

Shipmate November 2008
10 September 2008
Duke Longworth

November in the Yard is usually a cool month, football is in the air, and the middies are eager for Christmas break. By the time you receive this Shipmate we will know the outcome of the quadrennial election cycle. Seems the politicians always talk about how this cycle is the most important. Hopefully, our nation will continue as a strong republic for many centuries. And, hopefully the Navy football team is on a winning streak!

Our astronaut classmates are making the news this year. Here's a report on our own **Frank Culbertson**: "Orbital Sciences Corporation has named two experienced executives to fill new roles in its Advanced Programs and Launch Systems Groups' management teams, the company announced today. Mr. Frank L. Culbertson, Jr. has joined the company as Senior Vice President and Deputy General Manager of the Advanced Programs Group, based in Dulles, VA. Mr. Culbertson will be responsible for Orbital's human spaceflight programs, including commercial transportation services to the International Space Station (ISS) and the Orion Launch Abort System."

"Mr. Culbertson was originally selected as a NASA astronaut candidate in 1984. For the next 18 years, he served in a variety of critical spaceflight and management roles for NASA's Space Shuttle and Space Station programs, including three launches aboard the Space Shuttle and command of the International Space Station. These flights included piloting STS-38 Atlantis in 1990, commanding STS-51 Discovery in 1993, and launching on STS-105 Endeavour to the ISS in 2001, plus returning aboard STS-108 Discovery after four months on the ISS. During Expedition 3 to the ISS, which began in August 2001 and returned to Earth in December 2001, Mr. Culbertson and his two Russian crewmates lived and worked in space for 129 days. In total, he has logged over 144 days in space and over five hours of extra-vehicular activity (space walk) experience."

As an aviator, I always enjoy reading about our astronaut classmates. I hope you do, too. By the way, nice work, Frank! Now that you are in Northern Virginia, perhaps we will see you at the class tailgates. There's always a good crowd of folks and some good chow! I hope to see you there.

Several notes to send along as well as a prized photo in this month's column. I'm sure you recall the great years when **Brian Horias** was our secretary. Seems he is making some changes lately: "I have changed my residence. I'm becoming a "man of leisure" and moving to Knoxville, TN. Cathy's family is there and we like the area. I'll take some time to wind down and then will probably do some part-time consulting. This is a great location, so please consider that you all have an open invitation to stop in if you are passing through or want to say hello. We have plenty of room! I'll stay in touch and

maybe will have time now to make the next ceremony on CVN-71! Brian and Cathy Horais. brian@horais.com" Thanks, Brian. Now, that sounds like a nice place to live. I hope you can get to the Navy football games for years to come. I'm sure our alumni group in Northern Virginia will miss your energy and enthusiasm for the monthly luncheons. The place won't be the same without you, Brian.

A couple months ago a "gold hawker" advertised a '71 class ring on Ebay. Seems **Bob Beckman** thought it might be his. The story starts with the email from **Perry Martini**: "A 1971 class ring is currently posted on Ebay and the seller claims it was "found" on the beach in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Ring contains no inscribed name or initials. If your ring is missing, go to the following site and contact the seller."

Bob thought the ring might be his so Perry sent another email: "Bob, call this guy ASAP for he said he would accept a bid over the phone to the original owner but he still wanted to make "money" on the deal because he bought it from someone who found it on the beach. I told him over the phone to please not sell it to just anyone but to give me a couple of days to try and find out who it may belong to, etc."

Bob followed up with the following: "Perry, I think that was my ring! I lost it in a sailing trip years ago. Thanks for the heads up. So far, someone is sniping the bid by \$10 each time - may be the seller, who says he bought it from someone who found it! Pretty shady! Bob."

Perry responded: "I was most suspicious about the ring when he informed me that there was no name inscribed but rather just a copyright symbol on the inside from Jostens. Did your ring have your name in it? Nevertheless, you would recognize it as well by its photo. Let me know if you recover the ring from this Ebayer?"

