



Captain Ross A. Word USN (Ret.)

May 2, 1947 - June 4, 2018

Captain Ross A. Word USN (Ret), age 71, passed away Monday, June 4, 2018 at his residence.

Born May 2, 1947 in Honolulu, HI, he was the son of the late Colonel William E. Word, USMC (ret) and late Thalia Hettama Word. Mr. Word proudly served his country in the US Navy and was a Veteran of the Vietnam War. He served 25 years as a Combat Vet. He was awarded 5 Air Medals, 3 Navy Commendations with combat, and a Distinguished Flying Cross, also earned in combat. Following his retirement, he worked as an instructor with Horry County Schools NJROTC as an SNSI (Senior Naval Science Instructor) for 20 years. Mr. Word was a member of the Masonic Conway Lodge No. 65.

Surviving are his wife of 33 years, Susan Greenhalgh Word of Conway; two sons, Stephen Word of Phoenix, AZ and William Word of Myrtle Beach; four daughters, Leah Word Peterson of Hudson, OH, Julia Word Casper of San Antonio, TX, Jacqueline Word Neumann of Wake Forest, NC, Thalia Word of Roanoke, VA; six grandchildren; in laws, Captain William and Dianne Greenhalgh of Myrtle Beach; one brother, Kenneth Word of Honolulu, HI; and two sisters, Leslie Bateman of Tacoma, WA and Sydney Beckett of Eureka, CA.

Memorial services will be held at a later date.

Please sign an online guestbook at www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com

Goldfinch Funeral Home, Conway Chapel is in charge of arrangements.

Tribute Wall

TS

“ It has been many years since Capt. Word has passed. He was a great mentor, and some of the most fun I had in my life was playing for coach Word and learning from Capt. Word. I went on to have a long career in the Marine Corps. He taught me so much about leadership! Fair winds and following seas Sir!



Tony Speedling - May 27, 2025 at 11:20 PM

JA

“ To the family of Ross Word, my cousin. I only met you one time I can recall, when you were teenagers, with your family living in Hawaii and most of the other Words living on the mainland. But we had reconnected on Facebook, and I was enjoying getting to know you and see photos of your lovely family. My heart-felt condolences to all of you. I lost my husband, Stephen, unexpectedly less than a year ago. I know the pain you all are experiencing from his sudden passing. Prayers, Janice (Word) Morris



Janice - July 13, 2018 at 12:46 PM

RS

“ Gonna miss you Capt. you taught me a lot an was proud to be your LTJG. Weapons Officer.

Raekwon Sumpter - June 15, 2018 at 06:19 PM

JD

“ Rookie, I miss you. Loved serving with you. You were always a bedrock and fun to be around.

*Thanks for the call sign/nickname,
Dink*

Jim Dickey - June 15, 2018 at 04:05 PM

HD

“ Suzi,
Barbara and I were deeply saddened by the sudden death of your husband Ross. As a fellow MOAA member, we considered him a friend. His leadership of the Chapter and dedicated work with the JROTC program made a great contribution to the community. We will remember Ross as a kind, personable man and great fellow officer. God bless!

Hans and Barbara Duerr

Hans Duerr - June 14, 2018 at 08:27 AM

CH

“ *Susie, I pray God's comfort and strength for you during this time of loss and always. Chaplain Greg Hill*

Chaplain Greg Hill - June 14, 2018 at 08:18 AM

LC

“ *The Three Musketeers. During 2 Med cruises onboard USS Independence in VA-176 in 1982 and 1983-84; that’s how 3 of us were known: Rookie Word, Krank Kraemer and myself Fog Cleghorn. We took care of each other on and off the ship. I did not know either but Rookie was the detailer who put me there and Krank was my BN and roommate. They both are sadly missed. My prayers and best wishes to Rookie’s family and friends.*

*R,
Larry “Fog” Cleghorn*



Larry Cleghorn - June 13, 2018 at 02:36 PM



“ *Ross, as cousins I am sorry that I never knew you better. I remember meeting you in 1965 when your family made a trip to the Southern California mainland. You were staying in Oxnard with Uncle Bob and Aunt Nadine. You led a proud and brave life in service to the U.S. Navy.*

*Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea!*

Rest in Peace, Ross

David Word, North Richland Hills, Texas

David Word - June 12, 2018 at 06:24 PM

MF

“ Hi Susie,
I am very sorry for your loss. I had the great experience of serving with Ross on board USS Enterprise as members of VA-196. Ross was one of my roommates in a somewhat infamous JO bunk room. It was here that he earned the life long nickname of "Rookie". Through all the razzing he received from us, Rookie never took offense but always reacted in his naturally good hearted manner. I am very happy that the nickname stayed with him throughout his distinguished Naval career. Ross was a special man and I am a better person for knowing him. God bless to you and your family,

Mike Fischer (Fischly)

Mike Fischer - June 12, 2018 at 01:30 PM

AL

“ A great loss to us all. I served with "Rookie" in VA-128 along with many others. We were quite a group! Rookie was as good a man as there was.

Allen Lundy

Allen Lundy - June 12, 2018 at 01:17 PM

JM

“ Sincerest sympathy to Rookie's family and friends. He is and remains a legend in the Intruder community. His unique leadership style and humanity influenced and helped many. He did more than his bit in this world and you can be proud of his legacy and rejoice in the many great memories he helped create for others.

Sincerely,

The Beav,

Jerry Manthei

One of Rookie's in VA-176

Jerry Manthei - June 10, 2018 at 09:30 AM

GA

“ Captain Word was my NJROTC instructor at Carolina Forest High. I was there during the first year of the program and learned a great deal from him. He was a great instructor and would help anyone out that he could. He and SCPO did and awesome good with the Program and had a lot of newbies to deal with, but they never let it show that we probably gave them more than a few headaches.

Gary - June 09, 2018 at 12:17 PM

C(

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Capt Skip Krause, USNR (ret) - June 09, 2018 at 09:34 AM

C(

I served with Rookie when he was VA-176 T-Bolts XO & Skipper....a great Aviator, a great Naval Officer, a great Leader...a better husband, father, grandfather, and friend....RIP Intruder! Thank you for your service to our Nation in War & Peace...God Bless you and your family....

Capt Skip Krause, USNR (ret) - June 09, 2018 at 09:34 AM

BL

“ As my Navy Blue & Gold Officer, he changed my life forever! His dedication and love for his students is truly unmatched! Thank you sir!



Brian Livingston - June 08, 2018 at 09:14 AM

BR

“ I served onboard the Independence (CV-62) when Ross was a LCDR or CDR, can't recall which. But he was a fine example of a Naval Officer and treated his Enlisted shipmates with respect & dignity. He will be greatly missed. Keeping all his friends and family in prayer. - Brooke Ridge, HM2, USNR (Ret.)

Brooke Ridge - June 08, 2018 at 08:01 AM

DS

“ Susie, children and grandchildren:

I had the opportunity to serve with Captain Word in Vietnam, in Attack Squadron 196. After family, those I served with remain the most memorable and remarkable people in my life. Rookie was one of them. In very difficult and testing times, he was as fine a man as I ever met. I cannot remember, in very difficult circumstances, Rookie ever changing, ever deviating, or not smiling. I am sorry for your loss.

Sheply, aka Doug Shepherd

Doug Shepherd - June 07, 2018 at 10:25 PM

WS

I served with Captain Word on USS Enterprise with Attack Squadron 196.

He was a fine man, good friend and will be missed.

Whitey Sorenson

Whitey Sorenson - June 08, 2018 at 09:02 AM

Jl

These are my favorite comments on my dads passing. He was so kind, smart, empathetic, hard working and gave everything he could to his family, his job and his students. I'm looking forward to meeting everyone whose lives he touched at his memorial ❤️

julie isaacson - June 08, 2018 at 08:39 PM

RD

“ *As a decorated Viet Nam combat veteran, it was indeed an honor and a privilege to serve with "Rookie" Word. To this day I fly (Private) wearing a pair of "brown aviator boots" he gave me when XO of VA-176- Thunderbolts on the "USS INDEPENDENCE -CV-62). Rest in Peace with God's Angels my friend and mentor. You will be missed by many and never forgotten.*

To the family, may God continue to strengthen each of you during this most difficult time. You share our deepest condolences and know that CAPT "Rookie" Word was truly one-of-a-kind special to us all!

Commander Bob "Dizzy" Dean USN(ret)

Robert Dean - June 07, 2018 at 09:39 PM

JA

“ *From a KHS 65 classmate and a brother Vietnam Veteran (USMC) rest in peace.*

You served your country, family and friends well my brother. Rest in Peace.

