



Joseph “Joe” F. Ciokon Jr. JO1, USN

Announcer, Saigon (67-68)

January 18, 1939 – March 4, 2021

Memorial

By RADM Charles Brown, CHINFO: Team PA

It is with a heavy heart that I share that a legend of our Navy public affairs community, JOCM (Ret) Joe Ciokon, passed away in the early morning hours today.

Master Chief Journalist Joseph Ciokon retired from uniformed service in 1986 after thirty years of distinguished service. Throughout his time in uniform, he served in multiple combat tours in Vietnam; as a broadcaster and photographer during the 1968 Vietnamese Tet Offensive; and in overseas tours in Panama and the Middle East.

Master Chief Ciokon was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds suffered during a Hezbollah truck bombing that destroyed the Beirut barracks on October 23, 1983. Despite his injuries from the attack, Master Chief assisted his shipmates and successfully freed Marines and Sailors from the devastation of the barracks. His acts of selflessness in Beirut epitomized his character throughout his service.

After he retired from uniformed service, Joe went on to a second career in our community as a civilian Navy PA specialist in San Diego on the staff of Commander, Naval Air Force Pacific, where he famously ran the Distinguished Visitor program for many years. Literally thousands of Americans--community leaders, educators and others from around the country--were introduced to the wonders of naval aviation through Joe's tireless efforts.

It was there at AIRPAC 25 years ago when I first had the privilege of working with Joe. As an ensign in my first public affairs job, I was just one of countless young PAOs and Sailors who Joe generously mentored over his decades of service. The lessons he taught me about telling the Navy story remain with me today.

Joe's was a life of esteemed service to our Navy, even into his second well-deserved retirement. After his retirement from civil service, Joe continued to contribute as a volunteer Public Affairs Officer for the USS MIDWAY museum. In 2008, he was recognized with a prestigious MIDWAY volunteer award.

Master Chief Joe Ciokon was a humble, dedicated public affairs professional who loved the Navy and loved Sailors. His leadership, his example and his service will continue to inspire our community for years to come.

Our hearts are with his wife, Mary, his sons Joe and Ramon, and his daughter Lisa, herself a Navy Chief, during this difficult time.