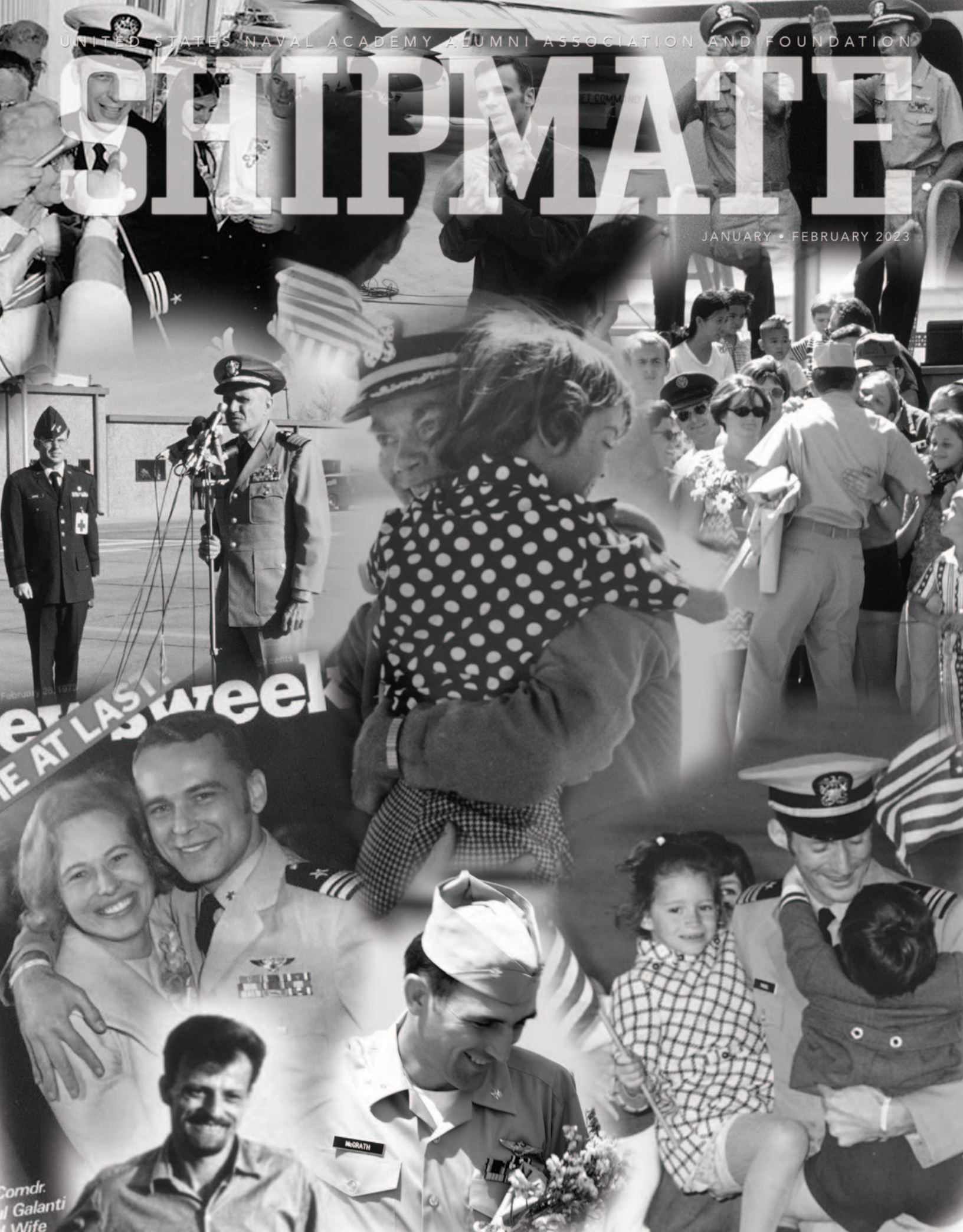


UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AND FOUNDATION

# SHIPMATE

JANUARY • FEBRUARY 2023



February 28, 1972  
everLASTING  
SWEET

Comdr. Galanti  
Wife

MORATH

# SHIPMATE

VOLUME 86 • NO. 1

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In defiance of his captors, RADM (then-CDR) Jeremiah Denton Jr. '47, USN (Ret.), blinked the word "torture" in Morse code during a 2 May 1966 interview by a Japanese television reporter. It was the first evidence relayed to the American military intelligence community that U.S. POWs were being tortured.

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### Get the Goat

This Bill is hiding somewhere in this issue. Find him and email us at [getthegoat@usna.com](mailto:getthegoat@usna.com) with the correct page number and you will be entered into a drawing for a prize from the Alumni Association. Good luck! The drawing is limited to the first 100 correct answers, so get reading.

Bill was hiding in the image on page 37 of the November-December 2022 issue of *Shipmate*.

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### Our Mission

To serve and support the United States, the naval service, the Naval Academy and its alumni by furthering the highest standards at the Naval Academy; by seeking out, informing, encouraging and assisting outstanding, qualified young men and women to pursue careers as officers in the Navy and Marine Corps through the Naval Academy; and by initiating and sponsoring activities which will perpetuate the history, traditions, memories and growth of the Naval Academy and bind alumni together in support of the highest ideals of command, citizenship and government.

**SHIPMATE** is the official alumni magazine of the United States Naval Academy.



**On the Cover**  
*Shipmate* honors the Naval Academy Vietnam POWs who returned with honor 50 years ago during Operation Homecoming. See page 147 for full captions of each photo on the cover.

FEATURE

# OPERATION HOMECOMING



COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE REPATRIATION OF  
VIETNAM PRISONERS OF WAR

**B**eginning in February 1973, 591 American prisoners of war (POW) were released and repatriated during Operation Homecoming. Among those were Naval Academy alumni who were Prisoners of War during the Vietnam War.

American POWs were often malnourished, put in solitary confinement and deprived of adequate medical care by their North Vietnamese captors. Torture was a regular occurrence.

Ten Naval Academy alumni shared with *Shipmate* how the Academy prepared them to endure and resist during their time as POWs. They describe how critical the relationships forged with their fellow POWs were to surviving and what kept them going during the bleakest moments.

Their examples of leadership and patriotism provide a blueprint for future generations of officers and midshipmen. Here are their stories in their words.

### **Captain Peter V. Schoeffel '54, USN (Ret.)**

Then-Lieutenant Commander Schoeffel was flying an A-4C, a small attack aircraft originally designed for nuclear weapons delivery. He trained in his squadron (1958–62) to deliver nuclear weapons against the Soviets and their allies. On his final mission, on 6 October 1967, he led a flight of four A-4s in what was known as a “flak suppression mission.” The flak suppressors accompanied the aircraft whose mission it was to bomb and destroy a target and protect it by bombing any flak sites that might engage them. Captain Schoeffel spent more than five years as a POW until he was released on 14 March 1973.

“The wisdom of such a mission may be debated because it involves diving down what is essentially the gun crew’s line of sight,” Schoeffel said. “I would not be responding to these questions if I had not erred in my bomb switch setup, so I only released half my bombs. In order to complete my mission and not embarrass myself by bringing live ordnance back to the ship, I repeated my bomb run and ... was hit!” After ejecting from his plane and parachuting to the ground, he tried to hide in tall grass near the river that runs past Haiphong.

“Hiding was fruitless and I was soon discovered and taken prisoner,” he said. “Someone hit me with a gun butt, so I started bleeding a bit at my temple. Quickly, a noncommissioned officer or junior officer had a bandage put around my head. As I was marched

past an antiaircraft artillery site, another soldier took the Navy watch off my wrist. I naively objected and was made to understand it would be returned later (hah!).”

Schoeffel was taken to a bomb crater near a village to hold him until higher-ranked officers arrived.

“During the two hours the villagers came to look, and an old woman tried her best to get at me,” he said. “She was making overhand clawing motions (like swimming) and leaning forward while being held back by soldiers. By this time, I had begun to respect the professionalism I thought I saw in the soldiers. Soon, I was picked up and after a one-hour trip was delivered to Hanoi and the Hoa Lo Prison, where my opinion was changed.”

### **Enduring and Resisting**

My Naval Academy experience was strongly directed toward the concepts of responsibility and fulfillment of duty. Many hours of motivational films (during Plebe Summer) and tales of heroism in U.S. Navy, British Navy and U.S. Marine Corps traditions incorporated into the course in naval history inspired us midshipmen to hope to match in action the performances of historic naval heroes. Little at the Naval Academy related to, or prepared us for, resistance in captivity except for the underlying motivation not to fail in one’s service to the nation.

Relationship to our fellow POWs was specifically addressed in survival school and exposure/training

During a 1967 propaganda photo shoot, CDR Paul E. Galanti '62, USN (Ret.), defiantly flashed both middle fingers downward as he sat on a cot.

related to the POW Code of Conduct. Being a prisoner and having a Navy or national responsibility as such probably did not enter my mind before my membership in an attack squadron engaged in flights over enemy territory.

Once I was captured, the relationships with my fellow POWs became of greatest importance. The continued existence of a chain of command and the recognition of a senior ranking officer having overall command gave purpose and meaning to behavior toward the captors. We surviving POWs cherish a brotherhood, trust and admiration for one another that is central to our life outlooks.

My bleakest times were after torture and in periods of expecting more. What kept me going was the knowledge of the justice of our nation's cause in Vietnam and the confidence that the national leadership would eventually return us to the country and do so without sacrificing national honor.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPT PETER V. SCHOEFFEL '54, USN (RET.)

**CAPT Peter V. Schoeffel '54, USN (Ret.),** was an A-4C pilot on a flak suppression mission when he was shot down on 6 October 1967 over North Vietnam. He was a Prisoner of War until 14 March 1973.

### **Rear Admiral Robert H. Shumaker '56, USN (Ret.)**

Then-Lieutenant Commander Shumaker launched off CORAL SEA on 11 February 1965 in an F-8 Crusader. He was a photo escort on an attack against a North Vietnamese military installation just north of the zone which separated the two countries. The low ceiling that day caused him to fly lower than planned, and as he fired his Zuni rockets and 20 mm machine guns, his plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire.

After ejecting, his parachute opened only 35 feet above the ground. He broke his back upon landing but managed to conceal himself in some nearby bushes. A short time later, a crowd of soldiers and civilians, all armed, marched past him shouting “Anglais” (French for Englishman) which gave him some hope he wouldn't be detected.

One lagging soldier spotted Shumaker and aimed his AK-47 at him. After capture, he was handcuffed and paraded in front of a large audience in an auditorium where he revealed only his name, rank, serial number and date of birth as required by the Geneva Conventions. Later, he was put before a four-man firing squad.

“Happily for me they didn't pull their triggers, but it certainly got my attention,” Shumaker said.

Then followed eight years of physical and mental abuse which ended when he was released on 12 February 1973.

“You can imagine how enjoyable it was to rejoin my wife and young son, continue my military career and appreciate even more the freedoms we have as Americans,” he said.

### **We Resisted**

I had a tough plebe year, and that experience taught me the importance of staying physically fit and mentally alert, which let me stay one step ahead of the game. We used to joke about being injected with a “blue and gold” shot at “Canoe U.” But all joking aside, the Academy had instilled in me a sense of pride in being a naval officer with honor and integrity and leadership ability.

During my eight years as a POW, three were spent in solitary confinement alongside ten other guys who the Vietnamese considered leaders of the POW group. We were put into individual, windowless, concrete cells measuring only 4 feet by 9. Our ankles were bound together with metal clevises for most of the day. We named ourselves the “Alcatraz Eleven” and three of this group were U.S. Naval Academy graduates.

All three became flag officers after repatriation—Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale '47, USN (Ret.), Rear Admiral Jeremiah Denton Jr. '47, USN (Ret.), and myself. We communicated by clandestinely tapping on the wall, helping each other maintain our morale while enduring frequent torture sessions. Our captors tried to extract confessions from us and get us to cooperate with their propaganda efforts. We resisted.

Yes indeed, our Naval Academy background was an excellent training arena for learning how to survive such a situation. This awakening can help you too, although it is unlikely that any of you will become POWs in the future. However, each of you will certainly experience a setback as you experience the ups and downs of life.

Just remember that even good boxers occasionally get knocked down from time to time, and the secret to overcoming such a setback is to get back up off the canvas, dust yourself off, get back on your feet and get ready for the next round. We were a band of brothers simply trying to represent our nation with courage and resolve. We all wanted to be able to return to our homes holding our heads held high knowing that we had done our best in resisting the enemy's efforts to exploit us. Our mantra was to “Return With Honor.”



**RADM Robert H. Shumaker '56, USN (Ret.), was an F-8 pilot deployed aboard CORAL SEA when he was shot down on 11 February 1965.**

## **Captain Phillip N. Butler '61, USN (Ret.)**

Then-Lieutenant Commander Butler was flying an A-4C on 20 April 1965 over Vinh when malfunctioning bombs the aircraft was carrying exploded underneath him. He was forced to eject. Butler spent four days and nights trying to evade capture by the North Vietnamese.

Butler was released on 12 February 1973 and returned to the United States on 17 February 1973.

### **Give it Your All**

Pride in being a naval officer and carrier pilot meant I didn't want to give in to the Vietnamese interrogators and torturers. Also, I couldn't let my fellow POWs, and even my family, down. We encouraged each other to give it your all, your best shot, resisting harassment and torture.

I learned teamwork at the Naval Academy. Communicating and depending on my fellow POWs was critical to our survival. I doubt many would have survived the long years and come out whole without each other.

We lived by the motto "Return With Honor," which means to return with your honor and like the guy you see in the mirror.

I created an ultimate list of 200 songs that I could play in my head. We taught and learned things for and from other POWs. We had classes even though we had no writing materials or books.

My cellmate for close to five years, Lieutenant Colonel Hayden Lockhart, is a 1961 graduate of the Air Force Academy. We were "classmates" so to speak. Hayden had a very dry sense of humor. One terrible day at the Briar Patch prison, where we were being tortured, Hayden said to me, "Don't worry about these bastards, Phil. You and I have been harassed by professionals."

He was referring to our plebe years. Very funny of course but also not true. No preparation for torture. But, I would say it was the ultimate test of a man.

*"On the strength of one link in the cable,  
Dependeth the might of the chain.  
Who knows when thou may'st be tested?  
So live that thou bearest the strain!"*

I thought of this poem I was required to memorize as a Plebe thousands of times.



**"Pride in being a naval officer and carrier pilot meant I didn't want to give in to the Vietnamese interrogators and torturers."**

Once I was in a small concrete cell with a drain hole at floor level. An adjacent cell was located about 5 feet away, separated by a cluttered hallway and it housed a Naval Academy graduate who had recently been shot down. He was badly injured and was depressed.

I had found and concealed a flimsy wire about 6 feet long. During the siesta hour I worked that wire into his cell (no small feat). After some hesitation, he reluctantly picked up his end of the wire fearing he would discover a "macho" guy on the other end who would make demands of him. The wire then suddenly disappeared only later to reappear with a toilet paper note attached explaining the "tap code" with the instruction to "memorize this code and then eat this note." Today, that guy is a forceful motivational speaker who attributes that experience as having put him on a good path to resist and survive.

Throughout our imprisonment, used the tap code to support each other through the trials of solitary confinement.

The bleakest times I experienced were the days after a torture session when I felt that I had let my country and the Navy down. I still carry some guilty feelings. I had thought that I could resist and endure any torture they employed, but I soon learned that humans have physical limitations and that the reaction to extreme pain can be overwhelming. As time went on, we learned to give in just short of losing consciousness, so the statements that we were forced to make would be senseless and obfuscating.

