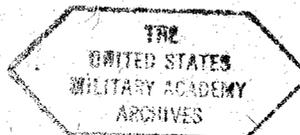




REPORT
of the
BOARD OF VISITORS
to the
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT, NEW YORK



4 February 1956



UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
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SUBJECT: Report of Board of Visitors to the United States
Military Academy, 1956.

TO: The President of the United States.

1. APPOINTMENT OF BOARD

The Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy was appointed in accordance with the provisions of sections 1055-1056 of Title 10, United States Code. Pertinent extracts from the Code are appended to this report, marked Exhibit A.

2. PERSONNEL OF THE BOARD

The membership of the Board as constituted for the year 1956 was as follows:

SENATORS

Richard B. Russell, Georgia,
Chairman of the Committee on
Armed Services.
Lister Hill, Alabama
Wayne C. Morse, Oregon
Charles E. Potter, Michigan

REPRESENTATIVES

Carl T. Durham, North Carolina,
representing Carl Vinson, Georgia,
Chairman of the Committee on
Armed Services.
Augustine B. Kelley, Pennsylvania
Joe L. Evins, Tennessee
Charles B. Hoeven, Iowa
Edward T. Miller, Maryland

PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES

General Lucius DuB. Clay, Chairman of the Board, Continental Can Company,
New York, New York
Dr. John S. Dickey, President, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire
Dr. Leonard Carmichael, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Dr. Francis M. Dawson, Dean of the College of Engineering, State University
of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
Dr. James P. Baxter III, President, Williams College, Williamstown,
Massachusetts
Dr. John A. Hannah, President, Michigan State University, East Lansing,
Michigan

Colonel Charles J. Barrett, Professor of Foreign Languages, United States Military Academy, was appointed Executive Secretary for the Board by the Superintendent, U. S. Military Academy.

3. PRELIMINARY DATA

In the summer of 1955 the Chief of Legislative Liaison, United States Army, consulted with members of the Congress concerning suitability of dates for the annual visit. After consideration of all factors affecting the choice, the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy notified the members whose terms extended into 1956 that the period of February 2-4 had been designated for the visit. Announcement of those dates was sent to all new members as notification of their appointment was received.

The Superintendent likewise caused to be distributed to all members certain reports and informational material, and a suggested program for the visit. A list of the data furnished is appended as Exhibit B.

4. CONVENING OF THE BOARD

Present for the annual visit were the following members:

| | |
|--------------|----------------|
| Mr. Kelley | Dr. Carmichael |
| Mr. Evins | Dr. Dawson |
| Mr. Hoeven | Dr. Baxter |
| General Clay | Dr. Hannah |
| Dr. Dickey | |

Dr. Baxter was unanimously elected Chairman of the Board of Visitors for 1956.

Illness and pressure of Congressional business combined to prevent the attendance of Senator Russell. Illness also caused the absence of Mr. Durham. Conflicting responsibilities made it impossible for Senators Hill, Morse, and Potter and for Mr. Miller to participate in the visit. The members of the Board actually in attendance were beset by similar conflicts and many of them were forced to arrive late or to depart early. All of them devoted the maximum available time to the inspections and deliberations of the Board.

Dr. Dickey was in attendance on the first day of the visit only and departed shortly thereafter for a three-month mission in Europe. He therefore did not participate in the preparation of this report.

5. PROCEDURE

The program followed by the Board in its visit is appended hereto, marked Exhibit C.

It is appropriate to note that the annual visit began with snow, rain, and icing conditions, and that the review which terminated the formal part of the visit was held in a snowstorm. Except for travel delays, the visit was not appreciably affected by the weather.

6. COMMENTS

a. MORALE

(1) CADETS

The Board in all its contacts with cadets found evidence of excellent morale. Cadets are proud of the Military Academy, proud of its role in the history of our country, and proud of their part in maintaining the standards for which the Military Academy is known. The Board has been informed that the period after Christmas leave, and particularly that part of it which immediately follows the semi-annual examinations, is a time of low spirits. If what the Board saw is low spirits, no concern need be felt for the morale of the Corps of Cadets.

