EARL EUGENE MEYERS JR.

US NAVY 1978-1984

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Electricians Mate First Class (EM1c)

Earl Eugene Meyers Jr. was born 30-Jan 1959 Missouri. His parents were Earl E. Meyers (1934-2025), an Air Force veteran, and Evelyn E Hobson. Earl had one sister: Linda. Earl attended Roosevelt High School in St. Louis MO where he was a member of the swim team. He graduated in 1977.

Earl signed up under the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) on 11-Jan 1978 and joined the Navy on 30-Oct 1978. Navy basic training at that time was about eight weeks. Earl attended Basic Recruit Training in San Diego from October to December 1978.

Basic Electricity / Electronics Training San Diego CA

After basic, Earl began Basic Electricity & Electronics (BEE) training in San Diego, CA. U.S. Navy Basic Electricity and Electronics (BE&E or BEE) training was 8 weeks and was notoriously rigorous, foundational pipeline school. It taught core electrical theory and solid-state electronics to recruits heading into technical ratings like Electronics Technicians (ET), Sonar Technicians (ST), and Fire Controlmen (FC).

Naval Training Center: San Diego, CA, Company 197, 1978 Patrol Squadron 19.

Electrician Mate "A" School, Great Lakes IL

From there, in April 1979, Earl went to Great Lakes, IL for Electricians Mate (EM) "A" School. Sailors in this 6-week class underwent intense technical instruction focused on marine electrical systems, motor generation, power distribution, and shipboard troubleshooting.

The USS Paiute (ATF-159)

On 9-Jun 1979, Meyers was mustered aboard the USS Paiute (ATY-159). New sailors instinctively widen their stance and slightly shift their posture to stay balanced on rolling waves. Earl earned his "Sea Legs" during his time on the Paiute. USS Paiute (ATF-159) was an Abnaki-class tug of the United States Navy during World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Persian Gulf War. She served a total of 44 years before being scrapped.

The complement (crew size) for the USS Paiute (ATF-159) was officially listed as 76 personnel, consisting of 8 officers and 68 enlisted men (some historical reference sheets list a general complement of around 97 depending on specific mission assignments or operational eras).

The USS Paiute was based out of Mayport, FL between schools**.** Naval Station Mayport is a major U.S. Navy port located in Jacksonville, Florida. It sits at the mouth of the St. Johns River in Duval County, about 15 miles east of downtown Jacksonville. It is the third-largest naval surface fleet concentration area in

the country. The port features a deep-water harbor that can hold dozens of ships, including aircraft carriers. Mayport serves as the headquarters for the U.S. Fourth Fleet.

The USS Paiute responsibilities included:

- Battle damage salvage, retaking and repairing damaged warships under fire.
- Ocean towing, pulling disabled vessels, barges, and floating drydocks across thousands of miles.
- Rescue operations, providing emergency firefighting, dewatering, and diving support to ships in distress.
- Logistic support, assisting with harbor movements, anchor-handling, and clearing navigational hazards.

The USS Paiute had about 76 crew members (8 officers and 68 enlisted personnel), though actual day-to-day numbers often fluctuated depending on specific operations and assignments. As a fleet tug assigned to heavy salvage and towing, the ship routinely utilized specialized divers or as the crew called them, the "diving gang". The USS Paiute also conducted burials at sea for retired, deceased Naval personnel. Earl left the Paiute on 26-May 1979.

Basic Nuclear Power School, Orlando FL

Earl's next stop was training in Basic Nuclear Power School. Earl attended NUCLEAR POWER SCHOOL (CLASS 8001) at the Naval Training Center in Orlando, Florida from 23-Sep 1979 to 25-Apr 1980. The 24-week school was operated under the strict oversight of Admiral Hyman G. Rickover. The intensive six-month course comprised roughly 700 hours of classroom instruction, focusing heavily on core engineering and theoretical fundamental. Admiral Hyman G. Rickover (1900–1986) was a legendary four-star U.S. Navy admiral known as the "Father of the Nuclear Navy." He directed the development of naval nuclear propulsion, spearheaded the creation of the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, the USS Nautilus, and served a historic 30-year tenure as director of the Naval Reactors office.

