

Eulogy for a Master Waterman
Harold Dunnigan
1930 - 2026
The Last Frogman to Know the First Frogmen

By
His Teammates and Colleagues
(Gary Bonnelly, Chuck Chaldekas, Jim Grey, Arthur Verge Jr. Phd. , and Jim Harris
Edited by
Pedro Loureiro Phd. ; Phil G. Garn and Erick Simmel, ©2026

During the 250 years of our Republic, there have been legions of patriots; many noted and well known, others long gone before our times. Within all our lives, there have been some around each of us that we took for granted. Often, these larger-than-life individuals quietly blended back into society not trumpeting their own horns. One such man, was Harold Lawrence Dunnigan Jr. “Harold,” to those who knew him, passed away peacefully on April 6, 2026 at age 95 with his devoted wife of more than 15years, Holly, was by his side.

[Insert Pic -25]

Harold was an exceptional lifeguard, multifunctional waterman, teacher, mentor, husband, and U.S. Navy frogman. Among his Navy teammates, he was known as a deep-diving, double-daring, double-crimping, rooting-tooting, skydiving-parachuting, fierce-fighting, underwater demolition frogman *extraordinaire!* His life from those who taught him a unique brand of *can-do* team effort and individualism and accomplishments, served as a role model for many of today’s lifeguards and U.S. Navy SEALs.

“The Dunnigan-Man” as Harold playfully referred to himself from a personal spin on an old LA Area TV advertisement was far more than inspiration for TV’s *Baywatch* character Lieutenant Ben Edwards portrayed by the late Hollywood star Richard Jaeckel. He was indeed, a multifaceted renaissance gentleman, on so many fronts.

[insert pic 2]

Born in Fall River, Massachusetts on October 11, 1930, his parents, Harold (Sr.) and Victoria, and younger brother, James, moved to Danbury Connecticut. They boys attended St Peters and St Yorican Grammer Schools and Danbury High School in Danbury, Connecticut, before their parents moved to Santa Monica to take war time jobs with Douglas Aircraft at the iconic “Cloverfield” Santa Monica Airport plant that began booming for the war industry during the late 1930s. Harold and his brother, James, assimilated nicely in the seaside community, but after a year the family returned to Danbury, Connecticut. Harold Sr. and Victoria missed family and friends. The boys re-enrolled at St. Peters and went back to life in Danbury, chasing the iceman in the summer for a chip of ice and snow sledding on State Street in the winter. It was a year before Pearl Harbor. Harold Sr, tired and cold, trudging home through a December snowstorm, came home and said to his brood, “*Who needs this weather when we can be at the Santa Monica Beach. Anyone wanting to join me, be ready and packed tomorrow morning.*” They traveled by cross-country train for three days and returned to Santa Monica. This time, they stayed.

The family lived on Broadway in a house between 4th and 5th street across from Robert’s Market. “*It was a lyrical time for Santa Monica then*”, quoted Dunnigan in an interview for *The Santa Monica Historical Society*. “... a time and a place which most of Santa Monica today retains only a bit of that era’s echoes. Most of today’s residents of that city would barely recognize how

its high-tech modern urbanization is the opposite of the hamlet that lost a lot of its old charm and sea-salt brine sometime following the late 1980's. Today most of Santa Monica Bay residents have very little understanding or insight as to the just how much Santa Monica contributed to the world subculture of ocean recreation and professional ocean service cultures"... and how in that influence Harold Hal Dunnigan was arguably one of the most influential figures in that professional side of that Lifeguard waterman beach culture , in the last half of the 20th century and how he subtly influenced so many who knew him.

[insert Pic 3]

Harold and his brother arrived in Santa Monica as kids wearing knickers, which they soon exchanged for long pants or shorts, which had long since shrugged off New England's dress codes. From the age of eleven years old, until the end of WWII, he had a newspaper route that included Douglas Aircraft, Ocean Park and the Santa Monica Pier. He hawked newspapers and knew about every major battle taking place in Europe and in the Pacific. He grew up by the sea, where he swam, learned to surf, and fished. Harold attended Santa Monica Catholic School, lettered in football, and was a California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) scholar and athlete.

