

Shipmate October 2022  
Duke Longworth  
25 July 2022

The Yard is in full fall colors now! I am always eager for the cool fall after the typically hot summer. This year is no different. I am looking forward to seeing classmates at our class tailgate and at the Army-Navy game. Navy Football is in full gear and hopefully on its way to a winning season! **GO NAVY! BEAT ARMY!**

First up is a note from **John Closs**: "Duke, As you know, our Class of '71 included four astronauts: **Bob Cabana, Frank Culbertson, David Leestma, and Bill Shepherd**. What you may not know is that the U.S. Postal Service issued a commemorative postage stamp honoring the Space Shuttle Program in 2000 (Stamp #3411 - \$3.20, 'Escaping the Gravity of Earth' - Set of 2 holograms). Attached is an autographed copy of that stamp. We are getting older; and since it may be difficult to read the signatures, I included enlargements of our classmates' signatures. And it may be even more difficult to see, but that is David Leestma in the upside-down space suit on the right side of the stamp. Enjoy. John Closs." Way too cool! Thank you!



*Commemorative postage stamp with all four '71 astronaut signatures*

As a follow up John sent the following note: "Their missions:

- Bob Cabana – four missions – served as pilot on STS-41 and STS-53, and was mission commander on STS-65 and STS-88;

*Bob's signature*



- Frank Culbertson- three missions – STS-38 (classified), STS-51, and to & from the International Space Station (where Frank lived for 129 days) on STS-105 & STS-108;

*Frank's signature*

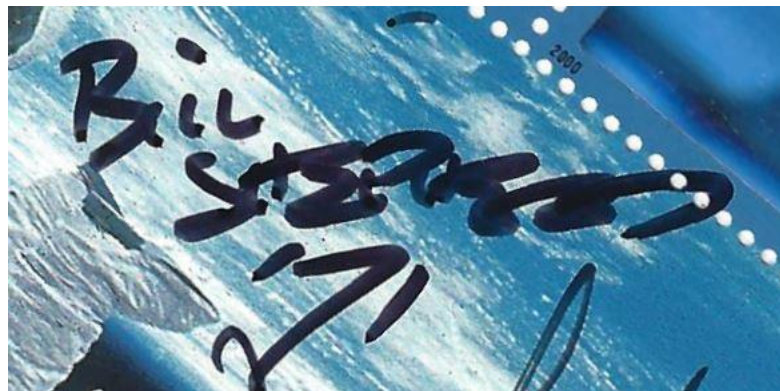


- Dave Leestma- three missions – STS-41-G, STS-28 (classified) and STS-45;

*Dave's Signature*



- Bill Shepherd- four missions – STS-27, STS-41, STS-52, and to & from the International Space Station (where Bill lived for 136 days) on Soyuz TM-31 & STS-102.



*Bill's Signature*



"People will frequently ask me to identify the most valuable stamp in my collection. My reply is always the same: 'Escaping the Gravity of Earth'. This stamp is priceless to me!" Very cool indeed! I am sure many of our classmates share pride in the success of these very brave men! At one point in my career, I hoped to figure out how to get into the astronaut program, but that was not what the USN had in mind for me. Given the opportunity today I would jump at it!

Next up is a note from **Phil Williams**: "Duke, While on vacation in Williamsburg Ann and I went to the New Kent Winery for lunch. I had on my USNA '71 shirt and hat. A woman asked me if I had gone to the Naval Academy. After I said yes, she spoke to her husband and some of his friends who were also there for lunch.

"This group is from 33<sup>rd</sup> Company, Class of '75. We had some fun discussions about people we knew. None of them were Marines. We did talk about Admiral Calvert's implementation of the academic major requirement at USNA. They had heard about how it was when we were third class midshipmen and wondered why it changed. Below is a photo of me with the three 33<sup>rd</sup> Company members (L to R). **Tom Cihlar, Dave Gray, Ray Wassel** and me standing. Have a great day. *Semper Fi/Duces Virum, Phil.*" Excellent photo! Seems it is good idea to wear a USNA '71 shirt!



*Phil with members of the 33rd Company – Class of 1975*

.Here is an update from my summer! I'm sure that many of you have had exciting summers and done several things that you don't get to do in the other months of the year. Mid-summer for the last several years is when I take Boy Scout Troop 408 to a weeklong summer camp with the help of other adults.

This year but I took the troop to Camp Rock Enon near Gore, Virginia. The six Scouts were a rather diverse group as three are on the autism spectrum. They are all on a higher functioning level, but it still makes the experience rather interesting and challenging. I have been very pleased at work with this young group of Scouts soon to be young men. Now is the time to help them grow and develop. You'll recall that in my closing paragraph every month when I mention now is the time for us to be active in our communities.

The Scouts were all anxious at the beginning of the weeklong camp. The first day we had a rainstorm that disrupted what they were doing and where they were going. By the next morning they had the flow down well, so my adult helpers, and I just had to keep an eye on them make sure they got to where they were going on time! .

I think the boys were quite delighted when our small troop from Tidewater Council, not from Shenandoah Council, was the only Scout troop to achieve the "elite unit award." This award recognized a very active level of participation in activities other than merit badge classes. The Scouts were quite delighted when at the closing campfire Troop 408 was selected to receive the "spirit stick." The spirit stick is a clever camp device intended to generator enthusiasm. All week Troop 408 Scouts wanted to be given the spirit stick for a day. But they were given the spirit stick at the closing ceremony, so they have it for the full year. Below is a photo of the troop with the stick. You can see their smiling happy faces. This is quite a pleasure to work with these Scouts to help them develop to become productive citizens of our great nation



*Troop 408 Scouts with the Spirit Stick*

Too soon, it is time to close. Please keep our classmates and their families in your prayers for good health, especially continuing protection from the COVID-19 virus, healing when needed, safety in travels, and strength to meet every challenge. **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. Our leadership at home, in our social circles, and in daily routines is vital to maintaining our nation’s constitutional republic. Now is the time to shape the future of our great nation as we strive for a more perfect union. There is plenty of work remaining as we increase our wisdom! Time, tide and column due dates wait for no man!

Duke Longworth