

# West Point

SPRING 2018



DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ARMY

## The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point

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Team USMA



A Publication of the West Point Association of Graduates

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# West Point

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The mission of *West Point* magazine is to tell the West Point story and strengthen the grip of the Long Gray Line.

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**ON THE COVER:** *Tribute in Light* is an art installation that creates two columns of light representing the twin towers of the World Trade Center, in remembrance of the September 11 attacks. It is presented annually from dusk to dawn on September 11 by the Municipal Art Society of New York. Image: Shutterstock

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

## Dear Fellow Graduates:

Thank you for electing me Chairman of our Association of Graduates. It is a privilege and responsibility I take seriously as we go about fulfilling our mission: *To Serve West Point and the Long Gray Line*. I intend to build upon many of the initiatives and operating principles put in place by my predecessor, Larry Jordan '68. We owe Larry a debt of gratitude for his enlightened leadership, example of matchless ethical standards, unwavering dedication to West Point and the Association of Graduates, and highly productive tenure as Chairman.

During the past four years we have done many things well while positioning WPAOG for future success. While there are many examples, I will mention just three. We have advanced alumni support services, including the launching of the award-winning Rockbound Highland Home Program. We have managed and seen to completion numerous construction projects, including the new Frederic V. Malek Visitors Center. Finally, we have concluded the highly successful *For Us All Campaign*, which allows us to continue funding Margin of Excellence initiatives across the Four Pillars of the West Point Leader Development model. We will build on these achievements with carefully selected new projects.

As I began my tenure I found it useful to review some basic facts about WPAOG. First and most important is that by virtue of being a graduate, every member of the Long Gray Line is also a Regular Member of WPAOG. We are a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) entity governed by the laws of the State of New York. We are not a government organization, hence are not part of the USMA staff. Two elements of WPAOG serve graduates, the staff and the Board of Directors. The staff, headed by our CEO, Todd Browne '85, is housed in Herbert Alumni Center at West Point. Experts in their chosen professions, staff members compete for their positions and are compensated for their work. The Board provides strategic guidance to the staff and has fiduciary responsibilities for WPAOG. It is composed of non-compensated graduate volunteers elected by the Regular Members. Together the Board and the staff govern and administer the activities of WPAOG with the assistance of a 54-person Advisory Council comprised of Class, Society and At-Large Advisors.

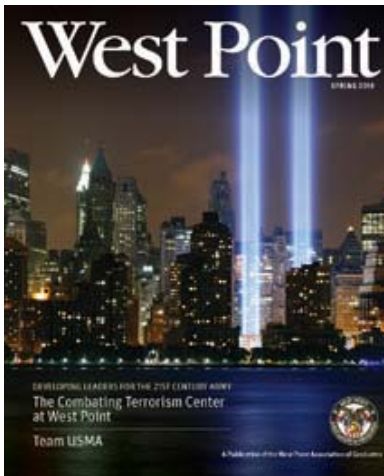
In the days ahead we will continue to drive toward our vision of being the most connected alumni body in the world. We contend that greater connectivity will lead to increased affinity and mutual appreciation among graduates and between graduates and our alma mater. This in turn should augment the justifiable pride and trust we have in West Point and our graduates from all eras. That pride has been fueled by our recent successes in areas as diverse as national and international scholarship competitions, national magazine rankings of the best colleges in America, and significant achievements by our various club and corps squad athletic teams, highlighted by the revitalization of our football program. All accomplished while our Academy leadership maintains a laser focus on producing leaders of character for our Army and our nation.

Next year will mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of our Association. Its original purpose was to reconcile those graduates who fought on opposite sides during the Civil War. In many ways we are still in the business of reconciliation as we strive to serve and bring together our graduates from across generations, diverse backgrounds and varied interests. While we are evolving to meet the ever changing needs of West Point and our graduates, today's mission remains consistent with our heritage. With your active participation we will endure as a vital part of the Academy landscape. We are bound together by a devotion to our common values and a determination to keep West Point a source of pride to our graduates and to our country.

Go Army!

Joseph E. DeFrancisco '65  
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army (Retired)  
Chairman, Board of Directors  
West Point Association of Graduates





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As I've visited various West Point Societies for Founders Day events over the last several weeks, I've enjoyed connecting (or reconnecting) with many of you and celebrating our shared proud heritage as Soldiers in the world's greatest Army and as members of the Long Gray Line.



As I close out my time as Superintendent and reflect over the last five years, your Academy has made great strides in improving this institution and the leader development experience, while continuing to meet the needs of a 21st century Army.

We reorganized our strategic plan to serve as a roadmap for innovation and improvement, ensuring we continue developing the leaders our Army needs for the future, while maintaining relevance and preeminence. We restructured our Cadet Character Development Program,

and published for the first time ever, a Character Development Strategy and Character Program "Gold Book," which outlines how we run our character program. Just recently, we published "Developing Leaders of Character," codifying our West Point Leader Development System, which integrates cadets' individual and leadership development experiences within a culture of character growth.

We implemented a new curriculum that better intellectually develops agile leaders through a broad core curriculum across disciplines, more depth to our academic majors and enrichment experiences to develop critical and creative thinking necessary for our graduates to lead in a 21st century Army. Our academic program continues to rank among the best colleges in the country from *Forbes*, *Princeton Review* and *U.S. News & World Report*, which ranked us as the number one public national liberal arts college for 2018.

As a result of our 2015 external comprehensive review of our military program, we made military training tougher with more time in the field, more physical training and road marches, and more time sleeping on the ground. We also refined summer training to allow cadet scholars and athletes to pursue individual advancement opportunities, and enhanced the training program with the capstone Cadet Leader Development Training and MX400 "Officership" courses (both graduation requirements).

Additionally, we implemented mandatory boxing for female cadets, transformed our athletics department into a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization to provide an extraordinary intercollegiate athletics experience and placed a greater emphasis on creating a culture of winning and excellence throughout the Academy, while ensuring we remain true to our values.

And speaking about our culture of excellence, we finally Beat Navy in football once again, and brought the Commander in Chief's Trophy back to West Point after 21 years.

As part of developing winning teams and a culture of excellence, we placed greater emphasis on diversity and inclusion, to ensure we develop leaders who leverage the power of diverse teams and that we represent the nation we defend. We established an office of diversity and inclusion and improved our outreach to minority groups, resulting in increased accessions, particularly with African Americans and women.

We improved our infrastructure with a new cadet barracks, upgrading existing barracks, a new state-of-the-art visitors center and renovating Bartlett Hall as our new science center. In order to maintain preeminence as a leader development and a higher education institution, we launched a two decade modernization effort to include renovating and upgrading our academic buildings and training facilities, and constructing a new Cyber and Engineering Academic Center.

The proof of these, as well as many other examples of excellence, is in the product—the leaders of character we graduate into the Army. In the last five years, we produced:

- 4,162 graduates, with an average GPA of 3.12
- 75 graduate scholars (to include 3 Rhodes Scholars)
- 2,753 graduates who branched into the combat arms (including 16 women who branched Infantry and Armor since the removal of the combat exclusion law)
- All of whom chose to come to West Point, to voluntarily defend and selflessly serve a nation that has been at war for most of their lives, knowing that they would be sent into harm's way upon graduation.

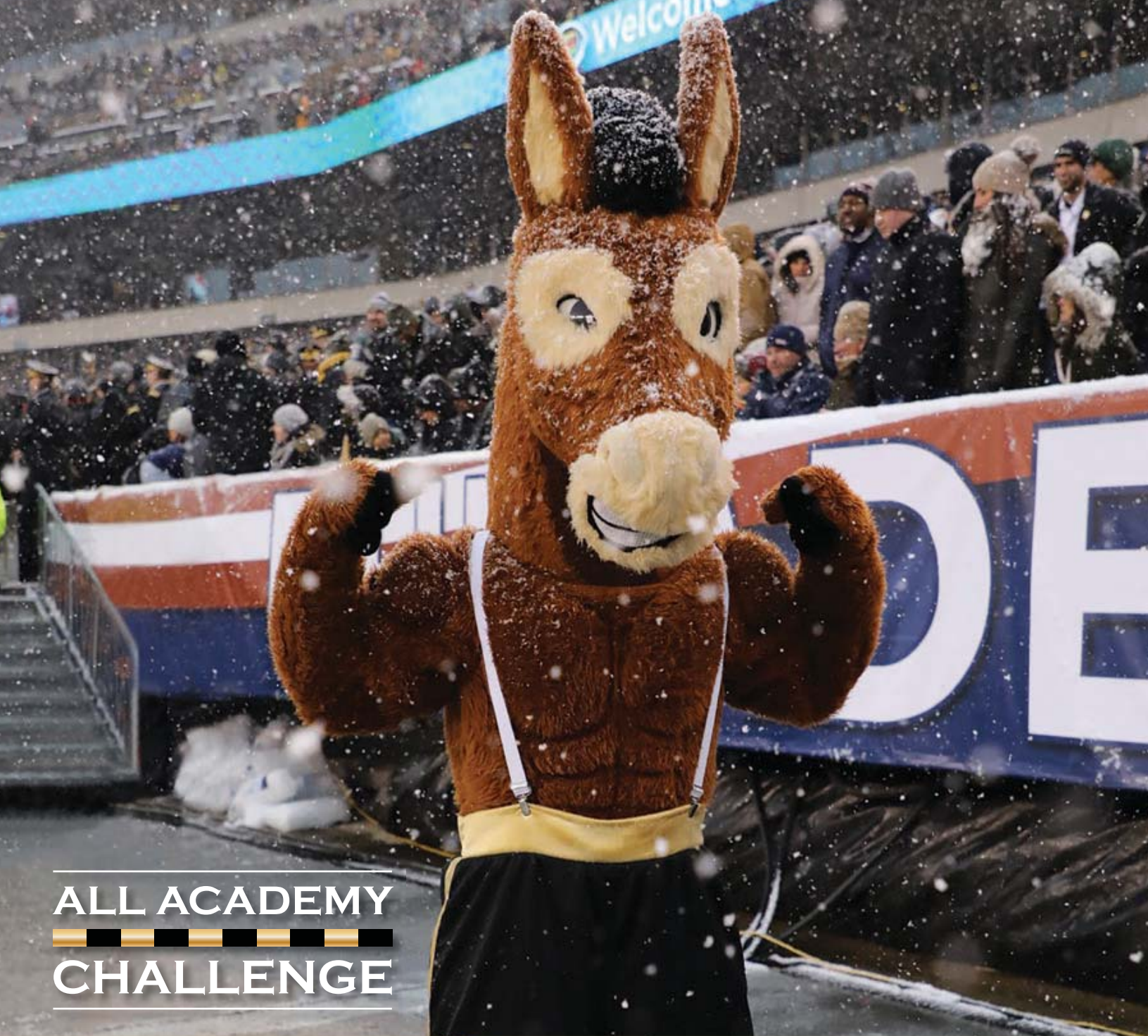
While methods and processes have changed over time, our standards have not. I would argue they have only gotten better. We continue to uphold the highest academic, military, physical and disciplinary standards without compromise and with an enduring commitment to excellence. In reaction to questions concerning institutional practices that favored special athlete groups, I asked the Secretary of the Army to send the DAIG team to inspect our academic, military, physical and disciplinary standards. Their concluding report stated that "The DAIG did not identify disparities in the application of academic, conduct and/or honor system policies based on a cadet's involvement in intercollegiate sports programs".

We recently hosted all of the Civilian Aides to the Secretary of the Army (CASAs) for three days. One of the CASA's note to me sums up best what they observed at your alma mater as they engaged with today's cadets and faculty. "The 85 CASAs and 43 spouses who attended were truly amazed by what they saw and heard from faculty, staff, coaches and cadets. Astonishment, admiration and pride best describe the evolution of their emotions as they began to understand what they were seeing and hearing."

Thank you for all you do every day for West Point and the Long Gray Line. I invite you to come visit your alma mater and see for yourself these outstanding men and women who make up the Corps of Cadets. They will inspire you as they did the Secretary of the Army's Civilian Aides, and they'll make you proud.

Beat Navy!

Robert L. Caslen Jr. '75  
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army  
59th Superintendent, U.S. Military Academy



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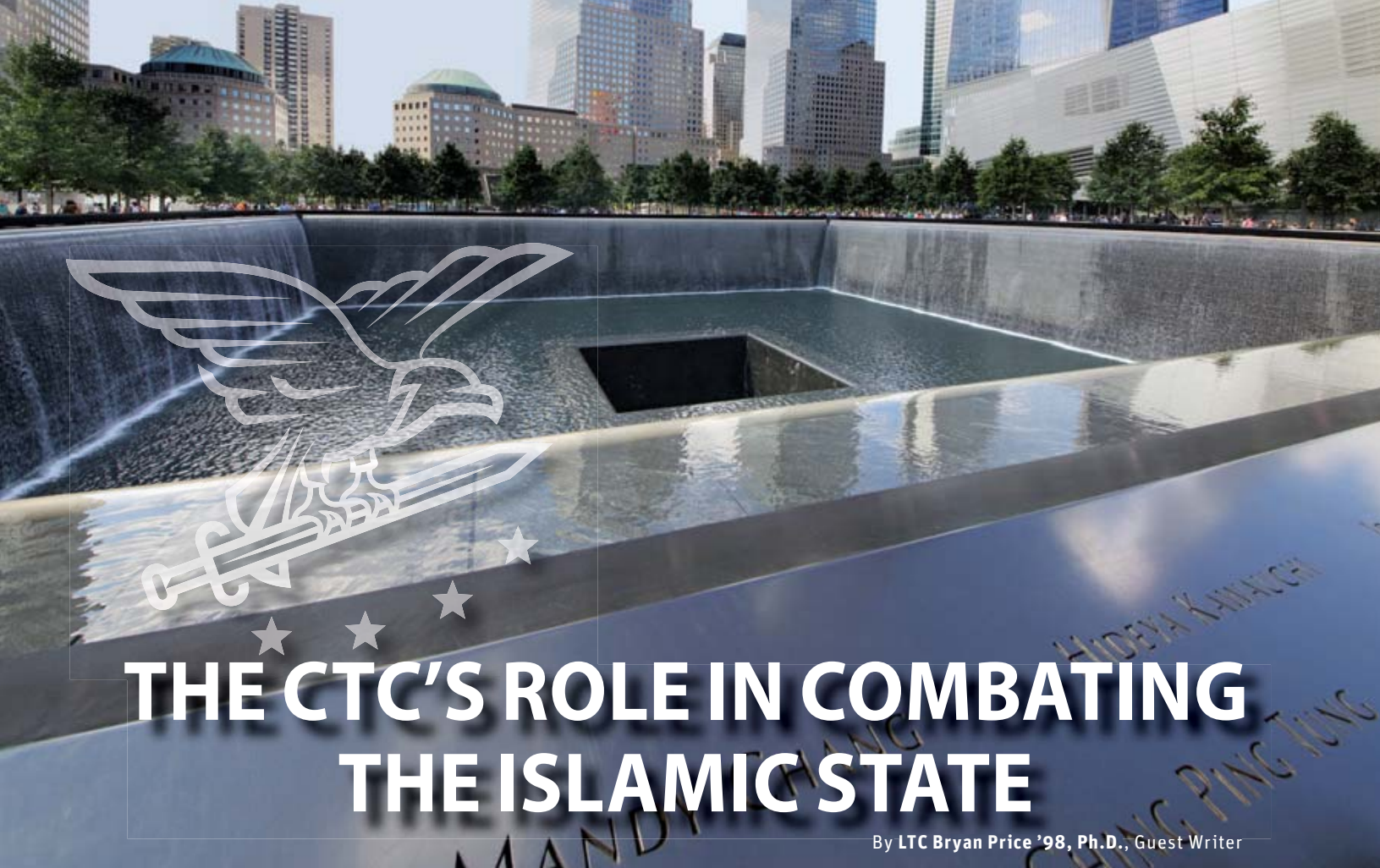
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# THE CTC'S ROLE IN COMBATING THE ISLAMIC STATE

By LTC Bryan Price '98, Ph.D., Guest Writer



Photos: Shutterstock



In July 2014, weeks after routing the U.S.-trained Iraqi military from Iraq's second largest city, the leader of the Islamic State stood in a Mosul mosque and officially declared the establishment of the so-called "caliphate." For many, it was not until Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's announcement that the world first took notice of this violent group.

But for followers of the Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point, the rise of the Islamic State, also known as "ISIS" or "ISIL," came as no surprise.

That's because since its founding in February 2003, the CTC has continuously produced rigorous, objective, and policy-relevant research about our nation's most dangerous terrorist threats. Like the name of its monthly journal, the *CTC Sentinel*, the Center has stood watch for the past 15 years, providing early warning and nuanced understanding and analysis of the groups that wish to do the United States harm.

Housed in the USMA Department of Social Sciences and financially supported by donations from graduates, organizations and other individuals made through the West Point Association of Graduates, the CTC has been an indispensable source of intellectual capital on the Islamic State. The Center's research has influenced all echelons in the fight to destroy the group, from cadets in the CTC's Terrorism Studies minor to elite practitioners at the tip of the counterterrorism spear, and even policymakers at the highest levels of the U.S. government.

### "He Who Thinks, Wins"

The CTC's initial goal was to educate cadets on what was thought to be a perpetual threat. Prior to the CTC opening its doors 15 years ago, there was no institutionalized education for cadets on terrorism. The Center was the brainchild of Brigadier General Russell Howard (Retired), longtime USMA philanthropist Vinnie Viola '77, and the now-deceased General Wayne A. Downing '62 (Retired). Downing had been a visionary change agent as head of U.S. Special Operations Command, and he intended to impart that mindset to the CTC. "He who thinks, wins" was Downing's mantra to the upstart organization.

Downing saw the Center as an "intellectual insurgency," comprised of modern-day innovators who would rigorously study al Qaeda and other extremist enemies. With CTC's private funding, the thought was that the organization would be independent, unencumbered by military bureaucracy, and free to conduct research that would regularly challenge conventional wisdom.