One time they demanded to know what my job on the ship had been, so I told them I was in charge of all the pool tables on the carrier. They bought that ruse hook, line and sinker. Of course, you know that there are no pool tables on ships.

## Commander Paul E. Galanti '62, USN (Ret.)

Galanti was shot down on his 97th combat mission while flying an A-4C Skyhawk over North Vietnam on 17 June 1966. He spent seven years at the Hanoi Hilton as a Prisoner of War. During a 1967 propaganda photo shoot, Galanti defiantly flashed both middle fingers downward as he sat on a cot.

He said he tried to remain optimistic during his time as a POW. He said he appreciates the sacrifice of the more than 58,000 Americans who gave their lives during the Vietnam War.

“Every time I think about how bad I had it, I think about Commander Everett Alvarez Jr. who got shot down 22 months before I did, and I don’t feel so bad. No matter how bad you have it, someone else has it worse. You just press on.

When I speak to the midshipmen, I just tell them it’s a piece of cake. I consider it Plebe Year Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, Foxtrot, Golf and Hotel. Anybody could do it. Naval Academy alumni were the true leaders in the POW camp, starting with Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale '47, USN (Ret.), Rear Admiral Jeremiah Denton '47, USN (Ret.), and Vice Admiral William P. Lawrence '51, USN (Ret.).

I realized how much the Naval Academy meant to helping us get through.

The two things I learned from those guys at Hanoi was I wasn’t as tough as I thought I was and no matter how bad I thought I had it, somebody else had it worse. There’s no such thing as a bad day when there’s a doorknob on the inside of the door.”

## “Paul Galanti shows a level of defiance that is so inspirational.”

—Dr. Joe Thomas, director of the VADM James B. Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership, on CDR Galanti’s finger “salute” during a propaganda photo shoot.

## Captain David W. Hoffman '62, USN (Ret.)

On 30 December 1971, then-Lieutenant Commander Hoffman was attached to Air Wing 15 staff as a landing signal officer, and he launched in a VF-111 “Sundowners” F-4 from CORAL SEA. He was the wingman providing fighter protection for a major air wing strike against the highly strategic and heavily defended Vinh Transshipment and Storage Area in North Vietnam.

Early into the mission, they were taking heavy surface-to-air missile fire. He pressed on to the target, attracting missile fire away from the strike group, which went on to successfully attack the target and return without loss or damage. His plane was struck by the last of five missiles fired at them. Hoffman and his naval flight officer ejected at about 25,000 feet and at very high speed. The wind flail caused his arm to hit the canopy rail on the way out of the cockpit, breaking it near the shoulder.

He was shot in the foot while still in the air. Local villagers held them until the arrival of North Vietnamese soldiers, and they were transported directly to the Hanoi Hilton. Hoffman was kept in solitary confinement for the next 90 days and received minimal care for his injuries. His broken arm was used for leverage several times during his time as a prisoner.

Hoffman was repatriated on 28 March 1973.

## Critical Relationships

When I am asked how my time at the Naval Academy prepared me for to endure torture and captivity, I typically reply, “Nothing prepares you for this.” But you have some sense of knowing you can gut things out if you take it a day at a time, sometimes an hour or a minute at a time.

The relentless pressures of Plebe Summer and the following years, the discomfort, the discipline, the sense of accomplishment when you do something right, helped get me through. Above all the bonds with classmates, company mates, teammates and knowing you are stronger together—that is what got me through my time as a POW, finding that same strength and support with my fellow POWs.

When I was weak, others held me up, perhaps not physically, but mentally and spiritually. When I was strong, I did the same for others. Those relationships were critical, because they allowed me to hope, and to believe, I would go home, to family, to friends, to normal life. At the Naval Academy, I learned to compartmentalize and focus on what I could control in the near term. I used that skill with regularity during interrogations and punishments, as well as just getting through every day.

**CAPT John M. McGrath '62, USN (Ret.), published a book of his sketches—*Prisoner of War, Six Years in Hanoi*—which illustrates the conditions American POWs lived under as captives of the North Vietnamese. Among the sketches are torture methods POWs endured including being bound by ropes and forced into painful stress positions like the one in this illustration.**

To view more of McGrath’s illustrations, scan this QR code.

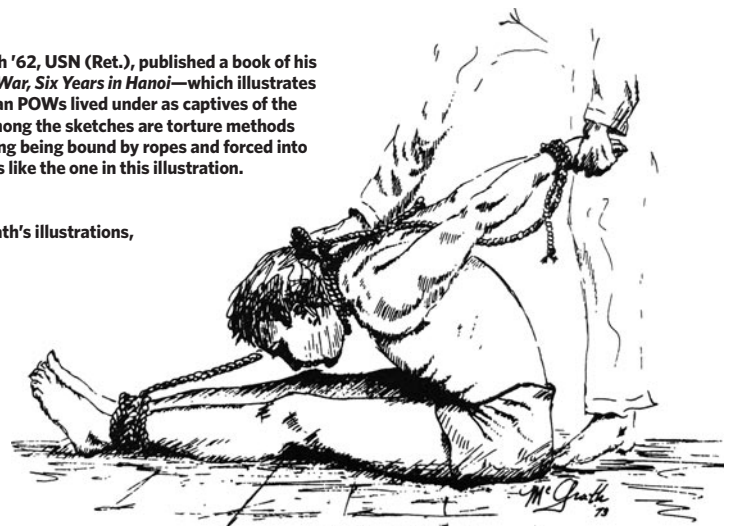


ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF CAPT JOHN M. MCGRATH '62, USN (RET.)

We came together as a group under some fine leaders who suffered the same or worse than we did.

People are always amazed at the humor we managed to find, another thing that bonded us. We were humans held in horrible conditions and treated, not as prisoners of war, but as criminals. If you've never looked at Mike McGrath's illustrations, I recommend it, as those tell the story of what happened to us on a daily basis. We pulled off some things, well-documented in various books, to show our defiance and resistance, some of which were pretty darned funny to us.

As I reflect on my Naval Academy experience from my Plebe Summer in 1958 to June Week in 1962, as time has passed, I can tell you it wasn't the book learning about naval warfare, strategy, history and case studies that were critical to my mental and physical survival. It was the knowledge I gained that I could absorb pain, discomfort, punishment, sleep deprivation, mental despair and other trials and somehow dig deep and get through it. Doing this in company with others suffering the same things, just like at the Academy, were critical on the really bad days and nights, when messages of comfort would be conveyed through the tap code.

In response to those who wonder what kept me going during the worst times, it was my belief in God, thoughts of home and family and strong help from fellow prisoners.

I am glad we were asked to share our stories and insights. It is important that the Naval Academy never loses sight of what going in harm's way actually means on a personal level. The best thing they can do for midshipmen is to hold them to high standards, make them accountable for their choices and challenge them with a rigorous approach to professional development.

The Naval Academy is most definitely "N\*ot" College," to quote our sponsor midshipman family, nor should it be. It should be painfully hard, high pressure and demanding, testing mental stamina, the will to endure and core confidence in a safe setting. That is a gift I hope they never have to use in the conditions under which I was held and treated.

They will learn to trust themselves to handle unbelievably hard situations, and most importantly, develop those bonds that allow them to survive the greatest of challenges in their lives. I lived to come home, return to my family, my career and active flying with four operational commands (VF-41, Air Wing 8, NEW ORLEANS and KITTY HAWK), definitely banged up but bearable.

I am quite certain my Naval Academy experience was a foundational element in my ability to do that, along with pure stubbornness that I would not let them win.



**"I compare my time at Hanoi to plebe year. When they dislocated my elbow, I told myself, 'If I can survive plebe year, I can survive this.'"**

### **Captain John "Mike" McGrath '62, USN (Ret.)**

Then-Lieutenant Commander McGrath was flying his 179th mission over enemy territory in an A-4C Skyhawk when he was shot down by anti-aircraft artillery on 30 June 1967 south of Hanoi. During ejection, he suffered a broken and dislocated arm, fractured vertebrae and a dislocated knee.

A shoulder and elbow were dislocated by his North Vietnamese captors during torture sessions. Like many of his fellow POWs, he was denied medical care. He was released on 4 March 1973 and returned to the United States on 7 March 1973.

McGrath published a book of his drawings, *Prisoner of War: Six Years in Hanoi*, that graphically detail the conditions POWs lived in and the torture methods they were forced to endure.

"I compare my time at Hanoi to plebe year. When they dislocated my elbow, I told myself, 'if I can survive plebe year, I can survive this.' I was in pain and was pushed beyond my breaking point. The discipline during my plebe year to get through an impossible situation—I wasn't going to let the first class beat me at the Academy.

I applied that to my enemy. It was a difficult time. You get demoralized with no rescue in sight. You think you're going to die there. That Naval Academy training was really helpful to me. The lesson of being true to your people and mission and my fellow prisoners. We were true to our classmates and to our fellow prisoners.

### **Unbreakable Bonds**

Relationships with my fellow Prisoners of War were all-important. You could trust them and they could trust you. You built loyalty. You built friendships that last to this day. You formed a bond that could never be broken.

We told each other to give the guards false answers. If they torture you again, make them break you again. Everybody broke. They just didn't take no for an answer. No one was tough enough to stick to name, rank and serial number.

You have to control your emotions. You have to have patience. Solitary is the worst torture of all. Your mind is racing all day long. With no input, your mind continues to race and you have to fill your mind with something.

I started memorizing things I learned tapping through the wall with my fellow prisoners. They started filling my mind with names. I memorized 355 POW names. I had a roommate who spoke German and Phil Butler was fluent in Spanish. I learned 8,000 Spanish words without ever picking up a book. You memorize everything you can and memorize every detail of information you can squeeze out of your source.

You keep your mind working and working. It gets you through months and years by extracting information from your fellow prisoners.



## Captain David J. Carey '64, USN (Ret.)

Then-Lieutenant Commander Carey was on an Alpha strike on a small railroad bridge inland from the port city of Haiphong on 31 August 1967 when a surface-to-air missile blew the tail off his A-4. Spinning upside down, he ejected passing 4,000 feet, landed in a small North Vietnamese village and was immediately captured. He was taken to Haiphong and then Hanoi.

He was released on 14 March 1973.

### Be a Man of Honor

The rigors of life at the Naval Academy, the pace, the daily demands, the emphasis on honor, striving to do our best, the pressure of trying to balance everything, somehow all this and more, I saw as excellent preparation for enduring and resisting over time. (Not to mention plebe year's contribution—and I might point out that '64 was the last class to have a plebe year.)



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPT DAVID J. CAREY '64, USN (RET.)

**CAPT David J. Carey '64, USN (Ret.),** flew the A-4 Skyhawk in Vietnam. He was captured by the North Vietnamese on 31 August 1967 after a surface-to-air missile struck his plane.

I'd be remiss not to mention former Naval Academy wrestling Coach Ed Peery's influence on my life. He had absolute conviction that I was tougher both physically and mentally than I ever realized or believed.

My honor was sacred and even though I might often fall short, I was to always strive to be a man of honor and do the best that I could do.

### Life Blood

Our relationships were our life blood. We all had good days and bad days. On the good days I carried and encouraged others. On the bad days others carried and encouraged me.

Beyond that, my POW experience was exactly like the adage about flying, "Flying is hours and hours of sheer boredom interspersed with moments of stark terror."

During the "hours of boredom" my fellow POWs were entertainment, education, encouragement, safety and brotherhood. During the hours of "stark terror" they were strength, encouragement. I knew that no matter what, they would forgive me, recharge my strength—both physically and mentally—and accept me just as I was.

When I was tortured to the point of having no control over my mind, long past the time when I could move my arms or get off the floor, the faithfulness of God in the form of a Psalm that I had learned as a child came to mind and provided an anchor. "The Lord is my shepherd ..."

That was no accident. Scripture tells us over and over again that God is faithful. Not me. Not you. We all have faith ... in something ... the question really is, "Is that in which we place our faith, worthy?"



**"Our fellow POWs were the true backbone of our ability to survive, endure and resist."**

## Captain Read B. Mecleary '64, USNR (Ret.)

Mecleary was flying an A-4E on a flak suppression mission on 26 May 1967. The target was Kep Airfield. His aircraft was hit by antiaircraft artillery. He left the formation and attempted to head for the coast. Shortly after leaving the formation, his aircraft received additional damage from a surface-to-air missile.

Mecleary ejected, parachuted to the ground and upon landing, he realized his legs were badly injured. He could not stand or walk. He radioed he was alive, but injured, then destroyed his survival radio to ensure the enemy would not be able to use it to lure other U.S. aircraft into a trap thinking the radio signal was from a downed pilot. He was captured about 30 minutes later.

### Duty and Honor

I'm not sure anything can really prepare someone for the experience of being a POW. Certainly, our Survival School experience was pretty far from the reality we experienced. But, our years at the Naval Academy did instill a very strong sense of duty and honor.

It introduced us to the Code of Conduct which gave us a base from which to start with our resistance and endurance. The Academy also helped us build our confidence that we could pretty much get through or accomplish anything we set our minds to.

Our fellow POWs were the true backbone of our ability to survive, endure and resist. They were supportive of us throughout and provided understanding, kindness and guidance in so many ways. They were always there for us—always. In my case, most were senior to me and provided a wealth of knowledge on so many aspects of the military and life in general.

Our senior leaders were absolutely superb. Taking the brunt of the torture in many instances, their leadership never faltered. In my personal case, I was very badly injured during my ejection and was unable to walk for approximately four months. My first cellmate was an Air Force major, ten years my senior. I credit him with helping me to stand and walk again over those difficult months. He saved my life!

## Captain Joseph "Charlie" Plumb '64, USN (Ret.)

Then-Lieutenant Junior Grade Plumb was flying the F-4 Phantom off the aircraft carrier KITTY HAWK on 19 May 1967. His plane was hit by a surface-to-air missile and he and his radio intercept officer ejected just south of Hanoi. They were captured immediately, tortured and spent the next 2,103 days in Communist prison camps.

### 'Elected to be Victorious'

The "Supe" in the early 60s was Rear Admiral Charles Kirkpatrick '31, USN (Ret.). We called him, "Uncle Charlie." His mantra was, "You can do anything you set your mind to do!"

Before every football game, we would see the veins pop in his brow as he would clench his fists and say, "And you guys can do it!" Those were the days of Roger Staubach '65 and Captain Joe Bellino '61, USNR (Ret.), and great Navy teams!

Kirkpatrick told us that it wasn't the challenges around us that shaped our destiny. It was the choices we made about the challenges around us that would. In the prison camps, I found that to be true. We could choose to be victims or victors. We elected to be victorious.

Relationships were vital ... lifesaving. I wouldn't have survived (and even thrived) without the strong support group of my fellow POWs, many Naval Academy grads. After a very painful torture session, I would be thrown back into my cell with a feeling of guilt that I hadn't been stronger.

After the guards had cleared the area, the guys next door would tap out the familiar, "Shave-and-a-haircut" call up. I would crawl across the dirt floor, press my ear to the wall and listen for the "tap code." "You're going to be okay," the taps would say, "We're with you. GBU (God Bless You) Plumber."

My faith kept me alive. Faith in God, faith in my country and faith in my fellow warriors.



Then-Lieutenant Junior Grade Plumb was flying the F-4 Phantom on 19 May 1967 when he was shot down by a surface-to-air missile just south of Hanoi. He was a Prisoner of War until 18 February 1973.

## Captain Theodore W. Triebel '64, USN (Ret.)

Then-Lieutenant Commander Triebel was flying a F-4B Phantom, attached to Fighter Squadron 151, on board MIDWAY. He was on his fourth combat deployment, and his 327th mission on 27 August 1972 providing armed escort for an unarmed RF-8 Crusader. The photo plane was to take battle damage assessment pictures of two bridges on a road segment south of Hanoi.

