

December 2024

Contact Us

United States Navy
Ceremonial Guard Alumni
Association
Email:
info.usncgalumni@yahoo.com
Website:

<https://usncgalumni.org/>

We are always looking for
more people to help,
Volunteer Today.

USNCGAA Newsletter December 2024

Below: United States Navy Ceremonial Guard circa 1973 thanks Robert Davidson.



Greetings to all members of the U. S. Navy Ceremonial Guard Alumni Association (USNCGAA). Since the reunion we have been enjoying time with our families and preparing for the 2025 reunion:

Irvin Clark - Chair

Jeremy Scott - Vice-Chair/Guard Liaison

Ryan Smith – Treasurer

Irene Rivera – Secretary/Web Master

Pauline Andrews - Guard Alumni website webmaster

Brad Miller - Advisor

Bruce Plummer – Advisor



USNCGAA In Focus Clare Merwin

Bio Clare F. Merwin



Photo: Clare Merwin (right) receiving EOT gift from Captain Rommel (left).

I arrived at the Ceremonial Guard in early Feb. (10th I think). I was recruited for the Guard during an interview set up by my Company Commander at Great Lakes Naval Recruiting Center. My self and two others met with the Commander of the Guard, (Commander McNulty) He explained "that we expect Excellence here and we get it" His Steel Gray eyes went right through me.

We were assigned to X platoon for training. I spent about a month and half there before being assigned to 1st Platoon. The days consisted of marching, firing party training and practice, doing laundry and of course shoe shining. Lots of shoe shining. We had a banner to prove that we had the best shoes in the DC area among the various Service Guard units.

As troops we did it all. We had those that were assigned to firing party, body bearers, and colors. We had a volunteer drill team consisting of anyone who wanted to try and who could "hack it", Anyone and everyone did the Armed Forces Full Honor Ceremonies and Wreath Layings. We also oversaw the Gate watches, during the day and at night and roving security patrols at night. Of course, we also did the Morning and Evening Colors. In between we did laundry and shined shoes.... During Whites, sometime going through 2-4 uniforms depending on the day. I had seven sets of whites. One for watches and one for liberty. three sets of dress blues, and one for liberty. We received extra compensation for extra uniforms, but we also paid out of pocket.

I was moved into the office in Mid-May to train and become the Detail Yeoman. I oversaw getting 100-130 men to their assigned details each day consisting of funerals and other details of the day. When I arrived at the Guard in Feb. the Navy Ceremonial Guard was averaging three funerals a day. When I left in Nov., we were averaging seven a day. I fired for a funeral in a new section that was full many months before I left in November of 1966. As detail Yeoman, if it was a ceremony that involved the Navy, it didn't happen until it moved off my desk.

To keep track of everyone, we had three boards. Each board was for a platoon roster and each guy was designated as body bearers, firing party, colors, and the drill team volunteers. I used a grease pen as to what and where they were assigned for their details. I tried to rotate them so one person wasn't carrying the load all the time. I also made up the watch list and assigned the men to that.

As the details were assigned (they came from Mrs. Bowman over at the Navy yard in the Admiral's office) I would TYPE them up and then get on the horn to talk with Hudson over in the transportation department to get what we needed for the next day's details. Of course, we only had the old gray school buses. We would also need a car for the boss when needed and a carryall for colors details. Many colors details were in the evening at the White House or one of the Hotels in DC.

My Seaman fitness reports regularly said that the job I was doing was one that should be by at least PO2 or a PO1. Currently the Detail job is being done by three Petty Officers with computers. I also realize they have more people to keep track of, but when I visited them, they still were sometimes trying to find an extra man. As old Boats Martin used to say, "squat and make a man"! It was nice to see that some things didn't change.

As Vietnam progressed, we were getting shorter and shorter on manpower. Very few were coming to us out of boot camp. If we had an Admirals funeral, we would have everyone including the sick, lame and lazy out there. I would be the only one in the building to answer the phone. Sometimes we were short the manpower because we just didn't have the men.

