



USMA Class of 1960 Washington DC Area Association

A BRIEF HISTORY

14 March 2021

Background (1960 – 1970)

The origins of the Washington DC Area Association are linked to the original Class leadership group that continued functioning after our graduation in 1960 as the Class Executive Committee. It had no immediate social function at that time, but the Class Treasurer role, then held by Fred Kaiser, soon became active because of funerals and other “cup and flower” needs. Coordination difficulties suggested a stable location and contact capability for the Treasurer functions, resulting in its establishment at West Point. The position was filled by successively drawing from classmates who were assigned there as faculty and staff. The result was that, for all intents and purposes, the Class Executive Committee then became centered at West Point.

The Class Executive Committee provided the nucleus of what we later formalized as the USMA Class of 1960 Washington DC Area Association. As such, that class group has been active in the DC area for over 40 years. When needed, it functioned as the Class Executive Committee in addition to its normal social activities. It also became the source of “go to” for classmates who were willing to work on five-year reunion committees and other activity needs that presented themselves over time.

Officers/Committee Members (initial to present)

President: John Berry (1985-1988); John Hesford (1988 - 2000); Wilsie Adams (2000-2003); Ed Post (2003-2006); John Berry (2006- present)

Treasurer: Chuck Mandelbaum (2003-2012); Curt Herrick (2012-2016); Trent Crosby (2016-present)

Secretary: Chuck Mandelbaum (2003-2012); Bill Florence (2012- present)

Activities Coordinator: Tom Caraballo (2003-2006)

Members-at-Large: Carl Miller (2012- present); Curt Herrick (2016- present)

Note: The members-at-large made themselves available in a general support role to assist (or stayed on to assist after stepping down from a previously held position) in advisory and/or extra-help roles and otherwise support the Committee.

Membership

The Association was intended for all classmates, wives, and widows in the general Washington DC area. Some, of course, were not within a reasonable commuting distance. The distance factor was a major participation consideration for those in the outer reaches of this area and became more important as we “matured.” To be sure, the long drives made by many to participate were always noted and appreciated.

Chuck Mandelbaum created the first roster of Class of 1960 graduates in the Washington area which was passed to subsequent committee secretaries for its upkeep and perpetuation. Some members preferred to remain on the roster when they moved out the Washington area and receive our event notices as a means of staying in contact. (A current roster, listing 70 names, is available from Bill Florence at w.floren5@verizon.net or 703.854.1322).

Activities Overview

As might be expected, the purpose of our activities has always been to provide a means for classmates, wives, and widows to get together to maintain and renew old friendships and to make new ones. Events were usually a luncheon at some reasonably central restaurant or, quite often, at military base officers’ clubs or at the nearby Arlington and Fairfax Army-Navy country clubs. We also assembled at the homes of classmates who generously and graciously hosted a special gathering event. In the Association’s earlier days, excursions to nearby points of interest were highlight events. They usually included a luncheon at the site or at a nearby locale. Some examples are several Potomac River cruises, visits to the Washington Cathedral, Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason; and several winery visits. As time went on, we trended more to the luncheons instead of evening dinners and less to excursions. We also made a special effort to encourage the increasing number of Class widows to attend the functions. This was well received and pleasantly successful for the enjoyment of all. We also established contact with our counterpart Class of 1960 graduates of the US Naval Academy and invited them to many of our functions. Guest speaker presentations were often a highlight of these activities. Below, is a chronological listing, *information as available*, of our activities to include guest speakers at some events.

1980- 1989 Activities

On 5 Aug 1980, the Class Executive Committee title and functions moved to Washington DC where the center of mass of our graduates was now well established. The function of Executive Treasurer remained at West Point in very capable hands including Tom Huber, Mark Lowrey, and Dean Herman successively. It was passed to the DC Executive Committee by transfer from Dean Herman to Gene Brisach in 1988.

