

From Rockville, Maryland

Bill Serchak just posted a “Save the Date” notice for the annual Tadeusz Kościuszko conference at West Point on May 3rd and 4th. Bill has been active with the organization. The conference should include a memorial mass, a monument ceremony and a Cadet Review.

My tour guide from 1900 shows a full color picture of the Kosciuszko Monument. It was designed by a member of the class of 1822 and erected in 1828 at a cost of \$3000. The statue on top was added in 1913.

More from Bill

In my recent, but long delayed, edition of Class Notes I left out a brief note that Bill had included in an e-mail, “My daughter, Bridget and I returned home last evening (that was in August) from our 10-day journey to Germany and Switzerland, to the sites of my first and last overseas military assignments. It was certainly a trip filled with nostalgia and memories.”

More yet from Bill

Bill just sent to the whole class an interesting e-mail about the presentation of the history of astronomy at West Point and the Astronomy Club as well as the new W.E. Serchak Astronomy Award. The e-mail included a link to the power point set made for the presentation. [PRESENTATION - Astronomy @ West Point \(Power Point\) - 3 \(1\).pptx](#) He also included a link to the second part of the photo essay he prepared about reunion activities.

<https://onedrive.live.com/edit?id=33B4C7A108030E94!103083&resid=33B4C7A108030E94!103083&cid=33b4c7a108030e94&ithint=file%2cdocx&ct=1705337305948&authkey=!AH3JxhfQioGciDo&wdLOR=cE17214AA-A52A-44B8-A321-6D309E496302&wdo=2>

Bill added that there is now “a star in the constellation Gemini registered in my name with the International Star Registry in Switzerland– a gift from my daughter, Mary Ellen Ynes. With a birthday in May, Gemini is the appropriate constellation for my star”.

From Williamsburg, Virginia

Phil Pryor realized that we had brothers who were classmates, **Ralph Pryor’62**, Company B-1 and **Rudy Penczer’62**, Company F-2.

From Springfield, Virginia

Jack Downing wrote, “ I'm happy to see so many of our class doing well. I'm proud of the class of '58. Margie and I are well and enjoying life. She is only one year younger than me but it seems to be a generation. I'm lucky to have her and my classmates.”

Traffic

I heard briefly from a number of classmates, **John Brinson, Pete Trainor, Mike Mahler, Jody Le Towt, Dale Hruby, Chuck Densford and Karl Oelke**. Also I saw **Jack May** active on Facebook. I exchanged Christmas notes with **Jack Vickers'57**. He's still getting around.

From Fairfax City, Virginia

Andy Andreson wrote about the handling and availability of the Class Flag for funerals. **Otto Thamasett** has retired from handling it after five very busy years and **Alan Chase** has taken over. Hopefully you won't need it, but you can reach Alan at N66928@aol.com 703 819 0188.

Traditions

A Dollar?

Someone asked a question about a tradition of collecting a dollar from each grad and giving it to the Class Goat (last man academically) at graduation. We didn't have that and it isn't at all clear yet if anyone did, but in the course of it **Andy Andreson** stepped in to explain that the honor of being in that position, not easy to get to, fell to **Bill Kelley**, those after him in class rank in The Register having had late graduations due to the need to finish some time on the Area. Looking at the Register, I see that Bill has enjoyed a very successful career

Apparently, there was a tradition of giving a dollar to the first enlisted man who saluted you after graduation.

This brought out **Chuck Cabell, Chuck Miller, Alan Salisbury, Stan Bacon and Jack Bradshaw**.

A Happy New Year

Over the holidays the magazine, The Economist, had a short article on the history of Eggnog. The first paragraph was about the Eggnog Riot of 1828. Sylvanus Thayer had become Supe and had prohibited alcoholic beverages on Post.. Christmas of 1828 came and the eggnog was to be dry. The protest was started with several cadets taking a boat across the river and getting several gallons of whiskey. Christmas Eve and on into the Morning North Barracks (an earlier building) lit up with windows being smashed and weapons flashed. The riot was put down and some were dismissed, but one notable participant, **Jefferson Davis'1828** did make it through to graduation.

It didn't become a tradition, but you can read about it in Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eggnog_riot

From Savannah, Georgia

About a year ago, almost to the day, **Roger and Laurelei Waddell** sent me an interesting note responding to a question: "What have I done in retirement?"

"Pete has recently been begging for class notes content. I decided to make one contribution calling it "What Did You Do In Retirement?" This is rather long, but it may be my first contribution in 64 and a butt years so I am claiming previously unused space.

What I began first in retirement you might call a hobby. I am proud of having been in A-1 and that is the foundation for my hobby which is one I would guess no one else has pursued. You will recall that back in the good old days tall guys went to A-1 or M-2, but did you know those who were tall AND handsome went to A-1?

