

Rear Admiral G. Dennis “Denny” Vaughan US Navy, retired

Admiral Vaughan started his career in the Navy initially as a Navy ROTC student at Oregon State College (University now) and then the following year having received the highest score in the state of Oregon’s entrance exams, he received appointments to Annapolis – US Naval Academy (Principle appointment from Congressional Representative Charles Porter), West Point (Principle appointment from Senator Wayne Morse) and Air Force Academy (Principle appointment from Senator Richard Neuberger). Having spent his youth living on the Oregon Coast and sailing with his Dad, it was an easy choice where he would go – Navy!

Upon graduating with a BS in Marine Science in 1963 from USNA, he took a month off to see most of Europe before he headed to the West Coast, knowing that his ship he was ordered to was about to go to sea for six months. Upon reporting to his first ship, the USS FRANK E. EVANS (DD-754) he sailed throughout the Pacific starting off the coast of Vietnam in Yankee Station during the early stages of the conflict. The EVANS was part of Destroyer Squadron 23, Admiral Arliegh Burke’s highly decorated Little Beaver Squadron. He was stationed out of Long Beach, CA, serving initially as the MPA (Main Propulsion Assistant) being responsible for all the men and machinery (mainly boilers and steam turbines in those days). He “fleeted up” on his second WESTPAC (Western Pacific) tour aboard the EVANS to be Chief Engineer, while still an Ensign – It is usually a Lieutenant’s job. The EVANS sailed the waters and visited many of the ports of Japan, Thailand, Hong Kong (the first of six visits over his career), Philippines (Subic Bay and Manila), Vietnam and Taiwan (Taiwan Patrol). While OOD (Officer of the Deck) in the early morning of November 22, 1963 as the sun was about to rise, the radio messenger brought up to the bridge a message that President Kennedy had been shot. We shared that moment together while most of the rest of the ship was still asleep.

In 1965 while in Kaohsiung city, Taiwan he was transferred to the USS GOLDSBOROUGH (DDG-20) in Pearl Harbor, Hawai’i as their DCA (Damage Control Assistant). A few months later while going to an engineering school on Treasure Island, San Francisco, he qualified for UDT (Underwater Demolition Team). They were the forerunners to our SEALs. However, due to his extensive engineering background both academically and in practice, the Navy detailed him in 1966 to be Chief Engineer aboard the USS VAN VOORHIS (DE 1028) out of Newport, RI. The major sea exercise was UNITAS (meaning unity in Latin) that combined in-port training and sea exercises involving countries of Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Panama, Columbia, Paraguay, Equator, Peru, Chili, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil (Rio de Janeiro with Copacabana and Ipanema beaches) and capital town of Brazilia and port of Recifi.

Then in 1967, he became apart of the Mine Sweep Force and joined the USS RUFF (MSC (O)-54) as Chief Engineer, then in 1969 the USS CORMORANT (MSC-122) as Chief Engineer; then in 1971 became the Executive Officer of USS WOODPECKER (MSC-209) and then in 1972 the Commanding Officer of USS WARBLER (MSC-206). The WARBLER was his first of 14 commands (10 on ships; 4 ashore). From there he had short assignments: in 1973 the Prospective Executive Officer of the USS CHANDLER (DD-717), in 1974 Unit CO (Commanding Officer) of FTG Det (Fleet Training Group Pacific NW Detachment), in 1978 COMNAVSURFPACDET (Naval Surfaces Forces Pacific Detachment CO); in 1979 Prospective Commanding Officer USS MCKEAN (DD-784), in 1981 Research Officer at ONR (Office of Naval Research), in 1982 Admin Officer NRMTF (Navy Reserve Maintenance Training Facility Headquarters), and then back to the minesweeps in 1983 as Commodore of Mine Division 53. Under this command he took his ships for exercises to Hawai'i (RIMPAC - largest exercise in the Pacific) - as well as exercises in Alaska (Adak across the Bearing Sea to Seward) and many other exercises up and down the Pacific Coast.

Then in 1985 he took command of the Coastal Defense Coordinating Command headquartered in Victoria, Canada, and then stood up in early 1986 the first COMMARDEZPACNW (Commander Maritime Defense Sector Pacific Northwest). Then in late 1987 he became the Inspector General of REDCOM 22 (Readiness Command of the five Northwest states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana), and then in 1988 in became COMREDCOM 22 (Commander, Readiness Command NW).

