

Thomas Joseph Solak



Colonel Thomas J. Solak, USMC (Ret.), died on 8 April 2025 in Alexandria VA.

“Tom” was born 19 December 1938 in Chicago, IL. At Weber High School, he played football, and the team won the 1965 Chicago Catholic League Championship. Recruited by the Navy director of athletics, he was accepted into the USNA Class of 1960 (Second Company). Tom played football all four years. As a Firstie, he was an Honorable Mention Academic All-American.

Upon graduation, Tom was commissioned into the U.S. Marine Corps and served nearly 30 years. Tom was assigned to Hawaii, Norfolk and then to Monterey for language school (Vietnamese). He

went to Vietnam, followed by Okinawa and back to the Naval Postgraduate School, majoring in electrical engineering. Tom taught engineering at the Naval Academy. He then served as a battalion commander at Camp Lejeune and deployed to the Mediterranean. Tom ended his military career at Marine Corps Headquarters.

Tom’s decorations include the Legion of Merit, Navy Commendation Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, RVN Cross of Gallantry, RVN Campaign Medal and the Expert Rifle Qualification Badge.

As a civilian, Tom served as a legal administrator at Walsh, Colucci, Lebeley & Walsh, during which time he made many lasting friendships.

A devout Catholic, Tom practiced his faith by singing in church choirs wherever he lived, including the St. Robert Bellarmine Chapel at George Mason University. He volunteered for the Catholic Business Network for Northern Virginia as President and Communication Chairman, Board of Trustees.

Tom was active in his Old Town Alexandria community, including serving on the Architectural Review Board. He is remembered as a man who loved his country, his church, his family, the Marine Corps and Navy football. He enjoyed tailgating with Class of 1960 and supported Trustee. He was designated as a trustee emeritus in 2024.

Tom is survived by his wife, Jeanne; his children Scott (Ketlen), Jamie (Scott), Heather (Michael) and Sarah (Paul); four grandchildren; his siblings, Jack (Barbara), Therese (Robert) and Leonard (Barbara); and Jeanne’s children, Cynthia and Michelle and their families. His first wife, Thomasetta Czajkowski, predeceased him.

July-August 2025 Shipmate