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## 28th Annual Alumni Reunion (November 8, 2014)

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### Texas Upsets #23 West Virginia 33-16

**70th Reunion class of 1944, 60th Reunion class of 1954, 50th Reunion class of 1964 and 40th Reunion class of 1974 30th Reunion class of 1984, 20th Reunion class of 1994, and 10th Reunion class of 2004**

What a great weekend! The weather was wonderful, lots of good interaction between alumni and future alumni, delicious barbeque, thousands of dollars in scholarships awarded, a Longhorn win (surprise) and lots of "catching up" with friends and classmates. UT wasn't expected to beat West Virginia but it happened. It was the Veteran's Day weekend, too, so it was also a day of remembrance. Over \$56,000 in scholarships and swords were awarded to our deserving midshipmen and officer candidates. We had two representatives from the Class of '44! All of the other classes ending with "4" were represented except '54. The Class of 1964 was the largest with 8. The youngest class represented was 2005. The Alumni Foundation elected two new board members from 2004 (Omar Rivera) and 2005 (Dan Rueda).

The weekend started early this year on Wednesday 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 John Eden, UT's Professor of Naval Science, and his new XO, CDR Brian FitzPatrick were in attendance. The guest speaker was John D. Butler, RADM USN(Ret). He is Vice President, Naval Strategic Systems, at Lockheed Martin. Admiral Butler is also a 1974 graduate from UT, who received his commission through the Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate Program.

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. Navy prevailed but, like last year, it was close. Star Ranch starts everyone off with a delicious hot breakfast in the clubhouse before teeing off. Then you can hit all the range balls you care to before starting play. The hard rain from yesterday did play havoc with the bunkers. Many were partially washed out and some standing water was still present. That just meant we all got a free drop on any ball landing in a trap. 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.

Later that afternoon at the Embassy Suites Hotel (our HQ), 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 first Crow's Nest scholarship will be awarded thanks mainly to the generosity of Bob Brown '52. The group is amassing the \$25,000 needed to endow a \$1,000 scholarship on their own. 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. CAPT Eden said 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.

Friday night, as usual, was a divided evening for alumni. Some went to Scholz's to celebrate with classmates over a few beers. Others went to the Awards Dinner at the Austin Country Club. At the dinner, one of our alumni was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus (DA), RADM John D. Butler, USN (Ret) and two alumni were recognized for Distinguished Service (DS), Robert L. "Bob" Collins '68 and CDR Edwin W. "Ed" Mergele, USN (Ret) '75. Each received a certificate from Bob Brown, Chairman of the Midshipmans Foundation; a DA lapel pin from Max Miller, President of the Midshipmans Foundation and a framed photograph of the Battalion from CAPT John Eden, 27<sup>th</sup> Professor of Naval Science at UT. After each presentation the recipient had a few words to say in appreciation of this recognition. Howard Lowe '44 was the oldest alumnus in attendance. He was there with his wife, Lillian. The author's family was in attendance for the award and his father, Edwin W. Mergele, Jr., a WWII and Korean war veteran, got to speak with Howard Lowe and compare sea stories. 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 Scholz's to finish their evening.

Saturday began early for the Alumni Foundation board. They met at 0800 in the new ADM William H. "Bill" McRaven classroom on the 5<sup>th</sup> deck of the new Liberal Arts Building. Five directors' terms were due to expire and four agreed to stay for another three year term. They were Kevin H. Hugman '80, Fred Moon '70, and Michael L. "Mike" Waldron '67. Douglas F. "Doug" Fisher '70 rotated off the board. Well done, Doug. Thanks for your years of service. Doug will be replaced by our newest director on the board, George Blume '67. Welcome aboard George! No officer positions changed for the coming year. Since the football schedule for 2015 was not out yet, the board could not decide on a date for next year's reunion.

At 0930 we all gathered in the nice large auditorium next door in the Student Activity Center. Ray Adams started with introductions of our VIPs (Flag Officers, Distinguished Alumni and Past Presidents present) and a moment of silence for our 18 fallen comrades since our last Reunion. We then conducted a short general business meeting. UT President, Bill Powers, then came by and spoke to the group briefly before the arrival of VADM Bill Moran, Chief of Naval Personnel. When VADM Moran arrived with CAPT Eden, the Admiral sat down and said he wanted to listen (to President Power's remarks). When President Powers finished he chatted briefly with Admiral Moran, then he was off to another game-day appointment. Admiral Moran then made his remarks, saying how unique UT is among all the NROTC Units. When he concluded he remained with us to help in the presentation of scholarships. We then went ahead with the scholarship awards ceremony. This fall we awarded nearly \$57,000 in scholarships and swords to deserving midshipmen and officer candidates. With the \$15,750 in scholarships awarded last spring that brings the total this year to nearly \$73,000. See the scholarship awards page for details. After the scholarship award ceremony, specialty insignia were pinned on graduating seniors who will be our future aviators, submariners and surface warfare candidates. Staff representatives of those warfare communities did the honors, assisted by VADM Moran. We finished the gathering with announcements of our new Alumni Foundation director and three continuing directors.

At 1130 all alumni and friends congregated on the 5th deck of the College of Liberal Arts Building, for our annual BBQ. 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 scenery from our perch and visit with each other until game time while trying to float two kegs. Between 1:30 p.m. and 2 people started drifting over to DKR-Memorial stadium for the game with West Virginia. We had a block of 60 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 2:30 p.m. Those without tickets could view it in the air-conditioned comfort of the Alumni Center. That evening many alumni gathered together at the Flying Saucer out near the Intramural Fields for more camaraderie, good food and drink. I private room was reserved for the group to use but many made use of the whole facility. Over 30 alumni and family gathered to take advantage of more visiting time and to participate in the festive atmosphere that usually follows a Texas win.

You can see who attended what events by clicking [here](#) or clicking on "Who came" on the *History Matrix* page. The most people showing up for a 10x reunion year were eight attendees from the Class of 1964!

Sunday morning was a leisurely wake-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.

