

Keith's Corner/McGill News

September 18, 2020

McGill's Own Navy

William Spane Sr., worked for KCC and along with his wife and two sons, Bill and Bob, lived in Ruth.

William was an avid golfer. Both, Ruth and McGill, had golf courses. The only thing the courses lacked was grass. Sifted sand was used for the "greens". Both towns had their own golf teams. William and Guye Clark consisted on the Ruth team. McGill had Harry Kilpatrick and Jerry McCarthy. They played a game at the McGill, treeless, grassless, golf course in July of 1934, with Ruth winning. I wrote about it in Keith's Corner Vol. 1, page 24. Jerry got the only eagle that day.

Sometime in the late 1940s, the Spane family moved to McGill and lived in a house on first street.

. Bob and his older brother Bill attended grade school in McGill and then on to WPHS. Bill graduated from WPHS in 1954. He was in my class and Bob was much younger. Bill went into the U.S. Naval Academy and graduated in 1958. John Ririe and I were living in Salt Lake at the time and drove to Las Vegas to help Bill celebrate. We attended the big attraction, Minsky's Follies and the Pinky Lee comedy Show. I never saw Bill again until 2004 at our 50 year class reunion.

Bob started at WPHS, but the family moved to Van Nuys, Calif., where he graduated in 1958. He entered the Naval Academy and graduated in 1962. He earned his wings as a naval aviator in 1963 and went to sea. He flew the A-4 Skyhawk and the A-7 Corsair.

In 1980 to 1982, he served as executive officer on the U.S.S. Enterprise. From 1984 to 85 he was the commanding officer of the helicopter assault ship, U.S.S. Tripoli. His big moment came in 1986 when he took command of the Enterprise for the next two years.

In 1987 I was walking by a newsstand in St. George and the front page had a photo of the Enterprise. It was the San Francisco Chronicle and the headline was—Capt. Spane Allows go-Go Dancers on Enterprise.

I talked with Bob many years later in Ely and he said he let them perform on the deck while the carrier was in port at Alameda.

In later years he was promoted to the 3-star rank of Vice Admiral. Quite an accomplishment for a small town youngster.

Page 4, Ely Daily Times, Ely, Nevada, March 3, 1986

McGill native helms USS Enterprise

McGill native Robert J. Spane, now a Navy Captain, recently took command of one of the Navy's most prestigious ships, the U.S.S. Enterprise.

The change of command of the aircraft carrier took place on the Enterprise as it steamed toward Pearl Harbor, the first port of call on the carrier's twelfth major overseas trip.

Spane attended White Pine High School three years when he lived in Ely, but his father's transfer forced him to graduate elsewhere, in Van Nuys, Calif.

He is the son of Bill and Carolyn Spane. His father worked for Kennecott as a timekeeper. His grandfather, W.O. Spane, worked at the Ruth mine.

Spane did well in football and other sports, prompting the Naval Academy to scout him at Van Nuys, where he graduated in 1968.

Spane was a Nevada appointment to the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, where he graduated with a bachelor of science degree in 1962. About a year later he was designated a naval aviator following flight training at Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida.

His brother, Bill, a graduate of White Pine High School, also attended the Naval Academy.

Spane's mother lives in Kearney, Ariz.. His father died about three years ago. His aunt Francis Maxwell, formerly a bookkeeper at Ruth Drug, and at L.H. Murdoch and Co., now lives in Salt Lake City.

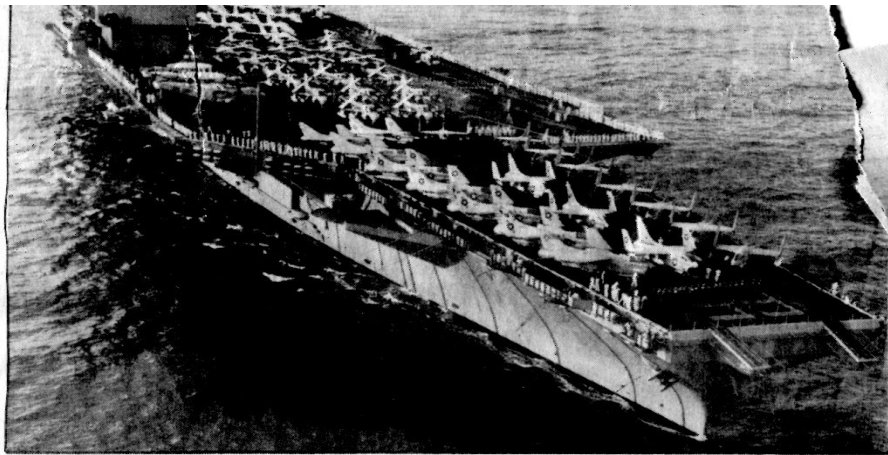
CAPT. SPANE: From Feb. 1984 until July 1985, Spane was commanding officer of the helicopter assault carrier U.S.S. Tripoli, based in San Diego. The Enterprise is nothing new to him, however; Spane served as executive officer of the vessel from 1980 to 1982. His current assignment is also a two-year stint. Spane, a naval aviator, has flown the A-4 Skyhawk and the A-7 Corsair. Being an aviator is one of the requirements to take command of the aircraft carrier.




TOP BRASS: Saluting the colors, left to right, are Cmdr. James Kelley, a Catholic chaplain, Capt. Spane, Rear Capt. Leuschner Jr.



McGill has sent way more than it's share of students to West Point and Annapolis. I guess the sulfur smoke and tailings dust didn't hold them back at all.



U.S.S. ENTERPRISE: The U.S.S. Enterprise, America's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, is based in Alameda, Calif.



CHANGE OF COMMAND: Capt. Robert Spane, left front, and Capt. Robert Leuschner Jr., slice a cake with a sword as part of change of command ceremony that took place Jan. 27 on board the Enterprise.



WELL, MEN: Capt. Spane addresses his crew as the ship steams toward Hawaii.

McGill News



The fiber optic cable line under K Ave. is now completed up to the Comptroller Bldg., which is behind all those trees at the top of K Ave.



The ultimate goal of the cable is the fake water tower. It will go up to the railroad and then turn. There used to be a gas station in the space between the cones in the middle of the photo. It was a KCC commissary coupon only. It had a metal roof and was one lane only. Bill Ball used to pump gas there when I was a kid back in the dark ages.

I just heard that Rudy, who is fixing the IOOF and theater has gotten approval from the county land authority for a zoning change for his new 80 acre development north of the Bassett Lake road. Will have Yurt tents and RV park.

McGill is alive and well.

Old Photos



These two, dapper gents, are standing on the small bridge over the little ice cold stream that used to run into the pool from the northeast corner. It came from a spring that was in under the lonely tree above the grassy park. That stream had some of the best water cress I ever remember. You can see the large pipes at the top that ran in front of the pipe fence. The fence and pipes were painted red. The pipes carried the pool overflow water up to the smelter. This photo was taken in 1938.