

Joseph Brian Mueller
CAPT Gold Commanding Officer
1977-1981



Joseph Brian Mueller, 81, husband of the late Mary Yvette Gonzalez Mueller, passed from this earth to Heaven peacefully at his home near Charleston, SC, on Monday, December 31, 2018.

Joe grew up on a small poultry farm near the Mt. Hood National Forest in beautiful western Oregon. He was for the most part the only farm hand and learned to work hard, taking care of the chickens and eggs, picking strawberries, and driving both the farm tractor and hay hauling truck when he was twelve. After high school, Joe spent a couple of years of undergraduate studies at Portland State and Santa Clara Universities and some US Forest Service time. He enrolled at the US Naval Academy in 1957. Joe was assigned to the 9th Company throughout his 4 years. He was a member of the varsity Wrestling Team and led his battalion tennis team to the intramural championship. Joe graduated with distinction in 1961 and was presented his diploma by President Kennedy in June of that year.

Joe met his future wife, Mary, in 1960 on a blind date at homecoming, while he attended the Naval Academy and she attended Notre Dame College in Baltimore. They were married in 1962, and remained so until Mary's death in 2013. Joe and Mary's family was, and is, tri-cultural. Mary was born in Puerto Rico. During their Navy years they lived, with their 3 children, in San Diego, CA, Groton, CT, and Charleston, SC. Rebeca, a program manager at the Medical University of SC, met and married her husband, Anh Toan Ho, in Viet Nam. She lives in the Charleston area with Toan, a restaurant owner, and son Joseph (JT), a gifted musician. Stephen met and married his wife, Phuong, in Vietnam. They live in Vietnam with their two sons, Brian and Ben. Stephen and Phuong started and own a tour company that features tours, throughout Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand, riding on Vespa motorbikes. Kenneth is not married. He also lives in Vietnam and is involved in exports and imports and transportation projects.

Joe's Naval career spanned 30 years of the Cold War. After a year and a half of nuclear and submarine training, Joe reported in 1963 to USS Scamp SSN588, probably the fastest submarine in the world at that time. Joe served on 6 nuclear submarines, eventually commanding USS Henry L Stimson SSBN655. Joe also had 2 tours on submarine squadron staffs where he helped train the crews and commanding officers of fast attack submarines in the squadron. Joe's last command was USS Holland AS32, an afloat depot and submarine repair ship with more than 1,000 men and women engaged in every activity required to support a squadron of SSBNs and crews; repairs, re-supply, medical and dental, torpedoes, missiles and nuclear warheads. After his tour in command of Holland, Joe finished his Navy career at the staff of Commander, Submarine Force Atlantic where he was the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations.

When Joe retired from the Navy, he and his family continued to live in the Charleston area. Joe and Mary built their dream house, on a tidal creek, with a dock and fishing boat. The dock was completed first, then the house. He worked for 25 more years for two large technology companies engaged in the management of research projects. He found time to devote to a deep engagement for more than 30 years with a worldwide catholic charity, St. Vincent de Paul, whose mission is helping individuals and families in need. He founded the St Benedict conference of St. Vincent de Paul in Mt. Pleasant about 15 years ago. Joe also was busy in the local US Tennis Association leagues, where one of his teams won the state championship in Men's 70+ doubles league. He and a Navy buddy were undefeated at the subsequent Southern Championships. Besides his family and charity work, Joe's greatest passion was fishing. He and Navy and local friends spent hundreds of hours, many at night, catching shrimp, flounder and redfish in the tidal creeks around Charleston. He joined another group of friends for fishing trips along the Pacific Coast of Oregon and Alaska, pursuing salmon and halibut.

After Mary passed away, Joe traveled the world, often with travel buddies, exploring more than 30 countries. Joe enjoyed life to the fullest, especially his work with St Vincent de Paul helping those in need, primarily in the rural areas of the South Carolina Low Country. A memorial mass will held at St. Benedict Catholic Church on Friday, January 4, 2019 at 11:00 am. Joe will be interred with Mary at Mepkin Abbey, a Trappist monastery, in Moncks Corner, SC.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial contribution can be made to St Vincent de Paul, St Benedict parish, 950 Darrell Creek Trail, Mt Pleasant, SC 29466.