Harold considered himself fortunate to have made so many lifelong friends from all walks of life during his journey. His story is similar to legendary waterman surfer Preston "Pete" Peterson, an eastern immigrant moving west into the Pacific Ocean. Harold entered lifeguard training in 1946. He was taught by WWII Office of Strategic Service (OSS) veterans, including swimmer operative Robert "Bob" Butt.

[Insert Pic 4]

In 1948, he tried out for the Santa Monica Lifeguard program, where he would meet more men who had served as America's first frogmen during WWII. With him during that try out class was fellow local West Los Angeles candidate, Oatis Eugene "Gene" Poole who not only paralleled Harold's lifeguard training with the same exceptional mentors, but later continued into US Naval UDT Service. Some of those first frogmen were: Doctor Jack H. Taylor, a dentist who treated Harold and his brother; and Frank Donahue, who would pen the template for the television series *Sea Hunt* (1958-1961.) Ironically, Harold would not know of these quiet professionals' classified military service for many years, even after his own wartime service in Korea.

Harold also served alongside notable lifeguard watermen, paddleboard and surfing legends Bob Sears, Tom Zahn, Dave Rochlin, Peter Cole and "Buzzy" Trent (North Shore Oahu Big Wave pioneer whose son Ivan would go on to be a Navy SEAL).

[Insert Pic 5]

Harold spoke about how these watermen were not merely one-sport wonders but were involved in many water and shore-based activities from beach runs to rowing, from swimming to surfing and sailing, even wrestling and jujitsu. Harold remarked, *"Under the exterior cloak of physical prowess, there was awareness of the natural environment, a thirst for knowledge, and invention that burned even brighter and instilled by example into younger generations."*

"'Readiness is All' Even on the most tranquil days, things can go sideways in a heartbeat."

Richard Fletcher – L.A. City Lifeguard in the 1960's

At age 90, Harold Dunnigan vividly recalled to Lifeguard historian Arthur Verge Jr. the rescue that changed Harold's life as if it happened yesterday. The year was 1949, and it was his second day on the job. *"I was working the open-air lifeguard stand just north of the Santa Monica*

Pier[...] So, there I was, happy as can be, sitting high up overlooking the beach. Feeling a pang of hunger, I grabbed a sandwich out of my lunch bag. Just as I bit into it, I heard a scream of – ‘Help!’

Out in front of Harold was a young girl drowning. He jumped off the tower and threw off his shirt and sped towards the girl’s screams. She was only about 15 yards away from Harold when he hit the water. With a few swim strokes, he was able to grab her. However, directly to her right was her unconscious father: *“I managed to grasp each of them and tried to hold them up above the water. As I did so, I struggled to use my feet to find the ocean bottom so I could stand up with them. There was none. The swim area north of the pier had been recently dredged, and what should have been four feet of water was instead 8 feet deep. I found myself in the middle of a nightmare... As I struggled to keep the two afloat, the little girl then said to me, ‘Save my sister.’ To her left side, I saw her sister’s head below the surface. I attempted the impossible, trying to use one hand to bring the sister up from below the water as I used my legs and remaining arm, attempting to float the others. With that, I quickly began to sink. I was drowning with all of their weight. As I sank, I felt the girls frantically grasping at me. I took them down with me and used the bottom to push back up. Just as I surfaced, a miracle from God occurred.”*

Neighboring tower lifeguard Bob Sears had hit the water. As he approached Harold drowning with the two girls on him, he threw Harold a rescue tube, saying to him, *‘You may want this.’*

“Bob grabbed the unconscious man and the sister who had been under the water. I then took the rescue tube and wrapped it around the girl I had originally gone after. “By the time Bob and I got the family back to the beach, the father had come to. The girls, too, survived but were very, very weak. I was so grateful that all of us were alive. The bottom line is that Bob Sears

had just saved four lives. Listen to me – if Bob Sears hadn't spotted us and done his job, I certainly would not be speaking to you right now.

“What happened that day has stayed with me all my life. Talk about a lesson. You see, I went on that rescue on blind instinct but without my rescue tube. If not for Bob Sears, that would have proven to be a fatal mistake. Actually, make that four fatal mistakes.

“Truth is, after everything settled down, Bob pulled me aside and let me have it.

“‘As a lifeguard, you can never, ever be without your rescue tube! Where you go, it goes. Period. Harold, never, ever, be without your rescue tube on the beach.’ Harold concluded with:

“It was a lesson well learned.”

