

mountain top was shrouded in mist with the temperature right around 38 degrees. My Seabees had cleared the ice and snow off the helicopter pad. We used calcium chloride to melt the ice and not cinders or any grit to avoid any FOD problems. It was dark, everything was ready, the pad was clear with only a sheen of water. I stood at the head of the sidewalk leading to the helipad and watched Marine One come down out of the clouds and settle gracefully on the pad. It had been a 30 minute flight from the South Lawn. The down wash from a VH 3A is pretty strong (100 knots?). The CO of HMX-1 was the Presidential pilot that night.

While I waited for the props to slow and began walking to the ramp of Marine One, I realized that the sheen of water on the pad had frozen instantly from the down draft into a sheet of invisible BLACK ICE. Footing was treacherous. The lead Secret Service Agent came down the steps and I told him, "Look out, it's icy!" He looked at me and just rolled his eyes. Then the president, President Nixon, came down the ramp. That night it was just him and the naval aide on the helo. Neither Mrs. Nixon nor either of the daughters were with him.

As he came down the steps I saluted and warned him, "Mr. President, please be careful, the pad is icy!" I was on his left side, thinking I was in position to assist in case he should slip. Then the unimaginable happened! As we turned to walk away from Marine One, shockingly, my feet went out from under me, and I began to fall. (And what do you do when you lose your balance?) I reacted and reached for the closest thing which just happened to be the President of the United States. HE IMMEDIATELY SENSED WHAT WAS HAPPENING, GRABBED ME, AND KEPT ME FROM HITTING THE DECK. His words, as best I can recall, "Got you there, Commander." Stunned and grateful, all I could muster up was "Sorry sir. Thank you Sir." After that, the weekend continued with no further incidents.

The scene could easily have been much different. Picture the two or three of us down in a heap on the icy helipad! To this day, no one was aware of what had happened that night except the President, the Secret Service agent, and me. During that particular time, the country and the President were in the middle of throes winding down the war in Vietnam. Any incapacity or delay to meet with foreign leaders could easily have been an international incident. Black ice was a close call for the President and also for the career of yours truly.

This whole story has never been told except to my family and close friends. It was covered briefly in a recent book, *Inside Camp David: The Private World Of The Presidential Mountain Retreat*, now in publication by Little Brown.

**TAPS**

**Martha Donovan, widow of Frank Donovan (13)**, the first president of our '59 organization, died in her Vienna, VA home on 31 January 2022. Visitation and funeral mass were held on 4 and 5 February. Interment will take place on a later date at the Arlington National Cemetery.

**Jack Battenburg (7)** passed away peacefully on 20 January 2022 in their home in Vacaville, CA. Jack was a Navy pilot, initially flying the F-9 and then logging more than 4,000 sorties in the F-8 during Vietnam. Later he was involved in development of the Navy's F-14, and assignments with the Navy's Test Pilot School Jack is survived by his wife, Barbara, and others who live in the Vacaville area, where services were planned in early February. His remains will be interred in the USNA Columbarium in April.

**Alice Holds, Wife of Jim Holds (15)**, passed away on 27 January 2022. Alice earned bachelor and masters degrees in education. But later, feeling called to serve her country in time of conflict, Alice set aside her teaching career during the Vietnam War to serve six years as a commissioned naval officer stationed in Newport, Pensacola, San Diego, and Honolulu. Since settling in Saratoga in 1993, Alice has been busy in church activities as well as various other local charity organizations.

**'60**

**Life Membership: 71%**  
**Donor Participation: 3.28%**

Pres: **RADM Peter G. Chabot, USN (Ret.)**  
p: 443-624-0094; e: pgchabot60@gmail.com

Vice Pres: **CAPT Douglas M. Johnston Jr., USNR (Ret.)**

Treas: **CAPT Geoege W. Dowell III, USN (Ret.)**

Sec'y: **Bill Lewis**  
1300 S Hwy. A1A Unit 508, Jupiter, FL 33477  
p: 804-334-6353; e: bilewis@comcast.net

