

Shipmate January-February 2026
Duke Longworth
24 November 2025

The Yard is certainly cold, and sometimes damp. Darkness surrounds the Midshipmen. The Dark Ages were just lots of work and walking and running in the wet, cold weather. Thankfully, spring is just a couple months away!

On a brighter note, the Navy Football team is 9-2 with a great win over Memphis! The last game of the season is with the Army Black Knights. I am confident it will be a good game, and NAVY will BEAT ARMY!

First up, a note from **Mike Rand**: “Duke, It was nice seeing you and all our classmates at the class Executive Board dinner Friday evening. As requested, attached is the photo of **Ron Hewett** and me with **Phil McConkey ‘79** in Annapolis on Friday. As you know, Phil not only was a standout at USNA, but also in the NFL, catching a



touchdown pass in the New York Giants victory in Superbowl XXI. Although our meeting was happenstance, Phil was most gracious discussing our time at the Academy, his service flying helos in the Navy, his pro football experience, and Navy football, past and present. He's a great guy, a proud USNA graduate, and an adoring father of a daughter, May, (Navy grad) who is currently a Marine second lieutenant in The Basic School at Quantico.

Hope to see you again soon. Best regards, Mike. BEAT ARMY!!!” I was glad to see you and Ron at the AF-Navy game! Hope to see you next year!

Mike Rand, Phil McConkey, and Ron Hewitt in Annapolis



33/7 Gift to 33 CO

Next is a note from **Jon Cichucki**: “Duke, on October 3rd the 71/33 Magic concluded our two-year project to support the reformed 33rd Company wardroom with three valuable gifts. **Larry Wray** painted a portrait depicting the *USS Constitution* in Annapolis waters circa 1860 and it was the primary gift to the wardroom. The Magic voted to give an engraved ships bell to

be mounted in the wardroom. We also gave the wardroom a copy of our hardcover 50th reunion book chronicling all our careers since graduation in our own words. Nine members and their spouses converged on USNA for the Air Force game and a weekend get together after the presentation ceremony. The presentation ceremony was attended by the entire current 33rd Company and their company officer, Major Angela White. It was a pleasure to meet the Mids and give them a glimpse of their future 50 years from now. It was a perfect weekend including the victory over Air Force. The new 33rders gave us a framed photo signed by all the members of the Company.

“In the photo below: (L-R) **Dan Curry, Bob Hendershot, Mac Oxford, Dave Hackett, Mike Ward, Pete Baker, Jon Cichucki** and **Larry Wray**. **John Closs** is seated holding the signed photo gift from the new 33rd Company to the 71/33 Magic.



33/7 at Gift presentation

The entire 33rd Company attended the presentation of the gifts from the 71/33 “Magic representatives” WOW, 33/71 rocks! What an excellent idea and superb gift! Thank you for the excellent note! See you next year at USNA!

Dave Polatty sent this note: “Duke, Nance and I enjoyed seeing you again in Crabtown. A couple of pics to share - looking good at the AF tailgate. It was Awesome, as was the NAVY victory that day!

33/7 with 3rd CO



“How about our bowl eligible 6-0 Mids comeback win in the final seconds against Temple this past weekend. Wow! HAPPY 250th NAVY! GO NAVY-BEAT ARMY! Polecat.” I enjoyed chatting with you and Nance at the tailgate! Hopefully, we will see you at A-N!



Duke, Dave and Nance Polatty at AF-Navy



Mark & Ginni Scharfe with Frank

Frank Culbertson sent this photo of Ginni and **Mark Scharfe** after Navy's win over South Florida.

The Class of '71 held a Memorial Service for our late classmate, **Bob Capra**, on Friday, 21 November at St. Andrews By the Bay Catholic Church in Arnold, Maryland. Over 50 classmates were in attendance and a team of classmates were the Honor Guard in presenting the U.S. flags to Bob's son, Kevin Capra. and daughter, Christine. The Honor Guard representing the Class of '71 were **Frank Culbertson, Perry Martini, Jim Elfelt, Walt Havenstein** and **Bob Wagoner**.

It was a fitting and final tribute to Bob following Taps and eight bells: "**Robert Arnold Capra**, Commander, United States Naval Reserve, has departed; Fair winds and following seas, Bob. You now stand relieved. Your classmates have the watch."

Ken Marks sent this excellent note: "NAPSters were in attendance among the 50+ classmates who attended **Bob Capra's** Funeral mass and Memorial Service. Most of us in '71 knew Bob was a giant among us; but long before the class of '71 would know Bob as a mover and shaker, he was a beloved leader, taskmaster, and one of two company commanders at NAPS. Here to remember and honor Bob were NAPS '67 classmates (L-R):

Paul Cuddy, Bob Gallagher, Mike Trent, Dennis Bruwelheide, Ken Marks, Tom Bjerke, Ed Kellog , and (kneeling) Bob's West Point son, Colonel Kevin Capra, USA.



Bob's NAPS '67 Classmates with his son

Lud Sorentino attended the memorial service but had to depart at the close. **John Condon** and **Mike Wilson** planned to attend but were thwarted by flight cancellations.” Thank you, Ken, for this timely note. Bob certainly lived our class motto – *Duces Virum!*



Bob's NAPS '67 / USNA '71 Classmates

Sadly, three classmates have passed away since the last column.

Michael “Mike” Hichak passed away on September 28, 2025. in Marietta, GA. with his loving wife, Noreen. at his side. Mike was born in Trieste, Italy to two active-duty Army officers, Patty Orr Hichak and Michael Hichak, both WWII veterans. To his 26th Company-mates, Michael was one of the special people who will never leave us. Farewell and following seas our friend. His full obituary was in the November-December *Shipmate* “*Last Call*.”

Obituary Notice

For those seeking more details about Jim Parks' life and career, his full obituary appeared in the November-December issue of *Shipmate* under the “*Last Call*” section. This tribute provides additional insights into his accomplishments and the legacy he leaves behind.

James “Jim” Parks, passed away on 22 October in Seattle Washington following a short battle with pancreatic cancer. He was a graduating member of the 3rd Company and rowed on the Heavyweight Crew Team.

Upon graduation, Jim spent a short time in nuclear power school but was eventually selected to become a Navy Seal. Jim retired as a Captain following a successful career with the Seals, his final assignment was Commanding Officer of the Rapid Deployment Force stationed at Fort MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. May he rest in peace.

Funeral or memorial arrangements are not known at this time but will be passed along once finalized. His full obituary was in this issue of *Shipmate* “*Last Call*.”

Theodore “Ted” Snoots passed away on 12 October in Washington D.C. Ted grew up in the district and was the only son of Vern and Kitty Snoots. Following his year at Bullis Prep, Ted joined us in June 1967 graduating out of 12th company. During his four years in Bancroft Hall, Ted was known by many nicknames by his company mates and fellow baseball teammates but was most affectionally known as “Dirt” for his antics on the baseball field. He was an economics major excelling in academics and equally excelling on the baseball diamond as a first baseman on the Navy varsity baseball team.

Ted selected Surface Navy and had his first assignment on the USS Tuscaloosa a Newport class LST where he was the Communications Officer, deploying to the Gulf of Tonkin in 1971 and 1972. He subsequently was accepted into UDT school with sights on becoming a Navy SEAL, however, during training he sustained a serious injury falling on his back which cut short his opportunity for that career path. He was later medically

discharged and moved back to Washington D.C. where he pursued a sales and marketing career.

Ted will be sorely missed by not only his 12th company mates but also by his teammates on the Navy baseball team. May he now rest in peace.

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!

Duces Virum, Duke