

West Point and WPAOG Highlights

By J. Phoenix, Esquire

- 1850:** George W. Cullum, Class of 1833, publishes a "Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy from 1802 to January 1, 1950," which is a forerunner to the later *Biographical Register* for which he is esteemed.
- 1853:** The Class of 1821 held the first Class Reunion at West Point.
- 1860:** Joseph E. Johnston, Class of 1829, was the first Academy graduate to be promoted to brigadier general.
- 1867:** George W. Cullum publishes the first edition of his *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy*.
- 1869:** Robert Anderson, Class of 1825, in a letter to Sylvanus Thayer, Class of 1808, suggested the formation of an association of graduates to promote the welfare of the Academy.
- 1869:** The Association of Graduates held its first meeting at the College of the City of New York, at which it adopted its constitution and bylaws and elected Professor Charles Davies, 1815, as permanent chairman.
- 1870:** The first reunion of the Association was held at the West Point Chapel (now the Old Cadet Chapel).
- 1872:** Eugene McLean, Class of 1842, then one of seven Southern members, was the first former Confederate officer to attend an Association reunion.
- 1874:** At the annual meeting it was resolved that all graduates should be encouraged to join the Association and attend the 1875 meeting to celebrate the centennial of the Battle of Bunker Hill.
- 1877:** At the annual meeting, a committee of five, including former superintendent George W. Cullum, coordinates the removal of the remains of Sylvanus Thayer, Class of 1808 and former Superintendent (1817-33), from South Braintree, Massachusetts, to be re-interred later that year at West Point.
- 1879:** Francis H. Smith, Class of 1833, Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute, and a classmate of Executive Committee Chairman George W. Cullum, was the first Southern graduate to deliver the opening address at an Association annual reunion.

The legendary Custer statue was unveiled on the Plain.

1882: At the annual meeting, the chairman of the Thayer Monument Committee reported that a clay model of the statue of Thayer and pedestal had been viewed by committee members in November 1881 and suggestions made for improvement.

1883: The Thayer statue was dedicated; former Superintendent (1864-66) George W. Cullum delivered the dedicatory address.

1884: The first 100th Night Show was performed by cadets.

1885: Herman J. Koehler was appointed Master of the Sword.

The first dress coats (tunics) were issued to cadets. Previously, full dress coats had been worn to almost all formations (including class).

1886: At the annual meeting, the deaths during the previous twelve months of President Ulysses S. Grant, Class of 1843 (July 23, 1885), George B. McClellan, Class of 1846 (October 29, 1885), and Winfield Scott Hancock, Class of 1844 (February 9, 1886), sadly were noted.

1890: The inaugural Army-Navy football game was played at West Point. Cadets voluntarily contributed funds to assist with the travel costs of the Midshipmen, but the more experienced Navy team won easily, 24-0.

1891: At the annual meeting, it was resolved that the Association be incorporated under the laws of New York. George W. Cullum, Class of 1833, formally presented the third (1890) edition of his *Biographical Register*.

Justice Willard Barrett of the Supreme Court, Second Judicial District of the State of New York, approved the submitted certificate of incorporation for the Association and consented that it be filed.

Coached by Dr. Harry Williams, Yale Class of 1891, and captained by Dennis M. Michie, Class of 1892, the cadets make their first road trip ever to defeat Navy at Annapolis, 32-16.

1892: George Washington Cullum, Class of 1833, died.

The Army Officers Athletic Association was founded.

1894: At the annual meeting, the Memorial Hall bequest from George W. Cullum, Class of 1833, was briefed.

1896: George S. Greene, Class of 1823, was the last Association president appointed on the basis of age.

1897: The Battle Monument was dedicated, and the Honorable David J. Brewer, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, delivered the main oration.

George S. Greene, Class of 1823, also was the first elected president of the Association and held the office for a year.

1898: The Academy Coat of Arms and the Academy Seal, including the motto “Duty, Honor, Country,” were adopted.

1899: The colors black, gray and gold, having met the approval of the Army Officers Athletic Association and of the Cadet Athletic Association, are adopted as the colors of the U.S. Military Academy for use in all athletic games.

1900: Cullum Memorial Hall was dedicated (funding provided by the generous bequest of \$250,000 for construction from Cullum) and the Catholic Chapel of the Most Holy Trinity was dedicated.

