



Rear Admiral Thomas R. Richards

Rear Admiral Thomas R. Richards was born in Bay Shore in 1947, and attended St. Patrick's Elementary School before attending Bay Shore High School. Upon graduation from Bay Shore High School in 1965 RADM Richards accepted a Naval Reserve Officers Training Center scholarship to attend Villanova University in Pennsylvania, one of four 1965 graduates to earn a Naval ROTC scholarship.

While at Bay Shore High School, many faculty and staff influenced his education and success including chemistry teacher Cliff LaPlatney and Coach Ericson, to Assistant Principal Mr. William Thieben, Geography teacher Mr. Skiptunas and English teacher Ms Graffe, covering the spectrum of sports and academics. Their leadership and example built upon the moral compass imprinted on him by his father, Inspector A. Russell Richards, of the Suffolk County Police Department.

At Villanova there was no wrestling team in the 60's so he pursued weightlifting, placing third in the national Collegiate Championships in 1969. While at Villanova he got his first introduction to Navy Underwater Demolition Teams and SEALs.

Upon graduation from Villanova in 1969 his first assignment was to the Basic Underwater Demolition / SEAL Training Command as a student, the start of a 30 year career as a SEAL. While frequently viewed as the most physically demanding program in the military he quickly saw that mental focus, sacrifice and self discipline were even more important to success.

Rear Admiral Richards saw combat in Vietnam, El Salvador and the Persian Gulf, receiving awards from the Purple Heart and Bronze Star to the Defense Distinguished Service Award.

Throughout his career he Commanded Special Boat Unit Thirteen, SEAL Team One, the Naval Special Warfare Center and Naval Special Warfare Command, with over 5,500 personnel, more than 20 subordinate commands and a budget over \$550M a year.

Upon retirement in 1999, RADM Richards served as a Senior Vice President with the Afognac Corporation and served on and subsequently as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Navy SEAL Foundation. He is currently the Vice president and Senior Military Advisor for Juliet Marine Systems.

RADM Richards and his wife, the former Jacqueline J. Jones of Ontonagon, Michigan, have been married for 42 years.

