

Peter Jack Garfield

Commander Peter J. Garfield, USN (Ret.), of Jacksonville, FL, passed away peacefully on 6 October 2025. He was 89 years old.

Born on 14 September 1936 in Manhattan, NY, “Pete” was a gifted scholar, athlete and consummate gentleman. A graduate of the Bronx High School of Science, he leveraged his height and spirit as a varsity basketball player—losing a front tooth in the process. After a year at Vanderbilt University on a Naval ROTC scholarship, he joined his beloved U.S. Naval Academy Class of 1960 (“Super-Sixty”), proudly completing a West Point exchange program he recalled fondly each Army–Navy football game.

Commissioned with the 11th Company, Pete began his Surface Warfare Officer career aboard Little Rock (CLG-4). In 1962, he became the first U.S. naval officer to graduate from the NATO Mine Warfare School in Ostend, Belgium. Serving aboard several Anti-Submarine Warfare ships, he completed numerous cruises before returning to the Naval Academy (1965–1967) as Third Company officer while earning an MS from The George Washington University. His surface warfare career continued through 1976, including service aboard guided missile cruisers and destroyers, Vietnam War duty and culminating as Chief of Staff, Destroyer Squadron 17, in San Diego, CA.

The following decade included two tours with Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, in London, and leadership posts at Fleet Training Center Mayport, FL, and Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, VA.

Retiring in 1986, Pete began a second career in financial services, earning an MBA from the University of North Florida, along with multiple professional credentials. He took pride in helping clients achieve their goals with integrity and professionalism.

An active member of the Jacksonville Chapter of the USNA Alumni Association, Pete held numerous leadership roles and was devoted to mentoring future Naval Academy leaders. Known for his encyclopedic knowledge of Midshipman football, he watched Navy defeat Air Force from his hospice room on 4 October 2025—even singing along to “Anchors Aweigh” to mark the victory.

An avid reader, lifelong student, historian and “punter,” Pete delighted in marching his family and friends through London’s landmarks, European cities and horseracing venues and “bookmakers” throughout the United Kingdom. His favorite mug read, “When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life.”

Pete is survived by his beloved wife of 64 years, Phyllis; sons, Peter Garfield (USMC, retired) (Victoria) and Michael Garfield, Esq. (Shannon); and four grandchildren, Peter, William, Kelsey and Aimee.

November-December 2025 Shipmate