

Send Class Notes to Class Scribe - George W. Sibert at gsibert@comcast.net

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1958 Class Notes

180th Column for Oct 2011

10/2/2011

This is my first effort to appear on westpointaog.org website. Hope the staff can work with this digitally-challenged Scribe. Hope most of you saw number 179, the final one for the final *Assembly*. Since then our class has been swamped with sad news of classmates transitioning to the Ghostly Assemblage. All of that news will appear first.

Sad News – Ernest R Lenart Jr I-1

10/2/2011

Tex died on 15 Apr. CINC Obits sent this info from **Tony Bauer** CCQ of I-1: “Just received this message from Bob Lusignan, a friend of **Ernie Lenart**. Tex had Alzheimer disease and was in a care facility in Arizona. I will pursue information about his burial at West Point and try to determine what the family would like in the way of a memorial.” Included was this message from Bob Lusignan: “Hi Tony, I wanted to let you know that Ernie passed away (very peacefully) on Apr. 15. There will be a Mass on May 10th for him here in Sierra Vista, but his cremains will be sent to West Point for final internment. His son, Gregg, will be meeting him at West Point for the service there on the 20th. Bob”

Sad News Continues – William A Roosma H-2

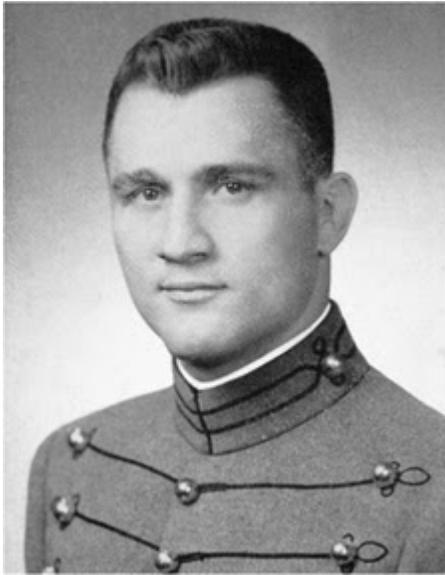
10/2/2011

Will died on 29 Apr only days after his 76th birthday. He was Scribe’s roommate for three years – should have been four. I could not have asked for a better roommate. Too young, too sad. Our CINC Obits wrote of Will in his announcement to the class: “**Garry Roosma** just called me with the sad announcement that Will passed away about 45 minutes ago (~6:30). There will be a viewing in the near future but the time and location are not now known. He will be buried at Arlington at a later time (Scribe: 20 Sep 2011). Will was one of our class’ bright lights. He told stories on himself and laughed loudest of all. We will miss him greatly.”

More on Tex from Bob Dey

10/2/2011

“I attended a small Catholic Mass in Ernie's honor this morning, held at Our Lady of the Mountain church in Sierra Vista AZ. The Mass was attended by the same set of friends who have cared for Ernie for several years. A group of ladies from the church and several of his neighbors came to honor the man. I was one of four ex-service people there, as well as three members of the local Air Force Assn. I spoke for the Class and thanked especially Bob and Cathy Lusignan, who served as Ernie's friends and legal guardians as his mental capacity diminished in the last several years. If anyone would like to contact them to say thanks the email address is lusig@msn.com. I think they would greatly appreciate a picture from the ceremony for Ernie at West Point on the 20th if anyone can find one. Ernie is now cleared for takeoff. RAD.” Many classmates will remember that **Gary Kosmider**, before his death on 26 Apr 2005, helped Tex with the administrivia of life. Tex was fortunate that Bob & Cathy Lusignan stepped in to help after Gary’s death. Our CINC Obits wrote: “I returned yesterday from New York. Ernie's remains were placed to rest at West Point cemetery on Tuesday May 24. Gregg Lenart, Ernie's son was present at the grave site which is near the caretaker's house and a few graves away from **Al Pensiero's** resting place. A Catholic Chaplain, from



2d Regiment, CPT Felix Kumai, presided at the ceremony and sang a special song as part of the final prayers. Our class flag was present. Bob McClure, WPAOG President and CEO, was in attendance.”

