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The year was 1965 and sometime in September I received a notice that my school deferment of 2S had been changed to a classification of 1A (meaning I would be drafted shortly into the Army). I had gone to school for two and a half years at a junior college and still was not close to an associate's degree. I was pretty much out of money, so I hadn't registered in any other college. My grade point was abysmal besides.

On the 19th of October I journeyed to Ames to see if I could join the reserves. Waiting list was around 18 months to get in at the time, so I checked with the draft board to see what my status was. They happily handed me my report for Army physical which was sometime in December. I asked how I could avoid getting drafted and they said be in another branch of the service before that date. Back in those days, all of the recruiters had offices in the same building as the draft board. The only recruiter that was in at the time was the Navy recruiter, so I stopped in and started talking to him. Because I had some college, he said that he could guarantee me an advanced basic school and advancement to E-3 upon graduation from Boot Camp. I signed on the dotted line that day, October 19, 1965 for a 4-year enlistment.

On October 28, after testing, and a physical at the induction center at Fort Des Moines, I was on a plane to Chicago and Great Lakes, Illinois for Basic Training. It was only 8 weeks long and around the five week mark they had us sign up for what we wanted to be when we grew up (the rating that we wanted to train in). We were given a form to

fill out and there were 6 blanks to be filled in. I looked at the Blue Jackets Manual (this gave brief descriptions of the various ratings that you could get training in) and chose 5 different aviation ratings because all of the schools were in Memphis, TN. That sounded exotic compared to being at Great Lakes (by now it was pretty cold there). The guy that helped you fill out this form told me that I HAD to select 6 choices and I had no idea what to select for the 6th choice. He recommended CT (Communications Technician). I asked him what the rating did and he said they did Top Secret stuff and their basic schools were in Pensacola, Florida. Sounded good to me so I made that my last choice. Guess what I got. CT, but there were 6 different branches of the rating and the one I got was CTM. The M stood for maintenance and guess where the basic school was. Great Lakes, Illinois, starting in January 1966.

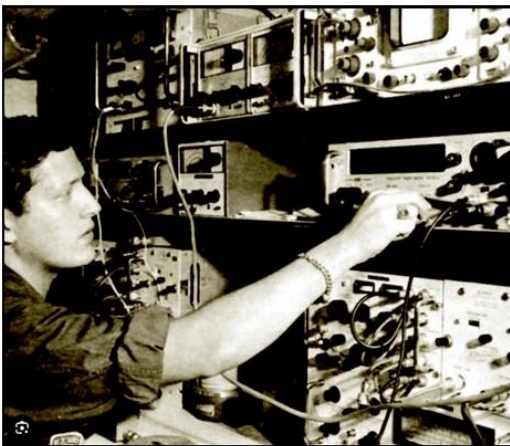
The first 2 weeks of school that year, the temperature never got above 10 below zero!! We went to the same basic electronics school as the ET's did (Electronic Technicians). While we were going to the 28 weeks of school, they started doing my background check for the security clearance I was going to need to work on the equipment once I was in the "field". By now I had found out that most of the assignments for CT's were shore stations spread around the globe. Very few in our rating were assigned to shipboard duty as very little of our equipment was on ships.

While in Great Lakes, we really felt like second class citizens. The military was looked down on

when we were on “liberty”. We were very easy to spot when off the base, due to our extremely short hair compared to the “civilians”. Got my clearance and my orders to my first duty station, Clark Air Base, Philippines. At the time it was the largest military base overseas. There were over 25,000 airmen and 30,000 civilians that worked on the base. We (the Navy) were only about 45-50 strong and our barracks was five and a half miles from the main gate.

In June of 1967 while I was stationed at Clark Air Base, one of our few ships that had CTs on it, USS Liberty, was attacked by the Israeli Air Force during the Six-Day War, and almost sank. Thirty-four crew members (mostly CT's) were killed and 171 members of the crew were injured. This event definitely got my attention, as did the next thing that happened in January 1968 while I was still at Clark Air Base. This was the capture of the USS Pueblo by the North Koreans and subsequent torture of its crew. A number of the crew that were captured had been augmented by personnel from the base in Japan (Kamiseya) which would be my next duty station after a short 8-week school on teletype. While I was stationed at Kamiseya, in April of 1969, the North Koreans this time shot down an EC-121 Reconnaissance plane with 31 of our people onboard. Most were CT's.

Japan was a very different assignment for me, as I stayed out of trouble and ended up extending my enlistment and eventually re-enlisting to make my total obligation now 8 years. I stayed in Japan for almost 3 years as I still didn't feel like I wanted to go back to the States, where I felt we were still second-class citizens.



**Working on Communications
Equipment**

In March of 1971 I was ordered back to the United States to a place called Winter Harbor, Maine. The name pretty much says all I needed to know about what I thought I was going to think of this place before I even got there. I was so wrong. The local people loved the Navy personnel and vice versa. There was much respect both ways and many of the personnel stationed there over the years felt it was the best duty they ever had. Shortly after arriving there, I met a local lady that would become my wife of almost 50 years before she passed in 2022. We ended up living in a special place on station and meeting several personnel that had been on the USS Pueblo. Our first daughter was born there and after spending a little over 2 years there I actually got orders to spend four and a half months in Pensacola, Florida enroute to an almost five-year tour in Sabana Seca, Puerto Rico. So over 9 years of my first 13 years in the Navy were spent outside the United States.

I didn't return to the United States until I received orders back to Winter Harbor, Maine in August 1978. By then, Viet Nam was a distant memory and the people in the military were no longer second-class citizens. I ended up spending 23 years in the Navy before retiring in August 1988. One of our nicknames for the CT's while I was in was they called us “Spooks” because many of those stationed on ships were many times only there for short periods of time and worked in spaces no one else could go in. One of our mottos was “In God We Trust, All Others We Monitor”. I am still friends with many of the people that I was stationed with in the late 60's and early 70's, a very trying time in our nation, to say the least.



NAVY SPOOKS

Communications Technicians' Emblem