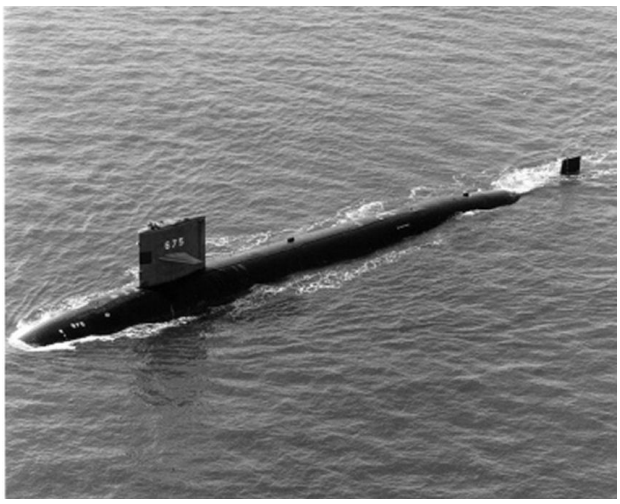
Nuclear Prototype Training, West Milton NY

From there, he was off to Balston Spa, New York for what the Navy called "NUPWR PLANT OPERATOR ON MARF PROTOTYPE. He was there 26 weeks beginning on 12-MAY 1980 and completing the training on 8-NOV 1980. While based there, Earl was a Electricians Mate 3rd Class (EM3c). In 1980, U.S. Navy Nuclear Prototype Training in New York took place at the Kenneth A. Kesselring Site in West Milton (near Ballston Spa/Schenectady). Trainees worked grueling 12-hour rotating shifts on active Cold War reactor prototypes like the S3G submarine prototype and MARF, completing intense hands-on operational qualifications. During the 1980's there was high-volume students and training with roughly 2,000 sailors trained annually during the peak of the 1980s Cold War buildup. The students were divided into intensive classroom system-design phases followed by strict operational watch-standing and qualification boards inside the plant. The plant included operational prototypes such as S3G and MARF (Milford A. Reuben Facility. Earl called the plant, "very unique."

Governed by Admiral Rickover's notoriously uncompromising nuclear safety and engineering principles there were few incidences. Most recorded radiation exposure at the prototype and training facility consisted of minimal, highly regulated doses absorbed by personnel and rotating Navy student classes.

USS Bluefish SSN-675

His training complete, on 14-Dec 1980, Meyers went aboard the USS BLUEFISH (SSN-675). The submarine was part of the Atlantic Fleet, Norfolk VA. The Bluefish was a Sturgeon Class Attack Submarine. When Earl came aboard, the ship was commanded by Commander George Michael Hewitt (USN) Command Period: 21-Apr 1979 to – 18-Dec 1981.



The keel was Laid down 13-Mar 1968, at the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics Corp., Groton CT. The ship was launched 10-Jan 1970 and commissioned, USS Bluefish (SSN-675), 8-Jan 1971. The boat was nicknamed the "Blue Thunder from Down Under". The boat was 292 feet long, 31' beam, could run submerged up to 25 knots, on the surface 15 knots. The propulsion system was a S5W nuclear reactor. The armament consisted of four 21" torpedo tubes amidships aft of bow, MK 48 Torpedoes, UUM-44A SUBROC, UGM-84A/C Harpoon, MK 57 deep water mines, MK 60 CAPTOR mines. The boat had a crew of about 108 officers and enlisted men.

Soon, they left for an around the world trip UNDERWATER.

Mission of an Attack Submarine

During the Cold War the US Naval Submarine Force was tasked with keeping tabs on Soviet submarines (called Boomers) naval movements before they could launch nuclear strikes.

Submarines like the Bluefish – designated a FAST ATTACK sub (as designated by SSN) - were well suited to this task and often trailed Soviet submarines for days reporting on their movements and recording noise signatures. Built smaller, faster, and more agile than ballistic missile submarines, prioritizing stealth and acoustic quietness. An Attack submarine like the Bluefish is designed to track and prepare to sink Soviet strategic missile submarines if necessary.