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, it was evident that the United States had to think differently about the terrorist threat. The CTC's founders thought that to fight an unconventional foe like al Qaeda, the way we studied and understood our adversaries had to be equally unconventional. Led by then Lieutenant Colonel Joe Felter '87, a career Special Forces officer with a Stanford Ph.D. who was known to kayak to work from his home across the Hudson River, the CTC populated itself with a cast of characters with an entrepreneurial spirit as big as their director's. The CTC

was staffed with a multi-disciplinary team comprised of former military officers, Islamic ideology experts, Arabic linguists, young and hungry scholars, and arguably the most well-known terrorism scholar in the field, Bruce Hoffman. It was a mix of "brains" and "brawn," academics and practitioners, and intellectual "insurgents" who excelled at thinking outside the box.

### Unconventional Start and Early Wins

Ahead of its time and seen as a risky experiment by some, the CTC punched well above its weight in the early days. With the roll-out of a monthly journal on counterterrorism that was accessible to both academics and practitioners, and hard-hitting reports using declassified documents produced by al Qaeda, the CTC quickly established itself as a thought leader in the field of counterterrorism.

The CTC caught a lucky break in 2007 when U.S. forces recovered an al Qaeda computer in Sinjar, Iraq, a border town close to Syria, which contained five terabytes worth of personnel records of foreign fighters flooding into the country. Instead of depositing that information into classified channels, never to be seen again (at least publicly), then Lieutenant General Stanley McChrystal '76, who was commanding Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) at the time, took the surprising step of turning those documents over to the CTC for analysis.

The CTC's subsequent report revealed the true foreign-born nature of al Qaeda in Iraq. Because it was open-source research, senior leaders could then strategically share the detailed report with foreign counterparts who now had undeniable proof of the foreign fighter problem emanating from their home countries. Others began to take notice of CTC's value, and McChrystal would later cite the Sinjar haul as one of JSOC's most important breakthroughs.

But it wasn't only senior leaders in the United States that noticed the CTC's research. Research produced by this tiny outfit in Lincoln Hall and initially intended to educate only cadets was now being read by our nation's most notorious enemies. When the CTC published a 2009 report that highlighted the hypocrisy of al Qaeda, specifically the fact that 85 percent of its victims were Muslims, not "Western infidels," senior al Qaeda leaders like Ayman al-Zawahiri and Adam Gadahn felt compelled to respond to their followers about the report.

Even Osama bin Laden himself was an avid consumer of CTC research. In a letter released by the U.S. government in 2016, bin Laden wrote asking one of his lieutenants to "send all that is published by the Combating Terrorism Center of the American military."

**Previous page, top:** National September 11 Memorial and Museum at the former site of the World Trade Center in New York City. **Bottom:** A visitor walks between the engraved monuments at "Empty Sky," the official New Jersey September 11 Memorial, located in Liberty State Park, Jersey City, NJ.

The CTC's credibility is one of the reasons the White House decided to give it the first-ever declassified documents captured from bin Laden's Abbottabad compound in 2011. In the announcement, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said, "...the CTC is the appropriate place to do that because it has experience analyzing and releasing captured battlefield documents, and [it] has a strong reputation for scholarly work on terrorism issues."

### From al Qaeda in Iraq to the Islamic State

Thus, when the Islamic State grabbed international headlines in the spring and summer of 2014, the CTC was well-positioned to provide thought leadership on the group and its evolution moving forward. The CTC's independence, afforded by private funding, coupled with unmatched access to the nation's leading counterterrorism units and agencies, provided unique opportunities to contribute intellectual firepower to the fight.

In fact, the CTC might be one of the few organizations in our government that routinely engages with U.S. counterterrorism elements at all three levels of war—tactical, operational, and strategic. One day CTC faculty members may be teaching a roomful of cadets, and the next day they may be in front of a room full of Navy SEALs, briefing the Secretary of Defense or a four-star combatant commander, or testifying in front of Congress. Sometimes this even happens on the same day.

The following are some examples of the CTC's contributions in the campaign to defeat the Islamic State thus far, and the impact the Center has made on our collective understanding of the threat.

Prior to the Islamic State's blitzkrieg across northwestern Iraq in the spring and summer of 2014, the CTC had already been documenting the group's rise in the *CTC Sentinel* and the Center's "CTC Perspectives" line, including a special issue on Syria and the burgeoning crisis there. The Center provided some of the first-ever empirical data on the Islamic State's demonstrated military capability from 2011 to 2014, research that attracted attention from the media, policymakers, and practitioners alike. In response to the group's rapid ascension, the CTC produced a primer on the organization entitled *The Group That Calls Itself a State: Understanding the Evolution and Challenges of the Islamic State* in December 2014.

Because of this research, the CTC was invited to meet with and help educate units deploying to the counterterrorism fight, including the 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 10th Special Forces Groups, the 82nd and 101st Airborne divisions, the 1st and 4th Infantry divisions, the 75th Ranger Regiment, Marine Special Operations Command, and the Naval Special Warfare Development Group. These engagements included senior command teams, junior officers, NCOs, and their soldiers who would be facing the Islamic State on the front lines. Not only did these engagements inform the CTC's future research on the group, but insights gained were also then passed along to future officers: cadets taking CTC classes.

The CTC was also asked to brief flag officer and cabinet-level leaders in the military and the policy world. Reports included formal briefings to the Secretary of Defense, and the commanders of JSOC and numerous combatant commands (SOCOM, CENTCOM, AFRICOM, NORTHCOM). On the interagency

side, the CTC briefed the CIA Director, National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) Director, the FBI's Fly Team and the High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group, and elements from the CIA, NCTC, DHS, NSC, U.S. State Department, and U.S. Treasury Department.

Given these varied engagements, the CTC was able to contribute across the spectrum of our government's efforts to combat the Islamic State, from kinetic operations to countering violent extremism.

### Foreign Fighter Research

Since the Sinjar report in 2008, the Center has become a trusted go-to source for foreign fighter research. Three major reports and countless articles in the *CTC Sentinel* have provided students, policymakers, and practitioners with insight into this threat. The Center engaged with a number of partners in the Department of Defense and the interagency community. This included early collaboration with JSOC's foreign fighter intelligence fusion operation called Gallant Phoenix, and this past summer, the Center was asked to send two faculty members to deploy with that outfit for five weeks.

**"...the CTC might be one of the few organizations in our government that routinely engages with U.S. counterterrorism elements at all three levels of war—tactical, operational, and strategic."**

—LTC Bryan Price '98

In April 2016, the CTC was featured on *NBC Nightly News* for its analysis of the largest cache of foreign fighter personnel records produced by the Islamic State, which had been smuggled out of the organization by a defector and given to the CTC by NBC News. Senior correspondent Richard Engel came to West Point and interviewed the CTC's Deputy Director, Mr. Brian Dodwell, the lead author of *The Caliphate's Global Workforce*. The findings from this report and other works from the Center's foreign fighter research have been briefed to the highest levels of leadership, including the SOCOM and JSOC commanders, respectively.

### Islamic State Propaganda & Countering Violent Extremism

The CTC has also contributed to the collective understanding of how strategic communications affect the fight against the Islamic State. This has included research and analysis on how the group communicates to multiple audiences. Led by the CTC's Director of Research, Dr. Daniel Milton, the CTC has produced some of the most cutting-edge analyses on the group's media operations to date.

In fact, the CTC's October 2016 report was featured on the front page of *The New York Times* web and print editions, was the top story on ABC News' website, and was showcased in international media from the United Kingdom, Russia, India, and Saudi

Arabia. As a result, the Center was asked to present this information to a wide array of diverse stakeholders, including the National Security Council, Google, DARPA, NYPD, and the government of Iraq.

The Center has also published research on how the U.S. government can improve its counter-narrative campaign. In the spring of 2015, the CTC ran, on behalf of the Department of Social Sciences, the prestigious Senior Conference, which draws top leaders in government, the private sector, and academia to tackle strategic topics of import. In its attempt to live up to the conference title, "Unconventional Approaches to an Unconventional Threat," the CTC flipped the traditional conference model on its head. Although it invited senior U.S. counterterrorism leaders to attend the conference, the CTC chose speakers from other industries and disciplines that, in some cases, had nothing to do with counterterrorism. The goal was to generate innovative ideas and approaches in counterterrorism.

For example, on the panel examining the war of ideas, we featured Pete Favat, the creative force behind the "Truth" anti-smoking campaign, one of the most successful and controversial advertising campaigns in history. Clad in jeans and purple Chuck Taylor sneakers, Favat wowed senior counterterrorism officials

**Below:** GEN Mark Milley, the 39th Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, and LTG Robert L. Caslen Jr. '75, USMA Superintendent, receive a briefing of CTC operations and research efforts. On the wall hangs an Islamic State flag captured in December 2014 in Anbar Province, Iraq and presented to the CTC. **Right:** Dr. Daniel Milton, CTC's Director of Research, listens to GEN Milley after the briefing.

with how he overcame the advantages of Big Tobacco's impressive advertising in order to reduce teenage smoking. Lightbulbs went off across the room as attendees drew the self-evident parallels between Favat's challenge and the one faced by U.S. counterterrorism officials against the Islamic State. After the event, *Ad Age*, the leading outlet for the advertising and marketing industry, championed this novel collaboration between counterterrorism and the advertising industry.

For another panel on building partner capacity and the best ways to train our allies to counter terrorism more effectively, the CTC invited the most senior special forces NCO in the Afghan Army



Combating Terrorism Center  
AT WEST POINT



**Above:** The CTC took 46 cadets to New York City in November 2017 as part of the Terrorism Studies Minor. The cadets received a personalized tour of the 9/11 Museum and Memorial, visited the Freedom Tower's observation deck, and heard from the Indian Police Commissioner who was in charge of the investigation into the 2008 Mumbai attacks by Lashkar-e-Taiba, a terrorist organization.

who has been fighting since the age of 12. What better way to highlight the gaps and challenges involved in the American “train, advise, and assist” mission than to hear from somebody who has been on the receiving end of it since 2001?

### Cadets and the War of Ideas

On the heels of the Center’s research on the Islamic State’s media operations, a special class of cadets taking the CTC’s combating terrorism course competed in an international competition sponsored by the U.S. State Department and Facebook. This competition asked undergraduate and graduate students from around the world to design and pilot social media campaigns to counter violent extremism.

In true CTC fashion, the group of entrepreneurial cadets crafted a covert social media campaign using Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and a website to attract and engage mainstream Muslims and would-be jihadis in the hopes of creating a community that would push those sitting on the fence onto a non-violent path. Not only was the

campaign highlighted in national news outlets such as NPR, *PBS Newshour*, and *The Washington Post*, but the cadets got to brief their campaign to officials at the White House and the U.S. State Department. The CTC was subsequently invited to brief this effort at separate conferences hosted by SOCOM, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, and the FBI.

### CTC: A Thought Leader in Counterterrorism

The CTC’s rigorous, objective, and policy-relevant research has made it a respected and trusted voice in the counterterrorism field. When we critically evaluate our relevance, we consider the demand for and reaction to our research, especially from key stakeholders. In trying to measure the impact our research has had on the campaign to defeat the Islamic State, for example, we know that a number of senior counterterrorism leaders in the military and the policy world routinely use our research. There are, however, some special engagements that speak to the CTC’s impact in this conflict.



**Below:** Michael Morell, CTC Senior Fellow and former Acting Director and Deputy Director of the CIA, leads a cadet discussion.



Photo: Courtesy of CTC

## CTC at West Point

The mission of CTC is educating cadets and counterterrorism practitioners at all career levels to understand and think critically about the dynamic threat environment.

### Cadet Education: Terrorism Studies Minor

The CTC's Terrorism Studies Minor (TSM) program is the most popular academic minor at West Point. It is designed to provide cadets with the intellectual, analytic, and theoretical tools required to understand the nature, root causes, and challenges posed by terrorism in the 21st century, as well as issues associated with counterterrorism policy. Housed within the Department of Social Sciences, the TSM program leverages the expertise and experience of the CTC and the department's faculty members. The TSM is based on two pillars: Academic and Professional Development.

#### TSM Academic Pillar

The TSM consists of five courses: two required core courses (SS465 – Terrorism: New Challenges and SS466 – Combating Terrorism) and three electives. Cadets can concentrate in one of five tracks (four regional and one policy).

#### Core Terrorism Minor Courses

##### SS465--Terrorism: New Challenges

Cadets build a solid understanding of the causes, nature, and consequences of terrorism, and of the practical and moral dilemmas inherent in counterterrorism. The course assumes that a sophisticated understanding of the contemporary terrorist threat requires an understanding both of the theoretical and historical underpinnings of terrorism.

##### SS466--Combating Terrorism

Cadets learn the tools, tactics, and strategies of combating terrorism in the current operational environment. Cadets also learn about metrics used to evaluate counterterrorism strategies and tactics. The course exposes cadets to how we currently combat terrorism and encourages critical thought on how we can improve the way we fight terrorism in "the Long War."

#### TSM Professional Development Pillar

The TSM professional development component provides opportunities for cadets to engage with leading scholars and counterterrorism practitioners. Opportunities include guest lectures and roundtable discussions with experts, practitioners, and senior government officials in the field; participation in field trips to New York City and Washington, DC; participation in a variety of internships in the nation's leading counterterrorism units and agencies; participation in a capstone field exercise with the FDNY; and involvement in the Irregular Warfare Group.

#### Advanced Research Opportunities

Cadets frequently participate in the CTC's various research projects, present original research at academic conferences, and publish articles in professional and peer-reviewed journals.

### Graduate Education for Mid-level Army Officers: The Downing Scholars Program

The General Wayne A. Downing Scholarship program is a competitive, advanced civil-schooling opportunity for mid-level Army officers. The CTC sends Downing Scholars to top-tier universities around the globe, hosts them at West Point each semester, and facilitates unique internships in the interagency.

#### Practitioner Education

In addition to teaching cadets, the CTC routinely goes outside the Academy to educate the nation's most elite counterterrorism units and agencies. The CTC has conducted educational events for the Army's Special Mission Unit, 75th Ranger Regiment, numerous Special Forces groups, and pre-deployment training for the 101st Airborne Division, 1st Infantry Division, 82nd Airborne, and 4th Infantry Division. For inter-agency partners, the CTC has led educational events for the FBI's Counterterrorism Fly Team and High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group, the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and CIA University. ★

## Peer to Peer: Challenging Extremism via Social Media

Sixteen cadets from multiple majors at the Academy enrolled in a special section of the CTC's SS466—Combating Terrorism course in the fall of 2015. All they knew up front was that they would be partaking in a real-world project to counter the influence of the Islamic State.

None of them could have predicted, however, that six months later they would be presenting their project to senior counterterrorism officials at the White House and the State Department. Or that their campaign would be featured in national news outlets, including *The Washington Post*, NPR, and *PBS NewsHour*.

The opportunity arose when the State Department and EdVenture Partners teamed up with Facebook in early 2015 to create the "Peer to Peer: Challenging Extremism" competition. At that time, thousands of foreign fighters were flocking to the Islamic State, including many who were drawn to the group's slick propaganda. The U.S. government looked to the next generation for help.

West Point and 46 other universities from around the world were invited to create novel ways of challenging extremism. The task: develop a viable idea, and Facebook would fund the initiative up to \$2,500. The three best campaigns would then travel to Washington to present their projects.

While most teams chose campaigns focused on raising public awareness about radicalization or ways to reduce Islamophobia in Western countries, the cadets focused on what they called "fence-sitters." These were individuals who were curious about the Islamic State but had yet to join the fight. No social media campaign at the

*continued on sidebar, page 13*

For example, we have the privilege of presenting our research to many different audiences, but there are some units that serve as the standard bearers in counterterrorism. We have been fortunate to brief many of them, including the Army's Special Mission Unit, the 75th Ranger Regiment, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, and the Marines Special Operations Command. But perhaps the greatest compliment we have received was an invitation to present the keynote address at the Naval Special Warfare Development Group (DEVGRU) conference in 2016. Although we never tire of beating Navy on the fields of friendly strife, counterterrorism is a team game, and that organization is one of the best in the business. The opportunity to deliver the keynote at DEVGRU's conference was a special tribute to the CTC's current standing in the field.

Another metric of our relevance in the fight against the Islamic State was when the CTC was asked to testify in front of the House Armed Services Committee in September 2016. Although we are often asked to speak with committee members and staffers behind closed doors about CTC research on a variety of topics, we were asked to provide official testimony on the counterterrorism lessons learned in the 15 years since 9/11.

Finally, the CTC's research on jihadi hostage-taking since 2001 has received a lot of acclaim from academics, policymakers, and practitioners. We created the largest open-source dataset of Western hostages taken from 2001 to 2016. After the report launched, we had the opportunity to present the findings to the National Security Council, SOCOM, and the FBI's new Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell. One of our most valued compliments, however, came from the mother of James Foley, the American journalist who was taken hostage and eventually murdered by the Islamic State. After members of the National Security Council recommended the CTC's hostage report to

In February 2016, five West Point cadets travelled to the U.S. State Department in Washington, DC to report on their project in the "Peer-to-Peer: Challenging Extremism" competition. Team members (left to right): Jordan Isham '18, Austin Montgomery '18, Brittany Scofield '18, C.J. Drew '16, and David Weinmann '18.



James' mother Diane Foley, who now leads the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, she contacted us and praised our work, saying it was the best she had seen on the topic. Her stamp of approval meant a lot to the CTC, and it reinforced how truly important our work is at the Center.

### A National Asset in the Long War

Because of its positioning at the nexus between theory and practice, not to mention its strategic location at the U.S. Military Academy, where it sits in a world-renowned academic department with access to elite counterterrorism units and agencies, the CTC is a respected thought leader in the counterterrorism fight. Moreover, the Center's blend of faculty is unique. It includes individuals with master's degrees and doctorates, some with policy and government experience, others straight from leading academic institutions such as Harvard and Columbia. Finally, as a Margin of Excellence Center, funded through private donations, the CTC is free to rigorously examine the threat and speak truth to power, especially when the findings may buck against the conventional wisdom.

The CTC is one of the most innovative and risky initiatives the Academy has ever embarked upon. Today, as one of West Point's largest centers with a proud 15-year track record, it can no longer call itself a "garage band." But the entrepreneurial mindset that General Downing instilled in the CTC remains just as prevalent today as it did in 2003. It is in our DNA.

That is why our research connects with multiple audiences. That is why senior leaders keep coming back to the CTC, including the past three CIA Directors, six combatant commanders, the past four JSOC Commanders, and every SOCOM Commander since General Brown. It is why the Terrorism Studies minor is the most popular minor among cadets at West Point. It is why you'll see CTC research touted by every news outlet across the political spectrum, even in these partisan times.