[Insert Pic 7]

Harold enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1951 during the Korean War. After completing boot camp, he was assigned to the destroyer *USS Lymon Swenson* and deployed to the Western Pacific. He would meet famed special operator Commander Francis “Red Dog” Fane, who encouraged him to test for the Underwater Demolition Teams. During training, he had UDT legends as instructors, including Tiz Morrison (one of the first black frogmen), Deever Cunningham, and Robin Goodenough.

Harold would also meet future UDT/SEAL legends such as Wendy Webber, Fenton Scholes, Carl Schultz, Bob Stanton, Gerry Darrah and Gene Poole -all who became his lifelong friends and teammates. After completing UDT training with Class 6 on November 21, 1952, he deployed to Korea with UDT 3. With his teammates, Harold conducted reconnaissance and combat demolition missions, including raids along the Yalu River.

[Insert Pic 8]

Harold once related a story about executing a clandestine reconnaissance north of the 39th Parallel in an IBS (Inflatable Boat Small) in the winter of 1953, wearing drysuits. After four hours in the icy waters, they came back to their APD (Assault Personnel Destroyer) and prepared hydrographic charts for the mission commanders. Because they didn't take any fire, he, like his OSS mentors, never considered it a "real combat mission." Many years later, SEAL Team officer Captain Duncan Smith (retired) would chide Harold that they completed what is called in the SEAL Teams "a perfect op (operation)" - they got in and out, and the bad guys never knew they were there.

During Korea, Harold had the occasion to enjoy duck hunting on R&R in between secret operations. During a 1990 interview for a Navy SEAL Team professional journal, the author noted during Harold's Korean war UDT service, he was attached to a detail on intelligence reconnaissance operations that were highly sensitive at the time.

[Insert Pic 9]

Harold returned to California from Korea and separated from reserves and in 1954 and resumed his life as a beach lifeguard. He became an instructor following in the paths of renowned lifeguard mentors before like George "Cap" Watkins, Bob Butt, Bob Sears, Frank Donahue, Fred Wadley, Bob Scoles, Fred Zendar (underwater coordinator from *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* to *Jaws*). Harold would also take the Lifeguard Captain's exam and become President of the Lifeguard Association.

[Insert Pic 10]

In the mid 1950's he embarked on a personal adventure of a lifetime- he embarked on a 7-month, 1700-mile sailing adventure from Los Angeles through the Suez Canal to Istanbul, Turkey, and on to the French Riviera historically exploring the Mediterranean, Ionian, Aegean, Red and Black Seas, on a very large private schooner, something he would always find time to convey to those curious about his life at sea which had been mostly under sail.

[Insert Pic 11]

Graduating with a BA in education from Los Angeles State College (now California State College Los Angeles), he began teaching math and physical education. He later completed his master's degree in education from UCLA. Harold continued lifeguarding as well as teaching at Malibu Park School, Lincoln Middle School, became Vice Principal at John Adams Junior High School, and Olympic High School all in the Santa Monica School District. He encouraged students to never quit on their dreams and dedicate themselves to lifelong learning.

He mentored his students to value friendships. Some of his students included Greg Bonann, producer of *Baywatch*, who modeled characters after Harold. Other former students and lifelong friends included screenwriters, John and Jim Thomas, who created a number of films and television shows including *Predator* and *Behind Enemy Lines*. Due to his seniority as a lifeguard, Harold often got to serve as the water safety supervisor on set at *Baywatch*. He mostly stayed in the background but said the food served to the actors and TV crew was too plentiful and rich for him; so it was back to eating just a head of lettuce, followed by more long, soft sand beach runs to stay fit. The level of fitness Harold and those who were from his era, became the keystones, to the legendary fitness for all Santa Monica Bay area ocean lifeguards recognized for spawning

a world-wide beach safety legacy that endures to today. This exemplified Harold's era of lifeguarding taking it all up a few notches to influence all rookie guards who followed.

[Insert Pic 12]

Fellow LA County Lifeguard Bob Scoles (an LA County Lifeguard and original OSS swimmer operative, World War II UDT 10 veteran and candidate for the 1940 Olympics cancelled by the war) was a friend and mentor to Harold. Scoles pioneered the Los Angeles County Underwater Instructors Certification Course (UICC) which was the model for recreational SCUBA training that rivaled and often surpassed US Navy, Coast Guard and commercial diving programs. UICC continues to be the premier civilian scuba instruction course in the world supporting all West Coast public safety service dive and recovery programs. This entity provided support to all Los Angeles area lifeguard and public safety ocean search and rescue dive programs. Harold would be one of the early graduates and served on the Los Angeles County Lifeguard's and Santa Monica Lifeguard Service dive search and recovery teams (remember he was double dipping.)

