Commander Raymond Peter Swanson (USN Retired) 79, of LaGrange, passed away on Wednesday, January 29, 2020. He joined Navy in September 1958 and rose through the enlisted ranks to Chief Petty Officer (E-7). He graduated from diving school in 1962 and Explosive Ordnance Disposal in 1963. He served as a Diver and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician aboard various ship and stations prior to becoming a Warrant Officer in 1967. In 1966 and 1967 he was an instructor for the Navy, Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force for advanced demolition procedures. From 1967-1969 he was the Officer-In-Charge for Explosive Ordnance Disposal Teams in the Republic of Vietnam. From 1969-1971 he was stationed in Kodiak, AK, and was the Officer-In-Charge of the Explosive Ordnance Detachment responsible for underwater explosive ordinance disposal and operations in Alaska. The Detachment received the highest grade of any Pacific Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment. In 1971 he became the Diving Officer and Instructor for the Naval School in Indian Head, MD and served in that role until 1974. In 1974 he moved to Washington, D.C. and served with the Navy Experimental Diving Unit. He was responsible for research, development, test and evaluation of diving and related underwater equipment used by Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Underwater Demolition and SEAL Team divers. While in D.C., he completed his Master’s degree in Mechanical Engineering at The Catholic University of America. Beginning in 1979 he served as the Group Material Officer and Staff Salvage Officer for the Submarine Development Group One in San Diego, CA. In 1982 he become the Supervisor of Diving for the United States Navy and the Weapons System Acquisition Manager. During this time, he oversaw the entire United States Navy Diving program encompassing deep sea, salvage, saturation, special warfare, explosive ordnance disposal, underwater construction and ship’ husbandry diving. He served as Supervisor of Diving until 1986. In 1986 he became the Executive Officer of the Naval Ordnance Station in Louisville, KY. He became the Commanding Officer of the NOSL and remained in this role until his retirement in 1989. Raymond Swanson retired from the United States Navy as a Commander (O-5) after serving 31 years. He received numerous medals and awards for his heroic service including; the Bronze Star with Combat “V” for heroic achievement, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Unit Commendations, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Good Conduction Medal, National Defense Medal,
Vietnamese Service Medal, Civic Action Medal, Vietnamese Gallantry Cross, Vietnamese Civic Action Medal, Vietnamese Campaign Medal, Expert Rifleman, and Expert Pistol. After his retirement he served in various roles, including; Engineering and Management Consultant and the Executive Director and Treasurer for the Uniform Boiler and Pressure Vessel Laws Society. He joined the Rotary Club, becoming the President, became a member of the Pewee Valley Masonic Lodge #829, Knights Templar, becoming the Grand Commander of the Knights Templar for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Red Cross of Constantine, Louisville Scottish Rite, Oldham County Shrine Club, and VFW Post #1170. Preceding him in death were his parents Vincent and Agnes Swanson. Survivors include his loving wife of 57 years, Susan Swanson; daughters, Jeanette and Christine Swanson; grandchildren, Kimberly Marie Frangesh, Victoria Lynn Frangesh, Kathryn Ann Ellis (Sam) and Calla Beach Ross (Christopher). A Celebration of Life will be conducted at 2 PM on Saturday, February 8, 2020, at Heady-Radcliffe Funeral Home with visitation from 11 AM until service time on Saturday. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made to the EOD Warrior Foundation or Kosair Charities.

Ace Thrift

President, Navy EOD Association

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