From 1989 to '92 he was the Commodore of Inshore Undersea Warfare Pacific (COMIUWPAC) with its 14 unit commands. Under this command, he took three of these units to Operation Desert Shield/ Desert Storm (1990-91) placing them in the ports of Manama, Bahrain, Al Dammam, Saudi Arabia and Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia for the protection of their country's harbor approaches, harbors, anchorages, ports, vessels in these areas, waterfront facilities and cargoes from external and internal threats to ensure that US forces achieved maximum port and harbor operational capability. Under this wartime command he had the Operational Control (OPCON) of three MIUW units, three EOD units (Explosive Ordinance Detachments), three Navy Port Security Units, three US Coast Guard small boat Port Security Units, the US Army Port Security Detachments and host Nation assets and personnel. The day before the actual war began; he was sent to Cairo, Egypt to evaluate the security of the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. As they approached Cairo the pilot suggested they fly low over the pyramids of Giza and the Great Sphinx - and so they did. Upon landing, a person that answered his phone as "Gray Beard" and drove an armored car met him at the end of the airport runway, and they went out a side gate. The meetings took place in an Egyptian palace. In flying back as the sun was setting over the quiet desert he remembers the feeling of being the only one on the plane that knew what devastating action would take place in the upcoming early morning.

On short notice and a day before the US Marines landed in Saudi Arabia at the start of the war, he was part of a detachment to secure the landing beach during the initial assault of the Marines. It should be noted that all the MIUW units had both men and women assigned in combat zones. In fact, a woman was in command of one of the MIUW units. Before the units were deployed from the US, he was questioned whether women should be deployed into the combat zones. He's immediate answer was "We trained together, and we will fight together - next question".

At night all hands had to be in harden shelters, as the Patriot Missile Defense Systems did their jobs and would shoot down the scud missile being launched from Iraq, and the Scud Crud would fall out of the sky at times causing significant damage. One scud landed in the water less than 100 yards from the units in Al Jubayl, but fortunately it was tumbling and became ineffective upon landing. It was the only scud recovered in tack during the war.

The day after ODS/S was over, he traveled to Kuwait with an EOD special team to secure the port and ensure no explosives or booby traps were rigged before reconstruction of the port could start. He remembers clearly the command to "don't touch anything".

About a year after returning from ODS/S, he was in the field in the middle of a major exercise on San Clemente Island, CA, and he got a surprise call on the field phone that he had been selected for Rear Admiral. His initial assignments as a "Flag Officer" were: 1993 Commander, Military Sealift Command Pacific and Commander, Military Sealift Command, Far East. Also, for a short time he was called back to Wash, DC headquarters to serve as the Deputy Commander of all MSC. During these MSC commands he traveled to the MSC Detachments in Guam, Okinawa (beautiful beaches), Singapore (a port that had over 700 ships in the area working from the piers and mother ships at anchor), Japan (with exercises out of Hokkaido, Sasabo, Yokosuka Yokohama, and Okinawa), and Diego Garcia (watched nightly the crab races at the beach bar). Also, in Diego Garcia the humidity is so high, that a palm tree will almost immediately start to grow when a coconut drops to the sandy soil. He also traveled extensively in Alaska while visiting his commands (Juno, Anchorage, Whittier, Nome, Barrow and Prudhoe). While in Barrow in early July, there were still snow flurries falling and ice burgs being pushed against the shore; yet, local native kids were out in shorts and t-shirts playing soccer.

He had a special assignment serving in Sarajevo in 1992 to be the Deputy for Operations for the European Command out of Stuttgart, Germany during the Bosnian War (Croatia, Herzegovina and Serbia conflict). The night that he flew into base operations in Sarajevo he was given a safety brief and instructed to get to know the maps well. In case they were shot down, they were instructed on the location to get to for being rescued. They were further instructed to wear their flax jackets under their butts, as the bullets would be coming from below. Upon his return of seeing the destruction of war, he wrote a free flowing and emotional poem titled

“Hollowed Eyes”. He also became the Deputy for Operations for the Atlantic Command during Operation Uphold Democracy in 1993’s Haiti uprising. Shortly after a Haiti status briefing to President Clinton, he was asked to go to Grenada and represent the President to make the principle remarks during Granada’s 10th anniversary celebration of their victory in the conflict with Cuba.