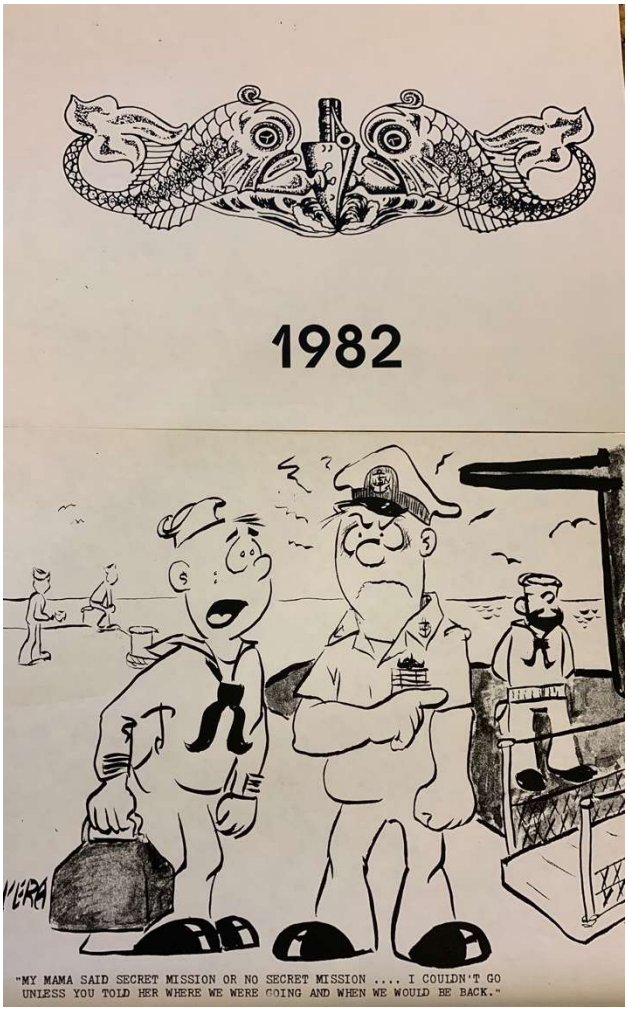
The objective was to achieve and maintain "trail." An American fast-attack submarine (the cat) would slip quietly behind a Soviet ballistic missile submarine (the mouse) as it left port. The U.S. submarine would follow directly behind the Soviet vessel, staying close enough to lock on with a torpedo at a moment's notice. If nuclear war broke out, the trailing submarine's mission was to immediately sink the enemy vessel before it could launch its missiles.

Submarines rely on passive sonar (listening to the ocean) to detect threats. Because a submarine's own propeller creates a massive wake of noise behind it, every submarine has a "blind spot" directly to its rear, historically called the "baffles." Attack submarines would stalk, intentionally hide inside the enemy's baffles, running completely silent to mirror every turn, acceleration, and deceleration of the target.

"Crazy Ivan"

Crazy Ivan's are officially called "clearing the baffles." To find out if they were being followed, Soviet captains regularly executed a violent, unannounced maneuver called "Crazy Ivan." The submarine would suddenly turn hard to port or starboard and loop backward to face its own wake, exposing anyone hiding in its blind spot.

When a target executed a "Crazy Ivan," the trailing submarine had only seconds to react. They had to immediately reverse engines, dive sharply, or turn away to avoid a catastrophic collision. Because both ships were completely blind to what was directly ahead or behind them while traveling at high speeds, these maneuvers occasionally failed. This resulted in several classified, paint-scraping underwater collisions that nearly escalated the Cold War into a hot one. This maneuver was depicted in the movie, "Hunt for Red October."



CALENDAR: "MY MAMA SAID SECRET MISSION OR NO SECRET MISSION....I COULDN'T GO UNLESS YOU TOLD HER WHERE WE WERE GOING AND WHEN WE WOULD BE BACK"

Earl in front of USS Bluefish and likely Commander George Michael Hewitt (Captain).

Another part of their core mission was to guard friendly aircraft carrier battle groups against enemy surface fleets and sub-surface threats. They were also responsible for intelligence and reconnaissance, conducting clandestine surveillance near enemy coastlines and monitor naval bases.

Life Aboard a Nuclear Submarine

Submariners in the 1980s required a security clearance - typically a minimum of a SECRET clearance for general crew members and nuclear-trained personnel, and Top Secret or SCI clearances for officers and specific technical ratings. Simply holding a clearance did not grant access to all information on board; sailors were strictly limited to data necessary for their specific operational duties.

Crew members experienced a unique and demanding environment. Nuclear-powered attack submarines like the USS Bluefish (SSN-675) can stay submerged for 2 to 3 months at a time, limited mostly by food supplies and crew endurance rather than fuel or air. Earl recalled, “For the artificial lighting and regulated ship climate we affectionately referred to as “60 cycle sunshine & man-made air.” Home-ported in Norfolk VA, the Sturgeon-class attack submarine spent months at a time submerged on hidden intelligence-gathering missions. Crew members recall deployments stretching deep into Soviet-claimed waters, the North Atlantic, and an iconic extended 1982 patrol into the Indian Ocean that included a historic globe-circling route.

