

Shipmate Summer 2009
11 May 2009
Duke Longworth

Ah, I can feel the heat and humidity that pervades the Chesapeake Bay area and our Mother B in summer. The mids are dripping with perspiration every time they run to formation and especially when marching and exercising. That part of academy life I do not miss. But, still those were the halcyon days!

Well, back March, we had an invigorating winter. Winter is my favorite month and the ground hog delivered six more weeks for us this year! The good news about the longer winter is in my first report, the 36th Company Third Annual Winterfest.

Here's the report from **Bruce Gallemore**: "Duke, the 36th Company 'Mountain Division' convened in late February for our third annual winterfest at Lake Placid, NY. **Sonny Naple, Don Beaudette, Steve Joens, Mark Horgan, Craig Welling, Jim Barron, Garry Holmstrom, Ron Spratt** and I mustered for three days of skiing, mountain hiking and camaraderie in the frozen North. It was a great renewal of acquaintances with old friends and forgotten muscles. In the evenings around the fireplace, history was revisited, embellished and generally revised for the better. Close re-examination of our Navy/USMC careers revealed that the seas were rougher, the girls prettier and our exploits more daring than recorded in previous accounts. Each year we re-discover that fresh air, physical activity and extended laughter with old friends are a great way to break step with the relentless march of maturity. Same time next year! Bruce." Somehow I've got to be there next year! Here's a great photo of our daring classmates in the snow.



Front row: Mark Horgan, Garry Holmstrom; Back row: Jim Barron, Bruce Gallemore, Sonny Naple, Steve Joens, Ron Spratt and Don Beaudette.

As you can imagine, I received some more inputs from the hearty snowmen. Here's a note from Don Beaudette to Sonny Naple which details the various leadership billets: "Sonny--Thanks so much for putting all this together. It would not happen without your leadership and friendship. Mark - thanks much for driving and for your steadfast support of Boston sports (Go Sox!). Garry - your Nordic bonhomie and blueberry pancakes were truly outstanding. Craig - your cogent case about football replacing baseball as our national pastime was very persuasive and entertaining. Jim thanks much for risking life and limb to periodically check for gravity's continued presence. Steve - after traveling the furthest, at quite some peril it appears, it was remarkable that yours was the first chronicle and photographic evidence of our gathering. Master Chef Ron - without your expert tutelage, my rapid promotion would not have been possible or in Order. Finally - Bruce your keen observations and official record of our exploits made an outstanding time sound even better. See you in 2010! Don Beaudette."

Sonny replied: "Thanks guys for another great long weekend of fun in the Adirondacks. Garry, although new to the Lake Placid group this year, seemed a veteran. Without exception, each year the topic of other classmates comes up. We would love to see our other company classmates at next year's get-together. Sonny."

Steve Joens added his return trip report: "Hi all! I hope you 2009 Lake Placid Come-Around Participants got home OK. Jim, let us know how the drive to VA went in the storm. The word at the Albany airport was significant delays into/out of Newark and cancellations into Atlanta. I had a little trouble getting out of Albany - something about fluid leaking from the landing gear - but they fixed it and I made my connection in Cleveland with 'seconds' to spare. To all participants - it was great to see you all and spend three quality days with good friends having a good time. Sonny - thanks again for setting this all up again - it was awesome. Gary - terrific breakfasts, thanks. Ron and Don - unforgettable dinners, thanks.

"As I said at dinner Saturday: We call upon the 36th Co members of the world to reunite and participate in the IV 36th Co Games, February 25-28, 2010, in Lake Placid, NY." Nice report. This sounds like too much fun for me to stay home working all weekend. I'm thinking Ron Spratt can help me with the words so I can get my liberty card!

Speaking of Ron, here's his report to Bruce Gallemore: "That was an excellent capsulation of another momentous weekend. Thanks to all for coming; both near and far. Here's a special salute to Sonny for spearheading the movement and bringing The Order together. I was particularly pleased with the promotion of Assistant Chef Don Beaudette to Associate Chef. I foresee a great future for this man of exceptional culinary skills. I am very grateful for the friendship, camaraderie, and opportunity to be with my 71 company mates. The more the merrier. May the force be with us. Ron." As I said, how can I let another year pass without participating in the company-mate fun!