Thrice married, Santa Monica beach is where Harold met his first wife, Doris, who hailed from Surprise, Arizona. He met his second wife, Rita, in 1955 at a beach party in Santa Monica. They lost touch, went separate ways and re-kindled their romance in 1975. They married in 1979. Following Rita's death in 2003, Harold met and married his third wife, Holly in 2010. They were together until his death in 2026.

[Insert Pic 13]

Harold was a proud teacher and instructor for legions of school students; student lifeguards, frogmen and SEALs. He was known for being an influence to the average John and Jane Q. Public who he met on the beach, having a lifelong effect upon them, treating them either hard or

soft depending on who they were sometimes as part of his many families. One junior guard in training Gordon Elkins recalled meeting Harold in the 1960's and remaining a Lifelong friend. Gordon attributed a quality in Harold that was rare in anyone.

Gordon's mother had passed. Harold and the Elkins Mother were friend to a fellow Lifeguard colleague Rimmon 'Rim' Fay(1929-2008). Elkins Mother would have liked to have Fay in attendance at her service. However, at the time life had caught up with Fay: *"He [Fay]has probably spent more time underwater than any man on the planet,"* said Harold who had taught Fay how to dive in 1955. Dunnigan said he could easily out-compete Fay in swimming contests, but underwater, few could keep up with him. *"He was at one with the ocean."* Harold helped Fay launch Pacific Bio-Marine, an ocean environmental company Fay created to collect sea creatures and specimens for research. [Such moonlighting with Fay would, give Harold unique ability in his later service to a Navy SEAL program he would become involved in, described later, below]. Later Harold would remember his friend Fay as driven and demanding, willing to work impossibly long hours. Once the engine of their skiff broke down as they left Catalina Island's Avalon Harbor heading back to San Pedro (Los Angeles Harbor on the mainland, across the 26 mile channel from Catalina). Fay insisted that they row back to the mainland. Harold recalled: *"We rowed from 4 p.m. and got in at San Pedro at 2 a.m. and then we had to unload the boat,"* Harold said. Harold would recall Fay burned out assistants quickly, and often worked alone.

[insert Pic 14]

However, this time it was Fay who was burned out. He was having a series of strokes, older and ailing. during the time of Elkins mothers passing. When Harold heard of Fay being, asked by

the family to be at the wake, Harold flatly responded: *"I will have him there."* When the memorial happened, to the surprise of everyone in the Elkins clan, Harold pulled up his car parking in a red zone and then emerged leading the ailing Fay, at his side into the Elkins family home, true to his word.

[Insert Pic 26]

Then in 1976 at age 46 when most frogmen are thinking about retirement, Harold decided to re-affiliate with the Navy Reserves. Because of his 22-year break in service, he had to enlist as a seaman. Harold, along with his teammate, Gene Poole, joined the newly established NR (US Navy Reserve) UDT-SEAL Pacific Team 119, headquartered at the Naval Amphibious Base in Coronado, California. The team was one of the first Reserve Naval Special Warfare augmenting units in the US Navy.

Harold continued service in the Navy Reserve components of SEAL Teams 1-3-5. A teammate, Lieutenant Commander Chuck Chaldeckas (retired), recalled that Harold provided diving support and expertise to SEALs supporting different experimental marine mammal programs over several years. With the help of Harold's leadership and expertise, those programs proved that mammals could protect Navy assets.

Harold's years of diving experience coupled with his enthusiasm were key to successful SEAL training operations. Navy Captain Duncan Smith SEAL (retired) related this story from the 1980s. He was reviewing service records for SEAL reservists and saw that Harold had a master's degree as well as supervisory positions as a lifeguard and a teacher. Smith pulled Harold into his office and told him he was going to be taking the next Chief Petty Officer's exam, and it was time to start studying. Of course, Harold passed with flying colors.

