



Christmas Newsletter 2010

Class 24-66 Artillery O.C.S. ~ Formed 1 May 1966 ~ Graduated 11 October 1966

Honoring Those Lost In Service:

James F. Fuhrman, Michael L. Phillips, Donn L. Sweet, Warren L. Wozencraft, John S. Hughes, Jr.

Web Site: www.ccil.org/~wambinam

Web Updates

Jim Wambold

We continue to update the web pages daily as information or research is received. Your help in keeping the information current is important to this effort. Since our last Christmas issue of the newsletter, we've "accounted for" another 8 classmates. Those are John D. Bowen, James G. McCauley (D), Robert H. McLaughlin, John P. Mullholland (D), John J. O'Neill, Hubert L. Parrish, Gregory A. Peake, and Donald E. Shelton. Our success rate in accounting for classmates has risen from 74 of 86 (86%) at year's end, to 82 of 86 (95%) as of today. We still need to find information about the remaining four: Paul R. Griffin, Robert M. St. Clair, Jr., James E. Taylor, and Philip W. Thompson. Please use your resources to find these officers so we may report a 100% success rate by the end of this year.

Also, while conducting research about a fellow officer in my Viet Nam unit (6-11 Arty), I made contact with **Captain James R. Heldman**, our Battery Commander during the "O.C.S. Experience". After several e-mail exchanges he provided his biography and reminiscences of his thoughts of commanding an O.C.S. battery. Please read his response on the following page. Your attention will be drawn to the "Goldfish Incident" and the explanation I provided to him in clarification of our efforts.

Inspirational Thoughts

Chaplain, Rev. Sam Dauer
"Opportunities to Excel"

James 1:2 "Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials."
(HCSB)

As I grow older I find that I become more reflective. Not much occurs these days that does not remind me of something that has happened to me earlier in life. The OCS gave me many experiences to reflect upon and I'm sure many of you also remember several occurrences and aspects of our time at the Cannon Cocker's College. At present one as particular aspect stands out, the "opportunities to excel." I'm sure that you remember these; we never had "problems", just "opportunities to excel." They would intentionally put us into impossible situations, give us too much to do and not enough time to do even a small part of it. It was like living in a pressure cooker to see who would survive. Many of our contemporaries had the courage to join a later class and try again, many others dropped out.

Consider my year; just before Thanksgiving last year my wife had a dizzy spell while at work and after several medical tests she was diagnosed with a neurological condition which causes her to have balance problems. She is no longer able to drive and has to walk using a cane. Also, the medication she has to take causes her to be extremely drowsy for a couple of

hours after she takes it. Then in February this year I had a heart attack and had to be sent to a medical center in Billings, Montana to have an angioplasty and a stent placed in one of the major coronary arteries. As if this were not enough, my wife went to the dentist for a tooth ache resulting in several return visits with a root canal and a trip to an oral surgeon. We have now made most of the payments for our dentist's new truck.

We decided we needed to get away from it all and the cold winter in Montana. Being a snowbird sounded like the cure for our worries so we went to Huntsville, Alabama to enjoy a warm winter living in her mother's home there. An additional benefit is that we would be able to spend time and Christmas with our grown children and the grandkids. Well, there have been new developments in our plans. My mother suffered a stroke last week and was admitted to the local hospital in their small town in Arkansas, the next day she had a heart attack and was sent to a medical center in Jonesboro, Arkansas. In less than a week she has been in and out of two different ICIS and three ward rooms. Add to this she is the sole caregiver for my bedridden father.

So my wife and I have now relocated to Arkansas and are driving back and forth between both towns, doing our best to look after both parents. The situation is not unlike OCS experience; too much to do and not enough time to handle what

almost seems like an impossible situation.

The point to be made is not, "poor Sam" is having a bad time of it, but rather that I'm having an "opportunity to excel." Look at the two verses that follow James 1:2.

James 1:2-4 *"Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing."* (HCSB)

I'll be honest, I have not found the joy in all of this yet. As I recall I had a similar time finding the joy in being a lower-classman. However, I am comforted in knowing that God will somehow make it come out alright in the end. I just have to endure just as I did in OCS.

I know some of you have also been going through some tough times and I hope and pray that God will give you the same comfort that he has given me. Let me close with these Bible verses and thought.

Philippians 4:12-13 *"I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content – whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me."* (HCSB)

2 Timothy 2:3 *"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."* (KJV)

So my wish and prayer for each of you is this, no matter your circumstances, good, bad or

indifferent, find joy in this Christmas season. For we celebrate the birth of our Savior who endured the cross that we might have the hope and joy of Heaven.

O.C.S. Reunion

The 27th Annual FAOCS Reunion will be held at Ft. Sill, May 11-14, 2011. Check this link <http://www.faocsalumni.org/reunion.html> for details and updates as they become available.