Next note is from **Mike Marks**: "Duke, having washed away the road salt and waxed the old Super Beetle in anticipation of spring, I stood back to admire my handiwork and wondered aloud if any other classmates might also still possess their first car. I would be curious to know. Surely, there were times I thought it better to have slapped down the Northeastern National loan against a more serious babe-magnet, but my high school sweetheart / fiancé was not inclined to agree. It was at Julie's urging that I should follow the lead of perhaps the brightest and clearly most practical guy in the 32nd company; i.e., **David Radcliffe**. Dave had acquired a 1971 yellow Super Beetle which Julie saw, liked, and thought a wise purchase for newly weds-to-be. Imagining agreement in the matter might contribute to a happy marriage (among other benefits); I was quick to purchase an almost identical machine. Julie still likes the Volkswagen, but that's about as far as it goes. Anyway, I don't think Bay Volkswagen exists in Annapolis anymore, no different from the smoke-stack we left in a pile of dust. And while I've only visited Crabtown a few times since that hot, humid day in June some years past, with each brief walk about the yard I marvel at the changes, lament the losses, and cling desperately to the vestiges of our time in the sun. The occasional visitor will likely agree it's like stumbling into a strange land. I wander about the grounds, squint at various building and athletic fields, and pause to wonder if I was ever really a part of it all. Is it possible I simply saw the place on TV and thought it my own? It is then I turn to the little yellow bug,

and it all comes back to me. The diggers, the fillers, the Porsche on the rocks, and Bilgers' Gate ... that distinctive little archway I shall forever avoid just to be sure. Surely, the grounds look good as it appears for a time the fillers have gained upon the diggers; but with so many reminders now buried beneath the improvements, and cars galore parked on tennis courts, I am left to wonder if new is truly better. No surprise then I should faithfully wash and wax the Beetle. On a closing note, let me toss this memory on the table. As clearly as yesterday, I recall a somewhat regular stop en route Saufley Field in April 1972 to pick up a carpool buddy / classmate by the name of Mike Longworth. Julie and I had a flat in the Lamplighter Apartments somewhere near the commercial airport (as did **Terry Tonkin**, **Neil Kinnear**, and their wives among others). I doubt I could find it today without the help of MapQuest; and I cannot recall the name of the complex where you lived, but it was definitely on my way to Saufley and our collective introduction to Naval Aviation. I think it safe to say we were ahead of our time in the whole carpooling thing, but that's another story. Anyway, Duke, I don't know if you remember the apartment, the little yellow Volkswagen, or me for that matter, but there you have it, sir. The sharing of a fond memory while it lasts. As for the VW ... three more payments and that baby is mine! Ken Marks kamarks71@comcast.net." Ken, I well remember all the above and am most appreciative of the lift to Saufley and this ride down memory lane!

All avid travelers will love this note from Jeanne and **Dan Hickey**: "Greetings from the Rivah (Northern Neck of Virginia)! Though our busy boating season is almost upon us, (www.smithpointmarina.com) I thought I'd take a time-out to tell you about the recent trip that we took to Morocco with Neil and **Mike Greene** (18th Co. roommate, USMC,). Since all of our sons were happily involved in their own lives: Larry Greene (newly commissioned USMC,) Josh Hickey, (ONI) and Matt Hickey, (structural engineer,) the four of us decided to head for an unconventional vacation destination – Morocco. (Should you want to see Mike's terrific photography, contact him at: traveling3@aol.com.)

"The planning began December 27th at the Marrakech Restaurant in DC, where we enjoyed the belly dancing and food while celebrating Jeanne's mother's 80th birthday; an appropriate venue since she was born and raised in Morocco and met Jeanne's father, an Army-Air Corps mechanic, when he landed near Casablanca in WWII.

"Picture us, two months later enjoying authentic couscous in the Fez apartment of a Moroccan taxi driver, then retiring to an adjoining room to participate in a teleconference with his son in DC. Aissom, the young waiter we had met at the Marrakech Restaurant, took great pleasure in visiting with us and with all of the relatives and neighbors who stopped by to chat with him (apparently a daily event.) This experience of international relations was a highlight of our trip!

