



Commander David Anthony Hamel USN (Ret)

May 12, 1951 - February 21, 2024

Commander David Anthony Hamel, USN (Ret.) of Saint Augustine, FL, departed this world on 21 February 2024 at 72 years of age.

Born 12 May 1951 in Nuremberg, Germany to Paulette and Lt Col Richard Hamel, USAF (Ret.), Dave grew up in several cities and towns throughout the world as his family followed his father throughout his career. Dave and his family lived in Okinawa and eventually settled in Annandale, VA. Dave loved sports of any kind but especially loved baseball, football, and basketball. He graduated from Bishop O'Connell High School and after a year at Northern Virginia Community College, went to the Naval Academy Prep School in Newport, Rhode Island. He was admitted to the U.S. Naval Academy in 1971.

As a member of the 5th, 15th, 20th, and 34th Company, David spent his free time playing intramural sports. The highlight of his time there was starring in a production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. He graduated with the mighty class of 1975 with a Bachelor's of Science in Naval Science and English.

Upon graduation, David reported to NAS Pensacola, FL, for basic flight training. He found he liked the water a lot better than the air however, and instead opted for a re-designation to the Surface Warfare community. David's first warship was the Knox-class USS Cook (FFG-1083), homeported in San

Diego, CA. He cut his teeth first as the Machine Division Officer and would also hold the positions of Damage Control Assistant and Navigator. He remained in Southern California for his follow on tour and became a Surface Warfare Officer School Basic Engineering Instructor at Coronado, CA. While assigned there he taught damage control, ship handling and steam and turbine principles.

He moved on to be the Chief Engineer for the pre-commissioning and initial deployment of the Oliver Hazard Perry-class USS Rentz (FFG-46) in 1983. During this tour he completed his M.B.A. in Industrial Relations through National University. In 1986, he was proud to be part of an historic visit to Qingdao, China, the first US Naval visit to China since 1949. Rentz was accompanied by cruiser USS Reeves and destroyer USS Olendorf. The visit was officially hosted by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy.

Dave spent two years from 1987-1988 at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, RI as a resident student, completing his Masters in National Security Affairs.

In 1988, David assumed the duties of the Executive Officer and Chief Engineer of the Oliver Hazard Perry-class USS Curts. During this assignment his crew participated in Operation Earnest Will, where they protected Kuwaiti-owned tankers from Iranian attacks during the Tanker War phase of the Iran-Iraq War. Under his leadership, Curts was awarded the Arleigh Burke award as the most improved ship in the Pacific Fleet.

In 1990 through 1993, Dave completed a tour as a member of the Joint Staff J-4. While at the Pentagon he was responsible to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs for all U.S. military equipment pre-positioned worldwide. Most importantly during this tour, he was able to spend time with family (mother Paulette, sisters Paulette and Terry, niece Jessica, and nephews Drew, Colin,

and Matt) who resided close by in Northern Virginia.

In 1993-94 Dave completed ten months as a student at the State Department's School of Language Studies. He studied and became fluent in Indonesian. In 1994, he moved across the globe to work as the Chief of the Navy Division within the Office of the Military Attaché for Defense Programs at U.S. Embassy Jakarta. This would be his last posting and he retired on July 1st, 1995.

David's military awards included the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, two Navy Commendation Medals, the Joint Meritorious Unit Commendation Medal, Navy Battle "E", and the Navy and Armed Forces Expeditionary Medals.

Following retirement Dave moved to Northern Florida and would live and work on his next love, his 40 ft. schooner, "Windragon". He worked for the Florida Department of Transportation initially as a bridge tender and eventually moved on to the position of bridge tender District Manager until his retirement in 2012. He was proud to attend his nephew, Matt's commissioning at his alma mater at the Naval Academy in 2003 and would spend time with him during Matt's time in P-3C flight training in Jacksonville over several tours. After his final retirement, David lived in Saint Augustine, FL and had many hobbies. These included golfing, travelling, hanging out at the beach, cooking, playing guitar, and reading. He is survived by his sisters, Paulette Reagle and Terry Hobert; brother, Richard Hamel; nieces, Tracey Tibbetts and Jessica Reagle; and nephews Drew Hobert, Colin Reagle, and Matt Hobert.

Tribute Wall



“ *Fair winds and following seas, classmate.*

Jim Tenuto - March 05, 2024 at 01:04 PM



“ *Went on a 10 camping camping trip with Dave, John Riffiee and myself, Jon Duryee, right after his graduation from USNA in mid June of 1975. Went up through Maine into New Brunswick then Prince Edward Island on the ferry. Crewed out on a lobster boat one day from 3:00AM to 11:00 AM bought 20+ lbs. of lobster for .90 cents lb. Canadian. Then to Cape Breton Island and visiting Fort Louisburg. On to Nova Scotia and the Bay of Fundy, then back home to No. Va. It was a b and tons of. fun.last*

Jon Duryee - March 05, 2024 at 07:58 AM



Jon - what happened to Dave? Just now saw post from Riffiee from months ago.

Donna Pierce Leonard Winter - May 05, 2024 at 09:39 PM



Dave Hamel was a great, likeable guy. Talented, great friend and devoted to our country and friends that felt the same way. Such a sad loss and would like to know how we that loved him lost him. Pls share if you know how he passed. Thanks

Donna Leonard Winter - May 20, 2024 at 11:51 PM



“ 4 files added to the album *Trip with Dave after his USNA Graduation.*



Jon Duryee - March 05, 2024 at 07:39 AM

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“ *He was my neighbor and he was very interested man, he loved my Mexican food and listened about my culture. My son and I will miss him but he will always be remembered not only for all the presents he gave us but all his stories and lessons, he really liked the celebration of the day of the death so he will be invited and welcome RIP Dave we will miss you*

Julvia - March 04, 2024 at 04:04 PM