Sailors on nuclear submarines perform drills almost daily, with multiple exercises often occurring during a single watch rotation. There is no fixed total number of drills for an entire voyage because training depends on the submarine's schedule, operational status, and command requirements.

Newcomers were labeled “dink” and faced immense pressure to “get hot” and earn their submarine warfare silver or gold dolphins. Until qualified, a sailor's life was consumed by studying ship systems, memorizing diagrams, and standing basic duties. Patrols meant weeks or months submerged without seeing sunshine, relying completely on artificial fluorescent lighting and a regulated ship climate.

Unofficial Certificates and “Initiations”

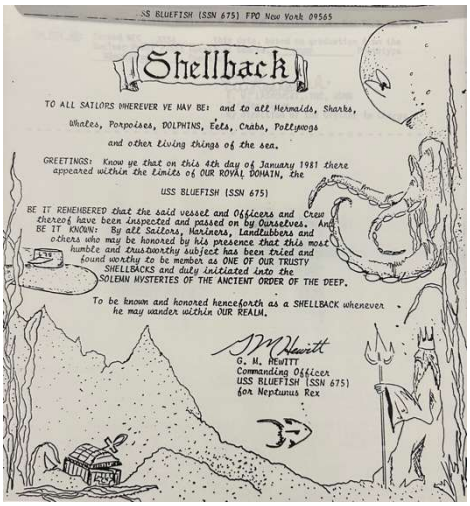
There are two “Unofficial” Navy certificates sailors can earn. The Order of Magellan is an unofficial U.S. Navy certificate given to sailors who complete a full circumnavigation of the Earth by ship. The U.S. Navy does not officially issue or track these maritime certificates as part of official service records; instead, they are traditional commemorative tokens shared among crew members. Because modern deployments rarely require a complete round-the-world voyage for a single ship, it remains one of the rarer nautical milestones in the service.

Order of Magellan earned by circling the world.

The other award sailors earn is the traditional Crossing the Line ceremony when their submarine crosses the equator. First-timers on board are called pollywogs (or slimy pollywogs). Once they cross the equator and complete the ritual, they become shellbacks (or trusty shellbacks). Unlike surface ships with massive flight decks or open pool areas, a submarine obviously cannot hold a large outdoor ceremony while submerged. If conditions permit, ceremonies may be adapted or held when the boat surfaces or scaled down to fit the tight interior spaces of the vessel. Years ago, the ceremony resembled something like “hazing.” Crew members who are already shellbacks dress up as King Neptune and his royal court to initiate the pollywogs through classic, lighthearted maritime rites of passage. Participants also receive an official ornate certificate commemorating the milestone.

The award read:

Shellback



ALL SAILORS WHEREVER YE MAY BE: and to all Mermaids, Sharks, Whales, Porpoises, Dolphins, Eels, Crabs, Pollywogs and other living things of the sea.

GREETINGS: Know ye that on this 4th of January 1981 there appeared within the limits of OUR ROYAL DOMAIN, the

USS BLUEFISH (SSN 675)

BE IT REMEMBERED that the said vessel and Officers and Crew thereof have been inspected and passed on by Ourselves. And
BE IT KNOWN: By all Sailors, Mariners, Landlubbers and others who may be honored by his presence that this most humble and trustworthy subject has been tried and found worthy to be a member of ONE AS ONE OF OUR TRUSTY SHELLBACKS and duly initiated into the SOLEMN MYSTERIES OF THE ANCIENT ORDER OF THE DEEP. To be known and honored henceforth as a SHELLBACK whenever he may wander within OUR REALM.

Veterans of the Bluefish and other subs, often describe the unit as a tight brotherhood where traditional divisions between forward (operations/weapons) and aft (engineering) crew dissolved under pressure. The crew passed time playing cards, reading, listening to music, and watching whatever movies were on tape.

On nuclear fast-attack boats during normal operations, crew members could often shower every other day or a few times a week. However, if the fresh-water evaporators broke down or the ship entered strict water conservation modes, showers could be restricted or halted for days. When showers were permitted, sailors had to take rapid, highly rationed cycles wetting down briefly, turning off the water to soap up, and turning it on for a fast rinse to conserving every drop.

