

VIETNAM VETERAN FRANKLIN GARRETT

By Richard Long

The Naval Reserve, a way to get college credits, backfired on 18 year old Franklin Garrett. Called to active duty in his third month, he reported at Long Beach Naval Station and then to Fire-Fighter training. December 1959 he moved to US Naval Air Station, Agana, Guam. After one year there, he qualified for base housing so his wife/high school sweetheart joined him.

“Frank’s” remaining time saw him discharged there and reenlisted regular Navy for six years. He’d scored a reenlistment bonus—\$1250—which bought a new car upon returning stateside. He remembers two Japanese soldiers coming out of caves where they’d been living, still believing the war was ongoing. They surrendered.

Qualifying for R&R from Guam, the Garrett’s went to Tokyo. The Japanese people were courteous and polite. Fascinated with his wife’s blonde hair, they wanted to touch it!

Frank arranged travel back stateside by ship. That trip, however, was aborted by Typhoon Karen, the worst typhoon to hit Guam up until then. Now Personnelman First Class, Frank was assigned duty at Naval Electronics Laboratory, Point Loma’s top secret operation. It was Frank’s intention to have a military career. However, as was the case with many specialties at that time, base personnel were becoming mostly civilians so sea duty was more common. Having a small family, Frank opted for discharge.

His final year was spent aboard USS Ticonderoga heading for Southeast Asia with a short detour to N. Korea following the Capture of the USS Pueblo.

Personnelman First Class Franklin Garrett, we honor you and thank you for your service.