More on Will by Harry Walters '59, Former Secretary of Veteran Affairs

10/2/2011

“Will Roosma was indeed a man of great virtue. A strong family man, a man of God, and a man who bore no ill will toward anyone. He & **Sandy** and their family are devoted Christians and I am confident that he is now in the loving hands of the Lord.

The trifecta of **Butch Ordway, Brad Johnson** and Will was legendary not only to their 1958 classmates but to all others who walked into their domain. Will and I had the privilege of planning the National Victory Celebration Parade in June of 1991 to mark our ‘Desert Storm’ victory. As Commander of the Military District of Washington DC, Will was irreplaceable and unflappable. He insisted that the word Victory be emphasized for the troops and for our country. Victory was important not only to the Desert Storm combatants, but especially for those who had fought in the Vietnam War. Will was dedicated to the proposition that the Vietnam veterans be honored by the Victory in the Gulf. A victory that was taken from them in Vietnam. May he rest in peace with the Lord and with lasting salvation in the kingdom of heaven.” Harry, thank you for writing!



Sad News Continues – Albert L Sasseville A-2

10/2/2011



Al, a former cadet, died on 19 May 2011. Please read his entry in the 50th Reunion Book. Al retired as a LTC US Air Force Reserves and had a distinguished career in Department of State, serving in myriad embassies around the globe. Our sympathies are extended to his wife **Yitin** and their children and five grandchildren. A son is serving as a LTC in the active USAF. Another son is a COL in the DC Air National Guard. And, their daughter is in upper management of eBay. There was a story in *Washington Post* on 11 Sep 2011 about a young woman F-16 pilot ordered to launch from Andrews AFB to take down Flight 93, believed to be headed for

DC. She and her Squadron Leader, Mark Sasseville, took off for their mission. The truly interesting part is that their F-16s were not armed; I say again, not armed – too little time to get them loaded. They were to be

kamikaze pilots. **Jack Downing** called Al's widow Yitin to confirm the Squadron Leader was the son of Al – YES! Scribe read the article, but did not make the connection and did not save it; therefore, my details are sketchy. The part about unarmed and mission to ram the commercial liner are accurate. The F-16 pilots did not have to complete this part of their mission because the passengers took care of the aircraft – the crash in PA to prevent further chaos in DC on 9/11/2001.

Sad News Continues – Donald DeJardin A-1

10/2/2011



Don died 16 Aug 2011. CINC Obits forwarded the info from **Lee Miller** A-1 CCQ: "It is with great sadness, that I must report we have lost one of the finest persons and gentlemen in our Class of '58 with the passing of Don DeJardin. As many of you know, Don was the captain of the Army basketball team. He had a very successful career involved in professional basketball as a general manager and later as an agent for professional basketball and baseball players. He was stricken approximately a year and a half ago with lymphoma. After three different types of chemo over the ensuing period with the last rounds being induced in the hospital four weeks ago, the doctors said he could go home on Mon Aug 15 to be at home with **Sandy**, his ever positive and loving wife, and family during his last days. Don died peacefully Tues night with all of his family present including Sandy, a daughter, three sons and 20 grandchildren. Funeral arrangements are forthcoming...

CINC Obits forwarded links to Don's obit published in the *Los*

Angeles Times. Your digitally-challenged Scribe was not able to get the words: the links yielded blank pages headed by LA Times and Obituary.