Upon completion of his MSC commands, he again was assigned in early 1993 to be Commander, Readiness Command 22 Northwest. This time as an Admiral. Later he was assigned to the Pentagon in 1993 to be Deputy to the Chief of the Naval Reserve; followed in 1996 to become Commander of the Naval Reserve Force reporting to both to the Commander in Chief (CINC) of the Atlantic Fleet and CINC of the Pacific Fleet; as well as Director of Naval Reserve reporting to the CNO (Chief of Naval Operations). At the same time he had additional duty as PEO (Program Executive Officer) for the Navy’s IT (Information Technology).

As Chief of the Naval Reserve he was responsible for the manning, training and operating his force of over 100,000 Sailors stationed throughout the world on the sea, in the air, under the sea and ashore. He also reported to the CNO on his Mississippi Area responsibilities.

He retired in September 1999 as PEO for Mine Warfare and Special Forces.

Medals and awards: 16 medals and ribbons representing his service in four wars/conflicts and numerous administrative assignments. The most important award was for his successful Command of his Sailors during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Interesting activities during his career:

Visited Eastern Berlin in 1963 and went through Check Point Charlie two years after the Berlin Wall was built to keep the Eastern Germans from fleeing their country. At that time, Eastern Berlin still had not rebuilt many of their major buildings after WW II. Also, it was their first year after the Wall came down in 1991.

While assigned to the USS FRANK E. EVANS (DD-754), a small destroyer, in 1964 he was high lined at sea from her to a aircraft carrier and then back to another destroyer the USS JAMES E. KEYS (DD-787) to observe and grade their engineering department’s exercises. It’s traditional that the crew allows the chair that you sit in to dip into the ocean waves that are crashing between the ships. One only gets a little wet.

While on liberty in Japan, he went skiing in Shiga Highlands, Nagano in 1963 and climbed Mount Fuji in 1965.

One of his major challenges while he was CO of the FTG Detachment was the assignment in 1975 to take Sailors from Pakistan and train them in two weeks to be fully operationally capable of taking a former US Navy Destroyer from San Diego to Pakistan. This Destroyer had been transferred to their Navy, and they were to bring it to their home base from San Diego. They were great to work with and were successful.

In 1984 when he was Commodore of MINDIV 53 he was in the lead and first ship back into Pearl Harbor of all the ships assigned to RIMPAC. It was very interesting as they entered that the only ship in the port of Pearl Harbor was a Japanese destroyer flying the Flag of the Rising Sun. For a moment he reflected on WWII.

While in the port of Seward in 1985 he was invited to join and participated in the limited entry 2006 Mount Marathon Race. This race is torturous. Two runners died the year before. It is considered the jewel of all mountain running races. He finished even though his hands were totally bloodied from sliding down the steep section of frozen snow.

While both in Yokosuka, Japan in 1963 and later in Pusan, Korea he was fascinated by the cave infrastructure deep into the mountains for their command and control stations – amazing feeling walking through history; yet, the caves are still being used effectively today as command centers.

In July 1997 he took part in the celebration of the USS CONSTITUTION's (Old Ironsides) 200th anniversary of her first launching by getting **underway under sail for her first time in 116 years.**

While serving as the Commander of the Naval Reserve Forces headquartered in New Orleans from 1996 to 1998, he was given the keys to the City of New Orleans, made an Honorary Citizen of the city, was chairman of Mardi Gras one year, was a member of the bead throwing krewes named after Greek gods and rode in many Mardi Gras parades, attended many of the balls, and bestowed Knighthood by his Majesty in King Rex's court.

Also, while Chief of the Naval Reserve he flew down to Australia as the honored guest at Australia's Military Day Parade held in Sydney.

During his time at EUCOM in 1993, he was given another interesting assignment to speak at the Naval/Merchant Marine Academy in Varna, Bulgaria shortly after the Berlin wall came down. The city's infrastructure was in terrible shape. While out running the first night there, he came extremely close to falling into a deep hole on the unlighted sidewalk that had no caution sign of work being done or barriers. Yet, once the wall came down and they got their independence back, the people's lives seemed to immediately return to earlier days. He visited a church that had only been opened up the previous day and already the religious artifacts that had been

hidden in homes or buried were returned and hanging on the walls. Candles were aglow, songs were being sung, and Mass was being conducted.

He gave the graduation speeches in 1999 at: the US Coast Guard Academy and at King's Point Merchant Marine Academy

After he retired in September 1999, he was asked by the President of Taiwan to be a part of a five person Team lead by the former USMC Commandant, General Gray, to conduct a study of its military preparedness. He also had a special assignment from around that time from the Commander of the Combined Forces of S. Korea to head up a five-person detachment to evaluate N. Korea's military preparedness from an attack from N. Korea.

