

# **THE OCS EXPERIENCE**

*Memories of Robinson Barracks*



***Artillery Officer Candidate School  
Fort Sill, Oklahoma 1941-1973***



***Compiled by Randy and Penny Dunham***

*Newly Revised and Updated November 2022*

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Fort Sill, Oklahoma 1941-1973**



**Compiled by Randy C. Dunham  
Artillery OCS Class 10-69  
and  
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**First Edition: Bound and Printed March 26, 2013 (338 pages)  
Second Edition: Bound and Printed March 26, 2014 (338 Pages)  
Digital Edition: Revised and Updated November 1, 2022 (788 pages)**

**The Artillery Officer Candidate School Heritage Society  
Lawton, Oklahoma 73505**

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Dedicated to the Artillery Officer Candidates who were billeted in the OCS Hutment area during the 1940s and to those who would later pass through the Robinson Barracks archway (in its many variations) during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s on their journey to becoming Commissioned Officers in the U.S Army.

They served our Nation with honor and valor.  
936 gave their lives in WW II.  
69 were lost in the Korean War.  
322 made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War.  
Three were awarded the Medal of Honor.  
89 were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross



“Let me say a word about these OCS people in case you have not had any contact with them. They are far in the way the best that I have seen in the Army, and for the job they have to do I had just as soon have them as any graduate of the Military Academy joining his first regiment. They are well grounded, interested in their job, industrious, ambitious, and on the ball twenty-four hours a day.”

*.....World War II, U.S. Army Regimental Commander*



*During the 1940s this arch stood for the exclusive use of graduating officer candidates and was only used on the night of their graduation party at Mess Hall # 1*





*Downstairs floor in Durham Hall - The Artillery OCS Hall of Fame  
Building 3025 Fort Sill (2014)*



*Robinson Barracks during 1966-1967 Expansion*

***“Leadership”***  
**Address of General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff**  
**To the First Officer Candidate Schools - July 1941**

You are about to assume the most important duty that our officers are called upon to perform-the direct command of combat units of American soldiers. To succeed requires two fundamental qualifications-thorough professional knowledge and a capacity for leadership. The schools have done all that can be done in the limited time available to equip you professionally, and your technique of weapons and tactics should rapidly improve with further study and actual practice. However, they cannot provide you with qualities of leadership-that courage and evident high purpose which command the respect and loyalty of American soldiers.

You were selected as officer candidates because you gave evidence of possessing these qualifications. Whether or not you develop into truly capable leaders depends almost entirely upon you personally.

Your school work has been under ideal conditions from an instructional standpoint; but when you join your organizations, you will find many difficulties and deficiencies complicating your task. There will be shortages in equipment, for example. These are being made good as rapidly as possible, but so long as they exist they are a challenge to your ingenuity and not an invitation to fall back on an overdose of close order drill and the other necessary but stultifying minutia which so irked the army of 1917 that we still suffer from the repercussions.

Warfare today is a thing of swift movement-of rapid concentrations. It requires the building up of enormous fire power against successive objectives with breathtaking speed. It is not a game for the unimaginative plodder. Modern battles are fought by platoon leaders. The carefully prepared plans of higher commanders can do no more than project you to the line of departure at the proper time and place, in proper formation, and start you off in the right direction. Thereafter the responsibility for results is almost entirely yours. If you know your business of weapons and tactics, if you have insured the complete confidence and loyalty of your men, things will go well on that section of the front.

There is a gulf between the drill ground or cantonment type of leadership and that necessary for the successful command of men when it may involve the question of sacrificing one's life. Our army differs from all other armies. The very characteristic which make our men potentially the best soldiers in the world can be in some respects a possible source of weakness. Racially we are not, a homogeneous people, like the British for example, who can glorify a defeat by their stubborn tenacity and clogged discipline. We have no common racial group and we have deliberately cultivated individual interest and independence of thought and action. Our men are intelligent and resourceful to an unusual degree. These characteristics, these qualities may be, in effect, explosive or positively destructive in a military organization, especially under adverse conditions, unless the leadership is wise and determined, and units the leader commands the complete respect of his men.

Never for an instant can you divest yourselves of the fact that you are officers. On the athletic field, at the club, in civilian clothes, or even at home on leave, the fact that you are a commissioned officer in the army imposes a constant obligation to higher standards than might ordinarily seem normal or necessary for your personal guidance. A small dereliction becomes conspicuous, at times notorious, purely by reason of the fact that the individual concerned is a commissioned officer.

But the evil result goes much further than a mere matter of unfortunate publicity. When you are commanding, leading men under conditions where physical exhaustion and privations must be ignored; where the lives of men may be sacrificed, then, the efficiency of your leadership will depend only to a minor degree on your tactical or technical ability. It will primarily be determined by your character, your reputation, not so much for courage, which will be accepted as a matter of course, but by the previous reputation you have established for fairness, for that high minded patriotic purpose, that quality of unswerving determination to carry through any military task assigned you.

The feeling which the men must hold for you is not to be compared to the popularity of a football coach or a leader of civic activities. Professional competence is essential to leadership and your knowledge of arms, equipment, and tactics operations must be clearly superior to that possessed by your subordinates; at the same time, you must command their respect above and beyond those qualities.

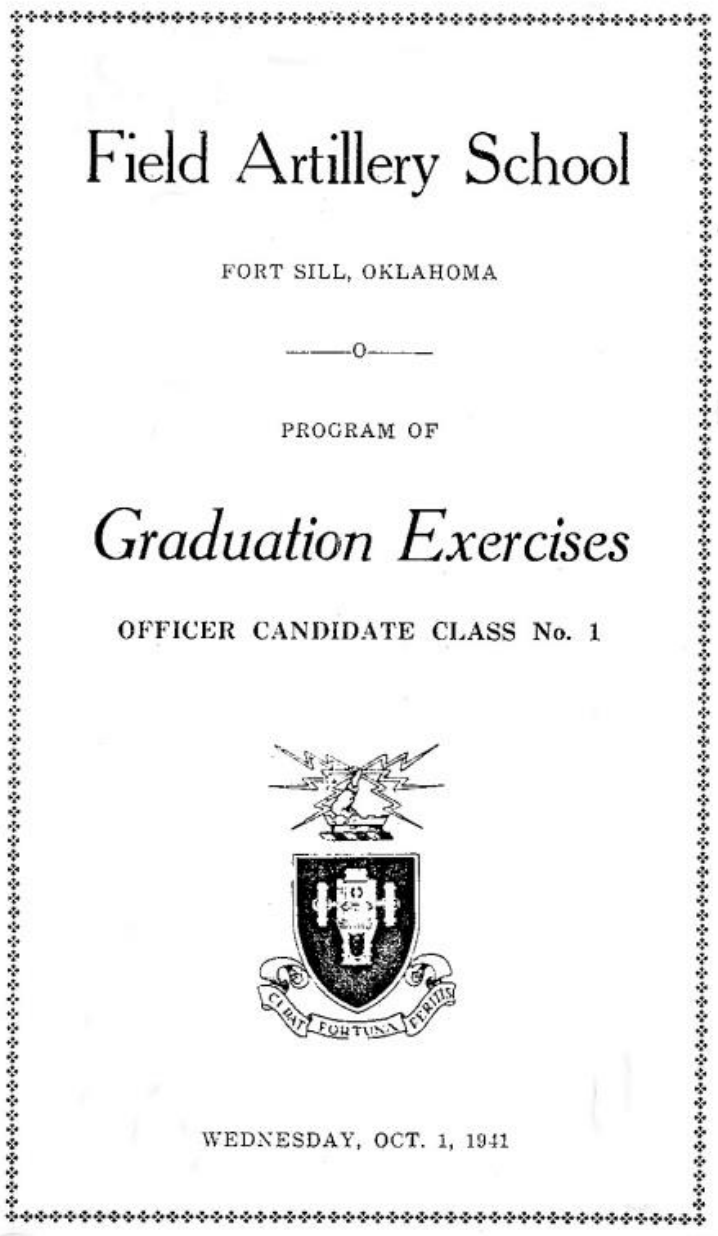
It is difficult to make a clear picture of the obligations and requirements for an officer. Conduction of campaigns and the demands of the battlefield are seldom appreciated except by veterans of such experience. The necessity for discipline is never fully comprehended by the soldier until he has undergone the order of battle, and even then he lacks a basis of comparison, the contrast between the action of a disciplined regiment and the failure and probable disintegration of one which lacks that intangible quality. The quality of officers is tested to the limit during the long and trying periods of waiting, of marching here and there without evident purpose and during those weeks or months of service under conditions of extreme discomfort or of possible privations or isolation. The true leader surmounts all of these difficulties, maintaining the discipline of his unit and further developing its training. Where there is a deficiency of such leadership, serious results invariably follow, and too often the circumstances are directed to the conditions under which the unit labored rather than towards the individual who failed in his duty because he was found wanting in inherent ability to accept his responsibilities.

Remember that we are a people prone to be critical of everything except that for which we are personally responsible. Remember also that to a soldier a certain amount of grouching appears to be necessary. However, there is a vast difference between these usually amusing reactions and the destructive and disloyal criticism of the undisciplined soldier.

Mental alertness, initiative and vision are qualities which you must cultivate. Passive inactivity because you have not been given specific instruction to do this or to do that is a serious deficiency. Always encourage initiative on the part of your men, but initiative must of course, be accomplished by intelligence.

Much of what I have said has been by way of repetition of one thought which I wish you gentlemen to carry with you to your new duties. You will be responsible for a unit in the Army of the United States in this great emergency. Its quality, its discipline, its training will depend upon your leadership. Whatever deficiencies there are must be charged to your failure or incapacity. Remember that: The truly great leader overcomes all difficulties, and campaigns and battles are nothing but a long series of difficulties to be overcome. The lack of equipment, the lack of food, the lack of this or that are only excuses; the real leader displays his quality in his triumphs over adversity, however great it may be.

Good luck to you. We expect great things of you. Your class is the first of which I believe will be the finest group of troop leaders in the world.







**First Lieutenant James E. Robinson, Jr.**, a 1943 graduate was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor during World War II, for his actions while serving as a forward observer during an attack near Untergresheim, Germany, in 1945. The area occupied by the Officer Candidate School was named “Robinson Barracks” in his honor on April 15, 1953.



**Major Benjamin Franklin Wilson**, a 1943 graduate was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on September 7, 1955 for his actions on June 5, 1951 near Hwach'on Myon, Korea while serving with Company I, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for additional heroic actions on June 9, 1951.



**Second Lieutenant Harold B. “Pinky” Durham, Jr.**, a 1967 graduate was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions while serving as a forward observer during the Battle of Ong Thanh, Vietnam in 1967. Building 3025 at Fort Sill, home of the Artillery OCS Hall of Fame from 1984 to 2021 was named “Durham Hall” in his honor on May 20, 1999.



**Captain Gary M. Rose**, a 1973 Branch Immaterial Officer Candidate School graduate, commissioned in the Field Artillery Branch was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions as a Special Forces Medic on a Top-Secret mission in Laos during the period September 11-14 ,1970.

**The Artillery OCS Hall of Fame honors graduates of other OCS programs who served as Artillerymen and have a record of heroic or distinguished service to the Nation.**

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***LTG Carl H. Jark  
First Field Artillery OCS Commandant  
July 1941-July 1942***

## **Lieutenant General Carl H. Jark – First Commandant of the Field Artillery OCS**

LTG Jark is an important figure in the history of Fort Sill, the Field Artillery School and the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School (FAOCS) that was established at Fort Sill in 1941. LTG (then CPT) Jark was the first Commandant of the Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill and served in that position until July 1942. After fighting in World War II, he returned to Fort Sill as a Colonel and served as the Executive Officer of the Field Artillery School.

He was born on June 13, 1905 in Leigh, Nebraska and graduated from Beatrice High School in 1924. Standing at 6' 5", LTG Jark was a tremendous athlete and acquired the nickname "Tiny" which stayed with him for the rest of his life.

While a cadet at West Point, Jark participated in the 1929 Drake Relays in Des Moines, Iowa and broke a (then) world record by throwing discus 158 feet and 3 inches. He graduated from West Point on 13 June 1929.

From September 1929 to January 1930, General Jark attended primary flying school. He was then assigned to the 18th Field Artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma and entered the Field Artillery School in September 1932. He completed the battery officer's course in June 1933 and was appointed assistant property officer for the Oklahoma Civilian Conservation Corps District. He reentered the Field Artillery School in September 1933 and completed the Advanced Motors Course in June 1934.

General Jark's next assignment was with the 13th Field Artillery at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. In September 1936, he joined the 17th Field Artillery at Fort Bragg, N.C., and in May 1939 became an instructor at the Field Artillery School.

In June 1941, CPT Jark was dispatched from the Department of Motors, Field Artillery School by the commandant of the Field Artillery School, BG George R. Allin, given a staff of instructors and assigned an area in the nearby National Guard Cantonment. CPT Jark was in command of the school, its organization, discipline and academic instruction. As originally planned in 1941, the OCS organizational scheme called for a commandant of candidates, an executive officer, an adjutant, and a supply officer. Each class was commanded by a class tactical officer with one assistant class tactical officer per hundred students.

CPT Jark's FAOCS headquarters was in Building 2600 (then known as CC 1). The first OCS class was billeted in pyramidal tents (with wooden supporting frames on concrete slabs) just east across the street (Currie Road). Their tents paralleled Currie from Ringgold to Miner Road. The next several classes extended the tented battery areas eastward. For a while as each class graduated, an incoming class took its place. This was the original home of OCS and before it closed 12 December 1946, it had expanded into some 1500 hutments in this Concurrent Camp area. The original classes started with 126 candidates. By the time Jark left, classes of 550 were starting each week and the staff had expanded to strength of 66 officers and an authorized course capacity of 6600 candidates, 12 classes of 550 candidates each.

During his long and distinguished career, he commanded the 1st Cavalry Division Artillery in Japan and the 2nd Armored Division Artillery in Germany. He was Commanding General of the 7th Infantry Division in Korea and the Commanding General of the Fourth U.S. Army from January 1962 until his retirement on July 31, 1964.

LTG Jark returned to Fort Sill several times during the 1960s and 1970s and visited the Officer Candidate School each time. He served as the Graduation Speaker for Class 4-73, the last class to graduate on July 6, 1973. During his closing remarks, he offered these words of advice to the newly commissioned second lieutenants:

**“Those of you who will soar with eagles in the morning should not hoot with owls at night.”**

General Jark’s decorations include the Army Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm. He passed away on March 22, 1984 at the age of 78.



*The 4.2 mile fast paced disciplinary tour from Robinson Barracks to the top of MB-4 and back held on Saturdays and Sundays was called the Jark in honor of the school’s first commandant. Candidates who accumulated an excessive number of demerits made the trip.*

## ***What OCS Means to Me***



"I graduated from OCS on March 17th, 1959 and I did not return to Fort Sill until over forty years later when my son graduated from Basic Training there.

I went, back to Robinson Barracks and walked up and down the street where I had marched so many years before. I went to MB 4 and was turned back by an "Off Limits" sign. I was surprised at the flood of emotions I felt.

All the old buildings (from my time in OCS) were torn down and gone except for one. I wanted to cry, but I was so thankful that the Robinson Barracks Gate and the one building had been spared.

No other experience has had as much positive influence in preparing me for life and defining who I am as the six months I spent at Robinson Barracks.

I am so thankful that a remnant of OCS has been preserved in the Hall of Fame, a place where we can go to reflect and reminisce on this very significant phase in our lives."

***From "What OCS Means to Me" by Guy Wilhelm Class 2-59***

## ***Introduction***

The Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill commissioned 26,011 second lieutenants from the initial opening on July 10, 1941 until the first inactivation on December 12, 1946. The school was re-activated on February 21, 1951 and graduated 23,031 more second lieutenants before closing on July 6, 1973.

The story of this remarkable institution remains virtually untold, until now. What follows is an attempt to give the reader an idea of what the school was like through the eyes of those who attended the school or served as cadre.

The personal accounts and memories contained in this compilation were submitted in every imaginable format (handwritten, voice mail, typed, PDF, email, word document, JPG, etc.) and have been formatted into a single word document and converted to a searchable PDF. We have taken the liberty of making some spelling, punctuation and grammar corrections. Every effort has been made to keep the content as close to original as possible. We apologize for any errors that might have been made in the transcription or conversions.

Selected newspaper and magazine articles have been included to expand the understanding of the school's history. Excerpts from selected published works dealing with the OCS experience and other relevant topics are also included.

Background information from the Artillery OCS archives and historic information found in the Morris Swett Technical Library at Fort Sill was used to supplement the personal accounts that were submitted.

Statistics cited in the background information are based on extensive research and may not always agree with information previously written. Every effort has been made to present accurate information based on the available historic records of the school.

We hope this compilation will help students of history and the families and friends of OCS graduates to have a better understanding of what it was like to have been a "Candidate" at the Fort Sill Officer Candidate School - regardless of whether they attended the 12-week (1941-1943), 17-week (1943-1946), 23-week (1951-1973) or the special 11-week summer course for National Guard or Reservists.

For the most part the OCS history is presented in chronological order and the personal accounts are arranged in order by Class. The Table of Contents and Index may be helpful in finding the written memories or stories about specific graduates. The entire PDF document is searchable.

***Randy C. Dunham***  
***Artillery OCS Class 10-69***  
***Researcher & Administrator***

***Penny L. Dunham***  
***Artillery OCS Heritage Society***  
***Researcher & Administrator***

***November 1, 2022***



# Chapter One

## U.S Army Officer Corps and Roots of Army OCS

The modern U.S. Army has its roots in the Continental Army, which was formed on 14 June 1775, to fight the American Revolutionary War (1775–83), before the United States was established as a country.

After the Revolutionary War, the Congress of the Confederation created the United States Army on 3 June 1784, to replace the disbanded Continental Army. The United States Army considers itself descended from the Continental Army and dates its inception from the origin of that armed force in 1775.

From 1775 to 1815 the United States was continuously involved in military conflicts with American Indians and various European countries. The United States was forced to rely on militia and volunteers, with no federal standards of training and competence. Officers below the rank of colonel were appointed by the states.

It was believed from the beginning that members of the officer corps must come from society, not a segment of it. Officers must be available and able to train and lead citizen soldiers in time of war and must not use their monopoly of knowledge to their own means.

The new country needed a school which would teach the mathematical and physical sciences and their applications to military problems, as well as to the problems of agriculture, industry and the means of internal communications. The result would be a national military academy.

### **United States Military Academy (USMA) was established at West Point in 1802.**

The Continental Army first occupied West Point, New York, on 27 January 1778, and it is the oldest continuously operating Army post in the United States. "Cadets" had been trained at West Point since 1794 and the USMA was established there by an act of Congress on 16 March 1802.

**The college from which ROTC originated is Norwich University, founded in 1819** as the American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy. The university was founded by former West Point instructor, Captain Alden Partridge, who promoted the idea of a "citizen soldier"- a man trained to act in a military capacity when his nation required, but capable of fulfilling standard civilian functions in peacetime. This idea eventually led to the formation of Reservist and National Guard units with regimented training in place of local militia forces.

**The Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) was eventually established in 1916.** The concept of ROTC in the United States began with the Morrill Act of 1862 which established the land-grant colleges. Part of the federal government's requirement for these schools was that they include military tactics as part of their curriculum, forming what became known as ROTC.

## **Officer Training Before and During World War I (1914-1918)**

**Military Training Camps for college students during 1913-1915** formed a connecting link between the antiquated system of military training at land grant colleges and the new **Citizen's Military Training Camps (CMTC)** and **Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC)** program established by the National Defense Act of 1916. World War I delayed implementation of the CMTC program until 1921 and ROTC was only able to commission 133 officers by 1920.

**Plattsburgh Camps (1915-1917)** were part of a volunteer pre-enlistment training program organized by private citizens before the U.S. entry into World War I. The camps were set up and funded by the Preparedness Movement, a group of influential pro-Allied Americans. They recognized that the standing U.S. Army was far too small to affect the war and would have to expand immensely if the U.S. went to war. The Preparedness Movement established the camps to train additional potential Army officers during the summers of 1915 and 1916. The largest and best-known camp was near Plattsburgh, New York. The participants were required to pay their own expenses. They ultimately provided the cadre of a wartime officer corps.

Graduates of the 1915-1916 camps gave the spark for the formation of the **Military Training Camps Association (MTCA)**, with the core of its membership principally alumni of the Plattsburg training. MTCA turned the Plattsburg training camps planned for the summer of 1917 into what would be called **Officer's Training Schools (OTS)**.

### **Officer Training Schools (OTS) - (1917-1918)**

Sixteen Officer Training Schools (OTS) were opened on 15 May and closed on 15 August 1917. A second series of camps opened on 27 August and ended on 17 November 1917. A third series of camps opened on 5 January 1918 and ended on 19 April 1918. The fourth series opened on 18 May 1918, most of them in Army and National Guard Division camps. Most of those candidates were absorbed into the newly created **Central Officer Training Schools (COTS)**, while the rest completed their training and were commissioned overseas. Other small camps were established Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Hawaii and Panama.

### **Officer Training Camps for African Americans: Provisional Officer Training Camp (OTC) and the Medical Officers Training Camp (MOTC) Colored - (1917-1918)**

Almost 1,400 volunteers arrived at Fort Des Moines, Iowa to be trained at the Army's first training camps for African American officers. Two groups trained there. The first trained line officers. It was called the 17th Provisional Officer Training Camp (OTC) and ran from 18 June to 18 October 1917. The candidates included 1000 college graduates and 250 NCOs from the 9th and 10th Cavalry (Buffalo Soldiers) and the 24th and 25th Infantry. The course graduated 639 Captains and Lieutenants. The second was called the Medical Officers Training Camp (MOTC) - Colored and trained medical and dental officers, most of whom were physicians and dentists who had left their practices to join the war effort. 104 Medical Officers and 12 dental officers qualified and graduated from the MOTC.

### **Central Officer Training Schools (COTS) - (1918)**

Eight Central Officer Training Schools (COTS) were established - five for Infantry, one for Machine Gunners, one for Field Artillery and one for Cavalry.

Major General William J. Snow was harshly critical of the shortcomings of earlier versions of the officer training camps. He was named Chief of the Field Artillery in February 1918 and recommended the establishment of a Field Artillery Central Officer Training School at Camp Zachary Taylor, Kentucky. He helped make it one of the best.

Drills began at the Field Artillery Central Officer Training School (COTS) at Camp Zachary Taylor on 24 June 1918 and by 20 November it was the largest school of any kind in the world, with 14,469 candidates.

On 11 November 1918, the Secretary of War directed that no more candidates be admitted to any of the COTS. The candidates in attendance at the time had the option of taking an immediate discharge or finishing the course.

A total of 80,416 line officers were commissioned during and shortly after World War I. They constituted more than 60% of the total officer strength in the combat arms:

Infantry: 48,968

Field Artillery: 20,291

Quartermaster Corps: 3,067

Coast Artillery; 2,063

Cavalry: 2,032

Engineer Corps: 1,966

Signal Corps: 1,262

Ordnance Corps: 767

After the war, the U.S. Army shrank from its wartime high of almost 2.5 million men to about 140,000 while its officer strength declined from 130,000 to 12,000. The closure of the Officer Training Schools left the Army with no source of rapidly trained officers until World War II threatened to engulf the United States.

### **Citizens' Military Training Camps (CMTC) - (1921-1940)**

CMTC were military training programs of the United States, held each summer during the years 1921 to 1940. The CMTC camps differed from National Guard and Reserve training in that the program allowed male citizens to obtain basic military training without an obligation to call-up for active duty. The CMTC were authorized by the National Defense Act of 1916, a continuation of the Plattsburg camps of 1915-16.

### **CMTCs were formalized under the Military Training Camps Association (MTCA)**

CMTC camps were a month in length and held at about 50 Army posts nationally. At their peak in 1928 and 1929, about 40,000 men received training, but the camps were a disappointment at their multiplicity of stated goals, but particularly in the commissioning of Reserve officers. The program established that participants could receive a reserve commission as a second lieutenant by completing four successive summer courses (titled Basic, White, Red, and Blue), but only 5,000 commissions were awarded over the 20-year history of the CMTC. It is estimated that 400,000 men had at least one summer of training.

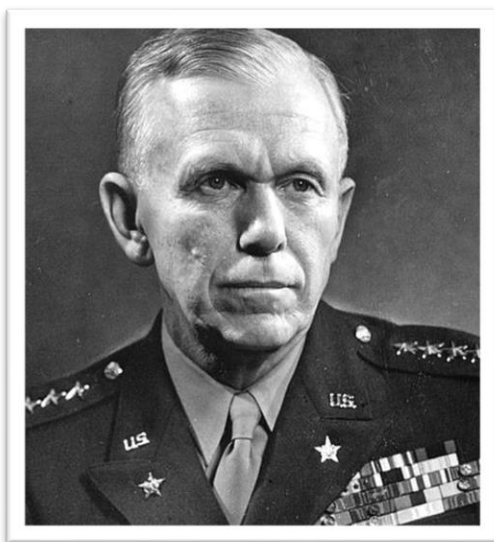
### **The Formation of OCS: 1938-1941**

The Military Training Camps Association (MTCA) proposed and helped secure passage of the first peacetime draft in September 1940. The Selective Service and Training Act of 16 September 1940 required all men 21-35 to register for one year of service by 16 October 1940. Within one year the Army grew from 265,000 to 1,400,00.

The MTCA wanted to use the same process to obtain additional officers as it had done during 1917-18. They wanted to establish a large program of Plattsburgh type camps. Secretary of War Henry Stimson and the Assistant Secretary of War agreed. MTCA felt that three months would be ample to turn the best brains in the country into second lieutenants, that an adequate officers' school could be set up within ten days and five or six qualified persons could handle the instruction very effectively. The Army and Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall disagreed. The MTCA believed that the "best brains" would be lost to the Army if men had to enlist before taking officer training and then serve on active duty for a year or more. The Army believed the draft would bring in more than enough "best brains."

The initial OCS plan was submitted to the Chief of the Infantry in June 1938 and it was rejected. In June 1940, the War Department directed the Infantry Board to revise the plan. General Marshall knew that if the draft was renewed in the fall of 1941 there would be serious morale problems. He believed that war with Japan was inevitable and that additional junior officers would be required. Securing them from the ranks would improve morale. He was determined to condition junior officers physically and psychologically by service on the enlisted level. He was determined to create a competitive and democratic system for the procurement of officers. The initial planning for OCS in late 1940 was vigorously promoted by General Marshall.

General Marshall promoted Colonel Omar Bradley to Brigadier General in February 1941, appointed him Commandant of the Infantry School and instructed him to get the OCS plan going. On March 6, 1941 Bradley forwarded his recommendations to the War department, they were approved on March 25, 1941 and OCS was established.



***General George C. Marshall***



***General Omar Bradley***

## ***A General's Life***

**by Omar Bradley, Copyright 1983:**

By the time I assumed my duties at the Fort Benning Infantry School in early March 1941, the U.S. Army, augmented by draftees, the National Guard and the Reserves, had grown to well over a half-million men. The existing mobilization plan called for an Army force level of 1.4 million men by June 30, a figure that was in fact, met. The total number would include about 100,000 officers of all ranks.

It had long been assumed by the Army planners that there were sufficient numbers of well-trained junior officers in the National Guard and Reserves (mostly ROTC graduates) to meet the requirements of large-scale mobilization. It was further assumed that after these officers had received concentrated training in small-and large-unit maneuvers and a refresher course at the Fort Benning Infantry School, they would be “seasoned” and ready. But Marshall had never really believed any of this. He correctly foresaw that too many National Guard junior officers would be inadequately trained or otherwise unfit, too many Reserve officers would be siphoned off for the Air Corps or other non-infantry duties, and the infantry (and other branches as well) would find itself with a severe shortage of junior officers.

Early in the mobilization planning, Marshall had proposed that the Army establish special schools for the rapid training of junior commissioned officers recruited from the existing enlisted ranks or from the ranks of draftees with six months of basic training. They were to be called Officer Candidate Schools – or OCS. Marshall believed, correctly, that the draft would net many men qualified in leadership and other abilities to warrant commissioning. Moreover, he argued, it would be salutary for the morale of the draftees to know that officers were being chosen from the ranks. But his G-1 (personnel section on the General Staff and the chief of Infantry, George Lynch, had adamantly opposed OCS for a variety of reasons and disbelieved Marshall’s contention that a critical shortage of junior officers would occur in the infantry.

By the time I reached Benning, a sort of gold-plated prototype OCS had been established by Courtney Hodges, mainly to pay lip service to Marshall. There were only two classes, and these were poorly organized and instructed. The men taking the course were elitist draftees or volunteers, graduates of Ivy League colleges, many of the students scions of distinguished or wealthy American families. Courtney Hodges, who was cool to the OCS concept, had told me that it was pointless to think in terms of expanding OCS, that not another man could be shoehorned into Fort Benning’s badly overcrowded facilities.

I shared Marshall’s view that an OCS, or some form of it, would be essential to fill the junior officer ranks in the expanding Army. For several weeks I studied the problem, then drew up a sort of assembly-line plan that would enable us to expand the Benning OCS program twenty-four fold without exorbitant expense or the need for large numbers of skilled instructors, who were everywhere in critically short supply. I took the plan to Washington and presented it to Hodges-now chief of infantry-and to G-1. Because of the widespread underlying prejudice against OCS in general (the graduates had already been derisively tagged “ninety-day wonders”), I got nowhere until I decided to go over everybody’s head and take the plan directly to Marshall. He was impressed – and pleased-and promptly gave the plan a green light.

The Fort Benning OCS became the model, or prototype, for all future OCS's, carefully studied and copied by representatives from the other branches. The school turned out countless thousands of junior officers who went on to fill the infantry ranks in Europe and the Pacific. I consider the founding of the Fort Benning OCS my greatest contribution to the mobilization effort. I'm happy it still exists.

**Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Georgia opened on July 1, 1941.** Class #1 started with 204 candidates and graduated 171 on September 27, 1941. The attrition rate was 16%.

**Field Artillery OCS at Fort Sill, Oklahoma opened on July 10, 1941.** Class #1 started with 126 candidates and graduated 79 on October 1, 1941. The attrition rate was 37%.

At Fort Sill, the first classes lived in tents and were warned not to bring dependents to Lawton, for not even tents were available there for wives and children.

The candidates lived in pyramidal tents with wooden supporting frames on concrete slabs. The tents paralleled Currie Road from Ringgold Road to Miner Road. The mess hall was in Building 2769 along Ringgold Road. The next several classes extended the tented battery areas eastward. Eventually the pyramidal tents were replaced with tarpaper and frame hutments.



*The first Field Artillery OCS candidates were billeted in 6-man pyramidal tents.  
In 1942 the area was converted to 6-man tarpaper and frame Hutments.*

# Chapter Two

## OCS Historic Timeline 1941-1978

Ten Officer Candidate School were activated in **July 1941**: Infantry, Signal, Armor, Field Artillery, Coastal Artillery, Quartermaster, Medical Service, Engineer, Cavalry, and Ordnance.

Four more OCS programs were activated in **November 1941**.

The Army Air Force (AAF) established its OCS in Miami Beach in **February 1942**.

Congress created the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) on **May 14, 1942**. The WAAC needed officers and created its own OCS. The first WAAC OCS class at Fort Des Moines, Iowa consisted of 440 candidates, including 40 African Americans. The class started on July 20, finished on August 29, 1942 and commissioned 436 third officers (equivalent to a second lieutenant).

In **September 1942** an OCS was opened in Shrivenham, Berkshire, England with 50 students.

15,000 Soldiers returned to the States from overseas **between June 1942 and November 1943** to enter OCS programs while 2,500 lieutenants graduated from OCS programs operating overseas.

**During 1942 and 1943** OCS programs operated in a hotel in Chicago, on several college campuses, in New Caledonia, in Natambua, Fiji Islands. An in-theater OCS operated in Santa Agata Dei Goti in the Mediterranean.

**During January 1943**, in Brisbane, Australia, 135 lieutenants graduated from an OCS at Camp Columbia. Most of the cadre staffing this school came from Fort Benning.

When Class 52-43 graduated on **February 18, 1943**, the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill had commissioned 13,690 second lieutenants since opening. That number surpassed the total officers commissioned from the United States Military Academy at West Point since it had opened in 1802 (141 years).

In **May 1943**, the junior and senior years of the college Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs were suspended. Those students who had completed the sophomore year of ROTC were sent to OCS.

The OCS Course at Fort Sill was 12 weeks long until **July 2, 1943**, when it was expanded to 17 weeks. During the period 1941-1946 the 12-week course at Fort Sill commissioned 22,338 officers and the 17-week course commissioned 3,673. The program at Fort Sill peaked in late 1942, with 12 classes of 550 in session. Most of the candidates were housed in 1,138 six-man hutments. The course capacity was authorized at 6,600.

**July 1943** all OCS programs, except for the WAAC, were expanded to 17 weeks.

**On July 31, 1943**, the Women's Army Corps (WAC) was established. The training center established at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia included an Officer Candidate School.

During World War II, at least 27 Army OCS programs around the world produced 280,000 lieutenants.

Largest schools:

Infantry	61,202 graduates
Field Artillery	26,011 graduates

Casualties from the Battle of the Bulge prompted the opening of an OCS in Fontainebleau, France in **February 1945**. OCS instructors from Fort Benning augmented by combat-experienced officers taught 30 classes there with 6,588 candidates and 4,167 graduates from February to July 1945.

OCS programs were crucial in winning World War II and the majority of all Army officers serving in World War II were commissioned through OCS.

By the end of the war, three-fourths of all company grade officers were OCS graduates.

***An American Ground Forces Staff Memo During World War II:***

*"The three months of intensive training undergone in an officer candidate school under war conditions, is far superior to the full ROTC course."*

Officers Commissioned by the Infantry and Artillery OCS programs during WWII era:

Infantry OCS	61,202
Field Artillery OCS	26,011
AAA OCS	25,191
Seacoast Artillery OCS	1,964

Total Army Strength:

1945	8,268,000
Late 1946	1,899,000
1950	593,000

**August 26, 1946:** the course of study was expanded to 24 weeks at the Infantry OCS at Fort Benning.

**Field Artillery OCS at Fort Sill closed on December 12, 1946.**

**On December 31, 1946**, all OCS activities were ordered to be transferred to the Army Ground General School at Fort Riley, Kansas and OCS was reduced to one program.

**On September 1, 1947** OCS and the Infantry Basic Officer's Course moved from Fort Benning to Fort Riley, Kansas.



**November 1947:** The OCS class that was still in progress at Fort Benning graduated and the Fort Benning OCS closed.

**April 1949:** The WAC OCS moved to Fort Lee, Virginia as part of the new WAC training center.

**During 1950** only 542 lieutenants graduated from the two remaining Army OCS programs at Fort Riley and Fort Lee.

**June 1950:** With the start of the Korean Conflict, the Army needed more junior officers and once again turned to OCS to produce them. Seven OCS programs were activated during the Korean War: Infantry, Field Artillery, Signal, Engineer, Ordnance, Anti-Aircraft Artillery (Fort Bliss) and Branch Immaterial at Fort Riley. All the courses had a very high attrition rate, with Fort Sill at 57.5% during 1951-1953.

**Artillery OCS at Fort Sill reopened on February 21, 1951.** The course was lengthened to 23 weeks and the candidates were housed in wooden barracks. A temporary shortage of barracks space resulted in some classes being placed in tents. The Headquarters was in Building 3025, and remained there until August 1968, when it moved to Building 3166.

**1951-1953:** Infantry OCS commissioned approximately 7,000 officers during the period and Artillery commissioned nearly 3,100.

**1952:** the WAC OCS moved to Fort McClellan, Alabama.

**1953:** The Fort Sill OCS area was named Robinson Barracks in honor of 2LT James E. Robinson Jr., a 1943 graduate who was the posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor.

**August 1953:** The Department of the Army reduced OCS from eight to three programs: Infantry, Artillery, and Engineer, and then deactivated Engineer in 1954.

**1954:** The WAC OCS closed because of the low number of applicants and the high attrition rates. The WACs began relying on direct commissions for their junior officers. Only two OCS programs remained: Infantry and Field Artillery

**1954-1958:** The Field Artillery OCS put several National Guard classes through a rigorous 11-week summer course.

**1955-1965:** The Infantry OCS graduated an average of 339 lieutenants annually. During this period, all OCSs contributed only about 7 % of the new officers to the Army.

**1957-1968:** Army Reserve classes had special 11-week Reserve Classes at Fort Sill.

**June 1958:** The Thomas W. Wigle Infantry OCS Hall of Fame at Fort Benning was dedicated. 2LT Wigle, who died in Italy in September 1944, was the first Infantry OCS graduate inducted into the Infantry OCS Hall of Fame.

Officers commissioned at Fort Sill OCS and the USMA during the Vietnam build-up:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Artillery OCS</b>	<b>USMA</b>
1963	401	504
1964	683	565
1965	1,146	596
1966	2,177	579
1967	6,414	581
1968	1,654	706
1969	1,966	800
1970	1,268	749
1971	143	728
1972	313	821
1973	163	943

The Artillery OCS graduate totals are based on the class numbering system, not the calendar year or fiscal year totals. Some official documents cite graduations that take place during a calendar year while others cite the totals for the fiscal year. There is no consistency, so our calculated figures are based on the class numbers. Some classes designated as the first class in a year graduated in December of the previous year. For example, Class 1-60 graduated on December 18, 1959. The following classes graduated in December of the previous year:

Classes 1-60, 1-61, 1-64, 1-66, 1-67, 1A-68, 1B-68, 2-68, 1-69 and 1-70.

**1963:** American advisors helped to establish a South Vietnamese OCS. This 36-week course produced about 4,000 graduates annually.

**1965-66:** During the Vietnam Conflict, five more branch OCSs reopened with a 23-week course. At the peak of the war, the Infantry OCS graduated 7,000 officers annually.

**1965-66:** The WAC OCS reopened at Fort McClellan.

**September 1965:** The Engineer OCS was reactivated at Fort Belvoir. It graduated 10,000 officers, mostly to serve in Vietnam, before its final inactivation in 1971.

**Seven OCS programs operated during the Vietnam War:**

Infantry

Field Artillery

Signal

Engineer

Armor (also commissioned Ordnance, Quartermaster and Transportation)

Ordnance and Transportation OCS were activated in 1966

**August 1967:** While filming his movie, The Green Berets, at Fort Benning, John Wayne included footage of an OCS class training for helicopter assaults.

**August 1967:** All branch OCSs except Infantry, Artillery, Engineer, and WAC were closed.

**1967:** The Fort Sill OCS received new barracks and administrative facilities to support a programmed input of 9,600 candidates. The Fort Sill OCS area was named Robinson Barracks in 1953 for 1LT James E. Robinson Jr., a 1943 graduate and the only Artillery OCS officer awarded the Medal of Honor in World War II.

**March 8, 1969:** Fort Benning OCS graduates its 100,000th lieutenant.

**During the 1970s** with the elimination of the draft, some of the OCS harassment disappeared, such as low crawling to the mess hall, shaving heads, or upper classmen dropping lower classmen for pushups.

Only Infantry, Field Artillery and Engineer OCS remained after 1967. (Field Artillery OCS also commissioned Air Defense Artillery and Signal after June 1968)

**February 1971:** Engineer OCS closed at Fort Belvoir

**April 1973:** Fort Benning became the Branch Immaterial OCS and the length of the course was reduced from 23 to 14 weeks.

**July 7, 1973:** Field Artillery OCS closed after commissioning more than 48,500 second lieutenants.

**December 1976:** The WAC OCS closed, the Fort Benning program integrated female candidates and became the only Officer Candidate School in the active Army.

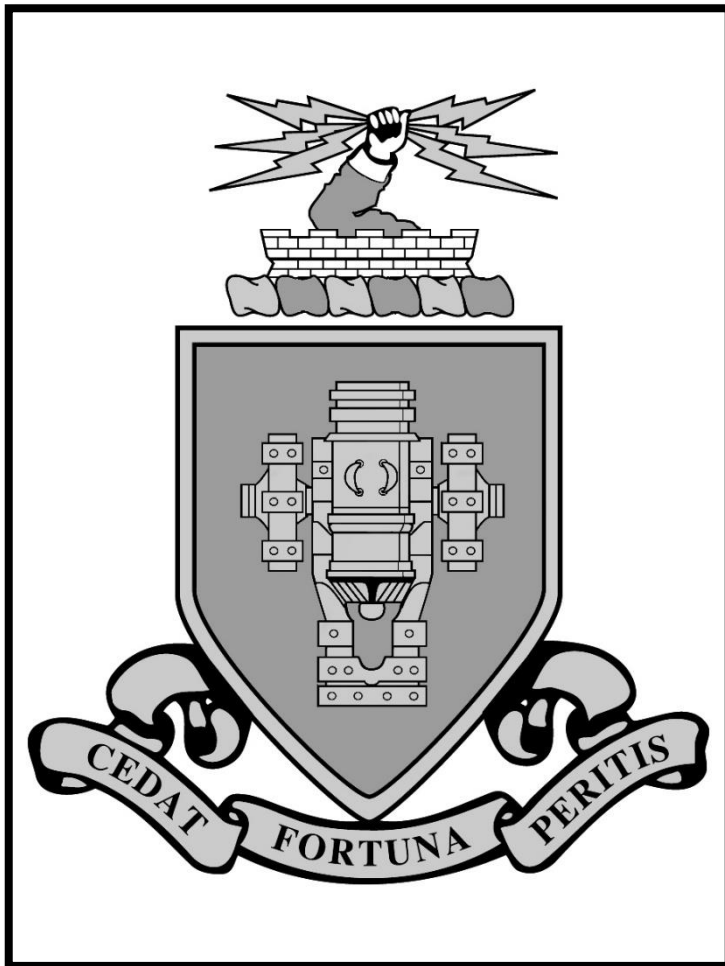
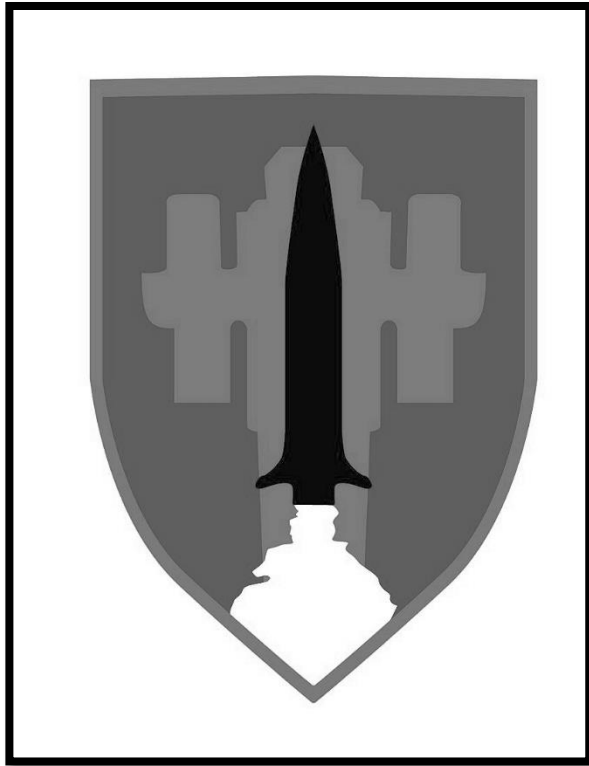
**February 1978:** Fort Benning OCS graduates Brenda Barton and Donna Shuffstall became the first women commissioned in a combat arms branch, Air Defense Artillery.

The OCS has returned to a 90-day schedule, but its mission remains the same “to train selected personnel in the fundamentals of leadership and basic military skills; instill professional ethics; evaluate leadership potential; and commission those who qualify as second lieutenants in all sixteen basic branches of the United States Army.”

**The Army OCS Motto is “Standards! No Compromise!”**

It was not until 1992 (19 years after the last OCS class graduated from Fort Sill) that the number of graduates from West Point surpassed the totals from Artillery OCS.

**The Army OCS Hall of Fame was established in 1958.  
The Artillery OCS Hall of Fame was established on June 29, 1968.**



# Chapter Three

## Field Artillery Officer Candidate School 1941-1946

**Organization - Instruction - Grading and Ratings - Tactical Officers - Statistics**

***From History of the Field Artillery School Volume I, 1911-1942  
and History of the Field Artillery School Volume II, World War II***

The creation of officer candidate schools in World War II was directed by a letter from the Adjutant General, January 15, 1941. The schools were to open July 1, 1941 offering three-month courses to warrant officers and enlisted men who had six months Federal service before applying. They were to be no older than 36, would be commissioned second lieutenants, and would have to serve a year after graduation. The Field Artillery was allowed 125 men per class for a yearly quota of 500. With the exception of the Air Corps, the candidate need not have been from the branch in which he desired a commission. A later letter directed the convening of boards of three or more officers, including one medical officer, to pass on applicants for the schools, applications to go from the organization commander through channels to the post commander and then to the examining board.

Later letters somewhat modified the provisions of the first letter. It was provided that an officer candidate with less than three months to serve after graduation could be discharged and re-enlist, that candidates who would be 21 on graduation could be admitted, and that examining boards and corps area surgeons could waive certain defects. In January it was not planned to provide any extra facilities for the OCS at Fort Sill, the Adjutant General wiring the Chief: "Officer candidate courses will be conducted within facilities at your disposal, no additional housing being contemplated."

The quota of students for OCS was doubled even before it opened. On his April visit to Fort Sill, General George C. Marshall inquired what would be needed to handle a capacity of 420 students. In reply, the Field Artillery School requested more firing batteries and about 14 instructors and 10 enlisted men for every 100 candidates. This plan was not carried through, but in the reply to it, the Chief's office wrote that the OCS capacity would be 250, thus doubling it.

A second War Department letter of April 26 provided for 125-man classes entering at six-week intervals. It stated that the predominating consideration governing admission to OCS would be demonstrated qualities of outstanding leadership, to which educational requirements would be secondary. Appointments to the Organized Reserves were discontinued, and commissions could no longer be earned via the extension course route. Men who had reenlisted to take the course, as provided above, could if they failed be discharged, if the man so preferred. Others would be returned to their organizations. At this time, it was planned to give reserve commissions to successful graduates.

Since mathematics, or the lack of it, had previously proved to be such a barrier to many students, it was mildly surprising that the Field Artillery School suggested as mathematical requirements for OCS entrance only a working knowledge of common

fractions, decimals, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. At the same time, it recommended that college mathematics not be made a requirement for ROTC students, on the grounds that many capable men would be excluded from the reserve list, since many colleges did not require mathematics for graduation.

As originally planned in 1941, the OCS organizational scheme called for a commandant of candidates, Captain Carl H. Jark, an executive officer, an adjutant, and a supply officer. Each class was commanded by a class tactical officer with one assistant class tactical officer per hundred students. As the school grew, the expanding classes were grouped into battalions, three to a battalion. In the beginning, mess and supply were handled through the White Detachment of the Field Artillery School until the growth of OCS forced the organization of a separate service battalion. The instructors were drawn from the several departments of the Field Artillery School according to a quota.

The first class of 126 entered July 10, 1941 and 79 graduated October 1, 1941.

These first classes lived in tents and were warned not to bring dependents to Lawton, for not even tents were available there for wives and children. The requirement for housing sturdier than tents was met finally by the approval of tarpaper and frame hutments on March 12, 1942.

According to size, each class was broken into sections of about 30 men, under students who were detailed as section marchers. The latter were responsible for forming their sections for all formations, reporting attendance at each, and insuring the proper conduct of the section during duty hours. They also reconnoitered the routes prescribed for going to and from all formations and took the section along the proper route. Marching was at attention at all times unless otherwise directed by a tactical officer. The sections were in turn divided into 10-man squads, led by squad leaders who reported late and absent members to the section marcher.

This system broke down with smaller classes but was largely rectified by the substitution of enlisted mail orderlies for the day room and having but one charge of quarters with simpler duties.

Students performed no fatigue details during duty hours, with the exception of those men who served in the mess halls at meal times, the charge of quarters at the class mail room, and the battalion and headquarters charge of quarters. Rosters were kept by each class tactical officer and duties rotated so that during his stay at the School, each student performed all duties enumerated above. Rosters were arranged in the larger classes so that no student did the same duty more than once.

The course was 12 weeks long. Candidates arrived at Fort Sill on Monday and Tuesday, completed their processing on Wednesday afternoon, and began work Thursday morning. There were eight hours of instruction a day, half in the morning, half in the afternoon. Drill formations and inspections were held before class in the morning. Study hours were from 7:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

The academic instruction in the Officer Candidate Course was conducted by the various Departments of the Field Artillery School.

The “block system” was used. For example, when the course was of 12-weeks duration, the instruction was conducted by the Departments as follows, with the instruction starting on Thursday morning:

<u>Consecutive Weeks</u>	<u>Department</u>
Thurs, 1st week--Sat, 2nd week	Motors
Mon--Sat, 3rd week	Materiel
Mon, 4th week--Wed, 9th week	Gunnery
Thurs, 9th week- -Tues, 10th week	Communication
Wed, 10th week--Wed, 13th week	Tactics

The motors course took three days of the first week and six days of the second. It began with a conference, i.e., class-room discussion and a movie on military vehicles and driver training. Then followed four days of conferences and practical periods on motors, transmission, clutch, steering, lubrication, axles, etc., finishing with a complete 1,000-mile maintenance service, “trouble shooting,” and a command inspection. One day was given to driving a stake course and difficult driving. The final two days were divided between conferences and practical work on marching, ending with a 10-hour motor march, and a final examination.

The materiel course was given six days of the third week. Two days of conference and practical periods were divided among small arms, the .50 cal. machine gun, the 37 mm antitank gun, the 75 mm pack howitzer, and the 155 mm howitzer. The 105 mm howitzer received four days, covering: sights, tube and breech, recoil mechanism, elevating and traversing mechanism, the carriage, the wheels and brakes, and a final examination.

Next came gunnery, from the fourth week to the ninth. The subject was introduced with the organization of the firing battery. Then came a conference on artillery arithmetic and fire commands, laying the battery, and firing charts. This was followed by practical work in the use of fire control instruments, laying the battery by compass and base angle, determining the minimum elevation, and measuring the adjusted compasses and base angles. A conference with blackboard problems introduced axial precision fire. After this the candidate could look back on his first week of gunnery and feel that it wasn't so bad.

In the fifth week, a minimum of 12 hours was devoted to subcaliber firing of axial problems. The student was graded on each problem fired, grades being based on initial data, fire commands, procedure, speed, sensing, and effect. Survey was introduced by a conference followed by practical work on the transit, intersection, and short and long base problems. The work of the safety officer was begun as was work on K-transfers and meteorological data.

The sixth week was known as the “bloody sixth” and was laden with examinations. Fire direction was taken up with conferences and practical work. The duties of each member of the team were studied. Target area surveys were taken up, then connecting surveys, and lastly, position area surveys. A conference introduced small-T precision fire. There was a review conference and practical session on the firing battery and the posts and duties of its personnel.

The seventh week was begun with the fire direction team, K-transfers and metro messages, Small-T precision problems were fired on the blackboard, followed by conferences on forward observation. The week also had its quota of examinations.

Forward observation problems were fired in the eighth week. Fire direction teams were formed and given both conference and practical work using photographs, grid sheets, and maps. Practical work was given on survey with a photo map. Large-T firing was brought up via the blackboard route, and more examinations.

The next week, the ninth, gave three days to gunnery, firing large-T precision, and bracket problems. There was a practical period on fire direction using aerial photographs and a conference on the use of the oblique photograph. The final examinations were conquered--by most of the students--and the successful had completed a good 50% of the OCS course.

After gunnery came communications, three days of the ninth week, and two days of the tenth. The course was divided into wire and radio. Under radio, the student studied voice procedure and discipline, the various nets, etc., in both class and practical periods. Under wire, he studied circuits, laying wire, splices, voice procedure, etc. Conferences were held on ciphers, codes, and visual communication.

Tactics began in the 10th week with about 12 hours of mapping, followed by class work on combat orders and combat intelligence, and on the organization and use of the battery detail. Saturday was given to a demonstration on the battery in displacement, reconnaissance, and selection of position.

The 11th week introduced the tactical use of aerial photographs. Army administration, military law, and military correspondence were taught in class. After these came a conference and demonstration of infantry in the attack, camouflage and battery supply. Selection of battery positions was covered in class.

Conferences and practical periods were allotted the 12th week for the organization of battery positions, the use of battery and battalion details, and reconnaissance, selection, and occupation of position for the battery and the battalion. There were conferences on armored artillery, the liaison officer, and infantry and artillery in the defense. All examinations were finished on Saturday afternoon.

Only two and one-half days remained for the 13th week. An entire day was reserved for demonstrations of tank traps, mine fields, booby traps, battalion aid stations, and the field kitchen and rations. The course ended with an overnight battalion problem with students acting as enlisted men and officers of the battalion. About 40 rounds of 105 mm ammunition were allotted for the morning's firing.

Candidates who had been ill could be turned back to a later class by the Commandant of OCS on recommendation of a board of officers. This would not affect quotas of incoming candidates. Where candidates demonstrated their ability by practical tests, they were graduated even though their academic work did not indicate proficiency; This ability was judged partly on the basis of ratings given them by their instructors and by their classmates. These ratings were made by section mates twice during the course at the end



of the 5th and 10th weeks. The actual process involved rating the members of one section, less oneself, in order of preference, giving the number "1" to the top man and so on down. For the most part, student ratings and those of tactical officers were in close agreement. Obvious discrepancies were investigated immediately. The records kept on the student, his previous achievement in the army, his intelligence score, the grades given by departments, of course entered into the decision to graduate a man.

In planning the graduation ceremonies for the first class of candidates, it had been hoped they might listen to a radio address by General C. Marshall, but this was not possible. Fortunately, General Robert M. Danford, the Chief of Field Artillery, was able to be present, and the graduates received their commissions from him.

This plan was followed, with very little deviation, until the course was expanded to 17 weeks on 2 July 1943. Thereafter, the first 2 weeks were utilized by the Tactical Officers and selected instructors from the Department of Tactics to give instruction in army administration, military law, mess management and other general military subjects.

With the 17-week course in effect, Gunnery instruction started on Friday of the 6th week and ended on Wednesday of the 13th week. Later the block system was modified by spreading the Gunnery instruction over the remainder of the course instead of stopping at the 13th week. Combined arms instruction started a little earlier in the course and thereafter the Gunnery instruction and the Combined Arms instruction were integrated.

General George R. Allin, the Commandant of the Field Artillery School believed that of the men in the first OCS class, many were deficient in educational background, others, in artillery experience, but he was of no mind to relieve them. The Chief of the Field Artillery, General Robert M. Danford's reaction was that he most certainly did not want men in the course who were not officer material and that he wanted them worked as hard as possible to weed out those who could not stand the pressure.

The number of graduates from the first two OCS classes did not please Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, who called it a meager return on the effort expended. He directed an investigation of why only 60.5% and 54% respectively of the two classes had graduated. This investigation revealed that in addition to the deficiencies commented on before - such as lack of educational background - that in one class a candidate had had as little as one day of recruit training and that three men had had only a week or less. It was also the belief of General Allin that men not fit to be officers should be weeded out before commissioning, rather than after.

The staff of the Officer Candidate School was expanded from time to time as the student enrollment grew. By November 1942 the staff had expanded to a strength of 66 officers with an authorized course capacity was 6,600 candidates, 12 classes of 550 candidates each. The classes were grouped into battalions, 4 classes to a battalion. Later, as the classes became smaller, battalions were eliminated until eventually all classes were grouped into one battalion. The requirement for housing sturdier than tents was met by the approval of tarpaper and frame hutments on March 12, 1942.

Each OCS class had a tactical officer in charge, with one or more assistants when the size of the class required. During the peak enrollments, the objective was to have one tactical officer for each 100 candidates. When classes dropped below 100 candidates, this ratio naturally increased. Since the OCS was organized by classes, rather than by batteries, the class tactical officer was comparable to a battery commander in most of his functions.

Tactical officers were responsible for: discipline and administration; dismounted drill and other exercise; daily inspection of area and quarters; supervision and control of marching formations and mess formations; arrangements for graduation, including parade, assignments, clearance, and graduation exercises; Saturday inspection in ranks; compilation of ratings made by class members and by instructors; payroll supervision; inspection of mess halls; student interviews and counseling; accompanying class to classrooms, service practice, and field exercises to observe students when presence not required elsewhere; rendering demerit reports based on inspections and observation; arrangements for incoming classes. As time went on, tactical officers were relieved of as much of the administrative work as possible, so that they would have the maximum possible time with the students.

Tactical education embraced formal instruction in military courtesy, close order drill and ceremonies, close combat, customs of the service, discipline, and education by inspection and example. The formal instruction was given after duty hours in a carefully integrated system which culminated in a battalion review. Neatness, precision, and leadership were stressed. The phase designated as education by inspection, included the round of daily inspection of quarters, daily inspection in ranks, and the weekly uniform inspection. All delinquencies drew demerits. Haircuts, daily showers, shaves, shined shoes, clean brass, were musts. Quarters were kept on the West Point system with a place for everything, and quarters were required to be ready for inspection any time after the student left for class.

Tactical officers were expected to detect and bring to the attention of the reviewing authorities every candidate whose character, personality, and attitude might preclude his receiving a commission and to make every effort to salvage worthwhile prospects whose background or education made it difficult for them to keep abreast of the class.

Field Artillery OCS was very aggressive and effective in identifying and securing qualified candidates. In February 1942 four-week prep schools for Field Artillery OCS candidates were established at Field Artillery Replacement Training Centers at Camp Roberts, California, Fort Bragg, North Carolina and Fort Sill.

In September 1942, a salvage school of four weeks was established which gave basic instruction in mathematics, gunnery and tactics to candidates who had not attended a preparatory school or were finding it hard to stay abreast of their classmates. Upon reporting for duty, candidates were interviewed, and those whose background was clearly insufficient were sent to the salvage school before beginning OCS. On completing the salvage school, candidates were either put in a new OCS class, or in a class doing the work they were having at the time of transfer to the school.

***Cedat Fortuna Peritis (Let Fortune Yield to Experience) A History of the Field Artillery School (pages 114-120 Boyd L. Dastrup, Books Express 2011)***

The Field Artillery Officer Candidate School prepared officers to serve as field artillerymen. Specifically, it trained them to fill assignments as a platoon leader in a firing battery, a field artillery staff officer, or a tactical officer at the Field Artillery School based upon the Army doctrine that every officer should be qualified to fill any position in a particular branch commensurate with the rank.

From July 1941 when it began operations through 12 December 1946 when the Army closed its doors, the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School provided rigorous training regardless of the length of its course. The school turned enlisted personnel, warrant officers, and civilians into field artillery officers who were well grounded in the tactics, techniques, and procedures of the Field Artillery and were prepared serve in operational units.

***Statistics from the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School 1941-1946:***

When Class #169 graduated on February 9, 1946 school records indicate that 32,432 candidates had entered OCS at Fort Sill and 26,033 had been commissioned.

The overall graduation rate stood at 80.3% (attrition rate 19.7%)

2,138 candidates were relieved for academic deficiency

2,163 resigned voluntarily

1,721 were relieved for lack of leadership

111 were relieved for misconduct

215 were physically disqualified

30 were discharged for other reasons

12 received direct commissions

9 transferred to other OCS programs

A letter dated July 3, 1963 from the General Services Administration indicates that 32,915 candidates were enrolled and 26,209 second lieutenants had been commissioned when the school closed on December 12, 1946.

***Statistics from the History of the Infantry School Volume 2 (1945):***

A statistical summary of the failures in approximately 380 Infantry Officer Candidate Classes which graduated prior to January 5, 1945:

The record indicates that 79,840 candidates had entered OCS at Fort Benning and 54,592 had been commissioned.

The overall graduation rate stood at 68.4% (attrition rate 31.6%)

6,906 were turned back

2,505 were relieved

15,837 were failed by the Faculty Board

**Note: The Infantry OCS graduation and attrition rates above do not seem to account for setbacks who later graduated.**

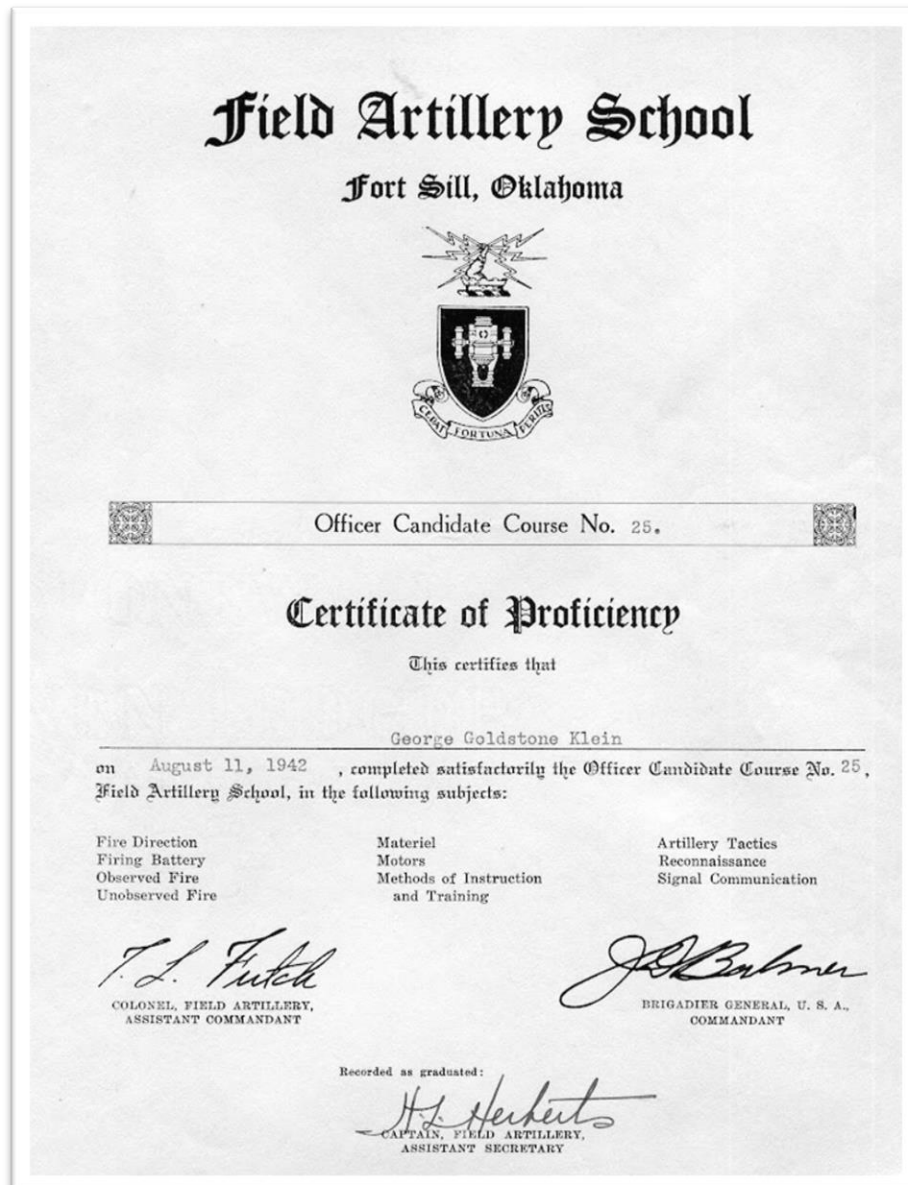
## Grading and Rating

Complete records covering the various factors involved in determining the disposition of a candidate--turn back, relief or graduation--were maintained by Officer Candidate School Headquarters.

## Commissions

It was originally intended to commission the OCS graduates in the Officers' Reserve Corps, but this idea was abandoned before the first class had completed the course, and all were commissioned in the Army of the United States (AUS). Commissions were issued by The Adjutant General, but effective 10 April 1942 the Field Artillery School (FAS) was authorized to issue orders appointing successful OCS candidates as Second Lieutenants, Army of the United States.

**Certificates of Proficiency** were issued to all candidates who successfully completed the Officer Candidate Course, whether they accepted commissions or not.



# Chapter Four

## 1941-1942

### **“Officer School to Be Enlarged”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (December 7, 1941):***

The Officer Candidate School for Field Artillery starts a new weekly schedule Jan. 1 which will see the enrollment increased from 250 to 500 students after 12 weeks, Fort Sill FAS officials said Saturday.

A class of 42 candidates for commissions will report each week. At present, classes of 125 have been reporting each six months for the 12-week course. Class No. 3 will be graduated Dec. 20, instead of Dec. 24, as originally scheduled. The students are doing extra work to make up for the four days lost.

Meantime construction of barracks, classrooms, a mess hall, and motor repair shops for the Officer Candidate School is proceeding rapidly. The school facilities should be ready the latter part of February.

#### **Charles E. Howard: 2-41**

Captain Carl Jark's headquarters was in Building 2600 (then known as CC 1) and Class 1 was billeted in pyramidal tents (w/ wooden supporting frames on concrete slabs) just east across the street (Currie Road). Their tents paralleled Currie from Ringgold to Miner. Their mess hall was in building 2769.

I was in Class 2 (August to November 1941), east of and adjacent to Class 1. The next several classes extended the tented battery areas eastward: for a while as each class graduated, an incoming class took its place. This, not what twelve years later became Robinson Barracks, was the original home of our OCS. Before it closed 12 December 1946, it expanded into some 1500 hutments in this Concurrent Camp area.

***Note: Colonel Howard was the only graduate of the Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill to return to the School and serve a full tour as Commandant (August 1965 - May 1967).***

### **“General Sees Sill Changes (Doubling of the Army to Mean Expansion)”**

#### ***The Daily Oklahoman (January 17, 1942):***

Home from Washington where he conferred with field artillery leaders on the effect the army's expansion to 3,600,000 men would have on Fort Sill, Brig. Gen. G. R. Allin, commandant said Friday there would be “some changes,” but added their extent is yet to be determined by the war department.

Observers believe that doubling the army will mean a large increase in the field artillery officer candidate school here and expansion of the replacement training center.

General Allin was accompanied in a plane by Brig. Gen. Waldo C. Potter, commander of the replacement center, and Lieut. Col. T. L. Futch of the field artillery school.

Fort Sill has been directed to conduct practice blackout soon.

### **“Fort Sill Artillery School to Expand”**

***Miami (Oklahoma) Daily News Record (Thursday January 22, 1942):***

Immediate expansion of the field artillery officers candidate school at this army post to 6,000 men was begun today, army authorities said. The school up to now had 365 candidates for 2nd lieutenant commissions in the field artillery.

Under the revised program, the candidates will be increased steadily until they number 6,000 about April 1. Thereafter 6,000 candidates will complete the course every three months. Army authorities also disclosed that the field artillery replacement center would be increased by 1,000 white selectees.

When the expanded officer candidate school gets in full swing, 600 new candidates will be received here weekly replacing an equal number who will have completed the special training. The candidates will be housed in tents.

The candidates for second lieutenant in the field artillery are picked from army commands over the country. All are enlisted men.

### **“Billy Mitchell’s Son Picks Armored Force”**

***The Pittsburgh Press (February 6, 1942):***

The son of Billy Mitchell, early Army advocate of air power as a major striking arm, will make his military career in an even newer branch of mechanized warfare.

Corporal John E. Mitchell, 21, son of the late Brig. Gen. William E. (Billy) Mitchell, said today he would enter the Armored Force Officers’ candidate school at Fort Knox, Ky., February 22.

The young motion picture technician at present is enrolled in a preparatory course leading toward the Fort Sill Field Artillery Officers’ candidate school. But he has asked for a transfer to the Armored Force. “I want to get into action,” Corporal Mitchell said, “and I think there is a good chance for it in the Armored Force. It appeals to me because it is a fast, moving arm of the service.”

Corporal Mitchell was inducted into the Army at the field artillery replacement center at Fort Sill four months ago. After his primary training, he was advanced to corporal and then qualified for officers’ candidate school. He was a technical advisor for Warner Brothers Pictures before entering the Army.

### **Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and Women’s Army Corps 1942-1945**

Fort Des Moines, Iowa, was selected as the site of the first WAAC training center. Applications for the WAAC officer training program were made available at Army recruiting stations on May 27, 1942, with a return deadline of June 4.

Applicants had to be U.S. citizens between the ages of 21 and 45 with no dependents, be at least five feet tall, and weigh 100 pounds or more. Over 35,000 women from all over the country applied for less than 1,000 anticipated positions.

On July 20 the first officer candidate training class of 440 women started a six-week course at Fort Des Moines. The average officer candidate was 25 years old, and most had

attended college. All the women professed a desire to aid their country in time of need by “releasing a man for combat duty.”

The forty Black women who entered the first WAAC officer candidate class were placed in a separate platoon. Although they attended classes and mess with the other officer candidates, post facilities such as service clubs, theaters, and beauty shops were segregated. Black officer candidates had backgrounds much like those of white officer candidates and almost 80 percent had attended college.

Although the first WAAC officer candidate class started its training before the enlisted class, the first enlisted WAACs entered training before their future officers graduated. Consequently, the first classes of both WAAC officer candidates and enlisted personnel were trained by male Regular Army officers. Eventually the WAAC officers took over the training of the rest of the corps.

The majority of the newly trained WAAC officers, the first of whom finished their training on August 29, were assigned to Fort Des Moines to conduct basic training. As officer classes continued to graduate throughout the fall of 1942, many were assigned to staff three new WAAC training centers in Daytona Beach, Florida; Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia; and Fort Devens, Massachusetts. Others accompanied WAAC companies that were sent to U.S. Army field installations across the country. Black officers were assigned to black auxiliary and officer candidate units at Fort Des Moines and Fort Devens.

On July 3, 1943 with the conversion of the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps to the Women’s Army Corps (WAC), former WAAC first, second, and third officers became captains and first and second lieutenants, respectively.

**James T. Deacy: 4-42 (KIA on July 13, 1944)**

***The Bracket (Monthly Magazine of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School) (May 1943)***

The following dissertation by LT (C.T.O) James T. Deacy has been posted at one time or another on the bulletin boards of almost every class. Many requests have been received to have it reprinted, so here it is:

An Officer Candidate should have all the attributes of a gentleman when he is assigned to the school and lack only the military knowledge requisite in an officer. Undoubtedly, all of the students of this school are gentlemen, but under stress of applying themselves to military science many candidates are forgetting the training they received at home and behaving very unlike gentlemen at mess.

At times sections of the various mess halls are reminiscent of the Bowery soup kitchens of 1931. There is a mad flailing of arms in every direction, and the nerve-wracking overtones of vanishing soup are interrupted only by preemptory demands for salt, sugar, or coffee.

There are candidates who poise rigidly over the tray, nose barely within safety limits, and madly shovel the proteins down the hatch. Others adopt a wide-open form of attack and inundate the area surrounding the tray with fragments of food, blobs of soup and coffee.

An almost universal phenomenon is the student's apparent inability to hear requests that coffee, napkins, etc., be passed. The acoustics of the mess halls have been checked so that the fault must lie in the individual auricular systems. Naturally, a man cannot be commissioned if he cannot hear.

"Shortstopping," the practice of hijacking a portion of the butter or sugar as it passes you en route to a third party, has long been forbidden by Army custom. In equally poor repute is "climbing," removing the last of any food from a plate or container and failing to hold it up for replenishment by the table waiters. In some outfits offenders against this custom are subtly reminded of their transgression by being soundly belted on the noggin with the empty receptacle. While the dignity of the school prevents the adoption of this very effective mnemonic technique, there are times when its appeal is very strong.

When you use the sugar remember that you should leave enough for two men-two full size cannoneers, not, diabetic midgets. If there is not enough left in the container, hold it up.

Eating is not merely a refueling process. It has social as well as dietetic aspects. The mess formation is one of the times when a man's ability to mix with his fellows can be observed. Often it enables the instructors who sit with the classes to reach a better understanding of men whose attitude in class has seemed indifferent. However, students should hold no lengthy critiques after a meal. The tables must be reset rapidly for another class.

Avoid excessive politeness but keep in mind that an officer is at all times a gentleman.

**Kenneth C. Crawford: 5-42**

***From a letter to COL T.E. Watson dated July 29, 1969***

At first opportunity, I will visit Robinson Barracks and your new facilities. I recall that when I reported for OCS Class No. 5 in December 1941 or January of 1942 we were put into tents. The temperature could not have been more than 15 or 20 degrees. It was most difficult to study as I recall.

***"Mass Production (Antiaircraft Artillery OCS at Camp Davis)"***

**Lieutenant John Edward Aber**

**Coast Artillery Journal May-June 1942**

Sharp, staccato barks of "Whut! Twwhoop! Thrheep! Fourp!" split the crisp morning air of Camp Davis and fir themselves into the rhythmic ring of many heels striking the pavement in unison, as a platoon of khaki-clad young men is seen swinging by in perfect cadence., their arched chests and tucked-in chins, and their perfect marching point out, even more than the text-laden field bags slung from their shoulders, and the proudly borne red and gold guidon emblazoned "O.C.S." that this is a platoon of officer candidates -the potential junior officers of our tremendously expanding army.

"But what about these officer candidates?" everyone wants to know. Surely, they can march, and a fine job of it they do, too; but it takes more than marching ability to be a good commissioned officer. Can they lead men? Can the shoulder responsibility and be



relied upon under all conditions? Do they have the intelligence and training to tackle the highly technical problems that will confront them as officers of Antiaircraft Artillery?

The answer is emphatically "Yes!" School officers, anxious to know how their neophyte lieutenants would fare under the acid test of service conditions, were most pleased by the consistently commendatory reports on graduate candidates that come rolling in from every corner of the continent after the first graduation. Doubts and prejudices as to the kind of officer that could be produced in only three months were completely dispelled. Many unit commanders, expecting raw, half-baked shavetails from the Officer Candidate School, were so pleased by the military, aggressive, and self-confident looking lieutenants who reported for duty that they wrote enthusiastic congratulations to the Commandant on the fine work being done. The most common plaudit is that graduates of the Officer Candidate School are able to step right into their jobs and make themselves useful immediately, without the period of bewildered orientation which many new officers go through before actually becoming assets to their organization. The combination of inherent capability, previous education, enlisted service, and intensive military and technical training at an Officer Candidate School seems to be an excellent formula for producing good, well-rounded junior officers.

Conceived and formulated in the calm, unhurried, peace-time years by the best military minds, and included in the constantly renovated mobilization regulations, the plan for producing the thousands of trained men needed to fill out the junior officer ranks of a tremendously expanded army bears none of the marks of excited, last-minute, wartime preparation. When the world situation reached a state of affairs that told Uncle he had better start rolling up his sleeves for action, all that had to be done was to take the plan out of the files and put it in effect.

And so, after a short period of local planning and assembling of personnel, a new offspring, the Office Candidate Camp, was born on July 1, 1941, to the Cost Artillery School, a wise parent ideally suited through a century of experience to the rearing of this fast-growing youngster. Few had any idea of the staggering scope of the accelerated expansion that the school would ultimately be called upon to perform. Original quotas called for groups of 200 candidates entering every three months for three-month courses; but that was before Pearl Harbor. Plans had already been laid for an expansion to double size, with staggered, over-lapping courses; but drawing up new local plans seemed only to invite their being thrown aside, as the proposed size of the school sky-rocketed from its original peak load of 200, to a staggering present requirement. The breath-taking scope of the program can be realized when it is recalled that the entire Coast Artillery Corps receives only about eighty officers a year from the United States Military Academy.

Even before the plan for separating antiaircraft and seacoast artillery officer candidate had crystalized, it was realized that facilities at Fort Monroe would fall hopelessly short of meeting the new expansion program. Accordingly, the Officer Candidate School was moved to Camp Davis, North Carolina, on February 24th (1942). The subsequent separation of the antiaircraft and seacoast artillery education resulted in the incorporation of the Officer Candidate School as a division of the Antiaircraft Artillery School which was established at Camp Davis. Commanding the Officer Candidate

Division is Colonel Harold R. Jackson, who was designated as Commandant of the Officer Candidate School, upon its activation. The Seacoast Artillery Department of the Officer Candidate School was moved back to Fort Monroe to form the nucleus of a separate officer candidate school for seacoast artillery officers.

So phenomenal a growth has naturally been accomplished by a certain number of growing pains; but so well were plans laid that the many concomitant changes and reorganizations have caused very little confusion. The new remodeled officer machine is already running smoothly and turning out officers at a remarkable rate per week and will soon speed up about 100% additional. Really mass production!

From the instant the incoming candidate salutes and reports in at his battery office until twelve weeks later, when he is handed his commission, every minute of his time is accounted for in a schedule that is all work and very little play. The average day includes seven hours of instruction, one hour of drill, athletics, or calisthenics, and two hours of supervised study. Eating, marching to and from classes, and policing of barracks and personal equipment take up most of the little remaining time. With the sounding of taps at 11 pm, all candidates, regardless of rank or marital status, are required to be in bed. Occasional bed checks by the Officer in Charge discourage candidates from burning out their eyes as well as the mid-night oil in after-taps studying, or from seeking gayer nocturnal environment.

“In the Officer Candidate School, here is but one standard—that of PERFECTION,” That statement, one of the first to be heard by candidates, is not mere wishful thinking. In every member of the School, from the Commandant to K.P, there is indoctrinated the attitude that nothing less than perfection will do’ only to newcomers does the short-lived idea of “just getting by” ever occur. Even a “good” job is not sufficient; if it is at all possible to do a better job, then that is the way it *will* be done.

The life of a candidate is necessarily a hard and exacting one, because twelve weeks is a very short time in which to cram a modicum of the knowledge and training a capable Antiaircraft Artillery Officer should have. However, the strain under which candidates are placed also has a useful purpose. In meeting the rigid academic requirements, in constantly facing new situations, in adapting themselves to standards possibly surpassing anything they have ever known before, candidates are naturally under a certain amount of pressure, which has the effect of stripping away their superficial demeanors and enabling their battery officers to see their basic characteristics and true makeup. The routine is severe, but it must be remembered that a man who cracks or weakens under a hard and fast military and academic routine, however trying, is not the type of man to be responsible for the lives and safety of a group of men under the much harder and more demoralizing stress of battle conditions.

Neatness, military bearing, and precision in all things are stressed even to the point of exaggeration, to straighten out a curved steel spring, it is necessary to bend it past the straight position, so that when pressure is released, it springs back straight and remains that way. Accordingly, great stress is placed upon posture throughout the course. High standards of neatness and precision in barracks are insisted upon. There is a place for

everything, and rigid daily inspections ensure that everything is in its place. Saturday afternoons find the candidates lined up on the parade ground for a detailed inspection in ranks for which arms, clothing, and equipment must be meticulously neat and clean. It is not expected that these future officers necessarily will require their organizations to attain the standards of the Officer Candidate School; but having known the meaning of perfection, they will never tolerate unsatisfactory conditions. Reports have been received indicating the effectiveness of this phase of the candidate's training when applied in the field.

For the purposes of administration and discipline, candidates are grouped into batteries of five sixty-eight-man platoons. A cadre of enlisted men is assigned organically to each battery to carry out the usual battery functions of mess, supply, administration, and police. So that every individual may be given the opportunity to exercise responsibility and leadership as often as practicable during the course, candidates are assigned to positions as acting officers and non-commissioned officers and changed semi-weekly. Except for these rotated responsibilities, there is absolute equality among candidates

No distinction is made because of rank, age or experience; chevrons are removed immediately upon entrance, and thereafter candidates are known officially only as "candidate," and are addressed as "mister."

Candidates come into contact with two groups of officers—those who instruct in technical anti-aircraft artillery subjects, and the battery officers, whose positions correspond to those of tactical officers at the United States Military Academy. Battery officers teach the basic, "what every officer should know" subjects, such as mess management, supply, and administration and are also responsible for the administration, military training, and discipline of the units to which they have been assigned. Their primary, most important function, however, is the moral and psychological development of their men into officer material. Constantly under the eagle-eyed supervision of their battery officers from the day they report until the day they graduate; candidates probably never realize how closely they are being observed or how much their officers know about them. Even into the mess hall, the molding of enlisted men into officers is extended, where the man at the entrance door may be, instead of the mess sergeant with his whistle, an officer with a pencil and pad making notes and raking corrective action where unsatisfactory appearance or conduct at mess is observed.

However, there is nothing suggestive of the Gestapo in this close, continuous observation. Criticism, correction, and advice are given on the spot as needed, and delinquencies are listed on a "skin sheet" which is posted daily on the bulletin board for observation and initialing. Consistently delinquent candidates are called in by their unit commanders, whose loaded buck-up talks are usually capable of bringing wayward sinners to repentance before more severe disciplinary action is necessary.

Efficiency reports are made out weekly on every candidate by platoon commanders, and those rating "U" (unsatisfactory) in any item are interviewed by their platoon, battery, battalion or regimental commander, depending upon how long they have received an unsatisfactory rating. Apparent misfits are given individual attention, criticism and advice in an effort to straighten them out. If, after ample opportunity to improve, a

candidate still evidences a lack of military aptitude and leadership, it is the painful duty of his unit commander to recommend him for relief. No candidate is dismissed, however, until the Faculty Board, including the Commandant, has considered all angles of the case, and has come to a decision.

Casualties average around fifteen per cent, most of which are due to academic deficiencies. In rating a candidate, academics and military aptitude are given equal weight so that a slight deficiency in one does not necessarily mean dismissal, if heavily outweighed by the other. More detailed information is shown in statistics quoted at the end of this article.

The curriculum of the Officer Candidate School is as shown on the accompanying table of Subjects. It may be noted that a total of two and a half weeks is devoted to gun, automatic weapons, and small arms firing. Wherever possible theoretical instruction is augmented by practical application. It is believed that the course as now outlined gives the graduate a well-balanced theoretical and practical background which will qualify him quite adequately as an officer in a battery of Antiaircraft Artillery.

After three hard months of academic and disciplinary rigors, the long-anticipated day arrives when those who have successfully passed the course are assembled in the theatre for graduation exercises. The thrill of graduation felt by candidates is shared to almost as great an extent by all members of the Staff and Faculty through the arduous course to its completion. Seeing their charges proudly march up on the stage in their new smartly tailored uniforms and shiny gold bars to receive commissions as temporary second lieutenants in the Army of the United States, it is almost impossible to believe that they are the same men who had reported in only three months before. Any slight misgivings as to particular candidates which may have obtained heretofore have now disappeared. They not only look like good officers—they are good officers.

**Internment of Japanese Nationals (“Enemy Alien Japanese”) at Fort Sill  
*Fort Sill Military Reservation Historic Context: World War II-era Concurrent  
Camp/Officer Training School, 1939-1945”***

After the Pearl Harbor attack, persons of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from the West Coast areas in the interest of military security. To carry out this evacuation, the Japanese were divided into three groups. The first group consisted of Japanese nationals who were patriotic to Japan, belonged to pro-Japanese organizations, or subscribed to pro-Japanese publications. This group was considered a possible fifth column front for Japan and became known as “enemy alien Japanese.” The second group was composed of Japanese who had been born in Japan, but who had migrated to the United States for economic or political reasons. This group was known as “Issei.” Their children, born and educated in America, made up the third group known as “Nisei.” These last two groups were destined to be sent first to temporary assembly centers and then to relocation camps for the duration of the war. The first group, enemy alien Japanese, were arrested as soon as possible and eventually sent to internment camps where the physical environment and the psychological abuse were much more hostile than at either the assembly centers or relocation camps. Compared to the 110,000 Japanese Americans sent to relocation camps, there were only 5,264 enemy alien Japanese documented and reported. Before they were sent to the internment camps in the interior of the United States, they were

questioned and shifted around the country to what were known as Temporary Enemy Internment Depots (TEIDs) until permanent locations were finally built. For a short time in the spring of 1942, Fort Sill served as a TEID until the permanent facility at Lordsburg, New Mexico, was completed.

Treatment of this group, as expected during the hysteria of war, verged on the inhumane. A recorded death of a Japanese American prisoner took place at Fort Sill on the night of May 18, 1942. Mr. Ichiro Shimoda, a 45-year-old gardener and a veteran of the Japanese military, was arrested on December 7, 1941, in Los Angeles. After interrogation, he was placed on a train to the Missoula TEID, where he later became irrational. He tried to commit suicide by biting off his tongue but was restrained by the other internees. He was placed under constant watch until the train arrived at Missoula. Two months later at Missoula, he tried to asphyxiate himself. In May, his particular group of enemy alien Japanese was transferred to Fort Sill awaiting the completion of the Lordsburg facility. While at Fort Sill, he again became irrational, tried to climb the inner fence surrounding the camp, and was seized by an MP on late night duty. In the ensuing struggle, Shimoda killed the MP, but the noise alerted the rest of the force, and Shimoda was shot to death. The rest of the internees were placed on a train within four hours of the incident and transferred to the unfinished Lordsburg camp. Records filed from eyewitnesses and from the FBI reports state that the Fort Sill camp was dismantled in two weeks and plans for the building of barracks on the same site proceeded. The site of the TEID is located in the current 2800 area between Jones and Davidson roads. Any remains of the TEID were erased with the erection in 1942 of two messes, present-day Building Numbers 2809 and 2810, and eight barracks which have since been destroyed, designated Building Numbers 2801-2808.

### **William R. Dempsey Jr.: 8-42**

#### ***G.I Biographies - Captain William Dempsey Battery C, 328<sup>th</sup> FA Bn, 85th "Custer" Division.***

He graduated from Fordham College in 1935 and from Fordham Law School in 1938. In 1941, he was drafted into the Army. Bill relates that the instruction (at Fort Sill Officer Candidate School) was rigorous, and the training exercises were challenging.

At graduation, he had a short but eventful encounter with the assignment officer. As he later described the interview, the officer said in substance, "*Bill, I see that you had calculus and physics as an undergraduate. Would you mind if I assigned you to the field artillery?*" Bill assented. In later years, Bill said that 30 second conversation probably saved his life.

It was during training on the 105 Howitzers that he made the acquaintance of many splendid officers and men who would later form the core of the 328th Field Artillery: Braulio Alonso (Battery A) Class 18-42, William Armstrong and George Brem (Battery B), his future brother-in-law, Bill Nuebel (Battery C), Class 5-42 and Harold Goodwin (Service Battery) Class 8-42. There were celebrities as well. Also in attendance was Shelby Foote Class 8-42, who, in the 1960's, composed a definitive three volume history of the Civil War and served as a commentator in Ken Burn's television documentary on the Civil War. There was also Edward B Andrews Jr. (Eddie Andrews) Class 8-42, who became a celebrated character actor.

Among the more benign stories Bill related concerning Eddie Andrews was the stove cleaning incident. In the 1940's, the barracks at Fort Sill were heated by pot-bellied stoves. The preferred method to clean the stove was to take a small canvas powder pack, toss it into the stove, and place a foot on the lid. When the pack ignited, the soot would be discharged through the exhaust vent. On one occasion, Eddie Andrews walked into a barracks while a cleaning was in progress. Eddie said, "What the H\*\*\* are you doing?" Bill explained the process, and, shortly thereafter, a barracks exploded with a deafening roar. It seems that Eddie had used the largest pack available to clean the pot-bellied stove.

**Shelby Foote: 8-42**

***From the Academy of Achievement Museum of Living History Interview June 18, 1999 and the Paris Review***

Well, I'm a Mississippian, and southerners are known for joining in whatever military action is going on, partly because they don't want anything that big going on in the world without being part of it. I had been two years at college, and I had had enough of that. There was very little anti-military feeling in the part of the country where I came from, so it was perfectly natural when Hitler went into Poland, I went into the Mississippi National Guard to show him he couldn't get away with it. And then in November of 1940, almost exactly a year after I first joined, we mobilized and went into federal service. During that year while we were waiting to be inducted into federal service, I wrote the first draft of my first novel, *Tournament*.

The best thing about being in the military is something that I'd had an edge of all the way along. I told you I grew up in this town of about 12,000. High school was four years, and we were segregated in those days, but for four years, every white child in that town was under one roof for six or so hours a day, nine months out of the year. And during those impressionable years you got to know each other very well. So, the rest your life is going to be spent with the knowledge of the people you live among that was acquired during these susceptible years. That was a great virtue to growing up there.

But the same thing was true in the army. You slept in a barracks with all kinds of people of every nationality, every trade, every character, and quality you can imagine, and that was a good experience. The discipline of the army, which I always bucked against with all my might and main, was also a good thing to have bear down on me at that time.

I think that everything you do helps you to write if you're a writer. Adversity and success both contribute largely to making you what you are. If you don't experience either one of those, you're being deprived of something.

I liked the army. It was so different from any life I'd lived up till then. That was before I ran into all kinds of trouble from not being able to take authority from anyone anywhere. I got into constant trouble. I finally worked up to sergeant and got busted back to private. Then I went off to officer candidate school, came out a second lieutenant, I spent the next five years in the service, reading almost nothing except army materials, learning how to be a soldier. It was an interesting time. I did some reading. I carried Douglas Southall Freeman's "R. E. Lee" and G.F.R. Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War" all over the country. I was in the field artillery and you're no good without your gun, and if you don't have a truck with you, you can't haul your gun—so you had plenty of room to carry these things around, and I did.

I went to officer candidate school at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in, I think, January of '42 right after Pearl Harbor and finished there, came back to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and was sent out to Camp Bowie, Texas, and Brownwood, near Dallas and Fort Worth, and then went overseas and joined the 5th Division, which had been in Iceland since way before Pearl Harbor, and ran crossways of a colonel on the staff there who's well-known for somebody you should not get crossways of. He lay for me and finally got me on falsifying a government document.

It was a rule that you could not use a vehicle for recreation beyond 50 miles. We were 50 miles from Belfast, so it was a common practice among us to write 50 miles. Our battalion was outside that 50-mile radius. That was the charge of falsifying a government document, and I was court-marshalled and sent home. I stayed home and I worked on a local desk at Associated Press for about six months. Then I couldn't take it any longer and went down and joined the Marine Corps, and I was in the Marine Corps for a year, and they dropped the bomb, and the thing was over, and I came on home. I went through boot camp at Paris Island and everything, having been a captain in the Army. They said, "You used to be a captain in the Army. You might make a pretty good Marine if you work at hard." I enjoyed it. I liked the Marines.

*Note: Shelby Foote wrote what proved to be his masterwork, The Civil War: A Narrative (1958-74), which consists of three volumes - Fort Sumter to Perryville (1958), Fredericksburg to Meridian (1963), and Red River to Appomattox (1974). Considered a masterpiece by many critics, it was also criticized by academics for its lack of footnotes and other scholarly conventions. Despite its superb storytelling, the work received little popular attention until Foote appeared as a narrator and commentator in Ken Burns' 11-hour television documentary The Civil War (1990). Foote also wrote the novel September, September (1977; filmed for television as Memphis, 1991), about the South in crisis.*

#### **Laurence A. Scott: 9-42**

The Robinson Barracks were not the Original Home of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School. The original home of the Officer Candidate School was some tar-paper huts and some World War II type barracks and converted classrooms close by the Balloon Hangers open ground. Our entire class (60 to start - 32 to graduate) was housed in some World War II barracks building and we participated in daily marching drills on this open field by the balloon hangers. Also, we walked off our demerits on this field on Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

#### **"Gets Textbook Back" (Gerald S. Rufer: 10-42)**

##### ***Miami (Oklahoma) Daily News (Monday August 24, 1942)***

In sheer exuberance over surviving the stiff officers' candidate school, Second Lieut. Gerald S. Rufer picked up a firing table textbook and heaved it out of sight. Three weeks later by the post came a package from his wife who, lives at Fergus Falls, Minn. In it was the textbook. Somebody had picked it up and mailed it to her.

#### **Isaiah A. McCoy, Jr: 12-42**

##### ***A letter to the OCS Alumni Chapter dated May 17, 2002***

I would like any information about General Jark. He was a highlight of my career. He was Commandant there during my OCS Class #12-42. He called the four Afro-American

candidates to his office to remind Us why we were There, and said “If You Have Any Difficulties, CALL ME !!” (smiles). He was also Commanding General of Fourth U.S. Army, at the time I was assigned to DSPER, 1962-1965. He called me to his office for a few moments of reminiscence. “Old Home Week.”

**Robert F. Dunning: 20-42**

**“Recollections of a Citizen Soldier, 1935-1945” (Unpublished Work)**

**Robert F. Dunning (1991)**

The term “90-day wonder” was one of disparagement usually tossed about by people who flunked out, couldn’t get into OCS in the first place or just plain hated officers. When I look back, it really was a wonder that the Army was able to come up with a workable system to produce the thousands of needed officers in time to fight and win the war. By December of 1941, the 27 active divisions had more than used up all the available officers from the Regular Army, the Guard, and the Reserves. Where would the many officers come from to fill the more than 60 additional divisions planned and the hundreds of separate regiments and battalions? A few came directly from enlisted ranks without further training, but barely enough to make a small dent in the shortage. The ROTC would provide others but without sufficient training for modern combat.

Officer Candidate Schools, then, provided the only workable solution to the officer shortage. AT OCS, prospective officers from all sources, the active army, the ROTC, and Selective Service could be given concentrated training in leadership and the latest techniques of a particular combat or service branch. The quality of these officer candidates would be only as good as the nation itself, and any wisecracks about the “90 Day Wonders” is really a crack at the ability of the U.S. to produce able officers for its Army. For the first half of the war, meeting OCS entrance requirements and successfully completing the course wasn’t all that easy. In my class, almost 50% failed to make it. Later on, when the manpower shortage became acute, the standards may have been relaxed, I am not sure. You can be sure; however, that the 90-day wonders were the best the USA could produce to meet the given situation of urgency.

There was one practice at the Artillery OCS while I was there that I thought to be very unfair and stupid. Candidates that flunked were treated very badly. We used to see them working as K.P.’s in the mess halls, ex-sergeants, corporals, all with years of experience and potential to fill meaningful jobs somewhere. After all, they had volunteered to better themselves and help the Army at the same time, and they shouldn’t have been tossed out on the trash heap even briefly.

The OCS course at Fort Sill, the Artillery School, as I remember consisted of 12 or 13 weeks of concentrated training divided into segments roughly as follows:

Motors - 1 week, Material - 1 week, Gunnery - 7 to 8 weeks, Communications 1 week, Tactics - 2 weeks.

Gunnery and Tactics included a lot of leadership tests and were the meat of the course. Unless you did well in both, you had no chance of passing. Many failures in Gunnery were due to the inability to solve the mental arithmetic problems required to conduct observed artillery fire. The day lasted from about 6 am to 6 pm with one hour of drill and the rest of the time devoted to course training. There was often homework which could take up to 2 or 3 hours at night, and Saturdays involved inspection and often special



exercises. All the latest material and methods of fire were taught, and lessons learned in the battlefield were quickly adapted back at the school. As I look back, there was very little change I would have made to better prepare us for leadership and combat. One deficiency inherent in the system may have been that some candidates, new to the Army and without the actual experience of leadership that many from the RA and Guard possessed, may have graduated weak in that important area. Chances are they would catch up during their “shavetail” apprenticeship. If there were failures in the product, for any reason, blame it on the urgency and need for officers and be thankful it all worked out as well as it did.

So, there I was at the first of April, 1942, heading for Fort Sill. There were five of us from the Yankee Division (26th Yankee Division, Massachusetts National Guard), Leonard Dowse and Bob Ross from the 101st FA, Sid Towle, and a fellow named Wallace from the 180th FA and me. I did not know any of them previously, but we arranged to meet at the South Station on the appointed day to travel together. I would like to add a few words about the railroads of those days for anyone aged 50 or younger. The railroads were at their peak as to number of trains and volume of business. Most of the long-distance trains consisted of 2 or 3 sections. Each section was a complete train, and the sections followed each other about 5 minutes apart. Unfortunately, the factors that eventually ruined the railroads in their competition with autos and airplanes were already at work. Archaic schedules, discriminatory freight rates, union feather bedding; the venerable but creaky Pullman system, stuffy dining cars and the refusal of railroad management to enter the twentieth century were all working against the iron horse. It was a shame, because healthy railroads are sorely missed in this age of strangled highways and congested air travel.

Just to buy a ticket was sometimes a project. For example, from Boston to St. Louis, your ticket had to have a section for every railroad over whose tracks your train passed, and there surprisingly were many. The ticket to St. Louis was almost two feet long. Later, my ticket to the west coast I remember to be about three feet long, colorful but confusing. It took the agent forever to put your ticket together, and it was best to go to the station and order your ticket way ahead of time. For our trip to Fort Sill, we would travel by Pullman to St. Louis and Oklahoma City and change trains for a local to Lawton, Oklahoma, and Fort Sill.

We left Boston in the late a.m. and travelled by the so-called water level route to Cleveland where we veered off to St. Louis. The only mountains to climb were the Berkshires where extra engine pushers” were added to the rear of the train. The Pullmans were comfortable enough, but we spent most of our time in the club car where there was an off and on-again bar. We were sitting there nursing a drink when suddenly the bartender said, “Drink up” and closed the bar. We were passing from a wet Indiana county to a dry one, and the bar didn’t open again until we hit another wet one. This happened several times during our trip, and we citizens of the Boston area couldn’t believe there were places without booze. There was a radio in the club car, but all we could get on it was twangy, heartrending hillbilly music, the forerunner of country western. This didn’t make it with a bunch of ears indoctrinated by big-band swing stuff. The diner was elegant, everything silver and crystal, with smiling obsequious black waiters but with a menu too short and unappetizing for my taste. It was also expensive, and it took forever to get a seat. I never could figure out why the trains didn’t also have a fast service diner with stools and booths

where we plebeians could buy a light lunch. In all my travels, I saw such an animal only once and it was very popular. The formal diner was used mostly by Pullman passengers. Later on, I had occasion to ride, coach class from Yreka, California to Los Angeles, a miserable trip. It was crowded, hot and steamy, and I had to stand half the way. People slept in their seats if they had one. There were many service wives and families, and everywhere were overtired brats and squalling babies. For food, a guy came around selling stale sandwiches and candy. By comparison, Pullman was the height of luxury.

Our overnight trip to St. Louis was pleasant and we arrived the next afternoon. We sat in St. Louis for a while and then pulled out for the overnight trip to Oklahoma City where we arrived the next morning. We gawked at the oil derricks everywhere, along railroad tracks and roads, in backyards and even on the State House lawn. We quickly changed to a local train to Lawton and Fort Sill. This train was a relic, gas lamps, no glass in some car windows, and it stopped at every ranch and corn crib on the way. The strangest people got on and off, full blooded Indians in blankets, squaws with papooses on their backs, cowboys in checkered shirts and ten-gallon hats carrying saddles and Mexicans in even bigger hats selling tortillas and other mysterious Mexican delights that smelled good but burned the taste buds.

It was midafternoon when we arrived at the Fort Sill station just outside the town of Lawton. Shuttle trucks picked us up and deposited us, on the vast front lawn of an administration building where a number of other recent arrivals lolled about. A loud-mouthed sergeant, happy to get his last licks in at a bunch of future officers, expressed his contempt for us and allowed that as we were good for nothing else, we might as well police the area. If I haven't explained it before, policing the area means that everyone fans out in a long line and crosses the area to be policed, over and over again, eyes to the ground, picking up bits of paper, cigarette butts, you name it. You had to stuff your treasure in your pocket until a trash can could be found. The procedure for a cigarette butt was to roll it out until the tobacco came loose and blew away and then to wad up the paper which was then small enough to discard. You could get pretty adept at this, but your fingers always stunk. For this particular policing, the sergeant, with a destructive eye for race relations, picked out the only black candidate from the group to supervise the job, much to the disgust of the good "ole" boys among us. Life at Fort Sill had begun.

Actually, the foregoing incident was an exception. Unlike formal military schools there was no hazing and no attempt to grind anyone down by unreasonable discipline at OCS. There was no time. A lieutenant appeared who informed us he was our "TAC" (Tactical) Officer for the duration of our stay. He would be in charge of us whenever we were not in class. We were marched from the administration building to our quarters, a double row of pyramidal tents with cots. On either side stretched other rows of tents for the other classes. We were to be Class No. 20. The first seven classes had graduated and had consisted of only about 30 to 40 candidates. Along about Class No. 12, the number had been increased to 120. We were the first class of about 350 of whom maybe 200 graduated. We were divided into 12 sections of 30 men each, arranged by alphabetical order. I was in the Second Section "C to G." We were assigned tents, ordered to remove all insignia of rank, and ate our Saturday night supper in one of those big 1,000 seat mess halls where you stood in line to get a tray, stood in line to get your food, and stood in line again waiting for a seat. The food was passable but in no way comparable to the

food in the old 102nd FA. They tended to lump things together and put gravy on your dessert, humorous (?) stuff that you generally saw only in-Sad Sack Cartoons. Some of the meals were strange and unappetizing to me, hot dogs, and sauerkraut (I thought we were at war with Germany?), boiled instead of baked beans and skinny greasy ribs. I had my first encounter with Mexican Chili at Fort Sill and damn near coughed to death before I could get to the drinking fountain. I later learned to like the stuff very much, but I never ate it without a large glass of water at hand. About halfway through the course, our class was transferred to new quarters, little frame huts with iron beds, springs and mattresses, shelves, and all kinds of luxuries. There, we had our own individual class mess hall which put out as good a meal as I ever had in the army.

Our first night at OCS was a memorable one. A mini tornado swept over the area, ripping down half the tents and soaking everything and everybody. It reminded me of the squall that wrecked our camp on the slopes of Mount Mansfield back in National Guard days. Our tent barely survived at great sacrifice to our bodies, but everything we owned got wet. In our tent besides myself were Dowse, Drumheller, David, Donovan and Easter. David D. David was direct from Selective Service basic training and the main line of Philadelphia. He was from a very old Jewish family and was extremely sensitive and intelligent, none of which qualities stood in his favor with the rednecks. The poor guy was apple green when it came to the Army, and he had the habit of showing his ignorance by asking what seemed like magnificently dumb questions to the rest of us. Most of us couldn't help but make good natured fun of him over his gaffes, but there was one guy in our section, a blatant anti-Semite who gave David a real hard time at every opportunity until the rest of us told him to cool it. He never did understand why we were "sticking up for the Hebe."

Leonard Dowse, one of my travelling companions was a Yankee Division man from "A" Battery of the 101st FA. "A" Battery was the outfit that the Lowell's and the Lodges would have joined if they weren't so busy speaking only to the Cabot's and God. They had their own tailored uniforms and spoke with Harvard accents. Leonard had the accent but never put on any airs. He was always calm and a real nice guy, a cynic, sort of like what John Charette would have been if he'd gone to Harvard. He could drink more beer without showing it than anyone I ever knew. We became good friends, Yankees among the Philistines. Later, when we both went to the 91st Division, we were assigned to different battalions and didn't see nearly as much, of each other.

Drumheller was a very quiet, serious guardsman whom I never got to know very well and lost track of after graduation. Donovan was from the Arkansas National Guard and had just been married. He was a friendly, voluble, extrovert who spent all of his time, when he wasn't studying, talking about his wife, or plotting ways he could get together with her. Easter, an old regular' army man, we found out later had been recently married and had already found a way to be with his wife, much to the later discomfort of the rest of us in the tent.

We had arrived on Saturday. Sunday was spent drying out, orientation lectures and the receipt of study material. We were also issued the school insignia for our dress blouses which I still have. We were confined to our tent area and study halls for the first several weekends. That Sunday night after chow, Easter put on his dress uniform, ducked under the back tent flap, and disappeared until just before reveille. He did this every night and,

upon questioning about his odd behavior, somehow implied he had permission to go home every night to his wife who had an apartment in Lawton. He went out the back of the tent simply because it was the shortest way to the bus stop. Since he was RA and married, his actions did not seem so unusual to the rest of us citizen soldiers, such credentials rated high on the pecking order when it came to privileges. All through my service career, it was the common gripe of bachelor enlisted men and officers alike that they were discriminated against in favor of their married brethren when it came to duty roster, passes, leaves and furloughs.

Our first week was devoted to Motors. Reveille was about 5:30 am by bugle on a loudspeaker system, followed by recorded band music. Then came bed making, tent clean-up, falling in for inspection, breakfast, and a half-hour or so of drill. We marched everywhere we went, in Class formation to meals and by Section to training classes. Morning drill was by Section, led each day by a different candidate. All commands by the leader were repeated in unison by the members of the Section. When you consider there were 100 or more sections within the immediate area, it was advisable for a passer-by to wear earplugs. The system undoubtedly developed a lot of voices.

The Motor course was pretty boring, all about the thousand different kinds of lubricants, lectures on the internal combustion engine and "do it yourself" repairs. The crowning achievement was to be able to repack a wheel bearing. There was homework at night to be done in barracks like study halls since there were no study facilities and only one measly light bulb in each tent. The piece-de-resistance was an all-day motor march on the following Saturday, at which we took turns as route markers and drivers in convoy. We saw a lot of Oklahoma countryside as the route took us out through the Wichita Mountains. I saw my first prairie dog town with the little heads popping in and out of holes all-over the place. The roads were dirt and there was plenty of dust. The houses and ranches were ramshackle with kids and junk cars and farm equipment littered all over the yards. These people were P'Okies (Po'Okies) too poor to have made it to California.

My turn to drive came at the very end. I was driving a 2 1/2 ton, 6x6, GMC truck down a hill, and there in a gully was a big mud hole with barriers to prevent anyone from driving around it. On the opposite bank was a ten-ton wrecker manned by a couple of grinning mechanics. Off to the side were several trucks that had mired and had to be towed out. But I was prepared. I had been warned by a fellow from an earlier class. Too many guys would get halfway across, feel the truck slow down, get rattled and try to shift gears or "gun" it. I put it in low-low right away (The 6x6 had 2 sets of 5 gears each, one set being in the low range) and stepped on the gas right to the floor. The engine roared and the truck inched down the hill and into the mud hole right up to the hubs. I kept the gas pedal on the floor, and we kept right on going, slow but steady, like a ruptured turtle right up the other side onto firm ground. The guys in the wrecker looked disappointed. Back in camp, we were again confined to our quarters for the weekend for quarantine reasons, so they said; someone had come down with mumps.

Materiel, the next course, was less boring in that we had to learn all about the weapons and ammunition we would use, the 105 mm and 155 mm howitzer being the most important. The course consisted of lectures and demonstrations for the Class as a whole. The one unusual item I remember about the course was a question posed by Candidate David. First, I better teach a bit about ammunition. Ammunition for the old French 75's

was called “fixed” because the shell and casing were tightly pressed together and could not be separated in the field. Ammo for the 105’s is “semi-fixed”. The casing can be removed from the shell in the field, the 7 bags of powder removed, a certain number of bags out off and discarded, the remaining bags inserted into the casing and the shell reassembled, loaded, and fired with the correct powder charge. The “charge” or number of remaining bags depends on the range to the target and is selected by the fire director.

Ammo for the big 155 mm howitzers is “separate loading.” The shell is separate, the powder is provided in separate bags and there is no shell casing. The shell and then the powder bags are rammed into the breech and fired. Around each shell is a groove with a strip of soft metal inserted called the “rotating band” which engages the spiral grooves in the gun barrel when fired. This gives the shell a twist as it leaves the barrel, thereby greatly increasing accuracy. Until the 155 mm shell is rammed into the breech, the soft rotating band is protected by a heavy rope called a grommet which is wrapped around the shell and also used to assist in lifting the shell into the breech. Well, to finally get to the point of this endless story, David’s question was “Do you remove the grommet before you fire the shell?” Well, all the old gunners roared and the instructor, after almost swallowing his pointer, allowed that he had never been asked that question before. (I guess you had to be there to appreciate it. David’s question was sort of like asking whether you remove the shoe trees before putting on the shoes.)

After Materiel, came Gunnery, but first I must get the affair of “Easter” off my chest. One morning, Candidate Easter never returned to our tent. None of us paid much attention, we had plenty else to do. That night after classes, our TAC Officer came into our tent and told us Easter had been picked up by MPs in town the previous night without a pass, and that the Commandant wanted to see us all. He further implied that because of the honor code, we should have reported him and that we could all be in trouble too. We knew of no honor code, but we were a worried fivesome as we sat outside Colonel Steel’s office and were called in one by one.

I was fourth, and to make things tougher, the three ahead of me were let out by another entrance, so I had no way to judge from their appearance how bad it was. I marched in and saluted. Colonel Steel was about 6’5” tall and weighed about 250 pounds with shoulders like a bull, reminding me of Ralph Farnum, my old Vice Principle at Lynn English High. I’m sure I was sweating and trembling, and he let me do so for a minute... He finally began to question me, just simple direct questions as to what I knew about Easter’s activities. His manner was severe, but the questions and his voice were friendly. I even think he smiled when I ventured my observation about married men and special privileges. He dismissed me, and to our vast relief, we never heard any more about it. Easter was expelled, and we never saw him again at Fort Sill. For a while I could see myself spending the war scrubbing pots and pans.

If we had been at West Point, we would all have been sacked for not comprehending the situation and tattling, even though Easter had somewhat deviously led us to believe he had the necessary permissions to leave the post at night. However, an honor code such as at West Point would have been counterproductive at OCS where they were intent on making us combat officers in 90 days and not necessarily “gentlemen”. As it was, we were losing candidates left and right because of failures in the Gunnery course. David David was one of the first to go. Our section lost two lawyers, bright, intelligent, typical of most

of the failures, but they couldn't conduct a firing problem. France and Farley, the Black candidate, flunked Communications later on but were allowed to repeat based on their skill at Gunnery, and both graduated in Class No. 21. There were a few others like Easter who were canned because of misdeeds or for just doing something plain stupid.

There was an instructor at Sill from Boston who had just married the current "Miss Massachusetts," a real doll. Picture this. She is walking along the sidewalk swaying a little this way and that. In the opposite direction in the street marches OCS No. 20, Section 2 on the way to dinner. As the two pass each other, the unfortunate leader for the day gives the command "Eyes Right!" which the rest of us are only too willing to obey. She blushes, another passerby with bars on squints and writes something in his little notebook. (We all wore nameplates). That night, the leader whose name I can't remember is gone.

As I have mentioned, the expelled or flunked candidates were often assigned very menial and degrading jobs disappearing in anonymity into the swollen ranks of the Armed Service. A few eventually made it to a commission anyway. In the Spring of 1945, who should reappear in our life but Candidate Easter as a sergeant replacement in the 348 FA, 91st Division in Italy where he eventually won a battlefield commission. I spoke to him and was surprised to learn that he held it against us, his tent mates, because he got sacked at OCS. I guess he expected us to deny he ever left his tent at night and get sacked ourselves so that he could rendezvous with his wife. That sort of irrational thinking was common with newly married, horny soldiers, threatened with long separation from their wives. Later in the 91st Division, we had a newly married officer go AWOL on maneuvers.

Back to Gunnery. This course was the main reason we were at Fort Sill, the bottom line. If we couldn't make the necessary calculations and give the right orders to cause the shell to leave the guns and arrive accurately at the target on time, we were no good as artillerymen. The course was a mixture of class work, field work, and observed fire practice. Class work included a lot of homework, surveying methods and calculations, the use of meteorological data to make unobserved fire more accurate and newly devised methods of fire control-by fire direction centers. This latter feature was to provide American artillery with enormous flexibility and fire power concentration. A knowledge of trigonometry and logarithms was essential and was one reason for many failures. In the field, we practiced with various surveying instruments, the aiming circle, the transit, and plane table alidade. We learned how to tie the firing battery guns to the survey by using an orienting line, aiming circle, aiming stakes and the gun sight itself. We learned how to establish the four guns of a battery parallel so that you only had to control one piece to control them all. Don't be confused if I inadvertently interchange the word "howitzer" with "gun." I will explain later and, in the meantime, if I use the word "gun" I usually mean any artillery piece.

The mathematical and survey parts of the course were easy for me as I had a math background in high school and lots of practice with the 102nd FA. Conducting observed fire did not prove to be hard either as I had seen many practice shoots and was familiar with the procedures. A typical observed fire practice was as follows: Our section would be assembled, with field glasses, on a hill overlooking a target area. A battery of French 75's was somewhere in the vicinity tied into our hill OP, by telephone. Although 105 mm howitzers were available, 75s were probably employed to use up the vast store of 75 mm

ammo. The methods of fire would in any event be identical, and if you could spot a 75mm burst, you could surely see one from a 105. Major Hoover, our instructor, would first show us the base point, a well-defined feature such as a building in the target area at which the guns would be pointing. He would then point to a target and name somebody to conduct fire on that target. That somebody had to get up on his feet, make the mental calculations and give the orders to the telephone operator to adjust artillery fire on the target. The first round would be smoke for easy spotting, then it was necessary to make adjustments in range (distance) and deflection (direction) until the target was bracketed. Ideally a bracket would be 50 yards, that is, you would sense an "over" reduce the range by 50 yards and then sense a "short." If you could bracket your target in both range and direction with three or four adjustments, you did well. Usually, if you got a 100-yard bracket, Major Hoover would stop the problem to save time and ammo and give you a satisfactory mark. If your problem went beyond four adjustments without a decent bracket, Major Hoover generally ordered "ceasefire" and you were in danger of flunking the problem. To conduct fire, you had to be pretty good at estimating distances, and you had to thoroughly understand the "mu" system of angle measurement. A rule of thumb in estimating is that at a distance of 1,000 yards, an arc of one yard subtends an angle of one mil.

There were four basic methods of observed fire, Axial, Small T, Large T and Base Point Reference. When the observer, the target and the guns were more or less in a straight line, the method to use would be Axial fire. Small T was used when the guns were off to the side a short distance and Large T when the guns were off to the side a great distance. Each method required visual estimation of distances and quick mental calculations for angles. Axial was the easiest and Large T the hardest. The only help you had was your brain and the mil scale in the vision of your field glasses. Written calculations, notes and tables were not allowed. The Base Point Reference method involved estimating the number of yards, left or right and over or short, that your target was away from the base point. Of the four methods, this was the only method later used extensively in combat, although the other three provided excellent training. In Europe, where maps were plentiful, map coordinates were used to designate targets whenever possible.

We went to the firing range three days a week, and each had to fire at least one problem of each type satisfactorily. Needless to say, there were casualties along the way, and the size of the section became smaller and smaller. You were rated either satisfactory or unsatisfactory and the results posted on the bulletin board each night. I fired five problems, all satisfactory, but there was only one I was really proud of. For my Small Tee problem, I came up with a real good first round and got a 50-yard bracket on my third round. It was a textbook solution.

For that I became known as a "gunner" much to my embarrassment. On our last "shoot out," when everyone had completed their required problems, there were three rounds of ammo left. The Major pointed to a little shed in the target area and asked if anyone wanted to try to hit it. A fellow named Crowne, a real hot shot, was first on his feet. His third round sailed into the target, and the shed was blown to bits. My small achievement was now history. How quickly they forget.

Fort Sill and the artillery range gave us a taste of what the Southwest was like. In town the streets were crowded with Indians. In the bars, soldiers dating chubby little Indian

girls, with expressions that never changed, were common. Out on the range, trees were few and far between, all was sage brush, almost like a desert. The wildlife was all new to me. Rattlesnake Butte lived up to its name, and big scorpions dwelt behind innocent looking rocks. One day at the OP, a huge tarantula about four inches long scampered toward us. A fellow calmly stood up and squashed the big spider with his foot. I learned later that tarantulas seldom bother people or bite even if picked up.

We saw coyotes and prairie dogs, but the worst pests were the chiggers, little red mites that live in the grass and eat their way under your skin, particularly your ankles. The itching was unbearable, and we spent our spare time daubing iodine on the little critters.

There wasn't much Rest and Relaxation (R and R) for us officer candidates. We didn't have much free time; for the first three weekends we were quarantined and there wasn't much to do any way. There was a service club nearby and on Saturday nights we could hear the music of a dance band. So, for our first Saturday night of freedom, a few of us gave it a try. It was a typical service club. The dance hall was surrounded by a balcony with a flight of stairs at each end. As we entered, the band had stopped, and the floor was filled with girls from the local towns sort of milling around. This was a snap we thought and pushed forward toward the dance floor. An MP barred the way and pointed to a flight of stairs. Then we saw the catch. The stairs were loaded with soldiers facing up. The balcony was loaded with soldiers, and the stairs at the other end were loaded with soldiers facing down. There were probably five times as many soldiers as there were girls. Somebody blew a whistle, a gate was raised at the other end, and a torrent of khaki burst down the stairs, barreled out onto the floor and in a snap of the fingers all the girls had partners. The gate was closed, and the music began. Meanwhile everyone on the stairs and in the balcony had improved their positions. After about five minutes the music stopped and all the soldiers on the floor rushed off and got in line again. We gave it a try, got in line and slowly worked our way up to the balcony and over to the "down" stairs. After what seemed like an eternity, we were part of the rush out onto the floor. Well, it was sort of like musical chairs. You see the girl you were aiming for already taken, so you grab the first one at hand. I doubt if I remembered, the girl I danced with ten minutes later, and the odds against dancing with the same girl twice were astronomical. There wasn't even time to work out a telephone number. After two dances, we decided we'd had enough of that rat-race and retreated to the PX to drink beer.

The only time we left the post we went to a nearby lake where there was a roller-skating rink. There were few soldiers there but fewer girls without dates. Even so, it was good to get away from it all for a while. While at OCS, I met some of my old "mudguard" friends from the neighborhood and the 102nd FA. Kewpie Hunt, Freddy Wood and Wally Comeau were all now on the Course and would all be commissioned. Wally went to the new 13th Airborne Division. We were all too busy to do any more than chat briefly. One week there appeared a new class from ROTC units at Harvard and other Ivy League Schools. They arrived without uniforms and drilled for a few days in T-shirts, shorts, and sneakers while their uniforms were being tailored (I'm only kidding). They took quite a ribbing.

After sailing through Gunnery without a hitch, Communications was easy for me. The course involved familiarization with radio and telephone equipment and networks, some of which was new since my days in the old 102nd FA. Nevertheless, it was a piece of cake. We in the Artillery liked to brag that our communications networks were more extensive



and reliable than those of any other branch, and in combat often saved the day. We often relayed critical infantry messages.

Lastly came "Tactics." Tactics was primarily the study and practice of plans and operations of field artillery batteries and battalions in combat situations. The course was also a catchall for miscellaneous administrative procedures such as the various reports a unit commander had to routinely fill out including the all-important "morning report" which establishes the number of rations a unit would receive. There was also a lecture and mock trial illustrating the Army Courts-martial system. One of our tactical instructors was Chris Herter, Jr., son of a future Massachusetts Governor, whom I had met before when he was a reserve officer assigned to the 102nd FA.

On a typical tactical exercise, we would be trucked to the field where we would rendezvous with a skeletonized firing battery of French 75's for a problem. We would assemble before the instructor who would assign each of us to a particular part we would play in the exercise, i.e., Battery Commander (BC), Executive Officer (Exec), Forward Observer (FO), Battery Scout, etc. On the very first problem, I was pegged as the BC. I was given a map showing an OP and target area, and it was my job to place the battery in a decent firing position and call for fire on a target. Without getting into details, the only difficult part of my job was to find a decent gun position and set the wheels in motion for the rest of the Section to do their jobs. On the way out I had noted an excellent gun position (Joe Hays would have been proud of me) even before I had been assigned as BC, and the exercise worked out very well. I was glad to get this important test over with early. I would have been more nervous if I'd had more time to think about it. Of course, after each exercise as with the observed fire problems the instructors gave a critique in which they were merciless if things didn't go well. Thankfully, I didn't feel their sting too often.

The last exercise was an overnight battalion exercise involving the whole class. In that one I was demoted to a Number 3 Cannoneer and was able to relax and watch other people sweat. We did get a chance to fire live ammo using the cannoneer drill which we had practiced. All I had to do was hand the shell from the fuse setter to the No. 2 man who shoved it into the open breech. We arrived-back at camp about 11 am and had the rest of the day off. In three days, we would graduate and right after graduation we would head for home and 14 days leave, including travel time. I used the free time to go into a uniform store in Lawton and buy a pair of "pink" officers' slacks green officers' blouse and cap, a couple of dress shirts, several pair of gold bars and a sturdy suitcase which I have to this day. Most of my stuff was sent home in a duffle bag. Months later, I bought a Valpak which could hold more and sent the suitcase home. Later still I picked up a couple of foot lockers both of which were sent home full before I went overseas. I never could figure out how one could collect so much junk in the service, but I did.

About a week before graduation, we were asked to indicate our preference as to where we would like to be stationed. On the list of available outfits was the 26th Division, but I never seriously considered the Yankee Division, as we had been advised that returning to one's original outfit was often difficult for a new officer. There were several from our class who did make it to the 26th Division including two who were assigned to Dad's outfit, the 211th FA. My choice boiled down to the 91st Division at Camp White, Oregon and the 96th Division at Camp Adair, Oregon. Both of these camps were in great scenic locations with reasonable weather and attractive surrounding communities nearby. They

did not sound like the typical army camp, which is usually located in a sparsely settled, boiling hot or frigid hell hole inhabited by only hateful natives and war profiteers. What probably swayed my mind to Camp White was that a fellow in our Section named Mel Cotton, who came from a town near Camp White, was a veritable Chamber of Commerce all by himself and seemed to know all the girls in the surrounding five counties. Sure enough, the day before graduation I received my orders to report to the 91st Division at Camp White on July 20, 1942. If I had chosen the 96th Division, my overseas battle destination would have been Okinawa via the Philippines, not a very attractive alternative.

Graduation was held at 9 a.m. on Saturday July 7. Some General spoke briefly about our responsibilities and how we were the hope of the nation and all that, we took our oath and were commissioned "en masse." We received our written commissions from Colonel Steel and that was it. We sure didn't feel any different and half expected when it was over to be ordered to fall in for drill. On the way back to our hut, we saw a second lieutenant walking toward us. He looked familiar, but I didn't recognize him at first. "Why it's Charlie Brown from the first Section! What's he doing wearing gold bars?" Then it dawned on me "Hell, I'm a lieutenant too. Now I can put on my own gold bars." We finished packing and made ready to leave.

Dowse, Towle, Wallace and I had arranged with one of the post civilian barbers for a ride to Oklahoma City for 5 dollars a head. In this way, we would avoid that long miserable Toonerville Train ride. We left at about 11 a.m., and I think I had my eyes closed most of the way. The guy flew the 120 or so miles at 60-70 mph without hardly ever slowing down. That was fast in those days, and thank God the road was concrete, straight as a die with only a few small towns along the way. All the time, the guy and his wife were chewing our ears. Seems like he makes this trip twice a week, and if the war will last at least two more years, they'll have their mortgage paid off. In spite of it all, we arrived safely at "OK" City, had a great fried chicken dinner at this new fancy place called "Chicken in a Basket" and got to the station in plenty of time for the early evening St. Louis and Boston train.

### **"Colonel Page Praises Officer Candidates"**

***Pittsburg Courier (May 30, 1942):***

With high praise for the work of the colored men in Officer Candidate Schools, Col. Page of the War Department special publications sections discussed the possibilities before colored troops interested in bettering their condition.

"These men are selected for certain things, not on the basis of race or creed." he said. "And the difficulty we have had is that the tests given show a difference in the educational qualifications of men from various sections of the country. This is not the army's fault; neither can the army correct it. But when we find a man who is qualified and meets the physical, mental, and moral requirements we do not hesitate to take him in for training as an officer.

### **Investigates all Rumors**

"While the ratio is not what it should be, this too can be traced back to fundamental training and the difference throughout the country in educational systems.

“Once in the officer training camp, the youth is given every opportunity to make good and to prove that we were right in giving him the chance to become an officer. If he fails, the causes are easily traceable. “The army is interested in obtaining the best possible men for these posts, which is easily understood and when stories come to us of mistreatment or practices we frown on, a thorough investigation is made.

“This is true of every rumor which finds its way into the public print. Time after time, newspapers have carried scare heads on stories received in anonymous letters. When they come to the department, a careful investigation is made in each instance. Nothing is left to chance.

“Usually, these investigations take about two weeks, when the final returns are made, after covering, hospitals, sick calls, undertaking establishments, morgues, police departments, company commanders --running down every possible clue, all too frequently, there is nothing but rumor upon which these stories were founded.

### **No Distinction in Schools**

“By that time, it is too late to attempt to offer any explanation as the hue and cry has just about died now and another fresh problem is on our hands.

“All too seldom does the army receive any consideration for the many good things it is doing. Especially in this officer candidate school. In these schools, there is no distinction, the men are trained together and are usually given the understanding that they are officers and friends. If we accomplish this, we will have gone a long way toward achieving some of the things we hope to do. We know the army is not perfect and it will take a long time to remove some of the things that rankle. But right now, this officer candidate school is one of the things we are going ahead with and every day there is a change in the situation, with the list continually growing.

### **Earl E. Strayhorn: 22-42**

I was a draftee. I received my notice to report for military service October 15, 1941 - one year from the enactment of the Selective Service Act. I reported as ordered to my Draft Office in Chicago that early morning, eager to begin my one-year service obligation. Little did I know that I would be gone for almost six years.

December 7 – that fateful day – found me a private walking guard on the water tower at Tuskegee Army Air Base, Alabama. My basic training at Fort Custer, Michigan had been shortened by our imminent involvement in Hitler’s Holocaust. Our country found itself in a two ocean, multi-continent war.

When the call went out for applicants to fill the need for junior officers, I was First Sergeant of the Military Police Detachment at Tuskegee. I applied to both the Artillery School and the Air Corps Officer Candidate Schools. I was accepted at the Artillery School first.

My period at Fort Sill was the defining experience of my life. It was there that I learned the self-discipline, the commitment to succeed, no matter the odds, the willingness to persevere, the belief in the innate goodness of man that has been imprinted indelibly on every achievement of my life since then.

As difficult as it was for me to grasp the rudiments of gunnery (I was put back two classes for failing) the thrill that I felt on that Saturday on the range, when the principles of laying the battery finally broke through the steel barrier of my obtuseness is a moment which I still treasure. It was then that I realized that nothing one worked at and persevered in was impossible of attainment. It was that day that I crossed the bar and became fit in my own mind to lead others into Hitler's Inferno. I have not doubted myself since that day. That's what OCS did for me.

***“Integration of the Armed Forces 1940-1965” (Public Domain)***

**Chapter 2 World War II: The Army Morris J. MacGregor, Jr.**

The War Department ignored the subject of race when it established the officer candidate schools in 1941. “The basic and predominating consideration governing selections to OCS,” The Adjutant General announced, would be “outstanding qualities of leadership as demonstrated by actual services in the Army.” Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis (The nation's first Black General), who participated in the planning conferences, reasoned that integrated training would be vital for the cooperation that would be necessary in battle. He agreed with the War Department's silence on race, adding, “You can't have Negro, white, or Jewish officers, you've got to have American officers.”

Officer candidate training was the Army's first formal experiment with integration. Many blacks and whites lived together with a minimum of friction, and, except in flight school, all candidates trained together. Yet in some schools the number of Black officer candidates made racially separate rooms feasible, and Blacks were usually billeted and messed together.

The Army's policy failed to consider one practical problem: if race was ignored in War Department directives, would Black candidates ever be nominated and selected for officer training? Early enrollment figures suggested they would not. Between July 1941, when the schools opened, and October 1941, only seventeen out of the 1,997 students enrolled in candidate schools were Negroes. Only six more Negroes entered during the next two months.

General George C. Marshall (Army Chief of Staff) agreed that racial parity could not be achieved at the expense of commissioning unqualified men, but he was equally adamant about providing equal opportunity for all qualified candidates, black and white. He concluded that many commanders approached the selection of officer candidates with a bias against the Negro, and he recommended that a directive or confidential memorandum be sent to commanders charged with the selection of officer candidates informing them that a certain minimum percentage of Black candidates were to be chosen. The widespread refusal of local commanders to approve or transmit applications of Black people, or even to give them access to appropriate forms, halted when Secretary Stimson and the Army staff made it plain that they expected substantial numbers of Negroes to be sent to the schools.

The segregationists attacked integration of the officer candidate schools for the obvious reasons. A group of Florida congressmen, for example, protested to the Army against the establishment of an integrated Air Corps school at Miami Beach. The War Department received numerous complaints when living quarters at the schools were integrated. The president of the White Supremacy League complained that young white candidates at

Fort Benning “have to eat and sleep with Negro candidates,” calling it “the most damnable outrage that was ever perpetrated on the youth of the South.”

**Frank E. Smith: 26-42**

***“Mississippi Liberal: A Biography of Frank E. Smith”***

**Dennis J. Mitchell (2001)**

Smith applied for admission to officer candidate school in order to escape enlisted life. From home his mother encouraged his ambitions. “You have got it in you, and I know you can make good. Uncle Harry is mighty glad. He says you will stand a chance of getting something when you get through whipping the Japs.” Finally, Smith had done something of which his family and society could approve. Waiting to hear from officer candidate school, Smith entered artillery school at Fort Bragg. There he began to study the mathematics that he had refused to learn at Moorhead. The despised math proved easy for him compared to the physical challenge of boot camp. The first formation assembled at 6:30. After breakfast they ran half a mile and then did half an hour of exercises.

Probably because of his college degree, the army decided to make Smith an officer. Transferred to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Smith continued to have problems keeping up with the training pace because all officer candidates had to “double time,” or run at all times. Smith, who could not run well or for very long, feared that he would “wash out” because of his physical abilities, but he determinedly struggled through the exercises. His biggest problem was “staying awake in class” through days that concluded with a “study period” at 10:00 in the evening. Worst of all, he complained, “We have to keep neat and shiny all the time, something else that doesn’t agree with me. Halfway through the course an officer reassured him that he was doing well, and he gained the confidence to finish strong. Still, petty regulations annoyed Smith, and he vowed to request overseas duty as soon as he received his commission, so as to escape the spit-and-polish rules that were relaxed in combat.

To Smith one of the most exciting aspects of OCS was the integration of Blacks in the ranks. He told Willie Ruth Cowan (a friend) that “we have bi-racial education here. There are two Negroes in my section of the class and only the fact that neither happens to be named Smith keeps me from being in the same tent with them.” He reported that he usually ate with “one of them” because height put them close in formation. Both black candidates were from northern cities and relatively well educated. Smith thought that few southern Blacks would get into officer candidate school because of their limited educational opportunities, but he supported the integration as a good first step.

After mastering the math necessary to aim and hit a target, Smith found firing a 105mm howitzer just another intellectual challenge. He had a talent for solving the problems and dropping the shells on target. The army commissioned him and sent him back to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, to help form a new artillery battalion with noncommissioned officers from a New England National Guard unit, draftees, and a mixture of officers ranging from a regular army lieutenant colonel to Smith and other “ninety-day wonders.” For a few days there were no enlisted men and little to do, which Smith thought “nice after the torture of Fort Sill.

**William T. Mock: 27-42**

**“Corporal Seeks Commission After Fighting in Three Armies”**

***The Daily Oklahoman (July 22, 1942)***

The war fronts in battle-scarred Europe are familiar scenes to Corporal William T. Mock, a college professor who deserted his classes to drive an ambulance for the French, Polish and Finnish armies.

Studying comparative literature at the Sorbonne, France, during a year's leave of absence from Stephens College, Mock, now a student at the Field Artillery Officers Candidate School, joined the Iroquois Volunteer Ambulance corps, upon the outbreak of the war in 1939.

Failing to see enough of the front-line action promised him by the authorities, he left the French army and went to Finland where he joined another ambulance corps. Mock remained in Finland until the first peace was signed, flying back to France to plot his course for the remainder of his stay in Europe. He arrived in France less than a week before Germany invaded the Scandinavian countries.

Leaving his organization in France, Mock joined the Polish American Volunteer Ambulance section, which had been founded by Ted Shulze, son of Mrs. Anthony Drexell Biddle, and drove in battles for the Polish army until the fall of France. His next activities consisted in helping to evacuate the Polish troops on their way to the coast to join the British troops. Mock helped a great number of soldiers to get to the English ships, but when he prepared to leave the war zone, he discovered that no room was available for his ambulance. Rather than leave the vehicle he drove south along the coast trying to find a boat that would take it.

After the last boat had left, Mock was still on the mainland. He remained near Biarritz during the summer of 1940, returning to Paris in August. He returned to New York February 19, 1941, making his trip by way of Lisbon.

He had served in Europe under three armies and except for quarters and rations, and a cigarette allowance equaling approximately three packages per week, had received not one cent in pay. His only regret upon returning to America, however, was that he had not served in Spain.

Believing that the American entry into the war was inevitable, Mock began to lecture upon what he had seen in Europe, stressing the “obvious” German designs upon the United States and also Hitler's effect upon all of the peoples conquered by his army. His belief that the United States would eventually be forced into a war against Germany caused him to be called a war monger in Chicago.

His lectures, however, were all well attended by appreciative audiences intent upon receiving first-hand information on the European situation from an American who had been under aerial bombardments and machine gun strafing's in France. His only mishaps

during the lectures were when he engaged in debates with America First members before the entry of the United States into the war.

Enlisting in the U.S. Army in February 1942, Mock considers his attendance at the Field Artillery Officers Candidate School as one of the “biggest breaks” he could have been given.

**Wilfred O. Boettiger: AAA OCS 21-42**

**Antiaircraft Artillery OCS, Camp Davis, North Carolina (June 8 - August 28, 1942)**

We got off the train at Wilmington, North Carolina, and were taken by bus to Camp Davis on the Atlantic coast north of Wilmington. The sandy land was flat and sparsely wooded with small pine trees. It was my first view of the Atlantic, which struck me as a big gray lake with lapping waves, unlike the surging blue Pacific with its foamy breakers.

The bus pulled into camp and dropped us at the headquarters of the Officer Candidate School. The camp had been built for the newly created Army Antiaircraft School. It had broken away from the old Seacoast Artillery branch school at Fort Monroe, Virginia, which had until then been responsible for antiaircraft training courses. The entire camp was constructed of wood-frame buildings, with two-story barracks and classrooms, and one-story offices and mess halls. They were painted a cream color, which blended nicely with the red signs with gold cross cannons that identified the various buildings.

The commanding general of the antiaircraft school was in charge of the post as well as the school. The school provided basic and advanced courses for officers and enlisted specialists as well as for officer candidates. It also developed and tested new weapons and equipment and wrote the manuals for antiaircraft warfare. They had a large staff of instructors, many classrooms and training areas, and all sorts of training aids. An Army Antiaircraft School battalion maintained firing ranges for test and training purposes and was equipped with all the types of weapons and equipment used in the training.

We were met by our officer instructors and learned that we were Class 21, which would establish our date of rank as officers if we graduated. We were assigned to platoons for training purposes.

My barracks, like all the others, was a standard two-story building designed and built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at military posts all over the country. It was identical to the one I had lived in at Fort Lewis. Our platoon of candidates occupied one barrack, and we were supervised and trained to be officers by several lieutenants. The lieutenant in charge of us was a West Pointer, considered very strict and tough. He would be harassing us for eleven weeks, trying to make eleven-week wonders out of us.

From the first our platoon was organized into sections and squads. Candidates were selected to serve as platoon leader, section chiefs, and squad leaders, and were rated on their performance as leaders in these positions. If they performed well and avoided other hazards, they were not placed in further positions of responsibility. Those who had problems continued to be placed in charge and continued to try proving themselves, under the ruthless discipline and criticism of our eagle-eyed and raptor-clawed lieutenants.

By the luck of the draw, I was selected as the platoon leader for the first week. During that week, I supervised the setting up of the bunks, footlockers, the hanging of uniforms, and cleaning and preparing the barracks for inspection. I had to lead the platoon out to the drill field and conduct physical training and infantry drill. It was the sort of thing that I had learned to do well in good old Fightin' D. Also, I had a voice that projected well and wasn't afraid to snap out commands. Furthermore, I simply loved drilling out on the drill field with the bands playing.

After the first week, the instructors left me alone. The only problem I encountered was because of the bend in my little finger that Jackie Robinson had broken when we had gone up for the same pass in a night high school football game in the Pasadena Rose Bowl. At hand salute, the fingers of the right hand are supposed to be straight and parallel. They wanted me to go to the hospital and have my crooked finger broken and reset. "Hells bells," I told them. "This is my souvenir of Jackie Robinson, and I want to keep it." They decided not to make an issue of it.

In addition to training in the barracks and on the drill field, we attended classes in map reading, sanitation, first aid, defense against chemical warfare, military discipline and courtesy, administration, mess management, antiaircraft artillery weapons and equipment, and heavy and automatic weapons gunnery. We went to the firing range on the beach and fired all the weapons, and out to a maneuver area to conduct field problems.

In my platoon were three graduates of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology without prior military training. They flunked a field problem that involved emplacing a machine gun on the flat roof of a shack in the maneuver area. Most of us could see by common sense that the shed was strong enough to support the gun, but the MIT fellows spent an hour or so trying to estimate the stresses and strains on the shed from an engineering point of view. The battle couldn't wait for them.

It was hot and humid that summer, and we spent many hours standing in formation out on the asphalt-surfaced drill field. In time, your shoes sank into the soft tar and made imprints there. It sort of toasted the feet, too.

Late in August, our trials were over. Those of us who passed the course were given a clothing allowance and told to go to the tailor and get our officer's uniforms. It was my first tailor-made uniform. The jacket was a dark green gabardine.

### **Leif C. Reinertsen: Class 27-42**

One of the most commonplace "gigs" handed out in 1942 was for failure to have a full water bucket hanging outside your hutment. Between the long walk back from the water source and the evaporation by the effects of the summer Oklahoma sun, you really never had a chance. As I recall, the water level had to be less than half an inch from the top rim of the bucket, an almost impossible feat. We assumed our mettle was being tested, so quietly accepted the "gigs," and worked harder to avoid others. My 90 days at OCS, double-timing between classes, trying to absorb the vast amount of material presented in the most concentrated training I have ever undertaken, are unforgettable.



**David H Robertson: 28-42**

In the late winter of 1942, I spoke to my battery commander about the possibility of going to OCS. He grunted an approval and nothing more was said and apparently nothing more happened at the time. Remember, this was 1942, the army was in a frantic endeavor to get the units combat ready, find enough officers to lead the massive military force being built up. Paperwork was not at a premium as it is today, and the BC's grunt of approval was all the confirmation of my request I needed. My assignment was Chief of Gun Section # 3. However, for several weeks I was the NCO in charge of training a group of newly assigned recruits. In fact, I was the only NCO on this detail. It wasn't that we were stretched that thin. The prevailing concept of leadership was not to send multiple leaders on a task when one person could do it alone. My feelings at this time were that if I could single handed train this platoon, I could surely handle what 2nd Lieutenants are supposed to do. The training of the recruits was completed. I was ready to go back to my gun section duties when the 1st Sergeant told me pack up my stuff-- you are leaving for OCS tomorrow.

On September 3, 1942, following thirteen weeks of Field Artillery Officer Candidate School (OCS), 300 or so khaki clad young men stood up, raised their right hands, mumbled the correct words which included their full names and "so help me, God," threw their red piped overseas caps into the air, and, presto, there I was: a 2nd Lieutenant of Field Artillery, Army of the United States, to serve as a commissioned officer in the Army of the United States with no status or tenure what so ever. The commission could be terminated at any time and for sure six months following the end of World War II hostilities.

OCS classes were organized alphabetically into sections of approximately 32 persons. My section had 31 candidates with names from Rimmler to Seamans. Naturally, a candidate named Rufus L. Roberts would stand near to me in formation. In fact, Rufus was so close to me that he stood on my right for the section picture and bunked in the same hut on an adjacent cot. It was only natural that we became reasonably good friends. Rufus had been a Staff Sergeant in the 1st Battalion, 119th Field Artillery Regiment (155 mm Gun). The 119th was a Michigan National Guard Regiment ordered into Federal Service in April 1941 destined to remain on active duty until demobilized or deactivated. During the thirteen weeks we were together Rufus extolled the joys of heavy artillery while I spoke of the delights of light artillery. Prior to receiving our commissions and orders we were permitted to request specific assignments to organizations to which we would like to be assigned. My first choice was the 119th Field Artillery (based on Rufus' recommendation); my second choice was a 240 mm Howitzer Regiment, and my third choice I don't remember. Neither do I remember what Rufus had requested. Upon graduation, Rufus received orders for the 8th Infantry Division; I was ordered to report to the 2nd Army Replacement Depot in Nashville, Tennessee for further reassignment.

Looking back after all these years I have a feeling that the most important part of the development of my career was Field Artillery OCS Class 28 graduating September 3, 1942. The class was organized, the curriculum was organized, the instructors were organized, and even the TAC Officers, God bless them, were organized. The theme of the entire 13 weeks (except in the case of Class 28, it was only 12 weeks) was devoted to teaching us what we needed to know to be Field Artillery Officers. There was no Mickey Mouse scrubbing the barracks floor, no close order drill except marching to and from classrooms

and the 5,000-man mess hall, no meaningless calisthenics, or strutting around with red epaulets and wearing only starched and pressed fatigues.

Weeks one and two was spent in Motors: motor marching and vehicle maintenance. This was good stuff since all of us would be confronted with motor vehicles and the need to know how to move and maintain. Also knowing that newly minted second lieutenants are generally given the additional duty of Battery Motor Officer, it behooved us to learn what we could about truck maintenance. We learned all about first echelon maintenance and the 1,000-mile check. I will always remember three things out of the motors segment of OCS: how to pack grease into a wheel bearing; that the wheel bearing grease in use at that time was water soluble and bearings must be repacked after deep fording; and the hell the Sergeant in Charge gave me for not tightening the wheel lug nuts as hard as I could. Week three was Materiel which included introduction to the standard pieces presently used by active Field Artillery Battalions: namely the 75 mm Gun, the 105 mm Howitzer, and the old World War I Schneider 155 mm Howitzer with its big tires, short trail and green bag and white bag powder charges. There was a short film clip showing the newly minted 8-inch howitzer. That was our introduction to the hardware we'd be commanding and shooting when the big event got underway.

Then six solid weeks of gunnery. This was the piece de resistance of the entire course. It was quite obvious from the introduction to Gunnery that the officers of my former unit were woefully ill prepared to be real Field Artillery Officers. Gunnery seems to have started with such basic things as azimuth, elevation, angle of site, deflection, firing angle, and aiming angle. Then it was on to the S factor, forks, bringing the shot to line, and axial, Small T, and Big T commands.

Gunnery introduced us to such esoteric things as the range-deflection fan, the GFT (Graphical Firing Table) and some new titles for men who worked in the S-3 Section: FDO (Fire Direction Officer), HCO (Horizontal Control Operator); VCO (Vertical Control Operator), and Computers (actually field artillerymen who converted the items from the FDO, HCO, and VCO into commands which were transmitted to the firing batteries. Then there was observed fire. The candidates were trucked out to an Observation Post, carrying our folding chairs with us as usual, and the practice began. The OIC (Officer in Charge) would designate a target, the candidates would determine the data to send to the guns, a "victim" was named, and the rest of the firing problem was up to the candidate. Each mission was graded E, S, or U. Too many U's and you were out of OCS. We started with axial fire, moved onto Small T, and completed Observed Fires with Large T. And we learned about base points, registration points, high burst registration, the mysteries of the Met Message which included the application of powder temperature, weight of the projectile, head and tail winds, air temperature, and air density (a combination of temperature and humidity). Goodbye to the candidate who couldn't muster up the intricacies of observed fire, the magic of unobserved fires and finally the "firing battery."

The final event of gunnery was the four-hour period when the candidates played cannoneer, gunner, chief of section, and executive officer (the officer in command of the guns) in a 75mm gun battery. Assignments were rotated so that everyone got to load, fire, or set the sights. Except for me. In four rotations I was the Safety Officer -- that is the officer in charge to see that all rounds were fired into the impact area. To climax my

career at OCS as a Safety Officer the old ploy of loading a dummy shell into of the guns and then calling out “Misfire” was pulled on me.

After Gunnery there was a week of Communications which was fairly dumb stuff as there weren’t any radios we could use. But we did learn all about line lines, EE-8 telephones, 6 and 12 drop switchboards, twisted pairs of telephone wire, splicing breaks, and the esoteric of simplex and duplex connections. After this it was three weeks of Tactics which included a few dry firing field exercises, the mechanics of the Battery Property Book, a little bit of military law and courts-martial, and some odds and ends not previously covered. Believe it or not, it was beginning to look like “down hill” from now on.

One of the mysteries of OCS was the disappearance of candidates who just couldn’t “make the grade.” One case I remember was a candidate being called out of formation just before we marched off to class. No one ever saw him again or had the slightest idea what his derelictions had been. Another case was the hapless section marcher who marched the section through a mud muddle, then up against the side of a building, on our way to the mid-day meal. A TAC Officer called him over. When we returned to our huts after lunch, he was gone, gone, gone. Apparently it was school policy that a failed candidate would have no contact with his brethren after being “found.”

After all these years I have a solid remembrance that my learning experience at the Field Artillery OCS was the absolute best educational experience I had which includes several short courses, several years of college, and the Army’s famed CGSC (Command and General Staff College).

**Robert William Patenge: 30-42**

Officer Candidate School made it possible for me to grow in maturity as well as leadership. The education I received in the Section 11 of Class 30 of 1942 made all the difference in my life.

The three years I spent as an artilleryman in the 43rd Division Artillery of the 43rd Infantry Division in the Southwest Pacific gave me opportunity to exercise this knowledge in military life. Our Colonel Wilbur Brock saw to it that we younger officers were exercised in all of the jobs in the Battalion as well as a great amount of forward observing, which is the main combat use of every artilleryman.

After the World War II was over and we were discharged, I enlisted in the reserve and served until I had accumulated eighteen and one-half years of accredited service before I was discharged as over age in grade. Here, I learned so much that it made everything more understandable.

This brings to mind, my autographed copy, of the book “*The Good War - The Oral History of World War Two*” by Studs Terkel. For me World War Two was a Good War. All of these experiences and knowledge served me well in my marketing occupation to becoming the very successful Michigan Regional Manager for Lincoln St. Louis a Division of the McNeil Corporation.

I also believe it helped me in my married life with my wife who was a WAC in the Army Air Corps. We grew up together, living in the same neighborhood and our parents were

friends. We went through the University together. Our son, David, was in the Army during the War-Vietnam and stationed at Fort Benning for his tour of service. He has stated many times that this service has been of more help than his undergraduate schooling at the university. I certainly appreciate that I had a chance to serve my Country in the Field Artillery of the Army of the United States.

**George I. Connolly: 31-42**

I am writing this letter at the suggestion of an old comrade in arms, Mr. Robert C. Baldrige, who is interested in the history of the FAOCS. (Mr. Baldrige is the brother of Malcolm Baldrige (Malcolm changed the spelling of his last name). This is the story of the first Field Artillery ROTC cadets to attend the FAOCS at Fort Sill in June 1942.

In June of that year there were approximately 90 ROTC graduates of Field Artillery ROTC units across the country who had not completed summer camp in 1941 for various reasons—health, etc. They were told by their Professor of Military Science and Tactics that they had fulfilled all the necessary requirements except for summer camp and on successful completion of such camp, they would be commissioned. The summer camp in 1941 was of six weeks duration.

These camps were usually adjacent to Army posts, erected for this purpose, staffed by the ROTC instructors from the schools involved and supported by an active Army unit. They were designed to instruct the cadets in basic soldiering, small arms training, living in the field, leadership techniques and Field Artillery instruction to complement their theoretical classroom work. Of course, after Pearl Harbor a special ROTC camp was the last thing, the Army wanted to be bothered with.

Orders were issued directing the group to report to Fort Sill to attend Battery Officers Course 62 1/2 (many of their commissioned classmates were in class 62). On 21 June 1942 the eager cadets arrived in various uniforms, some even in “blues” and “pinks” and “Sam Brown belts.” In no time they were informed that they would attend OCS Class 31 and to change immediately into HBT fatigues. What a come down!!

These were unhappy campers. The academic work was not difficult. Since we were out of condition and there were differences in the quality of training, they had at their institutions. They had expected a gentlemen’s course and not the hard realities of the OCS Program. They were not given an oath, had no serial number and of course no dog tags. Furthermore, they could not leave.

About two or three left due to academics. One was a graduate of a prominent military college in the east who was great at polishing his shoes and showing his press clippings as a great football player, but academically he did not last two weeks. Not surprisingly he ended up in a short while as a great running back for the Philadelphia Eagles. In addition to our purely Field Artillery instruction, we did much in the way of close-order drill but nothing in the basics of soldiering, weapons training, living in the field, etc.

We were not paid for almost a month because they could not find the proper authority to pay us. And then we received a mere fraction of a privates’ pay which was designed for a six-week camp, not a three-month course.

We graduated on 24 September 1942. At that time, the Army was filling out the divisions and units that were going to participate in the African landings. In addition, each unit was allowed a five percent overage in officers. With 500 graduates a week from FAOCS, it is easy to see where these officers came from. As a result, many of the 90 went ashore in Africa without having ever-fired a small arm. And they did a good job while the previously commissioned classmates were getting a comfortable orientation at one of the three FA replacement Training Centers, then attending a Battery Officers Course and going to a newly activated division where promotions were frequent and rapid.

We were never able to get service credit for these three months because we were not under oath. All of us who went through this gave a good account of ourselves and were proud of our early introduction to combat.

**Robert B. Martin: 41-42**

**“Hero of Midway Battle Will Get Coveted Award”**

***Oklahoma Sun* (Sunday October 25, 1942)**

Officer Candidate Robert B. Martin, Manette, Wash., hero of the battle of Midway, will receive the Silver Star at a special assembly of trainees in the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School Sunday morning.

Martin was a machine-gunner in the crew of a Flying Fortress which was in the air for 57 hours between June 3 and June 7, bombing and strafing Japanese warships headed for Midway. The award for gallantry will be presented by Brig. Gen. Jesmond D. Balmer, commandant of the (Field Artillery) school.

*Note: He served with 431st Bombardment Squadron, 11th Bombardment Group (Heavy), 7th Air Force and graduated from OCS with Class 41-42 on December 3, 1942.*

**Major Clark: 33-42**

***A letter to the FAOCS Hall of Fame, dated 1 December 1969***

One of the most significant decisions of my life was the decision to apply for FA OCS. I was accepted for Class No. 33, which started in July and graduated in October 1942. As one result of the decision, I was privileged to experience one of the most unusual examples of the implementation of the Army's Equal Opportunity Policies.

Although my biographical sketch is included in the 1965-1966 and 1969-1970 editions of Marquis Who's Who in the South and Southwest, I have not had the opportunity to cite this example in the proper context, because of the general lack of understanding and the anti-military bias in some parts of the community. In 1940, I was a disadvantaged Negro youth, a product of a segregated system of education and a discriminatory system of employment, who joined the Army for economic reasons.

I was assigned to the 349th Field Artillery Regiment at Fort Sill and soon advanced to the position of (trainee) No. 12 cannoneer on the old 155 mm GPF. In February 1956, less than 16 years later, I was assigned to the Army General Staff in the Pentagon, with Action Officer responsibility for ALL Army Artillery Training (Field Artillery and Surface to-Surface Missiles; Anti-Aircraft Artillery and Surface to-Air Missiles). I was alone in this responsibility until 1958, when I was joined by Colonel Frank Duda. Just before I retired in 1960, we were joined by Colonel Tony Perpich.

FA OCS provided my first experience in non-segregated education and training. The considerate attitudes of my instructors and classmates favorably affected the development of my character, which later resulted in some degree of success on my part in coordinating with people of all services and levels of command, other government departments and even other countries.

**Charles M. Brown: 35-42**

**“Army to Honor First Black Pilot (at Fort Rucker Alabama)”**

**Vernon C. Thompson, Staff Writer *Washington Post* (February 7, 1980):**

Tears welled up in Charles M. Brown’s eyes during the officers’ graduation ceremony as he realized the terrible irony of being a Black Army officer during the segregation of the military during World War II.

Brown a Dunbar High School graduate, who later became the Army’s first Black aviator, was one of few Black officers during the period.

Now 62, and a retired master army aviator, Brown said it was during his graduation from Officers’ Candidate School in Fort Sill, Okla., that he realized rank would not eliminate the racial prejudice that prevailed in the 1940’s.

“Five Blacks out of about 480 graduated as second lieutenants in my class. When they pinned the bars on my shoulders, I realized I could not go anywhere on the post, not even the officers club. As a Black officer I stood on the stage during graduation and tears came to my eyes.

*Note: Major Brown was the first Black officer to complete Army Liaison Pilot training. He completed the Army Advanced Flight School at Fort Sill in 1943 and was a Senior Army Aviator by 1948. He served as a pilot during World War II and during the Korean War flew observation missions for 13 months, during which time he was the only Black Army aviator in the war. He was honored for these accomplishments at a ceremony at Fort Rucker in March 1980.*

**Charles A. Conley: 36-42**

I studied in the latrine after ‘lights out and once, panic-stricken, in the midst of Gunnery, I searched out my instructor who happened to be working one particular night (as he worked most nights on his lesson plans for the following day). Bless him. He did not tell me how I was doing, as I had hoped he would. He simply laughed and told me to go back to it, and I did.

I came from a horse artillery outfit in the Illinois National Guard, converted to rubber tires the year after I had enlisted. Most of my officers were at school, themselves, or cadried out by the time I was sent to OCS in August of 1942. During the year that I’d been on active duty as Chief of Detail, prior to Pearl Harbor, I was taught very little about the artillery beyond Survey; or the duties I learned previously as a high-numbered cannoneer on a French 75.

What a difference OCS made in my confidence and in my ability to lead! There was a jog in the road in front of OCS headquarters where we had to do a left and then a right “oblique march.” There a TAC Officer nailed me for not prefacing my command with

“column.” The pace never let up, constantly shaping, and sharpening our responses. Especially, we came to live with fear and use it to advantage those windy days we spent on Arbuckle Ridge. Armed with nothing more than a pair of binoculars, mind racing, nerves on edge, it became second instinct for us to jump from our chairs with the next command on our lips if called upon. Each firing problem I mastered there helped make me the highly effective Forward Observer I was to become in Europe (I remember how the Infantry cheered whenever I dropped a volley so close in front of them that they were covered with dirt).

Military historian Russell Weigley concluded that our field artillery was “the outstanding combat branch of the American ground forces” in World War II. Surely, we twenty-thousand-odd graduates of the Fort Sill OCS contributed to that accolade. There was just one other time that I thought I would not make it. We were in Tactics, nearing the end. I remember praying, late one night, alone, in the Artillery Bowl - of all places. Sixteen of the 32 candidates in my section did not make it, but I did. What’s more, I graduated bursting with knowledge and eager to show it. I knew Motors, gosh damn! I knew Materiel. I knew Fire Direction and the Firing Battery, up down and sideways. I knew with firm conviction that I could be any kind of Field Artillery Officer anyone wanted me to be and, eventually, I was.

I shall never forget my days at the Fort Sill OCS. They remain a significant milestone in my life. Fort Sill was and still is the most beautiful army post in the United States. How fortunate I was to go there. No school that I have attended since has given me greater pride of accomplishment.

#### **“VOC (Volunteer Officer Candidate) Plan”**

***Daily Oklahoman (Sunday November 14, 1942)***

**Paul C. Hood (Class 78-43, graduated on August 19, 1943):**

Well, what are you going to do about the army? Apparently, we can’t delay that decision much longer now, as General Hershey, the draft director, has Indicated It’s only a matter of months, or even’ weeks, before the bulk of the married men go on the selective service block.

Probably you have been doing the same as many of the rest of us in the past few months, casting about for some special deal offering a commission or a rating carrying a salary high enough so that you can take care of your wife and still pinto in and do your share of the fighting. But these commissions are scarce.

That’s why you might be interested in a relatively new plan worked out by draft and army officials to fill the bill for just such cases as yours and mine. They call it the Volunteer Officer Candidate plan (VOC for short) and it is still so new that only now are the first VOC applicants receiving their commissions.

I applied for that officer training the other day and then went behind the scenes into the training school to get an idea of what lies ahead. It’s no snap, let me warn you.

In classrooms I watched officer candidates wade through complicated problems of firing data. Outside others were being Introduced to the big guns for the first lime. and out on

the firing range other groups were snapping through actual firing problems with military precision.

After seeing all that you don't wonder so much where the army plans to get enough officers to direct that seven and a half-million man force planned for next year.

The Officer Candidate School (there's one for each branch of the service) works just like a big assembly line producing one big class every week and starting new students through the mill at the same time. During those three months of training each student is given every technical detail he will need to command men in battle. More than that, the fundamentals of leadership are drilled into them so that when the bars are pinned on their uniforms, they can stand in front of a group of fighting men and direct them without hesitation.

The assembly line is fed from two main channels, one drawing men from civilian life and through a 13-week basic military course. The other skimming off much of the cream of the enlisted ranks. Once the men enter the school, a VOC man can't be distinguished from the students drawn from the ranks. Even instructors don't know which is which. and the sole mark of separation is a small tab on the candidates record card in the school headquarters' file.

Preliminary steps in the VOC plan are all handled by the regular selective service setup. For example, when I finally made up my mind to make the jump. I filed a waiver, signed by my wife, of any claim to a 3-A draft classification. Then came the order to report for the usual preliminary draft physical exam.

As anyone who has gone that far in the regular draft knows. the first exam is something of a farce. As you stand stripped before the examining doctor. he gives you the quick once over with one eye while signing your papers.

"Anything wrong with you" my draft board doctor asked me as he handed me my approved papers on which he already had written "yes" and "no" in the appropriate spots. Without waiting for an answer, he went on to the next man. After I had donated a sample of my blood, I was over the first hurdle.

Two weeks later my papers were returned to me, and I wandered timidly into the reception center at sprawling Fort Sill. This time the examinations were considerably more exacting.

First, they tried to find out how smart we were. We marched into a mess hall and, instead of getting a chance to sample army chow, were exposed to the AGCT test (Army General Classification Test). It's a good deal the same as intelligence tests we used to take in school and, although basically simple, it's highly important that you make a good grade. For that matter, you aren't eligible for officer training unless you make a grade of at least 110. Here are some typical questions:

"If it takes six men three days to dig a 180-foot trench, how many men are needed to dig it in half a day?" and "Perpetrate means most nearly (1) emanate (2) commit (3) fluctuate (4) gainsay."



Then you revert to your kindergarten days and play with some block problems for the benefit of army psychologists who devised the exam. Each man is shown a drawing of piles of blocks or cubes and on the theory that every block near the top of the figure must be resting on another block is required to count all the blocks in the pile. Imagine a group of 35 men sitting around playing with blocks and you get the idea of how foolish you feel.

Nevertheless, the army testers say it's helpful in determining a man's ability to solve problems swiftly and to see through complicated situations. After this test we jumped through hoops for the army doctors for a couple of hours and then were ready to tackle the VOC examining board. I had been, a bit leery of just what the board might ask but the interview turned out to be nothing but an informal talk designed to give the examiner a chance to size up our background. Then we were asked to pick the branch of service we would like to enter. Yes, within certain limits the applicant does get his choice in the matter.

Certain branches already are filled for months to come (incidentally, these include most of the administrative and non-combatant services) and 11 fields were still open when I applied. They were anti-aircraft artillery, armored forces, cavalry, coast artillery, engineers, field artillery, Infantry, ordnance, signal corps, tank destroyers and chemical warfare service. Field artillery was my choice and since Fort Sill has the only field artillery officer candidate school, I stayed over at the fort a day and looked the school over to see just what I would be up against. And repeat, the course is plenty rough—but interesting.

It's like no other school you have ever seen, this 90-day West Point. There's no lounging around on the campus between classes, no cutting of classes, no coke dates down at the corner drug store with a blonde co-ed. Not that the fellows in the school are any different from those we knew on most any college campus. But they have a job to do and not much time in which to get it done.

The Fort Sill OC school operates over one of the biggest "campuses" in the country and every Thursday morning a new crop of "freshmen" comes in just before a class graduates and gold bars are pinned on the new shavetails. Don't ask me how many are commissioned, because that's a military secret.

In the interval between the start and finish, here roughly is the program: nine days study of motor equipment and maintenance; five days study of artillery material; five and a half weeks of gunnery instruction; five days study of communications; and finally, three weeks study of artillery tactics.

The men learn by doing. They don't just sit in a classroom and hear lectures on motor equipment; they go out in the garages and climb over and under heavy trucks to find out what makes them tick. Then they learn how to use the equipment in military maneuvers. The same goes for instruction on all types of material. The course is boiled down to the essential points every officer should know.

Then comes gunnery. That, after all is the artilleryman's real job and to that they devote a major part of the course. Step by step, the officer candidate learns basic principles in lectures, goes out onto the practice field to learn something of the guns he'll use, then on

to the vast expanse of the gunnery range where he uses live ammunition and learns how to direct fire.

First, he uses dummy ammunition in “dry runs” to get the feel of the mechanism, much as we used to do in R. O. T.C. courses. But then comes real shrapnel and high explosives which can turn the pock marked range into a true-to-life replica of a battlefield. Out there on the range the candidate operates for the first time under conditions somewhat similar to those in actual warfare. I’ll admit I was a bit squeamish about the whole affair when I ventured out onto the range for the first time, and I wondered if probably the officer candidates didn’t turn over in their minds that relative merits of the infantry or perhaps the quartermaster corps about the first time they heard shells zipping over their heads.

“You’ll notice,” one of the instructors remarked to me as we jolted along in a jeep toward an observation point on the gunnery range, “that there’s no horseplay in the classes out there. This is serious business.”

As if to punctuate his remarks, a battery of 75 mm. guns let fly in back of us about that time and I started wondering if by any chance a gunner would miscalculate his range data and drop a load of shrapnel in our laps.

When we reached the forward observation post, the fire didn’t seem to distract the students. A couple of miles to our rear big guns were rumbling ominously at intervals in response to telephoned commands from students around us (Each roar would be accompanied by the eerie whine of a shell as it sped overhead to land a mile or more away from our vantage point.)

There was no glamour or gold braid out here. Students clad in sloppy work clothes, as unglamorous as clothes can be from the shapeless hat to laced leggings, were perched on folding chairs set along the side of the hill.

The students were taking turns at directing the fire at targets singled out to their instructors. Eagerly they spotted the puffs of dirt as each shell landed and rapidly, they would calculate corrections in range and deflection. Once they had the range, they would order a full blast from the battery of guns and the target would soon be hidden in dust and smoke. The problem over, an instructor leaped to the front of the class, rattled out criticism of the student’s work, and another problem would start.

This wasn’t just an isolated incident staged for our benefit, either, because in the OCS the instructors and students don’t have time to stop and put on a show for visitors. As soon as one class completes its job on the range it is loaded into trucks for the trip back to their “classrooms” and a new class comes tearing in to take the places.

That same business-like attitude marked all of the classes, on the range and in the classroom. I dropped in briefly on one gunnery lecture to find an instructor going swiftly through an explanation of a technical point in the location of a battery. The explanation completed, all students jumped to blackboards around the room and worked a similar problem.

During this time the student calls a little roofing paper-covered hut near his classrooms home. At 6:45 a.m. each day he climbs from his bunk and shares the job of policing the hut with his five hut-mates. Breakfast over, he pounds out a half hour of drill before starting the day's classes which last from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. At 6:45 p.m. comes dinner and then he's free to study for about three hours.

"Officer candidate school graduates have proved the salvation of our army," declared Brig. Gen. Jesmond D. Balmer, commandant of the Field Artillery School.

"Men commissioned there are among the best officers in the army. The only thing they lack is actual battery experience."

He explained that originally separate classes were held for the officer candidates and for commissioned officers assigned to the school for a refresher course. When this was done, the candidates invariably had better records than the men already commissioned, he observed. Now the classes have been merged and all receive the same instruction.

Col. Kenneth S. Perkins commandant of Fort Sill, readily occurs in General Balmer's opinion of the school graduates, pointing out the men are making good account of themselves on active duty.

The hundreds of young officers being turned out by the school will be the backbone of the army, predicts Lieut. Col. Cragie Krayenbuhl, commandant of the OCS.

"The officer candidates are doubly fortunate in that they have the viewpoint of the enlisted man, plus an excellent technical training acquired in an intensive course of study," the commandant explains.

"Many thousands of young soldiers are being graduated weekly from the various officer candidate schools and the success of the higher commanders will be in direct proportion to the training and discipline which these junior officers give their men."

Thursday, October 29, the first of the VOC men was commissioned from the Fort Sill School. Typical of the type of man for which the plan was designed, Lieut. Joseph N. Feltner of Pinedale, Wyo. was still a long way from being drafted last spring. Forty-three years old, he is married and the father of one child.

He wanted to do his part in the war and tried to enlist but was rejected. Then he was accepted for VOC training. Although not a college graduate, Feltner had attended both the University of Kentucky and the University of Wyoming, where he had studied engineering and surveying. He chose the field artillery as his branch.

Only a small percentage of the candidates fail to make the grade in officers' school, and these are sent back to their original posts or in the case of VOCs, revert to their civilian status. Others don't quite keep up with their classes and are turned back to other groups to give them another chance at difficult points. Instructors for the school come from the most part from the ranks of the school's graduates.

There's none of that "90-day wonder" attitude about the school's graduates in this war. Without exception old line experienced artillery officers at Fort Sill pay their tribute to the school and to its graduates.

After looking it over, I'm convinced the school is no "royal road to commissions," but if you are ready to study and work, there's a second lieutenant's bar waiting for you. It won't be a gift, though, because you'll earn every bit of it.

**"Life in Army is Picnic – Oh Yeah? Not to This Lad"**

***Piqua (Ohio) Daily Call (December 4, 1942):***

Oh, come now, can things be as bad as all that? The soldier who wrote this letter reprinted below from the Fort Sill Army News nods an emphatic "yes," and if what he writes is true, it's no wonder he signs his letter "Your despondent son."

Dear Mom:

I'll start this letter but don't be surprised if it isn't finished, for yesterday two OCs were giggered two extra demerits and given an extra detail for finding three minutes to write home.

I can't describe Lawton for I haven't been able to get to town. It seems that they have a very silly rule that any OC who receives over five demerits in one week loses his pass privilege. I've only lost three weeks in a row so far and my Assistant CTO (Candidate TAC Officer) states that I'm well on the way to setting a new record.

The Motors Course we took was a "beaut." I never knew there were so many darn bolts and nuts to be tightened on one little old truck in all my life. And that motor march! I was well on my way to Wichita Falls before the regular driver made us turn around. Oh well, I understand there isn't any use driving to Wichita Falls, anymore, anyway.

We were supposed to have the following Monday off. So, all they did was to schedule three lectures, a window washing formation, a formal inspection, a "turn in and draw texts" formation and about 100 pages of materiel to read.

This Materiel Course was formerly at least four weeks long but because of the high intelligence of our class, they are reducing the course to four days. It's just dandy. They allow you to use any and all texts, diagrams, poop sheets, etc. on the writs, but forget to allow you time to open them.

I spent all my time frantically trying to find the length of a breechblock. When I finally gave up in despair, it seems that it wasn't the question anyway. It had something to do with RIP.

Talk about the government abusing the alphabet, all I've heard out here is CC-1, SOP, RTP, RHP, RHIP, CQ and CTO. And the way these instructors hand out the poor mutilated letter "U" it's a wonder it's still in the language. Sure would like to get one of those "S" all my hut-mates are talking about.

Speaking of hutments, we're now in those six-man jobs. Frank left just one little tiny match stick on the floor Monday and I got one demerit as orderly for the week. Tuesday, I forgot to mark this ingenious locator card and I was again on the skin sheet. Wednesday, all we did was leave the light burning. Thursday, I very coyly put an orange under my blanket and guess who found it

**“Democracy as Practiced at Fort Sill Artillery School Worth Fighting for.”**

***The fifth of a series of articles written by Enoch P. Waters of the Chicago Defender Staff on his observations and experiences while visiting army camps during 1942:***

The by-now distinguished Artillery Officer Candidate school at this picturesque army camp is no school at all, I was surprised to learn. It is simply one of the most popular courses in an institution of higher military learning larger than any college or university in the country.

The Officer's Candidate Course, for that's how it's described officially, is one of 12 courses offered by the Field Artillery school at this post. But it wasn't the magnitude of the school nor the variety of courses offered at the institution, but rather its racial policy and its commandant that impressed me.

**Negroes in All Classes**

Every Wednesday since July 1941, a group of soldiers averaging 500 to a group has enrolled at the school here for a 12-week course leading to a second lieutenant's commission in the field artillery.

Every Thursday since October 1941, a class almost as large has been graduated and either sent to one of the specialist courses at the school or transferred to an active unit where they have started their careers as commissioned men.

In each of the 40 classes to date with the exception of several there have been Negroes, who knew they were Negroes, so far as the school was concerned, only when they looked into a mirror. For this school is truly democratic from the administrative point of view.

**Bar All Prejudice**

It is not to be doubted with men coming to the school from all sections of the country and from all strata of society that some would not remind the Negroes that they are Negroes and attempt to impose upon them some of the social customs for which the South is justly infamous.

But Lt. Col, Craigie Krayenbuhl, commandant of the school, and with whom we talked for some time, is interested in only one objective: turning out good artillery officers. He has recognized that Jap bullets know no color line and that a shell, whether fired by a black man, a white man or a mixed group will kill just as many Nazis if it strikes the objective.

Though the day I selected to visit the school was one of those rainy days for which Oklahoma is famous, it was fortunate in that I arrived almost simultaneously with a group of new students. It consisted of 546 men.

### **Arrange Teams**

In his opening address to them. Colonel Krayenbuhl stressed the point that this was an artillery school, the primary concern of which is to produce officers.

Petty and silly prejudices built upon rank—for some of the men already held their commissions and others were buck privates—race creed and color must be set aside so that each man could concentrate his whole effort upon becoming a good artillery officer. This group was arranged alphabetically; then broken down into groups of 30 or 35 called sections. As near as possible these sections were to become teams which would cooperate throughout the course.

### **Housed Together**

They were housed, for example, in adjacent hutments containing six men each. They attended class together, worked on common problems and passed leadership of the section around so that each man served at least once during his stay at the school as section leader.

And one of the functions of the leader is to appraise his fellow students, and this appraisal is important, for men have been dropped from the school because of the estimation placed on them by their classmates. Where do the Negroes come in? Wherever they fall alphabetically. In some sections there might be two or five or one or no Negroes at all. Even in hutments there is no differentiation. There may be two Negroes, four whites. or no Negroes. or one and five whites.

### **No Quota System**

No one stops to figure out where the Negroes are. No one is more or less concerned about them than about other students. No one has figured out what percentage of the school's enrollment is Negro, nor how many have been above average, nor how many below. From observation, it is clear to staff members at the school that there are more Negroes in the school now than when it first started. Perhaps there are six, or eight or 10 to a class. How do they fare? No one has considered that. Mortality rate for the classes averages about 10 to 12 per cent.

The purpose is not as it seems to be in the regular army: to maintain nicely balanced quotas of so many Negroes to so many whites. Nor is a lot of energy, paper and time consumed in seeing that no Negroes get into white units or vice versa.

The officers' candidate course is simply interested in men scoring 110 or above in the army general classification test who have an intense desire to become commissioned men in the artillery.

## **Fast Course**

The course is a fast one, based on the assumption that a man is drilled in the fundamentals of artillery and is seriously interested in becoming an officer. No time is wasted on those who can't keep up with the class.

Even Colonel Krayenbuhl will admit that many of the men dropped would make excellent officers, but time is an important factor and the army in this crisis can afford only to devote its energies to men who can keep pace with the outlined schedule. The days are long—beginning at 7 a.m. and ending at 11 p.m.—and the work is hard—embracing every phase of artillery, but so it must be if we are to win this war.

## **No Separation**

There were Negroes in the class we saw graduated Thursday morning. Their names? Why should we single them out, when for 12 weeks they weren't singled out as Negroes? No one has picked out the Jews, the Irish, the Chinese or the Italians. Satisfy ourselves that there were Negroes and let it go at that, for that's as it should be.

The cost of training these artillery officers is very high running over \$1,000 per week per student. With the exception of the men at the reception and replacement centers here, the other thousands are referred to as school troops, for each plays a part in the training of the officers.

The 349th Field Artillery plays an important role in the field training of the officer candidates. The quartermaster troops and the Field Artillery School Motor Pool provides transportation for the students the 1864th Service Command is a labor unit used by the school and the 581st Ordnance company handles ammunition for the school.

The Officers school here, located as it is in the south and in a state, which bears no reputation for liberality on the question of race, is living concrete evidence that the demands of Negroes for a democratic army are not fantastic and is a living refutation of the contention that the mixture of whites and Negroes in the armed forces would break down morale and lead to a disruption of the army.

The type of democracy to be found at the Officers Candidate Course, is a thing worth fighting to protect.

## **Frank H. Armstrong: 43-42**

### ***“Payoff Artillery – WWII” by Frank H. Armstrong (1993)***

My older brother, Herbert, went to Cavalry Officer Candidate School. My battery commander, Captain Brunner, strongly opposed commissioning any one as young as I. Nevertheless, I became the youngest soldier to appear before the Brigade OCS Board. The Board strongly recommended approval for the Artillery School. In view of the controversy, Brigadier General John C. Lewis personally interviewed me, and then decided I should attend Artillery OCS.

I traveled by train to the Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Railroad travel during the war was not pleasant. Much of the rail equipment was being used for troop transport. Manufacture of new rail-equipment was subjected to the manufacture of army tanks and trucks. Retired rail cars were recalled. Some of the ancient cars had pot-bellied stoves for heat. Trains were crowded with soldiers on leave, families trying to visit husbands and fathers, and defense workers moving to new jobs. Soldiers felt compelled to give up their seats to mothers with children and then sit on their suitcases for the remainder of the trip.

The most important challenge for officer candidates at the Artillery School were ten firing problems. Classes were taken to an observation post and assigned a target some 3,000 or more yards away. Then a candidate was called and was expected to come out of the bleachers shouting his commands to the telephone operator for transmission to the howitzers. He then had to make adjustments, while the instructor was shouting at him to do something. The instructor's antics were intended to simulate the pressures of combat. Older candidates frequently became un-nerved by the instructor. Youngsters, like myself, frequently did very well.

We were class #43 of the Artillery Officer Candidate School. Initially, the 440 candidates were assigned to five-man huts alphabetically. My hut included John Alfred Ames, John Ellsworth Anderson, Peter Richard Andre, John Kenneth Stuart Arthur.

The five topics at OCS were gunnery, motors, tactics, communications, and logistics, which were taught in block instruction. That is, we would have ten straight of communications and then go on to a new topic. Strangely, each one of us had background in one of the five topics. Hence, we cooperated and encouraged each other. Ours was the only hut, of about 85, which graduated intact. Three hundred and thirty-two lieutenants were commissioned in December 1942. Some of these had been set back from earlier classes. "Commissioned officers" are those who have been commissioned by the President.

Newly commissioned lieutenants were granted two weeks leave. I was home in Germantown, Philadelphia, for Christmas of 1942. Neighbors, friends, and especially schoolteachers were delighted that a young man from such a poor family had been commissioned. My high school classmates had just become eligible for the draft. Many sought advice.

**Raymond C. Kerns: 44-42**

***"Above the Thunder – Reminiscences of a Field Artillery Pilot in World War II"***

**Raymond C. Kerns (2009)**

Suddenly, I was at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, home of the U.S. Field Artillery. Off came all the insignia of grade and on went the OCS patch, sewn the left breast pocket of our shirts. We moved into tar paper shacks, called "hutments," built on concrete slabs in long rows. At the end of each two rows was a latrine building with showers. The hutments were numbered, of course, and each held six candidates, assigned alphabetically by last name. In my hutment were Everett Kelley, Donald Kellogg, Earl "Bud" Kelly, Howard Kenyon, and Bernard Kipley. Each of us had a steel cot with cotton mattress, a shelf with rod for



hangers, and a few square feet of floor space to call our own. There were one or two bare bulbs hanging from overhead and a small oil heater.

Discipline was necessarily quite strict, because the amount of material to be covered made the OCS period a rather frantic thirteen weeks. The miracle of the “Ninety-Day Wonders,” it turned out, was that they survived. There was little time to be wasted. After First Call, played by a record over a very scratchy loudspeaker, we had fifteen minutes to be ready for our first formation. In that time, we had to make it to the latrine—shave, brush teeth, and all that kind of thing—make bunks, sweep out the hutment, and be dressed in proper uniform of the day.

The first formation was a roll call followed, during part of the course, by “oice culture.” The latter consisted of repetition of commands in unison as directed by a senior candidate from another class. This was often varied by being made a “Simon Says” drill just to keep us awake, and sometimes individual candidates were called on to demonstrate the proper voice and inflection for various commands. After that was the morning meal, for which, like all other meals, we were allotted thirty minutes. Those detailed for table waiter duty got no special consideration. They served the meal and ate, they hoped, before the half hour was gone. Food discipline was very strict, too. We were told: “Take all you want but eat all you take.”

And then we hit the classroom or the range. We might be learning to fieldstrip different small arms (sometimes blindfolded) or driving six-by-six trucks cross-country or studying the dry regulations pertaining to supply or solving problems in gunnery or survey or adjusting fire out on the range. In the gunnery and survey problems, I came up against the challenge of which the OCS board at Schofield had warned me. I had to study a little more than most, I guess, to overcome my total ignorance of the methods of trigonometry, but I carried my tables of trigonometric functions and logarithms, and I made out OK. The fun part was the classroom, when all twenty men in the section would be at blackboards working on the same problem. There were occasions when the instructor would come up behind me and begin, “Well, now, Kerns, you seem to be having a little trouble there. Let me. . . Well, you have the right answer there—but I don’t see how you got it. How did you do that?”

I’d explain to him, and he’d say it was OK, but he’d like for me to show on the board more of the reasoning process. I had to tell him I did not know how. Looking around at other boards, I was utterly mystified as to the reason for all the algebraic procedures that filled them. Using just simple arithmetic, supplemented with a lot of thinking that I didn’t know how to show, I wrote much less. But I got the same results.

Out on the firing range, however, I was a champion. I don’t suppose I was the best in the class, but I was certainly the best in our twenty-man section. During the five-week gunnery period, each student had to fire at least twelve problems of certain types, and he had to compute initial data for the 228 other problems fired by his section mates. So, we sat out there on top of some barren ridges, swept by the icy winds of late November and December, at ease in our chilled steel folding chairs, each with a clipboard on his lap, gazing with teary eyes across a shallow valley or two at a shell-pocked area in which numerous nondescript pieces of obsolete materiel lay scattered about. In front of us, two

BC-scopes - one for the instructor, one for the students. Behind us, radio operators to relay our commands or sensing's to the guns.

“All right, gentlemen, your target. Take as a reference point the Blockhouse on Signal Mountain. Go nine zero mils right and at a greater distance to a lone tree at the head of a small ravine. Two-zero mils farther right, at a still greater distance, is a piece of materiel in the middle of a beaten area. That is the target. Is there anyone who does not identify the target? Very well, compute your initial data.”

Twenty frozen students were hastily consulting maps, measuring angles by use of previously calibrated fingers and fists, making hasty calculations, writing down factors, sticking up hands to show when they were ready. At some point in this process, the instructor would designate a candidate to fire the target.

“Kerns, take the target under fire.”

It was my twelfth and last required problem, and it was of the most difficult kind, the “Large-T,” in which, because of the large angle between the gun-target line and the observer-target line, a range error was seen by the observer as a deflection error, and deflection was observed as range, thus involving factors not present in computing data for other conditions of observation. But I had never failed to do well, and I got up to the BC-scope without one twinge of nervousness. I surpassed even my own high expectations, and when I sat down the instructor said, “Now, gentlemen, that’s the way a Large-T problem should be fired.” I swelled with pride and confidence but was happy to realize that I’d completed the course requirement and didn’t have to risk my reputation again.

He designated another target. I computed initial data for it and stuck up my hand, at the same time noting to myself that I was first to do so. Without hesitating for a second, the instructor said, “Kerns, take the target under fire.”

I was surprised, since I had just fired, but again I lay my clipboard on my chair and walked to the BC-scope. I’m sure my voice sounded firm and confident as I called out to the radio operator, and I soon heard him report, “On the way.” I watched the target area to catch the burst. I watched and I watched. And I watched. And I saw nothing. Must be down in that swale in front of the target area, I thought, and I gave it some more range. Still no burst. Well - must be on the other side of the ridge, I said to myself, and I knocked off twice as much range as I’d added before. No burst. Well, shucks! Where the devil was it? Maybe it was off to the left, mixed in with the bursts where another section was firing. I sent a deflection change but the instructor called “Cease fire” and told me to be seated.

“Do you know where your rounds were?” he asked.

As I sat down, I picked up my clipboard on which I had noted my initial data, and I knew then where my rounds had gone. I had remembered the base point elevation wrong by 100 mils, and my rounds had gone far beyond the target area. In fact, the instructor said, I had almost hit the reservation boundary. It was my thirteenth mission and my first “U” for Unsatisfactory. I was thoroughly embarrassed, to say the least. It was the classic “hundred mil error” that is the dread of all artillerymen. Field Artillery OCS candidates at Fort Sill received only two grades: “S” for Satisfactory, “U” for Unsatisfactory. In addition

to that miserable fire mission, I got one “U” on a pop quiz based on a very long, boring reading assignment in supply regulations.

The only man in our hutment who had any serious trouble was Howard Kenyon, a good old country boy from Nebraska who had come down from Alaska as a corporal. When Howard got something through his head, he never forgot it, but he was slow to learn. He worked very hard, and some of us, especially Kellogg and Kipley, helped him each night until lights out at 2100 hours. Then Kenyon would go to the study hall and remain there until 2300, every night. Nevertheless, with only three weeks left to go before graduation, he was put back into an OCS preparatory course. Long after the rest of us had gone on to our first assignments as second lieutenants, Kenyon was still there, finishing the prep course and going all the way through OCS again. He graduated, he was commissioned, and as a second lieutenant he was killed in action in Belgium.

There was a demerit system in effect at OCS, and I suppose there was some limit on the number of demerits a candidate could get and survive. I got a few, all out of two incidents, neither of which I could reasonably have avoided. In one case, I was the hutment orderly, responsible for certain all was secure, lights out, heater turned off, floor clean, spic-and-span order, before we left for the day’s activities. Kenyon, having joined another class but still living in our hutment, asked me to leave the heater on for him, since he had another half hour to study his first class. He forgot to turn it off, and I got some demerits. In the other case, I got a standard GI haircut on Saturday afternoon, and on Monday morning a tactical (administrative) officer coming through our classroom gigged me for needing a haircut. I think the trouble was I just didn’t look handsome enough to be a lieutenant.

There was never any doubt about my academically passing the course, but I did manage to almost get kicked out, which certainly would have changed the course of my life. Dorie, who is now my wife and who then was the girl who had answered yes to my telegraphic proposal, came to Sill to visit me. She arrived on a Tuesday and would have to leave within a day or two, back to Ohio and her job repairing radios at a plant in Columbus. There was no possibility for me to spend any time with her on post, since OCS men could get passes only on Saturday evenings until 0100 hours on Sunday morning. There was nothing to do on the post except to sit in the midst of hundreds of soldiers at the enlisted men’s club and drink Coke or beer. So, in desperation, I took the OCS patch off one of my shirts and sewed on my staff sergeant chevrons and, after duty on Tuesday, off to Lawton I went to see my betrothed.

All went well. No one questioned me since NCOs were normally able to get passes on Tuesday night. Some of them even had quarters in town and commuted. So, about 2330 hours I got a taxi and started back to the post, allowing plenty of time before the 0100 pass deadline.

As the cab approached the Military Police (MP) post at the main gate the taxi driver said, “You’re going to be in trouble, aren’t you, Sergeant?”

“I don’t think so, why?”

“Well, it’s a little bit late for you to be getting in.”

“Oh, no, I have plenty of time before one o’clock.”

“Remember, though, this is Tuesday, not Saturday. You should have in by eleven o’clock if you were coming in at all.”

“Oh, hell! You’re right. Take me back to town.”

He made a U-turn right in front of the gate and took me back to the historic old Keegan Hotel, the yellow-painted, weather-boarded inn where Dorie had a room. I knocked on her door, explained the situation, and told her I needed a place to stay until I could safely return to post in the morning. Dorie was rightly skeptical, but after a great deal of hesitation on her part and earnest reassurance on mine, she agreed to let me sleep in the chair in her room, where I remained a perfect, if uncomfortable, gentleman. (Today, over sixty-five years later, Dorie is still shy about my telling that story.)

Next morning, I caught the first bus going to the post. It stopped at the gate, and an MP came aboard, spot-checking passes. He didn’t ask for mine. I slipped into our hutment and into a proper uniform barely in time to make roll call. I was just lucky. If the taxi driver hadn’t spoken, I’d never have gotten an Army commission. A classmate named Johnson did the same thing one night, except that he got married while he was in town. A few days later, a brief notice of the wedding having taken place at 9:30 on a certain evening appeared in the Lawton paper. One of the TAC officers saw it, recognized the name, and Johnson was thrown out of the school. Others were disqualified for breaches of the high standards set for candidates, and I’ve always been humbly grateful to that cab driver, the MP who did not check my pass, and to the kind fates that protected me in this as in so many other aspects of my life. And I want to assure you, an American citizen, that this incident does not accurately represent the standards of honor and ethics I maintained during my service, either before or after the incident.

Instruction in gunnery lasted five weeks, and the fourth week was known as “The Bloody Fourth.” Not only was it a week in which there were notoriously difficult exams that sent many a candidate packing or back to a less advanced class or even to a prep course, as in the case of Howard Kenyon, but during that week each candidate was required to turn in to the administrative office his written appraisal of each of the other nineteen candidates in his section. These reports served several purposes. For one, they gave an indication of each candidate’s ability to evaluate the character, capabilities, and shortcomings of other men and to express his evaluation in writing. The evaluations of each candidate could be boiled down to an appraisal that could hardly be anything less than honest, and it might be favorable or not. An individual who tried to use the evaluation to injure someone against whom he held a grudge was very likely to be readily spotted, and the resulting injury would be to himself. And so, there was many a candidate who was academically strong but lost out by having impressed most of his associates in some unfavorable way or who betrayed his dishonesty to the TAC officers by his appraisals of others. Our class was slimmer after The Bloody Fourth.

One day early in December, the class was interrupted by a visit from two officers who briefed us on a new program for providing an organic air observation capability to field artillery units. The general idea was to give each field artillery battalion and division artillery headquarters a couple of light airplanes to be flown by artillery officer’s organic to the units. The training program was already in progress and needed volunteers for pilot training. It was emphasized that the pilots would be artillery officers first, aviators second. The planes were merely a means for getting into position to observe the targets and adjust fire. Volunteers from the class were asked to apply at Post Field.

In the hutment that night, I announced my intention of volunteering for flight training, and I started trying to sell my hutment mates on going with me. A day or two later, Bud Kelly, Everett Kelley, and I went together over to the field and applied. Col. Rollie Harrison, the first and, at that time, only flight surgeon involved in the program gave us physical and psychological evaluations.

The last big event before graduation of FAOCS Class #44 was Reconnaissance, Selection, and Occupation of Position (RSOP) 12. It was a three-day exercise, employing actual troop units, with candidates occupying certain critical positions in each. Each candidate's duty assignment was changed frequently so he could gain experience and have his performance observed in a variety of situations. In one phase, I was in charge of conducting a survey on which an actual division artillery concentration was later fired. Again, I filled the role of an enlisted telephone operator and in one of the most interesting problems, I was commander of a battery of four 105 mm howitzers that, on a road march behind advancing infantry, had to go quickly into position to put down covering fire for the infantry's withdrawal in front of an attacking enemy armored force, then to fight the tanks with direct fire. I managed to get satisfactory solutions in all cases—but, of course, barring some unimaginable catastrophe, my graduation and commissioning were already assured. My best memory of RSOP 12 is of the frosty, moonlit nights out on the ranges with coyotes yapping and howling on the hills after our bivouac was quiet.

We arrived back in quarters after RSOP 12 early in the evening the day before graduation. Most of us were up until after midnight, getting all in order for the big day, which started early with our formation for the graduation ceremonies in the post theater. There was the traditional tossing of the caps, discarding the enlisted man's scarlet artillery braid for the black and gold of the officer corps, and then we hurried back to our hutments to change into our new officers' "pinks and greens" before lining up for payment of our \$250 initial clothing allowance.

But I had a wee bit of a problem. My new uniforms had come in by Railway Express, COD, and were over at the Fort Sill railway station waiting to be picked up. I didn't have enough money to pick them up until after I received my clothing allowance. I was far back in the slow-moving line, and already it was almost time for the departure of the special bus on which I had a ticket to Oklahoma City. In desperation, I asked Bud Kelly if he could loan me \$80 to pay for the uniform, so I could pick it up and return by the time the end of the line reached the little shack where the pay office had been set up.

With Kelly's money in hand, I began trying to get a taxi. So did everyone else. By the time I finally got back from the station, the pay line was gone, and they told me I'd have to go to the main finance office on the old post to get my uniform allowance. But the guards were being taken off the hutment area, so all candidates had to have their gear out of there. The buses were mostly loaded, some had already left, and Bud was delaying his bus, hoping to get his \$80 back. I hastily explained and told him I'd mail it to him. Then I hurried to our hutment, changed into my new lieutenant's uniform, grabbed my suitcase, and started hurrying over to the old post—a good quarter of a mile away. As I left the hutment area, I encountered the sergeant in charge of the security guard, which he had just relieved. He greeted me with a big smile and a salute, the first salute for my gold bars. I returned it and gave him a dollar, in accordance with tradition, and he stuffed it into a bulging pocket.

I lugged my heavy suitcase across the post as fast as I could, and the finance people were glad to see me—now they could close out the special payroll. I hurried back toward the OCS area, but just as I turned a corner and came into view of the street where all the buses had been lined up, I saw the last one pull out and turn down toward Gate 3, on the way to Oklahoma City. I set my suitcase down and stood beside it, just about exhausted, discouraged, and cursing in a most ungentlemanly way. I had missed the bus, and that would cause me to miss the train, which would cause me to miss at least a day of the first leave I'd ever had in my twenty-seven months of Army service. And I had my ticket for that particular bus in my pocket. One other minor detail: it was Christmas Eve 1942.

A civilian car stopped beside me and a sergeant driving it asked me whether I needed a ride. I was in the car faster than I can tell about it. I told him there was a bus going down toward Gate 3 and up the highway to Oklahoma City. I asked him to catch it for me, and he did. About two miles up the highway, he pulled alongside, and I waved my ticket at the bus driver. He stopped. I left \$3 on the seat of the sergeant's car and boarded the bus.

### **“135 To Graduate Before Officers' School Opens”**

***The Evening Sun* (Friday, December 11, 1942)**

**William Bono Associated Press Correspondent**

Somewhere in Australia, December 5 (Delayed)- The first officer candidate School for United States Troops in Australia is not scheduled to open until January 1. Yet on the day of the official opening, the school will be graduating its first class of 135 newly commissioned second lieutenants.

If this seems paradoxical, blame it on a combination of circumstances. Early in November, four officers flew here from the United States to map out plans for the OCS, urgently needed to meet the American forces' demands for officer replacements. They were Col. Harold Haney, former executive officer of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia and chosen as commandant of the Australian School; Col. Frank O. Dewey, a cavalryman, his executive officer; Col George P. Privett, Field Artillery, assistant director of the school, and Lieut. George A. Tapper, from Fort Benning.

### **Suggests Six-Week Course**

Since the OCS comes under the supervision of the army's Services of Supply, one of their first conferences was with Brig. Gen. Richard J. Marshall. SOS commander in the Southwest Pacific. The general's reaction was unexpected, to say the least.

He said he had one hundred and thirty-five men, all SOS specialists, who were about to be commissioned without special officer training. Why didn't Colonel Haney and his three-man staff take them off his hands and give them a six-week course in general army orientation.

“That was on November 10.” says Colonel Dewey “and five days later we started the school. We really started from scratch. We had nothing. We had to borrow cooks from one outfit to prepare the food for the men, a mess hall from another to feed them in, officers from wherever we could get them to serve as instructors.

### **Eight Hours Of Instruction**

“But,” and he looks pretty pleased. “We’ve been giving those men eight hours of instruction a day, and they’ve had to study hard at night to keep up with their work.”

For the balance of this month, things should be a bit easier. The full teaching and administrative staff—officers and enlisted men--now has arrived from the United States.

### **Heads Of Units**

The school’s eight departments will be headed up as follows:

Infantry -- Lieut. Col. Ernest E. Barlow. a regular officer whose wife lives in Salt Lake City, Utah.

FIELD ARTILLERY — Lieut. Col. Thomas W. Dunn, Fort Worth. Texas.

QUARTERMASTER — Lieut. Col. George M. Grimes, from the Quartermaster School at Fort Lee. Va.

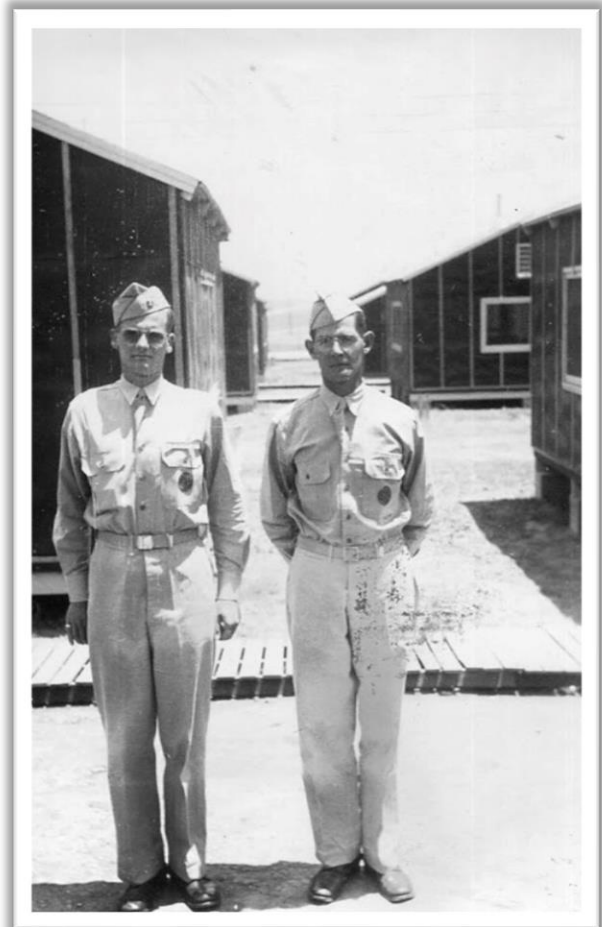
CHEMICAL WARFARE - Lieut. Col James O. in civilian life an associate professor of plant pathology at the University of Tennessee.

ENGINEERS - Major Ernest L. Griggs. Waynesboro. Va.

COAST ARTILLERY - Major Donald T. Michael, Cincinnati.

ORDNANCE - Capt. Harold T. Amrine, Cedar Rapids. Iowa.

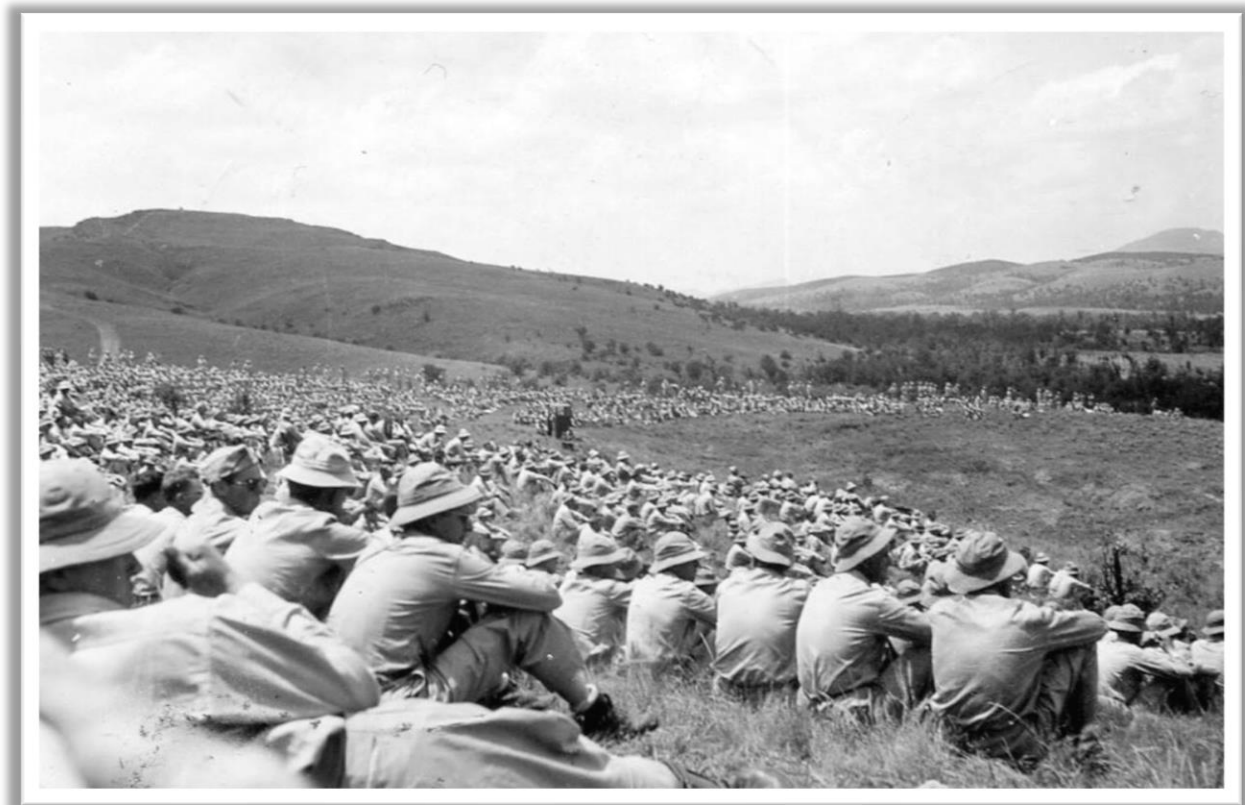
SIGNAL CORPS--Capt. Floyd W. Dickerson. from Fort Monmouth. New Jersey.



*Candidates from Class 25-42 standing in front of a pyramidal tent and the new hutments that replaced the tents during their time at Fort Sill.*

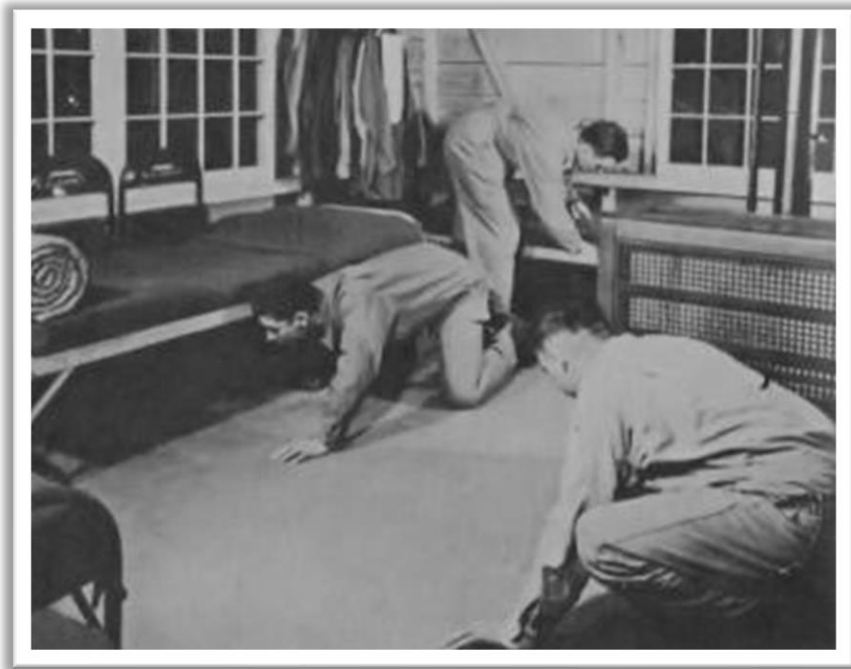


*Candidate heading for in-processing and a rude awakening*



*Artillery Demonstration attended by several OCS Classes on Fort Sill West Range (1942)*





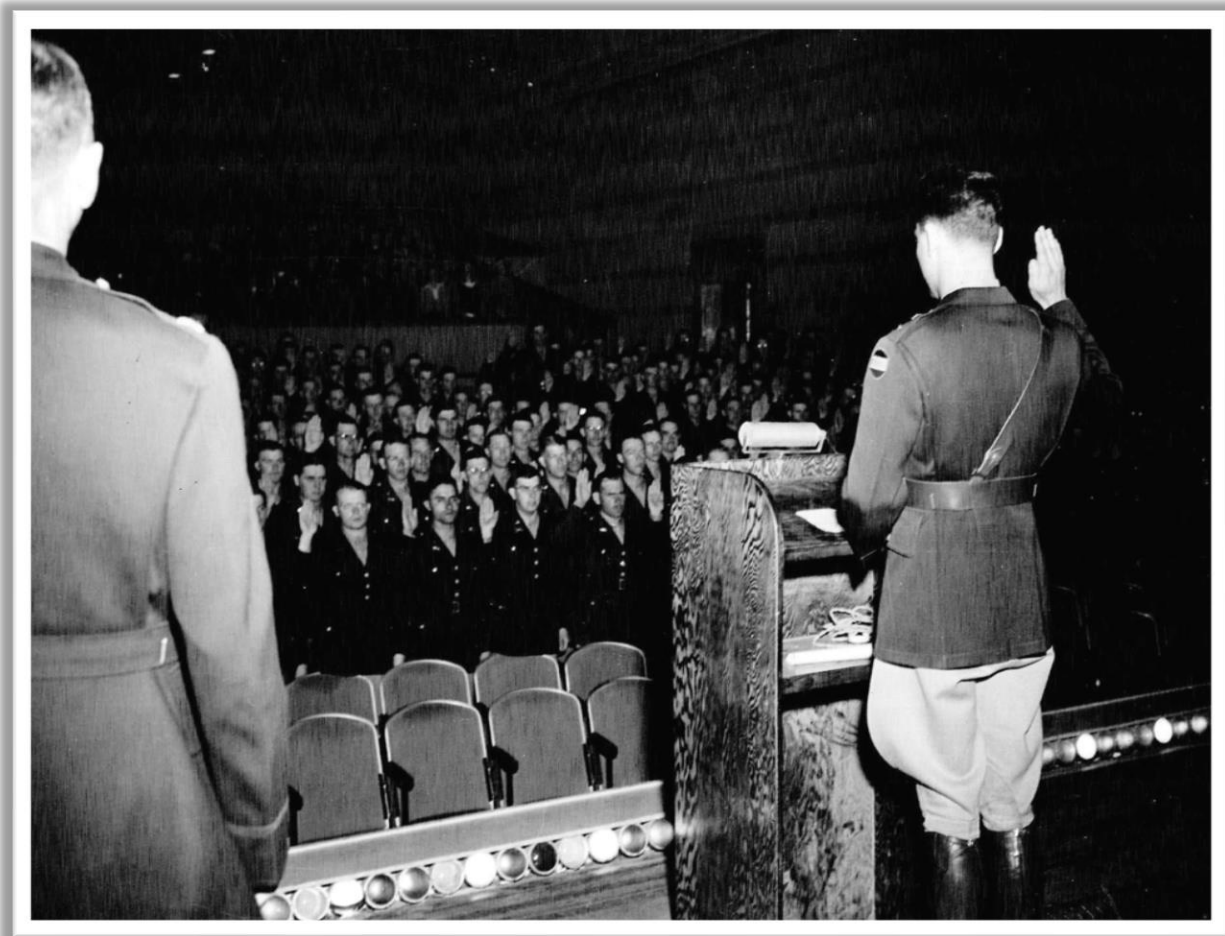
*Candidates prepare their 6-man hutment for inspection*



*Tactical Officer conducts an inspection*



*Observed Fires Class*



*Oath of Office being administered to graduates of Class 43-42 on December 17, 1942*

# Chapter Five

## 1943 - 1949

### **“OCS Prep Schools”**

#### ***Field Artillery Journal (January 1943)***

A comprehensive 192-hour schedule is being standardized for these schools, which are conducted at Fort Sill, Fort Bragg, and Camp Roberts. Firing battery, preparation of fire, and gunnery math lead the list of subjects, with 35, 24, and 24 hours allotted to them respectively. - F.A.S. Information Bulletin.

### **“Shell Bursts Near Officers at Fort Sill”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (January 13, 1943)***

An Army board of Inquiry sought today to learn why a high explosive shell fell far short of its target, wounded two soldiers not far from a class of officer candidates.

The shell, apparently defective, plowed into a range guard shelter yesterday and exploded, showering fragments on the two artillerymen.

Pvt John J. Bills, Greenfield Center, N.Y., the most seriously injured staggered from the shelter and collapsed. Pvt. Henry M. King, Southland, Tex., standing at the base of a knoll on whose summit the shelter was erected, was less seriously injured.

Not far from the knoll where the 75 mm shell exploded, sat a class from the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School. None was hit.

Far behind the scene of the accident, officers in charge of the firing practice said some old ammunition was being used, a common expedient in the training of troops to conserve new ammunition.

Brig. Gen. Jesmond D. Balmer, commandant of the Field Artillery School, ordered an investigation.

### **“Candidate to Officer”**

#### ***Maj. W. S. Jones, The Field Artillery Journal (February 1943)***

The danger of sacrificing quality to quantity in selection of Officer Candidates has become an actuality. Those charged with the approval of applications for officer training have, in some instances, been too much concerned with the filling of quotas to determine the candidate's fitness for a commission. Mental and basic backgrounds are, of course, important. Most of the selection boards, however, have accented the first to the virtual exclusion of the latter. At the present time the course at the Field Artillery School is not designed to supply basic training in artillery to candidates from other branches or from the more sedentary activities of the artillery.

Several projects have either been effected or are under advisement by the Replacement and School Command to bridge this gap. At Sill a “salvage school” has been initiated into which candidates of excellent type but relatively meager artillery background are placed if the course proves too fast for them. These men—and they must have demonstrated

their initiative and worth, together with their lack of basic artillery background—are withdrawn from the regular course and given a special three-week course in artillery mathematics, terminology, and techniques. Those who develop at this retarded pace are then entered in the regular course. At the same time an effort to ensure uniformity of preparation has resulted in a standard preparatory school schedule (including text assignments and instructors' notes) being prepared by the school.

The course is of four weeks' duration, and it is expected that each of the Replacement Center schools—plus any post or unit schools—will adopt this standardized course. The recommendation has been made that every applicant for the Artillery Officer Candidate School must either (1) have a certificate from an accepted prep school before being admitted to the course, or (2) pass an examination which will indicate proficiency in the work given in these prep schools. Failure in the latter will result in the applicant being transferred to the Fort Sill Replacement Center preparatory school before commencing the course. So much for the basic qualifications.

The biggest weakness in the present selection of candidates seems to be that of leadership qualifications. The original classes were made up of men who had been carefully examined as to character, type, and actual demonstrations of leadership. This is no longer true. While every effort is made to eliminate obviously unfit candidates, regardless of marks, the truth remains that the Officer Candidate School is not designed to develop incipient leadership. It seems manifestly unfair for a boy just out of school—with no military or civilian background of command - to be sent back to his outfit after as much as ten weeks of the course because he was still too retiring or timid to accept responsibility—yet that is being done in ever-increasing numbers.

The responsibility lies with those who sent the man there. This fault is particularly true of the Replacement Center schools. Most of these men are mentally and basically ready to complete the course, but too frequently they have no background of experience in command from which to draw. It is my firm conviction, based on contact with over ten thousand Officer Candidates, that no man should ever be certified for the Field Artillery School until he has actually been put in a position of responsibility and command and has therein indicated poise, self-control, levelheadedness, authority of manner, and military bearing.

General R. E. Lee, Commanding General of the 15th F. A. Brigade, has instituted a procedure which might well be emulated throughout the service. In brief, after a process of selection, any man who is selected as a potential officer candidate is given a distinctive white ribbon on his cap. He is required to demonstrate exemplary conduct during his apprenticeship, and he is, regardless of rank, assigned certain duties which require leadership. His performance as a non-commissioned officer—either regular or acting—is carefully watched, and it is only by measuring up to the highest standards that he is sent on to the Officer Candidate School examining board.

## **“Candidate Selection at Fort Bragg”**

### ***The Field Artillery Journal (February 1943)***

In the early stages of the national emergency, enlisted men of the FARTC at Fort Bragg were chosen for officer candidate schools not only with extreme care, but in a leisurely way. A trainee who in the course of time distinguished himself by his education and ability to lead, was eventually sent before an Officer Candidate Board. Ultimately, he reappeared on the military scene considerably improved sartorially and wearing the gold bars of a second lieutenant.

Times have changed, as a minimum of investigation behind the scenes will convince you. The selection of officers is no longer a chance, if perfectionist, process. The need for officers is felt keenly and candidates are no longer chosen as if they were to receive the Nobel Prize or the Academy Award. The Officer Candidate Board operates with system, speed, and efficiency to choose officer candidate material from the word “Go”—that is, from the moment potential candidates enter the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center. Within a few hours of the arrival of new men, prospective officers among them are interviewed and those who pass are listed as possible candidates for a class in the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center School. Of the men so listed, about 75% actually get to the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center School, and of these another 75% or so get through this preparatory school and go to the Field Artillery Officer Candidates School at Fort Sill. Approximately 94% of these graduate from Sill as officers.

Shortly after new soldiers arrive in the Replacement Center, the qualification cards of those who have attained a grade of 110 or over on their Army General Classification Test are sent to the office of the Officer Candidate Board. These men are then assembled in one of the battalion recreation halls, where Lt. George Sold of the Prospect Section of the Officer Candidate Board tells them why they are there. “You men have been asked here because we think you may have the stuff—if you use it—to become officers in the Army of the United States.” After giving them some idea of what the field artillery is about, Lt. Sold continues with “You must take your basic training. Take your lessons in the guns, chemical warfare, and first aid. Take the K.P. and the ditch-digging and whatever else there is in soldiering. You’ve got to be a good private before you can be anything else. You’ve got to be a good soldier above all.

“In the tenth week of your training—I can assure you it will be during the tenth week, so have a pressed uniform ready—you will be asked to appear before a board of officers. They will try to find out how much of your basic training you have absorbed and they will give you examinations. An officer must know what’s going on in the world. We want you to know where Casablanca and Toulon are. Where are Guadalcanal and Vladivostok and what is their significance? You will be given a math test, more difficult than the one you will take this morning.”

Before the proposed math test is given, Lt. Sold explains the importance of the Field Artillery School above any others as far as the Replacement Center is concerned. “You can apply for any school. But we are mainly interested in the field artillery, because we have the facilities here to teach you the field artillery. You may apply for the infantry or for ordnance or one of the other schools. But, for example, suppose you want to go to the engineering school. Now, we have small quotas for schools other than the field artillery and we will probably be able to send, at the most, only two men to the engineering school;

although we think you are qualified for the engineering school and recommend you, you will have to wait until there's an opening. By that time, you may no longer be in the Replacement Center. Your application will follow you wherever you go, but it may do you little good. But the Field Artillery School is another matter. We can guarantee you the chance to go to school, if you have the qualifications."

The preliminary math test is then given. There are usually 38 questions and there is no time limit. The test is not difficult and is designed more to give confidence to those men who have the requisite knowledge than it is to test them. At the end, examinations are graded rapidly by Lt. Clyde Warren or Lt. Paul Stone, the remaining members of the Prospect Section of the Officer Candidate Board. A chart of correct answers is used, so that by matching and then using a scale of grades all the tests can be marked in a few minutes.