Sad News Continues – Paul T Schonberger F-1

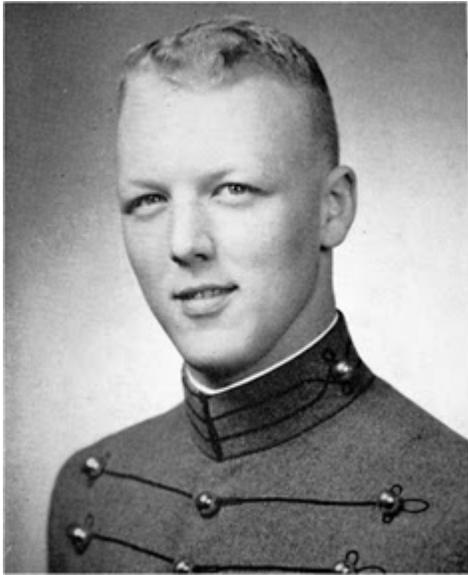
10/2/2011

Paul died on 26 Aug 2011. CINC Obits sent information: "Classmates, I am sad to report that our classmate, and my brother, Paul, aka, "PT" died this afternoon at the Martinsburg, WV VA Hospital. He had been diagnosed with a particularly aggressive form of lung cancer that was beyond treatment when it was discovered and had been in hospice care from the time he was admitted. We are grateful that he was never in any real pain and didn't suffer a long, debilitating ending. Family and friends had several visits where he maintained his sense of humor and proved to be a real trooper to the end! Funeral arrangements are being coordinated and information will be provided as the details are finalized. Grip Hands! **Dick Schonberger**" [Most of you know that we have three Schonbergers in the class: Dick, Paul and **Ann**, she married **Pete Kusek** E-2. Our prayers are with Paul and the survivors: Ann and Dick.]



Sad News Continues – Turner D Griffin B-1

10/2/2011



Buck died on 10 Sep 2011, the final entry for the printed Roll Call to be used at the Orlando Mini on Monday morning 26 Sep. The last two Roll Calls in Tucson 2009 and Denver 2010 had names read who were too late for the printed version. Scribe sincerely prays that is not the case this year in Orlando. CINC Obits sent the following information: “Classmates, Buck Griffin passed away Saturday evening with his family in attendance through the past two days. This was the end of a long struggle with COPD and over a month in the hospital. Burial will be at the Ft Sam Houston National Cemetery; arrangements are pending. We were able to 'Grip Hands' yesterday and today; he was mentally strong until he lost consciousness near the end. Pray for his soul! **Bob Hayden**” The class appreciates the faithfulness of Bob Hayden who spent much of the past month with Buck in the hospital. Buck and **Dick Price** B-1 CCQ kept the company and some other classmates up-to-date on Buck’s condition with virtually daily

emails to B-1 over the past month. They made excellent use of usma1958-b1 email list which your Scribe is privileged to receive. Buck was one of three super recruiters for USMA in TX (Hayden '45, Buck and Jack Tierney) – for which the Supe awarded him the DA Civilian Commendation Award. Our sympathies are with **Charlotte** and the rest of Buck’s family.

Sad News Continues – Fred M Ruffner Jr H-2

10/2/2011

Fred died on 5 Mar 2008. Bad news does not improve with age. In this case it adds a guilt trip because I was not in touch with Fred during the past three years or so. **Denny Sharon** and your Scribe gave Fred a surprise Associate Membership in AOG (now WPAOG) a few years after the 30th Reunion when we tracked him down. Fred resigned in Oct of Cow year. Knowing he would be drafted immediately, he enlisted in the USAF for Air Cadet training. He got through solo phase but did not graduate. Upon his discharge as a PV-1 and his transfer to inactive USAF Reserves, he pursued other schooling and civilian career in insurance adjusting. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Fred was called to active duty. Picture a private E-1 reporting to active duty in AF in the uniform from Air Cadet Training – an officer’s uniform. It was all he had at the time. The photo of Fred is courtesy **Frank Waskowicz** from a Yearling shot at Camp Buckner.



More on Fred

10/2/2011

Bill Serchak, who is not digitally-challenged, helped Scribe by finding Fred’s actual date of death and obituary: “**Olive Branch - FRED M. RUFFNER, JR., 73, formerly of Memphis and Dyersburg, TN, passed away Wednesday, March 5, 2008 at his home. Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. Monday, March 10 at Memphis Funeral Home Poplar Chapel, with interment in West Tennessee Veteran's Cemetery at 11 a.m. on Thursday, March 13. Visitation will begin at 1 p.m. Monday at the funeral home. Fred served in the U.S. Air Force and also the Air Force Reserves, and he retired from Ohio**

Casualty and Life.” An email note from Bo Craddock adds some interesting info: “George, I was sorry to hear about Fred Ruffner. Fred, **Kyle Rector** and I were the first cadets in the history of Dyersburg, TN.” And another note from Bo: “I haven't seen Fred since he was found. My mother kept me somewhat up to date with information from Fred's sister Joan. Fred was a delightful character -- once worked on a riverboat during high school years. Our journey via NYC on the way to USMA was a fascinating story with four rubes from West Tennessee (We met **Hugh Morgan** from Jackson, TN at the Astor).”

