

Northern New Mexico West Point Parent Club



United States Military Academy

Firstie Parent Handbook

2002-2003

***CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF 2003
AND FAMILIES***

This handbook continues a tradition begun nearly a four years ago when four mothers whose sons were in the class of 2002 decided that a handbook was needed for the upcoming new cadet parents. We had knowledge that we wanted to share with new parents.

Now two of us have decided to share some ideas about Firstie year and all the unique experiences involved. We've been there, done that, and we have a couple of ideas to share. As time goes by, more refinement will be added. We are carrying forward information from our experiences that may prove useful. Things change. Some traditions do not persist. Others are begun. The secret is to be flexible and to pay attention to the instructions you will be receiving from USMA.

To our new Firstie parents we add our good wishes, our hopes that this little guide helps. And our hopes that all of you and yours find as much satisfaction in participating in the stunning activities to come as we found, as the adventure continues...

We hope this booklet will serve as a guide to help make Firstie year memorable, exciting and stress free as possible for parents of the Northern New Mexico West Point Parents Club.

This booklet is loosely based on a Firstie books from various Parent Clubs and the experiences from our NNMWPPC members.

Vicki L. Chavez and Carolyn Donnell

It is never too soon to start planning for graduation. Often the cadets have too many other things to think about and it is left up to us to make the arrangements. This handbook is designed to give you an idea of what you should be aware of as the year progresses. You should receive the first graduation information from West Point in December with more details available either April or May, but we are including a copy of last year's information so that you know what to expect.

As graduation time draws near, anxiety and emotion can run high. Plan so that you can sit back and enjoy this experience. When your cadet steps out of ranks to receive the final salute from the Corps at the graduation parade, give yourself a pat on the back for also making it through four years at the Academy.



Photo courtesy of Kishi Lomeli



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT, NEW YORK 10996-5000

December 20, 2001

Dear Cadet Parents:

Greetings from West Point! Anne and I wish you the happiest and healthiest of holidays. The end of this event-filled year serves to remind us that graduation is fast approaching. That special day, which seemed like a distant dream in June of 1998, is now on the horizon for the Bicentennial Class of 2002.

Planning for graduation for the Class of 2002 began here at West Point more than six months ago. You should do your part by making reservations for travel and lodging now. If you have not made reservations, the following tourism numbers will be of assistance:

Orange County (800) 762-8687 or www.orangetourism.org
Rockland County (800) 295-5723 or www.rockland.org
Putnam County (800) 470-4854 or www.visitputnam.org
Dutchess County (845) 463-4000 or www.dutchesstourism.com
Westchester County (800) 883-9282 or www.westchesterny.com

We will send additional information concerning graduation to you during the first week in April 2002. However, for planning purposes dates of major graduation activities are as follows:

Tuesday, 28 May	Commandant's Award Ceremony
Wednesday, 29 May	Superintendent's Reception for Parents and Guests, 1st & 2nd Regiments
Thursday, 30 May	Superintendent's Awards Review; Superintendent's Reception for Parents and Guests, 3rd & 4th Regiments; Baccalaureate Services
Friday, 31 May	Graduation Parade; Awards Convocation; Banquet & Hop
Saturday, 1 June	9 a.m. GRADUATION

During this holiday period Anne and I urge you to talk to your cadet and firm up your plans for graduation. In addition, so that your cadet may graduate as scheduled, please remind your firstie of the need for continued excellence in academic studies, military training and physical development. Our bicentennial theme "Duty, Honor, Country: West Point at 200 years – Timeless Leadership" demonstrates the goal your cadets have been working to attain, will be judged on and expected to meet throughout their Army careers. Let's ensure that happens.

"Pride in all we do."

Sincerely,

William J. Lennox, Jr.
Lieutenant General, US Army
Superintendent

Letter sent from the Supe in December regarding graduation, planning dates & activities.

THE CIRCLE IS COMPLETE

As I stood with the crowd to listen to the Alma Mater for the last time, my heart was bursting with pride for my son, joy at his joy, and yet sadness for him. The Class of 1990 and all the parents who were hearing that moving anthem for the final time on that special day. Thoughts began flooding my mind and speeding by as if in a whirlwind.

The hot July - R-Day - was as vivid as if it were yesterday. I remembered the ache in my heart - but the anticipation of his face, which got me through many long days! I knew it was what he wanted and where he should be. I remembered that first visit, when we stood at Patton's statue and watched our eyes out for him to come our way. What joy when I saw him walking toward us. How tall - how straight - how official he looked.

Other days rushed through my mind: that very first trip home for Christmas, the cadets he brought home and all the meals I've cooked for them and the pride at seeing him in his uniform. My favorite is the white India! But the gray over white dress one, with sword, sash and plume made my heart soar. Other trips home, other times spent there, all came back to me. Whether actually seeing him at West Point, or seeing him in my mind as he went through his activities, I "watched" him every day.

Being a witness to that final day - Graduation Day - made those four years seem like a dream, but they were far from that for him or us! Knowing what he had accomplished, how far he had come from that hot July day in 1986, was almost more than I could take in. But, I know that his pride was our pride that day. I could almost feel those hearts beating on Michie Field as they sang for the last time, "And when our work is done, our course on earth is run, May it be said, ' Well, done! Be thou at peace. "

How different were the emotions from the first day we saw him in uniform to that last day! He had come from a candidate, to a plebe, to a cadet, and now to a graduate. The circle was now complete - and the circle can now begin again for another cadet, another parent and another class in the Long Gray Line.

*Charlotte O. Kirby
Mother of Mark C. Kirby
Class of 1990*

(Reprinted from the Firstie Handbook of Ohio)

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FIRSTIE YEAR

RING WEEKEND

The first major event of Firstie year is Ring Weekend - generally held the last weekend in August. Some cadets may want to invite their parents for this; others may prefer to have just their boy or girlfriends. The festivities begin on Friday night in the open-air concert area of Trophy Point with a private ceremony for Firsties only; this is when they receive their coveted rings. After the ceremony, the Firsties go to “the area,” and other locations, where the Plebes will admire their new rings and greet them with the “Ring Poop”. Dropping to one knee, the Plebes will chant:



This ceremony is a must see!

“Oh my God, sir/madam!
What a beautiful ring!
What a crass mass of brass and glass!
What a bold mold of rolled gold!
See how it sparkles and shines!
It must have cost you a fortune!
May I touch it please, sir/madam”



After that, the Firsties are free to spend the weekend with you and their dates.

On Saturday, there are various open houses, followed by a formal dinner and ball. Women should wear long gowns or cocktail dresses, for men, dark business suits are in order. Cadets will be attired in their India whites. All Firsties have the option of having their pictures taken inside a 9-foot, 500 lb. replica of their class ring. The lines for this are extremely long, so take your camera to the ball at Eisenhower Hall and get your own.

Ring Weekend Dates:

Class of 2003: August 24, 2002

HISTORY OF THE WEST POINT RING

As far as records show, the U.S. Military Academy was the first school in this country to use rings as a class symbol, the tradition beginning with the Class of 1835. With the exception of the Class of 1836, which chose not to have class rings, and the Class of 1879, which chose cuff links, each class has worn rings to symbolize their pride in West Point and each other.

Until 1969, the style of the rings was selected informally, but that year an organized meeting was held for deciding upon the design. Thus began the Ring and Crest Committee, the members of which are chosen by each class during Cadet Basic Training.

After considering crest designs submitted by members of their class, the committee formally announces its choice during the Spring of Plebe year. Each class ring must have incorporated within its design: an eagle, an American flag, an officer's saber, a cadet saber, the class motto and year, and "USMA."

Since the Class of 1917, rings have borne a class crest on one side and the crest of the Academy on the other. Although the design is uniform for any given class, the content of gold and type of stone is the choice of each individual cadet. Legend has it that one cadet chose a small stone from "the area" to represent the many hours that he had spent there walking off demerits.

A cadet who resigns or is separated from the Academy before graduation forfeits the right



to wear the class ring. It is customary until graduation for the ring to be worn so that the class crest is most easily seen by the wearer; after graduation, the ring is reversed so that the Academy crest is the one nearer the heart.

Each class since 1835 has chosen its own motto, traditionally in Latin on the earlier rings, although one was in French and one in Scottish. Now the Motto is in

English and usually rhymes with the year.

Editor's Note: The Class of 1835 adopted the first "West Point ring," none of which are known to remain in existence. All that remains is an impression of the crest in sealing wax. From this, we may determine that the stone was oval and the crest included the class motto, "Amicus Periculique Foedus (Danger Brings Forth Friendship)" and the class year, 1835. The first extant ring is from the Class of 1837 — a simple, 19th Century gentleman's "pinkie ring" bearing a design with a sword piercing a book, attributed to the French philosopher Voltaire.

CLASS RING MEMORIAL PROGRAM

INSIDE THE RING

Ring Weekend is an extraordinary time at the Academy, as First Class Cadets don their class rings and celebrate with family and friends. Long steeped in tradition, the class ring has now added yet another dimension to its rich history with the Class Ring Memorial Program.

Used first with the Bicentennial Class of 2002, the Class Ring Memorial Program allows Academy graduates or family members of deceased graduates to donate their rings to the Association of Graduates. The gold in these rings is then melted down and mixed with the gold of previously donated rings. Next, this old gold is added to the new gold that is used for the rings of the upcoming First Class Cadets. Finally, a portion of the mixture is saved to be used in the rings of the next class of Firsties. By this process, today's graduates can surely feel previous graduates "gripping hands" with them as they go through their last year at West Point and begin their Army careers.

At a ceremony marking the melting of the donated rings and the gold of the class of 2003, the family of General Andrew S. Low, Jr., USAF, USMA Class of 1942, read a particularly poignant story about General Low's ring, which was confiscated after he was seized by the Germans following the explosion and crash of his plane during a bombing run in WWII. In a strange twist of fate, on the third day of his interrogation, a wounded German flying officer visited him. After making small talk (the German officer spoke English), he pulled General Low's ring from his pocket and dropped it inside General Low's clothes, saying, "I am sure this means something to you, and it means nothing to them. Hide it, and do not wear it until you are free."

Though most USMA graduates do not have such amazing stories to share about their rings, each USMA class ring calls up its own memories for its wearer. The ring represents the blood, sweat, and tears spent over four years at the Academy, along with the promise of a lifetime of service to the nation, and the bond that exists among all West Pointers, living and deceased. The Class Ring Memorial Program symbolically strengthens the bond between the Class of 2003, the classes that preceded it, and all the classes to follow.

Jackie (Kalata) Whiteside '93

(Excerpts taken from AOG Gray matter Newsletter 9-6-02)

RING WEEKEND

Though your cadet may be considered a "Firstie" or "first classman" after the graduation ceremony at the end of his/her second class year (no more the "cow"), "Firstie" year is a concrete reality when he/she receives a class ring. Festivities for Ring Weekend start after classes on Friday afternoon.

