



United States Military Academy Class of 1967



USMAPS Class of 2013

I'm honored to have been asked by my classmate Ed Beck, USMA'67 Affiliation Coordinator, to share a summary of my career experiences and West Point's role in them. In doing so I have been very clearly reminded how transformational and important my four years as a West Point Cadet have been to my career and my life.

After a number of fortuitous events during my final years of high school in a rural coal mining region of West Virginia, I was offered the opportunity to pursue a competitive appointment to West Point, replacing a candidate who withdrew at the last minute. It was February 1963; I accepted the offer and had to get to Fort Meade, MD the next week for testing – physical fitness, physical and SAT. I was excited by the prospect of going to college, as the first member of my extended family ever to do so, and eager to compete and earn that honor. Imagine my stress level as the time passed; I finally received a call to the high school from my Congressman in early May 1963 (just weeks before graduation) to inform me that I had been selected.

In July 1963, I entered West Point with the class of 1967. The next four years were extraordinarily challenging, demanding, enabling, invigorating, exhausting and transforming for me. I excelled in sports and military service/leadership and gained in academic maturity. Not apparent to me at the time, but now obvious to me in nearly every aspect and activity of my life, West Point changed my life, my capabilities, my self-assuredness, and my enduring values. The Academy motto of Duty, Honor, Country and focused commitment to National Service have guided my actions and enabled my diverse career choices and any successes or accomplishments I have achieved. Shortly after graduation, pending delays to attend a number of West Point weddings, including my own to Pamela Bennett Smith (now my wife of nearly 46 years), my wife and I loaded all we had in our new car and headed south to Fort Benning, GA, for the Officer Basic Course, Ranger School and Airborne School, thus starting the military phase of my career and providing the basis for all my career choices.

After my initial and very important training, I began a number of challenging and interesting staff and leadership roles, beginning with platoon leader and company commander assignments in an airborne brigade in Germany. Subsequently, I served in positions of increasing responsibility including platoon leader and company commander in Vietnam (this was the most demanding and rewarding job of a lifetime); followed by the Infantry Officer Career Course; and two years of Army sponsored advanced education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), during which time I received an MS in Nuclear Engineering and an MS in Political Science. These prepared me for my two-year utilization tour as a Military Research Associate at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, NM, and two years as the Special Weapons Plans Officer, United Nations Command/U.S. Forces Korea, Seoul, South Korea – positions in which I played a significant role in nuclear weapons development, deployment, and employment activities. These two accompanied tours were very memorable, interesting and exciting times for me, my wife Pamela and our children, Bill and Heather.

It was during the Korean assignment in 1977 that I decided to leave the Army to pursue my strong interest in national energy security and national policy issues. This energy-focused phase of my career lasted nearly 15 years. During that time, I held senior executive positions in energy companies, such as Vice President of Ashland Coal, President of Massey Coal Services, Vice President of the Mining and Reclamation Council in Washington, D.C. representing energy companies on legislative and regulatory matters, and Director of the International Energy Program at Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, IL. Also, for a short time I returned to public service and was the Energy Commissioner on the Governor's Cabinet in Charleston, West Virginia.

The third phase of my career began in 1992 with my recruitment into the Senior Executive Service (SES) for a position in the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). This refocused my attention on nuclear materials, weapons, wastes and policy issues of national importance. My initial assignment as a member of DOE's SES was as an Assistant Manager at

the DOE Idaho Operations Office, Idaho Falls, which was responsible for the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory. Later, I was chosen to form and manage, the Carlsbad Area Office with responsibility for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) and the National Transuranic Waste Program, which at that time was nearly 8 years behind the schedule to be licensed and operating. The mission of this organization was to license the WIPP and transport and dispose of all the transuranic nuclear waste generated from the nation's nuclear weapons programs. The WIPP facility is fully licensed and has been operating safely to achieve its mission for over a decade now. With the licensing accomplished, I left the Senior Executive Service, as an SES6 (protocol equivalent rank of a Major General), and returned to private industry.

Beginning in 1999, I held the leadership position at DOE's Yucca Mountain nuclear waste disposal facilities serving as President and General Manager of TRW Environmental Safety Systems, Inc., a DOE management and operating contractor; the Yucca Mountain repository was designed to safely dispose used fuel from nuclear power plant operations. I led the team through the preparation of site selection recommendation report, which was approved by the congress in 2001. Later, I became President and COO of the privately-owned, Waste Control Specialist, LLC, operating a hazardous waste disposal facility, and managing licensing of a low-level radioactive waste treatment and disposal facility (located in Andrew County, Texas) where I oversaw design, engineering and scientific studies.


In 2006 I joined B&W Y-12, LCC, to serve as President and CEO, responsible for the management of the Y-12 National Security Complex, Oak Ridge, TN, an original part of the World War II Manhattan Project. There I managed a \$1.2 billion annual budget and more than 4,600 employees, leading Y-12 through a period of improvement initiatives that restored the facility's nuclear material production operations and greatly improving the productivity of both the nuclear weapons modernization and dismantlement programs. We also re-established Y-12's leading role as a reliable supplier of nuclear weapons components to meet our National Security needs. I left this demanding, 24/7 type position in 2008 in order to support my wife, Pamela, in her treatment and recovery from her newly diagnosed cancer.

Currently, I am President of B&W Conversion Services, LLC (BWCS) and serve as Project Manager for the Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride (DUF₆) Conversion Project, a first-of-a-kind nuclear chemical processing operation in the United States for conversion and ultimate disposal of depleted uranium tails from enrichment operations. I direct the BWCS project office and am the day-to-day interface with DOE's federal project director; as well, I direct operations at the conversion plants in Piketon, Ohio and Paducah, Kentucky. As a turn-around specialist and principle-centered leader, I am pleased to have another first-of-a-kind nuclear project to guide to successful operational status.

But what, if anything should all of this mean to you? Simply put – you have entered a life's course that will be ever transformational. You will be challenged, encouraged, tested, confronted, stressed and uplifted to become the very best you can be. Underpinned by our Motto; Duty, Honor, Country, my four years at West Point gave me the strong ethical standards, strength, self-assurance and leadership principles to take on any challenge or difficult task. Ever-biased towards service to Country, family and community, challenging assignments aligned with these priorities were always considered and seldom refused. Upon your successful completion of your four years at West Point, you will be well-grounded in the required academic disciplines, the leadership and ethical principles, and the commitment to hard work in the National interest. You will have learned principled leadership and responsible empowerment and be ready to put them to work. You will also have made many and varied enduring friends in your Academy class and others. These will prove invaluable to you as colleagues, associates, counselors and supporters as you pursue your passions and add appreciably to the vaulted accomplishments and continued nationally important contributions of the Long Gray Line.

“Follow your passions, love your families, take care of the troops, serve the greater good, and hold true to Duty, Honor, Country; you will thereby live productive and accomplished lives.”

God Speed and Good Luck,


George E. Dials
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