March Back 2011

10/2/2011

Our standard three hikers (**Will Collette, Wally Ward** and **Ed Weckel**) were joined by **Mike Daley** (final two miles) who was there for his granddaughter, then New Cadet Brianna Burnstad. Mike was reliving his youth by being their for Brianna's R-Day. And, following the MB, Mike watched her join the Corps at Acceptance P-rade. Photo of four '58 hikers should appear here with some luck on my part. L-R Daley, Collett, Ward and Weckel. Fund raiser Ed did it again for MB and PEF: “Latest report from Russ Robertson '82 (Treasurer PEF) indicates that the Class has donated \$2,735.80 to the Endowment. This does NOT include the matching contributions from our two



anonymous donors. Including these matching contributions doubles the total to \$5,471.60. This is good news - - but please remember, we have \$6,000 in matching donations available. That means we still have a long way to go before we use up our \$6k in matching grants. Let's not waste this opportunity. Send your check to: Russell Robertson, at 8606 Cross View, Fairfax Station, VA, 22039. Make your tax deductible check out to: 'Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund.'” The opportunity was not wasted: later report says he (Ed)/we (class) exceeded the \$6000 in matching funds. If you feel fingers in your pocket -- you might be at an airport check-in or might be Ed Weckel searching for money. *Photo: Mike Daley, Will Collette, Wally Ward and Ed Weckel*

Bill & Edna Mae Serchak's 50th Anniversary

10/2/2011



"We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of our wedding (24 June 1961) for a week (18-25 June) in Frankfort, Michigan with our children and grandchildren (nine of us in all). Frankfort is located on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan about one hour south of Traverse City and almost three hours from the Mackinac Bridge that separates Lower Michigan from the Upper Peninsula. Bridget, Mary Ellen, and Bill rented a 5-bedroom Victorian house-built in 1878-in Frankfort, MI. With the arrival of the Ynes family (Mary Ellen, Rob, Aliya, and Andrew) on Monday afternoon and Laurie Serchak-with Gus the Dog (a yellow Labrador)-on Tuesday, our family gathering was now complete.

(The) final event: the "50th Wedding Anniversary Gala" on 24 June.” The class has been celebrating 50th anniversaries since June 2008 – and we still are celebrating as this evidence demonstrates!

Don Palladino -- Info from CCQ C-2

10/2/2011

“Some of you (email to C-2) remember **Don Palladino** from F-2. Don is now retired from being COO of the Save the Children Foundation, but did get called in to help with Haiti and with Japan aid projects. It was interesting to talk with him about all of that when we saw him in Wellfleet, MA, where he now lives. We had a very nice time. We went for dinner, along with other friends of mine who have a house in Wellfleet, to the Moby Dick, a good seafood restaurant there. It reminded me of struggling in an English Class many years ago. The book may have had many levels of meaning but the restaurant just had a long line to get in. **Pete Penczer**” In effect a PS via second email to C-2: “Incidentally, Don looks very well and very fit. He's quite busy on a local board, helping with a local marsh preservation project and helping set up regular local historical walking tours. This is on top of non-stop family visits to his home all summer in Wellfleet and projects still for Save the Children.”

Another Spot Report on Don Palladino

10/2/2011

This report is from **Tom Carpenter** o/a 4 May: “**Don Palladino** continues his service to others. Spoke with him yesterday. He is just back from four weeks in Japan helping Save the Children provide vital assistance to the Japanese in their time of need. Don had high praise for the Japanese people. He told a story that he encountered repeatedly in shelters around the country -- a displaced family of three with three mats and a comforter and nothing else. When Don and others offered assistance and logistical help, the family invariably replied, ‘others are in greater need; give it to them.’ Don believes that Japan will rebuild in three years because of this cohesion and national spirit.”

Annie Stanton to be Married 8 Oct!