The CTC is like no other enterprise in the world, and it could only exist at West Point. For these reasons, the CTC has been, and will continue to be, a national asset in the Long War. ★

*LTC Bryan Price '98, Ph.D., is an Academy Professor in the Department of Social Sciences and has been the director of the Combating Terrorism Center since 2012. For more information about the CTC, or to subscribe to the CTC Sentinel, please visit [www.ctc.usma.edu](http://www.ctc.usma.edu) or follow it on Twitter @ctcwp.*

*Since its inception, the CTC has benefited from Margin of Excellence funding in the form of named endowments and positions from individuals like George Gilmore '71 and the Classes of 1966, 1971, 1977, 1984, 1987, 1989, 1998, and 2001 as well as support from organizations such as the Audia Group, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Morgan Stanley, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and Thomson Reuters Special Services, among other donors.*

*For more information on how to support the CTC, contact Allison Barry at [Allison.Barry@wpaog.org](mailto:Allison.Barry@wpaog.org).*



time was focused on this vulnerable group. Because would-be terrorists never consult the U.S. government for career advice, let alone 16 West Pointers, the cadets concealed their identity throughout the campaign.

The cadets chose a two-phase approach to initially attract and then expose fence-sitters to a community of mainstream, moderate Muslims in hopes of off-ramping them to a non-violent path.

The first phase employed inbound marketing techniques to surreptitiously entice fence-sitters with the engaging phrase "Let's Talk Jihad." The second phase involved the creation of an online community of moderate Muslims throughout the Arab world to show a different side of Islam than the one the Islamic State was promoting.

The campaign created thought-provoking posts in both English and Arabic, inviting users to engage with the content and other community members on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and a webpage. Cadets bought Facebook ads that targeted mainstream Muslims in the Middle East and South Asia, and timed the ads to run soon after the audience returned from Friday prayers, when most were getting online.

When several pro-Islamic State supporters trolled the campaign's social media platforms, the cadets' initial instinct was to delete the posts and block the offenders. However, if they wanted to present a realistic, credible portrayal of the ongoing debates in Islam, the cadets concluded that the Islamic State supporters had to stay.

It was a risky move, but then something interesting happened. The pro-Islamic State trolls were ultimately drowned out by moderate Muslims, showing fence-sitters that the Islamic State's brand represented an inferior, minority view of Islam.

Although the cadets ultimately finished second to the team from Pakistan, the interest from U.S. counterterrorism policymakers and practitioners only increased after the competition. The cadets were invited to present at the annual FBI Leadership in Counterterrorism conference and the CTC was invited to present at the U.S. Army Special Operations Commanders conference.

Once the competition was over, the cadets' cover was blown, and the campaign ended. But they were proud of what they had accomplished and the opportunity they had to influence the fight and inform future counterterrorism policy. ★

# ARMY=TEAM

## The USMA “Team” Issue

The “Army as team” metaphor has long served as a way to relate the Army experience to civilian life. Today, this concept is clearly affirmed in the second line of the “Soldier’s Creed” which begins: “I am an American Soldier. I am a warrior and a member of a team.”

Yet, the specific team—whether it is rifle squad, platoon headquarters, infantry battalion, or numbered division—is left unstated. That is significant because at each of the many levels of the Army, the Soldier’s team concept remains fundamental and constant. As Brad Harrison ’94 noted in his article “Teamwork is the Most Important Lesson You Learn from the Military,” appearing in the blog *Task and Purpose*, successful teamwork is built upon five essential qualities: 1) a leader who is responsible for providing direction, 2) an environment based on mutual respect, 3) a desire to work and solve problems from multiple perspectives, 4) a willingness to embrace decisions (regardless of debate outcome) and move forward, and 5) a sense of bonding through it all. Thus, from the high-ranking commanding general to the recently enlisted fireteam member, the Army succeeds through each Soldier’s sense of belonging to one unified team forged out of a network of many smaller teams.

This issue of *West Point* magazine highlights the ways in which the United States Military Academy “builds and sustains diverse and effective teams.” This is the first of five Superintendent’s Goals that guide the Academy toward fulfilling Strategic Imperative 2 (“Foster Relevance and Preeminence”) of USMA’s Strategic Plan 2017-22. According to that Strategic Plan, “Building effective teams is critical

to mission accomplishment. This includes attracting, recruiting, admitting, and retaining the Corps of Cadets who will become future leaders.” But once you have the “players,” or members of the Corps, you also need to have the variety of USMA team structures through which they “play” and grow as leaders. The Academy excels at offering cadets a range of team experiences that, as the Superintendent’s Office says, “welcome full engagement of all members, embrace the strength of their differences, promote a sense of belonging, and foster high performance through inspired contributions from each member of the team.”

In addition to our regular athletic team feature, this USMA “Team” issue of *West Point* magazine highlights four different types of cadet teams in the military, academic and club domains, as well as the Center for Enhanced Performance, a unique resource for team building at West Point. Many of these academic and club teams are supported by graduates’ Margin of Excellence donations through WPAOG.

Our first article profiles members at various levels of the USCC chain of command. Worth noting is how each cadet, regardless of differences in background or experience, feels valued and respected, which is key to building an effective team. The next article spotlights West Point’s “Dean’s Teams,” six academic clubs that compete against other undergraduate institutions in the fields of debate, cyber security, and mock trial. The third article of this USMA “Team” issue looks at some of the projects this year’s capstone teams are creating: an augmented-reality app to study lessons of military art, a team of drones that can assess a radiologically contaminated environment, and scientific experiments using the Academy’s high-energy laser facility. As the article shows, each interdisciplinary capstone team is leveraging the experiences, talent, and knowledge of every team member for maximum effect. This issue also looks at one of the Academy’s most visible and successful military teams, the Black Knight Drill Team. Through interviews with three of the team’s leaders, it becomes evident that the team’s motto, “Pride and Discipline,” stems from the team’s commitment to two overarching principles: a sense of family and dedication to practice. Finally, the “team” theme concludes with a detailed description of the Center for Enhanced Performance, a West Point support center dedicated to helping individual cadets become better team members, as well as helping teams forge stronger group bonds and identities.

All of these articles show how the leader development experience at West Point consciously cultivates leaders who recognize and leverage the power of a diverse set of teams while treating everyone with dignity and respect, so that when they graduate and become officers in the Army’s diverse units, they have the tools to build their own effective teams within the greater Army team. ★





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# LEADING THE CORPS: Team Responsibility at Every Level

By **Kim McDermott '87**, WPAOG staff

USCC PAM 6-22, the Cadet Chain of Command Leadership Evaluation and Development Procedures, addresses how the leadership of the Corps functions during the Academic Year (as well as during Cadet Summer Training) and states, "... development of cadets is an essential element within the total program of the Military Academy. The learning and practicing of leadership must be a part of all phases of cadet life, including company, classroom, athletic field, and extracurricular activities. Leadership development... must be complementary to, and supportive of, the character, intellectual, physical, and military development of cadets at the Military Academy."

After plebe year, all cadets begin to assume leadership responsibilities. Long gone are the days when a becoming a yearling simply meant you were no longer a plebe. Today, yearlings at the rank of Cadet Corporal serve as Team Leaders. In this initial leadership position, they begin to learn the duties of a Squad Leader, but start on a smaller scale. In theory, they should be able to act in the Squad Leader's absence. In practice, they are fully accountable for each member of their team—typically one plebe, sometimes two. This means knowing their duty status at all times, conducting cadet development time, inspecting rooms, and monitoring their military, academic and physical performance.

Cadets of all ranks are assigned tasks and duties that are "meaningful and necessary," but that will not interfere with their other responsibilities. Instead these duties should enhance the functioning of the Corps as much as possible, making it imperative that cadet leadership responsibilities at all levels are well-defined and clear. And while USCC PAM 6-22 outlines the basic responsibilities attached to every duty position, it says "setting the example in self-discipline and attitude is the most important role of the cadet chain of command."

With all of this in mind, *West Point* magazine asked a cadet leader at each level of the chain of command in the Third Regiment (and the Brigade Commander, too) to provide some thoughts on their jobs—how they fit into the big picture, and why they are important. These cadets also describe how they balance the duties of their position with other requirements, and share something about their personal leadership style. ★

## TEAM LEADER (D-3)

**Cadet Corporal Michael McGerty '20**

**Hometown:** Chicago, Illinois

**Major:** Economics (possible double major with International Relations)

**Team Function:** "As a Team Leader with only one subordinate, I have the potential to provide the most direct positive influence in her cadet experience right now. I try to ensure that everything I instruct my plebe to do is ultimately for her betterment, which I think is a good model to carry forward. I think that the depth of experience from leading one person will be invaluable when I am asked to lead ten people next summer as a Beast Squad Leader."

**Why it's Important:** "Team leaders are the true first line of leadership: if something is wrong, they are the first to be able to recognize and address it."

**Finding Balance:** "I've found that cadets must develop a keen sense of priorities to be successful."

**Leadership Style:** "I like to think about the quote from famous USMA graduate Lieutenant General Harold 'Hal' Moore '45, who said, referring to leadership, 'There is always one more thing you can do.' Since I am responsible for just one subordinate, I am constantly trying to think of what else I can do to help her be more successful, since her success is also my success as a leader. I also focus on being personally competent and confident in order to provide a good example."



## SQUAD LEADER (D-3)

**Cadet Sergeant Olivia Smith '19**

**Hometown:** Jupiter, Florida

**Major:** International History

**Team Function:** “It is my job to give my squad information and guidance to help them develop into capable leaders ready for their next leadership position.”

**Why it's Important:** “I serve as a kind of mentor for the other cadets in my squad. As a Squad Leader, I also maintain discipline and professionalism in my squad. When trying to reach a shared goal, like finishing a group project, or cleaning the company area, leading my peers is fairly easy. Leading peers becomes difficult when they decide not to cooperate. This can be pretty stressful, but I would say it is one of the best ways to develop as a leader—if I can effectively lead an uncooperative peer, then I can lead subordinates with ease.”

**Finding Balance:** “I’ve learned that setting a written schedule for myself helps me to meet all my goals.”

**Leadership Style:** “I would say I have a pretty composed leadership style. I speak with my subordinates offline to get to know them and to keep track of how they are doing. I try maintaining an open, but professional, atmosphere in my squad so that everyone is comfortable with coming to me for help or questions. I have found that being approachable can help me solve problems at the lowest level.”

## PLATOON LEADER (D-3)

**Cadet Lieutenant Eric Arzaga '18**

**Hometown:** Honolulu, Hawaii

**Major:** Sociology

**Team Function:** “In my position, I provide supervision, counseling, and feedback to my peers and subordinates within my platoon to ensure the Company Commander’s mission is successful.”

**Why it's Important:** “Leadership training at West Point does not end after summer training; it is constantly occurring at the platoon level. The Platoon Leader is the most experienced cadet in terms of standards, discipline, and daily operations. My Platoon Sergeant gets the job done for me. I provide the intent and guidance, and he or she needs to think critically and complete the mission.”

**Finding Balance:** “I tend to set aside some time during the day to check emails and get military duties done. If I am back-loaded on academic work, I close my emails and simply focus on academics. (I also try to be sensitive to my Platoon Sergeant’s time, in terms of giving workload and tasks to complete.) If a military task is urgent, my Commander will simply text me or talk to me personally to get it done ASAP.”

**Leadership Style:** “My leadership style can sometimes be cut-and-dried, though it depends on the situation. For the most part, I try to seek first to understand before jumping to conclusions. I adhere to the rules, but I also take time to know my soldiers.”

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**COMPANY COMMANDER (D-3)**

**Cadet Captain Zachary Yopp '18**

**Hometown:** Tallahassee, Florida

**Major:** Management

**Team Function:** "I am ultimately responsible for everything the D-3 Dino Team does or fails to do."

**Why it's Important:** "As a Company Commander, I can interact with all four classes, and I have an opportunity to be a role model. If I can have the slightest positive influence in the life of one person, I will be happy. At the end of the day, it's all about people."

**Finding Balance:** "I have learned that relying on the people around me is the only way to get everything done that is demanded of me. The best way to describe my relationship with my First Sergeant is that of two team captains, one an offensive captain and the other a defensive captain. We both have our own specialties and ideas on how to best lead the team, but we collaborate to discuss what is best before making a decision."

**Leadership Style:** "My leadership philosophy is composed of three values: Integrity, Lead by Example, and Teamwork. Integrity is critical to building trust between leaders and their subordinates. Leading by Example means never asking someone to do something I would not do. If I fail at this, I lose all credibility and trust. Teamwork is a group of people understanding that they must rely on one another to accomplish the task at hand."

**BATTALION COMMANDER (D-3)**

**Cadet Captain Destinee Morris '18**

**Hometown:** Lino Lakes, Minnesota

**Major:** Life Science

**Team Function:** "As a Battalion Commander, it is my job to serve the companies in their daily operations and provide the necessary resources and information they need. I also act as their communication liaison with regimental leadership."

**Why it's Important:** "It is my job to ensure my battalion of three companies is executing our part of the bigger mission—this is what the Regimental Commander expects of me."

**Finding Balance:** "Balancing my duties as Battalion Commander, a pre-med student, and an Army West Point Women's Basketball player is challenging but rewarding. While my leadership positions at USMA have taught me how to effectively motivate a large group of people, being a student has taught me how to push through adversity, and being a basketball player has taught me how to channel my emotions and attitude towards a purpose. Valuing each of these, I simply have to prioritize and organize."

**Leadership Style:** "Since Beast, I've been inspired by the words 'before you lead, you must first learn to follow,' and as a new cadet, I began to understand the importance of humble leadership. I must never stop learning from others, even my subordinates. I am not afraid to ask for help from my fellow battalion commanders whose strengths I recognize. I want to learn from their experiences."



## REGIMENTAL COMMANDER (A-3)

### Cadet Captain Taylor Chambers '18

**Hometown:** Plano, Texas

**Major:** Chemical Engineering with a Grand Strategies minor

**Team Function:** “First, my job is to ensure that the regiment has an effective command climate that allows for the optimal education, training, and inspiration of each individual cadet. Second, I have a responsibility to ensure that the regimental staff is held accountable for doing their jobs and enabling the operations of the regiment.”

**Why it's Important:** “As a Regimental Commander I have the ability to affect 1,100 cadets. It's a job that is an incredible blessing and should be executed with a heart focused on service.”

**Finding Balance:** “I had a mentor tell me once, ‘You can do everything you want to do well, or you can do a handful of things great.’ It has stuck with me throughout my time at West Point. I'm not always good at prioritizing, but this year has improved my abilities in this regard. Always start with school work, physical and spiritual health, and taking care of others, and everything else falls into place.”

**Leadership Style:** “I hope that my leadership style develops every day into one that helps the people I work with to become the best versions of themselves. I am focused on making each organization I am a part of better than when I found it by creating connections and having compassion for the people who make up that organization.”

## BRIGADE COMMANDER (B-2)

### Cadet Captain Simone Askew '18

**Hometown:** Fairfax, Virginia

**Major:** International History

**Team Function:** “In a nutshell—I am responsible for the overall performance of the Corps of Cadets. I am also the primary liaison between the Corps of Cadets and the Academy leadership. The great news is that I have an excellent staff and subordinate commanders who help make this work.”

**Why it's Important:** “As the bridge between the Corps and the Academy leadership, I am accountable to both. I owe it to the Corps to represent cadet perspective, as respectfully and thoughtfully as possible. Likewise, I must effectively communicate the expectations of the leadership to the Corps.”

**Finding Balance:** “It's important to have people around you who can square you away! You can't do it all by yourself, so surround yourself with people you trust. I've also found that deliberate efforts to guard my time have helped me maintain my relationships with friends and family.”

**Leadership Style:** “I cannot stress enough the relationship-building aspect of leadership. It's so important to be able to relate to, and interact with, people at all levels. My time as First Captain has entailed connecting with subordinates, peers, and VIPs—and they deserve the same amount of consideration and respect. Remaining calm and collected in challenging times, if not literally ‘under fire,’ is also how I strive to lead.” ★

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# THE DEAN'S TEAMS:

## Six Special USMA Academic Clubs

By Keith J. Hamel, WPAOG staff



Photo: CPT Robert Lawless

Entering the United States Military Academy through Thayer Gate, one notices the large billboard on the left touting the number of national and conference championships that West Point's Division-I sports teams and competitive sports clubs have earned in the last year. One name on the list, "Ethics Debate"-National Champions 2017, stands out as different from the rest. Rather than a sports team, this is one of six West Point "Dean's Teams," academic clubs that compete against other undergraduate schools (and sometimes graduate programs) in their respective disciplines: ethics, parliamentary, and policy debate; cyber policy and defense; and mock trial. Each Dean's Team represents the Academy at the highest level; but, more importantly, they all teach valuable skills—such as teamwork, communication, preparation, civility, and technology—to the future Army officers that comprise their rosters.

### Speech and Parliamentary Debate Forum (SPCH)

Founded in the late 1940s, SPCH is the oldest Dean's Team of the current six clubs. It was originally organized to provide cadets with the opportunity to practice public speaking and political discourse. Today, SPCH seeks to develop within its members a sense of professionalism and confidence through oral communication and argumentative reasoning. Housed within the Department of English & Philosophy, SPCH's mission aligns with the department's mission to "prepare cadets to be outstanding communicators and adaptable critical thinkers who can synthesize concepts; appreciate diverse cultures, ideas, and forms of expression, and assess clearly the implications of complex ethical questions."

The current SPCH team features 18 members, most of whom come from the Fourth Class. To join the team, the seven plebes presently on the roster needed to undergo tryouts that included a quiz on current events, a practice debate round, and an interview with the team's Cadet in Charge and its Assistant Cadet in Charge.

SPCH meets four times a week, Monday through Thursday, and competes in an average of two speech tournaments per month. The competitions are held in the style of the American Parliamentary Debate Association (APDA), the nation's largest student debate forum, which has well over 1,500 members. One of the tournaments on APDA's schedule is the West Point Invitational (WPI). Held annually since 1967, WPI features more than 200 students from schools across the Northeast, including New York University, the City University of New York, and a majority of Ivy League schools. The topics debated throughout the year can be anything the host school wants to discuss, but APDA regulations stipulate that a case cannot be outside the purview of an undergraduate liberal arts education. In particular, cadets use lessons taught in their International Relations, Philosophical Methods, Logical Reasoning, and even Information Technology classes and apply them within debate tournaments to rebut opponents' speeches or to develop their own.