Webmaster: **Richard Harper**  
p: 805-583-1640; e: Richard.Harper@1960.USNA.com

Website: <http://www.1960.usnaclassess.net>

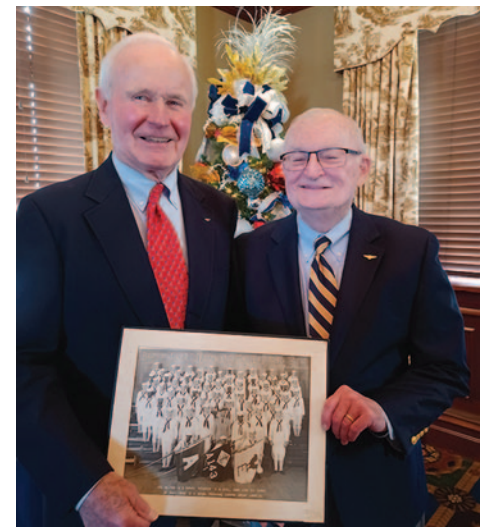
From **Doug Johnston (5)**:



DC Get together

✉ "The speaker at our November luncheon was Jan Scruggs, the visionary behind the Vietnam Memorial who played an instrumental role in selecting its design and seeing its implementation through to completion. Because of the topic, we invited our West Point counterparts to join us, which they did in good number. Jan's success took place over the strong opposition of the Navy and the Marine Corps, both of which wanted something more heroic, like the Iwo Jima Memorial. During his description of the political challenges, he mentioned that Bud McFarlane, who was National Security Advisor at the time, helped tip the balance in favor of moving ahead.

As it turned out, the memorial itself has proven to be an instrument of reconciliation for (1) those who returned from the fighting after serving honorably, only to be vilified by their countrymen, (2) those who felt guilt in the wake of fleeing to Canada, and (3) those who still feel the loss of loved ones who were either KIA or MIA. The memorial also set a precedent for honoring veterans of other conflicts where victory has proven equally elusive, like Korea and Afghanistan.



Don Boecker (15) and Ward O'Brien (22)

At December's lunch, **Don Boecker (15)** provided a different perspective on the war by sharing the details of his escape from behind enemy lines in Laos, after his A6 was blown out of the sky by the premature explosion of bombs he was dropping on a bridge along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. It was an exciting tale, the details of which can be found by Googling "Donald V. Boecker" or by searching him out on the Library of Congress Veterans History Project website. (Thanks to the efforts of **Ward O'Brien (22)** and his family, this website includes inputs from a number of our classmates).

Those who participated in one or both of the above lunches include John Berry, Curt Herrick, Jim Lincoln, Dick Nelson, Roy O'Connor, and Charley Ostott from West Point,

## 60/60 CLASS NEWS

Gay and **Don Boecker (15)**, Kathy and **Gary Cogdell (7)**, Martha and **George Dowell (19)**, **Dennis Hickey (22)**, Darlene Matulka, Barbara and **Ward O'Brien (22)**, Becky and **Dick Pariseau (1)**, **Grant Sharp (19)**, Jeanne and **Tom Solak (2)**, Charlotte and **Bob Stevenson (2)**, **Bob Traister (2)**, Dureen and yours truly.

The picture has **Don Boecker (15)** and **Ward O'Brien (22)** showing a picture of the Naval Reserve unit they both joined enroute to acceptance into the Naval Academy.

From **Jack Gerrity (15)**:



60 Lunch gathering in Jacksonville, FL

✉ "Bill, as illustrated in the accompanying photo (above), four of us decided to enjoy brunch at The District in Jacksonville, Florida. The District is noted for Mongolian-/Tibetan inspired Yurts in its outdoor Peacock Garden; we opted for regular indoor seating.

Seated clockwise from the left are **JJ "Jack" Garrity (15)**, **Harry Lewis (15)**, Helen Garrity, and Mimi Lewis. The food was absolutely scrumptious.

From **Bob Osmon (17)**:

✉ "Dear Class of 1960 Classmates, back in December, I was in Giants Stadium for what probably is going to be my last A/N Game, and what a doozy that was!!! What a way to go out!!! And would you believe I had 50-yard line seats? Guess the AD is feeling sorry for us old guys. About time.

I decided I wanted just one photograph for my memory book and suddenly I realized what could be more appropriate than the Brigade March On! All of you and I did this for four years in Philadelphia in the 50s, in the freezing cold and stormy weather. We watched the signalman give us waves to commence removing our caps, doing our cheers, and then doing an about face and doing it again. Of course, we were far more disciplined and professional than the mids today, but they did all right.

