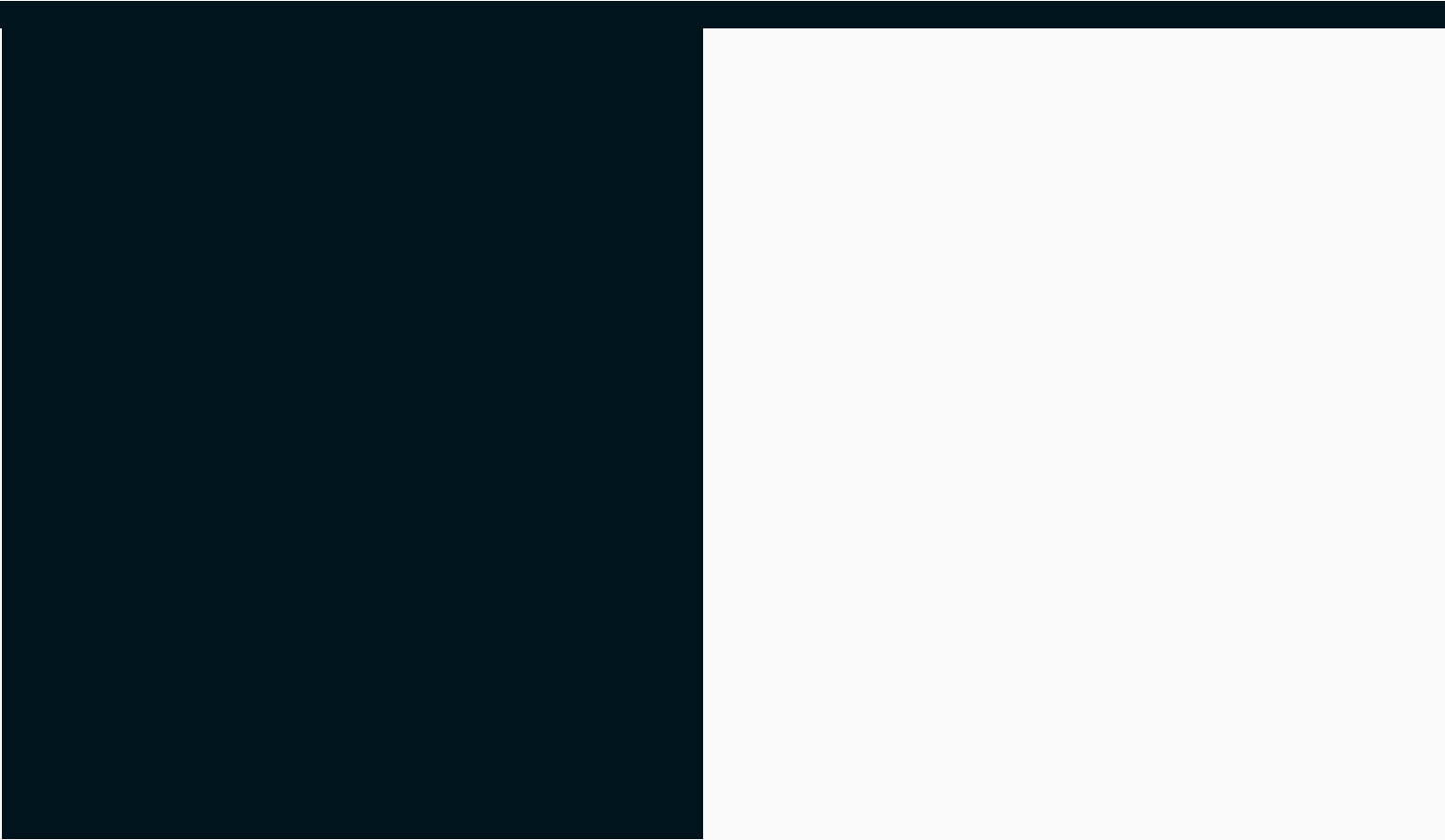


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Louis M. "Lou" Tew

1925 - 2020

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Mystic - LCDR (Retired) Louis M. Tew, 95, passed away quietly in his sleep May 11, 2020, in Mystic. "Lou" was born March 9, 1925, to Lewis Franklin and Electa Lee Tew, in Duke Township, Harnett County North Carolina. He was raised first by his grandparents, then by Aunt Ida and Uncle Willie Edwards, working on the farm, growing tobacco, cotton, potatoes and soybeans until World War II. When war broke, he enlisted in the Armed Guard.

During the war Lou served on Liberty ships, bringing supplies to Swansea and the Isle of Wight prior to D-Day. He served on the Oliver Evans and the Benjamin Holt, and was at the Normandy invasion while serving on the Holt. He also served for a short time in the Pacific front as well on the Edward W. Bok. Lou was a member of the "Barefoot Boys," which was described in an article featured in the New London Day, November 2009 by Ms. Jennifer Grogan. It can be found online at <http://www.theday.com/article/20091108/NWS09/311089932/1018>. It documents how Lou and others came from the Carolinas under similar circumstances to go on to be outstanding examples of their generation.

After the war Lou remained in the U.S. Navy, working out of Brooklyn. While working in the shipyard he made extra money helping boxer Jack Dempsey clean Dempsey's bar each morning. He met his wife, Ann Marie Kautz of Astoria N.Y., in 1943. In March 1946 they eloped and were married in Newton Grove, N.C. They initially settled in Waldwick, N.J. and had four children, Patty, Paul, Terry and Tom.

