



Michael E. Flenniken
CDR Commanding Officer
B 1988-1991
ETERNAL PATROL: May 6, 2026

Michael Flenniken Obituary

FLENNIKEN - U.S. Navy Capt. Michael E. Flenniken (Ret.), of [St. Marys, Ga.](#), went on eternal patrol May 6, 2026.

Born in 1944 in [Houston, Texas](#), to Joy (Hathcock) and Elmo Flenniken, Mike graduated from Austin High School in El Paso, Texas, attending New Mexico State University before reporting to San Diego, Calif., as a Navy recruit in 1964. There, he launched a 32-year military career culminating with the command of the ballistic nuclear submarine USS Henry L. Stimpson (SSBN 655B), while rising to the rank of Captain, O-6.

As a part of the elite and tight-knit Silent Service, his generation of submariners were instrumental in winning the Cold War and bringing about the end of the Soviet Union. Following boot camp, Mike was selected for the Navy's NESEP program, sending him to the University of Nebraska to study engineering. Graduating in 1971 Mike survived the infamous "Admiral Rickover interview" to enter the nuclear navy as a newly commissioned ensign. Mike returned to the fleet, earning his dolphins on the USS Guitarro (SSN 665) in 1973, also attaining the rare "Mustang" moniker for sailors that move from the deckplates to the wardroom.

Mike then completed several rigorous undersea warfare and nuclear power schools. After serving on the USS Tecumseh (SSBN 628) and then earning a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., he was assigned as Navigator on the USS Thomas Jefferson (SSBN 618B), then as Executive Officer on the USS Baltimore (SSN 704) and the USS Francis Scott Key (SSBN 657B), then finally as Commanding Officer of the USS Henry L. Stimson (SSBN 655B) from 1988-91. Following staff command posts at COMSUBGRU FIVE San Diego and Pensacola Naval Air Station, Mike retired in 1996.

Mike loved retirement as much as the Navy. An avid golfer, Mike attended the Masters Tournament, and soon after, he fulfilled a dream with a rare invitation to play Augusta National. Mike treasured time on the water and rooting for his beloved Huskers and home-state Cowboys.

Mike is survived by his wife of 58 years, Joyce (Paas) of St. Marys; son, Joseph; daughter, Catherine; granddaughters, Makenzie and Eliza of Atlanta; brother, Bruce Ponder of San Antonio, Texas; and sister, Suzan (Flenniken) Fannin, and brother, Mark Flenniken of Lubbock, Texas.

Mike will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery with Allison Funeral Home handling the arrangements. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the St. Marys Submarine Museum, P.O. Box 5640, [St. Marys, GA](#) 31558.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](#).

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