



"The main role of this Academy is to develop graduates who will lead our nation to greater prosperity, security and happiness. I would hope that this Distinguished Graduate Award recognition inspires them to succeed in their future endeavors."

## REAR ADMIRAL ROBERT SHUMAKER '56, USN (RET.)

Born in 1933 in New Castle, PA, Rear Admiral Robert Shumaker '56, USN (Ret.), grew up attending local public schools and spent a year at Northwestern University before entering the Naval Academy. Following graduation, he completed flight training and flew the F-8 Crusader with fighter squadron VF-32. Around this time, Shumaker was considered for astronaut training by NASA, but unfortunately his selection was blocked due to a short-term physical ailment.

In February 1965, while serving with VF-154 in Vietnam, his plane was shot down on a mission over North Vietnam. For the next eight years, Shumaker was a Prisoner of War (POW) in Hanoi, Vietnam. During his imprisonment, he was respected by hundreds of his fellow POWs, including Vice Admiral James Stockdale '47, USN (Ret.), who continually selected him for special assignments in the camp and was recognized as a Distinguished Graduate in 2001. Due to his resistance efforts, he and the rest of the POW leaders, known as the "Alcatraz Eleven," spent three of those years in solitary confinement and in leg irons, where he endured inhumane treatment and torture at the hands of his North Vietnamese captors. Following his release in 1973, he was awarded the Navy Distinguished Service Medal with

Combat "V" and two Silver Stars for his brave leadership as a POW. His other military decorations include four Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, a Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts.

After earning his doctorate in electrical engineering, Shumaker was a major project manager for precision-guided munitions, at Naval Air Systems Command for six years, where he helped develop the High Speed Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM), Hellfire and the MAVERICK air to ground weapon. After promotion to flag officer, he was the superintendent of the Naval Postgraduate School, followed by a tour at the Pentagon where he coordinated the research efforts for the Navy's air, surface, electronics and space activities.

After retiring from the Navy as a rear admiral in 1989, he served as assistant dean at George Washington University and later was associate dean at the University of North Dakota's Center for Aerospace Studies. A long-time supporter of the Naval Academy Brigade of Midshipmen via the Naval Academy Foundation, Shumaker is a President's Circle donor and a lifetime member of the Naval Academy Alumni Association.

Shumaker and his wife of 47 years, Lorraine, live in Fairfax Station, VA, and have one son, Grant.