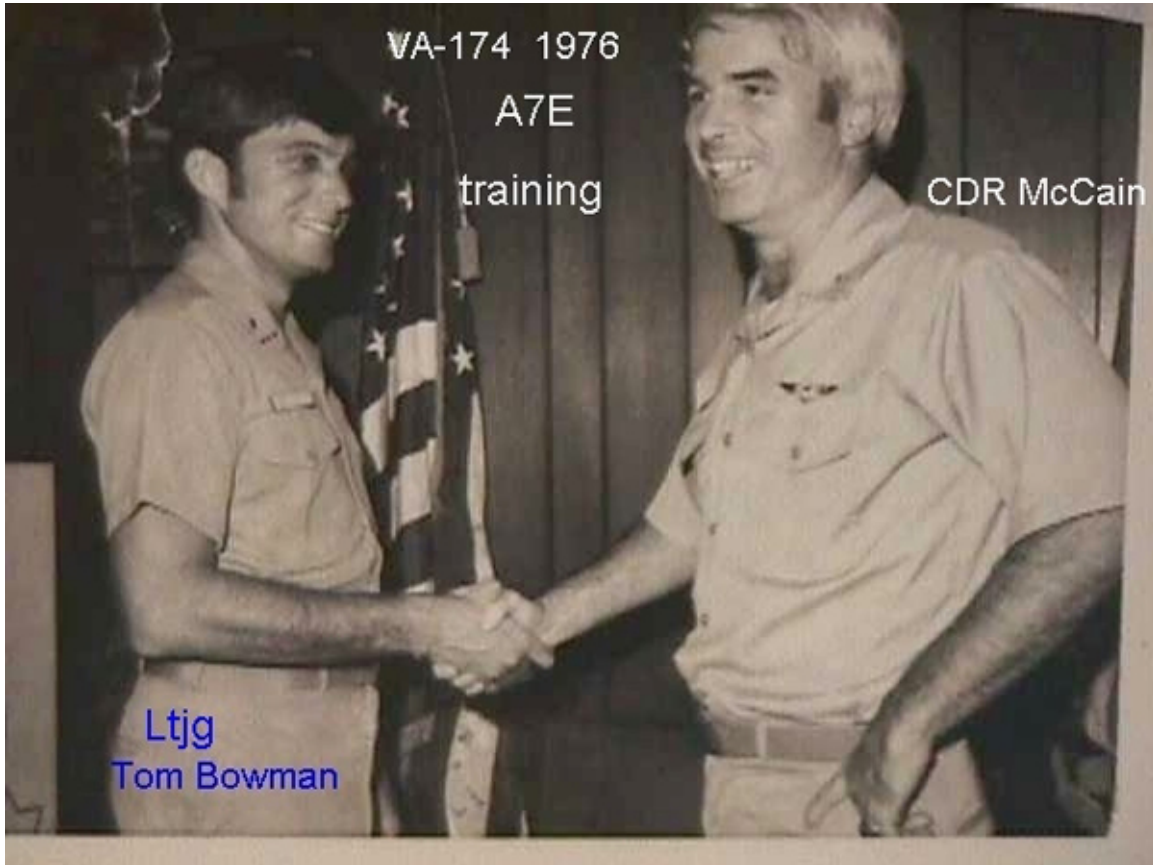
Bob replied: "Perry, I contacted the guy. He wanted \$1500 over the phone. I had a bid in for \$1000 and was outbid. Had lunch with **Al Ptak** yesterday and took a look at his ring - I did have mine engraved, so the found ring is not mine. Also, the more I looked at the pictures it looked too new to have been lost for 20 + years. So, no joy here, but at least I'm not out \$1,000! I wonder if it's a knock off."

Perry replied: "I'm always amazed as to the audacity of greed found with those who have something others want or own. Glad you didn't win your \$1K bid; also, have a feeling that this sluggo is the one who keeps adding to the bid himself to drive the price up! I'm glad you didn't buy the fake / marked out ring. I was suspicious with the copyright trademark inside the ring which doesn't exist on mine or others."

