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Period 6

George Riolo
U.S. Navy Reserve
1965 - 1995
2018



George Riolo

For King High Remembers my partner and I interview George Riolo, a U.S Navy veteran. Born and raised in San Diego, California his family lived in a bay area due to his father working as a steward in the US navy. His father wasn't able to have any other position due to Filipinos being limited to chef position at the time. The world however would come to war again as the cold tensions arose between the United States of America and the Soviet Union.

After graduating from Lincoln High School in 1965, he was forced to enlist in the Navy Reserve due to the draft; along with his brother, they went to the Navy base in San Diego and enlisted under the supervision of their parents. He didn't want to participate in combat so he decided to enlist in the navy. However, George's younger brother wasn't allowed to enlist due to his asthma. After enlisting, George wasn't assigned to boot camp, instead, he was sent to submarine school in the Bay area of San Francisco which it took 6 weeks to complete to understand the structure of a submarine. While attending he placed hardwork and dedication to the electrical field. Finally after finishing submarine school, George was ready to board the submarine he was assigned to.

George had the pleasure to serve aboard the U.S.S. Remora, a Tench-class submarine. He had the luxury to work alongside his brother who was also an electrician on the same submarine. George had to learn the job of everyone in the submarine in case he needed to operate other parts of the submarine. Aboard the submarine, he had the help of his brother to get used to the life of a

submariner. In their spare time they watched movies (which made him nauseous), ate food, and played board games, George prayed with a cross his mother had given him to relieve the stress of being a submariner. He soon learned that the men he was serving with came from every corner of America. Some notable ones were two men from Tennessee who had never seen a black man before.

In the 1960's, George's main objective was to travel underwater near Russia's Naval base to collect data such as photographs of the Russian submarines; As Mr. Riolo stated "We're not here to engaged, but to remain underwater". Trying to remain undetected underwater, they had to shut off the submarine's motor for 2 days to avoid being detected by the enemy's sonar. However they mostly traveled during the night in order to avoid the detection. Despite never partaking in combat George says that the mood during these missions was very serious. Him and his crew vividly remember the sound of the sonar in the dead quiet waters.

After 26 years of service George was finally discharged in the same place where he had first enlisted. George had the honor of receiving a Dolphin medal which he proudly showed off at the interview. To earn this medal one has to be a Submarine Specialist (SS) which he became during his service. During his time in the navy he always had a plan on what to do after his service; to attend university. He had his sights set on San Diego State University and with the help of the GI bill he was accepted.

In University he took classes for shop and photography classes. To help out with money he also worked at a gas station pumping gas during his time in University. After finishing his education he became a high school teacher; however he still feels like he's serving his country as "teachers help with fighting for freedom." He enjoys living in the California area due to the diversity there is in people. He's also part of a Filipino bike club and rides a Harley Davidson.

In the early years of his discharge, he didn't communicate much with his old shipmates but with the advent of social media he started to reconnect with old friends. The crew that he worked with had a few reunions but didn't really meet often. However with the passage of time veterans pass away onto the afterlife so him and his comrades are trying to have reunions more often. With fewer people each year to reminisce with King High Remembers is a great way to share his life story with the citizens of tomorrow. My partner and I greatly appreciate George Riolo for the time he took to share his military experience. We hope that Mr. Riolo considers returning in the coming years to share his story and life lessons with other MLK High School students.