Then in 1990, at the age of 59, Harold was mobilized to active duty to SEAL Team ONE in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

[Insert Pic 26]

At the outset of Desert Shield, SEAL Team One Executive Officer and Vietnam War veteran Commander Don “Crawdaddy” Crawford “cherry-picked” Harold for recall to active duty. The XO hauled him into his office and said, “You’re in charge; now get the hell out of my office.” Harold frequently related that his time in SEAL Team ONE during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm at 60 years of age was one of the highlights of his life.

Commander Crawford related to SWCC (Special Warfare Combat Crewman) Historian Phil Garn, who operated with Harold in the 1980s, that story was positively true and, “He (Dunnigan) did an absolutely outstanding job. What a teammate!”

[Insert Pic -1]

A true Renaissance warrior, Seaman Harold Dunnigan would be advanced and retire as a Quartermaster Chief (SEAL) in 1993.

At a business mixer with wife Rita in the 1970s, Harold would learn about his Santa Monica mentors’ clandestine war service; something he would soon recognize as a unique bridge.

[Insert Pic 17]

Rita had learned that real estate developer Jim Eubank was a former Santa Monica Bay Area Beach lifeguard for LA County. Rita introduced Eubank to her husband. Jim and Harold got to talking. Harold mentioned he was a Navy frogman in Korea. Eubank replied that he was a Coast Guard frogman in Burma with the OSS. Stunned Harold said, “What?” Eubank said there were a whole bunch of us: Butt, Fred Waddley, the Tallmadges (Buster Keaton’s sons), Norm Abbott (nephew of comedian Bud Abbott and a Hollywood producer and director), Bill Hopper (son of

Hedda Hopper and Hollywood actor), Doctor Taylor, and even Frank Donahue. Stunned Harold replied “Butt and Wadley were my lifeguard instructors. Doctor Taylor *the dentist* fixed my and my brother’s teeth. We used to go lobstering from Taylor’s house near Dan Blocker Beach and would leave a few lobsters to pay for dental work.”

[Insert Pic 18]

“*The Dentist*,” Dr. Taylor, was also formally Lieutenant Commander Jack H. Taylor USNR one of the first OSS Maritime Unit -Operational Swimmers during WWII. A double Navy Cross awardee due to his significant behind the lines missions and historically being credited with being the Promethean prototype for today’s SEa -Air -Land and Special Warfare Combat Crewman operators. As a founding member of the Office of Strategic Services Maritime Unit, Taylor would be the first SCUBA qualified officer in the US Navy, with Gunners mate John P. Spence part of the first “swim pair,” spearheading the operational swimmer programs for OSS and later US Navy Underwater Demolition Teams as well as pioneering clandestine ferrying operations. Taylor first saw action in the Aegean smuggling arms and supplies to Greek Partisans in disguised coastal craft then in the Adriatic supplying Tito’s partisans fighting the Nazi’s behind the lines. Taylor then parachuted with a team of agents into Austria, where he would be captured by the Gestapo and sent to the Mauthausen death camp. Original footage of Taylor’s liberation from Mathausen was included the 2025 motion picture “*Nuremberg*.” Taylor would help war crimes investigators and testify during the Nuremburg War Crimes Trials, literally putting the nails in several high-ranking Nazi’s coffins. Then the “dentist” would quietly return to his Santa Monica practice.

[Insert Pic 19]

Due to this legacy, the OSS Society created a [Doctor] Jack H. Taylor award to honor individuals who embody the self-sacrifice and standard Doctor Taylor pioneered to which all modern Navy SEALs and SWCC aspire. Two of the highest-ranking retired Navy SEALs to ever have served, Admirals Eric Olson (as the first presenter) and Joesph McGuire (the first recipient) of the award, recognized Taylor's legacy acknowledging his further influence in establishing what we know today as Naval Special Warfare. It is unclear if the Admiral's knew their fellow teammate Harold, was at the time of the award, one of only two Navy UDT Frogmen/SEALs who ever knew Doctor Taylor (1908-1959)- both before and after Harold was a UDT Frogman. However, Harold was the keynote speaker honoring the 75th anniversary of Dr. Taylor as the first co-founding member of the *Santa Monica Wind-Jammers Yacht Club* in 1941 on the Santa Monica Pier), during a 2016 ceremony at their clubhouse now in the Marina Del Rey yacht basin, commemorating that club's anniversary event.

