Commanding the Guard

As a senior at Trenton State College, Gene Chojnacki was planning to teach industrial arts in high school. But it was 1967, and the Vietnam War was heating up, and when two Air Force recruiters interrupted him walking through Phelps Hall one day that spring, he warmed to their words about pilot training and enlisted.

It was a natural choice for him. “I’ve always been very patriotic,” he said. “I grew up in a bar my parents owned in Berlin, where the conversation often was about the country and the military.” He enjoyed several leadership roles in college and was on the varsity track squad, so the idea of being an Air Force officer and pilot was attractive.

After six years of flying—including one in what may be the most dangerous job of all, special operations helicopter pilot—he left with the rank of captain and entered private business. At Merrill-Lynch in Lawrenceville, he plied the investment trade while earning an MBA.

In his letter, Richard recalled that Serotkin had entered the State Normal School in Trenton in 1932 and relocated to the Ewing residence hall at the time. Bernie Reed went on to teach in Pennington and Morristown before coming back to Trenton State College as director of admissions from 1958 until his retirement in 1977.

Today, 37 years, 18 duty assignments, and more than a dozen major military awards after his enlistment, soon-to-be Maj. Gen. Eugene J. Chojnacki commands the 2,500 men and women who are the New Jersey Air National Guard. Together they comprise the 177th Fighter Interceptor Wing (with 18 F-16 fighters) at Atlantic City International Airport, and the 108th Air Refueling Wing (with 20 KC-135 tankers) at McGuire Air Force Base near his Ft. Dix headquarters.

Whereas yesterday’s Air National Guard was primarily a strategic reserve, now more than ever it’s an operational force, Chojnacki said. Recently, 300 of his people joined an “air expeditionary force” to the Middle East for duty in Iraq, and its refueling aircraft routinely support regular Air Force missions worldwide.

Chojnacki said his major challenges now are need to modernize the state’s aging fighter fleet, and to enlist new recruits in time of deep international uncertainty. He and Barbara have two sons and a daughter, the latter a sophomore at Penn State. They live in Seaville in Cape May County.
recently, sadness as well as sorrow. We have been truly blessed by our meetings and concern for each other."

"Re" Rose Darolito Antelmann (E) and her husband, Heinz, have been living in Daytona Beach, FL, since 1981, when she retired after 35 years teaching business courses at the Highbridge High School. In Florida, she has continued to teach another five years. Rose has master’s degrees in business education from Columbia and in guidance and counseling from Rider University. They have traveled twice yearly to Germany and Europe to visit his relatives.

The two couples discussed in a letter from Dick Conner ‘40 published in 1984 in Florida. From left on couches are Lou Sorrell ‘56, Walter ‘40 and Audrey Cooper ‘59, Marie Conner, Berta Sorrell, and Dorothy Reed ‘40.

Major George J. Betor (E), has a full career with the Marine Corps in World War II, the Army National Guard in Korea, teaching at the College. Each year he organizes a week-long reunion on the Jersey Shore for former beth and physical education majors. This year’s event, the 56th Consecutive Annual Class Reunion was held at the Boge Oceanfront Resort in Wildwood Crest. To Betor, everyone is welcome, and a few from other majors and classes, plus relatives and friends, always show up. George and his wife, Ernestine, have lived in the same house in Ewing for 46 years. A picture of all those who could be rounded up at the time is on page 43.

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Dino Pettinelli

Frank Yusko ’73 goes way above and beyond his teaching duties at Spotwood High School. Frank—or as Karl Martin, the town’s chief of police, calls him, “Mr. Spotwood”—not only teaches U.S. history and criminal justice, he formed the school history club and advises its Octagon Community Service Club. Frank has many awards for outstanding service to the town and has traveled to twenty countries with grants and scholarships to study in Europe and Israel.

Not bad for a man who’s had multiple sclerosis for 20 years.

Spotwood Mayor Barry Zagaitz says, “When you see the enthusiasm that is generated from his students and how they enjoy his classes, you can see that he’s an excellent teacher.”

Frank loves his students. He says his greatest accomplishment is the 7,000 young people he has dealt with. At a recent Christmas party for the mentally handicapped, he said, “I watched my kids and turned the teacher to me and said, ‘It’s times like that make me think we have the best job in the world.’”

With MS taking its toll, Frank has been in a wheelchair for three years now, but he has high hopes as he tries new treatments. His principal, Peter Karycki, who hired Frank 13 years ago, says of his work, “he doesn’t miss a beat.”

He received the Patriotism Citizen Award for turning local land, with the help of his students, into a veterans’ memorial playground. He has served as a volunteer firefighter, and was even named grand marshal of the town parade for the last two years. Frank also wrote the state Holocaust/Genocide curriculum guide and, thanks to his contributions, Spotwood High School was named America’s first high school WWII Commemorative Community by the Department of Defense in 1992.

Spotwood may be a small community, but in its 7,780 people there is a big heart, showing their love and respect for Frank by raising over $12,000 for MS research in his honor.

If Chief Martin says, “If someone in town doesn’t know who Frank Yusko is, I don’t know where they’ve been.”