After the photos were taken and they turned around, several surface-to-air missile sites had become active. Seven or eight missiles were launched at them. While maneuvering to evade, one missile exploded behind Triebel's plane causing major damage.

Ejection seats and parachutes worked as advertised, though wind impact at ejection caused flaying. Floating down, he made a call on his survival radio letting "everyone" know they were shot down and had two good chutes. He landed hard on the side of a karst, an area made of limestone. A village was below and local militiamen were shooting. Triebel heard the bullets ricocheting off the rock formations close to him. In less than a few minutes later, he was surrounded by rifle-toting soldiers and captured.

### Others Before Self

My four years at the Naval Academy brought forth, and solidified, the personal and professional value of strong friendships when dealing with adversity. As midshipmen, we were faced with achieving common goals as a team. That could be as plebes supporting each other under stress, as company mates in various competitions or in group academic tutoring sessions and varsity sports.

My time on the heavyweight crew team was particularly notable



CAPT Theodore W. Triebel '64, USN (Ret.), flew the F-4B Phantom. He was on his 327th mission when he was shot down on 27 August 1972.

for developing insights on the importance of cohesiveness to achieve success. Indeed, as middies we learned such camaraderie meant putting others *before* self. These functionable attributes were planted and grew under the overarching Naval Academy mission: to develop midshipmen morally, mentally and physically.

I'm pleased to note that's the exact same Academy mission as today. It works.

As a POW, stressors were many. There was *nothing* more important than having a fellow POW to lean on, to share with, to rely on, to console with and to fight with in an extremely hostile environment.

### Sustained by Faith

The evening after being shot down, I was taken to a nearby village. There was a gauntlet of villagers lined up with various farm implements in their hands. They were angry, yelling and ready to have me enter.

I was tied and a blindfold was taken off, as militiamen jabbed with rifles indicating I had to go through this awaiting throng. What came to my mind entering the gauntlet was what I'd learned in Sunday school, part of the 23rd Psalm. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." 📖

# COURAGEOUSLY DEFIANT

## NAVAL ACADEMY ALUMNI HELD AS POWs DEMONSTRATED ALLEGIANCE TO EACH OTHER AND THEIR COUNTRY

The following stories of deceased Naval Academy alumni who were POWs in Vietnam are far from complete. Their journeys of service, sacrifice and persistence have filled volumes of books. It is *Shipmate's* intent to recognize the heroes who survived unimaginable physical and mental abuse to return home with honor. They exemplify the values the Naval Academy instills in midshipmen.



### **RADM Jeremiah Denton Jr. '47, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 18 July 1965

**Released:** 12 February 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1230, arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1625.

Denton was shot down while leading an attack over a North Vietnam military installation on 18 July 1965. In defiance of his captors, Denton blinked the word

“torture” in Morse code during a 2 May 1966 interview by a Japanese television reporter. It was the first evidence relayed to the American military intelligence community that U.S. POWs were being tortured.

Rear Admiral Denton was imprisoned in the Hanoi Hilton where he spent four years in solitary confinement. As a senior officer among the POWs, Denton set policies for handling interrogations and communicating without raising the suspicions of their captors.

“As a senior ranking officer in prison, Admiral Denton’s leadership inspired us to persevere, and to resist our captors, in ways we never would have on our own,” said fellow POW Captain John S. McCain ’58, USN (Ret.).

Denton earned the Navy Cross, the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, three Silver Stars and the Distinguished Flying Cross.



### **VADM James B. Stockdale '47, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 9 September 1965

**Released:** 12 February 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1405 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1655.

Stockdale broke a bone in his back while ejecting from his plane on 9 September 1965. He was attacked by local townspeople on the ground.

He suffered a broken leg and a paralyzed arm.

He was the highest-ranking Navy officer POW in Vietnam. He refused to cooperate with his captors and devised ways for POWs to communicate. Stockdale established rules for prisoner behavior—BACK U.S. (Unity over Self). He set the example for resistance by taking extreme measures to deny attempts to use him as a propaganda tool.

In 1969, he beat himself in the face with a wooden stool when told he would be paraded in front of journalists. Stockdale knew his captors would not allow him to meet reporters with a disfigured face.

While his actions inspired his fellow POWs, Stockdale was frequently tortured. He spent two years in heavy leg irons and four years in isolation. When he learned some prisoners died during torture, he slashed his wrists to demonstrate to his captors that he preferred death to submission.

Stockdale delivered vital information to the American intelligence community through coded letters with his wife, Sybil. Sybil Stockdale also played a critical role—along with the wives of other POWs—in keeping POWs and those missing in action in the nation’s consciousness. She founded the National League of Families for American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.

He was the most decorated naval officer of the Vietnam War. Among his awards were the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Stars with Combat “V.” Stockdale was selected as a Distinguished Graduate Award recipient in 2001.



### **CAPT Homer L. Smith '49, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 20 May 1967

Smith was tortured to death by his North Vietnamese captors on 21 May 1967. His remains were returned to the United States on 13 March 1974. On 29 May 1974, memorial services were held at the Naval Academy Chapel and interment was in the Academy cemetery with full military honors.

On 20 May 1967, Smith was shot down by ground fire while leading a strike group in an A-4 Skyhawk over North Vietnam. He was observed successfully ejecting and was captured upon reaching the ground. He was on his second combat tour in Vietnam, having completed more than 129 combat missions during his first tour.

Smith was awarded the Navy Cross, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross (two awards), the Legion of Merit with Combat “V,” Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Navy Commendation Medal (three awards), Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnam Campaign Medal,

Vietnamese Meritorious Unit Citation and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.



**CAPT Allen C. Brady '51, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 19 January 1967

**Released:** 4 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1425 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1730.

Brady was executive officer of Attack Squadron 85, flying off *KITTY HAWK* and leading a flight of A-6s against a bridge complex in North Vietnam when he was

shot down on 19 January 1967.

He was captured by the North Vietnamese and was subject to “extreme mental and physical cruelties in an attempt to obtain military information and false confessions for propaganda purposes,” his Silver Star citation reads. “Through his resistance to those brutalities, he contributed significantly toward the eventual abandonment of harsh treatment by the North Vietnamese, which was attracting international attention. By his determination, courage, resourcefulness and devotion to duty, he reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Naval Service and the United States Armed Forces.”

After returning home, Brady’s assignments included serving as commander of Medium Attack Wing ONE at NAS Oceana (August 1974–June 1976), and on the staff of the Chief of Naval Education and Training at NAS Pensacola (July 1976 until his retirement from the Navy on 1 October 1979).



**RADM Robert B. Fuller '51, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 14 July 1967

**Released:** 4 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1500 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1811.

Fuller was a Skyhawk pilot and the commanding officer of Attack Squadron 76 onboard *BON HOMME RICHARD*. On 14 July 1967, he launched in his A-4C on a mission near the city of Hung Yen in Hai Hung

Province, North Vietnam. During the mission, his 110th, as he was just northwest of the city, Fuller’s aircraft was shot down. He ejected from the aircraft and was captured.

During captivity he was tortured by ropes, leg irons and spent 25 months in solitary confinement. Fuller spent 68 months in captivity. He was awarded the Navy Cross, two Silver Stars, four Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars, two Purple Hearts and the POW Medal.

He was one of the naval aviators who flew the flight sequences for the movie *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* in 1954.



**CAPT Charles R. Gillespie '51, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 24 October 1967

**Released:** 14 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1430 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1715.

Gillespie served in numerous flying assignments before flying combat missions in Southeast Asia with Fighter Squadron 151 off aircraft carrier *CONSTELLATION* from June to November 1966 and then off

aircraft carrier *CORAL SEA* from August 1967 until he was forced to eject over North Vietnam and was taken as a prisoner of war on 24 October 1967. He spent 1,969 days in captivity.

After coming home, he served as a test pilot, chief of staff for plans and programs of the Naval Air Test Center, commanding officer of NAS Patuxent River, MD, and as deputy commander of the Naval Air Test Center at Pax River, from June 1975 through October 1982.



**VADM William P. Lawrence '51, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 28 June 1967

**Released:** 4 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1500 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1811.

Lawrence was the commanding officer of Fighter Squadron 143 onboard *CONSTELLATION*. On 28 June 1967, Lawrence was flying a mission over Nam Dinh, North Vietnam, in a F-4B Phantom when

his aircraft was hit by enemy fire.

Lawrence was subjected to five consecutive days of torture by his captors. For the next six years, Lawrence was held prisoner in the Hanoi prison system. He memorized the rank and name of every POW and shared the “tap code” POWs used to secretly communicate with each other.

“He repeatedly paid the price of being perceived by the enemy as a source of their troubles through his ‘high crime’ of leadership,” his fellow POW Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale '47, USN (Ret.), later said, “[but he] could not be intimidated and never gave up the ship.”

During an extended period, isolated in a small cell, Lawrence wrote a poem about his home state, “Oh Tennessee, My Tennessee,” which is now the official state poem. Lawrence served as superintendent of the Naval Academy from August 1978 to August 1981. Lawrence was selected as a Distinguished Graduate Award recipient in 2000.



**CAPT James P. Mehl '51, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 30 May 1967  
**Released:** 4 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1500 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1811.

Mehl was an A-4E pilot assigned to Attack Squadron 93 onboard HANCOCK. On 30 May 1967, Mehl was the section leader of a two-aircraft strike group assigned targets in Thai Binh Province, North Vietnam.

Upon entering the target area, Mehl and his wingman began receiving indication that a surface-to-air missile site to the north was preparing to launch a missile. Mehl eluded one missile and maneuvered his aircraft to fire his strike missiles at the site. When in a 10 degree nose-high altitude, a second missile impacted the underside of his aircraft. Mehl turned toward the water, but was forced to eject near the city of Hung Yen and was captured. Mehl's honors and decorations include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit with "V" device, the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts.



**CAPT Wendell B. Rivers '52, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 10 September 1965  
**Released:** 12 February 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1405 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1655.

Rivers was a member of Air Wing 15, Attack Squadron 155 flying A-4 Skyhawks from aircraft carrier CORAL SEA. On his 96th mission, 10 September 1965, he was

shot down and captured at Vinh, North Vietnam. He spent 2,712 days in captivity. Rivers earned the Silver Star, Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and Distinguished Flying Cross.

After recovering from injuries suffered in Vietnam, he was assigned to Naval Air Systems Command in Washington, DC, until his retirement from the Navy on 31 December 1976. Rivers also served aboard the destroyer ÅGERHOLM during the Korean War. He entered flight school in 1953.



**Col George R. Hall '53, USAF (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 27 September 1965  
**Released:** 12 February 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1405 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1655.

Hall began flying combat missions over Vietnam with the 15th Tactical Fighter Squadron in May 1963. On 27 September 1965, he was flying photo reconnaissance

near Hanoi when his RF-101 Voodoo was hit by ground fire. He ejected and was captured.

During his time as a POW, Hall would harken back to his days on the Naval Academy golf team and visualize playing on familiar courses, using a stick in his 7-foot by 7-foot cell, according

to a 3 June 2014 post on the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum website. This exercise helped Hall keep his sanity through the horrendous conditions he and his fellow POWs endured.

After returning to the United States, Hall served as an aide to Colonel John Flynn at Keesler Air Force Base, MS, and then attended Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. He served as deputy commander of operations for the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing at Bergstrom AFB, TX, flying the RF-4C Phantom II. Hall retired from the Air Force on 31 July 1976.



**CAPT James F. Bell '54, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 16 October 1965  
**Released:** 12 February 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1405 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1655.

Bell was flying a reconnaissance mission north of Haiphong when he was shot down on 16 October 1965. He was able to reach the sea, but he and his crewman

were picked up by a local fisherman 30 minutes later. Bell was tied to the boat's mast and then beaten by a "crowd of angry North Vietnamese en route to the first of several prisons," according to Captain Bell's obituary in the *Washington Post*.

He spent two months in leg chains for refusing to answer an enemy questionnaire. After his return to the United States, Bell served with Fleet Composite Squadron Seven from August 1974 to November 1975, and then with Naval Air Headquarters at the Pentagon from November 1975 until his retirement from the Navy on 1 March 1979.

Bell earned two Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, the Bronze Star with Combat "V" and the Purple Heart.



**VADM Edward H. Martin '54, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 9 July 1967  
**Released:** 4 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1500 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1811.

Martin's A-4 Skyhawk was hit by surface-to-air missiles on 9 July 1967 while leading a bombing mission off INTREPID southeast of Hanoi. He ejected and was captured.

His Vietnamese captors broke his shoulders through rope torture. He spent his first year of captivity in solitary confinement. He was confined in leg and wrist irons and was beaten regularly. Eventually, Martin was placed in a 78-inch by 60-inch cell with four other men who were forced to sleep on concrete.

Following his return to the United States, Martin served as deputy chief of Naval Operations for Air Warfare (June 1974–August 1975); commanding officer of aircraft carrier SARATOGA; chief of current operations for the commander-in-chief of U.S. Pacific Command (July 1979–November 1980); chief of Naval Air Training, where he served until January 1982; and commander of the United States Sixth Fleet. His final assignment was as United

States commander, Eastern Atlantic, and the deputy commander-in-chief of U.S. Naval Forces Europe, where he served from January 1987 until his retirement from the Navy on 25 June 1989.



**CAPT Ernest A. Stamm '54, USN**

**Captured:** 25 November 1968

Stamm was conducting a photo recon flight along the 19th parallel in North Vietnam on 25 November 1968 off CONSTELLATION. His aircraft was flying at about 5,500 feet and 550 knots when it was targeted by an antiaircraft artillery site.

The pilot maneuvered his aircraft to break the gunners' aim, but his F-4 escorts saw

the Vigilante explode in flight. Although two parachutes were sighted, there was no contact with the crew.

Stamm was captured and reported to have died on 16 January 1969 of injuries received during the shoot-down. His remains were repatriated on 13 March 1974 and positively identified on 17 April 1974.

After attending Nuclear Weapons Training, he served as special weapons officer on the staff of the commander, Carrier Air Group FIVE (December 1960–July 1962), followed by service as an instructor with the Navy ROTC detachment at the University of South Carolina (August 1962–August 1965). Stamm served as an RA-5C pilot with RVAH-5 from November 1967 until he was forced to eject over North Vietnam. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross and Prisoner of War Medal.



**CAPT Edwin A. "Ned" Shuman '54, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 17 March 1968

**Released:** 14 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1515 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1811.

Shuman was shot down north of Hanoi on St. Patrick's Day 1968. He broke his right arm and shoulder when ejecting from his A-6 Intruder. He spent about 17 months

in the Hanoi Hilton prison in solitary confinement.

Around Christmas 1970, North Vietnamese prison guards rejected Shuman's request for the POWs to hold a church service. Despite knowing the consequences, Shuman led the 42 other POWs in a prayer session. Guards forcibly took Shuman away and the next four ranking officers stepped up one at a time before being escorted to a session of physical abuse.

Recognizing a united front, the guards allowed the POWs to hold weekly church service from then on, until their release in 1973.

"It was the first confrontation of the camp's regulation," Everett Alvarez Jr., the first Navy pilot to be shot down and held as a North Vietnam POW, told the *Washington Post*. "For those of us who were religious or spiritual, it was a very important part of our morale, optimism and overall, it was a part of our survival."

After returning home, one of Shuman's assignments was running the Naval Academy's sailing program.



