

Greetings!

I hope you all have been experiencing a terrific Spring. Here in Crawfordsville, Finals Week has wrapped up and the Seniors are looking forward to next weekend's graduation ceremonies with eager expectation.

I hope you receive notification of the many activities and accomplishments of Wabash and her students, perhaps through Alumni Office communications or news gathering services such as Google offers. Three students, Ben Finley, David Gunderman, and Patrick Rezek, have received Fulbright scholarships as English Teaching Assistants, and will be serving their assistantships in Argentina, Germany, and Poland, respectively. Also, Jacob Burnett has been honored as a Rhodes Scholar and will be working towards his Masters degree at Oxford this Fall. The Track & Field team won its fifth straight NCAC title and its coaches were honored as NCAC Coaching Staff of the Year. The team still has a couple more regional/national meets before this season is over, and there's a good chance we'll see some individuals standout.

As we continue our attempt to be highlighting individuals from our class in these letters, I'm excited to present to you this month Frank Buerger. I have really enjoyed the opportunities I've had over the last couple months to catch up with Frank, whether after his talk on "Insights into U.S. Foreign Policy" in Baxter 101 back in January or the phone conversations we've had since that time. Along with the information provided by Frank as he filled out our questionnaire, he sent several photos which I hope to include (I don't want to be accused of "photo-bombing" Tom Runge's email.).



Here is how Frank answered the questions:

1. Briefly describe your professional life journey. Did you envision it when you were a student?

I had a remarkable career in the U.S. Navy serving as a Warfighter, Peacekeeper, Diplomat and Intelligence Professional. I started in Naval Aviation and flew the F-4J Phantom and the F-14A Tomcat. I flew combat missions as the Operations Officer of a fighter squadron in Desert Storm. I've held numerous command, staff and intelligence positions in the United States and overseas to include service in numerous fighter squadrons, Commander of the United Nations Air Base in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Defense and Naval Attaché to Japan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.





Throughout my career, my first love was flying. Earning my wings as a Naval Flight Officer and flying the venerable F-4 Phantom on and off the carrier was exciting and dangerous. When I flew with my first squadron, each cruise we lost aviators and friends. It was at the height of the Cold War and all of us trained for a war we hoped would never happen.

Times changed and I transitioned to the F-14 Tomcat. It was big, fast and deadly. They say you cannot love a piece of metal, but we loved that aircraft. When you spend enough time in an aircraft you develop a bond that binds you for life. Cowboys talk about their horses, race car drivers talk about their cars, however only aviators and their planes can go to the edge of space, do things no bird could ever do, and return to pitching deck in the middle of the ocean in a dark and stormy night. It was an aircraft that took me to war in Desert Storm and brought me back. Like me, it has left the fleet and is only a memory (but a great memory!).

As a student at Wabash, I think I always knew I wanted to serve in the military. It wasn't until I was working on my MBA at IU that I made the leap. One of my professors flew for the Navy. We were talking one day and he said, don't take this the wrong way, you're getting an A- in my course but I don't think you are made to be an MBA". At the time I was playing rugby and was a bouncer at a local bar. My professor had flown for the Navy and he felt I was made for it. As they say, the rest was history.

2. Describe your current employment. (If retired, when did you retire and from what position/profession/company?)

I retired from the Navy in 2006 and joined the Defense Intelligence Agency. I have held numerous positions and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

3. Please provide an update on your personal life. Where are you living? Family members? Spouse/partner working? Children in college or in work force?

My wife and I live in Arlington, Virginia. She is the office manager of a small real estate firm. My son is a Captain with Force Recon Marines in Okinawa, Japan. My daughter is employed by Booz Allen Hamilton as a Senior Consultant with the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)

4. With which classmates do you still stay in contact?

I stay in contact with Paul Bisset, Mike Dill and a number of the Phi Delts

5. Which classmates would you most like to see at your next reunion

The '73 Phi Delts

6. Favorite memory of Wabash?

10. Walking through the campus at night (all seasons)

9. Library (to study and sleep)

8. Scarlet Inn debates

7. Snowball fights with Kappa Sigs

6. Semester in London

5. Ralph's Mother

4. Dance weekend

3. End of finals

2. Homecoming weekend/Monon Bell weekend

1. Graduation

7. Your favorite Wabash professor?

Dr. Cole - he was personally responsible for many of the Phi Delts getting through biology. Besides that, he was a remarkable man that was both approachable and personable, a true teacher.