10/2/2011

Scribe learned of this via L-2 net and CCQ **Robert Higgins**. I emailed Annie to get her permission to spread the news. Her answer follows: “Dear George: Thanks for your good wishes. Yes, I am very happy! Ashby Moncure and **Jae** were good friends in high school and he was widowed about 6 months before Jae died. Though we had met only briefly on two occasions, we wrote for awhile and eventually he came to see me. Ergo: Here we are, marrying on Oct 8. Jae was one of Ashby's admirers. I often think he and God above brought us together. Ashby is retiring the last day of August from his part time position on the Harvard Medical School Staff. He retired from clinical surgery some years back and has been teaching for about 8 years at Mass General. Some of the '26ers do know the news, and a few of the classmates. I would be happy for you to share the news and wedding date. You could mention that he and Jae were good friends in high school. Another of their close friends was John Strickler, whose father was also '26. John went to Cornell, was commissioned and, unfortunately, was killed in VN. Their 4th good friend was John Fugh who rose to the job of Army JAG. He died of cancer soon after Jae. Ashby delivered John's eulogy at Arlington. I want to bring Ashby to DC about the time of the mini next year. It would be fun to take in one of the events and have him meet some of our wonderful friends. Much love, Annie” Fantastic news!!

Civil War Cruise and Dinner

10/2/2011

For some time here in DC area, **Herb Puscheck** and **Jack Downing** have been organizing Civil War battlefield tours (staff rides really). This year the event included a river cruise to a restaurant. Here are photos of Herb during the cruise and the group of survivors after the cruise. Go to them for details and plan now to attend the 2012 Civil War staff ride, cruise, whatever happens! Actually in my confusion, Scribe may have combined a Civil War staff ride in May with a June cruise to a restaurant reachable only by water. I do know that Herb was instrumental in both events, if these were two separate events.



John & Barbara Raymond – Parents of USAF MG Selectee

10/2/2011

“A DoD news release today announced that BG John (Jay) Raymond, son of our own **John Raymond**, has been selected for promotion to Major General. As was the case when Jay was selected for BG, John is much too modest to announce the news himself so I chose to do so. Congratulations to John & **Barbara** and kudos to the USAF for recognizing Jay's talent and leadership. **Pete Kusek**” Thanks to Pete for his keen eyes.

Capelle Award 2011 – Last at Ft Monmouth

10/2/2011



Report from **Hugh Trumbull**: “The last hurrah for the Prep School at Ft Monmouth! On a beautiful May morning, with flags flying and band playing, a very spirited class conducted their final review and ceremonies to end the 34 year chapter of USMAPS at Ft Monmouth. The moving vans will arrive in just days and the next class will report to the School's new home at West Point in the fall. This year's “Capelle” went to Alpha Company, represented by Cadet Candidate Tykerious M. Coleman – a tall drink of water from South Carolina. Ty Coleman is a well rounded guy with many interests and a boatload of

personality! While he and his family have no military background, he is really looking forward to joining his graduating classmates as they become part of the Class of '15 on the Plain on the 29 June. Timing this year allowed Ty and me to attend the Pizza Party that goes with the Capelle Trophy. It was great to have an opportunity to meet and chat with a number of the CCs. They are a diverse group with an impressive number of right shoulder patches. '58 received many ‘thank yous’ including from the Commandant, COL Tyge Rugenstein and his XO who stopped by the Pizza Party to thank '58 for their support.” The photo shows all awardees. The Capelle Award is front left (note the number of entrees on the plaque) and Hugh is standing third from left.

K-1 Micro Reunion May 2011

10/2/2011

Report from **Hugh Trumbull**: “**Ann** and I just finished hosting a K-1 Micro based on the Valley Forge / Philadelphia area. It was a blast with everyone getting a good shot of red, white and blue history!!

(Gustitis, Barker, Sands, Shrader, Bellows, Serchak, Shely, Hidalgo (Pat), Groves (Marg), Johnson and Trumbull attending.) Hundreds of pictures taken - I'm sure they will surface at some point!"

