

# The Cult that is Fort Hunt

Thursday, 11 December 2008

In the off-chance that there's someone out there who hasn't realized that Fort Hunters are absolutely everywhere, here's yet another installment of "The Cult that is Fort Hunt."

My long-suffering husband didn't really think too much of it when we were West Point classmates, and there were more Fort Hunters there than from any other, single high school. In the ensuing 25+ years of marriage, however, he complains that Fort Hunt must have had a student body at least as big as the United States Army, because we run into Fort Hunt graduates everywhere we go. We have moved 21 times, and haven't been anywhere without the privilege of running into still-proud Federals. It happens over and over. Kenny says that when he gets on an airplane, he just turns to the person in the seat beside him and asks, "So, what year did you graduate from Fort Hunt High School?"

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In 2004, Kenny took command of his brigade in Oklahoma. I was in Alexandria at the time. Kenny beamed after the ceremony, announcing that for the first time in 22 years, there were no Fort Hunt graduates present. Shortly afterwards, a young captain approached him and asked if Kenny's wife were present; while in high school, he worked at the Hollin Hall gas station, and wanted to extend greetings from the Harveys, who had gone to the same high school.

A tall young sergeant in Kenny's brigade learned that we own a house in Alexandria. When he said he went to high school there, Kenny was sure that SGT Hightower was too young as the school had closed so long ago, but although the school closed before he could graduate, he still declared himself a Fort Hunt Federal.

In 2006, Kenny called me from Baghdad, boasting that he had just completed a full year in Iraq without meeting a single Fort Hunt Federal. After he hung up, a major from the unit replacing my husband's unit approached and said, "I hear you're moving back to my neck of the woods, Sir." Certain that it was a set-up, Kenny drily replied, "What year did you graduate from Fort Hunt High School?" Astonished, MAJ Stanbery replied, "1979! How did you know?"

These days, we live in Stratford. Kenny works at the Pentagon. He runs into Fort Hunters all the time, but he's already met them over the years.

Until tonight.

Kenny works for a Navy Vice Admiral. Tonight was the Winter Social for this department of the Joint Staff. The social was at Fort Belvoir. Vice Admiral James Winnefeld arrived, feeling he was on familiar ground, and Kenny never even saw it coming. Admiral "Sandy" Winnefeld is a 1974 Fort Hunt High School graduate. When Kenny replied, "I'm glad my wife isn't here to hear this." Winnefeld replied, "Have you met General Johnson's husband? He was there in 1978."

Surrender, all ye who didn't graduate from Fort Hunt. We are everywhere.