

# U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column OCTOBER 2020

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Dear 'mates, It is a bad year. There's no other way to put it. We lost our first classmate to COVID-19 when **Dan Nelson** passed on his 67th birthday (18 July). The family-only service in Houston was live-streamed on 27 July. Rest in peace, classmate.

## 9th Company Zoom meeting



The shift to on-line virtual meetings is one of the small advantages that we have discovered as a result of the pandemic. Several companies continue meeting on line. German Gutierrez reported that 4th company met in June and again in July. Sixteen 9th company graduates joined up in July. It is certainly much easier to open your laptop than it is to travel to a physical reunion. Rugby players met on 30 July. **Mike Langley** ([michael.langley@gmail.com](mailto:michael.langley@gmail.com)) is working to recreate the team roster. If you were a rugger, contact Mike.

**Kevin Wallace** shared a memory from his active duty days. Thanks Kiwi!

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“As Fleet Communicator for Battle Force Sixth Fleet (CTF 60), I had been fleeted up as an O-3 to an O-4 position. On the flagship, the carrier's own Comms reported TAD to the Admiral through me. They had failed two critical emergency response comms drills. Upon the second time-late failure, I “invited” the ship's Commo to the War Room. I informed this O-4, as an O-3 (which chapped his hyde) that the Admiral was unhappy, ergo so was I, and you know how that works. We finished up, and a senior staff Commander had overheard our conversation. He said “Lieutenant, I know that wasn't easy for you, yet you did us all proud and you're gonna be okay.” I was so pumped that I ran for days on that supportive energy.”

Sue and **Rick Schwarting** were proud to attend the March winging ceremony for their son **Philip Schwarting** '17. Unfortunately, they were part of the last group of parents who were allowed to attend winging ceremonies — again due to COVID. Philip is wearing the gold wings of Sue's first husband (and Rick's USNA roommate) **Steve Thorne**. Philip is now training in the CH-53 helicopter at New River MCAS before joining an operational squadron in San Diego, at Miramar MCAS. Living in the Norfolk area, Rick and Sue enjoyed spending some time with Philip this summer.



**David Gough** shared a story about 24th company mate **Dennis Kruer**. Dennis and his high school sweetheart wife Paula have taken up a new hobby this year. Instead of becoming lighthouse keepers they have become bee-keepers, starting out with two hives in the backyard of their Kentucky cabin on Willisburg Lake. They prepared the hives for occupation then drove thirty miles to a beekeeper club and picked up two NUCs (nuclear colony) of about 36,000 bees and transitioned them into their new home on 28 April. No one has been stung yet! Dennis was a SUB NUC and says he took up this new hobby out of curiosity and to help the environment. Besides, he likes honey and Kentucky bourbon. He says that the bees are fascinating to watch, and will even tell you when it is going to rain. They all head back for shelter in the hive before the water drops can knock them out of the air. The Kruers harvested their first jars of honey on 16 July and look forward to watching how their bees behave through the remaining seasons. Dennis and his buddy call themselves the Bee-Buoys and would enjoy hearing from any other classmates interested in this hobby. Contact him at [denniskruer@gmail.com](mailto:denniskruer@gmail.com).

As always, **Tom Kelley** answered my request for column fodder. *[Tom wins the Coveted Scribe's Award this month. As you undoubtedly remember, the Coveted Scribe's Award is all the beer Tom can drink when he visits us in Pensacola (air fare not included).]* Tom gathered updated bios from most of 25th Company. I'll use some for this issue and store the rest in the gouge locker for future *Shipmates*.

**Lunceford Bass** resides in Conover, NC with his wife of 42 years, Diane. They have two sons — Lunce Jr. who lives in Seattle, and DJ who lives in Fairfax VA with his wife, Mimi. While on active duty, Lunce served 8½ years as an SH-3 pilot with tours at HS-5 and HS-1. He continued to serve in the Reserve — flying helicopters for 15 years and finishing his career as the Commanding Officer of HS-1197, which he helped decommission. Lunce worked for Siecor (later becoming Corning Optical Communications), a leading fiber optic products manufacturer for 35 years. At Corning, Lunce held various commercial positions including Vice President of Sales for North America. He retired in January 2019 and currently

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lives in the Rock Barn Country Club and Spa community where he spends much of his leisure time playing golf.



