



## Artillery OCS News and Commentary April 22, 2025



*The Artillery OCS Heritage Hall is open during Artillery Museum hours.  
Tuesday through Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm.  
Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays.*

### **Greetings from Fort Sill:**

Sorry for taking so long to get back in contact. Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day, Medal of Honor Day, and National Former POW Recognition Day have passed by. Those days mean something to all of us. We answered our Nation's Call and will always honor the memory of those who are no longer with us.

### **Two New Benches for the Heritage Hall Courtyard:**

We ordered two 8-foot benches for the courtyard a few days ago. They each weigh 215 pounds and cost \$2,215 shipped to the Museum. Curator Gordon Blaker reports: "Next we will figure out some way to chain or cable them to a ring in the concrete so they don't grow legs and disappear." They will fit in very well, near the two artillery pieces on display.

### **Artillery OCS Heritage Hall - More Traffic and Use:**

Our classroom is getting more traffic as the word spreads. A few weeks ago, Penny and I walked in as an event ending with lunch was winding down. I noticed a female officer explaining some of our history panels and displays to the group members. They all seemed genuinely engaged and interested. Later we stopped at the front desk on our way out and saw a visitor response form she had left with several comments, including a suggestion that Heritage Hall be used for briefing the history and contributions of OCS to our Nation during the BOLC and Captains Career Course.

### **Cameron University:**

If you attended classes or graduated from Cameron University in Lawton please let us know. We are compiling a list of OCS alumni who are also Cameron alumni. Cameron and Fort Sill OCS have a relationship all the way back to 1941 and we have established an Endowed Scholarship in Leadership for ROTC Cadets.

Dr. Richard Storm Class 3B-68 received the Distinguished Alumni Award for 2025 and visited the Heritage Hall in February and again a couple weeks ago. We greatly appreciate his generous support for the Heritage Hall. Only 127 Cameron Alumni have received the Distinguished Alumni award since 1979.

Other OCS Graduates who received the award include MOH recipient CPT (Ret) Mike Rose, BG (Ret) Billy Cooper, MG (Ret) Toney Stricklin, BG (Ret) Bill Bilo and Ambassador Julian Niemczyk. Another notable Cameron graduate is GEN (Ret) Brian D. "Doug" Brown, Class 10-70 who retired in 2007 after 1,406 days as commander of U.S. Special Operations Command.

### **"Drafted" by Rick Parker, Class 11-67:**

Rick Parker has created and published a remarkable Graphic Novel entitled "DRAFTED," released on September 24, 2024. He is getting great reviews, and the book is highly and widely recommended. It is 256 pages (all hand-drawn and hand-lettered and in color). We talked to Rick on Saturday after seeing a review of his work in the May 2025 issue of Army Magazine. It made his day. A write-up by Arts Editor Marc Leeson in the January/February issue of VVA Veteran was another feather in his cap. Ben Carl Youmans a graduate of Armor OCS Class 7-67 and I had the privilege of reading the transcript of "Drafted" and seeing proofs of pages as Rick drew, colored and lettered them. Ben and Rick were high school locker mates and went through Basic Training together. Ben and I crossed paths 55 years ago in Vietnam.

The reviews and other information are available at:

<https://artilleryocshistory.org/rick-parker--drafted.html>

### **Army OCS Vietnam Fallen Recognized by OCS Class 3-25:**

Class Leaders of Officer Candidate Class 3-25, now Second Lieutenants, displayed great initiative and thoughtfulness when they decided to create a booklet for their Graduation Formal to pay tribute and honor the legacy of 1,698 OCS graduates who had paid the ultimate sacrifice for our Country.

That same idea is what led to the creation of the Army OCS Database, which began in May 2019 when David Roe suggested to his 1967 Infantry OCS classmate, Emory Deason, that they find their OCS classmates. Their research soon expanded to identifying OCS graduates from all branch schools, initially focusing on the Vietnam era. That is the database that provided the information for the booklet. Project Officer, Class Vice President Ciarra Castillo was responsible for putting the booklet together, which was first displayed at the OCS KIA Table at their Graduation Formal.

The booklet has the names in class order from 1943 to 1970. A PDF of the original document prepared by the class can be viewed at:

<https://artilleryocshistory.org/fallen-booklet-ocs-class-3-25.html>

This initiative provides the framework for a "Fallen OCS Classmates" booklet that can be continuously updated as our fallen from all conflicts are identified. The booklet can be displayed at "Missing Man" tables at each OCS function to remind participants of those OCS graduates who have gone before us.

We will continue gathering information for the OCS KIA registry for all Schools, even though TUSAOCSAA leadership seems to have little or no interest in the significance of this initiative, even though one of the specific purposes of the organization is: **"to commemorate and memorialize those graduates of the Officer Candidate Schools who have lost their lives in service of their country."**

My preliminary estimate for World War II OCS fallen is 8,000. I have a list of 7,500 so far that I consider certain, and Korea has about 800 OCS I am certain of, out of more than 1,500 Army officers killed in action.

Penny and I took on the research to create the Artillery OCS Fallen registry and Remembrance documents in 2005. Our numbers now are World War II (943), Korea (70) and Vietnam (322).

