

Thomas J. Scalese Jr.

July 29, 1939 - February 6, 2026

Obituary for Thomas Joseph Scalese, Jr.

Thomas Joseph Scalese, Jr., a proud U.S. Navy veteran, world traveler, and true Californian at heart, passed away leaving behind a legacy of curiosity, friendship, and adventure.

Born on July 29, 1939, in Tsingtao, China, Tom was the son of Thomas Joseph Scalese, Sr. and Elizabeth Marie O'Donahue. His father's naval service brought the family abroad, but Tom grew up by the Pacific in Venice, California, where he graduated with the Class of 1957 from Venice High School.

Answering the call to serve his country, Tom joined the U.S. Navy and was stationed with Patrol Squadron 17 in Alaska from 1959 to 1963. His love for aviation and service would remain an enduring source of pride throughout his life.

After completing his military service, Tom pursued education with the same determination he brought to every endeavor. He earned a certification in Computer Theory from Control Data Institute (Class of 1969), an Associate of Arts degree from Saddleback College (Class of 1975), and later a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of San Francisco (Class of 1985). These

achievements reflected his lifelong curiosity and commitment to personal growth.

In 1969, Tom married Dana Marie McClanahan. Together they shared the joy of raising their daughter, Tana, and Dana's daughters, Gayle and Vikki. Although Tom and Dana later divorced in 1985, their cordial friendship remained—a testament to mutual respect and shared family values. Tom's professional life spanned more than three decades in the computer industry as a business consultant before he shifted his talents toward property investment and management, building another successful 30-year career.

A man of boundless energy and an adventurous spirit, Tom traveled the world extensively—visiting Europe, especially Germany and Ireland, where he connected with extended family on his mother's side. His journeys also took him across South Africa, South America, Mexico, and throughout the Middle East, where he humorously aimed to visit every country ending in “-stan.” His love of exploration extended across North America as well; he often recalled being at the bottom of the Grand Canyon on September 11, 2001, and noticing the unusual stillness of the skies above.

At home in Southern California, Tom was known for his warm smile, quick wit, and love of conversation—particularly over a good meal. He was a familiar face at the Swallows Inn in San Juan Capistrano, where he enjoyed camaraderie, laughter, and friendship.

Tom also had a deep affection for his dogs. His beloved Cocker Spaniels, Sandy and later Groucho, were constant companions. Groucho, now 13, was Tom's trusty sidekick on countless visits to local dog parks, where Tom formed and maintained many friendships.

A proud American, Tom displayed the flag outside his home as a daily

expression of gratitude for his country and those who served it. His humor, loyalty, and zest for life touched all who knew him.

He will be remembered and deeply missed by his daughter, Tana; stepdaughters Melissa, and Gayle, his extended family and many friends; and his faithful dog, Groucho.

Fair winds and following seas, Tom.

Celebration of Life Service will be Sunday, March 15th, 2026
01:00 PM to 03:00 PM (PTZ)

Crown Valley Community Center
29715 Crown Valley Parkway
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

See below for maps and driving directions.,, NOTE: The will be held in the
CENTER BALL ROOM

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Services

MAR 15. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PTZ)

Crown Valley Community Center
29715 Crown Valley Parkway
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

The event will be held in the CENTER BALL ROOM

Tribute Wall



“ Reflecting on Memories created a Tribute Video in memory of Thomas J. Scalese Jr.



Reflecting on Memories - March 08 at 11:08 AM

CG

What an amazing tribute to this man's life Amen 🙏.

Christopher Gaimari - March 11 at 01:53 AM

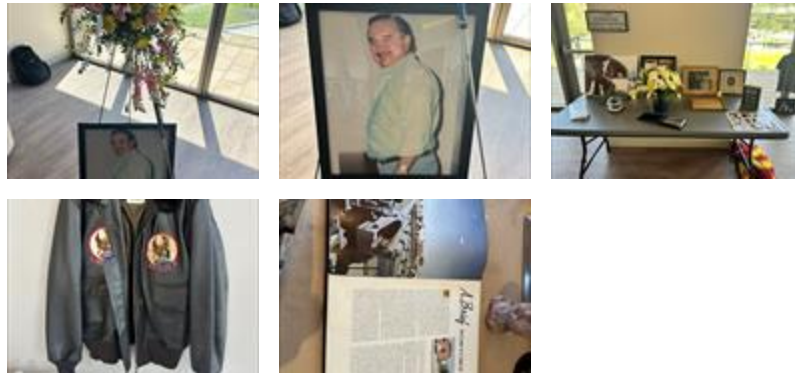
AS

Such a wonderful tribute. Tom is missed. 🙏

Ann sheridan - March 11 at 11:10 AM



“ 34 files added to the album Celebration of Life & Reception



Reflecting on Memories - March 20 at 04:13 PM

RR

“ *To the Scalese Family,*

Although Tom was only on hospice for a short time with our Green Meadows Hospice, I feel deeply grateful that I had the opportunity to see Tom, meet the family and help with the mortuary and Celebration of Life planning.