Food aboard the USS Bluefish (SSN-675) during the 1980s followed the long-standing U.S. Navy submarine tradition of being significantly better than what was served on surface ships or shore bases, acting as a crucial tool for morale during tense Cold War patrols. Because the crew operated on rotating shifts around the clock, the galley served four meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner, and midrats (midnight rations) for off-watch sailors.

Hot-Racking

Like most Cold War nuclear boats, space was at an absolute premium.) While most sailors, typically had their own rack, junior enlisted personnel hot-racked when we carried “extra riders” for highly sensitive missions. Sailors shared cramped “berthing” compartments where bunks (racks) were stacked tightly,

and personal storage was limited to a small rack pan and drawer. Earl bunked in the torpedo room for several weeks until a hand-full of crew members transitioned off in Diego Garcia.

The crew lived by rotating watch schedules (typically 6 hours on, 12 hours off, or variations depending on battle stations), constantly monitoring sonar, nuclear propulsion plants, and navigation systems. As a Sturgeon-class boat, space was at an absolute premium. Hot-racking (sharing bunks as shifts changed) and a constant, low-frequency hum of machinery were standard facts of life. Life was accompanied by the persistent hum of the Westinghouse S5W nuclear reactor plant, machinery, and rushing water outside the hull.
Like many ships of that era, sailors from this timeframe faced routine environmental exposures, including the presence of asbestos used for thermal and fire insulation in pipelines and bulkheads.

Port Calls / Liberty Ports

While aboard, Meyers was deployed for Indian Ocean deployment (around the world trip) 26 Dec 1980 - 2 July 1981. Hitting exotic foreign ports after grueling months under the polar ice or tracking Soviet fleets offered intense relief and legendary downtime for the crew. During his time aboard Bluefish, Earl had several good liberties. The crew was described as a hard-working, hard-partying crew.

Earl aboard the Bluefish as a EM2c.

Earl called St. Croix a very good liberty. St. Croix was generally considered a welcome, relaxed “working liberty” port rather than a wild party destination for submarine crews in the 1980s. Sailors found a quiet, tropical atmosphere with local beaches, excellent scuba diving, and cheap rum, contrasting sharply with hectic industrial or high-crime major ports. Earl also talks about Perth Australia as aa very good liberty port. Perth and the nearby port city of Fremantle were widely considered legendary, top-tier liberty ports for submarine and naval crews. Following grueling, isolated patrols across the Indian Ocean - frequently originating from austere outposts like Diego Garcia - pulling into the greater Perth area offered a massive psychological and physical reset for submariners. Australians in Western Australia had a long-standing reputation for being exceptionally welcoming, friendly, and generous to visiting allied sailors. The Fremantle and Perth metropolitan areas provided world-class beaches, lively pubs, great restaurants, and an active nightlife that contrasted sharply with months of cramped conditions underwater.

Earl left Norfolk in the winter, stayed submerged and popped up on an island owned by the British Diego Garcia. Liberty and off-duty life on the remote military atoll of Diego Garcia centered heavily on drinking at base clubs, bowling, eating at local spots, fishing, and outdoor recreation due to the island's isolated nature. In the 1960s, Britain leased the island to the United States to establish a major military installation. Throughout the 1980s, large-scale construction transformed Diego Garcia into a fully operational, major joint naval and air support facility. Diego Garcia sits close to the equator in the Indian

Ocean, meaning the sun's rays strike with intense directness year-round. Earl found out, you can get badly sunburned there.

Earl also visited Roosevelt Rhodes (Rosy Roads), located on the eastern coast of the island of Puerto Rico in the municipality of Ceiba. He also stopped in Guantanamo Bay (GITMO). Gitmo serves as a routine, functional logistics and operational port stop for U.S. Navy submarines transiting the Caribbean or Southern Command region. Later Earl when through the Panama Canal - with a gun boat escort. Submarines always transit the Panama Canal on the surface for safety and operational control. Earl also visited Ft. Lauderdale Florida and Groten Connecticut. Groten is known as the "Home of the Submarine Force" and the "Submarine Capital of the World." Groten is situated on the Thames River, across from the city of New London. The port serves as the primary U.S. Navy East Coast submarine base and hosts the Navy's Submarine School.