"In perfectly pink Marrakech, we barely had time to recover from jetlag when we plunged into the suuqs. There we had ample opportunity to practice our French and our haggling skills (one leather dealer actually chased us down) and even slipped unscathed from the hands of the carpet vendors! It was fascinating

to drop into this lively Berber epicenter and to delve into its history and architecture.

“With our trusty driver, Khaled, at the wheel, we set off through the snowcapped and dramatic High Atlas Mountains for the Moroccan Hollywood, Ouarzazate, where movies such as “Cleopatra” and “Charlie Wilson’s War” were filmed. After a night in an oasis at a “hip” kasbah (fortress) hotel, it was on to the Sahara and the Erg Chebbi dunes at Merzouga. Our timing was perfect – just enough to take a one hour trek (no camels, thanks,) photograph the amazing play of shadows and light across 19 miles of dunes, examine the fossil-wares of the local kids who had followed us up, and then watch the sunset as we headed back down. Though I, inspired by Humphrey Bogart in “Sahara,” had crawled to the top in painful parody of a man dying of thirst, we are all in agreement that this was the ideal season to be in Morocco – comfortable temperatures and nary a tourist in site. We were the only guests in the Nasser Palace Hotel – no TVs, no wifi, no bar, but the young Berber cousins who ran it, provided tasty local food (tajines) and regaled us with a drum concert and song. Local roosters provided the wake-up call! Despite the remoteness of this village, we were sorry to have to leave this hospitable hostel so soon after sunrise.

“The next leg of our journey took us through deep gorges, geological phenomena and the anomaly of a Swiss-like ski resort, ending at the medieval city of Fez. Here we stayed at a stunning “riad” (house with interior courtyard and water) just inside the medina (old city) walls. The blank exterior did not betray that it was listed as one of the most beautiful riads of Morocco. Though I have entered and escaped the mazes of many a suuq, the one in Fez was the most inscrutable. A guide is the only way to go in order to discover the beauties and secrets of this intriguing city and make it back to your hostelry the same day.

“An hour’s drive from Fez lies the broad and long Rif Valley, the imperial city of Meknes, and the Roman ruins of Volubilis. Having been stationed in Naples, Jeanne and I were pretty familiar with ruins, but the setting of these (the backdrop for Patton’s Carthaginian speech in the movie of the same name) made them spectacular! Our driver also skirted the nearby holy Islamic city of Moulay Idriss, but we “non-believers” were not allowed to enter.

“We departed Fez via train for the more European-like port city of Tangier. The journey passed amicably as we dialogued with a Moroccan army officer who told us about life on the border with Algeria, where he had been stationed (unaccompanied) for over 25 years. It put six-month deployments into perspective! Tangier is a city in which any sailor would feel at home: a great waterfront, lots of restaurants and entertainment and easily accessible shopping. Neil and Jeanne, whose suitcases were already filled to capacity, concluded their shopping spree at a bazaar in the Continental Hotel. There Jeanne discovered her “Berber drum” – a great souvenir of our desert experience – the irony was that the head of the drum was a stretched fish skin....always appropriate here at Smith Point, ‘where the fish live!’

“So, classmates, if you can’t make it all the way to the Sahara, we hope you’ll trek down the Potomac and visit us at Smith Point – we promise not to bore you with our movies, but there may be a drum concert! Fair Winds, Following

Seas, Dan.” Wow, that sounds like lots of fun and like a trip I’d love to replicate! It’s on my list of vacations!

