



## John Edward Luce

October 8, 1934 - February 18, 2017

John Edward Luce was born in October 8, 1934, in Glendale, California. He was the fifth of six children in the blended family of his parents, John William Luce and Alice Maxine (Mullin) Luce. His siblings included brother, Lee Lundwall, sister, Marge (Lundwall) Folks, brother, Bill Luce, sister, Juanita (Luce) Ritzema, and brother Roger Luce.

John is survived by his wife, Pat (Johnson) Luce, daughter Kim Cubeiro (husband-Marc) of Corona del Mar, CA, son John Luce (wife-Rae) of Monrovia, CA, and daughter Tanoa Jones of Fort Gibson, OK. He also leaves grandchildren Sam and Emma Cubeiro, Tracy and Nancy Luce, Matthew and Andrew West, Tabitha Jones, and great-granddaughter Natalia West, along with many nieces, nephews, and great-nieces and nephews.

John relished growing up in the then sparsely populated San Fernando Valley in Southern California. He had fond memories of riding his bike several miles to a dam and going swimming.....imagine that happening today! As he grew, he spent many weekends with his family at a ranch his parents owned in the San Gabriel Mountains. More fond memories of fishing, horseback riding, his mom's good cooking..... It was there he also learned he did NOT like digging ditches to irrigate a garden and fruit trees, cleaning out the chicken coop, setting fence posts and stringing wire, and a number of other tasks necessary to keep a ranch in good repair.

The love of John's life was the ocean. He loved going to the beach – any beach – with family and friends and spent a lot of time in Newport Beach, CA, as a youngster at a friend's place and on his boat. He loved body surfing and fishing – surf fishing, from a boat, from a dock, from the edge of a stream – it was all good. Fishing was something he enjoyed all his life.

Shortly after high school John joined the Coast Guard aboard the cutter Minnetonka. Needless to say, he was happy spending 4 years on the sea. The ship spent 12 tours of duty at Ocean Station November in the Pacific marking a square plot in the ocean and serving as a navigation aid to other ships and aircraft. He loved it. The Minnetonka was also deployed along the coast of Korea during the Korean war. The ship once endured 5 days in a typhoon that was one of his most spectacular memories. He also saw duty aboard ship along the Southern California Coast. He ended his tour of duty as a Gunners Mate 2nd Class.

When John finished his tour of duty with the Coast Guard he was already married to lovely wife Donna. His daughter Kim and son John were the apples of his eye. As a young father he bought a sailboat that brought him probably his greatest pleasure ever. He was happiest at the tiller, tweaking sail lines to get the most lift from the wind, taking his kids out on weekends, sailing to Catalina Island for the weekend and crewing in races with friends. His son, John, inherited his father's love of fishing – in spades – and to this day is an avid fisherman, often going on ocean-fishing trips to Baja and the waters off Southern California. He once helped crew a 60-foot ocean racer from Newport Beach to Coos Bay, Oregon.

Shortly after leaving the Coast Guard, went to work at the Rocketdyne Division of North American Aviation in Canoga Park, CA, where he tested rocket engines and performed failure analysis on components. He went from

there to the S-II Program – the second stage of the Saturn V rocket – at the Space Division of North American Aviation in Downey and Seal Beach, CA. He worked in Configuration Management, a brand new discipline in engineering that John was instrumental in helping to define. It was a very exciting time in this country's history and an exciting program to be involved in thanks to President John F. Kennedy's goal to put a man on the moon. His job took him to Cape Canaveral, Mississippi Test Facility, and various other related sites on the program. The company became North American Rockwell during this program.

It was on the S-II program that he met Pat (Johnson) Liverpool, where she worked as a secretary. They were married August 5, 1969, in Richardson, TX, where his brother Roger and wife Jeanette were living. Roger and Jeanette stood up for the couple at their marriage in The Church of the Transfiguration Episcopal Church in Richardson. They were married for 47 years.

John worked in Project Engineering management on the North American Rockwell proposal for what became the F-15 aircraft. John was then recruited to the B-1 bomber program almost at its inception where he met long-time friend and co-worker Bob Valor. He went on in the B-1B program where he was Director of Configuration Management. It was a program he believed in and put his heart into. He retired from Rockwell after 35 years with the company in the late '80s.

John and Pat became the proud parents of daughter Tanoa in 1973 when she was 7 years old. Kim and John welcomed their new sibling whole-heartedly. Recently Tanoa and daughter Tabitha moved to Fort Gibson from Las Vegas, NV, a decision John and Pat were delighted with. Grandson Andrew West and fiancé Sabrina Castillo moved here also about a year ago, bringing great-granddaughters to add to the family here.

John loved cars and loved to drive. While in the Coast Guard he was the proud owner of an MGTC, which sadly he wrecked, but miraculously he survived. He also owned a Porsche, a Datsun 240Z and a 280Z, and gave Pat a 1984 5-liter, 5-speed TransAm for a Christmas present. It might be noted that he occasionally “borrowed” that car when he had to drive to Edwards AFB which was a far piece and a fun route to drive.

