

Shipmate June / July 2008
10 May 2008
Duke Longworth

Summer in the Yard. I recall it was only ever hot and humid. The occasional thunderstorm provided some relief from the insufferable heat, but it got really wet and windy. I imagine the middies of today experience the same elements. Ah, those halcyon days!

Lots to report this month. My first note is from **Steve Joens**: "Hi Duke. The 36th company held its 2nd annual winter come-around at Lake Placid, NY in late February. Attending this year were **Jim Barron, Jan Milligan, Ron Spratt, Sonny Naple, Don Beaudette** and me. Sonny did another spectacular job of organizing the weekend with a great condo right on Lake Placid, handling all the paperwork and even arranging sub-zero temperatures and snow fall. Throughout the weekend, Jan got us going in the mornings with plenty of coffee and breakfasts that would have made the mess hall proud. We hope to see more of our "last to start, first to finish" 36th company comrades. Steve." I've got to make this 36th Company come-around next year! We're already organizing and signing up for the trip. Steve sent along this photo.



Sonny Naple sent this response: "Classmates! Well, it was a great time with old friends, in spite of my being incapacitated by a painful back. More than 25% of the original 15th Company and more than 50% of those graduating from 36th Company have attended at least one Lake Placid Trip. The 2009 trip will be Thursday, 26FEB08 - Sunday, 1MAR08. So get in shape for skiing, snowshoeing, bobsled riding, eating, drinking and laughing. Best wishes to you and your families, Sonny." As did most company classmates, we had a lot of fun in 36!

Garry Holmstrom replied: "Sonny, count me in. I prefer the skiing and snow. Must be the Skandahoovian genes. Thanks for pulling us together. Garry." I received a note from **Mark Horgan** indicating he will attend in '09. Hope we can get a large gathering next winter.

Next note is from **Mike Lynch**: "Duke, Happy Easter. I have now retired twice and have not slowed down. I retired from the Navy in '94; my last tour was as Director of Navy Sailing, working for CNET based in Annapolis. Next, Sue and I spent ten years in northern Minnesota working at a paper mill where I was involved in education development, training, and human resources. In 2005 we moved back to the Maryland eastern shore, I spent a year doing electrical construction as a project manager and job superintendent. In 2006 I went to work for Dorchester County Public Schools in Cambridge, MD. I am the Facilities Planner and my principal duties are as project manager for school construction, renovation, and capital improvements. Sue and I live in Easton, MD. Hope to see you at a football game, Mike." Sounds like a very fun and challenging post Navy career.

I asked Mike about his billet as Director of Sailing. Here's his reply: "Duke, that was my last tour. I spent three years traveling all over the country to ROTC units teaching young people how to sail. I started my commissioned service teaching sailing at the Naval Academy and ended teaching sailing at the Naval Academy, a great way to start and finish with Susan always at my side." Wow, that is just too good a deal. Nicely done, classmate!

You'll get quite a thrill from this next tale. **Larry Simoneaux** sent this note: "Duke, I write a commentary column for the Everett Herald, north of Seattle. To say that I didn't think it could happen to me would be understating it by a mile. To say that I was lucky would be spot on. I'm sending it to you to use if you'd like to remind the guys that we aren't bulletproof and that the only things buried in your chest are the things that keep you vertical and breathing. So, if they hurt, do something about it right away. Sincerely, Larry.

"PS...My rehab nurse makes Nurse Ratchet look like a purring kitten."

"Listen to your heart. I was helping a friend clear trees from his property. My reward was to be several cords of wood for my home. After about four hours, I was tired, sweating, running short on energy, but determined to keep at it. I put my chainsaw down and had just tossed a fairly large round of wood into my truck when my heart basically said, 'OK, stud. That's it. You're on your own.'

"So there I am, lying on the ground with a sharp pain in my chest that won't go away, fighting off the thought that I might be having a heart attack. The EMT's

were there in about 5 minutes and immediately started hooking me up to more sensors than there are on the space shuttle. They took one look at the EKG and we were out of there.

"I'm told I'll need some time to get back to normal. My diet is definitely going to improve. The exercise I was doing will continue. I was extremely lucky that my dumbness ran out before my life did. My point is that when you feel any pain in your chest, don't even think of trying to gut it out. Just get yourself moving to an ER as quickly as you can. And yes, someone else can drive. (Larry Simoneaux lives in Edmonds. Comments can be sent to: larrysim@clearwire.net)." Wow! PTL Larry lived to tell his story. Okay, classmates, time to read and heed this word of the day! No more overdoing it thinking you'll be fine! Yikes!

