



After Action Report

Class of 1967

West Point Alumni Leaders Conference

August 16-18, 2012

“West Point in a World in Transition.”

This year's conference was tempered from the outset due to the loss of one of our graduates, MAJ Thomas Kennedy, Class of 2000. MAJ Kennedy, his brigade's CSM (CSM Kevin Griffin), MAJ Walter Gray, USAF, and a civilian USAID worker were killed by a suicide bomber in Afghanistan on 8 August 2012. MAJ Kennedy had been in theater for three weeks and was serving as Fire Support Coordinator for 4th BCT, 4th ID, Ft. Carson, CO; this had been his third deployment, with the first two being in Iraq. MAJ Kennedy had previously served as a TAC in USCC, and had also worked with COL Graham '88, of the Dean's Office, with cadet AIAD assignments. His funeral was held Friday, 17 August 2012 in the Cadet Chapel.

This year's conference was condensed from previous conferences. The conference opened with a 'Go Army!' Barbeque Reception at Herbert Hall on Thursday evening, 16 August. The food was good; however, there is a lack of sufficient parking for as many attendees as were present. At the reception, I had the honor to meet COL (R) Dick Williams '45; COL Williams had completed the entire March Back with the Class of 2016 the previous Monday.

The conference got underway Friday morning in Robinson Auditorium in Thayer Hall, formerly known as South Auditorium. The auditorium has been dedicated to GEN (R) Roscoe Robinson '51, former CG of 82nd Airborne Div from '76-'78.

The first briefing was by the Superintendent, LTG David Huntoon '73. LTG Huntoon started by relating that, in his opinion, the phrase "leaders of character" is the most important part of the USMA Mission. He showed a slide of the card of the Cadet Honor Code being read by a New Cadet candidate; we were told that receive this card ~37 minutes after leaving Eisenhower Hall and their families. He said that he has re-instituted the Superintendent's Advisory Council on the Honor Code. Gen. Huntoon then showed a slide depicting new Cadet Barracks; the average age of all the current cadet barracks is ~80 years old

(Pershing Barracks = 1890s; Bradley Barracks = 1970s), there is ~40% overcrowding in the current cadet barracks. The appropriations for the new barracks is currently before Congress as part of the Defense Authorization bill. We were told that the new barracks would take ~2 ½ - 3 years to build, and construction could start this winter, if approved. An AOG project, sponsored by the Classes of '73 and '74, will be the construction of a new Visitors Center in order to move from the former administrative offices of the former Ladycliffe College. The Supe also informed us that USMAPS is currently headed by an O-5, and it is desired to make that position a Command Select position; there is also a plan to hire a separate Dean for USMAPS, rather than continue with the current Dean of the Academic Board being Dean of both USMA and USMAPS. LTG Huntoon told us that this year's Thayer Awardee is Ike Skelton, and that CPT Stephen Tangen '08, Silver Star recipient, is the recipient of the Nininger Award. He told us that hand grenade training has been re-introduced in summer training (CBT), and that CBT is focused on fire team live fire and convoy ops. Gen. Huntoon informed us that ethical leadership dilemmas are being addressed with the Corps of Cadets right away, specifically regarding Johnson '86 and Reilly '07. He said that a reading list regarding ethical dilemmas has been given to the cadets, and that the Academy does not shy away from addressing tough issues in an effort to educate the Corps. We were told that, as of early August 2012, there were already 10,700+ applicants for the Class of 2017.

Following the Superintendent, were briefings by AOG. Some facts presented:

- Class of 1987 = mid-point of Graduates (Damon Hofstrand '87)
- 48,543 living graduates
- 69,212 total graduates
- Oldest Grad = COL (R) Benjamin Heckemeyer '35
- 134 West Point Societies (90 = USNA; 70 = USAFA)
- 80 graduated classes; 4 in residence
- 40% of AOG Gift Shop sales are online, with 25% of those online sales through smart phone apps

Part of the AOG presentation regarded the ongoing 'For US All Campaign'. The goal is to achieve \$350M; \$249M achieved as of 17 Aug 2012 (71% of goal), with 33,202 donors to campaign and 47% participation by graduates. The components of the campaign were stated as follows:

- For Cadets = \$200M
- For West Point, the landmark = \$70M (cemetery expansion, Visitors Center)
- For Our Today = \$40M
- For The Nation = \$20M (Center for Combating Terrorism)
- For the Long Gray Line = \$20M (AOG)

On 6 April 2013, there will be a launch of the 'For US All' campaign website.

