



Cliff & Paul

Looking good, '77! Our two intrepid linksters took on the challenge of the RTJ Trail course at Ross Bridge in Birmingham, a layout yours truly brought to its knees some years back with a sizzling 91 while getting 19 pops. Hey, if net wasn't what mattered, why did the golf gods create handicaps?!

And since we're on the subject of golf, **Jim Kelly (11th Co.)** recently participated in the USNA Spring Scramble. As we understand the format, A, B, C and D handicaps were matched at random by the golf staff with the players hitting from different tees based on their relative talents. Which leads us to two conclusions: (1) As Jim didn't provide any additional details regarding his team's performance, they didn't win; and, (2) though Kelly played great, alas, his teammates did not.

Pictured below left to right are classmates **Joe Kovalcik (1st Co.)**, Jim, **Harry Rouse (34th Co.)** and **Chris Feeney (11th Co.)**.



Kelly Foursome

Finally, we'll call it a wrap with a correction to an earlier sea story courtesy of **John "Amazing" Grace (7th Co.)**:

✉ The Midshipman Officer of the Watch on duty the hot summer night John ordered our younger

brother Jeff and a fellow Plebe down to Main Office to cool off the MOOW with a refreshing sh*t can full of water was NOT **Tom Lindner (17th Co.)** as previously reported, but **Dave Evensen (18th Co.)**. We apologize for any pain, suffering and/or embarrassment Tom may have suffered as a result of our waning powers of recall, and once again applaud the Amazing One for standing up for the men under his command. BZ, Mr. Grace!

Magoo

'78

Life Membership: 81%
Donor Participation: 32.14%

Pres: **Glen Woods**

Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**
1320 Homewood Ln., Annapolis, MD 21401
e: canoeu78@aol.com

Website: usna1978.org

In the last column I mentioned **Jeff Ewin's (29th Co)** retirement from INPO. I did not have any pictures at the time I submitted the column but Jeff's wife, Kim, has rectified the situation. Here are images of Jeff and Kim joined by Judi and **Faris Farwell (29th Co)** on the occasion, as well as the entire Ewin family.



'78: The Ewin Family



The Ewins and Farwells

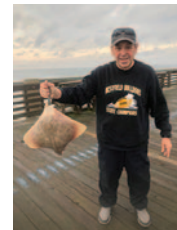
Speaking of retirements, back in May, **Carl Abelein (19th Co)** wrote to say that on April 20th he joined the ranks of the "Class of '78, 65 and out, retired airline pilots club". He reported that the thirty plus years at Delta Air Lines went by in the blink of an eye. One pic is Carl's last day in the "office" at the conclusion of his final flight. Able to attend the proud moment were his wife, Lori, and sons Matthew and Ted. Ted works for Delta as a Boeing systems engineer and was able to ride on the cockpit jump seat for that last flight. Their oldest son, Nick, was unable to be there as he is in his SWO Department head tour on USS Gridley based out of Everett, WA.



Carl's Last Day in the Office



The Abeleins on Retirement Day



Dog Callas and his catch

What's a football coach do in the off season? For **Alex "Dog" Callas (26th Co)**, it's fish. In April, Alex was in the Outer Banks, Fishing. The Old Man

and the Sea caught "7 Skates and a Drum. He noted that the "Season off to a good start. I was born on the crest of a wave....."

The first quarter of 2021 had two USNA grads serving in Africa! Our own, **David W. Bruce (13th Co)** CDR, USN (Ret) and **Christy McCutchan ('01) MAJ, USMC (Ret)** were in Ougadougou, Burkina Faso working for PAE on the US State Department Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) program. David was the Team Lead and

78/79 CLASS NEWS

Christy was the Logistics mentor/instructor, as they assisted the Burkina Faso Peace Operations Directorate to conduct pre-deployment training for the next battalion deploying to Timbuktu, Mali for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The job is long over as Dave (having been there since 9 Jan.) was scheduled to return home in France at the beginning of May; Christy was there for three weeks 25 Mar – 17 Apr.



Christy and Dave in Africa

Brad Jackson (9th Co) posted a great story on his FB page. "September 1941. End of the Louisiana Maneuvers. My dad's cousin stopped by our family home on Coliseum St. for supper, enroute back to DC. I am sure the dinner was bowls of boiled shrimps, and some sides. Convinced my 11-year-old dad to go into the military. Dad later went to West Point. George C. Marshall went back to DC, and three months later we had Pearl Harbor. That's recruiting." Of course, my reply was fitting, "Wow—so your dad's cousin was George C. Marshall?! I am impressed. It may have been better if it was Chester Nimitz, and he talked your dad into going to the USNA. Lol" That's a great story, Brad, and what a link with history!