Some parents may be apprehensive about attending Ring Weekend ceremonies. There are many parents who attend the festivities and those that make the drive to West Point and share in this weekend are happy they did. You may not see your cadet a lot during the weekend, but just being apart of the tradition is well worth the effort.

Parents, friends, sweethearts and cadets can be seen near the Plain by mid afternoon. Some people are dressed casually while others are dressed informally for after ceremony dinner reservations. (This is late August and one should expect HOT and HUMID weather and should dress accordingly.) Cadets are dressed in India whites and as the afternoon nears five o'clock, the sidewalk intersecting the Plain becomes crowded with parents and friends taking photos, talking and meeting with cadets.

Even though you may have been at West Point a number of times through the last three years, this may be the first time you will see the lowering of the flag. This event occurs daily and is an integral part of the lives of our sons and daughters. It was touching to watch all activity stop, everyone focus on the flag and to be included in this very solemn moment.

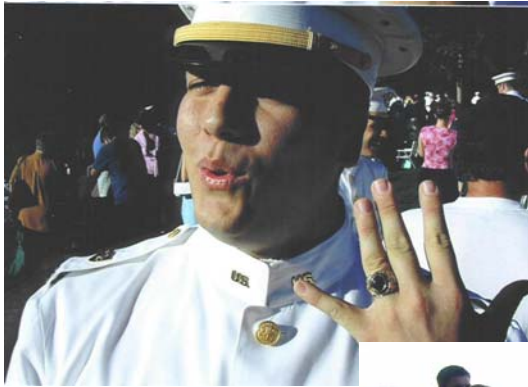
A canon sounds, "To the Colors" or "The Star Spangled Banner" is played by the Army band, the flag near Trophy Point is lowered and every cadet within earshot, uncovers, stands at a attention facing the lowering flag and salutes. It is a reverent moment during a busy day and it is a subtle reminder that the flag and all it symbolizes is why our sons and daughters are at West Point.

Following the flag lowering, the Firsties form for accountability in front of Washington Hall. As guests face Washington Hall, the first regiment stands to the left in front of Eisenhower barracks and second and third regiments follow with the fourth regiment standing near MacArthur statue.

Most parents and friends stand on the diagonal walkway on the plain. Keep in mind A-1 through H-2 march to the left and A-3 through H-4 march to the right as they proceed to the ceremony behind Trophy Point. This is a private ceremony until 1998. The Classes of '98 and '99 voted to allow family and friends observe the ceremony. Underclass cadets line Trophy Point walkway and keep everyone on the far side of the sidewalk surrounding the amphitheater.

If you plan to meet your Firstie after the ceremony, pre-plan a meeting place. In case of inclement weather, Eisenhower Hall is an ideal spot to meet. The 500 lb., 9' ring will be on display and it is a good opportunity to take photos after your cadet gets his/her ring and comes to meet you.

The giant class ring is the main attraction at Saturday's "hop" with a long line of people that wait for an opportunity to take photos and Friday afternoon may be a good time for a "photo op."



Andrew Chavez



Nicholas Ryan



Tyler Donnell & friends



Greg Barber and friend

In the past, the plebes would converge on Firsties near Trophy Point immediately following the ceremony. This must have been chaotic as the Firsties, parents and friends were surrounded by plebes chanting this traditional poem and clamoring to get a look at the ring. Although parents and friends cannot go into the area, the tradition of plebes admiring Firstie rings is better observed from afar.

After the ceremony, cadets can take leave. Some go out with parents and friends and others have elaborate parties or boat rides planned. Whatever, cadets do not have to

return to post until Saturday afternoon.

A banquet is held in Washington Hall. As stated earlier, Ring Weekend is in August and it is usually very warm. (There is no air conditioning in the Cadet Mess!) However, formal long gowns or dressy street-length dresses for women and dark business suits for gentlemen are in order. Cadets wear their India Whites.

The banquet is similar to the Plebe Parent Weekend banquet - except it is in August and the mess hall is not air-conditioned. There is a hop after the banquet and cadets with friends and family can enjoy a walk from Washington Hall or they can catch an Academy bus near MacArthur barracks or the superintendent's house and be driven to Eisenhower Hall. Take lots of pictures and enjoy this very special occasion.

FOOTBALL SEASON

This is the last season you will be able to go to West Point for a football game while your son/daughter is a cadet. If you haven't gone in the past three years, make a point to attend a game. If you have not attended an Army/Navy football game, this is the year to do so! NNMWPPC is organizing a club trip to see the game in New Jersey this year. This game not to be missed!!

BRANCH SELECTION

Throughout the first three years at the Academy, each cadet receives information from branch representatives and faculty members as to the merits of each branch and the particular talents required. By the end of October, a Firstie must select a branch. The Branch Notification Ceremony presently takes place in November. The Firstie makes post selection in February, except Aviation candidates who do not select posts until they have completed their Aviation training at Ft. Rucker, AL.

After much anticipation, the cadets of the graduating class receive their Army branch assignments, which will spell out the futures of the soon-to-be USMA graduates for at least the next five years. Traditionally, the majority of the class receives its first choice from among the many branches offered to the grads for their service obligation. A grad may choose from among a variety of combat arms and combat support service fields. The most popular choice by far, (and the one for which there are the most "slots"), is the Army's main combat branch, that of the "foot soldier," more traditionally known as the Infantry. Other popular branches include Air Defense Artillery, Armor, Aviation, Engineers, and rounding out the combat arms choices, Field Artillery.

In the fields of combat support and combat supply support, there is also a wide array from which to choose: Adjutant General Corps, Chemical Corps, Finance Corps, Medical Service Corps, Military Intelligence, Military Police, Ordnance, Quartermaster, Signal Corps and Transportation Corps. There is an additional branch, which no cadet can elect to enter directly after graduation- Special Forces ("The Green Berets") requires additional

training and experience before one can apply for service in that branch.

Typically, on this very special milestone night, members of the graduating class assemble in Ike Hall, and with traditional West Point fanfare, as one, they ceremoniously open the envelopes that contain their branch insignia that reveal how, in only a few months from then, these young soldiers will begin their Army careers. A soldier's branch of service is dear to his heart, for it spells out the special skills and duties to which the new officer will dedicate him- or herself for at least the next five years.

Traditionally, almost all the cadets get their "first choice." For a few, there may be a measure of disappointment. Not that there's little to select from. Each has a wide range of choice among a variety of combat arms and combat service and/or support organizations that collectively comprise the greatest fighting outfit on the face of the earth- the Army of the United States of America.

From the AG (Adjutant General Corps) to "Transpo" (Transportation), there is something for everyone. For your information, below are described most of the Army branches shown along with their respective insignia:

(AD) Air Defense Artillery



ADA is an outgrowth of Field Artillery branch. This branch is trained in use of weapons that provide protection against attack from the air. The Persian Gulf War highlighted the use of the Patriot Missile System which is operated by members of the ADA branch.

(AG) Adjutant General's Corps



The AG Department was established by the act of 13 March, 1813, and redesignated the Adjutant General's Corps in 1950. Today, the AG is the branch responsible for providing education, development, and training and resettlement services, thus contributing to the operational efficiency of the Army. The branch is charged with improving the efficiency, effectiveness and morale of the Army. Its insignia is the red, white, and blue stars and stripes shield.

(AR) Armor



This branch traces its origin to the U.S. Cavalry. A regiment of cavalry was authorized to be raised by the Continental Congress Resolve of December 12, 1776. The tank service was formed on March 5, 1918. The Armored Force was formed on July 10, 1940 and Armor became a permanent branch of the Army in 1950. Armor training is conducted at Ft. Knox, KY. The "new cavalry" has been effectively instrumental for the U.S. in fighting wars since WWI right up to and including the Persian Gulf War. Armored units are currently deployed in Kosovo and other world locales today.

(AV) Aviation



Following the establishment of the U.S. Air Force as a separate service in 1947, the Army began to develop its own aviation assets (light fixed-wing planes and rotary wing aircraft) in support of ground operations. The Korean War gave this drive impetus and it saw its fruition in the Vietnam War. Aviation performs a variety of missions

including reconnaissance, transport and evacuation, and fire support. Aviation became a separate branch on April 12, 1983, and a full member of the combined arms team for the U.S. Army. All of its pilots are trained at facilities at Ft. Rucker, AL.

(CM) Chemical Corps



With the rise of the use of chemical agents in warfare during WWI, the Chemical Warfare Service was established on June 28, 1918, combining activities that until then had been dispersed among five separate government agencies. It became a permanent branch of the Regular Army by the National Defense Act of 1920. In 1945, it was designated the Chemical Corps.

(EN) Corps of Engineers



The Corps of Engineers was established on June 16, 1775, when by Continental Congressional Authority, a Chief Engineer for the Army was appointed. Congress authorized a Corps of Engineers for the United States on 11 March, 1779. The Corps as it is known today came into being on March 16, 1802, when President Thomas Jefferson was authorized to "organize and establish a Corps of Engineers... that the said Corps... shall be stationed at West Point in the State of New York and shall constitute a Military Academy." A Corps of Topographical Engineers was merged with the Corps of Engineers in March, 1963. Since its inception, the Corps has been responsible for some of the greatest civil engineering feats in the world, building many of the dams, bridges, canals, tunnels and highways that we use even today. Army Engineers are charged with combat ops support in such areas as mobility, counter mobility, survivability, sustainment and topographic engineering, and ground combat (as infantry). Their insignia is the familiar castle whose design all academy visitors should recognize whenever they pass by Pershing Barracks on the Thayer Walk Area.

(FA) Field Artillery "King of the Battle"



The Field Artillery branch was established on November 17, 1775, when the Continental Congress unanimously elected Henry Knox "Colonel of the Regiment of Artillery." The regiment formally entered service on 1 January, 1776. Its insignia is the crossed cannon. FA is a combat arms branch whose mission is "to destroy, neutralize or suppress the enemy by cannon, rocket, or missile fires and to integrate all fires into combined arms operations." Training for its new officers is conducted at Ft. Sill, OK.

(FI) Finance Corps



The Finance Corps is the successor to the old pay department, which was created in June, 1775. The Finance department was created by law on July 1, 1920, and became the Finance Corps in 1950. Among the many of its responsibilities is managing the astronomical payroll of all Army service members, including the Corps of Cadets.

