

The following was presented by Board Member Jud Compton at the Hall of Distinction Induction Ceremony of the Dover Historical Society, on Sunday, April 28, 2019.

## Capt. Harry Merwin Yockey, Jr. (USN, Ret)

As a youth, Merwin Yockey was a busy lad running through the streets of Dover with his childhood friends like Walter Pretorius, Vic Strimbu, and Jack Rausch playing all types of sports and establishing military games. I am curious to think that the competition he received among his peers established the foundation of the legacy Harry Merwin Yockey was about to embark upon that very well helped shape the nation, at least the modern world we have come to know.

Harry Merwin Yockey was born in Canton, Ohio, on November 3, 1933, the son of Harry and Martine Yockey and died on June 16, 2004 in Louisville, Kentucky. His name was appropriately derived from Harry (which means "Commander") and Merwin (a family friend, means "Lover of the Sea"). During his formidable years, Yockey's father, Harry moved to Dover to become the editor of the Dover Reporter and, later, the Times-Reporter. Young Merwin came of age here in the community, was a member of the Dover Church of Christ, and attended Dover High School where he excelled in everything he attempted. He is noted as a scholastic achiever, a member of numerous clubs (a leading Thespian included), a member of the football team, (was a capable backup QB to Frank Ellwood, who went on to become the QB for the Ohio State Buckeyes) and even prom king.

After his high school graduation in 1951, Yockey attended Case Western Reserve University for a year under scholarship before enlisting in the US Navy. He was appointed to the Naval Academy in Annapolis earning his degree in 1957, a class with many significant graduates. Merwin was so proud of his 1957 class that his car license was USNA 1957. Yockey would eventually go on to earn a master's degree in Electrical Engineering at the Naval Post Graduate School. Merwin met his first wife, Marna, at the Naval Academy and together they raised three children. Over the years, his hobbies included playing golf and piano, cooking, and playing Bridge as a Gold Life Master.

While Yockey's early successes are important, his greatest gift and perhaps his significant achievement was his work on the US Tomahawk Cruise Missile Program. In his mind, the Tomahawk Missile would be used as both a deterrent from war and a vehicle for combat. The overall mission was to preserve peace and defend our freedom. Yockey served as commander of the USS Salmon (SS-570) from 1970-1972 and on several assignments, including ASS Saufley destroyer; and USS Sirago and USS Runner submarines.

During both the Cold and Vietnam Wars, Captain Yockey was active in several historical rescues. As its commander, he oversaw the Salmon's daring rescue of five Japanese sailors in the frigid and choppy waters south of Tokyo Bay. Another example: He was the submarine officer on the USS Coral Sea aircraft carrier, and participated in rescuing the US merchant ship, Mayaguez, and the Saigon evacuation. On a more personal note, he dove into a swimming pool to rescue his son, Brian who, at age 4, jumped into the pool without knowing how to swim and was floundering. Brian recalls his dad climbing out with a soaked wallet.

Yockey began work in 1976 on the fledgling Tomahawk Missile Program as the deputy program manager for testing and development through the Naval Air Command, and he then worked as the overall program manager alongside Rear Admiral Walter Locke. When Capt. Yockey retired from the Navy in 1983 after 31 years of service, this Tomahawk land missile could be launched from surface ships and submarines.

The Tomahawk Missile is a highly advanced, intelligent weapon with the eyes of a global tracking system. The 3300 pound Tomahawk with a booster rocket engine can be launched by ship such as the USS Stout, named after Dover's Rear Admiral Stout, and submarines like USS Ohio. Flying low to evade radar, the missile is capable of speeds at 550 miles an hour and flies up to one thousand miles to the target. The inaugural deployment of the Tomahawk Missile was during the 1991 Iraq War and utilized heavily in 1993 in Iraq and is still in other allied combat operations.

Today, nearly one hundred and fifty navy ships and submarines are equipped with the missile to help preserve our freedom. Many believe that Yockey played a crucial role in the overall success of the missile. Tomahawk's Rear Admiral Locke said this of Captain Yockey: *"He was a great man and a patriot in every sense of the work; professional in work, yet always a smile that warmed our hearts and made the job lighter. He left a legacy to our nation."*

Captain Yockey received many decorations for his service, including the Meritorious Service Award, Navy Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Ribbon, and Vietnam Service Medal, and in 1979 he was inducted into Aviation Week and Space Technology magazine's Laureates Hall of Fame for Achievement for his Achievement and leadership of the Tomahawk Missile. His son, Army Major (Retired) Harry Mark Yockey, who followed his dad in service to our country, referred to his dad as "The Renaissance Man!" for his many deeds and contributions.

Following his retirement from the Navy, Harry Merwin met his wife, Jackie, then working with the 700 Club, while playing Bridge and helped her in the Christian-based High Adventure Ministries. As such, he reached out to people who were less fortunate and offered

hope for a better life. The couple actually won a Bridge tournament three weeks before he died, even though he had a memory loss from multiple brain tumors.

Merwin was a beloved family man who served the Lord with compassion. Although his daughter, Cheryl Keck, has passed away, his legacy continues through his wife, Jackie, sons Army Major H. Mark (Terri) Yockey, George "Brian" (Maggie) Yockey, step-son Jeffrey Mitchum; 10 grandchildren, 4 great grandchildren; sister, Nancy Yockey Bonar and her family, Tim and Julie.

In 2004, Harry Merwin Yockey, age 70, and with full military honors was buried – along with his love for his country, and his grand penmanship, humorous wit, and memories of his hometown of Dover. He rests in the Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery in Point Loma, CA overlooking the San Diego submarine base where he took command of the USS Salmon (SS-573). "He fought the good fight. He kept the faith. He finished the course!"