DC "Zipper Club" Members

10/2/2011

Years ago, after his open heart surgery, **Bob Tallgren** wanted to make a list of all classmates with "zippers" as in opened and closed chest for surgery. Not many takers back then. **Chuck Toftoy** has now organized such a group in DC area: "**Jack, Dick, Otto, Bill, John**: It looks as if 6 of us make up the USMA58/DC-Zipper Club. Please send me the type of surgery you had and date. For example my response would be: 2 valves repaired, maze procedure-May'11. Another example might be: double bypass-March'07, etc...

Thanks. I'll make up a chart to show our total picture. Tuttle should be included even though the Doc didn't crack through his sternum. He had an esophagectomy. When I visited him in Walter Reed, Bill pulled back his hospital gown and all I remember were stitches all over his chest. By the way, Bill is a tough guy. If it's OK, we'll decide on how often we meet for lunch to discuss our procedures and current events. Of course our main goal is to help classmates who are faced with this type of surgery. Open for ideas. Your pal, Chuck Toftoy, E-2 CCQ (last names added by Scribe: **Downing, Reidy, Thamasset, Tuttle and Nun** – their first Zipper Lunch is in Oct).

Reminiscences of Camp Buckner 1955 and Hurricanes

10/2/2011

Terry Connell began this string of memories via email: "Many will remember that 56 years ago this past week another hurricane similar to Irene came blowing up a very replicated path, catching us as new Yearlings at Camp Buckner. Some of the Buckner companies were undergoing 'field exercises' in various phases, and mine, 3rd Company, found ourselves in a defensive position a bit south or west of Round Pond. The small creek along which the positions were deployed (what the engineers would perhaps determine was an 'intermittent stream') normally ran ankle deep water. The night of the storm passage it rose to a six-foot depth meaning any crossing necessitated that you held your M-1 rifle very high and took great care in crossing. Someone on high felt there might possibly be the danger of one of our media-precious numbers becoming a NYT's statistic and decided discretion was the better part ... and at least the war was called for Third Company about 36hrs before the scheduled ending. There may have been a repetition of that historic episode once again last week. We'll ask **AASmith** to check it out.... Ah, the blessings of fun and games for big boys. Terry F-1"

Reminiscences (Continued) by Glenn Hall

10/2/2011

"I'm thinking I was in 4th Company, and I don't recall the exercise being canceled. I do recall that an 'intermittent stream' ran directly through my pup tent! :-)."

Reminiscences Continued by Doug Sedgwick

10/2/2011

"I remember Connie well. From Wikipedia: 'Hurricane Connie brought the heaviest rain seen in New York in over 50 years during its passage, dropping 5.32 in (135 mm) in New York City within a 20 hour span. [3] The maximum rainfall from the storm was also recorded in New York, amounting to 13.24 in (336 mm) in Fort Schuyler, Bronx Schuyler, Bronx. This total is the highest of any tropical cyclone to impact the state on record. [4] Large areas of the city, including subways, were flooded and many residents were left without power.' I spent the night in a foxhole up to my neck in water. The next day they had a foot inspection, and when I took off my boots the medic said they were the ugliest thing he had ever seen. Ah memories..."

Reminisces (Continued) by Phil Gibbs (our last gift to '59)

