

Remembering Captain Wellard B. Guffy, USN, Ret.

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I am writing this to expand on the short Bio-Obit notice in the Summer 2013 “The LEAF” of Captain Wellard B. Guffy. My wife Betty (now deceased) and I knew Bill Guffy and his wife, Esther (now deceased) quite well over many bygone years. I first met Bill Guffy (then Commander Guffy) when he joined our car pool from Ellicott City, MD in 1970. Bill and Esther had moved to the Font Hill area in Howard County when he became the NOL Supply Officer (prior to this, he was the NOTS, China Lake Supply Officer.). Bill was a special person in my life in that he was instrumental in Betty and I getting acquainted and subsequently married when he arranged for the two of us to meet on a blind date to the Kennedy Center “Show Boat” musical starring Mickey Rooney in 1974!! Betty was widow and living in Cincinnati; and I was a single and “in-between” marriages. Betty and Joe (her deceased husband) lived in Honolulu, Hawaii in the 1960’s where they became acquainted with Bill and Esther Guffy (Bill was at the Naval Station there), and they then kept in touch with each other over the years.

Bill Guffy was probably the longest serving Supply Officer at NOL (1970-1977), and in my book, the best that we had during my 29 years at NOL! He would move heaven and earth to supply us with our needs from soup to nuts. He knew how to give the Technical Staff first class service with a smile.

Wellard B. Guffy was born in 1926, and raised in Williamsport, PA. He served in WW II as a Navy enlisted man. He narrowly escaped death aboard a Cruiser off Okinawa in 1945 when a Japanese Kamikaze wiped out the bridge and two decks above him (He was unharmed!) Following WW II, Bill attended and graduated from Columbia University in NYC, and was commissioned an Ensign in the U. S. Navy. He was a rare bird in that he was one of the few “Mustangs” to eventually attain the rank of Captain who was not a Naval Academy Graduate.

I remember very vividly when Bill was promoted to captain---circa 1975---when he, excitedly, called me early on a Saturday morning, telling me the good news! Betty and I attended his “wetting down” promotion party at the Navy Bethesda Hospital Officers club. It was a gala celebration. Captain Guffy was then transferred to Towson, MD to become the CO at DOD Regional Procurement Center with jurisdiction over the DOD Supply and Procurement business for the Middle Atlantic Region with some 200-300 government employees there. This high position was rotated periodically within DOD Services (Army, Navy, and AF), and Bill was selected when the Navy’s “turn” came-up. Upon completing his tour at Towson, Bill moved on to a position in the Navy’s Crystal City Complex prior to his retirement (circa 1983). Thus, he served 39+ years in his Navy career! After retirement, he took a position for several years with a “Beltway Bandit,” which was operated by a former WOL Executive Officer.

In the late 1970's, Bill and Esther moved "up-country" just beyond Columbia next to the Glen Elg area to a much larger and more elegant home with more acreage for their hobby of raising poodle dogs. They were active in showing their dogs at various shows. Esther passed away on Christmas Eve, 2005 from complications of Alzheimer's disease. Several years later bill married his second wife, Anne, whom he met at a Masonic Society social gathering. Bill was very active in the free-Masons in Baltimore.

I lost touch with Bill several years ago, when I failed to hear from him at Christmas time, I learned from the telephone company that he no longer lived in Howard County. He probably moved back to Williamsport, PA where he passed away.

Bill is probably survived by his wife Anne, and also, by three foster children that Esther and he raised as their guardians, when their Father, a Naval Officer at NOTS, China Lake, died suddenly.

In Summary, Bill Guffy was a great guy to know, a very good friend to have, and a fine gentleman. Betty and I had a great many moments with Bill and Esther over the years that we knew them. I believe him to be the best Supply Officer during my time at NOL!