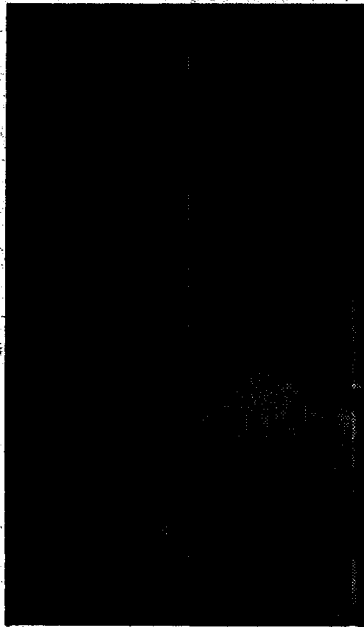


PROBER WAS A TOP COP

William H. (Joe) Cooper, 50, is an investigator with an outstanding law enforcement record and a unique ability to



Joe Cooper in uniform.

solve the most difficult cases with tenacious detail work.

For many years, he served on police departments in Florida and Louisiana. As a member of the Baton Rouge, La., police force, he received two departmental citations — one as the year's "most observant policeman."

In 1964 and 1965, Cooper was a paid undercover contact for the FBI and has served as a special investigator for the Baton Rouge grand jury.

His independent investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy has been carried out, off and on, for almost a decade.

Like many other independent and official assassination investigators, Cooper has become intrigued by the paradoxical contacts and associations of such Kennedy probe figures as Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby.

His painstaking research has opened up entirely new lines of investigation.

During World War II, he served four years aboard the naval destroyers USS Smith, USS Saterlee and USS Frank E. Evans. He was aboard the USS Smith when a Japanese plane struck it, killing 58 people on Oct. 26, 1942. He received a presidential citation for his service.

Cooper is married and has four daughters. They live in Baton Rouge.

WHAT RELEVANCE DOES THE CRUISE IN AUG. 63 HAVE TO NOV. 22, 1963? COOPER NEVER ADDUCES THIS.
WITHOUT MORE DATA, ONE CANNOT EVALUATE COOPER'S ALLEGATIONS.

Investigator Ties Navy Intelligence to JFK Killing; Findings Almost Cost Him His Life

A private investigator and former policeman has spent nine years trying to prove a contention that naval intelligence was involved in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The detective, William H. (Joe) Cooper, 50, of Baton Rouge, La., also a former paid FBI informant, may have put together a thick packet of bizarre coincidences. But his efforts almost cost him his life.

Cooper, his wife, and daughter were almost killed in a mysterious auto wreck just a few days before he was scheduled to make his information known to a New Orleans grand jury investigating Kennedy's assassination.

Like many Southerners, Cooper admits that he was against President Kennedy's programs in the early 1960s.

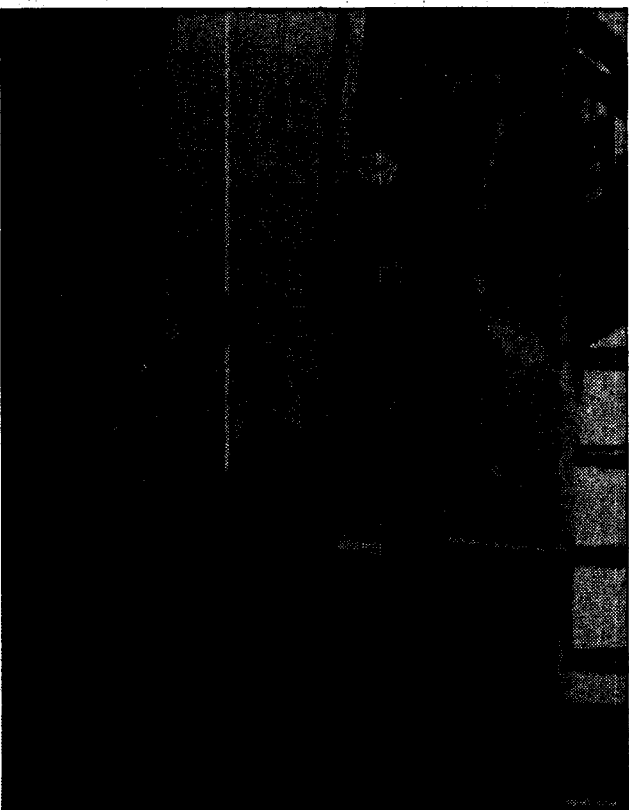
"But I love my country and murdering the President is not the way to change it," he told TATTLER.

He said he is convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald, whom the Warren Commission named as the sole assassin of President Kennedy, was a naval intelligence agent. Assassination investigators have frequently tried to link Oswald with a military or intelligence organization. Former New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, who conducted his own probe of Kennedy's death, believed Oswald was in the employ of the CIA and the assassination was a conspiracy.