After the examinations have been corrected, the men are interviewed individually and asked whether they are seriously interested in becoming officers. Each man's qualification card is before the interviewer so the latter can tell his educational background, former occupation, highest position of leadership, hometown, aptitude examination results, interest in sports, general intelligence, and possible previous military training. Those men who are interested—and almost 100% are—are told their strong or weak points. They are advised as to what procedure to follow if they wish to become officers.

This is of utmost importance and is a significant change in the approach to officer candidate material. The idea of leadership is implanted early and a directive is issued as to how to proceed. Men are advised to send for their old math books. They are told where they may study, and they get some idea of what is in store for them. The entire process has been activated. Ability is sought out, directed, and cultivated instead of being allowed to transpire by accident. Before they leave the recreation hall, the men are cautioned. They are to return to their barracks to take up the duties of their basic training period. They are to bear in mind the high purpose it is hoped they will all pursue. But they are, above all, not to act like officers before they are so in fact. They must be good privates first of all. They must strive to be the best soldier in the platoon. The names of those men who have been considered by the interviewer as possible officer material—and they are the bulk of this group—are listed as possible candidates for enrollment in a class thirteen weeks later in the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center School.

The men go back to their batteries and hear no more from the Officer Candidate Board for many weeks, but the Board's "offensive" has not rested. During their tenth week of training, these men are called before the Board and interviewed thoroughly, while their ability to lead is judged. They are given examinations in mathematics, current events, and character. The mathematics examination includes fractions, which count for 15%; decimals, also 15%; conversion of fractions to decimals, 10%; equations with one unknown, 20%; solving for the unknown in field artillery formulas, 5%; ratio questions, 15%; elementary trigonometry, 5%; and others, 15%.

The character or personality examination consists of four questions for each of which the applicant is expected to write a paragraph of about fifty words in answer. Questions cover education, experiences, leadership, and officer qualities. If the prospective candidate

passes these examinations and is acceptable to the board, during the next two weeks he takes his physical examination. By the end of his training cycle he has been fully tested, has been enrolled in a class in the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center School, and is embarked on a course that will lead him through Fort Sill to a commission in the Field Artillery.

**“He Doesn’t Care What’s Cooking” - John G. Voight: 72-43**

***Pampa (Texas) News (April 15, 1943)***

Pvt. John G. Voight was notified while on KP duty that he had been accepted by the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Okla., for training. Candidates for the officers’ school automatically become corporals. Corporals don’t have to help the cook. So, says Brooks Briefs, field newspaper, Voight “bade KP a fitting farewell.”

**Charles H. Taquay: 48-43**

**A “Frog” at Fort Sill**

***Field Artillery Journal (April-May 1943)***

Fort Sill, Medicine Bluff, Signal Mountain and Mt. Scott! Shadows of Sitting Bull, Stumbling Bear, and Big Tree! Shadow of Colonel Grierson and of the Quakers so opportunely evoked in *Carbine and Lance* for the relief of overworked Candidates! A long time shall pass before I may forget you. Even you, Geronimo, whose name we call under the canopy of our parachutes (even if you do hardly deserve such an honor, you whose chief passion was an unreasonable taste for “fire water”), you will remain for me the symbol of these plains. You were as they are, all contrast and antithesis.

Fort Sill! There the wind blows freely, carrying the cold of the northern ranges after the most unexpected heat waves in the midst of the winter. And at other times the “toughening process” of American soldiers is readily accomplished without the benefit of General Rommel’s hothouses. There the sons of the White Man are taught scientific methods of killing under the eyes of the last Redskins. And, to their surprise, they learn that Indian Warfare may be sometimes as important for the Artilleryman as the procedure for Fire Direction.

A Candidate arrives at the OCS branch of the Artillery School. He has been sent there by a Board of Officers which passed on his aptitude to lead men, to adapt his mind to new circumstances, to learn, and to teach. He is officer material. At first he may have misgivings.

Let’s suppose that you are such a Candidate. You may come from any walk of life, from Wall Street or the dust bowl, direct from college or from the battlefield. You may think that you are a leader because you have effectively led men under fire; maybe you have been an officer in a foreign army, or your excellent record as N.C.O. makes you much more conversant with the mechanism and psychology of command than any “Ninety Day Wonder” may ever hope to become. Possibly you are an “armchair strategist;” logistics and geopolitics of the highest caliber are your favorite dish; you eat it three times a day, and it happens that you digest part of it. To the contrary, you may think that you are too young, too inexperienced to exert command and assume responsibilities; or the idea of firing guns big and small may not appeal to you so much as a commission in the Air Corps. As a lawyer

you would prefer to be part of the Judge Advocate General's office, or to devote your time as an economist to the planning of the post-war world.

But you are in the Army now; you are "officer material," nothing more, nothing less; and the Army needs artillery officers. The problem is to dress you up; adjust the qualifications that you may have, supply some which you lack; teach you the mechanics you will need in the fulfillment of your daily job; make you able to learn from experience what no book will ever teach you; and impart to you the Unity of Doctrine, the *esprit de corps* and at the same time the initiative which is the basis of any efficient army. The solution to so many different requirements can be provided only by a school. There the Lawyer will learn that logics apply to Gunnery and to the Rules of Evidence as well; the Farmer will find a new use for his knowledge of the terrain; the Strategist will swallow, willy-nilly, the A.B.C. of the trade; the N.C.O. will be taught to make decisions; and the College Boy, as well as the others, will go through some tough experiences which will distinguish him among other men, give him confidence, and ultimately make a Chief out of him. Probably your greatest benefit will be to forget quickly many details of such a large picture shown to you in so short a time and to feel therefore the urge, immensely greater than before, of learning them again by the sweat of your brow.

You are at Fort Sill and with little time at first to think of the Indians. The course starts with motors. In former times it was horsemanship. You understand without difficulty the dictum, "A modern army smells oil, an old fashioned one smells dung." You read the assignments—at least you try to—and you begin to understand why the Second Front did not start earlier, and why radio commentators insist fatiguingly on the "Problem of Transportation." A 6x6 truck is more temperamental than 6 horses, even 6 mules, and it needs more attention than a beautiful woman. First echelon maintenance, weekly, monthly maintenance, driver's inspection, command inspection, check and recheck, without forgetting tightening and six or seven kinds of lubrication. You think of the plight of motorized columns short of supplies 3,000 miles from our shores. At the end of a short week you have a motor march. Your assignment: Bn S-2, and you will relieve the road marking party. Easy, you think. Wait until you have left six or seven of your buddies behind on the road!

Materiel follows. You learn the importance of small details for the achievement of broad aims. The Bracket Locking Ring Lock Screw and the Piston Rod Outer Locking Nut haunt your dreams. If you keep your head throughout the S.N.L. you can also get valuable dope on the psychology of foreign nations. The French, mind you, contributed most of our 155 howitzer, and their cautious mind becomes evident to you once your instructor has demonstrated the fastidious safeties of that piece which can hardly be fired until everybody has said his prayers. By that time demerits ("gigs," you will call them) start falling. You just imagine that they are shells of splinters and you fix your locator card or button your shirt with the same spirit you would use in digging slit trenches under fire. Up to now, after all, everything is fine. The writs have not been arduous, you were authorized to use your books, and a small crop of U's bring to your section nothing worse than a few hours of compulsory study hall.

The first week of gunnery is the real beginning of adventures, and if a dangerous life appeals to you, you have what you want. Experienced or not, you will have your troubles. Y-azimuths will be the main cause. Although they call them angles, I rather think that they



are Gremlins gone crazy for having turned all their life in the clockwise direction. You will lose valuable time thinking out the nature of the little bird who adds 6,400 to your declination constant, when needed, and you will be disgusted by his failing to subtract 3,200 from some of your deflections. As to the base angles you will meet in survey, their labyrinth of crisscross polygons will remind you of Crete—not because of the German invasion but because the Minotaur used to live there.

Weeks follow weeks; each one has a name; the bewildering third, the scintillating fourth, the bloody fifth, etc.—you will learn them more quickly than I can forget them. Each one will have a surprise in store for you; firing battery, ballistics, unobserved fires, survey, MIFMIF, K-transfer, correction difference, vertical and horizontal photos (remember the last item, gentlemen), time fire, ricochets (remember that one too), high bursts and center of impact, . . . These will be the tools of your trade.

As if it were not enough, service practice starts without delay. There you will find the pace really terrific. “Class assemble; poor judgment; waste of ammunition; a mis-sensing; you do not know your procedure; how the h— can you hope to get an adjustment? Any questions? Sit down. Next problem. 45 left of the truck body and at a nearer range, at the limit of a light green field, a small piece of materiel. Student so-and-so, your target.” “A, Sh HE Ch V, FD, BDL 640, Si 300, FO, El 450.” “On the way.” “Eh, EH . . . LOST ... Eh, Eh . . . Sir, I think I have lost it. . . .” “I ain’t your mother, kid! What is your next command?... Sound off ... Do something, DO SOMETHING, D-O- S-O-M-E-T-H-I-N-G! . . . Cease firing. End of problem. Class assemble.”

Axial precision, axial bracket, small-T precision, small-T bracket, forward observation, large-T precision, large-T bracket—under such an avalanche no wonder if you jump brackets in precision and split them in bracket! Your correspondent “dood it” with full success. Still little confident in your grocery-store arithmetic when using the *c* and tottering when you try to find out on the spot the result of 75-6, you will hear to your dismay (among other “latrine rumors”) that small-T involves the use of two other factors and large-T three! Three new factors you will have to add, subtract, multiply, all by head, and God knows what else! You have never been closer to committing suicide. “Nonsense,” says your gunnery instructor, “small-T is just like axial and large-T is easy. Any other question? Take a writ.” You go on stumbling in the December snow watching your shots, and jump from one foot to the other as your nose cannot be kept dry; or it is August and you sizzle on your iron chair.

From one day to the next you scramble your methods, sense a deviation in forward, work out deflection first in large-T, but you do not get discouraged; you do not repeat more than twice the same mistake. You avoid the shame of being sent back to your former unit with an assignment in relation with your present rank, or the horrors of Prep School. You have shown your desire of becoming an officer. You get through gunnery.

Communications are awaiting you. Elementary, my dear Watson! No code, no theory, no nothing. They show you the sets, outline the procedure, give you tips about wire—and a miracle; to your great surprise, you pass the test. It is true that the shorter the time, the more you have to open your ears and eyes. You know that communications are everything in modern battle and that you may not have a better occasion to have a crack at it until D-Day.

By the tenth week you are ready for tactics. Only three weeks of them; three weeks to assimilate the fundamentals of military art—rather, to learn a new way of life. The Warrior’s way of life.

Up to now you have dealt with separate techniques: how to handle a gun, make a traverse, inspect a car. Now you must “think a situation,” find in an instant the proper use of each technique at your disposal and of each man under your command, for the fulfillment of your mission. You must live your mission in such a way that you will never be surprised by any change of situation, that you will find a way of turning to your advantage even the most unfavorable circumstances. Ultimately, you will be introduced to the fundamental responsibility of Command: making decisions for others. As an enlisted man you have had a valuable experience of military life, but an unconscious one. You were doing what you were told to do. Now you have to think what to tell them to do.

First the school teaches you to fit mentally your own branch of the service in its proper place among the others. You must be proud of it, but remember that infantry in modern battle is more than ever the Queen. Ultimate success depends on how you support that Queen and maintain liaison with her (*Honi soit qui mal y pense*). Your brilliant infantry instructor will tell you, with all the necessary emphasis, that the aim of any military operation is a doughboy on the enemy position, with a rifle in his hands and a bayonet at the end of it.

As an artilleryman, your mission will always be to support the infantry. The techniques you know will be your tools to that end. After having learned the “how to do it” you will learn the “when, where, and what-for.” Tactics will become a part of your life; you will open your eyes on the terrain, on and off duty look for positions, collect the necessary information—yes, you will always be more or less an intelligence agent. You will keep record of every available bit of information on notes or on sketches, maps, and photomaps you have been taught how to read.

You make acquaintance with the other arms which help you or against which you have to organize a defense. You start a lasting relationship with military administration and its indispensable neighbors, logistics, transportation, supply, army organization. You are directed to give some thought to the “Conscience of the Army,” the Court Martial and the fearsome apparel of the Articles of War. Supreme consecration of your new duties, you receive instruction in combat orders.

But tactics are a way of life that the book alone cannot give to you. The practice only creates habits, reflexes, ready to be used when the opportunity occurs. It also makes you realize your ignorance better than any gig or any U. It makes your mind more permeable to future injections of theory. RSOPs afford such a practice. You will like them more or less according to your knowledge of the job assigned to you. If you do not know, everything will be for you like a bad show. If you do know, if you direct your attention to what happens around you, if you keep on the ball, if you are your own critic, you will enjoy your RSOP more than a dance with your best girl—well, almost as much, anyway.

A final feature marks your weeks in tactics: demonstrations of infantry and artillery in the attack, artillery in the defense, air support, antitank operations. You will have something

them that many a German *Von* would give his eyeball for. Once and maybe for all time you will have seen from the best OP the broad picture, the one historians always talk about but nobody sees in the fog of war.

That is all. You have graduated; you have bought your uniform with trousers pink or dark, and your overcoat short or long. You have got your assignment; you have been treated to a few orientation talks by your Tactical Officer, to some music and a speech by some distinguished guest. You have shaken hands with the General and received a big bundle of papers. You know that you are assuming a heavy responsibility and that you are not starting on a party of fun. Still, you are probably more happy than at any other time in your entire life. Even old routiers are, and you throw your hat with no little enthusiasm. Now you do not have anything else to do than to start working hard and learning without being told.

*Note: Charles Taquey served with the French Pack Artillery, prior to enlisting in the US Army for parachute training and served in the US Army parachute Field Artillery after OCS.*

**“From the Front at Fort Sill – Newest Additions to Tactics (A Battle Inoculation Course)” *The Bracket* (May 1943, Vol. No. 1)**

The Field Artillery School took a broad step toward furthering the “Special Battle Course” policy of AGF, in inaugurating the “Forward Observer Under Fire” course for student instruction. The course was made part of the school curriculum in March, when students of the Officer’s Basic Course and Officer Candidates experienced the “run” for the first time. The purpose of the exercise is to experience students with actual battle conditions and to accustom them in combat by subjecting them to every sight, sound and sensation of actual battle.

The Department of Tactics is responsible for the now popular T-15 exercise, “The Forward Observer Under Fire”, and Captain A. P. Callahan, Research Department, conducted the necessary experimental work and planned the course as it is used today. In all, there are five separate stations to the course, and high-ranking staff officers take their baptism of fire alongside students from the Officer Candidate School.

At Station No. 1, students are given a demonstration of the actual manufacture and use of Improvised, close-in, defensive weapons – The Molotov Cocktail and the sticky grenade. Here, too, students are given an opportunity actually to use these weapons.

Station No. 2 consists of a display and explanation of organic artillery intrenching tools. True, front-line reports indicate troops in combat exhibit amazing speed in intrenching for defense while under fire, and, in emergencies they have intrenched without tools. However, how much more will they be able to do with tools and a knowledge of how to use them under combat conditions. Although the value of intrenching is best proven while under hostile fire, the cost of this test in human lives can be reduced by having prior knowledge and experience in the subject.

Station No. 3 demonstrates the difficulty of detecting enemy Mortars, machine guns and 37 mm guns firing from well concealed positions. Students are instructed in the identification and location of these fires by sound and sight method.

Station No. 4 presents an actual demonstration in scouting and patrolling under fire. With the artillery now a more desirable target for infiltrating troop attack, a knowledge of these fundamental infantry tactics is essential.

Station No. 5 is the highlight of the entire exercise and demonstrates the proper technique of advancing and crawling through barbed wire. After the several methods have been demonstrated and explained, students actually make a “run” through the course and at the finish—without time out to catch a breath—students are assigned a target and directed to conduct an adjustment of fire using forward observer methods. No instruments are used. The situation is realistic in every detail. Battle-field casualties remain in convincing positions—mute reminders pointing out the wrong way to advance through barbed wire; violations of cover discipline are promptly rewarded with smoke concentrations on the position; lack of attention to the proper method of crawling and advancing meets with a concentration of hostile fire or a brace of hand grenades. A raised butt, for instance, is an automatic casualty. Students advancing through the forty odd yards of barbed wire are constantly under over-head machine-gun fire and intermittent bursts of simulated hostile artillery add to the worries of those undergoing the exercise.

**Ralph E. Anderson: 58-43**

In late 1942, I was selected to attend the Field Artillery School O.C.S. at Fort Sill. Several other sergeants and I were returned from the Pacific to qualify for a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant of Field Artillery. Our orders said we were entitled to “15 days en route,” however an ambitious Captain at Angel Island misunderstood our orders and canceled our leave due to “exigencies of war-time service.” Imagine our surprise when we were greeted in person by the Commandant of the Field Artillery School. It seems that several of our sergeants had served at Pearl Harbor and General Pennell wanted to meet them. As a sergeant, I had served under the general when he was a colonel commanding the 52nd Field Artillery Brigade.

When the General learned that our leave had been canceled, he countermanded the orders and told us to go home and spend Christmas with our families, and the war would be waiting for us when we returned for class #58, instead of class #56.

Initially, most of our classmates had the same concern: “Would we have the ability to complete the course?” We got the answer when we learned that three of our six tent-mates would not qualify for a commission. The gunnery department appeared to cause the most casualties; and rightly so, because most of those selected would shortly be serving in combat against a tough and skillful enemy. My OCS training was a valuable experience, and I have fond memories of those years.

**Walter Ford Rogers, Jr.: 64-43**

I graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in Jacksonville, Florida, in the Class of 1939 and enrolled in Harvard College. Before I selected my courses for my freshman year, Germany and Russia had invaded Poland, and England and France had declared war on Germany. I anticipated that America was likely to become involved, and I preferred to serve as an officer rather than a private. So, I became an officer candidate in the Army ROTC.

In February 1943, I elected to skip the final semester of my senior year, along with about 30 other ROTC students who had enough credits for graduation, and we went together to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, in OCS Class 64, to become second lieutenants. I followed that by a battery officer's course (different from the other Harvard men). In mid-June I received orders to report to Camp Robinson at Little Rock, Arkansas, for duty in a newly formed unit, with a delay en route.

**Hugh B. Mott: Anti-Aircraft Artillery OCS Camp Davis 1943  
*Veterans History Project Interview (June 29, 2004)***

I was aware of what was going on in Europe and I was actually raised for the military to start with. I was a cadet major in ROTC in high school and I thought I was going to go to West Point, so I went to Marion Military Institute, which was a prep school for West Point. My appointment to West Point did not pan out for some reason or another, and I got disgusted and went back home and got married.

When pearl harbor was attacked, I was working at Vultee aircraft plant as a stock chaser. At that point I never paid much attention to the part about going to war because employment there was an exempt thing. I finally got caught up in the whole thing and I felt like I had to see what it was all about. I slipped of and volunteered. But it didn't take me but about fifteen minutes to see all I wanted to see.

The Army was the only thing I knew anything about, so that's why I chose the Army. I didn't know anything about the Air Force or the Navy, so I didn't want that. I was what they called a VOC (Volunteer Officer Candidate). They had a program where you volunteered, and you had to go to Basic Training and then you went to OCS.

When I got ready to go to Officer Candidate School, they said, "What branch do you want," and I said, "Where do you need officers?" because I wanted every chance to make that grade, so I'd go anywhere they needed me. They said, "We have lost a lot of people in anti-aircraft," so I went to Antiaircraft Artillery OCS at Camp Davis, North Carolina. I graduated on June 3, 1943 and I stayed there and taught school for a number of months.

They told us if we stayed at the school to teach, we would all leave as 1LTs and a lot would be CPT's, but that was just a carrot that they sort of hung out and we jumped for it. But I went almost all the way through the war as a 2LT and ran across people I'd taught in school. I finally did get a battlefield promotion to 1LT right at the end, but I never could get that CPT rating during the war.

After teaching at the Antiaircraft Artillery School, I was transferred to the Combat Engineers and went to the Basic Engineer School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. It was just sort of a little old quick thing. All you need for engineers is a strong back and weak mind anyway. You learn a little bit about bridge building, demolitions, mines, knot tying and that sort of stuff. You learn all the trades it takes to keep all the people and equipment going- Bailey Bridges, pontoon bridges and so on.

I was then assigned to Company B, 9th Armored Engineer Battalion, 9th Armored Division at Camp Polk. I shipped over with them on the Queen Mary and stayed with that unit throughout the war.

**Associated Press (June 5, 1943): Class 68-43**

The 68th class of the Fort Sill Field Artillery School will be graduated next Thursday. One of the 250 members of the class will be the 19,000th officer turned out by the school since the start of the war.

**“Fort Sill Artillery School Graduates 19,000th Officer”**

**Arizona Republic (Friday, June 11, 1943)**

**June 10, 1943** - The assembly line which mass produces the alert brains directing the army's tremendous concentrations of fire power in battles over the globe turned out finished product No. 19,000 today. He was John K. Curran, officer candidate, 34 years old, a Minneapolis bank employee before he entered the Army 14 years ago.

Along with other members of Class 68 at the field artillery school here, Curran became a second lieutenant, fully imbued with the spirit traditional in the corps since Alexander Hamilton organized Battery D during the American Revolution.

The school edged into heavy production in July 1941 and stepped up its output to 500 artillery graduates weekly in January 1942, when demand curved sharply skyward. Now that the pressure has eased somewhat, Brig. Gen. Jesmond D. Balmer, commandant of the school, disclosed that starting July 2 the average class enrollment would be cut to 90 compared with the current 200.

The present course of 13 weeks will be lengthened to 17 to ensure even wider instruction in the vastly improved artillery techniques which have won commendation from field commanders everywhere from Bataan to Tunisia. They were developed at Fort Sill.

Addressing Curran and his classmates, General Balmer reminded them of the terrifying efficiency of their arms, compared with even newer weapons born of World War II.

“There is nothing that field artillery cannot do.” he said. “It has always done the job better than anyone else. The battle is won by fire power-by the business end of your weapon.”

Like many of his fellow candidates, Lieutenant Curran has come up through the ranks. He was a staff sergeant in the 80th Field Artillery Battalion, Sixth Division, before winning entry to the school. It was a double celebration for the 19,000th graduate. Lieutenant Curran and Miss Mildred Bailey were to be married tonight at the home of her parents in Rush Springs, Okla.

**“So You Washed Out of OCS?”**

**Staff Writer Sgt Bill Davidson, Yank Magazine (July 30, 1943)**

**Jefferson Barracks, Mo.** - So, you washed out of OCS. All right. According to the formula, you now report to your new assignment or to an overseas pool, such as the Air Forces Overseas Training Center here at Jefferson Barracks, feeling low and useless and ready to carve out a slit trench with your teeth.

You sulk through lectures; you resent the restrictions and the rugged physical training. You're convinced that you got a raw deal in OCS. You feel that you were sent to the wrong school, or you were discriminated against because of your background or the branch of the service you came from. You feel that the Army doesn't want to have anything more to do with you and you certainly don't want to have anything to do with the Army. In short, at this stage you're a pretty sorry mess of a soldier.

Either one of two things can now happen:

You can continue to act in the above-named manner, contaminating not only yourself but the more susceptible men in your outfit as well. Or you can snap out of it and get yourself another chance – with the aid of the Army.

Shortly after an OCS wash-out arrives here at Jefferson Barracks, he is given a furlough. During his period of orientation, he is not actually restricted to the post, but is taken to see ball games, burlesque shows and the like in St.

Louis—an effective process for keeping his mind from self-pity. Gradually, he settles down to work. Unless he is an easily rusting radio operator, he is kept away from his specialty altogether. His training here is designed largely

to teach him basic infantry weapons and to harden him physically for possible overseas duty. Too many of our technicians have been found to know too little about soldiering.

This is the toughest period for the OCS washout. He drills, runs obstacle courses, feels degraded and has plenty of time to think. One sergeant got up in the middle of a sex lecture and made the classic remark, "What kind of prophylactic do I use after what happened to me at OCS?" Another, Sgt. William Richardson, who had been cited for bravery at Pearl Harbor and wounded in both legs over Midway, unconsciously drew crude, bitter OCS cartoons during lectures on weapons by PFC instructors. It's not so easy to get failure and hopelessness off your mind.

This is where intelligent handling comes in. Maj. Curtis I. Pullig, wing commander in charge of training, speaks to each class, asks the OCS washouts to hold up their hands and then addresses them directly. "You men," he says, "are the leaders of this group—otherwise you never even would have been selected to go to OCS. Something happened down there at school to mess you up. But you're like a cork in a tub of water. No matter how deep you're pushed under the surface, that leadership quality in you is going to pop you to the surface again. Nothing is going to hold you down, and you've all got a fine job to do yet in this Army - a lot of you as officers."

This takes the 500 or so wash-outs by surprise. They lose their listless look and sit bolt upright. Within a few days, nearly all of them have been in to see Maj. Pullig personally. Each man discusses in detail his own personal problem and grievance. Maj. Pullig, a lanky, astute ex-schoolteacher from Arkansas, estimates that these conferences take up fully one-third of all his time. It's the same with the other wing and squadron commanders, but this work ranks as the most important they have to do. The classification officer is always standing by for consultation.

In addition to getting things off your chest, here is what you find out about your future in these conferences.

**1. You can apply for OCS again.** If the classification officer finds irregularities in your record or outstanding qualifications for any school on the hot list, you actually will be rushed through the local OCS Board because of the fact that you have been selected for leadership once before. In most cases, however, when you apply yourself, there will be no time for your application to go through channels, and chances are you will be shipped before being assigned to another school.

**2. If you are shipped, you can apply for OCS overseas.** Each commanding general has set up schools in his theater of operations, and they are accepting men now at a faster rate than the schools in the United States, which have been drastically cut down. Here, too, the fact that you have already been selected for leadership by one board greases the way with another—provided, of course, the reason for your failure doesn't ballax you up.

**3. You can be commissioned directly in the field.** This is a fairly common occurrence overseas, and if you develop into a crack specialist, come up with some outstanding achievement, or wind up a hero in action, the fact that you attended OCS will weigh heavily in your favor. Or you can remain an enlisted man at a job you like. After a wash-out finishes his training at the overseas pool, every attempt is made to get him back to the work he likes and does best - even while he's here. Thus, supply clerks become supply clerks again, mechanics become mechanics, and specialists in weapons and camouflage become instructors in their favorite subjects. It's amazing how soon you can get over failure when you're doing something useful and interesting. By the same token, when you get back in the saddle as a gunner or radio operator or tank commander overseas, it isn't long before you lose yourself in your work and say, "what the hell!" After all, there are some pretty nice guys who are enlisted men, too.

Sgt. Tom Damico, former New York newspaperman and Armored Force OCS wash-out, summed up the situation perfectly. "No man who washed out of OCS ever lost anything," he said. "Once he gets straightened out, he's a better soldier than he ever was before, he knows how to keep from getting killed, and he certainly knows how to take it—both mentally and physically. That's the kind of guy who comes home with medals."

### **Jimmy L. Butt: 70-43**

About two weeks after graduation from Auburn, during which time Jane and I visited my foster mother and told her of our plans to be married after OCS (Officer Candidate School). My mother had died at my birth and my father died when I was fourteen. I reported to Fort McClellan at Anniston, Alabama, for induction. There we were sworn in, issued some G.I. clothing, and then shipped to Fort McPherson in Atlanta. We were there for three or four days getting shots, more clothes, seeing indoctrination films, and being lorded over by a bully of a PFC (one stripe).

Since we were new inductees, it was presumed that we were buck privates (no stripes), so he had us doing K.P., picking up litter, and all sorts of mundane duties. Then a couple of our fellows determined that, in view of our ROTC training, we were not privates but had been inducted as corporals (two stripes). So, we outranked the bully PFC! Our guys then gave him a rough time, refusing his commands and otherwise upsetting his routine treatment of inductees. Fortunately, we left about a day later, by train, for Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and the PFC crisis disappeared.



Fort Sill, Oklahoma, home of the Army's Field Artillery School, sits way out among rolling hills, in windy county. It is well suited for artillery training since there were few trees so one could target-shoot at great distances with few obstructions. Upon arrival, we were trucked to our "huts," and I was part of Class 70. There were six of us per hut originally, but only three or four by graduation time. I was especially fond of two roommates, Ray Bugaro from New Jersey, who I later asked to be my best man, and Cade, a black, from Baltimore.

Then the shock came! In a matter of days, we went from the relaxed, laid-back, casual lifestyle of fraternity house living where our house man made the beds and our room could get pretty wild to the strictest of military discipline! We learned that we had to have our newly shined spare shoes laced up and tied and lined up like soldiers under our beds, our extra clothing had to be hung in a certain order with all buttons buttoned, and coat hanger hooks facing the same way. Our beds, which we had to make, had to stand the "dime test"—drop a dime from one foot and the blanket should be taut enough to flip the dime over. Of course, the hut had to be spotless, cleaned and dusted daily in the dusty Oklahoma environment. And the grounds outside the hut had to be equally immaculate (we swept it smooth daily before going to class).

We marched to all functions—meals, classes, to trucks to go to the firing range. We would "fall in" in front of our huts, with enough huts joining to create a platoon of three squads of about ten men each. Upon "falling in" we would endure a rigid inspection. We stood at the "brace"—meaning we raised our shoulders as high as possible, then rolled them back as far as we could, then pushed downward until our chests were protruding in an exaggerated military posture. All buttons had to be buttoned, shoes newly shined, insignia perfectly placed, eyes straight ahead, tummy tucked in. While we maintained this posture the officers would stroll through the ranks looking for violations, trying to catch our eyes following them rather than being focused straight ahead. Following inspection, under the constant surveillance of the officers, we would march to breakfast, still holding the brace and being sure there were "13 wrinkles" under our chins. We would march up to the dining hall door and the person marching the platoon (We took turns doing this.) would command "Column of squads, left squad, column left!" Then the left squad leader would yell, "Column left," the platoon leader would say "March," and the left squad would execute a left turn and march into the mess hall followed by squads two and three. Then we could relax for thirty minutes to eat breakfast.

During the day we would attend classes and about two days a week we would go to the firing range to learn to adjust fire on targets. The class work was relatively easy for the ROTC fellows because we had studied the same things in college ROTC classes. It was more difficult for those who had entered OCS through the ranks. On the other hand, they were much better at things like gas mask training, taking weapons apart and getting them back together, and setting up campsites. So we helped one another.

Going to the firing range was fun, if nerve wrecking. We would load into 2 1/2 ton trucks for the ride to the range. Upon arrival our instructor, seated in the cab, would hit the ground yelling "Hubba, Hubba!" (meaning hurry up) and almost immediately begin identifying reference points in the target area. If you were slow getting off the truck and failed to locate a reference and were called upon to fire, you were in trouble! Next, the instructor would identify a target: "See the small hill to left front? Sixty mils to the right

is a black spot. Directly beyond the black spot is a bush, your target (name).” Everyone thought he might be called so we all tried to follow the directions and then calculate our initial commands to the gun crew. (Understand, the guns were nowhere near us so we communicated by telephone.) Once a name was called, all others breathed a sigh of relief though we knew that over a period of time we would all have the same number of chances to shoot.

Some weird things happened on the range. One fellow failed to identify his target, he was afraid to admit it to his instructor, so he fired away at some target known only to him. All of us realized something was wrong and finally the instructor asked the student to identify the target. He couldn't; he flunked.

Nick, one of our Auburn ROTC students stuttered. He was a top student and an excellent singer. But under pressure he would stutter. So when he was firing his mission, he would struggle to give his next command. (All of us knew that he knew what to give.) The instructor would yell, “Hubba, Hubba.” Nick would grow more tense and could not complete his fire mission. He was the only Auburn student that failed to graduate from our OCS class even though there was more than a 50 percent failure rate overall. All the other students came into OCS through the ranks except for us and an ROTC class from Princeton. We did better than they!

During our very first week I was designated “hut orderly” for our hut. This meant that any flaw in our housekeeping that could not be directed to an individual would be credited to me. For failures, we would accrue “gigs.” Twelve gigs were cause to flunk you out. While I was hut orderly, I got nine gigs in the first week! I thought sure I'd flunk out and told Jane so. They stuck me for things like an empty clothes hanger in our hut in the wrong place and near the front door a cigarette butt that had not been there when we left, as I had personally swept that area. That weekend I had to sign in at headquarters every two hours as punishment. I had to report to an officer (march in, helmet under arm, salute, and hold until he returned it), and then listen to a tirade about neatness, responsibility, soldiering. An officer must set an example for his men. I accepted the criticism knowing that's what the army expects. Believe it or not, I got no further gigs the entire period I was there. My conclusion is that they were testing me. How would I react under pressure? Would I show anger and fight authority (impossible in a military situation)? I suppose I passed.

In retrospect, I believe the hazing I had experienced in fraternities, Scabbard and Blade, high school W Club, even pranks and ribbings by peers throughout life had taught me to roll with the punches, let it slide off otherwise, this experience could have been very stressful. As it was, nothing concerned me except the nine of twelve gigs in the first week.

Field Artillery training required that one be nimble in math; more specifically, in geometry and trigonometry. Initial commands and subsequent adjustments had to be translated from the observations of the observer to commands for the guns. A simple situation might have guns, observer, and target in a straight line. If the observer were exactly halfway between guns and target, and he measured a 40-mil deflection to bring the next shot on target, then his command to the guns would be “Left two zero” (applying the correction for twice the distance).

But rarely were guns, observer, and target on the same line. Rather, they might be offset as much as 90°. So, two other types of situations had to be dealt with: Big-T and Little-T. The most common situation was Little-T—where the guns were offset something less than 45°. Here deflections measured at the observation post had to be mentally corrected, by a factor that was based on the first digit of the sine (or was it cosine) of the angle. In addition, the distance differential had to be considered as in the discussion above. If you increased or decreased the range (distance from gun to target), you had to correct deflection, or your next shot would be off line. I'm hazy on this now, but I knew it well back then.

Big-T was even more difficult because what appeared to be deflection to the observer was actually a range change at the guns. And a deflection change at the guns produced overs and shorts as viewed by the observer.

These were the more difficult commands that entered into every sensing of a round. But there were a total of nine basic commands: charge, fuse, kind of ammunition, difference in elevation, are examples. I trust that this is sufficient to show that artillery officers had to be pretty good at math and able to make quick and accurate calculations under pressure. That's why the instructors were forever yelling "Hubba, Hubba" and urging that you to react to the previous round and come forth with your next command without hesitation.

Another axiom of field artillery: "Get your bracket." This meant that when your first round landed, the second one should be adjusted so that it was always on the opposite side of the target. Thus you have bracketed (hemmed in) your target and should hit it within the next two or three rounds. OCS candidates would be too timid in their shifts getting three or four shots on the same side of the target (no bracket). They would flunk the problem. It was called "creeping." Enough of artillery fundamentals.

Fortunately, as World War II progressed, improved forward observer (FO) methods of adjusting fire took over. The observer merely had to write down whether the last round was over, short, left, or right and by how much. His observations would be plotted on the firing charts by the central fire direction center and commands to the guns developed there. This took pressure off the observer (less math) and placed it in the fire direction center which was in a sheltered location, warm, with coffee, lights, and less pressure (usually). These so-called forward observer or FO firing methods were used almost exclusively during the latter part of WWII. Example command: "Left 300! Up 400!"

A Fort Sill Wedding: During my last few weeks of OCS, I was busy on weekends planning our forthcoming marriage. I located a Methodist minister, arranged to be married in the Old Post Chapel, a tiny but historic little church, rented a room in a private home, reserved a hotel room for Jane and Mel, her aunt, who accompanied her and stood with her. Ray Bugaro was my best man and several of my Auburn classmates were there: Tom Corley, Luther Brown, Dewitt Alsobrook, John T. Bryan, James Culpepper, all agricultural engineers, and Rene Bidez, Billy Duncan, Joe Sarver, and others that I cannot now recall. We married on June 23, 1943, and I was commissioned on June 24. I told Jane I would always remember our wedding date since it was just one day before I got my commission. She maintained I had the priorities reversed.

When I went to the OCS officer to ask permission to stay in town overnight, June 23 to be with my bride (Mel returned home that day), he gave me a hard time. "Butt, can't you wait one more day?" I got the time off, even though I had to get up in time to get back onto the Post for 6 a.m. roll call. We lived up to an old army tradition later that morning when my bride pinned the gold bars of 2nd Lieutenant on my shoulders.

We had ten days before my next assignment, which was to attend survey school at Fort Sill. We spent that time on our honeymoon at a nice little resort just out of Lawton. We had planned our wedding to be at Fort Sill, otherwise all our time would have been consumed in travel to Jane's home in Wetumpka, Alabama, and back. Not knowing where I would be assigned after survey school, we wanted time together.

Besides, I only had \$80 to my name! I had accumulated about \$80 from my corporal's pay while attending OCS, but lost my wallet in downtown Lawton, where I went to buy my uniform (for which I would be reimbursed), I was downcast! How could I take my bride on a honeymoon? How could we even eat the 10 days before I went back on duty? When I returned to my hut there was a letter from Uncle Geechie extending congratulations and enclosing a check for \$70! Fate was on my side!

**David H. Kregg: 77-43**

***War Years 1941-1945 with 327th Field Artillery Battalion***

I was attending Purdue University in 1941 and I remember coming out from the Sunday noon meal in the residence hall where I was living. On the radio, they announced that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. Right after that Purdue went on a speed-up program of three semesters a year. I was in basic ROTC since all males in the university were required to take two years of ROTC (Purdue is a land grant university). In May of 1942, at the end of my 2nd year, I elected to take the advanced course since I felt pretty sure we would be going into the service.

In January 1943 the University requested the advanced ROTC cadets to consider registering, which would credit the city of Lafayette, Indiana with the equivalent number of draftees. Most of my class signed up; there were just three or four who did not.

We were still not supposed to be subject to the draft, but on 17 February we were advised that we would be taken to Indianapolis and inducted, put in uniform, and returned to Purdue to finish our semester. I would then be one semester short for graduation. The students that did not sign up stayed in school for the next semester and graduated. They were inducted as privates after their graduation and did not get to Officer Candidate School for another three to four months.

In May of 1943 we were sent to OCS, Class 77, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma for our thirteen-week course. Most of the class consisted of Purdue students but there were a few candidates from the other services. Some were from the Air Force and had never seen an artillery piece. The Air Force personnel had a tough time for most of the thirteen weeks since most of the instruction moved pretty fast. The Purdue students had already had three years of instruction on 75 mm and 155 mm artillery pieces.

The first few days at OCS were trying. We lined up for the mess hall and on signal entered and started down the food line. When we sat down at the table it seemed like only a couple

of minutes and the whistle blew for us to leave. It went on like that for every meal. After a few days, I was getting pretty hungry. I decided to start eating as I was going down the line so that I was partly finished when I got to the table. I have never changed my eating habits to this day. I still eat fast. When I was first out of the service and married to Rosemary, she would not sit across the table from me because I was always close to being finished before she had eaten half of her meal.

**Robert A. Young: 78-43**

In the early part of 1943 I was serving in the administration office of an Air Force unit in Winfield, Kansas. I had applied for Field Artillery OCS and a couple of others. One of my friends on the post was notified that he had been accepted for OCS. LT Root asked me to go into the Colonel's office to take notes as he knew I was adept in shorthand. What I discovered was that my friend had worked in a bank and had been convicted of a felony and therefore could not be commissioned as an officer in the US Army. I was saddened to hear this because he was really a neat guy. However, it turned out my good fortune as LT Root contacted Fort Sill and recommended me as a replacement. They said OK and I departed for Fort Sill, graduated in Class #78 trained as a FA Liaison Pilot, now Army Aviator and served in Europe with the 280th Field Battalion.

**The Field Artillery Officer Candidate School Course was expanded from 12 to 17 weeks when Class 84-43 started the course on July 2, 1943 and graduated on October 28, 1943**

**Clarence F. Gilmore: 84-43**

As I recall, as we got into the latter weeks of our course there was a series of field exercises called RSOP's, short for Reconnaissance, Selection and Occupation of Position. Candidates were assigned various responsibilities in various RSOPs and of course graded on their (the candidates) performance.

I had been lucking out pretty well during the program, getting assignments that weren't too challenging. Then came the final one, the big enchilada, called RSOP 12; an afternoon/overnight/morning after live fire affair, traveling from Fort Sill westward toward Cache, then a little north, then east into the west range area.

I looked on the bulletin board at the RSOP order and KABOOM; there I was, assigned as Battery Executive Officer. My luck had run out. I think my knees wobbled and I am sure my self-confidence took on some strain.

The appointed hour for RSOP 12 arrived, and there we were, officer candidates temporarily spliced into a 105 mm howitzer line-outfit, assigned to serve as part of the Artillery School's activities.

The exercise did indeed involve reconnoitering, selection, surveying and occupying a position and firing live problems during the late afternoon and into the night. A lot of things recur in my memory. Following are three of them:

1. Service Battery delivered ammunition to my battery's site; a couple of GMC 6x6 trucks with their tailgates down; a couple of GI's kicking crates of ammo off onto

the ground, I winced, thinking in my innocence that maybe those shells shouldn't get jarred around like that. But all went well enough and I had learned a little.

2. Later on, after dark, the brass casing of a just fired round came back out of the breech, hit the ground, a few grains of powder lit up and I jumped. It took some getting used to, but I learned that too was all part of the process.
3. We eventually bedded down; it was a clear frosty October night. One of the Tactical/Instructor Officers was bedded down near my post and the group of us shot the breeze for a while. He gave us officer candidates a little verbal hazing, saying how our Army pay was about to increase ten-fold and that if we weren't careful, our expenses would increase more than ten-fold. We eventually drifted off to sleep.

The wire section had done its thing and the communication was pretty good. (It's sort of sobering to realize that, yes; wire was still depended upon to a good extent at that time). At about 0500 our field telephone rang. Some GI answered it in a sleepy voice, then after a pause came out with "Yes Ma'am, Good Morning." And that woke everyone in the area with a jolt, wondering did that guy really say "Yes Ma'am" in the midst of a military outfit bivouacked out in the Wichita Mountains on a frosty, cold October morning? It turned out that, yes; arrangements had been made for our field phone network to have one line connected to the civilian telephone system and for one of their operators to give us a wakeup call.

Epilogue: We must have done well enough on RSOP 12: we all graduated a few days later and went on our various ways, shiny new Second Lieutenant bars in place.

### **David W. Blasen: 90-43**

Friday 13 August 1943: And so "to brace" on one of the days mankind sets aside as superstitious - not that any candidate in OCS is superstitious, nor prone to believe in latrine rumors. In spite of this day of black cats and witches (no references to TAC Officers intended) we opened the first inning of Administration. Every candidate struggled desperately in hopes of learning some way to avoid court martial in the next seventeen weeks.

Gunnery-Oh joy! Stand up! Sit down! You're too slow! You've lost your rounds? Sir, what's this big card with T.S. on it? You've lost your plotting pins? Where are your photos with your names on them? Lost? You can't find your firing tables?

Tactics-Now we'll get through, naturally depending on the situation in CC-35.

Thursday 9 December 1943: And so "to graduate" on one of the days OCS students set aside as superstitious. The grind was long and a lot of "Hubba, Hubba!" In spite of all, it has been fun - maybe you didn't think so at the time, but you'll never forget your days at OCS....August 13, 1943 - December 9, 1943. Hubba, Hubba, Hubba!

### **Earl R. Swanson: 90-43**

In September of 1939 I enrolled in the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois. Hitler had invaded Poland without a declaration of war just a few weeks before. Reserve

Officer Training Corps (ROTC) instruction in Military Science and Tactics was mandatory for all students in their freshman and sophomore years. I enrolled in the Field Artillery, not because of deliberate choice but because the Field Artillery class sections were open at the time I registered. Other branches, e.g., Signal Corps, Cavalry and Coast Artillery were closed.

At that time the artillery was horse-drawn, and we were required to ride horses and take examinations in our ability to have the horses perform the various gaits. The horse barns were in the present site of the Law Building and the track for demonstration of riding was the parking lot directly south of the Law Building. The artillery was the French 75 mm and we drilled in the Armory with occasional exercises in the field.

After completing my sophomore year in June of 1941, I applied and was accepted for Advanced ROTC. In May of 1941 President Roosevelt had declared an unlimited national emergency. The advantages of Advanced ROTC included the high likelihood of completing college prior to entering the service and entering as an officer rather than as an enlisted man. My father supported this decision on my part.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese on 7 December 1941 and the subsequent declaration of war on Japan and Germany intensified our training. On Pearl Harbor day I was in my junior year at the University of Illinois and, by coincidence, was in my room preparing for my military class on Monday when the news came over the radio. That Sunday night we marched to President Willard's home on Florida Ave. He came out on the balcony and urged us to continue our studies and to wait to be called to duty.

We shifted from horse-drawn artillery to the more modern motorized artillery and the French 75 mm guns were replaced by the 105 mm howitzers. Among other things this made obsolete the new dress boots that I had purchased from Sears and Roebuck to wear with my dress breeches. We practiced "firing" in the University Armory with small steel balls fired from a small gun mounted on top of the 105 mm howitzer. We had instruction in firing the .45 pistol and I qualified as a "marksman" on the range. We were given "officer" ranks in the ROTC program, largely based on our grades in drill and theory. I was a Captain in my senior year. The usual pre-war procedure included a summer camp of six weeks between the junior and senior year and a commission as second lieutenant upon graduation from the University. The summer camps were eliminated during the war. I graduated in June of 1943 and went home to the farm to wait for my orders to report for active duty.

I was finally called to active duty as a Sergeant to report to Camp Grant, Illinois on 13 July 1943 and left the train station in Paxton and transferred to the Hiawatha in Chicago for the trip to Camp Grant. There were several fellows from my University of Illinois class also headed for Camp Grant. We did not have a physical exam because we had taken them earlier at Chanute Field. We took the Army General Classification Test to see if we met the minimum of 110 for Officer Candidate School (OCS). My score of 136 meant that I was eligible for OCS. This test was what later might have been called a scholastic aptitude test. Not surprisingly 80 percent of the college students during World War II scored 120 or above, while only 16 percent of all recruits scored 120 or above. At Camp Grant we had to keep all of our possessions in a barracks bag. We got our short haircuts,

and I sent my hair oil home along with my civilian clothes. I was at Camp Grant only a few days.

We were sent to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin to begin basic infantry training. It was supposed to have lasted six weeks but was cut short when our orders to go to OCS arrived. Art Jacob, a neighbor boy from across the road at home, was stationed at McCoy and I spent some time with him, going to his mess hall to eat on a Sunday. My mother started the practice of sending cookies while I was at McCoy and cookies arrived periodically until I moved to a post in the South, where insects caused problems with food in the barracks.

Our orders to go to Fort Sill, Oklahoma included about 50 ROTC men from the University of Illinois and about 70 from Michigan State. My brother-in-law, Allan Beckstrom, had gone through OCS at Fort Sill in 1942. He had been in the Illinois National Guard Division, the 33rd, and after he was commissioned, he joined the Americal Division. He was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action as an artillery forward observer in January 1943 at Guadalcanal.

My class at the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill was OCS Class 90. The class began on 16 August 1943 and was completed on 9 December 1943 when we were commissioned second lieutenants. There was a waiting period before classes started and, among other things, some of us attended a rodeo in nearby Lawton. This was a first for me.

Some of my classmates from Illinois who had graduated in February had received their commissions and were stationed at Fort Sill. They told me that it was not unusual to be "set back" two or more classes before being commissioned. This could be done for poor class work or for demerits. We had compulsory study hall every night from 6:30 to 9:30. I had trouble getting a footlocker, so my Dad got one and sent it to me. There was an old radio in the shop on the farm and I asked Dad to send that to me also. We enjoyed it in our hut but there wasn't much time to listen to it.

In addition to my OCS classmates from Michigan State and the University of Illinois, there were a few from other ROTC programs and some enlisted men who had returned from overseas. We were quartered in huts with six candidates to a hut. There was much rotating among huts, partly because some candidates were "set back" to a later class and, we received some from earlier classes. One of my hut-mates was Jack Richmond, a friend from the University of Illinois. We had taken a number of courses together in the College of Agriculture. Jack had started out in Class No. 81 but developed some blood problems and was eventually discharged. The inspections were fairly rigorous, and the huts were hard to keep clean because of the blowing sand. I got a demerit ("gig") the first day for having my trousers and shirt hung on different hangers. I got another demerit for not slowing to a walk before saluting the lieutenant in charge of our class. Some of the demerits were for more important items. I got one once for failing to keep an accurate sketch of the terrain during a firing mission. I managed to get through on schedule without being sent back to another class.

About halfway through the course we had two Yale men move into our hut. They had been set back for excessive demerits. One of them was Alexander Montgomery III and he would have been called a "nerd" today. He carried a brief case and we nicknamed him "Bombsight," because he was so secretive about what was in the briefcase. At that time



there were rumors about our development of a bombsight that was superior to that of the Germans, and we knew that his father was a colonel. Alexander Montgomery III left our class and I'm not sure if he was set back or was reassigned.

Royal Suttkus from Michigan State and I were hut-mates during most of the OCS training period. He was of Finnish background from the Upper Peninsula and was trained in wildlife management. We spent some free time together exploring the mountains around Fort Sill. When he told me he was from the UP, I mistakenly thought that meant Union Pacific.

Every night after call to quarters formation we would yell the number of days remaining to graduation (December 9). Much time was spent learning how to conduct fire with the 105 mm howitzer. We used the objects on the mountains and hills as reference points, often a blockhouse on Signal Mountain was used. I had trouble estimating distances at first because the air was so clear, I underestimated ranges. We also practiced the three steps in finding howitzer positions: reconnaissance, selection and occupation of position (RSOP) in the semi-desert country in that part of Oklahoma.

The quality of instruction at OCS was excellent, better than almost any course that I had taken at the University of Illinois. The training aids were very effective in supporting lectures both in the classroom and in the field. The officers conducting courses had been carefully selected. A number had returned from combat assignments. By early November, I was fairly sure that I would complete the course and asked my parents to send my officer's uniform that I had for advanced ROTC. After commissioning on 9 December 1943, we were given 10 days leave and I returned home via St. Louis and then to Danville.

After my 10-day leave I returned to Fort Sill where I had been assigned to a post-graduate school for a short period. In addition to classes, we were expected on short notice to lecture to the new recruits at the reception center on any of ten subjects. We were in the same kind of quarters as during OCS except there was twice as much space. I did send home for sheets and pillowcases which weren't furnished. Also, now that we were officers, we didn't have to keep things in such good order. Officers got housing allowances and we were charged \$45 per month for quarters. At this time, I also increased my monthly bond purchase to a \$50. We needed to keep enough cash on hand to go to any place in the USA. We would then turn in a voucher and be reimbursed.

On New Year's Eve several of us went to nearby Lawton. There was an unusually heavy snow, and it was hard to find a cab driver willing to drive us back to the post. The roof of one of the post theaters collapsed from the weight of the snow. The post graduate school was completed in mid-January 1944, and I was assigned to a training regiment

#### **H. Malcom Baldrige, Jr.: 91-43**

I should tell you that Mac, my husband, was in grave danger of being kicked out of the Fort Sill OCS program back in 1942,3 or 4 (whenever he was there) because of an accumulation of "gigs", mostly for failure to make his bed properly. In desperation he got the best bed maker in his unit, who never got a "gig" for his bed, to make Mac's bed properly. But, alas the final "gig" came for his bed, and he was to be expelled. He appealed to the Colonel that he could shoot properly but that a vindictive sergeant was determined

to oust him, even with the best made bed in the unit. So, he was allowed to graduate with the succeeding class. We had many laughs over that story.

***(The above is a note sent to the Artillery OCS Hall of Fame by Midge Baldrige on March 10, 1995 in reference to the upcoming posthumous induction of her late husband into the Fort Sill Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame. H. Malcom Baldrige, Jr., served as the Secretary of Commerce from 1981-1987 and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1988.***

***Serving the Pieces (the 242nd Field Artillery Battalion World War II)***  
**Edward V. Walsh, 2006**

On March 4 (1943) a cold and wet morning, both trains (from Yakima, Washington) pulled in at the same time at the depot at Lawton, Oklahoma, just a few miles from Fort Sill. We were put on trucks and hauled to our new home, another tent city at the west end of Fort Sill's main camp. Our equipment came onto the base on a railroad siding. As soon as we were assigned tents and cots and were settled in, we ate and went to unload the equipment train.

Then there was a meeting. We were told why we were here and what we would be doing, the rules and regulations of the base, about guard duty, passes, where things were, the theaters, PX, cafes, etc.

The reason we were here was to train the OCS, Officers' Candidate School (guys that came out of ROTC in college or had been chosen out of ranks to try to become a 2nd Lieutenant in 90 days of tough training, or ninety-day wonders as they were called). Fort Sill turned out officers from this school by the hundreds every month. Those who did not make it were given the rank of corporal and were transferred out.

Also, at Sill was the Field Artillery School where guys were sent from outfits all over the nation to become specialists in radio, telephone, survey, mathematics, truck mechanics, gun mechanics, ordinance, ammunition, cooks, bakers and other jobs in the Artillery. We were to train these guys, too.

The Field Artillery School would furnish men to do jobs in their specialty for us and the OCS would furnish the students (would-be officers). We would do some work but mostly watch and help them or show what to do so it was right.

The next day we would go out and start "The Battle of Fort Sill," which would go on day and night for the next year. The next morning, we went on the firing range, not with our 105 mm Howitzers but with French 75 mm. Seems the Arsenal had millions of rounds of 75 mm shells left over from World War I and they figured they might as well use up the ammunition.

It was cold and windy. They were short of telephone operations, so I tried running one at the gun site. The whole thing was being run by telephone. I would take the order from the Officer Candidate student that was out front somewhere, as Forward observer and I would repeat to the student at the French 75. Such as, left, so many degrees, right, so many degrees, up or down so many degrees. But I forgot to say "On the way" when they fired, and the Forward Observers would not know the shell was coming and would not

see exactly where it hit and could not give the order to change the degrees right or left or whatever. So, after this happened a few times, I was off the telephone! I did run it lots of times later without any trouble, but I usually did recording of the guns. We would fire from a few rounds up to 2,000 rounds a day. I recorded day after day for A Battery until I was transferred to the Survey Section as messenger or agent.

The 75 mm ammunition we had was bad. Sometimes it would not fire, and the gun would have to set for some time to see that the ammo did not go off. Then it was unloaded very carefully, and the misfired shell put off at a distance to be destroyed later. Sometimes the shell would explode just as it left the muzzle of the cannon. This is called a muzzle burst and is very dangerous. It could kill some of the gun crew, but we never had anyone hurt. I saw several of these muzzle bursts from the old French 75 but only one from a 105mm Howitzer with new ammunition. After a few weeks we finally ran out of 75mm shells and went to our regular 105 mm.

The food in Fort Sill Tent City was much better than the Yakima (Washington) Tent City. About the only thing that was bad was greasy pork chops and also the coffee was bad. There were cafés on the post, though, and you could go into Lawton any night there wasn't night problems or guard duty. Some Chinese ran a café in the main PX. Some of us always went there for breakfast on Sunday and had steak and eggs and hash browns. You could buy most anything to eat in the PX and also beer in the evenings.

We had to have drivers' licenses for the Army vehicles, and we had to have good control over what we were driving in order to get the license. The Motor Officer would take a bunch of men and different kinds of trucks out to the back side of Signal Mountain. Here he would work with each guy in different vehicles and ride around. Finally, in a place that seemed almost straight up, you had to stop the truck, set the hand brake, and shut off the engine. Then start the engine, put it in gear, release the handbrake and go on up the steep grade - without rolling back more than 18 inches.

Some guys never did get a license. The Motor Officer was a great big young guy just out of OCS. He was real easy to get along with, but he worried that someone would panic and that the big truck would roll backwards down the mountain, wrecking the truck and possibly injuring himself and the driver. The Lieutenant sweat pretty easy anyway and it was hot the day I went out to get my license. His whole uniform was soaking wet. I was one of the last to drive and as I got in the truck, he said, "I'll sure be glad when this is over, it's wearing me out!"

We got to the grade and I stopped as directed. He said, "For God's sake, don't let it roll back or kill the engine." I said, "I won't. I know how to do this." I put the truck in gear and pulled out. Never rolled back an inch. I could see the relief on his face. The others said he had said the same thing to everyone on the grade, but some had rolled back 15 or 20 feet and scared him to death. He never went overseas with us. The Colonel must have thought he wasn't tough enough, or maybe too big to be a forward observer, would make too good a target for the Germans.

Lawton was a pretty tough town. The bars, cafes and even the theaters, bus and train depots were rough. This had been an Army town near an Army post for years and years. Back to the time of the great Indian chief Geronimo, and even before, there had been

infantry and artillery at Fort Sill. There were signs on the lawns "Soldiers and dogs, keep off the grass!"

There were lots of Indians in the town and also lots of Blacks on the "other side" of the tracks. In the 1940's the Black people still took the outside of the sidewalk for a white person. They also used the back of the bus and had separate rest rooms.

Some of the bar fights were really bad, knives, bottles broken over heads, broken tables, broken chairs and windows. Some guys got hurt pretty bad at different times. I usually went to every change of movies on the post at the big theater. If I missed a movie there I could go to another theater on the base and see it later. I went to the show at least three times a week. Fort Sill has a museum in the old original guardhouse.

It tells the history of Fort Sill and has many old artillery pieces, etc. The cell in the basement where they kept Geronimo is available still to see. (**Note: The legend that follows has no basis in fact**). The legend is that Geronimo escaped from here once and rode a horse up on one of the bluffs of Medicine Creek. There are four bluffs right together, Medicine Bluff one, two, three and four. Artillery called them MB1, MB2, MB3, MB4. You can walk up these high bluffs or ride a horse up as he did on the south side but when you get to the top it is a sheer drop on the north side of about 175 to 200 feet into Medicine Creek. Geronimo is said to have jumped his horse off into this creek and survived!

The soldiers chasing him were afraid to follow and Geronimo escaped into the Wichita Mountains to the west. However, he was captured again and lived out his life in the guardhouse or in and around Fort Sill. The military got so they didn't keep him in the cell and he wandered around the Fort, drunk whenever he could get some whiskey.

Most of the Creek that I saw was carved out of solid rock with deep holes in it. You could see the catfish because the creek was clear over the rock. It must have been that Geronimo knew where one of these deep holes was when he jumped off the bluff. To the northwest was Mount Scott. To the west was Signal Mountain and beyond Scott and Signal were the rest of the Wichitas. These mountains only run for 15 to 20 miles west and only about 6 to 10 miles wide. Kind of a strange thing with flat plains planted to cotton, and pasture all around them. The mountains were covered with pine, scrub oak, brush, grass and rattlesnakes.

We lived in the tent city at the west end of the base right next to the firing range for about six weeks or more. We then moved to the big stone barracks where the artillery outfits that had been here for years had always lived.

They were crack outfits and were sent overseas. They even had a battalion of pack artillery that packed Howitzers on the backs of mules. They were called Mountain Artillery because they could go where no truck, tank, or even horse drawn artillery could go. This was a tough bunch. They went overseas to Burma.

Anyway, we got the fine stone barracks, steam heat, hot water, pretty plush. We called the stone barracks, "The Marble Mansions." We would be in these barracks almost a year. (Then we were back in the tarpaper shacks the last week or so in Fort Sill while waiting to go to the next post.)

These large stone buildings were Spanish style with lots of cross ventilation and large open porches or verandas on the north side and were real comfortable most of the year. There was about 2 months in the summer when the days were 110 degrees and 90 degrees at night with high humidity coming up from the Gulf of Mexico. It was bad enough when the wind blew to cool you, but when there was no breeze, you sweat just sitting still. You sweat so bad at night that the bed would just be soaked.

We thought this was bad but heard from guys in Arkansas and Louisiana swamp areas. That must have been worse because they had mosquitoes really bad. Mosquitoes did not bother us so much, but we did have trouble with chiggers and ticks.

The food was even better in the stone barracks. Maybe they just had all the greasy pork chops used up. But we also got a new cook. In fact, two new ones, one a French chef, Joseph Monet (Cleveland, Ohio) and a 2nd cook who had been a chef, a Dutchman called (Victor) Fletcher (Jackson Heights, NY). They could put up a real good meal when they had the supplies. Like at Christmas, Thanksgiving and New Year's. They even had fancy menus printed. I have some of the menus in my suitcase yet.

We always had cold cuts on Saturday and Sunday nights because so many were gone on pass. Had a big dinner on Sunday noon though, of course, many of us got up too late for Sunday breakfast and went to the Chinese place.

Breakfast in the States usually was bacon, eggs, cereal and toast, real butter and orange marmalade. About once a week we had ham, eggs and maybe American fried potatoes, and once a week there would be the famous chipped beef on toast, and an apple, orange, or other fresh fruit.

When they had fried eggs, the eggs were practically raw! I could hardly stand them. When I did not take the kitchen job that was offered to me by Sergeant Reed, a friend of mine took it, Laverne Riel from Milford, Nebraska. When he saw me coming through the line, he would put two eggs over on the back of the grill and I would get some decent fried eggs! Riel married a girl from Medford Oregon that he met when we were in Camp White. Through attrition he finally became head cook and was a Staff Sergeant.

The officers had a separate mess hall at Camp White and again here at Sill. They also slept in a separate building from the enlisted men. Base Command ran these mess halls and cleaned the officers' sleeping quarters. The Base Command furnished the sergeants and corporals and officers over them to do this. Most of the KP work was done by prisoners from the camp guardhouse and later prisoners of war, Italian and German.

Fort Sill had some huge mess halls that were fully staffed for the Officers Candidate School and for the Field Artillery School. There were normally about 80,000 men at Sill all the time.

Some Saturday afternoons there would be mass artillery demonstrations for visiting brass and foreign brass. The impact area was near signal mountain. The people watching sat on the side of a mountain about a mile or a mile and a half away. There was usually over one hundred artillery pieces firing. Everything was surveyed in beforehand, and the shells would all hit in the same spot.

The cannon would be 105 mm, 155 mm, and 240 mm. The minute they started firing on this spot, they would fire 8 to 12 shells from each gun, which would be around 1,000 rounds hitting in the same place.

This was timed in coordination with medium size bombers with hundreds of anti-personnel bombs and then other planes with 500 lb. bombs. The planes would get to the target just after the artillery had hit. They would drop their bombs in the dust and smoke caused by the artillery. Then the fighter planes would come in and strafe the area. As the smoke and dust disappeared, just a few hundred yards from the impact area, Infantry would come out of foxholes and advance across the area firing rifles and machine guns and bazooka.

This was really a surprise the first time I saw it because I did not know the infantry was out there. We were usually part of the artillery firing in these demonstrations, but one time we got to sit on the mountain and watch. It was really some sight. You could feel the heat from the bombs and shells and the wind pressure from it even a mile and a half away!

This had to be real accurate and precise. The infantry out there in the foxholes would have been wiped out if there had been a mistake.

In the basement of one of the big stone buildings was a very large room that had bleacher type seating in one end and the other end had a very large framework built up off the floor about six feet like a table top. It covered the entire end of the room. On this was a cover of netting or burlap and papier-mâché. It was a complete scale model of the Fort Sill Military Reservation, every tree, mountain, creek, and building. This was a training model for the forward observers.

The instructor would pick out a target on the model and have the student zero in on it from an aiming point or base deflection and base elevation. Under this table it was all set up in degrees of deflection and elevation. A couple of men were under it with a gadget that would put up a puff of smoke through the netting on the spot that the student called for. The gadget would put up one puff for one cannon shell burst, or two for center, or four for full battery or 12 battalion fire for effect.

It was just like firing out on the real military reservation and saved a lot of ammunition. This was in constant use in the daytime. It was called the "Puff Range." Some of us would go over and practice with it in the evening. We got real good at it. This helped a lot of enlisted men when an officer was hurt or killed in combat and someone had to take over for him.

We got in several guys as replacements that had not made it in OCS. When they got booted out of OCS, they were sent to some regular line outfit as replacements for ones sent home as over age or medical discharges. One had an IQ of 160 so don't know why he didn't make it. Another hit one of the training officers and knocked him out for about 10 minutes. Another was just wild and crazy. He was with us for just a little while when there was a call for volunteers for Airborne troops and he went to the 101st Airborne. One of our guys got a letter from him later and he had gotten his leg broke on D-Day in France. I don't know if he parachuted in or went in on a glider. In the letter he said he was going

back to duty and hoped to get back into combat before the war was over. We fired for the 101st Airborne in Europe and we kept an eye out for him and asked about him but no luck.

About a month before we left Sill, we moved out of the Marble Mansions into tar paper shacks down in the OCS Training Center. The shacks held about 8 men with cots. No more beds!

Our equipment was moved out and lined up on a large oil mat parking lot. We had been storing it in the old horse stables and pens that the horse drawn artillery had used when they lived in the Marble Mansions.

We continued to train the OCS and FAS students, but we knew we would be leaving Fort Sill soon. We got word we would move out of Sill by motor convoy. There was not much preparation for this. We just threw our bags in the trucks one morning and took off.

### **“Overseas OCS Programs June 1942 – November 1943”**

#### ***History of the 43rd Division Artillery***

15,000 Soldiers returned to the States from overseas to enter OCS programs while 2,500 lieutenants graduated from OCS programs operating overseas.

One such program was initiated by the 43rd Division Artillery after the New Georgia Campaign in the Solomon Islands. As the Division became more settled in the Defense of New Georgia, attention was directed towards training and the 43rd Division Artillery inaugurated an Officer Candidates School.

The outstanding non-commissioned officers, who had in combat shown ability and qualifications for promotion, were selected to attend this school. A most comprehensive schedule was carried out, including service firing for two days a week. The entire school would bivouac at the old Japanese Boat Pool in Ringi Cove on Kolombangara. Using the high ground back of the Boat Pool as an OP and batteries in position on Arundel for firing, the setup permitted many forward observer problems. Communication was by radio and excellent results were obtained. Most of the 26 candidates were commissioned

### **“All-Time Record Set by OCS 101-44”**

#### ***Artillery OCS Archives***

Officer Candidate Class No. 101 of the Field Artillery School has set an all-time record scholastically, having 14 classmen who have completed the difficult 17-week course without scoring a single unsatisfactory grade. Each graduate will be given a certificate in the school's "Horseshoe Club," an organization made up exclusively of students who have completed OCS without unsatisfactory grades. Ten of the outstanding officers were formerly ROTC students at Ohio State University. Two came from Harvard and two from Eastern Kentucky State Teachers College, Richmond, Ky.

#### **Edmund H. McDandel: 101-44**

Originally, I was in Class 99 for about 10 weeks. On a physical examination, they noticed a small spot on my left lung. They pulled me out of Class 99 for a few days to review the X-C-Rays. It was OK, and I joined Class 101.

**James E. Boman: 103-44**

I was 21 years old on December 14, 1943, the day I started OCS in Class 103. Even though I was 21, I was still a boy at heart. It didn't take me long to realize that a boy couldn't make it through OCS. As an advanced ROTC graduate, the academics were fairly easy, but the discipline and soldiering were a challenge. I was somewhat reserved and quiet till I found my niche in the group I was in. The same was true in OCS and it led to my being told by my TAC Officer "Mr. Bowman, you'll never make it." I don't know if he actually meant it or whether he was trying to challenge me. If the last was intended, it woke me up and I was ranked in the top 10% of my class by the other candidates. Becoming a man and accepting responsibility was the principal thing that OCS means to me, but this really prepared me for life. Isn't that what's required for anyone to succeed in life in any endeavor?

**"OCS Program Cut"*****Coast Artillery Journal (January-February 1944)***

With the initial pressing demand for junior officers met and the need for the Officer Candidate School program decreasing rapidly, not more than eleven of the original twenty-six schools in continental United States will be in operation this fall, the War Department has announced.

During March, the following Officer Candidate Schools were suspended:

Fort Riley, Kansas (Cavalry)  
Fort Monroe, Virginia (Coast Artillery)  
Camp Hood, Texas (Tank Destroyer)

On March 1, 1944, the Military Police Officer Candidate School at Fort Custer, Michigan, accepted its last class and will be suspended after graduation of this class on June 27, 1944. The Antiaircraft Artillery Officer Candidate School at Camp Davis, North Carolina, enrolled its last class on February 20 and will close on June 15, 1944. The Chemical Warfare Service Officer Candidate School, Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland, which enrolled a class last March 13 for graduation this July 8 will be suspended on completion of this class. The Armored Officer Candidate School, at Fort Knox, Kentucky, will be suspended on September 23, 1944, when its last class, enrolled May 29, will be graduated.

When the peak of the program was reached in December 1942, more than 23,000 enrollees were graduated in that month from Officer Candidate Schools. Since then, the number of monthly graduates has steadily dropped until now it is below 2,500. Of the four Officer Candidate Schools overseas, only the one in Australia now is in operation.

**Officer Candidate Schools which at present accept candidates are:**

Fort Belvoir, Virginia (Engineer)  
Fort Sill, Oklahoma (Field Artillery)  
Durham, North Carolina (Finance)  
Fort Benning, Georgia (Infantry)  
Ann Arbor, Michigan (Judge Advocate General)  
Camp Barkeley, Texas (Medical Administration)  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland (Ordnance)  
Camp Lee, Virginia (Quartermaster)  
Fort Monmouth, New Jersey (Signal)



New Orleans, Louisiana (Transportation)

San Antonio, Texas (Army Air Forces) which will supplant the Army Air Force Officer Candidate School at Miami, Florida.

**Officer Candidate Schools which were suspended prior to those already mentioned include:**

Fort Washington, Maryland (Adjutant General's Department)

Fort Warren, Wyoming (Quartermaster)

Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania (Medical Administration)

Fargo, North Dakota (Army Administration)

Grinnell, Iowa (Army Administration)

Gainesville, Florida (Army Administration)

Fort Washington, Maryland (Army Administration)

**Virgus R. Cardozier: 120-44**

***“ROTC Trained Officers in World War II” (working paper, March 2008)***

On July 21, 1943, the War Department announced that “reduced quotas for the officer candidate schools in connection with a slowing up of the officer training program have made possible a modification of the original plan of training ROTC students called to active duty. It is now possible to permit this group to be returned to school for academic training designed to increase their value as future officers ... they will be returned to college under the supervision of the Army Specialized Training Division, pending availability of vacancies in the officer candidate schools...”

The Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) had gotten underway on college campuses in the spring of 1943. Following induction into the Army, these men were sent to basic training, and then to a Specialized Training and Reassignment (STAR) unit located on a college campus where they were tested, interviewed and assigned to curricula for which they were best qualified.

The first-year advanced cadets (juniors) began to leave colleges and the ASTP for officer candidate schools in December 1943 and by March 1944 most of them had departed. Sharply reduced quotas slowed the juniors' admission to OCS, with small numbers arriving over the summer and early fall of 1944.

As vacancies occurred in officer candidate schools, juniors were often sent to schools of a branch other than that in which they were trained. For example, of the 56 Field Artillery men who returned to Harvard after completing basic training at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, 24 left in the last week of December 1943 for the Armored Force OCS in Kentucky (*Instead of Field Artillery OCS*).

Others left the ASTP for an OCS branch consistent with their ROTC and basic training but found a surplus waiting to be admitted and were redirected to a different branch, usually Infantry.

For example, the ROTC juniors at the University of Illinois left the ASTP on that campus in March 1944 for Field Artillery OCS at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, but after arrival and waiting three weeks for space in OCS, were redirected to Ft. Benning and, following an abbreviated basic course, were enrolled in Infantry OCS.

In a few cases the juniors went through Infantry basic training, and then went through basic training of their specialty, e.g., the Signal Corps juniors from Texas A&M. Some cadets completed portions of basic training and were sent to a new unit that was just beginning basic training; one former cadet reported that his group spent a total of six months repeating basic training in this manner.

It is important to note that wartime ROTC cadets completed all or most of an ROTC program, followed by OCS or by basic training and OCS. On the downside, some highly talented enlisted men from the ranks were denied the opportunity to attend OCS because of the priority given ROTC men for approximately one year beginning in the early summer 1943. Many of them would undoubtedly have qualified for OCS if spaces had been open to them, which were instead filled by ROTC men. Many of those men ended up serving as riflemen in the Infantry in Europe where their intelligence and education was in many cases superior to their company officers.

As late as 1953, less than 45% of the Army officer corps held college degrees and 25 percent had no college education at all.

### **“The Birth and Death of the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP)”**

**Louis E. Keefer, *Army History* (Winter 1995)**

The Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was conceived in mid-1942 to meet the Army’s avowed need for university-trained officers. In early 1944, no sooner than fully operational, the program was curtailed to help meet the manpower crisis. By April 1, 1944 more than 105,000 trainees had been reassigned, over half to infantry, armored, and airborne divisions. These men had expected the ASTP to be their open sesame to officer candidate school (OCS). Instead, they were used as “fillers” in units where even the noncommissioned officer ratings were all taken. For most, their first stripes came only after combat casualties created openings they might fill.

In 1942 the prestigious American Council of Education (ACE) recommended that a “college training corps be set up to function in as many institutions as possible...and that candidates for the corps be selected, inducted, put into uniform, on pay, and be under military discipline while in technical training with the armed forces.”

Shortly thereafter, President Franklin D. Roosevelt urged the Secretary of War Henry Stimson and the Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox to consider promptly the council’s recommendation:

“Please have an immediate study made as to the highest utilization of American colleges. This is in view of the undoubted facts that the drafting of boys down to and including eighteen-year-olds will greatly deplete all undergraduate enrollment. There is an enormous amount of equipment in colleges—buildings, athletic fields, etc., which the Army and Navy may be able to use without great change.”

The commander in chief’s orders led to the establishment of a joint Army-Navy study committee which outlined the basics of both the Army Specialized Training Program and the Navy V-12 Program. The two programs were announced on December 17, 1942.

The basis for ASTP was just as described by General George C. Marshall in the April 1, 1943 War Department booklet, *Fifty Questions and Answers on Army Specialized Training Program*:

“The Army has been increasingly handicapped by a shortage of men possessing desirable combinations of intelligence, aptitude, education, and training in fields such as medicine,

engineering, languages, science, mathematics, and psychology, who are qualified for service as officers of the Army....The [ASTP] was established to supply the needs of the Army for such men....Successful graduates of the program will be immediately available to attend Officer Candidate Schools and technical schools of all the arms and services....Graduates will be assigned according to need in the same manner newly inducted men entering the Army are classified and assigned, primarily on the basis of pre-induction skills or professions.”

A close review of his language reveals ample opportunity for misunderstanding. And, of course, the phraseology “available to attend Officer Candidate Schools,” although easily construed by many young trainees as a commitment, was no commitment at all. That was always very clear to Secretary of War Stimson, who took great pains directing that ASTPers not be called “cadets” and that they be considered soldiers first, students second. If General Marshall’s explanation of ASTP’s objectives was less than exact, then portions of the Fifty Questions and Answers booklet were positively misleading. The answer to the first question read, in part, “It is anticipated that most of the soldiers who receive Army Specialized Training will be recommended for Officer Candidate School.” The answer to the twenty-third question read, in part, “At the end of every 12-week term a soldier can be recommended for...assignment to Officer Candidate School.”

These answers were paraphrased in camp and post bulletins and newspapers everywhere when promulgated by the Army Camp Newspaper Service, “For many soldiers the college courses will open the door to officer candidate schools and lead to commissions. For others the courses will lead to recommendations for technical ratings upon successfully completing the studies.”

Qualifications were quickly added. A June 1, 1943 enclosure to the ASTP question-and-answer booklet, while holding that the answers to the first and twenty-third questions were “perfectly true,” said: ... “it must be realized that the number of soldiers actually appointed to Officer Candidate School will always depend upon the number of openings at any given time. Inasmuch as the number of openings has recently been sharply reduced, this statement has been prepared for enclosure with the booklet in order to avoid any semblance of a misstatement of fact.”

Just to be absolutely certain that there could be no mistake, Secretary Stimson directed, through a July 9, 1943 memo signed by Maj. Gen. M.G. White, Assistant Chief of Staff (Personnel Director) for Army Service Forces:

“That immediate steps be taken to remove from all memoranda, advertising, and other publications on the ASTP, every statement or inference that an enlisted man will go directly from an Army Specialized Training unit to an officer candidate school and that future publications on this subject clearly indicate that an enlisted man who completes Army Specialized Training will be assigned to a unit or other installation at which he must compete for selection to attend officer candidate school along with all other enlisted men.”

In any event, extremely few ASTPers ever gained admission to OCS. Moreover, because it was impossible to apply for officer candidate school while in the program, some men may have missed a chance they might otherwise have had.

The basic problem was that the Army had too many officers, the number having skyrocketed from 93,000 in 1941 to 650,000 on December 1, 1943. Ultimately, of course, the needs of the arms and services had to prevail. General Marshall on February 10, 1944 asked Secretary Stimson to liquidate ASTP:

“I am aware of your strong feeling regarding ASTP. However, I wish you to know that in my opinion we are no longer justified in holding 140,000 men in this training when it represents the only source from which we can obtain the required personnel, especially with a certain degree of intelligence and training, except by disbanding already organized combat units.”

When General Marshall explained that he meant disbanding at least ten infantry divisions to use the men as replacements in other divisions, Stimson reluctantly told Roosevelt that the program had to be scaled back. Convinced there was no other choice, Roosevelt approved. Orders were cut the same day, February 18, 1944 to drop 110,000 ASTP's from college by April 1st. Roughly 35,000 would remain in school, of whom about half later would be dropped as well.

### **James A. Russo: 123-44**

Regarding FAOCS candidate's experiences while working toward a commission, my first thought was while surveying in the mountain area of the school; how different the land did lie compared to my New Orleans home area.

On another occasion while learning to give artillery fire direction commands, I sounded out: direct fire-one, OOO. That is when the sergeant conducting the class yelled - “Soldier, don't you know the difference between a zero and an O.” Radio and TV announcements using O in place of zero causes me to remember that incident.

One other occasion comes to mind: my twin brother and I started in class 120, but during the gunnery course, neither of us was setting the world on fire. It so happened that while in the mail room, brother and I met with two candidates from 120 who had been reassigned to class 123, they indicated gunnery the second time around was easier to handle. Twin brother and I decided to see the TAC Officer - LT Kitchen regarding our replacement to class 123. After hearing our request, the Good Lieutenant said - “this is the first time I have ever had a candidate ask to be put back into another class.” The good news was that brother and I were commissioned September 3, 1944 as Field Artillery Second Lieutenants.

### **“History of Military Training: Reserve Officers Training Corps and the OCS Schools, 1939-1944” Willard W. Hanson**

Most of the ROTC men eliminated from OCS were dismissed for leadership deficiencies: 74.0 percent of the ROTC men vs. 31.8 percent of the non-ROTC men. At the Infantry OCS, 83.9 percent of the ROTC men who failed did so because of leadership deficiencies, compared to 43.7 percent of non-ROTC candidates. On the other hand, only 9.2 percent of the ROTC men who failed to graduate were separated for academic reasons vs. 25.3 percent of the non-ROTC candidates.

### **John S. Morton, Jr. (O-1185902) Class 124-44:**

#### ***From a letter to the US Field Artillery Association dated January 29, 2002***

I am 83 1/2 years old and a graduate of O.C.S. #124, September 1944. While I say that I am a graduate of that class, I was something less than the smartest guy in that class

and had to remain for several weeks in order to successfully complete several sub courses which I failed during the normal course. While I think that I am considered a graduate of #124 in September of that year, my date of commission is actually the early part of November 1944.

We did not have a large class. Fifty started off, and then we caught many candidates who dropped back from earlier classes. OCS #125 did not even begin until several weeks or a month after our class graduated! Hence our ranks increased in size considerably. I believe that we graduated perhaps sixty or seventy candidates even after about sixteen were kicked out the week prior to graduation. I believe that if they had kicked out one more, I would have been it!!!

**Robert Joseph Dole: Fort Benning Infantry OCS 1944**

“I arrived in August 1944 as a corporal, and in little more than ninety days, I left in November as a lieutenant. Whether I merited his confidence or not, the commanding officer at Fort Benning believed in me, and declared that I was competent to handle a platoon of men, so I didn’t argue with him, I believed.”

**Leonard L. Finz: 133-45**

***The Greatest Day of My Life (2017)***

Having been transferred to a U. S. Army band in 1944 was a joy and a very cushy job. We’d play reveille in the morning, go back to sleep and lounge around until summoned for a parade or field marching music for the GIs in training. At 5 p.m., we would line up in front of the flag (called retreat) and play the national anthem as it was lowered and folded military style. After retreat we would move quickly back to our barracks and within minutes would be on our way to town where we would probably stay out all night. What would follow would be the good times young soldiers usually sought.

Answerable only to my Bandmaster (a Warrant Officer), and a real prince of a guy, it is what we then called, “Being in the Army, really?” I could have remained with that enviable assignment but somehow, I didn’t want to tell my future wife, kids, and grandchildren, that I spent the war playing clarinet and saxophone at dances and on the parade grounds when I was in the army. There was a World War going on and I felt it was my duty to become an active part of it.

Employing the proper protocol, I informed my Bandmaster that I wished to apply to Officer Candidate School and that I wanted his blessing. In response, he said, “Lenny, you’ve got the best thing going right here in the band. You could stay stateside throughout the war. I want you to know that if you’re accepted into OCS, you’ll be sent overseas right away and into battle. Is that what you really want?” My answer to him was a quick one. “Yes, I know what the probabilities are. But I must become a real part of our war. I feel it’s my duty.” With that, I applied to Officer Candidate School in the Field Artillery knowing if I was accepted and passed the four-month intensive course, I would be sent overseas and into combat.

A month after submitting my application through army channels, I received notice to report for an entrance intelligence test. Within a few weeks I received word that I passed the I.Q. requirements and that my name would be placed on a wait list since there were

no opening slots at the time. That was the summer of 1944, when I was nineteen years of age. I received no further word for months despite my many inquiries regarding my status.

In the Fall of 1944, the Battle of the Bulge was exploding. Our soldiers suffered tremendous losses including many field artillery officers killed in action.

It was December 20, 1944, when I was suddenly called into the Bandmasters office. He had just received orders for me from Washington. I was to report to the Field Artillery Officers Candidate School (OCS) in Fort Oklahoma, on December 31, 1944, as a member of class 133. I was also given a furlough to return home before reporting to Fort Sill. My emotions were mixed—sad that I would be leaving my buddies in the Army band with whom I had become so close but exhilarated that I would soon be a candidate at OCS. When the news was given to my buddies in band, they threw me a big party with all the good wishes along with it. I remember packing up my personal belongings in a barrack's bag and saying goodbye between many tears as I left the camp. By this time, we had already been transferred from Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach, Virginia, to Camp Chafee, Arkansas. Although being accepted into OCS was great news, it still was not the greatest day of my life.

I went on furlough and spent time with my mother, father, older brothers Bob and Al, and my sister Mollie, who I had not seen in over a year. At the end of my furlough, I said a tearful goodbye to my family. I wasn't quite sure that if I ever made it through OCS and went into battle that I would ever see them again.

On December 31, 1944, I reported to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, presented my orders, was assigned to a barracks and a bunk, outfitted, and received a special ID nameplate that read, "Officer Candidate Leonard Finz." Although January 1st was New Year's Day, the lieutenant in charge of class 133 (called the "TAC Officer"—an abbreviation of "tactical officer"), sent out a message that although the official four-month course would not begin until January 2nd, the members of class 133, all one hundred of us, were directed to line up in formation on January 1st, at 0800 hours (8 a.m.)

The next morning, we were marched to the parade grounds for a morning exercise drill. The first exercise was one in which each candidate individually was required to run one hundred yards, pick up a baton on the ground and run back as fast as he could. Those first called, made the run and did it almost effortlessly. The ones that followed were equally good. After all, they all came directly from line outfits, many of whom were battle-scarred first sergeants, master sergeants, tech sergeants, etc. I looked at them in awe. They had been actively involved in the war coming from the deadly battlefields of France, Italy, Germany, and the Pacific. By sharp contrast, I was a lowly private first class, the only PFC in the entire group. The only battlefield I ever saw was on a movie screen. For most of my army life I was a sax and clarinet player coming from a very soft and cushy job in an army band, stateside.

It then became my turn. I huffed and puffed as I ran since, I was completely out of shape considering the easy and leisurely lifestyle I came from. I ran the hundred yards, reached down to pick up the baton, turned around and started to run back. Suddenly, I felt dizzy and nauseous and before I even reached the end of the run, had to stop, bent over and

vomited with such force that I thought that my gut was part of the contents. With that exhibition I knew I would be bounced from the class even before I officially started it. The fact is, I was in lousy shape competing with ninety-nine other strong and seasoned army warriors. Although the TAC officer said nothing, I had an ominous feeling I would be dropped from the class when we returned to the barracks. Somehow, I was not. Although I was not called to task by the TAC officer, it was not one of the greatest days of my life.

Our class started with a roster of one hundred, most of whom were hardened fighters who reported to Fort Sill directly from the front. Each day however, a member of the class would usually be called into the TAC officer's office. It was always bad news. "You're being dropped." There was never a reason given and no appeal from the decision. After four months of the most rigorous West Point-like training there was a graduation ceremony. Of the original one hundred candidates, only thirty-two eventually made the grade. From the start, I was always uncertain whether I would be one who would make it.

### **F\*\*k Your Buddy Week**

There were so many difficult hurdles that an officer candidate had to jump over without falling on his face, that it almost became impossible to define each one with any degree of exactitude. The four-month course was so physically and mentally demanding, as to push human endurance to its extreme limits. But there is one I will describe that falls somewhere between a physical and mental challenge. It played out like this...

At the end of the first rigorous month of the course there was what was called, "F\*\*k your buddy week." Each of the officer candidates received a sheet containing the names of each member of the class in alphabetical order. It also contained a lined grid next to each name with eleven columns. Thus, as you read across the sheet it would start with the name of the candidate followed by eleven blank columns each with its own heading at the top of the column. These were the headings: Leadership; Courage; Intelligence; Confidence; Discipline; Mental Fitness; Physical Fitness; Responsibility; Performance Under Pressure; Quick Decisions; and Comradery.

Assuming there were fifty named candidates at the time, it was now our duty to attach a number to each category as to where in our judgement we thought the candidate stood in the overall class rating. Thus, the best candidate could conceivably receive a "1" in all columns or any other number from "1" to "50." Conversely, the worst considered candidate would receive a "50" or a different rating in any of the columns.

We learned that the TAC officer used our ratings to make his own determination as to how each class member rated the other and who was rated the best and proceeding down to the worst in the class. If a candidate attached good numbers to a friend based upon his relationship but who received poor numbers from the others, it would reflect negatively upon the one reporting, thereby demonstrating a lack of good judgement that could even be the basis of his being dropped. Consequently, even if he was your best friend you had to rate him honestly. If he was the worst student, he should receive a "50" in a number of the columns. That is how the process got its name, "F\*\*k your buddy week."

This tough procedure was repeated at the end of each month and was always one of the most difficult and personal burdens we had to go through when, "F\*\*k your buddy week"

was with us again. The class ratings of each candidate in the 11 categories would be a most significant factor the TAC officer employed, combined with class performance and his own one-on-one appraisals. It was amazing and sad to see the many candidates who were shown the door after each dreaded, “F\*\*k your buddy week” occurred. It was just another rigid device used in an already extremely challenging and competitive course to whittle away those candidates who were viewed as not being of sufficient officer material to lead soldiers in combat against the enemy.

### ***My Final OCS Exam on “Killer Mountain”***

Those of us who survived being axed from the class had to scale the wall of the final hurdle in the last week of the four-month course. We had to pass the test on “Killer Mountain,” having received its name since a candidate who flunked the final exam would be dropped from the class. Thus, the mountain could be the “killer” of one’s hopes of ever becoming an officer in the army. To put it in understandable terms, each candidate perched on the mountain situated a few miles from Fort Sill, after being designated a target thousands of yards in front, would have to direct cannon fire that would destroy the target through commands radioed to the artillery batteries hundreds of yards behind our position. We would be graded upon speed and accuracy. The failure of one or the other could end our candidacy as officers in the field artillery.

With the above as a backdrop, these are the details...

At 0700 (7a.m.), our class (what remained of it) was marched to army trucks a quarter of a mile away. Once inside, we were driven through rugged country toward one of the high mountains a few miles from Fort Sill. When the trucks reached their destination, we dismounted. The rains of the night before and into the morning hours brought so much mud that the muck was above our army boots and well over our leggings. We were directed to another mud-filled area several hundred yards above where the trucks had stopped.

There, we were instructed by our TAC officer (he was accompanied by two other field artillery officers at the time) to remain in that holding area while a candidate would be called out who would then be put to his test. Intentionally, we were kept from observing the process thereby removing any advantage we might have gained in watching a candidate go through his final exam on, “Killer Mountain.”

As each candidate was called up, we would hear cannon shots and shells swishing with thunderous sounds, like a freight train above us, heading hopefully toward the target selected by the TAC officer. The candidates called before me didn’t know if they had passed the test since no information was being released.

In due time I heard the call, “Candidate Finz, front and center” It was now my turn. I trudged through the mud with my large binoculars in hand and was escorted to the top of “Killer Mountain.”

In actual combat, a field artillery officer would be in the front lines ahead of the infantry (sometimes even in enemy territory) with the artillery batteries lined up behind the foot soldiers. It would then be the artillery officer’s duty to select the target, estimate its distance from the cannon batteries, determine its straight or lateral position, and determine whether it was a stationary target such as a farmhouse where enemy machine



gun fire was coming from, or a moving target such as tanks, armored vehicles or even foot soldiers. To accomplish this, geometric angles would have to be plotted.

All components would be factored into commands radioed to the gun batteries in the rear. It was imperative therefore that the target (assuming it was a stationary one such as a farmhouse) be surrounded by single cannon shots that would be seen in the distance as a puff of smoke. It would be necessary to give commands that would discharge individual cannon shells to the north, south, east, and west of the target. Accomplishing that is what in field artillery jargon is called a "bracket."

Once a bracket is accomplished by single cannon shots, the field artillery officer would then radio a command to, "Fire for effect." With that order, the entire gun battery would fire its cannons with the expectation that the target selected by the artillery officer would be destroyed. Time and accuracy were essential in order to take out the target before the enemy could cause further casualties to our side.

With the previous segment as a backdrop, I was told my target was, "That small farmhouse with the brown roof." The exam clock started to run. I could see no farmhouse with my naked eye. Using my high-powered binocs, I was able to make out a small structure that appeared to have a brown roof.

My next step (as the clock was running), was to quickly estimate its distance from the gun batteries behind me. Such a numeral would create a geometric angle that would give me a calibrated number to direct the elevation of the barrel of the cannon. A decreased number would direct the gunnery squad to lower the barrel, in which case the shell would travel further. An elevated barrel would form an arc so that the shell would travel a shorter distance. The next step was to determine the target's lateral position since the command had to be accurate enough so that the shell would explode to the east or west of the target, thereby forming the east or west edge of the bracket. That number would be radioed to the battery commander in the rear with the order to, "Fire one." Within a second I heard the swishing sound overhead as I placed my binocs to my eyes hoping to see a puff of smoke either slightly north or south of the farmhouse. And there it was. The puff of smoke was north of the target. I now had to readjust the number hoping that the next puff would be to the south of the farmhouse, and it was.

But my laterals were off. I quickly adjusted my numbers and radioed the new laterals praying that the puff of smoke would be to the east or west of the farmhouse. Fortunately, it was. At the end, I had bracketed the target and sent out my commands to the battery commander behind my position: "Battery adjust, shell HE, fuse quick, elevation, base deflection right, fire for effect." The signals radioed were immediately relayed to the gunnery squad leaders. Within seconds it sounded as if the sky had exploded as each cannon, all twenty of them, was fired. Looking through my binoculars, the farmhouse had been destroyed. At that point the TAC officer gave me those reassuring words, "nice job."

I left "Killer Mountain" reasonably sure I would not be added to its list of victims. Three other officer candidates were not as fortunate. My time for graduation and commission as a Second Lieutenant was finally in sight but not there yet.

### ***The Greatest Day of My Life***

At this point the reader might ask impatiently, "So, what was the greatest day of your life?" The answer compels me to return to my candidacy at the Fort Sill, Officers Candidate School. The four-month course was an unbelievably enormous experience. It matched West Point training in every respect, from leadership, to the breaking down of a jeep's engine, to geometry, but most of all, to the special pride of being a candidate training to become an army field artillery officer. I remember so clearly the last three days prior to graduation. From the original 100 candidates in the class, we were now down to 33. But graduating was still no certainty.

Graduation was scheduled to be held on Saturday, May 6, 1945. On Thursday, we received officers' uniforms having been outfitted a week earlier. But even that was no guaranty that I would not be called into the TAC office and bounced. In fact, when Saturday morning did arrive, another candidate was suddenly dropped, reducing the class number to 32.

On Saturday morning, I put on my officer's uniform absent the gold bars. In the early morning hours, the 32 remaining candidates in the class stood in rigid formation. When ordered, we marched with military precision to the post chapel a short distance away. Once inside, we received the order to sit down. High ranking officers were already on the stage in front. Soon, a brigadier general made some opening remarks. Within minutes, individual names were sounded out in alphabetical order.

At the sound of his name, the candidate marched up to the stage, was pinned with gold lieutenant bars, and exchanged military salutes. I had the terrifying thought that at any moment the TAC officer would summon me to his office. While in a trance and harboring such a dire possibility, I suddenly heard the general call out from the stage, "Officer Candidate Finz, front and center." I rose from my seat, made a sharp right turn into the isle and marched crisply to the stage. With a slight smile, the general pinned gold bars onto my dress jacket epaulets while simultaneously saying, "Congratulations Lieutenant Finz." He saluted me and I returned it as if I was in a dream. I couldn't believe I made it.

When the ceremony was over, we all euphorically walked out of the chapel. "Was this really happening?" I kept thinking to myself. Just moments before I was one stripe above a private, a PFC, a sax and clarinet player who came from an army band, who competed with the bravest battle-scarred soldiers I had ever met, and now at age 20, commissioned a second lieutenant in the army of the United States of America. The chills I felt were unbelievably priceless, made even more so when I left the chapel and received my first salute from a soldier in the Women's Army Corps (WAC). She had that coy smile knowing those gold bars were just pinned on me. Returning it with a telling wink, I responded by saluting her with a crisp military flair.

It all seemed so surrealistic and indeed even at the age of 92, I can say what I have always felt in my heart for the past 72 years, that being commissioned a second lieutenant in the army of my beloved country was indeed the greatest day of my life.

There, I finally said it. But to stop here would be a great disservice to the many who are still hoping to find their greatest day. To those of you I say, without preaching and with all humility, that somewhere within your own wondrous experiences lies the greatest day

of your life. If that as yet has not arrived, then follow the masterful poetry of Robert Browning, one of the greatest bards of the 19th Century whose magical words created this immortal inspirational message: To gain what is good but seems unattainable, your “reach should exceed” your “rasp.” It is also in that spirit that an anonymous author wrote, “To achieve anything worthwhile, one should attempt even those things that may appear to be impossible.”

So, take that risk and extra step toward your own magical goal and you too may come upon your greatest day. I did just that and discovered what will always be the greatest day of my life.

#### **“OCS Area Hutments Will House Visitors”**

##### ***Lawton Constitution (Tuesday August 14, 1945)***

Nineteen hutments in the OCS area across the street from Guest House No. 3 are being groomed to augment the guest house facilities for families machining short visits with Fort Sill soldiers, it was announced this week by Lt. Col. John S. Moran, post exchange officer.

The 19 hutments will be operated on the same basis as the guest house’s 25 rooms at a charge of 50 cents a person nightly. Post Exchange employees will clean the hutments and make the beds. Three to four army cots will be installed in each of the hutments which had contained six cots when they were used by OCS students. The decision to utilize the empty hutments was made to accommodate better the families visiting soldier patients in Station hospital. With the hutments available they will be assured of a stay of at least three days with their sons and husbands at Fort Sill, according to Col. Moran.

#### **“Col. Jark Named New Executive Officer at FAS (Field Artillery School)”**

##### ***Lawton Constitution (Sunday October 7, 1945)***

Col. Carl H. Jark, a veteran Fort Sill Field Artilleryman who was the first commanding officer of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate school at the time of its inception in July 1941, has returned to the Field Artillery school as executive officer, relieving Col. Russell G. Harknlow, who has been assigned to headquarters of the Alaskan department at Fort Richardson.

Col. Jark recently returned from the European theater of operations where he was executive officer of division artillery in the 63rd Infantry (Blood and Fire) Division, then commanded by Maj. Gen. Louis E. Hibbs, now commandant of the Field Artillery School.

#### **Frank A. Athanason: 162-45**

##### ***The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project (2011)***

I went to Georgia Tech and was not prepared for it. I was very weak compared to the northern kids on mathematics. And at Georgia Tech, it was like throwing you to the wolves if you were weak in math. Anyway, I struggled there for about a year and a half. I made decent grades in chemistry, social sciences, and drawing. The only subject I ever failed was mathematics and I failed it there. I made extremely high grades in ROTC.

After a year and a half at Georgia Tech I had an emergency hernia operation. In those days they kept you in the hospital for two to three weeks. I wasn’t a great student anyway, so I fell behind. Rather than go back and try to catch up, I decided to go to the Citadel. I knew I would eventually get drafted and I loved ROTC, I loved the military. So, I finished

my sophomore year at the Citadel before I was drafted into the army. It was much easier than Georgia Tech. The standards are not as high for drawing and mathematics. I liked the military life. I was at the Citadel in 1943 and 1944 and World War II was raging. In fact, while I was there, we received word that my brother (not the oldest brother, but another brother) was killed in action in Germany in September of 1944. That was another reason I wanted to be at the Citadel, I was near my mother and I knew I would eventually get drafted.

I was able to take a test to go into the ASTP (Army Specialist Training Program). They sent you back to college as an enlisted man. I was not interested in that. I went to take the test and I think I didn't complete it or didn't try to complete it  
I put in for OCS in lieu of that and my brother said I didn't have a ghost of a chance of making that, but I did. There were only a few of us selected because they weren't looking for too many officers at the time. There was no great demand. I was called in for my final interview and asked what branch of service I preferred. They had three choices. I listed engineers, first choice, armor, second choice, and infantry, third choice. The interviewer remarked since your initials are FA, we're going to send you to field artillery. So off to Fort Sill I went.

Each class had 50 students. We had about three weeks to go to graduation and there were six of us left of the 50. They were being extra hard on us. They didn't really want you at the time. So, they put us back to the next class because it didn't pay to have a class of six people. So, I graduated two weeks late, December 7, 1945, I was 19 years old at the time.

**“Waco Artilleryman Posthumously Given Medal of Honor”  
*The Paris (Texas) News (Thursday December 20, 1945)***

First Lt. James E. Robinson, Jr., Waco artilleryman who rallied and led a commanderless infantry company in two assaults against tremendous odds in Germany, has been awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.

Eight hours of desperate fighting over open terrain swept by German machinegun, mortar and small arms fire had decimated the 63rd Division infantry company to which Robinson was attached as a forward observer on April 6, 1945. The commanding officer and most of the enlisted men had been killed, when he rallied the 23 remaining uninjured riflemen and a few walking wounded and led them in a charge near Untergreishheim.

Ten Germans threatened to stop the assault. The gallant leader killed them all and went forward with his men to sweep the area of all resistance.

Ordered to seize the defended town of Kressbach, he led the 19 exhausted survivors forward. In the advance he was wounded in the throat, but refused medical aid though mortally wounded until the town was taken. He then walked two miles to an aid station where he died of his wound. The medal will be presented to his widow.

**Note: The area occupied by the Artillery Officer Candidate School was named Robinson Barracks in honor and in memory of 1LT James E. Robinson, Jr. on April 15, 1953.**

**Gib Gayle: 169-46**

I graduated from Field Artillery OCS at Fort Sill in Class 169 on February 8, 1946. I was 19 years and four months old. I entered the Army on February 13, 1945 and am accordingly a veteran of World War II who had nothing to do with winning the war. The infantry did not like my flat feet, so I took basic training at Fort Bliss, Texas, near El Paso, in the Anti-Aircraft branch of the Coast Artillery Corps.

In early May all but three of us in Battery B-55 were sent to Okinawa to help clear the island of the remaining Japanese. I asked to go along, but the Army in its finite wisdom insisted that I stay at Fort Bliss at Radio and Radar School, even though I told them that my ignorance of anything mechanical or electrical made that assignment a mistake. I lost the argument. After three months of shocking myself every day, I finally applied for OCS and was told around VJ Day that that I was headed for Field Artillery OCS at Fort Sill. I finally got there around the end of October, 1945.

As a native of Waco, Texas, I enjoyed going to Lawton, Oklahoma, even though my feet almost froze a few times in the winter of 1945-46. I loved OCS. I particularly enjoyed adjusting artillery fire, taking as a reference point the blockhouse on Signal Mountain. I never got a demerit and was one of only two members of the Horseshoe Club, an organization limited to those officer candidates who never got a "U" grade on any of the hundred or so tests we took. The only grades given were "S" and "U" for satisfactory or unsatisfactory. I also never failed to come up with a successful "Fire for effect" on an artillery fire problem.

My Tactical Officer was named Tieche, and he was a gentleman of firmness, but fairness. There was a short captain Tactical Officer who used to secrete himself in the ranks when we lined up for close order drill. When the candidate ordered "forward, march," the captain came screaming out of the lineup and awarded instant demerits. Another evil Tactical Officer awarded demerits for "shoes shined over dirt."

After graduation several of us were sent to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to join the 16th Training Battalion, an organization of all African American enlisted men, but mixed officers. The close order drills by the enlisted men were the best I ever saw.

**Story C. Stevens: 172-46**

I've been thinking about my experiences in OCS. My class graduated on 10 May 1946. I was fortunate to having gone through artillery basic training just prior to OCS. Basic training was in instrument and survey which made the OCS course somewhat easier. Many of the memories are somewhat humorous now.

I remember how we departed the four man "hootches" each day backing out on our hands and knees to make sure all was spotless. The one war story I want to pass on was about a dining incident. It was supper after a hard day on the range. I was starving. Going through the mess line I was happy to see steak and onions. I took a very healthy helping. A major problem developed when I discovered the steak was liver. I really despised liver. Of course, you could take all you wanted for dinner, but you had to eat all you take. I was the last one out of the mess hall that night. Actually, I really enjoyed OCS. Great instructors and comrades.

## **“Soldier Killed at Post Today”**

### ***Lawton Constitution (Tuesday, October 1, 1946)***

Premature explosion of a shell in a routine firing demonstration was fatal today to a Fort Sill artilleryman, Maj. Gen. Cliff Andrus, commanding general, announced. The sergeant was pronounced dead upon his arrival at a Fort Sill hospital, after the shell burst prematurely while his battery was presenting a routine demonstration for Officer Candidate Class 178 on West McKenzie hill.

A member of the class, Candidate John E. Williams, was slightly injured when a part of the shell struck his left knee. He was given emergency treatment at a Fort Sill hospital. A military board will conduct an immediate investigation of the accident.

### **John E. Williams: 178-46**

Last year (1997), I attended the Annual Reunion of the Artillery OCS Courses at Fort Sill, where I graduated as a 2nd LT Artillery, in November, 1946, and the day before my 19th birthday. That brought back a stream of memories which included some islands. Come along with me for a few moments on a stream-of-consciousness.

My high school in Wilmington, North Carolina had a Junior ROTC, of which I was an enthusiastic member. There were three of us in my class (of 1944) who were very anxious to go to West Point and become career Army officers. All three of us got appointments, and the other two guys made it to West Point. (One retired as a Lieutenant General, the other as a Colonel.) I didn't, because my eyesight wasn't good enough. After high school, I went to N.C. State College for a year and a half and was in their ROTC. I excelled in "Military Science and Tactics." As soon as I turned 18, shortly after World War II ended, I enlisted in the Army. I would have been drafted soon but wanted to get a head start. I took field artillery basic training at Fort Bragg and applied for Officer Candidate School. This involved taking an exam - written and oral.

I've always been pretty good at taking exams. The written exam was a breeze, as had been the A.G.C.T. when I first enlisted. Then came the oral - a type of exam to which I was not then accustomed. I appeared before a panel of five officers who asked me lots of questions. Most of the questions were Army-related; some specific to artillery, some to command structures, some to personnel, etc. But then there were some that might have come from a University Political Science or History exam. The OCS exam had become tougher than it had ever been before, because, with the war over, they didn't need very many new officers. I was doing reasonably well, I thought, when one of them asked me: "Where are the Dodecanese Islands?" Too quickly, I answered "In the Western Mediterranean, near Spain." I saw them look at each other in a way that made me very uncomfortable. Suddenly, the light dawned. I had given them the Balearic Islands. I said: "Excuse me, sir, I misspoke: the Dodecanese Islands are in the Eastern Aegean Sea off the coast of Turkey. I confused them momentarily with the Balearics." There was a nodding of heads, and the exam was soon ended. I was told I had passed and would soon be on my way to Fort Sill. Luckily, I had remembered seeing something in a newspaper about the Dodecanese Islands, which had earlier been seized by Italy, being given back to Greece. It was a "current affairs" question.

I went to Fort Sill and struggled through the 17 weeks. Though I say "struggled," I really enjoyed most of it and found myself getting along very well academically. I felt really good about being chosen as the S-3 Gunnery Officer for our final field exercise.

How strange life is - that a small thing like remembering some distant islands was so important to me, and to the course my life took as a result of going to OCS, graduating (despite the 2/3 attrition rate), and serving as an Army officer in Japan. My service in Japan caused me to decide that I didn't want to be a career Army officer after all, but wanted to go into the Foreign Service. I did so and served 27 years as a diplomat. One of these days, I'm going to go visit the Dodecanese islands and study some of their history. I think I owe them that.

OCS had a very powerful effect on my life, and my career. My 73 (beginning) classmates and I went through the training without any serious incident, until October 1st.

On that day, we were out on one of Fort Sill's artillery ranges. We were on West McKenzie Hill with a four-gun battery of 105 mm howitzers. A howitzer is a gun that can fire at a high angle, so that the shells drop down on the target, rather than just firing straight at the target. We were firing at a very high angle - about 70 degrees.

I was a member of one of the gun crews, and we were being supervised by Sgt. Raymond W. Myers (only later did I learn his first name) who went back and forth from gun to gun, checking on us. He was right beside me when a shell just fired from the howitzer we were serving exploded prematurely, about 20-30 meters in the air above us.

A fragment hit my left knee, shearing off a piece of skin and flesh but not damaging my knee-cap. I focused on that briefly, but quickly discovered that Sgt. Myers had been hit in the forehead and was obviously dead.

It didn't take long for an ambulance to arrive to transport us to the base hospital. During the drive, I recall looking at Sgt. Myers, who was on a stretcher beside me, and wondering about his family.

Later I was told that he had survived several campaigns during WWII, including the Normandy landing. I learned that he was from Vance, South Carolina, a town near Orangeburg. At the time of his death, he was serving with Battery B, 18th Field Artillery Battalion, which was assigned as 'school troops' to train us OCS candidates. A service for him was held at the base chapel, which I was unable to attend, being in the hospital. He was age 37 when he was killed. Let us all remember Sgt. Myers with admiration. I can't find the appropriate words to express the irony of it.

I was in the hospital for three days. I thought they were going to either put me out of OCS or drop me back to the next class. But neither happened. I was at the top of my class in grades, and some buddies brought me each day the material I was supposed to read and/or write. So, I kept up, and after the three days, I was back with the group. I was commissioned on November 9, the day before my 19th birthday. My Mom sent me a telegram reading "Congratulations on becoming officer, gentleman." I served three years on active duty, mostly in Japan, and then 27 years in the Active Army Reserve, retiring as a lieutenant colonel.



*Marching to class*



*Gunnery Class break-time ("Smoking and Joking")*



## **United States Army in World War II, The Army Ground Forces, The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops (1991)**

### **Basic Problems of Officer Procurement (page 158-163)**

The basic problem faced by the Army in procuring officers for World War II, as for all previous wars, was that of drawing from civilian sources an adequate supply to meet a sudden emergency. In World War II that supply had to meet the requirements of a war new in type. The rate at which the supply of officers would have to be maintained to replace casualties was not readily predictable on the basis of previous experience. Furthermore, officers had to be ready to cope with an unprecedented range of technical and administrative problems. In the Army Ground Forces most of them had to be ready to lead troops in combat, and in addition many of them had to be prepared for leadership in organized arms not previously employed by the United States in war: Antiaircraft, Mechanized Cavalry, Armored, and Tank Destroyer.

The Army obtained most of the officers to man its initial expansion either by drawing upon its civilian components—the National Guard and the Officers' Reserve Corps—or by directly commissioning civilians, among whom could be found a number who had had some military training or who had been officers in World War I. Officers of the National Guard were better trained than in 1917, and the Officers' Reserve Corps had been greatly strengthened by the operation of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. But, in the ground arms at least, it was found that the Army "did not have in fact the great mass of trained officers that were carried on the books." During the initial period of mobilization, the officer problem was a problem of quality, inherited from an undernourished peacetime establishment.

During the war years the majority of officers in the Army Ground Forces were procured from the enlisted ranks by means of officer candidate schools. Through this system the Ground Forces obtained the mass of junior officers needed for its rapid expansion in 1942 and 1943 and for the replacement of young officers lost in combat in 1944 and 1945. It was a democratic system. It permitted the Ground Forces to utilize the aptitude for leadership provided by the wide sweep of Selective Service through the youth of the Nation. It provided young leaders who had had experience in the ranks. Army Ground Forces found its OCS graduates better suited for its purposes than graduates of the ROTC. Men graduating from ROTC units had been invaluable, indeed indispensable, in providing the Army with junior officers during the initial period of mobilization, but they necessarily lacked the concentrated training and background of experience of OCS graduates. The officer candidate schools provided such a satisfactory source of junior officers that the efforts of the Ground Forces to procure officers, after the initial period, were concentrated on deriving maximum benefits from the system and overcoming, as far as possible, the conditions that impaired its efficiency.

The main problem was to have graduates of the desired quality in the numbers needed at any given time. By depending on the ranks to furnish officer candidates, the schools were tied in with the current enlisted strength of the Army Ground Forces—until late 1944 with the enlisted strength of the ground combat arms in the Zone of Interior. Thus, the number and quality of OCS graduates were affected by the fluctuations in the AGF Troop Basis and the replacement system. The result was that the output of graduates from the AGF officer candidate schools and the demand for them were in fact

continuously and seriously out of balance. The consequences of this lack of balance were evident throughout the war.

In 1942 rapid mobilization created a demand for graduates so great that standards were lowered and the quality of junior leadership available to the ground arms declined. In 1943, when mobilization of the ground arms was slowed down and then virtually completed at a much lower level than originally planned, the demand for junior officers fell off sharply, leaving a surplus of men with commissions. In consequence, for a time, enlisted men with better qualifications than those previously commissioned were denied officer status, and the Army Ground Forces was deprived of potential leadership. When in 1944 the Army passed from the phase of mobilization to the phase of maintenance, the pendulum again swung in the opposite direction and the demand for junior officers greatly exceeded the supply. At a time when the output of the officer candidate schools had been cut to a minimum, the loss of junior officers in battle, particularly in the Infantry, mounted far above the number that were being provided under the production policies established by the War Department in the spring of 1944. The previous surplus of young officers was quickly consumed. The Infantry Officer Candidate School was greatly expanded after June 1944, but the limited number of enlisted men then available could not supply candidates of adequate quality in adequate numbers, even when standards were once again lowered. An acute crisis ensued which was not completely overcome before the end of the war.

These fluctuations in demand affected adversely the quality of training in the officer candidate schools. When sudden expansion was ordered, facilities and staffs were put under strain and instruction was spread thin. When cuts were ordered, extensive facilities remained idle and experienced staffs were partially dispersed. A few months later, with a new demand, the process of hasty expansion had to be repeated. What the schools accomplished under such conditions was a magnificent example of resourcefulness and devotion to duty.

The lack of balance in demand and supply among the different arms of Army Ground Forces also presented a serious problem. This unbalance could only be corrected by a wasteful process of conversion and retraining. Nevertheless, the conversion of thousands of officers from other branches helped to ease the critical shortage of infantry officers in 1944.

The effect of these difficulties might have been reduced except for the fact that the officer candidate system could not respond quickly to sudden changes in plans. When production had to be curtailed in 1943, months elapsed before the outpouring of candidates could be halted. When the call for more replacements required accelerated production in 1944, months elapsed again between the decision to increase output and the actual increase in officers available. In both cases crises of overproduction or underproduction occurred between the decision for change and its implementation. To select, train, and prepare an officer for overseas duty required a long period, varying from eight to twelve months. Once enrolled in large numbers, candidates would continue to graduate in large numbers until several months later, regardless of intervening changes in requirements. If current output was low, it could not be increased in less than eight to twelve months, no matter how urgent the need for officers became. Such inelasticity was inherent in the system.

Efforts were made to offset this inelasticity but were largely ineffective or came too late to affect the mass procurement of officers in World War II. One of these efforts was to decentralize the procurement of officer candidates. Since the problems of the OCS system were tied into the Troop Basis, variations in strategy, and the distribution of manpower within the Army as a whole, it was logical that the War Department should control the system. On the other hand, the Army Ground Forces, as the command in control of both the schools and the troops from which the candidates were drawn, might be expected to provide a better adjustment of output to requirements. Both methods were tried, but neither solved the fundamental problem of unbalance.

Another measure designed to help solve this problem was an effort to obtain more accurate and comprehensive information regarding supply and demand. In June 1944, having reassumed control over officer procurement, the War Department established a Strength Accounting and Reporting Office in order to put personnel accounting on a uniform and world-wide basis. Information available on such matters as the number, branch distribution, location, and assignment of officers had been woefully fragmentary and uncertain. In computing officer requirements different sets of figures had been used by the War Department and the Army Ground Forces, and even within the headquarters of Army Ground Forces there was no general agreement on relevant statistical data. Confusion in planning was the greater because the existing system of accounting for officer strength was based on classification by arms which had been superseded. Officers were commissioned only in the four statutory arms, and officers in the Armored, Antiaircraft, and Tank Destroyer arms were detailed from one of these four. Improvised procedures enabled Army Ground Forces to keep track of officers in all of the seven ground arms as long as they were in the United States, but once overseas they could be accounted for only with difficulty because they appeared in strength returns under the branch in which they had been commissioned rather than the one in which they were serving. Too often major decisions had to be based on partial information or delayed while more accurate information was being compiled. The Strength Accounting and Reporting Office was established to reduce these delays and make possible accurate as well as timely planning for the size and composition of the officer corps.

A third attempt to effect a better adjustment of supply to requirements grew out of the difficulties the Army Ground Forces experienced toward the end of 1944 in filling increased quotas for officer candidate schools. The deployment of AGF strength overseas had reduced manpower resources in the United States to levels incapable of supporting a program designed to produce officers to meet world-wide requirements. Under these circumstances the basis for officer procurement had to be extended beyond the Zone of Interior to Army-wide resources. This change in procurement created serious difficulties, which had not been successfully overcome by the end of the war. Production of officers overseas, by direct appointment and by school training, remained low in relation to theater strength. Candidates were returned from theaters in dribbles too small to alleviate the shortage in the United States. Consequently, the bulk of candidates continued to be recruited from the Army at home, with compromises in experience, training, interest, and ability comparable to those in 1942. A new procurement program of general scope was worked out at the end of 1944. By its terms, overseas theaters were to receive after March 1945 only a limited number of officers from the United States and were to fill remaining needs from their own resources. This program could not be fully implemented because the German offensive of December left many units in Europe extremely short of men and

fighting in Europe came to an end before the new program could be fully tested. Still the experience of the Ground Forces had shown that, given the inevitable delay in the reaction of the officer school system to changed demands, it was essential that a sufficient supply of candidates be immediately available when needed to increase output. An Army-wide procurement basis seemed to be the logical solution to this problem.

In the light of the foregoing study, it is apparent that changes along the lines projected during the war will not suffice by themselves to produce a well-coordinated program of officer procurement. Throughout, the greatest difficulties were caused by external conditions. The most conspicuous of these were the following:

**1. Initial lack of an officer reserve distributed by branch in proportion to the needs of mobilization.** Few armored, tank destroyer, or anti-aircraft officers, Regular or Reserve, were initially available as such. Establishments for training them had to be set up at the last minute.

**2. Necessity for rapid mobilization upon the entry of the United States into war.** The need for men to fill units outran the supply available through Selective Service. Understrength units could furnish officer candidates only by risking their own training or filling their OCS quotas with men of inferior quality.

**3. Rigidity of the ROTC program.** When the War Department decided to induct men in the Advanced ROTC before they had completed the course in college, it felt obligated to enable these men to qualify for commissions after entering the Army. They were therefore sent to officer candidate schools—the bulk of them being enrolled in a period when there was no longer a need for increased officer production. Requirements for officers were so low during late 1943 and early 1944 that OCS quotas were allotted almost entirely to ROTC men, and enlisted men had very little chance of being admitted to officer candidate schools.

**4. Shifts in the AGF Troop Basis.** The deferment of units, for which candidates were scheduled to go to school or were already in training, resulted in 1943 in a surplus of officers above actual Troop Basis needs. This surplus grew as planned activations were further curtailed and existing units were inactivated during 1943. Heavy cutbacks in certain arms, especially anti-aircraft, not only added to the growing surplus of officers but also had the more serious effect of throwing available officer strength out of balance with probable requirements. The conversion of officers in 1944 grew out of this situation.

**5. Shifts in strategic plans.** The demand for replacements which would have resulted from the cross-Channel invasion planned for the spring of 1943, and then postponed, did not materialize. Pending the large-scale invasion of Europe in 1944, it was uncertain how far the surplus of officers would go toward cushioning replacement demands on the OCS system. In the winter of 1943-44, it was believed to be undesirable to add to the surplus by maintaining a substantial volume of OCS output. The expansion of OCS facilities for replacement needs was delayed, and later was not effected in time to avert the crisis in procurement during 1944. In the summer of 1944, when theater demands for replacements were building up to their greatest peak, officer candidate schools had declined to their lowest output since 1941. The immediate crisis had to be met by using up the surplus of officers, including those recently converted from other arms to the Infantry.

Some of the difficulties listed cannot be removed even by the most foresighted plan for officer procurement. They are summarized here to illustrate the type of external factors which planning must take into account.

### **“OCS Candidates will Henceforth Wear Distinctive Uniforms”**

#### ***President Harry Truman (October 1946):***

President Harry Truman announced that OCS candidates would henceforth wear distinctive uniforms and be subjected to a modified form of military law. These directives were never implemented.

### **“Surplus Buildings Being Filed”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Friday November 15, 1946)***

If the competition doesn't improve, the 1,400 surplus buildings to be sold on the auction block at Fort Sill may sell for rock bottom prices, it was indicated today. Although officials of the army engineers will not know what the amounts of the bids are until the sealed envelopes are opened next Monday, they are somewhat alarmed at the lack of interest.

Less than 25 bids have been submitted thus far for the block of buildings which include some two-story structures that were used during the recent war for barracks. Some of the structures, it was pointed out, even have hard wood floors, an item that is extremely scarce in lumber yards of the southwest.

It was planned to open the sale by placing 300 buildings on sale for next Monday. Anyone is eligible to purchase the structures, although it is possible for veterans to obtain priority. Prospective bidders may call at the Fort Sill office for information where guides are available to show the buildings scheduled for the auction. The sale will continue until all of the buildings have been disposed of. The auction will be conducted next Monday and each Monday thereafter.

Less than half of the structures are the 16 by 16-foot hutment buildings that were used during the war to house officer candidates during their period of study to become second lieutenants.

### **“21 members of Last OCS Class End Sill Training”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (December 15, 1946)***

Fort Sill's last Field Artillery Officer Candidate class graduates its 21 members in a ceremony at Post Chapel No. 3.

Maj. Gen. Clift Andrus, commandant, the Artillery School, presented the diplomas to the men and Maj. Erwin Fredricks, OCS director of gunnery, a graduate of the first class, administered the oath of office to members of this 179th graduating class. The ceremony ended when General Andrus pinned the bars on 2nd Lt. Corydon B. Dunham, honor graduate of the class as the band played “The Caisson Song.” Since its inception in July 1941, 26,173 students have been commissioned as second lieutenants of field artillery. An average of four out of every five candidates have successfully completed the course.

## **“Selection of Officer Candidates”**

### ***The Field Artillery Journal (Nov – Dec 1946)***

New Officer Candidate selection system has been instituted. Effective 1 February 1947, it is expected that the new plan will guarantee a sound and uniform method and procedure for the selection of officer candidates on an Army-wide competitive basis. For the first time in history, an enlisted man will evaluate the qualifications of another enlisted man to attend Officer Candidate School. The program also provides that selection for attendance at OCS will be based more on intelligence and officer-like qualities than on a formal educational background.

The OCS program has been reorganized to provide that all enlisted men, flight officers or warrant officers desiring commissions in any of the ground arms or the technical and administrative services must attend a school of six months' duration at Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon graduation, each individual will be commissioned and assigned for three months to a basic associate course conducted by the arm or service for which the individual has been selected. Thereafter, officers will be assigned to duty within the arm or service conducting that particular course.

In order to qualify for selection, an applicant must have attained his 19th birthday and must not have passed his 31st on the date of enrollment in the course for which selected. No waiver of age will be granted. He must be a citizen of the United States and must have had at least six weeks' continuous service immediately preceding the date of application and must have completed the Military Training Program prior to the date of enrollment. This provides that a man entering the Army can qualify for OCS upon completion of his basic training. However, only those individuals receiving the highest composite scores will be permitted to attend OCS from training centers.

Army experience during the war proved that although a good percentage of eligible men brought into OCS from training centers proved excellent officer material, the man completely familiar with the Army for a period of time was better equipped for his duties later in his career as an officer. Consequently, it is anticipated that the greater proportion of officer candidates will be made up of men who have served in the ranks for a time.

Selection for OCS training will be made on the basis of Army-wide competition with each applicant executing certain scored testing devices from which will be derived “composite scores.” The composite score will determine the standing of each applicant in relation to all other applicants being considered for selection for a specific class at a particular time. The quotas for a specific officer candidate class will be filled from the number of men having the highest composite score, starting at the top.

The process for qualification and selection starts with a physical examination. If qualified physically, the candidate for selection takes an intelligence test, which, if passed satisfactorily, is followed by a “self-rating” test, a written examination in which the answers to the questions establish the man's caliber as possible officer material.

If the candidate has qualified through these steps, he is submitted to an evaluation by another enlisted man, a noncommissioned officer who in the opinion of the immediate superior commissioned officer is best qualified to make such an evaluation based upon the frequency of daily contact and the supervisory relationship between such non-commissioned officer and the applicant. In the case of applications from non-

commissioned officers of the higher grades the evaluation report will be secured from a qualified commissioned officer.

After the evaluation rating by a fellow enlisted man has been compiled the applicant will be ordered to the nearest officer interview board, where he will be evaluated again for selection.

Although elaborate for the number of candidates selected during peacetime, in the event of an emergency the officer training plan should not only greatly reduce the officer attrition rate but also provide the Army with an efficient, easily administered, and practiced system of selection of officer candidate material from civilian manpower pools.

**Historical Note from the Artillery OCS Archives (1946-1950):**

With the fall of the Japanese Empire and the cessation of hostilities in August 1945, the need for Field Artillery officers became less critical. The Army Ground Forces announced that a new Officer Candidate School program for the ground forces would be established and that no further classes would be enrolled at Fort Sill after 1 September 1946.

The Army Ground Forces authorized the discontinuance of the Officer Candidate School program at Fort Sill effective 12 December 1946 and Field Artillery OCS was officially closed when class number 179 graduated 21 individuals. Since opening on 10 April 1941, 26,209 Second Lieutenants had graduated and received commissions from the Field Artillery OCS.

In August 1946 the name of the OCS program at Fort Benning was changed to the Army Officer Candidate School (AOCS) and subsequent classes under the new course of instruction were extended to twenty-four weeks duration. All other OCS programs then in operation were discontinued after graduation of those classes which were enrolled prior to 1 September 1946. The newly created school at Fort Benning differed from the former OCS in that it provided for commissioning candidates in any of the arms and services for the Army.

The first of the new AOCS classes, which began on 3 October 1946, had fifteen different branch colors represented on the piping on the officer candidate's caps. Each class was divided into two phases, with the first phase of eight weeks duration being designated as a rigid screening period. Such screening was necessary because the failure rate in Infantry OCS averaged nearly fifty percent in the late months of the war.

The subjects to be stressed during the trial period included physical conditioning, weapons training, elementary infantry tactics and military courtesy. Those who met the requirements received instruction in administrative, supply and disciplinary functions of company officers in the second phase of sixteen weeks. Following graduation, the new officers were assigned to the officer's basic course in their arm of service. OCS and AOCS operated concurrently until graduation of the final Fort Benning OCS class on 9 December 1946.

Thereafter, the AOCS continued in operation until the last of the classes graduated on 1 November 1947. Twelve classes were scheduled but two were canceled. Only 915 of 1,899

enrolled graduated, a failure rate of more than fifty-one percent. Class Twelve of AOCS (8 May - 1 November 1947) graduated only fifty-two of 109 candidates.

On 31 December 1946 all activities pertaining to OCS were ordered transferred to the Army Ground General School at Fort Riley, Kansas. Columbus, Georgia, home of Fort Benning and the birthplace of OCS, bade OCS a reluctant farewell.

A considerable number of cadre and instructors were transferred from Fort Benning to Fort Riley, as well. The first class at the Army Ground General School opened on 26 June 1947 with ninety-two candidates. The Branch Immaterial OCS would remain at the school until after the reactivation of OCS units during the Korean War. Production of OCS graduates gradually declined at Fort Riley. Only 542 graduated in 1950, the lowest annual production of officers in Army OCS to that date.

### **“The Ground General School”**

#### **LTC Wheeler G. Merriam *Field Artillery Journal* (March-April 1947)**

The Ground General School, which has recently been established at Fort Riley, Kansas, using the buildings and facilities that were formerly The Cavalry and Intelligence Schools, is an important part of the revised Army Ground Forces School System.

In addition to training all newly commissioned officers in basic, branch immaterial subjects, the Ground General School will conduct the Army Officer Candidate School and will continue to carry on the functions of the Intelligence School in training students as intelligence officers and specialists. Horsemanship instruction will also be continued on a limited scale.

The activities of The Cavalry School which pertain to fields other than animals have been assigned to the Armored School at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

#### **Officer Candidate School at the Ground General School**

All AGF officer candidate instruction will be centered at The Ground General School starting in June 1947. The standard 24-week course of intensive training will be given with few changes in content from that previously presented at Fort Benning and elsewhere.

Early phases of the officer candidate instruction directed at the basic training of the individual will include familiarization and qualification firing of small arms, motor maintenance, driver training, use of communications equipment, map reading, scouting and patrolling, drill and ceremonies, first aid and sanitation. Leadership and methods of instruction will receive considerable attention. Later phases will be directed at small unit tactics, familiarization with the equipment and functions of the various branches of the service, and the techniques of carrying out the tactical and administrative duties of the junior officer. As with the basic course, the stress in this instruction will be on the practical applicatory exercise to the extent possible with the large enrollment that is anticipated.

Upon being commissioned in the Army of the United States the graduating students will be prepared to take the associate basic course at the school of their respective arm or service.



Although currently operating on a somewhat reduced scale, The Ground General School will expand in the near future. With increments of 200 officer candidates arriving every few weeks commencing in June.

**“New System of Conducting Artillery Fire is Announced”  
*Lawton Constitution* (Thursday April 17, 1947)**

A new system of conducting artillery fire was announced at Fort Sill today which makes it possible for any soldier, private or general to serve as the observer and direct the projectiles on the target.

Some of the complicated procedure of firing gunnery problem has for many years been one of the toughest phases of becoming a topflight field artillery officer.

It involved the observer remembering a long list of figures and with all of these in his mind, solving several problems in trigonometry.

This became even more complicated in recent war when the computations of flight for time fuzes was introduced to assure overhead bursts of artillery shells. Many officer candidates were “washed out” because they were unable to master the mathematics involved.

The new system, announced by Maj. Gen. Clift Andrus, commanding general of the Artillery Center, will be used throughout the armed forces of the United States, army, navy, marine corps and air forces. The new procedure employs some of the popular features of the forward observer system developed during World War I but used more than any other in World War II.

Instead of the observer sending all commands down to the guns as he did in the old method, he merely announces what he sees in relation of the bursting projectile to the target. The computations are made at the guns.

For instance, the observer estimates in yards the distance from a base point in the target area, the location of which has been determined previously and registered upon by the guns.

If the target is at a greater range than the base point, he merely says “add.” If the range is less, he says, “drop.” He indicates the lateral location of the target by announcing “left” or “right” so many yards. All sensings are in yards and conversion to mils is computed by a fire direction center at the guns.

The new method is being published in a war department field manual on field artillery gunnery and will be distributed soon to all field artillery organizations, General Andrus said.

## **“How to Enlist at the Top”**

**George Scullin, *Mechanix Illustrated* (April 1949):**

Like to make the jump from civilian to officer in one step? MIs editors listened unbelievably to Army ads and then sent their correspondent to check. Here’s the inside story he brought back from Fort Riley.

You’re walking down the street and a big-business man stops you. “How’d you like to join my organization as a junior executive?” he asks.

“Executive of what?” you probably say.

“Whatever type of business you prefer,” he answers. “I need executives who can run a railroad, a truck line and a radio network. I have some good spots open for engineering executives and more top jobs in personnel, foreign relations, motion pictures, aviation, science, purchasing - you name it and I have the job for you!”

“But I have no experience,” you start to protest.

“Oh, that’s all right,” he interrupts. “I’ll give you six months of training, with free room, board, medical care and \$115 a month to boot.”

Would a conversation like that interest you?

It probably would and you can get in touch with that gentleman any time you want. He’s your nearest Army recruiting officer and the offer he’s making seems so unusual that the editors of MI sent me to check on it.

In brief, the offer is that you, a civilian, can now join the Army as a full-fledged officer. This is quite an offer as many GI’s who spent years in the ranks without a chance at officer’s training will assure you.

My first stop on the *Mechanix Illustrated* investigation was Washington, D. C. at the Pentagon Building. There, I learned that the program is open to all men, married or single, between the ages of 19 and 28. You must have a high school education or its equivalent and be able to pass an intelligence screening test.

I was determined that first I would check on one aspect of the program that had bothered me. A recent ruling prohibits the return to civilian life of officer candidates who fail to pass the course. If this program is not simply a ruse to get quality enlistments, why keep the unsuccessful candidates in uniform if they are unwilling? Especially since you must enlist for a three-year term in order to be accepted. That was the question I asked.

It keeps you on the ball, they told me. You can’t just drop the course and return home as your only alternative to staying in school is to go into the ranks as a private. While this looks like a rough ruling, a couple of candidates told me that it is a lifesaver. After four months of classes, field work, physical training and drill they were fed up. It was at this point that some of their civilian predecessors had washed out in favor of home and family. Faced with three years of training in the ranks, these boys kept plugging in school. And now, with lieutenant’s bars on their shoulders, they are glad they were forced to stay at it. However, many wary individuals will probably still look upon this ruling as a definite drawback.

A big topic of conversation around the Pentagon Building is the new school itself. Located near Fort Riley, Kansas, it represents all that the Army has learned in the training of

officers. Before starting the school, the old Officer Candidate School of World War II was put under scientific observation. It was probed, psychoanalyzed and subjected to surgery. Many courses with no more to back them than military tradition were eliminated. Technical courses that had been mere introductions to the subject matter were expanded to mean something. Biggest changes as the result of the scientific survey came in the bolstering of courses in applied psychology, personnel administration, self-appraisal and etiquette. The old phrase "an officer and a gentleman" was dusted off and given new significance.

Instead of the old O.C.S. - 90 days of training, the new A.O.C. (Army Officer Candidate) school lasts six months. And instead of having several schools scattered around the country, the Army has just one. Besides training civilians, the school also trains candidates selected from the ranks. The first few classes were drawn largely from the ranks. Now, the need for officers has become so acute that civilian sources must be tapped. Since January, a class of more than 200 has entered A.O.C. every three weeks. By now civilians comprise about 50 per cent of each class.

When you are finally accepted for the new school, you do not report until there is a definite place for you. Then you are given two months of basic training at Fort Riley so you can compete on an even basis with classmates who have had previous military experience. During this basic training you receive the pay of a sergeant - \$115 a month. This is the same paycheck you draw during your six months as a candidate. The rank of sergeant is yours from the time you report for basic until you graduate as an officer. Men from the ranks are also sergeants while in school, but all are addressed as "Candidate." Enlisted men who fail the course revert to the rank previously held.

After hearing about this wonder school, I flew out there in order to give you a first-hand report. Fort Riley is as beautiful a post as there is to be found in the country. It has an air of comfort and security that gives the officer candidate something to look forward to. But look forward, he must. This solid comfort is not to be his during A.O.C. The school itself is located at Camp Forsyth, a war-built training adjunct to Riley, located on the treeless flats of the Republican River, a mile from the main post. The barracks, mess halls, classrooms and administration buildings are examples of the type of wooden structures rushed together during the war.

If you are typical of the candidates with whom I talked, you will not have much time to notice meager surroundings. The reason lies in a 55-page book, each page single spaced and a foot long, which outlines every minute of the 960 hours you will spend in class, physical training, field work, drill and practical demonstrations.

But let's follow you through the school. From the instant you show up at Camp Forsyth you are under inspection, even during your sleeping hours. Col. Robert Lutz and Lt. Col. Elwood Spackman, who head the school, know more about you and your potentialities than any school heads you have ever encountered. Within a week, Maj. Read, Battalion Commander, and Maj. Wood, Operations Officer, will know your exact standing in your class.

Then, each of the 110 instructors you'll encounter will have something to say about you and your grades. Your tactical officer is usually a lieutenant whose course is not so far

behind him that the details are forgotten. There's one of these "Tac" officers to every 50 candidates and he has you under observation from reveille to taps. He watches the way you fall in for morning inspection and observes your manners at mess. In class he takes notes on your recitations and the timber of your voice. He's always making notes.

Most important of all, you must pass the inspection of your fellow candidates. The Army has perfected a "Buddy System" to accomplish this which out-Buddies any system you've ever run across.

Since an officer is an executive who must appraise men, the Army says, part of your training will be to appraise your fellow candidates. Three times during your six months in school you will write a confidential report on each of the candidates in your platoon. After your estimate of a candidate has been checked against those of other candidates and counter-checked against reports of school officials, the Army should have a fair idea of your ability as well as his.

Here again you'll probably feel some resentment. There's no doubt that it's a super-spy system and anyone lacking in qualities desired in an officer will find it impossible to conceal his weaknesses. But on the other hand, if you've got the stuff these reports will protect you from being washed out by a snap decision. And in the final analysis, everybody will be served best if the weak links are eliminated before it's too late.

By the time you reach the end of the six months, many of your classmates will have fallen by the wayside. In some classes as many as 48 per cent have failed to pass the course! More selective screening has greatly reduced this number, however. I talked to a group of candidates a few days before they were to receive their commissions and the consensus of opinion was that although no single part of the program is overwhelmingly difficult, it takes steady plugging to get by. One of the fellows said, "It's like a hurdle race—all the hurdles are easy but after you've jumped hundreds they all look a mile high."

By the time you complete your course, the Army will have spent about \$17,000 in cash on your training and hundreds of valuable man-hours of instruction. In return, the Army will expect to gain a competent officer.

While I was investigating this new Army plan for MI, I figured I might as well get a few figures straight on the retirement plan. And Brother, it really had me drooling. You can retire after 20 years of service at half of your base pay. Or in thirty years at 75 per cent. Let's say you've worked your way up to colonel (quite probable after 30 years as an officer). Your monthly pension check would come to around \$400. In order to collect that same amount after 30 years of work as a civilian, you would have been paying \$200 a month all during the 30 years! So, when you start weighing the possibility of joining up, make sure you put some of that pension gold on the scales.

My investigation of this plan for training officers revealed the bad points as well as the good. Admittedly, from your civilian point of view, there are drawbacks. Probably the major one is that—officer or enlisted man—you're in the Army for a three-year hitch. And of course, there's no denying that the course is rugged. The Army made it that way on purpose.

But there's also no denying that the Army has put its cards on the table. The opportunity to serve your country as an officer is actually there. You must decide for yourself whether you want to take a shot at it - it's a big decision to make and neither the Army nor MI can make it for you. So, check the balance carefully on your own books.

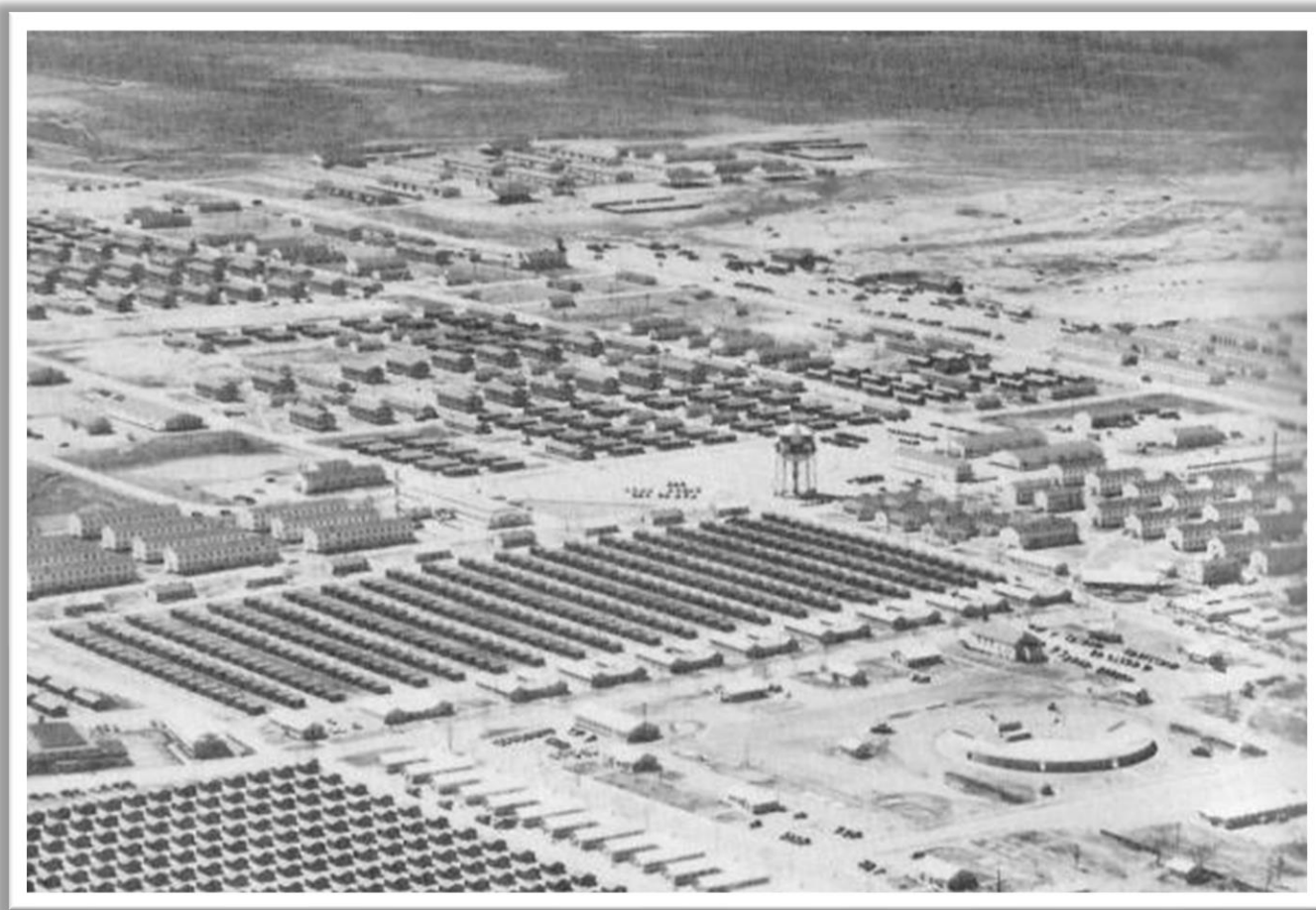
Then, if your answer is yes, you'll be able to do something which GI's and civilians have dreamed of doing since men started making war—enlist at the top!

**James C. Causey: Fort Riley AOC Course 18-49**

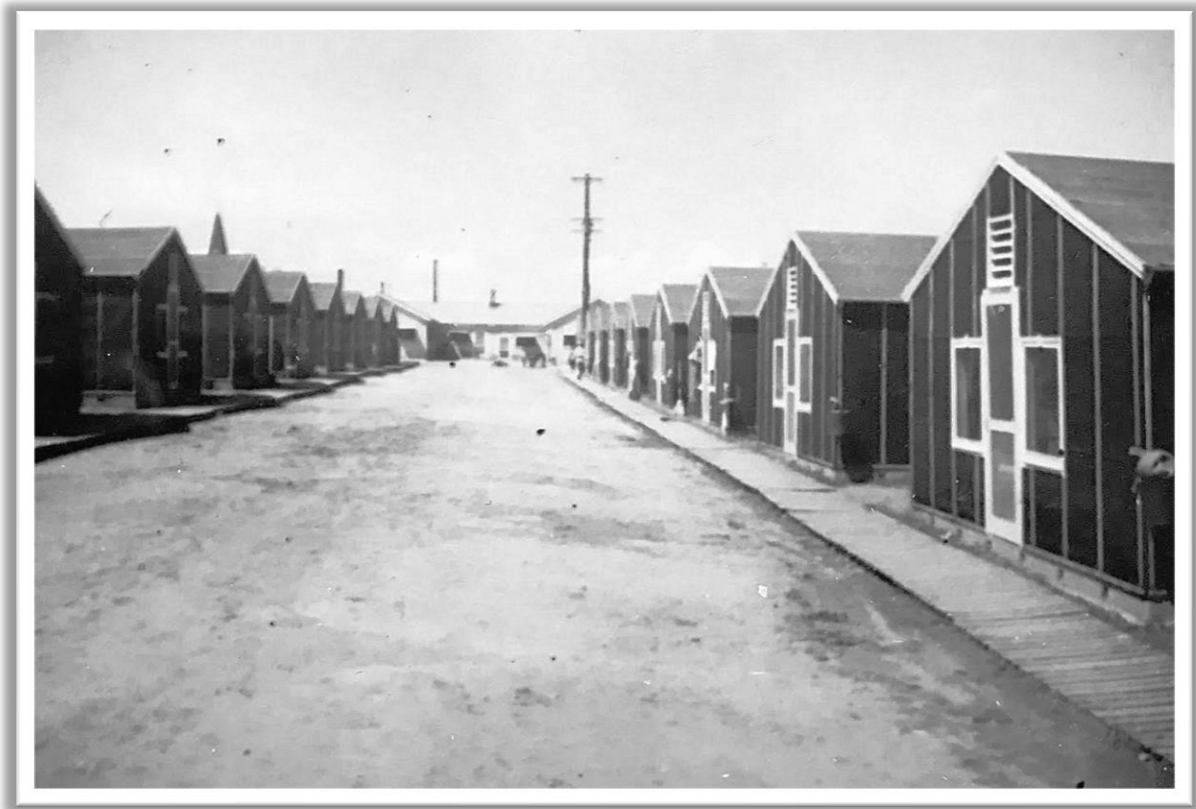
OCS ranks as a close third “most defining moment of my life.” Just behind my acceptance of the Lord and my marriage to Elizabeth.

Here we learned leadership of troops and the technical aspects of war fighting.

Graduation resulted from intense, focused attention to details of study, command presence and physical conditioning. Rightfully one could say that this “candidate” grew up during those six months. In summary, we learned a vital principal of leadership: Take care of the troops and the troops will take care of you.”



*Fort Sill Officer Candidate School Area from the Air – 1945*



*OCS Hutment Area 1942-1946  
Looking Northeast from near Miner and Currie Roads  
Chapel and Artillery Bowl are in top left corner - north of Ringgold Road*



*Class 52-43 (above and below)*





*Class 52-43*

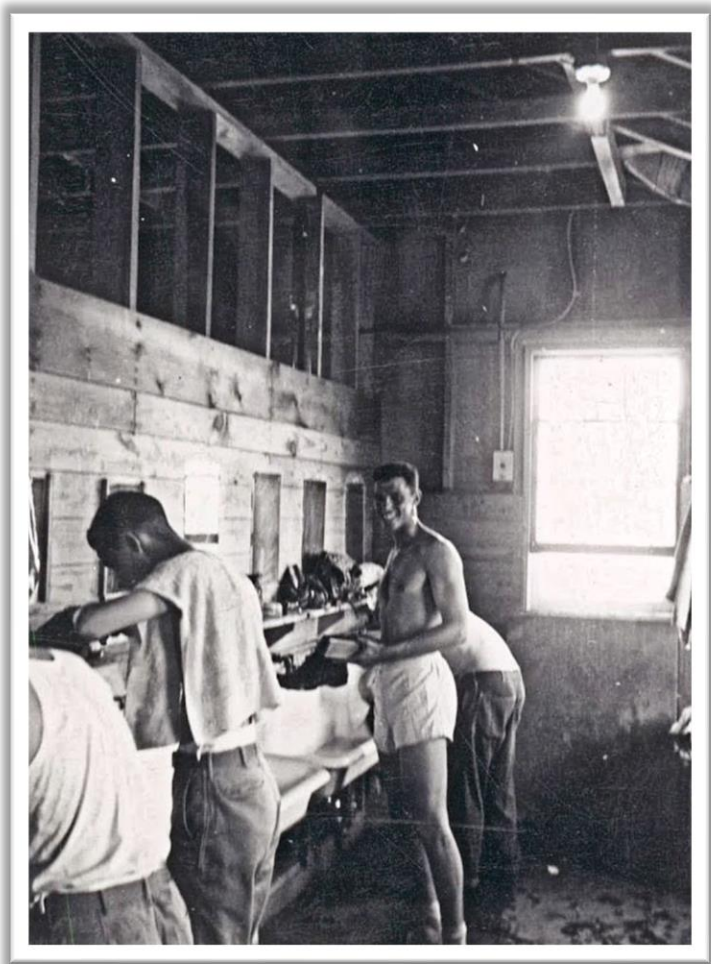




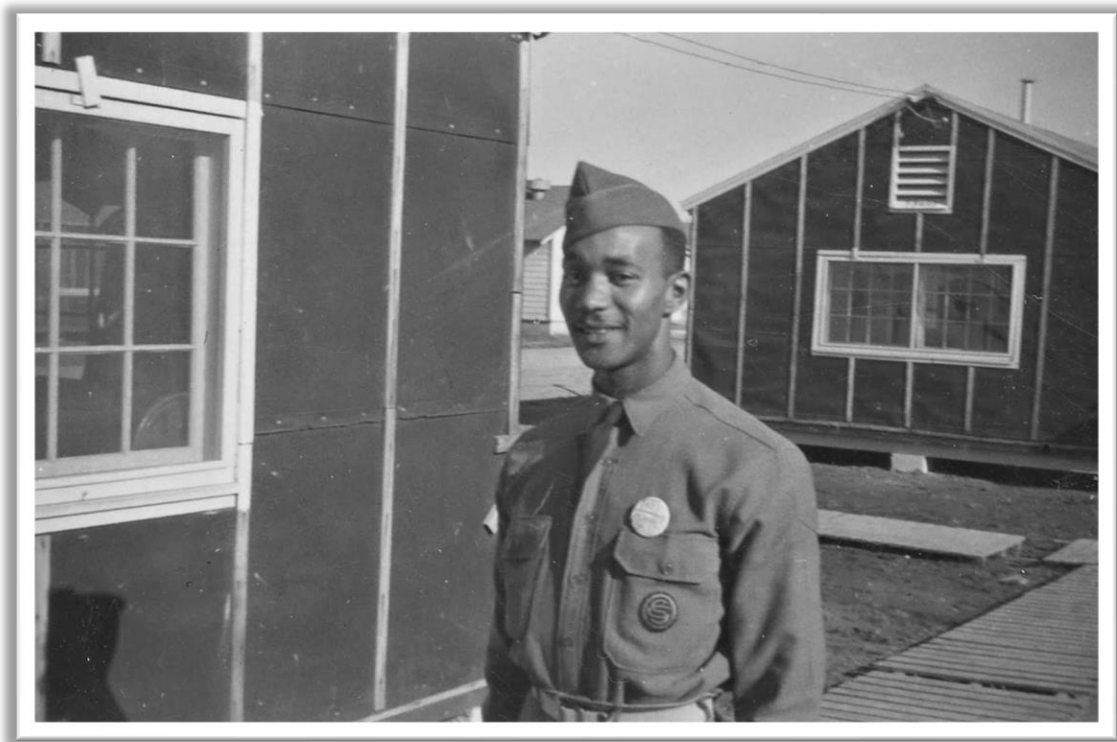
*Class 52-43*



*Class 52-43*



*Class 80-43*



*Class 52-43*

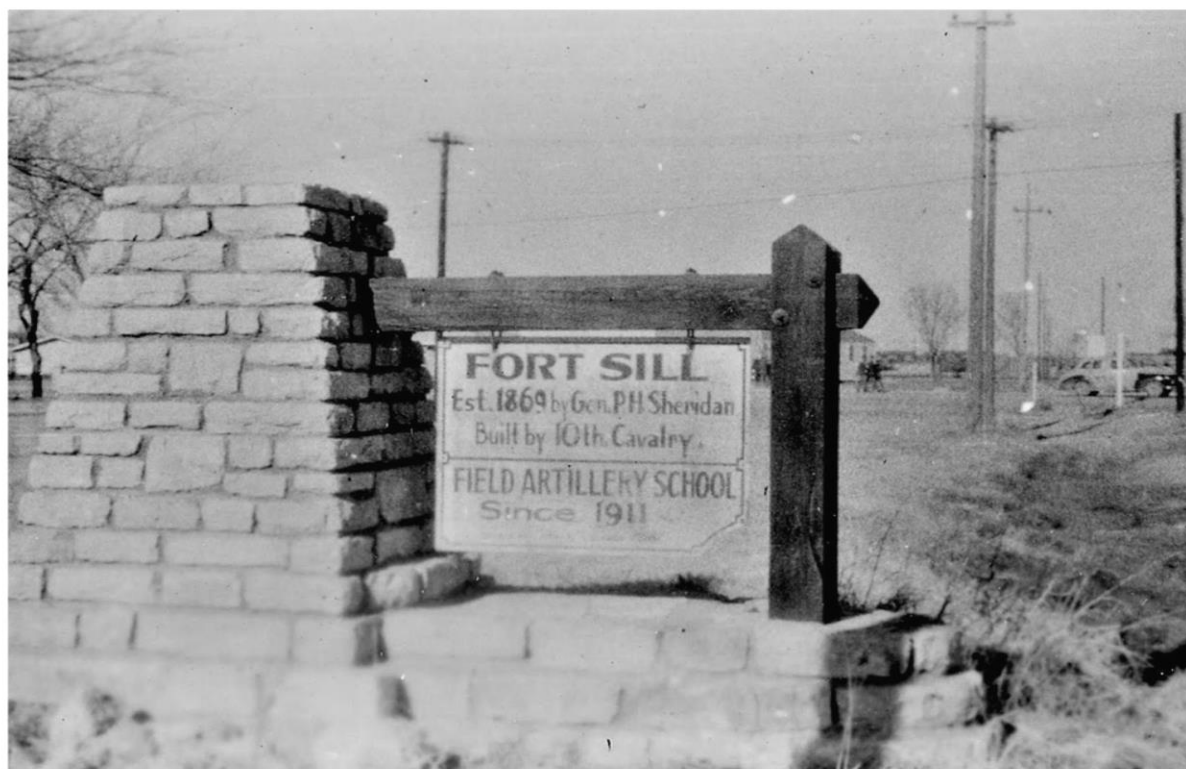


*Class 80-43 (top and bottom)*





*Class 80-43*



# Chapter Six

## 1951

### Field Artillery OCS 1951-1963: Reactivation and Expansion

***From History of the US Army Artillery and Missile School, Volume III, 1945-1957 and History of the US Army Artillery and Missile School, Volume IV, 1958-1963***

On 30 June 1950, United States ground forces entered the Korean Conflict which had been started by the invasion of South Korea by the North Korean Army on 25 June 1950, and the Artillery School entered a period of rapid mobilization.

Preparations for an Officer Candidate Course at Fort Sill were begun at the Artillery School during the months of November and December 1950. The Secretary of the School had previously prepared plans for a program of instruction for an Officer Candidate School course in the event of its possible establishment at Fort Sill.

During November, Army Field Forces alerted the School to begin preparation for such a program of instruction and the School initiated a review of its planned 22-week Officer Candidate Course. This program of instruction was requested on 7 December 1950 by Army Field Forces and informed the Artillery School of the projected student requirements of the course. On 18 December 1950, Office, Chief, Army Field Forces, approved establishment of the Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill.

The officer requirements of the Korean War resulted in the reactivation of seven OCS programs in 1951. The Branch Immaterial OCS program at Fort Riley, Kansas and the WAC OCS at Fort Lee, Virginia continued operating. Infantry OCS, Fort Benning and Field Artillery OCS, Fort Sill were reactivated in February 1951. By the end of 1951 Armor OCS, Fort Knox, Kentucky; Signal Corps OCS, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey; Engineer OCS, Fort Belvoir, Virginia; Ordnance OCS, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland; and Antiaircraft OCS, Fort Bliss, Texas had been reactivated.

The first Field Artillery OCS class since 1946 reported on 21 February 1951 to attend the new 23-week course at Fort Sill. Fifty-seven candidates started with the class and 28 were commissioned. In 1954, several National Guard classes were established for a rigorous 11-week summer course. Then in June 1957, Army Reserve classes began a similar program.

Effective 5 March 1951, General Orders 15, The Artillery Center, reestablished the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School by the activation of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Officer Candidate School.

General Orders 122, 24 November 1952, established the Office of the Commandant, Field Artillery Officer Candidate School, and outlined the duties charged to the School.

Mission: To produce junior officers who have the required knowledge, character, and capabilities for practical leadership to the extent that they can lead artillery and missile elements successfully in combat.

Organization: The U.S. Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School consisted of the Commandant, Assistant Commandant, Administrative Officer, S1, S2, S3 and S4 and the Personnel Section, Headquarters Battery, Mess Section, and three batteries.

Phased construction plans were initiated in January 1951 to move part of the Field Artillery School to the Officer Candidate School area that had been occupied during World War II.

In the Officer Candidate area, three housing areas were established. The barracks of the 2700 area became the Battery Officer Course area. The northern half of the barracks of the 2800 area became the Officer Candidate School area, and the southern half became the Enlisted Specialist area.

Thirty-two gunnery type classrooms (35-man) and four 60-man Officer Candidate School classrooms were created by conversion of 18 mess halls in the 2500 and 2800 area.

Four communication 60-man classrooms, two code rooms, a text issue and bookstore were made from 2700 area mess halls. From post exchanges, recreation halls and former classrooms buildings in the 2600, 2900, and 3000 area, six 120-man gallery type lecture halls and eight 120-man classrooms with tables were established. The barracks of the 2600 area were converted to offices and supply rooms to furnish administrative space to support the newly established activity in the western part of Fort Sill. Most of the work necessary to effect these changes was completed during the first few months of 1951.

In October 1951, a new load of 3,800 Officer Candidate School students was given to the Artillery School for calendar year 1952 by Army Field Forces.

On 14 August 1954, Snow Hall was officially opened. The building, which contained 190,000 square feet of floor space and facilities to accommodate 2,500 students, furnished the Artillery School with a centralized location for its headquarters and classrooms. Snow Hall, which is air-conditioned and equipped with modern instructional equipment, filled a need which the Artillery School had recognized and sought to alleviate by requests for an adequate academic building since the years immediately following World War II.

On 13 September 1954, classes were begun in the academic wing of Snow Hall.

**Name Changes of the Field Artillery School through the years:**

School of Fire for Field Artillery (1911-1919)

Field Artillery School (1919-1946)

The Artillery School (1946-1955)

The Artillery and Guided Missile School (1955-1957)

US Army Artillery and Guided Missile School (January 1957-July 1957)

US Army Artillery and Missile School (July 1957-1969)

US Army Field Artillery School in 1969.

The Officer Candidate School dutifully chased the redesignations. There were many changes to the Robinson Barracks Archway after it was erected in 1953. Pictures of it during the years when OCS was in session offer a clue to when the picture was taken.

## **General Information on the OCS classes from 1951-1957:**

*From the official School records:* the graduation rate from the opening of the school in 1951 through June 1957 was 56.4 % (Attrition Rate = 43.6%)

Total enrollment was 8,407 candidates.

1,658 candidates were turned back during the period

4,740 graduated.

370 failed the course

174 were relieved for disciplinary reasons

394 were relieved for physical defects

646 were relieved for Leadership Qualities

139 were relieved for compassionate reasons

1,846 were relieved for Motivation

98 were relieved for other reasons

Calendar year 1951: 535 candidates originally enrolled in classes 1-51 through 6-51 and a total of 237 graduated – 44.3 %

Calendar Year 1952: 3,370 candidates were enrolled in classes 7-52 through 31-52 and a total of 1,985 graduated – 58.9 %

Calendar Year 1953: 1,289 candidates were enrolled in classes 32-53 through 45-53 and a total of 764 graduated – 59.3 %

Calendar Year 1954: 1,503 candidates were enrolled in classes 46-54 through 59-54 and a total of 747 graduated – 49.7 %

Calendar Year 1955; 1,020 candidates were enrolled in classes 60-55 through 71-55 and a total of 548 graduated – 53.7 %

Calendar Year 1956: 487 candidates were enrolled in classes 1-56 through 7-56 and a total of 270 graduated – 55.4 %

## **From December 1956 (Class 1-57) through June 1963 (Class 3-63)**

Total Enrollment was approximately 2,386 candidates

1,306 candidates graduated (54.7% graduation rate – attrition rate = 45.3%)

773 were relieved for various administrative reasons

622 were turned back

164 failed the course

## **“OCS at Sill Set to Open”**

### ***Lawton Constitution (February 18, 1951)***

Brace! Brace! Brace!

That will be part of the order of business Wednesday at Fort Sill when 110 hopeful candidates for commission in the U.S. Army begin their rigid course of study in the newly activated Artillery Officer Candidate School.

Following the pattern set in World War II when 26,000 officers were commissioned in the Field Artillery OCS, discipline will be one of the most important phases of training. For 22 weeks the young applicants will be subject to the most trying tests, no small part of which will be academic.

The training will be under the direct supervision of Col. Franklin G. Smith, a veteran of the Pacific in the last war. He recently transferred from a post in the Pentagon to take over the job of commandant of the OCS.

The 22-week course was prescribed by the Artillery School, headed by Brig. Gen. W. H. Colbern, assistant commandant. The school is part of the Artillery Center, commanded by Maj. Gen. A.M. Harper.

The law of supply and demand is expected to regulate the number of officers who will be graduated from the newly activated school. During World War II new classes entered each week. The scheduled tempo of the school now is a new class each month. When one of the students completes the course and is handed his diploma with the accompanying gold bars, it will signify that he is capable of efficiently commanding a field artillery unit.

In World War II the emphasis was on training as "forward observers," which were jokingly termed, "expendable." But along with their training to "shoot" was basic knowledge of commanding a unit.

### **"OCS Has Reason for that Running"**

#### ***The Daily Oklahoman* (Sunday March 4, 1951)**

There is no such thing as walking around artillery officers candidate school at Fort Sill, members of the first class found when they tumbled out of bed at 6:15 a.m. last week. Everywhere the candidates went, they double timed. The big hurry has a purpose. It's part of the physical training required of men who hope to wear the bars of a second lieutenant in the artillery.

The first day of training got under way with the familiar "Hour of Charm" of World War II days. Students drill and give mass commands designed to improve their command voices. It starts at 7:50 each morning. Physical training and a training film took up the rest of the first morning. In the afternoon carbines were issued and candidates cleaned them up in preparation for inspection.

For the first three weeks of school the men will study at the department of motors. A mechanized army requires a thorough knowledge of motor vehicles. A retreat parade has been scheduled for each Friday evening, with the first one a practice affair. Every night there is a required study period with bed check at 11 p.m.

The first man to start his processing for OCS was Cpl. John J. Anthony, Shelton, Conn., who was greeted by Brig. Gen. W. H. Colbern, assistant commandant of the artillery school and Col. Franklin G. Smith, commanding officer of OCS. Anthony spent three years in the Pacific theater during World War II and later operated a taxi company in his hometown. He returned to service in 1949 and was with the 351st Infantry in Trieste for 10 months prior to coming to Fort Sill.



During his first day, here he drew equipment and tripped to the barber shop with other arrivals to get a GI haircut. One student, Cpl. Phillip Spencer, Elmira, N.Y. spent his time under the clippers worrying about his wife's comments when she saw his hair. Though GI haircuts are not required, it is practice to keep hair cut shorter than in civilian life.

Students traveling from one class to another double time for 100 yards and then slow to quick time for the next 100.

Twenty-one more weeks of tough study and the class members will receive their diplomas and commissions. Then they will be off to new assignments.

### **“The Gigs Will Get You”**

#### **Paul Hood, *The Oklahoman* (Sunday April 1, 1951)**

A Fort Sill OCS candidate got the surprise of his life, and the cause was typical of the school's "gig" system. For the benefit of a news photographer, a new officer candidate was demonstrating on another candidate's bed the way the school requires potential officers to make their beds. To do so, it became necessary to pull the top blanket off.

As the blanket was yanked free, a key hidden in the bed, fell to the floor. With almost a cry of triumph, an eager "Tac" officer pounced on it and made a quick entry on the demerit list; "Property concealed in bedding."

The luckless candidate no doubt thought he was completely safe when he slipped the key there for safekeeping as he dashed out for the day's classes. But because it was found he'll draw a few demerits, or gigs, for it. Hiding keys in beds is not provided for in the school's rigid regulations.

It's inspection of little details like that that keep the candidates "on the ball" officer candidate school leaders declare. Once again, they are adhering closely to the discipline system that kept thousands of officer candidates muddled during World War II.

This is just a word of advice for recruits or draftees who picture OCS as the royal road to shiny gold bars and a soft life in the army: Don't try it unless you want the advancement so badly that you can stand a rugged 21 weeks.

"We haven't flunked anyone out of the first class yet," Lt. Col. Harry M. Meyers, the school's executive officer, reported as the group rounded out its first four weeks. "But we have had six candidates resign voluntarily."

Some of those found they couldn't stand the gaff physically. Others quit for various personal reasons. The time is growing short for others who have failed to stand the pace during the opening weeks. The gigs will get them.

"There isn't any fixed standard on the number of demerits a candidate must have before he is dropped," Col. Meyers explains. "At the end of each four weeks the number of demerits assessed against each candidate is totaled."

"Then the average number of demerits for the class will be figured. Any candidate having 200 percent of the average must go before the OCS board."

Going before the board doesn't mean automatic dismissal from school but the individual's chances for survival are slim. Even those with 150 percent of average demerits will be warned they are on the borderline.

Don't get the idea that these conduct offenses are the only thing to worry about. They really are only the harassing factors as candidates buckle down to the serious business of learning to be artillery officers.

Already OCS class No. 1 has finished the three-week motors course (not a man flunked) and is winding up two weeks of general subjects. Then they'll go through materiel, communications, nine weeks of gunnery, four weeks of combined arms, an artillery observation school course and work in airborne operations.

Class No. 2 is now in the first phase of instruction and will keep hot on the heels of No. 1. As a matter of fact, probably a number of candidates from the first class, lagging a little in their work, will be turned back to No. 2, to go through instruction a second time.

The school is operating under a staff commanded by Col. Franklin G. Smith. Col. Smith, Col. Meyers and Capt. L.D. Kinnard, the senior tactical officer, all are West Pointers.

"Officer candidates are competing for the honor of becoming officers in the U.S. Army." the code of conduct states. "They are constantly observed in their actions: the slightest error or offense as well as commendatory performances are made a matter of record."

In addition to the diligent efforts of the tactical officers, there is a duty imposed on a student honor committee, selected by the candidates themselves, to help report undesirable characteristics among the class.

Everyone in the class will have a chance later to rate his classmates. It's the same system used during the wartime OCS and was known by a variety of names, most of them unprintable.

"However, this student rating will not be directly figured into the school's rating of the individual," Capt. Kinnard pointed out, "but will just be an indication of how he stands among his classmates."

It's just one factor that adds to the tension for 21 weeks. The tension starts the minute the eager candidate steps into the school area and lasts until he leaves. Always there are sharp eyes looking for the slightest infraction of the rules and the bulletin board displays the daily accumulation of gigs.

"Chewing gum in ranks, 5 demerits," the list reads, "Failure to pick up distribution, 6; use of vulgar language, 10; failure to properly report, 3; sleeping or apparently sleeping in class, 5; button unbuttoned, 2; in need of haircut, 5; cobwebs in barracks area, 5; shoes improperly aligned under bed, 1; lights burning in barracks when not occupied, 5."

Even the candidate who doesn't find his name on the daily list has little time or inclination to celebrate. He knows his time is coming, unless he is capable of perfection.

## ***From Historical Reports, Headquarters, Officer Candidate School***

### **10 April 1951: by 1LT James G. Baxter, Adjutant**

On 10 January 1951, a Commandant and Executive Officer were appointed, areas were assigned and preparations were begun for handling Class No. 1, scheduled to arrive 21 February 1951.

It soon became evident that to assist in further planning, preparation of initial schedules and the Program of Instruction (POI), a visit to the Officer Candidate School at Fort Riley was indicated. With the approval of the Assistant Commandant, FAS, a trip was set up for 24 January. The Commanding Officer and his executive spent two most profitable days at Fort Riley and brought back a wealth of material for use as a guide. This material has been exceedingly helpful and it seems appropriate to mention, at this point, the sincere and enthusiastic cooperation by personnel at Fort Riley was indeed refreshing.

On 21 February, the first class arrived, consisting of 57 candidates. The small number is attributable to the fact that notification did not reach the field in sufficient time to process prospective candidates. Of the 57, only four had previous artillery training. The remainder came from all branches of the service, plus four whose prior military training was with the Marine Corps. With few exceptions, the educational level was high school or the equivalent. The average age was 22.5 years, and the average OCT score was between 125 and 130.

Candidate processing and indoctrination proceeded as scheduled, including addresses by the Commanding General, The Artillery Center, The Assistant Commandant, The Artillery School, and Commandant, Officer Candidate School. Processing culminated with issuing of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), drawing equipment, haircuts, preparation of barracks, talks by the tactical officers on the honor and demerit systems, assignment of candidate officers and NCOs, and finally, a tour of Fort Sill. By Monday Morning 26 February, candidates prepared to begin their formal 22-week course of instruction, consisting of some 918 hours (POI) distributed among the various Departments of the Artillery School and the Commander of the Officer Candidate School.

Basic plan for the establishment of OCS provided for janitor service in candidate latrines. However, upon opening of the OCS, the Commanding Officer decided that candidates should take care of their own latrines, with responsibility therefore rotated. The wisdom of this decision was readily apparent as evidenced by the cleanliness and overall fine appearance of latrines and washrooms.

The Fourth Army Food Service School opened the mess hall for the Officer Candidate School on 19 February. Personnel operating the mess were student cooks from Fourth Army area and enlisted instructors and officers assigned to the school.

During the period from 26 February through 21 March, the first class showed steady improvement. Barracks were inspected daily by tactical officers, three inspections in ranks were held each day, at drill call, noon meal, and retreat. Instruction for which the OCS Command was responsible became more clearly defined. The first course for the class was at the Department of Motors and no members of the class failed. However,

during this period a few individual members of the class resigned by virtue of being unable to meet the physical standards or by not being able to orient to the daily life. On 21 March, Class No. 2 reported consisting of 54 men from the different armies and divisions.

On 31 March, seven candidates from Class 1 and three from Class 2 had tendered their resignations, some for physical reasons; some had low academic levels, and one for disciplinary reasons.

**10 May 1951: by 1LT James G. Baxter, Adjutant**

At the beginning of this period, Class No. 1 was starting the sixth week and Class No. 2 its second week. The marked difference is noted in everything, but the four weeks interval in the training stands out especially during drill and in ceremonies. On the basis of these facts the practice parade was put into effect and the results were evident in the parade that followed.

Other lessons learned were the definite advantage of the shock action to incoming candidates on their first day of processing, the show of lack of experience among many of the candidates in regard to handling of men under their command, the very positive disadvantage which showed in two of the candidates who did not attend the Leaders Course, and the necessity of quick removal of resignees from the other candidates presence, to eliminate the influence of the letdown which resignees seem to lapse into when their resignations have been submitted.

Class No. 1 - The instruction in Gunnery has been very good but the shock action that resulted from their introduction into the course made some of the candidates skeptical of their abilities in that particular course. A few of the candidates wanted to resign as they felt that they would be unable to pass gunnery. This feeling is passing as more practical work is given to them.

Consultations are still held one night a week for both classes and from the reports of all Tactical Officers they seem to be helping the candidates. From the individual consultations the Tactical officers have been able to determine if their instruction has been good; if the morale of the class is high; and when weaker candidates are considering resignation. Sometimes this period has assisted giving candidates the proper attitude, and thus it has salvaged his potentialities as a future officer.

**10 June 1951: by MAJ Howard E. Mahoney, Adjutant**

With the onset of hot weather, the physical training has become more arduous, and the non-availability of salt tablets has caused very minor stomach ailments among candidates. Two suggestions have been made to lessen the effect on the candidates wellbeing. First, that physical training be held in the morning and, thus, utilize the coolest part of the day; second, that a period of 1/2 hour be allowed between the end of the physical training period and the retreat formation.

Last Saturday, a trial inspection was held on the parade ground, and a full-field layout displayed. Lineup of tents and equipment was poor. Standardization among platoons was not followed as prescribed on the display diagram. The movement into the area and the

formation of the platoons was not as military in appearance as it could have been. Further instruction will be given.

One of the most significant developments that occurred during this period was the Student Rating Forms which were submitted by both classes. The phrases and descriptive terms used were excellent. In both classes, the position of top-rated candidates was equally shared by two candidates. In each class, there was no doubt about the lowest rated men. All showed that careful observation of each other was being maintained. A more detailed look into the candidate's life and actions is to be found in this type of rating.

In the case of most candidates, there is still a need for improvement. Tactical and TAC officers are bearing down on this so that standards will not fall below the prescribed mark set by the school.

During a barracks inspection on 3 May, the hasps were found broken on the footlockers of two members of Class # 3. Since this is a Class I offense, candidates were required to render a full explanation. In both cases, they stated that during physical training, the keys had been lost. Both, upon returning to the barracks to shower and change from fatigues to Class A uniform for Retreat, were in haste to break the private locks as only twenty minutes was available, and the hasp was accidentally broken. On these grounds the Class I offense was removed, but the candidates were admonished.

On 30 May, the 2nd Platoon of Class # 3 was honored by having their barracks inspected by Colonel C. A. Frilis and Staff, of the Danish Army. The visitors appeared particularly impressed with the rough finish type combat boots which had been shined so well that they appear to be patent leather, by American shoe polishes and a liberal application of elbow grease.

### **10 July 1951: by MAJ Howard E. Mahoney, Adjutant**

On Saturday 29 June, Class No. 1 became upperclassmen. After the barracks inspection, the class fell out for a final buck-up formation. For a 15-minute period, a complete harassing took place. At this point, the "A" Battery CO dismissed them. The candidates then placed their distinctive red epaulets on their khaki shirts. For one week prior to this date, the first class was given a thorough working over and pressure was applied to the top ranking candidates. The class received and absorbed this period with a good sense of humor.

On 7 June, a special exercise group was set up for the candidates who were having difficulty with the required physical training program. By the end of the month, nine of these had resigned, leaving only two of the original special exercise class.

Officer Candidate Class No. 5 reported on 13 June, with 185 candidates. However, since the school could handle only 140, the balance of these candidates were held over for Class No. 6. During the period of hold-over, they worked with the Department of Observation.

**10 August 1951: by MAJ Howard E. Mahoney, Adjutant**

Class # 1 was graduated with the following figures:

57 original strength

28 graduated

11 turn-backs to later classes

4 relieved (1 by board action)

14 resigned

49.1 % graduated

50.9 % failed to graduate

Class # 2 is now in Gunnery Block of Instruction. It is believed the class will now be graduated as it stands. "Hell Week" arrived and was crammed into 60 minutes, and on 28 July 1951, members of Class # 2 were welcomed as upper classmen.

**10 September 1951: by MAJ Howard E. Mahoney, Adjutant**

On 12-15 August, Officer Candidate School was visited by Signal Corps Officers preparatory to starting their Officer Candidate School at Fort Monmouth, N.J. All phases of training were made available to them for study.

Class # 2 graduated with the following figures:

53 original strength

36 graduated

8 turn-backs (gains)

5 turn back (losses)

17 resigned

3 relieved

59.01% graduated

40.99 % failed to graduate

Gunnery block of instruction has given classes the lowest grades. Most of the failures result in this period. Strength of Class # 4 dropped from 76 to 62 during the stages of gunnery.

**31 October 1951: by CPT James O. Baxter, Adjutant**

To offset the shortage of instructors, upper classmen are used as assistant instructors for OCS Subjects under the direction of Tactical Officers.

**30 November 1951: by CPT James O. Baxter, Adjutant**

The mess hall at which the candidates eat is not under the jurisdiction of the OCS Commandant. The large increase of candidates during November required faster mess service than the mess unit was able to furnish. By having candidates act as food servers, the speed of mess was greatly increased. A shortage of barracks space has necessitated the erection of 6-man tents to billet the new classes in.

**"OCS Graduate Plan Revealed"**

***Wichita Daily Times (October 16, 1951)***

Students who distinguish themselves at Officers Candidate School will be given more opportunities to receive Regular Army commissions under a new program announced by the Army recently.

(It was) revealed Wednesday that distinguished graduates, determined by qualities of leadership and aptitude for military service, will be given opportunity to apply for Regular Army Commissions. Heretofore OCS graduates have received only reserve commissions.

In addition to outstanding records, officers applying must be between 21 and 27 years of age; however, in some cases waivers, not to exceed three years will be granted for those above 27.

**Robert T. Hayden: 2-51**

***From a letter to the Fort Sill Museum September 21, 1977***

Brigadier General Charles F. Gordon, Jr. (Class 2-51) graduated first in his class probably because:

A. He was the fastest dresser in the class as displayed in numerous “uniform formations” conducted at 2 a.m. by CPT Kinard.

B. He was able to keep from breaking up when LT Golightly fell through the barracks ceiling during a Saturday inspection.

C. Displayed expertise as a cabinet maker by constructing a removable step riser where we stored unauthorized articles.

D. Kept the driest carbine in the class by boiling the metal parts in the latrine water heater tank.

**John Rosenbloom: 5-51:**

Six decades ago and across the great divide, eighty-seven stalwart young men were commissioned officers in the Field Artillery, after having successfully completing a competitive, challenging and rigorous military, physical and mental training program.

These young men faced an uncertain future with the Korean War raging after its start in June 1950.

The graduates of OCS Class 5, Fort Sill, Oklahoma 1951 were molded into soldiers, carrying the high standards of military leadership necessary to fight a successful war. I am proud to have trained with these men and contribute this class book to the memory of those for whom the final taps have sounded and to the others who are living to the advanced age of eight decades.

The essays (both poetic and prose) and accompanying narrative, capture the spirit of dedication and cooperation the candidates provided to each other.

**From the Class Book 5-51: John Rosenbloom**

I think it will do to supply the necessary background for the writing of this theme. It all started on Saturday, August 11, 1951, when Candidate McGlone, John E., was rather astonished to be told by Capt. L.S. Pierce that there was rust on his fork. It seems that Candidate McGlone had spent at least five minutes that previous evening, Friday, cleaning it with a Brillo soap pad. He was sure that it would pass the inspection the following morning.

However, from the time he finished cleaning it to inspection time, rust had worked itself onto the fork. The only feasible excuse Candidate McGlone could offer was that it was quite humid the night before, and maybe that could explain the appearance of rust on the fork.

Well, this was the beginning of both Candidate McGlone's and my own downfall. It seems there is a certain amount of tension present at all inspections, and it doesn't take much to ignite laughter of any individual when something humorous occurs or is said. It happened in this particular instance, when Candidate McGlone offered his feeble excuse. He could hardly contain himself with laughter, and I had a hard job trying to control myself. However, I reached the point where I no longer could hold it in, and I was found giggling also. With this introduction, I will now get into the body of the theme.

Let us get a working definition of the word humidity. Humidity is the amount of water vapor in the air. Water vapor may be defined as the "molecules of water which have evaporated from some body of water and mingled with air. Relative humidity is the percentage of saturation; and we may define saturation as the point at which air is holding the maximum amount of water vapor. Beyond that point water will automatically condense. It is this fact that causes rain.

Now, let us explain how rust forms on an object, in particular a fork. When the temperature of an object is less than the temperature of air, and the humidity is high, water will condense on the object, because the object absorbs heat from air which causes a lowering of the saturation point and therefore causes water to condense which collects on the object, in the form of rust.

The humidity in Oklahoma is normally quite high, and variable from day to day. However, to one who has spent his entire life on the East coast, I would add that it is not as high here as on the East coast. This in itself is quite a relief. With the temperature bordering near the century mark, and the humidity a very high percentage, the efficiency of an individual is well below standard. However, we at Officer Candidate School do not permit our efficiency to be impaired by anything; including temperature and humidity. Nor do we consider humidity as a plausible excuse for rust on any metal object.

### **John E. McGlone: 5-51**

When a new Officer Candidate arrives at Fort Sill, one of the first things stressed is standing straight and tall. Of course, many other things are shouted at the young, innocent candidates so that for the first few weeks, they are thoroughly confused.

In support of this last statement, let us consider an example. A newly arrived class at Officer Candidate School is marching up to the mess hall. The usual confusion is present. Everybody is breaking his back to stand up straight and just about everybody is doing "push-ups" or "squat-jumps" for not standing at attention.

Now our subject is the unfortunate one who is nailed just as the battery starts into the mess hall. The poor soul has just double timed back from motors, already done about one hundred push-ups since he left the battery street, and here he is again scratching in the gravel. With the "Grace of God" behind him, he finally squeezes out the last one. He jumps up, trying not to look tired, runs over and salutes some officer and jumps back into ranks.

The salt in his eyes has already almost blinded him and the only guide he has in finding his unit is looking for a group that is standing up straight. He knows that when he gets



back into ranks that he is going to have to “brace” as he can take it for granted that his colleagues have already braced.

With perspiration in his eyes, this candidate stumbles down a file of men. This file is composed of such stalwart “bracers” as Rosenbloom, Glass, Lanzalotto, Biette, Schnorr, Brunner, Gibson and now he sees an empty slot. Ah, success he thinks this must be his place. He stumbles in and assumes his “brace.”

What? Fall out? Don’t belong in this class. Twenty more. Yes Sir. As our poor friend stumbles into the mess hall and thinks “How could a thirteenth week class stand as straight as a first week class? I thought they let up after four weeks.”

As you see it was not an individual, but a collective magnetism that attracted this poor innocent candidate.

**“Young Man, Go South, Hit Up Army for a Wife”**

***(This is another in a series of articles on army training camps throughout the nation. The series describes the training and recreation activities of the soldiers)***

**John H. Thompson, Chicago Tribune Press Services**

**Fort Sill, Okla., Dec 26, 1951**-- If young man, you have pondered on how to select a wife, enlist in the army and come down here. That’s one of many subjects in which instruction is given in the artillery officer candidate school.

But only one of many subjects. The OCS attempts to convert an enlisted man into a responsible officer in 22 weeks. And not just any kind of officer, but a battery officer, able to function as a second lieutenant in a field artillery battery, where a man must know about logarithms and something about geometry.

It’s no wonder that since the OCS opened Feb. 21, 1951 between 40 and 50 percent of the aspiring candidates have failed. The school, under Col. F. G. Smith, has set its sights high, but, through interviews and coaching, attempts to “save” every young man with possible officer potential.

**40 to 50 Per Cent Fail**

Its 16th candidate class started recently on the 22-week grind, and its sixth class will be graduated soon. The classes originally 45 men, now are up to 140 or 150. The age limits are 18 1/2, a new minimum selected recently over the objections of Col. Smith to 27.

“With few exceptions we find that even a boy of 19 is too immature, too unready to assume responsibility,” said Col. Smith. “That usually comes when he is 22 or 23. Our classes have been averaging 22.”

**Slow Starter Makes Good**

In one recent class, 22 per cent of the candidates had college degrees. The same percentage had two years of college education, 20 per cent had attended college for one year, and 32 per cent were high school graduates.

For the man without some higher education the academic classes sometimes are too tough. But if the faculty believes a candidate could be graduated with another chance, he is allowed to be a “turn back” and start all over again.

In the fifth class of recent graduates a “turn back” was a Harlem Negro who became the honor graduate and was recommended by Col. Smith for a regular army commission. OCS graduates seldom get regular commissions.

Col. Smith operates with 113 officers and enlisted men, probably the smallest “faculty” of any OCS. This has compelled him to make arbitrary reduction in the army’s voluminous paperwork.

### **More than a Stroke of Pen**

But to be graduated a second lieutenant still requires the signature of an officer on 1,244 separate pieces of paper. The candidate must first be discharged as an enlisted man, then commissioned in the army as an officer.

In general, the Fort Sill OCS operates like such other OCS institutions as the infantry school at Fort Benning, Ga., the anti-aircraft artillery OCS at Fort Bliss, Tex., and the “branch immaterial” at Fort Riley, Kan.

A candidate gets the same 15 weeks as is given in the associate battery officer course at the artillery school. To this is added seven weeks, largely devoted to making the transition from enlisted man to officer.

In his last four weeks, the upperclassman is a “red bird,” a privileged student, wearing red shoulder tabs. He need not double time everywhere in the regimental area. He is entitled to a salute and a “sir” from underclassmen and helps in their instruction. And the school arranges week-end dances for him.

### **Marital Advice Thrown In**

“Sure, we advise him in how to select a wife,” said Col. Smith. “We tell him that his wife will have a great effect on his career, whether in the army or civilian life and that he doesn’t have to marry the first girl who flutters her eyelashes at him.”

Col. Smith also writes to the family of every candidate, a time consuming job that pays off. He tells them exactly what the school is trying to do and that the entire faculty is interested, individually, in every student.

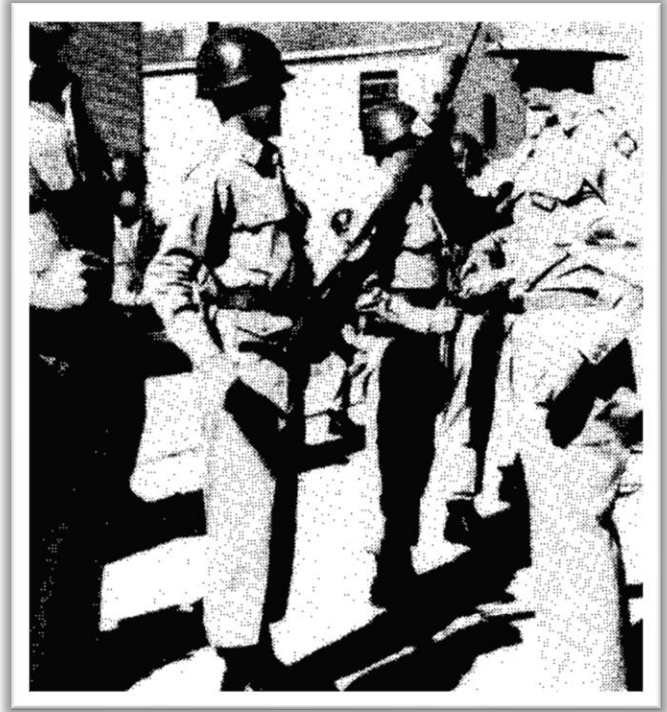
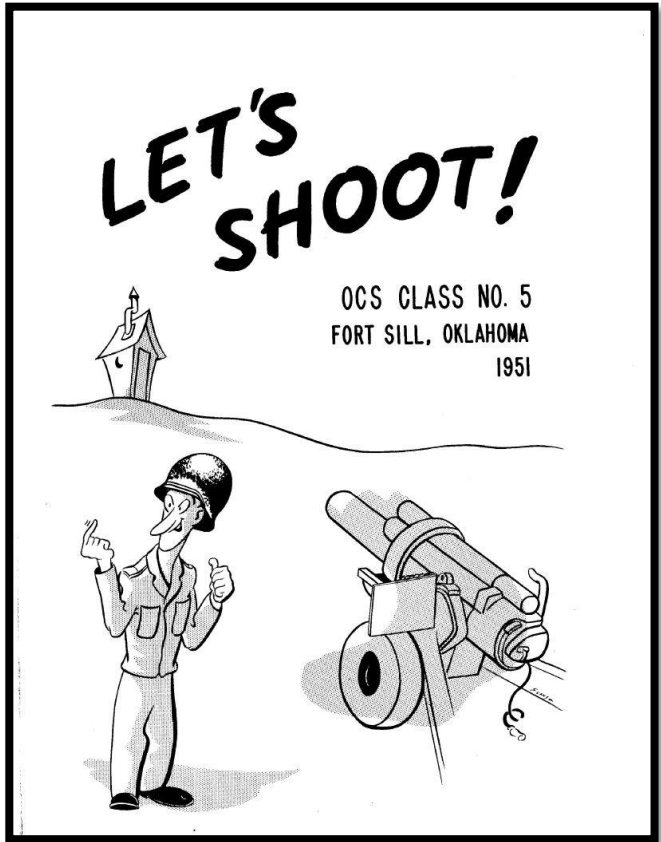
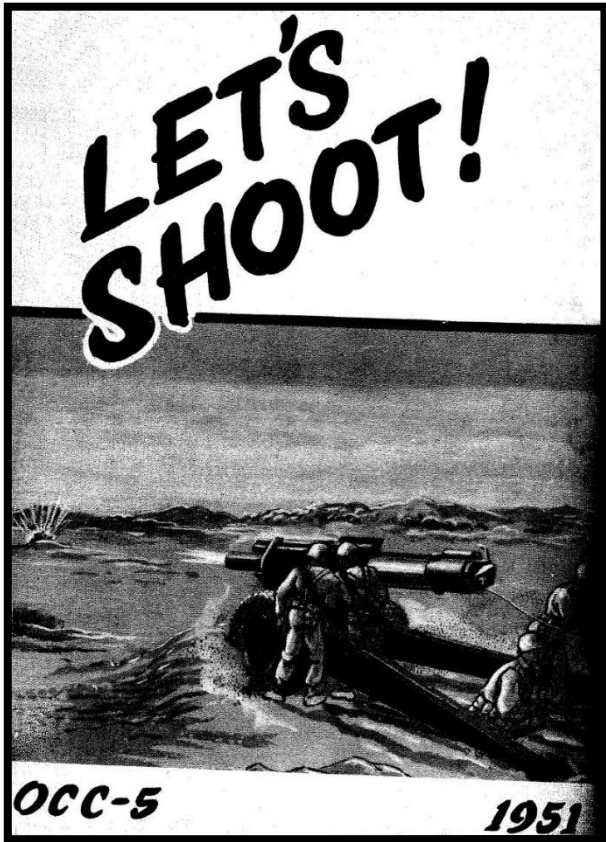
His stack of letters from grateful parents is sufficient testimonial. Not only do the parents respond by writing their sons and exhorting them to study hard, but frequently the parents reveal helpful hints about junior that had not been known to the faculty.



*The Spencer Trophy – the boots belonged to Class 1-51 Honor Graduate Phillip M. Spencer. The story is told that he wore the boots for 44 road marches (later known as Jarks) up MB-4. The well-worn boots were painted gold and presented to the school by Class 2-51*



*Class 1-51*



*Images from the Class 5-51 class memories booklet*



There's nothing funny out here.  
There's nothing funny out here!  
There's nothing funny out here?

HEADQUARTERS  
AAA AND GUIDED MISSILE CENTER  
Fort Bliss, Texas

GENERAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 110

16 October 1951

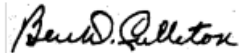
ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICER CANDIDATE STUDENT DETACHMENT  
4054TH ASU AA AND GUIDED MISSILES BRANCH TAS

Pursuant to authority contained in Letter, ATNG-32 352/38 (OCS) (18 Sep 51) Office, Chief of Army Field Forces, 21 September 1951, Subject: Initiation of Army Officers Candidate Program - Antiaircraft and Guided Missiles Branch, The Artillery School, an Officer Candidate Student Detachment, 4054th ASU, AA and Guided Missiles Branch, TAS, is established.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL LEWIS:

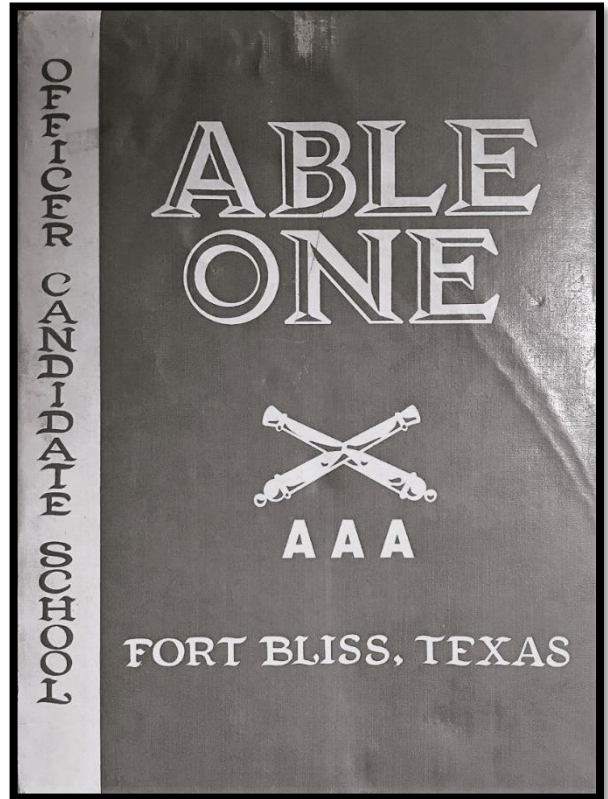
OFFICIAL:

CYRUS Q. SHELTON  
Colonel, GSC  
Chief of Staff



BEN D. CULLETON  
Lt Col AGC  
Adjutant General

DISTRIBUTION: "A" & "E"



**The Officer Candidate School Department, Antiaircraft and Guided Missiles Branch, The Artillery School was activated on 15 October 1951.**

A small, initial cadre was assigned to the department to effect the activation. For a two-month period prior to the activation, however, an officer in the office of Coordinator of Instruction had prepared a staff study and a plan for the operation of the Officer Candidate School which at the time was based on an Army Field Force plan for activation during January 1952. The large backlog of selected applicants for Officer Candidate caused Army Field Forces to move up the date of arrival of the first candidate class.

Class No. 1-52 reported To Fort Bliss in mid-October 1951, and graduated six months later as "Able One", on 2 May 1952. The Fort Bliss program followed a twenty-two week curriculum modeled on the OCS programs of WW II and of those times, with emphasis on physical fitness, military academics, leadership ability and branch specialty skills. Candidates assumed class leadership roles on a rotating basis, and periodically they were appraised by their peers. A School Honor Code was an integral part of the candidates' experience. The early AAA OCS classes at Fort Bliss trained on weapons systems and equipment that were of World War II vintage, but later classes trained on state-of-the art target acquisition and gun pointing radar and surface-to-air guided missiles.

# Chapter Seven

## 1952

**“Officer School Discovers GIs Pull Fast One (OCS Racket Gets Many Soldiers Out of Combat Service)”**  
**Paul Hood, *Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman* (Thursday, January 24, 1952)**

Applications for officer candidate school have been parlayed into a ticket home and insurance against more foreign duty by a good many GIs abroad, Fort Sill OCS officers agreed Wednesday.

Admittedly concerned over what appears to be a growing problem, OCS staff members said more than a third of the artillery OCS applicants who have returned from the Pacific to study for a commission have resigned from school shortly after arrival.

Under present army policy these men are barred from reassignment overseas. Withdrawal from the OCS course means they have virtual assurance of being sent to duty somewhere in the United States to “sweat out” release from service.

Meanwhile, other servicemen overseas who would honestly like an opportunity to earn commissions are being deprived of the chance because the sham-candidates are filling available quotas.

**45th (Division) Percentage High:** A check of OCS records has revealed 53 men have been sent to Fort Sill OCS from the Far East Command, since the artillery officer school opened for business Feb 2, 1951. Of that number, 19 have resigned, usually two weeks after starting the school.

The percentage of officer candidates sent back by the 45th Division who have resigned has been greater than the average. OCS records show 12 artillery officer candidates were returned to this and assigned to class No. 11, which started October 17. Eight of them quit immediately.

That’s why officers here are watching with considerable interest the new class due to start Friday. There are 28 men from the 45th Division assigned to this group, which began arriving here Wednesday. Some already have indicated they have no intention of undertaking the course in earnest.

The whole OCS attrition problem, particularly this high rate of resignations, has alarmed the army enough to cause creation of a special officer candidate school board to go over the situation and work out some solutions. The group is now meeting at Fort Riley, Kan., and before winding up its studies will visit each of the schools in operation.

**Riley Has Same Trend:** Fort Sill’s school seems to have no corner on the resignation trend. A recent report from the school at Fort Riley indicates the record of overseas returnees is equally black there.

Col. F.G. Smith, artillery OCS commandant, points out there are three principal reasons for candidates dropping out of the school voluntarily: physical troubles, lack of motivation and lack of military experience.

“The second reason in general indicates a poor attitude plus a desire to spend the maximum possible time in a ‘pipeline’ status,” Smith observed.

“The latter is an assumption which would be difficult to prove. However, losses from overseas sources, particularly the Far East command, have been heavy, which makes it appear that the OCS system may be used as a means for return to the United States.”

Under present policies, here is the way the pretended officer candidates are working their deal: They make application in the routine manner through their commanding officers for permission to go to OCS. Their qualifications are checked, and if the application is approved, the man is ticketed for school. When a quota is available for the command, the approved applicant is given a ticket home.

**Few Admit Sham:** Sufficient notice has been given overseas units so the men can have a furlough, usually all their accrued leave time, before starting to school. After the furlough, they report to the school.

Many have tried to resign the first day they reach OCS, Col. Smith observed, although the school has adopted a policy of not accepting resignations before the end of the second week.

Reasons given on the formal resignations are varied. A few are honest enough to say they applied for school just for the chance to come back to the States. But most of that quitting mask the real reason with excuses such as lack of education, failure to adjust to school routine, family troubles, and similar reasons.

Approval of resignations is usually routine, because school officials don't figure you can force men through the rough course if the desire to learn is lacking.

“Then we get them out of the area as soon as possible,” says Col. Smith. “We don't think their presence around the school is good for morale.”

From the school, the men are sent to the Fort Sill reception center for reassignment.

Of the men who have not been overseas, about nine out of 10 are marked for service abroad. But the overseas veterans are usually shielded against reassignment to foreign duty for about a year.

In the case of the 45th Division national guardsmen, another factor is considered. They are getting close enough to the end of their enlistment now that army policy bars them from return to the Pacific.

What do the 45th men still on combat duty in Korea think about the OCS dodge?

“They won't like it, but it won't be news to them,” said one former 45th Division sergeant now serving at Fort Sill. “It has been common knowledge in the division that a lot of men are applying for OCS just as a way of getting home.”



If an officer candidate completes the course here and is commissioned, he signs an agreement to remain on active duty at least 18 months. Until recently the term was two years. One solution that has been suggested for the present abuses of the system is to make an officer candidate sign the extended service agreement before he is accepted for school.

The artillery OCS has been starting two classes of about 145 men each, each month. Quotas are allotted to various commands both at home and abroad.

“The worst thing about the men applying for school and then dropping out is that it prevents others who want commissions from filling the quota.” said Col. Smith. “With the present demand for officer this is a serious problem.”

### **“OCS No Longer a Ticket Home”**

***Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman (Tuesday March 11, 1952)***

The army Monday closed the door and sealed the lock to which some men overseas found a key to enter home country again by qualifying for officer candidate schools, then resigning soon after their arrival stateside. After queries on a reported new policy of sending men back overseas, the army Monday declassified its confidential instructions and said the policy is now in effect.

“If it is indicated that an OCS candidate has reneged on his statement that he intended to complete the course, by voluntarily withdrawing before completing the course, he is available to be returned to the area from which he came,” the statement said. The army added such men, who signed a statement of intention when applying for OCS overseas, are exceptions to the rule that a man must have a minimum stateside tour before he can be shipped back overseas.

The last part of the statement really is the clincher. A few men, 16 in one artillery officer candidate school class at Fort Sill from Japan and Korea, for example, found qualifying for OCS an easy way to get back to the states. Then the former regulation requiring a certain term here before they could be shipped back allowed some of them to reach the end of their enlistment.

In any event they were in the U.S. But that one won't work anymore. They can still ask for OCS but must finish the course. Whether or not they receive a commission then depends on the individual grading.

*Note: the above article might be confusing. The bottom line - if a candidate comes from an overseas duty station and then voluntarily drops out of OCS, he now is available to be returned to the overseas duty station without delay.*

**COL (Ret) Richard H. McCormick: AAA OCS 4-52 (Fort Bliss)**

***Remarks at the 2003 and 2004 AAA OCS Reunions***

***2003 Reunion at Fort Benning:***

I would like to thank all those individuals who worked so long and hard to make this reunion a reality. I am personally grateful to each and every one of you.

In the Book of Joel there is a passage of scripture that says, "Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." We are now all old men. Some among us had not only a dream, but a determination to reunite a group of soldiers who had shared an unforgettable and, at least in my case, a life-changing experience. Thank you for making your dream and a reality. Thank you for our being able to relive, if only for a short while, that dream.

My return to Fort Benning represents a homecoming of sorts for me. I attended the Infantry Officer Advanced (Career) Course at Benning in 1954-55, and I was posted here again for a short period as Veterinary Corps officer during the buildup of the 1st Airmobile Division in 1965.

Although I will always remain, in my heart at least, a "Redleg Artilleryman," I was proud to wear the robin's egg blue of an infantry soldier, both as an officer and as an enlisted man. I have been honored by the fact that I was able to serve with a musket, a lanyard, and a scalpel. In whatever capacity any of us served, we were all there to support that Spec 4 walking point on a night patrol. He deserved our best, and that is exactly what we gave him.

In our individual lifetimes we observe many milestones. Some of these milestones include marriages, births, deaths, university graduations, success or failure in business and retirement. On the other hand, we have very few seminal events in a lifetime. My definition of a seminal event is one that changes forever one's life so fundamentally that things are never the same following it. For me, OCS was a seminal event. My view of life after graduation and commissioning was never the same as before. To many of my classmates, OCS did not even represent a milestone. Rather it was just a jog in the road for privileged young men on their way to bigger and better things. But this was not true in my case.

The United States Army took a skinny young kid, without the first day of college, and who had been in the service for only five months and gave him a shot at becoming a leader of men. At the time I entered the army, I was climbing poles for the telephone company for fifty dollars a week. My ambitions, to say the least, were severely constricted.

The confidence I developed in the crucible of OCS allowed me to go on to complete nine years of college, graduate from professional school and to own my own business. I was also privileged to complete a career in the USAR, retiring in 1990 with the rank of full colonel. None of these things would have happened without OCS.

So many memories. Staying up until one in the morning in the only illuminated place in the barracks, the latrine, while a classmate tried to teach me the rudiments of trigonometry for surface gunnery. Watching another classmate go from 195 pounds down to 150, as we all struggled to choke down the powdered eggs and dehydrated potatoes served on a tin tray in the mess hall. Being constantly bone-tired from the lack of sleep

and ready to quit because of harassment from TAC Officers. I kept an unsigned resignation form in my desk for weeks.

Dining on the dollar steaks and cheap Mexican champagne at Geronimo Fong's in Juarez. Geronimo Fong, who was half American Indian and half Chinese, would proudly take us back to the kitchen where we could observe sides of beef, mostly bull-ring kill, that were covered with flies. Flies or no flies, his steaks beat the mess hall chow.

Map reading in the desert and being able to shoot a five-mile azimuth. Watching the desert turn purple in the evening when we went to New Mexico's Organ Mountains to fire the 120 mm guns. The exhilaration of early morning PT runs in the snow, a rare occasion in El Paso, even in February. The thrill of buying our first set of "Pinks and Greens," the most elegant uniform the US Army ever had. Signing each other's graduation yearbooks, ours was titled FLAK, and the promises to keep in touch. We lost track of one another so quickly. With the exception of my Dog Battery classmates, I have never met most of you here today. Nevertheless, we share a common experience that is well worth celebrating. I ended up soldiering for forty years, both active and reserve. I served as an artillery officer and as an infantry officer, as well as a member of the Veterinary Corps. During that time period, I never saw the equal of my fellow officer candidates in terms of motivation and performance of duty. You have every reason to be proud of yourself.

#### ***2004 Reunion at Fort Bliss:***

We came from all over the country by train and automobile. Some even came by air, although airline travel in 1952 was still in a developing stage. I remember the train ride to El Paso and Fort Bliss. With the clickety-clack of the wheels lulling me to sleep in an upper berth, the smell of freshly brewed coffee in the dining car with its starched white tablecloths and watching the flat landscape of Texas go by while eating breakfast.

Ours was an eclectic group drawn from every social and economic stratum. There were Ivy Leaguers and high school graduates. Little attention was paid to social status. We judged each other on the basis of character and ability and not on caste or privilege. This was the group that reported for duty at the barracks now designated as Dog Battery. Some in our group were old soldiers with six or more years of active duty. Others, like me, had been the Army for only a few months. I don't think any of us had any idea of what lay in store for us.

On either the third or fourth night after our arrival, our platoon leader was awakened at midnight by our TAC Officer and told that the uniform of day was underwear, shower clogs and our "horse blanket" overcoats. We were marched into the showers and held there until our overcoats absorbed as much cold water as they could hold. After that we fell in outside the barracks in the cold January night. Welcome to OCS, guys!

One of the more diabolical tricks the TAC Officers had was to step on a candidate's combination lock on his footlocker. If the poor unfortunate had not insured that the lock was securely fastened, the TAC Officer would scatter his belongings all over the tiny space that served as his quarters. He would then put the lock on the overhead sprinkler system pipe with the combination facing upwards. To retrieve the lock required sitting on another candidate's shoulders holding a mirror in order to see the lock's combination. One soon found out who one's real friends were after one of these episodes.

Sleep deprivation quickly became our greatest challenge. Sleep was a precious commodity, and we could not get enough of it. Falling asleep in class was almost unavoidable considering how sleep deprived we all were. Our instructors were kind enough to allow us to stand at the rear of the classroom if we were unable to stay awake at our seats. It didn't help much. Most of the standees propped against the wall were sound asleep. One candidate had mastered the art of sleeping while standing up better than anyone I have ever seen. I remember one day our candidate platoon leader fell asleep at his desk. According to protocol, the platoon leader would call the class to attention and report to the instructor. At the end of the class, this routine was repeated, and we would march off to our next place of instruction. About halfway through the lecture, I looked over at our platoon leader seated directly to my left. He was sound asleep, and his snoring was interfering with the presentation. I nudged him rather sharply and he leaped to his feet, calling the class to attention. I had to tell him to sit down; we still had a half-hour to go.

The location of our OCS compound was once, if my memory serves me, an army hospital. After World War II, the German rocket scientists the United States brought back from Peenemunde were quartered there briefly before being sent on to White Sands, New Mexico, and Redstone Arsenal in Alabama. The concertina wire on top of the perimeter fencing was still in place, and it lent a prison-like ambience to our surroundings.

At the time, the army had a huge stock of powdered eggs and dehydrated potatoes and was under some pressure to get rid of it. The powers that be decided to serve the bulk of these two delicacies to the officer candidates on the assumption the no candidate would dare file a complaint with the Inspector General. Although there was a veneer of fresh eggs placed on top, the gelatinous mass beneath shimmered like some green-tinged foul concoction and the potatoes had the consistency and presumed taste of wallpaper paste.

I took supper every evening at the little PX annex in our area. My meal consisted of a couple of dry sandwiches and one of those non-carbonated imitation orange drinks from a counter dispenser. Weight loss, as one can imagine, was endemic. One candidate, who was not fat at 185 pounds, dropped to 150 pounds. His chest simply disappeared, and his collar bones looked like they were almost touching each other.

One memory permanently etched into my mind was standing on one of the little screened-in porches of our hospital barracks and listening to the strains of Tattoo every evening just before Lights Out. This most beautiful of all bugle calls echoed through the clear desert air and reminded me that I had made it through yet another day.

In spite of all this, OCS was one of the most exciting and meaningful periods of my life. I learned a lot about "Triple A," but even more about myself. I ended up with a long career in the Army, and I met some special people along the way. None of them was ever as special as my OCS classmates. The bonds that were forged with my classmates over fifty years ago are still strong. I am grateful to God that He has allowed me to live long enough fellowship with you again. Thank you and God bless you.

**Eugene R. Barno: 8-52**

I was drafted into the Army in January 1951. My four months Basic Training was at Fort Dix, New Jersey, 200 miles away. I came home many weekends to see my sweetheart, Monnie. After Basic, I went to Leadership School. I volunteered to go to OCS (Officers Candidate School). In September 1951, I arrived at Fort Sill, Oklahoma for six months of training as an artillery officer. I failed the first of twelve courses (motors) and was asked to resign. I told the Captain that he would have to fire me. Through some miracle, I managed not to fail any more courses. I graduated near the bottom of a class of 96. We started with 150 candidates.

**Harlan N. Barton: 8-52**

The advance word was to expect a lot of hazing in OCS, but I had been in a college fraternity and was already used to that sort of thing. Nothing however, had prepared me for what would be encountered immediately on arrival at Fort Sill. Sergeant Brast met our group of new candidates arriving by train on a hot September Sunday afternoon and had us fall-in on the station platform. Here we were ordered to rip the newly acquired sergeant's stripes off our cotton khaki uniforms as we were not really sergeants at all, but instead, lowly *candidates*. His critical eye then discerned the blue infantry braid on the caps of those of us fresh from infantry basic training and leadership school. We were summarily ordered to rip off the offending braid as we were now *Field Artillerymen*. We were soon to learn this is a proud group of professionals, more competent and precise, and of lofty purpose than those who engage in the ugly art of infantry warfare.

During the early weeks, we were particularly vulnerable to attacks by predatory upper class *Redbirds* while waiting in line to gain admission to the safety of the mess hall. From the abrupt beginning, hazing continued almost unabated until we in turn, became upperclassmen and could inflict punishment on the newcomers. A glimmer of relief in TAC Officer LT Mullen's stated purpose of "being here to help us out" failed to materialize. Only after the departure of numerous classmates, did his interpretation of *help out* emerge. Indeed, the hazing followed me beyond graduation. My first official act as a commissioned officer was to sign a *Report of Survey* to pay for bedding lost in hazing activities. Of those who failed to complete the course, I can't remember any. Perhaps I was so focused on surviving that I had no thought for anything else.

TAC officers created a baffling aura of perceptiveness by calling an offender out of formation at a distance of 100 yards or more for an offense such as an unbuttoned pocket of a loose thread on the uniform. Actually, this had been observed earlier at close range and saved for the opportune time. Eventually most of us learned the only acceptable responses were, "Yes Sir," "No Sir," and "No excuse Sir." The most justifiable and rational of explanations would only result in "Give me two-five" or "Give me five-zero push-ups." "Never apologize, it's a sign of weakness" was a favorite of Captain Woods. I don't know if John Wayne learned it from him or if they both got it from another source, but Captain Woods was saying it first. He could always spot you in formation if your eyeballs weren't front and center. I had Captain Woods' undivided attention when it took me four attempts to scale an inclined wall about six or seven feet high in the running of an obstacle course. He just stood there with arms folded, waiting to see if I would be able to do it, go around or quit.

Marching became almost enjoyable as we became more proficient at the end of the course, doing battalion massed formations with a band on Saturday mornings. The appointment of candidates of questioned command ability to battery commander and platoon leader positions for a week of intense scrutiny led to some catastrophes such as marching the formation off the road, across a ditch, and into a barracks. Duck walking in formation seemed particularly repressive when we weren't allowed to quack. Soiling of the back of one's trousers with shoe polish while duck walking could be avoided but required a more strenuous and unnatural technique.

Summer's oppressive heat during hell week eventually faded, giving way to cold blustery winter days, particularly noticeable on the OP. The most memorable weather was the winter storm that left a thick coating of ice. Battery formations became fluid and distorted as members would drift slowly out of alignment down the slight incline of the battery street while trying to stand at attention in formation.

Academics were a welcome safe haven from the harassment of the TAC officers as we learned to move, shoot, and communicate. A field exercise with communications equipment held in the park-like setting of the old post on a beautiful fall day was memorable for a sense of well-being and security from harassment. Motors classes were generally held indoors with the class seated in big bleachers and the equipment on spotless floors. The most interesting were hands-on trouble shooting problems with engines. The high point of a tactics class was a sleepy Granville Tate, aided with a whispered prompt, responding "Drop five zero, fire for effect." to a tactics question.

Gunnery was fascinating. We marched to classes held in a line of low stone buildings, carrying our canvass bags of fire direction plotting equipment: the range deflection fan, GFT's, GST's, coordinate square, target grid sheets, plotting pins and needles, FM 6-40, grease pencil, tabular firing tables. It was applied mathematics at its best. Some of the special gunnery problems we studied were precision fire, destruction missions, meteorological (met) messages, velocity error (VE), high burst registration, High angle fire, special corrections- converged or open sheaf, time on target.

Gunnery classes in the field were set up with the dark green wooden folding table arranged in rows on a hilltop OP or in the wooden sheds with a wide hinged window in front. It would be interesting to see how it's done now with GPS and computers. Are graphical techniques even used for back-up? We did the complex trigonometric calculations for survey with 6 place logarithms and a by-the-numbers form. Captain Nichols and Lieutenant Pachulli, USMC were great instructors. *Read Right Up* and *LARS*, *Left add*, *Right subtract* were committed to memory as was the calibration on one's fingers to measure mils.

Observed fire was great sport. You did have to get a range bracket on the second volley, three unsatisfactory shoots and you were out. Classes were on a hilltop OP with the class seated on folding canvass chairs arranged in rows. The instructor, BC scope, and a telephone operator from the firing battery would be off to the side. Opportunities to relax on the OP were rare. When assigned the mission, you had to be on your feet moving to the lone empty chair up front giving your initial dada, "Fox Oboe Baker, Fire Mission...." With the mission in progress, it was prudent to follow closely. The candidate up front conducting the mission could mess up badly enough to be sat down and it could become

your mission. VT was the fuse of choice if the target called for air bursts. You probably wouldn't get it and would have to adjust fuze time for height of burst, but it didn't hurt to ask. The Roving OP without binoculars and the Air OP were interesting variations.