Drills

Life underwater meant operating in total stealth. Submarine protocol dictates that drills are not announced as practice when they start. Drills are treated as real. Every alarm and emergency call is treated as a real event, so the crew responds with maximum speed and serious muscle memory. Instructors or evaluators often simulate dangerous conditions. The crew only learns it was a drill when the officer in charge calls "secure from the drill" or "securing from the casualty" once the response phase ends. Because emergencies happen without warning at sea, submarine crews run surprise safety and damage control drills constantly to keep their reaction times sharp.

PTSD

Post Traumatic Stress is not limited to boots on the ground soldiers. Sailors on 1980s fast-attack submarines experienced PTSD, though it was rarely diagnosed or openly discussed at the time. Many Cold War submarine veterans have only recently received formal PTSD diagnoses and VA disability ratings for trauma sustained decades ago.

There were many triggers that caused PTSD in a submarine. Flooding incidents, sudden power blackouts in the engine room, or mechanical failures that threatened total implosion created lasting, severe psychological trauma. High-Stress Operations, tailing Soviet submarines required operating in total silence for weeks under the constant threat of a collision or detection, keeping crews on a state of perpetual high alert. Sailors knew, fighting electrical fires or toxic gas leaks in a sealed, pressurized metal tube underwater meant there was no escape from the life-threatening event. The 1980s Navy used a grueling 18-hour watch cycle (6 hours on watch, 12 hours off for maintenance and sleep), causing chronic exhaustion that compounded psychological stress. Earl talked about returning to port saying, "About a week out from returning to homeport after a long run/deployment, most of the crew would get 'channel-fever' and did sleep well at all due to the anticipation of returning home.

"Boat Dreams"

Because mental health issues could immediately disqualify a sailor from submarine duty (getting them "sub-disqualified"), crew members routinely hid anxiety, panic, or depression. Boat Dreams is a distinct symptom reported by many submarine veterans involves chronic nightmares about the vessel sinking, flooding, or imploding. There were simple triggers like power outages, flickering lights, or sudden changes

in ventilation fans can instantly cause aged veterans to wake up in full-alert panic. Many veterans did not experience severe flashbacks, hyper-vigilance, or panic until years or decades after separating from the Navy.

Watch Stations

Standing watch means taking total responsibility, ownership for the safety, security, and operational readiness of that station during a shift. During his time on the Bluefish, Earl qualified all required watch stations (5 total) in that six month. He was only one do to that in that amount of time. Earl later said, "no place to go - just study, learn all the nuclear and submarine systems and watch stations." Being qualified at all watch stations in the United States Navy means a sailor has earned official authorization to independently stand, operate, and supervise every specific operational or security position within a given department, unit, or plant.

A Watch Station Qualification entails complete system mastery. Sailors must learn the physical layout, electrical schematics, and mechanical functions of all related equipment in that space. There is rigorous testing. Candidates must pass practical demonstrations, oral "checkouts" with senior operators, comprehensive written exams, and a formal oral board. A qualified "Watchstander" must know how to diagnose and troubleshoot casualties or emergencies without relying on immediate assistance. Earl qualified the top 2 enlisted watch (in port and at sea) as a frocked E6 ("I was allowed to wear the stripe but was not getting paid for it yet"). These watch station qualifications weren't required until 6 months after you made Chief Petty Officer (E7).

Achieving this across all watch stations - such as completing every qualification in a submarine's engineering department or a nuclear reactor plant - demonstrates top-tier expertise, maximum flexibility for the command, and deep operational reliability.

Earl and the Bluefish returned to Norfolk VA on 2-Jul 1980. Bluefish earned a Silver Dolphin flag. Now all enlisted crew members were "qualified submarines." Earl says, "this is a very big deal in the submarine community."

U.S. Navy Silver Dolphin Flag.

U.S. Navy Silver Dolphin flag is a blue flag featuring the enlisted submarine warfare qualification insignia, flown on a submarine when it is moored or anchored to show that its enlisted crew members have earned their submarine warfare qualifications. A boat qualifies to fly it when ALL enlisted were qualified submarines. This is a VERY DIFFICULT thing to accomplish because of operational requirements. Earl recalled, "our Indian Ocean deployment allowed for a lot of study time and at-sea experience to learn the multitude of ship's systems. The flag represents a strict milestone achieved by an entire submarine crew. It indicates that 100% of enlisted sailors aboard have met the strict standards to qualify as submarine warfare specialists (earning their "silver dolphins").

Scuba School

On 1-Apr to 6-May 1983, Earl attended SCUBA (A4330023) NAVY DIVING AND SALVAGE TRAINING CENTER PANAMA CITY FL. Divers on a Navy ships perform security swims and minor hull maintenance.

