

14 September 2021

Brothers,

The week and weekend back at school were a wonderful series of events, maybe with a hint of magic in them.

Bill Roedy's many years of selfless service to his fellowman, promoting the safe vaccination and inoculation of millions of helpless people, fighting the AIDS epidemic in Africa, opening the Warsaw pact countries to the West as president of MTV International, and changing the world, were finally recognized after five attempts. He uses his silent power and influence to protect the vulnerable and strengthen the weakened.

The persistence of the endorsers (Bill Taylor, Barney Forsythe, Dave Brown, Doug Jeffrey (69), Bob Kimmitt (69), and Dr. Mark Dybul) allowed Mom, our Alma Mater, to finally give him her Distinguished Graduate Award---our first and only recipient so far. The ceremony was magnificent. Bill is ours, and we claim him, and now he is also claimed for the world to know, by Mom.

Roedy spoke with passion and tenderness, expressing his love for his Alma Mater and his classmates, and especially for his beautiful family---his wife Alex and his four children. He called Alex his heart and soul. Roedy is a genius at personal relationships. Shake his hand and look in his eyes and you will feel it.

On a side note, another of the Distinguished Grads was the little brother of our John Shull of A-4.

We also went to the ceremony on the Buffalo Soldiers' Field, over on the west side in front of the barracks and the stables of the old 9th Cavalry. There was raised the first statue to a Black American on West Point. He is SSG Sanders H. Matthews, Sr. He sits up straight in the saddle, carrying the guidon straight up, and is the very image of the 9th Cavalry's motto, "Ready & Forward."

This field, once the Cavalry Plain, was dedicated as Buffalo Soldiers' Field in 1973 by LTG Knowlton, our Billy's dad, and MAJ Frank Steele, our Gummy's dad, together. Gummy's father was an enlisted Buffalo Soldier in those very barracks and rose to Warrant Officer and then through the commissioned ranks to Major, retiring the day before his two sons, Gary and Michael, entered West Point. When the statue was unveiled, Gummy's eyes filled up, as did mine, and some more of our Brothers', and I could feel the presence of Major Frank Steele standing with us on that field.

Up on the Plain, we laid the wreath at Thayer Statue, sang the Alma Mater and the Corps, and stood on the line and took the review of the Corps. We had a victory over Western Kentucky and then had a nice dinner-dance back at the hotel, with Tommy Sullivan from the Night Riders---from our days back at school-- singing.

There were 53 members of the class there, and a total of about 90 people. Company A-4, Billy Roedy's company, was there in force---not every single one, but almost. There was no rancor, no politics, no bad news at all, just us sitting around in piles, laughing like hyenas. God, it was fun---made me want to have another mini with E-4 right away, and another class reunion as soon as we can.

We danced our butts off and our women looked great, better than great, the guys looked like a mud fence, and we had a big picture taken. Speeches and laughs and hanging around together--- It was a hell of a good time. It made us all realize how valuable it is to spend time in each other's company. And the actuarial tables tell us a tough story about life expectancy. But we are toughened. Mom rode us hard, and then Dad---the US Army--- rode us hard too, and we built truly excellent physical capacities, so our bodies

seem to go farther than the average civilian. That's what I believe and I'm sticking to it. But we are turning base to final.

So in the spirit of hanging with each other when we can, the class committees are working on our next events. We have ideas coming in about gathering together sooner rather than later, maybe piggy-backing on existing events. The golf tour/reunion combo in Ft. Campbell territory in 2023, or a soiree in the DC area in 2022--- both have been discussed.

Informality would give us less need for planning time and therefore a sooner event. Kurt Reineke's Comms Committee will be asking your opinion about some of these options, in the future. The last consensus was relatively inconclusive. These things are all tentative and in the planning stage.

In other news, the Sallyport commo app is rolling out now---this looks like it will be a godsend. Frank Monaco is breaking it in now.

Our fountain will not, I repeat will not be moved. But there may be a need for some funding for maintenance. More on that later.

Notes and minutes of class leadership team meetings are available upon request, as are the recordings of the Zoom meetings of that team. Everything said is noted.

We have our next Distinguished Graduate nomination we are starting now for Col. (Dr.) Fred Lough, twice deployed to Afghanistan, CMB and BSM. We will try to get this through as quickly as we can. We all suspect Fred is a shoo-in. Not only is he a heroic man and a dedicated surgeon, but he is the nicest guy you could hope to hang with.

Gil Harper's Special Ops Committee also has a new award called the Serve With Integrity Award, chaired by Billy Malkemes, to honor internally one of our classmates on a periodic basis. We have so many stories of valor, achievement, adventure and glory among our members, and Billy will seek to tell them.

One I am going to recommend to Billy is Kenny Thompson, in Germany, saving a soldier's life, at the risk of his own, from a murderous thug with a buck knife and a head full of crystal meth. Bruce Olson, Larry Walrod and I witnessed it. We wrote Kenny up for the Soldier's Medal but it was chopped for political reasons. It was the bravest thing I have ever seen a man do. That story should be told.

I believe Steve Wilson made up the name of the award, but if I'm incorrect in that, I know Billy Malkemes will set me straight.

The class can be right proud of the ego-less, spontaneous, unselfish co-operation and collegiality of our leadership teammates. Steve Wilson and Charlie McGee and Gil Harper and Billy Malkemes and Crash Werner and John Van Vliet and Kurt Reineke and Bill Taylor and Mike Zolidis and Frank Monaco seem to interact seamlessly to get whatever needs to be done, done. Barney and Bill Cater and Steve Strom and TJ Young all administer their areas with smooth, quiet expertise, no drama, good result, 100%. TJ's back is hurting and he had surgery, so I ask for prayers for his recovery.

John Connors looks at everything that goes on and checks it for legality, but more than that, good sense. There is a real good reason he was our First Captain---he's the genuine article.

Another thing our classmates should know is that Vic Madeja, who has become a flat-out expert on VA benefits, came through for a veteran friend of mine and Larry White's who is down and out. Vic knew exactly what to do to get this guy desperately needed help. If you need a hand there, Vic is your man.

John Norris---the Rhino--- needs our prayers. He broke his femur in a fall, ruined the prosthetic knee on the other leg and then contracted covid in the hospital. He is out of danger at the moment, but would love to hear from everyone at jnusma@gmail.com. He's tough---he'd put an iron bar in the hospital, but a Hail Mary won't hurt.

I was listening, and I heard some of our women comment over the weekend at how pleased they were at John Van Vliet's Family Committee. I can't get over how much luck we have had as a class with the women who have decided to love us. Thank you, God.

As we make progress working for the collective wishes of the class, the seven other class officers and the five class committee chairs and I will keep everyone abreast of the happenings in the life and operations of our class. Although we don't have any dramatic doings, at our age, this stuff is more important all the time.

All the Brothers are heroes

And all their wives are beautiful.

Every meal shared is a banquet

And each meeting is a celebration.

Love to all,

Serve With Integrity.

Beat Navy.

Sully