

Class of '85

Today's email is more than just about reunion happenings. Today, we should all take a minute to reflect on the happenings of the last 24 hours and also, today is the 24th Anniversary of the 9/11 Tragedy in America. I watched on TV today as they read the name of our Classmate Patrick (Pat) Dunn as I choked back tears because it still hurts. It still hurts to think of our Classmate Marc Flagg having lost his parents on the same aircraft that hit the Pentagon killing Pat who was there in a meeting. I know we all have vivid memories of that tragic day and have all been affected in some way by that day and the terrorists who conducted those heinous and unthinkable attacks. Our lives ever since have all been changed as has the world we live in. I ask you to take a minute or a few minutes to think about Pat, his wife Stephanie and their family, as well as Marc Flagg and his family, in addition to all the great Americans who died that day or died serving our country since as we hunted those responsible down and continue to keep the watch of Freedom and Safety.

Our Reunion, when you think about it, is born out of a sense of service. We all came to Annapolis in July of 1981 with a sense of service, a desire to be part of something special and to ultimately graduate and serve as a commissioned officer in the Navy and Marine Corps (or some other service or the service of a foreign military). On I-Day, we did not know what to expect or what our four years would be like, or what our commissioned service would look like, we just plowed ahead, squared our corners and studied and prayed. Look at us today! Forty years removed from graduating and 40 years of service still going on. A very few still serving on active duty, but everyone in some sort of service. Service to our families, to our communities and our careers and our friends, but if you are like me, you still draw on your Academy experience and those many lessons we learned. I think that my sense of time management and my ability to do a great job folding clothes are abilities I draw on most every day (among so many). I still fly for a commercial airline, so the skill I was taught as a Naval Aviator has served me well and still serves me as I safely deliver my passengers to their destinations every time I strap on the jet. Our Reunion, this Reunion we are blessed to be attending is a living tribute to all of us who are fortunate enough to be attending. To remember those we have lost and to celebrate each other next week in Annapolis.

To celebrate a life forever molded by our experiences at USNA and beyond, a leap of faith we all made 44 years ago in July that, if you are like me, still shapes each day I am alive. I encourage all of you to come to Annapolis with a sense of gratitude and a commitment to take the time to reflect on your experience, how it has changed your life and to enjoy seeing hundreds of classmates, some you have never met and some you know well. Let's enjoy every second of this reunion, check our politics at the door and come as one family united by the bond of service, our choice to serve each other and our country and now, our rewards for that choice. We live in the world's great country, free to travel and free to celebrate this special occasion together. I have a profound sense of gratitude for USNA and for all of you who I get to share this time with next week. For those who cannot make it, we will miss you. For those who we have lost, we will remember you. For those coming, we will raise our glasses, tell sea stories and family stories and enjoy these few days together because we just never know when it is our turn to make our heavenly journey.

A few quick notes, I have one hotel room at the Westin Hotel at the block rate, reach out to me if you want it. For those who ordered the Woodford Reserve Bourbon, the bottles turned out amazing and I will be reaching out to all of you soon to share a picture of the bottle and set up payment. I will have some shipping material at the registration desk you can grab to pack these for your trip home. Travel safely, reach out if you need anything, if you want to come last minute, go ahead and register and come!! Here is the class website again:

<http://1985.usnaclass.net/>

See you next week! I cannot wait. Go Navy, Beat Tulsa!!

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