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Honor Our Heroes



Charles F. Marshall
First Class Petty Officer - Missile Technician
U.S. Navy
Cold War Grand Marshal

Charles "Chick" Marshall says he feels humbled to be nominated to be a Marshal in the Phoenix Veterans Day Parade. "I hope people understand that Cold War Veterans were at the forefront of deterrence against Nuclear Warfare."

His nominator, daughter Amy Satterfield says, "I am very proud of my father's Navy service and afterward his service to the country. He's a true Renaissance man."

Marshall enlisted in 1961 and was honorably discharged as a First Class Petty Officer-Missile Technician (SS) in 1969. He was responsible for handling, loading, repairing and launching intercontinental ballistic missiles. While aboard the Submarine USS James Madison (SSBN 627), Marshall deployed on eight stealth patrols in the North Atlantic, including the seas above the Arctic Circle. Marshall earned his "Dolphins" in 1965 signifying he had the knowledge and skills for all phases of submarine operations. "With the small number of crew members it was important every sailor knew the fundamentals of every watch station. Submariners are a close knit group highly dependent on each other."

During the "war patrols" Missile launch alerts were frequently sent to the submarine to assure the crew readiness. Almost all were only a test drill, and none ended in a retaliatory launch." Marshall's service was "Just after the Cuban Missile Crisis, and during the significant years of increasing Soviet Union aggression. The patrols lasted as much as 70 days without surfacing. He recalls how contact with the outside world was extremely limited. Each crew member could receive three 15-word "family grams" during patrols, and strict radio silence prevented any response back to the sender. This was even true to bad news. Sometimes, it could be a death in the family or occasionally the sender would "code" the message and end a relationship. Like, "Uncle Jim came to town. We sold the house, and we have moved to California." Translation: "I met someone. When you get back, I won't be there." We paid a lot of attention to our role in maintaining world order." A reality Marshall points out is, "Sailors are out there today in submarines patrolling the oceans. Deterrence is still needed and the dedication and sacrifice of all cold war veterans must be appreciated."

Marshall says his time in uniform impacted his future in so many ways. "It set the foundation for my whole civilian career. In 1972 I earned an engineering degree, and became a rocket scientist," working for McDonnell Douglas and Lockheed Martin on new ICBM and Advanced Space Launch Technology programs. Fortunately for Marshall, his wife Mary was there through six patrols. "Mary has her own sea stories." They've been married for 50 years, and have a son and daughter and five grandchildren. Now retired Marshall lives in Goodyear and volunteers for civic, homeowner associations and political party election committees.