Although SPCH members regularly place in several tournaments each year, the team takes more pride in portraying a positive image of West Point to other college-aged peers and fostering

relationships with them. They are also mindful that they are learning skills that will be directly applicable to a future Army career. "Communication is absolutely the most vital skill that an aspiring officer can possess," says Major Joseph Mazzocchi, SPCH's Officer in Charge. "The ability to break down complex ideas, explain them to the average person, and then persuade those same people to be on board with these ideas will pay major dividends to these cadets down the road."

### Policy Debate Team

The West Point Policy Debate Team has a rich history of excellence within the Corps of Cadets and the debate community at large, where the team has become renowned for its success and dedication. West Point hosted the East Coast's first major debate tournament in 1945 and created the National Debate Tournament (NDT), the nation's premier tournament, in 1947. The Policy Debate Team has since gone on to produce numerous national champions: three



**Above:** CDTs Seamus Matlack '18 and Isabella Minter '19 take home the Commander in Speech Trophy after beating Navy at the Army-Navy Debate in Philadelphia, PA on December 8, 2017.

**Previous page:** The West Point Mock Trial Team competing at Regional Competition at Fordham Law School in NYC.

Novice and Junior Varsity National Champions have been produced in the last 20 years, while nine bids to the NDT have been captured.

The typical cadet joins the team because they have a passion for policy debate. Many of the team's 20 members debated in high school, but if a cadet joins without any debate experience, he or she will debate in the novice division for at least a year, and will be paired up with a more experienced debate cadet during practice sessions.

Typically, the team meets four days a week. On Monday, the team reflects on arguments it lost during recent competitions and assigns research to conduct throughout the week in preparation for its next competition. Tuesday is group preparation for the upcoming competition, which means assigning speaking blocks, compiling and sharing files, and conducting research as needed. Senior members of the team will also present certain arguments or strategies for the team. Wednesdays are devoted to mock debates. These debates are judged by the team's senior members and coaches, who provide comments to the debaters. On Thursday, the final day of practice in the week prior to a tournament, the team analyzes its competition, discusses debate strategies to employ, and hones its affirmative and negative arguments concerning the upcoming tournament's resolution.

According to Lieutenant Colonel (USAF) Patrick Kriz, the Policy Debate Team's Officer in Charge, cadets on the Policy Debate Team have been developing civil-military relations for going on seven decades. "For most civilian debaters, their exposure to West

Point cadets will be their only interaction with a military member," he says. "Our cadets serve a key role in helping to expand the debate community's knowledge of and experience with the military."

### Ethics Debate Forum

The Ethics Debate Forum was founded in 1997, the same year that the kind of competition in which it participates, the Ethics Bowl, first occurred at the national level. In the early days of the Ethics Bowl, USMA won the national championship in both 1998 and 1999. In 2006, as the number of teams competing increased, the Ethics Bowl began holding regional competitions in the fall to qualify for the national competition, and USMA won its third national championship that year. Today, hundreds of colleges and universities from the United States and Canada field teams for Ethics Bowl, and USMA competes in the most competitive region, the Northeast. Still, last year, the team attained its highest achievement by winning its fourth national championship, making it the winningest team in Ethics Bowl history.

With the recognition that came from its latest national title last year, the team has many more cadets vying for spots at competitions. This demand has enabled the Ethics Debate Forum to create study groups for competitions that focus on developing the team's position on particular cases, which allows cadets who are not able to actually compete to still contribute to the team and engage in ethical reflection on current moral issues. The team has also broadened its competition schedule beyond the Ethics Bowl, now competing in the annual Service Academy Ethics competition,



The Ethics Debate Forum at the National Championship in 2015.

which focuses on a controversial issue in military ethics, as well as participating in the Business Ethics Competition at Mount Saint Mary's University.

According to Dr. Graham Parsons, the team's Officer in Charge, ethics debate is the best form of competitive debate for cadets who want to learn about and develop their views on trending ethical controversies, everything from the problem of "fake news" to euthanasia for non-terminal conditions. Furthermore, unlike other forms of debate, ethics debate prizes civility and reasonableness over aggressive attempts to "defeat" an opponent, which creates space in competitions for open and sincere reflection. In addition to teaching cadets about current events, national and international politics, legal issues, and government, ethics debate helps them develop skills to face situations which they are likely to encounter as Army officers—situations that are ethically complex and have no clear solution.

### Mock Trial

Mock Trial, a competition of trial advocacy in which teams must present a simulated case before a panel of judges, is a relatively new organization at West Point. It was founded in 2013, but has grown substantially over the last two years. Today, the Mock Trial Team is transitioning from a team that was establishing its footing to one that is now ready to compete with schools on the regional and national stage. The mission of Mock Trial is to inspire a passion for the law and to develop cadets into creative and decisive leaders who are ready to tackle a variety of real-world problems. As members of

the Mock Trial Team, cadets learn how to speak decisively in impromptu style and how to creatively solve complex problems as a team.

There are no prerequisites to become part of the Mock Trial Team; in fact, only one of the team's current 13 members is a Law major. All team members, regardless of previous experience, are trained to serve as both attorneys and witnesses. In 2017-18, Mock Trial had four members acting as Defense and Prosecution attorneys, and the remaining nine served in various witness roles. Lawyers learn how to make and respond to objections, conduct direct and cross-examinations, and present opening and closing statements. Witnesses learn how to create a character from their affidavits and captivate the jury.

Mock Trial competes in several invitational competitions in the fall and one regional competition in the spring against teams from all over the Northeast, such as Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and Cornell. Each competition consists of four to five rounds for each school, spread out over two days. The rounds typically last four hours. The main focus of Mock Trial is preparation. Cadets are required to analyze copious amounts of information to create a case strategy, and to not only prepare to present arguments and evidence during trial, but also to simultaneously anticipate the opposing team's arguments. According to Captain Brian Strang, the demands of Mock Trial parallel the duties and responsibilities of an Army officer. "In their future careers as Army Officers, a large majority of these cadets will have to draft and present an OPORD to their



SPCH cadets pose in front of a sculpture on the campus of the College of New Jersey during a December 2017 American Parliamentary Debate Association tournament, where they competed against students from Harvard, Princeton, William and Mary, and other elite schools.



CDT Mason Adam '18 speaks with potential cadet candidates during a C3T outreach opportunity at St. Luke's School in New Canaan, CT in April 2017.

subordinates,” Strang says. “As such, they will have to rely on copious amounts of information to prepare a strategy against the enemy, all the while anticipating the enemy’s actions as well.”

### Cadet Competitive Cyber Team (C3T)

Technology has unquestionably become an integral and permanent part of everyday life, and, regardless of their future branch, soon every Army officer will interact with the cyberspace domain on a daily basis. This future reality is not lost on cadets, many of whom have pushed for more opportunities to learn about cyber topics. Fulfilling the demand for cyber experience at the Academy, the Department of Electrical Engineering & Computer Science and the Cyber Research Center, have created the Cyber Defense Exercise (CDX) Team, which has captured the most CDX trophies of any service academy; the Special Interest Group for Security Audit and Control, which is colloquially known as West Point’s “Hacking Club;” and C3T, which was founded in January 2013 with the intent of providing the Academy with a team to participate in the National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition (CCDC).

When it was announced that the Academy was forming C3T, two dozen cadets from all classes tried out for one of the 12 spots on the team. Since its first year, the team has evolved to compete primarily in offensive cyber challenges, known as “capture the flag exercises” (CTF), instead of defensive events like the original CCDC. C3T typically participates in one CTF per month, which normally runs for 48 hours straight over the course of a weekend. Most competitions are held online, although C3T does occasionally travel to compete head-to-head against other undergraduate teams, graduate teams, and even teams made up of cybersecurity professionals. C3T has also competed against teams that include nation-state actors and intelligence community professionals. In the past two years, C3T has travelled to Las Vegas, Nevada; Storrs, Connecticut; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and New York City for live competitions. In purely undergraduate competitions, C3T defines success as being one of the top-20 teams. In an international

competition, being in the top 10 percent is considered a significant achievement. Some competitions feature close to 1,000 teams.

Cyberspace is the newest warfighting domain. According to Captain Michael Kranch '08, C3T’s Assistant Officer in Charge, “C3T graduates will be more adept at properly employing Army cyber systems, have a better understanding of how to secure these systems, and be poised to exploit the enemy’s systems to gain a strategic advantage on the battlefield.”

### Cyber Policy Team

Founded in the spring of 2016, West Point’s Cyber Policy Team is the Academy’s newest Dean’s

Team. The team was founded as the direct result of input from two cyber officers, Major Shawn Lonergan '05 and Major Blake Rhoades, who came from the cyber mission force and identified a significant gap in the training curriculum of cadets at the Academy. Indeed, the biggest challenges they faced during their time in the operational force were not technical, but policy related, as they had to navigate the labyrinth of laws, authorities, and bureaucratic challenges surrounding cyber operations while at the same time being acutely aware that this was a new means of warfare with unique implications for the laws of armed conflict, international cooperation, and ethical decision-making. Both Lonergan and Rhoades had been champions of the Atlantic Council Cyber Student Challenge Competition while in graduate school, and felt that a Cyber Policy Team at the Academy would enable cadets, regardless of their major, to develop an understanding of cyber operations and government responses to a cyber attack.

The Cyber Policy Team began with four members, focused exclusively on the annual DC-based Cyber Student Challenge. The team has since expanded to 11 members who compete in multiple competitions, both domestically and abroad (in Geneva, Switzerland and Sydney, Australia). Part of the reason the team has evolved is because the competition itself has matured and taken on more prominence, while new competitions have sprung up to meet the demand.

The Cyber Policy Team’s mission is integrated with that of the Army Cyber Institute (ACI) with regards to leader development and outreach, as well as with the mission of the Department of Social Sciences (SOSH), where it has already changed the dynamic of incorporating humanities and social science-oriented cadet education into the cyber domain. Given the team’s performance over the last two years (against mostly graduate policy students and law school students from top universities), it has become clear that ACI, SOSH, and USMA are major players in the field of cyber policy education, respected by several Ivy league competitors at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Notably, in October 2016, the team beat Columbia’s SIPA program, Brown, and Tufts

Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, among others, to win the New York City competition, sponsored jointly by Columbia University and the Atlantic Council. Additionally, in September 2017, the Cyber Policy Team won the 2017 Indo-Pacific Cyber 9/12 Student Challenge, sponsored jointly by the University of Sydney and the Atlantic Council, finishing ahead of students from the University of Sydney, Macquarie University, and Australian National University, among others.

"Information and cyber are two emerging forms of warfare in which the world has little experience," says Cadet Lexie Johnson '18, the team's Cadet in Charge. "As war is an extension of politics, it is important that a future Army officer understand the political implications of cyber warfare in addition to his or her technical duties, and the Cyber Policy Team studies the ways in which cyber warfare interacts with other instruments of power, and how its nuances can greatly impact U.S. national security and the domestic and international political landscapes." ★



CDTs Lexie Johnson '18, James Pruneski '19, Robert Norwood '20, and Hannah Fairfield '18 pose with their certificates after winning the 2017 Indo-Pacific Cyber 9/12 Student Challenge at the University of Sydney (Australia).

*Dean's Teams are supported by Margin of Excellence funding through WPAOG.*

#### INDEPENDENT RETIREMENT LIVING



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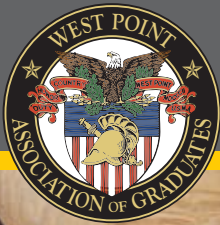
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## Expanding the Ways West Point Grads Connect to Each Other

For nearly 150 years, the West Point Association of Graduates (WPAOG) has offered a variety of resources for members of the Long Gray Line to connect with fellow graduates and to connect with their classmates or company-mates.

In the past, grads serving and living around the world relied on printed publications such as *ASSEMBLY*, Class Notes, *West Point* magazine and the *Register of Graduates* to find information and stay connected across the miles. Reunions, Society events and annual Founders Day celebrations provided additional opportunities to connect face-to-face and allowed dedicated volunteers to share news and updates, making sure grads stayed informed and in touch.

With the advent of the digital age, services such as “Find a Grad” and “Grad News” on the WPAOG website made it easier to access

contact information online. Even more recently, the launch of social media channels like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn has made it possible to immediately communicate news, updates and milestones with fellow graduates.

As the technological landscape continues to evolve, WPAOG is leveraging new technology to offer more ways for grads to interact. We will soon launch our newest service for grads to connect with each other: Grad Link.

### What is Grad Link?

Grad Link is a new enhanced service that makes it easy to connect with any West Point grad, anywhere in the world, via the web or through a free app available through the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. With the introduction of Grad Link, WPAOG hopes to create the opportunity for a greater intersection

# WPAOG GRAD LINK PROGRAM

of online and in-person connections.

## How does it work?

Grad Link leverages much of the data that is already available to your fellow graduates, including cadet company, geographic location, phone number and email address, and takes it to a new level by combining that information with new information from your LinkedIn profile, such as your company, industry and LinkedIn location. The result is an easy-to-use platform to find and to connect with fellow alumni.

The information available for each person and detailed search features will allow grads to find those with whom they share common interests and instantaneously reach out to them. Once grads are connected, Grad link also includes a “map” or geolocation feature to view the location of those searched, and find a convenient place to meet in person.

## Privacy and Security

As with all WPAOG Services, we take the utmost care to ensure your personal information is safe and secure. That is why Grad Link is only available to West Point graduates, and each person’s identity and graduate status must be validated before they receive access to the platform. To take maximum advantage of this service, we encourage everyone to make sure WPAOG has your most up-to-date contact information, specifically the email you use for LinkedIn.

We understand that some graduates may elect to conceal portions of their personal information. If that is the case, please contact [GradLink@wpaog.org](mailto:GradLink@wpaog.org). Alternatively, if you prefer to conceal your entire profile, you will have the opportunity to hide your profile when Grad Link launches.

We hope that all graduates will take advantage of this new service and help make the Long Gray Line the most connected alumni body in the world. ★

For more information on Grad Link, please visit:

**[WestPointAOG.org/GradLink](http://WestPointAOG.org/GradLink)**

Questions may be directed to: **[GradLink@wpaog.org](mailto:GradLink@wpaog.org)** or **845-446-1624**.

*Funding to support Grad Link comes from generous donations made to the Long Gray Line Fund.*



“Our vision is for the Long Gray line to be the most connected alumni body in the world, using innovative new technology that will make it easier for graduates to leverage the powerful network of more than 52,000 West Point graduates worldwide.”

—Todd A. Browne '85, WPAOG President & CEO



## Grad Link Features

**Direct Grad-to-Grad connection:** By integrating select WPAOG data into your profile, Grad Link makes it easier to contact fellow grads directly.

**Convenient and flexible:** Grad Link offers both mobile and desktop interfaces, so no matter where you are, you can find a fellow member of the Long Gray Line.

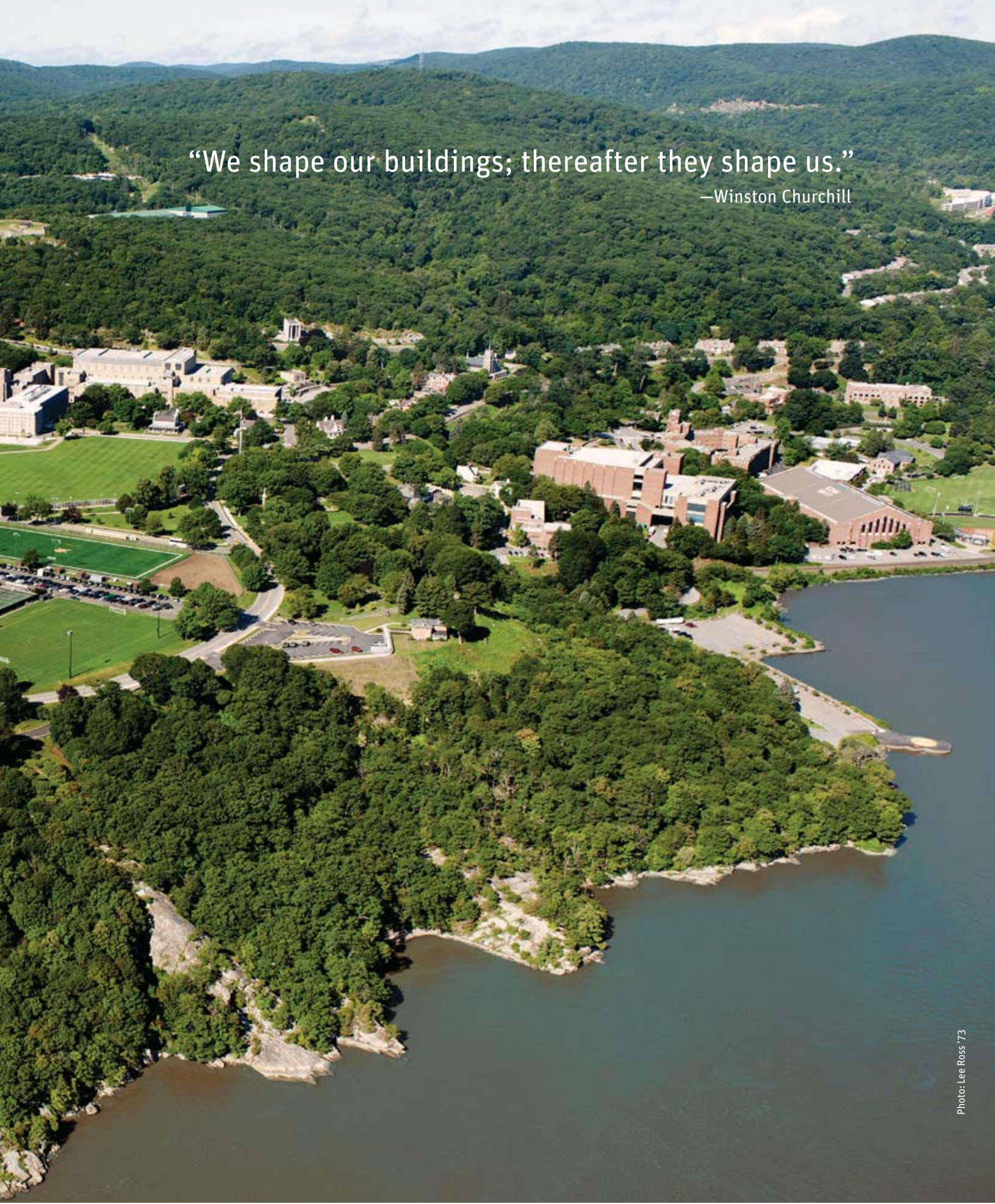
**Free:** Grad Link will be available free for grads in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

**Easy, quick and customizable:** With a variety of search filters to choose from, Grad Link allows you to quickly find grads with shared interests. No more sifting through huge lists of search results.