8. Tell us something that not a lot of classmates know about you.

I speak Japanese.

I was the United Nations Air Base Commander in Cambodia with a 1000 people under me, only one was an American.



1993 - UN Air Base Commander, Cambodia.

9. What single piece of advice would you offer Wabash students today?

The three things I try to bring to everything I do are passion, persistence and fun. Believe in what you are doing. Persistence will win over genius and talent. If you are not having fun you are probably not doing it right.

2005 - The Crown Prince visiting Frank's office.



A couple things I found interesting (amazing, perhaps) that Frank shared while on campus - and in regards to the photo above from 1993 - were 1) that even though he is a Navy man, he was assigned as the UN Air Base Commander in Cambodia and 2) while serving in that capacity he became the only US officer to have commanded a Chinese force.



I guess the photo on the left is one of my favorites from the time Frank spent on campus in January since it shows some of the interaction he had with students. The involvement and availability of the speakers who visit Wabash, along with the openness of the faculty, provide the students with incredible opportunities to explore and learn. It's truly one of Wabash's strengths. Some of my favorite memories were time spent hanging out with faculty. Frank mentions Tom Cole as his favorite Wabash professor. I remember the Sunday that Dr. Cole took a group of us freshmen mushroom hunting in Baker's Tract (back behind Pine Hills Nature Preserve) and then to his home to fry them up as part of a terrific breakfast.

I encourage to you get engaged in some fashion with the College, possibly by assisting with a regional Admissions' event; contacting Scott Crawford in Career Services about hosting students, possible internships with your company, or availability to mentor a student; or – as Frank did – come back to Wabash for a visit, taking time to engage in some conversation with students. And if you get back to Crawfordsville, please let me know so we can get together for coffee or a meal along with a few of the other class members living in the area.

A great place to initiate your involvement with Wabash can be found at [www.wabash.edu/alumni/volunteer](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/volunteer).

As always, your financial support for Wabash is appreciated. Currently, 47 class members have made donations for the current fiscal year. Thanks to all of you who took part in "Go for 2 on 4.22 Day of Giving" last month. 2752 gifts were made to the college with a total of \$504,810 given. If your name isn't on the

Honor Roll (<http://wabash.edu/giving/honorroll#class1973>), visit [www.wabash.edu/giving/give](http://www.wabash.edu/giving/give) and make your contribution today. You only have a month and a half until Wabash wraps up its fiscal year.

If you know of a young man attending a high school in your area that you feel would benefit by a Wabash education (what young man wouldn't?), be sure to make contact with him and then let the college know about him via the Referral webpage - [www.wabash.edu/alumni/student/refer](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/student/refer). A terrific first step for you in assisting with this is to visit <http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/admissions>. The webpage has a link for you to register as an Alumni Volunteer, as well as a Tool Kit to help you recruit and a Wabash Facts document.

I just received an email from Tom Runge concerning this Fall's trip to Farmville, Virginia for The Gentlemen's Classic II football game as the Little Giants meet The Hampden-Sydney Tigers on September 5<sup>th</sup>. The following link has instructions, maps, directions, and hotel information - <http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Hampden-Sydney%20Travel%20Information1.pdf>. Patsy and I have added it to our schedule so we can attempt to keep that weekend available.

Also, it was announced that Wabash Day 2015 will be on October 10<sup>th</sup>, so in the coming months be checking at <http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/wabashday> as the site gets updated with the activities happening around the country. And if you don't see something where you live, start one!

One additional way for you to contribute is to provide suggestions / requests for classmates you would like to see featured in upcoming Class Letters. If you're still in touch with them, send me their contact information so I can call them to explain what I'd like from them.

Next up? – highlighting Chris Petruzzi! I contacted him after getting a copy of his book "Christianity and Politics". He has already supplied me with some information, so hopefully we can get another Class Letter out in June (although I know it's a crazy month for the Alumni Office with Big Bash and vacations scheduled).

Have a terrific month of May. I'm off now to check out the Angie's List Grand Prix of Indianapolis over at the Speedway

Pete  
765-366-6342

