

February 10, 2013

NOTE MISSING INFORMATION:

Number of two century men  
Plebe Christmas Chain of Command for Second Regiment  
Cost of great Mess Hall rally, \$2.14 or \$12.04.<sup>1</sup>

THE USMA YEARS

As Fred Laughlin has observed, we were “sons of the greatest generation.” We had witnessed our parents willingly serve our country and risk everything in doing so, and as we made our way to West Point on July 5, 1961, we brought the ideals and values they had inculcated in us. We came from 50 states, several American territories, and five foreign countries. We had many accents: New England, southern, mid-western, Long Island, Hispanic. We came from all walks of life, from homes with only the basic necessities to homes with every conceivable luxury. We came from farms, villages, cities, and big cities. Most of us came from high school, but 232 of us had a semester or more of college before entering the Military Academy. Some of us came from prep schools focused on preparing high-school age boys for entrance to a service academy. 55 of us came from the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School, then at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Eleven of us gained admission as “sons of deceased veterans.”

We had many reasons for choosing to attend the Military Academy. In his application to attend West Point, Pete MacArthur gave a patriotic reason: “I want to help preserve and perpetuate America and its way of life. No other institution of learning can train and equip me for this purpose as well as the United States Military Academy.”<sup>2</sup> Others came from a desire to serve our country, receive a fine education, play intercollegiate sports, or follow in the footsteps of their father. As we considered our reasons for attending West Point, most did not realize how important would be the friendships we established with classmates when we took the entrance examinations, endured plebe year, overcame numerous and sometimes conflicting demands, and finally graduated. Our motto became “Strength and Drive, ‘65,” but the bonds that held us together were the friendship and respect forged through four years of meeting and overcoming numerous challenges.

Before coming to West Point, we knew the world was a dangerous place because of our father’s and, in some cases, our mother’s military service in World War II. In elementary and high school we had heard about conflicts in Indochina, Korea, Algeria, and the Middle East. At the same time we felt threatened by the increasing intensity of the Cold War as suggested by the rise of Nikita Khrushchev in the Soviet Union, the crushing of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, the success of the Cuban Revolution of 1959, and the shooting down of a U.S. spy plane over the Soviet Union in 1960. We were surprised by the Soviet Union’s launching of Sputnik in 1957 and cheered by the U.S. Army’s launching the first successful American satellite, Explorer 1, in 1958. The fact that we lived in a dangerous world was high-lighted by some of us having crouched under our school room desks during simulated atomic attacks in Civil Defense exercises.

Amidst this danger, we often heard about West Point because a graduate, Dwight D. Eisenhower, served as President of the United States in the eight years before we entered the Military Academy. We learned more about West Point by listening to stories told by members of the “greatest generation” and reading the famous Clint Lane stories written by Colonel “Red” Reeder. We also watched the movie, “The Long Gray Line,” which was directed by John Ford

and starred Tyrone Power, and the TV series, "The West Point Story," which aired from 1956 to 1958. Numerous news articles about Pete Dawkins and Army football in 1958 provided us additional information about the Military Academy. Our interest in West Point was a natural outcome of our experiences in our formative years.

After becoming cadets, we endured many changes, and accomplished some ourselves, in the academic, physical, and tactical programs at the Military Academy. One of the songs at the Hundredth Night Show in our First Class Year went: "Oh, why has the Corps gone to hell? Must we let old tradition be forgotten?.... What's the need for all these innovations?" As listed in the June 1965 edition of *The Pointer*, some of these innovations were of the sort most noticeable to cadets: late lights after taps, meal tickets for the mess hall, "dragging" to Chapel, checking accounts, week-end passes and other privileges, and officers' club use by First Classmen. Perhaps the most talked-about changes concerned milk and fruit during Beast Barracks for the Class of 1966 and Christmas leave for the Class of 1968 as plebes. More substantial changes concerned upgrades in educational requirements for the faculty, modification of the core academic program and addition of elective courses, addition of computers into academic courses, post-Sputnik emphasis on missiles and nuclear science, and post-May 1962 (John F. Kennedy's commencement address for the Class of 1962) emphasis on counterinsurgency. As plebes most of us entered the old library, meaning the one left over from the nineteenth century, and then watched it being torn down and a new one erected. While watching the numerous changes unfold, many of us echoed the *cri de coeur* in the Hundredth Night Show: "Whatever happened to that brown-slipper corps?"

We faced numerous challenges after we left West Point and entered the service of our country. When we were commissioned, we entered an army (or other service) that had units scattered across the face of the earth and was attempting to adjust to the very different, if not conflicting, demands of the nuclear age, conventional warfare, and counterinsurgency. In Southeast Asia, we fought in an unpopular war that demanded sacrifices we had anticipated and those we had not. In the aftermath of that war, we helped the armed forces turn inward and repair emotional and institutional damage. Meanwhile, about half of our classmates left the service and entered the civilian world where they made the painful but ultimately successful adjustments necessary not only to succeed but to excel. Those of us still in uniform found different challenges but nonetheless distinguished ourselves in places such as the Pentagon, Germany, Grenada, Panama, Iraq, and Afghanistan while those of us not in uniform distinguished ourselves in the law, medicine, the church, business, industry, science, engineering, education, and government service. Whether in or out of uniform, we never lost our sense of duty or our desire to serve our communities and our country.

At our graduation ceremony, General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, talked about Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes who had served in the Civil War and been seriously wounded. Holmes, said General Wheeler, "considered that those violent years had rewarded those who participated in the conflict by molding their character and conditioning their minds to be unawed by problems and to be receptive to progress." Holmes believed, "Through our great good fortune, in our youth our hearts were touched with fire." The fire that touched our hearts was different from the fire that touched Justice Holmes' heart, for ours was touched by the fire epitomized by the motto, "Duty, Honor, Country," and by the challenges of an unpopular war in Southeast Asia. Time would show that we too were "unawed by problems" and "receptive to progress." Time also would show that the "fire" heightened our willingness to serve our communities and our country.

## FIRST DAY

We came to West Point on July 5, 1961 to form the Class of 1965.<sup>3</sup> As we entered West Point, we recognized how fortunate we were. About 20,000 young men had sought nominations to join the Class of 1965. Of these 3,012 received nominations and were examined by the

Admissions Division of the Military Academy, 1,582 were deemed qualified after taking the entrance examinations, and 847 were admitted. Competition was especially keen for those seeking a Presidential nomination, since 900 candidates competed for 17 slots. Of the candidates admitted, 73.7% of us were in the top fifth of our secondary school; our mean scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test were 568 on the verbal portion and 636 on the math. 14.5% of our Class had been president of a student body or senior class, 30.5% an athletic team captain, 23.3% an all-state or all-conference award winner, and 10.9% Eagle Scouts. 63 members of the Class of 1965 were sons of Military Academy graduates.<sup>4</sup> Not all of us were high school heroes or had strengths in all areas, but all of us had our own unique talents and an ambition to succeed and graduate from the Military Academy. Very few of us realized how challenging our four years at the Military Academy would be or how important to us overcoming those challenges would be.

On Wednesday, July 5, military policemen directed us to the North Gymnasium. Those of us who were accompanied by family and friends had to say goodbye to them at the doorway. As we entered the large room on the second floor, we were handed some tags and two laundry bags containing two athletic supporters. After we put on an athletic supporter and placed all our clothes except for our shoes in the bag, a team of medical personnel examined us from head to toe. Dan Donaghy described subsequent events. "Then came the 'posture picture.' Can you believe it, almost naked, photographed in front of a grid-marked screen. I'm in a file somewhere in that first Cadet uniform--the athletic supporter!"<sup>5</sup> Other unexpected events of much greater consequence occurred that day.

After donning our civilian clothes, we were led to North Area, where we learned the rudiments of how to stand at attention and brace. Bracing proved to be uncomfortable, even though it supposedly helped our posture and strengthened our character. We also had to report to the man in the Red Sash. When Russ Campbell was told to report to the man in the Red Sash, he thought he was told to report to the man in the "Red Socks." Russ explained, "For the next several eternal minutes I jogged around looking for Red Socks. Not seeing them, I began to think that this was one of those many pranks that I had heard about West Point. Then it happened. 'You man, HALT! What are you doing?' 'Sir,' I emphatically responded, 'I'm looking for the man in the Red Socks.' Next thing I remember, he rounded up some of his buddies and announced, 'Guess what we've got here?' You can only imagine what happened next..."<sup>6</sup> Jim Webb also recalls being very confused that first day. "I had no idea what the guys in the red sashes meant when they hollered at me to 'pop-off!' When they kept yelling it at me, I decided it meant for me to 'take off' and that's what I did, much to their displeasure."<sup>7</sup>

The rest of the day was filled with our reporting to the First Sergeant of the New Cadet Company, locating our rooms and new roommates, and double-timing everywhere. We were issued cadet trousers, charcoal-colored tropical worsted shirts, and two laundry bags of military equipment. We also got haircuts. Dan Donaghy observed, "All of the haircuts were of two types--short and shorter. The barbers chattered about this latest crop of 'beatniks' and almost made a ceremony of de-locking those with longer hair. They were the first real people we met at West Point."<sup>8</sup> Around noon we had lunch in the Mess Hall and were introduced to the life of plebes on a table which held eight "new cadets" and two upperclass cadets. We quickly learned that the "cold beverage corporal," the "hot beverage corporal," and the "gunner" had a lot to do on the table other than eat. To an outsider, the goings-on at the table would have been hilarious, but to those of us on the table there was nothing funny or enjoyable about the experience.

That afternoon we did additional drill and, dressed in cadet shirt and trousers, finally marched to Trophy Point. Dan Donaghy writes, "There was a live band in uniform with real marching music.... People lined the roadway in a somewhat reverent formation. Military Police policed the lines. An occasional 'There's John' was heard. We wore only one glove, the left one. We carried the right one in our left hand. We dared not glance around since the

upperclassmen had whispered promises of retribution worse than death for any new cadet who 'screwed up.' 'I, Daniel Donaghy, do solemnly swear...to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, so help me God.' It was short and sweet. 'About face!' and we were out of there."<sup>9</sup>

That night we attended a presentation by the Protestant chaplain, Reverend Theodore C. Speers, in the South Auditorium of Thayer Hall. Among the things he told us was that only two out of three of us would graduate. Later that night we had a "shower formation" and gained some insights into why a third of us would not graduate. The shower formation was chaos at best. Ed Abesamis wrote: "You were naked inside the blue bath robe, and held your soap dish in your left hand, your arm at right angle to the body, your towel draped on it. You lined up with others against the wall, chin in waiting for your turn on the supervised shower stalls. At your turn, you pulled off the robe and jumped to the shower. Then you heard 'ten seconds in the shower.' You could not really use the soap. You were shouted out of the stall, and into another queue, the line for foot inspection after the shower. After foot inspection, you reported to the upperclassman, 'Sir, new cadet so and so has showered,... brushed his teeth, had his foot inspected and powdered, and is now ready for bed.'"<sup>10</sup>

Despite the chaos, some memorable moments occurred. One of the most memorable was Chuck Dickey's explaining that the foot-long scar on the calf of one of his legs came from his jumping into a water-filled ditch in Wauchula, Florida, and wrestling an alligator into submission.<sup>11</sup> Taps and lights out finally came at 2200 hours but we spent several hours in the dark trying to get our rooms and equipment organized. We had survived our first day at West Point, but we had much to do before we could say we wrestled our alligator into submission.

Not all of us arrived on the first day. Ron Kolzing wrote, "I was raised by my grandparents on a small farm in Indiana. On Thursday, after the class [of 1965] had been sworn in, I was in a field with my grandfather when my grandmother told me there was a telephone call from Washington." It was Ron's congressman who asked him if he still wanted to attend West Point, and if so, could he be there by Saturday. Ron continues, "I told him I would be there. I went to our local barber...and got what I thought was a military hair cut. That proved to be wrong. The next day I flew from Fort Wayne to Newark.... On Saturday, I took a cab to the Port Authority and then a bus to West Point. I arrived at 1130 hours. I was met by an upperclassman, who appeared to be a really nice guy. He escorted me to Central Barracks. I was sworn in. As we left the barracks, my escort (I do not remember his name but I will never forget his face) turned towards me and started yelling, as his face turned the color of a stop light. I was then 'escorted' to the North Area. Here is where I think all of my classmates owe me one. We arrived just as everyone was released from Washington Hall. I remember everyone double-timing past me, except for the cadre. They all surrounded me and expressed their delight that I was there."<sup>12</sup>

## BEAST BARRACKS

Subsequent days proved to be as challenging as the first day as we learned the rudiments of being soldiers and cadets. We had to double-time wherever we went and had to endure constant "corrections" from the cadre. Jack Lowe wrote his parents: "My roommates and I were just discussing whether we would be better off dead and in a cemetery or alive in New Cadet Barracks."<sup>13</sup> We spent endless hours learning how to salute, march, and wear the uniform correctly. We practiced the manual of arms and learned the complexities of eight-man squad drill which, in the words of Kim Olmstead, "initially appeared to have participants going in different directions only to come on line with other cadets all going the same way."<sup>14</sup> We learned how to spit-shine shoes, polish our brass, display items in our wall locker, and arrange our rooms. We endured numerous trashings of our rooms by our squad leader when we failed to meet his expectations. We had physical training, including exercising with the rifle and doing the "eight-count pushup" with the rifle. We memorized much plebe "poop," including "The

Days," "How's the Cow," "Schofield's Definition of Discipline," "Scott's Fixed Opinion," the words to numerous West Point songs, etc. We quickly learned that the more we memorized, the more we had to memorize.

We were issued M-1 rifles, as Gil Curl said, "to carry, clean, and love" during Beast Barracks,<sup>15</sup> but we did our qualification firing with brand new M-14s. And we ran the bayonet course, which proved exhausting and confusing. Some of us shot the target we should have bayoneted and bayoneted the target we should have shot. On Sundays, we attended chapel, which was not voluntary but mandatory. The Protestant cadets had their services in the amphitheater on Trophy Point, the Catholic cadets in the Catholic Chapel, and the Jewish cadets in the Old Cadet Chapel. At least one of our classmates was a Buddhist, and he was required to choose one of the denominations. Some of those cadets who technically were Protestants but had more in common with liberal Judaism chose to attend the Jewish chapel. Amidst this busy schedule, we watched a "sound and light" show one night that emphasized the origins and growth of the Military Academy. We were the first class to see the show, which became a regular part of Beast Barracks for subsequent classes.

An especially notable event occurred not long after the first detail of the cadre at Beast Barracks departed and the second detail arrived. The Berlin Wall went up on the night of August 12-13, and shortly thereafter the Commandant, Brigadier General Richard G. Stilwell, addressed the assembled plebes. We have long since forgotten everything he said that night but some of us remember his mentioning the international situation and his telling us that a cadet on Army Orientation Training in Germany was in one of the units that deployed during the crisis. The situation seemed serious, but most of us were more worried about our new squad leaders than what was happening in Berlin.

Unlike the Commandant's presentation, we have vivid memories of the Plebe Hike which began on Wednesday, August 23. We formed on Jefferson Road, marched to Range 5, and witnessed a firepower demonstration. We camped that night in the Queensboro Furnace area and had to endure not only sleeping on solid rock but also repelling an attack by the Airborne detachment in the middle of the night. After being awakened at 0400, we ate breakfast in total darkness and finally arrived at Lake Frederick on Thursday afternoon. On Friday we went on a reconnaissance patrol and had a talent show that night. We were awakened on Saturday at 0200 hours, provided coffee and donuts, and marched six hours to West Point. After pausing at Washington Gate to shine our boots, we marched proudly past the Superintendent's Quarters. Alex Alexander led us as the best plebe.<sup>16</sup> Even though it had rained for much of the three days, the plebe hike proved to be enjoyable time with ample opportunity to get to know our classmates. All of us knew, however, that it was the calm before the storm.

