

U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY, CLASS OF 1975, SHIPMATE COLUMN

MAR - APR 2017

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Dear 'mates: Do you remember that elementary school teacher who gave you a writing assignment over the Christmas break? Well, the *Shipmate* publishing schedule was the Grinch for all class scribes this year. Deadline for this column is 28 December. So I sit with my laptop, next to my son and daughter-in-law's Christmas tree, granddaughters building new lego sets, and Thomas the Train videos playing in the background. Actually, it's a rather nice setting to compose a column.

<Photo 75#1: "Gary Miller at the Florida games">

Gary Miller qualified to represent Florida at the National Senior Games in Birmingham in 2017 with a Gold at 800m and Silver at 1500m at the Florida International Senior Games and State Championships held 11 December in Clearwater. Gary was feeling just a bit of pressure leading up to the Games since he was honored to be the featured track and field athlete in the 2016 event brochure and won the 800m last year. Anyway, all went well and he got to eat as much pizza as he wanted for two weeks before resuming training! Gary says that he "ran 2:46 for the 800m—which would not make the junior high JV squad—but was good enough to get the job done in my age group this year. To have a shot at making the final at nationals, I will likely need to get in the 2:33-2:37 range. I

made the finals in 2013 with a 2:35.6 but it will be a challenge to get back down there again with the additional mileage on these tires since then!"



<Photo 75#2: "Fun One reunion">

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<Photo 75#3: "... and the whole group">

Dan Murphy filed this report about 1st Company's summer reunion of 2016.

"The members of First Company held a reunion last August in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for 14 of our 19 graduates. **Mike Meier**—a long time resident of the area—convinced **Ron Nicol** and me to purchase summer homes up there at the Hiawatha Sportsman Club. I am right next door to Mike and Ron is down river a bit. After the 40th reunion in Annapolis all agreed to do have an off-year get together in the wilds of the U.P. On 9 August, after much planning by Mike Meier and **Doug Ayars**, the event came off for four days of great fun and much drinking. Events included a cross-river water balloon fight with a group of retired Michigan Prison Wardens who were also having a reunion, kayaking, mountain biking, a night at one of the local watering holes where **Pat Sloan** led a robust rendition of our alma mater, a magnificent beach bonfire on Ron's property, and much reminiscing. Jane and **Rob Reed** came in their own RV from Oregon as they toured the US-Canadian border. Rev. **Rick Gribble** was only able to stay a few days as he was off to Europe to work on another of his many books. Other classmates used the trip as a way to tour that part of the country. Golf was planned but bad weather curtailed the main matchup between Rob Reed and Doug Ayars. Reunion participants included

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Liane and **Ron Nicol**, Gertie and Mike Meier, Sherri and Doug Ayars, Jenny and **Bob Phillips**, Nan and **Terry Blake**, **Mike Maynard**, **Mike Mathews**, Rick Gribble, Tammy and **Gary Jones**, Pat and Dan Murphy, Tina and **Mike McDermott**, Denise and **Rick Udicious**, Jane and Rob Reed, and first time reunion goers Mary and **Jeff Bust**. Also included were Debbie and Pat Sloan, along with a first semester only member of our Company—Pat and **Joe Austin**—who live in the area.”

Debbie Donaldson wrote to tell us that Tom and her son **Alex Donaldson** '13 has completed FA-18 Carrier Qualifications by successfully recording ten day and six night traps with zero wave-offs and zero bolters. BZ Alex!

<Photo 75#4: “The Brotherhood—Flower Child version”>



<Photo 75#5: “Sea stories at the Chart House celebrating the Navy win”>



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A few Class of '75 members of the Navy football brotherhood chose the Tulsa game in November for a small reunion. **Tim Harden** posted the after-action report. Along with Tim, the mini-reunion included **John “Boomer” Stufflebeem, Gary Reed, Pat Gottschalk, and Skip Lind.** This was the first of what is planned to be an annual get-together. Members of the team — please send your contact information to t.harden@att.net so Tim can let you know when the 2017 event is planned. This particular game was extra-special for the Hardens, as their son Matt was there celebrating the 1996 Aloha Bowl victory with his teammates.

<Photo 75#6: “The Ahle clan celebrating Christmas in Hawaii”>

A first-time *Shipmate* submission from **Deke Ahle!**



“After more than 47 years (33 military, 14 federal government) under the oath to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic, I am finally retiring from service. I will go on terminal leave 21 December and retire at the end of the month. My family and I with our significant others, are going to Hawaii to join my son who is stationed there to celebrate Christmas and my retirement on Oahu. It’s been an interesting ride

since I first took the oath in June 1969, but time to move on. My kids are all doing well. One is an engineer with a startup in Silicon Valley, another is a LCDR squadron department head in an east coast E-2 squadron, and the third is an Army captain serving with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in HI. Jan and I already have a house in the Tampa area and will be moving into it as soon as we can fix up, market, and sell our Northern Virginia house. Well that’s all my news. Wishing all of my classmates a Merry Christmas, happy holidays, and a safe and prosperous New Year.”

Deke further mentioned that he planned to spend much of the Christmas holidays (and much of his retirement) under water as he pursues his scuba-diving passion.

Here’s a late-breaking announcement from **Bill Squires.** Bill is a candidate to represent the Eastern Region on the USNAAA Board of Trustees. If you are an Alumni Association member and live in the Eastern Region, please vote for Bill. he will certainly represent “75 well and do a great job for all alums.

Until next month ... ’75 Sir! Larry