

Wins Appointment To Naval Academy

James J. Di Nardo Jr. from Harrison Accepted as Midshipman

James J. DiNardo Jr., 18, of 224 Cleveland avenue, Harrison, has been accepted as a midshipman at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. Only son of a veteran of World War I, young DiNardo was one of five New Jersey sailors to receive fleet appointments through the Bureau of Naval



James J. DiNardo Jr.

Personnel. He is believed to be the first resident of Harrison admitted to either of the service academies.

Entrance into the academy will be the fulfillment of a boyhood ambition. As a child, his mother says, he always said he wanted to go to a United States military school. At that time he insisted it would be West Point since his father had served in the Army. However, Mrs. DiNardo says he is happy to "settle" for Annapolis.

Specialized in Radar

DiNardo has served in the Navy over a year. He enlisted May 28, 1945, while a sophomore at St. Vincent's College at Latrobe, Pa. and received training at Great Lakes Station, Manley School, Chicago, and Gulfport, Miss. He specialized in radar. Later he attended Camp Peary, Va., and served a brief period at Baltimore, Md. He received his naval discharge last week.

A lifelong resident of Harrison, DiNardo is a graduate of Holy Cross School, Harrison, and St. Benedict's Prep School, Newark. He was attending St. Vincent's College on a scholarship when he enlisted. He has two sisters, Rosemarie, 15, and Eleanor, 14, attending Good Counsel High School, Newark.

His father, quartermaster of Sawelson VFW Post the last 10 years, served in France during World War I and participated in several battles.

U.S. Naval Academy

From 1946 to 1950 I attended the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. We chose a service, Navy or Marines, when we graduated. Then we would go on to specialized training for our chosen service.

I had always tended to be a bit disruptive in that I challenged some things a bit. I didn't mean to offend, but the Navy guys did get offended.

The Naval officers said, "This isn't going to work." They felt that in the close quarters aboard ship if I spoke out and they didn't like it, I would be in trouble. So when I graduated I asked for a commission in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Annapolis was tough. The students are superhuman.

Our only real break came in the summer when we went on the midshipman's cruise. After my second year my cruise was aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Coral Sea*.

I spent my last summer of my junior year on a destroyer. We went to Europe – France, England and Scotland. It was a midshipman cruise, they called it. That would have been 1949. Helicopters were kind of a new deal in those days. So we were on the destroyer and it delivered either a chaplain or mail. The chaplain, they put him out and let him go down the rope. He does the service and they came back to hook him up, pull him back up and take him to another ship. It was just

another approach in from the helicopter.

One of the highlights of the Naval Academy was my time as president of the Italian language club. I was the only language club leader who couldn't speak the language!

At the Naval Academy everybody took the same courses except for language. I took



Italian Club dinner, Feb 8, 1950. I'm the one at the far left speaking English.

German because I had started German when I went to St. Vincent College.

My roommate, a Polish boy from Chicago who became a 3-star general, was a Russian linguist.

Once or twice a year the language club would have a dinner event and we finally got some good food like a steak or filet mignon. The first time I ever ate a filet was at one of these. They would invite some of the staff at the Academy or members could invite a guest.

So here I am. I have an Italian name but I'm studying German. My parents said you learn

English at school before you start Italian. I didn't even join an Academy language club.

I'm in Bancroft Hall one day and there was a very highly-decorated Navy Cross winner, a good Italian boy from Boston who is a Naval Academy grad, Colonel Antonelli.

Italian Club Dinner Meet

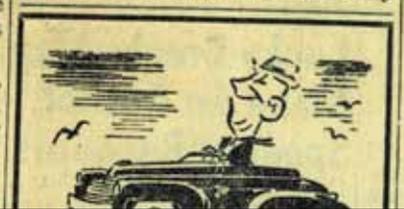
Midshipmen of all classes at the Naval Academy, who are members of the Italian Club, held a dinner Wednesday evening followed by after dinner speaking.

At these dinners, midshipmen hold all conversations and profer all speeches in the language of their particular club. At this meeting, predominated by Italian, the guests of honor were Assistant Professor Joseph P. d'Elia, Assistant Professor Harry R. Keller, Jr., Associate Professor William M. Buffum, Assistant Professor Guy

J. Riccio and Capt. Alfonse R. Miele, USAF, all of the Department of Foreign Languages at the academy.

Midshipman, First Class, James J. DiNardo, Jr., was in charge of the midshipmen present at the dinner.

Denim, that old standby for play clothes, is available this season in plaids and strips and may



Klohr for a change from agricultural

He says, "Ensign Di Nardo."

"Yes sir."

He said, "Listen, we started teaching Italian this year, but nobody knows it well enough to be head of the language club, the Italian Club. You're going to be the guy."

I said, "I don't speak Italian, sir."

He said, "You're the guy." End of conversation.

