



Mr. Edward L. Therrien

April 27, 1939 - September 23, 2025

Edward Louis Therrien, 86, of Castle Rock, Washington passed away at home on September 23, 2025. He was born on April 27, 1939, a son of the late Lawrence and Mabel (Girardey) Therrien. He graduated from Lee High School in 1957 where he was the senior class valedictorian. He was one of only three Berkshire County recipients that year of a full NROTC academic scholarship. He attended Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in June 1961. While there, in addition to his studies, he was also a member of the pistol team, the Navy drill team and the NROTC battalion staff. Following graduation, he was commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy, thus beginning an extensive career as a Navy officer. He served on various ships and shore stations throughout his long career, beginning with a four-year stint onboard USS The Sullivans (DD-537). During that time, he was in the Gunnery Department when the ship patrolled inside Guantanamo Bay harbor during the 1962 Cuban Missile crisis. He was also serving on The Sullivans as she was one of the search and rescue ships for the nuclear submarine USS Thresher which sunk with the loss of all hands in 1963. It was not until he returned to port when he learned that a close friend from Holy Cross had been onboard the USS Thresher, having reported one day before the sinking. USS The Sullivans, named after the five Sullivan brothers who were lost on the cruiser USS Juneau in World War II, was retired in 1965, and eventually was brought to Buffalo, NY where it attained historic landmark status as part of the Naval Park there. A poem written by Ed on the

occasion of the ship's 21st birthday is still on display in the exhibit area of the ship.

After The Sullivans tour, he served for two years as an instructor in Naval Tactics at Officer Candidate School in Newport, RI. Near the end of that tour, he was selected for Vietnam duty in riverboats and spent 1967 attached to the Mobile Riverine Force in Vietnam's Mekong Delta. His unit supported soldiers of the Army's 2nd Brigade of the 9th Infantry Division during incursions against the Viet Cong. He barely survived a near-drowning when he was knocked off one of the boats in full battle gear and was unconscious when found tangled in a fishing net in the Rung Sat Special Zone, south of Saigon.

Following his Vietnam tour, he spent a few months at Quonset Point, RI while awaiting a tour as Executive Officer of USS Thomas J. Gary (DER-326) in Key West, FL. The highlight of that tour occurred when USS Gary shadowed the Soviet Fleet during their first incursion into the Gulf of Mexico in 1969.

Following a later tour in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, he went to sea with the USS Guadalcanal (LPH-7) in charge of the Deck Department and later as Operations Officer. It was in this capacity that he was promoted to full Commander. He was then assigned to USS Juneau (LPD-10) as Executive Officer for two years, during which time he qualified for his own command at sea. Then, following a short shore tour in Coronado, CA where he was responsible for training and evaluating crews of amphibious ships and boats for readiness, he became Commanding Officer of USS Shasta (AE-33) in 1979. It was in this capacity that he guided USS Shasta in the Indian Ocean in the Naval response to the Iranian hostage crisis. It was also during this command tour that the ship and Captain Therrien personally were recognized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the rescue of over 200 Vietnamese "Boat People" in the South China Sea.

His final Navy tour was in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-01) where he coordinated the design and development of a Navy Manpower Management program which is still in use by the Navy today. For this effort, he was awarded the Legion of Merit. Finally retiring in 1984 as a full Captain after

a long Navy career, he and an old friend traveled around the country for seven months before settling in Chula Vista, CA where he intended to live out the rest of his retirement. After nine years, he tired of constant sunshine and the lack of seasons and moved to the Pacific Northwest just north of Castle Rock, WA, a small town very similar to his hometown of Lee. During his time in Castle Rock he discovered a talent for woodworking and for landscaping his two acres of property. His slightly off-center sense of humor came to the fore most notably in his annual Christmas letter, "Mistletoe Missives from Mossy Meadows", which were favorably compared to the writings and storytelling of Dave Barry and Garrison Keillor. He had many funny stories from his time in the Navy and the memories of those will live on in family lore for generations. He was proud of his time serving and fighting to defend freedom for all. Captain Therrien leaves behind his brother Thomas Therrien and his wife Regina of Clarksburg, his nephews Thomas Therrien, Jr. and his wife Jenn and their daughter Nora of Savoy, Lawrence Therrien and his wife Sherri of Belchertown, Michael Therrien and his son Benjamin and daughter Katelyn of Adams, and Robert Therrien, Jr of Lee as well as many friends and extended family. He was preceded in death by his partner Tom, his parents and his younger brother Robert Therrien.

A Liturgy of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Tuesday, October 28th at 10:00 AM in St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church, 70 Marshall St. North Adams. Burial with Military Honors will follow in St. Mary's Cemetery, Lee, MA.

Relatives and friends are invited. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Elizabeth's Church, 70 Marshall St. North Adams, MA 01247.

The PACIOREK FUNERAL HOME, Adams, is assisting with arrangements. To leave a message of condolence, or for directions, please go online to www.paciorekfuneral.com

Cemetery Details

St. Mary's Cemetery

Spring St.
Lee, MA 01238

Previous Events

Liturgy of Christian Burial

OCT 28. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church
Marshall Street
North Adams, MA 01247

Tribute Wall

JM

“ I worked for Ed at the Tactical Division at the Officer Candidate School when Ed was transferred to Viet Nam. Never realized he was shipboard searching for the USS Thresher. My memory of Ed is from 1966-1969 and I always liked him. So glad he made a career out of the Navy as so many didn't. He will be in my prayers as will be his family. Jill Alford Moran, 1907 Savona Pkwy West, Cape Coral, FL 33914

Jill Alford Moran - May 08 at 01:46 PM

KS

“ I am so very sorry to hear of Ed's passing. We had such a great relationship for the past several years. We told shared lots of personal information and our ancestry info. He was a great help to me finding info on our families. I am heartbroken with this news. I miss you, Ed. RIP my dear, dear friend.



Katherine Storti - January 05 at 04:41 PM

TK

“ Theresa Kennedy lit a candle in memory of Mr. Edward L. Therrien



Theresa Kennedy - October 23, 2025 at 09:59 AM



I am so sorry to learn of Ed's passing. I have been trying to track him down for many years. He was one of my instructors as I went through USNOCS at Newport RI. He was there at my graduation and helped send us off to our first duty stations. I just re-read a 3 page letter he sent me 11 April 1967. In that letter, he gave me a detailed breakdown of everything he endured after being blown overboard in action and having nearly drowned. I never heard from him again. All I knew was that he intended to stay in and pursue a career path. He was a really great guy, and I have always considered him as a mentor. RIP, Ed, and thank you!

Jim Keil - March 01 at 11:32 AM



Thanks for writing this Jim...Ed was a great guy and always nice to hear that he positively impacted people during his service.

Larry Therrien - April 20 at 04:48 PM