

RAYNOR ANDREW KENT TAYLOR



Rear Admiral Raynor A. K. Taylor, age 77, passed away September 3, 2013 from cancer and congestive heart failure. He died at his home in Virginia Beach. He was born to Raynor and Doris M. (Santos) Taylor in New Bedford, Massachusetts on December 22, 1935. He grew up with his loving sisters Jeanne and Lynne, and brother Jeffrey. He was a 1953 graduate of New Bedford High School where he excelled in math, physics and geography. He attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute on an academic scholarship for two years before earning a competitive Congressional appointment to the United States Naval Academy. As a member of the USNA Class of 1960 he was editor of the yearbook,

the Lucky Bag.

After graduation Ray married the love of his life Mary Jane Stevens of Newport News, Virginia. Together they enjoyed his thirty-three year Navy career which was always, both personally and professionally, rewarding and demanding. Rear Admiral Taylor was a nuclear trained Surface Warfare Officer. He served in the engineering departments of USS ABBOT (DD-629) and USS HOEL (DDG-13). He was Main Propulsion Assistant USS ENTERPRISE (CVN-65) and Executive Officer USS HALSEY (CG-23)

Command tours included Commanding Officer USS SEMMES (DDG- 18), Commanding Officer USS MISSISSIPPI (CGN-40) and Commanding Officer Surface Warfare Officers School. As COMCRUDESGRUONE he commanded the NEW JERSEY Battle Group, the Navy's first modern era battleship battle group.

Overseas tours provided lasting memories and learning. He was an Olmsted Scholar at the University of Grenoble, France 1967 -1969, earning a Diplome d'Etat in Political Science followed by a Masters of Arts in Area Studies from American University, Washington, D.C. From 1987 to 1989 he was J-3 (Operations) Headquarters US European Command in Stuttgart, West Germany. During Desert Storm, Rear Admiral Taylor served as Commander Middle East Force. In April 1991, he was assigned as Commander Naval Forces Central Command and led a successful multi nation effort that cleared over twelve hundred mines from the Northern Persian Gulf.

Upon retirement from the Navy in 1993, Ray and Mary Jane settled in Virginia Beach. Ray enjoyed a second career at the Innovation Center, Newport News Shipbuilding. Retiring again, he was quickly attracted to civic challenges. He became President of the World Affairs Council of Greater Hampton Roads. He then joined Future of Hampton Roads (FHR), a volunteer research and think tank organization that effectively seeks solutions to future regional level issues. He was named the Hampton Roads Regionalist of the Year in 2010 and the region's Military Visionary Leader in 2011.

Ray was recognized by all who worked with him for his depth of knowledge, attention to detail, focus, hearty laugh and love of life. He was generous with his time and talents and mentored many along the way.

Ray was a loving and faithful husband, father and grandfather. He is survived by Mary Jane, his beloved wife of 53 years, his sisters Jeanne McCullaugh of Plymouth, Massachusetts and Lynne Krebs of Marlborough, Massachusetts and his aunt, Mildred Blossom, of Fairhaven Massachusetts. He is survived by two sons, Raynor Lawrence Taylor of Arlington, Virginia and Andrew Kent Taylor, his loving wife Lili, and their precious children Michael and Michelle of Austin, Texas.

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