(IN) Infantry



On 14 June, 1775, ten companies of riflemen were authorized by a resolution of the Continental Congress. The oldest regular Army infantry regiment, the 3rd, was constituted on 3 June, 1784, as the new nation's First American Regiment. The infantry is of course the backbone of any army; it is comprised of the foot soldiers that must

always fight on the front wherever battle lines are drawn. Evolving from those first "minuteman militias" of the Revolution to the best trained fighting men in the world today, to "go infantry" is the true and valiant call to arms of many graduates of the United States Military Academy. The infantry insignia is the easily recognizable crossed rifles. All new second lieutenants who select this branch receive their OBC at Ft. Benning, GA.

(MI) Military Intelligence



On 1 July, 1962, General Orders No. 38, an Intelligence and Security established branch of the Army to meet its requirement for national and tactical intelligence. On 1 July, 1967, the branch was redesignated as Military Intelligence. Army Intelligence performs a wide range of tactical and intelligence services in the interests of national security both during periods of peace and war. The need to discover in advance the enemy's tactics and plans and uncover both its strengths and weaknesses has always been an important advantage to our army's generals dating back to Washington and the Revolutionary War. The insignia of MI is a compass rose. The MI OBC is conducted in Arizona.

(MP) Military Police



A Provost Marshal General's Office and Military Police Corps were established in 1941. Prior to that time, except during the Civil War and WWI, there was no regularly appointed PMG or regularly constituted MP Corps, although a Provost Marshal can be found as early as January, 1776, and a Provost Corps as early as 1778. The MPC is charged with protecting and providing security for every U.S. Army installation, post and camp in the world.

(OD) Ordnance



Act of Congress established an Ordnance Department on May 14, 1812. During the Revolutionary War, ordnance material was under Supervision of the Board of War and Ordnance. It acquired its present designation in 1950. The Ordnance Corps oversees the provision of the wide range of armaments, ammunition and material for the Army. Its insignia, the lit-fused bomb, is highly recognizable.

(QM) Quartermaster Corps



The Quartermaster Corps was originally designated as the Quartermaster Department on June 16, 1775. It has the "U.S. Army's Provisioner" as their service branch's motto. The "QM" is the literal lifeline of the Army, responsible for supplying and equipping its soldiers with everything from their BDU's (Battle Dress Uniforms) to their underwear. Virtually every element of field and personal supply passes through the QM to the soldier on the battlefield, including clothing, personal hygiene materials, ammunition, food rations, fuel, and medical items. The importance of the role of the Quartermaster is perhaps best summed up in these terms: "The Key to the Battlefield and Sustainer of Armies."

(SC) Signal Corps Act of Congress authorized the Signal Corps on May 3, 1863. However, it dates its existence from June 21, 1860, when Congress authorized the appointment of one signal officer in the Army, and a War department order carried the



following assignment: "Signal Department- Asst. Surgeon Albert J. Myer to be Signal Officer, with the rank of Major, June 27, 1860, to fill an original vacancy." The Signal Corps has come a long way from flags and mirrors to alert its side to enemy movements. Now,

highly sensitive and accurate electronic devices and state-of-the art communications are keeping careful watch on the movements of those who threaten our national security.

(TC) Transportation



This branch is responsible for getting the Army to the battlefield in the safest and most expeditious manner possible. Rapid troop deployment falls squarely in its lap. This Corps has continually proved itself in virtual every armed conflict (and many humanitarian efforts as well)- witness such "ops" as Desert Storm, among others. Whether by land, rail, or sea, it is the task of Transportation to get the Army where it has to be. "Transpo" officers receive tactical and logistical training during TOBC (Transportation Officer Basic Course), which will culminate in an FTX (Field Training Exercise) with students serving in leadership positions of a typical truck company. The Transpo Corps was created on July 31, 1942, although it can trace its historical background to WWI. Prior to that time, transportation fell under the operations of the Quartermaster General.

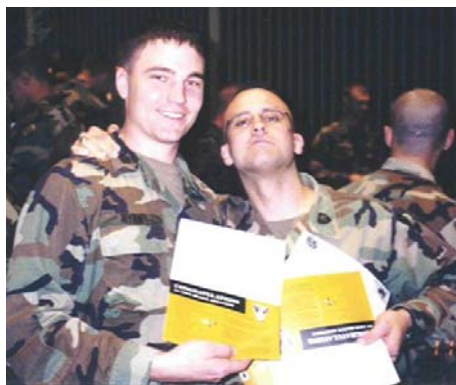
This chart gives you an idea of the Class of 2002 statistics as it relates to the branch assignments and first choice received.

Branch Assignments –2002						# 1st choice	# 1st choice
Branch	Max	Assigned	Male	Female	Male	Female	
IN	209	209	209	0	209	0	
AR	117	117	117	0	108	0	
FA	183	114	113	1	91	1	
AD	75	51	47	4	33	4	
AV	120	111	103	8	106	12	
EN	138	111	87	24	77	15	
SC	60	60	51	9	56	5	
MP	24	24	5	19	10	25	
MI	63	63	50	13	88	25	
AG	24	24	7	17	5	18	
FI	7	7	6	1	21	9	
CM	21	2	0	2	2	0	
TC	29	27	12	15	16	8	
OD	32	11	2	9	3	5	
QM	30	25	7	18	5	7	
MS	10	10	5	5	14	18	
MC		20	15	5			
IS		10	8	2			

BRANCH NOTIFICATION

By mid-October 2001, the Class of 2002 went to Eisenhower Hall and was given their envelopes with the branch assignment enclosed along with branch insignia. A short reception by the branch followed the ceremony. We received a call very soon after our (somewhat inebriated) cadet returned to his room. It is an evening for Firsties to celebrate, and they do!

Anyone can access the branching information after the Branch Ceremony through the internet by using <http://www.usma.edu>. Click on Military Instruction (DMI) and click on "**BRANCHING**" at the end of the military instruction information. Listed are several areas of information that parents and friends can access. Click on "Roster of names by branch choices," "Branch choices," "Branch assignment statistics" and "Satisfaction statistics" and you will be amazed at all the information that is available.



Nicholas Ryan & fellow Aviator

ORDERING FOR GRADUATION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Soon after Thanksgiving but before Army/Navy, the Class of '02 received notice through email that they needed to order announcements for graduation. The "Ring and Crest" rep from each company takes the orders. Remind your cadet that you want him/her to order graduation items and ask your cadet to copy and forward this particular email message or to call you with the options and prices. Invitations and announcements for the graduation ceremony, class crest and personal stationary, name cards and a memorial book can be purchased at reasonable prices.

Due date is in the first week of December. Make sure that you have enough ordered because it is hard to get additional items after order has been placed.

Here is the Class of 2002 prices:

Graduation announcements & invitations:	5.45/10
calling cards	6.95/50
Note card with class crest:	3.45/20
Note card with embossed name:	3.95/20
Memory booklet:	5.95 each

GRADUATION PHOTOS

Cadets usually have two photos taken for Firstie year. In the second semester of your year, the yearbook photo for graduation is taken and the recommended deadline according to the Howitzer staff is May of the year prior to graduation. This photo is very similar to the plebe year photo. *(But what a difference! There is very little of the teenager left and you will be amazed at how much your cadet has changed!)* If a graduating Firstie has not had his/her portrait taken by spring break of their Firstie year, the Howitzer will be forced to use a plebe year portrait.

The second photo, or the "graduation photo" is taken anytime, but the "recommended deadline for class portraits is spring break of the Firstie year."

Your cadet needs to make an appointment at Academy Photo for the sitting. Traditionally, your cadet is in full dress gray over either white or gray, tarbucket in hand along with cadet sword and red sash. Remind your cadet to have the proofs sent home (so that Mom and Dad can pick out their favorites). Retakes are available if you are not happy with the portraits and prices vary according to the package you choose. By having the pictures done early enough you will be sure to have them ready in time for graduation. A nice idea is to send a wallet size photo included with your cadet's graduation invitation or announcements.

Academy Photo
PO Box 102
West Point, NY 11996
845-938-3448
www.academyphoto.com

Right after Spring break, Firsties gather for a panoramic class picture. In 2002, this photo was available through Panorama International, P.O. Box 650063, West Newton, MA 02465-0063. The cost was \$28.00 unframed and \$ 125.00 framed. The phone number for Panorama International is 888.969.0879 and the web address is www.panfoto.com

ARMY UNIFORMS

In October of Firstie year cadets order their uniforms. Previous classes may have ordered their Army uniforms during the second semester. Cadets go to Eisenhower Hall where four or five uniform companies display uniforms and Firsties order their blues and greens. Your cadet will be spending between \$1100 to \$1500 dollars. This is one of those things we can't help with. They have to do this for themselves.

The blue uniform is the "Dress Mess" for formal occasions. The green uniform is considered the "Class A." Also, consider that Dress Mess is used frequently (all formal occasions) and "Class A" is rarely used. This is also a good time to consider ordering extra pairs of BDU's depending on post location (winter or summer weight).

MEMORABILIA

There are A LOT of things to purchase to commemorate your cadet's graduation. Photos, prints, pewter plates, watches, etc., etc., etc.

1.) In February of 2002, parents received a letter offering a frame for the diploma and/or commissioning oath.

2.) Association of Graduates offered *Seiko USMA Class of '02 watches*

3.) The United States Historical Society offered a *pewter Graduation plate*.

4.) Army *Athletic Association* offered a lifetime membership.

5.) Outside the Thayer gate at the "Toy Soldier" shop, I purchased a metal *graduating cadet* (you can purchase a male or female with a variety of hair colors) with diploma, red sash and a hat about to be tossed. This is my favorite memento.

6.) Somewhere during grad week (at the USMA gift shop, in 2000) *class T-shirts* were sold. The class crest and every graduating cadet's name are listed on the shirt.

POST NIGHT

The class of '02 had Post Night in February. Each branch meets separately on this evening at a pre-arranged spot.

Exceptions were:

- The Aviation branch did not meet as the second lieutenants pick their posts during Officers' Basic Course (OBC).
- The Military Police branch submitted their post selections via computer prior to Post Night and were notified through email of their post assignment.

CLEAN OUT ROOMS EARLY

We cannot stress how important it is for your Firstie to start cleaning out his/her room early. From a slightly filled duffle bag on R-Day, their possessions have expanded logarithmically. Encourage your Firstie to begin sending/bringing things home at Christmas. Continue to encourage as you can. As it is, most new 2nd LTs. can be seen leaving the West Point with the cars filled to the top of the interior with boxes, uniforms, computers etc.

Cadets can send things home (or to OBC or their first assignment via a shipping company. This is done free of charge; however, this takes time out of an already busy grad week and your cadet may decide to bring things home by him/herself.

REMINDER &/OR ADVISE YOUR CADET: DO NOT SEND ARMY UNIFORMS VIA THIS SHIPPING SERVICE. ITEMS MAY NOT ARRIVE IN TIME FOR OBC.

