

After reconnecting with a couple of my high school friends a few years ago, we've kept in touch via Emails, telephone calls, and get togethers every few years. In the past Ben & Doris Spotts, Bill & Norine Dowd, Bob Malarsky, and I have met here in the Charlotte, NC area to just hang out together for a day or so.

This year Wally & Dianne Duffy joined us, but Bob Malarsky declined since he and Sue were expecting a grandchild to be born around the date of our get together, July 31st through August 2nd.

July 31, 2012

So this year there were seven of us who met and stayed at the Holiday Inn Express in Matthews, NC.

Photos 1 & 2



*Holiday Inn Express & Suites
9420 East Independence Blvd.
Matthews, North Carolina*

Photo 3



Left to right: Dianne & Wally Duffy, Norine & Bill Dowd, Len Bailes, Doris & Ben Spotts.

Bill & Norine had arrived the evening of the 30th. They had been on vacation in the New England area and drove straight through to Matthews. The rest of us arrived after noon on the 31st.

We spent the first few hours together in Bill & Norine's room catching up and talking about many things including the 50th reunion next year. It is unanimous, the seven of us will be attending the reunion if all goes well.

I was mindless during this social gathering as far as taking pictures. Didn't think about pictures until later.

Our rough plans were to seek a geocache near the hotel prior to going to Efir's Rifle Range on the 1st of August. So that's what we did.

I had collected a few things I thought would be useful while at the rifle range, picked up a large enough container at Walmart, and put it all together and hid the cache after I checked in. After our social reconnection on the 31st and prior to going to dinner, we sought the geocache. Ben and Doris were the most experienced geocachers so they showed us how it was done. *(By the way, if you're interested in learning how to geocache, go to this Website: <http://www.geocaching.com/>).*

Photo 4



Doris locates the geocache (within 10+ feet), down an embankment concealed in a clump of bushes.

Photo 5



Wally is dispatched and he finds the cache.

Photo 6



Ben help's Wally retrieve the cache

Photo 7



Cache contents: (2) Navy ball caps, (2) USMC ball caps, (3) Women's sun visors, (7) Ear plugs, and assorted paper targets.

After finding the geocache, we drove a few blocks to Chili's and had dinner.

Photo 8



Chili's

After dinner we returned to Bill & Norine's room to talk about anything we missed the previous night. The stories were abundant and most were hilarious! I laughed so hard a couple of times, I think I spotted! After an hour or so, we said goodnight and retired to our rooms for the night. It was a good first day

August 1st, 2012

We had agreed to meet for breakfast in the breakfast area around 8:30 AM. We did and we had a good leisurely breakfast.

Photo 9



Breakfast, the guys

Photo 10



Breakfast, The gals

This was the main day. We were to go shooting. Wally, Dianne, Ben & Doris had wisely selected their favorite guns and rifles to shoot. Bill had not fired a weapon since his days in the Marine Corps. I had been collecting firearms over the last 3 years or so and hadn't fired one of them. So I thought I would bring all the guns I hadn't shot and shoot them. Well, if we do this again, I'll bring two or three.

Norine is studying to get another certification, so she can teach how to give injections in the dental hygienist field. She teaches at one of the colleges in her area in Florida. So, Bill was my date for the day.

Photo 11



Entrance to Efirt's Rifle Range

Photo 12



In the parking lot getting ready to set up on the firing line.

Photo 13



Wally was a great help setting up as Ben and I tried to set up our spotting scope. We couldn't get it focused. Wally jumped in and got the job done.

Photo 14



Wally had some interesting fire arms and he knew how to use them.

Photo 15



Dianne may not have had much experience shooting, but she learned quick and had some of the best groups I saw.

Photo 16



Bill kept telling us he hadn't shot since he was in the Marine Corps, but he looked like an old salt as he shot several different weapons. (Notice Dianne in the back ground getting ready to fire a military rifle)

Photo 17



Doris is Annie Oakley! She had her own .357 revolver and from what I could see, she was hitting everything she shot at.

Ben brought a rifle and a pistol and was also dinging (*No picture*). He and I spent a lot of time together in the government field near Amelia Earhart Air Field and the Lost Lakes area when we were in high school, shooting his old .22 single shot rifle. He still shoots quite well (*for a Swabby*).

Photo 19



Classmates watching this Jarhead fire.

It was warm on the range and it got warmer as the morning wore off. By lunch time I think we all were ready to cool down and get something to eat, so we called it a day, packed up and headed out.

Photo 20



Driving through Frog Pond, we found a little BBQ restaurant so we stopped for lunch.

While at the restaurant, toward the end of our visit, the manager came over after seeing Bill's USMC cap. He introduced himself and said he had been in the Marine Corps too. When he asked what we were doing, we explained that we were just getting together and that we had been friends since high school. He rolled his eyes when we told him we were getting ready to have our 50th high school reunion next year.

Back at the hotel, we split up for a couple of hours to get cleaned up and rest a bit before meeting again in Bill and Norine's room to talk about the day and wet our whistles.

Photo 21



Chilling out after a warm morning and more story telling. Dianne had gone to the store for some goodies.

Photo 22



Just about wound down. We began making plans for dinner.

Photo 23



Deciding on OutBack, we took everyone in two cars down the road to OutBack where we had dinner.

Photo 24



Our waiter agreed to take a picture of our routy group even though we had given him a hard time (in jest).

We returned to the hotel calling it a day and agreed to meet for breakfast around 8:30 AM.

Happy Birthday Ryan Jeffrey Malarsky!

Photo 25



Photo 26



*Born today 8/1/2012 at 11:17 AM, 6 lbs. 9 oz.
Mother: Colleen
Father: Jeff
Congratulations Bob and Sue Malarsky!*

Photo 28



Left to right: Colleen, Ryan, and Jeff Malarsky

August 2, 2012

Our last morning together began with loading our cars, having breakfast, and checking out of the hotel. We meandered into several small groups talking for awhile then got together for a final photo.

Photo 29



*Until we meet again, HHS Class of '63: Left to Right,
Len, Ben, Wally, & Bill*

We said our good-byes in the hotel parking lot and departed until next time.

As I drove home (20 minutes away) I thought about the good times I had with my life-long friends and how this get together strengthened our bond. I had truly enjoyed myself this trip. If my friends had enjoyed themselves as much as I had, then the Get Together in Matthews was a great success and will be remembered for years to come by all of us.