

Rear Admiral Robert Burnett Rogers, U. S. Navy (Retired) 1931-2007

Rear Admiral Robert Burnett Rogers, United States Navy (Retired) died peacefully in his sleep at his Fernandina Beach, Florida home on December 7, 2007. He devoted his life to the service of his nation, his community, and his family. Bob Rogers was one of the few, unfortunately of a disappearing breed of men, totally immersed in the rigors of his profession dedicated to the premise that there is nothing more satisfying than going to sea in a sturdy ship with stout shipmates. Those many of us who were privileged to know him, serve with him, and work side-by-side with him realize we have lost a compatriot with whom we were allied in common cause. His humility belied his consummate skills across a broad spectrum of demanding naval assignments in which he applied a keen intellect and compassionate judgment as he led his sailors, peers, and his community to success. He is universally respected by a grateful Navy and Marine Corps Team for his contribution to its structure over a bright and rewarding career. Admiral Gary Roughead, now the Chief of Naval Operations, describes him as one “who was a great help to me at Naval Surface Force Command, Atlantic Fleet, an officer who loved his work, the Navy, and the sailors who served in the ships of the line. His calm demeanor and genuine interest in the sailors are among the hallmarks of his naval service.”

Admiral Rogers was born in Plainfield, New Jersey, May 25th, 1931. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1954 to begin his long career as Ensign, USN. His naval service spanned more than thirty years – during the time of the Cold War, war in Vietnam, and transition in the Navy. Early operational assignments included submarine school and USS Sablefish SS303, Commanding Officer USS Cahokia ATA 186, USS LaSalle LPD 3, and commissioning Commanding Officer of the USS Lamoure City LST 1194. There were demanding staff assignments as well, including US Naval Academy Instructor, Defense Intelligence School, Staff of Commander U.S. Military Advisory Command, Vietnam, Naval War College, Naval Aide to the Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps and Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Amphibious Group Three. During those early years he found time to earn a Master of Science Degree from George Washington University with a subspecialty in naval intelligence. As a young Captain he became the Fleet Intelligence Officer at the headquarters of the Pacific Fleet, working closely with the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence Admiral Bobby R. Inman – later the Director of the National Security Agency – who remembers Bob Rogers as “ calm, thoughtful, and of great intellect.” The Commander-in-Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet, Admiral Maurice Weisner, then chose him as his Executive Assistant, an assignment of great import. He served as the CINC’s close advisor and was highly

valued by his staff for his coordination of matters affecting several staff divisions. He returned to sea in 1977 as Commanding officer of USS Austin (LPD 4), the lead ship of that Amphibious Transport Dock class. He followed that tour as Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations, Plans, and Intelligence at the Naval Surface Force, Atlantic Fleet, and then in 1980 became the Commander Destroyer Squadron Eight at Mayport Naval Station, Florida.

In 1981, he married Marolyn Templeton Fierro and was selected as Rear Admiral, USN. Bob returned to Norfolk in August 1981 where he served as ACOS of Plans Policy & Intelligence SACLANT. He subsequently returned to headquarters of the Naval Surface Force, Atlantic Fleet, as Deputy Commander, where he served for two years before selection as Commander Amphibious Group Two at Norfolk, Virginia, in 1983. It was in this assignment that he became the modern day leader in amphibious warfare, joining Generals Al Gray and Carl Mundy, each later serving as Commandant United States Marine Corps, in advancing tactical applications of the Navy-Marine Corps Team. His pride in and devotion to Marines – as he liked to describe them – “the main battery of his amphibious ships” – was equal in every respect to that bestowed on his sailors. He was affectionately described by senior Marine commanders who served with him as “a true Marine in ship’s clothing”. Admiral Rogers remained in that important assignment for nearly three years. In 1986 he became the Director of Logistics for CINCLANT and subsequently retired in August.

Admiral Rogers’ vast experience as a surface warfare officer in the United States Navy, his roles as exemplary leader of sailors and innovator in amphibious warfare, his steadfast dedication to his nation and his community are all legacies that will long survive. For his distinguished military service he was awarded the Legion of Merit with 4 Gold Stars, the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star, Joint Service Commendation Medal and Navy Commendation Medal. He stood high among that special breed of American sailor described as “iron men who go down to the sea in ships.”

In retirement, Admiral Rogers became active in the local community affairs of Fernandina Beach, Florida and was elected a Commissioner and Mayor of that city, and continued to contribute to its general welfare. He served, as well, as a founding board member of the International Motor Racing Research Center, located in Watkins Glen, NY, an organization dedicated to the heritage and preservation of amateur and professional motor racing, highlighting Sports Car, Formula 1, NASCAR, Dirt Track, Indy and Vintage and Historic racing.

Admiral Rogers was preceded in death by his parents, Jack Willoughby Rogers and Margaret Snyder Rogers, his beloved stepmother Jeri Rogers, and eldest son, Robert Burnett, Jr. He is survived by his wife Marolyn, sons Steven (Susan) and John (Tabitha), daughter Kathryn Peterson (Brad), stepson Gary Fierro, stepdaughter Sandy Fierro, numerous grandchildren and one great-grandson. He is also survived by his sister, Joan Campbell of Melbourne Beach, Fl and his beloved cat "Troubie" who shared his life and was a constant companion for almost 15 years.

Interment will be at Arlington National Cemetery.

<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org/>

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<http://www.legacy.com/TimesUnion/GB/GuestbookView.aspx?PersonId=99207481>