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### **Andy Shaffer's Ships Prominently Displayed in Texas Museum**

As mentioned earlier, **Andy Shaffer** is a wooden ship replica craftsman extraordinaire. As noted on his website (<https://www.shaffers-ships.com/>), over the last 29 years, he has constructed over 15 replica ships (warships and merchant vessels) dating back to the 1600s. These are not your Revell plastic models from our childhood. While museums in Texas have asked him to display his ships, he has been reluctant to put them out for permanent display until now. Two of Andy's ships now have a permanent berth in the City By the Sea Museum in Palacios, Texas. One is the *Invincible*, the flagship of the Texas Navy, and the other is the *Triumphant*, a ship of the French Royal Navy.



[Photo #1 – “Andy Shaffer at the acceptance celebration at the City by the Sea Museum in Palacios, Texas”]

### **Dallens and McKennas – Last Back and First Out for International Travel**

As mentioned earlier this year, **John & Frances Dallen** and **Brian & Karen McKenna** were among the last to return to the US and hunker down after “Series of Unfortunate Events” encountered that shortened their last trip and the latest variant and booster warnings.” It didn’t take long for the wanderlust bug to overcome the frustrations of previous events and the discomfort of masks and boosters. Last month, they boarded a relatively small SilverSeas cruise ship (that had been out of service for over 16 months) in Santiago, Chile and set out for a two and a half week adventure to Antarctica via various not-guaranteed islands, straits, and passages to (possibly) see numerous species of seals, whales, penguins, other exotic birds, fishes, and animals. Since the ship was fully staffed (albeit with somewhat rusty hospitality industry personnel) and not all of the cabins were filled, passengers were treated to various levels of service and care. On the plus side, this is an adventure where a tourist rarely encounters pick-pockets. If you are thinking about breaking out of lockdown, read John’s blog at [Dallen.posthaven.com](http://Dallen.posthaven.com) for an exciting, informative, well written, and candid review. John summarized the journey as, “A stress-filled start and a stress-filled end, and a marvelous, once in a lifetime adventure between. International travel in the COVID era is not easy, but we remain glad we are struggling through it. Life is short, and for those of us staggering through the victory

lap of life, however exhausted and exhausting, it feels good to still be creating memories to hold and to share.”



[Photo #2 – “Brian & Karen McKenna and Frances & John Dallen chilling out in Antarctica”]

#### **B-4 Mini-Reunion**

**Ralph D’Alessandro** reported that, in mid- November, he and his bride, **Linda Bacigalupi**, teamed up with **Rick & Pat Goodell** to invade and party at **Pete & Cathy Swan's** villa in Paradise Valley, Arizona in a repeat of earlier mini-reunions. This time, because of COVID concerns, **Jay Johnson** & his bride **Marian** were not able to join the gathering from their home in New Hampshire. Rick & Pat drove from their home in Portland, Oregon and Ralph & Linda sailed south from their home in Western Colorado. Pete & Cathy hosted the two couples with great food, bountiful wine, and lots of Arizona sunshine. The guests reciprocated with many tall tales of past and current adventures. While the ladies enjoyed massages, the guys played a round of best ball golf, with Rick and Ralph – who had not played golf in many moons – teaming up as one team against Pete, who plays multiple times every week. On the 18th hole, thanks to a great drive by Rick and a birdie putt by Ralph, the twosome was able to pull out a hard fought win. Pete had returned a short time earlier from an overseas trip promoting his and Cathy's pet space project of space elevators, so he could claim residual jet-lag, despite having played a round a day or two after he returned to Arizona. Prior to this gathering, Rick & Pat had just returned from an East Coast trip where they saw Jay & Marian and took a cruise on the Chesapeake Bay. During a stop near Annapolis, Rick gleefully and publicly advised the guide, who was touting to the tour group the attributes of the USNA and its football team a bit too glowingly. Rick reminded the guide – and all others on the tour – that Navy and its star quarterback, Roger Staubach, lost the last game Staubach played at Navy to Army in the 1964 Army-Navy game. That timely bit of information seemed to move the guide on to other topics... On a past and current subject, Ralph mentioned that he has a long running annual bet with a law school classmate who was Navy’s ‘68 track team captain, Phil Katauskas. USMA track team captain, **Greg Camp**, also stays in touch with Phil, so when Phil’s son, Alex, service transferred into the Army, Greg swore him in at Ft Benning. Alex is now enroute back to West Point for his second instructor tour – this time as a Juice P after getting his PhD at RPI. Alex and his wife, both Navy grads and ex-Marines, enjoy the rivalry being Navy grads at West Point, especially at this time of year.



