

Having mentioned Andy Wilson, we were saddened to learn of the recent passing at age 95 of his father, Bob Wilson, USNA '48.



Bob Wilson

Bob is shown above wearing the sword and hand-repaired scabbard which now hangs in a place of honor in our office. Andy's Dad was a one-of-a-kind character, but the story of Bob's class ring is truly unique. As Andy tells it, being a thrifty Scot, Bob opted for the only free stone offered with his ring, a black onyx plug. The plug cracked shortly after his Ring Dance, so back in Mother B, he used a knife to carve a "stone" out of a green toothbrush handle, then buffed it using toothpaste as an abrasive. The "stone" has been in his ring ever since (75 years) and still looks great:



Andy Wilson's Dad's Ring

As you can see, he also kept the rest of the 1946-vintage toothbrush handle just in case he needed another "stone" (Hey, waste not, want not!), and possibly to prove he'd actually done it. A great story about a great guy who'll be sorely missed.

Finally, we'll call it a day with this photo of **Tug McGraw (22nd Co.)** and yours truly taken adjacent to the monument honoring astronaut and Academy grad Willie McCool between the 14th green and 15th tee at the revamped Navy golf course.



Magoo & Tug

The course was in primo condition, which is more than we can say for our game. Still, we had a great time with Tug, and really enjoyed the changes which were made to the course. Hat tip to **Jim Kelly (11th Co.)** for getting us on.

Until next time, friends, fair winds and following seas.

Magoo

'78

Life Membership: 81%
Donor Participation: 34.11%

Pres: **Glen Woods**

Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**
1320 Homewood Ln., Annapolis, MD 21401
e: canoe78@aol.com

Website: usna1978.org

I am on my soap box to gripe about something bugging not only me - but a lot of USNA Marines. While I applaud the football team honoring Marines with special "Semper Parvum" uniforms for the Navy-Air Force game, the sold "collateral" clothing is the problem. It is best exemplified by seeing Coach K - on national TV - wearing a polo shirt with the Marine Corps emblem and the word "Navy" below it. Seriously?! That eagle, globe and anchor emblem is NOT Navy's emblem! Moreover, think of the message it sent to the world that the Naval Academy doesn't seem to know naval service organizational structure or emblems. Likely, the average viewing citizen didn't even recognize it as problem. (In which case we just spread misinformation and perpetuated more naivete about the military.) But to those in the know - especially Naval service veterans - it was a clear, BIG mistake.

Furthermore, we can buy at any Navy or Marine Corps Exchange all other Marine items sold in the Midstore. There is nothing to connect us as Naval Academy alumni who went Marine Corps. We Marine alumni are proud of our Naval Academy roots - we'd love to have Marine-connected USNA gear to display that pride. How about some "USNA- Marine" items and more general "USNA" branded gear? (Not simply "NAVY" because that isn't who we are.) As this goes to print, I am writing the Academy Business Services Division to plead the case to get rid of that ill-marked gear and ask for more USNA-Marine type items (I've heard some great ideas for cool logos.). For at least the last decade 25% of each class has Commissioned as Marines. With many more Marines before them, there are a lot of Marine alumni. With smart marketing and branding, BSD can make a pretty penny on that gear. I leave you with an image of just one of the items on sale at the Midstore and the question - "Seriously, does that look right?!"



In my Jul/Aug column I noted 34th Companymates, Randy Masters and Herb Nyberg's, trek across the Grand Canyon and queried, "What's

next - the Appalachian Trail (AT)?" Well, Randy said, "In fact, yes. A portion of it." He went on to write that "Brent 'OB' Obenour (33rd Co.) thru-hiked the AT in 2018, and after noting my successful Grand Canyon hike decided to try me out on the final 100 miles of the AT. Aptly named "The 100 Mile Wilderness" in Maine, it starts in Monson and ends with scaling Mt. Katahdin, the northern terminus of the AT" OB, three of his DC friends, and Randy started out on 1 August and didn't quit for 10 days. They had a resupply of food on day five but carried everything necessary on their backs. Randy added, "The terrain seems specifically designed to be challenging, with rocks, roots, and bogs as the norm with periodic hills to climb and rock falls to climb/ descend in what is best called 'full body contact hiking'. We were blessed with perfect weather for summiting Katahdin, which is as close to mountaineering as one can get without supplemental equipment. OB and I proudly wore our 1978 Reunion hats...prompting some still wet-behind-the-ears 2014 grad to comment that we were looking pretty good - for old guys. Once I caught my breath and quit seeing stars, I told him to brace up." Randy joined you other '78 airline pilots who "aged out" of a career. In February, he retired after 35 years at American Airlines. He ended his career as 787 International Captain in Philadelphia. Through the years he flew a variety of aircraft both domestically and internationally, across North and South America and Europe. Randy noted that, "Just like in the Navy, the airlines and airline life have changed dramatically



'78: 30th Co reunion



'78: OB and Andy on the Appalachian Trail

since I started, but it was quite a ride." Well, enjoy the next "ride" and adventure, Randy!

