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### **Picking up the New BSOTW Pace**

For those of you who have been in deep quarantine/lockdown, our popular memoir *Both Sides of the Wall* will receive an addition – *BRIDES' SIDE OF THE WALL*. **Tony Ambrose** ([aambrose1968@gmail.com](mailto:aambrose1968@gmail.com)) and **Andy Shaffer** ([oldgrad68@swbell.net](mailto:oldgrad68@swbell.net)) have received almost a score of stories from a variety of brides who have been with us through thick and thin. Further, since it appears that 2021 is not going to turn into a time of rainbows and unicorns real soon, now is a good time for the rest of our learned ladies to settle down and also chip in. The timeline for input, editing, compilation, and publishing in time for our 55<sup>th</sup> reunion sets all contributions to be submitted by the end of this coming December – which is also a good time to cement plans for friends family touring in 2022 – while Tony & **Linda** and Andy & **Betty** work on what will surely be a masterpiece – but only with your help.

### **2020 Brought Strange Adventures**

**Chuck & Joan Petruska** tagged along on a trip partially planned by their oldest daughter to the North Georgia Mountains. As Chuck was checking a map of the area (another 20<sup>th</sup> century odd undertaking for today), he discovered that they would only be about 45 miles from Dahlgonega. Chuck & Joan's 14 year old grandson (both of his grandfathers are veterans) was intrigued by the practice, genuinely interested in what he had heard about Ranger training, and asked if they could go there. So, they did something that Chuck swore that he would never do again -- 52 years after earning his tab, he went back to Ranger School! Visiting day was perfect -- cold and rainy when they pulled up to the gate of Camp Merrill. After a bit of "sweet-talking," "old vet" flag waving, and whining, the guard let them through and directed them to the Camp Headquarters. Chuck swaggered into the orderly room, introduced himself to the CQ, told him that he was a graduate of Ranger Class 6-69 and wanted to show his grandson and his parents where he had trained. After the CQ explained that the School's Museum was closed due to COVID and the group could not get access to any training areas, the Camp Commander came out of his office after hearing Chuck's appeal and was fascinated that he would ever want to return. The CO introduced Chuck to his XO and a civilian trainer, and re-iterated that the Museum was closed, but offered to give Chuck's group a private tour – must have been a really slow day/week. As part of the price of gaining admission for the private tour, all three Ranger cadre members asked for Chuck's memories and -- most importantly – his "take-aways" from his training. The cadre members were very accommodating to all of Chuck's grandson's questions, and took and posed for a gazillion pictures with what appears to be a camera left behind by a Ranger class not too junior to Chuck's. After the tour, Chuck's contingent stopped at the PX for some souvenirs, and departed. Chuck reports that he is sincerely grateful for the decision to return, and

recommends such a visit to any of you who are ever in the area. The fact that they visited during 2020 have added to such a feeling.



[Photo #1 – “Chuck Petruska returns a special Dahlenega mountains hide-away”]



[Photo # 2 – “Chuck Petruska and his grandson at the Camp Merrill Museum”]

## Holiday Greetings

As another sign of old graddom, snail mail holiday greeting cards and letters outnumbered missives dispatched through cyberspace – a practice that diminished the number of pictures I could post of folks in masks – which might have allowed me to throw any name or names I chose while showing groups in masks surrounding a birthday cake and one geezer holding up a can of compressed air aimed at the candles – but you’d catch on... Due to lockdowns and quarantines, adventurous class news consisted of events already reported in January and February of 2020 as well as small victories of zooming with family and an occasional social distancing gathering. **Bob Alexander** took advantage of the lockdown and curtailment of the West Point Society of Hampton Roads activities by helping **Tricia** through rehab after her stroke. **Gary & Patti Halstead** felt blessed that a branch of their clan (along with **Jim & Rene Orahood**) is still attached to the Air Force Academy and the transition of military service. **Bill & Cheryl Jeffries** took 2020 in stride with a dose of the most stressful events in one’s life – death, birth, marriage, house sale, house purchase, cross country move, an out of the blue pandemic requiring quarantine, and the realization that they experienced far more blessings than disappointments. **Charlie & Janet Lieb** have adjusted to their new normal with biking, swimming, walking, golfing puzzles, reading and Clorox as a multi seasonal scent – as well as the discovery that they still like each other. After taking in Nats Spring Training in Florida, **Jack & Bobbi Munson** complained about losing their hearing because the primary word they would yell at each other was “What” through masks that Bobbie made in place of quilts. Despite the 2020 restrictions, **Bob & Carol Shimp** managed a two page Christmas poem in #8 sized font so