[Photo #3 – “Rick & Pat Goodell, Linda & Ralph D’Alessandro, and Cathy & Pete Swan creating a food shortage in Paradise Valley, Arizona”]

### **Bob & Randy Hensler Fend Off COVID by Driving a Lot**

In an effort to cure their cabin fever, **Bob & Randy Hensler** set off from their home in San Antonio for a road trip that included a reunion with Bob’s War College work group in the Central Atlantic area, and a stop to visit A-1 company mate **John Hedley** at Lake Norman, North Carolina. They also visited their son at Fort Benning. Bob’s work group had the reputation of immediately “clicking” and essentially took over the War College. While at Lake Norman, the Hedleys took the Henslers to Richard’s Welcome Home Veterans Coffee Shop and shared them with us. After Benning, Bob & Randy returned to San Antonio just long enough to do laundry and then drove over to New Orleans to tour the WWII Museum with **Jim Stefan, Tommy & Bonnie Barnes**, and **Jim & Suzanne Hargis** – all members of a pretty large group that gets together on Tuesday evenings for a Zoom call to reflect on our class’ legacy. While Bob & Randy were with Hedleys and us at Lake Norman, we agreed that two places vets need to go are the beaches at Normandy and the WWII Museum. The group stayed at the Higgins Hotel – not cheap but very convenient. They spent one evening atop the Higgins Hotel at "Rosie's," (as in Rosie the Riveter) where the waitresses wore red bandanas wrapped around their heads just like the famous poster of "Rosie." At the museum, the group sat in on a "4 D" presentation in a small theater that covered the entire War – like a Military Art Cliff Notes – narrated by Tom Hanks. At one point, a German Tiger tank cut loose with its main gun and the noise and blast of air in the theater, simulating the gun's muzzle blast, was quite realistic. Then, the seats started vibrating as the tank moved on. Bob recounted that the presentation was VERY emotional, and he admitted to “blowing ‘OD snot” by its conclusion!



[Photo #4 – “Randy Hensler, Margie Hedley, Barbara Gerard, John Hedley, and Bob Hensler at Lake Norman”]

When the Henslers departed Lake Norman, so did the Hedleys. They headed to Hilton Head Island to meet up with **Ray Rhodes** and **Tony Mathews**. Tony lives there and is THE go-to guy regarding anything about the Island.”



[Photo #5 – “John Hedley, Tony Mathews, and Ray Rhodes on Hilton Head Island”]

### **Claude & Tina Johnson Check In**

Moved by the recent losses in our ranks, **Claude Johnson**’s bride, **Tina** wrote to offer encouragement and news. She shared that **Nick Nahorniak** had called Claude this summer to chat and lift Johnson spirits. Recently Tina lost a sister and Claude lost one of his brothers to COVID. Claude is physically in great shape and still a dear. He goes to a day program one day a week. Tina calls it “Post K” – if you’re four years old, you go to Pre K – after 75, it becomes Post-K. All of his garden work, and other weekly volunteer commitments ended during 2020. The Johnsons hosted their children and grands for Thanksgiving. Claude once reflected, “Grandchildren really are named aptly! They ARE grand! AND give meaning to ‘the rest of your life!’”



[Photo #6 – “Claude & Tina Johnson with their grandchildren during Thanksgiving”]

### **Loss of John Ryneska Brings Reflections**

A few years back, **Andy Stratton** reflected, “As I read about our classmates passing away (**Steve Williams** and **Larry Fulton** from our wedding party are deceased so that is 1/3 of them) or suffering from terminal illnesses, I am thankful for our situation.” When he heard about **John Ryneska** passing, he wrote, “In our Howitzer, the F-4 section of all four classes lead off with, ‘... we’re about as close friends as any group of guys can be.’” These are tough times. Our losses will grow for those of us blessed to live longer. I hope that your friendships have endured and that you can pool your memories for the task or writing Memorial Articles.

