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## 26th Annual Alumni Reunion (October 20, 2012)

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### Texas Outlasts Baylor 56-50

**60th Reunion class of 1952, 50th Reunion class of 1962 and 40th Reunion class of 1972**

Well we weren't quite sure how Texas would do having lost its last two games, especially the embarrassing OU game just a week ago. Texas' defense has proven to be subpar this year and after a couple of quarters, it looked like Baylor's was, too. The clock just ran out on Baylor and Texas survived with a win.

The weekend started early this year on Thursday evening, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 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 current Professor of Naval Science, and three other past PNSs were in attendance, CAPT Gabe Salazar '79, CAPT Mike Spence and COL Steve Smith. ADM Bobby Inman was one of the league's special guests. The guest speaker was ADM William H. "Bill" McRaven '77. The President of the Austin Navy League Chapter, Bruce Byron '70, introduced ADM McRaven to the packed dining room. After an excellent dinner, ADM McRaven, who is Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, gave a very informative briefing on SOCOM's organization and mission. The highlight of the evening, though, was his question and answer session immediately afterward. He answered what he could and politely moved on when he couldn't. After his presentation ADM McRaven was very happy to have photographs taken with various groups who attended, from a local JNROTC group, who were there as guests of the Navy League, to the more seasoned alumni of UT. One table was reserved for attendees from the Class of 1952. This is their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This was probably the biggest audience that the Navy League in Austin has ever had for one of their guest speaker dinners. We're delighted that they could schedule it in concert with our Reunion Weekend this year.

Friday morning we got the next event started out at Star Ranch. This year we had four foursomes. There were 5 Marine players and 12 playing for Navy. This year was also a little different from years past in that we played a scramble (i.e. best ball) which greatly speeded up play so we could get on to other activities. Everyone started off with a hot breakfast in the clubhouse before teeing off. The day started off slightly cold but quickly turned into a beautiful day. Around noon players finished and had a nice buffet lunch at the clubhouse before heading out. Navy won by 3 strokes (91 to 94)! Everyone, though, had a good time.

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. From roughly 1949 to 1982 the Crow's Nest was a co-op organization at UT that provided room and board to NROTC midshipmen at a very reasonable cost. It was not officially connected with the NROTC Program at UT but unofficially promoted by the Unit as an affordable place for room and board. Since UT is a State institution it cannot offer free room and board to scholarship students as some private universities do (e.g. Rice and Tulane). Those who do earn a scholarship are sometimes unable to attend UT because they cannot afford the cost of room and board on or off the campus. The Crow's Nest was created to fill that need. The group appointed a task force to raise funds to endow a \$50,000 scholarship and explore other alternatives to meet this ongoing need. Bob Collins '68 will head up the task force. A physical boarding house has been explored for several years but the numbers cannot justify one at this time. The unit is much smaller than in years past. Midshipmen are allowed to marry now and officer candidates, unlike midshipmen, already get some assistance with housing and subsistence because they are on active duty.

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, three of our alumni were recognized as Distinguished Alumni (DA). Only one new DA award was presented, though. K. J. Moore '64 was honored with that award and gave an inspiring talk afterward. ADM Bill McRaven '77 was unable to attend since he was being honored this very evening by the Texas Exes as one of UT's Distinguished Alumni. He will be presented with our award tomorrow. Also in the audience was James J. "Jim" Mulva '68 and six of his family members, including his granddaughter. Jim was recognized as our very first Distinguished Alumnus, which he received in 2008. He also gave a brief talk on what the Unit has meant to him. He was further recognized for his generous support that has helped to endow our scholarship fund over the past five years and has made the completion of the new COLA building possible. 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 leisurely at 11:00 a.m. with walking tours of the NROTC's facilities in the new College of Liberal Arts Building, which is being completed on the site of the old R.O.T.C. Building (a.k.a. Russell A. Steindam Hall). Three tours were planned but length of tour and numbers changed that to just two tours. A total of 32 people went on the two tours. Jim Mulva and family were among the first group to tour the spaces, which were very impressive. All three ROTC Programs will be located on the top floor (5<sup>th</sup> deck) of the new building, which will be called the James Mulva ROTC Center. A space near the elevators will be called The Honor Lounge and will highlight the four services and include a tribute to Mr. Mulva. The Midshipman's Lounge will be called the Jonas B. Kelsall Student Lounge in honor of one of our 2001 graduates, a Navy LCDR and SEAL who was killed in action (KIA) in Afghanistan in 2011. The large classroom on that floor will be called the Admiral William McRaven Classroom in honor of one of our 1977 graduates who is the highest ranking alumni we have in either the Navy or Marine Corps. We have been told that the College of Liberal Arts has recommended to the Board of Regents that the new building be named Russell A. Steindam Hall in honor of the Medal of Honor recipient for whom the old R.O.T.C. Building was named. Steindam was an Army ROTC student and liberal arts major who was killed in action in Viet Nam in 1969. The Board of Regents has not yet made a decision on this recommendation. The new Navy and Marine Corps offices will be in the Northeast corner of the fifth floor and along most of the North side of the building, overlooking the East Mall, Memorial Stadium and the LBJ Library. The Army will be in the Southeast corner and the Air Force will be in the Southwest corner. The tour groups got to see those spaces as well. Two spaces not covered by the tour include a large auditorium that we will make use of at next year's Reunion and a gymnasium in the basement that is totally dedicated to the use of the ROTC.

