

## Shipmates Remember Time Aboard *USS Orion* (AS-18)

### What a Surprise!

The year 1953 was a busy one for a nearly 20-year-old Sam Bimonte. The Army was after me as the draft was still in force. Knowing that, I joined the Naval Reserves. Soon after, I went for my physical and promptly went on Navy active duty.

At the end of six weeks boot training at Bainbridge, MD, I went on leave to my home in Connecticut to marry my sweetheart, Lucy, before heading out to Electrician's "A" School at Great Lakes, Illinois.

After "A" school, I was assigned to the *USS Orion* and Lucy came to Norfolk, VA where we took a room in a boarding house. The landlady was a sweet person. She told us that she did not house hookers during WW II.

It was a very nice room with kitchen privileges where Lucy made some of our first homemade meals. Soon we were departing for the Virgin Islands and Lucy had to return home.

While sightseeing on a street in Charlotte Amalie, I ran into my long time, hometown friend, Fred Di Leone. He was stationed on the *Fulton* which was replacing the *Orion*. What a surprise for the both of us!

Just before we departed the Virgin Islands, I was notified by the Red Cross that Lucy had a baby girl and I was a father. WOW!

Now 60 years later, Lucy and I celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary by taking our immediate family on a

Princess Cruise to Aruba this past April. It was a very happy time with our three married daughters, their husbands and five grandchildren. The sixth grandchild is a sergeant. in the Marines (on embassy duty) and couldn't make it.

My short time on the *Orion* will always remain one of my fondest memories.

— Sam Bimonte, 1953-55, EM3, 12-E Div.

### Remember Those Caribbean Cruises

Some of the fondest memories I have of my time aboard *Orion* are the trips we took to the Caribbean to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands.

We would spend a lot of our time at Lindbergh Beach. That place was a spa-like beach with very calm and clear waters, where you could go snorkeling or just sun bathing. There was a very nice vendor where you could buy snacks, soda or good cold beer if you were so inclined.

I had some very good times in town as well. There were several nice places to eat. Also, a trip up to Blue Beard's Castle was a must. You could sit out on the patio and enjoy the scenery and "shoot the breeze" with your buddies. The only bad thing about that was the trip back down the hill and you had to be back to the ship by midnight.

— Jack Bowman, 1957-61, MR1, R-2 Div.

