

Shipmate July-August 2018  
Duke Longworth  
29 May 2018

Lots to report this column! Summer is in full bloom with the Black Flag days mounting in the Yard! The only mitigation to the heat and humidity for the middies is the air-conditioned Mother Bancroft! Must be nice, but in our days, we managed to survive just fine! I hope you're having a pleasant summer!

First up is a note from **Walt Havenstein**: "Duke, I linked up with **Buck Collins** at a Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation event in Tampa in March. Buck and Marguerite are living in Brandon, FL and enjoying retirement."



CAPTION: Walt and Buck

Walt sent a photo from CA where he and **Tom Dalton** were golfing!



CAPTION: Walt and Tom at Pebble Beach 18<sup>th</sup> hole.

**Steve Ayers** sent this note about the long-running TestFest! Hey Duke, Hope all is well with you. The 31st annual 16th/14th Company T-Fest was held the weekend of May 3-6 2018. There were only five of us this year because as you know **Bill Luckey** passed away last fall. It was great to see everyone again, but needless to say Bill was really missed. He was an amazing guy, and T-Fest will never be quite the same without him. We stayed at the great beach house that **Roger Young** always arranges for us on Figure 8 Island near Wilmington, NC. The weather was really great and we enjoyed golf, fishing and lots of barbequed red meat (and brown liquor). The photo is from our



fishing trip, during which we caught a total of 3 ½ (very small) fish among us. Left to right are **Paul Timmins, Paul (Mac) McIntire, Mike (Blue) Bluestein, Roger Young** and me. Some of us may see you in San Diego this October. Best, Steve



CAPTION: 31<sup>st</sup> CO TestFest!

The Class of 2021 held their end of plebe year Sea Trials on 15 May 2018 while members of our class and spouses were in attendance cheering them on. Sea Trials was "The Another Link in the Chain" event for us. Sea Trials for the plebe class at USNA started in 1998 so this was the 20th year! Reveille for the plebes is at 0300! At 0330 they start a full day of grueling events on Farragut Field. They literally compete with all companies in the brigade challenging their endurance in physical demanding events until 1730 with only a short 30 minute break for lunch. It was a warm day in Annapolis with temperatures hovering in the high 80's, but fortunately humidity was low so the "Black Flag" was not hoisted. The day concluded on Rip Miller Field with remarks by Superintendent **VADM Ted Carter '81** and our Class President **Perry Martini**. Those in attendance representing our class for the day long events, **Bob Stuart, JT Morris, Eric Rychener, Tom Gross, Chris Weaver** and in photo left to right, **Jim Hergenroeder, Bob Capra, Bill Butler, Mike Hallahan, and Perry Martini**.



CAPTION: ALITC – a few of the Sea Trials observers

Class of '71 showed up in force to cheer on the plebe class of 2021 in their final plebe event in the Yard – climbing Herndon. Our classmates had a front row seat to watch the festivities at the famous Herndon Monument -- as always, the greasy obelisk was a major challenge and although the class of 2021 was going for a "world record" - they managed to slip and slide until someone finally got to the top in just under 2 hours and 9 minutes! Pictured left to right: **Bob Capra, Ken Marks, Eric Rychener, Bob Stuart, Mike Hallahan, Bill Butler, Charlie Perkins, Bill Zapf, Tim Burns, Mike McNallen, Greg Heath, and Tom Gross.** Also in attendance: **Jim Hergenroeder, John Paulsen, Hugh Strain, and Hank Turkowski."**





