



Barry Ford

1. What made you want to enter military service?

To serve my country, to travel, and to gain benefits that would allow me to finish college and purchase a home.

2. What branch of the military did you join and why?

I joined the US Navy because of the array of career options available at the time and because of the opportunities to travel.

3. How many years did you serve?

I only served 8 years, but, in retrospect I should have made it a career of 20 year or more.

4. What was your rank upon discharge?

My rank at discharge was E-5

5. What has been your greatest achievement in the military?

While on the USS POINT LOMA, I achieved the ENLISTED SURFACE WARFARE SPECIALIST designation. It was tough, but, it was a way to ensure my advancement while being recognized as a sailor dedicated to the Navy by taking on increased responsibility and leadership opportunities.

6. What lesson did you learn while in the military that you still use today?

Discipline, professionalism and leadership. They all apply in my home and work life.

7. Tell us a funny story that could only happen in the military.

The ship that I was stationed on was the USS POINT LOMA (AGDS-2). It was a deep submergence support ship that served as a testing platform for the Trident Missile program. We also supported deep dive submersibles such as the Trieste. Because of those unique missions, the ship was able to open the stern gate and ballast down into the water providing an area in the aft section of the ship to take on sea water and launch and recover small subs. Once on the way to Pearl Harbor, HI, we had a "swim call", where we opened the stern gate and flooded the well deck like we would if launching a sub. I took a flying leap off the ships port side into the ocean. I did it twice. On my second time, as I was swimming to the back of the ship to climb back onboard via the well deck, the wind changed and the currents began to push the ship out of range of my ability to keep up. That was the case for about 12 of us, all bobbing in the waves, trying to stay afloat. Eventually, the Captain sent a Zodiac (a motorized rubber speed boat) out to retrieve us.

Although I was a well-trained and strong swimmer, I was a wee bit concerned about getting back to the stern gate. I eventually made it back aboard as did all of us. After we all showered and ate dinner, we all had a big laugh about our close encounter with meeting Poseidon!!



USS POINT LOMA (AGDS-2)

8. What duty station did you most enjoy?

I enjoyed being in San Diego, CA the most where I was assigned to the USS POINT LOMA. It is where I made lifelong friends and got married. San Diego was also close to Los Angeles where my extended family (cousins, aunts and uncles) lived.

9. Why did you choose your military job specialty.

I was a Yeoman Second Class Petty Officer. Before I joined, I made sure that I had a very specific school to attend after boot camp at Recruit Training Command, Orlando, FL. The school that I wanted was the Naval Administrative "A" School at the Meridian Naval Air Station, Meridian, MS. It was there that sailors were trained to be Yeoman and Personnelman (YN and PN). I was already a good typist and enjoyed working with my mom and assisting her with her administrative duties as secretary of several churches. I even knew shorthand. My mother, Vivian Grafton Ford was my biggest influence in deciding to go into military administration.

My duty stations in order:

Recruit Training Command, Orlando, FL

Naval Administrative "A" School, at the Meridian Naval Air Station, Meridian, MS

USS POINT LOMA (AGDS-2) at the 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego, CA

- Submarine Development Group ONE

- Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet

Commander, Training Air Wing FOUR, at the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, TX