



**Duane Harms, SN**



**USS Sacramento AOE - 1**

**Dates of Service:** September 22, 1966 to December 13, 1968

**Assignment and Locations:**

**Navy Reserves:** Sept. 22, 1966 to Sept. 13, 1967 in Wichita, Kansas

**Active Duty:** 2 Weeks: Jan. 7 -21, 1967 Basic Training, Great Lakes

2 Weeks: Jan 21 –Feb. 8, 1967 on USS Havre PCE 877, Lake Michigan

15 Months: Sept. 13, 1967 to Dec. 13, 1968 on board USS Sacramento AOE -1

1 Month: Nov 10 – Dec 4, 1967 USS Sacramento AOE-1, San Diego, CA

6 Months: January 6, to June 24, 1968 USS Sacramento AOE-1, Western Pacific Cruise

When not at sea the ship was in home port in Puget Sound, Bremerton, WA

**Military Specialty:** The last 9 months of active duty, I served as the Storekeeper for the Ships groceries for a crew of over 700 men. I had the rank as a Seaman SN, and I had passed the test for E4 Third class Petty Officer, but was discharged before receiving this rank.

While earning my way to Storekeeper status, I started in the Galley washing pots and pans. Next job was in the Spud Locker, working with vegetables and fruits. In the Spud Locker, I prepared salads, salad dressings or whatever the cooks had on the menu for the entire crew. For a brief time, I served as the ships disc-jockey for the ship's private radio station.

**Position Held:** Seaman, and worked as the "Jack of the Dust" Storekeeper

**Awards received:** National Defense Service Medal and Viet Nam Service Medal

**Narrative:** The USS Sacramento AOE-1 came alongside other ships supplying fuel for their aircraft and ship; ammunition, including guided missiles; and refrigerated and dry stored food. AOE-1 had two helicopters on board to help transfer goods. AOE-1 was 794 feet long and 107 feet wide. Many times aircraft carriers were supplied beside the AOE-1 which looked similar in length. The ship displaced 53,000 tons and could travel up to 30 knots.

After the USS Pueblo Ship was taken by North Korea, AOE-1 made four trips, January 27 to March 20, 1968 traveling between Sasebo, Japan to the Sea of Japan near North Korea. During this time, AOE -1 supplied 133 ships. It was no comfort to have a Russian guided missile ship following us during this time. They were located a few football fields away. It is a good thing that at that time, we the crew only knew a few things about what had happened to the USS Pueblo.

The USS Sacramento made five trips, March 29 to June 24, 1968, traveling between Subic Bay, Philippines to Tonkin Gulf and the South China Sea maintaining a safe distance from the coast of Vietnam. The first tour to Vietnam the AOE-1 supplied 69 ships in about 15 days. In the Vietnam area, the crew received hazard duty pay. At night from a distance, I could see the fireworks over Vietnam.

While overseas, I traveled by bus from Sasebo Japan to Nagasaki to see where the atomic bomb was dropped during WWII. We had a brief R & R in Hong Kong touring Victoria Harbor around Kowloon and Hong Kong.

My Honorable Discharge was received on Dec. 13, 1968. March 1968, President Johnson ordered more troops to Vietnam, mostly Army. At that same time, an order was given to reduce the authorized strength of the Navy thus 40,000 Navy reservists were released from active duty at the end of that year. While I actually served about 15 month's active duty, this reduction decree gave me credit for serving a full two years.

I enlisted in the Navy Reserves because the Butler County Draft Board office said I was about to be drafted into the Army. I had just graduated from College and this action changed the direction of my life. The unexpected experience in the Navy became a turning point that enabled me to see an opportunity to serve as a pastor in local congregations. One major benefit for me was that the GI education bill paid for a good share of my Seminary education that I received after active duty.