

## **WILLIAM HENRY WILSON**

BILL WILSON, while standing OOD watch aboard the REDFIN, was swept overboard at 1830 on 26 April. Bill was attempting to visually identify a radar contact when a 15-foot wave struck the boat tossing him over the side. The man-overboard alarm was given immediately and a rain squall at sunset added to the confusion. Bill was evidently knocked unconscious for he was spotted in the water making no attempt to swim. All that was found after a lengthy search was Bill's foul weather jacket.

Bill joined the Navy in 1953 and later went on to get his dolphins as a whitehat. He came to the Academy from NAPS with three years of service behind him. His friends will testify that he was a highly motivated sailor-he wanted nothing but sea duty. Bill leaves a widow and a little girl surviving him.

*SHIPMATE, June-July 1961*

I don't know if anyone else has sent anything in about how Willie Wilson lost his life, but I was there so I'll try. Willie and I were in the same submarine school class. Our class was the first class to go to sub school straight from the Academy since the end of World War II. After graduation, we were both assigned to the USS REDFIN (SS-272) and reported to the ship in an interim dry docking in January 1961 (wow, was it cold inspecting the ballast tanks). Willie and I qualified as OOD Underway in March. We were coming back from an underway training exercise near Bermuda when Willie was lost overboard. I was relieved as OOD by Willie at 1600. The seas were moderate with long rollers coming from the port quarter. About two hours later the ship took a heavy roll to starboard. Almost immediately, the lookout announced "Man overboard" on the IMC - it was Willie. The XO got to the bridge first and caught one glimpse of Willie and then he sank from view. We searched for 36 hours without success. Upon return to port, a memorial service was held in the chapel at the Naval Base in Norfolk. That's about it. Willie's wife and I did not keep in contact after I left REDFIN.

*Gary Cogdell, 7th Co  
30<sup>th</sup> Year Book*