The size of the West Point Military Reservation was 2,361 acres.

1902: As part of a cadet review during the Centennial Celebration, President Theodore Roosevelt awarded the Medal of Honor to Plebe Calvin P. Titus, Class of 1905, for his heroic actions in leading a climb up the 30-foot city walls during the Siege of Peking.

1903: The authorized strength of the Corps of Cadets was 521.

1907: The inaugural edition of *Bugle Notes*, the unofficial cadet handbook, was published as a Young Men’s Christian Association project.

1909: Building 600 (now Taylor Hall), the headquarters building, was completed.

1910: The East Gymnasium was completed.

“The Corps,” composed as a centennial poem by Chaplain (later Bishop) Herbert S. Shipman, was set to music by W. Franke Harling, Chapel Organist and Choirmaster, and sung for the first time at the closing of the Old Cadet Chapel.

1911: The Riding Hall (that became the Thayer Hall academic building in 1958) was completed.

The removal of the Old Cadet Chapel from the level of the Plain to the West Point Cemetery was completed.

At the annual meeting, it was reported that a Memorial Window in the new Cadet Chapel was presented to the Academy by the Association at a cost of \$6,800.

The "Alma Mater," written by Paul S. Reinecke, Class of 1911, as a "furlough song," while walking the area in the fall of 1908, first was sung as a hymn.

1913: The East Academic Building (renamed Bartlett Hall in 1966) was completed.

The Class of 1863 held a reunion on the 50th anniversary of their graduation, and all five living members of the class attended.

1914: The Master of the Sword, Herman J. Koehler, became the Father of Army Physical Training with the publication of the so-called "Koehler Manual," War Department Training Reference No. 115-5, *Physical Training With and Without Special Equipment*.

1915: The authorized strength of the Corps of Cadets was 706.

1916: The authorized strength of the Corps of Cadets was doubled to 1,332 because of the ongoing war in Europe.

The equestrian statue of President George Washington, funded by an anonymous Civil War veteran, was dedicated.

At the annual meeting, the Class of 1885 initiated a fund to purchase a full set of chimes for the Cadet Chapel at an estimated cost of \$15,000 as an Association, rather than a class, project.

1917: Due to the war, there was no annual meeting of the Association held in 1917, and the name of the annual publication was changed from *Annual Reunion* to *Annual Report*.

1918: Lieutenant (Retired for wounds) Charles Braden, Class of 1869, resigned his position as Secretary of the Association after serving for 31 years (1880-1900 and 1907-18); he worked with George Cullum in preparing the 1890 *Cullum Register*, and was the editor of the 1910 edition.

1919: A resolution was passed officially recognizing Robert Anderson, Class of 1825, as the originator of the Association of Graduates of the Military Academy.

The French Cadet Monument was presented to the Academy by the association of graduates of L'Ecole Polytechnique.

1922: At the annual meeting, amendments were passed to amplify the statement of the object of the Association (“to cherish the memories of the Military Academy at West Point, *to promote its welfare and that of its graduates*, and to foster social intercourse and fraternal friendship”), provide for a vice president, and increase the executive committee to 30 members.

1923: The first Alumni Day was held at West Point, including an alumni wreath-laying ceremony at the statue of Sylvanus Thayer, the Father of the Military Academy.

The North Memorial Window of the Cadet Chapel, a gift from the Association at a cost of \$9,000, was dedicated as a memorial to those graduates who gave their lives in the World War.

The first edition of the cadet semi-monthly magazine, *The Pointer*, was published: Its predecessor was *The Bray*, which first appeared on November 26, 1919.

1924: Michie Stadium, a 16,000-seat stadium completed at a cost of \$300,000 and gifted by the Army Athletic Association, was completed and named in honor of Dennis Mahan Michie, Class of 1892, the first coach and captain of the Academy football team.

The inaugural Regimental Review for the Presentation of Stars to [academically] Distinguished Cadets was held.

The Class of 1924 was the largest to graduate in the history of the Academy: at 405, it dwarfed the 262 graduates of the Class of 1923.

