



USMA Class of 1965

Strength and Drive

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July 5, 2024

To: Members, Family and Friends of the Class of 1965

From: Class of 1965 Leadership Team

Subject: Annual Letter

The Class Bylaws call for the Leadership Team to provide an annual letter report to members on class activities; this constitutes the 2023-24 report. The Leadership Team meets in the even numbered months via Zoom. Minutes are available for each meeting. We frequently exchange emails and phone calls.

Class Financial Status.

We have four endowments as well as the Class of 1965 Gift Fund. The AOG manages the endowments following New York State non-profit law and guidelines established by the Board of Directors ensuring funds are prudently spent and for their intended purpose. The current policy is to spend 4% annually, allowing the income stream to support the activity in perpetuity. Below is the latest financial status of each fund.

- The Harry Dermody '65 Summer Leaders Experience Scholar Endowment covers personal expenses for one summer experience scholar each year. Balance: \$40,521, as of 12/31/2022 with \$1,713 available for disbursement.
- The Harry Dermody '65 Cadet Public Relations Council Endowment covers the cost for a cadet each year to travel to Massachusetts to speak to potential WP candidates. Balance: is \$63,129 as of 12/31/2022 with \$2,672 available for disbursement.
- The Bob Jones '65 Fallen Graduates Memorial Scholarship Endowment, now essentially a part of the Gripping Hands Endowment, provides educational benefits to families of those killed or wounded in the line of duty and provides aid to families of graduates in "times of trouble" without defining every trouble. Balance: \$581,973, as of 12/1/2023 with \$21,931 available for disbursement.

- The Class of 1965 Maintenance Endowment funds the maintenance of the Arvin Alcove, Thayer Walk Memorial, and the Class Forum at Jefferson Library. Balance: \$132,384, as of 12/31/2023 with \$5,017 available for disbursement.
- The Class of 1965 Gift Fund has a balance of approximately \$500,000. We assume the fund is an accumulation of undesignated donations by classmates. The Fund is not currently designated for any particular purpose. The Gift Fund belongs to AOG and once our class is history the balance will be used by AOG as it sees fit. On the other hand, we can allocate the balance to any of the AOG funds we desire, and that is exactly what we intend to do. The Leadership Team will sort through existing AOG funds determining those we recommend supporting. That process will be concluded by the time we gather for the 60th reunion.

You may contribute to an AOG fund by sending a check to West Point Association of Graduates, 698 Mills Rd, West Point NY 10996, ATTN: Lisa Taylor-Ilardi. Place the name of the fund to which you are contributing on the memo line, such as “Class of 1965 Gift Fund” or any other AOG fund. If you need assistance contact our Treasurer, Mitch Bonnett, at mebonnett@icloud.com.

60th Reunion

Our 60th Reunion will be April 24-27, 2025, at West Point. The Planning Team, of Joe & Diane Barkley and Mike & Carol Lapolla, developed four goals: maximize visiting time, minimize transportation time, offer programming that will be meaningful and memorable, and use all the assets of the Hotel Thayer. Joe and Mike have developed a working group of committed classmates and a prototypical schedule of events.

The Planning Team will meet with West Point, AOG and Thayer leadership this summer to start converting their plans into defined operations. Once that summer work is done, they will offer more specifics through the company reps and will be prepared to offer Reunion registration in early 2025.

Be on the lookout in the next few weeks for room reservation instructions.

Notable Events and Activities

- The **Ring Melt** for the Class of 2025 took place at West Point on January 19, 2024, and included the donation of the rings of classmates Steve Darrah and Don Nowland.
- Seventy plus members of the class and guests, mostly spouses, gathered at The Greenbrier in West Virginia from 12 -15 May; it was a marvelous event at an incredibly special location. Originally advertised as a golf outing, and while 28 played golf, it was a significant class gathering, capped by a group dinner on Monday night. It was disappointing that the organizers of the gathering, Bob Radcliffe, and Faye Hayes, could not attend due to health issues. Clair Gill stepped in for Bob, without missing a beat!
- There have been other gatherings shared with the class by the Scribe, Gerry Buckosky, when pictures and write up are sent to him. In addition to class events, share family events, travels or anything that might be of interest to classmates. Send to Gerry Buckosky at gerrybuckosky@gmail.com
- Our Information Systems Officer, Chuck Nichols, established an electronic version of Class Notes that dates to those that appeared in the *Assembly*. All information shared with the Scribe is captured and maintained on our class website. The notes are posted by quarter; the latest version is at <https://www.westpoint.org/class/usma1965/ClassPoop/ClassNotes/2024Q2.php>. It seems '65 is the only class with such a collection. Enjoy the read!
- Jack Jannarone is a member of the AOG Class Advisory Council; he is midway through a 3-year term which expires on 31 December 2025. Jack is the last member of our class to serve as we have become too senior for membership.

Classmate Deaths. We lost 11 classmates since the last report to the class. Each is missed but not forgotten.

Name	DOD	Company
Warren M. Kennedy	18 September 2023	B2
David Trevor Jones	15 October 2023	B1
Richard Magee Osgood Jr	20 October 2023	A1
Lorin Craig Albright	17 December 2023	E1
Kermit Donald Larson	9 January 2024	D2
Thomas A. Ridenour	13 Jan 2024	E2
Walter S. Kulbacki	06 March 2024	C1
Raymond J. Schaltenbrand	06 March 2024	E1
William W. Sherrell	10 April 2024	A2
Fred M. Belanger	13 May 2024	I1
John M. Howell	11 June 2024	C2

2024 Memorial Articles

The class goal remains a memorial article for every deceased classmate. This year's issue of Taps will include memorial articles for Rick Bunn, Tom Carll, Dick Smoak, and John Thompson. The articles are now on the AOG and class web sites. We need help for those without a memorial article. Please consider being the coordinator for one of those listed below. Instructions are at westpointaog.org, or contact Chuck McCloskey ccmcloskey@yahoo.com for assistance.