## PLEBE YEAR

With the return to West Point came the end of Beast Barracks, the assignment to regular cadet companies, and the beginning of Reorganization Week. Also, 15 cadets turned back from the Class of 1964 joined us on August 26, just as we returned from the plebe hike. While we had outnumbered the upperclassmen in the previous two months, we now found ourselves outnumbered. All of us remember viewing the lists that were posted by the new cadet orderly rooms showing the regular letter companies to which we were assigned. For some of us, this was a moment of joy but for others it was exactly the opposite. Jack Lowe expressed this in a letter to his parents: "I am in regular letter company I-1. I am a loser. This is one of the toughest, if not the toughest, company in the whole Corps of Cadets."<sup>17</sup> Yet, we knew we had accomplished a great deal during Beast Barracks. One instructor said in a military heritage lecture: "Men of the Class of '65, you have just taken your first giant step toward a military career by getting through Beast Barracks. If all is going well, your chin and your spine are becoming well acquainted and your shoulder blades are building up a warm companionship."<sup>18</sup> We were proud of having made it through Beast Barracks, but we had no idea what the "warm

companionship” of our chin and spine had to do with a military career.

The transition from Beast Barracks to the academic year was a shock to many of us, something that was symbolized by 4.1 acres of excavation fill near North Dock slipping into the Hudson River about the time we arrived in our regular companies.<sup>19</sup> As we settled into our new rooms, we had new squad and platoon leaders, all of whom seemed to have plenty of time to ensure our proper development. We continued to memorize more and more plebe poop and also perfected our ability to call minutes, deliver mail and laundry, and deliver newspapers. As we performed these duties, we learned unexpected things. Ed Abesamis wrote: “When the academic year started, I was first in all plebe duty rosters because they were lined up alphabetically. With a name starting with AB, I was head mail carrier, and then section marcher in all my classes. These all carried potential for getting into demerit troubles, and I did get enough to walk the Area and have a brown sheen on my dress coat from the leather sling. But being head mail carrier was the worst job, especially in getting the company’s allotted newspapers. You got up early and were at the door of the Division before the reveille bell. When it rang, you jumped out and ran a race against the other mail carriers to the South Area sally port and the newspaper piles. The papers were in bundles with brown paper covering, with the company number written on the cover. But it would still be dark and the mass of head mail carriers could not make out the numbers. There would be a scramble to get your company’s bundles--one of them *New York Times* and one of them *Herald Tribune*--or any other bundle. Sometimes the top papers got torn or dirty. The papers were distributed before the upperclassmen got back from breakfast or you were in trouble. If lucky, you got the correct number of papers and the right papers to the right upperclassmen. One Cow in my company was very particular about getting his *Herald Tribune*, and I dreaded missing delivery.”<sup>20</sup> As we performed our duties, being “classmated” took on special meaning. In incremental, painful episodes, we learned to “cooperate and graduate” and to help each other.

In the Mess Hall there were two or three plebes on each table and seven or eight upperclassmen. Those of us on company tables envied those who sat on “corps squad” tables for athletes, which filled the center wing of the Mess Hall; those on corps squad tables rarely experienced the hazing frequently present on the company tables. Most of us had lost weight during Beast Barracks, an average of eight pounds each.<sup>21</sup> Except for the fortunate few among us who lost so much weight that they were put on weight tables to regain some strength, many of us had little prospect of regaining it on company tables.<sup>22</sup> Jack Lowe told his parents: “I am the only plebe on the table now; the other plebe is in the hospital. I have to do so much on the table that I do not have time to eat.... I am trying to supplement my diet with ice cream. As many boodle packages as possible will be appreciated. In other words, you have a very hungry plebe on this end.”<sup>23</sup> Ken Cherry reflected the same sentiment when, five decades later, he listed “first trip to Boodlers during Beast Barracks” among his most memorable experiences.<sup>24</sup>

Plebes from the First Regiment usually welcomed the periodic closing of tables in an effort by the Mess Hall staff, especially on weekends, to cut costs. Such closing afforded them the opportunity to flee to the tables of the Second Regiment and earn a “fall out” with a funny joke or skit. Jerry McMillan, for example, memorized the obscene but funny “Arkansas Poop” and never failed to win a fall-out when he fled the D-1 tables and found an empty chair in the second regiment. Some plebes showed great ingenuity in planning and executing skits. George Ruggles, who was in L-2, planned an intricate skit in which he wore an MP brassard from his enlisted days at Fort Gordon and the other plebes in his company wore signs around their necks indicating they were Buicks, Plymouths, etc. As his classmates milled around the company’s tables, George stood on a chair and restored order by directing traffic with hand and arm motions. Just as George and his company mates had hoped, they were able to eat steak at ease for the rest of the evening.<sup>25</sup>

Our first academic semester began on September 5. Though we initially were more concerned about our fate in our new companies, we quickly learned that the academic

departments were deadly serious and demanded our attention. This became immediately apparent during Reorganization Week when we were issued 50 pounds of books and reading material, more than any of the other three classes.<sup>26</sup> Our courses consisted of mathematics, engineering fundamentals, environment, English, foreign languages, tactics, and physical education. Those of us who had not excelled in Beast Barracks now had an opportunity to “show our stuff.” And some of our classmates truly had “stuff:” Jim Airy remarked at the beginning of one class, “All my life I was a fifty-watt bulb around twenty-five watt bulbs. Then I came to West Point and discovered there were hundred-watt bulbs.”<sup>27</sup>

Of our academic courses, the most demanding was math. With about twenty-eight sections, cadets sat in order of merit with the highest grades (or, at the beginning of the first semester, highest scores on the math portion of the College Entrance Examination Boards) in the first section and the lowest grades (or scores) in the last. We had seventy-five-minute classes six days a week and were expected to have studied and understood the assignment before arriving in class. Each math book, which was written by the Head of the Department of Mathematics, was officially called a “Special Topic Memorandum”<sup>28</sup> and had its own number, but we knew all of them as the “Green Death” because of their green covers. When the instructor entered the classroom, which included about 15 cadets, we snapped to attention, and after a report by the section marcher (“All present and accounted for, sir”), he would tell us to take seats and then ask, “Are there any questions?” If there were no questions, the next words from his mouth were, “Take boards.” We then proceeded to our assigned chalk boards and “solved” the problems he gave us. The boards were numbered so those facing “odd” boards had different problems than those facing “even” boards. Strict rules told us which colored chalk to use and how to underline and mark our answer—if we had one. After a loud and clear “Cease work” several of us had to stand before the class and explain in a “recitation” what we had done and why. Those completely unprepared often earned a grade of 1.0 on a 3.0 scale with 2.0 being the lowest acceptable grade. All of us knew the saying, “Two-oh [2.0] and go!”

Most of us nonetheless learned far more from the Department of Mathematics than we recognized at the time. Dan Benton wrote: “In high school I was not a stellar math student and the strong math/engineering academic curriculum at the Academy was a major struggle for me. I lived in last section math with my Buddies of a similar math affliction. We approached exam times with deep terror. In later years, when in business graduate school, I was amazed how my fellow civilian classmates considered me a math genius (they must have been liberal arts majors). No doubt I learned a lot in USMA math through osmosis.”<sup>29</sup>

Our other classes also proved challenging. The Department of English taught us composition, logic, and rhetoric (argumentative themes) in the first semester and required us to read and to write, including a 700-900 word “expository theme” on a book from the department’s “Reading List.” This list included many of the great literary works, such as *Wuthering Heights*. In the second semester we were introduced to the research process and wrote a research paper. We also read, discussed, and wrote about Stephen Vincent Benet’s epic poem *John Brown’s Body*. All in all, we were required to submit more than 20,000 words in writing in our two semesters of English. Meanwhile, we struggled through Foreign Languages (meaning French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, or Russian) and sometimes took advantage of the opportunity to use a new language laboratory with 30 booths. Safe in our cadet rooms, most of us gave thanks for not having to take Russian or endure Monsieur Claude Viollet’s inspecting cadet uniforms in French class. We learned new skills in Engineering Fundamentals in our drawing class and in using surveying instruments such as the transit. And long before it became politically correct to do so we studied the environment in the Department of Earth, Space, and Graphics Sciences. Immersed in our academic courses and in the plebe system, we entered the “old” library a few times, the one that has been built in 1841, and, except for the inconvenience of finding books scattered in shelves throughout Thayer and Bartlett halls, hardly noticed the historic structure’s being demolished.

In our physical education classes, we had many memorable experiences, but especially so in plebe boxing and swimming. Those of us who could swim learned new techniques under Mr. Robert Sorge's booming voice, "There are no walls out there." Those who could not swim had other challenges in the "rock squad." Dan Donaghy wrote, "My first lucid memory of that adventure was in a class when Mr. [John] Kress told me to grab a rubber brick and swim across the pool. I started to protest but he would hear none of it. So, I jumped in. I quickly dropped the brick and it was a photo finish as to which of us hit the bottom of the pool first. I think I beat the brick. After some choking and flailing, I made it to Mr. Kress's feet. Without a change in posture or tone, he said, 'Go get the brick.' My swimming objective quickly became to learn enough to make it to the life boat or the shore."<sup>30</sup>

Plebe boxing had its own challenges, and most of us, even after fifty years, still remember some of our opponents. Dave Hurley wrote, "While I was no athlete, I did well in plebe boxing and on the intramural boxing team, but one day I had to move up a weight class (or two) and fight Joe DeFrancisco. While the guys in my weight class hit like butterflies, Joe packed a wallop. I found this out when I made a mistake, and he hit me so hard I was out on my feet. Joe was so surprised he never hit me again, and I managed to recover, but I blame future memory lapses on that punch."<sup>31</sup> Jim Hardin wrote: "When entering the boxing ring during plebe boxing, I had to take off my glasses and therefore could not see well when fighting. I was always a little apprehensive throughout a match. However, with a lucky punch I was able to knock down Bob Lee during the last match of plebe boxing and got a passing mark. I think we were both glad boxing was over."<sup>32</sup> Roger Frydrychowski recalls having Joe Petchkofski, his roommate and former Golden Gloves champion in Pennsylvania, as an opponent. As Roger crossed the ring, he winked at Joe to request leniency, but Joe "proceeded to inflict" what Roger called "fair, but brutal punches."<sup>33</sup> Adding to the memories is our recollection of Mr. Joe Palone and Mr. Herb "Punchy" Kroeten. None of us will ever forget Palone's cheering at the sight of blood.

The Military Academy also sought to make us socially adept. We had a memorable class on "Cadetiquette" in which we learned how to tell a salad fork from a dinner fork and how to write thank you notes to our host and hostess. And we had plebe dancing in the large ballroom in Cullum Hall. Some of us managed somehow to "validate" dancing and thereby avoid the classes. With our classmates as dancing partners, Mr. Bill Lewis of the Department of Physical Education taught the rest of us the rudiments of ballroom dancing. More enjoyable lessons occurred when the Cadet Hostess Office arranged for visiting females from local colleges to be our dance partners.<sup>34</sup>

In the fall of 1961, the Class formed the Ring and Crest Committee, which consisted of representatives from each cadet Company, to oversee the design of a crest for the Class of 1965. With "Ranger Major" Lee Parmly as the Officer in Charge and John Howell as the Chairman, the committee asked each cadet company to submit a design. As Company E-2 representative, John met with Dan Donaghy in January 1962 and asked him to create and draw a design for Company E-2's submission. John told him the crest should have a "fierce" eagle and should have year numbers large enough to be read from a distance. After reviewing all the submissions, the Ring and Crest Committee selected Dan's drawing, which the Cadet Store then sent to companies that manufactured class rings for them to submit their version of the crest. Dan's drawing was so nicely and professionally done that several of the companies competing for the contract to manufacture the rings accused Balfour (which won the contract) of collusion with the Ring and Crest Committee. With only minor changes, Dan's impressive design became our Class crest and a permanent fixture in all of our lives.<sup>35</sup>

We arrived at West Point about the same time as some important new technologies. In 1960-1961 the Military Academy studied the operational and educational potential of computers and initiated an effort to increase their use.<sup>36</sup> Our arrival coincided with the Department of Electricity's receiving a digital computer and a sub-critical reactor. The subcritical reactor was a "light water-moderated natural uranium device" which would be used in a First-Class elective in Nuclear Engineering. The digital computer was a RECOMP II computer that was obtained from the U.S. Army Electronic Proving Ground. Along with the computer came equipment to punch and read holes in cards. In an article in *Assembly* describing the new technological devices, Colonel Boyd Bartlett listed a variety of things the computers could do including calculate firing tables in an artillery battalion, assess casualties and damages from nuclear strikes, aid intelligence analysts, and contribute to war games and command post-exercises. He admitted, "The long-term potential of computers...is sometimes difficult to distinguish from science fiction."<sup>37</sup> To some of us the computers did seem like science fiction, especially when we used pencils to fill in tiny ovals on a computer card and got the computer to perform mysterious operations. The slide rules all of us carried seemed much more useful.

As time passed, we became accustomed to balancing the competing demands of academics, the plebe system, and homesickness. We had no telephones in our rooms and could use the telephone booths in the basement sinks of the barracks at specified times. We also could use the telephone on the mezzanine of the Hotel Thayer. No matter when we tried to use the telephone, there was always a line, and we greatly appreciated our "Plebe Pops" (staff and faculty sponsors) permitting us occasionally to use the telephone in their quarters. We also appreciated the generosity and kindness of the parents of our classmates (usually our roommates) who traveled to West Point on weekends or holidays. They brought not only food for their son but also for the rest of us. We learned to live day by day, taking each challenge as it was presented to us.

One time of great joy was Christmas. Many of us purchased Christmas cards that had a joyous plebe on the front surrounded by bursting fireworks and shining stars and shouting "Christmas is here..." On the inside of the card the same plebe, but dejected this time, said, "And so am I..." Though we could not go home for Christmas, we rejoiced when Christmas leave for the three upper classes began at 1515 hours on Friday, December 22. For twelve days we celebrated and relaxed. NOTE: MISSING CHAIN OF COMMAND FOR SECOND REGIMENT. We had a plebe chain of command with Louis Csoka as our brigade commander, John Pickler as the brigade adjutant,<sup>38</sup> Jerry Hoffman as the 1st Regimental Commander and --- as Second Regimental Commander. With one detail in charge until December 22 and the second thereafter until January 3,<sup>39</sup> the battalion commanders included Mark Walsh, Steve Aron, Tony Pyrz, Ric Shinseki, Dick Tragemann, Joe Anderson, ----- .<sup>40</sup> A "special memorandum" from Louis Csoka informed us that Flirtation Walk remained off limits, visitors were not allowed in the barracks except at prescribed times, and no drinking of alcoholic beverages was permitted.<sup>41</sup>

We had a great time visiting with our family and friends, attending the Fourth Class Glee Club's Christmas Concert, watching athletic events, going to the movies, and participating in special events. The Hop and Activities Committee, better known to us as the "Hop Committee," enhanced many of our activities by devoting hours to setting tables, hanging crepe, and handling numerous details. Joe Anderson, for example, was in charge of "Trees and Wreaths," and Lou Csoka the Christmas Party. Roger Frydrychowski had the responsibility to turn off the lights in the gymnasium after midnight on New Year's Eve.<sup>42</sup> The Hop Committee also helped with the Ice Capades at the "old" Smith Rink. The evening began with professional skaters putting on a

wonderful show and ended with plebes, primarily from the South, who had never been on ice skates, playing a broom hockey game. With Ranger Major Parmly as the OIC, Skip O'Donnell ran this hilarious event and presented the winning team a prize appropriately known as the "Dixie Cup."<sup>43</sup> Amidst the relaxed atmosphere, we enjoyed the company of some wonderful women. Ralph Locurcio arranged a blind date for Stan Genega with Barbara Daly, one of Ralph's high school friends. The blind date turned into something wonderful, for Stan and Barbara married ten days after graduation.<sup>44</sup>

Plebe Christmas proved to be a great opportunity to get to know our classmates and enjoy ourselves, but it was followed by the return of the upperclassmen and the arrival of "Gloom Period." The gray walls and gray skies matched our moods. The first semester ended on January 20 and was followed by a Written General Review (WGR), which in future years was transformed into a Term End Examination. Those who failed a final examination or who were deficient overall in a course had to take a turnout exam about a week or so later. If a cadet failed the turnout exam, he was sent home and afforded the opportunity several months later for a re-entry exam.<sup>45</sup> If a cadet passed the re-exam, he continued with the next class, but if he failed, he was separated and could not be reappointed without the recommendation of the Academic Board.<sup>46</sup> For the rest of us, the second semester began on January 25.

