

Louis Peter LaDow, 65

By Reader Submitted

Friday, January 29, 2010

Louis Peter LaDow

of Belfair

Oct. 3, 1944

to Jan. 18, 2010

Veteran

Louis Peter LaDow passed away, unexpectedly, at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Bremerton, WA, 18 January, 2010.

He was born 3 October, 1944, in Oakland, CA, to his father, George A. LaDow, serving in the Navy, and his mother, Millie Kugen LaDow. Shortly after his birth his mother and he returned to her hometown, Aberdeen, WA. Her marriage was yet another casualty of the Second World War. Louis was nurtured by his mother and her parents on their Black Creek farm in the Wynoochee Valley. It was a time and place of deep emotional attachments and development of bearings that were to serve him so completely during his life.

In 1949, his mother married George V. Lonngren, also of Aberdeen, and Louis joined the family in their new home at 207 N. Michigan Street. He attended McDermoth Elementary School, Miller Jr. High School and entered Hopkins Jr. High when it opened in 1958. He participated in school athletics and fulfilled a football ambition with enthusiasm. He entered Weatherwax High School, Aberdeen, in 1960 where he was very actively engaged in school social activities as well as athletics. He was a standout in football and baseball.

After graduating from Weatherwax in 1962, he worked for a time in the timber industry as a cutting crew buckler for Ray Smith. A lifelong interest in the US Navy and persistent recruiting efforts by Jack Parker, however, finally persuaded Louis to enlist in the Navy in 1963. It was a decision that would provide him with lifelong gratification and superlative recognition at every stage of his career.

He attended boot camp in San Diego, CA, took advanced training at Great Lakes Training Center near Chicago then attended submarine school in Groton, CT. He served on numerous nuclear submarines, and was a "plank owner" of the USS Von Steuben, a Polaris Class submarine. This association and distinction resonated with Louis to the end of his life. He found deep meaning and personal satisfaction in serving

with distinguished crews that were committed to defending the United States at a time of seemingly unending peril. He was very much part of a national mission. Rising through the enlisted ranks, he was commissioned an officer in 1979. He continued his career transferring to the surface fleet serving on the USS Canopus and the USS Frank Cable, submarine tenders. His final tour was at the Trident Refit Facility in Bangor, WA. He retired as a Lieutenant in February, 1990, after nearly 30 years of service.

While serving on recruiting duty in San Francisco in 1974 he married and became a father. His son, Peter, traveled with him from San Francisco, to Guam, to South Carolina, Georgia, and finally to Belfair, only two hours from his hometown. He was a dedicated and conscientious father, devoted to passing on the values he learned from his parents to his son. He took his role seriously, and was a source of wisdom, knowledge, and support.

In the late 1970s, Louis met the real love of his life, a brilliant, ambitious woman with a wonderful heart, Eleanor Curtis. Louis, the ever practical and stoic man, was transfigured by the ideal and warm-hearted Eleanor. The two of them, though very different, found a deep and everlasting love.

After retiring from the Navy Louis became a Belfair icon. He was widely known for his work as a Belfair Water District Commissioner and for other civic works. At that time he also embarked on the creation of his own business, Belfair Marine. From a small one-man shop in his back yard he provided excellent boat and motor repair service and support. Slowly increasing his customer base created expanding prospects that allowed him to construct the Belfair Marine Center in 1993. The business continued to grow until it was the premier boat repair facility in the Hood Canal area.

Louis retired from this second career, however, after ten years of development to travel and enjoy friends and family and to pursue his favorite hobby, woodworking. With his steadfast friend, Mike Philhauer, he created wonderful gifts in the forms of cabinets, beds, cradles and other objects of love for friends and loved ones. An expectant grandfather, he was in the process of constructing a crib and other baby furniture for his granddaughter due in March.

All who knew Louis were touched by his generosity and friendliness. He was always willing to help anyone who asked. Not one to wear his heart on his sleeve, he showed his love through his generosity. His friendly, easygoing nature made him a natural leader and good friend.

Louis was preceded in death by his lifetime partner, Eleanor Curtis. He is survived by his son, Peter LaDow of Kirkland, and his brother Wayne Lonngren of Olalla.

A viewing will be held at Miller Woodlawn on Kitsap Way in Bremerton on Saturday, 6 February, 2010, at 10 a.m. A memorial service will follow at 12 p.m., with the presentation of colors. A reception will be held at Miller Woodlawn following the memorial.





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