

Staff, U.S. Military Academy

Q: The summer of 1969, then, you headed back to the United States, and then eventually back to West Point. How soon did you know you were headed back to the academy?

A: I don't know, probably April or May. I came home in July. It was a couple of months before I came back.

Q: Was this an assignment you were looking forward to? Was it sort of the thing you would like to do next?

A: I hadn't really thought about it. I'd been told I was going to Washington to the Office of the Chief of Engineers to be the executive to the Director of Military Programs. At that time the Corps headquarters was still at the old location near National Airport, and one of my first responsibilities, I was told, would be to move into the Forrestal Building, into the new digs.

I'm not sure when I was told that. I was sort of planning on an assignment in the Office of the Chief of Engineers when all of a sudden I was called and they said, "We would like to send you to West Point to be a tactical officer, a regimental executive officer, and would you like to do that?" I said, "Yep," so I did.

I didn't go up to teach. I'd always been trying to get back up to the department of engineering to teach. So, when you say, would I like to have done that next, I really never thought about it. The tactical officer assignment came up, and the opportunities sounded good because I'd be dealing with cadets. Here I'd just come out of a leadership role, battalion commander, and they wanted those kinds of people up at West Point. Just like, as I mentioned, when I was a cadet, the Al Haigs were across the quadrangle, the Colonel Mike Davisons were regimental commanders, and the Haldanes and Pattons were about—recent combat leadership experience.

So, in 1969 they were looking for recent Vietnam experience and battalion commanders to come back and be the number two person in each of the regiments in the tactical department. It was a lieutenant colonel position, a combined regimental executive officer/S-3. So, that's what I did.

Q: Tell me a little bit more about what that job entails, what the responsibility is like?

A: Well, the tactical department has a normal military organization. The commandant is the senior guy, and he has a staff, S-1, S-3, S-4, the cadet activities officer, four staff officers, and he has four regiments in the brigade he commands. Each regiment, at that time, was commanded by a colonel, and he would have two on his staff. One would be the lieutenant colonel, my position, who would be his exec/S-3. The other one would be a major, the S-1/S-4, then George Lawton.

There were nine company tactical officers who were typically captains, maybe a major here or there. That was the assigned chain of command. Then there was a cadet chain of command made up of cadet captains, the regimental commanders, regimental executive officers, and

regimental S-3, S-1, S-4, and all the rest. Company commanders were also cadet captains. We tried to let the cadets run the command, although the colonel was actually “in command” of the regiment.

The tactical officer then had the combined role of running things through the cadets and being a counselor, adviser, teacher in the military ways of things, but not academics. The academic departments taught the various subjects. We were located in the vicinity of the barracks. Since then, the academy has actually moved company Tac offices into the barracks. That was not true at that time. We were in Washington Hall with offices contiguous to the barracks.

I was in the 2d Regiment. As mentioned, I was the 2d Regiment executive officer. We didn't use the term “exec/S-3,” we just used “executive officer,” but I did the S-3 part too.

So, that meant that I reported to my boss, Colonel Robert Haldane, the regimental commander. That's the same Captain Haldane who was my company Tac when I was a cadet 14 years earlier. Later on, when I was in the DCSENGR [Deputy Chief of Staff, Engineer] in Europe as a colonel, Lieutenant General Haldane was Chief of Staff, USAREUR, a job that I held later in 1988-'89.

I would interact with both the cadet captain regimental executive officer and the cadet captain regimental S-3 in doing those things that had to do with cadet operations. Additionally, we took responsibility for planning summer training. As the academic year approached, we first would get organized for the year and would pick the cadet chain of command, based on their previous performance, experience, and their cadet performance reports. When the academic year started, we would get the cadets started off in the leadership positions doing the various kinds of things that were their responsibility.

We would monitor their performance through the year, and then start working with the first class (seniors) towards their branch choice as they prepared to move off and start their commissioned service.

In the spring we would begin to plan for one of the summer training activities. For the 2d Regiment that year, our mission was to be second summer training at Camp Buckner. The cadets, just now becoming yearlings (second year), would go out to Camp Buckner and undergo combined arms and support services training in the field for 60 days.