In 1985 John Berry became the local class president until summer 1988 when posted overseas, turning it over to John Hesford.

Classmates stationed in the DC area periodically got together for luncheons and other various social activities during these busy active-duty years. Class social gatherings also occurred in Hawaii, at the Army War College, and elsewhere wherever a group of us were sharing an assignment location.

During this period, some classmates in the DC area also became active member in the West Point Society of Washington DC, a long-chartered organization open to all West Pointers. The Society's activities, particularly Founders' Day events, often served as gathering occasions.

1990- 1999 Activities

Most of us were still busy in second career jobs in the 1990s, but still managed to gather socially from time-to-time. Jim Lincoln, Ed Post, Erc Barone, and Chuck Mandelbaum helped make this happen. We met occasionally for luncheons and rallies at the Arlington Army-Navy Club and other watering holes in Northern Virginia.

Charley Otstott, in his class president role (and serving as de facto Washington area group president) got things moving even more by organizing a class lunch at Arlington Army-Navy Club on March 5, 1998. Following the lunch, an election of members to the Class Executive Committee was held, with Willsie Adams elected as president. The gathering also served to brainstorm future activities. These started with a luncheon event on June 11, 1998, where for the first time, wives and guests were specially invited. That is important, since nearly all previous social gatherings/lunches were primarily stag affairs up to that time.

2000-2002 Activities – no records available

2003 Activities

After a bit of a lull period, Chuck Mandelbaum, Erc Barone, Ed Post, Tom Caraballo and Ed Deagle reenergized Class activities and embedded the structure that continues to this day. Erc and Tom starred in selecting and reserving activity venues and took care of other meeting details. Chuck did most of the administrative stuff – flyers, email RSVP responses, and dues. He established a bank account with the Pentagon Federal Credit Union that enabled us to become a 501(3)(c) charity to collect dues and pay bills. Chuck also updated and maintained the local roster, passing this function to Bill Florence in early 2012 when he departed the area. Curt Herrick stepped in as Treasurer, and additionally assumed an active role in coordination with John Berry regarding venue selection, guest speakers, and sending out flyers, collecting RSVP responses and dues.

We started having occasional presentations during this period, but the focus continued to be on being together with classmates. We set up the routine schedule of one each luncheon in fall and spring, one major activity in the summer such as a picnic or other outdoor outing, and of course, an A/N game rally during the week before the game so that victory was still possible. We did host a couple of river luncheon cruises on the Potomac that were a great success.

We met for a winter luncheon in February, held at the Army-Navy Country Club in Arlington. Our guest speaker was Reginald Brown, USMA, serving then as Assistant Secretary of the Army.

2004 Activities

Charley Otstott spoke to us at our Fall luncheon about the Abu Ghraib prison scandal and revelations of torture of Iraqis during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

2005 Activities

Our Spring luncheon was held at the Marco Polo restaurant in Vienna. Ted Hartke, our longest serving classmate, spoke to us of his Medical Corps experiences in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Vi and Erc Barone invited everyone to their home for a grand "Old Virginia" picnic at their lovely home in Gainesville in August.

Rosemary and Will Adams invited all of us to their magnificent home on River Road for a Beat Navy game party in December.

2006 Activities

We again went to our favorite Marco Polo restaurant in Vienna for our Summer/Fall luncheon in September. Our guest speakers were classmates who participated in the March Back (a 13-mile night tactical march) with the Class of 2010, our 50th year affiliation class. The March Back is from Camp Buckner to West Point at the conclusion of Beast Barracks, a relatively new tradition.

Joyce and Ed and Post invited everyone to their spacious home in Fairfax Station for an Army-Navy football game party before the December game. Army colors and paraphernalia were strongly encouraged and on display. Later that month, Ed Post turned the local class presidency over to John Berry.

2007 Activities

Again, at the Marco Polo restaurant in Vienna, we gathered for a summer luncheon in July. Charlie Baker, just back from Iraq, shared his impressions of the war and experience as an embedded reporter.

