

## 77/78 CLASS NEWS

innovative Thach Weave and became an ace himself. CAPT (later RADM) Tom Hamilton, -4 the legendary aircraft carrier ENTERPRISE (CV-6). He also served two stints as head Navy football coach. Sub skippers such as CDRs Burt Klakring and Creed Burlingame (both later RADM) and Bob Rice (later VADM) were among the top-scoring captains of the Silent Service.

The war took its toll on the Class of '27. The class suffered 43 operational losses over their decades of service, with 13 killed in action in World War II. At least eight ships were named in honor of class members.

### Leading the Fleet

The class culminated their service by leading at the highest levels. ADM George Anderson served as chief of naval operations from 1961-1963, including the Cuban Missile Crisis. Other four-star admirals included U.S. Grant Sharp, Charles Griffin and Jimmy Thach. Additionally, RADM (later VADM) Charles Melson served as Naval Academy superintendent from 1958-1960, bringing the USNA experience full circle.

### Inspiring Future Generations

The Class of 1927 left its mark on the service, not only of its time but on generations going forward. The class entered in a time of coal-fired ships and saw its last active duty members retire in 1968, just a year before the first lunar landing. In 45 years they contributed powerfully to their country and their alma mater.

Their lasting legacy on the Yard can be found in the Chapel. The magnificent "Invisible Commission" Tiffany-stained glass window, given shortly after their graduation, honors alumni "who in war and in peace have recognized [the Academy's] ideals of honor, courage, loyalty and duty, in the service of God and country..."



As it inspired the Class of 1977 during our time on the Severn, may this powerful depiction of service help guide the Class of 2027 as you join the Long Blue Chain.

BZ, Mr. Wilson. Andy offered a couple other notes of interest, the first being the Class of 1927 sponsored the 27th Company wardroom

during our stay in Mother B, along with the fact the father of our classmate Fred Litty (24th Co.), shown below with Fred and his mother at graduation...



...was a member of '27.

1927...1977...2027: Time does indeed fly when you're having fun!

Magoo

# '78

**Life Membership: 81%**

**Donor Participation: 41.76%**

Pres: **Glen Woods**

Sec'y: **Vince Balderrama**

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It's October - a very special month for '78.

As this edition of *Shipmate* arrives at your mailboxes, we are just about to celebrate our 45th Reunion. There'll be plenty of sea stories and catching-up being done over that Air Force game weekend so I (or whomever else you voted to be Class Secretary) should have lot of news coming in from you through the end of the year.

In June, Marla and **Al Baker** (10th) took a cruise & bicycle tour on the Rhone River in France. While in France they linked up with classmate **David Bruce** (13th Co) in Viviers. Viviers is a famed village known for its medieval cathedral and views over the Rhone River.

There were two other USNA couples on their cruise whose names, Blues didn't provide ('70 and '72) as well as the Captain of the vessel who wore a Navy N\* lapel pin awarded to him by a prior guest.



**Dave Bruce with Marla and Al Baker**

**Jim Fiorelli** (2nd Co) brings us up to speed on the Fiorelli Family. Jim retired in September from the Office of the Attorney General/Virginia Commonwealth University. He wrote that after two years in Princeton, Jan and he "moved in June to West Point, deep in the heart of enemy territory, to be close and available to our son Matt and his wife Andrea — OK, let's be honest — to be close and available to their four kids [Emmy, Beau and twins Rosie and James] ages 5 and under." (Soon that will be five children under five and under as Andrea is due around Christmastime.) Matt has a three-year assignment teaching American Government to Woops. Jan and Jim have a house within walking distance to the West Point main gate and within 10 minutes to Matt's Post housing. Jim is standing by to assist in any '78 Army-Navy spirit missions. By the way, they all survived the Big Flood that hit West Point and the northeast. As for the rest of the family, Mike ('13) is enjoying his shore duty tour as an instructor pilot and RAG LSO in the F-18 RAG at Oceana. Leathernecks, son John ('19) and his wife Liza ('18) are at Naval Post Graduate school in Monterey for the next two years.



**'78: Two Fiorelli Dads on Father's Day**



As this is submitted for printing, Ann and **Ralph Scaffidi** (36th Co) were coming to Annapolis at the beginning of August. They were attending the Annual Convention of the Military Order of World Wars (MOWW). MOWW predates the American Legion and is a patriotic, nonpartisan, Veterans Service Organization (VSO) dedicated to promoting patriotism, civic responsibility, public service, and leadership in our nation's communities. Ralph and Ann are both engaged with their local MOWW Chapter's Annual Youth Leadership Conference, helping with staffing, and involved in their week-long programs. Youths are offered at no cost, a comprehensive program that provides a combination of guest speakers, interactive seminars, an Awards Banquet, outdoor and indoor team-building Leadership Challenges, and other events to ensure students are motivated, educated, and inspired. The conference's capstone event is a guided tour of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library with students taking part in the Situation Room Experience. MOWW Chapters across the nation have similar programs. One thing Ralph and I have been talking about has been identifying guest speakers to engage with those youth involved in the Conferences convey stories or lessons about leadership and their own patriotic experiences and service to our nation and communities. With only 18% of adults in the U.S. aged 18-34 saying they are "extremely proud to be an American" it's vital to our nation to educate youth about what is truly good about this "grand experiment" our forefathers started and shown examples of service and devotion to make it better. If you are interested, drop me a line.