CAPTION: Herndon – a few of the '71 observers

**Tom Hammons** sent this note: “Great news! We have kickoff time for our Notre Dame-Navy game concurrent with our 47.5<sup>th</sup> and we have a tailgate! A lot is happening, and I want to ensure ‘All Hands’ get the word - we’re expecting a great time in sunny San Diego 25 – 28 October. Saturday Pre-Game Tailgate Party - kickoff is expected at 4:00 pm local. We will join the Alumni Association’s ‘Beat Notre Dame Tailgate Party’ which starts about 1:00 pm and ends at kickoff. We will sell tickets for seats at ‘71 tables grouped together. To order Tailgate tickets, LOGIN on the Registration page, then click on the red box ‘Complete Registration and Pay or Add More’. On the ‘Reunion Events’ page, scroll down to Saturday’s ‘Pregame Tailgate Party’ and select those for whom you want a Tailgate ticket, adding them to your Shopping Cart for Checkout. Cost: \$75 per person. We will include your tickets in your Check-in packet. Deadline for ordering Tailgate Tickets is 26 August 2018. To buy Tailgate tickets for those not attending other Reunion Events, such as family or friends, simply add their names as a Guest by clicking on the blue ‘Add More’ box under ‘Who is joining you for the Reunion?’ Their name will appear on the ‘Reunion Events’ page so you can add them to your Shopping Cart. Cost: \$75 per person.” This will be a fun event! Hope to see you there!

**Tom Gross** sent this note: "Duke, our class tailgate will be up and operating every home game. We'll be in our traditional spot on the Blue Side parking lot perimeter, directly out from the press box. We're easy to find, so join us at the tailgate. The tailgates start two hours before kickoff and remain open through halftime. All classmates and guests are welcome. This year we will invite members of '21 to join us. These are impressive youth who will bring a high degree of motivation and unit cohesion to the Fleet and the Corps. Come and meet them at the halftime break!

"The menu is pot luck; however, brats, hotdogs and burgers will be available. Classmates bring dishes, drinks, desserts, or snacks to share, grill space is also available for those who want to bring their own tailgate grill specialties. Coming from out of town? Don't sweat it. If don't have a chance to pick up something, come anyway. We haven't run out of food yet! Beat Army, Tom Gross!" Most excellent tailgate! See you there!

Sadly, I'm passing along information regarding five classmates who have passed away.

**Michael "Mike" Bilecky** passed away in Lima, Peru this April following a year-long battle with liver cancer. He came to Navy from Silver Spring, MD and was 17 years old Plebe Summer. Mike was an outstanding high school wrestler and was a member of the Plebe wrestling team. A beloved member of 11<sup>th</sup> CO, Mike will be remembered for his contagious smile, and as our classmate who sank his 911 Porsche in Chesapeake Bay beyond the sea wall at USNA our 1<sup>st</sup> Class year. Mike majored in mechanical engineering. He had a brief career as a Naval Officer and later taught the concepts of solar energy at the University of Maryland. He spent several years sailing the high seas and then came back to Maryland and joined the firm of Von Otto Engineering. Soon thereafter, he became a partner in the business and successfully ran Bilecky-Von Otto for almost 30 years until the business was acquired by Brinjack Engineering.

Mike is survived by his wife Pilar of 38 years, a daughter Kira, a son Raul, daughter-in-law Tiffany and granddaughter Sydney. Several years ago Mike built a house on a golf course north of Lima where he often played golf. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, Mike hosted a Celebration of Life in Germantown, MD where many 11<sup>th</sup> CO Classmates plus over 130 close friends and family were in attendance. Mike was loved by all who knew him. He will be dearly missed. May he now rest in peace.

**Frank "Rocco" Montesano** passed away April 13, 2018, following a yearlong battle with cancer. He was a graduating member of 26<sup>th</sup> CO and a three-year letter winner on the heavyweight crew team. Following graduation and a short stint at sea, Rocco entered his lifelong dream of Naval Aviation in Pensacola and received his

Wings of Gold in 1973. He served during Operation Desert Storm and was Commanding Officer of the VA176 "Thunderbolts" where, as XO and CO. he led the squadron to winning three consecutive 'Battle E' awards. He accumulated over 5500 Flight hours and over 900 carrier landings. Rocco moved to Corpus Christi in July of 1994 as CO of NAS Corpus Christi and was proud to call it home. After retiring, he was the executive director of USS Lexington Museum on the Bay for 20 years.

