

Pre-Korean War Veterans Donn Kelsey continued from page 2

Donn served aboard the U.S.S. Remora SS487 and later at the U.S. Naval Gun Factory in Washington, DC, and the U.S. Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, as a corpsman. He was discharged from active duty as a 2nd Class Petty Officer in 1953 but remained in the Naval Reserves. Donn attended college under the G.I. Bill and graduated from Sacramento State College in 1956. While in college he married fellow student Harlene Ann "Harley" Kloss on January 28, 1956. Following graduation he accepted a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the USAF Medical Services Corps. He received his Master's Degree in Hospital Administration from Northwestern University under Air Force sponsorship and spent 18 years serving in various military medical facilities stateside, the Philippines and the Azores, Portugal. As a military marksman he was 1965 Ohio State Skeet Champion and the next year Runner Up in the Armed Forces Championships. In 1970 he was the Portuguese-American Trap Champion.

Donn retired in 1974 with 27 years service in the grade of Lieutenant Colonel and settled in the Sacramento, California, area with his wife, son and daughter. He followed his wife into TV and print commercials and then as a background actor in big screen and TV movies. Both earned membership in the Screen Actors Guild with Donn being cast in scores of commercials and over 30 films.

Colonel Kelsey maintains his contacts with Manning through visits, reunions, the Monitor, the Alumni Newsletter and is a life member of Manning American Legion Post #22.



Raymond and Donn Kelsey 1957

The great thing about working with a Veteran while they are living is I can ask them for more details about their service and pictures they have.

In 2013, I was working with Donn on more of his military service. He sent me this next picture to scan so I asked him some details and I was excited to find out all of the guys in the picture were from Manning. Donn added some great stories to his explanation.

Donn and I have a family connection. Donn's grandmother, Anna (Hansen) Meyers and my great-grandmother, Maria (Hansen) Grau were sisters.

Every now and then I'll e-mail Donn about some family information, or questions about Manning when he lived here, and I still bug him about his military service. Donn has always been a big help!!!



Back: Donn Kelsey, Jim Farrell, Glenn Kuhse, Willis "Whitey" Lohmeier; Front: Alvin Kuhse, Charles "Tuffy" Schumann

Taken six months after leaving Manning together - serving at the US Naval Submarine Base in New London, Connecticut - enlisted together June 30, 1948

Message from Donn in 2013:

Hi Dave - This photo was taken at the U.S. Naval Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut, in the fall of 1948. We were all attending the Naval Submarine School.

One of the officers attending this school was a lieutenant named Jimmy Carter... yes, President Jimmy Carter. I have no knowledge of ever speaking to Lieutenant Carter and he wasn't over us. We may have had contact when pulling watches and he was Officer of the Day.

One of the training exercises required us to make escapes from a depth of 50 feet with only a small Momsen Lung on our chests for oxygen and a rope to control our ascent to the surface. We just about lost Tuffy but he finally made it. We trained at sea each week and it was tough going at times, but being all together made it easier. My ear drum ruptured and I didn't turn in to Sick Bay, the guys covered for me so I didn't get kicked out of the school.

After graduating in the spring of 1949 the Kuhses got on the same sub at New London, I became a crew member on the USS Remora SS 487 at Mare Island, California, and the other three went to the Sub Base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii to join their subs.

Another little story was about our going to sea down the Thames River. There was a drawbridge that had to open in order for us to pass and the Skipper would toot our horn in order to get their attention to raise it. Sometime we would have to wait awhile BUT when we returned he said, "The crew is eager to get to town," so would give a toot but not slow down and if the bridge was not up he would dive until our decks were awash and we'd go right under it.

