

U.S. Coast Guard Academy Class of '53 Newsletter December 2013

About this Newsletter: The Class of '53 Newsletter is published "as soon and as often as we can get around to it". Its purpose is to keep members of our class informed about our classmates' lives and activities, and to occasionally provide some tid-bits of trivia and information.

Because not all of our classmates are members of the Alumni Association, and not all of our classmates have e-mail, and the deadline for articles for our class notes section in **The Bulletin** is almost two months before it's published, there will be, from time-to-time, duplications and gaps in what is included here, what is sent by e-mail or "snail-mail", and what appears in **The Bulletin**.

Send items for **The Bulletin** and this Newsletter to: Wee Smith, 19 Coachman Pike, Ledyard, CT 06339 - Tel./FAX 860-464-8425 or e-mail to jdsbridge@aol.com.

Dan Briganti's Burial

Suzanne (1216 Whetstone Dr., Arnold, MD 21012, e-mail: sbriganti@toad.net, Tel. 410-757-7223) advised that **Dan's burial will be at Arlington National Cemetery on Friday, December 27th at 11 a.m.**

For those able to attend: Please arrive by 10 a.m. Notify the Security Guard at the entrance that you are attending the funeral of CAPT Dan H. Briganti. They will direct you to the Administrative Building on Memorial Drive.

Of interest, Sue said "our son, Doug who's in Afghanistan, took an American flag over to the small Coast Guard contingent and told them about his father's death and asked them to fly it, even for a few minutes. They flew it for two days before he folded it in a triangle and sent it home. Doug will get home for his Dad's service at Arlington and they will use the Coast Guard flown flag on Dan's casket."

'53 LX Photos

For those with access to the internet, Kirk Greiner (P.O. Box 908, Edmonds, WA 98020-0908, Tel. 425-640-3048, e-mail: kirk.greiner@gmail.com) has put some of the photos taken at our 60th reunion on his '53 website (CGA53.org). You can check them out under "Reunions"!!

Some Long-Lost Classmates Dick Blackledge and Ken Boehner

Thanks to George Everett (617 Dayton St. #5, Edmonds, WA 98020, e-mail: georgeever@usa.net) and Jim Grabb, (10209 Ranger Rd., Fairfax, VA 22030, e-mail: jimgrabb@verizon.net) for researching and finding info on two of our long-lost classmates, **Dick Blackledge and Ken Boehner!**

George sent the following about Dick.

"Dick came to the Academy from the paratroopers in July '49 with the rest of us. You may recall that he had a pretty rocky time of it. I didn't know him then but I heard about him. Everyone heard about him. He was not at all impressed by the rules, regulations, and discipline at the Academy. Certainly not intimidated by upperclassmen he must have seen as kids. As might be expected of a former paratrooper. Someone who jumps out of airplanes!! A legend in his own time.

After our first long cruise, he was transferred to my company and we were roommates in Chase Hall. After the first rotation, we continued as roommates and moved to the reserve barracks. Where he somehow continued to get into trouble. I remember one snowy morning after breakfast just before Christmas when Charlie Martin appeared in our doorway and put Dick on report for letting a stray dog into the barracks—out of the cold and snow. Charlie was something else again.

And then a couple of weeks after Christmas leave I came back to our room between classes to find Dick all dressed up and brushing his blues. When I asked what was going on, he told me he was resigning. And I never saw nor heard from him again. And today he lives in Florida. His address: **Richard K Blackledge, 6410 - 21st Avenue West Apt J109, Bradenton FL 34209**

He and his wife Theresa moved there from Coronado Island in early July so she could be close to family to look after her if something happened to him.

You can get in touch with Dick through his caregiver Norma Jean Williams - Tel. 619-300-8307. Email: normajaguero@yahoo.com

I talked with him a little bit—*first time in* almost 63 years. He was difficult to understand because he's had a tracheotomy and he tires easily but he seemed happy to hear from me and very upbeat. And Norma Jean is there to help.

I'm sure he'd love to hear from anyone who remembers. He certainly does. He's been diagnosed with first stage throat cancer and tumors are developing aggressively around his throat. And he's never even smoked. Life really is not fair!!

Your good thoughts, prayers, lighted candles, cards, letters, and e-mails will be greatly appreciated. **George**"

When **Bob Schmidt** learned that **Dick** had been located, he shared the following story:

"I remember **Dick** well, mostly regarding the 'Dental' story.

The Academy took good care of the cadets, even to the point of 'adjusting' some 'fly away ears' for a few. Dick needed a dental implant. The dentists made a post of gold on which to build the tooth.

Dick was in the dental chair, head back, mouth open as the dentist approached with the gold spike. Unfortunately, it slipped from the forceps and fell into Dick's mouth. He swallowed it. The dentists were not going to wait for the possible retrieval. They made another post later and finished the job. I wonder if Dick Blackledge still has the implanted tooth."

And, thanks to **Jim Grabb** (10209 Ranger Rd. Fairfax, VA 22030, Tel. 703-273-6482, e-mail: jimgrabb@verizon.net) for finding out that **Ken Bohner** sadly had died at age 77 back on January 28, 2007 in Livingston, TX after a long illness, (apparently cancer). **Ken's** obituary indicated that he had attended CGA and graduated from the University of Maine, Orono with a degree in Public Administration. He was a LCDR in the Coast Guard Reserve and since 1955 he had worked as a Town or City Manager in New Hampshire. He retired in 1989 after serving 18 years as the City Manager of Laconia, N.H. Among Ken's survivors were his wife of 51 years, June, a son John, and a daughter Tracy.

Mea Culpa!!

In the November *Newsletter*, I said, that I was putting together a "'53 LX Addendum to our 2003 Golden Tide Rips'" to bring our *classmates* up-to-date on what has happened in our lives in the last 10 years and that it would be in the mail by November 30th!!"

Fortunately I didn't say what *year* because unfortunately, I haven't finished it yet. No more promises -- it will be done "soon" :-)
