



Rear Adm. Ronald Lee Christenson USN Ret.

NOV 11, 1947 - AUG 25, 2023



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When the orders for immediate transfer came early, Rear Admiral “Rabbit” Christenson departed the pattern for his permanent duty station on the Lord’s staff in heaven on August 25, 2023, entering into travel status, suddenly, at his home in Leesburg, VA, where he had been executing his previously directed retirement with his accustomed and well-documented aplomb.

Designated Ronald Lee Christenson upon his worldly arrival on November 11, 1947, Ron honored that name with an outstanding work ethic which led to significant academic and athletic recognition, including, but not limited to, leading Mt Morris High to a Michigan football state championship and garnering offers from Dartmouth and Navy, entering the latter in June of 1965.

Shortly after matriculating, though the actual date and circumstance is shrouded in the mists of time, he became known as “Rabbit”, a moniker which has endured. Rabbit was a Navy footballer for all four years, wore academic stars throughout, and established his position as a true leader.

He graduated in 1969, with a BS in aerospace engineering and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, which he quickly converted into a Master’s degree at Cal Tech. Continually demonstrating his breadth of talent as a true renaissance man, he complimented his academics by joining his wife Mackie as finalists on The Newlywed Game.

Rabbit then attended Naval Flight School and was designated a Naval Aviator in 1971, with his first stop at H-3 Readiness Training and assignment to Antisubmarine Squadron 15 aboard USS Guam (LPH-9).

Thereafter, in 1975, he reported to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 1, Patuxent River, MD, followed by selection as an exchange pilot, serving with United Kingdom Royal Navy, as a Sea King pilot, in Squadrons 820 and 706, Royal Naval Air Station, Culdrose, England. His next duty



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station was Administrative and Maintenance Officer, Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 5, aboard USS Dwight D Eisenhower (CVN-69); After a tour on the staff of Commander, Sea Base ASW Wings Atlantic, he became Executive and then Commanding, Officer , Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 7, aboard USS John F Kennedy (CV-67). In 1986 he reported to Naval Personnel Command as Aviation Enlisted Assignment Officer. He entered the Nuclear Power Program in 1988, in preparation for his assignment as Executive Officer, USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) in 1990. The carrier participated in Operation Desert Storm, Operation Desert Shield and Operation Provide Comfort. After assuming Command of USS Dubuque (LPD-8), Sasebo, Japan, in 1992, he returned to USS Theodore Roosevelt as its Commanding Officer, serving from 1994 through 1996. His final active-duty station was as Head, Carrier Programs and Aviation Manpower and Training Branches, Washington, DC.

Upon retirement from the Navy, Rabbit joined Lockheed Martin, where he served in a number of influential posts, most notably as Group Managing Director of United Kingdom Integrated Systems, headquartered in Chichester, England. Rabbit departed the Lockheed Martin warren in 2011, but his retirement was from formal employment only, as he pursued his fishing and hunting activities, oil and gas and realty investments, golf with the Jim Calvert Group of the USNA class of 1969, Asian rug and “Blue Coyote” art collecting and traveling with his family and friends, with the same zeal that made him such an exemplary Naval Officer and corporate executive. In 2013 he was Baptized and Confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church. He was also a Trustee of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, the Sports and Athletic Program board of the Naval Academy Foundation and a member of the National Helicopter Association. He was constantly a man in productive motion. In the words of Toby Keith, Rabbit never “let the old man in.”

Rabbit’s parents, Roy and Dorothy (Evelyn) Christenson, of Mt Morris, Michigan, preceded him in death. He is survived by his spouse, the love of his life, Mackie, the former Sharon McIntyre, two sons, Stephen Scott Christenson and Martin Alexander (Marty) Christenson, of Alexandria, Virginia and Franklin, West Virginia, respectively, and his brothers, Gerald Bruce (Jerry) Christenson, of San Antonio, Texas, and James Craig (Jim) Christenson, of Fair Play, South Carolina.

A visitation will be on Friday September 1, 2023 from 6:00PM to 8:00PM at Loudoun Funeral Chapel, 158 Catocin Cir. SE, Leesburg, VA 20175.



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A catholic funeral mass will be held on Saturday September 2, 2023 at 11:30am at Saint John the Apostle Catholic Church, 101 Oakcrest Manor Drive, Leesburg, VA 20175.

In Lieu of flowers, Memorial donations can be made in Rabbit's Honor to [The Theodore Roosevelt Association](#)

Rear Admiral Ronald Lee Christensen, Ret. will be laid to rest at the United States Naval Academy on November 9, 2023 at 10:30AM.