[Insert Pic 20]

Speaking of lobsters, Harold caught thousands of lobsters while SCUBA and free diving as well as gathering abalone and spear fishing. He had many, many stories about lobstering. One of the most famous was keeping logbooks on all his lobster diving recording about 5,000 or so lobsters that he had taken between 1955-1990. One of his favorite places: The Santa Monica Yacht Harbor breakwater rocks. He said he wanted to figure out what were the best conditions for getting lobster: full moon, no moon, high tide, low tide, storm, calm water, winds out of the various points of the compass. Unfortunately, for Harold, but fortunately for the lobsters, he found absolutely no correlation. Harold remarked, "You just had to go down and see!"

[Insert Pic -16]

Lifeguarding had the most profound and lasting influence on Hal's life. He was very competitive dory (lifeguard rowing rescue skiff) racer competed in multiple "Taplin Sprints" (*The Judge Irvin Taplin Lifeguard Medley Relay Championship was conceived and presented to Bud Stevenson, former Chief Lifeguard and the first Assistant director of the Los Angeles County Department of Beach, in 1936. Bud was smitten with the idea of the event and felt it had considerable merit and, of course, it could be incorporated in show casing lifeguarding in the Southern California area*). He was a Rookie School (now Training Academy) Instructor. He became the second training officer for the Los Angeles City Lifeguard Service and was recognized for evolving the training from a military boot camp paradigm which aimed at washing out candidates to that of a collaborative assisting all cadets to become lifeguards. Alumni of these classes have become recognized leaders and mentors of our current day service.

Santa Monica Pier Executive Director Jim Harris recalled how Harold was a premier advisor for the annual popup Museum of Beach Culture at the Santa Monica Pier 360 Beach Festival since the event's inception in 2010. *"His knowledge of the importance of the Santa Monica Lifeguards was immense, and his passion for ensuring their stories were properly shared was unparalleled."* In 2023 the Santa Monica Pier honored him with the annual "Aloha Award" for his contributions not only to the *Pier 360 Beach Festival*, but to the overall celebration and preservation of Santa Monica Beach Culture. Jim Harris added: *"...Harold Dunnigan was a true classic gentleman who not only knew how to enrapture and charm a crowd but knew how to teach any individual who listened how to do the same. Those of us lucky enough to be in his presence, listen, and learn will forever be better persons for having known him."*

[Insert Pic 21]

Adorned with beard, crown and trident spear in one hand and sometimes a lobster in the other, strands of seaweed and not much else, Harold would make an appearance as “King Neptune” at the annual Los Angeles County Beaches and Harbor Department Christmas party. For years he penned a column in the *Marina Del Rey Argonaut* newspaper under the byline, “*King Neptune*,” Both to keep up appearances and keep everyone guessing.

Harold’s life embodied so many qualities but the one that glued them together was his life of honor in all aspects he undertook. He applied it through most of his life’s voyage. He did not like to be slighted; nor his friends or colleagues to be either. He would go to extremes in all endeavors to assure his character and those he took care toward would never be tarnished and that his actions supported his word.

[Insert Pic 22]

Another of Harold’s extremes was mountaineering... not hiking, full wall technical summiting of the East Face of Mount Whitney at age 60! Harold’s fitness was a staple of his life. He and former OSS MU Swimmer / LA Lifeguard Jim Eubank would actively compete against each other in the annual one-mile *La Jolla Rough Water Swim* race until Eubank was in his 80’s and passing in 2004. Harold would continue to compete in that event into the later 2000s well into his 8th decade, like Eubank with the skill and fitness of a man half his years.

As one of the oldest living Santa Monica Bay area lifeguards with fine historical recall, Harold bridged the pre-World-War II and immediate post-war lifeguarding eras with today’s Lifeguards, after LA county guard Cal Porter (1925-2019) passed away. Many younger guards enjoyed the Annual June Lifeguard Luncheon gaining sage wisdom through Harold’s poignant insights and tales of those who once served us all well.

His wife Holly, whom he married in 2010, followed a long friendship that developed between them for several years. They both had New England origins and small-town upbringings. Their shared similar values including being devoted Catholics before they knew one another. When they married, she joined Harold in his lifelong attendance at Santa Monica Parish. Living in Santa Monica's Ocean Park Neighborhood, they spent over 15 years enjoying life's blessings: As Harold aged, they stayed closer to home, enjoyed friends, hosted dinner parties and back porch lunches.