1925: The Association of American Universities, at the request of the Superintendent, accredited West Point so that the Academy graduate Rhodes Scholars selected in 1925 and afterwards could attend graduate schooling in Great Britain.

1926: The United States Hotel Thayer opened, replacing The West Point Hotel built on the Plain in 1829 by Sylvanus Thayer, Class of 1808, while Academy Superintendent.

1929: Washington Hall, the 2,500-seat cadet dining facility, was completed.

A separate Association office was established and an active duty officer was assigned to West Point by the Chief of Staff of the Army to be in charge of the *Cullum's Biographical Register*.

In the annual report it was noted that the first circular inviting the various classes to organize for the purpose of contributing their share to the Endowment Fund was dated January 1, 1929 and mailed a few weeks later.

The first separate *Roll of Members* of the Association was published. Previously this information had been incorporated into the *Annual Report*.

1930: The harmonic division of the organ at the Cadet Chapel, a gift of the Association, was dedicated.

1931: Grant Hall, on the first floor of a wing of South Barracks, was completed on the site of the old cadet dining facility built in 1852 and re-named in 1887 to honor Ulysses S. Grant, Class of 1843.

The offices of the Association moved from the Administration Building to Cullum Hall, the Superintendent having provided two large rooms for the secretary-treasurer and the active duty officer in charge of *Cullum's Biographical Register*.

1933: An Act of Congress authorized the Academy to bestow the Bachelor of Science degree—previously, all graduated cadets received only a diploma and a commission.

1935: An Act of Congress increased the size of the Corps of Cadets to 1,960.

For the first time, the annual report of the Association included a series of short essays describing the activities and some of the history of the various reunion classes—a precursor to “Class Notes” (originally titled “Report!”) first published in *ASSEMBLY* magazine in April 1942.

1938: The *1938 Annual Report* noted that the Act of Congress of May 25, 1933 that authorized the Academy to bestow a Bachelor of Science degree upon all succeeding graduates had been amended in June 1937 to provide the degree to all living graduates of classes prior to that date and that the distribution of certificates to these graduates had been completed in January 1938.

1939: The New North Barracks was completed.

The Field House [now the Gillis Field House] was completed.

Doubleday Field, the baseball diamond adjacent to the Plain, was named in honor of Major General Abner Doubleday, Class of 1842.

1941: Stewart Field at Newburgh, New York, was placed under the jurisdiction of the Superintendent for the purpose of providing Army Air Corps branch instruction to cadets beginning in 1942. As a result, the Corps of Cadets was divided into Air Cadets and Ground Cadets.

1942: The authorized strength of the Corps of Cadets was increased to 2,496 because of the ongoing war in Europe.

Lake Popolopen and the surrounding area (approximately 10,500 acres) were acquired by the Academy for cadet field training.

The inaugural issue of *ASSEMBLY* magazine was published.

1944: The term “Black Knights” is applied to the Army football team for the first time.

1945: The Tactical Training and Firing Center at Lake Popolopen was renamed Camp Buckner in memory of General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., Class of 1908, killed in action on Okinawa, June 18, 1945.

The West Point Alumni Foundation, Incorporated, was established as a Maryland corporation for the purpose, among others, of publishing “books and magazines which may contain advertising” (this separate foundation was required because for many years the annual Army appropriations bill had provided that “No appropriation for the pay of the Army shall be available for the pay of any officer or enlisted on the active list of the Army who is engaged in any manner with any publication . . . which carries paid advertising of firms doing business with the War Department”).

1946: The Alumni Foundation filed to do business in New York State as a foreign (Maryland) corporation for the purposes of publishing the annual *Register* and any football programs containing advertising and acting as the business manager for the *Register* and *ASSEMBLY* (which contained no advertising).

The first annual *Register of Graduates* was published by the new Alumni Foundation.

1947: *ASSEMBLY* magazine became a paid subscription publication.

1948: The Association was granted tax-exempt status by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue (all gifts made after that date became tax deductible).

1950: At dinner in Washington Hall, Chauncey L. Fenton, Class of 1904, the president of the Association, announced the winners of a cadet essay contest sponsored by the Association.

The Patton statue facing the Academy library was unveiled, and the Dade Monument, previously having occupied the site, was moved to the Cemetery.

1951: The size of the U.S. Military Reservation was 15,065 acres.

