



Pitta, Kenneth

Kenneth J. Pitta Sr., surrounded by the love of his family, passed away peacefully on January 12, 2014. Kenneth was born on October 3, 1925 in Lowell, Massachusetts, the son of Portuguese immigrants from the Madeira Islands. The third oldest child in a family of 11 children, Kenneth lived in Lowell until he was 17.

Kenneth served in the U.S. Navy during WWII from 1943 to 1946 aboard the U.S.S. Laffey (DD-724), a destroyer, and participated in the battles of Normandy & Cherbourg in June of 1944. Later in the war his ship saw action in the Philippines and Okinawa. On April 16, 1945 he survived a suicide attack on the U.S.S. Laffey by 22 Japanese kamikazes in which his ship was hit by 8 planes and 4 bombs. His ship shot down 9 planes. Kenneth received the Purple Heart as a result of that battle. He also earned the title of "Atomic Veteran" because of his participation in Operation Crossroads which was a U.S. testing of the Atomic Bomb on naval vessels and conducted at Bikini Atoll, Marshall Islands, in March of 1946. After the war Kenneth served for a while in the Merchant Marines and was certified by the U.S. Coast Guard as an "able seaman in any waters".

Kenneth lived the majority of his life in Point Loma, where he met his wife Marie. They were married for 59 years and raised a family of five children. He worked for 14 years as a produce manager for Lucky Grocery Stores, working at locations in Pacific Beach and mostly Point Loma. Kenneth was a commercial tuna fisherman for 22 years; working for Ocean Fisheries and fishing on large purse seiners, including the M.V. Finisterre and M.V. South Pacific. After retiring from tuna fishing he worked for Mobil Oil aboard a seismic survey vessel in the North Sea.

Kenneth was known by his friends and family as gregarious, strong, a hard worker, and a dedicated husband and father. He enjoyed surf fishing, gambling at Barona Casino, gardening, cooking for the family, playing with his grandchildren, and maintaining his apartments.

Kenneth was predeceased by his wife Marie, son Kenneth Jr., and his parents Isabel and John Pitta. Kenneth is survived by his children David (Rhonda), Thomas (Evelyn), Anne (Daniel), and Christopher. He has seven wonderful grandchildren who love him dearly: Alex, Zachary, Marissa, Ian, Arynn, Alice-Anne, and Matthew. His family would like to thank the entire staff at Canyon Villas retirement home as well as Vitas Hospice for the care and kindness they provided.

Funeral services will be on Wednesday, January 22nd, at St. Agnes Church, 1140 Evergreen St., San Diego, CA 92106; rosary starting at 9:30 a.m. with the funeral mass at 10:00 a.m. A reception at the church hall will follow the services. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be sent directly to Father Joe's Villages to help the homeless. Please sign the Guest Book online obituaries.utsandiego.com