In years past, parents have rented a van in order to help bring everything home and because of the **RENTAL**; the cadet was able to get some reimbursement. You may want to have your cadet investigate this possibility.

100th NIGHT

This event is celebrated by the cadets in late February/early March and commemorates the mere 100 days remaining until graduation. It permits the Firsties to reflect upon their four years at the Academy.

This show is a hoot! It is written, directed, acted and produced by the graduating class and has its tradition dating back to the nineteenth century. Much of what is done is definitely spoof, some over our civilian/non-cadet heads, but to hear the raucous laughter of the cadet audience is contagious. The talent is quite good. The vignettes depict the previous three and a half years at the Academy, and if your cadet has been keeping you informed as to the goings on, you might just have an inside track to enjoyment. . As with Ring Weekend, 100th Night is more cadet oriented, although many parents do attend

Saturday is free during the day. In the evening, a formal banquet is held in Washington Hall for Firsties and their guests. A formal ball follows this; cadets will be wearing their full-dress uniforms. Dark suits for men and dressy attire for women would be appropriate. While the ball is in progress, the 100th Night Show is presented once again and is open to the public and to the underclass cadets.

For those parents who wish to attend 100th Night, do not expect your cadet to stay with you the entire weekend. Cadets may want to be with their fellow cadets. It is slowly sinking into their heads and hearts that their Academy experience will soon end.

CLASS HOME PAGE

All of the graduating classes have a web site. Look for one for the Class of 2003 (probably after Winter or Spring break). Access <http://www.usma.edu> and click on the highlighted words: **Association of Graduates** and then find the **Class of 2003** (or the Class of '04, '05, or '06 when their time comes) and check out the home page for the graduating class.

GRADUATION WEEK

RESERVATIONS

It is never too early to make reservations at a hotel or motel for graduation week. If you are not all set now, get moving! You have made a real project for yourself.

WHERE TO STAY DURING GRAD WEEK

By now, most of you should have your hotel or motel reservations made for Graduation Week. If not, we suggest that you start checking with your favorite hotel/motel now to find what its graduation stay requirements are. Some hotels and motels will take reservations several years in advance; some will not take any reservations for the current year until 8:00 AM on January 1. Most motels will have a 3 or 4-day minimum stay, so check with your favorites now and see what regulations they have. It is never too early to make your reservations. At the last minute, there is usually no problem finding accommodations in areas such as Suffern, provided you do not mind a 25-minute commute. Just pack everything that you will need for each day. On the Friday of the parade, there is ample time to get back to your motel, shower, and change into formal clothes for the banquet at 7:30 PM.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Nearby hotels in the Highland Falls and neighboring areas have **LONG ADVANCED BOOKING POLICIES AND A MINIMUM STAY REQUIREMENTS OF FOUR OR FIVE DAYS.**

Check out the resource page on the Parent Forum for a list of various hotels in the area. Go to www.west-point.org/parent/wpp-net/faq/

Click on with “Hotels in the area” or “More hotels” for a list with phone numbers of the various hotels in the area.

DINNER

There are numerous restaurants where you, your family and cadet can relax and enjoy a good meal during graduation week. Your cadet can direct you to his/her favorite places in Newburgh, Fishkill, Nyack, Cornwall or Peekskill.

Grand Union in Highland Falls (845.446.8285) offers party trays and are very friendly and accommodating. There are numerous pizza places and your cadet probably knows all the phone numbers. This may be an alternative to dining out if you have a large crew to feed.

Some families decide to stay in the West Point area on Saturday evening and make their departure on Sunday. Because it is a hectic week and everyone is exhausted, it may be a good idea to stay the night, enjoy an evening out with your family at a restaurant of your cadet's choice.

ON POST PARTIES

Here's another idea: Contact the DCA (Director of Cadet Activities). Under new "Management" since Graduation 2000, the DCA has attacked Graduation with a vengeance!

The DCA's motto is: "If you'd like it, we'll do it". And they proved it! There are lots of nooks and crannies around West Point. The DCA will arrange tents, canopies, catering, seating, whatever for any spot you pick. You might consider getting together with other parents from the club and going joint venture. Contact the DCA. You won't be sorry.

PICNIC

There are some excellent picnic spots at West Point

- ◆ South Dock area, and the South Athletic Fields, below Thayer Hall on the river level.
- ◆ Buffalo Soldier Field (by Thayer Gate) has some areas surrounding it that have nice shade trees.
- ◆ Lusk Reservoir across from Michie Stadium has some nice areas.
- ◆ Down by the river at Shea Stadium provides out of the way areas to picnic.
- ◆ There are small picnic areas all over the main post area -- look for shaded area with a nice place to sit and good views -- some by the hospital -- just don't go into housing areas.
- ◆ If you don't need a table, then Trophy Point is lovely and you could sit on the grass. There are a few benches out there, too.

GRAD WEEK INFORMATION

In April or May as it was last year, the Academy will mail you a Graduation Week Schedule. You will see that there are activities during the entire week before Graduation. Some parents do attend for the whole week, and some come for just Friday and Saturday or a long weekend. The various attractions include academic open houses, Glee Club / USMA Band / organ concert, awards ceremonies, USMA bookstore, Cadet Parachute Team demo, Cadet Drill Team, museum, Tower Suite restoration, and much more. If your cadet should be receiving awards, these ceremonies are held Tuesday PM (athletics), Thursday PM (department - academics), and Friday AM (stars, wreaths, etc.). Consult the attached "Graduation Week Schedule" from the class of 2002 for a sample of events. Regardless of how much time you choose to spend there, you will want to arrive no later than noon on Friday for the big parade. There is also an awards parade on Thursday prior to the Friday graduation parade around 11 AM, which includes a terrific demonstration by the Black Knights, the Army Parachuting Team.



During Grad Week, be sure to take advantage of the Firstie Club. Prices are reasonable and the Club is open to the families of graduating cadets for lunch and dinner.

Be sure to stop by the Highland Falls liquor store to purchase a bottle of the Class of 2003 Wine (approximately \$20.00).

TICKETS

Most activities during graduation week require tickets or reservations. Cadets are issued four (4) tickets for Thursday's parade, and the same for Friday's. Cadets may reserve spaces for three (3) guests for the banquet on Friday evening (wine glasses!). Tickets were sold last year's graduation banquet for "overflow tickets" on a first come-first serve basis at the West Point Club and then when that was full (750 tickets), tickets went on sale for an additional "overflow table" at the Thayer Hotel. Encourage your Firstie to track down tickets for additional family members.

Tickets are checked for seating in the grandstands for parades.

The same is true for graduation. Cadets receive about 10 tickets for reserved seating for graduation. There are additional tickets available at the gates. Nobody has to sit outside. It's just that the reserved seats are best.

OFFICIAL INFORMATION

The official graduation schedule sent by the Academy should arrive to you by early May 2003. The Graduation booklet contains a letter of invitation from the Superintendent, a complete schedule of events, with notes, exceptions and alternate plans for weather and an official parking pass for graduation day. Also included in the packet are a schedule of Chapel services and the shuttle busses, telephone numbers of restaurants, motels and cadet companies and other post facilities. Recommended dress is described and directions to West Point from major airports are included. Included with this booklet was a map for handicapped parking.

CADET ACCESS TO EARLIER INFORMATION

In early February, our Firstie forwarded an email titled "Grad Week Schedule" he had received from the "chain of command." For parental purposes, this email was mostly accurate. At the end of this email, it stated that Firsties could log on to the "class directory" to get information regarding class activities and/or graduation week. I am not sure how a cadet goes about logging on to the "class directory", but I am sure it is something they should know how to do.

Our Firstie forwarded a nine-page schedule during the second week of May. This schedule gave EVERY detail starting with term ends and ending with 7 p.m. on graduation day. This inventory of days gave the times for every mandatory meal, every graduation week parade practice, used book sales, etc., etc., etc. The schedule is probably more than you want to know, but it does give you an idea of all the activities and events that your cadet must attend to during graduation week. This is a very busy

time for your Firstie (and sometimes stressful, too).

Quite a few Firstie handbooks I have looked at say, "Don't count on your cadet for information." On a personal note, I found that our cadet was very willing to share information with us and as long as I said, "Please let me know about . . . " he did so. However, cadets are a busy lot during the last months at the Academy and it is imperative for moms and dads to keep in contact with their parents clubs and the WPP-NET. Valuable information is out there for those who are vigilant and for those who ask questions.

LAST MINUTE SCHEDULE CHANGES

A reliable source gave some valuable information that may help: When you get to West Point during Grad Week, locate a current issue of The Pointer View, the post newspaper, and if there are any schedule changes, you will find them there.

The cadet hostess (845.938.3104) is supposedly available to answer questions regarding the schedule. I have also read in some Firstie Parents Handbook that the cadet hostess is available at Eisenhower Hall during graduation week to answer questions.

GENERAL CHECKLISTS

- You really need to arrive early for activities.
- Be prepared for any kind of weather.
- Pre-arrange meeting places before hand...especially for after the graduation ceremony.
- Tickets for both parades, the banquet and graduation are a must. You will be required to produce them. Your cadet may only be able to secure a limited number of premium seats.
- Bring your hotel reservation confirmation number.
- Bring plenty of film.
- Wear comfortable shoes and plan on walking.
- Check for time changes of activities.
- Keep a small cooler of drinks and snacks in your trunk for after parade and graduation refreshments.
- Grant Hall, Ike Hall and the Officer's Club are open for refreshments and/or lunch. It was crowded!
- Grad schedule with Parking Pass
- Binoculars
- Lawn chairs (tubular folding- a must for elderly parents/grandparents)
- Tissues
- Snacks and drinks
- Pencil and paper
- Bug repellent
- Comfortable shoes and clothing
- If sunny: sunblock
 sunglasses, & hat

- If rainy: paper towels to wipe off wet bleachers
umbrellas
ponchos

PARKING

Every "Firstie Parent Handbook" has advice regarding parking during graduation week. Here are a few suggestions:

- Arrive early for activities.
- Plan on walking.
- The parking permit sent in the official graduation booklet is good only on graduation day. Even on graduation day, it seems to have no discernible effect on where you get to park
- Even if you do not have a handicapped person in your party, consider dropping the elderly members of your group near the entrance of the activity.

Parking on Thursday and Friday should be no problem as long as you arrive early.

The president was the graduation speaker for the Class of '02 and all the rules for parking seemed to have been suspended. Be ready to deal with the "all-bets-are-off" security considerations if the President is the guest speaker. Parents throughout the years have written that if you get to the post early enough on graduation day, you can park at Buffalo Soldiers' Field. This may not be so. Be prepared for mass confusion for parking if one- the President is the guest speaker or two- there is still massive construction on Michie Stadium. The best advice is to park and then walk to the stadium in comfortable walking shoes. Of course if you are with elderly folks, this will not be an option.