So, the responsibility during spring 1970 befell to Colonel Haldane and his staff to plan the Buckner operation for that summer. Then he would be in command at Buckner during the period.

Q: How long were you there? I have a couple of conflicting dates.

A: I spent one year in the 2d Regiment and two total years in the tactical department. In the second year I moved to become the S-4, Corps of Cadets, that is, the commandant's S-4.

Q: What did that involve?

A: It involved almost all activities in logistical support of cadets. I was the budget officer for the Corps of Cadets. I maintained the program and budget. I was the supply officer for the Corps of Cadets. We operated the supply room with all the khaki uniforms, the bayonets, and so forth that were issued for them.

I was the transportation officer for the Corps of Cadets. I arranged air transportation to fly to the Notre Dame football game. I would figure out what airplanes were needed for when. I wasn't the contracting officer, but my office would get the contract and make the arrangement for the treasurer to withdraw the money from cadet accounts. We would then contract for the commercial aircraft to fly the cadets to the football game, or lay on the buses to take them down to Philadelphia for the Army–Navy game.

We were in charge of cadet uniforms. Therefore, we would work with the uniform manufacturers, who were right there at West Point. The crew that makes the cadet uniforms didn't work for me, they worked for the quartermaster, United States Military Academy. I was the commandant's rep that worked with them for all the fittings to get them right and so forth. We coordinated all of the uniform manufacturers who came to West Point to sell the graduating class their first Army uniforms.

I did not operate the cadet mess because there was another quartermaster officer, Major Tom Arwood, who worked for the Military Academy, who operated it, but I was the commandant's point of contact with him on all operations of the cadet mess.

Likewise, I was the point of contact for the commandant for everything having to do with facilities for the cadets. The barracks police worked for me—that is, the janitor on each floor and each stairwell of barracks worked in an organization of about 130 that reported to me.

Parts of the new barracks at that time were under construction by the North Atlantic Division, New York District. The district had an area office at West Point. I was the commandant's point of contact for everything having to do with construction requirements, for policing of the area so that we could simultaneously conduct operations, for closing off certain things so certain construction could take place.

Q: Did you like being back at West Point at this stage of your career? Did you enjoy working with cadets?

A: I enjoyed it very much, and I enjoyed very much the interaction with cadets. It was a nice time for my family too. It was, having just been in Vietnam on a hardship tour, a chance to get to know my children.

I left Steven at age two and came back at age three. He was three, John was six, and Michelle was eight. That was a nice period for them, getting started with school and all the activities at West Point. We met an awful lot of nice people and interacted with them. A lot of people had just come from Vietnam; some were just going back.

Q: Harking back to what you said earlier about your branch choice, when you were at West Point; they gave you a chance to have some influence, hopefully, over cadets who were facing branch choice questions.

A: Well, yes. I mentioned the anecdote before, I believe, where the cadet regimental commander wanted to change his mind at the last minute and go engineers. I basically talked him out of it. I think what was important was to make sure people made a right choice.

There's always the interest in your own branch, and you really like to talk it up to people who are interested or undecided, but, by the same token, you're really looking for the right match for the Army, for the right people to do something that's going to keep them motivated throughout a career. If you put a guy who should be infantry at an engineer post, he's probably not going to be motivated to stay the route, and vice versa.

There was a tremendous interaction with the cadets. For instance, the brigade supply officer, my counterpart when I was the S-4, was Cadet Captain Rick Capka. Later on, when I signed in at Fort Belvoir to become commandant, there was Major Rick Capka. Then later on he became General Heiberg's aide here in the USACE headquarters.

So, you do have those kinds of interactions that continue throughout a career.

Major General Dan Schroeder, now commandant of the Engineer School, was a company tactical officer at that time. Brigadier General Roger Yankoupe, now at South Pacific Division, was another company tactical officer at that time. I didn't really know him there, but Major General Pat Kelly, Director of Civil Works, was teaching physics. Major General Tom Fields and Brigadier General Bill Fitzgerald were company Tacs with me in the 2d Regiment. Lieutenant General Tom Griffin was exec in the 4th Regiment. Major General Jim Ellis taught earth space and graphics, and Colonel Jim McNulty was a permanent assistant professor of mathematics. There are just a lot of people that came in and out of my assignment at any one particular time.