As the second semester began, the talents of our classmates became more obvious. We had no way to compare our performance as plebes or in academics with other classes, but more so than in any other field, we knew we had some extraordinary athletes among us. Gordy Larson wrote, "I remember our squad leader polling our Beast squad on their athletic accomplishments, and it was pretty impressive to find out that more than half the guys in my squad were All State or All American in one sport or another, and just about everyone had at least one varsity letter."<sup>47</sup> The March 16, 1962, edition of *The Pointer* had a photo of Jerry Merges and Buddy Bucha beside the swimming pool and the caption "The most talked about Plebe team on the Plain." Other members of the swimming team mentioned in the article were Tony Clay, Steve Bliss, Bob Lee, and Tim O'Hara. The article described Joe Kosciusko (Koz) as the "standout player" on the "highest scoring contingent to ever play [basketball] at Army." The article also spotlighted Mike Thompson and Bart Barry on the Plebe hockey team; Ken Slutzky on the gymnastics team; Walt Oehrlein, Paul Kantrowich, Terry Carlson, and Fred Laughlin on the squash team; Don Exelby on the pistol team; Bill Bradburn on the rifle team; Dave Brown, Jim Hume, Dick Collins, Greg Steele, and John Malpass on the track team.<sup>48</sup> Two months later another article in *The Pointer* mentioned other outstanding plebe athletes on the track team: Steve Aron, Hal Jenkins, Jim Helberg, Bob Stowell, Steve Clement, and Steve Ganshert.<sup>49</sup>

We also knew we had some outstanding African-American classmates. When we arrived at West Point, six of our classmates were African-Americans, two of whom left during Beast Barracks. The remaining four (Joe Anderson, Jim Conley, Art Hester, and Hal Jenkins) graduated with us and along the way not only distinguished themselves but became leaders in our Class. Before we arrived at West Point, many of us had attended racially segregated schools, and if any of us harbored any racist sentiments, the talent, personalities, and dedication of these four classmates demonstrated the foolishness of such views. Joe Anderson wrote that he encountered "no racial issues from classmates the entire four years." This did not mean that he, Jim, Art, and Hal encountered no racial issues in other areas. Joe, who served as a battalion commander during Plebe Christmas and regimental commander during spring break, wrote: "Huge disappointment Firstie year, being told by Tac that participating in Crossroads [Africa] prevented me from having a leadership role Firstie year. [I was a] sergeant in C-1 entire

Firstie year. My view is the Academy was not institutionally ready for African-American leadership in the Corps at that time.”<sup>50</sup>

Our many talents did not keep us from making mistakes and learning from them. Ben Whitehouse wrote: “As a plebe in E-1, my roommates (Jay Vaughn, Paul Singelyn) and I were preparing for a major inspection by the commandant. Everyone was up late the night before cleaning lights and anything we could reach. Paul and I were smokers at the time so we had a cigarette before class but didn’t know what to do with the ashtray when we were done. Since the lids would be closed on the shoe box, we decided to hide the ashtray there. The scene described to us later in detail by our Company Commander was as follows. BG Stillwell, Major [Goose] Gosling (our Tac), and a few others walked into our room and observed a stream of smoke arising from the shoebox like a chimney. The General commented on it, and the Tac went over and lifted the lid, and the shoebox burst into flames (oily rags and fire, hello). They rushed the shoebox into the bathroom and put it in the sink extinguishing the flames.” Ben observed that he and his roommates had “a few rough days” afterward and concluded, “This was my introduction to walking the area.”<sup>51</sup>

Our lives slowly settled into a routine, and we became somewhat jaded as we counted the days until the Class of 1962 graduated and we were recognized by the upperclassmen. We became accustomed to listening to the “Hell Cats,” which were the Field Music Section of the Band, who played at reveille, meal formations, and retreat. Our only complaint was when they played under our window and broke the silence of the night too early in the morning. Always sleep deprived, we found ways to grab naps whenever we could even though we were prohibited from lying on our bunks during the day. One classmate fell asleep while standing in class and sprawled across his desk, thereby startling his instructor and delighting his classmates. Also standing, the same cadet fell asleep in one of the classrooms in the top floor of Washington Hall and was saved from tumbling out the window only by the quick action of a classmate.

For many of us the plebe system became less onerous as each day passed and as upperclass cadets contended with the heavy academic load. Others, however, found themselves terrorized, if not physically hazed, when an upperclass cadet took a dislike for them or vented his frustration on a plebe. Greg Letterman wrote, “The Plebe system as it existed in our day could be grossly abused by mentally disturbed upperclassmen.”<sup>52</sup> In some companies, such as D-1 and I-1, upperclass cadets ran out of the corps, or tried to run out of the corps, some of our classmates who did not appear suitable to them. Too many of us had to “sweat” coins onto the wall, “swim to Newburgh,” do the “T-pin manual, go on “clothing formations,” etc.

For all of us a sense of humor proved essential to our survival. Jim Helberg wrote, “Our room was where many of the 13<sup>th</sup> Division plebes waited until it was time to go out to formation. Ed Klink lived in either the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> division and was frequently held up and harassed on the stoops outside our window by the yearlings. It was very hard for a bunch of plebes to be quiet in our room (we weren’t supposed to be looking out the window) while this was happening because it was seldom clear whether the yearlings were messing with Ed or he was messing with them (mostly the latter, I think). On one occasion a yearling hollered at him, ‘Mr. Klink, you just don’t care do you?’ Ed’s response was to whip off his hat, hold over his heart, and say in his most earnest voice, ‘Sir, I really do care.’ That was followed by the bunch of us in our room getting hollered at because of the laughter.”<sup>53</sup>

Despite the harassment, we knew we were at a very special place. While we were plebes, some extraordinary speakers gave presentations at West Point in a period of about 40 days: William Faulkner in April 1962, Douglas MacArthur in May 1962, John F. Kennedy in June

1962. Over the next year we would have the opportunity to hear Wernher von Braun, Edward Teller, Frank Borman, Billy Graham, Bruce C. Clarke, and George H. Decker.<sup>54</sup> For most of us, the most memorable presentation came from Douglas MacArthur when he received the Thayer Award and gave his famous “Duty, Honor, Country” speech on May 12, 1961. Ed Abesamis noted that General MacArthur’s speech was especially memorable to him. Ed wrote: “To my father’s generation especially, he was god-like. To see him in person and hear him speak at the Mess Hall, and be within a few meters of him was a thrill I could not forget.”<sup>55</sup> MacArthur’s speech was recorded by chance and quickly became known as one of the greatest speeches ever given at West Point.<sup>56</sup> Those of us in the audience listened in awe as a polished, experienced public speaker gave his finest performance. We were impressed with General MacArthur’s speaking from the heart without any notes, and not until decades later did General Westmoreland, Superintendent at the time, relate a story to Bob Doughty explaining the actual nature of the speech. General MacArthur’s wife had told Mrs. Westmoreland that the five-star general had kept her up late at night for weeks while practicing the speech. Practice does make perfect, and we were fortunate to watch the performance of a great military leader and masterful speaker.

June Week finally came, as did recognition by upperclass cadets. Each of us has clear memories of that day and our joy at the prospect of going on summer leave and returning as Yearlings. We also remember the graduation exercises in the Field House on June 6, 1962, when President John F. Kennedy spoke and said, “The demands that will be made upon you in the service of your country in the coming months and years will be really more pressing, and in many ways more burdensome, as well as more challenging, than ever before in our history.” Most of us do not remember the President’s words, but we do remember running up the hill after the ceremony so we could get on a bus or in a car and go home.

Eleven months after 847 of us had arrived at West Point on R-day (plus those who were turned back and rejoined us during Reorganization Week), only three quarters of us ran up that hill. The year had been a tough one. On July 1, our official strength was 669. Ninety-two of us had resigned, and 69 had been separated for academics, 5 for military aptitude, 21 for honor, 2 for “physical education,” and 14 for “other” reasons.<sup>57</sup> Yet, many of us had excelled, especially those who were appointed regimental, battalion, and company commanders during Plebe Christmas. Of these talented classmates, Louis Csoka had been our Brigade Commander over Christmas and was formally recognized in a parade during our Yearling year as “Best Plebe.”

## YEARLING YEAR

When we returned from leave, we reported to Camp Buckner for summer training and enjoyed other “opportunities to excel.” Each company had its own personality, including “One, Two, Fifth Company,” and the “Silent Sixth.” We learned squad and platoon tactics, ran the compass course, and had artillery, signal, and engineer training. In our armor training, some of us got to drive tanks and armored personnel carriers. We also rode in helicopters, a mode of transportation with which we would become very familiar. As part of the engineer training, we built a Bailey Bridge. One of the NCO’s at the bridge site remarked, “If you men play and love as hard as you build bridges, I’m going to watch out in New York City come Labor Day weekend.”<sup>58</sup> We had some special presentations, one by Major Joseph G. Clemons, Jr., a hero of Pork Chop Hill,<sup>59</sup> and another by Captain Bobbie Brown, a recipient of the Medal of Honor in World War II.

Of the various training experiences, Recondo, which is a contraction of reconnaissance and commando, included about 72 hours of Ranger-type training and proved especially

challenging. Each company began Recondo with an early reveille, a march up Bull Hill, and “the” pits, which were run by Major Parmly. Each company had its own “King of the Pits,” but Tom Abraham was recognized as the “King” for the entire class. Of the many highlights of Recondo, one of the most memorable was when Bill Zadel, Rollie Stichweh, and others captured and subdued Major Parmly. The threat of nuclear weapons, however, could not be ignored, and on one of the few weekends in which we had some free time, we had an “air raid” drill and had to seek shelter in the firing pits on the rifle range.

The training at Camp Buckner ended with Camp Illumination, which consisted of the “Buckner Stakes” on Friday, “Hawaiian Holiday” on Friday evening, Awards Day on Saturday morning, and a water-ski show, skydiving exhibition, and military equipment display on Saturday afternoon. On Saturday evening we had a Formal Hop and a “Color Line Show” with skits performed by our classmates. As the only cadet from Hawaii on the Hop Committee, Sonny Arkangel arranged many of the Hawaiian decorations and themes for the weekend. He coordinated the shipment from Hawaii to Camp Buckner of posters, orchids, and flower leis and helped create a paper maché volcano in the middle of the dance floor. Sonny also arranged the construction of a make-shift platform of two canoes upon which Kala Kukea was paddled to shore as King Kamehameha while Elvis Presley sang “Blue Hawaii.”<sup>60</sup> Ed Zabka won the Buckner Stakes and was rewarded for his outstanding performance by being thrown into Lake Popolopen by his classmates.<sup>61</sup> Amidst all this activity, we elected our Class officers: Mark Walsh as President, Bill Zadel as Vice President, Buddy Bucha as Secretary, Jon Thompson as Treasurer, Frank Hennessee as Historian, and Mike O’Grady as Athletic Representative.<sup>62</sup> At the end of the Buckner training, Bob Arvin was recognized as the outstanding Yearling.<sup>63</sup>

Outfitted with a new lightweight, short-sleeve, open neck, white shirt, and shoulder boards,<sup>64</sup> we returned from Camp Buckner and endured another Reorganization Week before beginning our academic studies. Even more so than plebe year, we had a demanding curriculum, including mathematics, chemistry, physics, English, foreign languages, psychology, and social sciences (American and European history). The Office of the Commandant did a survey in the fall of 1962 to see how much sleep cadets were getting. On an average, we were getting 5 1/4 hours a day, including weekends and free periods.<sup>65</sup> Jack Lowe wrote his parents, “Life at West Point has really been fast and furious lately. I have so many term papers coming up and so many WPR’s I do not know whether I am coming or going.”<sup>66</sup> Those of us who survived soon adjusted to the heavy academic demands.

The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 interrupted our routine and reminded us of the dangers of the nuclear era. Denny Coll wrote, “We watched JFK maneuver a Soviet leader into a corner with military might and then provide him a face-saving exit out the back door.”<sup>67</sup> Jack Lowe wrote his parents, “Around here President Kennedy’s action was highly applauded, and most cadets were for us going into Cuba.” He said there were rumors that the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division was “packed and ready to go.” A cadet’s girl friend had reported, he wrote, a rumor at Mary Washington College that the Class of 1963 would graduate early and the rest of the cadets put on alert.<sup>68</sup> The Military Academy updated its “Air Raid Plan” in November 1962.<sup>69</sup>

On the “fields of friendly strife,” the biggest event of Yearling year was the arrival of Paul Dietzel. One of the ideas that Dietzel brought from LSU was the “Chinese Bandits.” Bill Zadel explained, “His idea was to use three different teams every quarter of the game and always have fresh players in the game.” One of Dietzel’s favorite sayings, Bill said, was, “The fourth quarter is ours.” Of the three teams, one played defense in the second half of each quarter and was known as the “Chinese Bandits,” a name derived from the comic strip “Terry and the Pirates” where the Chinese bandits were supposedly the toughest people on earth.<sup>70</sup> The

Chinese bandits were unveiled in 1962, as were the red coolie hats with gold trim the cadets wore when the bandits entered the game. Fifty years later we still remember our wildly cheering when we put on our Chinese bandit hats for the first time in a home football game. And some of us still proudly display our Chinese Bandits' hats.