1952: The first academic convocation was held at West Point as part of the Sesquicentennial Celebration, but inclement weather forced the ceremony inside the Field House.

1955: The Alumni Foundation moved its offices to West Point.

1956: The conversion of the old riding hall to the Thayer Hall academic building was begun with a dedication on Founders Day by former Secretary of the Army Robert E. Stevens.

1958: The inaugural Sylvanus Thayer Award was presented to Dr. Ernest O. Lawrence.

The Admissions Division of the Academy was established to “encourage outstanding potential leaders... to seek admission” to West Point.

1960: Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Leone deeded 956 acres of land in Central Valley (“Leone’s Farm”) to the U.S. Military Reservation.

1961: The West Point Superintendent’s Fund was established under the supervision of Chairman Lucius Clay, Class of June 1918, and Vice Chairman George Olmsted, Class of 1922.

Superintendent William C. Westmoreland, Class of 1936, acknowledged that the Alumni Foundation had agreed to hold funds raised in trust until needed for specific projects designated by him and his successors.

The Sylvanus Thayer Award was presented to General of the Army and former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Class of 1915.

West Point was designated an Official National Historical Landmark.

1962: General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Class of 1903, received the Sylvanus Thayer Award and delivered his famous “Duty, Honor, Country” speech.

1963: A policy committee of senior graduates was established to advise the superintendent on the disbursement of unrestricted funds from the West Point Superintendent’s Fund.

1964: Public Law 88-276 decreed the expansion of the Corps of Cadets to 4,400 by 1973 (initial funding provided for the expansion of the mess hall and construction of additional barracks wings).

The first expansion class of 991 cadet candidates entered; 706 graduated in 1968 as compared to 583 in 1967.

A new library with a storage capacity of 500,000 volumes to serve the increased Corps of Cadets was dedicated on the site of the old 1841 “triple-turreted castle” library designed by Delafield.

1965: The Graduation Ceremony was held at Michie Stadium for the first time (previous graduation ceremonies were held at Trophy Point until 1939, when they were moved to the Field House).

The second expansion class of 1,137 cadet candidates entered; 800 graduated in 1969 as compared to 706 in 1968.

1966: The East Academic Building was renamed Bartlett Hall in honor of William H. C. Bartlett, first man in the Class of 1826; Professor, USMA, 1836-71; and eminent educator and author of scientific texts.

Sylvanus Thayer was inducted into the Hall of Fame for Great Americans at New York University, ending a decades-long effort by graduates.

1969: The West Point Superintendent's Fund was renamed The West Point Fund.

The MacArthur statue near the Superintendent's Garden was dedicated.

1971: The Cornerstone of Mahan Hall was dedicated.

The Washington statue was moved from a position near Battle Monument to a more appropriate position of honor in front of the expanded Washington Hall cadet dining hall.

1972: The Supreme Court determined that Chapel attendance by cadets must be voluntary, not mandatory.

A Memorandum of Agreement was signed transferring publications personnel and publications responsibility from the Alumni Foundation to the Association.

Eisenhower Hall was dedicated by Mamie Eisenhower.

It was noted at the annual meeting of the Association that the Endowment Fund now exceeded \$3,000,000 and provided interest and dividend income of over \$100,000 annually to fund operating expenses.

Upon his retirement on August 31, 1972, Robert J. Lamb, Class of 1946, became the last active duty officer to serve as a member of the Association staff, and with no active duty officers assigned to the Association, responsibility for the publication of the *Register of Graduates* (which accepted advertising) was transferred from the West Point Alumni Foundation, along with *ASSEMBLY* magazine (which did not accept advertising at the time).

1973: The Thayer statue was moved to a more appropriate position across from Quarters 100, the Superintendent's quarters built and first occupied by Sylvanus Thayer.

1974: Eisenhower Hall officially was opened.

1975: A Memorandum of Agreement was signed detailing the eventual phasing out of the West Point Alumni Foundation.

1976: The Special Commission on the U.S. Military Academy (known as the Borman Commission, headed by astronaut Frank Borman '50) delivered its report on cheating to the Secretary of the Army.

1977: The natural grass at Michie Stadium was replaced by artificial Astro Turf.