I hope in some small way, I was able to ease the burden for the family and be a comfort. It's clear he lived life with curiosity, courage, and a love that reached far beyond himself. I would have loved to talk with Tom about his old cars, his Navy service and many other things that we had in common.

To honor his memory, I've created a memorial website and a keepsake movie celebrating Tom's life and all he accomplished—as a devoted father, proud Navy veteran, and man of wide horizons. I hope these help reflect the joy and adventurous spirit he shared with so many.

I'm also looking forward to officiating at his Celebration of Life Service and meeting more of the friends and family whose lives Tom enriched.

May you find comfort in the love that surrounds you and in the beautiful legacy he leaves behind.

With heartfelt sympathy,

*Chaplain Roger E. Rustad
Green Meadows Hospice*

Roger Rustad - March 11 at 12:48 AM

CG

Amen

Christopher Gaimari - March 11 at 01:38 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Thomas J. Scalese Jr..

March 10 at 06:10 PM



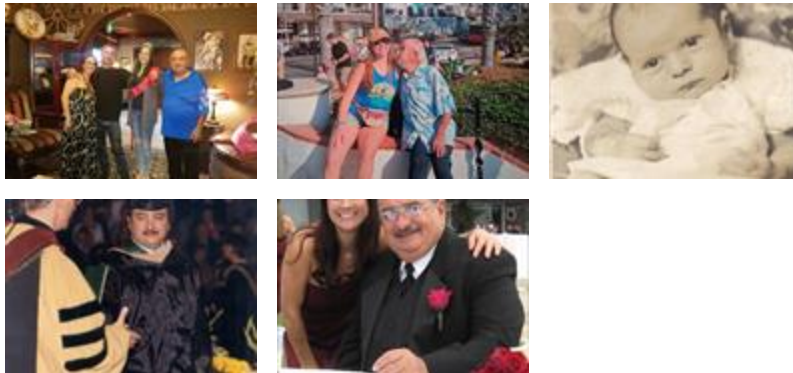
“ Sweet Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Thomas J. Scalese Jr..



March 10 at 06:10 PM



“ 46 files added to the album Scalese Family Memories Album



Reflecting on Memories - March 08 at 11:08 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Thomas J. Scalese Jr..



March 06 at 07:30 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Thomas J. Scalese Jr..

March 06 at 07:30 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Scalese Family Memories Album



Reflecting on Memories - February 12 at 05:02 PM

RR

“ Tom Scalese, Jr., age 86, was a proud United States Navy veteran who carried a deep and abiding love for his country throughout his life. Born just days before the outbreak of World War II, Tom’s early years were shaped by a strong sense of patriotism and resolve. It was that spirit which inspired his proud service in the Navy — a calling that became one of his life’s greatest honors.

Tom’s interests reflected his curiosity and hands-on nature. He loved classic cars, enjoyed sports, and took great pride in repairing and working with computers. He approached each hobby with the same dedication and precision that marked his military service.

Though Tom was not a deeply religious man, his strength, humility, and integrity spoke volumes about his character. I was grateful to spend time with Dan, Gayle, Tana and the rest of the family as they lovingly supported Tom in his final hours. It is my hope that Green Meadows Hospice helped to ease some of that burden, bringing comfort and dignity during his last days.

I have created this online memorial website for Tom so that friends and family can share stories, photos, and memories — because those shared memories are what keep his spirit alive. I will always remember the time we spent together shortly before his passing, moments that will stay with me always.

Please know that I will personally ensure that Tom receives the Navy Honor Guard tribute, the American Flag and VA burial benefits he earned and so richly deserves. I am getting Tom a new set of his military dog tags to put on the front of his flag to honor a hero who fought for our country. Tom was there for us, and it is my privilege to be there for him.

With deepest sympathy and respect,

*Chaplain Roger Rustad
Green Meadows Hospice*

Roger Rustad - February 07 at 12:46 PM