

Name: Ed Banda  
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- 1) What branch and unit were you in? *Navy, 1966-1970, aboard USS Wahoo (SS-565, one of the last diesel submarines commissioned by the US Navy), home-ported in Pearl Harbor.*
- 2) What was your highest rank? *E-5, Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Interior Communications Electrician (SS).*
- 3) Are you still enlisted as a reservist or National Guard? *No.*
- 4) Why did you join the service? *Wanted to have a choice of where I would serve and, since this was right in the middle of the War in Vietnam, I signed up for a four year enlistment in the Navy. In Boot Camp they asked for volunteers for the submarine service, so I signed up. Out of 60 guys in my unit, only 3 volunteered and only two of us passed the physical. They sent me to the submarine school in New London, Connecticut.*
- 5) What did you like the most about being in? *The basic camaraderie and the feeling that we were unique, since less than 2% of the Navy was submariners. We were a tight-knit group and when we were on the beach we stuck together, so it was sometimes the submarine sailors versus the surface-craft sailors - the two groups didn't really co-mingle.*
- 6) What did you like the least? *Probably the long patrols. One time I spent 42 days without seeing the sun. Since this was a diesel submarine, we had the ability to snorkel. We were performing surveillance operations in the Yellow Sea or off the coast of Korea. We would do this in the daytime, then retreat to a safe place to snorkel during the night. By snorkeling at night, we could run our engines to recharge our batteries all night in preparation for the next day. We didn't get to shower much (once a week, maybe) because fresh water was rationed. We had stills on board to make fresh water, but when we ran them they heated up the boat a lot.*
- 7) What moment most defined your military experience? *One of the more thrilling times was sailing into San Francisco Bay under the Golden Gate Bridge. A couple of the scarier times were shipboard emergencies, one was a fire and the other was a mechanical problem where, if we didn't all do our jobs right, we wouldn't have been able to survive.*
- 8) What made you choose firefighting as a career? *Everybody goes to Basic Shipboard Firefighting School in the Navy and I thought that would be a very interesting and exciting occupation to look into after I got out of the Service. I got married after processing out in 1970 and was working construction, but work was kind of spotty at that time, so I figured I'd better pursue this firefighting career a little more diligently. I started testing and was hired by El Monte Fire Department where I lived at the time. I had also tested at LAFD and was offered a job there after I had accepted the El Monte FD job. Five days after completing probation at El Monte FD, I resigned and joined LAFD as a rookie and started all over again, serving another year's probation for the LAFD.*
- 9) What do you like the most about firefighting? *Going to fires is exciting, but we also perform a lot of EMS (Emergency Medical Service), too. The overall knowledge that when we go out on a call, someone has a problem, whether it's a structure fire or a medical problem, we solve somebody's problem. That's very fulfilling and rewarding. You work with a crew who you can depend on, who look out for each other, and what you're doing is a very important job. The camaraderie is great where you work with a crew that gets along well with each other. I have 34 years in now, I've been a captain 23 years this year and I still look forward to coming to work and doing this job. I never know what's going to happen day to day - it could be just a regular Monday routine or it could be the most significant incident in the city's history. I was working the day of the 1992 riots, the day of the Pan Pacific Auditorium Fire, and others. I have two sons who are firefighters: one who's a firefighter/paramedic with LAFD and another who is a volunteer fire captain in Ammon, Idaho, which is just outside of Idaho Falls. My third son is an Aviation Ordnanceman in the Navy attached to HS-4 aboard USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76). For us*

*here in the city, we work a 56 hour week, but it's really only about 10-11 days per month because of the 24-hour-a-day schedule.*

- 10) *What do you like least about firefighting? Paperwork. Everything else about the job I still enjoy, especially the people I work with.*