

Shipmate March - April 2025
Duke Longworth
22 January 2025

May in the Yard was a beautiful time. Flowers blooming, the grass so very green, and the anticipation of “summer cruise” or graduation! Such halcyon days! I hope to visit the Yard this summer with my three grandsons. That will be an interesting day!

First note is from **John Ball**: “Duke, A quick note to say that I met for lunch with Mary and **Jeff Hemler** recently in Encinitas while they were visiting family here in Southern California. We enjoyed a delicious Italian meal, relived the fun of 26th Company antics, and celebrated Navy Football’s big victories. Jeff and Mary had been bi-coastal nomads for the past few years and recently purchased a townhouse in Fairfax City, so by now they are settled in. Have a great year 2025! John.” Thank you for the note. Hopefully, I’ll see you and Jeff at a Navy game this fall! BEAT ARMY!



Mary & Jeff with John in San Diego

Here’s an note from **Lee Schierer**: “Duke, Sue & I recently completed a 29 day journey south of the equator. We planned for months and ended up having a very successful and enjoyable journey. Our travel plans included a two-night layover in Honolulu each way to avoid the 20+ hour flights and to adjust more easily to the major time zone changes. I contacted our company mate, **Dave Luengen**, and his wife, Sue, who reside

near Honolulu to see if we could get together during one of the stops.

We departed home on January 22, 2025 driving to Cleveland, followed the next morning by our flights to DFW (3 hours) and HNL (9 hours). Shortly after arriving in Honolulu, I contacted Dave, but unfortunately, he was tied up. We planned to meet on the return trip. My wife and I spent a nice day wandering in Honolulu and enjoyed a nice seafood lunch near the International Market. We walked through the International Market for a while and noticed a shop selling unique pieces of woodwork. Being interested in woodworking, I walked in and talked to a lady who turned out to be the shop owner about some teak items that were on display. It seems that the teak decking from the *USS Missouri (BB-62)* had been replaced, and certain artisans were authorized

to make items from the wood. This shop was selling them. I bought a small piece with the bow of the ship engraved on one side and an authentication on the back.

After the second night we boarded our flight in the early afternoon and winged our way south (9 hours) across the equator and International Date Line, arriving in Sydney the early evening of the next day. We spent one night in Sydney and then flew to Cairns (pronounced Cains). We were greeted by rain which continued for most of the three days we spent there. Our planned snorkeling trip to the Great Barrier Reef was a bust due to a high sea state at the dive site. The next day we visited Cape Tribulation, Mossman Gorge and Daintree Rain forest in a small tour group. We returned to Sydney where we visited many of the local sites and even ventured out to the Blue Mountains via the train system.

We boarded our Holland America cruise on February 2 and spent the next two days visiting Melbourne, and Hobart before heading off to New Zealand for the remaining 12 days. The ship sailed through Milford sound and Fiordland National Park followed by stops at Dunedin, Christchurch, Picton, Wellington, Napier, Rotorua, and Auckland. We left Auckland at 10:00 pm Sunday, February 16 and arrived in Honolulu at 7:30 am on Sunday, February 16. During our stop in Honolulu, we took some time to just rest, relax and make arrangements to spend some time with Dave and Sue. We enjoyed a very nice lunch with the two of them at Nico's at Night, enjoying more fresh seafood, some sea stories and catching up.

We departed from Honolulu on February 18 arriving home the evening of February 19 and were greeted by several feet of snow in our driveway. Lee.” Lee, a most excellent note! Sounds like a fun trip! I'm glad you connected with Dave and Sue. Dave and I were on the Lightweight Crew team. He's a top-notch Classmate!