Even though most of us were not corps squad athletes, sports were an integral part of our cadet experience. During three intramural seasons we had a choice of eighteen different sports, including wrestling, boxing, football, golf, water polo, and skiing. Some cadet companies competed fiercely for regimental or brigade championships; others did not. An especially memorable experience for Gene Parker was his playing on the F-1 intramural football team and winning the brigade championship. He wrote: "The plebes on the team were 'recognized' by the upperclassmen making the rest of Plebe year more reasonable."<sup>71</sup> Skiing became an intramural sport after the installation in the winter of 1962-1963 of a T-bar ski lift (2,260 feet long) on Victor Constant Ski Slope. Chuck Nichols wrote: "The accomplishment I am most proud of was when I coached the Brigade champion ski team my senior year. I was fortunate to have on the team a couple of plebes who had skied all their life. That experience got me to love skiing, a sport I enjoyed the rest of my life until my knees told me it was time to hang up my skis."<sup>72</sup>

A memorable salute to tradition occurred during our Yearling year when a group went to Sedgwick's Monument at the end of first semester to spin the rowels on his spurs. Legend has it that if a cadet is deficient in academics, he should go to the monument at midnight the night before the term end examination, in full dress, under arms, and spin the rowels on the general's spurs. If he does so, he supposedly will not be "found" in academics. On this moonlit night when the Plain was covered with a layer of ice-encrusted snow about a foot deep, Step Tyner, Gordy Larson, Alex Alexander, Bill Birdseye, Doug Kline, Keyes Hudson, and others, only a couple of whom were deficient in an academic course, made their way to the monument. Only Step Tyner was in full-dress uniform under arms. He explained his presence by saying he "was one of the few to regress from Section 3 to the [math] turnouts in a mere 18 months."<sup>73</sup>

As the cadets departed New South Area, the Officer-in-Charge spotted them and they scattered. Step reports, "I ended up in bed, in full dress over white under arms with fixed bayonet and the covers pulled over my head. The door opened, there was a moment's silence, and then it closed again. Now to reform the group and cross the LD...." Once reassembled the group made their way across the Plain toward the monument which was located in front of the Superintendent's quarters. For a moment they thought an MP had spotted them, and then they feared they had awakened the Superintendent with the loud crunching noise made when their feet broke through the crust of ice on top of the snow. Step describes what happened: "The actual spinning went without a hitch, and for a number of years I had a Polaroid of my handsome mug, hand raised, about to twirl the General's horse-goosers.... Lamentably, I have long since lost that photo, and have nothing but the memory to sustain me."<sup>74</sup> Keyes Hudson observed that everyone on the trek passed the exams except one cadet in the company who had "declared the tradition to be foolish and childish" and refused to participate. Keyes concluded, "Never doubt the power of tradition."<sup>75</sup>

We had numerous classmates as roommates during our four years at West Point. Ed Abesamis wrote: "Roommates will always be remembered; they helped me learn many things, gave friendship, emotional support, and assistance in many forms."<sup>76</sup> Ron Walter, who is noted for his fine sense of humor, wrote amusing anecdotes about how much he had learned from his roommates. One, he said, taught him the value of calculus in "measuring," instead of "estimating," the anatomy of women; another talked him into throwing firecrackers off the roof of New South Barracks and got him into great trouble; another taught him a technique in intramural

boxing that did not work; and one in his First Class year introduced him to a night of “drinking and debauchery” in New York City. Ron wrote, “I concluded that *all* of my roommates must have been a bad influence on me.”<sup>77</sup>

Barrie Zais did not accuse his roommates of exerting “bad” influence over him. He wrote: “During yearling year, Bob Selkis and I were roommates and were leading the first regiment in demerits. Returning from class one day we opened the door to find four officers, two sitting on each bunk, in full green uniforms with overcoats and service (saucer) hats. So the entire room appeared to be full. The four officers were the K-1 company TAC, first regimental TAC, my plebe pop, and my father, then a colonel. Their message was that the good times were over, we had to shape up, and we would no longer be roommates. Bob moved his stuff upstairs to room with John Bell, while Dave Hurley came to room with me. That did not end our friendship, however. Selkis and I were Ranger buddies, roomed together in airborne school, drove across the country together, put our cars on the same boat, took the same plane to Hawaii, got assigned to the same battalion, were both assigned as our company advanced party, sat next to each other on the C-130 from Hickham to Pleiku. Four months after arrival he got shot and left me in Viet Nam; I often remind him of that.”<sup>78</sup>

Sonny Ray had a special relationship with his roommate Tom Johnson. Sonny wrote: “One of the great mistakes of the tactical department was assigning Tom and me as roommates, hoping that somehow by my being in the vicinity of such cerebral capacity there would be some transference. Never happened! Tom almost never studied and when he did, it was for some advanced section topic that was so arcane that I could not even understand the title. He also was not particularly adept at answering my questions since they were of such a simplistic nature that they could be answered in five words and certainly no longer than a sentence. I would reply ‘Oh, yeah, of course’ and retire to my desk on the other side of the room and try to figure out ‘What the hell did he just say?’ Tom and I spent most of our time just talking since he had the time and I had the inclination to do anything but homework. From these discussions, I received a real education that does not appear anywhere on the course schedule but was invaluable to me. He was a great friend. We were the ultimate odd couple.”<sup>79</sup>

Despite our friendship with our roommates, or perhaps because of our friendship, we sometimes took advantage of them. When Tom Abraham roomed with Jack Terry, he challenged Jack one morning to a war of nerves on who could wait the longest before getting dressed for reveille. At the two-minute warning Tom admitted, to Jack’s dismay, that he was excused from formation that morning. Tom wrote, “I got one heck of a good laugh at the expense of my best buddy, and he barely made it to the formation.”<sup>80</sup> Every classmate had a different tale about his roommates, but all were different versions of the same song.

## COW YEAR

Like plebe year, yearling year eventually ended, and we became Second Class cadets, or cows. Much like cadets had done in the days of Ulysses S Grant and Douglas MacArthur, we had June Encampment shortly after graduation in June 1963, but we lived in the barracks instead of tents on Clinton Field. Most of our activities focused on making us better trainers and leaders. We studied such subjects as map reading and methods of instruction and did a great deal of physical training. We also visited Fort Monmouth and the U.S. Naval Submarine Base and the Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut. We rode in a submarine at New London and at Fort Monmouth received some presentations about the Signal Corps and spent some lovely time on the beach.

Then half of us went on Army Orientation Training (AOT) and the other half served on

the cadre of Beast Barracks. Those of us who went on AOT were “detailed” as a platoon leader in one of the combat arms—Infantry, Artillery, Armor, Engineers, and Signal Corps—in an overseas unit. Since only a handful of us went to our Basic Branch Course after graduation, this summer experience proved invaluable in our gaining basic knowledge about our future branch and in developing professionally. Those of us, for example, who performed as platoon leaders in a unit that trained at Grafenwöhr or Hohenfels in Germany, instead of remaining in garrison, received a sound foundation for success as a combat arms officer.

A highlight of AOT was a two-day orientation visit to Berlin, including Check Point Charlie, Brandenburg Gate, and a huge Soviet war memorial. Many of us vividly recall riding in a U.S. Army bus through Berlin. Bob Frank wrote: “The week before our orientation in Berlin, JFK visited and uttered his famous ‘Ich bin ein Berliner!’ German enthusiasm was so high that the Soviets felt a need to counter JFK’s move. So, [Nikita] Khrushchev was scheduled to visit East Berlin, which was festooned with red flags and banners. One block off Khrushchev’s route, however, the buildings were shabby like most of the G[erman] D[emocratic] R[epublic]. But we got to see this show of political force.”<sup>81</sup> As we rode through the Berlin Wall and through Berlin, none of us missed the sharp contrast between the rise of West Berlin from the rubble and the failure of East Berlin to do so. While at the memorial Ed Knauf had a Polaroid camera and was surrounded by a crowd of curious East Germans when he produced an instant photo of the memorial.<sup>82</sup> Also, a German hid under a seat in one of the buses and, upon being discovered by the senior NCO on the bus, was forced to leave the bus. Oblivious to the international repercussions, some of us insisted the man should have been left on the bus and smuggled across the border. Almost fifty years later, Ed Knauf wrote: “This visit had a profound effect on me personally and put me on a path to commit a major portion of my life to ending the Soviet Union’s dictatorship of many of the world’s people.”<sup>83</sup>

As we began our Second Class year, we were “scrambled” into new companies. Though we remained in the same regiment, we left the company where we had been for two years and moved with two or three of our company mates into a new company. The Commandant’s goal was to break some of the ties between members of the First and Second classes and thereby enable the chain of command to function more effectively. Like the Class of 1964, we began with a new slate in a new company and grumbled mightily about leaving friends with whom we had endured two years at West Point. It did not take us long, however, to make new friends in our new companies. We also did not take long to become acquainted with the M-14 rifle, when it replaced the M-1 during our Cow year.<sup>84</sup>

When classes began, we took electricity, mechanics of solids, mechanics of fluids, law, and social sciences (economics and government). Much as we had come to expect, these courses proved more demanding than those of previous years. We learned new ideas, such as the “right hand rule,” and created new names for our instructors, “the velvet hammer.” Jack Lowe emphasized the dramatic change facing the new Second Class cadets: “Life went to 5 1/2 hours of sleep, shallow complexions, dark rings under the eyes, glazed eyeballs..., the circuits P who wears a cape and pulls rabbits out of a black-top hat, 50-60 page economics and law assignments, spit-shined shoes, long hard soccer practices, beautiful girls walking all over the place (with other cadets).”<sup>85</sup> John Malpass remembered one of the labs. He wrote: “In Juice lab, Timmy Vogel was my partner. We matched out to see who would ‘throw the switch.’ I lost. Tim hid behind a station an aisle away, while I blew up a potentiometer and God knows what else, with no resistance or infinite resistance (I still don’t know which it was). I arc-welded molten metal on my belt buckle after burning through two folds of my class shirt.”<sup>86</sup>

Just prior to our entering West Point, the institution had adopted a revised curriculum

that included advanced courses, electives, and core-course validations.<sup>87</sup> Beginning with the Class of 1961, First Class cadets could take one or two electives from a list of sixteen,<sup>88</sup> a list that rose over the next four years to 67.<sup>89</sup> In Academic Year 1963-1964 we, as Second Class cadets, could take one overload course voluntarily each semester,<sup>90</sup> and in 1964-1965 as First Class cadets we could take two electives, as well as a voluntary overload course. We also could be selected for advanced courses. Many of us managed to validate a few core courses, something that was previously unknown in the "old corps," and sixty percent of us took advanced courses during some time in our four years at West Point.<sup>91</sup> Because of his previous college studies, John Concannon managed to take twelve electives, probably a Class record, and establish a strong foundation in foreign languages and area studies for his later distinguished service as a Foreign Area Officer.<sup>92</sup>

Electives also grew in sophistication and complexity. The close proximity of West Point to a large number of research activities enabled academic departments to extend classroom discussions and laboratory exercises into "the field." Cadets visited, for example, Brookhaven Laboratories on Long Island, the Nevis Cyclotron Laboratory at Columbia University, Army Research and Development Laboratories at Fort Monmouth, and Bell Telephone Laboratories in New Jersey.<sup>93</sup> Cadets routinely attended the Eastern Colleges Science Conference. In May 1964 Frank Prokop presented a paper entitled, "A Low Cost, High Impulse Solid Rocket Fuel for Amateur Rocketry."<sup>94</sup> The following year five of our classmates (Bill Hecker, Bill Bradburn, Bob Wolff, Tom McDonald, and Lloyd Briggs) presented papers.<sup>95</sup>

As the Military Academy's curriculum evolved, the institution also reconsidered the academic qualifications of its faculty. In 1961 the institution formally considered whether civilian professors (other than those in the Department of Foreign languages) should be "engaged" to teach selected elective courses,<sup>96</sup> and in the spring semester of 1961-1962 the Department of English offered an elective taught by a visiting civilian professor. Except for increasing the number of visiting professors, the Military Academy would not make more dramatic changes in its civilian faculty for another two decades. More significant changes in the early 1960s occurred in the military faculty, especially in their having advanced degrees. When we arrived in the classroom in the autumn of 1961, faculty members who had recently received their Ph.D.'s were Colonel Amos A. Jordan, Jr., Colonel Harvey "Hot Body" Fraser, Colonel Charles H. Schilling, Colonel Eliot C. Cutler, and Colonel Walter J. Renfroe.<sup>97</sup> By Academic Year 1963-1964, the faculty consisted of about 400 professors, 282 of whom had masters degrees, 20 professional degrees, and 30 doctorates. Although 67 did not have a masters degree, 29 of these taught in the Department of Foreign Languages and had completed extensive in-country studies for the language they were teaching. Of the remaining 38 instructors, 14 taught in the Department of Mathematics.<sup>98</sup> About the time of our graduation new procurement policies ensured that "practically every instructor" had an advanced degree.<sup>99</sup> To enhance the academic capabilities of the military faculty, the Military Academy received permission in March 1963 to add fifteen "permanent" Associate Professors.<sup>100</sup> In brief, the academic qualifications of the faculty improved markedly while we were cadets.

We nonetheless were not always as serious about academics as we should have been. In one social sciences course, we had to write a paper worth 15.0, which was equivalent to five daily grades of 3.0. Ray Pollard, Greg Steele, Terry Starling, Jim Tillman, and Jim Hennen agreed to do research for the paper but not to put pencil to paper until the last possible moment. The challenge was to see who could wait the longest before starting to write the paper. At 1930, on the night before the paper was due, Jim Hennen, Ray Pollard and Terry Starling started writing. At midnight Jim Tillman started writing. Although Greg Steele finally started writing at

0400, he received a 15.0, much to everyone's amazement, and his instructor complimented him for his brilliance. He was penalized, however, for the appearance of his paper. He had turned in the paper on sheets torn from a spiral binder, and he had scratched out or lined through numerous words and phrases. His instructor wrote him up for the lack of neatness and he received a 15 and 20 slug for violating format rules. Ray Pollard wrote, "It was the final confirmation that I was out of my academic league!"<sup>101</sup>

The heavy academic load did not decrease our interest in girls. We enjoyed going to the movies or spending time in Lee Hall when we were plebes and the Weapons Room and the First Class Club when we were upperclass cadets. As plebes we could find some private time with dates at Fort Putnam and, in our upperclass years, do the same on Flirtation Walk. In our visits to Fort Putnam and Flirtation Walk, blankets were not the only things we carried in our typewriter case. Hank Dermody wrote, "I received a bottle of 151 proof rum from a stewardess I knew. Being resourceful, Bob Larson (another turnback) and I hid the jug on 'Flirty.' The idea was to periodically have a sip to give us balance throughout the next month. Unfortunately, the first time we got a chance to have a sip, we went to the rock where we had hid our bottle and found, not our jug, but a note. The note said, 'Found what you left for us. Good stuff. Thanks, The Workmen.' So much for being resourceful."<sup>102</sup>

One of the most delightful aspects of West Point was having the opportunity to date girls from Ladycliff, a Catholic residential college for women in Highland Falls. Mark Sheridan, whose wife graduated from Ladycliff, said, "On a per capita basis, the women of Ladycliff...earned more JD's, MBA's, M.Ed's, Ph.D's, and MD's than our class did."<sup>103</sup> Most of us first met some of the girls when we were remanded to Plebe remedial dancing. Even though the girls referred to us as the "Elephant Squad," we were delighted to meet them. Linda Sheridan observed, "Some of my classmates married men they met that day."<sup>104</sup> All of us had to endure careful screening before we were permitted to date the girls. Skip O'Donnell wrote: "My father was stationed at West Point in the mid 1950s and we lived in Highland Falls. I went to Sacred Heart grammar school across the street from Ladycliff. At that time some of the nuns from Ladycliff taught most of the grade school classes. I had Sister Bonaventure for my 7th grade class. She was a large person and very strict. I was a cut-up in her class sometimes and got my knuckles rapped with the proverbial ruler. When I returned to West Point as a cadet, I started dating Marilyn [whom he eventually married] in my cow year. On my first visit to the Ladycliff dorm where Marilyn was staying, I had to report to the dormitory nun, who happened to be Sister Bonaventure--yikes. She remembered me and hoped I had changed my ways for one of her girls. I said that I had changed and was glad to see her again. After that first encounter, Sister Bony and I were great friends."<sup>105</sup>

While some of us received "Dear John" letters or found new girlfriends, others maintained relationships with high-school sweethearts. Rosemarie Kuhn dated Dave in high school and spent Christmas at West Point with him when we were plebes. She wrote: "Dave and I used to dance to juke box music at the Thayer Hotel. We went to the old skating rink that is no longer there. I saw Harold Jenkins run like a rabbit and win almost every race. I saw John Alger and Peter Lounsbury compete and sat with Bob Arvin's family to watch Dave run track. I went to gymnastic meets and saw Tad Ono. I saw Dave do the high jump, long jump and triple jump, in which he held the school record. I remember meeting the great swimmers Buddy Bucha, Steve Bliss, and Tony Clay." She added, "I was with Dave kissing at night standing by the Catholic Chapel and an officer stomped by to warn us! Another officer was mad when I had a nose bleed and Dave was trying to help me hold my head back so I would not bleed everywhere. He warned Dave about public display of affection, and told him to take me to the

Grant Hall.”<sup>106</sup>

Dave explained how Rosemarie was chosen to be the Homecoming Queen in 1963: “Each company had the ability to nominate one girl. I nominated Rosemarie and submitted her picture to the G-1 Company Staff. They picked her to represent the company and submitted her name to our Battalion Staff. I don't know what process was used, but she was selected to represent the battalion. To be selected to represent a battalion, the candidate had to commit that she would travel to West Point for Homecoming weekend. In our junior year, Homecoming was scheduled in conjunction with our football game against Cincinnati.”

