

Draft letter for grandchildren (Prepared by Jack Downing and Ed Weckel)

Dear Grandson/daughter (use appropriate name)

This is (your name) writing to you from (date).
Happy New Year 2058!

I wish I could be with you to celebrate this event; however, that is quite impossible. I do remember when you were born, and how happy I was to have our family line extended far into the future. Do you remember when we used to go (*personalize this - - hiking, biking, swimming, camping, hunting, etc., etc?*). These were some of my fondest memories, which I always cherished.

I want to take you back 100 years -- to 1958, the year I graduated from West Point. I don't know if you realize how important West Point was in our family history, because (*personalize this-- it is here that I met/married your grandmother, started my career, etc., etc*). In those days we were concerned about the onset of the nuclear age, the frightening aspect of World War III, and the spread of communism throughout the free world. We were depression babies and molded by the events of World War II. We witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent rise of militant Islam. We fought in the conflict in Viet Nam. The world certainly changed during our lifetime, and I suspect during yours. I cannot imagine the challenges and opportunities which you now face, but I hope it is a better world, helped in part by the sacrifices made by our Class during our careers.

We are very proud of our class. We are all men, since in those days women were not allowed in West Point. We all spent four years together and grew from boys to men. We then served together in both the Air Force (this was before the Air Force Academy) and the Army. As we took wives and children and grandchildren came, we bonded at our reunions. Even when we died, we wrote each others' memorial articles and stood by at our funerals. We shared a loyalty to the West Point motto, Duty, Honor, Country.

We have planned for two events to occur at our 100th Anniversary in 2058. First, a time capsule will be unearthed. We buried it at West Point during our 50th Anniversary (2008). It contains mementos from our days at West Point, such as items from our graduation, a "Bugle Notes" better known as the "Plebe Bible", a slide rule, a "Hop Card" and a plebe B-robe. I know that some of these are foreign to you, but I want to stir your interest. Second, at this event, a substantial portion of our Perpetual Endowment Fund will be gifted to West Point -- the first of many gifts that will continue at 10 year intervals. (At our 40th Anniversary, we established a perpetual endowment, to be managed by our descendants, with the first major presentation to be made at our 100th Anniversary.) During the unearthing ceremony, and the presentation of our class gift, we hope there will be an appropriate ceremony, attended by our descendants. We cannot be there, but we hope that our descendants will celebrate this occasion for us.

The year 2058 is also the 50th anniversary of the graduation of the class of 2008, and we hope that they will also be at the opening of the Time Capsule since they too have items in it. We had a special association with this class. We attended many of the events in their cadet life from their entrance to their graduation. We got to know many of them as cadets and some afterward, even as they recuperated from their injuries in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Some may remember us. The purpose of this letter is to remind you of your grandparents and to share our pride in having served our country. An opportunity awaits you to attend our 100th Anniversary at West Point. I would be pleased if you would contact the Academy (the West Point Association of Graduates-WPAOG, if it is still in existence) and determine when this event will take place. It probably will be in May, 2058, but schedules change over the years. The WPAOG should be able to put you in contact with the Perpetual Endowment Fund Board that will manage this event. I encourage you and your family (which is my extended family too) to attend and help us celebrate. You are our connection with the world that follows us. In the words of "The Corps", a well known West Point anthem, "Grip hands, though it be from the shadows" and remember that we live in your memories.