

A Salute to Curtis R. Leary Career Coast Guard and Beyond

*Presented by
Pearson Wood, Member
American Legion Post 67
Cary, North Carolina
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Vitals: Curtis was born July 27, 1936, at Caffeyes Inlet, NC, which is located [four miles North of Duck](#), in Dare County. He attended school at Kitty Hawk from 1st grade to part of the 10th grade and finished the 10th grade at Elizabeth City, NC. High school was completed in Norfolk, VA, and at the same time he completed two years at William and Mary Technical Institute in Electronics, Norfolk, VA, in the afternoons.

While in the 11th grade, Curtis entered the [Coast Guard Reserve](#) and attended meetings at the Coast Guard Base, Berkley, VA.

Coast Guard Career: In July, 1954, Curtis attended boot camp at Coast Guard Training Center, Cape May, NJ. In October, 1954, [hurricane Hazel struck the NC coast](#) doing heavy damage to the Aids to Navigation systems along the coast and in the sounds and waterways of NC. Curtis was called to active duty and was stationed aboard the CG Cutter, Verbena, a buoy tender home ported in Washington, NC.

Three years later, he was transferred to the [CG Cutter Dexter](#) in Baltimore, MD. At that time the Cutter Dexter was being taken out of moth balls and once again entered active duty service. Once commissioned, the Dexter was home ported in Alameda, CA, in August of 1958. Curtis left the CG in October, 1959, returned to NC and started working at the DuPont plant in Kinston, NC. Civilian life came to a close in December, 1960, when Curtis re-entered the Coast Guard and was stationed in NJ at the Telephone & Electronic Shop as Temporary Additional Duty for three months waiting for a seat in basic Telephone school. From there he went to basic telephone school in Groton, CT. After graduation in July, 1961, he was stationed at the Telephone Shop in Hoquiam, WA,

maintaining Coast Guard Land Lines and CG bases telephone systems along the Washington coast.

In January, 1966, Curtis was sent to Advance Telephone School in Groton, CT, for six months training. After completion of that training, Curtis received orders to go to the Telephone and Electronic Shop, Manasquan, NJ. In 1971, he received orders to the US Coast Guard Communication Station at Honolulu, Hawaii, for a four year tour of duty. In 1975, he was once again stationed back to the Telephone Shop in Manasquan, NJ, as the Executive Senior Petty Officer.



Curtis retired September 1, 1980, as Command Master Chief. Total years of accumulated service credited reached 26.5 years.

Medals and Awards: CG Commendation Medal, CG Achievement Medal, CG Good Conduct Medal (with large star), National Defense Medal (with small star), Expert Rifleman Medal, Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon (with small star) and Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation - Operational (meaning an actual involvement in a specific operation—in this case it was setting up and maintaining special telephone circuits to be used by the government in a special operation with little advanced notice).

Civilian Life: On September 15, 1980, Curtis went to work for [Nortel](#) Networks at RTP as part of the Technical Assistance and Support (TAS) group where he was eventually promoted to manager of the TAS group. In 1988, he was asked to head up a new Nortel Grounding Department. It was his job to solve the many issues related to lightning, power surges, noise and other prob-

lems that faced the new digital world of telephony involving grounding of the equipment and offices. This included documentation and procedures that involved the many telephone companies, large and small, that were Nortel's customers. On December 31, 1993, Curtis retired from Nortel and started his own company called Grounding Solution Service, Inc.

Curtis has 25 years of service with the American Legion, all at Post 67. He has held positions as Sergeant at Arms, Adjutant, 2nd Vice Commander, 1st Vice Commander, Post Commander (2 years). At the Department level he has been the 11th District Vice Commander, 11th District Commander, Department Vice Commander for the 3rd Division and currently is 1st Vice Commander of Post 67.

Curtis is married to Sybil Sullivan Leary of Washington, NC, located in Beaufort County. They have two children, Michael and Susan. Both children are married and live close by. They have three granddaughters and three grandsons. Curtis and Sybil have been married for 52 years.

Other Organizations:

- National President of the Armed Forces E9 Association (AFE9A)
- Board Member of the 4th Branch Inc. (Registered Lobbyist)
- Master Mason, Orr Lodge 104 AF & AM
- Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association
- Institute of Electrical & Electronic Engineers (IEEE)
- Wake County Veterans Council
- Nortel Network Retirees Association (Past Treasurer)
- Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA)

- Cary Chamber of Commerce and other business related associations around the country.

Footnote: Curtis's military family has a history of CG service accumulating a total of 267 years of continuous CG Service. He was the last to leave the CG. The one exception was his biological father who served in the US Merchant Marines during WWII. His family history started back when the Coast Guard was known as the [Life Saving Service](#). His great-grandfather was a Surfman, stationed at Paul Gamiel Hill Life Saving Station located 5 miles North of Kitty Hawk on the Outer Banks for 30 years. His grand father was also a Surfman with 20 years, mostly stationed at Caffey's Inlet. His stepfather was a Coastie and served 20 years, several Years at Caffey's Inlet also. Many uncles and cousins made up the rest, all from the coastal area of NC. Some served in the Pacific during WWII and Vietnam on landing craft and cutters supporting our troops.

Semper Paratus (Always Ready).

Curtis Leary, the American Legion Post 67 salutes you for your service to God and Country.