While at Army War College in 1992 he visited Gettysburg. He has lasting memories of those who fought and the 620,000 soldiers that died in the six years of war - 52,000 at Gettysburg alone. The deaths total in the Civil War equals almost all the deaths of the military men and women in all the other wars combined involving the US.

One of the more interesting exercises during his MARDEZ command was 1997 to lead a specialized team to secretly and on short notice do a 24-hour load/offload/emergency repairs to a nuclear submarine at a coastal port pier. Tide had control of the arrival and departure times. Another memorable MARDEZ exercise along the Oregon Coast was the challenge in coordinating twenty-five commands from the Navy, Coast Guard and Army.

He was President in 1993 of the Secretary of the Navy's (SECNAV's) National Reserve Policy Board.

In late 1994 he lead a four man team in the developing and writing the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS). It combined his experience of small crews on MSC ships and the mobility of his MIUW units to provide a ship that can be adaptable and low cost to operate.

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EDUCATION:

He attended Oregon State College 1958-59, US Naval Academy 1959-63, Seattle University (MBA Program) 1968-69, Harvard's John F. Kennedy's School of Government 1994, Navy War College 1991, Army War College 1992, Armed Force Staff College, and Defense Systems Management College 1997.

POST NAVY:

Since leaving the Navy he has been serving on Boards and does consulting with entrepreneurs of start up companies, as well as those seeking to develop or strengthen their relationship with the federal government.

While in Wash, DC in 2005 he received a personal invitation from President Bush to attend the Inauguration Ceremonies on the Congressional lawn and attend many of the Inauguration Balls that evening.

His personal activities have included racing and cruising sailboats (past Commodore Corinthian Yacht Club Seattle); Ran the Boston Marathon in 2 hours 58 minutes; Completed the MS 150K bike race in Wash, DC; Completed the Tour de Palm Springs 100 mile bike race; Completed the kayak race "Seventy-48" – paddling non-stop for 16+ hours through the night for 70 miles from Tacoma to Port Townsend, WA; and then there is golf – the hardest of them all.

Information requested by the Mariner Organization

Name & Rank: Denny Vaughan; Rear Admiral, US Navy (retired)

GENERAL:

1. **Home Town:** Seattle, WA
2. **Colleges:** Oregon State University, US Naval Academy and Seattle University
3. **ROTC Program:** While at Oregon State participated in the NROTC Program

MILITARY:

1. **Branch:** Navy
2. **When did you join the military:** first as a NROTC midshipman in 1958, followed as a midshipman upon entering Annapolis (US Naval Academy) in 1959 through 1963; and then went on active duty in summer of 1963
3. **Rank when you join the military:** Joined initially as a Midshipman; then became an Ensign upon graduation from the Naval Academy and joining active duty
4. **List each location you were stationed during your time in the military:** Initially stationed in Long Beach, CA; Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i; Newport, Rhode Island; Seattle, WA; Yokohama, Japan; New Orleans, LA; Stuttgart, Germany; Norfolk, VA and Washington, DC.
5. **List any deployments and dates:**
 - Vietnam 1964
 - Germany and Sarajevo, Croatia 1993
 - Western Pacific 1963 - 95 and 1993-4
 - Eastern Pacific multiple times starting in 1967 through 1995
 - Atlantic and South America 1966 – 67
 - Japan Yokohama, 1993 – 1995
 - Bahrain and Saudi Arabia 1990 -91
 - Cairo, Egypt 1991
6. **Any stories:** Highlighted in the bio
7. **List military awards:** Distinguisher Service Medal presented by the President of the United States. The second Legion of Merit presented by the

President of the United States, and 14 other wartime and administrative metals and ribbons. My most unexpected recognition was a hand written note that came from Admiral Borda, the CNO (Chief of Naval Operations), wishing me Happy Birthday.

POST MILITARY

What did you do following your time in the military?

Since leaving the Navy Admiral Vaughan has been serving on Boards and does consulting with entrepreneurs of start up companies, as well as those seeking to develop or strengthen their relationship with the federal government.

He also does special projects for the Navy from time to time.

When did you retire?

September 1999

REMARKS:

Possible remarks to be made by Admiral Vaughan or a representative of the Mariners – **“By the Mariner Organization honoring me, they also honor all of us in the military. I ask all those currently or have been in the to please stand up and be recognized. We stand together; we don’t stand alone. We are one Team. I salute you all.”**

As of 9 July 2019