

## Passing of John McCaull

Captain John Wayne McCaull, USN ret. passed away December 3, 2022 at his home in Coronado after 10 months of debilitating strokes. He was born March 4, 1933 in Van Nuys, CA, the only child of Frederick and Ivy Blacker McCaull.

The family hopscotched throughout SoCal as Fred opened feed stores. When John was 12, Fred and Ivy bought a home and pet store in Hermosa Beach, CA and John met his first love; the Pacific Ocean. He became an avid surfer, played beach volleyball (later was All-American in volleyball as part of the USA military team), and worked as an LA County Lifeguard, crewing on the first Baywatch. He graduated from Redondo Union High School where he excelled in sports and socializing. After a year at Santa Monica Jr. College he transferred to Occidental College where he met Laurie Sinclair, a fellow beach lover from Santa Barbara, CA. John left Oxy in his senior year to become a pilot in the U.S. Navy. He moved to Pensacola, FL where he earned his commission and learned to fly through the NAVCAD program. As a member of the NAVCAD Drill Team, he performed at the LA Coliseum at halftime of a Ram's game. During that visit, he and Laurie became engaged. After graduation from Advanced Flight Training in Hutchinson, KA he earned his "Wings of Gold" which were pinned on by his then wife, Laurie.

His first tour was with VP-19, NAS Alameda. His daughter Kristy and son Jeff were born during that tour. His early deployments to Japan inspired a life-long interest in Asian decor.

Next he served as a Flight Instructor with VP-31, NAS Coronado. They bought their first home. Son John Robert McCaull was born at the Coronado Hospital in 1963. Before his tour at VP-31 was

completed, John was selected to work for the CIA as a Flight Instructor in Taiwan. Laurie hesitated to move as her new encyclopedia listed 20 varieties of poisonous snakes on the island. She wanted to believe John when he said, "We'll just get some Snake Begone Spray." She reluctantly left their recently purchased home on 6th Street and packed diapers and bottles for John R. On his first of many trips across the Pacific, they spent three weeks on Waikiki, waiting for baby John to be old enough to complete his vaccinations.

For two plus years in Taiwan, from 1964-1966, John trained idealistic young Chinese Nationalist pilots to fly to support Chiang Kai-shek's effort to reclaim mainland China. The operation has been written about in British War Historian, Chris Pocock's book, "The Black Bats, CIA Spy Flights Over China from Taiwan 1951-1969." When John was home on the weekends he and Laurie socialized with friends and family, played bridge, explored local beaches, shopped for Asian furnishings, and relaxed at the beautiful Grand Hotel in Taipei. Membership at that upscale resort was paid for by "The Company." Laurie, kids, and their baby Amah relaxed by the pool while John, spiffy in requisite tennis whites, became proficient in the sport which kept him active in his later years. After Taiwan the family had a brief stay in Coronado and lived in their new home on Matthewson Park, which John termed "Their front yard, which he did not have to mow."

His next tour was with VP-1 on NAS Whidbey Island, WA. The family lived in base housing during his deployments to Vietnam. They returned to Coronado when John was assigned to a shore tour at NAS North Island. Next tour was to VP-31 at Moffett Field, as XO. After that he returned to Coronado for a staff job. His oldest children graduated from high school at that time.

Scenic Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, was the setting for his next two tours. He was selected for Captain and was the first CO of the Naval Ocean Processing Facility (NOPF). When asked what that acronym meant, he liked to quote Woody Allen, "It's an animal with the head of a lion and a body of a lion, but not necessarily the SAME lion."

Next assignment was with the U.S. State Department as an Advisor to the Royal Thai Navy. John and Laurie lived on the eleventh floor of a 4,000 square foot apartment in Bangkok, far above the neighborhood cobras! His years of tennis paid off when he and his doubles partner, Admiral Nippon, won the RTN annual tournament and forged wonderful friendships. Not bad for a SoCal Beach Bum!

John and Laurie returned to Hawaii (Makalapa) where he was on the CINCPAC staff. His plans to retire changed when he was offered a job he could not refuse. He returned to Moffett Field as Chief of Staff to COMPATWINGSPAC, Commander of VP Navy in the Pacific. It was a perfect ending to his 32 year career as a Navy pilot. He presented his ceremonial sword to son, Ensign Jeff McCaull, who was assigned to a Moffett squadron. Laurie wept.

The family dogs should be acknowledged. There were at least eight, ranging from miniature poodle, Lady Chatterly, from a posh kennel, to cockapoo Scampy from "Old Rose out to the City Dump" in Oak Harbor. Briefly, they housed "Bad Biting Betty" who became a sweet dog without direction from Cesar Millan.

John and Laurie retired in Coronado. Their Matthewson Park home gained a second story. During his early retirement years, John and Laurie welcomed five grandsons into the family. The boys all called him BODGER. John became a rabid tennis player

and kept orthopedic surgeons busy as they attempted to keep him mobile. They traveled the world (38 countries plus or minus), usually with John's best friend since junior high, Wayne Hokom and his wife Ann. The foursome also spent three weeks every summer on the Garden Isle, Kauai, and John perfected his Mai Tai recipe as part of his Rum Research responsibility. Laurie and Ann's motto was "Papaya Per Person Per Day." They played Mexican Train, lazed on the beach and in the warm waters, generally doing well at nothing.

John is survived by Laurie, his wife of almost 66 years; brother-in-law Richard Sinclair; daughter Kristy; son Jeff (Susan); son John (Merlita); and grandsons Sam, Johnny, James, Robert, and Kaden. We daily mourn his passing, and smile when we recall his athletic skills, ability to choose ugly Christmas hats, and his uncanny ability to find the perfect Whoopee Cushion hiding spots. RIP Captain Bodger.

*Colorado Eagle & Journal*

*VOL. 113, NO. 4 - Jan. 25, 2023*