Weekends weren't really memorable. One of the early ones I hiked up MB4 with classmates who similarly had demerits to work off. Lawton's bars didn't hold much attraction. Out of town excursions included visiting Norman to see the Oklahoma football machine of the 1950's humiliates Colorado and to Chickasha to unsuccessfully seek out girls at Oklahoma Women's College. One Sunday I took a roll of comic photos of Ken Murphy acting as a new FO for the class book. Ken was the first of four class members to be KIA in Korea. This is a photo of him acting as a combination forward observer/ one man fire direction team.



*Candidate Kenneth J. Murphy as Forward Observer/One Man FDC Team*

**Leonard A. De Bord: 8-52**

In August (1951), I was ordered to Fort Sill, Oklahoma to commence training as part of OCS Class 7-52. What a screw up. Class 7 had already started and 28 of us new arrivals had the delightful tasks for the next 5-6 weeks, of preparing the barracks and grounds for the September class, Class 8, of which we would become members. We graduated 96 of a starting class of about 150 on 26 February 1952.

After four and one-half decades, any attempt to find a definitive personal meaning of OCS is disrupted by many emotional excursions. There are fading, sometimes hazy, and yet indelible recollections of those OCS days long past. Memories of periods, some short lived, others lingering, which are focused on past feelings: feelings of enthusiasm, depression, panic, exhaustion, anger, and determination: of times of exasperation, elation, reflection, irritation, dedication, and tenacious resolve to survive both mental and physical adversity: of a seemingly interminable period of “Standing Tall” against a dedicated cadre and sometimes overzealous “Redbirds.” It was also a time of incredible spirit: A unity of purpose and resolve within the entire class: a supportive camaraderie between candidates: a spirit of cooperation among and between sections and platoons. All-in-all, a young man’s lifetime of singular and stirring experiences compressed within a short (but long) six plus months.

Irrespective of the above, deeper, and more tangible meanings of FAOCS do surface. First of all, it meant the opportunity to become a Field Artilleryman... my previous branch being Infantry. And, as perceived in 1951/1952, the school was one of the most significant and challenging periods of my young life. OCS meant a great opportunity to learn and to both prove and improve myself. It was an opportunity to increase my options and to expand my horizons. A chance to become a member of an exclusive and professional group, and the opening of a doorway through which I could step (had I so desired) into a lifetime career of military service dedicated to Duty, Honor, Country (a politically correct concept in those days!). Having decided to follow that career path, I have always felt honored to have been selected to carry the cachet of Graduate, Field Artillery Officer Candidate School, Fort Sill. OCS meant, and still provides, a continuing source of pride in being able to say, “I am a Redleg” and that I belong to a fraternity that matched or surpassed the talents and skills inferred by members of other groups and military institutions.

Above all, FAOCS meant entry into and membership in that honorable and noble order of U.S. Army combatants affectionately known as the “King of Battle.”

### **Don Melton: 8-52**

I had been in the army for three years before OCS. After three weeks of brutality, I noticed that the guidon carrier was not picked on like the other candidates- I took the guidon and kept it for the remainder of OCS. I got away with it!!

Our TAC officers did not check the attic in building 2828. We hid all sorts of stuff. Modern medicine does not condone duck walking. It’s a wonder we can still walk. Our TAC NCO made us low crawl over a gravel strip in khakis after Saturday inspection. It ruined our uniforms and brass buckles. He disappeared that night on orders.

When I arrived at OCS, I had my issued two buckle combat boots which were rough out texture. They would not shine. Corcoran’s replaced them quickly.

As an old soldier I didn’t ever get gigs enough for the MB4 trip on Sunday. I did land a helicopter up there later.

The number fifty still means pushups!!



## **“Officer Candidate School at Fort Bliss”**

### **CPT Joseph E. Melanson, Jr. OCS *Antiaircraft Artillery Journal* (March-April 1952)**

The present Antiaircraft Artillery Officer Candidate School was inaugurated 14 October, 1951, when Colonel Robert H. Krueger was informed that he was to be the director of this new department of the Antiaircraft and Guided Missiles Branch, The Artillery School. At the same time Colonel Krueger was advised that the annual quota of the school would be 2,500 candidates and that three classes would be in operation by Christmas.

A cadre of operating personnel was obtained at once by levy upon the staff and faculty of the school. This gave enough key people to initiate plans for the OCS and its expansion. Officer teams were sent out to study the operation of other officer candidate schools and soon returned with volumes of instructional material and forms, and also with some good ideas.

Soon the program of training as well as the administrative features were well under way toward solution. The location for the new school was found in the old station hospital area at the northeast extremity of the main post facing Biggs Field. This area had been used by the German scientists after the war and more recently by the First Guided Missiles Group. Soon the carpenters, painters, plumbers, and electricians were in the area busy rehabilitating it in a suitable fashion.

The mission of the school is to:

- Develop in the candidate physical proficiency and the qualities of character, leadership, loyalty, and discipline required of an officer.
- Provide the candidate with the fundamental knowledge required of a junior officer in antiaircraft artillery.
- Determine whether the candidate meets the requirements of military leadership and possesses officer potential.

To meet this standard the program of instruction covers a period of 22 weeks, 44 hours per week. The departments of Tactics, Gunnery, Electronics, and General Subjects of the Antiaircraft and Guided Missiles School give to the OCS students instruction equivalent to the associate officer's basic course.

The administration, supervision, and additional instruction in the general courses such as army administration, military sanitation and first aid, and mathematics are responsibilities of the Department of OCS.

To meet the mission, six instruction teams were organized, each consisting of a major, senior team instructor; a captain, executive officer; and six lieutenants, team instructors. The teams, lettered A through F, have the responsibility of instructing the candidates assigned them.

Class Number 1, assigned to instruction team A, arrived at Fort Bliss 15 November 1951 and was scheduled to begin classroom work 19 November. The basic organization of the class is a battery, and the first three days were used in organizing it, in quartering and indoctrinating the candidates in the rigorous standards demanded.

One of the most important hours during the initial processing is a conference devoted to the code of honor under which the candidates live during their 22 weeks of training. An honor system similar to that employed at the Military Academy is in effect. The functioning of the code of honor is left entirely to the candidates and the overall coordinating agency is the candidate honor committee comprised of three members from the senior class and one member from each of the junior classes. One of the three members from the senior class is designated president of the honor committee and all members are elected by their fellow candidates. The duties of the honor committee are to investigate all alleged violations of the honor code, interpret the code for the candidates, and set needed precedent.

The candidate's day begins with reveille at 0530. From reveille he goes to breakfast; then some housekeeping and a period of exercise before his first class at 0800. With an hour for lunch, he attends classes until 1700, five days a week. Each Saturday a session is devoted to indoctrination in supply economy, and four hours of prescribed academic work. During the afternoon he participates in a parade and undergoes an inspection in ranks.

The candidate has few off-duty privileges during his first four weeks. He is not allowed to leave the immediate area nor has he much free time to escort visitors. He has study hall periods from 1800 to 2000 daily. After the completion of four weeks, privileges are granted at the discretion of the senior team instructor and may be as elaborate as a weekend pass.

During his stay at the school, the candidate is placed in many positions of responsibility. The functioning of the candidate battery is entrusted to the candidates. All of the positions of command in the structure of the battery are rotated weekly among the candidates so that each candidate has ample opportunity to demonstrate his ability in the art of leading men.

To graduate, a candidate must meet the required standards in his academic work, leadership, and physical proficiency. If he is found deficient in any one of the three, the candidate becomes acquainted with the Officer Candidate Board. While this is not always a pleasant acquaintance, the Board is often able to salvage the situation and help the candidate get a more successful course.

During his 19th week, he becomes a senior candidate. At this time he is granted extra privileges and emphasis is placed on preparing him for the duty which will confront him upon his graduation. He is given a distinguishing insignia which requires a salute from members of the junior classes. He assists in the inspections of the junior classes and much of the responsibility for maintaining the decorum of the candidates rests in his hands.

After 22 rigorous weeks, he is commissioned a second lieutenant of Artillery in the ORC. He is then assigned to active duty immediately with an AAA unit.

## **“The Chow Formation or (I’d Rather Go Hungry)”**

### ***From the Class 9-52 Redbook***

Surely one of the most unforgettable things at OCS is the chow formation. Three times a day before a morsel of food touched our lips, we first had to do one-hundred repetitions of some sort of exercise, undergo various insults and sometimes, if particularly unlucky, run about insisting we were Napoleon or reporting to the corner of the Mess Hall. Most of this punishment was meted out by upperclassmen, who are suspected of often going hungry, in order not to miss a single Battery, standing helplessly at attention, outside of the Mess Hall.

Of course the newest class always provided the greatest amount of pleasure for upperclassmen and Tactical Officers alike. These unfortunates usually were given only ten minutes or so in which to sew on their patches. The patches, being sewed on loosely made for easy tearing off by the eager fingers of the torturers. These helpless neophytes were also usually not in as good condition as the older men and would collapse under much fewer push-ups. The uniforms which they had heretofore considered pretty “sharp” were disreputable and gross. The shoes and brass they had just laboriously polished to what they considered a high luster looked as though it hadn’t been touched since the Year One to the critical Red Birds and Tactical Officers who swarmed around their ranks.

At last came the report which all candidates eagerly awaited. “Battery Commander, Sir the chow line is clear.” Those candidates lucky enough to be in ranks at this time marched in, gleefully. Of course the candidate squad leaders, by virtue of their position had to do some corrective exercise for pivoting incorrectly. The push-ups or squat-jumps done for this infraction are performed with resignation.

After the majority of the Battery had safely run the gauntlet, there still existed those poor souls still outside completing their exercises or other punishment. The hundreds of Red Birds and Tactical Officers immediately converged around these woe-be-gotten creatures. All good things must come to an end, however and finally even the last of these candidates had satisfied his corrector and entered the blessed sanctuary of the Mess Hall.

To the uninitiated it would seem that this would certainly be the end of the harassing until the next meal. In truth, though, the candidate running back to his barracks seldom made it without more corrections from the upperclassmen who posted themselves at every point between the Mess Hall and OCS barracks likely to be traveled by candidates. During this phase, the candidate was told he was either double-timing too fast or too slow, was not in step with the candidate next to him or perhaps performing the unpardonable sin of carrying his gloves in his hand. Safely inside the barracks we collapsed. The torture had been arrested until the next mess.

### **William J. O’Donnell: 10-52**

OCS taught me the principle to never ask anyone to do anything that I could not do or would not do myself. This principle served me well and in particular during my Navy career. OCS also taught me to remain assured and confident in the face of adversity, no matter how dark and hopeless a situation may seem. OCS was the foundation of my leadership abilities and awakened a confidence in myself. The friendships made at OCS I shall cherish forever.

**Gene Richards: 11-52**

***“All the King’s Men (a Story of an Army OCS Class of the Korean War)”***

***The Field Artillery Officer Candidate School Class #11 of 1952 (September 2014)***

October 17, 1951 was the official date of the start of the 23-week training course for the FA OCS Class #11. This was the 11th class to begin its training since the school had been reopened on February 21, 1951 (the Fort Sill OCS had been closed for 5 years, after the end of WW-II) - thus the designation of our class number.

We were also designated **“K Battery,”** and our class carried the “K” banner whenever marching in formation (from class to class, barracks to mess hall, parades, etc.). Apparently, the first class to crank back up after reopening of the school was designated **Able Battery**, Class #2 as **Baker Battery**, etc. The alpha-character designation progressed from Able thru Mike (skipping the letter “J,” which is never used neither in Infantry companies nor artillery batteries); Thus, the designation of “King” battery for our class. Class #12 would follow ours 2-weeks later and designated “Love” Battery. Class #13 began only one week behind #12 and was designated “Mike” Battery. Then for the following class, #14 was designated “Able” Battery, etc. thru the end of the 1952 calendar year - with the last class graduating in 1952 being #30. However, this alpha character designation was interrupted for only one of the 30 classes of 1952, Class #21, which was designated **Roger Battery** - the only “Roger” Battery in the history of FA OCS! There is a strange story about the reason why this class was given that designation. I will save that until near the end of this story about my own **K-Battery Class #11-52.**

This class numbering system was used consecutively through the first 5 years (after the reopening of the school in 1951). But at the end of the 1955 calendar year, the decision was made to start over with a new Class #1 in January of 1956. By that time, the class numbers had reached #71-55. Thereafter, the class numbers used each consecutive year always began with a new #1 at the beginning of 1956, on up thru 1973 when the last class was produced (#4-73). The FA OCS closed its doors in 1973, at the end of the Vietnam War. By the time of the final closing, the school had produced a total of 48,500 2nd Lieutenants.

Fort Riley, Kansas and the WAC OCS at Fort Lee, Virginia were the only OCS schools operating when the Korean War broke out in 1950. At this time, the Army was forced to reopen most of its branch OCS programs. The Fort Sill Field Artillery OCS would be reopened after being closed for nearly 5 years. It had graduated over 26,000 during the WWII period. The FA OCS was reopened February 21, 1951.

I had just been drafted into Uncle Sam’s Army the previous month - January 12, 1951, a Day that would live in Infamy (at least in my mind)! I had received my Draft notice the previous month, just before Christmas of 1950. I had been working in west Texas in Colorado City, Texas on a Seismograph crew (oil- field exploration) and was expecting to be drafted at any time. In those days, the way the Draft system was working, they were drafting young men soon after they turned age 21 (and my 21st birthday was September 13, 1950). I called Joyce Mathiews, my fiancée in Eastland, Texas as soon as I got my Draft notice. I told her I was quitting Western Geophysical Company and coming home that weekend, and that **we were getting married!** I would have to report to my local Draft Board to be inducted into the Army on January 12, 1951.

Joyce and I were married just 4 days before I was to leave for the Army: January 8, 1951 we were married in her parents' home in Eastland. Short Honeymoon it was, as the two of us drove west to Sweetwater (about 100 miles) on the 11th, spent the night there in a motel and I reported in to my Draft Board early the next morning. Joyce had to drive herself back to Eastland in that old 1946 Ford Convertible.

Then later that day a few of us draftees who had reported to the Sweetwater Draft Board were bussed to Abilene (about 40 miles east) to the larger regional Draft Board center for many counties of north central Texas. A large number of us new draftees were quickly processed, given physicals and a battery of aptitude tests (which we learned much later, included the Army's OCT test that determines scholastic eligibility for application to OCS). Late that day a larger number of us were put on busses which traveled most of the night to Camp Chaffee, Arkansas (adjacent to the city of Fort Smith. This is where we were to take our infantry basic training, and where my army buddy, Dwight Thomas (later to become known to us as "the Waco Kid") and I first met. Dwight and I would stay together through infantry basic training at Chafee, advanced basic (artillery) at Fort Sill, Leadership School back at Chaffee, then all the 23-week course of OCS in Class #11 at Fort Sill, until we graduated from OCS on April 8, 1952 and were commissioned brand new 2nd Lieutenants in Uncle Sam's army. From that day, it would be 38 years before some of us would be back in contact with each other-1990, right there in Lawton, Oklahoma at our first OCS reunion to attend.

### **"Sound Off, Candidate!"**

#### ***From the Class 12-52 Redbook***

"Sound off, Candidate!" They were about the first words we heard at O.C.S. "Sound off, Candidate!" - shouted in our ears by people we couldn't see because our eyes were straight to the front, focused on the shaven neck of the man (as you were! - "Candidate") in the rank ahead. We sounded off, but never loud enough; so, we sounded off again - and again and again. Then suddenly there would be a group of us clustered around the telephone pole between the barracks, all shouting together- yet never with enough volume to satisfy the threatening figures with red patches on their shoulders.

For the first few days we were confused, discouraged, exhilarated, exhausted, and rushed. After a while, the confusion and discouragement passed, but not the exhilaration and rushing. The first retreat formation was something like a comic nightmare. We believed ourselves prepared - shoes shined and brass polished as never before, uniforms skin tight and sharply creased, beards shaved beneath the skin. We fell in and took up what we prided ourselves was a pretty impressive position of attention. For a few moments there was silence. "We've got it made," we thought. "This is going to be a snap." Then it began - the vultures with red epaulettes had descended.

Five or six of these "Redbirds" paced around each of the new candidates. Commands snapped out - "Pull back on those shoulders! —Pull! Pull!" - "Reach for the ground! Suck up that gut!" A hand appeared opposite our chins, and we were told, "Arch that chest! Arch it till it touches my hand!" Next a voice behind roared, "Pull back those shoulders! I want to see five wrinkles back here." At the same time, we were drawing in our chins, straightening wrists, and getting heels on line. When the "Redbirds" left us, we felt like wax figures that had been heated and then allowed to harden in distorted positions.

Those first few days there also were “corrective inspections.” We worked for hours - scrubbing floors, polishing windows, spit-shining boots, using everything from Brillo to Blitz-cloth on canteen and mess gear in a frantic attempt to make them glitter. But we were never quite good enough, never did quite measure up to the standards of O.C.S. - at first. A shoe was out of line, brass was cloudy, a sheet was wrinkled, dust had settled on footlocker or bedrail. Sooner or later, we managed to beat every rap except the dust. A slight Oklahoma “breeze” would blow - dust would sift through the floor, the walls, the roof, apparently even through the windows - settle on a table, shelf, or chair - and we would be gigged.

Inspections - even though the average of weekly demerits decreased from thirty to a mere eight - inspections continued to be a daily and weekly obstacle. We’d rush in at noon - and the barracks would look as if a local tornado had passed through. Beds were turned over; chairs were up on tables; field manuals scattered; boots and field equipment strewn across the center aisle. Saturday inspections were in the same spirit - always we were impressed with the fact that the standards of the Officer Candidate School were perfection - and imperfection would not be tolerated.

In the race from week to week and from subject to subject, a pattern emerged. We rushed every dawn to prepare for daily inspections. Every morning we had dismounted drill, and three afternoons a week there was physical training. We paraded each Friday evening - though we never won. Friday nights found us “G.I.ing” and getting our gear ready for Saturday mornings. And then Sunday afternoon - the scenic tour which an unfortunate few of us took each week to the top of MB-4 - the famous “Corrective March.” All this time we were harassed - “Candidate, you don’t move your hands at parade rest! Give me five-zero pushups!” and similar comments became all too familiar. But the harassing had a purpose - to develop our voices, to raise the standard of perfection, and, above all, to make obedience to an order instinctive, no matter how unpleasant that order might be.

### **Paul I. Bonham: Class 12-52**

I want to dedicate this short recollection to those members of Class 12 who have passed on. What a great group of friends.

The thought of going to Officers Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma was something that boggled the mind for a farm boy from Indiana with a bachelor’s degree in agriculture from Purdue. My twin brother, Richard, and I had just finished 16 weeks of basic training and Leadership School with the 10th Infantry at Camp Breckinridge, KY, and luckily we were both accepted for OCS. We choose the Field Artillery, as we didn’t want any more of the Infantry. When we arrived at Fort Sill we were assigned to our barracks and then to the cubicle that was to be our home for the next 22 weeks. The memory of all those other guys from all over the United States experiencing the same thing really created a bond that is lifelong. My cubicle mate, Harry Conlon, Jr., and I got to know each other real well and we stayed together in the same cubicle for the entire 22 weeks and neither one of us had to march up MB-4. We must have been cleaning and polishing the whole time.

Being harassed by the “Red Birds” is a memory of that time. Not knowing what they would come up with next kept us on our toes. All part of good training, I guess. Duck walking to class, going out on the range to adjust fire, cleaning and polishing the barracks floors and windows, keeping everything (clothes and books) straight and clean, and finding time

to study were all some of the memories that are recalled. I think that one thing that kept us all from getting engrossed in ourselves, was the fact that if you 'screwed up,' you would be gone (probably to Korea as a private) and someone else would be sleeping in your bed.

There was another pair of twins in Class 12, Albert, and Clarke Adickes. I think seeing twins confused the cadre and I remember an article was written in the Oklahoma City newspaper about there being two sets of twins in the same OCS class. I think we were the only two sets of twins to graduate from OCS at Fort Sill. As a side note, Richard and I, along with my son, Bill, returned to Fort Sill for the OCS reunion in 2008.

One of the best memories was getting through the 22 weeks and being commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Army along with my twin brother, Richard. Our parents drove to Oklahoma from Indiana to be there when we were commissioned on April 22, 1952. That was real special since back in 1952 there were no interstate highways, and it came just at planting time on the farm.

Richard and I both served in Korea in the 9th FA Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. We both came home together and were both awarded the Bronze Star. There are some experiences in one's life that leave a lasting impression and OCS did just that.

### ***From the Class 13-52 Redbook***

It was cold and snowing the night of 5 November 1951. Members of Mike Battery were reporting from all over the country to Headquarters, Artillery OCS.

But the weather wasn't the only thing cold around here that night. Barracks were cold. We were cold... we got a cold reception from start to finish. And maybe that's why things started popping a little before schedule. We wanted to get warm...

Hawked nosed Sergeants, scowling officers, and blood-thirsty upperclassmen didn't like our looks. We could hear them whispering, in loud yells that could be heard at McNair Hall, their concern over our appearance. Questions like "How long do you expect to be around here, Candidate?" Answers like "Two-two weeks, Sir!" And replies like "You better do a lot of changing or you won't be here TWO weeks, Candidate . . . now POP that chest up, give me three-zero, and take your post!" We were confused.

We were told that we'd double time (military expression for running) from our barracks to all points at all times. We did, for eighteen weeks. We were told we'd get an OCS Haircut . . . "Just tell the PX Barber to give you the works." They did. (One frustrated candidate, rumor had it, woke up one morning to find he had a beard longer than the hair on his head . . . he frantically shaved the whole works. We hear he's recuperating at his home state mental hospital).

We did push-ups, squat jumps, got yelled at, and stayed restricted on weekends. And after about six weeks, to the amazement of all concerned, we found that we were shaping up. We earned a week-end pass; almost won a drill streamer . . . things were going well. And then it happened.

Someone got the idea that Sunday evening study hall periods could be used to attend a movie. This we now attribute to a mis-scrutinization of "Memorandum No. 44, This

Headquarters.” Word got around fast and by 1800 hours 16 December 1951 over half the class was sitting in Theatre No. 4. At approximately the same time there was a roll-call formation being conducted by the Officer of the Day on the graveled boulevard in front of Mike’s barracks. By 0800 hours the following morning, “requests” were pouring in from the Orderly Room for candidates to “Report to the Battery Commander immediately.”

Turmoil reigned. It looked like there would be very few of us following that guidon around after that. But, in some miraculous manner, the tactical officers were finally convinced that the “walk-out” was a result of mass hysteria rather than willful intentions to disobey the rules of the institution. The incident was smoothed over with two weeks restriction for those concerned. And Mike Battery acquired the title of “Movie Battery” . . . and was the talk of sporting candidates throughout the school.

Those two weeks must have cured a lot of our troubles. We began winning recognition at Friday parades. We had a good scholastic average. By the end of our eighteen-week tour as junior classmen we had won two drill streamers, kept a larger percentage of our original class than any class in the history of the school, and had the highest class scholastic average in the Department of Gunnery.

We had a rip-roaring Hell Week, put on our red tabs, loved the title of “Red Birds” and started out on our new mission of helping to develop young junior candidates.

After three months of basic training, two months of Leadership School, and five and a half months of harassing, work, worry, and study . . . we’re ready for those commissions. We’ve earned them . . . we can do the job!

### **Richard B. Jones: 13-52**

I had many memorable experiences while attending OCS, but one of the more memorable events that I can remember about OCS was the time I got to play Santa Claus for my Battery Commander, Captain Robert C. Key.

It was a few days before I was to leave for Odessa, Texas, my hometown, for my Christmas Holidays leave. We, Class 13, were all at the field doing our daily pushups and all sorts of calisthenics when Captain Key approached me. After I jumped up and stood at attention and saluted the Captain, he put me at ease by asking if I was going home for Christmas; I told him that I was. He then asked if I would deliver some Christmas packages to his family in Midland, Texas, the neighboring town to Odessa. I was honored to think he would ask me; I assured him that they would be delivered in plenty of time for Christmas.

I not only got to play Santa Claus to one of the greatest men I have ever known, but I also got to meet his very nice family in Midland. As I recall it was his sister and her family who owned a motel there.

After I got back to Fort Sill, Captain Key thanked me, and I reassured him that it was a pleasure and honor to be able to deliver the packages for him.



**Edward T. Mennona: 13-52**

**“Ode to a Fallen Guidon or 1,000 Words to Say, it Fell”**

***From the Class 13-52 Redbook***

On the eleventh day of January, in the year of 1952, during my tour as guidon bearer, a unique incident took place. It occurred during the weekly regimental parade of all OCS Batteries.

When the Batteries were formed on line, the Battalion Commander gave the command, “Parade Rest”. The guidon was attached to the staff in its usual position, at that time. At the next command, “Present Arms,” the guidon was snapped forward, parallel with the ground. Nothing unusual occurred except, the guidon appeared to wrinkle slightly. At the command “Order Arms,” given by the battalion commander, the guidon was brought sharply to the order. As the guidon was above my head, I did not notice anything unusual. The wind was blowing very sharply, and the guidon was straining at its staff. It was at that time, that I felt the flag being blown against my head. The candidates to the rear brought to my attention the fact that the flag had come loose. The flag, or guidon, had slid down the staff and was resting on my head and shoulder. I attempted to hold the staff correctly but found I could not do so without the guidon sliding further down the staff. Therefore, I was forced to carry the staff tightly against my side and shoulder.

The next command was, “Present Arms,” at the playing of the National Anthem. Upon executing the movement and snapping the staff forward, the guidon again returned to the top of the staff.

Upon executing order arms, the guidon remained in its proper place at the head of the staff. Due to the force of the wind, however, the guidon soon slipped down to my shoulder and hand.

At the command of present arms, after “Officers Center,” the guidon again returned to the correct position. Upon execution of “Order Arms,” and returning to my post, the flag again slipped down the staff and rested on my hand.

Throughout the rest of the formation the guidon remained in this position. As the Battery passed the reviewing stand, the command “Eyes—Right,” was given. I raised the staff at the preparatory command and the guidon remained down on the staff. It had now slipped all the way down to my upper arm. At the command of execution and my resulting execution of present arms, the guidon became entangled in my cartridge belt, hooking into the First Aid Packet. This caused the staff to be jerked down at the ground before I could do anything to avoid it. After recovering to order arms, we continued off the parade grounds and back to the Battery area. I marched along, my humiliation complete, and thought back to the source of my sorrow.

It all began before the parade. As we reached the road in front of the mess hall, a senior classman ran up to the Battery. He asked Captain Key or one of the other Officers where the parade guidon was. I was asked by the Candidate Battery Commander and replied that I had no idea.

At this instant, I noticed Sgt. Johnson approaching the Battery from the direction of the Orderly Room. In his right hand, he carried the parade guidon, a silk or rayon pennant

with fringed edges. We began to remove the duty pennant from the staff. The point was unscrewed, and the pennant detached from the staff. In the bottom of the duty pennant was a thumb tack. This was used as a replacement for the screw fastener, which was missing. The flag had to be pulled from the staff to remove it, as the tack would not come out.

The parade guidon was then put on the staff. It was passed over the staff through a specially made seam. The top portion of the flag was secured to a screw mounted in the top for that specific purpose. It was supposed to fit over the screw, but I regret it did not fit snugly.

I attempted to use the tack in the rear as a screw but could not. The tang in the bottom of the pennant, which was the same as the one at the top, was broken. I could not slip the tang over it, so was therefore obliged to remove it.

Attempts were made to do this by prying it up with a coin. Sgt. Johnson attempted to pry it with a knife, but to no avail. I then succeeded in removing it, but in so doing weakened the tack so that the head came off.

At that moment Adjutant's Call announced that the parade was to begin. I remarked to Sgt. Johnson that the guidon was very loose. I expressed a hope that it would not come loose. I found my fears were justified; too justified to be sure. The Sgt. answered that there was nothing that could be done at that moment. The only thing that could be done would be to continue on with the parade. My own little prayer that it would stay up, I regret to say, was not answered.

Now the main reason that the flag did not stay up brings us to a scientific definition. That is to say the law of gravity as put forth by the noble Englishman, Sir Isaac Newton. This theory that he found was proven by the fact that an apple will fall down from a tree instead of going up, or in some other direction. This Theory, as set forth, is that there is a mutual attraction between two bodies. The attraction in this case, was between the flag and the earth. It is caused by the attraction being directly proportional between the mass and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them. This was not a free fall as in Newton's apple. It was a sliding action of the silken banner against the shellacked staff. This friction tended to withstand the forces of gravity but, unfortunately, the forces of gravity proved to be too much.

The aforementioned statements, although proving interesting, are also immaterial and irrelevant. The truth of the matter is the only answer that can be submitted is—"NO EXCUSE, SIR."

### **Cubicle Mates: 14-52**

The group that attended the OCS Class 14-52 Reunion in May 1996 felt that the assignments of cubicle mates was critical on whether both students graduated from Class 14-52. If one was lucky and was assigned with a strong, stable and positive cubicle mate, his chances of doing well were greatly enhanced. I am convinced that there was a very definite and positive synergistic effect between cubicle mates.

**Nathaniel S. Eek: 14-52**

***From Class 14-52 Class Book***

During those first days, events occurred with such cataclysmic rapidity that any remembrance is as distorted as peering through a fractured kaleidoscope. Incident upon incident wrought its peculiar emotional effect on each of us, but many occurrences left collective visualizations that can never be entirely removed from the group mind. On arrival we immediately realized that although we were specially selected persons, never while we remained here would we be treated as such. The post mongrels would receive more respect than we despite our superior pedigree. Bedded down in a dust-breeding canvas rectangle that shuddered with every breath of wind, we faced the first night wondering if we had just voluntarily subscribed to a six-month prison term. Zero week began that night.

Our beginning task was one of snipping threads and stripping sleeves of stripes once sewn on with loving care. Thus, denuded of all official authority we began an existence of formations, cleanups, classes, and personal catastrophes. Retreat and mess formations provided graphic examples of organized confusion. One particular evening during our scattered forming in ranks the upperclassmen stood quietly by the tents, like the permanent spectators from the casual company. At the moment order entered the formation, disorder entered from the rear; for with the vengeful battle-cry, "Let's go, Redbirds!" the dignity of the military formation vanished. A disgusting familiarity with pushups and squat jumps was inevitable since untold quantities of ravelled sleeves, chartreuse brass, spinal curvatures, jutting chins, dipping paunches and ravaged appearances were discovered-even though one personally felt dressed sufficiently for court presentation to Queen Elizabeth. Piquancy was added by a running procession of candidates circling the formation shouting their individual comparisons to dethroned French generals and their states of mental derangement, and no one can ever forget that cry of distress, "Sir, Candidate Laceyey!"

Coupled with these moments of confusion came a web-footed waddle to test issue and our first inspection, a systematized creation of chaos out of order, Sergeant Sewell's method of inspecting could be likened to an enraged elephant clearing a jungle path. By the time he finished, each cubicle had achieved the appearance of a fire sale. Somehow that week's books seemed to belong logically on the floor. After the horror of the initial impression wore off, we took note of our future NKVD - the tactical staff. We wondered what type of person could enjoy such a vocation; but fortunately, as we grew to know them, we realized they were not the combination of brute and bird-dog we originally thought. Fundamentally they always had our welfare in consideration. In the Artillery Bowl Chapel, we were tersely welcomed by Captain Munding, and with the finality of a papal decree we received our "last kind word."

At the end of the third week our forces felt the sweep of the scythe for the first time. Seventeen fell in one blow. Resignation forms were placed within easy reach; all we had to do was wake up in the morning and touch the top of our footlockers. Thus, Heros slaughtered the innocents. This mortality rate rather than deterring us determined us to stay; and with shins at a brace, we desperately looked forward to the next phase for relief.

**David B. Isbell: 14-52**

***From Class 14-52 Class Book***

We had come to look forward to upperclassmanship as a surcease from harassing and a time of well-earned privilege. Like Coolidge, we could choose not to run, which seemed a little odd and very welcome after eighteen weeks of double-timing in the OCS area. Freedom of movement was no longer limited by study-hall or the week's accumulation of demerits. We had new responsibilities coming to us as well: for the guidance, training and evaluation of our junior candidates; and for assisting in administration of OCS (what a change, from following the Sabbath procession to MB 4 to leading it!). Upperclassmen meant more than having it made at long last- it was a foretaste of things to come. For after four very short weeks we would shed our red wings for the gold of full-fledged lieutenants.

Our class by now was trimmed to less than half its original size, and our hardy band of survivors were a long stretch away from the motley mess who in November traded their stripes for the little round black and gold patch. Competent artillerymen, confidently looking forward to the varied responsibilities soon to be ours, we prepared to leave OCS. To speed us on our way, we'd have two last parades (the whole school passing in review before us), a farewell party on our last Friday night, (good spirits of all sorts. flowing); and finally on Tuesday morning, 6 May 1952, graduation.

Here our story ends and, unwritten, begins anew. From here we go to the four winds, the unknown future; with our memories of the days we spent in OCS, with confidence and high resolve. To all, Good Luck. Able Battery is on the way.

**Gordon R. Tyler: 14-52**

***From "These were Able" April 28-May 2, 1999***

When Gordon arrived at Pusan Korea, the day's issue of the Stars and Stripes carried a center-fold spread about First Lieutenant Conrad K. Hausman. "Connie" had been dropped from OCS Class 14-52 on the basis of being too immature. He was sent on to Korea, won a battlefield commission, was awarded the Silver Star and was already a First Lieutenant by the time we (Class 14-52) arrived in Korea as Second Lieutenants. Connie stayed in the Army and retired as a Colonel.

**Roger A. Barnhart: 16-52**

What happened to me during and after Officer Candidate School came as quite a surprise. I had graduated from college and had taught high school for a year and thought I knew who I was and what I would become. The first or Zero week in OCS was in a tent in the winter in Oklahoma. I was gigged for having snow on my bunk. In a formation in the freezing rain, we all took off our gloves because there was one missing glove on one hand. I couldn't believe it. Twenty-eight weeks later my mother pinned the slightly rounded gold bars on my uniform that my dad had worn in France in WW I.

That was the beginning. A year in Korea in 1952-53 helped, but the important things happened in OSC. Our class had its fiftieth reunion last year (2002). At the last class dinner one of the speakers asked each candidate to get up and tell whether he would go through the program again. Each one seemed one way or another to say that he would never have become an engineer or a State Department officer or whatever without this

experience. I can say without hesitation I never would have become an MD. OCS made that possible. After medical school I reentered the Army, for an additional nine years as a medical officer. Then in civilian life I stayed in the Reserve and retired as a Colonel. None of this would have happened had it not been for what I learned about myself in Artillery Officer Candidate School.

**Tom deShazo: 16-52**

I was in Class 16, 1952 and claim to be the first Candidate ordered to perform chin-ups by a Redbird.

My Battery was being worked over while waiting our turn at the mess hall. A Redbird was in my face in the middle of our formation when another Red Bird ordered our BC of the week to command "About Face," the class responded, but without me because I thought turning my back on "my" Redbird would not be wise. However, I found myself looking over his shoulder at grinning classmate Leo Eckerd. I couldn't suppress a grin in return, and that sent my Redbird into orbit.

There were no chin-up bars then, so he pointed out a very spindly little tree and ordered me to do a hundred chin-ups "no matter how long it takes!" Chin-ups are not my forte. I did the insignificant number I was capable of, and thereafter hung from the only branch capable of holding me. I hung there while my Battery went in to eat, while they ate, and while they and everyone else cleared the mess hall. By that time even my Redbird had tired of the show and departed. I dropped from the tree, about six inches, and went to our next formation. With a sprightly step. Fresh *legs*, you know.

I won a victory of sorts: I graduated still owing OCS almost a hundred chin-ups. I'm a little nervous at reunions, though. They might still want to collect.

**Harold T. Quinn: 17-52**

**"TAC Officers Are Made, Not Born"**

***From the Class 17-52 Redbook***

Some, indeed, most, candidates trembling through Officer Candidate School have experienced a secret desire to know in what way, and by what nefarious means, a TAC officer is selected and trained. At great personal risk, your editorial staff has amassed the following information for the benefit of all brave officer candidates whose curiosity overcomes their better judgment.

The average TAC Officer is selected for training only after careful screening in which certain traits are looked for in his personal history. Did he for example, as a child, pull wings off flies, or pour cement in his mother's biscuit batter? Was he adept at pulling little girls' pigtaileds, cramming inkwells with paper and sticking spitballs on the ceiling? Did he frequently submit sarcastic themes in college, blackball potential fraternity brothers and devise hideous tortures for freshmen? If the answers to these and similar questions are generally affirmative, the applicant receives serious consideration.

Selected officers are first scheduled for several months training in "Tortuous exercises of the Persians" and a thorough study of the techniques of Heinrich Himmler. It is understood trainees relax by reading the books of Edgar Allen Poe or H. G. Wells or by listening to the "Inner Sanctum" on the radio.

Following this rigorous preparation, successful trainees are ready for their final schooling which consists of a concentrated course at the University of Zurich covering the very latest theories that the great minds of psychology from Freud to Adler have produced. After a brief course on the methods of Svengali and Machiavelli the new TAC Officer is presented his diploma, numerous rubber stamps, stacks of form 41s, a psychiatrist's couch, and is turned loose on the terrified officer candidates.

***From the Class 17-52 Redbook***

An interesting phase of our training in gunnery was provided by "dug-out" shoots. Armed with the ever-present binoculars, maps, and sensing pads, the students and their instructors descended into concrete bunkers to bravely call in fire missions on targets as close as 50 yards from their positions. These exercises differed somewhat from the conventional service practice in that the students seldom, if ever, saw the round hit, as they were securely crouched down hugging the wall of the bunker from the time they heard "on the way" until well after the teeth jarring explosion. This added an element of chance to the whole proceedings, as it was extremely difficult to estimate the effects of the fire from the drifting cloud of smoke and dust which was about all that could be seen by the time the student had struggled to his feet.

**Vernon D. Gallagher, Jr: 18-52**

What OCS means to me: Pride in serving my country, association with fine men, and knowing I measured up to expectations.

**George Karganis: 18-52**

**"Concealing Articles" (Disciplinary Essay)**

***From the Class 18-52 Redbook***

One mistake may, and usually does, ruin the best plans or intentions . . . That mistake was underestimating the capabilities of one's adversary or opponent. Because there had been no previous inspection made of the attic for articles, several persons, including myself, presumed that it was always to be so . . . You can hide things from some of the people some of the time, but not all the people all of the time . . . With necessity being the mother of invention it can readily be seen how one could easily be led down the path of least resistance . . . In my particular case, that path of least resistance led to the attic . . . A comparatively safe storage for my miscellaneous articles such as muddy boots . . . It was far too handy and convenient to resist, and my will power soon fell by the wayside . . . Without a doubt, I shall have an opportunity to repent of my sins on MB-4 Sunday afternoon. The overcoat has to its credit two enormous pockets, an almost unbelievable weight, and a peculiarity for being the most cumbersome garment I have ever worn . . . Those enormous pockets going to waste present a big temptation. They stare you in the face and seem to say, "Well, where are you going to put it now? Put it here! We'll hold it!" . . . They beckon again and you oblige. Three solutions to the problem: (1) Get rid of the overcoat; (2) Sew the pockets; (3) Exercise self-control, even though they beckon.

**Gerald Nelson: 18-52**

I look back with great memories of 22 weeks spent at Fort Sill. I felt well trained and ready for assignment upon completion of OCS. In Korea I served with a self-propelled 155 mm howitzer battalion. On my 2nd trip for a one-week tour of the O.P. the Commanding General paid an inspection visit. After using my B.C. Scope, he selected a target building

in the White Horse Chinese Baldy area. I sent the fire mission and asked for Willie Peter first round. After spotting the landing, I called for add 150, fire for effect. The General turned to his aide and asked to check 50 up or down or left or right. My round hit the building. The General said I was lucky. I said, "NO Sir," my instructor at OCS, MAJ Beard said if you're sure, shoot with guts, but if you're wrong you flunk. It turned out the major was a personal friend of the General.

Our battery was mainly OCS graduates for officers. The lesson I learned was I was lucky, and, on most missions, I used a bracket. I was thankful for good training at OCS.

The General pinned the Bronze Star with V and a commendation ribbon that day. After collecting the shell fragments mentioned in my Bronze Star citation, our spotter plane located the enemy howitzer, and we were able to destroy it.

### **Robert W. Sullivan: 18-52**

#### ***Outpost Harry Survivors Association Members Stories (2002)***

It was the summer of 1950, and I was 19 when war broke out in a faraway land called Korea. Most of us had never heard of it. Just as I was about to start my third year of college, I decided that duty to my country was more important and enlisted in the army. This may seem surprising to some, but at the time, there was a strong feeling of patriotism among my generation. Our military had recently won decisive victories in concluding the hostilities of World War II. Those, who fought in that war, were looked upon by my peers with almost an awe-like reverence. They were all heroes to us. Despite the gold stars in the windows, acquaintances that did not return, the occasional maimed or disfigured who did, and the brutal battle scenes shown in the newsreels, we (the males) felt somehow cheated that we were too young to have been a part of it. The naivety of youth attached an almost romantic aura to it.

Our teen years, except for rationing, blackouts and curfews were little different from those of today. We spent a great deal of time trying to determine who we were, and in finding a comfortable place in the social pecking order. On dates we walked, used public transportation, or had occasional use of the family sedan.

There were no computers, so we spent most of our free time playing sports. In high school I played football, basketball, baseball, and occasionally hockey when God was good enough to supply natural ice. In college I played football at the highest level. These activities defined my social position and I interfaced with guys and gals easily and naturally. When one put on his country's uniform, however, he or she jumped to the head of the line of acceptability. One quickly learned however that military service was not a game and training was conducted with the utmost seriousness. At times I thought it was overdone, but this only proved how naive I really was. My sports background made the regimentation easy to accept, and barracks life of every manner of dress and undress, as normal as sweat dripping off your nose on a ten-mile run.

I had scored well on placement exams and was sent to Artillery Officer Candidate School in Oklahoma. The mental part was fairly easy, but the physical part was much more taxing. For two months we were hazed unmercifully by the upperclassmen, not much worse than being a fraternity pledge. This was supposed to test your ability to take it as well as give it out. We lost about half the class before we graduated as 2nd Lieutenants.

**Charles A. Whiteford, Jr.: 18-52**  
**“Smiling in Ranks” (Disciplinary Essay)**

***From Class 18-52 Redbook***

At the position of attention in ranks, the individual becomes an integral working part of a machine . . . While at this position, there is to be no unnecessary movement . . . nor is there to be any smiling or laughing . . . Exhibiting undue levity at the wrong time shows a lack of self-control, this lack of self-control having been transmitted to your men can cause the annihilation of your entire command. An officer must continually be on his guard to ensure that his own actions are above and beyond reproach. Undue levity becomes as a cancerous growth. Past history has proven this without a doubt. Chaos and disintegration results . . . for example the decline and fall of the Roman Empire . . . As the growth of laxness spread to the military, all forms of discipline and control fell apart and the one-time ruler of the known world fell to the bottom.

The power of the smile for good or evil has never been denied. It was the smile of Helen that brought havoc on Troy, and those of the Buddha that pacified ancient India (two extremes). . . A smile may be spontaneous or affected . . . of dubious purpose, for though usually depicting one’s true personality, it is often utilized as a cover or false front for entirely opposite emotions, motives, and ambitions . . . The first sign of lunacy in a candidate is a smile . . . As a braying ass or a hyena only increases its ridiculousness with its grin, so it is with many pumpkin-headed persons who carry perpetual jack-o-lantern jaws. Nero no doubt smiled as he fiddled . . . The military is a serious business, and the proper discipline of troops may not be accomplished by a light-headed commander.

**Dwight Lorenz: 19-52**

What OCS means to me: Although only six months in duration, the experience was important as the foundation of a successful Army career. Lessons learned regarding the FA were made indelible by the strict standards applies in the course. Perseverance under strain and stress was a daily challenge which each graduate had to demonstrate.

The only shortcoming was the lack of instruction in the area of “battlefield survival.” Fortunately, I had learned the principles and techniques during 3 1/2 years in an Infantry unit prior to attendance.

Bonding with classmates, many of whom were not well known at the time, was absolute, as demonstrated by the feeling of family closeness during reunions at Sill. For our class it was 37 years from graduation to our first gathering, which has been followed by five additional organized attendances. In summary: A unique, unforgettable experience in life with rewards which will be with me to the end.

**Joe Reynolds: 19-52**

It seemed that our class was in enough trouble without asking for more but the Friday night before Saturday inspection of Easter weekend, we started “Operation Bunny.”

We decorated our barracks with crepe paper, set out Easter candy bunnies, and hid a rather large number of candy Easter eggs in our footlockers, under bunks, on windowsills, and other places. We believed it would get us in a mess of trouble and everybody expected to make at least one trip up MB4 that Saturday.



When Colonel Smith, the Inspecting Officer, walked into our rather lavishly decorated quarters for the Saturday inspection it quickly degenerated into an Easter egg hunt to the bewilderment of the Staff and Red Birds. Appropriate gifts probably helped soothe any ruffled feathers and we got by with our little joke.

**Thomas K. Hobby: 21-52**

The Roger Battery guidon was given to each new Class to carry until they actually started school and received a battery designation. It was the “symbol of fresh meat,” and all Redbirds were allowed to harass them until they became a designated battery and had their specific Redbirds assigned to them. So, carrying it was the kiss of death, which usually only lasted about a week, at most a couple of weeks.

Well one day the guidon bearer was told to do 50 pushups and he laid the guidon down on the ground instead of spiking it into the ground or giving it to someone else. All hell broke loose then; and one of the Redbirds said “Candidate, would you like to carry that Roger Battery guidon for 22 weeks?” And somehow the word got back to CPT Dockstetter and that’s exactly what happened. From then on, each new class got a battery designation and a guidon when they arrived. That was the end of the Roger Battery guidon being used for fresh meat.

To show you how effective it was; My entire Class marched up to MB4 twice each Sunday for the first ten weeks.

**Maurice J. Le Bleu: 21-52**

OCS was a challenge that I accepted and completed. It was an opportunity to meet and become teammates of some of the nation’s finest young men. It taught me that by dedication, perseverance, and teamwork anything could be attempted and usually more than expected could be accomplished. Last but not least it gave me an opportunity to individually contribute to the service of my country.

**Arnold Carothers: 22-52**

As a young man I came into OCS having never experienced the discipline that took place at OCS. I thought I had developed from a boy to a man, but OCS taught me real quick that I had a long way to go to stand up and be counted as a man with a purpose in life. My hat goes off to the drill sergeant that has the patience to work with young people as ours at OCS did. They are primarily responsible for me being the person I am today. At OCS my life became focused, I set goals and obtained them, which I contribute mostly to the self-confidence brought out in me while at OCS.

I will never forget my time in the Army and particularly my stay at OCS. It made me a better person and citizen with a real appreciation for America.

**“Antiaircraft Artillery Officer Candidate School”**

**CPT Joseph E. Melanson, Jr. *Antiaircraft Journal* (July-August 1952).**

The assembly line is just about in full swing at the Fort Bliss OCS, where approximately one hundred second lieutenants are commissioned each month. These eager lads are joining fellow anti-aircraftsmen in units located throughout the country.

The first three graduating classes provided the Army with three hundred new officers. Graduates of the first two classes were assigned to antiaircraft battalions in the various continental Army areas. Members of class three, almost to the man, were assigned to units stationed at Fort Bliss. Many of them are presently on duty with the AAA RTC.

The three hundred who finally achieved the goal of a commission were among the 582 who were initially enrolled in the classes. The attrition rate was high; but those associated with the school feel that when the seal of approval is placed on an OCS graduate, he is ready to be a credit to his fellow artillerymen wherever he may serve.

Candidates fail to graduate from the school for a multitude of reasons. Perhaps the greatest deterrent to successful completion of the course is termed lack of motivation. This is a catchall category and one of the reasons why a candidate may be so tabbed is that he lacks in military experience. Some of the men reporting to OCS have been in the Army a very short time and the hardships of their new environment make it difficult for them to meet the rigorous standards of the school. Others fall into this category because of shortcomings in their educational background. An individual may report to OCS having had little or a great deal of formal education. However, he may have had this formal education in fields divorced from the knowledge needed to master the academic work demanded of him at OCS. Others in the lack of motivation category resign to avoid involuntary relief from the school.

Specifically, if a candidate decides that for some reason, he is unable to successfully complete some portion of the curriculum he may elect to resign rather than be discharged because of his shortcoming. Then there are some who resign because they feel that after being at OCS for a period of time, they are no longer desirous of becoming an officer. Candidates who have observed that their tactical officers are not clock watchers have been heard to express, "I didn't know an officer had to work; I thought he spent all his time at the club or on the golf course. If I have to work as hard as these officers after I get my commission . . . well I just don't want any part of it." Others resign because they were not assigned to the OCS of their choice. When a man applies for OCS, he is required to list three choices of branches in which he would like to serve. Some who have resigned say, "My first two choices were in the service branches, and I was required to list my third choice as one of the combat arms." The Army attempts to assign candidates to schools of their choosing; but in the final analysis the quotas are filled according to the requirements as specified by the Department of the Army. Finally, candidates in the lack of motivation category do not complete the prescribed course for personal reasons, such as family difficulties.

A question often asked of those affiliated with the OCS is, "How many candidates do you discharge for disciplinary reasons?" Actually, the number falling into this category is amazingly small. To date only three candidates have been discharged from the school for disciplinary reasons.

Physical defects take a sizable toll from the rolls. The requirements are demanding and an individual who may have a minor defect which normally would be no handicap finds himself in difficulty at OCS. A person susceptible to eye strain, for example, may find that cracking the books night after night is more than his eyes can endure. Or an old football injury, which has not bothered him for years, may kick up on a candidate as he undergoes

some of his rigorous physical exercises preparing for the five PT tests he is required to take. In the first three classes a total of thirty candidates were not graduated due to a physical defect of some nature.

Candidates must attain a certain proficiency in military leadership. They are constantly observed by their tactical officers to determine if they possess the qualities which will enable them to lead men to battle. The candidates are assigned many of the 53 positions of responsibility in a candidate battery such as battery commander, platoon leader or section leader. While performing in these positions, candidates have ample opportunity for demonstrating any leadership potential they may possess. It was determined that twenty-five did not possess these desirable qualities in the first three classes, and these candidates were released from the school.

As can be expected, one of the biggest reasons for discharge from the OCS is failure to meet the requirements of the academic portion of the course. In the first three classes sixty-one candidates were released because they could not meet the academic standards. Candidates not possessing an aptitude for mathematics often experience difficulty in completing the course. A high correlation has been found for example between the results of a candidate's work in math and his grade in communications or in surface gunnery, where the artilleryman is required to apply a knowledge of mathematics.

Because of the importance of mathematics and related subjects, emphasis is placed early in the curriculum of each class on giving candidates who need extra instruction, every opportunity to receive needed coaching. Officers devote many hours during the evening to extra classes and individual tutoring. Due to this extra work, many candidates have been kept from falling by the wayside.

Candidates are assisted in the solution of personal problems in an attempt to graduate as many who are worthy as possible. All personnel of the OCS department are available to the candidates, 24 hours a day, guiding them through any difficulty.

Though the pitfalls on the road to an OCS commission are many, a constant effort is being made toward the goal set by Colonel Robert El. Krueger, Director of the Antiaircraft Artillery Officer Candidate School, who stresses to members of his department that, "Nothing would please me more than to graduate one hundred percent of every class."

### **Billy D. Ballard: TAC Officer 1952-53**

My classes as a TAC Officer were 26-1952, as Platoon Leader, 38-1953, and 45-1953 as CO. I loved working at OCS. I was Jack Merritt's first Commanding officer after he graduated from OCS. He was a TAC Officer for Class 45. Also, in that class was Joseph Tarrant, a Hall of Fame Inductee. Joe was a National Guardsman from Connecticut and the first Guardsman to come to OCS and return to his Guard unit after graduation. I have pictures of his father, grandfather and Commanding Office who came to the graduation.

I can still see the guys reporting in on the day of their arrival at Fort Sill. My fondest memory might be working with SGT Nash in Class 45. I had a great memory for faces and names and Nash had a photographic memory and knew their rifle numbers and anything else he wanted to remember. On the second day, he and I would go down the ranks and

I could tell each something I learned about them on the interview the day before and Nash could recite their rifle number. To say the least, we had their attention. Several had the “Oh, crap, what have I gotten into?” look on their face.

Working with Captain Munding in Classes 26 and 38 was really great. I was a National Guardsman from Arkansas that was mobilized with my unit and went to Korea. At 21, I had climbed to MSG, Chief of Firing Battery for 155 mm self-propelled “Long Toms.” The battalion commander insisted that I apply for a direct commission. I did and later ended up at Fort Sill in the 555th Field Artillery Battalion as Ammo Train Commander. A directive came across my desk that said OCS was looking for TAC officers. I had to ask someone what a TAC officer was. I decided to give it a shot and was accepted. I couldn’t have been more lucky than being with Munding. (not sure that is the correct spelling)

### **Maurice Cohen: 26-52**

At the age of 80, I’ve been through, at, or around many schools, but the one I’m proudest to have graduated from is the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School, and the group who made it through Class 26-52 are the classmates I remember most fondly.

In 1952, the Korean War was still very much a war despite peace talks which began after General Ridgeway’s killer offensives. The other side was showing no haste to end the fighting; none of us were allowed to forget we were being trained for combat, probably first as forward observers with the Infantry.

Our Tactical Officers and Master Sergeant Non-Coms were serious and strict, but fair. Captain Munding, our Commander, was a splendid leader. A veteran of extraordinary missions during World War II, (which we weren’t told about at the time), he was always present, even on our weekend marches up hill and down dale in the glorious warmth and sunshine of Oklahoma, like each of us, wearing a knapsack and carrying a carbine.

Not everyone in the class who started, enjoyed the endless drilling and exercise, the absence of passes for quite a while, mathematics, and the insistence that we become proficient with “slipsticks,” the Artillery slide rules you had to use before the wonders of electronics.

During the last week, the greatly reduced number of us still in the class were beginning to allow ourselves to believe we were going to make it. We had survived all of the above, plus carefully supervised badgering by dramatically harsh upperclassmen, and Saturday morning inspections, when a speck of dust in the barrel of the carbine you had sat up half the night cleaning and polishing, won you another march over the already too familiar hills beyond the barracks.

We had been told that the Army was spending \$10,800 to train each of us, a lot more than four years of education at many colleges. Perhaps it was a bit of lightheadedness that tempted me to try a bit of humor, and I hazarded a question to Master Sergeant Peterson, for whom the word “dour” was certainly invented.

“Sergeant Peterson, since the Army has spent \$10,800 to train us, they’re going to take good care of us, aren’t they?”

Peterson wore a Combat Infantryman's Badge and more rows of ribbons than most of us had years after our sixteenth birthdays, but we had never seen him wearing a smile. That day there was just a trace of a smile as he answered slowly, "Sonny, if you take out one tank, you'll have paid for your education."

Almost all of us who graduated went to Korea in six months and spent time "On the Hill." I never took out a tank but served as an FO, first on Pork Chop Hill, then on Arsenal, another Combat Outpost in our section. There the Engineers had left as a wall decoration in my bunker, the naked cranium of a Chinese soldier.

Since OCS, I've done a lot of other things. But I've never been with better men than those who made it with me through Class 26-52 or the Officers and Non-Coms who worked to prepare us for what they knew we would probably face. As classmates we helped one another, competing only with ourselves to see if we could handle what was demanded, and I still think of those in charge of us as some of the finest leaders I have ever known.

**John S. Dillon: 26-52**

What OCS means to me:

Self-Discipline	Self Reliance	Self Confidence
Attention to detail	Loyalty	Duty
Leadership	Survival	Presence and appearance

**Bert Kister: 26-52**

The following is a remembrance of Captain Robert Mundinger. Captain Robert Mundinger led his battery in ways probably not intended by the Training Manuals for FAOCS. He wanted his class of candidates to handle stress, think for themselves and be as original as permitted under Army rules and regulations.

Many of those in his charge would later come to realize the worth of his approach. After a very trying day, he lamented that only through prayer could we hope to survive. In fact, he broke the battery into several teams and gave each team 15 minutes to compose a hymn, using our own words but relying on traditional tunes.

Here's what one team composed and sang in unison, using the old familiar "Yes, Jesus loves us."

Yes, Robert loves us  
Yes, Robert loves us  
Yes, Robert loves us  
The Colonel tells us so.

Yes, we believe that the Captain, in his own way, did love us.

**Donald I. Mackenroth: 26-52**

What OCS means to me - It taught me the true meaning of Duty, Honor, Country. I became a better person and gained a stronger character, which has remained with me throughout my life.

**Roy E. Peneacker: 28-52**

I have often said that the best thing that ever happened to me was being drafted by my friends and neighbors and the opportunity to attend OCS where a whole new world opened up to me.

You see, when I was drafted, I was working in a textile mill in my hometown and there was little or no chance for advancement and world travel. The OCS training was the backbone for other training and advancement through the years. I didn't realize at the time that I would meet my future wife in Lawton, and it would become our home after serving 20 years in the Army. Yes, OCS really changed the course of my life and I have never regretted making the decision to attend.

**Wallace J. Pursell: 28-52**

After 57 years, memory of specific events has mostly either faded or become lost altogether. What I do remember well is the caliber of the young fellows as I first met them in "C" Battery (28-52). Immediately, I knew I had made the right choice in signing up for OCS.

My basic training had been at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania with the 5th Division, 2nd Infantry Regiment, "D" Company. Frankly, the make-up of that particular company was demoralizing: shirkers, laggards, goof-offs and several who went AWOL over the Christmas vacation leave. And we had several men who had been given the option (by their State Courts) of serving two to five years in their penitentiaries or joining the Army. I just could not imagine how being in the Army could be so unpleasant. There were only a few fellows out of about 150 I would have cared to remember or maintain contact with (including Tactical Lieutenant William Middendorf Miller).

OCS at Fort Sill changed all that when our Battery was peeled down to about 60 men after two weeks. I still recall almost everyone in the Battery and maintain contact with some. Our Captain Brazier was a fine man as were our Lieutenants. Our two Master Sergeants, Wallace L. Holbrook, and Lawrence G. Muncy were tough, but friendly and very helpful. All in all, my time at Fort Sill OCS was one of the very best and most memorable in my life.

**"The Most Difficult Job in the Army?"****LT Robert L. Hogan TAC Officer Class 1-52 AAA OCS*****Antiaircraft Artillery Journal (September - October 1952)***

Military leadership has been defined in various ways by many outstanding commanders. Each in his own way is convinced that his definition of leadership is the best. From the objective viewpoint it is probable that any definition of leadership from such a military commander must be valuable. It is the interpretation and implementation of these definitions that make the work of the OCS Tactical Officer one of "The most difficult jobs in the Army."

The term Tactical Officer has been adopted from the United States Military Academy. This title is carried by those officers at the Military Academy whose duty it is to counsel and advise the cadets during their years at West Point. It is their example and guidance which have consistently produced the fine young officers who have risen to some of the highest positions this country can provide. It is their counterpart, the OCS Tactical Officer, who

must do the same job in twenty-two weeks rather than the four years allowed at West Point. In this short time the tactical officer must discover those men who will not meet the fundamental standards of leadership. From an initial group of forty to fifty candidates the tactical officer must weed out the weaklings, the obvious misfits, and then rate those left according to their leadership adaptability.

At the Antiaircraft Artillery Officer Candidate School, this process has been developed to a fine art by its Tactical Officers. Colonel Robert H. Krueger, while director of the Department of OCS, has specifically directed that Tactical Officers be chosen from the best available.

Note: The Tactical Officers at this school possess a notable cross section of military schooling and education. Five Graduates of the United States Military Academy, eight ROTC Graduates, seven from Fort Riley Army Officer Candidate School, one from the Infantry Officer Candidate School, five from the Artillery Officer Candidate School one graduate of the Air Force Cadet program during World War II, a graduate of the Special Associate Basic Course during 1949, one recipient of a battlefield commission, one with a direct commission, and a National Guard officer. With this background among his tactical officers, the average candidate of the AAA OCS receives his commission feeling he has been given a varied and instructive example of leadership during his twenty-two weeks.

Many will not agree with the premise that the OCS Tactical Officer has a difficult job and it is the purpose of this article to present reasons valid enough to justify the title "The Most Difficult Job in the Army"

The Tactical Officer meets his group within twelve hours after their reporting date. The first drill formation is known as the "sizing" formation at which the candidates are grouped into their respective platoons. The Tactical Officer, who also acts as the platoon instructor, assumes control of his platoon and immediately begins to evaluate his group. Just as cream inevitably rises to the top of a bottle of milk, the men with outstanding leadership qualities are readily discernible to the experienced Tactical Officer. It is these men on whom he relies on a great deal during the opening weeks of the class. It is these candidates whom the Tac Officer, during the first weeks, places in various platoon and battery command positions in which they assume actual command responsibilities. Tests of leadership qualities may develop hidden flaws which are not readily apparent in a man's personality. If flaws are noted, the Tac Officer makes written observation of such, and plans to concentrate a little later on these signs of weakness to see how deep they penetrate.

A certain amount of mental and physical pressure, coupled with an immediate high standard of discipline, is applied to the platoon from the very first. The Tac Officer uses this pressure to squeeze out those candidates who applied for the school more for the purpose of evading the same kind of discipline in their former unit rather than an intense desire to earn a commission. These men usually request relief within the first two weeks. Before they resign, the Tac Officer counsels and advises that the pressures which they obviously cannot stand, are minor, compared to the possible combat pressures facing the officer on the battlefield.

Usually, by the first four weeks, the tac officer knows his best men and has been relieved of his very worst. Then comes the difficult work. He must decide, out of the remaining twenty or thirty, how many of these will make good leaders. Of course, during this time, academic failures are taking their toll. Many men have left the OCS due to academic failures who also have a high degree of leadership ability. This cannot be helped, for one of the important adjuncts of the good leader is knowledge of his job.

By this time, the Tac Officer has rated his platoon according to their leadership adaptability. The candidates have completed the first student rating within their sections. This is more properly known as “buddy rating” and in which each candidate rates his fellow candidates according to their leadership personality. It is these ratings which help to tell the Tac Officer if a man is as good a follower as he is leader, whether his personal habits are above standard and whether he adapts himself to group living.

From these first leadership ratings the Tac Officer must now concentrate on the bottom group to see if they have the qualities desired. At the same time, he must constantly evaluate the others, searching for weaknesses and flaws. The bottom may consist of two or three candidates, or as many as ten candidates. It is at this time that the Tac Officer must exercise the epitome of judgment and perception. The primary decision is up to the Tac Officer which may cause a particular candidate to receive his commission or not.

It is this decision-based on such intangibles as personality, attitude, mental and physical stamina, command ability, to mention just a few, which is the primary reason why the job is considered difficult. Decisions in themselves are difficult enough, but it is more difficult when one makes a decision which may shatter completely a man’s ambition for an honorable career.

Though the primary decision to release a candidate for lack of leadership qualities lies in most cases with the Tac Officer, it is only fair to add that the decision is not completely his. The senior team instructor of the candidate battery has also been evaluating the candidates from a higher level. The recommendations of the senior team instructor, plus those of the Tac Officer, are then forwarded to the Officer Candidate Board, who carefully review the evidence. This is passed on to the Director of the OCS Department, who then makes recommendations as to the disposition of the candidate.

The work of the Tac Officer is best summed up in the remark made by Major Forrest I. Rettgers, former senior team instructor of Class Number 1 of the AAA OCS, about his tac officers of A Battery, when he said, “My Tac Officers are not running for any popularity contest, their job is to produce leaders—not buddies. They will be best known in the field by the well-rounded officer they produce.” This statement is best borne out by the many graduates of OCS who probably remember their particular Tactical Officer as being the most rigid and strict disciplinarian they have known. The Tac Officer who rates this honorable accolade has performed his duty in a highly conscientious manner but, it has been ... difficult.





*Candidates from Class 8-52 in the field*



*Candidate from Class 8-52 – Standing Tall!!!*



*Candidate from Class 8-52 in the Field*

*Class 19-52 preparing for a Saturday Inspection and Standing the Inspection.*



# Chapter Eight

## 1953

### **Robert L. Manson: AAA OCS 11-53 (Fort Bliss)**

After World War II, the military services of the United States were disbanded rapidly, and by late 1946, all Army OCS training had been transferred to the Army Ground School at Fort Riley, Kansas. Only 542 candidates graduated from OCS at Fort Riley in 1950. The OCS program at Fort Riley was the only program in operation then, as a Branch Immaterial school, until the opening of Branch OC Schools after the start of the Korean War. Note: WAC OCS at Fort Lee, Virginia was also operating.

The Korean War began on Sunday, June 25, 1950, when North Korean Armies invaded South Korea. The critical need for Army Branch Officers resulted in the opening of several branch OCS programs in 1951. Among these was the AAA OCS program at Fort Bliss, Texas. Other Branch Army OCS Schools that were opened were for the Signal Corps at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey; the Corps of Engineers at Fort Belvoir, Virginia; the Armor Corps at Fort Knox, Kentucky; and the Ordnance Corps at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. The Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Georgia, and the Field Artillery OCS at Fort Sill, Oklahoma were also reactivated at that time. The OCS program at Fort Riley, Kansas, continued to operate. The WAC OCS program, which had moved to Fort Lee, Virginia in 1949 continued to operate.

An Army Officers Candidate Program - Antiaircraft and Guided Missiles Branch, The Artillery School, with an Officer Candidate Student Detachment, 4054th ASU, AA and Guided Missiles Branch, The Artillery School, was established by General Orders Number 110, Headquarters, AAA and Guided Missile Center, Fort Bliss, Texas, dated 16 October 1951.

The OCS program at Fort Bliss was housed in what originally had been a World War II army hospital, and which later was used to billet German rocket scientists working at the nearby White Sands Proving Ground after WWII. The first Director of the school was Colonel Robert H. Krueger. He left the school in August 1952 to become the commander of Camp Drake in Japan. This was an installation that many Fort Bliss OCS graduates passed through on their way to assignments in Korea.

OCS Class No. 01-52 reported To Fort Bliss in mid-October 1951 and graduated six months later as "Able One" on 2 May 1952. The Fort Bliss program followed a twenty-two week curriculum modeled on the OCS programs of WW II and of those times, with emphasis on physical fitness, military academics, leadership ability and branch specialty skills. Candidates assumed class leadership roles on a rotating basis, and periodically they were appraised by their peers. A School Honor Code was an integral part of the candidates' experience. The early AAA OCS classes at Fort Bliss trained on weapons systems and equipment that were of World War II vintage, but later classes trained on state-of-the art target acquisition and gun pointing radar and surface-to-air guided missiles.

There were fourteen classes that graduated approximately 1,175 candidates from the AAA OCS program at Fort Bliss. Class No. 13-53 had the distinction of graduating the 1,000th successful candidate on 16 April 1953, in a class of 91 candidates. The final class, Class No. 14, walked across the stage of Theater Number 1 at Fort Bliss to receive their commissioning certificates on 17 July 1953.

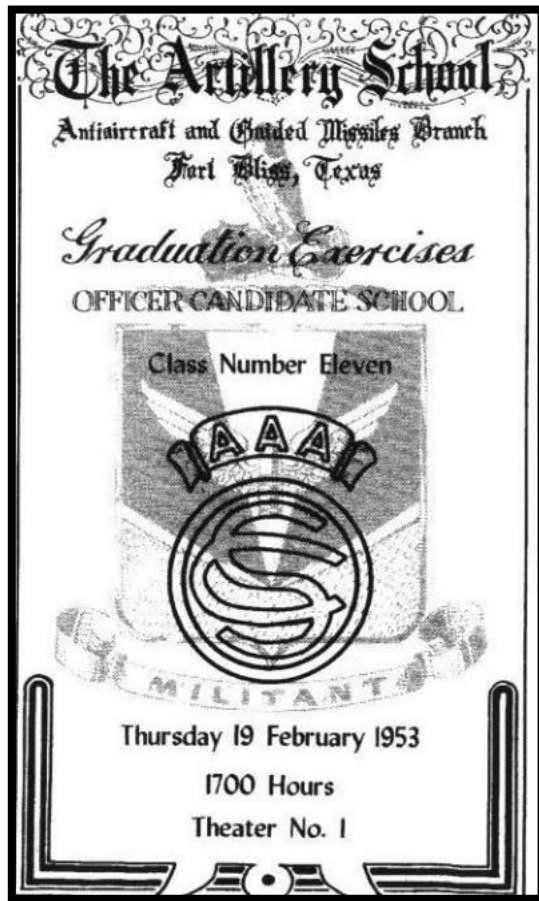
The attrition rate of these classes was high, sometimes approaching fifty percent, not unlike the rates of World War II and later OCS classes in all branches of Army service. Attrition was due to failure by candidates to meet established physical fitness, academic or leadership standards. Significant attrition also was due to voluntary resignations.

After commissioning, most Fort Bliss OCS candidates were assigned for a short tour of duty with active AAA gun battalions and missile units emplaced in the continental United States to provide air defense for major American metropolitan communities, military installations, and critical infrastructure against high-flying bombers. A few others were assigned to the Faculty and Staff at Fort Bliss as instructors to provide training in AAA specialties to Officer Basic Course attendees and Enlisted specialists. Graduates of several classes served with the 2nd AAA Battalion, Division Artillery of the 1st Armored Division, an active combat division in training at Fort Hood, Texas.

Most individuals assigned to units in the CONUS, typically after ninety to one hundred-twenty days, were assigned overseas, usually to the Far East Command in Korea. A few also were assigned to NATO units in Germany and England. Still, a few others ended up in Alaska or Panama. Those candidates that were assigned to units in Korea typically joined the self-propelled AAA battalions attached to front-line Infantry Divisions. There they served as platoon leaders and eventually battery commanders and battalion staff officers. These divisional AAA units often provided ground support for infantry combat operations in Korea. A few were reassigned to field artillery units and served as forward observers. Others were assigned to separate AAA mobile and gun battalions that provided air defense for the port facilities and the POL storage area at Inchon and the important military airfields near Seoul.

When the Korean War Armistice was signed in July 1953, the military services instituted a RIF (Reduction in Forces) program, and many Fort Bliss AAA OCS graduates were eligible for release from active duty. Although some elected to complete their term of active duty, most choose at that time to return to the opportunities of civilian life where many eventually were phenomenally successful in professional, business and academic pursuits. Many stayed in the Active Army Reserves after being released from active duty, and some attained field grade rank before retiring from the active reserve. Still others chose the active Army as their career, where some achieved General Officer rank.

Quoting from Major Roger L. Steltzer, Operations Officer, OCS at Fort Bliss, in the 1953 pages of the *Antiaircraft Journal*, "Well done" can be written of the job done over the months the school has been operated. The best traditions of the Officer Corps have been maintained. Duty, Honor, Country have been instilled into about 1,175 young officers. "Well done, indeed." Regardless of where they were assigned, the 1952-1953 graduates of the AAA OCS program at Fort Bliss served proudly at the time of their country's "Forgotten War" and during the Cold War.



*AAA OCS Class 11-53 Receives Oath of Office*

***“History of the Antiaircraft Artillery Officer Candidate School” (Organizational)***  
**LTC George J. Bayerle, Jr.**

The Antiaircraft Artillery Officer Candidate School department was organized to handle six candidate classes with a maximum strength of two hundred simultaneously. At full strength, it was prepared to receive one class per month and graduate one class per month. Although the department reached capacity status for a two-month period in 1952, the average number of classes present throughout the history of the school did not exceed five. This situation existed because projected inputs were not fully realized.

The OCS department eventually settled down to a system whereby a team of tactical officers consisting of six officers, one major, one captain and four lieutenants were provided to evaluate leadership wise a class of two hundred candidates. These known initially as instruction teams and later designated tactical teams. The major provided the required supervision, the captain or executive handled the administrative work incident to evaluation and the four lieutenants, each working with a platoon of fifty candidates provided the close hour-to-hour supervision. Initially six of these teams were organized, one per class; however, the number of teams depended on the number of classes in residence. Each team was provided with the necessary clerical help to assist them in their mission.

The organization of the Officer Candidate School was centered on the organization of each candidate into a candidate battery. Emphasis was placed on the necessity for the candidates governing their own organizations. The tactical teams in no way fulfilled command position within the structure of the organization of the candidate battery. Their mission was solely evaluation. The candidates performed the required command functions. On this rested the key to the evaluation of candidates by the tactical teams. Each tactical team although working closely with candidates, was regarded as separate and distinct entity from the candidate battery.

The instructional mission was taken from the tactical teams and placed in a pool of officers know as an Instruction Pool, under an officer designated the Coordinator of Instruction. He was directly under the Director, OCS, in the chain of command, but he worked primarily with the S-3, or Plans and Operations Officer. The pool was responsible for conducting instruction in the common subjects.

The Permanent Enlisted Detachment, which as a morning report unit carried the enlisted cadre personnel assigned to the department's various sections. The detachment, in addition to its other duties, was responsible for the operation of the candidate messes, providing the necessary cooks and kitchen police. No candidate performed any work in the messes. All help was provided by the Permanent Enlisted Detachment.

Among the many problems during the period of organization was the selection of a suitable area for the quarters, messing and incidental training and instruction. Because of the rigorous training and schooling given the candidate, it was apparent that only the best type quarters should be used, quarters which could provide the candidate some measure of privacy in quiet and tasteful surroundings. Many areas were studied, but it was eventually decided to locate the Officer Candidate School in the Fort Bliss 2700 area. A total of 56 temporary buildings were ultimately assigned to the department. Of these, 36 barracks were assigned to candidate batteries, seven building were converted to



classrooms, five buildings were used as warehouses and supply buildings, two were mess halls of the large, consolidated type, each capable of feeding five hundred men, three were barracks housing enlisted cadre men, two were department headquarters buildings and the last, a large recreation hall for officer candidates.

The 2700 area at one time had been a cantonment type hospital. It had central steam heating, interconnecting corridors and generally many facilities for comfort not normally found in a troop housing area. A small portion of the area was occupied by the Leaders' Course, AAA RTC. The remainder of the area, because of disuse, was run down a bit. The Leaders' Course, however, was in excellent condition and the first OCS battery occupied this area. The barracks had been cubicled, providing desirable privacy, and the plumbing was in good condition. Negotiations were immediately entered into for the conversion of the unoccupied area into suitable classroom and barracks facilities. Contracts were let, but it was not until the summer of 1952 when the reconditioning and rehabilitation of the entire area was completed. In the meantime, some of the classes entering were required to live under conditions that were not as desirable as believed warranted for officer candidates.

With the completion of contract work in the 2700 area, the school was in a position to boast of a training and quartering area perhaps second to none in officer candidate schools throughout the nation. The barracks were decorated in tasteful pastel shades and fully cubicled. Two candidates were assigned to each cubicle in which were placed two beds, two desks, two shelves, two lamps, two footlockers and two wall lockers. The total effect was to provide all candidates in residence with proper living conditions conducive to effective study and rest. The funds spent for the reconstruction of barracks were well spent because the living conditions had a direct effect on the morale, attrition rate and standards of the school. The area was so well laid out and maintained that it was commented on by every visitor to the school. It would not be exaggeration to say that the area was cited as a model area and caused widespread comment. Because of the area, the high standards so necessary to a successful officer candidate school could be maintained.

One of the big problems that had to be solved during the organizational period was the program of instruction. The OCS graduate was to be qualified in his branch as well as to be prepared for command responsibility. This meant that crammed into the twenty-two week period of training would be the required leadership training and technical branch training. This indicated full days for the candidate with intensive classroom instruction. Later, during the month of September 1952 and in compliance with an Army Field Force directive, the curricula was expanded to prepare graduates for duty as infantry platoon leaders in addition to their training as anti-aircraft battery officers. The Program of instruction was expanded to a total of 1,056 hours over a twenty-two week period, with the OCS Department responsible for 501 hours and various other school departments responsible for 555 hours.

*Extracted from a set of undated original documents held by the USAADS Library Fort Bliss, Texas and edited by Robert L. Manson AAA OCS 11-53 (Fort Bliss)*

**“Sill OCS Unit to be Named”**

***The Daily Oklahoman (Thursday April 23, 1953)***

The officer candidate school at the army’s artillery center here will be dedicated Saturday in memory of Lieut. James E. Robinson Jr., Congressional Medal of Honor winner from Waco, Texas. Robinson’s mother, Mrs. Delores M. Robinson, will unveil a memorial plaque while orders are read formally naming the area occupied by the School “Robinson Barracks.”

Robinson, who graduated from OCS here in 1943, was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for leading 23 survivors of an infantry company into action near Utergriesheim, Germany on April 6, 1945. He was a field artillery forward observer attached to the company.

Among the guests who will be present will be Maj. John Fralish, Daytona Beach, Fla., who was Lieut. Robinson’s senior officer in Germany. Fralish is now an instructor in the department of gunnery here.

The ceremony will be held under a high steel arch erected over the street in front of OCS headquarters. It is fronted by two highly polished bronze cannons.



***Mrs. Delores M. Robinson at the dedication of Robinson Barracks in honor of her son 1LT James E. Robinson, Jr., Class 64-43. MG A. M. Harper (on left) Commanding General of Fort Sill and LTC Benjamin D. Capshaw the acting OCS Commandant view the memorial plaque. (April 25, 1953)***

***The following is a copy of the text of General Order # 24, dated 15 April 1953 from the Historical Archives of the Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill***

The Artillery Center  
Fort Sill, Oklahoma

GENERAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 24

15 April 1953

ROBINSON BARRACKS

1. The area presently occupied by the Artillery Officer Candidate School is hereby formally named "ROBINSON BARRACKS" in honor and in memory of First Lieutenant James E. Robinson, Jr., Field Artillery, Army of the United States.
2. Lieutenant Robinson was born at Toledo, Ohio on 10 July 1919, and was educated in the public schools there and in Waco, Texas. When the United States became involved in World War II, Lieutenant Robinson entered the military service through the Texas National Guard. He graduated from the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School in May 1943. After being commissioned, Lieutenant Robinson served in various artillery units in the United States and served in the 861st Field Artillery Battalion overseas.
3. Lieutenant Robinson was killed in action on 6 April 1945, near Kressbach, Germany. For his part in this action, he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. The citation which accompanied this award reads as follows:

MEDAL OF HONOR. By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (WD Bul. 53, 1918), a Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty was awarded posthumously by the War Department in the name of Congress to the following named officer:

First Lieutenant JAMES E. ROBINSON, JR., 01181988, Battery A, 861st Field Artillery Battalion, Army of the United States, was a field artillery forward observer attached to Company A, 253rd Infantry Regiment, near Untergriesheim, Germany, on 6 April 1945. Eight hours of desperate fighting over open terrain swept by German machinegun, mortar, and small-arms fire had decimated Company A, robbing it of its commanding officer and most of its key enlisted personnel when Lieutenant ROBINSON rallied the 23 remaining uninjured riflemen and a few walking wounded, and, while carrying his heavy radio for communication with American batteries, led them through intense fire in a charge against the objective. Ten German infantrymen in foxholes threatened to stop the assault, but the gallant leader killed them all at point-blank range with rifle and pistol fire and then pressed on with his men to sweep the area of all resistance. Soon afterward he was ordered to seize the defended town of Kressbach. He went to each of the 19 exhausted survivors with cheering words, instilling in them courage and fortitude, before leading the little band forward once more. In the advance he was

*GO 24 (15 Apr 53) Par 3 cont'd*

seriously wounded in the throat by a shell fragment, but, despite great pain and loss of blood, he refused medical attention and continued the attack, directing supporting artillery fire even though he realized he was mortally wounded. Only after the town had been taken and he could no longer speak did he leave the command he had inspired in victory and walk nearly 2 miles to an aid station where he died from his wound. By his intrepid leadership Lieutenant ROBINSON was directly responsible for Company A's accomplishing its mission against tremendous odds.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER  
Chief of Staff

4. In accordance with the General Order, a suitable memorial plaque, appropriately inscribed, will be placed at the main (north) entrance of Robinson Barracks.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL HARPER:

OFFICIAL:

L.L. MANLY  
Colonel, AGC  
Act Chief of Staff

J.F. RITTER  
Lt Col, AGC  
Asst Adjutant General

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**Raymond Hunstable: 31-53**

FAOCS to me was an experience I will always cherish. My classmates taught me and indeed each other how to perform with the efficiency expected and required. Class 31-53 was a period of growing up and maturing.

**Thaddeus E. Jackson, Jr: 32-53**

To me OCS was an experience that literally changed my life. OCS took an unsophisticated young man with little college education and molded him into an individual suitable to become a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army. Becoming an OCS Graduate convinced me that I needed to obtain my college degree. As a result, I obtained first a BGE (through Bootstrap and the University of Omaha) then a Master's Degree in Education at Johns Hopkins University, and finally a Certificate of Advanced Education at the same institution. After retiring from the Army in 1971, I became a teacher in elementary education for over 20 years. I believe my attending Artillery OCS was the springboard for all of this. OCS was one of the best things I have experienced during my life.

**Marvin A. Norcross: 32-53**

Artillery Officer Candidate School to me was clearly a life-changing event. When I presented myself to the OCS Staff at Fort Sill, I was clearly a young man without direction or purpose. But the OCS Staff, especially Captain John L. Wood and MSG Rowland E. Williams, changed all that in a very brief period of time.

In retrospect, my participation and graduation from OCS was a significant achievement for which I am indebted to the OCS Staff. They instilled in me the knowledge, the self-confidence and the desire to always strive to accomplish the task at hand to the best of one's ability, regardless of the magnitude or importance of the task. I am very proud to have been associated with the OCS Staff and it is to them I owe an eternal positive attitude and the strong desire to achieve.

Further, I am forever grateful to the Staff who gave me, occasionally forcefully, a sense of integrity, a desire to succeed, a profound patriotism and an unrelenting desire to do it right the first time. In my opinion, it is unfortunate that every young man and woman in America cannot be exposed to this brief but total education early in life.

I appreciate very much what the School has done for me and I hope over the years I have been able to repay the very dedicated OCS Staff, as well as society, for the very fine career I have enjoyed, which began at Fort Sill in 1952.

**Earl J. Christensen: 33-53**

I was 19 when I entered OCS Class 33 in 1952. I had been in the army for just over 16 weeks and finished my basic training just prior to attending OCS. I did not have the advantage of having gone through Leadership School so the first several weeks were a bit tougher for me. The things that I learned about myself and the self-confidence that OCS gave me have been useful throughout my life.

After OCS I was assigned to Fort Carson in a newly activated battalion. We had all new recruits except for a small number of NCOs. I was the exec of one of the firing batteries as we took these recruits through their second 8 weeks of basic and through battalion tests. The knowledge and confidence obtained from OCS were invaluable during this time. The battery commander didn't think too highly of 2LT's, so I had a lot of interesting times with the Captain.

After Fort Carson I went to Korea for a year. While there many of the other officers in the battalion encouraged me to go to engineering school. Again, the confidence that OCS had given me helped me to go ahead with their recommendation after I was released from active duty.

I received an Electrical Engineering degree from Purdue University in 1958. If not for the OCS experience, I probably would not have attempted engineering school. OCS was a great 6 months in my life, and I am thankful for the opportunity to attend and the confidence that it gave me.

### ***From the Class 34-53 Redbook***

The day that we have been working so hard for has finally arrived. Today we reached the goal for which we have been striving for 22 weeks. . . Graduation! As we look forward to our new assignments, we can't help but stop and reminisce about our trials and tribulations in OCS.

We all remember the day that we arrived at OCS. We were so full of vim, vigor, and vitality; so eager to knock OCS on its ear. We were the cream of the crop; or so we thought. We were nearly perfect; in our own estimation - then it happened . . . we encountered our first Redbirds. During our first three weeks at OCS all we seemed to hear was the word GROSS. Then all we could think of or hear was gunnery and confused arms. We went home for a short Christmas vacation and returned ready to finish gunnery with a big bang. We took our comprehensives, suffered through Hell Week, got our tabs, and here we are, February 24, 1953, awaiting graduation.

Before we leave for our new stations, let's take a few moments and look back at our stay in King Battery. Let's remember the good times that we had together and the close friendships we established that will be invaluable to us in later life. We learned to get along with all types of personalities, and in all situations, but most of all; we learned.

"Remember When". . . we got our first hair cut during Zero Week. . . we started lugging those heavy footlockers up the hill to our new home, and the endless times we sized those "\$10& Field Manuals". . . we got our first pass. . . we got a pass before we even started OCS, but of course we remember that it was the last pass that many of us received for many weeks. . . we plunged into Motors and finished it off with motor march. . . Lt. Gee presented O/C Johnson with a cup full of buttons. . . the buttons that this hapless O/C had forgotten to button. . . if my memory doesn't fail me, there were 65 buttons in that cup. . . the demerits were posted at the end of that week. . . new records must have been set. . . we were first introduced to MB4. . . we came back from classes one day to find dummies that Lt. Gee and Lt. Dixon had made out of items that we had stored away in hiding places we thought were secure. . . we soon learned that there was no such a place in a barracks. . . , O/C Colon told the Redbird that he didn't know the SOP but that his display was right . . . he was wrong. . . Sgt. "Scrooge" Sewell made us double time to all our classes because we couldn't keep in step, we all became pretty attached to "Scrooge" even though most of us won't admit it even... Yet . . . during our seventh week we changed from "How" to "King" and moved down off the hill . . . we sure hated to give up those barracks . . . we got our first taste of gunnery and the first service practice . . . where we joined the "Horseshoe Club". . . we finished the "bloody fourth" of gunnery and started Confused Arms . . . we took the guesstimation test in C. A.... we got the welcome 15 for the Yuletide season. . . that was just what the doctor had ordered. . . most of us were in worse shape when we came back, than when we left. . . O/Cs Kerns and Cottrell woke up one morning with fingernail polish on their nails - but we all know that none of their buddies would do a thing like that to them. . . O/C Shiro seemed to have a little trouble keeping track of his bunk. . . O/C Pieszak claimed he couldn't get in bed due to the collection of articles he kept under his blankets. . . we had our first party, beautiful girls, refreshments, entertainment.. . then on the OP the next day with the "walking deflection fan" telling us to drop a half fork.

Lt. Landers came to the Battery and Lt. Dixon became the OCS Mess Officer. . . we had to start buying uniforms and thinking seriously about graduation. . . we came back from

classes and found that the TAC staff had been through the barracks. . and then you remembered that you left your footlocker unlocked - result, five demerits and a scrambled footlocker . . . we started "Special Indoctrination Week". . we locked the Redbirds out of our barracks. . .We had the funeral procession to the Mess Hall with O/C Baka. . . we were all saddened to hear that he had died, but he did not die in vain.. we had to return Dog Battery's Guidon . . . we set a new record for the number of demerits issued to a platoon during Special Indoctrination Week. The second Platoon garnered a grand total of 2,699 demerits in one day . . . we finally got our tabs which made a grand impression and made us realize the responsibility that we now had.... we received our orders . . . we marched in the long-awaited graduation parade and later that evening the good time at the reception.

We just received our commissions, and we were eager to leave, but in a way we hate to leave OCS. For the past 22 weeks it was our home, steeped in traditions and glories. One thing that we have learned and will always keep in mind; that we are now members of the finest Officer Corps in the world.

### **"AAA OCS Closes"**

***Antiaircraft Artillery Journal (May-June 1953)***

**Major Robert L. Stelzner Operations Officer, OCS**

On 17 July 1953 when Class Number 14 walks across the stage of Theater Number 1 at Fort Bliss to receive their diplomas the Antiaircraft Officer Candidate School will pass into history after nineteen months of operation.

It will have graduated approximately 1,175 successful candidates for commissions. From the earlier classes many graduates are serving in Korea, many are battery commanders, and some are serving in staff positions as battalion intelligence and operations officers, as well as motor and supply officers. Information received from commanders in the field has been that these graduates are held in high esteem for their efficiency and ability to get the job done.

Class Number 13, under the guiding hand of Major Peter M. Furgiuele, Senior Tactical Officer, had the distinction of graduating the 1,000th candidate on 16 April 1953. He is Second Lieutenant Winfield C. Boyd, Jr., of Rosemont, Pennsylvania. Boyd was a member of a class of 91 who were commissioned on this date.

Of these 91 graduates, 10 were designated Distinguished Graduates. They were Second Lieutenants Charles E. Talmage, who was also Honor Graduate; Jack C. Bollinger; Richard C. Buffos; Sidney R. Kliesing; Milton D. Mobley; Claude S. Morris, Jr.; James M. Oswalt; Frank R. Pease; Arthur W. Storer; and Gene F. Wilson.

Distinguished Graduates have the opportunity to apply for Regular Army commissions within a year of graduation.

The Officer Candidate School at Fort Bliss was inaugurated 14 October 1951 under its first Director, Colonel Robert H. Krueger. When Colonel Krueger left the school in August, 1952 to become the commander of Camp Drake in Japan, Colonel Kenneth R. Kencrick took over the duties of Officer Candidate School Director. Of the officers who were on the ground floor at the start only three remain. They are Lt. Colonel George J. Bayerle, Jr.,

Assistant Director; Lt. Colonel J. E. Olivares, President of the Officer Candidate Board, and who will retire from the Army this June; and Major Asa P. Gray, Jr., first the Operations Officer and currently the Senior Tactical Officer for the one remaining candidate class.

Throughout its history the school maintained the attitude of self-criticism and constantly made efforts to improve its product, the platoon leader.

Experience of the school reveals that the candidate most likely to succeed is between the ages of 20 and 26, with at least 116 ACCT and an OCT of 121 or more, who has not had too much military experience (from one to five years only), and at least a year of college. Marital status, his basic component, previous combat service and the Service Area he comes from appear to have little bearing on a candidate's chances to successfully complete the school.

Closing of the Officer Candidate School at Fort Bliss does not mean that the branch will receive no further OCS trained officers. Rather, 40% of the Artillery candidates will be earmarked by The Department of The Army for Antiaircraft prior to their reception at Fort Sill. Upon completion of the 22 weeks of school at Fort Sill and commissioning, the Antiaircraft graduates will attend an eight-week school at Fort Bliss to indoctrinate them into the techniques of their branch. Then they will be sent to their first duty assignment.

"Well done" can be written of the job done over the months the school has operated. The best traditions of the Officer Corps have been maintained. Duty, Honor, Country have been instilled into about 1,175 young officers. "Well done." indeed.

**Keith E. Barenklau: 38-53**

OCS changed my life - hopefully for the better! I looked upon OCS as a challenge and approached it from that standpoint. It was just amazing how a group of unrelated people could be brought together, and in a few short weeks be welded into a team of people all striving for the same goal and helping one another to succeed. OCS was an exclusive club which was hard to get into and even harder to stay abreast of what was going on with all the academics and purposeful discipline. I found OCS to be the fulfillment of the old "take things one day at a time" adage. Everything seemed to have purpose and although I felt the pressure, it was fairly and consistently applied.

After leaving OCS with my commission, I had the good fortune to serve with some of the people who were in my class and other classes that graduated just before or just after we did. We all approached things in a similar fashion, and it was easy to spot a report written by a classmate, whether he signed it or not. I was impressed with the honesty of the people. In OCS we could leave valuables lying around without fear of having them stolen. This assurance soon ended, once we were on the job with others. I found that the OCS honor code was not universally practiced.

I feel OCS helped me in other work and life when I left the service. The "attention to detail" which was so much a part of OCS training served me very well in civilian pursuits. I often hired OCS graduates and was never disappointed. Few, if any, of my classmates were regular army, either before or after OCS. We were basically civilians who felt we had job to do and were proud to work with the "regulars," for whom I have always had the highest



admiration. The draftees and the reservists have always come through when the country needed them. OCS is a prime example of this. Though most of us planned to leave, and indeed did when the war (police action) was over, we did our “lick” and fitted in very well as professional leaders, however temporary. I wouldn’t take anything for my experience as an OCS graduate, and I’d do it all again if the situation called for it. I enjoyed being an artilleryman. The artillery is more than a branch of the army; it is a group of professionals who serve whenever and wherever needed by the direct contact arms, the infantry and armor. There is a certain mystique about solving right triangles, and getting fire on a target, a relatively simple process that the Gunnery folks treated as a quest for the Holy Grail. I appreciated the experience, and still do. I probably got more out of OCS than I could ever give back but am proud of having served.

Since I stayed in the Guard and Reserve after leaving active duty, I had the opportunity to move up through the ranks. The Army spent a lot of money training me from the basics, like OCS, through several post graduate courses. Such training was easier for me since I obtained such a good foundation for it as an OCS graduate. My induction into the OCS Hall of Fame was the capstone to a life of citizen-soldiery. I am most appreciative to all those who helped me along the way.

Like many classmates, I have said that “I wouldn’t take a million for the experience, but I probably wouldn’t do it again.” In recent years, I have thought that I would indeed do it again, given the circumstances.

The Army, though a noble profession, has been a secondary profession for me. I was amazed how the OCS experience assisted me in civilian life. For example, the “mission orientation” that was taught us has helped me immeasurably as an executive in business. We were taught to keep the mission foremost, which works equally well for civilians as well as for military people. We were taught to share the mission with our people -- a technique I have used throughout my business life. When the mission is understood by all hands, the job usually goes forward without a hitch.

Leadership training was excellent. Experience has shown that leading works; pushing does not. This was taught us in OCS. OCS helped me in giving directions (orders). Spur of the moment plans and decisions usually only works in the movies. OCS taught us to study the problem (opportunity) and give clear directions on how to solve it. “Any 30 minutes spent in planning will give you back at least twice that amount that very day.” This was taught to us. It is also taught by the great management writers, Drucker, Allen and the like. OCS taught us the importance of taking care of people and equipment. If we don’t do this, we will probably fail. I would not hesitate to recommend OCS to anyone. Lessons learned will serve for a lifetime, no matter what the task.

**Claudie Chester Feagin, Jr.: 38-53**

It is more than I can possibly say what OCS means to me. I would say that I never dreamed that at a point in time, I would not only attend OCS at Fort Sill much less graduate as a 2nd Lt. I give a lot of credit to those that have preceded me and accomplished the same goal.

While I felt like I was very sharp when I left basic training and leadership school, I just did not measure up to the standards set by The Field Artillery OCS. I had a lot to learn

and a short time to do it. We were blessed to have the BC (battery commander) Capt. Mundinger, TAC Officers 2nd Lt. Earle, 1st Lt. Ballard and 2nd Lt. Stuckey and M/Sgt. Williams to guide us through a very tough and grinding 22 weeks of intense training outside of the classrooms.

I was the oldest man in our class, and it was sometimes hard to keep up with these fine young men. I was 27 when I graduated. Most of class 38 were 20 and under.

This period of my life will always stand out for the great training I received, and it has had a marked effect on my life since. This more so than my service in the US Navy during WWII, serving on an ammunition ship with battle stars for Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and Bombardment of Japan, and actually seeing Old Glory Raised atop Mount Suribachi at Iwo Jima.

OCS made it possible for me and others who did not make it to college to achieve a goal that was denied the less fortunate. I am one of those veterans who still gets choked up with the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner and the passing of the Colors. I believe it was the greatest honor for me to be allowed to serve my Country. I will never be able to thank those in charge of OCS and its leadership and pressures to make all of those who graduated be the kind of Officers that could be relied upon in the heat of battle. We proved ourselves on and off the field as competent and dependable Officers.

### **Robert S. Sandia: 39-53**

Not too long ago my OCS class 39 yearbook magically appeared after disappearing in the course of a family relocation. I was absolutely delighted to see it again as it brought back; and verified, many memories. It also tended to confirm the impact that the OCS experience had on my life, now that time has softened the many challenges candidates faced going through the 22-week program.

Before signing in at Robinson Barracks late one night in mid-February, 1952 and the contrived chaos of Zero or "Hell Week," I was fortunate in having completed basic training at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas where the objective was to train artillery crewmen. In addition, I had also completed a six-week leadership course at Chaffee and later served as cadre for several weeks, training recruits in the basics of "cannoneer's hop," formally known as "service of the piece." It gave me a bit of a head start especially when it came to leading my platoon in PT. Despite that I was still a Private, on Private's pay, which made the expenses attached to laundry, sewing of patches, gallons of Brasso, shoe shine gear, tee shirts for display only, and latrine cleaning materials always a burden for the next 22 weeks.

After "Hell Week" it was a relief to get started with the established academic curriculum, which sometimes provided the opportunity to catch up on much needed sleep, via the many training films. That relief was short lived in and about Robinson Barracks due to the eagle eyes of the aptly named "Redbirds" and the TAC staff. I will never forget the sheer misery faced by candidate platoon leaders in attempting to have his squads make the column left into the mess hall, while TACS and Redbirds were screaming in his face. I think there may a ghost at Robinson Barracks. If true, he has taken the form of a skeletal candidate (known in my yearbook as the "Flying Candidate," like the eternal Flying Dutchman), who is doomed to forever making short pivots off a desperately hungry

platoon leader, while a chorus of “Redbirds” hums Wagner’s “Ride of the Valkyries.” Someone connected with the museum should check to see if the ghost can be seen, usually shortly after Retreat.

Inspections, demerits, and the possible resulting “Jark” marches always loomed in my psyche, and with good reason, as I was never the neatest candidate in Class 39. Because of that failing one event remains burned in my memory. One week, later in the course, I was assigned as candidate platoon Sergeant. The platoon had done well that week and I was looking forward to spending some time with my colleagues in lovely downtown Lawton. My demerits were negligible. All seemed secure. Saturday inspection was over. No duties remained except for a short trip to the bookstore for several platoon members. I would march them in formation to that location. They dallied in the barracks while I became impatient outside. I yelled a mild obscenity, something like; get your lazy butts out here, now! No TAC was in sight... Mysteriously, out of nowhere appeared my TAC Platoon leader, LT Fred Radichel, who admonished me for using foul language and told me to post a number of demerits, 10 or so, which edged me into the two Jark march category. And two it was, which added to the considerable number of trips I had already made up and down MB 4. I must add that LT Radichel was very fair, very bright, set high standards, and did OCS proud.

Gunnery, - ah, gunnery. The tiny classrooms on Gunnery row. The windswept areas on the west range where forward observer instruction was held. The little folding stools to sit on. Papers and stuff flying in the Oklahoma wind. Do I have the correct target? Is that really the blockhouse on Signal Mountain and how far down from there is the old beat up tank hull? Then the dreaded command of “Candidate So and So, your mission.” When I got the call on my first mission, I had the target located, binoculars ready and the data called in a very professional manner. The reply, “on the way” came. Then, nothing.

I swept the range with my binoculars and about a thousand yards to my right I caught a glimpse of a burst. Not knowing if they were my rounds I called, in somewhat of a panic, “left one thousand, repeat range.” At that point, the officer in charge stopped everything and called back to the FDC. My coordinates were correct but, for some unexplained reason the FDC had managed to plot them one grid square out. The corrections were made, the rounds re-fired, landed where expected and I got a big “S.” It is a vivid memory of OCS, one not to be forgotten.

Class 39-53 graduated on July 28th, 1953. On July 27th, the Korean Armistice was signed and the guns in Korea went silent. Our Tactical Battery Commander, Captain Donald Dexter, announced that news and said that the armistice was “the best graduation gift that we could receive.” He was right and my OCS career ended on that note. But it was not the end of my association with OCS. In 1959, after a three-year tour with an 8” SP battalion in Ansbach, Germany, I was assigned back to Fort Sill to await the start of the next Advanced Artillery Course. At Sill I requested assignment back to OCS and, after meeting with the school’s Commandant, I returned to OCS, this time as a TAC Battery Commander. I became one of them - a (scary organ music) TAC officer!

The opportunity to lead an outstanding group of enlisted men through to commissioning in the United States Army was one of the most rewarding assignments in my military career. Class 4-59 started out with about 80 candidates and completed the program with

roughly half of that number. That tracked with what had occurred with my class in 1953. As I quickly learned, the high standards and pressure of OCS determined the number of dropouts. Some candidates quickly became disillusioned: some succumbed to the pressure of everyday life at Robinson Barracks: others could not keep up academically. It also became obvious that a candidate's autobiography was a significant tool in predicting his ability and his desire to complete the program. The "buddy rating" system also proved to be important as a predictor... In that regard there was one candidate who had difficulty simply marching in step. It was suggested, not mandated, that that he did not come up to OCS standards. In every other measure he was more than satisfactory and his "buddy ratings" showed him to be highly thought of by his classmates. He graduated and a few months later I received a note from his battalion commander complimenting him and OCS for preparing such a fine young officer.

I must add that there was never any indication that higher headquarters had established a quota system, nor was I ever given any direction to that end. It proved to me that the system, established many years before, worked to produce highly motivated, well prepared 2nd Lieutenants.

One of the graduates of Class 4-59 was John Shalikashvili, later General John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Upon his selection to that position, I wrote him a congratulatory note and jocularly suggested that it was my leadership at OCS that enabled him to reach that pinnacle. He found the time to reply and was very kind in his comments.

In 1992, I returned to OCS for a reunion and met classmate Don Goshman. We decided to try to contact our classmates and, as it developed, Don did most of the work. As a result, at the 1993 reunion we were joined by 12 former classmates and their wives. It was a very emotional time for all of us and we were proud to visit the museum and look at our battery's outstanding record in the weekly pass in review march, winning the competition many times. We climbed MB4, albeit very slowly, watched a firepower demonstration, sorrowfully remembered departed classmates, and bored spouses to tears with tales of our heroism in the face of the ever present (so it seemed) Tactical staff.

The experience and the effect OCS had on my life will always be one of the signal events of my life - and I thank the museum staff for the opportunity to share a bit of it with you and other Artillerymen.

### **Joel Elman: 44-53**

I always had a flair for drama and humor, especially of the iconoclastic variety, and when a situation arose that lent itself to either (or both), I usually exploited it with an Academy Award performance. Here are a couple of examples:

Drafted into the army in 1952, when my basic training had been completed, I volunteered, was selected, and was sent to Artillery Officers Candidate School in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Rigorous training - lots of spit, polish and discipline. Discrepancies of any kind - a wrinkle in your bedding, dust on the underside of your bunk frame, twitching in ranks, etc., resulted in penalties - "gigs" -- and the accumulated "gigs" for a week had to be worked off over the weekend via grueling forced marches or other types of demeaning aggravation.

I invariably accumulated enough gigs in a week to require the maximum level of gig-expunging weekend misery.

It was inspection time. We stood at attention in the hot sun for long, long time. Don't move. Don't dare move your eyes sideways even if the guy next to you faints (which happened), don't even blink if you can avoid it. Our Battery Commander, a West Point graduate, came down the ranks, inspecting each candidate, finding minuscule faults with everyone. As he approached me, a gnat flew into my eye, drowned, and disintegrated - right in my eye! - its body parts were floating around. I didn't blink. My eye watered, became super-bloodshot, and tears trickled down my face and dripped onto the front of my uniform, creating a huge stain. I didn't flinch, blink, or move. The Battery Commander finally reached me, turned and stood at attention in front of me-and gasped! "What's wrong with your eye?"

"Sir, candidate Elman! A bee flew into my eye and stung me, sir!"

The Battery Commander's lips trembled, and he said, "Oh my God! You didn't even move! Sergeant! See that this man is taken to the infirmary at once!"

As I was led away, the Battery Commander said to my fellow cadets, "Did you see that man? A bee stung him in the eye! He never moved! He never blinked! Now that's what I call a real soldier!"

At the infirmary, a doctor examined my eye, which I had already blinked and wiped clear, said it was perfectly fine, and that I should return to duty. I told him that the light seemed a bit harsh in that eye at the moment and asked if I could get a temporary gauze bandage as a sunscreen. He told me to see the nurse and tell her what I wanted. Next patient! I told the nurse that the doctor wanted my eye bandaged, and that since I was scheduled for a forced march, that it might make sense to double the gauze patch and hold it in place with a head wrap. She wrapped my eye and head in a wonderfully dramatic way.

I went back to the battery, my eye and head looking like a living wound, and I looking like a member of the walking wounded. When I arrived, my platoon was being tortured with endless pushups. I rejoined the ranks, dropped down, and began pumping up and down... with that big bandage on my eye and around my head. The Battery Commander saw me, came running over, and said, "What are you doing?" I replied, "Sir, candidate Elman! Pushups, sir!" I think he sobbed, then ordered me go into the barracks, lie down, and take the rest of the day off.

The last week of OCS underclass status was called Hell Week. It was a night and day maelstrom of forced marches, field maneuvers, inspections, lack of sleep, dashing and crashing around, and other assorted torments which culminated in a brutal forced march with a full pack, steel helmet, rifle, and a single canteen of water. The forced march was scheduled for midday when it would be as hot as hell. Officers in jeeps rode past our bedraggled column, looking into the faces of cadets for signs of serious physical problems and ordered some of the men to get into a shaded transport for an immediate drink of water and a ride to the finish line - no penalty for that. The danger was physical exhaustion and dehydration. One canteen of water was not enough to offset the hours of perspiration, searing heat, and clouds of dust along the trail. But this would be the last

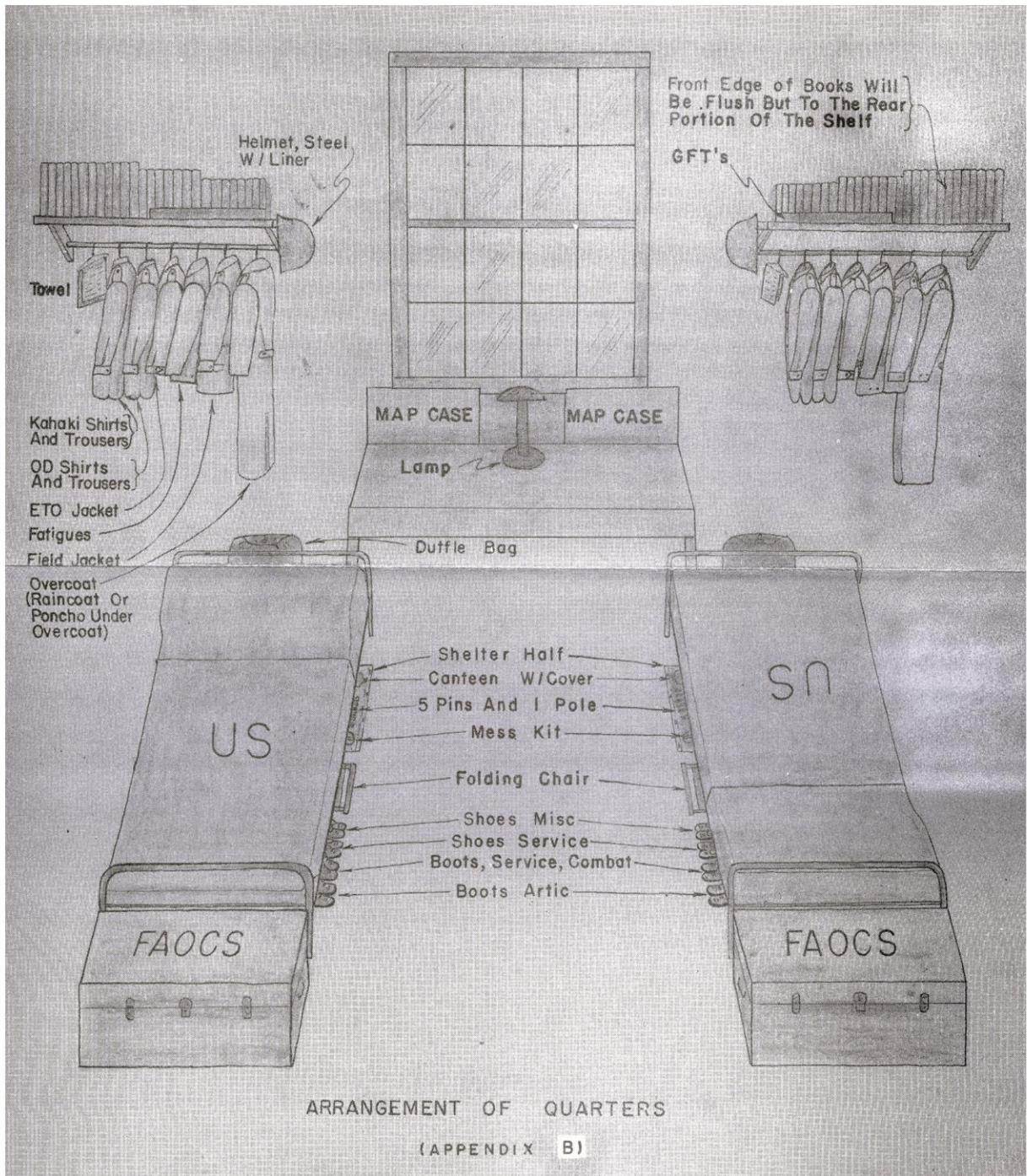
fragment of underclass aggravation. We would all be upperclassmen on the next day and would be exempt from any further harassment.

When the marching survivors approached the finish line many of them, practically dying of thirst, ran toward the large pots of ice water to be handed a ladle by an upperclassman, and to then slurp as much water as they could. It was a disgraceful scene. The cadets jostled and shoved each other in their desperate attempts to scoop ladles of water and chug them down. My Battery Commander was off to the side of the table, sympathetically watching the breakdown of discipline and good manners. He was with a Colonel, the Commandant of OCS. He pointed me out to him - remember, I was the hero who didn't even flinch when a bee stung him in the eye. I did not rush to the water table even though I desperately wanted a drink of water; instead, and sensing an opportunity for some glorious drama, I walked up to it calmly and with stately grace, seemingly unconcerned that I would be last man to slake his thirst. I politely declined the ladle handed to me by an upperclassman—who happened to be an aide to the Battery Commander -- and inquired softly, "Do you happen to have a proper glass?"

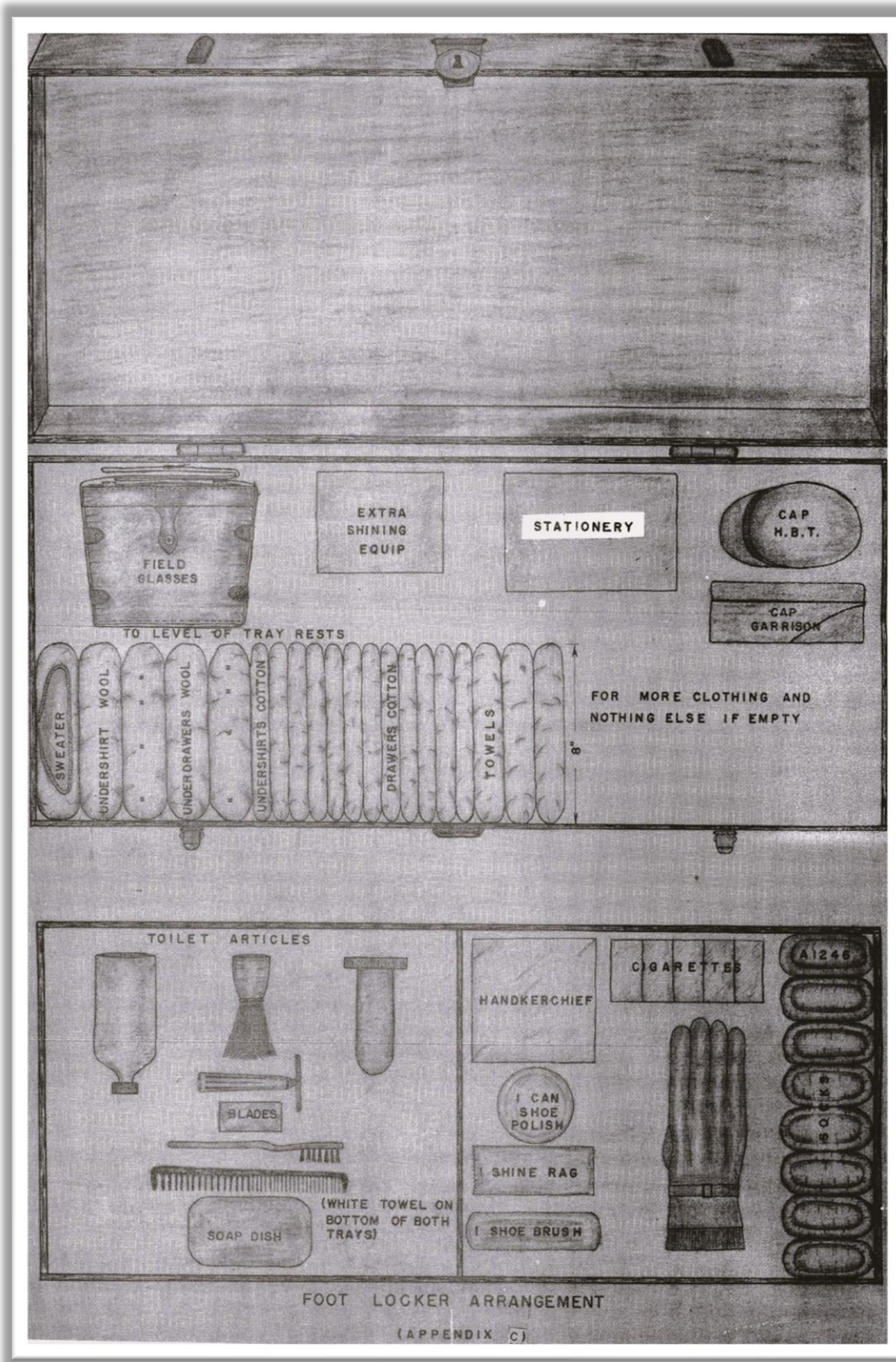
Thus, legends are created. MMWAUGH! Zingers. I love 'em!



*Candidate Cubicle – January 27, 1953*



*Arrangement of Candidate Cubicle from The Artillery School Officer Candidate Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 8 July 1952*



*Arrangement of Candidate Footlocker from The Artillery School Officer Candidate Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)*

8 July 1952



# Chapter Nine

## 1954 - 1955

**Thomas G. Armstrong: 46-54**  
**“A Journey to the Isle of OCS”**  
***From the Class 46-54 Redbook***

When Candide stepped off the vessel, he stared about him in wonder at the Island of OCS. From itinerant strangers, he had heard fabulous tales of the Island, but the expectation hardly lived up to reality. The inhabitants ran past him in frantic haste, every now and then slowing their pace to render hand tribute to someone who, although dressed much the same, was obviously a nobleman as was indicated by his grand demeanor and leisured pace.

Even as Candide was trying to conceive some explanation of this strange behavior, an ominous voice exploded behind him, and upon turning he found himself confronted by one of the noblemen.

For some time hence, Candide recalled with multihued detail the ensuing conversation. Upon inquiring the way, he was informed that a life history was not required, and he'd do better to curtail his comments. Candide found this brusqueness hard to comprehend, particularly in view of the fact that he had been sent here by his own government in order to eventually be knighted; and as a member of the nobility, it would seem prerequisite that one be able to think with articulate results. However, he had little time to ponder this, for the nobleman, in stentorian tones, directed him to one of the oblong dwellings immediately around him.

Thus, laden with his accoutrements, Candide moved toward his new quarters. He noted that all of the ranking personages wore red tabs upon their shoulders and with such frequency did they stridently speak to him that their very approach brought a shudder. They called him strange names, most notable being that of “Neoph.” Candide could not but reflect that this foreboded an unusual apprenticeship for knighthood.

Upon reaching his dwelling, he was, however, a bit reassured by familiarity- -clean, sparkling floors with regularly spaced, comfortable looking beds, lent a welcome tranquility to his soul. He sank to his bed and began to leisurely remove the comfortable belongings from his bags--warm, casual brown suits, loose, soft tan shirt and slacks combinations. From outside a raucous voice blatantly announced an arbitrary time seemingly without meaning. He shrugged and sank back on his pillows in an attempt to defeat the stifling heat. From over the hum of drowsiness came another call of diminished time. Vaguely perturbed at the crier's lack of voice nuances, he tried once again to settle into a complacency marred only by the bustle of other inhabitants of the dwelling, and the swelter and droning of innumerable tiny local monsters. Perhaps, then, this island wouldn't be insufferable- -for rest seemed a delightful ambrosia.

Through a crush of flying legs, garbled garments and a babel of screams, Candide found himself scurried out of doors and into a ragged formation. Confusion reigned--at first Candide could detect no directing force until gradually one voice rose out of the melee

subordinating all others. Two of the overseers employed by the nobility were rounding up stray Neophs much in the manner he had seen cattle corralled in his native land. They appeared singularly proficient and with their animal roars and uncompromising stares soon had Candide's neighbors standing erect and fearful. As Candide stood there, casting furtive glances about him, he struck into a terror by the voice of an Overseer knifing into his back with, "Straighten your limbs and keep your heels together. Neoph!" As Candide strained to keep rigid, the Chief Overseer strode to the head of the group and, commanding their attention put forth the edict which was to govern their Initial week.

They began to scrub apparently immaculate floors; to pull weeds where there was no grass, to go on long treks around the perimeter of their area. Candide could not guess how this might qualify him for the hierarchy but again and again it was thumped into them that this was the beginning of a suitable foundation. The befuddlement he had originally experienced daily increased as he unhesitatingly performed these tasks. The culmination of that week was Inspection--an operation designed to demonstrate that for every single thing Candide had tried to straighten up he had neglected four; he found himself, indeed, a particularly negligent young man. He was somewhat mollified by the knowledge that all the other Neophs had had a similar experience.

Monday morning at 0430 hours by the island's time system, Candide was introduced to Academics. Academics, it was explained, were seven hours daily of class room instruction which were added to the duties of the initial week. He learned first of the machinations of the Academic Department's method of instruction; then he delved into the mysteries of the maintenance of the cuisine, and then an abrupt traverse into the realm of transmissions and fuel pumps. While Candide enjoyed the class work it was mitigated by the continual rearranging of his paraphernalia by the noble who ruled his group. But through this frantic, new way of life, Candide discovered growing in him a depth of spirit that he had never before known--all the adjurations of the nobility, the myriad facts he absorbed in classes, the rigors of physical training he was subjected to, the emigration of many of his friends from the island, were focused into a pride almost overwhelming when his group was adjudged best of all those competing in the weekly pageant. Since the beginning they had tried for this, on two occasions gaining second best, but now, after nine weeks, they found new confidence in themselves and their fellow Neophs because they WERE best.

And shortly following this triumph came another. The weeks of painting and scrubbing and dusting, which previously had seemed so superfluous, of a sudden developed into the honor of having their abode selected as the finest on the entire isle. Placed upon the dwelling was a plaque which bore testimony to this merit, and Candide seldom looked at this but what he felt a swell of pride. And when he examined this emotion closely, he was aware that at last he and the rest of his fellows were coming to possess the active spirit of a cooperating group. After so many strenuous weeks he began to feel an "inhabitant" of the island in the full sense.

And it was obvious that the other Neophs shared this sensation, for the quality of working together became almost habit and laurel followed laurel in the many-faceted sphere of island competition. The successive Neophs who managed the supplies and those who disseminated current happenings of import accumulated honors each week in their specialized fields. Candide realized his groups complete superiority and discovered this

belief has pervaded the rest of the isle. Even the nobles seemed pleased with the great forward strides these Neophs had made.

And concomitant with this progress, Candide found himself granted brief respites from the regimen of the island. Precious hours were doled out for the exploration of surrounding lands by Neophs--and they found startling evidence by comparison that their training had given them a bearing and confidence that set them apart from the serfs of neighboring lands. The badge of their apprenticeship became a mark of pride. Rejuvenation of their social graces--which they had long subordinated to the effort of attaining excellence in their domicile, themselves and their study of weapons and tactics--culminated in a great fete during which the presence of maidens, mazurkas, gavottes, and the lowering of some of the barriers between nobles and Neophs supported the Neoph's claim that they could excel at anything they attempted.

However, a sudden thrust back to reality came as the Neophs moved from their shining barracks to establish themselves in the more casual forests near their area. Candide found that for the moment absolute meticulousness in dress and housing was not the work to heed; instead, he would have then been quite willing to agree with the nobles' oft-voiced opinion that he was indeed lacking in personal neatness. However, to compensate for this and the discomfort of rising in darkened frigidty, Candide benefited greatly from the brief experience of a wide variety of tactical positions under simulated conditions of the battlefield.

Upon return from the forest Candide underwent a transition period of perdition after which he found himself suddenly and gloriously a semi-member of the nobility. Red epaulettes appeared on his shoulders and with this mark of quality and achievement came new pride in his status, unaccustomed freedom, and also added responsibilities and duties. The four weeks Candide experienced as a junior noble saw a gradual metamorphosis from plebeian to patrician. It was so subtle a change that he found it hardly creditable when the day of knighthood grew into actuality.

And then, unaccountably, without realism, it happened--and he was no longer private citizen, no longer Neoph, but instead a nobleman.

When Candide left the following day, it seemed impossible that a place which had witnessed such a turbulent and influential segment of his life could be left behind; that it was an inescapable factor which would remain and motivate regardless of where his fortunes as a noble might lead. And, Candide reflected, it was a reassuring thought.

### **Cleve C. Kimmell: 46-54**

I enlisted in the Army in June 1947, but I received an extension to report for duty when I completed college (five-year delay). Stationed at Camp Roberts as a Private E-2, Security Detail was one of the dreariest events! We carried loaded M-1 rifles. My first encounter with a General Officer was about 2 a.m. on a semi-foggy night. I saw someone lurking about the facility some two-blocks distant. Calling for him to "advance and be recognized," I kept the rifle trained on his body. When he was about 50-feet away I called for him to stop and give the password. It was correct and I gave the counter sign, then I recognized the Star on his uniform -- and saluted him. He made some comment about my alertness, and my name. ***Why have a General go out at night for such a mundane task -- surely***

***there are others who could do that? If I were suspicious, he might have been shot. I do not believe he knew the rifle was loaded!***

I had enlisted with OCS as a request – but the personnel department at Camp Roberts “lost” my application. They also lost the entire record of my having enlisted in the Army. Outside of being paid, no other record existed. I called on the personnel offices several times a week, complaining until they were very tired of me. With a “non-soldier” status, I was assigned into the Base Cadre – that group trains soldiers in various facets of military life. Mine was to instruct them how to take care of their firearms and how to shoot pistols, carbines and M1 Rifles. The various teams took these courses as they passed through Basic Training (about 12-14 weeks). Most of them were then sent to Korea. I was Squad Leader at that time and resided in the 2nd floor of a barracks building. A serious earthquake shook the building, and some of us were dumped off the beds – the local guards on duty at the time were screaming from their post locations, most were crying. Nothing serious happened – just a scary thing. ***Of course, a General appeared and asked if there was anything he could do to help? I said no. No one else saw him!***

Quite naturally, on occasion I was put in charge of barrack’s cleanup – while the others were on duty assignments. That meant cleaning up the whole thing – windows, floors, head (toilets, etc.) and making sure all was spotless. Guess what? Along comes a General – and he was dragging with him the luckless company commander. First off, he wanted to see the head! He was shocked – as I had the area spotless and all the toilet seats were down! He asked why? Very simple, I explained – “On that wall - over there, is the latrine. The toilets are for sitting down, and not peeing in them. ***Soldiers should have better manners than that!***” ***He was stunned but agreed with me. No one had ever said that before.***

With no other orders for a missing person, me, I was sent to the “Leadership School” on base. It was two months of pure hell. All movements and actions were monitored continuously – and with a huge amount of harassment. The final training test consisted of dividing the members into groups of five, with a different person taking the lead at each test station. The situations at each test site were designed to be impossible to complete with this small of a group. The leader for each test site was graded on how he handled the situation. ***There was a General lurking about and watching me; and I guess I was the only one to see him. The training class was twice as tough as OCS would be.***

I was sent Fort Sill for OCS training. My personnel file was finally located. Things got a lot tougher – and starting out with 139 candidates – only 45 graduated; about 30% of the original group were veterans from WWII operations in Europe. This class the last one to feel the wrath of exceptionally hard hazing provided to us.

Once, while being grouped with others and our field packs – there was a surprise inspection. All our stuff had to be laid out in a precise order on our shelter half (one-half of a tent). There were about 80 of us at that time, and the Commanding One-Star General came over – and inspected my layout! Why me? Finding nothing missing, he left, and we all had the privilege of re-stowing our stuff.

No other Generals on inspections; but they were present at the parade fields when I was commandant (in charge of Sunday Parades) and watched my every movement. No direct assignment after graduation so I was sent to Radio School, then Survey School – getting a degree in that field – and assigned to Fort Bragg.

**Frank D. Baker: 50-54**

Back in 1953 I received my orders for Artillery OCS, while teaching at the Leaders Course at Camp Roberts, California. One of my fellow instructors also received his orders at the same time. Since he had a car, I suggested we go to Fort Sill together. His name was Rudolph Valentino Brown. I laughed at the time, for my name is Franklin Delano Roosevelt Baker. We were both assigned to MIKE Battery, Class of 1954. To add to this coincidence our TAC Staff Platoon Leaders were 1LT John Quincy Landers and 2LT Grover Cleveland McClure.

Here we were all in the same outfit at the same time. I guess Rudolph Valentino was not meant to be an officer, for Brownie flunked out of OCS. I don't know about the careers of any of the three, but I did work with John Landers and Grover McClure for several months after graduation as a fellow TAC Officer. General Jack Merritt and I worked at OCS at the same time. I continued in the Army until retirement in December 1972. I always thought of it as an amazing coincidence! For what it is worth.

**James Blakeslee: 54-54**

My training certainly prepared me for the rest of my life. However, I didn't understand how 15 straight weeks of the Saturday Hiking Club up MB 4 prepared me for it, until I joined the 11th Airborne Division.

**Gordon Cress: 54-54**

After high school I enrolled at John Muir Junior College in Pasadena. The Korean War was in full swing, but no one really worried about it. I finally dropped out of college after a year to work full time. Shortly after that I got my "Greetings" from the Selective Service folks. In my innocence I figured I'd have a better chance for Officer Candidate School (OCS) if I enlisted, so I did so.

At Fort Ord we got our GI haircuts and standard issue of clothes, etc. After a few days there we (about six of us in my induction company) were flown up to Fort Lewis, Washington. This was my home away from home for the next year or so. I went through the standard eight weeks of basic training and then on for another eight weeks of heavy weapons training on 4.2 mortars, 75 & 105 mm recoilless rifles and heavy, water-cooled, 30 mm machine guns. We were redlined for direct shipment to Korea, and everyone was really paying attention until they announced the truce in late July and then we all kind of relaxed.

I had put in for OCS and was on hold, awaiting orders. They told me my IQ score was 142 and the other test results should be more than adequate to get me in. Since I was assigned as a gunner in a heavy machine gun squad that sounded good; machine gunners did not have a history of long life in combat

In January of 1954 I finally got my orders for OCS. After 16 weeks of infantry basic training, I was assigned to *Artillery* Officer Candidate School. I was assigned to Battery H

(How in the phonetic alphabet). The first weeks, starting February 1, were really hell; they constantly screamed at us and never gave us a moment's peace. We were treated to such delights as having to double time everywhere in the area and the north-south sidewalks between the barracks being off limits to the candidates (for some unknown reason). One grizzled old sergeant, who marched us over to the church to hear the Chaplain, during the first (or orientation) week, called us to attention afterwards and proclaimed, "I hope you listened real good to the padre, because those are the last kind words you're going to hear for a long time." This was when I started to wear my glasses full time. In OCS you had to be able to spot an officer or upperclassman from a block away and I sure couldn't do that without the glasses.

The upperclassmen, who you had to salute and treat as officers, were the worst! After 18 weeks you make upperclassmen, who are referred to as Redbirds after the red felt markings they wore on the epaulets. I remember that you could get a 4-hour pass (big deal!) on Saturday afternoon if you got less than 20 demerits during the week. This was usually no problem as the weekly demerit totals were normally in the 200 to 300 range. Somehow, in the fourth or fifth week, I managed to slip by until almost noon on Saturday with only 18 demerits. This was unbelievable! I came roaring out of the barracks, headed for the CO's office to pick up my pass only to run directly in one of our TAC officers, LT J. J. Walsh (we called him "Smiley" because of the crooked little smile he always seemed to be sporting). Smiley just looked at me as I came to a halt in front of him and saluted smartly; "Candidate Cress," he said without even looking at me, "post one demerit for dirty brass, one demerit for scuffed shoes and one demerit for a sloppy tie; that ought to hold you!" And with that he turned and walked off. Talk about crushed! My dream of four hours of peace and quiet ruined! But I lived. Our TAC officers were a varied group, from Smiley Walsh to Lieutenant Heiss to Battery Commander, Captain Spiker. Some of the extracurricular activities included "rat races" during which we crawled under the bunks for the length of the barracks racing against another guy (the loser had to go back in line and keep at it until he won or was so badly bloodied up in the knees and elbows that they let him quit) and mock inspections in the late evening in which we would have 30 seconds or so to get all our gear outside and be standing tall ready for inspection. It involved tossing all the gear, including bunks outside through the windows or doors.

Another favorite trick of the TAC officers involved the many manuals we were issued (and never used); the manuals, at least a hundred of them, were of all different sizes, no two the same, and they had to be all lined up in perfectly ascending order on the shelf above your bunk. It took at least an hour to carefully align them and make sure they were perfectly lined up on the shelf; Then the TAC officer or Red Bird would just take a glance at them, knock them all on the floor with the terse comment "manuals not sized." In the seventh or eighth week I came down with a terrible sinus infection and spent four days in the hospital. I got back to the battery just in time to keep from being set back to the next class (a loss of four weeks). A potential major, major setback, indeed!

The uncertainty of things really got to you. After a really grueling run or inspection there would be resignation forms on your bunk and all you had to do was sign it and out you'd go. You'd go off to class in the morning and when you returned in the evening, you'd find that the guy next to you was gone; he just vanished with all his clothes and the mattress rolled up like he'd never existed. He'd either quit or been washed out. At the mess hall that night you would see him dishing out your chow as he waited for reassignment. I

always thought it was kind of cruel to make guys who wash out have to face their friends across the counter just after they had been given the heave-ho, but maybe that was the whole idea.

I believe we started with a class of over 100 and 24 weeks later, on July 13th, graduated around 61 shiny new second lieutenants. They did try to reduce the OCS attrition rate through testing and Leadership School. Leadership School was a four-week mini-OCS. It was meant to weed out as many as possible before they got to OCS. When I went to Leadership School, they picked our group for a special program. Instead of the normal harassment and inspections, they subjected us to two solid weeks of written and oral testing to see if they could find a better way of predicting who would and wouldn't cut it in OCS. We really weren't all that unhappy to miss the harassment part, although it did get pretty dull and tedious taking all those non-stop tests. Never did find out if they came to any conclusions. I do know one thing, all those who made it through OCS did have a sense of humor; I think you had to have one just to cope.

The Red Birds really had life by the tail; they had almost unlimited power over the candidates and after taking so much abuse for 18 long weeks just couldn't wait to dish some out! A favorite sport was for three or four Red Birds to descend on one poor candidate and start firing questions at him so fast there was no way he could answer one without ignoring the other. Then all hell would break loose. Among the favorite harassment techniques were asking obscure questions like "who was the first soldier caught dog-eyeing in the Greek army?" or asking no win questions like "have you stopped cursing at upperclassmen?" Dog-eyeing, by the way, is the crime of letting your eyes stray from the direct straight ahead direction when you are in ranks. The only acceptable responses to questions were "yes sir, no sir and no excuse, sir." Anything else resulted in the order to give me ten (or twenty), referring, of course, to pushups.

On Sundays we had our afternoon hikes. They consisted of donning full packs, steel helmets and M-1 rifles and making a run out to and up Medicine Bluff 4 and back. I don't know how far it was to MB4, but it had to be at least a couple of miles. About the third week in OCS someone contacted me about writing a column about H Battery for the weekly newspaper and I did that until we graduated. We did have some scheduled OCS recreation and that usually took the form of softball. I was the pitcher because I was the only one who could windmill and throw strikes. It was fun and took our minds off the other OCS stuff. We also had Physical Training (PT) tests. The tests consisted of pushups, squat jumps, sit-ups, chin-ups and a 200-yard run. There were a possible 500 points, and the ultimate was to score 400 points (be a "400 man"). By the end of OCS, more than half the class scored over 400. It took 54 pushups to score a hundred points, and equally high numbers of sit-ups, chin-ups, squat jumps and a decent time in the run. After the squat jumps, your legs were so tied up it was all you could do to walk, much less run, but somehow we managed

One night around 7:00 p.m., a whole group of us were ordered to report to the orderly room at battery headquarters. Usually this would be cause for worry, but in this instance it included several who were obviously destined to be the distinguished military graduates of our Class. We thought, "What could be wrong with this group?" The problem was rust on our rifles. To the casual observer this may not seem like a big deal, but in OCS it probably ranks right in there with treason and murder. There were hints of rust on all

the offender's rifles and after what seemed like hours we were allowed to go back to our barracks being duly chastised not let it happen again. The weather there seemed to cultivate rust on the best-maintained equipment and we just had to live with it.

Geddings Hardy Crawford, Jr. was one of my friends there along with Curtis Manley. Geddings was quite a southern character; I think he'd been thrown out of nearly all the best universities in the south. Needless to say, his family was fairly wealthy. Curtis was just a good old Texas boy.

We were schooled in all phases of the army artillery in anticipation of our becoming officers. We learned about supply, tactics, gunnery, communications, leadership, etc. We learned how to "shoot in" a battery with the aiming circle, how to use the BC scope, drove 2 1/2 ton trucks, became forward observers (directing artillery fire), got our chance to use and understand radios and hard line communication systems. We got to actually fire 105 mm howitzers and also covered a whole host of other military and academic subjects

Geddings, Curtis and I were interviewed about the fifteenth week as to our interest in Observation Battalion work. That was about when they assigned us officer serial numbers, too. It made us feel like someone actually thought we might make it. The Observation Battalion people had contacted us because of our high scores in math and math aptitude. We just had a nice chat and they went on their way. It was the last we saw or heard from them until we got our orders after graduation.

The feeling in that 18th week when you reach Red Bird status is indescribable; the relief to know you have made it! Then comes the realization that now it's your turn to dish it out. Let us at 'em! We finally did graduate and my folks were there to pin on my first set of shiny new gold lieutenant's bars. A proud July 13, 1954 for them and me. Of course, the OCS sergeants were on hand to collect their due; it is army tradition that the first enlisted man to salute you gets a dollar. Naturally, the sergeants were stationed right outside the auditorium doors to render that first salute and collect all the dollar bills.

Here it was 1954 and I was officially an "officer and a gentleman," but being only twenty at the time, I still couldn't buy a beer off the base.

### **"Love Battery OCS"**

#### ***From the Class 56-54 Red Book***

With our caps peaked and wearing silver or gold plated brass we eagerly yet cautiously arrived at Robinson Barracks. From every state and from every branch of service we came pouring in.

The transition from ordinary GI to that of O/C was no simple change, but a necessary one, "Hit a brace, drive that gross chin to the rear, drop your salute and start over..." were phrases which we were to learn quite well. Time and time again we were told that these two-two weeks would fly by. Our opinion then? Phooey!

Love will never forget our first Sunday here... Let's see now- it was around 0530 when our peaceful slumber was disturbed by the shouts of Charlie Battery's Redbirds, What could they possibly want at this early hour? Yup, you've guessed it. MB 4. Up to that time



MB meant nothing to us. Loading our packs with our front row of manuals, we double timed up and back. This was our introduction to MB 4 - one we'll never forget.

We can all recall those quaint walks to Motors. Ah yes. It seems that no matter how early we started, we still had to double time. The Department of Motors brought forth many revelations. For example, O/C Engstrom has yet to recover from the shock of learning that a vehicle is not propelled by a squirrel on a treadmill. Horrors! O/C Wood will always be remembered for his long discourses on the evolution of the I-head engine (or was it H-head?).

Middle class status brought forth many added privileges. With these privileges, however, came many more responsibilities. Then that coveted day arrived. Into the trucks and out to the field for a week of practical application of what we had learned in class. Every one of Love's candidates should now be an authority on insects. Never before had we seen so many different species... and all of them hungry. The less brave covered themselves with sulphur powder. True, they lost a few friends, but the insects shunned them too.

Receiving our red tabs was a dream come true. How well we can recall those first few moments when we left the mess hall as upperclassmen and were greeted by shouts of "Good Afternoon, Sir," Once again greater responsibilities were given us. Upper class standing brought with it an opportunity to view others critically, an opportunity to help others. OR's had to be written carefully and duties such as ADO had to be performed diligently.

Graduation day arrived and was received with mixed emotions. We were all happy to graduate; and yet the thought of leaving friends had a dampening effect upon our joviality. For here in OCS a unique type of friendship is molded; friendships brought forth by a common hardship, but even more frequent experiences of humorous incidents and good times. Even the greatest of men cannot leave such friends without feeling he is leaving behind an integral part of himself. True, time has a way of "double-timing" in the OCS area. We now realize everyone was right when they said that the two-two weeks would fly by. And now as we leave Robinson Barracks, we leave feeling that we have accomplished something, and we leave as MEN.

### **"Snow Hall Opens" from the Artillery OCS Archives**

On 14 August 1954, The Artillery School officially opened Snow Hall (B730) to replace McNair Hall built in the 1930s. Snow Hall housed classrooms and administrative offices and was air conditioned. The building had 190,000 square feet of floor space and facilities to accommodate 2,500 students.

### **"E-5 Grade is Due Officer Candidates"**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Thursday September 2, 1954)***

Army enlisted men below the rank of sergeant selected for training at Officer Candidate Schools will be promoted to grade E-5 by the school commandants upon their enrollment, the Department of the Army has announced. Those serving in higher grade at the time of selection will attend OCS in that grade. Prior to the revision of procedures enlisted men attended OCS in the grade in which they were serving at the time of selection.

**John R. Harrell: 58-54**

Even after (all these years), the memories flood back and it seemed as though it was only yesterday. How vividly I remember reporting into the OCS Headquarters Building 3025 (now Durham Hall) filled with fear and trembling. But, I also remember proudly departing Robinson Barracks some months later with gold bars shining. A pivotal point in my life and from conversations at the reunions, in the lives of us all. Fort Sill and OCS always will be a special part of us.

***From the Class 60-55 Redbook***

Early in the weeks of George Battery's sojourn at OCS, a big event took place in our lives as candidates. Our classes were transferred from the dinginess of Gunnery Row to the well-lighted, perfectly appointed classrooms of Snow Hall. We were among the first who were privileged to enjoy its many advantages.

This new building on the campus of the Artillery School fairly breathes the spirit of professional competence and knowledge which has always marked the U.S. Artillery. Named for Major General William J. Snow, First Chief of Field Artillery in the days when cannoners wore riding boots and swore at a balky horse instead of at a stalled truck, this imposing edifice is located near the hub of Field Artillery activities.

We salute Snow Hail as a center of professional Artillery knowledge and hope that OCC Six-Zero may be worthy of the instruction we have received within its walls.

**John F. Oppie: 61-55**

I graduated in February 1955. Artillery OCS Class 61, Battery B. OCS was one of the best experiences in my life-I loved it and made some wonderful friends. The camaraderie of OCS is something I will never forget.

There are some memories that I still enjoy. One I still chuckle over has to do with the constant "direction" provided by the Red Birds (Upperclassmen). One poor soul who was assigned as student Battalion Commander and charged with marching us to the Dining Hall--was so "helped" by a Red Bird screaming in his face that he marched the entire Battalion into the side of the Dining Hall where there was no door.

Another that I still enjoy is the order, "Stop That Shivering" screamed into the face of a poor Candidate as we stood at attention in the very early hours of a frigid January morning.

Our 6 months of OCS were very demanding, and I am still proud of the fact that once we got the hang of it Battery B won most of the awards given for Best Barracks, Best Parade, TI&E, Supply, Sports and P.T. for the last 4-5 months of our training.

I had the dubious honor of being chosen as President of the Honor Council of our Battery. On one occasion the council chose to punish but not dispel from OCS a Candidate guilty of some transgression that brought him before the Council. The OCS Commandant, Col. W. A. Enemark did not like our decision to not dispel the Candidate and let me have it with both barrels. That is not one of my fun memories.

A significant number of our class did not graduate with our class, some never at all and

some in later classes, We started with just over 100 and graduated 71 including about 36 drop backs from earlier classes. I still feel a sense of accomplishment that I graduated and was overwhelmed that I graduated as a Distinguished Military Graduate--when I started, I wasn't even sure I would graduate.

### **John L. Patten: 61-55**

In Basic training I wanted to be an infantryman. We took the OCT test and a number of us qualified for interviews. I recall a young LT talking to us on the rifle range and asking how many had taken the test - more than ten put up their hands. He then announced that only two would be chosen and only one would graduate. My thought was, "What a smartass. If I'm chosen I will graduate." Because I was not a citizen, I had to wait for that process to play out and in the meantime, I was an acting platoon sergeant for two cycles of basic trainees.

Finally, I was told that my scores qualified me to attend Artillery OCS at Fort Sill-not what I was hoping for. In due course I boarded a bus and departed for Oklahoma. When we arrived in Oklahoma City it was 112 degrees. For a guy who had never been south of New Jersey that was a shock. I spent two days in the YMCA sweating and getting acclimated. Of course, when I arrived at Robinson Barracks, I was wearing a Garrison Cap and walked down the sidewalk which drew a number of salutes from candidates until a Redbird met me and I received my first chewing out. I thought it was humorous but knew enough not to smile. Then we met SGTs Hekyll and Jekyll for zero week, drew our gunnery bag and books and prepared for the course to come. Between the browbeating we took from them and trying to sleep in a building where the atmosphere was sweltering we looked forward to the start of the formal program and knew the TACs could not be worse. Snow Hall had just opened, and we knew our time of instruction would be cool for classes there.

Things went well for me until a Friday in September when I was informed that my younger brother had been killed in an auto accident. That same day I had undergone an operation to repair a blood vessel injury in my ankle suffered in a pickup football game. The doctor who operated on me was present when the chaplain informed me of my brother and he called his wife to take me around post to get money, a plane ticket and leave slip. She and her two young children drove around post to complete the arrangements and delivered me back to her husband when all was done. I was pressed for time to get to the airport, so he called the MP station and got me a ride to the airport. We made the plane as it was loading.

When I returned to OCS Colonel Enemark, the Commandant, called me into his office and asked me if I wanted to continue. I told him I really didn't know because I was still in shock from losing my brother. He told me he had to set me back four weeks but if I decided to not continue, I should come to see him and tell him in person. He knew, and I didn't that when you got back into the daily requirements and harassment there was little time left for personal reflections. Because of his interest I have always viewed COL (later MG) Enemark as one of the heroes of my life. Obviously, I did stay the course and graduated in February 1955.

A comment about life in OCS; I am 6'5" tall and most of the Redbirds who captured you for guidance, usually at night returning from the mess hall, were much shorter. It really was hard for me to not smirk when they would be nose to my chest and yelling at me. Since the course work came easily to me there was not the pressure of flunking out due to academics and that made a big part of life there easy. Last comment. We were told that when we were approaching graduation there would be recruiters there offering their branch specialties. We were told to sign up for the first one that came along and if we chose a later offer the first/last choice would be cancelled. The first one we got was a Captain talking to us about going airborne. I had no interest in jumping out of airplanes but followed the guidance and signed up. Next was aviation (too tall) and then signal (no interest). Then we received orders, and I was assigned to the 11th Airborne Division at Fort Campbell. So, began a thirty-year association with airborne units.

Like most young men who survived OCS it was a life changing experience. The comradery, intense training environment and coping skills developed there influenced all of us no matter how long our military career was.

**Richard R. Brown: 62-55**

***“Definition of Leadership from a candidate in Class 69-55”***

*The original was submitted to Richard R. Brown (Class 62-55), who was a TAC Officer at the time. The composition was not signed, and Richard does not recall the name of the candidate. He had the original document for more than 60 years.*

A man who is going to lead men must have, on his own part complete control of himself. His temper and his emotions must be kept cool at all times. He must be a man of honor and integrity, true to himself and his ideals. His actions and his speech must establish the highest standards so that others will follow his example. He must be completely confident of himself, willing to firmly defend his actions.

In relation to those he is leading, he must be sensitive to their feelings and desires, allowing those things to influence his methods, but not the purpose of his leadership. He must respect the honor and integrity of his subordinates, treating them with courtesy and tact, and he must show implicit trust in their good word. Thus, he can delegate his authority, and, with a minimum of supervision, can accomplish his task. He must have a refined sense of fairness and never hastily judge his subordinates. His patience must be infinite. He must have the ability to go to any length to instruct a man in a job he wants done. These qualities he will allow to influence his methods of leading but will not cause him to deviate from the job he intends to do.

Finally, he must have an enthusiastic and complete interest in the task he is leading men to accomplish -an almost single-minded devotion to the duty he has chosen. Based on thorough practical knowledge of his job, he must be able to analyze any situation objectively and clearly and come to a decision about a cause of action. His judgement, based on experience, must be good, but not timid. He must not fear to be bold – at the same time he must never gamble on hasty judgment. A leader must, above all else, be able to take decisive action based on his own good judgment.

Decision and action – with a developed ability to deal with people – are the keystone of leadership.

**Clare D. Bedsaul: 64-55**

The OCS experience has been the most meaningful experience in my life. Although at the time I felt that much of the stress induced was unnecessary, I later discovered that this experience had taught me to remain calm and rational in any stressful situation and allowed me to make valid decisions where earlier I would have totally fallen apart.

My closest friends over the years are those I met in OCS and subsequently served with over the years. Unfortunately, the closest of these friends have departed this earth but the memories associated with them are forever locked in my mind. OCS provided me with opportunities that I never would have had otherwise. It was an experience that I will never forget but one that I'm sure I would not care to repeat.

**Lynn D. Hickman: 66-55**

Regardless of the eventual circumstances, we were all classmates of the Artillery OCS, who endured the trials and tribulations of the training. I feel there is a camaraderie that you can't dismiss.

**Charles I. Miller: 67-55**

I had one experience that had a profound influence on my army career: I reported to OCS in January 1955 as a Master Sergeant, Infantry, with seven years service. Having only a high school education and absolutely no algebra or geometry training, gunnery and survey classes were very difficult and I was about to flunk out. I requested to see my Battery Commander to quit OCS. He sent me up to see Colonel Enemark, the Commandant at that time. Colonel Enemark checked my records and said that I was rated second highest in the class in leadership and he was not going to let me quit. He said he would assign a lieutenant to tutor me and get me through gunnery. Needless to say, after an eight week set-back, I graduated with Class 67-55 in August 1955 and went on to retire from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel with over 24 years of service. Graduating from OCS was surely one of the best things to ever happen to me.

**Don A. Chorpenning: NG1-55**

I came to Robinson Barracks for an eleven week stay in 1955, straight from UCLA, almost completely unprepared, from my AAA unit. I was given a brand new issue of uniforms, which were lost in transit for a couple weeks. Living in a single borrowed set of khakis especially for an NG made an easy target for the "Red Birds!" There were several of us without uniforms, enough for them to place us in a "separate platoon" of dirt bags.

The Army also managed to put a "Hold" on me for medical reasons. It seems that I had a positive serology. Knowing what that means now, I am surprised I wasn't placed in strict quarantine. This saved me from the first few MB-4 marches, but I got to go later.

Our class curriculum was designed to contain much of the academics of the regular course but had much less time for harassment. In addition, apparently there had been a "Congressional Investigation" shortly before we arrived and the TAC staff seemed to be walking very lightly. Instructors recognized us as generally being older and having more extensive backgrounds than many of the active army candidates. Personally I had never seen a Howitzer before and had always avoided Trigonometry.

Later, I went to Fort Bliss and learned a lot of Tube Gunnery. Our Battery G was much larger than all the others and we even took the prize for one of the weekly parades. After everyone had properly tailored uniforms and had learned how to wear them. Our class was a fairly rowdy group and for a number of reasons we were strongly advised to have our graduation party in an unused Mess Hall. We were told that the MP's wouldn't bother us moving to Robinson Barracks from there.

My Platoon's Gunnery Officer was a Marine 1LT who didn't have much love for the Army but felt we were different enough that he took us out for an "After-Party-Party" in a Speakeasy in Lawton after we finished the Mess Hall. Oklahoma was very dry in 1955.

**"Letter to the graduates of Class 68-55"**

**From General (then Captain) John W. Vessey, Jr., former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

Congratulations to you on your pride-worthy achievement.

Apply the same determination and fortitude that you have shown and the knowledge you have gained here and you will be a credit to this school, the Army and our Country. Remember that the man who refuses to surrender or be beaten is a difficult man to whip.

You take with you the best wishes of the tactical staff for success in your military careers.

John W. Vessey  
Capt, Artillery  
Commanding

**GEN John W. Vessey, Jr. former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

***Interviews on May 8 and May 12, 2012***

**By Thomas Saylor, Ph.D. at the Vessey Residence, North Oak, Minnesota**

***GEN John W. Vessey, Jr., was direct commissioned and attended the Officer Special Basic Course at Fort Sill in 1945. He later served as a Battery Commander in the Artillery Officer Candidate School:***

***(May 8, 2012):*** "I jokingly say that this officer special basic course was to teach us how to use the right utensils in the officers' mess. How to keep from smelling up the officers' latrines."

"But there was a lot of technical know-how, and it was actually the basic artillery officers course that had been taught to OCS candidates and to new graduates of the Military Academy, except it was condensed. It was much shorter; I think it was six weeks or something like that. I learned a few new things that were technically related to artillery, but also learned that I had been taught well by my mentors in the 34th Division."

"And I was number one in the class. So, as I say, I was a little cocky."

***(May 12, 2012):*** "I finished the Advanced Course and then was assigned to the Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill; it was then run by two officers who had been in the 4th Division Artillery, Colonel Bill Enemark and then Lieutenant Colonel Ted Dessaseur. They had been in the same battalion. Enemark had been the commander and Dessaseur the

exec, and then later on Dessaseur took over command when Enemark got promoted and moved elsewhere. They knew me and wanted me in that job.”

“What I knew about Officer Candidate School you could write on the head of a pin with room left over for the Lord’s Prayer. Anyway, I spent a year there as a battery commander in the Officer Candidate School. I didn’t particularly enjoy the duty much, but I worked with good people. Enemark and Dessaseur were top notch officers.”

“I still get invited to the OCS reunions. As a matter of fact, I was just dealing with some emails for this year’s reunion of the people that were in the class that I took through.”

### ***From the Class 69-55 Redbook***

None of us will ever forget 25 April 1955, when ninety-three gross individuals began *zero day, zero week of Artillery Officer Candidate School*. We had come to Fort Sill from practically every Army Post in the world to spend what we hoped were twenty-two easy weeks.

Lt. Davis and Sgt. Petty were our official guardians from Monday to Thursday of that week. At the end of the week, we donned our khakis with genuine OCS patches prominently displayed and were officially welcomed to OCS. Unknown to us, about sixty upperclassmen in Class Six-Five were busily practicing their best “Well, Candidate,” and “You post over here, Candidate!” which, obviously, were to be used for our benefit.

It seemed to us that Redbirds were everywhere—the most innocuous “dog-eye” in the mess hall gauntlet invariably resulted in a gnawing stomach. But somehow, we negotiated that first week without too many losses in our strength.

Next week the cry of “But Sir I must see the Colonel” became a familiar one. Class Six-Niner had just been roughly introduced to that famous landmark-MB4. Our first road marches resembled the Bataan death march (or so we felt) with the landscape dotted with candidates staggering up the hill like a herd of bewildered Rocky Mountain goats. For some MB4 became a hill frequently seen from a distance but seldom traveled for others; well, we wondered if “Mountain Battery” had been inspired by some foot dragging journey up the hill.

We wasted little time beginning our academic life. For most of us Motors marked the first time we had squirmed in a classroom under the weight of a field pack and an M1 rifle. For most of the class the discomfort was negligible, however, because we were victims of those OCS maladies—droopiness and drowsiness. By some mystical process we managed to learn the nomenclature and characteristics of the various artillery vehicles, and birth of a keen appreciation for artillery began for us who had never before seen a prime mover or other large Army vehicle. This appreciation born in Motors was to grow by leaps and bounds in the coming weeks as we progressed through other courses—Materiel, Communications, Tactics and Combined Arms, and of course, Gunnery.

Materiel—and how impossible it seemed to learn the difference between such items as respirators and recuperators, sleighs and cradles. It was remarkable how patient and understanding the instructors were toward such an unlearned group. Materiel classes were long and arduous; occasionally grimy as we disassembled virtually every weapon in the Army, and always informative. As in all classes given to OCS, the instructors achieved

that rare combination of humor and seriousness so necessary to instruct sleepy candidates. Many personal hardships were encountered by Six-Niner - for example, that hopeless feeling and despondency experienced when one had only a pocket crammed with quarters, and Knox Hall without a single change-making Coke machine!

Meanwhile, back at the OCS area, the TAC staff was silently (?) at work trying to make officers of us. Our falling in for formations resembled a Macy's mob scene; our shirts appeared to have been cut from shelter-halves; and all of us were not-too gently accused of shining our shoes and boots with Hershey bars and steel wool. Unabashed and undaunted, Six-Niner stumbled on its merry way, and surely it seemed to everyone that we were the "Grossest yet." Or so we were constantly reminded.

But soon, sense emerged from the multitude of corrections shouted at us. We began to think, act, and look like Officer Candidates should. We began more frequently to find that not a single footlocker had been disgorged upon our barracks floor; that only one or two shelves of books had been unceremoniously swept in all directions; and that there was at least a fighting chance that our clothing would be undisturbed after our daily inspections. To us, those Saturday inspections were ordeals comparable to the rack. That frantic rush to align our floor displays and to square our eternally creeping dust covers on that elusive spring; our "magic box" bulging with a week's accumulation of odds and ends; and the 0819 hours cleaning with some scrap of cloth of rifles and bayonets. And still the apparent results of our efforts were dismally monotonous - a three page "gig sheet" posted on Monday, and two marches the following Saturday.

Our physical training and development was not entirely neglected during this period. At least three or four afternoons a week we were rushed to Training Area A to the melodic chant of "RA, all the way" to receive a PT class. The number of repetitions increased until we were soon doing one-two repetitions, with six reps of famous old Number Six tossed in for good measure between each exercise. After that, a short "Double-time tour" of the OCS area, WAC barracks area, and other points of scenic interest was in order. Only the very weakest ever fell out, however, because we knew we were the best, and were constantly reminded of this by the familiar sign over the mess hall entrance.

"There's a Redbird behind you," "Ready, Whirl," "On Guard," were only a few of the staccato commands of LT Keaton during those arm-sapping, back-numbing bayonet classes. Even the most hardy soul blanched at the prospects of a session with the bayonet sponsored by LT Keaton's "Dueling in the Sun" productions.

One of the first "big" days for Six-Niner was when we made middleclassmen, donned our eagles, and turned those pots and packs in to S4. We immediately assumed command positions, and soon found ourselves in the incongruous position of trying to make candidates of the new class which had just arrived. One of the first apparent advantages of being middleclassmen was that more and more demonstrations were scheduled on Saturday morning, and we thus not only received very interesting instruction, but missed inspections as well.

Academics continued in the Department of Communications and life settled down to a jumble of radio sets, MX-155 switching kits, and phantom circuits. "Fad 21, this is Fad 41" became our motto in all those practical periods held in the Snow Hall "hay-shed."



Commo had a profound effect upon our class: it turned compulsory study hall from a thing only heard about to a living reality. Seldom a period of instruction passed that we were not subjected to at least on pop writ.

Nevertheless, our class as a whole fared quite well in this Department, with only a few falling by the academic wayside. And in Commo we learned the indispensable role played by communications in modern warfare, for without adequate and dependable communications, artillery activities would be at a standstill.

We began Gunnery in our sixth week, and it constituted the bulk of our academic endeavors until our 19th week. Gunnery was sub-divided into Survey, Observed Fire, Fire Direction, and Firing Battery. We were plunged into the complexity of Survey geometry and mathematics, the aiming circle and transit, and how to compute, measure, and tape position and target locations. The phase of Gunnery most remembered by Six-Niner was undoubtedly the numerous service practices on West Range in the shadow of craggy Signal Mountain. At first, any resemblance between proper forward observer procedure and our comical fire missions was coincidental. We found it difficult to estimate ranges even with the aid of map boards, coordinate squares, pins, needles, and binoculars. On those first shoots, "Your Mission, Candidate" threw terror in the heart of the poor unfortunate selected to fire the mission, because West Range was a kaleidoscope of yellow tanks, red cars, green "beat-up" areas, and white cylinders, and it was a real feat to locate and plot any target in the allotted time.

Our Gunnery instructors were "tops," and the entire class always looked forward to a full day at Snow Hall with only Gunnery classes scheduled. Two-Zero minute breaks were the order of the day, which enabled us to partake of Snow Hall cafeteria delicacies not ordinarily available in the OCS mess hall. The cafeteria was the Lindy's of the desert, and those 1000 hours doughnuts were indispensable. In retrospect, only one factor prevented our complete enjoyment of Gunnery. This, of course, was the logistical problem involved in getting our gunnery equipment to class. Our gunnery bags became the logical depositories from trash and dirty laundry, and most of the notes that had been issued in zero week. Each week saw our bags increase both in dimension and weight, until they had deservedly earned the title "White Elephants."

Our time spent in Tactics and Combined Arms was equally divided between class work and field problems. We went on many interesting demonstrations in the field, such as those in Medical Support, Combined Arms teams in the attack and defense, Camouflage, Field Artillery Observation, and many others. The balance enabled us first to learn the many principles involved, and then to see how they were actually applied in the field.

At the completion of our 14th week, our hard work and determination were rewarded by our becoming upperclassmen. Six-Niner was a proud class when our Tactical Officers presented to us our coveted red tabs, and then joined with us in consuming those very delicious steaks at the mess hall. Our Redbird party was the highlight of what many felt to be a rather meager summer social season. Our wives, guests, instructors, and Tactical Officers assembled at the Polo Club for a thoroughly enjoyable evening of eating, dancing, and general merry-making. Even in the midst of our reveling, however, everyone felt just a little more serious, because we realized that the path before us was a hard one, strewn with many pitfalls. We would be acting as officers in charge of the middle and

lowerclassmen, and of course we would be charged with much more responsibility than in the past. Six-Niner shouldered this responsibility as efficiently as we secretly knew we would, and everyone knew that when Six-Niner finally crossed the stage at graduation that a good class would be leaving OCS.

Our field week marked the most important phase of our Redbird life. There, we put to practical use all that we had learned in the past months, and it was there that we discovered how difficult it is to be a good officer in the artillery.

As we look back upon our life in OCS, many emotions cross our minds. Pride - because to have graduated from OCS is a difficult feat accomplished only by the very best; Happiness - at being able to look backward upon many hard weeks of sweat and worry; Anticipation - in looking forward to interesting assignments throughout the world; and most important, sadness, in that many of those with whom we shared the common bond for so long would no longer be at their accustomed place beside us in ranks.



*Candidates enter the new Snow Hall that opened August 14, 1954*

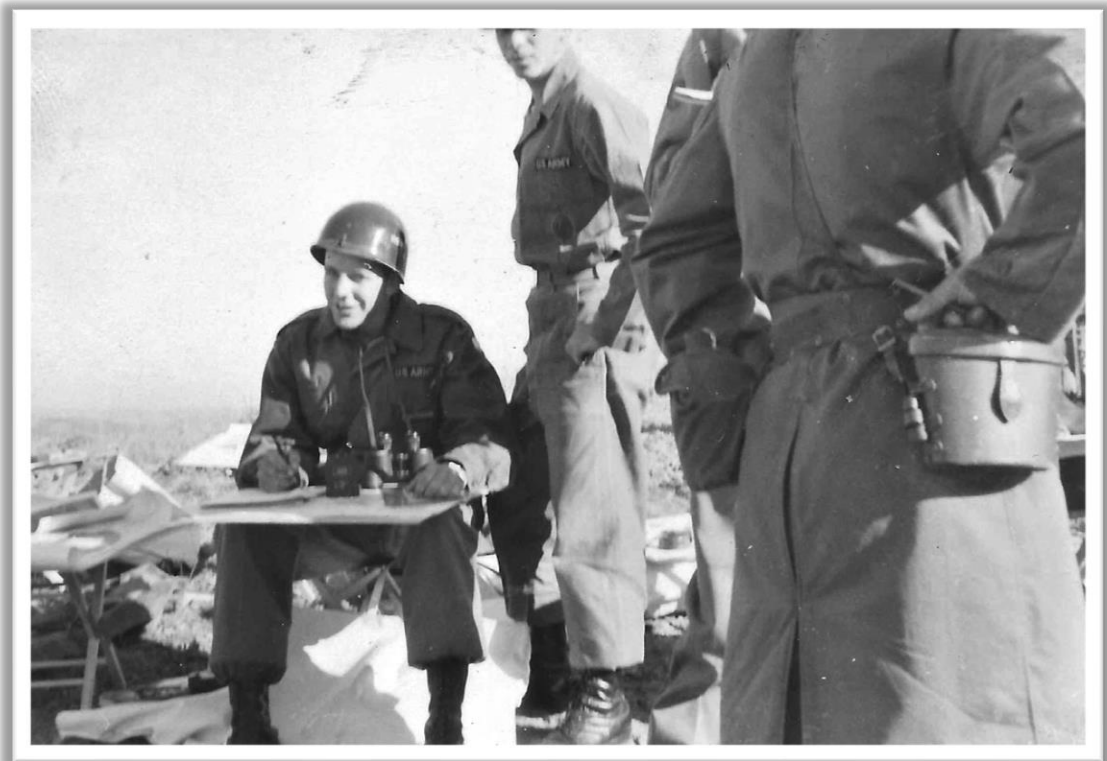


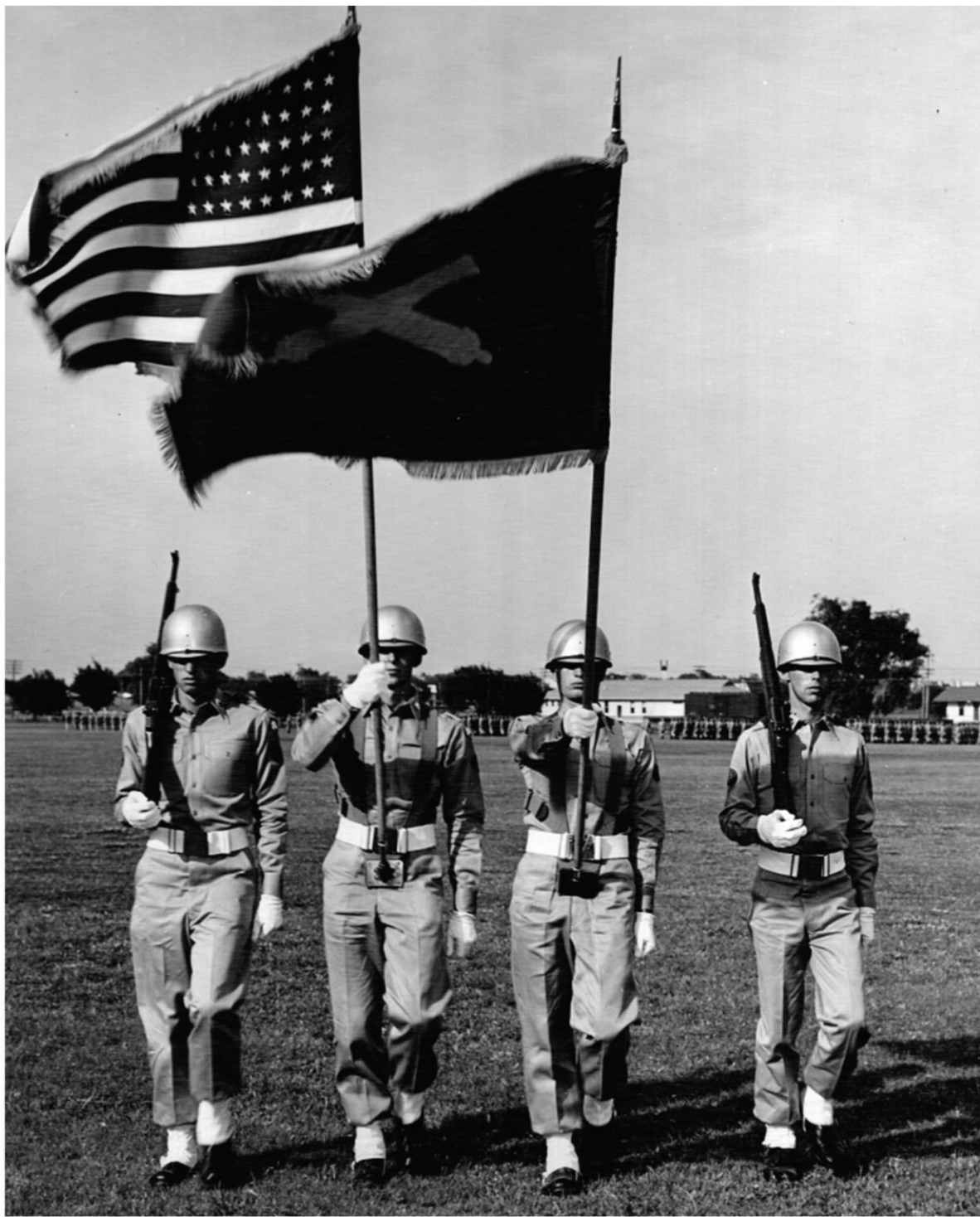
*Class 60-55 (top and bottom)*



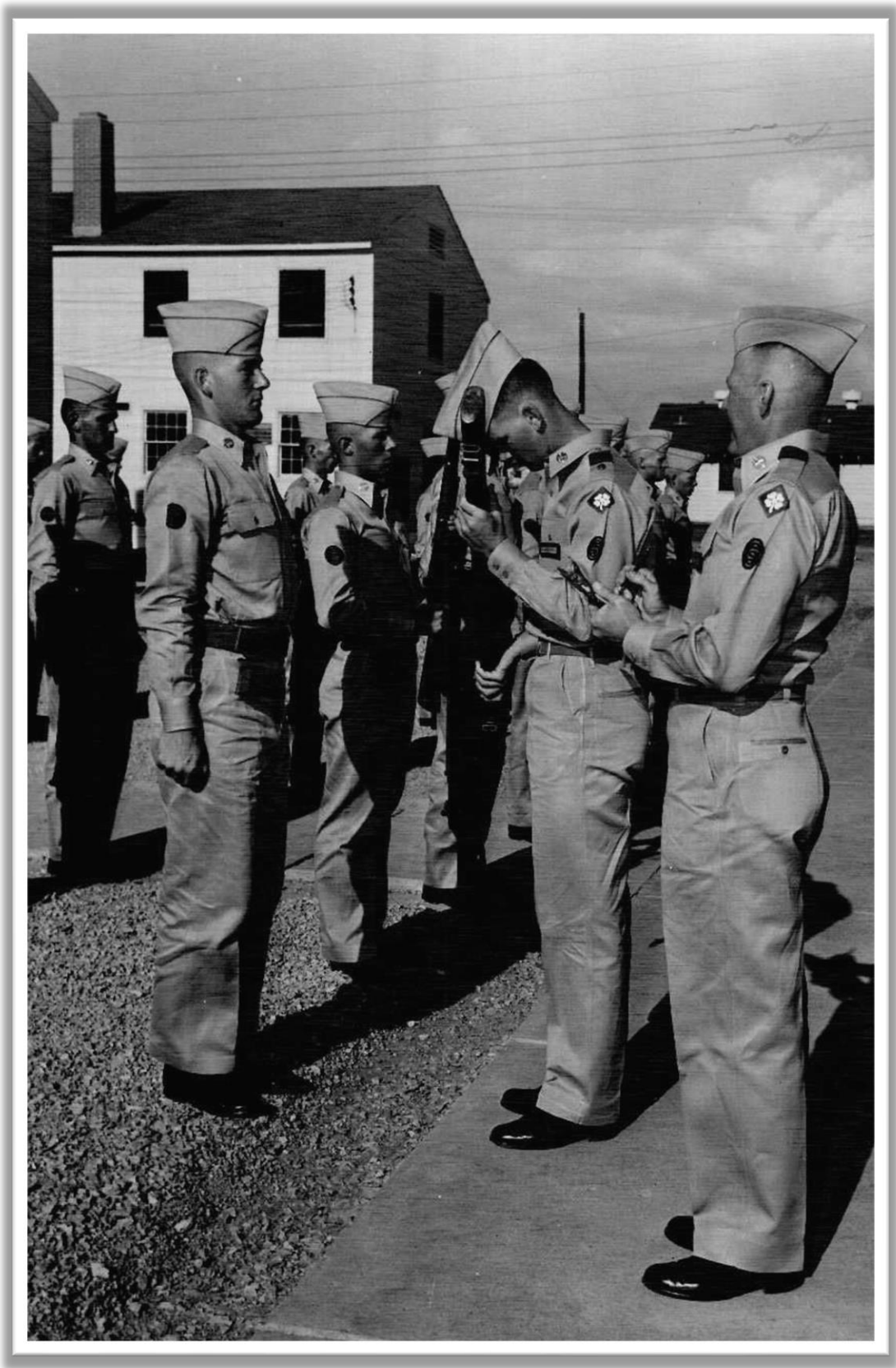


*Class 62-55 (bottom)*





*Color Guard Class 65-55*



*Rifle Inspection (September 12, 1955)*

# Chapter Ten

## 1956 - 1959

### **James A. Kilgore: 1-56**

I was assigned to Class 1-56 (that graduated December 1955). After making my way through the lower class things like having to run when you were outdoors (in the gutter) and having an upperclassman post you returning from chow each evening (things like your pants are too long....so you went to the tailor and had them made a bit shorter and the next day a different upper classman would tell you that they were too short).

But finally making it to Middle Class I was having a great week with no Demerits. On Thursday of the week, I still had no Demerits and knew I could expect a weekend pass, so I called my wife in Dallas and asked her to grab a plane and meet me in Lawton for our first week end together since I had reported to OCS.

When I returned to the barracks on Friday evening, I checked the Demerits List to find I had picked up enough Demerits to not only have my weekend pass canceled but enough to have to make two round trip Marches up Medicine Bluff. When I checked to see why the Demerits were awarded, I found the statement "Unauthorized pets in cubicle." The little brown ants for which Oklahoma is famous (often referred to as Piss Ants) had been crossing my cubicle space when my TAC Officer was inspecting, and he had awarded me one Demerit for each ant. Since it was too late to call my wife, she arrived in Lawton and thankfully was met by my classmate's wife who lived in Lawton. They didn't know each other but spent the weekend visiting while my classmate and I enjoyed a restricted weekend with a great march.

This story was true but didn't end there:

I guess I never forgot that wonderful TAC Officer and years later I received a couple of Below the Zone Promotions and was assigned to Washington D.C. as an Assignment Officer in the Artillery Branch. One day my old TAC Officer's Records appeared on my desk for reassignment. He was still a Major since I had passed him with the Below Zone Promotion, and I now outranked him. Also on my desk was a requirement to send an Artillery Major to Katmandu (Himalayan Mountains) as an assistant attaché; and as bad as I wanted to assign him to a Mountain Top Country that's too cold for ants, I didn't. I passed his records over to my desk partner and ask him to handle assigning him.....OCS did teach a code of honor and I just couldn't violate the code.

### **Charles R. Dinges 2-56:**

My OCS experience is not different from other candidates. And mine are filled with first person singular; interlaced with adjectives of untold sources. It is now the 21st Century. I am an old man, long in the tooth.

I was in hot pursuit of a career in baseball. In 1950 I registered for the draft; with the usual 1A classification; being in high school it was no issue. Any change was possible at graduation as Korea raged. My high school baseball skill was well scouted. Upon graduation in 1951, I was offered a contract, a substantial bonus, and terms locked-in

for an MLB roster-slot for 1952 (i.e., I would be in the major leagues). Not yet 21 years old - I had a problem: parents would not sign and were staunchly non-receptive to my course of action. It was school or else! I chose the former and became University bound, along with my grudge.

Late in the summer of 1952, playing industrial league ball I was injured. My classification was changed to 4F. Surgery solved it, and I continued to play.

Suddenly, August 1954, the greatest of all possibilities collided. I talked with recruiters and formulated a plan; my parents had been removed from the loop two years prior.

Then came BCT/AIT which becomes the precursor to the OCS Process. As with many candidates before me, we all started there, with little change in sequence allowed. It's no secret all OCS candidates have endured the interview/screening/and rigors of indignities to succeed in said process. To wit all were learning the Army way, get up early, wait, and endure. All valuable moments contributing to the successful OCS experience was the goal. And everywhere you succeeded in the process was exhilarating. Hopefully getting closer? And every day the Drill Sergeant screamed with sarcastic delicious emphasis, "You people asked for this!" Fire direction technical training was very helpful during the board sequence process. Each aspirant always under the gun, proving training for the rigors for the OCS Experience was the road. My confidence soared at successful completion of the selection process.

Then finally, OCS. I arrived at Fort Sill, as required, for Zero Week orientation et al, covering what to expect - uniforms, do's & don'ts, regulations/SOPs, the list quite lengthy and full of myriad detail - and that is no understatement, in the least. Our first week and actual course study commenced the 22-week endurance and survival test. Soon, and I say this with deep devotion and highest regard for the Tac Staff: All candidates learned a new slogan, which is quite pithy, resulting in smiles and memories for each of us. The slogan was applied often, like a giant wide paint brush, just dipped and ready in white paint. It taught each of us the stature and endurance to "hold on." We came to cherish and understand: the length, breadth and detail we were dealing with, constantly, and we must endure in order to achieve our goals and the goals of the service. The slogan is far more meaningful than just: "Oklahoma Chicken Shit."

The stories and format vary but the message is clear, OCS experiences will differ from those you have probably read, in many on-line versions. That is, to me, mainly because the plethora of candidate stories already told: tend to blend with many and all similar harsh realities evolving over OCS history. It's just a fact, not an admonishment. All candidates were individuals when they entered ... their natural instinct was to succeed - and quickly they recognized their vulnerabilities/frailties and fallibilities. The rigors of OCS are not for everyone - the bottom line was imbued: cooperate and graduate; don't go it alone; but most of all, an OCS officer can cut it.

Candidates have earned the same gateways to success as other officers. Why can't enlisted men try to achieve that hallowed status? A harsh fact is leadership prevails and overcomes all adversity. In every candidate story there is evidence of leadership and strength. Such stories by candidates reflect strength of our core values in: relationships, humanity, mission, unity of effort, focus, stay on the critical path, plan, execution, do not



become distracted from the objective, read the terrain, know the situation. The list is almost endless.

And as for the FAOCS topics taught: my favorites were Observed Fire, FDC, and Survey. Probably the most difficult was 'evaluation' i.e., to appreciate the situation - it is the critical element in every task. The ability to evaluate is not instinctive - you must be keen and learn how, among all subtle variations - and you will make mistakes along the way. One must retain an impersonal stance to accomplish the mission: because the mission is always first, unity is achieved through leadership, the esprit followed the leadership - and amongst all else, practice humanity toward people, with interaction in unison, recognize pride in self, and loyalty to mission cause, and their unit/team/organization "can do"(large or small) reaps results.

There are amusing stories to tell. I always liked those associated with in-ranks shenanigans while marching to class after dark. There was always a joker in every formation who did the damndest thing. And all aimed at rattling the Upperclassman responsible ... because there was no commissioned Tac Staff present. Now just spend a few moments in reflection - I'd bet there is smile of recognition on your face.

In truth, I felt many emotions while I was at Robinson Barracks: will I succeed, endure, cope? All in varying degrees, each of us faced the demons - the system - every day to the very last day, when we took the oath. It truly wasn't over till it was over! At this writing it is almost 66 years to the day since I first experienced OCS. I am long in the tooth, but those days are wonderful memories, and from my perspective I attest: those days were truly life changing.

Human nature is, sometimes, strange & weird, but a marvelous intriguing enigmatic characteristic. I can honestly say I never assigned anyone to a task that I had not performed myself; and especially under combat conditions, I was especially cognizant of "being there" for the younger soldier on the bunker-line. Hell, I had been one of them. OCS had taught me to be just, balanced, evaluate and measure the right person for the job, tailored to the mission, plan it/explain it, get it done, move it! In Nam, however the young soldiers were so vulnerable. They were worth the many long hours of my time. And the senior non-coms were excellent.

And of all the tasks I have performed: the hardest was escort of a fallen comrade. 1LT Richard H. Weinhardt (Class 1-56) was the Aviation Officer of the 36th Field at Schwabisch Hal in Germany. I did not know him as upperclassman in OCS. We met in Germany, and we flew often; he knew I wanted to go to flight school; we shared the same wedding anniversary date. Our families socialized often. He had two children, his wife's name was Marylyn, she and Khrista were best of friends. He died on August 4, 1960 when his L-19 crashed during a battalion parade ceremony - a change in command ceremony. He was executing the flyover, simultaneously, during the "Pass in Review" portion of that ceremony. I was on the reviewing stand. I can't explain it, but I sensed something was amiss at the first pass; while attempting the second pass he crashed several hundred yards from the parade site. I bolted from the stand and ran to the crash site to aid if I could. I could not! I was first to arrive, Dick had cleared the parade area to avoid a major disaster. Upon impact the L-19 burst into flame. It was horrible! Dick had planned, that day, to pick up his new Mercedes and later we were to celebrate our anniversaries

together. Instead, I departed immediately as escort to return his family to the Mainland in upstate New York; and then return to Dover to escort the deceased. I am sure my selection was because of mutual OCS association. I was honored to perform for a fellow candidate. Without any doubt this was the most difficult task I have ever had to perform. At each port of call I was briefed and assisted; albeit I was broadly informed of protocols, but the detail steps were scant. The Escort Officer documentary was uncommon in the 1960s (FM-22-5 provided minimally), and I do not recall any such instruction, as a candidate. And at Dover AFB the details were equally lacking. Little did I know, then, this task was to become common during the Viet Nam Era. And by then the protocol was well defined and in use. On every installation duty roster's (for senior officer) were common. I was stationed at Fort Bliss by then and both my wife and I feared getting that call at our quarters. There is no greater honor than to be humbled by a fallen comrade's death. It was a distinct honor to fulfill such an assignment.

**Jim Hamilton: 2-56**

I remember presenting an irresistible target of opportunity for the Redbirds by proudly wearing my parachutist badge. After being questioned repeatedly about how many feathers and shroud lines were in my wings, I decided to stop wearing them. Only to be seriously chewed out by a TAC officer, who had just graduated from jump school, for not wearing them. Between the proverbial rock and a hard place, an unfortunate situational awareness, I became very familiar with during my time at Robinson Barracks. I also had the dubious honor of cleaning the off-limits urinal in my pinks and greens after being discovered following the tradition of using it on graduation morning.

**Message from the Commandant, OCS to the Graduating Class 3-56**

**Major General (then Colonel) E. W. Enemark**

You have successfully completed an arduous and exacting course of instruction which was designed to do one thing – to qualify you as officers in the United States Army.

You were picked to attend Officer Candidate School after careful selective screening. Thereafter, its rigorous training program coupled with a meticulous attention to detail and constant critical observation by your contemporaries and the staffs of the Artillery and Guided Missile School and the Officer Candidate School have produced a truly outstanding group of officers. We of the Officer Corps are proud to welcome you into our ranks.

In pursuing your goal of a successful career in the Army, adhere to the high standards of self-discipline, honesty, attention to duty, leadership and training which you have learned here.

Keep constantly in your mind your responsibilities to your country, to your unit, to your men, and to yourself. Every unit is a direct reflection of its leaders. You will be leaders. Be good leaders!

Good luck. I hope that we may serve together again in the future.

W.A. Enemark  
Colonel, Artillery  
Commanding

## **Letter to the graduates of Class 3-56**

### **General (then Captain) John W. Vessey, Jr., former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

To the Graduating Class:

Congratulations. We are justifiably proud of you who have successfully completed this exacting course of instruction.

Maintain the sense of duty and responsibility that you have demonstrated here, continue to refine your knowledge of artillery, remember that effort is the gateway in the wall of difficulty, and you will always be able to accomplish your mission.

You take with you the best wishes of the tactical staff for success in your military careers.

John W. Vessey  
Capt, Artillery  
Commanding

### **James (Jim) Hattersley: 3-56**

My Battery Commander was Captain John W. Vessey (later General/Chairman of JCS). During a scheduled hand-to-hand combat class conducted in the morning, I was thrown to the mat from a hip-toss and landed with one leg under the other at the calf, with the force of the fall absorbed by the top leg. I felt a stinging sensation in the front of the calf, but shook it off at the time and went through the rest of the day's activities.

Later in the evening, in the barracks, I happened to cross the leg that absorbed the fall over the other leg and I felt a slight grinding sensation; there was also a redness in the area of the calf. It turned out that I had fractured (greenstick) the fibula caused by the fall in the mentioned class. I was taken to the hospital and was fitted with a plaster cast from foot to mid-thigh with a rubber foot walker. As a result, I was called in to discuss my situation with Captain Vessey. Rather than an automatic setback, Captain Vessey said that he would allow me to stay with the class if, being put in a leadership position, I could keep up with the overall candidate demands.

It's amazing what you can learn to do when you are so challenged; I learned to double-time, negotiate steps quickly, dress, shower, itch with a hanger, etc. But I also had extraordinary help and encouragement from my cubicle-mate, Sam Varney. Captain Vessey called me in and told me that I had proven myself and that I could remain with the class. Even before this event, I had the highest regard for Captain Vessey, limited as we, as candidates, had with him. But he had that quality of character---concern, understanding, connection---coupled with what I considered at the time, mature leadership. By his example, I learned a great deal from his leadership and carried it with me throughout my career.

As graduation approached and commissioning was on the horizon, I had the opportunity to be commissioned in other than the Artillery Branch. Even with the high regard that I had, and still have for Artillery, I chose to request a direct commission in the Armor Branch for personal reasons. Such a request had to be recommended for forwarding and subsequent approval in the chain of command, thus requiring an approval recommendation by Captain Vessey. I was called in by Captain Vessey to discuss and explain my purpose and reasons for being commissioned in Armor. His counsel, guidance

and experience made a great impression on me concerning my request. He explained his experience in WWII as an FO in Europe and seeing the hulks of tanks aflame from his positions as an FO – “a Boy Scout’s dream” ---I recall him saying. He also asked if I had read the book, “The River and the Gauntlet,” about tank action combat in the Korean War; I was aware of the book. So, after our meeting, he asked if I still was intent on an Armor commission; I said yes. He then said that he would so recommend. Eventually, my request was approved, but I never lost my attachment, respect and high regard for the Artillery and the opportunity to be led by such an officer.

What I took away from these two one-on-one meetings with Captain Vessey was what an honorable, decent man and leader that he was. I came in contact with him over the years in different assignments --- not with him --- when he was a general officer and he remained the same approachable, decent and outstanding person and leader we would all hope to be. He taught me a great deal in the short time in our encounter at FAOCS which remained with me throughout my military career.

For me, OCS charted a course for a military career. It goes without saying that OCS further developed and strengthened one’s character, knowledge, responsibility, accountability and leadership. We were exposed to exemplary leadership: in our class’ case, General Vessey and Major General W.A. Enemark – and there were others. But these officers had a lasting impression and impact after graduation for me.

OCS developed and extracted one’s potential and abilities in many ways; physical, mental and commitment. Collective and self-discipline were hallmarks of OCS life which carried forth thereafter. Respect for our unit, each other, the Army and our country were instilled in us. Pride in accomplishment and in oneself were integrated with learning and other demands placed upon us. The marching treks to Snow Hall - then a relatively new structure - and the passive, yet strongly developed camaraderie - are fond memories. How could I overlook the countless PT formations and the “Army Drill # 1 – Exercises 1-12” performance. It seemed many times that we couldn’t meet all the demands placed upon us, but we did: studies, exams, fitness, impeccable cubicle areas and displays, quick formations, repeated inspections, minimal demerits, MB-4 excursions and others too numerous to mention. Many of the demands’ residual effects remain with me today.

Most importantly, OCS life taught me to be a better person and instilled the credo “Duty, Honor, Country” in the broader perspective for a young candidate. Brief as the time was in Robinson Barracks and at Fort Sill, they were and remain an instrumental part of my life.

### **Francis (Frank) M. Lindler: 3-56**

As a 24 year old infantry sergeant, the initial drive to go to OCS was the potential for higher rank. Everywhere around me were sergeants with almost 20 years service with no expectation of being promoted. I had some experience with the 60 mm mortar and thought that artillery must be similar to the fire direction procedures for the mortar. I also thought the artillery had to live better than the average infantryman.

My initial reception at the OCS battery area provided me with the realization that the challenge of OCS was a giant step back into the most demanding standards of dress and appearance. As lowerclassmen, once our foot hit the ground at the foot of the steps, we

had to double time. Thank goodness I was in good shape and this was no problem. The physical training program for the new class began with five repetitions of the daily dozen and rapidly progressed to more.

My introduction to artillery weapons and fire direction procedures quickly convinced me I was going to have to study and work hard. Coupled with the daily inspections of our living areas and in ranks inspections, I had the most demanding challenge of my life. I had never adjusted mortar fire, so I had no bad habits to unlearn. The artillery FO procedures were complex at first, but quickly became understandable. I never fired an unsatisfactory mission while in OCS.

The everyday challenge of trying to please the TAC Officer, the OCS Candidate Staff, the minute details of dress and barracks readiness and finally, but not least, the academic requirements were a heavy load. I adjusted and somehow kept my sanity. You had to develop the attitude and confidence that you were going to make it, after all, most of the candidates who were washed out, gave up and quit.

After graduation and the realization that “hey, I made it!” sunk in, I realized that my real tests were still in front of me. Two of my classmates and I went to the same 105 mm battalion which was going to depart for Germany within five months. I was placed on the advance party and departed for Germany two months after I graduated from OCS. After the battalion arrived in Germany, we were always so busy that I seldom had time to associate with the former classmates. Yet if needed, we were there for each other. We stayed together through the entire tour and returned to the US together. Then we received new assignments, and we lost contact with each other.

About twenty years after I retired from service I learned about the annual OCS reunion at Fort Sill, I had never seen any others of my classmates. Several of us have worked together and, we have located all of the surviving members of our class and a large number of us have met at the various reunions. Our wives cannot understand the way we feel about each other. I cannot explain it except to say, we worked together, and we graduated. We are members of a very elite society. We were instilled with a sense of honor and duty-first that is still part of our everyday life. Our word is our bond, and we cannot tolerate a person who tells half-truths. These same traits helped me to advance in a civilian job after I retired from service. In fact, the company I worked for prefers to hire retired Officers because of these traits.

### **Ernest E. Varney: 3-56**

I was privileged to have as my TAC Battery Commander, CPT John W. Vessey, Jr., the strictest but fairest officer I have ever known. He later became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but he was always a “Soldier’s General.” I started and graduated with Class 3-56.

### **“Sillmen To Don New Black Shoes”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Thursday August 30, 1956)***

Saturday is Black Shoe Day at Fort Sill. On Saturday, all Army personnel will drop their old brown low-quarter shoes and begin wearing the new Army black low-quarters. Going out with the old brown shoes will be brown socks. Beginning Saturday all military

personnel will be required to wear black socks with their black low quarters, except that tan knee-length socks will continue to be worn with the summer garrison uniform.

The Quartermaster Clothing Sales Store now has available both black shoes and black socks in nearly all sizes. Price of the black shoes is \$5.50 per pair. The new regulation makes no change in the color of combat boots and boot socks.

**From the 1957 booklet “*The Challenge - OCS*” prepared by the U.S. Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School.**

**Message from the Commandant OCS**

Congratulations, men of the entering class! Congratulations upon having successfully completed the first step up the ladder of your military careers.

Here, at the U. S. Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School, you will receive the greatest opportunity possible to equip you for the second step up this ladder--that of being commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army of the United States. Let us reflect upon this grade bestowed upon the graduates of the U.S. Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School: Official designation--second lieutenant, Artillery achieved designation--leader, tactician, administrator. As a leader, you must understand men; you must be able to make them want to follow you. And these followers will be intelligent men; they will not long follow the blind leader. As a tactician, you must know how to successfully commit your men in battle your battle maneuvers must be sound ones and better than those of your opponent. As an administrator, you must know how to handle capably and oversee efficiently the administration of the men within your command.

Gentlemen, remember that before you can become a leader, you must know the role of the recipient of your leadership; you must be able to take orders. Before you can become a qualified tactician, you must study the tactics of those who have fought before you. And before you can become a good administrator, you must understand the functioning of a military command.

Linked with these essentials is the strength of the candidate battalion—honor. Honor will bring you a great trust, a great pride and unquestioned confidence in yourself. Honor will bring unquestioned confidence and respect from those with whom you associate.

Yours is a wonderful opportunity. Make the most of it. Know that when the time for your graduation comes, you can truly say: “Official designation - second lieutenant; achieved designation - leader, tactician administrator, and man of honor.”

William J. Gallagher  
Colonel, Artillery  
Commandant

**From the 1957 booklet “*The Challenge - OCS*” prepared by the U.S. Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School.**

**Letter to a Quitter**

Young man, these “insurmountable” problems that now confront you have been met and overcome by many men before you--were they better men than you? The answer to that must be “yes” if you are a quitter.

Any man will feel discouraged and tempted to chuck it all and quit at one time or another as he pursues any worthwhile goal. That is particularly true during the early stages of this course. Urgent and cogent reasons for being somewhere else doing something else will spring easily and readily to mind as the difficult lot of an officer candidate unfolds itself to you. Newly arrived candidates always have two left feet. No matter how hard you try, the chances are 9 out of 10 that neither the middle class, the redbirds, nor the tactical staff will like either your methods or your results. You will be “chewed” unmercifully at the slightest provocation, the physical training will be rough, and the disciplinary tours will be hard. The whole system will often appear ludicrous, ridiculous, and without guidance or purpose to some candidates in their early weeks. You are being tested. OCS insists on testing you as a soldier and a man before it will indorse you as a man qualified to lead American troops in combat.

Not everyone who passes the initial period of trial will succeed. There are many other pitfalls along the path to graduation. However, if you maintain your individual desire and effort, these trials must necessarily be imposed upon you by other persons. Speaking from the experience of 15 months as a tactical battery commander, I can say that in practically every case of involuntary relief there exists a certain doubt in the minds of the tactical staff concerning the appropriateness of relief or turnback action, The standards are high, the time is short, and there is definitely room for errors in all evaluations. There can be no doubt, however, in the mind of anyone concerning the reasons and the background for a voluntary relief. Regardless of the rationalizing or reasoning that leads up to voluntary relief, it is essentially caused by lack of intestinal fortitude and perseverance. Quitting is an action that you will remember uneasily for the rest of your life. Long after others have forgotten the incident, you will remember that you did not measure up. Don't quit!

A Former Tactical Battery Commander

**Spencer Trophy**

**From the 1957 booklet “*The Challenge - OCS*” prepared by the U.S. Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School.**

The Spencer Trophy, a pair of well-worn boots mounted, and painted gold is awarded to the winner of the traditional Upper class vs. TAC Officer softball game. The story is told that the boots belonged to Phillip M. Spencer, honor graduate of Class 1 -51, who wore them for 44 road marches up Medicine Bluff 4. The Upper class vs. TAC Officer softball game is played when the class is in its 21st week. If the candidates win, the rigor of the SOP is suspended until after the evening meal. If they lose, the upperclassmen act as servers at the evening meal.

### **“Special Reservist OCS Course Slated for Post”**

***Lawton Constitution (Thursday, January 17, 1957)***

The first special 11-week officer candidate class for Army reservists from all over the United States will be held at Fort Sill next summer, the Department of the Army has announced. This new program will give reserve warrant officers and NCO's the same opportunity for officer candidate schooling as National Guardsmen.

Though the stepped-up OCS class here will be the first for reservists, it will be run somewhat on the same lines as the guardsmen's three summers. Candidates to report to OCS in the second week of June for the course. They will receive training as a separate unit. A contingent of National Guardsmen are also expected for similar training during the same period.

The reserve officer candidates will carry a heavier academic program and a lighter schedule of physical and outdoor training than the regular OCS classes. Reservists selected for the courses must be between the ages of 18 1/2 and 24 years, four months. Other qualifications include a passing grade in the Army's aptitude test and satisfactory completion of six months active duty for training in one of the services. A nine-week course for reservists will be offered at Fort Benning, Ga., under the same program.

### **“Sill OCS Class Dons Army's New Greens”**

***Lawton Constitution (Thursday February 21, 1957)***

The first graduates of Officer Candidate School to get their lieutenant's bars in the Army's new “Green uniform,” heard the deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Training Center, Fort Chaffee, Ark., tell them “a career in the Army is a lifetime of study.”

Brig. Gen. Ralph R. Mace was the principal speaker at graduation exercises Tuesday morning in Snow Hall at which 33 members of OCS Class 2-57 received their commissions. The green uniforms were worn due to a recent Department of the Army ruling that all officers entering active duty for the first time as of Feb. 1, would wear the new duty uniform.

“You must never stop learning about your profession.” Gen. Mace told the new officers. The general said “to be a good artilleryman you must know everything there is to learn about artillery. After mastering artillery, don't sit back satisfied; spread out and learn the other branches of the Army.” Gen. Mace warned the graduates that to be successful leaders they must know their men. He urged them to study the men under their command- to know their strengths and weaknesses- to find out what makes them tick.

Honor graduate of Class 2-57 was Lt. Ellis Parker, Adams, Ky., who had his bars pinned on by his wife and Gen. Mace. He also received the class guidon from the general. Distinguished graduates were Lts. Leonard L. Boswell, Davis City, Iowa; James W. Johnston, Perrin, Tex., and Charles T. Lane, Richmond, Va.

The graduation exercises reminded Gen. Mace of a period some 20 years ago when he was in a similar position to the newly commissioned officers, after completing a battery officers course at Fort Sill. He added that Brig. Gen. Paul A. Gavan, Assistant Commandant, USAA&GMS was a member of that class.



### **“OCS Course Tests Leadership Ability”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Thursday April 4, 1957)***

In an effort to determine leadership ability, Officer Candidate School students will be required to complete a leaders reaction course for the first time at Fort Sill.

Conducted by the Personnel Research Division, Adjutant General Office, Department of the Army, the leaders reaction course is one of a battery of tests which all OCS students will be required to take. The leaders reaction course will measure as accurately as possible the leadership ability of students in the performance of a particular task in each of 12 sections of the course.

Other tests making up the battery include sub tests in tactics, dismounted drill, group discussion and physical training. The personnel Research Division will be assisted in the administration and supervision of the tests by the OCS training officers. These tests will be given simultaneously in the OCS area.

This is the first time a test of this nature has been given at Fort Sill, but similar tests have been given at Fort Benning, Ga. It is anticipated that future classes will be required to take the leaders reaction course.

Construction of the course has been under the direction of OCS personnel, supervised by Lt. B. J. Chaney, projects officer. M-Sgt David Mangrum of the Department of Material has acted as construction foreman, and 10-man details from various groups have assisted.

The entire battalion, consisting of three classes will participate in the April tests. Class 5-57 will be tested April 13,14 and 15; class 3-57 will be tested on April 16, 17 and 18; and April 19, 20 and 22 will be the test days for class 4-57.

### **“Considerations for Battery Commanders Recommending Enlisted Men for OCS”**

#### **Colonel Charles A. Symroski, Artillery OCS Commandant, June 1957**

The U. S. Army Artillery and Guided Missile Officer Candidate School exists primarily for the purpose of training and educating selected enlisted men for a commission as second lieutenants of Artillery. The most important stage in the selection process is the battery commander’s recommendation, because only the battery commander will have had the opportunity to observe the soldier’s performance over a prolonged period in the face of varying challenges and problems.

Basically, the officer candidate course develops and measures the candidate in three areas: Professional knowledge, character, and leadership. The potential candidate must have positive qualities in each area. Army standard tests are used to determine the soldier’s mental prowess and ability to gain knowledge. Character, as OCS emphasizes it, is the soldier’s unwillingness to lie, cheat, steal, or evade the issue, and also his willingness to persevere in his mission in spite of physical, mental, and emotional strain. Leadership and followership are developed by actual performance within the candidate organization in every assignment from battery commander to cannoneer.

Often, candidates are relieved from the School because of inherent deficiencies which should have been detected early by the battery commander. It is the purpose of this article

to emphasize certain qualities which are important to the soldier at OCS and which the battery commander should understand before making the first indorsement.

The prospective officer candidate should have a demonstrated and proven desire to work, study, and train in order to qualify himself for increased responsibility. This quality has a lot to do with his "attitude" at OCS where he will be subject to corrections by upperclassmen, to a full schedule of study and recitations, and to frequent, exacting inspections. If he assumes this as training and not as insult, he will probably persevere. Those who do stick with the School are often the soldiers who conscientiously developed themselves into a better asset to the Army all through their Army careers. They are seldom the soldiers who are seeking a soft berth.

There should be something about the man which, strip him of all rank, makes him obviously more than his contemporaries. He cannot be less. If he were feeble of physique, as an example, not only may he fail the physical fitness requirements, but he may never realize self-confidence. Others will not follow him and so he is not a leader. He should be someone others look to for an example of a soldier. It has been the experience of tactical officers that a candidate with a background of failures will be inclined to quit at OCS when the going gets a little tough. The opposite is also true: those whose personal histories reflect perseverance will stay with the School.

Candidates are required to be on the go practically all of the time, from reveille to tattoo. Therefore, any serious family or financial troubles are hard to deal with at the School. Often, the candidate has no recourse but to resign to have an opportunity to attend to his personal affairs. These should be investigated, and the potential candidate warned not to attend until he can devote his full abilities to the prescribed course.

Poor physical condition is a factor which contributes to early resignations. If the candidate cannot make an average score on the physical efficiency test when he first enters, he finds that the physical strain holds him back during his initial weeks, exhausts him, and makes the routine often too much to bear.

Insofar as leadership is concerned, the battery commander should not be content to estimate or guess that the applicant has leadership ability. The battery commander should positively establish the applicant's possession or lack of leadership traits by observing the applicant in some leader position.

The qualities mentioned here are by no means all that should be considered. They are qualities which are often overlooked because OCS is not understood to be as demanding as it is. We hope that battery commanders will consider these factors when encouraging their men to attend OCS or when considering the nature of a recommendation about a soldier who has applied. Such consideration will help the Army produce officers from the enlisted ranks and will save the time and money expended on applicants who will not measure up at OCS.

### **"Active Duty Obligations of OCS Graduates"**

**Lieutenant by Robert W. Kindt, *Artillery Trends* (October 1, 1957)**

Selective Service inductees, a potential source of officer candidates previously untapped, now have a choice on their length of active duty after graduation from Officer Candidate

School (OCS). Many of them have not wished to commit themselves to an additional 2 years of service by completing OCS and accepting a commission.

This has been remedied recently by changes 7 and 8 to AR 350-50. These changes bring the OCS program in line with the Reserve Forces Act, under which officers commissioned from the ROTC program may be called to active duty for short tours of only 6 months.

An officer candidate who was serving in an inducted status at the time of selection for OCS may now serve either 6 months or the remainder of his 2-year obligated tour, whichever is greater; or he may elect to serve 2 years of active duty after graduation. Regular Army candidates may choose either 6 months or 2 years. The choice will be made before graduation from OCS.

One advantage of the new OCS program may be a material increase in the number of personnel applying for Officer Candidate School Training. A Human Resources Research Office report states that only 10 percent of those eligible for Officer Candidate School apply. The shorter tours will provide a good source for augmenting the Army Reserve and the National Guard with Officer Candidate School trained officers. These officers would have an advantage over Reserve Forces Act officers in that they will have at least 6 months of active duty unbroken by basic course attendance. The shorter tour will tend to increase the number of applicants with higher educational background who apply for OCS. The experience of the School has been that the non-Regular Army candidate as opposed to the Regular Army candidate has a higher educational level. Also, the higher the educational level of a candidate, the better chance he has for successful completion of the course.

A disadvantage would be the number of officers who might request the short tour. This would be offset by a greater number of graduates and the probability that those who now enter are career-minded and would continue to request long tours.

At present, the Officer Candidate School trains National Guard and Army Reserve classes for 11 weeks during the summer. Also, National Guardsmen and Army Reservists may attend the regular 22-week course. Although many of these men are subsequently commissioned, they are under no active duty obligation like that imposed on the man who enters OCS from active duty.

It is urged that unit commanders give this new policy wide publicity.

**Walter J. Campbell: 1-58**

I have a story of Candidate Ernest F. Smitka who graduated in the last class of 1957. He was being inspected by an upper classman who found a small aspirin bottle of Brasso in Smitka's footlocker. Brasso was banned as an inflammable. When asked what it was, Smitka replied "Liquid aspirin sir." The upperclassman said, "Liquid aspirin?" and Smitka immediately replied, "Yes sir, for relieving headaches caused by dull brass." The upper classman stopped inspecting right there and left the barracks as he could not stop laughing. It saved the rest of us from being inspected as Smitka was the first one in the barracks being inspected.

### **“Top OCS Battery Will Get Trophy”**

***Lawton Constitution* (Tuesday March 4, 1958)**

Col. Harry E. Trail, president of the Fort Sill chapter of the National Sojourners will present a trophy for the best drilled OCS battery to Col. William J. Gallagher, OCS Commandant, at a battalion parade Friday. The traveling trophy will be presented monthly by Col. Gallagher to the best drilled battery. All Sojourners have been requested to attend.

### **“5,000th Sill OCS Graduate Since 1951 Wins Gold Bars”**

***Lawton Constitution* (Thursday January 22, 1959)**

The 5,000th candidate to graduate from the US Army Artillery and Missile School's Officer Candidate School since 1951 received his bars Tuesday morning when Class 1-59 was graduated.

Lt. William J. Boyd was presented his commission and congratulated by Brig. Gen. H.L. Sanders. Boyd was the 5,000th man to graduate from OCS since its reopening in 1951. Honor graduate, Lt. James C. Bennett, was Sills first OCS graduate of 1959 and Lt. Edward T. Stokke was announced as the distinguished graduate.

Brig. Gen. H. L. Sanders, Commanding General of Troops, gave the graduation address.

“As an officer in the United States Army you step into a slot on a winning team.” said Gen. Sanders. “And to keep it a winning team you must play your position well.”

General Sanders went on to say that entrance into the Officer Corps brings with its many responsibilities. “You will be responsible not only for your own professional competence, but for that of the men serving under you as well. And the training they receive from you may well be the difference between life and death for them upon some far-off battlefield.” Terming the past twenty-five years “the most revolutionary the world has ever seen” with respect to changes in weaponry, tactics, equipment, training and organization, Sanders said the officers of the Army have faced the greatest challenges which could be put to any group of men.

“Those challenges are not over.” he said, going on to point out that each day new challenges arise pointing up the necessity for skilled officers and men dedicated to the service of their country.

“Much of the knowledge of your profession will come to you by your own efforts, by day-to-day experiences and by research which you yourself must make.” he continued, noting that each officer should make use of a set personal reading program, including each month some of the books on the military reading list.

### **Guy A. Wilhelm 2-59**

I attended OCS in 1958-59 and graduated with class 2-59 on March 17, 1959. I served twenty years in the military service and retired as a Major in May of 1974. OCS was certainly an historical experience for me and had more influence on my life than about anything else I have ever done. It was a truly great school because of the quality that went into every aspect of it. In spite of the intensive harassment that characterized this school, I was treated with more underlying respect than I had ever received before. It challenged

me and made me want to give it everything I had. My very best barely measured up, but I was as proud as if I'd been the honor graduate.

One of the memoirs of Robinson Barracks that I wish most I still had, but do not, is a copy of the OCS Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) that we were required to carry at all times.

The greatest, most character building, and most significant experience of my life was OCS. I am sure that for many others it was not so significant because they had learned the things, I was learning somewhere else. But for me no other experience of my life has compared with OCS. Not that it was a pleasant experience for it was not. It was dreadful. It was heart-breaking, back-breaking, mind boggling, unbearable, cruel, unjust, exhausting, overwhelming, and barbaric; but it was the best training I had ever been exposed to and when I came to understand this I knew I could not bear to leave, that I must do the best I was capable of doing and just hope and pray it was good enough. I also vowed that if my best were not good enough that I would bluff my way as far as I could before I was found out. This approach served me well and many times I succeeded at something I believed I couldn't do.

OCS has had more beneficial effect on my life than any factor except the Church. It was rather remarkable that I was selected to go to OCS. When I enlisted in the Army, I had already completed my military obligation through my service in the Air Force, but I decided that I had always wanted to be an officer and that I would go back in and get a commission. I went into an Air Force recruiting office in Seattle with the intention of enlisting in the Air Force. For some reason I got a rude recruiting sergeant and after a brief unpleasantness with him I left. On the way out of the building, I noticed an Army recruiting office manned by a very impressive sergeant first class named Starcher. I stopped to hear what he had to say and was hooked. With my three years of college, he said, OCS would be a breeze, there would be no question of my being selected and I could either take Army basic training or not as I chose. He recommended I take it however, because the exposure to Army weapons would be valuable to me later on. He said I was the kind of man the Army was looking for and that I could practically write my own ticket. Little did I know that he was lying through his teeth. A year or so later, after enduring unbelievable hardships and passing through situations wherein only miracles preserved me, I stood before him as a commissioned officer and took him to task for the way he had misrepresented things to me. His only comment was, "Well, things turned out OK, didn't they?"

My first brush with disaster came at the processing center at Fort Ord, California. I was a full-fledged Private in the Army now, their having deducted a stripe for every year I had been out and so my four stripes from the Air Force were all gone. We were taken to a testing center where the entire day was spent in taking aptitude tests. At about 3:00 in the afternoon we were all assembled outside where they read off the names of those who had scored high enough to be qualified to take the OCS test. They did not call my name. There was no time for questions. The ones who had scored high enough were taken back into the building and the rest of us were marched back to our barracks and dismissed.

I could not believe that my journey to OCS had been so brief and that I was now faced with making the best of a 3-year enlistment as a Private in the Army. I needed a place to

do come crying and praying. It was then that one of the miracles happened. A sergeant from the reception center called to me, "Hey, Wilhelm, you're a prior service man, right?" "Right." "You know how to march men, right?" "Right." "We have to provide a detail to clean up the school. You don't have to do any of the work, you just have to march this group of men to the school, turn them over to the NCOIC, and come back. Got it?" "Got it." So, away I went back to the testing center marching the group of about ten men. I reported in to the NCOIC of the testing center, a Master Sergeant. He thanked and dismissed me and when I hesitated, he asked if there were something else I needed. "Sergeant," I said, "I had my heart set on going to OCS and it doesn't look like I even made it past the first step." The sergeant, a very patient and kindly man, although very impressive and imposing in appearance, explained to me how the system worked.

Eligibility to take the OCS test was based the outcome of two other tests, one of which measured vocabulary and reading comprehension and the other which measured mathematical ability. This kind and patient sergeant, after looking at my scores told me that I had done all right in mathematics but had fallen down in the vocabulary and reading comprehension. I expressed surprise and told him my math scores had always been lower than the language related ones. He asked if I would like to see my tests. I had trouble concealing my eagerness to do just that. He paged through a huge stack of papers and found that one of my tests had been switched with a man named Wetzel who sat beside me during the testing and that he was now in taking the OCS test. My vocabulary and reading comprehension were indeed higher than my math test and I was eligible to take the OCS test but I would have to come back the following day. I felt sorry as he tapped Wetzel on the shoulder and told him would not be able to continue the test. I went back the following day after a good night's rest and, I'm sure, did better on the OCS test than I would have done the first day. I have always been thankful to that sergeant and have always considered this a miracle in my life and an answer to my prayers. If I had not taken the OCS test at this time, it would have been six months before I was eligible to take it again and many things could have happened in that period of time.

Another minor miracle happened to me in August of 1958. I had been in the Army for about four months and had completed basic individual training and advanced individual training. I was at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas where I had taken my advanced individual training (AIT) in Artillery Fire Direction Control. During AIT I had been an acting corporal and squad leader, trying to show all the leadership potential I could, in hopes it would improve my chances of selection for OCS. We had a tough bunch of troops in our battery through a combination of low intelligence levels and bad attitudes. I was one of the acting non-corns who had to keep this unruly bunch in line. I was much resented because of my gung-ho attitude and received frequent threats of bodily harm. When the training cycle was over, I was still one of the OCS applicants, although final selection had not yet been made. It had been a discouraging cycle from the standpoint of OCS. We were told that two had been selected from the previous cycle. There were twenty-three of us at the start, six dropped out because of the discouraging odds, seventeen went before the selection board, and seven of us were still applicants. I was assigned as battery clerk under 1st Sergeant Haddock and although my acting corporal stripes had been pulled, he still used me as a non-corn. This role of non-corn without stripes caused a few problems and some personal hazard.

One day battalion called for a detail of about 25 men. I went to the barracks, called the names of those on the detail, and marched them to battalion headquarters. I went inside and reported to the battalion sergeant major. He thanked me and said he would take it from there, so I left the men standing in formation in the street, and walked back to the orderly room. About ten minutes later, we got a call from the battalion sergeant major asking where our detail was. They had waited out in the street for a few minutes and because no one had come out and taken immediate charge of them, they had drifted back to the barracks to cool it. I went back to the barracks and with a few sharp words told them to get back to battalion headquarters. Most obeyed, but one tall slender man by the name of Bobby Smith took offense.

He was about six-foot-four, had been a professional basketball player in civilian life, and thought he was pretty hot stuff. He said, "Wilhelm, you little sawed-off SOB, if you don't get out of here and leave me alone, I'm going to throw you out." I said, "Smith, you have your orders, and I don't want to have to come back to this barracks to get you out again so move it." We were in the upper bay of one of an old wooden barracks. I spoke to a couple of other men as I made my way to the stairs and was just going to start down the stairs when I heard a noise behind me. It was Smith. "Maybe you didn't hear me," he said, "If you don't get out of here, I'm going to throw you out." I was very frightened, but with as much confidence as I could muster, said, "Well, maybe you better start throwing." He grabbed me by my fatigue shirt and spun me around with the obvious intention of throwing me down the stairs. I got my back against the stair railing and shoved him away from me. Then I hit him as hard as I could. My first blow connected dead-center with his nose and the battle was on. I gave it to him with all I had. We fought for several minutes and then he grappled with me in an attempt to throw me to the floor. My right knee, injured in high school twisted out of joint and I fell with him on top of me; but I still had his right arm pinned and a free swing with my right arm and was doing some real damage to the side of his head. The troops pulled us apart and I stood up to survey the damage. He was a wreck, with both eyes blacked, a bloody and swollen, nose, a split lip, and various and sundry cuts and bruises. I had a sprained, knee and a slightly bruised lip and was covered with blood; but it was all his blood and I appeared unscathed.

I bravely ordered a man to get a mop and clean the blood off the floor and told everyone else to get back to battalion headquarters. They obeyed with an alacrity I would not have thought possible a few minutes before. I went back to the orderly room. When I walked into the orderly room, I must have appeared worse than I thought. First Sergeant Haddock came out of seat and asked me what in the world had happened. I gave him a quick rundown on the situation and told him everything had been taken care of. He and two other sergeants made a bee line for the barracks. In those days, the Army had white name tapes on the fatigue uniform and mine was red with Smith's blood. Although I had put on a brave front, this was one of the most frightening and traumatic experiences of my life and one that I would reflect on many times afterward. I was so shaken that I could not type that afternoon. Smith was a professional athlete. If he had kept his distance and taken advantage of his tremendous reach, he would have cut me to ribbons. He later offered to "finish" what we had started but was warned by some of my large friends to leave me alone.