Here some parking information that was given for the class of 2002:

Recreational vehicle parking for cadet families is authorized for graduation week at North Dock. During graduation week, the graduation shuttle will service North Dock area. A pass is not required to park in this area during Graduation week. The recreational vehicles must park in the back of the lot on the black hard top surface. Recreational vehicle parking at North Dock is on a first come first serve basis only. This is not an authorized tent camping area.

HANDICAPPED PARKING

If you have a "handicapped" parking tag, use it. If you have elderly or handicapped guests and they have a tag, remind them to bring it. A map included in the grad week booklet gives details of available handicapped parking.

Handicap parking is reserved in H lot located on Stony Lonesome Road. Personnel possessing any state handicap license plate or placard are authorized parking in the handicap parking area. Personnel wishing to obtain a temporary handicap parking pass for a serious condition which would prohibit the use of the regular parking or shuttle must have their cadet request the pass through their Tactical Officer or MP office.

Let us share our experience. We were sent to Stoney Lonesome parking lot due to the

Handicap sticker in our dashboard and special Handicap pass, which our cadet picked up from the MP's office. The Academy has had some special shuttle service available for the handicapped. These lines are very long and but we had no other choice. Two of the members of our group went in the Handicap Shuttle line. They were dropped off behind Michie Stadium and went across the walkway and were in the stadium prior to the ceremony. The rest of the party who stayed in the regular line for the shuttle to Michie Stadium, finally got off the bus that was stopped on the hill going down to Michie Stadium and walked rather briskly to the Stadium and arrived after the cadets had marched in. Plan on arriving early to avoid long lines and give yourself plenty of time for shuttles. We can not stress this enough!!

Keep in mind that the graduation ceremony is held in Michie Stadium and walking the steps to reach your seats or to find a rest room is a chore even for the physically fit.

TUESDAY

The Cadet Glee Club has a concert on Tuesday at 7:30 pm at Eisenhower Hall Theater. If you are planning on arriving early for the Graduation activities, plan on catching this awesome concert and be prepared to shed a tear or two at the emotional renderings of the club.

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY

After the morning parade, on Wednesday, the Superintendent's reception (In the garden of his residence--a fabulous location!) for 1st and 2nd regiments is scheduled from 1:00-4:00 P.M. Two events of importance occur on Thursday. They are the Awards parade in the morning and the superintendent's reception for the 3rd and 4th regiment in the afternoon.

Keep in mind; the superintendent's reception is required for all Firsties. Each cadet and his/her family go through the receiving line to meet the Supe and his wife.

The scheduled time for the third regiment reception is 1:00 to 2:30 P.M. This time will be further broken down for each battalion.

1:00 - 1:30: A-3, B-3, C-3

1:30 - 2:00: D-3, E-3

2:00 - 2:30: F-3, G-3, H-3

(NOTE: If your cadet is in first or second regiment, the reception will take place on Wednesday with the same times as Thursday. You need only to substitute first regiment for third and second regiment for fourth.)

Plan on standing in a line to be introduced to the superintendent and his wife. It looks like it will be a long wait when you first arrive, but the line moves right along. While we were in line, we found that it was a great time to visit and become re-acquainted with parents and cadets.

The booklet that you will receive from the Academy will give you an alternate place for the reception in case of rain.

Dress is business casual (dresses/suits/jackets/ties) and although tents are put up for shade, this can be a very hot and sticky event - or cold and windy.

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

On Thursday evening, usually 7:30 PM, the Most Holy Trinity Church, Cadet Chapel and Jewish Chapel all hold Baccalaureate Services. You must arrive early. There is no view from the seats in the back. If you have attended services with your cadet at West Point before or simply want to give thanks in this manner, services at the chapels are available at this time. The Baccalaureate Services held at the various places of worship is so very special and moving. Make every effort to attend.



CADET PRAYER

O God, our Father, Thou Searcher of Men's Hearts, help us to draw near to Thee in sincerity and truth. May our religion be filled with gladness and may our worship of Thee be natural. Strengthen and increase our admiration for honest dealing and clean thinking, and suffer not our hatred of hypocrisy and pretence ever to diminish. Encourage us in our endeavor to live above the common level of life. Make us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never to be content with a half truth when the whole truth can be won. Endow us with courage that is born of loyalty to all that is noble and worthy that scorns to compromise with vice and injustice and knows no fear when truth and right are in jeopardy. Guard us against flippancy and irreverence in the sacred things of life. Grant us new ties of friendship and new opportunities of service. Kindle of hearts in fellowship with those of a cheerful countenance, and soften our hearts with sympathy for those who sorrow and suffer. Help us to maintain the honor of the Corps untarnished and unsullied and to show forth in our lives the ideals of West Point in doing our duty in Thee and to our Country.

All of which we ask in the name of the Great Friend and Master of men.

AMEN.



THURSDAY

The best parades are the Alumni Parade on Tuesday (if you are arriving early) and the Superintendent's Parade on Thursday. Both are not as well attended and you can see your cadet march on and off just as they have done for the last four years in your absence.

FRIDAY

Tickets are required to sit in the stands for viewing the Graduation Parade. Each cadet is issued four tickets and every Firstie Handbook source states emphatically: **Arrive early!** The Class of 2002 had the Graduation Parade at 10:30 Friday morning. Some people arrived at 8:00 A.M. for the parade. It sounds early, but people were commenting that it was worth the wait. If you don't have tickets, you'll be able to watch from the sidelines--crowded and a poor vantage point. Try to secure tickets and tickets will be checked prior to entering the stands.

The Graduation Parade is probably the most meaningful parade for Firsties. The particular sequence of music for this ceremony is not used for any other parade. The battalions' march onto the Plain to the tune of "Stars and Stripes Forever" change to "The Dashing White Sergeant" as the initial line is reached. The band troops the line to the "Graduation March" consisting of the first eight bars of "Home, Sweet Home" followed by parts of "100 Days 'til June," "The Wedding March," "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "Auld Lang Syne," and concluding with the entirety of "Home, Sweet Home." The First Class forms for "Front and Center" to their "Alma Mater." The First Class cadets then form a reviewing line, which stretches the length of the Plain, and the Corps (the three underclasses) pass in review to the "Official West Point March." As each company comes abreast of the first cadet of the graduation class, it executes "eye right" and holds the salute until they pass the last graduating cadet. Those graduating salute by uncovering to honor their home company as it passes their position in line. And with that, another class joins "The Long Gray Line."



Photo courtesy of Martha Barber

As the Corps marches off the field, the First Class, which is still standing on the Plain near the stands, is dismissed. Most cadets went to search for family and friends and to have yet more photographs taken. This is an excellent photo-op. Firsties will be wearing the same uniform as for graduation. If pictures are taken now, your new 2LT will be able to leave the graduation ceremony right away and get a jump on checking out

of the barracks. You and your cadet need to figure this out ahead of time and decide on meeting places...especially for after graduation.

If the weather should be hot - water is a must! There are no fountains on the Plain and you will be in direct sunlight for three hours! Small plastic bottles work great.



By 12:45 PM, the parade will be history and you will have, hopefully, found your cadet. There are some nice shade trees behind the reviewing stands; these provide a cool place to chat and take additional pictures. Keep in mind that you will probably be hot and tired and will need to get back to your room to change for the banquet.

Remember that although this is a very special day for you, the regular community will be getting out of work and there will be traffic as they work their way home. Leave extra time for driving back and forth.



GRADUATION BANQUET

This is a formal affair with long or cocktail dresses for the women and dark business suits for the men. Usually each cadet is allowed to purchase 3 guest tickets for the banquet. Some Firsties will only need 1 or 2 tickets and your cadet can ask around and pick up an additional ticket or two from others. The Firstie can also purchase tickets for the overflow banquet at the Officers' Club. These are on a first come, first serve basis. The Academy in the past has arranged for family members who do not have tickets to the banquet to attend a satellite banquet at the West Point Club. The tickets will be sold only to cadets and are limited to 6 tickets per cadet. The meal is the same as served in the Mess Hall and there is an audio hook-up so the speeches can be heard. The Academy will make announcements (via e-mail) to let the Firsties know what arrangements can be made. Make sure your Firstie is aware of what you need.

The shuttle lines were extremely long for the Graduation banquet. All vehicles were directed to Buffalo Soldier Field and shuttles were leaving from BSF for the Mess Hall. There were many very anxious Firsties looking for their families on the steps of

Washington Hall as the 7:00 hour approached. Again due to security at West Point allow plenty of time to pass security, park and stand in line for the shuttle service. The other option is to wear very comfortable shoes, carry the fancy heels in a tote bag and walk to Washington Hall. Take bubble wrap with you so your souvenir wine glasses arrive back to New Mexico in great shape.

After the banquet, there is a formal reception and dance at Eisenhower Hall, usually from 9:00 PM to 1:00 AM. This is a great time to meet with old friends and share memories.

SATURDAY

Get up, get dressed and get yourselves to Michie Stadium early. If the president is going to be the speaker, you need to park and be prepared to walk or take a shuttle to the stadium even earlier.

The last official March you don't want to miss occurs on the road from the Chapel to the football practice field around 8:00 am before the graduation ceremonies begin. A lot of people are in a hurry to get into the stadium and miss this event. Stand along the road facing Lusk Reservoir or down further near Professor Row and wait till the cadets pass by. They march up the hill in reverse order with H-4 Company first and ending with A-1. This is truly an awesome march as the cadets know it is their last official parade.

You may be seated for a couple of hours before the ceremony starts, so dress comfortably and be prepared for rain, sun, heat or cold, or even a little of all the above. You will see a variety of dress. Some people were really dressed - men in suits (not to be confused with the movie "Men in Black") and ties, women in fancy summer dresses and high heels - but most were sensible and wore comfortable clothes and shoes. Actually, the men in black were watching over the President.

The concession stands should be open and food and drink can be purchased.

After the graduating class entered the stadium and the officials were seated, the ceremony began and within an hour and a half, our sons/daughters were graduated and commissioned second lieutenants in the United States Army. It was indeed a glorious and joyous moment.

GRADUATION CEREMONY

Graduation takes place at Michie Stadium and is scheduled for 9:00 AM. Under normal circumstances, Graduation is open to the public and the gates to Michie Stadium open at 7:00 AM and it is not unusual for lines to begin at 7:00 AM. Tickets for reserved seats are distributed to the cadets by Company during Grad Week and may be given out as late as the day before the ceremony. Additionally, the ceremony is usually available for viewing in Christ Arena, Holleder Center, which may be an option for the less stalwart if the weather takes a turn for the worst. The doors open at 7:00 AM. Dress

comfortably for the weather, in the past, the weather has been hot and humid. The Visitor's Center is a good alternative for those not wishing to deal with the weather or the hike to Michie. It is open, air-conditioned and the ceremony is televised on a big screen television.

