

Class of 1960 -- 50th Year Medallion & Reunion Remarks

Shipmates,

It's a truly an honor to be with you here today, and back aboard the Coast Guard Academy. For many of us, this is where it all started. On this campus, in these halls and classrooms, on these athletic fields – rowing out and back upon the Thames River – and aboard summer cruises in EAGLE – this place is where it all began. Here, we forged lifelong friendships. We broadened our minds. Strengthened our bodies. Even met loved ones— some of us having been married in that chapel on the hill following graduation! And here we all cast off our lines, to pursue our Coast Guard careers, and LIVES, (as the Coast Guard Academy mission states), ***in service of country and humanity.***

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Yet, today we return. And, whether it has been a year, 5 years, a decade, – 35 years like myself, or 50 years like the Great Class of 1960– or more – We return to what was once our home – **hoping to find it's still home** -- and, perhaps even hoping to regain a bit of our youth!

And, you know what? This Academy looks great doesn't it! And, these Cadets look terrific as well! So thank you Superintendent Burhoe – Academy Staff – Faculty – Cadets – Alumni – and all others who have a hand in keeping this Academy in ship-shape and Bristol fashion! It's always great to come home, to such a good looking home and family!

There's also another reason we return; it's to renew our connection with the Corps of Cadets—the future leaders of our Service—the custodians of our maritime heritage—who will soon be responsible for defending our Nation. It's an honor to stand here, once again, with the Corps.

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For today, on the grounds of the Academy, from the great class of 1960 – to the current cadets who make up the classes of 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014, we collectively represent 5 decades of a long blue line of Coast Guard leaders this Academy has so ably produced...and continues to produce...in *service of country and humanity.*

And though many of the traditions and values taught here within these walls are the same as they were when we last walked these grounds, a few things have changed...In the summer of 1956, when the class of 1960 was administered their oath on this very parade field, Eisenhower was President; Richard Nixon was Vice President; Ike would go on to win a second term later that fall—some of you even marched in Ike’s second inaugural parade!

1956 was also the last election where only 48 states voted; Alaska and Hawaii had yet to achieve statehood and would not until 1959...

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Our Service was still under the Treasury Department, and would remain so until it moved to DoT in 1967; (in 2003 we moved to DHS);

Robert Anderson was Treasury Secretary;

The Commandant was Admiral Alfred C. Richmond;

The Superintendent was Rear Admiral Frank Leamy,

The Commandant of Cadets—I am sure some of you had the opportunity to know him personally—was Capt. W. J. Smith;

The great Otto Graham took over as head football coach, he was assisted by a man dear to my heart, assistant coach Frank Kapral (who, today is my father-in-law—and is here with us today!) – Thank goodness for Coach Kapral!

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As you emerged from these gates in 1960, you did so in fine fashion – you were then the largest class to graduate from the Academy, and you entered a new decade, the 60s! – a decade that is looked upon today as the start of a social revolution in our society!

It's clear YOUR great class kept this social revolution going—listen up Cadets—the class of 1960 has a Face Book Page – and 40 or so of them are registered FACEBOOK users – perhaps they don't "LOL" or "OMG", however, they have continued to break through the status quo and have gone from social revolution to social media – and they haven't missed a beat!

On a personal note my first exposure to your class was in 1960, when Ensign Dave Parker and his wife Patty rented an apartment from my parents in Norwich. Now if you give Dave an adult beverage he might tell you

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some legend about teaching sword manual to a future Commandant ... and a few other sea stories!

On a more serious note, You all have accomplished much in your careers;

The names of your classmates are etched upon the Academy's Corridor of Heroes ...

On the Wall of Gallantry,

Lieutenant Eugene Hickey, defending our Nation in Vietnam, while Commanding a Patrol Boat, and earning the Silver Star – and,

CDR Harry Obedin earning a Coast Guard medal;

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Upon the Wall of Remembrance—reserved for those who made the ultimate sacrifice while on an operational mission – Lieutenant Commander Paul R. Lewis, whose helicopter crashed returning from a search and rescue mission – I am sure Paul is smiling down upon YOU today, along with the other members of your GREAT class that have crossed the bar...

Indeed, each and every one of you – including your spouses, brought great credit to our Service. Whether you continued on to become a senior Coast Guard officer, or left our ranks to pursue a second or even third career – or even full-time retirement (which, judging from your class notes, some of you are better at staying retired than others), you continued *in service of country and humanity*. YOU always kept the Coast Guard and this fine Academy close to your hearts – even today, your class remains fully engaged as part of the initiative to provide new 44s to our sailing fleet....

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Today, we will honor 79 of you who have made the journey back, 76 graduates and 3 widows, with your 50-year alumni medallions.

So let me end by simply saying **Welcome Home!**

It's an honor for all of us to join you on this special day!

Semper Paratus...and Go Bears!!!