

From: Cox, Samuel J SES USN NHHHC WASHINGTON DC (USA) <samuel.j.cox4.civ@us.navy.mil>
Sent: Thursday, July 28, 2022 8:16 AM
To: samuel.cox@navy.mil; Cox, Samuel J SES USN NHHHC WASHINGTON DC (USA) <samuel.j.cox4.civ@us.navy.mil>
Cc: Sam Cox <sjcox80@verizon.net>
Subject: Passing of RDML William E. Terry, USN (Ret.)

Fellow Flag Officers,

It is with deep regret I inform you of the passing of Rear Admiral (lower half) William Edwin "Bill" Terry, U.S. Navy (Retired) on 10 July 2022 at age 82. Bill entered the U.S. Naval Reserve in June 1961, was commissioned in April 1963 and served as a Naval Aviator flying helicopters until his retirement in October 1994 as Commander Combat Logistics Group TWO. His other commands included Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron EIGHT, Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron TEN, USS OKINAWA (LPH-3,) and Amphibious Squadron SEVEN. He flew 32 combat missions during three Vietnam War deployments; he was awarded a Silver Star for rescuing three survivors from two downed aircraft under heavy enemy fire in March 1966.

Bill Terry attended Adams State College and Colorado State University on a football scholarship, before enlisting in the U.S. Naval Reserve on 28 June 1961, entering the Naval Aviation Cadet program on 31 August 1961. Following initial instruction at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, he commenced flight training at Saufley Field, Pensacola with Training Squadron ONE (VT-1) flying the T-34 Mentor. In April 1962 he reported to Whiting Field, FL, flying the T-28 Trojan with VT-2 and VT-3. He conducted carrier qualification in the T-28 with VT-5, and also flew the TC-45J Expeditor as part of Basic Training Group TEN (BTG-10.) In early 1963, he reported to Ellison Field, FL for training in Helicopter Training Squadron EIGHT (HT-8.) He was honorably discharged on 15 April 1963 and the next day was commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserve, to rank from 16 September 1962, and was designated a Naval Aviator.

In April 1963, Ensign Terry reported to the Naval Justice School, Newport, RI for Legal Officer Training. In July 1963, he then reported to the H-3 Replacement Squadron, Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron TEN (HS-10) at NAS Imperial Beach, California. In January 1964, he reported to HS-4 at NAS Imperial Beach. He was promoted to lieutenant (junior grade) in March 1964. He deployed with HS-4 as part of ASW Carrier Air Group FIVE FIVE (CVSG-55) embarked on USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10,) departing Long Beach in October 1964, conducting air strikes into North Vietnam in February, March and April of 1965 before returning to Long Beach in May 1965. After a short turn-around, YORKTOWN deployed again in January 1966 to the Gulf of Tonkin.

Lieutenant (junior grade) Terry would be awarded a Silver Star for action on 14 March 1966, when another aircraft was shot down and the two aircrewmembers ejected in coastal waters under enemy fire. LTJG Terry's Silver Star citation stated, "He unhesitatingly flew toward the area to

undertake the rescue of the downed airmen. As he approached the area, another aircraft attempting to affect the rescue was also shot down by deadly fires from the enemy coastline, an offshore island, and enemy boats. Despite recommendations from other pilots on the scene that he not attempt the rescue, he flew his aircraft through the heavy and accurate enemy mortar and automatic weapons fires to rescue all three survivors of the two downed aircraft.” He was promoted to lieutenant in April 1966, augmented from the Naval Reserve in June 1966, returning to Long Beach with YORKTOWN in July 1966.

In October 1966, Lieutenant Terry reported to HS-10 at NAS Imperial Beach as an instructor pilot in the H-3. In July 1969, he returned to an operational squadron, Helicopter Combat Support Squadron ONE (HC-1,) deploying as Officer-in-Charge of HC-1 (Search and Rescue) Detachment 4, embarked on USS HANCOCK (CVA-19,) for a Tonkin Gulf deployment. He was promoted to lieutenant commander in October 1970. Despite the halt to Operation Rolling Thunder, aircraft from HANCOCK struck surface-to-air missile and air defense targets in North Vietnam on 21-22 November 1969 (Operation Freedom Bait) in reaction to North Vietnamese firing on unarmed U.S. reconnaissance aircraft; HC-1 Det 4 provided SAR support to the operation. In May 1971, Lieutenant Commander Terry reported for duty under instruction to the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government (International Relations) in 1974 and a Master of Science degree in Management in 1974.