Events

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Visitation

 **Friday**, September 1, 2023

 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET


 **Loudoun Funeral Chapel**
158 Catoctin Circle, S.E., Leesburg VA 20175


- ① Additional parking can be found on: South Street (to the right of our building) Summit Community Bank
Ketterman's Jewelers

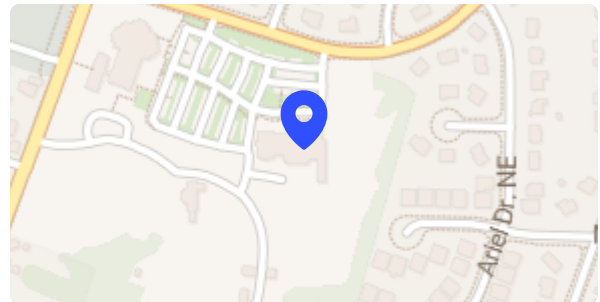


Catholic Mass

 **Saturday**, September 2, 2023


 11:30 AM ET


 **Saint John Apostle Catholic Church**
101 Oakcrest Manor Drive NE , Leesburg VA 20176

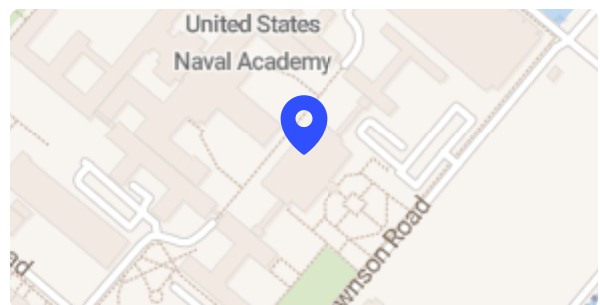


Graveside Service

 **Thursday**, November 9, 2023

 10:30 AM ET

 **United States Naval Academy Cemetery**
101 Cooper Road, Annapolis MD






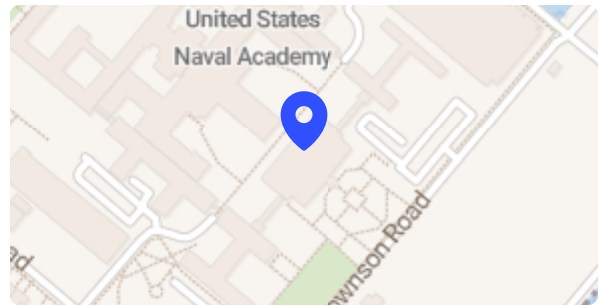
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Cemetery Details

 **United States Naval Academy Cemetery**
101 Cooper Road, Annapolis MD





Tribute Wall

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Daryoush Malekzadeh sent a virtual gift in honor of Ronald.

Him and his family invited International students to their home. I was honored to be chosen one of them. His family picked me up at Airport and treated me with respect. It was Christmas time. I visited most of the historical buildings. They invited me to the party as we exchanged some gifts. His wife gave me a Bible at the end of my trip. I am sorry for losing such a great gentleman who left a legacy behind. I never forget my American family and their hospitality. 🙏❤️Dar. Malekzadeh.



April 3 at 7:06 PM



John Zimmerman posted:

Worked with Ron at Systems Integration in Owego, NY...he was a wonderful friend. I was sorry to find this obit. - John Zimmerman

July 10 at 12:52 PM



Felicity Webber Nee Prowse posted:

So sorry to hear this news. Always had to stand two steps up on the staircase at Tretheague to talk to Rabbit eye to eye. My love and condolences to his family Love Felicity ❤️

January 16 at 12:26 PM



Jc Harding Capt Usn (Retired) posted:

I just found out about the Admiral's passing when I read "Shipmate" last night...I am utterly shocked and offer my deepest condolences. He was my XO on THEODORE ROOSEVELT, and truly the most memorable! My favorite memory was when he asked during our Desert Storm cruise if my parachute riggers could make him a punching bag to hang in his stateroom so he could privately work out his frustrations - of course, we obliged to ensure we kept the XO happy. He was one of the best leaders and Naval Officers I've ever had the pleasure to work for, and I mourn his passing. God bless y'all real good!

December 21 at 6:38 AM



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SD

Scott Dickinson posted:

My father, Philip Dickinson, always spoke fondly (and often with much amusement) of Rabbit and time working spent together in the Royal Navy and I know was pleased to call him a friend for the duration of their Naval careers on each side of the Atlantic and beyond. Condolences to his family but a salute to a life well lived.

