

## JON EDWARD MORRISSEY

The Naval Academy afforded us the opportunity to hone academic tools for future application. We forged lasting friendships with loyal classmates, engaged in a variety of athletics, experienced foreign lands, and sampled the Navy's offerings of career choices - surface ships, submarines, aviation and the Marine Corps. Jon Morrissey thrived in this environment. He easily absorbed assigned studies (well, maybe French was a bit indigestible), became an avid sailor, and looked forward to an engineering life aboard destroyers.

He shared a ready sense of humor and ability to enjoy life even during trying assignments. As Sam McKee attests, who else could turn a punitive destroyer side cleaning/painting chore during Youngster Cruise into an impromptu dive and swim call into the Caribbean at St. Thomas? Of course he got "caught"! They had to fish him out of the harbor, but it was a "fall", an accident, hence no punishment. He was prepared for liberty because he had had his salt water shower already!

Same cruise, during one rough unrep, Jon and Bob Powers were assigned amidships, with the life, knee and foot lines down. The ship took a heavy roll to port and they went sliding down the deck with nothing but ocean ahead. Bob reached for the only thing available: Jon's hand that he held out. "I went sailing out over the water, Jon's other hand grabbed a stanchion, and around we went, back onto the ship. I was thankful Jon was strong and I (Bob) was a lightweight."

Jon's transition from Mid to Ensign was a blast, as he and Sam McKee conspired to get Triumph TR3's. They took every opportunity to break them in properly, i.e. high speed drag races with each other. Sam remembers: "I could easily tell he was the fastest because I was behind. The "race" place was somewhere out toward the Bay Bridge, but not on Rt. 50, and the racing was at night when there was no other traffic. Those TR-3's would only go so fast anyhow"

Jon Morrissey was known by friends and colleagues as a very capable mariner and an exceptional engineer. Upon graduation in June, 1960, he was selected as a crew member on a USNA yawl for the grueling Newport to Bermuda race, a test of seamanship, teamwork, stamina and navigation. This was the start of his sailing with the "old Navy". John Chenard attests to his sailing abilities and his persuasiveness. Stationed on the West Coast, Jon called his friend, "Hey, John, join me on the San Francisco - Monterey overnight race - we'll get back in time to have cocktails with our wives Saturday night at the Club" Yeah, right!! Sunday afternoon, we were still becalmed off Santa Cruz - no wind, no food and certainly no cocktails. But, Jon made it enjoyable.

Bob Powers, his roommate, reports that he was a "slash" in all he did except French. Jon returned to the Naval Academy to teach thermodynamics in the "Steam" Department. As usual, he took advantage of every opportunity and earned a MS in Systems Management from GWU while stationed there.

In the “new Navy”, Jon steamed with the best on new construction destroyers for his early sea duty in, primarily, engineering billets. His reputation in the Surface Warfare community was excellent and well earned as the Navy tested him repeatedly with difficult assignments. Joining other experts on the Naval Propulsion Board, Jon assessed the material readiness and state of crew training on all ship classes, an assignment involving superior judgment. Jon was one of the premier Wrenches (propulsion Engineers) for many years, he was more than a practical Naval Engineer, he was a philosophical Engineer. Jon knew how to fix things, not just by the book, but by practical experience. Fellow Wrenches always marveled at the level of understanding he displayed in figuring out why things weren't operating correctly, then proceeding to make them right. He was well respected on the Propulsion Examining Board because he could quickly and efficiently figure what was wrong with the engineering plant, and then help get the plant operating, while constructively teaching ship's company proper operating and maintenance procedures.

A tour at the Naval Engineering School in Idaho Falls was followed by Chief Engineer on BELLEAU WOOD (LHA-3), the third new construction ship in a class with major engineering and design flaws. As usual, with quiet determination and little fanfare, Jon took on this last major challenge, and his leadership and engineering expertise resulted in that ship becoming the first operational LHA.

Commander Morrissey retired from the Navy in 1980 and worked in the engineering field in the petroleum industry in Houston, Texas and later at Service Engineering in Long Beach, San Diego and San Francisco, California.

His three children, Kevin, Kathy and Jon, remember him as a father who was always gentle and kind. Kathy reminisced “He was fiscally responsible and gave us every opportunity. He was intelligent, witty, and charming. He rarely met anyone he didn't like.”

Jon was taken from us when he died on November 14, 2001 from complications following surgery and is sorely missed.