



Robert Wayne Nelson Jr.

August 11, 1950 - January 23, 2023

Captain Robert W. “Brick” Nelson Jr., a resident of Coronado, CA and a veteran of the Cold War, the War on Terrorism and the wars in Iraq and the Balkans, passed away surrounded by family and friends on January 23rd, 2023 at age 72 after an extended illness.

Brick, as he was known by just about everyone, was born August 11th, 1950 in Spokane, Washington to Robert W. Nelson and Dorothy Estelle Nelson. After moving to Newbury Park CA, he attended Thousand Oaks High School where he played varsity football, was an outstanding track athlete and was Senior Class President. Following graduation from California State University, Northridge, he entered the U.S. Navy to become a pilot. He earned his wings of gold as a Naval Aviator in 1976 and was assigned to Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore, California to fly the A-7E Corsair II. His next duty station was NAS Beeville, Texas where he was an advanced jet instructor and Landing Signals Officer (LSO) flying the A-4 Skyhawk. After this

tour, Brick returned to sea duty as the Airwing LSO onboard USS Midway (CV-41) stationed in Yokosuka, Japan.

Captain Nelson was hand selected to be among the first East Coast Strike Fighter pilots to transition to the FA-18 Hornet. He later became an instructor pilot flying and training at NAS Cecil Field, Florida and NAS Fallon, Nevada. He subsequently served as an aviation squadron department head embarked in USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71).

After his department head tour, Captain Nelson served ashore as the Commander, Naval Air Forces Atlantic's FA-18 Program manager. He later served as the Commanding Officer of an operational Strike Fighter Squadron. Following his command tour, Captain Nelson was selected for and assumed command (CAG) of the Airwing embarked in USS Enterprise (CVN-65). His next duty station was as a Senior Fellow for the Chief of Naval Operation's (CNO) Strategic Studies Group in Newport, RI, followed by assignment as the Deputy Director of the CNO "DEEP BLUE" office in Washington D.C. Captain Nelson retired in 2005.

During his 31 year Navy Career Captain Nelson accumulated over 8,000 flight hours and more than 1,400 carrier arrested landings. His awards include the Legion of Merit (two awards), a Bronze Star, two individual air medals with 'V' for valor and numerous strike

flight air medals
for combat operations.

After retirement from active duty, Rob returned to the Los Angeles area as the Director of Northrop Grumman's Aerospace Business Development and Strategy. Subsequently he became the Northrop Grumman Corporate Lead Executive in the San Diego region, an area that has the largest concentration of military in the United States. While in San Diego, he volunteered as a board member for the San Diego Navy League, Fleet Week San Diego, San Diego Military Advisory Council, Tailhook Association and Tailhook Educational Foundation. At the 2022 Tailhook Convention, Brick was honored as the recipient of the Tailhook Association's Lifetime Achievement award. He also was a member of the Early and Pioneer Naval Aviators Association, ("Golden Eagles").

Brick was the quintessential strike- fighter pilot. He was loved and respected by his peers for his expertise, professionalism and unwavering loyalty to those with whom he served. His exceptional talents were too numerous to list but are recognized by all. Rob was a true friend who will always remain our brother and hero.

Rob is survived by his wife Tanya and their son Ian and daughter Caitlin

Nelson Probert (Evan).

He was predeceased by his parents Robert and Dorothy, his sister Barbara Wood and his first

wife Rebecca (Bridges) Nelson. Rob and Becky are survived by their son Robert W. Nelson III

and grandson Robert W. Nelson IV. He is also survived by sisters Joanne Laurance, Julie, Janet

Uribe (JL) and brothers Owen and Eric.

Captain Nelson's final resting place will be at the Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington,

Virginia. Details will be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Brick's

honor can be made to the Tailhook Educational Foundation headquartered in San Diego, CA.

(858) 689-9223.

Tribute Wall

JG

“ *Best CO I ever served under! “Gunslingers”*
Jeff Gambill
AZC Retired

jeff gambill - May 06, 2025 at 09:43 PM

TN

“ *Tanya Nelson lit a candle in memory of*
Robert Wayne Nelson Jr.



Tanya Nelson - July 19, 2023 at 08:58 AM