**CDR James L. Griffin '55, USN**

**Captured:** 19 May 1967

Griffin joined RVAH-13 in 1964, serving in Vietnam on two cruises (1965–1967). In April 1967, Griffin had completed 100 combat missions. His plane was shot down over Hanoi on 19 May 1967. He would die on 21 May 1967 from injuries sustained in the shoot-down.

He was carried in a "missing in action" status until January 1973, when his death was revealed by the North Vietnamese. On 16 January 1974, the Secretary of the Navy verified Griffin died while a prisoner of war.

Commander Griffin's awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross with gold star, the Naval Commendation Medal with gold star and combat distinguishing device, the Purple Heart, Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Gallantry Cross Medal Color with Palm), Vietnam Service Medal with three bronze stars and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.



**CAPT John H. Fellowes '56, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 27 August 1966

**Released:** 4 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1415 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1708.

Fellowes was serving with VA-65 off the aircraft carrier CONSTELLATION when his A-6 Intruder was hit by antiaircraft fire on 27 August 1966. He ejected and was

captured, suffering from fractured bones in his back.

Fellowes spent time at five POW prisons. On 10 September 1966, he endured a 12-hour torture session in which he "resisted my captors' attempts to force a statement condemning my country, I lost the use of both arms for the next four months," he wrote in a 1976 edition of the U.S. Naval Institute's *Proceedings* magazine.

Following his return to the United States, he was assigned as an instructor at the Naval Academy. He served at the Academy for four years and then attended the National War College from 1977 to 1978. Fellowes retired from the Navy on 10 July 1986. In retirement, he mentored midshipmen at the Academy and was a volunteer at home Navy football games.



**CAPT John D. Burns '57, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 4 October 1966  
**Released:** 4 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1415 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1708.

Burns was shot down during a night reconnaissance mission searching for enemy trucks on 4 October 1966 by antiaircraft fire, according to a 3 June 2013

story on [gazette.com](http://gazette.com). During the ejection from his plane, Burns broke three vertebrae.

He spent the first weeks of his captivity strapped to a concrete pallet and then months at a time in solitary confinement, the [gazette.com](http://gazette.com) story said. Among the awards Burns earned were the Silver Star, Legion of Merit with Valor, Bronze Star with Combat "V," two Purple Hearts and the Prisoner of War Medal.



**CAPT Leo G. Hyatt '57, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 13 August 1967  
**Released:** 14 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1430 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1715.

Hyatt learned from a doctor following his imprisonment by the North Vietnamese he had a fractured neck vertebra, "similar to what would happen if someone was hung," he told [yourobsvr.com](http://yourobsvr.com) for a 2021 story.

He said he was injured while being tortured. He couldn't move afterward and couldn't feed himself for at least five days. Another prisoner fed him and gave him water, saving his life.

Hyatt was on a reconnaissance mission in North Vietnam on 13 August 1967 when his RA-5C Vigilante was hit by antiaircraft fire. A bone in his left shoulder shattered during his ejection from the plane and he was shot in the right arm while trying to evade the North Vietnamese.

Hyatt retired from the Navy in 1986. He earned several awards including a Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross and two Bronze Stars.



**CDR Richard D. Hartman '57, USN**

**Captured:** 18 July 1967  
 Hartman was flying an A-4 Skyhawk when it was shot down on 18 July 1967 while on a combat mission over North Vietnam. He was reportedly in radio contact with other pilots who were able to drop supplies to him while he attempted to elude capture.

His captors reported that he died in captivity four days later on 22 July 1967. Hartman's cause of death was not specified.

One of the rescue helicopters attempting to recover Hartman on 19 July was hit by enemy fire. It crashed and all onboard perished. His remains were repatriated on 6 March 1974.



**CAPT John S. McCain III '58, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 26 October 1967  
**Released:** 14 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1455 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1715.

McCain was flying over Hanoi when his A-4 Skyhawk was hit by antiaircraft fire on 26 October 1967. He ejected, and his right leg, right arm and left arm were

broken. The North Vietnamese captured him after pulling him from a lake.

Because his father, John S. McCain Jr. '31, USN (Ret.), was an admiral at the time of his capture, the North Vietnamese attempted to leverage Commander McCain for propaganda purposes. They filmed an operation to repair his injured leg. He was hospitalized for six weeks before being moved to the "Plantation" POW camp.

McCain spent more than two years in solitary confinement. He rejected any suggestion of preferential treatment from his captors, including an offer to return home where he could receive competent medical care. He said in an account printed in the 14 May 1973 edition of *U.S. News and World Report* that the final offer to go home coincided with the date his father became commander-in-chief, Pacific Command. He refused to leave before the POWs who preceded him.

During his imprisonment, McCain was bound with ropes, his left arm was rebroken and his ribs were cracked during torture sessions.

McCain was selected as a Distinguished Graduate Award recipient in 2018.



**CDR Dennis A. Moore '60, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 27 October 1965  
**Released:** 12 February 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1405 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1655.

Moore was deployed aboard BON HOMME RICHARD on 27 October 1965 when he was shot down and forced to eject over North Vietnam. He recounted the

ways POWs passed time during an interview published by Montana Public Radio in December 2018. He said once he had cellmates, they would have 30-minute mosquito killing competitions each day.

They would pass along knowledge to each other. For example, he took Spanish in high school and at the Naval Academy. He would give out five words of vocabulary each day and review with his fellow POWs.

Upon returning to the United States, Moore served as maintenance officer with VF-51 at NAS Miramar and deployed aboard the aircraft carrier CORAL SEA (November 1974-July 1975). He participated in operations during the Fall of Saigon in April 1975. He also served as executive officer of VF-191 at NAS Miramar (March-December 1976) and served as commanding officer of

VF-191 at NAS Miramar and deployed aboard the aircraft carrier CORAL SEA (December 1976–March 1978).

He retired from the Navy on 1 July 1980.



**LCDR James J. Connell '61, USN**

**Captured:** 15 July 1966

Connell was physically abused regularly and kept in solitary confinement for several years by his captors. He died on 14 January 1971 due to his treatment by the North Vietnamese. His fellow POWs were inspired by Connell's resolve and his Navy Cross citation is a testament to his bravery.

"Under constant pressure from the

North Vietnamese in their attempt to gain military information and propaganda material, Lieutenant Commander Connell experienced severe torture with ropes and was kept in almost continuous solitary confinement. As they persisted in their hostile treatment of him, he continued to resist by feigning facial muscle spasms, incoherency of speech and crippled arms with loss of feeling in his fingers.

"The Vietnamese, convinced of his plight, applied shock treatments in an attempt to improve his condition. However, he chose not to indicate improvement for fear of further cruelty. Isolated in a corner of the camp near a work area visited daily by other prisoners, he established and maintained covert communications with changing groups of POWs, thereby serving as a main point of exchange of intelligence information."

On 15 July 1966, Connell's plane was shot down. He sustained minor injuries after ejecting but was captured shortly thereafter. His remains were repatriated on 6 March 1974. Among the other awards he earned were the Legion of Merit and Distinguished Flying Cross.



**CDR Charles D. Stackhouse '61, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 25 April 1967

**Released:** 4 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1425 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1730.

Stackhouse was flying an A-4 Skyhawk when enemy fire struck his plane during a bombing mission over North Vietnam on 25 April 1967.

His Silver Star citation credits Stackhouse for saving the life of his wingman. "With both planes under attack by enemy fighters, he maneuvered his aircraft in support of his wingman, calling defensive turns which enabled the wingman to repeatedly evade his attackers. While so doing, Lieutenant Commander Stackhouse was shot down by his attacker. His courage and devotion to duty under conditions of gravest personal danger contributed substantially to the success of the mission. By his heroic disregard for his own safety, Lieutenant Commander Stackhouse was directly responsible for saving the life of his

wingman, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service," the citation reads.

He spent 2,141 days as a POW. He earned a Distinguished Service Medal, two Purple Hearts and Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star both with "V" designation. He retired from the Navy after 21 years on 1 February 1982.



**CAPT Edward A. Davis '62, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 26 August 1965

**Released:** 12 February 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1405 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1655.

Davis was shot down on his 57th combat mission over North Vietnam while flying an A-1H Skyraider on 26 August 1965.

He was captured after a night spent in a rainy ditch then marched 19 days to Hanoi. Among the torture techniques used on him by his captors, Davis endured the "rope trick" in which his arms were bound and forced behind his back and toward his head.

Davis smuggled out a puppy named Maco from his North Vietnamese prison on his flight to Clark Air Base in the Philippines. After returning home, he served as executive officer of the Navy ROTC unit at the University of Virginia (August 1975–June 1978). His final assignment was as commander of the Navy Recruiting District at Harrisburg, PA. He retired from the Navy on 29 March 1987.

Among Davis' honors were three Silver Stars, the Legion of Merit with combat citation, four Bronze Stars, five Air Medals and two Purple Hearts.



**CAPT Michael P. Cronin '63, USNR (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 13 January 1967

**Released:** 4 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1425 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1730.

Cronin was flying an A-4 Skyhawk when he was shot down on 13 January 1967. He was captured and proceeded on a 16-day march to Hanoi. He estimated he was

tortured using the "rope trick" between 20 and 30 times.

After returning to the United States, Cronin served as an instructor pilot with VF-126 at NAS Miramar, CA (August 1973–January 1976). He also was a C-9 Skytrain II pilot with VR-30 at NAS Alameda, CA, from January 1976 until he entered the U.S. Naval Reserve on 1 July 1976. He then served as a reserve C-9 pilot (1976 to 1980). He remained in the Naval Reserve in a non-flying status until his retirement on 1 August 1992.

Among his honors, Cronin was awarded two Silver Stars, the Legion of Merit with Combat "V," the Distinguished Flying Cross, four Bronze Stars with Combat "V," two Purple Hearts and three Navy Commendation Medals with Combat "V."





**CAPT Wilson D. Key '63, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 17 November 1967  
**Released:** 14 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1455 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1715.

Key was shot down and captured about 20 miles east of Hanoi on 17 November 1967. A 31 August 2018 [journalpatriot.com](http://journalpatriot.com) story shared Key's actions as his captors

were taking him to Hanoi. He untied his hands and attempted to escape.

"I jumped out the back of the truck," he wrote in a 1997 letter, according to [journalpatriot.com](http://journalpatriot.com). "Unfortunately, I jumped in the middle of a village (the timing wasn't my choice; one of the guards discovered that I was untied.) Nevertheless, I managed to make my way through the village toward the south and suddenly the Red River lay before me (they were chasing me by this time).

I jumped in and was able to swim under water far enough so that they lost me. I evaded for about an hour, I guess, before the armada of boats they launched found me. The only repercussions for the escape was a few belts from the guards in the truck and a much more comprehensive tie job for the rest of the trip to Hanoi."

After his return to the United States, Key served at the Naval Academy twice. The first was as a physics instructor (June 1977–1979) then as director of math and science and commodore of the sailing squadron (June 1990 until his retirement from the Navy on 1 July 1993).



**CDR Aubrey A. Nichols '64, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 19 May 1972  
**Released:** 28 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1530 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1824.

Nichols' A-7 Corsair II was shot down over North Vietnam on 19 May 1972. He spent two months in solitary confinement before joining his fellow POWs. The inhumane torture at the Hanoi Hilton had

largely ceased by the time Nichols arrived but he was still pressed to divulge information and to write anti-war propaganda which he refused to do, according to a 28 September 2016 story posted at [Kirtland.af.mil](http://Kirtland.af.mil).

After returning to the United States, Nichols served as an A-7 pilot for five years. His final assignment was with the Defense Nuclear Agency Field Command at Kirtland AFB, NM, from January 1985 until his retirement from the Navy on 1 June 1988.



**VADM Joseph S. Mobley '66, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 24 June 1968  
**Released:** 14 March 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1515 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1811.

Mobley's A-6 Intruder was hit by antiaircraft fire on 24 June 1968. His leg was broken when he was shot down.

His captors tied him, standing, to a pillar and he was beaten and interrogated in front of a crowd. He was denied immediate medical help and set his broken leg himself once he was placed in a prison cell.

When he retired on 1 June 2001, he was the last Vietnam POW on active duty. Among Mobley's assignments after returning home were commanding officer of KALAMAZOO and SARATOGA. He directed his aircraft carrier's operations in Operation Desert Storm. After the Persian Gulf War, Admiral Mobley served as Chief of Staff of U.S. Sixth Fleet from May 1991 to August 1992.

Mobley also served as commander of Carrier Group TWO and commander of the Naval Safety Center (September 1994–October 1995). He was director of the Navy Staff in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (November 1995–September 1996), and was director for Operations of U.S. Pacific Command (September 1996–November 1998). His final command was as commander of the Naval Air Force of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet.



**LCDR Frederick J. Masterson '67, USN (Ret.)**

**Captured:** 11 July 1972  
**Released:** 29 February 1973, at Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam, at 1600 and arriving at Clark Air Base, Philippines, at 1832.

Masterson served as an F-4 RIO with VF-103 at NAS Oceana from May 1970 to May 1972. Masterson was deployed aboard the aircraft carrier SARATOGA from May

1972 until he was forced to eject over North Vietnam on 11 July 1972. He suffered a partially paralyzed right hand when he broke his arm as he was ejecting from his plane.

Following his return to the United States, Masterson served with the F-4 Replacement Air Group VF-101 at NAS Oceana from June 1974 until he was medically retired from the Navy on 1 March 1977. Masterson received a Bronze Star with Valor. ⚓

*Editor's Note: Information from [veterantributes.org](http://veterantributes.org), [pownetwork.org](http://pownetwork.org), [usnamemorialhall.org](http://usnamemorialhall.org), [arlingtoncemetery.net](http://arlingtoncemetery.net) and Captain John McGrath '62, USN (Ret.), contributed to this report.*

# IN MEMORIAM

The Naval Academy honors alumni Killed in Action and those who were operational losses during the Vietnam War in Memorial Hall. *Shipmate* honors their sacrifice and recommends learning more about them at VMH: Vietnam ([usnamemorialhall.org](http://usnamemorialhall.org)).