**Location filters:** You can easily see who is in your geographic area, a feature helpful for planning happy hours, reunions or meet-ups, even when traveling.

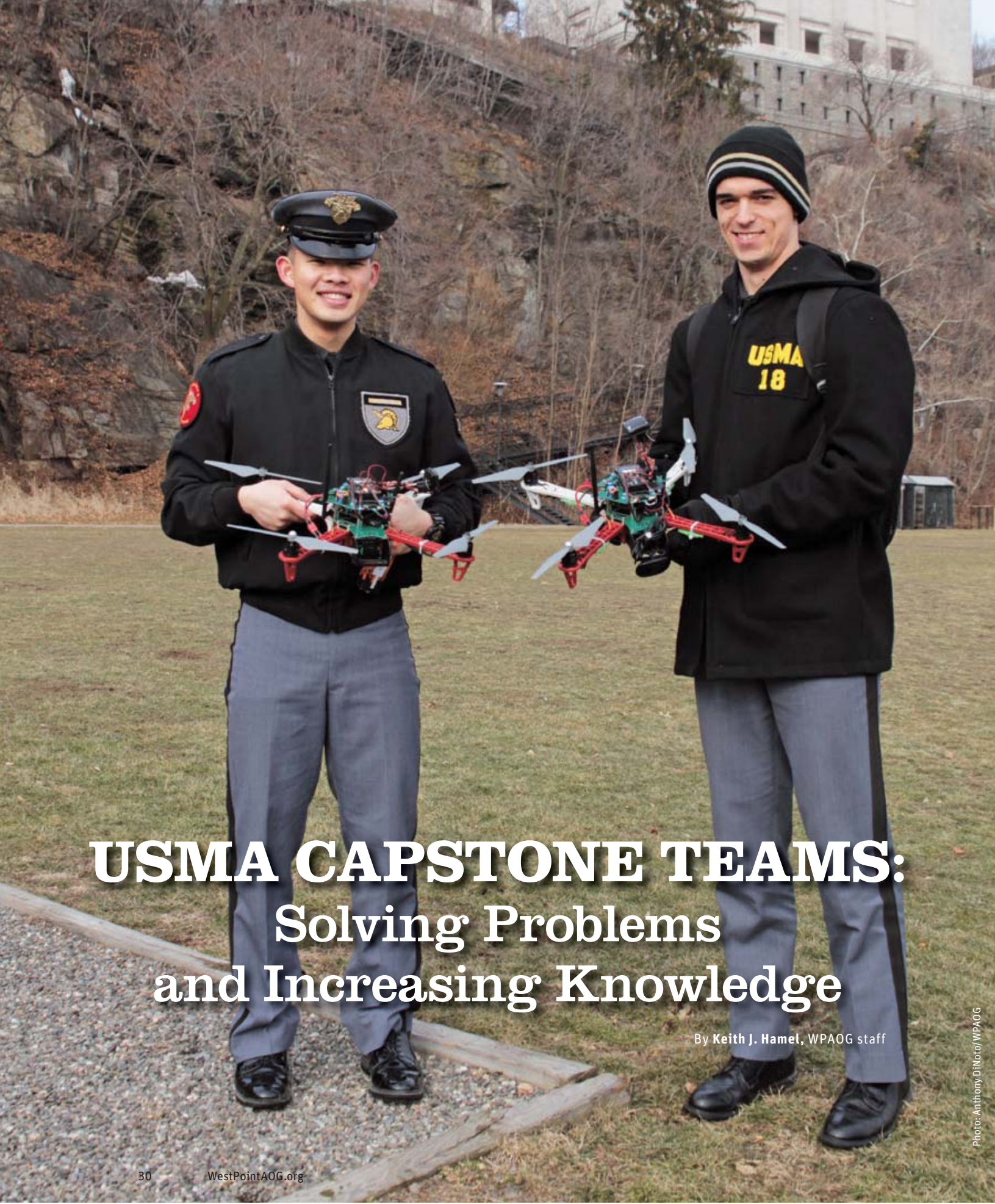
**Search by industry, job and location:** Using LinkedIn data, Grad Link will recommend relevant grads in your chosen professional field and geographical location with whom to network.



An aerial photograph of a university campus. The campus is nestled between a large body of water in the foreground and a range of forested mountains in the background. The campus features several large, multi-story brick buildings, some with modern architectural elements. There are numerous green lawns, trees, and parking lots. A prominent green field, possibly a sports field, is visible on the left side of the image. The overall scene is a blend of natural beauty and academic architecture.

“We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.”

—Winston Churchill



# USMA CAPSTONE TEAMS:

## Solving Problems and Increasing Knowledge

By Keith J. Hamel, WPAOG staff

In their last summer at West Point, most firsties spend the first three weeks working as part of a diverse team in Cadet Leadership Development Training (CLDT), the capstone event of their military training at the Academy. To successfully negotiate CLDT, cadets need to use all the skills and tactics they have learned in previous summer training programs plus insights from their military science coursework. Furthermore, they need to work together in various and changing team roles, namely platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and squad leaders to complete three separate five-day missions.

Similarly, on the academic side, in their last year of coursework at West Point, most firsties spend their semesters working as part of an interdisciplinary team to solve problems for real-world clients, the capstone assignment of their academic training at the Academy. Most academic departments at the Academy require their majors to complete a capstone course, which is designed to integrate all the concepts and principles of that academic major that cadets have learned during their previous three years of study. As one capstone course description notes, “[The capstone course] provides an integrative experience, presenting each cadet team with a professionally relevant, open-ended situation including professional, ethical, social, security, legal, economic, and political dimensions, where an engineering approach has strong potential to produce benefits. Under the guidance of a faculty advisor for each project team, cadets develop client-focused products, applying the principles of design and implementation to affect an optimal outcome for the circumstances presented to the team by creating a product or service that meets requirements and constraints negotiated with the client.”

In this issue, *West Point* magazine profiles three teams working on capstone or capstone-type projects and asks them about the nature of their project, the functioning of their team, and what they have learned while working on the assignment.

## Pointe du Hoc

The Pointe du Hoc project, commissioned through Department of History, debuted in 2016-17 and aims to bring cadets enrolled in HI:301/302 “History of Military Art,” a core course, onto the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc, France through the eyes of the Rangers who fought there during the first battle of the D-Day invasion. Last year’s team used virtual reality (VR) goggles to digitally take the viewer into the action, but this year’s team decided on a different approach, using augmented reality (AR) instead. “In VR, you are in your own world, but that makes it very difficult to interact with other people in the room,” says Major Brian Boyles ’06, one of the advisors on the project. “VR is only good for a single user and is not a good collaborative experience; AR, on the other hand, facilitates interaction.” With AR, cadets can all be looking at the same thing through their own individual cell phones but can easily look away to interact with other people in the room. And what are they looking at? “We are creating a 3-D virtual map that can overlay a 2-D table map,” says Cadet Andre Michell ’18, a Pointe du Hoc team member who develops code for the project’s app. When it is operational, the app will allow Military Art cadets to study this pivotal battle from a leader’s point of view, asking questions of “how” and “why” about command decisions, and offering cadets a technology platform to provide the answers. “Hopefully our app

will bring Mil Art’s lesson on Pointe du Hoc to life for cadets,” Michell says.

The Pointe du Hoc team is comprised of eight cadets from five majors: computer science, geography, history, information technology, and systems engineering. The history cadets spent a week at the National Archives last summer researching the battle of Pointe Du Hoc. They then spent seven hours a week on average during the fall semester developing the story they wanted to tell. Karol Wegrzyn ’18, one of the history cadets, says, “We decided early on that we wanted to tell a unified story and thus decided to focus on getting the user up the cliffs.” Should this project continue, the new team will build on from there, focusing on the rest of the two-day battle. Thus, one of the challenges the computer science cadets had was finding a transition point in order to divide the story into independent modules. But this was not their only challenge. The centerpiece of the experience is a 3-D terrain model created by the geography cadet from drone footage taken during a previous trip to Pointe Du Hoc, and the computer science cadets needed to connect the content from the history cadets with the 3-D terrain model and then display it all on top of the 2-D table map by using the phone’s camera and other sensors. The information technology cadets then needed to connect the user with the content by designing an interface that is easy to use and displays all the pertinent information. Managing this complex team was Cadet Jacob Paniccia ’18, a systems engineering major, who also served as a liaison between the team developers and the customer-client.

Clearly, Pointe du Hoc is a highly complex, interdisciplinary project. “I’ve never worked on a project with as much scope,” says Michell. “I’ve had a number of internships at the government level, and I haven’t seen a project with such a wide discipline breadth applied to it as Pointe du Hoc.” It is also an arduous project. “Only chain of command duties are more demanding,” says Michell, who estimates working 12 to 15 hours a week on the project. Add the number of participants with the stress involved and there is bound to be some team conflict, right?



**Previous page:** Cadets Ziwei Peng ’18 and Sam Miller ’18 from the RAID Swarm capstone visit the River Courts to perform a flight test on their quadrotor drones. **Right:** A wider view of the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc and some of the defensive fortifications. The craters, which still exist today, were caused by the aerial bombardment which preceded the WWII landings.



**Above:** Members of the Pointe du Hoc team hold a meeting in Thayer Hall to discuss the app's interface. From left to right are Andre Michell '18, Hannah Whisnant '18, Jesse Austel '18, and Andre Hufnagel '18. **Right:** CDT Hannah Whisnant '18 "holds" a section of the cliff at Pointe du Hoc in Normandy, France. Army Rangers used ladders and grappling hooks to scale these 100-foot bluffs during Operation Overlord on June 6th, 1944.



"Well, we all have different outlooks on how to approach the project in general," Wegrzyn says. "The computer science cadets want it clear as to what the end state should be, but my fellow history major and I are taught to be comfortable with ambiguity, so the way we do things is a lot less structured." Boyles confirms that occasional friction points do emerge. "The geography cadet wants maximum detail, but the IT cadets push back because such resolution will slow down users' smartphones," he says, "but they are all communicating with one another to solve the many issues that arise in a project of this magnitude." "At the end of each 'sprint' [a team-decided measure of time] we have a briefing and something tangible to show to the client," says Paniccia. "In the process, we have all learned about each other's disciplines and how to work together to balance our different approaches."

## RAID Swarm

Last year, West Point participated in the Service Academy Swarm Challenge, sponsored by DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency). The goal of the challenge was to develop innovative offensive and defensive tactics for swarms of small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), more commonly called "drones." DARPA provided each Service Academy with 20 fixed-wing UAVs, 20 quad-copter UAVs, and the software needed to participate in the challenge. This year, according to Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Korpela '96, one of the advisors on the project, the RAID (radiological and imaging data) Swarm project is "taking that infrastructure and repurposing it for a capstone funded by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA)."

The Center for Innovation and Engineering (CIE) and the DTRA's Nuclear Science and Engineering Research Center (NSERC) collaborated to develop the RAID Swarm capstone project, which investigates the use of multiple drones to create a map of a radiologically contaminated environment. Twelve cadets from four academic departments—Civil and Mechanical Engineering (CME), Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS),

Physics & Nuclear Engineering (PANE), and Systems Engineering (SE)—make up the RAID Swarm team. According to Cadet Alfred Girardot '18 the team's developmental tasks are broken down along academic department lines. "CME cadets are focused on making mounts for the quadcopters so that EECS cadets can attach cameras and a radiological sensor that the PANE cadets have modeled and selected," he says. "Finally, the SE cadets work primarily on scheduling and planning how the team is going to develop its final test of the project, which is scheduled for April at Idaho National Laboratory (INL), a U.S. Department of Energy national laboratory in Idaho Falls, Idaho."

Luckily, the capstone course schedule hours for these majors line up pretty well. "It's always better when everyone is in the same room working together," says Girardot. Cadet Ziwei Peng '18, another RAID Swarm team member, says, "Every meeting begins with a huddle during which everyone on the team provides a report of where they are on their part of the project." As the cadets huddle, so do the project's five academic advisors, who are also from various academic departments, devising ways to steer the overall group. "Our challenge is to get the departmental requirements and learning outcomes to line up," says Visiting Professor Andrew Kopeikin, a scientist with MIT's Lincoln Laboratory working in CME. "Even though the project is going to be graded potentially four ways, we work to ensure that the team will have a unified final presentation for DTRA."

The first semester of this yearlong capstone project was spent on project definition and the preliminary design of the system. "We started off with a bigger scope, hoping to use our UAVs at some nuclear detonation site and focusing on how soldiers were going to use the system, but DTRA recommended that we scale back," says Girardot. Before the winter break, the team put together a purchase list for products it will need to implement its design, and the cadets will spend the spring semester testing the team's design system. "During testing things will inevitably go wrong," says Kopeikin, "but during this 'fly-fix-fly' phase, a lot of learning will take place,

and the team will realize that there's a lot more to this project—such as weather, air space, range reservations, and transportation considerations—than just flying a UAV.”

Speaking of learning, Girardot and Peng already have several takeaways from being part of this project. “Being on this team has given me exposure to what it is like to solve a real Army problem,” says Girardot. “We have a real client, and our success on this project depends on each individual team member doing his own part.” Peng, who serves as the team’s webmaster and writes code to program the radiological sensors, says that he’s learned that team communication is hard but vital to success on the project. “This sort of project mimics rather well what cadets will experience in either the Army or professional world,” says Kopeikin; “namely, working with people who have a different expertise than their own.” Colonel Rich Morales ’89, Deputy Head of the Department of Systems Engineering and RAID Swarm faculty advisor, agrees.



“I can’t highlight enough the value of a hands-on, problem-solving approach focused on meeting a complex set of customer needs through innovative design and cadet let project management,” he says, “and integrating several disciplines into a single team fully engaged with a variety of stakeholders from concept to flight is the greatest takeaway from this capstone.”

### High Energy Laser (HEL)

Technically, HEL is not considered a capstone project. Still, like the capstone projects described above, HEL features an interdisciplinary team of cadets who are learning as much about working on a team as part of the HEL project as they are about the physics of lasers. “The HEL project is basic research, driven by a scientist’s curiosity and motivated by the goal to increase knowledge,” says Lieutenant Colonel Kirk Ingold ’96, Director of the Photonics Research Center, the home of West Point’s high-energy laser. “Capstone projects, on the other hand, are applied research, designed to solve a particular problem by creating a tangible product for a particular client.”

According to Colonel John Hartke ’88, who started the project in 2006, more than 50 cadets from seven academic departments have participated in HEL over the years. The project started by looking at the feasibility of placing a high-energy laser on a ground combat vehicle for the purpose of defending against rocket artillery and missiles, and it has evolved in several novel ways since then, from evaluating batteries and power systems to examining the legal issues associated with HEL weapons. Through it all, cadets working on HEL have been trying to understand the effects and science of a high-energy laser. “With every new project, we learn

**Top:** The 10,000-watt laser of the Photonics Research Center. **Bottom:** HEL Team CDTs Peter Meyers ’18 (right) and Tina Le ’19 use a thermal camera to measure the temperature profile of the hole made in a sheet of metal as the laser beam imparts its energy.



something new about the science,” says Dr. Dave Kashinski, an Associate Professor with the Department of Physics & Nuclear Engineering who has been working with HEL since the spring of 2014. “After every test we are removing uncertainties, eliminating assumptions, and increasing knowledge that could be applied in any number of ways.”

This year’s HEL team includes seven cadets from PANE and the Department of Chemistry & Life Science working on three experiments. One sub-team, made up of a physics major and a chemistry major, is testing the lethal effects of a high-energy laser on a rotating cylinder (meant to resemble a flying projectile). Furthermore, the chemistry cadet is developing a substance to pack inside the cylinder that has the similar thermal properties to an explosive but without the accompanying ‘KA-BOOM!’ “Hypothetically, my substance will expand but not explode,” says Cadet Jordan Johnson ’18, who is looking forward to announcing her results at the 2018 Directed Energy Professional Society (DEPS) conference later this spring (cadets working on HEL have a total of four accepted abstracts to the DEPS annual symposium).

Another sub-team is looking at the lethality of a laser on a flat surface, as well as on a surface behind the target. “We are studying how a hole forms in a sheet of metal when a high-energy beam hits it at a particular angle of incidence,” says Cadet Nolan Hedglin ’18, a physics major working on this experiment. This sub-team is working with another cadet who is conducting an independent study to “pick off” a tiny fraction of the infrared laser in order to perform diagnostics with the help of a thermal camera that will help them describe the intrinsic properties of their laser beam.

Finally, Cadet Jake O’Neill ’18, a physics major, is studying the low-altitude atmospheric turbulence associated with laser systems. “Not a lot of research has been done in this area, but it is extremely important to the Army, a ground-fighting force, given that the closer a laser is fired to the ground the stranger the atmospheric perturbances seem to be,” O’Neill says. “My work involves setting

up differential temperature sensors around West Point in places that mimic different terrain features—mountainous terrain (the ranges), water (down by the river), and an urban environment (up on roofs)—and measuring and characterizing their atmospheres for a ground-laser system.” Kashinski thinks that the knowledge gained in this last experiment would be transferable across atmospheric science in general; for example, using a laser to communicate and thus needing to know what happens to the laser beam in the atmosphere as it travels long distances. “We could keep HEL projects going indefinitely,” he says; “well, at least until we run out of science.”