(2) REMAINDER OF THE COMMAND

The officers and enlisted men observed by the Board were alert, intelligent, and interested in their work. They seemed to be deeply aware of their part in accomplishing the mission of the Military Academy and to find their reward in realization of the importance of the tasks entrusted to them.

b. DISCIPLINE

Problems of discipline appear to be effectively handled and high standards are being maintained.

c. CURRICULUM

The Board realizes that the curriculum of the United States Military Academy is tailored to the mission of preparing its graduates for a single career; i.e., that of an officer in the military service of our country. The Board is, however, greatly interested in the extent of extra-curricular endeavor, principally in the educational field, which is open to all cadets, particularly those who are intellectually gifted. Seminars in progress at present range from the common-place problems of personal finance to the more abstruse matter of relativity. The Board also notes with approbation the widespread interest of the cadets in debating, which should bear dividends in effectiveness of expression and the ability to make a logical presentation.

d. INSTRUCTION

(1) ACADEMIC

The Board is pleased with the methods of instruction in use at the United States Military Academy, and particularly with the maintenance of small sections, in which individual work and participation are possible. To some extent this lessens the rigidity of the curriculum, permitting the more able students to penetrate more deeply into the subject matter while others accomplish only the minimum.

The Board was impressed with the caliber of the instructors it observed in the classrooms. They appeared not only to be thoroughly conversant with their subjects but also to possess those qualities which permit them to draw their students into discussion, thus permitting the latter to derive the benefits of active participation in group work.

(2) MILITARY

No actual tactical instruction was observed. The Board visited the instruction plant of the Combined Arms Detachment of the 1802d Special Regiment where it saw adequate and well-maintained equipment and talked with several instructors, particularly with noncommissioned officers who conduct the weapons training and the basic tactical training of the cadets. Training aids are up-to-date and embody many interesting features. It is believed that the military instruction is up to the standards of the Military Academy.

e. PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT

The conversion of the riding hall to academic space has now begun, and is tentatively set for completion in September 1957.

Removal in 1957 of the academic activities from the present West Academic Building will permit the first step to be taken in alleviating the crowded housing conditions of the Corps of Cadets. More than two-thirds of the cadets are living three in a room designed for two occupants. Beds, study tables, clothespresses, and racks for the equipment of three cadets occupy most of the available space. While no health problem appears so far to have arisen, and the morale of which mention has already been made is excellent, a very distinct disadvantage to the cadet exists in the lack of suitable study conditions. Were study rooms available in the barracks, present conditions would be immensely improved. But since the cadet lives, works, and sleeps in the same crowded room

where the distractions of three occupants greatly outnumber those of two, he cannot devote to his studies the attention which they merit. Considering his limited study time, he is working under an academic handicap.

It is to be noted that the overcrowding is most prevalent in the Fourth Class, which is precisely the one in which the cadet is often faced with the need to develop new habits of concentration in the preparation of his daily tasks.

The facilities for housing cadets at West Point are substantially below the standards maintained in civilian colleges and universities which provide housing for their students.

It is planned to convert the West Academic Building, after 1957, into additional housing space for the Corps of Cadets. Its location immediately adjoining the present barracks area contributes to the desirability of the plan. It will not eliminate the overcrowding, but any reduction of the overcrowding is a step in the right direction.

It is the belief of the Board that the plans for conversion of the West Academic Building to barracks space should be carried to the point where the work may be started immediately upon release of the building. Meanwhile planning for barracks space in addition to that to be obtained by conversion of the academic space to be out-dated in 1957 should be undertaken, and actual construction should be accomplished as soon as possible. Expansion of the Corps of Cadets beyond the figure which is currently projected should be deferred until the physical plant is made adequate for its housing.

f. FISCAL AFFAIRS

Though all major items of equipment are available for training the Corps of Cadets and for maintenance of the Military Academy, there is apparent a sensible economy in administration. No indication of extravagance or of assigning high priority to the procurement of minor items has been seen.

g. FILLING CADET VACANCIES

Currently the Corps of Cadets is below its authorized strength and it was also below strength before the departure of those who failed the first term's work. The Military Academy has not been filling its vacancies at a time when civilian institutions of learning are being deluged with applications. The Military Academy is in competition with civilian colleges for the same outstanding young students. The education at government expense which is

characteristic of the service academies is offset by the scholarships, some of them carrying both tuition and board, which are available in many colleges today.

It is important that the Military Academy obtain its share of the outstanding young men who enter college each year. Any tendency toward mediocrity in the officer corps of our military services must be combatted in every possible way.