Make sure to ask your cadet where he or she will be seated. Cadets are usually grouped according to companies, and each is assigned to a specific seat of a certain row. If you have a good pair of binoculars, you might even be able to find your cadet on the field. For some reason, with 1,000 identical full-dress uniforms, they all tend to look rather similar. All cadets' names are announced individually when receiving their diploma. After the customary opening remarks and presentations, the featured speaker will give the graduation address. The ceremony is not elaborate, but is impressive and solemn in its tone and setting. The members of the graduating class are about to assume the positions of responsibility for which they have worked so long and hard to achieve; their cadet careers are fast coming to an end as they await the presentation of their diplomas. Usually several dozen distinguished cadets receive their diplomas first, then the rest come forward in a specified order. After all of the diplomas are presented, the Superintendent gives the Commissioning Oath to the graduates. The First Captain then announces, "Class Dismissed," and the graduates toss their white caps high into the air.

NOTE: If the President of the United States happens to be the speaker, be aware that security will be very tight. You will have to walk through a metal detector, have your handbag (and any other bag) searched, and have your camera examined. Because of all of this extra processing time just to get inside the stadium, you may want to arrive much earlier than 8:30 AM. The entire area will be crawling with Secret Service men and women and there will be sharpshooters in high places. Some of the reserved seat assignments will be changed for "security reasons." Even after you are actually inside the stadium, if you stray outside of the security perimeter (perhaps looking for a restroom), you will have to pass inspection a second time.

Final Note: Many parents have reported that because this can be a very hectic and emotional day it is suggested that you order a Graduation Video when they are offered so that you will have a lasting memory of this day. The version of the video you receive will be tailored to your cadet's Company as they receive their diplomas (additional cost to have your cadet's company included) and this video arrives in July.

GRAD WEEK ESSENTIAL TIPS

- A medium sized cooler filled with "cold" bottled water, orange juice or any soft drink to have available during the ceremony. (Check first due to security)
- A tote bag filled with snacks, ex: bagels, muffins or doughnuts. Be sure to bring napkins and paper cups.
- Bring a towel to wipe down the bleachers if it has rained the night before.
- It is VERY IMPORTANT to be at the stadium at least two hours before the cadets' march-on.
- Bring extra rolls of film, including batteries. The stadium sells film but not batteries.
- Organization is the key to a successful graduation experience. Try to have your plans worked out ahead of time and you will enjoy graduation.

- It cannot be over stressed how important it is to be early for all the events and activities during graduation week.
- If you have lots of family or friends coming for Graduation, distribute an agenda, map and meeting places and times. Let them be on their own, so you do not miss anything.
- Your cadet really may not want to give the grand tour of WP to all the family members...so try to keep it simple for your cadet's sake. Most cadets are still in the process of packing those last minute things so they do not need any extra pressure.
- Keep tissues handy at all times...it is an emotional time and you will find a few tears flowing during the week.
- BE FLEXIBLE with your plans...remember your cadet is graduating and is in the process of saying goodbye to their friends. Your cadet needs to be able to have some time of his/her own to do what he/she needs to do.
- Ask your cadet what their schedule is, so you can plan to attend graduate rehearsal if you choose to. It's a great opportunity to see where your cadet is going to be seated and to know when his company marches in. The same goes for the graduate parade rehearsal.
- By knowing your cadet's schedule, you can arrive early enough on graduation day to see your cadet's final march with his class around the reservoir to Howse Field (the staging area prior to the cadets graduation).
- Wear comfortable walking shoes...you will be doing plenty of walking.
- Wear sunscreen...you will burn otherwise! Hats are a great idea!
- Plan to meet your cadet at a specified spot after the ceremony is over. A designated yard line on the football field is a good choice. Make sure you are very specific as to where you will meet (for example- the 25-yard line on the south side of the stadium). Our cadet found us in the stands by seeing his grandmother wave her cane back and forth and he joined us up in the stands after the ceremony!
- If you are meeting family and friends for graduate week, cell phones are very helpful to keep in touch.

ENJOY THE DAY! It is one of the most emotional and proudest days of your life - a day unmatched by any other day.

After the customary opening remarks and presentations, the featured speaker will give the graduation address. The ceremony is not elaborate, but is impressive and solemn in its tone and setting. The members of the graduating class are about to assume the positions of responsibility, which they have worked so long and hard to achieve; their cadet careers are fast coming to an end as they await the presentation of their diplomas. Usually several dozen distinguished cadets receive their diplomas first; then the rest come forward in specified order. After all of the diplomas are presented, the Superintendent gives the commissioning Oath to the graduates. The First Captain then announces, "Class Dismissed," and the graduates toss their white caps high into the air.



Photo courtesy of Martha Barber

CLASS DISMISSED

While the diplomas are being presented, many children will gather on the field; eagerly awaiting the traditional “Hat Toss”. Children of a certain age and height can partake in a tradition on graduation day after the graduates' hats are thrown in the air. Each child is invited to try to recover a hat. An announcement on the message board in Michie Stadium tells parents when to take or send their children to the North end of the stadium where they are measured. All children must be as tall as a certain wooden cadet at the location where they are told to meet. All cadets have their names inside their hats and some will even write a special note and include money for the children who will catch the hats.



TRAVELING WITH THE ELDERLY OR PHYISCALLY CHALLENGED

I was told to be absolutely honest in this section. West Point as we know is extremely hilly and not conducive to handicap accessibility and it is not an easy place for even the most fittest to negotiate. However having said that, it can work taking an elderly parent or grandparent. After all, they have participated in all activities of your son and daughter up to this point. Take a little more time, plan on leaving very early for all events so that you are not rushed and do take a tubular folding chair with you at all times along with a bottle of water. When my mother got tired and that was easy with the amount of walking involved for graduation events, we simply found a shady area under a tree, fixed her up with her chair and water and she was pleased to sit, relax and watch people.

Be sure you are honest with the family and friends that you invite to the week and let them know that there is a tremendous amount of walking, lots of stairs and very little handicap accessibility or parking. Most MPs are very helpful and understand that you need handicap parking but due to the events of 9/11 security is extremely tight and many parking areas that are normally open to handicap and would be convenient are not open or available.

AFTER GRADUATION

It is a tradition for the new 2nd Lts. to give a silver dollar to the first enlisted person (from post, in this case) to salute him or her. The silver dollar is generally uncirculated and of the current year although it has been known to be a tradition that a silver dollar be handed down through the Corps. YOU best purchase this at HOME, where it will cost only \$8, or \$11 including box and tax. In the area of the Academy, the same silver dollar can cost up to \$25 because of the demand.

BAR PINNING CEREMONIES-

This is an individual event that some Firsties choose to do and others choose not to do. The newly commissioned second lieutenants change into their new green uniforms in the barracks and often go to a pre-arranged place for the bar pinning ceremony. Often, officers that cadets have come to know are present and read the commissioning oath while moms and dads or other family members pin the "butter bars" on the uniform.

Popular sites include Trophy Point, the Chapels, the Plain and the statues on the Plain. If this ceremony takes place, your cadet may elect to do this in Company or with a particular Team, Club or organization or group

At the 2002 graduation, a tradition took place. Old Grads from the Class of 1952 met the new Second Lieutenants as they left the podium. Each was presented with a pair of 2LT bars engraved on the underside with: "52-02".



Greg Barber and friends

Nicholas Ryan, Amanda Ryan & Debbie Dado Ryan



Tyler Donnell, Alton & Carolyn Donnell



Andrew Chavez & COL. Garcia



Greg Barber and Doug Barber

MOVING DAY AT THE BARRACKS

The barrack rooms must be emptied by 5:00 P.M. on graduation day. Cadets usually clean ahead of time so their rooms will pass inspection by the TAC. To avoid the mad dash that afternoon, it is possible for most of this to be accomplished prior to graduation day. (Solely the cadets accomplish this; no moms or dads can do this deed.) However, parents need to know about these tasks, because your cadet will not be able to leave immediately after graduation, as he/she must return all sashes, sabers, plumes, sign-out and say good-bye to four years of friends.

If you are planning a celebration lunch or dinner, take this into account. Your Firstie will not be ready for anything until he/she accomplishes the above-mentioned requirements. We recommend the go-with-the-flow approach rather than causing increased anxiety.

PHOTOS

Academy Photo offers a video for approximately \$80.00 (plus postage and handling) of Grad week highlights and for \$99.00 (plus postage and handling) gives you the same video plus your offspring receiving his/her diploma.

Academy Photo sent graduation proofs of individual cadets receiving their diplomas by the third week in June. Cost in 2002 for the package was \$ 68.00 (plus \$6.00 handling). Each cadet's photo was taken receiving his/her diploma or shaking hands with the superintendent or the commandant. Academy Photo also offers a photo of the hat toss. The cost of an 8" x 10" hat toss photo was \$15.00.

Although Academy Photo has been asked to take family photos during graduation week, their policy is to only take group and family photos at the Graduation Hop on Friday evening between 9 pm and 11 pm. Allen Borack (owner of Academy Photo) suggests that cadets and their families need to come to the second balcony of Eisenhower Hall as soon as the Graduation Banquet is over (the sooner the better) and have their photo taken. The photo package prices ranges from \$14 to \$35.00 (plus shipping).

TENT RENTAL AND CATERERS

It is possible to have your family celebration on the grounds of West Point but it is not a simple process and should be begun by February of the graduation year.

The initial contact is the Director of the Fields found in the Dept of Physical Ed. The form he will send to you is the USMA Reg 210-6. Your cadet will need a sponsor to send this form through the system for approval. This person could be his original sponsor, a professor, or TAC officer, for example.

Popular sites are South Dock and Buffalo Soldier Field. By 3 PM on Saturday afternoon, the only people at Buffalo Soldier are the few families tenting so it is nothing like a football Saturday or other college graduations you may have attended where families linger for the day. Tent companies can supply all you need including tables, chairs, linens, grills, china and flatware, or paper products.

TENT COMPANIES

Montgomery Hudson Valley Tent: 845-788-3175, 800-255-2698

Newburgh Classic Tent: 845-564-5858

Highland Champion: 845-691-8236

Orange County Rental: 845-342-5611 (Used by Club families on recommendation of caterer and they were happy with the service.)

CATERERS

Nicole's: Rte 9W. Highland Falls. Cold buffet was excellent. They deliver
Pamela's Traveling Feast. Rte 9W. Newburgh. Sit down dinner was excellent.

Grand Union

Cadet Restaurant

CB Driscoll: Montgomery 845-457-1300

There were many restaurants and stores in the area that had signs in their windows about catering during grad week. If you want to leave your food arrangements until then, or if you have last minute needs, the local establishments are handy.

