

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, October 19, 2014

The 19 October meeting of the EXCOM was held during the 56th Reunion of the Great Class of 1958 at the Island House Hotel in Orange Beach, AL. The large gathering dictated the nature of the meeting – it was primarily one of passing out information rather than decision making. In the presence of classmates, spouses, widows and friends, Paul Ruud called the meeting to order and began by explaining his presence as the Program Chair. EXCOM Chair Dick Schonberger's unexpected illness kept him in Virginia and prevented his attendance. The other EXCOM member present was Social Chairman Jack Gordon. Paul began by thanking the F-1 Cadet Company family in general and Faye and Jerry Cook in particular for another outstanding reunion. The Class flag flew proudly and now awaits the addition of an Orange Beach 2014 streamer.

Vote to seat Frank Waskowicz

Frank Waskowicz was unanimously voted in as Vice President and Secretary of the EXCOM.

Treasurer's Report:

Pete Kusek's Treasurer's Report showed a net worth of \$58,563.26 – comprised of \$1,911.10 in our USAA checking account and \$56,652.16 in our T. Rowe Price account. His report listed the following expenses since the last meeting.

Vietnam Memorial wreath	\$ 121.90
Capelle award	310.00
Armagnac for last toast	300.00
Flowers and memorial donations for Williams and Pederson	200.00
EXCOM teleconference cost	37.11
Transfer to AOG admin acct	500.00

We have two funds held by the AOG: our Admin Fund has \$3,113.07 and our Gift Fund holds \$42,717.00.

Perpetual Endowment Fund (PEF) Status

Jerry Mitchell, current PEF Board Chairman, reviewed the ultimate fund disbursal plan reminding that the first major donation to West Point will be on our 100 year anniversary. This event will be held at West Point, hopefully presenting the check to the then Superintendent, in the presence of Class descendants and others. He mentioned that the PEF Board will be the only functioning entity of the Class of 1958 as the years pass. Also happening on this exciting day will be the opening of the Class of 1958 time capsule. Jerry listed the current members of the PEF Board and sketched the process by which board members will come and go leading up to 2058. He mentioned current board discussions regarding upcoming actions. They include hosting a cocktail hour mixer in the West Point area prior to official events, arranging tours of Academy grounds by recent graduates or descendants and whether or not to rebury the time capsule after the anniversary opening.

As of 30 September 2014 the fund has a value of \$895,115. A detailed handout was provided those at the meeting and a reminder that more information regarding the PEF is available on the Class web site.

First Class Club (FCC) Situation Update

The FCC is now closed due to broken underground water and sewage pipes. This is of course an old building and the years have taken their toll on the building's utilities. The problems are being corrected by the West Point Post Engineers and a return to normal use is anticipated for academic year 2015-2016. The costs for this repair are expected to be mostly, if not totally, borne by WP maintenance funds. Tony Smith has extended his tour on the ExCom to provide the necessary liaison between the Class and official West Point and will keep us all informed as the details are worked out and made available. It is hoped to have our original FCC ready for service at the formal handover to the Class of 2016 prior to the beginning of 2015 fall classes. This handover is also expected to include the Class of 1958 turning over our monitoring responsibilities to the Class of 1983. The

Class of 1983 will in due course hand responsibilities off to the Class of 2008. During this school year the second class club is being used by both first and second classmen. No one questions that our creation of the FCC is the cadet's favorite of all Class donations. The recent covering of the patio has expanded service capability and is viewed positively by all. Stay tuned.

Last Toast Update

Paul set the stage by reminding everyone that following Ed Weckel's suggestion and enthusiastic Class support, the ExCom continues to develop reasonable parameters for moving forward as the years pass by. In the Doolittle tradition of preparing to honor the Class, the last few surviving classmates will gather and raise a glass to the Great Class of 1958. The glass will contain Armagnac - a French brandy suggested by Jack Bradshaw who had enjoyed it in France back in the day. Tony Smith was able to purchase a bottle of 1958 vintage Armagnac – it was distilled in 1958, stored in an oak barrel for 40 years and then bottled. The ExCom will continue to discuss what organization or which individuals will have the ultimate planning and implementing responsibilities for the final toast.