COL John Graham '87, PhD, provided a briefing from the Dean's Office following AOG's presentation. He started by telling us of the networking he was able to provide regarding employment search for a recent graduate (Class of 2012) that was deemed medically unqualified for commissioning. COL Graham discussed the AIAD program, which are essentially internships taken on by cadets during summer

training / leave time. There were 700 CONUS AIADs, and 350 OCONUS AIADs in 2012; these AIAD assignments typically cost ~\$2500/2 weeks and are financed through AOG. We were briefed by CDT Astrid Colon-Moreno '15 on her AIAD at US Institute of Peace; CDT Andrew Lopez '13 on his AIAD on Conflict and Human Security Solutions in Ghana where he taught kindergarten children; CDTs Evan Szablowski '13 and Zachary Langhans '13 on their AIAD on Economic Development of Entrepreneurial Networks in Ethiopia; and CDT Jeff Nielson '13 on his AIAD on Counter-IED for Afghanistan at USMA.

The last briefing before lunch was by COL Jesse Germain '87, the Deputy Director, DPE. He told us that the USMA had been named one of the 15 most influential sports education programs. He shared the curriculum with the new Kinesiology major; DPE has actually had to turn away applicants to study this program. He also showed us a video of the new survival swimming test.

Lunch was held in the West Point Club. The attendees were seated according to geographic sections based for admissions; thus I had the opportunity to sit with Roy Bromfield, President of WPS of Upstate. We were briefed by LTC Pete Wilson, Assoc. Director of Admissions. LTC Wilson is also in charge of CPRC. LTC Wilson informed us that the average SAT score for Class of 2016 = 1281. He said that 30% of Class of 2016 attended SLS (Summer Leadership Seminar). USMA runs a 3-day STEM workshop that is targeted for 7th and 8th grade students. LTC Wilson told us that offers of admission for Class of 2017 will not be tendered until after 1 March 2013, and the applicant will only have a 30-day window in which to accept the offer of admission; no more early offers of admission. There were two unfortunate issues regarding lunch; first, the AC in the Club was not working which made the temperature extremely uncomfortable, and MAJ Turner, the SE Regional Admissions Rep was on vacation that week and could not attend the lunch.

The afternoon breakout sessions were pretty much the same as they were the previous year, which was a disappointment. I attended only one session due to the repetition. I did learn from that session that the criteria for awarding / achieving Distinguished Society Wards was being reviewed to determine if any changes would be relevant; particularly regarding Society size and achieving DSA.

The Alumni Leaders Dinner was held in the Eisenhower Hall Ballroom Friday evening. Again, there were cadets present to be able to sit with us "old grads". My table consisted of myself, my wife, four other members of my class, and three cadets of the Class of 2013. The guest speaker for the dinner was Paula Broadwell '95. She is the author of the book All In : The Education of GEN David Petraeus. The talk was disappointing in that Ms. Broadwell spent virtually no time discussing her book; she instead spent her time talking about her issues / interests.

The conference wrap-up Saturday morning ended up with a bit of an argument going on between AOG (Bob McClure) and at least one attendee regarding the 'differences' between AOG and West Point.org (Our Jay Folk can better answer questions on this as he is the moderator for WestPoint.org). The weather turned out beautifully for the Acceptance Parade for the Class of 2016; it was nice to see a parade from the 'outside'.

The conference is mostly a series of briefings around the theme of this is what we (USMA) does with the money you (grads) send us; therefore, my feeling is that the underlying theme is 'Society reps send us

your money, and go back to your respective societies and convince everyone else to send us your money'. Whether right or wrong, that is my impression. It is really nice to be able to visit our Alma Mater and appreciate it, rather than how we experienced West Point while cadets. The one-day format utilized this year also makes it a difficult consideration if attending is *really* worthwhile (particularly those of us that have to travel good distances in order to attend).

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Miller '85

President, West Point Society of Columbia