My reputation was made in the battery after that, and everyone treated me with a new respect. It took weeks for Smith to heal up and in the meantime, he was most noticeable

to everyone who saw him. I have often wondered what bearing, if any, this fight may have had on my selection to go to OCS. It must not have done any harm and may have done more good than I knew. I had proven myself in a situation that tested my courage and resolve. When the final cuts were made, I was one of four selected to go to OCS, another miracle.

My Battery Commander was 1LT James Catlett. Fifteen years later when I was a Major stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado, I saw a Major James Catlett on the post officers' roster. I called him on the phone, and found it was the same officer who had been my battery commander. His first words when I spoke to him on the phone were, "Were you the little squirt that beat the tar out of that great big guy?" We had lunch together and reminisced about our time at Fort Chaffee. He had been passed over the first time he was considered for promotion to major and I outranked him.

In September of 1958, four of us from Fort Chaffee reported in to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for OCS. They were Eddie Hammett, Herbert W. Booth, Bill Kuhn, and me. We arrived in the evening and put up in hotels in Lawton for the night. Booth was black and could not stay in the same part of town with the rest of us, so we had to find him a place in a black hotel. The next morning, we dressed our best, shined our shoes and polished our brass, and reported in to Robinson Barracks, the home of Artillery OCS. It was an intimidating place. The buildings and grounds were absolutely immaculate. I did not believe a floor could be as clean and shiny as that in the headquarters building. We saw men in shorts working on the grounds, remarked at their muscular legs and speculated on whether they were particularly good physical specimens when they came to OCS or whether they had built those muscles here. We were to learn that it was probably a combination of both.

Our first week at OCS was called "zero week" because it did not count as one of the 22 weeks the school required and we did not get demerits during zero week. It was just a week of pre-training for OCS. The first night we were taken on a run that caused several men to collapse and all of us to be pushed to the limit. It was obvious that OCS was going to be very physical. Upperclassmen Coble and Saul were in charge of whipping us into shape to start OCS. There was much to learn. At about 10:30 p.m. we were all ordered to assemble in the latrine. Booth, our friend, was standing before us at fearful and rigid attention. Upperclassman Coble addressed us. "I want you to take a good look at this man. This man has pissed in a urinal. I've been in OCS three-eight weeks (I found that he had been set back to a later class twice) and this is the first time I've ever seen anyone piss in a urinal. Do you know what would have happened if he'd done this in one of the batteries? He'd have killed the goldfish. This man is going to clean this urinal. He is going to scrub it from one end to the other. He is going to disassemble the drain and polish the inside of the drainpipe. When he is finished, this urinal will be clean. Are there any questions?" There were no questions.

The next day we were taken out to observe a "Jark March." Named after General Jark, the first commandant of the Artillery Officer Candidate School, it was, to the best of my knowledge, unique to that school. It was a four-and one-half mile forced march to the top of MB4 (Medicine Bluff Number 4) and back with a 2 1/2-minute break at the top of the hill. If the trip were not completed in 55 minutes or less, it did not count. It was done in fatigues with a helmet liner, pistol belt, canteen, and rifle. Usually about a fifth of the



group passed out en route and had to do it again at a later time. It was the worst physical ordeal I have ever been through. I was to make eleven marches during my time at OCS. We marched from Robinson Barracks about a mile and a half toward the Medicine Bluff Peaks when we heard the Jark marchers overtaking us from the rear and moved off the road to let them pass. We could not believe their pace. They leaned far forward at the waist and called a cadence about double that of the fastest marching I had experienced. Their rifles were at sling arms and the determination on their faces was fierce. As they crossed the railroad tracks, a candidate from Fort Chaffee whom I had known there, one of the two selected from the cycle preceding ours, began to stagger and reel. His rifle clattered to the pavement and he fell in a heap on the tracks. Someone from the OD's jeep, which was following the marchers, dragged him to a tree just behind our formation. His face was flushed and his eyes small circles surrounded by white. His breath came in great gasps. He vomited and then went into convulsions. That was my first view of a Jark march. Because of my slowness and disorganization during my first two weeks at OCS, I accumulated enough demerits to give me eight of these marches before I had even made the first one. I was called in and counseled by my Tactical Officer, a 1LT Spinks, and told that if I did not shape up by the 3rd week, I would go before the board for elimination from the school.

The Jark march deserves special treatment in any account of Artillery OCS because it formed the basis of the discipline system for the school. Demerits could be awarded for a variety of offenses which included conduct, appearance, knowledge, punctuality, personal area, and a variety of specific items that were enumerated in the school SOP (Standing Operating Procedure), a small book we were required to have on our person at all times and which we would memorize as a means of survival. Demerits were awarded by upperclassmen and tactical officers and were recorded on a sheet which we kept on top of our desk at all times. Nine demerits restricted us to the OCS area on Saturday. Eleven demerits restricted us for both Saturday and Sunday. Thirteen gave us full restriction plus one Jark march. Fourteen gave all the preceding plus two marches. Anything over fourteen was considered excess demerits and earned two more Jark marches for a total of four.

I had thirty-five demerits my first week and was informed I had set a new record. The next week I cut it down to thirty-one, still far short of acceptable. Those two weeks earned me eight marches and I had still not made my first one. Rather awesome, I felt. It was then that I vowed that I would not be driven from this school by anything but my own lack of ability after I had done absolutely everything in my power to be what they expected me to be. I had never before approached any challenge in my life with this degree of dedication. I stayed up late each night working by flashlight to accomplish what I could not do before lights out at 10:30 p.m. My first six weeks at OCS I averaged about two and a half hours sleep each night. It was not easy but I found it was possible, and I managed to accomplish all that was required of me.

Jark marches were made on Sunday afternoon starting at 1:00 p.m. If you had more than one march, there was a fifteen-minute break between the two. Two was the maximum you made in one day but that was nine miles in less than two hours and approached the limits of human endurance. One of my classmates wryly remarked that the second march was usually easier than the first because you were about half out of your head. Perhaps there was some truth to this. It was a mark of honor to walk as uprightly as possible

when returning from the second march, but it was hard to keep from staggering. Because of my shortness (five feet-five inches), I had trouble stretching my legs to the long stride used in the Jark marches and had to get into a sort of crouch to keep in step but keep in step I did. I felt a great surge of relief when I was able to make my first march without passing out and I reflected on the promise of the Doctrine and Covenants Section 89 verses 18 and 20, which state that “All saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow in their bones; And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.” I desperately needed this blessing at this time in my life and I received it.

The only activity that might approximate a Jark march is the race-walking that is done as an Olympic event. Upperclassman Saul had reportedly been a race walker and was one of the best Jark marchers in the school. Running would have been easier than marching at this pace but was not allowed. It was customary to carry a small pebble in one’s mouth to keep it from becoming too dry. It seemed to help. We usually took a sip of water from out canteen during the 2 1/2-minute break but only a sip. Occasionally, if someone were having difficulty on the march and was in danger of dropping out, the men on either side would carry his rifle and grip his arms to keep him from falling. I have helped someone like this for a mile or more. The unofficial motto of the school was “Cooperate and Graduate,” and in no other area was this more apparent than in Jark marching. By the same token, if someone were an uncooperative jerk who believed in helping only himself, and there were a few like this, you let him fall, made a half-hearted attempt not to step on him, and left him lying in the road.

I can remember a very large strong-looking man from Special Forces named Candidate Cavanaugh. I was an upperclassman, and it was to be my last march. I inspected the troops before the march and when I came to Cavanaugh, he was very melodramatic, it being his first march. “If I start to falter, sir,” he said, “hit me, kick me, beat me, do anything, but make me go on.” I said it would be a pleasure. When we were about two miles into the march, Candidate Cavanaugh began to reel. His eyes rolled up into his head and he fell like a great tree. We left him lying there. When he regained consciousness, the second formation was just passing by, so he fell in with them and completed the march, slightly illegal, but he got by with it.

Perhaps my darkest day at OCS was the day I got thirteen demerits, all in one day. It all started at about 2:00 a.m. when I reported for duty as a fire guard. Fire guard was performed in exactly the same manner as regular guard duty to familiarize us with all the formalities and customs of the largest and most formal ceremonies and the regulations governing them. I had failed to read the latest bulletin and reported in the wrong uniform. I was reprimanded by the staff assistant duty officer, an upperclassman, for this error, given three demerits, and sent back to the barracks to change. This forced me to hang up a used uniform and put a used pair of boots under my bed. During the daily inspection, I was awarded four more demerits for having dirt on the bottom of my boots and a wrinkled fatigue uniform hanging on the rack. I was awarded two more demerits for being late to formation when I went back to the barracks to try to correct these problems before the inspection party arrived. I could not get into the barracks in time and was caught and chewed out by an upperclassman, who did such a thorough job that I did not have time to shave before marching off to class. I did succeed in getting a razor which I hid in the leg of my trousers. We were not allowed to have anything in our pockets

and all except the left breast pocket were sewn shut. It was used to carry a pencil and note pad and nothing else. During my first class, I got out the razor and attempted to dry shave. First, I cut myself, then the instructor noticed what I was doing and embarrassed me with a public reprimand. When I returned to the OCS area for the noon meal, I was inspected by an upperclassman and given three more demerits for improper personal hygiene because of the dried blood on my face where I had cut myself shaving.

The OCS environment was unrelenting, twenty-four hours a day we were candidates and there was no escaping even momentarily from the realities of the school. The theory was to break those who would break under this regimen and to build those who did not break. It worked. The stated mission of Artillery OCS was to produce junior officers who could successfully lead artillery units in combat without further training. I was never to see combat, but my OCS training was, in my opinion, the best I could have been given in this short time. There were several candidates who had attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York and had been dismissed from that school for reasons I was not to know. They stated that OCS was more intense than West Point although it was 22 weeks as opposed to four years. It was interesting that these former West Pointers also failed to graduate from OCS.

I was to serve under a number of West Point officers in my military career and had nothing but the highest respect for all of them. I also respected very highly all the West Point officers who were my contemporaries, but had one or two as subordinates who were slightly difficult to supervise because they were quite critical of any task, they did not feel measured up to the standard they felt they should be spending their time on.

Meals at Robinson Barracks were quite an adventure. We marched to chow and observed the most careful formalities of drill in marching into the mess hall. The battery who had won first place in the weekly parade competition went first. The staff assistant duty officer, an upperclassman, stood on the steps of the mess hall and commanded in his best command voice, "Charlie Battery Commander, move your battery into the mess hall." The "C" Battery Commander responded by marching his battery to the front of the mess hall and commanding, "Column of files from the left, column left, march." The squad leaders gave supplemental commands and we marched very formally into the mess hall where we seated ourselves at tables which accommodated about twelve men each. An upperclassman presided over each table and saw that proper decorum was observed during the meal. We were required to sit very erectly on the front four inches of our chairs with our head and eyes straight forward. We were not to speak unless spoken to or in addressing a statement or question to the table commander. We were not to speak with food in our mouth but were to chew and swallow it before responding to any question we were asked. Bread was to be broken and eaten in small pieces. We were not permitted to lean forward as we ate, and it required a great deal of care not to spill food on our chests and laps.

I made a big mistake in selecting a bowl of oatmeal for my first meal in the OCS mess hall and regretted it all day. The oatmeal spill on the front of my jacket seemed to attract every upper and middleclassman in the area and I was chewed out so many times for my lack of personal hygiene that I never again ate oatmeal until I was an upperclassman and could eat like a human being.

One lowerclassman at each table was assigned the title of “gunner” and was sent to get milk, rolls, syrup, or anything else that was needed. A great deal of harassment went on in the mess hall and it became a goal to eat and get out as quickly as possible. Since it was practically impossible to actually eat enough to satisfy our hunger in this hectic and demanding environment, and since our tremendous physical exertions caused us to be ravenous, we bolted down as much as possible in as large bites as the table commander would allow, excused ourselves, and ran back to our battery areas to get the many tasks done that were required of our limited time. French toast became the staple of my breakfast diet. It could be quickly cut and eaten with a minimum of effort and little risk of a spill, and it had a lot of nourishment in it. For years after OCS, it was my favorite breakfast.

The eating restrictions were relaxed when we went to the field and for the first time, I was allowed to eat all I wanted. I quickly earned the nickname of “Candidate Dempster Dumpster” because of my enormous appetite when given a free rein.

One very enjoyable institution at the Artillery School was the coffee shop on the lower floor of Snow Hall which made fresh doughnuts continuously as they were sold. I’m sure these doughnuts saved my life on more than one occasion. They were absolutely delicious and whenever I think of a perfect doughnut, I think of Snow Hall. No doubt my appetite influenced my judgment of quality, but they seemed out of this world.

In recent years I have seen movies that depicted the OCS experience and have been disgusted by the language and verbal filth that supposedly was the norm. I am proud to say that the Artillery School was almost totally free of profanity and pornographic speech. I remember an incident when I was a Middleclassman and Upperclassman Gene Loos, while visiting our barracks, let out one of the most ear-blistering strings of profanity I have ever heard. A tactical officer chanced to walk into the barracks just as he uttered these fateful words and awarded him, on the spot, ten Jark Marches and a setback. He stuck it out and graduated with my class. One of the candidates who impressed me most was Middleclassman Tandy. He was handsome, well built, well organized, articulate, and a very impressive leader. He was obviously one of the most promising men in the school. Then one day something happened that changed all that.

Middleclassman Tandy had to report to the First Sergeant for some reason I did not know. The First Sergeant was an old-timer with four rows of ribbons and so many hash marks and overseas bars, they defied counting. The First Sergeant was not impressed with officer candidates and not patient with them. Candidate Tandy halted at the gate to the First Sergeants office enclosure and rapped the prescribed three times. The First Sergeant ignored him. Tandy waited a moment and rapped again, impatiently. He had a great many things to do and was not interested in wasting his time waiting to talk to the First Sergeant, with whom he was not particularly impressed anyhow. Again, the First Sergeant ignored him. The third time Tandy rapped, he was obviously getting irritated. “What’s your problem, candidate?” the First Sergeant called out crossly. “Sir, Candidate Tandy requests permission to speak to the First Sergeant.” After another long pause, the First Sergeant commanded “Post in, candidate.” Tandy entered and marched stiffly to the First Sergeant’s desk, halted sharply, and announced in the prescribed loud voice, “Sir, Candidate Tandy with a statement.” “What’s your statement, candidate” snapped, the First Sergeant. “Sir,” replied Tandy, “You may be a good First Sergeant, but as a man,

you don't show me shit." That was Tandy's last moment as a candidate. Within fifteen minutes, he was packed and moving his gear to "Happy Battery," the administrative unit that processed ex-candidates for reassignment. OCS was over for Candidate Tandy. A moment of temper had cost him the school. Was this a character flaw that would have made Tandy an unfit officer? Perhaps it was. I have often wondered. It was very easy to get out of OCS.

It was strictly against the rules to have any food whatsoever in the barracks; but, it was also a school tradition to smuggle pizza in occasionally. It worked like this. One person would take orders for his barracks and collect the money. Then he would call Dante's Italian restaurant in Lawton and place the order. About two hours later a taxi cab would pull up to the specified building number with his lights off. An assigned Lowerclassman would run out, pay for the order, and run back to the barracks with the pizza, hoping desperately that he would not be caught by the duty officer or one of the tactical staff. Rapid distribution would be made inside the barracks so that within a minute or so all that could be detected was the smell. A suspicious duty officer might arrive on the scene and know what was going on but if there were no pizza visible on his walk-through with a flashlight, he would do nothing, even though the place reeked of pizza and there were suspicious looking humps under the blankets of the beds. Such were our appetites with the high energy output that a large pizza did not go far. One of my most pleasant memories was of eating a large incredibly delicious pepperoni pizza under the covers of my bed with a flashlight. Occasionally someone would be caught by the duty officer and would be sharply reprimanded and counseled at great length on having violated the standing rules of the school but would not be given any demerits. The reward was worth the risk. Sometimes the traffickers in illicit pizza would be caught by the staff assistant duty officer, an upperclassman, in which case this corrupt individual would merely demand a large slice of pizza in return for his lack of vision. It seems that everyone has their price.

When I was an upperclassman, I was given the job of training and supervising a platoon of National Guardsmen who were going through a special OCS set up just for them. After two weeks of very hard work and their having won the weekly parade competition, I decided they had earned a pizza party, so I indoctrinated them in the proper procedure for carrying it out. They were delighted and most appreciative. There was one candidate among them named Merrill Menlove, a former Mormon missionary from Utah, who was particularly enthusiastic about the pizza party. About three weeks after I had left the National Guardsmen, I heard a story of one of the National Guard Candidates whom the duty officer had caught outside in his underwear collecting a pizza order. He had on the strangest set of underwear anyone present had ever seen. I suspected it was candidate Menlove but did not confirm this until ten years later when we met at Fort Carson, Colorado. He admitted it was he and said that the sad part of it was that whenever he met someone he had known at OCS, that story was the only thing they remembered about him.

Physical training was a consistent part of the daily routine. Exercises varied from Army Drill Number One (The Daily Dozen) through Army Rifle Drill and a variety of other exercises. The purpose was to make us familiar with as many of the official Army exercises and Physical training routines as possible. Each candidate was required to prepare himself for each exercise session as though he were going to be the instructor which he

might well be. At the beginning of the session the instructor would be announced, and the candidate selected would then be graded on how he conducted himself as an instructor. He would be graded on his knowledge of the material, his control of the class, his command voice, his confidence, how he answered questions and overcame problems, and the general effectiveness of his instruction. One day the training schedule called for Army Drill Number Two which consisted of twelve exercises I had never heard of prior to reading about them in the Technical Manual provided us. I had studied the first six exercises but had not gotten any further. It was my lucky day; I was called to be the instructor. I launched into the instruction with all the confidence I could muster, knowing that when we came to exercise number seven, I would be exposed for my lack of preparedness and given an unsatisfactory grade on the class. I put on the best act I could, and the class cooperated beautifully. Remember! Cooperate and Graduate! Several questions came up which I answered with my best judgment, not remembering if the book had addressed that point or not. I approached exercise number six with all the assurance of a man driving a speeding automobile toward the edge of a cliff, but I was determined to give it my best shot. Just as we were completing exercise number six, a messenger arrived stating that the class was to be terminated early and that we were to report to supply to draw equipment for going to the rifle range that afternoon. I was saved. As we stood in line at supply, one of my classmates remarked, "Boy, you sure had that down cold." Little did he know what the next minute would have held if I had continued my class. I learned a very valuable lesson that day, that one should never voluntarily expose his ignorance until circumstances force him to do so. It may not really be necessary.

When a group of candidates were marching, they were required to either sing or double time so, since it required considerably less exertion, we usually sang. Some of our favorites were "The Mountain Battery," "Hang Down Your Head, Tom Dooley," "The Quartermaster Corps," and "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon." There were a few songs that were expressly forbidden and the reasons for their prohibition are worth mentioning.

One of them went like this:

*Some mothers have sons in the Army.*

*Some mothers have sons overseas.*

*But take down your battle star, mother.*

*Your son's in the ROTC.*

*ROTC ROTC, Your son's in the ROTC. ROTC ROTC, Your son's in the ROTC.*

It seems that a formation of officer candidates was marching to school singing this song and were quite amused at the irritation and resentment it aroused among the OBC's. The OBC's were commissioned officers recently graduated from either ROTC or the US, Military Academy who were attending the same academic courses as the officer candidates but were not subjected to the rigors of OCS because they had already won their commissions. They walked, not marched to school and, in the envious eyes of some officer candidates suffered no greater trials or inconveniences than not having martinis on the OP. It is probable that the former West Pointers aggravated the situation by laughing at the discomfiture of their ROTC classmates. At any rate, the story was told that some of the OBC lieutenants pulled candidates out of formation and hit them and that a minor riot ensued with injuries on both sides. This was part of the lore and legend of OCS and I do not know whether it was true or not.

The other banned ballad was sung to the tune of “The Whiffenpoof Song” which undoubtedly was Rudyard Kipling’s poem, “Gentlemen-Rankers” set to music. It went like this:

*From the blockhouse Signal Mountain,  
To the top of MB-4,  
And the OT factor that we loved so well.  
See the candidates assemble,  
with their glasses raised on high,  
As they shoot the school solution all to hell.  
Forward observers on the OP, Fire for effect with fuze VT.  
God have mercy on such as we. Satisfactory!*

There were probably other verses I can’t remember, and I think it was banned because the tactical staff had been so sickened by the melodramatic sentimentality of previous classes who had sung this at their graduation, that they could no longer stand it.

The OCS honor code stated that an officer candidate did not lie, cheat, steal, or quibble. To quibble meant to deliberately mislead without actually lying. When an honor violation was suspected, a council of candidates was convened to hear the evidence and determine if, in fact, a violation had occurred. Procedures in hearing a case were much like that used in a military court martial and served the dual purpose of training in proper court procedures. I had the unpleasant responsibility of sitting on a council that found one of my most promising classmates guilty of having positioned his examination paper so that another man could copy from it. Both the man who copied and the man who positioned his paper so that the other could see it were dismissed from OCS. The honor code was taken very seriously and did much to build integrity in candidates.

The lower, middle, and upper classes had the same status in the school as the privates, NCO’S, and officers in the Army. The lowerclassmen were privates and did all the physical work. I was amazed at the amount of work that a lowerclassman could accomplish when imbued with sufficient motivation through the intense supervision of several middleclassmen. I found that I could wax and buff the floor of the barracks in minutes and that I could clean a latrine in less time than I had ever thought possible through a combination of organization and desperation.

The middle class were the NCO’s and directly supervised all the physical work. I recall vividly on the evening of my first day at OCS of double timing back and forth across the grass with a lawn mower, under the supervision of Middleclassman Cheeks and his assistant. Periodically we were braced and informed how hopelessly inept we were and asked repeatedly how we had the audacity to think we could make it through this school. I had never heard the word “gross” used so frequently and found that at OCS it was also used as a noun to mean a lowerclassman. Upperclassman Cheeks stood me at a rigid attention then he had me pull back my shoulders and get my chin into battery (tucked as closely into my neck as was physically possible). Then he asked why I was “Dog eyeing” (moving my eyes anywhere but straight to the front and center). I answered with “No excuse, Sir.” which was one of the few acceptable responses. Then he asked me who the meanest middleclassman at OCS was. Fortunately, I had seen his name tag while I was dog eyeing and answered without hesitation, “Middleclassman Cheeks, Sir.” That was

apparently the right answer for he seemed, pleased and allowed me to return to my double-timing back and forth with the lawn mower.

At about 10:00 p.m. I was commanded to follow another middleclassman who led me to the rear of the laundry building where I was given a cold drink and a few minutes rest. There were those with compassion, I had found. The upperclassmen were the officers. They wore distinctive red tabs on their epaulets and taps on the heels of their low-quarter shoes. They rated a salute from all those junior to them and were allowed to walk in the OCS area. The taps served to warn of their approach and forced them to walk very erectly and carefully to keep from falling down on slick surfaces. Upperclassmen could and did award demerits which made them doubly fearsome and caused lowerclassmen to avoid them as much as possible.

As the last weeks of my Upper-Class term unfolded, we were measured for our new officers' uniforms and I began to think, for the first time, that I might actually graduate. It seemed that I had been in that school forever and that I would continue to be in it until that unlucky day when they tallied all my inadequacies and realized what a mistake it would be to give me a commission. We had our final uniform fitting and ordered our calling cards. They explained to us the customs of the service as far as our responsibilities to call on our new commanding officer at his home and to leave our calling cards in a tray provided for that purpose. They explained that every new second lieutenant was required to dance with the battalion commander's wife at the first military social he attended. I had never learned to dance.

Finally, the day before graduation, one of the TAC Officers said to us, "Gentlemen, tomorrow you will put your new uniforms on with those shiny new second lieutenant bars and you'll drive through the gate as you leave the post and the MP on duty will give you the sharpest salute you have ever seen and you'll return it as best you can and hope he doesn't know how new a second lieutenant you really are, and you'll drive a few blocks and turn around so you can go back through the gate again."

Well, graduation day finally did come, and I finally did walk across the stage and get my diploma. One of the horror stories of the school was of the candidate who made it to the stage but had forgotten to zip his pants and was dismissed on the spot. As I had my commission in left my hand and as I raised my right hand and swore to defend the Constitution of the United against all enemies, foreign and domestic and as Pat Hedrick, one of my classmate's wives pinned my bars on, I began to dare hope that I had made it.

As we walked through the door of the graduation hall, a senior sergeant from the school was there to give us our first salute and collect the dollar from each of us that it was customary to bestow. I wished that it had been a lowly private or PFC that I gave my dollar to. It seemed unfair that this senior sergeant, who obviously didn't need the money, stood there and raked it all in. There were forty-six of us, so he probably got enough to take his wife to dinner at the best place in Lawton.

So ended one of the greatest experiences of my life. I wouldn't trade it for a million dollars; but I wouldn't do it again for another million. My class standing was 36th out of 46, but my bar was just as gold as the valedictorian's. I have always thought that a properly shined second lieutenant's bar is the prettiest insignia the Army has.



**George D. Krumbhaar: 4-59**

And you never got a reply from Shook (Class 3-59)? Again, he was just before me, but they (and he) were still talking about “Candidate, are you Shook? SIR, CANDIDATE SHOOK, NO SIR.”

No one has written you about the goldfish funeral?? It was at least one class before my time, but everyone knew about it. Try anyone in 4-59 or previously. OK, so maybe it didn’t “influence my life,” but for those in attendance it probably taught them how to stay solemn in situations that would make lesser folks die laughing. I’ll bet Shalikashvili knows. If you don’t have his reminiscences, you should try him anyway - with a career like his, he probably has great stories to tell.

**John M. Shalikashvili: 4-59****“First Night at Robinson Barracks”**

After the first day of OCS training, certain that a serious mistake had been made, this officer candidate sneaked out of the barracks after curfew and wandered around for an hour, looking for someone to accept my urgent resignation! Finding no one, I returned to my bunk crestfallen. The next morning at 0400, training began again, and things happened too fast to repeat the attempt. Now 39 years later (1998), that OCS experience is remembered as the beginning of a wonderful professional life leading soldiers and participating in the defense of our great nation.

**“Boy on the Bridge - The Story of John Shalikashvili’s American Success Story”  
Andrew Marble (2019)****“To Become an Officer? January 24, 1959-Lawton, Oklahoma” (from Chapter 8)**

Not long after lights out, once the other candidates had collapsed into their bunks for a few precious hours of sleep, John Shalikashvili slipped from the two-story wooden World War II barracks into the darkness of Robinson Barracks, home of Field Artillery Officer Candidate School.

The OCS cantonment area was an austere grid. Each school mainstay—brigade headquarters, mess hall, service center, gymnasium, candidate barracks, classroom buildings, quad area, and parade field—squared off within a checkerboard of cement walkways reinforced with gravel trim. Not a fallen leaf or stray twig marred the grounds. No blade of grass stood taller than another. A rigid black and white metal banner identifying the school spanned the main entrance. Bookending the sign were two small, brightly polished brass cannons, twin ostentatious exceptions to the school’s asceticism. Enlistees, by mastering specialties within a military unit, serve as the backbone of the armed forces. Yet it’s commissioned officers who provide the top-level leadership, a position requiring not just mastery of a military occupational specialty but also the development of substantial leadership and management skills. Being a commissioned officer is better—pay-wise, responsibility-wise, and certainly prestige-wise. That’s why the ratio of enlistees to officers in the US military, standing about eight to one in 1959, is always high. Robinson Barracks was opened at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in 1942 for enlisted men like Shalikashvili who wished to jump this divide by achieving a commission as a field artillery officer.

The temperature this January evening hovered in the thirties. Yet Shalikashvili’s mind was not on the cold. Earlier today, each member of cycle 4-59, the school’s newest wave

of students, had received a copy of the OCS Standard Operating Procedure. The pocket-sized manual—which laid out the school’s expectations for the conduct, appearance, knowledge, punctuality, and personal area of candidates—warned:

Newly arrived candidates always have two left feet. No matter how hard you try, the chances are nine out of ten that neither the middle class, the redbirds, nor the tactical staff will like either your methods or your results. You will be “chewed” unmercifully at the slightest provocation, the physical training will be rough, and the disciplinary tours will be hard. The whole system will often appear ludicrous, ridiculous, and without guidance or purpose to some candidates in their early weeks. You are being tested. OCS insists on testing you as a soldier and a man before it will endorse you as a man qualified to lead American troops in combat.

“Ludicrous, ridiculous, and without guidance or purpose”—that was their first day in spades. Entering brigade headquarters to register this morning, many hesitated at the doorway, temporarily awed by wooden floors buffed to a blinding sheen. Once they’d crossed the threshold, the haranguing began. Tear off any stripes or ribbons from your uniform, the duty officer barked. For OCS was a netherworld. Within the confines of Robinson Barracks there were no enlisted men. Until you either flunked out or were finally deemed worthy of donning an officer’s uniform, you were nothing but a “candidate.” After being issued a bewildering array of uniforms, hats, and boots, the lucky were ordered to double-time to the holding barracks; the unfortunate, to crawl, pushing their duffel bags forward with their heads.

Lined up in formation shortly thereafter, the class met the cadre in charge of orientation week. That’s when the screaming began. Salute inappropriately and you were chewed out. Respond to a question less than immediately and you were blasted. Wide-eyed candidates stood at attention, frozen in place between two tactical officers each screaming a different command in one ear.

One tradition at OCS was to end the first day with a run—a long, punishing run designed to make candidates regret thinking they were officer material. Decades later, one graduate from this period would relate the shock of his first night at OCS. The cadre announced the candidates would not stop the test of endurance until ten of them quit—not just stopped running but, as a result, were ejected outright from the program. He remembered the trial lasting three hours, with twelve candidates departing the school that evening.

In the craziness that was Field Artillery OCS, the best chance of surviving lay in keeping your head down. Graduate James McGary would later recount an event from his first week. Tac officers asked who in the class held a military driver’s license. Despite having one, he kept silent. Those whose hands eagerly shot up. Those poor saps were put to work, first loading heavy footlockers onto “Cadillacs,” military slang for wheeled transport bins, and then “driving”—which meant pushing—them around the cantonment area for hours.

By maintaining a low profile, McGary managed to reach graduation without having to complete a “Jark March,” the school’s most dreaded punishment. “I have the uncanny ability,” he boasted, “to get lost in a crowd of two.”

If there ever was a candidate who could not get lost in a crowd, it was John Shalikashvili. One big problem, of course, was his name. “His name was outstanding!” one fellow private later exclaimed. “It took up his whole uniform!” bug-eyed another. It was so unpronounceable that both Shalikashvili brothers would jokingly be called “Lieutenant Alphabet” as young officers.

His name had drawn undue attention the very first night of his military career. Six months earlier he’d reported to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, for basic training. He stood shoulder to shoulder with his newly assembled company while the field first sergeant took roll. Attempting to call out Shalikashvili’s surname, the sergeant butchered it badly. “I don’t know how that god-damn name will ever fit on a god-damn name tag!” he sputtered. “From now on I’m going to call you ... ‘Shali!’”

Here at OCS John Shalikashvili’s name had indeed proven too long to fit on the plastic nametag handed out today. Forced to wait for the school to make a specially sized one, John spent the day without.

And boy had he drawn extra attention. “Shashkaveelee?” senior-classmen would deride after pouncing on the infraction and demanding he identify himself. “What kind of god-damned name is that?!” Then, upon hearing his accent, “Are you some kind of German?” “We can’t put a rifle in your hands! How can we trust a German?” Push-ups invariably followed. For the ease of others—and certainly for himself—Shalikashvili began immediately dropping into a brace and replying: “Sir, Candidate Shali, sir!”

This was just day one at OCS! Why would anyone want to suffer through half a year of such abuse? So he’d snuck out from his bunk this evening. Somewhere within Robinson Barracks was a tactical officer he knew, a fraternity brother a couple years ahead of him at university. Shalikashvili was going to find him. And when he did, he’d tender his resignation from OCS.

### **“A Strategic Yes” (from Chapter 10)**

John Shalikashvili continued making his way about Fort Sill’s Robinson Barracks in the cold January darkness. Though it was just the first night of Field Artillery Officer Candidate Scholl, the program had proven so distasteful he’d snuck out of the barracks this evening prepared to quit.

But why were the fingers of doubt still clutching his gut? At only twenty-two years of age, Shalikashvili already held a cautious approach to life. Out in the cold darkness of Robinson Barracks, John Shalikashvili stood both still and silent. He was weighing his options carefully.

Was it time for him – this former stateless refugee, mediocre college student, unpromising engineer, twice abandoned lover , and scion of a fallen aristocratic European family with a proud military heritage- to become a serious person?

Finally, decision made, he turned back to join his sleeping classmates.

## **“The Crucible of OCS July 1959-Lawton, Oklahoma” (from Chapter 11)**

Roger O’Dwyer was sitting in candidate battalion staff headquarters, struggling to fill out a sheaf of duty roster forms. The weather was blasting hot and dry, coating the office with a layer of unbanishable Oklahoma dust. Now an upperclassman, O’Dwyer was in his last two months of the six-month program.

The OCS program at Fort Sill, the US Army’s “Home of Field Artillery,” was launched following the outbreak of World War II. Given the pressing need for artillery officers, the school set a low bar, cranking out over twenty-six thousand second lieutenants between July 1941 and February 1946. When the need plummeted following the end of the war, the school closed, only to reopen in 1951 with the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. Cycles of candidates then entered every two weeks, and by 1952 OCS was training about 1,250 candidates at any given time.

Now, with the Korean conflict long since over, the school was once again bottoming out. The two mainstays—West Point and ROTC—could easily meet the nation’s need for new officers. OCS had thus drastically tightened ship. The bar for admission had been raised, candidates were now entering on a more relaxed two-month rather than two-week cycle, and the school was training only 120 candidates at a time, just one-tenth the Korean War peak.

With no pressing demand for new officers, OCS dialed up the pressure. If candidates dropped out in droves, what would it matter?

So physically and mentally punishing had the program become that one graduate—with bitterness still in his voice five decades later—characterized his OCS experience as nothing less than institutionalized hazing. Another labeled it a form of indentured servitude. Going on to retire as a full colonel, he judged OCS the toughest six months of his life: “It was so bad that during my first week I seriously wondered if it would be possible to break my leg in such a way as to be excused from the program but not end my military career.” The OCS experience at this time, as summed up by yet another graduate, was “heart-breaking, back-breaking, mind boggling, unbearable, cruel, unjust, exhausting, overwhelming, and barbaric.” And the attrition rate—at 44 percent—was “as bad as walking into machine gun fire.”

Yet unlike many classmates of cycle 5-59, the fifth class of candidates entering OCS in 1959, Roger O’Dwyer had neither dropped out nor been held back a cycle. In fact, he now held the second highest slot in the program: S-3, the battalion staff’s operations and training officer. Handling these vexing duty roster forms was a responsibility of the position.

As he struggled to make sense of the documents, a recent graduate from the prior cycle walked in. “Lieutenant Shali, sir!” O’Dwyer snapped to attention. “Please, call me John,” the officer replied, preferring informality now he was no longer bound by the rigid OCS program. Spying what O’Dwyer was up to, Shalikashvili sat himself down to help. Having also held the S-3 spot, he was no stranger to filling out these roster forms.

The symbolism was not lost on O’Dwyer. Given his spirited personality, he should have never made it this far at OCS. He owed a huge debt of thanks to the guidance of one

person—the European-accented draftee who was once again by his side, extending a helping hand.

Every OCS candidate begins at the bottom rung of a rigid and severe hierarchy.

At the top was a cadre of tactical or “tac” officers. Comprised of second lieutenants and noncommissioned officers (NCOs), they were ultimately responsible for all training—formal or informal—within Robinson Barracks.

Next were the upperclassmen. They were easy to spot. On the cusp of becoming artillery officers, they had tabs on their epaulets that were red—the color of artillery—earning them the informal title of Redbirds. Horseshoe-shaped cleats adorned the heels of their low quarter shoes, lending an air of dignity to their gait— “like an old Prussian,” recalled one graduate. The cleats would snap together with a resounding “click” when upperclassmen came to attention. Only Redbirds were allowed to walk at a normal pace or roam freely around the cantonment area. They supervised most activities within Robinson Barracks, especially the wide variety of rules, traditions, and ad hoc assignments designed to test the mettle of candidates. Redbirds shared two tac officer prerogatives. One was to order physical tasks as punishment to anyone their junior who failed to meet the school’s many expectations. The more awesome power, however, was to assign demerits, the accumulation of which could result in a dreaded Jark March. Junior classmen all feared the sound of the approaching footsteps of the steel-heeled Redbird.

The middleclassmen were the managers, equivalent to NCOs-in-training. Sporting green tabs on their shoulders, they were banned from certain walkways and had to walk at double-time—a pace of about 180 three-foot steps per minute. Under the watchful eye of the Redbirds, middleclassmen held both formal and informal “leadership training” positions. Though unable to assign demerits, they could give orders and harass lowerclassmen for weaknesses, real or perceived.

At the bottom of the hierarchy were the lowerclassmen— “the lower gross.” The equivalent of privates, they too were banned from certain walkways and required to double-time. They performed all manual labor at Robinson Barracks and were expected to unflinchingly, unflinchingly, and immediately follow the orders of everyone else.

Living quarters were designed to maximize the effectiveness of this hierarchy. Candidates were divided up into lettered “batteries,” each billeted in its own two-story barracks. Middleclassmen, housed in rows of open cubicles on one side of the second floor, could easily keep watch on the lowerclassman sharing cubes across the way. For both middle- and lowerclassmen, visiting the latrine or entering or exiting the building meant passing by the Redbird area on the first floor. Each battery also had its own tac staff in the barracks area keeping watch over Redbirds, middleclassmen, and lowerclassmen alike.

Under this monitoring system, the school ratcheted up the pressure. The strategy was simple: increase responsibilities in both number and weight, and then punish candidates mercilessly when they failed.

Candidates woke at 4 a.m., and within five minutes had to be in formation. Candidate battery staff would lead each battery on a run or in a round of physical training. After PT, candidates had only fifteen minutes to shower and change into their duty uniform. At 5:15 they were back in formation, this time for reveille and then to march to breakfast.

None of the meals at OCS—breakfast, lunch, or dinner—constituted a respite from the day’s pressures. Because the mess hall could seat just one battery at a time, meals were only fifteen minutes in duration.

The dining hall was thus organized chaos. Meals were eaten family style, with candidates passing bowls of food along the table. Upperclassmen would take their portions first, then the middle, and finally the lower. A lowerclassman served as “gunner” in charge of refilling the empty serving bowls.

For lowerclassmen, mealtimes were another example of how ridiculous the school’s practices were. The gunner often needed to replenish the serving bowls multiple times before senior classmen had taken their share—by which time the battery’s allotted fifteen minutes might have ended and lowerclassmen would be out of luck.

Lowerclassmen could not simply wolf down whatever food they managed to take. OCS tradition required a lowerclassman to sit poised on the first four inches of a chair placed exactly perpendicular to the table, and—looking straight ahead the entire meal—lift food vertically up from the plate until at chin level, and then straight into his mouth. The utensil traced the same path in reverse back to the plate for the next morsel. In the wry parlance of OCS, this was how lowerclassmen received a perfect “square meal.” Eating this way was agonizingly slow.

For lowerclassmen who managed to master the art of the square meal, the system had other ways to defeat. Lowerclassmen could not speak unless spoken to; but if spoken to, they had to respond. Yet demerits loomed for anyone who, forced to talk for most of the meal, left any food on his plate by meal’s end. And if in haste to eat everything a candidate dropped food on his uniform? Any upperclassman who spotted stains could assign demerits for “stealing food.” Perhaps the most heartless tactic to harass, though, was when right before mealtime a senior classman would assign a task that would take at least fifteen minutes to finish.

Emerging frazzled and almost always still hungry from the mess hall, lowerclassman immediately had to run the next gauntlet: battery inspection was in fifteen minutes, and lowerclassmen were responsible for cleaning the common areas. Supervised by middleclassmen, some would wash, wax, and buff the barrack floors; others would clean the latrines.

Cleaning the common areas was an extra burden for lowerclassmen because they, like all candidates at OCS, also had to keep their personal space immaculately arranged. Beds made so tight a quarter could bounce off; boots and brass polished to a high sheen; articles of clothing hung equidistant and perpendicular to the wall; and equipment arranged neatly on the shelf above the bed or in the footlocker below. Uniforms had to be immaculate—no small feat given that clothing suffered such abuse under the rigors of OCS that the school warned applicants to budget extra for laundry.

No matter how much one prepared for inspection, though, the forces of either man or nature always seemed to conspire against the candidates. “Those god-damn Oklahoma dust storms,” recalled graduate Coy Short, “would kick up and coat everything with sand—including your footlocker, which you had to leave open for inspection. So of course, you’d get demerits.” When a moth managed to land on his bed while morning inspection was going on, James McGary was awarded three demerits for “harboring wildlife.” A piece of straw that had broken off from a broom right before the inspection and landed under Jim Slagle’s bed resulted in demerits for “harboring dust on a log.”

After the stress of inspection, the candidates boarded the bus for the Artillery and Guided Missile School. Classes started at 7:15. The windowless building of Snow Hall was a place where lowerclassmen could shut out, at least temporarily, the horrors of Robinson Barracks. Not part of the OCS cadre, Artillery and Missile School instructors did not subject candidates to screaming, forced physical exertion, or demerits.

While classes were a chance to nurture their minds about the fine art of tube artillery and the incipient field of missilery, time at Snow Hall was also a chance to nurture their starved bodies. Because the students were bussed back to Robinson Barracks for their chaotic lunch, the students were perpetually starving. In the breaks between classes candidates thus stormed down to the coffee shop, which made fresh doughnuts throughout the day. So food deprived were OCS students that they’d often empty Snow Hall’s vending machine, earning them the nickname of “candy-dates” by the Artillery and Missile School staff.

The pace continued into the evenings. Batteries lined up at 5 p.m. for dinner. After another harrowing mess hall experience, lowerclassmen would begin contemplating the countless tasks to finish before the 10 p.m. call for lights out. Two hours of study hall, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., were never enough to prepare for the next day’s artillery classes. But with mornings so rushed, it was also critical also to prepare for morning inspection. Frustratingly, on any given evening candidates could also be assigned a host of formal leadership tasks, such as guard duty, that further cut into time.

But it wasn’t these regular duties—marching, cleaning, studying, and other leadership tasks—that made OCS unbearable. The real problem was the overdose of outright harassment, much of which happened in the evening. One night a senior classmate ordered George Krumbhaar to practice his command voice on invisible “smiley faces” he indicated were on the floor by “marching” them back and forth across the barracks. At one point the senior classman judged that his command, “Platoon of smileys, halt!” had come too late. Krumbhaar’s “troops,” apparently, had marched straight through the door and over the fire escape. “Go downstairs, pick them off the ground, and bring them back to the second floor.”

Wilbert Sorenson was once similarly ordered to command a platoon of forty-eight invisible smileys each night for an entire week. One night, after being informed he’d marched them right out of the barracks, he was ordered to run outside and pick up one smiley, bring it into the latrine, stand at attention, salute, flush it down the toilet, and whistle taps. Sorenson had to repeat this ritual forty-seven more times that night.

With so many responsibilities and yet so many opportunities to be harassed by senior classmen, one candidate unsurprisingly received twelve demerits in less than a twelve-hour period.

It began when Guy Wilhelm showed up for fire guard duty at 2 a.m. Having reported in the wrong uniform, he was given three demerits and sent back to the barracks to change. This forced him to hang up a wrinkled uniform and stow a used pair of boots under his bed. Unable to return to barracks in time for morning inspection, Wilhelm received four demerits for his unkempt uniform and boots and two additional demerits and an ass-chewing from the battery staff for being late to formation. With no time to shave before class and worried about accumulating additional demerits for incorrect personal hygiene, he grabbed a razor and hid it in his pant leg. Attempting to dry shave during class, he cut himself. During lunch, an upperclassman noticed the dried blood and slapped him with three more demerits.

The twelve demerits he'd just earned meant Wilhelm would make at least one Jark March this weekend. But how many he'd end up making was an open question. Fourteen demerits meant two marches; anything over fourteen was a total of four.

Perhaps no aspect of OCS was as ludicrous as the Jark March. Named after Lieutenant General Carl Jark, the first commandant, it formed the basis of the school's disciplinary system. It was an oh-so-painful round-trip from Robinson Barracks to the top of Medicine Bluff Peak #4 (MB-4) on Fort Sill's West Range. These were the bluffs that Geronimo, mounted on horseback, had widely but incorrectly been said to have jumped off during his attempt to escape from Fort Sill in the early 1900s. The 4.2-mile march was commonly done with a field pack, helmet liner, pistol, ammunition belt, canteen, and rifle. Marchers were required to take thirty-inch steps at a punishing tempo of 130 paces per minute. Because candidates were prohibited from bending their knees, each step placed enormous strain on their stomach and upper thigh muscles.

Wilhelm recalled the shock of witnessing his first Jark March: "a candidate ... began to stagger and reel. His rifle clattered to the pavement and he fell in a heap on the tracks. Someone from the OD's [Officer of the Day's] jeep that was following the marchers dragged him to a tree just behind our formation. His face was flushed and his eyes small circles surrounded by white. His breath came in great gasps. He vomited and then went into convulsions."

Any candidate unable to complete his assigned march—or one who arrived back at Robinson Barrack's even one minute past the fifty allotted for the trek—would have to attempt the grueling march again at the next opportunity.

With four scheduled Jark Marches per weekend, opportunity was not lacking. "I had another one of those marches for too many demerits," Shalikashvili wrote home. "I am getting to be an expert at those."

Unsurprisingly, candidates took extreme measures to avoid demerits. They even turned to magic. Rags and cleaning materials used to scrub floors, polish boots, and clean equipment were thrown into a pillowcase—or "magic footlocker"—and dashed behind a "magic tree" behind the barracks before morning inspection. Candidates also employed



“magic equipment,” keeping one set of clothes, boots, and the like out at all times for display only.

For the common areas, a quick way to buff the floor was to have one candidate lie on a blanket and be pulled around the barracks. Because cleaning latrines was so time-intensive, all forty-plus barracks members often agreed to the ludicrous practice of using just one or two of the available toilets.

Many also studied after lights out, lying under the covers with a sock-covered flashlight clenched between their teeth. One candidate even smuggled a typewriter into the barracks so he could finish an assignment. Why not? Many students polished their boots and brass in bed as well.

Yet working after lights out held danger. Sometimes Redbirds would sneak up the fire escape. Spotting candidates at work under the blankets, they’d barge in, knock flashlights out of mouths, and liberally assign demerits. Even falling straight to sleep didn’t guarantee a night’s rest: some senior classmen took devilish delight in waking lowerclassmen up to run an errand, such as to fetch them a Coke at 3 a.m. Being ordered to run multiple errands per night was not unheard of.

Sleep deprivation was thus rampant. One graduate recalled averaging 4.5 hours of slumber for the entire program; another eked out 2.5 hours per night for the first six weeks. Such lack of sleep took its toll. Candidates would fall asleep during class at Snow Hall. If noticed by the instructor, they’d have to stand against the wall in the back of the classroom. “By the end of the fifty-minute period,” recalled Laurence Crawford, “oftentimes half the class would be standing in the back trying to keep from nodding off.” Sometimes, as once happened to Shalikashvili, candidates would fall right back to sleep even while standing up.

All these stressors took a toll. Robert Lindsay, who’d been in good physical shape before OCS, lost about thirty-five pounds over the course of the program. Larry Frye lost forty in the first few weeks. Then there was the emotional trauma. “After being harassed for one or two months straight since we walked through the gate of Robinson Barracks, many of us would be so overwhelmed we’d stand in the shower and cry,” recalled John Ruoff. “You miserable candidates!” seniorclassmen would goad during formation. “Come on, we know that many of you want to quit. Just step forward now and let’s get it over with!”

Those who refused to quit sometimes pushed themselves beyond endurance. While on a Jark March one weekend, one member of cycle 4-59 fell to the ground and began pounding the ground with his fists over and over again until he was restrained. Because of this breakdown, he was restricted to supply and office work. Coy Short recalled what happened one day when seniorclassmen pushed a fellow candidate too far. The cycle mate was ordered to assume the Parachute Landing Fall position and then jump down the barrack steps, one by one, while repeating some ridiculous chant. “He flipped out. He went completely wild. They had to get him on the bed and use a blanket to pin him down until the medics came and took him to the hospital. He was still in the hospital when I graduated.”

Other candidates were simply dismissed outright. “Do you remember the negro who came here with me from Chaffee?” Shalikashvili wrote home. “Well, about a week ago his arm got twisted up pretty badly in hand-to-hand combat and he got dismissed from OCS. As a matter of fact, he is being released from the Army and he will be home in another week. All that is too bad, since he was a very good soldier. However, at least his arm is not too bad and in civilian life it won’t bother him at all.”

“It was easy,” recalled one graduate, “to get out of OCS.” When a candidate did leave the program, his space in formation was left open for the next three rotations. It was a visual reminder of the tenuous nature of OCS candidacy, one designed to increase the anxiety of the remaining candidates. Who’d be next to leave?

That was the environment O’Dwyer had stepped into upon arriving at Robinson Barracks four months ago. But he’d been lucky. Lucky in his assignment of a “big brother.”

The big brother/little brother relationship was the pairing of a middle- and lowerclassman, a system ostensibly designed to help new candidates adjust to the rigors of OCS. How senior classmen actually approached this or any other assignment, however, depended to no small extent on personality. Albert Shook recalled that he was critical when upperclassmen ragged on him and his fellow lowerclassmen. “I thought their harassment was stupid,” he recalled, “but when I became an upperclassman I did the same goddamn thing.” John Ruoff concurred: “When you were middle- or upper class, you gave the lower classes the same crap that was given to you when you were at that stage.” For little brothers paired with this type of candidate, explained Bobby Coggsdale, “big brother was there to harass you. Yes, he was to have some responsibility for your development—but not in a brotherly way.”

Given the steep attrition rate at OCS, Shalikashvili was assigned two little brothers. One was Russell Davis. Highly professional and motivated, Davis, already a senior NCO, would graduate second in his class and eventually retire as a colonel. He recalled that Shalikashvili quickly read the situation: “He didn’t need to offer any advice, and he didn’t. He knew there was no need to waste both our time.” Time was in short supply at OCS.

O’Dwyer, Shalikashvili’s other little brother, was a different assignment. “I had an urge to be independent,” he later chuckled at the memory, “and Shali made it his commitment to make sure that I would graduate in spite of this urge. He did it by pushing me physically and mentally.”

O’Dwyer was once trying to lead formation. He lacked a loud command voice, however, and his older brother decided to do something about it. Ordering O’Dwyer into the big brick smokestack, some one hundred feet tall and ten feet wide, that towered over the mess hall, Shalikashvili slammed the heavy door shut. “I want you to call that smokestack to attention!” After taking a deep breath, O’Dwyer began issuing orders: “Chimney, forward march! About-face!” Every few minutes, Shalikashvili would open the door and shout: “I can’t hear you!” Each time, O’Dwyer saw an ever-expanding crowd gathered around the chimney, enjoying the show. And when he was finally ordered out, everyone was laughing at him.

“I didn’t think it was funny at the time, but after three weeks I understood what he was doing and we became fast friends.” Shalikashvili was firm as needed, but never mean. Some senior classmen would walk away from the smokestack, leaving the poor lowerclassman to shout commands over and over until he screwed up the courage to open the door and check.

Sometimes during formation Shalikashvili would come up to O’Dwyer and quietly ask if he needed help with anything. “Middleclassman Shali, yes I need help sir!” Big brother would later seek him out. “Shali would help out if he could, but when a particularly thorny artillery problem came up, he might say, ‘I don’t understand it either.’”

Russell Davis observed how Shalikashvili treated O’Dwyer: “Even many of the cadres really didn’t understand what Shali saw: the original intent of this big/little brother relationship was not to beat the crap out of your younger brother and get him to quit, but rather to mentor him to the best extent possible.” “Shali’s approach was kind of infectious,” Davis added, “I was a mentor rather than a tormentor to my little brother when I became a middleclassman.”

Similar sentiment came from Bob Errico. As a middleclassman he was once assigned to a dining table next to one headed by Redbird Shalikashvili. The table head set the tone for the meal; if he decided to harass lowerclassmen, then the entire table joined in, leaving the candidates with no time to eat. The upperclassman leading Errico’s table had been doing just that. “I remember thinking to myself, this is wrong! An army travels on its stomach—let the poor lowerclassmen eat, why don’t you?” Errico noticed Shalikashvili was instead using mealtime to answer questions junior classmen had about surviving OCS. When it came time for Errico himself to head a table, he copied Shalikashvili.

Others also noted Shalikashvili’s approach. Tac officer Robert Sandla later recalled that the immigrant soldier approached his mentoring responsibilities in a more serious way than others, and that he put great effort into counseling other candidates. Robert Jenks saw how Shalikashvili, helped along by his engineering expertise, often aided other students struggling in gunnery class: “He had a quiet way of sharing his knowledge.”

Certain incidents occurred during Shalikashvili’s final two months that deepened O’Dwyer’s respect for his former big brother. The first involved an execution. Some candidates in O’Dwyer’s battery began suspecting that, wishing to hand out additional demerits, one tac officer was sneaking in before morning inspection to place a strand of hair inside candidate mess kits. To retaliate, one candidate captured a tarantula from the cantonment area. Before leaving for breakfast the next morning, he placed it inside a mess kit. During inspection the tac officer had indeed been scared out of his wits.

As part of their battery’s inevitable punishment, the tac officer ordered O’Dwyer to conduct a formal execution of the tarantula. Redbird Shalikashvili was put in charge of supervising the proceedings. With a copy of the US Army’s field manual for executions as guidance, O’Dwyer assigned battery members to appropriate positions—executioner, chaplain, physician, and the like. At the end, once the deed was done, Errico made the announcement, “That concludes our ceremony. Dismissed!” But immediately after he heard a deep accented voice boom out: “That’s not right! Read that!” Following where Shalikashvili’s finger was pointing in the manual, O’Dwyer saw the words: “... and the

band will play a jaunty tune.” Shalikashvili would not release the execution squad until they’d fulfilled every last required detail of the ceremony.

Yet Redbird Shalikashvili was not averse to bending the rules or speaking up to authority when necessary. One Sunday afternoon Shalikashvili was calling cadence for the first Jark March of the day. O’Dwyer, always the clown, was slotted to make both marches that day. As the procession worked its way up MB-4, O’Dwyer began to drag. Increasingly exhausted, he fell back further and further, eventually reaching the end of the line.

Now he was worried. Could it be heat stroke? Just as he was about to slump to the ground—which given his heavy load of demerits could possibly have set him back a cycle, adding two more long months to his OCS experience—his former big brother appeared. Shalikashvili, who as the leader of the march did not carry a pack or a rifle, took O’Dwyer’s weapon from him, adding it to the collection slung over his own shoulder. He gave O’Dwyer a few gruff words of encouragement, and they continued on.

Upon returning to the barracks at the end of the march, Shalikashvili rushed him into the shower and snapped the cold water on full blast. Ten minutes later they heard the call— “Jark March number two, assemble!” “Stay where you are,” Shalikashvili ordered. He then fixed it with the cadre that O’Dwyer wouldn’t have to attempt his second slated march that day.

O’Dwyer’s gift for finding trouble could also put others in jeopardy. Once, while on a timed “rapid shoot” training exercise, he was tasked with unloading rounds of ammunition and hustling them to the base of the three or four howitzers. While rushing to place one round in position, he heard an unexpected rattling noise. Looking down, he spied a snake, body curled and head held up and back.

Screaming at the top of his lungs, O’Dwyer hurled the round downward. In his panic, however, he missed the snake completely. Still not thinking clearly, O’Dwyer ran back for more shells.

When those nearest him realized what was going on, they leapt into action. O’Dwyer’s actions could very well inadvertently trigger a shell’s detonating mechanism, thereby incinerating everyone within the shell’s one hundred-yard bursting radius, possibly even setting off a chain reaction by exploding other ordinance in the area. Luckily his classmates managed to get him under control before tragedy struck. With a flash of a knife, one candidate ended the ordeal by cutting off the snake’s head.

Shalikashvili just happened to be the leader of the exercise. He could empathize with O’Dwyer. Here at OCS Shalikashvili himself made a grave error that put other lives in jeopardy. When trying to determine the length of the fuse on one shoot, he’d placed the decimal point one place shy of correct. The shell exploded much too soon. Though it was well within his prerogative to do so, and though it might have ended Shalikashvili’s hope of becoming an officer, the tac officer that day did not eject him from OCS. And neither would Shalikashvili, on this day of O’Dwyer’s very serious and public failure, push the matter.

It was graduation day for Shalikashvili, and he was leaving OCS having made a good impression. “He wasn’t a talker, but when he did speak it was clear he knew what he was talking about,” recalled one graduate. He was also neat in appearance, taking great care of his boots and brass, always looking sharp in his uniform, recalled another. “He looked like he was going to do what was asked of him, and he was going to do it right,” said a third.

It was a favorable image Shalikashvili both cultivated and protected. On graduation morning middleclassman Jim Stotler was doing a last-minute commode check just before inspection. He spied Redbird Shalikashvili at the sink, wearing his new lieutenant’s uniform. Stotler immediately snapped to attention, and Shalikashvili ordered him at ease.

“I couldn’t believe it,” Stotler later recalled his shock, “but Shalikashvili was putting in contact lenses!” The senior classman had impressed him from day one— “Shali could run anyone into the ground. He was so smart he aced tests that were never aced!” So Stotler’s first reaction was: “Oh my god, he is human after all!” “If others at OCS knew about his contact lenses,” Stotler later explained, “it would have been perceived as a physical weakness. He might even have had trouble staying in the top echelon of the class.” Shalikashvili’s resourcefulness was similarly impressive: “At that time, contact lenses were almost exclusively for movie stars and other elite. They really weren’t available to the masses.”

Exiting the bathroom, Shalikashvili warned Stotler: “They don’t need to know about this.” “Yes Sir,” the middleclassman replied.

\* \* \*

A few days had passed since Shalikashvili had helped out Redbird O’Dwyer with the duty roster forms, but the new lieutenant still hadn’t left OCS. The army was fielding an increasing number of nuclear warheads and given Shalikashvili’s European upbringing—and especially since his mother was born in Russia—the military was subjecting him to a more rigorous background check.

While waiting for his clearance, Shalikashvili continued bunking in the candidate battalion staff barracks. One day O’Dwyer noticed his friend didn’t look quite right. “What’s the matter John?” he queried. Shalikashvili explained that his clearance was troubling him, and he was also struggling over how long he should stay in the army.

Top OCS candidates generally desired a lifelong career in the military. Yet at this point in the army’s history those graduating from the program earned just reserve officer status. To stay permanently, they’d need to apply for Regular Army Commission. That’s why, as a reward for those excelling in this punishing program, OCS offered this commission to the top three graduates.

Having finished second in his cycle, Shalikashvili received the offer. But even just prior to entering OCS, he hadn’t planned on making a career in the army: “Mother mentioned that OCS is going to increase my tour of duty by one year,” he’d written home from AIT. “That is not so. The Army has a new program now, and I am in it, under which an OCS candidate does not have to add one extra year to his service. What all this means is that I am still going to be discharged on 30 July 1960.” Having since gone through six months

of OCS hell, Shalikashvili now had even less interest in a military career. So, he did what was unthinkable to some: he turned down the army's offer of Regular Army Commission.

So how best to approach the next few years? He planned to pursue graduate education at some point, but it was the timing he seemed unsure about. "I don't know what to do now, Roger," Shalikashvili worried aloud. "Do I stay just for the two years total or do I extend it to three? If two, the army will pay for my uniforms. If three years, I have to foot the bill myself."

This caught O'Dwyer by surprise. "John, go for three years!" he exhorted. "You look like someone who should be an officer." Then, looking squarely at his mentor and friend, O'Dwyer blurted out: "You're going to be a general some day!" Shalikashvili said nothing, an odd expression hanging on his face. The two spoke no more on the matter. Soon thereafter his clearance came through, and Shalikashvili parted ways with Robinson Barracks.

### **Robert M. McGowan: R2-59**

#### ***"The Goldfish Funeral- answer to a question from a class 4-59 graduate"***

First Platoon Class R2-59 was the instigator of the "Goldfish" story. One of our candidates was averse to working in the hot Oklahoma sun. He volunteered for PLO (Permanent Latrine Orderly). After a few days he suggested closing off one of the urinals and making it a fish tank. The barracks agreed, and he went to our TAC Officer and explained what we wanted to do. After deciding on the number of fish the TAC Officer gave his permission. The job was completed with all appropriate aquarium necessities.

A couple of weeks later we came in one afternoon and one of the fish had jumped out of his tank. The Barracks personnel gathered in the latrine, had an appropriate ceremony, and gave him a burial at sea. (We flushed him down the commode).

The next day we came in from training the PLO noticed he was awarded demerits for authorized items not on display. This happened for the next two days. We told him to go ask the TAC Officer what the problem was.

The TAC Officer asked him how many fish he was supposed to have. The light came on. He was then tasked to tell him what happened to the missing item. He explained that we had returned from training and found him out of his home and deceased. The barracks personnel were gathered and assigned appropriate duties for a military funeral and that he was given a proper burial at sea. He bought the story.

### **Larry W. Lee: 6-59**

Aside from surviving the rigorous academic curriculum and physical training during my first three months at OCS, I managed to keep my weekly demerit accumulation within reasonable bounds. From Zero Week through most of middle class, I had accrued only a couple of tallies sufficient to merit a "tour," spending an hour or two marching back and forth at shoulder arms on the parking lot.

My remarkable demerit record, however, was upended just before graduating to upper class. One of the TAC Officers apparently concluded it unacceptable that I was the only member of Battery C who had not received sufficient demerits to qualify for the ultimate

penalty. This intolerable irregularity was addressed during a barracks inspection while our company was engaged in a full day of classes and field exercises.

Upon my return to the barracks on the day in question, I discovered a demerit slip bearing my name. The specified offense was the presence of a penny (of mysterious origin) on my cubicle desk. The inspecting TAC Officer cited an array of infringements attributable to this single violation, among them: unauthorized object on display, unshaven Lincoln, unshined brass, failure to secure valuable item, and attempt to bribe an officer. Each of these infractions was allotted a sizable number of demerits; in sum, they added more than enough to elevate my week's total well beyond the amount qualifying for a "walk."

The following weekend I visited MB4 with a group of other, more deserving, fellow candidates. I endured the ordeal, and over time came to fully appreciate the episode, especially its retelling with embellishments.

**"100th OCS Class Since 1951 Reports for Duty at Center"  
*Lawton Constitution (Thursday November 5, 1959)***

Fort Sill's 100th Officer Candidate School class since 1951 gets under way Friday with the conclusion of a five-day processing period.

Forty-nine men comprise class 3-60. They were welcomed earlier this week by Maj. John T. Coats, Jr., assistant commandant of the school.

Since Officer Candidate School was reopened at Fort Sill following the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, 5,198 men have graduated and received their commissions as second lieutenants in the Army of the United States. At present 111 others are in training in classes 1-60 and 2-60.

Officer Candidate School class No. 1 began in January of 1951 and graduated 25 second lieutenants. At that time, new classes entered at four week intervals until September 1951 when the frequency was increased to a class every two weeks. By this time 1,250 candidates were in training.

After the truce was signed in Korea, the number of classes was reduced considerably. At present, new classes enter every eight weeks. Col. F. G. Smith was named commandant when OCS was reconstituted in 1951. Col. B. B. Kercheval is the present commandant.

Twenty-four officers, 46 enlisted men and eight civilians are presently on duty. Among them are two men who have been serving with OCS since shortly after its reopening. They are Harold A. Shafer, statistician in academic records, and Master Sgt. Walter R. Reagan, non-commissioned officer in charge of the instructional committee

Besides these regular OCS classes, a rigorous 11-week course for reserve component candidates was begun in June, 1957. National Guard participated in these classes initially. The U.S. Army Reserve started in this program in 1957.



*National Guard Class NG 1-56 (Top and Bottom)*







*Class 2-57 Field Expedients Class & Demonstration near Wolf Creek Crossing*



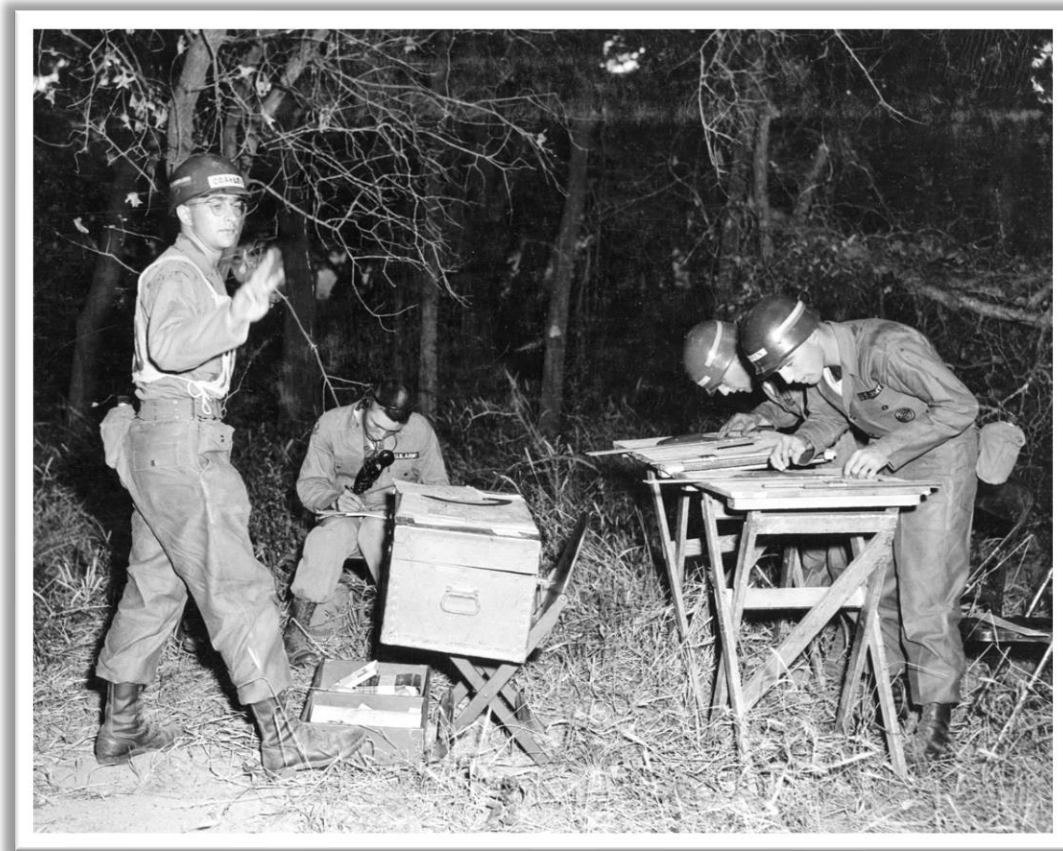


*Class 5-57 learns table manners (top) and fires the .45 caliber machine guns at the Medicine Bluff (MB2) firing range*



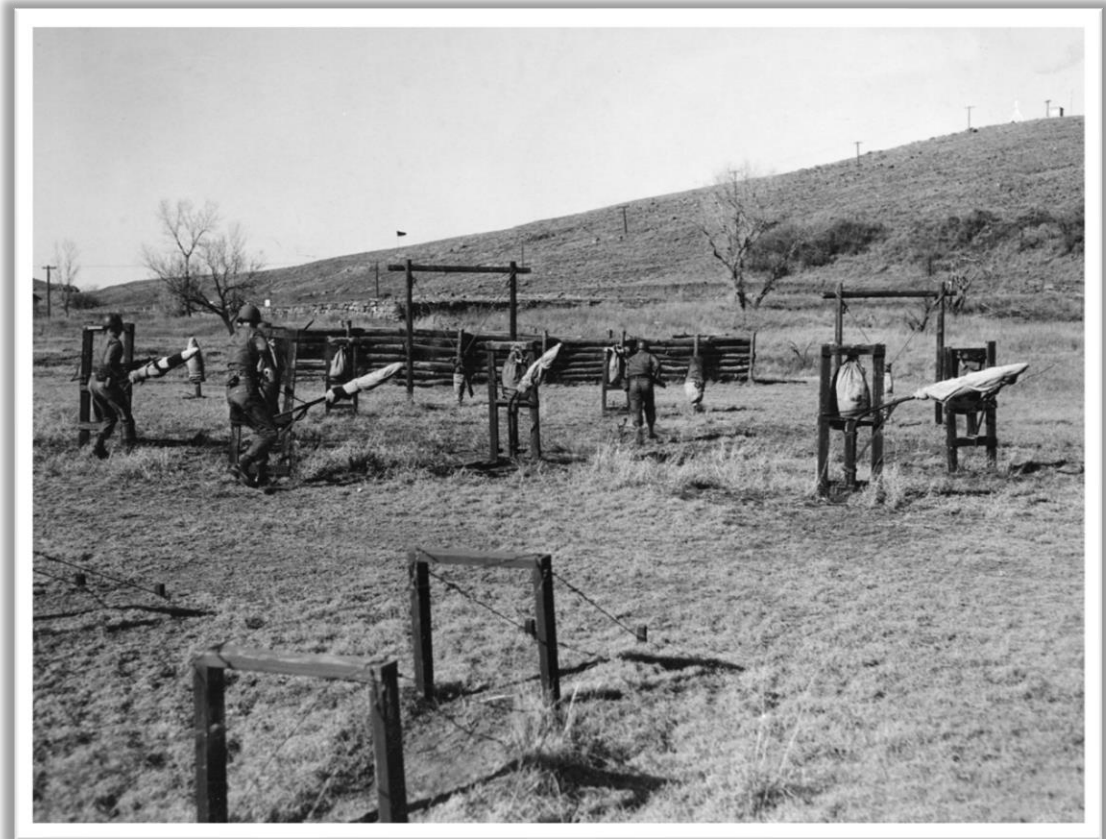


*Candidates from USAR Class R1-57 training on the M1 4.5 Inch Gun (top)  
and a fire direction field training exercise (bottom)*





*Bayonet Training (1957)*



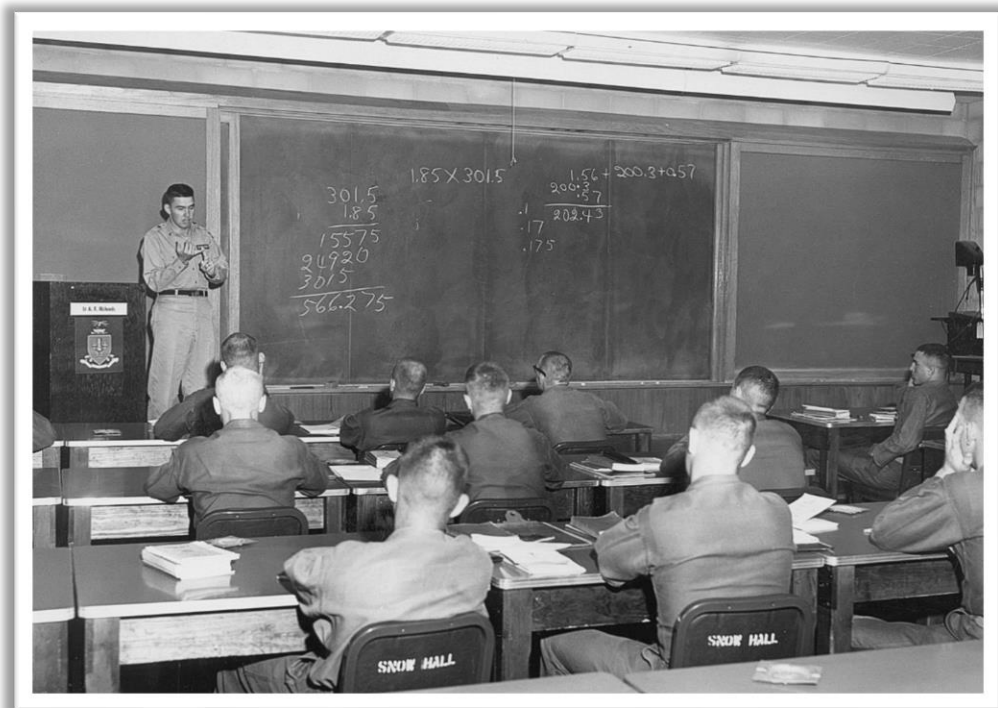


*Hand Grenade Training and an Organized Athletic Period (1957)*





*Candidate Louis Fancher Class 3-57 OCS  
Winter Class C Uniform & Summer Parade Uniform*





*Leadership Reaction Course Class 2-59*

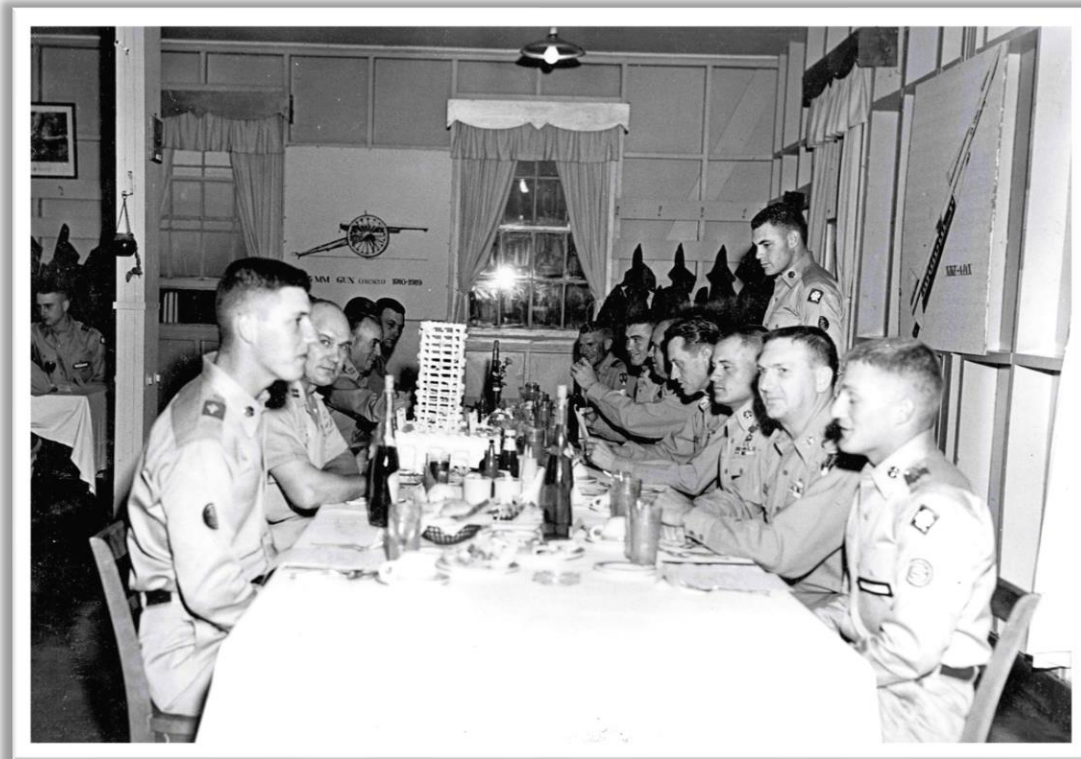




*Leadership Reaction Course Class 2-59*







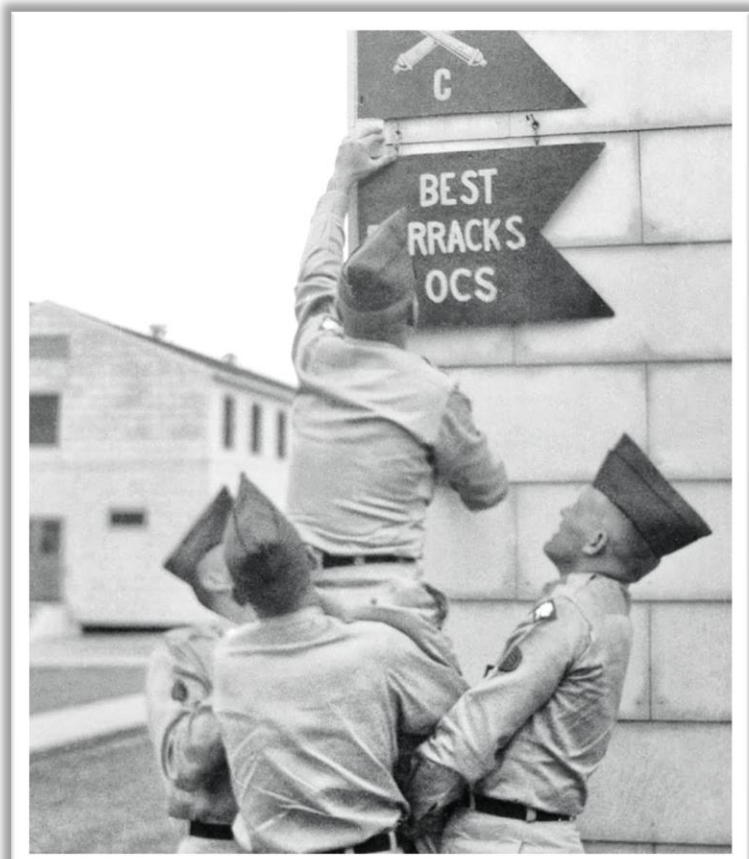
*Head Table at the Redbird Dinner May 8, 1959 for Class 4-59. Sitting at the front right side is Candidate John J. Shalikashvili, the future Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.*



*Class 5-59 Arrives for Processing and Orientation Week on March 23, 1959*



*Class 5-59 Redbird Dinner*



*Candidate Life – Class 6-59*

# Chapter Eleven

## 1960 - 1963

### **“Officer Candidate School Today”**

**Captain Talbott Barnard (Class 11-52)**

**US Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School**

***Artillery Trends (February 1960)***

The US Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School presently has its 100th class in training since the artillery OCS was reactivated in January 1951.

What does it take to graduate from today’s OCS?

First, the unit commander must make sure that the men selected for OCS are properly prepared. The applicant must be familiar with the nature of officer candidate training, including the fact that the course entails considerably more than a 40-hour academic week. The OCS commandant recommends that every applicant be briefed by a recent OCS graduate.

In discussing an applicant’s possible attendance at the OCS, the unit commander should ask about existing or impending personal problems: OCS requires nearly 100 percent of a candidate’s attention and energies and outside problems constitute a major obstacle to his completion of the course. Financial difficulties are a major problem. Often these difficulties become acute because married candidates are not entitled to separate rations and therefore lose their subsistence allowance. Also, it costs more to maintain uniforms and personal equipment than the candidate is normally accustomed to.

The applicant must score at least 250 points on the standard physical fitness test within one month prior to appearing before the OCS examination board. Half of a recent class was not able to attain this minimum score when they were given the test again during the first week of the school. The school presupposes a certain degree of physical fitness; therefore the course is not designed to raise the physical proficiency of an individual.

### A New Requirement

A recent additional prerequisite for attending OCS is the completion of high school trigonometry or its equivalent. As a minimum standard, the applicant should be familiar with the functions of triangles and the use logarithms. To meet this requirement, the applicant should complete subcourse 15, “Exercises in Mathematics.” Prospective candidates may apply for this and other extension courses by filling out DA Form 145 and mailing it to the Commandant, USAAMS, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

The unit commander should consider all these points when reviewing an individual’s application for OCS. The unit commander should never process this application as a matter of routine.

The OCS area at Fort Sill is called Robinson Barracks. In addition to the normal administrative offices and barracks, the facilities include a mess hall, post exchange,

barber shop, visitor's lounge, gymnasium, and classroom buildings. The OCS is organized with a standard headquarters and staff, a headquarters battery to administer the enlisted permanent party, and three lettered candidate batteries. Within this structure, the OCS fulfills the mission of preparing selected individuals for duty as second lieutenants, and serves as a basis for expansion in the event of mobilization.

A class of approximately 50 candidates enters the OCS every 8 weeks and is divided among the three candidate batteries. There are three classes in residence all the time. Consequently, one-third of each of the three classes is in each of the lettered batteries. Thus, each candidate battery has a Lower Class, a Middle Class, and an Upper Class, each separated by 8 academic weeks. A system of command position is used on a weekly rotational basis as part of the leadership instruction. The battery officer positions are filled by the upperclassmen and the noncommissioned officer positions by the middleclassmen while the lowerclassmen serve as "privates." A candidate battalion staff is formed by members of the Upper Class. This staff is responsible for administrative and training activities and occupies its own headquarters building in the OCS area.

#### Honor System

The candidates elect representatives to operate an honor system similar to the one at the United States Military Academy. Any violation or suspected violation of the honor system is reported to the Honor Committee. The committee then conducts an investigation in accordance with Article 32 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The committee also conducts a hearing, and the findings are forwarded to the OCS commandant for appropriate action. If a finding of guilty is submitted, the offender, in most cases, is either permitted to resign or relieved from the school.

The OCS is an organic part of the US Army Artillery and Missile School. It shares the responsibility for the instruction of the candidate with the academic departments of the School. The resident School departments teach the candidate those subjects essential to artillerymen. Twenty percent of the candidate's instruction is in gunnery, 25 percent is in tactics and combined arms, 10 percent is in artillery transport and materiel, and 10 percent is in communications and target acquisition.

The remaining one-third of the instruction is either taught or supervised by the OCS tactical staff. This instruction gives the candidate the necessary background to be a junior officer. There are periods of dismounted drill, physical training, and troop information which prepare him to instruct those subjects. The candidate receives familiarization training with small arms and small arms range operations and instruction in the use of the bayonet and hand-to-hand combat. To facilitate the transition from an enlisted to a commissioned status an officer indoctrination program is being expanded.

This full academic program given in a 22-week period exerts a demanding routine upon the candidate, who must satisfactorily complete each of the subcourses as one of the criteria for graduation. Academic achievement is weighted as 65 percent of his overall grade.

## Other Grading Areas

There are two other areas in which a candidate is graded. The first is an evaluation of the individual by his battery tactical officers. The candidate is observed closely during all phases of his training, and the rating he receives accounts for 25 percent of his overall grade. The final 10 percent of the overall grade is derived from student ratings of the candidate submitted by his classmates.

The overall attrition rate for the past 9 years has remained constant at about 44 percent. Of those not completing the course, approximately 49 percent are relieved for lack of motivation and 12 percent for physical deficiencies while leadership and academic deficiencies account for some 27 percent of the individuals relieved. This figure of 27 percent would be considerably higher were it not for the policy of retaining candidates deficient in these areas by turning them back to a subsequent class. To be retained by being turned back, a candidate must demonstrate sufficient potential to justify his retention. The remaining 12 percent who do not complete the course drop out primarily due to financial hardship, character deficiencies, and security requirements.

The candidate is constantly made aware that his every action is being observed, analyzed, and evaluated. The prescribed standards are intentionally made to seem unattainable; adequate time to perform necessary actions never seems to be available. In this atmosphere, the candidate must learn to function efficiently and concentrate his efforts on the most important of a multitude of "Mandatory" requirements. This takes determination, as more than 5,000 past graduates will affirm.

For the future, the Officer Candidate School will strive to continue to produce qualified junior officers from the enlisted ranks.

### **Ronnie K. Livingston: R1-60**

I joined the Mississippi National Guard at the age of 17 1/2 (my parents signed for me). Four years later my Battery Commander recommended me for the special Artillery OCS Reserve class. I believe I graduated 57th out of 104.

These are just a few of the many, many memories I have of that challenging 90 days:

The very first week I thought I would get washed out. I sprained both ankles jumping a ditch going over to buy footlocker display items at the PX. I was caught after lights out putting alcohol on my ankles and was ordered to sick call the next day. For a few days, they let me walk instead of run to classes. I was very fortunate.

The food deliveries to Robinson Barracks each night kept us alive. I can still smell the aromas from the burgers and pizzas. We were not able to eat a square meal in the mess hall, due to the harassment by the regular army Red Bird seated at the head of each table. I wonder what they did with all the extra rations that were available because we ate so little.

The relief and thrill of passing the physical with flying colors and the good fortune of having only 2 hours' worth of demerits for the parking lot my entire 90 days.

With the temperature over 100 degrees having to spend 1 minute in the ice-cold shower before jumping into the pool.

Experiencing my proudest moment when the FO Instructor said “Gentlemen, that is how it is done” after I had perfectly bracketed the target and fired for effect. I wish I could remember the name of the Forward Observer Instructor. He was my favorite. I aced every one of my missions. I had the toughest time with FDC.

Our class was for only 90 days, so we never made Red Bird. The only relaxed meal we had was our special “Red Bird” dinner the last day of OCS. Some of us, I never heard how many, got food poison from the shrimp they served. I went unconscious and was not aware of anything until I awoke in my bunk at Robinson Barracks feeling like I had had the best sleep in my entire life. I was told that I was taken to the hospital and my stomach was pumped out. All of that happened and I did not have a memory of any of it. I do not know how long I was out. It would be interesting to read the hospital report for that event. It was over 10 years before I ate another shrimp.

I am very proud of my OCS accomplishment. OCS was the greatest thing that had happened to me in my life up to that point. It gave me self-confidence and great pride in being an Artillery Officer. It was a big challenge but well worth it.

### **Larry Robert Frye: 2-60**

I was 21 years old when I reported to Fort Sill to enter Officer Candidate School. My life up to that point had been pretty normal, with the usual ups and downs while growing up in Logansport, Indiana. I had completed two years of college at Purdue University in Engineering, but I really wanted to become a Forester. So, I left college and joined the US Army to allow myself some time to sort things out.

I loved basic training. I worked my way into becoming our trainee platoon sergeant. I had been in ROTC in college, attended Culver Military Academy for four summers, and knew FM 22-5 forwards and backwards. At first, I did not volunteer for the position because my father, a WWII veteran, suggested I not volunteer for anything. While in basic training in 1958, I met PVT John (Shali) Shalikashvili, a fellow trainee platoon sergeant in the same basic training company at Fort Leonard Wood. General Shali was commissioned at Fort Sill OCS a year later. He was a great soldier and eventually appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Clinton Administration. It was an honor for me to serve with him for a short, insignificant time in his illustrious career.

The Army gave me an opportunity to “prove” myself to me and to others around me. After basic, I went to the Signal School at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey for microwave radio repair advanced training. Leadership opportunities were again offered, and this time I did volunteer. My company CO suggested I might consider OCS and he offered to handle the paperwork and give a good recommendation. In those days, the recommendation was most important. I accepted his offer and within a few months I was on my way to Fort Sill.

I will never forget my first day in OCS. The first task was getting through the hassle from the Candidate Duty Officer and then taking everything I had with me to my quarters. Later that evening they formed us for running. They announced we would run until ten

candidates quit. We ran for what seemed three hours, and twelve candidates quit that night. I lost 40 pounds in the first few weeks.

The standards at OCS were demanding, but fair and meaningful. It was a wonderful personal experience. I had an opportunity to prove myself, and I did. That was valuable to me for the rest of my life, as I faced challenges along the way. Near the end of my upper class segment of OCS, my TAC Officer boarded me. This usually meant dismissal or recycle. We started with 72 in our original class and 28 of us were still around at the time of graduation. We had 22 or so candidates in our class who had recycled from previous classes. I was number 28 in our original class, and last over all in academic ratings, but I had done well in leadership and character.

The Board procedure was interesting. As it turned out, the TAC Officer's written statement sending me to the Board started out, "When compared to other candidates, Candidate Frye does not measure up" or words to that effect. On Page 1, Paragraph 2.b. of the OCS Manual, it clearly stated, "Candidates are competing for the honor of being commissioned in the Army of the United States. This competition is not candidate against candidate; it is competition of each candidate against the high standards of OCS." Several of my fellow candidates came to my defense and we made reference to this paragraph. Without further discussion, all charges were dropped. The TAC Officer had egg on his face. This was two weeks prior to graduation. Needless to say, I paid dearly for my actions with two weeks of hell from the TAC Officer.

This lesson was again useful later on in life. It taught me to pay attention to rules, small details, and established procedures. It also taught me to stand up and fight for what is right. I came out of OCS a better person. I was full of confidence and ready to accept the challenges that were ahead. I appreciated the opportunity.

I am proud to have been an OCS graduate, a soldier, and especially proud to be an American.

### **"Special Order Solves Crisis for Candidate"**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Friday November 25, 1960)***

Officer Candidate J. C. Williams had a real problem. On reporting to Fort Sill's Officer Candidate course last month, the 6-foot, 3 inch, 195-pound soldier was instructed to purchase a pair of tennis shoes for use during physical training.

As is the custom, the Marietta, Ohio, native submitted his shoe size to the instructor committee so that a mass purchase of tennis shoes could be made locally. At the time, he suspected that the purchasing agent would have trouble satisfying the order. After several weeks of hunting, it was finally decided that Williams' size was not in stock in these parts.

A Lawton store, Levine's sent a rush order to a national manufacturer for the shoes and now Williams is in step with the rest of his fellow candidates during exercise periods.

Williams' battery commander, Capt. F. B. McElmayl, reported today with a chuckle that the 20-year-old officer aspirant can now march off to class relieved of the burden of

properly adorning his bottom-most extremities. Aligned and standing at rigid attention under Williams' bunk are two size 15 1/2 tennis shoes.

### **Neil Springborn: 6-60**

I have spoken to many high school students through a "Living History" program offered by the Military Order of World Wars. In talking about the military and what it did for me, I always mention that I learned more about leadership, coping and that I could do anything if I put my mind to it, thanks to six months in OCS. Those were things I never really learned in four years in college and have stayed with me through several careers, several personal disasters and as a teaching tool to my five children and numerous grandchildren. I owe a great deal to the officers and staff of the OCS school not only for how they prepared me for a military career but also for life in general.

One of my great memories from OCS occurred during my lower class time. We were housed on the 2nd floor of the old wooden barracks with the middleclassmen on one side of the floor and we poor lower class "scum" on the other. Occasionally, the middle class would order "laundry" which was a hamburger from the nearby PX. The "laundry" was smuggled up to them via the wooden ladder at the end of the barracks which served as a fire escape. We also had at that time a TAC Officer whose name, I think was LT Raskoff. He was always sharp and carried a swagger stick which gave him an aura similar to (we thought) what a Gestapo officer might have been like.

So, one night the middle class ordered "laundry" (which did not include us). It arrived and had just been handed out when we heard a noise at the top of the wooden ladder/fire escape ... and in the door comes LT "Gestapo" Raskoff. My middle class "big brother" whose last name was Burke, was standing closest to the door and as Raskoff came in, Burke quickly stuffed his still warm and mustard covered hamburger into his shorts and jock. Raskoff stopped, sniffed loudly and announced he smelled mustard. I'm sure he knew what was going on but never asked who had a burger. He just walked up and down the aisle as we all stood at attention ... and Middle Class Candidate Burke realized that a hot hamburger and mustard were not compatible in his jock next to his "private parts." I stood there looking at candidate Burke watching the sweat roll off his forehead and could sense how he wanted to jiggle and twist -- which he did when LT Raskoff had his back turned. I of course was swallowing hard and trying not to collapse in hysterics. Eventually, LT Raskoff left and shortly afterwards, Candidate Burke raced down the stairs to the showers which ran for quite some time. To this day, I can't eat a burger without vividly remembering that night.

### **"Sill OCS Graduate Follows 2 Brothers"**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Thursday April 20, 1961)***

Lt. Waldo L. Blanton, a distinguished military graduate of the U. S. Army Artillery and Missile School's Officer Candidate School class No. 3-61, has followed closely in the footsteps of his older brothers in the U. S. Army, Capt. Clay Blanton and Capt. Duane Blanton.

Capt. Clay Blanton administered the oath of office to Candidate Blanton, in the ceremony conducted in the OCS Headquarters this week.



The new second lieutenant enlisted in the Army at 17 years of age and served as an enlisted man for 6 years before attending the Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill. He completed parachutist training at Fort Campbell, Ky., and served with the 11th and 101st Airborne Divisions where he attained the rating of Master Parachutist.

Lt. Blanton's eldest brother, Capt. Clay Blanton, enlisted in the Army at the age of 18, served as an enlisted man for seven years and graduated from Fort Sill OCS in February 1953. Capt. Blanton also completed parachutist training at Fort Benning, Ga., and served with the 82nd Airborne Division where he attained the rating of Senior Parachutist. He is presently attending the Field Artillery Officer Career Course.

Another brother, Capt. Duane Blanton enlisted in the Army when he was 18 years old, served as an enlisted man for 7 years and graduated from Fort Sill's OCS in April 1955. He also attended parachutist training at Fort Benning, Ga. and served in the 11th and 101st Airborne Divisions, where he attained the rating of Master Parachutist. Capt. Duane Blanton is detailed for duty with the Ordnance Corps, serving with the Korean Military Advisory Group.

All three brothers were born in Norman, Okla. They are all married. Clay and Waldo have four children and Duane has two. Lt. Blanton was commissioned in the Ordnance Corps and assigned to Fort Bragg, N.C., upon graduation from the Officer Candidate School.

**“Big Picture TV Film Being Produced at Sill”**  
***Lawton Constitution (Monday May 30, 1961)***

“The role of Artillery” is the title of an Army “Big Picture” television film now being produced at Fort Sill. The film, which is scheduled for airing in late August or early September, is being produced by the Army Pictorial Center, Long Island, N. Y., by direction of the Chief of Information, Department of the Army.

After initial approval of the project in January of this year, a script writer was sent to Fort Sill to map out the program. It was decided at this time to write the program around the experiences of an Officer Candidate School Candidate as he went through his training. It was felt that this would show the many different facets of modern artillery training and equipment. Following approval of the completed script, camera crews moved in and actual filming began May 22.

Pfc. Vincent Giacalone, Battery “C,” 2nd Howitzer Battalion, 36th Artillery has the “starring” role in the production as he portrays Officer Candidate Madden, who leads viewers through the activities and training conducted by and for candidates.

The film, directed by Charles Turner, assisted by Charles Sladin, is scheduled to open with shots of Massed Fires demonstration depicting Fort Sill's contribution to training of the modern artilleryman.

From the shock of Artillery fire power, the scene will shift to a classroom in Burleson Hall where instruction is being given in subjects ranging from continuous wave telegraphy to radio maintenance. From the School, the cameras will swing to the 1st Field Artillery Missile Brigade for shots of instruction in the little John and Corporal missiles.

At his point, the OCS sequence will begin with candidates viewing a weapons demonstration. Candidate Madden is present in the group and begins to narrate the scenes, relating them to the life of an OCS candidate. From the parade of weapons, the scene shifts to instruction in various types of ammunition.

As the film progresses, training with actual weapons and classroom instruction is explained. Scenes portraying the life of a candidate are shown including counseling sessions with tactical officers and life of a candidate during his first seven days or “beast week” at the school. The similarity to the training program of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York is stressed.

As a candidate progresses through his course he is afforded more time for his own use. This is shown in the film as Madden visits the U.S. Army Artillery and Missile Center Museum for a look at the historic artillery weapons on display there.

After this brief interlude, the film picks up the training activities once more with the candidates observing artillery fire in a forward observer class.

The highlight of the OCS program, the first full field problem and three-day bivouac, shows the candidates putting their newly acquired knowledge in action as they perform the duties of personnel in an actual howitzer firing battery.

With training completed the scene shifts to graduation exercises for the candidates with emphasis being placed on the motto of the U. S. Army Artillery and Missile School. “Fortuna Cedat Peritis.” “Let Luck Give Way to Skill.”

Following graduation, the candidate, now an artillery second lieutenant gives the viewer a look at some of the latest innovations in artillery weapons, equipment and tactics. The Field Artillery Data Analog Computer (FADAC) is shown emphasizing the complexity of modern artillery fire control and the precision training necessary for modern artillerymen. The Army’s latest artillery weapon, the 175 mm gun and helicopter operations point up new concepts in Artillery weapons and tactics.

Troop and equipment coordination for the film is being handled by Lt. Ernest Wohlenberg, office, Director of Training Literature, USAAMS.

### **John R. Coe, Jr.: Reserve Class 1A-61**

#### ***From Century’s Child (a Novel of an American Family’s Cold War Years)***

#### **By Walter D. Rodgers aka John R. Coe, Jr., (2000)**

I had been chasing Reserve commissioned officer status for seven years, balancing the requirements against a pre-med curriculum, the aforementioned woman trouble, and several full-time jobs. Each time I completed the course work, the standards were raised. It was like trying to walk up a “down” escalator. After missing my step the third time (part-time courses in 1956, 1958, and 1960), the Army decreed that the only way open was to go full-time to Officer Candidate School, and thus head off that next escalation. God knows what *it* would have been. A master’s degree? West Point graduates only? Both? At the time I was a buck sergeant in National Guard artillery firing battery (really, was *trapped* there by the location of my pre-med colleges and the paucity of Guard units). No

real career aim or avocation pushed toward the Artillery School; regulations limited me to applying only there because of my unit of origin.

On 27 May 1961 I reported in to the now-defunct Robinson Barracks, the Artillery and Missile School's Officer Candidate School, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. A little corner of hell on earth called "Zero Week."

That pretty much explains the how and why of OCS.

Let's get back to Zero Week, now, and to Class 1-A-61.

Our collective experience of Day One, 27 May 1961, was of being herded, always at the double, from place to place in the Oklahoma heat, leaving us gasping for air, as we waited in ranks in the summer sun in heavy, dark green new fatigue uniforms, stripped of our rank insignia, each wearing a four-by-six-inch white tag, suspended from our left shirt pocket buttons by a string.

Each tag had sixteen line items on it, such as "Personnel," "Medical & Immunizations," "Battery Supply Room," "Academic Supply Room," and so on. Our shepherds were middleclassmen, designated "babysitters," switched every few hours, spelling each other so that no one of them would miss any more class work or study time than would any other.

The third-from-last stop was the Academics Supply Room. It was the source some items of a unique nature. They included a two and-a-half-by-three-foot canvas gunnery bag, with sewn-on canvas strap handles at the mid-points of the long sides. It was not unlike an artist's supply bag. We got it first, and we needed to.

Then we were issued a gunnery plotting board, which just fit into the bag with half an inch to spare on all sides. Then came an excellent-quality pair of 6 X 35 binoculars, with a reminder of how much they would cost us if we lost them. Same for a lensatic compass, with the same warning. And a stereoscopic aerial photograph reader. And a stainless steel 90-degree plotting protractor a foot on a side, with a protruding straightedge 22 inches long, looking like a cheap pork chop with a long bone. And five 5-H pencils, a red pencil, slide rule, a dozen push-pins, and on, and on and on.

At the Battery Supply Room, various more familiar small items were issued, along with the outgoing M-1 rifle with the usual warning not to lose or abuse it (the M-14 rifle was being phased in, albeit slowly, because it cost more per copy than had been anticipated).

In retrospect, oddly enough, we were not issued ID cards, nor dog tags. No gas masks either, in contrast with later years (1976-1996) when they were virtually inseparable from the student or trainee.

The army wasn't doing drug screens yet. The technology wasn't in place. This sixteen-point check-off process took eighteen hours. Dehydrated, we spent the short night waking up and padding barefoot to the fountain at the north end of the barracks (which in OCS were called "houses" for some goddam reason or other)

At morning (“oh-five-dark”) formation, we were told that our class had been designated Battery C, the Student Battalion, and then divided into three platoons. We were loaded onto trucks driven by sleepy, School-support Permanent Party privates and PFCs, and taken to the field, dismounting on a high, bald hilltop, where, from large open bleachers we could see most of both the East Range and the West Range, with all the prominent landmarks of both. The country was rolling and semi-arid, what the ranchers of a hundred years before called “The Short Grass Country.” The air, to my townie senses, smelled clean.

Artillery weapons have long ranges, measured in miles, and a lot of distance is needed to exercise them.

Europe is the same size as the United States but has four times the number of people. Because of the high population density, there are whole countries in Western Europe where there is no place left to fire artillery. Their soldiers (NATO) come here to train. Even in my home state of Missouri, there is only one post that can support artillery range firing, and then only with use of reduced propellant charges.

The lesson to be learned today was that since 1915, the field artillery had caused more casualties than any other class of weapon, including a couple of nuclear-warhead bombs. That remains true at this writing. Learning to place that fire accurately and in a timely manner was to be the lesson, the sole purpose, of the next three months’ work.

Several cubical blockhouses several miles apart, located atop the three grassy dominant mountains were carefully pointed out as cardinal base points. Originally, during the Indian wars, these were heliograph stations, to allow units in the field to signal the movements of the hostiles back to the cavalry at the main post. Now they were used to phone or radio our sensings and corrections back to the guns: “FROM the blockhouse, Signal Mountain, RIGHT 220 mils, DOWN 80 mils, Will Observe.” At exactly that point, what looked like a thousand shells exploded nearly simultaneously 500 yards in front of us, as if a volcano were erupting right there, as we watched, just to underline what we would be able to do before we left there.

*Mils? What’s a mil? Well, it was new to me, too, in 1961. A mil is an angle of 1/6400 of a circle. It’s also the angle displaced by one unit at a distance of 1,000 those same units. The Navy uses degrees and hundredths of a degree, and the Army uses mils in regulating gunfire. Mils allow more precise small corrections while using whole numbers over ranges of five to twenty miles than do degrees. Oddly enough, the Marines who trained at Ft. Sill, and who would all go to the all-artillery Eleventh Marine Regiment, learned to use mils, though they would almost certainly have to call in naval gunfire.*

*It’s a derivation of the French mule, a thousand.*

*Down and dirty, a degree is 17.777 mils; call it eighteen.*

*One fingerbreadth, with the arm fully extended, is roughly 20 mils.*

*One handbreadth, at arm’s-length, is roughly 125 mils.*

*A right angle is 1600 mils (remember that 90-degree protractor?).*

There was no end of attempts to make us drop out of the School, fading ever so-gradually, and at the time unnoticeably, to supportiveness over the 90 days. I must be pretty dull, because I never saw the process itself, harassment (again, what does not kill us makes

us stronger) morphing slowly into toughness, and finally to supportiveness as a continuum until this moment. I couldn't have designed it better, nor I suspect could any expert in human behavior.

The Army had discovered it through trial and error over the preceding 26 years (quite old as Army schools go), i.e., that people who could and would withstand this much physical and mental discomfort tended not to fall apart in a setting of violence, wounding, and death, and would still be able to function as they'd been trained to do.

The whole platoon was doing 20 two-count pushups, yelling out the count in unison ("ONE, Sir! TWO, Sir!") as punishment for some trivial infraction seen by an upperclassman (a candidate in his last four weeks of school). Now, I see that it was all part of the breakdown process, repeated twenty times or more a day.

Early on the first day, we had packed away all our old uniforms, civilian clothes, or any item that wasn't part of the absolute minimum we'd require to complete this school. All of it was locked away for three months in the Luggage Room (again, of which more later). Any personal gear we had was kept in our unlocked (easier to inspect) footlockers in a shoebox, and nowhere else. No books, no radios, nor cameras were permitted.

We were then told about the Honor Code, violation of which was the one instantaneous way out of there, without quitting. Expulsion was certain and swift for honor violations. They consisted of lying, cheating, stealing, or quibbling about the definition of any of the three. Finally, knowing about a violation and not reporting it was as serious an offense as having committed it.

We were supervised by middleclassmen (the babysitters, again) who were four weeks ahead of us, sort of like fake corporals and sergeants. Then, over them were the upperclassmen, four weeks ahead of them, who wore bright red shoulder tabs (why they were called "Redbirds") and metal heel taps to warn of their approach. Supervising the uppers were the Tactical Officers, all Army second lieutenants (I make this distinction, because some of our academic instructors were Navy or Marine Corps officers). During the hellish Zero Week and the four weeks of lower-class, all of them came down hard on us. We were shorn to 1/8-inch hair length weekly. We were constantly dropped for pushups and were not allowed to walk outdoors; every move was made at double-time.

I found out a few years ago (1994) that the USSR had a similar re-education school near Vladivostok, for wayward officers of the Red Army, which it, too, maintained for many years.

The small branch Post Exchange (PX) in the OCS area was the only non-duty place that we could go to, and then only if sent there by a superior, usually to buy accessories to uniforms, and usually alone, to buy them for five or six other men. In short, every minute of every day was on-alert time.

Here, I've got to stop again, and describe the loser (there's no better term) that I was before the summer of 1961, of having intelligence only slightly above normal range, and of my erroneous conclusion that it was much higher. And I must speak, too, of the also-

false belief that I somehow deserved what Tennessee Williams once described as “the kindness of strangers.”

In retrospect, my personality had taken dead aim and shot itself in the foot. I had an exaggerated sense of my own importance, but no coping skills to maintain it in the presence of even slight adversity. I mean, it was fragile, and had been for as long as I could remember. It’s important that I spell it out, because at this juncture, over a period of a few weeks, that man ceased to exist. He had to or would have had to leave OCS.

He could never have accomplished even the first four weeks of OCS, or faced up to Vietnam, Desert Shield, qualifying for a PhD program, another run at medical school, parachute school or internship without this reconstruction into a goal-directed, never-give-up, I-can-do-anything man, then just short of his 24th birthday.

Some Americans develop this approach to life in high school (like R.T. had), and frankly, I admire them for it, even now. Some literally never do, spending their lives as slackers. Saddest, perhaps even most tragic, of all are the ones who discover too late that they could have and should have but didn’t.

These first four weeks’ curriculum consisted of map reading, introductory survey, gunnery, division and lower organization, small unit tactics, and a lot of formal physical conditioning. It seemed to us as if we had been born running.

Radio and field telephone installation, operation, and basic repair procedures were included. We were required to use the phonetic alphabet at all times when speaking to middle or upperclassmen, as a glorious combination of both instruction and harassment.

“What’s your name, Candidate?”

“Sir, Candidate Richards, Sir!”

“Spell it!”

“Sir, I spell: Romeo, India, Charlie, Hotel, Alfa, Romeo, Delta, Sierra, Sir!” “Too slow, Candidate. Drop and give me two-zero (pushups).”

“ONE, Sir! TWO, Sir!” And so on, twenty times.

Superimposed upon the stringent academic load was the Leadership Program. Every week each officer candidate was assigned to a different position within the battery, and was graded on his performance of how well he’d been able to function while still carrying his academic load. The slots (called “sweat positions” went all the way from staff sergeant to captain (the battery commander).

In Week One I was assigned as a staff sergeant, and had already failed it by the end of Day Two. Too disoriented by the new situation, exhausted, and never having been athletic, I didn’t tolerate the physical training as well as most.

My TAC Officer gave me some good advice disguised as directive counseling: “It’s too late to do anything about that ‘fail,’ but it’s early in the course, and you may get a second chance at a leadership position. Meanwhile, keep your academic grades as high as possible and run till you drop, but never give up. As long as you are genuinely trying and don’t fall behind academically, there’s hope.”

That could be expressed as, simply, “Never give up,” and that’s how I took it.

Suddenly, overnight, I was a middleclassman, was astonished to realize that a full five weeks of OCS had gone by, and that I was still there. That’s not to say that the way was downhill, but rather that the path to the top was visible and open, though still steeply up-hill. Guys could be, and were, dropped from the course through week eight with some frequency, usually for academics, since the coursework got progressively more difficult through-out the 90 days.

A new class came in, and they had to salute and call us “Sir,” when they addressed us. We could harass them, as we had been harassed, but never did. There just wasn’t time. Ominously, Field Artillery Forward Observation was added to the curriculum. I say “ominously,” because Medal-of-Honor-winner Robinson, of our Barracks of the same name, had been killed while forward observing.

The model toward which we were taught was a European war similar to World War II, even though 12,000 American advisors were then actively engaged in South Vietnam. Unconventional warfare like Vietnam was never addressed by our faculty. Too bad, in light of later events.

Late on the night of August 13th, while I was the Charge of Quarters (CQ) for our battery, the whole post suddenly went onto wartime alert. Sensitive areas were closed off under armed guard. Military Police, sirens howling, fanned out through Lawton, the nearby Army town, and rounded up anyone who looked like he might be a serviceman, Army or otherwise, and if he were, ordered him back to Ft. Sill, ASAP. All the Armed Forces had gone to Condition Yellow, Hostilities Imminent (Condition Red was open war).

The noise of heavy-lift transport aircraft landing and taking off never stopped, day or night. Large convoys of men, guns, and other materiel rolled out the South Gate, moving fast with full overseas loads of gear, (and didn’t come back for several days) indicating that they were deploying to a combat zone, now.

With no access to radio, TV or newspapers, it took two-and-a-half days for us to find out what had happened: the Berlin Wall had gone up overnight, as a preliminary to who-knew-what. We weren’t afraid; we hadn’t known enough to be afraid. However, the Soviet tanks did not roll, and Ft. Sill stood down on the third day.

OCS classes and training had not been interrupted, probably on the assumption that this would probably blow over, and that if it didn’t, artillery second lieutenants would be badly needed, and quickly.

A few days later, I volunteered for what was described to us as in advance a dirty job. One of the TAC officers had noticed a stink as he walked through the headquarters building. It appeared to be centered on the secured luggage room on the (July-hot) second floor. The first problem was to find the key to the room, which shouldn’t have been needed until September 3.

Then, the footlocker, one of 200 stacked head-high, that was the source had to be identified and removed. That alone took 2 1/2 hours in the heat of late afternoon. We

found the locker that was giving off the worst odor (no easy task in a small room), pulled it out into the relatively-cooler 93-degree open air, and sent a man for tools to get the lock off. How he turned up a bolt-cutter, or where, I'll never know, but he did. After getting the padlock cut off, and the footlocker open, the evil deed could easily be reconstructed.

A failed candidate named Bindle had been packing his gear to return to his unit, in Europe. During that time, instead of packing his footlocker, he'd stuffed all his clothes into a laundry bag, shit in the footlocker, re-locked it, and replaced it in the luggage room. A small act of combined rebellion and revenge.

No problem. A putty knife and Army-issue yellow soap will take anything off. We were laughing so hard during the scraping and scrubbing that followed that it didn't seem to be such a dirty job, after all. I believe that was the moment it occurred simultaneously to all four of us volunteers that we were going to make it through OCS.

I was a Redbird, an upperclassman at last! It was Week Nine. I wore huge horseshoe-shaped metal heel-taps ("heel clickers"), red epaulet tabs, and as a second shot at a leadership position, was made a Candidate first lieutenant, second only to the battery commander of class 1-A-61. In fact, there were only seven Candidate officers in the three-battery Student Battalion of higher rank.

I passed Leadership with a 93%, not too shabby for having flunked a sergeant's position in Week One. Even though the courses were becoming more and more difficult, the only one that gave me any problem as far as comprehension was Field Artillery Survey, and I could pass an exam in that area by using dead reckoning as an approximation of the right solution. Empiricism, forever!!!

There were 400 candidate's junior to us in the School, now, and a high percentage of the pressure was off us, and on them.

As a sort of final exam on our training and cross-training, we took the entire class to the field, worked at firing and then moving the six-gun-battery several times under both night and day conditions, technically called reconnaissance, survey and occupation of position (RSOP). At our level of training, it all went off without a hitch. Every four hours, every man moved to a different randomly- chosen position in an artillery battalion, and performed it, usually well. You could be a simulated-PFC radioman for four hours, and then be a simulated-lieutenant colonel battalion commander the next four and be graded on each duty performed.

Then, it was graduation time. It was over, abruptly, just when we were getting comfortable with the School's murderous routine. Graduation day came, and I MADE IT!

Half of Class 1A-61 didn't graduate. At long last, a success at something that not everyone could do. Jesus, the exhilaration!



**Leo A. Lorenzo: Reserve Class 1A-61**

I was a member of FAOCS Reserve Class 1A-61 when the Berlin crisis occurred. A TV set was brought into our study hall to allow us to hear President Kennedy address the nation. The next day we were told that when we graduated, we were going straight to Germany and we should write our wives or girlfriends that we would not be coming home, so a contemporary wrote the following song for us to sing while marching in formation to be sung to the tune of "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean":

*IN PEACE TIME THE RA'S ARE HAPPY  
IN PEACE TIME THEY'RE WILLING TO SERVE  
BUT JUST LET THE SHOOTING BEGIN  
THEN CALL OUT THE GUARD AND RESERVE  
CALL OUT, CALL OUT  
CALL OUT THE GUARD AND RESERVE*

For some reason the TAC Officers and upper class did not find this amusing and we were dropped for enough pushups to convince us not sing this again.

One of the valuable lessons I learned at OCS that helped me several times throughout my 42-year career was that there are only three correct answers you should give a superior:

1. YES SIR.
2. NO SIR.
3. NO EXCUSE SIR, IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

**Donald W. Roberts: Reserve Class 1A-61**

After driving two days from New York along with a fellow candidate, in a 1960 MGA towing a U-Haul trailer filled with our gear, we arrived at Fort Sill.

I was immediately "welcomed" by a host of Upperclassmen. Reporting in was an adventure. Doubled timing, juggling your duffed bag, along with your paperwork, was interrupted by frequent "drop and give me 25". Once the in processing was completed, I realized it was not a good idea to have towed a U-Haul, for it had to be dropped off in Lawton. Obtaining permission to leave the Post was my next adventure. Needless to say, requests were not well received. After reporting to numerous individuals moving up the chain of command, finally permission was granted by the Battery Commander. Upon departing Fort Sill to return the trailer, I was tempted to keep on driving back to New York. Fortunately, I did not make that decision.

One of my barracks assignments was to maintain the goldfish pond located in the latrine urinal. I would feed the fish and clean the tank daily. About two weeks into this routine, one the fish passed away. After an Upperclassman discovered the death, there was a directive to conduct a formal funeral the next morning. Flowers were mandatory. I roamed the area around the barracks and secured some wild flowers. Every morning fresh flowers were required for the grave of our departed pet. So as time went on, the searching perimeter got larger and larger, and it became harder and harder to find flowers. But the fish always had fresh flowers.

Eating at the mess hall was another adventure. I was always the one who ended up with the missing serving utensils in front of him and as such got used to sitting on the “invisible chair.” Eating family style was the procedure. Immediately after PT, selected candidates double timed to the mess hall to secure the meal and place it on the tables, prior to the arrival of the other candidates. On one occasion, I ended up as the server for the Upper Class Battalion Staff table. I approached their table with a tray of 10 glasses of milk. As I neared the table, the assembly was asked to stand for a moment of silent prayer. I placed the tray (halfway) on the table and bowed my head for the prayer. At the conclusion of the prayer, I reached down for the tray, hitting the portion hanging off the table. All 10 glasses flew up in the air, over the Upper Class Battalion Commander, before smashing to the floor. As the entire mess hall stared over at the incident, I faded into the background as numerous fellow candidates quickly picked up mops to clean up the mess. In the confusion, none of the Upper Class realized who caused the mishap. However, I was a hero to my classmates.

Food was off limits in the barracks. The Upper Class would pay visits anytime — day or night. One night (about 0100), an Upperclassman entered the barracks. He was inspecting the gunnery bags hanging from each candidate’s bunk. Upon inspecting the bag on the bunk next to mine, he shouted, “Candidate is this your gunnery bag?” Half asleep I observed the following conversation. “Yes Sir” “Are these your 5 Milky Ways?” “Yes Sir” “Then eat them” As the candidate proceeded to unwrap the candy bars, the Upperclassman shouted, “I didn’t say unwrap them, I said eat them.” At that point I rolled over and returned to sleep.

The Upper Class always had a display in front of their barracks. The week I was in the position of Class Commander, the display was a Russian Howitzer on loan from the Museum. One night a group of classmates decided to steal the Howitzer. It was wheeled off into the woods, but as they returned to the barracks, they were spotted by an Upperclassman. The next morning, I was summoned by the Upper Class Battalion Commander, who demanded I give him the names of the individuals involved in the incident. I presented the Class Roster. He again demanded the names I again gave him the Class Roster. That night the Howitzer was returned to the Upper Class, but not before it was painted “PINK.” The next morning, as our class marched pass the weapon on the way to the mess hall. I commanded “EYE RIGHT.” That evening we repainted the piece OD. Case closed!

There were many more memories, such as commanding the OCS Rabbit who never complied, but I’ll leave those for another candidate.

#### **Cumberland A. Warden: 4-61**

A Jark is when the soldier double-time marches at right (or left) shoulder arms in a Groucho Marx crouch so that the rifle does not bounce up and down on his shoulder. Try that for five miles.

#### **Paul F. Titus: 4-61**

We did (what Cubby Warden describes about the Jark), and if my grey head remembers correctly, it wasn’t fun. Especially when we did the second one on the same day!

## **“Fort Sill OCS – Army Expansion May Mean More Activity”**

***Lawton Constitution (September 21, 1961)***

In the face of the newly authorized increase in strength for the Army, Army officials have expressed concern that the problem finding qualified junior officers may become acute in the near future. One solution may be an expansion of the Officer Candidate Schools – such as the one for Field Artillery officers at Fort Sill.

The Artillery OCS at Fort Sill, part of the Artillery and Missile School is one of two OCS schools operated by the Army. The other is the Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Ga., which handles about the same number of trainees as Fort Sill.

The Fort Sill Officer Candidate School primarily is concerned with training capable junior officers for Artillery, but also trains a limited number for Armor, Chemical, Engineer, Ordnance, Quartermaster, Signal, Transportation and Medical Corps.

Approximately 15 percent of those trained at Fort Sill go into branches of the Army other than Artillery.

The “University of Artillery” has its own commandant, Lt. Col. Charles A Christin Jr., and a Headquarters Battery of 23 officers and 35 enlisted men who furnish administrative and logistic support. They also provide approximately 30 percent of student instruction. The regular course is 23 weeks long with an additional special 11-week course open to National Guardsmen and Reservists.

More than 32,000 have been graduated from the school since it opened its doors in 1941. It was closed after World War II but was reactivated in 1951. Since that time 6,000 have gone through the course.

Although Fort Sill authorities report no directives for an expansion have been received, they have said that it can readily expand to handle 1,000 students at a time, and even to its World War II size if needed.

Maj. Gen. L. S. Griffing, Sill commandant said, “Whether the student body remains at its present strength or whether it is increased in strength, the school will continue to fulfill its mission of producing junior grade officers who have the required professional knowledge for successful leadership of Artillery and Missile elements in combat.”

## **“OCS at Fort Benning Completes 20 Years”**

***Fort Benning Bayonet (Friday September 29, 1961)***

The 20th anniversary of Fort Benning’s Officer Candidate School, which has produced 78,012 second lieutenants, was celebrated Wednesday.

On that date in 1941 General of the Army George C. Marshall then Army chief of staff, spoke at graduation ceremonies for 166 candidates, the first to receive gold bars of a second lieutenant through participation in the Officer Candidate (OC) program here.

The post’s officer candidate course has been in continuous operation except from June 1947 to January 1951, when a branch immaterial course was conducted at Fort Riley. Over 110,000 candidates vied for the more than 78,000 commissions issued at Fort

Benning. Additional hundreds of potential second lieutenants have attended Fort Benning's National Guard and Reserve OC courses.

Initially, classes opened at five-week intervals. The time element was constantly reduced until late May 1942, five new classes were reporting each week. The OCS was moved to the newly built-up Harmony Church area in February 1942.

The peak load of OC classes occurred between October 1942, and January, 1943, when 14,309 candidates were attending 69 classes. Infantry replacement training centers provided nearly two-thirds of the candidates. High school graduates predominated in this group.

Officer Candidate School here became the alma mater of the great majority of the Infantry company-grade officers (lieutenants and captains) serving with U.S. divisions in all theaters of World War II.

In August 1946, The Infantry course was expanded to Army OCS of the present 24 weeks, providing for commissioning in any of the combat arms and services. Commissions are now given at Fort Benning in all these branches except artillery, which is available at the Artillery OC course at Fort Sill, and the Women's Army Corps, which holds OC classes at Fort McClellan.

Between September 1941 and June 1947 Fort Benning commissioned 67,056 second lieutenants. In the last 10 years and nine months, 10,596 men have successfully completed the OC course here.

The officer candidate program at the "Home of the Infantry" is administered by the Fifth Student Battalion of the Student Brigade (formerly the Student Training Regiment), commanded by Lt. Col John W. McClain.

Its four 24-week classes annually provide 2,600 officers. Each year two Reserve Components classes of 10 weeks are held. The curriculum of the latter are tailored to benefit the individual needs of the states.

The mission of the course is to develop selected personnel to be second lieutenants in the Army who will be capable of performing duties appropriate to their grade in Infantry units and who, with a minimum of additional training, will be prepared to serve in other branches of the Army. Its secondary mission is to serve as a basis for mobilization as the needs of the service require.

The OC program is designed to turn out well qualified officers who are thoroughly indoctrinated with the spirit of aggressive, enthusiastic leadership which has long been the mark of Infantry officers.

Gen. Marshall 20 years ago addressed the OC graduates on leadership. His statements are equally applicable today:

*"You are about to assume the most important duty that our officers are called upon to perform-the direct command of combat units of American soldiers," he told the group.*

*“To succeed requires two fundamental qualifications-thorough professional knowledge and a capacity for leadership. The schools have done all that can be done in the limited time available to equip you professionally, and your technique of weapons and tactics should rapidly improve with further study and actual practice. However, they cannot provide you with qualities of leadership-that courage and evident high purpose which command the respect and loyalty of American soldiers,” he emphasized.*

*“You were selected as officer candidates because you gave evidence of possessing these qualifications. Whether or not you develop into truly capable leaders depends almost entirely upon you personally...,” the general continued.*

*“Warfare today is a thing of swift movement, of rapid concentrations. It requires the building up of enormous fire power against successive objectives with breathtaking speed. It is not a game for the unimaginative plodder,” Gen. Marshall stated.*

*He challenged the class in saying:*

*“Modern battles are fought by platoon leaders. The carefully prepared plans of higher commanders can do no more than project you to the line of departure at the proper time and place, in proper formation, and start you off in the right direction. Thereafter the responsibility for results is almost entirely yours.”*

*“If you know your business of weapons and tactics, if you have insured the complete confidence and loyalty of your men, things will go well on that section of the front,” he explained.*

Instruction of the Infantry OC today revolves around the development of this leadership ability. At graduation, he must be able to lead a platoon in combat without further training.

Candidates receive an intensive course in the theory of leadership plus considerable practical work in this field. Each class is organized as a company with the OC's rotated in command positions. In addition, they are required to instruct in military subjects such as dismounted drill, physical training and troop information.

Tactical officers assigned to each platoon continually observe the performance of candidates. The OCs are advised of their deficiencies and ways to overcome them. Emphasis also is placed on physical fitness, particularly upon coordination and stamina.

The OC also undergoes a concentrated program of military subjects. These deal with weapons, tactics and general subjects.

Weapons instruction includes all weapons found in the Infantry battle group from the pistol to the 90-mm gun on a tank. Each candidate fires the M-1 rifle, Browning automatic rifle and machine gun for record.

In tactics, instruction is given OCs at the platoon and company level with platoon offensive tactics stressed. General subjects training covers atomic warfare, communications, vehicles, map reading and similar topics.

During the first six weeks of training, OCs are considered underclassmen. At this time, they are required to follow rigorous underclass discipline. They are middleclassmen from the seventh through the 14th weeks. For the final 10 weeks they are upperclassmen, with greater responsibilities and privileges.

A significant part of the heritage of Fort Benning's Officer Candidate School is its Hall of Fame in Wigle Hall. The Hall of Fame displays pictures and brief biographies of graduates of the school who have been awarded the Medal of Honor, distinguished themselves in the field of government or attained the rank of lieutenant colonel on active duty.

**Harry B. Folk: 1-62**

As many before me have said, "were it not for my education at OCS I would never have achieved what I have." Artillery OCS was the keystone to my subsequent life and multiple careers. I am sure I am not alone. I am almost ashamed to admit that somehow, I managed to escape the pleasure of a Jark. I was certainly not a "Goody Two Shoes."

**Joe B. Snodgrass: R1A-62**

Attending OCS at Fort Sill was certainly the most important and determining event of my early life.

**Ivol C. Kenner, Jr.: R2-62**

Our battery was selected to represent the school at a combined arms demonstration. The public was present along with about six to ten busses of ROTC personnel.

We were held on our bus while everyone else went into the stands. The ROTC guys unloaded at random and sauntered aimlessly into the stands. They were surly a ragtag bunch with overseas caps turned backwards, shirttails hanging out and ill-fitting uniforms. Our TAC officers were busy stopping our snickering over the sight of the ROTC troops.

We were finally off the bus and formed up. We were marched around the end of the grandstand as the post band was playing military march music. As we came in sight of the crowd the band switched to playing "Hey Look Me Over." The formation was already "STRAC," but it immediately became absolutely perfect. The audience was applauding, and our hearts were in our throats.

It's obvious, in looking back, that the whole affair was planned. Apparently, the school had confidence in us to uphold the reputation of the Officer Candidate School. I feel great about this considering we were a reserve class picked over the regular classes for this assignment.

**Frank (Bart) Bates: 2-62**

The last duty we (Class 2-62) had to "perform" was on the night before we graduated as "Butterbars." We had gone someplace and had a few celebratory libations and entered the barracks just as the then-middle class (now the new "upper" class) were turning out the lights. We burst in and "ordered" them to "take a brace, you messes!" with arms at their sides outside the blankets. Then we proceeded to give them a rapid-fire series of

orders, i.e., left face, right face, about face etc. That, within moments had them and their blankets seriously entwined and subject to falling on the floor if they weren't already there. Having "accomplished the mission" we sashayed out the door, wishing them a very pleasant "Good night, all."

In retrospect, as we grow older, the unpleasant memories fade, and we remember the happy times. I have forgotten about doing push-ups on the crushed gravel, getting my hands somewhat torn up in the process, but vividly remember the fore-said barracks experience. And that's the way it ought to be.

**Richard O. Frazee: 4-62**

I can attest to the fact that my time at OCS and the training I received at Robinson Barracks (including multiple JARK marches up and down the only "mountain in Oklahoma) prepared me for the grueling regimen required to complete law school. I will always remember my time at Fort Sill as the start of a rewarding career in the law.

**Thornton D. Barnes: 5-62**

With both our parents living only fifty miles from Fort Sill, Doris and the girls visited with them while I went to Fort Sill shopping for new combat boots, fatigues, and anything else I thought I might need as a candidate. The next two weeks before reporting in I spent putting a spit shine on my boots so bright I could see my reflection. Next came the Brasso polishing of the accouterments to my uniform until they too sparkled like diamonds.

The trip to the incoming candidate area at Robinson Barracks at Fort Sill occurred with highly charged emotions with me silently anticipating what lay ahead. The rest of the family silently dreaded the family being apart again for the six months of OCS and then an unspecified length of a tour in Vietnam with the CIA. The horrible memories of leaving my family on the side of the road when I headed to Korea raced through my mind. I have to admit the excitement of what laid ahead overshadowed the dread of being apart from my family.

Before leaving my Hawk missile unit in Germany, my CO, Captain Irving briefed me on Zero Week where 50 men prepare for the coming twenty-two weeks, which, for most of the men is the toughest of their careers, both mentally and physically? Driving into the parking area, the activity on the OCS campus reminded me of buzzards and mice. The buzzards being the upper and middleclassmen waiting for the arrival of a new candidate, the mice being the incoming candidates, lowerclassmen, running everywhere they went except for a stop every few feet to do pushups for some infraction noted by one of the sadistic buzzards. I would soon learn that merely being a "sick puke" or "lower than dog poop" amounted to infractions worthy of fifty pushups. More than once I heard that the best part of me ran down my mama's leg.

Seeing what lay ahead for me, I hurriedly kissed the family goodbye and told Doris to leave as soon as I unloaded my duffle bag. One of the buzzards, a Hispanic middleclassman, pounced on me before I even had the car door closed, yelling insults with me braced in the rigid position of attention. With Doris and the children watching only ten feet away, the middleclassman stripped me of my chevrons, highly polished medals and insignia, all the while screaming every insult he could think of. Doris and the children drove away crying, their last sighting of me being me doing another series of

pushups. (Only weeks before graduation, this candidate broke the honor code by stealing from another upperclassman. At his courts martial, the hearing officer busted him to E-1 and sentenced him to 6 months in the stockade.)

Before going any further describing what to most will seem ridiculous, for me OCS training was the experience of a lifetime and one that I strongly attribute to my leadership traits, assuming responsibility, and living a life of obedience, loyalty, devotion, and faithfulness, in strict adherence to my personal dictum of "Duty, Honor, Country." OCS developed in me a prepotency for discipline and strong standards to live by. Throughout my life thereafter, I have lived and expected everyone else to live by the military honor code and Code of Conduct. During my watch in the military, one often heard the word honor and in the military academies and in the OCS honor reigned supreme. To instill honor in individuals the OCS system demanded absolute truth. Quibbling would get a candidate thrown out of the school instantly.

My harassment at the hands of the middleclassman continued until the arrival of another hapless candidate – new meat to replace me. I followed directional signs indicating the location for reporting in, but being one of the mice running in that direction I attracted my share of middleclassmen finding it their duty to find something heinous about my appearance, my soul, and even my mother for which I paid with 50 pushups, no more and no less. I quickly learned that a lowerclassman never walked on the OCS campus. Instead, they scurried at full speed wherever they went just like mice.

I finally escaped the gauntlet of middleclassmen and reached my assigned barracks without encountering any TAC officers or the dreaded upperclassmen, the Redbirds, the Gods of Robinson Barracks. At that time, the OCS classes billeted in old World War II barracks with an open squad room and open latrines. I let out a sign of relief when I found the barracks deserted. At last, I might enjoy a requiem of time to recover from the arduous gantlet from which I had momentarily escaped, but knew to be ominously awaiting me outside. I threw my duffle bag onto a bunk and hurried to the latrine to relieve a very bloated bladder. I found a six-foot wide urinal conveniently located just inside the entrance where I hurriedly unzipped and let it fly, savoring the relief.

What occurred next it takes a slow-motion review to determine which happened first, my hearing the click, click, click of the metal horseshoe taps on the shoes of an upperclassman, or my witnessing his looking down just in time to see a goldfish swimming under my stream of urine. God himself had just busted me, lower-than-a-dog-turd Candidate Thornton D. Barnes pissing on his holy fish.

The pitiful, blood-curdling scream of an OCS God summoning the middleclassman responsible for this sick, barf of a lowerclassman who pissed on the holy fish bounced, vibrated, and oscillated throughout the OCS campus and a major part of the City of Lawton. The middleclassman assigned responsibility for me introduced himself to me between the 50 pushups I pumped for the OCS God, and the next 50 for the middleclassman still standing at attention while getting his rump chewed on by the upperclassman for allowing me, whom he had never met, perform such a pervert act upon the darling fish.



That evening we fell into formation for our first inspection. Though I no longer possessed the beautiful insignia that I spent hours polishing, I did have on my feet a pair of combat boots so shiny they could blind you. The upperclassman took one look at my boots and ordered me to take two steps forward. He did the same for several other candidates, all of them probably thinking as I did - that we were destined to be examples of what a soldier was supposed to look like.

We were not wrong about being examples. Once the upperclassman got us all lined up, they ordered us into the shower wearing nothing except our shiny boots. We spent fifteen minutes soaking our boots that we also slept in that night. The next morning we ran for ten miles. One could only imagine the blisters on our feet had we not soaked our boots to help break them in.

So, it came to be that for the first three weeks of OCS, I spent the hours between lights out at 2200 hours, when the studying stopped, and midnight searching in bushes with a flashlight to locate food for the fish. The hapless middleclassman responsible for my sins had to accompany me and inspect each insect or critter I captured. Amazingly, the upperclassman discovered defects in over half of the insects, one leg shorter than the others, mental deficiency, or oldest son of a mother with a gaggle of little critters at home, all sorts of reasons to not feed them to the damn fish. I paid for my lack of respect and well-being of the fish by repetitiously pumping pushups in the weeds with the critters I was collecting for fish food.

The ideal candidate was, among other things, 20 to 24 years of age. Older men often had difficulty adjusting their set behavior patterns to the strict and demanding OCS schedule. My being a veteran with tours in both Korea and Germany under my belt, I knew the reasons for the treatment of the lowerclassmen being to tear them down and rebuild them in the ways of the Army. The hazing, insults, and other indignities by the middleclassman accomplished the teardown of the lowerclassman while rebuilding the middleclassman under the guiding eye of the Gods with taps on their shoes and red tabs on their epaulettes. I knew all of this so when a middleclassman or upperclassman did or said something unique in the way of hazing, my mental attitude was, "Man that is a good one. I will have to remember that for when I'm the one doing the ass-chewing." A lowerclassman never, ever cast his eyes to look at a middle or upperclassman. If caught doing so, the one he stared at loudly raised a ruckus, screaming, "You sick barf, are you eyeballing me, do you want my body, are you a faggot," etc., of course drawing an audience in the process. It amazed me to witness many of my contemporaries literally crack up because of the hazing. Weeding out those who failed to handle verbal abuse was of course the purpose of the hazing. OCS forced men to revert to the survival skills they knew best. Some would stop to help a classmate when the pressure was on; others would eat their classmates' hearts to survive. The Army had places for both.

Some of the lowerclassmen found it difficult to follow even the simplest of protocol. The school taught protocol in very basic ways. We learned the protocol for a military funeral when a PFC Beetle died in our barracks. We notified its next of kin, arranged an honor guard, and actually conducted the burial ceremony. This may sound silly to someone non-military, but this protocol is one I still follow today as my life-long military friends board their final flight. One protocol ritual that still gives me a chuckle today was the

protocol at mealtime where all the classes ate in a large mess hall. Chewing down on a tough piece of meat today instantly triggers memories of OCS dining.

For our meals, OCS candidates filled the mess hall lined with sufficient tables to feed all at one sitting. An upperclassman sat at the head of each table. To his immediate left sat a middleclassman. Five lowerclassmen occupied the rest of the seats at the table. The lowerclassmen sat in the position of attention, casting their eyes down only to retrieve a bite of food and deliver it to his mouth in a stiff, regimented “square” movement. Regardless of the toughness of the food in his mouth, protocol allowed him only three chews and a swallow. Any more than that earned him a demerit that he walked off during the weekend by climbing Jark Hill with rifle and full backpack. As lowerclassmen, we were servers providing a “family style” meal using bowls and dishes. A lowerclassman was required to ask, “SIR! Would the upperclassman at this table like some mashed potatoes?” If he answered yes, the middleclassman passed the potatoes to the upperclassman; after he took some then the lowerclassman asked, “SIR! Would the middleclassman like some mashed potatoes?” The middleclassman would take some food or decline, and the process repeated for the lowerclassman to which he said, “Would any of my contemporaries at this table like some mashed potatoes?” The lowerclassman that started the dish rarely got any of the food items. It took a couple of days to learn to pass dishes all at the same time in order to get anything to eat as a lowerclassman. A “gross bite” (one requiring more than three chews) would cause a huge screaming session from one of the Redbirds.

As a lowerclassman, we sat on the front four inches of our chair in a brace and moved our fork at right angles. When the upperclassmen were out in the field on artillery shoots, we might get something to eat from the middleclassmen heading the tables, who were also more interested in eating themselves than harassing us.

Amazingly, some of the candidates never mastered the protocol for asking for more food. Instead of first asking the upperclassman, the middleclassman, and then their contemporaries, they simply asked, “Would anyone like more potatoes” to which the upperclassman stood up and rang a bell sitting at each table for this purpose, and bellowed in a loud manner, “would anyone like more potatoes?” Throughout the mess hall, upperclassmen asked those at his table, “Would any of you worms like more potatoes,” and likewise bellowed “affirmative, table x would like more potatoes.” The poor soul who originally wanted more potatoes spent the rest of his noon hour delivering potatoes to the rest of the tables in the mess hall. Obviously, one entered the mess hall with the same expectations as running the gauntlets elsewhere on the OCS campus. Hazing was a very noisy and intimidating ever-present function on the OCS campus at Robinson Barracks, especially during meals.

As my family and anyone who knows me well will attest, one thing OCS taught me was time management. We accounted for every minute in OCS. We were doing something every minute we were awake. Even when sitting on the pot, I shined my boots, Brasso shined my buckle or studied.

I do not think my feet ever touched the floor in a standing position unless I was circle buffing the floor. We walked on the footlockers to avoid scuffing the wax on the wooden floor. I can imagine what those did in later years when they moved into modern barracks.

I prided myself for never accruing enough demerits to make the Jark March to MB-4. That is not to say I did not screw up on occasion. In one instance, an upperclassman caught me talking in formation. I did not receive a demerit but had to entertain my contemporaries with a voluble 30-minute talk on the sex life of a nearby telephone post. I avoided demerits in the mess hall by eating easy foods and supplementing my hunger by buying candy bars out of vending machines at the classrooms where we spent the day.

No one harassed us while in class, but our return to Robinson Barracks was another matter. After class, we loaded into buses for transport back to the OCS campus. Approaching the campus, we knew the middleclassmen were waiting in a gauntlet line to expose our warm bodies to another round of hazing. We mice always entered the campus loudly singing the Mickey Mouse theme song in a brave attempt to show our defiance. I wouldn't trade anything in the world for character building experiences of my time at Robinson Barracks.

### **“OCS Candidate Sill’s 10,000th” (Daven N. Lewis: 5-62)**

#### ***The Daily Oklahoman* (April 23, 1962)**

The 10,000th candidate to enter the Artillery Officer candidate School at Fort Sill since it reopened in 1951 stood before the newest class to receive the guidon and congratulations from the OCS Commandant.

Candidate Daven N. Lewis, 23, North Hollywood, Calif., a draftee who says he wants to make the most of his Army time, accepted the class banner from Lt. Col. C. A. Christin, Jr., OCS Commandant. Col. Christin took Lewis by surprise with the announcement, shook his hand and wished him and the other 56 men of the fifth class of 1962 well during their six-month stay.

Of the 10,000 men who have entered the school since 1951, close to 6,000 left it as second lieutenants of field artillery. During World War II, approximately 26,000 men received commissions before OCS closed in 1946.

The 10,000th candidate, who was drafted while attending the University of California, said he hopes to go to flight school or airborne following OCS completion. Lewis was studying engineering when he was drafted. Following basic training at Fort Ord, during which he applied for OCS, Lewis came to Fort Sill for advanced individual training as a cannoneer with Battery D, First Training Battalion, Artillery Training Center.

OCS presently is training approximately 250 candidates. It is capable of training 600 at one time. Statistics reveal the high caliber candidate that OCS demands. One authority estimates that for every 1,000 men entering the Army, about 30 can meet the stiff requirements and will apply. Of the 30, about 15 will be admitted, nine will graduate.

During their six months, the candidates undergo constant screening and evaluation of their leadership capabilities and of the application of leadership principles. In the classroom, the candidates undergo a rigorous 22-week academic course encompassing all phases of artillery. Active Army graduates of OCS receive commissions in the army.

The Artillery OCS at Fort Sill is recognized as one of the most important sources of high grade junior officers.

“Whether the student body remains at its present strength or whether it is increased, the school will continue to fulfill its mission of producing junior officers who have the required professional knowledge, character and capabilities for practical and successful leadership of artillery and missile elements in combat,” Col. Christin said.

**“OCS Candidate Wins Honors For Saving Life Of Classmate”**

***The Cannoneer* (September 1962) - Charles A. Thompson: 5-62**

An officer candidate scheduled to be commissioned this month has been commended officially for his “quick thinking” and “display of leadership” in saving the life of a fellow candidate.

Candidate Charles A. Thompson of Battery B, OCS, has received a letter of commendation from Brig Gen. James W. Totten, assistant commandant of the Artillery and Missile School.

Presentation was made last week by Lt. Col. C. A. Christina Jr, OCS commandant. Candidate Thompson of Princeton, Ill. is credited with saving the life of Candidate Willie J. Denton who had suffered heat prostration while on a detail at the OCS athletic field Aug 4.

Candidate Denton, a lowerclassman from Chester, S. C., had collapsed and been carried to a tree-shaded area by his fellow candidates also on detail.

Candidate Thompson, an upperclassman, arrived after being hailed by another lowerclassman. He immediately sent one of the candidates to call an ambulance and had the others remove their tee shirts.

Soaking them with cool water from Thompson’s canteen, the candidates sponged Denton’s body. This act stimulated the faltering, breathing of the unconscious man.

However, the breathing became labored again and finally stopped altogether. Quickly, Thompson used mouth-to-mouth artificial respiration he learned in Red Cross lifesaving training in his hometown.

Denton’s breathing was restored briefly, but it flickered out again. Thompson started it again and again it stopped. For a third time, Thompson was able to restore it and this time maintain it until ambulance attendants arrived. Denton has recovered fully.

The letter praised Thompson’s quick decisions, his calm action in the face of extreme danger to a fellow candidate.

Candidate Thompson graduates Sept. 18. He has been assigned to the U. S. Army Training Center, Field Artillery.

**“OCS Man scores 499 in PT Test” - Charles R. Palmer: 1-63**

***Fort Sill Cannoneer (December 2, 1962)***

Demonstrating what a lot of desire and physical endurance can do, Candidate Charles R. Palmer, an upperclassman at the Artillery Officer Candidate School, scored 499 on the Combat Proficiency Test last week.

Candidate Palmer missed the perfect score by one point when he scored 35 raw points on the grenade throw for a 99-point total. The 22-year-old candidate from Austin, Tex., scampered along the 40-yard low crawl in 18 seconds setting a new Fort Sill record. In the run, dodge and jump course, Candidate Palmer dashed to 100 points in 20 seconds. Grasping 88 rungs on the horizontal ladder in one minute, the candidate again scored perfectly. He ran the mile in five minutes, 55 seconds. No stranger to physical exercise, Candidate Palmer lettered in basketball, track and baseball at Del Valle High School, Del Valle, Tex. He was varsity football captain for three years.

Joining the Army in October 1960, Candidate Palmer completed a 16-week course in radio maintenance at Fort Sill, then was assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division, Korea. He says he looks forward to a rewarding Army career.

**“Officer Candidate Sets Grade Mark at Center (It’s the Highest Mark Since 1951)”  
Artillery OCS Archives (January 1963) - Thomas P. Easum, Jr: 1-63**

A Fort Sill man today was graduated from Officer Candidate School with the highest academic average recorded since the school reopened in 1951.

Thomas P. Easum Jr., 25, of Memphis, Tenn., compiled a score of 95.6 percent. He also received the second highest overall average (to date), including academics and leadership qualities, with 96.30 percent.

He was named honor graduate of the class. Three other graduates in the class of 48 were named distinguished military graduates at the commissioning ceremonies today in Snow Hall auditorium. They are William C. Hoffman, 24, Cincinnati, Ohio, 91.56 percent average: John P. Beachow, 24, Abingdon, Ill., 90.182 percent: and Bobby J. Cullum, Vienna, Ill. 89.452 percent

**Wilhelm K. Bernhard, Jr.: 1-63**

Probably like most previous candidates my thoughts are so often on the life experiences of OCS. As one, if not the only candidate to survive two setbacks I’m eternally grateful to have completed the program. Although I was forced to take a setback in lower class to be able to attend my dad’s funeral who died unexpectedly, I was allowed a second one (academic) at the end of middle class. Ten months there was my ultimate test.

**Arthur W. Reed: 1-63**

**Until We Meet Again, Old Friend “Tales of an Old Soldier”  
By LTC Arthur W. Reed (U.S. Army Retired) (2014)**

As the other candidates were getting off the bus in front of the main building referred to as Robinson Barracks, I could hear the threats and “Mickey Mouse” name calling by individuals I learned later were the middle class and upper class OCS candidates. When you got right down to the “nitty-gritty” of it all, this was nothing more than a high-powered version of what I had experienced in my few weeks of basic training several years earlier.

What prepared me even better was that I had experienced worse than this in my initial Special Forces Training. The hazing I had received in Basic Training was a cakewalk compared to what I had gone through in the UDT, POW, Survival, and Escape and Evasion phases of Special Forces training.

I was the last one off the bus and as I stepped off, I immediately found four or five OCS candidates in my face. In so many ways, using phrases I had not heard since basic training, they made it abundantly clear that they did not like my spit-shined “looking-glass” jump boots; they did not like my Master Jump Wings; but most of all they really did not like my Special Forces Green Beret—my “Funny Girl’s Hat”—as one of them called it.

After informing me I was “lower than whale crap at the bottom of the ocean,” they began shouting orders at me. The problem was they were all giving conflicting orders at the same time. So, I smiled and asked them which of their orders they wanted me to follow first. Naturally, my question did not sit well with them.

One of the candidates stood out from all the rest of the candidates wearing fatigues and boots. He was the only one in the group wearing a class “A” set of khakis and spit-shined, low quarter shoes.

I would learn later that day, that the OCS candidates wearing the khakis with a red tab on each shoulder epaulet were upperclassman (the designation for an OCS candidate acting commissioned officer)—while those candidates that were wearing fatigues or khakis without the red tab were the middleclassmen (the designation for an OCS candidate acting NCO).

The candidate wearing the khakis did not have any red tabs on his epaulets—identifying him as one of the middleclassmen. I would learn later that night why he was wearing khakis. When he spoke, the other guys in fatigues clammed up and backed away.

Putting his nose within an inch of mine, he shouted “Candidate, you will do exactly as I tell you or rue the day you were born.” Now I had been placed at attention and unless asked a specific question, I could not say anything, so I just stood there—at attention—in silence.

In a flash, his voice raised several levels—which surprised me, as I thought he was already at peak volume during his earlier tirade. The veins on his neck stood out as he again shouted in my face:

“Candidate, you answer me when I speak to you, do you understand?” He shouted at me.

“Yes, I understand,” I replied.

His face suddenly grew redder, the veins on his neck more pronounced, and his voice even louder as he shouted in my ear:

“Your only answer while at this school—which may not be very long—is “Sir, Candidate Reed, Yessir, do you understand me?”

Now you should know one of the techniques of confusing an interrogator is to specifically answer the question he asked without assuming you understood what he was really asking you to do or say.

Back in the 1950s, when Special Forces NCOs ran into students from the Intelligence School at Fort Holabird, Maryland, they would drive the students crazy when one of the SF guys was lighting a cigarette and was approached by one of the student MI agents asking them if they had a light.

They would answer his question by answering “yes,” while at the same time putting the cigarette lighter or pack of matches away in their pocket, and immediately turning and walking away from the student agent standing there with a bewildered look on his face.

Or when one of the MI student agents approached one of them and asked if they had a cigarette. Again, if they had cigarettes on them, their answer to his question would be “yes” and again, they would immediately turn and walk away—having answered the student’s question.

So, this OCS candidate wearing the khakis had asked me if I understood him and—you guessed it—I heartily replied “Yessir.” I knew that was the wrong answer the moment I spit it out, but the look on his face was well worth the twenty pushups I had to do. He then ordered me to pick up my duffle bag and follow him. We walked away from the group that had just gotten off the bus with me—now forming up in three ranks on the parking lot.

He stopped me on the asphalt behind the two-story wooden building—which I later learned was the OCS School Headquarters. Looking me straight in the eye, he told me I was to drop my duffle bag, stand at attention next to the duffle bag—with my back to the brick chimney—and wait there until he returned.

“Do You Understand Me Candidate?” He shouted.

“Sir, Candidate Reed, Yessir!” I enthusiastically replied.

He turned and walked off leaving me standing there at attention looking out onto an empty, open field. It was starting to get dark and I had long ago—in the absence of any order to the contrary—ordered myself to “Stand at Ease.”

There were no parked cars in sight and there was no street behind that building—only a huge open field. There were no windows near me so no one could see me standing there. For about an hour after he had left me, I could hear the faint sound of people leaving on the other side of the building. I could also hear car doors slamming shut and the sound of cars leaving the parking lot. For a short period of time, there would be the sound of people saying goodnight to each other.

So, for the next hour, I stood without seeing a soul or hearing any noises aside from the occasional sounds of birds and the ever-present rumble of field artillery fire in the distance. I know, how dumb can one Special Forces Sergeant be. Why not just pick up the duffel bag and walk into the Headquarters building and tell someone what had happened? That was probably what this candidate expected me to do and exactly why I was going to stay there until someone found me—if it took all night!

By the time full darkness arrived, I had decided the candidate who ordered me to stay there until he returned either assumed I had already reported, been found—or—he had completely forgotten me. With the darkness came rain, but I stubbornly would not budge. It only rained for a short period of time—enough to get really wet. But it was warm out, so it was not all that bad.

In the middle of the rain, I heard a vehicle pull up on the other side of the building. The sounds were those made by a group of soldiers getting off a truck—banging their rifles on the tailgate as they jumped down off the truck. The guard detail was being posted. A few minutes went by before I could see one of the OCS Candidate guards rounding the corner of the building.

As he looked my way, he stopped and pointed his weapon at me hollering, “Halt, who goes there?” Mind you, I was standing still and not moving at the time. There was no real danger he would have shot me as I would have bet a lifetime of military pay that, like a basic trainee’s rifle, his rifle was not loaded either. I replied that I was Officer Candidate Reed.

The guard approached and asked me what I was doing standing there in the rain. I told him I had been ordered to stay where I was by an OCS candidate. He asked me if he was wearing fatigues or khakis with red tabs on his epaulets and I said that he wore khakis, but no red tabs. “He was a middleclassman,” was his reply.

The guard then told me to follow him into the headquarters building to speak with the Staff Duty Officer—so I picked up my duffel bag and followed the guard into the building. As we entered the headquarters, the guard ran into the room ahead of me and told the lieutenant he had found one of the newly arrived candidates that had reported in earlier today.

The lieutenant told him to have me report in, which I did as the guard promptly left the building to resume his post outside. The lieutenant was an actual commissioned officer and he was wearing artillery brass. He asked me where I had been and what was I doing outside in the rain. I explained what had happened earlier that day. He then asked me if I thought I could identify this candidate.

Now, standing immediately to the left of the lieutenant was an OCS candidate in a class “A” khaki uniform. I learned later that he was the acting Staff Duty NCO. Somehow, my world back then never seemed to function like any other human being’s world did. Unbelievably, this guy was the dummy who had left me out in the rain. There was a look of horror on his face anticipating I would recognize him and identify him to the Duty Officer.



Looking the candidate straight in the eye, I told the lieutenant I did not think I could because everything happened so fast and all the OCS candidates looked alike to me. The lieutenant told me since I had not processed in that morning, and did not show up for the supply issue or medical exams that afternoon—or for evening muster—I had been reported to the OCS headquarters as being AWOL. He threw me a clean dry towel to get the rain off my face and asked when I had last eaten anything. I told him I had not eaten since breakfast early that morning.

Remember what I said earlier about my world acting more strangely than yours? Well, the stupid candidate who had forgotten and left me standing outside on a darkened, rain swept parking lot was later appointed my “Big Brother.” Later in the academic year, when he was preparing to become a commissioned officer, it was he—along with several of his upper class friends—who would be responsible for what was originally scheduled as a 23-week OCS course for me, turning into a 34-week course.

Fortunately, the psychological and physical pressures of my Special Forces training had more than prepared me for the constant hazing and harassment that occurred in OCS. The first week of the school was called “Zero Week” and it was where they really put the screws to everyone while they attempted to weed out the mentally and physically weak candidates before we even started our academics.

While the hazing and pressure never let up—right up to the day before candidates would be commissioned—it became more bearable as a candidate progressed from Zero Week to lowerclassmen (the lowly privates), to middleclassmen (the non-commissioned officers – NCOs), to the upperclassmen, who acted in the official capacity of commissioned officers within the school.

Each of the three class phases was about seven weeks long with “Zero Week” at the start and “Happy Battery” the last week before being commissioned. It was here the graduating OCS candidates would get fitted for their officers’ uniforms. They would also find out their military assignments and—after graduation—have time for the personnel office to create their officer pay and personnel records.

Zero Week went by pretty fast. Before I knew it, we were moving into our new barracks as lowerclassmen, and in less than two months we would become middleclassmen. Seven long weeks later, my Big Brother and his contemporaries would be getting ready to move into “Happy Battery”—preparing for their commissioning ceremony the following week.

However, on the night before they were to enter Happy Battery, one of the current upperclassmen got the bright idea to hide all the footlockers of the soon-to-be upperclassmen—us!

This act of skullduggery was accomplished by several upperclassmen in each barracks supervising a couple of the middleclassmen. Unfortunately—as it turned out—my Big Brother was one of the upperclassmen supervising these middleclassmen—and I was one of those middleclassmen selected to hide our footlockers.

The upperclassmen then went around and removed the taped names on our footlockers so we could not tell whose individual footlocker was being hidden where. After removing

the names, the upperclassmen came outside and had us go into the barracks and bring out a middle-classman's footlocker, one at a time. They would then tell us where to take it, which could be in another barracks, up in the attic, behind the huge brick chimney near the mess hall, under the OCS Headquarters building, out in the open field, etc.

After about twenty minutes of this drill, I got an idea of how we could get even with the upperclassman creating this havoc with our footlockers. We would remove the name tag of the upperclassmen's footlockers and take those lockers out to be "hidden" along with ours. I approached several of my contemporaries with the idea, but they nervously declined to take me up on the idea. There were only a couple of middleclassmen's footlockers left as I approached my Big Brother with an untagged footlocker, and asked him "Where to Sir?" He did not have the foggiest idea I was showing him his footlocker as he told me where he wanted me to hide it.

After supper, we quickly met as a class and found out which guys they had used to hide our footlockers. We then took the middleclassmen around to where we had hidden the footlockers, brought them back and lined up all thirty (less mine) in a row on the sidewalk. The middleclassmen then walked one-by-one past them until they found a lock that their key fit.

Of course, my footlocker—having gone nowhere—was not among them. More importantly, my Big Brother's wasn't either. The whole process was over in an hour and we settled into the quiet of our last evening as middleclassmen. Tomorrow, we would move downstairs and begin the last phase of our training. Finally, we would be upperclassmen—at the top of the ladder!

The silence was quickly broken as we heard a loud cry from downstairs "Candidate Reed, Get Your Ass Down Here—now!" There was no mistaking the sound of my Big Brother's booming voice. He must have just returned from having moved to "Happy Battery" and found that his key did not fit into the lock on his footlocker. Actually, it was my footlocker—not his—he could not get into. My footlocker had ended up at the foot of his bunk. And unbeknownst to him, his footlocker was still out in the middle of the open field where he had told me to put it—believing it was a middleclassman's footlocker.

I had already been put through hell while going through the Special Forces POW interrogation training—so I was prepared for anything. I knew full well these guys would spare nothing harassing me, but I also figured they would not jeopardize their commission less than a week before graduation. Eventually, after an hour or so, they tired of the physical and mental harassment, and I went out to the field and brought his footlocker to him—returning upstairs with mine.

The next morning was my first day as an upperclassman and as the designated Cadet Battalion Commander I had the responsibility and the honor of marching the entire OCS Battalion to the mess hall for breakfast. As I approached the mess hall entrance, I commanded the cadets to halt.

Before I could turn the companies over to the company commanders to have them march their men into the mess hall, I was surrounded by four of the "Happy Battery" residents.

They were in my face, shouting insults and threats, led by none other than—my former “Big Brother.”

The candidates were still at attention, waiting for my command, and all I could think of was to holler “Gas” as loudly as I could. Back in the ‘60s, when a soldier heard the word “Gas” it was a warning that the enemy had attacked using poisonous gas. Soldiers—hearing that command—were to immediately don their gas masks and at the same time scatter from any formation they were in to prevent mass casualties from enemy incoming artillery or mortar fire. Since we did not have our gas masks in the barracks area, everyone took off on their own, and ran into the mess hall while the “Gang of Four” continued their tirade against me.

After the last candidate had entered the mess hall, I started walking towards the door myself, to be stopped and told I was not yet released. They demanded I salute them. I told them they were not commissioned officers yet, and I did not have to salute them.

I can still see the look of astonishment upon their faces as I then said, “I will salute you when you act like officers and not until then.” While they were still standing there in utter disbelief, I turned away and ran up the stairs and into the mess hall.

Later, after breakfast as I was leaving the mess hall, the company First Sergeant stopped me at the door and said I should accompany him to the orderly room. When we got to his office, he handed me some papers and told me to sign them.

I asked him what they were and he replied they were “Resignation Papers” or “Quit Slips” as they were referred to in OCS. I told the First Sergeant he could not order me to sign them and I said I would not sign them, and—in front of him—I tore the “Quit Slip” papers up and threw them in the trash can next to his desk.

Within a couple of minutes, I found myself in front of the Captain who commanded the OCS Company of cadets. He was a former graduate of the Field Artillery OCS and a commissioned officer. He pushed some papers toward me and ordered me to sign them.

The papers were another copy of the resignation papers I had refused to sign for the First Sergeant. I respectfully declined, telling the Captain “You can kick me out of OCS Sir, but I will not quit.” The Captain said that he thought I was a terrible candidate and he told me I did not measure up to the capabilities of my contemporaries.

That evening, I would find myself standing at attention in front of what was called a Review Board. The OCS Company Commander—the one who ordered me to sign the OCS resignation papers—had conducted an inquiry into what occurred that morning.

The Captain’s recommendation to the Commandant was that I be thrown out of OCS based upon my conduct that morning. In so many words, the charges he made said that I had failed to measure up to the standards set by my classmates.

Earlier in the day, right after leaving the Captain’s office, the First Sergeant told me I was suspended from classes that day and recommended I use the rest of the day preparing to appear before the Review Board that evening. He explained what would take place.

I asked him if I could go back to my bunk and do some research and he said I could. Special Forces training had taught me that success or failure—one or the other—was to be found in the detail.

So, I started reading my OCS Manual to see what specific rules or regulations I had violated. The OCS manual was clear. My former Big Brother and his cohorts were not supposed to be in the OCS area harassing the OCS candidates. They were to keep away from the OCS candidates. Our area was “Off Limits” to them.

However, something much more enlightening caught my eye as I read the OCS Manual. I ran across the passage early in the manual that stated OCS Candidates were competing for the honor of receiving a commission in the Army of the United States. It went on to explain this competition was not a competition of one candidate against another, but a competition of each candidate against the high moral and ethical standards of the Field Artillery Officers’ Candidate School. In other words, you could not run a candidate’s reputation down—just so you could place yourself above him. We were to help each other—not compete against each other.

It was not important that you beat every other candidate in the daily run—or that you were always first out to the morning reveille formation—but that you helped those candidates who were having trouble keeping up. The phrase we had so often heard while lowerclassmen— “Cooperate and Graduate”—resounded through my head as I read—and re-read—the manual.

The First Sergeant had also told me that morning that there would be five members on the Review Board that evening. He said all of them would be field grade artillery officers (majors and above).

He told me the president of the Review Board would be the OCS Commandant, Colonel Christin. He then told me that as the First Sergeant, he would also be attending the hearing.

Then the First Sergeant said something that threw me off balance—it was totally unexpected. “If you want me to testify as one of your witnesses, Candidate Reed, I would be happy to testify that I believe you would make a fine officer.”

The president of the Review Board, Colonel Christin, had been the OCS Commandant for several years. I had met him on several previous encounters as a lower classman. As I entered the building ready to report to him, there was one meeting in particular I hoped he had forgotten about.

That particular morning, our class was on a PT run through the OCS area and we were approaching the 30 to 40-foot huge circular brick chimney next to the cleaners that backed up to our OCS area. The upperclassman in charge of our PT had shouted at me “Hey Special Forces, if you guys are so great, let me see you climb that chimney to the top.”

Now—as I recall—the brick chimney was about 12-15 feet in diameter at its base, tapering to about 2-3 feet in diameter at the top. There were curved “ladder-like” iron rungs

imbedded in the side of the chimney that went up its side all the way to within a foot or two of the top; however, the rungs did not begin up the side of the chimney until about eight feet above the ground.

Taking a running start, I leaped up, grabbed the bottom rung and pulled myself up.

I then proceeded to climb the thirty-some feet to the top of the chimney. As I approached the top of the chimney I heard an authoritative sounding voice from below yell out, “What the hell are you doing up there, Candidate?” I looked down to see a stocky full colonel dressed in a class “A” uniform looking up at me—it was the OCS Commandant, Colonel Christin.

Looking down from some thirty feet in the air, I shouted back to the Colonel.

“Sir I was told to climb this chimney,” I replied.

“Get down here now!” The colonel yelled up at me.

When I got down to the ground, I reported to the Colonel. He asked me my name and then asked if I knew who he was, and I replied that I did. He asked me why I was up there in the first place, and I explained that I was challenged to climb the chimney. He said, “What were you thinking, Candidate Reed?” I told him I was supposed to prove to the upperclassman that a former Special Forces soldier could—unassisted—accomplish that feat. In no uncertain terms, he made it clear I was never to do that again—or anything else that dangerous or stupid—as long as I remained in OCS.

When I caught up with my class, they were sitting down taking a break. The upperclassman in charge, the one who had challenged me to climb the chimney, called me aside and asked me what the Colonel had asked or said. I told him that the Colonel had asked me who had ordered me to climb the chimney, and that I told the Colonel the upperclassman in charge was from a different barracks and since we did not wear name tags on our PT clothes, I did not know his name.

So that evening, hopefully fully prepared to defend myself, I reported to the President of the Review Board. Colonel Christin read the charge against me made by the OCS Company commander. The Colonel’s opening question was right to the point as he asked me “Why should we keep you in Officer Candidate School, Candidate Reed?”

The First Sergeant had given me an idea of some of the questions the board members would ask. His advice was to speak from the heart. Looking at the ribbons the board members wore on their uniforms, it was apparent that every one of them had been in combat and so—as the First Sergeant had recommended—I replied from the heart without notes.

For the next few minutes, I told them of my experiences as an NCO in Special Forces and how I missed the camaraderie of the military when I left to attend college. I told them I had returned to active duty for the sole purpose of making a career in the United States Army as a commissioned officer.

I explained what had happened that morning as the OCS Battalion was waiting to enter the mess hall to eat breakfast. I told the Board members that I had informed those harassing me that, as residents of Happy Battery, they were in an “Off Limits” area. However, they did not listen to me and continued their harassment and threats, including pushing and shoving me.

I told the board members that it appeared they were punishing the entire battalion while they took their personal feelings out on just one individual—me! Because of their selfish and unprofessional conduct, I had to take whatever steps were necessary to get my men safely into the mess hall.

I felt that it was my responsibility—my duty as the Battalion Commander—to make sure all the cadets got to eat breakfast that morning. I continued telling them that the action I took I felt was necessary to accomplish that mission. I tried my best to convince the Board members that I would, as a commissioned officer, take care of my soldiers, regardless of the cost to me.

I brought to the Board’s attention the fact that the charge made against me by my company commander was not in agreement with the OCS manual. The manual specifically stated we were not to evaluate or judge one candidate against another. We were to judge or evaluate each candidate individually against the high moral and academic standards of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School. Moral and academic standards I did not think I had violated.

Colonel Christin interrupted me by asking me if it was true that I had hollered “Gas.” I told him that was correct. He then asked me why I chose to use that particular command. I told him it was the only command I could think of that would immediately override any command given by the candidates who were harassing me and preventing us from entering the mess hall.

That one command immediately gave each individual candidate the authority to act independently to ensure his own safety and thus allow them each individually to enter the safety of the mess hall.

Colonel Christin then asked if it was true I had refused to salute the men harassing me when they had ordered me to. I replied I had told the individuals they were not yet commissioned officers, and they definitely were not acting like officers in the Field Artillery. I told them I would salute them when they acted like officers.

One of the Board members then asked me the names of the four candidates who were there that morning harassing me. I respectfully declined to give him their names stating it was me who was under review, not them. I explained to the Board I did not believe a decision on whether or not I should remain in OCS should be based upon the misconduct of other OCS candidates.

I told the board that if we were to follow the OCS manual, then my actions should be based solely upon my own conduct when compared to the high standards required of all Field Artillery OCS candidates. I believed these candidates had already proven they had met the high standards of the Field Artillery OCS. They were just days away from receiving

their commission. I did not feel that one inconsequential—stupid—mistake should cost them their commission in the United States Army Field Artillery.

Another of the Board members then asked me if I felt I had met those Field Artillery OCS standards as outlined in the OCS manual. I replied I had and added that I would continue to act in the highest traditions of the Field Artillery OCS. Colonel Christin then asked me if I had any further testimony to give or if I had any witnesses to call to speak on my behalf. I turned and looked around the room and—sure enough, just as he had promised—there sat the First Sergeant. I nodded at him and he stood and said, “I would like to testify on behalf of Candidate Reed.”

More than fifty years have passed since that hearing, and I have forgotten exactly what the battle-scarred artillery First Sergeant said on my behalf, but I do remember him closing with the statement that he would be proud to serve under the command of an officer like Candidate Reed—under any circumstances—including combat. What followed explains how the 23-week OCS course turned into 34 weeks.

The Review Board deliberated less than twenty minutes before they called me back into the room. When I reported to Colonel Christin, he informed me the Review Board had made a unanimous decision. I could continue as a candidate in the Field Artillery OCS. However, I would be set back a class. After becoming an upperclassman for just one day, I would repeat the middle class with my “Little Brother,” and all my former classmates would now become my upperclassmen.

The Review Board’s decision meant rather than receiving my commission on November 13, 1962, with the OCS Class 6-62, I would now receive my commission—unless something else came up—with the OCS Class 1-63 on January 22, 1963.

The remaining several months of OCS seemed different than the first fifteen or so weeks had. Everything had a completely different perspective. My new classmates appeared pleased I had been allowed to stay in OCS. And my former classmates were now the upperclassmen over me. Somehow, I felt like the “Magic Candidate.” There was however, one drawback to my unusual status. No matter how high I would eventually score in either academics or leadership, I could never again become the OCS Cadet Battalion Commander.

On January 22, 1963, I was sworn in as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army as a Field Artillery Officer. The orders given me several days earlier assigned me to the 7th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg. I was ecstatic. As excited as I was about finally becoming a commissioned officer in the United States Army—returning to Special Forces was the icing on the cake. I packed up my belongings, which now included an expensive set of tailor-made dress and mess blue uniforms, as well as several sets of tailor-made Army greens.

### **Jim Auld: 2-63**

Someone in class 2-63 short sheeted 2LT Northrop (Alpha 1 TAC Officer) ..... no one came forward to admit to this serious crime, but all the upper class in Alpha Battery were subject to an hour of rifle PT.....the crime is still unsolved.

### **Leonard Deege 3-63:**

#### **From “Warrior (From Nazi Occupied Holland to the Jungles of Vietnam...An Immigrant’s Story)” by Leo Deege (2016)**

I was attracted by officer pay, which, when saved, would help me to kick start my life after the military. I therefore went to a Navy recruiting station in downtown Los Angeles, filled out a load of paperwork and submitted an application for Naval Officer Candidate School [OCS].

At the beginning of every month I returned to the recruiting station and inquired about my application. The paperwork had seemingly entered a black hole because no one could ever tell me what the status was. For several months I waited in limbo. The clock was ticking and any day I could expect a call by the draft board. “This won’t do!” I said and I decided to explore some alternatives.

I took the National Guard test, maxed the score but again I was never contacted about the status of my application. An Air Force recruiter invited me to take a test flight to see if I had the potential for becoming a pilot. The five and a half year commitment, however, turned me off. That would have been a large piece out of my life and I had no idea if I would qualify or whether I would like it.

With the clock ticking while I was in limbo, I walked into an Army recruiting office in downtown Los Angeles to see what the Army could offer me. When I expressed an interest in going to Infantry OCS, Airborne and Ranger training, the Army recruiter became excited and assured me that it would be a cinch for me to get whatever I wanted as long as I signed up for three years. He asked me how soon I wanted to leave and asked if the next Monday would suit me. That sealed the deal for me because I wanted to quickly move on with my life. The following week I left for Fort Ord, California to start an Army career. The Army’s basic training was relatively easy for me.

About a month into my new career as a lowly private [with a college degree], the Navy sent me a letter directing me to report for Navy OCS. After having picked up many cigarette butts, cleaned latrines and mess hall tables, dried dishes and walked miles of guard duty, I hoped that the Army would release me. My company commander explained the facts of life to me, “*Sorry son, you’re in the Army now...*” and you know the rest of the song.

Following basic training in Fort Ord the Army sent me to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to become a medical specialist. While I had volunteered for advanced infantry training, a doctor determined that I had flat feet and I was ordered to train as a medic instead. I also needed to give up my ambition for ranger and airborne training so that I could be more quickly considered for OCS. After several months of dressing “make shift” wounds, preparing splints, drawing blood, giving injections and learning the ins and outs of debridement, I was contacted by a personnel specialist to fill out an application for OCS. In my application, I volunteered to go to Fort Benning and become an infantry officer. Acting on rumors that an OCS screening panel would ask me lots of difficult questions and that there would be much running and harassment in OCS, I faithfully studied current events and the battles of WW II, while also running 10-mile cross country courses to prepare. The runs prepared me well, but no difficult questions were asked by any of the three officers on my OCS board. I found it strange that an artillery officer headed the



board, until he suggested that I would much prefer Artillery OCS. At that point in time I was not about to disagree with an officer and I quickly agreed. While I had actually no idea what that might entail, I would soon learn the difference.

Retroactively I must admit that it was probably the best choice for me. After a few more weeks I was ordered to report to Artillery OCS in Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

I took the greyhound bus to Lawton and stayed at a rundown hotel in the middle of town. The next morning, while carrying all my earthly possessions in a duffle bag, I walked to the base and reported to the OCS reception center. A Red Bird [upperclassman wearing red tabs] waved me in. I quickly found out that I was lower than scum. The Red Bird greeted me: *“Come here sick smack!”*

*I responded: “Are you talking to me?” [I thought; Hey man, a little politeness or respect?]*

*His reply: “Don’t you ever dare speak to me unless I ask you a question, and I am SIR to you!!! “Now give me two-zero.” [Artillery speak for twenty push-ups].*

*I thought. [Wow, this guy must be a radical or something, I must try and stay away from him.]*

I quickly learned about the OCS hierarchy which at the top consisted of TAC officers [training, advising and counseling officers], to be avoided at all costs because their counseling sessions often involved lots of push-ups and reaction drills. These officers had the most power over us and their impressions would determine whether one would pass or fail the school.

Next in line were the upperclassmen [student officers who were totally unapproachable in that they were close to graduating and consequently very high on themselves, while considered everyone else as “scum.”]

Next were the middle classmen, the student noncommissioned officers [NCOs] who were tasked to educate us into the system and who directed us to do all the work. I quickly learned the OCS way to “speak” while doing countless pushups. The only allowable answers were:

*“Yes Sir,” “No Sir” or “No Excuse Sir”*

One learned to take responsibility, excuses were never allowed. Quibbling was for civilians. Consequences for failures were pushups, reaction drills and disciplinary tours.

OCS was physically and mentally very tough. Without a total commitment one would never graduate. One was constantly watched, punished and chewed out. During our first week [hell week] we were told to look to one’s right and to one’s left and that one of these candidates would not be there at graduation time. (My class graduated only one third of the initial entrees.) At first I did very well in my extra leadership duties and academics and I also could physically outrun everyone except one former college track star. Academically my engineering background served me well to understand missile trajectories and the gunnery tables, but the subjects were always a bit tricky for those

who had not been exposed to trigonometry. One of my favorite subjects was “forward observing.” We would sit on the firing range, while winds would often blow with strength. Here we were taught by reasonable men, usually reserve officers whose only one mission in life was to teach us correct artillery procedures. I was in OCS during the winter of 1962-1963, when strong and cold winds always crossed the artillery range. This made us particularly cold and when we needed to remove our gloves, our hands would freeze. Without our gloves we could not possibly maneuver the thin pins that were used to locate targets on map boards that were balancing on our knees. Because the temperatures were frequently below freezing and with our gloves off, our fingers needed defrosting after each exercise. Follow-on adjustments were then estimated with the aid of powerful binoculars and it was always fun to see one’s target destroyed.

At the beginning of middle class I was made first sergeant, because at that particular time I was rated at the top of my class. [This came as a total surprise to me.] However, because I lacked Army experience, I had no idea of what was expected of me. Until then I had only dealt with staff sergeants and one second lieutenant who, while in basic training, I drove around in my jeep. My lack of knowledge and experience quickly showed and I was asked to step down in favor of a more experienced airborne trooper candidate. My stock rapidly declined, but not yet down to a disastrous level. Everything would have been fine until midway through the course when I made a monumental mistake that caused all hell to descend on me. We had to fill out a preference sheet for assignments after OCS and instead of asking for an airborne or ranger unit as I had originally planned to do, I had a change of heart and wanted to get out and join a reserve unit for only a six-month active duty tour. Most candidates as well as the TAC staff were career soldiers and for me to want to be a short timer was not appreciated. Harassments doubled or tripled and seemingly everyone in OCS wanted me to fail or quit.

I did not like the prospects of leaving OCS because that would have resulted in lengthening my tour by two years as an enlisted man and I therefore became fanatically determined to ignore and endure the increased pressures. While I continued to outperform academically, the increased adverse scrutiny resulted in my accumulating many demerits and I ended up with the OCS record for maximum disciplinary tours. Every weekend I completed two tours. One of the tours was called the “Jark march” named after General Jark who had invented a 4.2 mile punishment tour. We double-timed with our rifles to the bottom of a hill and quick marched up the hill with our arms and legs stiff and our bodies bent at a 45-degree angle. After we reached the top we were allowed to double-time back down and back to the barracks. Since I was in great physical condition, I often ended up carrying up to five rifles, mine and four of other candidates who were struggling. My water polo conditioned heart served me well.

About midway through the course I needed to confront myself [I distinctly remember the moment while I was sitting in a brightly lit classroom listening to a lecture about artillery] and I forced myself to make up my mind that I was going to do whatever it took to graduate. I knew I had to demonstrate more enthusiasm, even if I was hurting, and leadership at the top of one’s voice shouting at a candidate who needed correcting. Occasionally I went overboard in showing my eagerness by making a grand display of how aggressive I could be. There were several instances that I retrospectively wondered about. One involved a Jark march where a candidate in front of me fell down on a railroad track, bumped his head and stayed on the ground. I then shouted at him, “*Get up you*

*sickness! What are you doing on the ground? Are you quitting?"* I guess my outburst gave the man some belated courage and he got back up albeit with a huge bump on his head. In civilian life we would have all empathized with him and helped the guy to feel sorry for himself but keeping in mind that in combat men must continue and never quit, my reaction under the circumstances was probably appropriate.

In lower class we were usually hungry because during most meals we had to eat a "square meal," that is "at a brace" [stiff] showing seven wrinkles underneath our chins, sitting two inches on the front of our seats and four inches away from the table while looking straight ahead. Without looking at our plates, we dug into the food, lifted our forks vertically from our plates and horizontally towards our mouth. In this manner we were lucky to get as much as three peas on our fork, which were then given no more than three chews and one swallow. At the artillery school where we did our classwork, hungry candidates always emptied every one of the candy machines.

Sometimes, we experienced dramatics in our mess hall. One candidate decided he had had enough and slammed his fists on the table. Upper and middleclass men were trying to restrain him while I, being a lower clansman at the time, took full advantage by stuffing my mouth with as much food as possible. On another occasion I did something quite odd from a civilian point of view, but understandable when you think about the enormous pressures that we all felt and dealt with. One candidate obviously not used to a lot of pressure, lost his cool and started to slice his wrist. Being an upper class table commandant at the time, I burst out "*Everyone hit a brace!*" Everyone at my table froze with eyes front and stiffened bodies, while producing maximum wrinkles underneath their chins. I then explained "*The puke was only trying to attract attention and we do not want to encourage that kind of behavior.*" The candidate was escorted out of the hall and eased back into the regular Army with an additional stripe. At that stage of my metamorphous into a hard boiled officer, and having until then had to withstand lots of pressure myself, I could not afford empathy nor did I want to encourage empathy in others for candidates who engaged in self-mutilations.

As early as the first week I could hear some men cry at night. It dis-gusted me and I thought that these officer candidates would never be able to stay cool in combat. "Hazing" was strictly forbidden and we had to learn a two-sentence definition by heart. Overly zealous candidates made sure that lower clansmen fully understood the meaning of the term by helping them to experience what it was like to stand with bent knees against a pole for as long as they could stay up, while being shouting at by other candidates about four inches away from their faces. I remember spittle flying and the taboo of trying to wipe it from our faces. I guess we needed to learn how to endure hardships without losing self-control, an attribute essential in combat.

There were some humorous times as well. In hell week, we had to fall out dressed up in ponchos, galoshes without combat boots, helmets without helmet liners and an open mess kit in one hand. The other hand grabbed the poncho of the candidate in front. We then ran about a mile, not able to see because of the bobbling helmets that were covering our eyes. We must have looked absolutely ridiculous. After lights went out a zealous TAC officer sometimes made us perform dismounted drill while we were lying in bed:

*“Attention, Right Face, Left Face, About Face, and At Ease. OK give me two zero for being too slow!”*

*“One Sir, Two Sir, Three Sir, etc.”*

The absurdity of those drills often made me laugh. As soon as the officer left, I prepared for the next morning with dry shaving my whiskers in bed. There was never enough time in the mornings and one always had to be cleanly shaven.

Although some of this was comical, we could never afford to show pleasure. One unfortunate candidate always appeared to be smiling. He was often commanded: *“Wipe that smile off your face.”* [That meant he had to slap himself as hard as possible on his face, so that the smile would disappear.] This candidate however could not make his smile disappear, which infuriated some upperclassmen. “Smiley” had been a professional fighter and had undoubtedly endured countless punches. The humiliation of hitting himself in the face was too much for him and he finally quit the school.

One particular evening all candidates fell out after supper to attend a funeral for “Candidate Praying Mantis.” This secret pet had given up the ghost after a candidate had stuffed the animal in his pocket to avoid it being detected. The procession was marked by loud wailings and grief, and candidate mantis was interned on a patch of grass next to one of the barracks. A small cross made of twigs was placed over the head stone. Excessive bawling was strongly encouraged and did not stop until the formation actually broke up and candidates were dismissed to their sleeping quarters.

For me, OCS was a life altering experience transitioning me from a “happy go lucky” college kid to a hard-boiled officer. OCS taught me how to survive pressure situations without losing one’s head. I learned to ignore what could not be changed and to focus on what could be accomplished. I learned that I could do much more than I ever thought possible in tight timeframes and that a strong, focused will can overcome most obstacles. That has served me well in later-life situations and for that I will always be grateful. Aggressiveness in manner and word was encouraged and since I was strongly motivated to graduate, I too occasionally went overboard with my zeal and acquired the unflattering nickname “the Hun.” After graduating it probably took me quite a while for my humanity to surface again. However, I was proud to have been one of the few that survived the school.

Artillery OCS was discontinued in 1973. It had served its purpose by providing many officers during times of national emergencies and wars.

### **McKendree Long: 3-63**

Colonel Len Shlenker (Ret), FAOCS Hall of Famer, was probably the oldest man in Class 3-63. His wife called him Pepper, but most of us classmates called him Pappy. Maybe 28 years old, he was a master parachutist and former staff sergeant from the 82d Airborne and his nose must have been broken a half-dozen times.

Sometime in early 1963 in the mess hall he endured a long brace and tirade at the hands of a middle classman, about Pappy’s gig-line. “Try again,” the candidate shouted. “Straight from the tip of your nose down through the right edge of your belt buckle. And

don't dog-eye me." Pappy had this nasal twang. "Sir, Candidate Shlenker with a statement. I believe if you'll look at my nose, you'll see I ain't ever gonna get it right." Some upperclassman who was giggling and spitting saved Pappy from the irate middle classman, and the rest of us tried not to choke.

There's more of course: low crawl parades at midnight through gravel and sandspurs, hanging backwards on cube dividers from our elbows to be shown what could no longer be done to us, all the while reciting, "Sir, Hazing shall be defined to consist of..."

**"Post Officer Candidate Real Man on the Move" (Philip L. Perkins: 4-63)  
*Lawton Constitution* (Monday February 18, 1963)**

Fort Sill Officer Candidate Philip L. Perkins is a man on the move. He already has had more homes and traveled more miles than many people do in a lifetime.

Perkins is the first man to enlist in the Army under a new college option program. He is currently attending OCS at Fort Sill.

The soldier started traveling almost from birth. When his father was attached to the U.S. Embassy in Shanghai in 1940, Perkins' mother was prepared to evacuate in advance of the Japanese Army's arrival. Following the war in 1946, the traveling Perkins family returned to China and the embassy. Located in Nanking, the embassy was then headquarters of the Nationalist Chinese forces (Perkins remembers seeing Chiang Kai-shek at a party to which he and his parents were invited.)

In talking about China, Perkins says that geographically and weather-wise it is far different from what he finds here in the Southwestern part of the U.S. "The Chinese climate is more like that of the Eastern Coast of the U.S., with its humid, sticky weather. Geographically, the rows and rows of rolling hills remind me of Tennessee."

Asked what other features about China stuck in his mind, Perkins replied that no one who was there during this period could forget the "endless rows of rice paddies, primitive roads, the unbelievable human labor performed by the Chinese people. There was a lack of almost all but the most primitive forms of transportation; and most of all, the Chinese people themselves were incredibly impoverished."

In 1948 the Perkins family for the second time had to flee from the Chinese mainland – this time because of the Communist threat. They returned to Washington D.C. where Philip finished high school.

Perkins' father is now retired, and his mother runs a boarding house for students seven blocks from the White House. Despite his close proximity to the Kennedy home, Perkins has never seen any member of the first family.

Perkins attended college at George Washington University in Washington D.C. for one year, and then transferred to Union College in Schenectady, N.Y. He graduated in 1962 with a B.S. degree in geology. Upon graduation he considered post-graduate work but decided to forestall it until he had fulfilled his military obligation. Thus, he became the first to sign up for the new OCS program.

**“Major Changes Planned in Sill OCS (Army Commanders Notified of Expansion)”  
*Lawton Constitution (Monday, April 15, 1963)***

Fort Sill’s Officer Candidate School has scheduled major changes in three categories in the near future due to a need expressed by the Army for more prospective officers.

The changes to be taken will virtually triple the yearly enrollment of the school and double the number of graduates. The three stages to be made include expansion, a change of command, and revision of the schedule for training cycles.

The changes come into effect April 21, when about 105 candidates will enter OCS of the first leg of the expansion program. This is compared with the usual number of candidates, which varies between 60 and 70 per class.

Along with larger classes, cycles will begin reporting every four weeks, rather than every eight weeks. By the time the program reaches high gear in 1964-65, 1,200 candidates will enroll annually. The number of batteries will double from three to six by June, with a seventh to open this summer for the annual class of reservists.

Lt. Col. Alexander A. Terris, new OCS commandant, steps into the post at the onset of the expansion program. Outgoing commandant, Col. C. A. Christin Jr., reflected last week on his two years at the School with some impressive figures – for both good and bad. “The major problem confronting OCS presently,” said Col. Christin, “is the sad statistic that only 20 percent of the applicants come from Fort Sill line and staff units.” The bulk of the classes are filled by men from the U.S. Army Training Center Field Artillery.

“We need more men to apply from troop units,” the former commandant added. Col. Terris readily agreed. “When I commanded the 2nd of the 36th a year or so ago, I realized that OCS officers – particularly those who had prior artillery experience, were immediately productive.” In February, 35 applicants appeared before the OCS Selection Board -30 were from ATC, four from troop units and one from the U.S. Army Hospital.

A call has gone out to commanders throughout the U.S. Army to inform qualified men of the program.

Just what does it take to enter OCS? In the words of Col. Christin: “Once you’ve qualified on the tests, it’s a matter of motivation”

Lt. John P. Sweeney, an OCS graduate himself, and now the OCS assistant S-3 recalls that: “You have to see that gold bar in front of you all the time. And you must see that bar as the most desirable thing in the world. Sometimes it’s the only thing that’ll keep you from quitting.”

Technically, however the prospective candidates must have at least a General Technical (GT) score of 110, a score of 115 on the Officer Candidate test and a score of 300 on an interview before the OCS Selection Board.

If a soldier wants to attend OCS, he first must go to his commanding officer, then apply to the personnel section of the Adjutant General’s office, Room 100, McNair Hall. He then goes before the Selection Board for an interview. The board is composed of at least three

officers, who on Col. Christin's view: "Adjudge the applicant's maturity, confidence, attitudes, motivation and his reaction to a number of situations." An OCS graduate is always a member of the Selection Board.

If the applicant is accepted, he'll report with the next class within two months. Then the pressure begins: "The candidates face a lot of physical, mental and emotional problems in OCS designed to test their determination. As I've said, about half can't take it." Col. Christain said.

Lt. Sweeney: "All the pressure of the first weeks, especially zero week, is to weed out those who would get shook under battle conditions. We can't have officers getting flustered when shells start dropping."

The pressure is applied by the tactical cadre who command the battalions and by upper and middleclassmen.

Upper, middle and lowerclassmen learning to give and take orders while living together is known as the "layer cake" system. The lowerclassmen correspond to privates who must do all of the menial work, take all of the orders and perform everything required of them." said Col. Christin. Lower Class status, during which candidates must salute all officers, and upper class candidates – and double time in the OCS area, lasts six weeks.

Middleclassmen perform the functions of the noncommissioned officers – platoon sergeant and first sergeant – while upperclassmen (dubbed 3rd lieutenants) take turns being battery commander, executive officer and platoon leader. In addition, the top eight candidates are selected to serve as a battalion staff for four-week periods.

All these activities are designed to bring out leadership qualities in the candidate.

In Snow Hall, where most of the academic instruction is conducted, the candidates study a large number of courses taught by the Gunnery, Artillery Transport, Communications-Electronics, Target Acquisition and Tactics-Combined Arms departments.

The toughest courses, according to the commandant; are gunnery and artillery survey. They often trip up a candidate and force him to be set back a cycle to take another crack at them.

The 10-year average of dropouts from OCS is 43 percent. This has been reduced recently by a "turn-back" program, in which a candidate can repeat his lower, middle or upper class period – to pick up either academic courses or develop his leadership abilities to OCS par.

Candidates also are assigned to such jobs in OCS as S-1, S-3 or S-4 officers. They also are placed in charge of the Troop Information display, the activities and recreation exhibit and mess hall operation. These duties, the TI display in particular, are designed to increase the candidates' "imagination and initiative." Said Col. Christin.

About one in four candidates are college graduates. These men usually fare better than those having less formal education. Two-thirds of these men graduate. The graduation percentage lowers in direct proportion to the amount of formal education.

Graduation requirements are based on a ratio of 65 percent academics, 25 percent leadership, and 10 percent on an evaluation of the individual's leadership by fellow candidates.

But what makes a candidate drop out? Returning to the 10-year average, Col. Christin explained that "almost half (47 percent) of the dropouts are from lack of motivation."

"We can't hand commissions to candidates on a silver platter. They must work for it." Said the husky former commandant.

Lack of leadership ability claimed 17 percent of the dropouts. physical problems forced 12 percent to leave, academic troubles, 11 percent. Miscellaneous problems, usually personal, weed out the remaining 13 percent.

The average candidate is 23 to 24 years old, has had 2.2 years of college and has been in the service 17 months and his previous rank was private first-class. Of course, individuals will vary greatly from this.

"Usually we find," said the colonel, "That men with five or more years service make excellent candidates. It's hard on them to be lowerclassmen, after all they were NCOs before. But once they advance, they do very well."

Of each 1,000 men entering the Army, only 320 have the GT score to qualify, and only 250 will pass the officer candidate test (OCT). Of these 250 men, 200 will be physically qualified, but only 30 of these will apply for OCS. Fifteen will subsequently enter OCS and between eight and nine will graduate.

"We operate strictly on an honor system – there's no cheating, no lying and no quibbling." Said Col. Christin, "The men must learn to become responsible citizens and officers."

And beginning this month, OCS will be training twice as many candidates to take their places among the "best junior officers in the Army."

### **"105 To Report at Post Today" (Class 5A-63)**

#### ***Lawton Constitution* (Sunday April 21, 1963)**

Approximately 105 men will report for Fort Sill's six-month officer's candidate school course today with the beginning of a new expansion program outlined recently for the school. Prior to the expansion, classes ranged from 60 to 70 men, one-third less than the size of the classes reporting after expansion.

Also, due to be revised is the cycle schedule for the candidates. Training cycles will be started once every four weeks instead of every eight weeks. The changes will triple the number of incoming men.



Most of the new candidates will be assigned to Battery D, the first of three new batteries to be reopened under the program that will double the number of yearly graduates from 300 to 600. A smaller portion of the new class 5A-63 will be assigned to Battery C. Sunday will mark the first time OCS has had more than three batteries since December 1955.

Battery D commander is Capt. Richard S. Wheeler, who formerly commanded Battery C. His executive officer is Lt. Charles E. Mebring, formerly a tactical officer in Battery A. Platoon leaders in the new battery are Lt. Richard A. Manupella, Lt. Randolph L. Austin and Lt. William B. Graves. The battery first sergeant is Ernest Starkey, Jr.

Monday, the new candidates will plunge into “zero week” during which they are oriented on the course, receive their supplies and their first touches of the mental and physical discipline and OCS demands. Academics begin April 27.

A fifth battery will open in May, with the sixth to greet candidates reporting in June. In addition, Battery G also will open in June for an 11-week condensed course for National Guardsmen and Army Reservists.

From the crowded days of World War II to the present, OCS has seen the ups and downs of existence - and sometimes no existence at all. More than 26,000 men were graduated during World War II. It closed down in 1946 but reopened in 1951 during the Korean War.

#### **Kenneth E. Rubin 6-63:**

One of my personal “claims to fame” while at OCS was that I had played golf with the Base Commanding General in a tournament that we won before I started OCS.

One day a TAC officer told me I was in deep Sh@# and was to report to the Commander.

I showed up as a very nervous Candidate and he asked me who the hell I thought I was? Well, I felt for some reason my life (and time in OCS) was coming to a close. Then he said that the CG wanted me in civvies with my clubs Friday afternoon for a practice round. And I was excused from Saturday and Sunday activities and that I better damn well win the tournament again or there would be all hell to pay. Long story short, we won again, and I sort of became “magic” from then on.... On the other hand, I always looked over my shoulder to make sure I was doing my best.

#### **“This Patch Needs a Sleeve”**

**LT James J. Dorsey: 1-62**

#### ***Artillery Trends (November 1963)***

The reorganization of the Army and new complex developments have created a demand for company grade officers in the artillery that is greater now than it has been since the Korean conflict. During times of national emergency, the Army has relied heavily on its officer candidate schools for its company grade officers. The Artillery OCS program alone produced 26,000 second lieutenants during World War II. During the years between World War II and the Korean conflict, the Artillery program, like all other branch candidate schools, was discontinued. However, as hostilities in Korea erupted in 1950, the need again arose for more company grade officers than were being commissioned at the time, and the Officer Candidate School was reactivated at Fort Sill. The Artillery

Officer Candidate School, which produced 2,800 lieutenants during the Korean action, became a permanent part of the United States Army Artillery and Missile School and since the end of the Korean action; approximately 300 officers per year have been commissioned at Fort Sill.

### SCHOOL EXPANSION

To meet the present demand for more lieutenants, the Artillery OCS program was recently expanded to triple the yearly output of officers. The facilities of the school have been almost doubled in size. The staff and faculty have been increased and billeting and mess facilities have been expanded. The new program calls for a class of 105 students to begin every month, as compared with classes in the past which consisted of 50 to 70 students reporting every 2 months.

However, the increased capability of the School is of little value without a sufficient number of applicants to fill the classes. For example, the first of the expanded classes started in April 1963 with 95 students -10 short of capacity.

Although 200 of every 1,000 men entering the Army qualify for OCS, only 30 of those 200 apply for the program. Why the other 170 eligibles do not apply cannot be exactly determined. Probably the low percentage of applicants is due to lack of desire resulting from misunderstanding or misconceptions developed from erroneous information. Through interviews, the Artillery OCS faculty has found that many soldiers have little knowledge of the OCS program.

### QUALIFICATIONS

The requirements for OCS are outlined in AR 350-50. Briefly, they stipulate that the applicants must be between the ages of 18 1/2 and 28 and have a high school education or GED equivalent. The prospective candidate must have scored at least 110 on the General Test and 115 on the Officer Candidate Test, in addition to passing the physical examination and scoring 300 or better on the physical combat proficiency test. The applicant must be favorably evaluated by a selection board. In mathematics, he must have completed a course in trigonometry at the high school level. If he has not, he may satisfy this requirement by presenting proof of successful completion of either USAFI course B 188 or Field Artillery Subcourse 526, both of which are extension courses.

### OCS PROGRAM

Desire, motivation, ability, determination, and acceptance of 23 weeks of study, double timing, and sweat constitute some of the essential qualities a candidate must possess to pass the artillery officer candidate school program.

The first week of a candidate's life, called "Processing and Orientation Week" or "P and O Week," is the first step in a gradual but tough conditioning process. During P and O Week, the candidate is processed, draws his texts and instruments, and learns what is expected of him.

After P and O Week, the candidate becomes a lowerclassman, a private in the candidate battalion, who obeys rigorous and strict lowerclassman customs. The candidate begins the 23-week long academic and physical program. For the next six weeks, in addition to

attending artillery classes, the lowerclassman buffs and polishes, mows and rakes, scrubs and paints., and does pushups when he does those things too slowly. In all, a candidate realizes that his training to be an artillery officer will be a 24-hour a day job. Daily inspections are an important aspect of a candidate's life, and only through hard work and attention to specific details can he pass the rigid inspections. During the course there is only one acceptable speed - double timing. The reason? There is never enough time to take it easy.

For the next eight weeks, the candidate is a middleclassman; thus, he begins to give orders and is observed and graded according to how well the lowerclassmen carry out their orders. If he has proven his leadership ability at the end of the eight weeks, he is promoted to an upperclassman and performs the duties of a candidate battalion officer.

The pressure never lets up. Throughout the course, the candidate must continually master the academic standards which include gunnery, survey, tactics, and communications. He learns not only current artillery, but also the new techniques and developments.

A candidate also must maintain a high degree of physical fitness to meet the physical standards of OCS. The school has various methods of developing a candidate's stamina. One such method is the Combat Proficiency Test.

At the end of 23 weeks, the former OCS candidate, now a commissioned second lieutenant in the artillery, realizes that the end, graduation, does justify the means by which he received his commission. He knows why the course not only is tough but also demands the "all" in an individual.

Basically, it is found that the man to procure for the OCS program is one who wants a commission. It takes determination to complete the program, the kind of determination that only a man who wants a commission will display. Men who possess the qualifications should be made aware of the officer candidate program and the benefits which can be derived from it (TAKE COMMAND—DA PAM 20-18). Many more of the Army's qualified soldiers must become acquainted with the program and encouraged to apply if the Artillery OCS quotas and Army requirements are to be fulfilled.

### **"Artillery Officer Candidate at Fort Sill Lives in Strict World of Spit 'n Polish"**

***Lawton Constitution-Morning Press (Sunday November 10, 1963)***

**Bill Chaze, Staff Writer**

A soldier in the Fort Sill Artillery Officer Candidate School lives from reveille till taps in an unyielding world of spit 'n polish. His world keeps him on the dead run from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., six days per week with no time for "lollygagging around." This is for six months.

"Our essential job her at the Artillery OCS is to make a man an officer. We treat a man hard, but fair." Speaking was Capt. Paul Buckley, OCS Operations Officer, who sums up the OCS as a "tough" and unique place to learn the rudiments of a first-class artillery officer."

An OCS man lives in a world apart from the normal realm of a soldier undergoing military training. Although officially an enlisted man, the candidate no longer has time to

fraternize with his former enlisted friends. His days are spent in endless spit and polish drill, tough tactical classes and critical inspections. For some of the OCS way of life is just right: for others it's not so easy to adjust. Roughly 30 percent of the candidates are unable to make it through.

"A very small number of our candidates," Capt. Buckley said, "just drop out of the school for one reason or another. The most common reason we get is: "Sir, I just did not know what I was getting into." "This is a man's business and we are dealing with people that will be among our Army's leaders. We're not running a halls of ivy type operation here. The ones that arrive thinking this is just another college outfit are soon finding out differently."

Fort Sill's OCS, now the training center for all artillery officer candidates, is a tough nut for a soft man to crack.

A prospective officer hits the deck at 6 a.m. and 15 minutes later is standing in formation with his comrades in arms at his battery area. A short while later he marches to breakfast. Normally, you'd think a man could relax a bit while eating. Not so with the future artillery officers for the scrutiny continues and the pace never slackens.

The candidates file into the mess-hall and are seated at pre-designated tables. At the end of each table sits a commandant, taking notes about the good or bad points of his charges' eating habits. Later, the men are informed of existing shortcomings with the silverware.

After breakfast, the men begin intensive classroom training, and in the course of an average day, participate in physical training, including a brisk one mile run around post.

At 5 p.m., the classroom portion of the day is over, and the candidates return to their barracks for the night. The remaining hours before 11 p.m. are spent preparing personal gear and studying for the next day's activity.

"We try to keep our men busy here," Capt. Buckley said. "for the most part, you don't find a candidate with a lot of time to burn, but now and then you'll find a man playing the angles who manages a few minutes to goof off."

Although the training is designed to be rough and rugged, the training cadre is instructed to keep a man "on his toes but in command of his dignity."

In years past, an OCS man was even shorn of his hair to aid in uniformity. Within the last year a "new look" has been extended to include the hair. Now an OCS man is identified by one-quarter inch of hair on top and slick around the ears, which is designed for a minimum of hair with a maximum of dignity.

One of the more interesting training aspects of OCS comes under the heading of Leadership Reaction Course. Candidates assemble at a series of wooden stall-like affairs at Craig and Sheridan Roads and spend several hours struggling through problems designed to test their leadership and ability to work as a team member. The course, also designed to toughen the men physically, consists of crossing imaginary rivers with only a few rotting planks and similar problems.

To qualify for OCS is no easy chore in itself. A man takes initial application through his unit commander and undergoes both a physical and a mental examination. The physical, tagged "combat proficiency." Involves scoring 300 out of 500 points through crawling 40-yards with chest and thighs on the ground; running; dodging and jumping barriers; and climbing a horizontal ladder. As a clincher, a man hurls a grenade at a bullseye 75-feet away.

With this successfully completed, a bundle of red tape now awaits the prospective OCS man. Test results are sent to Army Headquarters where officers determine an individual's eligibility. He is then sent before a special three-man board which makes the appropriate recommendation.

At Fort Sill a new class starts every four weeks, 12 classes per year. Completion of the course takes about six months.

A man first arriving at Sill's OCS is greeted by rows of antiseptically clean barracks and a sign saying, "Robinson Barracks."

His first week is spent in the tedious business of phasing in, drawing equipment and receiving the official haircut. A special OCS patch with overlapping letters is sewn on the left sleeve of the uniform. During this first week he is drilled on the basics of acting and looking like "an officer and a gentleman."

Although Fort Sill is a far cry from the constantly disciplined U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the general operation is the same. Lower classmen-- new arrivals—are expected to "brace" and salute men expecting to graduate shortly—the upperclassmen. The troops undergo study hours and are never left to themselves.

"At all times an officer is in the area to make sure the candidates are doing what they are supposed to and when they are supposed to," Capt. Buckley said. "When we tell a man to jump, we mean jump now and not later."

At the present, 300 candidates are undergoing the training, and another class of 81 is expected to check in Sunday. Capt. Buckley said the past trend has been for smaller classes but because of an Army-wide emphasis on the program, classes are gradually increasing in size.

The physical toughening aspect of a candidate's training is done on a 21-day program of graduated development. It involves conditioning new arrivals on a gradual dosage basis until new arrivals can hold their own with upperclassmen. For example: A man's first daily run will be a quarter-mile, but within a short while he is galloping a full mile per day with no difficulty. Along with the running he does the "daily dozen," a series of not too complicated, but strenuous exercises. "When we finish training here," Capt. Buckley said, "we've got a man tough enough to weather any physical hardship."

In addition to physical and classroom training, candidates also participate regularly in tough escape and evasion problems which deal with making your way over rugged terrain to given check points without being tagged by a mock-up enemy.

The image of the old-time instructor soundly cursing his students is – like the haircut – outdated and never seen.

“Along with the new look out here,” Capt. Buckley said, “we use gentlemanly language. We might admonish a man but yelling and screaming is out.

Classes are conducted on the honor system, meaning each candidate is placed on his honor not to cheat in class or tolerate cheating on the part of his classmates. A candidate observing cheating on the part of a classmate is urged by the school to inform, leaving the accused cheat to be dealt with by a candidate honor committee. Capt. Buckley summed up the honor system with a terse: “A candidate does not lie, cheat, steal or quibble. When we say ‘quibble,’ we mean giving evasive answers, steering away from the hard-rock truth. I won’t claim we teach the honor code.....it’s a thing you can’t teach a man. If he doesn’t learn it at home, he won’t learn it here- that is not our purpose or our job.”

Along with the possibility of becoming an officer, OCS offers rapid but temporary advancement within the enlisted category for candidates. Each candidate selected for OCS is ranked as an E5 (buck sergeant) if he is below that rank. Troops with higher pay grades retain their rank throughout training.

In the case of a private unfortunate enough to “bust out” of OCS, he is reduced to his former rank. However, in some rare instances, he is allowed to retain his E5 rating, depending on his OCS performance.

If a man does flunk out, there is a possibility application may be made again in six months for another go-around at the Army’s toughest Artillery officer’s school. However, few washouts attempt another session with OCS. Capt. Buckley said usually a man decided it is not worth the effort, “especially if he does not have much time left in service.”

But for a man tough and smart enough to make a go of OCS. It offers a reserve commission and a chance to apply for a Regular Army commission if a long service hitch is foreseen.

In addition to the bars of a second lieutenant, OCS graduates are afforded more than the usual token of respect for newly commissioned officers.

Gone are the days of the World War II “90-day wonders” and in his place stands the OCS grad secure in the hard-won knowledge he has weathered one of the world’s toughest officer schools.



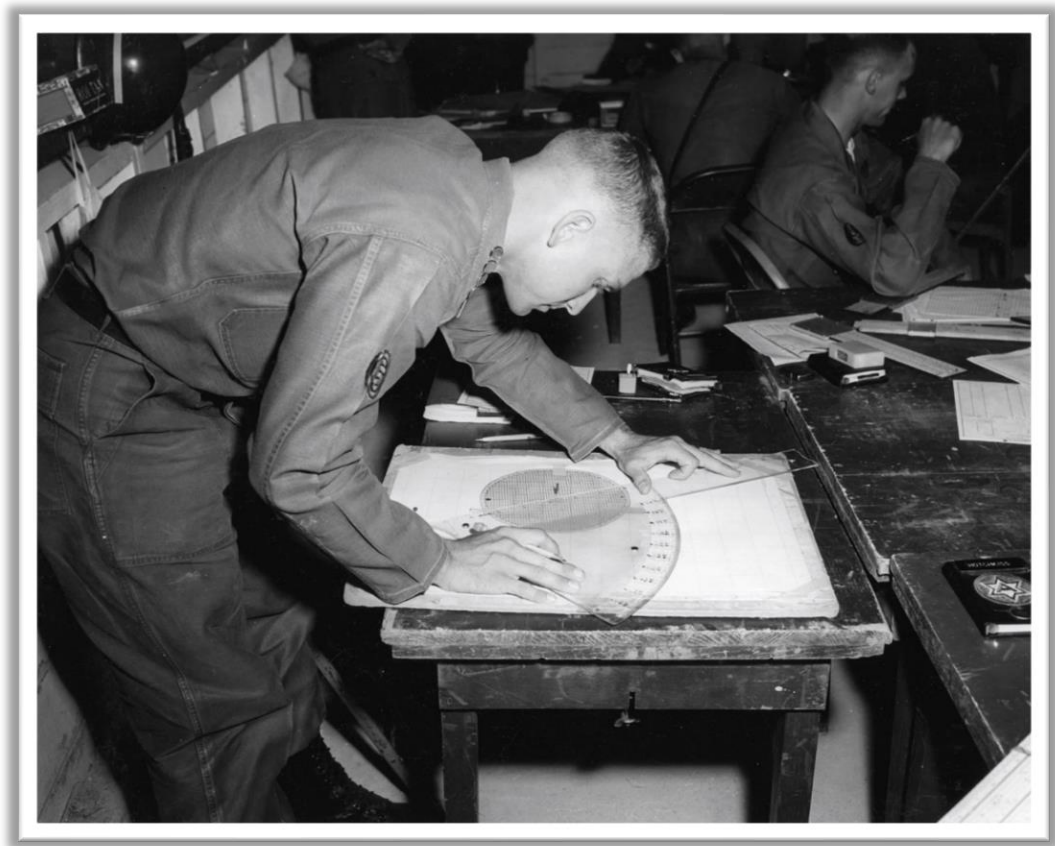
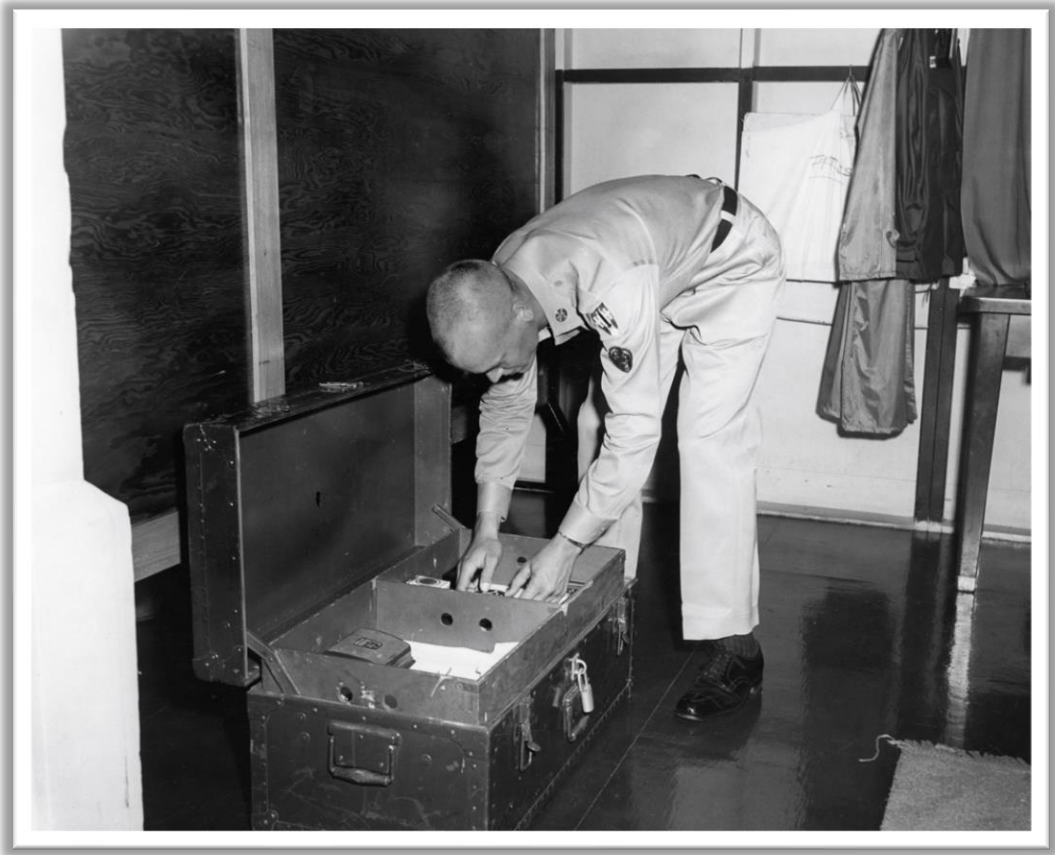
*Candidates Cubicle June 1960*



*TAC Officer points out deficiencies in Candidate Clothing display June 13, 1960*











*Observed Fire Training*



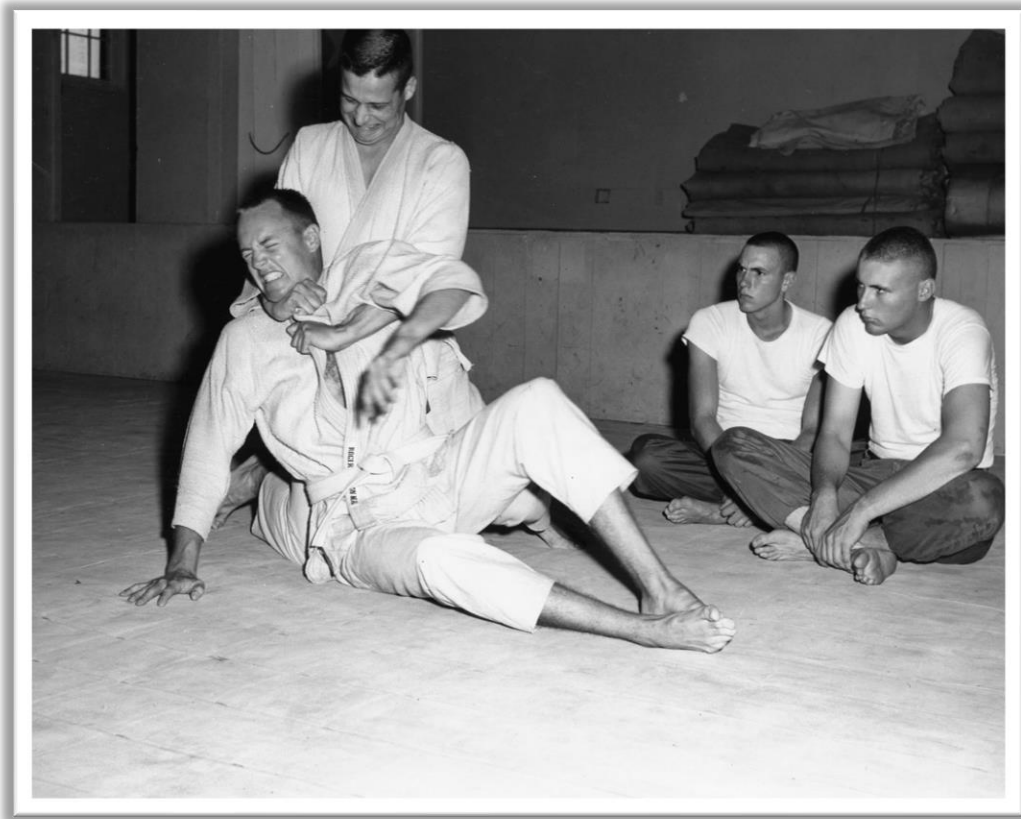




*Square meals in the mess hall – “Hit a brace Candidate”*



*Class 4-62 barracks cubicle set up in the Battery street – “I left my valuables unsecured.”*



*Combatives Class 1-62*



*2LT Dennis Ziolkowski, Honor Graduate of Class 3-62, receives his new gold bars from his wife and Colonel H.N. Moorman (29 May 1962)*

# Chapter Twelve

## 1964 - 1965

### **John D. Aultman: 4-64**

I graduated from class 4-64 in April 1964. I was the tallest, ugliest, rankest (enlisted wise) and oldest (30) in my class. Upperclassmen used to have a ball busting my ass but somehow I hung in there. I definitely remember: the mess hall, shaving from the toilets at school, our minute-and-a-half Shave and Shower Formation at night, those wonderful Jarks, the crying at night after “lights out” and someone would say a prayer, oh, and those wonderful Nukes, and of course the closeness that some of us developed in order to make it through. When we started someone said “Look at the person to your left, the person to your right, and then in the mirror. Tomorrow, one of you won’t be here. Toward the end, we used to say “Look at the guy on your left, the guy on your right and then in the mirror. Tomorrow, none of you will be here.