“Rose flew back for the weekend,” Dave said, “and joined the five other ‘princesses.’ They all attended a dinner on Friday night which included some officers, possibly some officers' wives, the Cadet Hostess and others. The results of the judging were kept secret. On Saturday, the girls were introduced at half time, each being escorted by the Cadet Battalion Commander onto the field. The cheering was pretty raucous with each battalion trying to make more noise than the others. Fortunately, we won the game by the score of 22-0. That night, there was a formal Hop (the cadets wore all whites) at the gymnasium. About half way through the night, they announced who was Queen and Pepsodent Paul Dietzel crowned Rose with a tiara she was allowed to keep.”<sup>107</sup>

Whatever the academic demands or female distractions may have been, most of us always found time for a football rally. The rallies came in two varieties, the mess hall rally, and the evening rally.<sup>108</sup> The Mess Hall rallies often began with a speech from the Poop Deck or by a performance by the Rabble Rousers on a stand near the main entrance. Rallies with bon fires usually took place on Clinton Field. We had a number of charismatic speakers at the rallies, including Colonel Tom Rienzi, who later hosted us during a visit to Fort Monmouth. Another memorable speaker was Captain Jack Williams of the Department of Law. He was a Penn State graduate who gave a fiery speech for three successive years before the Penn State game, all of which Army won. In the fall of 1961, at a noon rally in the mess hall, a banner with the word “spizzerinctum” was unfurled below the poop deck as General Westmoreland spoke. The word meant having the “will to succeed,” and even though it was new to us, it was not new to Larry Neal since his great-grandfather, a Baptist minister in Middle Tennessee, had used it decades before. In October 1965 General Westmoreland greeted some of us with the word when he visited us at Ranger School, and, even later, some of us unfurled banners with the word “spizzerinctum” when he visited us in units in Germany or Viet Nam.<sup>109</sup>

The evening rallies usually began spontaneously when some cadet stuck his head out of a barracks window and hollered “Rally, Rally, Rally.” In most cases, that call generated additional cries from barrack windows, and then cadets would swarm out of the barracks in their bathrobes or outlandish costumes for the rally. The rallies sometimes included audio performances in which cadets had recorded lines from or portions of hit tunes and then linked them to deliver a rousing message to the assembled cadets. Rallies usually started and ended in the barracks area, but frequently they included movements to the Superintendent's or Commandant's quarters, where one of the general officers would come out and address the cadets. They also included movements to the football coach's quarters near Lusk Reservoir. Gordy Larson, who was proud of his having attended “most, if not all, of the rallies,” observed, “Rallies provided a release from the restrictions imposed on us as part of cadet life, and it was one of the few times that we were allowed to cut loose.”<sup>110</sup>

We also had “spirit missions.” Two weeks before the Army-Navy game in our Yearling year, seven classmates and five plebes headed across the Plain around midnight with red paint and paint brushes in hand to paint “Beat Navy” on the roof of Cullum Hall. Halfway across the

Plain MP's spotted the group and chased them. As the group scattered, a few of them ran toward Kosciusko Monument and the Hudson River, and Joe Sanchez, John Mogan, Fred Eichorn, and Rick Kuzman jumped across the stone wall. After leaping across the wall, Rick Kuzman realized he was "falling straight down with paintbrush in hand." He landed on his feet in a pile of leaves after a twenty-foot drop and realized the woods he had seen from the road were the tops of thirty-foot trees.<sup>111</sup> Rick was the only one of the four not seriously hurt. Joe Sanchez followed John Mogan across the wall and later wrote: "I put my hands on the waist-high stonewall and did a vault as in gymnastics and over I went. I hit about 10 or 15 feet below on a narrow ledge and that is when my troubles started. My momentum carried me off the narrow ledge to a drop of at least 25 or 30 feet. I went off the ledge head first and kept rolling all the way down to Flirtation Walk."<sup>112</sup> John realized Joe and another classmate were seriously hurt and went to get the MP's, who were followed by the Fire Department, Emergency Services, and the OIC. The next morning Joe, John, and Fred Eichorn were lined up in adjacent beds in the hospital. They watched as Colonel Tarbox, the Company Tac, and a captain discussed the magnitude of the slug they would receive. Then the Superintendent and Commandant arrived. John wrote: "Quick conference is followed by Westy standing at the foot of our beds saying that our chain of command recommends severe punishment, but it looks like we've had enough. Then he says, 'Next time you jump, wear a parachute. Beat Navy!'"<sup>113</sup>

Other memorable spirit missions stand out. In our plebe year, during the Syracuse game at the Polo Grounds in New York City, we marched on the playing field and dropped oranges as we left. We tried to make the oranges spell "Beat Syracuse" but as we stumbled over the oranges while jogging off the field, we kicked many of them out of place and obliterated the message.<sup>114</sup> During our plebe year Company D-1 in the middle of the night moved an Honest John rocket, one used in static displays, from a motor pool to the front of Washington Hall. The following morning the Corps was cheered by the sight of this rocket in front of Washington Hall with a banner that said "Beat Navy."<sup>115</sup> Just before the Navy game in our Second-Class year, Gordy Long, Cam McConnell, Bryant Bachman, and Larry Leskovjan managed to hang a "Beat Navy" sign onto Lady Fame on Battle Monument. After shooting an arrow across her wings, they hoisted the sign into place, but the MP's removed it before lunch.<sup>116</sup> As Firsties, a foursome that included Alex Alexander, Ross Wollen, Tom Kovach, and Roger Frydrychowski attempted to drop a "Beat Pitt" banner across the front of the reviewing stand on the Plain, but a keen-eyed MP interceded at a critical moment and stymied their efforts. The same foursome, however, successfully strung a sign from the top of the clock tower across Thayer Road to the top of Bartlett Hall and, for another game, a sign from the clock tower.<sup>117</sup> Pete McArthur, Ron Wells, Dean Loftin, Tom Fergusson, John Funk, Mike Shaver and several others painted "Beat Navy" on the stern of one of the ships in the moth-ball fleet anchored on the Hudson near one of our favorite drinking spots (Gus's).<sup>118</sup> Paint proved more visible and lasting than banners strung across roads or monuments or oranges dropped onto a football field.

Of the many rallies that occurred while we were cadets, none was more famous than what the officer-in-charge that night, Major Joe Rogers, called the "great/infamous Penn State rally/riot" of October 1963. Just before the Penn State game, a huge rally began when the Rabble Rousers turned off the Mess Hall lights, blasted Army fight songs over the public address system, and hauled up the entryway stairs the French 75mm towed cannon that was fired at football games each time the Army team scored.<sup>119</sup> After a thunderous blast from the cannon near the main door, our own Rocco McGurk appeared on the Poop Deck, tore off his grey jacket, and began cheering. In the subsequent pandemonium, food and open milk cartons were thrown into the air, and knotted cloth napkins, soaked in water, were thrown high into the

chandeliers. Throughout the Mess Hall, cadets built pyramids of tables five or six high so they could stand on them and lead cheers. In many ways it was “the biggest food fight in history,”<sup>120</sup> but it also created a huge mess. In addition to the Rabble Rousers and the Cadet chain of command, the 1965 Hop Committee and the Ring and Crest Committee had to help clean up the mess. To pay for the damage to the Mess Hall, every cadet had \$12.04 NOTE: VERIFY (\$12.04 or \$2.14). deducted from his Cadet account.<sup>121</sup> All of us thought this was a small price to pay for an unforgettable rally...and an awesome 10-7 victory over Penn State.

Another memorable victory came when the Corps traveled by train to Chicago to cheer for the Army football team against Air Force on November 2. We departed on Friday afternoon, marched on Soldier Field for the football game on Saturday, watched Army beat Air Force 14-10, and enjoyed a warm and gracious welcome from the people of Chicago. We also enjoyed what one Chicago newspaper called “the biggest date in the history of Chicago.” Some 1,500 West Point and Air Force cadets, plus an equal number of girls, jammed into the grand ballroom of the Conrad Hilton hotel and danced the evening away. One girl remarked, “I think it’s the best thing Mayor Daley’s ever done.”<sup>122</sup> We departed around 0100 hours on Sunday for West Point. Most of us did not get back to our rooms until 2200 hours on Sunday, November 3.<sup>123</sup>

The frivolity ended three weeks later, however, when we received on a sunny Friday afternoon the shocking news of President Kennedy’s assassination. Roger Frydrychowski recalls being in class when an officer entered the classroom, announced that the President and had been shot, and told the cadets to return to their rooms.<sup>124</sup> Additional reports and rumors arrived as many of us returned from class. Jerry Lipsit vividly remembers hearing the news over radios playing from the windows of most barracks. He added, “The sky suddenly turned black with a greenish tint and there was total silence except for the radios.”<sup>125</sup> Dan Christman recalled, “I remember going to law class in the afternoon--normally, there’s a lot of banter and chatter in the cadet areas as you’re heading off after a class break. It was just as silent as a tomb as we were heading off to class.... [I]t was really an emotional moment for the entire corps.”<sup>126</sup>

Everything came to a screeching halt. The soccer team arrived at Annapolis on a bus the day of the assassination, and when Coach Palone stepped off the bus to meet a waiting Naval officer, he was told of the tragic event. He returned to the bus with tears flowing down his face and said the President had been shot. The bus immediately turned around and returned to West Point.<sup>127</sup> The Commandant cancelled all leaves and passes, and the next day, Saturday, the Dean cancelled classes after the first hour. At 1000 hours on Saturday, all cadets assembled on the Plain, and the First Regimental Adjutant formally announced the death of President Kennedy. A cannon was fired every half hour on Saturday, and all flags flew at half staff.<sup>128</sup> About 200 cadets marched in the funeral for President Kennedy. Keyes Hudson wrote: “The sound of ‘Hail to the Chief’ as the casket was brought down the Capitol steps was the saddest sound I had ever heard.”<sup>129</sup>

In the aftershock of President Kennedy’s assassination, nothing else seemed important, not even the impending football game against Navy. The Department of Defense thought seriously about canceling the football game, but since the Kennedy family believed that the President would have wanted it to take place, it was postponed a week. Many of the usual frivolities and rallies were absent in the week before the game, while a somber tone permeated practice that week at both schools.

The exception to the somber tone was the Goat-Engineer game which took place at 1000 hours on Thanksgiving day, November 28, at Clinton Field. Roger Frydrychowski kept a program from the game, and more than a few of our classmates were surprised nearly fifty years

later to discover they had participated.<sup>130</sup> Cadets who participated in the game or attended as spectators took great liberties with the “uniforms” they wore. One memorable Engineer cheer went, “Sliderule Slipstick cosine sine, 3 point 1-4-1-5-9, Hives! Hives! Hives!”<sup>131</sup> Step Tyner wrote, “I dragooned Mike Abbot and members of the Cadet band (or, at least, instrumentalists who hung out in Bldg. 720) into doing the halftime entertainment. And entertaining it was; Mike had borrowed the USMA Band drum major’s shako and sash, which he wore over B-robe and thermal underwear. Nobody’s lips froze to any mouthpieces, and Mike managed not to kill anyone with the baton, either....”<sup>132</sup> As for the game, the Goats won despite several long passes and a touchdown by the engineers. One of the winning coaches, John Johnson, wrote: “Captain Chance, my E-1 TAC, ‘drafted’ me along with Ron Riley to help coach the Goats. I was injured in our first game of the ‘63 season (Boston U.) and ‘available.’ I recall the game being a spirited, hard fought contest. At the sake of offending a classmate or so, I recall Bill Triick’s superb QB’ing being the difference. I have read and been told that coaching a Cadet football team is special. I found it so, and when talking about West Point football I seize on that assertion and relish dropping my name along with Colonel Blaik’s as a ‘former West Point football coach.’”<sup>133</sup> As is customary, we had our Thanksgiving dinner in the Mess Hall after the game.

Tradition has it that if the Goats win, Army will beat Navy, but tradition proved wrong. Rollie Stichweh described the 1963 football game, which took place on December 7 and saw the introduction of instant replay. “In 1963 Navy had one of the top teams in the country and was led by Roger Staubach who had just won the Heisman Trophy as a Junior. He was the best player in the country in my view and receiving the Heisman was a well-deserved honor. In addition, Navy was ranked number two in the nation, again well-deserved given its 8-1 record at the point. But we had an outstanding team as well with a record of 7-2. We had beaten Penn State on their home field and Air Force at Soldier Field, Chicago. Were we intimidated by Roger and his Navy Team? No!!! Were we convinced we would beat them? Yes!!!”

The 1963 game turned out to be one of the most exciting games in the Army-Navy series. Rollie explained: “Confident, we got off to a strong start and scored first to take the lead, 7-0. Staubach’s first pass on the next drive was picked off by Sonny Stowers to stop the drive. But Roger [Staubach] could not be contained for long. They fought back to tie the score at 7-7 at halftime. Navy took the lead early in the second half and were on a roll. But Johnny Seymour intercepted a pass. We drove the ball down to the goal line, but Kenny Waldrop was stopped just short of a touchdown. Navy went 93 yards to score, aided by two fifteen-yard personal foul penalties. Now the score was 21-7. Was the game over at this point? Many thought so--we did not. We scored on the next drive and, rather than kick the extra point, ran the ball for a 2-point conversion. The score now was 21-15. With time running out, Dick Heydt executed a perfect on-side kick and we recovered to keep possession of the ball. The stadium, with over 100,000 fans, went berserk, and the noise level was greater than any had ever heard.”

Rollie continued: “With sheer bedlam having broken out, we started down the field again. The head referee granted an official time-out to settle the crowd, but the bedlam continued unabated. Ray Paske, Kenny Waldrop, and Don Parcels had key gains as we moved the ball down to the two-yard line. With a fourth down, no time-outs remaining, and the clock ticking, we broke the huddle and wanted to run Waldrop around the right end for the TD. The noise prevented calling the signals; the crowd had encroached into the end zone and onto the field. Teammates raised up out of their stance as I asked the head referee for an official timeout to settle the crowd and clear the end zone but that request was denied. Game over: Navy 21, Army 15. To lose in that way was crushing—the players should have determined the outcome of the game—one more play—the game should not have ended in this way. Would we have

scored to tie the game and then hit the extra point for the win? Yes!!!”

