



Vice Admiral William L. Read

January 16, 2007

Vice Admiral William L. Read died on January 16th in Easton, Maryland after a long battle with cancer.

The son of Reginald A. and Martha L. Read, he was born in Brooklyn, New York on July 8, 1926 and grew up in LaGrange, Illinois. During his high school summers, he worked as a deckhand on a towboat on the Mississippi River. In February 1944, he enlisted as an apprentice seaman in the Navy V-5 flight training program. While waiting to begin flying, he attended the University of Illinois and Columbia University as well as various Navy training schools, and won a competitive senatorial appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy where he entered as a midshipman. He graduated in June 1949, was commissioned as an ensign and ordered to sea duty.

Bill served in various positions in destroyers, cruisers, and amphibious ships in both the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets. Throughout the "cold war" period, he sailed on numerous extended deployments to Europe, Africa, and the Far East including two tours in Viet Nam. He held five sea commands: the destroyer escort USS Van Voorhis, the guided missile destroyer USS King, a Destroyer Escort Squadron, a Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla, and ultimately, the Surface Force of the Atlantic Fleet.

His shore assignments included duty as Senior Aide to the Supreme Allied

Commander in Europe, Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel, and Director of Ship Acquisition in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. He is a graduate of the Naval War College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and earned a master's degree in Business Administration from George Washington University. His military awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Navy Commendation Medal, and the Distinguished Service Medal of the Republic of Viet Nam. His hometown of LaGrange honored him with its Distinguished Citizen Award and installed him in its High School Hall of Fame.

In 1979, Bill retired from active duty and, with his wife Marty, settled in Easton, a lovely town on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Shortly thereafter, he joined Lone Star Industries, as Vice President in charge of construction of cement plants and the production of concrete railroad ties. He later served on the boards of directors of Preston Corporation, Olin Corporation, and Bairnco Corporation.

Bill was active with the Easton Memorial Hospital, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, and the United Fund. He was interested in land use issues and controlled growth and was a founder and the first president of the Talbot (County) Preservation Alliance. He was a member of the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club, the Atlantic Council, and was a founding member of the Surface Navy Association. He was a lifelong Episcopalian and a member of Christ Church in Easton.

In retirement, Bill was an avid woodworker and was never happier than in his workshop at home in Easton. He and Marty also loved barge cruising on rivers and canals in France, and exploring the Chesapeake Bay on their trawler "Bluejacket". In recent years, they spent as much time as possible at their place on Barters Island in Maine.

Bill will be remembered by his family and friends for his unflagging good humor and optimistic outlook on life. He loved the Navy and his country, and always found joy and loving companionship in his beloved wife, Marty.

Bill is survived by Marty, his wife of 56 years, the former Martha Miller of Hinsdale, Illinois; his daughter Allison Read Walk of Portsmouth, Rhode Island; two sons, William L. Read, Jr. of Coventry, Rhode Island and Captain John A. Read, USN (Ret.) of Norfolk, Virginia; three grandchildren; and his brother Reginald A. Read, Jr. of Durango, Colorado.

Services will be held at 2 p.m. on January 23rd at the U.S. Naval Academy Chapel, Annapolis, Maryland. Donations may be made to the Talbot Hospice Foundation, 586 Cynwood Drive, Easton, Maryland 21601, and Memorial Hospital, 219 S. Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

Arrangements are by Fellows, Helfenbein and Newnam Funeral Home, P.A., Easton.

Tribute Wall



“ *Vice Admiral William L. Read*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Vice Admiral William L. Read*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Vice Admiral William L. Read*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM