

# ARMY SWIMMING & DIVING

Fall 2014

## The New Reality of College Swimming and Diving

A couple of years ago, Bob Groseth, the former executive director of College Swimming Coaches Association of America, predicted that college swimming and diving programs will have to become adept at fundraising to the point they are self-sustaining.

Groseth had been the head men's coach at Northwestern for 20 years. He knew firsthand the difficulty of reconciling operating expenses with budgeted income. He believed the solution for swimming and diving, as well as all other non-revenue sports, would be competitive schedules populated with nearby schools, thereby reducing traveling expenses, facilities that are more functional than extravagant, and fundraising expansive enough to cover much of what a program spends.

### Key Links

- **Meet Schedule:**  
[Men](#)   [Women](#)
- **All-Time Top 10**
- **Donations**
- **FOASD**
- **Facebook**
- **Twitter**
- **Instagram**

Maybe, maybe not, but there's no denying that the current reality of non-revenue sports is that budgeted dollars are becoming more and more scarce.

Fortunately, Army swimming and diving has an infrastructure in place to counter the trend. Friends of Army Swimming and Diving (FOASD) was founded in 1976 to cover the modest cost of the annual Swimming Review, which former head coach Jack Ryan authored after each season. Since then, FOASD has expanded its range considerably. Working with the Army athletic department, FOASD now supplements the swimming budget with money to support a number of program needs that arise during the season.

### From the Head Coach....

I couldn't be more excited about the upcoming season. This will be one of the deepest and most balanced teams that I've ever coached. The firstie class has taken ownership of the squad. With 12 firsties (four women, eight men) ready to lead the program to the next level, Army swimming and diving is in good hands.



Mickey Wender

I am very confident that our athletes did everything they could to return to the Academy fit and ready to go. We had four cows go to combat dive school and they all finished at the top of their class. Our rising yearlings did a great job at Camp Buckner and will have a few weeks of training in the pool before the start of the season.

The new cadets attacked CBT and were great at all of our mass athletics sessions -- physically strong and mentally tough. A list of all of the plebes, their events, and best times is later in this newsletter (page seven). They are talented and motivated group and will make an immediate impact in and out of the pool.

The entire team is fully invested and ready. I can tell by the volume of texts, phone calls, and emails I've been getting that the team is anxious to get started.

There have been several changes on our staff recently but I couldn't be more excited about our coaching team this season. Although I am very proud of the fact that seven of my former assistants are active NCAA head coaches, staff retention is a goal. This group seems to be invested for the long haul.

Last year, with the help of a \$25,000 matching gift from one of its members, FOASD raised more than \$60,000 in support of the program. This generous alum has offered to make a \$25,000 contribution again in 2014, but with the stipulation that the percentage of donor participation double from 2013.

In 2013, FOASD received donations from 83 of the slightly more than 1,300 Army swimming and diving alums and friends with contact information in the Association of Graduates database – just over six percent. The goal for 2014 is 12 percent. Every donation, regardless of amount, counts. Size, so to speak, doesn't matter. And the money will go directly toward supporting the program this season. Head coach Mickey Wender plans to use the donations for, among other things, renovating the Zilinski team room, purchasing power towers, replenishing team parkas and warm-ups, and expanding the Halls/Walls project around Crandall Pool.

Donating is a simple matter of clicking [HERE](#) (Designate "Team General Expenses"). You will get updates from Coach Wender throughout the fall on how you're doing toward reaching the 12-percent goal. The hope is that we can report success in the winter newsletter, which will ship shortly after the Navy dual meet in December.

In the summer issue of this newsletter, Coach Wender touched on the program's endowment. As he stated, the fourth goal of the program, after swimmer improvement, winning dual meets and the Patriot League championships, and sending swimmers every year to the NCAA championships, is to endow the program.

Within just the last year, the endowment jumped from \$100,000 to more than \$1.2 million, helped in no small part by the recent locker-naming campaign that a number of you supported. The short-term goal for the endowment of \$1.5 million is within sight. The long-term goal is \$5 million, which will ensure the program is self-sustaining under the current structure. For more information on the endowment, or to discuss a gift in support of this fund, please contact Zach Hurst, Associate Athletic Director, at 845-446-1553, or [zach.hurst@wpaog.org](mailto:zach.hurst@wpaog.org).

