

November 11, 2010

Joe Butler died today. I would be lying if I said my eyes were dry as I write this. I will truly miss him. Having Joe as a friend of 59 years was a unique experience: grade school/class mates/cub scouts/boy scouts/altar boys/sack race partners at school picnics/sometimes unwelcomed 'critics' at the Wilmington Flower Shows, high school/class mates/dating sisters/ fraternity brothers/cars/hunting rabbits at Cherry Island; and the surprising and challenging experience of finding ourselves together not just in the same OCS company, but also the same platoon. I believe some things in life are simply meant to be and I am thankful that those experiences came my way for my life is richer for it.

Joe didn't make the reunion this year as those of you that were there realize, but he did visit with my family the end of September. We shot clay pigeons and fished for bass. He did rather well hitting the clays. He was confident, because he had discovered when he was here last and shooting clays that an eye patch would be helpful. He made me smile, because he had brought the eye patch this time and was hitting clays; however, when he was done we both realized he had placed the patch over his good eye. We laughed out loud. We enjoyed diner and each other's company. We reminisced late into the night of both the good and the less than pleasant experiences that we had over the years. We laughed more at ourselves than complained about some of our misfortunes. We shared our regrets as we always did. And this time was no different than in the past for we managed to bury a few of those regrets. We concluded that in spite of a few dings and dents, life had been good to us. Not perfect, nor easy, but good; no complaints.

The best wish I could have for anyone would be for them to have had the good fortune of having a friend like Joe.

Take care,

Paul Elwood