SATURDAY NIGHT

This is a nice time to take your new officer out to eat. After an exhausting couple of days, you might not want to begin your trip home until the following day. If you will be driving home Saturday night, you will have to check out of your motel room prior to the graduation ceremony. Be aware that many of the graduates may want to stay for the weekend, primarily due to all of the weddings (of their fellow cadets) that take place in the post chapels during the remainder of the weekend. Some families get together and have group parties at various hotels, function halls, etc., talk to your cadet about what plans they may have following the graduation ceremony.

You will want to finish Graduation Day off in a manner that is best for the safety of your family and group. Do not let your graduate try to drive that afternoon to some distance location. Graduation week has been extremely hectic for your former cadet and most want to leave and get away as soon as possible. Encourage them to take the night off, and celebrate this wonderful occasion. It is best to start off the next morning refreshed.

RESTAURANTS

Schades. 54 Main Street, Highland Falls 845-446-2626

The Park. 53 Main Street, Highland Falls 845-446-8709

Gasho Japanese Steakhouse. One of the cadets' favorites...authentic reassembled Japanese steakhouse - excellent food, excellent service and entertainment also. Reservations are suggested. Address is: 16 Route 17M, Monroe, NY 10950. Phone 845-783-2670.

Schlesinger's Steakhouse. One of the cadets' favorites...great steaks, great seafood, hearty portions, good prices. Reservations are suggested.
Address is: 293 Temple Hill Road, New Windsor, NY 12553. Phone 845-561-1762

Rainbow Restaurant. It is excellent Northern Italian cuisine, huge portions, and excellent service. Reservations can be made the day before.

The Lakeview House. House on the Lake converted into a quiet, unique restaurant. Perfect for that special occasion. Reservations are recommended.
Address is: 205 Lakeside Rd, Newburgh. Phone 845-566-7100

Bella Rose Ristorante. 9W, Cold Springs (Italian). Phone 845-265-7837

The Blue Heron. 631 Route 17K, Montgomery. Phone 845-567-0111
(Voted best in Hudson Valley) 4*

Cosimos. Just a little south of the Hampton Inn on SR 300. It is a lovely, contemporary Italian restaurant with delicious food and reasonable prices

GRADUATION GIFTS



Money is always appropriate for grads, especially since space may be at a premium for a year or more. More and more the grads will have the opportunity to wear civilian clothes, so a welcomed choice would include a gift certificate to a favored retailer. Sporting goods may also be nice gift idea.

Laptop computers make a great grad gift so that your new 2nd Lt. can stay in touch; cell phones are also not a bad idea. Order a gift saber from the C store early in the year.

Parents can call 845-938-2121. Sabers purchased from the C-store are cheaper than those through the AOG gift shop.

Your cadet will receive a diploma and Commissioning Certificate. If you are buying frames from the C store or the mail order forms you will receive, you will want to order both frames so that they match each other as there are several vendors and styles available.

FIRSTIE SWORD

Firsties can buy a cadet sword at the Cadet Store for about \$100. Different displays for the sword are also available for about \$100. A wooden shadow box with black velvet lining and brass inscribed plaque (plaque needs to be ordered for inscription) or a crossed sword & scabbard effect with the WP crest in the center are available, again at the Cadet Store. Either one makes a wonderful display and memento for either the cadet or his family. Talk to

your cadet as what you might want to do.

CLASS PISTOL

Cadets have an opportunity to purchase a commemorative class pistol in the Fall of their first year. In 2002, it was a Colt Commander .45 caliber in a stainless steel finish with rosewood grips. The left side is engraved with “United States Military Academy – Duty Honor Country” the right side is engraved with “Class of 2002 Pride in all We do.” The cost was \$750.00. You can see more information by going to the following web page: <http://www.defiant.west-point.org/family/mem2002/classpistol.html>

For safety reasons West Point will not transfer possession of the pistol to the cadets at West Point. They are shipped to the cadet’s home state. Federal laws require that the recipient be a Federal Firearms Licensed dealer, so you will have to make arrangements with one close to your home to actually receive the pistol. In order to pick it up from the dealer you will have to meet state requirements.

TARBUCKET PLUME AND RED SASH

These are readily available from the Cadet Store. A simple call to the Cadet Store along with your credit card orders the Plume, Red Sash and Saber without a problem. The Cadet Store then notifies your cadet that an order is waiting for them and can be picked up. A cadet must pick up all items ordered through the Cadet Store.

HOWITZER

To obtain a copy of the 2003 Howitzer for yourself, a form will be sent to you in early spring. It is easy for this form to get misplaced among all the graduation information that you receive. Howitzers can be ordered up to August 1, 2003. Contact Directorate of Cadet Activities @ 845-938-2780 or www.usma.edu/uscc/dca/pubs/

The DCA is so helpful, friendly and eager to help. The woman who helped me on the phone even knew my cadet’s name/company and asked how he was doing!

WHERE DO THEY GO FROM HERE

Usually within 30 to 60 days after graduation, the new 2nd Lt. heads off for the OBC (Officer Basic Course) in whichever branch he or she has chosen. There are 16 different branches, and the OBC can vary from several months to a year or more. Enjoy the company of your new West Point graduate. The Academy barracks have been cleared of all their personal gear, and the Graduate Officers are about to begin their summer leave before they have to report to their designated posts.

OBC and PCS vs. TDY

Following their leave, the new lieutenants, depending on their chosen branch, will be off to various forts and Army installations across the country to begin their branch OBC (Officers’ Basic Course). This is the preliminary training all new officers receive before

they move to their permanent posts, or PCS (Permanent Change of Station). Except for Aviation, the officers already know where this will be. For example, all Infantry officers receive IOBC (Infantry Officers Basic Course) at Ft. Benning, GA. Following that, they will go to their chosen post. Many Infantry officers choose the 82nd Airborne at Ft. Bragg, NC, or the 101st Airborne (Air Assault), at Ft. Campbell, KY.

Since they are only to be at OBC for a relatively short period, their duty station is designated “TDY” (Temporary Duty). As such, they reside in special quarters called BOQ’s (Bachelor Officer Quarters). The quality of these accommodations depend on their particular location, but they are sometimes described as similar to typical “efficiency apartments,” although they are probably more like hotel rooms with a bath, small fridge, sink and microwave... maybe. The officers usually eat on post or eat out during their OBC period. The PCS is a different matter.

AVIATION: A special case

The only branch that does not follow this protocol and has an immediate PCS is aviation since their specialized flight training requires a protracted stay (about a year or so). All aviation candidates report for Army flight school at Ft. Rucker, AL. They may stay in BOQ’s for a brief time while they locate off-post housing. They begin receiving housing allowance in their pay once they have documented their living arrangements. Housing allowance is based on the particular location of the installation and varies greatly depending in what state the post is located. Aviation officers receive their OBC training in between their various flight school phases so by the time they earn their wings and receive their final training for the specific aircraft they will fly, they are ready to report to their future post.

The “DITY Move”

Whether reporting for TDY or a PCS, the officer will be moving his/her personal effects from the Academy (and home as well, one would assume) using one of two services. The Army will store and/or move an officer’s belongings for them (directly from the Academy) or the officer may choose to assume that responsibility him- or her and be reimbursed for expenses after he/she reaches his/her post. This is referred to as a “DITY” move (Do-it-yourself).

This involves some planning on the officer’s part and, of course, some paperwork. As of grad year 2000, Long Island officers had to go to Ft. Hamilton (Brooklyn) to arrange this move. An office there will instruct the officer how to make a DITY move. Briefly, it involves having the vehicle(s) weighed at a certified station (they’ll provide a list of locations in your residential area) empty, and then having it recertified after it is loaded.

The Army reimburses the officer based on the difference in the two weigh-ins. It is suggested that the officer stop at a weigh station along his/her drive down to the post for the laden weight. Location of such stations is NOT provided, but there are many places along major interstates that offer this service for a fee.

The officer must keep a careful account of all expenses for gas, oil, mileage, tolls, etc. They should be reminded to get a receipt for EVERY expense along the way. At the end of the trip, the officer will submit them for reimbursement. The Army will determine

which expenses are allowable. (For example the cost of renting a trailer may not be reimbursable, but the travel time of the driver would be if he/she were reporting to a PCS.) If everything is in order; the officer will be reimbursed for expenses commensurate with his/her move. It should work out to be about a break-even proposition.

LIFE INSURANCE

While the officer was a cadet, he received inexpensive term life insurance through the military. The cadet determined the amount of coverage and its cost was deducted from their cadet pay. The same option is available to the officer after graduation. Up to \$200,000 of term insurance may be purchased (As of 2000, the premium was \$16.00/month, payroll deducted).

PAY ADVANCE AND LOAN RE-PAYMENT

To help them get established at their new posts, before leaving West Point, the Army offers the graduates an advance if they want it. For a 2002 grad, it was \$1200. This is repayable over a 1-year period once the officer starts receiving his regular pay at the post. The \$100.00 is automatically deducted from the officer's regular pay. All officers also receive a one-time uniform allowance (about \$200).

At about the same time, the officer's Cow loan (if he/she elected to take it) begins being due. This payment, like the advance, is payroll deducted. The officer never even sees the money. Since the loan is sizable (Class of 2002 grads received \$24,000.00), the deduction is substantial as well.

While the loan rate is very low (1%), it has to be repaid in a relatively short time. Classes of 2000 grads were paying out about \$400.00 per month. The amount is deducted from one of the two monthly paychecks, not split between the two. At least, this was the case for the 2000 grads. It is important for the officer to remember to expect this debt since for the first time he/she will be responsible for many of the additional mundane expenses that he/she has not had to consider during the 4 years at the academy, where virtually every aspect of the cadet's life had been overseen by West Point. After all, the officer/graduate is out on his/her own now, and is expected to attend to all these details him- or herself!

MENTORS

Just a special thank you to the mentors who work so hard in behalf of our New Mexico cadets and prospective candidates. These men become more than liaison officers to our sons and daughters, they become part of the family. Graduation is a time for sharing the pride in your cadet's accomplishments. Include those special people in your sons or daughters life.