So, there you have it: immediate support for the program via FOASD and long-term support through the endowment. We all have fond memories of our time swimming or diving at West Point. Let's do our best to ensure those memories continue for Army's current and future swimmers and divers.

Eric Bugby is back for his fourth season at West Point after a one-year stint as head coach at Illinois Institute of Technology. He will coach the sprinters and coordinate our recruiting efforts.

Haley Mitchell has a great pedigree as a distance swimmer and assistant coach at Ohio State and will coach our endurance group. Her recent experiences with the winningest program in NCAA history, Kenyon College, will definitely serve us well.

Riley Boulden will coach our short breaststrokers and IM'ers. He coached at DePauw (Ind.) and is an Alabama grad, where he still holds the record in the 200 IM at 1:45.54, which he set in 2010.

Our new diving coach is PJ Hughes from Seton Hall. PJ was the 2014 Big East men and women's diving coach-of-the-year and is ready to make his mark in the Patriot League.

We have made some significant changes to the competitive calendar- all for the purpose of getting the athletes to their best when it matters most. (See page one for a link to the 2014 -2015 competitive schedule.)

Our team in recent years has felt a strong connection to Dennis Zilinski, an '04 grad, swim team captain, and Patriot League finalist in the 200 fly. He was KIA in Bayji, Iraq, in 11/05. One of our traditions is to take a run to his gravesite early in the season and talk about what it means to be truly committed to the Army team. By all accounts Dennis epitomized what it meant to be a great teammate and to live honorably.

The second half of CBT was named Task Force Zilinski in Dennis' honor. Several years ago, the Zilinski family donated the money to create the team room in the Crow's Nest. As mentioned in the lead article of this newsletter, the room needs renovation. Our fundraising efforts this fall through Friends of Army Swimming and Diving will, in part, focus on raising the money to get this done.

I can't begin to express what an honor and privilege it is to live and work at the Academy. I am incredibly blessed to have the opportunity to mentor an amazing group of people. I love the team. I know that we are all committed to doing everything in our power to be the best that we can be. The best is yet to come.

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# Six Swimmers Talk About the Upcoming Season

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**Danielle Nuszkowski**, sophomore, current Academy record holder in the 500 and (4:54.88) the 1000 free (10:12.18), second all-time in the 200 free (1:50.39), and third in the mile (17:01.69)



This season is about no regrets. It's about beating our last performance. My goals are to get under 1:50 in the 200 free, 4:50 in the 500, and 10 minutes in the 1,000. I hope the distance group will get multiple girls under 4:55 in the 500 and 10 minutes in the 1,000.

I want to be top three at Patriots in at least one distance event and sometime before I graduate, achieve an NCAA cut in the 500 or the mile.. I think a few of the swimmers on the team are capable of getting NCAA qualifying standards this season.

**Colin Kanzari**, junior, fastest returning men's breaststroker, third all-time in the 100 (55.22) and 200 (1:59.84) breast

First and foremost, I want to beat Navy's breaststrokers. With Luke Hoffer and Sean Murphy gone (Navy breaststrokers from class of '14 who qualified for the NCAA championships), it's time for Army breaststroke to take its rightful ownership of the 100 and 200 breaststroke. I also want to beat (John) VanSant's Academy records (54.73 and 1:57.65 in 1987). They have been there long enough and it is time to update the record board.

Last season's Patriot League championships was not my strongest showing. This year I will train harder to ensure that is not a recurring theme. Finally, I want to qualify for the NCAA's in both breaststrokes.



**Molly Mucciarone**, junior, Academy record holder (22.85) and two-time Patriot League champion in the 50 free, second all-time in the 100 free (50.93) and 100 fly (54.33)



I have four main goals for this season: One, contribute to Army's long awaited victory against Navy. That means winning all three of my events. Two, win all three of my events at the Patriot League Championships. After placing in the top three in this year's Patriots, I think I'm ready to place first in all of them. Three, qualify and compete at NCAA's in the 50 freestyle. I want to specifically focus on my favorite event, the 50 freestyle. I have so much fun training for it and more motivation then ever for making the NCAA's. And four, in the spring, qualify for 2016 Olympic Trials in the 50-meter freestyle.

I plan to train smarter, harder and better than I have in the past in order to make these goals become reality. I can't wait for the beginning of the 2015 season.

