

Gerald Elden Miller was born on January 22, 1942 in Rolfe, IA to Elden and Bernice (Schott) Miller. He graduated from Gilmore City-Bradgate High School in 1960 and enlisted in the United States Navy that same year.

Jerry was a proud member of the United States Navy for 22 years. He was a disbursing clerk, Electronics Shop supervisor, an instructor, and ended his career as a Chief Petty Officer, a rank he was so proud to attain.

Jerry served aboard 5 different ships, and a variety of duty stations. He served in Vietnam and was present at the fall of Saigon while aboard the USS Dubuque. He served aboard the USS Iwo Jima in 1970 and was among the crew to recover Apollo 13.

He received many commendations during his time in the Navy. He was the recipient of 5 good conduct medals and the Humanitarian Service Medal among others. The full extent of the honors he received will likely never be known as he was a humble man who always said "I was just doing my job".

After retiring from the Navy, Jerry continued his passion for teaching. He received his vocational teaching certificate in 1985. He taught for 3 years at SOIC, 2 years at Pierce Community College and 20 years at Puyallup Schools. Jerry was known for being an excellent educator and prided himself on being able to connect and reach all kinds of students regardless of ability. He was named Pierce County Vocational Teacher of the Year in 1999.

Jerry was committed to community service his entire life. He volunteered for many years with little league baseball when his son Craig was younger. He participated in an organization called Kars for Kids that provided fun, wheeled vehicles for children with physical disabilities. He was a long time member of Fraternal Order of the Eagles 2308 in Puyallup. He and his wife Linda joined in 1996. Jerry was an officer for the last 10 years.

One of the more unique jobs that Jerry had was with the transportation department at the Puyallup Fair. He drove the "talent" to and from the airport for the shows that were performed during the fair. Some of his favorites were Larry the Cable Guy, Martina McBride and Tim McGraw.

Jerry was a master craftsman and built 75% of the furniture in the home he shared with his wife. He could build anything and most of what he built was from reclaimed wood. He was known to his grandchildren as "Papa" and they adored him. Whenever something needed to be fixed or built, they would say "Papa can do it" and Papa always did. Some of the last things he built were a cedar chest for his wife, a hall tree for his granddaughter and a raised garden bed for his daughter. The hall tree was built with wood from the baby bed he built her when she was born. Nothing ever went to waste and he was a real life MacGiver when it came to problem solving.

Summary of Navy Service:

USS Hunley: 1964-66

USS Diachenko: 1968-69

Tacron 11, Pacific: 1969-70

USS Iwo Jima: 1970

USS Dubuque: 1974-75

USS St. Louis: 1975-78