



**Robert H. Wertheim, RADM USN Retired
November 9, 1922 - April 29, 2020**



RADM Wertheim served as Director, Strategic Systems Projects from 1977-1980. His Naval career began after he graduated from the United States Naval Academy as a member of the class of 1946, an accelerated class that actually commissioned in June 1945 due to World War II. RADM Wertheim served on destroyers in both the Pacific and Atlantic fleet before reporting to Sandia Base, New Mexico as a member of the Navy's first Nuclear Weapons Assembly team. He went on to attend the Naval Post Graduate School and Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he graduated with a Master's Degree in Nuclear Physics. In June of 1956, he joined a select group of naval officers and civil servants assigned to the Special Projects office under RADM William Raborn. During RADM Wertheim's first tour at SPO, he was charged with leading the team of government, industry laboratories, and contractors that undertook the design, development and production of the new nuclear re-entry system. His next duty assignment was at the Naval Ordnance Test Station, China

Lake, California where he conceived and aided in the development of the Chapparral, a tactical surface-to-air missile system which was later adopted by both the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army. In 1965, after serving in the Office of the Director of Defense Research and Engineering, he returned to Special Projects Office (renamed the Strategic Systems Project Office) serving as Missile Branch Head and Technical Director before taking on the role as Director in 1977, relieving RADM Levering Smith.

During his tenure as Director, the decision was made to create the Submarine Support Base at Kings Bay, GA; Assembly of the first TRIDENT I C4 Performance Evaluation Missile (PEM) commenced at POMFLANT and subsequently launched from the USS FRANCIS SCOTT KEY (SSBN 657). Also during his tenure, there were 10 POLARIS A3TA, 45 Poseidon C3 and 24 TRIDENT I C4 successful launches. The USS OHIO and MICHIGAN, the first two TRIDENT Submarines were launched.

After his retirement RADM Wertheim went on to serve as Sr. Vice President for Science and Engineering for Lockheed Corporation and as a consultant for Science Applications Internal Corporation for 18 years. He also served as the Chairman of the Los Alamos National Laboratory Advisory Board and was an elected Fellow for the American Institute of Aeronautics.

RADM Wertheim received many honors and awards including Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the 1972 Gold Medal of the American Society of Naval Engineers, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Distinguished Public Service Award, and the Secretary of Defense Award for Outstanding Public Service. He was also very involved with the United States Naval Academy and had a pivotal role in the building of the Uriah Levy Jewish Chapel.

We were honored to have RADM Wertheim and his wife Joan join us for the 60th Anniversary Celebration Dinner in 2015 as the most senior former Director. He has been laid to rest at the Miramar National Cemetery in San Diego, CA. RADM Wertheim was Director during an exciting and challenging time during SSP's history but through all of his accomplishments he was always approachable, warm, and humble with a genuine smile. He was, as his daughter in law called him, a Rocket Rock Star!