Q: West Point does bring together a fairly high concentration of officers, I guess, in the faculty and staff positions—people who have a lot of interactions. That's quite a few engineers to be there at one time. Maybe that's usual. I don't know.

A: Well, there always are quite a number of engineers. Colonel Bob Ayers had just been in the tactical department and was now in Engineer Branch, Office of Personnel Operations, and he was trying to get engineers in some of those tactical department leadership positions. Later on, Generals Mark Sisinyak and Hugh Robinson were regimental commanders.

Q: We've talked about your positions at West Point. I don't have any further questions. I wasn't sure if you had any more thoughts about it.

A: Well, about the S-4 job, that was one job I really didn't want to take. I argued that I ought to stay in the 2d Regiment. Colonel Dick Tallman, the assistant commandant, called me in one day and said I'd used all the good logic and made a lot of great points about why I should not go be the S-4, and therefore I should report Monday.

I did, and that place had a lot of problems. Dick Tallman's charge to me was to put it back on an operational footing. For example, I found out the budget was prepared by the same guy who approved all the purchases against that budget. I walked down to the supply room and found out that he ordered the same number of the various sizes of khaki uniforms. So, we're out of 32 medium, but we had a whole shelf full of 38 extra longs.

There was a lot of dissension in the ranks. The janitors wanted to be an operational entity. A lot of things just weren't being taken care of. So, it was my job to clean house and get it straightened out.

I did that by adding a second deputy position. I had two; I had a major that worked for me as assistant and added a second one. Major Bob Oliver, an engineer, had been there as assistant S-4 over the last year and was doing a good job. There was way more to do than he could take care of, so I brought in Major Gary Brown, a field artilleryman, to fill the other position.

During that year we straightened out a lot of those things, and we rewrote the logistics manual for the Corps of Cadets, which addressed how to do everything from rooms to uniforms. We did quite a number of things to put supply, logistics, and transportation activities into a better condition.

We also worked to review the cadet accounts. Our interaction with the academy treasurer was on the cadet accounts—what moneys went into which part of the account. We reworked all of those and worked very hard with now Major General Tom Arwood, who was then a major and head of the West Point mess in Washington Hall. We fought a lot of problems together that year.

For example, a couple of our United States senators decided that cadets should wait on their own tables because, after all, when they went to college they had waited on tables in their fraternities. So, in typical fashion, as I was to find out later when I came down to the Army Staff, we got a message tasker from the Department of the Army, Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison on Friday evening about five o'clock. The requirement was to provide them a paper by eight o'clock Monday morning on the issue.

As the staffer responsible, I got that weekend mission and worked with Tom Arwood to prepare our response—why things were different between a fraternity's and West Point's meal operation. Why taking away from cadets' already full schedules, when we were paying to get certain things accomplished, just wasn't smart. We submitted our paper back to the Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison on Monday. Evidently, it worked.

Q: How would you characterize the mood at West Point in the '69-'71 time period, as opposed to what you remembered when you'd been there before in the mid-50s. The Vietnam War is still going on. Was it a lot different? Did it seem a lot different to you?

A: Well, it's pretty hard to characterize because your view as a cadet is much different than your view as a Tac officer at any time. I mean, often, when I was a cadet, what I wanted to do least

was go to parades. I wanted to do my things, be independent, had a little rebellious nature, and often tried to beat the system. In the tactical department you think that everyone is trying to support the team, to get ahead, to be a winner in the endeavor, not recognizing that everyone is human.

So, there are two different views. Certainly, as a Tac I worked at the cadet captain level, that is, interacting with the brigade staff, regimental commanders and staff, positions far higher than I ever had attained as a cadet. I was a cadet sergeant my first class year. I was working now with people who came with more motivation and a higher level of motivation in their class, and they'd proven that throughout all of their years there.

