

Edward William Clexton



Vice Admiral Edward William Clexton, Jr., USN (Ret.), passed away peacefully at his home, June 16, 2026, leaving behind a legacy of exemplary leadership, distinguished military service, and unwavering devotion to family and country.

Born in Washington, D.C. November 14, 1937, Edward “Ed” Clexton was raised in Arlington, VA, alongside his five devoted sisters. Inspired by a profound sense of duty and following in the distinguished footsteps of his father, VADM Edward William Clexton, Ed answered the call to serve his nation by entering the United States Naval Academy in 1956. He graduated with the class of 1960 in the 10th Company and embarked upon what would become an extraordinary 34-year naval career marked by courage,

excellence, and achievement.

Following graduation, Ed married and began his naval aviation training in Pensacola, FL, mastering the demanding art of carrier-based jet operations. As his family grew, he relocated to San Diego, California, where he joined VF-143, the “Puking Dogs.” During the Vietnam War, Ed distinguished himself through exceptional valor and commitment, flying more than 200 combat missions. His service spanned the progression from junior officer to commanding officer, reflecting both his operational skill and leadership abilities.

Ed was selected to attend the prestigious Test Pilot School, where he earned the Top Student Certificate, a testament to his remarkable aptitude and professionalism. He subsequently flew primarily F-4 Phantom aircraft before returning for additional service in Vietnam.

Following his combat tours, Ed assumed command of the Diamondbacks at NAS Oceana and later Fighter Wing One, where he was entrusted with responsibility for all Atlantic Fleet F-4 squadrons. Demonstrating both versatility and dedication to the Navy’s evolving mission, he completed 18 months of intensive nuclear power education and was selected as the inaugural XO of USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69). This distinguished assignment led to his command of USS El Paso and, subsequently, his selection as the third CO of USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. Three years later, he attained the rank of Commodore and was assigned to the Pentagon as Director of the Naval Command Center (OP-64). Upon promotion to Rear Admiral, Ed relocated to Alameda, California, where he served as Commander, Carrier Group Three (COMCARGRU 3), a key Battle Group Commander assignment. He subsequently served as Operations Officer for the United States Atlantic Fleet before being selected for one of the most prestigious assignments of his career: Deputy Commander, United States Naval Forces Europe, headquartered in London.

Promoted to Vice Admiral, Ed served with distinction in Europe until his retirement in 1993. He regarded his years in London with particular pride and affection, often describing them as “a time of high esteem, almost magical.”

Following his retirement from active duty and faithful service to the nation, Ed began a successful second career with Price Waterhouse in New York City. He later settled in Virginia

Beach, Virginia, where he embraced retirement with characteristic enthusiasm, enjoying time on the links at Cavalier Golf and Yacht Club and cherishing the companionship of family and friends.

In 1999, he received another meaningful honor when he was inducted into the Golden Eagles, the elite fraternal organization composed of distinguished Navy and Marine Corps aviators.

Ed was preceded in death by his mother, Zita; his father, VADM Edward William Clextan; and his sisters, Zita, Judy, Mary, and Catherine.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 40 years, Catherine; his sister, Nancy Harlow; his children, Eric Clextan, Zita Fisher (Steve), Edward Clextan III, Lisa Schiederer (Mike), and David Clextan (Sandi); his stepchildren, Diane Pyle (Allen), Mark Inderlied (Kris), and Matthew Inderlied (Stephanie); and 16 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

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