## Jock Merriam and Peter Hanson

**Jocko Merriam** shared that he and **Peter Hanson** met for lunch on Veterans Day in Stuart, Florida -- mid-point between Jock's & **Malena's** year-round compound in Palm Beach Gardens and Peter's winter digs in Vero Beach. They had a nice (and free) lunch at a local pub. They were charging for beer so they pulled a cadet summer trip move (no money in their pockets) on them and stuck to Arnold Palmers. The summer trip move originated when Jocko, Peter, **Bill Bachman**, and **Jack Swaney** caught a hop to Europe the summer of 1965. They learned the "cadet summer trip move" (CSTM) as they explored the continent on a zero-dollars-based budget (ZDB2). At lunch, Jock and Peter reminisced about their shared artillery careers, Vietnam, life after the Army and those classmates we have lost recently. They agreed that they would see each other again soon to watch the navy game (deliberate lower case). Jocko further reported that his and Malena's daughter just retired from the Army (LTC- Military Intelligence) and their son is at Carlisle for the War College experience (Col, JAGC). Malena and Jocko are linking up with the kids and hoping for enough snow and airline cooperation for a ski week in Breckenridge over Christmas.



[Photo #7 – Peter Hanson & Jocko Merriam

at a pub in Florida honoring Veterans Day']

A few weeks later, Jocko wrote to express his and Malena's sadness regarding the passing of **Ed Garrison**. Jock and Ed didn't know each other as cadets – a Regimental thing – but, as Jock was returning from Vietnam (and enroute to Germany), successfully convinced Malena to marry him. He went to Panama (where Ed was stationed at the time) to marry Malena and, concurrently, had to see about filling up his of the aisle with people who could stand in for members of his family or others close to him since neither of his parent or his brother could make it. Only one of his siblings – his sister, Crystal – was able to attend and participate. The wedding was a momentous event for Jock, Malena and her family and Crystal – and a call to duty for Ed.



[Photo #8 – “Jocko’s and Malena’s wedding in Panama in 1969 with Ed Garrison and two brothers-in-law to add balance”]

## **Ambroses and Carsons Meet in Columbus**

**Tony Ambrose** sent a photo of a display consisting of small flags, in honor of Veterans Day, that commemorate members of the Armed Forces on active duty lost to hostilities since 9/11. It was created by his National Sojourners (an organization of masonic veterans) chapter on the grounds of the Masonic Village where he and **Linda** now live. Tony's chapter does the same thing for Memorial Day at Fort Indiantown Gap. He sent another photo of a microreunion taken a couple of weeks earlier of **Craig & Susan Carson** with the Ambroses in Columbus, Ohio, which is roughly equidistant between their homes. Since the Carsons were unable to make this year's march back, Tony and Craig decided that they needed to get together. They had a couple of nice suppers together, as well as a wine tasting "picnic." While planning the meeting, they discovered that the National Veterans Memorial and Museum was a short walk from their hotel. Tony reported that the exhibits, building, and grounds were extremely well done, and worth a visit by anyone in (or passing through) that part of the country. A bonus to the gathering was that Tony managed to entice Susan into penning a contribution for BSOTW4, which is tentatively entitled "My Husband Is Just As Normal As The Rest Of His Classmates."



[Photo #9 – “Tony & Linda Ambrose with Craig & Susan Carson in Columbus”]

## **Classmates Gather to Witness Army Beat Airforce**

**Dale Hansen** was the first offer a first-hand report of Army's nail-biter win over Air Force. Dale & **Joyce** met up with **Bill Brown**, and **Dave & Suzanne Martin** at the Army reception at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas on November 6<sup>th</sup>. They also saw **Joe Guignon** at the reception. **Phil Samuel** ensured his own seat as well as a ride to and from the game by securing tickets for himself as well as for **Ed & Shirley Nelson**. They acknowledged seeing other classmates at the game but Phil could only remember his old Beast roommate, **Ed Lorentzen**. **Ross Irvin** had to take a pass on going o the game in favor of staying home to look after his bride, **Margaret**.



[Photo #10 – “Joyce & Dale Hansen, Suzanne & Dave Martin and Bill Brown at the Army-Air Force Game”]

### **Much Later Breaking News**

While rummaging through Internet sites for scraps of news, I came across some ancient tidbits posted by **Monte Anderson**. If I had been more diligent, they could have been shared years ago... Two Thanksgivings ago, **George & Andrea Shoener** traveled to Scranton, Pennsylvania to visit George’s family. Since they went that far, George and Andrea drove another two plus hours up to Elmira, New York to spend a day with Monte & **Katherine Anderson**. After lunch in a local restaurant, Monte enticed someone to take a picture of two ole company mates. The other photo was obviously taken much earlier and can be filed as an early mini-reunion – the closest I could come to Ranger School photos.



[Photo #11 – “Chief Monte Anderson and George Shoener circa Thanksgiving 2019”]



[Photo #12 – “Steve Caldwell, Monte Anderson, Steve Osborn, and Pete Sowa – we were soldiers once – and slim”]