Noank - Thomas Macdonough Russell III, 88, of Noank, died Sunday, Aug. 13, 2017, at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital in New London. He is survived by his beloved wife of 53 years, Margaret Sexton "Peggy" Russell.

Tom was born in New Haven on June 1, 1929, the son of Thomas M. and Marjorie (Tilton) Russell. He grew up in Middletown and attended Eaglebrook School, Tabor Academy and Union College. He joined the [U.S. Navy](http://www.legacy.com/memorial-sites/navy/?personid=186402432&affiliateID=1420) at the age of 18 and served for 20 years, retiring as chief petty officer. He served aboard a heavy cruiser and four submarines, finishing his career on the USS Patrick Henry SSBN 599. He served as a Lay Leader during his military service years, and more recently, an 11-year tenure as Chaplin for the SubVets Groton Base. Tom was a member of the Old Saybrook Fire Department from 1956-1962, where he served on several committees. After retirement from the Navy, he began a 14-year career as sailmaker and owner of Van Zandt Sails in Old Mystic. In following years, Tom flourished as a management consultant, personal development coach and published author of "The Path of Greatest Truth."

Tom was an accomplished sailor, enjoying both racing and cruising with the family. He became a commercial and instrument rated pilot in 1977. Tom spent decades actively involved with Barbershop Quartet singing. This led to his passion of singing and playing the banjo, performing "gigs" entertaining seniors and Alzheimer residents at local facilities. He was known as "Banjo Buddy" and was loved by all. Tom was also an avid bicyclist, riding thousands of miles each season. He was a current member of SubVets and Fleet Reserve Groton, American Legion Middletown, and was on the board of trustees at the Russell Library in Middletown.

In addition to his wife, Peggy, Tom is survived by his children, Mark M. Robinson (Winnie) of Kingston, Mass., Thomas M. Russell IV (Peggy) of Guilford, and Suzanne R. Snell (Kevin) of Dillon, Colo.. eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother, Sam Russell of New Jersey, and his two sisters, Julie Russell of Tennessee and Margaret Heyer of Arizona.

Tom is predeceased by his parents as well as his son, Kim Robinson.

Tom will be remembered for his warm personality, quick smile and the twinkle in his eye. He was a great role model who lived life with positivity and purpose. He will be missed and lovingly remembered by his family and friends.

A very special thank you to the nurses and staff of Unit 4.2 at L+M Hospital, whose compassionate and loving care were greatly appreciated.

A Memorial Service will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 21, at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 15 Pearl St., Mystic. A private burial will be held at a later date at Indian Hill Cemetery in Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to SubVets Groton Base, 40 School St., Groton, CT 06340 ([subvetsgroton.org](http://subvetsgroton.org/)) or Indian Hill Chapel Restoration, Middletown, CT ([www.indian-hill.org](http://www.indian-hill.org/))

Sailor, rest your oar.

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