Like regular capstone teams, HEL’s seven cadets face challenges working on the project (“It is hard to get our schedules to line up,” says Johnson), but continue to help, encourage, and build each other up so that they can continue the great research work they are conducting. It is this mix of challenge and camaraderie that cadets appreciate in academic capstone teams. “Building relationships is pretty similar across all Academy teams,” says Pointe du Hoc’s Michell, “but what’s unique to capstone teams is the level of academic rigor applied and the amount of individual exploration that goes on.” His teammate Wegrzyn agrees, “Capstone teams are more independent, and I don’t see this in other West Point teams—we have an end state, but no one is really telling us how to get there.” What is similar between capstone teams and other Academy teams is the level of commitment among team members. As Cadet Peter Meyers ’18 from the HEL team points out, “Everyone who is down in the lab is committed to working on this project, everyone cares.” Returning to the summer training analogy, Paniccia links working on a capstone project to being a squad member in Cadet Basic Training: “Teamwork is critical from day one at West Point—you can’t have success on a capstone project in the lab or against an obstacle in the field without help from the other members of your team.” ★

**Left:** CDTs (left to right) Jake O’Neill ’18, Peter Meyers ’18, Jordan Johnson ’18, Tina Le ’19, and John Roll ’19 are five of the seven cadets who are working on HEL projects in Spring 2018. **Right:** CDT Jake O’Neill ’18 sets up equipment on the roof of Bartlett Hall that measures atmospheric turbulence.





## **LEADERS ARE SHAPED BY THE VALUES THEY EMBODY**

As future academy graduates prepare for their military careers and beyond, support and advocacy is essential for their long-term success. Boeing is proud to partner with the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis and the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs with the shared goals of leadership development and engineering excellence. Together, we're helping shape leaders of character to better serve our nation and the world.



# PRECISION IN MOTION: The USMA Black Knight Drill Team

By Keith J. Hamel, WPAOG staff



The Black Knight Drill Team performs on the Plain.

Nothing illustrates teamwork like the precise unison of a military drill team in action. Although every cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point participates in drill, only a select few have the “pride and discipline” to be members of the USMA Black Knight Drill Team, an elite group of 20 cadets celebrated at the Academy for its high-ranking performances in regional and national drill competitions. But it was not always this way.

“We faced institutional resistance getting the Drill Team off the ground,” says Dr. Mark Esper ’86, the 23rd and current U.S. Secretary of the Army and founding member of the Cadet Drill Team. “Those in leadership feared that it might encourage cadets to move away from the fundamentals.” Yet, after a successful demonstration in front of then Brigadier General Peter J. Boylan Jr. ’61, the Commandant at the time, that first Cadet Drill Team (nicknamed “the Bayonets”) proved that it had the skills, that it could attract interest among the Corps, and that it could properly represent the Academy in parades on the Plain, in football halftime shows at Michie Stadium, and at other events supporting West Point. Soon the Drill Team was taking its exhibition drill routine on the road, participating in parades and performances in Washington, DC; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and New York City. In 1992, the team went abroad for the first time, performing at the Royal Military Academy in Canada and giving an exhibition in Puerto Rico. In 10 short years, the Drill Team was competing in the most prestigious drill competitions across the country, including the National Drill Competition, and the Mardi Gras Drill Meet at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. In 1998, the Drill Team took home its first national trophy, earning second place in the Exhibition Drill category. By 2000, it was crushing the competition, including Navy and Air Force, at the Cornell University Invitational Drill Competition, the team’s annual regional meet. When the team officially changed its name to the Black Knight Drill Team in 2012, it had become a regional and national powerhouse, winning first place at the Cornell Competition and regularly placing in every event it entered. All the while, the Black Knight Drill Team continued to represent West Point at public events, including Brooklyn Nets basketball games, various Veterans Day events, and the New York International Auto Show.

The key to the team’s success, according to its commander, Cadet Evan Pape ’18, is its values. “We are a family; we care about each other first and foremost,” he says. Cadet Miguel Pantano ’19, the team’s first sergeant, acknowledges that the team’s “family aspect” is what attracted him to the Drill Team. “I joined the team because it was familiar, having done drill in high school, but I stayed on past plebe year because of the diverse people that I met and the team’s family aspect,” Pantano says. Cadet Justin Taylor ’18, the team’s executive officer, says that, “like any closely knit family would,” the Drill Team has kept him going when times have gotten tough over the course of his four years at the Academy. “When it’s dark and cold and your hands hurt from slapping the rifle for the past two hours, it’s the family dynamic of the team that keeps you going, because you don’t want to let your teammates down,” he says.

To ensure this family dynamic, the Drill Team conducts interviews with every potential member during tryouts. “Because

we will be spending a lot of time together, we are seeking cadets who are not only technically proficient but who have the proper attitude and will be loyal to the team,” Pape says. Only six of the 30 cadets who tried out for the Black Knight Drill Team in 2017 had all the qualities deemed necessary to become team members. Currently the Black Knight Drill Team has three firsties, three cows, eight yearlings, and six plebes on its 20-cadet roster, including three female cadets.

After tryouts, the team spends the first couple of weeks acclimating new members. It uses activities such as football or frisbee and events such as “movie night” (complete with pizza) to bond its new members with its veterans to forge each year’s team identity. New members are officially welcomed on the team after they complete the “Monster Run,” a revered tradition held on the night of the team’s first competition that tests the mental toughness of its new



Members of the Black Knight Drill Team practice rifle spins in North Area.

members. “We really get that good family feeling sitting around and talking after the Monster Run,” says Pantano.

While bonding is admittedly crucial to the team’s success, its motto, “Pride and Discipline,” is the result of hours upon hours of practice (note, the team calls it “practice” and not “drill” in order to differentiate it from the typical regulation drill of the Corps). During the fall semester, the team practices for two hours Monday through Thursday, and it practices every other day in the spring semester (alternating with company athletics). When preparing for competition, the team will also practice on Fridays, and practice, which is always outdoors at the field by the library or in North Area, is never cancelled because of weather. “It’s been two degrees with a negative-10 wind chill, but we’ve still practiced,” says Pape.

“We focus on the smallest things to make sure we are getting it right,” says Taylor. Each year, the team starts with the choreography it used the previous year and improves it in some way. Early on, the team works on perfecting a single spin, which is one 360-degree rotation of the nine-pound M1903A3 Springfield rifle. It then moves on to a double spin, successively increasing the complexity of the moves that are part of its routine. In two to three weeks, the team will have mastered two-thirds of its moves, and by the end of the semester all team members are expected to be able to perform all spins, turns, and steps of its approximately nine-minute routine proficiently. During competitions, all 20 members of the Black Knight Drill Team compete in at least two of the five typical

events: Platoon Personnel Inspection, Platoon Basic (Regulation Drill, Squad Basic Drill (sometimes referred to as the “Two-man Team Trick”), Platoon Exhibition Drill, and the Color Guard Competition. “We even have a few team members competing in four of the five events,” Pape says.

The highlight of competition is the Platoon Exhibition Drill. Unlike Platoon Basic Drill, which follows a precise drill card (order arms, present arms, open ranks, column right, etc.), Platoon Exhibition Drill evaluates teams on eight elements: precision, difficulty, complexity, military bearing, variety of movements, floor coverage, flow of routine, and originality. Judges, often members of the Marine Corps Silent Drill Team, also provide a score for “overall impression.” As the Black Knight Drill Team performs, especially during the ripple line portion of its routine, when each member performs identical movements a split second apart from one another to make it seem as if a wave or electric current is moving back and forth through the line, it is easy to see how the team’s values and hours of practice translate into “Pride and Discipline”: 13 team members moving as one in crisp precision, marked by the uniform rhythmic “clicks” of gloved hands smacking twirling rifles, almost as if the members of the Black Knight Drill Team were gears of some giant clock. Or, as Secretary Esper puts it, “The Drill Team should be embraced and applauded as an exceptional group of cadets who have mastered a fundamental Army skill—discipline.” ★

The Black Knight Drill Team and members of the Hellcats pose on the steps of Old College at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst in Camberly, England in March 2017.





The Black Knight Drill Team performs a routine on the Plain prior to a Football Saturday parade.



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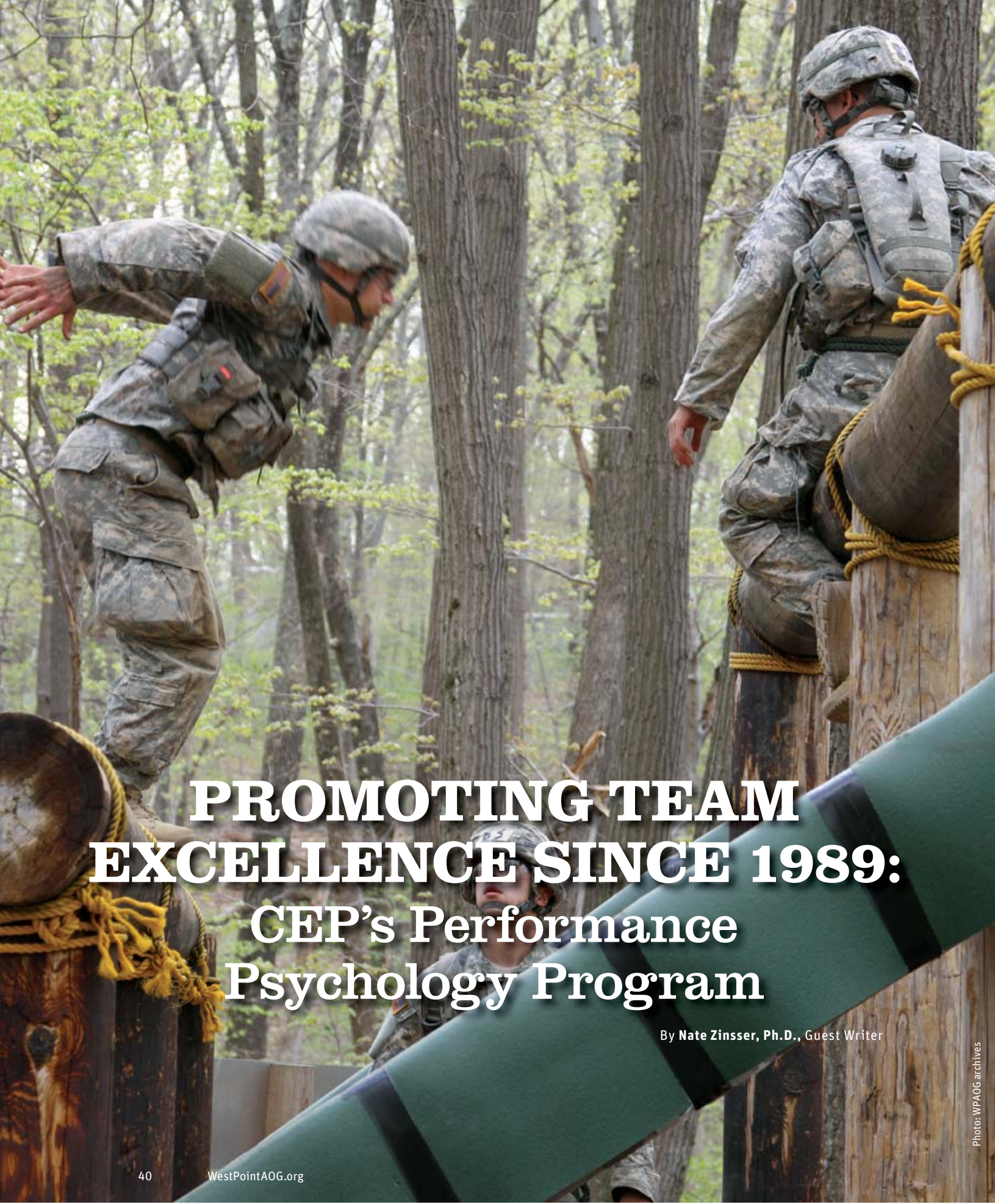


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# **PROMOTING TEAM EXCELLENCE SINCE 1989:** CEP's Performance Psychology Program

By Nate Zinsser, Ph.D., Guest Writer

What separates excellent teams from merely good teams? At the elite levels of NCAA Division I athletics, Olympic competition, and real-world Army operations, excellent teams are composed of high-performing individuals who share both a sense of purpose and a set of core values, and who trust each other to perform flawlessly at the “moments of truth.” At West Point, cadets have opportunities to pursue team excellence through participation in corps squad, club squad and company athletics; through engagement in military events such as Sandhurst and Pre-Ranger training; and through group activities as diverse as debate, Glee Club, and SCUSA (the Student Conference on U.S. Affairs).

A unique program supporting cadets, and the teams of which they are a part, is the Performance Psychology Program (PPP) delivered by the Center for Enhanced Performance, housed in the Jefferson Hall Library. First established in 1989 by Colonel Louis Csoka '65 under the name “Performance Enhancement Center,” the PPP has evolved into USMA's “secret weapon” for thousands of cadets and dozens of teams. Each year, approximately 300 cadets (comprising a diverse cross section of the Corps), participate in some 4,000 individual performance psychology training sessions.

The PPP operates out of an office suite consisting of four staff office/training rooms—each equipped with biofeedback, audiovisual equipment, and the well-known Alpha Chamber “Egg Chairs” (ergonomically designed chairs for relaxation and imagery training)—a conference room, a classroom, and a kinesthetic room with life-size projection video and four electronic concentration and coordination training devices. Cadets come to the PPP to learn visualization techniques in order to rehearse and master combat diving skills, goal-setting to prepare for obstacle course or fitness tests, and attention training to improve their ability to make correct decisions under pressure.

**Previous page:** Teamwork is evident during the annual Sandhurst competition. **Below:** A member of the Army West Point Wrestling Team takes down his opponent. Members of the Wrestling Team adhere to a unit creed developed by PPP known as “BHAW”: Brotherhood, Heart, Attitude, and Warrior. **Right:** A cadet participates in PL360: Psychology of Elite Performance, one of two PPP courses.



Pre- and post measures of self-reported coping skills and optimism levels show that cadets make significant gains by participating in the PPP. Even more important, the cadets who train in the PPP have earned a disproportionately high number of post-season performance awards. Since the program's inception, more than 80 percent of the winners of the annual Army Athletic Association Athlete of the Year Award have been PPP-trained. Hundreds of enthusiastic testimonials from cadets who have taken their athletic, academic, and military performance to a new level attest to the effectiveness of the program.

Take the case of Cadet Alyse Rawls '21. Having no prior swimming experience and a pre-existing fear of heights, Rawls initially struggled with the course requirements of her mandatory survival swimming class, particularly the six-meter tower entry. She attended two PPP group sessions and then met with PPP trainer Jen Schumacher. Rawls came to Schumacher's CEP office, and Schumacher visited Rawls on the six-meter platform itself. Together they practiced managing Rawls's discomfort so she could complete the obstacle. “I was able to get sufficient help and support to help me face one of my biggest fears,” Rawls said. “I couldn't have stepped off the tower without the help of CEP.”





PPP's tennis ball projector fires multi-color tennis balls at a cadet as part of a "selective ball catch" exercise designed to sharpen one's awareness and decision-making ability.

There is also the case of Parker Gahagen '17, a three-year starting goaltender for the Army West Point Hockey Team, who graduated from West Point as the Mike Krzyzewski '69 Award for Excellence in Character through Sport winner (the "Coach K Award") and a Hobey Baker Award finalist. Gahagen met weekly with PPP Director Dr. Nate Zinsser throughout his cadet career because he knew intuitively that being able to control his mental state, particularly his confidence, would play a huge role in his success both on the ice and in the classroom. Through regular PPP training, Gahagen learned how to get the maximum benefit from each practice session and take pressure off himself before games.

**"The PPP helped me in many ways as a cadet, and that has translated to success in my military career in combat as well as in training environments."**

—CPT Jason Pomeroy '09

"My game got simpler, and I was able to minimize my movements in goal and slow the game down in my mind," Gahagen reported.

Moving from individual cadets to USMA teams, the PPP promotes excellence (of all kinds) in two ways. First, the PPP provides individual and small group training in the mental skills that directly affect human performance—the skills of building, maintaining, and performing with confidence despite setbacks, the skills of focusing and refocusing attention in the presence of distractions, and the skills of recovering energy and maintaining composure amidst stress and pressure. Cadets with these skills inevitably become the greatest contributors to team success and lift other teammates up through their example. Second, the PPP conducts team-building sessions with entire teams to help team

members pinpoint the core values that will drive their behavior, set meaningful goals, and communicate with one another effectively. Teams ranging in size from a six-person company leadership cadre, to a 12-member Sandhurst team, to a corps squad athletic team with over 60 members, have taken advantage of this unique service.

Performance psychology principles from the CEP have become critical elements of the organizational culture of many West Point athletic teams. Men's Soccer head coach Russell Payne credits PPP trainer Dr. Jeff Coleman for breaking down the stigma that can be associated with the mental game and for introducing mental training routines (e.g., detailed 10-minute pre-game imagery sessions during which players see themselves working together as a team). Army soccer players now look forward to these routines. According to Payne these mental skills are essential parts of his team's culture: "We have a common language on performance, everyone knows our significant words, it helps us react better collectively in critical moments."

If you ask former Army Soccer 2nd team All-American, Brigade Deputy Commander and Ranger School honor graduate Winston Boldt '15, he'll tell you that the effects performance psychology training are lasting. "The West Point PPP not only provided me with a foundation to set and achieve individual and team based goals, but the skills that I learned and sharpened through CEP have provided me with fundamental mental skills that I rely on daily as an infantry officer," Boldt says. "This program was a key component of my development at West Point, and I continue to sharpen the same mental skills every day."

Army West Point Wrestling is another example of how the PPP has helped a team establish and maintain a culture of success. In January 2011, then-Cadet Mike Gorman '12 asked PPP Director Dr. Nate Zinsser to help the wrestling team develop a stronger identity and greater team cohesion. The team was brought together for a "no-holds-barred" discussion on the present state and desired future of the program. The result of this session was an Army



Dr. Nate Zinsser holds an individual training session with a cadet sitting in the Alpha Chamber "Egg Chair" which helps cadets with their energy management.

