

Courtney Peeples

Decorated Combat Veteran of U. S. Navy



Courtney Peeples was born in 1946 in Iowa City, Iowa. He graduated from United Township High School in East Moline, Illinois. After school in 1965 he entered the workforce with the Manufacturing Unit of John Deere Harvester Works. He also briefly attended Black Hawk Junior College in Moline. He briefly enlisted in the Naval Reserve in Davenport, Iowa but ultimately decided to enlist in the regular Navy for four years in April 1966. He attended boot camp at Great Lakes, Illinois and was promoted to Seaman Apprentice (E2) upon completion of training. He was able to freeze his employment at John Deere with the option of returning after serving or staying in the Navy.



After boot camp Courtney was assigned to USS Parle (DE 708), a reserve training ship based at the Navy Pier in downtown Chicago. Upon completion of that tour he was selected to be one of thirty sailors who were formed as a unit to train for river warfare at the Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, California. The nine weeks included one week of intensive survival, escape and evasion at Whidbey Island, Washington and one week of gunnery training on San Clemente Island, California. Following training Courtney and the other twenty-nine sailors were ordered to the Mobile Riverine Force, a combined unit of the Navy/Army Second Brigade of the Army's Ninth Infantry Division, in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. Thus began a one-year tour of intense river warfare combat.



On 2 May 1968 Courtney, as a Gunners Mate Second Class (GMG2), was assigned to Alpha Boat A112-4. An Alpha Boat is pictured to the right. The boat was assigned to River Assault Flotilla One, Task Force 117, River Assault Squadron 11, Task Group 117.2, River Assault Division 112. The Mobile Riverine Force was based at the Navy-Army Base at Dong Tam on the My Tho River Branch of the Mekong River Delta. Alpha Boat 112-4 had a crew of six sailors - boat captain, coxswain, radioman, engineman/30 MM operator, 20 MM gunner, and twin 50 MM gunner.



During his tour on A-112-4 from May 1968 to April 1969, Courtney was wounded twice. On 9 June 1968 on the banks of the My Tho River he received shrapnel wounds to his lower back. On 16 December 1968 on the Ham Long River just west of Ben Tri, Kien Hoa Province he was wounded by a percussion grenade that exploded on deck. For these wounds he received two Purple Hearts.



After serving his combat tour in Vietnam, Courtney was assigned to USS Coral Sea (CVA-43). It was aboard Coral Sea that he was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal with Combat "V" for his service aboard Alpha Boat 112-4. In 1970 he completed his four years of Naval service.



After his Naval service, Courtney returned to his saved job at John Deere. In September 1981 he married Ruth McNeal in East Moline, Illinois. She worked for John Deere World Headquarters as a computer systems analyst. They have one son and one daughter.

In September 2001 Courtney retired from the quality control department of John Deere with 35 years of service with various certificates and awards. Ruth retired a couple of years later. They moved to South Carolina in 2004. Courtney received a diploma in Advanced Biblical Studies from Liberty University in April of 2015.