Jay Allen

Jay Allen - June 07, 2018 at 07:29 PM

L(

“ It is a testament to Rookie's friendliness, that even though we didn't serve in the same squadrons, I smile when I hear his name. We were in Whidbey Island and Oceana at the same times. My condolences to the Word family.

LCDR Davy Thorn, USN (Ret.) - June 07, 2018 at 06:55 PM

DB

“ Proud to have served with Rookie, he and I were squadron mates in Attack Squadron 196 in USS Enterprise. He was a respected warrior, a proud patriot and wonderful human being. Fair winds and following sea my friend. God Speed

Commander David M Brennan USN (ret)

David M Brennan - June 07, 2018 at 05:11 PM

DO

“ One of the finest Naval Officers that I have ever had the pleasure to serve under. XO of VA-176, the Thunderbolts, at the time. Graciously welcomed me into the Ready Room as a temporary replacement BN to cover an umnplanned move. Epitomized leadership and comaraderie. Never saw him without a smile. Rookie...remember Palma 1986. I will. To the family, my thoughts and prayers are with you during these tough times. I can guarantee he is in a good place smiling down on us all. He made a difference and he will be missed.

RIP my friend...Dave Ott "Otter", CAPT USN(ret)

David Ott - June 07, 2018 at 05:03 PM



“ *Capt. Word was a very intelligent and kind instructor. I learnt alot while in high school under his teaching which influenced my decision to join the U.S. Navy. He will be greatly missed! Fly high with the angels!!*

Sheena Davis - June 07, 2018 at 02:55 PM



“ *Capt Word was an inspiring and kind instructor to my daughter in the NJROTC program, and a dear friend of our family. He will be greatly missed. Our most heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Word and their children and family.*

Niki Gawith - June 07, 2018 at 12:51 PM



“ *VFW Post 7735 members enjoyed our assisting in the recognition of the Outstanding Cadets in Captain Word's NJROTC Program at Carolina Forest. He was a pleasure to work with and always the consummate gentleman. I also acknowledge his Masonic Brotherhood in Conway Lodge #65. Prayers for strength for the family and may he rest in peace forever, So Mote It Be, Amen!!! CB Deal, Post 7735/ Seaside Masonic Lodge #419*

CB Deal - June 07, 2018 at 11:48 AM

WU

“ Thanks for your service Sailor and Fellow Vietnam Vet !!!
Wayne Williams
United States Marine Corps



Wayne Williams - USMC - June 06, 2018 at 07:32 AM

HA

Captain Word was my NJROTC Instructor at NMB HS. Capt. Word was the reason why I wanted to join the the best navy in the world. Rest In Heaven, Sir! Heather Augustine Class of 03

Heather Augustine - June 07, 2018 at 01:41 PM

TJ

Rookie was my first skipper in A-6's. He was always positive, uplifting and generous. His love for his family was a driving force in his life. I will never forget the large "Babe" on the nose of his plane on the flyoff in 1987. Fair winds and following seas skipper. TJ

Tom Jones - June 07, 2018 at 10:41 PM



Rookie was a VA-128 "RAG" instructor in 1976, the Bicentennial Year. He was always enthusiastic and respectful of us nuggets - Fleet Replacement sticks and B/N's - learning the A-6 systems and tactics from experienced vets like him. Never flew with him but he was a big influence on our class. What a great guy! Phil Conroy, VA-115 1976-1979, USS Midway.

Philip Conroy - June 07, 2018 at 11:06 PM

SA

Having the pleasure of serving with Captain Word in VA-115 (NAF Atsugi, Japan and aboard CVA/CV-41) my memory serves me in remembering how practical and respectful Captain Word was towards his sailors. I recall many occasions of his attitude and demeanor towards all whom served with him commanding a presence of respect. Captain Word had a deep respect for the Uniform and our United States of America. May God Bless you Captain Word and may peace be with your family.

AMECAW (Ret) Steve Makoski

Steve Makoski, AMECAW(RET) - June 08, 2018 at 07:21 AM

SH

“ Sharon sent a virtual gift in memory of Captain Ross A. Word USN (Ret.)



Sharon - June 05, 2018 at 03:33 PM