Next is the annual report from **Steve Ayers**: “The 16th Company T-fest was held April 17-19 in Annapolis. No injuries reported except bruised golf egos and burrito indigestion. Saturday brought much needed stimulus spending in Baltimore. At Fells Point the T-pests repelled a non Somali pirate attack in the best Navy tradition (see single shot of the group as evidence). This was followed by a Prop Joe / Avon Barksdale style WIRE tour of East Baltimore, complete with live substance abuse effects demo by local stand-ins. (if you don’t get that there’s no way to explain here). Next was the Navy-JHU lacrosse game. Game highlights were nil except for **Bob Capra** passing out sun screen and french fries to all takers. Forty years ago “Bob Capra passing out...” would have meant something else. The final stop was a tryout for the local Senior Shuffle Board League franchise. None of us made the cut for The Baltimore Stoops training camp because we couldn’t keep the puck in line. No news there, but some here: Peg and **Roger Young** have moved to Wilmington, NC where they live on a golf course. If you visit you can play the third hole over and over again without greens fees by ducking into Roger’s yard when the greens keeper shows up. Dawn and dusk are best for this. **Paul McIntire** thinks he has amusing stories about memory lapses, but can’t remember. **Mike Bluestein** flies PHL to Tel Aviv, almost his boyhood dream of being a motorman on the B Train to Brighton Beach. **Bill Luckey** is still looking for the perfect fly fishing spot. **Steve Ayers** band will soon release a new CD of other people’s greatest hits. **Paul Timmins** remains partially employable and took some valuable time off to write this.” Thanks for a great report, Steve!



This next topic has me hot. Many of you received a terse note from the new Alumni Association President announcing an abrupt change to the number of SHIPMATEs we receive this year and next. I was struck by the sudden nature of this change, especially in light of the lack of apparent analysis. After gaining my composure, I called Perry Martini to vent. Perry was similarly caught unawares about the change. He is in an excellent billet for us to voice our opposition or support of the reduction in the number of SHIPMATEs. My recollection of our time in Mother B is along the lines of collect the data, analyze the data, and then make a decision. This was a classic “fire, ready, aim” as the analysis portion of this was weak. Perhaps better communication with the audience would have assisted. My bottom-line: I support paying for the hardcopy magazine.

Our own **Mitch Marich** captures the essence of the issue in this note to **Skid Heyworth '70**: “I received the notice about the reduced publication schedule today. I do not recall being polled about this recently. I am not confident a majority of the alumni want it to drop to 5 issues a year, even if time-sensitive items are posted on a web site. Like most alumni who are not fully retired, there are a lot of demands on my time. I get a lot of email and it is often quickly deleted or moves down off the visible list if it does not require quick attention. I rarely go to USNA.com unless I have a specific reason. SHIPMATE is casual reading I can take with me. I do not generally have access to the Internet on trips or at work. Of course, a quality print publication is easier on the eyes than a screen.

“Many longer articles can wait for (about) bimonthly publication (which I am sure is your intention) and breaking news is better promulgated by email, but I am not sure I want the other features delayed so long, or scattered among emails and web site postings. I know your intention is to best serve the alumni and think that should be the first priority, not saving money (although that is a valid consideration). Thanks, Mitch Marich.” Well said, Mitch. I agree completely.

Here is the reply from Skid: “Mitch -- Thanks for your email on SHIPMATE. I've delayed answering until I had most of the facts. I'm afraid we got ahead of ourselves here and tripped on the way to a solution. Turns out the Foundation lost a \$12M pledge they were counting on and panicked. They convened the Joint Finance Committee which approved a revised operating budget. The largest expense is SHIPMATE and that fact combined with the pressure on printed media worldwide led them to target SHIPMATE as the easiest fix. Then the Board's Communications Committee was convened and joint ‘task force’ including the Board officers and the Staff officers came up with the solution you saw announced last week.

“We over-reacted a little but scaling back SHIPMATE is inevitable unless it becomes separately funded. Every annual budget for the last 10 yrs we've been bemoaning how much it costs. But there are a lot of ways to solve that problem and I'm not sure we announced the best way. Because of alumni pressure, I doubt it will be cancelled entirely. The new President is still open to other ideas and in the Executive Committee meeting said he'd do a member survey which

will be used to revisit the announced decision. So in the short term, it looks like we will lose two issues this year and that's all that's certain. We have lots of reserves so we don't have to panic. We'll come up with a better solution. I have your input and I encourage you to also get your thoughts to your Class President. If you have a Chapter Trustee notify him too. Skid."

Too soon it's time to close. Our nation is at a turning point regarding our fundamental operating philosophy. I hope our foundation remains strong and our people wise regarding what is best for our long term. 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 continued success of our missions in Iraq and for success in Afghanistan.

Duces Virum, Duke