Brian Horias sent along the following note: "Duke, keep up the great work classmate! Here's an input on a recent visit that Cathy and I had with Sandy and **Rick Baxter** while on a trip up the California coast in February. We stopped by to visit them in Atherton, CA and were treated to wonderful weather and a great weekend. The highlight of the trip was a walk across the Golden Gate Bridge. Shown in the photo (left to right) are Cathy and me with Sandy and Rick. Rick is a radiologist specializing in non-invasive surgery and Sandy is an MD working for a Bay area pharmaceutical firm. Brian." Thanks for the kind words and great photo!



Next is a note with follow up from **Pat Doyle**: “Duke, I was reviewing the list of donors from '71 in the April Shipmate, and in one of the levels had '**Thomas H. Abernathy**' at the top of the column, followed immediately by 'Patrick M Doyle'. The first time that those two names were that close together was on the first day of AC Year '68, when Tom and I were in 5th Company and moved into Room 3312 with **Doug Murphy** and **Dave Odland**. At the end of Youngster Year, we all shifted to 4-0 and 'Tiger 23', and Tom and I roomed together in 4005 for two years. I guess that the last time that our names were together was either 08 or 09 June 1971, depending on when we both finally cleared out of 'Mother B'. Still have my door nameplate, by the way. Pat.” That surely brings back some fond memories of roommates and the days in Mother B. How about a company reunion, I asked?

Pat replied: “Sounds like a great idea. We had the same 16 (out of 26) guys from 23 at both the 30th and the 35th, so we could probably work with something more frequently than every 5 years. We also have at least 4 "Tigers" in Annapolis: **Tom Gross**, **Don Rockwell**, **Mike Hallahan** and **Hank Turowski**. Pat.” See my 36th Company note above for the gouge on a winter get together. Just too much fun and a decreasing amount to time!

Here's the latest from our “Army Sailor”, **Bob Anderson**: “Duke, greetings from Mesopotamia! The unusually cold winter and accompanying mud are behind us and the insurgents are popping up like crocuses. We actually had snow in Baghdad for the first time in something like 80 years. Most Iraqis had no idea what to do. The work here continues and we are making progress. I wish the loss of American lives would end, but all I can do is work to mitigate it as best I can. The Navy (and other) electronic warfare officers (EWOs) from the squadron are spread hither and yon trying to keep the systems up and operational. Different services seem to take different approaches, but the goal is always the same...saving all the kids we can.

“Life as a contractor affords few privileges here, but I am at least allowed to forego shaving. Here is a recent photo that was taken on the way back in from the field. The street sign is real, but the local pests have pretty much been eradicated by our people. We get rockets coming in now and again, but so far I have managed to duck them. Take care and be well. Bob.” I'm always impressed with the aplomb Bob gives to the periodic dangers of his environment!



I asked Bob about the beard and he's his reply: "Duke, Thanks. I'm basically growing the beard because in my role here I can and it is one less thing I have to worry about during the course of the day. A couple of the sailors had remarked about my resemblance to the picture, so I got a white hat and posed one morning. Take care." Bob, I'm pulling for you to make all of this you can. Our nation needs good men like you to do their part to bring peace and stability to that area of the world. Duces Virum, Duke.

Now, for a change of pace, I have some different material. Here's a note about one of our astronauts from **Harry Sheffield**: "Don't know if this needs to get some '71 press or how to do it, but **Bob Cabana** is being inducted into the Astronaut Hall of Fame at the Kennedy Space Center visitors center on 3 May." That is quite an accomplishment. Surely hope one of our other classmates gets a

photo of the event which we can share with the class! Any photos from this one, Harry?

Next is a note regarding **Dave Leestma**. Here's the press release:
"GRAND RAPIDS -- A retired NASA astronaut who made three space shuttle flights is returning to his West Michigan roots this month for two presentations. CAPT David Leestma, who was raised in Grand Rapids, will be at the Public Museum of Grand Rapids at 8 p.m. on April 16 to speak on 'Flying in Space: What It's Like and What's Ahead.' The next night, Leestma will speak at the annual awards banquet of the Roger B. Chaffee Scholarship. Leestma, who was born in Muskegon and holds a degree from the U.S. Naval Academy, logged more than 3,500 hours in space, including a 3 1/2-hour space walk. He now works at the Johnson Space Center in Houston heading a team planning a return to the moon and an expedition to Mars. Grand Rapid Press (Michigan)." Nice work, Dave. I hope the visit went well. Where's a photo?

I received this short note from **Perry Martini**: "Captain **James Bryant**, USN (Ret.)'71 has been elected as President of the Greater DC Metro Alumni Association and will be inducted on Wednesday April 16th." No surprises here! Jim is a natural leader!

Time, tide and column due dates wait for no man. This is the time in our lives to renew the close friendships we knew at USNA. Take time to visit or call a classmate. Please pray for wisdom for our nation's leaders, especially for our classmates in national military, civilian and commercial leadership billets. Pray, too, for the success of our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Duces Virum, Duke