

Russell D. Egnor, Chief of U.S. Navy News Photography, dies

Russell Darrell Egnor, 60, Director of the U. S. Navy's News Photo division and retired Naval Reserve Senior Chief Journalist, died June 17 at Fairfax Hospital following a short illness with leukemia.

Mr. Egnor, who had dedicated 43 years to telling the story of Navy operations around the world through words and pictures, headed the division in the Navy Office of Information (CHINFO) that keeps the public informed about U.S. Navy operations through photography.

A resident of Manassas, Va., Mr. Egnor was born in Glen White, W. Va. He grew up in Detroit, Mich., and in 1954 enlisted in the Navy at age 17. Mr. Egnor served on active duty as a Navy journalist for 15 years. His early assignments were at the Military Sea Transportation Service, aboard the heavy cruisers USS Helena (CA 75) and USS Saint Paul (CA 73) and assignment to staff, Commander, FIRST Fleet in San Diego, Calif.

From 1963 to 1966, Mr. Egnor worked in the News and News Photo Divisions in CHINFO at the Pentagon, one of the only enlisted journalist to serve as a media officer on the Navy News Desk, answering queries from both the Pentagon press corps and the public, and preparing Navy news releases. During this assignment, Mr. Egnor temporarily deployed on the first world cruise by surface nuclear powered ships. He spent time aboard each of the three ships involved - USS Enterprise, USS Bainbridge and USS Long Beach - preparing features and hometown articles for the Sailors on this historic naval operation.

In 1967, Mr. Egnor attended advanced training at the School of Journalism at Syracuse University in New York. He then served as a photojournalist in the Pacific Fleet Combat Camera Group, Naval Air Station North Island, San Diego, Calif., and later to Combat Camera Group Detachment Saigon in the Republic of Vietnam. Mr. Egnor traveled extensively throughout Vietnam, shooting pictures and preparing material for national release on Navy life in Southeast Asia and combat operations. He also spent six weeks in Korea, at Seoul and Panmunjom, covering negotiations for the release of USS Pueblo and its crew from North Korea.

Mr. Egnor returned to Detachment Alpha following a brief return to the United States for a second tour as a combat photojournalist, traveling throughout Thailand, Republic of the Philippines, Okinawa and Vietnam. For a five-month period, he was the only photojournalist in Vietnam with

the Combat Camera Group. His work appeared in civilian and military publications around the world.

Upon release from active Navy service in 1969, then Journalist First Class Egnor joined the Naval Reserve, serving in Public Affairs Units drilling in Norfolk, Little Creek and Oceana, Va. He began his Navy civilian career during the same period with the Military Sealift Command (MSC) in Washington, D. C., eventually being promoted as the command's Public Affairs Officer. In 1982, Mr. Egnor became head of the Still Media Division of the Naval Photographic Center - later renamed the Naval Media Center - at Naval Station Anacostia in Southeast Washington, D.C. In 1986, Mr. Egnor became Director of the Still Photo Branch within the Media Operations Department in CHINFO.

While in the Naval Reserves, Mr. Egnor was promoted to Chief Journalist and later Senior Chief Journalist. He frequently deployed with active duty ships to produce photo articles for use by the civilian media. His last reserve assignment was the Command Chief for the Naval Reserve Public Affairs Center 106 in Norfolk, Va. After more than 34 years active and reserve naval service, Mr. Egnor joined the Retired Reserve in 1989.

In recent years, he spearheaded the transition of the Navy's photo program into the era of digital imagery. His early vision of embracing digital photography to document and report on Navy news around the world resulted in wide National and International photographic coverage of naval operations in areas such as Haiti, Bosnia, the Persian Gulf, humanitarian missions in Africa, and crisis response operations such as the recovery of TWA Flight 800.

With his extensive knowledge in photojournalism, Navy journalists and photographers around the fleet, consistently sought his technical advice and professional insight, and in turn, received constant encouragement to forward their photography to update the Navy's historical record of Navy life and operations.

Most recently, the National Press Photographer's Association (NPPA) recognized Mr. Egnor's contributions to military photojournalism around the world, with a *National Citation of Excellence*. Mr. Egnor will be formally honored at the NPPA National Convention in Florida later this summer.

His military awards include the Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Meritorious

Unit Commendation, Good Conduct Medal with three stars for subsequent awards, Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal with one star, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for Korean Service, Vietnam Service Medal, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

He was a member of the United States Navy League, Fleet Reserve Association, U.S. Naval Institute, Association of Naval Aviation, U.S. Navy Public Affairs Association (USNPAA), and a charter member of the Association of Naval Photography (NANP).

Survivors include his mother, Mabel Lucille Bowman Egnor, brother Larry Wayne Egnor, sister Karilyn Kunstbeck, five children: Andy Lee Egnor, Robin Ann Willis, Randy Sue Payne, Melody Pearl Hourgreaves, Christopher Michael Egnor, stepson Larry Hixson, 9 grandchildren, 1 great grandchild, 8 nieces and nephews and loving companion Pat Holmgaard.

A viewing for friends and family will be held Tuesday, June 24, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Money & King Funeral Home, 171 Maple Ave. West, Vienna, Va.

Memorial services will be held Wednesday, June 25, at 3 p.m. in the Post Chapel at Fort Meyer followed by interment at Arlington National Cemetery.

Memorial contributions in the name of Russ Egnor may be made to Leukemia Society of America Inc., National Capital Area Chapter, 2900 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria, Va. 22314, or Navy Memorial Foundation, 701 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004-2608.