



11 May 2021

DEAR CLASSMATES, WIVES, FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

Greetings once again from the HH Team. As we sit down at the computer to begin to draft this latest letter to you, we note that there are *only fifty days until our much anticipated reunion begins!* Last week you should have received an email from the AOG reminding you that Reunion Registration will close on June 6th. (27 days from now) This is a follow up to that reminder, along with additional information that will be of interest to you. Please take the time to read through this rather lengthy letter so you will be among our classmates who are in the know about all the reunion details!

REUNION ATTENDANCE:

First and foremost, we are off to a great start on the number of classmates listed as attendees! We know that there are many more of you who have indicated that you will be coming, especially those who are holding hotel reservations. If you haven't yet registered for the reunion but are definitely planning to attend, we encourage you to register sooner rather than later. It would be helpful to us from a logistical and budgetary standpoint for you to do so. We would much appreciate that and look forward to seeing you soon!

NEW COVID GUIDELINES:

For those of you who may still be sitting on the fence, it should be reassuring for you to know that the Governor of Virginia has recently lifted many of the restrictions as the pandemic concerns have lessened and the road ahead looks much brighter. At this time, masks are still required indoors, and we will be adhering to those guidelines until told otherwise. The ballroom at the Renaissance is quite large, allowing for tables to easily be set up for social distancing, with six people sitting at tables that normally would hold ten. With the vaccine being widely available now, all of our attendees will have had the opportunity to have received their shots. With common sense practices and thoughtful consideration of others, it will be a safe and wonderful gathering for all who attend.

MASKS FOR THE MEN, AND SPECIAL ORDER MASKS FOR THE LADIES:

Speaking of masks, two anonymous donors have ordered a very cool N95 mask with the class crest to be given complimentary to each classmate in attendance. No doubt

you will wear them with pride throughout the reunion, and they will make a great keepsake years from now as we look back on the very crazy and unsettling year we have all, in varying degrees, endured. To compliment the masks that the guys will be receiving, we have also come up with an equally cool mask for the ladies. (see pictures below) The ladies masks are not complimentary, but can be special ordered at the reunion table on the second floor of the Renaissance on Thursday afternoon. Price is yet to be determined, but it will likely be in the \$25 range.

Gentleman's Mask



Ladies Mask



FRIDAY ACTIVITIES – OUR COMMEMORATE DAY:

WREATH LAYING CEREMONY: We have an incredible day planned for you on Friday, beginning with the Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown at Arlington Cemetery. As mentioned in previous correspondence, four classmates were randomly chosen by the Class Leadership Team to represent the class in the ceremony. They are Dave Gnau, Tom Henneberry, Hank Sterbenz and Bernie Zeigler.....a fine group all! The rest of us will be proudly standing behind them on the steps of the Amphitheater, as we watch the precision of the members of the Old Guard and the solemnity of the Ceremony. **(Please note:** Privately owned vehicles (POV) are not allowed at Arlington Cemetery, and parking would be extremely difficult at the Vietnam Wall. If you plan to attend either of these events it would be wise for you to sign up for bus transportation.)

VISIT TO THE VIETNAM WALL: Following the Wreath Laying, we will depart directly for the Vietnam Wall Memorial for some quiet and reflective time there, to honor and remember the twenty six classmates who lost their lives in service to our country during this long ago and far off war. We are pleased to have Judy Hemmingway, widow of our fallen classmate Charles Hemmingway, and their son, Chuck, joining us at the Vietnam Wall, and sharing with us our entire 55th Plus One reunion weekend. As a Gold Star Spouse and son of a fallen hero, we honor Judy and Chuck's sacrifice, as well....and consider them revered members of the Class of '65. Paper and charcoal will be available should anyone want to do a rubbing of a classmate's name in memory of their sacrifice.

MEMORIAL SERVICE: Dave Hopkins, Chuck Mosely and John Pickler have put together a beautiful Memorial Service that will follow the Class meeting back at the hotel on Friday afternoon. Thanks to Terry Ryan, Chuck Nichols and Jim Ferguson, we are privileged to have over thirty members of the West Point Alumni Glee Club who have volunteered to take part in the service. Kleenex will be available, as it might be needed, especially when they sing the Vietnam Medley, *"The Mansions of the Lord."* They will then reach out to present the Vietnam Commemorative Pins, honoring the service, sacrifice and valor of all who served during the Vietnam era, to those classmates who have not yet received one on this 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War.

FRIDAY COCKTAIL HOUR AND DINNER: Following the Memorial Service, we will be treated to a special performance by the West Point Alumni Glee Club featuring many of your favorite USMA songs *"Honoring Country, Academy, Our Class, The Ladies and Benny Havens!"* Dinner will be a plated affair, with a short welcome followed by Walt Oehrlein offering the Invocation and Ray Woodruff leading the traditional toasts. Seating will be by Firstie Company. The widows in attendance will be our guests for the evening, and with no speaker scheduled, we leave you time to just visit with each other and enjoy the camaraderie and the blessing of being able to be together!

CHANGE OF VENUE FOR SATURDAY NIGHT CELEBRATE DINNER:

One of the highlights of the reunion will be our visit to the spectacular new National Museum of the United States Army! Many of us have contributed to the museum since its inception, and have continued to contribute as it has now become a reality! We know you will be impressed as we have the opportunity to tour the many exhibits together as a class on Saturday afternoon. Our collective appreciation goes to our classmate, Ric Shinseki, for his leadership and wise stewardship of our new Army Museum! Hoohah!

Regarding Saturday night's dinner, our original plans were to have cocktails in the Veterans Hall and Medal of Honor Garden after the tour, followed by dinner in the museum lobby. While the staff at the museum had hoped to be able to accommodate us, and tried hard to do so, this is a DOD operated facility with tighter restrictions on numbers allowed inside. They did offer to put up a tent outside on the plaza where we could have our dinner, however the cost of renting the tent was \$20,000. Needless to say, the cost was prohibitive.

The good news is that we had been holding space back at the Renaissance ballroom just in case we might need a Plan B. We held off on a decision as long as we could, but finally had to move the Saturday night dinner back to the hotel. For one thing, it will give folks a chance to rest for a bit back at the hotel in between the tour and the cocktail hour and dinner. Then to add a little extra special *"PZAZZ"* to the evening at the hotel, thanks to the Military District of Washington and the United States Army Band, we are pleased to tell you that we will have a very special *patriotic opening* to

the dinner! When you hear the trumpet sound calling us to mess, it will be time to move into the Ballroom where you will be treated to some rousing music by the very popular Brass Quintet Ensemble from the Army Band. They will be followed by three members of the Fife and Drum Corps leading the Honor Guard in to Present the Colors. This is our “Celebrate” night, after all! And we will be proudly celebrating OUR COUNTRY, OUR ARMY AND OUR GREAT USMA CLASS OF 1965!

After all the formalities, our dinner will be a casual country western affair, with some flashy black, gray and gold bandannas for all to wear! If you are so inclined, you might even want to don your favorite Stetson, or even go so far as to wear your spurs if you were a member of the Cav! It will be a fun and relaxing ending to our Fifty-Fifth Plus One Reunion, and will have us all eagerly looking forward to the 60th back at our beloved Alma Mater!

STRENGTH AND DRIVE

Bill and Nancy Hecker

wmheckerjr@mindspring.com – (571) 296-1972

Jim and June Harvey

jimjune@cox.net – (757) 288-6684

