

# Surface Warfare

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DIGITAL FEATURE



## Seeing Double on a DDG – Twins Stationed together on USS Mustin

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PACIFIC OCEAN (MAY 10, 2024) – Wandering the passageways of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mustin (DDG 89) might make someone feel they're seeing double.

It's not because of being lost, as happens to shipboard newcomers. The double-vision is really a pair of twins!

Mustin Sailors, Chief Intelligence Specialist (IS) Luis Montero Jr. and Interior Communications Electrician (IC) 1st Class Anthony Montero, are fraternal twins and not identical. However, for many among Mustin's crew, their close resemblance results in them often being mistaken for each other.

Luis and Anthony have both been in the Navy for nearly 19 years; however, they did not enlist together. Luis was completing his time at boot camp when Anthony enlisted. Apart from Mustin, their paths have never crossed professionally.

So how did they end up together now? It was no mistake.

"I was stationed at U.S. Central Command and I was coming up for orders," Luis explained. "I needed to go to a ship, so, I called the IS detailer and asked him, 'what's the possibility of me being stationed on the same ship as my brother? He's currently on a destroyer and they have an IS billet.' And he said, 'yeah, that's easy. You just have to fill out a colocation form.'"

Luis said his detailer sent over the form and requirements that day, and he and Anthony got enthusiastic support from their commanding officers. Within three days, Luis had his orders.

Navy policies about assigning siblings together are often misunderstood, and few Sailors seem to know the ins and outs of family colocation in the military. Most know it as a policy geared toward keeping spouses stationed near one another geographically, though not at the same command.

When it comes to sibling colocation, there is as much rumor floating around the Navy as facts and much comes from the deaths of the five "Sullivan Brothers" in 1942. They died in the November 13 sinking of the Atlanta-class light cruiser USS Juneau (CL 52) at the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal.







SEVERAL MISCONCEPTIONS, COMMON DURING WORLD WAR II AND AFTER, CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE ABOUT THE SULLIVAN BROTHERS AND THE ASSIGNMENT OF FAMILY MEMBERS TO U.S. NAVY SHIPS.

— *Navy History and Heritage Command*

"Several misconceptions, common during World War II and after, continue to circulate about the Sullivan brothers and the assignment of family members to U.S. Navy ships," according to the Navy History and Heritage Command's website article [The Sullivan Brothers: U.S. Navy Policy Regarding Family Members Serving Together at Sea](#).  
"Reference to a "Sullivan Act" in connection with family members serving in the same ship/unit is a popular misconception. The Sullivan Law of 29 May 1911 is a New York State Law dealing with firearms. Although proposed after the death of the five Sullivan Brothers, no "Sullivan Act" was ever enacted by Congress related to family members serving together. Similarly, no President has ever issued any executive order forbidding assignment of family members to the same ship/unit."  
Navy family assignment policy has since evolved further. The latest version of this policy was updated in 2007 and applies to both blood and adoptive siblings

while laying out rules for other colocations such as other types of family member colocation, too. It's all spelled out in Military Personnel Manual Article 1300-1100 –Immediate Family Member Assignment or Reassignment Policy.  
There are only a few stipulations for family member assignment, which include being related by either blood or adoption, being eligible to be reassigned, and the command having fillable billets for both family members.  
In a nod to the policy's history, however, current policy does require Sailors requesting colocation to sign a statement that they "understand the potentially hazardous implication of family duty but desire this assignment."  
According to Anthony, the timing was impeccable. The Sailor his brother would be replacing was scheduled to leave right around the time that Luis was looking to pick orders.







"I can't emphasize enough how much it never gets old," said Luis, bringing a laugh and nod of agreement from his brother.

Twinship has also earned them fame among Navy leadership. Luis told a story of the Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) One Commodore, Capt. Thomas Chekouras, asking to get a photograph with them during a visit to the ship. After presenting Anthony with a challenge coin for excellence, the commodore asked about Luis and requested a photo, posing between the two. "Usually it's the other way around, you know? Us getting a photo with him," said Luis.

Luis and Anthony plan to retire together in 2026 in a shared ceremony, which they're sure will turn heads with their older brother in attendance, who looks just like them both.

The brothers see no downside to their colocation. In fact, it has brought them much comfort to have each other to talk to. It has also brought them some entertainment as they stay quiet and watch other Sailors innocently mistake them for one another, or wonder how one person keeps switching between chief petty officer and petty officer first class.

"People will bring him updates for stuff," said Anthony, "and he'll say 'okay, that's cool,' and walk away. Then they'll see me and say, 'I gave you the updates' and I'll say, 'I don't know what you're talking about, but you can give me the updates now!'"

Both twins said they let the confusion play out until fellow Sailors realize on their own what has happened and in the process, get a good laugh from their reactions.







TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING FAMILY CLOSE BY  
RATHER THAN FAR AWAY. THIS IS DEFINITELY A  
PROGRAM THE NAVY IS DOING RIGHT.

— 1st Class, Anthony Montero



“Growing up, if [Anthony] wasn’t present, and me and my older brother were there, people would say ‘oh, these are the twins, right?’” Luis said, laughing.

Clearly, though, their bond runs deeper than even the best ‘seeing double’ gag. Luis and Anthony are glad to be able to stay connected both on the difficult days of ship life, and the best days.

Through the years, their careers have been similar but not quite the same. Luis pointed out that though he has advanced to E7, or chief petty officer, it was Anthony who was selected to be meritoriously promoted to petty officer first class—an honor Luis never experienced. They are glad to fill their different roles and celebrate one another’s victories.

Looking back on their careers, the twins agreed the only thing they would do differently is get stationed together sooner in their careers “so the shenanigans could have lasted the whole time,” according to Luis.

Anthony said his advice to other Sailors would be to do their research and take advantage of programs like this earlier rather than late in their careers.

“You don’t know unless you ask,” said Luis, “and the worst someone can say is ‘no.’”

“Take advantage of having family close by rather than far away,” said Anthony. “This is definitely a program the Navy is doing right.” ⚓