

Reunion Musings

Sixty-nine years ago, we walked through Gate 3 to begin a lifetime of service to the nation. As we are about to gather to celebrate our 65th Reunion, we also celebrate a remarkable class legacy that has developed over the years. Even more important, though, have been the bonds of friendship that have stood the test of time.

Because of the Covid-related cancellations of our attempts at a 60th, it has been ten years since our last opportunity to celebrate old ties in a major way. So, we have some making up to do. Adding to this challenge is the fact that this may be the last opportunity for many of us to reinforce those bonds, while honoring classmates who are no longer with us, especially those who gave their all in military operations.

In some respects, today's Academy is quite different from the Academy we left in 1960. It has become a co-ed institution, new buildings and facilities have been added, and the daily life of a Midshipman no longer includes marching to class or pulling out one's slide rule to ace a quiz in Steam. Despite the changes, the values remain the same, as does the Academy's mission. Midshipmen continue to serve the Navy and their country with honor, just as we did.

As for the legacy, we were the last class to fly the N39 "yellow perils" and the first class to enter Rickover's Nuclear Power Program directly after graduation. We were also the first class to report directly to Submarine School for service aboard submarines. Until 1960, all officers entering Sub School had to first qualify as officers of the deck on surface ships.

Our class made its mark on the fields of play as well, with 16 graduates inducted into the Navy Athletics Hall of Fame. They and other classmates played central roles in beating Army in football by the largest margin since the series began in 1890, winning National Championships in lacrosse and fencing, playing in the NCAA basketball championships, and representing the United States at the Rome Olympics in crew and fencing.

That success continued after graduation as well, with 24 ascending to Flag rank, two classmates awarded the Navy Cross, 12 the Silver Star, two the Distinguished Flying Cross, and 20 the Purple Heart. Some 28 others lost their lives in military operations, with five of those in combat.

No matter how you cut it, we are called "Super-Sixty" for a reason. It is the camaraderie borne of the above and countless other experiences over the years to which we will be paying tribute at our 65th. If the planets align—join us if you can.

Go Navy!

Doug