At noon the Alumni Foundation board members met for a short meeting in Welch Hall. They elected two new directors, Jim Bushee '76 and John Engstrom '66. They will be taking over for two directors who are rotating out, Jim Higdon '67 and Spence Smith '73. Also Dan O'Neil '79 is rotating off of the Alumni Foundation as Treasurer and assuming duties as Secretary on the Midshipmans Foundation. Many thanks to Jim, Spence and Dan for their service and welcome aboard to Jim and John. John has come back on the board after a one year leave, Jim has been actively participating at board meetings since last August and will be assuming duties as our new Treasurer. Kevin Hugman '80 is our new Vice President and Dick Wellborn '70 is our new VP of Alumni Relations. This leaves only one vacancy on the board to fill our full complement of 15. If you would be interested in serving on the board, contact any of the board members. Usually this board meeting chooses the next Reunion date; however, only the dates have been scheduled so far. We don't know if they are visiting or home games and we don't know who the opponents will be. The following weekends have been targeted at likely candidates: 10/19/2013, 10/26/2013 and 11/2/2013. As soon as we know which ones are home games and who the opponents are, the board will make a selection. The next board meeting was set for February 9, 2013 and will be in the Unit's new offices.

At 1:00 p.m. we conducted a General Business Meeting (GBM) and our annual scholarship awards ceremony. Ray Adams started with introductions of our VIPs and a moment of silence for our eleven fallen comrades since our last Reunion. Then we were honored with a few words from Jim Mulva '68 and ADM Bill McRaven '77, both Distinguished Alumni and our special guests for the weekend. After ADM McRaven's talk to the midshipmen and alumni, he was presented (finally) with his Distinguished Alumnus award, which he was

unable to accept last year due to scheduling conflicts. President Bill Powers was expected to talk with us, too, but was detained. To fill the time we went ahead and started the scholarship awards ceremony. This year we awarded \$38,500 in scholarships and three swords to 26 deserving midshipmen and officer candidates. See the scholarship awards page for details. About midway through the ceremony, President Powers arrived and spoke to us. He spoke of his time in Bahrain as a young Naval officer, not knowing that another young Naval officer was also serving on the other end of the same island, at the same time, Jim Mulva. They both learned of that connection many years later at a UT function. When President Powers departed we resumed the award ceremony. After that a ceremony was held, where specialty insignia were pinned on eleven future aviators, submariners and surface warfare candidates by staff representatives of those warfare communities. We finished the GBM with announcements of new directors and officers and three prospective dates for next year's Reunion.

At 3:00 p.m. all alumni and friends congregated in Speedway Plaza, just outside Welch Hall, 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 weather and visit with each other into the early evening while trying to float two kegs. Bill McRaven was due to be honored at the stadium as a Texas Exes Distinguished Alumnus. And he was to participate in the coin toss at the beginning of the game so about 50 folks, who had tickets for the game, started moving in that direction just after 6:00 p.m. The rest stayed and continued their sea stories for another hour, even after the middle work detail removed tables and chairs. The weather was wonderful.

At 7:00 p.m. the Texas – Baylor game started. Some viewed it in the air-conditioned comfort of the Alumni Center. The evening was shirt sleeve weather, a clear night. The game turned into an offensive duel. Baylor just ran out of time and Texas prevailed.

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 in the new building.

By Ed Mergele '75