## Class of 1943

LtCol George E. Chamberlin Jr., USMC #

## Class of 1945

LCDR Roger H. Mullins, USN \*

## Class of 1947

CDR James D. Lahaye, USN

CDR Valentin G. Matula, USN \*

## Class of 1948

CAPT Hubert B. Loheed, USN

Col Robert N. Smith, USMC

CAPT Roger M. Netherland, USN

## Class of 1949

CDR Clarence W. Stoddard Jr., USN

CDR Edgar A. Rawsthorne, USN

CAPT Homer L. Smith, USN

CDR Leonard F. Vogt Jr., USN

## Class of 1950

CDR Robert C. Frosio, USN \*

Lt Col Christopher Braybrooke, USAF \*

## Class of 1951

Col Donald E. Westbrook, USAF

CAPT Peter W. Sherman, USN

Col Richard A. Walsh III, USAF

CDR Clyde R. Welch, USN \*

## Class of 1952

Lt Col Charles D. Ballou, USAF

Col Charles Harold W. Read Jr., USAF

CAPT Donald D. Aldern, USN

CAPT John C. Ellison, USN

Col John F. O'Grady, USAF

Capt Thomas C. McEwen Jr., USAF #

Maj Robert G. Bell, USAF \*

Maj Joseph E. Bower, USAF

Maj Raymond L. Tacke, USAF \*

## Class of 1953

Col George E. Tyler, USAF

LCDR Harvey Chadwick K. Aiau, USN

Capt John H. McClean, USAF

Col Oscar M. Dardeau Jr., USAF

CDR Peter H. Krusi, USN

LtCol William G. Leftwich Jr., USMC

LCDR Donald W. "Dan" Beard, USN \*

Maj Robert J. Cameron, USAF \*

LtCol Lee Snead, USMC \*

CAPT Edmund B. Taylor Jr., USN \*

## Class of 1954

Col Charles S. Rowley, USAF

CAPT Ernest A. Stamm, USN

LCDR Kenneth E. Hume, USN

LCDR Charles D. Schoonover, USN \*

## Class of 1955

Lt Col Donald L. Rissi, USAF

Maj Jay Coates Jr., USAF

Lt Col Henry M. Serex, USAF

CDR James L. Griffin, USN

Maj John L. McElroy, USAF #

Maj Thomas D. Moore Jr., USAF \*

## Class of 1956

Col Charles A. Levis, USAF

Col Ernest A. Olds, USAF

CDR George H. Wilkins, USN

Maj Philippe B. Fales, USAF

LCDR Wilmer P. Cook, USN

## Class of 1957

Capt Charles F. Swope, USAF

Maj David I. Wright, USAF

Maj Gardner Brewer, USAF

Lt Col Herbert Doby, USAF

Maj Howard V. Andre Jr., USAF

CDR John D. Peace III, USN

LCDR John E. Bartocci, USN

CDR Richard D. Hartman, USN

Lt Col Robert M. Brown, USAF

LCDR Donald G. Brown, USN \*

Capt Kurt W. Gareiss, USAF \*

## Class of 1958

LCDR Carl J. Peterson, USN

Capt Edward R. Browne, USMC

Lt Col John W. Held, USAF

Capt Wesley R. Phengar, USMC \*

## Class of 1959

LT Charles D. Witt, USN

Lt Col Glenn R. Morrison Jr., USAF

Maj Jack W. Phillips, USMC

Capt Roland R. Obenland, USAF

LT William L. Brown, USN

Col Winfield W. Sisson, USMC \*

LT Gary D. Hopps, USN #

Maj Wayne R. Hyatt, USMC

LCDR Lawrence Gosen, USN

## Class of 1960

Maj Donnie L. Darrow, USMC

Capt Martin N. Tull, USMC

LT William M. Roark, USN

LT Malcolm A. Avore, USN \*

Capt Alexander McIver, USAF #

CPT Don T. Elledge, USA #

1st Lt Donald A. Mollicone, USAF \*

## Class of 1961

LT Gene R. Gollahon, USN

Capt Henry Kolakowski Jr., USMC

LCDR James J. Connell, USN

LT John D. Prudhomme, USN

Capt John L. Prichard, USMC

LCDR Robert S. Graustein, USN

Capt Sterling K. Coates, USMC

LTJG Terence M. Murphy, USN

Capt Willard D. Marshall, USMC

LT Frank M. Brown, USN \*

## Class of 1962

Capt Barry R. Delphin, USAF

Maj Bradley G. Cuthbert, USAF

LT Charles A. Knochel, USN

LCDR Charles R. Lee, USN

*Continued on next page*

# IN MEMORIAM

LT Charles W. Fryer, USN  
 CDR Clarence O. Tolbert, USN  
 1st Lt Cyrus S. Roberts IV, USAF  
 Capt John A. Lavoo, USMC  
 Maj Lucius L. Heiskell, USAF  
 Lt Michael T. Newell, USMC  
 LT Richard L. Laws, USN  
 Capt Thomas L. Carter, USMC  
 LTJG Thomas E. Murray, USN \*  
 LTJG Geoffrey H. Osborn, USN \*  
 LT Jack D. Renfro, USN \*  
 LT Richard W. Hastings, USN \*  
 LCDR John R. Poe, USN \*

### Class of 1963

LCDR Alexander J. Palenscar III, USN  
 LTJG Carl L. Doughtie, USN  
 LCDR Charles W. Marik, USN  
 LT Daniel H. Moran Jr., USN  
 LTJG Donald C. Maclaughlin Jr., USN  
 LCDR Erwin B. Templin Jr., USN  
 LT Frederick E. Trani, USN  
 LCDR James K. Patterson, USN  
 LTJG Jerald L. Pinneker, USN  
 LCDR John B. Worcester, USN  
 LCDR Kenneth R. Buell, USN  
 LT Stanley K. Smiley, USN  
 LT William C. Fitzgerald, USN  
 Richard A. Schenk #

### Class of 1964

LT Barry W. Hooper, USN  
 LCDR Charles C. Parish, USN  
 LCDR Geoffrey R. Shumway IV, USN  
 LCDR Jerry F. Hogan, USN  
 LT Michael R. Collins, USN  
 LTJG Robin B. Cassell, USN  
 1stLt Thomas J. Holden, USMC  
 LCDR Virgil K. Cameron, USN  
 Capt William A. Griffis III, USMC  
 LTJG Gerald W. Siebe, USN \*

### Class of 1965

LCDR Edward J. Broms Jr., USN  
 1stLt Richard W. Piatt, USMC  
 2ndLt Ronald W. Meyer, USMC  
 LT William L. Covington, USN  
 1stLt William M. Grammar, USMC  
 LT Lynn M. Travis, USN  
 LTJG Warren W. Boles, USN

LT John C. Lindahl, USN  
 LT Gary B. Simkins, USN

### Class of 1966

LT Bruce C. Fryar, USN  
 2ndLt Charles W. F. Warner, USMC  
 LT Donald G. Droz, USN  
 LTJG Douglas D. Vaughn, USN  
 Capt John W. Consolvo Jr., USMC  
 2ndLt John W. Doherty, USMC  
 2ndLt Larry V. Chmiel, USMC  
 LT Leland C. Cooke Sage, USN  
 LCDR Marvin B. Christopher Wiles, USN  
 Capt Michael C. Wunsch, USMC  
 LCDR Nicholas G. Brooks, USN  
 LCDR Orland J. Pender Jr., USN  
 1stLt Raymond C. Daley, USMC  
 CAPT Robert D. Huie Jr., USMC  
 LT Victor P. Buckley, USN  
 LTJG William T. Morris III, USN

### Class of 1967

2ndLt Alan A. Kettner, USMC  
 LCDR Barton S. Creed, USN  
 LTJG Hal C. Castle Jr., USN  
 2ndLt Henry A. Wright, USMC  
 LTJG Kenneth D. Norton, USN  
 LT Richard C. Deuter, USN  
 2ndLt Robert E. Tuttle, USMC  
 2ndLt Thomas J. Weiss, USMC  
 1stLt Gary E. Holtzclaw, USMC \*

### Class of 1968

LT David M. Thompson, USN  
 1stLt James D. Jones, USMC  
 LCDR Philip S. Clark Jr., USN  
 LTJG Richard H. Buzzell, USN  
 2ndLt Theodore R. Vivilacqua, USMC  
 LT Melvin S. Dry, USN

### Class of 1969

Capt Scott D. Ketchie, USMC  
 LTJG Arnold W. Barden Jr., USN  
 PFC David D. Peppin Jr., USMC #

### Key

Naval Academy graduates KIA in Vietnam  
 # Nongraduates KIA in Vietnam  
 \* Alumni who were operational losses



PHOTO COURTESY OF PICTNOTES

Signing the Paris Peace Accords of 1973

## THE PARIS PEACE ACCORDS

The Paris Peace Accords, signed on 27 January 1973, called for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, a cease-fire and the release of all American prisoners of war (POWs). The first release for American military POWs during Operation Homecoming was 12 February 1973 conducted simultaneously from North Vietnam, South Vietnam and China. They were flown by C-141s to Clark AFB where they received medical treatment before meeting their families three days later at military bases in the U.S. Additional groups of POWs were released over the next six weeks, the last of which left Hanoi on 28 March 1973.

More than 58,000 Americans made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War. That includes Naval Academy graduates and nongraduates Killed in Action and Naval Academy alumni who were operational losses.

- To learn more about the Naval Academy alumni who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam visit: VMH: Vietnam ([usnamemorialhall.org](http://usnamemorialhall.org))
- To watch The Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership Return with Honor Interviews including Naval Academy alumni, visit: Return With Honor Interviews—YouTube
- To watch the 2022 PBS documentary *P.O.W.: Passing on Wisdom* featuring stories from POWs and recent Naval Academy midshipmen, visit: MPT Presents | [P.O.W.: Passing on Wisdom | PBS](https://www.pbs.org) 



Memorial Hall

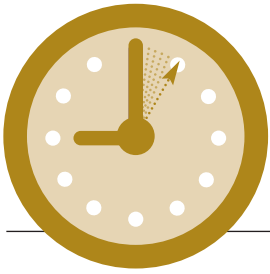


YouTube



PBS

*Captain John M. McGrath '62, USN (Ret.), contributed to this list.*



## FIVE MINUTES WITH...

**BEN BILES '08**

*This feature spotlights the extraordinary things being done by alumni in the Navy and Marine Corps and their unique, impactful achievements in the private sector and in their communities. Please send suggestions to jimmy.debutts@usna.com.*

Ben Biles '08 is honoring the memory of his best friend, Lieutenant Keith Lisante '08, USN, through the American Veterans Group, an investment banking company Biles co-founded that dedicates 25 percent of its profits to career readiness programs for military veterans.

Biles and Lisante were roommates at the U.S. Naval Academy and dreamed of working together on Wall Street when their military service was done. But those dreams were shattered when Lisante, struggling with his transition back to civilian life, took his own life just weeks after returning home from deployment.

Structured as a public benefit corporation, American Veterans Group is the first and only company of its kind on Wall Street. Since Biles established the company in 2018, American Veterans Group's philanthropic mission has directly supported career training for up to 170 veterans in Boston, New York City, Charlotte and Dallas-Fort Worth.

Biles served six years as a Navy officer, completing an eight-month deployment aboard NIMITZ aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. In his last assignment, he served as a military procurement officer at the Naval Academy.

He recently shared his story with *Shipmate*.

**Shipmate:** Why did you choose to attend the Naval Academy?

**Biles:** I grew up in a small town in North Carolina where my stepmother was the mayor. I was always fascinated with some of our dinner table conversations such as, "how would we get the school funded, or how will we build that new park," so I was really drawn to public service early on as a kid. I carried that over to my college choice of the Naval Academy. I've always enjoyed serving a cause bigger than myself, and I found those similar beliefs with the midshipmen and USNA alumni that I met. Besides marrying my wife, I would say that attending the Naval Academy has been the best choice I have made.

**Shipmate:** Why was it important for you to launch a business that serves the veteran community?

**Biles:** Keith Lisante and I graduated as economics majors in 2008 right when the Global Financial Crisis was rearing its ugly head. We saw our friends in civilian colleges having a very difficult time finding employment. We had family suffer financially. And after learning leadership from an institution such as the Naval Academy, we questioned where the leadership was on Wall Street.

Keith's death was profoundly personal to me. I resolved to honor Keith's legacy by fulfilling our shared vision for a career in finance, while at the same time providing meaningful philanthropic support for military

veterans and their families seeking to succeed in their return to civilian life.

We structured the American Veterans Group as a public benefit corporation and created a parallel nonprofit foundation—the AVG foundation—that manages all our philanthropic giving. We felt this would significantly boost our impact and that it would underscore our commitment to deliver measurable, accountable social impact in the communities where we and our clients do business.

Since our inception in 2018, American Veterans Group has donated more than \$550,000 to 36 different veterans organizations in 45 cities across the United States. One hundred percent of those funds have directly impacted more than 3,100 veterans.

**Shipmate:** What are some issues facing veterans you help promote awareness for?

**Biles:** Two of the biggest issues facing transitioning service members, particularly post 9/11 veterans, are mental health and the transition to the civilian workforce. The Department of Veterans Affairs, for example, has reported an increased demand for mental health services as veterans come to terms with the withdrawal from Afghanistan and try to reconcile their service. Additionally, the process of seeking work in the civilian world can be daunting for many service members as their experience does not always translate well into corporate terminology. Nearly half of all veterans leave their first post-military position within a year.

We've been able to donate to organizations like SoldierStrong, which provides virtual reality therapies designed to help veterans recover from post-traumatic stress. We also have an ongoing partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes program where our donations have funded the organization's corporate fellowship and training programs for transitioning service members and their spouses.

**Shipmate:** How did the Naval Academy prepare you for your business and charitable endeavors?

**Biles:** Of the 1,200 or so students in my class, we had individuals from all 50 states. There were 20 different countries represented, people from different walks of life and our shared experience created a level playing field for all, regardless of socioeconomic background. The experience taught me about embracing diversity. We were one team focused on executing our mission.

The Naval Academy helped ingrain ethics into each and every decision I made. I learned from a young age how the decisions I made as an individual reflected the values of our nation.

As I've gotten older, I realize how valuable this value system—forged from my upbringing at the Naval Academy—has been. □



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN BILES '08





# MIDSHIPMEN AT WAR: VIETNAM—AN UNTOLD STORY

By Captain Gordon I. Peterson '68, USN (Ret.)

A mayday call from a downed American pilot springs a Navy helicopter aircrew into rescue mode. Then-Midshipman first class Joseph C. Glutting is aboard the guided-missile destroyer leader *WORDEN* near islands south of Hanoi, North Vietnam, during the search-and-rescue operation.

“Our helicopter went in and rescued him, but then North Vietnamese 8-inch shore batteries opened up,” Glutting said. “The first rounds were a bit off, but the second set was very close—they hit so close aboard that the explosions drenched me and my gun crew with sea water.”

Glutting, a 1968 Naval Academy graduate and retired commander, saw firsthand the realities of war during summer at-sea training in 1967. That experience shaped his post-commissioning journey.

“*WORDEN* maneuvered to open the range since its 3-inch guns were no match for the enemy’s artillery. Then I saw a *FRAM I* (Fleet Rehabilitation and Modernization) destroyer steaming in to engage those batteries and making smoke to help hide us while she closed in—firing away with her forward, 5-inch/38-caliber mount. She turned to unmask both her guns and engaged the North Vietnamese 8-inch batteries. It was magnificent! Here was this small ship going in harm’s way to save us—and she did!

“Then and there,” I said, “That’s the kind of ship I want to be on—going forward and attacking, not heading out of harm’s way.”

After reporting aboard *WORDEN* in June 1967, Glutting was assigned a general quarters station in charge of a 3-inch/50-caliber gun mount amidships and stood junior-officer watches. Operations at Yankee Station were intense during the carrier air wing’s missions over North Vietnam. During his cruise, *WORDEN* supported the carriers and conducted two successful pilot-rescue missions with its embarked helicopter detachment.

Glutting selected surface warfare after graduation. He served in South Vietnam as an adviser in a River Assault and Interdiction Division (RAID) in the Mekong Delta.

The Naval Academy’s professional training-and-education programs play an important role in preparing midshipmen for their service as commissioned officers in the Navy and Marine Corps. At-sea summer training cruises with fleet units are an important component of these programs. They have a long tradition of furthering midshipmen’s professional development, familiarizing them with operational naval forces and motivating them for a career of naval service.

Although these cruises have evolved considerably over the years, they continue to provide valuable “hands-on” functional training, practical

**This midshipman in the Class of 1968 arrived by helicopter at his WWII-era Fletcher-class destroyer while it was deployed in the waters off South Vietnam in June 1967. He is being lowered to the ship’s small flight deck that had been installed for its unmanned “DASH” anti-submarine warfare drone.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE U.S. NAVY

*Continued on page 34.*

# FEATURE

Continued from page 31.

applications of academic-course material and leadership-development experience.

A historic chapter in at-sea summer training occurred during the Vietnam War following the major escalation of hostilities between the United States and North Vietnam in 1965. Between 1967 and 1970, hundreds of Naval Academy and NROTC midshipmen were assigned to ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet conducting combat or combat-support operations—at sea and, several times in small numbers, on the ground in South Vietnam, on its inland waterways and in the air.