So, the people I dealt with, the cadets I dealt with day in and day out, were an extremely high cut of caliber, motivation, and potential for the future. Not that cadet sergeants can't find motivation and over a career amount to something. That's not the point. I mean, the point is that what I saw day in, day out, with my working relationships didn't necessarily reflect that everybody up there was motivated to do that same kind of job, and there were an awful lot of the rebellious kind of folks, just like I had been earlier during my yearling and second class years.

This was also a time where there were antiwar feelings throughout the campuses of the United States. I didn't notice it at West Point, although in the previous year before I arrived, the class of '69, under General Rogers, then the commandant, had had some difficulties with several cadets. Some of them were either canned or otherwise disciplined. There were just a lot of problems.

I didn't see that. I thought most of the cadets that I saw were motivated, and they were very interested in wartime activities in Vietnam because they were going to go there when commissioned and paid attention. They had a good motive.

That didn't mean that cadets didn't have a lot of horseplay and didn't mean there wasn't a lot of other things that went on. For example, in one incident, Vassar students decided that they would come down and circulate petitions to get cadets to sign up for antiwar activities. It was said that they would come down and trade their bodies for a cadet signature on the petition. That was the word passed around the Corps one week.

On Saturday morning, as we got ready for the football weekend, we looked out upon the plain, and there was a single cadet bunk with a sign that said "Welcome Vassar." [Laughter] So, throughout all of this, there's always a bit of horseplay and humor.

Then another incident was more serious. Cadet Michael D. Anderson, who had been the assistant S-3 in the first detail—the academic year was divided into two leadership details—and thereby worked under the cadet regimental S-3, joined the legal suit against mandatory chapel at the service academies. This was quite a *cause célèbre* at the time.

Now, Cadet Anderson had missed chapel formation one Sunday, and he'd been reported absent by the cadet in charge of his chapel marching unit. He had argued that he wasn't a

member of that Protestant chapel squad that he was marked absent from because he was really on the Catholic chapel squad.

Well, when you got right down to it, it was found that he missed chapel, and so he was written up for punishment. There was an ongoing legal action by five midshipmen at Annapolis who had sued the federal government to get out of mandatory chapel. Anderson joined that suit and was the only cadet as part of that suit.

At this time, Colonel Haldane, the regimental commander, was at Harvard at an advanced management program, so I was the acting regimental commander. It befell on me to handle this situation over the coming weeks.

There was a strong reaction from Anderson's classmates, and there was a great deal of discussion and talk, a buzz of activity and dialogue about this at West Point. It was manifested a little bit later in an incident in which Anderson, in a classroom, had used some profanity in a social studies class in answer to a question. The cadet section marcher reported Anderson for conduct unbecoming a cadet, using profanity in a classroom. The instructor took issue with this because of his feeling that in the classroom he was in charge, and he wanted to have freedom of expression.

This, then, became a bit of an issue between the academic department involved, social sciences, and the tactical department. Now, you must understand that often there's some differences in opinion between the tactical department and the academic departments. The tactical department feels that they do important things; the academic side needs to understand how important those things are. The academic departments think the cadets are up here for an education; if the tactical department would quit taking up all their time, they'd be able to study better and be more prepared.

That puts it very simplistically, but that's the rudiments of this divide. There were always efforts to bring the two together for the common cause.

Well, in this case, Colonel Amos Jordan, who had been the head of the department of social sciences for some years, quite a well-known figure in United States national security circles, called me, the acting commander. He said basically that what happened was well within norms and met the standards of the department of social sciences and certainly we shouldn't do anything to punish Cadet Anderson.

Now I had a dilemma. As I looked at the situation, it seemed to me that I should let it play out its course and see how it was going to work. I didn't want to stop anything at any one particular time because if I stopped it, then it was going to be a situation in which no one was going to be happy.

Our normal protocol in the tactical department was that if a cadet reported an offense we sent it to a cadet board. I'm talking here about an offense that reached a certain threshold, we would send it to a cadet board and let them pass judgment on their fellow cadet and assess the punishment. If it was reported by a tactical officer, we would send it to a tactical officer

board to go through the same process. Since the cadet section marcher wrote him up, I decided to send it to a cadet board.

