



Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive
DSpace Repository

History of Naval Postgraduate School

Biographies

1965-03

A Visit with Mrs. O'Donnell

Classmate Magazine; O'Donnell, Mrs. Edward J.

Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School

<https://hdl.handle.net/10945/59307>

This publication is a work of the U.S. Government as defined in Title 17, United States Code, Section 101. Copyright protection is not available for this work in the United States.

Downloaded from NPS Archive: Calhoun



Calhoun is the Naval Postgraduate School's public access digital repository for research materials and institutional publications created by the NPS community. Calhoun is named for Professor of Mathematics Guy K. Calhoun, NPS's first appointed -- and published -- scholarly author.

Dudley Knox Library / Naval Postgraduate School
411 Dyer Road / 1 University Circle
Monterey, California USA 93943

<http://www.nps.edu/library>

A Visit With Mrs. O'Donnell

"Adaptability—that's the key word for a Navy wife."

So said Mrs. E. J. O'Donnell when we asked her what she felt were important attributes for the wife of a Naval officer. And Mrs. O'Donnell knows well from whence she speaks—she has recently, and very graciously, been doing some adapting of her own as her husband has assumed command as Superintendent of the USN Postgraduate School.

Only two days after arriving, Mrs. O'Donnell attended her first OWC gathering in her capacity as Honorary Advisor. A few nights later, she was in the receiving line for the Welcome Aboard coffees; later that week, she and Admiral O'Donnell met new students at a reception. And in between, there were interviews and appointments—all with the normal routine of unpacking, arranging and redecorating that must be done with every change of duty. Mrs. O'Donnell has managed to make such a hectic schedule look easy, and her ready smile gives assurance that "adapting" comes with ease.

"This is a challenging life, and Navy life is one of contrasts," she remarked. "Perhaps there are those whose personalities are just not suited to enjoy this challenge—but for those who do, the good times more than make up for the bad."

Mrs. O'Donnell might well be termed somewhat of an authority of Navy life, as, to quote her, "I've done the whole bit." Not only is she a Navy junior, but during World War II she was a Wave officer and served



Mrs. E. J. O'Donnell, wife of the Superintendent

in the Bureau of Naval Personnel. She met Admiral O'Donnell while he was a student at the Postgraduate School in Annapolis and her father had duty there.

Of the years since their marriage, Mrs. O'Donnell cites two tours of duty as being particularly interesting. One, of course, was the Admiral's tour as Commander of the Naval Base at Guantanamo, Cuba, during the Cuban Crisis. Of her evacuation along with all of the dependents on the base, Mrs. O'Donnell said, "The conduct of the dependents and the reception by the wives in Norfolk was absolutely fantastic. The whole experience made one very proud of being a Navy wife and of being an American. The wives in Norfolk didn't overlook one thing in trying to make us comfortable—I will never forget the kindness of those people."

One of her most cherished mementos will always be the ash tray which was made from a copy of the evacuation order and presented to all those who were evacuated during those troubled times.

A second tour of duty which Mrs. O'Donnell mentioned as being memorable was the two years the family spent in Germany, from 1950-'52. Admiral O'Donnell was with the Staff that coordinated all Navy activities in Germany, and the family lived in Heidelberg. While there, they were able to make several interesting trips to all parts of Europe—"before the great influx of tourists began," she laughed.

Even though she has travelled all of her life—first as a Navy junior and then as a Navy wife—Mrs. O'Donnell still loves the excitement of a trip and seeing new places. She has seen the greater part of the world but has yet to visit the Orient—a situation she hopes some day soon to remedy. "At least we're on the right side of the continent for getting there now," she said with a smile.

Their trip to Monterey was exciting, she said, as they drove out—traveling the Southern route and visiting her sister in North Carolina and attending a wedding in Tucson en route.

Both the O'Donnells' sons are in college now; Neil is a sophomore at Williams College in Williamstown, Mass., and James is a freshman at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

Although Mrs. O'Donnell says she has no defined hobbies, she seems to stay busy and during their most recent tour in Washington she particularly enjoyed her volunteer work at St. Elizabeth's, a Federal mental hospital. She has been an interviewer for Navy Relief in other duty stations.

And if the first few weeks are any indication, Mrs. O'Donnell will stay very busy here in Monterey. Both Admiral and Mrs. O'Donnell look forward with anticipation to their association with the Postgraduate School, and it is with sincere pleasure that the CLASSMATE adds its own welcome for them to the school and to the area.

MARCH MEETING OF OWC TO BE CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH

The March 18 meeting of the OWC will feature a champagne brunch and a jewelry demonstration by Mrs. Ruth Buol.

The gathering will be hosted by the wives of the Naval Engineering Curriculum and will begin at 11:30 a.m. at the "O" Club. The jewelry demonstration will follow the brunch.

Lorraine Spadoni, program chairman, announces that there will be a drawing for a silver compote, a set of four silver serving trays, and a silver cake or sandwich tray to be awarded as door prizes.

Dates for making reservations and names of those persons receiving reservations will be provided on the pink flyer.