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# Six Swimmers Talk About the Upcoming Season

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**Sean Regan**, sophomore, Academy record holder in the 200 fly (1:47.03) and third all-time in the 100 fly (48.33)

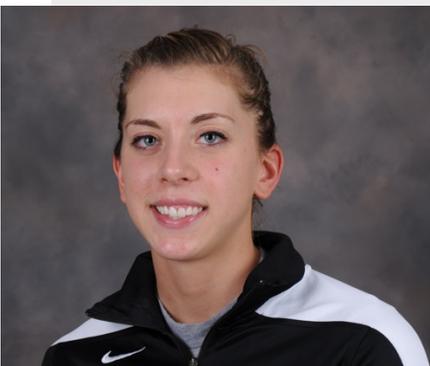
This season I have already raised the intensity of my dryland training. I want to focus my efforts in practice exclusively toward the 100 and 200 butterfly and pacing those races better.

At the Patriot League championships, I want to finish among the top three in both races. I want to lower my Academy record in the 200 fly to 1:45.9. In the 100 fly I want to at least break 48.2 and possibly beat Mark Spitz's pool record (47.98) in the Army-Navy meet.

And no Army goal setting is complete without a need to sink Navy.



**Jess Burkett**, sophomore, current Academy record holder in the 400 IM (4:24.50), second all-time in the 200 IM (2:04.93), fourth in the 100 breast (1:05.57), and fifth in the 200 breast (2:22.04)



I hope to become even closer with my teammates and play a greater role in establishing comradery. I will push them at practice and cheer them on at meets. I would also like to see the men's and women's teams end the season with winning records.

Individually, I want to achieve best times in the 200 and 400 IM's, and the 200 breaststroke, and place among the top five in each of these events at the Patriot League championships.

**Chris Szekely**, junior, Academy record holder in the 50 (19.88) and 200 free (1:37.01), and second all-time in the 100 free (44.16)

For me, this season is really about reaching some of my personal career goals. I would love to make NCAA's and get a relay there, as well as get the Olympic Trials cuts in the 50, 100 and 200 freestyle. The ability to represent West Point on a national stage would really be a blessing and an amazing experience.

I would put time goals down, but in a way I feel like that limits my thinking. At the end of the day, the biggest challenge/goal is, and always will be, beating Navy. It's something I've wanted for this team since day one. That being said, I'd like to step up and win a few individual events against them. Going 19.88 in the 50 is satisfying, but at the end of the day, it's not enough to get the job done if they are still touching us out.



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# A Talk with the Co-Captain

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Firstie **Kristen Barta** is a women's co-captain for the 2014-2015 season. She holds the Academy record in the 200 breast (2:20.04), and ranks among Army's all-time top-10 performers in the 200 and 500 free, the 100 breast, and the 200 IM. In June Kristen was selected to the Academic All-America Division I At-Large team, the second Army swimmer -- and the first female -- to earn the honor. She was named to the Patriot League All-Academic Team in 2013 and 2014. Kristen is a life science major with a 3.96 GPA.

## What's been your technique for balancing the academic, athletic, and military commitments?



I'll be honest, I stay up late. I'm not one of those cadets who goes to bed at ten o'clock every night. I wish I was, but generally I take a break to eat dinner and hang out for an hour or two after practice and then start my homework. I hate to admit this but I also have a tendency to procrastinate on big things like papers.

This is definitely not something I recommend to anyone but I always get things done in the nick of time and generally end up with a good product -- probably thanks to the focusing power of massive amounts of coffee. Although I have been successful at West Point, it hasn't been painless and there are definitely areas I can improve.

## What do you attribute the noticeable improvement in the women's team over the last few years?

The biggest factor has been retention. During my plebe year, we only had one firstie swimmer, so my classmates and I took on a greater leadership role than we'd anticipated.

That challenge, to step up and take responsibility for our own development and achievements, was ultimately a blessing. We've come together as a class and I believe we will have at least four firstie women on the team this season. We've seen each subsequent class strengthen in numbers as well, ultimately making us more competitive within our own ranks. We push each other everyday. We steadily improve, and ultimately that attracts stronger recruits. And the cycle repeats.

## What appealed to you about coming to West Point and swimming?

When I came on my recruiting trip, I was blown away. Everything about West Point was different. And I loved the team atmosphere. I loved going to coach's house for dinner, getting to meet his whole family and hanging out with all of the girls. I called my parents that night and told them I'd made my decision. Of course they told me to go on my other recruiting trips, which I did, but ultimately West Point was the perfect fit.

**"I've met and worked with so many wonderful people and I hope I'll be able to keep in touch with a lot of them when I graduate."**

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# A Talk with the Co-Captain

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## **What have been the highlight and the lowlight of your West Point experience?**

The highlight has been the community. I've met and worked with so many wonderful people and I hope I'll be able to keep in touch with a lot of them when I graduate.

The lowlight has been the monotony. Sometimes I feel like I've lived the same day for a year. Every now and then it catches up with me and I feel this crazy need to just get out, even if it's only to go to Andy's Restaurant (in Highland Falls) for brunch on Sunday. I'm definitely very excited to have a car at West Point firstie year. I can't wait to explore upstate New York and find trendy cafes to hole up in and do homework. Sometimes just a change of scenery is all it takes.



## **How do you foresee the '14 - '15 season?**

Every year the team improves and I don't think this upcoming season will be an exception. We have a lot of talented individuals coming in on both the men's and the women's side, and I know we're going to make a lot of progress in terms of our dual meet records and our record against Navy. Every year brings new challenges but we're a strong Army team and this season I know we're ready to beat Navy.

## **What do you personally hope to accomplish this season?**

I definitely have a few events that I'd like to drop some time in, namely the 200 breaststroke. I'd love to go under a 2:15. I think everyone dreams of their last season being the best season of their life, and I hope that's true for me.

More important, I want to be a great co-captain. I've been so lucky to be a part of this team for three years. This last year I want to give back to the program. I want to be there for the girls, motivate them, and push them during practice. And I want to be someone the coaches can rely on. Essentially I'll be putting all of the leadership skills I've developed over the years to the test. It's daunting but I can't wait for the season to get started.

## **Was coming to West Point the right decision for you?**

Without a doubt. I can't imagine myself anywhere else. West Point has opened so many doors for me and I've had so many amazing mentors, instructors, teammates, roommates, and friends. I'm happy here. And I'm very optimistic about my future in the Army.

Even though I don't know exactly what I'll be doing or where I'll be, I trust the Army as an organization and I believe hard work can get you anywhere. If I'm lucky, I'll be heading off to medical school in a year. If that doesn't happen, there are so many other opportunities within the Army that I would love to explore. I can't say enough about how grateful I am to West Point. It's been challenging, but that's what makes it so special. It tests your limits and you gain confidence knowing you pushed yourself to the brink.

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# Incoming Swimmers and Divers

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## **Men:**

**Seth Nordel**, Visalia, Calif.: Diver

**Taylor Rodenhuis**, Salisbury, N.C.: 500 free – 4:44.58; 200 fly – 1:55.26; 400 IM – 4:11.88

**Jason Rodriguez**, Irvine, Calif.: 100 fly – 48.85; 200 fly – 1:48.90; 200 IM – 1:50.28; 400 IM – 3:57.50

**Evin Rude**, Kerrville, Texas: 500 free – 4:29.98; 100 back – 50.59; 200 back – 1:51.76; 200 IM – 1:54.21; 400 IM – 3:59.40

**Joshua Sembrano**, Hasbrouck Heights, N.J.: 100 back – 48.72; 200 back – 1:50.20; 100 fly – 49.86

**Garrett Simon**, Chesapeake, Va.: 500 free – 4:35.91; 1650 free – 16:06.57; 400 IM – 4:01.75

**Michael Stanchi**, Bellevue, Wash.: 500 free – 4:34.18; 100 back – 52.09; 200 back – 1:49.81

**Patrick Wall**, Sarasota, Fla.: 100 breast – 57.00; 200 breast – 2:03.68; 200 IM – 1:54.07; 400 IM – 4:02.25

## **Women:**

**Anastasia Bistrow**, Jacksonville Beach, Fla.: 200 free – 1:52.89; 500 free – 4:58.87; 1650 free – 17:09.62

**Teresa Groton**, Williamsburg, Va.: 100 fly – 56.98; 200 fly – 2:07.12

**Margaret Ireland**, Wake Forest, N.C.: 100 breast – 1:05.18; 200 breast – 2:21.06; 100 back – 57.73

**Madison Jones**, Greer, S.C.: 200 free – 1:54.24; 500 free – 5:05.66; 100 fly – 58.19

**Carolyn Kehn**, Brighton, Mich.: 200 free – 1:56.77; 100 fly – 59.32

**Collin Kessinger**, Shelbyville, Ky.: 100 breast – 1:03.59; 200 breast – 2:17.53; 200 IM – 2:05.33; 400 IM – 4:28.02

**Sabrina Mortel**, Mechanicsburg, Pa.: 500 free – 4:52.23; 1000 free – 10:05.47; 1650 free – 16:47.18

**Delaney Musselman**, Kerrville, Texas: Diver

**Bridget Ritter**, Bellaire, Texas: 200 free – 1:51.48; 500 free – 4:53.95; 1650 free – 17:10.41; 200 IM – 2:04.43; 400 IM – 4:20.70