Frank Yusko

Jeffrey Dorf ’05

relatives living in occupied Germany immediately after World War II. (See the College Bookshelf on page 37.) Over the years Mark has become probably the leading world authority on the Lindbergh kidnapping of ‘32.

He oversees the original investigative files, and over 250,000 documents in the museum, has worked closely with police on Cold Case and film crews over the years, and has appeared in television documentaries about the subject.

In his spare time he’s the pipe major of the Cairngorm Pipes and Drums of Bucks County, PA, which is in high demand for special events in the region.

Nancy Hommy Clarke (B) has been president of the Business Services and Development department and Merck & Co. based in Whitehouse Station, NJ. In her current role, Nancy will be focusing on the continued support of Web application hosting for Merck’s 1,200 Internet and intranet applications. Prior to joining Merck in 1991, Nancy spent two years at Dow Jones as a senior programmer and database administrator. Nancy lives in Whitehouse Station.

Gregory J. Jackson (AS) is director of operations at Buffalo’s Franchise Concepts Inc. (BFCI), the parent company and franchisor of Buffalo’s Southwest Cafe restaurants, each of which is decorated with western memorabilia and hundreds of period photographs lining rustic wooden walls. Jackson is responsible for operations in all eight corporate restaurants, including the three largest metropolitan areas of New York, Philadelphia, and Cleveland. In his current role, Jackson lives in Cumming, GA, where he is the executive director of a veterans’ memorial playground. He has served as a volunteer firefighter, and was even named grand marshal of the town parade for the last two years. Frank also wrote the state Holocaust/Genocide curriculum guide and, thanks to his contributions, Spotwood High School was named America’s first high school WWII Commemorative Community by the Department of Defense in 1992.

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Frank Yusko
Weddings


New Arrivals

Jennifer Klingerman Herrera '90 (B) and husband, Carlos, a son, Robert Michael, July 27, 2003.


Irene Applebaum Lefkowitz '98 (AS) and husband, Jeff, a son, Peter Ross, April 2, 2000. She joins sister, Hannah Amber, 4. Diane "Taz" Speake Main '92 (AS) and husband, Alex, a son, Cameron Stuart, January 16, 2004.

Lynda Montanaro DiPasquale '93 (AS) and husband, Michael, a daughter, Carleigh Rose, December 5, 2003. She joins brothers Daniel, 2, and Shelia Medley Maurer '91 (B) and husband, Kevin, a son, Rucker, January 30, 2004. She joins sister, Sydney, 3.

Tony Zoldowski Video '95 (E) and husband, Christopher, a son, Dylan Connor, October 12, 2003.

Lisa Goldblatt Casco '96 (AS) and husband, Jason, a daughter, Hannah Marie, April 11, 2003. Antonio Matos '96 (B) and wife, Ingrid: a daughter, Mariza Alyah, April 8, 2004. She joins a brother, Mason Antonio.

Brian C. Mauger (N), Stephen Halpert '96 (MEd) wed Peter Bayo Horn '01 (EN)  November 2, 2003.

Sheila Medley Maurer '91 (B) and husband, Jason W. Trujillo Kries '04 (EN) wed Robert Michael, April 2, 2004. She joins a sister, Emma Rose, 3.

Kelly Gavin Cupit (AS) and her husband, Walter, married in December at St. Charles Borromeo Roman Catholic Church in Skilledman, followed by a reception at Peddler's Village in Lahaska, PA. Kelly is employed by Millburn Township as assistant business administrator, while her husband is the scene shop manager at Princeton University. Kelly received a master's of public administration from Syracuse University. Walter worked at TEDCO from 1993 to 1996 in the investment arm and is a graduate of Juniata College. They live in Hillsborough.

Katarzyna Potocka (AS) completed her PhD (E) in social work at the University of Chicago and accepted a tenure-track position in the Department of Mathematics at Ramapo College of New Jersey.

Michael M. Pastoral (AS) successfully defended his PhD dissertation in the University of Delaware's electrical and computer engineering department with a concentration in optics and electromagnetic. In an email to the College, David wrote: "I want to thank you for providing me with a foundation in physics that is second to none and for an wonderfully undergraduate experience. This would simply not have been possible were it not for the high level of academic and research experiences upholded in the physics department." David is a senior systems engineer at Lockheed Martin in King of Prussia, PA. He lives in Newark, DE.

Michael Sapenstir (B) recently joined the Abbott Point-of-Care/EITM operation in East Windsor as marketing communications manager. The firm makes and markets medical diagnostic products for blood analysis with local resellers and international markets. Sapenstir was an executive of world trade show activities and U.S. marketing initiatives.

Lyndsay Schaeffer (AS) completed her PhD in microbiology at the University of Cincinnati and moved on to a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Louisville School of Dentistry.

Baby photos from left to right: Adam Joseph and Daniel Jackson Lui, twin boys of Darlene 'Da' Loris '90 (AS); Elizabeth Lauren Gray, daughter of Allison Moyor Gray '94 (AS) and Gary Gray, Hannah Marie, daughter of Lisa Goldblatt Casco '96 and Jason Casco; Marisa Aliyah Matos, daughter of Antonio Matos '96 and Ingrid Matos.