Rollie concluded: “As the quarterback responsible for getting that last play run, I felt terrible. Our whole team did. Those of us who were cows and yearlings felt particularly bad for our Firstie teammates who would not have another shot at Navy to redeem themselves. So, on the long and quiet trip back to the Point following the game, those of us in the Class of 1965 made a vow--dedicating the next year’s game to our 1964 teammates; we vowed not to leave that field unless we secured a victory. Some teams, knocked to the ground in defeat, may not have had the grit and determination to rise back up and fight. We did.”<sup>134</sup>

The loss to Navy set the tone for the remainder of the semester and for Gloom Period. Except for Christmas leave, the only break in the gloom came with our celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> night before our graduation. The idea for the celebration, which had never been done before, came through two channels. Jon Thompson suggested to Mark Walsh, our Class president, that we should do something special to observe the day, and Mike Hudson suggested to Buddy Bucha, who was co-chair with Roger Frydrychowski of the Hop and Activities Committee, that the Class organize a dance to celebrate the milestone of 500 days until graduation. Feeling ambitious, Mike, Roger, and Buddy sought approval for a dance to be held in civilian clothes, off-post at the Bear Mountain Inn. While Buddy sold the idea to the Office of the Commandant, Roger wrote the operations plan and received formal approval on December 24, 1963. Colonel A. L. Hamblen, who was our Class sponsor and who forwarded the formal approval, wrote: “The Superintendent stressed the fact that this action was precedent and consequently it was incumbent upon the Class of '65 to set a good example, both in conduct and performance, at this event. Of course I assured him that with a class of the tremendous enthusiasm and drive that is inherent in '65 he would have nothing to fear.”<sup>135</sup>

On the night of the celebration in late February 1964, we traveled by bus to Bear Mountain and listened to music provided by “Lou Csoka and his boys.” Miss Judy McMurdo, the date of Pat Kenny, was chosen as “Sweetheart of the 500<sup>th</sup> Night.” At the celebration, the Class thanked Roger Frydrychowski for his efforts in organizing the event.<sup>136</sup> Since that night, subsequent classes have celebrated their 500<sup>th</sup> Night and transformed the event into a full weekend of activities concluding with a formal dinner-dance, but no class’s celebration has been as spontaneous or as fun as ours.

Extracurricular activities provided other opportunities for fun. While we were cadets, the Military Academy formally recognized about sixty extracurricular activities, ranging from the Astronomy Club, to the Debate Council and Forum, to the Ski Club,<sup>137</sup> and virtually all of them provided not only opportunities for cadets to leave West Point for a few hours or days but also opportunities for us to grow intellectually and personally. The Glee Club proved to be an extraordinary experience for everyone fortunate enough to make the cut and join. Duncan MacVicar wrote: “Singing in the Glee Club was a highlight.” He added, “We traveled quite a bit; I count that we visited ten different states during our three years, to include California, Colorado, and Florida. We even got to sing in the Hollywood Bowl! We appeared on TV in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. Nationally, we appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show and the Bell Telephone Hour. As we traveled, we were often put up for the night by host organizations, of which our favorites were always girls’ schools. No surprise there! Attending reunions, I have realized that some of the best friendships of my years at USMA were forged in the Glee Club.”<sup>138</sup> Several of our classmates had outstanding musical talent. Joe Anderson was the lead soloist for the Cadet Chapel Choir and the Glee Club;<sup>139</sup> his remarkable voice greatly enhanced the Choir’s and Glee Club’s always wonderful performances. Louis Csoka, Mike Connors, and Jim Connell formed “The Headliners” as plebes and sang at several events during our cadet days.

The group eventually earned a spot with the Cadet Glee Club.<sup>140</sup> Another cadet band, "The Jaguars," included Chuck Shaw, Kala Kukea, Doug Richardson, and Mike Hudson; the band played primarily at the First Class Club and other "hops." Chuck said Kala was "the main musical talent and vocalist."<sup>141</sup>

We also participated in religious activities. Jim Golden served as Superintendent of the Cadet Sunday school which had more than one hundred cadet teachers and seven hundred post children. Jim wrote: "Just getting all those children, particularly the young ones, out of and into those winter coats was a challenge."<sup>142</sup> When asked to describe one of his most memorable experiences as a cadet, Lee Hewitt replied: "Meeting Princess Grace [of Monaco] during a Chapel Choir trip to Philadelphia [on April 26, 1963]. After we arrived and had our rehearsal, our host, Mr. Russell Baum, asked if we could drop by 'the Kel's' and sing a song since they could not attend the service. As we approached the house, the presence of police security suggested this was more than just neighbors and might be the Kellys of Philadelphia. The senior Mrs. Kelly answered the door and when we explained who we were and why we were there, Mrs. Kelly got Princess Grace and the children to come to the door. They were very gracious and invited the choir director (Mr. Davis) and our OIC to have tea with them while the rest of us went in search of girls."<sup>143</sup> About ten to fifteen cadets participated in the visit and, among the surprises, found two of Princess Grace's children watching "The West Point Story" on television. According to John Swensson, "Punchy Kroeten was on the TV screen teaching cadets to box."<sup>144</sup>

Many benefits came from being on the Glee Club or in one of the choirs. Chuck McCloskey wrote: "I was in the Catholic Choir and one trip was to the College of New Rochelle when I was a Yearling. It was for a joint concert with the girls of the college. The girls rehearsed first and I spotted a beautiful blond in the back row and determined that I needed to meet her. I asked her for a date that Saturday night but she already had one. I still managed to be at the same club that night and have a dance with her. Then the next day we went for a walk together. The happy ending is that the beautiful blond girl was Rosemary and we have been married for 44 years."<sup>145</sup>

Amidst all the "opportunities to excel," we cannot deny that some of our activities were totally frivolous. Jerry Clark, for example, earned the name "Mole Clark" because he sorted out, in Larry Leskovjan's words, "the ways and byways of the underground network of tunnels running through the Academy buildings." Larry wrote: "One night, Dick Drass and I went on a tour with him. Neat!"<sup>146</sup>

## FIRSTIE YEAR

In June 1964 we finally became First Class cadets. That summer we gained leadership experience at West Point with the plebes or at Camp Buckner with the yearlings. Bob Arvin and Mark Walsh were kings of Beast Barracks, and Dave Kuhn and Buddy Bucha commanded the yearlings at Camp Buckner. Many of us worked hard to be good leaders for the plebes and yearlings. Bob Scully, for example, considered it "an honor and a privilege to be chosen as 'the man in the red sash'.<sup>147</sup> Those who had not gone on Army Orientation Training the previous summer went this summer. The Commandant's office had considered in April 1963 sending four "carefully selected cadets" to train with U.S. advisors in Viet Nam but decided not to do so.<sup>148</sup> Thus, we scattered across the United States and Europe in tactical units as "third lieutenants." We also had some educational opportunities. Joe Anderson, Tom Barron, and Sandy Hallenbeck went on Operations Crossroads Africa.<sup>149</sup> This was a marvelous opportunity for them to learn about Africa. Sandy, for example, built a school in Tanzania for refugees

mostly from South Africa, Mozambique, and Southern Rhodesia.<sup>150</sup> Also, a small bus-load of our classmates participated in August 1964 in a special Military Academy “tour” of several battlefields in Western Europe (Verdun, Bastogne, Metz, Bitche, etc.).<sup>151</sup> Among those participating in this tour was Bob Keats, a classmate who may have been more interested in history than any of us.<sup>152</sup>

For many of us, the most memorable event of the summer was “The First Class Trip.” At Fort Knox, Fort Sill, Fort Bliss, Fort Benning, Fort Belvoir, we learned about infantry, armor, artillery, air defense, and engineers and viewed numerous static displays and live demonstrations. While we learned a great deal about the combat arms, we also received numerous sales pitches about choosing a branch. At the end of each visit, Buddy Bucha would stand before the Class and the senior officer representing the post and say, “On behalf of the Class of 1965, I would like to thank you.....”

After fifty years, we appreciate all the effort expended on our behalf during this trip, but we remember the social events best of all. Ken Slutzky wrote: “We were near the end of our first class trip having already visited Fort Sill, Fort Knox, Fort Bliss, and Fort Benning. We were at Fort Belvoir and had heard the phrase ‘cream of the crop’ far too many times for our own good. As evidence of that, at each fort and at the required attendance at a reception where we had to be accompanied by a date, normally a blind date, we had the customary ‘pig pool.’ (Each cadet would put in a dollar and the pool winner was the one with the ugliest date.) As we sat around a table at the officers’ club (Tom Satorie, Bob Gagne, and others I can’t remember), all our dates made a group trip to the powder room. When they left, we considered this routine female behavior. However, when they returned, they were all smiling and laughing. One classmate asked his date what this was all about. She whispered in his ear a little too loudly, ‘We were picking the winner of our pig pool.’ It was funny at the time but also an eye-opener. We were so self absorbed that we failed to even consider we had flaws, too.”<sup>153</sup> Apparently some of the blind dates liked us as much as we liked them. Ed and Gail Simpson met at Fort Knox, were married after graduation, and were still married forty-five years later.<sup>154</sup>

As in previous summers, the training finally ended, and we entered another Reorganization Week filled with meetings, briefings, inspections, and drill. Following what had happened with the Class of 1964, the cadet chain of command rotated three times during the year. The first two were “temporary” and the final one, which assumed command after Spring Leave, was “permanent.” Among our responsibilities, nothing was more important than our nourishing the Honor System. The chairman of the Honor Committee, Stan Genega, who held his position for the entire academic year, wrote: “After three years of supporting the Honor Code and the Honor System, we became Firsties and assumed the mantle of leadership of the Corps in all areas including Honor. To our company representatives who comprised the Honor Committee fell the responsibility of introducing the Class of 1968 to the meaning of the Code and the System; also the responsibility of investigating alleged violations of the Code and judging those accused. The responsibility was awesome and felt by all--taken very seriously and fulfilled with an attention to detail and determination as strong as anything they had ever done. The word ‘transparency’ didn’t come up, but First Classmen who were not on the Committee were invited to observe proceedings, deepening their understanding of what their representatives were doing.”<sup>155</sup> Whether in Honor, room appearance, wearing of the uniform, or academics, we set the standards this time and tried to enforce them. Somehow or another we managed to get the Corps organized and functioning effectively as the academic year began.

Much of our success came from talented classmates who eventually became part of our “permanent” chain of command as cadet captains: Bob Arvin, Dan Christman, Dave Kuhn, John

Alger, Joe McChristian, Duncan MacVicar, Mark Walsh, Tommy Carll, John Connor, Grant Fredericks, Bob Stowell, Gene Parker, Pat O'Connor, Jim Webb, Buddy Bucha, Jay Stewart, John Swensson, Harry Joyner, Jim McEliece, Jerry Ledzinski, Jon Thompson, and Harry Dermody.

Of these, none was more highly respected than Bob Arvin, our First Captain. Dan Christman, who was Brigade Adjutant during our First Class year, wrote: "Bob Arvin was both a close friend and my direct cadet 'commander' during my last year at West Point... I admired him greatly for his maturity and his easy manner with senior officers with whom we had to interact.... Bob was always gracious in introducing us to the senior West Point leadership, visiting VIP's, and other dignitaries his duties brought him in touch with. He was a 'classy person' - 'elegant' would be an appropriate adjective were he 30 years older. But Bob's maturity made him someone you liked being around, and he and our families became very close as our final year at West Point unfolded."

Dan continued, "As a leader, Bob was always quietly confident, but never cocky.... In so many ways, he reflected the leadership style of the three general officers who led the Academy during our final years as cadets: Jim Lampert as Superintendent, Mike Davison as Commandant, and John Jannarone as Dean. These three were ideal role models for our class, and many of us, Bob included, I am confident, emulated their leadership style and ethic." Dan added, "Although Bob exhibited a quiet calmness while leading the Cadet Corps as First Captain, as captain of Army's wrestling team he was an absolutely ferocious and passionate leader who competed with enormous intensity. Always gracious in victory, he took the few losses he suffered very deeply; but he always tried to learn from his losses, including trying out a few new wrestling holds on his roommates! Learning from defeat and not dwelling on losses was an early-on lesson Bob imparted to those around him. And invariably, Bob's humor would quickly return. But Bob wanted to win--on the 'fields of friendly strife,' in the classroom (he was unbelievably proud to be designated a 'star man' by his last semester firstie year), and on the battlefield."

Dan concluded, "In the end, Bob's values became his defining characteristic: absolute integrity, respect accorded those who worked for him, unmatched competence. He was, in short, a leader who could be trusted. What remains remarkable, highlighted by the passage of time, was that those characteristics emerged so powerfully in one so young."<sup>156</sup>

To mark our rise to the top of the Corps, we received our Class rings on Friday, September 11, 1964. The Superintendent, Major General James B. Lampert, presided over the formal dinner and ceremony which was held at 1900 hours in the mural wing of the Mess Hall. General Lampert presented the first ring to Mark Walsh, our Class president, and the second to John Howell, the chairman of the Ring and Crest Committee. Company representatives on the Ring and Crest Committee then went forward to receive a box of rings and then passed them out to us at the tables of the Mess Hall. The next night, Saturday, we had our Ring Hop. The Commandant, Brigadier General Mike Davison, spoke to us about our rings and how to wear them. Buddy Buccha and Mark Walsh accompanied the Commandant as he entered the Mess Hall. Buddy wrote: "He wore his cavalry boots, knee high with spurs, and as he walked across the stone floor of the mess hall his spurs struck the stone with a loud click."<sup>157</sup> Though we may not remember the Commandant's cavalry boots or everything he said that evening, many of us still have the photo that was taken of us and our date at the Ring Hop beneath the large mockup of our Class ring.<sup>158</sup> Adding to the festivities, we had a Class picnic at Camp Buckner on Sunday.<sup>159</sup>

Our responsibilities as leaders did not mean we had a smaller academic load. We had

civil engineering, ordnance engineering, history of the military art, English, social sciences (comparative politics and international relations), and leadership (taught by the Department of Military Psychology and Leadership), and we had two electives. We found the electives different from our usual academic experience. While a considerable number of our classmates had managed to validate courses and take some electives, many of us entered the world of electives only during our First Class year, and we enjoyed the novelty of being able to choose what we studied. No academic department gave us a bye, however, even in the electives. And the Department of Physical Education never wavered in its demands. We had to take and pass the Personal Combat Proficiency Test, which included a mile run in combat boots.<sup>160</sup> Fred Laughlin received the top score.<sup>161</sup>

Many of our extracurricular activities focused on academic endeavors. Don Rowe wrote: "As a member of the Debate Council and Forum, I became an active members of the Model United Nations. The program afforded many interesting memories to include having to leave a forum at McGill University on the advice of the Department of State when the school seated a delegation from Cuba. Later that year we defeated Harvard University as the best delegation at the National Model UN."<sup>162</sup> Another academic activity was the Student Conference on United States Affairs. With Joe McChristian as the Chairman, SCUSA had some 210 participants from the United States and Canada to discuss "Problems of Developing Nations." We also honed our debating skills. In our plebe year Kent Brown and Dave Bodde were recognized as the two outstanding plebe debaters, and in our First Class year Kent Brown and Les Hagie were recognized as the two outstanding "Senior" debaters.<sup>163</sup>