The memory of our OCS Fallen (from all branches and locations) warrants more than a 16-foot-long floor-to-ceiling mural of several cemeteries inside the Fort Benning OCS Heritage Center. The mural is a wonderful tribute, but we can do more to honor and remember them by creating a registry of the Fallen and make it available on TUSAOCSAA website and the kiosks.

### **Artillery OCS Kiosk and Website Thoughts:**

**Lessons learned during seven years of struggling to help the Army OCS Hall of Fame and TUSAOCSAA provide accurate information to the public.** I was making reasonable progress at first, but the leadership soon grew tired of my help and eventually started ignoring me. It took me several years to convince one stubborn director that there was never a separate Army OCS Program at Camp Carson, Colorado, where Black soldiers were sent to be officers in World War II. He finally conceded that he had made an error, but it was not corrected on the kiosks at Fort Benning. Very frustrating.

I have determined what will go into the kiosks in the Artillery OCS Heritage Hall, so now we need to settle on the format and decide how complex we want it to be. I've certainly learned a lot about how not to do things. Most of what we make available on the kiosk(s) will also be on the website, and most of what's on the website will also be on the kiosk(s). I don't think we'll need more than one kiosk, but we'll decide soon.

I have witnessed the advantages of linking and syncing data between a website and a kiosk (or kiosks) and the importance of taking the time to do it right from the start. If the kiosk and web are not in sync then you can end up with a real mess, especially if you don't update them both at the same time or make a mistake on one and not the other or screw them both up. You also need to have a reasonable grasp of the subject matter you are entering into the kiosk and you need to have learned a little OCS history and have some notes on the history of the programs to prevent making entries that are not historically correct.

Our review of the Fort Benning Army OCS HOF database uncovered nearly 2,000 discrepancies. That is a sizable number of errors. All of them are simple fixes, and we provided a list of corrections. The past TUSAOCSAA president suggested that the individuals who found the errors and provided the documented and sourced corrections should be asked to cover the \$4,000 cost of entering the correct information into the database. Now, that is flat out crazy! Someone was paid to enter the information in the first place, and someone supplied it.

TUSAOCSAA has about \$650,000 in a non-interest-bearing checking account, which could be parked in a money market account or CD, easily earning at least \$1,800 a month. Does that make any sense at all? One silly comment from a director was that the organization was a not-for-profit, so that wouldn't be appropriate. Another was that they could not invest any money unless they hired a financial advisor. Common sense seems to be lacking.

### **No Viet Nam Veterans on the US Army OCS Alumni Association (TUSAOCSAA) Board of Directors:**

The current leadership, Board of Directors, and some past directors seem to think that the Vietnam veterans are worn out, just old and in the way, with nothing much to contribute to the new direction they are taking things.

"You cannot sustain a growing institution with 80-year-olds," was a recent comment from a former director. TUSAOCSAA is a shrinking institution, with the majority of current board members lacking institutional knowledge.

I believe most BIOCC (Branch Immaterial Officer Candidate Course) graduates from 1974 on may never experience the same type of bond developed between the OCS graduates who spent six or more months together in the "cooperate and graduate" OCS era. It's just not the same. No offense intended to BIOCC candidates, because we have bonded with many of those fine officers and they do get it.

The "old timers" still have a lot to offer, so now that Vietnam Vets are no longer part of TUSAOCSAA Board of Directors, the organization is turning its back on the influence, experience and wisdom of a large group that weathered many storms. They also have more time to devote to the cause than recently commissioned graduates and retired field grade officers with a demanding second career.

Two highly qualified and decorated OCS alumni (one a retired colonel and the other a retired major with a distinguished 25-year career in the CIA Directorate of Operations). Both had tours in Vietnam as company-grade officers. They recently sought to fill two of the vacant Board of Directors positions. For reasons unknown, neither was selected. They are not worn out, and the two vacant positions remain unfilled, but they were deemed not qualified for the job.

They have been working tirelessly for months drafting proposed governing documents and financial procedures, straightening out incomplete tax returns, unraveling the membership records, and helping the Alumni Association get its act together. Now they have been cast to the wind.

You probably wonder why so much space in this newsletter is devoted to what is less than complimentary reports on what is going on at Fort Benning. The reason is simple. We have the opportunity to do things that benefit the entire OCS community. Things that need to be done and probably should have been done a long time ago. Individuals who are not serious about an accurate presentation of Army OCS history or honoring our Fallen in such a way that the information is available to the public are standing in the way. Not everyone can visit Fort Benning, Fort Sill, or the Wall, but they can access a website. A website needs to be kept up to date. It should not be cluttered with bells and whistles that take you in circles.

**Contributions to the Artillery OCS Alumni Chapter:**

The Artillery OCS Alumni Chapter is an IRS 501(C)3 charitable organization. Donations are tax-deductible. Tax ID: EIN # 74-3052514. You can send a check to Artillery OCS Alumni, PO Box 33612, Fort Sill, OK 73503.

Click on the link below to see how you can support our efforts:

<https://artilleryocshistory.org/support-us.html>

The "Support Us" page has a PayPal link for making credit card donations. Thanks for your continuing support,

Randy C. Dunham (Class 10-69)

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