

Doc Mehlenbeck 1948 - 2015

He was simply known as Doc around our rifle and pistol ranges. If you asked him why he liked to be called Doc it was because he was a dentist in the Navy and he was not very fond of his first name, which was Clarence. These words are difficult to write just thinking he is gone. It was easy to pick him out of the crowd at the range as he was the big guy that acted like he knew what he was doing, and that's because he did. Doc was a regular on our ranges for many years and more so the past couple of years after his second retirement.

Club records are incomplete but they show Doc joined the Poulsbo Sportsman Club sometime in the 1980's. He had a low two digit membership number. In the early years he was active duty Navy and a mainstay of the local Navy shooting teams. These teams included Bill Geil, Jim White, Thad Johnson, Bob Campos, and Steve Andrus. The teams won several all Navy championships in both rifle and pistol, and at least once won both in the same year. Doc was one of a few Navy officers that earned both the Distinguished Rifle and Distinguished Pistol badges. He could draw a bead with the 45 or hold tight with a M1 with equal success.

Doc was president of our club in 1990 and 1991. Quiet times as compared to today but his steady hand filled the need.

Doc always took the time to answer questions and could provide advice on anything from a boy's first rifle, to a squirrel gun, a silhouette pistol, or a center fire rifle for big game. Topics from selecting a scope, working up a load, adjusting the sights, or cleaning the barrel when done were all right down his alley. You always got good answers, but if you disagreed you could change the subject to fishing and keep on talking. He usually had a story and sometimes pictures about a hunt he had just been on or a hunt he was in the stages of planning.

For the record, Doc was at the range on his last day. Shooting a rimfire rifle, talking squirrel hunting with friends, and generally doing what he liked to do. It is easy to say that we are all better off for Doc having been part of our club and it was that way for a long time. At the same time it is difficult to express how much we are diminished now that he is gone, and gone far too soon. Doc will be missed by many and I am one of them.

Doug Forsyth