

Francis Daniel Kay



Commander Francis D. Kay, USN (Ret.), passed peacefully early on 14 August 2020 at his home from bone cancer.

“Frank” was born in Brooklyn, NY, on 15 October 1938 to Adam and Veronica Kay. After attending Brooklyn Prep, Frank earned an appointment to the Naval Academy in 1956. There, he made lifelong friends and was a strong member of Navy crew, winning the Intercollegiate Rowing Association Championships (1957 and 1958). He graduated and was commissioned as an ensign in June 1960. Frank first deployed on BLANDY in July 1960 as DCA, later joining the inaugural class at the Naval Destroyer School in Newport, RI. He

was re-assigned to GEARING (DD-710) in July 1962, engaging in the Cuban Missile Blockade. Naval Postgraduate and Amphibious School in California followed before being promoted to lieutenant and serving as an advisor to Vietnamese River Assault Group 28, commanding a PT boat and South Vietnamese crew. He was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in combat, Bronze Star (2) with Valor and a Purple Heart, as well as multiple citations from the South Vietnamese government.

Following combat duty, Frank was assigned to CCDF-2 in Newport, RI, followed by four years with CinCSouth in Naples, Italy. His final sea deployment came as XO aboard HAROLD J. ELLISON (DD-864) stationed in Virginia Beach. Shore duty included HRMC and director of Fleet Training Center, Norfolk, before retiring in February 1981.

In retirement, he raised his family and became a consultant with E.L Hamm, developing training programs and teams for U.S. Army’s Integrated Facilities System (IFS). These programs were deployed to Army bases all over the globe. In Virginia Beach, Frank was a community leader in the PTA, at St. Nicholas Church, and veterans’ organizations, earning an MEd from Boston University and teaching courses at Saint Leo’s College.

Fully retired, he became a Master Gardner, nurturing his passion for floriculture. He and Ruth enjoyed a quiet retirement. Francis D. Kay committed his life to service and duty with humility...always ready to help.

Frank is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, Ruth; sons, Michael, Christopher, and Timothy (Jennifer); grandchildren, Leanne (Patrick), Addy, Collin, and Emily, of whom he was very proud; and his sisters, Norah McLaughlin, and Sr. Francis Kay (RSHM). He was predeceased by his parents; brother, Walter; and sister, Irene.

September 2021 Shipmate