



Shipmates,

One of our PACNORWEST Chapter Members from Boise, ID, ADM Archie Clemins USN (Ret.) has died. His impact on the Navy and our Nation was truly profound, and arguably one-of-a-kind.

Mike Sharp

Chapter President

It is with deep regret that I inform you of the passing of Admiral Archie Ray Clemins, U.S. Navy (Retired) on 14 March 2020 at age 76. Admiral Clemins entered the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps in September 1962 and served as a submarine officer, retiring in 1999 as the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet. He served as the Executive Officer on submarine USS PARCHE (SSN-683,) and his commands included submarine USS POGY (SSN-647,) Submarine Group SEVEN, Training Command Pacific, and SEVENTH Fleet, for operations which earned two Presidential Unit Citations and two Navy Unit Commendations.



Midshipman Archie Clemins entered the NROTC program at the University of Illinois on 17 September 1962, graduating in February 1966 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering and was commissioned an ensign and selected for the Navy Nuclear Propulsion Program. Ensign Clemins then proceeded to Naval Nuclear Power School, Mare Island and then to the Naval Nuclear Power Training Unit, Schenectady, NY. He then reported for instruction at the Naval Submarine School, Groton where he was promoted to Lieutenant (junior grade) in August 1967. Following additional instruction at the Naval Guided Missiles School,

Dam Neck, VA, LTJG Clemens reported to his first submarine in February 1968 in the Gold crew for fleet ballistic submarine USS LEWIS AND CLARK (SSBN-644,) operating from the U.S. east coast for Polaris A3 ballistic missile deterrent patrols. In January 1971, Lieutenant Clemens returned to the University of Illinois to earn a Master of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering, graduating in June 1972.

He reported to fast attack submarine USS TUNNY (SSN-682) as Engineering Officer and was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in August 1972, serving aboard TUNNY from her launch until one year after her commissioning. In August 1975, LCDR Clemens reported to the staff of the U.S. Pacific Fleet as a member of the Fleet Naval Nuclear Propulsion Examining Board. In March 1978, he reported aboard fast attack submarine USS PARCHE (SSN-683) as Executive Officer, engaged in sensitive Cold War missions which earned two Presidential Unit Citations. He was promoted to commander in July 1979, and continued serving aboard PARCHE until April 1981.

Following duty under instruction at the Division of Nuclear Reactors, Department of Energy, and Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, CDR Clemens assumed command of fast attack submarine USS POGY (SSN-647) in November 1981 operating in the Western Pacific during the peak years of Soviet out-of-area submarine activity. Following his command tour, CDR Clemens reported to Washington, DC in May 1985 as the Executive Assistant to the Director of Submarine Warfare (OP-02) on the OPNAV staff, and in February 1986 he was promoted to captain. In November 1986, he assumed command of Submarine Group SEVEN (which counted as Joint Duty equivalent) followed by duty in July 1988 as Chief of Staff for Commander U.S. SEVENTH Fleet, embarked on USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC-19) as part of the Forward Deployed Naval Force at Yokosuka, Japan.

Designated a Rear Admiral (lower half) in October 1990, he assumed duty as Commander, Training Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet and he was promoted to Rear Admiral (lower half) in October 1991, during which he revamped the entire Pacific Fleet training structure, while also serving dual-hatted as the N6. In July 1992, RDML Clemens returned to Washington DC as the Director, Force Level Plans Division (OP-70) on the OPNAV Staff. This was followed by duty as the first Director of the CINC Liaison Division (N83) on the OPNAV Staff, where he established a "world-wide classified electronic conductivity between his staff and all three major fleet commanders." In July 1993, he reported as Deputy and Chief of Staff to Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet in Norfolk, where he coordinated planning for U.S. Navy involvement in the Haiti and Cuban Refugee crises, and the establishment of the first consolidated Shore Station Management Division, as well as implementing an information technology master plan for the Atlantic Fleet Staff.

He was designated a Rear Admiral (Upper) in November 1993. In July 1994, he was designated a Vice Admiral and assumed command of the U.S. SEVENTH Fleet, embarked on USS BLUE RIDGE in Yokosuka, Japan, where he directed naval contingency operations in the vicinity of Korea and Taiwan while overseeing the conception and implementation of the Global Network Initiative. In September 1996, he was designated a four-star Admiral and in November 1996 became the 28th Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, where he was responsible for the world's largest combined fleet command, with more than 190 ships, 1,500 aircraft and over 200,000 Sailors and Marines. Admiral Clemens retired from active duty on 1 December 1999.

Admiral Clemins' awards include the Distinguished Service Medal (3,) Legion of Merit (7,) Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (2,) Navy Achievement Medal, Presidential Unit Citation (2,) Navy Unit Commendation (2,) Meritorious Unit Commendation, Navy "E" Ribbon with wreath, Navy Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal (2,) Sea Service Ribbon (3,)and Overseas Service (3.) Per Admiral Clemins' PACFLT bio, he was "most proud of the two Presidential Unit Citations, two Navy Unit Commendations and the Meritorious Unit Commendations, because they recognize the participation and accomplishment of all crew members."

After his retirement, Admiral Clemins founded Caribou technologies and became co-owner of TableRock LLC engaged in technology consulting and business development. In 2002, he received the Naval Order of the United States Distinguished Sea Service Award.

I don't have any details on services yet, except that there will be a small service in Boise with later interment at Arlington National Cemetery at a date to be determined, probably in the Fall.

Admiral Clemins was one of the great visionaries of the U.S. Navy in the 1980's and 1990's. He had a reputation on the job as a pretty intense, details-oriented officer, with enormous drive to get things done, fast and right. Much of the shipboard innovations in computers for command, control and communications that entered the Fleet in a big way in the 1990's can traced to his vision for how the fleet should operate. He was also a great leader and submariner, who was highly-respected and known as a mentor to many. He served our nation with great distinction during the peak of the Cold War, when the only real difference between peace and war under the ocean was pulling the trigger. He served on numerous sensitive and dangerous missions, for which the true story will not be known for many years (let's just say that PARCHE did not earn nine Presidential Unit Citations, ten Navy Unit Commendations and 13 Navy Expeditionary medals by participating in JTF-EX,) but these missions fundamentally altered the course of the Cold War, and our nation is far more secure as a result. His impact on the Navy and our Nation was truly profound, and arguably one-of-a-kind. He will be truly missed, but his legacy is very much alive and well in the fleet today.

Rest in Peace Admiral Clemins.