Correspondence

Received From
Captain Heldman

You asked for some bio information on me and I am flattered to be asked and will respond. In fact, I thought that I would add some information about OCS and your Class that might be of interest to you and your Classmates as I would think that most of it would be news (old information but perhaps enlightening or humorous) as well as a couple other matters. In any case, here is what I can provide:

BIOGRAPHY:

I grew up in the Pacific Northwest and graduated from High School in Eugene, Oregon. I graduated from West Point in 1962 and then from the Officer's Basic Course at Ft. Sill, Ranger School at Ft. Benning and Airborne School at Ft. Benning. In April 1963, I joined 3/76 Artillery in Kitzingen and spent three years there with all the normal Battery and Battalion assignments that a young Officer would have. I was promoted to Captain in November 1965 and transferred to Ft. Sill in April 1966. I spent the next twelve months at OCS at Ft. Sill and then was sent to Viet Nam where I was assigned to the 2/4 FA in the Mekong Delta. I had a number of staff jobs there as well as a six month stint as Delta

Battery Commander; this was the first and only Artillery Battery to be equipped with Airmobile Firing Platforms. In April 1968 I returned to CONUS and ended my Army career with my resignation. Following my Army career, I worked in the computer industry for a number of firms in both the US and Europe. I had the good fortune to work for two firms that became very successful and I later started my own firm and now am retired. My wife and I live in the San Francisco Bay Area.

OCS IN 67 AND 68:

When I arrived at Ft. Sill from my three years in Germany, I had hoped to teach in the Gunnery Department but was told that I would go to OCS to become a Battery Commander. I took command of a class that was close to graduation and, after a break between classes of a couple weeks, your Class arrived. There was nothing like an "Orientation" session for people like me so I simply did what I thought was right and that was what I had learned at West Point and what I could learn from some of the OCS "Old Hands" including our First Sergeant (who was a great guy and had seen and done it all).

During this time OCS was expanding rapidly to meet the needs of Viet Nam. I think that there were four Candidate Batteries when I arrived and five or more times that number when I left one year later. There was a lot of pressure on the Commandant to turn out a lot of high-quality 2nd Lieutenants and I think that he and his staff did a good job.

MY IMPRESSIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS OF OCS:

The School was well run and the people who graduated were excellent young Officers. I met a number of them in Viet Nam (to include Tommy Franks who served in my Battalion; I remember him but not all that well). I think that anyone who graduated while I was there can

take a lot of pride in saying that they attended and graduated from a course that was designed to weed out people who did not have the ability or determination to do what OCS demanded. I cannot imagine that many of you would disagree with the statement that it was one of the defining events in your lives.

WHAT WENT ON "AT THE TOP" WHILE YOU WERE CANDIDATES:

The politics at OCS were never a big issue for me and the entire Chain of Command seemed (in retrospect) to have been good officers and dedicated to what they were doing. Like the rest of the Army, a lot of the important things were done by the NCOs and those of us who let them do their stuff were wiser for having looked the other way (sometimes).

ANECDOTES:

My favorite event was discovering three (I think at least that it was three) toilet bowls filled with GOLDFISH on a Saturday morning inspection while the fourth (and last one just had water). I liked the gag and enjoyed knowing that the guys in that barracks had the same sense of humor that a lot of us had at West Point. Bending and breaking the rules without being caught was the sign of someone who was going to do well in life, in my opinion. Am not sure how widely-held that opinion is, but it is mine so I think that it is right.

WHERE THEY WENT:

I encountered a few of the OCS Cadre in my tour of Viet Nam and later in life but they are all now "lost in the mists of time". I wish in some ways that I had stayed in touch with some of them but I think that what you are doing will help you all stay connected. Old friends and old stories grow more important with time; perhaps, like some wines they improve with age.

SUMMARY:

You all have a lot to be proud of with respect to what you did during a difficult time in America and how well you did it. I was proud to have known your Class and to have been able to play some role in your careers as aspiring young Officers.

Respectfully,

Jim Heldman, former Captain of Artillery

RESPONSE FROM WAMBOLD:

Thanks so much for the biographical info and the memories of O.C.S. Today, 11 October, marks the 44th anniversary of Class 24-66's graduation.

The complete story about the GOLDFISH is that, during their return from Sunday church services, two of our Candidates noticed an old barracks building being demolished. In the trash pile they found four old, oak, toilet seats with brass fittings and returned to our barracks carrying those.

After discussions with the upstairs and downstairs Platoons, a decision was made to refinish the wood and shine the brass for installation in the communal shower/bath area. Several weeks of work in our "spare time", gallons of Brasso, a pound of steel wool and some shellac provided a stunning finished product.

Early on the morning of the inspection the installation was made. Immediately before inspection one of our Candidates placed two goldfish into each of the toilets. (The goldfish were purchased in a 5 & 10 cent store in Lawton by his wife and delivered the night before). We KNEW this would be the MOST IMPRESSIVE sight any Tac Officer had ever seen!! WRONG, AGAIN, CANDIDATES. Instead of congratulatory acknowledgement we each received demerits for "Harboring

Animals". One of the Tac Officers assigned "gunners" to each of the four toilets. At his command of "Fire", the flushing mechanism was activated and the fish were gone.

