

Shipmates,

Greetings from the political capital of the world! (When I retired from the Navy in 1998, I promised Donna we'd never return to DC. We're now in year 20 inside the beltway and, with 7 of our 10 grandchildren living here, aren't going anywhere soon).

We pray that you all had a blessed Christmas and New Year.

The last few months have included several significant events involving our class. Highlights include:

1. The Naval Academy Alumni Association hosted the annual Honor our Fallen Heroes (HOFH) event on Veterans Day 11/11/2023. <https://www.usna.com/HOFH>. We welcomed 230 USNA Gold Star family members and family escorts back to Annapolis to honor and celebrate the lives of 36 fallen heroes from 28 different classes - Naval Academy alumni who were killed in action or in training for combat. Of those 36 honored, 4 were from '66:
 - Lieutenant Victor P. Buckley '66, USN
 - 2nd Lieutenant John W. Doherty '66, USMC
 - Major Dean H. Matzko '66, USMC
 - Lieutenant Junior Grade Douglas D. Vaughan '66, USN

Despite the half century which has passed since most of our losses, we had the highest representation of any Class. We hope to have even more families attending next year. Special thanks to Ed McMenamy who spent countless hours tracking down family members of our fallen Classmates. Thanks also to Robert Percival (leader) and Andre Simonpietri who served as escorts for the families at the event.

2. The Navy-Air Force game in October – though Navy was unsuccessful in beating Air Force, the game honored Roger Staubach and the historic 1963 Cotton Bowl football team. '66 Honorees included Bob Wittenberg, Bruce Bickel (who also conducted a memorial service), Bill Higgins, Duncan Ingraham, Fred Moosally, Russ Puppe, and Steve Shrawder. Jimmy Angel, Phil Norton, and Jack Conley were unable to attend, and Ron Buschbom had passed earlier. (<https://navysports.com/news/2023/10/16/football-roger-staubach-to-be-honored-saturday-surrounded-by-teammates-of-the-great-1963-cotton-bowl-team.aspx>)
3. A Change of Command ceremony on GONZALEZ (DDG-66). RADM John Sigler superbly represented '66 at the event on what is now the only Class sponsored ship on December 27th. Thanks, John.

Looking forward, the Class Wellness program continues to grow under Phil Bozzelli's (pbozzell1@verizon.net) able leadership. The Class Wellness site (<https://usna66.org/class-wellness/>) has expanded its offerings to include more comprehensive legal and health related issues.

Working through Company and Battalion Reps, we have cast wider the net to identify Classmates with backgrounds in the medical and legal professions who can and are willing to provide their expertise to help others.

- John “Racquet” Williamson has put together a presentation and discussion addressing the broader topic of the prostate and we will air this during a Zoom session on Tuesday, March 5th.
- Don Jackson and Shirl Rollins have experienced first-hand the necessity of providing spousal care over the long term: together they will address on Wednesday 20 March what has become a reality for many. Their experiences are especially different in that Shirl will come from having support from the Veterans Administration while Don had been reliant upon Medicare and Tricare For Life (TFL) for his wife’s care. NOTE: while this Zoom will be hosted by the ’66 ladies, all Classmates are invited and encouraged to attend
- Rick Grant has assembled a legal team to discuss estate and financial planning. We will issue a class wide notice for this session planned for a 9 April zoom session and will ask for your questions in advance.
- Al Swinger has offered to present a discussion of how to downsize more profitably than sending the “stuff” to the dump: whether we have to downsize to move to a smaller residence or our children have to confront the reality of getting rid of our “prized but unwanted” possessions when we are gone, this and all the above topics apply or will apply to all of us.
- Finally, when we started the wellness site, the objective was to take a holistic view that was not limited to just physical health issues but to address deeper concerns as well, including the spiritual component. To that end we have placed on the class wellness site a “prayer wall” under the leadership of our classmate, Pastor Bruce Bickel. If you (husbands, wives or family) would like prayer for any reason, you can go to the class website under the “Resources” section <https://usna66.org/prayer-wall/> (or simply click on PrayerWall1966USNA@gmail.com and submit a prayer request directly). The request will be prayed for by a small team of ordained clergy and church officers headed by Bruce. Currently the requests will remain private to that group. If there is interest, a public prayer option may be added later wherein – if desired by the submitter - requests would be made available for prayer by anyone who visits the site. Additionally, if there is interest, we may incorporate a separate site specifically for class wives and widows for their particular concerns.

Interestingly, we note that the Naval Academy Alumni Association has implemented a beginning effort for a comprehensive wellness site for alumni and their families. Based upon experiences at West Point, we expect it will take some time for their site to develop fully, but in the interim it is a very handy source for Academy specific issues (e.g. Naval Academy burials) and as a ready compendium of VA (Veterans Administration) information documents. It can be accessed via the ’66 class web site (<https://usna66.org/class-wellness/>)

And last but not least, our Long Gray Line ’66 contemporaries from West Point have apparently discovered – somewhat late in life – the benefits of going to sea. Several of them are planning a Caribbean cruise next year which would include watching the Army-Navy game at sea and have asked – via the Alumni Association - if any USNA ’66ers would be interested in joining them. I

used up all my cruise chits somewhere around 1996 in the Persian Gulf but if you're interested in finding out more info, contact Lin Arison USMA '66 at lindsey@academycruises.com (all standard disclaimers apply).

Blessings to you all from Donna and me.

Beat Army!

Scott