And the conclusion from Bob: "Perry, FYI, the ring went for \$1375 to some unidentified person. Probably either a collector or wanted the gold! Bob."

I sent an email regarding the ring to our classmates in the Virginia Beach area. **Tom Bowman** replied: "Thanks for the notification. I do visit VA Beach to see the folks, but I still have my ring."

“Here are two-academy types in 1976. In this picture CDR **John McCain** '58 was CO of VA-174, the A7E training squadron. (I have not been "vetted" for VP, yet! That is probably just as well!) I had just completed my training. Prior to that I was in VA-45 and flew TA-4J two seat jets. I did fly with McCain after his return from Vietnam on his speaking engagements.



“I ended up in VA-12 with CDR Edwards with VA-66 as our CAG squadron on the USS INDEPENDENCE. I was married to Vickie for 25-years and have three daughters. All three of the girls are graduates of the University of Central in Orlando. I joined EASTERN Airlines but had a 'minor' ultra light mishap in 1982.



Tom continues, "I will look you up in the Lucky Bag. Your name sounds familiar. I was in the 34th company and hung-out with **Kevin O'Connor, Jim Gosma, Tom Bjerke, Paul Cuddy** and **Mike Trent**.

"I went to Norview High in Norfolk, VA and spent all my Navy time at Cecil Field. My current girl friend as a house on Cocoa Beach, FL. She is a retired Navy Commander. My 'spa-boat' is at Patrick AFB. I have lived on the boat since 2001."



I replied, "Tom, Thanks! Great photos! Okay, were we in VA 174 together and do either of us remember that? I went through Class 04-76 with **Guy Snodgrass**, but don't clearly recall any other classmates in the RAG then."

Tom replied, "Guy and I went through jet training in Beeville, TX in 1973. He is retired from Delta."

I managed to recall a few other classmates in VA-174 about the same time. "Tom, Roger all. Guy and I were not in the same A-7 class, he was several ahead of me. **Fred Ziska** was finishing the RAG when I got there, or so I recall. My Class 04-76 included **Jack Sheehan '73** and **Bob Stumpf '73**. **Bob Chimenti** joined the class a couple months later."

Tom, let's get together at a Navy game this fall and share sea stories over a beer or two! Thanks for the great photo!

Bill Williams has a tip for all of us: "I just had my ring resized by Jostens. I hadn't worn it in a few years as my knuckles had gotten larger. What I wanted everyone to know that is this: if you have a similar issue, our warranty covers resizing the rings at no cost, and if Jostens ruins the ring while making it larger, they will cast a new one, also at no cost. All the best, Bill." Great tip, thanks Bill! Hope to see you at a game this fall.

Tom Ledvina sent along this note regarding a "distinguished executive" award he received: "The Presidential Rank Awards are presented to members of

the Senior Executive Service through a nomination and selection process. No more than 5% of the sitting SES members can get the 'meritorious executive' award. No more than 1% can get the 'distinguished executive' award. As with most awards, I was lucky enough to be in charge of some great folks and working on maritime readiness issues and BRAC issues that apparently resonated with the panels." No surprises here, Tom! Keep up the great work!

My last note is from **Bill Nevitt**: "Hi, Duke. I trust this e-mail finds you well. I was browsing our class website and saw the In Memoriam section. Looking at it, I saw it does not include **Craig Williamson**, a non-graduating classmate who was in my company (18th/35th). He left USNA youngster year and died in 1984. I've asked my company classmates who were closest to him, but they do not know the date of his death. If I've provided enough information, the next time the In Memoriam section is updated, it would be nice if he were included. Bill." I am working on getting more info on Craig's death. If any of you have additional information, please send me an email.

Time, tide and column due dates wait for no man. The silly season in politics over! I'm hopeful that regardless who is elected our nation will remain a republic and not a social democracy. I hope, too, that I've seen a few of you at the tailgates this season! 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