In December 1974, LCDR Terry reported to HS-10 at NAS Imperial Beach for refresher training in the H-3, before being assigned in June 1975 to HS-6 at Imperial Beach as Maintenance Officer. In February 1976 he assumed duty as Executive Officer for the Helicopter Replacement Squadron, HS-10. In January 1977, he assumed duty as Executive Officer for an operational squadron, HS-8. He was promoted to commander in January 1978, and in May 1978, CDR Terry assumed command of HS-8. During his tenure HS-8 was awarded the Isbell Trophy (best ASW squadron in the fleet) and the Admiral Jimmy Thach Award. In July 1979, CDR Terry was assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS OKINAWA (LPH-3) as Air Officer, then Operations Officer, and then Executive Officer, finding time to fly the UH-1N during a Western Pacific and Indian Ocean deployment that included a port visit in Mombasa, Kenya. In October 1981, CDR Terry assumed command of the replacement squadron, HS-10, at NAS Imperial Beach.

In February 1983, CDR Terry reported to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as Branch Head, Career Programs Branch (OP-136.) He was promoted to captain in October 1983. Following a short period under instruction at Surface Warfare Officers Schools Command in Newport, in January 1985 he assumed command of USS OKINAWA for a deployment to the Western Pacific, including a port visit to Perth, Australia. In August 1986, he reported to Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group ONE (COMCRUDESGRU 1) as Chief of Staff, the first helicopter pilot to fill that position. He made two Battleship Battle Group deployments to the Western Pacific, the first on USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62) and the second on USS IOWA (BB-61.)

In October 1987, CAPT Terry assumed command of Amphibious Squadron SEVEN (PHIBRON 7,) which was established in 1986 as a Readiness Squadron homeported in San Diego. In August

1989, he returned to the Pentagon in the Office of the CNO as Deputy Director, General Planning and Programming Division (OP-80B.) He was selected for flag rank in December 1989. In May 1990 he reported for joint equivalent duty to Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe (CINCSOUTH) as Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics. He was promoted to rear admiral (lower half) on 1 February 1991.

In July 1992, RDML Terry assumed command of Combat Logistics Group TWO, based in Norfolk, responsible for 11,000 personnel and 26 ships providing logistics support to the fleet. RDML Terry retired from active duty on 1 October 1994.

During his career, RDML Terry flew 5,753 flight hours, 5,000 of them in the H-3 (making him the all-time H-3 flight hour leader.) He made 1,865 rotary ship landings. In addition to the combat rescue in Vietnam, he made six non-combat rescues during his career.

RDML Terry's awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (two awards,) Meritorious Service Medal (three awards,) Air Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Unit Commendation, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Battle Efficiency Ribbon, Navy Expeditionary Medal (Korea,) National Defense Service Medal (two awards,) Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal (five campaign stars,) Sea Service Ribbon (four awards,) Overseas Service Ribbon (two awards,) Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Honor Medal First Class, Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Expert Rifleman Ribbon, and Expert Pistol Shot Ribbon.

Following retirement from active duty, RDML Terry worked for DBM and Wells Fargo Securities. He wrote over a dozen fiction and non-fiction books, including an autobiography. He was a Naval Aviation Golden Eagle. He was also a former Naval Helicopter Association (NHA) President, NHA lifetime member #17, the 2005 Life of Service to NHA Award winner, and the 2020 NHAHS/NHA Captain Mark Starr Pioneer Award recipient.

Memorial Services will be held 8 August 2022 at 12 PM at Miramar National Cemetery.

Within Rear Admiral Terry's stellar career is a lesson for junior officers – that your moment of truth may come very early. Lieutenant (junior grade) Terry met this moment by flying "unhesitatingly" into the teeth of intense enemy anti-aircraft fire, with no regard but to rescue three comrades from two downed aircraft (one shot down before his eyes.) His display of courage was rewarded by a Silver Star, but more importantly by three lives saved, and the gratitude of their families. He would go on to save six more lives in non-combat rescues during his career, a lifetime accomplishment that is hard to top and something few outside the helicopter (and medical) communities ever get to experience. He also demonstrated that it is possible to stay in San Diego for almost an entire career and still get promoted; although that has to be tempered by the fact that, although homeported in San Diego, he spent many long years and months deployed at sea away from family, including three Vietnam deployments and 38 combat missions, which in an SH-3 is particularly dangerous. He achieved multiple firsts in

his career, including the first helo pilot as a chief of staff for a cruiser destroyer group. The recognition of his squadron command (HS-8) as the best ASW squadron in the fleet was an amazing accomplishment and a testament to his superb leadership. He was described by those who knew him as an incredible helicopter pilot, essentially one-with-the-machine (and 5,000 hours in the H-3, the all-time record, is testament to that.) But he was also a superb leader, mentor – an unassuming officer who was incredibly proud of his family, his Navy and his country – and we should all be incredibly proud of his service, and grateful to his family for enabling that dedicated service.

Rest in Peace Admiral Terry

Very respectfully,

Sam

Samuel J. Cox (SES)

RADM, USN (Ret)

Director of Naval History

Curator for the Navy

Director Naval History and Heritage Command

Samuel.cox@navy.mil

202-433-2210 (work) 571-213-9392 (govt cell)