

Reunion Talking Points for the Class of 1963

- The Class of 1963 was inducted on 7 July 1959, numbering 1,205 young men comprised of appointees from 48 States (no member from North Dakota), the Territory of Hawaii (not yet a state), the District of Columbia, the Canal Zone, and six foreign countries. We were the only class inducted under a 49-star U.S. flag, Alaska having been admitted to the Union in January of that year, while Hawaii was not added until August.
- We were the first class to participate all four years in the then-new majors program, and 106 of us received major-credits on our diplomas. We were the second class to be admitted based partly on the SAT exam and prior to graduation, we all took the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) to assess readiness for graduate school education.
- We were the first class to undergo a “forced draft” into nuclear power. Submarines were being built faster than they could be manned. Our service selection preferences were put on hold and those in the top half of the class were sent for interviews with Admiral Rickover. If selected for nuclear power training, the only equal priority was naval aviation pilot training and the successful passage of the naval aviation physical which could excuse one from nuclear power training.
- We were the last class to wear detachable collars with our white dress shirts; the last to have our names stenciled across our white work uniforms; the last to wear cloth cap covers and cape-style “rain gear”; and the last class to go through all four years using the old Navy 4.0 numerical grading system, where 4.0 was a perfect score and 2.5 was the minimum passing grade. By the end of our Youngster Year, the growing variety of academic courses had eroded the universal curriculum and, as a result, we no longer marched to and from classes.
- We marched in John F. Kennedy’s inaugural parade on a bitterly cold day after a major snow fall the night before. When the Brigade of Midshipmen arrived in front of the reviewing stand in front of the White House and went to “eyes left” hundreds of overshoes were peeled off the feet of those in ranks. One classmate claims to have begun the parade wearing two overshoes and finished wearing three.
- We beat Army in football all four years. This string of victories continued with a fifth consecutive win the November after we graduated. We were the first class never to lose in football to either Army or Air Force, although we played Air Force only once, beating them 35-3 in the first encounter between the two teams. Evidencing strong, early spirit, members of the class painted “63 Sez Beat Army” on the freshly refinished laundry smokestack at the beginning of Youngster Year. (The large laundry building stood at the present site of Rickover Hall and the tall smokestack was a prominent feature in The Yard.) The feat was accomplished in a deft, night time climb and the encouraging words remained until we graduated.
- The inaugural game at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium was played in September 1959, our Plebe year, against William & Mary. (Navy won 29-2.) The occasion was

made memorable by the personal appearance of President Dwight Eisenhower, who flew in from the White House by Marine helicopter and officially dedicated the new facility.

- We were the last class to enjoy “Exchange Weekend” with West Point, where all 2/c Midshipmen, in successive small groups, spent several days at The Point, stepping into the life and academic schedule of a counterpart cadet while cadets did the same in our places at Navy. This was a unique experience in seeing “how the other half lives” and strengthened the close relationships that exist between Navy and Army to this day.
- At our commencement on 5 June 1963, Vice President Lyndon Johnson presented diplomas and commissions to a class whose ranks numbered 876. The great majority of the graduates accepted Navy commissions. The largest number, 324, went into the surface line; 209 chose naval aviation including five NFOs, and 138 entered the nuclear power program. The remaining 54 new Ensigns were spread among the Supply Corps, the Civil Engineering Corps, and Engineering Duty Officers. Only 66 entered the Marine Corps, reflecting the limits on commissions into that service. Almost as many -- 60 graduates -- were commissioned in the Air Force. (The USNA and USMA classes of 1963 were the last allowed to send significant numbers of graduates to the Air Force, a vestige of the days before the Air Force had its own academy.) In addition, 20 new officers chose Army commissions. One Navy classmate who spent a thirty year career in the Army Corps of Engineers is an honorary member of the West Point class of 1963 and attends both reunions. Five graduates were found not physically qualified for commissioning. Foreign students from Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Philippines, and Peru returned to service in their own countries.
- Subsequent to graduation, members of the Class served with distinction in all the services. The large majority of the class served in Vietnam in one capacity or another. Thirteen graduates were lost in Vietnam and two were held as POWs. Another 15 died in the line of duty over the years; among these were three men lost in the sinking of SCORPION and one who perished in the LIBERTY incident. Classmates distinguishing themselves in combat were awarded three Navy Crosses, one Army Distinguished Service Cross, and 15 Silver Stars and many other personal awards commending their combat service.. One Navy warship was named after a heroic classmate, Lt William Fitzgerald, USN awarded Navy Cross posthumously, lost in Vietnam – the USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62).
- Twenty 1963 graduates achieved flag rank, 19 in the United States Navy and one in the Peruvian Navy. Four of the U.S. flag officers attained the rank of Vice Admiral. Class members not serving a career in the military achieved notable success as physicians, actors, dentists, writers, artists, educators, jurists, clergymen, scientists, lawyers, and leading business executives. Class members also served widely in both elected and appointed governmental office at the national, state, and local levels. The class numbers two Distinguished Graduates among its ranks, Roger Tetrault and Ronald Terwilliger.
- In 1974, the Class established a Class of 1963 Foundation to perpetuate the history and memories of the Academy and the Class of 1963, and to assist the growth and