October 7 at 2:07 PM

LB

Liz Baxter lit a candle in honor of Ronald.

Ron was a truly valued leader during his assignment in the UK. His engagement with all aspects of the business with genuine interest and attention made him a very hard act to follow. I will always have very fond memories of him and send deepest condolences to Mackie, Marty and Scot.

September 5 at 4:03 AM



BD

Barbara Dixon lit a candle in honor of Ronald.

I'm ever so thankful for all Rabbit did to support the work that Mackie has done to support the Pro Life Republican Party efforts. As a leader he also was a most humble servant to those who served. I pray for & send my love to the Family♥️✝️

September 2 at 5:48 AM





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John Gradowski posted:

I graduated with Ron from Mt Morris High School in 1965. As we were both identified as going to college and it was a small school, we were in the same classes with the same group of students from about 1958 through 1965. Teachers would come and go, Junior High changed to High School but Jerry, Ron, Cheryl, Pam, Ken, Tonya, Dennie, Mike, Gary, Jim, Maryanne and others would be there with you in class sitting in alphabetical order year after year. It was the late 50's and early 60's. It was structure and stability. And then we graduated and we all went in separate directions. While I saw Ron only twice in the past 58 years, I did hear about his career in the Navy. I knew he graduated high in his class at the Academy, that he flew helicopters and he commanded an aircraft carrier. That last point to me is absolutely stunning. I can not imagine the education, the experiences or the responsibilities one has to master in order to be qualified to command an aircraft carrier. Your passing Ron has been a jarring experience for all of us who knew you from Mt Morris. We are stunned that we now have lost you. I guess in the back of my mind I always thought you would be the last one of us standing. You are gone to soon Ron. My condolences and prayers for all of your family and friends during this time of great sadness. Your friend, John Gradowski

August 31 at 3:07 PM



Mike Hough posted:

As a classmate of Ron's, we became great friends while at the Academy....it is noteworthy to know that he had from the very beginning the greatest respect from not only his classmates, but those above and below him throughout out school years....Ron served as a personal and professional role model for all who were lucky enough to know him and work with him throughout his entire career....as his imprint on all of us has lasted a life time not only as a Naval Leader but also as a standout in industry.....We are better leaders, husbands, and fathers for the experience of knowing him and serving with him....and to be his friend was "Priceless"!He will be missed but not forgotten..... Mike Hough

August 31 at 1:03 PM



Melanie shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.



August 31 at 5:51 AM



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Andrew Roosevelt posted:

I only remember meeting the Admiral briefly last fall but was exceptionally impressed with his intelligence, humor and openness. And his height...My deepest condolences

August 30 at 7:38 AM



Loudoun Funeral Chapels shared an album called **Memories Album.**



August 30 at 6:56 AM



Anonymous sent a Sentiments of Serenity Spray to the Christenson family.



August 30 at 4:06 AM



Marta L. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Ronald.



August 29 at 8:28 AM



Ted And Vally Gloukhoff planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Ronald.



August 29 at 8:09 AM



Ted And Vally Gloukhoff sent a Dreams From the Heart Bouquet to the Christenson family.



August 29 at 8:09 AM



Media

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Melanie shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.

August 31 at 5:51 AM



A fond farewell from your UK team



Media

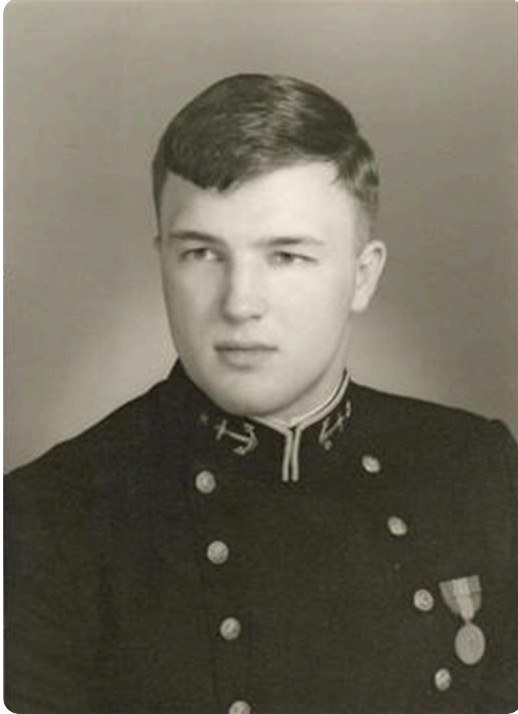
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Loudoun Funeral Chapels shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.

August 30 at 6:56 AM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Ronald by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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