My recollection was that two Jarks equated to a total close to nine miles and each Jark took about one hour. I remember how the upperclassmen allowed us to eat like pigs just before a Jark and there was frequent barfing along the way of the Jark. I’ll never forget one memorable Jark morning when one of the Jark leaders called for volunteers to police the parade grounds.

My hand shot up and about a dozen of us were chosen to police. Wow, I thought, today must be my lucky day. After arriving at the parade grounds, I was casually bending to pick up anything that looked out of place when I heard “Hey Smack! Just what do you think you’re doing?”

“Sir- candidate Aultman, policing the area sir!” after which I was told that the proper position for policing an area was to always have your elbows below your knees. (I can still recall the pain when I think about it. At the time I was 6’4” and thirty years old. Right now I don’t think I could keep my elbows below my knees for more than a second. I learned a lesson that day in that there were worse things than going on a Jark.

### **Henri C. Bienvenu: 4-64**

#### **“Odyssey Ends”**

***Teche News (St. Martinville, Louisiana) Wednesday July 18, 2007***

Our last “stop” on the trip was a visit to Fort Sill near Lawton, Oklahoma. And while it was interesting, I kept recalling Thomas Wolfes’ novel “You Can’t Go Home Again.”

Lawton and Fort Sill have, understandably, changed quite a bit since I was last there in 1963-64. And memories surely get muddled after 43 years. The most wrenching change was the razing of Robinson Barracks, which housed the Officer Candidate School and was my home for six tough months. The site is now a small athletic field, and the only evidence of the OCS facility is the impressive sign and headquarters building (a modest two-story, wood-frame building) that now houses a museum of sorts – that wasn’t open on the Saturday afternoon of our visit.

The asphalt parking lot where we drilled for hours on end is still there, although apparently now hardly used for anything, and I was able to locate Medicine Bluff 4 (MB4), a modest sized (but steep) hill about a mile from Robinson Barracks. Wayward candidates had to double-time to the hill and up to its summit on weekends to work off demerits, and it was a gut wrencher.

#### **Pete Lorenz: 4-64**

For me OCS was physically and mentally tough and I was not prepared for it. I came to Fort Sill from an Engineering battalion stationed in Mannheim, Germany at which life was relatively comfortable and enjoyable, especially since I spoke German and therefore had a wonderful playground at my doorstep.

The “shock and awe” of the first few days from the sudden severe daily discipline broke some spirits unnecessarily. Our class, 4-64 lost some good potential candidates during these first days. Personally, I enjoyed the classroom and field exercise work immensely not only because it provided relief from harassment but because the subject matter was very interesting. Survey classes, gunnery, “Live Fire” aiming exercises all kept me very motivated for the next day’s class. They are subjects so out of reach to the ordinary soldiers and our mastery of them gave us all important confidence.

Since I’m somewhat of a “runt,” I could not compete based on physical size or stature but my classroom grades were good. I was thrilled to achieve Upperclass status knowing my hard work and the humility it took to reach it. (Especially the prize of “walking” versus constant “double time”).

It became obvious we were all needed for the war in Vietnam around graduation, but I and two others from my class were sent to a Sergeant Missile Battalion. I felt somewhat bad about not continuing with a true authentic tube artillery unit, loyalty drilled into us all at OCS. For my next tour I joined a 105 mm SP Battalion that was deployed to Pleiku from Fort Sill and my OCS training did make me an effective officer. Of special value were my survey skills (well recognized by my Battalion Commander) learned at Fort Sill since our maps of the Vietnam central highlands were old colonial French copies or oblique aerial photo maps. Both had significant errors which could have (and often did) cause problems.

#### **John Mateyko: 4-64**

For about nine months, the US Army had a program where college graduates could enlist and be guaranteed OCS immediately after Basic Training. Often referred to as College Op, those candidates obviously had no AIT and were often behind the power curve when it came to military jargon and military organization. I was one such candidate. I completed Basic Training at Fort Knox and two days later was flown to Post Field and transported by bus to Robinson Barracks.

I reported in and was told to wait in the battalion street (all streets were gravel) and someone would be up to fetch me. Sure enough, a middleclass candidate came running up, grabbed my duffle bag and I followed him (at a run) to Delta Battery. At that time, only four batteries were active. What a cultural shock! Most of the other lowerclass candidates had prior service and they were busy removing unit patches and stripes from their uniforms. Ten minutes before the evening meal (announced by a candidate at the



corner of our battery street and the battalion street – DELTA BATTERY, EVENING MEAL FORMATION, ONE ZERO MEENOOTS) a candidate came to our second-floor area wearing khakis with the 8th Infantry Division patch and PFC stripes. A TAC Officer was right behind him and instructed about eight lower class candidates to help him get out of his uniform, remove a clean fatigue uniform and boots from his duffel bag, strip the rank and unit patch off the jacket and help him dress so he could make the evening meal formation. We made the formation and had our first inspection by middle and upperclass candidates. The candidate who just arrived from 8th Infantry Division was designated Guidon Bearer and Candidate Seely went on to become BG Seely.

As every OCS candidate knows, saying that OCS was a cultural shock is a gross understatement. Striving for perfection, each and every minor infraction is magnified by either a candidate above you or a TAC Officer. It didn't take too long for the pride of being a candidate to show. We were in Snow Hall almost every day and were much sharper than officers who were recently commissioned from an ROTC program. But, I was falling behind in military studies. I had no idea why it was important to know how a transportation company organic to an infantry unit was different from a transportation company organic to an armor unit. I was very tired, falling behind academically and rapidly developing an attitude. Soon after becoming a middleclass candidate, four prior service candidates explained to me that if I were to apply to flight school I would be given a flight physical which included dilating my eyes and upon returning to Robinson Barracks I would be allowed to sleep that afternoon until evening meal. I immediately applied for flight training. One morning, Candidates Brooks, Robillard, Seely and I piled into Candidate Mitra's car and went for our flight physicals. Sure enough, when we returned to Robinson Barracks we took an afternoon nap. In 1965, Mike Seely graduated from the fixed wing course and I from the rotary wing course. By the Fall of 1965, both of us were in Vietnam. I was assigned to the same company as Jim Dorsey (Class 1-62) who had been one of our TAC Officers.

I remember doing close order drill in November when a TAC Officer pulled our candidate instructor aside. When the candidate returned, he informed us that President Kennedy had been assassinated. I think every unit in the armed forces changed their schedule for that event, every unit except Artillery OCS. No change in our training schedule.

Our class continued to get smaller as men left either for academic or personal reasons. I am pretty sure we gained at least one man from a class ahead of us. Christmas Leave was a two-week break from the high standards of regimentation and academics.

Upon returning to Fort Sill in January, we had an outdoor class laying those British 155/158 mm guns near the grade school. The temperature was well below zero and we wore long johns, sweatpants, wool pants and shells and layers of clothing above the waist. Warming tents were set up and it was as much a lesson on how to take care of troops in cold weather as it was in laying the battery. I am pretty sure but not certain that candidates from class 5-64 shared that training day with us.

After sixteen weeks, we put on the red tabs and clickers that designated upper class candidates. Three weeks later we were told that Robinson Barracks was going to expand by two batteries, and it was up to the upperclassmen of each platoon in Charlie and Delta batteries to bring one of those buildings up to OCS standards. They had been vacant for

years, so you can imagine what it took. Each night, we worked on them during study hall. Captain Morrison was our Tactical Battery Commander. One evening, he climbed the fire escape ladder and entered the second floor through that back door. I was the first to see him and immediately called, "Attention." He looked at me as though I were the dumbest person on the face of the earth. He told me in no uncertain terms that as long as I had been in OCS, I should know that Attention is not called during study hours. He was correct, but I didn't equate working on the building as studying.

We made it through the 24 weeks and moved to "Happy Battery" with nothing to do that weekend. Monday morning we were in the auditorium in Snow Hall rehearsing the graduation ceremony which would take place in 25 hours. At that time, one of our TAC Officers came in, ordered "Candidate XXX, Post." The candidate reported to the TAC Officer, left the building and by the time we returned to Robinson Barracks, the candidate was no longer a candidate. We heard he was dismissed for Conduct Unbecoming a Candidate.

OCS was an experience you cannot forget. It forged combat leaders out of experienced soldiers and recent college graduates.

#### **Daniel (Bart) Bartholomew: Honor Graduate Class 4-64**

**(Note: The preceding article by John Mateyko must be read first for this article to make sense.)**

The command, "Candidate XXX, Post" and his subsequent dismissal from the School had a resounding impact on everyone in Class 4-64. But the greatest impact of all was on me.

Candidate XXX had had prior service, was a good military leader and had excelled in all the academics. He had breezed through the course and at the beginning of our upperclass period he, as #1 in the class, was designated the Candidate Battalion Commander (BNCO). At the same time, I who had gone through the first 16 weeks (lower and middle-class periods) in my own "magic" style (to be explained later), as #2 in the class was designated the Battalion Executive Officer (BNXO). While "Candidate XXX" as BNCO was reveling as the leader of the battalion, I as the BNXO was following in his shadow. The situation changed drastically however, when a week or two before his dismissal, Candidate XXX had been relieved of his duties as BNCO, and suddenly, there I was the Battalion Commander and head of OCS 4-64.

I immediately began fulfilling the duties of BNCO and everything went well until Saturday morning arrived and the BNCO was expected to lead the formation for the weekend Jark. I mentioned earlier that I had gone through OCS in my own "magic" style; as such, I had managed to go through the entire course having never accumulated enough demerits to be given the privilege of going on a Jark.

I obviously had learned that the Jark went from Robinson Barracks to the top of MB4 and returned. What I had not learned was the exact route that the marchers followed. You guessed it! While leading the formation I took a wrong turn. Needless to say, the discipline of the formation suddenly vanished as most of the candidates directed various verbal comments toward the guy leading the formation. Fortunately, the wrong turn was on the way to MB4; had it been the return trip I may have been stoned.

I survived the humiliation of not knowing the route of the Jark and continued with the duties of BNCO on through our graduation. As was customary, I was given the Class Guidon and charged with maintaining and protecting it on behalf of my classmates. I immediately had it framed along with my Diploma and the Honor Graduate Certificate. That huge frame had an esteemed place in my office, whenever I actually had one, throughout my military career. I was especially proud to call attention to it while it was displayed in my office during my last assignment as the Director of Information Management at the United States Military Academy, West Point.

I finally got a chance to show off the guidon to classmates when I brought it to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our graduation during the 2014 FAOCS Reunion. Classmates Pete Laessig, Paul Savidge, Billy Keyes, Henry Bienvenu, John Driscoll and Mike Seely gladly joined me as we gathered to have photographs taken with 'Our Guidon.' The guidon now is the focal point of our family/living room in our home in Lee's Summit, Missouri.

So, what is a "magic" candidate? Every candidate knew about "magic" items such as candy ("pogey bait"), shoe polish, and various not-to-be-had items. These items were never seen, yet they existed. A "magic" candidate? I'll explain only two examples of my life as a "magic" candidate. Zero-week had been hell for me along with everyone else. One experience that I will never forget was the fact that my birthday just happened to fall during zero-week. Unfortunately, my mother back in Pennsylvania had asked all of my friends and relatives to send a birthday card to her poor soldier-boy son who was far away in this place called Fort Sill, Oklahoma. During zero-week no one needed extra attention! Every turn resulted in more attention, usually adverse, that anyone wanted. Needless to say, the TAC officers had lots of fun harassing me during each mail call throughout the week as the cards continued to flow in. Finally, zero-week was history and we moved into our assigned barracks as lowly lower-classmen.

With a last name beginning near the beginning of the alphabet, I immediately found that per the duty roster I was assigned duties of "House Mouse" during the very first week. The house mice were charged with cleaning and polishing the barracks (other than the latrines.) One evening, during that first week, Fort Sill experienced a major downpour of rain. The upperclassmen quickly capitalized on this opportunity and ordered all lower-classmen, except for the "house mice" who needed to stay inside to guard the barracks, to go outside to "police" the fire-breaks. The "police call" ended up being swimming lessons in the water-filled ditches around the barracks foundation. Needless to say, when the lowerclassmen returned inside the barracks their bodies and uniforms were a total disaster, far from the OCS standards that were expected the next day. The other 'house mice' and I had lots of cleaning and polishing to do on the barracks, but our boots and brass were ready to put on our uniform the next day and, unlike our classmates, we would not be given lots of demerits.

The other example of my "magic" life probably began during middle class. One evening during the middle of the night I awoke. Since we were not allowed to wear watches, I didn't know what time it might be, but I gambled that the TAC Officer of the Day had already made his rounds, so I quietly gathered my footwear and polishing equipment and sat under the firelight by the stairs and shined my boots. That became a nightly routine and the fear of demerits for "boots NSS" no longer existed.

I had arrived at Zero Week with an advantage over many of my classmates in that I was fortunate to have received good advice from recent OCS graduates before I got there. I had applied for OCS during Basic Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky during the preceding May. Unlike so many personnel actions during those paper-records days, my application miraculously followed me to Fort Sill where I was trained as a 13B at the Field Artillery Training Center. After graduation from ATC I was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 13th Field Artillery there at Fort Sill as a cannoneer hoping that OCS might still be a part of my future. Shortly after I arrived in the 13th Artillery, my application surfaced again; I was interviewed by a board of officers and found acceptable for OCS. I was going to be an officer candidate! After that fact became known, one of the lieutenants in my battery, a recent OCS graduate, took it upon himself to give me lots of pointers and advice on excelling as a candidate. One of his recommendations was that I arrive at OCS with my collar brass appropriately modified to OCS standards. So, I arrived at zero week with the cross-cannons and US from the collar brass filed down, sanded and buffed to a high gloss; the round bases of the collar brass had been given the “spinning” treatment and hence had perfect, uniform, concentric circles. That one pointer saved me endless hours during zero week.

With a good head start, some “magic,” and quickly learning to pay attention to the endless, seemingly ridiculous details I managed to skate through the course being able to focus on organization and academics rather than, for example, putting my area back together because the TAC officer found a laundry tag in one of my fatigue shirts and then “nuked” the rest of the hanging display looking for more.

My quality of life as a candidate was in large part due to my big brother, John F. (Jack) Gannon, a member of the infamous Class 2-64. (I know nothing about the history of that class other than they had a grand total of 13 graduates!) Jack Gannon was clearly one of the best candidates in the class. He gave me positive direction, corrected me when I was wrong, and patted me on the back when I did well. He quickly got me well-grounded on how to be a candidate. The rest was up to me.

As every candidate recalls, staying awake during classes was a major challenge to everyone. I found staying awake extremely difficult especially during some of the long, drawn-out lectures. The most sleep-prone classes were those by the Artillery Transport Division. These classes were presented in Summerall Hall but to candidates the name was affectionately changed to “Slumberall” Hall. During many of these type classes I spent much of the time standing in the back of the room to avoid falling asleep at my desk. I loved gunnery classes because there one got to actually learn the mathematics and science of the ballistic trajectory and apply that mathematics during the field exercises. Staying awake in gunnery classes was not a problem; I had been an aspiring math teacher before I was drafted and hence gunnery was right down my line. One instance of falling asleep in class took place in one of those small wooden training buildings right there in Robinson Barracks. The class was on the use of hand grenades. I remember being wide awake when the instructor first demonstrated pulling the pin and allowing the handle fall to the floor with a definite metallic ring. Of course, he also emphasized the tremendous amount of explosive power that was contained within the grenade and the fragments that would be produced. Sometime thereafter I fell sound asleep in my chair. The next thing I heard was that same metallic ring coming from right next to my chair. The next sound was that of a heavy metal object also falling by my side and a voice loudly yelling,

“Grenade!” I woke up and stayed awake standing at the back of the room during the rest of that class!

Overall, my experience as a Field Artillery Officer Candidate was very similar to those expressed by previous writers. Before I signed in, I had been told that I would be broken into pieces and then be rebuilt as a candidate. I think the School did just that and did it well. The leadership skills, self-discipline and ability to function under pressure that I learned there equipped me well for a career in the Army and follow-on employment as a public-school teacher. I am still humbled today when I think of the officers and non-commissioned officers who were over me as a young soldier and saw potential and recommended and encouraged me to apply for Officer Candidate School. When I was drafted, I knew I would do my two years in the Army and then get out. The staff and other candidates at the Officer Candidate School changed my view of the Army and I am thankful that they did.

I do, however, fault the OCS Staff on one thing. That is, the fact that they suggested that I stay at OCS as a TAC Officer immediately after graduation. I didn't know any better and I knew that I had mastered being a successful candidate and felt that I could teach other young men to do likewise; so, I accepted the assignment and served as a TAC Officer for the next year. I was successful and had great experiences but during that year I should have been getting my hands dirty as a true lieutenant of field artillery. Once again, my life as a lieutenant was also turning out to be somewhat “magic.”

#### **Paul Herbold: 5-64**

We started bringing down those (Jark) rocks in my class (5-64). The idea was to tear down the mountain to make life easier for later classes. We piled them in front of our barracks and put the class, our name, and the date on them with felt pen. It started with pebbles and given the competitive nature of Candidates, rapidly escalated to small boulders. We used to carry them under one arm with weight resting on canteen top to distribute the load to our hips. Don't remember how many times I had to go, but I do recall a couple of doubles.

#### **Felton Graham: 6-64**

It's been a long time but has always been close to my heart. The faces are there, I only have to close my eyes and I can even smell the place. When my heater comes on even now, I have flashbacks that remind me of the heater blower in our barracks.

#### **“Review to Honor Jark, First OCS Commandant”**

##### ***Lawton Constitution (Friday June 26, 1964)***

Lt. Gen. Carl H. Jark - first commandant of Fort Sill's OCS - will be honored with a review Tuesday afternoon. The farewell review by current OCS candidates is slated Tuesday afternoon at the Robinson Barracks parade field. It will be the last official visit to the Artillery and Missile Center by the soon to be retired Fourth Army commanding general. Gen. Jark will be succeeded by Lt. Gen. Robert W. Colglazler, Jr.

A 15-gun salute and the commanding general of Fort Sill will greet Gen. Jark upon his arrival at the school he formed in 1941. Salute battery for the 15 blasts will be Class 10-64. Classes 8 and 9 make up the honor guard. After the review, Gen. Jark and the troops will adjourn to Theatre 4 where he will make his “farewell address.”

Gen. Jark has been assigned to Sill on several occasions. Besides his term at OCS in 1941, he served as a student, instructor, and executive officer of the Field Artillery School, now the Artillery and Missile School.

Gen. Jark was born in Leigh, Neb., June 13, 1905. After graduating from high school at Beatrice, Neb., he entered the U.S. Military Academy. During World War II, Gen. Jark served as an executive officer of the 63rd Division Artillery, fighting in France and Germany. At the outbreak of the Korean Conflict, he was designated Chief of the Operations Division, Far East Command in Japan.

### **Fort Sill Briefs**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Thursday, July 2, 1964)***

Artillery officer candidates at Fort Sill no longer wear the "Circle of Courage" patch on their shirt sleeves. Last week the OCS students pinned on new brass which now identifies an officer candidate.

Lt. Gen Carl H. Jark, retiring Fourth Army Commanding General said that setting up the Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill was "the most rewarding of my career." During a farewell address to the troops at Theater 4.

#### **"Candidates Wanted for OCS Classes"**

##### ***Newspaper clipping in Artillery OCS archives (July 14, 1964)***

Soldiers thinking of a career as a commissioned officer have a wide-open opportunity.

The Army says procurement requirements for the officer candidate schools have been increased during the past 15 months. More classes have been added at both the infantry officer candidate school and the artillery officer candidate school, and this increased number of classes will be continued for the foreseeable future. However, the supply of candidates is not keeping up with demand.

Sufficient numbers of applicants are not being received to provide a desirable range of selectivity in filling quotas for artillery. Officials say the quotas for artillery for the past few months have been filled by applicants who obtained the minimum composite scores.

It is anticipated that there will be a sufficient number of applicants to fill the infantry classes to capacity through September 1964. However, the Army says, unless increased command emphasis is placed on seeking out and encouraging qualified personnel to apply for this training, the range of selectivity off applicants for the officer candidate schools will continue to decrease.

#### **Jack Kinane: 8-64**

I still look back with pride on graduating on-time with my class. One of the hardest things I ever had to do and one that I feel proudest of. Nice to know that I'm in good company with Tommy Franks.

#### **Carlo Americo Odella: 8-64**

I remember having to cut a pea in half so that we could quickly respond to any order while "chewing!" I ran a few Jarks and do not remember anyone bringing back rocks from our little runs! One of the most difficult, yet rewarding, periods of my life was spent with

the class 8-64. It's hard to believe that almost 40 years have passed since my last Jark march.

**David L Parker: 8-64**

The first day I walked into Robinson Barracks I thought all hell had broken loose. I was in Khakis for the first two days of OCS as the airline had lost my duffel bag. As I recall I was assigned to Delta Battery and when I entered the barracks I needed to urinate and found a long white urinal and started to urinate at which time someone started screaming at me. I was advised that the urinal was kept clean and polished for inspections and never used. At the end of each training day, we were allowed 7 minutes to shower, shave, brush our teeth, and use the toilets (not the urinal).

The family style mess hall food was very good, but as a lower classman we didn't get to eat much due to the constant harassment. Occasionally an upperclassman from the dining table would send a lowerclassman to the kitchen to bring more servings. The dining tables were separated from the kitchen area by a partition and if one were fast you could knock down a glass of milk and sneak a dinner roll in your pocket to be eaten after lights out. The dessert pies on the dining tables looked great, but as a lower classman I never got to taste one. We could not be harassed while at Snow Hall or study hall. While at Snow Hall during breaks you could get a soft ice cream and a shave. I attended a reunion a few years ago and recall a graduate from a different class talk about not being able to eat enough at meals so his class had pizzas delivered to the back of his barracks. I doubt that ever happened with 8-64.

A few years ago, I met a graduate from a subsequent Robinson Barracks class who advised me that he never got a demerit during the 6 months of OCS. As I recall the TAC Officers for 8-64 saw to it that all lower classmen got enough demerits so that they went on every Jark march as a lower classman. The Jark marches were in fatigues, boots, belt with poncho, helmets, and rifles. On one Jark march when we returned, a message was received from the Commandant advising that our round-trip time was too slow and to turn around and do it again. Upperclassmen were required to volunteer to lead the Jark marches, but could wear red shorts, tee shirts, and tennis shoes. As an upperclassman I volunteered on a number of Jark marches and got to the point I actually enjoyed them.

After graduation from OCS, I completed my obligation as an Army Officer and eventually left for a civilian career. I was subsequently accepted into an FBI new agents' class and upon completion of training was entered on duty May 4, 1970 as an FBI Special Agent which I retired from after 27 years. I credit my OCS training and time as a commissioned Officer as significant factors in my acceptance to the FBI new agents' class. Although the date of 5/4/70 when I entered on duty as an FBI Special Agent is significant, the date that is etched in my memory and I will always remember is the 8-64 graduation date.

**Fred Gesin: 9-64**

When I made Red Bird my wife moved to Lawton and found a studio apartment in the garage of a house. On my first weekend off post, I went to see my wife for the first time after 14 weeks in our new apartment. Prior to entering the apartment, I heard a very loud voice stating: "Drop candidate and give me 20!" My wife did not know she had rented in a house owned by an OCS graduate!! Needless to say, it was quite a shock!

Later, when I reported in at Fort Monroe, Virginia it was on a Sunday and I had to report into the duty officer. I was told: "Just a minute and I will get CPT Woolever for you." I asked him to repeat his full name and he replied "CPT Ronald Woolever." As he came through the door I ordered: "Drop and give me 20!" CPT Woolever was one of my TACs at OCS who had gotten out and came back in. The problem was that at this time I had been promoted to MAJ and Ron was still a CPT. I loved doing that. We became good friends while at Fort Monroe.

**Ronald H. Katow: 10-64**

The OCS environment was designed to be hectic 24/7 to say the least, living minute to minute, right shoulder foot lockers a couple of times a night, and a lot of yelling and looking at the ground in the front leaning rest. So, socializing with fellow candidates about life at home or taking photos to document your visit, never happened. Any activity remotely looking like that, would have been greeted with immediate retribution, big time.

The one thing about reunions, graduates usually experienced just about the same things under like conditions. Therefore, they have something in common. In the case of OCS, where the techniques of applying nonstop physical and mental pressure situations, designed to force people to hit that psychological wall, then to go beyond, is something that not everyone experiences. The high 60 or 70 percent attrition rate mirrors the results of this pressure. Trying to relate these experiences with someone that had not been there, is futile at best. It comes out like a prison atmosphere. So, we tend to closet the memories, and over time, forget them. I guess reminiscing these experiences might be amusing, even medicinal, because it wasn't funny at the time.

**Dale R. Morris: 10-64**

I was a graduate of Class 10-64. I would like to share a few of my memories of that incredible experience. I arrived on the first Sunday in April of 1964, the 5th, to begin my self-imposed hell. I had been warned that I would do over 200 pushups on that first day and as I lay in my bunk that night, I counted the number of times that I could remember doing 20 and I far exceeded the 200.

Of course, week one is "zero" week and that is when every new candidate is reduced to putty to be remolded over next 26 weeks. On Monday as I was standing in formation and we were getting the orientation of a lifetime much to my surprise standing before me telling me to get my greasy eyeballs off of him was none other than Darryl Morris who grew up in a neighboring community of Quail, Texas. He made a special effort to ensure that I received no "special" treatment but that is exactly what I got. I was dropped for 20 every time he saw me, and I got to do extra training on Saturdays and Sundays allowing me to join the Century Club on Jark Marching. I soon learned to be a regular church attendant on Sundays. That first week did eliminate a few of the candidates but the real test came in the weeks to follow.

The hardest night came in the 7th or 8th week when LTC Marvel the Assistant Commandant of FAOCS came down to our barracks at 10:30 p.m. to give us some additional training. I think there were still 10 of us left at that point and he was of course assisted by our TAC Officer 2LT Weise. LTC Marvel began by telling us that he had been informed that we were the sorriest lot of lowerclassmen that had ever been allowed to enter OCS and he intended to correct that situation. We began by doing half-pushups on



our bunks quickly followed by order of arms with our footlockers with an inspection of our footlockers. I had made the mistake of using a combination lock on my footlocker and therefore could not even get it open in the impossible time frame given to prepare our footlockers for inspection. Therefore, I received additional pushups as punishment. After what seemed like several hours of that reoccurring sequence of harassment we put on our ponchos over our PT shorts (that we were wearing since we had just returned from our nightly round of the daily dozen followed by a mile run) and strapped on our belt with canteen, steel pot minus the liner and over boots. Then we picked up our footlockers and proceed outside for close order drill using our footlockers as rifles. Sometime around 4 a.m. only three of us were left standing and were allowed to go into the showers and go to sleep for 2 whole hours. Several others had collapsed earlier and had gone to the showers and bed. When we got up at 6 a.m. to start the day, I know that 3 left OCS to return to their units and I think 2 more left later that day. What a night - and the day that followed was really hell, totally exhausted, sore and having to perform was a real challenge.

After I reached Senior Upperclassman, I remember a friend of mine from Fort Devens, Smith (don't remember the first name), arrived at OCS and had been inquiring about me. A Lower Upperclassman stopped me to ask if I knew him and I was taken to his barracks to talk to him. Smith was very guarded in talking to me knowing the problems he could have if he let his guard down in front of his Upperclassmen. Don't know what happened to Smith.

My funniest moment came when we were tossing hand grenades. I raised up to throw my grenade and struck the top of the concrete wall with my wrist and the grenade fell just over the wall and exploded covering me and the Sergeant that was instructing me with dirt. He politely and softly said, "Candidate could you try to throw the grenade just a little farther." He did not realize that I had about broken my wrist on the wall, and we were lucky that I got it over the wall. Obviously, I was positioned too close to the wall.

We all survived the first 9 weeks by eating candy bars we brought at Snow Hall from the vending machines and field rations (when in the field) because we certainly could not survive on the food we were served at the mess hall. Not that it wasn't good, we just were not allowed to eat it because of all the constant harassment and squaring our food with no more than pea size bites coupled with the air raid drills being called by the Upperclassmen and TAC Officers.

Ah, but the blessing of reaching "turning green" and Middleclass. But the real moment was reaching Upperclass. At that point we had survived dry shaving in our bunks and polishing our boots and shoes at night with a blanket over our heads with a flashlight in our mouths. As well as learning to wash our mesh kits, brush our teeth and anything else we could accomplish in the lengthy 30 second showers we were allowed to take after PT.

The sorriest thing I was assigned to do was to try to drive a lowerclassman out of OCS because he had a tenor voice. I have never forgotten that candidate and he has probably never forgotten me either. I receive punishment by several sets of 20 pushups and someone screaming in my ears and trips up Medicine Bluffs, because that candidate was still there and as far as I know he finished.

There were lots of trying moments in OCS with pain and misery, but it was an experience I will never forget. We were especially honored to have General Jark to visit while I was there and of course in his honor we all got to go up Medicine Bluffs on a Jark march in his honor. It was great training and I have always regretted that I did not go on to airborne and ranger school. But such is life.

I loved directing fire and learning everything about Artillery even though I went back to Military Intelligence. While stationed in Germany in 1965 I did visit one classmate that was stationed at Giessen. I have not seen or visited with anyone else in all these years

### **Warren Faulk: 12-64**

I remember the “ingenuity” course. Seems to me my group solved few if any of the riddles. There was always someone with a clipboard making notes, but I never learned what they recorded concerning our performance. I don’t remember any E&E courses. That came later for me at Jungle Warfare Training in the snow at Fort Devens, Massachusetts.

I was selected for OCS while running a 14-man tactical radio team in Germany. I had been promoted to Sergeant a year or so before and had done very well on the 053.60 MOS/proficiency test... remember those? I was quite surprised that I was being sent to Artillery but I’m glad I was. Having an understanding of artillery capabilities served me well in my career in the Army Security Agency ... especially the tactical side.

At the time I was in OCS there were some with 3-5 years in like me, some college option fellows coming out of college, through basic training and right into OCS (these men had the greatest difficulty I seem to remember) and then there were some older fellows who had gotten waivers for the 28-year maximum age. One was 33. He not only graduated, but he was also near the top of his class. Name was Kendeigh, Class 10-64. A SFC on entry. A career artilleryman and could probably have taught gunnery. I lived in fear of washing out for the entire 23 weeks. Fact is, I was never in any danger. I was just making it hard on myself.

My class wore the OCS patches for about half the course and then switched to the OCS brass pins. I still have one of each, I think. In theory the patches, having left an unfaded spot “ruined” otherwise good fatigues. Didn’t bother me at all. I was kind of proud of the spots. My uniforms had sergeant stripes on them too. THAT didn’t bother me either.

And what was the name of the shoe polish sold only in Lawton?? In 20 years in the army I never saw it anywhere else. It withstood heat better than Kiwi.

When we (12-64) were there we used floor buffers on the concrete latrine floors. Left a pattern of swirl marks. At some point someone broke a commode with a buffer and we were ordered to stop doing it. My platoon took up a collection and bought an electric hand drill and a cloth buffing pad and just continued turning out the cute little swirls. First morning we did it I was the Platoon Leader and got a harshly worded note to report to the Battery Commander. He chewed on me for quite awhile before I got him to hear my side of the story. He thought we had disobeyed orders and continued to use the big buffer. I think he was pretty impressed, after all.

And yes, we polished the bottoms of ALL our footwear. And had color coded marks on the soles so you could easily tell if the right pair of boots was being worn. Red dots even days, no dots odd days and green dots for rough work like Jarks and field exercises.

Goldfish in the urinals had come and gone before I got there...

I'm proud of my association with Artillery OCS. I have even had dreams about going through it again at my present age ... not exactly nightmares but pretty odd.

I can't believe nobody remembers the shoe polish. It was more important to my class than pogy bait and harder to get. It was not for sale in the PX so either you had to know about it before hand and bring it on board with you or somebody had to earn a weekend pass and buy that ... and the pancakes of course.

**James M. Taylor: 1-65**

Nellie had a lot of iterations over the several years I spent at OCS. Classes would sometimes purposely vary it; sometimes it just seemed to morph a little. Sometimes, a TAC Officer (ROTC, of course) really wouldn't know the words and ad-libbed. Anyway, here's how I remember it:

***Nellie***

*Nellie had a new dress,  
it was mighty thin  
She asked me how I liked it,  
I answered with a grin  
Why don't you wait 'till the sun shines Nellie,  
And the clouds go drifting by -  
We'll have a good time, Nellie,  
You and I Together  
Down lovers lane we'll wander,  
Sweethearts, you and I  
Why don't you wait 'till the sun shines Nellie, (baby)  
Bye and bye.*

*It's a long way to graduation,  
It's a long way back home.  
It's a long way to graduation  
And the sweetest girl I know;  
So goodbye to Robinson barracks,  
Goodbye to dear old Lawton town;  
It's a long, long way to graduation (tell your mother)  
It's a long way back home.*

I was a "dreaded" TAC officer, having returned to OCS from Fort Hood at the beginning of the build-up. About three weeks before graduation Candidate John Schuetz came to see me to get permission to have his father drop off his car. I told him the parking rules and suggested that when his father arrives, he should check in at headquarters and they'll notify us to get Jon. Well sir, he'd rather not do that. Couldn't he just meet his

father when he arrives? I must have given him a strange look, because he went on to explain that neither he nor his father wanted people on post to know who his father was.

With visions of Mafia floating in my head, I pressed for details. Seems his father was a Major General in the Air Force, and neither one wanted to take advantage of the fact. His father showed up in civvies at the graduation dance, and somehow MG Critz, the post commander found out about it halfway through the evening. He was more than a little hot about having another MG around without being able to make a big “to do” about it.

**Walter B. Huffman: 1-65(R)**

I attended Artillery OCS class 1-65(R), a three-month class for reservists from June-August 1965. My best friend Walker “Nick” Nichols and I were both students at Texas Tech and members of the Texas Army National Guard when our Battery Commander pointed out that the battalion needed officers and this OCS class fit exactly into our college summer break. We were young and adventurous, so we thought, “why not.”

Our class was assigned as Golf Battery in Robinson Barracks, and that was a long low-crawl from the admin building after being stripped of our prized SP-5 rank. Plus, it was a tad hot at Fort Sill that summer! And, as we soon learned, there were a lot of reasons “why not.” Perhaps we were wrong, but it seemed to us in 1-65(R) that we had to do everything the six-month classes were doing -- we just had to do it harder and faster.

As our Battery Commander/Senior Tac Officer, 1LT Guy Hovis said to me, “this is a hell of a way to spend your summer vacation, isn’t it?” Interestingly, Guy Hovis went on to become a music star, appearing for several years with his wife Ralna on the Lawrence Welk show, and I understand he still performs occasionally at Branson, Missouri. Nick and I made it through, JARKs and all, we graduated and were commissioned in the Texas National Guard.

Nick eventually retired from the USAR as a Lieutenant Colonel. I entered active duty in 1968 after graduating from Texas Tech, served as a Battery Commander (C 5/4 FA,) in Vietnam, and then I was selected for and attended Law School under the Funded Legal Education Program. Thus, my last 27 years in the Army were served as a Judge Advocate, culminating in my selection as the Judge Advocate General of the Army.

Despite the hardships of OCS (my Dad, a WWII Army Air Corps OCS grad correctly stated that he would not have stayed in OCS another week if they had offered to make him a Major). Nick and I treasured our OCS experience and the value that experience added to our lives and our futures. We were, and I am, proud to be an Artillery OCS graduate and I am certainly honored to have been selected for the Hall of Fame.

**Joseph C. Lausier: 2-65**

I was a graduate of 2-65 when there were only 6 batteries there. I remember first bringing back a rock from MB-4 to make the hill a little smaller the next time I ran up it. The others in Charlie battery also started to bring back rocks and piled them up outside the barracks. I guess the tradition grew thereafter. I don’t know if earlier classes did this, but nobody else was doing it when I started it.

I went up that hill 28 times, and brought back a good-sized rock each time, to put on my MB 4 rock pile. I met General Jark once; He was a big guy... 6' 5" tall.

I seem to remember wearing the round OCS patch on our fatigues for like a couple of weeks and then we took them off and started wearing the brass OCS tabs on the collar.

I remember on our E&E our small group chose to take a route just inside the fenced off impact area which, of course, was out of bounds. This avoided all the roads which, of course, were the sites of ambushes. We didn't run into anyone.

The last half of our E&E route was via the hills/ridgeline where we sacked out on a rock and observed, awaiting a decent arrival time at the lake area. We avoided all roads and were never intercepted. There were guys who walked back to the OCS area that night.

### **Charles A. Ray: 3-65**

Nearly 45 years ago (September 1964) I stepped off a bus at the terminal at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and into a maelstrom of yelling and frenetic activity, the likes of which I had never seen. I was reporting from my unit in Augsburg, Germany to Class 3-65, Field Artillery Officer Candidate School.

Green tabbed middleclassmen (of course, I didn't know what they were called at that time, and at that time of evening after a bus ride from New Jersey, they were just uniformed devils) were screaming at us from all sides; "Get in formation!" "Grab your bags!" "What are you, a bunch of sissies?" These guys made the harassment I remembered from basic training seem not so bad. Somehow, they got us (I believe there were about 16 - 20 new candidates on that particular bus) organized and marched off to our barracks. Much of that first evening is now a blur, but one incident sticks out in my mind. I can remember it as if it was yesterday and have even used it in a book I wrote about communication.

Here's what I remember. After getting to our barracks and being assigned bunks, we went about the business of organizing our spaces; getting foot lockers and clothing lockers arranged just so and making sure our bunks were military tight and our boots were spit shined to a high gloss. All the while we were trying to get this done; the red tabbed upperclassman assigned to our barracks was lecturing us on all that was expected of us in the coming days. I had the bunk closest to the exit, so I became his training aid. Whenever he wanted to make a point, he would poke a part of my body with the swagger stick he carried (I believe they were still permitted in those days - but permitted or not, he had one). He began to explain how we were to mark our combat boots. "A precisely drawn red dot with fingernail polish in the center of the instep." As he spoke he tapped his swagger stick on the top of my foot. My entire attention was focused on that stick; tap, tap, right on the top of my foot. You can probably guess what comes next - the next morning when he came to inspect, he looked at my boots first. And, there right on the top of each boot, right at the point where he was tapping, was a precisely drawn red dot.

That incident taught me the power of non-verbal communication better than any classroom demonstration. I heard his words, but my mind followed the cues of his actions. I painted the dot where he tapped, because my mind took that as where he 'really' meant for the dot to be. After that morning, it was all uphill for me. Thankfully, laughing was prohibited in our barracks, or I might have also had burst ear drums as well.

**Lynn P. Alexander: 4-65**

Before I went to OCS, I was a bandsman for 7 years. I never quit playing and now have joined a nearby community band. One of the French horn players, named Marvel, asked me when I had attended, and when I told him October 1964 - April 1965, he said, "My dad was the Assistant Commandant during that time". In my wildest dreams, I would not have believed that, after 46 years, I would run into anyone from that era, much less LTC Marvel's son. He had passed away 3 years ago and his son played Taps at the funeral.

It is amazing, but if we put a uniform on our Jim Marvel, who happens to be an Orthopedic Surgeon now, he could pass as Colonel Marvel's twin. Jim told me that his dad had once been fined by General Patton who caught him driving his own jeep.

Jim, a college student, was once visiting his father who asked him if he thought he could make a JARK march. He said, "Sure" and joined one, sans weapon and proper candidate attire, only to be accosted by a TAC Officer. The officer started to chew on him, until he asked him his name. When he heard, "Jim Marvel," the officer asked if he was related to Colonel Marvel, then sort of faded into the scenery when he got the answer. Don't know if you ever ran into him, but he was someone to avoid, be you a Candidate or Junior Officer.

**Jon C. Schreyach: 4-65**

I was in Basic Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky in November of 1963, and standing in a line when a sergeant asked the group if anyone wanted to apply to try to go to OCS. I asked what that is and was told that it is a school program that you have to be selected to attend and if you are accepted and pass the course of instruction, you get to be an officer. Having experienced some of the downside of basic training, I then asked if officers do KP. When the sergeant said "No," I said, "Where do I sign?"

Then I pretty much forgot about it except for being given a series of tests on math, English, and general knowledge. I seem to remember that these took place over several days.

The next thing I remember is being summoned to the basic training Company Commander's Office where 2LT Dabney, himself a recent graduate of The Benning School for Boys (Infantry OCS) informed me that I had been accepted and was going to Field Artillery OCS at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. The implication was that I had been chosen for Field Artillery because my math scores were good, but I don't know if that is really so or not. But, true to his branch, LT Dabney also posited that it was a good thing that I was going to Field Artillery because I wasn't tough enough for the Infantry.

Well, I was eventually sent to Fort Sill for Advanced Individual Training (AIT) as a "gun bunny" and after training stayed in my AIT battery as what was known as an "OCS Hold Over." The implication being that we holdovers were to stay in place until a slot opened in an upcoming OCS class.

I waited but nothing happened regarding OCS, and I was eventually sent across post to join the 6th Battalion, 14th Field Artillery Regiment which was then a 175 mm SP Gun unit. There I OJTD as an Artillery Surveyor in the Battalion Survey Section.

One day, I got a call to report to the First Sergeant who, I found out was highly upset with me because I was supposed to have reported to OCS two days earlier and some Sergeant Major was all over him about my being a “no show.” Of course, all of this was portrayed as all my fault even though no one ever bothered to tell me about reporting to Robinson Barracks.

So, because I was already late, the First Sergeant and the Battalion duty NCO dispatched me to OCS in the Battalion Commander’s jeep. Then, when I showed up at Robinson Barracks in HQ6--a LTC’s vehicle, I took a lot of heat from the assembled upperclassmen about me arriving late and in an officer’s jeep, indicating that maybe I considered myself “Too good for their school.”

My only problem settling in was caused by a shortage of time, caused by my late arrival and the fact that I had just been promoted to PFC---so I had to spend most of the first night with a razor blade carefully cutting my brand-new chevrons off all my uniforms. But it all got done and I survived.

As far as what I did in OCS is concerned, like everyone else, I tried to maintain a low profile, help contemporaries who were in “Sweat” (leadership) positions and accept their help when it was my turn. Academically, I did best in the Target Acquisition/Survey portion probably because I had been a surveyor in 6/14 FA. Gunnery was not my strong suit.

### **“OCS Candidates Tangle with Aggressors”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Thursday May 6, 1965)***

Ninety-five graduating OCS candidates got their baptism in fire - blank fire - this week. The candidates who will graduate Tuesday, were airlifted by H-37 Mojave helicopters to the Blue Beaver Region of the West Range, where they participated in an overnight escape and evasion exercise.

The problem began about 5 p.m. Tuesday under cloudy threatening skies, when the candidates grouped to storm an aggressor held hill. They had faced fierce aggressor fire while disembarking from the aircraft.

The aggressors, armed with M-14 rifles and machine guns loaded with blanks, moved back to emplacements on the hill after the landing operation concluded. The candidates, armed with M-14 rifles stormed and held the hill. The candidates then formed small groups and, under the cover of darkness, infiltrated to a command post about six miles to the northeast.

Those candidates captured by the aggressors were held as prisoners of war. After capture, the POW’s attempted escape to continue their mission.

The exercise, conducted by Lt. Joel Boyd and Lt. Larry Cox of the OCS tactical staff, concluded at 6 a.m. Wednesday. Supplying the 55 aggressors was the 3rd Target Acquisition Battalion, 26th Artillery. Also on hand for the exercise were Col. Floyd D. Gattis, OCS commandant; Lt. John McDermott, assistant S-3 at the school, and Lt. Earl Robinson and Lt. Paul Habiger of the 3rd of the 26th.

The candidates will spend the rest of this week preparing for graduation, which will include a 10:45 a.m. Saturday parade at the OCS parade ground. Among those expected to attend is Maj. Gen. Harry H. Critz, post commander.

### **Edward R. Hines: 5-65**

My memories of OCS are vivid and enduring. From the moment my friend and I checked in with 55 pound duffle bags, wondering why upperclassmen looked at us like raw meat – to the infamous Jark March up MB 4 – to an early morning callisthenic when the battalion commander was told by a TAC Officer to drop and give him 50 in front of the entire battalion – to the elation experienced when I got supernumerary twice, thus not having to serve as fire guard in the middle of the night – to singing, both to and from Snow Hall to the chorus at graduation comprised of our entire OCS class with me directing (I was a music person) -- to the pride I felt when the CAPT told me that I made the 2nd highest score on the gunnery final exam – and, finally, the feeling of happiness yet sadness when at graduation I threw my hat into the air and realized that it was all over, OCS made an indelible impression on me.

Two of the more humorous stories, however, involved candy bars. We called it “pogey bait” (check the definition on Internet about the Marines). One night my friend and I coincidentally were identified as potential fire guard people. I got supernumerary because of shouting out orders louder than anyone else, and didn’t have to serve as fire guard, walking around Robinson Barracks in the middle of the night, but my friend did. He had the extra key to my car which was parked just to the east of our barracks. The trunk was loaded with candy bars, which periodically we’d tap into with other friends. Brad did his fire guard duty. A week or two later when I snuck out to the car to retrieve a candy bar or two, I opened the lid to find no candy bars. Brad had eaten them all or gave them away. This was a genuine crisis. I was mad as hell. It almost ended our long-standing friendship (we had served together prior to OCS), and both of us returned to what at that time was called the Counter-Intelligence Corps (later called Military Intelligence) after OCS. Of course, in time it blew over, and our friendship continued.

My favorite story which to this day our adult children ask me to retell – involved candy bars. All three OCS classes (upper, middle, and lower) were scheduled to go to the firing range to qualify with the M-16 rifle. Upperclassmen rode out in style while middleclassmen and lowerclassmen marched. I was a lowerclassman and was told in no uncertain terms that lowerclass were expected to provide candy bars for their big brothers and others. I was determined to set some kind of a perverse record for taking candy cars out to the rifle range. But, how to transport them out there? In our sleeping bags? In some kind of a container? We had no such things. I got an inspiration; put them in my pants legs, from the bottom where the “blouse” (an elastic band placed around the top of your ankle to secure your pants bottom up to the torso) was at. I stuffed both pant legs with candy bars, making me look like John Candy in an SNL sketch. I had so many candy bars in there, it was difficult to walk but somehow, I did and was helped along by my classmates who knew if I made it out to the rifle range, they’d have candy, too. Several miles later, we arrived at the rifle range. While getting the sleeping bags and gear in order, I removed the elastic bands from my pants, but no candy bars fell out. Why? They were fused to my legs because of the heat generated by my body while marching! Still, candy was a valued commodity, so my classmates and I cut the bars off my body (they had



melted in the wrappers), separated them as best we could, and I became the most popular lowerclassman in OCS!!

As these OCS Memories are finalized, recognition is given to OCS 5-65 Graduate Rafael S. Windham. Ray was instrumental in keeping track of many of our OCS 5-65 graduates. He and his wife visited on their way to a high school alumni event in Chicago. He passed away November 12, 2009 in New Brockton, AL.

### **James E. Marrs: 5-65**

I had finished college in May of 1964 and joined the Army under a recruitment plan called College Option OCS. You were not guaranteed a commission, but you were guaranteed an opportunity to attend OCS. In July 1964 I found myself in Basic Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. After Basic Training I reported to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for my second 8 weeks of training and went to an advanced training course in Fire Direction. It seemed the Army felt many OCS candidates had issues with Fire Direction. Our entire second 8 weeks of training was in a Battery made up of College Options recruits. We had some very good instruction in the operation of the FDC as well as our time in the Battery Area which was very intense and stressful. The training officers and NCOs were getting us ready for our time at OCS.

In late Fall we all entered OCS as a group but most of us were assigned to different Batteries. I was in Foxtrot Battery. Most of us were in pretty good physical shape because of our prior 16 weeks of good old Army physical training. We were very blessed in that in Lowerclass you ran everywhere you went. Our class was nearing the end of our Lowerclass phase when the School shut down for Christmas break. Honestly, I was not sure I was going to survive Lowerclass, but I did. Getting to go home for Christmas was a real blessing.

Upon our return from the Christmas Break we moved on to the Middleclass phase. In my first week in Middleclass my leadership assignment was that of First Sergeant. I thought I was back in Lowerclass again. I was trying to operate on very limited sleep and staying awake in class was a real challenge. I remember once an instructor threw an eraser at me to wake me up. I ducked just in time and it hit the candidate behind me. Another time that week I fell asleep standing up while we were being instructed on how to operate a tracked vehicle. The instructor had mercy on me that day and let me sit down. I slept until the class was over. My evaluation for that leadership position was not real good but my TAC Officer was an Arkansas graduate as I was, and he wrote me up pretty good.

The regular Army First Sergeant liked me because I got some structural things accomplished in the Battery command center. Thanks to my Little Brother - he pulled me through that week. My Big Brother was Hell on Wheels. He was a regular Army guy and very demanding. He probably would have liked for me to leave the program. His favorite comment was "You have all this book learning, but you don't have any common sense." He resented the fact that I was a college graduate and he was not. We met later in Germany and he apologized for being so hard on me.

While I was Battery First Sergeant, I failed to set up a duty roster for the Upperclassmen to monitor study hall. I caught hell over that mistake. I thought I was going to have to go before the OCS Commander to explain that mistake. My TAC Officer came to my aid on

that mistake also. I had to do 50 push-ups every day for him for covering me on that mistake. I did have to give up my Razorback Car Tag to him for helping me out.

Then it was on to Upperclass. What a relief! When we could get an overnight pass on weekends, we would go to the Hotel Lawtonian downtown to let off some steam. Several of us would share a room and share a bed or sleep on the floor. There was also a great steak house in Lawton that we would frequent when we were on pass. I did make it to graduation. My Dad, Mom and my older sister came to my graduation. My family was in the service station business in Arkansas and my dad closed the business for one day, so the family could attend my graduation. Many of their customers thought surely there had been a death in the family. No, just some proud parents that their son was receiving a commission as an officer in the United States Army.

A brief comment on the training at the Artillery School. The instruction always was very good. My primary Gunnery instructor was a Marine 1LT. He was an Annapolis graduate and chose to take his commission in the Marines rather than the Navy. He made Captain before our class graduated. His name was Sullivan. An Irishman with a little temper and a strong work ethic. He demanded perfection from all of us in his section. Obviously being an Annapolis graduate he was very intelligent and knew his Artillery and Military Tactics. He loved teaching and was a great inspiration to all of us to do our very best.

One day we were on an FO shoot out in the training area. The Fort Sill Commanding General was subject to showing up in the training area especially when he knew the Officer Candidates were training. LT Sullivan always instructed our class that if the General showed up to continue our training as if we were not being observed. To our backs that morning we heard a vehicle drive up and LT Sullivan snapped to attention and said, "Good Morning Sir." We heard the reply, "Carry On." LT Sullivan would shout out the target and the class would calculate the coordinates and prepare the Fire Mission. While the General was observing three candidates were called on to call in the Fire Mission. All were different targets. I was one of the candidates that was called on to adjust fire. The first rounds came out and sparks flew off the target. I followed the school solution. Bracket the target and fire for effect. When each one of us were finished the General was asked to critique and evaluate our performance. When he came to me the General said, "You followed the textbook solution but in reality, you could have fired for effect on your second round. Good job Candidate." The General also complemented LT Sullivan on his instruction ability. The Army had great respect for these Marine officers who were instructors in the School.

Upon leaving OCS I was assigned to a 155 mm mechanized unit in Germany. I felt very confident in my ability as an Artillery officer because of my training at OCS. We had just over 90 officers who graduated in Class 5-65 and by the grace of God we only lost 2 of our classmates in Viet Nam. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity I was given to attend OCS. My training there made me a stronger, more competent person, a better Military officer and a successful businessman.

### **Vandevanter E. Scott: 5-65**

After graduating from college, I was drafted and was sent to Fort Leonard Wood for basic training and then to OCS Prep at Fort Sill. On Friday afternoon, 11 Sept. 1964, after having completed OCS Prep, CPT Fairman (the CO) and LT Kelley (the XO), congratulated

us on having completed OCS Prep and advised us that although we were off-duty for the next 48 hours, they stressed: 1) that we were to report to OCS Headquarters at 1700 hours on Sunday for induction into OCS and: 2) that during those next 48 hours we were to remain within a 50 mile radius of Fort Sill.

Well, you see, on Saturday the Missouri Tigers were playing the Oklahoma Sooners, at Oklahoma (well outside of the perimeter that the Captain and the Lieutenant had described); - but, I thought - no one will ever know. So, I took a Greyhound bus to Oklahoma City, then asked the first cab driver if he knew where the Sigma Nu house was in Norman; he replied, "Are you a Sigma Nu?" "Yes" "I am too and this ride is free." When we got to the house, everyone was drinking Coors Beer from cans, the same size as the cans of Red Bull are today. A Dad, of one of the actives, was a Coors Beer distributor and since that size was not selling, he had given his son a full truckload.

Saturday was a very hot and humid day; especially in a woolen Army uniform. We went, with dates, to the game and to be more comfortable, I shed the black tie - then the woolen jacket - rolled up my sleeves - and pulled my shirttails out. I was impressed with the game, on both sides of the ball - the shoulder pads were popping - almost sounding like firecrackers, Then early in the third quarter, I could sense that someone was staring at me. Instinctively, I looked about 8 rows down the stands and saw a very serious/stern LT Kelley staring up at me. CPT Fairman (a Mizzou Graduate) and his new bride were standing next to LT Kelley. LT Kelley told CPT Fairman where I was, CPT Fairman looked up at me, then said something to LT Kelley and then LT Kelley waved a message that I interpreted as "we didn't see you." That episode probably only lasted 5 to 10 seconds, but it seemed much longer, at the time.

One morning, as we came off the buses at Snow Hall, the OCS Executive Officer had the entire lower class in a formation and standing at attention. He proceeded to let us know, what a sorry and sad lot of humanity, that he thought all of us were. "Lower than whale shit on the bottom of the ocean" ... I am going to drive you out of my school etc, etc. The longer that he spoke the closer to Marlboro red, he became. Finally, he said "until further notice, the snack bar, the PX and the candy machines are off-limits to the lowerclass!" I do not recall that ukase ever being lifted: (apparently his opinion of us never improved).

Well, one day another lowerclassman said "Scott, there is no one on the second floor, so those candy machines are available." So, since I had a few minutes, I went to the second floor and he was right, not a soul on the second floor. I dropped two quarters in the machine and got two bags of Planters Peanuts. I slid them into my shirt and headed for the stairs. Coming up those stairs were two upperclassmen and one of them was the XO, who had put the candy machines off- limits. He yelled "Candidate Scott, post over here"! "Sir, Candidate Scott posting as ordered, Sir!" "Candidate, have you been hitting my candy machines?" I paused and thought (there is no way he could have seen me use that machine) and then (I know what my father's answer would be) "Sir, yes sir." Then the XO said take a look south, Candidate. Looking down I could read Plan on one of the bags of peanuts, looking up, I saw the XO smiling broadly and heard him say, "Post out, candidate." "Sir, posting out, Sir!"

### **“Sill OCS Drew Many Applicants” (March 1965)**

Almost five times as many men as could be accommodated applied for the special Officer Candidate Course for U.S. Army Reserve enlisted men to be conducted at the U.S. Army Artillery and Missile School at Fort Sill March 12-May 28.

A total of 567 men applied through the Continental Army Command for the 105 spaces available.

### **John Kalokerinos: OA-65R**

#### **“Red Leg Toe Nails”**

The night before graduation three CATO's (Candidate Assistant TAC Officers) entered our barracks and ordered all candidates to remove their boots and socks and to come to attention upon their footlockers. On “Eyes Front” the CATOs opened bottles of red nail polish and began painting our toenails to the “tune of” welcome men you are all now officially lifelong Red Legs of OCS.

The next day, after graduation and a flight to my girlfriend's home in California, imagine the look on her face when she saw my toe nails. Of course, the next few days were spent at the beach, and yes, I had a lot of explaining to do about my “Red Leg Toe Nails.” It was only many years later at an OCS reunion that I found out that we candidates of GOLF Battery had been **had** by the famous CATO Gang.

### **Manfred Groth: 8-65**

My motivation for going to OCS: I was a SP5 attending the one-year Vietnamese language course at DLI, Monterey, California. A classmate was a 1LT who was a graduate of the Infantry OCS at Ft Benning. His first assignment was as an infantry platoon leader supporting the Artillery School at Fort Sill. Thus, he experienced one OCS and saw how the other OCS was run. Anyway, he got on my case at DLI about making a career as an officer instead of an NCO. My argument was that I was not a yeller and screamer - a requirement for getting through Infantry OCS. He explained that yelling and screaming was only 50% of the Artillery OCS experience; the other 50% was academics. Further, Artillery OCS required the “yellers” and the “academicians” to cooperate in order to graduate; very few Candidates had both qualities. Lastly, this LT (I do wish I could remember his name) pointed out that Artillery OCS was organized like West Point: the three classes were living and working together and were not separate as in Infantry OCS.

I put in the papers for OCS, went through the interviews, etc, and was accepted for Class 8-65, starting in February 1965. I was married at the time and settled my family in Lawton before reporting in to class. That first day was truly culture shock, but I remembered one piece of advice: “Most of the harassment is stupid, but don't you dare smirk or laugh.” I guess I got used to the yelling and screaming pretty quick. I was in either B-1 or B-2; I met my Big-Big Brother (Upperclass) and Big Brother (Middleclass), but I don't remember their names. I rarely met my Big-Big Brother. I do recall having more to do with my Big Brother, especially explaining some gunnery math to him (“cooperate and graduate”).

I'll leave it to others to recount our daily lives at OCS. It became pretty routine: life in the house, classes, the occasional pass on a weekend, and the Jarks. I would say that B Battery lucked out with the quality of TAC officers and NCOs. The 1SGT was a gruff old

bird but decent. Our platoon leader was a VPI (Virginia Polytechnic Institute) graduate, and I believe he had to force himself to be a rough cadre. He was OK. I certainly recall that C Battery had a bunch of jerks for TACs who bordered on sadistic. Many of us felt sorry for those Candidates. A Battery TACs were OK - somewhere between B and C Batteries. I don't recall any "bad apples" among the Artillery School instructors; they were certainly qualified, and I think they appreciated our motivation when compared to the ROTC 2LTs they got for the Basic course. My section's "regular" gunnery instructor (last name started with a "Z," Ziegler?) was certainly a good man.

The "make or break" classes/tests were rough. The first block of instruction was surveying. The introduction was a one or two day "review" of trigonometry. If you had trig in high school (I did, about six years earlier), then the review and surveying went OK. If you didn't have it, there was no way you were going to pick it up in one or two days. I think we lost the biggest number of classmates after that surveying exam. Of course, from the Army's viewpoint, why spend the time trying to teach you gunnery if you couldn't handle surveying. I presume our class was typical: in round numbers, we started with 120 and graduated 90. Besides surveying, we lost classmates along the way for any and all reasons. One of the dumber ones was a house classmate of mine who, in Upperclass, was caught cheating on some mundane drill and ceremonies written test. He just felt under stress to get through the exam and - boom - he was out. He came by the house a couple days later wearing his SP5 patches. Sad...

Jarks were an interesting punishment tour. Your demerits during the week were cumulative. A certain number equaled one Jark, which was held on Saturday afternoon. Your status (Lower, Middle, or Upperclass) affected how much gear you had to wear on this forced march/double time trip from the OCS area up the hill MB4, and back. I must have kept my head down as I was only docked once in each level for one Jark. The last one, in Upperclass, was deferred due to the heat (Oklahoma in the summer). For punishment, we had to clear some weeds along a street while being protected by tree shade.

Meals in the mess hall, while healthy, were literally a pain. Each table had all three classes. Lowerclass was supervised by the Middleclass. Upperclass had overall supervision. However, the Upperclassman at the head of the table (chosen by who grabbed the chair first) had the discretion to control how much or little supervision would be meted out at the meal. Certainly at noon meal, there was little time for fun and games (all needed time to prepare for afternoon classes), and when I had the chair, I usually gave the table "free meal" with the admonishment to the Middleclass to insure the Lowerclassmen kept their feet and elbows off the table.

A way for a Lowerclassman to avoid mealtime harassment was to volunteer (before entering the mess hall) to be a dining room orderly. While you were busy bringing plates and bowls of food from the kitchen to the tables, when this was done you ate at a separate table without much trouble.

While harassment continued to graduation day, it did decline as you progressed through the class levels. A common saying among Fort Sill graduates was that the most powerful position in the Army was that of a senior (last four weeks) Upperclassman in OCS. Minus the TACs, you were God! And then you graduated and were just another 2LT.

Besides the harassment within our battalion (A - C batteries), there was the harassment from the 2d Battalion (D - F batteries). There wasn't that much contact between the two battalions, but enough to be unpleasant. In turn, there was a USAR/NG OCS class that started when we were in Upperclass. I guess we were not so reserved toward them.

One of the many unpleasantries within a class was the constant evaluation we had to do of each other within each house. Someone always had to be at the bottom of your list. One classmate and I irritated each other throughout Upperclass, and we consistently placed each other at the bottom of the house class evaluations. Our TACs certainly noticed this and let it go.

When I entered OCS, candidates were able to apply for direct commissions into other Army branches if they had the qualifications. Based on my enlisted experience I requested commissioning into MI... and was approved by DA. I was notified of the approval by a small handwritten note from the Battery 1SGT. I believe the approval came when I was in Middleclass; that piece of paper remained on my desk blotter for all to see until I graduated. I never caught grief from this paper. When I was in Viet Nam, I heard from later Fort Sill graduates that the OCS Commandant was unhappy with the high number (to him) of graduates getting commissioned into other branches. I have no idea if he was able to get any action on this.

The greatest week at OCS was "Happy Battery," the final week when we were virtually assured of graduation. The week was mainly spent in out-processing and preparing for our graduation and future assignments. In our case, while we were in Upperclass, we luckily had time in our houses to listen to President Johnson order the 1st Air Cav Division to Viet Nam. We knew then where most of us would wind up...sooner or later. In my case, graduation was on 3 August, and in late November I was on a troopship to Saigon.

### **"Safety Precautions for OCS Wives" From the *Artillery OCS Archives***

The following has been compiled for OCS wives based on a lecture from the Lawton Police Department. This is NOT meant to alarm or scare you--merely to inform you, so that you will be able to effectively handle yourself should something come up. The vast majority of women living alone during their husband's tour of duty in OCS do not have problems with obscene phone calls, etc.

1. In case of any trouble requiring police or other emergency action you should call 911. Your phone call is immediately locked in, even if you are unable to talk, so the Lawton Police Department will be able to trace your call.
2. Always lock your car--even if you are in it. Many posts will issue a DR for leaving an unattended car unlocked. When returning to your car, check the back seat for uninvited passengers.
3. At night and when you will be away from home--make sure your windows and doors are locked. It is a good idea to close the curtains or blinds at night. Also, it is worth the few pennies to leave at least one light burning while you are out at night. In addition,

porch lights should be left on, especially when you are away at night or expecting a visitor. Most burglars and prowlers will not bother well-lit homes.

4. Do not answer your door, especially at night, without checking through a window or calling through the door to see who your visitor is. If a stranger should want to use your phone (a common line given) ask for the number through the door and place the call yourself—do not let strangers in.

5. Salesmen in the city of Lawton must have a permit to sell door-to-door. This is a three-day permit identifying the salesman. If a salesman appears without one, call the Lawton Police Department. Do not let the salesman in your home. If you are continuously bothered by one particular company, report this to the Lawton Police Department or to the City Clerk. The City Clerk Issues the permits and may be contacted at 357-6100. After making your complaint to the City Clerk you may also call the Chamber of Commerce at 355-3541.

6. It is a wise idea to list your utilities, phone, etc. in your husband's name. Do not include OC before his name--merely list things as John Jones, NOT as OC John Jones. This also applies to mailboxes in apartment houses,

7. It is not necessary that you tell people your husband is in OCS-especially people running "surveys", etc.

8. The Lawton Police Department has 15 special marking devices that may be checked out to mark your appliances, TV, radio, etc. Items that are marked in some manner are much easier for the police department to recover, should they become lost or stolen here or elsewhere.

9. If you should receive an obscene or annoying phone call, inform the Lawton Police Department so that it will be recorded on their books. Do not become alarmed, angry, or scared during these calls - oftentimes the caller, is interested in your reaction.... don't give one--HANG UP.

### **Al Harvard: 8-65**

#### **"Night of the Prowler" by Dee Harvard**

With Al and Geary in middleclass, Kathy McCabe and I left Augusta, Georgia in May 1965 and moved to Lawton, Oklahoma. Geary and Al were cube-mates and ironically Kathy worked for my father, a Colonel at Fort Gordon. The trip was without incident until I got to Lawton. Who ever heard of two 24th streets? Streets, drives, avenues.... all too confusing. Anyway, we settled, Kathy pregnant with Shelly and me with 3, 4 and 5 year old boys. For some reason our apartment was a gathering spot for other OC wives. I'd really need help remembering their names, but I need no help remembering the *Night of the Prowler*.

During the next few weeks we were plagued with a prowler. He frequented the area and became a frightening peeping-tom. Pretty soon our apartment was filled with OC wives. It gave us a feeling of safety, but unwittingly fueled his deviation.

I remember the girls chatter as I lay with my boys. The moon flooded the room and gave me a perfect light to see these angels sleeping. I was thinking how frightening it would be if the peeper showed up. And before I could gasp for air, like a bolt of fear from a Stephen King novel, there he was framed perfectly in the orb of the moon. My scream sent him running. The chatter in the kitchen turned to a deafening silence as I whizzed past the girls waving a .380 automatic pistol and bolted out the door. In the street, in a crouch, holding this cannon, I wondered what the hell I was going to do. I looked both ways for the pervert, but suddenly the lights of an approaching car came to a screeching halt blinding me. The driver must have had to restart his heart looking into what must have looked like the muzzle of a 105.

The police interview was over quickly and we wondered how long this would continue. In fact the OCS staff in concert with the Lawton police conducted a stakeout and in a couple of days caught him. He was a 2nd LT from one of the tenant commands. Colonel Gattis, the School Commandant, counseled Al on the wisdom of his wife wheedling a pistol in the city. In reflection I probably would have done nothing different. After all....it worked.

## **Al Harvard: 8-65**

### **Arrival**

The 6 months of Officer Candidate School (OCS) was the turning point of my life. I was a staff sergeant (E-6) in Germany and after 8 years enlisted, I started the path to my new career as an officer in the Army, and it was NOT an easy climb.

OCS was arranged in three 2-month sessions, Lowerclass, which is exactly what it sounds like; Middleclass where candidates are Non-Commissioned Officers or sergeants with appropriate leadership training and finally Upperclass who were Candidate Officers. My first day was a horror story. I came into the headquarters in my Class-A uniform proud to show off my staff sergeant stripes carrying my duffle bag. I approached an Upperclassman that greeted me with "What are you smiling at SMACK\*?" BTW Lowerclass was ALWAYS subjected to yelling at by least a 120 db.

"Huh, Wha" I accidently replied.

"That's huh – wha SIR you sorry piece of road dirt. Your job banana nose is to sign this book and look after your wounded buddy there."

"Wounded buddy?"

"Wounded buddy SIR" He shouted. "Can't you see he's dying? Look at his color marble brain." He points to my duffle bag. "If you don't get him to the medic in Alpha-1 in two minutes 18 seconds, he'll die, and you'll be on the bus back to your mama. Now sign in and save his canvass butt"

I grabbed the bag and started out the door.

"What are you doing? Get down maggot meat. You will crawl to your house and BTW, streets are for formations and sidewalks are for upperclass, crawlers use the trench"



Well, there went my new Class-A's. And this was day one of zero week. Only 26 more weeks to go. You think it would get better. Two weeks into school I was summoned by the Upperclass to hang around and smoke & joke. They wanted to recognize me as a former staff sergeant. I went and reported, and they were VERY literal. I ended up hanging by a rafter with feet off the ground and they stuffed several cigarettes in my mouth, lit them and told me to tell a joke. I fell back on the only one that came to mind.

“Charles Dickens walks into a bar and orders a Martini. The bar tender asks, Oliver Twist?” That got a laugh, but it was wrong to have succeeded...guess what they wanted more of? Still hanging around.

### **Smack**

I heard this expression throughout school. Never knew what it meant until, on a motorcycle trip, I visited USAF Academy in 2002, 37 years later and from a freshman cadet no less. He said it meant Soldier Minus Attitude, Courage, Knowledge.

### **A Satisfying Event**

In Germany, my application for Officer Candidate School (OCS) was approved in January 1965. As I signed out of the unit, the First Sergeant, a very horrible person, stuck his head into the car with my wife and 3 boys aged 3, 4 and 5 and said: “Harvard, you’ll never make it. You’ll be back here in 6 weeks.”

Well 6 months later...not only did I make it, but I graduated as a Distinguished Military Graduate. My first job was commanding officer of a Basic Training Company at Fort Bliss, Texas. At that time, I was the only 2LT as a commanding officer at Fort Bliss. I was walking with two of my drill sergeants to the PX when who should be coming out, but that horrible First Sergeant. He recognized me and did salute, but his arm must have been made of lead. I offered him a special one-finger salute in return. We each continued without speaking a word.

### **The Wonderful World of Jarks**

4.2 miles at double-time with a M-14, a canteen and of course combat boots. These usually were a punishment throughout our 6 months. I do not remember if Upperclass ever JARK'd except to accompany those that did. I don't know what our class individual record was, but I have a picture of Tom Kowen III standing next to a sign displaying 147 miles. That's 35 JARKS. Now the embarrassing good news. I did 3 JARKS. The first one everyone did. The next two were for obvious stupid mistakes I made, but I don't know if I learned my lessons. For some reason I never JARK'd again. I think I had a genie in my Magic Box.

### **Total Surprise**

On 6 July 1965, our class became the junior graduating class, but Red Birds none the less. We would graduate on 3 August. The ceremony was very formal and everyone there was proud and excited. I was at attention like all the troops as they announced names for the Battalion Staff. I was not paying attention because I did not really know them. Then I heard “Candidate Albert Harvard, front and center.” I almost fell over. Recomposed, I marched up in place and was announced as the Assistant S-4. I had no idea whatsoever that I was in the running for a staff officer. This was a life-time total surprise. I was 26 and throughout my growing-up years three times I had a surprise birthday party, but I

broke the code on all of them before the “big surprise.” This announcement knocked me off my tracks. Proud and happy, we assembled in the new quarters for the staff officers, I think next to the cleaners. My supervisor, S-4 said: “Now that you’re an officer we go by first names.” He was sitting down at a desk and I was standing in front of him. He went on; “I call you Al, you call me.....sir!” And thus, reality set in, but it was wonderful.

### **Gary Meyer: 8-65**

Very few will ever understand the bond that is born between friend and comrade. Eight of us shared one roof for 180 days. There were others that passed through the ranks but we started and finished together. I doubt if any of us ever thought that we would see the dawn of graduation day that August 3 back in 1965.

I received a letter from General John M. Shalikashvili in 1997 when I requested that he write a little article for our Class 8-65 newsletter. He told the story about the first night that he spent at Robinson Barracks. He said "After the first day of OCS training, certain that a serious mistake had been made, this officer candidate sneaked out of the barracks after curfew and wandered around for an hour, looking for someone to accept my urgent resignation! Finding no one, I returned to my bunk crestfallen. The next morning at 0400, training began again and things happened too fast to repeat the attempt. Now, 39 years later, that OCS experience is remembered as the beginning of a wonderful professional life leading soldiers and participating in the defense of our great nation."

Although none of us made Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we shared many of the same experiences and probably, like me, had many of the same doubts. I am proud that I served. I am grateful that I had the privilege of sharing 180 days of my life with everyone in 8-65.

### **“Discipline, Confidence Build Officers at OCS”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Sunday April 11, 1965)***

The building blocks for strong leadership are discipline and confidence. This is what is taught at the Officers Candidate School at Fort Sill – discipline and confidence. Sill’s OCS – one of two in the U.S. Army – thrives on discipline and offers candidates plenty of opportunity to build their self-confidence.

You can tell that discipline is strict when you walk through the OCS area known as Robinson Barracks. The walks are well swept, vegetation is neatly trimmed, there is no litter on the grounds. Whenever you spy a candidate, he is in top uniform, shaved and shined. He walks briskly to his destination. When a candidate sees an officer, he stops, salutes and shouts a greeting: “Good Morning, Sir.” At 12:00 noon the greeting changes to “Good Afternoon, Sir.” That’s discipline.

Inside the shiny barracks you see more examples of the tough discipline meted out to the men who want to become Army Officers. Lt. Randy Austin, tactical commander for Alpha Battery at Sill’s OCS, runs a hard battery, with three rigid platoons. Upstairs in each platoon’s barracks live the lowerclass and middleclass candidates. The lowerclass area is designated by blue curtains over the windows and blue towels on the ends of the beds. The middleclass candidates use green towels and curtains. The floors are shiny, and so are the boots which are carefully lined up under each bunk.

Each day the area undergoes two inspections. The first inspection is conducted by the officers of the candidate staff. The second inspection is conducted by officers of the tactical battalion staff.

Downstairs in the barracks is the domain of the upperclass candidates – the Redbirds. Their windows are covered with red curtains and bunks marked with red towels. The area also is inspected twice daily. The upperclassmen have help from “house mice” and “latrine mice” which are actually middleclass candidates, in keeping their areas clean. The upperclassmen also have a dayroom for their use in the barracks. Here are literature, television and record players for what little leisure time they have.

Col. Floyd D. Gattis, OCS Commandant, explains that the candidate’s day is pretty much a full one. He’s normally up at 5:30 a.m. and hits the sack at 10:30 p.m. Through the day, the candidate’s schedule includes physical training, cleaning up his barracks for inspection, two class periods – either in formal class or on a field exercise: two more work periods, and a couple hours of homework. Of course, there are three meal periods that must be squeezed into the schedule.

Col. Gattis said that the course of instruction at OCS includes training in drill and command; physical training; weapons; officer indoctrination; leadership and the Honor Code. That’s only about one-third of the student’s academic load during his 22-week stay at OCS. The rest comes from the Artillery and Missile School, with instruction through the various departments.

What about the candidate who doesn’t keep up with the tough discipline? He goes “Jarking.” The term “Jark” was named after the first commandant of Sill’s OCS, Lt. Gen (ret.) Carl H. Jark. The Jark consists of a round trip-on foot to the top of Medicine Bluff from Robinson Barracks. Lt. Col. Edgar Marvell, assistant commandant at OCS explains that the trip is a 4.2-mile journey, which is assigned as a punishment tour to candidates who have an excessive number of demerits. It must be completed in 55 minutes. Despite the disciplinary nature of the Jark, OCS candidates have turned the trip into another area of competition. The OCS record for a fast Jark is 32 minutes for the 4.2-mile trip. A relay team carried the unit’s guidon to the top of Medicine Bluff and back in 22 minutes.

A major portion of the confidence training administered to OCS students involves physical activities. One of the more interesting aspects of this program is the Leadership Reaction Course. Candidates assemble at a series of wooden stall-like affairs at Craig and Sheridan Roads at Fort Sill and spend several hours struggling through problems designed to test their leadership and ability to work as team members. The course, also designed to toughen the men physically, consists of crossing imaginary rivers with only a few rotting planks or on a single rope; or scaling a vertical wall; or moving equipment to the top of a tower.

Col. Marvel explains that “confidence and poise” are also gained through a program that takes place just a few days before graduation. The men spend nearly a full day at Medicine Bluff for a conference, demonstration and practical exercise in rappelling and stream crossing by use of ropes. Rappelling involves descending the side of a mountain by sliding down a rope from the top of the 90-degree cliff. The stream crossing exercises involve

crawling across a rope suspended over Medicine Creek. The men often get bruised ankles and wet clothing during these exercises.

The rappelling instruction includes three slides down the rocky cliffs of Medicine Bluff. The men first walk to the top of the cliff where safety officers show them how to handle the rope. As the candidate slides down the rope which is partially wrapped around his body, he uses his feet to kick away from the cliff. Another safety officer guides the rope below. After the first slide, the candidate then must crawl the rope to get across Medicine Creek. Once this mission is completed, he repeats the procedure two more times, rappelling from a higher level each time. Crawling across the rope may not seem hard but judging from the number of candidates who splash out of the creek – it isn't easy.

### **“Sill to Gain 3,795 In Training Step-Up”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Friday, September 17, 1965)***

Fort Sill by mid-January is expected to have an in-residence increase of approximately 3,795 officers and enlisted men over the number presently stationed here, authorities announced today.

There were 22,600 stationed here last June 30.

The increase results from President Johnson's recent decision to double the draft and increase the Army's manpower strength.

**Basic Training to Soar:** The Army expects its basic training to soar to 408,000 recruits this fiscal year compared to 231,000 recruits given basic training in the fiscal year ending July 1.

The Army said that because of the Viet Nam crisis, the Army is being expanded by 235,000 men to a strength of 1,200,000.

In-residence increase here will include approximately 1,095 candidates in the Officer School, expected by mid-January; 2,000 in advanced individual training in the Artillery Training Center, expected by mid-November; 300 more cadre for OCS, and 200 for expansion of The Artillery and Missile School, information officers said. The expansion will also include an increase of 19 civilian employees at Fort Sill.

**Troop Strength Was Down:** In-residence population means the number stationed here at any given time. On January 1, 1965 authorities said, “At year end (1964) Sill's troop strength was rated at 27,715, an increase over the 24,000 in December 1963 and nearly 7,000 more than the 21,000 figure for December of 1962.”

Fort Sill's increase is part of the national expansion in Army training which will handle twice as many soldiers, the Department of the Army announced in Washington.

**Two New Centers:** The action includes the establishment of new reception and training centers at Fort Benning, Ga., and Fort Bliss, Tex. It provides an input of 408,000 active Army trainees during the fiscal year 1966 – an increase of 210,000 over last fiscal year.

At Fort Sill during this fiscal year, which began July 1, the Army Training Center now expects to turn out 4,500 more advanced trainees than planned before the President's announcement. Artillery and Missile School specialist training and the Officer Candidate School both will increase.

**Advanced Training:** The Training Center at Sill provides advanced individual training to soldiers in cannon artillery, rockets and missiles. Since the soldier's basic training of eight weeks takes place at other installations, it will be mid-November before any increase is seen at Fort Sill.

The added number of trainees in ATC will require an increase of 300 instructor and administrative personnel, from 1,400 to about 1,700.

Part of the ATC expansion will be an increase in Artillery batteries. Three new batteries will augment the present 18. Each battery will be increased from the present three platoons to a 4-platoon battery of about 230 men each. Two fire direction platoons will be added.

**OCS Will Expand:** The Army announced last week that the Artillery Officer Candidate School will expand from the present 1,200 candidates to an input of 2,700 during fiscal year 1966.

The largest number of candidates to graduate in one year since the school reopened in 1951 graduated in 1952. In that year, accelerated 22-week courses graduated almost 2,000 lieutenants.

There are two officer candidate schools in operation. The other is a 23-week Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Ga. Additional schools are set for Fort Belvoir, VA., Fort Knox, Ky., and Fort Gordon, Ga.

Army authorities said expanding OCS classes will be continued as long as necessary to meet the additional requirements of the Army for junior officers.

The OCS expansion at Sill will increase the present 6-battery organization to 16. The normal in-residence load of 650 candidates will reach a peak of 1,745 by mid-January.

The cadre or "tactical staff" will be increased by slightly more than 200 officers and enlisted men and 11 civilians.

Expansion of the OCS will require the acquisition of 16 more buildings located near OCS and the relocation of the Fort Sill Noncommissioned Officer Academy. The NCO Academy will move to the 3700 area of post without any interruption of its training program.

The Artillery and Missile School will also feel the expansion program. Artillery Survey specialists will increase from the present programmed input of 770 men to more than 2,600 for the remaining months of the fiscal year. There will be smaller increases in five other specialist courses.

The increase will require formation of a new student battery to be designated 3rd Enlisted Student Battery. The battery will be staffed by two officers and 26 enlisted men.

Fort Sill expects an increase in instructors and support personnel for the school totaling more than 400 officers and enlisted men, and 19 civilians, to handle the expansion of the School and OCS.

Nationally, Army service schools will be expanded to accept an increased input in advanced individual, administrative and specialized training. Officer Candidate School training is scheduled to increase from 3,400 in fiscal year 1965 to 11,700 in fiscal year 1966.

An additional 13,800 will receive basic combat training and advanced individual training in a new Army division at one of the three separate brigades that are to be formed in fiscal year 1966.

The reception and training centers at Fort Benning are scheduled to begin operating in early October of 1965. The reception center will have a processing capacity of 1,400 trainees per week. The training center is scheduled to receive six companies or approximately 1,300 men per week with an average training load of about 10,000 soldiers.

At Fort Bliss, the reception and training centers will be placed in operation by early December 1965 and will process and begin training 880 men per week with an average training load of about 7,000 soldiers.

Other Army training centers which will have increased loads during fiscal year 1966 are Fort Dix, N.J.; Fort Knox, Ky.; Fort Jackson, S.C.; Fort Gordon, Ga.; Fort Polk, La.; Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; Fort Ord, Calif.; Fort Sam Houston, Tex.; and Fort McClellan, Ala.

### **O. H. Perry Cabot: 11-65**

I enlisted in 1964 in the Army Intelligence and Security (AIS) branch to avoid being drafted for the infantry. But having not gone into Advanced ROTC in college, I was not eligible for OCS except from active duty. After long training courses and barely two months in personnel security duty, I got orders to Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Inasmuch as an officer is the gentleman class of the military, I naturally assumed we would be treated as such. Arriving in mid-April, a couple of weeks before my designated OCS class, the casual duty and incidental observation quickly disabused me.

In the militarily lean years between the Korean and the Vietnam War, most officers came from West Point and ROTC programs. Only two OCS operations, Infantry at Fort Benning and Artillery at Fort Sill were necessary to round out the relatively meager remaining quota; and in 1965 the Army could afford to be tough on those in the OCS track. The West Point "ring-knockers," who generally ran the schools, looked on six months of OCS as a free ride to what had taken them four years. Fortunately, President Johnson had just authorized the Vietnam buildup, and the Army had apparently decided the traditional 50% washout rate was no longer justifiable.

Sixty-six percent of my class, 11-65 (Battery D, at graduation), got through without being recycled. They showed film clips of how brutal it had been just a year before, but since we were already being pounded to within what we felt was an inch of our capacity, it only

served to show how lucky we were. OCS seemed to be one continuous succession of inspection demerits, harassment to see how much we could take, hundreds of pushups each day, running (walking was not allowed for the first four months), and eight-minute meals. My college math background came in handy, attention to detail was unnatural for me.

Progressing through three stages, blue for the underclassmen, “grungy” green epaulet tabs for the middle two months and finally brilliant artillery red, became the over-riding goal. Upperclassman status meant we could actually walk when out of formation, a novelty so strange it seemed like learning a new skill; and would have put us in control of the lower classes. Unfortunately, shortly after we reached that status, the operation shifted into a higher gear to turn out more officers. The changed structure freed many of us from supervisory details. For me this was a blessing in disguise because I had never acquired the stomach to yell at others, except for specific errors, and was particularly sympathetic to the subordinate’s plight when an understanding upperclassman took pity upon finding me in a dumpster near my watch post during a violent storm. I was sure that would cost me the worst possible punishment, a double “Jark,” but he did not report it.

As all likely readers know, the “Jark” was the method of working off demerits. No candidate ever got through without having to do several, and one every week was not uncommon. The ‘Jark’ was named for the former OCS Commander who devised it. Simultaneously, a disciplinary punishment, physical exercise, and an object lesson in unit cohesiveness, the candidate sentenced to a ‘Jark’ was required to make the next designated formation, Saturday or Sunday, both if necessary. The candidates all jogged, not marched, in formation, in PT uniform, with combat boots, pistol belt, full canteen, and M-16 rifle at port arms from Robinson Barracks to the top of MB-4, a nearby medium hill, and return; a round-trip distance of 4.2 miles, within 55 minutes. We could break formation for 200 meters of the hill climb itself, but understandably an ambulance accompanied every “Jark.”

I was fortunate to be subjected to only 13 “Jarks,” but the last was memorable. Our training officer, CPT Whitehead, so STRAC he reputedly shined the inside of his belt buckle, cajoled some near-graduates to set a record. Twelve of us, the minimum formation being a squad, accepted the challenge. Most of us were upperclassmen and knew it was to be our last. As a concession for the attempt, we were allowed to take only six rifles and pass them around for welcome relief. We were making good time, but not quite on a record pace. Halfway back, I could see that the Captain was struggling even though he didn’t have to carry an M-16 or go to the top of the hill, although he may have on this occasion. When he started yelling that we weren’t going to make it, I couldn’t tell if he wanted us to speed up or slow the pace for fear of breaking ranks and of somebody passing out. The ambulance was way behind with the normal pace formations. I had just passed my rifle off to another, and for some reason took the lead to set a pace and encourage the rest. Thirty-seven minutes was a new record, at least that’s what he told us.

**Lesson:** Setting new standards in extreme situations makes an indelible impact. It provides a nearly inexhaustible source of pride and inspiration for future endeavors. As long as the performer believes he is that good, he will continue to emulate the effort. I had chosen Artillery OCS over infantry, with its promise of more technical skills and

mathematics in fire direction control. In this I was not disappointed, and it was the most enjoyable part of the experience, until we learned that forward artillery observers, the most common detail for new artillery officers, had the highest casualty rate in the Korean War.

Fortunately, upon entry, Candidates were allowed to state their preference for a branch commission. My prior service in AIS was no guarantee of returning, but I had read the system correctly. I worked briefly with a 105 mm outfit in Vietnam but lived out a 28-year career in investigations, security inspections, tactical and strategic intelligence before “stacking sticks” with exceedingly fond and rewarding memories.

**Richard S. Cohen: 11-65**

OCS Changed my life, in a good way, as did serving as a U.S. Army officer.

**Lucian Hill: 11-65**

**“The Influence of OCS Upon My Life”**

In 1964 I was slated to be called up by my local draft board. Rather than be drafted with a two-year obligation as an enlisted man, I joined the regular Army with the goal of attending OCS. My motives were not the purest- God, country, and apple pie. Rather, there was a woman involved and I thought being an officer was one way to impress her.

I spent a year at Fort Hood, Texas with the 2nd Armored Division before being accepted for Artillery OCS. I arrived at Robinson Barracks and warmly greeted a former member of my Fort Hood unit. He was now an upperclassman and promptly stood me at attention. Welcome to OCS!

Much of the next several weeks were spent in a blur of class work, physical training, and always trying to measure up. I remember Captain Whitehead and trying to be just a little bit as squared away as he.

I remember eating square meals on the front two inches of my chair. Then there were the meals spent eating underneath the table as I was too “gross” to sit with an upperclassman. I also remember putting a light coating of butter on the shoes of that same upperclassman. That went well with the red dirt of Fort Sill. I can remember looking longingly at the jello and never having enough time to get to that wonderful dessert.

Somewhere through all of this, something clicked and I started thriving in the OCS environment, even becoming a member of battalion staff. OCS literally changed my outlook on life. From a shy country boy who had never traveled more than 100 miles from home I developed a confidence in my abilities that I never knew existed. I discovered an ability to adapt and even thrive in a totally foreign environment.

Though I did not make the Army a career, the discipline and people skills learned in OCS carried me back to college at the ripe old age of 26 after my tour of Vietnam. I earned a master’s degree and commercial pilot’s license. It was here that I met and married my wife of 39 years. These same skills served me well during a career with AT&T and, later, the State of Mississippi.



I still keep in touch with friends from class 11-65 that shared these same experiences and look forward to the annual reunions. Life takes you down many paths, and the OCS path is one for which I will always be grateful.

### **Melvin Honig: 11-65**

During the Vietnam buildup there was a pressing need for warm bodies in our Armed Services. The draft was considered a fair way of filling that need. In addition to the draft, several programs were started as inducements to have young men and women voluntarily enter the Armed Services. When I joined the Army after graduating from college in 1964, I took advantage of the College Option Program.

The College Option Program guaranteed any college graduate the right to attend Officer Candidate School (OCS) after completing Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT). I graduated from basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and was then assigned to the AIT school at Fort Sill, Oklahoma to obtain a Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) in artillery. All the College Option Program enlistees were assigned to the same training unit, so we got “special” treatment.

After AIT, it was Officer Candidate School (OCS); 23 weeks of strenuous physical exertion, introspection and education in the art of warfare. This was where; if they haven’t done it by now, the individual would be molded into the team player. OCS was divided into 3 levels; lower, middle and upperclass. After successful completion of the 23-week program you resigned from the Regular Army with the permanent grade of Sergeant E-5 and enlisted in the Army Reserve as a Lieutenant with a two-year active duty obligation.

All the men in OCS were not College Option types. We also had enlisted men, many with several years’ active duty experience. Any enlisted man could put in an application in to go to OCS. We were a mixed group, coming from many different backgrounds, but we all had one thing in common: we were all looking forward to graduation day.

While in OCS we were evaluated on our academic accomplishments, leadership qualities and physical abilities.

Our day started before first light and ended at midnight. It was trial by fire. After calisthenics, eating and putting the barracks in order we were off to class. In OCS I had the best teachers of my life. They were interesting, interested and highly competent. Learning during our 8-hour class day was a joy. Many days we would be out on the range learning the art of artillery warfare.

After the school day we would return to the barracks and find out what the upperclassmen had in store for us. When we became upperclassman we would go back and try to invent new ways to make life hell for the lowerclassmen. Each barracks had the lower, middle and upperclassmen living in the same building for the 23 weeks of OCS until we graduated or got booted out. A demerit system was used to inform you of your shortcomings. If one accumulated enough demerits, you would find yourself running up MB4 (Medicine Bluff 4), where it is said Geronimo jumped to his death. Then of course I also heard he died of old age. There was always something in the works to fill our time or give us more opportunities to run up MB4.

For me the most difficult aspect of OCS was leadership, something that comes naturally to many. You can learn little tricks, but I contend that you cannot be taught to be a leader. I am not a leader: nor a follower: but an individual....so adjusting to Army life was not always easy because I did not want to be *molded*.

In order to move up the next level (lower to middle... middle to upper... and then graduate) you had to pass all phases of your training. At the halfway point and end of each level you were evaluated. The form used for the leadership evaluation was completed by your superiors; the classmen lower in rank than you; your contemporaries; and the regular Army Officer in charge of your barracks. We all had about 30 Leadership Evaluations to fill out every six or seven weeks.

A sample question on the form might be “would you like to have this person serve under you?” The corollary would be “would you like to have this person as your superior officer?” I don’t remember the exact rating system, but for argument’s sake let’s say you were rated from 1 to 5 on each question. The numerical answers for all the questions were summed to come up with a score. The Army Officer in charge of your barracks conducted the face-to-face evaluation with you, and told you if you were; moving on; moving out, or; given a second chance and allowed to repeat the 8 week cycle that you just failed. This is how things worked at Officer Candidate School.

There was one person who changed my life at OCS. Maybe I did not know it at the time, but it was not long before I realized what he had done for me. Bill Leatherwood was short, stocky and ugly. He had curly reddish-brown hair and freckles and spoke with an uncultivated southern drawl that gave away the fact that he was from the backwoods of Alabama. Being a relatively good looking, sophisticated and know it all New Yorker I was not impressed with Bill.

At the time of the incident I was a lowerclassmen and wore blue ribbons on our epaulets to show my status... bottom of the barrel. Bill was middleclass. It was maybe the 3rd or 4th week when I got a visit from Bill.

Another middleclassman was somewhat of a loud blowhard. Jack barked orders all the time and really didn’t get much respect from the rest of us. I didn’t think I was treating him any differently than anybody else until Bill sat down on my bed beside me. It was after evening meal and I was probably shining my shoes, or polishing my brass just like everyone else....getting ready for tomorrow’s inspection by the upperclassmen. So Bill says to me, in almost a whisper:

*“Take it easy on Jack. He is having a rough time with leadership and he needs some help from us. It’s best if we all stick together and try and help each other get through, regardless of which class we are in.”*

My usual emotional response to this type of intrusion was to think who the hell is this guy to tell me how to behave, no less some cracker who can’t speak the King’s English without slaughtering it with his southern drawl. But no, I didn’t think that way at all. Instead, I took Bill’s words to heart. Of course there was no magic transformation, but I felt that a door had been opened that had been closed for too long.

Needless to say Bill graduated top of his class, both academically and leadership. As an upperclassman he was Commandant of the Class. While previous Commandants strutted around and barked orders Bill never spoke in much more than a whisper, but was always in absolute command. I was so proud that I met him because I knew some day he would be a Senator, Five Star General, or perhaps even President.

Every time I go to Washington D.C. I visit 'THE WALL' and touch the name of William E. Leatherwood Jr.

Note: Second Lieutenant William E. Leatherwood Jr., Class 9-65 was killed in action in Vietnam on February 17, 1966

### **Jack Sturtevant: 11-65**

My time in OCS was a life changing experience. I entered as a PFC. I was raised in a family with all sisters and absolutely no previous military experience anywhere in my family's past. I was drafted in 1964 and while at the reception station, when we were called out for a "police call," I actually thought we were going to search for someone who escaped from the stockade. I didn't have a clue.

When I was approached in basic training about attending OCS and was offered the choice between Infantry or Artillery, I had to ask the difference between the two. I was told that infantry was kind of like basic training, and artillery was mostly riding around in the back of a deuce and a half. You can guess what I chose.

This leads me to a few my most memorable moments in OCS. Prior the attending, I was assigned to the 38th Sergeant Missile Battalion, classified as an OCS Hold with several other potential candidates. A few preceded me to OCS and I would visit them on Sundays. I was advised by my friends, based on their experiences not to report as PFC Sturtevant because I was now a Candidate. They were heavily berated because they were no longer a simple enlisted man, but an OCS Candidate. I felt somewhat secure with this information. With the stories I'd been told, I waited until the last minute on registration day to report. You can imagine what happened when I reported in as an OCS Candidate. By time I finished stomping the source hat to death, I realized there was not going to be any way to win for the next several months.

My second most vivid memory was the day I decided I had had enough and wished to resign and go back to a plain old PFC. I wish I could remember the officer's name that I had to report to. He changed my life forever. I pounded on his impact board until my hand became numb. Upon entering his office I was ordered to the prone position. I was doing pushups while I was trying to quit. I had made my mind up that this was my last day at OCS no matter what he said. I was prepared. When he asked me if I had finished something or other, I said no. When he asked me if I had completed college, I said no. He then proceeded to refer to me in no uncertain terms that I was a "quitter" and here I go again. I wasn't prepared for that. I accepted his challenge and have been proud to be a non-quitter for my entire life.

As a lowerclassman, my big brother, bless his soul, "asked" me in the mess hall to come by his cubical that evening so we could hang out for a while. I was excited all day. "A little love was going to come my way." After beating on that damned impact board for several

minutes, I was permitted to enter the upperclass sanctuary. I hung from the rafter in his cubical till my arms fell asleep.

My time as an OCS Candidate is filled with many fond and humorous memories, but make no mistake they sure weren't fond or funny in 1965. My time in OCS went by so fast, and I have always regretted the speed with which I left Fort Sill following graduation. I have always wished I had sat down in October 1965 and reflected on the accomplishments I had achieved and thanked those that helped me achieve them.

**Michael A. Watson: 11-65**

My "OCS Experience" remains until this day one of the peak experiences of my life. Not that I was one of the outstanding graduates nor was I an exceptional Commissioned Officer following graduation. But, by God I did graduate, and I did serve to the best of my ability after graduation.

Before OCS I had made a number of false starts and left a lot of loose ends hanging here and there all over the place. I was a bit of a mess upon arrival, but I knew that I was smart enough and had it within me to make it through and graduate. On more than one occasion I had to reach deep down inside myself to muster the effort to get through the day. I suppose that is the main thing that I took away from the "OCS Experience." I learned that I could read way down and make it through. Knowing that and remembering that served me well throughout my life in countless ways.

At age 78+ I know without doubt that had I not had the OCS Experience my life would have fallen far short of the humble achievements that I have enjoyed. My eleven grandchildren enjoy hearing my stories about OCS and telling them brings us closer. So "Joy" is an ancillary benefit of having been blessed to attend Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill as a member of Class 11-65. Thanks for the memories and the opportunity to know myself.

**From the Honor Code of the Artillery Officer Candidate  
U.S. Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School  
Fort Sill, Oklahoma, March 1965**

SECTION I

THE HONOR CODE

1. IMPORTANCE OF HONOR

a. Honor may be defined as that quality in a person which shows him to be fair and truthful in word and deed. It implies a devotion to such standards of right, loyalty, courage, and conduct as society has crystalized throughout the centuries. Honor includes a delicate sense of right and wrong and a strong determination to adhere to that which is right and just.

b. An officer must have the highest standards of honor. The effectiveness of the United States Army is based on the honesty and dependability of the Officer Corps. Army business is conducted by oral and written statements. Any carelessness or unscrupulous use of words or signature cannot be tolerated. An officer's word or signature is his bond.

Battle information is useless unless it can be accepted without question by those who depend upon it to make decisions. The characteristic of reporting the truth is something that cannot be adapted for battle purposes only. If an officer is not honest by long habit in the performance of peacetime duties, he will not suddenly develop this characteristic on the battlefield.

## 2. THE HONOR CODE

a. The OCS Honor Code is a primary means by which excellence of character is developed. It requires complete integrity in word and deed and permits no deviation. The maintenance of its high standards is the responsibility of each candidate, and each candidate is expected to report himself or any other candidate for violation of the Honor Code.

b. The Honor Code of the Artillery Officer Candidate is embodied in four basic principles: An officer candidate is always truthful, uses his own knowledge during examinations, respects the property rights of others, and never quibbles. In essence, an officer candidate does not lie, cheat, steal, or quibble.

c. Each individual in OCS is responsible to see that all candidates meet the standards of the Code.

d. Relief from OCS is the penalty for violation of the Code.

e. Candidates are expected to adhere to the spirit of the Honor Code at all times and without reservation. It is considered neither necessary nor desirable to promulgate regulations which prescribe the limits of honorable conduct.





*Class 4-64*





*Sweeping sidewalks that only Upperclassmen could use and protecting the shine on jump boots while policing the area*





*Class 4-64 Graduates moving out using the "Cadillac Cart"*



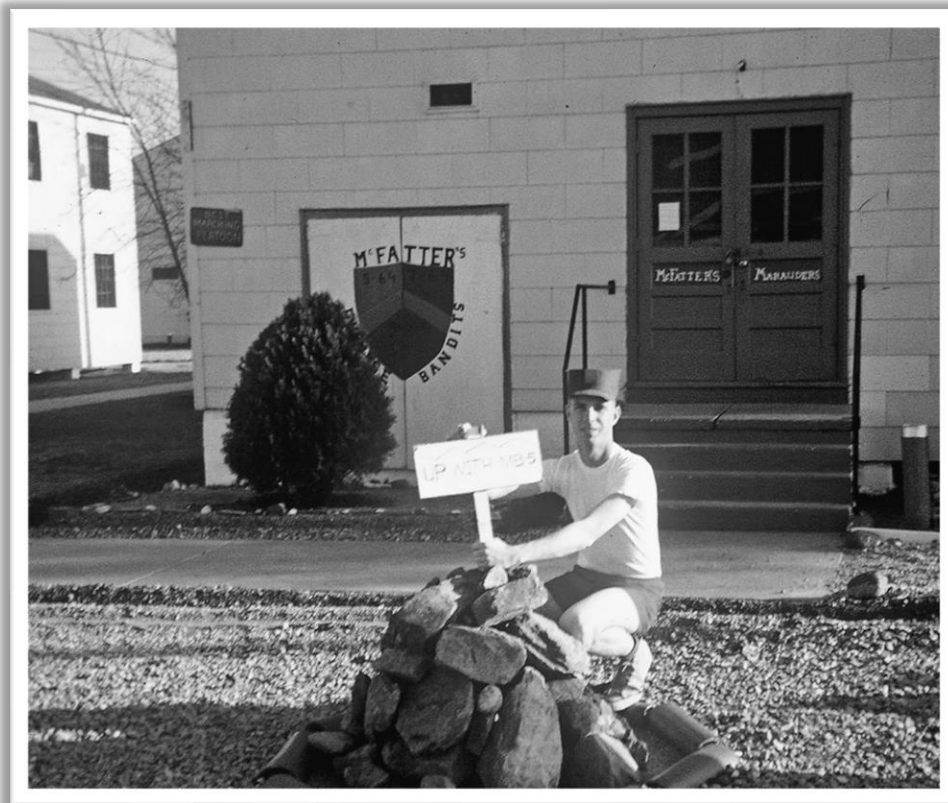
*Class 5-64*





*Class 5-64 Candidates busy keeping the barracks area looking good*





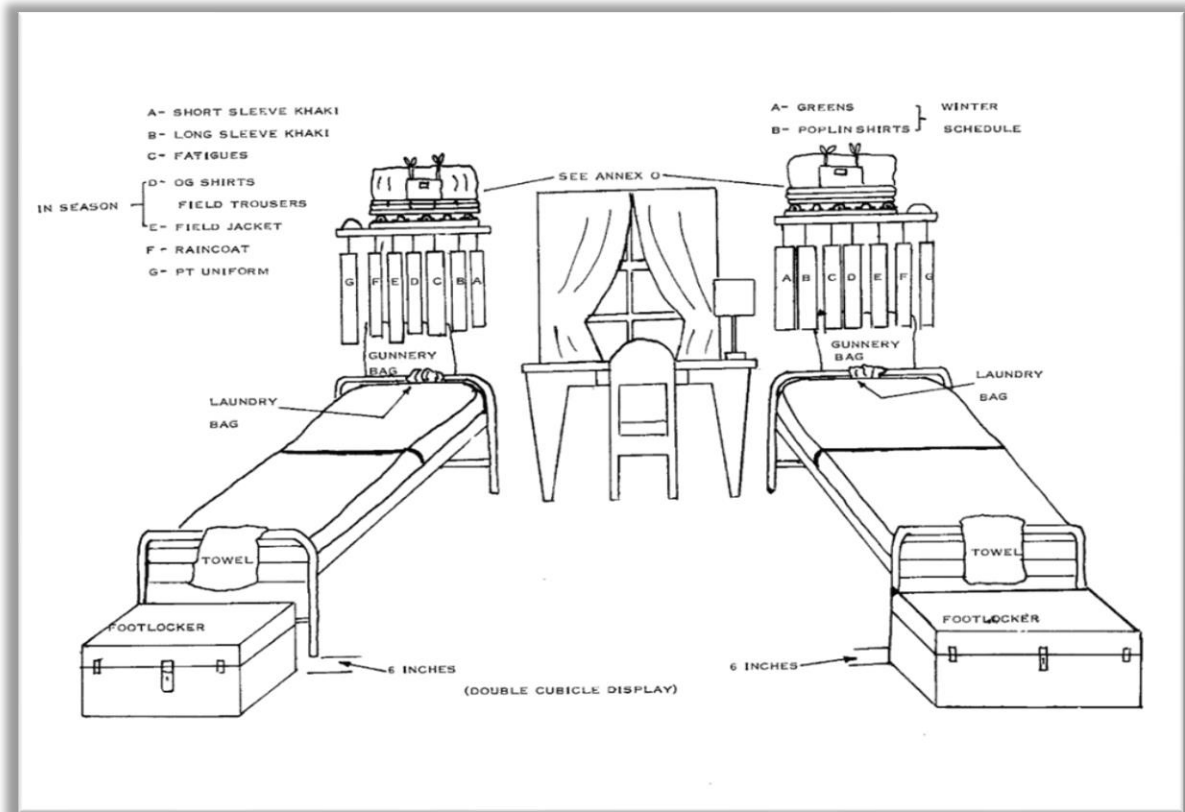
*A pile of Jark rocks from MB-4 with a sign that reads "Up with MB-5"*



*Fresh faces arrive at OCS Headquarters to begin the "OCS Experience"*



*March to Mess Class 6-64*



*Double Cubicle Display Diagram  
SOP for Officer Candidates (March 1965)*



*Class 2-65 Honor Graduate 2LT Glen L. Riden, Jr, cuts the cake at the Graduation Coffee as his spouse looks on (Feb 16, 1965)*



*11-65 Graduation Review October 1965*

# Chapter Thirteen

## 1966

### Officer Candidate Brigade 1966

#### *From History of the U.S Army Artillery and Missile School 1958-1967*

#### ***Narrative History 1966:***

To facilitate the increasing numbers during 1966, OCS expanded from two to six battalions. As the year began, OCS strength was listed at 866 candidates constituting nine batteries. This figure increased to 3,000 candidates divided among 28 batteries, at the year's end. By March 1967 the number of batteries was expected to total 43 and by the end of fiscal year 1967 a total of 9,600 candidates were expected to have entered OCS for that 12-month period.

To keep pace with the expansion, the physical complex at OCS was enlarged with the construction of 13 additional barracks and 5 buildings to house battalion headquarters and supply facilities. In addition, approximately 80 barracks and classrooms were renovated in 1966.

Changes were made in the OCS program of instruction with the addition of 8 hours to the 32-hour block of instruction on field exercises and bivouac.

The most welcomed addition to the heavy schedule at OCS, however, was not programmed and, regrettably, not permanent. That was the visit of Miss Deborah Bryant, Miss America of 1966. The visit was made on Sunday, the 24th of April, when Miss Bryant toured the OCS area and joined the candidates for dinner. Upon her request, amnesty was declared for the candidates and, as a result, the normal disciplinary "Jark" (run) up Medicine Bluff Four, a hill two miles from the OCS area was cancelled.



## **Wulf R. Lindenau: 1-66**

### **“From East Prussia, Germany in World War II to USAAM OCS and Beyond”**

My family’s journey started in Memel, East Prussia, a short time before the Russians advanced into Germany in 1945 signaling the end of the war- and forcing hundreds of thousands of refugees to flee from the onslaught of Russians, who were determined to make all Germans pay for their countless losses in combat.

My grandfather and grandmother and other family members including my two brothers, were among the lucky ones to escape from being murdered and raped – and we arrived safely in Bad Toelz, Bavaria, West Germany. I do not remember the actual journey from East Prussia in early 1945, as I was only three years old and my brothers (Joern and Gert) were four and two years old when the war ended in 1945...but I do remember Bad Toelz and the most beautiful countryside and friendly people we encountered. Because my father, who was in the former Headquarters of Admiral Doenitz, the Chief of the Submarine forces in Germany, and as he was assumed killed, my mother soon married a U.S. Army officer, Colonel Leonard W. Zedler, who was on General Patton’s staff in the headquarters of a former SS Officer Kaserne in Bad Toelz.

Inasmuch as my mother became an American citizen, all her young offspring were given what was called “derivative citizenship,” and soon we were no longer hungry refugees–but brand-new Americans. To everyone’s surprise, our father suddenly appeared from captivity – surprised by what he found, he accepted the cards that fate had dealt him and his former family. I am not surprised by this, as he was to all who knew him, a truly most decent and kind gentleman, who rebounded from a total loss of everything he had in East Prussia to become a very well-heeled successful businessman in Munich, Germany after the War. I treasure my memory of him and my step father, COL Zedler (whom we all nicknamed “the Old Man” but also accepted and loved as our father). The fun began for all, when we realized that we had to address our mother in German and our step father in English, and we attended both German schools and of course American High Schools as well. The benefit for all the children is that we had two languages we could communicate in. Our stepfather’s military assignments included Germany, Italy, North Africa (Morocco–where we spent many wonderful years!) and his career in the U.S. Army resulted in all male members of the Zedler - Lindenau family joining the U.S. Army.

My younger brother Gert and I were advised by our stepfather to join the Army after graduation from High School in Heidelberg, Germany. This resulted in a rather humorous escapade for Gert and me when we attempted to join the U.S. Army in Frankfurt, Germany and were advised by the Sergeant in charge that we were not eligible because we were “Krauts” and had no proof of US citizenship. The Sergeant had never heard of Derivative Citizenship and since we had no documents to prove it, we were rejected. Our stepfather obtained US passports for Gert and me from the citizenship documents of our Mother...and our military service started in earnest with the joy of basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Gert served several years in the Army and left as soon as he could, and I remained, as I really did not know what else to do. because being in the USA was totally foreign to me and all possibility of family and contacts who could have provided recommendations to enable me to seek an education or employment were in Germany. The answer soon surfaced – stay in the U.S. Army and before long – trained as an interrogator – I was

assigned to a Military Intelligence Company in Alaska, and my OIC, a young 1st Lieutenant suggested that I apply for OCS as my score on the OCS exam we all took when we enlisted was, according to the Lieutenant, “very high.” So, I applied to the Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Georgia and was informed that all slots were taken and all that remained for me, was a slot at the Artillery and Missile OCS. I accepted, with many worries that I would probably not graduate as I understood that mathematics ability was required, and I was close to ignorant in all mathematical computations...I was lucky if my check book ever balanced!

Before my attendance at OCS started however, I had an opportunity to take leave and attend some schooling in the D.C. / VA and Baltimore area, and was fortunate to stay with my mother’s sister, also married to an Army Colonel, who was formerly on the staff of GEN Patton with my step father (they were friends and married sisters) and who lived in a wonderful apartment in Arlington, (the River House) near the Pentagon. This resulted in meeting my future wife, Catherine N. Rasmussen, who lived in the same building my aunt and uncle were in, and who was the most beautiful lady I had ever met – my life was now on a mission – get a commission and marry this beautiful lady (who-by the way- had been selected to be one of the first Redskin Cheerleaders).

Fast forward to mid December 1965 - when the Artillery and Missile OCS Class 1-66 graduated...and I wondered how was it possible that I actually “made it” ...was it possible that this Kraut who practiced signing his name as “Lieutenant Lindenau” countless times when a student at Heidelberg High School in 1960, and who hoped and prayed that someday in the future he would actually be an officer, and who would now would have the honor of placing a “butter bar” on his uniform and wear an officer’s hat. Next to the graduation from Basic Training, when I was very proud to place a single stripe on my uniform as a Private First Class, I would now enjoy the pride and responsibility of actually being an officer in the United States Army - wow!!!

I remember bits and pieces of the OCS experience...certainly the many barracks, the early rising for PT and running, rather lengthy and for me difficult classes, etc., and the endless attempts to be neat and prepared at all times for anything. Several instances, however, have remained in my memory and I shall relate them as best I can.

1. Attention from our TAC officer: I recall being asked to see our Lieutenant ASAP, and wondered why, since I had not done anything meriting attention or punishment. The Lieutenant asked who I was and why I had no record of receiving “gigs” and if I fancied myself as “a magic candidate” ...I was confused and he awarded countless pushups which I was barely able to complete, and many “Jarks” which followed me up to our graduation. What fun, eh?

2. Getting my heels locked by an underclassman: I do not recall when this happened but remember that I was slowly walking somewhere, and I was an upperclassman (Red Bird) about to graduate I hoped, when someone behind me loudly ordered me to stop and assume a position of attention. I assumed the order came from an officer and that “something” was wrong with my department and appearance. I froze in place and awaited my fate. The “officer” turned out to be a Lower Class candidate and when I saw who and what he was his demeanor and appearance was indicative of fear that I would take “drastic actions against him,” I remember that I was actually amused and quickly

informed the candidate that all was OK and that he should dismiss the matter, as I would. Many years later, after I provided a short write-up of this occurrence to our worthy OCS newsletter, I received an e-mail from a retired Army Colonel who admitted that he was the OCS candidate in the event, and who remembered the event although much time had passed- and who was thankful that I took no actions against him.

In conclusion, I served approximately 20 1/2 years in the Army, retired as a Major, and continued my Government service as a civilian for 23 more years. I served initially with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Treasury Department, and then with the U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of State, and lastly with the General Services Administration where I was the Director of the Federal Protective Police Force for the National Capital Region in Washington, D.C. Civil Service was rewarding and interesting in many ways and greatly added to my Government retirement as a GS/GM 15 step 10...and I presently live in Georgia where we do not suffer from the continuous threat of bad weather as is found on the East Coast year after year.

### **Edgar G. Colinsky: 3-66**

The school and the weather were very difficult. About a third of my class failed the course. The program was based on West Point's traditions as regards academics, physical fitness and leadership development. I routinely received orders from senior Candidates to "drop and give me 50."

My claim to fame with my class was the angle I found that enabled me to lean back in my chair so I could sleep without making disruptive noises such as falling backwards, snoring or hit my table by falling forward during my gunnery class. I needed the sleep because my TAC Officer had many extra daily requirements for me and many of the other candidates in my battery were asking for help with the gunnery concepts at night before "lights out." The two Marine Captains who taught the course never made a comment about my achievement.

The lessons I learned helped me accomplish a long successful officer's career that led to an induction to the Artillery OCS Hall of Fame at Fort Sill 35 years later on May 5, 2000.

### **Bruce E. Johnson: 3-66** **"Red Bird Weekends"**

After becoming a Red Bird, we were allowed off post on weekends. We learned that we could get more studying done toward passing the heavy academic load by getting a motel room in Lawton, than we could back at Robinson Barracks with the frequent interruptions by the TAC officers.

A favorite place for us in Lawton was a little motel called The Capri owned by Betty, a woman of Japanese descent. The motel had no restaurant but did have a small bar. Every Sunday morning, but not too early, a knock came at the door and there stood Betty with a tray of donuts and hot coffee for us candidates free of charge.

After studying for hours, we usually ended up at the motel bar. No bartender was available. Betty showed us how to run the cash register and we made our own drinks and put the money in the till ourselves. No one ever cheated Betty for she knew and we knew that one call by her to OCS with a bad report would result in an honor code violation and



an immediate dismissal from school. She took good care of us. Oh...our favorite drink was a Black Russian.

**Pat Mitchell: 3-66**

I was a young pup PFC in the Army who had an LTC in Germany that said I should go to OCS, so I took the exams, the boards and passed and off I went to arrive at Fort Sill in August or September 1965. I was scared to death, didn't know a thing but entered that class of 3-66 and lo and behold I had a big brother upperclassman named Carrell Proby who was assigned to mentor this young buck OCS candidate.

I was always hungry and he would post me to his barracks late at night and feed me pizza and counsel me on how to get through this ungodly program called OCS. I did make it the first go around not getting set back and I owe that to Carrell Proby. As I progressed through the ranks to Colonel (O-6) I often thought about those days and how one man made a difference in my life.

**Norman L. King: 4-66**

I was stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas after AIT as the Colonel's clerk at Headquarters Special Troops. After suffering appendicitis during Basic Training, hospitalization at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, a 30 day leave and then AIT, I already had some time in when arriving at Fort Bliss.

After being there about eight months, I took leave and was married. I came back to Fort Bliss and a short time later, the Sergeant Major told me I was coming down on orders for Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) Headquarters in Paris. It was not an accompanied tour for a just married E-3.

I searched the Army Regulations and found if you had an application pending for flight school or OCS no re-assignment would happen until a determination was made on the application.

I applied for OCS, knowing at that time it was taking six months or more for a resulting decision. In six months or more...I wouldn't have enough time remaining on active duty for reassignment.

Thanks to my loving Sergeant Major...in less than three weeks I was asked to change from the Infantry OCS request to Artillery OCS. So, I did and a week later I had orders to OCS at Fort Sill.

I started with Class 1-66 and was just about to turn Red when I was stung by a nasty spider, infecting my hand. It was noticed by cadre in a Snow Hall study hall and I was hauled to the hospital. After two weeks of hospital magic, I began with my new class 4-66.

I must admit I did smile at the candidates that lost it in the mess hall due to upperclass table commandant noodling and coming back to the "house" and the candidate that went a bit overboard...his bunk was in a roll ... he was gone.

I thought many times that I sent in the OCS application to get out of the Army without being reassigned as an E-3 without my new wife to Paris.

I liked being in OCS and I enjoyed the varied training necessary to be a Field Artillery Officer. I mostly loved the FOing.

My first assignment?? Of course, an unaccompanied tour in Korea. I later served with LTC Jack N. Merritt as his Artillery LNO and later his Adjutant of 3rd Battalion, 34th Field Artillery Riverine Force...What a Man!

### **John J. Gillespie, Jr: 5-66**

I graduated high school in 1962. I bounced around between two different colleges and working in plywood mills in Eugene and Springfield Oregon until I received my draft notice in January 1965.

Decided I would like a little choice in what branch I would serve in and having seen *GI Blues*, I decided that Armor in Europe would be great so that's what I enlisted for. I took Basic Combat Training at Fort Leonard Wood because of meningitis outbreak at Fort Ord.

I took Advanced Individual Training at Fort Knox learning how to drive tanks and shoot really big guns. While there, I got summoned to Commanding Officer's office. Terrified as I stood at parade rest in front of the CO, he told me that the Army was expanding to meet needs of the Viet Nam build up and they had waived the requirement for soldiers to have a college degree to receive a commission. He told me that the AG had reviewed my entrance exam scores and they thought I had to potential to become an officer. I accepted. The only schools then were operating at Fort Sill and Fort Benning. Didn't want to walk my whole career so I asked for and was sent to Fort Sill.

I arrived in fall of 1965 and was assigned to Battery L, Class 5-66. There the fun (?) started. I met my TAC Officer, LT Joe Moody, and boy was he tough. Got to do lots of pushups and weekend runs up MB 4. Don't think I missed too many.

**Three memories stand out:** My mom and dad attending my graduation and pinning on my gold bars. My dad had served with the 2nd Marine Division in WW II and was boots on the ground in Nagasaki as part of the occupational force about one month after the bomb. So, I was proud to carry on his tradition of serving our country and could see the pride in his eyes.

Having the honor to be selected to the color guard and being double honored to carry our National Colors. Ironically while on the color guard, I broke my pinky in a football game. What was I going to do with a forearm cast with my pinky taped to a metal strap? Not to be deterred, my team and I figured out how to solve the problem. We found the biggest white glove, cut a slit at the base of the pinky to put the metal brace through, taped it closed and then when I had the colors in my hands wrapped the metal tab around the staff. It worked fine. I think that was my last graduation parade before we graduated.

Last and probably the most generous. Before we graduated we were in formation and the Commandant stood in front of us and asked what branch we wanted our commission in. Every classmate before me said "Sir, Candidate ....., Artillery, Sir" Well, remember GI

Blues? He got to me, same question only I answered “Sir, Candidate Gillespie, Armor, Sir.” A pregnant silence followed. I think LT Moody wanted to kill me, not sure but if looks were guns, I was already a dead man walking. Anyhow, the Commandant then asked, “Well Candidate would you accept a commission in the Artillery?” Having realized by that time that I had really made a booboo, I responded, “Sir, Candidate Gillespie, YES Sir.”

I did get my footlocker “Nuked” one time. Not a fun experience. And still remember “tape, pull, stick, stuck” from survey classes.” Amazing what sticks with you, isn’t it?

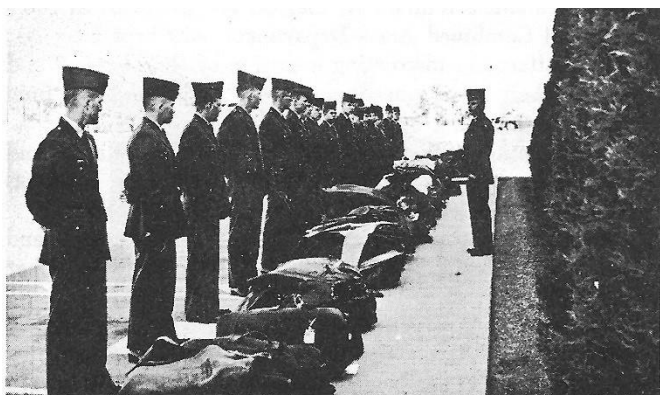


Through these portals. . .

## **Becoming an Artillery Officer**

***A series of Articles by 2LT Joseph A. Rollo (Class 10-64)***

***Information Office, US Army Artillery and Missile Center Fort Sill, Oklahoma, reporting on highlights of a typical Artillery OCS class from the first week of training to completion of course and graduation as commissioned officers.***



**Candidate Robert L. Stein, a middleclass guide, gives helpful suggestions to members of Class 8-66 prior to processing for entry into OCS the next day.**



**Candidates are issued "basic load" of literature. They will rely heavily on the text books as they progress in the 23-week Officer Candidate course.**

One hundred and thirteen soldiers, ranging in rank from private to warrant officer and representing 34 states, reported into Officer Candidate School, Fort Sill, Okla., and attained the rank of "candidate" with one goal in mind: completion of the course and a commission in the U. S. Army as a second lieutenant.

The group was assigned to Delta Battery, commanded by Capt. Floyd D. Whitehead, a 1960 graduate of West Point. Five tactical officers are also assigned to Delta Battery to help in the supervision of the candidates. First Lieutenant Francis E. Israel Jr., executive officer, has a Master of Science Degree from the University of Knoxville. The four platoon leaders are 1st Lt. Gerald W. Sharpe and 2nd Lts. John R. Treanor, John C. Gambaccini and Pat J. Razook. Lieutenant Sharpe is a graduate of OCS and attended Western State College in Colorado. Lieutenant Treanor graduated from St. Mary's University, San Antonio. Lieutenant Gambaccini graduated from Kent State University in Ohio. Lieutenant Razook holds a Master of Science Degree in Student Personnel and Guidance from Oklahoma State University.

### **First Week**

The new candidate class, Number 8-66, began its processing Sunday, Oct. 31 for the 23-week long class. Members of Class 8 spent most of their first hectic week being welcomed to OCS and receiving the tools and equipment which they will use during the next six months. They received their texts and instruments on Tuesday and were amazed at the voluminous manuals and gunnery equipment they will have to master.

In a ceremony Thursday afternoon Col. Charles E. Howard, the OCS commandant, presented the class guidon to Officer Candidate Battery Commander Marvin C. Williams, Danbury, Tex. The class guidon bearer was Candidate Daniel Russel III, Glenarden, Md. The guidon will be presented to the honor graduate at the completion of the course.

On Friday morning, Col. Robert C. Williams, deputy assistant commandant of Sill's Artillery and Missile School, welcomed the class to the school. He told them that units at Sill fought to get graduates of OCS because they were the "best-trained artillerymen available."

After the welcoming address, the candidates attended their first classes. The instruction was given by the Artillery Transport Department and covered the general policies of the Army's maintenance program. Duties of the driver were stressed and the responsibility each individual has for the equipment assigned to them.

Candidates learn the Army from the ground up so that they will become familiar with the jobs of the lowest grade enlisted personnel before taking command as an officer. As lowerclassmen during the first seven weeks of the course they learn the duties of the "worker." Later, during middle and upperclass, they will learn the duties of the non-commissioned officer and junior officer, respectively.

The week was completed with an inspection in ranks by the TAC staff on Saturday morning. If the candidates had not learned what OCS was all about during the inspection they had a good indication of the standards expected of them. With a long first week behind them, the candidates can look forward to many classes and a rigid schedule of activities to keep them always on the alert so they will learn how to function under pressure.

Two inspections and one written exam highlighted Class 8's first academic week of OCS training. After a week of processing, the 113 candidates began a rigid schedule of classroom instruction. Although subject to inspection 24 hours a day, formal inspection of personal appearance and individual weapons was conducted on Saturday, Nov. 6 by the battery commander, Capt. Floyd D. Whitehead, and his platoon leaders.



**At Sill's West Range, Candidate Alexander Koziol Jr. of New Ulm, Minn., takes a compass reading on a terrain feature pointed out by 1st Lt. Ziegler, instructor in tactics and combined arms.**



**First Lieutenant Sharpe (left) snaps weapon from hands of Candidate Joseph W. Howze of Cleveland. Sharpe's inspection covered individual weapons and personal appearance.**

## **Second Week**

Class 8 received its first written exam from the Artillery Transport Department of the Artillery and Missile School on Tuesday. The exam covered the instruction the candidates had received on the Army's maintenance program.

On Wednesday, the candidates were finally given a chance to conduct their own inspections of various Army vehicles. A junior officer is often assigned the task of motor officer and is responsible for the condition of the equipment assigned to his battery. The instruction on Wednesday gave the class practice in knowing how to determine the readiness of a vehicle.

An integral part of OCS is the close relationship each candidate has with his platoon leader. On Wednesday afternoon, each candidate was counseled by the officer responsible for his training. The candidates were questioned on their background and individual problems.

Veterans Day was a special day for Class 8 students as they were allowed to leave the OCS area and use the recreational facilities of Fort Sill. Although the time was used by some to polish boots and do the hundreds of things that could not be accomplished on busier days, some candidates took the time to see a movie at one of Sill's three post theatres.

Friday afternoon the candidates received the first classes in what is one of the most important blocks of instruction in their 23 weeks. The class was taught the proper method of giving commands and teaching drill and physical training. They will spend many hours doing practical exercises in these subjects before their training is completed.

The usual inspection by the officers of Delta Battery took place on Saturday morning. The errors of the previous week were corrected but the well-trained eyes of the TAC staff were still able to find some flaws that the candidates had missed.

The candidates will get a look at Sill's range area as they begin their instruction in map reading next week. They will learn how to locate their position on a map by observing the area around them. This past week they knew where they were —IN OCS.

## **Third Week**

"You should be able to locate your general position by observing the surrounding terrain. By taking azimuths from known points, you will be able to plot your exact position." First Lieutenant William A. Ziegler, an instructor at Sill's Tactics and Combined Arms Department, was kept busy last Thursday afternoon instructing a section of OCS Class 8 and answering their many questions as they prepared for a final exam in map reading on Friday.

The instruction took place on Fort Sill's West Range and the candidates moved from one location to another, constantly trying to orient themselves by observing the terrain. Using maps, coordinate scales, protractors, compasses, and grease pencils, candidates of Class 8 tried to piece together the knowledge they had been collecting all week. The course of instruction this week also covered classes in military justice and beginning classes in survey.

On Saturday, the candidates witnessed Artillery Firepower Demonstration. They observed a display of small arms firepower and three artillery “mass missions” in which 80 pieces of tube cannonry simultaneously fired on the same target.

Following the third “mass mission,” the candidates watched as H-34 Choctaw helicopters from Sill’s 1st Aerial Artillery Battery demonstrated the firing capabilities of their 4.5 inch rockets.

Next week the candidates can look forward to a big Thanksgiving Day feast in the OCS mess hall and the possibility of a pass for a few hours on the holiday.

Classes in Field Artillery Tactics begin next week. This block of instruction will last throughout their training. They learned this week how to read a map and travel from one location to another without getting lost. Next week the candidates will begin to learn what they should do when they get there.

### **Fourth Week**

Time is a very valuable but limited ingredient in the life of an officer candidate. The high standards of personal appearance and military deportment must be learned quickly for there is little free time in the candidates’ daily routine.

From 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., the candidates rush through a hectic schedule fighting the clock trying to get all their duties and assignments completed. Their day begins with a mad scramble as the candidates prepare for their physical training. Five minutes after awaking, they are in formation prepared either to run two miles around the OCS track or begin their twelve repetitions of the “daily dozen,” the Army’s standard physical training exercise. The candidates have 15 minutes after PT for showers and a change to their duty uniform. At 5:45 they are in formation for Reveille.

After breakfast, the candidates have 45 minutes to prepare their barracks and the battery area for inspection. At 7:15 the academic schedule begins with classes until 11:30.

After an hour-long break for lunch, classes resume. The candidates’ lunch hour includes traveling to and from classes and waiting in formation to enter the mess hall.

Study Hall begins at 7 p.m. and lasts for two hours. The candidates must have completed their duties prior to Study Hall because they have only an hour after it is over before “lights out” at 10 p.m.

When candidates fall below the standards expected of them, demerits are imposed by Tactical Officers. In addition to being restricted to the OCS area during off-duty hours of the weekend, too many demerits will “qualify” a candidate for participation in the weekend “Jark March.” Named for Lt. Gen. Carl H. Jark, retired, former Fourth Army Commander and the director of OCS in 1941, the march is a four mile struggle up Medicine Bluff 4, a steep hill on Sill’s West Range.

Several members of Class 8 took their first “Jark” this weekend. Upon returning, all candidates had a little more incentive to budget their time more carefully, accomplish all required tasks, get fewer demerits, and avoid the next “Jark March.”

## **Fifth Week**

Azimuth, traverse, triangulation, orienting angle, and declination constant became familiar terms to members of Officer Candidate Class 8 this week as they prepared for their final exam in Survey.

Working with logarithms, aiming circles, theodolites, steel tapes and plumb bobs, the candidates checked their measurements of Fort Sill's terrain against the accurate data held by the Survey instructors of Sill's Target Acquisition Department.

Accurate survey is necessary if the artillery is to provide effective fire support. The exact position of the artillery piece must be known if fire is to be directed accurately on a target. Wednesday and Thursday mornings and all day Friday the candidates worked in the field putting their classroom instruction to practical use. On Wednesday, the candidates performed a position area survey problem. A target area survey problem faced them on Thursday, and Friday's problem was an artillery battalion survey requirement.

Friday's exercise afforded the candidates the pleasure of spending the duty day away from the pressures of Robinson Barracks. The candidates performed the various duties of a survey party. Some candidates acted as tapemen, some as recorders and others as instrument operators.

The final survey exam is scheduled for 7:30 Monday morning. After completion of the exam the candidates immediately begin another block of instruction in communications. They will be taught the techniques and the importance of being able to send and receive messages by wire and by radio.

This Saturday morning the class will view a helicopter demonstration. The show will feature a 105mm howitzer battery being airlifted into position. An indirect fire demonstration by the 4.5-inch rockets mounted on the H34 helicopters of Sill's 1st Aerial Artillery Battery will also take place during the show.

Next Wednesday morning the physical fitness of members of Class 8 will be determined as they take the Army's Combat Proficiency Test.

## **Sixth Week**



**Candidates John A. Kilcoyne (left) and Barton H. Ishizaki take tape measurement during survey exercise**



**Candidate Wayne Smoot of Newcastle, Calif., sights through the eyepiece of a theodolite (a survey instrument)**



**Candidate Michael S. Moseley, Moorestown, N. J., receives green felt and eagle, symbols of middle class**



Crawling, swinging, running, dodging, jumping, throwing and more running highlighted this week for Class 8 at Sill's Officer Candidate School. The candidates put away their classroom notes Wednesday morning and struggled through the five physical fitness exercises which make up the Army's Physical Combat Proficiency test. A maximum of 100 points can be made in each event.

Starting the test is a 40-yard crawl over a dirt course. Two candidates in the class completed the course in 21 seconds. The second problem is the dodge, run and jump, a test of agility and speed. The test includes several obstacles, a six-foot wide ditch and four gates to hinder the runner. A time of 22 seconds is necessary for a maximum score. Five candidates mastered this test with perfect scores.

The horizontal ladder or "monkey bars" is next on the list. Strong hands and arms and good timing are essential in this exercise. Candidate Francis J. Sloan, Chicago, Ill., led the class in this event. Candidates limbered up their arms in the next test, the grenade throw. A man must throw five disarmed grenades 90 feet to the center of a bulls-eye. Three candidates scored the maximum points for the test.

A mile run is the finale of the 500-point-possible PT test. The run must be completed in six minutes and 2 seconds to score the maximum points. Candidate Andres O. Ortiz, San Antonio, Tex., excelled with a time of five minutes and 40 seconds.

Candidate Bobby L. Parker, Thomasville, Ga., led the class with a score of 497. Passing score for the test is 300. Forty-nine of the 109 candidates who took the test scored more than 425 points. Average score for the class was 411.

### **Seventh Week**

Green felt and golden eagles became a part of the uniform of the officer candidates of Class 8 last week when they advanced to middle class status.

In a ceremony Thursday the class received the symbols of middle class from the members of Class 3-66, who are in upper class. The green felt is worn under the OCS brass on the collar. The eagles are worn on the helmet liners which the candidates wear when in fatigues or marching in a parade.

As members of the middle class, the candidates are now charged with supervisory responsibility. They hold positions in OCS which would normally be allotted to noncommissioned officers in other units. In the various details which must be accomplished in the OCS area Class 8 will now supervise the lower classes.

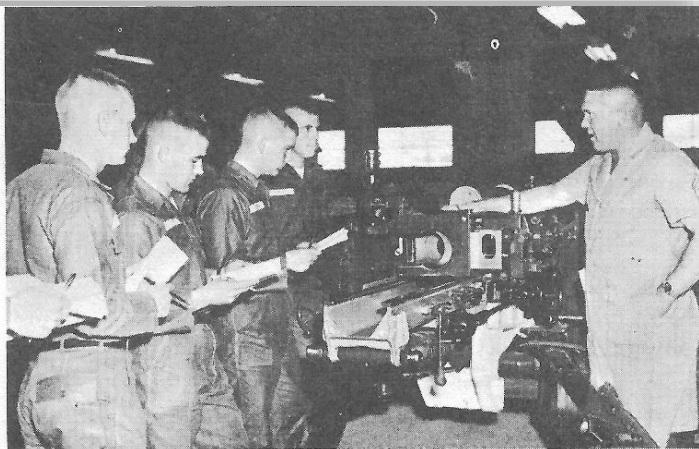
Prior to Thursday's ceremony, the candidates took a written exam in communications. On Friday, they spent the day in the field putting to use the knowledge gained in the classroom as they were required to set up a battalion communications system. Next week the candidates take a six-day break for Christmas leave. They will return to their classes on Dec. 29.

On Saturday, the class entered into the spirit of the holidays by sponsoring a Christmas party for the Lawton Boy's Club. The candidates obtained a cartoon movie for the party and took up a collection for prizes, fruit, and candy. About 400 boys attended.

When the candidates attained middle class status, a milestone was passed; the next hurdle is advancement to upper class. With an abundance of fine training, hard work and intense study behind them, members of Class 8 may confidently anticipate upper class standing eight busy weeks from now.



**Aiming circle procedure**



**105mm breech block mechanism**

### **Eighth Week**

The complexity of accurate artillery fire support was demonstrated to the aspiring officers of Class 8 this week as they began courses in gunnery, the largest block of instruction. Instruction began with an orientation class in fire direction. Candidates learned the general duties of personnel in the fire direction center and became familiar with the various equipment used to convert fire missions to fire commands to the howitzers.

On Tuesday, the class was taught correct terms used in preparing an artillery piece to fire. These fire commands give all the necessary information to the gun crew for commencement, conduct and cessation of fire.

Beginning on Thursday, the candidates were allowed to take time for Christmas leave. Returning to OCS, the class began practical exercises in laying an artillery piece by use of an aiming circle. The tubes of the howitzers must be pointed in a known direction if accurate fire is to be achieved.

Rounding out the general introduction to gunnery, instruction in observed fire was given to the class members. They learned the proper method of requesting a fire mission as a forward observer. Other classes will soon follow in the adjustment of fire.

More specific courses in the art of gunnery begin next week when the candidates receive instruction in the artillery weapons. Each major weapon will be covered in detail and classes conducted in the maintenance, care, and firing characteristics of the piece.

Next week Class 8 will have a new battery commander. First Lieutenant Gerald W. Sharpe, former platoon leader, will replace Capt. Floyd D. Whitehead as battery commander. Captain Whitehead is leaving OCS for duty in Vietnam.

Settling down following Christmas, Class 8 looked forward to a new course of instruction, gunnery; a new battery commander, Lieutenant Sharpe; and a new year. One of the

classes' New Year resolutions was sure to be the determination to walk across the stage in April with a second lieutenant's commission.

### **Ninth Week**

Answers to questions which might save a lieutenant's life were provided for the candidates this week as they took classes that ran the gamut from first aid to insurgency to night patrolling to 105mm howitzers.

All courses of instruction had one thing in common preservation. Beginning Monday, the candidates were instructed in the Army's system of medical support and the medical aspects of nuclear warfare. They learned how the Army cares for its wounded and how to survive and continue their mission in the event of nuclear warfare.

First aid classes were given on Thursday and the candidates learned how to treat themselves if wounded and no other help was immediately available.

Gunnery instruction this week concentrated on the weapons of the Artillery and the care, maintenance and functions of each part of the 105mm and 155mm howitzers. Learning to keep their weapons combat-ready by careful and knowledgeable maintenance was emphasized.

The gunnery classes featured instruction in small groups, with approximately eight candidates assigned to a howitzer with one instructor from Sill's Gunnery Department. Friday afternoon and evening the class was given instruction and a practical exercise in night patrolling techniques. This session included how to locate the enemy and gather necessary information about his position and activities. The candidates experienced the difficulties of negotiating unfamiliar terrain and moving undetected during darkness.

Friday's class was only a preliminary to the instruction which will follow next week. Classes in escape and evasion and counterinsurgency operations will further test the skills acquired during Friday night's practical exercise. The material presented this week may well save their lives in combat. And, more immediately, if properly learned, it will help them with their cannon exam next week as well as the escape and evasion practical exercise later on Sill's West Range.

### **10th -11th Weeks**

Standing at a rigid brace, the candidate knocked three times and was told to enter the room. Approaching the desk, he saluted and reported to his platoon leader. He was asked to sit down and the lieutenant read from a piece of paper as the candidate listened attentively.

Thus began another counseling session at Sill's Officer Candidate School. Each candidate is regularly rated by the other candidates in his platoon and by the tactical staff in his battery. The tactical staff is charged with the responsibility of developing, instructing, and evaluating the candidates in their charge. Each candidate receives a daily inspection by his platoon leader and every candidate in a leadership position receives a written observation report on his performance. Leadership positions are rotated weekly and a candidate may hold varied offices from candidate battery commander to squad leader.

Daily inspections and ratings on each leadership assignment keep the tactical staff busy learning more about each candidate every day. The candidates frequently are counseled by the staff on their progress and special problems. Facing difficult assignments each day and under constant evaluation of their performance, the candidates learn more about themselves and develop confidence in their ability to lead.

A well-timed snowstorm provided the candidates of Class 8 with physical proof of the problems of mobility. The Tactics/Combined Arms Department of Sill's Artillery and Missile School provided part of the Army's answer—movement by air.

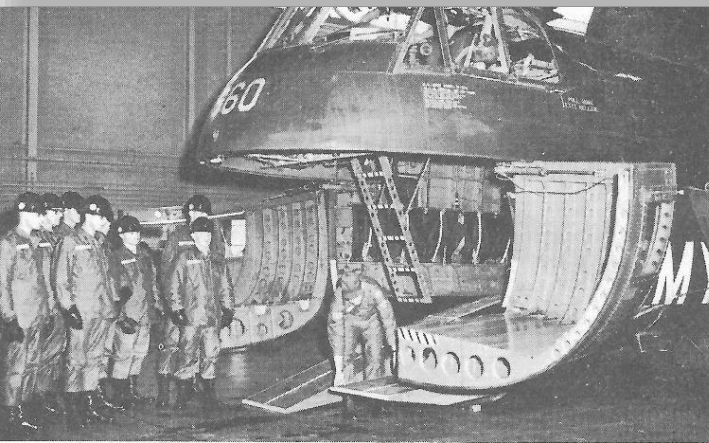
On Wednesday, the officer candidates were instructed in the role of Army Aviation and the characteristics of various fixed-wing and helicopter aircraft. After a classroom presentation on the Army's concept of air-ground operations, the class traveled to a hangar at Fort Sill's airport to view several aircraft and learn their capabilities.

A medium transport helicopter, the CH-37 Mojave; a fixed-wing utility aircraft, the U-6 Beaver; and an experimental fighter-escort helicopter, the Bell Huey Cobra, were among the aircraft shown to the candidates. The Huey Cobra drew the most attention because of its sleek design, speed, and firepower.

The blanketing snowstorm forced some classes at the Officer Candidate School to move indoors. Drill instruction and physical training exercises took place in the gymnasium and inside the barracks. Instructed mostly within the warm, cozy confines of Snow Hall this week, Class 8 journeys outside one day next week to put into practice techniques learned in the classroom.

Included in next week's schedule is a "split shoot" which will test the candidates' ability to fire the 105mm howitzer and adjust the rounds to a target on Sill's impact area.

Fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, and 105mm howitzers are all a part of the Army's new airmobile division. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara praised the division as a "different approach to the solution of tactical problems." To the candidates of Class 8, the instruction was another important phase of learning how to be an officer



**CH-37 'copter loading demonstration**



**Fixed-wing aircraft explained**



Preparing to load 105mm



Firing practice round

### **12th - 14th Weeks**

Having completed 11 weeks at Artillery Officer Candidate School, which included five weeks of gunnery instruction, candidates of Class 8 finally begin practicing their chosen military profession - firing artillery weapons. Although as officers they will probably never fire the weapons, the candidates must learn the duties of each cannoneer to insure that they can train and supervise personnel in efficient operation of the firing battery they will someday command.

After an exhaustive, practical exercise and “dry run” beginning on Monday, the class traveled to West Range for an all-day actual firing exercise. The class was split into two groups as one section fired the 105 mm howitzers while the other section observed the rounds and adjusted the fire to targets in the impact area.

Classroom instruction in the duties of the executive officer of a firing battery and a practical exercise in the operation of the fire direction center were additional classes in gunnery given this week. The candidates will look at Sill’s impact area from a different angle next week as they take a class in aerial observation. From helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, they will observe and adjust artillery rounds.

The skills of an artillery battalion’s forward observer, the most hazardous artillery job, were practiced by the candidates after many hours of preparatory indoor classes before actually expending ammunition on West Range. Peering through their binoculars, the students took turns calling for fire on targets designated by their Gunnery Department instructor. After initial rounds were fired, the candidate was required to sense the deviation from the target and adjust the fire within destructive distance.

Yellow and red automobile bodies were the primary targets in the impact area, representing enemy patrols and command post headquarters. The candidates in Section 1 had already seen these targets from a different angle—observed from helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. Calling for fire from the air and adjusting the rounds to the targets presents additional problems with which the forward observer in modern warfare must cope. This aerial method is presently being used with much success in the jungle warfare of Vietnam.

When the candidates were not in the field practicing fire missions, they were in Snow Hall learning more about the operation of the fire direction center. Another important class given was in methods of military instruction. Proper teaching techniques are essential because when they become second lieutenants the candidates will be required to give many classes to members of their battery.

For two days next week the class will put aside artillery matters as it journeys to one of Sill's rifle ranges to practice firing M-14 rifles. A forward observer protects his battery and front lines with artillery fire but he must also be able to protect himself with small arms fire if necessary.



**Observing-adjusting fire**



**On range with M-14**

Switching from pulling lanyards to squeezing triggers, the candidates first fired the M-14 for practice and later for score, ably assisted by the personnel of Sill's Trainfire Branch. During the two days of firing, the skills acquired in basic training were relearned. M-14 rifle familiarization is part of a weapons orientation which all artillery officer candidates receive during the 23-week course. Before graduation each candidate will fire the 3.5 rocket launcher, the .22 caliber pistol and the M-60 machine gun.

Returning to the classroom, an exam in Tactics was given. Observed fire exercises followed by another Tactics exam high-lighted the remainder of the week's activities. Although another exam in gunnery and several classes in tactical field operations are scheduled, the class members look forward to next week when they attain upperclass standing.

As upperclassmen, the green felt on their uniforms will change to red. They will become candidate officers with increasing responsibility, and more important supervisory tasks will be assigned to them. After 15 weeks at OCS, the last hurdle, upperclass, is a welcome sight on the horizon.

### **15th - 16th Weeks**

One hundred nine members of Class 8 received their red tabs this week and were promoted to upperclass. After 14 weeks of academic training, they are now regarded as junior officers with added responsibilities—but additional privileges. On Thursday the candidates assembled in the battery area and received their tabs from Class 4 which is

in its 18th week. After pinning on the tabs, Class 8 is eligible for salutes from all lowerclass candidates.

Walking in the OCS area is only one of the privileges the candidates now receive; formerly they were required to double-time. The north-south walks are accessible to the Class and they may now smoke outside. Jark Marches will be easier for the new upperclassmen because they will no longer be required to carry their rifles which weigh some 11 pounds at the start but “grow heavier with every step.”

Although the physical efforts required will be easier for the next 8 weeks, the academic schedule and added supervisory responsibilities will keep the candidates busy. The hardest part of gunnery is still before them, and the leadership positions in the all-day field problems are now theirs to assume.

The classroom schedule this week was mainly in preparation for the field problems coming up in the future. During the next eight weeks class 8 will have two tactical field problems which will test all the skills learned in previous training. This week’s training dealt with the defense of an artillery battery against enemy attack and the proper methods of reconnaissance before occupying a position area.

Friday afternoon 64 candidates took the physical examination for Airborne training. Ranger and Special Forces tests were also given and attracted many candidates. Washington’s birthday highlights next week’s schedule as OCS celebrates the holiday from the academic training schedule. An important class will be given next Friday as the candidates learn the duties of safety officer, a job which occupies much of a new second lieutenant’s time.

Upon graduation from Artillery OCS, a candidate receives a gold bar. After assignment to a firing battery, he receives another item of equipment—the yellow helmet of an artillery safety officer. This week, class members learned their duties when wearing this helmet. The safety officer is responsible for the safe firing of an artillery piece and insures that the shell lands within the prescribed safety zone. During all firings at Fort Sill, a safety officer is present to personally check that the weapon is pointed in the right direction and that the range and deflection settings on the weapon are within the safety limits.

During their first full week as OCS upperclassmen, Class 8 looked forward to the traditional “Red Bird Party” on Saturday evening. The party, which is given for all new upperclassmen, took place at Fort Sill’s Polo Club. In addition to the party, the candidates were free for the remainder of the weekend.

Washington’s Birthday was an additional holiday but training continued as usual the rest of the week. An exam on Monday and one on Wednesday kept the candidates occupied during the weekend and the holiday. The class also continued its gunnery instruction and fired some 155mm howitzers Thursday morning.

### **16th-17th Weeks**

In modern warfare, where there is no front line, it is not unusual for an artillery battery to have the enemy “at its front door.” Consequently, an effective perimeter defense must be employed if safety for the firing battery is to be insured.

In previous weeks, the candidates learned from the instructors of the Tactics Department of the Artillery and Missile School about the defense of a firing battery. Last week instructors of the Officer Candidate School and the tactical officers from Delta Battery showed the candidates how to emplace their available weapons to defend the perimeter.

Class 8 combined with Class 4 (upper class of the battalion) in a firing exercise which involved selecting, occupying and firing from a position area. After darkness had fallen, the candidates moved into another location and resumed firing. OCS instructors gave them a tour of the area perimeter and demonstrated the weapon emplacement which would protect the battery. A rotating guard was maintained, and at 3:45 a.m., the candidates returned to the garrison area and began cleaning the equipment used on the exercise. Later that day an inspection of all individual field gear was conducted.

Next week two all-day field problems are scheduled with Class 4. Duties will be rotated so that all candidates can become familiar with the problems in communications, survey and gunnery. Candidates of Class 4 will be assigned the leadership positions and Class 8 will perform the jobs normally handled by the lower grade noncommissioned officers and privates in a battalion.

### **Upper Class Standings**

With the graduation of Class 4, Class 8 assumed the senior role in the 2nd Battalion, the school having two battalions, 1st and 2nd, of seven batteries each.

Of the 108 candidates now in Class 8, six now hold the senior command and staff assignments in the 2nd battalion. The chain of command fluctuates as the candidates rotate through the leadership positions during the 23-week course.

Wednesday the following new staff-command assignments were announced:

Candidates Kenneth W. Simpson, battalion commander; James P. Dower, executive officer; James G. Branden, S3; Jon C. Henderson, S1; and Barton H. Ishizaki, S2.

### **Class Leaders**

Another significant event occurred last week; Class leaders were announced. After 16 weeks at OCS, the leading four candidates, from four different states, range from 22 to 27 years of age. Their prior military service ranges from nine months to nine years. While the average educational level for all Artillery OCS students in Fiscal Year 1966 is 13 and a half years, the average schooling for Class 8's top four is 17 years. Army schools and extension courses helped in achieving this high academic average for the four.

The leader in the class, Candidate Simpson (battalion commander), never went to college but has attended many Army schools. "The more service a man has, the easier OCS is," he stated. He also enrolled in many extension courses offered by the Army before coming to OCS. Simpson is 22 years old, married, and the father of two children. He entered the active Army in January 1963 after a tour in the National Guard. His home is San Diego, Calif.

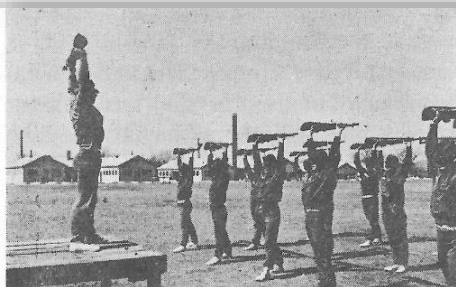
Candidate Dower (battalion executive), Class 8's number two candidate, is 27 years old, married and the father of four. He entered the Army in November 1956 and reached the rank of staff sergeant before entering OCS. When questioned about his educational background, he mentioned that he had taught Survey in the U. S. Army Artillery and



Missile School at Fort Sill before becoming a candidate. He never attended a college and feels that “prior service outweighed prior education in preparing me for OCS”—Candidate Dower comes from Burlington, Vt.

The S3 and third ranking member of Class 8, Candidate Branden, has completed his course work for his masters degree in Sociology. A self-styled “citizen-soldier,” he plans on attaining a PhD and becoming a college teacher. Born in Albany, Ga., Candidate Branden went to Georgia Southern College and did his graduate work at Florida State University. He is 25 years old and single. “My academic background has been very helpful at OCS. I have had more to learn but my years in school have given me a better ability to learn and a broader outlook,” he explained.

Candidate Henderson (S1) was a warrant officer before becoming a candidate. He has served in the Army for eight years and decided to become a commissioned officer because it would “allow more variety in future assignments.” His previous assignment in the Army was as a calibration technician. Although he previously attended three Army schools, Candidate Henderson stated that he “never knew there was so much involved in firing an artillery weapon.” He cited: his previous military service and education as very beneficial in preparation for OCS. Henderson attended Kalamazoo College in Michigan for one and a half years. Married and the father of one child, he is 27 years old and grew up in Michigan.



Candidate John R. Naas leads members of his battery in physical training on which they will be graded.



From left to right: Candidates Simpson, Branden, Henderson, Dower, Class 8's most outstanding.



Direction computer explained to Candidate Paul L. Tessier by 1st Lt. Ralph V. Nichols of Gunnery Department.

### 18th-19th Weeks

Physical training classes serve a twofold purpose at Artillery OCS, (1) achieving physical stamina and (2) learning proper instructional techniques by teaching the exercises to his classmates. Class 8 members will have spent some 76 hours in formal physical training by the time they complete the 23-week course. Each candidate is rated by the tactical officers on his ability to teach and his composure before a group. The candidate is judged on his voice, knowledge of the material, and ability to present the instruction clearly. The physical training drills range from the regular Army “daily dozen” to the various rifle exercises, grass drills and guerilla exercises.

In addition to the physical training classes, each class receives 60 hours of instruction on dismounted drill. Field Manual 22.5, the bible of dismounted drill, is digested and taught by the candidates paragraph by paragraph. Practical opportunities for marching and PT at OCS are abundant. The classes march in formation wherever they go and spend at least 30 minutes each day doing PT. A candidate's rating as an instructor is an

important ingredient in his leadership rating. As a second lieutenant, he may be required to give his battery instruction in the techniques of drill and PT and his methods of presenting the material must be faultless.

This week's training schedule included classes in artillery fire planning, an observed fire examination, and an orientation on the Honest John and Little John rockets. On Saturday, the Class spent the morning in the field operating a fire direction center in preparation for next week's gunnery examination.

Speed and accuracy via computer was the topic this week for OCS Class 8. The M18 Gun Direction Computer (or FADAC) replaced coordinate squares, range deflection protractors, and graphical site and firing tables in the minds of the officer candidates. Fire direction, perhaps the most difficult part of gunnery instruction, involves the use of many items of equipment to determine the proper position of the howitzer tube in order to place a round in a specific location. The computer solves the fire direction problem with greater speed and accuracy than is possible with human calculations.

The FADAC can be programmed to solve fire control problems for five firing batteries, meteorological computations and survey operations. Although not in general use, it is currently being tested and used in several types of situations. The candidates operated the computer to test its speed and were given instruction in the maintenance requirements of the system.

No automation has yet been developed to replace the coordination between the human eye and brain so the candidates had to be content to settle down to the old method of observed fire practice. Peering through binoculars, the candidates adjusted artillery rounds to a target in the impact area. Some candidates were given the opportunity to observe the rounds from the air as they hovered over the target in helicopters.

On Wednesday afternoon, class members received an orientation on reporting for their first duty assignment as second lieutenants. For the next four weeks before graduation, the candidates will attend several classes geared to acclimate themselves to their future status as officers. Class 5 graduates next Tuesday and Class 8 will become the senior class in the entire school.

With the graduation of Class No. 8 on April 15, 1966, the U. S. Army gained 99 new second lieutenants of artillery.

### **The Beginning**

On entering Artillery OCS in November 1965, and being faced with 23 long weeks of intensified study, comprehensive examinations and inspections, and exhaustive-exhausting field and physical exercises, the members of Class 8 almost immediately adopted the same attitude toward the several months ahead. They found it would be more reassuring to regard each successfully completed day as "one more behind me" rather than count the days remaining to be successfully completed—days sure to be filled with increasingly difficult challenges and requirements, to say nothing of the ever-present chance of being eliminated or dropped back to another class.

For many of Class 8's future officers, the month before graduation had all characteristics of a first-class paradox—the passage of time was slow as it rapidly sped into the past. It seemed time went by at such a snail-like pace that each minute took an hour. On the other hand, days were dissipated with such great speed that a week was gone before it was missed.

### **The Ending**

Regardless of the rate of speed at which time passed, or seemed to pass, it is believed safe to say that at this point the candidates had abandoned the attitude of “one more day behind me” and that they are now confidently counting the days ahead.

Final examinations began with a comprehensive gunnery examination. The two-hour test covered all previous instruction given over a 14-week period. Next came a tactics examination which included fire-planning and organization for combat. This was followed by two demonstrations conducted by the Tactics Department with a rifle company performing in the defense and the attack phases of operation.



Familiarization firing

Familiarization firing with the .45 caliber pistol, the artillery officer's basic weapon, preceded a 24-hour field problem on the West Range. The candidates performed normal artillery operations until close to midnight and then established an overnight bivouac.

As graduation drew nearer and nearer, the agenda included a panel discussion for Class 8. Heading the panel was Col. Charles E. Howard, commandant of the Officer Candidate School, assisted by Lt. Col. Donald H. Richardson, assistant commandant, and Capts. James R. Heldman and William R. Kulik, battery commanders.

Having undergone week after week of learning their future duty responsibilities as commissioned officers, the candidates did not ask questions regarding what an officer does. Instead, they asked, and were encouraged to ask, questions concerning educational opportunities, advanced Army schooling possibilities, and the many personal benefits accruing to an officer and his family.

Fielding questions on personnel matters was CWO John M. Futch, personnel officer. The chief of Sill's educational division, Mr. Russell Croach, was also on hand to answer queries about civilian schooling through the Army's several bootstrap programs.

The schedule also included two all-day tactical artillery field problems. While these exercises were nothing new to the candidates, they did provide another chance to sharpen their artillery skills before reporting to their first assignments as officers. However, something new was provided in the form of instruction and practical work in rappelling and river crossing.



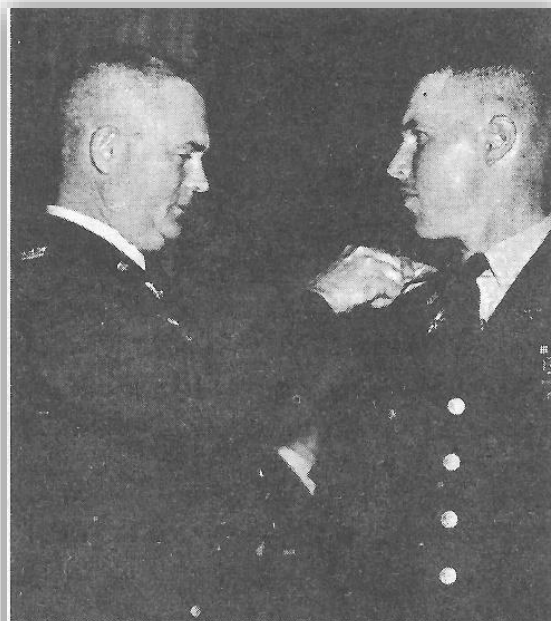
Descents were made from three cliffs of different heights on Sill's Medicine Bluffs mountain. Using rope and hip harness, the candidates lowered themselves down the cliffs. On reaching ground level, they were required to reach the far side of an expanse of

water on ropes strung across for that purpose. Two methods of crossing were used—first with two ropes, then with one—and all candidates tried both.

Before graduation next week, the class will take part in an escape and evasion problem. It will begin with an afternoon orientation. As darkness approaches, the candidates will set out in groups of five and move to prescribed area nine miles away. They will attempt to make the move without being spotted and upon arriving in the designated area set up a bivouac and spend the night.

### **Commencement**

Traditional events leading to issuance of certificates of graduation and commissions as officers are the graduation parade and the reception-dance. Held on the OCS parade ground, the graduation parade of Class 8 was reviewed by Col. Paul S. Cullen, CO, 1st Field Artillery Brigade. That night at the reception-dance, attended by many of Fort Sill's high-ranking officers with their wives, the Gunner's Trophy was presented to Lawrence E. Soper for highest gunnery average, and the Shooter's Award went to Wayne Smoot for highest grades in observed fire.



**Honor Graduate Simpson has bars pinned on by Fort Sill's Colonel Cullen.**

With Colonel Cullen as guest speaker, the graduation ceremony was conducted at Snow Hall Auditorium. Class 8's honor graduate was Kenneth W. Simpson. Distinguished military graduates with Simpson included Jon Henderson, James P. Dower, James G. Brandon, Marvin C. Williams, Thomas E. Konkle, Barton H. Ishizaki, James H. Parsley and Michael F. McCardle.

Second lieutenants all, the 99 graduates of Class 8 have passed an important milestone on their road to accomplishment—a milestone they can look back on with personal pride and satisfaction which will enable them to look the future squarely in the face with justifiable confidence, keen understanding, and sincere dedication.

**Richard D. Allen: 9-66**

When reporting to Robinson Barracks in November, 1965, I braced myself for an experience I knew would be life altering and one of the most demanding challenges I had ever undertaken. I wasn't disappointed. From the time I arrived until graduation in April 1966 there didn't seem to be a second that wasn't planned and executed according to plans.

My memories of OCS Class 9-66 are as clear today as they were in 1965. I have searched those memories to find and pass along some humorous situations or fond experiences. No luck. Although there were many situations and experiences that remain vivid in my mind none can be described as fond or humorous. It was clear that the course structure was designed to strip most individuality and remove the huge variety of personal baggage each candidate brought to the school. The goal was then to mold that group into a cohesive, mature, disciplined, and well motivated team. There is no doubt in my mind that objective is as valid today as it has been for decades.

My wife and young son accompanied me to Lawton. Meeting her in the parking lot to pick up clean laundry once or twice a week was huge for me during my early days at Robinson Barracks. There were few occasions when quiet, peace and sanity gave a respite from normal activities. This was the case during our meetings in the parking lot even though the visits were only about ten minutes long and no physical contact was allowed.

I was by no means a mental giant and I struggled academically. My motivation became one of basic survival. Perhaps that is the reason I can find no humor or lightheartedness in my OCS experience. Like most things at Robinson Barracks, even my struggles to move forward had redeeming value. It taught me how to prioritize, how to achieve balance, how to really buckle down when necessary, that the whole is greater than its parts, and to never, ever give up. Each candidate learned how to compete, to have compassion for fellow candidates, and that the output of teamwork is almost always greater than that of individual effort. Individuals continue to develop these qualities throughout their lifetime. OCS candidates receive a compressed, basic framework of these traits in a brief six-month period. Like everyone else and with varying degrees of success, Artillery officers must then take these lessons into the world and let all the external factors such as moral values, education, associations, life's experiences, individual goals and initiatives mold the person and the officer he will become. More often than not, the foundation upon which graduates will succeed in life are gained, in large part, through the OCS experience.

I clearly recall our cadre and how each was a mentor to our entire class. Our Battery Commander was Captain Kulik. Our Executive Officer was LT Phaup and our Platoon Leaders were LT's Mangrum, Armstrong and Drop Diperro. Although each played a part in the daily lives and training of the candidates, I'm not sure they completely understood the huge significance each would have on the candidates. By far however, the officer that had the greatest impact on me was Marine Gunnery Instructor Captain Yarnell. He was a remarkable instructor and a professional example I will never forget. He took the time and was able recognize individual capabilities and then carefully factor them into the total molding process. I will always be grateful for the sterling impression he made and impact he had on me both personally and professionally.

Rarely a day has gone by in my life that I have not and do not draw from the experiences I had while attending Officer Candidate School. For those experiences I will always be grateful albeit I did not have a full-scale appreciation for them at the time.

Of course, each member of Class 9-66 made an unforgettable impression. Although everyone had a different level of challenge and commitment, you could always count on mutual support, understanding, and pride in what we were becoming as a group. These were not things you had to stop and think about. These were qualities you simply knew were always there. As each graduate of Artillery Officer Candidate School will tell you, “I made lifelong friends at Robinson Barracks. I will never forget most of them and I continue to stay in contact with many.” After all of these forty-five years I can say that I am proud to have been a member of Class 9-66, I consider myself a better man for having had the experience, and I am honored to have attended the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill Oklahoma.

### **Tobias Wolff: 9-66**

#### **From “In Pharaoh’s Army” (*Memories of the Lost War*) 1994**

I was at loose ends and bored. My company commander had been working on me to apply for Officer Candidate School, and I finally agreed. I took some tests and went before a panel of generals and colonels who took note of my command presence and pronounced me officer material. They told me I’d be on my way in a month or so.

My orders came. Instead of sending me to the infantry school at Fort Benning, they assigned me to Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I felt both guilty and relieved. Since the Special Forces had no howitzers, they could not reasonably send me back there. My logic was impeccable, but six months later, with twenty years of life under my belt and new gold bars on my shoulders, I opened my orders and saw that I was going right back where I started, to Fort Bragg and the Special Forces.

My position was absurd. While laboring to become an artilleryman I had acquired a body of skills now utterly useless to me—trigonometry! calculus! - and lost or grown clumsy in those I needed. It was going to be hard for the troops at Fort Bragg to take me seriously as an officer when some of them had known me not long before as an enlisted man, and as something of a fuck-up. I couldn’t even take myself seriously. In my OCS class I’d finished forty-ninth out of forty-nine, the class goat—like Custer, as no one lost a chance to tell me.

It wasn’t as disgraceful as it looked. There’d been one hundred twenty of us to start with. But it was still pretty bad. I barely passed the gunnery course, and then only by pulling all-nighters in the latrine. I was chronically late and unkempt. My jocose manner amused only a few of my classmates and none of my training officers, who in their reports labeled me “extraneous” and “magic”—not a compliment in those circles—and never failed to include me in the weekly Tark, an hours-long punishment run in full field equipment, which was so effective in producing misery that people used to line the streets to watch us stumble past, as they would have gathered to watch a hanging. Some bystanders were actually moved to pity by the sight of us and slipped us candy bars and words of encouragement. The true Christians among them threw water on our heads.

In the end I finished OCS only because, mainly to amuse myself, I had written a number of satirical songs and sketches for our battery to perform on graduation night. These revues, in the style of Hasty Pudding or the Princeton Triangle, were a tradition at Fort Sill and a big headache to our training officers, whose talents did not lie in this direction. Along with hundreds of other visitors, the post commandant and his staff would be in attendance. There'd be hell to pay if the show was a flop. When the time came for the final cuts to be made in our class it was discovered that I was the only one who could put the whole thing together. They kept me on to produce a farce. That was how I became an officer in the United States Army.

### **Guy Ferstl: 11-66**

I attended FAOCS as a member of Class 11- 66 (Papa Battery) from mid November 1965 until we graduated on May 10, 1966. We were in the old WWII wooden style barracks as the new masonry types were not even started until after the class graduated. I have a few stories that might seem amusing:

During our initial week, 1SG Bradford discovered I had previously run an Arms Room and I was assigned as the Battery Armorer. This meant that during Saturday morning formation inspections I was busy issuing or taking back the unit's rifles and missed the inspections. The only "gigs" I received were on the daily cubical inspections. By the time we achieved Middle Class status, I was rarely on restriction unlike many of my comrades.

One late Saturday evening I was in the barracks talking with three or four of the guys who were restricted. They decided they were all hungry for pizza and since I was in my Greens, had a car and could drive into Lawton, I should be the one to go. I reluctantly agreed, knowing full well that severe discipline would result in being caught. Everything went fine until I was coming back into the OCS area carrying two large pizza boxes. I then heard the dreaded sound of metal clicking against concrete coming towards my location. It was apparently one of the Upper Class Staff accompanied by the regular Duty Officer. I quickly ducked under the crawl space below the wooden barracks and concealed myself. As the two got close to my position, one commented that he thought he smelled pizza. They commenced entering and inspecting all the nearby buildings. After fifteen or twenty minutes the clicking sound faded away and I made my way back to my barracks. My Greens were filthy from the low crawl and I was sweating profusely. All my friends could do though was to complain about me being late and the pizza being cold!

Another event occurred during Middle Class. I was not having any problems with my academics and found the requisite daily evening study halls quite boring. One evening I smuggled a Mad Magazine into study hall inside a Technical Manual. Halfway through the period I found myself fully engrossed in reading the magazine and did not notice several people that entered the room from my rear. I then felt as if someone were staring at me and looked up to see a full bird Colonel scowling down at me. I snapped to attention and assumed as severe a "brace" as I could manage. Visions of myself departing the OCS area the next day on orders for Vietnam raced through my brain. After about ten seconds, the Colonel's frown changed into a slight grin and he chuckled under his breath. He said to me, "Son, you need to get rid of that!" Then he and his escort left as quickly as they came in. I quickly placed the magazine under my other books and opened a TM to do some authentic studying. I never heard another single word concerning the incident. My



study habits improved significantly from that point on. From this event I learned a lifelong lesson that sometimes a little compassion can significantly go a long way.

My final story was the result of the initiation into Upper Class status as “Red Birds.” My classmates and I were required to paint our toenails a bright Artillery Red. We apparently used a nail polish that had excellent wear qualities. After the initiation it never occurred to me to use nail polish remover on my toes. All was well until about a week after graduation when my fiancé, Donna and I were married. Prior to this she had been trained as a hairdresser and had been acquainted with male members of her profession that were of an alternate lifestyle. The first time on our honeymoon I had my shoes and socks removed, she almost went into shock after seeing my red toenails. At this point she harbored doubts about my sexuality. Apparently she got over these misgivings as we now have been together for over forty-three years.

Another story of the FAOCS involves some artistic ability I apparently had at that time (ability long lost now). Early on during Lower Class I painted a mural on the front of our barracks next to the entrance. My platoon’s TAC Officer was 2LT David A. Peters. LT Peters was a recent Distinguished ROTC Graduate from Oklahoma State University. After attending the Artillery Basic Course he completed Jump School and was very proud of that accomplishment. A few days after I completed the mural, I was ordered to report to LT Peters. Fearing something bad was in store for me, I was relieved to learn that he had seen the mural and wanted Jump Wings painted on the floor in front of his desk. I obtained some black and silver paint and produced a set of wings approximately eight inches wide on the floor. They were situated so that when a candidate was receiving guidance from his TAC Officer while in the Front Leaning Rest Position, he would be staring straight down at the Jump Wings. LT Peters was reassigned about halfway through our class, so his picture is not included our graduation photograph. In March 1968 I arrived in Vietnam and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery, which was in Direct Support of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. Upon joining the unit I learned that Peters, now a Captain, was one of the Battalion’s Liaison Officers with a maneuver battalion of the Brigade. He was KIA on April 4th, before I got a chance to reintroduce myself. I believe CPT Peters is buried at the post cemetery at Fort Sill.

My class, Papa Battery, Class 11-66, was one of the last classes that did not include a candidate who came in under the College Option Program. A College Op Candidate was a college graduate that enlisted with the option of attending OCS after Basic and AIT and had not been in the Army long enough to attain enlisted promotions. Because of the lack of College Ops in our class, I was only one of two candidates in Papa Battery who were Private E-2s prior to OCS. Upon completing OCS, most graduates were awarded the Good Conduct Medal for their enlisted service, unless they had previously received the award. At that point in time, if you saw an officer wearing the GCM, there was a good chance that he/she was an OCS graduate (over time the College Op Program changed that perception). Unfortunately for me, to receive the GCM you had to have at least one year enlisted service. I enlisted on May 27, 1965 and our class graduated on May 10, 1966, so I was a few weeks shy of being eligible for the award. In a way I was disappointed that I completed OCS so soon.

**John F. Moran: 11-66**

Several memories of OCS come to mind, in no particular order:

Turning “Red,” w/ Tabasco sauce

“Hi Diddle Diddle, File from the middle”

“Hanging around” an upperclassman’s cube

Directing fire from the bus because it’s so cold

Having your glossy, spit-shined boots melt, and look like chocolate because it’s so hot

Practicing being an FO, in the barracks, wearing just your steel pot

“Pledging” the barracks floor, for that high shine

Double-timing everywhere as “lower gross”

Trouble with logarithms in surveying

Jarks & MB4

Getting red tabs and heel clickers

“Cooperate and graduate”

**Edward W. Ross: 15-66****Remarks at the Artillery Officer Candidate School****Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony May 22, 1997**

Since I retired from the Army in August 1984, I have worked in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in one capacity or another. Immediately before assuming my current position three years ago, I was the Director of the Office of Prisoner of War-Missing in Action Affairs. In that job, I traveled around the world attempting to account for the nearly 90,000 service people still unaccounted for from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War.

Those experiences instilled in me a deep appreciation for the bravery and the sacrifices our comrades have made over the years. That is why I am extremely proud and honored to be inducted into the Artillery Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame today and to have the privilege of representing my fellow inductees. Of all the groups I have ever been a member of, I am prouder to be a member of no other group of people more than this one.

When I was asked to speak for all 34 of us being inducted today because time would not permit each of us to come up here individually, I gave a great deal of thought to what I should say. At first, I thought I should direct my remarks to those of you who are here to witness this occasion, expressing the gratitude I’m sure each of us feels as we are inducted. But after much reflection, I have decided to direct my brief remarks to my fellow inductees. While I do not know the personal histories of each and every one of you, I know many, if not most of you, are a lot like me. Many of you were drafted into the army, while others enlisted for one reason or another. However we came into the Army, we were selected for officer candidate school because we demonstrated potential for leadership at a time when our country needed leaders.

But if you are like me, you did not think of yourself so much as a leader of men, but as a young man setting out on a journey to an unknown destination. Whether we entered OCS during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War, more than any physical destination, each of us went looking for ourselves.

I was drafted into the Army in 1965 after dropping out of College. God only knows what might have become of me had I not been accepted to OCS and commissioned an officer in the U.S. Army Artillery.

It is true for me, and I am confident that it is true for most of you; every door that subsequently opened to us probably would not have opened had we not gone through what we went through here at Fort Sill, had we not learned the lessons this place had to teach us.

Despite the hardships - the Jark marches up MB-4, the harassment by upperclassmen, the cold nights on guard duty and in the field - I now look back on my experience here with only fond memories.

My only regret is that so many of the young men who passed through here with us did not survive our country's wars in which they were called to make the ultimate sacrifice. Six members of my own class gave their lives in Vietnam.

From my office in Washington, I watch with great interest and some trepidation the many changes our Army and the armed forces of the United States are undergoing today. Budget cuts and the spiraling cost increases in weapons and technology are resulting in a smaller, more technology-reliant force. Tomorrow's wars will not afford us the time we've had in the past to train and deploy new officers and enlisted personnel. Future wars, for the most part, will be fought with the force in being at the outset.

Many might argue that the Officer Candidate School that you and I knew has been relegated to the pages of history. Perhaps they are correct, I do not know. What I do know, is that this country will continue to produce men and women like us, who, loving our country, and in search of ourselves, will come forward to serve with honor and distinction whenever and wherever we are required.

I know that you share with me the sentiment that as long as we live, we will always remember the few short weeks or months we spent in OCS. We will always remember entering here as boys, leaving as men.

I want to thank my fellow inductees for being who and what you are and for the honor and privilege of representing you. And I want to thank MG Randall Rigby, commanding general of Fort Sill and the Artillery Training Center and all the members of the Field Artillery Association for this moving and memorable ceremony and for all they do to keep the spirit of OCS alive.

### **Dick Kjellsen: 17-66**

Bringing out some memories; I don't remember being called anything but a smack, as in "Suck it in, Smack!," and "Hit a Brace, Smack!," unless I was being reminded that my name was not "Candidate Zilch."

The area around 3rd & C in Lawton was not known as "The Combat Zone" without cause. One of the songs I recall was "I went down to the Oriental;" the Oriental was one of the many bars near the corner of 3rd & C. When I returned many years later it was a surprise

to see the area totally re-done. The Club in the OCS area was (I think) called the Red Bird Club (not very creative, but...)

I did many miles on MB-4, but the most memorable trip up the hill was not until 1999; I served for many years in the USAR with a fellow OCS Grad (although not a classmate), and in our commute we discussed many things including memories of the Jark. We had casually mentioned having our ashes spread on MB-4; my friend died on New Year's Day of 1999 after a 6-month fight with smoking-related cancer, and I asked his widow if she wanted me to see if we could scatter his ashes at Fort Sill. He was immensely proud of being a Field Artilleryman, and she thought he would have liked that.

I contacted Fort Sill to ask for permission (fully intending to carry out the mission in the dead of night if they said no); somewhat to my surprise, they not only agreed but they provided a Chaplain and an escort. So, during the OCS Reunion of 1999, a small group of friends and relatives went up MB-4 and, after a brief ceremony, scattered the ashes of LTC (USAR-Ret) Bill Strickland, OCS class of 27-66. The ceremony took place shortly before sunset, and in a fitting finale we could hear Howitzers firing in the distance as we finished. I'm not sure if this would be possible today, but prior to 9-11 Fort Sill was very cooperative (to include sending along a photographer from "The Cannoneer" who did a story in the paper about our mission).

### **Raymond F. Kreiner: 17-66**

About 15-20 of us reported to Class 16-66 in January of 1966. We went through our preparations to start, and then they came back and told us we did not have enough for the class. We were told that we would start in Class 17-66, and to put our stripes back on. Most of us were prior service, and we had an E-7, several E-6s, and a larger number of E-5s and 4s. I was a sergeant.

We did as we were told and used the Upper Class sidewalks to go to mess and other places, not really knowing what it was all about. We did notice several candidates with red on their uniforms watching us intently. When the time came to start our class, we all took our stripes back off. All of a sudden, a large number of Red Birds converged on us and we stayed in the front leaning rest position for what seemed like hours. "Welcome to OCS."

My other remembrance was at gunnery practice one day. Our gunnery officer, CPT Spicer, gave me a mission of anti-tank guns in the open. I jumped up, called my mission, and had a first round hit on my target, junk. I closed my mission by announcing "End of mission, anti-tank guns dispersing."

CPT Spicer immediately assesses that anti-tank guns do not disperse, only people do. I said, rather impertinently, "Begging the CPTs' pardon sir, did you not see the junk dispersing?"

We all got a good laugh out of it. And he gave me back the points that he had subtracted. Of all the TAC Officers that we had in OCS, CPT Spicer was the most memorable and easiest going officers I have ever had the opportunity of interacting with. Great guy and fantastic leader of men and women.

## **“Sill’s Officer Candidate School Will Mark Its 25th Anniversary”**

### ***Lawton Constitution (Friday, July 15, 1966)***

Fort Sill’s Artillery Officer Candidate School will mark its 25th anniversary Saturday. The anniversary will be celebrated along with the graduation of OCS Class 18-66, designated as the anniversary class. Its 70 members will bring to a total of 34,884 the number of graduates of the school.

Lt. Gen. James H. Polk, assistant chief of staff for force development, Department of the Army, will address the 70 graduates during formal commencement exercises which begin at 10 a.m. Tuesday in Snow Hall Auditorium.

Also in observation of the anniversary, all OCS personnel, including officers, enlisted men, civilian workers and their dependents will hold an organization day picnic from 1 p.m. till 6 p.m. Saturday at the 214th Group Recreation Area. The event will feature barbequed steak, softball, volleyball, horseshoes, badminton, dancing and a play area for the children.

### **Donald E. Zlotnik 18-66**

#### **“Memories of OCS- March to Mess”**

There are two military formations that are so refined they are works of art; a company of paratroopers wearing their double-soled Cochran jump boots double timing and singing airborne cadence—and—a battery of Upper Class Redbirds in OCS Marching to Mess wearing their steel-plated (toe and heel) boots.

The day a Middle Class battery turned “Red,” (upper-class) when they fell out for their first formation, every man wore steel plates on the toes and heels of their boots/shoes. One never forgets being a Lower Class OCS candidate and hearing the sound of a single Redbird approaching them from behind—it was the sound of terror about to be unleashed.

After having marched together for four months their formations were absolutely perfect, but still even the slightest difference now in their step would be extremely noticeable and the March to Mess was the ultimate OCS formation.

There was a yellow line painted across the asphalt road in front of the Mess Hall. During the March to Mess the order was always the Redbird Battery (Red Tabs) went first followed by the Middle Class (Green Tabs) and then Lower Class (Ugh—Infantry blue) battery.

The student battery commander was responsible for halting the battery so every member in the front eight-man rank had their boot tips lined up perfectly on the yellow line. Even the slightest infraction would result in having to go back to their battery area and start over again. When the senior Redbird Battery reached the yellow line and came to a halt, their metal tabs sounded like a single rifle shot as they came to a halt. In the absolutely rare occasion where a Redbird battery failed their March to Mess—the lowerclassmen caught absolute hell once the Redbirds got inside the Mess Hall—but!—there was a glorious ten minutes when the lowerclassmen could actually EAT without Redbird supervision.

I was selected as the student battery commander for the first week of my OCS class and was responsible for our first March to Mess, which normally was an absolute disaster for lower classes resulting in very few of the men getting to eat anything their first meal—Redbirds waiting inside the Mess Hall also had a lot to do with not eating. Fortunately—I was a Special Forces buck sergeant before attending OCS and had learned to recon as much as possible BEFORE entering a danger zone in force. I had arrived at Fort Sill three days early and had been parking my TR-4 in the staff parking lot and observing the activities across the street. (I paid dearly for doing that—my daily recon having not gone unnoticed by you-know-who.) I observed a dozen or so marches to mess and had a general idea of what was expected.

I briefed the entire battery of student leaders making up the first rank on what was going to occur and we had practiced on our own marching to mess. Our FIRST attempt was perfect and we were allowed to enter the Mess Hall—a place I had NOT been allowed to observe prior to entering and what a surprise it was!

I have had the pleasure of participating in BOTH of those excellent formations and on my death bed if I hear the sound of an Airborne Company double-timing and singing cadence as the background sound to a Redbird Battery Marching to Mess—I know I'm headed for Heaven with some mighty fine men!

### **Jack Cairnes: 20-66**

For me there was nothing funny or fun about OCS. I think pretty much all of us knew that we were headed to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). I figured that I better pay attention and learn all I could about being a combat Forward Observer (FO), Battery Fire Direction Officer (FDO) or Executive Officer (XO). As it turned out I served in all three capacities.

OCS, for me, was a transition period from being a party animal with few or no responsibilities to being a serious and responsible combat leader. OCS TAC Officers were firm and expected immediate obedience to any order given. Upperclassmen or, Red Birds, as we knew them had just about made it and were always alert to any indiscretion. So was I after I turned Red.

Fun or funny, not for me.... life changing is more how I would describe my OCS Experience. From then to now I will forever be grateful to being selected, to my TAC Officers and to my Country for molding me into a responsible citizen and soldier. I take great pride in being an OCS graduate.

### **Roy V. Hogsed: 20-66**

**You've got to love Sergeant Majors:** We were on our final Field Training Exercise as Upperclassmen and I was the acting S3. Alpha Battery had made a night move with two guns, moving them forward and firing them into position. This would make it easier and quicker for the other guns to come on-line in the morning, when they moved forward. It was about 2100 hours and it looked like we were settling in for the night. My Tactical Officer, a Marine Major, had stepped out of the Command APC, leaving me alone. I was trying to guess what they might throw at us next. Maybe they would hit us with a time-on-target all guns, giving Alpha Battery FDC a challenge. What happened next was much more challenging and dangerous. The landline rang and it was Candidate Robert Byrnes on the line, screaming cease fire. Byrnes was with an Army Captain Tactical Officer and

they had just completed firing-in the two guns that Alpha Battery had moved forward. Byrnes indicated that a round had gone off directly above them and shrapnel had torn through the tent they were in. My first thought was that this was part of the training exercise, but then I realized that Byrnes was very serious. I immediately checked to see if we were firing any guns over his position and we were not. Byrnes called again, this time with an even more urgent request for a cease fire. He said that another round had gone off and he and the Captain were under a field table inside the tent trying to protect themselves. I immediately went to the command frequency and called for "Cease Fire all units! I say again, Cease Fire all units!" Within minutes there was a Bird Colonel chewing on my ass wanting to know who and where my Tactical Officer was. This was a typical army colonel, focusing on why I didn't know my Tactical Officer's name and not why I called a cease fire. When the Marine Major did show up, the Colonel turned his attention toward him and wanted to know who authorized a candidate to call cease fire for all of Fort Sill. As they were getting a little heated, the Sergeant Major that accompanied the Colonel, asked the 64 Thousand Dollar question; "Candidate Hogsed why did you call for a Cease Fire all units?" That question led to them talking to the Captain with the two guns receiving the shrapnel. It turned out that the Colonel's eight-inch unit was testing a variable time fuse and was firing over the two-gun position. His unit had not taken into consideration our night move. I'm not sure what happened to the Colonel.

I do know that the Byrnes' story was very sad. He was killed in action in Vietnam while trying to save an infantry platoon leader during an ambush. They had just recently returned from Hawaii, where Byrnes was best man in the platoon leaders wedding. The platoon leader was also killed. Robert and I became friends during our first PT test while running the combat mile. Before we started the run, LT Wargo, our tactical officer, informed us that he would do 50 push-ups for anyone that could break a five-minute combat mile. I turned to Robert and said, "Let's put that glorified Red Bird on the ground" and Robert agreed. Robert paced me for the first two laps and I was on my own for the last two with Robert shouting encouragement from the infield. I finished with a five minute and a few seconds mile. Not good enough to put Wargo on the ground, but I believe we gave him a good scare. Robert, I salute you my fallen brother.

**Decorating your barracks like Heorot Hall:** It was an honor and a privilege to carry the American flag in the color guard for five graduations at OCS. My biggest fear was not marching in front of the graduating class, but screwing up when retrieving the American flag from the commandant's office. Along with this honor, I also had the privilege of being the guidon bearer for our Battery. Upon taking this position, our tactical officer, LT Wargo, made it very clear not to ever lose our guidon. He said it would be a disgrace to our battery. This led to a brilliant idea. We were getting hammered with demerits from the Middle and Upper Class candidates. To get back at them, we took it on ourselves to embarrass them. Being lowerclass, we were the last battery to check into the mess hall for lunch. After posting our guidon, I was the first to enter the mess hall. On this day, I immediately went to the first empty table and requested to be excused, explaining to the upperclassman that I was feeling nauseous. I left the mess hall and went directly back around to the guidon station, where I secured 8 to 10 guidons and carried them to our barracks. We placed them in the rafters on each side of the bay with the banners hanging down over our foot lockers. It looked just like Heorot Hall in Beowulf. All the fury that was to come was worth it just to see the smile on LT Wargo's face, when he entered our barracks. That afternoon was pure hell when the Middle and Upper Class came to retrieve

their guidon. The ranking Upper Class actually took our guidon from us, while standing us at attention in formation. The tradition was that you had to retrieve your guidon no matter where it was hidden. This tradition was ended by the commandant when the Upper Class placed our guidon on top of the water tower.

**Supernumerary:** The most difficult part of guard mount was the demerits you would receive from having a dirty rifle. This was due to the dust and dirt freely blowing through the wooden buildings at OCS. You could clean your rifle immaculately, place it in the armory and a few hours later it would be filthy based on the Oklahoma wind. To overcome this, I checked my M14 out of the armory with the idea that I would clean it and return it as late as possible, hoping that it would still be clean the next morning. Initially, I disassembled my rifle and took the parts into the shower. I scrubbed each part with a toothbrush and soap, rinsed with extremely hot water and dried with a towel. I reassembled the rifle and jogged it back to the armory. To my surprise the armory was closed. My only option was to sleep with my rifle. Needless to say, I did not sleep at all and was extremely happy to hear reveille the next morning. The upperclassman inspecting guard mount was very impressed with my spotlessly clean rifle and made me supernumerary. If he only knew.

**The Grotto Wagon:** The first few weeks at OCS were the most difficult from learning a new ranking system, how to organize your cube/footlocker, falling out for formation at all kinds of weird hours and most of all learning how to eat a square meal. Initially I thought they were trying to starve us to death, which made the statement “eat like you’re at home,” sound like a giant dinner bell ringing for a pack of hungry wolves. I know our moms had taught us all better manners. This brings to mind a humorous situation involving food from the grotto wagon and taking a break during study hall. There were four of us in our barracks that were not on mandatory study hall and our routine was to take turns on bringing snacks back to the barracks. (Note: there was a standing order that prohibited food in the barracks.) On this day, it was my turn to go to the grotto wagon. Upon entering the back of the wagon, I started to fill my arms with the snack requests I had been given, four cartons of milk, four pastries, and a cup of ice cream. I paid the driver and exited the front of the grotto wagon to find a TAC Officer looking me square in the face. He sternly asked me what I was going to do with all that food and I replied, “Sir, eat it, Sir.” I made it through three milks, two pastries and most of the ice cream. Ultimately, I had to dispose of the balance. Needless to say, I felt sick but the worst part was the reception I received when I returned to the barracks. The guys were not sympathetic at all and wanted their money back, which of course I returned.

### **John R. Burns: 21-66**

Living with Class 21-66 was a “check point” in my life. One of those points on a patrol you must hit to move on. I never thought of it as a destination or a point of origin, simply a place, time and change along the route of my planned lifetime military career. Like the multiple tours in Vietnam, college, some firefights, grad school, a divorce, children, Jump School, multiple surgeries, Ranger School, Cancer and other landmark events in my life; I realize that OCS changed me and the member’s class 21-66 forever.

Today, I went through the class photo, creating a roster and checked it against the list of the names on the Wall. I was a sobering experience. Not that there were so many on the



Wall, but that I remembered the people in class 21-66 so well. Only four of us are on the wall, thank God!

Hendricks, Greendyke, Ligons and Wolf, I knew them all. Daryl Ligons was my “cubie” during Upper Class; I had known he bought it shortly after it happened. He was a good guy and would have made a good man, officer and father. I envied his speed and endurance on the “Jark.” He got me through one or two and kept me off the hill when I was a CATO. We had fun together. He could turn anything into a laugh, even the TAC’s. I didn’t know the others as well, they were Terry, Gerry and I don’t remember Wolf’s first name, I’m sorry Wolf.

The Jark was 4.2 miles roundtrip -- After an argument in 1967 somebody actually had to measure it with a steel survey tape. (Not me) Some wise assed 2nd LT from ROTC bet that it was not accurate; it cost him MUCH beer. Of course much was consumed during the measurement. From center of the Brigade parking lot - around block house to center of the Brigade parking lot takes many beers. They dressed as an Artillery Survey Crew (all eight second lieutenants, 2 ROTC and 6 OCS), no one ever questioned them.

I was with the Instructor Division, Tactics at OCS when the concrete POW camp was built (Mid-1967). The E&E course began on Intersection 1295 at grid coordinates 357344 went through Lake 1369 at grid 362373 and ended up at Ketch Lake Pavilion at grid 375404. When I traveled through there 12 years ago, I took my wife out to see the POW camp. It was there then, a poured concrete outer wall, painted camouflaged, about 2,000 square feet in size. The road to Lake 1369 was open and people were fishing there.

We 2LT’s (some 25) rotated being the Aggressor CO, Camp Commander, OIC of E&E and Safety Officer. All simulations were taken directly from Secret briefings we got every 3 months from Army Intelligence about what was being done to the POWs in Vietnam. All actions were inspected and approved by some senior officer who would show-up for each evolution in the POW camp. It was the Safety Officer’s job to ensure that the participants didn’t become overzealous, and time-outs were given on both sides.

There were 6 LTs assigned to each E&E group:

1. OIC
2. Aggressor Leader (classroom and field)
3. POW Camp Commander
4. Fire Control Officer (weapons and brushfire)
5. End point OIC
6. Safety Officer

Each of us rotated into each position after observing two evolutions. As there were few non-cycle days in this period, we ran classes back.

I think I was Camp Commander six times. None was ever an easy tour. Someone was always getting injured and aggressors, students and instructors were all Alpha Males pumping max Testosterone. Clashes were frequent and tempers flared constantly, thus the need for a Safety Officer.

The POW camp was located on the Southwestern edge of the West range. The E&E course extended almost due North for about seven bolder and rock-strewn Klicks through a narrow valley with a road in but no road out. A lake in the middle and a lake at the end were arranged to reduce the number of heat injuries.

The "Worry Pole" was a 6" diameter smooth wooden pole oiled with Pledge. Once on it was almost impossible to get off. Calf, knee and quad pain were terrible; each instructor had to spend 1/2 hour on it to be able to use it on a student. All of the doctors from the hospital visited it and declared it safe but stupid.

The assorted wall lockers, buried, spinning, inverting and sun baked were all cleaned before each exercise and a new layer of Limburger was applied. There was a diamondback in a 1/4" mesh cage at various times, depending on the "Catch-of-the-Day". The EPA would've hung us but all snakes were caught within 200 yards of the POW camp.

The Safety Officer position was the most Silver Bar limiting. You could do no right. A number of folks volunteered for Vietnam rather than stay in this trap. No O-3 or O-4 ever served in any of these positions (and we had plenty). They would simply move one of the LTs up the roster.

### **James E. Greer: 22-66**

I was 24 when I went through OCS and there were 2 or 3 in my class (22-66) that were around 30.

I only ran the Jark twice. Once as Lower Class and once as Upper Class. I learned fast how to not get demerits. I caused the whole Battery (A Battery, 1st Battalion) to have to run the Hill when we were Upper Class. The TAC Officer's came into the barracks earlier than expected that Saturday morning. I was dusting with a T-shirt and did not have time to get it into my laundry bag. I hid it under my mattress. 1LT Vaughan, a West Point graduate, finished inspecting our cube and was proceeding to the next cube when he wheeled around and jerked up my mattress. When he saw the T-shirt he went berserk and proceeded to destroy our cube. When he was through he announced that the whole Battery would run the hill that day courtesy of candidate Greer. I thought I would be killed, but we decided to set a time record and almost killed the Lower Class Candidates that day.

I remember that upperclass could walk on the north-south sidewalks and no one else except TAC Officers. All others had to jump over them.

Married men could talk to their wives in the parking lot 2-4 minutes I think and had to stay two feet from the car.

I don't remember being called smack as Lower Class, but was called just about everything else. Lower Class was allowed to smoke but only on break from a class. No one was allowed to smoke in the barracks or on OCS grounds.

Upper Class did sit at the head of each table in the mess hall and harass the Lower Class.

The Middle Class did wear green tabs and the Upper Class wore red tabs and horse shoe clickers on the heels of their shoes.

There were no choices between FA and ADA. We all received orders for Vietnam - the whole class. My younger brother was in the class behind (23-66) me and my orders were later changed to Korea, when he beat me to Vietnam.

I recently had lunch with my OCS cube mate - we had not seen each other in 39 years. We got back in contact a couple of years ago through the internet. OCS was quite an experience and has helped me the rest of my life. I am glad that I had the chance.

I used clear liquid floor polish on the toes and heels of my jump boots. This kept them shining for a week or more if no one stepped on them in the rush to the junk machines during breaks in classes.

### **James L. Lovrien: Class 23-66**

The army during this period (1965-1966) was growing quite rapidly in terms of number of soldiers as the Vietnam war was expanding/ escalating. During 1965 and 1966 there were approximately 400,000 soldiers in Vietnam. Because of such a large army they had a need for leaders such as 2nd lieutenants. When you first arrive at basic training you take a battery of test and one of the tests would be to find out your IQ. My IQ was high enough to qualify for OCS and therefore I was asked to apply for Officer Candidate School. I decided to apply to OCS because it was a six-month course of training and I thought the Vietnam war would be over or if not, then at least there would be more than 500,000 total soldiers in country by the time I would get assigned to Vietnam, thus hopefully improving chances of coming back to the States in one piece or alive. Another benefit would be making more money.... \$450 vs \$98 a month. In September 1966 I, was accepted to the Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Officer Candidate School was six-month training to develop soldiers as junior leaders. We would graduate as second lieutenants upon completion of the training cycle. As lowerclassmen, which was the first two months, we were not allowed to walk on the sidewalks. Once some upperclassmen caught a number of us walking on the sidewalk and they made us squat down and grab our ankles with our hands and walk the entire block on the sidewalk. This was called "Duck walk" .... The next day our legs were very stiff and very, very sore. We learned to never walk on the sidewalk again until we became upperclassmen.

Our day usually started at 5 a.m. where we ran about 5 miles and then had physical training consisting of pushups, squats and various other physical training activities. Next, we would shave, shower and get dressed for the day and march to the mess hall for breakfast.... all this was completed by 7:30 a. m.

One of the training exercises that was taught to us was called Survival, Escape and Evasion and was about surviving, eating berries and other food stuff found on the land, and how to escape, should we get captured, and evasion, learn ways not to get caught. We were taken to the small mountains near Fort Sill, Oklahoma and had 24 hours to make it through an escape and evasion course. The distance from the starting point to the finishing line was approximately five miles. Along the way the army trainers set traps

where the enemy soldiers would capture us and then take us to their camp and interrogate us. The goal was not to get captured and if we did get captured then escape.

Before the exercise began the Drill Sergeants had a formation of 100 soldiers and gave instruction on what was expected. The start of the exercise began when a whistle was blown. We then would have ten minutes to move out with a goal to get to the finished line. Along the way the enemy tried to capture us. I remember taking off running and after a short while the enemy was encountered and started to capture as many soldiers as they could. I evaded them by jumping into a stream of water which was approximately three feet deep. I took a thick weed, similar to bamboo, which has a hard hollow stem so that I could lay on the bottom of the stream with the bamboo in my mouth to breath air. I could hear the enemy soldiers pass by the stream talking about capturing soldiers. After about ten minutes or so I no longer heard any voices and got out of the stream.

Not too far away I met a contemporary who also was not captured. We devised a plan to head through the mountains to avoid getting captured. The next scene was 11 p.m. and pitch black in the mountains. I remember laying on a big flat rock to sleep with our poncho over us. We were laying back-to-back to stay warm. The next morning, we walked out of the mountain and did not see or hear the enemy. We came down the mountain and started walking on the gravel road back to the barracks about ten miles away.

Soon a jeep approached and it was our Sergeant Major looking for us. He took us back to our barracks where we took a shower changed clothes and were taken to our next class. We were successful at not being captured.

We learned all about 105 millimeter and 155 millimeter howitzers...how they worked and actually fired the howitzers. They made a lot of noise and even though we wore ear plugs the noise did overwhelm our hearing. I am sure this is why my ears are still ringing and that why I receive a 10% disability from the VA hospital for tinnitus, a condition that causes you to hear ringing or roaring sounds that only you can hear.

We had several classroom and outdoor classes over a two-month period. We learned how to operate land survey equipment and then how to calculate the survey data using a slide rule...digital computers were not available during this time. A written test was administered at the end of the two-month period and I was very proud to get 100% and in fact, as best I can remember, out of 100 soldiers I was number one.

We were trained on all of the radio equipment available at that time in the army inventory. I found that the training and the equipment to be quite interesting. The radios were at that time the top of the line in radio equipment but very bulk and big compared to what's available today. I applied for helicopter school and took a series of written test. I had to take an eye exam and found out that I needed eyeglasses. That was the end of my dream to fly helicopters.

The third month of OCS was a time when our class became upperclassmen. We would wear steel plates on our shoe heels and the sound was great as marched on the sidewalks.... loud click, click, click. We would search out underclassmen and check their uniform or ask them military questions. If they could not answer to our satisfaction, we would have them drop to the ground and do 50 or more pushups. In the mess hall, the

underclassmen would serve us or get whatever we needed such as more water, milk etc. It was a fun time.

Every three or four weeks we had to take a physical training exam consisting of a number of events such as running a mile in combat boots and the standard was 15 minutes or less; horizontal bars that were seven feet long or about 10-12 bars and the standard was to go back and forth six or eight times.

Graduation came after the six months of training. We all marched to the parade field where we were given the 2nd Lieutenant bars.... what a proud day. We then paraded past the reviewing stand where the Generals and Colonels stood at attention reviewing us. We were given our orders indicating where our next assignment would be located. Ten of us, out of 200, were assigned to Fort Lewis, Washington. We were given a month leave/vacation and sent on our way. Many of us purchased a new automobile. I went to the Ford dealer in Lawton, Oklahoma and purchased a new red 1965 Mustang.... what a car! I loaded all my clothes etc. and headed back to Ellsworth for vacation time before reporting to Fort Lewis.

My memories of OCS.... WOW .... hard work but it was GREAT!

The training/discipline received was something that would be the foundation of my life. I never thought that all that training would be used. But I found that through my military and civilian life I used many if not all principles that I learned at the OCS. In Vietnam, the training I learned in OCS came automatically when the time came to use it as a Forward Observer, FDO, Battery Executive and other leadership positions. Thank you, OCS, for the GREAT training!

The following are events and things I remembered in no particular order.... good and bad.... some 54 years since graduating from OCS:

- Howitzers.... FDC classes were great, but the BEST was learning how to be a FO! I will never forget "Block House Signal Mountain"!
- Lower, Middle and Upperclassmen.
- Red Tabs...and finally getting to wear them.
- Discipline, Discipline, & more Discipline.
- Long hours.... very long hours
- Monday morning runs was tough especially because if you were tall you were positioned in the back of the formation and had to smell the pizza breath!
- Marching to training and classes
- Barracks.... bunks, foot lockers.... everything had to be perfect.... highly polished shoes & boots
- Jark...MB-4...4.2 miles.... first few times was terrible ...very difficult and almost got sick. Did witness several classmates falling out sick. After about the third time it was no problem to complete the run.
- I was in the BEST physical shape ever at the completions of OCS training.
- TAC Officers & Upperclassmen made me do many, many pushups!
- Weather.... April-May was cool & windy.... June-September was hot & windy
- Meals.... remember eating square meals in the mess hall. That was quite an experience. Other meals were eaten very fast because so much to do! Lots of C-rations.

- Participating in Parades. The BEST Parade with my Graduation Parade! What a relief!
- Filling out the “Dream sheets” just before graduation and I put down Fort Lewis, WA. I got that assignment. I was excited to go to Fort Lewis and had fun being an Executive Officer in an AIT Infantry training company. It was fun! After 12 months at Fort Lewis, I was assigned to attend Jungle training in Panama then went to Vietnam.
- Learning how to fire and maintain the various small arms weapons.
- Finally getting a weekend pass and going downtown Lawton and staying in a Hotel.... a good break from training but still remembered after all these years.
- Going to “Shakey’s Pizza” drinking beer, eating pizza and singing the “Artillery Song.” FUN time!
- Classes at Snow Hall was fun, but the building was also too cold in the summer.
- Classes...enjoyed all.... gunnery, survey, survival, small arms firing bivouac, night firing, forward observation, working with the Howitzers, tactics and learning about the various vehicles.

### **Jim Heldman: OCS Battery Commander 24-66**

When I arrived at Fort Sill from my three years in Germany, I had hoped to teach in the Gunnery Department but was told that I would go to OCS to become a Battery Commander. I took command of a class that was close to graduation and, after a break between classes of a couple weeks; Class 24-66 arrived. There was nothing like an “Orientation” session for people like me so I simply did what I thought was right and that was what I had learned at West Point and what I could learn from some of the OCS “Old Hands” including our First Sergeant (who was a great guy and had seen and done it all).

During this time OCS was expanding rapidly to meet the needs of Viet Nam. I think that there were four Candidate Batteries when I arrived and five or more times that number when I left one year later. There was a lot of pressure on the Commandant to turn out a lot of high-quality 2nd lieutenants and I think that he and his staff did a good job.

**My Impressions and Recollections of OCS:** The School was well run and the people who graduated were excellent young Officers. I met a number of them in Viet Nam (to include Tommy Franks who served in my Battalion; (I remember him but not all that well.) I think that anyone who graduated while I was there can take a lot of pride in saying that they attended and graduated from a course that was designed to weed out people who did not have the ability or determination to do what OCS demanded. I cannot imagine that many of you would disagree with the statement that it was one of the defining events in your lives.

**What Went on “At the Top” While You Were Candidates:** The politics at OCS were never a big issue for me and the entire Chain of Command seemed (in retrospect) to have been good officers and dedicated to what they were doing. Like the rest of the Army, a lot of the important things were done by the NCOs and those of us who let them do their stuff were wiser for having looked the other way (sometimes).

**Anecdotes:** My favorite event was discovering three (I think at least that it was three) toilet bowls filled with GOLDFISH on a Saturday morning inspection while the fourth (and last one just had water). I liked the gag and enjoyed knowing that the guys in that barracks had the same sense of humor that a lot of us had at West Point. Bending and breaking the rules without being caught was the sign of someone who was going to do

well in life, in my opinion. Am not sure how widely held that opinion is, but it is mine so I think that it is right.

**Where They Went:** I encountered a few of the OCS Cadre in my tour of Viet Nam and later in life but they are all now “lost in the mists of time.” I wish in some ways that I had stayed in touch with some of them, but I think that what you are doing will help you all stay connected. Old friends and old stories grow more important with time; perhaps, like some wines they improve with age.

**Summary:** You all have a lot to be proud of with respect to what you did during a difficult time in America and how well you did it. I was proud to have known your Class and to have been able to play some role in your careers as aspiring young Officers.

**Jim Wambold: 24-66**

The complete story about the GOLDFISH is that, during their return from Sunday church services, two of our Candidates noticed an old barracks building being demolished. In the trash pile they found four old, oak, toilet seats with brass fittings and returned to our barracks carrying those.

After discussions with the upstairs and downstairs Platoons, a decision was made to refinish the wood and shine the brass for installation in the communal shower/bath area.

Several weeks of work in our “spare time,” gallons of Brasso, a pound of steel wool and some shellac provided a stunning finished product.

Early on the morning of the inspection the installation was made. Immediately before inspection one of our Candidates placed two goldfish into each of the toilets. (The goldfish were purchased in a 5 & 10 cent store in Lawton by his wife and delivered the night before). We KNEW this would be the MOST IMPRESSIVE sight any TAC Officer had ever seen!!

WRONG, AGAIN, CANDIDATES. Instead of congratulatory acknowledgement we each received demerits for “Harboring Animals.” One of the TAC Officers assigned “gunners” to each of the four toilets. At his command of “Fire,” the flushing mechanism was activated and the fish were gone. Gee, my first, and only, “4-Flush Salute.”

But we all, Officers and Candidates, had a great laugh together. It was a defining moment in the maxim, “Cooperate and Graduate,” and we ALL realized it. A “team” had been built.

**Richard L. Marrocco: 24-66**

***“Sir, Please Pass the Butter”***

OCS was an ordeal to be survived!!! Six months of regimented harassment, exercise, athletics, inspections and academics. There was no “spare” time; every moment was scheduled. We depended upon each other and, in a short time, became a unit. The motto was “Cooperate and Graduate.” Our first 6 weeks was spent as Lowerclassmen. The following 8 weeks we were elevated to Middle Class status. The remainder of our captivity was as Upperclassmen.

During the first half of our Lower Class existence we were required to move at a “double-time” pace, salute all Middleclassmen and Upperclassmen, and eat “square meals” in the mess hall. Our meals in the mess hall were served family style at long tables seating about 20 of us. At the head of each table was an Upperclassman ... the Table Commandant. He assured that we occupied no more than the allotted front three inches of our chairs, we remained at a rigid “brace” during the meal, looked straight ahead without “dog eyeing”, put no more into our mouths than could be swallowed in four chews, and had the authority to discipline us, on-the spot, for any infraction of table manners.

If a Candidate wanted additional chow passed to him, he was able to request it from the Table Commandant. The plea was quite formatted: “Sir, would you care for more mashed potatoes?” “Sir, would any of my Contemporaries care for more mashed potatoes?” “Sir, please pass the mashed potatoes.”

One day, at the breakfast meal, Candidate “X” was unfortunate enough to be observed by the Table Commandant taking a “gross bite” from his plate of pancakes, sausage and fresh fruit. The Commandant took action by pointing out the infraction and saying, “Candidate “X,” you scum-sucking mess, you sick barf, you disgrace to the military and mankind. Is that how your Mamma taught you to eat? Take yourself and your plate under the table, sit on the floor, and finish your meal there.” Candidate “X” complied.

Several minutes later we all heard the muffled sound of, “Sir, would you care for more butter? Sir, would any of my Contemporaries care for more butter? Sir, please pass the butter.” The butter was passed ... under the table. After the meal, we left the mess hall in our normal formation to double-time back to the barracks. This time we ran a little faster after we learned that Candidate “X” had SUCCESSFULLY SPREAD A QUARTER POUND OF BUTTER on the Upperclassman’s spit shined boots. So as not to embarrass Candidate “X” in this narrative, I’ll offer only a clue to his identity .... Candidate Richard L. Marrocco, from Cranston, RI, (Lieutenant Colonel, Retired).

Our class of 120 Candidates was formed on 1 May 1966 and on 11 October 1966 we graduated 86 (43 of the original group) as Second Lieutenants in the United States Army. Candidate “X” was among us “and we ain’t got no clue why.” This training came in handy later in life as my wife often sends me under the table for overly indulging. She also reminds me at each meal to “Keep your feet off the table, Candidate!!!”



*Graduation Review Class 24-66*



**George L. Skypeck: 25-66**

**“SOLDIER”**

I was that which others did not want to be,  
I went where others feared to go,  
And did what others failed to do.

I asked nothing from those who gave nothing,  
And reluctantly accepted the thought  
Of eternal loneliness should I fail.

I have seen the face of terror,  
Felt the stinging cold of fear,  
And enjoyed the sweet taste of a moment's love.

I have cried, pained and hoped,  
But most of all, I have lived times  
Others would say were best forgotten.

At least some day, I will be able to say  
That I was proud of what I was.... a soldier.

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**Ronald D. Van Dyck: 26-66**

Field Artillery OCS and Robinson Barracks will be forever burned in my memories as a place and a culture. After joining the Army in Aug 1965 and figuring out how to make the experience painless (listen to the NCOs, do what you are told, ask questions and never give an NCO any lip) my AIT commander inspired me to apply for OCS.

As happened a lot then, my paperwork was lost at Fort Sam Houston, and rather than casual duty there, I chose assignment to Fort Riley and the Camp Funston Dental Clinic (I was a 91E).

OCS began for me 1 May 1966 in Delta Battery, there were 1,151 candidates in residence. It ended in Nov 1966 in Hotel Battery. Bombing the aiming circle cost me an additional month. I stayed on as a TAC Officer until August 1967.

**Tim Bodine: 126-66**

This is a short story about six months that changed my life. It is written for me, to help me remember as I grow older, for my family, and for special friends who may be interested. I apologize for the vulgarity, but you just can't talk about OCS without using the word "Bullshit."

When I was a young teenager, my Dad told me there would be few real opportunities in my life, and I needed to recognize and pursue them. Officer Candidate School (OCS) was one such opportunity and it significantly changed my life.

In January 1966, I was 19 years old, married to Linda, and living in El Paso, TX where I was attending Advanced Individual Training (AIT) in the Nike-Hercules air defense missile system. I had joined the Army in September 1965 to escape a life working at two dead-

end jobs. I realized that I had to make a significant change in order to make a good life for Linda and me. I had scored very high in the test for officer potential given during basic training at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

There were three Army OCS programs in 1966, Infantry, Armor, and Artillery. The Artillery program was the most difficult academically and had the highest failure rate at approximately 40%. I appeared before the OCS Selection Board, was approved, and scheduled to report to Fort Sill, Oklahoma in May 1966 for Artillery OCS.

This was a time of rapid buildup in forces for the war in Vietnam. Artillery OCS was starting a new Officer Candidate (OC) class every two weeks. This was still not meeting the need for new Artillery lieutenants, so two additional classes were inserted between the planned 1966 classes. My class was inserted between classes 26-66 and 27-66 and was designated class 126-66. Because we were an add-on class, our classes were scheduled in a different sequence than the others. This meant it would be difficult to set us back to a later class due to academic problems, and members of other classes couldn't be set back to my class.

In early May 1966, Linda and I left El Paso in our little yellow Corvair car and drove back to Tulsa to move Linda in with her parents and take a one week leave before beginning OCS. On the Sunday I was to report, Linda drove me to the bus station in Tulsa and I began my journey to our future. I rode a bus to Lawton, then took a taxi to Robinson Barracks, the home of Artillery OCS at Fort Sill. During the 15-minute taxi ride, the driver told me of the horrors I was soon to face. We stopped at the OCS Headquarters where there was a large metal archway over the road that stated, "Robinson Barracks, the United States Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School."

I was wearing my "Dress Green" uniform with PFC stripes and carrying all my other uniforms in a duffle bag. After signing-in, I was greeted by several Upper Class OC's who tore the stripes from my uniform and informed me that I was no longer a PFC. I was now a "Smack," a "Sick Puke," "Lower Than the Whale Shit on the Bottom of the Ocean" and many more demeaning terms. There were two or three upperclassmen in my face shouting at me constantly for the next several minutes. I had no idea what they were talking about or what they wanted from me, except for a lot of pushups. Finally, another taxi arrived with another new "Sick Puke," and they moved to greet him. They told me to "drop" to the "front leaning rest" position (the starting position for pushups), put the duffle bag on my back, and low crawl to my new Battery area, about 100 meters down the sidewalk. After 10 meters or so, an upperclassman walked by and began chewing me out for not saluting. After several "On your feet, Candidate" and "Drop, Candidate" commands, I was told to pick up my duffle bag, hold it over my head, and double time (run) to my barracks building. When I entered the barracks building, I saw several other new OC's surrounded by upperclassmen who were yelling, and ordering "drop," "on your feet," "give me ten" (pushups), etc. We had no idea what they wanted us to do. Thus began "Zero Week" at OCS.

When I arrived in May 1966 there was one battalion of Officer Candidates. We were housed in the old wooden, two-story, WWII, non-air-conditioned buildings. The barracks buildings were arranged in rows, four buildings wide, eight buildings long. There was a mess hall at each end of the long axis. Only about half of the buildings and one mess hall

were in use. When I graduated in November 1966, OCS had grown to five battalions. An entirely new complex of modern concrete, air-conditioned buildings were constructed, including two new mess halls. The place was crawling with OC's.

During Zero Week we learned the rules and how to survive at OCS. It wasn't fun, but I learned to see the humor in all of it without displaying any outward sign, such as a smile. We learned to brush our teeth, shower, and shave in five minutes. We learned not to walk when we were outside a building, but always double-time or march in formation. We could not use the north south sidewalks, as they were for Upper Class only. We organized our clothes and gear into the specified displays - exactly, no deviation. We shined our boots to a high gloss and marked them on the bottom as white dot, red dot, and green dot pairs. Our highly starched uniforms were hung on hangars all facing the same direction, exactly one inch apart - exactly. The floor was waxed and buffed over and over until it was like a mirror. We didn't walk on the floor down the middle of the building. Instead, we jumped from footlocker to footlocker so as not to scuff the floor. We also became familiar with "magic." Magic is the term used to describe how we accomplished seemingly impossible tasks. For instance, we were not to do anything after taps and lights out except sleep.

