

Robert Victor Gamba



Captain Robert V. Gamba, USN (Ret.), died peacefully on 18 September 2019 with his family by his side. He was 80 years old.

“Bob” was born in Fort Lauderdale, FL, on 2 January 1939, but spent his childhood in White Sulphur Springs, WV. He graduated from Greenbrier Military School in 1956 and enrolled in the U.S. Naval Academy, graduating in 1960 with the 11th Company. He earned an MS degree in International Affairs from The George Washington University.

Highlights of Bob’s naval career include: tours on BECUNA, ETHAN ALLEN, SALMON and WAHOO; attendance at the Naval War College (1969-1970); aide to the chief of staff at Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (SacLant), executive officer of

RICHMOND K. TURNER; commanding officer of MILLER; attendance at the National War College (1980-1981); staff position at the Pentagon; and commanding officer for Fleet Combat Training Center, Pacific. He ended his career as commanding officer of Naval Station, Annapolis. Bob retired as a captain in June 1990, having served 30 years.

After the military, Bob entered the civilian work force and worked as senior vice president for Bullock Construction Inc. and as a procurement officer for the State of Maryland.

He met the love of his life, Joanne Speer Ehlers (widow of Ernie Ehlers '59), during his tour at SacLant. Joanne had four young children, whom he adopted and raised as his own. This was no small feat for a young bachelor. Their family grew to seven with the addition of their youngest daughter. No words can express how grateful we feel for Bob entering our lives as a husband and father.

Bob’s hobbies included fishing, hunting, watching sports, traveling, wine tasting, storytelling and spending time with his family.

Whether a new acquaintance or a lifetime friend, Bob always made you feel exceptional. Through his career, Bob and Joanne established an extensive military family, with whom they shared many laughs, travels and memories. This family loved and supported them throughout their years.

He leaves behind his wife of 46 years, Joanne; daughters, Mary Jo Laurin (Jack), Judianne Reynolds (Ronald), Charlene Della Ratta (Raphael) and Gina Phair (Joshua); son, John; 12 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

The Gamba Family