

Glen Raymond Phillips

Who was this guy? This drop-dead, good looking Paul Newman look-alike with the square jaw, steel blue eyes, shock of blonde hair, and that wonderful curl of a smile that invited you to be friends the instant you met him? Glen Phillips was his name, he was our classmate, and he truly was one of a kind.

Glen Phillips was another great athlete in what seemingly was an endless supply of talented Western Pennsylvania athletes, mined by Rip Miller's famous "bird dog" system. A relatively small, but very fast and elusive running back who showed great promise on the football field, and a Golden Gloves boxing champion, he was the pride of Snowden High School in suburban Pittsburgh. After high school graduation, Glen joined the Naval Reserve and chose to attend Columbian Prep School in Washington, DC, for a year of academic and athletic "seasoning" before entering the Naval Academy as a plebe in the summer of 1956 as a member of the Academy's Class of 1960.

Glen blossomed during plebe year, using his previous Golden Gloves experience to win the summer Brigade middleweight boxing championship, as well as seeing a lot of action on the winning plebe football team that fall. Unfortunately, a severe knee injury during spring football practice in his youngster year ended his varsity aspirations. He became an active and fierce competitor in several company intramural sports for the remainder of his Academy stay. He was also a member of the Class Ring and Crest Committee and had a significant role in the design of the Class of 1960 crest.

But there was so much more to the man! In addition to being handsome, intelligent, charming, and witty, Glen was able to achieve a workable balance between the Academy's serious side and his penchant for the enjoyment of the "freer, more entertaining things in life." He never sweated the academics -- his motto seemed to be, "Never do today what you can put off until the study period before class tomorrow!" -- and it seemed to work for him. He had a multitude of hobbies to take up assigned study time -- playing the guitar, photography, playing cards or chess, listening to music, writing love letters to his "one and only" -- and he pursued them all with a passion and flair that flew in the face of the need for "managing your time" to succeed at the Academy. Worry was not a part of Glen's vocabulary. He was a happy, go lucky guy at a very serious, demanding institution, and that presented a major challenge -- academic and military life on the Severn kept interfering with his hobbies! Glen's plan to change Academy life to fit his way of doing things, otherwise known as the "Phillips Plan to Change the U.S. Naval Academy Forever," never succeeded in getting off the ground, as the "system" proved to be an uncooperative opponent. He never surrendered completely, however, and continued to push the envelope until graduation day. Rules, to Glen, were never much fun -- they made life so boring and uninteresting. This attitude, of course, led to some great "engagements" with LCDR Jack Scoville, the 14th Company Officer, who was convinced that Glen and his roommates (Bo and Joe) had to be tied somehow to the Pittsburgh Mafia, and weren't really midshipmen, after all!

During the summer following graduation from the Academy, Glen Phillips married Carol Gossie, a Pittsburgh girl and his "one and only" from Academy days. Glen had chosen Navy Air

as his Service selection, so the newlyweds were off to Pensacola and pilot training as a start to Navy life. With Academy rules and regulations in the rear-view mirror, Glen thrived in his new found "freedom" in Pensacola, and he and Carol enjoyed the party atmosphere of flight training and the camaraderie of fellow classmates and new-found friends. Graduating from the Training Command with wings of gold, Glen and his bride were assigned to NAS Bermuda, where Glen flew the P5M, a multi-engine seaplane. He later transitioned to the newly-introduced P3A Orion and qualified as a Patrol Plane Commander before he resigned his commission in 1965. He opted to enter the Trans World Airlines training pipeline to become a commercial pilot and spent the next 20-plus years flying as pilot-in-command in several aircraft models, retiring in the late 1980's. Glen and Carol were married for 44 years, during which they raised their three beautiful daughters, Hope, Tami, and Sierra.

Those of us who were fortunate enough to call Glen a friend remember him in different ways and for different reasons. But we can all agree that he was a very special guy, a compassionate, generous, and kind man. He was a fierce competitor who squeezed out of life all there was to take and looked for more. Through the years, he did it all, adding skydiving, hang gliding, skiing, motorcycling, gun collecting, horseback riding, golf, camping, boating, and flying to his earlier hobbies. He absolutely lived life to the fullest, experiencing and enjoying more in his 67 years on Earth than most of us could in 167!

On a beautiful, sunny October day in Reno, Nevada, in 2004, Glen was riding his motorcycle in the right lane of a busy thoroughfare when a car went spinning out of control from the opposite lane and hit him head on. He never had a chance and his life in this world was ended. Although, what we, as classmates, and Carol and her daughters and grandchildren lost on that day cannot be described in words, what Glen gave us during his time with us cannot be measured. To those who knew him, no explanation is necessary; to those who didn't, no explanation is possible. Glen, your spirit will continue to live in all of us, your friends and family through eternity. Thanks for the memories!