Rocco married his wife Joanne on March 4, 1972. He was a loving husband and father who enjoyed participating in the Corpus Christi Mustangs, Corpus Christi Housing Authority, and Corpus Christi Rotary. He will be remembered for his fantastic sense of humor, service to his country and community, love of sports, and exceptional devotion to his family. Rocco is survived by his wife, Joanne, son, Michael, daughter, Dr. Cariann Galloway, and grandchildren, Kyleigh and Kase Galloway. May he rest in peace.

In lieu of flowers send donations to the U.S.S. Lexington Museum in his honor. Condolences may be offered at [www.cagemillsfuneraldirectors.com](http://www.cagemillsfuneraldirectors.com).

**Michael "Tex" Skinner**, passed away on 5 May in Orland Park, Illinois, surrounded by his family following a 5-month battle with liver cancer. Tex, as he was affectionately known by his classmates, grew up in Corpus Christi, TX. He graduated out of 26<sup>th</sup> CO, and after a brief stint in aviation training, transferred to the Supply Corps. Tex resigned his commission and worked for a number of years in the hi-tech industry selling and managing projects in the Enterprise Application industry (SAP, ORACLE, etc.).

Mike was a friend to many and always willing to lend a helping hand. He is survived by his beloved wife of 37 years, Marybeth, son Christopher and daughter Casey, and grandchildren Gwen and Delaney. Mike enjoyed reading, golfing, and fishing and spending time with his family, especially his two granddaughters. May he rest in peace.

Belatedly, **Elwood "Skip" Plourde**, died on June 4, 2016 in Ozark, Missouri. Skip grew up in Columbus, TX before reporting to USNA June 1967. A graduating member of 26<sup>th</sup> CO, Skip played on the Navy golf team. Following graduation and a short stint in the Surface Navy, he headed for Pensacola to begin his journey to receive his Wings of Gold. Upon completion of his obligated service he continued his life as a pilot with Southwest Airlines.

Although fond of his childhood years in TX on the Colorado River fishing, hunting, and water skiing, Skip lived out his remaining years in Missouri and is survived by son, Ben, and two daughters Julie and Natalie, and seven grandchildren. A

memorial service was held on July 13, 2016 at St. David's Episcopal Church in Denton, TX.

See Lucky Bag photos of Frank Montesano, Skip Plourde, and Mike Skinner center page - all from 26th company: <https://bit.ly/2G8elht>.

**Ralph “Arch” Architzel** who passed away Thursday, May 24, 2018 after a four-year battle with prostate cancer. Arch graduated from Calhoun High School in Merrick, New York before joining us on 28 June 1967. A graduating member of the 29th Company, he excelled in athletics and academics. A member of the Brigade Soccer Championship team he was also often seen wearing the academic stars of excellence on his uniform collar. Following graduation and commissioning, Arch attended nuclear power school and then prototype training before joining the submarine service. He served on the *USS Flying Fish* (SSN 673) and the *USS Andrew Jackson* (SSBN 619). After leaving the Navy, he worked for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for 35 years. He was the first resident NRC inspector at Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant. In retirement, he enjoyed painting and was an avid golfer.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Rosemarie, and children Michael (Emily Canavan), William, Daniel, and Stephen (Margaret Zimmer). A service was held at the chapel at Norbeck Memorial Park, 16225 Batchellors Forest Rd, Olney, MD 20832 on Thursday, May 31.

See Lucky Bag photo of Ralph at: <https://bit.ly/2su1UNR>

Too soon it's time to close. Please keep our classmates and their families in your prayers for good health, healing when needed, and safety in their travels. Our classmates in leadership as well as those in volunteer organizations need our thoughts and prayers, too. For everything there is a season and a purpose. Today is the gift of “the present.” Life is precious and too short –love passionately, give and share your blessings generously with others – as we are richly blessed so may we richly bless others. Remember, too, that words have the power to elevate and to destroy, so use your words carefully! Give thanks for your many blessings, especially for family and of citizenship in our great nation. As much as ever, this is the time for us to be actively shaping the future of our great nation. There is plenty of work remaining as we increase our wisdom! Time, tide and column due dates wait for no man!

Duces Virum, Duke