**Ariana Rocha**, Tucson, Ariz.: Diver

**Gretchen Roesel**, McLean, Va.: 100 breast – 1:04.92; 200 breast – 2:21.18



*New Army swimmers at the annual picnic at Round Pond the day before the start of BCT.*



*Plebe diver Delaney Musselman*

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# Alumni Connection

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Some of the leading swimmers from Army's golden era joined **Buddy Bucha** ('65) at West Point in early June for his recognition as a Distinguished Graduate.

Buddy received the Medal of Honor for actions in 1968 while commanding an infantry company in Vietnam. After leaving the Army in the early 1970's, he embarked on a career in finance, though he never strayed from his instinctual commitment to soldiers. For example, he raised money for construction of multiple Fisher Houses, which assist Wounded Warriors and their families, and he advocated increasing insurance benefits for families of soldiers killed during the invasion of Iraq.

Buddy was one of 13 Army swimmers from 1963 through 1966 who made Division I All-America. (Army has had four since.) Four of Buddy's teammates attended the ceremony:



**Jerry Merges** ('65), a butterfly and freestyler, was a two-time All-America who served as an infantry officer in Vietnam before leaving the Army and getting into financial consulting. He coached age-group swimming and junior- and high-school track on the side for over 20 years. He has seven children, 19 grandchildren, and one great grandchild. He is retired and living in Florida.

**Kerry O'Hara** ('67), a backstroker, was mentioned in the summer issue of this newsletter. He was a four-time All-America, served in Vietnam, and had a lengthy career in human resources after leaving the Army. He is retired and living in Vermont.

**Tony Clay** ('65), a freestyler, was a four-time All-America whose active duty time was shortened by rheumatoid arthritis. He received an MBA from Columbia before a 25-year career in commercial banking. He retired early, as he says, "to do the things I like – spending time with my wife, hunting, fishing, and riding motorcycles." He and Calla live in Southampton, Long Island. They have a daughter and a grandchild.

**Ken O'Sullivan** ('63) arrived at West Point the same time as new head coach Jack Ryan, who, Ken says, "Changed everything. It was a whole new way of being coached." Ken went into Air Defense Artillery and stayed on active duty for 21 years, including three years in Vietnam. When his daughter began swimming in the early 1990s for the Nation's Capital Swim Club, he soon found himself coaching, a passion that he continues to pursue. "I have always has a soft spot for swimming," he says. "I love it."

Ken lives with his wife Mary in northern Virginia. His daughter, **Caroline**, swam at West Point and graduated in 2008. She served as an engineer officer on active duty, including a tour in Afghanistan. She now works in South Carolina for Michelin tire company and continues to serve in the National Guard.

The "young" guy in the picture is **Ray Bosse** ('77), the former co-captain and Academy record holder in the IM's. He was commissioned field artillery and served five years before returning to West Point to assist head coach Jack Ryan. Ray took over the men and women's programs in 1988 following Jack's retirement. Ray left coaching in 2001 for a full-time job in the Academy's PE department. He lives near West Point with his wife Sherri, an All-America swimmer at Nebraska, and their three children.

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# Alumni Connection

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**Jen Grzbek Buckner** ('90) found out in May that she is the latest swimmer or diver selected to the Army Sports Hall of Fame.

