

Sahil Jog P. 1

Amrin Sahi P. 2

### **King High Remembers - Mr. Peter Meine (US Navy)**

Peter Meine is a veteran from the Vietnam War with many years of experience and defines what to be a Fire Control Technician on ships, such as USS Tulare, and USS Schenectady. Peter was born in Peoria, Illinois on May 29, 1953, and was extremely involved in community service, sports, and the Boy Scouts. As a sailor, Peter used to frequently visit and volunteer at a children's hospital, where he used to hold "races", in which he and his fellow volunteers would place races with the handicapped children, and would purposefully make it so that the races would end in a tie, making the childrens' day. Also, in high school, Peter was involved in water polo, and partially the reason why he enjoyed swimming while he was in the Navy. As soon as he got out of high school, he declared for the draft, but was not drafted right away, because he had passing grades in college, therefore the people with lower grades were drafted first. Part of the reason that he wanted to join the US military was because of his family history. His father had served in the Air Force, and his grandfather in WWII. Peter enlisted in the Navy to become a U.D.T/ SEAL, which required tons of effort, manpower, and commitment. Peter had made it through a lot of the training, up until Hell Week. Hell Week, as Peter described it, was a week of grueling and tiresome, because of the vigorous exercises they had to perform, and had a 94% failure rate. Peter unfortunately got a severe leg cramp while training and had to spark a flare for rescue, since he couldn't even stand up. Meine also stated that the training he faced was 90% mental

and 10 % physical. During Hell Week, he failed to complete one of the tests that they were going thru and voluntarily disenrolled from the SEAL Program and was returned to the Fleet/Navy to complete his enlistment. He was then active for 4 years, from 1972 to 1976.

In the Navy, Peter had many experiences ranging from disarming WWII bombs to witnessing someone cutting their finger off. First of all, when Peter was commissioned to be on an island off of the Philippines, where there were several active bombs from WWII, Peter and his colleagues had the duty to safely disarm the bombs, as there were people living on the islands. After the bombs were disarmed, they were treated to a huge feast by the villagers as a form of thank you, as they slaughtered 2 pigs, which were considered significant during that time. Another valuable experience was when Peter was commissioned in Korea, and the temperatures were much below freezing, along with strong winds. One of his colleagues actually got his finger stuck in a contraction and got his finger cut off, but there was no blood since it was so cold and was taken to the hospital in Japan immediately by an airlift. Fortunately, he fully recovered and retained 80% of his finger mobility. Also, when Peter was stationed in Hong Kong, he had the opportunity to interact with others, like the Australian and Russian Navy, before 1999 Hong Kong was considered a free port. There, Peter also had the chance to purchase 2 motorcycles, and ship them back to the US. During his time on the USS Tulare, Peter spent his pastime taking photographs and documenting his journey. Also in his pastime, Peter and his colleagues spent time wrestling, playing basketball, and watching movies at night on the deck of the ship. He also pulled pranks

with the crew, such as the ceremony called “crossing the line”, which occurred when the ship crossed the equator. In the ritual, the men were divided into polliwogs, or sailors who had never crossed the equator before, and shellbacks, or those who had done so. The shellbacks would often play pranks on and tease the polliwogs, until the ceremony was over.

During his time active, Peter also embraced many cultures along the way, as he was stationed in various nations with different cultures. He thoroughly enjoyed indulging in their cultures, experimenting with new foods, and meeting new people along the way, as the Australians Peter met with were considered extremely friendly and inviting. Furthermore, he had a friend who married a Chinese woman, and was invited often to their family parties to embrace their culture. In his last year of service, he finally had the opportunity to marry his girlfriend who he met back in high school, and was finally discharged from the Navy in 1976. In the end, Peter was a wartime hero, as he assisted in saving many lives of the villagers on the island, and sacrificed his valuable time to serve his country, while others can spend their times living their lives. We are indebted to Mr. Meine for his service in the Navy, and would like to thank him for his time in King High Remembers.

