

One in a *Ver* Million

Meet Robert Amon

By Travis Gulbrandson
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After more than three decades serving his country, an area man found a new career through serving his inner bookworm.

Robert Amon is the owner of Foxtrot Books, located at 115 E. Main St. in Vermillion, a store that boasts more than 12,000 titles.

This comes on the heels of 33 years with the Department of Defense. Prior to that, Amon served two in the U.S. Navy.

He had been a regular customer at the store's previous incarnation, and took ownership last year.

"I was still working overseas, so my son came and made the arrangements," Amon said. "I came back in December, and I've been doing this every day, six

days a week for 10 months now."

The business "has its ups and downs," he said.

"Sometimes I get a lot of customers, sometimes I don't. I do most of my business online," he said.

Amon sells books in the Internet both through Amazon and AbeBooks.com.

"Everything is on the computer, so the first thing I do usually is check my e-mail, wrap up the books and go to the post office to mail them off," he said.

Originally from Long Island, Amon first came to South Dakota as a student at Yankton College.

"In those days many Easterners came out there," he said. "But the main reason I came back out here is, my wife is from Yankton. I like the slower pace, the cost of living, the much less

expensive lifestyle."

Prior to becoming a book-seller, Amon worked as a supply officer with the Department of Defense.

"Our job was to provide services to the fleet," he said. "I worked on tankers, which are like floating gas stations. My job was to see that the ship had everything it needed to keep it in operation - everything from food to engine parts. I was in charge of the fuel."

Remnants of his time as a supply officer are evident in the many pieces that decorate the store - from the pictures of some of the ships on which he served, to the awards on the wall above his desk, to the various artifacts he picked up on his travels.

The very name Foxtrot Books comes from his time with the

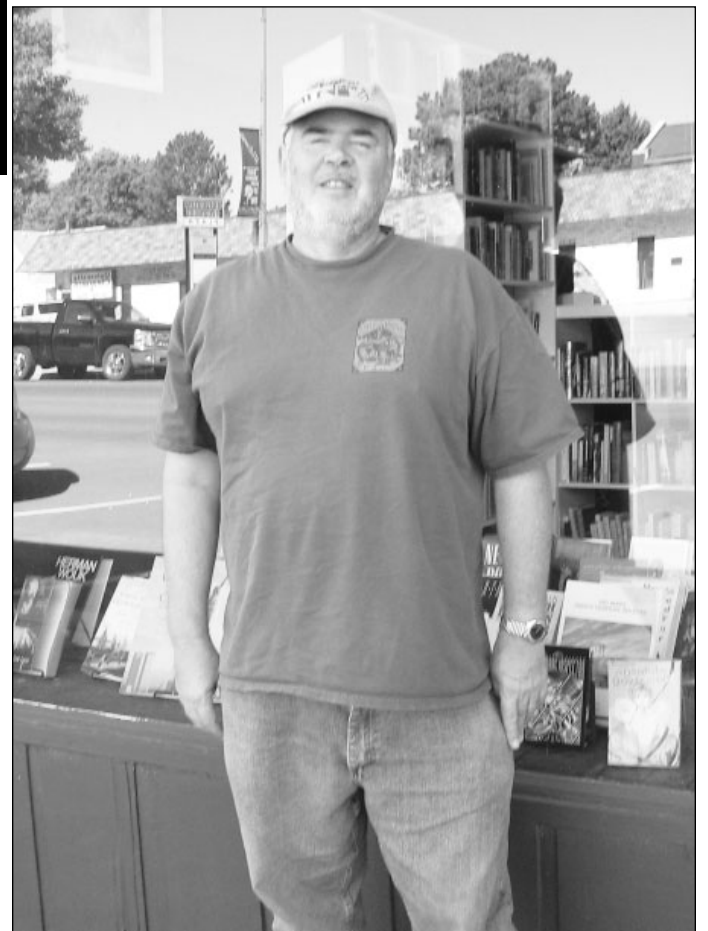
Department of Defense, he said, as the teams that replenish the ships are named in alphabetical order, from A to Z.

"Foxtrot was my team that was responsible for going on the tank deck and keeping track of the fuel that was being pumped," Amon said. "Since I spent the better part of 30 years on Team Foxtrot, I named the store Foxtrot Books."

Reading always was a big part of Amon's life.

"I come from a family of journalists, even though I never took to journalism myself, so there were always plenty of books in the house," he said.

Despite being a compulsive reader, he said it's hard to single out



(Photo by Travis Gulbrandson)

his favorite authors, although he did name James Michener, Gore Vidal and Leon Uris, among others.

"You name someone, and chances are I've read

them," he said.

Amon said he enjoys working at the store.

"I like working for myself," he said. "It's something new."

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