Aside from several Academy class histories, *Lucky Bag* entries and personal accounts, midshipmen’s experiences during one of the longest wars in U.S. history are an untold story. The 50th anniversary of the cessation of combat operations between the United States and North Vietnam occurs in March. Documenting those alumni who served as midshipmen in the Vietnam War is long overdue.

**This map shows the U.S. military operations, North Vietnamese POW camps and Navy support locations during the Vietnam War.**

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION



The narratives that follow are a step in the right direction, but many more alumni have a story to tell.

## A PIVOTAL YEAR

U.S. military assistance and direct operational support to the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam increased during the early 1960s. The growth was a continuation of U.S. counterinsurgency efforts to assist the beleaguered nation in its fight against communist Viet Cong guerrillas within its borders while also resisting North Vietnamese aggression.

As part of this increase, U.S. Seventh Fleet operations expanded significantly in spring 1964, a pivotal year in the war.

“Beginning in May, a major part of the Seventh Fleet was deployed off the South Vietnamese coast,” Edward J. Marolda noted in *By Air, Land, and Sea*, his comprehensive history of U.S. naval operations during the war. By summer, for example, Task Force 77’s aircraft carriers CONSTELLATION, TICONDEROGA and BON HOMME RICHARD were on station.

Naval Academy and NROTC first class midshipmen served on Seventh Fleet ships for summer cruises prior to this major expansion. According to the Naval Academy superintendent’s special order for summer training in 1963, for example, approximately 225 first class midshipmen in the Class of 1964 were assigned in two groups to sequential, one-month cruises.

During this timeframe, at-sea summer training cruises were scheduled for first and third class midshipmen. First classmen’s training focused on a junior officer’s duties to enhance their preparation for commissioned service. Third classmen were acquainted with shipboard organization and the duties of a ship’s enlisted crew.

The Class of 1965’s at-sea training in summer 1964 included a Western Pacific cruise for 245 first classmen from early June until early August. Although midshipmen knew their assigned ships, they were not told where they would operate until they reported aboard. The Seventh Fleet’s high operational tempo resulted in many of these midshipmen reporting to ships deployed for operations supporting South Vietnam.

After arriving at their ports of embarkation in Japan and the U.S. Naval Station Subic Bay in the Republic of the Philippines in early June, midshipmen boarded their ships, awaited their arrival or were transported to them at sea by another ship, a flight to an aircraft carrier or by helicopter. This pattern was followed during subsequent years. They performed a wide range of duties on board aircraft carriers, surface combatants, amphibious-force ships and logistics-force ships. The midshipmen's experiences varied from ship to ship depending on its type, operational tempo and assigned missions. The degree to which they were assimilated into the ship's wardroom and assigned meaningful duties also had an influence.

Commander Timothy W. Tedford '65, USN (Ret.), was assigned to the destroyer SHELTON with three classmates.

"The ship had begun 28-day operations in the Gulf of Tonkin," he said. "We patrolled for four weeks into July just beyond the 12-mile limit off North Vietnam."

While aboard, Tedford was assigned duties as a division officer and stood four-hour watches in the ship's junior-officer-of-the-watch rotation. Surface combatants with midshipmen embarked also supported carrier battle group operations.

The amphibious assault ship VALLEY FORGE, with its complement of U.S. Marines and helicopters, embarked both Academy and NROTC midshipmen.

"Early in the cruise," Lieutenant Colonel Michael G. Malone '65, USMC (Ret.), recalled, "we sailed to South Vietnam where, just offshore from Da Nang, we offloaded a Marine helicopter squadron that flew to the Marine helicopter air base near China Beach and Marble Mountain. I had no idea that 19 months later I would be the platoon commander of the amtrak [amphibious tracked vehicle] platoon tasked with protecting the village at the base of the Marble Mountain."

Seventh Fleet's wartime operations provided midshipmen ample opportunities to prepare for their future leadership responsibilities as junior officers.

As the end of the Class of 1965's summer WESTPAC cruise approached in early August, preparations began to disembark them in late July for their return



**Eight members of the Class of 1965 and 13 NROTC midshipmen, some of whom are pictured here, reported in June 1964 to the guided-missile cruiser TOPEKA. By late July, after embarking midshipmen on ships assigned to carrier battle groups operating in the Gulf of Tonkin for return to port, the ship's cruise book reported their numbers swelled to 86.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE U.S. NAVY

home. The pace reportedly accelerated in the waters off North Vietnam toward the end of the month—before what became known as the Gulf of Tonkin Incident in early August. Midshipmen were aware that an order had been received to transfer them to ships for their return to port.

Captain Robert A. Stanfield '65, USNR (Ret.), serving on the guided-missile destroyer BERKELEY while it was screening TICONDEROGA in the Gulf of Tonkin, was "high-lined" to an attack cargo ship with six other midshipmen and returned to Subic.

Jon A. Lazzaretti '65 recalled his ship's role in returning midshipmen to port.

"I was assigned to the guided-missile cruiser TOPEKA," he said, "one of the ships sent into the Gulf to offload midshipmen assigned to the carriers on Yankee Station as well as midshipmen on the destroyers TURNER JOY and MADDOX."

Captain Leslie R. Heselton '65, USN (Ret.), assigned to TURNER JOY with other midshipmen, confirmed they were transferred to TOPEKA before the Gulf of Tonkin Incident.

"TOPEKA was quite full of midshipmen for the rest of the cruise," he said. "Every bunk was occupied."

The cruiser soon departed for a port call in Hong Kong and then Okinawa and Japan for the midshipmen's return flights home.

Some midshipmen's return to port from the Gulf took longer. Captain Francis D. Schlesinger '65, USN (Ret.), was assigned to the amphibious command ship ELDORADO with 12 Academy and NROTC midshipmen.

"We stayed aboard a week after the two attacks," he said, "and were then literally 'dumped' off in Subic Bay."

They joined other midshipmen and waited days before flights back to the United States were arranged.

Soon after the transfer of most midshipmen from ships operating in the Gulf of Tonkin, a naval confrontation there marked a major turning point in the war. During a surveillance-intelligence patrol in international waters off North Vietnam's coast on 2 August, MADDOX responded to attacks by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. Aircraft from TICONDEROGA assisted in repulsing the attacks.



## FEATURE

Two days later during a follow-on nighttime patrol in inclement weather, MADDOX and TURNER JOY again responded to what was reported as another attack by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. After approval by President Johnson, TICONDEROGA and CONSTELLATION launched punitive airstrikes against targets in North Vietnam on 5 August. Two Navy aircraft were shot down, resulting in the death of one pilot and the capture of the other.

Subsequently, questions arose whether this second North Vietnamese attack occurred. Decades later, following the declassification and public release of many documents associated with the incident, it was confirmed it had not.

The Navy's confrontation in the Gulf of Tonkin resulted in the U.S. Congress passing the joint Tonkin Gulf Resolution on 7 August authorizing President Lyndon Johnson to increase U.S. military involvement in the war between South and North Vietnam.

Midshipmen whose assigned ships satisfied the award criteria earned the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. The Vietnam Service Medal was established in July 1965. Service members who were awarded the expeditionary medal for service in Vietnam before this date were later authorized to exchange it for the new service medal.

The Class of 1965's assignments in summer 1964 to ships operating off South and North Vietnam during this prelude to major U.S. combat operations paved the way for several follow-on classes to serve during the Vietnam War until summer 1970.

### COMBAT OPERATIONS

Three years elapsed before another WESTPAC cruise was scheduled for midshipmen in 1967. As *Shipmate* reported in 1965, Superintendent Rear Admiral Charles S. Minter Jr. '37, USN (Ret.), stated, "Our major setback in the cruise program has been the cancellation of foreign port visits, which limits first and third class cruises to Western Atlantic and Eastern Pacific operations."

A similar schedule followed in 1966.

Overseas summer cruises resumed in 1967 with the Class of 1968. The reality of



the war was never far from a midshipman's mind. The photos and names of Academy alumni who had been killed or were missing in action were displayed in Bancroft Hall's Rotunda.

U.S. Navy and Marine Corps operations at sea and "in-country" had increased significantly in early 1965. Operation Rolling Thunder, a sustained bombing campaign against targets in North Vietnam, began in March 1965. Carrier battle groups participating in the campaign operated from Yankee Station, a maritime position located initially off the coast of South Vietnam until its relocation approximately 90 miles off the coast of North Vietnam in 1966.

Also in March, Marines assigned to the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade landed at Da Nang in the I-Corps tactical zone in northern South Vietnam to protect its airfield. A major advanced base for the support of U.S. operations was later developed there. Operation Market Time, the naval blockade of South Vietnam's coastline by the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard and South Vietnam's Navy also commenced in March.

In December 1965, the Navy's River Patrol Force (Task Force 116) was created to patrol the massive, strategically important Mekong River Delta's waterways during Operation Game Warden to disrupt Viet Cong supply lines and activities. The Navy's first deployment of river patrol boats (PBRs) on the Delta's rivers and canals soon followed. Additional Navy air, ground and surface units operated in the Delta to support the "Brown Water Navy." In June 1967, the joint U.S. Navy-U.S. Army Mobile Riverine Task Force 117 began operations in this vast, southern-most region of South Vietnam in the IV-Corps tactical zone.

The Naval Academy's Seventh Fleet training cruise for 100 first classmen in 1967 was scheduled from 9 June until 4 August. The superintendent's special order for summer training did not

**Time at sea during wartime deployments was not all work. These midshipmen in the Class of 1969 enjoyed "swim call" in the flooded well deck of the dock landing ship GUNSTON HALL while en route to their assigned ships deployed in the Gulf of Tonkin in June 1968.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF LCDR WALTER R. GIRALDI '69, USN (RET.)

specify where in the Western Pacific. However, before they selected their preference for one of the 11 scheduled cruises, midshipmen were informed this cruise would entail operations in the waters off Vietnam.

Midshipmen were also told they would be required to complete a cruise journal documenting their training that would be graded and, following their return to the Academy, take an examination based on at-sea training objectives and syllabi. Grades were accredited in calculating their academic-and-professional course multiple for class standing. Failure was not an option. Unsatisfactory grades could delay a first classman's graduation until the cruise and the exam were repeated satisfactorily.

These new requirements resulted from a comprehensive review of the Academy's professional training-and-education programs initiated by Superintendent Rear Admiral Draper L. Kauffman '33, USN (Ret.), in 1967. Major changes were made to these programs as part of what Kauffman described as a "professional revolution" to establish a better balance with the Academy's "academic revolution" of the past eight years.

Understandably, completing a cruise journal and taking a graded examination upon return to the Academy caused consternation for some midshipmen, but they also provided an incentive for improved performance.

The Class of 1968's cohort departed the Academy 8 June for air transport to Travis Air Force Base and thence Clark Air Base in the Philippines. They boarded their ships at U.S. Naval Station Subic Bay or were transported to deployed ships by mid-June. Their combat operations encompassed a wide range of missions, including naval gunfire support, carrier battle-group operations at Yankee Station, maritime harassment-and-interdiction ("H&I") patrols and logistics support.

The opportunity to serve in wartime interested these midshipmen for professional and personal reasons. The cruise also allowed midshipmen to gain a more informed understanding of U.S. involvement in the war, exposed them to the realities of combat operations and influenced some in their future service-selection decisions.

"I entered the Naval Academy with the desire and plan to become an officer of Marines," said Lieutenant General Jack W. Klimp '68, USMC (Ret.). "I selected the Seventh Fleet cruise because we were at war, and I figured this was the best way I could experience at least one aspect of it."

During his cruise on *BON HOMME RICHARD*, Klimp flew on two operational missions in the S-2 Tracker ASW aircraft and one in an A-3D Skywarrior conducting aerial refueling.

"Returning to the carrier in the S-2 on my second flight the pilot invited me up into the cockpit," Klimp recalled. "That landing convinced me that I was not an aviator."

Following graduation, he served in Vietnam as a rifle platoon commander, company executive officer and company commander.

The wartime cruise appealed to Commander Thomas Hayes '68, USN (Ret.). He hoped to serve on a small surface combatant to learn more about the enlisted crew's duties and to do something meaningful during the war. The possibility that his father, the executive officer of the amphibious assault ship *IWO JIMA*, might

also be deployed in theater did not come to pass.

Hayes and classmate James Dale Jones '68 were assigned to the destroyer escort *HOOPER*.

"We had a great commanding officer," Hayes said. "He integrated us into the watch bill and gave us real jobs."

The midshipmen participated in a broad range of operations, including an important intelligence-gathering mission.

"It was a great experience," Hayes said, "probably the best thing I did at Navy."

Following flight school, Hayes served in Vietnam as a helicopter gunship pilot in the Seawolves of Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron 3. First Lieutenant Jones, USMC, while serving as a platoon leader of a Marine force-reconnaissance unit in Vietnam, was killed in action in 1970.

Colonel John C. McKay '68, USMC (Ret.), assigned to the destroyer *AULT*, spent a portion of his cruise with a Marine Corps Combined Action Platoon (CAP) in South Vietnam. McKay served as an enlisted Marine before attending the Academy. When he reported aboard and met with *AULT*'s commanding officer, the late Commander Robert E. Brady '49, USN, McKay informed him he planned to serve in the Marine Corps following graduation. Brady soon arranged for McKay to serve ashore as well during his cruise—possibly the first midshipman to do so during the Vietnam War, but not the last.

"I spent a considerable portion of my cruise with the CAP on the Batangan

**The aircraft carrier *FORRESTAL* ablaze in the Gulf of Tonkin on 30 July 1967, as seen from the flight deck of the attack carrier *ORISKANY*. Midshipmen in the Class of 1968 vividly remember seeing *FORRESTAL* days later when it returned to U.S. Naval Station Subic Bay, RP, for repairs—still trailing smoke from its deadly flight deck fire.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE U.S. NAVY





**“We saw what the war was like,” is how then-MIDN Walter R. Girdali ’69 described his wartime deployment on the attack carrier BON HOMME RICHARD in the summer of 1968. Girdali is shown here with a battle-damaged A-4 Skyhawk on the carrier’s hangar deck.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF LCDR WALTER R. GIRALDI ’69, USN (RET.)

Peninsula, Quang Ngai Province in southern I Corps,” McKay said. “I was also assigned to swift boats participating in Operation Market Time ranging as far south as Vung Tau Province.” While serving aboard AULT, McKay was berthed in a cabin directly below the number two, 5-inch/38 caliber gun turret.

“Sleep was ephemeral in the close quarters of forced air,” McKay recalled, “and seemingly constant gunfire support missions.”

McKay returned to South Vietnam in 1968 following graduation, serving as a platoon commander in the 5th Marines during some of the war’s most bitterly fought engagements. Wounded twice in action in 1969, he was medically evacuated stateside following his second wound—one that resulted in the loss of his left eye and hospitalization for two years. He returned to full duty as an infantry officer.

The Class of 1968’s first classmen returned stateside in early August. Some left with the indelible memory of the attack carrier FORRESTAL ablaze in the Gulf of Tonkin on 30 July. The carrier arrived at Yankee Station just five days earlier and commenced flight operations. Other midshipmen saw the carrier arrive for emergency repairs at Subic Bay on 1 August—still trailing smoke from the disastrous fire.

The Navy’s investigation revealed an F-4B Phantom fighter jet’s inadvertent firing of a 5-inch Zuni rocket, caused in part by an electrical malfunction, struck an A-4 Skyhawk during preparations for a strike against North Vietnam. Fed by burning jet

fuel and exploding bombs, the fire soon spread below decks. The ship lost 134 officers and men, with an additional 161 injured.