So I ended up president of the Italian Club. I memorized some of the words and speeches and stuff like that with help from our advisor who actually spoke Italian. Sometimes I'd play Italian records at the meetings. Fortunately we had a fairly inactive club. Most of the members were Italians from New York City, New Jersey and Boston. I don't even know if they could speak Italian either.

Then there's the annual banquet. We invited the Assistant Italian Attache from DC and the Lt. Commander who was the head of the Spanish group.

Our Italian advisor was a nervous wreck. He was one of those guys who believes that everything going wrong. He was just scared to death.

I said to him, "I have to give a speech in Italian. Help me prepare it."

We introduced the guests and the Spanish commander, in English, said, "I can't speak Italian so

'Hello' everybody."

I thought, "Thank God, that's a break for me."

So in English I said, "To tell the truth, I don't speak Italian either, but they asked me to head the club. So welcome."

Everybody ate well and had a great time.

Next day: "Di Nardo. Report to Colonel Antonelli immediately."

Naval Midshipman

Midshipman James J. Dinardo Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. James Dinardo of 224 Cleveland avenue, Harrison, has completed his second year at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., and now becomes a member of the new second (junior) class. The Harrison youth is serving on a Summer practice cruise aboard the aircraft carrier, USS Coral Sea.

Officer Training

Second Lt. James J. Di Nardo Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. DiNardo of 224 Cleveland avenue, Harrison, is attending the officer Basic School at the Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Va. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., Lt. DiNardo is one of several newly-commissioned officers learning the duties and responsibilities of a Marine officer. The course includes instruction in all infantry weapons, tactical problems and command and staff functions. *

took her to West Hudson hospital.

Midshipman at Sea

Midshipmen James J. DiNardo, son of Mr. and Mrs. James J. DiNardo of 224 Cleveland avenue, Harrison, is aboard the minelayer, USS Fraser, now on duty with a 10-ship task force participating in the Second Midshipmen's Summer Practice Cruise. *

July 18, 1949



MIDSHIPMAN DINARDO

Midshipman James Joseph DiNardo, Jr., Midshipman Ensign, entered the Naval Academy via a Naval Reserve appointment.

This popular midshipman has served as Second Class Petty Officer in the second group of 1948-49, Midshipman Petty Officer of the first group of 1949-50, Midshipman Lt. (j.g.) second group, 1949-50, and has been appointed Midshipman Ensign for the final group of this year.

A member of the Catholic Chapel Choir for four years, he is also vice-president of the Italian Foreign Language Club.

In the athletic field he has received numerals in three different sports: Basketball, 1946-47, small block 50, and 1947-48, 50; Football, 1947-48, a50f; and Track, 1948-49, 50.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Joseph DiNardo, Sr., of 224 Cleveland Avenue, Harrison, N. J.

"Di Nardo, what the hell did you do?" he demanded.

I told him the story. "I didn't do anything."

He said, "Well someone there said you insulted him."

There was this creepy guy who was a Lt. Commander and said I insulted him because I broke into English saying I didn't understand Italian and therefore I had disgraced him.

I said, "Everybody had a great time. I don't speak Italian. You put me on this job. I'm not the guy for the job."

He said, "The Commandant wants to see you."

Next I'm going to the Superintendent. "What did you do, Di Nardo?"

I told him the same story.

"That's still a mistake, you shouldn't have done it. But we're going to let it go."

They gave me some extra duties and I lived through two more of these banquets by being very careful.

Finally it's my last year. At graduation time they give out certificates to every president

of every language club. They read the names out. Guess who didn't get one?

A funny part was that a high ranking officer called me into his office not too long after that incident.

He said, "Di Nardo. You know, the local auto dealerships give discounts to midshipmen. And I'd like an Oldsmobile. I'd like you to buy it for me. I'll give you the money."

So I ended up buying a discounted Oldsmobile for a midshipman who happened to be a superior officer. He gave me a free spaghetti dinner that night.

My own personal football participation

was limited to the Academy 150-pound Lightweight Team in 1947. I got 12 seconds of playing time and the guy I was supposed to tackle slipped and fell on the muddy ground all by himself. It was against the University of Illinois.

The next year, they cut me, so I played battalion football and scored a touchdown. I ran track and was in the battalion competition. I was the second fastest 100 yard dash guy but I never could beat the first guy. We won first and second at every meet.



U.S. Naval Academy Plebs, June 1947. There I am front and center.



Our 1948 summer cruise aboard the USS Coral Sea stopped in France. Here I am at the famous sites - Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, Mont St. Michele in Normandy and the Eiffel Tower in Paris.



RIGHT: James Di Nardo, Sr., Harrison gelatin department supervisor, congratulates James, Jr., who last month graduated from the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

A clipping from the Swift & Company newsletter when I graduated from the Naval Academy in 1950.



At the Naval Academy Ring Dance, your date puts your ring on a ribbon around her neck and then you both pass through the binnacle. You dip the ring in the water of the Seven Seas and give it to her with a kiss.

