

## Shipmates Reconnect After Fifty Years

A young, teen-aged AGAN Dennis Ruth, fresh from completing AG "A" school at Lakehurst, NJ in March 1972, reported to the USS GUADALCANAL (LPH-7) several weeks later in April, in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.



1972 - LT Madison, AGAN Ruth, Ruth's Father, AG! Don Wilson

GUADALCANAL had departed Norfolk in late February for a six-month deployment to the Mediterranean. At that time, GUADALCANAL's OA Division Officer was then LT William R. "Bill" Madison. He was an 1100 Surface Line Officer who mostly performed Engineering duties on prior ships.

LT Madison attended the meteorology curriculum at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Monterey and his post-NPS assignment was GUADALCANAL. Besides being the ship's Meteorologist, LT Madison's prior qualifications and experience put him in a unique position as he was assigned as an OOD underway and was the OOD for General Quarters and the Sea and Anchor Detail.

Of particular note, he was recognized as the Atlantic Fleet's COMPHIBRON 8 "Ship Handler of the Year." During his tenure, GUADALCANAL's OA Division won the coveted Atlantic Fleet's Naval Weather Service Achievement Award in 1972 and 1973 and is a testament to his leadership of AG's assigned OA Division.

Promoted to LCDR near the end of his tour on GUADALCANAL, he transferred after the 1973 deployment to FWC Norfolk, where he led the OTSR section.

At a career crossroads, LCDR Madison decided to leave the Meteorology community and return to the Surface Warfare community. His next assignment following the FWC was as Chief Engineer onboard the USS Detroit (AOE 4). Following that he spent two years at COMNAVSURFLANT in Norfolk. Next, he was the XO onboard USS Piedmont (AD17) then became Commanding Officer of the USS BUTTE (AE 27) followed by assignments at the Pentagon. He retired at the rank of Captain on January 1, 1991.

While still at the Pentagon he Attended George Washington University and became certified as a Nationally Registered Paramedic volunteering with Fairfax County Fire and Rescue. Upon retirement, he was hired as the Deputy Executive Director for the International Association of Fire Chiefs headquartered in Washington D.C. After four years at the IAFC he accepted an offer from the fire chief at Lincoln, NE to head up a new advanced life support system for the city, training and supervising paramedics and establishing an EMS transport ambulance network for the fire department. After eight years as Deputy Chief of EMS, he and his wife, Gail, retired and moved to Nine Mile Falls, WA in 2003.



2024 – Dennis Ruth, Bill Madison

While a full career in the Navy's Meteorology community did not happen for Bill Madison, I'll submit that every sailor has had one or more mentors that they've modeled their careers after. Myself, I've had several that helped me navigate my career's journey. Bill Madison was my first mentor who had an impact upon my career. Thus, after a half century has swiftly elapsed, my recent visit with him in August 2024 was personally gratifying. As the accompanying photos suggest, our looks haven't changed very much!

Submitted by LCDR Dennis Ruth, USN (Ret.)