Vi and Erc Barone opened their lovely home once again to all of us for a December pre-game rally in support of the Army team. Vi insisted, and Erc wisely agreed, that this time it would be a genuine Italian meal – even better than Mama Leone’s, our old favorite in NY City.

2008 Activities

Drawing on a family connection to Kentucky, John Berry invited Congressman Ron Lewis, the House representative to Kentucky’s 2nd District, as our speaker for our Winter (February) luncheon. This gave us the chance to host our luncheon at the Republican Club on Capitol Hill. Republican classmates were impressed. Rep Lewis spoke to us on the BRAC process and support for veterans.

Our mid-summer luncheon was at the Marco Polo restaurant. Paul Cerjan was our speaker and talked to us about logistics support for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In September, we gathered at the Marco Polo restaurant to hear LTG Richard Trefry ’50, invited by Curt Herrick. Our speaker spoke to us on the Army Force Generation Model in Supporting Units in Future Conflicts. He was the H-2 tactical officer during our First Class year, so we knew him then as CPT Trefry. LTG Trefry founded the Army Force Management School at Fort Belvoir and was honored as a USMA Distinguished Graduate.

Rosemary and Will Adams again invited classmates and wives to their River Road home for what had become our traditional Army-Navy game party, this time to watch the game on television. A great time, even if Navy won.

2009 Activities

We tried a new venue for our winter luncheon in February – the Campaign Room at the Fort Myer Officers’ Club. The Club’s superb buffet lunch proved appealing, and we vowed to return periodically.

Our mid-summer gathering was a lunch at the USMC Officers’ Club in Quantico, then a visit to the splendid USMC museum with a talk by a museum docent and a self-guided tour. The Marines know how to tell their story.

In October, we all headed out of town to Pat and Ken Richeson’s spacious home at Ford’s Colony near Williamsburg. The Richesons served us a delicious meal. Many stayed at local hotels, and the golfers hit the links of the Ford’s Colony Country Club.

2010 Activities

Classmates met at the National Cryptologic Museum near the I-495 exit to the National Security Agency in March. We received a docent tour of the museum, then gathered for lunch at the nearby Historic Rams Head Rathskeller in Savage, MD.

For our summer gathering, we met again at the Marco Polo Restaurant. Active-duty Army Colonel Chris Reed, USMA 87, son of Col (ret) Jean Reed, a 1960 Oklahoma University ROTC graduate who often joined us for our events. Chris had recently returned from Afghanistan as an adviser to the Afghan Army and shared his impressions.

We held our annual Army-Navy gathering a different way this December – a dress-up, served dinner at the Arlington Army-Navy Club. This was popular with the wives and for most of the guys.

2011 Activities

Our first event of the year was a luncheon at the Marco Polo Restaurant in February. The next event was a visit to Gunston Hall, Home of George Mason, in May. Carol Coose, then a docent at Gunston Hall, made special arrangements for us for a historical presentation and an interpretive film talk by the Education Director, Frank Barker, on the “Virginia Navy of the Revolution” - and a tour of the Main House. We reassembled for a special Italian buffet lunch at nearby Pane e Vino.

We traveled out of town again for a “North and South” class lunch organized for us by Marie and Dick Healy. The luncheon took place at the prestigious Glen Restaurant and Yellow Tavern on the outskirts of Richmond. Classmates living in the Tidewater and Richmond areas joined in and we had a merry time.

Our Army-Navy game rally dinner was held at the Fairfax Army-Navy Club in December.

2012 Activities

A luncheon gathering at the Marco Polo Restaurant was held in March. Our guest speaker was local author, Paul Herbert. Mr. Herbert is a professional raconteur, a story-teller of obscure and fascinating stories in American history – carefully chosen to appeal to the Go Like '60 Class from his most recent book, *God Knows All Your Names*.