I well remember the report of the board, which was some two or three pages in length and signed by Cadet Captain Steve Wesbrook, who was the deputy regimental commander. The board found Anderson guilty of the offense and recommended punishment. Part of Wesbrook's articulation because the academic departments had talked about standards, was to the effect that academic departments may have their standards, but cadets had their standards too. Cadet Anderson didn't meet them, and so he was assessed the punishment.

I thought this was an appropriate solution to the episode. Colonel Jordan may not have agreed, but the process had worked. The punishment was approved, only to be stopped when the plaintiffs went to the judge and got an injunction against any punishment of Cadet Anderson or others during the period.

In the end, of course, that suit is the one that caused mandatory chapel to be dropped at our service academies.

Q: So, the era had its effect on West Point, but perhaps not in the same ways that it might have affected some other parts of society, but a sort of rebelliousness against rules and regulations.

A: Well, you put that in a little different tone, in a different mode from what I answered. You asked, did I see things as different. Your conclusion about the era may've not been the same thing.

I think you'd have to go in and do an analysis of a whole bunch of things, such as retention rates, for one. You know, I think the numbers of applicants per position were down in those years compared to later years when the number of applicants had grown considerably after the war was over.

I don't know whether the graduates of '67, '68, '69, '70 stayed in or got out in any different proclivity from other classes. I don't think my answers can lead you in any kind of overall conclusions on the impacts of those wartime things on the graduates of West Point.

What I was trying to suggest was that daily activities at West Point weren't embroiled in war operations, that we went about the daily business. The daily business for a cadet is very time-consuming. He or she has got a lot to take care of, and their schedules are very packed full of academics and other activities. So, there's not a lot of extra time to do other things.

What I'm suggesting is, from my interactions with the cadets of that time versus the old, the tactical department of my day as a cadet and me, I'm not so sure the interactions weren't about the same, and things that went on weren't about the same. Certainly a different external climate that we were all aware of and all very interested in, and probably all more in tune with than many of the people on the rest of the campuses, many of whom seemed to be in the streets but with their ears tuned off to anything of logic and only tuned into things with their own already preconceived biases.

Q: You did point out, and I thought that was interesting—and I've heard this from people over at West Point during World War II—that there is a sort of urgency, perhaps, being there in a wartime situation. The cadets know that soon thereafter they'll probably go to the theater, and that's given an emphasis.

A: Sure. When we interacted with them, they wanted to know about what was it like, and what's happening, and I'm able to provide their answers as the recent battalion commander of the 577th Engineer Battalion. A cadet who wanted to go engineers could talk to me, and I could talk about the kinds of things we did in the engineers.

Q: Anything else about West Point, before we turn to your next assignment?

A: No. I worked with some fine folks there. Colonel Bob Haldane, I've already mentioned, was the 2d Regiment commander. Colonel Bill Webb commanded the next regiment over, the 4th Regiment, and my classmate Lieutenant Colonel Tom Griffin was their executive officer.

Later I was to work with Major General Bill Webb when he took command of the 1st Armored Division and I was the 7th Engineer Brigade commander in Germany. Then, as I mentioned earlier, Colonel Haldane came back to be the Chief of Staff, USAREUR, when I was in the Office of the DCSENGR.

Then Colonel Dick Tallman, who was selected for brigadier general, went to Vietnam and unfortunately caught an artillery shell and was one of the few general officers killed there. He was a fine gentleman and a terrific leader.

I also enjoyed working with the commandant, Brigadier General Sam Walker, who, I thought, was a superb commander and individual. General Bill Knowlton came in as superintendent, and I enjoyed his time there.

I should say early on there was one other thing that did cause a lot of conversation and thoughts throughout the faculty and cadets. When I first arrived, General [Samuel W.] Koster was the superintendent. He, of course, was involved as the Americal Division commander with the My Lai affair, and so I was there when he was removed as superintendent and watched him leave and General Knowlton come aboard. I guess that happened just a couple to three months after I arrived.

Naval War College

Q: Shall we turn to your next assignment, then? I guess the obvious question is, why did you go to the Naval War College?

A: I went to the Naval War College in 1971. I was due to stay at West Point for another year. I had a call from Engineer Branch and was told I was on the alternate list for the War College.