

Shipmate September 2020
Duke Longworth
22 June 2020

September for many years was a favorite month of mine. The midshipmen are in the Yard, the temperatures are cooling, football season begins, and friendships are renewed! It is still hot in Virginia Beach in September, but I look forward to travel to Annapolis for a football game and gathering with classmates. This year will be unique in several ways – the Navy vs. Notre Dame football game will be played at Memorial Stadium in Annapolis! That is a first ever! The corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic will likely impact how the midshipmen and others attend the game. And, the pandemic may impact how many of us attend regular football season games, as well as other sports. Regardless how this affects spectator attendance I say GO NAVY! BEAT NOTRE DAME!

Jeff Albright sent this sea story note about two 16th Company grads! “Duke,



Jeff Steelman sighting a ship

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its tragic toll on so many lives and on the activities of so many people. One benefit of additional time at home with family/friends is that it has given us time to dig through old boxes of memorabilia and forgotten stories of our past Navy days. **Jeff Steelman** sent me the following story and photographs that were part of his tour as Commanding Officer of *USS Estocin (FFG-15)*, an Oliver Hazard Perry class guided missile frigate. He recounts the story when he got to go onboard

the *USS Pasadena (SSN 752)* under the command of **Will “Fritch” Fritchman** while both ESTOCIN and PASADENA were on sea trials.

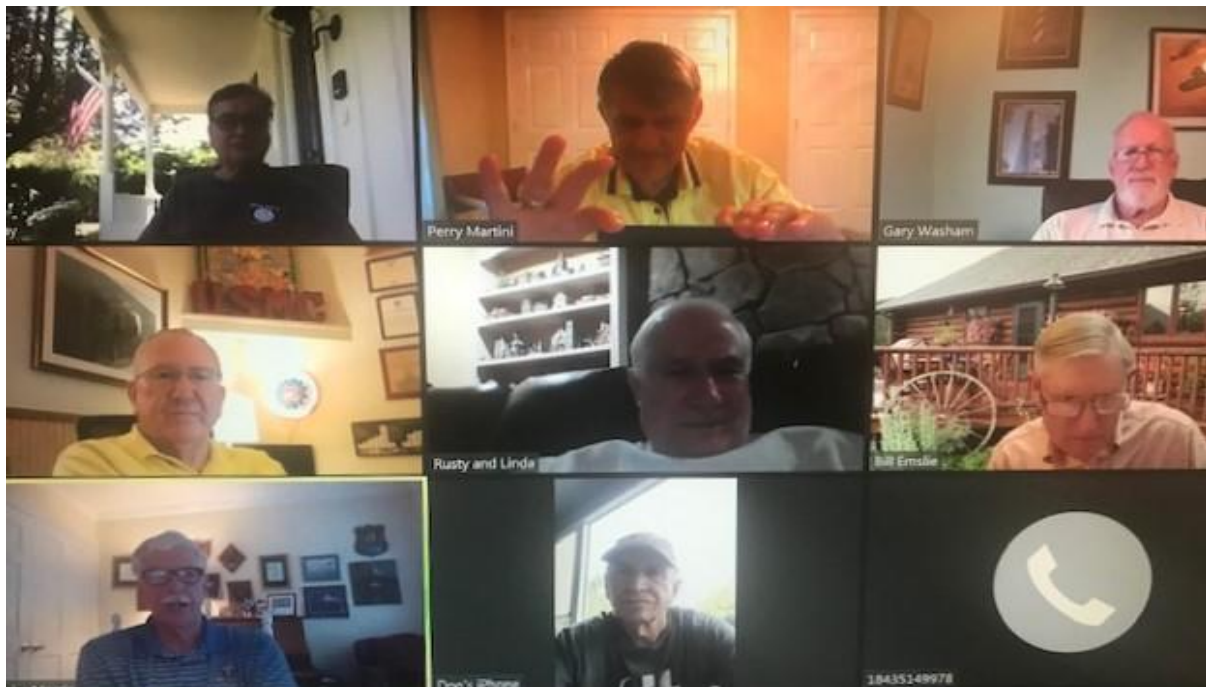
Jeff Steelman’s story: “We both came into St. Croix on the same day to start Underwater Tracking Range sound testing. The SUBLANT scheduler obviously had more clout than SURFLANT so Will (aka ‘Fritch’) got the pier and I got to practice mooring to a buoy. At dinner together up on the hill overlooking the harbor we agreed

to cross deck members of our crews when one or the other's ship wasn't underway. I got to ride Will's boat and he really did it up right. Periscope depth to 1200 feet, 30 deg down bubble, 30 knots! The string going slack didn't have to tell me I was not in my comfort zone. I asked Will if he detected ESTOCIN on the way. He responded, 'Yep, 25 miles away.' It was educational for me.