It is currently proposed to increase the number of Presidential competitive appointments to the Military Academy. These appointments have been reserved for nearly a century for the sons of members of the regular components of the Armed Forces. Increasing the number of appointments from this source would permit the admission of a greater number of young men familiar with military life and possessing a high degree of motivation for a military career.

Authority exists under the law for appointment of qualified alternates and qualified competitors to fill vacancies which exist after the composition of a new class has been determined. A limiting factor here is the size of the pool of qualified prospects. There are many young men of suitable academic ability, character, and leadership potential who are not eligible for Presidential appointment and who would be interested in a military career and enrollment in the Military Academy were they aware of its opportunities.

It is suggested that inconsistencies of geographical distribution, lack of familiarity with the approaches to Congress, or the accident of birth into a family without service connection, be offset by authorizing the Superintendent to fill vacancies still existing after the entrance of a new class, plus the qualified alternates and qualified competitors whose admission is currently provided for by law. A suitable procedure might conform to the following outline: Any interested young man could make application for admission directly to the Superintendent; the applicant would be required to establish his eligibility for admission as prescribed for all prospective appointees; the Superintendent could then select from this group the individuals to fill any remaining vacancies, considering the same factors which are used in the selection of the qualified alternates and the qualified competitors.

It is a certainty that there are young men in the country today who are unaware of the opportunity West Point offers, or who consider appointment to the Military Academy unobtainable. Greater dissemination of information about the Academy is necessary and the

Board is pleased to note the scheme of expanded publicity which was reported to it. It is hoped that these proposals may be immediately implemented in order that the country at large, and particularly its eligible young men, may know more about the Military Academy.

The Board hopes that the Corps of Cadets may be soon returned to its authorized strength and that every measure, including necessary legislation, will be taken to assure that the annual quota of admissions be filled.

h. POSSESSION OF MONEY BY CADETS

For many years receipt of money from outside sources by cadets was prohibited. This was in the interest of democracy; it placed all cadets on a plane of financial equality, making it impossible to distinguish the rich man's son from the poor man's son.

In past years -- the exact time is not known to the Board -- the prohibition was removed. Possession of outside funds is now both recognized and tolerated. Though changing norms of social behavior undoubtedly have their effect among the cadets, there remains a question concerning the desirability of preserving the former standards in money matters.

In view of the increased compensation recently authorized for cadets, an increase which it was expected would be sufficient to permit all cadets to graduate free of debt, it is believed that study should be given to the desirability of returning to the democratic principle which was in force for so many years.

i. STATUS OF PERMANENT PROFESSORS

There is at West Point a devoted group of officers who have been selected for the twenty-one permanent professorships (the Dean of the Academic Board is included). In addition to their educational qualifications, they possess the characteristics and abilities sought in general officers. Five of them were actually general officers before they accepted their present responsibilities; in the past ten years there have been two others, one of whom is now retired, one deceased.

While these patriotic officers have been devoting their finest efforts to the preparation of tomorrow's leaders in our Army, many other officers of no greater ability or promise have been promoted to general officer rank. And whereas in the small Army of fifty years ago there were relatively few colonels and that grade carried considerable importance, today's expanded numbers have so

submerged the professors of the United States Military Academy as greatly to diminish their prestige.

The Board considers it unjust that professors should be denied the opportunities for advancement in rank and recognition to which their qualifications would entitle them in other military fields. In the view of the Board their responsibility for training future military leaders is fully as worthy of recognition and rank as are the assignments of other general officers of the Army. Since promotion is the most tangible recognition of worthy performance of important duties, it should not be denied to outstanding officers willing to make a lifetime career of training future military leaders.

The Board believes that the relative importance of the direction of instruction at West Point vis-a-vis that of other general officer assignments has not been properly evaluated. It believes that steps can be taken within the general officer ceiling figure, whether as now established or as it may later be amended, to permit recognition of the worth of distinguished teaching officers at West Point. It believes that the time has come for providing suitable advancement for meritorious officers whose service to the country has been distinguished, deserving, and apparently insufficiently appreciated.