Besides keeping up this hobby, I will write about, I have also stayed in contact with my two plebe squad leaders from the Class of 1956. My first semester squad leader, Howard Ray Cannon, when I was with John Stone and Harry Kirschner, went into the Air Force so contact has been limited to one meeting at Maxwell AFB in 1970 and periodic emails, mostly since July 2020. My second squad leader, Ivar W. Rundgren, Jr., when I was with John George, was an Army Aviator with whom I got in contact with in Germany in 1960 or so and stayed in contact until his death last April at the age of 91. Over that period of time, I was in the same organization with him for only one year and that was in the Pentagon in 1978. The most significant suggestion he made to me was in 1968 when he suggested I apply for the Naval Test Pilot School. I applied and graduated and that completely changed the course of my career. Having that background led to my working in retirement, beginning in 1981, at Gulfstream Aerospace in Savannah. My squad leader even came down from the Outer Banks to attend my retirement lunch in 1997. He knew George Sibert from Germany in the early 60s and since and sent George a note about my retirement that George published in Class Notes. Laurelei and I visited Ivar and his wife in October 2021 and I have attached a picture with him.

Who else has had a lot of contact with your squad leader? After all, "**Everything I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my squad leader**".

But, I digress. What about this so-called hobby? I retired 31 October 1997 and completed the first phase of my "hobby" in June 1998. I decided to document some history of all members of Company A-1 during the years 1955-1961 when I was there. Important sources were Howitzers beginning in 1952 to show who all had been in the company even if they did not graduate. Another important source was the

Register of Graduates and Former Cadets. That identified those who went into the Air Force and the one (class of 1959) that went into the Marines. That also showed military retirements and rank at retirement and deaths. Some of you are aware of my grievance against the Register-actually against graduates since around the mid-80s. If you look you will see way too many who show only their first assignment or two. That certainly does not meet General Cullum's vision of having the Register being "a historically significant document". Very few show military retirement and rank at retirement and, of course, graduates are now shown in alphabetical order. No one from those later years could use the Register to gather the data I did.

The document I prepared has a Names page and a Statistics page. The structure of the Names page is to show graduates from those years in Cullum Number order. As an added feature, at no extra cost, I recently made up a second Names page replacing the Cullum Number with the first name. Air Force and the Marine grads' Cullum Numbers are shown in bold print. Generals are identified as are Army Aviators and Vietnam KIAs. Deceased are identified with an asterisk. It also shows the ex-cadets and if one got turned back but graduated with a later class.

The first section on the Statistics page shows for each class the number entered and graduated and first and last Cullum Number for the class and for A-1. Another section shows the number that graduated and how many went into the USAF or USMC. Then, a Genealogy section shows the number of grads who have an ancestor or descendant grad with notes at the bottom showing what relationship there is with that ancestor or descendant. Next, it shows the number of military retirees and the percentage of the class that retired. That number can be misleading because of deaths while the individual was on active duty. The class of 1955 had three of their ten deaths while on active duty. After that it shows numbers at the grades Major through General as well as the number of military retirees and then the number Deceased identified as Retired, Active, or Civilian.

Our class recently discussed General Officers. I will add that for classes 1955-1958 there was only two Generals in A-1. They were roommates General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and MG Leroy N. Suddath, Jr. a Savannah native who retired to Savannah. After that, there was a BG Ryan in 1959 and LTG Otstott and LTG Johnson in 1960. You probably do not know that Charles P. Otstott was also class president, first captain, and first in his class. Squad leader Jim Ryan liked to claim credit for Charley's development and success

I find two items for the class of 1955 to be interesting. They began in 1952 with 26 and graduated only 16 plus one who graduated in another company in 1956 (and was my seminar leader at Air Command and Staff College). When I first assembled these data in 1998, they had six deceased graduates. Their most recent was in January 2020, bringing the total to ten. The last death prior to that was March 2010. So from June 1998 until the present they have lost only four.

So to wrap up this odd hobby story, I report deaths in those other six classes to our A-1 classmates and deaths of our A-1 classmates to a contact in those other six classes. One never knows who might have had close contact with another A-1 company mate from another class during their "47 month experience" at West Point or during the years since.

But if you try to find your squad leader, you might find as I did that my first plebe squad leader did not remember being one!!

"Everything I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my squad leader"

Roger "Rube" Waddell

p.s. "Rube" at West Point originated when a now deceased A-1 member of the class of 1955 asked me if the "R" on my name tag stood for Rube, the baseball hall-of-famer and 1903 champion pitcher in the American League with the Philadelphia Phillies. Laurelei and I visited the Hall of Fame on 5 June 1958, the first day of our honeymoon."

Below is a picture of Roger and Ivar.



From Fairfax City, Virginia

We had a Class Excomm meeting done by teleconference, not Zoom. One reported statistic is that, as a class, we still have 40% remaining alive. I think that's pretty good.

One thing that was discussed was the coming 70th reunion. Planning hasn't started but thinking about it has. Maybe it's the bottle of Armagnac that's gotten thinking started.

From Gainesville, Florida

Jack May remembered **Jerry Hoblit**, his Plebe year roommate, in a note to his company, B-2, "Colonel Jerry Noel Hoblit, United States Military Academy Class of 1958, was one of the lead fighter pilots in this Wild Weasel mission and was awarded many commendations and medals, including the Distinguished Service Cross for "for extraordinary heroism". Jerry was the most highly decorated Air Force member of the 1958 Class from West Point. Jerry was my Plebe roommate and a lifelong friend.

'58 is Great!"