One of my biggest highlights was standing casket watch on General MacArthur in the Rotunda. I was fresh out of X platoon and volunteered for the job. Of course I caught a lot of flak for "volunteering", but I got the last laugh as I was inside the day of his funeral and the rest of the guys were outside in the rain and cold as only DC can do in the Spring. We would be on the "Watch" for 30 minutes going with the slow silent count from attention to parade rest. We were "off" for two hours, the last half hour of getting ready to go back out. Because of the Grommets, we really couldn't take our pants off other than to just lay back and rest a bit. Jumpers could come off. During the night of one of our last shifts, my hand started falling asleep. The more I couldn't feel my piece, the harder I squeezed. Suddenly there was a big

CRASH. I was scared to death that I had dropped it, I didn't! It was a person with a big Land Camera behind me taking pictures and he dropped his camera. So much for that!

My last day in the Navy, and the day I was to be separated, I was told I had to go to the Captain's Personnel Inspection for the Base. Needless to say, I was not happy! However, I was presented by Captain Rommel, Base Commander, with the only Gold-Plated guard Buckel ever presented. I still have and display proudly that buckle.

Being a member of the Ceremonial Guard means more to me today than ever before. I am one of only a Few people in the Country that can say he gave our fallen heroes their last Earned HONORS with DIGNITY AND RESPECT.

As far as what I have done since I left the Navy, I went back to the bank from which I was on Military Leave from. However, with a wife, house, and less than one year old twins, it didn't take long for me to figure out that the \$6,000. a year, which sounded like a lot of money compared to what I did in the Navy (about 400.00 and change a month). I started selling Electrolux vacuum cleaners part time door to door. In two years, I was making more doing part-time work than working at the bank, so I quit the bank. I had sold the vacs part-time prior to going in the Navy and while stationed in DC. We had one more son in 1970. I left that job to sell insulation in the mid-70s, and then went to work for Johnson Wax and their various subsidiaries for just short of 30 years. So, I was in Sales for 50+ years since leaving the Navy. My family is all doing well in Life.

I was divorced after almost 20 years and remarried. That lasted for 38 years before she passed away in 2022.

To my Guard Brothers and Sisters from 89-92...I have learned the unfortunate and sad news that our Guard Brother, Weldon Jenkins, passed away September 29th 2024. While at the US Navy Ceremonial Guard Weldon served as a Body Bearer. Please say some prayers for his wife, Tanya, and two children.



December 2024

USNCGAA Reunion Information

We are planning a reunion in 2025. The dates are 25 – 28 September, with the first and last day reserved for travel. We’re looking at hotels at this time and will be developing a schedule soon.

USNCG guidon coin

To order, go to usncgalumni.org site.

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Send email to unclebsm@yahoo.com , cost of coin \$40.00 ea.

Any questions contact: 757-763-8721, Bradford Miller

USNCGAA Exclusive Guidon Coin

Below: U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard Alumni Challenge Coin Front and Back.



Limited Edition Guidon Challenge Coin for Sale Proceeds will be used to support the 2025 reunion.
\$40.00 each, postage and packing included.
Make checks to – Bradford Miller
Mail to – Bradford Miller
2304 Andre Court
Virginia Beach, VA 23456
757-763-8721

Membership and Dues USNCGAA

For many of you, that in earlier years were members of the Guard Alumni Association, please consider reactivating your membership. For those of you that haven’t joined, here’s an opportunity to reconnect with Alumni shipmates and help to preserve the Ceremonial Guard legacy. 2024 dues are \$30.00 and may be paid via personal check, PayPal or Venmo. Please mail checks to USNCGAA to the Guard Alumni Treasurer, Ryan Smith at the following address:

Ryan Smith
10345 46th Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98513
Phone: 206-552-6946
Email: ryanhawkadaysmith@gmail.com