j. CHAPLAIN, UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

The moral and the spiritual are among the most important phases of instruction at the United States Military Academy. This Board has reviewed, and concurs in, the comments of the Board of Visitors for 1955 concerning the chaplaincy at West Point. The present method of selection of the Chaplain should be continued. The pay of the office should be sufficient to attract to it young clergymen of suitable caliber. In addition, the size of the Corps of Cadets is now such as to require the time and labors of more than one man. Currently an assistant is provided, utilizing the Chapel Fund for his payment. It is proper that the need for an assistant be recognized and that provision be made by the government for his maintenance and remuneration. Legislation has been introduced (S. 2137) to authorize the appointment of an assistant and to establish a suitable pay scale for both clergymen. This Board considers the proposed legislation worthy of support.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board makes the following recommendations:

a. BARRACKS

That detailed planning be undertaken so that the present West Academic Building may be converted to barracks space for cadets as soon as the building can be released from its present use; also planning for the construction of sufficient additional barracks to permit housing all cadets two to a room, with adequate additional study space in all barracks buildings.

b. FILLING CADET VACANCIES

That the Superintendent be authorized to fill the Corps of Cadets to its authorized strength each year, after the new class and qualified alternates and qualified competitors have entered, from among those qualified young men who have made application to him and whose academic ability, character, and leadership potential warrant their selection for a military career. Such procedure, if adopted, must not jeopardize the present method of filling vacancies by Congressional appointment nor reduce the number of appointments to which each member of the Congress is entitled.

c. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

That every step be taken to inform the youth of our country of the opportunity which West Point offers, and to interest them in the military career, so that the Military Academy may receive its share of the talented young men who enter college each year.

d. POSSESSION OF MONEY BY CADETS

That a study be made, with report to the Board of Visitors for 1957, of the feasibility and desirability of limiting the amount of money in the possession of cadets to that which all receive alike from their cadet pay.

e. IMPROVEMENT OF STATUS OF PERMANENT PROFESSORS

That the senior officers permanently assigned to the Military Academy receive the same opportunities for increased rank and recognition to which their qualifications would entitle them if serving at stations other than West Point.

f. CHAPLAIN, UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

That the present method of selection for this important post be continued, that the Chaplain's pay be set at a figure which will provide him a living comparable to that in other important posts of the Protestant clergy, and that he be given the necessary assistant in his ministrations to the United States Corps of Cadets.

8. CONCLUSION

The members of the Board of Visitors, as citizens of the United States, take pride in the work of the United States Military Academy and in the spirit which characterizes the performance of all who are connected with it. In our judgment the loyalty and enthusiasm of the Corps of Cadets, reflecting the same qualities in the members of the faculty and of the staff, would be an inspiration to every American. It is our belief that the Military Academy is accomplishing in full measure its mission and that its graduates go forth today with the same high ideals and same fine qualities which have made their predecessors worthy defenders of the American way of life.

AUGUSTINE B. KELLEY
United States House of
Representatives

JAMES P. BAXTER III
President
Williams College
Chairman

JOE L. EVINS
United States House of
Representatives

LUCIUS D. CLAY
Chairman of the Board
Continental Can Company

CHARLES B. HOEVEN
United States House of
Representatives

LEONARD CARMICHAEL
Secretary
Smithsonian Institution

FRANCIS M. DAWSON
Dean of the College of
Engineering
State University of Iowa

JOHN A. HANNAH
President
Michigan State University

10 USC 1055 - 1060

Board of Visitors
United States Military Academy

§ 1055. Appointment of Board of Visitors

There shall be appointed on or before the last day of every year a Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy. June 29, 1948, C. 714, § 1, 62 Stat. 1094.

§ 1056. Composition of Board

The Board shall be constituted as follows:

(a) The chairman of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate or his designee;

(b) Three other Members of the Senate to be appointed by the Vice President or President pro tempore of the Senate, two of whom shall be members of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

(c) The Chairman of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives or his designee;

(d) Four other Members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, two of whom shall be members of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(e) Six persons to be appointed by the President. The first Board to be appointed pursuant to the provisions of sections 1055-1060 of this title shall, with respect to the nine (sic) Presidential appointees, consist of two persons appointed to serve for a period of one year, two persons appointed to serve for a period of two years, and two persons appointed to serve for a period of three years. Two Presidential appointees shall be appointed to each subsequent Board to serve for a period of three years. June 29, 1948, c. 714, § 2, 62 Stat. 1094.

§ 1057. Filling of vacancies on Board

In case of the death or resignation of a member of a Board during the term for which such member was appointed, a successor shall be appointed for the unexpired portion of the term. Such a successor shall be appointed by the official, or his successor, who appointed the member who died or resigned. June 29, 1948, c. 714, § 3, 62 Stat. 1094.

