

Class Briefing Notes
Class of 1963
Class Motto "Quality"

CLASS HISTORY:

Prepared by Captain Spencer Johnson, USN (Ret.)

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.

Our class was the first at Navy to take the SATs as part of the admissions process. Previously, each candidate had been given a special entrance examination prepared by the Naval Academy. We were also the first class since 1931 not to receive Plebe Summer flight training in the two-seat N-3N seaplane (the "Yellow Peril"), a fleet of which was still maintained across the Severn River. These antique bi-planes, which were almost 30 years old by 1959, had just been declared un-airworthy, to our great disappointment. 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 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 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 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, 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 stadium.

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.

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, 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. 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. 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 serving in combat were awarded three Navy Crosses, one Army Distinguished Service Cross, and 15 Silver Stars. One Navy warship was named after a heroic classmate lost in Vietnam – the USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62).

Twenty 1963 graduates achieved flag rank, 19 in the U.S. 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.

In 1974, the Class established a Foundation to provide educational assistance to the children of deceased classmates. Over the ensuing 30 years, that Foundation has provided nearly \$900,000 in scholarship aid to more than 90 children, while also contributing substantial funds to other efforts memorializing the class, especially the Class of 1963 Center for Academic Excellence at the Academy. Individually and collectively, the class of 1963 has donated over \$13 million to the Naval Academy for various projects and unrestricted funding purposes.

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

EVENTS AROUND THE YARD

1959 – Commencing with the Class of 1963, midshipmen may validate courses completed prior to entrance that are substantially the same as in the basic Fourth Class curriculum. Midshipmen of the three upper classes are allowed to enroll in elective courses.

1959- 26- September the Navy Marine Corps Memorial Stadium is dedicated. Navy defeats William and Mary 29-2, on this date in the first game played in the Stadium.

1960 – The office of the U.S. Naval Academy Foundation moves from Washington DC, to Annapolis. Midshipmen marching to class ends. An additional 54.5 acres are added by filling in areas of the Severn River and Spa Creek to create Dewey Field and the New Farragut Field. Joe Bellino '61 is the first midshipman to be awarded for the Heisman Trophy- player of the year in college football. The Lloyd Phoenix Regatta is established by the Naval Academy as the invitational Chesapeake Yacht racing Yawl Championship. The trophy is a Tiffany Silver pitcher won by Lloyd Phoenix 1861 during the 1909 New York Yacht Club Cruise.

1960- 22 June- Rear Admiral John F. Davidson '29 becomes Superintendent.

1961- Wings 7 and 8 are added to Bancroft Hall. Mitscher Hall is completed. Initially as the Brigade Library and Assembly building, it will later become the Chaplain's Center. The Naval Academy Foreign Affairs Conference is begun.

2 January- Missouri defeats the Navy Football team 21 to 14 in the Orange Bowl.

22 May- Secretary of Navy directs Superintendent to appoint a civilian educator as Dean of Admissions.

1962 – 18 August- Rear Admiral C.C. Kirkpatrick '31 becomes Superintendent.

1963- Navy wins the NCAA soccer championship, and will again in 1964.

Conversion of the Academy's traditional 4.0 based marking system (2.5 is passing) to the more widely used letter-grade system (2.0 is a C average)

1963- 3 July- The U.S Naval Academy is officially designated a National Historic site by the Department of the Interior pursuant to the Historic Sites Act of 21 August 1935.

Flags, Generals and Notables: (23)

RADM	Kenneth L. Carlsen
RADM	Dennis R. Conley
RADM	Guillermo A. Devoto
RADM	John J. Donegan
The Honorable	Stephen M. Duncan
VADM	William A. Earner
VADM	George W. Emery
The Honorable	Mario P. Fiori
VADM	David E. Frost
The Honorable	Thomas F. Hall
RADM	Wesley E. Jordan
RADM	Karl L. Kaup
The Honorable	Jerry T. Lockett
RADM	Larry R. Marsh
RADM	David R. Oliver
RADM	Thomas J. Robertson
VADM	David B. Robinson
RADM	Richard M. Rohrbach
RADM	Joseph C. Strasser
RADM	Frank L. Tillotson
RADM	Paul E. Tobin
RADM	George D. Vaughan
RADM	Richard A. Wilson
The Honorable	James DeFrancia
The Honorable	Anthony Trabant

Other Notables:

2 Distinguished Graduates:

J. Ronald Terwilliger

Roger E. Tetrault

1 Olmsted Scholar: Larry R. Marsh

Decorations (38)

Mr. John C. Bender

Silver Star Medal (SS)

Mr. Robert A. Black Jr.

Silver Star Medal (SS)

CAPT Ronald J. Calhoun, USN (Ret.)

Silver Star Medal (SS)

Mr. William H. Campbell, Jr.

Purple Heart (PH)

Mr. George Candelori

Silver Star Medal (SS)

Col Bernis B. Conatser, Jr., USMC (Ret.)	Silver Star Medal (SS)
Col Bernis B. Conatser, Jr., USMC (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
CAPT Michael P. Cronin, USNR	Purple Heart (PH)
CAPT Michael P. Cronin, USNR	Silver Star Medal (SS)
CAPT John H. Detweiler, USNR (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
LtCol Joel R. Gardner, USMC (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
CDR James E. Gill, USN (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
CDR James E. Gill, USN (Ret.)	Silver Star Medal (SS)
LT Lawrence L. Graham, Jr., USN (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
LCDR Jon R. Harris, USNR (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
LtCol Daniel A. Hitzelberger, USMC (Ret.)	Silver Star Medal (SS)
CAPT Wilson D. Key, USN (Ret.)	Silver Star Medal (SS)
CAPT Wilson D. Key, USN (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
Mr. Joseph S. Longo, Jr.	Purple Heart (PH)

Decorations cont. Class of 1963

Col Ronald R. Matthews, USMC	Purple Heart (PH)
LT Daniel H. Moran, Jr., USN	Purple Heart (PH)
LtCol Joseph G. Morra, USMC (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
Mr. Anthony J. Nargi	Silver Star Medal (SS)
LtCol Ken W. Nisewaner, USMCR (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
Mr. Kenneth R. Ramsey	Purple Heart (PH)
VADM David B. Robinson, USN (Ret.)	Navy Cross (NC)
VADM David B. Robinson, USN (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
LCDR Coral V. Schufeldt, USN	Silver Star Medal (SS)
CAPT Peter W. Soverel, USN (Ret.)	Silver Star Medal (SS)
CAPT Howard S. Stoddard, USN (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
LCDR Grant R. Telfer, USN (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
CAPT David W. Thornhill, USNR (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
LT Stephen S. Toth, USN	Purple Heart (PH)
LT Stephen S. Toth, USN	Silver Star Medal (SS)
LT Frederick E. Trani, USN	Silver Star Medal (SS)
Mr. Joel M. Warshaw	Silver Star Medal (SS)
CDR Talmadge A. Womble, USN (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)
LTC Frank M. Wroblewski, USA (Ret.)	Purple Heart (PH)

Class Gifts/Giving:

1. Since graduation, the Class of 1963 has donated over \$23.8M to various causes around the Yard. This places '63 in 6th place in total giving of all classes that have graduated in the past 84 years, and in 2nd place in the decade of the '60s.
2. A number of Class Projects have been funded:
 - a. 1963 Center for Academic Excellence
 - b. Alumni Hall concourse
 - c. Faculty Development Endowment
 - d. Vietnam Memorial
 - e. Scholarship Program for children of deceased (outside USNA AA/F)
3. 23.6% of the class made donations during 2017.

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