**"The West Point PPP not only provided me with a foundation to set and achieve individual and team based goals, but the skills that I learned and sharpened through CEP have provided me with fundamental mental skills that I rely on daily as an infantry officer."**

— 1LT Winston Boldt '15

Wrestling "unit creed" organized around four cardinal points: Brotherhood, Heart, Attitude, and Warrior or BHAW ("Bee-Haw!"). As head coach Kevin Ward says, these four words have become the defining values of Army wrestling: "There are many things that make Army West Point wrestling unique and very special to the people associated with the program. More than anything, it's the brotherhood of the program that really binds the athletes on the team with those that have come before them. The team's creed, BHAW, has become so much of the program that I can't imagine Army West Point wrestling without it. Dr. Zinsser gave life and an identity to a shared feeling, and he has helped create the sinew of our Brotherhood that lasts a lifetime."

While the particular teaching points in CEP's Performance Psychology Program are derived from the field of sport psychology, where they are applied to the development of professional and Olympic athletes, they have equal value to individual soldier training and to military team performance. Cadets preparing for combat diver, Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape (SERE), and Ranger schools have taken advantage of the PPP to become better "tactical athletes," and the lessons they've learned have positively influenced their careers as officers.

"The PPP helped me in many ways as a cadet, and that has translated to success in my military career in combat as well as in training environments," says Captain Jason Pomeroy '09 who was deployed to Kunar Province, Afghanistan with the 2-327th Infantry, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) during the

surge of 2010-11, just six weeks after completing Ranger School. "We conducted approximately 120 dismounted patrols and five battalion or higher-named operations, and I was able to stay focused on my job downrange through visualization, and recover after traumatic events downrange through focused breathing techniques."

From the classroom to the practice field, and from Michie Stadium to deployments around the world, cadets who have learned, practiced, and mastered the mental intangibles of human performance in the PPP are among West Point's most accomplished performers. No other institution has taken this kind of systematic approach to the psychology of elite performance and provided a designated training facility staffed by subject matter experts and equipped with cutting-edge technology. Perhaps Captain Pomeroy says it best, "I wish we had the ability to get every soldier across the Army to receive the performance psychology training and mentorship that cadets are able to receive at the CEP." ★

*Nate Zinsser, Ph.D., is the Director of the Performance Psychology Program at USMA's Center for Enhanced Performance. He is responsible for PPP's curriculum development, annual assessment, coordination with athletic, academic, physical education and military instruction departments, and staff supervision and professional development. Dr. Zinsser has conducted more than 600 classes and group training sessions and approximately 15,000 individual performance enhancement appointments during the past 20 years.*



# Army West Point Sprint Football: IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN

By **Kim McDermott '87**, WPAOG staff

The Collegiate Sprint Football League (CSFL) has been in existence since prior to World War II, and Army West Point has been a part of that league for 60 years. Sprint Football is a full-contact varsity sport with the same rules as regular college football, except that all players must weigh 178 pounds or less. According to head coach Lieutenant Colonel Mark West '91 (Retired), the game is identical to regular football in every way, though the weight limit “levels speed and quickness across the field.”

The league split into two divisions in 2017 and introduced a championship game between the winners of the North Division (four teams) and the South Division (five teams). The inaugural CSFL Championship game was played at West Point on November 10, 2017. Army West Point defeated the University of Pennsylvania, 10-0, securing their 35th overall league title.

Sprint Football is not an NCAA-sanctioned sport, so the CSFL adheres to NCAA guidelines in some areas (e.g., eligibility), but not others. One difference is that West and his staff can't travel to recruit. So West will always look “first and foremost at potential candidates to see if they are qualified to enter West Point.” Then he tries to discern if they really want to come to West Point—and serve in the Army. After positive signs in those two areas, he then looks for a solid athlete (football player, primarily). He may occasionally have a need to look for someone who can play a specific position, but that isn't usually the priority. In any given year, the team gets about 20-25 freshman. Of these, only about a half-dozen are considered “chip” athletes—those with the proven (versus hoped for) potential to impact a program immediately.



Photos: courtesy of ODIA

The restrictions on recruiting efforts make the program's strong history of success all the more interesting. In 60 years, Army boasts 35 league titles and 18 perfect records. Five of the league titles and four of the perfect records have been in the last decade.

The Sprint Football program boasts one of the highest winning percentages of all the Army West Point corps squad teams. Part of it, West says, is due to the type of athlete interested in the team. "The majority of players are in it for the pure love of the game," he says. He cites one indicator of their passion—they are willing to cut weight to play a full contact team sport.

Case in point: Cadet Jackson Brock '21 from Dallas, who played safety and quarterback in high school. The Army West Point staff tried him at quarterback, then as a receiver—but didn't feel it was working out. They asked if he'd try playing left guard; he is now starting at the position. Brock says, "It came as quite a surprise that I was moved to left guard. That's one of the best things about Coach West and the coaching staff: they know how to maneuver players for the betterment of the team. It turned out to be a very rewarding experience."

West understands this passion for the game because he himself starred for the team as a cadet. West was a three-year starter at quarterback, leading the Black Knights to an overall 17-1-1 record during that time. He also led the Black Knights to three league championships and two wins over Navy. He served as team captain and was recognized as "most valuable player" multiple times.

As an Army officer, West's path to becoming a Division I coach at Army was decidedly different from most. He says he is one of the few in the country who didn't become a coach through normal channels.

While serving in the USMA Admissions office from 2001-04, West assisted the team as an officer representative and a position coach. A

few years after his assignment, there were talks of cutting the sport at West Point. The league was down to five teams, and budgets were being reduced. The Athletic Department looked around the league to see what other schools were doing, and noticed Navy had an active duty head coach who coached the team as an additional duty. Army soon adopted that model and started looking for a head coach. The search eventually led to West, who was set to return to his alma mater in 2008.

Prior to his return, he was deployed to Saudi Arabia for a year, and used most of his downtime to think about his vision for the program. He developed "Standard Operating Procedures"—which he still uses to this day—as his guidance to coaches and players alike. His "day job" at West Point would be teaching four sections of PL300, Military Leadership. He was excited about this, since there was considerable application between the material he would teach and his coaching responsibilities. Crediting a great deal of support from both the Dean and his Department Head, West took on the additional duty of coaching the Sprint Football team and immediately got to work turning around a program that had lost 11 straight games to Navy.

The team goals every year are for Army to win its division, win the league, BEAT NAVY, and go undefeated. But West has learned to revisit these goals each year with the rising seniors to confirm they are realistic, and that they are committed to putting in the work to achieve them. Those were the goals his first season, but they went 2-5. The next year the goals changed to simply having a winning season and beating Navy. They went 6-1. The one loss was to Navy, who scored to win 7-6 in the final seconds of the game. West remembers that game more than any of the others. "That was a game that will haunt me for a long time," he says. "I tend to remember the losses more than the wins, especially if the loss is to Navy."



**Previous page, top:** The Army defense making a stop in the team's season-opening 70-0 win over Post University. **Previous page, bottom:** The Collegiate Sprint Football League Championship Trophy. **This page, above:** Class of 2018 Army West Point Sprint Football Team members L to R (Front Row): David Baker, Ty Galyean, Tanner Andrews, Dakota Jones, Jake Marchillo, Chris Raymond, Nathan Lopez. L to R (Back Row): Arran Rounds (manager), Quay Gilmore, Kian Geraghty (manager), Christian Hess, Dexter Penick, Curtis Jerzerick, Keila Pritchard, Zach Trainor and Sidney Gonzalez (manager).

Along with the input of his team leadership, West expects his coaching staff to be honest with him and the players. “These kids are smart and need to hear the truth,” he says. “They will sense if we aren’t genuine.” He values their feedback, knows he has a lot to learn from them, and wants coaching staff to hold cadets to standards in all areas.

This ties directly to West’s coaching philosophy. His vision is for Sprint Football to be a model athletic program. He wants “anyone and everyone who looks at us to say in all areas—on the field, in the company, in the classroom—that we are dedicated to excellence.” He keeps it simple with three rules of thumb: “Do the right thing. Don’t embarrass yourself. Don’t embarrass the team.”

While the team focuses on the seven Army Values—Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage—they also discuss others. For example, Brotherhood. Each week during the season, the team has a “Value of the Week,” reinforced by the team and game captains with discussions about how it fits into the Army context.

As with all coaches at West Point, West says a major challenge is dealing with the cadet schedules. He says, “Initially it’s the time management piece, and it can take a couple of years to figure out the battle rhythm.” He is familiar with it as a graduate but observes so many more requirements on a cadet’s time now than in the past.

So, he encourages his players to be open about other requirements when things get off balance—as they often do. For example, if a player needs to attend an additional instruction session instead of practice to stay proficient in class, that is reasonable.

The success of any team is built on what the team does best. For Sprint, West says, “the players are accountable to each other.” He can go to the team captains whenever he has issues. But he says it is very rare to see players out of uniform or late. His senior players are very good at leading their peers. He says, “It’s what you expect. If they can’t do it now, they won’t be good leaders in the Army. The seniors really make it happen—and isn’t that what this place is all about?”

But even the plebes get it. Brock says of West, “Coach is all about his team. He sets the Sprint team up for success and does this in part by allowing player ownership. He is big on teammate accountability.” West knows that his messages are sinking in. He tells a story of a player he observed doing sprints after practice one evening. When he approached the player to see why he was doing the drills, the player told him that the captains made him do it for being late. “As a head coach, that is heaven,” he says.

Asked what the players would say about him, he says, “I hope they would say I am firm, but fair, and that I hold them to standards.” Cadet Jacob Marchillo ’18 says, “There isn’t a day you question his

**Large photo, below:** Current and former Army West Point Sprint Football players come together at midfield during their annual alumni game. **Below, left:** Army raising its helmets in victory after defeating Post University, 70-0, in the 2017 season opener. **Below, right:** Wide receiver Mike Shannon ’19 celebrating after the team’s 40-6 victory over Navy.



enthusiasm and dedication to excellence.” His teammate Ty Galyean ’18 adds, “I appreciate how passionate Coach West is about the game. I have never met anyone who wants to win more than he does.”

West also loves the support from the team fans. Parents are by far “the biggest fans, at home or away.” But there has been an outpouring of support from team alumni as well, both in game attendance and financial support. When West retired in 2015, he admits he was concerned that he might not be coaching anymore because of West Point’s practice of having a military officer coach the team. Luckily for West, when he retired, the Athletic Department converted the job back to a civilian position.

Given the success of the team, Army West Point Sprint Football is a true Margin of Excellence program. It’s no wonder that the team has enjoyed such support from alumni. Since he became head coach, West has involved them with the program. Bill Murdy ’64 is one of the team’s alumni supporters. He says, “I think the keys to the success of the Sprint program are a very talented and dedicated coach in Mark West, the leadership of the current First Class and the long tradition of high performance by the team.”

Murdy supports the team and encourages other alumni players to do the same—not only for nostalgic reasons, but because it represents “the achievement possible by dedicated, hard-practicing, well-coached, well-led, Type-A cadets...future leaders of our Army.”

He adds, “I was privileged to play for and coach with the legendary coach Eric Tipton. Coach West and teams of the present era will surpass Tip’s records for winning.”

According to the CSFL website, “the league is made up of hardworking players who strive to be the best in both academics and athletics. Players must first be dedicated to academics, but must also be willing to put in the time and commitment needed to help make their team a champion.” This is surely true at Army West Point, as the team’s average grade point average is about 3.0. And while West acknowledges that winning every game is perhaps “not a realistic goal for many teams,” he is quick to add, “but we believe it is realistic for us. It requires work, leadership, focus and commitment, and we have it all.”

Galyean says, “I am excited to see what incredible things my teammates will do in the Army.” West loves getting an email message or seeing a Facebook post from a former player who is succeeding and doing well. It is gratifying to see that “at end of the day, we’ve fulfilled the USMA mission.” The CSFL recently announced the addition of St. Thomas Aquinas College to the North Division as the 10th team in the league. But no matter how many teams there are, one thing is certain: Army West Point will always be in a league of its own. ★

### 10th Annual Sprint Football Alumni Reunion

August 23-25, 2018

**Below, left:** Wide receiver Ty Galyean ’18 holds up the football after scoring a touchdown in the Star Game against Navy. **Below, center:** Defensive lineman Bobby Downing ’20, Wide receiver Mike Shannon ’19 and other members of the Black Knights sing the West Point Alma Mater after winning the inaugural CSFL Championship game over Penn. **Below, right:** Head sprint football coach Mark West ’91 (front) and offensive line coach John Rotella (back) on the sideline during the 2017 Army-Navy game.





## WPAOG Rockbound Highland Home Program Wins Prestigious CASE Gold Awards

In 2017, WPAOG launched the Rockbound Highland Home Program (RBHH) to assist graduates with navigating post security procedures, offer special access to select MWR (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation) facilities and services, and provide “insider” tours for graduates and their guests. Recently, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District II Accolades Awards Program recognized outstanding work in the area of advancement for more than 700 organizations. The Rockbound Highland Home Program received two Gold Awards, one each in “Alumni Relations” and “Alumni Relations Events & Affinity Programs,” beating other leading universities such as Villanova, Georgetown and Princeton.



## Reserve Today! Grad Insider Tours Now Booking through 2019

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Point with families and guests. WPAOG provides transportation for these popular tours, which begin and end at Herbert Hall. Tours are conducted Monday - Friday at 10am and 2 pm. To learn more and reserve online now, visit [WestPointAOG.org/gradinsidertour](http://WestPointAOG.org/gradinsidertour).

## WPAOG Ring Memorial Program Connects USMA 2019 to the Long Gray Line

2018 marked the 18th anniversary of WPAOG's Class Ring Memorial program, a tradition that tangibly links new graduates to the Long Gray Line through West Point class rings. Originally proposed by Ron Turner '58, the “Ring Melt” allows graduates to bequeath their class rings so that the gold can be melted and incorporated into future graduates' rings. The 2018 ceremony was the largest yet, with a record 69 rings donated, and record attendance that included 26 donor families, the Commandant of Cadets BG Steven Gilland '90, WPAOG Chairman LTG (R) Joe DeFrancisco '65, WPAOG CEO Todd Browne '85 and 15 cadets. To date, the program has received 520 rings. When the Class of 2019 dons their rings in August, the gold on their fingers will have been worn in battles during the Mexican Expedition, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, and the War on Terror. “My perspective on the significance of this event changed when I heard the testimony from the family members of the donors,” said CDT Tony Smith, President of the Class of 2019. “When they placed their loved ones' rings in the crucible, they demonstrated the indelible link that each member of the Long Gray Line shares, and their stories reinforced that

these rings represent more than just precious metal; above all these rings signify a long line of commitment to ideas, the ideas of Duty, Honor, Country.”

Read more about the WPAOG Ring Memorial Program and donors on our website at [WestPointAOG.org/RingMemorialProgram](http://WestPointAOG.org/RingMemorialProgram)





## WPAOG Hosts Class Officer Luncheon

On February 2, cadet class officers from all four classes and the Ring and Crest Committees from the First and Second classes were treated to a special luncheon at Herbert Hall. The purpose of the luncheon was twofold: to thank class officers for serving as leaders to their classmates, and to inform them about how WPAOG serves them and their classmates during their cadet years and in the decades ahead as Old Grads.



## 2018 WPAOG Election—Call for Nominations for Board and Advisory Council

All USMA graduates may apply for election to the WPAOG Board of Directors and/or for election to the WPAOG Advisory Council. In 2018, the WPAOG Nominating Committee will nominate graduates for Director and for Advisor-at-Large. To apply, please see the instructions posted at [WestPointAOG.org/NominationPolicy](http://WestPointAOG.org/NominationPolicy). The deadline for graduates to submit their completed applications

(to include a nomination letter from another graduate) is July 1, 2018. The 2018 nomination and election process will conclude on November 20, 2018 at 5pm EST, when the Annual Meeting of the Association of Graduates will take place at the Herbert Alumni Center. Please send applications for nomination to WPAOG, Attn: Laurie Fontana ([Laurie.Fontana@wpaog.org](mailto:Laurie.Fontana@wpaog.org); 845-446-1523).

## Consistency - noun

Conformity in the application of something, typically that which is necessary for the sake of logic, accuracy, or fairness:

Synonyms: steadiness, reliability

Antonym: Fickleness (found often in weather and financial markets)



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## Plebe-Parent Weekend Welcomes USMA 2021 Families

From March 8-11, families of the Class of 2021 had an opportunity to experience West Point with their cadets. WPAOG kicked off the weekend, hosting our annual Plebe-Parent Breakfast on Friday, March 9. Parents and cadets were able to meet WPAOG leadership and staff, learn about the ways WPAOG enhances cadets' experiences, and enjoy a complimentary breakfast. The weekend continued with tours, presentations, a parade, and a banquet in the cadet mess, before cadets departed for spring break.

## West Point Parents Fund Has Lasting Impact—Thank You for Your Generous Support!

West Point and WPAOG appreciate the commitment and generosity of all our parent donors. Your support makes a tremendous impact on the Corps of Cadets—the future leaders of our Army and nation—and strengthens every aspect of the Margin of Excellence. Parent participation in the West Point Parents Fund (WPPF) increased to 42 percent in 2017, raising nearly \$1,000,000! Your gifts to the WPPF support the following types of activities:

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Thank you again for your support! Watch our 'Thank You' video at [vimeo.com/wpaog](https://vimeo.com/wpaog) to see highlights from the past year at West Point!

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## START<sup>the</sup>DAYS!

MAY	JUNE	JULY
<b>3</b> Projects Day & Donor Tribute Day <b>14-18</b> Term End Exams "BEAT THE DEAN!" <b>22</b> Distinguished Graduate Awards <b>26</b> Graduation for the Class of 2018	<b>2-8</b> Summer Leader Experience I <b>7-9</b> Alumni Golf Outing <b>9-15</b> Summer Leader Experience II <b>15</b> June Graduation	<b>2</b> R-Day for the Class of 2022 

**Upcoming events submitted by West Point staff & faculty.**

Events for Aug—Oct 2018 should be sent to [editor@wpaog.org](mailto:editor@wpaog.org) by May 15, 2018.