Gee, my first, and only, "4-Flush Salute".

But we all, Officers and Candidates, had a great laugh together. It was a defining moment in the maxim, "Cooperate and Graduate", and we ALL realized it. A "team" had been built.

An O.C.S. Memory

"Sir, Please Pass The Butter"

O.C.S. was an ordeal to be survived !!! Six months of regimented harassment, exercise, athletics, inspections and academics. There was no "spare" time; every moment was scheduled. We depended upon each other and, in a short time, became a unit. The motto was, "Cooperate And Graduate".

Our first 6 weeks was spent as Lowerclassmen. The following 8 weeks we were elevated to Middleclass status. The remainder of our captivity was as Upperclassmen.

During the first half of our Lowerclass existence we were required to move at a "double-time" pace, salute all Middleclassmen and Upperclassmen, and eat "square meals" in the mess hall.

Our meals in the mess hall were served family style at long tables seating about 20 of us. At the head of each table was an Upperclassman ... the Table Commandant. He assured that we occupied no more than the allotted front three inches of our chairs, we remained at a rigid "brace" during the meal, looked straight ahead without "dog-eyeing", put no more into our mouths than could be swallowed in four chews, and had the

authority to discipline us, on-the-spot, for any infraction of table manners.

If a Candidate wanted additional chow passed to him, he was able to request it from the Table Commandant. The plea was quite formatted: "Sir, would you care for more mashed potatoes?" "Sir, would any of my Contemporaries care for more mashed potatoes?" "Sir, please pass the mashed potatoes."

One day, at the breakfast meal, Candidate "X" was unfortunate enough to be observed by the Table Commandant taking a "gross bite" from his plate of pancakes, sausage and fresh fruit. The Commandant took action by pointing-out the infraction and saying, "Candidate "X", you scum-sucking mess, you sick barf, you disgrace to the military and mankind. Is that how your Mamma taught you to eat? Take yourself and your plate under the table, sit on the floor, and finish your meal there."

Candidate "X" complied.

Several minutes later we all heard the muffled sound of, "Sir, would you care for more butter? Sir, would any of my Contemporaries care for more butter? Sir, please pass the butter." The butter was passed ... under the table. After the meal, we left the mess hall in our normal formation to double-time back to the barracks.

This time we ran a little faster after we learned that Candidate "X" had **SUCCESSFULLY SPREAD ONE HALF POUND OF BUTTER** on the Upperclassman's spit shined boots.

So as not to embarrass Candidate "X" in this narrative, I'll offer only a clue to his identity Candidate Richard L. Marrocco, Service Number O5 424 472, from Cranston, RI, (Lieutenant Colonel, Retired)

Our class of 120 Candidates was formed on 1 May 1966 and on 11 October 1966 we graduated 86 (43 of the original group) as Second Lieutenants in the United States Army. Candidate "X" was among us "and we ain't got no clue why."

Class 24-66 Photos Needed

Larry Swank continues his efforts to receive and publish any O.C.S. photos to our site via his SmugMug album. Please search for some of your "priceless" Kodak shots and share those with Larry and Delta Battery. You may find where and how to send by clicking the [Photo Pages](#) link on our site.

While you're at it, send your Military Biographies to the WebMaster. Any format is acceptable or, you may use the link [Create Biography](#) to type it on-the-fly. No one cares if you are a retired General or if the MP's used you as a "speed bump" outside the guard shack ... everyone wants to hear your military and civilian experiences.

Honoring Those We Lost In Service

U.S. Army Artillery and Missile
Officer Candidate Class 24-66
ROLL OF HONOR

1LT James Francis Fuhrman
08/14/45 – 01/04/68

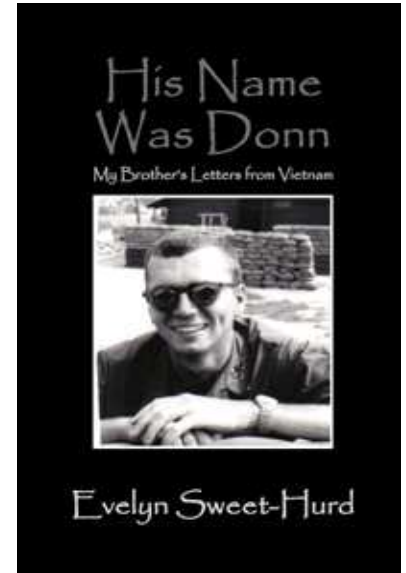
1LT Michael Leon Phillips
03/09/43 – 06/13/68

1LT Donn Lafayette Sweet
07/14/42 – 07/25/68

CPT Warren Lynn Wozencraft
09/10/43 – 05/20/70

CPT John S. Hughes, Jr.
09/17/46 – 06/03/70

His Name Was Donn
My Brother's Letters From Viet Nam
by
Evelyn Sweet-Hurd



Written by Donn's sister, Evie.
and available via [This Link](#).

Please Remember Our Vow

"I am an American fighting man and serve in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense."

**May
God
Bless
Our
Troops
and
The
United
States
Of
America**