An offshoot of John’s love of fishing was camping in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California and sometimes Utah at lakes, streams, and rivers that were favorite fishing sites. His family became good campers and memorable camping trips were shared with long-time friends Bob and Gayle Valor and their children. One especially memorable vacation shared with the Valors was on a houseboat on Lake Shasta in Northern California. A bear came aboard the boat when it was tied up on the beach.....apparently it smelled dinner being prepared and wanted some. A fair bit of panic ensued, but Bob finally blasted the air horn which was just above the bear’s head, and the bear decided he didn’t like the music and left. That landing site was quickly abandoned.

John bought a 25’ fishing boat in the late ‘80s, and he and Pat spent many pleasurable hours on the waters off Long Beach and down the coast, fishing and lazing in their favorite environment. Many trips were taken to Catalina Island, mostly to Twin Harbors at the Isthmus, which is a rustic paradise. Bob and Gayle were favorite companions on a number of these trips that included fishing, hiking, sunning, eating.....and the occasional (ahem) drink. There are so many fond memories of these ocean excursions, including one day seeing a whale breach not far from the boat.

A couple of years after John retired, he and Pat bought a cabin on Fort Gibson Lake after having visited friends there a number of times. They were

lured by the water (of course!) and the peace, quiet and beauty of the area. Oh, yeah, John quite liked the fishing, too, and loved having a boat and boat dock on the cove just below his home. They moved from Southern California to Oklahoma in November, 1992.

John was an avid, avid reader and spent countless hours on the screened porch reading many and varied books. He loved military and maritime history and read countless books on the subjects. A side note: Luce Hall at Annapolis is named for his great-great grandfather, Benjamin Luce, an expert in marine navigation.

Over the years, and especially in recent weeks John had told Pat often, "I love our home." He found contentment here. What more can one desire in this life? John passed peacefully to eternity with God in the home he loved on Saturday, February 18, 2017, at the age of 82.

Memorial services will be held, 2:00 PM Saturday, March 4, 2017 at St Paul United Methodist Church, with Reverend David Burris officiating. The family of John Edward Luce has entrusted his care and cremation to Cliff & Carmen Garrett of Clifford Garrett Family Funeral Home & Cremation Service 1224 E Poplar, Fort Gibson, OK 74434 (918) 478-2555

You may share online condolences with the Luce family  
[@clifforddgarrettfamilyfh.com](mailto:@clifforddgarrettfamilyfh.com)

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAR 4. 2:00 PM (CT)

St Paul United Methodist Church  
2130 W Okmulgee St  
Muskogee, OK 74401

# Tribute Wall



“ *John Edward Luce*

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January 29, 2023 at 12:59 PM



“ HEY JOHN

by Bob Valor

Hey John,

Remember when we first met some 45 years ago. It was during the F-15 Fighter program

proposal effort. You came from the California Space Division and I from the Columbus Ohio

Aircraft Division. It was a fortunate meeting providing each of us with inroads to the other's

organization. It worked out well over the years. We lost that program but really hit our stride on

the B-1 Bomber program. We won that one big time. A lot of hard work but very rewarding.

Seems so long ago.

Hey John,

Remember the monotonous drive to work. All on the San Diego Freeway from Cypress to El

Segundo - an hour each way. I figured that we spent 1/12 th of our life on that Freeway. The

only fun part was the fact that we both owned Datsun Z cars and when we drove separately, We

had a bit of adventure taking the off-ramps to gain an advantage in the race to get home. The

other fun part was when we declared the Freeway too congested to drive on so naturally we just

had to stop by Joe Jost's in Long Beach for one or two beers and a Joe's Special. We always

made it home.

Hey John,

Remember all of the trips to Catalina on your's and Pat's power boat. Great times. I remember

one time in the early morning with a slight foggy mist over the ocean, somebody on an unseen

boat played Amazing Grace on the Big Pipes. So beautiful and moving.

Probably the most exciting trip to Catalina was the time we

*borrowed that 42 foot sailboat - the Sidewinder. Beautiful boat and thank God that you were an experienced sailor. Remember that diesel engine wasn't working but we decided to venture out anyway relying on a nice breeze for power. All went well until we got to Catalina. Normally one would drop the sails, start the engine and maneuver under controlled power to a mooring. Well not his time - no engine, just wind. So we just barreled ahead with you at the wheel giving orders and me at the bow with a boat hook. As we approached the mooring, you ordered that the sails be dropped, I snagged the mooring bout and all was well with the world. As we came to a stop, there was a thunderous round of applause from the shoreline. All the people on shore were watching to see if we made it safely or wrecked havoc on the harbor. We made it and you can take a bow.*

*HEY JOHN,*

*Remember all of the camping trips we made to Rock Creek in the Sierras. Great trout fishing and great times. Remember when my oldest daughter, Kathy dropped the breakfast bacon in the gravel. She went to creek to wash it off, but I believe I'm still picking bits of stone from between my teeth.*