"At lunch in the wardroom, Fritch and his officers spoke with 3-dimensional hand motions like rolling out like an airplane after firing a torpedo. They operated and thought in 3D. We operated in 2D. After that, I always had bottom contour charts on the ASW plotting table. Fritch purposely tipped over a salt shaker, and one of his officers immediately said something loudly to draw my attention. Fitch explained that he had taught them to always draw attention away if their CO did or said something in error."

Jeff continued his story, "while the boat was 30 degrees down bubble and going 30 knots to 1200 feet, Fritch slipped off his shoes and stepped into the stainless steel cover for what had to be the tray for loading and unloading torpedoes. Fritch then slid down the tray, like a skier. It was clear that he was very proud of his boat the PASADENA – and rightly so." Jeff included a picture of him at the periscope of

PASADENA. He CLAIMS that he could NOT have been sighting the ESTOCIN, since they clearly were not underway with him being onboard Fritch's boat. What a superb sea story! It makes me wonder if, while we were still midshipmen, any of our aspiring submarine officer classmates ever think about getting a classmate's ship in the crosshairs. Regardless, this tale of classmates is good stuff! If you have a story similar.



(Top L to lower R) Dub, Perry, Gary, Bill Y, Rusty, Bill E, JT, Don.

to this please send to me! **Perry Martini** sent this note: “Duke, the world famous plebe year 29th Company ‘Dirty Dozen’ have been holding 9th Company Zoom Happy Hours one or twice a month during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). Those in attendance that were part of the original dirty dozen: **Don Brewer, Rusty Colquitt, Tom Dalton, Brad Foster, Dub Hay, Chuck Hiles, ‘JT’ Morris, Jim Smoogen, Gary Washam, Bill Yocum,** and me

“Welcome additions have been other 9th Company grads **Tom O’Brien** (Navy Sailing Team and America’s Cup) and **Bill Emslie**. The Zoom calls have been one way of having mini-reunions while most were in sheltering in place across the country and have been filled with great ‘sea stories’ mixed in with some great adult libations!” Sounds like a reliable way to have some fun, tell sea stories and keep updated with company mates! Well done to 9th Company!

Next is a note from **Dave Laws**: “Duke, fifteen members of 14th Company recently gathered to talk about the old times and tell lies on Zoom. This was our second video call since the start of COVID-19. We did a fair job of proving to our grandchildren that we are not totally technically inept. Of course, yours truly forgot to take a picture, so we had to gather as many of us as we could later that evening to get the photo below.” Well done, Dave! These zoom meetings are great fun! Especially with libations!



14th Company Zoom photo

“From left to right, top to bottom: **Bob Capra, David Laws, Walt Havenstein, Bob Goodwin, Roger Young, Bill Williams, Ted Grell, Ed Kellogg, Bob St. Germain, and Ruben Torres.** On the original call, but missing from the photo were **George Rodgers, Mike Newman, Bill Organek, Steve Raphael, and Rick Burgess.**

We plan to keep meetings like this going! Dave.” Most excellent! These Zoom meeting are an excellent way to stay in touch with family and friends! Keep up the zooming!

Next is a note from **Phil Williams**: “Duke, Memorial Day 2020 was rough trying to fit into my Dress Blues for our community celebration! This ‘sheltering in place’ took a toll on my weight! Eat, watch TV, read, eat, watch TV, eat, etc! You get the point. I had to lose ten pounds so I could get into my uniform! With the 4th of July approaching, I am eating less and exercising to keep the weight down for the next time I wear m



Dress Blues! Semper FI! Phil.” Looking good, Phil! Not sure many of us can fit our Dress Blues anymore! You’re doing very well.

36th Company plans to meet this month (September) in Lake Placid. The annual gathering is certain to have fun on the lake and while dining! I will have a full report in the December column.

Too soon, it is time to close. Please keep our classmates and their families in your prayers for good health, especially protection from the Corona Virus COVID-19, healing when needed, and safety in their travels. Today is the gift of “the

Phil looking good in Dress Blues present.” Certainly, this pandemic highlights how 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. Our leadership at home, in our social circles, and in daily routines is vital to our nation. Now is the time to shape 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