We made a visit to the Washington Cathedral, DC in May arranged by Khacki Berry, a Cathedral docent. We enjoyed a Service & Sacrifice presentation and tour, with a luncheon afterwards at the nearby Café Deluxe.

The October event was a luncheon at Marco Polo Restaurant. Our guest speaker was distinguished author Lew Sorley, Class of 1956, who spoke about his latest book *Westmoreland: The General Who Lost Vietnam*. Sorley also authored: *Honor Bright: History and Origins of the West Point Honor Code and System*, *Vietnam Chronicles*, and *The Abrams Tapes, 1968-1972*.

Our Army-Navy game rally event was held at the Fairfax Army-Navy Club in December.

2013 Activities

Our winter luncheon was at the Arlington Army-Navy Country Club in February. Our guest speaker was Mr. Bill Vogelsong, Jr. who spoke of grave-side operations at Arlington cemetery. He was a retired 20-year veteran of the Air Force Band who started as a cemetery representative at Arlington 23 years ago. Vogelsong has handled every aspect of a funeral, from a relative's first phone call to the actual interment. His role involved interfacing with the family members – no easy task. Candy Otstott, a member of the Arlington Ladies, also spoke of their role in the Arlington funeral proceedings.

We gathered for a luncheon at the Fort Myer Officer' Club in May for a Summer social event – no speaker.

A luncheon at the Officers' Club, Ft Belvoir in September was our Fall event. Our guest speaker was Colonel Greg Gadson, Fort Belvoir Garrison Commander, USMA Class of 1989. He spoke about happenings in and around Fort Belvoir regarding the ongoing Base Reduction and Consolidation (BRAC) actions.

Some of our members participated in Veterans' Day ceremonies at the Rocky Versace & Vietnam Veterans Memorial Plaza, Alexandria, on Nov 11th.

We held our Army-Navy game rally and dinner at the Fairfax Army-Navy Club in December.

2014 Activities

A luncheon at the Fort Myer Officers' Club in March was our winter gathering.

We did our next luncheon at the Fort Belvoir Officers' Club in June. We hosted retired BG Creighton W. Abrams, Jr. then the Executive Director of the Army Historical Foundation. He briefed us about the construction plans and funding status of the National U.S. Army Museum at Fort Belvoir. Following this event, we decided to solicit within our association for a group donation to support the Army Museum. (Some of us were already contributors to this noteworthy cause. The \$2500 goal was enthusiastically met and exceeded. We presented a check for \$2650 to BG Abrams in August. Our donation qualified the USMA Class of 1960 for a commemorative plaque on the Museum's Veterans' Wall.

We made an excursion to the Barrel Oak Winery (near Delaplane, VA) in October for a sampling tour followed by a picnic lunch and gathered for the Army-Navy game rally and dinner at the Fairfax Army-Navy Club in December.

2015 Activities

Our mid-winter gathering was a luncheon at the Ft Myer Officer club. With our 55th reunion approaching and nostalgia creeping in, Bill Florence showed a few snippets of the *West Point* TV series that was filmed and ran on national TV while we were cadets. Many of us had not seen much or any of this series since we had no access to television at the time it ran. The series, only recently available through Amazon, had received good reviews. Some interesting budding stars took part

including Steve McQueen, Barbara Eden, Larry Hagman, Clint Eastwood, Leonard Nimroy, and Chuck Connors. We too starred as the plebes in the background in some of the film settings!

We had member participation in Memorial Day (and possibly Veterans' Day too) ceremonies at the Rocky Versace & Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Plaza in Alexandria in May and November, respectively.

The next events were a luncheon at the Fairfax Army-Navy in October followed by a gathering there again in December for the Navy game rally dinner. The rally featured songs and cheers, and we even managed to do the USMA Rocket!

