

vacation retreat to a permanent home, having just completed their 3rd (and Ray hopes *final!*) renovation. More importantly, they recently received news daughter Lindsay is expecting a boy on or about Thanksgiving, which will be Lindsay's 2nd child and Sue and Ray's 5th grandchild (Sue, you look far too young to be a grandma!). Three of the four Simmons offspring live nearby in Orlando (Lindsay and her husband and daughter, son Sean and his wife Becky, and Connor, their youngest), while Adam and his family remain in Northern Virginia. But as Ray still makes semi-monthly trips to D.C. on business, he visits them regularly.

And what update would be complete without the recounting of a recent surgical procedure, in this case Ray's knee, which he trashed back in January and had surgery on in March. The bad news was, awaking from what was to have been a 15-minute procedure followed by a 10-day recovery, Ray discovered he was sporting a leg brace and faced a 4-month rehab plan, which he just recently completed. The good news is, the reason Ray got the "extended" plan was, once the orthoped got in there, he concluded the knee was in such good shape Ray will never need a replacement, so the surgeon opted for a full fix. Now, with the months of frustration a dimming memory (at our age, what memory isn't dimming?!?), Ray's pretty much back to normal, biking and golfing daily. Ray attributes the superior condition of his knee, at least in part, to limiting himself to 6:29 miles back at Canoe U., Heinz Lenz's admonitions to run faster notwithstanding. Hey, if the minimum wasn't good enough, why'd they have one at all!?

Next up, **Mike Tryon (3rd Co.)** recently received his LL.M. (Master of Laws) from the University of Alabama School of Law. Mike is shown below with classmate **Dan Beach (17th Co)** just prior to the conferment and hooding ceremony, which Mike avers is photographic evidence you *can...*



Mike and Dan

...teach on old dog new tricks! Mike explained, from their Academy days to present, Dan and he have frequented many an establishment specializing in adult beverages. So when Dan saw Mike's invitation *might* have something to do with a "bar", he was all in, making the trip to Tuscaloosa with Lauren to provide adult supervision. Good for Lauren and Dan making a special day even more memorable. And BZ to Mike for a most notable accomplishment.

As Porky Pig so eloquently observed, until next time, "Uh...th...th...th...that's all folks!" And remember, we can't publish what we don't receive, so keep those cards, letters and photos coming. Unless you're Kirk Barker...in which case, we've already heard every story at least 12 times. Even so, Buddy, we're up for making it a baker's dozen!

Magoo

'78

Life Membership: 80%
Donor Participation: 28.86%

Pres: **Glen Woods**

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Wow! What a great reunion.
Despite the best efforts of

Hurricane Flo, '78 was undaunted and you showed up in great numbers. In Annapolis, the weather turned out to be perfect for the weekend. Elsewhere it was not. To those impacted by Flo - and still affected- we all continue to send you our best thoughts and prayers. Thanks to **Brett Ayotte (29th Co)** and his Reunion Committee for all their months of hard work and planning. In a little over 84 hours it all came to fruition and finality. I think this was Brett's third reunion "command" of our reunion helm. Once again it was stellar. Bravo Zulu to all and thanks again. By now you have also heard the "tale of the tape" about our reunion but let's recap it here:

- 527 classmates registered for the Reunion; 500 were able to attend while some had to change plans due to the hurricane and other last-minute challenges. (It's a good thing a some of you didn't win the tug of war for the extra bag you tried to pilfer when it was one per registrant. We needed all of them!)
- Classmates traveled from 43 of the 50 states; there were also several international registrations (Australia and Europe)

- 77 classmates participated in the golf tournament (won by the foursome of **Charlie Nickell (21st Co)**, **John Wissler (21st Co)**, **John Semcken (2nd Co)** and **Dave Heintzman (34th Co)**)



Golf Tournament Winners

- Over 550 people signed up for the Friday Night Social and more than 900 registered for the tailgater
- This was the first time that we had an arrival reception on Thursday and a departure brunch on Sunday - both were well attended.
- Our Memorial Service had over 480 people in attendance. (**Mike Kozlarek's (14th Co)** remarks were spot on and moving. We all were also surprised by the number of classmates who rose to lead in the hymns but even more so by the gusto and quality of the singing! And alcohol wasn't even involved.)



'78: 22nd Company



'78: Memorial Service

78/79 CLASS NEWS

• Congrats to the 22nd Company who had the most in attendance with 21 companymates (one company-mate who started with them on I-Day but did not graduate).