For the entire calendar, go to [WestPointAOG.org/calendar](https://WestPointAOG.org/calendar)

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# Gripping Hands

*“Grip hands—though it be from the shadows—while we swear as you did of yore, or living or dying, to honor the Corps, and the Corps, and the Corps.” —Bishop Shipman, 1902*

## 2018 Distinguished Graduates

The recipients of the 2018 Distinguished Graduate Award are:

COL (R) Dana G. Mead '57  
Mr. Thomas C. Barron '65  
LTG (R) Larry R. Jordan '68  
GEN (R) William S. Wallace '69  
HON Sloan D. Gibson '75  
HON Douglas E. Lute '75

The awards will be presented in a ceremony at West Point on May 22, 2018, with further coverage in the Summer issue of *West Point*. Visit [WestPointAOG.org](http://WestPointAOG.org) to learn more about the Distinguished Graduate Award and the recipients.

1979 1986

1991 1993

## Five USMA Grads Named as CASAs

Graduates recently named as Civilian Aides to the Secretary of the Army (CASAs) are:  
Anthony DeToto '91 (TX-East),

Craig Wilhelm '93 (OR), Richard W. Pascoe '86 (CA-South), Brian Concannon '79 (MA) and Joseph DePinto '86 (TX-North). Each state, the District of Columbia and the five U.S. territories have one or more CASAs who provide vital Army links to the people whom they serve. CASAs are usually business or civic leaders who possess a keen interest in the welfare of the Army and their communities.



## ★★ Change of Command ★★

The Chief of Staff of the Army announces the following officer assignments:

**MG Ronald P. Clark '88**  
to Commanding General, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, HI

**BG Heidi J. Hoyle '94**  
to Commandant, U.S. Army Ordnance School, U.S. Army Sustainment Center of Excellence, Fort Lee, VA

**MG Daniel G. Mitchell '85**  
to Commanding General, U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command, Life Cycle Management Command, Warren, MI

**BG Telita Crosland '89**  
to Commanding General, Regional Health Command-Atlantic, Fort Belvoir, VA

## ★★ Promotions ★★

The U.S. Senate has confirmed the following General Officer nominations for promotion:

**To the rank of Lieutenant General:**  
**MG Theodore D. Martin '83**  
**MG Eric J. Wesley '86**

**To the rank of Brigadier General:**  
**COL Garrick M. Harmon '92**

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# MAILBOX West Point



**We regret that because of limited space, we cannot publish all letters received. Letters may be edited and shortened for space. Submit comments or questions to [Editor@wpaog.org](mailto:Editor@wpaog.org), or chat with us on one of our WPAOG social media channels**

## FROM: COL Mark Bieger '91, USMA Chief of Staff

I wanted to pass on my appreciation for your team's outstanding work in the latest edition of *West Point* magazine, "West Point's New Front Door." This entire series continues to get better with every issue, but this latest edition is truly exceptional. From start to finish, the design, photos, stories, presentation—the entire issue is world class.

Your efforts are very much appreciated by the Academy, and I know, as a parent of cadets, they are valued by thousands of other parents and families across the country. These magazines present a "window" into our Academy, the staff and faculty, and most importantly, our cadets that very few are able to see or understand.

Again, thank you for the hours that you put into these documents.

## ERRATA WEST POINT WINTER 2018 ISSUE:

**Page 23:** In the second photo caption, the "member of the Cadet Ambassador Program" conducting the briefing is a captain from the West Point Admissions Office. The Cadet Public Relations Council serves under the direction of that office and officers often conduct briefings, but the caption incorrectly implies that a cadet is pictured.

**Page 54:** The chart of branch assignments for the Class of 2018 should have read "Engineers," not "Engineering." *West Point* magazine regrets the error. Essayons!

## FROM: Dave and Marie Shively, parents of CDT Brandon Shively '19

We recently visited the new West Point Visitors Center and were so impressed. The view when you first walk in is spectacular, and reflects the natural beauty that abounds on the West Point campus. The Visitors Center does a great job showing in detail what cadets experience throughout their time at the Academy, while also educating visitors about the terminology and jargon that is such an integral part of a cadet's language. But more importantly, it presents the leadership traits and values that the Academy instills into all cadets. It does this through a series of fun, interactive exhibits. When we walked through the final section that simulates a cadet's transition from the Academy into military service, we both got chills! For parents and potential cadets who are not familiar with military procedures, activities and terminology, a trip through the Visitors Center does a great job of showing what to expect. We wish we had this when our cadet was deciding to join USMA. Thank you to WPAOG for building this impressive facility.

# Be Thou at Peace

Deaths reported from December 8, 2017–March 12, 2018

LTG Edward L. Rowny, USA, Retired	1941	Mr. James T. Guyer	1951	COL Arthur F. Mace, USA, Retired	1958
Col Gerhardt C. Clementson, USAF, Retired	1942	LTC Stuart L. Miller, USA, Retired	1951	LTC Thomas L. Orr, USA, Retired	1958
COL Arvid P. Croonquist Jr., USA, Retired	1943 JAN	COL Raymond L. Toole Jr., USA, Retired	1951	MAJ Richard M. Hotchkiss, USA, Retired	1959
CPT Richard L. Evans, USA, Retired	1943 JAN	LTC George F. Barkley, USA, Retired	1952	Mr. Gary Simmons	1959
Mr. Phillips Eastman Jr.	1943 JUN	LTC Charles N. Rainey, USA, Retired	1952	LTC Walter J. Josicki, USA, Retired	1959
COL Homer S. Pitzer Jr., USA, Retired	1945	Mr. Joseph J. Urschel	1952	LTC Holland B. Coulter, USA, Retired	1961
LTC Robert F. Tansey, USA, Retired	1945	Lt Col James R. Landreth Jr., USAF, Retired	1953	Mr. George Fox	1961
COL Lamar Weaver Jr., USA, Retired	1945	LTC Jack A. Merrigan, USA, Retired	1953	COL Donn G. Miller, USA, Retired	1961
LTC Donald S. Beyer, USA, Retired	1946	COL Douglas G. Waters, USA, Retired	1953	Mr. James D. Strachan	1961
COL Robert E. Crowley, USA, Retired	1946	Mr. Cyrus S. Avery II	1954	Mr. James F. Boyle	1962
COL James B. Hobson, USA, Retired	1946	Maj Gen Jay T. Edwards III, USAF, Retired	1954	LTC George B. Sweet III, USA, Retired	1962
Mr. Lawrence Miller	1946	COL John H. Farrar Jr., USA, Retired	1954	Mr. Albert P. Fulco Jr.	1964
Lt Col Richard H. Turner, USAF, Retired	1946	Mr. James E. Giles Jr.	1954	Mr. John K. Winkler Jr.	1964
Mr. Harley E. Venters	1946	Mr. Harold R. Greer	1954	Lt Col Daniel A. Dodd, USAF, Retired	1966
COL Duquesne A. Wolf, USA, Retired	1946	LTC Sebastian A. Lasher, USA, Retired	1954	Mr. Monte M. Parrish	1967
LTC Graham G. Kent, USA, Retired	1947	Brig Gen Daniel B. Geran, USAF, Retired	1955	Mr. Joseph D. Durkan	1968
Col Carl A. Anderson, USAF, Retired	1948	COL Robert H. Nourse, USA, Retired	1955	Dr. Laurence L. Archer	1969
COL Jess B. Hendricks Jr., USA, Retired	1948	Mr. Edward A. Mendell	1955	LTC Robert S. Guest, USA, Retired	1969
LTC Earl C. Betts, USA, Retired	1949	Col Thomas G. Weaver, USAF, Retired	1955	Mr. Charles J. Jarvis Jr.	1969
Gen Robert T. Marsh, USAF, Retired	1949	Mr. Arthur F. Boudreau	1956	Mr. John P. Cass Jr.	1970
COL John D. Mitchell Jr., USA, Retired	1949	Mr. Ralph J. Chesnauskas	1956	LTC William L. Wallis, USA, Retired	1970
Col Charles W. Oliver, USAF, Retired	1949	LTC Wallace S. Crain, USA, Retired	1956	LTC David L. Kopp, USA, Retired	1971
Mr. Richard D. Rosenblatt	1949	COL Charles E. Eastburn, USA, Retired	1956	Col Michael A. Neyland, USAF, Retired	1971
Col William L. Schlosser, USAF, Retired	1949	Lt Col Merrill A. Green Jr., USAF, Retired	1956	Mr. Donald S. Bushnell	1972
Col Stewart V. V. Spragins, USAF, Retired	1949	COL Harry W. Johnson Jr., USA, Retired	1956	Mr. Holly C. Howlett II	1972
Mr. J. C. Bean II	1950	LTC Walter H. Knudsen Jr., USA, Retired	1956	Mr. Luciano L. Gaboy	1976
BG David H. Cameron, USA, Retired	1950	COL Richard E. Mackin, USA, Retired	1956	Mr. Joseph L. Hardesty	1976
COL John D. Howard, USA, Retired	1950	COL Gregory W. Mitchell, USA, Retired	1956	Mr. Walter J. Sutterlin	1976
LTC Lawrence S. Lodewick, USA, Retired	1950	COL John R. Parker, USA, Retired	1956	MAJ Roger V. McMaster, USA, Retired	1977
BG Paul J. Mueller Jr., USA, Retired	1950	MG Stephen R. Woods Jr., USA, Retired	1956	LTC Jeffrey A. Romer, USA, Retired	1978
Lt Col John D. Pennekamp Jr., USAF, Retired	1950	Mr. Dwight C. Aller	1957	Mr. Todd W. Skulte	1982
Mr. William F. Pierce	1950	LTC Robert E. Beckwith, USA, Retired	1957	Mr. Danny A. Tidwell	1985
BG Roswell E. Round Jr., USA, Retired	1950	Col Alfred H. Davidson III, USAF, Retired	1957	Mr. Jeffrey A. Standlift	1986
Mr. James R. Skove	1950	COL Ralph A. Luther, USA, Retired	1957	Mr. Christian R. Koshinski	1993
Col Paul R. Zavitz, USAF, Retired	1950	LTC Wayne B. Nicoll, USA, Retired	1957	Mr. James H. Chun	1995
Mr. Richard C. Allen	1951	COL Rudolph N. Pataro Jr., USA, Retired	1957	LTC Jason D. Good, USA	1998
COL Bruce B. Bailey, USA, Retired	1951	LTC John C. Wilkinson, USA, Retired	1957	Mr. Hannibal S. Wright	1999

# Past in Review

## From Devilizing Plebes to Pie-Cutting

By Keith J. Hamel, WPAOG Staff

On June 27, 2017, Peggy O'Donnell from the website *Atlas Obscura* posted a blog that is likely to evoke mixed memories in the minds of West Point graduates. Her topic? Cutting a Mess Hall pie. The horror... THE HORROR! Witness what she writes, "At dinner in the mess hall [during the later decades of the 20th century], plebes were made to cut the dessert into a mathematically impossible number of exactly equal slices: seven, nine, or 11." The task of pie-cutting was just one of several mealtime duties that plebes had to master, and when one considers its origins in the physical challenges that used to be forced on Fourth Class cadets, the thought of having to precisely cut a pie into an odd number of portions might not be so scary.

According to then Captain Lori Stokan '86, in a 1994 white paper titled "The Fourth

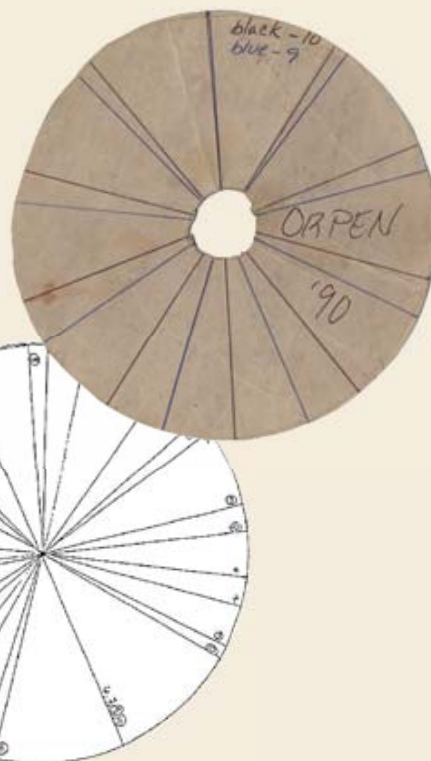
Class System: 192 Years of Tradition Unhampered by Progress from Within," "Deviling plebes," a practice in which upperclass cadets engaged new cadets in "seemingly harmless, absurd games, and ... menial tasks," began in the 1830s. Speaking from personal experience in the April 1908 issue of *The Metropolitan Magazine*, one member of the Class of 1857 reminisced: "Many tricks, some of them very funny, were played on the plebes. ... Among the very common tricks was this: a plebe fast asleep in his tent would be jerked out by the heels and left on his back on the camp ground. By the time he could get his eyes well opened, his assailants were out of sight or vanishing." He explicitly pointed out, however, that malicious acts against plebes were clearly forbidden. "Anything approaching brutality

was discountenanced and prevented by the old cadets of the First Class," he wrote, describing a scene in which firsties forced a cadet who hit a plebe over the head with a tent-pin to a "regular rough-and-tumble fight, what they call in Georgia 'fist and skull,'" near Kosciusko's Garden.

Unfortunately, firstie clemency didn't last. According to former USMA Historian George Pappas, sometime during the Civil War, upperclass cadets started to become more malevolent towards plebes, committing acts that went "beyond playful trickery." Worse yet, the acts started to be viewed as long-standing traditions. In November 1863, the Corps received a War Department order specifying "...that hereafter no cadet would be granted the customary furlough at the end of his second year unless he could certify on



The typical pie-cutting template (upper right) bears a close resemblance to the pie-cutting guide inventor Milton C. Hughes tried to patent in June 1926, (below, right).



honor that he had in no manner or way interfered with, molested, or harassed a new cadet.” Considering the restrictions placed on and callous treatment of plebes to be a traditional prerogative, cadets rebelled, and with the Academy and its graduates soon receiving widespread praise for military successes in the Spanish-American War, policies against these “traditions” went unenforced, despite some particularly shocking cases, one of which provoked a national scandal.

After World War I, Superintendents’ actions to squash these practices drove the Corps to devise more mental challenges for plebes to endure, particularly involving the Mess Hall. In 1929, Ira W. Porter ’32 submitted an article that ran in *The Harvard Crimson* describing some of these new customs: “In the mess hall, a plebe sits at attention while he eats. His eyes may not wander farther than the perimeter of a circle of radius seven inches, whose center is at the center of his plate; and he must see that all of the upperclassmen at his table are properly supplied with food.” Similarly, in his book *A Return to Glory*, William D. McWilliams III ’55 touched on the topic of plebe meals: “[Meals] were unforgettable mixtures of imposed discipline, self-discipline, courtesy and table etiquette training, and to hard-pushed, hard-working new cadets, slow, deliberate starvation. ... We ate each meal slowly, in a carefully prescribed pattern. ... One new cadet at each table served as ‘gunner’ ... the ‘coffee corporal’ sat in the seat to the immediate right or left of the ‘gunner’ ... facing him was his cold beverage counterpart, the ‘water corporal.’” Over the years, West Point officials codified many mess hall requirements such as proper serving techniques and announcements concerning food, and some of these remain today in USCC Cir 351-2, which states in section 10, paragraph c: “Learning [mess hall duties] will be phased throughout the first week of CBT in accordance with the following table: Cold Beverage Corporal—Taught Day 1 and 2 of CBT; Gunner—Taught Day 3 and 4 of CBT; Hot Beverage Corporal—Taught Day 5 and 6 of CBT.”

According to subsection (2)(a), one of the traditional duties of the gunner is to cut the dessert per procedure and submit to the table commandant for inspection. Failure to cut the dessert into an exact number of equal-sized portions resulted in being yelled at or ordered to run laps around the poop deck. In 2006, a blogger named “Delta,” who was a cadet in the early 1980s, wrote about being the dessert cutter on her first night in the mess hall: “You try to cut a pie into equal slices with a butter knife as quickly as you can under pressure. ... When the table com took one look at the pie, he sighed, ‘This is terrible!’” Unfortunately, she did not have the ingenuity one gunner had when faced with cutting nine equal portions of cherry pie. Reportedly, after making more than the necessary number of cuts, he grabbed his spoon, stirred the pie furiously, and then announced, “Sir, the dessert for this meal is cherry cobbler!” Also, being her first night in the mess hall, she didn’t have a tool that saved countless plebes in this situation, a Milton C. Hughes-like pie-cutting guide.

In June 1926, Hughes submitted an application to the U.S. Patent Office stating, “This invention relates to means for indicating the manner in which a pie may be divided in order to secure any desired

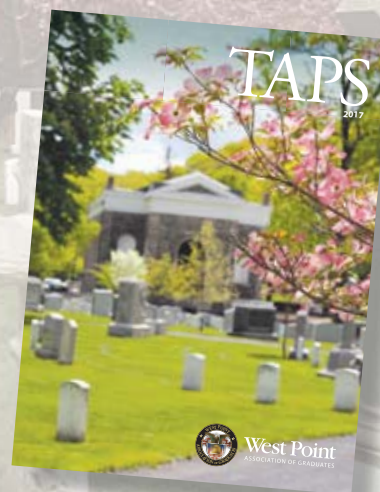
number of segments or pieces. ... three, four, five, six, seven, eight or nine pieces.” Similarly, the crude plebe pie-cutting template was a piece of paper with various diameter lines segmenting a circle representing a pie. The gunner plebe would remove this template from a zip lock plastic bag kept in his or her service cap, place the template on a sugar packet or piece of bread (so that it didn’t touch the pie), and score the pie’s edges per the numbers matching the diameters on the template to achieve the desired number of identical slices.

“Being yelled at while cutting a pie into an odd number of slices... taught cadets how to complete a detail-oriented, exacting task while stressed out and under pressure,” O’Donnell explains in her *Atlas Obscura* piece. Despite this seeming benefit, plebes no longer need perform precision pie-cutting. In August 1990, the Academy replaced the Fourth Class System with the Cadet Leader Development System (CLDS). As pointed out in the November 1992 report to Congress, as a result of the change to CLDS, “Table duties, such as serving beverages and cutting desserts, can be performed by anyone at the table rather than just the fourth class cadets.” But the ultimate death knell to this tradition is the fact that mess hall pies and cakes now arrive pre-sliced, with pieces of wax paper separating one piece from another—perhaps someone should now change or remove USCC 351-2: 10-c (2)(a). ★

## Pre-Order 2018 *TAPS*

*TAPS*, the official memorial magazine of the Long Gray Line, contains the fascinating and inspiring life stories of West Point graduates.

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