

Shipmate July/August 2010
Duke Longworth
1 June 2010

I hope this finds you enjoying another hot summer. Do you remember those WBGT black flag days when we were constantly drenched in perspiration? Of all the memories, those are my least favorite! A new crop of midshipmen are experiencing the joys of summer on the bay! There are several good reports this month. Here goes!

My first report is from **Tom Laboon**: "Hi, Duke. Hope all is well. I have attached a photo of me and my wife, Marie, at Kennedy Space Center last week. We live in Vero Beach, FL now which is only a little over an hour drive south of Cape Canaveral. **Bob Cabana** is the Director at KSC and was kind enough to get us two VIP passes (on three day notice!) for the Atlantis launch. Spectacular time and a perfect launch!

"Living in Vero Beach I also get alot of company, especially in the winter! This past winter, **Stan Holm '66**, a Civil Engineer Corps mentor for me, who came to see how nice the ocean is in February. I also saw **Mike Greene** and a bunch of guys from **Frank Fuchs'** company last month as they were having a small company reunion at Frank's in Fellsmere, just a few miles from Vero Beach. A hard partying group! You should be hearing from them about that visit directly. Take care. Tom." Thanks for the update. I hope you get to watch the last two shuttle launches. I should call Bob to see if he has a pass for me!



Kirk Benson '87 sent this note along with a photo of **Walt Havenstein**. Walt is the Chief Executive Officer of Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). <http://www.saic.com/>. Kirk works for SAIC and is contracted to NOAA's National Data Buoy Center located at Stennis Space Center, MS.



Here's a great update from **John Ball**: "Duke, Gay and I were blessed recently with the birth of our first granddaughter, Elise Aurelia Ball. With two sons and two grandsons already, a little girl in the family is quite a treat, especially since she and her parents live only 15 minutes away.

"I have had some success tracking down my 26th Company mates in preparation for our 40th Reunion in October 2011. So here goes. After some hours on the Internet, I was pleased to locate my roommate and Best Man, **Randy Wagner**, in Charlottesville, VA, after years of being out of touch. Randy and I talked as if we had seen each other yesterday, spawning some long-lost memories of life together in Bancroft Hall, such as flying paper airplanes out the windows of Room 5302 and reminiscing on Randy's quirky collection of nail clippings. Despite being an aero major and standing tall enough to bump his noggin on watertight doors, Randy decided to go into Uncle Hymie's pig boats and spent much of his 30-year career underwater. Despite this, Randy found time to father two wonderful children with wife Ruth. Their focus now is on their six – count 'em – grandchildren, who live within driving distance. After some time fully retired, Randy went back to work and now supports the Army at the National Ground Intelligence Center in Charlottesville. We'll stay in touch from now on.

"Through the Internet I also located **Joel Lassman** and had an enjoyable phone call recently. Joel is living in Washougal, Washington with his wife Rosann, a CPA for the local school district where Joel is a special education teacher for grades K-5. They have one grown daughter. After graduation, Joel was a SWO and then went restricted line as an oceanographer. His last duty station was as Senior Oceanographer for COMSUBPAC in Hawaii, where he happened to live across the street from company-mate **Pat Kelly**. He retired from the Navy after 20 years – same day as me in San Diego - and became a school teacher in his home town of Spokane for many years. After a few years in Arizona, Joel and Rosann moved to their present home in Washougal for employment. Joel plans to retire in a few years and return to their Arizona house so he can fulfill his passion for golf year 'round.

"On Facebook there are new photos of **Scott Gessis** up and about, a major milestone after his stroke last fall. With the love and support of Jackie, Scott is doing a disciplined regimen of physical therapy, even making it onto the putting green. Jackie wrote recently, "He has about 95% of the hearing back in his ear. He won't be happy though until he plays a round of golf." Hang in there Scott, as there are lots of prayers headed your way from classmates and friends. By the time you read this, I'll bet Scott has in fact been out on the course.

"I was also pleased to locate **Len Smith**, with whom I had lost contact after graduation. Len and Robin live in New Braunfels, TX, which, according to him, is only his home base for his busy 'international ministry for Bible believers'. Len flew Phantoms at Miramar and aboard MIDWAY while home-ported in Japan, and then flew for American Airlines. It's just difficult for me to picture this former fighter pilot and fun-loving guy as a minister, but then the Lord works in His own way. My email spurred Len to nostalgia and he shared a few wonderful stories. When I wrote Len that we had not seen him at a class reunion, he responded, 'Our classmate, **Chic Burlingame**, used to razz me (before he was murdered) about not being able to get to Annapolis more often – even teasing that our classmates would love to talk Bible with me! He had a great sense of humor and is one of those guys that you can't help smiling about when you think of him. Our careers often paralleled: We were on Youngster Cruise together, he and I were on FORRESTAL together; he was in Kingsville when I was in Beeville; and we flew at American Airlines together.