*HEY JOHN,*

*Remember the house boat trips on Lake Shasta. All were wonderful and exciting. Don't know what was consumed more - gasoline or beer. Probably close to a tie.*

*Remember, when we would decide it was time to quit for the day and find a good place to moor the boat. We had to run the house boat up on shore and use long lines to anchor ourselves for the nite. Remember that one particular nite when Gayle was*

*cooking bacon for clam chowder. I was on the bow with our kids when way off in the distance I spotted a black bear. Told the kids about it and we watched it from afar. Well that bear kept getting closer and closer. We finally figured out that it smelled the bacon. It was really cute to watch until it decided to climb onboard. We all ran inside and shut the sliding glass door. The bear was on the outside and my oldest, Greg, was on the inside trying to hold the door shut. All this time, Gayle is yelling to us all, "put on your life vests and Pat was yelling, "put one your sneakers". Fortunately we didn't have to do either. The air horn was right above the bears head. So I turned it on and the bear left. It didn't take us very long to depart. HEY JOHN, Remember the fishing trips to Utah. The entire area was secluded and pristine. The trout fishing was unbelievable. On what I believe was our last trip, we had driven/hiked to a very secluded small lake. Beautiful scenery. I proposed that whoever cau*

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**Clifford Garrett** - March 08, 2017 at 05:45 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of John Edward Luce.



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March 01, 2017 at 03:58 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of John Edward Luce.*



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February 27, 2017 at 04:47 PM



“ *I have just finished reading John's Obituary in which his love of sailing was mentioned - many times. In 1968, I visited my American family in Los Angeles and was thrilled to be taken on a sailing trip on Newport Harbour with John and Pat. The first and only time I have ever been sailing. John and Pat have been and will always be a huge part of my life. My husband and children also share a special bond with them.*

*Go forward in peace.*

*Much love*

*Elizabeth Cooke - Wagga Wagga NSW Australia (One of Pat's Australian cousins)*

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**Elizabeth Cooke** - February 24, 2017 at 03:40 PM

DM

“ In 1980 as a 13 or 14 year old boy I was about to take my first family trip overseas to the USA (from Australia).

*In the lead up to this I discovered I had an uncle who "worked on the space shuttle".*

*I was already fascinated by this machine and was beyond excited to meet Uncle John, Tanoa and Aunt Pat.*

*Armed with my crappy cheap camera I arrived in Orange County and the Luce household with great excitement.*

*I had lots of questions and Uncle John and I seemed to have some kind of banter thing going on.*

*In hindsight I am not sure he enjoyed it. I didn't see that at the time. I was an annoying teenage boy. Sorry about that.*

*John gave me some special bits and pieces from the shuttle program, pictures, articles and the like. When I went home he continued to send me photos and special bibs and bobs from the B1 program too. It felt very special.*

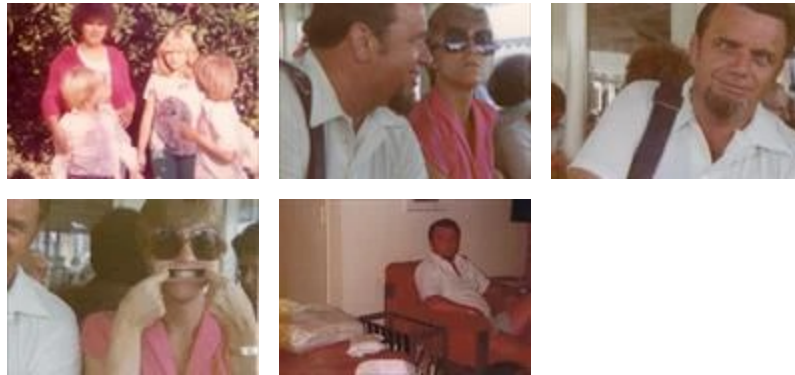
*A year or so later Pat and John visited us in Australia and by then I was also quizzing John about "stealth" technology. It was fascinating.*

*My continuing fascination with aerospace comes from John and those times and I will always be grateful for that.*

*Attached are some of my photos from that time. Apologies for the quality. They weren't even good photos in their day :-)*

*Love to all my relatives over there and take special care of yourselves.*

*David Moore - Australia*



David Moore - February 23, 2017 at 05:43 PM

CL

“ *When in the Coast Guard, John had to go to El Toro Marine Base in So. California, for some training or a class. He was challenged by the sentry at the gate and denied entry because of his goatee. He had to return to his ship and get a letter confirming that the goatee was in conformance with Coast Guard regulations. This is a copy of the letter.*



Cliff - February 22, 2017 at 09:14 AM

DL

“ *Many happy memories of Uncle Johnny :) I can still hear his lovely deep voice. Much love to Aunt Pat who I dearly love.*

Dana Luce - February 22, 2017 at 12:07 AM