10/2/2011

"I was in 2nd Co. We spent both nights in the storm. In the 2nd plat/2nd co my squad had **Phil Di Mauro, Ben Pellegrini, Vic Gongola, Hank Bielinski, Butch Ordway** was a Sqd Ldr or Cpl, and Zeb Bradford 56 I-2 was the Plat Ldr. We went into defensive positions on the fwd crest of a ridge at about 1630, as soon as we started preparing our positions it started raining. When we brought our mess kits back from the mess station it was full of water, it rained so hard during the night that all of the foxholes were full of water, and the poncho roof coverings were full and gave way, miserable. Phil DiMauro was posted to an early warning outpost almost as soon as we went into position, when he was relieved about 2100 hrs, he tried to return through our lines, he forgot or did not know the password, so a smart Yearling asked him some plebe poop 'how is the Cow?' DiMauro was soaked, hungry and tired, he responded with a statement as to where the yearling could put his head!!! At which time the yearling infantry man yelled 'Aggressor' and the whole hillside opened up on Phil DiMauro. Phil came into our lines after daylight the next day; he was not a happy camper. Bielinski and myself had to carry a 57RR. We were always getting put out of action as soon as anything happened, not much fun lugging a 57rr and an M -1, so during the evening firefight we decided to try something different. We opened the breach on the 57RR stuck the M-1 down into the barrel and fired a blank. This created a great roar, and produced a burst of flame that singed the wooden parts of the M-1 and lit up the hillside, we did get attention and satisfaction, but we did not duplicate the action. On the 2nd night we occupied positions along West Point Buckner Rd, the 75th RCT 'Puerto Rico' were the aggressors, Capt Patton was our nominal Field Company Cdr or TAC. Anyway he had his CP in a hill mass just north of so me kind of a quarry or gully, where the company trains were situated. During the night we were harassed by the 75th and in the morning right around 0730 they staged an attack. Now the word had gone out that chow was in the trains so most of the company went to breakfast, Capt Patton conducted a brave stand by himself against the 75th, but lost. We did have a decent breakfast. Later in the morning Capt Patton addressed 2nd Co in very colorful and descriptive language. He was apparently disappointed in our performance, and he was chagrined at having been KIA or captured by the 75th. He was just as colorful as when A-2 lost to I-2 in lacrosse, which was a very bloody game. Later we were debriefed by a Capt Gard, a popular Capt, Korean vet from the English (Social Sciences, actually) Dept who wasn't impressed with our approach to the final objective. We seemed to be indifferent and lacking in FIRE! After the verbal commentary the Company was offered the chance to repeat the last phase. I imagine we did so under duress from the authorities since they controlled all of the cards. So in answer to Terry Connell, I definitely have a strong remembrance of 'Hurricane Connie' (also the name of my former girlfriend with whom I had split from that summer). I also will not forget Phil DiMauro's face and response when he was asked about were he had been all night! Yes those were the days!!!! Phil Gibbs, I-2 Ex 58 (three Years) USMA 1959 Last man out of 58/ last man into 59 who graduated."

Reminisces Contribution from Jim Seltzer

10/2/2011

"According to NOAA there were two hurricanes causing heavy rain that season, only a week apart: Connie (August 11-14, 1955) and Diane (August 17-20, 1955). Obviously these had been preplanned and scheduled by the Tac Dept to make our stay at Buckner more enjoyable.

<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/nerfc/historical/aug1955.htm>

"I was in the 3rd platoon of First Co. I'm not sure whether it was Connie or Diane, but I do recall sitting in a foxhole wearing a poncho with my head well tucked into the hood as the rain continued to pelt the ground and slowly fill the foxholes. It wasn't the rain that made the event so memorable, however. It was the thousands of mosquitoes that shared my poncho and who were doubly profited by the event: feasting on my blood while avoiding the wind and pelting rain. As I crouched there in the dark, seemingly endless misery, I seriously contemplated the possible need for a blood transfusion to replenish all the blood that I lost to the mosquitoes that stormy night.

“The Mortar, Class of 1958, Third Company write up mentions Diane: ‘The highlight of the summer for the men of Third Co. was the two day water survival course which we took during the three days of the Company Field Exercise. The Hurricane battered, leaking, but valiant crew of the USS LEANHARDANDHIGHLYINTELLIGENT learned what the forces of nature could do by spending two days fighting both the hated aggressors and Hurricane Diane. Because of the position of our TAC, Lieutenant Whyte, USN, we all became qualified Deep Water Infantry Frogmen.’

“Returning to the present, there are lots of photos of Hurricane Irene posted on the web.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/westpointparents/sets/72157627416011747/> ‘Photos taken on Sunday, August 28, 2011 at West Point and in Highland Falls. The depth of the water in the area was amazing. The cadets pitched in to help set up a shelter for local residents who were flooded out of their homes if needed. Although we didn't feel the full brunt of the storm, there was significant damage to property and roads in the area.’”

