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29th Annual Alumni Reunion (November 7, 2015)

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Texas Beats Kansas 59-20 / UT NROTC's 75th Anniversary!

70th Reunion class of 1945, 60th Reunion class of 1955, 50th Reunion class of 1965 and 40th Reunion class of 1975 30th Reunion class of 1985, 20th Reunion class of 1995, and 10th Reunion class of 2005

Another super reunion weekend and, again, in conjunction with UT's celebration of Veteran's Day! The weather was perfect, lots of good interaction between alumni and future alumni, delicious barbeque, nearly \$76,000 dollars in scholarships and swords awarded, a Longhorn win (always a plus) and lots of "catching up" with friends and classmates. We had four WWII veterans attend (Howard Lowe '44, Sandy Crow '45, Warren Freund '45, and John Love '46). Sandy, Warren and John participated in the football game coin toss with the UT System Chancellor (Bill McRaven '77). Sandy and Warren were celebrating their class' 70th anniversary at the same time as the unit was celebrating its 75th anniversary of being on the UT campus. All of the other classes ending with "5" were represented except '95. The Class of 1965 was the largest with 6. The Class of '70 had the most alumni in attendance, 8. The youngest class represented was 2005, with 2 alumni.

The weekend started on Thursday evening, November 5th with the Navy League dinner at the Austin Women's Club (708 San Antonio St.). Many midshipmen and officer candidates from the Battalion were present as guests of the Navy League. CAPT Brian Teets, UT's Professor of Naval Science, and his XO, CDR Brian FitzPatrick were in attendance. The guest speaker was CAPT Donald S. "Don" Inbody USN(Ret), PhD. Dr. Inbody is a Senior Lecturer in Political Science at Texas State University and a former PNS of the NROTC Unit at the University of Texas. He spoke on his newly released book, *The Soldier Vote*, a history and current status of absentee voting by military personnel and Americans living overseas.

Friday morning at 0800 the next event started out at Star Ranch Golf Course. This year we had nearly five foursomes. Three were Navy and only one was Marine Corps but that didn't deter the playful rivalry between the two. We played "best ball" and started in a scramble. Star Ranch started everyone off with a delicious hot breakfast in the clubhouse before teeing off. Then we hit all the range balls we cared to before starting play. The weather was marvelous and made the game delightful to play. We all started at 8 a.m. and around noon players finished and had a nice buffet lunch waiting for them at the clubhouse to end the event. Even with one mixed foursome and the absence of scrutinizing scorecards, it was generally agreed that the Marines prevailed this year.

Later that afternoon at the Embassy Suites Hotel (the one at the Arboretum this year), Crow's Nesters from all eras met for a summit at 3:00 p.m. to discuss how they might positively impact the room and board issue for midshipmen and officer candidates of the Battalion. This year the Crow's Nest scholarship will again be awarded thanks mainly to the generosity of Bob Brown '52. The group this year raised enough funds to endow the \$1,000 scholarship themselves next year. If you were a 'Nester, or just want to help some of our Battalion members with room and board, think about contributing to their fund. It takes about \$8-10K to pay for room and board at UT each year. Even scholarship students have to bear this expense because UT cannot, as a State school, provide it. Ray Adams, also a 'Nester, was at the meeting and handed out ball caps to Distinguished Alumni, Distinguished Service alumni, Flag officers and WWII vets. The caps were embroidered for those folks especially for our 75th Anniversary. Other ball caps with the special 75th Anniversary patch on them were for sale. Howard Lowe '44 attended the meeting, at Ray's request, and had fun chatting with the attendees.

Friday night, as usual, was a divided evening for alumni. Some went to a new venue, the NXNW Restaurant and Brewery, just a few blocks from the hotel, to celebrate with classmates over a few beers. Others went to the Awards Dinner at the Austin Country Club. At the dinner, two of our alumni were recognized for Distinguished Service (DS). They were Charles W. "Charlie" Simons '63, and John C. "Rusty" Allman, Jr. '66. Each received a DS certificate from Max Miller, Chairman of the Midshipmans Foundation; a DS lapel pin from Rod Koenig, President of the Midshipmans Foundation and a framed photograph of the Battalion from CAPT Brian Teets, 28th Professor of Naval Science at UT. After each presentation the recipient had a few words to say in appreciation of this recognition. Both men had been past Presidents of the Alumni Association. Four of our WWII alumni were also in attendance: Howard Lowe '44, Sandy Crow '45, Warren Freund '45 and John Love '46. They were recognized for their service and for making the pilgrimage to UT for this special 75th Anniversary. Augustus Gray '45 had planned to come but had to cancel at the last moment. Bill Barnhouse '44 sent his regards from New Mexico but was unable to attend also. As always, our host, Rusty Allman provided a superb dinner and fine facilities for this event. We ended the evening around 9:15 p.m. and a few die-hards went over to NXNW Restaurant and Brewery to finish their evening.