Lieutenant Colonel Richard E. Glantz ’68, USMC (Ret.), assigned with other classmates on the attack carrier CONSTELLATION, was present with them in Subic Bay 1 August awaiting their return flight home.

“After spending some 40 days on Yankee Station, I had for the first time as a midshipman grasped the true nature of the Navy’s front-line forces and the selfless devotion of every sailor therein. When we stood on the perimeter of Subic Bay and watched FORRESTAL limp into the harbor with all hands on deck, my feelings of pride for the Navy were mixed with sorrow for the lost and injured—and the reality of the future career we as midshipman had chosen.”

### ON THE LINE WITH THE CARRIERS

Summer 1968 saw 130 first-class midshipmen in the Class of 1969 assigned to ships operating in the combat zone from early June to early August. In January, North Vietnamese forces and the Viet Cong launched their Tet Offensive across South Vietnam and commenced their extended siege of the U.S. combat base at Khe Sanh. Operations Market Time and Game Warden continued in high gear, as did the Navy’s participation in the air campaign against North Vietnam. Midshipmen again served on ships conducting the gamut of combat operations.

The Class of 1969 cohort arrived in the Philippines and reported to their assigned ships by various means.

“At Subic we boarded the dock landing ship GUNSTON HALL—built in 1943 and still operating her original reciprocating steam-piston engines,” recalled Stephen Leaman ’69. “She carried dozens of midshipmen to their respective ships.”

Leaman and nine of his classmates were transported by helicopter to the attack carrier AMERICA. During the summer months, Task Force 77’s carriers conducted sustained strike operations to slow North Vietnam’s flow of men and war materials to the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.

“I did three weeks with B Division tending 10 boilers and then wore a yellow shirt with the aircraft handling team assigned to the air wing,” Leaman said. “We flew 12 hours on and 12 hours off sharing attack duties with two other carriers on Yankee Station, BON HOMME RICHARD and YORKTOWN. Most air wing sailors worked 15 hours every day. I also flew aboard our Carrier Onboard Delivery C-2 Greyhound for take offs and landings. In July, AMERICA got her first kill while we were aboard courtesy of an F-4J Phantom downing a MiG-21.”

Leaman recalled seeing many damaged aircraft after they returned from their missions.

“Others did not come back,” he said.

Lieutenant Commander Walter R. Girdali ’69, USN (Ret.), was transported with his group of midshipmen to YORKTOWN for a week before transferring to BON HOMME RICHARD after its arrival on station following a port visit.

“They put us through the paces in different divisions,” he said, “and we saw what the air war in Vietnam was like—underway replenishments, flight operations, arming aircraft, watching 5-inch rockets skid off the flight deck when planes trapped

without having all ordnance expended and standing watches.”

Giraldi also experienced catapult launches and arrested landings during a few operational flights in one of the air wing’s E-1B Tracer early warning aircraft.

“Life on the ship was serious business, but there were some down times too,” he said.

During his cruise, a pilot from Fighter Squadron 51 flying an F-8 Crusader downed a North Vietnamese MiG-21.

“He was very willing to talk about the episode and made extensive use of his hands to describe the encounter,” Giraldi said.

BON HOMME RICHARD’s air wing flew F-8 Crusaders and A-4 Skyhawks since its flight deck was too small for the larger F-4 Phantom fighter-bomber and the A-6 Intruder all-weather attack aircraft.

“The A-4s did the bombing,” said Giraldi, “and it was not uncommon for some to return with battle damage. One A-4 took a round through its wing but was still able to land under control.”

Following graduation and an initial assignment on a guided-missile destroyer, Giraldi served on a Brown Water Navy PBR based in the Rung Sat Special Zone south of Saigon.

The Navy’s mobile logistic-support force played an essential role in enabling Seventh Fleet warships to maintain extremely high tempos of combat operations. Commander Richard D. Gano ’69, USN (Ret.), and three classmates learned just how critical this support was during nearly eight weeks on the ammunition ship MAUNA KEA. Gano, a member of the Academy’s Yard Patrol Squadron, was disappointed initially when he was not assigned to a destroyer.

“As it turned out,” he said, “it was a most exciting and rewarding cruise.”

After reporting aboard MAUNA KEA during a port visit in Hong Kong, the ship was underway for the Gulf of Tonkin. The commanding officer met with the midshipmen to explain their duties.

“He made it clear we would have numerous responsibilities,” Gano said, “including standing junior-officer-of-the-deck watches leading to solo watches when we qualified as officer

of the deck (OOD). We were soon on station at night at Yankee Station and rearmed TICONDEROGA.

“Heavy combat seemed to be occurring everywhere as we rearmed the carriers and the destroyers and cruisers on the gun line close to shore.”

In late July, he was the OOD when MAUNA KEA was scheduled to rearm a carrier.

“The carrier ordered us to come alongside,” Gano said. “I made course adjustments to do so and wondered when an officer would relieve me. As it turned out, with both the XO and CO now on the bridge, the skipper left me at the conn. I brought the ship alongside and completed the rearmament.”

MAUNA KEA was subsequently awarded a Meritorious Unit Commendation for its distinguished seven-month support of Seventh Fleet combat operations.

“I returned to the Academy with a letter designating me as an OOD, a Vietnam Service Ribbon and later a Meritorious Unit Commendation ribbon,” Gano said. “I was proud of my contributions to the war effort. The cruise ended up being a dream come true.”

Commissioned as a surface warfare officer, Gano deployed three times to Vietnam between 1971 and 1975. ⚓

*CAPT Gordon I. Peterson ’68, USN (Ret.), the Class of 1968’s corresponding secretary, served in the Vietnam War on the destroyer JENKINS during his first-class midshipman’s summer cruise in 1967. He served again in Vietnam as a helo gunship pilot with the Seawolves of HA(L)-3 in 1970-1971, flying 515 combat missions.*

Part two will of this story will appear in the March-April issue of *Shipmate*.

**Then-MIDN Richard D. Gano ’69, David B. Jennings ’69, Michael P. Jarina ’69 and Deck E. Harrell ’69, pictured here on the flying bridge of the ammunition ship MAUNA KEA in July 1968. The midshipmen experienced intensive underway replenishment operations transferring ammunition to aircraft carriers operating at Yankee Station and surface combatants on the gun line close to shore.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE U.S. NAVY



# '66

**Life Membership: 66%**

**Donor Participation: 24.58%**

Pres: **VADM John "Scott" Redd, USN (Ret.)**  
7242 Evans Mill Rd., McLean, VA 22101-3422  
p: 703-790-0933; c:703-298-7879  
e: Redd@analog.org

Sec'y: **CDR Mike Baird, USN (Ret.)**  
10439 Rivington Ct., Lone Tree, CO 80124  
e: mike.baird@1966.usna.com

West Coast Sec'y: **Robert G. Johnson Jr., Esq.**  
41391 Kalmia St., Ste. 210, Murrieta, CA 92562

Website: [www.usna66.org](http://www.usna66.org)

Welcome to 2023. I hope everyone is doing well and looking forward to the new year. This article has several interesting pieces, so I'll get right to it.

**Tom Eubanks** provided the following historical recap of HUE CITY (CG-66).

✉ "After 31 years of dedicated and honorable service, HUE CITY (CG 66) was decommissioned at a pier side ceremony on Friday, 23 September 2022, in Norfolk, VA.

The ship and her heritage were honored in a manner which was deeply respectful and – for the class of 1966 - highly emotional, for several reasons.

First, and specific to us, she was one of only two ships in commission with a hull number matching our USNA class year, 66. Second, her commissioning Commanding Officer was a '66 Classmate, CAPT **Tom Eubanks**, USN (Ret.). Providentially, Tom was the Guest Speaker for this final event, bookending the ship's life of service. Third, when Tom first took command in 1991, he reported to another Classmate, then RADM Scott Redd, Commander Cruiser/Destroyer Group 12.

Secondly, as a Class, Vietnam was "our" war. USNA '66 lost more Classmates killed in action (KIA) in that conflict than any other Naval Academy Class. In fact, we lost more KIA overall than any other Class since the Class of 1945. Decades later we continue to remember them and honor their service and sacrifice. As a tangible manifestation of our respect, the Class of 1966 has honored one outstanding officer and one outstanding enlisted crewmember of Hué City with an annual Leadership Award every year since she was commissioned in 1991.

Third, and somewhat unusually, Hué City was the only ship named for a battle in Vietnam. As a result, she held a special place in the hearts and minds of the many Marines and sailors who fought in that bloody battle as well as in the war overall. Included in that number were several Classmates; former Class president GEN **Carl Fulford** USMC, (Ret.), and **Chuck Tebrich**, who was present at this decommissioning ceremony. Many of those present had also attended the original commissioning ceremony. In his remarks, Tom

discussed the extensive efforts which brought hundreds of Hué City veterans to attend the original commissioning ceremony. Among those was the mother of Sergeant Alfredo Gonzalez, a Medal of Honor recipient in the battle, and namesake of another '66 ship, GONZALEZ (DDG-66). Of special note, Hué is now included in the list of prominent battles on the Navy Marine Corps Memorial Stadium walls.

Tom also recounted the early challenges of serving as the pre-commissioning CO. Those included not only ensuring that his new shipmates would serve the Navy well but also in establishing the sacred heritage of the ship. The latter was exemplified in creating the Ship's Crest, and its motto – Fidelity, Courage, Honor – attributes which played a significant role with the Marines in 1968 at The Battle of Hué.

Following Tom's remarks, CDR Thad Tasso, the final CO, gave an impressive account of the ship's many contributions and accomplishments. Those included numerous forward deployments spanning three decades from the end of the Cold War through the New World Order and the Global War on Terror into the present day.

As a final note, the Admiral presiding over the decommissioning ceremony on behalf of the Naval Sea Systems Command was RADM Huan Nguyen, USN. Amazingly, he himself is a native of Hué, Vietnam who lost his family in the war, was severely wounded, and ultimately made his way to the United States. He was commissioned in 1981 and holds several graduate level degrees in engineering and information technology. He is currently serving as the Deputy Commander, Cyber Engineering, Naval Sea Systems Command. RADM Nguyen made inspirational comments about the Battle of Hué and is a living tribute to the openness and inclusiveness of his adopted country.

The decommissioning ceremony was an enjoyable and celebratory occasion, but also a sad one. The cruiser that had served her country well with a proud heritage was now retired from active duty.

This final ceremony was, appropriately, also attended by '66 Classmates, including Donna

and **Scott Redd**, Gail and **John Sigler**, Betty and **Tom Eubanks**, Karen and **Chuck Tebrich**, **Chuck Grutzius**, **John Jackson**, **Charlie Pfeifer**, and **Charlie Votava**.

Upon completion of the ceremony, and in accordance with Navy protocol, the ship's colors were hauled down a final time. HUE CITY had served her country honorably, faithfully and well for 31 years. During those three decades, The Class of 1966 played a significant role in ensuring that her proud heritage would live forever in the hearts and minds of every member of the Class of 1966."

Great summary, Tom. Thanks!



**TOM EUBANKS WITH HUE CITY CO THAD TASSO**



**CLASSMATES WITH FLAG RAISED OVER PROVINCIAL CAPITAL HUE CITY BY MARINES**

**Skip Stephenson**, 21st Company Rep, sent the following report on his company's participation in the 55th + 1 Reunion.



**'66: CLASSMATES ATTENDING THE DECOM CEREMONY**



'66: 21ST COMPANY REUNION ATTENDEES

✉ The dinner event featured a photographer several of the company got together for a photo. From left to right are Linda McCook, Jeannie and **Dunc Ingraham**, Jan Stephenson, Gayle and **Ron Hartnett**, Gayle and **Bill Bina**, Jackie and **Tom Grim**, and I am kneeling in my Army B-robe, a long-enjoyed practice of mine at the dinner. Missing from the picture (my apologies for not better organizing the gathering of scattered people after dinner... wish I could have a do-over on that): Leslie and **TJ Williams**, Donna Phillips, Lynn and **Bob Nutwell**, Ginny and **Mike O'Shea**, and Judi and **John Williamson**. I only get back to USNA every five years, so it is a treat for me to just walk around at a place for which I am profoundly grateful to have attended. The ambience of the Yard is impressive and sentimental to me.

Our Memorial Service in the Chapel was heartfelt, with each deceased classmate's name read aloud, accompanied with the toll of a bell. For many names, I had some type of recollection, even if only a face.

The Supe's talk to us was informative and interesting. He took the toughest questions (you might imagine those would be from we in the Old Corps, so to speak), and he answered them well, even if not totally satisfying to all.

It was the first formal P-rade of the year, and I thought the Brigade looked good. Sitting in the stands and looking at the assembled Mids looking back at us brought back memories of being on the other end of that visual perspective.

To put it in another perspective, that of time, in a parade during our Plebe Year, we would have looked at the Class of 1902 in the stands! Long Blue Chain, indeed.

The next major Class reunion will be four years from now, to get it back on the 5-year cycle. Thanks, Skip!

**Jack Drake** provided the following item and picture from 2021 Alumni Golf Tournament.

In October 2021, at the Naval Academy Homecoming Golf Tournament, the Class of 1966 entry, consisting of **Tom Grim, Don Eshleman, Pete Wright, and Jack Drake** (L to R in the picture) achieved our long-term Class goal of shooting a 66 (or better) in the Homecoming Scramble on the Naval Academy Golf Course. We shot a 64 (not bad for a bunch of old guys trying to appear youthful). To our knowledge, this is the only time a Class of 1966 team shot a 66 or better at the Navy Homecoming Tournament.

Super, Jack. Thanks!

And that wraps up this issue. Thanks to all who contributed. A gentle reminder that the Class web site, [usna66.org](http://usna66.org), is a great source to learn about Class news and events. Our Web

Master, Therese Long-Fish, is doing a superb job of keeping the site current and easy to navigate. Until April...All the best...Mike!!!

## '67

**Life Membership: 76%**  
**Donor Participation: 38.83%**

Pres: CDR David E. Church, USN (Ret.)

Sec'y: LtCol Jim McNeece, USMC (Ret.)

