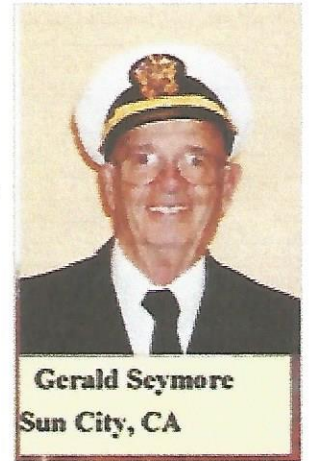


Gerry Seymore

Gerry Seymore's Story

DOB 6/9/25

I was born on June 9, 1925. Life was good until October 1929 when the big depression came upon us. Life was good and all of a sudden it came to a big halt. My parents lost our house. We moved several times until 1932 when we went to Arkansas and lived with my grandparents who lived on a farm. I had to walk about two miles to school and then do chores around the farm. It was tough on a seven year old city boy. We moved back to Colorado and tried to make ends meet. Finally we moved back to Arkansas in 1935. We lived in a Boy Scout log house for a while and then moved to a farm. Here I had to walk three miles to school. Chores were plentiful, such as helping dad fell a tree. We cut it into twelve inch sections, then I had to pull them to the house on a homemade sled. It was made of odds and ends of lumber and I used a piece of rope to pull it to the house. After graduating from high school in May 1942, I went to work for Mr. Higgins at a store in town. I never realized that I was working in a AM-PM. We sold gas which was pumped by hand. We also sold food and tobacco and an assortment of other items like soda, beer, and sandwiches. I still had the three mile walk to work.



In 1943, I decided I did not want to be drafted. At that time if you registered on your 18th birthday, you were given a ticket to the nearby army base. I went to Little Rock and joined the Navy. I did not leave until the 6th of June. I had my 18th birthday on a troop train out in the middle of Texas. After boot camp, I was sent to Navy pier in Chicago for Diesel School. After School, I was sent back to San Diego for Amphibious School. When I finished, I was sent to the USS Cheleb AK 138 for duty. We made a trip to Kwajalin Island with the equipment to build a new base. While there I injured my right leg falling through the hatch of the LCM on the fantail. It got infected and by the time we got back to Port Hueneme they sent me to the Naval hospital in Long Beach. On Easter Sunday, April 1944 I met a girl from the local high school who I later married.

After leaving the hospital, I was sent back to the amphibious base in San Diego. I was assigned to the Talladega Boat Group and we trained Marines at Camp Pendelton. Our ship headed for Pearl Harbor and more training. We then joined the battle group assembled at Ulithi. On February 19th we laded elements of the Fifth Marine Division at Iwo Jima. Then we traveled to the Philippines for more training. At that time we loaded Army personnel and took them to Okinawa. After that we began training the First Marine Division for the invasion of Japan. At that time we off loaded the Marines and headed for Mindanao to embark an Army group and got under way to Japan. We arrived on September 2nd and sailed right past the USS Missouri as the signing was taking place. We tied up at a pier at Yokahama. We disembarked the first ground troops in Japan at the end of the war. We then went back to the Philippines and took more Army people to Kure. After that we made several trips with the "Magic Carpet". My last trip was to Pearl and we returned to San Francisco with a load of women and children.

I was discharged in March. I married the girl of my dreams who was now living in Coffeyville, KS. We moved to Wichita KS. I went to work for a local Ford dealer as a parts delivery man. I worked there until 1955. I was the number three man at the time.

I re-enlisted in the reserves. January 1955 I took my two weeks of training on a "DE" in Long Beach. We had three days at Acapulco in the sunshine. When I got back to Wichita where it was cold and snowing, I told my wife, after a kiss, we were going to California. On May 23rd we were in Long Beach. I found employment June 1st and went to work as a parts counter man.

I remained in the reserve. During this time I made 1st Class and then Chief and then three grades of Warrant Officer. I retired in 1985 from the reserves with twenty one years, one month and one day. I have been associated with the Military Officers Association for twenty years, serving 14 years as treasurer.

I retired from the Ford parts business in 1985 after 40 years. In 1983 my wife was killed in an auto accident. Two years after I decided to travel which was a long time dream. I purchased a Ford Ranger and a 21 foot fifth wheel and traveled for nearly a year. During the year, I traveled in 37 eastern states. The high spot was the rededication of the Statue of Liberty on the Fourth of July. I came home in time for Thanksgiving. In 1987, I toured the remaining eleven state and got home for Halloween. I became a campground host at a local state park.

In 1992 I attended my first Talladega reunion in New Orleans. While there, I met Roberta, the wife of a deceased Talladega sailor. We saw each other again in Nashville in 1993 and spent a lot of time together. I made arrangements with Joe Miller to have the 1994 reunion in Buena Park. After the reunion Roberta stayed for four extra days. In June we made a trip to Alaska which was a turning point. During the next year we decided we made a nice couple and decided to marry. We married in November just after our San Antonio Reunion. But tragedy struck after one year of marriage and she died of a massive heart attack. We were at her cardiologist office when it happened. I stayed in Missouri for almost a year before returning to California. My son-in-law bought a house for me to live in Sun City, Ca and I have been there ever since. I stay busy with mall walking and a wonderful old style country church where I am head usher. I also am the head greeter at our bi-monthly MOAA meeting. I have had a full life and plan for many more.