COOPER, WHO served almost 10 years with the Baton Rouge police department and earlier as a law enforcement officer at Palatka and Fort Walton, Fla., is a former Navy man himself. He was on the U.S.S. Smith when a Japanese plane rammed it, killing 56 men Oct. 26, 1942. Cooper received a

By JOHN MOULDER

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THIS IS WHAT'S left of Joe Cooper's car. Cooper and his family were almost killed in the mysterious wreck. Just days before he was to testify before a grand jury on his findings.

presidential citation.

Cooper believes a week-long cruise aboard the aircraft carrier Shangri La in August 1963 - three months before Kennedy's death on Nov. 22 - involved an intelligence operation.

As a policeman in the mid-1960s, Cooper made many queries from the Navy Department about the guests aboard the Atlantic cruise, advertised as being to observe maneuvers and air operations of the carrier.

He obtained the identities of seven of the

nine men aboard the carrier, but the names of the other two - provided by Navy - turned out to be aliases. When Cooper persisted in trying to learn their identities through official channels, he received a visit from naval intelligence. Providing no new information to Cooper, the intelligence agent wanted to know why the policeman was interested in the cruise.

THE GUESTS ON the trip were sponsored by then-Secretary of the Navy Fred Korth of Fort Worth. Korth had succeeded John Connally, also from Fort Worth, after Connally resigned the cabinet post to seek the governorship of Texas.

Korth, incidentally, knew the Oswald family before Lee Oswald, an ex-Marine who had once defected to Russia, was accused of killing Kennedy, Korth's boss. In fact, Korth had represented Edwin Ekdahl, a former husband of Oswald's mother, Marguerite Oswald, in a divorce suit.

Oswald had also routinely corresponded with Navy Secretary Connally's office on questions about his Marine discharge. After his arrest, the names of both Korth and Connally were found in Oswald's address book.

Korth resigned as Secretary of the Navy on Oct. 11, 1963, amidst the political furor over the controversial TFX aircraft - which would

later become the F111 fighter plane used in the Vietnam war. General Dynamics, in Korth's hometown, finally received the \$6.5-billion TFX contract after Lyndon Johnson became President.

THE SEVEN Shangri La guests the Navy identified for Cooper are business or political leaders in the New Orleans-Baton Rouge area.

One of them - by perhaps still another strange coincidence - had worked for the same insurance company with Lee Harvey Oswald's father. Still another man on the cruise was a close friend of Dallas law enforcement officials who investigated Kennedy's assassination. Still another had family connections with a local American Nazi Party leader. Oswald had at least some interest in the Nazi Party. He had written the names of Nazi chiefs Lincoln Rockwell and Daniel Burros in his address book. Both are now dead - Rockwell by an ex-Marine; Burros by his own hand.

A public affairs officer for the USS Shangri La provided Cooper with a list of nine men aboard the cruise when Cooper was with the Palatka, Fla., police department.

When he followed up the communications with requests for more information about two of the names - Adolph Vermont Jr. and

William Craver Jr. - Cooper was referred from one department to another and finally to the Pentagon. There was no record of the two men. The final correspondence from the assistant U.S. Navy chief of information was:

"WE REGRET THAT after an intensive search we are unable to locate the names in any of our files. Unfortunately, there is no other way that we could track down this information for you."

Cooper asked on July 9, 1968, to testify before the New Orleans grand jury about his research into Kennedy's death - research that had led him throughout the country.

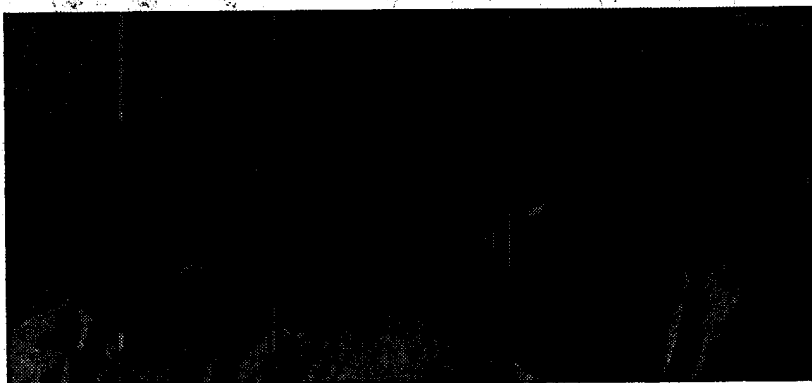
Five days later, the steering post came loose on his auto and it crashed into a culvert. Cooper's back was broken in three places. His daughter had a ruptured spleen. His wife had a serious head injury.

Hospitalized, he wasn't able to keep his date with the grand jury.

"I could never prove the steering had been tampered with, but I never believed it was an accident," Cooper told TATTLER.

HE SAID HE feared for his life after the "accident."

"But I have gotten to the point that I don't care anymore. Somebody needs to get to the bottom of this."



ACCORDING TO COOPER, former Secretary of the Navy Fred Korth (shown at left with then Secretary of Defense McNamara and President Kennedy) knew Lee Harvey Oswald's family quite well long before Oswald was charged with JFK's assassination.