

Hough Grandson Carries on Family's Military Tradition



Tyler Hough Kennedy inherited more than just his grandfather's name. Last week, Kennedy graduated from the US Army's demanding ten-week basic training course, and his grandfather, J. Moody Hough of Wadesboro, was one of the family members who made the trip to Fort Jackson, South Carolina for the graduation ceremony.

Lieutenant Commander Moody Hough is a military officer who served for 21 years in the US Coast Guard. He retired in 1977 after an extremely distinguished and decorated career. "One of the proudest moments of my life was when I saw Tyler graduate from boot camp," Commander Hough said. "I see in my grandson's eyes and heart the tremendous love of country and willingness to serve that I have."

Born and raised in Lilesville, Commander Hough graduated from Lilesville High School in 1955. He studied for a year at Mars Hill College before deciding to join the Coast Guard in 1956, even though he knew nothing about this branch of service. His most extensive trip on the water at that point was when he and his best friend swam the Pee Dee River as teenagers.

Commander Hough joined the military as a "fireman apprentice" and then worked his way up through the ranks to be selected to attend Officers' Candidate School where he completed a grueling 16-week course and earned his commission as an officer in 1967. As most officers in the military do not come from the enlisted ranks (almost all are college graduates), this was quite an honor and an accomplishment. Later while stationed in Philadelphia, PA Commander Hough attended Temple University.

During his military career Commander Hough was transferred 17 times to duty stations around the country - and even the world. He was stationed on two different lighthouses (Cape Lookout on the Outer Banks of NC and Faulkner's Island Lighthouse in Long Island Sound, NY), and went to sea on six different Coast Guard cutters. All total, he spent almost fifteen years at sea, and he enjoyed that part of his career immensely. His military service also took him to tours in Portugal, Japan, Guam, Bermuda, the Bahamas, England and the North Pole. He was stationed in Hawaii when it became the last state to join the United States in 1959. Commander Hough also spent a tour of duty patrolling off the coast of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

After his officer's commission Commander Hough served as the Engineering Officer and as the Executive Officer on several Coast Guard ships where he earned a reputation as an extremely tough but highly respected leader of men. For his last duty station he was stationed at the Coast Guard Institute in Oklahoma City, OK, the national testing center for all Coast Guard personnel. He was responsible for formulating the engineering questions for the national tests every Coast Guardsman must take to advance in his career.

When Commander Hough retired from the military he moved his family back to his native Anson County, and he then went back to college, earning two different associate degrees from Anson Technical College. He later retired as a plant operator from Carolina Power and Light's Blewett Falls hydro-electric plant on the Pee Dee River.

Though he will soon turn 78 years old, Commander Hough said there was nothing that could have kept him from attending his grandson's basic training graduation. As the recruits marched onto the field at Fort Jackson, Commander Hough quickly spotted young Kennedy in the group of over 250 soldiers who had survived and completed the arduous Army training. As Kennedy's company marched by in formation, a flag bearer led the group carrying the American flag, and Commander Hough rose to his feet, snapped to attention and saluted the flag. There were no dry eyes in the crowd around the proud old sailor.

Kennedy's grandmother, the former Ann Marks of Lilesville (who was Commander Hough's high school sweetheart at Lilesville High and who followed him all over the country during his years of military service) was also present at Kennedy's graduation. The Houghs have been married for 56 years and now make their home in Wadesboro.

Kennedy makes the third generation of Hough men to volunteer to serve and protect our country. The Houghs' only son, J. Gary Hough of Gastonia, served for eight years in the US Navy (six years of active duty on a nuclear submarine and two in the Navy Reserves). Kennedy is the son of Ken and Mandy (Hough) Kennedy of Badin Lake, NC. He recently earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of South Carolina, and his next assignment will be to attend Officers' Candidate School with the US Army to further his career in the South Carolina Army National Guard.

"I was so proud that my family was there for my graduation," Kennedy said. "But it was very meaningful to me that Pop was able to attend, too. I have a new found respect for him, his military service, his courage and his patriotism. I aspire to be the kind of officer and gentleman that my grandfather was - and still is."

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