§ 1058. Visitation of Board or individual members

The Board shall visit the Academy for which it is appointed once annually, and the Board or the individual members thereof may, with the approval of the Secretary of the Army, make such other visits on matters per-

taining to the duties of the Board, or for purposes of consulting with the Superintendent of the Academy, as the Board or its members may determine to be desirable. June 29, 1948, c. 714, § 4, 62 Stat. 1094, amended June 30, 1954, c. 432, Title VII, § 732, 68 Stat. 356.

§ 1059. Duties of Board; reports to President; consultations with advisers

(a) It shall be the duty of the Board to inquire into the state of morale and discipline, curriculum, instruction, physical equipment, fiscal affairs, academic methods, and other matters relating to the Academy which the Board may decide to consider.

(b) The Board shall, within sixty days after the meeting designated as the annual visit, submit a written annual report to the President regarding its action as such Board, together with its views and recommendations pertaining to the Academy. Any report based on a visit other than the annual visit shall be submitted by the originator or originators thereof to the President within sixty days after approval of said report by at least a majority of the members of the Board.

(c) The Board is authorized to call into consultation upon prior approval of the Secretary of the Army such advisers as it may deem necessary or advisable to effectuate the duties imposed upon it by the provisions of sections 1055-1060 of this title. June 29, 1948, c. 714, § 5, 62 Stat. 1094.

§ 1060. Travel expenses of Board members and advisers

(a) Each member of the Board shall receive not more than \$5 per day and be reimbursed under Government travel regulations for actual expenses of travel while performing duties as a member of the Board.

(b) Advisers called for consultation by the Board in connection with the business of the Board shall be compensated in the same manner as members of the Board in accordance with the provisions of subsection (a) of this section. June 29, 1948, c. 714, § 6, 62 Stat. 1094.

PAMPHLETS AND OTHER DATA
FURNISHED TO MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS

Official Register of the Officers and Cadets, United States
Military Academy, for the Academic Year ending 30 June 1955

Catalogue of the United States Military Academy, 1955-1956

Report of the Board of Visitors, United States Military Academy, 1954

Report of the Board of Visitors, United States Military Academy, 1955

Annual Report of the Superintendent, 1955

Suggested schedule for annual visit, 1956

PROGRAM
OF
BOARD OF VISITORS 1956

First Day (Thursday, February 2)

AM Arrival

12:45 PM Luncheon meeting, US Hotel Thayer.

1:45 Met Superintendent in lobby. To Headquarters,
U. S. Military Academy.

2:00 Conference with Superintendent.

3:00 Three Congressional members, delayed by bad weather,
arrived and joined remainder of Board.

4:00 Conference with Commandant of Cadets, Department of
Tactics.

5:00 Conference with selected cadets, Pershing Room of
Cullum Hall.

Dinner with Superintendent.

Second Day (Friday, February 3)

- 8:45 AM Met by Superintendent in lobby of US Hotel Thayer.
Proceeded with him to Headquarters, U. S. Military Academy, honors en route.
- 9:00 Conference with Dean of the Academic Board - academic situation and problems.
- 10:15 Conference with Chief of Staff, proposed publicity program for interesting more qualified young men in the Military Academy.
- 10:40 Visits to classes in session by sub-groups of Board.
Departments visited were
Electricity
Foreign Languages
Mechanics
Military Art and Engineering
Social Sciences
- 11:50 Tour of Cadet Mess.
Luncheon with cadets in Washington Hall.
- 1:00 PM Tour of physical plant and construction projects by one sub-group.

Visit to Department of English by one sub-group, observed classes.
- 2:15 Both groups to classes in Department of Social Sciences.
- 3:30 Visit to 1802d Special Regiment.
- 4:30 Visit to Library, U. S. Military Academy.
- 8:00 Executive session, discussion of report.

Third Day (Saturday, February 4)

- 9:00 AM Inspection of Cadet Barracks.
- 9:20 Visit to Gymnasium, discussion of program of physical education, observation of classes.
- 10:00 Showing of documentary film, The Making of a West Pointer.
- 10:45 Visits by sub-groups to
 Department of Foreign Languages
 Department of Military Art and Engineering
 West Point Museum
- 12:00 M Luncheon with group of junior officers at West Point Army Mess.
- 1:10 PM Review, Second Regiment, United States Corps of Cadets.
- 2:00 Visits to scenes of intercollegiate athletic competition in progress.

Departure from West Point.