

Rear Admiral Raymond Guy Zeller
Surface Navy Association

We are saddened to share the news that that Rear Admiral Raymond Guy Zeller of Coronado passed away on May 29, 2018. He died peacefully in his sleep at the Coronado Retirement Village where he had waged a brief but valiant battle with lymphoma.

Zeller was born July 28, 1937 in Olney, Illinois to Raymond Zeller and the former Lloyd Carver Redman, and grew up in nearby Lawrenceville. He obtained his NROTC naval officer commission in January 1960 after graduating from the University of Illinois at Champagne-Urbana where he met Britt, his wife of 58 years, and was a member of the Chi Psi fraternity.

Zeller had a distinguished naval career both in command at sea and ashore. He commanded three destroyers: USS WILLIS (DE-1027), the Mod Squad USS FURSE (DD-882), and USS BROOKE (FFG-1), Destroyer Squadron SEVEN, and Cruiser Destroyer Group THREE. In command of Battle Group FOXTROT embarked aboard USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65), in April 1988, Rear Admiral Zeller engaged the Iranian Navy during operation "Praying Mantis", the destruction of two Iranian oil platforms, which were known staging areas for terrorist attacks on Persian Gulf shipping. The 18 April operation was a "measured response" to the near-disastrous Iranian mine attack on USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (FFG-58) on 14 April and resulted in the destruction of two Iranian navy ships, and three armed speedboats. Praying Mantis was the largest naval sea battle since World War II.

Rear Admiral Zeller earned an Master of Science degree in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School in 1967 and subsequently served a year in Vietnam. He later had repeated tours on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations in the Pentagon, in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and as the Executive Assistant to the Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Hawaii.

Zeller retired from the Navy in November 1988 and joined General Dynamics Electronic Systems (later purchased by BAE Systems) in Rancho Bernardo, California. He subsequently became the Chief of Executive Officer of Helava Corporation, a joint US-Swiss company specializing in photogrammetry and aerial photography.

Always active in community service, Zeller was on the board of the ASYMCA, the City of Coronado Planning Commission, Coronado Mainstreet, and the Sharp Coronado Foundation Board. He is survived by his wife Britt, his brother James, Leslie and Todd Schwartz and retired Navy captain ophthalmologist Kristen and William Miller, and their four children. Memorial contributions in his name may be made to the Coronado Hospital Foundation or the Surface Navy Association Scholarship program. A Navy memorial service will be held at Fort Rosecrans on Wednesday, June 20th at 10:30 AM. A community memorial service and reception will be held at Christ Church Episcopal Church in Coronado at 11:00 AM on Saturday, June 23rd