00 Reunion Class

Lisa Dornbach (AS) is a graduate student researcher at UCLA working toward a PhD in biological chemistry.
Lynn Bonney Patesa ’(AS) is a registered nurse in the recovery room at the Center for Ambulatory Surgery in Mountainside. Her husband, Michael, is a facility technician at Verizon. They live in South Plainfield.

Kathleen Carran ’(AS) has graduated magna cum laude from Rutgers University-Camden Law School, where she worked on the Law Journal for two years, one as an editor-in-chief. She is now clerking for U.S. Judge Mary Cooper in Trenton, and has been named an associate with the Philadelphia law firm of Dishon Parxson. She expects to be moving soon from her home in Ewing.

Sheryl Lacina Ronopack ’(F) teaches third grade at Statton Elementary School in Champaign, Illinois, where she and her husband live while he pursues a doctorate in kinesiology/exercise psychology. Sheryl married Jim Ronopack in 2003. Her major of honor was Shalima Curtis Bluesteen ’(AS), who met her husband, Christopher E. Bluesteen ’(AS) (EN), while at TCNJ. He is in the Army and they are both stationed at the Hoenfelds base in Germany. Two of Sheryl’s bridesmaids were Andrea R. Gangluff ’(AS) of Voorhees and Kimberly Garnick ’(AS), who met her husband, Thomas J. Sayers ’(AS) (CS) has been working as a layout editor and reporter for The Wall Street Journal since 2002.

Jennifer Stern ’(CS) is a mental health clinician at UMMS’s University Behavioral Healthcare unit in New Brunswick.

Josee Rose ’(CS) has taken a position as a business unit support associate within BS Global Support Services, at Merck & Co., providing technical and customer service phone support to numerous parts of the business in North America. Jennifer initially started with Merck at the NJ Call Center as a TCNJ college recruit. She lives in Annandale and is working toward a master’s in information systems management at Stevens Institute.

Kenneth Strazzeri ’(B) has received a one-year appointment at the University of Virginia as full-time lecturer. He teaches introductory statistics courses.

Bluesteen ’(AS) of Voorhees and Rosemarie “Ro” Connelly ’(AS) just returned from teaching English in France for two years and is pursuing a master’s in French studies at New York University.

Sonja Rodrigues (CS) is a mental health clinician at UMMS’s University Behavioral Healthcare unit in New Brunswick.

Emily Weiss ’(AS) has taken a position as a public information officer and writer with the Office of College and Community Relations at TCNJ, where she will handle media relations and be a spokesperson for the College. At the same time, she’s completing a master’s in public communication at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

In Memoriam

Bertha Flansy Sheppard ’(AS)
Adella Tibby Lubenow Wothenspoon ’(AS)
Bud Klein Prial ’(AS)
Grace M. Scall ’(AS)
Dorothy Brown Eckert ’(AS)
W. Arthur Skees ’(AS)
Mary Myrekka ’(AS)
Agnes Toth O’Malley ’(AS)
Dorothy Lippincott Russell ’(AS)
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Norman L. Clinton ’(AS)
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Arthur E. Sinclair ’(AS)
Verna Schill Welchman ’(AS)
Rose Fattori Lasko ’(AS)
Eleanor Ruth McKinney ’(AS)
Margery Baud Cover ’(AS)
Charlotte Shullal Haliday ’(AS)
Thomas Mooney ’(AS)
Phyllis Ackery Magin ’(AS)
Helene Williams McRae ’(AS)
Norma Schneider Kahn ’(AS)
Jeanne Grimshaw Mueller ’(AS)
Mary Belleville Hart ’(AS)
Joanne Maria Fish ’(AS)
Edward Wynne Jones ’(AS)
Bita Barberia Kupia ’(AS)
Esther Hirt Geitz ’(AS)
Janet Tremblath Jones ’(AS)
Louis R. Lillato ’(AS)
John W. Phillips III ’(AS)
Jacquelyn Spitz Scott ’(AS)
Aileen N. Swann ’(AS)
Carol Bonheim Bryk ’(AS)
Francis “Frank” J. Schmidt ’(AS)
Richard A. Stares ’(AS)
Robert Harnosh Smith ’(AS)
G. E. “Chuck” Baiocchi ’(AS)
Lillian C. Bae ’(AS)
Kohath N. Shuler ’(AS)
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Beverly Libes Ellensop ’(AS)
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Elizabeth Matula Martin ’(AS)
Malcolm Davall ’(AS)
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Richard K. Gere ’(AS)
Robert William Diehl ’(AS)
Mary Eley Meisky ’(AS)
Mary Jane Scholl ’(AS)
Samuel S. Stern ’(AS)
Georgian T. Babbanal ’(AS)
Karen B. Hamston ’(AS)
Nora Ann Stockhouse ’(AS)
Sara Hartless Biddle Drak ’(AS)
Robert Manning Kerney ’(AS)
Jenni L. Woodson ’(AS)
Simon J. Gainer ’(AS)
Bette L. Mayberry ’(AS)
Alice M. Russo ’(AS)
Kathleen Robinson Smith ’(AS)
Nancy Parac ’(AS)
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