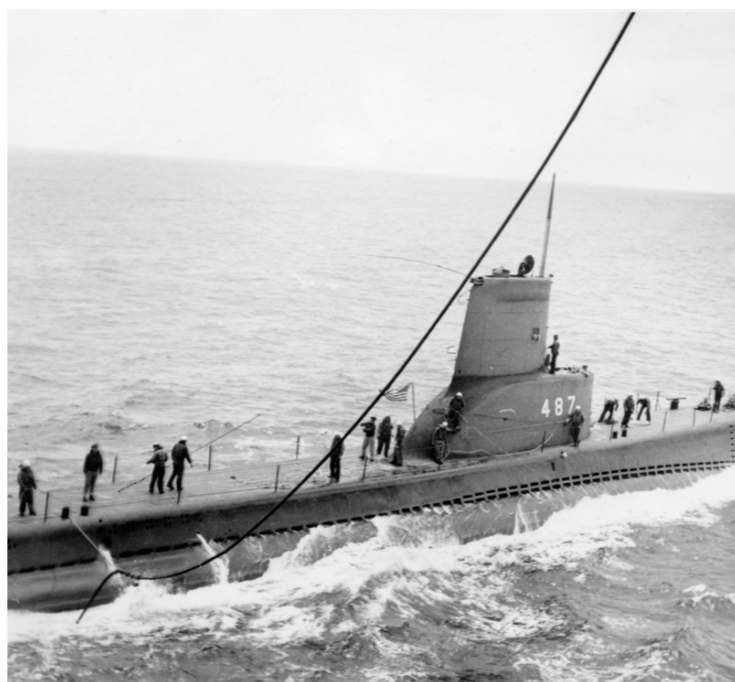
Lasting memories of Donn's military service:

"Perhaps one of the lasting memories I have of my military service is the terrible price our servicemen pay in combat. While in the Navy going to school at the US Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland, I would have extra duty as a corpsman making ambulance runs to Bolling AFB in nearby Washington, DC.

During the Korean War, blinded, paraplegic, and quadriplegic patients were air evacuated to our hospital.

It was heart breaking to see all these very young Marines crippled and handicapped for the rest of their lives and some not even out of their teens.

It happened again during the Vietnam War. I was the Administrative Officer of the USAF Hospital at Clark AFB in the Philippines. In the early stages of that conflict we were the only major military hospital in South East Asia. Cargo aircraft returning from the war zone were designated as air evacuation flights loaded with patients and medical personnel. The patients were either treated and returned to duty or stabilized and then flown on to the States. Again, the price many of these GIs paid was staggering."



The USS Remora SS 487 underway in the Pacific and refueling from her tender the USS Sperry. Fireman First Class Donn Kelsey is one of the men on deck in 1949.



Base Commander presenting Donn with a patch depicting 100 straight.

In 1966, while still stationed at Wright Patterson AFB in Ohio their five-man Skeet Team traveled to Peterson AFB in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to participate in the Annual All Services Skeet Competition - Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and Air Force. It was five days of continuous shooting. On the final day there were six shooters who had broken 100 straight clay pigeons. Then there were four who were 125 straight, and finally there were two left...Donn missed his 142nd and his competitor broke 143 and won the championship. Donn received runner up.



When Donn was stationed at Letterman Army Hospital in San Francisco, he took up skeet shooting and made the base team. From then on he continued to shoot at each base to which he was assigned. In 1965 Donn belonged to the Wright-Patterson AFB Team that won the Ohio State Skeet Championships.



Four trophies along with another from a later shoot in Portugal

In 1969 while serving as the Hospital Administrator of the USAF Hospital at Lajes Field, Azores, Portugal, Donn's team of military shooters were challenged by the best shooters in the Azores to a three-day trap shooting competition on the island of Sao Miguel. Their shooters were very wealthy men who shot the best guns and the wealth to afford this sport (Their guns were mostly German made and to my ear I believe that German may well have been their or more probably their parent's original language even though they were Portuguese citizens). The Air Force flew us to the island where the trap ranges were established in an extinct volcano overlooking a beautiful lake. They provided us with excellent accommodations in a nearby hotel and the next day the competition began. The shoot was organized into four separate and increasingly difficult formats with a trophy for each. On the evening of the third day of competition a banquet was held which included the presentation of trophies. The Governor of the Azores and the United States Counsel attended with the former presenting the trophies. After an excellent meal, the presentation began and the first winner was Donn. No one knew for sure who had the highest scores so it was a surprise. Donn won all four events and his wife and children attended the banquet.

