

Day One at the Naval Academy

John Lee 'Chip' Drury

I had the honor of swearing in my son, **Patrick Hunt Drury**, as a Midshipman at the US Naval Academy on Wednesday, June 27, 2007.

After dropping him off, I retrieved a "care package" from the car, packed with recommended items (a small plastic bin, bleach pen, American flag, stamps, band-aids, Neosporin, blister pads, extra socks, etc) and mailed it.

Things have changed in 43 years. On 30 June 1964 a white line in the pavement at the Field House gate was the boundary for all but midshipmen and staff. We were formed into platoons and marched off with considerable noise. There are now 30 companies instead of 36. It was also all male then. The class of 2011 appears to have 20% female.

The night before, I stayed up printing collages of motivational pictures of flight operations, Marines, SEALs, family, and friends to include in his "care package."

The plebes marched in while the band played at the induction. Two F-18s made a low pass over us. I screamed with joy as "the sound of freedom" reverberated in the courtyard, and those beautiful machines pulled into a climbing right turn. I was hoarse the rest of the day.

The Superintendent gave a fine speech. The plebes rose and were sworn in en masse. Afterward, we descended to "Smoke Hall" where a dozen flags had been strategically placed to accommodate individual swearing in ceremonies. The goal was to swear in your plebe, and exit, so the next person could use that flag.

We had 45 minutes with Patrick. His day had included medical screening and blood tests, haircut, uniform fittings, gear issue, dropping off belongings, changing into a uniform, and marching into the courtyard for the induction ceremony. He had met his roommates very briefly.

We took him for pizza to Dahlgren Hall, once an armory, then an ice rink, and now a restaurant and dining facility while King Hall (the regular mess) is being overhauled. We left at about 1930.

So far it is what he expected and desires: no phone, no computer, no email, no distractions. We've had two letters and one short phone call. He's up at 0545 for PT. He hurt his ankle recently, but does not want to shirk, so he has not gone to sick call. I hope it heals quickly.

Patrick Hunt Drury *From: Lois Pierce (Hunt) Drury, Phyllis Jo Ellen (Hook) Hunt, Lois Bethel (Blaisdell) Hook, John Blaisdell, George Uriah B.,*

John B., Ephraim B., III, Ephraim Blaisdell, Jr. — (6.34)