

Shipmate May 2008
Class of 1971
Duke Longworth, Secretary
12 Mar 2008

This is a favorite time in the yard. The midshipmen must be very eager for graduation day. Right now they are studying diligently (or so some think!) to pass their exams. I remember youngster spring semester – I stayed up all night studying for the physics exam. It paid off as I received a “B” for my efforts. Really don’t know how that happened with an all-nighter – I should have been sleeping during the exam! Well, there are mids doing the same thing today! Some things just never change! It’s a beautiful spring and the emerald green grass lining Stribling Walk is trimmed to perfection. Ah, those were the days!

I’d like to start off with a cheerfully bright list of all the accomplishments of our notable class; however, in this particular season we are confronted with a time of remembrance for those who go before us. The following two notes from **Perry Martini** say it all:

“It is my sad duty to report to you that **Greg Dies** passed away on Valentine's Day, February 14th. Greg, the 20th company commander at USNA and active with our class these past 40 years, died from complications following a kidney transplant in December 2007 and brain surgery in late January due to a brain aneurysm. Funeral services were held at the First Presbyterian Church at 2pm on February 20th in Graham, Texas. May he rest in peace in eternal salvation.”

Perry followed up with this note: “I talked to a co-worker friend of Greg’s today with the City of Graham, TX. They thought the world of him – they said he was a powerful force in the community, a truly patriotic man who held numerous elder positions at the local Presbyterian Church. I am proud to have called him a classmate.

“I talked to Greg in November as he was looking for some Army-Navy tickets for a friend. I took care of him – we had a good conversation and he said he wasn’t feeling well but was doing okay. Shortly thereafter he became ill and did not recover from the two operations. *Duces Virum*, Perry.”

Here is the second notice from Perry: “It is with deep sadness that I pass along to you the death of our classmate, RADM **Charles "Chip" Griffiths**, USN (Ret.) who passed away in his sleep on March 2nd following his long and courageous battle with cancer. Chip was a member of the 21st Company at boat school and one of only 13 members of our class to reach Flag or General Rank while serving his country during an illustrious career in the silent service. He is survived by his widow, Cindy, two sons, Matthew and Brandon (USNA '00), and his parents VADM and Mrs. Charles H. Griffiths, SR, USN (Ret.) Class of 1946. Funeral Services at Arlington National were held on March 14th. May he rest in peace.”

Thank you, Perry. All of us were blessed with the friendships formed at Boat School. The passing of our classmates gives us all pause to reflect on the memories and friendships formed during those halcyon days.

Shifting to the sunnier side of life, it seems Hawaii is a favorite destination during the gloomy winter months in CONUS. Here is a note from **Lee Schierer**: "Greetings Duke, my wife Sue and I recently returned from a two week visit to Hawaii. We took an 11 day cruise with Norwegian Cruise Lines on Pride of Aloha and were able to spend a few days on each of four islands. Also, while we were there we were able set up a dinner with **Dave Luengen**, a 2nd Company-mate, and **Jack Crowther**. We had arranged to meet at Duke's Canoe Club on Waikiki for a sunset dinner our second evening in the islands. Unfortunately Jack developed a cold and was afraid he would infect us on our vacation so he asked to be excused.

"It will take a while to sort through the 479 photos I took on the trip. We did some snorkeling and saw lots of fish and even had a turtle swim right under me not 2 feet away. The volcanoes were amazing as were the prices for meals. We saw lots of whales on our whale watching tour with The Pacific Whale Foundation and then saw lots more from the side of the ship as we continued around the islands. Getting photos of whales is a challenge as they are gone before you can get the camera on them. One guy on the ship likened it to watching submarine races! All in all we had a good time on our self guided tours of the various ports the ship stopped in. Our Garmin GPS was really great though it did lead us astray twice while looking for a place to eat and a place to shop. We got home late Thursday, February 14. We were able to meet with Sue and Dave Luengen and Jack Crowther on February 13, Wednesday evening before we boarded the plane for home. We ate at the Sam Snead Golf Club near Pearl Harbor. Dinner was excellent. I have attached the photos from the dinner. Jack, Dave and I got caught up on what we had done since graduating and leaving the fleet and also swapped a few sea stories. Dave is a Manufacturers Representative for Mechanical Systems Corporation. Jack is an entrepreneur and he told me about some of his business adventures. The fish business seems to be the most active right now. I wish we had had more time to talk and catch up but our flight was on time. Currently, I am a Senior Project Manager for Erie Management Group, a capital investment company that is currently completing a Bio Diesel Plant (45 M gallons annually) in Erie, PA. Duces Virum, Lee."



In the photo with five people, from left to right is Jack Crowther, Sue Luengen , Dave Luengen, Sue Schierer, Lee Schierer.

As a follow up to the April column, I'm attaching two photos of the four couples who were on the Pride of America cruise while Lee and Sue were on Pride of Aloha. Jean and Perry Martini, Joyce and Dave Laws, Peggy and John Morris, and Lisa and your humble servant, Duke Longworth. We hoisted champagne together on the fantail (Peggy and John's patio) at the ship's sailing and again for sunset the last night on the ship. Our cruise took us to Hilo where we toured Volcanoes National Park; Maui where we took the full ride to Hana with 617 curves along the coastal road while viewing 53 waterfalls; Kona where we enjoyed Captain Zodiak's speedy boats enroute to a superb snorkeling site; and, Kauai where we enjoyed the many delights of the Garden Isle to include the Waimea Canyon. I could go on for awhile. I do encourage all who are willing to brave the lengthy air travel to do this cruise. Hawaii is lots of fun. Now is the time to see it!





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. Please take a few minutes to remember those classmates who have gone on ahead of us. 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