Lou's Navy career was memorable. He received the Navy Hall of Fame

Award in 1955 and was the first enlisted man to receive the coveted John Paul Jones Award for leadership in 1957. He served many years on submarine rescue vessels (ASR's) as a hard hat diver and ultimately as a commander. He set a hardhat diving record in the north Atlantic, helped recover the submarine USS Harder, and salvaged the wreckage of an Eastern Airlines crash off of Fire Island. He led the USS Petrel crew to recover a B52 bomber in Puerto Rico and recovered the sunken submarine USS Scorpion in the Azores. Possibly the most dramatic was his leading of the top-secret recovery of an unexploded hydrogen bomb, known as the Palomares incident, in 1966 while on the USS Petrel. His last years in the Navy were dedicated to the design and construction of the ASR Ortolan, the first catamaran style rescue vessel.

Lou and family ultimately settled in Gales Ferry. There he enjoyed the quiet of his home with Ann, hanging out on the patio, and nurturing his peach trees. On retirement from the Navy, Lou couldn't keep still and soon became one of only a few Merchant Marine captains to obtain an exclusive "unlimited" license- the ability to captain any ship of any tonnage anywhere in the world.

One of Lou's great joys in his later years was working for John Wronowski and Interstate Navigation as a ferry boat captain. He found daily joy in piloting Block Island ferries- MV Quonset, MV Manitou, MV Block Island, MV Anna C, and MV Carol Jean- as well as the Cape Henlopen that ran to Orient Point. To him, working on the ferries was the ideal life, and he made many great friends, they were his extended family.

One thing stands out about Lou that those who knew him appreciated- he was honest, open minded and accepting of everyone. He believed in hard work, and in enjoying life with others. Lou had many great moments with family and friends- golfing, telling stories, smoking a cigar, playing cards, sharing a drink. He didn't care what a person looked like or where they were from, he treated everyone with respect. As a captain, as a father, as a friend, he was fair and true in his judgements of others, unhesitatingly

supportive, and loyal. These traits are what set him apart and endeared him to others. This is what made him a great man.

In the early 80s Lou worked for Tidewater Marine and then Mobil Oil, designing and piloting their first oil research vessel, the GV Mobil Search. Lou and many of the friends he made over the years enjoyed traveling the world on this ship. This was a common theme for Lou- looking out for others, working together and sharing life.

Lou went on in his later years to support the Veterans of Foreign War, Masons, Fleet Reserve, and Armed Guard. He was especially proud of efforts to build the Armed Guard Memorial located in New London. As a Mason, Lou was a lodge master and then District Deputy for the Connecticut District 8B, becoming a 32nd Degree Mason of the Scottish Rite. Lou always spoke proudly of the efforts of these organizations to make the world a better place.

Lou was preceded in death by his wife Ann in 1993. In 1999 Lou remarried, finding companionship with Helen Mejza, whom he is survived by. Additionally, he is survived by a family that loved him deeply: four children, Patricia Mahon (John), Paul Tew (Mary), Theresa Tew, and Thomas Tew (Saeko); seven grandchildren, Brian Ahern (Pam), Jonathan Ahern, Margaret Matthews (Stevie), Kathryn Roberts (Dane), Madelaine Tew, Allison Hotchkiss (Tommy), and Rebecca Albers (Mark); and great-grandchildren, Hunter Ahern, Caitlin Ahern, Samuel Douglas (Nichelle), Benjamin Douglas, Marlee Matthews, Kaitlyn Albers, and Dylan Albers.

Memorial services and a celebration of life will be held later in the year.

To Plant Memorial Trees in memory, please visit our [Sympathy Store](#).

Published in The Day on May 13, 2020.

MEMORIAL EVENTS

Memorial service

Send Flowers

Celebration of Life

Send Flowers

MEMORIES & CONDOLENCES

Not sure what to say?

May God bless you and your...

As the days and weeks pass, and...

May your heart still be filled...

In the loving memory of a wonderful...

May the love of friends and...

Grief can be so hard, but...

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5 entries

May 13, 2020

Lou was a true American. He served his country with pride & conviction.

Albert Ouellette
Friend

May 13, 2020

Tom, I was sorry to hear of your Dad's passing. I would have loved to have met him. I work part-time on the Fishers Island Ferry. I have a 100 ton Captains License. Hey, we ran track together@ Ledyard High. Your Dad sounds like a really interesting guy. Russell Smith

Russell Smith

Classmate

May 13, 2020

Lew was a good man and a true friend. We had many laughs and lots of fun. But make no mistake when he was captainng a ship, he was the Captain. In later years he would lose track of when I last visited, and say you should come see me more often. Forgetting I had just recently been with him. I shall never forget my friend Lew and will always have fond memories of him.

William. Perkins

Friend

May 13, 2020

As a fellow member of The First Wednesday Club, I got to know Lou over the past several years. He was a fine man and all ways a gentleman. FWC will miss him.

Christopher Marquette

Friend

May 13, 2020

He was a great captain and a wonderful person. I'm glad i had the pleasure of working with him, at Cross Sound Ferry.

Joan Malloy
Friend

INVITE OTHERS TO ADD MEMORIES

Share to let others add their own memories and condolences

Thank You.

Please allow 24 hours for your entry to be reviewed for appropriate content.

Send your condolence as a [printed card](#) and it will be mailed to the family tomorrow.

Send Card

or

Other ways to show your sympathy

Send Flowers

Send your deepest condolences with fresh flowers.

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Plant a tree to honor the memory of your loved one.

[Plant Trees](#)

INVITE OTHERS TO ADD MEMORIES

No thanks

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- Sympathy Advice
- What Is a Eulogy?
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