The school moved its operations from Washington, D.C. to Panama City in 1980. The newly opened Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center (NDSTC) in Panama City, Florida, taught a Second-Class Dive course that lasted approximately 5 weeks. Course lengths varied by specific classification.

Divers in the 1980s were strictly certified for specific depths based on their rating, qualification level, and the type of equipment or breathing gas (air versus helium-oxygen) authorized by the U.S. Navy Diving Manual. Submarine based scuba divers were typically certified up to 130 FSW. There were typically three divers assigned to a submarine.

Navy scuba diver at Panama City FL

On 16-JUN 1984, Earl was promoted to Electricians Mate 1st Class (EM1c). Earl had served as a Submarine Nuclear Plant Operator Electrical for 3 years and 11 months.

About this time, Earl left the USS Bluefish. He was still part of COMSUBRON SIX which stands for Commander, Submarine Squadron 6, a shore-based administrative command in the United States Navy.

On 18-Aug 1984, Earl was shown as Electrician Mate 1st Class (EM1c). Earl was Received for Temporary Additional Duty (RECTAD). It is used primarily in official personnel orders, logbooks, and administrative tracking when a sailor temporarily reports to a different command or unit for training, a specific mission, or a short-term assignment. It tracks the exact date and time a service member physically reports to their temporary assignment. The “TAD” Element: The core of this term relies on TAD (Temporary Additional Duty), which is the Navy's equivalent of a business trip or a temporary reassignment.

On 24-Oct Earl was shown TPU NAVSTA NORVA PSD. This designates he is a Transient Personnel Unit located at NAVAL STATION [NORFOLK], Personnel Support Detachment, handling administrative or separation processing through the Personnel Support Detachment finalizing paperwork to leave the military. On 29-Oct 1984, Earl Meyers was Honorably Discharged.

The USS Bluefish (SSN-675) was decommissioned on31-May 1996.
The USS Paiute (ATF-159) was decommissioned for the final time on 7-Aug 1992 and was scrapped in 2003.

EM1c Earl Meyers was Honorably Discharged on 29-Oct 1984.

Earl Meyers achieved the rank of Electricians Mate First Class (E6) (Submarines/Diver) and earned the following medals and commendations:

- Sea Service Ribbon
- Meritorious Unit Award Ribbon
- US Navy Expeditionary Medal
- US Navy Good Conduct Medal
- Submarine Warfare Badge
- Scuba Badge

After his active-duty military time, Earl continued to serve. He worked for Laclede Gas (Spire) briefly before starting a 36-year civilian career. He started with the US Army, in the private sector for a few years. He then worked a little while at the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA). The Defense Commissary Agency is a U.S. Department of Defense organization that runs grocery stores (called commissaries) for military members and their families worldwide. Earl also joined the National Park Service at the St. Louis Arch and Old Courthouse. He then continued as a civilian with the US Air Force for over 20 years. He retired from the USAF 31-Dec 2025.

Earl also worked a while at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in the Burnt Records Section. He said, "I was very proud to assist other veterans and family members of those whose records burnt in the 12-Jul 1973 fire here in St. Louis."

Editor's note: The 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in suburban St. Louis destroyed roughly 16 to 18 million official military personnel files on July 12, 1973. The major blaze burned out of control for 22 hours, taking 4.5 days to fully extinguish). At the time, the six-story facility was in Overland, Missouri (St. Louis County). Investigators could never determine the exact source due to the severity of the destruction.

After his service, Earl earned a bachelor's in management from Webster University. His daughter Hailee served as a medic in the National Guard and his son Jordan is in the Army on active duty.

FRONT ROW--L TO R Ray Gibson, Tim Feltmann, Ben Rodriquez, Bryan Therlin, Mark Kemper, Arvil Huson, Mike Blecha, Otis Johnson, John Moore MIDDLE ROW--L TO R Don Cromeens, Dave Jareo, Juan Bustillo, John Davis, Earl Meyers, Mike Laks, Dave Green, Jim Helvey, Wayne Balck-well, Jim Pyles BACK ROW--L TO R Coach Robert Otto, Mark Operle, Richard Rodriquez, Tim Friedmeyer, Ron Testa, Tom Feltmann, Ed Smith, Captain Mike Tustanowsky, Captain Steve Williams

Earl on the swim team at Roosevelt High School.

Earl at Roosevelt High School.