development of the Academy. Over the ensuing 40 years, the Foundation has provided nearly \$900,000 in college scholarship aid to more than 95 children of our deceased classmates while also contributing substantial funds to other efforts, especially the Class of 1963 Center for Academic Excellence at the Academy.

- The Class of 1963 ranks second in total giving to its Alma Mater. Over the past 50 years members of the class have contributed in excess of \$20 million, \$6.3million of which is designated to support the Class of 63 Center for Academic Excellence. Evidence of the Class of 1963 and its close bond with the naval Academy can be found in many places in the yard. The class and class members have made significant contributions to :

- The Jewish Chapel
- Refurbishment of the Chapel and establishment of a Class of 1963 pew
- Hubbard Hall refurbishment and a Class of 1963 racing shell to be maintained in perpetuity
- Navy-Martine Corps Memorial Stadium boxes and score board
- Refurbishment and enhancement of the Naval Academy museum
- Instruction in ethics for all midshipmen
- The Naval Academy baseball stadium and field

The Class of 1963 acted as the Another Link in the Chain Class for the recently graduated Class of 2013. Our two classes established in our four years of collaboration bonds and relationships that will last well into the future. Among our activities in the ALIC program we:

--Attended 37 midshipman candidate send-off dinners and picnics across the country in coordination with parents Clubs and local Alumni Chapters. This was a first and is now being emulated by succeeding classes.

--Attended I Day induction ceremonies FOR THE Class of 2013 after reaffirming in Memorial Hall our own oath taking 50n years earlier. The roll of those lost in the line of duty was also read.

--Presented an honor coin to the Class of 2013 at the end of their Plebe Summer and an inspirational speaker, Captain Mike Cronin, a Vietnam POW for over 5 years.

--Attended Sea Trials at the end of Plebe year and the Herndon Monument Climb which established a new record due to lack of grease of any sort except sweat on the monument

--Contributed the rings of thirteen classmates and miniatures of loved ones to be melted down and melded with the rings cast for the Class of 2013.

--Provided an inspirational speaker for the Class commitment dinner, VADM Bill Earner ,USN (Ret)

--Attended the Ring Dance at the invitation of the Class of 2013 in white dinner dress with small medals. 164 classmates and spouses attended. Many celebrated the 50th anniversary of their engagement at our class Ring Dance held in 1962.

Ron --Provided an inspirational speaker for the class Service Selection dinner, Mr. Klemick. At the request of the Class of 2013, “cannon balls” were reintroduced to King Hall and are now regularly featured on the bill of fare.

--Co-hosted six battalion receptions for the Class of 2013 at Alumni House.

--Established a sword donation program whereby members of the Class of 1963 passed their Navy and Marine Corps swords to members of the Class of 2013 as a legacy of our service and the service to be rendered by the new graduates.

--Attended graduation for the Class of 2013 presenting ensign and second lieutenant bars to each new graduate and a coin linking our two classes once again.

Our class motto is **Quality – ’63**, reflecting a shared dedication to excellence in the performance of our service to the nation and our fellow citizens. We sustain that high standard, though many years have passed since our time “by the Bay where Severn joins the tide.”

It is an established fact that the Class of 1963 had the last true Plebe Year.