



# August "Augie" Spata

OCT 28, 1925 - JAN 8, 2015



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**C**WO August Spata, born October 28, 1925, in Milwaukee Wisconsin. Survived his wife Vivian (Bongiorno) Spata who he shared 60 years of marriage. Survived by sister Angeline ( Richard) Thoenes, nieces, nephews and friends. Augie proudly spent over 43 years of service in the Navy. He retired his command on February 1, 1987. His last tour, was Officer in Charge of the Naval Aviation Engineering Service Unit, in Sigonella, Sicily. Augie has been a resident of San Diego since the early 70's. Augie's family would like thank America Garibay, Mark Maisel and John Mckean for the service, compassion and companionship they provided to Augie in the last years of his life. After 43 years, Spata hangs up his hat When he walked into the Piankinton Building in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to see a military recruiter, Augie Spata was ready to serve his country. Any of the Army recruiters on the ground floor office would have been glad to enlist the young West Allis resident. All he had to do was sit at any desk and sign up. Intent on his goal, he walked right up the stairs to the Navy recruiting office on the second floor of the building. "I was always liked the Navy" Spata said. "Sailors from Great Lakes came up to Milwaukee every weekend, so I used to see them all the time." "Even as a kid, I liked the uniforms *the way the sailors looked wearing them, the way they carried themselves with them on. I was always impressed by a sailor. It was a childhood dream to join the Navy.*" On that day in October, he fulfilled his dream. He was off to recruit training in Great Lakes shortly thereafter. That was in 1943. Over 43 years later, with the childhood admiration of the Navy still alive within him – Augie Spata has decided to hang up his crumpled combination cap and retire February 1st. His career has spanned three wars, numerous conflicts and crises. It has seen him rise from raw recruit to master chief petty officer before being accepted into the warrant officer program in 1965. Most important, it finds Spata leaving a Navy he finds remarkably unchanged – the equipment is more advanced, management techniques have improved, but the people aren't any different. "Navy people have stayed pretty much the same,"



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he said. *"There's a camaraderie here you won't find anywhere else in the world."* Though he prefers not to dwell on his career (I've been evading this since I decided to retire\*), he does like the direction the Navy has taken. "We now practice human leadership. We don't treat people like machines, we treat them like human beings now. This has helped develop people into better leaders, which makes the Navy a really effective organization." Spata, officer in charge of the Naval Aviation Engineering Service Unit Detachment here, chose Sigonelle for his final tour for a simple reason. "It's good duty. I like it here," he said. *When I was picked up by the continuation board, they asked me where I'd like to go. I told them they could send me back to Sigonella.*" Spata leaves January 8th to return to the United States. At the end of the month, his naval career will end. He intends to spend his retirement years in San Diego, California. Though he doesn't plan to involve himself much with the Navy when his career ends, he says he will miss those things about the Navy which attracted him to the service in the first place. *"I'm going to miss the people I've known," he said. "I don't think you'll ever find a more unique group of people to work for or with." "Most of all, I'm going to miss the Navy way of life"*



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