

Tales from Annapolis, by Hugh J. Smith

It was a quiet Sunday morning in “Mother Bancroft” during Youngster year. After Mass in the chapel and Sunday “brunch”, the solitary Sunday mail delivery arrived. Like every Sunday during my four years in Bancroft Hall, there was a letter from my father with news from New Orleans and my weekly \$5.00 “allowance”. This Sunday the letter contained an invitation to join the U.S. Navy League, a check for the initial dues and a note that read “send this in if you think this is worth joining. That afternoon I sat down and wrote a letter forwarding the invitation and check explaining how proud I was that my father was becoming a member of the U.S. Navy League. That’s when it all began.

Each week Admiral Smedberg would hold an update briefing with the Company Officers. Shortly after one briefing I was summoned to report to the office of my 24th Company Officer, Lt. Hofford. My first thought was what could I have done wrong. When I entered the office Lt. Hofford said “Smith, I don’t know what you did this time, but during the briefing Admiral Smedberg asked how you were doing”. It seemed that the CNO got a call from SECNAV asking that same question. Of course, the CNO didn’t know Smith, so he passed the question on to Admiral Smedberg.

This all began when I sent my father’s application to the Navy League. The editor of the Navy League’s monthly magazine (Sea Power) was so impressed with the letter I sent introducing my father, that he decided to make a photocopy as that month’s Editorial with the title “A Vote of Confidence”. He also sent a copy of the letter to the CNO, SECNAV and Admiral Smedberg. P.S. The thing that no one else knew is that Admiral Smedberg knew “Smith”. We first met during my initial appearance before the Academic Board. When I appeared the second time for the same subject (French) the Admiral said “Smith it’s you again for French. If I would have had to learn how to speak French, I would have never made Admiral, RE-EXAM GRANTED”.