So how did our dirty boots and smudged brass become highly polished overnight while we slept? Magic! We were subject to a very strict honor code where failure to tell the truth or obfuscating were grounds for dismissal from the program. It was a fine line between magic and lying. We could not have survived without magic.

We learned to march to the mess hall in formation, halting with the front rank exactly on the white line. Mealtime in the mess hall was not for eating, rather just another place to be harassed and demeaned. We marched into the mess hall keeping our eyes straight ahead and not "dog eyeing" (looking around). We were marched to our tables and stood at attention behind our chairs until all OC's were present. We were then commanded "Ready, seats!" We sat at attention on the first one inch of the chair, feet together and straight ahead, head and eyes straight ahead, arms in our laps. At one end of the table was an upperclassman - the Table Commandant, at the other end was a middleclassman, the Assistant Table Commandant. Their function was to harass the lowerclassmen and prevent them from eating. Meals were served family style in large serving bowls and platters. We had to always keep our head and eyes straight forward. In order to eat, you felt for your fork, found something edible on your plate with it, lifted the fork and food straight up and then horizontally to your mouth (hence the term "square meal"), replaced the fork beside the plate, chewed three times - no more - no less, and swallowed. Any deviation would result in being verbally abused by the Table Commandant and Assistant Commandant. In the event that you wanted more of anything, you were to loudly state "Sir, would the Table Commandant of this table care for any more mashed potatoes at this time?" He would answer "Yes or No." You would then repeat for the Assistant Table Commandant, and then say, "Would any of my contemporaries at this table care for any mashed potatoes at this time?" "Please pass the mashed potatoes."

On one occasion, I could not think of the word "contemporaries," so I said "comrades" instead. Big mistake. The Table Commandant said, "Candidate Communist, there are no comrades here," and things went rapidly downhill from there. I wound up seated on the floor under the table - no food again. At the designated time, the table was "march

ordered” with uniform stacks of plates, etc. in a specified order and all the condiments lined up, also in specified order. On another occasion, my collar stay (a wire device to hold one’s shirt collar in a straight position) had come loose and rotated downward. The Table Commandant noticed this and asked, “Candidate Radar, is that your antenna hanging down?” I was then ordered to go to the front of the mess hall, stand at attention and do repeated “left face” movements while moving my head up and down and shouting “beep, beep” imitating a radar set. Left face, beep, beep, left face, beep, beep, over and over for the entire meal period. Another lost opportunity to eat. There was a large amount of food thrown out to be sold to the local pig farmers. I lost at least twenty pounds during the first few weeks.

After Zero Week, we knew the routine and how to survive it. Beginning the second week, we were issued demerits for the most insignificant deviance from the prescribed procedures. Too many demerits in one week and we did punishment tours. As Lower Class, we were restricted to the Robinson Barracks area. Within the boundary was a small PX where we could purchase the essentials, a laundry, and a small branch of the Fort Sill Officers club called “Lanyard Lounge” for upperclassmen only. Being only twenty years old, I couldn’t purchase alcoholic beverages anyway. The first two weeks, our punishment tours were served in the parking lot. We could do two tours a week, one on Saturday afternoon, and another on Sunday morning. The parking lot tour was two hours of double timing (running) in full uniform with web belt, full canteen, steel pot, carrying our assigned M-14 at “port arms” (holding it out in front of you - it was heavy). It was now late Spring at Fort Sill and the weather was getting hot.

The parking lot tour was miserable enough, but it was only preparing us for “The Hill.” After the second week, our punishment tour was called “The Jark,” named after Lt. General Carl Jark, the first OCS Commandant, who thought up this particular bit of torture. The Jark was a trip from Robinson Barracks to the top of MB-4 (Medicine Bluff - 4). It was 4.2 miles round trip and we had to do it in less than one hour, again in full uniform, M-14, etc. Doesn’t sound too bad. But there was a catch. We couldn’t run. We had to “Jark” or walk taking long strides at a fast cadence. Much more difficult than just running. My legs were so sore after the first time, I could hardly stand. Over time, we got better at it and started doing “The Hill” in formation, trying to set time records. Everyone in my Battery did the punishment tours every weekend until we were Upper Class.

Beginning the second week, our academic classes started. Field Artillery involves firing a heavy, explosive projectile to a target twenty or so miles away and hitting it, not the friendly troops. It is a complex procedure involving many mathematical calculations. This was before any sort of computer or even hand-held calculators. We used slide rules, logarithms, trig functions, and a knowledge of geometry to solve the gunnery problems. Thanks to Mr. Klentos and the other fine teachers at Will Rogers High School in Tulsa, my math skills were more than adequate, and I was a whiz with the slide rule, which I had been using since the 8th Grade (thanks to Mr. Cameron at Cleveland Jr. High).

I was one of the few OC’s in my class with no prior artillery training or experience. It was all new to me, and very confusing. The instruction was generally excellent but presented quickly in a very formal setting. I learned to take good notes and to stay focused in class (skills I had not developed earlier). The first academic subject was “survey.” You had to know exactly where you were located on the Earth in order to hit a distant target. Survey

was pretty easy and sort of fun, being out in the field away from the bullshit. There were other classes on communications, tactics, military courtesy and law, and all the many skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to become a Field Artillery officer.

I was just getting into the rhythm of it all, when, during my fourth week, I was awakened during the night and told to go to the Battery headquarters. There was a telephone call from my brother Bill and Linda. My Dad had died. I didn't know how sick he was. He was only 53 years old. I was devastated. I went to Battalion Headquarters and arranged for an emergency leave to go home to Tulsa for the funeral. My brothers Richard and Bill brought Linda to Fort Sill and they drove me back to Tulsa. I was gone for one week. When I returned, I was told to report to the School Commandant. He told me that my class had just begun the most critical stage of our training, Gunnery, and I would not be able to catch up. He was going to recycle me back to Zero Week with another incoming class. I did not want to go through all that bullshit again. I asked him to leave me in my class and I would catch up. He reminded me, if I was unable to stay up with my class, I would be sent to Vietnam as an Infantry foot soldier. I understood, but again stated that I could do it. He agreed and sent me back to my class.

It was a real struggle to catch up. I learned that our motto "Cooperate and Graduate" was not just an empty phrase. My classmates worked with me and helped me catch up. My performance was acceptable, but I was never really good at gunnery. There was another motto that served me well. "Illegitimi non-Carborundum," loosely translated as "Don't Let the Bastards Grind You Down." This was my personal mantra during OCS and afterwards.

Snow Hall is a large, three story, air-conditioned classroom building at Fort Sill. We were to have our most important and difficult classes at Snow Hall. My first visit to Snow Hall was during survey classes as a lowerclassman. During our first break after a long morning of classes, I had to pee - really bad. I went into the hallway and down the hall. As Lower Class, I was required to march everywhere, making sharp, square corners, keeping head and eyes directly to the front, plastering myself against the wall in a full brace if an upperclassman should pass, etc. I didn't know where the latrines were located, but I figured that I would eventually come upon one. Finally, there was a door marked "Men" on the other side of the hall. I halted, made the proper left-face movement, marched across the hall and through the door. In front of me was a large stainless-steel basin about four feet in diameter. I remember thinking "how efficient this Army is, ten guys at once can use this." I unzipped and proceeded to urinate (I really had to go), keeping my head and eyes forward lest there be an upperclassman around. Suddenly, I had Upper Class and Middle Class screaming at me. "Candidate, what in hell do you think you're doing? You're pissing in the sink!" After a lengthy, one-sided discussion of proper potty training, I zipped up, did an about-face, and marched back out into the hall.

During Zero Week, we were each required to fill out a request for volunteer relief from OCS except for the required signature. This was called "self-induced dropout." During our training, at times when we were particularly tired and miserable, the TAC Officers (real-live commissioned officers who were in charge of us) would put us in the front leaning rest position, place our relief request and pen in front of us and say "Candidate, all you need to do is sign this paper and you'll be out of here. No more bullshit, no more harassment, no more suffering. Just sign it!" Some did, but not many. After the first

couple of weeks, most were dropped for academic reasons. My Battery had an especially high drop-out rate. Only about 30 of the 130 who started with us, graduated. This was a time when the Army was building its forces and it needed new lieutenants. Apparently, my Battery Commander didn't get the word. He was relieved (fired) shortly after we became upperclassmen.

There was a formation and our new commander told us that we had been through enough. There would be no more bullshit or harassment, however, we would still need to pass our courses and work off our existing demerits.

"If the Army wanted you to have a wife, they would have issued you one," was the attitude at the time of my enlistment. There were a few of us in my OCS class who were married. Some wives came to live in Lawton while their husbands were in OCS. Linda wanted to come, but we decided it would be better if she stayed in Tulsa where I knew she would be safe, taken care of if she needed anything and still be close enough to visit whenever possible. During Lower Class, OC's could meet their wives in the parking lot in the evenings. The wife had to remain in the car and the OC stood at Parade Rest at least two feet from the car. No physical contact was allowed. The visit was limited to five minutes and it was all closely observed by upperclassmen and TAC officers.

In Middle Class, OC's could get a pass from Saturday noon until Sunday at 1800 hrs (6:00 p.m.), but only if they didn't have any punishment tours (Jarks) to perform. Needless to say, I never received a pass. In Upper Class, you were eligible for a pass even if you had a punishment tour, but you would do the Saturday Jark before you went on pass and you would be back for the Sunday Jark, after which you could leave again until 1800 hrs. I got to see Linda most weekends as an upperclassman. She would drive from Tulsa.

OCS was twenty-three weeks in length. Zero-Week first, then Lower Class for six weeks. We were confined to the OCS area, could not use sidewalks, ran everywhere when outside, had to keep head and eyes always to the front (don't dog-eye, Candidate!), saluted anything that walked and were generally screwed with by everyone.

Next came Middle Class, identified by green felt tabs on the cap and uniform. Middle Class, for eight weeks, was the time when the academics became really serious and we learned our trade as Artillerymen. The bullshit slacked off a bit, we could actually eat in the mess hall, and we were eligible for passes off post on Saturdays (if we didn't have too many demerits). Upper Class (red tabs) was like being some sort of superior being, slim, fit, uniforms perfect, taps on our shoes and boots, caps at a rakish angle. We were the bull-shitters, not the bull-shitees. We were hot stuff!

The final week was Graduation Week, we were called "Happy Battery," had a final field exercise, received our orders, picked up our fancy new tailored officer uniforms, and turned in all of our books and equipment. A few of us still owed punishment tours for demerits earned during Middle Class and we were required to make one last trip up MB-4. The rest of our classmates decided to join us, so we made the final Jark in formation as a class. Cooperate and Graduate, indeed!

I remember things like rappelling off Medicine Bluffs, the Bunker Shoot, the aerial observation mission, the Vietnamese tunnel visit, my first Observed Fire mission, the RSOP, sleeping with a pizza in my bunk when the TAC officer almost caught us with food in the barracks, my pride in becoming an upperclassman, my disappointment the first time I chewed out and dropped an underclassman - demeaning others wasn't fun for me, learning to "magic" my red dot and white dot boots, hiding "grotto" or "pogey bait" in my boot blouse, our decorated clipboards, the sound of an Upper Class battery marching with the taps on their footgear, slipping and falling on my ass as an upperclassman with taps on my shoes, the TURCO (a turtle with RNCO pips that everyone had to salute), the Red Meal, a new Buick GS 400 upon graduation, standing at the rear of a classroom to keep from falling asleep, "Echo Battery, Mandatory, Reveille Formation, Five Minutes", "Hit a Brace, you sick smack puke, Drop!", "Candidate, you are lower than the whale shit on the bottom of the ocean!", trying on our new officers greens and admiring ourselves in the mirror, the reading of our first officer assignment orders, the Confidence Course where we took turns being the leader and solving seemingly impossible tasks, sitting on a cold OP unable to identify the target and praying the instructor wouldn't pick me for the fire mission, singing on the bus to the field, the Escape and Evasion Course, the POW camp, the last trip up MB-4 as a class with graduation the next day, graduation and commissioning day - November 16, 1966. But most of all, I remember how beautiful Linda was on those rare occasions when I got to see her.

Graduation day was wonderful. Linda, my mother, my grandmother and a cousin drove from Tulsa to see me graduate. They were all proud, but a little fearful of my future. There were speeches, swearing in as officers, throwing our old enlisted caps in the air, and lots of congratulations. I regretted that my Dad wasn't there, he would have been so proud of me. I never saw most of my classmates again after that day. We were each off to our new futures. As far as I have been able to find out, I am the only one of my original class to make the Army a career and serve a full twenty years.

I have very mixed emotions about my time at OCS. I'm very proud that I did it, and I know that it changed me in the most profound ways. I entered as a boy and came out as a man. I didn't like all the bullshit and harassment, but there was probably no other way to make such a change in young men so quickly. OCS had its light moments, but it was a serious business. There was a high failure rate and a lot of stress. I learned many things during my time as an OC. Some of the most important were; good intentions don't count if you fail; and there is no excuse for not performing your duty even under great adversity. I learned to plan ahead and always have an alternate plan if things didn't work out. These lessons, and many others were worth the pain and suffering, and have made my life better than it would have been had I not gone to OCS. I'm just glad I don't have to do it again.

### **Jeff Dossett: 28-66**

#### **From "Delayed Detonation" Jeff Dossett (2000)**

I felt that I would make a good Navy pilot. The Navy recruiter however informed me that there was a two-year waiting list to get into Navy Officers Candidate School (OCS). After considering and dismissing the Air Force, I made my way to the Army recruiter. Upon considering the pros and cons of the Infantry and Armor, the Recruiting Sergeant told me that the Artillery was the place to be. According to the sergeant, the Artillery was always located several miles behind the lines. Acting on his recommendation, on the cold winter day of January 16, 1965, I enlisted to go to the Artillery OCS at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Upon leaving the enlistment station on Henley Street, in Knoxville, Tennessee, I knew I had just made the biggest decision of my life. I was scared and nervous, but I don't remember ever doubting that I had made the right decision. It wouldn't have made any difference anyway because the matter was now out of my control. My father had taken me to Knoxville that day. As we drove back to Jacksboro that afternoon he told me that he was afraid for me, but was proud of me. He told me that whatever I did, I should be good at it, and I would make it back. I had about a week before I had to report back to the enlistment center in Knoxville to be shipped out. I would be going to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri for basic training, then to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for advanced individual training (AIT) in Artillery. After completing AIT, I would attend Artillery OCS at Fort Sill for six months.

I met approximately 20 other enlistees in St. Louis, Missouri and was flown on a military flight to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Luckily, I had worn warm clothes, but there were guys from Florida who were in short-sleeve shirts and sneakers. Eight inches of snow lay on the ground, and the temperature was 10 degrees. Weather conditions would get worse during the next twelve weeks. We would understand why this place was called Little Korea. Because of my prior ROTC training, I was made a Squad Leader, for all the good that did. I suppose some rank was better than no rank, even in boot camp. After completing 13 weeks of basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, I was sent to Fort Sill for advanced individual training (AIT) and six months of Officer Candidate School (OCS).

I had not known what to expect in OCS. Fort Sill is an Artillery Training Center, and everything revolves around the Artillery. Since I was starting OCS in April, I would be there in the hottest part of the year. I was prepared for the physical and academic training; however, the mental stress of OCS was unexpected. The first five months were continual harassment and pressure. I could not understand the reason for this mental torture and considered it Mickey Mouse. There were times that I just wanted to throw it in. In one situation, I was in a leadership role and was having difficulty getting the cooperation of my men. The cadre was using this to test my ability to motivate my subordinates. They screamed at me and insulted my intelligence and manhood. This was only an example of the methods the cadre used to place extreme pressure on you. During the six months of OCS, three officer candidates committed suicide.

During the third week of OCS, we were called into a general assembly of all the classes. No one knew the purpose of this assembly. As soon as everyone was seated, the Commanding General came onto the stage. Everyone quickly came to attention. The Commander said, "Gentlemen, I have called you together to advise you of a very grave incident which has taken place today. The Communist Chinese have crossed into North Vietnam and are actively assisting the North Vietnamese in the war." You could hear the air go out of everyone. I felt my legs go numb. My mind was racing and thinking of what was to come, because we all knew we were going to Vietnam. After a minute or so, the General continued: "Gentlemen, what I have just told you is not true, but it could be. I wanted you to know why you are here and what the possibilities are."

From that day on, I had a different motivation for completing OCS and learning everything I could about being an Artillery Officer and a leader. I was not to realize until later in Vietnam what the mental training was for.



Weeks were spent learning how the guns fired; how the battery was laid; and how the fire direction center was operated, so that the rounds hit where the forward observer (FO) wanted them to fall. The motto was: "The Artillery is the King of Battle. The Infantry is the Queen of Battle. The King's job is to put the balls where the Queen wants them." Little did I know when the Recruiting Sergeant told me that the artillery men stayed behind the lines that the first job for a forward observer was on the line with the Queen. I would learn later just how close to the Queen I would become. The mission of the Artillery is to shoot, move, and communicate.

My graduation from OCS was one of the proudest moments of my life. I had proved to myself that I could do what was asked of me and I had proved to my classmates that I was part of this team. My mother and dad came to Fort Sill for my graduation. I could see the pride and fear in my mother's and father's eyes.

**Keith M. Renerfeldt: 28-66**

***From a Veteran's History Project Interview***

I stayed at Fort Leonard Wood (after Basic Training) and much to my amazement they were sending me to clerk typist school. So, I thought, maybe my wish list is true, I'm going to be in finance or quartermaster corps, I'm going to go to Paris or Austria or someplace. And while I was in the holding company after my clerk typist AIT first sergeant called me in and said, you're going to Germany as a clerk typist. I said that can't be, I've got papers in my footlocker says I'm going to officer candidate school someplace. And he called me a lot of names I can't repeat right here. And I said, yeah, that may all be true, but send me to OCS or send me home, I said, I've got a contract.

And he called me some more names and sent me back to the barracks. And about a month and a half later I received orders for Fort Sill, Oklahoma. At that point that was our artillery and missile officer candidate school, it was a combined school of artillery and missile officer candidate school. Six months. Yeah, and then my holding company -- I was in that holding unit, it had to be four or five weeks. It was a long time. I was very surprised how long they just held us waiting to get a slot for OCS.

It was -- well, it was interesting. It's a combination of the education and physical and mental abuse. We had prepared quite well for the physical part of it, but the exhaustion would really get to some of us. I think we lost about 35 percent of our class.

They push you pretty hard. I was always surprised at the reasons people dropped out. Towards the end people had five months in and they would drop out. One thing was escape and evasion. I still remember they put us in small groups, about five guys, and one guy would have a map and a compass and take you out on trucks into the middle of the base and drop you off and then an experienced cavalry would hunt you down. Well, our convoy got a mock attack and so we'd jump off the trucks and got separated from the guy with the map and the compass of course. And so I'm crawling through high weeds and laying low until dark and I saw a searchlight battery, bouncing beams off the clouds so I went up over a hill and then back down the other side to get to the searchlight battery and as I'm coming off the hill I have to climb through barbed wire and it says impact zone. They weren't firing that night.

I went into the searchlight battery, I took off my shirt, just had a T-shirt, and ditched my OCS cap and went in and looked at their maps, figured out which way I wanted to go to go home and I went back, got my stuff and headed down the road.

But on the way I ran across a prisoner of war compound and some of the guys who had been captured, they had them down there, and several guys dropped out after being captured because they would (put you through) no true physical abuse, but kind of the mental anguish, and they had the one thing that got to a lot of guys. They had a refrigerator, they put them in the refrigerator, strap it shut and start beating on it with pipes and stuff and I know a couple guys got into that and just quit, they were claustrophobic and they went nuts, they dropped out.

The other dropout was another one of our last exercises. We had to repel off a hundred or 150-foot cliff. Well, you fasten a rope at the top of the cliff, and you hook up a harness around your waist with a couple little U-clasps (D-rings) and then wrap your rope through those and your first step is the hardest. You really have to put your feet on the edge of the cliff and then lean all the way back until you're almost horizontal with the ground below and then you give your first kick-out and doing that is very frightening. From 15 stories up. Once you make the first kick and your feet land back against the cliff it's exhilarating, you just love it. I'd do it again today if I had the chance, it was fun, but a lot of guys would get to the top of that cliff and they'd just walk away. After five months they just walked away.

**Ken Torreyson: 28-66**

I graduated from OCS in early December 1966. We had a great class. Many of us were married and our wives had made it to Lawton and once in awhile I was lucky enough to get out on the weekend to be with her. I was a senior classman at the time and most everyone earned a weekend pass. It was my wedding anniversary. When I returned to my cube in the barracks after inspection Saturday morning I learned that I had demerits that earned me a One and One. One weekend restriction and one trip up MB 4.

My TAC Officer had placed a small cake on my desk with one candle in it. Written on the cake was "One and One doesn't equal Two." I didn't consider it a teachable moment at the time but later in life have recognized that sometimes in life one doesn't always get what they want and you just have to tolerate people who like to control you.

**Douglas C. Clifton: 28-66**

***From the Sun Sentinel (September 27, 2017)***

With the war much less an abstraction, all my thoughts turned to questioning its logic, as did the thoughts of my OCS classmates. We soon discovered we were all peaceniks. What are we doing here? How crazy is this stinking war? We chose as our march-to-mess song, "Where have all the flowers gone," a haunting anti-war folk song. Either the training cadre didn't get it or didn't give a damn. We were in with no honorable way out.

**Dennis Whitt: Artillery OCS Candidate and Infantry OCS Graduate**

I actually attended both the Artillery and Infantry OCS programs. I started Artillery OCS in the summer of 1966 and later branch transferred to Infantry OCS. You should have seen the look on the receiving officer's face when I reported wearing red tabs and clickers. After about fifteen months as an OC I was commissioned an Infantry 2LT.

It was a change. I suppose that part of the decision process was that there had been quite a bit of money invested in my training and the Army didn't want to waste it. Just as a matter of info, I felt that the Artillery OCS program was much better and tougher than the Infantry. Also, the FO training came in handy during my tour in Nam.

### **“First of 13 New OCS Barracks Completed”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Wednesday, November 23, 1966)***

Ceremonies were held at Fort Sill Tuesday afternoon to accept the first of 13 barracks being constructed at the post's Officer Candidate School as part of a large-scale expansion program.

The H-shaped barracks, located in the 2800 area, was accepted on behalf of the post in 3 p.m. ceremonies by Maj. Gen. Harry H. Critz, Fort Sill commander. Participating in the ceremony was Col. Charles E. Howard, OCS commandant, Lester Hagerbaumer, resident engineer for the corps of engineers, and Cyril Cox, a representative of the contractor.

The expansion program was begun last April when the post was authorized an \$8.7 million construction and rehabilitation program for OCS, the Artillery Training Center and the U.S. Army Artillery and Missile School.

The crash program was developed in several packages for award of separate contracts in order to get started with the least possible delay. The first package consisting of six 120-man barracks and three 280-man barracks, was begun July 20, less than 30 days after the project was advertised.

The 120-man barracks completed Tuesday was finished after only 100 days of construction time. The entire program provides for 50 new buildings, including 19 barracks, eight classroom buildings, and 23 miscellaneous facilities. It also provides for the rehabilitation of 137 existing structures. Masonry block construction is being used.

Other additions will be several new parking lots, loading points, and three new Physical Combat Proficiency Test areas. There will also be a million-gallon elevated water storage tank in the area of Henry Post Field.

An Austin, Tex., company is the contractor in the new construction phase. Rehabilitation work is being handled mainly in two packages awarded to Dallas and Wichita Falls, Tex., firms.

The first barracks ready is one of the thirteen 120-man buildings being constructed for OCS. It is H-shaped with latrines and mechanical facilities located in the center portion between the legs. Each leg can accommodate 30 men. The six 280-man structures being built for the Artillery Training Center are in the 3800 area. Except for the size, they are identical to the OCS barracks.

### **“High School Students Get Earlier Chances for OCS”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (Thursday, November 24, 1966)***

A new program geared to increase the number of Officer Candidate School applicants has been placed in effect throughout the Army. The new program allows high school graduates the same opportunity as college graduates to apply for OCS training while

processing at any U.S. Army reception station. Previously, high school graduates were required to wait until basic training before applying.

Closer to home: Fourth Army officials said the new plan will greatly increase the number of OCS applicants in this area and will “assist materially in the overall officer corps expansion during the forthcoming year.”

With the new program, Fourth Army expects to exceed its OCS objective set by the Continental Army Command for the fifth straight month. By obtaining 653 qualified applicants in October, Fourth Army exceeded its quota by 20 percent. During that same month, Fort Sill achieved 100 per cent of its quota.

As part of its expansion program, created by the Vietnam war, the Army hopes to enroll some 41,957 men in OCS during the current fiscal year. In line with this expansion, Fort Sill’s Artillery OCS population has mushroomed, jumping from 2,700 students last fiscal year to an expected 9,600 this fiscal year.

**William L. Ford: TAC Officer 1966**

I have always felt that my duty at OCS was very worthwhile and meaningful. While performing as a TAC Officer, I was able to effectively train soldiers to become qualified Second Lieutenants in the Field Artillery branch. We always emphasized: Love of Country, Devotion to Duty, and Attention to Details, in all training. The Candidates did a great job in performing under most difficult and stressful conditions and were well deserved of their commissions. Graduates of OCS, through the years have gone on to achieve the highest in their chosen profession, whether it be the Military, Education, Law, Business, or Medicine. What we all did at OCS has and will benefit our Country for many, many years to come.

**William L. Ford’s Comments at the May 20, 1999 dedication of Durham Hall, the Field Artillery OCS Hall of Fame (Building 3025)**

General Baxter and Honored Guests:

It is an honor and a privilege on behalf of the Officer Graduates, the Tac Officers, Staff of OCS as well as the U.S. Field Artillery Association to accept Durham Hall, which was the former Officer Candidate School Headquarters and now home of the OCS Hall of Fame Building, as a lasting tribute to the accomplishments of its Graduates.

All of us today want to especially thank not only General Baxter for his leadership and helpfulness on this project, but also Anna Lou Johnson, COL Daniel J. Bonney, LTC Clyde W. Ellis, LTC Jefferson G. Ewing, CPT Larry D. Poole, and CPT Dale Davis

It now seems long ago, but at one time we were all Lieutenants and the memory of this location is lasting and meaningful. It was one of the most important times in our lives when we accepted the challenge and responsibility of leadership. Quoting from the Armed Forces Officers Handbook, published in 1950, “Being a Commissioned Officer is a lasting obligation to cherish and protect our Country and to serve its Armed Forces and to serve the welfare of our fellow American. This was the meaning of our Commission and was not modified by any reason of assignment nor was the obligation lessened on the day we put the uniform aside and returned to civilian life.”

This OCS program effectively trained over 48,000 young men to be Field Artillery Officers during its existence from the beginning of WWII through the Korean War, and to the end of the Vietnam War. Words such as determination - mission oriented - courage - love of Country - devotion to duty - attention to details - were all a part of the program whose traits we still carry today. This building represents the success and dedication of the Officers of the Program, and these Officers served their country with distinction both militarily and many later into their civilian professions. It is virtually impossible to list the accomplishments of the Graduates, but this Hall of Fame says in a special way to each one, THANK YOU for all you did and are still doing for this great Country of ours.

This is truly an honored place. It is our hope that future Officers, relatives, and friends will continue to show the respect and recognize the contribution of the OCS Graduates, and especially honor the memory of those Graduates who gave their lives for their Country. Their memory must always be preserved, and each of us today honors them and will always hold the memory of OCS in our hearts.

Thank you General Baxter and we thank the U. S. Army - what a privilege it has been to serve our Country. I salute you one and all . . .

Sincerely yours,  
William L. Ford  
OCS TAC Officer 1966



*Class 20-66 at Present Arms on OCS Parade Field - TAC XO 1LT William L. Ford*

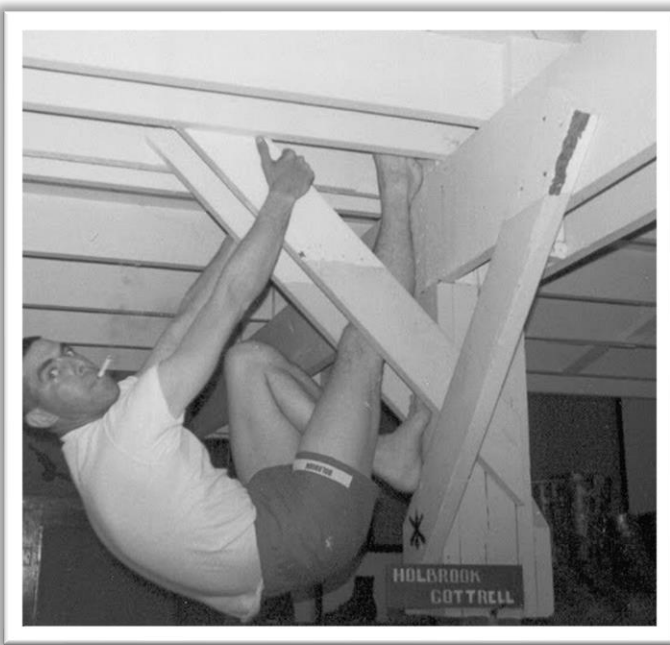
**From the Tactical Officers Guide – Officer Candidate Brigade  
U.S. Army Field Artillery School - 1966**

The principal duties of the tactical officer are to observe, evaluate, and develop candidates and prepare them to receive commissions in the Field Artillery and to recommend appropriate action for those who fail to progress satisfactorily and meet the prescribed standards.

The tactical officer must strive to know the officer candidates. He must show the officer candidates by his example of professionalism that soldiers are successfully led by the man who inspires confidence, willing cooperation, and obedience. It is essential that the tactical officer be approachable. He should follow a middle path between friendliness and aloofness. The tactical officer must help the candidates to improve their performance in every possible way.

Counseling, both formal and informal, is the heart of the tactical officer's job. The early detection of a candidate's weakness plus the indication to him of the means of improvement may produce another officer for the Artillery. The development of latent potentialities by wise counseling may result in the corps acquiring a superior officer instead of merely an average one. The counseling of both weak and strong candidates is valuable to the Services.

Inspections of barracks are conducted almost daily by the battery commander and/or tactical officer. Inspections in ranks and standby inspections in barracks are conducted when the schedule permits and at the discretion of the battery commander. Standards must be very high and inspections must be as detailed as time will allow. Standards must be uniformly presented and explained to the candidate so that he has no doubt as to what is expected of him.



*"Smoking and Joking" with Upperclassmen*



*Weekend Jark reaching the top of MB-4*



*No demerits for needing a haircut among these candidates from Class 8-66*



*Organized athletic competition was an important part of the OCS program  
100 yard dash during an OCS Battalion track meet (April 1966)*

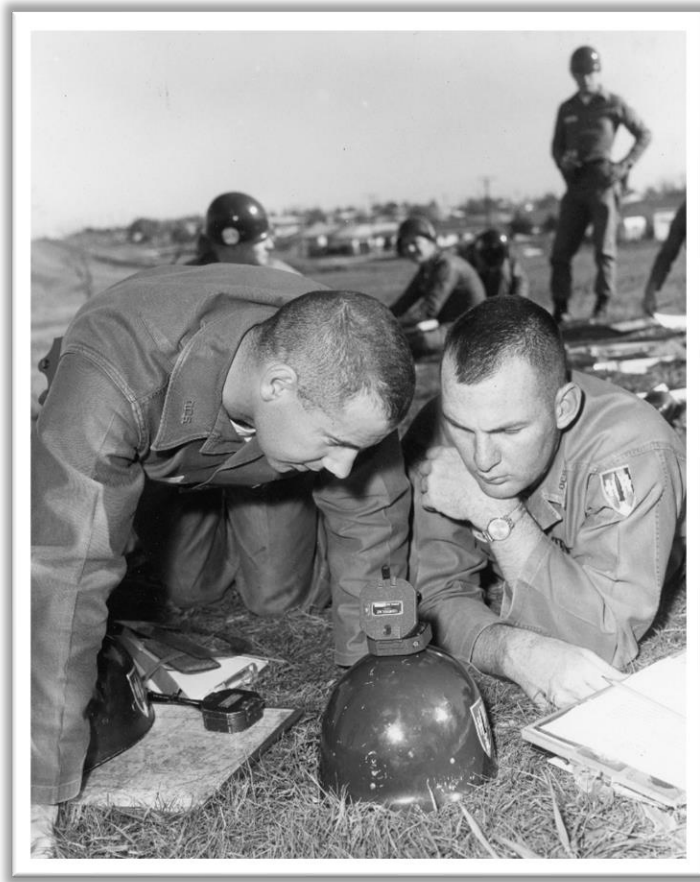


*OCS Commandant Colonel Charles E. Howard cuts cake on Organization Day on the 25th Anniversary of the Artillery OCS at Fort Sill (July 16, 1966)*



*Candidate Paul H. Wessman, Jr. Class 4-66 training on the Aiming Circle*





*Candidates Donald M. Keith and Michael T. McCardle Class 8-66*



*Candidate James R. Rodgers Class 14-66*



*The OCS Expansion project west of the Robinson Barracks began in July 1966. The first completed barracks was handed over to Fort Sill in November 1966.*



# Chapter Fourteen

## 1967- Part 1

### Officer Candidate Brigade 1967

#### ***From History of the U.S Army Artillery and Missile School Narrative History 1967***

In the Gunnery Department, instructor personnel were at a premium due to the conflict in Vietnam. A limited number of students in the officer courses (Artillery Officer Career Course, later redesignated the Artillery Officer Advanced Course, and Field Artillery Officer Basic Course) who demonstrated exceptional proficiency in gunnery were retained for assignment to the Gunnery Department in an effort to obtain the caliber and number of personnel needed for instructor duties. However, the main source for obtaining new instructors were graduates of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate Course. At the peak of the expansion program, there were 257 gunnery instructors, of these 118 were second lieutenants straight out of Officer Candidate Brigade.

In the Officer Candidate Brigade an unusual number of interesting sidelights occurred in 1967 which served to add to the history of the United States Army Artillery and Missile School.

For example, the truce with the Comanches was strengthened this past year when Officer Candidate Ronald Parker, great-grandson of the last Chief of the Comanches, Quanah Parker, was commissioned as a second lieutenant. On the day of his commissioning another page was added to the annals of history, as Candidate Parker's relatives entered Fort Sill's Key Gate and passed Quanah Road, the Old Post Corral, and the Old Post Quadrangle--all areas of this national historic landmark that were associated with Chief Quanah Parker's truce 92 years ago.

In other highlights during the year at the Officer Candidate Brigade the same set of gold bars that had been used in successive commissioning ceremonies for four brothers were pinned to the shoulder of a fifth brother, Second Lieutenant Lonnie Kasperbaur.

The name of a graduate of Class 33-67, Second Lieutenant Jack W. Johnson, will go into the annals of the Officer Candidate Brigade's history as the 40,000th second lieutenant graduated from Fort Sill's Artillery Officer Candidate course. Class 33 also boasted the largest number of graduates since the end of World War II with the commissioning of 238 lieutenants.



## **George Bannon: 1-67**

While it was not apparent to me at the time, OCS was a watershed experience that would have a long-lasting effect on the person I became, and how I lived my life. The effects of OCS gradually sunk in, but it really became more apparent to me many years later, when I attended reunions and interacted with classmates and graduates from other classes, to include earlier generations.

There is an old adage that “The older you get, the smarter your parents become.” and regarding OCS, it could be said that “The older you get, the smarter your TAC Officers become.” That also applies to the brilliantly conceived OCS “system” that both trained us and continued the selection process, which included the unrelenting pressure intended to reveal weaknesses and identify candidates who should not be commissioned. I eventually realized that there was a “method to their madness” and, in retrospect, we were the beneficiaries of those methods. A couple of items that might be considered “icing on the cake” in the OCS environment are the mantra of Cooperate and Graduate, the Honor Code, and the use of Student Rating Forms (SRF), all of which upped the ante on accountability and contributed to the winnowing process.

Out of the 60 graduates in our OCS class, 24 were also classmates in OCS Prep AIT for MOS 13E (FDC) at Fort Sill. OCS Prep AIT was much more restrictive and demanding than a normal AIT. However, there were several distinct advantages to having had the OCS Prep experience. We were fully immersed in the OCS policies, procedures, uniform requirements, and standards, which included having purchased many extra uniforms that we had tailored and several pairs of Corcoran jump boots that we had spit-shined, as well as having worked with the OCS SOP and footlocker layout. Another advantage was that we were reasonably proficient in Artillery Gunnery, which allowed us to focus on other requirements.

In the 3rd week of Lower Class, I was appointed OC BC (Officer Candidate Battery Commander) for the week beginning on 24 July, which meant that I had to ensure that the battery met all of its commitments in a military manner, such as movements to and from class, the mess hall, details, and study hall. I also had to ensure that all duty assignments and work details were properly manned and accomplished each day. It doesn't sound like much as I write these few sentences, but at the time it felt as though I was planning the Normandy Invasion every day. Those kinds of assignments are called “sweat positions” because of the pressure on performance and the visibility to TAC Officers and Upperclassmen, let alone the heat of July in Oklahoma.

Another learning experience was when our Lower Class battery planned to provide some refreshments to the Middle Class battery that served as our CATO's, because they were scheduled to return from a field exercise late at night. Since my wife drove a station wagon, with sufficient room for 20 dozen donuts and 10 cases of Coke, she got volunteered to buy the “grotto” and bring into Robinson Barracks around 10:00 p.m., which was after “lights out.” She showed up on time and three of us directed her to the Papa Battery house where we unloaded everything...and then got caught by a TAC Officer. She was allowed to escape, but we were not, at least not until we did a modest number of pushups. He did not issue any demerits and he allowed the food to remain for Papa Battery. The lesson was that taking care of others is a noble cause; but had the food been for our own consumption, the outcome would have been more severe.

Much of my time in OCS was somewhat of a blur, and my recollections were often limited to my immediate surroundings (cube, house floor, work detail, formation, etc.) as I scrupulously tried to stay below the radar and survive. In addition, I was “away” from the battery for much of the time during my 3 weeks duty as a Middle Class CATO and another 3 weeks as an Upper Class CATO. Being a CATO was a lot of work because the CATO had to inspect and prepare demerit slips for every cube in their assigned platoon, supervise and mentor the Lower Class platoon candidates to help them succeed, and assist the TAC Officer in evaluating the candidates. The upside to the extra work was the un-written rule that CATO’s would not be restricted on weekends, so I was able to get home more frequently than I would have, otherwise.

The bottom line for me is that completing OCS was the hardest thing that I had ever done, it was my most meaningful experience, and it reinforced and improved upon my values. It also made me realize, because of my personal experience, that most people can accomplish more than what they think of as their capabilities. In a nutshell, persistence trumps talent.

### **Peter McLaughlin: 1-67**

My Army service sprang from my 0.9 grade point average, over three semesters at Cameron College in Lawton, and the College’s admonition they didn’t want me to waste any more of their time. I was then still living with my folks on Fort Sill, as part of a military family, but the “*draft*” awaited me... So, I was sent to Fort Bliss for basic, along with two others who had similar academic credentials from Cameron. The three of us were all the sons of professional soldiers assigned to Fort Sill and had all been ROTC cadets at Cameron. But we were all certifiable as poor (or maybe just distracted) students.

When asked during our in-processing at the induction center, we all expressed interest in Officers Candidate School (and probably some other things), but never expected much to come of it. (As an aside, I had a rather tumultuous relationship with our Basic Training Company Commander, because he knew I was an “Army Brat,” and he recommended “Disapproval” of my request to attend OCS. I heard later that my SFC drill instructor, who apparently had great disdain for the CO, and thought that I had some potential, had fixed that through the Training Battalion Sergeant Major. I found great satisfaction in that. I also always wish I had found a way to thank him later. I later encountered that BCT Commander at the Fort Bliss Officers Club and he still thought poorly of me. Sadly, he had been relieved of his Command a bit earlier, for cause, and he was RIF’d a year or so later in the first round.

Because of what must have been a desperate need for officers, all three of us were programmed to attend Artillery OCS and were sent to Fort Sill for Artillery Fire Direction Control (13E) training at the AIT OCS prep Battery. Following AIT we were sent to separate units awaiting class dates. For me that date was set as somewhere around October or November of that year (1966). I lost track of the other guys over the years...neither of them became career soldiers.

My temporary assignment was an attachment, as a candidate-in-waiting, to Army Special Services as a Lifeguard at one of the Fort Sill swimming pools, because I had the certifications left over from my pre-Army life. The pool to which I was assigned was one at which I had been a Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Instructor as a teenager (I

was still a teenager at this point). Interestingly to me, many of the same cute girls that hung out there when I was with the Red Cross, were still there...but now I was just a GI or 'doggie' and considered sort of 'unclean' (for want of a better term).

After not very long, I received an unexpected notice from Battery Headquarters that an OCS class (1-67), that was just starting, wasn't at the desired "full capacity." They told me that if I could get ready in two days, I could join that class. So, I and a couple of others (can't remember who), entered OCS a few days later than our new contemporaries. I was immediately and truly dazzled by how this group of guys that I had never met, made it their priority to get us caught up. Through the Lower Class period, my story was just like all the rest of the class. But, when we reached Middle Class, I was among several others of our class that were designated as a CATO and assigned to quarter with (and guide) a platoon of an incoming class (Smacks). (I never learned the source of the terms "CATO" or even "Smack." I think CATO was like (Big Brother). Smack was more like (Dirt Ball). For anyone so designated, the real regret is that those assignments meant that we were seldom with our classmates, except during the daytime classwork or field exercises. So, our bonding with these great guys was probably a bit less intense than for the others. I was in that position again when Class 1-67 became Upperclassmen, except that I was then assigned to a different platoon, that was Middle Class. I gave up my status as a "teenager" just after we turned Middle Class.

One memory from early on, that somehow seared itself into my soul, was a sign on the wall in the barracks (or maybe in the Orderly Room), that was obviously taken from one of my favorite poems, "The Cremation of Sam McGee." That was a poem about constant, debilitating cold and death for gold prospectors in Alaska. The line they took from it read, "Strange things are done, under the Midnight Sun, by the men who moil for gold." Almost certainly intended to be a reference to Candidates, under their blanket at night, with a flashlight, polishing their shoes and brass. Still seems appropriate. I wish I knew where that sign ended up. Anybody know?

By far the most significant difference in my life following OCS, is that I suddenly, and necessarily, grew up. OCS was hard, but it was exactly what I needed to grow out of being a local ne're-do-well college boy, who lived with his mom and dad.

One advantage to growing up on Fort Sill was apparent during our E&E exercise. When they stopped the vehicle (from which we had no outside view) and made us get out, I recognized the area as a place that I was hunting quail, just six or seven months ago. I could easily figure out where the "Partisan Point" was from there, but the direct route would certainly be watched by the bad guys, so not really much use. But for our group, at least we knew the start point. We passed that around to who we could, but I don't know if it was widely circulated. Most everyone had taken off at a dead run intended only to get away from the truck and the road (South Boundary Road, by my recollection). As I recall, many of the class got to the pick-up point before us, but a lot were still unaccounted for at mid-morning the next day.

I stayed in the service for another 22 years following OCS, but I was one of the group that was sent to Fort Bliss for training as a HAWK Missile officer, and the links to the core of our OCS class begin weakening.

## **John A. Walker Jr: 1-67**

In November 1965, I received an invitation from the US Government to join the US Army. At that time, I was working for Marathon Oil Company in their computer group. I joined Marathon Oil in June 1964, so I had about 1 1/2 years with Marathon at that time. I was 23. I had a college degree, so I enlisted to be guaranteed successive schools and end up in OCS. Basic Training began on February 21, 1966 at Fort Leonard Wood. After Basic Training we were all off to Fort Sill and OCS Prep which was quite a shock as we thought it would be easy before going to OCS. Then entered OCS in July. Graduated December 17, 1966.

OSC training and being an Officer was probably the beginning of my career rise in management. OCS taught me one major leadership rule that has stuck with me ever since. "Do not give me all the reasons you cannot do the project or that hill - tell me what resources you need to get the job done and I'll get you those resources." I cannot say how many times during my rise in management positions I used this argument with others on our team. Many managers I worked for would tell me that I was always known for getting the job done.

## **Officer Candidate School Training Policies Headquarters United States Continental Army Command (CONARC) Regulation 350-11 (13 January 1967)**

### **Section I - General**

**1. Purpose.** This regulation prescribes training policies, practices, and standards for conducting US Army officer candidate schools.

**2. Applicability.** This regulation applies to all male officer candidate schools.

**3. Mission.** Officer candidate schools have the mission to develop leadership abilities and professional skills to the level required of a second lieutenant in his particular branch of service.

**4. Training objective.** The objective of each officer candidate school is to produce a second lieutenant capable of and fully prepared at graduation to perform duties commensurate with his grade and branch.

### **5. General policies.**

Each officer candidate school has the responsibility to teach candidates how to be a second lieutenant. The approach will be positive. Each candidate's leadership will be evaluated based on his ability to perform basic requisites of good junior leadership such as ability to direct and orient troops, to speak convincingly and well, and to be acceptable and impressive to associates. Exercises and tasks which parallel those of a second lieutenant provide the means to evaluate leadership. Consideration will be given to the candidate's intelligence and his capability for future development. Mature judgment must be used in counseling and evaluating all candidates, recognizing that some well qualified and intelligent candidates have not developed personalities and characteristics that adjust rapidly to the officer candidate school environment.

a. Officer candidate school is not primarily a screening process. Instead, it is a vehicle for training the candidate who meets the selection criteria to become a second lieutenant. The candidate will not be rated and evaluated until he has been taught what is expected of him.

b. Officer candidate schools are under no requirement to maintain any prescribed attrition rate. A concerted effort will be made to keep attrition to the absolute minimum without lessening the standards required for commissioning.

## **6. References.**

- a. AR 350-50, "Army Officer Candidate Schools," as amended
- b. AR 601-226, "Officer Candidate School Option," as amended
- c. TM 21-200, "Physical Conditioning," as amended.

## **Standards**

**7. General.** All standards prescribed will be constructive in nature and be of value in the overall development of a candidate towards the attainment of a commission in the US Army. The candidate will be observed continuously, and his performance made a matter of record. Unrealistic standards that cause the candidate undue financial hardship or harassment are prohibited.

**8. Academic.** Each service school will determine its academic standards based on the professional skills required of a second lieutenant on his initial assignment to a TOE platoon level position of the particular branch of service.

**9. Leadership.** Each service school will establish standards based on functional objectives of leadership training. Examples of functional objectives are:

a. Ability to stand before a company of men; issue commands in clear, concise terms; and have the commands understood and obeyed.

b. Ability to take charge of a group of men, organize them into a cohesive functioning group, instruct the men as to their mission, and supervise execution thereof.

c. Ability to take charge of a group of men, assign each a task, instruct the men as to their tasks, and supervise execution thereof.

## **10. Barracks.**

a. Barracks will be orderly and clean. Order and cleanliness will be emphasized rather than the degree of the shine on the floor or on fixtures. Regulations such as prohibiting the wear of normal footgear when walking on the floors will be avoided.

b. Static display items for wall locker or footlocker will not be required or accepted. All display items will be items which the candidate normally uses. Tee-shirts, shorts, and socks will be neatly rolled without the aid of a blocking material such as cardboard or plastic. Each candidate will be allowed a space in his footlocker, wall locker, or other container in which he can safeguard personal property.



### **11. Personal.**

- a. The personal appearance, military bearing, and military courtesy of the candidate will be worthy of emulation. The candidate will present a neat, clean appearance at all times.
- b. Uniforms will be fitted in accordance with current uniform regulations. Boots and shoes will have a high gloss at the beginning of each day.
- c. The standards of personal appearance required during the day will be consistent with that which may be reasonably retained under training conditions. The quality of service of quartermaster laundries will be acceptable.
- d. Candidates may wear either the uniform or civilian clothes while on leave.

**12. Conduct.** The standards of personal conduct will be the same as those expected of officers.

**13. Honor code.** Each officer candidate school will establish an honor code. The code will emphasize that a candidate's bond is his word and signature. The code will prescribe that a candidate does not lie, cheat, or steal. Each officer candidate battalion will have an honor council elected by the candidates to administer the code. An officer will be appointed as honor council advisor.

### **Section III - Organization and Responsibilities**

**14. Commanding officer of officer candidate brigade or comparable unit.** The responsibilities of the brigade commander with respect to developing leadership abilities and professional skills are to:

- a. Develop and evaluate the candidate's leadership ability and potential.
- b. Coordinate and work closely with the service school in the academic development of the candidate.
- c. Review all recommendations for relief from the course.
- d. Make pertinent recommendations or decisions on all matters pertaining to the leadership development and evaluation of the candidates in his brigade.
- e. Recommend qualified candidates to the commandant of the service school for commissioning as officers of the US Army.

**15. Battalion commander of officer candidate battalion.** The responsibilities of the battalion commander with respect to developing leadership abilities and professional skills are to:

- a. Develop and evaluate the leadership ability and potential of the officer candidates of his battalion.
- b. Devote the major portion of his time to observing leadership training and supervising the leadership development practices and procedures of his battalion.

c. Make pertinent recommendations or decisions on all matters pertaining to the leadership development and evaluation of candidates in his battalion.

**16. Company commander.** The responsibilities of the company commander with respect to developing leadership abilities and professional skills are to:

a. Develop and evaluate the leadership ability and potential of the officer candidates of his company.

b. Devote the major portion of his time to observing the candidate in training and supervising the leadership development practices and procedures of his company.

c. Make pertinent recommendations or decisions on all matters pertaining to the leadership development and evaluation of candidates in his company.

**17. Platoon leader (tactical officer).** The responsibilities of the tactical officer with respect to developing leadership abilities and professional skills are to:

a. Develop and evaluate the leadership ability and potential of the candidates of his platoon by:

- (1) Teaching the candidate how to be a leader.
- (2) Setting the example.
- (3) Counseling the candidate.

b. Compile sufficient and meaningful records on the leadership development of each candidate.

c. Make pertinent recommendations to his company commander on all matters pertaining to the candidates under his supervision.

#### **Section IV - Training**

##### **18. Initial training phase.**

a. Time must be allowed for the candidate to adjust to the pressures and demands of life as an officer candidate. The first four weeks of training are considered the crucial transition period. During this time emphasis will be placed on instruction requiring physical activity, as opposed to classroom instruction requiring concentration on complex subjects.

b. During the initial period the candidate will be taught the necessary skills to exercise leadership in candidate command positions. Practical application of methods of instruction, drill and ceremonies, and physical training techniques will be taught to the candidate by the tactical officer. The early phase of such training may be conducted by school instructors to teach the candidates the fundamentals, methods used, and commands given. In such case, the candidate will be required in subsequent periods of the training to conduct the instruction applying the principles and techniques learned in the early phase. This instruction will be under the control and supervision of the tactical officer who will make necessary corrections and conduct a critique of the instruction.

c. The purpose of this initial phase of training is to build self-confidence in the candidate and develop the skills required to exercise leadership.

## **19. Leadership.**

### **a. Initial leadership training.**

(1) In the first week of training, the candidate will be instructed in procedures and practices which will be used to teach and develop leadership traits. Standards of leadership the candidate is expected to attain will be explained. Leadership instructors at the service school and company officers will conduct the training.

(2) Leadership instruction in the classrooms will relate theories of leadership to the practices and techniques used to develop leadership in the candidate.

(3) The importance of organizing time and setting priorities will be emphasized. It will be explained to the candidate that he will be required to accomplish many tasks within an allotted time. The candidate will be required to discern which task is more important and allocate a greater portion of his limited asset, time, to the more important task. As he gains experience, he will develop proficiency in performing the tasks within the allotted time.

**b. Practical leadership training.** Leadership is best learned by practice. The candidate will be given maximum opportunity to practice leadership. Training situations which offer opportunities for the candidate to demonstrate leadership are:

(1) Field problems which require the candidate to lead small groups to accomplish military tasks. Examples are small unit tactics, artillery survey classes, map reading and compass courses, and establishment of radio teams in field positions.

(2) Classroom problems which provide the candidates an opportunity to use initiative and imagination in reaching solutions. Examples are problems in patrolling and reconnaissance, handling of refugees, management of indigenous labor, and traffic management.

(3) Situations where a candidate is required to conduct instruction or stand before a group of men to express ideas or give directions. Methods of instruction, drill and ceremonies, physical training, and command information presentations are examples.

### **c. Candidate chain of command.**

(1) A candidate chain of command will be established in each company. The positions will range from company commander to assistant squad leader. Each candidate will be assigned duties and functions designed to develop leadership traits. Positions will be rotated among the candidates so that every candidate will have an opportunity to function in a leadership position.

(2) The candidate organization may extend to battalion and brigade if the positions contribute to leadership development. The use of candidate battalion and brigade staffs in ceremonies is encouraged. These positions should be a reward for a candidate who has distinguished himself in academics and leadership.

(3) A candidate will not be relieved from a position in the chain of command without approval of the company commander. Indiscriminate relief destroys a candidate's self-confidence. Errors committed while in a command position will be corrected on the spot for the benefit of all the candidates. The correction will be made in a non-degrading, positive manner. The candidate will not be ridiculed for committing the error.

**d. Use of pressure.** Application of pressure is one of the key techniques in the leadership development of an officer candidate. The mettle of the typical officer candidate has never been tested, he does not know what he can or cannot do. Activities designed to apply pressure must be constructive and for the purpose of developing leadership traits. The candidate will not be required to partake in a pressure activity which he cannot possibly accomplish, or which is degrading to human dignity. Pressure will not be used to force men to resign. Pressures normally will fall into the following categories:

**(1) Physical.** Physical training will keep the Candidate alert and will enhance his physical fitness. The tactical officer must keep in mind at all times the physical capabilities of his candidates and conduct physical training accordingly.

**(2) Psychological.** Psychological pressures will normally be in the form of requiring a variety of tasks within a given period of time. Such pressures will develop the candidate's ability to organize himself, his time, and his resources to accomplish the tasks in the most efficient manner.

**20. Academic.** This training will be as prescribed by the approved program of instruction (POI) for the respective officer candidate school. The POI must be in consonance with the leadership training requirements of this regulation and, where necessary, will be revised to conform.

**21. Physical.**

a. Physical training will be conducted in accordance with TM 21-200 and subparagraph 18b of this regulation.

b. During the first two weeks of the course, physical training will be closely controlled. It will be designed to gradually condition the candidate for the rapid buildup in physical fitness to follow. All physical training conducted will appear on the training schedule. The candidate may be required to double time in his company area and to class for periods of short duration.

c. After the first two weeks, physical training will be as prescribed locally within the purview of TM 21-200 and subparagraph 18b of this regulation.

d. Capricious extra on-the-spot physical training will not be given.

**Section V - Leadership Evaluation**

**22. General.** Leadership evaluation relies on the judgment of the evaluator. Judgment is more objective when it is based on personal knowledge of a candidate's ability to perform duties required of a second lieutenant. The brigade commander is responsible for insuring that the best possible judgement is used in evaluating leadership.

**23. Factors to be considered.**

a. Factors to be considered in the leadership evaluation system are:

- (1) Ability to organize time, set priorities, and to accomplish assigned tasks.
- (2) Proficiency in conducting classes, dismounted drill, and physical training.
- (3) Performance in classrooms, field problems, and training situations.

(4) Performance while serving in the candidate chain of command.

b. Platoon projects such as constructing displays, scraping plumbing fixtures down to the brass, and painting murals on walls will not be used as factors in measuring initiative. Such projects de-emphasize the importance of developing leadership traits in areas directly related to the military duties of a company grade officer. Preparation for training, ability to work without supervision, and innovation of time saving techniques are better measures of initiative for the purpose of determining a candidate's ability to serve as an officer.

#### **24. Leadership evaluation system.**

a. Each officer candidate school will design a leadership evaluation system to measure the candidate's progress toward achieving the functional objectives of leadership training. The system will be designed to encourage the development of leadership rather than a means to screen the candidates for leadership qualities. The candidate will be rated on the basis of accomplishments in light of his experience. The application of reverse psychology, such as the practice of rating the candidate "inadequate" early in the course so that he will be motivated to improve, will not be condoned. Recognition of good work when it occurs is a greater motivational factor than intentionally rating the candidate low.

b. The "forced rating" system, which requires a certain portion of the platoon to be rated low, will be discontinued. Each candidate will be rated based on his individual capabilities. The appendix contains a recommended leadership evaluation system.

c. The leadership evaluation system will be exercised during the initial four weeks. Leadership ratings will be completed on each candidate covering the 4-week period. Each candidate will be shown his file and its contents will be explained to him individually by his tactical officer. At this time, any questions or doubts about what constitutes the leadership evaluation and how it is accomplished will be explained to the candidate. Observation reports, demerits, and other leadership performance records in his file which have been assembled during this first 4-week period will be used only for counseling and to explain the evaluation system to the candidate. They will not be considered in future evaluations.

### **Section VI - Relief and Turnback Procedures**

#### **25. Responsibilities of chain of command.**

a. The brigade commander is responsible for determining when a candidate should be turned back or relieved for academic deficiencies. Failure to meet academic standards prescribed by the service school will serve as a basis for the decision.

b. A candidate will be recommended for turnback or relief for leadership deficiencies when he fails to progress satisfactorily toward attainment of the leadership standards. Recommendation for turnback or relief will be made by the tactical officer and company commander. The recommendation will be reviewed, and recommendations made through the chain of command to the approving authority.

## **26. Responsibilities of faculty boards.**

- a. A board of officers will review each recommendation for relief for academic or leadership deficiencies. The purpose of the board is to see that the candidate has received adequate instruction and had ample opportunity to demonstrate his abilities. The board will make a recommendation to the brigade commander.,
- b. The board will consist of a minimum of three officers. One of the officers must be a field grade officer.
- c. The board proceedings must be dignified, however, court-martial procedures and atmosphere will be avoided. Practices such as reading “charges” to the candidate, swearing in witnesses, and taking verbatim testimony will be avoided. Every effort must be made to salvage a possible “loss” to the service.
- d. Records of board proceedings will not be given to candidates who appear before the board.

## **27. Training credit for relieved candidates.**

- a. School commandants will insure that the record of each candidate relieved from the school after the seventh week is reviewed, and when deemed appropriate, may award to such candidate credit for the Basic or Senior Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Academy course. Such award will be based on the candidate’s accomplishment and performance at the school. The personnel records (DA Form 20) of those awarded NCO academy credit will be annotated accordingly.
- b. School commandants are encouraged to award appropriate certificates of proficiency, under the provisions of AR 350-50, for those academic portions of courses successfully completed. Such awards will be annotated on the individual’s DA Form 20 as appropriate. A copy of the certificate of proficiency will be placed in the individual’s 201 file.

## **Section VII - Motivation**

**28. General.** The key to motivation is a challenging, well-executed training program which gives every candidate full opportunity to develop leadership abilities and professional skills. The approach to the candidate must be positive and will challenge and encourage him to complete the program.

## **29. Reception of the candidate.**

- a. Each candidate will be received in a manner which will encourage continuation in the course. The reception process begins when the candidate first steps into the company area. He will be received courteously and processed efficiently. Inspections and formations will be for instructional and administrative purposes only. Practices which are designed to separate the weak from the strong and to point out individual deficiencies are prohibited during administrative processing into the company.
- b. A formal reception ceremony will be held within one week after the class is enrolled. The ceremony will be designed to motivate the candidate to complete the course. The ceremony should be dynamic with flags, music, and a challenging address by a senior officer. The address will emphasize the fact that the candidate has been especially selected to be developed into a leader for the US Army. The advantages of early leadership

training and how it will assist the candidate in civilian life will be emphasized. The need for leadership training to supplement skills already learned in civilian schools and colleges will be explained.

**30. Ceremonial and social activities.**

a. Military ceremonies and social activities will be used to mark significant turning points during the course such as attaining intermediate or senior status. Individual accomplishments in training and in leadership will be recognized at military ceremonies.

b. Candidate clubs for use by candidates are encouraged. These clubs serve as a center for social activities which include wives of candidates. Club activities should be used to help keep the candidate and his family interested in the program.

**Section VIII**

**Practices Relating to Treatment of Officer Candidates**

**31. General.** The candidate will be treated as a man and as a soldier. Practices prescribed in this regulation are designed to provide a sound training program to develop a candidate into an officer. The candidate will not be required to participate in any acts that are degrading to human dignity. Hazing practices normally associated with college freshmen are prohibited.

**32. Senior candidates in chain of command.** The practice of placing a senior candidate in command positions over more junior candidates must be closely supervised. A senior candidate has an excellent opportunity to develop leadership abilities in this situation, but it must be insured that the senior candidate does not resort to using hazing techniques.

**33. Mess Hall practices.**

a. Each candidate will be allowed time to eat a full meal three times a day. So-called "training" during mealtime will be avoided. It is understood that some candidates require instruction in etiquette and social graces. This instruction will be presented in a positive, constructive manner.

b. Example of practices which will not be conducted are listed below:

- (1) Exaggerated eating positions such as sitting on the first 4 inches of the chair and/or eating "square meals."
- (2) Reciting general orders to senior candidates and tactical officers.
- (3) Serving meals to tactical officers.
- (4) Any action that could be construed as harassing or degrading.

**34. Daily schedule.**

a. Throughout the course, scheduling will insure that the candidate is allowed time for at least 7-1/2-hours of uninterrupted sleep each night when in the garrison. Appropriate adjustments can be made for bivouac, field problems, and authorized administrative duties such as duty officer and charge of quarters.

b. Time will be allotted the candidate for personal activities such as getting laundry, calling home, and writing letters.

c. At least 2 hours each day will be set aside for study. No other activity will be required of the candidate during this period.

**35. Pass policy.** Passes will be granted as a privilege for meeting the required standards. Blanket restriction to the officer candidate school area will not exceed the first 4 weeks.

## **Section IX - Role and Training of Tactical Officers**

**36. Role of tactical officers.** Tactical officers have the primary role in developing leadership. The tactical officer is responsible for teaching leadership techniques, providing opportunity for the candidate to develop leadership traits, and evaluating his capabilities as a leader. To accomplish his mission, the tactical officer must set the example by using correct leadership techniques in performing his duties.

### **37. Training of tactical officer.**

a. Each officer candidate school will conduct a course for all newly assigned tactical officers of at least 3 days duration. The course will cover the leadership techniques the tactical officer will employ. The rules prescribing his relationship with the candidate will be explained. Examples of practices that will be prohibited are:

- (1) Excessive shouting and yelling at a candidate.
- (2) Touching the candidate in a degrading manner such as tapping the man on the chest while reprimanding him for an error or infraction of a rule.
- (3) Referring to a candidate as “hey, you” or “hey, boy.”
- (4) Relieving a candidate for poor performance in the presence of other candidates and ridiculing him for his shortcomings.

b. The tactical officers’ course will teach the correct method of making on-the-spot corrections for the benefit of the entire group. Private counseling techniques designed to encourage a candidate to improve and to continue in the course will be emphasized.

## **Appendix**

### **Officer Candidate Leadership Development and Evaluation System**

**1. General.** Officer candidate leadership evaluation is a function of the chain of command of the brigade or comparable unit to which the candidate is assigned. Leadership is a quality which must be developed through teaching and association based upon the assumption that this quality is totally unfamiliar to the new candidate. The evaluation must be based on the candidate’s performance in areas conducive to leadership development following instruction in such areas. It is a consensus judgment of the officers in the chain of command from the tactical office at platoon level to the brigade commander. The minimum leadership standards required of the candidate must be high, but based on attainable objectives as shown the candidate through teaching and setting the example in a proper, positive atmosphere. The standards should be set on an appropriate level consistent with the experience and background of each candidate class and raised progressively through teaching to the high level desired for commissioning. The basic premise must be that, to be judged, leadership must first be taught.

### **2. Leadership development.**



**a. General.** The leadership development factors which are outlined in b through j below assist officers in the chain of command to develop the candidate's leadership qualities. The candidate's performance and response in these areas are the basis on which his leadership development is to be judged.

**b. Leadership training.** The candidate must be taught leadership fundamentals -- the tools of the trade, and then how to use them. The most common leadership training is, of course, formal leadership instruction in the principles and theory of leadership. Other training most closely associated with leadership development is embodied in physical training, methods of instruction, drill and command, small unit tactical training, the leader's reaction course, and similar activities. Academic subjects with a practical application phase in which the candidate participates such as map reading, compass course, conduct of weapons firing, field survey, installation of large field antennas, the conduct of motor convoys, etc., may also serve to further broaden the base on which leadership is judged.

**c. Chain of command.** The candidate is given command positions in the officer candidate chain of command to teach him how to command men. This serves to develop self-confidence, poise, and a knowledge of the problems normally encountered by a small unit leader. The company commander is the appointing and relieving authority for positions of command.

**d. Tactical chain of command.** Tactical training exercises provide opportunity for the candidate to assume leadership responsibilities under tactical conditions, and to further develop his organizational and leadership abilities.

**e. Instructor assignments.** Every officer must be proficient in instructing others. Assignment of the candidate to instructor tasks will develop this essential leadership quality. Such training as physical training, weapons training, drill and command, and command information is conducive to the development of instructional ability.

**f. Physical fitness.** The physical training program is designed to develop the candidate's stamina and endurance, and teach him the fundamentals and how to impart this training to others.

**g. Pressure.** Considered pressure can be a valuable aid in the leadership development of the candidate. It enhances his ability to think and act soberly under adverse conditions and periods of stress which are most likely to be the circumstances in a combat situation. Particular care must be taken to insure that pressure is applied for constructive purposes and not allowed to degenerate into hazing exercises. In no case will pressure be applied in a manner so as to cause a degradation of the candidate's human dignity.

**h. Inspections.** Participation in inspections teach the candidate how to attain and maintain high standards in personal appearance, cleanliness, orderliness, and maintenance of weapons, equipment, and facilities. Emphasis should be on the establishment of realistic standards and inspection procedures and techniques.

**i. Personality and character trait ratings.** These ratings are accomplished twice during the course, in the early and latter phase. The candidate rates all the members in his

platoon. The ratings provide each candidate a tool for self-analysis and give him an opportunity to see what his contemporaries think about him. The contents of the rating form will be as prescribed by the proponent school at which it is used.

**j. Counseling.** Counseling, both formal and informal, is a mainstay of the leadership development program. The candidate's autobiography should be used for background information to give the counselor a better insight into the individual with whom he is dealing. Counseling sessions should be conducted in a relaxed atmosphere that enhances the communications link between the candidate and the counselor.

### **3. Evaluation aids.**

**a. General.** Written observation reports and peer ratings are the most common evaluation aids. At best, they can reflect only a small portion of the candidate's total performance in leadership or leadership-related subjects while at the school. Therefore, those officers responsible for judging the candidate's leadership abilities must make every effort to personally observe the candidate as often as possible in training and performance of details.

**b. Reports of observation.** Observation reports should be written at such frequency and be of the type that will indicate a trend in the candidate's performance. The reports must be clear, concise, complete and constructive. They should always include good points in a candidate's performance, as well as the bad points. A type of observation report form is shown at inclosure 1.

**c. Peer ratings.** Peer ratings are completed during the 9th, 16th, and 20th weeks through use of a form similar to the one shown at inclosure 2. This form permits the candidate to rate his contemporaries on the same traits as those listed on DA Form 67-5, "US Army Officer Efficiency Report," except that "attention to duty" has been substituted for "sociability" and a service preference added. The graphic representation under "Expected Distribution of 100 O/Cs, II Part II of the student rating form, must be explained to the candidate. It is to be used in a manner similar to that described in AR 623-105 for the diagrammatical distribution pattern reflected in Part VI of the Officer Efficiency Report (DA Form 67-5). Peer ratings should be used as a guide and one of the factors in the evaluation of each candidate's leadership development. They are of particular value when counseling the candidate. The form is designed to aid in determining the candidate's strong points as well as his weak ones.

### **4. Evaluation system.**

**a. General.** Formal evaluations are accomplished three times during the course, the 10th, 17th, and 21st weeks. Reports of observation, demerit rosters, and other records of the candidate's leadership performance during the first 4 weeks are used primarily for counseling purposes and to exercise the evaluation system, and they are not considered in the formal evaluations. Those candidates who meet the minimum leadership standards required at each evaluation are to be considered adequate in leadership development, those of which there is doubt as marginal, and those deficient as inadequate. No numerical leadership grade is computed for inclusion in the candidate's overall grade or to determine relative leadership standings in the class except as indicated in c (5) below.

**b. Ratings.** Formal leadership ratings are completed during the 9th, 16th, and 20th weeks by the candidates and tactical officers. Candidates rate their immediate

contemporaries using a student rating form similar to the one shown at inclosure 2. Each tactical officer completes a general observation report covering the rating period for each candidate in his platoon. The tactical officer must include an adjectival rating in the report on the progress of the candidate in leadership development. The performance rating will be either exceptional, superior, adequate, marginal or inadequate when compared with that of other candidates in the platoon. Use of the "forced rating" procedures commonly associated with the order of merit worksheet is prohibited.

### **c. Evaluation.**

(1) During the 10th, 17th, and 21st weeks, overall evaluation of the candidate's development is completed by the company commander and the tactical officer. This evaluation is made under the "whole man concept." Generally, observation reports, peer ratings, academic grades, and personal observation by the officers concerned form the basis for the evaluation. Any candidate determined to be deficient in leadership or academic development, or both, will be reported to the battalion commander. The company commander will include a recommended disposition for each candidate named in the report.

(2) The battalion commander will review each case. If the decision concerning the deficient candidate cannot be made at battalion level, the battalion commander will forward the case to the brigade commander with an appropriate recommendation.

(3) The brigade commander will make a decision based on the merits of the case and recommendations of subordinate commanders or, in the case of a recommendation for relief, refer it to a board or panel.

(4) During the 21st week the company commander, using all information and records available, peer ratings, and tactical officer's recommendations, places all candidates in the class in a recommended order of merit based on demonstrated leadership performance. A leadership order of merit roster encompassing the whole class is prepared and forwarded through command channels to the commandant of the school. Those candidates recommended for recognition as distinguished graduates will be so identified on the roster.

(5) A leadership grade is computed for each candidate based on his relative standing on the leadership order of merit roster. This leadership grade is included in the candidate's final grade for the course. In determining the candidate's final grade, demonstrated leadership performance and academic accomplishment are given equal consideration.

(6) A roster is prepared showing the relative standings of all members of the class based on their final grades. The candidate's position on this roster represents his final class standing.

(7) The school commandant appoints a board to select distinguished graduates in accordance with AR 601-100.

### **5. References.**

a. AR 350-50, "Army Officer Candidate Schools," as amended.

b. AR 601-100, "Appointment of Commissioned Officers in the Regular Army," as amended.

c. AR 623-105, "Officer Efficiency Reports," as amended.

Observation Report – (Not included)

FA Form 195 – (Not Included)

### **Rating Part 1- Personal Qualities**

- a. Adaptability** (Adjusts to new or changing situations & stresses; bears up under pressure)
- b. Ambition** (Seeks and welcomes additional and more important responsibilities)
- c. Appearance** (Possesses military bearing and is neat, smart and well groomed)
- d. Attention to Duty** (Performs assigned tasks regardless of personal interests)
- e. Cooperation** (Works in harmony with others as a team member)
- f. Dependability** (Consistently accomplishes desired actions with minimum supervision)
- g. Enthusiasm** (Motivates others by his zeal)
- h. Expression** (Expresses himself clearly and concisely both orally and in writing)
- i. Force** (Executes actions vigorously)
- j. Ingenuity** (Finds solutions to problems regardless of obstacles)
- k. Initiative** (Takes necessary and appropriate action on his own)
- l. Intelligence** (Acquires knowledge and grasps concepts readily)
- m. Judgement** (Thinks logically and makes practical decisions)
- n. Loyalty** (Renders faithful and willing support to superiors and subordinates)
- o. Moral Courage** (Intellectual honesty, willingness to stand up and be counted)
- p. Self-Discipline** (Conducts himself in accordance with accepted standards)
- q. Self-Improvement** (Takes action to improve himself)
- r. Stamina** (Performs successfully under protracted physical and mental stress)
- s. Tact** (Says or does what is appropriate without giving unnecessary offense)
- t. Understanding** (Appreciation of another person's viewpoint)

### Service Preference

**I Prefer To Serve Under Him**

**I Would Be Glad To Serve Under Him**

**I Prefer To Serve Under Someone Else**

**I Do Not Want To Serve Under Him**

### **Charles G. White: 3-67**

Regarding OCS – Being a green bird was one of the toughest times of my life. I had begun to think that maybe I was a wuss. However, it seems that in recent years more men are confessing to similar experiences. I once read an article published in a Soviet newspaper. The theme of the story was about how the military was torturing its OCS candidates at Fort Sill.

Of all my accomplishments in my life, my proudest moment of all was completing OCS and becoming a 2LT.

I remember one of the courses that we went through in Lower or Middle Class involved having to use ingenuity to solve various practical problems like coming up with a way to cross a gap with three pieces of lumber that were each individually too short to make a bridge but if assembled somehow (like with your web belts) could make a long piece that could be used as a bridge.

(In Vietnam) we had to cross a ravine to get to the tents from the gun positions. When I arrived, I asked the men why they had not built some kind of foot bridge from the boards

that were present. I was told that they were not long enough. Recalling OCS training about principles of ingenuity, I had our men to piece the boards together to make a walkway. Fortunately we had nails to laminate the side rails.

### **“Fort Sill’s 10,000th OCS Grad to Be Commissioned Tuesday”**

**(John M. Dennis: 3-67)**

***Lawton Constitution (Friday January 30, 1967)***

The Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill will reach a new milestone Tuesday morning when candidate John M. Dennis of Huntington Park, Calif. becomes the 10,000th soldier to graduate from the program since it was revived in 1951.

Candidate Dennis will be sworn in as a second lieutenant along with some 125 other members of Officer Candidate School Class 3-67 in ceremonies set for 10 a.m. in Theatre No. 1.

The 21-year-old Dennis entered the Army in December of 1965, He took his basic training at Fort Hood, Tex. Previously, he had attended Murray State College in Tishomingo, Okla.

Selection of Candidate Dennis as the 10,000th graduate came about because he was the 36th man on the list of graduates in the class. The listing is in alphabetical order.

The Artillery OCS produced thousands of officers during World War II, then was discontinued. It reopened in 1951 and is presently expanding at a rapid rate.

### **“OCS Battalion Activated at Post”**

***Lawton Constitution (Sunday, February 5, 1967)***

Official activation ceremonies were held at Fort Sill Saturday for the Artillery Officer Candidate School’s 6th Battalion. During the ceremonies, the battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Charles M. Hunter, received three operational batteries from two of the other five battalions.

Battery F, 2nd Battalion, commanded by Capt. Gary L. Nilson was redesignated Battery A, 6th Battalion; Battery D, 4th Battalion, commanded by Capt. Dick D. Chapin, was redesignated Battery B, 6th Battalion, and Battery E, 4th Battalion, commanded by Capt. Thomas E. Bondurant, was redesignated Battery C, 6th Battalion.

The new battalion is expected to receive its first new class Feb.13. This class will be split, and form the Battalions Batteries D and E.

**Chuck Catania: 4-67**

### **“Escape From Xing Loi”**

Escape and Evasion (E&E) was the last operations and tactical training segment for a Red Bird class. After completing E&E, we transitioned into “Happy Battery” where most OCS norms were set aside. We were just a week away from having the coveted gold bar pinned on our Class A uniforms.

This was 1967, and the Vietnam campaign was in full swing. We were being trained as Forward Observers and the potential for being captured by the enemy was real. Stories about the treatment of captured soldiers, as P.O.Ws were prevalent in the news.

This is my recollection of the events:

Situated somewhere at the edge of the West Range was a mock P.O.W. facility named Xing Loi. Xing Loi was so realistic that news articles appeared, describing the harsh treatment of trainees and conditions of the camp. Around Robinson Barracks, stories about what went on at Xing Loi were passed from class to class, creating some angst and concern.

We were briefed on the goal of our mission; the field problem was scheduled as a night mission. The mission was to travel by foot to two partisan points where food, water, and instructions for the next meeting point were issued. The end goal was for all of us to meet at the final rendezvous location, terminating the exercise. The class would be split up into small groups and be dropped off at various locations on the West Range.

My group was dropped off and very soon after, a couple of M113 APCs (Armored Personnel Carriers) came rolling over the hill and started chasing us. No hope of out running these guys, we were doomed. Captured by the enemy (members of an on-post artillery unit), we were hustled off to the dreaded camp. The aggressors were very interested in removing the Red Bird badges off our fatigues and keeping them as souvenirs of the capture.

We arrived at the camp. What lay before us was all the interesting motivators we had heard about; the non-ending verbal harassment, the mud pit, the wooden box suspended from a rope, the interrogation room. Obviously, we were in for the full treatment.

The aggressors started with keeping us at attention, arms raised and plenty of verbal drivel. We then were ordered to drop and low crawl through the mud pit, all the time being sprayed with water. A couple of my contemporaries were ordered to the interrogation room, and one ended up in the closed box, which was spun around hanging on the rope. The rest of us was ordered to do PT. At this point I thought it was time to play the game and have some fun, I had nothing to lose. I took charge of the group announcing we would do the "Ground Listener" exercise, 10 reps. I took the starting position, which was to lay on my left side with my left arm at a 45-degree angle, supporting my head. My right arm was lying straight along my right side. I commanded "Starting Position, Hut!" My contemporaries immediately picked up on the sham and assumed the position. I started counting reps and got as far as two reps when the captors figured out what the game was and stopped the playtime.

All along I had been eyeing an escape route. There were two gates, one for vehicles and one on the side for personnel. The personnel gate was not being watched at the time so at earliest chance I bolted out of the camp. One of the guards yelled at me that I could not do that, but I ran about 500 feet from the camp and laid down on the ground, so my silhouette would not show against the skyline.

Prior to starting OCS, I was assigned to the G3 Range Office. One of the assignments was to do patrol of the ranges especially if there was a field problem assigned. I knew there would be a Range Patrol coming by at some point, so I started walking on the road. When the patrol vehicle came by, I asked for a ride to the end partisan point. The patrol dropped

me off about 100 feet from the end point. I failed to accomplish my mission... but I escaped Xing Loi

**Tommy Franks: 5-67**

**From “American Soldier”**

**General Tommy Franks (2004)**

I submitted my application to Officer Candidate School in the last weeks of crypto-analyst training. There were openings for qualified junior enlisted applicants at either Artillery or Infantry OCS. And I figured I might have to walk less in the Artillery.

Sam Long said that the final hurdle in the process would be an interview with First Sergeant Scagliotti. “Scag” had fought in Germany and Korea. He was single, lived alone in the cadre room on the top floor of the barracks, and was known to take a drink or two at the NCO club after duty hours.

Wearing my best-tailored uniform, I showed up five minutes early for the 0730 appointment that Tuesday in June. He kept me standing at his desk while he slowly read my thin personnel file, test scores, and class grades.

“Got a couple of questions, Private,” he said, finally looking up from the papers. For the next ten minutes, Scag grilled me on family background, my civilian education, and my opinion of the Army.

“Why do you want to be an officer, Franks?” he asked, snapping shut the file. I’d been prepared for this question. “I think I can learn to lead troops, First Sergeant. So I want to find out if I’m officer material.”

Scag frowned, turned away in his swivel chair, and shook his head in disgust. “Well, all right, Franks. It’s okay by me if you want to go to OCS.” He turned back to face me. “I’ll tell you this much. You’re making a big mistake. You’ll never be an officer worth a damn. But if you stick with it, you might make a hell of a sergeant one day.” Before I could answer, he spun the chair again, so I was facing his back. “Now get out of here.”

“Thank you, First Sergeant,” I muttered between clenched teeth. Striding down the barracks stairs, I was truly pissed off. Who the fuck did that old man think he was? After all, I had two years of college. I was among the best students in my Crypto class. And the guys in the outfit looked up to me. Where did he get off saying I should limit my ambition to becoming a sergeant?

“I stayed mad for weeks. My young man’s pride had been bruised. Then, driving home to Austin on leave before reporting to OCS at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, I realized that First Sergeant Scagliotti had paid me a great compliment. He’d always been encouraging, seeing me help a new trooper in the barracks get his weapon or uniforms squared away. “You’re a doer, Franks,” he’d say, “not just a talker.” In his mind, sergeants worked hands-on with the troops, and he thought I’d be good at it. I promised myself to remember that if I ever did earn my commission as an officer.

I parked my car on the hot asphalt lot and lugged my duffle bag under the steel arch topped with the sign reading, “Robinson Barracks, United States Army Artillery Officer

Candidate School” It was Saturday, August 20, 1966, exactly one year after I’d enlisted. I figured arriving on a weekend would give me some quiet time to get settled in before the duty week began. Bad figuring.

There was nothing quiet about Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Sprawling across the foothills of the Wichita Mountains, the post thumped and rumbled with howitzers and exploding shells around the clock, seven days a week. And the duty week for new Artillery officer candidates did not include days off.

PFC Franks reporting as ordered, Sir,” I announced, saluting the first lieutenant behind the desk and handing over my paperwork. I was proud of the single stripe on the sleeves of my khaki shirt. At east I didn’t have to say “Private Franks” anymore. My spit-shined shoes were like mirrors; my uniform was crisply starched.

The lieutenant hardly glanced at my orders. “Candidate Franks,” he said scornfully. “You are no longer a PFC. You are another life form altogether. A Can-di-date. It is my duty to inform you that lower-class candidates are in fact a very low life form in this organization. Do you understand me, Candidate Franks?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Good. Because you will now demonstrate that understanding. You will hoist your duffle bag on your back, march out to that storm gutter, execute a left face, and low-crawl to your barracks, Building 3306.”

“Yes, Sir.” My first taste of OCS.

Grunting through the heat down in the pitted concrete gutter with a seventy-pound duffle on my back, I was grateful that Staff Sergeant Kittle had taken the time to teach his platoon how to low - crawl without ruining their elbows. The trick was to support your weight on your toes and the clenched muscles of your forearms, squirming along like a woolly caterpillar. The process wasn’t really painful, but it sure pierced a young honor guard stud’s ego. That, of course, was the purpose of the exercise.

The first weeks of the six-month Artillery OCS Course combined all the physical hardships of Basic Training—Physical Training (PT) at 0545 hours, five-mile runs, “corrective” push-ups, and GI parties every day—with classroom challenges that made crypto school seem like first grade.

There were 120 candidates divided into six sections in my class. We lived in old World War II wooden barracks, with no air - conditioning, no fans. At least there were stalls for the toilets. We ran every morning, we cleaned the barracks, stood inspections, double-timed to classes, rushed through the chow line, gulped our food, and studied. Six days a week. After Saturday inspection, which was always conducted by a captain or major who peppered us with questions, we spent the rest of the weekend studying.

The ancient science of artillery, we learned, comprised a number of complex elements: every cannon in the Field Artillery inventory and its individual ballistics, projectile types, and fusing, as well as terrain characteristics and topography, battlefield surveying,



explosive charges, metallurgy. We also drilled on the rigorous communication discipline of “fire missions,” which involve ordering artillery shells to strike the enemy while avoiding friendly troops and civilians.

On the third afternoon of that hot, confusing first week, my section double-timed out to a firing range to observe a 105 mm howitzer battery in a training battalion. As we trotted up the road, we felt the pavement shake before we actually heard the smacking roar of the cannons.

The battery’s six M-101 howitzer “tubes” stood in low, circular sandbagged pits, the guns’ heavy barrels mounted on wheeled chassis, with V-shaped steel-beam “trails” spread to dampen the powerful recoil. We stuffed in our ear plugs and watched, fascinated, as the seven-man gun crews followed the precise orders that the lieutenant in command relayed over a field telephone from the fire direction center in a faded green tent surrounded by radio antennas.

“Battery adjust,” he shouted. The crews stood by for a fire mission.

“Shell HE.” The selected projectile would be high explosive. “Lot X-ray Yankee.” This was the exact type of HE shell to be fired.

“Charge Five.” Five powder charges in the cylindrical brass canister.

“Fuse Quick.” The shell would be fused to explode on impact.

“Center One Round.”

The gunners of the two middle howitzers threw open the shiny hinged breechblocks, and the loaders rammed home the designated, correctly charged and fused shells. The command “Fire” was lost in a cracking blast as the cannoneers pulled their lanyards. Gouts of flame, bright even in the summer sunlight, shot from the muzzles. The bitter, piercing odor of cordite drifted into the bleachers where we sat.

Our ears ringing, we waited almost a minute while the 35-pound steel projectiles sailed through their curved trajectories and down unseen on the West Range, 11,000 meters away.

“Candidates,” our instructor proclaimed. “This is the Field Artillery, the King of Battle.” The tools of my new profession.

I sat on the three-legged canvas stool, map board on my lap, binoculars hanging heavy from my neck. The other candidates in my section were lined up around me on the breezy gravel shelf of the observation post. It was November 4, the morning of our first live fire mission. We were on The Hill, a stony ridge of scrub oak that overlooked a rolling valley and the higher ground to the west. All of us were excited, most of us nervous. Five miles behind us a battery of 105 mm howitzers waited for the orders we would radio to the fire direction center.

Today we would each act as a Forward Observer, one of the most critical and demanding assignments in the Field Artillery. We had spent weeks in classrooms learning the theory underlying accurate and effective artillery fire. We understood the moving parts of the guns, the role of each crewmember, the energy of propellant charges, the muzzle velocity and weight of projectiles... and all the hundreds of other complex facts involved with firing big guns in combat.

Above all, we had been taught that accurate fire depended on crucial basic data. If we knew the exact location of the battery and had plotted it accurately on our firing charts, and if we had plotted the target, then the firing battery would deliver the shell accurately. It would be our responsibility as Forward Observer to identify those target coordinates with precision.

The target Impact Area spread across the valley below. Car bodies painted white, yellow, and red had been dumped in random locations. A squat tower of limestone blocks splotched with blue-and-white stripes about 1,200 meters to the left was the only obvious landmark. But we had studied this terrain for days, both through calibrated artillery spotting glasses and on maps divided into 1,000,000-square meter grids. Each of us had memorized the elevation above sea level and the precise coordinates of every hilltop and knoll visible from this observation post. We had stopped looking at the landscape like civilians. Now we instinctively saw the world around us in terms of six-digit coordinates on military maps or firing charts. Our visual perspectives automatically measured distance left (west) to right (east) and bottom (south) to top (north). Normal people saw rows of barracks, the commissary, or the softball diamond. We saw target coordinates.

I recognized this mental readjustment as a necessary and valuable adaptation to our situation. If all went well, we would graduate as Field Artillery second lieutenants in February 1967 and a few months later every one of us would be serving as a Forward Observer in Vietnam, calling real fire missions on real enemy targets. That was our reality. We struggled through each training day, constantly short of sleep, running from class to class, gulping our food in the mess hall, with no time to think of anything but the next gunnery test or barracks inspection. And, always, there was the sound of the cannons.

When I did have a moment to think about the future, I saw myself in Vietnam, in some dusty fire support base or out with the troops in a dark rice paddy. I ran, slept, ate, and studied in the hills of Oklahoma. But part of me was already in Vietnam.

First Lieutenant Rawson, our instructor, was a lanky guy who still had the deep leather tan he'd acquired from a year as a forward observer in Vietnam's Central Highlands. He had plotted and called two demonstration fire missions that morning, working patiently through the procedure to make sure we all understood. He had wanted us to get used to the ripping snort that tore through the sky as a live 105 mm shell passed overhead to explode with a Fourth of July blast on a target 1,000 meters down the valley.

"Okay," he said, striding along our row of stools, his battered spotting glasses gripped in his right hand, his compass in his left. "Candidate Franks, you have the next mission." I felt a flash of excitement. Showtime. "Yes, Sir."

Lieutenant Rawson stood beside me, pointing down the valley. "Candidate, from the old blue tower. . ." He raised his binoculars, and I did the same. "Down from the skyline six mils . . ."

Our glasses had tiny etched calibration scales marked in "mils," the scale that artillerymen used to plot coordinates. Civilian compasses had 360 degrees. Ours were divided into 6400 mils, which provided far greater precision.

"Six mils down from the skyline, Sir," I repeated.

“. . . Right two-five mils, there is a large yellow car body,” he said. I repeated his target description, remembering that “two-five” was the artilleryman’s way of saying twenty-five. “Further identified,” he continued, “as being two mils to the left of the rectangular white rock. Enemy troops in the open.” Again, I reiterated his designation. “Do you identify the target, Candidate Franks?”

My classmates listened and watched intently. I adjusted the focus wheel of my binoculars, studying the distant hillside shimmering against the etched mil scale. I had the target.

“Sir, Candidate Franks. Target identified.”

“All right, Candidate. Plot your target coordinates and write out your fire mission order.” I dropped to my stool and snatched up the board with my map, divided into numbered and lettered grids. Using a clear plastic coordinate square, I located the target and stuck a red pushpin “dart” into my map. Then I double-checked my calculation and carefully printed the order on my commo pad.

Lieutenant Rawson silently studied my work, making sure I didn’t make any disastrously gross errors. The howitzer shells I was about to order would pass overhead, and it was his responsibility to make sure I didn’t call for a round that would strike our observation post.

He gave me the radio handset. “Candidate Franks, send your mission.”

“Redleg one-eight,” I said, making sure that I’d keyed the microphone button “This is Redleg two-four Fire mission, over.”

“Send your mission, two-four, over.” The voice from the fire direction center was calm. I keyed the mike again “XT 182 478.” This was the grid square and the six-digit target coordinates I had plotted “Enemy troops in the open.”

The FDC confirmed my coordinates and the nature of the target. The battery would fire one adjusting round, using a high-explosive shell with a point-detonating fuse.

“I will adjust fire,” I said, reading from my pad.

“Shot, over,” the FDC reported.

My mouth went dry, and I had to swallow before confirming that my first live artillery round was on its way. “Shot, out,” I repeated

“Splash,” the FDC now called the round would explode in five seconds

I stopped myself from scrunching down beneath my steel helmet as the incoming projectile ripped invisibly above the observation post. I had the target car body centered squarely in my glasses. The shell burst with a flash and a large gray smoke cloud 200 meters north and 100 meters west of the target, peppering the ground with hot shrapnel. I felt Lieutenant Rawson poised behind me “Right 100 Drop 400,” I called.

The next shell burst south of the target

“Add 200,” I instructed the fire direction center.

“Shot. . .”

“Splash...”

This round hit the target. I could actually see the car body split as the shrapnel slammed into the metal.

“Fuse time,” I ordered “Fire for effect.”

I watched with satisfaction as the shells exploded around the target like a wild fireworks finale. If that car body had been an enemy formation, they'd be "in a world of hurt," as Lieutenant Rawson put it. I'd passed my first live fire test, and I felt pretty damn good about it. I think the whole section did.

But Lieutenant Rawson was stingy with praise. "Satisfactory, Candidate," he said, and then turned to the section. "That was the simplest possible fire mission. You have plenty of landmarks, daylight, excellent visibility, and perfect weather. And Candidate Franks here took his time." I sat uneasily on my stool.

"Imagine different conditions," Lieutenant Rawson continued. "Night. Monsoon rain so hard you can't see 100 meters. Triple canopy jungle. You're with an Infantry platoon that's just been ambushed. Enemy close on three sides. Now try plotting your target coordinates and ordering an accurate fire mission."

He let us consider that grim picture for a minute. Then he called the next candidate.

I was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Field Artillery on February 14, 1967, Valentine's Day. My father wore a suit, my mother a new hat and white gloves. They were proud, and so was I.

Somehow, I'd not only made it through OCS with only one demerit—a failed weapons inspection—on my record, but my academic and professional skills scores had been in the top 10 percent. That made me a "distinguished military graduate," eligible for a Regular Army commission, the path to future career advancement. I decided against making a commitment to become a lifer - a twenty - year man. I'd be going to Vietnam for a year, that was certain. And when I came home—when, not if—I'd have only eighteen months left to serve. I planned to go back to college, get a degree, and land a good job. Maybe even find a nice girl and get married.

Meanwhile, I had to learn what being an officer was all about. And that took a little learning.

### **Tom Robinson: 6-67**

Class 6-67 interwoven with the Vietnam era is a piece of my Country's history and a part of my past that is priceless. There is nothing that I would trade it for. It was a great bunch of guys and I often wonder how all of them have fared in life.

### **Brad Scheminske: 6-67**

In response to the signature block with LTG (Ret) Carl H. Jark's Quote "Those of you who will soar with eagles in the morning should not hoot with owls at night."

Interesting. So that's where the term "Jark" came from. If I ever knew that before, I've forgotten, but I certainly remember the weekend runs (Jarks) up MB 4. My class was determined to tear it down. On top, we'd each grab a piece of rock which we'd carry to the bottom and drop it with the idea of eventually removing the entire hill. After a few weeks, our training officers ordered us to stop the practice. Perhaps they were fearful the idea would catch on with other classes and the geography of Oklahoma would be changed forever.

**Rick Parker: 11-67**

**Selected blog posts from “autobiography of a former zygote” (2014)**

**Private Parts.** Because I had taken R.O.T.C. for two years in high school, Sgt. Maddy made me a squad leader.

Looking back on it, I don't think I actually did any leading, there were no perks—and no one, including Sgt. Maddy, ever treated me any differently from any of the other new recruits, but it did give my ego a little much-needed boost. I still felt like a loser for flunking out of college. Maybe I could redeem myself somehow.

Things went well for the first couple of weeks of basic. Unlike some of my fellow recruits, I was in pretty good shape physically, and had no trouble with any of the marching, double-timing, pushups, squat-thrusts, or side straddle hops they made us do every day.

About halfway through basic, we were in formation one afternoon when my name and several others were read out from a list. It seemed that based on written tests administered at the induction station, some of us had scored well enough to go to officer candidate school. Some who qualified, preferred to remain enlisted men and just get out of the army when their two-year obligation was complete.

I, on the other hand, saw becoming an officer as an opportunity to redeem myself for flunking out of college and humiliating myself in my own eyes, and perhaps being somewhat of an embarrassment to my parents. I also thought that perhaps as an officer, I might have a slightly better chance of not getting killed, if I was sent to Vietnam. I found out later that becoming an officer would have had precisely the opposite effect as fresh new second lieutenants from officer candidate school were in great demand to replace those who had been killed in combat as squad leaders in the infantry or as forward observers in the artillery. But I didn't know that at the time, so I volunteered to go to OCS.

Potential candidates for officer candidate school were required to be screened by a panel of real army officers and in due time I was summoned from waxing the floor in the barracks to my interview. I was led into a room in a small building nearby with a table and chairs and five junior officers, whose rank ranged from second lieutenants to a captain. The five of them were seated on one side of the table and there was an empty chair for me opposite the captain. As I entered the room I tried to stand up a little straighter and stopped just inside the room and saluted.

“Private Parker reporting as ordered, sir.”

“Be seated, Private Parker.”

Starting with the officer across the table from me, on my extreme left, and then proceeding with the next officer and so on, down the table, I was asked a few simple questions, the specifics of which now escape me. I do recall that I was able to answer all the questions to my own satisfaction and I was feeling pretty good about the interview. There were no follow-up questions and no questions about math.

Just before releasing me and bringing in the next candidate, the captain had one final question for me.

“Private Parker—if you were to remain in the army, how high up the chain of command do you think you could go?”

I looked him square in the face and without any hesitation whatsoever, answered very sincerely,

“Five-star general.”

For a brief second, he looked somewhat taken aback. Quickly regaining his composure, he glanced over his shoulder to gauge the reaction of the others present. There was an awkward silence. Then he released me,

“That will be all, Private Parker.”

I stood up, saluted, did an about-face, and marched proudly out of the room and went back to the barracks. I was immediately put to work cleaning the latrine.

**AIT.** Later in the afternoon, we had been split up into small groups and were inside a building, standing at a big table practicing disassembling and re-assembling the M60 when a low-ranking enlisted man, a clerk carrying a clipboard, appeared in our midst.

“Anyone here ever had any math?,” he asked.

I wondered if flunking out of college after only one year with a 43 average in math counted for anything.

I spoke up.

“I had two years in college!”

He wrote down my name and my service number, US 53417848, and went away. Apparently, he needed to fill a quota of just two candidates to send to the United States Army Field Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School.

Artillery, the “King of Battle” uses trigonometry to accurately “put his balls where the queen wants them.” All the rest went to Infantry Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia to become platoon leaders in Infantry Companies in Vietnam.

And so it was, that math, cursed and blessed math, which had caused me to get drafted into the army in the first place, would prove my salvation... and save my lying ass.

**O.C.S. Officer Candidate School.** After a month with the Holdover Platoon I finally received my orders. I was to report to the United States Army Field Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in only five days. I was elated. Finally, here was my chance to redeem myself for flunking out of college and the consequent feelings of failure. If all went well, in six short months I would become a second lieutenant, an officer in the United States Army. It turned out to be the longest six months of my young life.

I decided to fly to Oklahoma by way of Savannah, Georgia, stopping there for just a day or two to see my mother, whose birthday was the day before mine at the end of August. The plane from Georgia to Texas was not air conditioned, still I was feeling pretty spiffy in my slightly-wrinkled and mildly-sweat stained khaki dress uniform by the time the plane touched down in Dallas. Changing to a smaller plane for the short flight to Lawton, Oklahoma, I found myself seated next to a lovely young girl who was returning home from visiting her grandparents. We chatted amiably, and I confess that I began thinking I would like to see her again, even though I had no idea when that might be, given the uncertain nature of my current assignment. Her father, a sergeant first class, a high-ranking enlisted man, greeted her warmly at the gate. He looked less happy to see me. She whispered something to him and the next thing I know he reluctantly invited me to catch a ride with them from the airport to the army base in his brand new 1967 gold Oldsmobile Tornado. I was arriving in style.

When he asked, I explained that I was to report to the artillery officer candidate school and he allowed as how he was “pretty sure” he knew where that was. In twenty minutes or so, we arrived in front of a drab yellow wooden building and I thanked them. Then that cute young girl and her Dad drove away in that fancy gold car with my duffel bag and all my worldly belongings, in their trunk and disappeared out of my life, forever, never to be seen again.

Lightened of that burden, I went inside and met with the CQ (charge of quarters). He looked up, seemingly surprised to see me. He stopped reading his magazine, looked over my orders and then took me to draw sheets and blankets. I should have known, since the only two people who were at that place seemed to be the two of us, that it was probably not The United States Army Field Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School. We both kind of realized I was at the wrong place at the same time, so I gave him back my sheets and blankets.

I have always been the type of person, who, when faced with a strange and unfamiliar situation, assumed that the “other” person knows better than I do. This can often lead to difficulties.

I wasn't particularly worried about it, because I still was not required to report to OCS for another two days. I always leave room for mistakes. The CQ made a phone call, and in about ten minutes an army jeep arrived and drove me across the post to the United States Army Field Artillery Officer Candidate School. Sitting in the front seat of the army jeep with the air rushing by felt good on that hot August day and I was enjoying having my own driver and feeling somewhat flattered by the special treatment I was getting. I wondered if this was what it would be like all the time after I became an officer. In about eight minutes we were there. There was no doubt about it this time. There was a great big sign. The jeep drove away and I walked under the big arched iron gate with the letters on it and sauntered onto the grounds of OCS. Someone about fifty yards away was walking rapidly toward me. His shoes made a clicking sound, like the sound of a horse's hooves on a cobblestone street. It got louder and louder. It was another officer candidate, an upperclassman. He did not look happy to see me. This was not the type of welcome I had been expecting. Suddenly the clicking stopped. He was right in my face and speaking to me in a most unpleasant manner. “What are YOU doing walking on my SIDEWALK, candidate??!” I stammered, “Wha-? ... where am I supposed to walk...?”

“You’re NOT supposed to WALK, candidate! You’re supposed to RUN!” And NOT on MY sidewalk!!”

I took off running on the gravel, like I knew where I was going. It felt oddly familiar. Suddenly, I realized I’d been running all my life. Thankfully, he didn’t follow.

**Death By Candy.** It turned out that arriving at Officer Candidate School two days early was not such a smart idea.

The few of us who made that mistake were immediately set upon by middleclassmen officer candidates who were in their 8th to 15th week of what was supposed to be a 23-week training period. Although for me it would be a month longer. Some poor unfortunate slob whose name I never knew, had arrived before me and had been found to have included, among his personal belongings, a giant, 1-lb. bag of M&M’s.

When I first saw him, he was already lying on his back in the doorway of the barracks with the pointy end a makeshift white paper funnel in his mouth. One of the middleclassman had filled it up to the top with green, red, orange, yellow, brown and blue M&M’s and commanded him to,

“CHEW, candy-date!!”

Then that same sadistic middle-classman handed me the bag– and told me to keep re-filling the funnel, until he had eaten each and every last “m.” Upon entering the service, I had sworn to “follow all lawful orders.” This was the first time I had to think about it. I don’t know who the victim was, I made no mental note at the time to remember his face, and would not have recognized him the next time I saw him, which would probably have been later that day– and probably every day– for the next six months.

He was just another officer candidate. We were all brand new. No one knew anyone. We were all strangers, bound together in a crazy, intense “experience” that would last only half a year, but one we would all remember for the rest of our lives. I doubt that candidate ever ate another M&M. I know I have never eaten an M&M when I didn’t think of that candidate. It was ironic, in a way, because for most of the next six months we officer “candy-dates” practically lived on candy, or “grotto” as we called it.

In the evenings, when most of us, dressed for bed in our olive-drab boxer shorts and matching tank top, were down on our hands and knees with white towels—wiping and polishing the red linoleum floors to a mirror-like shine (we were not allowed to walk on the floors, but hopped from place to place on our tiptoes across footlockers)— others were cleaning the latrine, polishing the brass on the spigots of the white porcelain sinks, while still others were engaged in polishing the toilets.

One lone “candy-date” would be designated “grotto NCO.” That was me. It was my job to make the rounds between my fellow candidates, who were all busily engaged in cleaning the barracks and my job to write down their candy order on a slip of paper and collect all their nickels, dimes and quarters. A candy bar cost ten cents in the 1960’s.



Then, with a pillowcase to carry the coins in and to carry the candy back in, I, the “grotto NCO” would be hastily dispatched to a small wooden building a few hundred yards away, which contained a number of vending machines dispensing Baby Ruth, Fifth Avenue, Snickers, Oh Henry, Butterfinger, Zero, Mounds, Almond Joy, Mr. Goodbar, Clarke’s, Hershey Bars (with or without almonds) and of course small bags of M&M’s.

There was plenty of great food in the mess hall, we just couldn’t eat it. We were too busy being harassed by the middle and upperclassmen.

One bright early September morning, after cleaning the barracks for daily inspection and daily PT (Physical Training) we were marched to the mess hall as usual.

Streaming in at a rapid pace, we took our places on either side of the long wooden tables, each candidate with his eyes glued onto the nametag of the officer candidate directly across from him.

At one end of the table was the “table commandant” a middleclassman, whose job it was to enforce strict OCS table etiquette.

At the opposite end of the table, was the “assistant commandant” whose job it was to enforce strict discipline at his end of the table and to assist the table commandant in making every officer candidate’s life miserable during mealtime.

At all times, you must sit bolt upright on the front four inches of your chair, your eyes fixed on the nametag of the officer candidate directly across from you.

Any hand not actually engaged in the act of holding a knife or fork must be kept in your lap, under the table. Once the food was passed around to the table commandant and then to the assistant commandant, at the opposite end of the table, the candidates passed the food around the table to each other.

Once the table commandant observed that everyone had food on his plate, he gave the order to “begin eating.”

Each candidate was allowed to seize a piece of food no larger than his own thumbnail, and with his right hand, stick his fork in it, and with his left hand, simultaneously place his knife on the upper left-hand corner of his tray with the blade facing in, replace his left hand in his lap, replace the fork on the upper left corner of his tray, put his right hand back into his lap under the table and then begin chewing.

You were allowed three chews and then you had to swallow. And they were counting. Many times, it was hard to swallow something that small. Once in a while, a starving candidate, probably out of desperation, would take what was known as a “gross bite.” This would result in the TC shouting out,

“CANDIDATE THIRD ON MY RIGHT—- HIT A BRACE!!!

To which the offending candidate would immediately panic/drop his knife and fork, place both hands in his lap, sit bolt upright in his chair as if he were being electrocuted— and say quite loudly,

“SIR!! CANDIDATE CURLEY!!” (or whatever his last name was).

Then the TC would command, “SWALLOW, CANDIDATE.....”

This was usually followed by the candidate making a series of small, strained, gurgling noises as he tried to swallow a tiny morsel of food on demand. Any officer candidate whose eyes strayed would be called out for “dog-eyeing.”

All underclassmen at the table would immediately have to place their forks back on their tray in the upper right-hand corner at a 45-degree angle and their knife on the upper left corner of their tray at a 45-degree angle with the blade facing in.

I arrived at OCS on the 28th of August 1966. The first time I was ever allowed to eat a meal like a “normal person” was on Thanksgiving Day of that same year, when a handful of us candidates, who had no place to go, and by default, remained on the grounds of OCS, were “casually” marched to the mess hall and then once inside, were allowed to sit wherever we wanted and eat whatever we wanted. I was starving.

That Thanksgiving, while other soldiers were fighting and dying in Vietnam, the mess hall at Fort Sill Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School, had been prepared as if two hundred people were expected.

About a dozen tables were all set up for a sumptuous Thanksgiving Day feast, complete with red tablecloth (the official color of the artillery). There was a large golden-brown roast turkey with all the trimmings set out on every table. There were big bowls of mashed potatoes, a gravy boat, fresh pears and peaches, platters of roast beef, ham, large bowls of fresh steaming vegetables, carrots, squash, corn, broccoli, candied yams, bread, butter, cranberry dressing with walnuts, a pitcher of water. Apple pies, cherry pies, sweet potato pies and pecan pies.

There were only twelve of us, so we each sat down at our own table. I have never been so hungry in my life. All alone, I stuffed myself with a large plate of everything I could heap on it and ate it all unsupervised. In about eight minutes I was full. It’s amazing how quickly you lose interest in food once you have had enough of it.

One morning in December, right before Christmas, we arrived for the morning meal and the table commandant said, “Candidates, bow your head for a moment of silent prayer.”

That was standard and after a moment was followed by, “God Bless our mothers and fathers and our fighting forces in Vietnam.” Occasionally they added, “....and all officer candidates.” But this day was different.

After ordering us to bow our heads in a moment of “silent prayer,” he went on to add,

“One of your contemporaries choked to death on a candy bar last night.”

I felt sick at the thought of a starving kid lying flat on his back in his bunk after lights out, trying not to mess up his bunk, by actually sleeping in it, and trying to unwrap a candy bar and eat it without making any noise. That’s what we did every night, but none of us ever died doing it.

I was guiltily glad he wasn't in my barracks. I found myself wondering what kind of candy bar it was, if perhaps it was M&M's, and who he was. I wondered if it was that guy I had met on my very first day. And then I wondered what they were going to tell his parents. Then I thought what a terrible way for a young man to die for his country.

**My Hero.** Most officer candidates took all this harassment quite seriously. I know I did. That's why, one day, I was quite shocked, when I noticed the candidate directly across the table from me, Candidate Curley, upon whose nametag, my eyes were permanently fixed, began casually dog-eyeing the mess hall. The TC didn't take long to pounce.

"CANDIDATE CURLEY....DO YOU WANT TO BUY MY MESS HALL?"

Candidate Curley: "SIR, DO YOU HAVE CHANGE FOR A QUARTER?"

I couldn't believe it. I thought surely that would be it for Candidate Curley. Everyone had to immediately place his fork back on his tray in the upper right-hand corner at a 45-degree angle and his knife on the upper left corner of his tray at a 45-degree angle, with the blade facing in.

Then we were suddenly given the command "MARCH ORDER" by the TC. All the trays had to be passed down to the end of the table where the Assistant Commandant sat while the two "gunners" on either side of him scraped all the food, which had been barely touched, into a big pile on one of the trays. That was the end of that "meal." It was worth it, though, to see one of my contemporaries finally stand up to a middleclassman.

I don't know what happened to Candidate Curley. I'd imagine he did a lot of pushups after that. I assume he graduated with his class and eventually became Lieutenant Curley. I hope if he was sent to Vietnam, he made it back in one piece, and lived to be a happy old man with six grandchildren to whom he could tell that story. I don't know if he died in the Vietnam War a hero. All I know is, that day, he was my hero.

**"Sit Down, Candidate Parker, You're Dead..."** January and February on the Great Plains of Oklahoma are cold and harsh and the Winter Wind blows strong and hard with little in her path but the shivering bodies of Officer Candidates.

Dressed in long johns, and wearing two pair of socks inside our high, black tightly-laced boots, we sucked-in short, shallow breaths of cold air, then slowly exhaled onto the backs of our wrists. Swaddled, like big green babies in our army fatigues and field jackets (with liner), steel pots atop our wobbly-bobbling heads, an itchy wool scarf about each young neck, we stood, packed together like refugees, clutching our binoculars in our wool-lined, leather-gloved hands. We had come to this vast expanse, where once the buffalo roamed, not to kill any survivors among those few large, majestic beasts, but to become forward observers for the field artillery.

I had decided to become an officer, in part, out of a desire for self-preservation. I was under the mistaken impression that the odds of coming home alive, were I deployed to a war zone, would be somewhat increased were I to become an officer. When I shamefully confessed this to a veteran who had recently returned from Vietnam, I was quickly disabused of this notion. He told me that, in fact, it was quite the opposite. Forward

observers had one of the highest casualty rates among our troops in the field. This made me feel somewhat better.

Although I didn't know it yet, I would "die" that very day, killed by artillery fire, which I myself, had directed onto my own position.

**I Hate Math.** Candidates at the United States Army Field Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School spend a good portion of their day in the classroom in order to gain a mastery of trigonometry. Briefly, "Trig" is a complicated mathematical science which deals with the angles of triangles and the lengths of their sides. In the case of artillery, one corner of the triangle is the location of the "gun", the second corner of the triangle is the location of the target and the third corner of the triangle is the location of the "observer" –usually a second lieutenant with a map of the area, a pair of binoculars and a radio operator to transmit his observations concerning the precise location of the "target" to the fire direction control center.

Each eight-inch howitzer round weighs 200 pounds and is packed with a great deal of explosive firepower. Artillery rounds are large dumb metal objects, which come in various sizes. They are packed with high explosives and once expelled from the barrel or "muzzle" of a canon, will fall to earth under the force of gravity, with potentially deadly force at a point predetermined by "elevation" and "deflection" settings which are "set" on the howitzers by the "gunners" turning dials and knobs on the "guns" or "howitzers", the things a child playing army might call "cannons". These crucial settings are usually transmitted by field telephone or radio from a remotely located "FDC" ("fire direction control center"), usually a well-fortified bunker, far back from the line of battle and containing highly-trained officers and men equipped with maps, slide rules and a thorough grasp of trigonometry.

To be able to "put your balls where the queen wants them" it is absolutely essential to have a good grasp of math. My grasp of math could best be described as a tiny baby trying to hang onto a beach ball by his fingernails. But I had lied my way into the artillery and once there, I was determined to try to learn everything I could, as I was painfully aware that my life and the lives of others, depended on it. Our gunnery instructor was a very trim-looking captain in a starched tan-colored Marine Corps dress uniform. He spoke English, I could hear him and see him quite well. I sat on the front row and looked him right in the eye as he explained sines, co-sines and tangents. When he mentioned the "hypotenuse of a right triangle," I felt my mind suddenly break free and begin drifting away, like a small boat might drift away from a dock in a swiftly-flowing river, had the rope attached to the mooring suddenly and inexplicably become loose. For a little while, as I drifted downstream in the afternoon sunlight, I could still see his lips moving, and hear the sounds they formed, but, alas, he was speaking a language that I did not comprehend.

Soon, my boat had drifted far downstream, and our instructor had become a fading figure, barely distinguishable from the pilings on the dock.

**The Washboard Shoot.** Had it been real, and not merely a training exercise, I would never have known “what hit me.”

This particular “shoot,” was known as the “washboard shoot.” They called it the “washboard shoot” because the terrain was a series of undulating ridges and gullies with brightly painted car bodies scattered about as targets.

I had been the first to give the map coordinates of the “red junk” target, identified by our instructor, which was an old truck body about 1,000 yards distant from our position. This “red junk” target was sitting on a ridge and was plainly visible though binoculars. I called in a “fire mission,” which meant that I had identified a target and given the map coordinates to the fire direction control center. They triangulated it, figured out the powder charge (how many bags of powder to load behind the projectile) and then relayed the “elevation” and “deflection” to the six 155 mm howitzers which had been set up to deliver HE (High Explosive) rounds to the target. The “elevation” is the angle that the barrel of the howitzer makes from the ground and the “deflection” can be thought of simply as how many degrees to aim the barrel to the left or right. I got on the radio.

“Two-four fire mission, over....”

There was a three second pause and then the FDC echoed it back to me,

“Two-four fire mission, out....” (so far so good).

I continued with the map coordinates:

“GRID: 4353-7681, over...”

The FDC radioed back: “GRID: 4353-7681, out.”

While they made the calculations and sent the elevation and deflection settings to the guns, I lifted my field glasses from my chest and tried to hold them at the ready, and tried even harder not to poke my eyes out with them, as my hands, in fact my entire body was writhing uncontrollably from the extreme cold. Or maybe I was just nervous.

In a few seconds, I heard two rounds being fired from the howitzers, which were in place, just as they should have been, far to our rear.

“Splash, over....” Came back the command from the FDC.

That was my signal to bring my field glasses up to just below my eyes because in exactly three seconds the rounds would impact the target. Then I would see the explosion of the rounds and bring my field glasses up to my eyes, enabling me to visually determine if the rounds were in front of the target—behind the target— or off to the left— or to the right side. Then I could adjust the artillery fire until it was directly ON the target— and then presumably “fire for effect,” that being the final command to fire all six guns at once to completely destroy the target. At least that was the way it was supposed to work.

Hmmmm.....It had been more than three seconds, and I still hadn’t seen any explosions. This wasn’t good. I could feel my instructor’s eyes, like two blowtorches, burning a hole through the back of my helmet and I could sense the other candidates losing all respect for me. I jammed my field glasses closer to my eyes, as if that would do anything.

Then from somewhere very far away..... came a faint sound.

It did not sound like two 155 mm howitzer rounds exploding. The only way I can describe it is that it was the kind of sound one might have heard had one been walking past a bowling alley on a hot summer night, just as the manager opened the front door to the bowling alley to let in some fresh air.... and just as someone else inside rolled a strike. And now imagine that same sound if the bowling alley had been several blocks away. This was not good.

“Drop 500, over....” I commanded.

“Drop 500, out....” said the voice on the radio.

In about eight seconds the voice came back on.

“Splash, over.”

I repeated the words, “Splash, out...” and once again readied my field glasses.

This time I saw smoke. The smoke was followed by two distinct impact explosions, one on top of the other. Lifting my glasses to my eyes, I could see the red junk...I could see the smoke....but... the wind was blowing the smoke. Was it in front of the target... or behind the target? Shivering and trying to hold the field glasses steady at the same time made it so hard to tell. And it didn't help that these last two rounds apparently landed in the deep gulley or ravine that was the “washboard” in front of the red junk. Or was it behind it? It was so hard to tell. So I got back on the radio.

“Drop 300..over”..... seemed like a reasonable compromise.

This time there was no response from the FDC.

“DROP THREE HUNDRED!” I said again, as if they hadn't heard me.

Fortunately, the fire direction control center knew the coordinates of our position and would not fire on us no matter how many times I asked.

“Sit down, Candidate Parker, you're dead,” said our instructor.

I did as I was told even though there was no chair.

**I Was A Teenage Setback.** The fateful day of our graduation from OCS and our commissioning as second lieutenants in the army finally arrived in March of 1967, though, for me, it was a month longer in coming. My old nemesis, math, came back to bite me in the ass once again, when I proved to my trig instructor something I had known all along: That I was thoroughly incompetent when it came to the use of slide rules and their practical application as scientific instruments to make the mathematical calculations necessary for the accurate direction of artillery fire. The Queen would not have been happy with me in charge of the King's balls.

So, I became a “setback.” Just as the rest of Golf Battery were becoming “upperclassmen,” putting on their clickers, pinning on their red artillery felt tabs under their brass and walking on sidewalks instead of double-timing on rocks, I quietly, and with hardly a goodbye, packed up my gear as directed and moved out of Golf Battery and into Hotel Battery a few buildings away. I was demoted and stayed a middleclassmen for another four weeks. It was a humiliating experience. While my “new” contemporaries, who hardly had time to notice me, were busy polishing their brass and boots and rolling up their socks just right and otherwise ensuring that their area was “Strac,” thereby avoiding those dreaded demerits, I was quietly pulled out for E.I. (extra instruction) in trig. This didn't do much for my popularity.

This time-consuming distraction did help me eventually get through the program, but fairly guaranteed that I would accumulate more than enough demerit slips to keep me confined to the area more or less indefinitely. It had me going on “jarks” every weekend. Having arrived at OCS on August 28th, I did not actually get a pass to leave the company area until right before Christmas that same year, when everyone was given a pass regardless of his demerit status. I had never been into town, had no friends or family to visit, had nowhere to go, so I just stayed there.

A “jark” isn’t so much a punishment for accumulating too many demerits, as it is a 5-mile “motivational run” from the company area up a nearby mountain and back. Officer Candidates who have garnered a certain number of demerit slips for such offenses as Boots NSS or Brass NSS (not sufficiently shined) or whose blankets were not tight enough on their bunks, or who were late to formation, or who had a fingerprint on their brass belt buckle, or who had a hair growing out of the side of their face that they had somehow missed while being given 60 seconds to shit, shower and shave were all set upon by upperclassmen and issued demerit slips for these types of minor infractions.

I resigned myself to the weekend jarks, and in short order, I became in the best physical shape of my entire life. Candidates regularly picked up large rocks from the mountain and “jarked” back with them, placing them on the bunks of their “big brothers,” (senior officer candidates) who were then required to sleep with these large rocks in their bunks.

In return for this gift, the big brothers were supposed to “watch out” for their “little brothers” and help them navigate what would otherwise have been an endless ocean of harassment from middle and upperclassmen. Little brothers also did things like polish the shoes and boots of their big brothers in return for minor “protection.” After the big brother had slept with the rock, it was placed outside the barracks. There were literally thousands of these rocks, of varying sizes, some approaching a hundred pounds. They surrounded the barracks to the extent that the entire area became a grid of wooden buildings surrounded by a sea of whitish or yellowish rocks. The practice dated from World War Two.

The absolute worst thing one could do was be the last one out of the barracks and into formation. As one of our contemporaries stood outside the barracks calling out in a sing-song voice, how many minutes remained before the “noon meal formation,” for example, all the rest of my contemporaries scurried around inside the building, like a swarm of busy bees, washing and waxing, polishing and shining everything in sight from the sinks to the lighting fixtures.

Candidates were not allowed to wear their boots inside the barracks, so anytime you went inside the barracks you had to quickly unlace your boots and leave them by the front door or carry them to your area— while hopping from one footlocker to the next, being careful not to set foot on the floor for fear of leaving a mark. Anytime you left the barracks, you had to locate your boots from among all the others and lace them up and quickly get into formation as the “caller” stood outside and vocally ticked away the remaining thirty seconds, before everyone was expected to be standing at attention in formation. Woe to he who was not there when they gave the order to “FALL IN!”

Lacing up my big size 13 boots quickly and exactly right, using a complicated lacing pattern was not something which came naturally to me, and as a result I was often the last one in formation. This resulted in several upperclassmen, each with a fistful of demerit slips and a really loud mouth, giving me their undivided attention– up close and personal.

I think I was slower because I am from the South. Southerners generally do things slower because of the heat. It's just our way. Consequently, I accumulated a large number of demerit slips.

Soon I learned that as everyone was rushing about inside the barracks, doing little, last-minute things, like closing their footlockers, or lacing up their boots in preparation for falling out into formation, all I had to do was keep an eye on an even SLOWER one of my contemporaries, a certain Candidate “Charlie Bess”, twenty-five years old, a former State Highway patrolman, from Pascagoula, Mississippi, a Southerner from even DEEPER in the South. Charlie was a “good ole boy,” who talked slow and talked funny. When he spoke he sounded like he had a mouthful of grapes he was trying not to chew or swallow. His good nature was only slightly diminished by all the demerit slips he accumulated and all the jarks he went on. All I had to do was stay one step ahead of Charlie.

I really hope things turned out well for him. His slow, easy-going, gentlemanly Southern ways sure saved me a lot of suffering.

**Escape and Evasion.** One of the final hurdles we officer candidates had to overcome before becoming 2nd lieutenants in March of 1967, was the Escape and Evasion Course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, set up in the Wichita Mountains. We were divided up into teams of five candidates, each with a team leader, who was given a compass and a map of the area. I was not that person.

We carried nothing with us except the uniforms on our backs and a canteen of water. We had been informed that there were “aggressor forces” in the area, whose mission it was to capture us. Our orders were to avoid capture and to rendezvous at the “partisan point” indicated on the map– where we would be given food and further instructions about the location of the next checkpoint. Sounded simple enough to me.

We arrived by truck, late in the afternoon to begin our ordeal. We were dropped off in an open staging area at the foot of one of the mountains. No sooner had we jumped off the back of the truck, and our boots hit the ground, than we heard machine-gun fire, so we quickly scattered and ran toward the nearest cover, a rocky and brushy area about 50 yards away. I managed to arrive under the shelter of some gnarled trees, along with two others from my team, neither of whom was the team leader with the compass and map. Fortunately, one of the candidates I was with had looked at the map with the team leader, and had a “vague notion” of where the partisan point was.

We set out and followed a stream which was nestled between some big weathered rocks. We hadn't gone more than a few hundred yards when we were loudly ordered to “Halt!” by a member of the “aggressor” forces, wearing a green armband and a strange-looking helmet. He was pointing a rifle at us. He had already captured two other members of our team. They stood next to him with their hands in the air.



We were immediately ordered to sit down on the ground and tie our bootlaces together. This was so we would not be able to run away. It did not occur to me to run away at this point, as the prospect of being free, but alone, in the wilderness seemed worse somehow than being taken prisoner with the others. "At least I'll have some company," I thought.

We were forced to slowly walk, as best we could, with our laces tied together, for about fifteen minutes, until we came into a densely wooded area. As we got deeper and deeper into the woods, I began to hear voices. They were not happy voices. One of the voices was loud and demanding and all the other voices were subdued and miserable. Soon the source of the voices became quite obvious.

We were approaching what quickly became apparent was a mock prisoner-of-war camp surrounded by barbed wire. It reminded me of the way Hell was described in Dante's *Inferno*, a cheap paperback version of which I had read in the bathroom at my friend Hughie Fillingim's house many years before.

There were many different levels of suffering. Over here, there were a bunch of "prisoner" candidates crawling on their stomachs under the weight of a telephone pole. They did not look happy to see us and barely looked up as we passed by on our way into the camp. Off to my right, someone was inserting a large ugly-looking snake head-first through a three inch hole cut face- high into a metal wall locker which had been buried in the earth like a coffin, except that it was only 2 feet deep. Terrible, muffled, desperate, insane screams and pleas to stop were emanating from inside the makeshift coffin. Someone, seemingly, a Black guy, based on the sound of his voice, was locked inside, and banging his fists against the sides of the makeshift coffin. Everyone knows that Black people are "terrified of snakes."

I was starting to think that this was unlike other war games I had experienced in basic training. Whoever was running this place was a "RSM," a Real Sick Mother. We shuffled past several of our captured "contemporaries" whose mud-soaked, but uniformed bodies were wrapped around vertical wooden "Indian Poles." These future battery commanders and leaders of men were forced to sit cross-legged, "Indian-style," with large wooden poles, ten inches in diameter, between their legs, the weight of their own bodies cutting off the circulation of blood to their legs. One aggressor had his boot with the full weight of his body pressing on one of my contemporary's knees, that just wouldn't seem to go down the way he wanted it to. The candidate was screaming, "You're breaking my leg!!" I want out of this fucking army, I don't give a shit about OCS anymore!" I believed him.

We were led into a barbed wire "POW Camp" and initially to the edge a very large pit filled with mud. It was roughly about twelve by fifteen feet and around three feet deep judging by the slop-encrusted bodies of my contemporaries, who were submerged up to their noses in it. The tops of several helmetless heads completely covered with muck protruded from the pit and several sets of eyes –their faces unrecognizable– silently watched me as I was led into a nearby wire pen, and brought before an "interrogator" seated at a small table in a chair with another chair directly across from him. I was ordered to sit down in the chair– an old wooden school desk to which someone had attached some kind of metal plates to the armrest part and to the slats across the back. There was a leather strap on the armrest and another one across my lap and one for each leg. One of the "aggressors" stood alongside it with a field telephone—the type with a hand crank on it. Wires ran from the telephone to the metal plates on the chair. I immediately realized it was some sort of

electrical “torture” device. The assistant reached behind me, pulled up my shirt and forcefully pushed my back in the chair so that bare skin was firmly against the metal plate. Then he strapped my right arm to the armrest and my legs to the legs of the chair. The “interrogator” eyed me with an air of disinterest, a bored, detached look in his vacant eyes.

Anyone who has ever watched a war movie knows that when you are interrogated by the “enemy,” the only information you can give them is your name, rank and service number. I think the interrogator must have seen the same movie I did, because he started with those first three questions, which I dutifully answered.

I had been asked my name many times before, and felt confident that my answer was correct. When he asked me my rank, I responded “officer candidate.” He seemed surprised by that, but satisfied. Then came my opportunity to rattle off my service number. “US 5-3-4-1-7- 8-4-8.” Not exactly a math problem, but I got it right. Three out of three! I was feeling quite proud of myself.

Then he asked me, “What unit are you with?” I knew this was one of those questions that I was not allowed to give an answer to, so I didn’t respond. I just sat there. He repeated the question, slightly louder this time, as if I hadn’t heard it the first time around. I still didn’t answer. So he looked up at his assistant who was standing next to me with the field telephone in his hand. The man gave the crank a few turns.

It was a strange sensation. Not horribly painful. I wouldn’t describe it as a tickling feeling exactly, unless the hand doing the tickling was a metal glove with sharp claws that seemed to be digging at the flesh of my back and arm. At any rate it was only for two or three seconds. My reaction to the sudden shock surprised me—it was loud laughter.

Then he asked another question: “Who is your unit commander?” Another one which I was not allowed to answer, and he knew it as well as I did. This guy was clearly just going through the motions. This time, rather than sit there in silence waiting for the next jolt, I think I probably tried to postpone the inevitable electric shock by ten seconds or so, by rattling off something to do with “the Code of the Geneva Convention or the Uniform Code of Military Justice,” preventing me from answering his question. He rudely did not wait for me to complete my answer and the next thing I knew I was on the receiving end of a slightly longer dose of electricity delivered to my back and arm. Once again, all I could do was laugh. But slightly longer this time and with noticeably less conviction. Although, really, there was nothing remotely funny about it.

He asked me another question, I think it had something to do with the size of my unit. I thought of saying something like “ten inches,” like Candidate Curley would have done, but thought better of it. I simply remained silent. His assistant used the field telephone to ring me up again, but this time, there was nobody home. It wasn’t funny anymore. Not one Goddamned bit funny. I gritted my teeth, grimaced and when he stopped, a few seconds later, I just looked at him. I didn’t bother to laugh. Clearly I was now much less amused than before, and this time I really, really wanted it to stop. I didn’t think I was going to be able to stand it if they did that again. Fortunately, they unstrapped me and someone led me to a long barbed wire tunnel about two feet high and told me to crawl through it to the end. I was in no position to argue. I didn’t care where it led, as long as it led away.

I got down on my belly and started to crawl in the dirt. I had no idea what was waiting for me at the other end.

**My Lucky Day.** Lowering oneself down an eight-foot vertical hole in the ground, and then crawling through an opening at the bottom of it into a long tunnel and then crawling on one's belly to freedom wouldn't have been so difficult if only I had gone down head first, as the candidate before me had done. But for some reason, probably because I am, by nature, a cautious person, I descended feet first to the bottom. As a result, I found myself standing atop several dead animals at the bottom of a very narrow shaft with about three or four feet of dirt between the top of my head and ground level. The problem was that the shaft was too small to turn around in, and crawling back up and starting over seemed impossible. So I did what anyone else in my situation would have done.

I worked my feet and legs into the opening of the tunnel, sat down on my ass and began shimmying my way feet first— and flat on my back through the tunnel to safety. There was no light, and I had no idea how long the tunnel was. It was an uncomfortable and awkward way of crawling, to say the least, and with every movement I made, dirt from the tunnel dribbled into my wide-straining eyes and into my open and gasping mouth.

I took some comfort from the knowledge that I wasn't that far behind the candidate in front of me, who grunted and groaned as he moved along. He couldn't see any better than I could, but there was really only one direction in which to crawl to escape, and at least he had the advantage of crawling on his stomach and crawling head first.

When he realized my predicament, I remember him asking me, there in the darkness, "...why the Hell are you crawling on your back instead of your stomach?"

His question was quite valid, but it had the immediate effect of making me feel quite stupid. I didn't know what to say, or how to answer him. I'm not sure if I even knew how I had wound up in this position, myself. Plus, it didn't really seem like a good time to be discussing it, so I just grunted a little louder with a tone of slight desperation, hoping to elicit some sympathy from him instead of derision.

Fortunately, I don't think we had to crawl more than about twenty or thirty yards before we began to see some light— and shortly, we came to the end of the tunnel. The tunnel ended abruptly at another vertical shaft, but this one seemed to be only about five or six feet deep, which meant that we had been crawling slightly uphill. It's hard to gauge angles when you're scrunching along flat on your back with a face full of dirt.

There was just enough room at the end for him to pull himself out of the tunnel and into a small circular sunken pit about three feet in diameter. When I got to the end there was only enough room in the pit for my legs. There was no way I could scrunch up the side of the pit feet-first. Fortunately, before I had time to realize how dire my situation actually was, I felt two strong hands grab me around the ankles and with some difficulty, they pulled me up out of the pit. The next thing I knew, I was sitting on the ground next to my "contemporary" and we were free. He was not from my battery and I didn't recognize him. For just a moment, I wondered what I would have done, had the situation been reversed. He could have easily run off and left me there. But he didn't. I didn't even thank him.

It was just getting dark. Standing up, feeling the blood return to my legs and actually walking was a really great feeling, which was fortunate, because, even though neither one of us knew it, we still had ten or fifteen miles and a mountain to cross before we would sleep that night. But none of that bothered me. I was free and feeling great and I wasn't about to be captured again.

As luck would have it, there was even a full moon.

**Night Had Fallen – And It Couldn't Get Up.** With no map, and no sense of the direction in which to proceed, we picked our way along in the moonlight, across field and stream, between boulders and past dead, gnarled and weathered trees, guided only by our mutual determination to put as much physical and psychological space as our already exhausted bodies and minds would allow, between us and the place we had just “escaped” from. It was now clear to me, that everything so far, had been a “set up”, to insure that all– or most of us, would be captured– and then after subjecting us to a fair amount of degradation, we had been allowed to escape into the wilderness and find our way to the “partisan point” and reunite with the others for the last leg of our ordeal.

Very little conversation passed between my contemporary and me as we trudged on in the darkness, with only the full white moon and billions of beautiful silent stars to light our path. I kept an anxious eye on our surroundings, wary of being recaptured and sent back to the camp. After an hour or so, it seemed increasingly unlikely that we would encounter any other human beings and so I began to relax a little and we slowed our pace somewhat, although we did not stop. I, for one, had no idea whether we were going in the right direction or not and was afraid to ask my companion for fear he would admit that he did not know. I preferred not knowing. Walking along in ignorance was better than embracing the reality that we were lost.

Around midnight, we heard voices and then realized the voices belonged to two other officer candidates. Now there were four of us. This buoyed my spirits tremendously and put a spring in my step. It was almost like fun as we began to ascend a rocky out-cropping which eventually led us up and over a small mountain. Climbing up and jumping from one large boulder to another, following the blue grey ghostlike figure in front of us, we crested the ridge at -the top in the bright moonlight. The moon and stars never shone so bright as they did from the top of that ridge. Looking down from the top, way off in the distance, we saw the tiny yellow headlights of the trucks that were waiting to take us back to the barracks. A most welcome sight.

In another forty minutes, we had run and tumbled down the mountain in the darkness– and shortly thereafter, had reunited with our fellow candidates to exchange stories. We were all dirty and caked with mud. Uniforms were torn and candidates were limping. It seemed everyone had been captured and taken to the mock POW camp except for this one officer candidate. He had been one of the ones with a map and compass.

As he told the story: “In a few hours, I made it to the partisan point!”

“Then what happened?” we asked.

He continued: “They congratulated me and they were saying, it was AMAZING that I was the ONLY one who had not been captured. Apparently, this had never happened before in all the history of the program going all the way back to World War 2.... “

“Then they told me to come with them by jeep back to the POW camp and tell the camp commandant that I was the first one ever to make it to the partisan point. After about an hour or so, we arrived at the camp. They got on the radio and told him I was coming. When the Jeep pulled up he was waiting for me at the front gate.”

“And then what happened?, we wanted to know.

“Well...I went up to him and said, I MADE IT!! I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO MADE IT TO THE PARTISAN POINT!!”

“Okay....what did he say to you THEN?,” we asked.

“Well, he just looked at me for a minute—and then he said.....CRAWL PIG!”

### **Pat Stephens: 11-67**

In our E&E exercise as I faintly recall, we had to reach a point of safety by midnight. We were sent out in pairs – don’t remember the exact time, but it was probably around 5:00 PM. My partner, Dean Priddy, and I reached the point of safety around 1:00 - 2:00 AM the next morning, in violation of the exercise rules. Nevertheless, we passed the exercise. Up the sick hill.

### **Robert C. Blair 12-67**

We actually DID have the goldfish, at least for a while! I don’t think it’s just “Old Fartism” to say that people today wouldn’t believe what we all did in OCS, and I’m pretty sure they wouldn’t do it today. They also wouldn’t believe the amazing product that system turned out.

I’ve graduated many times, from many different institutions since that day in 1967 at Snow Hall, but none of those other times have compared to the excitement I felt that day. None of those other graduations has had a greater impact on my life and future than that OCS graduation either.

As I remember, we just polished the part of the footgear that didn’t actually touch the ground and had three different colored dots....red, green and white.

### **Robert G. Dawson: 12-67**

I attended FAOCS from October 1966 to April 1967, Class 12-67. Some of my fondest memories were when we first started. We assembled in Robinson Barracks, but before the first week was over, we were moved to an old Marine Reserve area close to Sheridan Road. Our new barracks (house) was in sad shape and we had a very limited time in which to get it up to OCS standards.

Being the only married candidate in my platoon, I volunteered my wife’s services to help make this our home for the next six months. I might add that she was over seven months pregnant and had three other toddlers to manage while living with her mother in a small two-bedroom house in Lawton. Being the trooper she was, she made everything come into place. Specifically, she purchased all of the items required to include curtains, curtain rods, display towels, bathmats, floor polish, et cetera, and delivered them to the platoon in time for us to have them on display before the start of the first academic week.

Since our Tactical Officer was an Armored First Lieutenant, we chose yellow for our bathmats by the bunks and towel displays. Our curtains were the traditional Red. We made quite an impression on him when he made his first inspection. Not long after we

moved in, we had an inspection and the Tactical NCO found Thin Mints in John Buncak's footlocker. He made John eat the whole package and to this day, John cannot stand Thin Mints.

My next memory was during the 10<sup>th</sup> week. We were in the field on a Saturday and I received word that my wife had gone into labor. I was immediately transported to the House, and Jim Buncak, my best friend, let me have his car to go to the hospital. When I got there, Linda had already delivered our third daughter, Kathryne, so I got to meet her without the waiting period. And to make things even better, Linda was in the parking lot for our uniform exchange the following Monday afternoon. She had insisted on leaving the hospital Sunday, the day after delivery.

Another fond memory was after being promoted to the Battalion Staff. When we had staff meetings in the evening, we would order a great number of McDonald's hamburgers and have them delivered. Boy, they tasted good and we would get all we could eat.

Finally, when we were through with the course, but yet to graduate, John and I played a trick on the rest of the members of the Platoon. After all had gone to sleep, John and I first buttoned all of the buttons on the fatigue shirts that everyone had set up to wear the next day. Next, we took all of the boots and laced them from the top down so that they could not get them on. We stayed up all night doing this and had a ball the next morning watching all of the platoon rant and rave while trying to make morning formation.

### **Gregory E. Larson: 12-67**

#### **"Wonderful and Very Valuable Memories"**

Graduating from OCS has left many memories, plus a large number of quite valuable influences on the life of Gregory E. Larson, LTC, US Army, Retired. I can never thank the US Army enough for drafting me on 28 April 1966, sending me through Basic Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and completing my initial training in Fire Direction - AIT, and Artillery Officers Candidate School. This pattern left me with the knowledge, ambition, desire, multiple abilities, leadership skills, and an attitude that has given me a life of successes that otherwise would never have been possible. The greater miracle is the fact that I have never attended a college to gain a Degree, (except that famous University of Hard-Knocks), yet have lived a life of nothing but successes, both in the Military and Civilian Life.

My OCS class started with about 126 students, of which only about 64 of these graduated together. A more difficult experience I have not experienced in any portion of my life, though the benefits of the trials and hardships of the School could not have provided more achievement throughout my Military Career and my Civilian life. Let me attempt to enumerate some of these fond memories.

A friend and I arrived at Fort Sill together in our Khaki Uniforms and checked in at the OCS Headquarters. We were heartily welcomed in a very friendly manner. After sign-in, we were directed out a back door with our luggage, where we were met by our TAC Officers, directed to get on our bellies, luggage placed on our backs, and we Low-Crawled about 3 blocks over crushed rock to our barracks. What a lasting impression, accompanied by deep wonder of what was about to take place for the next 23 weeks!!! I must state that I have never gone through such a difficult time as those weeks ever again. However, the lessons learned were of a nature that could not have ever been matched.

Humility, authority, discipline, character building, UNITY, individual responsibility, and deep thought processing were but just a few of the most valuable personal characteristics, plus the Military Operational subjects. Though thoughts of leaving this environment at any cost did pass through my mind, the discipline that had been instilled in me made me see it through to the end, for which I have been grateful for to this day. The memories, though harsh at the time, have become golden.

To mention some of the happenings, is something I would like to do. Being awakened and given a total of 10 minutes to dress, clean up, make one's personal area immaculate, and be outside in physical training formation taught great efficiency. It also allowed me to learn how to sleep in a standing position and still listen to, and understand orders being given. Return to barracks and dress for daily operation/training was also done within a very narrow timeframe.

The next operation was to march in a 12-Man front to Breakfast. This process was difficult enough as we learned to maintain a true formation and march simultaneously. Occasionally there was an alternative to marching upright, by being made to Low-Crawl in the same Formation to the Dining Facility, and then going to the door in the same position while keeping in cadence. The next part involves sitting at the table in the position of Attention, staring directly at only the name tag on the uniform of the person on the other side of the table throughout the meal. Next, one had to pick up the proper eating utensil, cut a piece of the food no larger than a thumbnail, set down the utensil not being used, place the morsel in your mouth, replace the utensil on the table, assume the position of Attention again, and then chew and swallow the food, only to be repeating this process for the entire meal. In addition, there was always an Upper-Classman sitting at the head of the table and a Middle-Classman at the other end, whom was also the one that brought the food to the table and was the 'Server.' Yes, this all sounds like stupid harassment; however, it had the teaching quality of how to survive in difficult situations. AND, just how many Wars have we fought that did not provide more than enough difficult situations, where having been taught to survive under very miserable conditions was definitely a true asset?

As mentioned, above, Middle-Classmen were the 'Servers' of the food at the meals. Now, on each Saturday morning, the TAC Officers required wearing a Class-A Uniform, In-Ranks inspection. The way Officers or Upper-Classmen were addressed was by shouting "Sir, Candidate (your name)" and then was followed by the answer to the question, or a statement. The Senior individual normally was standing with their face quite close to ours. This one Saturday morning, as we were Middle-Classmen preparing for inspection, the Breakfast-Server returned from his duties. As he climbed the stairs, there was a definite 'rustling' sound, and his pant legs seemed to be bulging. As he prepared to dress for the Inspection, he removed his Fatigue pants, exposing a large number of onions he had brought back from the dining facility. Each member of our platoon ate an onion. We then went outside and lined up for our In-Ranks inspection by our TAC Officer. After the third inspected Candidate had shouted his answers to the Officer, with their faces at very close range, the onions were detected, found quite unpleasant, and the inspection was abruptly ended!!! Perhaps this was not one of the best things done, but it did prove that OCS was also teaching "Ingenuity" which would become quite useful in later times.

OCS at Fort Sill was truly a place where soldiers were taught the needed Branch Qualifications, but they also taught us how to be responsible individuals, and to think far beyond the current situation to ensure that all were qualified to be leaders that were very capable of readily adjusting to many varying situations to accomplish our missions.

Next, I must admit that I have never felt more inadequate, and even approaching “Stupid” as the first days in my first assignment in an Artillery unit. The massive amount of information we had been taught in OCS, suddenly became no more than processes without any way to connect it to specific tasks. Fortunately, though, I was saved by realizing that our training had also taught us to seek answers when all seemed quite bleak. It was at this point that I approached the NCO in charge of whatever area the tasks I had to perform were centered within and asked him to clarify all things to which I had questions, so that I could mesh Learning with Performance. It worked quite perfectly, and immediately instilled that “Unity,” I spoke of earlier. I also carried and used this methodology throughout my Military career. What marvelous teachings we had been given in Fort Sill OCS! It became more obvious as time went on that there was true reason and benefit to what we considered ‘Harassment’ during those very difficult times that we thought were useless efforts to simply attempt to see how many would just quit rather than learn from difficult situations.

During my first Command and feeling a bit inadequate, I approached my First Sergeant one day and asked if he had any ‘Pearls-of-Wisdom’ to help me become a good Commander. His response was a very simple one that reflected back to OCS Classes. He simply looked at me and stated: “Lieutenant, did you ever try to ‘Push-a-Rope’? which I consider to this day one of the most effective things I have ever heard, but contained such a Powerful meaning, which was, again, attributable to lessons learned at OCS on how to use proper advice.

The simple meaning of this was a reminder of the fact that ‘Control’ is something only GOD has, but I must exercise the use of ‘Influence’ by leadership skills rather than trying to control people through a “Power-Push.” OCS had taught me to seek advice (normally the NCO’s) of operational data rather than blindly order people around. This brought the needed information to shorten learning time to operate in various environments.

In closing, I must emphasize the great value of the training I received at Ft. Sill Artillery Officers Candidate School. The training presented there, as I mentioned was probably the most stringent thing I have ever encountered during my entire life. However, I must commend those whom developed and operate the most valuable school that 74 years has shown me. I sincerely hope the future brings the same successes that I have enjoyed to many more soldiers. May GOD Bless all whom attend and teach at OCS, AND May GOD Bless America!!!!!!

### **Charles R. Whiting: 13-67**

I graduated in April of 1967. I did the last official drop in OCS. We had a battalion ceremony to celebrate no more pushups. My TAC Officer (LT Longdon) who loved to see me drop gave me the nomination to do the drop. I have since lost the picture that appeared in whatever newspaper they had at Sill. The photographer caught me a horizontal pose and the helmet had flown straight off my head about a foot out. It was a great picture of the last official drop at Fort Sill OCS program. **Note: Claim not verified.**



## **Austin D. Nixon: 16-67**

Well, I started out as an 11B Infantryman (then subsequently 11C & 11H) from Fort Dix in the summer of 1966. As I went through Advanced Infantry Training (AIT) I was questioned by my CO and asked to consider OCS. I had some college (Mechanical Technology) and loved mathematics. But my heart was as an Infantryman. After taking the final OCS test, I was given orders for Fort Sill not Benning. I was severely disappointed while accepting my new direction! But since OCS was two months after AIT graduation, I stayed at Ft Dix as an “acting jack” SGT and pushed AIT troops through recoilless rifle and mortar training, receiving additional proficiency awards for each weapon. Mortar Calls for Fire and firing technology would prove invaluable at OCS.

Being the ‘hard charger’ that I was (I enlisted for Airborne Infantry, Vietnam) I reported one week early to Robinson Barracks. Big mistake! It was a Sunday evening. I would have stayed away longer but I was out of money. I was the first of the Battery ‘B’ 1st Brigade candidates to arrive. After being told to low crawl to the old wooden barracks, pushing my duffel with my head, I arrived and gave 50 pushups to an Upperclassman. Then I was unceremoniously stripped of my Corporal stripes and NDSM ribbon and expert badge. I spent the next week cleaning the B Battery building, top to bottom, again and again and again. That’s what getting there early got you. But as the week progressed, more and more candidates began to arrive. So my misery had company. Thank God!!

Then “Zero” Week started the first week of November 1966. That first night in the Mess Hall under the tutelage of a Tactical officer was a real eye opener for me. I came from a large family of eight brothers and sisters. When we ate, with did it with gusto and completely finished our plates after saying grace. Well, our Tactical officer wasn’t impressed with my zesty performance, had me “March order” my silver ware (whatever that meant) and finish the meal under the table. My plate still was cleaned. TO wasn’t impressed and this led to a Love-Hate relationship during the rest of his tenure. He left after our 12th week for Vietnam. I doubt if I would have made it if he stayed.

The best memory of my platoon comrades was the “Talk and Tell” that started that first or ‘Zero’ week. Every night, one member of the platoon would walk from footlocker to footlocker, after lights out, on his side of the floor and tell his life story. I don’t think I ever laughed so hard in my life. The funniest was from a Missouri sheep farmer. Oh the tales the platoon told! The most intriguing was from a college graduate from NYC College of Music who played the ‘Horn’ in nightclubs to get through college. It turned out he was a neighbor of the Kennedy’s in Hyannis Port and direct heir of Whitman Chocolates. He was at OCS for his political future. His wife picked him up at Christmas break in their private jet so they could spend the holidays in Israel. What a time he had getting the First SGT to submit his Holiday pass for Israel. Final approval came from some congressman’s intervention. After he returned from overseas at the end of break, he was called to HQ about a week later and told about his grandfather’s passing. He was given an immediate hardship discharge out of the Army and he was to take his place within the family’s company. He promised to send us all some chocolates. We never heard from him again. Every time I see a box of Whitman’s Samplers, I think of him still.

My best memory of the academic load was Gunnery. I loved it all. On my gunnery final exam, I got a 996 out of 1,000. Missed one Precision Fire Computation. One of our classmates, Silvia, who was Candidate Brigade Commander at graduation, (If memory

serves), got a 998. He was very good at everything he did! I was a whiz at the sticks for computing firing solutions, so I used to give gunnery classes in the barracks. Of course, the “Stick, Stuck, Pull” of Survey is etched in my mind as well. As I said, if it was math related, I was on it with gusto!

Coming from a ‘Grunt’ background out of Fort Dix, field exercises were not very challenging. In fact our ‘shoots’ (conducting fire missions) were more classroom like than stressful field exercises. We would sit on our 3 legged stools with our binoculars and magnetic compass and watch downrange while classmates called in missions. I muffed my first fire mission by calling Fire for Effect and not bracketing the target correctly. Of course, the instructor just corrected 50 meters in the opposite direction of the last correction to see if we were within the effective range to destroy the target. I got a ‘Bolo’ for that mission. I am thinking 3 or 4 bolos and you were gone from school. I did very well on all future missions until the ‘Washboard’ range. This range was a series of parallel ridge lines, very close together. It was extremely difficult to accurately determine a target location because on the topography map, it just looked like a series of lines drawn parallel out there about 1,500 yards. So it was ‘best guess’ time. The first three students firing that day failed to destroy their targets. Nobody else wanted to volunteer. So I did. After indentifying what I thought was the target (you never knew 100% sure most of the time) I called for my first adjustment round. Wow! Way off! So I said something like Right 400, Drop 800! The instructor went nuts! You can’t waste rounds like that! I will give you two more adjustments before I kill you. (‘Kill you’ meant you failed that fire mission and someone would take over) All eyes turned to me. I said “I am staying with what I called, Sir!” The biggest risk of my OCS career. The instructor said, Ok! It’s your death candidate! The next round was just short and a little out of line to the right. Left 40 Add 100! The adjustment round landed just over and directly in line with the target. Drop 50 Fire For Effect! All rounds landed around the target. The instructor just shook his head and all the other students rose and cheered! It was a great moment for me.

When it comes to leadership, I have always had a hard time following guys that don’t always know what they are doing. As candidates, we all were to take turns being platoon leader for a week. I got low scores on cooperation when our weekly acting platoon leader got us caught after two hours on the Survival, Escape and Evasion course. I thought we should go one way and he another. Since he was leading, we went his way and got caught. I wasn’t too happy and let him know about it. He reported me to the TAC officer and I was “counseled.” The TAC Officer threatened to kick me out if I couldn’t do well when it was my turn. When my turn came, our platoon did very well in all assigned tasks and our TAC Officer gave me the credit. But really, the rest of the platoon backed me up and it saved my bacon. So my week in the barrel ended well and got my TAC Officer to back off my case.

May 2, 1967 graduation was so sweet! If memory serves, Candidate Silvia got the Gunnery Award and tops in the class. I came in a distant 23rd or 24th. No matter, we all graduated and left with some of the fondest memories of my military career. Over the years, my experience in OCS gave me lasting insight on how to manage, direct and complete all of my assigned tasks both military and civilian.

In 1985, as an 8-Inch Artillery Battalion Commander for the New York Army National Guard, we achieved the very highest distinction of being the best 8-Inch unit in the U.S.

Army being tested that year resulting from the conclusion of an extensive ARTEP. (Army Readiness Training Evaluation Program) First Army was very generous in their praise since the unit was scheduled for disbandment for failing to meet mission. I assumed command in the summer of 1983. My extensive OCS training allowed me to evaluate all of my gun sections, FDC, Survey and logistics support areas and give direction to the Section Chiefs via Battery Cadre and Battalion Staff. Our success was a true team effort that I directly equated with my training learned in OCS and shared among the battalion.

I will never forget and always cherish my time in the Field Artillery OCS Class of 16-67.

**John L. Edwards: 17-67**

**“The Jark”**

I understand that the school changed over the years, so what I’m telling you about our Jark may have been altered sometime after we left. In 1966 and 1967, our Jark was at a cadence of 90 steps per minute and the step length was 42 inches. We carried an M14 without a sling for all the Jarks in lower class. We could never be convinced that the sling was left off by accident. This pace with the length of the step created a pain in the lower back that no one ever got used to. The weapon was carried at right or left shoulder arms and every now and then to port arms, but it was never comfortable at any time up or back from MB4.

Our double time was at the cadence of 120 steps per minute and a 30-inch step and was not permitted on the Jark. As Forest would say, “and that’s all I have to say about that.” But let me know if they changed the Jark later, I’m curious if it was.

**Vance Marsh: 17-67**

The skills of the Field Artillery began during my tenure at the OCS at Fort Sill Oklahoma and the tenacity to stick out a difficult situation has helped me throughout my life and was especially useful during Combat.

I learned to adapt to the situation at hand. I also learned a rapport with the people I work with and around. I was taught at OCS to manage my limited resources whatever they may be and to manage my most valuable recourse that being time. The planning process was presented to me at OCS where I learned to backward plan from the object or result to now.

In addition, I was introduced to the Army organizations and the many different aspects of the Army. I was exposed from small sectional operations to battery operations in support of maneuver company operations and maneuver battalion operations. These skills later were developed into brigade operations and divisional operations from Field Artillery battalion and Field Artillery divisional operations support packages.

The skill to develop special sequential activities and coordinate them into a specific operation and into a specific time frame became very valuable to me. The ability to work with men and materials developing them into a cursive unit has played an important part of my life and it continues to play an important part of my abilities today.

I will always be grateful to have been able to spend 23 weeks concentrating on learning the Field Artillery and leadership skills as taught me at the Field Artillery OCS.

**Martin C. Newman: 17-67**

As I sat comfortably in my last semester of college, with nothing ahead but visions of a lucrative business career, reality hit. A close friend informed me that many in our senior class were starting to receive draft notices. With that surprising news, he also offered a suggestion that would prove to be a life altering experience. He suggested that instead of being drafted, that we apply for OCS. One small problem here, in that I had no idea what OCS even was. After he explained the ins and outs to me and further, suggested that we arrange to take the qualifying tests, I started to think about where this new life experience would take me.

Having passed the tests and interviews, my friend and I started to think about which part of the Army (our only choice other than the Marines) we wanted to be in. At this point we were caught somewhat short in that after researching all areas, we found that our only options were either infantry or artillery. With our wealth of college experience, we figured that since the infantry walked and the artillery rode, we would go with the artillery, and thus were pre-assigned, assuming no unusual pitfalls ahead, to Class 17-67 (still some six months away).

Basic training went like clockwork, but instead of a two week leave, we were loaded early the next morning (after basic graduation) on a bus headed for Fort Sill, Oklahoma (had no idea where it even was). Arrival at Fort Sill proved to be quite an experience as we were to meet the always loud and in your face SGT Kersey (I would really like to see what Jim Kersey had to say about OCS once he got there). Once push-ups became common place, we kind of settled into OCS Prep activity. Out about 4-5 weeks, we put together a football team at the Battery Commanders suggestion/direction. And while many of the others in my class drilled daily, I, along with a few other preps (some had been college stars), played football. And football went well, all the way to the post championships. As it would be, we started OCS on the Sunday prior to the championship game (between OCS Prep and OCS), so the Prep team was all but wiped out as 3/4 of us entered OCS that Sunday. A request from our previous Battery Commander to the OCS Commandant to allow us to play in that game fell on deaf ears. In fact, I believe that OCS won on a forfeit as Prep could not field a team.

Since all the Prep players were known to our new cadre, we did not start our OCS career standing tall, but in the standard drop position. Actually OCS, after the first two weeks of Jarks, wasn't too bad. One thing we learned quickly was that the name of the game was teamwork. With it you can win, but without it you will go down in defeat. Once we figured the cadre out, things ran smoother. During most of my Middle Class term I was assigned to lower class batteries (I don't remember what they called us back then, although it might have been CATO), then part way through my Upper Class time I went onto Battalion staff.

Either because I was in the top of my class, or just dumb luck, I got my wished-for assignment. Upon graduation, I was assigned back to the school as an OCS Tactical Officer. At this point I thought my two years would be spent at Fort Sill as a TAC Officer, and thus my military career would be rather mild. And this brings me back to the friend that first suggested that we go to OCS. About one year into my position, the battalion Sergeant Major stopped by my cubicle one day and informed me that I had just received orders for Viet Nam. While my friend sat snugly in Germany, I headed for the hot, muggy

jungles of Nam, off the Ho Chi Minh trail. Viet Nam was clearly an experience. I saw a few friends there, but also lost a few friends there.

How would I summarize my time in OCS? It was what college could not teach you (leadership), what your parents could not get through to you (purpose and discipline) and what life had not yet shown you (honor). To all of us who served, we honored our flag, fought for our flag, and to a man, would do it again.

**Haliday M. Pullum: 17-67**

OCS (Officer Candidate School) Where do I start? First off, let's start before I entered the Army. Since my Dad had been in the service (Navy) for 28 years, I spoke with him prior to going in the Army. The reason I chose the Army was that I did not need any college to go to OCS. It was my understanding that the other services wanted OCS candidates to have some college. So, with that in mind I joined the Army in April of 1966. Dad told me to do the best I could when taking all the tests the Army was going to give me. So, I did; I even tried to get a good night's sleep the day before the tests. I ended up going through basic and advanced training and somewhere in there I applied for OCS. Only thing I remember was putting my preferences as Infantry, Armor and Artillery, in that order.

After that I went before a board of three officers, and I must have done OK as I was notified that I was going to OCS (Artillery). Dad was the one who told me that the military would provide me schooling if I showed them, I was worth my salt. The other thing was Dad was not working (heart problems) and did not have the money to send me to collage. He would die while I was in Viet Nam. I waited about two months after I completed my advanced training and was told to report to Fort Sill OCS.

I do not even remember reporting in to OCS, nor do I remember much about the first months of OCS. I remember taking a PT (physical training) test and passing it. I remember the very first classes we had were in Summerall Hall. We called it Slumber Hall as we all fell asleep. The classes were on artillery transport and were as dull as a 100-year-old knife. I almost failed that class or block of instruction. I did better after that. I have been told by one of my classmates that we started OCS in the old OCS Robinson Barracks we moved to the area where the 4th Brigade was started. My class OCC 17-67 (Officer Candidate Class, and the number stands for the 17th class to graduate in 1967. We started sometime in November of 1966.

One of my classmates (Rich Hohman) stayed at Fort Sill after graduation and for two years was a TAC officer in one of the OCS batteries. He visited our class first sergeant and got a class standing; the subject on the DA Form 2496-1 is "Final Overall Standing, OCC 17-67 Battery D dated 3 May 1967.

First, I want to pass on some info/rumor about OCS paperwork and records. I heard (do not remember where or when, that when OCS closed down in 1973 all records and paperwork concerning OCS were boxed up and placed in one of the old World War II wooden barracks. After this everyone who was involved with OCS received orders and moved away. Years later, after everyone who had anything to do with OCS was gone, the Post Fire Department burned many of the old World War II buildings along with all records. I was told that many first sergeants kept copies of old orders and records and that is how many of the old OCS records were reconstructed. As a result of the lack of

records I do not know how many people started with OCC 17-67. I do know that 98 graduated, and more than half of them were setbacks from other classes. Eleven of my classmates were relieved and did not complete OCS. Forty-one of my classmates were turned back (moved back to another class) to retake a class that they had failed. I can only guess that many went on to graduate at a later date. Five of my classmates were turned back for leadership deficiencies and finally two of my classmates ended up in the hospital and went back to a later class. Add this up and fifty-nine of the individuals that started with OCC 17-67 did not finish with the class. It was not until much later that I found out that it was not the norm to make it all the way through OCS with the class you started with. I guess I was one of the lucky ones.

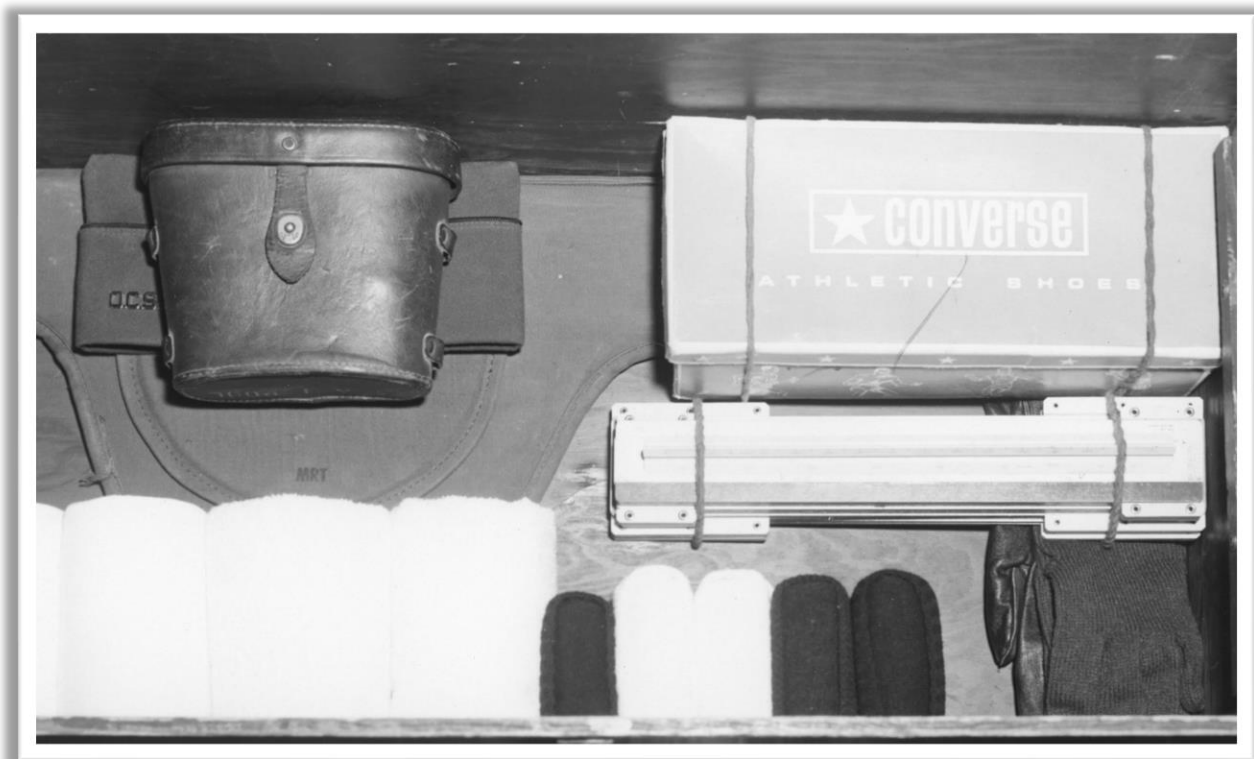
So now let's talk about the OCS experience. Most of my memories are of the old World War II building we lived in for about the last five months or so. I was in the 4th platoon and lived on the second floor. There were no showers on the second floor so everyone in the building used the first-floor showers. The showers had cement floors and it was not practical to put cement floors and drains on the second floor. The other great thing about the bathroom was that all the commodes were like two feet apart and no dividers! The one shower room had about ten shower heads, no dividers, and you just ran in got wet soaped up, rinsed and got out.

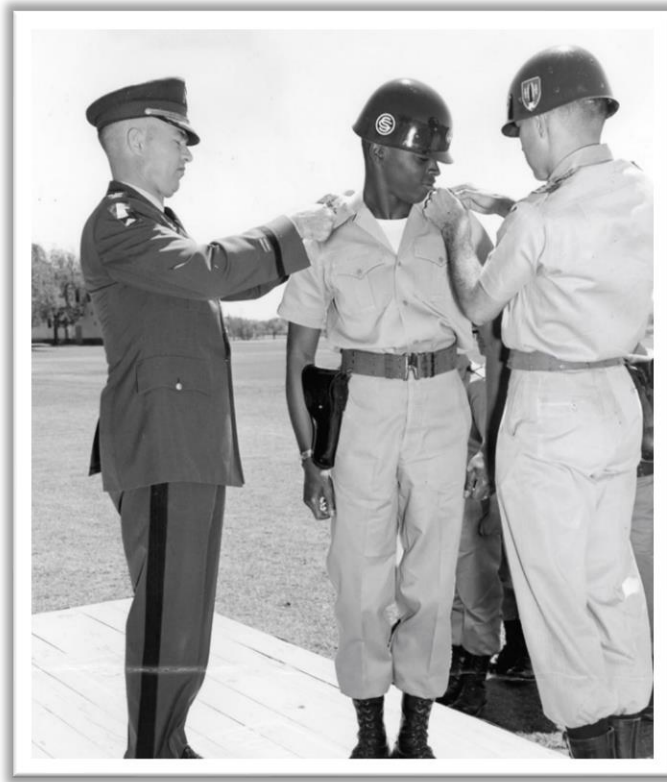
At the start of OCS, we were a mess and late to formation all the time; you had to shave, shower, brush your teeth and use the commode, get dressed and set your bed display up in 10 minutes or less. I remember lots of demerits when we first started OCS and how, over time we got better and better. I remember Jarks and marching with full gear to work off demerits. I remember the day we repelled; I think this made a big impression on me. I do not remember much about the different classes we went to except I remember gunnery and the cage. The last week of OCS we had Escape and Evasion and I remember going over the mountain and not getting captured. Later I was told that not getting captured was a big thing, as it was normal that nearly all candidates were captured. I remember eating meals as an underclassman. We would eat "square" meals; scoop the food onto the fork, bring the fork straight up, not towards your mouth and then when the food and fork were level with your mouth bring the food to your mouth and then repeat, all the while sitting up straight and your chin smashed into your throat, in other words a brace. Oh, yes, one cannot write about OCS without saying something about Snow Hall. This is where many of our classes were held. As underclassmen we had to walk in a single line as far to the right as possible and watch out for everyone else as we were the lowest form of human in the building; at least as far as the rest of the OCS organization was concerned.

(a) Each table is assigned a table commandant. When possible the table commandant will be an upperclassman. Through proper application of discipline in the messhall, a daily occurrence can become a teaching vehicle; the table commandant, in effect, becomes an "instructor." The primary purpose of the messhall is to afford members of OCS an opportunity to eat a full meal in a reasonably quiet atmosphere under reasonable conditions of accepted etiquette. "Training" during meals will be avoided. Candidates will be given sufficient time to eat. The only instruction authorized in the mess is training in normal and reasonable social graces and good etiquette. Such instruction will be presented in a positive, constructive manner. Punishment will not be administered by anyone in the messhall nor will the meal be interrupted.



*Footlocker Tray Display (top tray and bottom)*



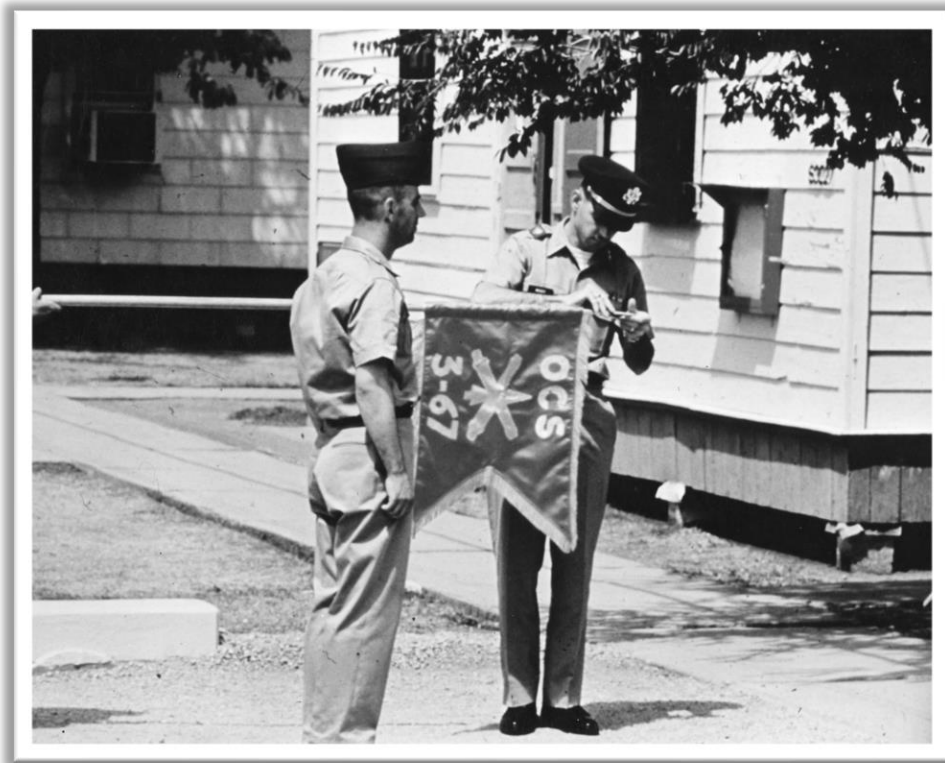


*Brigade First Candidate Gerald E. Howard Class 15-67*



*Class 12-67 working on colored gravel art outside Building 2824*





*Class 3-67 Guidon Ceremony*



*The grueling two-hour long disciplinary "Parking Lot Tour"*



*Aiming Circle Hill*



*Lunch from the mess hall delivered to the field in Mermite containers*

# Chapter Fifteen

## 1967- Part 2

### **Paul Lange: 18-67**

OCS set the course for the rest of my life and almost everything that happened later in my life was a result of things I learned in OCS or was in some way related to graduation from OCS. Like many of my fellow candidates, I did not know what I wanted to do in life. I had managed, after 3 years, to flunk out of college, due primarily to having too good a time, and decided to join the Army. I enlisted and was trained as a combat medic. The day we had to give each other enemas I decided that I did not to do that for three years and went to OCS. Artillery was my third choice, so being the Army, that is where I was sent. My time in OCS was not easy, as I had not had FDC training like many of my fellow candidates and I was color blind so I had trouble reading a map. I decided that I wasn't going to quit and after a longer than 6-month period I graduated in May of 1967.

So much has happened in my life since that day in May 1967 I graduated as a Second Lieutenant, Army Artillery. I have been truly blessed and believe many of my fellow OCS graduates have been similarly blessed.

### **Tom McCourt: 18-67**

#### ***“To Be A Soldier”***

#### **By Tom McCourt (2005)**

It was a cold and gloomy November day when I reported to Robinson Barracks at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for Artillery and Missile OCS. I was still nineteen years old. I had been in the Army for just over four months. The upperclassmen pounced on me as I reported in and stripped me of all rank and insignia. They were arrogant, insulting, and even more intimidating than the drill instructors in basic training had been. It was a lot like being taken prisoner.

I had my first lesson in things I didn't know about artillery in the first few minutes of my arrival. As a haughty upperclassman stripped my uniform of what meager signs of rank it held, he got right up close in my face and told me there was a lanyard on my uniform and I should remove it immediately. I had no idea what he was talking about. I just stood there, staring straight ahead as I had always done when being dressed down by the drill sergeants in basic training.

The smug and pompous upperclassman became enraged when I failed to respond to his directive, and with a red face and bulging eyeballs he ordered me to drop and give him fifty push-ups. I dutifully complied, there on the asphalt of the parking lot, in my class “A” uniform, jacket, necktie and all. As I stood again, out of breath, sweating, and with dirt stains on my hands and knees, he got in my face again and told me to remove the lanyard. I stared straight ahead again, but this time I told him that I didn't know what a lanyard was.

“You're shitting me!” was his incredulous reply. “What's your MOS (military occupational specialty), Candidate?” “Eleven Bravo - light weapons,” I stammered. “I'm a machine-gunner.”

“You’re shitting me!” he said again. “What are you doing here, Mr. Eleven Bravo?”

“I have orders to be here, Sir.”

“Let’s see your orders,” the upperclassman snapped. I dug into my folder and produced the official documents. The upperclassman looked them over, and then called a couple of his buddies to come and look too. They couldn’t believe it. I hadn’t made a mistake. I was at the right place.

The upperclassman stood before me again, but this time his attitude had softened considerably. “You don’t have a snowball’s chance in hell of graduating from this school, candidate,” he said finally. “Do you know that?”

“No Sir,” I said defiantly. “They sent me here and I’ll graduate ... Sir.”

“Sure you will,” the upperclassman said, almost sadly.

“Well, Candidate McCourt, Mr. Eleven Bravo, let me give you your first lesson in artillery terminology. A lanyard is a short rope that is pulled to fire a cannon. You have a small thread hanging out from the second buttonhole on your uniform. Around here we call that a lanyard. Remove the lanyard on your uniform, Candidate McCourt, or I’ll make you drop and give me another fifty.”

“Yes Sir,” I said, as I fished for the thread.

“And then,” the upperclassman said, as he smiled wickedly, “Around here, whenever you remove a lanyard, you must yell BOOM. After all, candidate, a lanyard does fire the gun.”

“Yes Sir ... BOOM Sir,” I said as I pulled the thread, not daring to even smile.

“Very good, candidate,” the upperclassman purred. “See, you’re learning to be an artilleryman already.”

In World War II, young Lieutenants were often called “Ninety-day Wonders.” It supposedly stems from the fact that during the worst days of the world conflict, Officer Candidate School was a three-month course of instruction. When I reported for OCS in November 1966, the school lasted twice that long.

The Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School was divided into three segments. Each segment lasted seven or eight weeks, and each segment had a different goal and course of instruction. There were very few Sergeants as instructors. We were under the tutelage of “TAC Officers.” Lieutenants, Captains, and even a few Majors took the place of drill instructors. Upper Class OCS candidates took the place of most NCOs at the school.

The first segment was physical and psychological torture. It was geared that way to find out who really wanted to be there, and who could function under stress. A new candidate was called a lowerclassman, and he wore a blue tab on each epaulet. Lowerclassmen were treated worse than cattle, and it was part of the plan.

As Lowerclassmen, we didn’t rank high enough to walk on the sidewalks. We had to walk in the gutter. In fact, we couldn’t walk at all unless given explicit permission. Most of the time we jogged everywhere we went. Lowerclassmen were routinely deprived of nourishment and sleep, and they were constantly harassed and belittled. Harsh physical conditioning was endless, and we spent hours and hours marching, running in formation, and doing push-ups and sit-ups. We were often cold, usually hungry, and always exhausted and in need of sleep. I lost ten pounds in the first couple of weeks. It doesn’t sound like much, but I weighed less than 140 to begin with.

The hardships and deprivation was a test to see who would fold under pressure. We were constantly reminded that we were suffering at our own request and we could quit at anytime. We had volunteered to be there, and we could volunteer to leave. The choice was ours. Several young candidates took the option and dropped out.

Some of the tortures were creative. They would march us to the mess hall after an all-night field problem and make us stand behind our chairs at attention while the presiding upperclassmen took their seats at the head of each table. Then, by command, we were ordered to sit. We could sit at the table, but still in a position of attention, and pity the man who reached out to grab a fork without permission. Reprimands and punishments were severe, and the whole group was punished for the infractions of an individual. We would sit at attention and smell the sausage and eggs, pancakes and coffee, while the upperclassman at the head of the table gave us a chatty lesson in proper table etiquette. He would sometimes be eating as he talked to us. We did not have permission to eat yet. When he finished his lecture, the upperclassman would give us permission to eat. We would no sooner get a taste of scrambled eggs than a whistle would blow and the upperclassman would order us to attention behind our chairs again. Our fifteen minutes for eating had passed. It was time to go on another hike. Our uneaten breakfast was dumped in the trash.

By the second or third week, a lower class candidate was a zombie. The stresses were as close to battlefield trauma as the Army could duplicate without actually shooting at us. They were finding who could function under pressure, and who had the will and intestinal fortitude to tuff it out.

Several of the candidates quit, and that was the plan. The weeks of torture were a great winnowing process. To survive as a lowerclassman, a person had to have an iron will, be in complete control of his emotions, be willing to suffer to win the prize, and be able to stay focused through weeks and months of unrelenting hardship. Only the strong survive. And then, one day we were called into formation, congratulated for having passed the first test, and were allowed to don the green epaulet tabs of a middleclassman. Things began to lighten-up from there on out. A middleclassman gets to eat regular meals, and he gets a few hours of sleep at night.

But, in spite of the hardships, lower class training was not all torture and tears. I experienced something during my lower class tenure at Robinson Barracks that has remained one of my most treasured memories of military service. It was truly profound, and it happened quite by accident.

We were on a forced march, just a few days before Christmas, 1966. It was cold, and we were all bundled up in old, mothball-stinking World War II surplus overcoats that flopped around our knees as we trudged through the boondocks. We were all wearing steel helmets, carrying rucksacks and M14 rifles. We looked like a ragged band of survivors from The Battle of the Bulge. We had been out all day. We were hungry and tired. My feet hurt.

We were marching back to the Army base after dark, following an old dirt road that wound its way across the wilderness. As we approached the lights of Fort Sill, it began to snow heavily, and soon the ground was covered. The heavy clomp, clomp, clomp of our

marching boots took on the squeaky crunch, crunch, crunch, of walking on fresh, new snow.

From deep in the ranks, someone started to hum a Christmas Carol. To my utter amazement, the song fit our marching cadence perfectly. We all began to hum, and then to sing. It was spontaneous, heartfelt, and incredible. "Oh come all ye faith-ful, joy-ful and tri-um-phant!" The sound of our boots on the wet, new snow beat a soft and perfect cadence. A surge of new energy rippled through our weary formation.

As one Christmas Carol faded into the night, another took its place. Incredibly, we found that we could adapt almost all of them to the rhythm of our marching feet. If we didn't know all the words, we hummed or waited for clues from those singing around us. I would never have guessed, but the songs "Joy to the World," and "Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains," have perfect rhythms for marching that could actually be set to fife and drums. When we discovered that fact, our wet, cold, and hungry formation came alive. Our chorus, and the sound of our marching feet, resonated through the stormy night. "Glory to God" - crunch - "Glory to God" - crunch - "Glory to God in the high-est" - crunch.

Our TAC Officers loved it. Any show of spirit and camaraderie from the ranks of the starving and oppressed lowerclassmen was a positive thing. Our superiors altered our route and took us through one of the residential areas of the fort. We marched through the streets of a humble, enlisted man's residential housing unit, and we continued to sing Christmas Carols as we marched.

The streets were deserted and the snow was beautiful. Huge snowflakes filtered down around the streetlights and the ground was blanketed in white. There were sparkling Christmas lights decorating many of the homes, and people peeked out from colored-light-framed windows to watch as we marched past. Our wet boots kept a perfect cadence on the squeaky new snow. "Si-lent night," - crunch, crunch - "Ho-ly night," - crunch, crunch - "All is calm," - crunch, crunch - "all is bright," - crunch, crunch.

Porch lights came on half-a-block ahead of us as the sound of our marching Christmas tribute went before us up the street. People came out on their porches to stand silently and watch as we marched past, singing in cadence. No one cheered, no one waved, and no one sang with us. Families stood with arms around each other, babes wrapped in blankets, and watched reverently, some with bowed heads. Even the children were quiet and respectful. The scene was wondrous and dreamlike against the background of falling snow and the twinkling of colored Christmas lights. The feeling was incredible.

It was a powerful, spiritual moment for me. These were Army families, the people who carried the burdens of the Vietnam War. How many would know the pain of separation in the coming year? How many would know the agony of losing a father or a husband? How many of the brave young voices from within our ranks would forever be silenced before they knew another Christmas? I thought of all of those things as I offered my weak and humble voice to the chorus. I don't know what the other soldiers in that formation were thinking, but I was praising God and offering a gift of hope and love to soldier families everywhere.

Every Christmas since that night, I have remembered the images and the feelings of that special Christmas tribute, and wished that I could do it again.

The seven or eight weeks of middle class training were slanted toward academic endeavors. It was during this time period when we learned the black arts of the artilleryman's craft. A lot of the instruction was live-fire exercises on the guns. We learned to set the fuses, load the guns, and "lay" (orient) the battery. We were also taught the ballistic wizardry that puts a shell on target from ten or twelve miles away. In those days we used slide rules and long division to make the calculations. The Army had no computers. And, I know it sounds unbelievable, but hand-held calculators had not been invented yet.

As middleclassmen, we were also taught intensive map reading, proper compass usage, escape and evasion, military protocols, military history, and dozens of other soldierly subjects. An OCS middle classman spends a lot of time in a classroom.

In 1967, the Army still combined Artillery and Missiles into one branch of the service. The two disciplines were separated in 1968. While at OCS, my classmates and I were trained to shoot Honest John and Little John Missiles as well as tube artillery.

The academic courses were tough for a kid like me without any college. I knew little of math, and geometry is the mother's milk of hitting targets over the horizon. Lucky for me, I had innocently and unknowingly made a decision on my first afternoon at OCS that helped to sustain me. It happened when I picked a roommate.

On my first afternoon at Robinson Barracks, I was escorted to a squad bay and told to select a bunk. The bunks were separated into cubicles. Each cubicle had two beds and two desks. Each candidate had a "roommate." About half of the cubicles were filled by the time I reported in, but there were still a few choices available. I walked through the barracks checking out the possibilities.

In one cubicle, a young man was sitting on a bed by himself, and he watched me as I walked through the squad bay. He had sad, but very intelligent eyes, and his face had strength of character. He was obviously of Mexican or Latin American ancestry, and he looked just a little out-of-place in that bowl of white milk. Back home in the coalmine country of Carbon County, some of my best friends were the children of Mexican emigrants. I walked over and asked if the other bunk in his cubicle was taken.

"Be my guest," he said with a smile and an extended hand of friendship. "My name is Felix Martinez."

Felix Martinez proved to be one of the most intriguing people I have ever known. He was older than me, twenty-six, if I remember correctly. He was a bachelor and a draftee who had lived his whole life on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. His family owned and operated the Chinle Valley Store. He could play guitar and sing like a bird in five languages, including Navajo. Lucky for me, he also had a Master's Degree in mathematics.

Felix became my mentor and my tutor. He was my roommate and my big brother. He was incredulous when he discovered that I had been sent there without any prior artillery training, and he took me on as a project. He did all he could to fill me in on what I had missed. In the evenings, he would sit me down and explain things about ballistics, computations, the mechanics of how cannons work, and the glossary of terms. He checked my homework and helped me cram for weekly exams. He would recap lectures for me and explain in detail any questions I might have. He pointed out things that I had missed, and showed me other and “better” ways to do the math on some of the equations. I don’t think I could have made it through without his tutelage. I owe him a great deal.

Many of our classmates were “washed-out” or “set-back” during the academic segment. Washed-out means they were dropped from OCS and sent back to a regular Army unit because of academic, leadership, or personal failures. “Set-Back” means they were sent back to the starting point of the academic section and given a second chance to pass, but with a different group of candidates. And then too, a few more of our “contemporaries” folded under the pressure and resigned.

At the end of seven or eight weeks of middle class academics, we were promoted to upper class. It was then we began our true officer training. Again, OCS is broken down into three parts. The lower class segment is a torture chamber, the middle class segment is an academic boiler, and the upper class segment is true leadership training. By the time a group of Candidates reaches upper class status, most of the dead wood has been culled.

Upperclassmen wore red epaulet tabs, and they were called “Redbirds.” Red is the Army’s designated color for artillery. An artilleryman wears a red braid on his uniform. The infantry color is blue, and armor (cavalry) is yellow. Redbirds routinely practiced their swagger in the presence of the lower class candidates. It was part of their job and part of their training.

As mentioned earlier, upperclassmen were the enforcers and the drill instructors for the outfit. It was in dominating the lowerclassmen where they practiced giving orders, calling marching cadence, and thinking up creative and sometimes humorous tortures for the new guys. If a candidate had a penchant for sadism, it would show up during his upper class tenure. Even a few upperclassmen were washed-out for excessive exuberance in creative disciplining. The TAC Officers kept a close eye on the haughty Redbirds.

Part of our job as upperclassmen was to meet and greet the new arrivals at OCS. It was our duty to shock and intimidate the new guys immediately, and to strip them of all rank and insignia. It was just my luck that the first man I confronted as a new upperclassman was a Staff Sergeant with Vietnam campaign ribbons, a First Air Cavalry shoulder patch, a Purple Heart, and a Silver Star. The man was everything I ever wanted to be as a soldier.

I stood in front of that man for what seemed like a long time as I thought it over. He was years older than me, and he stood at attention, straight and tall, with eyes to the front, staring straight ahead, very soldierly and completely professional. I took a deep breath and cleared my throat. There was chaos going on all around us as other upperclassmen demoralized and yelled at the new guys.



“Sergeant,” I said in a still, small voice, hoping that my contemporaries were all busy with other new candidates and not paying attention to what I was doing. “I’m supposed to strip you of all rank and insignia, to include decorations, chevrons, and shoulder patches. But ... I will not remove those decorations or that shoulder patch in such a disrespectful way. Would you please remove those items by yourself, Sergeant, and put them in your pocket?”

The Sergeant turned his stern military gaze to meet my eyes, and then he said very quietly, “Thank you, Sir.” It was the first time a Sergeant ever called me “Sir.” It was a great way for it to happen.

When the items were safely in his pockets, I told him to drop and give me twenty-five, just for the hell of it. As he did his push-ups in his stripped-down dress uniform, necktie and all, I knelt on one knee next to him on the asphalt and said, “Welcome to OCS Sergeant, and I do wish you the very best.”

“Thank you, Sir,” he said a second time, as he sweated to complete the push-ups I had ordered.

It was during our upper class training when we received most of our instruction in being Forward Observers. I found the job to be every bit as glamorous as the name sounded. It must have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to train each new artillery officer. We each expended hundreds of rounds of artillery ammunition on the target ranges.

They would take us out on a hill and point out a distant target through a spotting scope. We would then plot a fire mission for the guns. We had to estimate the range and then give the proper coordinates and the compass bearing to the target. Remember, this was in the days before GPS satellites and laser range-finding systems. We had to shoot by the “best guess” method. It was an inexact science, and some of us were better guessers than others.

We had to properly identify the target, and then choose the type of shell and fuse best suited for that target. We then directed fire on the target, adjusting the exploding shells ever closer in 50 or 100-meter increments (best guess) until we got a hit. We were graded at the end of the exercise on how well we did. The guy who properly identified the target, selected the proper fuse and shell, and hit the target in the fastest time using the fewest number of shells, won the accolades.

Like machine-gun school, artillerymen are taught how best to kill people using the tools at hand. First, there is the selection of caliber. If you have a choice, and want to blow things up from long range, we were taught to use the heavy guns, eight- inch or 175 mm. They make a big splash. For intermediate work, and for heavy hitting on fortified positions, a 155 mm does a good job. But most often, we were taught to shoot using the smaller, 105 mm howitzers. The bursting radius of a 105 is smaller (about 35 yards), which makes them just a little safer for close-in work. And then of course, the smaller caliber ammunition is less expensive for training purposes.

For clarification, I should point out that there is a difference between a howitzer and a gun, even though both might be called cannons. A gun is a direct-fire weapon. It sends a

shell on a relatively flat trajectory at a distant target, much like a rifle. Battleships use sixteen-inch guns. A howitzer, on the other hand, can be used like a gun or like a mortar. A howitzer can point its barrel high in the air and lob a shell over an obstacle, like a building or a grove of trees. A howitzer can sit on one side of a hill and put shells on the other side of the same hill on targets that are only a short distance away. Howitzers are more versatile than guns. Most Army cannons are howitzers.

There are several kinds of artillery shells available, and the Forward Observer gets to choose, depending on what he wants to do to the target. He can blow it up, set it on fire, pepper it with fleshettes, hide it with a smoke screen, or light it up in the dark.

After the proper shell has been selected, comes the selection of the fuse. Artillery shells are shipped without a fuse attached. The fuse is screwed into the nose of the shell just before it is fired. Several types of fuses are available. To bust bunkers, collapse trenches, or bring down large buildings, the Forward Observer tells the gun-bunnies to use a delayed fuse so the shell will bury deep into the ground or the target before exploding. For most surface targets, such as vehicles and small buildings, a point-detonating fuse is often best. For troops in the open, or in foxholes, an airburst is the method of choice. The observer calls for VT (variable-timed), "proximity" fuses that detonate the shell above the ground. If you are the bad guy and caught out in the open, it's hard to hide from an airburst.

Sometimes in training, we were given targets that were only a couple of hundred yards away. That's when things got tense. When the fireball of the explosion and the BOOM of the concussion happened at the same time, you knew you had better not screw-up when you made the next adjustment. You were in a zone the artillery calls "danger-close." There were times when our instructors countermanded a candidate's orders to the guns in the interests of safety. The trainee then got his butt chewed as the TAC Officer explained that the order, as first given, would probably have killed us all. Young soldiers and their instructors do get killed in training sometimes.

A few upper class candidates were washed-out on the gunnery ranges. Some could not learn to judge distance properly (a potentially fatal defect for an FO), and a few others proved to be careless, or to lack good judgment. An FO must keep a level head and focus completely on the job at hand. The middle of a fire mission is not the time to show off for your buddies or lose track of what it was you told six cannons to do a few moments ago (a standard artillery battery has six guns). No one usually cares if a stupid FO kills himself, but the Army really frowns on a sloppy artillery spotter who takes half a rifle company to hell with him. (It happens).

I was proud to be trained as a Forward Observer. In the world of artillerymen, the FO is King. He is the "eyes" of the artillery battery. All of the critical decisions about target selection, ammunition type, fusing, and the number of shells expended, are decisions made by the FO. All other officers who serve the gun battery, whether they outrank him or not, defer to the FO's decisions. He is the man on the scene. In most instances, the FO is the only man in the artillery who actually gets to see the shells hit the ground. Those who hump the ammo, set the fuses, sight the guns, calculate the angles, and give the commands to fire, are usually too far from the targets to even hear the shells explode.

We would lie on our stomachs on top of a hill (you don't want to create a profile that a sniper might recognize), and use a radio to call a fire mission to a gun battery eight or ten miles away. We then waited to hear the warbling flutter of the shells passing high overhead. We would watch the target through binoculars and howl with delight as the fireballs exploded and the fender of an antique Chevy went spinning off into the stratosphere. It was a feeling of power I can't even describe.

They took us up in fragile little airplanes and taught us to direct artillery from the air. From the air you can see concussion rings from the explosions expanding through the air like ripples in water. It was fascinating.

For a kid like me who always wanted to blow things up, directing artillery was absolute magic. I loved to snuggle up next to a warm and friendly machine-gun, but I had never dreamed of wielding such raw power until I called white-hot and exploding projectiles from out of the clouds like bolts of lightning. I found that with just my voice over the radio, I had the power of Zeus, the strength of Atlas, and the war-making potential of Odin, the father of Thor.

Few young men have ever experienced such a feeling of power. From ten miles away, a hundred artillerymen jumped to obey my every command. A dozen cannons roared when I gave the order. I could plow a field, cut down a grove of trees, or roll an old tank carcass down a hill with the exploding shells. It was magic.

I truly enjoyed Forward Observer training. It was more fun than Disneyland. But then, all too soon, it was over. On the sixteenth day of May 1967, I was awarded my gold bars. I was officially commissioned an Officer and a Gentleman in the Army of the United States. I was twenty years old. I had been in the Army for ten months and ten days.

### **Fred J Oliver: 18-67**

Memories: The three minute "shit shower and shave" routine in the morning still serves me well today.

Snow blowing through the walls of the old barracks during a major storm.

Captain Jones electing to set me back a week for my pants being too short during a morning inspection eight days before graduation and luckily the Battalion Commander overturning Jones's decision. And the subsequent surprise on Captain Jones's face when my father, Colonel Joseph F. Oliver (not previously disclosed to Captain Jones) showed up in uniform the day before graduation and requested the privilege of pinning on my bars.

To say the least, Captain Jones was a bit peeved, and year later I felt his wrath when I reported to a fire base in II Corps in Viet Nam with the 4th Infantry Division as a new FO and found my Battery Commander to be the same Captain Jones. He made sure that I was in the field that same morning with poor equipment (used two different sized boots and electric wire for my rucksack straps (surely the Captain and the supply NCO thought that was funny) and no introductions to any other persons in the battery. Oh well, we did come to some level of mutual respect over the next several months.

## **“Vietnam Village to Help in GI Training at Fort Sill”**

***Daily Oklahoman (Saturday May 20, 1967)***

A coil of battlefield barbed wire was cut Friday at Fort Sill to dedicate a Vietnamese village transplanted to the banks of East Cache Creek on Fort Sill's east range.

A group of Vietnam War veterans then led spectators through the village of Than Hoa, made to look as much like the real thing as Oklahoma's different terrain and trees would allow. The booby-trapped, grass hut village is surrounded by barbed-wire entanglements, tanglefoot wire, mines and is protected from the inside by machine gun and mortar emplacements.

“It is designed to give soldiers going to Vietnam the best training we can give them,” said COL Marlin C. Camp, commander of the Fort Sill officer candidate brigade, in his dedicatory speech.

“It assists those who will see the actual thing when they get there,” he said. With that he cut the wire substituted for a ribbon to open the village to inspection.

Capt. Robert E. Beddingfield, a Columbia, S.C., officer who returned from Vietnam fighting a year ago said the village was started last September and was ready for use December 1. A public inspection was delayed because of hidden hazards throughout the camp for anyone wandering at random.

The hazards include camouflaged pits in several locations, the bottoms of which bristle with punji sticks, needle sharp bamboo used by the Viet Cong to impale anyone who falls in. There are also false-ceiling grass huts like those used by the Viet Cong to hide soldiers and ammunition. Another hut has a double wall with hiding space between the two. Spider holes – ground level openings to a network of underground tunnels-dot the area.

“Some of our city boys never envisioned anyone living like this,” Capt. Isaac W. Hawkins, chief of the training division of the U.S. Army Training Center said. “They see it here before they get to Vietnam.”

Such tricky things to watch for as a tunnel from a restaurant to a Viet Cong hut are included in the village. All Fort Sill soldiers on orders for Vietnam attend a two-day orientation conducted by the Republic of Vietnam Training Committee. The orientation includes an ambush, demonstrations of jungle survival, a demonstration of booby traps and how to avoid them and a tour of the village.

The village is a display of many things the soldiers are told about in classrooms. Capt. Beddingford showed visitors Friday an assortment of weapons used by the enemy in Vietnam, including a teakwood Montagnard crossbow with arrows. The silent weapon is in use in the guerilla-type Vietnam War.

Three classes a week go through the training, plus all officer candidates. “We don't conduct battle exercises he,” said Beddingfield, “because we don't have materials to rebuild what would be destroyed.”

**Bob Montgomery: 19-67**

I graduated with Class 19-67 on May 22, 1967, I was still 19. I started with Class 15-67, but the aiming circle killed me. It was a cold and windy day and I couldn't get the correct plumb. Up to that point in time OCS was the toughest training I had gone through and it taught me that if I wanted something bad enough I could endure anything to get it. It also taught me there is no "I" in team. Up to that point in life I had pretty much quit anything I did. After that I had developed a real "can do" attitude. BC at OCS was CPT Ed Jarman, one squared away dude.

**Ted Van Allen: 19-67**

I did OCS Prep at Sill as well. Nothing like being an underclassman for 8 additional weeks just to prepare you to be an OCS underclassman. Getting the 13E20 AIT training did help making the gunnery classes easier in OCS.

**John F. Crowley: 24A-67**

Two "Memories"...I was drafted on December 28, 1965 out of a partially completed College Degree in Architecture...went to Boot Camp at Fort Dix and elected to go RA and become an Interpreter Translator of Iraqi Arabic for the Army Security Agency at Fort Meade.

Wanting to obtain a commission after language school I applied to go into "Military Intelligence" at Fort Benning's OCS School with all of my TS-BI Crypto Clearances and foreign training...In its infinite wisdom the Army saw me as an Artilleryman and shipped me to Robinson Barracks...For a New England "Farm Boy" the drive from Baltimore to Lawton seemed like going to the end of the earth...After what seemed like forever I stopped at a Texaco Station in Southwest Tulsa and asked "How far to Fort Sill?".. "Stay on this road (I-44) for another couple of hundred miles..."

That led to an "Impressed" stay at Tulsa's fine Capri Motor Inn where there followed a long night of Shoe and Brass Buffing preparing for the Fort Sill arrival the next morning. There I met a clerk who didn't notice the effort and simply directed me to go sit on the steps of the brand new southernmost Barracks to wait for the arrival of my classmates.

Arrival of my Classmates??? That is when I discovered that my year or so of wearing civilian clothes and sitting at desks in a language school was NOT the greatest preparation for OCS...My classmates were marching toward me and our new yet to be occupied barracks in starched uniforms, shiny helmets and two weeks of body building OCS Prep behind them!

**Ronald L. Mattison: 24B-67**

We were in the newer buildings to the west of the mess halls.

Do any of you remember marching to mess? The OC Battery Commander would place the battery at the ready line, and the OC Battalion staff officer would yell "What Battery" and you would yell "Battery \_\_\_ sir." He would tell you to march your battery to the mess hall, and you had to halt the first file of the battery right on the white line running across the street in front of the mess hall. If you miss your mark, you had to march the battery back to the ready line and start again. If there was a battery already there, then all hell broke out due to your holding up mess for other hungry candidates.

Food was brought to the table. The Red Bird in charge of each table would appoint a “Gunner” and “Assistant Gunner” who would then go get the bowls or platters of food and return to the table. Then food was passed around as in any formal setting.

On Saturday at the noon and evening meals, the redbird at each table would grant that the meals could be eaten at ease, not at the usual brace, but not always. On Sunday the meals were eaten at ease.

Of all the things I remember about OCS, my class work was the dimmest in my memory. I started in January 1967, and I believe that we had Survey courses then. It was so damn cold in the field my ink pen froze.

**C.P. McDonald: 24B-67**

***“Into the Green (A Reconnaissance by Fire)”***

**Cherokee Paul McDonald (2001)**

A day or so before I finished Basic Training at Fort Benning, I sat in the shade of a Georgia pine with my Drill Instructor. He was a large muscular Black man with a square face, a grim mouth, wide eyes, and flat ears pinned to sides of his whitewalled head. He had a crisp, tailored uniform, a deep voice, and a fierce determination to transform teenage boys into soldiers. I do not remember his name, but he was representative of his breed.

Anyone who has ever encountered the armed services knows who I’m talking about, a solid professional career soldier dedicated to his craft, who never slept, never had so much as a wrinkle in his fatigues, and had at his immediate command a repertoire of blue language unparalleled in the history of verbal communication. He had come to me with the papers that announced I had been accepted to attend Officer’s Candidate School. I did not know he had submitted my name.

“What’s OCS, Sarge?” I asked with the confidence of a new soldier near the end of his initial training.

“It’s where you leave the ranks of the great unwashed, boy,” he answered in his sandpaper voice. “Where you become a gentleman and a leader so you can do less work for more pay.”

“Sounds interesting, Sarge, but even a brand-new buck private like me knows it’s the sergeants who actually run this army.”

“You remember that and you’ll be okay, boy. Thing is, they need bright and shiny faces to stand out in front of the formations, bright and shiny faces on the ground to turn and pass on the commands from those command choppers circling above you at great heights, bright and shiny faces to *lead*.”

“That’s it? I’ll just be a bright and shiny face?”

“You’ll be bright and shiny,” he said, his eyes distant, “and you’ll be killed a lot, you and the other bright and shiny ones, when you go to Vietnam.”

**Peter D. Kazhe: 25A-67**

**First Apache Officer Serves at Fort Bliss**

***El Paso Times* (Tuesday August 8, 1967)**

Geronimo would lose a feather in his war bonnet had he known what would happen in 1967. The U.S. Army, the same army that the famed Apache chief ran ragged over the southwest has commissioned as a second lieutenant a Mescalero Apache.

Lt. Peter D. Kazhe, of Mescalero, N.M. is the first Apache to become a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army. He was graduated from the Artillery Officer Candidate School and is now stationed at Fort Bliss with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 6th Artillery Group, as a training officer.

Lt. Kazhe's family is used to having someone in the Army. His grandfather, Rogers Tuoclanny served as an Indian scout and many other Mescaleros have distinguished themselves as enlisted men, but Kazhe is the first to be commissioned.

The Mescalero Tribe along with Geronimo was rounded up by the cavalry in 1886 and sent to Florida. In 1913, they were given the choice of taking land allotments in Oklahoma or New Mexico. Lt. Kazhe's relatives along with 180 other members of the tribe chose New Mexico.

Lt. Kazhe attended the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell and Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo., before entering the service. When he returned to the tribe after being commissioned before coming to Fort Bliss there was a big celebration, featuring the Dance of the Mountain Gods.

"This is the only dance that the Mescaleros do now," he says. "The dancers wear knee high moccasins and a buckskin skirt decorated with ribbons and bells. The upper body is painted in symbolic designs of one of four basic clans of the tribe."

**Dennis E. Petty: 25B-67**

I feel fairly comfortable in saying that OCS was different for almost each Candidate. Where we trained for Basic and AIT were fairly important to the academics. The fact that we played sports or not would influence how tough we would be when it was needed. Then the final factor to me was the TAC Officer you were assigned. Let me discuss a little about each subject and how they applied to me.

I had attended one year at Wichita State University and ROTC was a mandatory subject. Drill and ceremonies was nothing new to me and we had attended classes on some of the basics of military courtesy. Most importantly was the fact that I could lay down a spit shine on a concrete sidewalk if needed. Just as I went into the service I broke up with my high school sweetheart and working hard in the Army just felt right to me. I found the Military to be like a natural language for me and I loved it. In basic training I scored 999 points out of a 1,000. I got beat by one point for soldier of the rotation in basic. I made a mistake on the rifle range and shot expert but not "High Expert." I am not sure what my score was on the Officer Classification Battery (OCB) but I must have scored high enough to be interviewed and then boarded to attend OCS. At the time I didn't care which branch but they put down Artillery and I found myself on orders to Fort Sill.

My Advanced Individual Training (AIT) was Field Artillery Fire Direction Crewman 13E. In late 1966, they were conducting an OCS-Prep battery and we were trained to the standards we would be under in OCS. I worked hard and learned a lot. I could not have been honor graduate because of Glen Priddy. He was an “honest to god rocket scientist” that maxed every test and then got any bonus points available. The Commander of Red Stone Arsenal came to his graduation and took him back there to do his two-year tour as an officer. By height or by alphabet, Glen and I were shoulder to shoulder through AIT and OCS.

During our training for 13E, we had a few shack shoots. We would take our FDC equipment up to one of the OPs and conduct fire missions for the 13B training. It gave us a look at both the Forward Observer part of the problem and the Fire Direction part. I was hooked from the first round of the first mission. I could chart, compute and call for fire out of AIT. Map reading was just a natural for me. I think my drafting training in High School helped me look at the detail and relate it to what I saw on the ground in the impact area. That was a real help during the gunnery training in OCS. I conducted several late night classes in the latrine for High Angle and Met +VE. I'm pretty sure that a lot of the guys that went to non-artillery AIT had to work hard and study a lot for a subject that was just a natural for me.

I spoke about sports and how that gave you an edge in OCS. I think that competition in guys was pretty much everywhere. If you could play a team sport and get mentally tough as a team you could beat about any system. We adopted a class motto of “Cooperate and Graduate” from the beginning. It also morphed into “Illigitimi Non Carborundum” or don't let those persons of spurious parentage wear you down. On those nights when a lot of us wanted to laugh or cry into our pillow, we chose to laugh.

One factor in the OCS equation was the assigned TAC Officer. They not only could influence what you thought, they could influence how you thought. Our TAC officer was a short, skinny young looking guy that could in his southern drawl drag out a mono syllabic word into a sentence. We instantly became Candy-Dates and his pronunciation of names would keep me laughing every night. LT Gooch had reportedly been in OCS for one year to get his commission. The scuttlebutt was that he had a 100% leadership grade and was just able to pass Met +VE and High Angle with a 70. I don't think he hated just me, as he was pretty much an equal opportunity hater. What really set him off was that because my gear was so straight; my cube mates looked like they shined their gear with a Hershey bar and a brick. Almost every day when we would return to our barracks, the other half of our cube looked like a hurricane had hit it. One day, when we returned from training, half of the gear was missing. LT Gooch and one of the other TACs had taken the bunks, footlockers shoes and boots and set them up in the shower looking better than they had upstairs.

A part of the physical fitness program in OCS was our tours in the parking lot and JARKs. I don't think anyone in our class escaped the parking lot tour and the first JARK. I was well on my way to not having another JARK when the peanut caper developed. On Sunday morning we could go over to the day room and pig out on the grotto to our hearts content. I was a starvin' Marvin most of the time and I'll bet I ate three-dollars' worth of those Hostess Fried pies every Sunday. We were not allowed any candy back in the barracks and one of our cube mates had brought a Baby Ruth back with him in his sweatshirt.



That afternoon we were doing what all good candidates did and he got that damned candy bar out to eat. Just about the time he put the last bite in his mouth someone down at the front door hollered "Attention." In the rush to find a place to stash the candy wrapper, he put it in one of the empty binders on our study desk. After the person left, my cube mate got the wrapper and hid it in the trash.

Well, as luck would have it, we overlooked the fact the binder was misaligned as we left the next morning. Our TAC officer did not. Wouldn't you know it that there on the desk was half a peanut and a small piece of chocolate? That violation was a six and six. Six weeks restriction and six JARKs. There were three of us in the Cube so we each took a two and two. I did a total of three trips to Medicine Bluffs 4. One that everyone took and two for that half a peanut. If I could remember the actual names of my classmates, I could name names but because of a failing memory I will let the guilty remain nameless.

I feel that I could have learned as much artillery business in a real unit quicker than I did in OCS. I am not sure that on-the-job training (OJT) was as good a way to ensure that I learned every area in the detail I did. I went to Vietnam and feel that I looked out after the units I was assigned to and did my best to protect them from fire, friendly and otherwise. I returned home to finish my degree and then joined the National Guard. I retired in 1997 after 30 years, 9 months and 25 days in uniform. I am proud to be a graduate of the Cannon Cocker College and will someday be waiting at Fiddlers green with a canteen of muzzle blast to share with my friends. I do so love the smell of cordite in the morning.

**David L. Whitney: 25B-67**

I was part of OCS class 25B-67. OCS was something that changed my life. It made me a better person and I will always have fond memories of the times I had going through OCS. It prepared me for the rest of my life.

**Carl Mason Boone: 26A-67**

I dedicate these memories to all of my classmates who went to Vietnam and gave their service for the United States of America. A special remembrance for **LT M. S. Elledge** who lost his life in Vietnam.

There are so many memories of OCS that it would take a book to record them. Therefore, a list of separate memories and times lends itself to an easier presentation.

1. Pre - OCS AIT was an experience in itself. Fire direction with the sticks and pins. That's when I did KP for the first and last time. The mess sergeant wanted me back because I did such a good job cleaning his stove.

2. I had done my AIT at Fort Sill as an FDC 13E20. Working the sticks was very interesting. I remember the day we were moved over to the OCS area. The night we packed over to the OCS area was when it dawned on me that something new was finally happening. We ran with full duffle bags on our shoulders. I knew that it was going to be challenging. Those duffle bags were heavy.

3. The rumor was that they were going to make us low crawl in our Class A's. When we got there, it didn't happen, but I think it did in classes before ours.

4. The first few days it was hard getting used to being up at 0535 and out in formation in less than five minutes. The trick was to not mess up your bed when getting into and out of it. We turned one corner down and slipped into the covers and didn't move after that. We put socks under our pillow and eyeglasses near. Boots ready to go. Magic occurred with boots. The colored dots on the bottom seemed to change all by themselves. Red days and green days were in force. On one of the first days I was the last one out the door. My boots weren't tied and I was caught at the bottom of the stairs by LT Persey and others who let me know I was keeping the whole groups waiting for me. I wasn't the last any more.

5. Eating OCS style was done some way. Taking a bit, putting down the fork and then chewing was the way. No gulping drinks or taking big bites. Oh yes, don't look at any of the cadre. I was caught doing that and was asked if I liked his body! MARCH ORDER! All plates, utensils, and glasses passed down and stacked in a precise order. The condiments were placed in precise formation. It must have been attention to detail. At the end of OCS I weighed about 150 pounds. But I was in great physical shape.

6. The floors were the old red stained material that needed red wax applied to keep the color from fading. We did polish the floor with our underwear on a couple of occasions. The funny thing was that we were wearing the underwear. Low crawl polishing was great. Charles Avery was a polishing partner and went on to flight school and Vietnam as a chopper pilot.

7. Sidewalks were for real people at first. The little narrow gravel borders alongside the walks were for us non-persons! Try running on that. We weren't allowed to walk. It would be bad for us! In fact we double timed everywhere we went.

8. The parking lot tour. That was one hard run. It lasted for two hours. It made running MB4 seem easy.

9. MB4 was one of the more scenic places. It had one tree at the foot of the hill and was the starting point for going all the way to the top. You could crawl, walk, or run to the top. I walked! The round trip from the barracks was about 2.1 miles one way. A good five mile run. JARK! Thanks be for the Jark. It was a stretched out fast walk that was the same speed as double time. It allowed us to use different muscles than when double timing. Colonel Jark we thank you in retrospect.

10. Magic footlockers were so neat. Brand new set up on the top tray not touched for the duration. Everything placed the same in everyone's locker. The bottom was functional but well kept. Rolled socks, rolled underwear, and other personal hygiene items were kept there.

11. Showers for all at the same time. Five minutes for shower, shave, and teeth brushed at the same time as everyone on the floor. Getting ready for the event evolved putting tooth paste on the brush, a squirt of shaving cream in the palm and razor held at the ready. Shower clogs on our feet and towels around our waist. At the word go, we began brushing teeth. Then we slapped on the shaving cream as we went through the door of the latrine. We shaved without any repeated strokes and jumped into the shower. We got

so good at this that we had time for a shared cigarette before going back upstairs to our cubicles.

12. Study time came just before bedtime which was 2200 hours. Study? While brain dead? OK... My cube mate, Garvin Brakel, was a source of information on gunnery. Candidates would come to him and ask questions and he would always know the answer. (Garvin switched to Infantry and went to jump school and became a Screaming Eagle).

13. Ready, Exercise! Magic had a place here. When no cadre was around the count for repetitions was numerically reduced. One, two, three, four....ONE!  
One, two, three, four....Five! One, two, three, four...TEN! .....and so on until we finished. One, two, three, four...Twenty! It wasn't cheating. We would never do that! It was "MAGIC."

14. RSOP was a great time to apply what we had learned, or thought we had learned. They would tell you your job when you were getting on the trucks. I was BC on one night activity. Hey, Boone, you're BC! We arrived at the time on target night fire site just as it was getting dark. There was a safety officer laying the battery of 105 Howitzers. As BC, I thought I was supposed to help. The LT was using lights on the Pantel (panoramic telescope) to align the weapons. He showed us how to do it. Someone yelled at me and said the Marine Captain was asking for the BC. This captain was known for kicking candidates out of the training for goofing up. I went inside the tent and he asked where the hell I had been. I told him and he seemed acceptable for my reason. Then I had to get on the line to the battery and give the commands for firing illumination. Number One Gun, illumination, FIRE! Now remember it was a time on target mission. We had to fire full battery HE at a very specific time. I said, "Number One Gun, Fire! CORRECTION, Number One Gun, illumination." The Marine Captain threw his helmet across the tent and yelled at me in some language not repeatable here. I told him I had corrected the command. He made me call to the guns and verify. A very calm voice answered and said they had caught the mistake before the correction. The Marine Captain didn't kill me but he would have if wasn't for the UCMJ.

15. We were able to be moving down the road, get a fire mission, and pull off, drop the gun in the direction of the azimuth, and fire one round in less than five minutes.

16. We were on the trucks going to a shoot when we passed a battery of towed 155 Howitzers that had been laid with each gun pointing the opposite directions from the one next to it. Two pointing one way and the other two the opposite. There was a candidate standing at attention with about four cadre and officers standing in a circle around him and all were yelling at him. I thanked God it wasn't me.

17. The job for a real LT as a safety officer was one not to be coveted. He had to run from one gun to another and check the tube by placing his thumb inside the breech to insure the tube was clear. We were warned very sternly not to close the block while the safety officer was doing that. Yes, it wasn't me but I watched it happen. The candidate tried closing it on the LT's thumb. That poor LT cursed, jumped around, ran up to the candidate and very clearly with painful language told him how stupid he was. The LT was lucky not to have lost his thumb. He finally calmed down and didn't kill the candidate. Safety First!

18. "Projo Toe" was a name that no one wanted. Those 155 Howitzer rounds were around 90 lbs. and were not to be dropped. We were shown how to place one hand under the round and the other at the top. We weren't there more than 30 minutes when I heard someone yell loudly, "Ouch!". I looked over and a candidate had dropped a projectile directly on his foot. He wore a cast for a long time and got free rides to training sites.

