

All Gave Some; Some Gave All

What is a "Veteran"? A veteran is someone who, at one point in their life, wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America," for an amount of "up to and including my life."

Raymond Edward Carey graduated from Assumption High School in May of 1963, during the time when the term "Draft Dodger" was coined. Raymond volunteered for the U.S. Navy on the buddy plan with his cousin, Wade Norman. Raymond entered the Navy in November of 1963 leaving his job at Caterpillar Tractor Company in Decatur.

Raymond reported for duty at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center North of Chicago, Illinois. It was a cold time to be in basic training and standing watch on a garbage dumpster from Midnight until 4 o'clock in the morning with six inches of snow on the ground. But, it taught you discipline and to obey orders no matter how dumb they seemed.

Raymond, graduated from Basic training in February 1964 and was sent to the U.S. Naval Station, Bainbridge, Maryland where he received 6 months training in basic electricity and electronics. That training would serve him the rest of his life.

Upon successful completion of training Raymond was stationed aboard the U.S.S. Steiner DD 863 that was in dry dock at the Naval Shipyard at Boston Massachusetts, it was lovingly referred to as "The Stinky" by the crew. The ship was in dry dock until completion of its "fram job" in May of 1965 when it set sail to its home port of Norfolk, Virginia. The ship was there about a week where it took on supplies and ammunition. The "Stinky" then headed for a three month "shake-down cruise" operating out of Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. While there the crew pulled liberty in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. The ship used the port where a James Bond movie was filmed.

Upon completion of the shake down cruise the ship and crew became part of Destroyer Squadron 56 home ported in Norfolk, VA. The Navy had what was called the blue and gold fleet which translated in to 3 weeks in port and three weeks at sea.

In 1965, the Steiner made a six month Mediterranean Sea cruise crossing the Atlantic and into the Mediterranean Sea. Raymond visited Gibraltar, Naples, Italy, Livorno, Italy, Genoa, Italy, Marseille, France, Sardinia, Toulon, France, and Palma, Spain in the Balearic Islands before returning to the United States. Raymond says that while in Livorno, Italy he decided he wanted to see the leaning tower of Piza. He boarded an Italian Bus, not speaking a word of Italian, and managed to go to Piza and not only see the Leaning Tower but also climb to the top and observe the courtyard. In the chapel there he also viewed Galileo's Ball which swing from the ceiling of the chapel and as the earth turns the ball swings in a constant direction and by use of a clock design on the floor it told the time of day. Raymond also saw the original painting of the Last Supper.

In 1966 the U.S.S. Steiner again took Raymond across the Atlantic and into the Mediterranean Sea, this time gaining passage through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea. This was just when the canal reopened after the 1966-67 war over the Gaza Strip. On this trip Raymond visited the ports of Barcelona Spain, Athens, Greece, Port Said, Egypt, the canal, the Red Sea, Aden, Aden, the Arabian Sea, Cochin, India, Karachi, Pakistan, the Persian Gulf, Bahrain, Assalala, and Saudi Arabia, then back through the Red Sea, the canal, the Med and then home. While in Athens, Greece Raymond visited the "Acropolis" the "Temple of Athena" and the "Agora" of old Athens. Just sailing on exercises Raymond also visited the Azores and Bermuda.

Raymond was honorably discharged in November of 1967 after four years of active duty. His responsibility on board the U.S.S. Steinaker was maintenance and operation of the Mk. 25, Mod. 3 Gun Fire Control Radar system which was used to electronically position and aim the ships 5 inch gun mounts. Raymond says that for the land lubbers a five inch gun means that the bullet it shoots is five inches in diameter and that bullet alone weighs 55 pounds.

In November of 1967 the U.S.S. Steinaker received orders for Vietnam. Raymond had 10 days left of his four year tour of duty and was left at Jacksonville, Florida Naval Air Station as a Shore Patrolman guarding prisoner work details until he was discharged there since the Stinky would be at Sea when that event occurred.

Raymond says there is not enough money in the world to buy the experiences he had and also not enough money to get him to go through it again. He would however do it again if called upon to defend the United States and its people and our freedom. Raymond says that "Uncle Sam" provided for him. In May of 2000 Raymond graduated from Lincoln Land Community College with Highest Honors with an Associate Degree in Psychology followed two and a half years later graduating Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelors of Psychology from the University of Illinois, Springfield. These were compliments of the "GI Bill." Raymond is a lifetime member of Phi Theta Kappa and Psi Chi Fraternities.