So anyhow I decided to share this with you as it may just bring back some poignant memories of long, long ago. As you may recall during our four years, we won 2, lost one, and tied one. Not a bad record at all.

So, to all of you, I wish you a Merry Christmas as we all celebrate the big win over Army....ALL YEAR LONG!! Beat Army!! Oz

From **Harley Barnes (22)**:

✉ "Bill, greetings from Southcentral Pennsylvania. A couple of years ago, **Bob Meck (19)** and I, both of us now our respective Company Reps, discovered we had coincidentally chosen to retire to the same 55+ development near Lititz in Lancaster County. Our choices have given us many opportunities to fill our retirement time with interesting activities. We both had sung in vocal groups either at the Academy or in church choirs and other choral groups. When we found that our development had a choral group, we decided to contribute what remains of our singing talents to the community. For the last two years, the choral group, known as the Silver Singers, has put on a tribute to veterans on Veterans' Day. Each year Bob has exceeded that tribute with an excellent summary of the backgrounds of each of our armed services and the origin of Veterans' Day. The community's concern over COVID dictated that the tribute be held out of doors. At this year's Veterans' Day tribute, Bob explained the origins of the Navy and Marine Corps to an audience of residents gathered in front of the development's clubhouse. (He gives equal time to the other services, too.) My contribution is represented by the bald head in the right background of the picture. Harley

I heard from **Jimmy McCoy (13)** out in Maui, Hawaii. Doing well after retiring and moving to the Islands. After 30 years with a lot of it including time in the DC area, a change seemed interesting.

From **Doug Johnston (5)**:

✉ "Ladies and gents, (Available at the class web site is an article)

Attached for your reading pleasure is an article from the January 1990 issue of the Naval Institute Proceedings authored by our recently deceased classmate Jim Patton. In it, he describes his experience while serving as technical advisor for the movie *The Hunt for Red October*. In a phone conversation shortly before he passed away, I asked how he had been selected for that assignment. He said he was at a meeting in which OP 02 asked if anyone present would like to take it on. He volunteered, as did Admiral Bud Kauderer, but because of Jim's status as a retired Captain, it was decided his involvement would make it easier for the Navy to claim plausible deniability in the event of an embarrassing outcome.

As you may recall, Jim's son, James, spoke to our lunch group some months ago in his capacity as CEO of the International Center for Religion & Diplomacy (ICRD). How that Center came into being and the impact it has had on U.S. foreign policy is the principal theme of my latest book, *Mountaintops and Mai Tais*, which came out several weeks ago. The book also accommodates a long-held personal desire to one day capture in writing all the humorous events that have taken place along

life's way (many of which transpired at Canoe U). So, it's a bit of an eclectic mix; but if you're having trouble sleeping at night, this book was written for you. Hit the link below, if you think you might be interested. All royalties go to benefit ICRD. *By the way, I just finished reading it and it is well worth reading (Bill).*

From **Bob Osmon (17)**:



Oz with the Swansons

Dear Classmates, if you are not sitting down, I suggest you do so now. What I am about to tell you will knock you off your feet. This is a lifetime event none of us would ever thought would happen, but it did!

**JOHN SWANSON NOW HAS EMAIL!!!** Of course, it happened with John screaming and kicking all the way, but here's what happened. As some of you all know, John and Selena are Masters in Bridge. As the pandemic grew and grew, more and more bridge tournaments were being cancelled. They were going stir crazy with no bridge, so their daughter bought them two lap tops and they now play bridge on line. As a side benefit, they had to learn to use email!

So, may I urge you all to welcome our last holdout to the email system and let him know we haven't forgotten him. **Dick Macke (17)**, John asked about you, so how about giving your old roomie...and us a little update on how things are in Hawaii?

I had dinner with the two of them last night and they both are healthy and hale, although unfortunately Selena did fall and break her leg last year. But she is healing up and was in great spirits. Here is a photo of the three of us from two years ago, but they look exactly the same. Oh, and John and I got the Final Jeopardy question right last night while none of the three contestants did. Must be a military thing (60,000 US Citizens are buried in a national cemetery in a volcanic crater in which state?) Bet most of you will get it.

God bless and Welcome to John and Selena to our ever-diminishing group of 17th Co. grads. Oz