19. Smoke circles, vanishing rounds coming out of the tube like shadows, swabbing the breech, ramming home the round, and putting your fingers in your ears before the command to fire, were some parts of firing the 155. Once I was sitting on the end of the trail with my back to the gun and my fingers protectively stuck my ears. I waited....waited....and then turned around with no fingers in my ears. FIRE! My left ear went completely numb. I thought if they find out I'm out of here. I said nothing and in about 30 minutes hearing was fully restored.

20. Escape and evasion was one scary deal. The real torture they gave was designed to let guys know what could be expected if captured by a real enemy. We were told to stay in groups of four no matter what. When they let us off the trucks, our group was standing at the foot of a mountain of boulders and to the immediate right was a flat plain with a lot of trees. Two of our group wanted to take that direction, but my fellow candidate and I said we had better take to the rocks. Two of them took off into the trees and we stayed there. We heard a lot of blank rounds going off and we knew those two had been captured. Without saying one word, we hit the rocks!

In short we were the only two that made it to the safe house without being caught. The troop at the safe house called in and wanted us to be taken to the prison camp anyway. They told him we had made it there and that's where we stay. I remember one big candidate came walking up entirely covered in mud and looking like he had been through a very hard experience. His eyes were full of anger and some tears of anger and he was carrying a huge tree limb and promising that nobody ever was going to capture him again. That E&E was nothing to laugh at and I'm still glad that I wasn't caught. You can see on the OCS Alumni web site pictures of what they did to those guys. We finished E&E by taking a lone night hike over very rough Oklahoma terrain.

21. The married guys had it made. Our wives would live together to save rent and have friends. They would polish boots, get our laundry done, and also help with those things for some of the single guys. It was a cooperative endeavor to get through those months and I couldn't have done it without my wife, Velma Joyce Johnson Boone. She worked in civil service there and later at Fort Polk and prior to that at Fort Bliss. She was active in the Officer's Wives groups at those times. She worked for two Officers that became Generals later on. Her jobs required a secret clearance.

22. Graduation day came suddenly. My father and mother were able to attend. We walked across the stage in kind of a dream state, officially became LT's, went back to our seats, threw our hats in the air, and put on our gold braided hats.

23. We had paid some sergeant a dollar for a salute somewhere along the line, but my first real salute impressed me to a great extent. It was one of the most insightful events I had. I was walking out of some building and to my right a highly decorated Command Sergeant Major with hash marks down his sleeve snapped a career improved salute for

me. It startled me so, but I returned it with the best I could. That salute emphasized to me that I wasn't who he was saluting. He was saluting the rank with respect and was getting that respect returned. That's when it dawned on me that I really was a LT and I had better be one that lived up to that mutual respect.

OCS was a life changing experience. The time I spent at Fort Sill, Fort Polk and in the Reserves, mean more to me than the 40 years I spent in public education as a teacher and building principal. The fellow graduates that I reunited with at two OCS reunions have become part of my life through social media. Those friendships are valuable to me and I cherish them. OCS was the most rewarding experience I've ever had in my life.

### **James E. Snyder: 26A-67**

Before I left for Fort Benning and basic training, a CWO in my hometown talked with me about Officer Candidate School and encouraged me to consider it. With a new associate degree in accounting, I thought the Army could always find a cushy desk job for me pushing papers someplace. And I did get out of several long marches to the rifle range on some very hot days in Georgia to work in the orderly room typing reports and documents for our First Sergeant. They even sent me to Brigade headquarters to interview for a permanent clerical job, and bypass AIT (Advanced Individual Training). But, I was predisposed to the idea of OCS and especially impressed by the example set by our company commander – a Captain of Artillery – who walked and talked with authority and purpose. Even my drill sergeant remarked about our Captain's rapid pace and military bearing. I wondered how a guy came to walk so fast and with such purpose. In the end, I just couldn't serve my time as a clerk when the challenge of OCS was in front of me. I had to find out if I could become an Army Officer.

On my OCS application, I put down Artillery as my branch choice for combat arms. Later, when I faced the OCS Selection Board, I was both nervous and apprehensive. In my short time in the Army, I never saw so many officers in one room, and they were all looking at me, Private Snyder. I don't remember their questions or my answers, but it must have gone well as I was sent to Fort Ord, California after basic for Infantry mortar school (indirect fire) in an AIT unit composed of nearly all OCS applicants from around the country. And, humping mortar base plates was nothing like pushing papers. It was weeks later when I received word of an appointment to Artillery OCS.

My first experience on that first day as an Officer Candidate (OC) made me wonder if it were a sign whether or not I was supposed to be at OCS. The day before, I had to change planes and airlines, and finally catch a bus to Lawton and Fort Sill. Upon arrival at Oklahoma City, I went to the baggage claim to get my dufflebag. It never showed. When I could wait no longer, I filed a claim before boarding the last bus to Lawton. And, I will never forget reveille at 5:30 a.m. that next morning when I stood in formation for my first day at OCS in my Class A uniform and low quarter shoes. In seconds, every TAC Officer on post was within 12 inches of my face and screaming: "Do you think you are funny, candidate?" "Why are you trying to be different, candidate?" "Don't you know the uniform of the day, Candidate?" And so many other challenges barked at me that most of what they said never registered. Later that morning, our platoon's TAC officer and Hotel Battery XO 1LT Hughes drove me to the post Quartermaster where they issued me new sloppy fatigues that didn't fit, boots, socks, underwear, etc. I was impressed this officer would spend his time on me, but soon learned this new wardrobe provided a near limitless

source of demerits for weeks to come before starch eliminated the wrinkles in my fatigues, and the polish on my boots would begin to reflect light. It was weeks before my dufflebag was recovered.

Married candidates seemed to get more consideration than single guys. No doubt they had more on their minds than the rest of us, but it seemed they ran fewer trips up Medicine Bluffs #4, got more off-post passes and got them earlier in the program than did the rest of us. I don't think I made but two or three trips into Lawton, one to the uniform shop, and I never spent a night off post. My most frequent weekend date was with the survey marker at the top of MB4.

I never had the time nor the inclination to search for a big brother. I do remember a young smack with a grin on his face posting-up and asking me if I would be his big brother, shortly after we "turned green" (middle class). But, I never saw him again. I always felt bad about that. I don't remember his name, and don't know if he washed out, but that's what I suspected.

We must have been early middleclassmen when we heard a National Guard OCS class was to begin shortly in the barracks next to us. We were told to keep our distance and not interfere, except to correct a grievous offense. Their class would last 11 weeks, so that they would start well after we did and finish well before us. WHAT? We thought: it takes the Army 23 weeks to make a Second Lieutenant, but the National Guard only 11 weeks? Needless to say, we were less than enthusiastic as they arrived, and we watched carefully for grievous offenses. After several weeks, those (most) with violations were in formation for their first trip up The Hill. Ahead of our battery in the Jark formation, we could see the number of NG candidates dropping out along the way to MB4, and back. That weekend, the pickup trucks following the Jark were busy as we had never seen with out-of-condition stragglers that couldn't make it. OCS was a physically demanding place for any soldier, but even more so for the older soldier more common among the NG Candidates. I often wondered what their drop-out rate was. Fortunately, I think we became Red Birds (upperclassmen) before they did, so at least those who survived were prevented from retaliating for any grievous offense we may have called to their attention during those first weeks.

Escape and Evasion was no fun. I don't know how any OC avoided capture. Few did. I ran for the high rocks and stayed there for hours thinking it was then safe to cross the road. At the POW compound, a candidate ahead of me went berserk as we low-crawled on our toes and fingertips through the "tunnel" escaping from the compound. Pitch black and claustrophobic, he went nuts, and we had to crawl backwards and then pull him out. I don't remember who it was, or whether he made it to graduation.

Some of my classmates attended Fort Sill's OCS prep course as their AIT. And, that may explain why some candidates didn't have to learn the hard way, never accumulated the number of demerits the rest of us did, and never seemed to run the hill (MB4), whereas this was a regular Saturday and Sunday event for many of us. It might also have contributed to First Platoon winning the Tiger Platoon award more than the other 3 platoons in Hotel Battery combined.

Back then, every OC knew exactly how many trips he made up that hill, but 40 years later I only know it was well in excess of a dozen trips for me, probably less than 20 and short of the hundred miler club. But, Dick Barr surely was a member, and then some. Dick was the youngest candidate in our platoon, if not the entire battery, and attracted demerits like a magnet. Late one dark and miserable rainy night after returning from some field exercise, we entered the barracks to find that Barr had left the window in his cube open and an Oklahoma downpour was all over the floor. He was immediately down on all fours and in a loud voice predicted how all sh-t would break loose if LT Hughes saw this. [By this time we were Red Birds, and LT Hughes had lightened up a bit since our time as lower gross smacks.] As Barr was all four-on-the-floor, he couldn't see that Hughes had entered the barracks with us and was now standing directly behind him. LT Hughes turned toward the rest of us, standing outside our cubes, with a big grin on his face trying not to laugh. Immediately and simultaneously, we all broke out in a roar of laughter that had Barr confused at first, until he looked up, after which he quickly came to a rain soaked position of attention – hands at his side holding his rain soaked towel – and dripping water onto the floor.

Candidate Barr ran so many trips up the hill that many of us felt it an injustice that a few OCs never experienced the pleasure of running MB4. Then, one weekend when we were early upperclassmen, I was again running off demerits for one offense or another, and one of our platoon mates, call him candidate Zilch, was in formation with us for his very first Jark up MB4. After the roll of violators was called and all had announced “present,” and as our formation executed a left face to begin the trip toward MB4, I noticed out of the corner of my eye somebody running back into the barracks. It was candidate Zilch. He was, for whatever reason, busting formation and by all appearances trying to skirt the Jark by sneaking back into the barracks. Cowardice was my first thought, honor code violation for calling “present” was my second. I can't recall if anyone else had seen it, but I knew I had to report a probable honor code violation, even as I feared it would mean the worst for Zilch.

I was not privy to whatever reasons, rationale, or other matters may have been considered, and it was improper for me to pursue beyond my responsibility to report what I had seen. Yet to my surprise Candidate Zilch did not become the newest Private Snuffy. However, he was confined to the battery area and did run the hill Saturday and Sunday for many weekends thereafter. Looking back on this and on the process that surrounded Candidate Zilch's redemption by way of MB4, I don't know how some, albeit very few, never did make a trip up that hill. And, while that too was above my pay and rank, it does seem like there ought to be some sort of special recognition for those persevering candidates like Dick Barr who never missed a trip up that hill while in OCS. Barr died in 2009. R.I.P. Dick, you will not be forgotten!

As others have noted, guys would simply disappear – some setback to another class, but most just gone. On occasion, a guy would join us who accepted a set-back from an earlier class – most often for poor gunnery scores. These guys fit-in quickly as we all admired their commitment and perseverance. As best as I can recall, they all made it to graduation with us, including Mike Elledge of North Little Rock, Arkansas. Conversely, at least 4 guys started with us on Day One and were with us so long they were in our class picture, but who didn't make it to our graduation. To their credit, three of these guys sucked it in, accepted a late program setback, and graduated with later classes. One of these, Mel

Lembke of Grand Forks, North Dakota, would give his life in Vietnam, as did Mike Elledge. Unquestionable commitment, and service beyond the call of duty.

The morning “Happy” Battery fell into formation for our graduation, the buses didn’t show. The post theater was filled with brass, dignitaries, cadre, families and guests, and we were standing in formation abandoned in front of the Howitzer House. Apparently, the drivers were given incorrect instructions. So, in the interest of staying on schedule, and in what many of us considered as one last insult, Hotel Battery’s last formation double-timed to the buses in our new dress green officer uniforms and low quarters. I don’t recall the temperature that morning, but later that day, July 11, 1967, it was 106 Oklahoma degrees. After the commissioning ceremony, my Mother pinned my new gold bars onto the epaulets of my new officer’s uniform – stage left at the post theater, as my Father snapped pictures and my younger sisters looked on.

In late 1968 or early 1969, I was traveling for one reason or another from Pleiku or An Khe back to my battery’s firebase with a stop-over in Qui Nhon. I don’t remember much about the military installation at Qui Nhon, except it was large and being a coastal city docile enough for an Officer/NCO club of some sort. I spent an hour or so enjoying a COLD beer or two when who approaches the bar but my Drill Instructor from Fort Benning, Staff Sergeant Phillips. I noticed he had another well-earned stripe on his sleeve and I still had none on mine, but I did have a silver bar on my collar. Now, the uninitiated might expect that I be tempted to pull rank and do something retaliatory, but of course, I didn’t. He was as disciplined, if not more so, at his job when I was a rookie private as I had learned to be at OCS. Instead, we chatted briefly, he congratulated me as I recall, and I thanked him for the efforts he made to turn me into a soldier, and the support he provided as I considered my options at that time.

Some things you never forget, and reading the stories of others and reminiscing with classmates at reunions helps to recall many things you have forgotten. But it is hard to accept that I have forgotten so much of life as an Officer Candidate, living as we did for 6 months with a wakeup call at 5:30 and reveille formation 5 minutes later; with a packed schedule until lights out, sometimes with field exercises late into the night or early morning and the same 5:35 reveille formation the next day; and a state of tension in the air every hour of every day, where Sunday Mass was often the only relief experienced. I can’t recall but about half of the daily dozen, and I can’t do but about half of those today. Strangely, I remember well the table manners we learned – an experience that cost us many days of hunger, many lost pounds, and much wasted food. This may have been of questionable value in building leadership qualities as an Army officer, but it surely had its impact in helping many of us on our way to becoming well-mannered gentlemen.

During the years following active duty, in several conversations with guys who never served, I heard several comments similar to this: *“Oh, I could have gone to OCS, but I drew a high lottery number,”* or some other problem. In other words, *“I could have been an Officer.”* My first thought was always of those guys who did serve; lottery or not. And, then of those who accepted the challenge of becoming an Officer Candidate, but left as Private Snuffy. And, I would think to myself: *“So, you guys didn’t serve. Never completed Basic or AIT. Never faced an OCS Selection Board. And, if you had, your probability of graduating from OCS was still no better than 65%. Whereas, my classmates and I completed every one of those tasks and actually were commissioned as officers in the*



*United States Army. But, other than those technicalities, I guess there's really not much difference between what you could have done, and what we did."* Well, just small talk, and private thoughts. But, as every OCS graduate knows, they don't have a clue!

Five years after OCS, with wife and child I returned to finish college graduating *summa cum laude*, followed by graduate school and an MBA. I passed the CPA exam, acquired several other professional designations, would be elected to partnership in a national CPA firm, and years later at a Twin Cities based firm were I spent 15 years as Consulting Services Partner, before soloing the last 10 years in my own Consulting/CPA practice. In all these pursuits and others, and some missteps along the way, there has been no challenge as difficult, as intense, as all-consuming, or had as lasting an influence on my character and grounding as did the United States Army Artillery & Missile Officer Candidate School. And, if they were asked, I expect most of my classmates – whose careers and achievements range from the trades and services to the professions and to the FAOCS Hall of Fame – would say the same thing.

**Raymond C. Hoyt and Clarence K. Plein: 26B-67**  
**"Parallelism Rates High in Careers of Two Officers"**  
***St. Louis Post Dispatch* (August 14, 1968)**

Raymond C. Hoyt and Clarence K. Plein of St. Louis continued a string of coincidental events when they recently won promotion to first lieutenant on the same day at Fort Sill, Okla.

Plein and Hoyt first met as athletic rivals at St. Louis high schools and attended St. Louis University together graduating in June 1966. They enlisted in the Army together in September of that year. They were assigned to the same company for basic training at Fort Leonard Wood and the same platoon during advanced infantry training and officer candidate school at Fort Sill.

The two entered officer candidate school in January 1967 and were assigned to the same battery. They were graduated and received their commissions July 11, 1967. Both were assigned to the officer student battalion after graduation.

**Louis Bantom: 28A-67**

After my group was captured (during the E&E Exercise) and taken to the compound, they made us crawl thru a mud pit about a foot deep. Then we had to roll around in some small gravel so the stones stuck to our clothes. I remember the suspended refrigerator. I can't recall if they put anyone inside. After some verbal abuse they let us escape through an underground pipe. We had to low crawl for about twenty yards through the pipe to get outside the compound.

**Tom Coats: 28B-67**

There was one incident we frequently talk about when our family gathers. My wife sent me a box of candy to my address at OCS. It was a box of "Turtles." I was called into the office of our platoon leader, LT Dennis, and was ordered to eat the entire box of candy while standing at attention.

One of my fellow candidates was married, and when we became "Red Birds" his wife had found, or dyed a bunch of bootlaces red, and we wore them to formation that morning.

LT Dennis, our TAC Officer was a short guy. We were being inspected one morning, and someone shouted “Where is LT Dennis?” I mouthed off “look under his helmet.” LT Dennis was standing in the next cubicle, and soon all my uniforms, and belongings were found outside my window.

**William W. D. Dowdell: 29A-67**

I dropped a Naval ROTC scholarship at Brown University and took a semester off to get my bearings. I got drafted and was inducted on September 6, 1966. While in Basic Training at Fort Dix I was asked if I would be interested in going to OCS. My father and grandfather had been officers, so I said “yes” and listed Field Artillery as my first choice. After Basic, I was sent to Fort Sill for AIT and training as a Fire Direction Computer. I did well enough that after graduation they kept me on as an instructor. As I had heard nothing more about my OCS application, I settled in to teach gunnery. I was pleasantly surprised in February when the 1SG called me in to tell me to pack up and gave me my orders to report to Robinson Barracks. I was going to OCS!

My grandfather served in the Army in France during WWI and my father was a Naval Aviator in WWII and Korea, so I had a pretty good idea what to expect when I reported in at OCS. I was lucky that I already knew the two Red Birds assigned to greet me and missed out on the obligatory low crawl in Class As, only having to surrender my CPL stripes, NDSM, and Expert marksmanship badge before becoming a member of Class 29A-67 and embarking the most transformative experience of my young life. I entered as a 20-year old kid with limited self-confidence and graduated as a 2LT with a much better understanding of what I could overcome, what I could accomplish, and enough self-confidence to tackle any challenge thrown at me.

It’s been over 50 years since I graduated from OCS, so many of the faces and memories have faded. Some memories do linger:

I only ran one Jark. When I was a kid, my father used a white glove under my bed and used to bounce quarters off my bed to check technique, so I didn’t have much of a problem paying attention to detail and avoiding demerits.

The fine Oklahoma dust and constant wind penetrated the old WWII barracks and made keeping the platoon area ready for inspection a constant chore. I’m still amazed at the level of teamwork we exhibited when coping with it.

Our TAC officer loved popping up the stairs banging two garbage can lids in the middle of the night — that is until we sprayed the floor at the top of the stairs with Pledge. Later, I was at a 105 mm Howitzer battery when he was assigned temporarily as an FO for a refresher before shipping to Vietnam. He was still a 2LT and I was the XO. I had been teaching gunnery and had no difficulty with class work.

Lack of sleep was the only physical hardship that bothered me and that ceased to be an issue after we got our green tabs.

Escape and evasion was quite an experience, but my luck held there as well. We were in teams of five and my team noticed that the course ran due north. The night was clear, so we used Polaris (I’m the son of a Navy man) to navigate and stayed on the military crest

of a north-south ridgeline that ran all the way to the rally point. We were on trucks and back to the mess hall before it closed.

One of our classmates, Tom Stoneham, had been a folk singer in Greenwich Village so we were well-entertained in barracks, on trucks and buses, and on the march.

One of our gunnery instructors was a Marine major and years later we worked together at a software company — he as a quality expert and me as director of development.

My time at Robinson Barracks and in Vietnam were the formative experiences of my life. I left the Army as a CPT and returned to civilian life where my run of good luck has continued. I'm married to a girl I went to high school with and we have three grown daughters and six grown grandchildren. At 72, I'm still working with computers and don't plan to retire anytime soon. OCS gave me the tools to make the best of my life.

### **“Three OCS Students Wounded”**

#### ***Lawton Morning Press (Saturday July 22, 1967)***

Three officer candidates were hospitalized with flesh wounds when shell fragments came through an opening of their bunker on the east range early Friday afternoon.

Officer candidates Paul W. Cramer, 18, Strasburg, Pa., and James C. Harper, 20, North Charleston, S.C. were wounded in the thigh, and candidate James F. Carey, 22, Stanford, N.C., was wounded in the right forearm.

All are members of Battery I, Fourth Battalion, Officer Candidate Brigade. The candidates were reported to be in satisfactory condition at Reynolds Army Hospital.

The men were taking part in forward observation training and were in a bunker in the impact area while fire from two 105 mm howitzers being called in at close targets.

This is routine forward observer training for all officer candidate trainees. The bunker where the candidates were located has a small opening through which the students can observe fire. Apparently one of the rounds landed near the bunker and scattered fragments through the area and a few pieces came through the opening.

Officer in charge of the problem was Capt. Howard F. Weber, Gunnery Department. Capt. David McLaughlin was in command of Battery B, 1st Training Battalion, USATCFA, the unit firing the howitzers.

### **“Sill GI Hurls Live Grenade Safely Away”**

#### **(James S. Henrichsen Class 33B-67 drops grenade)**

#### **From the Artillery OCS Archives – 1967**

A quick thinking assistant instructor from Buffalo, N.Y., prevented a disaster at Fort Sill recently when he grabbed a dropped, live hand grenade and tossed it safely away.

The incident occurred at the Officer Candidate School grenade range last Friday when OCS Class 33B-67 was receiving grenade instruction. One of the candidates, James S. Henrichsen of Congerville, Ill., was assigned to Pit No. 4, Court No. 2, the station of

assistant instruction Spec. 4 James Russo. Henrichsen, preciously trained in use of the grenade, prepared to throw a fragmentation M-26-A1 grenade. He dropped it.

“I must have jerked the pin instead of easing it out.” Henrichsen explained later, “and I jerked the grenade out of my hands.” Russo had four seconds between the time the handle flew off the grenade and it detonated. The handle ejects less than a second after the pin is released. He made it with a bit to spare.

The grade never even hit the ground. As it dropped from the candidate’s hands, Russo snared it in midair, shouted “Grenade!” and threw it out on the range. There it exploded just where it was supposed to. “It all happened so fast.” he added.

“That’s the only way to do it. You watch them, sometimes they’re jittery,” Russo said. But neither he nor Lt. Richard Haywood, officer in charge of the range and witness to the incident, could remember anything like this happening in recent times on the OCS range.

### **“Camp of Murderers – OCS Fort Sill, Oklahoma” From the Russian Newspaper-TPYA**

If the year 1943 were substituted for the year 1967 in the captions beneath this photo, one might think that the picture was made by (German) SS Troops, in concentration camps. Here you see somebody’s legs sticking out of an empty gasoline barrel. A rope stretches from the man’s waist to the ceiling. They twist the man around on this rope. He knocks his head against the side of the barrel.

Just where is all this taking place? It turns out that it’s only a 1 1/2 hr. ride from the American town of Oklahoma City. Here in the military camp they train American officers for the war in Viet Nam. After 6 months in this terrible camp, says the English magazine “Weekend”, they go overseas.

The first thing the novice officer sees in the camp is, yes, a gallows. It dominates the camp and sets its tone. The future officer must dangle in the noose. He will have a rattle in his throat and a twitch. True, He won’t be allowed to die. He is only permitted to look death in the face.

Every trainee, for example, is ordered to hide in an underground shelter....and falls right into the hands of ‘professional sadists,’ attacking their students from ambush and beating them unmercifully, the sadists “teach them lessons you will never forget.” The trainees are interrogated every day and their interrogation is never boring. Sometimes the trainees answer questions while suspended by their feet. They are also squeezed into medieval punishment stocks or are rolled over a barrel.

As we see, they try to transform the American, who faces a trip to the jungle into a beast-into a cruel, unfeeling animal. And they do this while he is still on home soil when he has scarcely been put into uniform.

E. Cheporov (August 1967)

## **“Soviets Say Course at Fort Sill Makes ‘Beasts’ Of Young Officers”**

### **From the Artillery OCS Archives**

A Soviet newspaper published an article on a special school at Fort Sill, describing it as a “Camp of Murders.” The article, which appeared in *Trud*, a publication of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions in Moscow says the class transforms young artillery officers into “beasts—cruel unfeeling animals.”

The training described in the article is thought to be the 5 1/2 day “escape and evasion” phase of Sill’s 23-week officer candidate school. The special training is aimed at showing officers the treatment they might expect as prisoners of war.

The *Trud* article showed a soldier, suspended from a rope, dangled head down inside an empty barrel. It says, “If the year 1943 were substituted for the year 1967 in the captions beneath the photograph, one might think that the picture was made by German SS troops in concentration camps.” The article said the man was twisted around on the rope, knocking his head against the side of the barrel.

The article said a gallows dominates the camp and future officers must dangle in the noose. It said, “He will have a rattle in his throat and twitch. True, he won’t be allowed to die. He is only permitted to look death in the face.” Other alleged brutalities such as beatings are described in the article.

Lt. Col. Richard G. Wheeler, Fort Sill information officer, said the officer candidates are “exposed to a POW exercise that closely approximates treatment they might receive as prisoners of war in actual conflict.” The young officer candidates are, he said, forced to crawl through mud, are taunted, interrogated and finally allowed to escape.

“There’s no cruelty,” he said. Wheeler said the training is designed to prepare the men to withstand possible indignities from enemy “beasts.”

### **“Preparing for the Worst”**

#### ***TIME Magazine: The Nation (Friday, September 1, 1967)***

Feet tied and hands clutched painfully behind their backs, the U.S. Army officers snaked and wiggled on their stomachs over the dusty, rock-strewn ground. “This way, sickie crawl to me!” cried one captor. “You’re ugly, you know that, sickie? Crawl—remember, we’ve got a lot worse waiting for you.”

The men were not Viet Cong captives but trainees in a gruelingly realistic prisoner-of-war course at Fort Sill, Okla. Roughest of its kind in the Army; the course is designed to toughen artillery-officer candidates for the kind of torture and humiliation under which many prisoners cracked in Korea. In the year since the course began, about 6,000 officers have completed it.

**Ready for the Worst.** “Before Viet Nam,” explained a training officer, “the artillery always had the infantry out in front. Now sometimes we have to do all our own patrolling and perimeter defenses. We want to be prepared for the worst.” With as many as 200 American servicemen presently held by the Communists in Viet Nam— though no Army Artillery Officers have as yet been captured by the enemy—the instructors have devised a

fiendishly ingenious array of tortures and tests to ensure that their men know what to expect.

The course begins at dawn. After calisthenics and classroom work, the artillerymen are trucked out to the fort's forested hills, turned loose, and told to evade mock aggressor forces patrolling the 7 1/2 square mile area. Of 133 artillerymen who took the course one day recently, fewer than 30 got away. The rest were marched, often barefoot, to a simulated P.O.W. compound.

Under constant taunts from their captors, the Artillerymen were forced to crawl, wallow in mud, hang by their legs from a horizontal bar, and sit for seemingly endless minutes with their legs wrapped painfully around a pole. The guards badgered them for information beyond the maximum—name, rank and serial number—sanctioned by the Geneva Treaty. A sympathetic “Red Cross” representative tried to wheedle additional intelligence out of them, but most immediately spotted him as a phony.

“Kiss the Mud.” When persuasion failed, pressure replaced it. “Get up, hit it, up, down, roll over, crawl in circles, up, down, faster, talk, talk, talk.” The captives were lined up in front of a row of odoriferous barrels partly filled with slime and crawling with spiders. “Get in headfirst, you dumb sickies,” they were told. “Kiss the mud. Now do push-ups.”

Thrust into a tiny, darkened hut, the captives found that a barrel placed in the middle of the floor had no bottom and led into a black hole. Climbing through, they descended into a sewer pipe barely wide enough for their shoulders.

Slowly, the artillerymen clawed their way through the 75-ft. pipe to freedom. But their ordeal was not yet over. Though they had started the day at 5 a.m., they still had to run a mountainous ten-mile course, evading aggressors armed with blank bullets and dummy grenades. Most of them made it back to their mess hall just in time for the next day's class work.

### **“Life's One Horror after Another for Sill Prisoners of War”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution and Morning Press (Sunday September 24, 1967)***

The mud-covered American GI stands on his head against the concrete block wall of the small, barbed wire enclosed prisoner of war compound.

A man in a foreign uniform bends over him, shouting into his ear:

“American pig! You're going to tell me a story, pig, because you're going to crack. I spotted you at 50 feet as a pig that would crack because I'm going to give you my personal attention until you do.

A short distance away, another prisoner is thrown to the ground and made to obey commands like a dog; others are jammed into a small dark underground pit; some are locked into a metal drum being beaten with a heavy club, and yet others are forced to raise and lower heavy logs or crawl through a mud hole on their stomachs. Vietnam? Korea? No

The scene is taking place on Fort Sill's West Range. The cast of characters is composed of candidates and instructors from Fort Sill's Officer Candidate School.

The future officers are being given a sample of the treatment they might expect if captured in Vietnam, and perhaps are gaining insight into their own limitations in resisting such treatment.

No punches are pulled. The grueling treatment is designed to break the candidates down both physically and mentally. Although rare, there have been candidates who have cracked under the pressure.

"The training has to be tough," said Col. Marlin W. Camp, OCS commander, "In order to give the candidate an appreciation for what could happen to him if captured and dispel his fear of the unknown.

"Once a man has been through something once, he is better prepared the second time." As explained by Col. Camp, the techniques used in the training are similar to those used by Communists in Korea and Vietnam – techniques designed to exhaust a man physically, thereby giving the captors an easier access to his mind.

He added that due to the small number of American prisoners taken, little is known about how the Vietnamese Communists treat their prisoners, but that from the few reports available the treatment appears similar to that used by the Korean Communists.

This involves physically exhausting a man instead of torturing him, then, after he is exhausted, being nice to him in an attempt to indoctrinate or "brainwash" him into signing statements that could be used for propaganda purposes.

As to how the Viet Cong treats captured South Vietnamese is another matter, South Vietnamese Army officers, apparently useless for propaganda purposes, have been found with bamboo splinters driven under their fingernails and into their nostrils, shot to death.

"The course here must be a challenge," Col. Camp said, "Most American soldiers feel that being captured is something that will never happen to them. We must make them realize that it could happen and give them some idea of what to expect if it does, so they might be better prepared to resist whatever treatment they are subjected to."

The POW training here, termed the roughest of its kind in the Army is officially known as the "Escape and Evasion" Course. It has been in operation about a year, and is administered to each class of candidates about half way through the 24-week training cycle.

It begins early in the morning. The candidates, many of whom will eventually see service in Vietnam, are first assembled for classroom instruction. They are briefed on escape and evasion tactics, and given maps of the escape and evasion course, which is located near Camp Eagle on Fort Sill's West Range.

In earlier classwork, they have been told of the Geneva Conventions concerning the treatment of prisoners of war. If captured, they are told to never sign anything, and never

to assist in torturing a fellow prisoner of war. They are required to give only their name, rank and serial number.

They are then divided into two groups and taken to the West Range and shown the boundaries of the escape and evasion course. This is required in order to prevent a candidate from possibly straying into a danger or Artillery shell impact zone.

They are told that they will be released near the south end of the 27-million square meter course and must make their way through an “aggressor” force to a “partisan” point located near Lake Quanah, then from there, on to a final destination point which is located at the north end of the course.

If they are not captured by the mock aggressor force, they are home free and won’t see the POW compound.

The candidates who know nothing of the POW compound other than the reports, some greatly exaggerated, which have filtered down to them through the school grapevine, are then trucked to the release point which has been ringed by a group of 30 to 40 aggressors drawn from school support units.

Here they are divided into five-man teams and given a final briefing. At a signal (from a course instructor, they begin running for cover. Most are captured at this point. Normally, out of a class of 100, only from three to 20 make it through the course without being captured.

Once captured, the aggressors run the candidates to the POW compound, a small concrete block structure with the sign “Welcome Xing Loi POW Compound.”

Upon arrival, many of the candidates are smiling, thinking it is just another training exercise. They don’t smile long.

First, they are made to lean against a log which has been suspended horizontally between two trees just outside of the compound, supported only by their fingertips. Here they are searched. Everything is taken except their ID cards, dogtags, Code of Honor card and wristwatch.

Their shoestrings have been tied together. The “Comrades” (OCS instructors) kick their feet from under them if they are not obeying fast enough, causing them to fall flat on their faces. “Get up pig!” they shout. “Get on your stomach, pig, get onto your feet, pig, faster, on your back pig, on your stomach, pig, on your feet, pig!”

No orders are ever spoken. They are shouted into the prisoner’s ear.

The prisoners, under constant taunts from their captors, are made to crawl on their stomachs through a gate in the barbed wire enclosing the compound into a large room call the “bull-pen,”

Here a comrade shouts orders through a loudspeaker system, making them raise and lower heavy logs until they are exhausted. If a prisoner is not moving fast enough, he is



shoved or dragged to a room containing a mud pit and thrown in. After he has been made to roll over in the mud several times, he is returned to the bullpen. The prisoners are then taken out of the bullpen and placed in isolation pits. One of these pits is underground, with only a small entrance hole. Some 15 prisoners are crammed into this pit, and the hole covered. They are removed from the pit after 10-15 minutes.

The other isolation pit is a metal drum that once housed an Honest John Rocket motor. About 20 candidates can be crammed into this container, and the drum is sealed shut. Another prisoner is made to beat upon the outside of the drum with a heavy club.

If a prisoner still shows signs of resistance, he is placed in stocks such as those that were used in colonial America. Here, the comrades shout in his ear, telling him he is going to die if he doesn't talk. Mud is poured on his head; his feet are kicked out from under him.

Sometimes a prisoner is picked as a collaborator. He is removed from the main body of prisoners, and the remaining prisoners are told that he has talked and is receiving fried chicken and lemonade as a reward. Actually, the isolated prisoner is being given another tour in the mud pit.

Occasionally a prisoner is selected and marched from the compound to a tent containing food and drink. He is spoken to in a friendly manner by a seemingly compassionate comrade who offers him food and something cold to drink. (A prisoner is never supposed to accept special favors).

Later, after the prisoners have been worn down physically, they are taken one at a time into a room where a sympathetic "Red Cross" representative speaks to them, asking them to sign a form which will be used to notify their next of kin that they are safe. Several of these forms have been forged with signatures of other prisoners and are left lying on the table in plain sight of the prisoner.

Occasionally, one of the candidates will sign this form. Later, he will be told that the signature could have been transferred to a document stating that the U.S. was involved in germ warfare.

After leaving the "Red Cross" station, they are again thrown in the mud pit, where they are further softened for the interrogation room, which is their next stop.

Here they are cajoled and berated in an attempt to get information from them. Next, they must crawl through a barbed wire enclosed obstacle course into a room containing a cable-suspended barrel.

They are placed headfirst into the barrel, and another candidate is made to spin the barrel and beat upon its sides with a club or rocks. This is an attempt to soften them up for the indoctrination room, their next stop.

In the indoctrination room, they hear discussions on the civil riots in the United States and the disparity between the incomes of the "owners" and the laborers, along with the other items of Communist propaganda. Next, they are taken to a small room containing sunken barrels partially filled with mud, in which they are placed headfirst and told to

do pushups and “kiss the mud.” From this room they are finally allowed to “escape” through a narrow 50-foot underground tunnel which leads to a small structure outside the compound. This is a safe area, free of aggressors.

After leaving the tunnel, they regroup into five-man teams and either hide in the woods until dark or start immediately for the partisan point, where they can wash up and eat. (breakfast was their last meal).

If they are caught by the aggressors, they will be returned for a second tour through the compound.

Upon leaving the compound, some of the mud-caked, exhausted candidates have said it could have been tougher, but these same candidates put up a pretty stiff fight it threatened with capture the second time.

They ignore the orders to halt given by the aggressors, whose rifles are loaded with blanks, and must be chased and physically wrestled to the ground. There have been a few black eyes and bloody noses.

All the candidates are expected to have reached the final destination by 4:30 a.m. the next day, when the problem officially ends. At 7:30 a.m., the candidates must be back in their classrooms.

Later, the candidates will attend a critique session in which they will be told of their mistakes, such as signing the “red Cross” forms, beating upon the barrels containing fellow prisoners, etc.

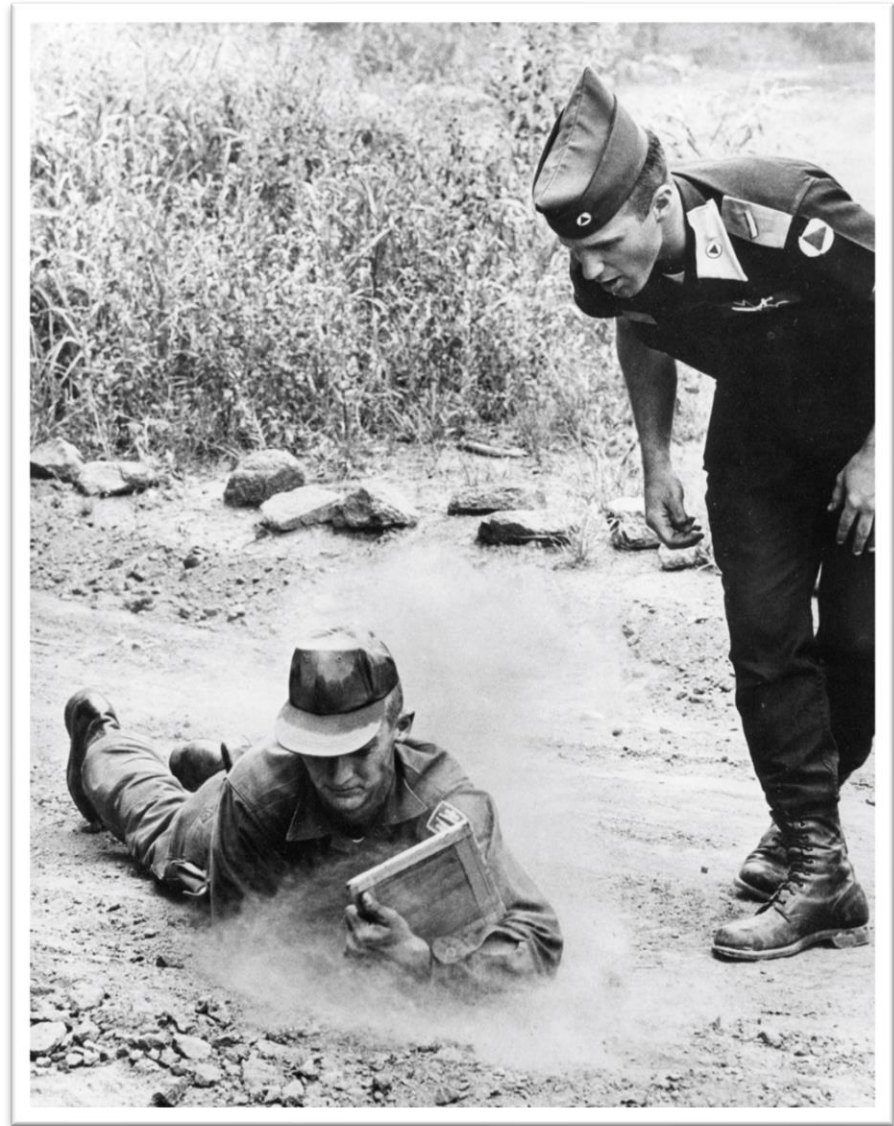
What do the candidates themselves think of the course?

“I think those who escaped without having to go through the compound were the unfortunate ones,” one candidate said. “it was rough, but I gained a lot.”

**Note: This article was written by Victor Gaither, who along with a writer and photographer for the German magazine Neue Revue spent on day (during early September 1967) watching Fort Sill OCS candidates undergo the POW course.**

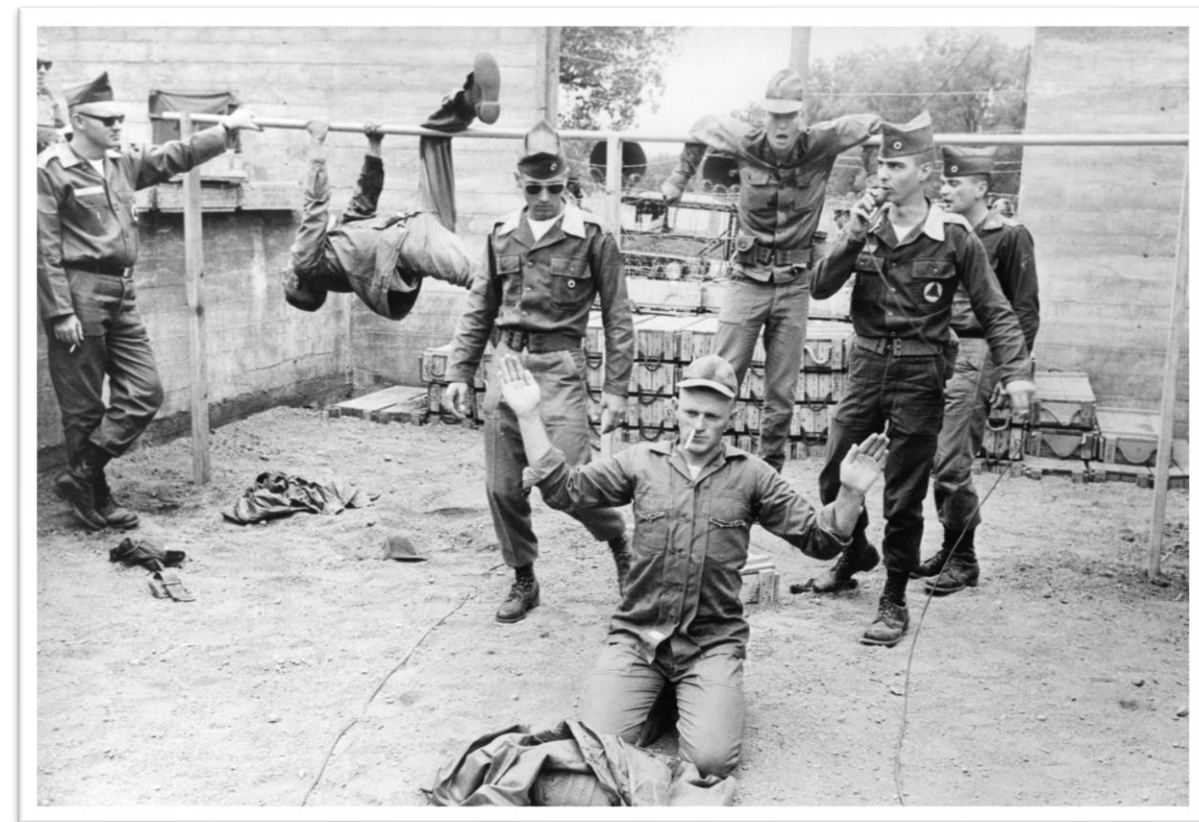
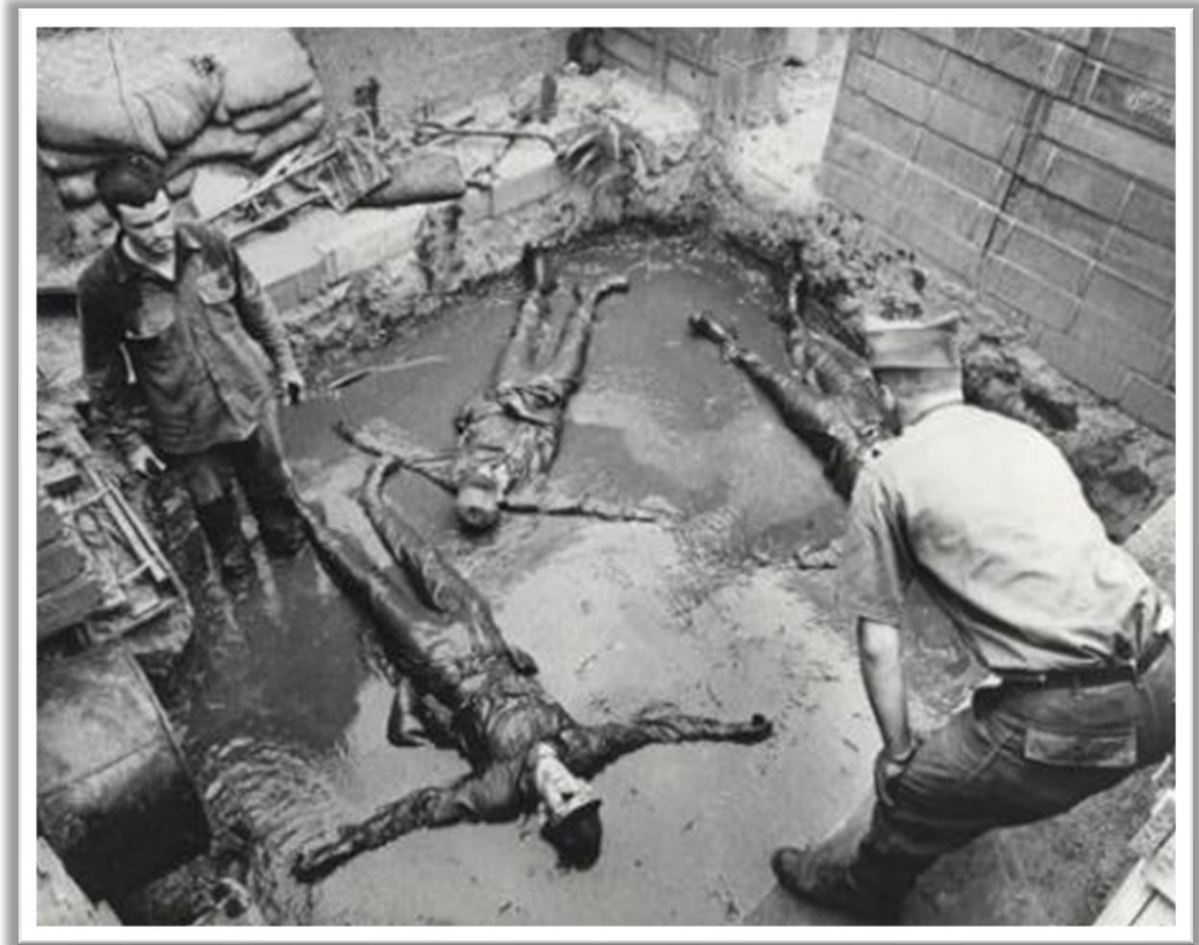
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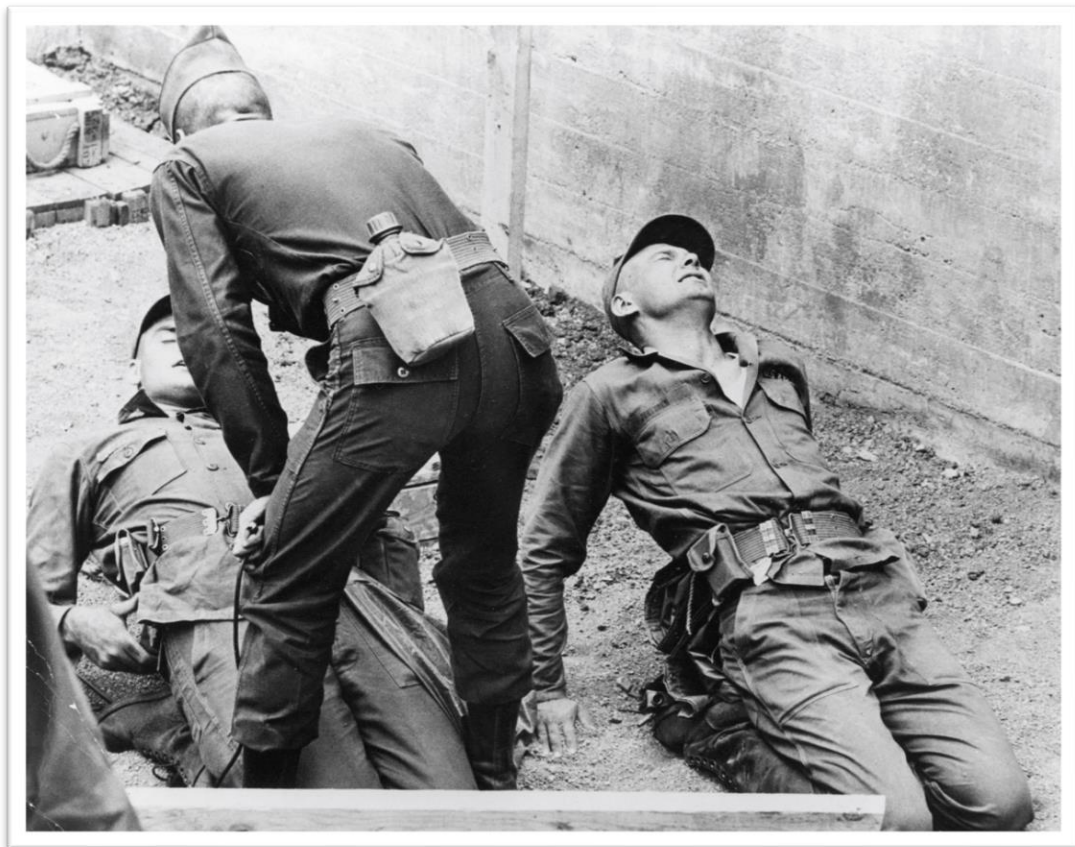
SUBJ & FILE NO	CLASSIFICATION	HOURS AND PEACE	TYPE MOB	SCOPE	REFERENCES
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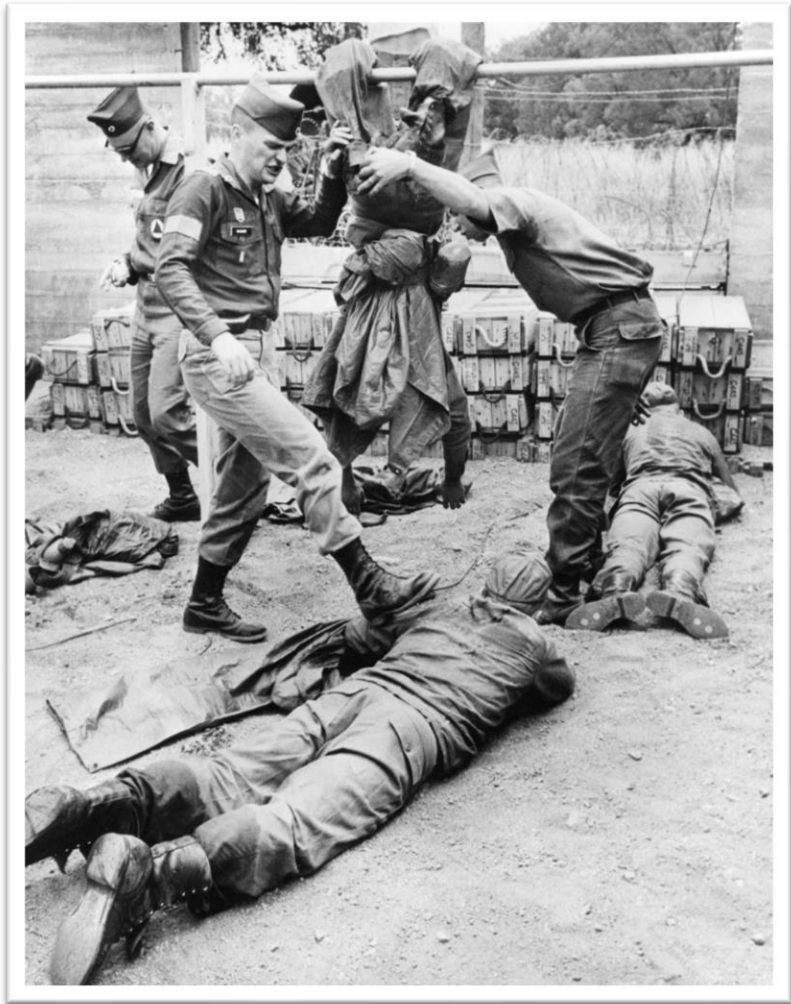




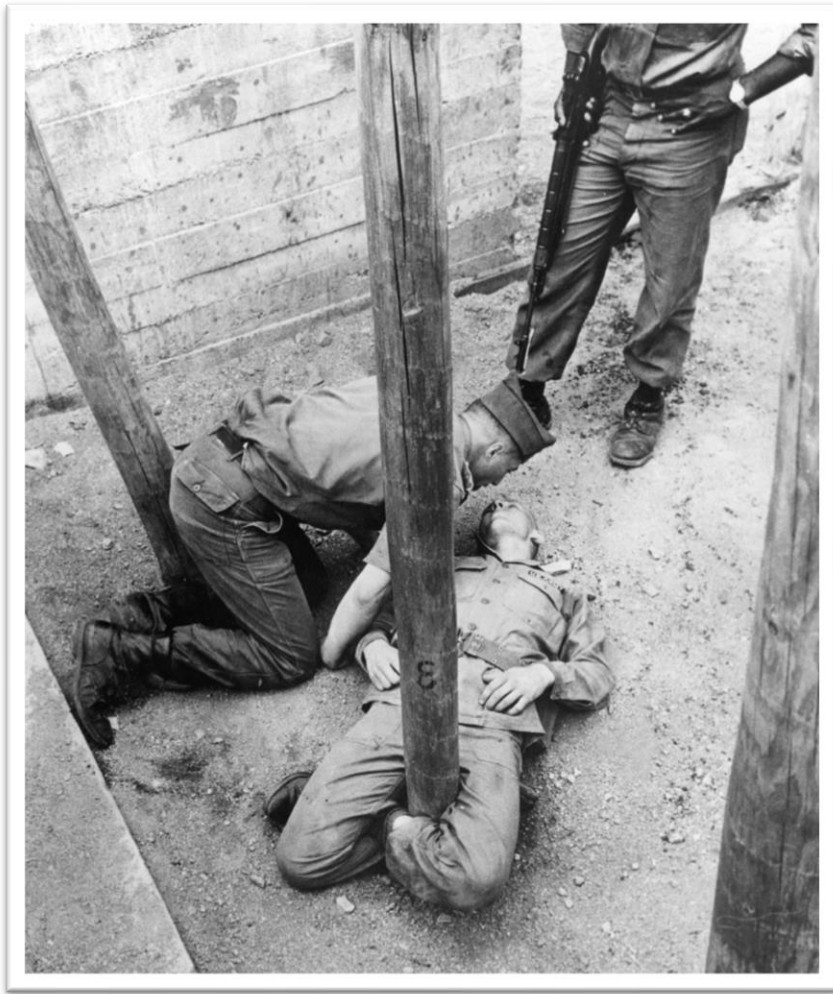


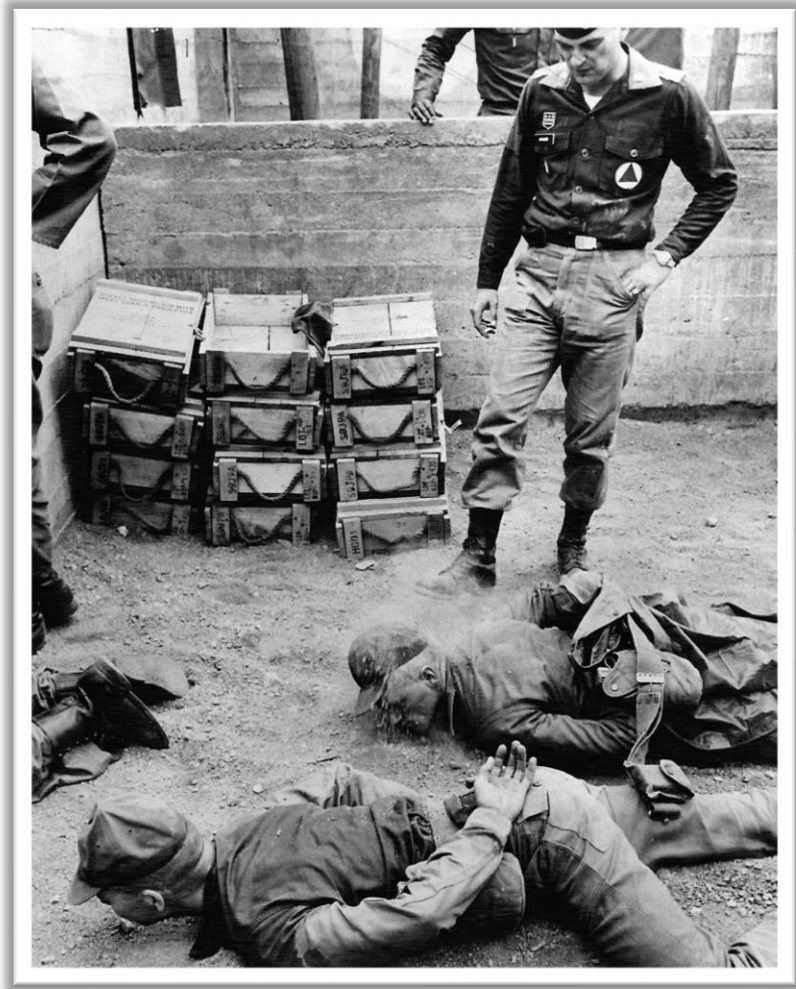


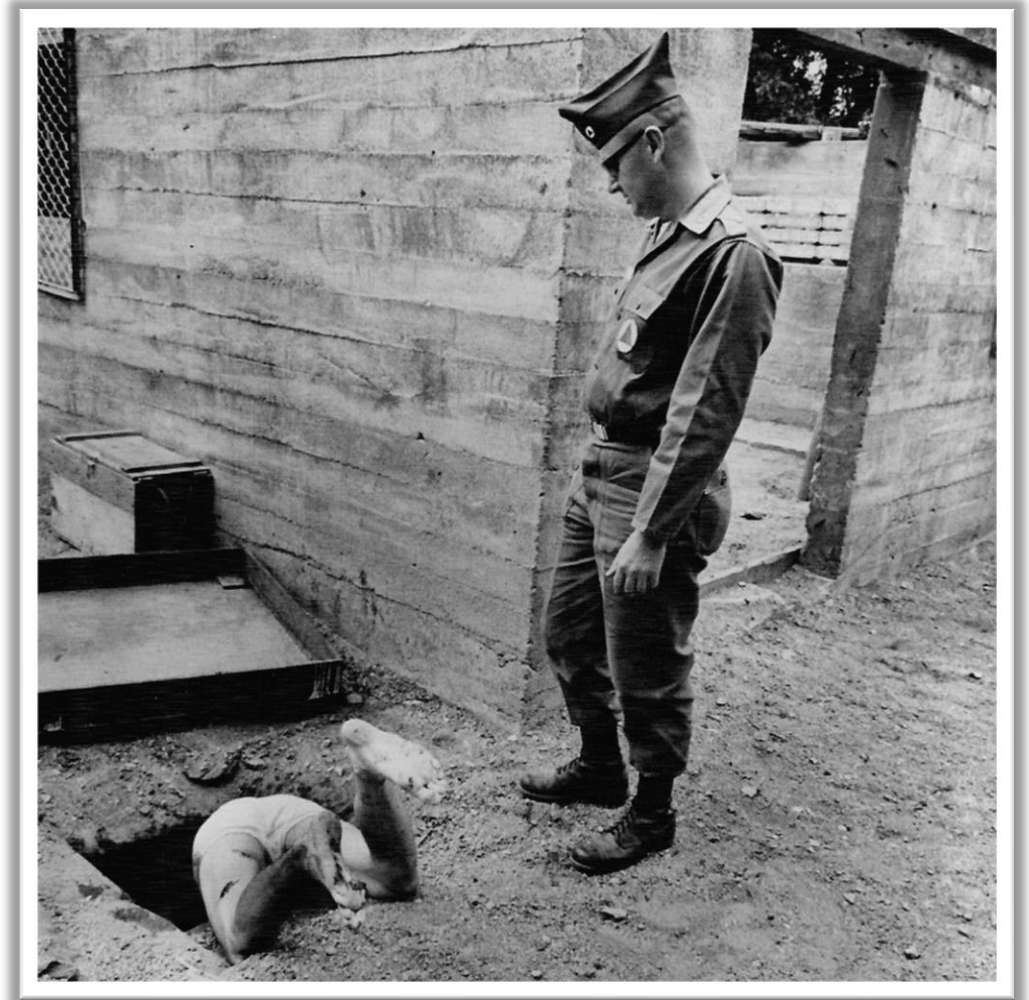


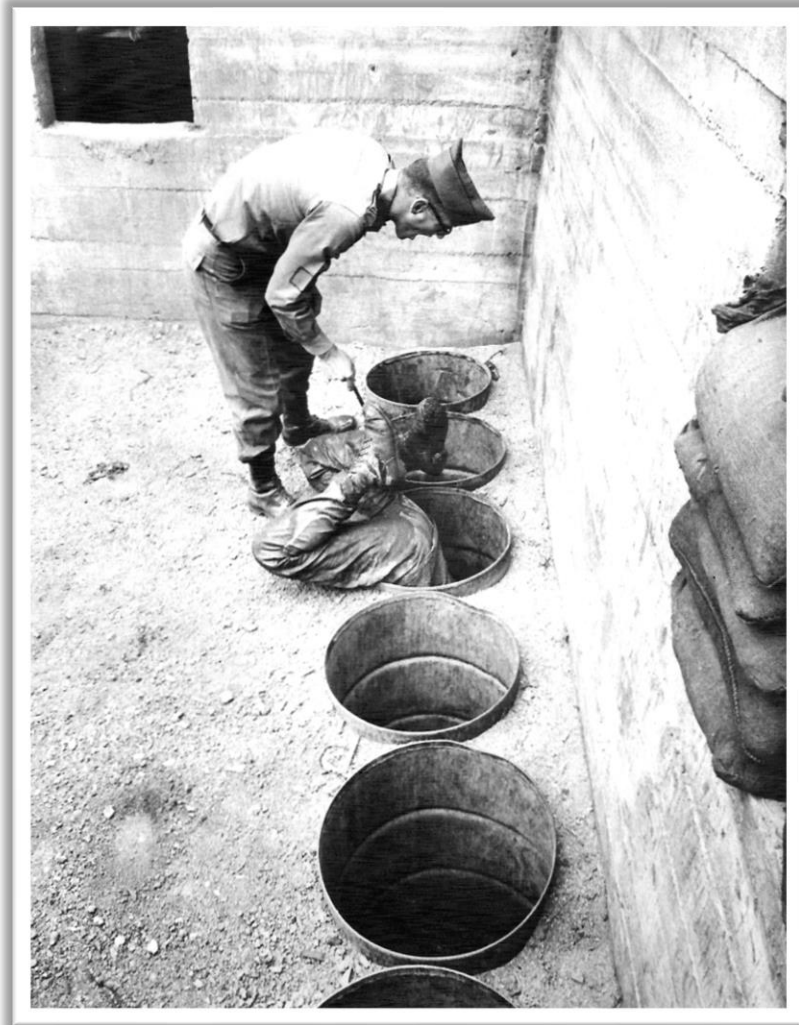






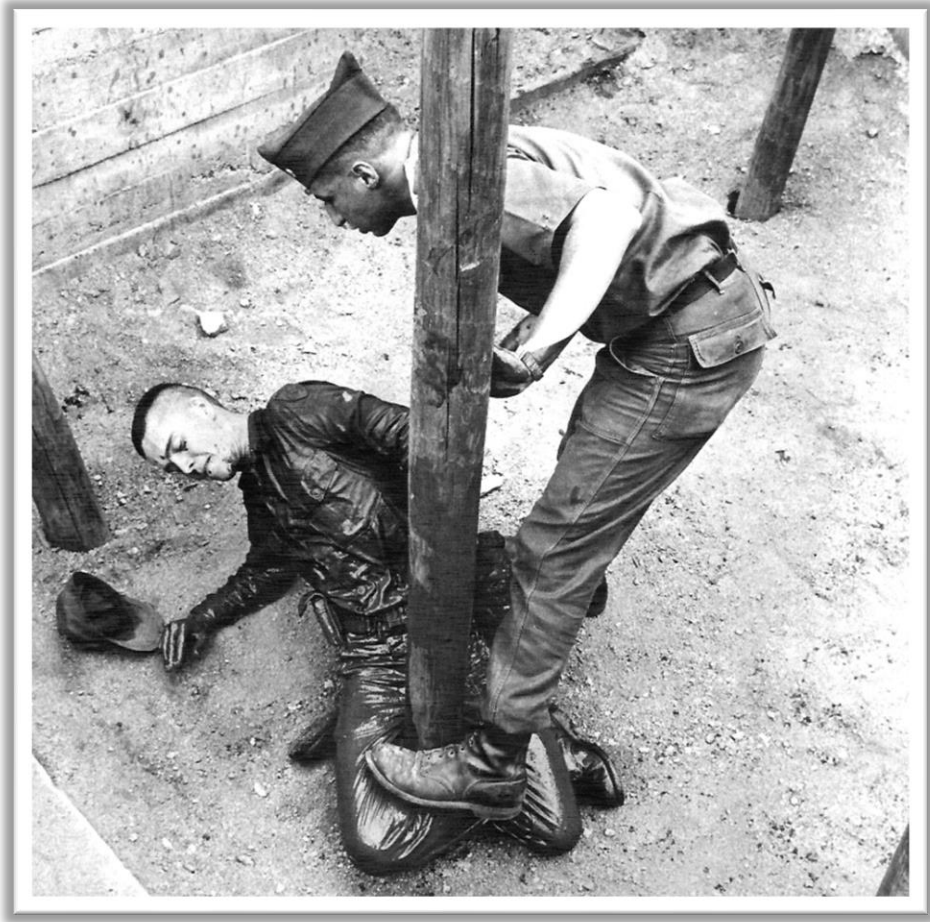
















4. Wash Board: During FO training, surprised me for bracketing the rounds so effectively.

5. Snow Hall: Will never forget the “smell” provided by the ventilating system in that building. Went back for the dedication of Durham Hall on 20 May 1999 and that distinct odor was still in Snow Hall!

**James F. Perry Jr.: 36B-67**

I am grateful to all my contemporaries. Cooperate and graduate was true teamwork in action. There is so much I have forgotten. They were difficult times for me especially gunnery. I was married at the time. Standing at Parade rest for 2-4 minutes when talking with the wife. No touching! The rules: I still have to temper that side of my being. The rules are the rules, but sometimes they had to be tempered.

I remember on our first Jark, we brought back a big rock, and I mean big, from the top of MB4 for our Big Brother to sleep with. Took one of the bunks without mattress, and we carried it back on the bunk. We traded turns carrying the darn thing back. It was a tradition at the time.

I can't tell you the number of times I stood behind the class during classroom instruction in order to stay awake! Drop and give me 50 candidate SMACK!

**David D. Anson: 37A-67**

***Voices to Veterans Podcast by David E. Grogan (January 11, 2019)***

Several aptitude tests at Fort Bliss charted the course for Dave's Army experience. First, he qualified for Signal Corps advanced individual training (AIT). Second, he scored high enough to be eligible for Officer Candidate School (OCS). Finally, he graduated from boot camp as a Private First Class (E-3). This was not only an honor given that most other soldiers graduated as a Private (E-1), but it also meant more money in each paycheck.

After Fort Bliss, Dave attended Signal Corps AIT and Radio Telephone Operator School at Fort Gordon, Georgia. He was also slotted for Signal Corps OCS, but before he could attend, the Army closed the school and transferred him to OCS at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he trained to become an artillery officer.

Dave considers graduating from OCS at Fort Sill to be one of the most challenging things he has ever done. The training was intense, both physically and mentally, especially given the math required to learn to put ordnance on target. To this day, Dave believes his training at Fort Sill was one of the defining experiences of his life. Dave graduated from OCS at the end of 1967 and reported to the recently reactivated 46th Artillery Group at Fort Carson, Colorado.

**Norman H. Brummett: 37B- 67**

When selected for OCS I hardly knew what an officer was. Shortly thereafter I entered Basic Combat Training then Infantry Advance Individual Training. During these periods I made up my mind that I was destined to be in a leadership role someplace in the Army. During OCS, I had many doubts but always reflected on the stature of the Commissioned Officers. The Noncommissioned Officers that I had come in contact with had professional

attitude and capabilities, but lacked that status that I believed that I could and should have in the Army.

I always kept this in mind during all the “Trying” times and never gave up on that goal. Once I started OCS, going back was not an option. It has been 30 years since OCS and I still believe that worthwhile things are obtained if you keep your eye on the goal. No matter what you have to go through the decision to start ANYTHING brings the responsibility to work hard and complete the task.

**Eugene C. Smith, Jr.: 37B-67**

I pulled a stunt that I was sure would have gotten me kicked out of OCS once I saw the reaction to it. I was middle class (green tab) candidate in B Battery, class 37B-67 when it was my turn to give the wake-up call, I tried to be funny, so here is what I called out: “Barfo Battery!

Mighty gory,  
Redleg fornication!  
One Zero midgets!”

TAC Officers and upperclassmen ran toward me from all directions, screaming at me, stood me at attention, and called me everything one could possibly yell at a scuzbucket candidate. Then I was marched into the Captain’s office, to be further chewed out and likely expelled.

The Captain listened to the TAC’s explanation that I said a bunch of stupid stuff, then turned to me and said, “Give me the exact words you used in the wake-up call and yell them just like you did.” So, I did, and the Captain lost his stern demeanor, struggled to keep a straight face, then lost it and began laughing.

He turned to the TAC officer and said, “See that this unruly candidate makes every JARK from now on, and find some other details for him, too.” For the rest of OCS, I JARKed, pulled guard duty, did police calls, and was the TAC officer’s flunky.

**Neal K. Schwartz: 38B-67**

I was the old guy in OCS, you’ve heard of the guy that was 25 (called a divorced draftee). At that old age I had my other “stuff” together and never got demerits, at least never enough for the Jark

Near the middle of training, my TAC Officer, a LT Wacker, approached me, I snapped to attention as he inspected my weapon never even looking at it. He looked me straight in the eye every second as he moved my M-14 left and right and told me it was dirty, 50 demerits, get in formation (for the Jark).

When we started from the barracks he called me out and told me I get to Jark up front with him as this was my first time. It was hotter than hell and I would have died except there was no way in hell he was going to make it without me staying right up there with him. He was the only TAC Officer I knew that actually Jarked with the class, the rest all rode in a jeep or the medical truck with the coolers of water and salt tablets. At the time I know I was thinking “forke” but today I understand why he got me to do it at least that one time. I would not have experienced one of the greatest traditions of becoming an Artillery Officer.

## **Dale Nichols: 40A-67**

### **Beginning**

I was selected to go to Artillery OCS Prep which was the FDC AIT with extra hazing. Apparently most AITs were fairly relaxed but not this one. If anything, it was harder than OCS -- but only about 90 days in length, and they often let you off on Saturday night.

The idea was to wash out those who couldn't learn the subject matter or take the hazing before they got to OCS. The only problem for those of us who got through both was that we had nine months of hell instead of six. OCS Prep had the toughest inspections I ever had in the Army.

### **Smack**

A lot of OCS is a blurry memory for me too. If I remember correctly, there were three "classes," lower, middle and upperclassman. Smack, Green and Redbird. The lower class was not allowed to smoke and was required to double-time when outside. Seems like they let us walk to chow when we were upperclassmen, as opposed to marching as the other two classes did. I think the upperclassmen were always the table captains and were not required to eat square meals – but were there to encourage the Smacks to do so.

The "Square Meal" in the mess hall was a trial for Smacks. It was so hard to get much more than a bite or two each meal that we were always hungry and most lost lots of weight. As a result, we constantly craved junk food which we called "grotto." Of course we were not allowed to keep grotto in our display, so we had to find imaginative ways to hide it from our TAC Officer. Some pushed grotto into the heating ducts with a broom stick after attaching a black thread to pull it out with. Others built grotto cavities in the wall with screwed-on panels to covering it. Sometimes a commando party would sneak out at night and order a pizza to be delivered to a drain culvert near the parade field where the money would be secreted in a tin can. The pizza restaurant was well familiar with this procedure and asked no questions. This little supply line worked pretty well until the Fort Sill duty officer (a former Candidate, the rat!) found it and sent our pizza around to all of the battalion duty officers.

My time in the lower class always reminded me of that old movie ***Stalag 17***, with William Holden. There was so much going on behind the scenes that the "guards" never saw...or at least we thought they didn't see.

I don't remember what milestones we passed to "graduate" to the next class. To me, the time in OCS passed very slowly. Those six months seemed like a year at least. Finally, it was all over. I think I know what a person released from prison must feel like. Since I only went off post once or twice during OCS, I felt like I shouldn't be out alone. Pavlov's dog...arf, arf. After we graduated I kept looking over my shoulder for a month afterward to see if they were coming to get me.

I was 25 when I went through OCS. They called me "Dad" and another guy who was 27, "Grandpa." Many days I felt like I should be called "Grandpa." One thing that helped me a lot was that I knew Trig better than practically anyone there, including the instructors (he said modestly). That helped make up for my deficiencies in the area of carrying 400 pound rocks back from The Hill.

The prohibitions on harassment and hazing which had been in place earlier had been completely lifted by the time I got to OCS in April of 1967. It was open season. We were called Smack, Puke and sometimes, redundantly, Sick Puke. Bad work was called a F\*\*KING ABORTION. Good work was called a F\*\*KING ABORTION. Mediocre work was called a F\*\*KING ABORTION. I always thought the range of evaluation was too F\*\*KING short -- but that's just my opinion.

I lost more weight and learned more about human nature in that couple of months than any other time in my life.

### **Middle Class**

Being married was a definite advantage in OCS since you had someone to help with all of the outside stuff. My wife managed the supply of starched clothes, shined shoes and M&Ms headed my way, and it was a major help. There was an OCS wives group (which I think was run by the OCS officer's wives) and at graduation, each OSC wife received a certificate from the club awarding them a PHT certificate -- which meant Putting Hubby Through. I was allowed to visit the parking lot once each week to see my wife at arm's length, not touching the car or her. Our only contact was the exchange of laundry and cleaning. She sewed a magic zipper into one of the folds of my laundry bag so it could remain elaborately knotted on the head of my bunk, but I could get to the M&Ms inside in 2 seconds. I did roughly 11,000 pushups in the course of these visits but I hauled in around 50 lbs. of M&Ms. Heh, heh!

A dormant "skill" I rapidly developed in OCS was Trig. I was never such a good math student, but Trig was always easy for me. I learned by the unit circle concept which allows you to work out many trig functions without a slide rule -- especially if you knew how to develop a logarithmic table (which I did). Under pressure I became really good at it and even had instructors asking me questions. On my one overnight pass, I studied Trig to maintain my lead. My paltry knowledge of Trig made me a relative whiz at the academic side of OCS. I was also a good sign maker so I usually made signs while the others went up the hill.

My knowledge of Lawton was also a help. I went to college at Cameron in Lawton in the early sixties and knew all of the nighttime landmarks around the area. I knew which tower belonged to KSWO's TV and which was the radio station, plus where the airport beacon was in relation to the towers. This turned out to be really valuable information during night shoots, the 10,000 meter night patrol and the escape and evasion.

I want you to understand I NEVER went there due to my strict moral code, but I knew about two bars in Lawton that catered to the serviceman, especially those who liked to fight. One was the Teepee bar in downtown Lawton. It was a landmark for years, and a good place to find out just how tough you really were. The other was the Oriental Bar over around 3rd and C Street. I believe the term "Green Dot Date" was coined in connection to the Oriental Bar...but I don't know why.

Some of these rapidly developed "skills" helped compensate for areas where I was not as good, such as throwing dummy hand grenades in the inclement weather PT test.

**Washouts** I don't remember losing anyone from OCS Prep, but we lost about half of the starters in my OCS class. We started with about 44 in my barracks and ended with 23. That is a very high washout rate. I don't know how that compares with earlier or later classes, but it was always sad to come back from class in the afternoon and find someone I thought was a good Candidate (maybe better than me!) sitting on the back porch with his "Private Snuffy" uniform on because he had been booted out. In our class I'd say about half of the washouts were for academic reasons and about half for leadership reasons. A small percentage of Candidates were kicked out of OCS because of an honor code violation, usually getting a speeding ticket in Lawton when they were supposed to be limited to Fort Sill.

**Classes** I remember classroom activities as the greatest torture of OCS. Sleep deprived as we were, it was murder to try to stay awake in the too warm classrooms with someone droning on about site and the Magnus effect and other artillery esoterica. I used to pull out my collar stays and stick them into my thumb to stay awake. Outside was different. We did some interesting things like rappelling off Medicine Bluffs, the Bunker shoot, the Vietnamese tunnel visit, the aerial observer mission -- great stuff. But listening to instructors droning on in long boring classes in warm classrooms -- bleah!

### **Upper Class**

**Red Bird** Finally, it was time to pin on the Red Bird tabs and our time at OCS has a foreseeable end at last. But we did not relax. The specter of washing out hung over us until we graduated -- and maybe a day or two beyond.

During OCS, I volunteered to go to helicopter school afterward. Turned out I couldn't hear well enough. Probably a good thing considering the life expectancy of helicopter pilots in Vietnam. Being a Forward Observer was bad enough! But I never went to Vietnam. Instead, I was sent to Kansas City ADA then Los Angeles ADA. Pretty cushy duty compared to most of the other options at the time.

**Uniform Salesmen** I did buy a dress blue uniform at the PX because a friend of mine who had preceded me through OSC wrote from Korea that I better have the blue uniform when I got to a unit. I wore mine twice. Later, I even bought an Army Officers sword for \$25 at a swap meet in LA when I was at Fort MacArthur, California. I used it to cut my going away cake -- and the curtains, and the couch, and the dog (almost). It is hard to have a sword in your hands and not act like Errol Flynn.

There was some kind of small bar connected to a meeting room somewhere in the OCS area. We had our Red Bird party there and I attended a uniform showing there. The uniform vendors plied us with free drinks. We mostly hadn't had any alcohol for 5 months, so one guy got happy and bought the whole collection of uniforms, including tropical whites!

But not me, I already had a little old lady lined up to hand sew gallon braid on by pristine Private Snuffy suits. During my 15-month career before OCS, I managed to preserve my green uniforms without ever sewing stripes on the sleeve, including going through one IG as a corporal with no stripes. I was saving them for OCS and it worked!

**Night Patrol** Bar none, my two favorite events in OCS were Night Patrol and Escape and Evasion. In both cases the team I was on ran continuously for the first hour -- so we were at least a kilometer ahead of where they thought we should be when it got dark. On the Night Patrol, we snuck up on the infantry company who knew our path and were supposed to ambush us. They were on top of a hill lying on top of rocks, heads on helmets, looking at the stars saying stuff like, "Those stars look like an elephant...hey look at that group, they look like a girl I met down at the Oriental Bar, etc., etc." when we sprang upon them, our M-14s blazing away with blanks. They started screaming and rolling off the rocks so convincingly I checked my blank adapter to make sure we weren't shooting live ammo by mistake (that did happen once while we were in OCS). They ran off into the night howling, and the evaluator gave us 100 points...a perfect rout and pretty close to the high point of my Army career. This may seem like a pathetic little episode to those of you who went to Vietnam, but I went to the Air Defense Command and never again fired a blank in anger. I feel good that we shot the hell out of the Circle Trigon Party that night. They deserved it.

**Escape and Evasion** The Escape and Evasion course was more daunting than the night patrol because we had to cross some pretty high hills at night and get through an infantry company which had been alerted to our path and sincerely wanted to impede our passing through.

The group I was in quickly adopted the strategy we had used successfully on the night patrol. We planned to run through the course to catch the ambushers off guard. In E&E we carried no weapons and didn't wear the helmet, just a canteen of water and some salt tablets -- so we were really able to make some time. We ran through the ambush area while the infantry was climbing up the hill to take their positions.

We crawled up and watched the partisan point for a long time and noticed that some of the infantry showed up and grabbed all of the OCS who were there for C-rations. After they left we swooped in got ours and left. Later, we crawled up to the prison camp and watched the plight of those captured for a while before crawling onward. After it got dark we crawled through the ROTC summer camp site and their sentries kept saying "Halt! Who goes there?" But we didn't halt...and they didn't offer to come after us. (And it's a damned good thing because we had honed our combat skills at the Teepee Bar and were not to be trifled with.)

We finally got to the home base and we watched it for a while to make sure it wasn't some nefarious trick by the aggressor force, the **Circle Trigon Party**. After we saw another group go in successfully, we went to the home base and were trucked back to the barracks at about 2 a.m. The others straggled in during the rest of the night and some didn't get back until 10 a.m. the following morning.

We had one Candidate crack in the Circle Trigon Party "Prison Camp." They said he confessed to all kinds of stuff after a few hours in the wall locker! He used to whimper in his sleep at night afterward, but he did get commissioned and did go to Vietnam.

As sustenance for the E&E course, I had stuffed king-size Babe Ruth's up my pant legs. After several hours of running I got them out and the chocolate had all melted off leaving only the sweaty, hairy peanut clusters. We ate 'em anyway. Of the two, Night Patrol was

way better than E&E for me but they both provided an opportunity to put some of our Army skills to a test.

### **Graduation**

I have read hundreds of comments people made about their time in OCS. It is striking that not one comment was negative! Everyone seems to feel that OCS focused their life and taught them skills which have proven to be very useful in life.

Even though I had no intention of staying in the Army, I've always been glad I went to OCS. It was definitely the right thing for me. I graduated from Artillery OCS in class 40-67A on October 23, 1967. It was a tough but fulfilling course that I still think of often. I wish I had kept in touch with my classmates, but after graduation, we scattered to the four winds -- mostly to Vietnam. I was a brand new Field Artillery Forward Observer, MOS 1193, which the Army in its wisdom decided to send to the Air Defense Command!

Not too many went from Artillery OCS to ADA. This was just before the split and both FA and ADA still wore the crossed cannons with the missile in the middle. About 1968 they split ADA off as a separate branch and asked everyone to choose which they wanted to be in -- ADA or FA. I chose ADA -- who knew they would close Nike Hercules down in the early 1970s? Well, I was only "in for the duration" anyway and always intended to leave when my time was up. Still, the Army, and in particular OCS, was one of the central learning experiences of my life.

When I got into the Army, I was exactly six feet tall and weighed 190 lb. After OCS Prep I weighed about 160 lb. About halfway through OCS I weighed 129 lb. No wonder I could run 4 miles! But my clothes kept falling off. I couldn't keep my uniform waistlines small enough in spite of all of the Babe Ruth's I ate. But that all changed when I got out of OCS and went to the Air Defense Command. We were Sedentary with a capital S -- and generally had either USAF or USN chow. I was soon back to my fightin' weight.

### **Conclusions**

While it had its light moments, OCS was a pretty serious business and there was a high failure rate and a lot of stress. Two major lessons I learned in OCS: Good intentions don't count if you fail and 99.9% of the time, there is no real excuse for not performing your duty, even under great adversity. These two lessons (and many lesser ones) were worth the pain and suffering and have made my life better than it would have been had I not gone to OCS.

"Cooperate and graduate" was a good idea too. OCS was the only self-directed team I have been on which worked.

### **OCS Glossary:**

**"Afterbirth"** Good work which would have been sufficient anywhere else in the Army, but rarely was in OCS.

**"Abortion"** Great work which was never praised, but at least was seldom criticized.

**"Brace"** An exaggerated position of attention in which the chin was pulled into the neck until the Smack formed at least one wrinkle for each year old they were.

**“Brasso”** If there was a smell of OCS rather than Kiwi, it would be Brasso brass polish. Most people also carried a jeweler’s rouge cloth in the front of their shirt for touch ups of their brass, and a woman’s nylon stocking up their pant leg to dust off their shoes.

**“Cadence Calls”** There were lots of cadence calls used in OCS. I can only remember two at the moment:

*Some mothers have sons in the Army,  
Some mothers have sons overseas,  
So hang out your service flag mother,  
Your son’s in the ROTC!  
R - O - T - C,  
Sounds like Bull Shit to me, to me,  
R - O - T - C,  
And Bull Shit it turned out to be!*

The only “Nelly” verse I can remember never made much sense to me:

*Nelly bought a new dress,  
It was very thin.  
She asked me how I liked it,  
I told her, “Suck it in!”*

**“Clipboard”** Each Candidate was required to have a clipboard and to decorate the back of it with images of his choice. Some put pictures of their wife, some put pictures of Playboy Bunnies, some put military pictures. The Battery Commander selected the best clipboard, and it always seemed to be the Playboy bunnies.

**“Display”** Everything you were not wearing was your display, and it had to be ready for inspection most of the time. “Unauthorized Articles on Display” was a common demerit or gig. A moth landed on one Candidate’s hat during inspection and he got a gig for “Unauthorized Articles On Display.” The display was probably the source of the most demerits which would cause you to trek up the hill on Saturday and/or Sunday.

**“Drop”** This was the command to assume the front leaning rest position – followed by the number of pushups to do: “Drop Candidate – and give me five zero!” “Yessir! one sir, two sir, three sir.....niner sir...” etc. My wrists still click loudly because of this little exercise.

**“Eat Gross”** A fifteen second period at the end of a meal when the candidates were able to suspend the table rules and eat whatever they wanted, however they wanted. I usually grabbed a piece of pie or cake and slammed it into my mouth...maybe a handful of mashed potatoes if I could swallow the pie quickly enough. It wasn’t pretty.

**“FO”** (From Forward Observer) A candidate appointed to sit out in front of the barracks and keep watch for the TAC Officer. If he saw the TO approaching, the FO would sound the alarm and we would bring whatever Magical activities we were engaged in to a rapid conclusion.



**“Footlocker”** This was a little olive drab painted plywood box where we kept the items we were allowed to have on display. We never sat on made bunks so the footlocker was our chair, shoeshine station, letter writing place and highway. When the barracks was STRAC, we never wailed on the floor, so the footlockers became our highway. Outsiders were required to wear wool socks over their boots to avoid marring the phenomenal shine we had achieved on the floor. It literally liked like a clear pool of water. After the first “get acquainted week” at OCS, I never walked on the Barracks floor with my boots on except for the last day I was there.

**“Front Leaning Rest”** This is the up position of a push-up, a position candidates spent many hours in. My experience is typical: I was the Candidate Battery Commander of our only live firing exercise and our USMC TAC Officer made me conduct all of my duties in the Front Leaning Rest. I guess it was pretty comical to see me scurrying up and down the line of 105s in the FLR position, because it got lots of smirks and snickers from my contemporaries.

**“Goldfish”** No, we didn’t swallow them, but we did put them into spotlessly clean urinals to keep people from using them so it wouldn’t take so much time to clean the latrine. For the same reason, we all used one toilet, so you had to stand in line. If you have trouble relieving yourself with 23 people watching you and exhorting you to hurry up, then OCS may not be your cup of tea.

**“Green Dot”** Candidates were supposed to wear a different pair of boots or shoes each day for sanitary reasons. To ensure we were following this rule, we were instructed to paint a red dot in the instep area on one pair of boots and a green dot on a pair to be used in the field. Ideally, it worked out like this: Your best pair of Corcoran 12 eyelet jump boots = White Dot. Your second best pair = Red Dot. Your left-over issue boots = Green Dot. The Green Dot boots were for rough use in the field. Before long, anything which was not up to high standard became known as Green Dot. Lucky for us there weren’t any No Dot boots because then you couldn’t magically change colors. We kept lots of paint secreted away to change boot dot colors. If you had a date with a girl you met at the Teepee bar, your cube mates would likely proclaim her to be a “Green Dot.” A little cruel, but, as far as I could tell, they weren’t teaching us to be nice.

**“Grotto”** This was the name given to any food that came out of a machine in the PX, or just about anything not prepared and served by the Army. Most Candidates carried Grotto stuffed up their pant legs for an illicit snack when the opportunity presented itself. (I have no idea where the word grotto came from or if I’ve spelled it correctly.)

**“Jark”** One of OCS’ important rite of passage was a leisurely amble from the Robinson Barracks area up to the top of a hill called MB4 on the map. It is funny how seemingly unimportant civilian skills became important in OCS. I was always an amateur sign painter in HS and College but given the option of painting signs or going up the hill, I became a truly great sign painter. I was in great demand at OCS, and the TAC officer didn’t send me up the hill much so I could make signs. I remember, different batteries would put their “Jark Rock” up in front of their barracks. The bigger the rock, the more STRAC the Smacks. Our guys brought back a huge rock and I volunteered to carry rifles. I wound up with 10 rifles which I had to get help with about halfway back. I only went up the hill twice! The Jark March was named after its originator, LTG Carl H. Jark.

MB4 is called Geronimo Bluff locally due to the **myth** of Geronimo making the 304 ft plunge in to the 2 ft deep creek as a morning constitutional each day. They just don't make horses like that anymore!

**“Kryptonite”** The green stuff inside an improperly cleaned brass belt buckle or in the feathers of the eagle hat device.

**“Magic” Anything** that took place outside of the body of rules was called “Magic.” If anyone asked how we got a \$400 floor polisher when we were forbidden to have “Slush funds,” we would say, “It’s Magic.” If someone asked how the latrine got painted during lights out, we would say, “Must be Magic!”

**“Middle Class”** This was the second of the three accomplishment levels of OCS, between Smack and Red Bird. The middle class wore green tabs and could walk in the battery area instead of running. They could smoke and go to the PX. Their life was generally a little easier than before.

**“Morning Call”** Each Candidate in turn gave the command to assemble the battery for the day’s duties. It was usually in the form of: **“CHARLIE BATTERY, \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_, TWO ZERO AND A WAKE UP!”** The “two zero and a wake up” indicated how many days until graduation. (Memory fails me for the middle phrase.)

**“Niner”** This is the NATO way to say the number 9 if you wanted to avoid pushups. In addition, the artillery said every number unlike the other branches of the Army. In the infantry they said “Eighteen hundred hours” for 6:00 p.m. In the artillery, we said “One eight zero zero hours – or we did lots of pushups. If you accidentally shouted “NINE” while counting off pushups instead of “NINER,” you would probably have to do niner niner more!

**“Paint it Black”** The Rolling Stones song from their 1966 Aftermath album we played continuously on our 100 watt stereo (which we bought with Magic Fund money). For me, Paint it Black is the theme song of OCS and I still think of the old barracks when I hear the song. Apparently, someone agreed with me since Paint it Black was used as the theme song of the 1987-1990 TV series about Vietnam, **Tour of Duty**.

**“Posting Out”** For the first several weeks as Smacks, each night after lights were out, one member of the platoon would tell his life story in the dark while the others silently listened. This allowed us to get to know each other a little better. Some rambled, but most were surprisingly clear and concise – and said things they probably wouldn’t say in the light of day.

**“Red Bird”** The third and final phase of OCS. During this phase Candidates were granted some minor authority and privileges. There was a Red Bird Party on a Saturday night to celebrate this passage. Retired LTG Carl H. Jark himself attended our Redbird Party. We were told to practice our manners: “General Jark, I’d like to present my date, Miss Nellie Greendot of Lawton. Nellie, this is General Carl Jark.” We were also told it would be polite to offer the general a drink, his favorite being branch water and Bourbon. This night was to be our first overnight pass so we were anxious to leave – but we were told that decorum mandated that we stay at the party until General Jark left. It was for that reason, we

started leaving the branch water out of the general's bourbon early in the evening – but he was made of stronger stuff than we thought! General Jark's years of experience allowed him to continue to march as the rest of us fell rapidly under the table. One high point was when a Candidate who had accidentally zipped up the tablecloth in his fly got up to leave and pulled the tablecloth, bottles and glasses onto the floor. General Jark didn't even wince at this faux pas and the rest of us were too polite to stare. The last thing I remember was the brand of the hooch they served: "Old Cannon Cocker." It was foul, but good after a 4-month dry spell as near as I can remember.

**"Smack"** Entry-level candidate, or lowerclassman. This phase lasted about 2 months. Smacks were not allowed to smoke, "...outdoors or indoors." They were required to double time everywhere. They received no leaves or passes and were not allowed to leave the OC BDE area except on official business. Smacks could be identified at a distance by the lack of any colored tabs.

**"Smoking"** Smoking was not allowed for Smacks but we learned how to do it in the shower with all of the steamy air masking the smoke. A casual observer would have noted that all of the drain covers were removed so 20 Candidates taking a shower would toss a cigarette down the drain from 15 feet away if the FO spotted the TAC Officer leave the orderly room. Smoking was equated with slack behavior and goldbricking. If lowerclassmen were caught smoking, they had to put a whole pack of lit cigarettes into their mouths and hang from the ceiling joists in the barracks while telling jokes to each other and laughing uproariously. This was called "Hanging around smoking and joking with your buddies."

**"Snuffy"** (Usually Pvt. Snuffy) What we were before we were elevated to the exalted position of Candidate. I think the name Snuffy came from the runny nose everyone had in basic, URI they called it.

**"Spiffy"** A small spring-loaded collar stay used to keep uniform collars pointing to the ground -- and also used as a sleep deterrent when pushed into the thumb during an exceptionally boring class.

**"Spit Shine"** We were required to keep a high state of polish on our boots and shoes which everyone called spit shine, although few still spat on them. Kiwi was the undisputed king of polish – and it was only 9 cents a can in the PX. For a while I put heel and sole enamel on by boot toes. It produced a super shine but was very fragile and when damaged, the shine could be pulled off in large pieces.

**"Square Meal"** This described the elaborate procedure for eating at a brace at a table of 10 with an upperclassman serving as table captain. A bite of food was brought straight up from the plate, until at mouth level, then straight over to the mouth. The fork was then returned to the plate before chewing could commence. Whenever any candidate asked for any food item, everyone had to put down their utensils and sit at a brace until the item was secured. Usually, one request would consume half of the allotted mealtime which was 10 minutes as I remember. We were generally allowed to bolt down the milk and that probably kept most people going. I went from about 160 to 129 in the six months of OCS -- but my trousers inconveniently stayed the same size.

**“STRAC”** (From Strategic Army Corp) Fully prepared and in a high state of readiness.

**“TA-50”** This was the set of field equipment issued to each Candidate, consisting of a steel helmet and liner, Canteen, mess kit, pistol belt, first aid packet, ammo pouches and poncho. We were never issued packs, suspenders, shelter halves, sleeping bags and lots of other odds and ends which were not used in OCS.

### **Some Thoughts about Lawton in 1966 and 1967**

Wherever you went within 25 miles of Lawton, you could hear the constant ba-boom-boom of the artillery, day, and night.

My first child was born in Reynolds Army Hospital on September 27, 1967 while I was in OCS. I had to pay \$7.50.

Draft beer was 25 cents most places in Lawton, but they were only 10 oz glasses.

A six pack was about 75 cents for 12 oz cans or \$1 for 16 oz cans.

It cost \$1 to have a fatigue uniform starched stiff – “STRAC.”

Cigarettes were 27 cents outside and \$2.14 a carton in the PX.

Kiwi shoe polish was 9 cents a can.

Hamburgers were still generally 25 cents at drive-ins like Charlie’s, and the one out on 23rd, whose name escapes me now.

The price of gasoline fluctuated widely in Oklahoma and was usually cheaper than anywhere else as it is today. In 1967, gas was generally about 24-26 cents a gallon. I had a red 1959 Chevy Convertible as a “closet car” in the parking lot. It had a 348 ci 215 hp V8 and got about 10 MPG.

A small cheese pizza was about a buck and a medium with everything on it was about \$2.75 (which seemed really high to me at the time!).

We all paid \$1.00 to have our middle-class hat brass ground smooth at a jewelry store in Lawton.

If I remember correctly, as a married E-5 candidate, I made a total of \$197.

My first paycheck as a 2LT was \$307, the next went up to \$314. When I got out of the Army my monthly check was \$849. I think it was 1966 they converted to checks for pay instead of cash.

OCS candidates were well treated by Lawton merchants compared to regular soldiers. However, that was NOT true of the smaller outlying towns like Duncan, Oklahoma, my hometown.

The wind blew ALL OF THE TIME at Fort Sill (still does) and it is full of red dust that gets all over everything. It never really snows much but the wind chill is bad in January and February. By March 1, it is Spring. Still, you never appreciate the weather until you are out in it for 16 hours a day clad in red PT shorts.

It was probably hotter and muggier in RVN, than in Oklahoma in the Summer – but not by much. At least when someone shot at you at Fort Sill, it was by accident rather than design.

We all went down to the USO in Lawton and bought big puffy baseball caps which could be styled into lots of interesting shapes compared to the ugly, Army issued cap.

People from the NE, North, and West all worried a lot about tornados and rattlesnakes – and not without good cause. After growing up hunting, I never saw a rattlesnake until a bivouac at Fort Sill – and he was a whopper! The lads chopped him up into about a dozen pieces and they wriggled all night. Most took to the trucks or the tops of tracked vehicles rather than sleep on the ground.

Once a major came around and asked if anyone was from Oklahoma. I said I was, and he took me to the Colonel. “Do you hear that noise, son?” he said, referring to the chatter of 10,000 cicadas. “Yessir!” I said. “Are those rattlesnakes?” He asked. I should have told him yes, but I was always too damn dependable, so I told him they were just bugs, just big brown bugs. He still wasn’t sure until some guys caught one and brought it for him to see.

Another common bug at Fort Sill was the lightning bug. There were millions of them at night, all over the post. One little touch of magic in an overdose of olive drab reality.

An interesting topographic feature around Fort Sill, which you could get a sterling view of from atop MB4, was Mount Scott in the Wildlife Refuge. It was great to go up there in daytime to see the panorama of Fort Sill and all the lakes, but even better at night.

Another interesting (and sometimes dangerous) place was Medicine Park under the dam for Lake Lawtonka. There was this ramshackle old bar called Rex and Grandma’s. It always seemed like illegal things were happening there -- but it had atmosphere, and that is what I wanted when I was 24. Damn Straight!

### **J.J. Stevenson III: 40A-67**

OCS was definitely not the most agreeable time of my life, although we did have a surprising amount of laughs, but it was an extremely valuable experience. I surely got more out of the Army than the Army got out of me, especially as I had the incredible luck to spend my two years post-OCS at the Headquarters in Heidelberg.

I do not remember in sufficient detail most of the events at OCS to recount them. However, I remember with total clarity my worst experience. By the time we got to the rappelling exercise, which I had been dreading for weeks; I had become the Candidate Battery Commander or maybe Battalion Commander. Whatever it was, one consequence was that I was to lead our unit over the rappelling cliff. My Deputy, an outstanding guy who did

everything well and with a smile that I hated, was tending my line and was the only person who could see me when I launched.

At all times during the process, I was convinced that I would not survive. However, the leader is obligated to lead, so there was no way out. My Deputy hit ground at the bottom of the cliff just about the same time I did, since he thought it was a lark. He came over and merely noted that, if anyone else in the unit had seen my face when I started, no one would have followed.

### **John Tissler: 42A-67**

In class 42A-67 there was a candidate by the name of Michael (Mike) Waterman. We were reasonably good friends, although I haven't seen or heard of Mike since OCS. In any event, Mike had a weakness for candy and a pretty good appetite to boot. Because we were forced to eat "square meals" back in those days (tiny bites and no chewing until you put your fork down) Mike was always hungry. During our classroom breaks, Mike would often load up on candy bars and other junk food from the vending machines and one day he stuffed several candy bars into the webbing of his helmet liner intending to sneak them back into the barracks for a snack.

We were marched directly to the Dining Hall from class that evening and while we were standing there in formation awaiting our turn to enter, one of our TAC Officers (whose name I can't remember) was cruising the formation looking for something wrong on someone...a lanyard, a helmet liner that was not EXACTLY two fingers above the bridge of the nose, whatever...so that he could have his fit-of-the-day. I honestly do not remember what it was that the TAC found wrong with Mike Waterman that evening, maybe Mike's eyeballs strayed over to the right watching the TAC, maybe he had a guilty conscience about that candy in his helmet liner and he just looked guilty. In any event, the TAC gave Mike that dreaded command, "Fall out, drop and push 'em out until I get tired."

As I'm sure many of you remember, the execution of the command to "Drop" was carried out with the kind of flourish that Johnny Weismuller (Tarzan) diving into a jungle pool would envy. It was a kind of "swan dive," without a pool of water, that was broken by catching yourself on your hands and with you ending up in the "front leaning rest" position, before you started counting off, screaming at the top of your lungs, your repetitions (push-ups). Well, when Mike did his swan-dive to the pavement, his helmet-liner, which was a bit top-heavy with candy bars, went flying off and when it hit the ground several of the candy bars came spilling out.

Since I was on the end of that row in the formation, this event happened right next to me and while I don't remember what the words were that the TAC was "spittle-ing" at Mike, I would have sworn he (the TAC) was going to have a stroke. It took all of my concentration, as I'm sure it did for many of my classmates in the immediate vicinity, to keep from bursting out laughing at this scene and bringing the wrath of the TAC down on us too. As the rest of us headed off into the Dining Hall for dinner, trying to stifle our laughter, we caught a glimpse of Mike, out of the corner of our eyes, opening and consuming, at the direction of the TAC, who was bent over and still screaming at him, every single candy bar, while he was in the front leaning rest position.

**Daniel M. Williams: 42A-67**

Do you remember the following exchange that took place while rigidly seated at the mess hall table?

“Would the Table Commandant at this table care for more beans?”

“No, Candidate.”

“Would my contemporaries at this table care for more beans?”

(In unison) “No, Contemporary.”

“Please, pass the beans.”

(We seldom had time to eat second helpings, however).

And do you remember “Lower Gross,” Muzzle Blasts (the drink), Grotto, and the expression, “Hit a brace, Candidate”?

What about, “Attention to detail, Candidate, attention to detail!”

Do you remember awakening to the “caller” outside the barracks making his “announcements” that went something like this: “Echo Battery, Reveille formation in one-zero minutes.”? Later, “Echo Battery, Reveille formation in zero-five minutes.” Then, “Echo Battery, Reveille formation, FALL OUT!!”

The song we sang most often while marching to and from the 2700 area was The Gypsy Rover: “The Gypsy Rover came over the hill... (etc., etc.)

**Travis Lee Harper: 46A-67**

I was raised in rural West Tennessee (the Volunteer State) and after failing out of college my freshman year, my father basically “volunteered” me for the US Army, RA 12922941. I joined the US Army and arrived at Fort Campbell, Kentucky on 31 October 1967 (Halloween Night). Although the Viet Nam War was not very popular, it was the best decision my father ever made for me. I took to the Army like a duck to water. My Training Officer in Basic Training told me to apply for OCS because I had tested very high on the OCT. At that time, I didn’t really know what OCS meant. After talking to my brother about the OCS possibility, I waived my RA guarantee for an opportunity to go to OCS. As part of the process, my Training Officer told me that if I put all Combat Arms on my “wish list” that I would get the first one listed, otherwise, I would automatically get Infantry. I was a Math Major in High School so I just decided that I would list as follows: Artillery, Armor, Infantry. I was fortunate enough to be selected for FA OCS.

I finished my 11B AIT at Fort Ord, California in early March, 1967 and waited there as an assigned Morning Report Clerk (I had 2 years of typing in my High School) until my OCS orders for Field Artillery arrived. I began my OCS career in June of 1967 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Our class turned “green” the 10th week of OCS and at the same time I decided to get married to my High School sweetheart, Cheri Fortune, Jackson, Tennessee.

On Saturday, September 2, 1967, we were married at the Artillery Chapel at Fort Sill. My TAC Officer/Battery Commander gave me the weekend off for my honeymoon which was spent at Wichita Falls, Texas. On my return to post on Sunday night and after leaving my bride in tears, I knew I had to work my butt off to stay off CAT III/IV so that I could be with her on weekends. She had moved in with my cube mate, Jan Paul Christianson’s wife, Sally. I had already put quite a few miles on MB4.

Then the real test came the very next weekend. I was put on CAT IV and I always will believe it was on purpose. My Battery Commander had told me that if I got married during OCS that I would never make it through. It was pretty tough on newlyweds but we

survived that weekend and I went on to graduate with Class 46A-67 on 5 December 1967, 6th in my class. I loved the Field Artillery and was destined to make a career out of the US Army. The next year I was in Viet Nam. After a 28-year career, I retired from active duty in December, 1993 at the rank of Colonel and was inducted into the OCS Hall of Fame in 2003. I will never forget my FA OCS experience at Fort Sill. It was absolutely awesome and I will forever be a "REDLEG."

**Earl Gray Webb 46A-67:**

Artillery OCS was a major turning point in my life. In 1966, I had flunked out of college and was just waiting for the Draft to catch up with me. During my first week of Basic Training, I was offered a chance to attend Artillery OCS. I knew I had no other choice but to accept. I had attended a military school during high school that offered Junior ROTC, so I was very familiar with drill and ceremony, spit shining shoes, polishing brass and all the other little tricks of Army life. Not having that to worry about that, gave me time to concentrate on the academics. And as anyone who was there knows, Artillery OCS is not for the academically challenged.

**Brian G. Kobinsky: 46A-67**

In the fall of 1966, I was newly married and in my last semester at the University of Wisconsin when I got drafted with orders to report November 17, 1966. In order to delay reporting until after graduation I enlisted with a guarantee to attend Artillery OCS. I was inducted on January 27, 1967 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

After the worst 8 weeks of my life in February and March at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. I went through OCS prep AIT at Fort Sill.

The 23 weeks of OCS started in June 1967. I remember being the laundry man so I could see my bride in the parking lot while standing at parade rest. All the uniforms went back and forth to Lawton in our 1965 White Mustang convertible as I watched my wife's blonde hair blowing in the wind. Painful!

Staying awake in the classroom during the hot summer was hard but I do recall being thankful when the black flag went up. My biggest shock and surprise at graduation on December 5, 1967, was receiving the high shooter award. Afterward I wondered if the others knew something I didn't.

Just prior to graduation, orders were received by everyone except seventeen of us. We all ended up going to ADA. I was assigned to B-3-59 in Milwaukee where I stayed for 26 months.

g. The battalion parking lots are not authorized areas for receiving visitors, except for reviews and parades or other school functions held on the parade field. Between the hours of 1730 and 1810, candidates are allowed a maximum of 5 minutes in the parking lot to deliver or pick up packages and laundry. Candidates are not allowed to sit in, or lean against, parked cars. Any public show of affection in the parking lot is prohibited.



**Everett Thompson: 46B-67**

I must report that I am one of those guys – the “evil” candidates who never ran the Jark during their time in OCS. Throughout my 24 weeks, I worked hard to maintain a very low profile. I had several TAC Officers who never even knew me. I recall about halfway through the training that I was selected for Officer Candidate Battery Commander. I was concerned during the week that I might be noticed but was able to shrink back into oblivion when that assignment was completed. With two weeks remaining in OCS, our platoon TAC Officer got wind of the fact that I had never Jarked and intended to dump demerits on me. Since I had no class anyway, I prevailed upon him to leave me alone. He agreed and I graduated without making the trip.

**Robert A. (Bob) Bracey: USATC FA (OCS Prep) – Fort Sill, OK 1967**

The stories and pictures bring back many great memories of Fort Sill and the Field Artillery OCS, even for those of us who are not among the alumni. As with so many of the alumni who have recounted here the ways in which their lives were altered by the OCS experience, I can honestly say that it had a significant impact on a number of us who did not attend, as well.

I was among those who were accepted into FA OCS while completing basic training at Fort Jackson in the spring of 1967. Subsequently, while most of my contemporaries were sent to Fort Ord for Infantry AIT, I was ordered to report for the OCS Prep program at Fort Sill. There, while learning the Fire Direction and Intelligence MOS (13E20) we were introduced to the rigorous discipline, character and leadership building that would prepare us for more of the same upon our ultimate transition to Robinson Barracks.

From the day we arrived we began preparing for the academic challenge, the discipline, Jarks, parking lot runs and E&E that lay ahead in our quest to become leaders. Our AIT classroom training concentrated on the technical aspects of fire direction; but beyond the classroom our leadership development continued. Unlike those who were pursuing identical technical training in the non-OCS-prep units, we led a very restricted life. I recall that around the fifth or sixth week we were finally offered our first opportunity to leave the post. However, there was a “catch.” We had been invited to attend a Sunday night ice cream social and program at a church about a block north of the downtown bar district; and immediately following the event the BC would distribute passes good for about two hours of free time. As this was the first time we were “turned loose” in Lawton, we spent most of our precious two hours just trying to orient ourselves. In the end it wasn’t much real freedom; but we were so deprived that each of us savored every moment.

Most of us had chosen FA OCS, because we believed the Field Artillery to be a behind-the-lines operation; and many were shocked to learn that our ultimate role would be that of the FO. We were even given a bit of introductory FO training during a couple of our field training sessions at the OP. Being out there at the OP where we could see the results of our work did so much to heighten our interest. As we approached the final weeks of AIT, we were all eager to face the challenges that lay before us – just a few blocks up the street at Robinson Barracks.

Finally, in mid-August our “graduation” day arrived. Almost immediately after the ceremony we were ordered to “fall in” for an important message from our BC. We all assumed that the “news” would be our OCS class assignments. To our great dismay the

message was quite the opposite. We were informed that the Army had decided to drastically reduce OCS throughput for a while (with the exception of the Armor OCS at Fort Knox). We were given several choices:

1. Accept a temporary assignment while awaiting a FA OCS class date (expected to be no more than a few months duration)
2. Report immediately to Fort Knox for Armor OCS
3. Rescind our OCS application and complete our service obligation among the enlisted ranks

After more than four months of basic training and OCS preparatory AIT (with the latter being exceptionally rigorous), the news did not sit well with many among us. Of the forty-four soldiers in my AIT class, only four of us chose Option 1. Nobody chose Option 2 (the cadre had done a fantastic job of “selling” the idea that the Field Artillery was the place to be); and the remaining forty chose Option 3. Each day during the next four weeks a few would receive orders for their next assignment. Of the forty who chose to abandon the idea of attending OCS, all would be sent to Fort Ord for additional training prior to deploying to RVN. Among the four of us who chose to continue waiting for a class date, one went to Korea, two were sent to a Howitzer unit in Germany and I was assigned to an Honest John rocket battalion in Nürnberg, Germany.

Germany was a long way from Vietnam; but each month one or more from my FDC section would be “levied” to the war zone. I was exempt from that possibility, since my assignment there was temporary, pending my return to OCS. The months passed quickly; and still no order to report back to Fort Sill. One day in mid-December of 1968, my BC sent his clerk to fetch me from a training session in which we were conducting an Honest John fire mission dry run. Turning my position at the FADAC over to another member of the FDC team, I jogged back to the BC’s office, only to find him, the Battalion Commander and Executive Officer all awaiting my arrival. My class date had finally come through; and they must have realized that, with less than four months of remaining active duty obligation, I would be reluctant to make a choice that would extend my obligation an additional thirty months. Over the next two hours I defended against an all-out sales assault that would have made the most successful car salesmen envious. I had really wanted those Gold bars and was tempted; but thanks in part to my training, I thought it through carefully. Ultimately, I decided that it was time to move on with my life. Completing the remaining year of my undergraduate education and beginning an engineering career had become my new primary objectives.

It’s true that I am not a graduate of the FA OCS; but, looking back, I cannot help but note the profound impact that the mere pursuit of that goal had upon my life. Ultimately, it was one of those forks in the road – a point where one must choose which path to take – that forever alter the sequence of events that constitute a person’s life. Had my FA OCS application not been accepted, I would surely have been a foot soldier in Vietnam. Had I survived that experience, I’m quite certain that my life afterward would have been quite different. Had I not chosen to persist with my goal of attending FA OCS even as others were giving up on the idea, I would have served as an enlisted soldier in the Field Artillery in Vietnam; and my life would have taken a different path. Finally, had I not decided to forego attending FA OCS when my class date finally came through, my active-duty obligation would have been extended another thirty months, after which I may have

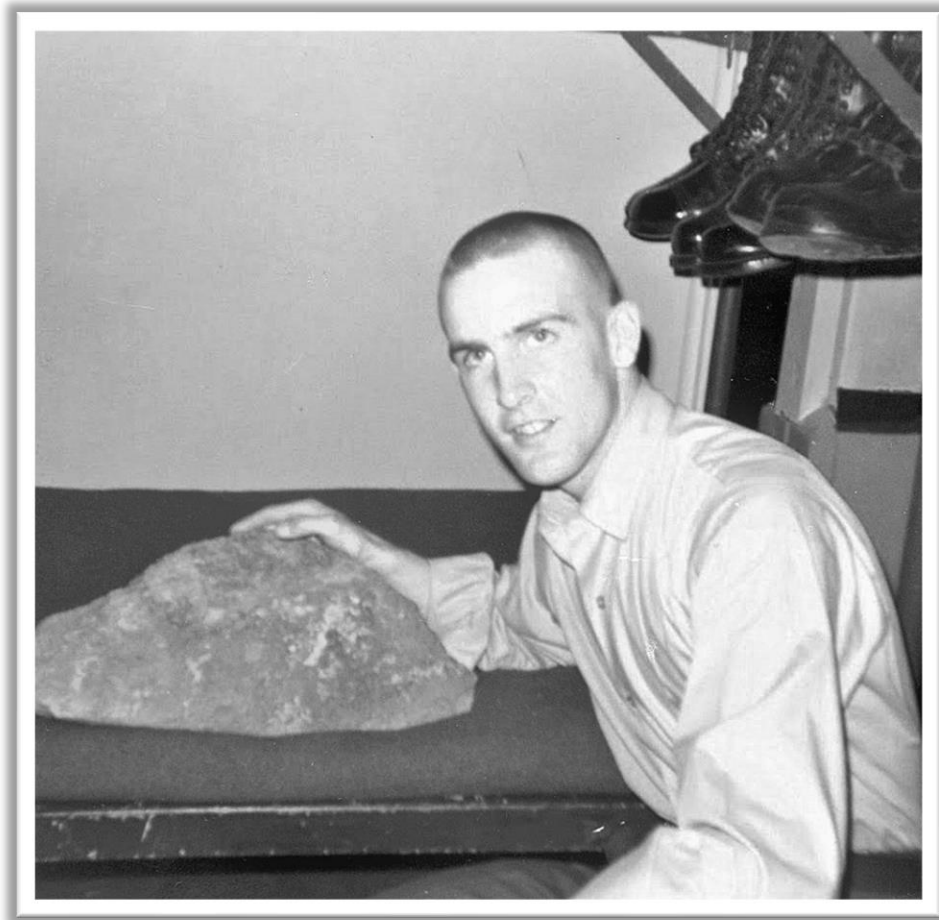
decided to make a career of military service. My life's entire timeline would have been altered. I would not have returned to school when I did, would not have the engineering career that I've enjoyed and I would not have met the wonderful woman to whom I've been married for nearly forty years.

Yes, my visiting this site indicates that I still wonder what it would have meant to be counted among you; and I deeply respect those of you who achieved the goal to which I once aspired. I can only speculate about how my life would be different today. Still, I'm quite happy with the choices I made.

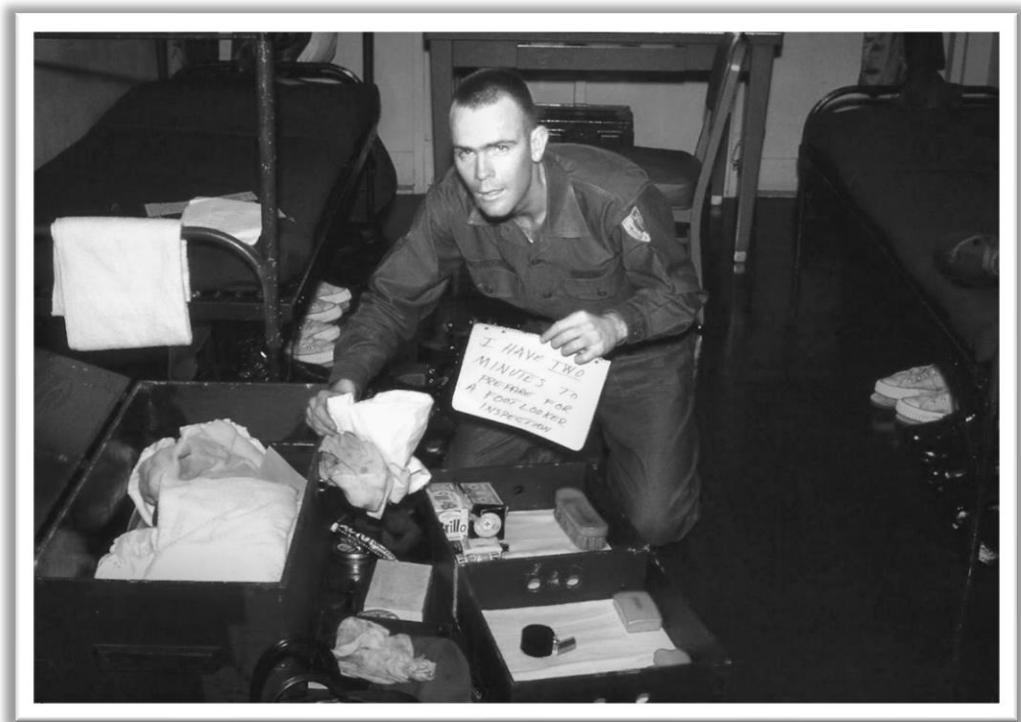
***More than 6,400 second lieutenants were commissioned from 64 classes during the 1967 calendar year as the buildup for the Vietnam War peaked.***



***2LT James R. Snodgrass (Class 46A-67) being sworn in by his wife 2LT Janet L. Snodgrass  
(December 5, 1967)***



*Candidate Dennis Montgomery Class 19-67 with a "Jark Rock" from MB-4*



*Two minutes to get ready for a footlocker inspection.*



*Class 26A-67 returns from the top of MB-4 on a Jark*



*Triple cube area (old barracks)*



*Triple Cubicles Class 31A-67 – ready for inspection*



*Upperclassman (Red Bird) "mentors" a Lowerclassman*

# Chapter Sixteen

## 1968

### Officer Candidate Brigade 1968-1970

#### *From History of the Field Artillery School (Annual Supplement 1968, 1969, 1970)*

At the beginning of 1968, the organization of the Officer Candidate Brigade consisted of three battalions – the 2nd, the 4th, and the 5th. On 24 July, the 4th Battalion was deactivated; on 4 August, the 5th Battalion was redesignated the 1st Battalion.

In February, a 5 1/2 day integrated field problem was initiated into the Officer Candidate Brigade training program. The exercise was reduced to 4 1/2 days in October. The basic concept of the new field exercise is to place candidates in a tactical field situation in which they are required to function as members of a TOE firing battery and perform the battery's assigned missions under simulated Vietnam combat conditions. For 2 1/2 days the battery participates in RSOP's, culminated by a battery helilift and firing exercises. The battery is then captured by aggressors and force marched to a PW compound, where, for approximately one-half day, the candidates are subjected to treatment which could be expected in a true situation. After the candidates are allowed to escape from the PW compound, they execute the escape and evasion portion of the problem. The second half of the fourth day is spent in patrolling. The candidates are formed into small groups, which are sent out on patrolling missions. The next morning, the candidates are helilifted to an area for rappelling and river crossing techniques. This terminates the 4 1/2 day field exercise, and the candidates are taken back to the brigade area for a well-earned rest.

OCC 501-68: the first class to participate in the OC 501 integrated field problem, performed in such a memorable manner the problem was named after the class. The following is an account of what happened:

On the Thursday of their week in the field, the Candidates, while moving from the East to the West Range, were attacked and captured by the aggressors. After being captured, the Candidates were bound around the elbows and herded into a small group and told to sit.

While the aggressors were giving their indoctrinations, the Candidates were busy untying each other. When the aggressors told the Candidates to get up and move into the trucks, to be transported to the POW compound, the Candidates rose and immediately dispersed in every direction.

A few of the candidates were captured immediately, but it was a futile attempt on the part of the aggressors to capture all of them because they were outnumbered 8 to 1. It took approximately 9 hours to locate the remainder of the class and both ranges were closed for the entire day, which didn't tend to humor anyone, except perhaps the Candidates. During the next 9 hours after the great escape of the candidates: two (2) candidates were found at Moway House trying to get to their final objective (Ketch Lake), six (6) were

captured by the Military Police who believed them to be escaped prisoners from the stockade, and one Candidate went to a Colonels' house and explained the situation to his wife--she in turn gave him some coffee and soup and sent him on his way. Several were found in the main PX, and the last candidate was found in the ATC area where he had gone, met a friend, ate in the mess hall, showered, and slept for about three (3) hours.

On 29 June, the Officer Candidate Brigade officially opened the doors of the Hall of Fame, in Building 3031. 1LT James Robinson, Class 64-43 became the first member.

On August 1, the Headquarters, Officer Candidate Brigade, moved into new quarters in Building 3166, vacating the Headquarters, Building 3025, it had occupied since 1951. Shortly afterwards, the Headquarters Battery Commander and Staff moved to Building 3025, with their permanent party personnel billeting in one of the new buildings, 2838.

On 5 August, the entire Officer Candidate Brigade was converted from a class system, in which each class constituted a separate battery, back to a "layer system". The layer system enables a candidate to make a smooth and orderly transition from an enlisted status to a commissioned status. During his 23 weeks of training, the candidate progresses from lower through middle to upper class with increased responsibilities at each step.

The Officer Candidate Brigade input decreased from 6,468 Officer Candidates in calendar year 1967 to 2,595 in calendar year 1968. During calendar year 1968, the Officer Candidate Brigade commissioned 1,432 second lieutenants, with the largest graduating class, OCC 505-68, totaling 138.

The Officer Candidate Brigade input increased from 2,595 in calendar year 1968 to 2,994 in calendar year 1969. A total of 1,922 Second Lieutenants were graduated, of which 1,260 were commissioned in Field Artillery. On 9 September 1969, the Officer Candidate Brigade graduated its 45,000th Second Lieutenant, a milestone in the Brigade's constant pursuit for excellence.

Throughout 1969 the Brigade maintained two tactical battalions, which were organized into four officer candidate battalions operating under the layer system. This organization provides for the admittance of a new class every second Sunday, distributed evenly between the four battalions and numerically replacing those just graduating and becoming the lower class to the middle and upper class already in residence. The layer system enables a candidate to make a smooth transition as he progresses from lower to middle to upper class during his 23 weeks of training.

Beginning with Class 6-70 in October 1969, the Officer Candidate Brigade incorporated all individual and auxiliary weapons training in a five-day bivouac occurring in the third week of training. Entitled OC 502, it also includes instruction and practical exercise in dismounted drill, field sanitation, rappelling and river crossing, field inspections, and riot control.

The Officer Candidate Hall of Fame, opened 29 June 1968, moved to Building 3168 in April 1969 to accommodate the burgeoning center of Brigade history and memorabilia. By the end of 1969 over eighty graduates of Artillery OCS were inducted.



Calendar year 1970 saw many changes in the overall organization of the Officer Candidate Brigade. Not only was the Brigade's mission slightly altered, but also the decrease in input and the reduction of newly commissioned officer requirements necessitated a change in organizational structure.

At the beginning of 1970, the Brigade maintained two tactical battalions operating under the layer system. In late July, due to the requirement reduction, the 1st Battalion was deactivated. In order to continue the mission of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School and to facilitate expansion should it become necessary in the future, a proposal that would combine the Artillery OCS and the Artillery Combat Leader (NCOES) into one brigade, to be called the "Leadership Brigade" was made. The proposal was brought about by a request from BG Carothers and came as a result of the overall phase-down and drastic reduction of manpower within the School Brigade. This plan was provisionally put into effect, Tuesday, 15 September, after receiving the approval of MG Wetherill, the Commanding General.

Input decreased from 2,994 in Calendar Year 1969 to 2,642 in Calendar Year 1970. There were 1,232 second lieutenants commissioned, with the largest class 13-70, totaling 105, graduating on 25 June 1970. There were 1,438 candidates enrolled under the college option program. A total of 646 graduated and 722 were relieved. Of the input of 159 in-service graduates (college graduates but not under the college option), 98 graduated and 61 were relieved. Of the remaining input of 1,045 candidates, 488 graduated and 536 were relieved. 136 candidates were relieved for leadership deficiencies; 364 were relieved for academic deficiencies; 85 for physical defects; 64 for lack of motivation; 64 for misconduct; 12 for personal reasons; 9 for compassionate reasons; 3 for disciplinary reasons and 2 for honor code violations.

The largest number of reliefs was due to DA Message 101812Z "the option" which resulted in 530 candidates leaving Artillery OCS. This option gave the candidate a choice of either continuing in his OCS program or voluntarily withdrawing from OCS, which, in turn, would reduce his three-year commitment to two years and would give him a guaranteed assignment to an area of his choice until his adjusted ETS. The option was offered to candidates on 15 July and on 20 July, 80 percent of all Artillery Officer Candidates had been voluntarily relieved. With only 134 candidates left in the Officer Candidate School after "the option" was offered only 3 batteries were in existence. Thus OCS was operating in a brigade structure, with one battalion and 3 batteries in that battalion. At this time, the new structure of the Brigade was implemented and the Leadership Brigade was born.

### **"Parking Signs to Boost Status of Second Lieutenants"**

#### ***Lawton Constitution-Morning Press (Sunday December 17, 1967)***

Second lieutenants - be of good cheer - the Army does know you're here! It's true fellows, those new signs at various facilities around Fort Sill in parking areas reserved for general officers, which read - "2nd Lt's Only." are for real. The signs are designed to give a boost to the morale of second lieutenants who might sometimes wonder if the old Army adage of "RHIP" (rank has its privileges) has much meaning for them.

Perhaps it is just a small glimpse of better things to come as they advance in their army careers. The new "2Lts Only" signs will be placed in all post parking lots which now have

reserved parking places for general officers. The spaces are available on a first come, first served, basis.

The new signs reserving a parking space for a second lieutenant have already been painted on in parking areas at McNair Hall, Snow Hall, the main PX, and work crews will soon complete the new sign work at all other locations on post where there is reserved parking for general officers.

However, this will definitely be a case of “the early bird getting the worm” as there are usually between 2,200 and 2,300 second lieutenants at Fort Sill.

One brand new second lieutenant was amazed to find a reserved parking space last week at the main PX. Carlton L. Bishop (Class 1B-68), of Fort Worth, who had just graduated that day from Fort Sill’s Artillery OCS, said of his luck in finding a reserved parking spot, “I just couldn’t believe it.”

### **From the Artillery OCS archives**

USCONARC Message: Dated 012157Z April 68

Subject: Recycling Officer Candidates

Reference: Message CONARC 72664, DTG 082302Z August 67

Subject: Officer Candidate School Output

The restriction placed on Recycling officer candidates by paragraph 6 of the reference message is lifted.

Note: Paragraph 6 of the referenced message reads:

Institute measures immediately to reduce recycling of O/C to only those who have demonstrated clearly outstanding potential to be commissioned officer. Also an O/C will be recycled only once – except for health or hardship (emergency leave, etc). It is understood that this action will raise attrition.

### **Alan Meyer: 1B-68**

My road to FAOCS actually began in 1959 when my family moved from Fairmont, Minnesota to Minneapolis at the beginning of my junior year in High School. Soon after starting school there I made friends with Ken Aasen, who would have a role in my going to OCS and who played a part once I got there.

Ken and I graduated high school together and both attended the University of Minnesota. Here, we remained friends, commuted together and had some classes together. We joined a fraternity together and were roommates there for two years. Ken was in ROTC, something I never gave a thought about for me. I was having too much fun to be that serious, which led to me eventually dropping out of school. Ken graduated soon after that and was commissioned as 2LT with orders to Fort Sill.

No longer in college and the draft looking for me (1966), I enlisted in the Army in order to have some choice other than 11B. Also, since I had some flight training while at the U of M, I was thinking about getting my wings as an Army Aviator (did not require a college degree like the USAF or Navy) and was trying to decide if I should be a Warrant Officer or

get a commission. By chance, before I left for Basic Combat Training (BCT), I saw Ken who was home on leave from Fort Sill. We discussed the options mentioned and he told me that in his opinion a commission was the best way. Get that first, then go to flight school and if flying doesn't work out, I would have the commission to fall back on. Good advice. And I wanted that challenge!

Off I went to BCT with OCS as my goal, then flight school. At Fort Lewis, my Senior Drill Sergeant and Platoon Leader were both tankers and they brainwashed the OCS applicants that Armor was the ONLY WAY TO GO! Sure enough, after completion of BCT all of the OCS applicants boarded a Modern Air Transport DC-6 at McCord Air Force Base bound for Fort Knox! Armor! We were in hog heaven, so to speak. After arrival, we became part of a platoon that was made up of all OCS hopefuls. Being at Fort Knox, it was a given (at least in our minds) that Armor OCS was a lock.

Toward the end of AIT, orders started trickling in. PVT after PVT learned they were heading just down the street to Armor OCS. I could hardly wait for my orders to join my friends who I had been with since BCT at Fort Lewis (I had already bought my Armor School patches!). Then my friend Gordie got orders to Infantry OCS. We thought there was a mistake until the next day, I got my orders to FAOCS Class 2-68, reporting the first week of July 1967. In the end, Gordie and I were the ONLY TWO of that platoon who would not be going to Armor OCS. We were crushed...and where was this Fort Sill, anyhow? What could be there? Little did I know that this was to be a life altering event, in a number of ways!

I went on leave to Minnesota. Once there, I called my now 1LT friend Ken in Lawton to find out what this artillery thing was all about. By then, he was an instructor of general subjects which we all endured during our first few weeks in FAOCS. He lived in an apartment above a paint store on Cache Road on 15th or 16th Street. He suggested that I show up at Sill four or five days ahead of my class date to stay with him and he would help me assemble my uniforms and stuff for my displays and fill me in on OCS. I did as he recommended, and he helped me get ready just as promised.

I remember well the day Ken dropped me off at Brigade HQ, (Dunham Hall). Although my orders read Class 2-68, I ended up in 1B-68, probably just an administrative change. I was the third or fourth soon-to-be Candidate to enter the barracks as part of Delta Battery, 5th Battalion. Already there were Wes Burch and Sterling Roath. More later about their roles in my life.

We all settled in, and like all others before and after us, we were wondering, "What the hell have I gotten myself into?" Thankfully, the help I got from my friend 1LT Aasen really paid off. My displays were ready almost from day one. I knew the SOP inside and out. I worked closely with my cubie Sterling, Wes and with others on all of the things necessary to eventually get passes and stay off the TAC Officers radar. Sterling was married, his wife and two kids were in Lawton. (She became our uniform and anything supplier.) Wes had a fiancée in Lawton, having met her while he was assigned to Sill just prior to OCS.

Somewhere along the way, I had some of those general subjects courses taught by my friend, Ken. As we all did, I took great pains to make sure that my appearance was as good as possible at all times, using all of the little tricks we learned as a means in our

struggle for survival. Well, my friend Ken took great pleasure (in good spirits) in posting me in front of my classmates and smearing or finger printing my belt buckle, brass or helmet liner just enough, so some eagle-eyed TAC Officer would have cause to drop some demerits on me. Thanks to the ever-present polishing rag, I avoided his attempts to get me a few demerits.

Here is where this whole story gets interesting. On the fourth weekend, Wes, Sterling and I managed to get the first passes given our platoon, a whole half day! I had considered using this time to see Ken in a more causal setting. However, Wes convinced me to go with him to his fiancée's apartment because she had a roommate that I may be interested in. Being a typical 24 year-old red-blooded American soldier, I chose to go with him rather than hang with Ken. Maybe there would even be a beer there, too!

Wes and I went to the apartment at 1108 Columbia to meet the girls. I was introduced to his fiancée first, then to her roommate, Sharon. Although I found her to be really pretty, we didn't exactly hit it off, so to speak. I hung around for a short while then went back to barracks. We didn't see each other again until Wes and Sandy were married in the Post Chapel, about half way through OCS. Still, we didn't mesh well, no sparks.

For us, and probably most others who went through FAOCS at about this time, Met Data was THE big one. To pass Met meant that graduating was pretty certain if you didn't screw up in a bad way after that. It also meant that, for a few of us at least, it was off to Burkburnett, TX and Mathis Chevrolet to get that new car! Wes, I and one other Smack caught a ride down there. We all came home with that shiny new trophy! Mine was a red 1967 Pontiac Firebird 326 HO (wish I had it today...fairly rare). What was there to lose? We were going to Viet Nam and the heck with it all! We felt like kings; Redbirds, new car, we had it all!

How did we find out our Met test score? It just so happened that the day the grade slips appeared on our bunks, I and other Flight School applicants had been taking our physicals as part of the application process. Part of the physical consisted of a thorough eye exam necessitating dilation, which can last for a while. We got off the bus at the barracks and were alone there, the rest of the battery being still in class. We saw the all-important grade slips on the bunks, but nobody could clearly read them. One of our aspiring 2LTs went outside and commandeered an underclassman to come in and read them to us. Mine was a 93, the highest score I got during OCS, I think.

The events above occurred in week 16 or 17. At about the same time, Wes told me that that girl, Sharon, was now interested in seeing me. Must have been because of my new car! The rest is history, so to speak. Sharon and I were married on 9 Dec 1967, three days before OCS graduation. We chose to get married then so some of my classmates could attend before leaving for their new assignments. Sterling Roath was my Best Man. Ken and Wes were in attendance. 1LT Ken Aasen (d. 2001) and Sharon pinned on my gold bars on 12 Dec 67. Sharon (Shari) and I celebrated 50 years together last December.

### **Robert Yowell: 1B-68**

In August of 1966 I finished two weeks of leadership training between Basic and AIT at Fort Polk. During AIT our Training Officer, 2LT Seiker, FA convinced me to apply for OCS, but I had absolutely NO idea what to expect. When I went before the selection board, LT

Seiker told me to request Field Artillery OCS and if the Selection Board asked me why Field Artillery, I was to answer, "because the Field Artillery makes a bigger bang." They did ask, and I did answer as ordered. My future and the future of my family was forever changed...for the good.

On July 2, 1967, our 3rd wedding anniversary, we arrived at Fort Sill in our 1952 Plymouth Cranbrook. My wife, Jean and daughter, Stephanie dropped me off in front of what is now the Artillery OCS Hall of Fame. Little did I know that was our last kiss for a long, long, time.

Unlike many graduates, I do not have chronologically ordered and detailed memories of every day in OCS. All I can do is relate a few events in that blurred black and white slide show of my mind that I like to replay at OCS Reunions.

I am pleased to say that my Artillery OCS memories are all good ones. I actually enjoyed OCS (also enjoyed Basic training.). One of the earliest and best memories as lower class is returning to our barracks after a day of training. What a joy that was. Our TAC Officers had graciously "unpacked" everything for us and cleverly arranged all, ALL our items around the House. This was a significant factor in our learning the deep meaning of cooperate and graduate and really helped us get to know each other better as we sorted our items from their items and their items from our items. Of course, that scenario played out many times even though we thought we knew each other about as well as we needed to. The luxurious every-morning showers were also great opportunities to get acquainted. Just that total experience of learning to efficiently S---t, Shower, & Shave was life-changing.

I will not soon forget the late-night rearranging of the duffel bag storage. We were given a totally unrealistic amount of time for each of us to remove our duffel bag from the "honeycomb" designed storage area and replace the duffel bag with "us." Of course, it helped that each one of us, one at a time, removed our bag and carefully crawled into our place in the "honeycomb" ... No, no, that's not the way it worked. It was every candidate for himself and was a real "fire drill." This drill also included "falling out" in multiple uniform configurations. If my memory is correct, I think the TAC Officers got in some trouble over that.

Somewhere in my memory is the early-morning image of our sister battery across the quadrangle. As we watched with glee, a large cloud, of pulsing white dust engulfed the whole battery. The intel was that one of their range out-houses was heavily infected with "crabs" and they were treating each other with bags of crab-killing white powder.

I like telling the story about the night exercise to take a hill far out in the west range. We were to navigate with compass to the base of a specific hill # "whatever." We had to be in position ready to take the hill by a certain time when the artillery would illuminate the hill with flares. After a long night of navigating, we finally arrived and were in position to take the hill...finally we saw the flares...illuminating a far-off hill. Obviously, we were at the wrong hill.

Who can forget the final field exercise including Escape & Evasion and Rappelling. The horror stories were such that none of us wanted to get caught by the aggressors. A few of

us collaborated and developed a detailed plan to escape and evade. The plan was that as soon as we were ambushed we would get through the first line of aggressors and into their thinly spread back field as quick as humanly possible. I don't know how far we **sprinted** before we felt safe to breathe but it was a 'purty fur piece.' We were among the first, if not THE first to safely complete evasion.

I don't want to talk about rappelling. Heights and I are not compatible. After Viet Nam, I was assigned as instructor in the Field Subjects Division of the Officer Candidate Brigade. We were responsible for the week-long OC 501 Field Exercise which covered everything learned as OC's including E&E and Rappelling. *I taught rappelling.*

I think it was during "Happy Battery" that I was OCBC. Sincerely, I did have fun. I had learned as acting platoon guide in both basic and AIT to march soldiers. That part was actually "fun" for me, particularly "bop-to-slop." I only remember being turned around one time trying to get in the mess hall. Delta Battery was especially good at "toeing the line."

During a rare lower class visit to the PX, I forgot to take off my cap... **"Is your head cold candidate?!"** Actually, it was, but I didn't admit it. "Sir, No Sir."

Class 1B-68 may be the only class with a "Glee Club." I conducted, but I have very little details other than we performed at graduation. The TV show "Sing Along with Mitch" was popular at the time, so we ended up calling us "Howell with Yowell."

One of the many ways to smuggle banned food, required clever use of trash cans and a non-OCS co-conspirator. Step 1 involves three OC's; two to carry the trash can and one inside the trash can. Step 2 was to remove the lid and dump the "trash" which was one OC who remained in the dumpster. Step 3 requires collusion with the co-conspirator who gives the contraband to the OC in the dumpster. Step 4 requires two OC's who carry the trash can to the dumpster and pretend to empty the non-existent trash. The inside OC climbs into the trash can bringing along the contraband.

### **Al B. Davis: 3A-68**

I have many, many wonderful (and a few painful) memories of my 23 weeks at Fort Sill but for some reason, my visit to the POW Camp is always my most vivid memory.

What a miserable place - we didn't even get a chance to escape as the aggressors were waiting for us and pulled most of us off the deuce and a half's as soon as we pulled up. Two or three of my classmates were injured, one very seriously (compound fracture of his leg), as we were pulled off the trucks. I was one of the few who was able to break away briefly and when I did, I chose to run to the right. Unfortunately, that direction led through some trees and directly into the POW camp (I should have run to the left!!!).

As such, I was the first "prisoner" to enter the camp whereupon they stuffed me down that God forsaken hole in the ground to be followed by the next 20 or so POW's as they were captured. I will never forget the leg cramps I and others suffered while jammed into that hole and since you couldn't move AT ALL, there was nothing you could do about them. And I'll also never forget those candidate candidates who panicked in the hole due to

claustrophobia. And, of course, there was the candidate at the bottom of the pile who farted and then laughed as we all gasped for non-existent fresh air and threatened to kill him when we got out. Do you guys remember that hole?

What has frustrated me over the years is that it was always difficult to describe the POW Camp to others, let alone getting them to believe there could be something so realistic and so gruesome. Finally, through your pictures, I am now able to show my wife and family what it was like.

**Michael C. Jordan: 3A-68**  
**“The Wives Always Know”**

I graduated from Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill and got my commission in January of 1968. Just before Christmas – we hadn’t gotten our assignment orders yet – our training battery commander said to us, “Wherever you are when I get your assignment orders I will come and tell you.” So, we’re sitting in class one day with this major up front trying to teach us about engineering tactics, how to build bridges and clear mine fields and that kind of stuff, when our battery commander came into the back of the room. The room started to buzz and the major said, “Captain, obviously you have something these candidates are more interested in than what I am trying to teach them about engineering tactics, so why don’t you take over.”

They had told us all along, you will not go directly to Vietnam, you will get an assignment here at Fort Sill, or Europe, or CONUS (Continental United States), but you will not go directly to Vietnam. Well, the wives had a wives’ club in conjunction with the officers’ wives. Mary Beth came home after one of their luncheons and said, “Your class is going to send guys directly to Vietnam.”

I said, “No, no, no, no. That ain’t gonna happen.”

Well, our battery commander gets up there in the front of the class and the first thing he says is, “There are seventeen of you going directly to Vietnam.” The wives knew more than we did. He read those seventeen names first, and then he started reading the rest of them. There was one other guy and me, who went to St. Louis to the Nike Hercules battalion.

**Charles C. Carson II: 3B-68**

***In reference to a cash contribution to the Artillery OCS Alumni Chapter in 2016:***

It is the least I can do to help in some small way to advance the work that you do to keep our memories alive. Not sure 50 years from now anyone will know or care, but for now it is important. I’m sure like for most people, OCS was a pivotal point in our lives. It sure changed me. I have the dubious distinction of being one of the younger graduates, when I was commissioned on 16 January 1968 (Class 3B-68), I was only 19. Scary.

**Imre Szell: 3B-68**

**“Former Hungarian Freedom Fighter One of Army’s Newest Lieutenants”**  
***Lawton Constitution (Wednesday January 17, 1968)***

A former Hungarian freedom fighter is one of the newest second lieutenants in the U.S. Army.

“I want to give something in return,” said Imre Szell, 31, referring to his U.S. citizenship and oath of office as a lieutenant received this week at Fort Sill. Szell, whose name is

pronounced Sale, was the oldest of 127 candidates graduated Tuesday from Sill's Artillery Officer Candidate School.

He was in his fifth semester as a math and physics major at the University of Budapest more than 11 years ago when he joined his countrymen in a revolt against the Russian-controlled regime.

"I had friends who were killed," Szell said. "We were amateurs; our forces were in the wrong places; we had no tactics." He fled the country Nov. 29, 1955, when his name was placed on a list of revolutionists, and in 1958 entered the United States. He has been in the American Army since 1959.

In October, 1961, Szell was burned in the explosion of a grenade simulator at Fort Benning, Ga. A hospital emergency medic introduced his young sister-in-law, Carrie Lou Braswell of Buford, Ga., to the injured Hungarian. They were married in June 1963, and now have a two-year-old son, Paul.

Szell became a U.S. citizen in June 1964, upon his return from a tour of duty in Korea with the 1st Cavalry Division. From that time until he entered the officer candidate school last July, he served as an instructor at the Aviation School, Fort Rucker, Ala., with the rank of staff sergeant.

Mrs. Szell and young Paul remained at Daleville, Ala., while the candidate completed his 23-week officer training at Fort Sill. They plan to reside in Lawton while he is stationed here awaiting assignment to take flight instruction.

### **Richard M. Pitts: 505A-68**

#### **"My Escape and Evasion Memories"**

My "big brother" had warned me about the escape and evasion course and not to get captured. The night before I prepared myself for the task of evading the enemy and if caught, how to survive the punishment and hopefully I would be able to escape. I first cut a small slit in my fatigue pants under one of the belt loops and put a pair of ear plugs in it. This was to be used if put in a 55-gallon barrel to save my eardrums from the pounding. I then loosened the top of my name tag and put two sticks of chewing gum under it and sewed it shut. This I thought would give me moisture in case they put dirt in my canteen. I then loosened my O.C.S. patch and put three matches and two aspirins under it and sewed it shut. The matches were to be used if I needed to start a fire to get warm and the aspirins were to be used as needed. I got a single razor blade and placed it under the U.S. Army tag and loosely sewed it shut on the bottom of the tag. I next ran a pair of boot laces down the inside of my fatigue blouse by the buttons in case I was captured and had to cut my laces to get away. I took part of a map of the area that we were going to do the exercise and taped it under the collar of my blouse to be used to find my way to the release point. I thought about the 55-gallon drum and decided to put two aspirins in my fatigue cap. I hollowed out one of the heels on my boot but could not think of what to put in it. I should have put a rabbit foot in it for luck. I was ready for the next day's relaxing jaunt through the "hills of Fort Sill."

It started like any other cold November day, with a sun rise and attending another class. The class was on "Escape and Evasion." The class covered ways to evade the enemy and



how to resist if captured. It was not sounding as if it was going to be a relaxing jaunt, but I was nineteen, cocky and “prepared.”

We trucked out to the field and broken down into suicide squads. We were told not to run back to the road. Not to run toward the prison compound (which made sense). Then we were told not to run to the west, this left only straight ahead. We now were sent on a mission of escape and evasion from the ever present “trap” of aggressors.

At the sound of a gunshot I started running for the opening in the wire. An armored personnel carrier blocked the opening in the wire, so I made a “command decision” and turned right, but the wire still didn’t show a way to escape. I kept running. Then a line of aggressors jumped up in front of me. It looked like a line of football players covering a kick-off and I was the ball carrier. I didn’t think about one of the aggressors running me down from behind, because I ran the hundred-yard dash in 10.2 seconds. I thought about college and what the coach had taught me about broken field running and this was a broken field. I cut left and I cut right, and then I cut back to get away from the two aggressors and ran into a third. He was a big guy and he was sitting on me. I was told to tie my boots together (I was ready for this). I told him you got me, and he should now go and catch someone else. He was huffing and puffing and would not leave me. I was a prisoner. Now on to plan two “Escape.”

This started my trip into the compound. They searched me but only found the two pain pills in my cap. They missed the gum, matches, map, extra boot laces, aspirins, and the single edge razor blade. So far not too bad, I was captured but still had the tools to escape. They took my canteen and put dirt in it and then had me lay down on the ground and began pouring dirty water in and on my ears. I then had to low crawl to a small room and sit in an office chair. This was going to be a “snap.” I could sit here all day and have them ask me what unit I was from and what did OCS stand for. After a while they bent me over backwards in the chair and locked my hands and neck in an old-time stock. This was not going to be a “snap” not fun at all. There I was in a chair bent backward with water hitting me between my eyes. I was living the “Chinese Water Torture.” I tried to make up songs to the beat of the water hitting my head. It seemed as if I was there for hours before the guards returned to ask their questions again. This time I could hear a buzzing noise and they were rubbing on my head. I thought big deal they are cutting my hair, then they started touching my hands, but they were numb, still not a big deal. My day was getting ready to get bad. They asked a question and would then put their “toy” against my throat. “Oh my God,” they had a cattle prod and it hurt. Where did I put those aspirins? They told me if I did not tell them what OCS stood for, they were going to increase the power and really shock me. I was not enjoying being captured one bit.

They took me out of the stocks and took me to another “chamber of horrors,” the log raising pit. They had four or five of us picking up this pole and raising it above our heads. Up and down over and over, after a while my arms wanted to fall off. When was the big escape going to happen?

They left us alone while some VIP was touring the camp. The entrance to the pit was unguarded and the gate to the camp was open and a straight shot. This was my chance and I was ready. I started to tear my U.S. Army tag off and get the razor blade and cut my boot laces when another cadet made a break for it. He ran over a guard and almost

took out the VIP at the entrance. They were chasing him, and my tag was getting loose. Why had I sewed it back so tight? The guard came back into the log pit and took us to the "Mud Bath."

They brought the cadet that had tried to escape in the pit with us and had us line up against the wall. Not too bad standing in mud up to your knees, better than cow manure. "You want us to do what?" My day was not getting any better, we began low crawling through the mud. When we got to the other side, we had to go back the other way. We were "Mud Covered Cadets." I was cold and all I could think about was getting out of Oklahoma and back to warm Texas, or at least back to the barracks and a nice warm shower.

I volunteered to police up around the latrine. This was a good detail outside the wire away from the sadistic guards and interrogators. I started picking up paper and putting it in a sack while I worked my way to the rear of the latrine. I looked to the right and to the left, no one watching, I grabbed my tag ripped it off, out came the razor blade I cut the boot laces and away I ran into the nearby tree line. I was free and my day was getting better. I ran, and ran, then I ran some more. No one was in pursuit, I stopped running and removed my cut bootlaces and replaced them with the new pair that was hidden in my shirt. I then tore off my name tag and started chewing some gum, which felt great in my dry mouth. I removed the map from under my collar and determine how to get the partisan camp. I was cold from the cold north Oklahoma Wind and being covered in mud was not helping. I was hungry, I should have put half of a Snicker Bar in my hollowed-out boot heel, too late now. I was sore and tired but off to the partisan camp I went.

I could hear shouts and gun shots as aggressors either chased other cadets or were just making noises. I did not care I just wanted to get to the partisan camp and get food and water. At the partisan camp, we ate and had plenty of water to drink. The partisans would put us into five to eight-man groups give us a map and tell us which way to head to the release point and look for a light on a pole. With a clean canteen with fresh water, food in my gut off I went into the darkness, with my new buddies and hopefully to the release point and then back to the barracks.

Cadet Muncaster and I were to be the point men for our group, because we were brave, great, and foolish Texans. We went through woods, over and down mountains, through creeks, and cactus. We traveled very quietly and ducked every time we saw or heard a patrol; it was slow going but we were going. We saw lights and tents to our right. Muncaster and I looked at the map, to our delight it was marked "Girl Scout Camp." We told the rest of team to wait - that we were going to check out the tents, we left off the part about girl scouts. Off we went with grins on our faces. Under the wire I entered the first tent - darn no girls just a bunch of sleeping bags and back packs. I opened one of the backpacks - it did not have any "girly stuff" just Air Force uniforms. What a disappointment for two Texans trapped behind enemy lines. Muncaster and I went to go back to our group with the sad news that this was not the release point. We heard voices coming towards us - we slid out of the tent and hid in the tall grass near the camp. They were carrying rifles, could this be an enemy patrol? We let them walk right by us. They passed by so close I could have reached out and touched them. The "mud bath" that I wore was great camouflage. We got back to the group and off we went again. We were in the middle of a field of very high Johnson Grass when we heard voices and lots of gun

shots. The firing and yelling was coming from the front of us and behind us. Now what had they spotted, our little band of frozen cadets? No, they were shooting at each other, they were not after us. We did not take any chances. We just hid in the grass until one group chased the other off. Once they were gone our trek started again hopefully heading in the right direction. We had to be with two Texans in the lead. A light shined in the distance off we went toward, freedom and a bath. More tents. Muncaster and I went to check it out. He stayed in the bushes as I crawled under a deuce and half. This camp had trucks, tents, and a lot of people walking around. I did not see any other cadets, oops there was a soldier standing beside the truck I was under. This time I was not as skillful as I was before, and I was spotted. I yelled to Muncaster to run, when the soldier, which turned out to be an Air Force Major, told me “not to worry they were not after us.” I bet the enemy uses that line all the time. We had wandered off the path and worked our way into an Air Force Commando group having their own little war game. The major pointed the way to the release point, as we were not the only cadets and probably not the last to enter this tent city.

We hiked over to the release point tent and checked in and waited until there was a truck full of cadets to truck back to the barracks. Once we got back to barracks I went behind the dumpster and striped down to my underwear. My mud-covered boots, socks, blouse, and pants were thrown into the dumpster. I went into the barracks picked up a clean pair of underwear and went to the showers. I took the longest shower I had since O.C.S. started. I dried off and got on my bunk and went to sleep. Throughout the night cadets were straggling in from the exercise.

The next morning the formations to “march to the mess” had more cadets in the sick and wounded formation, than our battery formation. I knew if this was only a training exercise, but it made realize I did not want to go through the real thing.

### **Raymond E. Gandy, Jr: 505B-68**

Since Class 505A-68 and Class 505B-68 (my Class) graduated (March 3, 1968) at the tail end of the famous 1968 Tet Offensive, I believe our classes were the first OCS Classes whose graduates got sent straight to Vietnam. If my memory serves correctly, there were about 58 of us who did not get short tours in the U.S. or elsewhere. We got 30 days leave and landed in Vietnam. When I reported to the 1st Cavalry Division in early April 1968, I'd been a 2nd LT for 28 days. Just in time for the end of the 1st Cav's Operation Pegasus (the relief of Khe Sahn) and the beginning of the Division's Operation Delaware, a fun trip into the A Shau Valley.

The conversation I remember most from OCS stems from that unique experience. All of us Vietnam bound “not yet” graduated Candidates had received our alert orders just prior to the Gunnery Final Exam. So, we knew before graduation that we were going straight to Vietnam. When we sat down to take our final exam, we asked what happens if we flunk the exam (some of us probably thinking-recycle or change of VN orders?).

Without a pause the Gunnery Instructor said: “A typical FA recon section in an Infantry Company is three people. The Driver, the Recon Sergeant, and the LT FO. If you pass the test, you'll go to Vietnam and sit in the right front seat of the jeep as the FO. If you flunk the test, you'll go to Vietnam and sit in the left front seat of the jeep as the driver.”

Needless to say, we all worked hard to pass the exam. When my Infantry Company left the A Shau in mid-May, our Company Commander had been wounded, the new “instant CO,” the former XO, 1st LT James M. (Mike) Sprayberry, had earned the Medal of Honor, and we were about 50% strength. I’d had second thoughts about passing that final exam a few times.

Note: Mike Sprayberry was also an OCS Graduate. He was an Armor OCS LT.

**Frank Melage: 506-68**

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” the famous Dickens quote describes OCS in a nutshell.

I was married only a few weeks when my class started. By the way I’m still married to the same wonderful woman. We started with approximately 130 or so candidates and finished with 81. The sense of accomplishment and the experiences shaped the next 40 plus years in a very positive way. I truly felt after OCS that there was nothing I couldn’t accomplish if I put my mind to it. I am now retired. I have had a wonderful productive career as an IBM executive, a blessed marriage, and helped raise 3 great children.

I remember the first weeks of OCS very vividly. The constant hazing, the discipline, the lack of sleep, the physical demands were all exhausting. The pressure resulted in many dropouts those first weeks. I found Jarking as we called it a lot more difficult than running. Dropping to the ground for pushups for the least infraction was constant. I didn’t understand it all at the time but as I progressed from no color to green the logic became clear to me. Put as much pressure as possible on the candidates to determine our reaction. If you couldn’t handle it in a safe non-combat training environment what would you do when you were faced not with an exercise but the real thing? Could you set an example and lead and be responsible for the safety of your men.

My wife became very active with the other candidate wives and enjoyed the time. It was hard on her though. I didn’t start to get weekend passes until we turned red. I spent most Saturdays and Sundays running up the hill and back. We were allowed to see each other after mess for 5 minutes. I had to stand at parade rest 3 feet from the car – no touching was permitted. We were always watched and it wasn’t unusual for a candidate to be dropped in front of their spouse.

I still have a rock from the top of MB4 with Ft. Sill 1968 written on it. This is where we coalesced as a unit. In the beginning we had to run with full gear and our rifles at port arms. The rifle became very heavy during the run and many candidates had difficulty carrying it. We would always carry another candidate’s rifle to help get him through. A pickup truck followed us to pick up any candidates who couldn’t make it. There was a time limit which was strictly enforced. If you didn’t complete the run in time or at all you had to do it over again. It wasn’t easy by any means, particularly in the beginning. By the last weeks of OCS (it was summertime in hot Oklahoma) I could run the 4 1/2 miles without breaking a sweat. We were completing the “Jark” run in close to 40 minutes by then. I was never in better shape.

The classroom work was also difficult but in a way it was a break. It was often difficult to stay awake. I did well in the classroom. Everyone was thankful for the “Aiming Circle” test. I think everyone aced it.

The field exercises were interesting and difficult. I remember learning to call in fire from the air. That was hard -- very difficult to get range and direction from that perspective. I can still read a map today and find any place without a GPS. The repelling exercise scared most everyone. Quite a few candidates had to be pushed over the cliff and were terrified. For some reason it didn't bother me at all. I thought it was fun.

Escape and evasion week was at the end of OCS. The last thing we had to get through. I remember going for 3 days on a half cup of rice and water. The POW camp was as real as it possibly could be. Probably a lot harsher than what is now called “enhanced interrogation.” I remember being put in a spinning barrel hanging upside down tied up at the feet. Then a dead snake was thrown in the barrel. It wasn't obvious to me that the snake was dead. My other memory is of six of us holding a giant log over our heads for hours. You always had the fear of washing out of OCS even in the last week. One candidate never surrendered and it took a couple of days for the cadre to find him. He washed out.

My last story. A few years ago, I went to a local Walmart for a book signing. It was a signing for the best seller “American Soldier” by General Tommy Franks – Fort Sill OCS alumni. As I approached the signing table I yelled “24 Fire Mission Over” – he replied, “18 Fire Mission Out.”

The greatest accomplishment of my life is being a good husband and father. The next is graduating from OCS and becoming a commissioned officer in the US Army. It is something I feel I earned and it was a great honor and accomplishment. It convinced me at a young age that there was nothing I couldn't do in my life if I worked hard. I was a good officer.

### **“OCS Hall of Fame to be Opened”**

#### ***The Daily Oklahoman (June 29, 1968)***

Formal opening of the Artillery Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame at Fort Sill is scheduled for 9 a.m. Saturday. Brigadier General John J. Kenney, Assistant Commandant of the U.S. Army Artillery and Missile School, will cut the ribbon opening the hall.

The Hall of Fame will feature items from the first class to this year's class 501, which pioneered the five-day field exercise named in its honor. The Hall was proposed by Gen. Kenney and a committee of officers began working on the project last November.

### **James P. Drake: 508-68**

I joined the Army shortly after graduating from Frederick Military Academy of Portsmouth, Virginia. My MOS was 95B, Military Policeman. My first assignment was with the 572nd MP Company, Fort Ritchie, Maryland. Later I was sent overseas to the 562nd Artillery in Alaska, a remote deployed Nike Hercules Missile site near the Arctic Circle.

Talking to the officers there I applied for OCS. Unfortunately, I was notified to appear at the selection board 2 weeks after it adjourned. A common occurrence when on a remote site. I was told to reapply when I got to my next unit. I received copies of my application and noticed it had me as a tail gunner on a B-52. I knew we worked closely with the Air Force, but only with their radar sites. Army paperwork at its finest.

I was then transferred to the 504th MP Company, Fort Eustis, Virginia. I resubmitted my paperwork and went about my duties as the Assistant Platoon Sergeant. I completed the basic infantry correspondence courses from Fort Benning, Georgia and was anticipating going to OCS there and becoming a Bluebird. I was selected to attend the First Army NCO Academy at Fort Knox, Kentucky and was looking forward to that.

Then out of the blue, Military Personnel, Washington DC called me at work and asked if I would accept Artillery OCS. I said I wanted Infantry and they said that with my mathematical background I was needed there. I agreed, this was on a Thursday afternoon and they said I had to report in at Fort Sill, Oklahoma at Sunday noon. I was expedited through personnel and finance and signed out of the unit at 1600 on Friday. The Mess Sergeant fixed me some sandwiches for travel, I stopped by the MP Station, filled my thermos with coffee did my goodbyes and hit the road in my 1965 Dodge.

I drove 21 hours nonstop to my parents' house in Dallas, Texas. They were surprised to see me, I went to bed and got up early Sunday morning. We got out our Oklahoma Map and started searching for Fort Sill, we had no idea where it was located. Found it next to Lawton and guessed it was about a 3-hour drive.

I arrived at the Officer Candidate Brigade and was assigned to Hotel Battery, Class 508-68. I could not enter until I took all my Sergeant Stripes off all my uniforms, I worked hard for those stripes. There was no turning around, so off they came. Now I looked like all the other OCS Candidates.

I had to learn how to run, not something I did for the past 18 months, which were spent inside a 1965 Chevrolet patrolling, investigating larcenies and traffic accidents. I could handle the military discipline, but it took a couple of weeks to get my running legs back.

My previous experience with artillery was occasionally firing the cannon for flag raising in front of post headquarters -that was it! Most of the candidates were college guys with some artillery knowledge from AIT. I knew I was going to have a tough time learning about fire direction, surveying, etc. The first week was vehicle inspection for post decal, my muffler system did not comply, so my car was kicked off base. Fortunately, a couple of the Ex-Sergeants wives kept my car at their house during OCS.

There are two things I remember most about OCS. One was the comradeship and support from all the others. We were always working together as a team, there was no challenge we couldn't handle. Looking back on that was one of the best times I had in the Army.

The second was the JARK, running Medicine Bluffs. Seems like every time I turned around I was getting more and more demerits. Which meant I got to run the JARK every weekend. I was leading the battery in trips up the hill. Once I became an Upperclassman,

I got to lead the Brigade on the JARK Run. Later in life I became a long-distance runner, so something good came out of those runs up the bluff. Upon graduation and commissioning, I rarely ever met any of the candidates and lost track of them. I imagine most of them left the Army after a couple of years and went back to college. The Army was my chosen profession and I retired from same.

### **M. Drew Mendelson: 509-68**

OCS is a pattern. In the course of twenty-three weeks the image of an Artillery Officer is created. By the time a candidate graduates, he fits this design. As in the sculpting of a chunk of rough granite, the qualities and the proportions are evoked, smoothed and polished.

On 10 March of this year, class 509-68 was formed. The fledgling candidates were the stone, and OCS was to be the sculptor. As the artist studies his work, roughing in the outlines; so OCS lays the groundwork.

The first courses were basics. The new candidate learned the superstructure of the Artillery. He became familiar with the operation of the guns and their means of locomotion. He was introduced to the intricacies of Army life.

509 spent its time in these pursuits. The artist wielded his chisel and the flakes of stone fell away. OCS tested the strength, the flexibility, the enduring qualities of each candidate.

Soon the sculptor found his design growing clearer, its aspects became evident, its contours unveiled, 509 became candidates in earnest. They turned middle class. The secrets of gunnery were revealed to them. This is the core of the Artillery, this is the body of the design.

OCS creates officers. The last few weeks provide the texture, the polish. The retiring of this guidon represents the emergence of the finished sculpture. The results are different, each candidate is an individual, yet each is an Artilleryman.

The artist had to start with a monolithic block consisting of those who might be leaders. Thus 509 began with 128 who might have been... it graduates with 61 who are.....

*A framed copy of the above was presented to the Hall of Fame by OC (Officer Candidate) M. Drew Mendelson on behalf of Class 509-68 on or about 20 August 1968. The Hall of Fame was established on 29 June 1968 and originally housed in Building 3031. The framed document is currently on display in the mock candidate cubicle on the second floor of Durham Hall in Building 3025 (The Artillery OCS Hall of Fame).*

### **Michael B. King: 514-68**

I finished my Artillery OCS stint at Fort Sill in the fall of 1968 but by luck of the draw or whatever it's called, I was assigned to Germany (75 of my class finished, 71 went to Southeast Asia, 4 to Europe). I do remember that one good friend/class member, Irving Chenoweth, was killed 3 months after arriving in Vietnam Nam. He and I enlisted at the same time, went through Basic together at Fort Leonard Wood and then the AIT and OCS exercise at Sill.

**Chris Callis: 515-68**

When I was in AIT at Fort Sill I entered an Army photo contest and won Best of Show and 4 other 1st places. They announced the winners in the post newspaper my 1st week at OCS (June 19, 1968) and I showed it to my battery commander and asked permission to document the OCS process through the eyes of a candidate. He thought it was a good idea and got Colonel Watson (Brigade Commander) to sign off on the idea.

They said I could carry the camera at all times and photograph anything I wanted unless it was classified. I would have to announce that I was on special assignment from the Brigade Commander if I was ever questioned. Needless to say, for a budding photographer I was in heaven. As the project got underway I realized I needed a darkroom in the barracks. They gave me a maid's closet to use, my parents sent out my darkroom equipment and I was all set to keep my passion going. It certainly helped my morale and I ended up making a scrap book (the class all chipped in to pay the costs) and we presented it to Colonel Watson as our class gift. He was thrilled with the gift and when my orders to report to a cannon cocker training outfit at Fort Sill came, he got me reassigned back to OCS and said I could have any job available in the Brigade plus he gave me two rooms for a darkroom and studio. I took the easy job in plans and scheduling and was there until I got orders to Vietnam.

As you can imagine, this experience was very special to me.

**Martin S. Smouse: 516-68**

Randy: I attended the 2007 Artillery OCS Alumni Reunion, and sometime after that I ordered my copy of your book, *The OCS Experience*. I retired from work at the end of 2014 and am finally getting around to doing many things I've been ignoring for years.

One of those things was to read your book, cover to cover. What a great book, and what an interesting experience it was to read it. Many of the common memories shared in the book were totally lost to my fading memory. Some of the memories started gradually coming back into focus a while after I'd read about them. Some were crystal clear but had lain dormant for almost 50 years.

I thought I would share my experiences with you, so here goes my rambling account. I wish these thoughts were better organized, but they jump around instead.

One of the oddest items was the rekindling of the term "grotto" for candy and similar food items. I had never heard this term before OCS, never heard it after, never thought about it since my OCS days. I hardly remembered it after reading about it, but slowly it came back to me.

Many of the comments in the book seemed written by men who had read my mind. Clearly, much of the effect of OCS was shared by almost all of us. Much of what I read I either did not remember or did not agree with, but so much of it was right on point.

I was one of the unfortunates who did not get to go to Artillery AIT. Although I had been tested for and accepted into OCS while in Basic Training at Fort. Lewis, Washington, the Army in its wisdom sent me to Infantry AIT at Fort Dix, New Jersey. While I did appreciate that assignment (we took the bus into New York City almost every weekend), it put me behind academically when I got to OCS. Many in our class had been to Artillery AIT and



got the jump on me. I didn't even know there was such a thing as Artillery AIT until I got to OCS and learned what I had missed.

I came from a family in rural Oregon which did not have any military family members, and our community was not especially military minded. I found out later that the guys who grew up in the South tended to have a more positive attitude toward the military in general and a more general acceptance of the Viet Nam war. I got drafted after I graduated from college, so to me the Army was just the next step in my life, not one that I looked forward to or wanted, but one that my life path took me to. OCS was just one more in a series of challenges: high school, college, Basic Training, Infantry AIT, and then Artillery OCS.

I only signed up for OCS because of the miserable conditions of Basic Training, and the perceived mistreatment I was receiving in Basic. I reasoned that being an officer and having a better level of treatment for 2 years and 10 months was preferable to being an enlisted man for just 2 years but being treated badly.

I recall that after passing the OCS qualifying test, we were offered one of three choices: Infantry (I knew I did not want this), Engineering (rumor was that you needed a related college degree), or Artillery. And that's how I ended up at Fort Sill.

I later ran into my Basic Training company Captain in Viet Nam. He didn't remember me, but he did remember one troubled soldier in our unit who I was friends with but who eventually washed out of Basic.

One of my strongest memories of Basic Training was on the rifle range. I had had a lot of experience with firearms growing up out in the country, so I was very confident with them. On the rifle range, I turned back to my buddies and made some wise crack while holding my M14, and our drill sergeant called out: "Smouse, you do that again and I'm going to come out there and tap-dance on your chest." He would have, and I would have totally deserved it. I don't offer that as an example of mistreatment, but as a humorous incident.

I do remember the first time our OCS class was treated to a live fire demonstration. My entire knowledge of artillery up to that time had been as portrayed in movies and TV shows. So, when the shots went off, I expected instantaneous explosions of balls of fire. Imagine my confusion and disappointment when it took an eternity for the shots to hit and then only a gray puff of smoke to show for it. Welcome to reality.

It was great to read the entries in your book to find out the true purpose of many of the types of treatment we got in OCS. It was kind of like reading a movie review, so you can understand what went on in a movie you saw but were confused by. Many of the observations would say something like "The TAC officers did ABC to make us realize XYZ." It's strange to realize so many years later what the true purpose was behind much of our suffering.

The descriptions of OCS during the Korean War years seemed much more difficult than when I was there in the Viet Nam years. I found myself thinking, would I have been able to handle that added degree of difficulty and would I have made it through OCS and graduated under those severe conditions? Life seemed harder back then.

In your book, at page 283, Hank Franz wrote about our class member who had been a warrant officer helicopter pilot in Nam, then came to OCS at about age 40. This was John Fox, and I remember him well. On one Jark, I was the guy who carried his M14 when he reached his physical limit. John had to graduate with our class, he absolutely could not be set back even 2 weeks to the next class. The Army had a rule that you had to be commissioned as an officer before a certain age, and he was right at that age. He could graduate with our class, but not with the next one. Talk about pressure. But he made it, an older man in a young man's world. Good for him. I met him again at the 2007 reunion.

Our gunnery instructor was Tommy Clack. I recall reading about him later. He was a triple amputee in Viet Nam. At that time there was another triple amputee from Nam who was very influential in the Veteran's Administration, and I recall a published photo showing the two of them together, shaking hands with the only arm they each had left.

Many of the recollections in your book mentioned how often fellow classmates would wash out and suddenly disappear. Oddly, I just don't recall this happening. It must have, but I have forgotten this aspect of it and cannot remember more than about one incident.

I do however recall vividly an Honor Code incident in which I almost washed out. I didn't lie, cheat or steal, but I did quibble, and I still blush to think about it. It was a lack of forthrightness that I knew was wrong at the time, but committed, nonetheless. One of the TAC Officers counseled me about the incident and told me that under more strict attrition rate guidelines that had been in effect earlier, I would have been washed out for committing the infraction I did. I think back about this incident often. It is one of the most self-critical memories I have in my life. What would have been the course of my life if I had been washed out because of that incident? Would I have had the confidence to go on to Law School if I had been washed out? I know I would not have met my wife, not have been father to my daughter. Life would have been much different. Thank heavens for the more lenient guidelines when this incident happened. I know for sure I am a better man for having graduated OCS and for having been an officer rather than an enlisted man.

I had been an indifferent student in high school and college. But my OCS experience required that I really bear down and perform to the best of my abilities. I know that set of experiences then translated into my becoming a much better student when I later went to Law School. Most of my law school class had just graduated from college, while I was several years older, due mostly to my years in the Army. But my Army experience more than made up for my educational shortcomings and made me realize that if I totally applied myself in Law School the way I did in OCS, I should be able to do it. Thank you, Artillery OCS for giving me this experience and confidence.

I wonder why I cannot remember the depth of detail that many of the contributors to your book were able to recall? Some have indicated the Army and the artillery just seemed such a natural fit for them, almost as though they had been born to it. Perhaps that type of bonding would result in more detailed memories.

I read that others recall sleeping while standing up, during those droning lectures in hot non-air-conditioned classrooms in the summer. I would not have thought it possible, but I too managed to fall back asleep while standing up in the back of the classroom.

I do not recall having different colored dots on the bottom of our boots to show that we were rotating them. Either we didn't do that, or I have totally forgotten.

I do remember dusting everything in the morning and having a thin coating of dust over everything by lunchtime.

Hopefully, now that I have read your book, more memories will slowly be awakened in me. I didn't have a camera in the Army until I got to Viet Nam, and I never kept a diary. So unfortunately, I don't have any visual or written reminders of what all we went through.

I do recall wonderful thunderstorms, mostly at night, with terrific rain, thunder and lightning. And I'm still puzzled about the high humidity in Oklahoma. Until then, I had lived all my life in the Pacific Northwest, and humidity was rarely an issue. And when you look at a map of the USA, you don't look at Oklahoma and suspect humidity. It really took some getting used to, especially the way those crisp uniforms could melt on you in an hour.

Thank you, Randy, and Penny, for all your hard work in compiling your wonderful book. It was a great trip down memory lane.

#### **“Officer Conduct”**

##### ***Officer Candidate Policy and Procedure Guide – Memo (20 September 1968)***

The practice of having the Tactical Staff Drop, or otherwise make fools of themselves during the Redbird and/or OC Wives skits or at any other time, will cease immediately.

#### **Anonymous: 516-68**

Several memories remain from that night (E & E). The many cattle prods that were used on us prisoners will long be remembered. And wandering across the firing range - I believe there were four or five in our group of escapees - and looking up and seeing a shooting star and hearing one of the group yell “incoming illumination round.”

That got the adrenalin flowing! But my most cherished memory was of LT Cross and the log. The log consisted of three utility poles, two standing vertically about 15 feet apart from each other. The third was about 20 feet long and was suspended by ropes that were connected to the tops of the vertical poles, so that it rested against the vertical poles. But when it was pushed away from the vertical poles and then released, it would slam back into the vertical poles. When my rotation was given the opportunity of being draped over the horizontal pole and experiencing being slammed, my demeanor did not please LT Cross (I believe it may have been something to do with the language I inserted between name, rank, and serial number, some of the words beginning with M and F), so I did not get to experience any of the other delights that evening before escape. He pulled me from my rotation and kept me on the pole the rest of the evening.

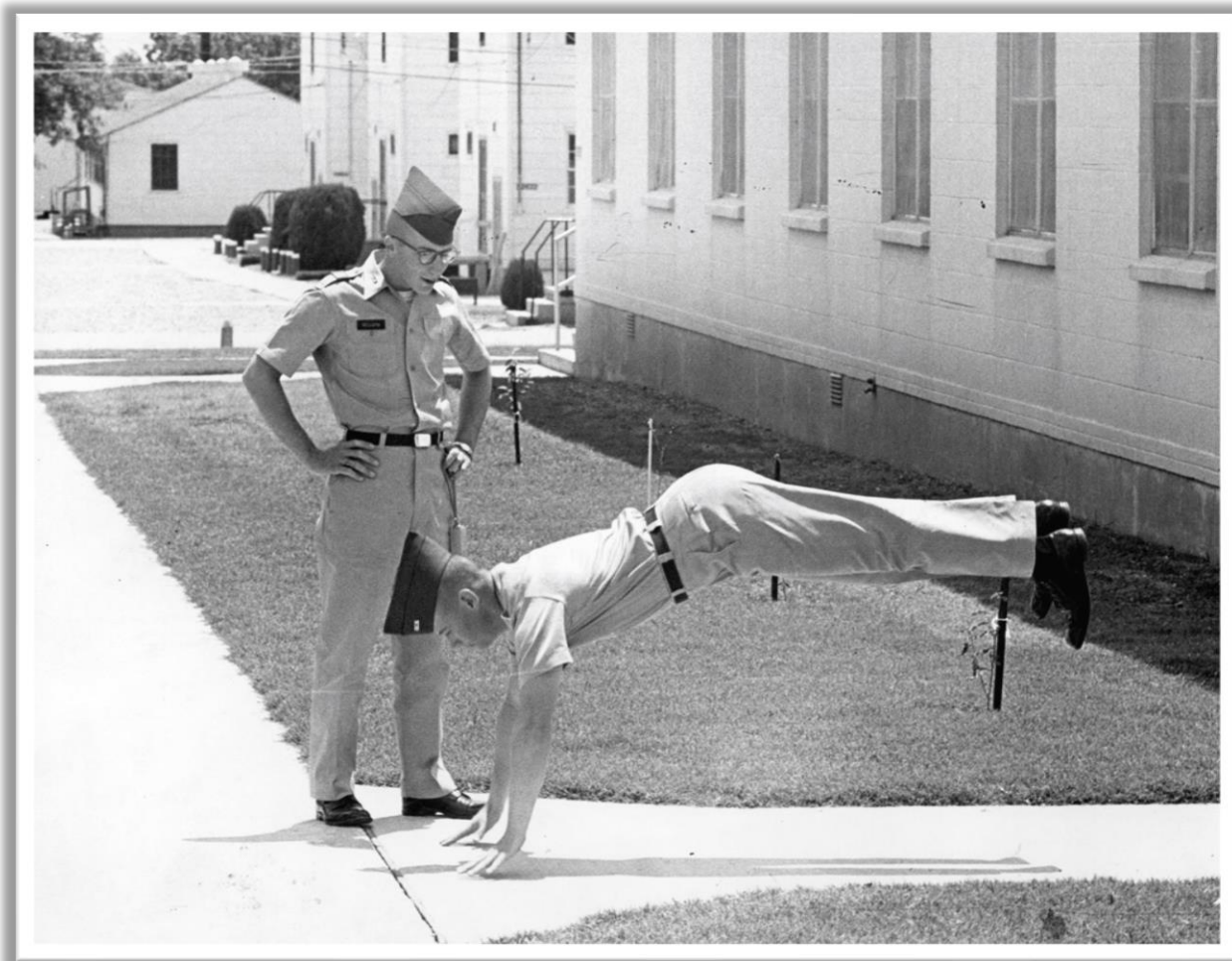
When escape occurred, I crawled for the first 5 minutes as my chest and groin were so sore I could not stand up. The blood in my urine the following day and the black and blue coloring from my chest to my thighs for the next several weeks, taught me many things, none of which did I use while being stationed in Italy for the following two years. Ah, the fond memories of Class 516 - 68.

**Henry A. Franz: 516-68**

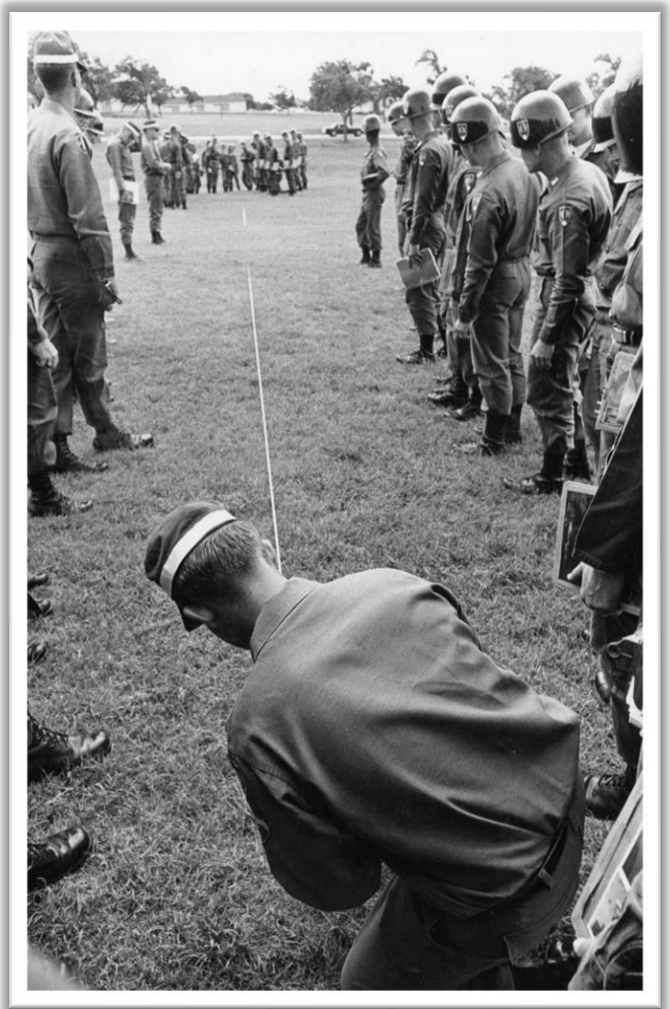
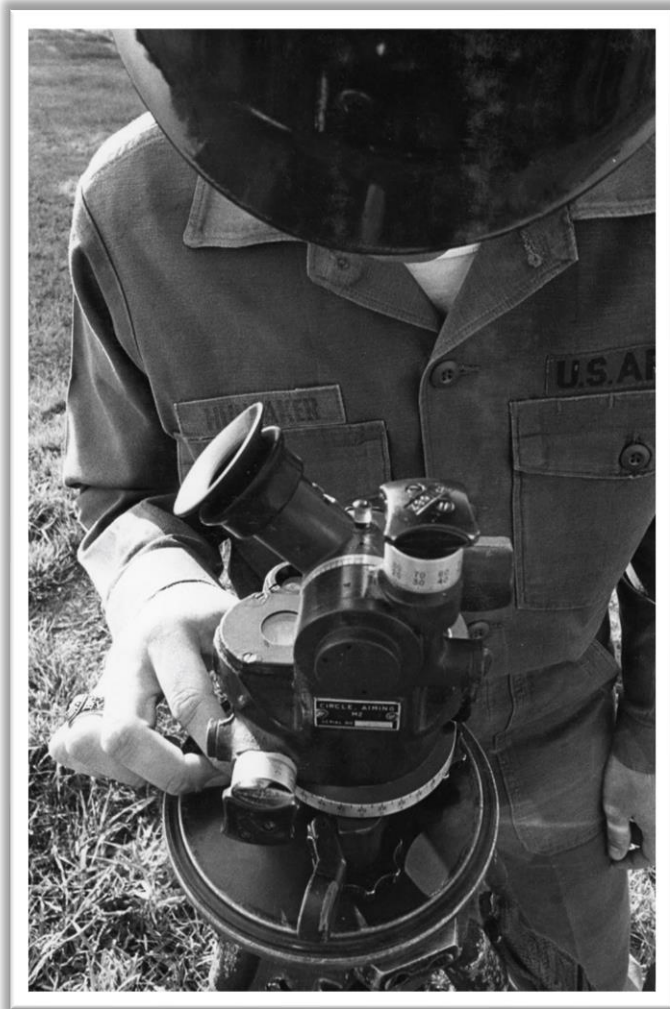
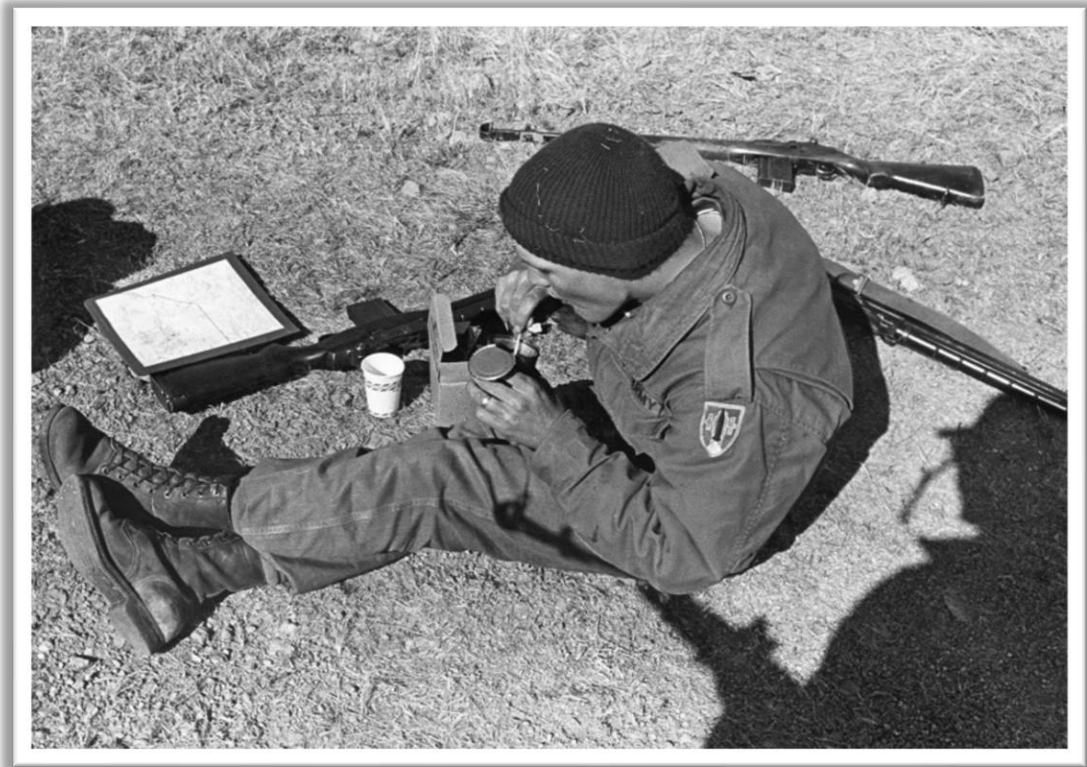
Like most, our class was all 20 something guys with the exception of a Warrant Officer helicopter pilot in his 40s who had just come back from a tour of Viet Nam. He did great and helped us all out except for one thing - he couldn't make it all the way up MB4 on our initial Jarks.

The instructors were on his ass something awful and it looked like he might throw in the towel until a couple of our classmates who were in exceptional shape took it upon themselves to carry him up the hill until he could get there on his own. It took a couple of weeks but by the time we were Middle Class he was doing great. He got the biggest round of applause at graduation. The guys who carried him got the second biggest.

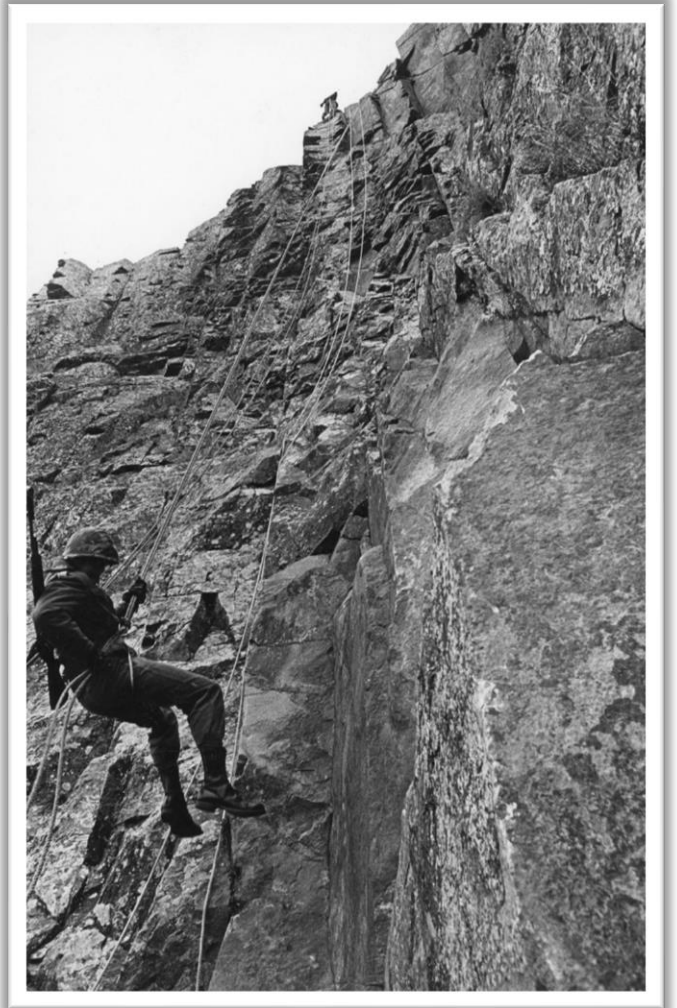
**The pictures that follow are from Chris Callis (Class 515-68) on special assignment from the OC Brigade Commander to document OCS through the eyes of a candidate.**

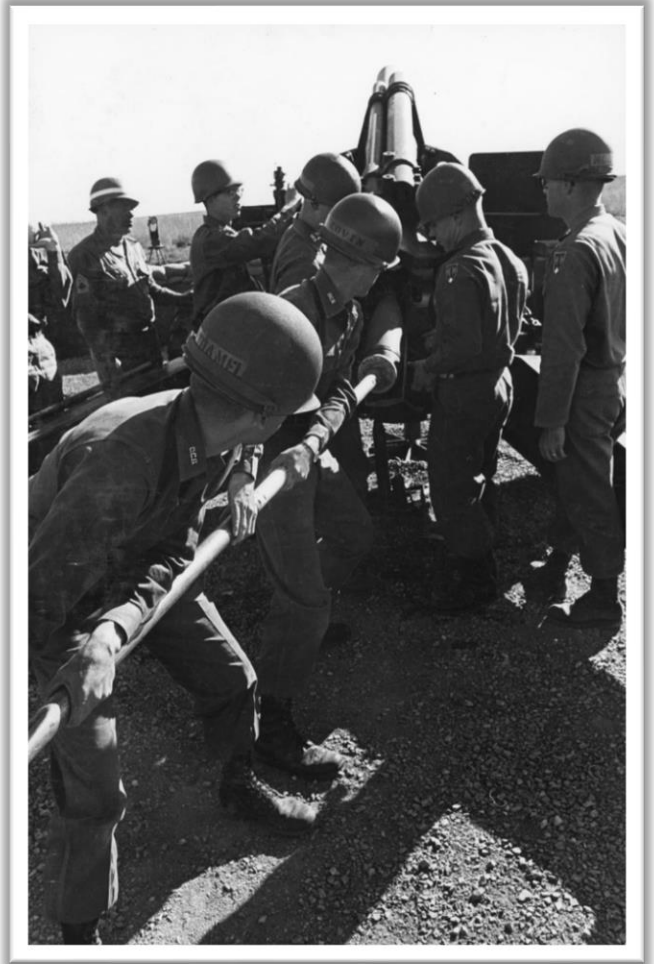
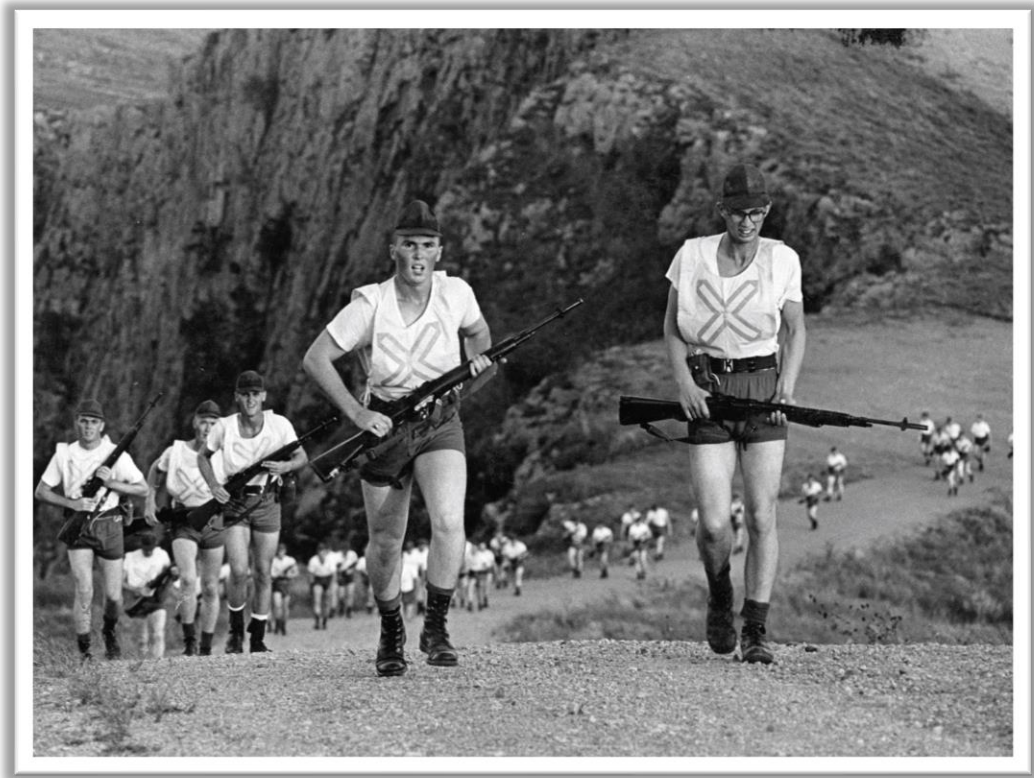


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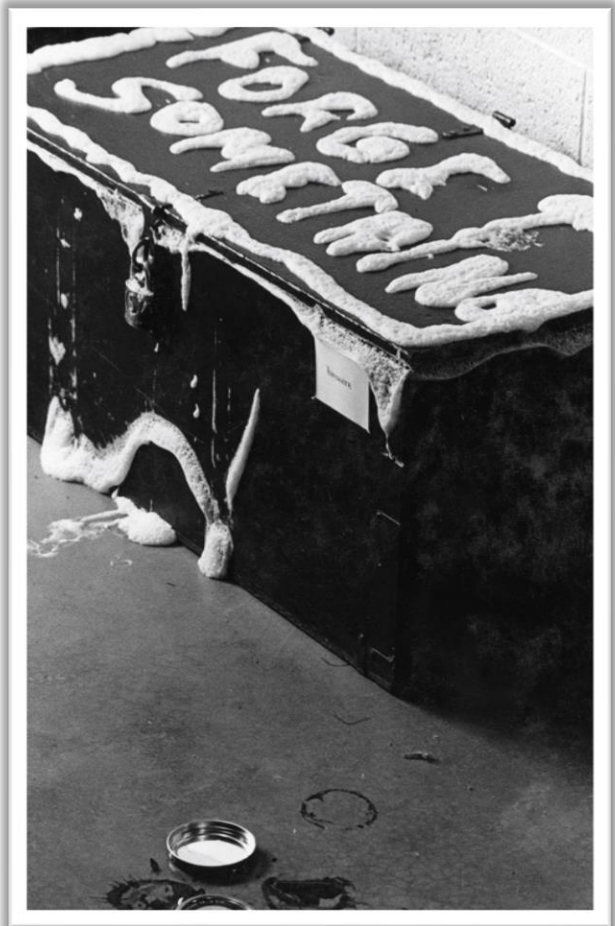
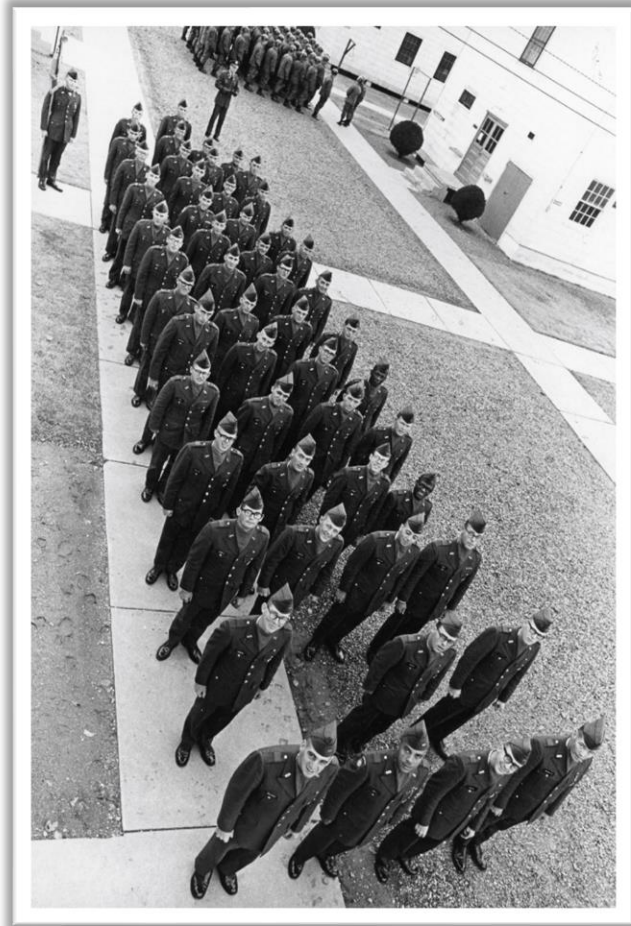
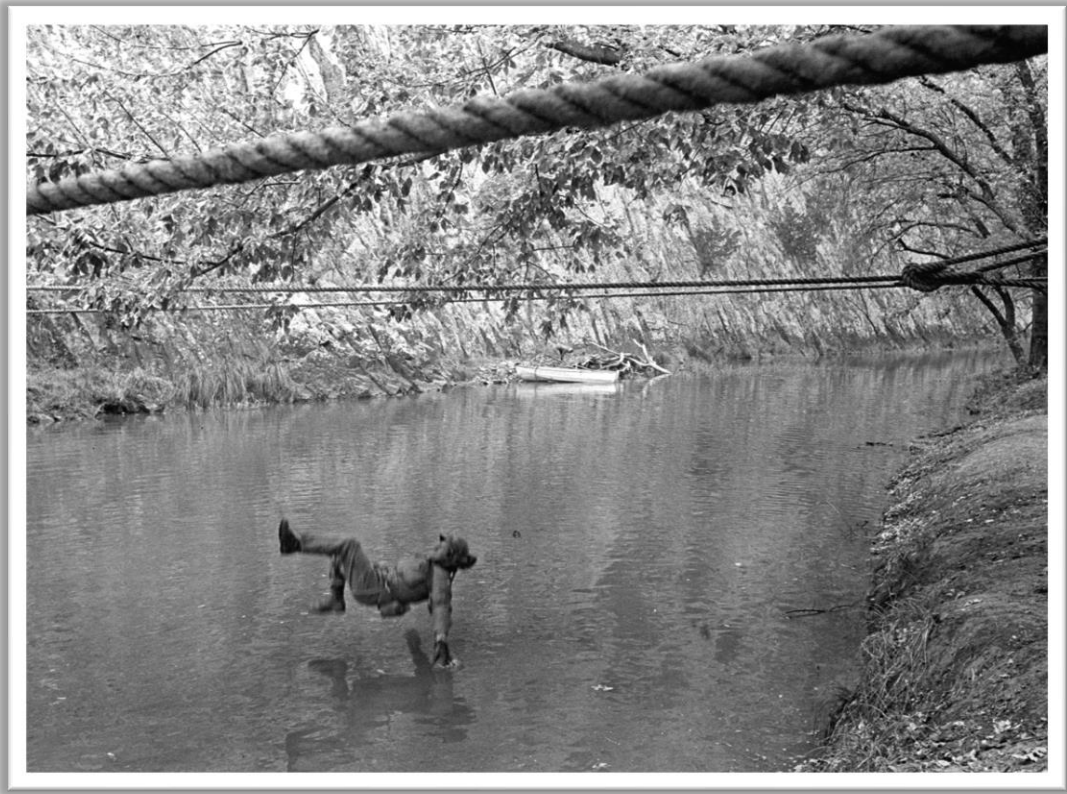


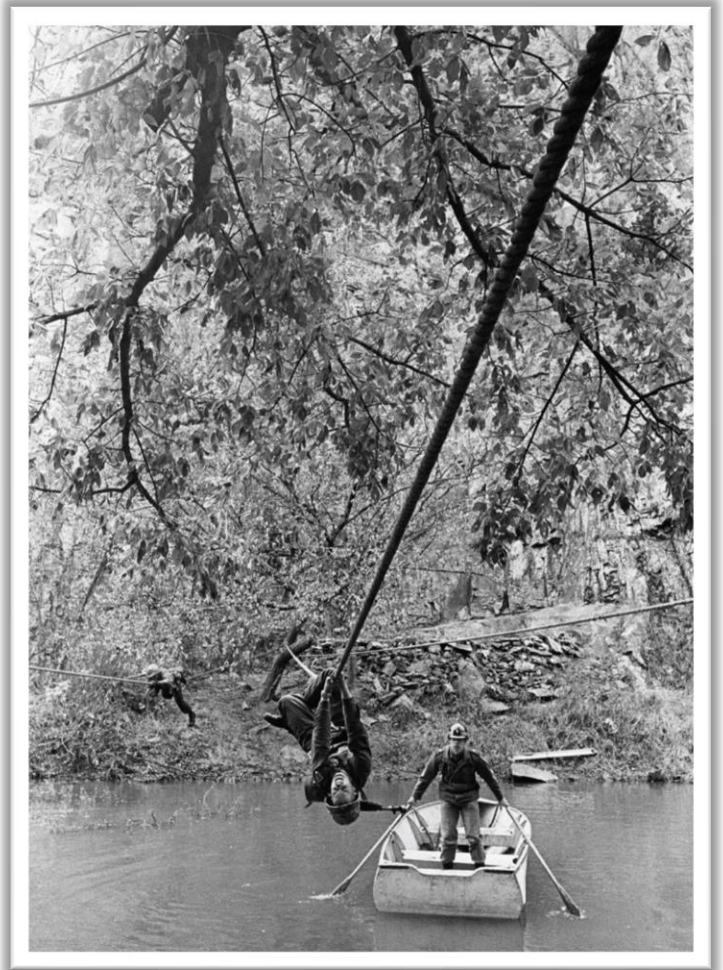
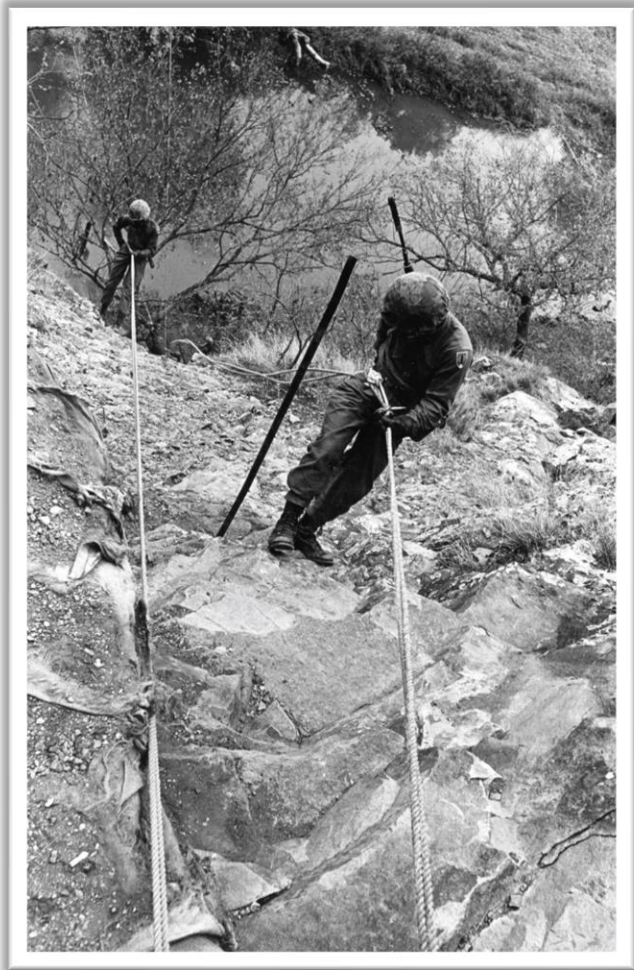


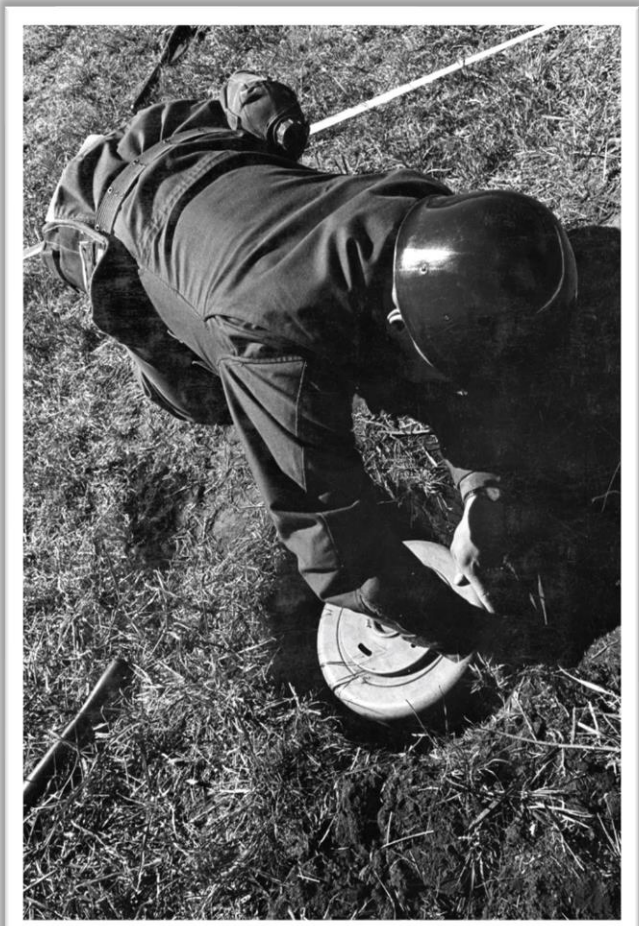








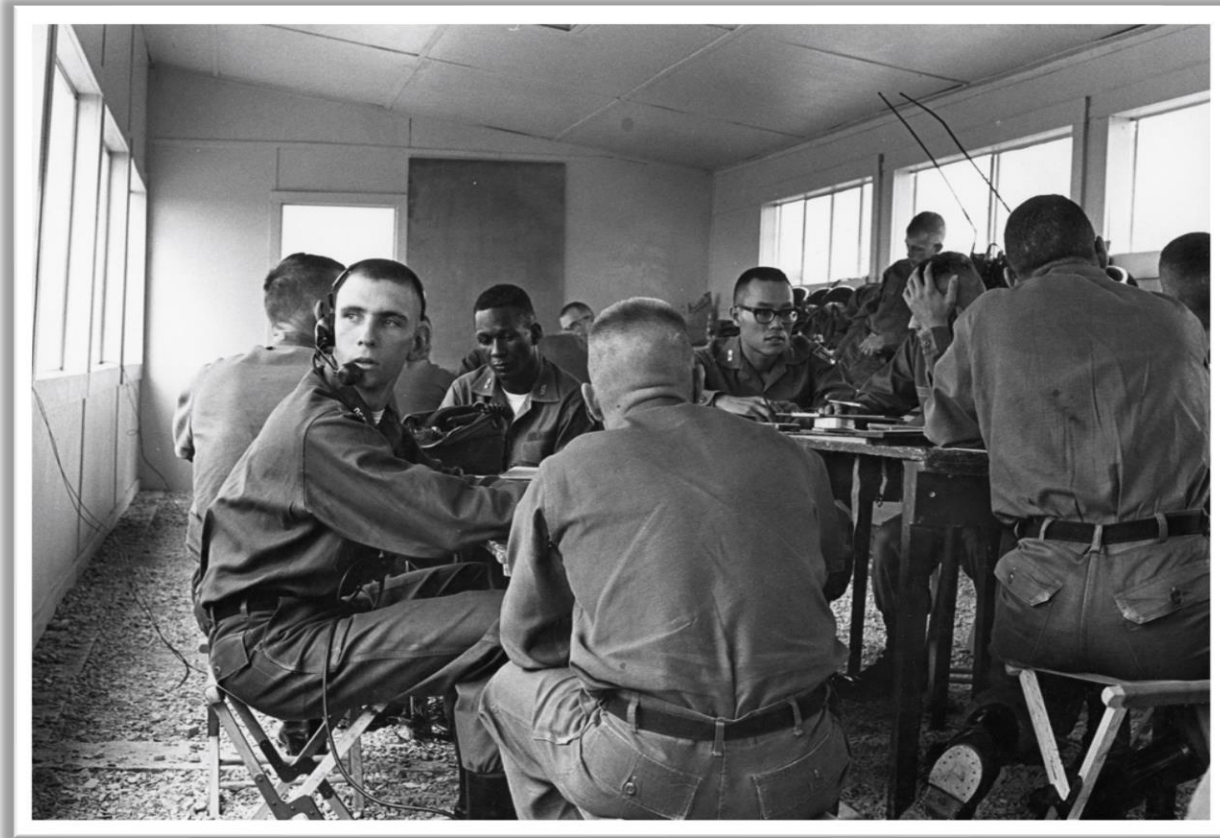
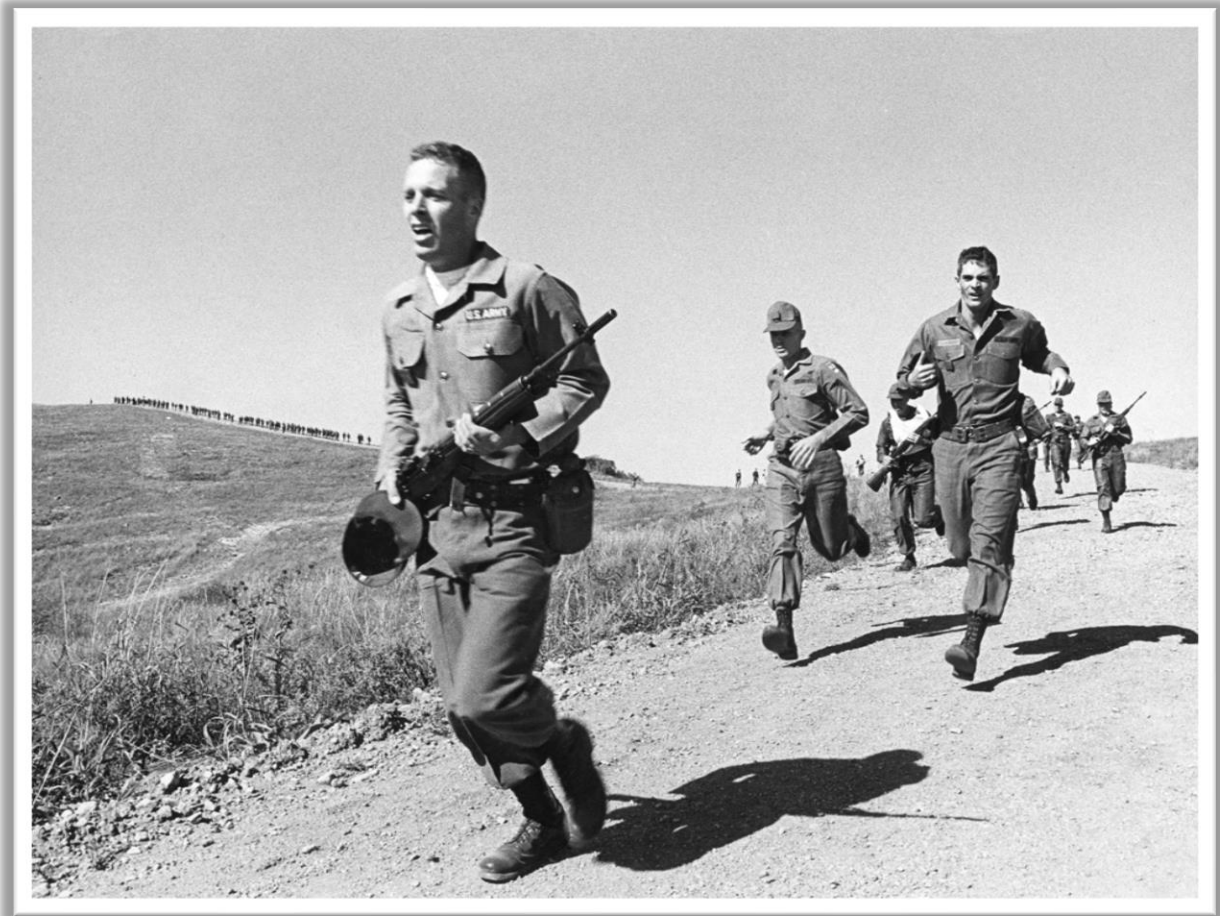






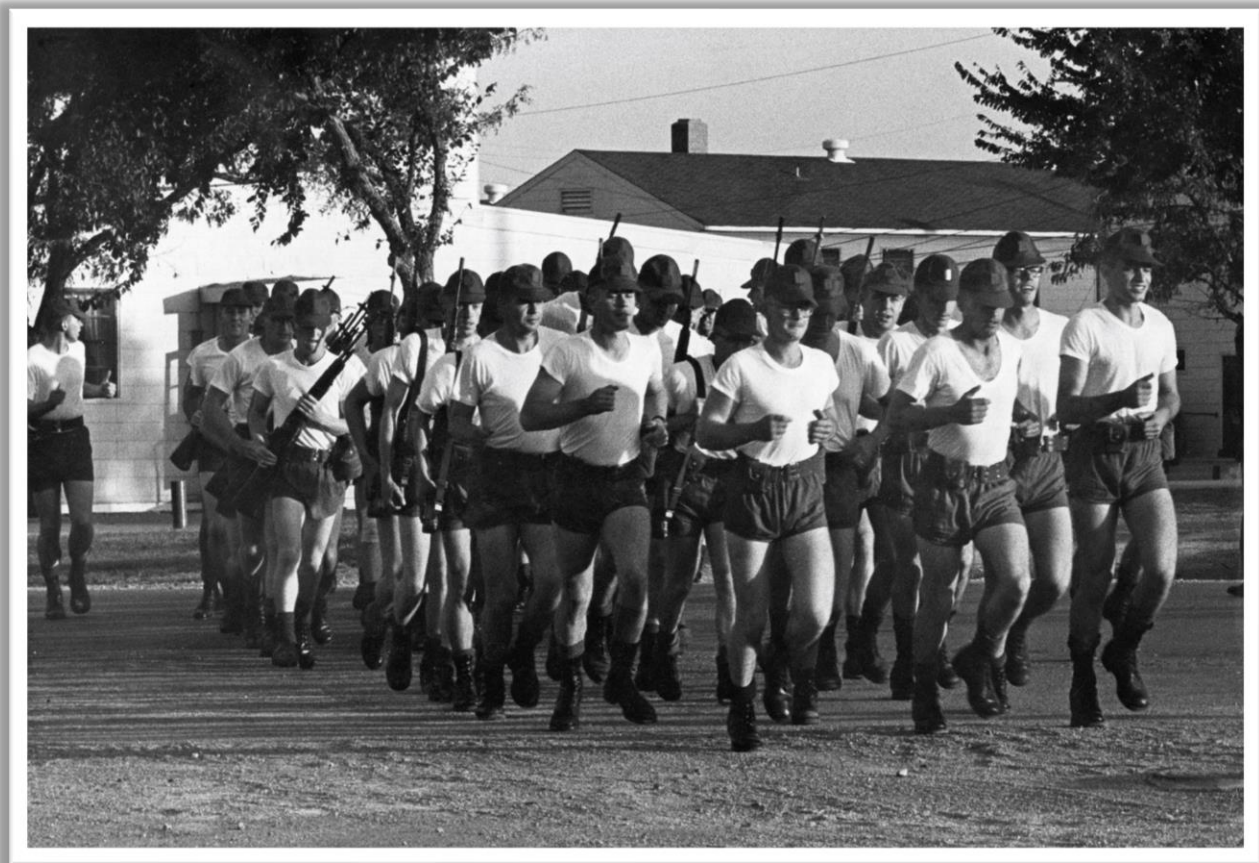
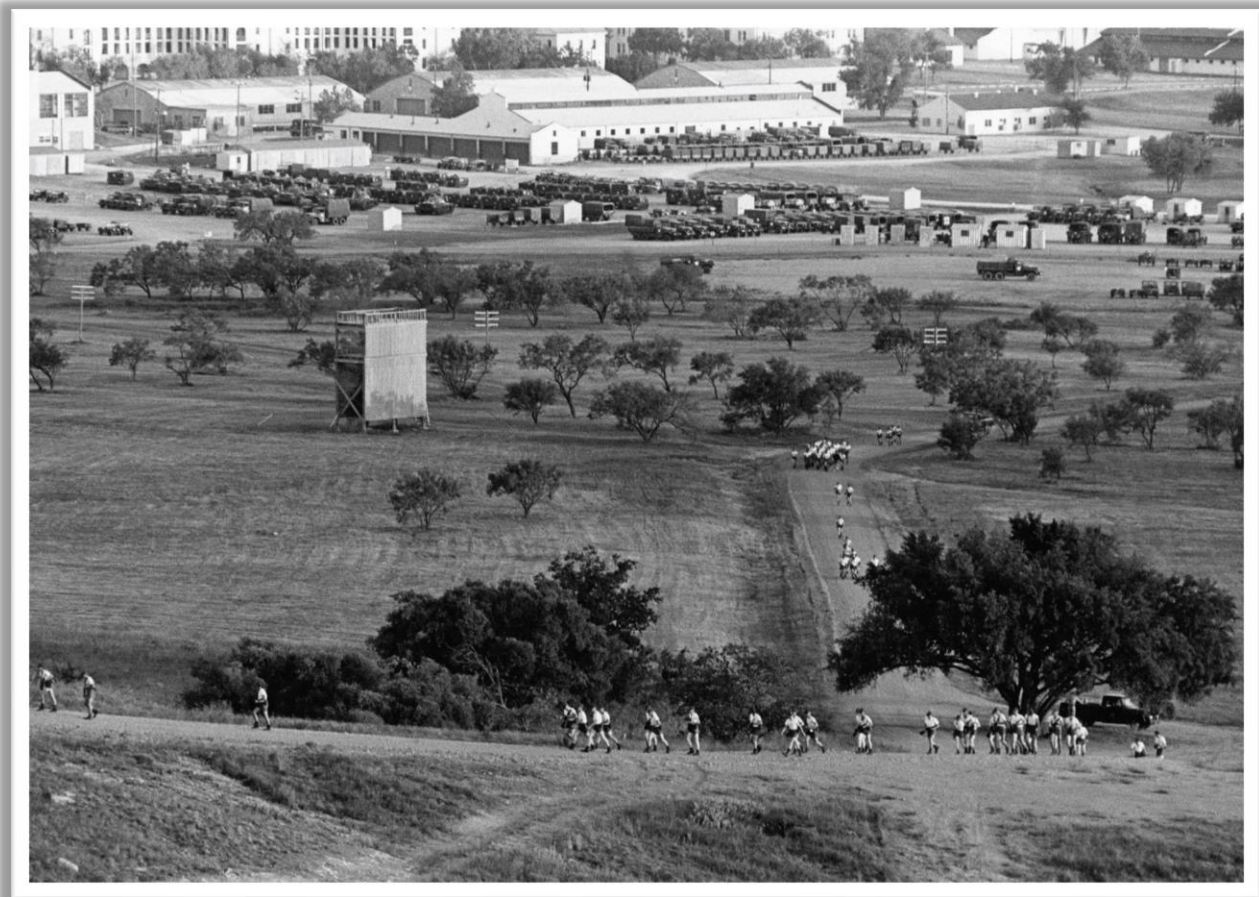


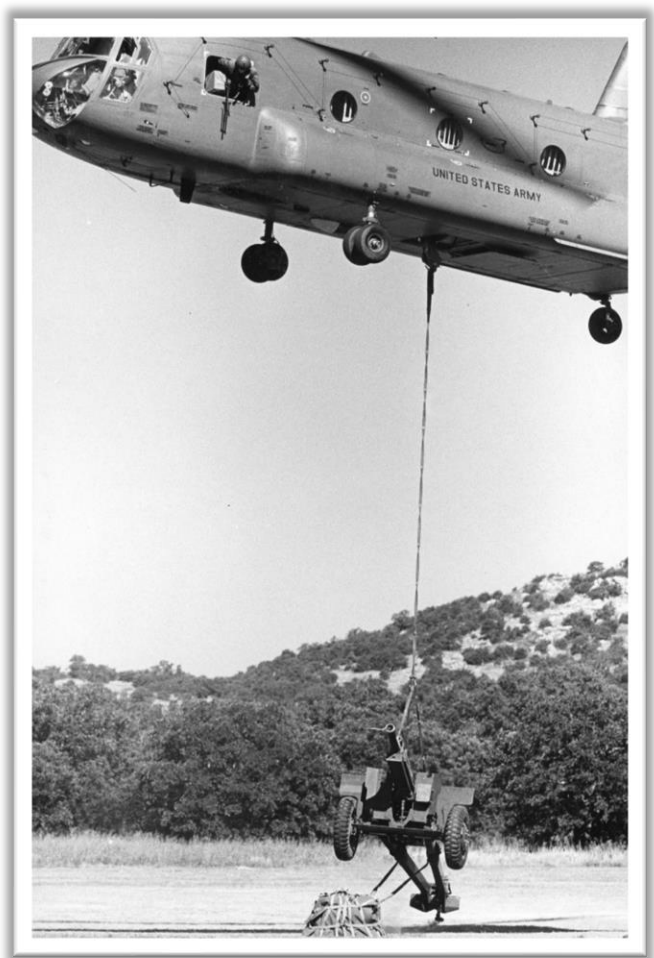














***TAC Officer observing, evaluating and molding a candidate into a leader***

# Chapter Seventeen

## 1969

### **“The Society of Graduates of the Artillery Officer Candidate School – 1969” Artillery OCS Archives**

Since the opening of the Hall of Fame, continuous research, communication, and planning have resulted in the establishment of an initial list of distinguished alumni, an honor roll of alumni who lost their lives in defense of their country, donations of mementos from various allied Artillery schools, and an impressive array of gifts from graduating classes.