Reminisces – contribution by Tony Smith

10/2/2011

“Good grief, Phil, how do you remember all that stuff?!? All good, except CPT Bobby Gard was a Soc Sci P (correction added above). And, another short contribution from **Jack Gordon**: “The most notable thing I remember from that event was that during the night, I held my hand up in front of my face, (about 3-5 inches away,) and couldn't see it at all. That's dark.” And another short contribution from **Jim Castle**: “I was also in the Co at Buckner with Capt Patton as our Tac. As I remember it, he was very disappointed with us and our performance. One morning at breakfast he decided to give us a rousing pep talk. One of the things he mentioned was that his first night of combat was more exciting than his first night of marriage. As I recall, his wife heard about his comments as well and he was locked out of the house for ‘X’ days. That I can't verify, but it was rumored.”

Reminisces from Ash Haynes

10/2/2011

“Just to add another ‘drop to the bucket.’ Per ‘The Mortar’ I was in the 3rd Platoon of 4th Company. I recall the rain during the field exercise well. **Bill Henning** and I had a 3.5" Bazooka (thankfully not a 57mm RR) on the night in question. We were in a foxhole at the base of a hill near a road, with the rest of the company above us. Around dusk, before the rain, we heard a tank approaching. Bill put an empty C-ration can (B unit?) in the bazooka, shouldered it and aimed it at the tank. I put my M-1 into the breech and, on command, fired it! The can bounced off the tank, whose crew was a bit shocked. Then the rain started and we spent the night in a rapidly filling hole. A can't help but think Bill Brower memorialized the rainfall by his drawing on the cover of "The Mortar." (This has not been verified with Snopes.) Grip Hands, Ash”

Reminisces (Continued) by Jimmy Weis

10/2/2011

“And one more--I don't recall what company I was in, but on the night in question, I was Sgt of the Guard. You may recall one of the guard posts was located near the flag pole at the edge of the lake (don't get ahead of me now). When I marched the guard detail around the route to change the guard at midnight, that guard post and guard were completely surrounded by water. Once again, my memory isn't clear, but I don't think I forced anybody to wade through knee deep water at that point. The cadet who was on that post probably, by mutual agreement, just sat, hunkered down and dozed off. Maybe whoever that was remembers it better than I do. Regards, Jimmy”

Reminisces from Edgie Waller

10/2/2011

“Buckner was soggy all night, the rain coming down in sheets after dark. Couldn't hear anything. You could barely make out which way was toward the enemy lines. I recall being ordered to relieve the LP several hundred yards forward. There was no way to see where you were going so, when I stumbled across a telephone land line, I decided to follow it hand over hand to the LP. When I got to the LP, I fell over a dirt mound into a shallow, water-filled foxhole (no men). I lifted the phone wire and squinted upward toward the landline phone in the dim light. It was two 1/2 pound TNT blocks. Needless to say, I got out of that hole like I was blown out. I made it back to my comfortable, water-filled foxhole.”

Reminisces (Getting Near the End) by Ron Bellows

10/2/2011

“Enjoyed all the memories of the storm at Buckner. I have a few recollections - I spent the night sitting on a large rock with a swirling poncho over my head. **John Deely** used to tell me of his unique experience. During the night of the storm the commo went out to his CO and he was tasked to track the wire back to where it was assumed to be broken. After thrashing thru the woods and underbrush following the wire he came to a deep ravine and in the dark, nearly fell in. I recall that we were told to put a pair of socks in our armpits so they would supposedly dry, and I recall that when we returned to Buckner and I took off my soaked wool OD socks, fungus had been multiplying around my ankles. What a time!”

Reminisces by Bob Dey

10/2/2011

“I for one find my Buckner time pretty much of a blank. I must have sat in a wet foxhole too but can't recall much. Perhaps I suffered PTSS and washed it all away. I do have very vivid memories of a few things. The ANPRC-whatevers never worked when you needed them. And, I hated log exercises with a passion. It seemed I always got the most slippery wet sandy biggest end of the log. Story of my life I guess.”

Reminisces – Last one

10/2/2011

“I remember **Sam Benjamin** and I had a helluva time trying to figure out how to light soggy cigarettes!
Tom Claffey”

First internet effort is far too long. Sorry about that. Especially sorry to lead off with seven classmates who transitioned to the Ghostly Assemblage. Hope you all can find your way to class notes on WPAOG website. Cheers, George