1603 John Worthington Way, Crownsville, MD 21032  
p: 410-849-3423; e: [scribe67@gmail.com](mailto:scribe67@gmail.com)

**Bill Connell** passed away on 22 October 2022 in Dallas. Bill was born on 8 June 1945, in Jersey City, NJ and graduated with us in 1967. He initially planned to go into the nuclear power program, but wound up in the surface Navy, primarily in the Gator fleet. He met and married Carol in 1968. They were married for 54 years and had two sons, John Paul, who died shortly after birth, and Chris, who died of a rare heart condition at age 46. Bill left the Regular Navy after 4 years, transferring to the Reserves where he served, including a tour in Desert Shield - Desert Storm, until he retired. After leaving the Regular Navy, Bill went to work for Texas Instruments, and he and Carol moved to Dallas. After earning an MBA from



**Bill Connell**

SMU, Bill worked for Rockwell International for 20 years. Bill was a Blue and Gold Officer, a Stephen Minister, and very active in life at the continuing care community where he and Carol resided after his stroke in 2009. He finally succumbed to cancer last October. He was interred at the Dallas-Ft. Worth National



'66: 2021 HOMECOMING SCRAMBLE GROUP

**Charles Roger Khoury Jr. '60**  
15 November 2022

**Gaeton Anthony Long Jr. '60**  
CDR, USNR (Ret.)  
16 August 2022

**Richard Chester Macke II '60**  
ADM, USN (Ret.)  
7 December 2022

**John Clinton McCrork Jr. '60**  
CDR, USN (Ret.)  
15 November 2022

**Dennis Anthony Moore '60**  
CDR, USN (Ret.)  
26 November 2022

**Jon Michael Barr '61** ■  
RADM, USN (Ret.)  
26 October 2022

**Charles Augustus Farrell Jr. '61**  
LCDR, USN (Ret.)  
29 October 2022

**Dennis Henry Irlbeck '61**  
12 November 2022

**George Price Koch Jr. '61**  
25 October 2022

**James Arthur Luper '61**  
CAPT, USN (Ret.)  
28 November 2022

**Peter McAfee '61**  
CPT, USAR  
4 September 2020

**James Emile Mire '61**  
19 October 2022

**Edward Anthony Reidman '61**  
29 October 2022

**Charles David Stackhouse '61**  
CDR, USN (Ret.)  
12 November 2022

**Carl Wayne Demshar '62**  
8 November 2022

**Charles John Koeber '62**  
LCDR, USN (Ret.)  
2 December 2022

**Oliver Grant Locher '62**  
29 November 2022

**Thomas Joseph McDonough Jr. '62**  
12 October 2022

**Hugh Miller Rawls Jr. '62**  
CAPT, USNR (Ret.)  
14 December 2022

**Robin Andre Vaillancourt '62**  
30 November 2022

**Trenwith Rockwell Ward '63**  
11 November 2022

**Thomas O'Connor Johnson III '65**  
1 October 2022

**Arthur Walter Wittig '65**  
LCDR, USN (Ret.)  
9 December 2022

**Christopher David Blair '66**  
8 March 2022

**Gerald Lee Kerr III '66**  
CDR, USNR (Ret.)  
25 October 2022

**Nile Adee Vail Jr. '66**  
21 November 2022

**William Lawrence Connell '67**  
CAPT, USNR (Ret.)  
22 October 2022

**Robert Frank Wilson '67**  
11 November 2022

**Michael Allan Ruth '68** ■  
CDR, USN (Ret.)  
25 October 2022

**William Lewis Breckinridge VI '69** ■  
29 October 2022

**Paul Joseph Bugelski '69**  
CDR, USN (Ret.)  
18 September 2022

**James Thomas Kearns '69**  
1 November 2022

**Donald Marcel Scott '69**  
17 November 2022

**Ernest Stephen Breithaupt '70**  
7 December 2022

**Frederick Roger Clements '70**  
CAPT, CEC, USN (Ret.)  
10 December 2022

**Ronald Alvi Dockery '70**  
27 November 2020

**Robert Lewis Hindman '71**  
11 June 2022

**Duane James Jones '71**  
10 November 2022

**William Edward Zapf Jr. '71** ■  
26 October 2022

**William Eckford Cook Jr. '72**  
CAPT, USN (Ret.)  
7 November 2022

**Richard Terry Englund '72**  
30 November 2022

**Robert Wesley Stecher Jr. '72**  
29 October 2022

**Frederick John Capasso '73**  
1 November 2022

**Roland Euclid Baker '74** ■  
25 October 2022

**Charles Phillip English '75** ■  
CDR, USNR (Ret.)  
12 November 2022

**Robert Emery Glendinning '75**  
CDR, USN  
11 December 2022

**Stephen Dennis McWilliams '76** ■  
30 November 2022

**Luster Payton Jr. '76**  
LCDR, USN (Ret.)  
29 October 2017

**Craig Thomas Weber '76** ■  
CDR, USNR (Ret.)  
2 December 2022

**Daniel Leroy Porter '77**  
21 November 2022

**Randall Louis Schluter '77**  
17 October 2022

**David Raymond Cruickshank '78**  
1 December 2022

**Donald Raymond Schneider '78**  
14 November 2022

**David Todd Kelly '80** ■  
Maj Gen, ANG (Ret.)  
7 November 2022

**Thomas Christopher Hickman '81**  
22 November 2022

**David Joseph Baudhuin '82**  
CDR, USN  
20 November 2022

**David Shelton Prudhomme '85**  
30 November 2022

**Helge Frank Nils Carson '88**  
17 October 2022

**Tyler Shane Tidwell '07**  
Maj, USMC (Ret.)  
10 December 2022

**Matthew Roper Driskell '16**  
LT, USN  
18 November 2022

**Publisher**

Jeff Webb '95  
jeff.webb@usna.com

**Editor**

Jimmy DeButts  
jimmy.debutts@usna.com

**Editorial**

**Assistant Editor**

Anne Sharpe  
anne.sharpe@usna.com

**Design and Production**

**Art Director/Production Manager**

Jackie Furton  
jackie.furton@usna.com

**Assistant Production Manager/Classes Editor**

Maria O'Shea  
maria.oshea@usna.com

**Chapter, SIGs and Classes Editor**

Sandra Stansbury-Spadaro  
sandy.spadaro@usna.com

**Obituaries Editor**

Timothy Elizabeth Woodbury  
timothy.woodbury@usna.com

**Associate Art Director**

Heather Payne  
heather.payne@usna.com

**Copyeditors**

Captain Andrew Wilson '77, USNR (Ret.)  
Kat Braz

**Contributing Editor**

Captain David Poyer '71, USNR (Ret.)

**Contributing Photographers**

Captain Laura Hatcher '92, USN (Ret.)  
Debbie Latta  
Kelly Eskelsen

**Contact Shipmate**

410-295-4000 Main  
410-295-4003 Fax  
410-295-4074 Classified Advertising  
410-295-4020 Display Advertising  
410-295-4000 Address Updates/Corrections

**Submissions**

Editorial [shipmate@usna.com](mailto:shipmate@usna.com)  
Address/Delivery [alumni@usna.com](mailto:alumni@usna.com)  
Bravo Zulu [comms@usna.com](mailto:comms@usna.com)  
Class payments [checkrequest@usna.com](mailto:checkrequest@usna.com)  
Chapter Columns★ [chapternews@usna.com](mailto:chapternews@usna.com)  
Class Columns★ [classnews@usna.com](mailto:classnews@usna.com)  
Obituaries [obits@usna.com](mailto:obits@usna.com)  
SACC Program [sacc@usna.com](mailto:sacc@usna.com)  
Register of Alumni [registerofalumni@usna.com](mailto:registerofalumni@usna.com)  
★ For Secretary use only, please

Address emails to individual staff as follows:  
**first name . last name @ usna.com**

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Shipmate (ISSN 0488-6720) is published monthly except for combined issues (January-February, March-April, May, June, July-August, September, October and November-December). Copyrighted 2023 by the United States Naval Academy Alumni Association, Inc., 247 King George Street, Annapolis, MD 21402-1306. Membership dues (including Shipmate) are \$70 per year. Subscription rate is \$70; Canadian and foreign subscriptions are \$75. Single copies are \$7 each. Periodicals Postage Paid at Annapolis, MD, and at additional mailing offices.

All editorial matter should be addressed to Jimmy DeButts, p. 410-295-4085, [jimmy.debutts@usna.com](mailto:jimmy.debutts@usna.com). Inquiries concerning membership or subscriptions and notification of change of address of members and subscribers should be addressed to U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association, 247 King George St., Annapolis, MD 21402-1306; p. 410-295-4062; [alumni@usna.com](mailto:alumni@usna.com).

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

Jeff Webb '95 *President/CEO* 410-295-4090  
Kara Fagley *Executive Administrator for the President* 410-295-4092

**ENGAGEMENT**

Dr. Sofi Loomis '99 410-295-4035  
*Senior Director, Alumni Regional Engagement and Outreach*  
Elizabeth Beedenbender 410-295-4166  
*Director, Engagement Operations*  
Isaac Phillips '19 410-295-4036  
*Alumni Engagement Officer*  
Wendy Owen 410-295-4017  
*Director, Class Programs*  
Lori Coogan 410-295-4038  
*Director, Parent Programs*  
Carrie Carroll 410-295-4062  
*Membership/Records Assistant*  
Ashley Parker 410-295-4000  
*Member Services Coordinator*  
Amy Garwood 410-295-4015  
*Alumni Travel Program Manager*  
Gwenn Dennis 410-295-4091  
*Director, Memorial Affairs*

**Service Academy Career Conference**

Tonya McGinnis 410-295-4022  
*Assistant Director, Career Programs*  
Melissa Nelson 410-295-4021  
*Coordinator, Joint Service Academy Career Programs*

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Wes Huey '87 410-295-4023  
*Executive Director, Strategic Communications*  
Dr. Heather Epkins 410-295-4175  
*Director of Communications*  
Emily Lucht 410-295-4047  
*Director, Digital Communications*  
Jackie Furton 410-295-4073  
*Associate Director, Publications*  
Jimmy DeButts 410-295-4085  
*Editor*  
Anne Sharpe 410-295-4078  
*Assistant Director, Communications*  
Maria O'Shea 410-295-4074  
*Assistant Production Manager*  
Sandra Stansbury-Spadaro 410-295-4076  
*Communications Specialist*  
Spencer Jones 410-295-4026  
*Communications Specialist*  
Timothy Elizabeth Woodbury 410-295-4064  
*Memorial Affairs*  
Heather Payne 410-295-4033  
*Associate Art Director*

**EVENTS AND FACILITIES**

Don Kennedy '92 410-295-4068  
*Senior Director, Facilities Operations*  
Scott Gaiser '05 410-295-4068  
*Dir., Real Estate, Facilities and IT Operations*  
John Cooper 410-295-4031  
*Facilities Manager*  
John Taylor 410-295-4029  
*Facilities Assistant*  
Alexandra Dooley 410-295-4012  
*Director, Enterprise Events and Marketing*  
Bridgette Lundfelt 410-295-4030  
*Associate Director, Engagement Experience and Sponsorship*  
Laura Cylc 410-295-4014  
*Event Coordinator*  
Judy Buddensick 443-994-2511  
*Partnership Marketing Liason*

**TREASURY AND OPERATIONS**

Robert "Bob" Gast Jr. 410-295-4040  
*Executive Vice President and CFO*  
Lisa Strobel 410-295-4051  
*Sr. Director, Finance and Treasury Operations*  
Kevin Mitchell 410-295-4039  
*Dir., Treasury, Analytics & Investment Reporting*

**TREASURY AND OPERATIONS CONTINUED**

Tim Smith 410-295-4059  
*Director, Financial Reporting*  
Linda Reyes 410-295-4056  
*Accounting Manager*  
Janet Douglas 410-295-4057  
*Staff Accountant*  
Julie Kopp 410-295-4054  
*Payroll Manager*  
Jim Scally 410-295-4058  
*Staff Accountant*  
Patricia "Patty" Ratigan 410-295-4028  
*Staff Accountant*  
**Information Technology**  
Garrett Keating 410-295-4087  
*Director, Information Technology*  
Jordan Bailey 410-295-4060  
*Computer and Information Systems Manager*  
Denise Clark 410-295-4079  
*Database Engineer*  
Derrick Planz 410-295-4067  
*Senior Software Developer*  
Rick Clark 410-295-4088  
*Systems Administrator*  
Sean Henson 410-295-4083  
*Help Desk Technician*  
Dustin Tripp 410-295-4086  
*Help Desk Technician*  
Ashley Norfolk 410-295-4084  
*SQL Application Developer*  
Umar Gbadamosi 410-295-4082  
*SQL Database Engineer*

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

Dr. Joy Jones 410-295-4048  
*Senior Director, Human Resources*  
Tom Cloutier 410-295-4050  
*Human Resources Manager*

**DEVELOPMENT**

Bill O'Connor 410-295-4101  
*Executive Vice President*  
Abby Repko 410-295-4103  
*Exec. Administrator/Principal Gift Administrator*  
**Development**  
John Rudder '78 410-295-4191  
*Senior Advisor*  
Meghan Murphy 410-295-4189  
*Dir., Corporate and Foundation Relations*  
Larry Cylc 410-295-4190  
*Asst. Dir., Corporate and Foundation Relations*  
Erin Pelletier 410-295-4106  
*Principal Gift Strategist*

**Major Gifts**

Michael Hoffman 410-295-4184  
*Vice President, Development*  
Ashley "AJ" Bauer 410-295-4160  
*Sr. Regional Dir. of Dev. and Leadership Giving*  
John Maconi 410-295-4185  
*Regional Director of Development*  
Dean Castaldo 410-295-4052  
*Regional Director of Development*  
Ted Ahrens 410-295-4183  
*Regional Director of Development*  
Lexxie Monahan 410-295-4128  
*Regional Director of Development*  
Brittany Lee 410-295-4182  
*Assistant Regional Director of Development*  
Kate Peterson 410-295-4178  
*Senior Development Coordinator*  
**Planned Giving**  
Jennifer Macris 410-295-4105  
*Planned Giving Coordinator*  
**Annual Programs**  
Gabbie Kulcsar 410-295-4147  
*Senior Director, Annual Giving Programs*

# STAFF AND ASSISTANCE

**DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED**

Rusty Yeiser '74 410-295-4174  
*Senior Advisor*  
Dan Quattrini '81 410-295-4167  
*Director, Class Legacy Gift Programs*  
Megan Farmer 410-295-4188  
*Director, President's Circle*  
Clay Evans 410-295-4034  
*Coordinator, Annual Giving Programs*  
**Donor Relations and Stewardship**  
Natalie Brianas 410-295-4102  
*Executive Dir., Donor Relations and Stewardship*  
Travis Galaska 410-295-4111  
*Assoc. Dir., Donor Relations and Stewardship*  
Hannah Geib 410-295-4127  
*Assistant Director, Campaign Operations*  
Nicolle Teixeira 410-295-4148  
*Assoc. Dir., Donor Relations and Stewardship*  
**Development Services**  
Adriana Bitoun 410-295-4150  
*Executive Director of STAR Team*  
Dawn Beach 410-295-4115  
*Director, Foundation Data and Reporting*  
Jenna Tonking 410-295-4109  
*Asst. Dir., Development Analytics and Research*  
Ashtin Riad 410-295-4151  
*Asst. Dir., Development Analytics and Research*  
**Gift Administration Team**  
Liz Root 410-295-4126  
*Director, Gift Administration*  
Victoria Sever 410-295-4122  
*Associate Director, Gift Administration*  
Elvira Reyes 410-295-4116  
*Gift Administrator II*  
Ashley Clark 410-295-4117  
*Data Support Specialist*  
Shirley Crawford 410-295-4071  
*STAR Project Coordinator*

**FOUNDATION ATHLETIC AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS**

Don Hughes '88 410-295-4096  
*Vice President*  
Tracey Cook 410-295-4164  
*Director*  
Mariola Baker 410-295-4098  
*Assistant Director*

**QUICK REFERENCE**

Death Notifications [obits@usna.com](mailto:obits@usna.com)  
410-295-4064  
Class Ring Information [classrings@usna.com](mailto:classrings@usna.com)  
Register of Alumni [registerofalumni@usna.com](mailto:registerofalumni@usna.com)  
Address/Delivery [alumni@usna.com](mailto:alumni@usna.com)  
410-295-4000  
Donate 410-295-4115  
Membership Updates 410-295-4000  
U.S. Naval Academy Main Phone 410-293-1000  
U.S. Naval Academy Athletics 410-293-2700

**CONTACT US**

**U. S. Naval Academy Alumni Association**  
247 King George St., Annapolis, MD 21402-1306  
Main Phone 410-295-4000  
Ogle Hall Fax 410-295-4001  
49 House Fax 410-295-4005  
Human Resources Fax 443-458-0972  
Cottage Fax 410-295-4003  
**Foundation Development**  
274 Wood Rd., Annapolis, MD 21402  
Main Phone 410-295-4100  
Fax 410-295-4107

**Foundation Athletic & Scholarship Programs**  
25 Maryland Ave., Annapolis, MD 21401  
Main Phone 410-295-4095