

Shipmate July-August 2025
Duke Longworth
28 May 2025

Summer in the Yard! So hot, so humid! Get me out onto the Chesapeake Bay, or in an air-conditioned classroom! As a last resort, take me to the shade and let's hope for a breeze! Summers have not changed in Annapolis, but the Yard is different.

Our first note is from **Jocko Jastrab**: "Duke, I wanted to let you several classmates joined me in celebrating the life of classmate, **Bill Bashore**, who passed away from cancer February 1st, 2025. Bill graduated from 21st Company and served on active duty for 28 years, flying helicopters, and retiring as a Commander. A larger-than-life character in so many ways, he made an unforgettable impression on all whom he met and will be greatly missed by his family and friends. Despite the sadness of the occasion, his family appreciated the stories told by those of us who knew Bill well both inside and out, and of the emotional support provided by the '71ers in attendance. Bill has been laid to rest in Miramar National Cemetery. In the photo below (L – R) **Bill Nevitt, Pat Doyle, Tom Hammons, Larry Nolan, Joe Anthony, Jocko Jastrab, Dave Bolduc** (missing from the photo - **Steve Pelstring**). Jocko." Thank you! Bill was a long-time friend from our days at Millard Prep School in Bandon, OR. During our plebe summer I was greatly pleased to see Bill chopping around and squaring corners at Navy. He is sorely missed.

'71 at Bill Bashore's funeral - 1 March 2025



Next up is a note from **Jon Cichucki**: "Duke, The 71/33 Magic gathered in Pensacola on April 8th. Eleven 33'rders plus their mates joined for a three day stay in the seat of Naval Aviation. Hosted magnificently by Missie and **Pete Baker**, we had a great visit enjoying local attractions and especially renewing our bonds with our company mates of the last half century. The local attractions of course revolved around Naval

Aviation. Pete organized our visit to the Naval Aviation Museum with a personal guided tour by our classmate **Jerry Geils**. His impressive knowledge of all facets of aviation made for a very interesting private tour of the museum. His tour was only overshadowed by our VIP seats on the flight line for the Blue Angels practice show that morning. Very impressive as always. At our dinner that night our very talented

company mate, **Larry Wray**, unveiled his original painting of the *USS Constitution* under full sail in Annapolis circa 1860. 71/33 Magic will be presenting Larry's painting to the new 33rd Company wardroom as a gift from our 1971 company-mates. On Thursday along with enjoying beautiful weather for the tour of Pensacola we had our annual company meeting as we ended the trip with the Bakers hosting a dinner at their home. 71/33 Magic has so many talented and fun mates that these get togethers really recharge our batteries. We can't wait for the 55th. Jon Cichucki." Sounds like a most enjoyable reunion. The 71/33 Magic is a great group of classmates!

33rd Company Members in the photo below (L to R Back Row): **Roland Weibley, Buz Dereniuk, Dan Curry, Jon Cichucki, Mike Ward, Jim Bloom**, Lynn Bloom, **Bill Shutt**, Missie Baker, **Larry Wray**, Gini Wray. (L to R second row): **Dale Carter**, Karen Curry, **Pete Baker, Terry Dereniuk**, Pam Ward, Judy Shutt. (Seated)

71/33 Magic in Pensacola



Rachel Weibley, **John Closs**. Sadly, three classmates passed away since my last column. **NOTE:** Full obituary for **Jim Stratton** is in this issue of *Shipmate Last Call*.

James "Jim" Murray Theis, 76, passed away suddenly on May 20, 2025, at his home in Big Canoe, Georgia. His final days were spent happily in the loving company of his adoring wife, Dianne, much as they had been during their 52-year marriage.

Jim was born on June 19, 1948, in Gardner, Massachusetts, to John and Catherine Theis. His childhood years were spent in Gardner with his parents and older brothers, Joe and Jack. Despite their shared hometown and church, Sacred Heart, Jim and Dianne's paths wouldn't cross until a school break in December 1970, when their beautiful love story began. Jim and Dianne knew almost immediately that they wanted to be together forever and were undoubtedly the love of each other's lives.

Jim followed in his dad's footsteps as he entered the United States Naval Academy as part of the Class of 1971. A beloved and respected company-mate in the 32nd Company, Jim completed a Surface Navy tour as a Gunnery Officer aboard the USS ALBERT DAVID during the Vietnam War, earning a Bronze Star. During his 9-year military service, Jim also completed flight training and earned the Wings of Gold becoming a Naval Aviator in Pensacola, FL. He flew the Navy's premiere ASW aircraft the P-3C Orion and subsequently served as an ROTC instructor at Iowa State.

It was during leave from flight training on July 2, 1972, that Jim and Dianne were married in their hometown. Jim and Dianne happily welcomed their first daughter, Kristi, in 1974. In the years that followed, they welcomed daughters Lisa, Kate, and Laura. Following his release from active duty, Jim had a long and successful leadership journey in Human Resources with ARCO, Ernst & Young, The Coca-Cola Company, and Delta Airlines. This journey took Jim, Dianne, and their four girls on many adventures from Maine to California, and several states in between. His loyalty and dedication to his work never overshadowed his loyalty and dedication to his family.

After his retirement from Delta, Jim and Dianne enjoyed many activities together, including golfing with friends in both Big Canoe and Tarpon Springs, Florida. Family was his priority, with travel often centered around spending time with Dianne, his daughters, 3 sons-in-law (Danny, Brian, and Josh), and 7 grandchildren (Ryan, Alex, Julia, Zoë, Mila, Ben, and Sam). A recent highlight was a trip to Jackson, Wyoming, where the entire family made lasting memories as they celebrated Jim and Dianne's 50th anniversary.

As his grandson Ben shared, Pops will be missed for his laugh, funny Donald Duck impression, and life stories. As many who knew Jim/Pops would say, he will be missed for his kind heart, selflessness, loyalty, thoughtful advice, positive outlook, tendency to sneak just one more cookie from the cookie jar, and so much more.

A public funeral mass and reception was held on Thursday, June 19 at 11 am at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church in Dawsonville, Georgia. A private family interment with military honors will follow at a later time at the Georgia National Cemetery. Donations in Jim's memory may be made to [Honor Flight Network](#) or the [American Heart Association](#)

Thomas "Tom" H. Abernathy passed away May 27th at his home in St. Louis, MO after a three-and-a-half-year battle with cancer. Tom was a well-liked member of 23rd Company. He was an All-American soccer player. At our 45th reunion he was honored by our class as one of the eight selected for induction into the Terwilliger Center for Student Athletes Class of 1971 Sports Legends. Following graduation he attended Damage Control Assistant (DCA) School in Philadelphia. He was assigned as DCA aboard the USS RICHARD L. PAGE, which was forward deployed to the US Sixth

Fleet in Athens, Greece. After completing his military service, he received his MBA from Southern Illinois University in 1980. He was the Engineering Manager at Anheuser-Busch for 30 years. He is survived by his wife, Diane. Funeral services will be promulgated when available.

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!