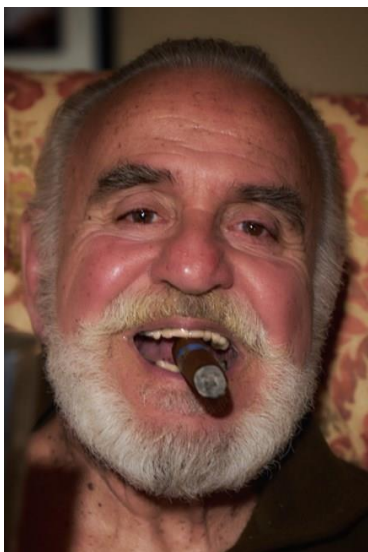


## John Paul Cotis



John P. Cotis of Sparta, NJ, passed away on 18 October 2021 after a short illness he fought with grit and good humor. He was 84 years old.

Born in the Bronx, NY, and raised by his widowed single mom, John was a standout high school athlete and was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy in 1956 on a football scholarship. Graduating with the Class of 1960, John was awarded a commission in the U.S. Air Force, where he trained as a pilot; flying fighter jets and test piloting (never crashing once) and serving as pilot for the 4-star general leading the U.S. Southern Command.

In 1960, he married Beverly Boehm, and they got to work starting a family. The work paid off as they had three of their four children in the next four years. John said he only had to make two decisions in

his life: to become a pilot and to marry Bev. She'd decide the rest for the next 60 years.

In 1966, John joined American Airlines, where he worked as a pilot for the next 30 years. Upon retirement, he set out to travel as little as possible while playing as much golf as he could. John enjoyed games of chance and was rumored to be a formidable poker player, as well as a local handball champion (a game all but gone, since it hurts a lot). A regular at Farmstead Golf Club, John could be seen most days with his signature cigar lit up, ready to compete and joking with all. Many people he met would describe him as a larger-than-life figure, because he was.

John was preceded in death by his father, John, and his mother, Stella. He is survived by his wife, Beverly; his sister, Evan; four children, John, Jean, Jim, and Joe; and seven grandchildren, Charlie, Jennifer, John, Brandon, Devin, Kaiser, and Violet, who will all miss him tremendously.

*January-February 2022 Shipmate*