Saturday began leisurely since the football game was a night game. The Alumni Foundation board met in Robert A. Welch Hall at 11:30am. Four directors' terms were due to expire and they agreed to stay for another three year term. They were Raymond J. "Ray" Adams '80, James M. "Jim" Bushee '76, Luis de la Garza '66 and Richard B. "Dick" Wellborn '70. Kevin H. Hugman '80 "flected up" from his VP position to President. Daniel F. "Dan" Rueda '05 was elected Vice President and Omar Rivera '04 was elected Treasurer. Since the football schedule for 2016 was not out yet, the board could not announce a date for next year's reunion.

At 1:00pm everyone gathered in the nice large auditorium in Robert A. Welch Hall. The last minute announcement of game time forced our move from CLA for the board meeting and from SAC for the general business meeting and midshipmen awards ceremony. Outside the doors, paperback copies of Bill McRaven's book, *SPEC OPS*, were being distributed for a donations to the Alumni Foundation. Also a few hard copies of the book, *Texas Fight, The History of the Naval ROTC at the University of Texas at Austin*, by the author, Ed Mergele '75, were also being distributed, as were eBook versions of it on thumb drives, for a donations to the Alumni Foundation or Midshipmans Foundation. The *Texas Fight* book covers the first 20 years of the NROTC unit's history at UT, beginning in 1940. Future volumes are in the works for each succeeding 20-year interval. Ray Adams started this event with introductions of our VIPs (WWII vets, flag officers and Distinguished Alumni/Service members present) and a moment of silence for our 21 fallen comrades since our last Reunion. We then conducted a short general business meeting and then went ahead with the scholarship awards ceremony. This fall we awarded nearly \$76,000 in scholarships and swords to deserving midshipmen and officer candidates. See the scholarship awards page for details. We finished the gathering with announcements of our new Alumni Foundation officers and four continuing directors.

At 3:30pm all alumni, midshipman and friends congregated in the plaza in front of Gregory Gym for our annual BBQ. The unit set up tents but the weather was gorgeous. The folks at Pok-E-Jo's did another fine job of serving up Texas barbequed brisket and sausage with all the trimmings. They served for an hour and a half. Then folks just got to relax, enjoy the beautiful weather and visit with each other until game time while trying to float two kegs. Bill McRaven '77, the new UT System Chancellor, stopped by and signed copies of his book, *SPEC OPS*, which were auctioned (two hardbacks) and sold (paperbacks) to benefit the Alumni Foundation. While he was there, one of his Navy SEAL comrades, LCDR Mike Sarrailliee, was awarded a Silver Star in front of Gregory Gym. ADM McRaven stood with the awards party. CAPT Teets pinned the medal on the awardee while CDR FitzPatrick read the citation. All three were dressed in tropical whites. Between 6:00pm and 6:30pm people started drifting over to DKR-Memorial stadium for the game with Kansas. We had a block of 75 tickets this year and all were spoken for. With those and season ticket holders we had a large contingent attend the game. The weather was perfect for it and Texas did not disappoint.

Kick off was at 7:00 p.m. Those without tickets could view it in the air-conditioned comfort of the Alumni Center.

You can see who attended what events by clicking [here](#) or on "Who came" on the *History Matrix* page.

Sunday morning was a leisurely wake-in and breakfast in the hotel lobby. Friends swanned business cards and last minute sea stories

Sunday morning was a relaxing make up and breakfast in the hotel lobby. Friends swapped business cards and last minute sea stories while they said their good-byes. The weekend was truly a delightful and memorable one. Please make plans to join us next year.

By Ed Mergele '75