2016 Activities

The activity year started with a luncheon at the Fort Myer club in March, which we repeated for the June gathering. We had a speaker at the latter session, Mr. Ed Bonekemper, author of six Civil War histories. He was then the Book Review Editor of Civil War News. He spoke to us on one of his favorite topics, *Ulysses S. Grant, A Victor, Not a Butcher*, with special emphasis on combined operations during the Civil War – an interesting story.

Our Fall event was a visit to the Vint Hill Craft Winery and Cold War Museum at Vint Hill Farms in October. This included a tour of the old Vint Hill Station former ASA site that processed signals during WW2 and the Cold War, followed by an equally interesting tour of the local winery.

We again had member participation in Veterans' Day (November 11th) ceremonies at the Rocky Versace & Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Plaza in Alexandria.

In December, we gathered for our usual Army-Navy game rally luncheon at the Fairfax Army-Navy Country Club. For this rally we strongly encouraged cadet and/or other West Point rally garb to set the stage for a follow-on session of USMA cheers and songs. It was good fun and highly effective – we won the Navy game (20-17) the next weekend – after a 14- game losing streak! We continued to follow this pattern for our successive rallies.

2017 Activities

We began our activity year with a March luncheon at the Fort Myer Officers' Club. Our next event was a May luncheon at the National Republican Capitol Hill Club, Washington, DC. Congressman Brett Guthrie, USMA 1987 from the 2nd District of Kentucky (includes Fort Knox), joined us for lunch and spoke about various defense related issues being addressed by Congress. A buffet lunch followed in the Club dining room.

The Army-Navy game rally luncheon, again with rally garb and a song-cheer session, was held at the Fairfax Army-Navy Club in December – resulting in yet again an Army win (14-13) over Navy!

2018 Activities

Our mid-winter function was a luncheon at the Fort Myer Officers' Club in March. Unfortunately, our invited speaker, a semi-retired CIA official, was called away and unable to attend.

A luncheon at the Fairfax Army-Navy Club in June was our mid-summer event. Our guest speaker was John Berry's counterpart, the USNA Class of 1960 Washington area group president, who briefed us on happenings in the Middle East.

At the Fall luncheon in September, Charley Otstott along with John Berry, and Dick Healy presented an update on the status of the *60@60 Collected Wisdom - West Point Class of 1960* booklet being prepared for publication in conjunction with our 60th reunion in 2020. The reunion was later rescheduled for June 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequently canceled again for the same reason. However, the Class is still in the game with a Virtual 60th Reunion planned for June 8th, 2021!

Our Army-Navy game rally luncheon was held at the Fairfax Army-Navy Club in December. Once again, our rally helped for an Army win (17-10) over Navy!

2019 Activities

We began the year with a buffet luncheon at the Fort Myer Officers' Club in March, followed by a June luncheon at the Arlington Army-Navy Club. John Berry shared some thoughts on the strategy-free decisions of four presidents, Eisenhower to Johnson, that got us into the war in Vietnam ... and ended with 58,000 names engraved on a wall. A perspective appreciated by all to include the USNA 1960 graduates who were invited and attended.

Our Fall luncheon was at Fort Myer in September. Jim O'Connell arranged for the speaker - LTC Raymond (Ray) Blaine, USMA '02. He was then the Director of West Point's Cyber Research Center (CRC), and the Department of Electrical Engineering & Computer Science. His presentation was particularly enlightening for we of the slide-rule era.

The Army-Navy game rally luncheon at held in December at our usual venue, the Fairfax Army-Navy Club. Sadly, this rally did not result in its usual success – Navy won 31 to 7.

2020 Activities

No gatherings due to the onset of COVID-19 early in the year. However, despite the absence of our usual Class of 1960 rally, Army still won the Army-Navy game (15 – 0). (This was the first A/N game played in Michie Stadium since the 1943 game during World War 2).

2021 Activities

Again, no local gatherings as of this writing due to COVID-19 concerns. However, on the horizon is the *USMA 1960 – Virtual 60th Reunion*, planned for June 8th, 2021.

