

WILLIAM RAYMOND CALVERT

Bill Calvert, at the age of 59, a retired Navy Lieutenant Commander, died on 16 August, of pneumonia. Funeral Services were conducted at the First Presbyterian Church in Orange, CA.

Born in Wickett, TX, the son of "Cactus" and Ruby Othel Calvert, young "Willie Ray" spent his early years after World War II in both Odessa and McCamey. He was a certified welder by the time he turned 11 and helped earn the family paycheck with his father Cactus, as itinerant welders. He also spent many enjoyable hours helping Uncle Jim in his McCamey bakery; the man who inspired Bill's culinary talents. As a boy, he loved hunting, fishing and hiking, in that order. His sister Barbara said, "the hiking was mainly out of losing the rest of the hunting party and having to find them again"!

In his junior year of high school, Bill joined the Marine Corps Reserve. After graduating in May 1956 and with the help of the Marine Corps Commander, he obtained an appointment to the Naval Academy.

In January of 1957, he consented to a blind date and met Ruthie Corcoran, Ruth's entry in her "Him Book" after the evening was "He'll make someone a good husband some day." They went out again on Easter break of that same year. Bill said that this was when he knew he loved her. Ruth was oblivious to this but still enjoyed his company. They spent June week together, and every weekend Bill was free. In August of 1958, Bill brought his "girlfriend" home to meet his Texas relatives for the family fishing trip. Ruth got seasick and couldn't stand fish, but Bill had never brought a girl home. So they all knew she was the one (even if she didn't - yet!). They got engaged Valentine's Day 1959, but Ruth called it off in January of 1960 (and sent all the gifts back!). A week before he was to graduate, Bill told Ruth "You're going with me after graduation, married or not!" Ruth said OK (finally) and thirty-seven years later they were still in love and committed to each other.

Following graduation Bill was an engineering officer aboard the D. J. Buckley, stationed in Long Beach, CA. During the next three years, daughters Teresa Lenore, Lorey Ruth and son William Redman were born. In 1964, he attended PG school in Monterey for Graduate School studies of International Relations.

A tour at the Bureau of Naval Personnel was followed by command of a River Boat division in Vietnam. From 1968 to 1970 he served as Executive Officer, RICHARD B. ANDERSON stationed in San Diego, CA. That was followed by Naval War College, Newport, RI, and a command, in 1971, of the JOHN R. PERRY.

While on maneuvers, in 1972, PERRY was caught in a typhoon. After securing the ship and on his way back down to quarters, Bill slipped on a ladder and hit his head. The resultant injury, a broken neck, paralyzed him from the shoulders down. Following a lengthy stay in the Spinal Cord Injury section of Long Beach, VA Medical Center, Bill retired from the Service and moved to Orange California.

Bill remained active, though with obvious limitations, and learned an entirely new way to

live. He studied and received his advanced HAM Radio License, was active in the board of the California Paralyzed Veterans Association and was a tremendous support to his wife and children.

Bill was a man of extraordinary character and wisdom and loyalty. From his difficult upbringing in the rural small towns of West Texas, he developed a quiet strength that would become an invaluable resource in the challenges he faced throughout his life. Although he faced more hardship than most, he was deeply grateful to God for his life and always extended compassion to those less fortunate. He believed that the greatest treasure in his life was his family and friends and he was certainly a rich man for them.

William E. Lewis, Jr. '60
Shipmate, November 1997