

Neal Gordon Parker

Lieutenant Colonel Neal G. Parker, USA (Ret.), passed away on 16 October 2025 in Hixson, TN.

Born in Decatur, AL, he was the son of Gordon and Ruby Parker. As a boy, he enjoyed Scouting, earning the rank of Eagle Scout. After high school, he attended NAPS for a year, reporting to Annapolis in 1956. At the Naval Academy, he thrived as a Navy crew coxswain. Upon graduation with the Class of 1960, he commissioned into the United States Army, where he served with distinction for two decades.

An Army Ranger, airborne officer and aviator, Neal flew UH-1 Iroquois “Huey” helicopters in Vietnam and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for valor during the Battle of Ia Drang Valley in 1965, one of the earliest major engagements of the war.

His assignments took him across the United States, Europe and the Middle East. He served at the Pentagon and NORAD, and he attended the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth and the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA. His overseas tours included Italy, Iran and Germany.

After retiring from the Army in 1980, Neal continued his service to the public. He earned a master’s in public administration from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government in 1988 and worked with the New York City Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority. He and his wife later made their home in Daphne, AL, and ultimately in Hixson, TN.

Neal is survived by his wife of 60 years, Joy; their sons (and spouses), Marc and Michael ’91 (Sue); daughter, Melissa; and grandchildren, Joanna and Luke.

Though he served proudly in the Army, Neal’s heart remained forever with the Brigade of Midshipmen. To the end, his rallying cry never changed: *Go Navy – Beat Army!*

He will be remembered as a devoted husband, father, and soldier whose intellect, humility, and steadfast sense of duty reflected the highest ideals of the United States Naval Academy and the United States Army.

The Parker Family