The most memorable event in the autumn of 1964 nonetheless was the Army-Navy football game. After the disappointment of the previous year, the team and the Corps were united in their determination to win the big game. Rollie Stichweh wrote: "Despite an unusual number of injuries to our team in the 1964 season, we finally had our entire starting backfield of Seymour, Parcells, Johnson, and me healthy for the first time all year for the Navy game. It was to be a head-to-head rematch against Roger Staubach and his Navy team. Given some key lingering injuries, some of us had to play both offense and defense, including Bill Zadel, John Johnson, Pete Braun, Sonny Stowers, and me. Our defense contained Staubach as he had never been bottled up before with Stowers tackling him in the end zone for a safety. Both our offensive and defensive lines, led by Bill Zadel, played their hearts out. Johnny Seymour had a great game with over 100 yards gained, Sam Champi made two key catches, one to sustain a key drive and one for a TD. And Barry Nickerson, cool under fire, kicked a winning field goal with Tony Pyrz holding—Army 11, Navy 8. It was a huge team victory and a thrill for us to have our classmates storm the field and lift us above the crowd. Yes, we had lost a close one the prior year to a great Navy team and its impressive quarterback, but we never quit and responded with a huge win to finish our cadet days with a smile."<sup>164</sup>

Steve Harman succinctly described the importance of this victory when he wrote, "Right after Army beat Navy in football in 1964 I took a football into the locker room and had almost all of the Army Team members autograph the ball. I gave it to my younger brother, and he recently [2011] returned it to me. The football is a symbol of my being part of a class that has attained many goals."<sup>165</sup>

As a result of Army's win over Navy, we got to go on Christmas leave early. We left after classes on Saturday, December 19, instead of the following Tuesday.<sup>166</sup> To make the victory even sweeter, all cadet punishments were suspended. Then, for the first time, the plebes (Class of 1968) got to go home for Christmas. Even though we harassed the plebes for this and complained of the Corps' "going to hell," we envied their good fortune. When we returned from

Christmas leave, we experienced another Gloom Period but the sky did not appear as gray as it had in the past. Aware of the impending demolition of the old Central Area barracks, we took special pleasure out of knowing that we marched in the last Band Box Review in the old Central Area in April 1965.<sup>167</sup>

One break from the gray skies and gray walls was the Brigade Open. Those from our class who boxed in the Brigade Open in 1963 included Jim Conway, Harry Joyner, Guy Riley, Fred Smith, and Mike O'Grady. Classmates who were finalists in the Brigade Open in March 1964 were Bill Beinlich, Fred Smith, Mike O'Grady and Jack Terry.<sup>168</sup> Jack Terry recalled, "In our Cow Year I remember fighting Mike O'Grady for the Heavyweight Championship in the Brigade Open. I was sitting in my corner with Guy Riley and Chuck Dickey, who were my 'managers.' Riley told me to fake a jab and throw a left hook to his body. I was so tired I didn't know if I'd be able to lift my arms. Anyway, he must have been tired, too, because he raised both arms to block my jab and my left hook to the belly sent him to the canvas."<sup>169</sup> In 1965 Ken Slutzky participated, as did Jack Terry who successfully defended his Heavyweight Champion title with a first round TKO.<sup>170</sup> We were all proud of Jack's winning the Heavyweight Championship for two straight years.

Having more privileges also made the final months at West Point more enjoyable, especially since we received more privileges than previous classes had received. This included the revocation of nearly all restrictions on drinking by the First Class, except--as noted in an editorial by Chris Kinard in *The Pointer*--those "recognized as necessary in any community of young yet responsible adults."<sup>171</sup> Yet, we did not yet have our own "wheels" until sixty days before graduation. Bob Axley wrote about the adventures he, Dennis Hawker, Tommy Thompson, Gene Farmelo, and Dick Kramer shared as Firsties after they bought a 1955 Plymouth sedan and rented a garage in Highland Falls. "Many was the weekend night when we would all pile into the car..., and head up Storm King Highway in search of adventure...or beer and women, whichever came first. We solved many of the world's problems on those excursions, generously lubricated with barley and hops. That part was easy. The hard part was negotiating our way back down Storm King Highway mere minutes before taps, finding the garage in Highland Falls, and getting back to the safety of I-2 just before lights-out in our state of 'lubrication.' The ultimate testimony to our West Point education and discipline is that not once did we fail to get back on time."<sup>172</sup>

When the car show took place on the weekend of December 14, 1964,<sup>173</sup> we paid about \$2,500 for our new cars but, as one would expect, the price varied according to the model. Johnny Wells paid \$3,689.75 for his "British racing green" Corvette convertible.<sup>174</sup> Johnny attended the car show with his future wife, Rose Ann, and when he asked her decades later about what she remembered about the car show, she responded that she remembered only his "drooling over the Corvette" on display there.<sup>175</sup> The cars finally arrived around March 20, but we could not drive them until spring leave. Unlimited short weekends also came with the privilege of driving our new cars.<sup>176</sup> Our newly found freedom and wheels made things difficult for our classmates who were in the chain of command. Jack Lowe summarized the dilemma of cadet company commanders trying to lead their classmates: "They have their cars, they have a lot of privileges, many will be married in two months..., and they are fed up with the West Point system of rigid discipline."<sup>177</sup>

Between the onset of Gloom Period and the arrival of our cars, we were delighted by the 100<sup>th</sup> Night Show in March 1965. With Ed Armstrong as Director, "Sadder Bud Weiser" proved to be thoroughly amusing and entertaining.<sup>178</sup> In addition to "100 Days 'till June," highlights of the show were the songs, "Why has the Corps gone to hell?" and "The Triumph of the Goats."

Ed wrote, "I learned a lot about leadership because some of the stars were Terry Tutchings, Tom Carhart, Buck Thompson, George Crocker and Step Tyner. Jack Cooley wrote some great original music and CWO Whitcomb arranged it all and led the USMA Band--very professional I thought. Rick Sullivan was my roommate and handled all of the details. Mike Hudson was the stage manager. Step and Tom Johnson (another rogue) wrote most of it, and I finished it off. We got many great reviews from the local and New York papers and held it over for two extra sold-out nights."<sup>179</sup>

Regular editions of *The Pointer* added levity to our lives and demonstrated the extraordinary creativity of our classmates. Our First Class year Chris Kinard was the Editor-in-Chief, Jim Conley Managing Editor, Bob Huffhines Humor Editor, Tom Borkowski Sports, Ross Wollen Features, Jim Webb Advertising, and Tom Johnson Fiction.<sup>180</sup> At times we did not know if the pieces in the magazine were serious or not. A "Guest Editorial" by Jim Stephenson, for example, urged cadets, that even if they were from a different part of the country, to dress appropriately and maintain an appropriate image in, as he described it, "the true Eastern fashion." He insisted cadets should not wear sneakers with a suit or bright yellow socks!<sup>181</sup> Bob Huffhines wrote an article entitled "Gorilla Warfare" for the May 1964 edition of *The Pointer*. Bob explained the title: "Undoubtedly the biggest thing going these days as far as the military is concerned is guerrilla warfare." Since the Army wasn't having the "best luck" in this field, he added, "We feel the trouble is merely an error in spelling." The article then presented seven cartoons of a gorilla in various amusing situations.<sup>182</sup> Reflecting on his experiences as Features Editor for *The Pointer*, Ross Wollen wrote, "I have often joked about being on deadline and pleading with Tom [Johnson] to give me a 2" and/or 4" poem to fill some space in my Features Section. He would protest that poems needed thought, deliberation, and editing--and then give me what I asked for in an hour--while also tutoring our classmates (including me) in Physics."<sup>183</sup>

In March 1965, our creative classmates published a special edition called *Playboy: The Magazine for Self-Righteous Young Men*. The idea for the special edition came out of the fertile minds of our classmates, but especially those of Bob Huffhines, Bob Clover, Chris Kinard, Ross Wollen, and Roger Frydrychowski. Roger and Ross were roommates in our First Class year, and they, as well as many of others, were annoyed and amused by efforts of the Military Academy's hierarchy to censor our reading material. Our tactical officers had decided cadets should not have copies of *Playboy* and initially confiscated copies from the mail and then "quilled" the intended recipient. When the Staff Judge Advocate advised against doing this, the tactical officers had the *Playboy* copies delivered to them, had the cadets report to their office to receive them, confiscated the copies (after delivery), and then quilled them. This modification, however, failed to pass legal scrutiny, and the Tacs soon were reduced to letting the copies be delivered but quilling any cadet found to possess one.<sup>184</sup> Roger Frydrychowski wrote: "The prohibition and penalties for possession of a *Playboy* made the concept of *Playboy* a unique opportunity to make a statement."<sup>185</sup> Emulating *Playboy*, the edition included "The *Playboy* Advisor" and 9 cartoons drawn by "Shell Servicestein." The main character of these cartoons was a bearded, unkempt man, obviously an early form of a Hippie.<sup>186</sup> Another article featured Tricia Oswald, Bob Clover's future wife, who was a student at Ladycliff, visiting Highland Falls with a "prayboy," Bob Clover. The article, said Bob, "Basically was about a cadet trying to find a way to spend more time with his girl friend."<sup>187</sup> Like *Playboy*, *Playboy* had nine photos of a beautiful young lady, Peggy Sorge, who was fully and tastefully dressed and not risqué.<sup>188</sup> The next edition reverted to the regular *Pointer* cover and content, and according to Chris Kinard, there was no "retribution" or "negative reaction" to the special issue. In its twentieth anniversary issue *Playboy* magazine recognized *Playboy* as one of the two best parodies of the

magazine.<sup>189</sup>

We also listened to KDET, a small 50-watt radio station that was run by cadets out of Building 720. Jerry Merges was the station manager, John Harrington the chief engineer, and Tim Simmons the advertising manager. Jerry Merges and John DeVitto broadcast sports, including the Army-Navy game from Philadelphia and the NIT games from Madison-Square Garden. They even did the Yankees and Mets versus Army baseball games and some soccer and track broadcasts. Most of the music played by DJ's such as Jim Webb was folk songs and easy listening, but KDET brought the Beatles to the Corps. Jerry explained, "Some of the 'younger' yearlings really got on board first; then as the [Beatles] phenomenon took over the music world, we realized this was a unique group and played their songs as they were released. We still played LP albums on turntables, so we didn't get the individual songs!" Jerry added, "We sent the guys out to class with 'Alley Cats'—a lively instrumental tune that we hoped gave everyone a lift on the way to academics."<sup>190</sup>

No matter what time of the year it was, we enjoyed attending athletic events, and we became accustomed to watching Army win. During our First Class year, we achieved extraordinary success in major athletic competitions, winning 76% of the 232 contests. Of the 17 contests with Navy, we won 12, tied one, and lost four. Our 150-pound football team reigned as the undefeated Eastern Intercollegiate Champions; our pistol team was undefeated in defending the national championship; our rifle team won the national championship; our soccer team reached the NCAA semi-finals; our swimming team was the runner-up in the eastern seaboard competition; our basketball team was third in the National Invitational Tournament; and our squash team was second in the National Intercollegiate Tournament.<sup>191</sup>

Some of our classmates gave extraordinary performances. On the wrestling team, for example, Bob Arvin and Ed Sharkness won personal victories against Navy during our First Class year, but Tom Abraham's victory was especially memorable. As a Second Class cadet, Tom began wrestling in both the 191 pounds and unlimited weight classes. The wrestling coach attempted to get someone else to wrestle heavyweight, but he found no volunteers. Tom wrote: "I got stuck for two years wrestling my natural weight of 191 or heavyweight, depending on where the coach needed me. In the Navy match, he needed me at heavyweight. I needed to pin the Navy heavyweight for us to win the match. A mere victory by me would tie Navy. I had weighed in at 191 and he weighed 270. It took all I had, but I beat him. Couldn't pin him.... Two years later, in Viet Nam, my unit the 173d Airborne, was visited by General Westmoreland. I went up to him and saluted and said 'Good morning, General, Lieutenant Abraham, Class of '65.' He said, 'I know you. You beat that Navy heavyweight.'"<sup>192</sup>

During our cadet years, our classmates who received All-American recognition were Bill Zadel in football; Don Exelby, Cal Kahara and Phil Olmsted on the pistol team; Bill Bradburn on the rifle team; Steve Bliss, Buddy Bucha, Tony Clay, and Jerry Merges on the swimming team; Tom Sheckells, Bob Radcliffe, and Tim Vogel on the lacrosse team; and José Gonzalez in soccer.<sup>193</sup> Dan Steinwald was selected to be on the All-Star team at the Amateur Athletic Union's National Indoor Championships. At a time when the AAU, not the NCAA, claimed Water Polo, this was the equivalent of being designated an All American in Water Polo.<sup>194</sup> Other outstanding performances included Mike Thompson's setting Academy records in scoring in hockey.<sup>195</sup> Bill Ritch was second team All-American in Lacrosse, and John Ritch was second team Academic All-American in basketball.<sup>196</sup> Almost in a league of his own, Walt Oehrlein won the National Intercollegiate Squash Rackets individual championship.<sup>197</sup> Of our classmates who received national honors, several, such as José Gonzalez, were recognized in multiple years.

No amount of academics, privileges, music, or athletics, however, could keep our eyes

off international events. When we first arrived at West Point, we were more concerned about the nuclear threat than insurgency, for we had lived under the specter of a nuclear holocaust throughout our years in high school. Events at West Point reinforced this perception. In March 1962, the Military Academy conducted a survey of buildings on post that could serve as fallout shelters. Not long thereafter almost everyone received a booklet entitled "Fallout Protection-- What to Know and Do about Nuclear Attack."<sup>198</sup> In December 1963, supplies arrived for three fallout shelters at USMA: Thayer Hall, Bartlett Hall, and the Gymnasium. The shelters were designed to keep a "population" alive for two weeks, and the supplies included carbohydrate supplements (a kind of candy), survival crackers, water containers, and medical supplies.<sup>199</sup> We also studied the challenges facing the U.S. Army in the nuclear era. One of the study questions for our plebe Military Heritage class was: "Can the U.S. Army be organized to fight both a conventional and a nuclear war?"<sup>200</sup> Our lessons on tactics included subjects such as nuclear effects, nuclear delivery systems, and the effect of nuclear weapons on operations.<sup>201</sup> We had some lessons on the Pentomic Division, which was a U.S. Army infantry division organized into five battle groups and tailored to fight on a nuclear battlefield. In addition to studying "Atomic Demolition Munitions" and "Army Nuclear Power,"<sup>202</sup> we also studied the Davy Crockett weapon system, which was a short range (2 km) rocket equipped with a 10-20 kiloton nuclear device,<sup>203</sup>

In early 1962 the Army added counterinsurgency to an already full plate. A month before President Kennedy spoke at the 1962 graduation and described "another type of war" other than conventional or nuclear war, the Military Academy formed a "Counter-Insurgency Committee" to examine cadet instruction. In July 1963, the committee published its report and emphasized how the Army's role in counterinsurgency had been defined formally in January 1962.<sup>204</sup> The Committee recommended, and the Academy adopted, fifty-four hours of counterinsurgency instruction during the four-year curriculum.<sup>205</sup> By 1963-1964 we had 66 lessons on counterinsurgency scattered throughout the curriculum. In our First Class year, 128 of us participated in a "pilot tactics seminar course" on insurgency. The course investigated recent counterinsurgency operations and sought to "deduce" tactical principles that brought success.<sup>206</sup>

And, though our participation varied widely, numerous guest lecturers spoke about counterinsurgency or the war in Viet Nam. In Academic Year 1964-1965, Major General Charles Timmes, the chief of the United States Military Assistance Advisory Group in South Viet Nam in the early phases of American involvement there, spoke about his experiences.<sup>207</sup> A French officer gave a presentation in 1964-1965 on French counterinsurgency tactics in Algeria,<sup>208</sup> and a Philippine officer gave a presentation, also in 1964-1965, on the anti-Huk campaign in the Philippines.<sup>209</sup> Other notable presentations came in our First Class year when some of us heard presentations from Lieutenant Colonel John Paul Vann on the advisory effort in Viet Nam, from Lieutenant Colonel John H. Cushman on pacification operations in Viet Nam, from Colonel George P. Seneff, Jr., on the 11<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Division, from Major General William P. Yarborough on Special Warfare, and from General Creighton W. Abrams on leadership.<sup>210</sup> Dr. Bernard Fall, Dr. Walt W. Rostow, and Dr. Roger Hilsman also spoke. Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer spoke but not as part of the counterinsurgency program.<sup>211</sup>

As cadets, we heard a great deal about the war in Viet Nam. Some of us had family members, or knew recent graduates, serving in South Viet Nam. We also were aware of the burial of recent graduates taking place in the post cemetery and of widows receiving awards presented posthumously to their husbands in ceremonies at West Point. General Nguyen Khanh, who served as chief of state and prime minister of Viet Nam as the head of a military junta in 1964-1965 and who was involved in several coup attempts in Viet Nam, visited West Point in February 1965 and was introduced to the Corps from the Poop Deck. As he stood there

surveying the boisterous cadets, he told John Swensson that we would all be in his country very soon.<sup>212</sup>

Additionally, our instructors emphasized the demands of the war. In February 1963, Captain William Stinson, Jr., Class of 1953, received the Purple Heart for wounds he received while serving in Viet Nam. The ceremony was particularly memorable because he received the award on the Poop Deck of the Mess Hall during the noon meal. A well-liked instructor, Captain Stinson taught counterinsurgency in the Department of Military Instruction and had played a key role in our training at Camp Buckner. Six years after receiving the award in the Mess Hall he was killed in action in Viet Nam.

