

U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1975, Shipmate Column JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024

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Dear 'mates, Welcome to 2024! We have more than enough material to fill several columns salted away in the gouge locker, so let's jump right in.

On our way to the Notre Dame game tailgate in Dublin, Nancy and I met a very pleasant young couple. The young gun recognized my '75 ball cap. ("Hey! 75! My dad has one of those.") It was **Steve Duba's** son **Tim '03** along with his wife Megan. The Duba family has a whole bunch of Navy ties. Older son **Steve Jr.** is USMMA '01 and son-in-law **Jim Hanlon** is USNA '01. Steve Jr. (Special Ops) and Jim (SEAL) are both active duty Captains (yes — we are old enough to have O-6 children!) Steve and Marcella had all four kids, their spouses, and nine grandkids with them in Fernandina Beach this summer. It was the first time they were able to get everyone in the same place at



Dubas - Steve, Tim, and Steve, Jr



Duba Clan

the same time in twelve years. They started the day with Steve swearing in Steve Jr. before shifting into shorts and flip-flops to enjoy the rest of the family time.

18th Company held a mini-reunion this past August at the home of **Dan "Rudy" Elins** in Tellico Village in eastern Tennessee. Fully 50% of the surviving graduating classmates were able

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to join the fun. Class President **Chris Cikanovich**, wife Diane, and neighbor **Chuck French '81** and his wife Reecy Payne added to the merriment. Activities included boating, tubing, and raft-offs on Tellico Lake, sunset river cruising on the Tennessee River, and some indulgence in adult beverages.

In mid-August, **Bob Giuda** and **Dave Corley** (former roommates) took a trip down the east coast via Bob's private plane to visit

25th Companymates. Bob and Dave departed Laconia (NH) arriving at Chatham Airport (eastern shore of Cape Cod) for their first stop, where they visited Susan and **Mike Basehore**. Mike started with 25 and resigned at the end of Youngster year. They feasted on clam chowder, raw oysters, and lobster. The next stop was Tipton airport (MD) for a visit to Annapolis. Diane and Chick Cikanovich took Bob and Dave to the Annapolis Fleet Reserve Club for lunch, followed by a dinner with other classmates. Of course, Bob and Dave toured USNA with the obligatory stop at the Mid Store. Karen and **Denis Powers** were Bob and Dave's hosts for the next two days

in Annapolis. Denis organized a BBQ dinner inviting other local members of 25th Company. **Chuck Louie**, **George Melnychenko**, Betty and **Tom Kelley** joined Bob, Dave, and Denis to enjoy massive amounts of food and drink. Denis, Chuck, and Tom were Plebe year roommates; they



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can't remember the last time all three were together (maybe June 1975?). The third leg of the trip was to Chesapeake Regional Airport (VA) to spend a couple of days with Trish and **Mike Groothusen**. **Jim Thoms** joined Mike, Bob, and Dave. Later, all met up with **Mark Klett**, **Dave Pruett**, **Bill McGloon**, and



Guida, Corley, Thoms, Groothusen

Dave Duffie (none from 25th). The final leg was to North Carolina to visit Dixie and **Bo Clark**. Christine and **Paul Viscovich** drove from Florida to see Bob, Dave, and Bo.

For those keeping score, ten members of 25th Company gathered at some point during the trip. As only 18 of their 20 graduates are still with us, that is a pretty good showing! And to keep it going, Sandy and **Ray Martin** visited the Kelleys at the end of August – making it 11 of 18. And to top it off, the Kelleys had lunch with Diane and **Lunce Bass** in Fredericksburg, VA in October. Lunce and Diane recently moved to be closer to their son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. Their older son, Lunce Jr., lives in Seattle. Lunce is a retired SH-3 pilot (active and reserve). He retired from his civilian job at Corning Optical Communications in 2019. Tom and Lunce hadn't seen each other in about eight years and probably not for 25 years before that. They had a great time sharing sea stories, some of them true!

There are a ton of good photos from the extended, mobile 25th company reunion. In the interest of column space, I have to save some of them for the next issue. But here are two:

Naturally, there are a lot of significant events happening at USNA with our Links-in-the-Chain of 2025. President Chick is keeping us updated. I have stories in the gouge locker covering the Bonds of Gold ceremony; the Grand Opening of the Fluegel Alumni Center (which we can call the Class of '75 Alumni Center); The "Two for Seven" Dinner in which '25 committed to continue their outstanding start to their Navy careers; and the President's Circle Weekend.

[Scribe's note: I was moved by Chick's summary of our ongoing relationship with '25. I'm sharing.]

"I am amazed at the relationship '75 has created with '25. They seek us out on the yard and reach out to us personally to ask our advice on everything from service selection to their class ring design. I am personally working with the midshipman planning their ring dance. When she found out I planned our ring dance, she asked for

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input on venues, etc. For info for '75, we are invited to attend '25's Ring Dance. I also mentioned that some of our classmates planned to attend because they didn't have a chance to "christen" their wives' miniatures and in some cases did not dip their own rings in the water of the Seven Seas. So MIDN Cerzma is arranging a special line for '75 to dip our rings. 2025 has also chosen a Sinatra theme with music reminiscent of our time at USNA.

For those of us who have not spent time with '25, I want to note that they are like us in so many ways. Despite all of the rumors or misconceptions about the Brigade and USNA today, I say that you would be amazed by this group. First and foremost, all they want is to get through these four years and get out to the fleet, fly their airplanes, drive their ships, be in the Marine Corps and submerge in their subs. As they see it, all the other stuff is just noise. Even more interesting is that '25 is enamored with '75. They want to hear every sea story. They want to know in detail how we came to be



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known as “The Flower Children.” They want to know how we met our spouses. Of course they want to know all about life in the Hall in the last century.”

Come back next issue for more photos of the 25th company summer traveling reunions and a thorough look at the Fluegel Alumni Center. 75 Sir! Larry