**Dennis and his well-decorated bee hives**

**Wynn Calland** resides with his wife, music educator Barbara in Keller TX. They have three children — Christopher, Lauren, and Patrick. Chris (38) is a programmer for Boeing subsidiaries in Seattle. Lauren (36) is a Veterinarian with her own business in the Fort Worth area with two children (Avery, 4 and Hudson, 1). Patrick (34) is a lawyer for Midland Corporation in Kansas City with two children (August, 2 and Emilia, six months). Wynn was a surface warfare officer for five years before switching to Oceanography. He made several deployments to the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean on board carriers and destroyers. Wynn's last tour was in the Secretary of the Navy's Installations and Environment office. This tour served as a transition to a civilian career in environmental, safety, and health for the chemical and steel industries. Wynn's first civilian position was as an Environmental, Health and Safety Manager for a chemical company. He later held senior executive positions in several other companies, including Senior Vice-President and CAO for Severcorr Inc., which built a billion-dollar steel manufacturing facility in Columbus MS. After the bank crisis in 2008 forced the bankruptcy of a follow-on steel mill construction project in Avery MS, Wynn went on to finish his second career working for a private Mississippi chemical company as Director of Special Projects where he directed the construction of a chemical manufacturing facility in Hagerstown MD. Wynn retired in 2015 and currently enjoys building model trains, projects around the house, church duties, and chasing the four Grandkids!

**Bo Clark** resides with his wife Dixie, in Harrisburg NC. Married for 45 years, they have three children — Kindra, Mandy, and Tyler. Kindra served as a missionary for seven years in the Andes Mountains of Argentina, supporting the folks indigenous to the area for time eternal. She and her husband returned to the US and now operate a faith-based non-profit business in Florence SC. Mandy is fulfilling her dreams of being a stay-at-home mom taking care of her husband and three sons. Tyler graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 2009, completed flight school, and has been flying the F-15C (Eagle) since. Post-graduation, Bo attended Navy Nuclear Power School and served in submarines until he resigned from the Navy in 1981. Upon leaving the Navy, he went to work for a nuclear utility. Reaching 55 years of age, he took early retirement from the utility and immediately went to work for the nuclear research firm Electric Power Research Institute. He managed a group of researchers conducting engineering-related research for the world's fleet of nuclear power plants until retirement in 2014. Bo enjoys building heirloom furniture for family members. Both he and Dixie spend considerable time doting on their nine grandchildren.

**Mike Fackrell** and his wife Jackie, live in Huntersville NC. Married 37 years, they have two sons — Jared and Shane. They also have three grandsons — Caleb, Nolan and August (Gus). After flight school, Mike started a 13-year tour in San Diego (HS-10 for type training, HS-12 plank owner, HS-10 Instructor, USS TRIPOLI Mini-Boss/Safety/Flight Deck, HS-16 plank owner and decommissioning, and HS-14 Maintenance Officer). This was followed by tours at the Naval War College (student), U.S. Space Command (Cheyenne Mountain Space Defense



**Kentucky honey**

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and Operations Center), and Navy Space Command (Fleet Space Support Team). After his active duty retirement at twenty years, Mike and his family moved to Colorado Springs. He worked as a defense contractor for about four years and then began his career as a Financial Advisor with Edward Jones Investments. Mike fully retired in 2017. He spends his leisure time hunting, fishing, and enjoying his family.

We look forward to catching up with more of 25th company in December. Thanks again, Tom! Do yourself a favor and get your hands on a copy of **Dave Frost's** latest book, KABOOMER ... Thriving and Striving into Your Nineties. You will certainly enjoy Frosty's writing style. Look for a more complete review next time.

'75 Sir! Larry