Donn Kelsey's USAF Assignments

Following discharge from the US Navy in 1953 and transfer into the Naval Reserves, Donn moved from Washington, DC to California to attend college at Sacramento State College under the GI Bill. Upon graduation with a degree in Business Management he accepted a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Air Force Medical Service Corps. His assignments were:

In January 1957, Donn began a sixteen-week Basic Course in Medical Administration at Gunter AFB in Montgomery, Alabama.

He was assigned to the USAF Medical Services Squadron at Letterman Army Hospital, San Francisco (2 1/2 years).

He was accepted for the Master's Degree Program in Hospital Administration at Northwestern University, Chicago, Illinois, under Air Force sponsorship (1 year).

Donn had residency in Hospital Administration at USAF Hospital Chanute AFB, Illinois (1 year).

He had administrative Officer/Squadron Commander USAF Hospital Clark AFB, Philippines. (2 years).

Next Donn had various administrative positions and Preceptor to Administrative Residents USAF Hospital Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio (2 1/2 years).

Then administrator/Squadron Commander USAF Medical Facility Norton AFB, CA (2 1/2 years) Administrator/Squadron Commander USAF Hospital Lajes Field, Azores, Portugal (2 years).

Assigned to Office of the Command Surgeon, Scott AFB, OH (1 year).

Administrator USAF Medical Facility McClellan AFB, California (2 years).

He was associate Administrator David Grant USAF Medical Center, Travis AFB, CA (1 Year).

Donn retired from USAF March 1, 1974 with a total of 27 years total service.



Brigadier General Maxwell W. Steel Jr. (left), command surgeon of Military Airlift Command, and Lieutenant Larry W. Johnson, (right) Navy liaison officer to the command surgeon present the Silver Dolphins to Donn Kelsey at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.

Wings on an Air Force uniform are not unusual, but Major Donn R. Kelsey at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, is the only known active duty Air Force officer to wear silver dolphins.

Major Kelsey, presently the chief of plans and hospitalization division, office of the command surgeon, Headquarters, Military Airlift Command, earned his dolphins after completing submarine school in 1948 when he was a member of the U.S. Navy. He later served aboard the submarine, USS Remora and was separated in 1953.

When he entered the Air Force in 1956, authorization to wear the dolphins was not in his personnel records so, through the years, he didn't give it much thought. Then one day, while moving into his new quarters, he discovered the authorization in some papers and gave it to personnel officials to place in his records.

Even with the official "OK" to wear them, dolphins are not a uniform item carried in Air Force exchanges. But fortunately a Navy man, Lt. Larry W. Johnson, Navy Surgeon General Liaison Officer to the MAC Command Surgeon, came to the rescue and obtained a pair of the silver dolphins at a Navy outlet.

Appropriate ceremonies were then held in the office of the command surgeon, with Brig. Gen. Maxwell W. Steel Jr., command surgeon, pinning the long delayed dolphins on Major Kelsey's uniform. The prized insignia identifies the wearer as having passed an extensive physical and psychological screening and becoming a submariner.



Missing from this Kelsey Family portrait in 2011: Lance and Kelsey Christensen added Brock to their family and another one on the way. Jared and Cherie Musick added Broderick and Parker to their family. Jordan and Bethany McCaa have added Tessa Ann to their family.



Back: Donn Kelsey, Jim Farrell, Glenn Kuhse, Willis "Whitey" Lohmeier; Front: Alvin Kuhse, Charles "Tuffy" Schumann
In the background is the old Club Cafe at 306 Main (now Manning Library). The Country Club Beer sign is the location of 314 Main Street (Grimm & Vinke for many years)

Six Manning young men left on Monday for Des Moines on the first lap of their 3-year career in the navy. They represented the largest group to leave here en masse since the advent of selective service prior to the war.

From Des Moines the boys left Wednesday for San Diego, California, for their boot training. Four of the group signed for submarine duty.

The volunteers were Glen and Alvin Kuhse, Charles Schumann, Willis Lohmeier, Donn Kelsey, and Jim Farrell. Lohmeier and Farrell were members of the 1948 state championship basketball team of Manning high school.

Next week January 2 - more pre-Korean era Veterans