

LOUIS SERVIN NAVARETTE

My memories of Louis Servin Navarette nicknamed Navy begin back in 1970 after being assigned to Deck Department on the USS Holland AS-32. After just completing a four month tour of mess cooking duties (KP). Don Garrett, Carlos Shelton & myself were glad to be in Deck and out of Food Service. We enjoyed being to work without someone coming around bothering you. Navy (Navarette) always came around to see how we were doing and would talk to us giving us a chance to suggest things. He was always in a cheerful and joyous mood and knew how to cheer us up. Eventually we were invited over to meet Linda and Winston and enjoy some home cooking. We could relate to that and with Linda being from the South made it even better because she like to laugh and joke just like Navy. They both seemed right for each other and enjoyed being together. She seemed a little bit jealous of Navy by asking us questions about him at times. We had a lot of good times and meals. I remember when Melissa was about to be born that a popular song out then was "Candida" by Tony Orlando and Dawn. Linda & Navy said that was going to be her name. Well, time rocked on and Don and I were promoted on up to the rank of BM3. Navy had been assigned to Base Shore Patrol as a Spanish Interpreter. He usually had a Spanish Policeman named Wa-King or Pinga riding in his van with him. So, I thought to myself after being on the ship for two years and done every job in Deck asked to go to Shore Patrol and did we enjoy it plus, would get to help Navy in incidents sometimes. By this time Don had fell in love with his Alabama Sweetheart and went home to get married and returned with his wife and moved across the street from Navy & Linda. We would pick at them for being newly weds. Time rocked on and I asked to stay on Shore Patrol and Don & I both promoted on up to BM2 same as Navy and we both joked at him of passing him up. That was June 1972 and I transferred to the USS John F. Kennedy CVA-67 out of Norfolk, Va. In November 1972 I got called to the after brow for a visitor. I got up there and to my surprise there stood Navy. I said what are you doing here? He told me that he was station at Fort Story, Va. He asked you want to come over and I said sure. At that time Linda & Navy were living in Robin Hood Apartments because Virginia Beach was too expensive. Anyway, we would visit on weekends watching football games and talking about old times in Spain. Well I deployed again in April 1973 and by this time I had met a sweetheart in January 1973 and was flying home to Florida once or twice a month to see her. By April we were engaged and the ship was to deploy off the coast of Vietnam. Well the POW's were released and we went back to the Med. I lost contact with Linda and Navy and transferred to Shore Duty at Ft. Lauderdale, Fla in 1973. While I was there promoted to BM1 and Don was getting out of the Navy. He & Diane had a son. We had a daughter and I transferred to Oceanographic Unit Five on the USNS Harkness (TAGS-32) in July 1976. This was isolated duty down in the Caribbean. I was incharge of all boats and training of crews. In July 1977 I transferred to Norfolk, VA to Instructor School before transferring to USS HolLand AS-32 in Holy Loch, Scotland in September 1977.

We worked boats again and I worked for the last President Yacht Coxswain before President Carter sold the President's Yacht. He was a former BM that went Warrant Officer and on to LDO. He and I got along good the duty was long hours and demanding due to weather conditions. By this time our son was born and I promoted to Chief in 1979. In 1980 I transferred to Naval Station Rota, Spain from Scotland and we drove the VW 4500 miles across Europe sightseeing down to Spain. I was a Tugboat skipper there. I transferred in November 1983 to USS Paiute ATF-159 at Mayport, Fla. In early 1984 (I believe) I was on at Sima Mayport at the weight test shop and Navy BM1 come walking in and had not seen him since 1973. I found out he was on the USS Yosemite AD-18 at the time. So Linda & Navy finally got to meet Ellen and kids. In August 1985 the Paiute was decommissioned and I transferred to USS Saratoga CV-60 on deployment. Navy was also assigned to Saratoga. We were both in 1st Division with the Ground Tackle (anchors & chain). We had a busy cruise and returned in April 1986 to Mayport. I remember Navy fishing off the fantail on duty nights. By this time Linda and kids had went back to Mississippi so to keep fire insurance on their home there. I remember one Thursday morning in January 1987 Navy come by and told me that he was going to Mississippi for the weekend and I asked him to be careful on the road. The next thing I remember was getting a phone call from Linda telling me that Navy had an auto accident and was killed. She asked if I would escort the body home. I told her that I would be honored. The next day I flew out to Montgomery, Ala and the funeral director met me at the airport. When we got to the funeral home and I saw Navy really didn't want to believe it was him but knew I had a duty to ensure he was ready for viewing by Linda and the family. It was a rainy day leaving Montgomery heading to Pocotoc, Mississippi and reflected how I felt but knew it would be tougher on the family. We arrived after dark. Linda and family came to the funeral home and I know she was holding back grief because of some many family members around. She did everything to make me feel at home and even had Melissa move out of her room for me. I felt bad about that. But, overall we got to share memories of Navy with the family and eventually the funeral day came and then graveside military honors. As I piped him over the side for the last time a thought came to me that I'll see him on the other side with our Lord and Savior one day. From the report that I was told that he had a heart attack and did not suffer. I am thankful for the friendship and being made feel like you were family with both Linda and Navy. I would like to tell all the children that you had a special Mom & Dad and pray you will follow doing what they taught you.

Sincerely

Charles B. Cooper