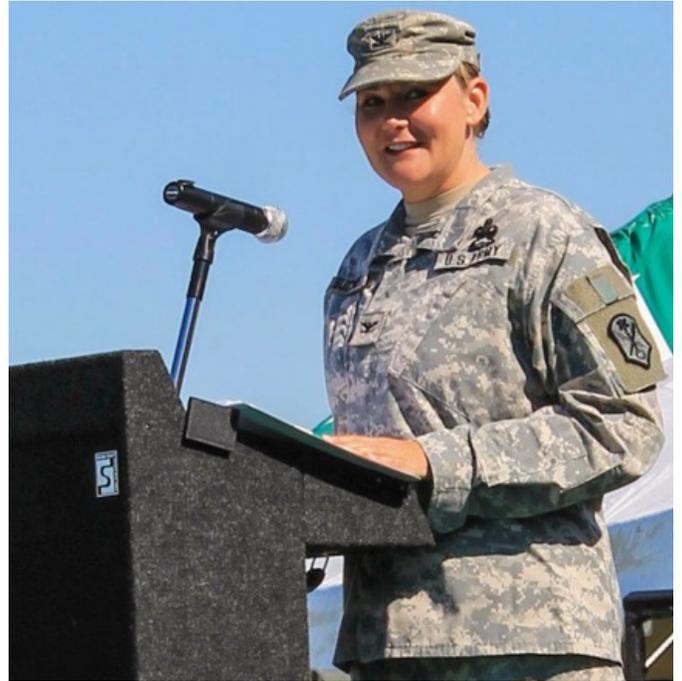
“Completely shocked and extremely honored,” she says of her reaction to the phone call from Army athletic director Boo Corrigan. “I was on a team of many who were faster.”

Not many, just one. Teammate Ann Marie Wycoff, a nine-time titlist at the NCAA Division II national championships, was inducted in the Hall of Fame in 2004. Jen won the national 200 back title in 1990, which capped a career that included 11 All-American certificates and Academy records in the 100 and 200 back.

“Swimming gave me a lot at the Academy,” she says. “It was something familiar – something I had been doing since I was 10 – while dealing with all of the stresses of West Point. And it gave me fantastic teammates and lifelong friends.”

Jen was commissioned in military intelligence and has commanded every unit from platoon to brigade. She is a colonel and currently serves as the commandant of the Army’s new cyber school at Fort Gordon, Ga.

*(Jen makes five Army swimmers or divers in the Hall of Fame. The winter issue of the newsletter, which will be emailed a week or so after the Army-Navy dual meet in December, will have updates on the other five.)*



**Maj. Charlie Lewis** ('04) is one of five swimming alums stationed at West Point. The former Patriot League finalist in the 100 back was commissioned in field artillery and served two tours (27 months total) in Iraq with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. He was in Bayji in 2005 with classmate and team captain Dennis Zilinski.

Charlie went on for a master’s in public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School before assignment to the Department of Social Sciences in 2012. He is married to classmate Marie Cicerelle.

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# Alumni Connection

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**Maj. Ray Blaine** ('02) is an officer rep for the swimming and diving teams (and also the communications director for FOASD). A Patriot League finalist in the 400 IM, he was commissioned in the signal corps and served three tours overseas (two in Iraq and one in Afghanistan) before going to Vanderbilt and earning a PhD in electrical engineering.

Ray arrived at West Point in 2012 to teach in the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department. Pictured are his wife, Michelle, and daughter, Payton. They also have a son, Wesley, eight months.

**Maj. Liz Wannstedt Knox** ('04) was a Patriot League finalist many times over in the 100 and 200 free and 200 IM, but she says the highlight of her swimming career at Army was winning all three of her individual swims against Navy her junior year. She went engineer branch after graduation and served at Fort Lewis and Fort Bragg and two tours in Afghanistan. She spent a year at Columbia University earning a master's in organizational psychology before becoming a company tactical officer last year. Liz is married to an Army captain. They have a two-year-old girl and a five-month-old boy.



**Capt. Zach Foster** ('07), arrived at West Point in June to serve as the director of operations for the lacrosse team. (He would have liked to work with the swimming and diving teams but the position is not yet available for non-revenue sports.)

Zach was a middle distance swimmer and the first recipient of Mickey Wender's most inspirational swimmer award. He branched aviation and has spent most of the last seven years, including 12 months in Afghanistan, flying OH-58 Kiowa helicopters.



**Lt. Col. Ward Narramore** ('95) is an assistant professor in the Law Department. The former middle distance swimmer was commissioned military police and served four years at Fort Bragg before going to law school at Florida State. He started teaching at West Point in 2011 after two tours in Iraq. He is married with three boys. A fourth child is on the way.

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*Let us hear from you so we can share with other West Point swimmers and divers what you've been up to. Send an email to Tom Slear ('73) at [tslear@comcast.net](mailto:tslear@comcast.net) or give him a call at 410-268-4773. The more details the better. Be sure to include your graduating year. Deadline for the winter issue is December 12.*