that they could squeeze in visits with **Dick & Kathy Shipley** and **GB Weeks**. Their pending trips in which travel agents are “graciously” holding their money until a future date when travel is safe. They are also learning how to share in the experience of Zoom wine blending and tasting in Mendoza, Argentina while in Houston. **Ralph Tuccillo** reports that he has not used his elbows for bumping this much since he quit playing hockey and discovered that, if you wear glasses, hearing aids, and a mask, the ears have become an essential organ. **Sandy** has become a Zoom and Facetime pro in an effort to stay connected with family. Since travel was shut down and remote working has become the 2020 normal, **Rick & Anne Wright** used their time getting their Continuing Care Retirement Community/Army Residence Community cottage constructed the way they wanted in a socially strategic spot, moved in in March, and Rick opted to work at IDA a bit longer while meeting their neighbors.

### **Hedleys Host a New Year’s Eve (Zoom) Party**

In an effort to not allow families and classmates to leave 2020 with a whimper, **John & Margie Hedley** put together a zoom New Year’s Eve gathering starting at 9PM EST. We joined in to bid farewell to John’s & Margie’s daughter and son-in-law since they were young, had stamina, and had others to social distance with – which left us with the Hedleys, **Ray & Mary Jane Rhodes** in Kingwood (just outside of Houston), Texas, **Bob Hensler** in San Antonio, Texas, **Dutch & Megan Hostler** in Oahu, Hawaii, and John’s sister and brother-in-law in the Columbus, Ohio area. Soon, we were joined by **Charlie & Janet Lieb** from their home in DePere (just outside of Green Bay), Wisconsin, and **Dick & Kathy Shipley** also from San Antonio. Given our age demographics, many thought that the gathering would last about an hour – tops. As it turned out, after some Army-Navy and Army-Air Force chortling, small talk about what we’ve all been doing, remembering when, adult beverage show and telling, and who had the largest head gear collection with the funniest stories, the gang in EST got to wish everyone else Happy New Year while the sun was just setting in Hawaii... Talk about social distancing! This group was safe but kept a lot of neighbors up.



[Photo #3 – “New Year’s Eve from the East Coast to Hawaii – (from top left) Gerards, Liebs, Bob Hensler, Rhodes, John Hedley’s sister and brother-in-law, Hostlers, Shipleys, and Hedleys”]

## Army-Navy Reflectiions

On the morning of the Army-Navy game, **Terry Wildrick** received the following from one of his daughter's in-laws, whose family is infested with Navy grads:

COVID-19 can't keep them down,  
As Navy and Army pound the ground.  
We know the Mids won't disappoint,  
As they roll over Army at West Point.

Terry responded with:

I'm afraid your poetry only goes so far,  
And a win at West Point is too high a bar.  
The Mids might think they've escaped and landed in heaven.  
But at the end of the day, they'll be three and seven.

As mentioned earlier, **Dave Martin** has made it to every Army-Navy game since 1981 (except for the 1983 game in Pasadena) along with family but, thanks to Mr. Covid-19, this year was a no-go. However, in keeping with family and Army-Navy tradition, all eight of the Martin clan ignored the NJ Governor's ranting, gathered on game day at Dave's & **Suzanne's** home, and held their usual pre-game tailgate with Suzanne's traditional chili and hot chocolate – and some beer. After the game, they also stood for to sing (Second) our Alma Mater. During the game, they (Dave supervised) even did pushups after each score. Traditionally, the family would go to an Italian restaurant for dinner right after the game (the red wine is sometimes more important than in other years). As a fill-in this year, they ordered pizza and pasta takeout. One benefit of watching the game at home is that they can have drinks immediately after the game.



[Photo #4 – “Dave & Suzanne Martin hosting an Army-Navy Tailgate for grandkids and more at their New Jersey home”



[Photo #5 – “Dave Martin ensuring post-game activities are lively”]