[Insert Pic 23]

Harold and Holly and were immersed in the social communities of the Lifeguard/ Frogmen SEAL communities. He was a connoisseur of knowledge and reading books often a few at a time each week. Until the post COVID era, it was rare for Harold to miss any annual *LA County Lifeguard Association* Lunch in June; nor the August UDT/SEAL Association reunion in San Diego; nor any *Old Frogs and SEALs* Meeting at the *Coronado Yacht Club*. They would frequently be accompanied by 'Doc' [Micheal] Strauss M.D. (Doctor for SEAL Team 5) and Mrs. (also doctor) Strauss.

Harold was predeceased by his brother James and James' sons, his nephews, Michael and Sean Dunnigan.

His lifelong friend, Lifeguard and UDT Teammate s and Swim buddy Gene Poole passed away in 2015.

As a lifeguard in later years, Harold related a poignant recounting of a winter rescue from the 1980s for the LA County Recurrent Blog of April 9, 2026. Mid-winter, a young couple, on a

catamaran, off Topanga Canyon, overturned in fierce Santa Ana winds. Harold credited Bill Power up at Zuma Beach for smart thinking and saving the couple by alerting Harold and Boat Captain Hapke to continue on with the rescue with water temperature in the 60⁰ range, 20 knot winds, and green waves washing over their bow. That was Harold, always crediting others for their work!

[Insert Pic 24]

When Harold was 73, he made a dangerous lifeguard rescue of a very large and very violent man in very big surf. Harold realized that it was time to think about retiring from lifeguarding. So in September 2006, he retired from the LA County Lifeguard service. He was presented with the prestigious Bronze Savage Lifesaving award after completing more than 58 years of service as one of the longest tenured southern California lifeguards.

Some of the things Harold said he missed in his later years were soft sand runs and night diving for lobster. He had been doing both until 2020 at 90 years old. Harold's life story served as a catalyst for a key character the original *Baywatch* TV series and was an influence to the writers of the movie *Predator*.

Always the quiet professional in his many endeavors, Harold was dearly loved and remembered by his wife, family, friends, his UDT and SEAL teammates, fellow lifeguards, and his many students. As Harold often opined, "*Be careful because some of what you heard might even be true.*"

[Insert Pic -27]

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TWO Endings

1st If blitzed before 11 June 2026

On Saturday, June 13th at 10:00am at the Venice Beach Lifeguard Headquarters, full professional and military honors including a flag ceremony are being held. An ocean paddle out and celebration of life will be held at the same location immediately following the flag ceremony.

It is to be a ceremonial milestone for the last living link who was molded by the pioneers who served as originators to US Naval Special Warfare: The last individual of the few, who knew them and what they gave to it all, who himself did all he could in his lifetime with us, to continue forth it's legacy today and into the future, for those who will volunteer to answer the call. Those in the future, who will only know of the now swimming and skin-diving in heaven Frogman named Harold in detail, by this capsulation of his life.

Fair winds and following seas Harold. We're sure your adventure continues, you are sorely missed by all who knew you.

Please RSVP at this link below following its prompts:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/harold-hal-dunnigan-life-celebration-tickets-1989147429508?aff=oddtcreator>

2nd If Blitzed for publishing AFTER 11 June, 2026

On Saturday, June 13th at 10:00am at the Venice Beach Lifeguard Headquarters, a memorial and celebrations of life full professional and military honors were held. A traditional Hawaiian ocean

paddle out into Santa Monica Bay waters Harold loved and served in, as part of his celebration of life at the same location immediately followed. Harold's family, historians, Lifeguard colleagues, watermen and many of his Teammates all stood in respect and prayers and fair-well's. It was all a combo of Harold: Upright and forth right, yet laidback smooth and relaxed as it was poignant. However in its joyous blessings it too was somber; a ceremonial milestone for the last living link who was molded by the pioneers who served as originators to US Naval Special Warfare; the last individual of the few who knew them and what they gave to it all, who himself did all he could in his lifetime with us to continue forth it's legacy today and into the future molding of those who will volunteer. Those in the future who will only know of the now swimming in heaven Frogman, named Harold in detail by this capsulation of his life.

Fair winds and following seas Harold. We're sure your adventure continues, you are sorely missed by all who knew you.