Another highly respected instructor was Lieutenant Colonel Parmly, the senior infantry instructor in the Department of Tactics, who had played a key role in our Recondo training. He came to symbolize for us the Army's emphasis on Ranger operations and on counterinsurgency. John Concannon wrote, "Our TAC in G-2 was Major Lee Parmly, newly back from RVN/Laos. The first time we saw him was at a reveille formation. He was wearing tiger fatigues, which we had never seen. Cadets were muttering in the ranks and asking about his uniform. The answer came back, 'Look at the hour; those are his PJs.'"<sup>213</sup> Adding to the mystique of the tiger fatigues, Parmly, soon a lieutenant colonel, received an award in January 1964 for "outstanding services in a position of responsibility as a U.S. Military Advisor to the Field Army Commander of an allied country" in 1960-1961, before he arrived at West Point.<sup>214</sup> Many rumors circulated among us about where he had served and what he had done.

The difficult task is measuring the effect these diffuse and often disconnected exposures had on our thinking. Almost fifty years later Dick Williams remembered General Timmes' talk about the early years of involvement in Viet Nam and he recalled the instruction he received in the counterinsurgency course under Lieutenant Colonel Paul Braim. Dick wrote, "I learned a significant amount that I later used in my Senior Advisory assignment in Viet Nam. We implemented a lot of the tactics and found them to be very successful."<sup>215</sup> Many of us, however, do not remember our having had a course in counterinsurgency and only a few can remember the guest lecturers who spoke about the war in Southeast Asia. Most of us learned much more about counterinsurgency in a very different classroom.

Cadet duties kept us busy. When General MacArthur died in April 1964, the entire Corps boarded buses from New York City and stood in formation between 30<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> streets as his funeral cortege passed. One cadet company went to Washington to participate in services there,<sup>216</sup> and L-2 went to Norfolk, Virginia, for MacArthur's funeral parade.<sup>217</sup> When President Herbert Hoover died, Company D-2 went in October 1964 to New York City to honor him, and Company D-1 went to Washington, D.C.<sup>218</sup> In January 1965, 600 cadets marched in the Inauguration Day Parade for President Lyndon Johnson.<sup>219</sup> In April 1965 we led the last "Band Box Review" in the old Central Area.<sup>220</sup> The entire Corps of Cadets marched in May 1965 in the annual Armed Forces Day parade, but the parade was different in that the march was halted for a time by an antiwar demonstration.<sup>221</sup>

Whatever the future held for us, we kept our eyes on the close-in targets: academics and girls. Many of us had to watch our "tenths" carefully, since our privileges and our graduation depended on our being proficient in every course. Preston Motes wrote: "In June week, Firstie Year, I was turned out in Ordnance. As I was studying for the re-exam, another classmate asked the professor in the room if everyone that was turned out was deficient overall. The professor answered that everyone turned out was deficient overall. I spoke up and said, 'Sir, I believe that I have 3 tenths.'" He replied, 'OH, REALLY, Mr. Motes!' He left the room and I went back to studying. About 15 minutes later the 'P' returned and said, 'You're wrong Mr Motes. You have 1

tenth! Get out of here!' I did have 3 tenths. I always kept a close watch."<sup>222</sup>

We also had to watch out for demerits and slugs. We had seen cadets in previous classes commit an infraction and then be given a huge slug, one that required them to march for long hours on the area during June Week and finish marching only in time to go to the graduation ceremony. A "Two Century Man," Bob Harter wrote: "A distinctive and rare group in our class was the group of three? NOTE: THREE OR FOUR? classmates who logged two hundred hours or more walking the area. All who achieved this distinction had one or more major 'slugs', which in and of itself says something about the willingness of this group to take risks as regards to not conforming to the 'system'. One does not get to two hundred hours by just being gross. Since the major slugs always included confinement, all two century men missed football games and other events at West Point, could not take weekends away, and could not date or do other social activities at West Point (since part of any slug is confinement). The confinement part of the slug was actually more of a punishment than walking the area. For example, I missed most of the football season in the fall of 1963 because of a two [months] and forty-four [hours] slug and missed spring break in 1965 because of a four and eighty-eight. This was hard for home games as you could hear the Michie Stadium fans loud and clear from central area."

Bob wrote, "The punishment tours walked by the two century men were monotonous, but bearable. The veterans devised games that helped pass the time away. Twenty questions was one such game. The communications associated with this game took place as paths crossed on the area. And often those not walking the area would put a stereo speaker in their central area room window so that those walking could listen to popular music and zone out. Surprisingly, the Tacs inspecting those on the area were lenient. This is a good thing, because tours were walked twice a week and with two inspections, there was plenty of opportunity to pile up more demerits."<sup>223</sup>

## OUR SPECIAL LADIES

As graduation approached, many of us planned weddings. Or, to be completely honest, many of our future wives planned weddings. A graduate of Ladycliff, Linda Sheridan emphasized, "MANY long and happy marriages happened because of the proximity of our schools. Mark and I celebrated our 46th anniversary on June 26, 2011."<sup>224</sup> Other couples who benefitted from the close proximity of the schools were: Carol Kolenski and George Bell, Patricia Oswald and Bob Clover, Anne Geddis and Steve Harman, Jeanne Schlageter and Jim Harmon, Alice Galvin and Pat Kenny, Connie Miuiio and Jim Mirando, Gerry Gorla (deceased) and Mert Munson, Marilyn McCabe and Skip O'Donnell, Olive Wiehl and Steve Paek, Jeanette Cuzzi and Bob Scully, Mary Ellen Costello and Fred Smith, Stanlene Makoski and Dave Vann, Judith Wojowicz (deceased) and Ron Williams, and Patricia Carey and Dick Wirth.

Some of us married our high-school sweethearts. Margaret Parker met her future husband, Gene, while they were in the third grade in Sackets Harbor, New York. She and Gene were in the same class in grades three through twelve. She described dating Gene while he was a cadet: "Dating at West Point was eye-opening, wonderful, memorable and full of angst at always having to say 'goodbye'----, but then, there was always 'hello, again'. I remember our many walks from the Dorms at the Thayer which was an experience in itself. 'Moon River' by Andy Williams became 'our song'. Meeting at Grant Hall and having cherry cokes in the snack bar with Ric and Patty Shinseki, Dotty and Denny Shantz and others was always fun as well as the Hops at Camp Buckner, Plebe Christmas and Ring Hop. Walks down 'Flirty' and up to Fort Putnam come to mind as well as the many Army Football games I was able to attend. Since I

did not have a car, I had to either take the bus over the mountains, YUK, or catch a ride with someone from my school headed to NY City. One time, my ride's foreign car broke down in the mountains and there were no gas stations open. We didn't get to West Point until 1:00 AM. I was staying at Bill Lewis's, the PE instructor, whom I had known from a prior lifetime. They had gone to bed and couldn't be roused so I spent the night on their porch and was greatly chastised the next AM for not banging louder on their door! YIPES!"<sup>225</sup>

Nancy Ryan described how she met Terry. She wrote, "I was a stewardess with American Airlines, based in N.Y. My roommates were Maralee Raetzel, and Margie Cassidy. Maralee was engaged to her childhood sweetheart, Fred Laughlin. In November of 1964, Fred asked if we might host a Thanksgiving dinner for classmates who could not get home for the holiday, due to the impending Army-Navy Game. We agreed, and Fred and several 65ers arrived for dinner, Terry, Fred's roommate, among them. We had just sat down for a glass of wine, when the crew schedule desk called. Maralee and I were to report to La Guardia Airport ASAP, for a trip to Detroit. Terry carried my suitcase to the bus, and I thought that was a really nice gesture. So Margie and the cadets enjoyed the dinner we had prepared, and Maralee and I dined with her parents in Michigan." Nancy added, "One weekend I baked some brownies and sent them back to West Point with Fred, for him and his roommates. Terry called to thank me, and invited me to the 100th Night Show. That was pretty much it, and we were pinned during June week, engaged in November, and married the next year."<sup>226</sup>

Joanie Huston was introduced to her future husband, Mike, by Ed Klink. She has many memories of dating Mike and wrote: "I remember taking the 'drag' train to Philly for the Army Navy Games. I also remember when Army beat Navy in 1964, what a thrill! I also took a bus through quite a snow storm from Albany, New York to meet Mike in Annapolis for his exchange weekend there during his Cow year. That turned out to be a great time. I think it was Mike's Yearling year when Mike couldn't get me in The Thayer Hotel for June Week and I stayed in a dilapidated old house in Highland Falls. I not only slept in the same room with a little girl who had German Measles, but also got bed bug bites (I never stayed off post again)! Memories of The Thayer are staying in the dorm room with four or five other girls. Occasionally one of the girls went out with an MP after curfew and woke us up coming in the room in the middle of the night. We also enjoyed many weekends in New York City when the Corps went there for football games or the Armed Forces Day parade. Lucky DeLaar was in F-1 with Mike [Huston], and his sister, Marcella dated Dave Gnau (they were later married). On many occasions, the DeLaars hosted numerous guys from F-1 with their dates for the weekend at their home in New Jersey. It also helped that they owned a bar and restaurant. When Mike was a Firstie he bought his car, a 1965 Impala Supersport convertible, in the Fall. They were not allowed to take possession of their cars until in the Spring. We beat the system by putting the car in my name, and I got it in the Fall so I had it to drive down to West Point most weekends that year. All and all it was a special experience dating at West Point and meeting many terrific people along the way!"<sup>227</sup>

John Wattendorf described how he met his future wife, Adrienne, in February 1964. He wrote: "Along with what seemed like the entire Corps, I was returning to my room following last class on a cold, cloudy day in the heart of gloom period. It seemed like everything was a dismal gray--the sky, our uniforms, the buildings, the remnants of snow on the ground, and most of all, our collective mood. The mob was temporarily delayed from crossing Thayer Road by a passing car. The car stopped, a window rolled down, and a female voice inquired whether anyone knew how to get to the field house where Army was hosting Hofstra University in basketball. I quickly handed my books to the cadet standing next to me and asked him to drop

them in my room. I then approached the car and said something like, 'I'm going there myself, I'll be happy to ride along and show you how to get there.' Suddenly the world was no longer gray! I was in a car sitting next to a beautiful young woman whom I would soon discover to be my *anam cara*. There is a God, and He is good! After buying a ticket to the basketball game for the driver of the car (it seemed the right thing to do), I made sure that I sat next to the beauty from the back seat during the game. Adrienne's only strong memory of the game was sitting next to this nut who would rather sweat in a stuffy field house than take off his overcoat. Yep, I did that...because if I didn't I would have drawn attention to the fact that I was escorting out of uniform (in those days we were required to change from class uniform to dress gray if we were escorting someone to an athletic event). After the game I remember standing in the parking lot across from my barracks gazing at the stars and discussing astronomy with Adrienne. It was a cold crisp clear night by then and the sky seemed filled with sparkling stars, but I think there were more stars in my eyes that night than in the sky."<sup>228</sup>

## GRADUATION

As June Week approached, the joy of knowing we were about to graduate and would be sharing the experience with our family and friends almost overwhelmed us. Adding special excitement was the presence of the Class of 1915, which was celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its graduation. Stepping through the door of Grant Hall and seeing some "old grads" (Dwight Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, James Van Fleet, et al.) suffering from the heat and sitting on the bench outside provided a unique moment for several of us. Jim Golden, Stan Genega, and Bob Arvin got to eat lunch on the Poop Deck with President Eisenhower and listen to a story about the battle of the Bulge.<sup>229</sup> Ross Wollen succeeded in arranging an interview with President Eisenhower which was later published in *The Pointer* and filed permanently in the Eisenhower Papers in Manhattan, Kansas. On June 7, President Eisenhower participated with General James B. Lampert (Superintendent), Colonel Lewis Sorley (Oldest Grad), and Bob Arvin in a groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion of the cadet area. A photo of that event, which was published in the Superintendent's annual report, provided concrete evidence to show that we were members of the "old" Corps.

We finally graduated on June 9, 1965, and received our diplomas which were signed by General Lambert (Superintendent), General Scott (Commandant), and General Jannarone (Dean and Jack Jannarone's father). We walked across the stage in order of merit, led by Dan Christman. Phil Harper, the Class "goat," came last to the cheers of all. Along the way we had lost many good friends. We started with 847 and had 669 at the end of plebe year, 617 at the end of yearling year, 599 at the end of cow year, and 596 on graduation day.<sup>230</sup> According to the Annual Report rendered by the Superintendent, 518 of us were commissioned in the Army, 60 in the Air Force, 6 in the Marine Corps, and 2 in the Navy. Later USMA reports said 519 of us were commissioned in the Army and 59 in the Air Force. For medical reasons, seven of us were not commissioned.<sup>231</sup> Three of us were "Allied" and returned to our own country. John Ritch became a Rhodes Scholar; Joe McChristian and Stan Genega received Olmsted scholarships; and Dick Osgood received a Hertz Fellowship. Gordy Long and Cam McConnell received National Science Foundation graduate fellowships, and Emery Chase, Hank Sterbenz, and Chuck Moseley received Atomic Energy Commission graduate fellowships. Nine of our classmates received honorable mention for the National Science fellowships.<sup>232</sup>

As many of us rushed to leave West Point, Jim and Marianne Paley were married in the Cadet Chapel at 1500 hours on graduation day. Jim wrote, "I was a bachelor for three hours." He and Marianne had met on a blind date. Bob and Jo Higgins were married at 1500 in the

Catholic Chapel. Bob explained how they met: "I met Jo in the eighth grade when I was her paperboy at Carlisle Barracks, asked her out to a movie, and the rest is history."<sup>233</sup> The *Pointer View*, two days after our graduation, published an edition filled with photos of graduation festivities and included a photo of Jim and Marianne Paley. It also had a photo of soon-to-be married Gary Kadetz and Norma Dorfman at the Graduation Hop.<sup>234</sup>

Gary was our first classmate to die in Viet Nam.

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