Herb Nyberg (34th Co) and **Randy Masters** (34th Co.), along with their friend, Dr. Wayne Kramer, and his brother Bryan, completed their North Rim to South Rim Grand Canyon trek at the end of May. Some quick stats they cited:

"24 miles, decent from North Rim to Colorado River at Phantom Ranch 5700 feet, ascent to South Rim about 4300 feet. Temperature extremes, below freezing and light snow at North Rim to almost 120 degrees F in the sun at Phantom Ranch. Day one hiked down North Kaibab trail to Cottonwood Camp stopping at Coconino Overlook, Supai Tunnel, the Needle, Roaring Springs then Cottonwood. Next day hiked down to Phantom Ranch and set up camp. Day 3 hiked around the ranch did a little swimming. Day 4 explored Colorado River hiked Clear Creek Trail to a vista off Sumner Butte, after lunch hiked round trip between silver and black bridges, more swimming and prepped for hike out. Last day hiked out on South Bright Angel trail with a leisurely lunch halfway at Indian Garden arrived after noon at the South Rim". That's a great accomplishment you two. So what's the next challenge- the Appalachian Trail? We've already had a few classmates hike parts and all of it.



Herb and Randy on the Trail

Ray Kempisty's (13th Co) son, LT **Mitch Kempisty** ('14) invented a sturdier and more lasting nametag for the Navy coveralls. A May14 *Navy Times* article highlighted Mitch's invention. The article noted that his " 'Industrial Reinforcement for a Wearable Identification' patented invention keeps sailor nametags looking crisp and professional." It described the basic concept as "simple: a backing board attached to the back of the nametag that has its own Velcro to attach to the uniform, keeping the nametag straight and true in the process."

And added that "The piece in the middle between the Velcro is carbon fiber nylon blend, which is very resilient, but also has good flexibility and rigidity..." It's also fire retardant. Mitch hopes to sell the new name tags at Navy Exchanges. In the meantime, Mitch is at Naval Postgraduate School studying aeronautical engineering.



Mitch and his new nametag

Well that's all for now. Catch you in you the next edition. Launchin' Spot Four.

'79

Life Membership: 91%

Donor Participation: 17.41%

Pres: **CAPT Dave Jackson, USN (Ret.)**
e: djackson@usna.edu

Sec'y: **LCDR John "Wiz" Withers, USN (Ret.)**
1886 Woodpoint CT, Lawrenceville, GA 30043
p: 240-298-1006; e: JDWithers@1979.usna.com

Social Network Links:
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/wizwithers>

Facebook Group: **USNA Class of 1979**

Website: www.usna79.com

Greetings 79ers!

The guys from 9th Company must have heard my pleas from last month – because a couple of them took time out of their busy schedules to drop me a line. First up is this note from **Don Brummett**:

✉ Wiz, it has been a while since I sent you an input because nothing earth shattering has happened recently. I am now retired from Southwest Airlines and living in Dripping Springs, TX. Driving through Drippin' five years ago I noticed a car with a West Point Class of 1979 license plate holder, so I naturally followed him to his house where I introduced myself. I met **George Conwill USMA '79** and invited him to my house to watch Army-Navy that year. Navy had a 13-year win streak going but Army won that year as they have for four

of the last five games. He now believes I'm his good luck charm. We went to a local brewery recently and I invited a fellow SWA pilot to join us for a beer. He brought along a buddy of his from his Air Force career. His name is **John Nichols USAFA '79** and he just retired as the Texas State Adjutant General.



Three 79ers: John Nichols USAFA '79, Don Brummett and George Conwill USMA '79

Don – always great hearing from you. Who knew Dripping Springs was the southern 79 HQ? Thanks for the note and photo.

Don's note was quickly followed by an email from another 9th Co. grad. Our class undersea explorer **Parks Stephenson** rose from the murky depths of the Philippine Trench to update us on his latest project – joining noted explorer Victor Vescovo in searching for those US Navy vessels sunk in the Battle off Samar in 1944. After a series of dives, the crew confirmed finding the remains of the USS JOHNSTON (DD 557), which was one of the members of "Taffy 3" lost in the battle when she took on the superbattleship YAMATO.



Parks Stephenson (right) with noted explorer Victor Vescovo