A handout containing more information was provided at the meeting and later made available in Benny Havens. The competition to make that final reunion has officially begun.

Wounded Warrior Mentoring Project

Jack Gordon gave an update and a resounding plea to support the Class Wounded Warrior Mentoring Project. The good news is that the number of new wounded warriors is decreasing, but the need is unabated since treatments often last throughout the warrior's life. The project has expanded to include volunteers who are non-graduates and members of other services. Lee Miller has led our Wounded Warrior Project from its inception and continues with many others in his leadership role.

Reunion Planning

The possibility of holding our 60th reunion at the Hotel Thayer and holding it earlier than graduation week are being considered. Discussion of options and consultation with the Class will occur during the upcoming planning years.

Stan Bacon next took the microphone to urge classmates to come to Austin 18-21 October for next year's reunion. The Renaissance Hotel has been selected for the reunion which guarantees comfort and location. There will be opportunities to tour the many sites in and around Austin and the Gonzo Compadres will be in evidence. Detailed information will be reaching you shortly – make your reservations early and schedule a trip deep into the heart of Texas.

Last Toast On April 18, 1942, 80 brave men flew 16 B-25 bombers off the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Hornet deep in the Western Pacific. Led by Lt. Col Jimmy Doolittle, their mission of bombing Tokyo was primarily to avenge the Pearl Harbor attack and to raise American morale by bombing the Japanese homeland.

On November 9, 2013, three of the four living Doolittle Raiders gave a last salute to each other and their fallen comrades at the National Museum of the Air Force in Ohio. This ceremony was the continuation – and the culmination – of their tradition that began decades ago to hold an annual reunion. It was a poignant and moving occasion that began with a reading of the Raiders’ roll. The few voices answering “here” in the museum’s hall made clear the passage of the years. Retired Lt. Col. Cole, Doolittle’s co-pilot announced his presence in a clear voice. When the roll was completed, he rose to open a bottle of 1896 vintage Hennessy cognac. AF Academy cadets poured a measure for Cole and the other two Raiders gathered for the toast. A fourth surviving Raider could not attend due to health issues.

Cole’s toast was “Gentlemen, I propose a toast to those we lost on the mission and those who have passed away since. Thank you very much and may they rest in peace.” The veterans drank, the crowd applauded, a lone bugler played “Taps”! It was over.¹

Reacting to a suggestion by classmate Ed Weckel and enthusiastic support by classmates, the Class Executive Committee discussed all aspects of replicating this ceremony for the Class of 1958. The decision was made to create the framework when several years down the road, the last living members of our Class will gather to offer a final toast to the Great Class of 1958.



The Executive Committee continues the planning in terms of developing reasonable parameters for moving forward as the years pass by. At the suggestion of Jack Bradshaw, the ExComm decided on a bottle of 1958 vintage Armagnac brandy as the most appropriate libation to be used in the “Final Toast.” Jack recalled sipping Armagnac in France at an appropriate occasion and research reveals it is a storied beverage used for generations in celebrating and marking an important and serious occasion. Tony Smith has

procured a bottle of Armagnac distilled in 1958 for the occasion (shown above).

My message to you is to commit today to be a participant in the final toast: eat more spinach, do more pushups, drink less wine – I think you see the formula.

The ExComm will be discussing what organization or which individuals will have the ultimate planning and implementing responsibility for the final toast. The ExComm or its successor will in due time determine where the Last Toast will be held and when the time is right to open the Armagnac. Stay tuned – Pete Trainor or Pete Penczer or their successors will be providing the details.

¹ Paul Ruud credits Air Force magazine for historical data in this write-up