

USNA Class of '71 History
(Authored by Vince Conroy '71)

The Great Experiment, the light of the world whose motto is *E Pluribus Unum*, or *From Many, One*, continues. One important reason is a uniquely American strength: distributed leadership. Good citizens with sound processes are abundant and self-cued from the smallest group upward so that all citizens may enjoy freedom, prosperity, and hope.

We of the Class of '71 are a small but important segment of that network. We are *Duces Virum*, *Leaders of Men*, and now more broadly, of women as well. We lead, inspire, manage, and control others in innumerable situations, both small and large, toward positive outcomes.

In 1966 there were 385,300 American troops in Vietnam. Anti-war demonstrations were widespread. In June of 1967 the Six Day War raged throughout the Middle East, and Red China exploded its first hydrogen bomb. Then, on June 28, 1967, 1394 of us took the oath of office. For the next four years and for decades to come we would be caught up in challenges, events, discoveries, and, most of all, change.

Selected terms evoke our years on the Severn:

“All ready on the right? ...”; M-1 thumb; “I’ll find out, Sir!”; Reef Points; white works; dixie cups; boondockers; alpha codes (laundry number!); Irish pennants; Plebe rates; 71 push-ups; shoving out, bracing up, and squaring corners; marching off demerits; “How long is the Mess Hall?;” leaning rest; window closing; come-arounds; spooning; snowflake drills; carry-on; mandatory chapel; knockabouts

YP craft & the stench of diesel; tragus; slide rules; Dodo and “Bite Army;” Tea Fights; Admiral Kaufman’s smile; falling asleep while standing up; truly nasty boxing headgear and gloves; Blood Mobile; Sleepy Hollow; Cannon balls with hard sauce; FORTTRAN; Dark Ages; going to & from home for Christmas on National Guard and Navy Reserve planes; 100th night; water skiing; June Week; the Blue Angels

Drags and drag houses; The Virgin Cannons; Fathers Sullivan and Laboon; “Rip ‘em up. tear ‘em up, give ‘em Hell, Laundry!;” the diggers and the fillers; cutting weight; red beach; hanging hand grenades on the Xmas tree; the 7-Mile Limit. Superintendent Vice Admiral James Calvert’s speeches: “Navy spells O-C-E-A-N” and “You should be proud to come home in a pine box”

Youngster Cruise; sextants. Morse code, & signal flags; upperclassmens’ rate to lie on the Rack; black market hotdogs, haircuts, popcorn, & hoagies; The Chapel Seven; Dilbert dunker; Restriction musters; 2nd Class Summer and the deadline at the start of 2nd Class academic year; visiting West Point & Colorado Springs; 2nd Class Ring Dance; 1st Class Cruise; entropy; $V = IR$ and the scourge of “wires”; Salty Sam; Service Selection; jumping from the tower; swimming a mile in your clothes with 100 of your closest friends; car buying; over 100 corvettes; “Porsche’s do not float”

In sports we did very well where size was not critical but tenacity and preparedness were. As Firsties we beat Army in 9-sports including football.

On June 9, 1971, 875 midshipmen became commissioned officers. We stood the conn, led the troops, flew the sorties, cruised the depths, and led the support activities that made all the rest possible. Collectively we walked the post for America. When diplomacy failed, we stepped in: for the War in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia; the retaking of the SS Mayaguez; Grenada; the aborted rescue of the Embassy hostages; Lebanon; and Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf. In 1986 we and the USAF attacked the terrorism support structure in Libya, striking simultaneously from England and from a carrier in the Mediterranean in a raid only America could conduct.

Freedom is not free, and some of our members no longer grow old with the rest of us. Instead they have entered our heritage as fallen comrades:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| • Art Bennett, III | • David Knott | • Granville Pullen |
| • Jim Collins | • William Marle | • Al Schaufelberger |
| • Michael Compton | • Mike Martin | • Mike Zurfluh |
| • Richard Hormel | • Craig McFarlane | |
| • Brian Hurst | • Michael Orrison | |

Entering our 45th post-Annapolis year, many of us have gained high rank and distinction. We have 13 Flag Officers, (11 Navy, 2 USMC), four astronauts, and numerous CEOs and other leaders of industry, government, education, the ministry, and publishing. More than that, though, every member of '71 is recognized within his own personal and professional circles, esteemed for his character and his contribution.

Our legacy includes gifts to the Academy and to the USNA community.

- USNA Visitors Center - Class of 1971 Yard Wall Map
- Ricketts Hall – Class of 1971 Joe Bellino Athletic Auditorium
- Lejeune Hall – Class of 1971 Midshipmen Athletic Hall of Fame
- Luce Hall – Class of 1971 Distinguished Military Professional Billet in Leadership and Ethics
- Center for Academic Excellence – Class of 1971 Writing Center
- USNA Museum – Astronaut and Space Program Display
- Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium – Class of 1971 Enduring Freedom and Cold War Memorial Arch (South End Zone)

As the struggles of the national political forces roil incessantly, they also shape, refine, and advance the Great Experiment. In parallel, distributed leadership will provide the platforms, the processes, and, most importantly, the standards needed for us to reach our potential without losing the essential elements of our heritage.

As the new watch relieves the old, we will ultimately pass our torch as well. Until then, though, we will continue to be *Duces Virum* and to be thankful for having been called to serve.

Beat Army!

Ship, Shipmate, Self

God Bless America