

## State of the Class

### Annual Report (2023)

Our recent mini-reunion in New Smyrna Beach, Florida was a huge success owing to the combined efforts of our Vice President, Bob Osmon; Randy McHenry and his wife Sheri, who hosted the event; George Dowell, who handled the finances; and Jack Paepcke, who worked his magic on the name tags. As with previous mini-reunions, it was a great opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new ones with classmates we had not previously known.

This was the second time around for New Smyrna Beach; the first being exactly two years ago to the month. A special thanks to Randy, who not only made his hotel available once again as the home base for our time together but was adamant about doing so, even as he was laid up in a hospital recovering from surgery (saying he would greet us in a wheelchair if necessary). As luck would have it, Randy was forced to miss the reunion itself in order to take care of another medical problem, but he was clearly with us in spirit throughout.

Two years ago, Randy and Oz were thanked for their efforts with suitable plaques from the Class. This time around, it was Sheri's turn, with a plaque expressing our gratitude for her "inspiring hospitality."

Our next reunion will be the big one celebrating our 65<sup>th</sup> in 2025. Between now and then, though, we will be **re-living the glory days of yesteryear** by holding small gatherings at various times and locations around the country where those who can attend will watch video highlights of Navy's 1959 football season. Most of the players on that team were our classmates, so the heroics will feature a number of folks who you know well. Back in the day, we didn't have the opportunity to view most away games, so a lot of this will be our first exposure to what took place in those far-away places. Because the game narration tends to focus almost exclusively on the backs and ends, we will try to have a veteran from the team present at each showing to comment on the contributions of the linemen as well. More to follow as the planning unfolds.

Col. Gary Espinas, USA (Ret), the current holder of our Class Chair in National Security, continues to do an excellent job both in the classroom and in serving the Political Science Department more generally. His *Politics of Russia* course has attracted 54 enthusiastic Mids, and he would be pleased to welcome any of you who would like to sit in on one of his classes. Let me know if you'd like to attend, and we'll set it up.

Twice a year the Academy convenes a meeting of Class Presidents at which everyone is briefed on the latest developments in the Yard. Highlights from the most

recent meeting, which took place last October in the new Fluegel Alumni Center, include the following:

1. A total of 1028 Mids graduated with the Class of 2023 and became members of the following communities (with 83% of all graduates getting their top choice):

286 Naval Air (231 pilots, 55 NFOs)

260 Marines (179 ground, 81 air)

247 Surface Warfare

158 Submarine Service

40 Information Warfare

29 SEALs

8 Other Specialties

2. The incoming class of 2027 included 1175 new Midshipmen. Of that total, 58% graduated in the top 10% of their high school class and 90% were athletes (of which 68% were team captains). The male/female split was 69/31%, and a total of 44% were classified as minorities.
3. Applications for the Class of 2026 dipped from a norm of about 16,000 down to 13,000 owing to Covid. That number is back up, probably driven in part by *Top Gun: Maverick*, which hit the big screen in May of 2022.
4. The most recent *U.S. New and World Report* ranking of colleges and universities listed the Naval Academy as the top public-school in the country, the 3<sup>rd</sup> best liberal arts college, and the 5<sup>th</sup> best undergraduate engineering program.
5. Graduation rates are considerably higher than they have been in decades past, with philanthropic support from the Alumni base a major contributor (e.g. 99% of all Mids use the Academic Center for help at some point during their four years).
6. Sports
  - a. The USNA Rugby team won the National Championship during its first season as a varsity sport.
  - b. Navy now has 36 varsity sports, the most of any NCAA university.
  - c. Army is joining the ACC in football and will remain in the Patriot League for all other sports. Navy typically won't play Army during the ACC regular season, but will do so following the ACC championship game.
  - d. An athletic excellence fund has been established for all sports, so it is now possible to vector donations to any sport on an individual basis.
7. A new website *myUSNA.com* has been established, with a goal of it eventually becoming a premier platform for class communications and information.

Over the past year, we dipped below the 50% mark, with the loss of 23 grads and 2 non-grads (that we know of). My first week on the job was particularly sobering with the loss of three classmates and one widow. Although the ranks continue to thin, we hope as many of you as possible will be able to join together in "re-living the glory days." To whet your appetite, the following is an excerpt from this past December's issue of *Sports Illustrated*:

"In 1963, Navy was a powerhouse. They entered the annual Army-Navy game, scheduled for November 30, with an 8-1 record. With a victory over Army, Navy would earn a berth in the Cotton Bowl and the chance to play Texas for the national title."

Although the 1959 season wasn't quite as successful, those were nevertheless the halcyon days of Navy football, which we will long remember.

On a final note, our collective thanks go out to Pete Chabot, John Michalski, Ed Clepton, Dick Pariseau, Don Boeker, Ray Burkley, Bill Calvert, and Hank Lawinski for carrying the torch of class leadership over the past 64 years. You did us all proud.

Have a great year, and Go Navy!  
Doug