"The last time Robin and I saw him alive was during a trip in early fall '01: We were sitting at DFW waiting for a connecting flight when Chic sneaked up on us from behind...and sat with us until boarding time. He is missed. Robin and I recently visited the monument to his tragic Pentagon flight erected at Arlington National. While in that area we visited my old homes in Arlington and Pax River and spent a couple of days in Annapolis. As you know, the Academy – and the rules – have changed dramatically from our day. And some of those changes hurt my ego: My parents (my dad was USNA '43) used to enjoy looking up at an old USNA track records board and see my name up there for my high hurdle record. My record was never beaten (only because track went *metric* about a decade later), so it looked like my name would be up there forever. Alas, however, nobody cares about *yards* anymore...and the board has disappeared."

Here's another story from Len Smith. "Our supe, 'Lord Calvert' (then **RADM Jim Calvert '43**), my dad's classmate, was a regular guy. When the wrecking ball showed up and they began demolishing the old laundry building (the "button-crusher"), I got a

can of paint and a brush, and at 0200 exited Bancroft Hall, made my way over to and onto the roof of the laundry building, and demonstrated both my esprit de corps and my commanding *Reef Points* knowledge about Midshipman Jarvis by painting along the edge of the flat roof so it could be seen from the whole Yard: **'IF THE STACK GOES, WE GO WITH IT '71'**. Lord Calvert said he *loved* it, and it is commemorated in *Lucky Bag*. [See page 187 of the 1971 *Lucky Bag*] If you notice that the stack also has a '72 on it, that was done by [future RADM] **Steve Tomaszewski '72**. Because I was on restriction I couldn't go out in town to buy the paint supplies, and I was afraid they'd destroy the building before I got off restriction. I asked Steve to get them for me. He agreed to do it if I'd let him accompany me and let him paint a '72. I agreed, so he was there with me that night as we slowly, carefully found a way through the demolition rubble up onto the roof. Why was Len on restriction? **Mike Hichak** can answer that, Len explained. I was walking through the passageway in Luce Hall going to class. As I passed an open classroom door, I saw Mike in there at his desk. There were a few moments before class began, so I bopped in to say hi. As we were talking I noticed his prof, a Marine captain, taking an unusual interest in me. With an angry face he came over, pointed at my belt buckle, and demanded to know how it got so gross. (It was dirty, scratched, gouged, and scarred.) I looked at him and replied honestly, 'It got that way at the rifle range, sir.' He immediately brightened, became friendly, and said, 'Oh! You were one of those shooting with us over there yesterday?' Knowing what was coming, I said, 'Uh, no sir...this happened plebe summer.' He blew a gasket, chewed my ass a while...and put me on the ree-port.'" Now we know the story. Well, that's it from 26th Company for now. Enjoy the summer, and Beat Army! John." Great stories!

I received this announcement on the latest in our astronaut activities, "Space explorers set for induction into U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame, KENNEDY SPACE CENTER — The public is invited to celebrate the induction of the ninth group of space-shuttle astronauts into the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame. Veteran space-shuttle astronauts Guion Bluford Jr., Kenneth Bowersox, **Frank Culbertson Jr.**, and Kathryn Thornton will join the ranks of legendary space pioneers like Neil Armstrong, John Glenn, Alan Shepard and Sally Ride. The ceremony at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex will be held on Saturday, June 5, at 2:30 p.m. Culbertson, commander of the first space shuttle night landing at Kennedy Space Center and two other astronauts, will bring the number of space explorers enshrined in the Hall of Fame to 77." Congratulations, Frank! You are most deserving of this honor.

Many of you have read about the first group of women on submarines. Our own **Steve Hudson**, a senior lead engineer at the Pilgrim nuclear plant in Plymouth, is quoted as saying his daughter, **Elizabeth Hudson '10**, will win over the skeptics in the fleet. "She won't be given any favors, and I don't expect her to be given any," Hudson said. "Her competence will prove her worth." We wish her well in the fleet!

The home game tailgates are as follows: 9/11 (Georgia Southern); 10/16 (SMU); 10/30 (Duke); 11/13 (Central Michigan); 11/20 (Arkansas State). All tailgates start at 1330 and all kickoffs are at 1530. Join your classmates for great camaraderie and delicious food.

Too soon it's time to close. I hope your summer is a "best ever!" Just over a year until our reunion, October 2011. The reunion committee will have announcements out soon. Please keep our classmates and their families in your prayers for safe travel and good health. Pray, too, for the success of our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as for our classmates in business and government leadership. Time, tide and column due dates wait for no man!

Duces Virum, Duke