

Class of 1938

Class of 1938

Robert W. McNitt was born in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and, as a young man, decided on a naval career. He entered the U.S. Naval Academy as a member of the Class of 1938.

At the Academy, Bob, or Robespierre, as he was known to classmates, was a dedicated sailing enthusiast who delighted in sharing his repertoire of sea-going lore. The *Lucky Bag* recalled that he often helped classmates with academics, and would “share his last apple or pipe full of tobacco.”

Commissioned as an Ensign in June 1938, Bob spent a year in the cruiser *USS Chicago* before joining *USS Rhind*, serving as engineering officer when World War II broke out. He was assigned executive officer of the submarine *USS Barb*. During five war patrols in the Atlantic and Pacific, *Barb* sank 80,000 tons of shipping.

After a stint at the Naval Postgraduate School, Bob was assigned as Gunnery Officer of the aircraft carrier *Midway*. After an assignment to the Naval Ordnance Laboratory in White Oak, Maryland, Bob took command of the destroyer *USS Taylor* during the Korean War.

Following the war, Bob held an assignment at the Bureau of Ordnance, commanded Destroyer Division 322 and Destroyer Squadron 25—and served as Commanding Officer and Director of the Atlantic Fleet anti-submarine warfare tactical school. After a stop at Annapolis, as his Alma Mater’s Secretary of the Academic Board, Bob was promoted to Rear Admiral and assigned to the NATO staff.

He served as Superintendent of the Naval Post Graduate School and Director of the Navy Management Systems Center. Before retiring from active duty, Bob was Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, responsible for the Navy’s manpower requirements.

Although retired, Bob remained active. He returned to the Naval Academy as Senior Professor and Dean of Admissions from 1972 to 1985. Next, he served as President of the U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association, organizing the capital campaign that built Alumni Hall. He maintains a lifelong passion for sailing and ocean racing, and has been a strong supporter of the Boy Scouts. He is also a Gold Medalist in the Senior Olympics for race-walking, slalom, and giant slalom.

Bob and his wife, Patricia, live in Annapolis and love spending time with their eight children and their families.