Pat Flaherty was my date and we've just passed through the big mock-up of the binnacle.

Another old tradition is that if you walk your date past the cannons outside the Superintendent's house, they may explode if she's a virgin.

Beat Army!



Army-Navy Game, Philadelphia 1946. Army won 21-18. 102,000 spectators.

One of the biggest ongoing activities at the Naval Academy was "Beating Army." The annual Army-Navy football game in Philadelphia was a year-round topic that reached a fever pitch just before the big game every year.

It all started in the late 1800s between the U.S. Military Academy (USMA, West Point) and U.S. Naval Academy (USNA, Annapolis). It was usually played in late November or early December after the regular season is over, but now is on the second Saturday in December.

During my time at Annapolis, Navy only managed to tie Army, 21-21, in 1948. It wasn't until after I had graduated in 1950 (and for the two years following) that Navy prevailed. In terms of game wins over the years, Navy leads Army 60 to 49.

The Game became a yearly ritual for me for

years to come. As the boys grew up I often took them, along with invited friends, to Philadelphia for the day to watch.

Beating Army was such a big deal at the Academy. Plebes were under pressure to perform the whole time in class and in other activities. About the only time off we'd get during the academic year was one or two days for The Game.



I'm reading "The Michigan Daily" in my BOQ room in 1950. The subhead reads: "Underdog Navy Scuttles Army 14-2." My socks are drying on the foot of the bed.

There were pep rallies, parades through the halls and the game itself with marching bands leading the teams and cadets onto the field.

Even though there's intense rivalry, there's also mutual respect and there are historic and traditional pranks, mascots (a goat for Navy) and formal closing ceremonies with the singing of the *alma maters*.

Our "War of the Worlds"

Orsen Welles' famous *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast was on Sunday evening, October 30, 1938. It had a major impact on the Di Nardo family and many other residents of Harrison, NJ as well as across the country.

It was a cold evening and we had been out visiting relatives. Back at home Dad turned on our Philco radio. He said, "This is interesting. They're talking about seeing some activity on Mars. Let's listen to it."

There we were sitting around the living room, my parents and two sisters and me. Latino nightclub music is playing from New York. We're listening when the announcer breaks in and says, "We interrupt this program to make an announcement..."

Everybody listened, because it must be really important. It said there's activity on this planet, Mars. It looks like some things are coming off this planet, this heavenly body.

My Dad said, "Pay attention." The music program goes on and all of a sudden the announcer says they've spotted space vehicles coming down from the sky. We began looking at each other anxiously. "Dad, what happens next with this thing?"

It all sounded very legit. I began to get worried. I didn't mind so much if they killed me, but not my family. They start describing this thing, and all of a sudden they're landing in Grover's Mill, New Jersey. That's like 30 miles from Harrison!

All of a sudden, we hear, they've activated the New Jersey State Police. They're suddenly

coming down McCarter Highway, a mile away from us, toward Newark. We lived right on the edge of Newark.

I said, "What the ...? We are really ... If this is true, we're really in trouble."

The radio said that the Martian craft were emitting a smoke-type fog and people were falling over. "They can't move, they're ..." I don't know if they said "dying" or not, but it sure sounded like it.

My mother was very frightened. "Let's hold hands and start saying the rosary."

"What can I do to help them?" I thought. We had this World War I gas mask in the basement. "I wonder if ... We could pass it around and take turns breathing.

Even if you had your windows closed, this gas-like stuff would get through any little opening. I figured we were all dead, until we heard the announcement that this was just a radio program. There was no Martian attack.

They had people really having heart attacks. These guys were gambling down at the Arrone Club when a guy comes in and says, "Hey, you listening to the radio?" The guys jumped into their cars, left their money and everything on the table, to head toward some safe part of Jersey.

You can't get too mad, because you're happy you're alive. Orson Welles has this rhythmic voice, and as he explained, it was just a radio program.

But he sure scared the Di Nardo family.

The Di Nardo Family

Mary and I had six children.

Mary Elizabeth married Jeb (James) Midyette. Jamie, Jackson

Jimmy married Kathy. Jordan, Derek, Casey, Carson

Tommy married Wanda. Joey.

Denise married Jason Cowan. Raleigh, Jody, Elle, Jana

Paul married Lora. Deborah (married Rusty Richards. Mary, Nick), Matthew, Katie, Danielle.

Pete married Helen. Cyrus, Anna, Mary, David, Leah, Emma.

I have to say, that our Catholic faith with my Mom and Dad has been a tremendous connection. Going to mass at the Base Chapel, through high school and into college and up to Mom's death.

I just remember also hearing beautiful homilies and being with Dad. We'd get up and go to 7:30 mass at the Base. Dad would sing, he'd do the homilies. It was really neat to sit there and watch him.

— Excerpts from a Sunday afternoon conversation