Well, that's it for now. See you at the Reunion!

*"But still when two or three shall meet, and old tales be retold,*

*From low to highest in the Fleet, we'll pledge the Blue & Gold"*

#### Launchin', Spot Four

P.S. I got more than a few jabs for my screw up in the July-Aug edition of *Shipmate*. I accidentally referred to my classmate, **John Gardiner** in the July-Aug column as my Marine buddy, "**Corky [Gardner] '77**" While I have already sent apologies to John and our 4th Company brothers, as well as Corky and those who read our Class Facebook page, I make this *official Shipmate* apology to all of you in '78 and '78-1. (Yes, I am on bended knee, with egg all over my face, and truly embarrassed.) I am not sure if I was on prescription drugs at the time I committed (submitted?) the error or was thinking about my Leatherneck pal, Corky, when I typed the words. Regardless, I screwed up. You know what they say, one "oh s\*\*t" replaces a thousand "Atta-boys". So, since August I have restarted the journey back to the thousand "Atta-boys", one step at a time. Once more, mea culpa, mea culpa, etc. For 78-1, I braced up for a week. For my classmates, I'll

see you at the Reunion where I will take my medicine or make my penance to John and 4th Company.

Best and Semper Fi,  
Vance...I mean, Vince

## '79

**Life Membership: 91%**

**Donor Participation: 17.02%**

Pres: **CAPT Dave Jackson, USN (Ret.)**  
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Sec'y: **LCDR John "Wiz" Withers, USN (Ret.)**  
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Social Network Links:  
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/wizwithers>

Facebook Group: **USNA Class of 1979**

Website: [www.usna79.com](http://www.usna79.com)

Greetings 79ers!

Now that summer is "officially" over and we've established our fall routines, the '79 inbox is starting to see some action. First up is this update from Jill and **Butler Newman**:

✉ We are the proud grandparents of two beautiful little girls, daughters of our son Zach and his wife, Sarah who live in Maine. Zach was just promoted to 1st Engineer on a roll-on roll-off cargo ship. Our younger son, LT Derek Newman, is back in the USA finally after a 2-plus year tour of duty in Bahrain. He got married this past March to Madison Wood, and they are now stationed in San Diego, CA.

Derek and Madison were married in St. Augustine, FL, and lots of family and friends made the trek to attend. They included Derek's godfather, **Rob Wray** (and his lovely bride Mary Ellen), Peggy and Chuck Doty, and Lyn and **Greg Long '78**.

We are now settled in our new home on the banks of the Chincoteague Bay. We love the slow pace of the Eastern Shore of Virginia and of course, being on the water!

Jill & Butler Newman



**Jill & Butler Newman's son Zach holding their granddaughters**

That's terrific news, guys. Congrats to the new grandparents!

We shift now from the mid-Atlantic to the Midwest. Up next is this 10th Co. update from **Tony Konecny**:

✉ Seven members of the Tenth Company (Good X 10) met in the Coal Regions of eastern Pennsylvania for a "Glamping" event May 9-11. **Tony Konecny, Warren McAuliffe, Dave Rogers, Kevin O'Sullivan, Frank Scholley, Paul Van Cleve**, and **Ted Williamson** occupied two luxury cabins at the Lakewood Park Campground near Barnesville, PA (hereafter known as the Barnesville Beer Summit '23). There was campfire cooking, beer drinking, and sea-story-telling in addition to a visit to the Number 9 Coal Mine in Lansford, PA and the Yuengling Brewery in Pottsville.

Seamanship and ship driving skills were put to use in paddle boating to an island in the campground lake for a picture session. Once on the island, a "Go Ricardo" sign was displayed to wish **Pedro Leon-Guerrero's** son well during an upcoming surgery. Pedro, **Scott Whitney**, and **Bob Sorge** had planned on attending, but life got in the way on short notice.



**10th Co.: Paul Van Cleve, Tony Konecny, Ted Williamson, Kevin O'Sullivan, Dave Rogers, Frank Scholley, and Warren McAuliffe**



**Good wishes for Pedro Leon-Guerrero's son**

Thanks, Tony, for the update. Sounds like all those hours on the YPs are still paying off!

Now we head down I-95 to the Sunshine State, and this update from **Grant Thornton**:

✉ I retired for a second and final time at the end of February from the US Special Operations Command in Tampa and wanted to share a couple photos. My plebe year roommate **John Kaiser** participated by delivering the invocation and we were joined by **Diggs Vann** to reflect on 48 years of paychecks!

I retired early from the Navy in 1995 and worked for a time as a contractor before joining the Civil Service for the balance of my career. My last active duty assignment in the SEAWOLF program office introduced me to the business of delivering Navy SEALs from