

Remembering Bob Blakeley



Bob at our 2009 Reunion

Kill Devil Hills – Captain William R. Blakeley, U.S. Navy (Retired), 72, of Kill Devil Hills, crossed over the bar to be with his maker on Friday, April 12, at his home in Kill Devil Hills. Bob is survived by Anne, his loving wife of 51 years; their four children: John, David, Beth and Patti; and seven grandchildren: Will, Lauren, Evan, Macy, Austin, Coleman and Bella.



Bob was born September 27, 1940 in Ann Arbor, Mich. He enlisted in the Navy while still in high school, but eventually joined the NROTC program at the University of Louisville where he met Anne. They went on to serve their country together at twenty-two duty stations over 29 years, including Bob's wartime service in Vietnam and his command of the destroyer USS McCandless. He retired as a highly decorated captain in 1991, whereupon Bob and Anne settled in Kill Devil Hills. In retirement, Bob dedicated himself to crafting children's toys, cataloging an expansive genealogical history, driving for Dare County Transportation and Social Services, rescuing retired greyhounds and making up for lost time with Anne.

Bob Anson remembers...

"Bob Blakeley & I were shipmates on the DD936 in the '62-'64 timeframe. We were both new ensigns, both assigned to the Engineering Dept. he as DCA and I as MPA. One of my more memorable moments is as follows: In May 1963 ... we were seasoned by this time.... (when we had the collision with the Lake Champlain) our refueling stations were in the Log Room, he on the calculator figuring out how much more fuel we could put into such and such a tank (& on the 1JV) and I was on the 2JV with the snipes on the fueling stations and with the main spaces. (I wasn't too good at math or calculators). we were done!!!! and HADN'T put any of that ugly black stuff all down the side.... suddenly I hear from the snipes topside (unusual, yes for them to be up there, I know).... words to the effect, "S***, this is getting a bit close.... I'm getting out of here"..... ((Chickens,,,,, they weren't used to salt spray in their face)).... I look at Bob and he's listening to some really important stuff on the 1JV, holds up his index finger to put me off for a second and THEN we both feel the ship lean to starboard..... 'OMG' as they would say today.... We knew what had happened.... I'm out the door heading for Main Control with Bob close on my heels... Don't know where he was heading.... Going up that first ladder was a bit disconcerting as it was leaning & swaying a bit.... So, I make it to Main Control.... fires lost in the forward fire room (stack crimped), they had cross-connected with aft but couldn't get enough draft or air (stack ripped back at the main deck or O-1 level)..... FDB's running at max to keep up the steam.... then comes Bob B. and his team of ship-fitters (wish I could remember the name of the PO-1, (Pryor, I think)).... and they put a block & tackle on the top of the stack to what was left of the after mast, pulled it forward and closed up the uptakes a bit so we could at least get a bit more draft for the boilers..... Other sheet metal patches on the intakes got us going, (cross connected on one boiler), 13 knots or so, and with normal hotel services as we then headed towards NORVA."