In September, Bob Lamont (3rd Co) wrote "Part of the USNA mission reads, 'provide graduates who are dedicated to a career of naval service.' The end of this month marks my exit from the civil service. After 22 years in the Marine Corps, 21 years as a GS testing Marine Corps equipment, and a four-year stint at a little-known undergraduate institution on the banks of the Severn River, I'm declaring Mission Complete. It has been an honor to serve Marines across four continents. I wish the next generation well, for I fear the challenges ahead. 'Request permission to go ashore.'" Permission granted, Bob.

On 24 Sep 30th Company had its annual Annapolis gathering. The weekend event started out with a golf outing at the Compass Point Golf Course. Among the duffers were Ray Kwong (32nd Co), Lew Wolfrom, Dick Boehme, Bruce Gearey, Tony Cato, Eli Turner ('77), and Brad Baylor. Bruce's wife, Robin, acted as photographer. Ray and Eli helped round out their 30th

Company foursomes. Others who joined for the weekend included Barb and Rick Paulsen, Brenda and Brad Thomann, Cindy and Larry Easton, and Tom Atkinson. Lew reported that Tony and Barb Cato also graciously hosted a marvelous Saturday evening dinner at their home. Joining Tony and Barb were Ingrid and Dick Boehme, Kathryn and Lew, Brenda and Brad Thomann, Brad Baylor and Nancy Alley, and Tom Atkinson. Post dinner entertainment included piano selections by Dick and Tony. Lew noted that it was many years ago at USNA that Dick provided Tony with his first piano lesson.

Speaking of reunions, EZ-25 (25th Co) also had a small get-together on Sep 10th, with Ray Bracy, Elmer Nelson, Doug Diehl, and Mike Whaley playing a round on the USNA Golf Course. Mike noted that "these four former plebes from 25th Company...had never played golf together...no score was written down that morning, no bets were won or lost that day..." They played their own ball and sometimes played someone else's ball. Occasionally, they lost several balls!!!

The bottom line was that they "NEVER have I had a better time on a golf course!!...the game of golf may have suffered greatly that morning but the Men of EZ 25 had a blast catching up!!!"



Magoo

The last mini reunion is also one of the most unique. Lloyd Prince wrote that some 7th Company "Seadogs" got together in Nye, MT. The pack included Gregg Burgess, Leslie and Lloyd Prince, Rob Westberg, Charles Witten and Annie Roth, Mark Korms and Scot Miller. The highlight of their trip was a four-hour tour of the Sibanye Stillwater Mine, the only active palladium & platinum mine in North America! Here we are miles inside and over 1500 feet deep in a mountain! Other activities included hikes, fly fishing, quilting, and meals at the lodge and other local establishments with consumption of lots "of adult beverages".

Great gatherings of "whenever two or three shall meet". Until next time, Launchin' Spot Four.

'79

Life Membership: 91%

Donor Participation: 20.70%

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!

As I alluded to in last month's column, my wife Karen and I played host for an impromptu gathering of several classmates who all happened to be members of the same company. Rebecca and **Bob Larys** drove over from Jacksonville, FL to visit with us for a few days. Bob and I rode bicycles and drank beer, while Rebecca and Karen spent most of their time talking about how wonderful it was to have us as husbands (at least that's what they told me). Coincidentally, Lois and **Bob Dupuis** drove down from the "other" Jacksonville (NC). Lois has family in the area, and during their visit they jumped in the 2018 Corvette and drove over to our home for an evening.

Also joining us was Atlanta resident **Mike Leigh** - I wrote about Mike last month, but as a refresher he was also in 8th Co. with the two Bobs until he decided to pursue nother path after Youngster year. Unfortunately, Mike's wife Lori was unable to be part of the gathering due to other commitments. It turns out that Mike, Bob and Bob are all big "car guys" - Corvettes, Porsches



'78: 30th Co dinner at Catos



'78: 7th Co Seadogs Deep Mine Tour