

John saw Nannette and **Chuck Litz** in Jacksonville; Chuck is currently on deployment with HS-9 aboard NIMITZ. He also heard from **John Maciejczyk** who is at the ASW school in Dam Neck.



Billy and Matthew Hubbard

The last letter I received this month was from **Mark Hubbard**. He has left DUPONT (DD-941) and is now on board SOUTH CAROLINA (CGN-37) as CIC officer. He bought a house with Tula and the boys in Green Run near Oceana. Before reporting to the SOUTH CAROLINA, Mark attended NTDS school in San Diego and CIC officer school in Dam Neck. **Frank Rennie**, CICO aboard FARRAGUT, and **Don Parker**, CICO aboard COONTZ, checked the screens at school with Mark. Mark has also seen **Tom Kennedy** who is navigator aboard EL PASO.

Life in Iwakuni goes on as usual—several Classmates have passed through the area in recent weeks. **Fred Horne**, **Ed Harper**, **Jeff Tomlin**, and **Chip McFarland** have all been through here. All the rest of us in Iwakuni are doing well. **Dennis Dilucente** heard from **Craig Snee**; Craig is now out of the Marine Corps and has stayed in California to complete work on a master's degree.

I wish everyone continued success as we start another year in our various careers—keep in touch.

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Sec'y, 1st Lt. **James R. Rowan** USMC
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Percent Members: 98

An Open Letter to the Class of '77

Back in our Academy days, the thinking of my more cynical Classmates was that the Class of '77 seemed to come up short when it came

to getting "good deals." Well, the "good deals" we may have missed back then are petty in comparison to the one we are being denied now—educational benefits under the old G.I. bill!

As many of you are aware, **Marc Watson** has been carrying the torch for our Class in the struggle to reinstate those benefits. On 5 September 1979, while stationed in Philadelphia, Marc went before the Veterans' Administration Appeals Committee to present our case. Subsequently, he was exiled to Gulfport, Mississippi, and provided me with enough background information to serve as his proxy in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, on 14 February 1980 the appeal was denied.

There are now two options remaining to redress our grievance. The first is a civil suit in the federal courts; the second, correctional legislation. The former could drag on for years. If it is presented as an individual civil suit, it would be too expensive for one person to afford. As a class action suit, the coordination required overall looks staggering, and the costs for just the paper work and postage would be prohibitive. With all of us so widely dispersed, it just does not appear to be the way to go right now. At this time, corrective legislation looks to be our most optimistic recourse for quick resolution.

Marc recently wrote to the Chief of Naval Operations for assistance. He responded that the Navy would strongly support corrective legislation in this matter, should the services be requested to comment.

Congressman Robert Traxler of Michigan has introduced H.R. 2136 that would, upon its passage, include Service Academy graduates of the Class of '77 under the old G.I. bill. H.R. 2136 has been tabled by the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and will most likely die there when this session of Congress is adjourned unless we do something about it.

What we have to do now is to conduct a coordinated, spirited letter-writing campaign. There are three key elements to this campaign: *timeliness, volume, and content.*

1. *Timeliness.* I realize that letters to Congressmen have been written in the past by many members of our Class; however, these have been mostly sporadic efforts. It is critical that the support for the bill be simultaneous and overwhelming; therefore, mark July 15 on your calendars as the deadline for sending in your letters. We have the vehicle at our disposition; let's all get on board at the same time.

2. *Volume.* We need letters from all members of the Class in order to garner the necessary support House-wide. Do not waste your time writing to your senators. The bill has to

clear the House of Representatives first.

In order to monitor our progress in the campaign, I request each of you to send me a copy of your letter. That way, I can ascertain which representatives have been contacted, ensure the receipt of the letters, and most importantly, lobby the correct congressmen's legislative staffs for support.

3. *Content.* Asking for your congressmen's voting support once the bill reaches the House Floor will not be sufficient. The bill will never reach the House Floor unless enough congressmen co-sponsor it to get it out of committee. Here's what your letter should contain:

a. *A Statement of the Problem*, i.e., approximately 3,000 graduates of the Service Academies of the Classes of 1977 have been excluded from educational benefits under the old G.I. bill, due to an apparent oversight in drafting legislation. Administrative avenues of redress have been exhausted, thus corrective legislation is required.

b. *Corrective Legislation Status*, i.e., Congressman Traxler has introduced H.R. 2136, which has been tabled by the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

c. *Request for Support.* Request your congressmen to contract Congressman Traxler's office to have their names added to H.R. 2136 as co-sponsor.

While it is fresh in your minds, write your letters now, and send me a copy in the mail. My address is: **Peter W. Grieve**, 227 Ninth St. S.E., Washington DC 20003.

Remember, the deadline is July 15.

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