Here's a note about the Los Angeles wildfires from **Mitch Marich**: Valerie and I live literally on the edge of Eaton Canyon in a piece of Pasadena adjacent to Altadena. The Eaton Fire was an unbelievable disaster due to hurricane force winds giving no time to respond. It took only a few minutes to get from starting on the mountain, about halfway to Henninger Flat to our



Lee and Sue with Sue and Dave

back yard. My daughter Diana and two friends got there before me and helped Valerie evacuate the dogs and some important things, then came back. By then I was there and set up my fire pump next to the pool as embers were flying around. Once the pump started, I thought, we got this. Then my son Matthew and a friend showed up. We stayed all night and were able to save all nearby homes as city water kept working and the girls, Matt, and I put out some spot fires with garden hoses. Due to our efforts and a few others who hung around and some early Fire Department response (and God) the fire was stopped at the canyon edge, the front line, and our neighborhood was spared. Thanks to our neighborhood not burning, there was little spread to the one to the immediate west, but above us and below us, devastation. So many friends lost their homes, including **Joseph Lyvers**, a non-grad from our class. We were kind of locked in (you could check out, but not back in), until evac orders were lifted for our area January 17th. I am so proud of my kids and their friends for staying and remaining calm-ish; some adrenaline for me but I was not scared thanks to Navy training and experiences. Covering our six, we had a safe evacuation route we could monitor.

I have kept this short for the class news but could of course say more. I am sure quite a few alumni have stories of either fire worth telling, enough to make a full *Shipmate* article. I suggest whoever at *Shipmate* should solicit them and edit them into a longer piece. Mitch.” Wow, that is a harrowing tale. Praise the LORD you save your home and others. I agree, there are likely other stories that could fill an entire *Shipmate* issue.

Sadly, four classmates passed away since my last column. **NOTE:** Full obituaries for **Bill Bashore** and **Dave Alleman** are in this issue of *Shipmate Last Call*.

Dave Martin passed away on Saturday, Feb 1st. Originally from Bricksville, Ohio (a Cleveland suburb), he joined our class on 28 June 1967. He was a member of the 6th Company and graduated with us on June 9th, 1971. He minored in French and was fluent in the language by the time we graduated. Dave played on the lightweight football team for several seasons. Following his mandatory ship assignment out of NS Long Beach, CA, he reported to NAS Pensacola in February 1972 for flight training. He earned his NFO Wings of Gold and was assigned to VF-33 and flew as a RIO in the F-4. He left the Navy at the end of his service obligation, moved to California where he had a sales position with DuPont for many years. He enjoyed a brief follow-on career in California with a food distribution company before fully retiring in 2009.

Dave is survived by his wife, Denise, and son Evan. Funeral arrangements and services are pending.

Ron Benigno passed away peacefully on February 27th, 2025. at UC Irvine Medical Center in Orange, CA surrounded by his loving family. Ron came to us from his native California after attending a semester at UCLA. He was a member of the

31st Company. Following, he completed his service obligation and entered civilian life to a career in insurance, where he would remain until his retirement in 2010.

According to his family obituary published last week, Ron was a man of great humility, resilience, and boundless love. Through the many challenges life threw his way, including a long battle with cancer, he remained a beacon of hope and determination. Facing each day with courage and unwavering optimism, he was an inspiration to those closest to him.

Ron enjoyed spending time fly fishing, golfing, and traveling. Above all else, he enjoyed spending time with his family, whom he loved dearly.

Ron is survived by his wife, Ellen, his sons Ron Jr., Dan, and Steve, his daughter Lisa and his two granddaughters, Ellie and Kassidy. He is also survived by his two brothers, Randy and Reggie, and countless nephews, nieces, and cousins. All shared immense love for Ron and will miss him deeply.

A celebration of his life was held on Friday, March 14th at Holy Cross Cemetery & Mortuary in Culver City, CA.

Harry William (Bill) Bashore III, 76, of Rancho Santa Fe, passed away peacefully on February 1st, 2025, surrounded by his loving family after a valiant battle against cancer. A funeral mass was held on Saturday March 1st.

David Peterson Alleman, 77, was called to his eternal home on February 10th, 2025, in Mountain Green, Utah.

Too soon, it is time to close. Please keep our classmates and their families in your prayers for good health, healing when needed, safety in travels, and strength to meet every challenge. **Today** is a gift – life is precious and too short! Love passionately, give, and share your time and 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. Our training to think critically and to analyze problems is necessary to solve our nation's challenges. 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