We also had the honor of sharing our hotel headquarters with many of the living recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor. It was an honor to be among them. Many of you got to meet and chat with them, hear their stories, share a drink and bond as only veterans can do. Jay Leno was also there. We suspect he really wanted to crash our party.



Bill McAlpine, Jay Leno and Bob Schwaneke

I was very reluctant to print the following e-mail from **Michael Sears** (36th Co) but after speaking with him and his strong insistence, I capitulated. I did it for him and for his son, Matthew ('19). I told Michael I was going to "preface the heck out of it" - so here goes. What Michael writes of is *only one* example of what many of you have been doing since we raised our hands and swore an oath to protect and defend - taking care of our classmates. This was *another* - silent - oath to which we committed ourselves that day; an obligation ingrained in all of us which over time has grown to encompass not only the care of our classmates but their families - **our '78 family** - consisting of wives, widows, daughters and sons, and now granddaughters and grandsons. The following could easily be about you. You know who you are, you remember those moments - when you "came to the rescue" or had been "rescued by a "brother" in the class. So, as you read Michael's e-mail, I'd like you to see it as an "everyman story" or rather, an every '78 classmate story. Here goes:

✉ "I rarely have written in to this column in the last 40 years. This is an exception. Less than a week after

our 40th reunion I found myself at a crossroad, literally. Many of you know that my son has been suffering from the grave illness for the last two years. He is at home with us as he goes through his recovery process. A few nights ago, he suffered a setback that required him to go to the emergency room in Bethesda. That's a 40 mile drive from our home in Annapolis. At 3 AM Monday morning my son and I jumped in our and car sped toward Walter Reed Bethesda Hospital.

A mile from our house, we were confronted with a potential catastrophe. There was a very large downed tree blocking the road. We were literally at a crossroad, and we could not continue. The police were there (see the picture), and the chain saw they were using broke.

My solution was to call a classmate on the other side of the downed tree. No sooner that I dialed his number that our classmate sprang into action. Did I mention it was now 3:30 AM. Within 15 minutes, his car appears on the far side of the tree. My son and I climbed over the tree, and we made our escape. Frog pilot to the rescue. He got us to the hospital, stayed with us, and eventually drove me back to my car (during the day the tree had been removed). Vince Balderama delivered in our crisis. My words cannot express my feelings and appreciation. I know that we would all do that for one another. I just wanted to mention that Vince did this for me and my son. BZ, Semper Fi, brother."

Launchin, Spot 4.



'78

'79

Life Membership: 91%
Donor Participation: 24.43%

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Facebook Group: **USNA Class of 1979**

Website: www.usna79.com

Greetings, 79ers!

Although it doesn't feel like it to me, as a class we've been around for a while now. For over 39 years my predecessors and I have been chronicling items of interest among the Class of '79. In the beginning, it was all the "firsts" - first weddings, first duty stations, first children, etc. Soon we started seeing the first civilians, as many 79ers opted for other opportunities once our initial obligation was over. Within our military ranks we soon saw the first commanding officers and eventually, first flag officers. We also started to see the first retirements.

But as '79's time in uniform was winding down, there seemed to be no more "firsts" to document. Oh there was still a lot of things happening, but no "firsts".

Until now.

Now, for the first time since we all took the Oath in T-Court on that hot July day in 1975, there is no '79er on active duty. On a not-quite-as-hot August day in 2018, our "last man standing" **Lt Gen Bob Walsh** was transferred to the retired list. Our time in uniform is done.

I was privileged to join about 15 other classmates and hundreds of spectators at the Marine Barracks in Washington, DC for the event. As you can imagine, the ceremony itself was absolutely first-rate. As Bob said in his farewell speech, anything the 8th and I touches is automatically transformed into something great.

General Joe Dunford, former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, was the presiding officer. He spoke extemporaneously for about 20 minutes, essentially documenting the highlights of Bob's career, of which there were many. Bob gave tribute to all those who aided him in his career, including those of us representing the class. For me, the icing on the cake was when the grandkids rushed out onto the field at the end to hug their grandpa.

Afterwards, during the reception, Dave Bethel presented a USNA/USMC framed print as a gift from the '79 Marines. Later in the evening he regaled us with a few stories that didn't make it into General Dunford's speech. Let's just say that Bob was gutsy enough to try stuff, yet smart enough to know when to stop. That's a fine line that many of us mere mortals have crossed more than once!



General and Mrs. Dunford, Teri and Bob Walsh



General Dunford and Lt General Bob Walsh, with the gift from the Class of '79 Marines