

## Class President's Annual Report 2021

Classmates:

Greetings and best wishes to each of you! I hope this finds you well and living life to the fullest possible during this never-ending pandemic.

Mini- Reunions

After cancelling (because of Covid) a replanned 60<sup>th</sup> Reunion that was intended in April, we decided 2025 was too long to wait to assemble again. Not wanting to risk the likely erosion of our treasured classmate camaraderie, and with the support of our Class Officers and Battalion Representatives, we decided to hold three Mini-Reunions to keep the flame alive. Following a class-wide survey to identify preferred locations, we set the first Mini-Reunion for early Spring of 2022 in Sarasota, FL; a second in the Fall of 2022 in San Antonio, TX; and a third during the Spring of 2023 cruising the lower Mississippi River, departing and returning to New Orleans, LA.

In Sarasota, we turned to Stew Seaman to take the point on making the necessary arrangements. Unfortunately, the impact of the pandemic caused hotels to become ultra conservative in their contractual requirements, to the point where penalties for no-shows created unacceptable monetary risks for the Class.

At this point, Randy McHenry (7<sup>th</sup> Co.), now owner of the Marriott SpringHill Suites hotel on the beachfront at New Smyrna Beach, FL, stepped forward and offered his hotel as an alternative location. Accommodations for the Class were provided at half-price and the guest facilities provided excellent opportunities for socializing. We owe a great debt of gratitude, both to Stew for his herculean efforts to make things work in Sarasota, and to Randy for bailing us out with his marvelous accommodations and facilities in New Smyrna Beach.

We are also indebted to Bob Osmon for making and overseeing arrangements for a great experience in New Smyrna Beach. Principal events included a Welcome (cocktail) Reception, a trip to the Kennedy Space Center (Oz was able to get the entrance fee waived (as military vets and guests) for everyone), a memorable dinner at the Smyrna Yacht Club, a 3-hour pontoon boat excursion at the local Marine Discovery Center (at one point we found ourselves riding along in the middle of a pod of dolphins), and finally, a Farewell Dinner on the last evening. We also honored Oz and Randy for their roles in making it all possible.

In short, a wonderful time was had by all. The opportunity to interact with a number of classmates we had never met before proved to be an enriching experience. At our milestone reunions in Annapolis, we ordinarily gravitate toward company mates and others we happen to know but haven't seen in a long time in order to "catch up." So, this was a bit different and quite special.

Frank Simpson (1<sup>st</sup>Co.) and Ray Burkley (2nd Co.) have volunteered to make the arrangements for our next Mini-Reunion in San Antonio in September 2022. And looking even further downstream, Don Sanders will be overseeing our 5-day Mississippi River cruise, which will take place in early April of 2023. Anyone who desires to go on this River trip should make their arrangements as soon as possible to ensure we are all on the same ship (a paddlewheel steamer). Reservations can be made through Lulu Pincu of Travel Solutions International USA at (972) 331-4226, and Don can be reached at (303) 589-0147 for any general questions you might have.

The next major reunion, our 65<sup>th</sup>, will take place in October 2025, and I've asked Doug Johnston to take the lead in planning for that. Although still a bit distant, Doug has kicked things off by reserving hotel rooms on a tentative basis for the Air Force game weekend of October 4, 2025. Billing the event as "60 for '60 plus 5," he wants to make it a special time for all concerned, recognizing that it might be a last hurrah for a number of us. Assisting in this effort will be Jack Paepcke, who will serve as Reunion Co-Chair and will be handling transportation requirements. (In response to a request from Oz, Jack had developed a marvelous set of nametags for the New Smyrna Beach Mini-Reunion). Don DeLude will be overseeing the registration process, Ken Batchellor will be handling the hospitality function, Willie Taylor will be coordinating the Memorial Service, and Tug Knorr will take care of the golf tournament. Because of the never-ending toll that attrition is taking on our ranks, we will be encouraging Battalion-wide parties rather than company parties on the second evening.

While on the topic of reunions, I would be remiss if I didn't thank Ed Mangan on behalf of the entire Class for his role in making most of the arrangements for both of our earlier attempts at a 60<sup>th</sup>.

#### Other Business

Last Spring, Bill Ostendorff completed his duties in superb fashion as Distinguished Visiting Professor and occupant of our Class Chair in National Security Studies. It was his fifth and final year, which we recognized by taking him and his wife to lunch at the Naval Academy O' Club and presenting him with a properly inscribed statuette of Bill the Goat. Hank Chiles, Doug Johnston, and I participated along with our wives. Hank and Doug also took part in a farewell lunch for Bill hosted by the Academy's Political Science Department. A search for Bill's successor has been initiated, and we should know soon who his replacement will be.

As was the case in 2020, because of Covid, the Academy chose to forego our Chair-related summer program for two Midshipmen to study National Security issues at Cambridge University in England. Hopefully, it can be resurrected in 2022.

#### In Remembrance

This past year, to the best of our ability to tell, we lost a total of 23 classmates, two of whom were non-grads. So, through the end of 2021, we have lost a total of 351 out of 798 graduates

(44%) and 80 non-graduates. With more than half of our class having exceeded the average male lifespan by a comfortable margin, now is not the time to drop our guard on eating right and exercising well.

#### Final Thank You's

A special thanks to all of you who are leading class luncheons in various parts of the country. I also express our collective appreciation to Bill Lewis, who continues to do a superb job as Class Secretary, to Richard Harper for the incredible job he is doing as our Webmaster, and to George Dowell for serving as our exceedingly able Class Treasurer. With very little notice, George also stepped in to set up the registration process for the New Smyrna Beach Mini-Reunion and filled an emergent and immediate need.

We have a great class, and I can't tell you how honored I feel to serve as your President and to be able to build on the superb efforts of those who have gone before. Thank you to all for your invaluable support.

Pete