The following classmates need a memorial article coordinator:

Albright, E1	Howell, C2	Ridenour, E2
Belanger, I1	Jones, D., B1	Schaltenbrand, E1
Bishop, K2	Kennedy, M., B2	Sharkness, K1
Brush, D1	Larson, K., D2	Stockton, H1
Davis, G., E2	Matteson, E2	Throckmorton, D1
Epperson, ex-B2	Osgood, A1	Van Dyk, I2

We encourage you to author your own memorial article, or prepare an autobiographical sketch, using AOG's outline as a guide. Such an exercise on your part will help your family and the person who will draft your memorial article. Submit what you write to Marilee Meyer, AOG Memorial Articles Coordinator (marilee.meyer@wpaog.org), and she will file for future use.

Funerals

The class continues to support families of deceased classmates. While company reps do their best to find someone to serve as the link between the class and the family of the deceased, finding that Point of Contact (POC) can be difficult. Making an informal agreement with another classmate to serve as the POC is an excellent move. If you have not done so already consider finding a POC for your family and inform Chuck Nichols of your arrangement.

Previous Leadership Teams developed a funeral SOP based upon experiences gained through the decades. Part 1 of that SOP is entitled Planning Ahead, a copy of which is attached for your consideration. It suggests actions that you can take now that will make it easier for your family when the inevitable happens.

What was mentioned last year remains true today, our journey through life continues, with all its difficulties and all its pleasures. We remain an active and vibrant class. We travel, participate in gatherings, share opinions in lively discussions on the class forum, enjoy our family and friends and maintain our individual pride at being a member of the Class of 1965.

The Leadership Team wishes you all the best, and we hope to see you at our 60th Reunion!

Strength and Drive!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kat' or similar, written in a cursive style.

Part I: Planning Ahead

- 1) **Introduction:** The West Point Class of 1965 takes great pride in our cohesiveness and camaraderie. When a member of the Class of 1965 passes away, the surviving family members can expect to be offered assistance by the Class in the following ways:
 - a) Notification of the West Point Association of Graduates and the Class of 1965.
 - b) Establishment of a “Eulogy Page” on the class website
 - c) Appointment of a classmate as a single Point of Contact (POC) to assist as necessary
 - d) Provision of flowers and/or charity donations, Class flag and bugler for “celebration of life” services
 - e) Assistance with writing the Classmate “Memorial Article.”
- 2) **Classmate Recommended Preparations and Awareness:** The Class Leadership finds it much easier to assist if a few advanced preparations for the inevitable are taken:
 - a) Cullum File: As most graduates are aware, there is a “Cullum File” maintained for each of us. Merilee Meyer is the person at AOG who manages those files. She is a great source of information about the files, the contents etc. She can be reached at: (845) 446-1646, merilee.meyer@wpaog.org.
 - b) Cullum File Access: The file can only be accessed by the graduate or, if deceased, by the next of kin. However, Merilee can access the file if need be.
 - c) Suggested Information For **YOUR** Cullum File:
 - i) An unredacted copy of your DD 214. It must be a signed copy.
 - ii) Like the old “ranger buddy” days, it would be helpful if your Cullum File listed the name and contact information for a classmate (POC) with whom you have arranged to care for your survivors. It is often difficult to locate a classmate who is able and close enough to the deceased, in a timely manner.
 - iii) Your next of kin and contact information.
 - iv) Your preferences for where you wish to be interred or inurned.
 - v) Any preferences you have for your memorial service.
 - vi) Suggestions on whom you might wish to write your “Memorial Article.” It is also a place to file any information you wish to have included. More information on this topic is at: <https://www.westpointaog.org/TAPS>

vii) If you have preferences on distribution of your Class ring, it might be helpful to document it if it is not documented elsewhere. Information on the “Class Ring Memorial Program” is at:

<https://www.westpointaog.org/RingMemorialProgram>

- d) DD 214: The most important document to maintain for quick access when the time comes, is the DD 214 Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty. If you are not familiar with the form, it documents your service including your discharge status. It is critical to have it available to obtain the benefits due you and your survivors. It must be an unredacted copy. For example, the funeral director who handles your passing, cannot arrange any military honors due you without the proper form.
- e) How To Obtain Your DD 214: The best way to get a missing DD 214 and other official records is to follow the instructions provided at this website: <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/>
- f) Preferred Resting Place: A clear decision on your preference for your final resting place and other qualifying members of your family is good to make prior to your passing. Arrangements are much more easily made if your survivors and those making your arrangements know your preference in advance. You have three basic options, West Point, Arlington/Other National Cemeteries or Private Cemeteries. The DD 214 is vital in making arrangements for all these options.
- g) West Point: Eligibility and other information for interment/inurnment at West Point is provided at this website location: <https://www.westpointaog.org/westpointcemeteryeligibility>
- h) Arlington National Cemetery and VA National Cemeteries:
 - i) Arlington National Cemetery: Eligibility for interment/inurnment at Arlington National Cemetery is different than VA National Cemeteries. The best source of information on eligibility and benefits are described at: <https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil>
 - ii) VA National Cemeteries: The best information is available at: <https://www.cem.va.gov>
- i) Private Cemeteries: Interment/inurnment at private cemeteries is best handled with the advice of the local funeral director. Part of a funeral director’s education and training is how to handle a veteran’s eligibility and honors.