1980: The first 62 women graduates joined the Association as members of the Class of 1980.

1983: The Eisenhower statue was dedicated near the clock tower.

1984: The first services were held at the new Jewish Cadet Chapel.

1987: The Inaugural West Point Societies Presidents Conference was convened. Presidents and other officers from 53 Societies traveled to the Academy for a one-day conference inaugurating the new West Point Societies Program.

1988: The West Point Alumni Foundation was dissolved.

The Jewish Chapel officially was dedicated; the first services had been held in November 1984.

1990: The 1990 *Register* celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of General of the Army and President Dwight David Eisenhower, Class of 1915.

1992: *ASSEMBLY* turned 50 years old; the event was commemorated in the March-April 1992 issue.

The first Distinguished Graduate Awards were presented to Andrew J. Goodpaster, Class of 1939, and Thoralf M. Sundt, Jr., Class of 1952, at West Point. In March, James A. Van Fleet, Class of 1915, received his award at his hometown of Polk City, Florida, in conjunction with his 100th birthday celebration on March 19. Matthew B. Ridgway, April 1917, received his at his home in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 18.

1993: All graduates, beginning with the Class of 1994, became members of the Association without the requirement of paying an initiation fee. As such, they no

longer received a free copy of the *Register* and a free one-year subscription to *ASSEMBLY*.

Ground was broken for Herbert Hall, named in honor of James K. Herbert, Class of 1930, whose bequest provided initial funding for plans and design.

An inaugural Association newsletter for the Societies and Classes, entitled *First Call*, was published.

1995: Herbert Hall officially was opened, and on March 1, the Association staff moved into the new building.

1996: 14,561 donors contributed a record total of \$12 million, as per the Chairman's annual report to members.

The first Distinguished Society Awards were presented for the year 1995 at the Annual Societies Presidents/Class Leaders Conference.

Johnson Stadium at Doubleday Field (baseball) officially was dedicated.

The Minority Outreach Committee of the Association, formed in 1995, organized and convened the first Minority Alumni Conference.

1998: The Bicentennial logo, carved in stone in the courtyard of Taylor Hall (Building 600), was unveiled, and the Bicentennial flag was unfurled.

1999: The Lichtenberg Tennis Center officially was opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony as the first completed physical development facility of the Bicentennial Campaign.

At the graduation of the Class of 1999, the Class of 1949 inaugurated the tradition of the 50-Year Affiliate Class presenting a set of second lieutenant bars to the graduating class.

2000: For the first time, graduates were invited to march back from the Lake Frederick training site with the incoming class of new cadets at the completion of "Beast Barracks."

Based upon a suggestion from Ron Turner, Class of 1958, in the May 1999 issue of *ASSEMBLY*, the inaugural ring melt of the Class Ring Memorial Program was held at the Herff Jones Company in Providence, Rhode Island

2001: At year end, almost \$184 million had been raised for the Bicentennial Campaign, exceeding its \$150 million goal with \$122 million already in hand.

2002: The 2002 Academy Bicentennial Thayer Award was presented to “The American Soldier,” with the Sergeant Major of the Army accepting the award.

The Bicentennial Campaign for West Point successfully concluded with more than \$218 million pledged and \$160 million already in hand.

2003: The Kimsey Athletic Center at the Michie Stadium Athletic Complex was dedicated: The lead donor was James V. Kimsey, Class of 1962.

2004: The inaugural issue of the *TAPS* supplement (Memorial Articles) was co-mailed with the January-February issue of *ASSEMBLY* magazine.

2006: The inaugural Nininger Award for Valor at Arms was presented to Major Ryan L. Worthan, Class of 1997.

2007: The General John J. Pershing Reflective Essay Inaugural Luncheon is held at Washington Hall.

2009: The Patton statue was unveiled at its new location between the new Jefferson Library and Doubleday Field.

2010: The 100th anniversary of the Cadet Chapel was celebrated with a processional from the original site of the Old Cadet Chapel to the site of the 1910 Cadet Chapel overlooking the Cadet area.

2011: The first issue of the quarterly *West Point* magazine, the winter 2011 issue, premieres.

The final issue of the quarterly *ASSEMBLY* magazine, the July-September 2011 issue, was mailed to all subscribers.