

VADM John W. Nyquist, USN Retired

Vice Admiral John W. Nyquist, USN (Ret) passed away on 4/9/21 at the age of 88 after a short but valiant battle with cancer and complications from Parkinson's Disease.

John was born in San Diego, CA, son of Rear Admiral Walfrid Nyquist, and Irma Beske Nyquist and moved with his parents and older sister Irene, to his father's various duty stations, including Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, where his father took command of Destroyer Division One and led his ships into World War II on that infamous day.

Growing up in the Navy as the son of a distinguished World War II destroyer squadron commander, it was natural for John to follow in his father's footsteps in a Navy career that focused on destroyers. Watching his father serve his country inspired him all of his life and he entered the Naval Academy in June 1951. He played varsity baseball, pitching a no hitter in his Plebe year. He graduated with the 16th Company in 1955.

Upon graduation, John served three years in the engineering department of USS OZBOURN (DD-846), followed by duty aboard USS PRIME (MSO-466) as Executive Officer.

In 1957, he married the love of his life, Penny Lyon of Menlo Park, CA. John and Penny were married almost 64 years before he passed. Penny was John's strength and stay throughout his life and career and he always said there was nowhere else he would rather be than with her. They have two children, Tom and Andrea.

He graduated from the Naval Postgraduate School in 1963 with a BS in Physics and then commissioned USS COCHRANE (DDG-21) as Weapons Officer.

Following a tour at ASW Force Pacific, John spent a year in Vietnam as a psychological operations advisor in IV Corps in Can Tho, then joined USS HORNE (DLG-30) in San Diego as Executive Officer. In 1971 he reported to BuPers and in 1972 stood up the Surface Warfare directorate in OpNav, OP-03, where he would serve a record five tours over 11 years, culminating in his assignment as Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Surface Warfare) from 1987 until his retirement as a Vice Admiral in 1991. He was best known for his role in bringing the ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG-51) class destroyer from the drawing board through Congress in the 80s, and to the fleet in the 90s.

His sea commands included USS SEMMES (DDG-18), Destroyer Squadrons 20 and 36, Cruiser-Destroyer Group FIVE and two carrier battle groups.

After retirement in 1991, John settled in Coronado, California and joined Trex Enterprises Corporation, serving for 10 years as Director of Operations. In 2000, he retired, but remained active in the defense industry as a consultant.

Throughout his retirement years, John was active in community affairs. He served a record stint of nearly six years as Chairman of the Board of Management of the San Diego Armed Services YMCA and was Chairman of the San Diego chapter of the Surface Navy Association for over 20 years. In January of 2020, John was inducted into the SNA's Surface Warfare Hall of Fame. He was also active in the Navy League, assisting in the commissioning of several new ships assigned to San Diego, including the USS SAN DIEGO and the USS CORONADO.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Penny; his son, Tom and wife Kelly, and his daughter, Andrea.

A memorial service will be held at City View Church, 8404 Phyllis Place, San Diego, on Friday, May 14, 2021, at 11 A.M.