Nick Ryan and LTCOL. Doug Anson



**Andrew Chavez and
"El Coronel"**

SOURCES:

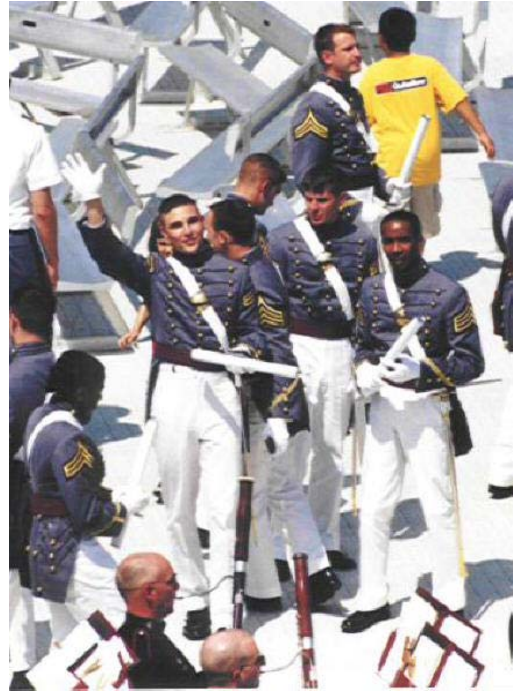
Central PA West Point Parents Club's "*So You Have a Firstie ... Graduation*" pamphlet. August, 1994.

Northeast Ohio West Point Parents Club's "*Firstie Parent Handbook.*" August, 1996, 1997, and 1998.

USMA Web Pages.

West Point Parents-Net.

West Point Parents Club of Long Island “*Handbook for Cow-Firstie Parents*”, 2001”



The hard work of getting ready for graduation is worth every moment of stress and anxiety when you see your son or daughter with commissioning papers in hand. Now take a deep breath- you have survived Firstie year and all the years previous at *West Point!*

"THE ALMA MATER"

Hail, Alma Mater Dear, To help us be ever near.
Help us thy motto bear Through all the years.
Let Duty be well performed.
Honor be e'er untarned.
Country be ever armed.
West Point, by thee.
Guide us, thy sons, aright, Teach us by day, by night,
To keep thine honor bright, For thee to fight.
When we depart from thee, Serving on land or sea,
May we still loyal be, West Point, to thee.
And when our work is done, Our course on earth is run,
May it be said, "Well done:
Be thou at peace."
E'er may that line of gray Increase from day to day
Live, serve, and die, we pray West Point, for thee.

"Alma Mater," the most beloved of all West Point songs has its beginning in a very inauspicious manner. In the fall of 1908, Cadet P.S. Reinecke attempted to write a furlough song in an effort to pass some time while walking the area. Finally, he began to march to the tune of "Treuebeliebe," an old favorite composed by Kuecken in 1827. Reinecke gradually developed the words to what we know today as the "Alma Mater."

The song, however, died the death of all furlough songs and was not even sung at the graduation of Reinecke's class in 1911. But on 9 June 1912, "Alma Mater" was sung at the Baccalaureate Service and took its place as a musical expression of feelings of every West Pointer toward his alma mater.

MISSCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:

Public Restrooms

Eisenhower Hall	The Chapels
Grant Hall	Herbert Alumni Center
The Library	Holleder Center
Thayer Hall near the bookstore	Officer's Club
Mahan Hall	Michie Stadium end near Holleder
Arvin Gym	PX
The Thayer Hotel	Cullum Hall
West Point Visitors Center	Near Guard House at Thayer Gate

Association of Graduates' Gift Shop:

Located in Herbert Hall Alumni Center.

Open Monday - Friday,

9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Football Saturdays,

9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Telephone 446-5869.

West Point Gift Shop

Located in Visitor Center

M-F 9-4

1-800-315-8762

1-845-446-3085

USMA Bookstore – 4th floor of Thayer Hall

Daughters of the US Army

located in the Museum (behind Visitor Center)

Visiting West Point

***For information about visiting West Point and sites to visit for your guests who will be arriving for graduation go to the official West Point web site @ www.usma.edu and click on “ Visiting West Point”.

***** RECOMMENDED DRESS******

During Graduation Week, the weather conditions at West Point can range from warm and humid to cool and rainy. The temperature in May ranges from 65° to 85°. Remember that the Graduation Exercises will take place outdoors in Michie Stadium rain or shine. For your information, the following is a suggested dress guide.

<u>OCCASION</u>	<u>DRESS</u>
General Daytime and Nighttime	Casual
Informal Hops	Informal
Reviews/Parades	Casual
Superintendent's Reception	Informal
Awards Convocation and Donor's Reception	Informal
Graduation Banquet & Hop	Formal
Graduation Ceremony	Informal

DEFINITION OF DRESS BY CATEGORY

FORMAL	- Military:	Army blue or white dress uniform with black bow tie Mess blue or white uniform
	- Civilian:	Men- Tuxedo or conservative business suit Ladies- Long or short formal dress
INFORMAL	- Military:	Army blue or white uniform or Army Class A green service uniform.
	- Civilian:	Men- Business suit or Coat & Tie Ladies- Afternoon dress or suit
CASUAL	- Military:	Duty uniform
	-Civilian:	Men- slacks with a collared shirt, sweater or sport coat Ladies- Slacks with blouse, skirt and blouse or pantsuit.

This really a guideline especially for Civilian dress. At the Graduation Banquet the dress ranged from long formals for the younger ladies to simply dressy wear for the, dare I say older ladies. The majority of men wore suit and tie.

Graduation Week 2002

Sunday, 26 May 2002

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
0900-1615	Museum Open	Olmstead Hall, Pershing
0900-1645	Visitor Center & USMA Gift Shop	Pershing Center
1200-1700	Alumni Headquarters open	Herbert Hall
1200-1900	Alumni class registrations	Herbert Hall
1900	Alumni social activities	Class sites

Monday, 27 2002

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
0715-1000	Practice Alumni Exercises and Alumni Review	Thayer Statue and The Plain
0800-1600	Alumni Headquarters open	Hebert Hall
0900-1615	Museum open	Olmstead Hall, Pershing
0900-1645	Visitor Center & USMA Gift Shop	Pershing Center
1200-1300	Battle Monument Wreath Laying	Trophy Point
1200-1500	Alumni Luncheons & Meetings	TBA
1500-1630	Shea Stadium Dedication Ceremony	Shea Stadium
1530-1630	Alumni Organ Recital	Cadet Chapel

Tuesday, 28 May 2002

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
0800-1600	Alumni Headquarters open	Hebert Hall
0900	Alumni Mass	Most Holy Trinity Chapel
0900-1615	Museum open	Olmstead Hall, Pershing
0900-1645	Visitor Center & USMA Gift Shop	Pershing Center
1020	Assembly for Alumni Exercises	Jefferson Road
1035	Alumni March to Thayer Statue	Diagonal Walk
1050	Alumni Exercises	Thayer Statue

1115	Alumni Review & Distinguished Graduate Award Presentation	The Plain
1230	Alumni Luncheon & Superintendent's Address	Cadet Mess
1430-1530	Commandant's Award Ceremony	Crest Hall, Eisenhower Hall
1700	Alumni Dinners or Picnics	Class sites
1930	Cadet Glee Club Concert	Theater, Eisenhower Hall

Wednesday, 29 May 2002

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
0715-0830	Practice Superintendent 's Awards Review	The Plain
0800-1600	1 st Div/Nininger Hall open	Building 747
0800-1200	Alumni Headquarters open	Hebert Hall
0845-1015	Practice Graduation Parade	The Plain
0900-1645	Visitor Center & USMA Gift Shop	Pershing Center
0900-1615	Museum open	Olmstead Hall, Pershing
1045-1200	Practice Superintendent's Award Ceremony	Robinson Auditorium Thayer Hall
1300-1700	Constitution Island Tours	South Dock Departure
1300-1800	Cadet Clubs & Activities Open House	Various Locations
1300-1430	Supes Reception for Parents & Guests of the Class of 2002, 1 st Regiment	Quarters 100
1500-1630	Supes Reception for Parents & Guests of the Class of 2002 2 nd Regiment	Quarters 100
1700-1800	Gospel Choir Concert	Robinson Auditorium Thayer Hall
2000-2100	Combined Choirs Concert	Cadet Chapel

Thursday, 30 May 2002

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
0630-0745	Practice Graduation Parade	The Plain
0800-1600	1 st Div/Nininger Hall open	Building 747
0800-1600	USMA Bookstore open	Thayer Hall, room 464

0900-1645	Visitor Center & USMA Gift Shop	Pershing Center
0900	Class of 2002 Bride's Coffee	Cullum Hall
1030-1050	Cadet Drill Team performance	The Plain
1100	Superintendent's Awards Review	The Plain
1215-1230	Cadet Parachute Team demo	The Plain
1300-1730	Constitution Island Tours	South Dock Departure
1300-1430	Superintendent's Reception for Parents & Guests of the Class of 2002 3 rd Regiment	Quarters 100
1300-1600	Academic Departments Cadet	TBA
1500-1630	Superintendent's Reception for Parents & Guests of the Class of 2002 4th Regiment	Quarters 100
1900	Catholic Baccalaureate Mass	Most Holy Trinity Chapel
	Protestant Baccalaureate Service	Cadet Chapel
	Jewish Baccalaureate Service	Jewish Chapel
	Eastern Orthodox Baccalaureate Service.	St. Martin's Chapel

Friday 31 May 2002

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
0700-0800	Graduation Parade Practice	The Plain
0800-1600	1 st Div/Nininger Hall open	Building 747
0800-1600	USMA Bookstore open	Thayer Hall, room 464
0900-1645	Visitor Center & USMA Gift Shop	Pershing Center
1030	Graduation Parade	The Plain
1130	Donors Luncheon	Benny's Lounge
1230-1330	Practice Awards Convocation	Theater, Eisenhower Hall
1400	Awards Convocation	Theater, Eisenhower Hall
1500-1600	Award Donors Reception	Ballroom, Eisenhower Hall
1900-2030	Graduation Banquet	Cadet Mess
2100-0100	Graduation Hop	Eisenhower Hall

Saturday 1 June 2002

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
0700	Gates open to public	Michie Stadium
0715	USMA Band provides music for Cadets marching to Stadium	Mills Road
800-1700	Herbert Hall open	
800-1630	AOG Gift shop open	
0830	Classes 03-05 seated	Michie Stadium
0840	Entrance of the Class of 2002	Michie Stadium
0850	Official Party seated	Dais
0900	Graduation Exercises	Michie Stadium
1100	Post Graduation Reception	Quarters 100

GRADUATION DAY

WHO: Brigade
WHEN: 0900, Saturday, 1 June 2002
WHERE: Michie Stadium (Ike if inclement weather)
REHEARSAL: 0815, Thursday, 30 May 2002
UNIFORM: Full Dress

Sequence of Events

0700	CLASS OF 02 FORMATION	HOWZE FIELD 0800
	CLASS OF 03, 04, 05 SEATED	EAST SIDELINE
0840	CLASS OF 02 MARCH ON	MICHIE
0855	OFFICIAL PARTY ARRIVES	MICHIE
0900	GRADUATION EXERCISE	MICHIE

