

West Point

Q: In your career at West Point, were there any **extra** curricular activities that you engaged in?

A: Yes. Having finished college, I was able to devote much of my time to extra curricular activities. Having come from Hopkins, the West Point coach of the lacrosse team naturally assumed I was a lacrosse player and put me on the team. It wasn't very long before I was bounced off the team since I had never played lacrosse and was not a good athlete. However, I liked the sport and later became manager of the varsity team. In addition, I engaged in half a dozen other extra curricular pursuits. One was the West Point debating team. As a matter of fact, I was on the famous debating team that won the national championship in 1939. That team consisted of Andrew Goodpaster, who later became the Supreme Commander of NATO; William Kintner, who later became ambassador to Thailand; and myself. I was also a member of the chess club and took part in school plays. I engaged in as many extra curricular activities as I could, largely because it allowed me to get to New York City quite often. I also participated in athletics, but only got to the "B" squad of the track team. I ran the half mile.

Q: Were there any people in your class at West Point with whom you established lasting friendships?

A: Yes. I made a number of friends with whom I still keep in contact. I'm thinking of Joe Gurfein, Pete Tanous, Herb Stem, Al Moody, Spec Powell, and a half dozen others. My roommate was Larry Greene. I also became friends with a cadet who rose high in the Air Force. George Brown became chief of staff of the Air Force and later the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was my boss when I was the Joint Chiefs of Staff's representative to the SALT II talks.

I also made lasting friendships with members of other classes. Those that stand out were Bill Kintner, Class of 1940, and Andy Goodpaster and Bill McCaffrey of the Class of 1939.

I think I should mention at this time that I made friends with several instructors with whom I was to serve later on in the Army. One of these was Captain Ted Conway who taught French. He became the commanding general of the 82d Airborne Division and when I was promoted to brigadier general requested that I be his deputy.

Another instructor, Abe Lincoln, had a great deal to do with my career. In the first place, he kept me from being discharged from West Point. Early in my fourth year my eyes went bad--from 20/20 to 20/200. To be commissioned, an officer's eyes had to be no worse than 20/100.

Because of my interest in international relations and Lincoln's interest in me, I became a member of the famous "Lincoln Brigade." Lincoln, who later became chief planner for General Marshall, followed members of his brigade throughout their careers and saw to it that they got plum assignments and were on a track of fast promotions.

Lincoln, as distressed as I over my failing eyes, sent me at his expense to an ophthalmologist in New York City. By giving up all reading and doing eye exercises, I was able to squeak through. I didn't study most of the last year. I didn't graduate as high in my class as I would have liked. Nine or ten others who had poor eyesight were not given regular Army commissions but reserve commissions instead.

Since Lincoln had so much to do with my career I'll have more to say about him later.

Q: What made you choose the Corps of Engineers when you graduated from West Point?

A: I chose the Corps of Engineers for a combination of reasons. First, my background at Johns Hopkins was in engineering. Second, my father was a builder. Third, I thought that if I chose to stay in the Army and there was a slow period after the war, there would always be lots of action in rivers and harbors. And finally, it was traditional for cadets who finished high in their class to go into the Engineer Corps.

Q: So the Corps of Engineers was your first pick. Did you have any other picks?

A: Yes. My second pick was infantry. Later, I did become an infantry officer since I decided to stay in the service and believed that fighting was what the Army was all about.
