Thomas G. Kelley
Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired)

Thomas G. Kelley was born in Boston, Massachusetts on May 13, 1939, and graduated from Boston College High School in 1956. He attended the College of Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Economics in 1960. He was also commissioned an Ensign in the U.S. Navy in 1960 after competing Navy Officer Candidate School. He graduated from the U.S. Navy Postgraduate School in Monterey, California in 1973 with a Master of Arts in Management, and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Studies from the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology in 2011 for his efforts on behalf of returning Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) Veterans.

In Vietnam, Lieutenant Kelley was in command of River Assault Division 152 – part of the U.S. Navy's Mobile Riverine Force. On June 15, 1969, he led eight boats on a mission to extract a U.S. Army infantry company from the bank of the Ong Muong Canal in Kien Hoa province. During the extraction mission, the convoy came under attack from hostile forces on the opposite bank as one of his boats suffered a mechanical failure which prevented it from raising its loading ramp and getting under way. After ordering the other boats to form a defensive line around the disabled craft, Lieutenant Kelley maneuvered his own boat to the front, between his men and the enemy, and engaged the hostile force. He received a severe head wound when a rocket struck near him, penetrating the boat's armor and spraying shrapnel in all directions. Although unable to stand or speak clearly, he continued to relay directions to the convoy with the help of one of his sailors until the crippled boat was repaired and the group was able to depart safely. Lieutenant Kelley survived his wounds, was promoted to Lieutenant Commander, and in a White House ceremony on May 13, 1970, he was presented the Medal of Honor by President Richard M. Nixon.

Despite the loss of one eye during his combat action on June 15, 1969, Lieutenant Commander Kelley requested and received authorization to remain in the military, and he served an additional 21 years on active duty as a Navy officer. His last duty position in the military was serving in Washington as the Special Assistant for Legislation and Oversight to the Chief of Naval Personnel. After 30 years of active commissioned service, he retired at the rank of captain in 1990.