The Hall of Fame was originally housed in Building 3031, which was the Headquarters Building when the school reopened in 1951. However, it soon outgrew this building and in April 1969 was moved to its present location in Building 3168.

**A need was seen shortly after its opening for an organization to perpetuate and maintain the Hall of Fame. Consequently, the Society of Graduates of the Artillery Officer Candidate School was established as a private association under the authority of the Commanding General, USAAMC on 20 December 1968.**

Of course the role given to the Society of Graduates consisted of much more than just maintaining the Hall of Fame. Its purpose as stated in the constitution was to “publicize the Artillery Officer Candidate Battalion and to honor the heroism and/or exceptional achievement of its graduates; to foster the esprit of the candidates; to recognize the outstanding performance of past graduates; and to perpetuate and maintain the Hall of Fame at Fort Sill.”

This, of course, is accomplished only by the continual interest and support given the Officer Candidate School by its members and alumni. Funds used by the Society of Graduates are derived primarily from membership dues and voluntary contributions from interested persons and organizations.

Membership in the society will be open to all Artillery Officers who have graduated from the Officer Candidate School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma; or any graduate of the Fort Riley, Kansas Officer Candidate School between 12 December 1946 and 21 February 1951 who was commissioned Field Artillery and immediately attended the Fort Sill, Oklahoma Field Artillery Officer Basic or Associate Basic Course.

Graduates of the Artillery Officer Candidate School are proud of their heritage and the fraternal spirit which exists among Artillerymen around the world. We hope that you will share with us in the perpetuation of this part of the history of the Artillery.

## **“Points of Interest – Field Artillery Officer Candidate Brigade”**

### ***Artillery OCS Archives***

Since July 1941 the U. S. Army has trained candidates to become second lieutenants in the Field Artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. With the exception of a five year closure between 1946 and 1951 the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School has had a continuous history of educating almost 44,000 well trained, highly motivated Artillery officers.

The “campus” of Artillery OCS covers an area of approximately four city blocks and consists of some 74 structures. All billets, and some classrooms are “on campus,” making OCS literally a separate school within a school.

In 1953, the area was designated “Robinson Barracks” by general order in honor of 1LT James E. Robinson, Jr., a 1943 graduate of Artillery OCS who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 1945.

Visitors to the area will notice the contrast between old wooden structures that date from World War II and modern, concrete, air-conditioned buildings which were completed in the summer of 1967. Landscaping and eye-catching displays have been completed by the candidates to make their “house” homes.

Areas of particular interest to visitors in the Brigade area are the Candidate houses, day-rooms, Redbird Hall, Howitzer House, and the Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame, located in the first OCS headquarters building contains an impressive array of class mementos, tokens from allied officers’ training schools, and a gallery of highly distinguished alumni who have achieved membership in the Hall of Fame through outstanding careers.

The Commanding Officer of the Officer Candidate Brigade, Colonel T. E. Watson Jr., invites interested visitors to tour the school facilities. Arrangements may be made by contacting Headquarters, Officer Candidate Brigade, at 351-6224 or 351-6120. Additional information or guided tours may be requested by calling 1LT William M. Culham at 351-7213 or 351-6922.

### **COL T. E. Watson, Jr., Officer Candidate School Brigade Commander**

#### ***From a letter dated December 13, 1968 to COL Woodrow W. Wiltse (Class 90-43) concerning his eligibility for the Hall of Fame***

The Brigade here is now some 1,200 candidates strong and these young men are really very impressive. We have a large percentage who are college graduates at this point, and I must say after seeing how well they do and how hard they work that I must have some confidence in the future of the leadership of the United States.

### **Department of the Army**

#### **Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1969**

On May 28, 1968, the Secretary of the Army directed that the Army’s Artillery Branch be separated into an Air Defense Artillery Branch and a Field Artillery Branch. The decision was the result of a lengthy study, begun in September 1966, to determine what effect existing officer personnel policies had upon the efficiency of artillery units and the proficiency and career of the artillery officer. The study revealed that there were three categories of artillerymen—one group had served only in field artillery assignments,

another had served only in air defense artillery assignments, and the third had served in both.

Analysis showed that personnel in the last category had lower achievement levels than the other groups. They also achieved less academically than did those who served only in one field of artillery specialization. The study further revealed that integration of the artillery caused a waste of training time, imposed an unnecessary burden on units with cross-assigned artillerymen, and lowered the traditional professionalism of artillery officers. The separation once again into field artillery and air defense branches permits officers to develop maximum proficiency in their respective arms, improves their competitive chances and standings for promotion and schooling, and furthers combat readiness in units of both branches.

Retention of both officers and enlisted men is always a military personnel problem, and especially so in wartime. Inadequate retention levels since the Korean War have led to the present shortage in the middle grades of officers and enlisted men. Based on past experience, the present retention rate of Regular Army officers is within acceptable limits; for example, the rate for ROTC distinguished military graduates at the 4-year point (one year following the completion of obligated service) has averaged 85 percent, while that for U.S. Military Academy graduates has been 88 percent at the completion of one year following obligated service. Involuntary extension has had some impact on these rates, especially for the 1964 group.

Since the number of Regular officers is limited by statute to 49,500, expanded requirements have made it necessary to retain a large number of non-Regulars as careerists. To sustain an officer corps of 100,000 men, it is estimated that approximately 4,500 other-than-Regular officers must be retained annually as careerists. In recent years an annual average of 2,530 such officers have extended their service voluntarily. Although the ROTC program has been the major source of officers, the expanded officer candidate school program was used to provide the majority of junior officers during the Vietnam buildup. If the fiscal year 1969 retention rate of 27.7 percent (7,502 extensions out of 27,064 eligibles) continues in fiscal year 1970, the current shortage of captains in the Army will be partially alleviated.

**Billy R. Cooper: 1-69**  
***“The Reluctant General”***

**Billy R. Cooper (2011)**

On Monday of week 2 of (Leadership Preparatory Course (LPC) at Fort Sill, prior to class, my drill sergeant found me at my bunk and asked, “Private Cooper, how would you like to go to OCS?” That’s right, OCS. I said, “Drill Sergeant, I have no idea what you are talking about. Please explain it to me.” He took a seat on an adjacent footlocker and told me to sit down. It took him about thirty minutes to get me to understand that OCS was Officer Candidate School. He indicated the other drill sergeants and he had discussed it, reviewed my records, and thought I had the potential to be a good officer. He explained that it was purely voluntary. He said one more thing I did not expect. He said, “Cooper, you are never going to be happy as an enlisted man. I think you should do it.” I said, “What happens if I fail?” He said, “You will be assigned to complete cannoneer AIT and probably be assigned to duty in Vietnam.” After all the explanations were done and his reaffirmation that he thought I could do it, I told him I would give it a try and do my best.

He helped me fill out the application. He set up the interview with the brigade commander, a colonel, and worked with me diligently for a few days to prep me. Discussions of current events, opinions about the Vietnam War, leadership questions, and why I wanted to be an officer were the topics. He was great. We got it all done. I passed the interview and was accepted for OCS. He helped me pack all my things and moved me to a different barracks for OCS prep. He was a great NCO. Before he left me, he shook my hand, said good luck, and saluted me as he said, "Let me be the first to salute you, future lieutenant, because I know you will succeed." I said, "Thank you, Drill Sergeant," and returned his salute. He walked away. I think his name was Staff Sergeant (SSG) Smith, but I'm not completely sure. I hope he reads this and remembers. It is perhaps the best tribute I can give him. He remains one of the best NCOs I ever met even though it was for a very short period of time.

At this point, I had been a soldier for about eleven weeks. Now, I was off to OCS prep, which was artillery fire direction (13E AIT) consisting of fire direction and observed fire procedures. The how-tos of target identification, target location, call-for-fire procedures, ballistics for different artillery projectiles, impact of weather, projectile weight, propellant temperature, and other nonstandard factors on ballistics (flight trajectory) to hit the target. Learning to properly use tactical radios was also very important. I may have left a few things out. All this was done manually with graphic firing tables, graphic site tables (these were slide rule equivalents), and tabular firing tables. We spent some time on the Field Artillery Digital Automated Computer (FADAC or Freddie FADAC as it was known). We were told if we could master these things along with leadership and discipline, not only could we be good fire direction center soldiers, but good officers as well if we completed OCS. Most of our time was focused on academics. Regular soldier responsibilities, like KP, guard duty, barracks duties, were important. But the skills that would help us, our units, and fellow soldiers best in Vietnam involved mastery of everything related to delivering effective fire support to maneuver units. I was good at it. I was selected to be the trainee first sergeant for most of the course. Apparently, some of my fellow classmates did not appreciate that and.: gave me a semi blanket party on the last day. After graduation, I found my wall locker overturned, and my footlocker had been thrown downstairs. Disappointing. I think my fellow classmates thought I was too tough on them. No matter. Eight weeks of 13E10 AIT. All of us graduated. Scheduled for OCS. Eight days' leave. Home by bus to Dallas to see Dorothy and rest of family.

I arrived home the afternoon of June 29, 1968. Our daughter, Charlyn, was born that night just before midnight. You know when you are a kid, time always seems to be moving so slowly. You want things to speed up. You get bored easily. Older folks keep telling you to slow down. Take life a day at a time. You are only young once, enjoy it. Be a kid as long as you can. You know, that kind of stuff. Well, try this. Graduated from high school 1965. Dropped out of college 1966. Five different jobs by 1967. Married 1967. Drafted, became a father 1968. The pace of my life was accelerating.

Started Artillery OCS July 15, 1968, Class 1-69. OCS was divided into three phases: bluebird or blue; greenbird or green, redbird or red. We wore tabs on our collars and head gear, so we could be easily identified by phase. As a bluebird, we were basically treated like scum of the earth. As a greenbird, we got more privileges, like the privilege to look left or right, the privilege to ask questions, and the privilege to actually eat a meal without being barked at by tactical (TAC) officers or redbirds continually. Redbirds were like third



lieutenants (no such rank). They led and supervised bluebirds and greenbirds. They could eat meals unsupervised. But at least one redbird sat with blue and green for meals and ensured we practiced the tradition of eating square meals. Bluebirds and greenbirds had to march everywhere in formation. While redbirds marched to class in formation, when in the barracks area, they could walk around alone.

First night after moving into the barracks, the TAC officers turned our footlockers upside down and threw them along with our boots on our bunks. They had us strip down to our underwear (T-shirts, shorts, and socks), brought in a water hose, sprayed water all over the concrete floors, sprinkled powdered detergent on the floor, and said, "Get to it." That meant low crawl all over the floors to mop them on our stomachs. They laughed; we low crawled. We were officer candidates, so it sounded like this, "Candidate Cooper, you are not wet enough." "Candidate Cooper, you are not crawling fast enough." "Candidate Cooper, you look like s—t." To which I responded: "Sir, Candidate Cooper, yes, sir." or "Sir, Candidate Cooper, I will try to become one with the floor to get it cleaner, sir."

That first night after "cleaning" the barracks, we were instructed on the rules of land warfare in OCS by TAC officers. They showed us how bunks were to be made, how to properly spit-shine boots and dress shoes, how to arrange and fold or roll everything in our footlockers, and how to hang up and display fatigue and dress uniforms. Further, they explained that first call was at 0550 hours and that we had five minutes to s—t, shave, shower, brush teeth, get dressed, properly clean up and display our area, and be standing in formation for reveille at 0555. DAMN! It took a week to get it right. But we finally did it. We learned how to wake up earlier, get dressed by flashlight under the covers, and fake being asleep when the TAC officers checked on us. If you had to s—t in the morning, you were s—t out of luck. You weren't going to make it. I nicked myself shaving a lot. I showered at night, so I would not have to in the morning. I still do not like water, except for drinking, cooking, and fishing today. If I had my druthers, I think I might shower only on Friday nights and then only if I needed to.

For poor behavior, violation of rules, substandard barracks area, failure to eat meals properly, sleeping in class, you earned demerits. As I recall, it was sixty demerits as a bluebird in a week, and you had to Jark the hill. A Jark in Artillery OCS was about a four-mile force march in gym shorts, T-shirt, and combat boots. Sometimes we had to draw and carry weapons. Always had to take a canteen of water attached to utility belt. First-aid pack and ammunition pouch were attached to the utility belt as well. Each platoon was sized by all the tallest to the front, which meant a fast-paced Jark. Taller candidates, long stride. Short guys, sorry, vertically challenged guys, in the back, running. The Jark is supposed to be at a pace just before you start running. We tall folks thought that was funny. So the TAC officers would put tall candidates in back and sometimes vertically challenged candidates up front to even it out. That was the fair way to do it. Sometimes platoons competed for the fastest time. Sometimes we tried to bring back the largest boulder. On those Jarks, I thought we were insane. All we did was paint them red, white, and yellow, paint on the unit insignia and class number. Then place them in front of the brigade, battalion, or battery headquarters buildings. I bet some of them are still there. Ultimately, Jarks were great team-building exercises, and we always reinforced that we start together, we finish together. Leave no man behind. As our nation continues to repatriate remains of servicemen lost in Korea and Vietnam, you understand the significance. You understand why we will leave no one behind in Iraq or Afghanistan

or any other land where our service men and women are killed or captured. That's just the way we are.

I seem to recall the number of demerits for greenbirds was thirty, and for redbirds it was fifteen. I had to Jark the hill every weekend both Saturday and Sunday until I was halfway through redbird phase. I had too many demerits every week. On the last weekend, before graduation, I even did a commemorative Jark just to say good-bye. I may have Jarked more miles up Medicine Bluffs 4 (MB4) than any other candidate. I was in great physical condition, and I really did not have anything else to do. Even when I did not earn enough demerits, in the last couple of weeks, I Jarked. It kept me out of trouble.

While normal soldier duties had to be accomplished, academics assumed much greater importance as we progressed. We studied military history, tactical communications, gunnery (the most difficult subject), observed fire procedures, firing battery operations, operation of the aiming circle, tactics, reconnaissance, and survey operations, and much more. The section to which I was assigned for gunnery had the privilege of being taught by then U.S. Marine Captain Arthur Schmidt. Gunnery instructor extraordinaire. Outstanding marine. The best.

Two other things about OCS. We were allowed three "square" meals a day. The procession to the mess hall (now dining facility) consisted of sizing each platoon in the class by height. Then, as we were called, we filed into the mess hall to our designated section by class color (blue, green, red). We could not sit until the TAC officer or redbird designated to instruct us on and supervise the eating of a square meal was seated. When seated, we had to sit completely erect and could not eat until told to do so. Imagine this: pick up a fork, put one pea or one bean or one very small piece of meat on it, extend out, up and back to mouth, insert food, remove fork. Fork back out, down, back, put across top of plate. Chew and swallow. Could not eat anymore until process was complete. Had only ten to fifteen minutes to eat a meal under very difficult conditions. I was gonna lose weight. I might starve. Near the end of the meal, we could drink all the water, milk, or juice we could get down in thirty seconds. On occasion, the upper classman in charge of us would give permission for one "gross bite." That meant whatever you could get on your spoon or fork and get into your mouth would constitute a "gross bite," and you could eat it. For a few meals, that worked for me. Then, one day, when permission for a "gross bite" was given, I did not use a spoon or fork. I used my hands. The upperclassman said, "Candidate Cooper, I do believe that was the grossest bite I have ever seen. That will be fifteen demerits." Sometimes I would do the "gross bite" without permission. I would be instructed to take my plate and eat under the table. "Sauce for the gander." After we became greenbirds, I think they assumed we could eat like civilized people. The rules eased. I think I began to thrive in the structure. We were always under the watchful eyes of an upperclassman or TAC officer just in case.

On one occasion, Colonel (COL) Watson, the OCS brigade commander, and Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Ardone were observing the sizing process before we entered the mess hall. COL Watson had his adjutant retrieve me from the formation and instructed me to report to the brigade commander. I did as instructed. I was six feet four inches tall, and COL Watson was about five feet eight inches tall. He said to me, "Candidate Cooper, your hat is crooked." I said, "Sir, Candidate Cooper, yes, sir." I tried to straighten it. He said, "Candidate Cooper, your hat is still crooked." I said, "Sir, Candidate Cooper, yes,

sir,” and I tried again to straighten it to his satisfaction. Then he tried to straighten it. He said, “Candidate Cooper, it’s not the hat. Your head is crooked. Return to formation.” I said, “Sir, Candidate Cooper, yes, sir.” I saluted smartly, did an about face, and returned to the formation. CSM (retired) Ardone, who befriended me when I returned to Fort Sill as a major in 1980 and as a colonel in 1991, recounted the incident and told me he and COL Watson had a big laugh afterward.

In the third week before graduation, we had an opportunity to fill out an Officer Preference Statement or Dream Sheet, as it was known. I requested a stateside assignment for six months to a year before going to Vietnam, so I could spend some time with my five-month-old daughter. It was not because I thought I would not return. But because I had not had a chance to be a father. We received our assignment orders one week before graduation. I was assigned to Fort Lewis, Washington, as a basic combat training (BCT) officer. I accepted this as positive and came to believe submitting a “dream sheet” was a possible means of providing input to the army leadership regarding what officers wanted to do in their careers. Yep. I began thinking about the army as a possible career for the first time. I did not see Dorothy until the Redbird Ball, two weeks before our class graduated. She came to Fort Sill and spent the weekend. On December 20; 1968, Class 1-69 graduated. We were commissioned second lieutenants in the U.S. Army Field Artillery. We had become the most dangerous soldiers on the battlefield, second lieutenants with map, binoculars, and a compass, as the legend goes. For those who have served in our Armed Forces, you have heard that one and know what I mean. About fifteen graduates were commissioned in Air Defense Artillery and were sent to Fort Bliss, Texas, for additional training.

Class 1-69 began with about 136 students. I think we graduated eighty-two. Some who left the class were sent back to other classes. Some were returned to enlisted ranks. I recall being the lone African American to graduate in Class 1-69. I was twenty years old and one of the youngest officers to be commissioned into the field artillery (or so I was told). One of the TAC officers, a first lieutenant, gave me a ride to Dallas, so I would not have to ride the bus home.

### **William R. Whitworth: 1-69**

I graduated from the University of Richmond in August 1967. Being draft eligible, I enlisted in the Army’s College Option Program for Fire Direction Control Advanced Individual Training and Artillery and Missile OCS at Fort Sill. My entry on active duty was January 10, 1968.

I began OCS with Class 514-68. We had a highly accomplished Battery Commander in Captain Lenard Shlenker, and we felt fortunate to train under his leadership of “Delta Hard Core Battery.” Captain Shlenker led by example. We experienced the traditional challenges in lower class and middle class. Those challenges included jogging Jarks up to MB-4 and back and not being able to finish meals due to upperclassmen making us sit in a brace at more meals than I can remember!

My biggest challenge was gunnery. I was set back in late August to Class 1-69. That turned out to be a blessing. I thrived with my new gunnery instructor. Also, I had candidate leadership assignments both in middle (green) and upper (red) classes. I could not imagine better leadership training. Altogether, I benefited from the encouragement

and insights I got from our instructors, my OCS Platoon Leader, Lieutenant Miller, and my classmates from classes 514-68 and 1-69.

My fondest memories are of our Class's performance on the parade field and our five day field exercise. Delta Battery had a great drill and ceremony record, placing first or second in most Saturday morning parade competitions. During our five-day field exercise, Candidate Reinhard spotted a simulated ambush and positioned the howitzers for simulated direct fire. Since we did that, our instructors and tactical officers declared an "administrative capture," and we marched to the mock POW camp carrying ammunition boxes filled with sand. In the long march, Candidate Hansen and I let some of the sand slide out of our ammunition box when we came to a stream bed. That definitely lightened the load. After our "escape," I trekked with Candidate Van Camp who was highly skilled. We were among the first candidates to arrive at the big tent where we would spend the night. The next day, I had the good fortune to be paired with Candidate Martin, who was a Green Beret prior to OCS. I learned more about infantry patrolling that morning than at any other time in my Army experience. My biggest challenge of the exercise was rappelling down a 205 foot cliff. After a misstep, I finally got the knack of it and continued through the river crossing to safety, soaking wet but happy. It was unforgettable and great preparation.

Our Battalion Commander, Major McDonald, asked our Class if we would agree to some extra training to allow us to graduate on December 20, 1968 instead of early January 1969. We heartily agreed! Major McDonald announced our assignments after night-time training. In that session, 16 of us learned we were assigned to the Eighth U.S. Army in South Korea (7th Infantry Division.) Around that time, our Brigade Commander, Colonel Watson, gave us a pep talk. He congratulated our Class and complimented us for exceptional performance. He gave us pointers like always carry a pen and pocket notebook. I often do that to this day, even when I have my smart phone with me.

OCS commissioning was very special, including wearing dress blues the night before graduation. Our Class had great camaraderie, and it was terrific to complete OCS with them. Part of that camaraderie was in evidence when 16 of us met up at Fort Lewis on January 10, 1969. We flew together to South Korea to begin our first jobs as Field Artillery Second Lieutenants. It was great to experience that camaraderie as each of us received our unit assignments at Camp Casey during the Korean DMZ Conflict (October 5, 1966 to December 3, 1969).

**Milestone: On 1 January 1969, The U.S. Army Artillery and Missile School was officially redesignated as the U.S. Army Field Artillery School.**

**Richard O. Roberts: 3-69**

There hopefully comes a time in every boy's life where he makes a conscience decision to become a man. That choice came when I entered Artillery OCS at Fort Sill, OK. Up to that point I had always taken the path of least resistance. I breezed through high school with a B/C average. I was almost proud of the fact that this feat was accomplished by not ever taking a book home.

Upon my entrance to Texas A&M University I figured it would be a little bit more difficult and might require some "studying" but no doubt I would succeed. Boy, was I surprised

when at the end of my sophomore year Dean Rice said, “bye bye,” and the draft board said, “greetings son.”

Well, the next few months were to be an education in themselves. I suppose this was the only time in my life I was glad my father had passed away. That happened when I was a junior in high school. I wouldn't have to experience his wrath and major disappointment.

I had gone from feeling like the most ignorant person in the world from flunking out of college to feeling like the most intelligent when I arrived at basic training. There were people here who could not read or write and I remember a couple of guys who could not spell their name.

At the time of graduation, it dawned on me and three of my buddies we could avoid the inevitable transition to “Tiger Land” AIT at Fort Polk, Louisiana, TDY Vietnam, if we signed up for OCS. Again, the easy way out. We would get an Artillery MOS, avoid Fort Polk completely and upon acceptance to OCS we could then drop out with an E-5 rating. Boy where we smart.

Upon entering those barracks, something was different; they weren't made out of plywood. This was concrete, the walls were masonry, and it was new. The people around me were of a higher caliber, mostly college grads. BUT!!!! OCS was SIX MONTHS LONG, it would require a lot of study, there was the Escape and Evasion course with all its little horror stories. I could now be an E-5. I wouldn't have to extend my two year draft commitment.

My three buddies were dropping out. This was definitely the easy way out! Then something funny happened. I realized all my life had been THE EASY WAY OUT and what had I accomplished? Nothing. If ever I was going to become a man it was now or never. I was not going to drop out of this Officers Candidate School. I'm proud to say I started with the 3-69 and I finished with 3-69.

That six months did seem like two years, but when they pinned that golden bar on my collar I knew somehow my life had changed for the better. My self-esteem had risen. Men old enough to be my father were saluting and calling me sir. I knew my life would be different now. I even extended for a year for promotion to Captain.

After the Army I did go back to Texas A&M, graduated and was even on the Dean's list and though that memory is great I don't think it can compare with that little gold bar. Are you looking Dad?

### **“OC Brigade “Wagon of Woe” Has Long History”**

#### ***From the Artillery OCS Archives***

One of the Brigade's most venerable institutions, the “Cadillac,” was found in a state of horrible disrepair by CW4 Herbert H. Newman. Mr. Newman, the Brigade Property Book Officer at S4, has been around Fort Sill for many years and was the Budget Control Officer for the Artillery School in 1958.

Mr. Newman's sense of tradition was struck by the loss of the Cadillac. The S4 pushcart has been in use by those candidates making an early departure from the Brigade since

the early 1950's. State Representative Jack Lindstrom recalls that the cart was used in April of 1956 when he arrived at OCS as a Battery Commander. According to Representative Lindstrom, one of his NCO's recalls it being used when the School was reopened in 1951.

With such a long and profound history, the cart had to be saved. Mr. Newman salvaged the 3 1/2 foot iron spoked wheels and rebuilt the carriage out of solid oak. The inside was highly varnished, and the outside painted Artillery red. OCS and Artillery School emblems grace the sides and rear of the cart. The coup de grace, however, was supplied by a trip to an auto graveyard. Mr. Newman managed to procure a Cadillac "V" insignia and lettering. Because of the sturdy rebuilding job, the Brigade now has an indestructible memento of its many years of instruction to officer candidates.

The Cadillac is a symbol of failure at OCS. But it is also a reminder of the toughness of the candidates who never knew it existed and the courage of those who later returned to try the program again.

### **William P. Craig: 6-69**

"Harvey the Hill Runner" was Harvey McGahee. After a grotto run, our lookouts fouled up and cleared Harvey out the same door the TAC officer was entering—and Harvey had all the burger bags, milkshake cups, etc. He was ordered to identify where he had gotten all of it and responded by saying he had eaten all of it himself.

He got one Jark for each object he had, which meant basically he ran every time until we got out of there. We all felt bad enough about that to take turns running with Harvey—and their system was fouled up when too many guys showed up. They would read the names on the list, count noses, and then order everyone else out of formation. They didn't know what to do when we stayed, so we all went up together. They really didn't like us. They didn't like our marching songs either.

### **Jim Gamble: 8-69**

In April of 1969, great world events were transpiring, and we were a part of them. Our Fort Sill Oklahoma OCS class was a composition of college graduates (some with advanced degrees), that had been cloistered in Halls of Ivy postponing their encounter with Southeast Asia and the Mekong Delta. We were the aging result of expired educational draft deferments. Our entry to active duty was also exactly sandwiched between the Tet Offensive beginning January of 1968, and Jane Fonda's trip to Hanoi in 1972. You may recall that the Tet Offensive was a last desperate effort by the North — that failed — and left the enemy exhausted and open to defeat. One general later summarized by saying "...that a troop of Girl Scouts could have marched into Hanoi and accepted their surrender."

In boot camp, at twenty-six years of age, I was surrounded by 18-year-olds and rudely introduced to Army life by Drill Sgt. Andrewjeski. The Sgt. had three Vietnam tours under his belt and, with a decided lack of taste, graphically displayed his stacked-up Vietcong casualties in photographs displayed on his desk. On Sundays, we were allowed time off for church and in formation, Drill Sgt. Andrewjeski instructed, "... Catholics fall out over here, Jews over here, and the rest of your off-the-wall religions, here." In boot camp at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri I caught a cold. It persisted in various stages (sometimes

near pneumonia), for a year. Ill health was my constant companion throughout boot camp, Advanced Individual Training (AIT) and Officer Candidate School. After graduation with health restored, I became resistant to almost all forms of microorganisms for a decade. I still vividly remember one time at a boot camp reveille formation, volunteers were requested. A fundamental rule in all military services is, “Never Volunteer for Anything.” But at my advanced age, I took a phlegmatic approach and raised my hand. Drill Sgt. Andrewjeski pointed at me and two others and ordered: “Get on that bus. You’re going to Silver Dollar City for the day” — a pleasant interlude.

Instead of carefully aligning and optimizing educational skills with corresponding military requirements, the U.S. Army did with us as they always do to everyone; they dumped us into a cadre of what was needed for the moment — artillery forward observers. Some explanation is required. A forward observer is a 2nd Lieutenant whom, with a radiotelephone operator and with freshly acquired skills, moves unsupported into the midst of enemy territory. He then calls down fire and instant death on the Vietcong and himself — not the same at all as sleeping through air-conditioned college classes and drinking beer at night in the company of co-eds.

Time was never our own. Boot camp was designed to be a cold-water shock treatment, acclimating undisciplined civilians to be transformed into reliable soldiers capable of receiving and executing orders. Typically then, advanced training became a relaxed classroom instruction period with the sharp point of predatory drill instructors put away. Not for us. We were pre-officer candidate material, and the basic training style of regimentation continued, and then continued again as we became officer candidates. For almost an entire calendar year a group of soft, pampered college students was forged into Army leadership by the fire of intense training. The instruction was excellent, possibly better than found in most college settings. The Army had before them a constant stream of college graduate talent, and for once did something with imagination instead of by the book. If a troop showed a measure of extraordinary teaching talent, he might be plucked from a line of olive-drab soldier trainees, and then made a part of the teaching cadre.

It was intentional that personal time was limited. I remember when one troop requested leave to get married. The powers that be granted his wish and the candidate was allowed two hours off base. Presumably, an hour and three quarters was absorbed by transportation, the wedding and a reception, and fifteen minutes was set aside for the honeymoon.

My fiancée, Paula Beth Rogers, and I were to be married on June 14, just a little over a month after our OCS graduation date. I had accumulated leave for one weekend where we could plan the details. By then we were upperclassman and had the added responsibility of properly supervising new officer candidate initiates (smacks). The process was an exercise of the biological sciences. OCS Upperclassman assisted the staff by rapidly advancing evolutionary biology by converting one-celled animals into military leadership material. Training days were long, started early, and concluded at 2100 or 2200 hours with lights out. After the duty officer’s inspection, flashlights appeared and necessary work continued, often well into the wee hours of the morning. One evening, in full uniform and regalia (I had the authority of seven pips on my shoulder epaulets and was designated the “OC Heavens Commander”), I ordered the smacks out of bed and into a “nuclear attack” defensive mode. The underclassmen, still in skivvies, were required by

my order to don steel helmets, web gear with canteens, and combat boots. Then the troops were to insert themselves, (for their own protection) into 2' x 2' locker honeycomb cubicles until it was decided that the nuclear attack threat was over. With optimum timing (at 1 o'clock in the morning) the duty officer made a surprise inspection. Among other things, my leave and the wedding planning session were canceled.

The Army spent more than \$10,000 (of taxpayers' money), worth of artillery shells alone in teaching me to call in fire on yellow car bodies barely visible on the horizon. The military then wasted that investment by sending me to Army Air Defense Command School and taught me to fire Nike Hercules missiles at Cuba in defense of Miami, Florida.

There are times when the ordinary workings of the universe are suspended and, for a time, a Cosmic Joker slips his reins of confinement. The Jokester then commandeers the Army's Department of Military Occupational Specialties (job assignments), or he sends Hanoi Jane to North Vietnam and allows an educated class of Cambodians to be completely destroyed (the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia executed between 20 and 30% of that country's population. If you had ownership of property or could read, or had glasses that indicated you might read, you became a target and was summarily executed). The Jokester then may send newly minted 2LT Gamble to lie on a Miami Beach and 2LT Von Kohorn to do the same on the Mediterranean in Italy — while others of our class are sent in harm's way slogging through Vietnamese rice paddies.

#### **Jack G. Starich: 9-69**

OCS kind of changed the trajectory of my life, as I am sure I would never have stayed with the army as a career if I was not an officer. I was definitely not a volunteer for military service, but the field artillery turned out to be something that fit my natural skill set. The National Guard and Army Reserve programs were a good fit to continue my military service while allowing pursuit of other career options. The retirement pay and other military benefits really enhance the quality of retired life.

#### **Ken Tricinella: 9-69**

##### ***The JARK ROCK was presented to the Artillery OCS HOF on 9 May 2008***

I began my OCS Career during the fall of 1968, in the class of 7-69. Following our first week in OCS we spent the first Saturday running "The Parking Lot" in preparation for the Jark March. The following Saturday, I was part of the majority that had accrued enough demerits to "Run the Hill."

My middle-class Big-Brother advised me of a tradition which involved bringing back a rock from the top of MB-4 while doing my "Cherry Jark". The rock was to be cleaned and decorated and then presented to the middle-class Big Brother and it was his responsibility to place it in his bed that night. My middle-class Big Brother related that the rock needed to be large. It seemed that the bigger the rock, the more prestige and respect for the corresponding middle classman. At any rate, I was advised that if his rock wasn't the largest, I would pay in the form of push-ups.

When the Saturday came for my "Cherry Jark," it was a brisk morning and we fell out into formation with our M-14 rifles. I anticipated a problem with carrying the rock while Jarking, so I brought my laundry sack to carry it in. When we got to the base of MB-4 we were told to go to the top and get our rock. I found the largest rock that I thought I could



carry; I put it in the sack and got back in formation for the return. As we started back, the classmate next to me in formation found it difficult to carry his rock and run. We made a deal that he would carry my M-14 and I would carry his rock in the laundry sack along with my rock. It was a long 2.1 miles back, but I was determined to make it. About the time we got to the OCS area, I was totally exhausted and was about to give up, when one of the upperclassmen that was in charge yelled "Give it up candidate, you'll never make it." That statement was all I needed to finish!

When we got back to the battery area, we weighed the rocks to see which was heavier. My rock weighed 31 pounds and the other rock weighed almost 30 pounds. I prepared the rock by scrubbing it and painted it white. Then I stenciled my name, class number, "Cherry Jark" on it and presented it to my big brother. It was much larger than the stones most had brought back, so he was happy. After he kept it for a few days, he returned it to me. I stashed it in my vehicle that was in the parking lot. When I left for Vietnam my Mom put it in her attic and I retrieved it about a year ago.

### **Ford L. Stevenson: 10-69**

The longer I live the more grateful I am for my experience in OCS Class 10-69. On many occasions in my life when confronted with what seemed to be overwhelming challenges, I harken back to my OCS experiences. I say to myself, if you can survive OCS you can survive this. So proud to say I completed Field Artillery OCS.

### **Thomas L. Brown: 11-69**

After OCS prep and "serving time" in the holding barracks near the hospital, I finally began the OCS experience on 8 December 1968. My battery was billeted in building # 2859 along Ringgold Road. We were on the southwest corner of Robinson Barracks.

One of my most vivid memories of OCS is the image of long columns of candidates running the streets of Fort Sill as they moved from one location to another. All of those STRAC soldiers running in a tight formation to the sound of cadence was impressive. While marching, "Yellow Submarine" was our favorite song. We looked good in our polished helmets, spit-shined boots and decorated clip boards.

Another vivid memory is the escape and evasion exercise during the five-day war. Navigating at night the high terrain on West Range was a challenge. We could see a light in the distance which marked our assembly point and knew we somehow had to get to it. I was certain that I would either break my neck or get bitten by a snake.

I also remember the friends made in OCS. Guys like Tom Jarriel, George Le May, Joe Warren and George Malleck were bright, motivated young men who became distinguished officers. I had the privilege of serving with several of my classmates later in my career. I recall the good times we had once we turned "red." We would often get together at the Ramada Inn to have a few drinks and unwind, or we would hit the Pizza Hut on Cache Road for a great meal.

Of course, I remember the "grotto runs." We would have the McDonalds delivery boy climb the rear fire escape ladder and drop off burgers and fries. We would then hide the goodies in our stereo console until we figured it was "all clear" to eat the stuff. We knew the TAC

officer could smell the food, but he never did find it. Those burgers and fries sure tasted good.

My one big scare in OCS was when I failed the communications exam. I was serving as the battalion S-3 at the time and was busy doing S-3 chores the night prior to the test. I simply did not allow myself sufficient study time. Fortunately, a board of TAC officers allowed me to retake the exam and continue my OCS journey. I guess that was a good lesson in managing time and setting priorities.

Graduation was a proud day for me. My father, an Air Force colonel at the time, pinned on my gold bars. Thus, I began a thirty-year career as a Field Artillery officer.

**Tom Hohan: 11-69**

**“Hazing: Separating Rites from Wrongs”**

**Hank Nuwer - Excerpts from *Legion Magazine*, July 1999 Issue, Vol. 147, No. 1**

**Hazing:** The word itself gives a commanding officer the shakes, conjuring up inquiries from Congress, visits from reporters, long-distance calls from mothers. Precisely what military hazing is, however, defies definition. One recruit’s hazing is another’s “shape-up” exercises. Most civilian definitions of hazing fail to take account of its varied meanings in military life.

Of course, hazing is not exclusive to the U.S. military. Hazing is widespread in the Canadian, Czech and Russian armed forces. In Russia, many first-year soldiers die at the hands of their superiors whom they call “grandfathers.” Others endure sadistic demands such as licking a toilet bowl clean, says Charles Moskos, a Northwestern University sociology professor and chairman of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society.

There’s a Difference. Hazing in the United States goes beyond the military. High school upperclassmen, bands, professional athletic teams and adult and collegiate secret-letter societies haze. Significantly, most experts distinguish military hazing from fraternity hazing. The purpose and result of military hazing - keeping troops alive doesn’t apply to Greeks bearing paddles.

Experts suspect it’s not the actual hazing that super-glues young recruits together but the sharing of experiences that try their souls and give a feeling of satisfaction if endured. “Going through shared misery is what bonds people, not hazing per Se,” Moskos says. After lights go out during basic, jokesters usually start a running banter. They good-naturedly make fun of the system and their drill sergeants who tell them they are tearing them down to put them back together. Recruits who were humiliated that day can re-invent their experiences in a humorous light by seeing how things looked through the eyes of their fellow soldiers. Often they laugh until the tears come, says Moskos, then hop to their tasks the next morning with new resolve.

Demands that military hazing stop escalated in the late 1960s after one national magazine exposed unusually vigorous Artillery OCS hazing conducted by Vietnam returnees.

Studies into behavior during initiations that have been done are old and in need of reassessment. An oft-cited 1958 study, financed by the National Science Foundation, tried to assess the effect of severity of initiation on personal preference for a group. The research, performed by Elliot Aronson and Judson Mills determined that a severe initiation did make individuals like a group more.

Tom Hohan (FAOCS Class 11-69), now a New Orleans businessman, outright rejects that the intense physical hazing he endured to complete OCS training in the late 1960s made him like his artillery outfit more.

“I hated it,” he says.

Nor did he bond with his fellow recruits, all of whom were competing with him for officer slots. “Out of the 74 or 76 who graduated, I’d be surprised if 10 percent would differ from me about hating it.”

POW Camp: Drafted out of a Pennsylvania steel mill in 1968, Hohan joined 140 other males in Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. A mere 40 percent graduated, including Hohan, one of only two non-college men to do so.

Hazing or a combination of hazing and discipline building claimed the rest, says Hohan, who since has become a University of South Carolina graduate. “Hazing during OCS was legendary and the POW camp you had to experience, if caught during an escape and evasion exercise, was pure hell.”

Hohan has vivid recollections of the two years, 10 months and three days he spent in the military. He recalls saluting a goldfish and waiting for it to swim around and face him before he was allowed to shower. Mostly he recalls a torturous prisoner-of-war simulation that seemed more real to him than an actual exercise. Hardened veterans back from Vietnam had the OCS candidates lift telephone poles, endure long periods in stocks and maneuver through mud laced with traces of fecal material.

All that would make Hohan a firm opponent of hazing right? Wrong.” It helped me survive,” says Hohan, who says the hazing gave him the mental toughness to survive in Vietnam and to survive punishing deadlines in the real world after his mustering out.

### **Arnold W. Jensen: 13-69**

Shortly after I became an Upperclassman I had a minor accident involving my new red towel - you remember that Upperclassmen displayed a red towel at the foot of our bunks, don’t you? - and a load of fatigues. Guess what happens when a red towel is washed with green fatigues? Right, the fatigues turn a nice shade of gray. As the training schedule and my luck would have it the next day we had an in-ranks inspection scheduled. Luckily, it didn’t involve any Brass, just our lieutenant TAC Officer.

I had no option - all my green fatigues were dirty - the only fatigues I had on hand were veterans of the mishap with the red towel. So I put on the least gray of my fatigues and awaited the worst. As our TAC Officer approached me, I tried to watch him out of the corner of my eye but saw no indication that he was aware of anything amiss. Finally, he

took his position in front of me, inspected my weapon, checked me out from head to toe, and... said nothing!

Then, as he was making the facing movement to inspect the next candidate, he said out of the side of his mouth, "So, Jensen, the South will rise again?" Later that day he called me to his office and we had a short discussion on the proper care and cleaning of uniforms.

### **"Only Best Motivated Finish Artillery OCS"**

#### **Larry Carney, Times Staff Writer *Army Times* (June 18, 1969)**

FORT SILL, Okla. – They are taking some of the Mickey Mouse out of Artillery Officer Candidate School (OCS) training at Fort Sill. But it doesn't seem to be enough to reduce the school's attrition which at 37 percent is among the highest of the Army's three OCS programs.

For the Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Ga., the attrition is running 30 to 32 percent. For the Engineer OCS at Fort Belvoir, Va., the attrition is at a par with that of the Artillery OCS. The Army figures on a 35 percent attrition rate for the Engineer OCS. It only figures on a 30 percent rate for Artillery OCS. The result is that the Artillery OCS will end fiscal year 1969 below projected totals.

The Sill Schools high attrition rate has become a matter of concern to Continental Army Command and Pentagon officials. Artillery OCS School Commandant Col. Thomas Watson admits the attrition rate is high but feels that the school shouldn't fool around with candidates who lack motivation and the leadership ability to become second lieutenants.

He noted that a lot of the cadets have poor math backgrounds, which gives them trouble with gunnery and survey. Watson also believes that a cadet shouldn't be recycled more than once or twice. Back during the day when the army was building up for Vietnam, candidates could be recycled as much as seven times and still be commissioned.

But the Artillery OCS is making some attempt to "humanize" OCS and cut down on the attrition rate. Cadets now have more off-post privileges than their predecessors. Their privileges become more liberal as the cadets near graduation. Col. Ralph Melcher, deputy OCS commandant, said a cadet glee club and drill team has been created, and the OCS brigade sponsored a "sit down" dinner for cadets and instructors on St. Barbara's Feast Day last December 4. Candidates have also been treated to a buffalo barbeque by the Lawton Chamber of Commerce. The OCS, he said, plans a quarterly event for candidates and instructors to get together.

In addition, candidates have the opportunity to participate in an independent studies program during off-duty hours. So far, 45 candidates in four classes are voluntarily taking correspondence studies in such independent fields as radar systems, intelligence, astronomic survey, military leadership and civil disturbances.

Watson said candidates have weekend and holiday post and off-post privileges after their fourth week provided they don't have a lot of demerits. Upperclassmen (cadets in 16th to 23rd week) on the Commandant's List now have unlimited daily on-post and off-post

privileges. Middle Classmen (9th to 15th week) on the list have unlimited post privileges during the week to attend the movies and bowl. On weekends and holidays they can go off-post.

“You can tell an honor student by the white stripes on his status tab.” Watson said. To make the Commandants List, a cadet must be in the upper 10 percent of his class.

The liberal privilege policy is a wide departure from tradition. Candidates were formerly restricted to barracks during their first seven weeks. They were not eligible for either post or off-post privileges until their eighth week.

The attrition rate in artillery OCS has been climbing since fiscal year 1967. Then it was only 21 percent. In those days, Watson said, an officer put his “career on the line if he recommended flunking anyone.” In fiscal 1968, the attrition rate rose to 34 percent, and is currently hovering at 37 percent or higher.

With the large number of college graduates attending OCS the attrition rate should go down in coming classes. OCS statistics show that the attrition rate among college men is much lower than for non-college graduates. Seventy-five percent of college men are graduating while the mark is only 45 to 50 percent for non-college graduates.

Watson said, “pre-entry motivation is of major concern to us.” The Army Training Center at Sill gives special attention to OCS-bound soldiers during the advance individual training.

Graduates are capable of firing the 105 mm, 155 mm 175 mm and the 8-inch howitzer. “We’re training them for positions as forward observers, fire directors, executive officers and assistant executive officers,” Watson said.

Twenty-five percent of the graduates are currently assigned to air defense artillery. Beginning in fiscal 1970, this figure is scheduled to drop to from 10 to 12 percent. Those assigned to ADA must attend that branch’s basic officer course. Artillery OCS graduates heading for a Sergeant or Pershing missile or target acquisition assignment must first attend specialized training.

### **John Irvin: 14-69**

I came into the Army at Fort Lewis and then went to Fort Sill for AIT. After three or four delays I finally got a school date for OCS.

There is a good story about the delays and finally getting into the school. For those that don’t want to read it now is the time to exit. Well, because the school was backed up due to too many coming in, and we were being held over doing odd work they sent us first to a firing battery. 24 hours on duty and 24 hours off, shooting for OCS and other training. Up at about 0400, breakfast, exchange three guns in the parking lot and out to the field. Set up, shoot all day and all night, back to the area at about 0200-0300, clean the guns, turn them over to the other section and after breakfast sleep most of the day.

After a few weeks of this and with the holidays, we got admin leave for Thanksgiving. I go home to Arizona and on or about the day after, I get a call.... if you can get back by such

and such date and time we have an OCS class for you. I clean up all my gear. Get the uniforms all squared away, packed very carefully, because I know what's coming, get an airplane back to Fort Sill (with six hours layover in El Paso) and report in. Yep, sorry last guy that got here got the last position. Back to some work in the firing battery and then sometime in who knows where. At one time we were kept in the wing of an old hospital, no heat, showers or anything else.

Well, Christmas is coming and training is slowing down so they send us home on another admin leave. Party time and then the call comes in on Christmas day, get back to Fort Sill and we have a class for you for sure. Clean all the gear again, get ready, ride the bus back to Oklahoma because of the holiday, walk in and that class is full, cancelled or whatever.

They send us home for the New Year holiday. You are ahead of me; I go home and party like no tomorrow.....don't even look at a uniform or boots.... get the call and push everything into the bags. Get back to Fort Sill and they put us up in a barracks and tell us we are going to OCS, and we all say sure. A few days later they put us in formation and take about six of us to.....OCS.

We are the only ones there with the whole upper-class on our butts.....with all those great looking uniforms and boots that look like they have been polished by a candy bar. This may not be funny to any of you, but today I can laugh about it. One good thing is we learned a lot at the firing battery. The officers knew we were on the way to OCS and they helped us a lot. Only problem is we learned how to do things the real world way and not the OCS way and got in trouble over that.

### **Dale E. Williams: 14-69**

In late March of 1969 our class, 14-69, had just gotten our green tabs. Late on a cold training day we finally stumbled back to our billets. When the lights came on we found that all of our stuff--dismantled bunks, footlockers, boots, fatigues--all of it--had been thrown together in a big pile in the middle of the floor. Two upperclassmen walked in: we "hit the wall." The upperclassmen remarked that the pile on the floor represented a situation somewhat worse than usual, even for class 14-69. They suggested that we might want to address the problem before our TAC Officer inspected us after PT the next morning. Smiling, they informed the class leader that it was mandatory that all candidates receive the required minimum of sleep, and they left. I never heard the place get so quiet.

What happened next turned out to be the most unexpected, important lesson I learned while at Fort Sill.

We immediately and spontaneously broke up into teams. My cube mate and I reassembled footlocker trays. Other teams put bunks back together, shined boots, made beds, put cubicles in order. It happened quickly, it happened automatically and we "moved with a purpose," all of us. Before I scarcely could believe it, we were all sleeping between blankets, primed and ready for the inspection the next morning.

But the really unexpected part came the next morning. The inspection went without incident and entirely without comment. The upperclassmen looked at us as if nothing had happened. If anything was said, I didn't hear it.

Years and years later when I mentioned this incident to my 15 year old son he was both impressed and interested. But at the time, I don't think any of us thought too much about it. We had many things of far greater import to hold our attention: girlfriends, families and the looming Vietnam tour to mention a few.

It all boils down to this: Character at FAOCS happened when we were focusing on something else. And it didn't happen alone.

### **Robert L. Watt: 15-69**

I probably made as many trips up that mountain (MB-4) as anyone in our class. If demerits had counted towards class rank I would have finished near the bottom!

The most trouble I got into cost me either four or six trips (it was a long time ago). A few weeks after starting OCS a middleclassman named Fowler asked me to be in charge of all "grotto runs" from McDonalds for his classmates. I collected all the orders and money, placed the order from the orderly room (where else?), met the delivery man at a side door and then distributed all the hamburgers.

All was well until there came down a decree from on high that all grotto runs were to cease. Well, I just had to do one more for my classmates and Fowler found out about it. Not good.

### **Jon G. McGill: 16-69**

In October 2018, I turned 72 years old, and I still count graduating from Artillery OCS as one of my greatest and toughest lifetime achievements. Although I had looked forward to the experience with great anticipation, made greater by having to wait my turn for two months in 'holding battery' it was only through self-deluding mind games that I was able to stick it out.

After a couple of months of the unrelenting stress, exhaustion and near-starvation (losing about 20 lbs. of my already-lean body mass), I had had enough, and decided I would quit, or 'post out,' the very next day. Every day, I got up with the certain knowledge that tomorrow I was going to quit and my life would return to normal. Another escape mechanism was occasioned by a photograph of a picturesque diner pinned to a wall in the barracks across the hall from my cubicle. When I had to hit a brace against the wall after a superior of some description had entered our living area and 'ATTENTION!' had been called, I often found myself staring at that picture, which helped anchor my eyes at 'center of traverse', and I began conjuring up visions of myself sitting with friends in a quiet corner of that diner, nobody yelling at me, all the food I could possibly eat stacked on a plate in front of me. Meanwhile, the reality was that the superior officer (or OC) would be screaming at me nose to nose, informing me that I was 'all barfed up', while his cohort would be trashing my cubicle...or, I would be sitting at a brace in the mess hall, yearning to be able to eat some of the food that had just been 'march ordered' onto the center of the table.

Contrary to the way things famously are in the rest of the armed forces, swearing was considered too boorish for individuals in OCS, whose intention, after all, is to become officers and gentlemen, so neutral words took the place of foul ones there. But those words served quite well to convey the intended insult, and the message came through scathingly loud and clear that you were a 'sorry' example of a soldier, incapable of doing anything right, and that everybody hated you. Even the word 'candidate,' which we had all been so eager to adopt, came to denote a contemptible creature, worthy only of scorn. It was used most often in the context of: 'DROP, CANDIDATE!' or 'POST ME A DEMERIT SLIP, CANDIDATE!' Use of the word in addressing one another was taboo to us, restricted only to those of higher status; thus, if you heard someone calling you 'candidate,' you could be pretty confident that you would soon be assuming the front-leaning rest position and might end up getting a demerit. As lowerclassmen, we were permitted to use the word only in reference to ourselves, as in, "Sir, Candidate McGill, no excuse, sir." In fact, after our class became 'red birds,' non-commissioned cadre were prohibited from calling us 'candidate' anymore. They were now to address us with the more respectful 'mister.'

But in the early phase of OCS, we were all hated to one degree or another by the upper, and even more so by the middleclassmen (the upperclassmen wore red tabs, were objects of adulation, fear and trembling, but were a step removed from us, whereas the middleclassmen, who were two months ahead of us, wore green tabs, were no longer required to double-time in the battery area as we were, and generally lorded it over us). Somehow, I was lucky enough not to be singled out for team-effort bullying. We had all heard about the astronomical attrition rate in OCS and, indeed, ten percent or more of our contemporaries 'posted out' the very first day, overwhelmed by the shock of the tumultuously unwelcoming reception. Not a day went by in that first month or more that somebody didn't post out. Occasionally, it would occur in the form of somebody melting into a sobbing bundle of tears; on other occasions somebody would just fly off the handle to join the losing battle of trading insults with his tormentor, having decided he was not going to take it anymore.

Two of my companions in holding battery, Novello and English, had been among our most enthusiastic and impatient members as we awaited our induction into OCS; they both quit on day one. In the next cubicle to mine was a classmate named Candidate Shuster (I remember very few of my classmates' first names). Sometime during the initial weeks of our stint as 'lower gross,' a group of middleclassmen began to concentrate their harassment on him. They called him a 'sharpshooter,' a special pejorative in OCS lingo applied to someone accused of trying to make himself look good at the expense of his mates. On one occasion, as they surrounded him in his cubicle while he maintained the front-leaning rest position, one of them grilled him with personal questions, including whether he had a family connection to Simon & Shuster, the publishing house. He admitted that he did. After a week or two of near-constant harassment, Contemporary Shuster, against my expectations and hopes, decided he couldn't take it anymore and posted out. It never was clear to me at the time what he had done to earn such harsh treatment, but I have to admit with some embarrassment that I was (in a sharpshooting kind of way) glad that it was him and not me on whom they were venting their steam. In retrospect, they may well have been motivated by anti-Semitism.

Undoubtedly, the worst way to be posted out of OCS was through an honor code violation. I remember attending at least one, and perhaps two, honor code ceremonies. These were



mandatory-attendance affairs during which the entire OC brigade was called to formation on the parade field. The subject(s) would stand in shame before the commanding officer, who would read out the detailed allegation and pronounce sentence. It seems to me there was a ceremonial sword involved as well. In one case, the individuals beings stripped of their OC status had been good students and had earned a three-day pass. Instead of spending their pass within the Fort Sill/Lawton area as required by policy, they had elected to travel home. Unfortunately for them, they were spotted by one of their unit's TAC officers at a highway rest stop. I'm fairly certain that I saved the OC career of one of my contemporaries who was called out during formation about an alleged honor code violation he had been accused of by the post gate guard. Although he denied it, I knew the accusation to be valid because he had bragged about what he had done, both to me and to others. In keeping silent, I knew I was committing an honor code violation myself but ratting him out would have felt even less honorable.

I struggled as a candidate, fully expecting to be posted out during the last week of OCS due to my low leadership status. It was between me and Contemporary Rutkowski, both of us tacitly vying for the bottom slot. The training officer, 1LT Kelliher, asked me at one point if I would accept a two-week setback. I rejected the idea out of hand, and, somehow, the question never came up again. I think I was saved by my fair grasp of artillery school subject matter and a sort of Gestapo-like fascination with looking good and maintaining a military bearing. I saw Rutkowski somewhere on post a week or two after graduation, me with my shiny yellow bar and him with his mosquito wings. He addressed me as 'sir,' but I was keenly aware that our roles might just as easily have been reversed. In another somewhat uncomfortable encounter during my brief stint as TAC officer over at the 1st OC Battalion just after graduation, I ran into a former member of the middle class who had been particularly hard on me early-on, but had later been posted out due to low artillery school grades. He was now mopping the orderly room floor. Surprised to see him there, I greeted him in friendly enough fashion and he replied respectfully, but I felt almost as though, had he ordered me to drop, I would have.

My greatest inspiration from the OCS experience, however, was derived not from a role model among the upper class or the cadre, but from one in the new lower class whom I met when I was an upperclassman. It was the first terrifying weekend at OCS for his class—and time for them to run the infamous 'parking lot' (a two-hour run around and around a quarter-mile track while wearing fatigues, helmet, and combat boots and carrying an M14, all the while being goaded and vilified by the attending cadre). I was to be the head member of that cadre. If I remember correctly, it was the Saturday of the Apollo 11 moon landing. CPT Rose, our battery commander, had arranged for as many as possible to be granted time off that weekend to watch the landing on TV. My class would be performing the '501 Problem' the following week, then graduating one week later. Meanwhile, as my class's 'JARK-master' (i.e., holder of the record number of demerits), I still had quite a few demerits to run off. Instead of doing so in the usual way by running alone up Medicine Bluff 4 and back, I had been designated the OCIC of the parking lot run, and would supervise, run with, and call cadence for one of the platoons of lowerclassmen. When my class (one-six, six-niner) had started out back on Easter Day, there had been a rare snow event (two or three inches) which the Commandant had compared to a 'cleansing,' but it was now the dog days of a particularly hot Oklahoma July. Candidates and TAC officers alike were being forced to 'break starch' twice or even

three times daily just to maintain the required sharp image required of anyone frequenting the OC battalion area, in the face of all that sweat.

In response to the events of this day and the investigation that followed, the Department of the Army would institute a new policy of classifying and posting the 'wet bulb,' or heat & humidity index, mandating the unblousing of fatigue trousers and the rolling-up of sleeves when that index exceeded a given level. During his instructions prior to the run, my OIC had told me to be more lenient than usual. In view of this heat and humidity, I was to walk the trainees one lap for every two laps of double-timing. Having been conditioned to running, what with my many demerits, as well as the fact that, as an upperclassman, I was now allowed to dress in shorts, ball cap and t-shirt, the run didn't seem particularly taxing to me. As was customary on these runs, I had all the participants double-timing pretty much in lockstep. All of a sudden, I noticed one trainee breaking ranks and staggering wildly. Thinking he was another quitter getting ready to post out, I yelled at him to get back into formation. But one look into his face, with his eyes starting to roll upward to reveal only the whites, was enough to tell me that this was a classic case of heat stroke. I had seen it often in training films but never in person. With that, I immediately halted the run and led the victim over to the shade of a large boulder, where I loosened his shirt according to the training films, poured water over him from somebody's canteen, fanned his face with a hat, and sent an assistant to call an ambulance. As it turned out, there were multiple heat stroke cases all over Fort Sill that day.

A few days later, I and my OC assistant were called for questioning by the Inspector General's office as a part of the investigation. While the first-aid measures we had taken had been enough to save the young man's life, he had slipped into a coma. Not until about a year later did I learn that he had remained in that coma for about six months. Then, in an amazing demonstration of grit and tenacity, he had returned to OCS after emerging from the coma, completed the course, and received his commission. I wish I could remember his name or that of the person who later informed me of the amazing comeback, but I cannot.

Now, fifty years later, I do remember, in addition to those noted above, the names of numerous fellow-candidates. Contemporaries Butz, Boggs, Wax and Bengtsen were among those on my floor. I was saddened to learn in recent years by means of the internet of Bengtsen's death in combat in Vietnam. Ed Grant and Mickey Reilly are the only classmates whose first names I recall. Ed and Griff (Griffin) were buddies of mine from AIT, but were assigned to a different OC battery. I remember Contemporary Henningson's name because he once lent me a pair of fatigues when I had run out of starched uniforms. One of the funniest moments of my time at OCS occurred right after that in the chow hall when a TAC officer approached the table, looked me straight in the eye and barked, 'Candidate Henningson!' Both the real Henningson, who was sitting on the other side of the same table, and I bolted to attention. That Gomer Pyle moment ended in another demerit for me because I hadn't been able to control the urge to laugh. One didn't laugh in the presence of a TAC officer.

Contemporary Gillardy was the guidon carrier one week and committed the grave oversight of leaving our unit's guidon flying in front of the chow hall, resulting in the entire class losing pass privileges that weekend. Thereafter, his name was added to the

repertoire of the songs we sang during marches. Contemporary Toergesen was a top student, always wearing a white academic achievement strip over his tab, usually in addition to several white pips denoting a leadership position. He turned out to be our class's distinguished military graduate. I didn't get to know him until the 501 Problem, when I was assigned the position of battery commander with him a member of my artillery survey party...he kept reminding me of the proper way to carry out certain procedures (things I'm sure I'd heard in class but that had somehow eluded me).

The timing of my OCS program was perfect from the point of view of somebody who did not particularly want to go to Vietnam. Virtually every member of those who had been upper and middle classmen when my class started went directly over, but by the time my class graduated, the war had finally started to wind down, and the percentage dropped to about fifty.

### **John Henningson: 16-69**

#### ***"A Reluctant Warrior, 1968-1974, An Artillery Officers Story" (2014)***

#### **John Henningson, Used by permission.**

I reported to the Artillery Officer Candidate School on March 3, 1969. Artillery OCS is at Fort Sill in southwestern Oklahoma. The nearest Town is Lawton, which exists primarily to supply civilian service personnel to the base. It is about 75 miles SW of Oklahoma City and 150 miles NW of Dallas. The Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge is adjacent to the Fort to the northwest. As with FT Leonard Wood, it is quite isolated. That's a good thing since the school exists to teach soldiers how to blow things up with artillery and rockets.

Southern Oklahoma is an interesting place. The Wichita Mountains to the Northwest are barren and rocky, with irregular, often steep terrain along the few watercourses. Rattlesnakes and scorpions are common residents of the rocky slopes. In June, July and August the temperatures average in the 90s. Imagine running all day long in 90 degree temperatures with humidity at or above the 80% mark. These conditions are great for spawning tornados. We frequently had tornado warnings throughout the summer months and once had a hailstorm.

The US Army Artillery and Missile School is where recruits and draftees are sent to learn how to be artillerymen or "redlegs." The Artillery Branch is called the "King of Battle." This is because the support of massed artillery fires has historically been essential to the success of the infantry, the "Queen of Battle" in overcoming the enemy.

OCS is part of the Artillery and Missile School at Ft Sill and shares the responsibility for the instruction of the officer candidates with the academic departments of the School. The resident School departments teach the candidate those subjects essential to artillerymen. Twenty percent of the candidate's academic instruction is in gunnery, 25 percent is in tactics and combined arms, 10 percent is in artillery transport and material, and 10 percent is in communications and target acquisition. The remaining third of the instruction is either taught or supervised by the OCS tactical staff. This instruction gives the candidate the necessary background to be a junior officer. There are periods of dismounted drill, physical training, and troop information which prepare him to instruct those subjects. The candidate receives familiarization training with small arms and small arms range operations and instruction in the use of the bayonet and hand-to-hand

combat. To facilitate the transition from an enlisted to a commissioned status an officer indoctrination program is an important component of the curriculum both in theory and execution. This full academic program is given in a 22-week period and exerts a demanding routine upon the candidate. There were no more “90 day wonders” as in WWII. To gain a commission the candidate must satisfactorily complete each of the subcourses as one of the criteria for graduation.

Generally, 40 % of those entering a specific class fail to graduate with that class. Twenty seven percent of the individuals who enter a given class are relieved. This figure would be considerably higher were it not for the policy to allow candidates deficient in certain specific areas to be “turned back” into a subsequent class. However, such a candidate must demonstrate sufficient potential to justify his retention. The remaining 12 percent who do not complete the course drop out primarily due to financial hardship, character deficiencies, and security requirements.

The candidate is constantly made aware that his every action is being observed, analyzed, and evaluated. This is through the intense supervision by TAC officers and upper classmen. Further, the performance of all candidates is rated every 30 days by their peers. The prescribed standards are intentionally made to seem unattainable; adequate time to perform necessary actions never seems to be available. In this atmosphere, the candidate must learn to function efficiently and concentrate his efforts on prioritizing the most important of a multitude of “mandatory” requirements. Most past graduates will affirm that it takes great determination to succeed or, in my case, survive.

### **Lower Class**

A class of approximately 150 to 200 candidates enters the OCS every 8 weeks and is divided among the three candidate batteries. There are three classes in residence all the time. Consequently, one-third of each of the three classes is in each of the lettered batteries. Thus, each candidate battery has a Lower Class, a Middle Class, and an Upper Class, each separated by 8 academic weeks. A system of command position is used on a weekly rotational basis as part of the leadership instruction. The battery officer positions are filled by the upperclassmen and the noncommissioned officer positions by the middle classmen while the lowerclassmen serve as “privates.” A candidate battalion staff is formed by members of the Upper Class. This staff is responsible for overseeing administrative and training activities and occupies its own headquarters building in the OCS area.

Hazing is a process related to the “tearing you down to build you up” approach used in Basic Training. In OCS they only have 180 days to make or break you, so it’s pretty intense. The idea is to force you to organize your mind to be multi tasked ...to cover all your bases...to always have a back door...forget individual pain and embarrassment... focus on the mission...to graduate. In the end all the bullshit, as we said in NAM, “it don’t mean nuthin.” However, I didn’t get it. For me it was all personal.

In retrospect, it’s likely that the word “hazing” gives any commanding officer the shakes. It conjures up visions of inquiries from Congress, visits from reporters, long-distance calls from mothers. However, precisely what military hazing is, defies definition. One recruit’s hazing is another’s “shape- up” exercises. Most civilian definitions of hazing would fail to adequately describe its varied meanings in military life. Some experts suggest that it’s

not the actual hazing that glues young men together but the sharing of experiences that try their souls and give a feeling of satisfaction if endured.

It has been suggested that after lights go out during training, jokesters may start a running banter and make fun of the system and those who tell them they are tearing them down to put them back together. Recruits who were humiliated that day may re-invent their experiences in a humorous light by seeing how things looked through the eyes of their fellow soldiers. However, this was not my experience. We were all too tired to discuss the day's activities. For me this continued well into OCS. The upper class "red birds" seemed to delight in harassing the lower class. At the time, I couldn't understand how so much verbal venom could be released on someone you didn't really know. Maybe that was the point.

As with the military academies, the honor system is a basic tenet of OCS. The senior class candidates in each battery elect representatives to operate the honor system similar to the one at the United States Military Academy. Any violation or suspected violation of the honor system is reported to the Honor Committee. The committee then conducts an investigation in accordance with Article 32 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The committee also conducts a hearing, and the findings are forwarded to the OCS commandant for appropriate action. If the offender is found guilty is submitted, in most cases, the candidate is either permitted to resign or relieved from the school.

While it had its light moments, OCS was a pretty serious business for me and there was a high failure rate and a lot of stress. Two major lessons I learned in OCS were: Good intentions don't count if you fail a task and 99.9% of the time, there is no real excuse for not performing your duty, even under great adversity. These two lessons (and many lesser ones) probably made my life better than it would have been had I not gone to OCS. "Cooperate and graduate" was a good idea too. OCS was intended to foster self-directed teamwork. However, most of the time in lower class I felt I had to shoulder the burden all alone.

According to the official documents, in 1969 the attrition rate for the Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Ga., was running 30 to 32 percent. For the Engineer OCS at Fort Belvoir, Va., the attrition was at a par with that of the Artillery OCS, 35-37%. I think that there were originally 182 candidates in Class 16-69 at Artillery Officer Candidate School, Ft Sill, Oklahoma. The attrition rate was 52%. Less than half, only 87 graduated and were commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Artillery.

The officer candidate school is organized into batteries. I was in Alpha Battery. There are three levels in each Battery each representing a different class spaced roughly 30 days apart. On March 2, 1969, I was assigned to Class 16-69. The lower classmen or "smacks" are essentially "plebes," animals, etc. The mission of the lower class was to survive the hazing and learn to "get their shit together" under stress. They wore blue shoulder tabs to distinguish their extraordinary incompetence and make them a target to everyone else. The middle classmen (green tabs) were given more freedom and focused on learning leadership skills. They functioned as non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in the battery hierarchy. The upper classmen had red tabs and were called "redbirds". They were the officers in the battery hierarchy and focused on technical and administrative skills but were also responsible for most on the hazing of the lower class. All this was under the

supervision of a TAC Officer, often a hardened 1st Lieutenant newly returned from Vietnam.

Throughout OCS there was a Peer Rating Systems by which each candidate was rated every 30 days by all the other candidates in his company. The rating form was fairly extensive and covered physical capability, mental stability under stress, technical skills and most importantly leadership ability. The ratings were with respect to your peers. How do you stack up against the 180 other members of your class? It was made clear that those judged to be in the bottom quarter were likely to flunk out. More pressure was placed on these marginal candidates. I was in the marginal category for much of the lower class and was harassed without mercy trying to break me and make me quit. On average 15-20 candidates, (probably 20%) of a given class either quit or were dismissed in the lower class. Although the pressure on the lowest class was the most severe you could always be dismissed until you received your commission. In the latter classes, such dismissals were usually for a lack of leadership skills, technical capabilities or an honor violation.

The training in OCS is designed to teach you to “think out of the box” and “make do with what you have”. Further taking chances and showing initiative gives you high leadership scores among your peers. However, if you get caught going outside of the chain of command or taking an initiative outside explicit rules may get you in trouble. Therein lays an interesting dilemma. If asked and you tell the truth you will have demerits and probably will end up taking extra “Jarks” to the hill. However, if you lie and get caught, it’s an honor violation resulting in dismissal.

Demerits were awarded for a wide variety of offenses. There was no such thing as a valid excuse. My most frequent offenses were a “5 O’clock shadow”, poorly made bed or generally “gross appearance”. Intellectually and physically I was pretty squared away. But I admit to being intimidated by the constant hazing process. As a result, of the heat and my own anxiety, I perspired profusely. In addition, I tended to have a heavy beard and couldn’t always find time to shave when I returned at mid-day or late afternoon. Hence, I was constantly harassed by the redbirds and awarded demerits for my “gross” beard and un-starched appearance.

In Basic Training and AIT one of my challenges was coping with the recurrence of upper respiratory and ear infections resulting from the constant exposure to cold and dampness combined with stressing my body physically to the breaking point. In OCS, the heat and arduous physical training tended to make one sweat profusely and excessive dehydration was always a risk.

With few exceptions both the lower and middle class were required everywhere whether in or out of formation. The constant running throughout the day took a toll on my legs. I developed a painful case of shin splints or tendonitis of the lower leg. However, if I went to the infirmary and was excused from running I’d just stick out more and get hammered down. I guess I would have benefited from some pain killers, even aspirin, but I had neither the time nor capability to find any. I just had to work through the pain.

During the first half of our Lowerclass existence we were required to move at a “double-time” pace, salute all Middle classmen and Upper classmen, and eat “square meals” in

the mess hall. Our meals in the mess hall were served family style at long tables seating about 20 of us. At the head of each table was an Upperclassman ... the Table Commandant. He assured that we occupied no more than the allotted front three inches of our chairs, we remained at a rigid "brace" during the meal, looked straight ahead without "dog eyeing," put no more into our mouths than could be swallowed in four chews, and had the authority to discipline us, on-the spot, for any infraction of table manners.

One of the unique perks of OCS was the opportunity to eat a square meal. A square meal is the prescribed method of eating in OCS. A candidate must sit perfectly upright in his chair but your back could not touch the back of the chair. One picks up the knife and fork and cuts a "thumbnail" sized portion on the plate. Then you must set down the knife before picking up the speck of food on your fork and lifting it vertically until it is opposite your mouth. At this point you may move it laterally into your mouth. However, before chewing, you must set the fork down. Each bite requires repeating this squared off process. Now imagine that you are starved and only have a few minutes to eat. Further, the upper Classman at the head of the table queries you regarding various minutiae you are supposed to have memorized. It is easy to lose weight while eating a "square meal" three times a day. If you fail to follow this process, the Upperclassman may stop your eating and lecture you on how gross you are. Repeated violations may result in your being ordered to vacate your seat and crawl under the table. This may sound bad but in actuality it's great. With any luck, your classmates find ways to slip/drop food under the table. In a few minutes, you stuff as much food as possible into your mouth and wolf it down like a pet dog.

Another procedural process critical to developing your communication skills is to learn the appropriate means of addressing an upperclassman or TAC officer. It really isn't difficult. When asked a stupid question you just have to remember to always respond by proceeding and following the answer with the word "Sir." For example, the appropriate answer to the question. "Candidate. Have you always been so gross?" Is: "Sir. No Sir." This will certainly result in another question. "Candidate. Then why are you so gross now?" The appropriate answer to which is always... "Sir. No Excuse. Sir"

Sometimes, we might return exhausted from class or the field and on entering the barracks find one of our foot lockers turned upside down with its contents spread all over the floor. This may seem minor, but in OCS, foot lockers were expected to be organized in a very precise order and available for inspection at all times. Setting up a footlocker in accordance with the prescribed guidelines took hours to accomplish, rolling socks, folding shorts and putting each item in its correct location. However, some TAC Officers found this an appropriate test of one's capabilities. Reassembling the puzzle was a real headache.

Some of the upper classman were particularly obnoxious and in my opinion over-reaching in their hazing. One particular upperclassman seemed to seek me out to reenact the ugliness he probably had experienced as a lower classman. I remember that he was blond, tall, and thin with glasses. He relished bracing me against the wall and unleashing his verbal attack in a spit storm close to my face. I suspect he smelled out the fear and uncertainty in me and was committed to break me and make me quit.

The price of too many demerits was a loss of limited privileges and the requirement to run “Jarks.” By OCS definition, a “Jark” is the longest, fastest step you can achieve without running. Outfitted with a web belt, canteen and toting an M14 rifle, the “Jark” took us up to and back from Medicine Bluffs 4 (MB4) approximately 4 miles each way from the cantonment. As a lower classman, I probably did at least 2 “Jarks” every weekend.

We endured a grueling regime of constant motion. No time for bellyaching. You ran so much you forgot how to walk. Our schedule was an endless treadmill of classes, inspections, formations, PT and marches to mess and back to barracks again, where for screw-ups like me, paid in sweat for our weekly demerits.

Part of my problem was that I felt alone and was unable to laugh it off like many others. Initially I was terrified. Maybe it was that I was a little older, married and had distanced myself from the camaraderie of college days. To me every day was a serious threat to me personally and my family. I didn’t grasp that the key was to let it roll off and “drive on.” At some point I said to myself, “I can’t do this. I’m hungry, tired and humiliated. Why not quit?” But something inside me said “I can’t quit. I have to keep trying until I succeed or my peers decide to vote me out.”

I must give particular credit to two classmates for helping me get through lower class. Candidates Dick Hamill and Bill Catherae served as important role models. I observed that they maintained their poise and let the verbal abuse roll off them. After a while I began to understand that the hazing was really not relevant. I squeaked through lower class because I finally realized that in the end only performance counted. “You can’t let them see you sweat.”

### **Middle Class**

Much of the pain of Middle Class is less clear as it was less intense. There was continued pressure to perform but it was focused on the technical aspects of the duties of a field artillery officer. This may have been a little more demanding for those of us like me, who had not been through artillery basic training and AIT. However, for me it was both interesting and enjoyable.

The technical stuff included the duties of a battery commander, forward observer, and a fire direction officer and battery executive officer. The short version is as follows:

The Battery Commander has overall responsibility for the activities of an artillery battery. The Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) calls for a Captain (O3) in this position. The other officers are usually 1st Lieutenants (O2) or 2nd Lieutenants (O1).

The forward observer is the link between the supported infantry unit and the firing battery. The FO identifies the unit’s location, identifies the type of target, (i.e., troops in the open, armor, bunkers, etc.), provides the map coordinates of the target, selects the type of shell (smoke, HE, WP) and whether an impact detonation (fuse quickly), delayed detonation (fuse delay) or air burst (fuse time) is needed. This requires excellent map reading skills and knowledge of the capabilities of the supporting artillery.



The fire direction officer is the supporting battery's connection with the infantry. The FDO controls the fire direction center at the firing battery. The FDC takes the information provided by the FO and converts it into an order to the Battery XO that controls the artillery pieces in the battery. The azimuth from the battery location to the target is calculated. Then the amount of powder (size charge) required for the requested projectile type to reach the target is calculated. Further consideration must be given to the intervening terrain that lies between the battery and the target. If there are mountains in between it may intercept the trajectory. Or if a proximity fuse is requested it could detonate prematurely. Also, consideration must be given to the position of the infantry unit and whether it is on the gun target line or dangerously close to the impact zone.

The FDC then sends the firing order to the Battery Executive Officer who directs the alignment and elevation of the guns, the type shell, and the fuse setting, if airburst or proximity, and powder charge. When the guns are ready the XO repeats the firing order back to the FDC and advises the FDC that the guns are ready to fire.

The FDC then gives the order to fire and simultaneously advises the FO that the shot is on the way ("Shot, over"). The FO replies "Shot, out" and awaits the impact. Upon impact, the FO provides his adjustment to the impact from the perspective of his location to the target. i.e., "add 100 (meters), left 50". This process continues until the target is engaged to provide the maximum destruction.

The Battery XO is also responsible for overseeing the layout of the battery when it rolls into a firing site from a road march or is dropped into a fire base by a helicopter. This involves establishing firing stakes for each gun which when aligned in the site of the gun demonstrates that the gun is still in proper alignment. In artillery parlance, this is called "laying the guns." All the directional accuracy depends upon turning the gun on a precise angle, or declination from the "laid" alignment. A very small error or undetected deviation can have a disastrous effect, an unfortunate "friendly fire" incident. Even now with GPS devices, the artillery officer is probably one of the most accomplished map readers around. In the "old days" the officer had to read a map and take compass bearings to verify the position whether it was the FO verifying the position of the infantry or the target or the FDO, verifying the coordinates given by the FO to the FDC, or the XO verifying the occupied position where the guns were "laid."

When we were in OCS everything was manual with the FO using binoculars, map, compass and his best judgment. The FDC used basic geometry tools, compass, protractors and slide rules. The XO used his compass level and the optical instruments on the guns. Today it involves laser beams and GPSs in the field and computers in the FDC and even on the artillery pieces themselves.

In addition, we learned about the capabilities and limitations of the various artillery pieces in the arsenal, The 105 mm howitzer, the 155 mm howitzer, the 8 inch howitzer and the 175 mm gun. There were both towed / air mobile howitzers (105 and 155) and self-propelled versions (155 mm, 8 inch and 175 mm).

There were different type of shells, smoke (marking) round, white phosphorous (Willy peter) rounds, high explosives (HE) and flechette (antipersonnel) rounds. In addition, there were timed fuses for airburst, proximity fuses for airbursts, delay fuses for bunkers and impact fuses.

Different powder charges were used to send the shells different distances. There might be seven small bags of powder that fit into the brass shell casing of a 105MM howitzer. First, the charge was cut to the number of required bags, which were placed in the brass casing. Then the projectile shell was placed in the casing, the fuse was set and finally the shell was rammed into the breach of the artillery piece.

Our training wasn't all in the classroom. We actually went out in the field on firing exercises playing different parts in the game of war. Sometimes you were the FO, sometimes the FDO and sometimes the XO. This was especially important to candidates like me who went through Engineering Basic and AIT vs. Artillery.

I enjoyed target acquisition as the FO the most. What was really fun was when the TAC officer required us to shoot with "black magic." Say that you lost your map and compass but still needed to direct fire on a target. You would have to "guess" where the guns were relative to your location by reading the terrain and being aware of the time and position of the sun and stars. Then you could request two smoke rounds fired with airbursts several hundred meters apart to verify the gun alignment with respect to your position. You would prefer not to be on the direct line between the guns and the target. Then you pick a nearby prominent terrain feature along the gun target line as the target and say, "from farthest smoke round on the gun target line...add 200 (meters) and right 500 ...repeat one round smoke, air burst." If the smoke bursts over or near the terrain feature you now can say something like..."left 50 drop 50...shell HE ...fire for effect. "It is always quite a rush when six rounds of 105 or 155 high explosive rounds burst on the target.

In middle class I finally felt comfortable enough to participate in some "extra-curricular" activities. Further, in a departure from normal protocol, our Class was allowed to march to class at a regular route step if we sang. We were fortunate that candidate Norman ("pitch pipe") Hile was capable of leading us in all sorts of songs from his repertoire. "McNamara's Band" being one of the most memorable of the songs that we marched to. Some of the other songs and cadence calls are found in Appendix D. So 16-69 was quite unique as we never ran in formation after lower class.

I joined in on some illicit activities, like late night "grotto" runs to food delivery trucks with high calorie goodies like pizza, hamburgers and ice cream.." Grotto" was the name given to any food that came out of a machine in the PX, or just about anything not prepared and served by the Army. Most candidates carried Grotto stuffed up their pant legs for an illicit snack when the opportunity presented itself. There was a risk as the TAC officers patrolled at night trying to catch such miscreants. It was exciting and got me involved with my other classmates in a risk sharing camaraderie building activity.

### **Upper Class**

Upper class was a step up for many reasons. Primarily I had developed more confidence in my own abilities. But in addition to my prime physical condition and stronger mental self- image condition the curriculum itself played to my strengths. The emphasis was now on implementing all the technical pieces we had been trained in plus leadership and the code of military justice.

Barbara arrived sometime in late June after completing the school year at her teaching position in NY. I had arranged for her to share an off base apartment in nearby Lawton, OK with the wife of a classmate, Mark Wagner.

I was still plagued with working off demerits by walking tours or running Jarks. But I was able to get off base on most weekends. It was great to escape the military environment but it was usually too hot even to enjoy the outdoor pool at the apartment complex on weekends. We took some day trips to some local sightseeing spots but usually stayed in the air conditioning at the apartment. The most difficult thing was the requirement to return to post before midnight on Sunday. I remember Barbara driving me back on post and noting that at 11:45PM the temperature on the bank clock was 95-110 degrees, remarking that it had cooled off somewhat.

Barbara took on the task of handling my laundry which saved money of which we had little to spare. She also could pick up toiletries and other essentials for me. It also gave me some additional time to concentrate on the demands of OCS rather than requiring me to take my stuff back and forth to the base laundry. During the week we basically had a parking lot marriage. Barbara would drive on post in the evening and park in a nearby lot. I couldn't come in contact with the car much less share a kiss. We could talk about what was going on or make plans for the weekend but, as I had to stand away from the car at parade rest. Barbara participated in the OCS wives club but as I had found, we were a little older than most of my classmates and seemed a little distance from the others. So her social life was limited.

As noted earlier, the upper classmen or "redbirds" were the officers of the battery. They were responsible for monitoring the performance of the under classmen. They provided most of the harassment and stress on their subordinates. However, remembering my own experiences as an underclassman, I was disinclined to actively harass the lower and middle class. I certainly couldn't see myself spitting nasty epithets in anyone's face as they stood helplessly braced against a wall. I understood the honor code and the need to see the under classmen develop a sense of accomplishment and confidence. However, I would be more likely to take someone aside and counsel them privately than scream at them. I did participate in the rating system of all candidates in the battery. I did vote against those whom I truly felt were falling short in leadership skills and lacked the ability to "drive on" under pressure. I now understood that such abilities are essential and most become critical in a fluid combat situation.

My recollections of the details of the Final Problem differ somewhat (*from the OCS Alumni book description*) but are fuzzy with three exceptions: Escape and Evasion, Rappelling and the River Crossing. I suspect that I considered myself very competent in the technical and intellectual aspects of my training, However, I guess was still apprehensive regarding the psychological and physical challenges. I didn't like to think about the possibility of being captured during E&E. The pressures of military training were still very real to me and I didn't see them as a game as many of my classmates seemed able to do. Further, although I was in vastly better shape than when I entered Basic Training, I still carried the memory of the torment I had experienced in the early period and the fear of failure.

I can't remember whom I was paired with when we began the escape and evasion phase. However, it was dark and I had a lot of confidence in my ability to read the terrain and

navigate by the stars. We had a general idea of the direction we needed to head to get beyond “enemy lines.” We suspected that although the terrain was rough the areas close to the roads would be patrolled by the “enemy forces” (i.e., TAC officers). Further the crests of the ridges might skylight us exposing us to the enemy. So we traversed the side slopes of the rugged hills with a rough surface of rocks, which often required us to crawl. I was also concerned about encountering critters like scorpions and rattle snakes. Our route was clearly time-consuming but safe. Some of the “gamblers” and less intimidated members of the class sought a more direct route and some made it without getting caught being rewarded by some well-deserved sleep. Others were caught and may or may not have had a bad experience for that. We arrived safely in friendly lines in the wee hours of the morning. We got some water and very little rest before heading out for the cliff rappelling and river crossing exercise.

The rappelling and river crossing were staged from a cliff overlooking an area where our family and friends were allowed to observe the execution of this final exercise. It is well known in my family that I have difficulty painting anything above the first floor of a house from a ladder because I need both hands to hold on to a ladder and it’s difficult to paint with the brush in your mouth. So the thought of rappelling off a cliff perhaps 200-300 feet high would cause some apprehension for me. I had rappelled several times before but never from a height this great. Further, the thought of backing up to and jumping off a cliff made my testes try to climb up into my abdominal cavity. rappelling technique involves rigging your own harness or seat which is checked by your partner. Then you attach two lines using carabineers, spring loaded metal clips. In our case one of these lines was controlled by a safety monitor at the base of the cliff. The other is use as a brake to slow or stop you descent. Although this is a logical safe approach it still concerned me to back off a cliff in the same way I don’t long to jump out of a perfectly good airplane with a parachute. However, it had to be done and I did it. I’m sure that I would be able to do it if my life or the life of another depended upon it but I wouldn’t like it or do it for recreation or pleasure. I backed off the cliff with my weapon and all my field gear and bounced down the cliff face in 8 or 10 steps. I hated it but I got it done.

Once on the bottom I faced the final challenge. We needed to cross the river, albeit a very shallow river, on a single rope strand slanted to the opposite bank. The task required reaching up and grabbing the rope, then swinging up my feet and wrapping my legs around the line with the weight of all my field gear dangling below me. Then I had to work myself hand over hand across the river. Although I was probably in better shape than ever before in my life, I still was not an exceptional specimen especially with respect to upper body strength. However, what I had learned about myself was that I could find the inner resources to do what you gotta do. And I did it. Only when I was done did I see Barbara waiting for me on the other side.

Graduation was a miraculous relief. There were festivities including a show put on by the girlfriends, fiancés and wives and a formal ball giving us the opportunity to wear our dress blues for the first time. I knew from the beginning that I would never give up and it turned out that was all that counted. I was very proud of my accomplishments. What lay ahead didn’t matter. It turned out that five other guys from Basic and AIT at Ft Leonard Wood graduated with me. The only ones I knew well were Dick Hamill and Mark Wagner. The others were Hank Coursen, Bob Simons and Richard Wormwood. At the time I

thought that it was miraculous that we all made it. However, now I realize that there were 95 others who dropped out. I don't remember their names.

I still did not grasp why this process of training to be an officer needed to be so psychologically challenging. Given my dissipated condition when I entered basic, I could understand the need to get me in shape physically for the rigors of combat. Further, I relished the technical aspects of being an artilleryman, the geometry, the map and terrain reading, and the procedures necessary to give clear directions in the most distracting situations. However, I considered myself a pretty intelligent guy and didn't grasp the need for the repetitiveness of the process.

It wasn't until a year later when I was in Vietnam that I grasped the full importance of this training in preparing me for my role as a forward observer and artillery liaison with infantry units. In the confusion of combat, exhausted after humping 80 pounds of gear over difficult terrain, and days of little sleep and repetitive boredom, suddenly it all comes down to you to deliver the goods. Seconds count in bringing fire down upon the enemy. The lives of your comrades depend upon it. But it must be accurate. A misplaced round could cause death or injury from a friendly fire incident. The 11 months of training were a horrible experience. Perhaps the greatest challenge I have ever faced in over 65 years on this planet. But in retrospect I can't suggest a better approach to program an artillery officer to react promptly and accurately when all hell breaks loose around him and lives are on the line. As Karl Marlante puts it in his book "What it is like to go to war..." The primary reason you don't make sound judgments in combat is that too often you are exhausted and numbed. There is little that can be done about this except training under extreme duress to learn how to function at such times..." That is an accurate description of my experience in surviving Basic, AIT and OCS.

A few days later I got my orders to report to my first duty station after a brief period of leave. My "dream sheet" had requested a station on either the east coast or the west coast. However, it was certainly possible that I would be sent directly to Vietnam. The orders were not to Vietnam. But as often happens in the "green machine" my orders were to report to Ft. Riley KS, approximately the geographic center of the United States. Considering the options, I was elated.

### **Bruce W. Bye: 17-69**

My buddy Craig Finley from Atlanta talked me into coming back (to a reunion) more than 10 years ago, and we did come back two years in a row. He has now passed on, and I appreciate what he did to try to track down members of our 17-69 class.

Craig was African American, had gone on a grotto run, and as he returned to the barracks, the TAC and an NCO were standing and talking at the far end of the building. Craig had to come up with a solution, quickly. Then it occurred to him, "I'm black." Craig chose to strip completely naked, hold his clothes and the pizza box behind his back, and creep along the edge of the barracks to avoid detection. Unfortunately, during that long walk with his back against the wall, his Johnson got into hand-to-hand combat with two bushes with huge thorns. Tears came to his eyes, but he was determined, and kept inching his way along the wall. As he got close to the door, LT Bessie said to his NCO, "I smell pizza." At that, Craig knew he had to act quickly. He made a dash for the door and avoided getting caught. He shared the pizza and had a great evening.

Unfortunately, the story does not end there. The next morning he was in severe pain because of all the scratches on the most sensitive parts of his body. He went on sick call, and when the doc asked him about his problem, Craig chose to say nothing and simply dropped both pairs of shorts to his ankles. Craig said the doc looked to his mid-section, looked back into his eyes, looked back to his mid-section and said, "I'm not even going to ask."

I have read through some of the comments (*in the OCS Experience*) and learned the solution to forming a bridge from three pieces of lumber, where each piece was too short to bridge the gap. As the "designated leader," I had that as my problem, and I failed. I tried to think of a solution, but did not come up with one on my own. (I learned from one of the stories that one solution was to take candidate's web belts and bind the lumber pieces together to bridge the gap.) The person who wrote his comment had the same problem in NCO school, learned from another person what the solution was, so when he was faced with the same problem in OCS he was successful.

I often wondered if we were also graded on leadership approach. For example, rather than arriving at "a solution alone" did the "designated leader" get more points if he had a discussion with his team, and attempted to identify alternatives before he made the final decision? If the group also failed to suggest a successful solution, would the designated leader receive more points for at least trying to use all resources?

I also believe it was that exercise, and one other field exercise where I did not get a maximum score, were what caused me to lose my "white stripe" and my very high class rank. I went to Nam immediately after graduation, and directly to the 9th Infantry as a FO. After I survived Nam, I also wondered what was impossible to know. What if I had maxed out those two scores, and got my choice of branch? I would have chosen Finance since I my major in college was economics, but mainly because Finance School was in Indianapolis where my wife was living and teaching school. After I got back from Nam, I also knew that some Finance Officers didn't make it back from over there just like some FO's who also made the ultimate sacrifice.

I still remember failing that three pieces of lumber exercise, am now glad to know one solution, and just wonder how scores were assigned. That was about 42 years ago. Strange what we remember.

### **Craig W. Finley: 17-69**

You see back before I was a DASL, I was in OCS and one of the exercises of training is called the 'Air Shoot.' What is supposed to happen is that prospective DASL's are supposed to learn how to adjust artillery from the air. Now this in itself is difficult when you are sitting still, but it is really difficult when you are flying and everything looks really strange and tiny. Now in my class one of the battery commanders was a pilot, and he was slotted to fly me on a shoot. This guy had a reputation of screwing with officer candidates and messing up their shoots. I climbed into the rear seat of a 4 seat light plane along with Captain Allen and Lieutenant Zitch. We took off from a grassy field and headed to an area on the east side of Fort Sill. Red legs will know of it as 'the washboard'!

Technically adjusting fire from an airplane is really easy. The way it's supposed to work is the AO inspects the terrain and determines map coordinates to the target and calls

them in. The guns will fire on that target with two rounds. The rounds are spaced 400 meters apart. This allows the observer to see the line of shot from the guns to the target and provide an estimate of distance on the ground. Now Captain Allen identified a target for me; and each time I tried to locate a reference terrain feature, he would bank the plane steeply away from the target and commence another orbit of the target area. I never could accurately locate the target, and I was beginning to get very, very air sick! Eventually I looked on my map and found a grease pencil tick from an earlier target I had fired upon. I reported to Capt. Allen that I identified the target and using perfect PTO procedures called in my fire mission on the bogus target!

I received a “shot” from the guns and expected to see my rounds impact so that I could make my adjustments. When I received a 5 second warning from the guns that my shots were to impact, Captain Allen immediately banked the aircraft and orbited away from the area. I didn’t see diddly and I was getting sicker and sicker. I keyed the mike and excitedly screamed “WOW! Hot dog! Did you see that?” I never saw the rounds hit; but I exclaimed, “From the near round, Right 100, drop 100 Fire for effect!” I got my fire for effect rounds and exclaimed, “Dog gone it I am a hot shot!” Captain Allen and Lieutenant Zitch looked puzzled. I ended the mission and we returned to the grassy field and landed. I quickly jumped out of the plane and started puking all over the landing gear and my clipboard. Captain Allen looked at me strangely and exclaimed “Wuss!” He then turned to Lieutenant Zitch and asked him “Did you see what the \*&%\$\*# he was shooting at?” Lieutenant Zitch said, “I think he identified the wrong target, but he did come really close to target AF1006! I’m going to pass him on the shoot!” Thus I completed my first Air Shoot (and I hoped it would be my last). Later in my career, I got another chance to be an Aerial Observer (AO) in Viet Nam; and I again had problems with my pilot.

*Thanks to Sarah Maude Merritt Finley, Craig’s widow, who provided this story from a series of articles written for the Georgia Vietnam Veterans Alliance (GVVA) magazine entitled, “Just Busting Bush by the DASL (Dumb Ass Second Lieutenant)”*

### **“Vietnam Takes Steps to Upgrade NCO, Officer Training Programs” *Lawton Constitution* (Wednesday August 20, 1969)**

Prodded by U.S. advisors, the Vietnamese government will review its officer and non-commissioned officer training programs to meet the increasing burdens of the “Vietnamization” of the war. Officials hope the review will help overcome what some critics believe is a major shortcoming of the Vietnamese Armed Forces – lack of aggressive leadership.

The review will be undertaken by a committee of senior U.S. and Vietnamese officers, all with combat experience. The committee will meet Aug 25 at the National Military Academy – Vietnam’s West Point-at Dalat.

Said Brig. Gen. Hubert S. Cunningham, director of the Training Directorate for U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam:

“I am pushing rather heavily to upgrade the program of instruction. The committee will make a thorough going review of the program of instruction from top to bottom and decide in their best judgement what should be done.”

Some changes are already under way. The government is removing about 400 officers and noncoms who have been instructors at training centers for up to 11 years. Because they have been instructors for so long, officials believe they have been out of touch with evolving battlefield tactics.

Cunningham also would like to see the Vietnamese Armed Forces loosen their requirements in promotion and in officer and noncom selection programs.

As a legacy from French colonial days, the Vietnamese military places heavy emphasis on civilian education achievements in selection for leadership courses.

In promotion, scant attention is paid to individual abilities, initiative and aggressiveness on the battlefield and other qualifications of an effective military leader.

The Vietnamese Joint General Staff maintains a roster of everyone who qualifies for promotion. The general staff, apparently jealous of its prerogatives, prefers a go-slow approach in promotions.

However, some U.S. and Vietnamese sources say there is favoritism both in promotions and in assignments. "This is a fact of life of the Vietnamese Armed Forces," said a Vietnamese source.

The deficiencies in the South Vietnamese forces, Cunningham said, are due to weakness in training. He said reports from field advisers show the Vietnamese to be deficient in such tactical chores as night fighting, coordination of artillery fire and map reading.

Much of the problem, he said, results from the mass influx of men into the military services under Vietnam's full mobilization program that has placed a heavy burden on the country's 45 training facilities.

The crush of training officers for Vietnam's million-man armed forces is especially acute at Nha Trang, Vietnam's only air training center. The airfield there houses both U.S. and Vietnamese combat and support aircraft units. U.S. Air Force officers said it is the busiest single airstrip in the world. Yet this busy strip must be used by pilot trainees for practicing landings and takeoffs.

Under the full mobilization program, all physically qualified high school graduates are enrolled in the Officer Candidate School at Thu Duc near Saigon for 24 weeks of training as infantry officers. The course is one week longer than the basic U.S. OCS Course. The candidates are graduated as aspirants – they become second lieutenants after 18 months service-and enter specialized training programs, such as artillery or flying school.

Dalat will graduate its first four-year class in October.

Cunningham likens the Vietnamese Armed Forces to the Korean Army in the early stages of the Korean Conflict.

"It wasn't much of an army when we started training them," said Cunningham. "But it is now considered one of the best in Asia." "And when you consider how quickly we've



thrown sophisticated pieces of (military) equipment at the Vietnamese. I think they are doing damn well.”

### **“Organization Day”**

#### **From the Artillery OCS Archives**

With Class 17-69 on their 501 problem this week, much of the responsibility for the Organization Day Picnic has shifted to Class 18, and they are working feverishly drafting the final plans for the picnic. To be held at the 214th Artillery Group Picnic Area, the picnic promises an afternoon of enjoyment for all personnel of the OC Brigade and their dependents.

Activities for the afternoon, in addition to eating the hundreds of pounds of hot dogs and drinking all the beer and soft drinks which will be available, will include volleyball, horseshoes, a Battalion Stakes, as well as activities and entertainment for the wives and kids.

Plans are for the buses to begin leaving the Brigade area at 1000 hours, Saturday, 23 August. Wives and Dependents will ride the buses to the picnic area along with the candidates. Dress for candidates will be Class C - Fatigues with soft caps. P.T. shorts may be taken by those participating in sporting activities.

Note: Expenditures included 41 kegs of beer (\$866.00), 600 pounds of hamburger patties (\$390), soft drinks, ice, and cups (\$389.75).

#### **Thomas M. Ellis: 18-69**

By my senior year in college, the Vietnam War was in full force. Protests were everywhere, but I did not join them. In fact, my plan was to join the service after college, the following spring. Because I had perfect eyesight, I applied for flight training in the Air Force. I thought I was in until mid-May 1968, when I was informed that because of two abdominal operations, I couldn't qualify. If you didn't qualify for flight training, you would not be accepted into their officer's training program. That left me hanging, as my 2S (student deferment) ran out on June 1. I visited the Navy recruiter and found out the same. I then visited the Army recruiter and found out that I could attend OCS and wait until the fall to start basic training. At the time, I thought Artillery was Air Defense Artillery only. Boy, did I find out different. So, I had a great summer and spent a lot of time with my girlfriend, now my wife of 49 years.

Basic was at Fort Leonard Wood and AIT in surveying at Fort Sill. The first day of OCS was Sunday March 2, 1969 for Class 16-69. I, along with all others starting OCS, had been moved to a holding battery a few days before. Since starting basic training, many of those who had signed up for OCS when joining the army, instead of waiting to be drafted, had already bailed out. Their plan was to get into something other than infantry, but not bother with OCS. Others had dropped out because they were afraid of the toughness, perceived or actual, of OCS. That weekend many candidates were dropping out before they even got started. I think Class 16 started with 150 and graduated 92 men. At least three who started with class 16 ended up graduating with class 18, to include me. Class 18 started with 100 and finished with 70. So, for those two classes, the graduation rate was 65% of those who started, and a lot more bailed before they were to start. Most who didn't finish, left on their own accord. A few were forced out.

In a letter to my parents dated March 12, I mentioned how impressed I was with our instructors, which were all OCS graduates. The word is they get to stay here both years. After classes, back to the old grind and not nearly as enjoyable.

It seemed that the first several days of OCS were spent at attention against the wall. New candidates with our backs against the wall at attention and the upperclassmen yelling at us. I'm sure they wore themselves out. We probably spent more time at attention than we did sleeping. We did get three meals a day, but with square meals, we only got a few bites per meal.

### **Square meals:**

You sit at attention with your silverware on the edge of your food tray. You are given permission to take a small bite of food. No matter how small, it is too big and we are back at attention thinking about the gross bite we just took. By the time the meal is over and very little food has been eaten, all food is passed to the end of the table and put on two of the food trays and then thrown away. One evening at dinner, two of my classmates agreed to eat the all the food (known as the march order) on the trays, but they had to eat it all. They did. Another time we were allowed to eat all we wanted, even seconds. Then we were taken out on a run. A lot of guys lost dinner that night.

### **The grotto run:**

A nearby McDonald's provided delivery to the OCS candidates. Of course, this was not allowed, so hence, it was a hidden event. 15 Big Macs, 14 cokes, 10 fries and eight milk shakes was a normal order. We would meet the driver at a specified location and bring the food back to the barracks for consumption. One night while I was an upperclassman, I went for the pickup with Rick Willauer. We met the guy, paid him and started to leave with the food and drinks. We then heard "stop right there, candidates." One of the TAC Officers was waiting in hiding. The word was that if any Officer caught candidates on a grotto run, they received an extra leave. He was out to get us. We didn't stop and started running. "Halt right there, candidates, that's an order." We dropped the food and drinks and ran. He didn't catch us, but he did have a lot of Big Macs and milkshakes.

We had footlockers at the foot of our beds. Inside that footlocker, besides the normal army stuff, was a "magic box." It was a shoe box and had to have two blousing rubbers (like strong rubber bands used around the bottom of our pant legs at our boot tops) around the box. We could keep anything in the "magic box" as long as it was secure. The rest of the locker had to be kept secure when we were out of the area and locked. Occasionally, a candidate would forget to lock his locker and upon return everything that had been in his locker was strewn all over the barracks, including shaving cream spread all over. Fortunately, that never happened to me.

Shortly before OCS started, I lost a filling. I went to the dentist and was told it would be a few weeks before it could be filled. I was told to keep food out of it until then. Easier said than done. OCS started and those square meals and little to eat. I did manage to score several candy bars one day to ease the hunger, but probably did in my tooth. A few days later and before my dental appointment, a toothache started, and I was off to the dentist. I needed a root canal. It is as bad as it sounds. That old joke of "I'd rather have a root canal than . . ." Well, it was seven or eight trips to the dentist to complete. The

good news is that the dental office had very comfortable overstuffed chairs to relax in while waiting your turn in the dental chair. Everyone slept waiting their turn. The specialist had to come out into the waiting room and wake up the candidate when it was his turn, and most trips would require a 30-minute wait. I caught a lot of needed shuteye on those visits.

### **The Jark:**

A little trip to the top of Medicine Bluff 4 (MB-4), Saturday and Sunday. Leading the pack were the upperclassmen with no rifles. Following them, were the middleclassmen with their M14 rifles at sling arms. Then came the lowerclassmen with their M14's at port arms. 4.2 miles, sometimes running and sometimes a little slower. I remember, the slower was called quick time, while running was double time, all while in formation and in step. All wearing jump boots along with the proper attire according to the weather. Jarks didn't start until the third week of OCS. The first two weeks we enjoyed the "parking lot." A quarter mile track with our M14's at port arms, going double time/quick time for 50 minutes and then a 10-minute break. Then another 50 minutes of the same. I think I had a total of 25 or so Jarks completed when I finished OCS. Not a record, but certainly somewhere in the top 25%.

A few days before I was to turn middle class, I was one of two candidates on CQ (charge of quarters) for the night. All candidates had to do this. Up all night and taking turns trying to sleep in a chair. It didn't work for me and the next day I was dead tired. We had a test on Army transportation that morning and I actually fell asleep while taking the test. I still scored over 50%, but that brought my average for two of the three tests on transportation down below 70% (68%, I think). Since the third test wasn't for another eight weeks, I was set back four weeks to class 18. The guys I had gone through basic and AIT and eight weeks of OCS, including Bill Gilardy, who I meet at the reception station in Cincinnati, were becoming middleclass and I was being set back four weeks. That was a very depressing day. The good news is that I made a lot of new friends and still kept the old ones.

Several guys in our class (I think six or seven) received a Signal Corps commission. Everyone wanted one as that meant service in Europe and not Vietnam. The rest were split between Air Defense Artillery and Field Artillery. The worst for ADA was Korea. Not a great location, but no current fighting. FA meant a good chance to go to Nam. Branch assignments were made, and I received Field Artillery. My cube mate, Rick Reda got one of the Signal Corps assignments.

One night we were out for a night shoot. Shooting the 105's at night. Once it was over, we packed up, got into the trucks and came back to the barracks. Once back, no one could find Heit (Candidate Dick Heit). Staff went back out to the range and found him waiting for someone to come back out to get him. He had fallen asleep and didn't wake up until after we were all gone. It was lucky he didn't get run over. He did have the smarts to stay put and wait for someone to come out to get him. Had he tried to walk back, he may never have been found.

Another time we were out on a night shoot which finished up about 2230 hours. The busses hadn't arrived so many of us, including myself, sprawled out on the gravel road for a comfortable sleep. About 2330 hours, the TAC Officer with us decided that we should

walk back to the barracks, which was about three or four miles away. We had gone about 3/4 of a mile when a truck came by. The Officer asked the driver to call transportation and we stopped and laid out on the grass for another snooze. Finally, the buses showed up and we were off to Robinson Barracks to sleep the short remainder of the night in our beds.

I was still dating (long distance) my college sweetheart. She did come out to visit me during the Memorial Day weekend. We were to talk about marriage, but never did. We did go to the Howitzer House with my friends from Class 16 and she got wasted on Bachi's (some sort of gin drink). She had a rough night and we never did have any wedding talks. Two months later I was walking over to the phone center on a Sunday morning to call her. In the phone center, there were private phone booths. You would give the operator the number and she would make the call for you. When finished you would go up to the front and pay for the call. On the way, I kept thinking of reasons to get married and then not to get married. Sort of a she loves me, and she loves me not routine. When I arrived, I was on a positive note and called and told her we should get married the weekend after I graduate. She said OK. She then went to a company picnic and when she came home, her mother had made out the invitation list. Then it hit her. This is for real. For me, I was thinking I would be assigned to the states for a year at least and wanted her with me.

A couple of weeks later, on my 23rd birthday (August 15), about a dozen or so of us were called out for a formation after classes. We were wondering what this was about and then it hit us all about the same time. We are all Field Artillery. We are going to Nam. We were called to attention and then at ease. When our name was called, we were to come to attention, shout sir, say our name, be given our assignment and then back to at ease. They started with Novak. Sir, Candidate Novak: Republic of Vietnam. Then came Hood: Vietnam. Hanning got Korea. Horton, with prior service and already a Nam tour was assigned to Italy. Ellis: Sir Candidate Ellis, Republic of Vietnam. The rest of the names were called, but I didn't pay any attention. After it was all over, besides Dave Novak, Dave Hood and me, Darrell Miles, Rick Manley, Dana Biehl and Rick Ray also received Nam orders. Oh well, the rest of OCS should be easier. What can they do, send us to Vietnam?

The final obstacle, or so we thought, was completion of the OC-501 Field Problem. We all take off after dark, try to avoid capture and make it to the end. The end was over some mountains and across some rough territory. While crossing the mountains (probably just hills but seemed like mountains to us) we could see the VC/NVA prison camp in the valley, all lit up. Candidate Ross Reck had been captured and across the loudspeaker, they kept accusing Comrade Reck of nefarious acts. Over and over again. Getting captured was not good. We finally reached the destination about daylight. A short nap and then we rappelled down the back of MB-3, about 300 feet. Then we had to cross the river on a rope. We were told that we had to crawl on top of the rope. If we rolled over and tried to make it on the underneath side, we wouldn't make it and would fall into the river. I rolled over shortly after starting but made it across anyway. I showed them.

### **Article Thirty-One**

I spent the weekend before graduation at the hotel. A few of us almost got into a tiff with some college punks at the pool, but with less than 48 hours until graduation, we backed off and let them think they had won. If they only knew how close they came to be experiencing real pain.

We were up early and back to the barracks in plenty of time for reveille, but since this would be our very last one, why bother and nine of us went to the mess hall for coffee and wait for the rest to come to breakfast. In the almost one year I had been in the army, I never missed reveille and accountability had never been taken.

Just shortly before we expected the rush of candidates for breakfast, one of our classmates came in and said accountability had been taken and we were in deep trouble.

Candidate Robert Morris was a Harvard graduate and really smart, but he seemed to lack military bearing. He did make it through OCS, even after being set back four weeks for lack of leadership. Anyone who could survive 23 (or 27) weeks in this place, deserved a commission. TAC Staff had a different view. They wanted him out and devised a weird plan to do so. They hid his hat, so he couldn't make it into formation and then they would have an excuse to kick him out, one day before graduation.

What they didn't count on was nine others about to graduate candidates going early to the mess hall. Actually, many other candidates were missing formation but were able to sneak in during the early morning darkness. That left Morris and nine early coffee drinkers.

Now staff had a problem. Their net caught Morris, but also nine others, including three of the seven going right to Nam: Beihl, Hood and myself. The only way they could get rid of Morris, was to get rid of all of us. They were not happy.

During practice for graduation, it was mentioned several times that "some of us might not be with us tomorrow." It was also asked if anyone's guest coming to visit for graduation was of VIP rank (Colonel or above). My father made full colonel in 1945 when Westmoreland was still a major. My parents came to my high school, college and even my basic training graduation. They would have come to my OCS graduation, if I wasn't getting married four days later. If my father had been there, that would have put another fly in the ointment for staff. My parents receiving royal treatment and their son not graduating.

Later in the afternoon we were called into the office of the XO. Some of us had been there before. I could see our names written on a tablet and stars by four of them, including mine. Those stars were either a ray of hope, or else something very, very bad. To no one's surprise, it was bad.

To make a long ass chewing short, we were threatened with all sorts of possibilities including not graduating and going to the stockade. He also mentioned (by repeating our names) that four of us had been here before.

It seems that a month or so before one of our classmates (a pretty sharp candidate by the name of Cussick) had been kicked out for a minor infraction. It's just that the minor infraction had pissed off his battery commander in a big way. He appealed to the commanding general but was turned down. A number of us signed a petition stating how we felt about Cussick and how his treatment was unfair. We were promptly called on the carpet by the XO and chewed out. This was the Army, not a democracy. We were quietly

ushered out, but not before being told we were never to return again under these circumstances.

Well, here the four of us had returned along with six more of our buddies. The final assault was having our rights read to us under Article 31 of the United States Uniform Code of Military Justice (the military version of Miranda). Our punishment was to run two Jarks that day and two again the next day before our swearing in as Officers and Gentlemen. Also, we were confined to our barracks after the formal dinner that evening.

What, all this for a lousy few Jarks? By this time running two Jarks was nothing, especially in tennis shoes (running shoes hadn't been invented), rather than our jump boots. Also, we were to run on the quarter mile track instead of up MB-4. Occasionally, to break the monotony, we ran a lap or two backwards. Piece of cake. All in all, it was well worth it to see Candidate Morris become Second Lieutenant Morris.

I don't remember much about graduation. I do remember running the Jarks. I also remember walking through the barracks area looking first right and then left to make sure those gold bars were really there. They were. A proud moment.

I have always been proud of graduating from OCS. Proud of how tough it was and that I could make it through. I sincerely believe the training paid off as I served my combat tour and well into my civilian life. OCS graduates seemed to have a special bond that put us above the ROTC officers and on par with West Point graduates. Not to put anyone down, but the training was intense and prepared us well. I am very proud to say I am a graduate of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School.

### **“OCS Glee Club to Sing at Fair”**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (September 12, 1969)***

Four performances by Fort Sill's Officer Candidate Brigade will be given at the Oklahoma State Fair in Oklahoma City. The group will present concerts on both days at 12:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. at the 14 Flags Plaza near the Space Tower.

Jim Johnson, post director of Christian education (Protestant), is the director.

The Glee Club is also scheduled to perform at Theatre Four, Fort Sill on Sept. 20.

### **William A. Cooper: 21-69**

#### ***from Boys of Battery B Blog (Ed Gaydos) June 17, 2015***

Three sergeants from firing batteries walked in and said, “Coop, we're going to OCS (Officer Candidate School). Why don't you come along?”

I thought for a moment and said, “Hell yes.”

We all filled out paperwork requesting OCS and that's when I found out you needed two years of college, and me a high school dropout. I was lucky I had gotten my GED equivalency on my first tour in Germany, and now I took a walk over to the education center. I took some tests and gave them information on schooling and positions I had held, and walked out with two years of college equivalency and then some.

Out of the three sergeants who applied to OCS with me, one was turned down. Seems he had hit a 2nd lieutenant somewhere in his career and they did not think him officer material. Another failed the OCS test and dropped off. That left two of us waiting for a class date. I asked for Artillery OCS at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

I found a nice apartment for Honey (my wife) and the kids in town near Fort Riley. I would go to Fort Sill alone. I felt that if I had them near me I would not study as hard. I would be almost twenty-eight years old while the average guy in OCS was a lot younger with all the advantages of college and good study habits. It would be hell not having my family near but it would be for the best. I was ready to give it a shot.

I had very little trouble adjusting to the training in OCS and let the abuse from the upperclassmen just roll off my back. It was funny how these young soldiers in the upper class tried to act like they knew everything better than you. They too were just candidates, but they loved to lord it over the lower class. I was going to become an officer no matter what they threw at me. This was an opportunity I could not let slide. The first sergeant and I got along, to the point he called me in to ask if I would talk to some of the other sergeants in OCS who were having a hard time.

The leadership part of the training was easy, but the math required for artillery was another story. I was up against guys way ahead of me who had gone to college and I never had good study habits. Artillery involves a lot of math and they're asking who's had trigonometry and 90% of the class is holding up a hand and I'm looking around thinking I wish I could hold up my hand. I was the oldest in a starting class of 130, of which 40 dropped out the first couple weeks. There were times when it got hard to keep up and I was starting to doubt myself. If I failed it would not be because I did not try hard enough. But was I good enough?

Then I ran into a real asshole. He was a young gunnery instructor who had just graduated from OCS and stayed to teach. He taught from the book, not from experience. It was apparent to me that the only thing separating the two of us was that he had already read chapter four and I hadn't. In class, he went along like he was reading out of a book. I was having a hard time absorbing what he was putting out, him babbling on, and I had to stop him and tell him he was losing me and asked that he slow down. He kind of put me down, and after class called me out in the hall and proceeded to chew me out. His attitude was he's an officer and I'm a lowly candidate and I should grovel at his feet. I was shocked that an officer in the U.S. Army would act that way. Well, I was having none of it and I got in his face a bit. He's maybe twenty-one; I'm twenty-eight, six foot four two hundred pounds. I told him he was there to teach and I was there to learn and we better get together somehow. The result was, No we don't, I'll just fail your ass.

For your final gunnery test you had to call in artillery from a small aircraft with two seats in the front and one in the back. They took one candidate at a time. There's a pilot up front, an instructor in the co-pilot seat and the candidate in the rear seat. You got a map and a pin. You get up in the plane over the range and they say, "Your target is that school bus." You have to know where you are on the map, stick the pin in the map on the right coordinates for the target, then you key the mike and call in the fire mission.

When my turn came to go up, my instructor friend gets on the plane in the co-pilot seat. I locate my target, initiate the fire mission, and call for a first round smoke, which is standard procedure before you adjust and call for high explosive. About the time the smoke round is to go off I see the instructor nudge the pilot and he does a banking maneuver away from my target. Even twisting around in my seat, I cannot see the smoke round go off. By the time the plane comes around my smoke is drifting off. The instructor is screaming at me over the headset, "Do something, candidate, people are dying down there. What are you going to do?" Instead of asking for a repeat of the smoke, which I should have done, I guess at an adjustment and call in high explosive. Of course, I miss the target. That got me a failing grade in the exercise, and therefore I failed gunnery.

My classmates told me this banking maneuver had not been pulled on any of them. A few had even vomited in the aircraft and gotten just passing grades of 70. I thought, Maybe I should have vomited on my instructor friend.

You fail gunnery you don't become an artillery officer, so now I had a choice. If I wanted to stay in OCS I would have to repeat the last four weeks of training. I phoned Honey and told her what happened. She wanted me to sew my sergeant's stripes back on and come home. I told her I was not being kicked out, just sent back a few weeks, and I wanted to give it another go. If I failed again I would stay in the Army and work for the highest enlisted rank I could, and she agreed.

I asked that my gunnery instructor be looked into and was assured that I would not be seeing him again. So, I packed up my stuff and moved to the class behind me while my friends became upperclassmen. The good part was my old classmates were now my uppers and they cut me a lot of slack.

The four weeks flew by and I was doing great; I was ranked seventh in a class of 84, and because I was in the upper ten percent I wore a white stripe across my red trainee epaulet. I excelled in the military side of the training: breaking weapons down, firing artillery pieces, knowledge of military regulations, and things of that nature. On the academic side, I got into a study group of all white stripes and they helped me out a lot. We committed to help each other stay at the top.

Then the roof fell in again. Before graduation we were marched to the orderly room to pay for our graduation notices and calling cards. I had been told it would be a while before we had to pay, and now I was required to write a check. All candidates were required to have a checking account. Being a married guy with two kids most of my money went home to the family, leaving me with not enough in my account to cover the check. I ran to the bank the following day with a savings bond I had in my footlocker to cover the check. When I got my bank statement I noticed the bank had posted the debit before my deposit and bounced my check.

A bad check was considered an honor code violation and grounds for dismissal. Guys had been kicked out for less. My First Sergeant said to just wait it out. The next few days were agony and then it happened. The commander of the OCS program wanted to see me right away. He first chewed me out and then told me I would be a danger to the officer corps reputation and should not be commissioned as an officer because I showed such poor judgment. I explained the bank's procedure was not sufficient cause for such a



drastic measure. I further reported I was ordered to write the check with no opportunity to ensure sufficient funds. I looked him straight in the eye and told him I intended to see the base commanding general if they were going to put me out for this.

In a day or two I got word they were going to let me graduate, but with a letter in my file for one year indicating that if it happened again I would pay dearly. This I knew to be a complete crock. Once I got officer bars there was no way they could take them away for a lousy bounced check.

I left OCS as a Distinguished Military Graduate (still in the top ten percent). My last encounter was with a major who asked me to stay and teach. By then I had a lot of respect from the officers and enlisted cadre that ran OCS because I was an E-6 with a reputation for helping other guys and I think my age helped. He said, "With your experience you are what we need here. And let me tell you what's going to happen. This class will have an allocation for Vietnam. At graduation, all the class records will be on a table. I'll pull one from this stack and one from that stack until I fill the allocation for Vietnam. If you agree to stay your record will already be pulled, it won't be on that table. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"Yes sir, I do. But I just want to graduate and go to work." He was very pissed off at me for turning him down.

The great day came. I was to graduate and be given the rank of 2nd lieutenant. I would be Lieutenant Cooper – not driver, not sergeant, but "Sir." The whole class was in the theater waiting to get their assignments. The top three graduates by tradition got their first choices, and all three had chosen Military Intelligence. Next came the draw for Vietnam, and we knew the allocation was for seven from our class. The major said, "The following candidates have been chosen to serve in the Republic of Vietnam." The first name out of his mouth was, "Cooper, William A." I know that son of a gun had my file on top. The class gave me a standing ovation when my name was read. I think they were happy to see me graduate because I had helped so many of them.

To this day Honey thinks I volunteered for Vietnam, but I did not.

### **"U.S. Highest Medal Goes to Orlandoan"**

#### ***The Orlando Sentinel* (Saturday November 1, 1969)**

An Orlando woman, Mrs. Grace E. Jolley, Friday was presented with the Medal of Honor won posthumously by her son who ignored repeated wounds to call down artillery fire on enemy troops in Vietnam. Mrs. Jolley, who lives at the Gladstone Apartments on Amelia Street, received the medal during private ceremonies in the office of Vice President Spiro Agnew.

On hand to witness the presentation were her son and daughter-in-law, Mrs. and Mrs. John T. Durham of Indianapolis, and her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Karl Knapp of Berlin, and Florida Rep. Lou Frey Jr.

The Medal of Honor, the nation's highest decoration for bravery in the face of the enemy was awarded to Mrs. Jolley's son, 2nd Lt. Harold B. Durham Jr., for his actions during a pitched battle Oct. 17, 1967. It was one of three Medals of Honor awarded by the vice president during the day.

Lt. Durham was a forward observer with the First Infantry Division's 28th Infantry on a reconnaissance in force when the unit was attacked by a well concealed unit.

While acting as an artillery forward observer, the citation said, he ignored severe head wounds to direct supporting fire against enemy troops.

Durham was mortally wounded by enemy machinegun fire be the army said, as he lay near death, he saw two Viet Cong approaching, executing defenseless, wounded men.

"With his last effort, Lt. Durham shouted a warning to a nearby soldier who immediately killed the insurgents," the citation read.

### **Dave Whelan: 22-69**

I was in Class 22-69 and also went through AIT at Fort Sill (OCS Prep). In some cases we had the same instructors in both programs. I think the AIT program was well planned and served as a good way to determine potential, or lack of potential. I know when I went through, it was heavily academic - not that the physical side was ignored.

By the time we were done, our uniforms were ready for OCS and I didn't wait at all to begin - 2 weeks leave and I was back at Sill for the games to begin. You couldn't help but feel sorry for the few candidates that came to Fort Sill from a different AIT. When I was in OCS those candidates unlucky enough to wash out normally just went across the street to ACL School. Also never heard of any special black polish - but spent some quality time in the Tacey Street beer hall, close by the phone center.

MB4 and I are old friends. If memory serves me correctly I ran the Jark every weekend, both days? for 19 weeks. I was in great shape when I left Fort Sill! No one in my class went to Vietnam (at least out of OCS) and I went Voluntary Indefinite for a 3 year tour with Pershing. I consider OCS to be a defining period in my life and look back on it fondly.

We only had red dot boots - god help the candidate who got caught trying to keep a set of "display" boots under his bunk by blacking out the red dot! Our Jark boots were not marked, were kept in our cubby hole by the latrine, and had to be polished at all times.

No goldfish for us either. I remember wanting to quit the first week because I had some 20 year old yelling in my face. My TAC, 1LT Malm, took me aside and spoke with me. He told me he had wanted to quit his first week also but I needed to stick it out. I am glad that I listened to him. People just wouldn't believe all of the hoops we jumped through during our 23 weeks.

If memory serves correctly we had a full moon and it was pretty incredible. The things you can do when you are young!

I remember one of the courses that we went through in lower or middle class involved having to use your ingenuity to solve various practical problems like coming up with a way to cross a gap with three pieces of lumber that were each individually too short to make a bridge but if assembled somehow (like with your web belts) could make a long piece that could be used as a bridge. It just so happened that I went through the same

course when I went to the Fort Sill NCO academy a few years earlier and remembered the solutions.

The 501 problem is etched forever in my memory.

Escape and Evasion - While we successfully completed the E&E, it was not without problems. I remember that evening well. We had a full moon, as I recall, and climbing around the rocks and cliffs of the west range proved to be a real challenge. We went out as a team with one compass, one map and nothing else. A few hours into the exercise two of the team were captured and we had no map or compass. I remember finding some vehicles parked along the road, but no people around.

One of the guys, I think it was Shade, dropped his M14 while climbing down a rock face and there wasn't much left after the stock shattered. We were never caught and made it to the rendezvous point where we prepared for the rappel down MB3.

Steak and egg breakfast after completing the rappel and crossing the river on a rope without falling in the water or dropping your M14.

I was dead tired but somehow managed to make it down safely and inched my way across the rope to safety and food. Some candidates were not as lucky and met up with tougher TAC Officers and ended up in the water.

### **Stetson Tinkman: 23-69**

Escape and Evasion - My memory of that whole evening (and the next day) is pretty clear. First, in setting up the ground rules for the exercise, the aggressor team briefed us about safety and outlined the course and the rules. They made it clear that if we got to a certain point, by a certain time, we were to step out and identify ourselves. I recall doing that, as instructed, and promptly being taken to the "POW camp." No lockers or 'fridges or poles that I recall. There was a mud pit; no rocks. Most fun for me was being stuck headfirst through a tire, hanging from a rope attached to a ceiling joist. The idea was to bend at the waist and hold on to your ankles, while one of the "captors" spun the tire in one direction for several minutes. When the tire (and the "prisoner") were released, the twists unwound, spinning the tire faster and faster. Stomach hung in there pretty well for the first "unwinding" and re-winding of the rope. When it began to unwind in the opposite direction, the inner ear-to-settled stomach connection kicked in (or out?) and stomach emptied itself. Having never experienced motion sickness before that event, I can report that, since the early fall of 1970, I've had a mild case of it under certain conditions.

A group of us thought, that, OK, we were meant to be "caught," so we could learn from this experience. None of us in this group divulged anything other than name, rank and serial number, so we got the full treatment. Several folks captured earlier DID volunteer more than that information; they were released without the fun of the entire evening. We thought then, and I do still, that we did the right thing by resisting the "torture" and by keeping our mouths shut.

Comes then the MB-3 "ropes course" and river crossing. I was fine going down the cliff face "on belay." I got to the edge of the river and was kicked in by one of the TAC Officers. As I was coming up the slippery bank, the Brigade Commander came by and told me to

get moving; a TAC Officer told me I was wet, I must have fallen off the river crossing ropes, I had failed the exercise, and I had better get out of there.

Obeying the first order first (not the textbook solution), I started across the rope. Hanging motionless in the middle was a classmate who had given out whatever information the “captors” had asked for the night before at the POW camp. I inched out onto the rope, properly positioning my legs for traction and balance, pulling myself forward. I got almost to the fellow who was hanging there. Dilemma: climb over him and probably cause him to drop into the water, or wait for him to drop? There was no way I could help him up or convince him to move on. Just as I was about to go “over” his hands, gripping the rope, a TAC Officer at the far shore gave the rope a mighty shake.

The other fellow dropped into the river. I lost my balance and ended up holding on by both hands, as he had been. I wasted no time moving hand over hand (accompanied by more frenzied shaking and bouncing of the rope by the TAC Officer) to the far shore. As I got there, again, I was pushed back towards the water. Eventually, I crawled up the bank. Because my uniform was wet, I was not allowed to have anything to eat or drink with those who had the good fortune to select a crossing rope monitored by less enthusiastic TAC officers. In hindsight, that evening and the next morning, probably carefully designed to teach Candidates several important lessons, ended up sending me mixed signals.

### **John P. Calhoun: 24-69**

Let me set the stage: The OCS Class is Class 24-69, the date is late November 1969 and the Upper Class is out in the field on their last FTX before graduation in a couple of weeks...the last big challenge/test.

We were in the second day of the FTX and naturally fatigue was beginning to set in. One of my classmates, Roy Reinalda, was designated as the Battery XO for this phase of the exercise and I was designated as one of the Forward Observers. To appreciate the rest of this story you have to know a little about Roy. Roy was a tall, slender guy, a smile that went from ear to ear and one who could find the “light side” in the most distressing situation, which as we all remember OCS was full of...at least for the first 3 or 4 months. Roy’s sense of humor and warm personality helped all of us get through those distressing days, particularly during lower and middle class.

The big test for Roy, as the Battery XO, was to lead the relocation of the firing battery during a night move. It was dusk, not quite dark when the word was given to move. Because of extremely windy conditions the forward observers (myself) were not “on the hill,” but instead remained in the battery until weather conditions improved. This allowed me to ride along with Roy and his driver to the next position. The road march to the next position went fairly well, or so Roy and I thought.

After arriving in the new position, Roy and his driver promptly went about the task of assisting each ground guide in getting each gun into position, setting up the aiming circle and laying the battery. Keep in mind, it was almost dark, and the terrain made it difficult to see all six guns from the XO Post, and as one might imagine, communications were not the best.

Roy promptly laid each gun that was in position and reported to the FDC that “the battery

is laid.” What Roy did not realize is that one of the guns (number 2 if I remember correctly) had broken down in route to the new position. I was standing beside Roy, a big smile on his face and a true sense of relief that he had completed what would be the most challenging task he would face as the Battery XO, when a TAC Officer approached. With a stern look on his face (TAC Officers always had stern looks on their faces when addressing “candidates” as I remember) and blurted out...” Mr. Reinalda, how many howitzers do you have in your battery?” Roy, still confident that he had excelled in the task, replied, “Sir, Mr. Reinalda, I have six howitzers in my battery.”

The TAC Officer then looked at Roy and said, in a very stern manner, “are you sure you have six howitzers in this position?” Roy, a little taken back, decided to count the howitzers. After moving from side to side and making a hasty survey of the firing battery area, Roy returned to a position in front of the TAC Officer, came to the position of attention, reached into his left breast pocket of his field jacket and pulled out a pad of paper, pen and began writing. The TAC Officer, visibly getting impatient and angry, barked...” Mr. Reinalda, what are you doing?” Roy, with that smile on his face said... “Sir, Mr. Reinalda, I am calculating at a Second Lieutenant’s pay, how long it will take for me to pay for a lost howitzer.” The look on the TAC Officer’s face was a “picture to behold.” As hard as the TAC Officer tried, he could not help but crack a smile and walk away shaking his head. The rest of the FTX went well from there...for the both of us.

The last time I saw Roy was the day of graduation. Most of us were in our Class A uniform, getting the last of our personal belongings out of the barracks and signing out. As I was making my way from the Orderly Room to my car I bumped into Roy, shook his hand and said goodbye. Roy was in his PT uniform...he still had a few “trips up the hill” to make before the First Sergeant would let him sign out.

### **Charles Donovan Stewart: 24-69**

I graduated from The University of North Texas (North Texas State University at that time) in 1968. Three days later, I got my induction notice. My wife was pregnant, so when I reported for my physical, I asked if there was any way I could delay entry. A Sergeant, working at the Shreveport, Louisiana Induction Center, looked up, smiled, and said, “sure son, just go into that room over there (he pointed to what looked like a classroom) and I’ll bring you an Officer’s Candidate Test. If you pass it, you can have a hundred and twenty-day delayed entry.”

The Army wasn’t part of my plan...as a matter of fact, military service, in any branch, wasn’t part of my plan. Like many of our generation, I worked myself through school. When I wasn’t working, I was studying or attending class. Though North Texas had an ROTC program, the money it generated didn’t come close to providing what I needed. So, I deluded myself into thinking that I would miraculously avoid military service.

I walked over to the classroom and sat down. The Sergeant brought me the test. I’m sure there was some kind of time limit, but I don’t remember what it might have been. I do remember that I had three choices of schools in case I passed. Two had to be a Combat Arms Schools. I wasn’t sure what that meant. The Sergeant explained that there were three combat arms: Infantry, Armor, and Artillery. The Artillery School was at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. It was the closest to Fort Worth (and my wife), so Fort Sill it was!

After I finished the test, I continued through the physical examination with the rest of the inductees. The Sergeant told me that he'd have the test result by the end of the day. Then I'd know whether I was going home or heading off to "Basic Training." It was a long day, and every third inductee was selected for the Marines...I got Marines! Things were not looking good!

When we'd finally finished with all the various physical exams, we were sworn in...so, I was in the Service...but, at that point, I wasn't certain what Service I was in! And I wasn't certain when I'd be going...today, or one hundred and twenty days later! I was marching, with my other Marine inductees to a bus when I finally saw that Sergeant walking toward me. He wasn't smiling!

The test hadn't been simple, however I thought I'd done pretty well. But, he wasn't smiling! He pulled me out of line, stared at me for, what seemed like, an hour, and finally said...you passed! Those were the best two words I think I'd ever heard! I had put off induction for one hundred and twenty days! I would be there to see my baby born!

The bus I had taken to the Induction Center was filled to capacity with inductees. There was only me and the bus driver on the return trip.

So, Artillery OCS was the result of a random selection based solely on the school closest to home! It would, of course, come to mean much more to me. But, as a young college graduate, ready to seek his fortune in the business world, the Army, and OCS, was just another obstacle that had to be endured!

After basic training and advanced individual training, the day I really had to commit finally arrived. I still wasn't certain that I wanted to complete the program, but the money was good...a lot better than private's pay...so I showed up! I figured that I'd stay long enough to get E-5 pay and get my wife and daughter a little extra money, then I'd bail.

Welcome to the program Candidate...drop, give me twenty! Well, here we go!

Of course, we had to be conditioned to "run the hill." So, with that mandate in mind, a TAC officer, named LT Wolf, had the brilliant idea to have our class (Class 24-69) run laps on the track around the football field in steel pots with weapons at port arms. I'm not certain what the temperature measurement "wet bulb" means, but I remember that, on that particularly hot July day, that measurement was approaching the upper limits of exercising weather.

In AIT, I had been a "guinea pig" for an exercise program the Army was evaluating. Those of us selected to be in the program did all our exercise training in an air-conditioned room, exercising against resistance pulleys. When we ran, we were attached to a harness that kept resistance for some period of time as we ran and pulled to reach the end of about a one hundred foot track. We never trained outside.

The class had been running for about half an hour, when I began to feel "funny." Some of my classmates had already fallen out and were, of course, being harassed by the middle class which was on hand to deliver punishment to "sick pukers." That, I determined, was not going to happen to me! But then, I began to have flashes of darkness...I'd come back

after a second or two, so I kept going. I don't remember handing my weapon to my classmate running beside me. But I must have. It went black after that!

I woke up' with an "IV" in my arm, in the hospital, the next day. I had a choice to make. If I indicated I was ready to go after a three day stay (two days over a weekend), then I wouldn't be set back to another class. The doctors would write a "no exercise" note that I could carry for three weeks. Or I could stay and accept a "set back."

I took the note and returned to class. The middle class was waiting! They assured me that they would be there once I was ready to run again! Challenge accepted! That's when I decided to finish the course! I graduated with my classmates of Class 24-69!

**Unknown 24-69 (The envelope that this arrived in was accidentally separated from the unsigned written comments) – we have not been able to determine the source)**

I started OCS in Class 20-69. The combination of skipping food for two months, dropping for dozens of pushups every day and running up the hill once or twice every week put me into the best shape of my life by the time I turned green.

It was probably the white stripe I wore on my new green tab that made an impression on our incoming group of lower class candidates. As a new middleclass, we wasted no time seeing that our blue-tabbed charges were properly intimidated and we made sure they recognized that they were controlled by a very proficient middle class. We kept them alert and anxious; we kept their time in the house busy and chaotic. Every movement they made and every thought they had was being overseen by our well-trained and skillful middle class. On day two of his OCS experience, one fresh-faced new candidate, obviously both nervous and overwhelmed, wanted to know more about the powerful middle class experience. He asked me how long I had been a middleclassman. Two days, I told him. I could see his eyes thinking, "Wow, they sure got good at this in just two days." In fact, we'd been learning every day for the previous two months.

We called them our lower class behind their backs. To their faces we called them "sick pukes." What was that all about?

One of our TAC Officers was disliked more and respected less than others. One evening in July he surprised us when he arrived at the lower/middle class bay with his portable 17" black and white TV and started to set it up in our battery study area. "What's the catch?" I wondered. Being an OC, we were pretty out-of-touch with the real world and didn't keep up with current events or the daily news. The TAC collected his battery around him that hot summer evening as candidates maneuvered the rabbit ears to improve the reception. Before too long, we were watching the first broadcast of a man walking on the moon. Though we were initially cynical about the TAC's motivation, in retrospect it seems he appreciated the historical significance and simply wanted to share this experience with his future fellow-officers. He left his OCS assignment soon afterward. I don't know where the TAC went, but I'm very grateful that he provided us the chance to watch our astronauts on this first manned lunar landing!

Lack of current cultural knowledge was illustrated at least once in a classroom, too, after an instructor "tagged" one of our most respected classmates. It happened on one of those hot summer days. We filed into an air-conditioned classroom, and midway into a boring lecture, our contemporary assumed an all-to-familiar expression: head tilted back a bit,

eyelids fluttering and falling, and mouth dropped open about halfway. The instructor continued droning in his monotone, held his finger to his mouth to “shush” us, picked up a well-chalked eraser while slowly walking toward his victim and scored a direct hit on his drowsy target. The candidate’s eyes rolled open as he looked around. The rest of the class sat in silence, partly because we viewed the attack as a cheap shot and partly because we knew that it could have happened to any of us on about any day. The instructor smiled at his prey and said, “Good morning, Starshine.” The candidate stared back; the entire class shot a confused stare toward the instructor. “You know, like in the hit song,” he continued. Not a single candidate acknowledged any awareness of the chart-topping song. A very awkward moment followed: our gentlemanly classmate had been assaulted and demeaned. We felt that the instructor had shown a lack of respect for his fellow soldiers and he displayed a callous lack of awareness of the challenges facing an OC. We expected candidate harassment and we had learned to enjoy both giving and receiving it. Harassing our own was not only acceptable, but it created a bond between classes. But we were learning to become commissioned officers. We knew that demeaning and unbecoming treatment from officers was shockingly inappropriate!

Accepting responsibilities was part of the OCS process. All the while we were middleclassmen we had NCO “sweat positions,” and often wore an NCO insignia of rank on our green tabs commensurate with our job description. My last green week I held the position of first sergeant. “Finally,” I thought, “next week I’ll hold an officer rank.” Wrong! The following week we turned red, but my “promotion” was from first sergeant to battalion sergeant major. What an embarrassing week that was! Eventually, we entered red week two. The sweat roster came out and I had been promoted. To brigade sergeant major. My contemporary upperclassmen began to scrunch their eyebrows when looking at the NCO insignia on my red tab.

Knowing the rank in the house was always important. If a “redbird” upperclassman walked into the lower class bay, the first “bluebird” to see him was expected to immediately yell “Attention,” after which the upperclassman would usually respond with “Middle Class, carry on.” After a while, a candidate got pretty good at knowing the “status of the house.” But pity the lowerclassman who didn’t know that a TAC Officer was already in the house, if a redbird came in afterward and the lowerclassman yelled “Attention.”

Rank awareness was never more intense than during an inspection tour by the highest-possible ranking officer candidate. Just as there was an OC Battalion Commander - OC Bn CO (Oh See Bing Ko), and an OC brigade commander, our lower class was prepared for a visit from the OC CONARC Commander. An upperclassman from another battery was dressed in his class A uniform with all the OC tabs and brass doubled up. Other army brass, braids and any additional paraphernalia at hand had been hung on him so that he took on the aura of a Christmas tree. The lower class was braced against the walls, barely breathing, eyes staring directly ahead and just hoping he would continue to walk past each man. Naturally, some of them didn’t know the square root of the muzzle velocity of a 155 mm SP while travelling at 20 mph uphill, or some such thing. That candidate was immediately given the order to begin to “hang around, smokin’ and jokin’.” Meanwhile, the middle class couldn’t even watch - we couldn’t keep a straight face and I recall that we soon after demystified the whole experience with our gales of laughter.



White stripe or not, falling asleep during exams can't be helpful. We had our last written test right before we began our five-day field exercise. After the dust settled, my academic score was 69-point-something. Seventy percent is the minimum passing cutoff score. Falling onto my sword not being an artillery skill, I was told to "request" to be recycled 8 weeks into Class 24-69, and thus joined the class I had previously enjoyed harassing. Two more green weeks before turning red again. It's all a matter of keeping your eyes on the goal! I will say that it was a very peaceful final ten weeks. My new classmates were respectful and amiable. I can't recall a single unpleasant TAC or staff episode in my second red experience. Of course, I did get to run the hill, even into Happy Battery.

### **"OCS Concert Set Nov. 29"**

#### ***Lawton Constitution (November 20, 1969)***

The Officer Candidate Brigade Glee Club will present a seasonal concert Nov. 29 at 8 p.m. at Snow Hall Auditorium at Fort Sill. The hour-long concert is open to the public and there will be no admission charge.

The 65-member mixed chorus of officer candidates and their wives will sing seasonal music in accord with Christmas activities in the Lawton-Fort Sill area.

The Glee Club was the winner of the Fourth Army Choral Contest at Fort Sam Houston, Tex., in October.

The Glee Club, formed in September 1968, is directed by Jim Johnson, Post Director of Christian Education.

The Nov. 29 program will be a change of pace for the club from its previous programs of popular music and artillery songs, according to Johnson. This seasonal concert will display the versatility of the songsters and add to the celebration of Christmas at Fort Sill, Johnson said.

### **"Officer's Guide to Honor Grads"**

#### ***From the Artillery OCS Archives (December 1969)***

A copy of the Officer's Guide, a helpful hints handbook for military officers, will be given to each honor graduate of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School.

The books have been donated by the publisher, Stackpole Books of Harrisburg, Pa. The Guide gives pertinent information about an officer's official, social and personal etiquette.

The Society of Graduates, an organization of former officer candidates, artillery officers and officers assigned to the Officer Candidate Brigade, contacted Stackpole Books and arranged for the presentation of the book.

The first honor graduate to receive the gift was Lt. William Shaw who graduated in class 1-70 on December 12, 1969. The Society of Graduates hopes this gift will aid each honor graduate as he begins his career and enhance the awareness of all new officers of the responsibilities of professionalism of being an Army Officer.



*Blockhouse Signal Mountain*



*The OCS Brigade Cadillac Cart*



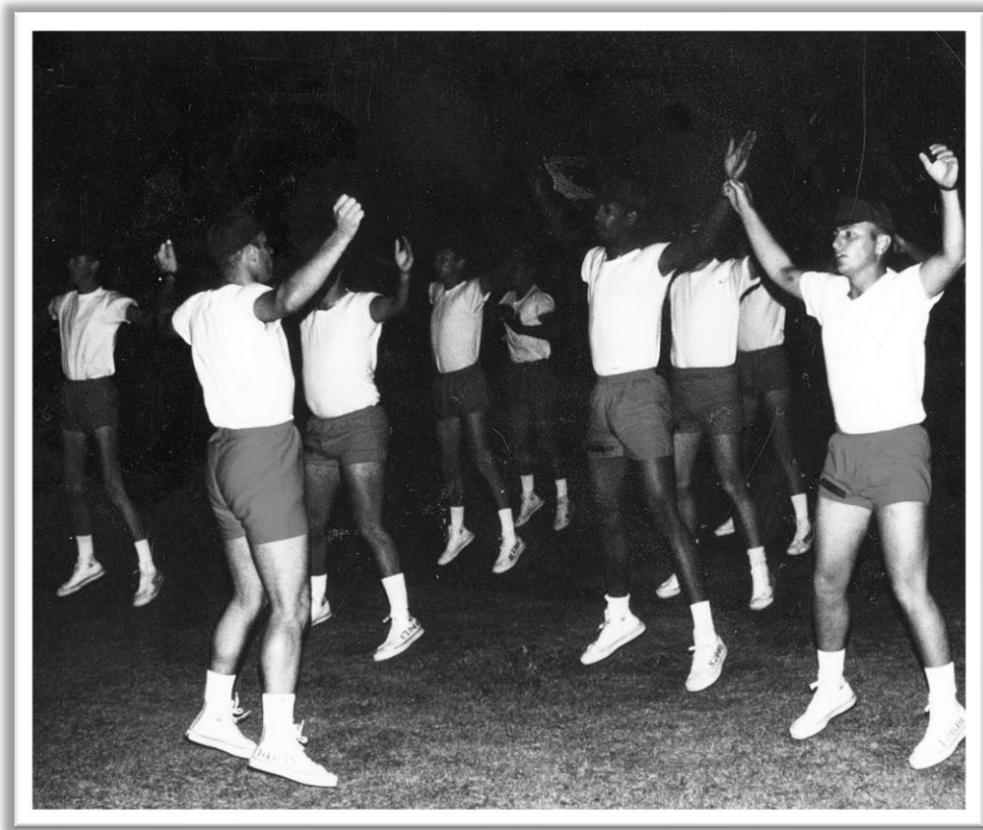
*Footlocker was not secured*



*Beer delivery for the Officer Candidate Howitzer House*



*Early morning call for a mandatory PT Formation  
"ECHO BATTERY, PT FORMATION IN ZERO FIVE MINUTES!!!!"*





*OCS Drill Team practices for Class 12-69 graduation parade*



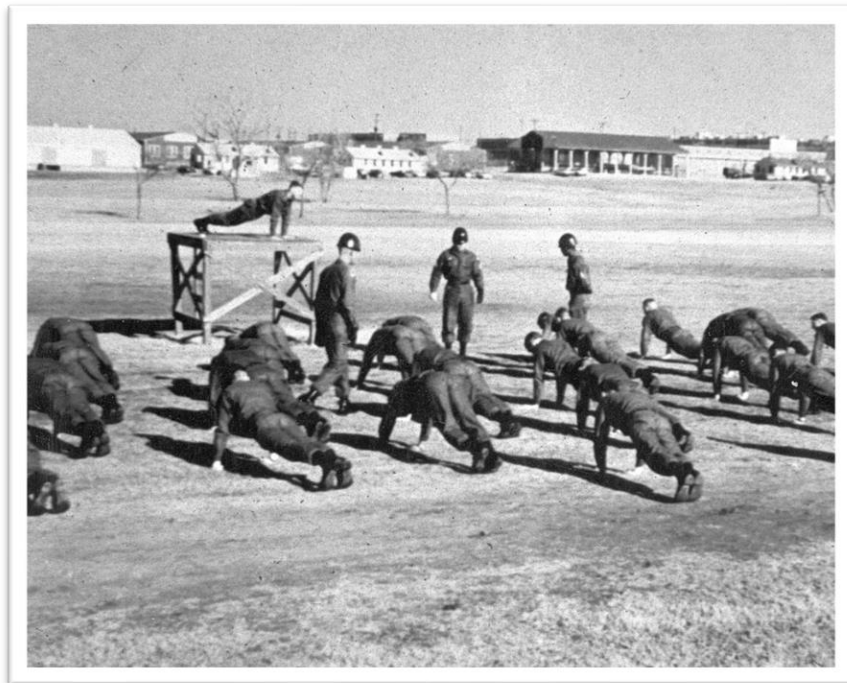
*Fire Direction Center training*



*40 yard low crawl during the Physical Combat Proficiency Test*



*Steps leading to the Upper Class area in a Candidate "House"*



*Candidate leads PT Formation under watchful eyes of TAC staff*



*Upperclassmen at the top of MB-4 during a Jark (May 1969)*



*The Officer Candidate Brigade Glee Club was 65-member mixed chorus of candidates and wives formed in September 1968. The members pictured here won the Fourth Army Choral Contest at Fort Sam Houston, Texas in October graduated from OCS during 1970*





# Chapter Eighteen

## 1970-1973

### **Information for Selected Applicants (For Assignment to the US Army Field Artillery School Officer Candidate Brigade (OC Bde Pam 20-1), February 1970**

Congratulations on your interest in the U. S. Army Field Artillery Officer Candidate Brigade. Your period of training as an officer candidate will prove worthwhile and interesting as well as challenging.

Graduates of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate Course can be justifiably proud of having completed this most difficult course. To complete the course, they were required to pass all academic subcourses and to meet the exceptionally high standards of leadership established for the course. They were subjected to mental and physical pressures throughout the 23-week period of the rigorous, rapid-paced course and were scored on their performance in a variety of leadership tasks. Like them, you must be prepared to meet the demands of strict discipline, vigorous physical training, and exceptionally high standards of the Officer Candidate Brigade.

The U. S. Army Field Artillery Officer Candidate Brigade offers an excellent opportunity for you to develop skills as a leader of men. During your assignment here, you will be advised and counseled by a tactical officer, who will be your leader.

I suggest that prior to starting your training as a field artillery officer candidate; you become familiar with the oath of office which will be required of you upon receiving a commission.

“ I, (full name and service number) having been appointed an officer in the Army of the United States, as indicated above in the grade of second lieutenant, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter; SO HELP ME GOD.”

Best wishes for your success in attaining your goal of becoming a commissioned officer.

T. E. WATSON, Jr.  
Colonel, Field Artillery  
Commanding

### **Joe P. Dunn: 1-70 (Resigned)**

#### **Desk Warrior: Memoirs of a Combat REMF copyright 2004**

The artillery OCS Prep unit was a very different experience from my unhappy days in Basic Training. Most in the unit were college grads with several graduate students as well. Our drill sergeant was quite unlike the macho, screaming, profane egomaniacs from Basic. A pencil thin, almost effete Black man, with a high voice, he was intelligent and articulate. Everything about him bespoke gentleman. We were to refer to him as Drill Sergeant Sir, and it seemed appropriate. Many years later, Lou Gossett in *An Officer and*

a Gentleman reminded me of the man. The first lieutenant who served as company executive and training officer was another story. A pompous dullard who could never seem to get anything right, he was a laughingstock among the cadets and the cadre as well. Although a bit overweight, soft, and pudgy, he preened around attempting to demonstrate, at least in his own mind, the model to which we should aspire. One of his early pronouncements was that for the rest of our lives we would be recognized as having been military officers by the bearing and demeanor that would set us apart. If he was an example, I wished to forego this distinction.

The prep unit was structured as a preview of OCS. We progressed through three stages--lower, mid, and upper classes--during the eight-week period which simulated experiences as trainees, NCOs, and officers. Lower class entailed heavy harassment conducted by the mid class under the supervision of the upper class. The harassment wasn't vicious. In fact, it was sort of a game, and the time frame was short, so I didn't mind the lower class time period at all. Life as mid and upperclassmen was pleasant. As an order freak, I liked the preciseness, the attention to the smallest detail, and the challenge to get everything just right in the prep unit. Hard work and merit paid off, and the battery (known as a company in most other areas of the Army) worked together as a unit. This was quite unlike the chaotic incompetence of Basic. Since we needed to be alert for the classroom work, proper sleep was a priority. The military believes in getting up early--in this case 4:30 a.m.--so we were dispatched to bed at 8:30 p.m. with bright sunlight still streaming through the windows. It didn't get dark until between 9:30 and 10:00 p.m. during May and June. It was difficult to go to sleep under these conditions, but most of the time we had to sneak out of bed anyway to shine our boots and belt buckles and clean the barracks. We slept on top of our tightly made beds or even on the floor since there wasn't time to make the bed to inspection-quality in the allotted two minutes when we leaped out of bed in the pre-dawn morning.

I rather enjoyed playing the game in AIT and was reasonably good at it. My favorite memory is what some others considered the worst nightmare--the traditional Jark every Sunday morning. Named after a Colonel Jark, the first commander of OCS, it was a 4.2 mile roundtrip run up a mountain in combat boots carrying your weapon. Theoretically we were to stay in formation, but inevitably the formation broke down and runners were allowed to proceed on their own in a competitive race to the top. It was a tough run. The mountain was steep and the rifle got heavier and heavier. I was usually among the first finishers with my legs, arms, and lungs burning. When everyone finally made it to the top, we started back in formation. On the way down winning the race wasn't important. The goal was to get everyone back by encouraging and assisting weaker runners, shouldering their rifles as needed. If that wasn't enough, the tradition dictated carrying a rock down the mountain. The larger the rock, the more macho the achievement. OCS candidates placed their rock in front of them at breakfast as symbol of their accomplishment. As a former cross country runner, I had good legs; but my upper body strength wasn't as fully developed. Getting my rifle, and usually someone else's as well, down the mountain was enough stress on aching arms and shoulders, so I confined myself to modest rocks that I could carry clenched in my fist. I remember one super athlete cradling a small boulder in his hands with two rifles slung over his back.

Many runners couldn't make it up the mountain in the first place. Most ended up walking and taking breaks to sit down and rest. On the trip down, the sides were littered with

breakdowns. Several times I thought that I would join the number, and I did throw up at least once, but I always kept running to the end. In a perverted sort of way, I enjoyed the challenge of the Jark. The best part though was that when we returned, we could let our aching, sweat-drenched bodies stand under a hot shower for as long as we wished. Many then collapsed in bed, but I strolled over to the mess hall for morning brunch where we were free from any harassment. Although so tired that I could hardly lift the fork to my mouth, those brunches are among my fondest memories of my Stateside Army days. I was around for only a few OCS Jarks, but they were a bright light in an otherwise dismal time. Even if, like my pebbles, the rocks grow into boulders over the years and the physical feats of carrying three classmates down the mountain on your back become more apocryphally heroic, the Jark is a unique rite of passage and bonding experience among artillery officers. I never wore crossed cannons on my lapel, but I have swapped a few Jark yarns with artillerymen at various times in later life.

Most of AIT was devoted to the serious classroom work of learning to direct artillery fire. I decidedly did not like FDC. I found the elementary geometric formulas and the slide ruler as baffling and frustrating as I had in high school, and my calculation skills were substandard. Although I had brought this on myself through the OCS option, I reflected that it was typical of the Army to test an individual extensively to determine strengths and weaknesses and then assign him to an area of demonstrated ineptitude. To say that I was not competent to direct live artillery fire was a modest understatement. In my first field exercise, I had the tubes pointed 180 degrees in the opposite direction from where I thought that I was firing. The range officer noted that I was more danger to my own side than to the enemy.

Several in the OCS Prep unit had made the decision to drop the OCS option, including a few who had increased their enlistment term to get the opportunity; they were stuck with their three-year obligation even if they didn't go to OCS. However, everyone was told that we couldn't drop OCS during AIT. I suspected, as I had when I raised the issue during Basic Training, that these pronouncements were a lie and all the duplicity was about maintaining good statistics. The Army believed that too many candidates were dropping out of OCS before they entered the program, so units were ordered to lower the drop-out rate. I was still too green to challenge the system, but I was convinced that the Army and the truth had nothing in common. The institution would say whatever was convenient to suit their purposes of the moment. As I witnessed later in Vietnam, truth and reality meant less than good statistics from which to spin the official story of the day. Already I was experiencing one of the root causes of our failure in the war.

Some candidates were persistent enough to drop OCS during AIT. Since I enjoyed the OCS Prep unit and the thought of having to serve in FDC was not appealing, I wavered back and forth. Since my obligation remained two years until I actually accepted a commission and every day counted no matter where I was, I drifted along putting off a final decision. I was increasingly convinced that Vietnam was inevitable no matter what route I took. We were threatened constantly that OCS dropouts were automatically sent to Vietnam. However, almost 90% of non-OCS-slated FDC graduates were going anyway. If one completed OCS, a Vietnam tour awaited either immediately or certainly during the second year. The high casualty rate made second lieutenant forward observers in great demand.

The cadre continually evoked examples of lieutenants who received European or Stateside tours instead of Vietnam. I found it interesting that a program designed to produce combat officers and fill the insatiable demand for artillery forward observers in Vietnam would devote so much attention to the hope of escaping the purpose for which we were being trained. Only a few candidates, primarily those who projected themselves as career military, were enthusiastic about going to Vietnam; others talked a good game. Most everyone seemed to be calculating their best options to avoid the prospect. Among all this self-absorption, myself included, two or three individuals stood out for their bearing, integrity, courage, team play, and selflessness. I knew that I didn't measure up to their standard. These were impressive young men with exceptional leadership potential. I wonder what happened to them. They could be generals today or casualties of the war. For the most part, the OCS Prep unit was a collection of talented individuals. It would be interesting to know what became of them in the military and beyond. How many of them, whether ultimately commissioned or not, became Vietnam statistics?

Everywhere we turned at Fort Sill, we saw Vietnam vets serving out their remaining months before discharge. They served as cadre, assistant instructors, firing range personnel, or general flunkies. We also ran into them in the beer gardens, PX, and other facilities. Since they had been there and come back alive, they became *ipso facto* fountains of wisdom. Several remarked that their tour wasn't so bad; others liked to curl our hair with the horrors of Vietnam. All of them were merely logging days until their discharge back into their normal lives. Some were bitter, others resigned, a few, philosophical; but to us they were all oracles. The ones whom we had most direct contact with were FDC and several had earlier been where we were in the OCS process. Probably justifying the decision that they had made earlier, and from the perspective that they had survived and were close to discharge, the consensus of most of the FDC vets was to bail out of OCS and get the Vietnam tour over with. The logic made sense to me.

From the vets I learned that if you returned from Vietnam with less than four months on your obligation, you would be discharged immediately instead of serving the remaining time Stateside. And you could extend in Vietnam beyond your year tour to get within the four-month frame. The policy made good sense since the military had little use for the hordes of returning vets with less than six months left on their two-year obligation. Few were potential career types, and it was expensive and inefficient to reassign them, often in make-work positions, only to discharge them soon after arrival at their new station. As we witnessed, many of the vets had strong short-timer attitudes. After Vietnam, they did not adapt well to the Stateside "spit and polish." Many of these combat veterans had exercised heavy responsibility in life and death situations at very tender years and rank. They did not react well to being ordered around by NCOs and officers who had not been where they had. Combat vets' contempt for Stateside REMFs was manifest. The common retort was, "What are they going to do; send me to Vietnam." It was a popular cliché in Vietnam as well. For the most part, the goal for both the vets and their superiors was to let the vets serve out their time with as little conflict as possible.

Unless one spent more than the average time in the U.S. prior to Vietnam, the soldier had to extend for a considerable time in Vietnam to get within the four-month window. This explained why there were so many short-timer vets at Fort Sill. Even for those who required only a brief extension, the question of staying beyond the tour engendered a great deal of anguish and superstition. Stories circulated about individuals killed during

a two-week extension. Even if these were apocryphal, they became gospel. REMFs often were the most superstitious about extending since soldiers in the field lived with danger and chance daily. It appeared obvious to me that the best strategy was to stay in the States long enough so that at the end of my Vietnam tour, the question of extending would be irrelevant. Getting out four months early so that I could start the spring 1971 semester at the University of Missouri had become central to my planning. That meant that I needed to stay in OCS as long as I could stand it. I continued to drift along not knowing what I really wanted to do.

I graduated from AIT on June 19 and flew home military stand-by for a two-week leave prior to starting OCS. I went to Potosi and Columbia, but most of the time I just enjoyed being at home away from the Army. Since we were allowed to have cars at OCS, I planned to drive mine back to Fort Sill. Mid-morning the day before I was to leave, I was casually getting things together for the next day when I glanced at my orders and discovered to my shock that I had misinterpreted the reporting date. I was to sign in at my AIT unit by midnight (counting the two-hour grace period) and would report to OCS the next day. My mother was hanging some of my laundry on the line. I nearly scared her to death when I ran outside announcing that I had to leave immediately. We quickly threw things together, including wet laundry on the back seat, and I called my father to say good-bye. I faced a 650-mile trip, more than half of it on windy two-lane roads through the Ozarks, but it could be done if everything went my way. I pushed my 1962 white Corvair, undoubtedly the worst excuse for an automobile ever perpetrated upon the American public, to its limits stopping only for gas and a hamburger eaten on the run. Flying down the Oklahoma interstate in the evening, I could see that if I didn't have any trouble I would make it. When I signed in from leave inside the final hour of the grace period, the NCO on duty remarked laconically, "Well the last one is now in." I called my parents, who had lived a very tense day, and dropped into bed.

I started OCS with inadequate motivation, and it was as miserable an experience as advertised. In the prep unit, if you worked very hard and did things right, you received praise rather than abuse. It didn't work that way at OCS. The abuse, the hostility, the adversity, and the chaos were constant no matter what you did. It wasn't possible to do it right no matter how hard you tried. For an obsessive person such as me, that was very difficult to accept. We were up almost all the first night devoting hours to arranging the scores of field manuals and technical books on our shelves according to the specifications. I was exhausted, but I knew that the display was perfect. My cubicle mate, a walking disaster of disorganization, gave up and went to bed hours before I did. The next morning the inspecting middleclassmen descended on the barracks screaming and shouting and tearing everything apart. One excoriated my cubicle mate about his disarray and then started yelling at me about why I hadn't helped him. He turned to my shelf, pulled one manual out about half an inch, pointed at the book with a sneer, and asked why my shelf was shamefully out of line. The only response that we were allowed to give to any charge was "No excuse, Sir." When I bellowed out the mantra, he screamed in my face at the top of his lungs that my books were a disgrace and I had no explanation. With a couple of swipes, he slung the manuals across the room bouncing them off the wall and tearing them apart. He then proceeded to rip up my bed and toss the mattress and everything else I had all over the room. Everyone else experienced the same fate. The barracks was in shambles. No one could tell what belonged to whom.

An almost uncontrollable rage welled up inside me. My face was red. The middleclassman put his nose right against mine breathing heavily in my face and screamed repeatedly, did I want to hit him? I yelled back, "No Sir," each time, but my mind was pulsating internally that at that moment, nothing in the world would give me greater pleasure. As he continued to scream insults at me, I fought the urge that was growing by the second. Only a tremendous amount of fear of the situation, of him, and of the consequences prevented me from ending my OCS venture that very first day in what would have been a very satisfying effort to break his nose.

To some extent today, I can understand, although I do not accept, the scenario. It was the beginning of a process of molding us to deal with fear, arbitrariness, chaos, intimidation, anger, and the necessity of maintaining discipline and poise no matter what. As I learned later, this was good preparation for combat. At the time, however, I only discerned fear, anger, and hatred. The fear was far more than of a particular individual and situation. It was the terror of the arbitrary and totalitarian power which the system held over me and of having my whole life ruined, even going to jail, if I couldn't control myself. My complete powerlessness in a totally artificial world was very difficult for me to accept. I knew that I was about to explode and I had no recourse.

Several candidates didn't make it through the first day. Certainly, I would have loved to walk myself. If this was what it took to be a military officer, I knew that I didn't have it. The building anger of all my months in the Army was boiling within me. Everything about me craved logic, order, and success. Arbitrary and indiscriminate failure was something I did not cope with well. Although I didn't like to fully admit it to myself, I knew also that I was not the best team player. I was too competitive and individually-oriented. I found it hard to waste time on those whom I judged didn't have the ability or motivation to succeed and I tried to outdo those who could perform. I had seen that aspect of myself on the OCS Prep Jarks. Just as in Basic Training, I didn't have any sense of camaraderie with a group just because the Army told me that they were my "buddies." I was probably redeemable, but I didn't care to reform in this context.

Any previous ambiguity was gone; I knew conclusively that I didn't want to be a military officer. However, no matter how much I told myself this, the idea of being a quitter was unacceptable to me. If I had followed my desire to withdraw before I arrived at OCS, that would have been a logical, well-thought-out, and honorable decision. However, the calculus was different once in the program. I had been indoctrinated in the prep unit that those who left were losers. I believed that my education and future goals obligated me to attain the highest status possible, and I didn't want to appear, at least in my own mind, to cave in to the harassment. I always prided myself that through dogged determination I could do anything. I had dropped only one course in my educational career; and even though that was for very good reason, to this day it is a bit of an embarrassment. I was that way about almost everything. I intended to complete what I started.

With all of this agonizing, I still hadn't factored into my calculus, Earl "Mad Dog" Tharp, the middleclassman I had already encountered. One of the few in OCS who was only a recent high school graduate, Tharp, from neighboring Cape Girardeau, Missouri, the son of a fundamentalist minister with whom he had a strained relationship, was a study in insecurities that manifested themselves in the huge chip on his shoulder. Unlike most of the others in the middle class that controlled our lives, Tharp wasn't just playing a role.

His anger and hatred were too clear, too deep, too obsessive and he exhibited a viciousness in his harassment. He earned his nickname for his out-of-control actions, and his classmates enjoyed threatening to unleash the “Mad Dog” on us. In truth, they spent more time attempting to control him because he was an obvious embarrassment to them. Each lowerclassman was assigned to the harassment tutelage of a middleclassman. “Mad Dog” selected me personally since we were almost from the same hometown and everything about me touched the raw nerves of his psyche. I was several years older than he, and my educational level triggered his anti-intellectual and social class biases. He had nothing but contempt for privileged college boys. It didn’t just show; it consumed him.

I lived in terror of Earl Tharp whom I considered a deeply unstable individual. Under any other circumstance, we would not have had any point of relationship. Although we were from two different worlds, our common geography was a connection, and in the military that can be very powerful. Even in the short time in OCS, I began to understand Earl some. I would later learn much more about him. He was an insecure nineteen-year old with a lot of problems. Younger than all his peers, less educated, abysmally unsophisticated and naive, he was totally out of place. Estranged from his very rigid father, Earl was trying to gain his father’s acceptance and respect the only way that he knew how. Earl wanted very much to gain the distinction of being an officer and he could not wait to fight in Vietnam. He had enlisted for infantry but had ended up in artillery, and he was having serious problems with the academic portion of the program. Earl’s strongest credentials were his iron will and his superior physical conditioning where he excelled above his peers. He actually began to gain some grudging respect for me after my showing in the first OCS Jark. Physical prowess was important to Earl and his personal charge finishing as one of the top two or three lowerclassmen was a feather in his cap. I discerned a detectable drop in his harassment and venom after that.

Finally, one day in the fifth or sixth week, I quit wavering. The incident itself was trivial. I had endured much greater trials; but on this day, I decided that I had had enough. Instinctively, I had been waiting for this moment that I knew would inevitably come. I stood at attention in formation in the 98 degree temperature for nearly a half hour with the sweat running down my body inside my uniform. The tickling sensation as water dripped down my sternum was driving me mad, and black waves were passing in front of my eyes as I fought not to pass out from the heat. I said to myself simply, this is it. At the first break, I walked into the battery headquarters and announced that I wished to resign. Every day in OCS someone was screaming at us that they would “wash us out of the program,,” that we couldn’t take it, and that we didn’t deserve to be there. I now agreed. Resigning wasn’t easy proposition though, as I had to talk to the training officer and the battery commander who both used a combination of insult, encouragement, and even flattery to get me to stay. I knew that they charted the drop-out rate per week and I was sure that their only interest in me was what contribution or detriment I made to the battery statistics.

As I walked out of headquarters after resigning, I was in somewhat of a daze and the strange artificiality of the life I had been living soon became evident. Lower Class cadets were not allowed to walk on the sidewalk but were relegated to the edge of the street. Instinctively I went into the street, but then with some trepidation I returned to the sidewalk. One of the training lieutenants who had been treating us like scum just a little

while before charged up and started to scream at me. I saluted and blubbered defensively that I was no longer a cadet; I had resigned. Instantly his demeanor changed and he responded pleasantly, "Good luck, private." As we both started to leave, he turned back and inquired, "Since you will be turning in your gear, may I swap some of mine with you?" Still in a disoriented state from the new condition of my life, I responded blankly, "Fine," and he walked with me over to the barracks where he traded his worn rain gear for my new issue. In less than a few minutes I had been transformed into a mere private, but I had regained human status.

After leaving OCS, I was dispatched to a holding company for a couple of weeks while awaiting orders. My life suddenly flipped from a racing treadmill where I didn't know what day of the week it was, to a slow, lazy existence in which time was of little importance. As I got over the shock, a great cloud lifted from me and a wonderful euphoria of freedom took over. For the first time since I entered the Army, I was not a trainee of one type or another, but an actual soldier. I was still a lowly PFC undoubtedly on my way to Vietnam and I had a year and a half more time to go, but I could see the light at the end of the tunnel. Most of the holding company were OCS dropouts awaiting their next fate, and new individuals joined daily. As we awaited orders, we did made-up work such as painting rocks, moving furniture, pulling guard duty, and merely hanging around. Analogies to the proverbial WPA stories came to mind as five or six of us and a 2 1/2-ton truck were sent to move a single desk. We filled up full days with tasks that could be completed in an hour. I lay in my bunk and read much of the time. Located only a couple of blocks from the OCS area, we often saw the cadets marching or training. I didn't miss them.

#### **Charles M. Counsell: 5-70**

Christmas break 1969 found me flying to San Diego, having a wedding rehearsal, getting married, briefly honeymooning in San Francisco, driving back to San Diego, packing, driving to Fort Sill, finding and moving into a rental for my new bride, and starting upper class status.

I was scheduled as OCBC (Officer Candidate Battery Commander) that first week back. I wasted no time in organizing a Grotto Run. Where did that name come from? We took orders for the Lawton McDonalds and called the order to Checker Cab - a \$55 order, an all-time OCS record at the time. We dispatched some Smacks with well-scrubbed garbage cans to the service alley to meet the Checker Cab delivery and bring it back to the house. Little did we know that Battery TAC Staff was just laying for us, confiscated the cans, and slapped the entire Battery with weekend restriction. The cans and all those Big Macs, French fries and chocolate shakes were left rotting in the middle of the Battery Orderly Room for the rest of the week. Meanwhile, all married candidates with wives in town were in the doghouse - especially newlyweds.

With only one possible recourse, we all worked our Candidate posterior anatomies off that week, eventually garnering all weekly Candidate Battery awards, an unheard-of feat. Consequently, amnesty was declared and we were given weekend passes. It was a very good weekend, and I don't think we tried any more Grotto Runs. I still crave Big Macs.

#### **David R. McPherson: 6-70**

I know these stories are going to be quite common to most OCS grads in the days I was there. I entered on a Sunday, I think 14 September 1969, by knocking loudly on the D



Battery orderly room door. After a short inquiry by the Executive Officer, I was told to wait outside for a middleclassman who would “show me my area.” Shortly, a fellow I knew from Fort Rucker came flying down the sidewalk in the strangest outfit I had seen in the service. He had on combat boots, red shorts with a pistol-belt including canteen, a white T-shirt and a soft-cap with a strange green felt square on the front (I would soon learn to recognize the Jark uniform).

I said a cheery hello to him and asked him to tell me about the place. Instead, he screamed, “Drop, you Smack” I complied. He bid me follow him, and as I recovered, he said, “I didn’t tell you to get up? Come with me.” So, I low-crawled in my “snuffy” Class-A’s from the orderly room, down the sidewalk to D Battery house, up the stairs and down the hall to my bunk amidst the most confusion I had ever witnessed, all the while pulling my duffle bag with me. I assumed the guy from Rucker and I were no longer pals.

Delta’s BC was CPT Jimmie Kilpatrick, and 3rd Platoons TAC was LT LaRue (Lash behind his back), the only Armor officer that I saw at Robinson Barracks.

The typical Delta grotto run was to get someone to a telephone and order McDonalds Big Macs and Cokes (no fries because the delicious smell seemed to attract TACs or Redbirds). We ordered from the taxi company, and they knew they would be well-paid. The laundry was posted every night to Joe’s Laundry, and we would meet a lights-out taxi, overpay the driver, and skulk back to the barracks. The food went into the maid’s closet in a waterproof bag, and we waited until 30 minutes after lights-out and the Grotto Control Officer and his underlings would distribute the contraband.

I have only eaten one Big Mac since those days, and it didn’t seem as good as those. My funniest (?) grotto run happened with pizza. I know, you don’t EVER get pizza because of the size, mess and odor, but it was a warm spring weekend day, after the Jark (I seldom missed one), and we were hungry. We knew the Redbirds were gone on pass, and quite possibly there was not a TAC in the area, so we went for it. As we were enjoying the repast, the lookout suddenly screamed a warning. He was stationed in a lower-level window and could see the sidewalk approaching from the orderly room. We hurriedly threw the uneaten pieces back into the delivery boxes, realizing the smell would convict us, but not knowing what to do with the evidence. Some thoughtful soul grabbed the boxes and threw them out the upper floor fire escape door. We sat looking like Cheshire cats as the Redbird came down the hall knowing he could prove nothing, until a loud banging on the fire-escape door commenced. As he opened the door, we saw another Redbird with a freshly starched set of khakis decorated with cheese and pizza sauce. He was not a happy camper, and we “pushed Fort Sill away” for several hours. It hurt, but still was a scream.

Another recollection was about an upper classman from the other battalion who was a civilian lawyer who had been drafted. He applied for a direct commission, but apparently had not received an answer, so he went to OCS. He was hurt in the final field problem the week before Happy Battery, but his direct commission came through as Captain while he was in the field. I saw him having great fun with the TACs in the mess hall with railroad tracks on his Class A uniform.

## **“OCS Status Report”**

**Army Digest (March 1970 Volume 25 Number 3)**

**LT Robert W. Engelhardt**

**Through the Years:** Beginning with a 13-week training program in July 1941, Army officer candidate schooling has been tailored to meet the Army’s needs for new officers. Schools at 27 locations commissioned more than 100,000 “Ninety-Day Wonders” in both 1942 and 1943 to supply the bulk of officers who led ground forces during World War II. But when need for officers declined, the number of graduates dwindled, reaching a low of 542 in 1950.

When war broke out in Korea, the Army established a 23-week course, which commissioned a peak of 12,514 second lieutenants in 1952. Afterward, two schools, at Fort Benning and Fort Sill, remained open and commissioned between 600 and 800 officers a year from 1956 to 1963.

OCS again expanded to meet increased manpower requirements for Vietnam. Starting in November 1965, six new schools were established—at Fort Belvoir, Fort Lee and Fort Eustis in Virginia, Fort Gordon, Ga., Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and Fort Knox, Ky. The number of graduates grew from 3,672 in Fiscal Year 1966 to 19,240 in FY 1967 and 18,355 in FY 1968.

Having met requirements, the Department of the Army phased out five schools in FY 1967, leaving three today—Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Field Artillery OCS at Fort Sill and Engineer OCS at Fort Belvoir. Fort Benning also commissions some candidates in the branches of Armor and Military Intelligence; Fort Sill is turning out Signal Corps and Air Defense Artillery officers in addition to those in Field Artillery. Officers assigned to the Corps of Engineers and all other support branches are commissioned at Fort Belvoir. The Women’s Army Corps conducts two OCS classes a year at Fort McClellan, Ala.

Recently, a colonel in the Pentagon was asked how the Army’s officer candidate schools were faring. “You can definitely say that OCS is changing with the times,” the colonel replied. After a brief pause, he added, “That means it’s getting easier.”

What he meant was that the Army has eliminated from the officer candidate program many of the time consuming, trivial requirements that fall under the category of “attention-to-detail.” Most officer candidates regret these changes, for they consider the program a great experience, if not the greatest experience, in their lives, and wish that others may share their adventures. The recent graduate recalls not the thousand hours of classroom instruction he received, but rather the time he came wheeling out of his barracks and stumbled over his tactical officer’s brand new Corcoran boot that gleamed with a patent leather shine. Recalling the resulting 30 minutes of “grass drill,” the graduate tells his ROTC-commissioned drinking buddies, “You don’t know what you missed.”

The present-day candidate will also miss many such traditions. The old “square-meal” is gone, for one thing. The graduate recalls when he had 10 minutes to finish a meal, at attention, sitting four inches from the edge of his chair, eyes straight forward, staring down the napkin holder in the center of the table. With knife and fork, he meticulously sliced a bite of food no larger than a postage stamp, lifted the morsel vertically from the

table, made an imaginary square corner, brought the bite horizontally to his waiting lips, then placed knife and fork on his plate, returned hands to his lap, and chewed. For another bite, he went through the same procedure.

Today, candidates must still display good manners at the dinner table, but the only strict rule is “eat all you take.”

**Officer candidate schools are changing with the times; but Tacs and “Jarks,” Ranger problems, Chinese fire drills and pogie bait runs are still a part of the program.**

“It’s getting easier, I guess,” said one junior candidate at Fort Benning. “My brother told me that when he went through the program they had to low crawl to the mess hall every day. They couldn’t walk across the barracks floor with their boots on—they had to take them off or clamber across the beds. Senior candidates were allowed to ‘drop’ underclassmen, which they did quite frequently.”

A recent graduate of Fort Sill OCS, Second Lieutenant Norman C. Hile, nodded. “They’re easing up now. Tactical officers are the only ones who are allowed to ‘drop’ candidates now. Upperclassmen can’t or won’t wreck the barracks very often, because they’re responsible for the condition of the houses. And they’re getting more passes. A while back, we took most of the candidates to the Oklahoma State Fair for a weekend. A few years ago, that would have been unthinkable.”

“I saw something the other day I couldn’t believe,” remarked a senior candidate at Fort Belvoir. “A new class who didn’t even have their heads shaved. I can’t get over it. No more Beanheads.”

“The Mickey Mouse is just about all gone,” says Captain Robert J. Post, Jr., assistant operations officer of the Fort Belvoir Officer Candidate Regiment. “Three and a half years ago, they would make a man nothing; they would take away his dignity, harass the hell out of him, make him a machine; and from there they would build, giving a man privileges along with his growth. Now we have a new concept—Dignity of Man. They’re doing away with mass harassment and doing what is good for the individual.”

This doesn’t mean that OCS is a picnic. It is still designed to place a man under physical, mental and emotional stress, simulating as closely as possible the stress and fatigue of combat. Candidates don’t find it any easier to get through the course. Many find the academics too rough, or they can’t meet physical demands or display necessary leadership abilities. Others, particularly prior-service candidates, find they cannot adjust to the regimentation of OCS life. Attrition rates, in fact, have risen from 27 percent in FY 1968 to a present level of 33 percent.

The main difference in life at the three officer candidate schools is in the training. Candidates at Fort Sill concentrate on artillery subjects while their contemporaries at Fort Benning learn infantry tactics and candidates at Fort Belvoir study engineer problems.

Except on cherished passes, the officer candidate leads a strictly regimented life. For nearly six months, he will never wear civilian clothes. At all times, he must keep his cubicle and gear inspection-straight. His day begins early and ends late.

**0530: Reveille sounds at Fort Belvoir. Candidates rush about the barracks, make beds, lace shoes, shave four deep in a mirror, frantically attempt to make formation.** “If you can’t get ready in time, you’re in trouble,” says a senior at Fort Belvoir. “It’s all part of the program. Some shave the night before and again at noon. Some sleep on top of their covers. They all make sure they’re out of the barracks.”

The expression, “*Organize your time*,” becomes as familiar to candidates as “Drop, candidate.” In later service, a man will frequently find himself with a limited amount of time to accomplish many tasks. In combat, demands are intensified. So now, as candidates, they are required to accomplish an inordinate number of tasks in an unconscionably short period of time.

A favorite exercise used by Tacs to stress organizing time is the Chinese fire drill. Candidates in formation are given two minutes to rush inside and reappear in a new outfit, whether in Class A’s, fatigues, khakis, or PT suits. “You’re like a quick-change artist in a play,” notes one candidate. “You’ve got to take shortcuts like wearing your PT suit under everything else. If you don’t learn anything else at OCS, you learn to organize your time.”

**0545: Fort Belvoir. Commands of “Fall In” and “All present and accounted for” echo through the battalion street. Formations are turned back to the companies for administrative announcements. “Some officers noticed that you men looked a little sloppy yesterday,” the acting company commander says. “You’re going to have to shape up.”**

Candidates fill leadership positions while Tac officers stand nearby, watching. Each candidate will hold leadership positions for a week (as platoon leader, First Sergeant or squad leader) and be rated on his performance. Leadership accounts for 45 percent of his final grade, the same as academics. Physical combat proficiency tests (PCPT) account for the remaining 10 percent.

In recent years, OCS has concentrated on enrolling college graduates with prior service, a majority of men who, faced with a likelihood of being drafted after graduation, decided to take advantage of the college option program. This guarantees an opportunity to attend OCS after completing basic and (advanced) individual training. The number of college graduates has grown tremendously in the past few years. In FY 1969, 60 percent of OCS graduates held college degrees, compared with 20 percent two years earlier. Today, commandants report that more than 90 percent are college grads. Looking to the future, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond A. Proietti, of the Army’s Officer Procurement Branch, remarks: “We’ll always have an officer candidate program to provide career opportunities for enlisted men and to give qualified civilians a chance to enter the Army and become officers. The size of the program will depend on the Army’s need for officers.”

**0645: Fort Belvoir barracks. Returning from the mess hall, candidates begin morning details. Footlockers come off the floor, a buffer hums, windows are washed,**

**desks shined, a detail is dispatched to clean the Tac officer's "Tac Shack" and regimental buildings. Outside the barracks, candidates sweep sidewalks, cut grass, trim shrubbery. "We get them to concentrate on small things," says one Tac. "It has its effects, as any graduate will tell you. We emphasize the extreme in the hope at least some of it will rub off."**

**1000: A classroom at Fort Sill. Candidates single file into a classroom where a sign on a lectern reads, STUDENT RATING FORMS.** The instructor talks with a hint of a Southern accent. "I suppose you're wondering why there's a Student Rating Form class so early in the program. You'll be involved in several rating periods, and from today on you'll have to start taking a hard look at the man beside you. It's up to you to see if he has what it takes."

The class leader distributes the student rating forms. They list 14 character traits. "Responsibility is the key word," the lieutenant continues. "You can delegate authority, But you can never delegate responsibility."

**1200: Fort Benning. Candidates line up for chow on a sidewalk near a portal reading "62d Company, Sir."** Inside the mess hall, candidates file through a service line. Lieutenant Howard E. Bushnell, a Tac, sits in front of a lunch of fried fish, mixed vegetables, baked potato, rolls and butter. In the background, a candidate bellows, "You have zero three minutes to clear the mess hall." Muffled groans greet the announcement. "It's too bad we can't do this more often," the lieutenant says. "It gets them depressed and frustrated. That puts a little more pressure on them . . . gives us another chance to see how they react."

**1300: Apache Ridge, Fort Sill.** In a wooden classroom called a "shack," candidates observe a 155-mm howitzer round impact on Signal Mountain, 4,000 meters away.

Using gunnery charts and artillery slide rules, candidates compute the position of the round, then relay the information to a student in the rear of the class, operating a Field Artillery Digital Automatic Computer (FADAC).

Colonel T. E. Watson, Jr., sits in his office below a sign reading, **"Candidate: You Cost \$15,902. Don't Waste It."**

"We have the highest rate of academic attrition here," the colonel says. "The man who is average today would have been an honor graduate two years ago. Academics are tougher now. The overall rate of academic attrition is up 200 percent from a few years ago. Motivational attrition rate is down 50 percent. "A man must pass all courses, including gunnery which is the toughest part. If a man drops below 70 percent, he is usually given one 10-week turnback. If he fails again, he is usually relieved from the program."

**1400: Infantry Hall, Fort Benning. A company of fourth week candidates enters a large auditorium, clapping hands and chanting "Fifty-first, Fifty-first," as they seat themselves in groups at work tables.** Lights dim. A film shows a platoon attacking a hill under artillery and mortar fire. One man on the screen becomes slightly wounded, runs to the rear in panic. The squad leader chases him. The rest of the platoon, seeing this, also begins running to the rear. The film switches to a close-up of a young lieutenant,

the platoon leader, whose jaw drops slightly. Lights brighten as the film ends. The instructor, a captain wearing a Silver Star among his decorations, addresses the class. "O.K., take a few minutes and tell me what you would do if you were the platoon leader."

**1500: Fort Sill Physical Proficiency Course. A Jark is not a Lark.** Candidates cast long shadows as they run toward a captain wearing a Ranger patch on his shoulder. He clocks the men as they cross the finish line of a mile run. Very few stagger across. Candidates mill around the infield of a gravel quarter-mile track, puffing after the run.

"Did you see the rock we brought back?" one of them asks.

At Fort Sill, candidates cite the rock that class 4-70 brought back from "The Hill" on their first *Jark* as one of the most graphic examples of working together. "Cooperate and Graduate" is still an axiom at OCS. A Jark (named after retired Lieutenant General Carl H. Jark, first commandant of Fort Sill's OCS) is a 4.2-mile run, a combination of quick time and double step in full gear, to the top of Hill MB-4 and back again in 50 minutes. A candidate who receives too many demerits (25 for junior candidates; 15 for intermediates; 5 for upperclassmen) during the preceding week may find himself on Saturday or Sunday runs. One recent graduate logged 201.6 miles *Jarking up* and down "The Hill."

On their first Jark, candidates traditionally bring back the largest rock they can lug, which their "Big Brother," an upperclassman assigned to guide them in their early weeks, must sleep with that night. Recently, one class decided to make a team effort and bring back a giant rock to represent the entire class. It weighed 40 pounds. The following classes decided to break the record, and the rocks coming back from The Hill kept getting larger—70 pounds, 90 pounds, 156 pounds. Then one class, "The Animals," using a bedpost, brought back theirs—260 pounds. "It was sheer guts," they say.

**1700: Fort Belvoir. Candidates returning from class have an hour of "free time" before the evening meal.** Some wander over to the "Tac Shack," a World War II wooden structure, for counseling by their Tac officer. Usually it is informal. The Tac goes over a candidate's records, peer ratings and test scores. He indicates areas where the man can improve. Others may march over to the PX to pick up supplies for their platoon. For still others, there are more details to be finished before chow.

**The Tac: "a necessity":**

The tactical officer stands between a row of wooden barracks, hands on hips, eyeballing a platoon in its third week of training.

One member of the platoon glances at the lieutenant through the corner of his eye. "Drop, Smack," says Lieutenant Nicholas H. Kondon, Tac, Foxtrot Company, Fort Belvoir Officer Candidate Regiment. The candidate dives toward the ground and assumes what is known as the front-leaning rest position—one with which he has become familiar, if not comfortable in, since his arrival. The rest of the platoon executes a left face and marches off toward the mess hall.

"Up, Smack," Lieutenant Kondon orders as he approaches the candidate. The candidate bristles to locked-heels attention, bracing himself so stiffly he forms a double chin.

“Don’t you know enough to keep your eyeballs to the front when you’re at *the position of attention*, candidate?” barks the lieutenant, now a nose away.

“Sir, Candidate Smack. . .” the candidate mumbles, “Yes, Sir.”

“You’ve got to *sound off*. Smack,” says the lieutenant, hurling more questions at the candidate, all demanding spontaneous and seemingly contradictory replies. The inquisition over, the candidate quavers, “Sir, Candidate Smack requests permission to Drive On.” “Drive On, candidate,” the lieutenant says.

Taking a half step backward, the candidate clicks heels, snaps a sharp salute, bellows “Good Morning Sir,” the greeting of the day, and drives on, double-timing his way toward the mess hall and increasing the distance between himself and his Tac as quickly as possible.

For Lieutenant Kondon, this is all part of the day’s work. The Army is paying this man good money to make the life of an officer candidate less than idyllic. The candidate takes the confrontation seriously, for whether he will receive the gold bars of a second lieutenant or be shipped to a casual company will depend in part on the Tac’s evaluation of his performance.

In the eyes of most soldiers, the role of strict disciplinarian is most closely associated with the OCS tactical officer. Reminiscing graduates reinforce the opinion, and the myth grows - The Tac is the man who makes Vince Lombardi look like Will Rogers, Jr. He would be delighted to request assignment as operations officer at the Black Hole of Calcutta.

Being a disciplinarian, however, is but a small part of the Tac’s job. According to DA Pamphlet 601-1, “The tactical officer’s principal duty is to assist candidates in successfully completing the course. This is done by advising candidates of their deficiencies and of ways to overcome them.”

**Sets Example.** Essentially, the Tac is an educator, a counselor, and a model for the candidates. Usually a veteran of Vietnam or a recent graduate of OCS, he may have volunteered or have been assigned to the duty. Chances are he is married. In any case, he was selected because he has demonstrated outstanding leadership abilities.

Most agree that it is a rewarding assignment—but, they are quick to add, it is demanding as well. “See that,” said Lieutenant Gary L. Hinaman, a Tac officer at Fort Benning, pointing to an Army cot in the corner of his office. “That’s where I’ll be sleeping tonight. I’ve been so busy I haven’t slept in my apartment in two weeks; and tomorrow morning I’ll be up at four o’clock. During a candidate’s first weeks in the program, we’re up before him in the morning and with him all day. I thought it was rough going when I was a candidate myself. This is worse.

“But it is rewarding. It’s up to us to see if a man has what it takes. I can’t think of any job for a second lieutenant with more responsibility. I figure a Tac can influence eight or nine hundred men a year.”

As a candidate progresses through the course, his opinion of Tac officers changes from absolute fear to deep respect. Rarely will a candidate in his first four weeks of OCS stop in to see his Tac officer for counseling. "About the fifth week they'll start to trickle in," reports Lieutenant Roger E. Payne, Fort Belvoir. "They'll ask about areas where they can improve. By the time a candidate reaches senior status, the Tac will only be around as an advisor."

**Opinions Change.** Senior candidates express almost a surprising sympathy toward their tactical officers.

"They're a necessity," said an honor student at Fort Benning, "but they've got a tough assignment. They have to put in a lot of hard work in a regimented environment."

"I'll always consider our Tac as one of the finest officers I've known," said another brand new lieutenant at Fort Belvoir.

"Any time you wanted to speak to any of the Tacs, you could. They'll talk to you about anything. Of course, you can't cry on their shoulders. I really think they're a fine group of dedicated young men."

Besides supervising candidate activities, the Tac spends three or four hours a day counseling men in his platoon. For each counseling session, he pores over records, including peer ratings, academic scores, on-the-spot correction slips and notes on his own observations. In addition, he is required to present classes of formal instruction for which he must spend hours of preparation. And he is always assigned extra details. He may be duty officer one day and a defense counsel in a court-martial the next.

Still, the Tac officer is remembered by most soldiers as the hard-nosed taskmaster who provides "constructive criticism" in his ineffable way, who is ready to "drop" a candidate at the slightest whim. His philosophy of discipline is summed up by one of them—"You can be as hard on a man as you want, just as long as there's a point to it, a lesson to be learned. Otherwise, it's just harassment."

"Actually," notes another Tac at Fort Benning, "chewing out a man is tougher on us Tacs than it is on the candidates. After all, we have to think of something to say."

**1830: In the OCS parking lot at Fort Sill.** A candidate stands at parade rest, 18 inches from a car in which his wife and child are sitting. "I've got a sweat position next week," he tells his wife. "What does that mean?" "That means I've got a leadership position. I'll have to work hard." "Will you be home next weekend?" "I don't know."

At Fort Sill, candidates are allowed to see their wives for five minutes a day between 6 and 7 p.m. At Fort Benning and Fort Belvoir, candidates can see their wives for an hour, twice a week. Most married candidates decide to have their wives live nearby while they attend OCS. The chances to see their wives are limited, especially in the early weeks of the program. Some wives share apartments. Some take part-time jobs. Most join officer candidate wives clubs, where they can get together and hold teas, hear briefings on the OCS program and rehearse skits which they put on to entertain their husbands.



Candidate Donald A. Gearhart, 24-year-old graduate of Midwestern University in Wichita Falls, Tex., is one man who brought his family with him when he entered Fort Belvoir OCS. His wife and two children live just outside Washington, D. C.

“I guess if it wasn’t for my wife, I would have quit.” says Gearhart. “She’s been doing things for the whole platoon. She does as much as 10 or 12 people’s laundry, even made our company guidon. And she’s always available for pogie bait runs. All you have to do is get word to her through a note in a laundry bag or a telephone call and tell her how many hamburgers and cokes you want and what time to bring them and she’ll be there. The attitude of the wives is tremendous. Any time you need materials—say the Tac wants you to decorate the Command Information board—they’ll get them.”

**1900-2100: Mandatory study period.** Candidates at all three schools sit quietly at desks, flipping through field manuals, rewriting notes, preparing for tests or the next day’s classes.

**2100: A free hour.** More details. Those in leadership positions hold a briefing to outline the next day’s schedule. At Fort Belvoir a candidate slips out on a pogie bait run to see if his wife has arrived with his platoon’s order for roast beef sandwiches and donuts.

An unauthorized pogie bait run, or grotto run as Fort Sill candidates know it, is a good test of the candidates’ initiative. At Fort Sill, candidates will get “three and three”—three weeks restriction and three weeks of Jarks —if caught. Tac officers are awarded a three-day pass for successful sleuthing.

**2200: Taps.** After a long day, lights go out, and many candidates can look forward to sleep.

But for a six-man patrol from the 64th Company, Fort Benning, the night is far from over. On a moonless night, they lie in red clay by the side of a dirt road, waiting to ambush aggressors from the 3d Ranger Company. The candidates are on the “Ranger Problem,” to demonstrate how well they have absorbed classroom infantry tactics.

Supervised by Ranger officers who consider forced marches a fun thing, the training is realistic. And it can be dangerous, especially when deer season is open.

The 64th Company ambush was aborted. Using a jeep as a decoy, Rangers flushed the candidates out of hiding while a main force of aggressors crept through the brush and attacked from the rear. A lane instructor critiqued their actions, and the candidates began marching back to their patrol base, using a compass and a field map as a guide.

Pushing through brambles and thickets, up and down pine-clad hills, through a knee-deep swamp, they reached the patrol base at 5:30 a.m. An hour later, the patrol moved out with the rest of the company.

**2400: Fort Sill. Candidates scheduled for a gunnery test the following morning are still awake, “magicking” for the test.** OCS may be easing up on some restrictions, but candidates still face a long day in a tough course. It is a small consolation that tactical officers say they went through a tougher program.

“The Tacs told us the same thing when I went through OCS at Benning,” recalls Lieutenant Richard R. Schell, now assigned to the Pentagon. “They called us Champagne Company! We had it pretty rough. But it was a great experience. Let me tell you what happened on our Escape and Evasion course . . .”

**Gregg Malicki: 8-70**

Like every Lower class Candidate, I endured 24-7 physical and mental harassment by Middle and Upper class Candidates and Tac Officers. But during one tough session, a Middleclassman who seemed to really enjoy focusing especially on making me personally miserable, kept me in a brace (at attention) while he played Frank Sinatra’s “My Way” on his cassette recorder.

He then told me to be strong and endure - to follow Frank’s advice: “...the record shows I took the blows and did it my way!”

Then he made me do several dozen pushups! Since then, whenever I’ve heard “My Way,” I’ve thought of that Middleclassman and his encouraging me.

During Observed Fire training, one of the exercises was shooting at a target on Fort Sill’s “washboard” range. The washboard was an area of undulating ridgelines, making it difficult to correctly determine upon which ridgeline or in which valley the target lay and where the adjusting rounds impacted. Not being able to adjust fire in the allowed time and with minimum ammunition, I failed the exercise.

Then, 18 months later in Vietnam’s Central Highlands, I had to bring fire on an enemy position that was in the valley of another washboard range. I again misjudged the location and after my first adjusting rounds impacted in the wrong valley, the enemy immediately started running. My subsequent volleys into the correct valley hopefully took care of them.

**Alan Van Loenen: 8-70**

One of many OCS memories is when I won COL Thomas Watson’s OCS Commander’s Aid inspection when I was a lowerclassman. My middleclass (Green Tab) big brother finished second in this inspection. I believe I was the second OCS candidate to win this OCS Commander’s Aid award started by COL Watson. The benefits of this award were 50 merits per week until the next award winner and to wear a brigadier general’s star on my left fatigue shirt pocket while in OCS and to be COL Watson’s aid/usher for the class graduation ceremony that occurred every two weeks. Yes, I attended all the graduation ceremonies until my own graduation as an aid/usher for COL Watson.

As most OCS candidates know, you do not get a week-end pass when you are a lower classman; it was assured you got enough demerits to not get a pass. Well, there was a mess up in the TAC Officer record keeping and as we approached the first weekend after my winning the OCS Commander’s Aid inspection, with the 50 merits I had more than enough merits balance to be eligible for a weekend pass. On Friday before the weekend, I returned from class to find my barracks cubical in a pile, all books, displays, and bunk broken down in a pile in the middle of my cubical. I forget how many demerits I was posted, but it sure was more than the 50 merits from my OCS Commander’s Aid status. I felt sorry for my barracks cubical mate because his stuff was in the pile with mine!!!!!!

Another “honor” of wearing the brigadier general star on my uniform, both fatigue and dress jacket was that my upper class would take me to other OCS class barracks and have me walk in to upper class floors; of course the OCS classes that were not aware of the meaning of me wearing a brigadier general’s star would call attention when I walked in; then my upper class members would follow me and ask the other OCS upper classes what the heck were they doing calling “attention” for a lowerclassman, I would then catch hell from the other OCS class upperclassmen!!!!!!!!!!!!

When I was upper class (Red Tab) Artillery OCS had the “wisdom” of having a new Infantry OCS 2LT graduate assigned as a TAC Officer for my OCS class. I am sure the 2LT’s name was Bell. In any case the upper class was not impressed having a “Benning School for Boys” Infantry OCS graduate as a TAC Officer for Artillery OCS. Prior to our final field problem, 2LT Bell was told that we needed “deflection grease” for the field problem. 2LT Bell went everywhere asking for “deflection grease” and finally asked our OCS battery commander for this item. The result was a meeting with our Battery Commander. Everybody remembers our Battery Commander trying not to laugh while chewing us out for having 2LT Bell trying to find the “deflection grease”!!!!!!

Our OCS Class 8-70 was one of the smallest classes (at that time) for number of graduates, I think we started with around 95, had a few recycles added, but only graduated 43 or 45. In any case for our final JARK our class set a record for the largest Jack Rock of any class before us. We used a bed spring frame to bring back this large Jack Rock. When we graduated from OCS in April 1970 this Jack Rock was in front of the OCS barracks with our OCS class number and upper class names on it. I often wondered what happened to this “largest” Jack Rock. Maybe someone brought back a larger Jack Rock; but I bet they had more than 43/45 upper classmen to do it.

### **Thomas E. Sturgess: 9-70**

OCS was a turning point in my life. The values, discipline and comradeship shared with my classmates prepared me well for Vietnam and remain to this day.

### **“Class 11-70 - All Commissioned Field Artillery” From the Artillery OCS Archives**

For the first time in over two years, a graduating Field Artillery OCS class has commissioned all its members in the Field Artillery. OCC 11-70, which graduated Friday, May 15, was the first all-FA class to graduate from OCS here since class 46, which graduated back in December of 1967.

Since all three of the top graduates, who are traditionally allowed to choose either their branch or first duty assignment, chose to stay with the Field Artillery, a perfect 100% FA commissioning was realized at graduation ceremonies at Snow Hall.

When the Field Artillery split with the Air Defense Artillery, making each a separate branch on December 1, 1968, the Army began commissioning some graduating Artillery Officer Candidates in ADA, starting with OCC 516-68, and ending with OCC 23-69. 672 new second lieutenants were thusly commissioned in Air Defense Artillery during this time.

Then on July 15, 1969, Artillery OCS was authorized to commission a certain (but varying) number of new officers in each new graduating class in the Signal Corps. Beginning with OCC 14-69 and ending with OCC 7-70, between 9 and 51% of each graduating class was commissioned in the Signal Corps, making a total of 448.

**Norman L. Lyde: 11-70**

**“Christmases Spent at Officer Candidate School and in a Vietnamese Jungle”  
*The Deseret News, Salt Lake City, Utah (December 22, 2015)***

In December 1969, I was attending officer candidate school in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. This was a six-month school designed to take soldiers and make them officers and gentlemen. Most of the soldiers had gone home on Christmas leave. The few of us who were left were assigned special jobs that only an officer and a gentleman can perform - mopping the floors, cleaning the toilets and picking up cigarette butts.

On Christmas Eve, we were given a special present by the first sergeant - guard duty. Three of us were assigned to guard valuable military property - the empty barracks where the soldiers slept who were now home with their families enjoying the holidays. Each of us would be on duty for two hours and off duty for four.

The temperature outside was around eight degrees. There was a foot of snow and the cold Oklahoma wind blew right in my face no matter which direction I turned. How many times can you walk around an empty building in two hours making sure all the doors and windows are locked?

There was a Christmas tree in the guard house, but it's hard to feel the Christmas spirit when you are a thousand miles from home and far from your family.

As I walked around the barracks for the 37th time, I told myself, “Hold on. It won't be like this next Christmas.” And sure enough, it wasn't. It was worse.

Instead of being a thousand miles from home, I was 8,452 miles from my family in the jungles of Vietnam. Instead of being on guard duty in eight-degree weather, I was walking through the bush carrying my M-16, ammo belt, ruck sack, steel pot, bug juice and C-rations in 100-degree weather.

I was an artillery forward observer assigned to an infantry company. On Christmas Eve, we had been flown by helicopter to a landing zone deep in the jungle. Our orders were to find the headquarters of a Viet Cong battalion and engage the enemy. The jungle in that part of the country was very thick. Hacking our way through the jungle with machetes, it took us about seven hours to walk two kilometers.

As we got closer to our destination, the men became increasingly nervous. All the soldiers were breathing heavily, safeties were off and fingers were on the triggers. Although it was Christmas Eve, all the men could think about was what would happen when AK-47 bullets started flying. When we finally reached the enemy bunkers, imagine our disappointment when we discovered they were empty. The Viet Cong had fled.

Suddenly a message came over the radio. If we could get back to the landing zone in one hour, we would be flown back to our home base. A special USO show would be presented.

USO meaning ... American girls. Remember it took us seven hours to reach the bunkers. The mosquitos were thick, the ground was covered with leeches, the bamboo needles pricked our skin. The exhausted men made it back in about 30 minutes.

Our mail was waiting for us and it was loaded with Christmas presents. I guess Santa had flown in by helicopter. I opened my package from home very carefully; it took about three seconds. It was filled with a real treat that I hadn't eaten in six months — popcorn balls. My grandmother in Florida had also sent a fruitcake, but it never made it. I guess some hungry Viet Cong devoured it in his bunker.

There was a 24-hour cease-fire. On Christmas Eve, we sat on our cots listening to Christmas carols played by helicopters flying overhead. Around midnight the artillery batteries put on a show. It was a Christmas I will never forget.

### **“The Option”**

#### **James A. Wickre: Engineer OCS Candidate**

Toward the end of our training in the summer of 1970 there was a rumor that the Army was going to offer an “Option” to OCS candidates, If we would forgo our commission as a Second Lieutenant, the army would give us “state side” duty for one year. We had already been in for one year, and we would then be honorable discharged after two years' service.

The Army was cutting back in Vietnam and they had too many officers. With about two or three weeks to go before I was to receive my commission, in August of 1970, as a Second Lieutenant the rumor turned out to be true and every OCS candidate at all three of the OCS schools were offered the “Option”. It was a very hard choice for me to make! I had been working and training for almost a year to become an officer and a gentleman. I had given it everything I had and was going to make it! I had finally passed the Physical Training (PT) test. I was going to be sent to Korea as an Ordinance Officer.

On the other hand, I had been admitted to law school and the admission was only good for two years, as I had been drafted. If I became an officer I would have at least two more years in the army for a total of three. After those three years I would have to reapply to law school. By that time everyone and his dog wanted to go to law school and it was hard to get admission. The night before I had to make my choice I was on CQ duty (Charge of Quarters) and had to stay up all night in the company headquarters office. That night on the radio I heard the Sandpiper's song “Come Saturday Morning” which made me think of my time at the University of Oregon and I then decided my main goal was to become a lawyer. Funny, how a song can cause you to make a major decision. I and about 2/3rds of my unit accepted the “Option” and I became an E-4 enlisted man for the last year I was in the Army.

#### **Albert L. Tait, Jr.: 12-70**

The class that came in as my class was “turning green” was among the first group to be offered the chance to quit OCS, return to duty as enlisted men, and then receive a discharge. As I recall, over half of the members of that class took advantage of the offer. You can see that in the greatly diminished numbers of graduates shown in the class lists on the website after Class 13-70.

I have a specific recollection of a tall, gangly young candidate (I was only 19, myself) who was in tears one evening after some of my more “demonstrative” classmates had him and his buddies doing a low crawl search for wooly-buggers under bunks after showering. The upper class house was empty, as they were out on that last weeklong field problem before graduation, so I took him over there and tried to get him to calm down and see that the harassment was just a game, and if he’d throw himself full force into playing the game, everything would be fine. I don’t think I convinced him, and I think he quit when offered the chance. He wasn’t very strong physically.

### **“Huge Trophy Now Honors Top Grad”**

#### ***Fort Sill Cannoneer (Friday, July 17, 1970)***

The OCS Hall of Fame now houses the Commandants Honor Graduate Trophy. This cup is symbolic of the very highest in OCS achievement.

The original idea for the creation of the award came from former Brigade C.O., Col. T.E. Watson, Jr. It was his feeling that each class honor graduate should be recognized in a significant manner. Therefore, the concept of a suitable award on which to inscribe the honorees’ name was born.

Major John W. Layman, Brigade Adjutant, immediately began to work out the details of the project. Working with J.D. Fowler of Fowler’s Watch Repair, he purchased what Fowler claimed was the largest and one of the most beautiful trophies he has ever sild. The silver-plated cup towers 44 inches above a 25-inch walnut base.

In consultation with the post commander, Major General Roderick Wetherill, it was suggested by the General that two side bases be added and that miniature cannons be mounted thereupon. This suggestion was carried out by the Fourth Army Training aids. The cannons were purchased. However, to have then silver plated, Lt. Norman Hile, while on leave, went to Los Angeles to have the craftsmanship done. The Monitor Plastics and Finishing Company of Pasadena assumed the job.

Also in California, Lt. Hile had a special silver-plated OCS medallion struck by the Blass Company. The medallion is currently affixed to the trophy. Although the names of all honor graduates from Class 1-70 onward appear on the cup’s award plate, it was first shown and presented to 2LT Robert J Dyer II as the honor graduate of Class 12-70.

The Commandants trophy will rest in a featured place in the Hall of Fame alongside the names and pictures of officers who have left a mark of leadership on their military profession. It stands in recognition of outstanding leadership and academic preparation, but above all it signifies great potential soon to be fulfilled.

#### **Roland G. (Gib) Stewart: 13-70**

In May 1970, Roland G. (Gib) Stewart was an officer candidate at Fort Sill Oklahoma. Stewart was a member of Class 13-70. When it was announced that there would be a Fort Sill track meet, Stewart was chosen to run in the track meet rather than doing the Jark he was scheduled to do that Saturday.

In the meet, Candidate Stewart won both the 100-yard dash and the 220-yard dash. After winning the races, he was presented with the dilemma of deciding between staying in

Officer Candidate School or running in the All Army track meet and perhaps running for the Army team. Candidate Stewart chose to stay in OCS and was commissioned with his class. After serving as a training officer and a company commander at Fort Knox, Kentucky, Lieutenant Stewart's final duty station was Fort Sill, where he served as Assistant Athletic and Recreation Officer.

**Rick Bryan: 14-70**

Artillery OCS was certainly a meaningful experience in my life. When I have been physically or mentally exhausted, I just tried to remember the rigors of OCS to keep on going. I especially remember the parking lot tour at the start of OCS and the guys who had dropped out marching behind the white flag. I have often called up that image to not give up. Also, the energy one gets from experiencing challenges as a group showed the power your friends can bring to accomplish something you could never do on your own. But of course, the best thing about OCS was gaining three lifelong close friends. Each of us different, and none of us living in the same area, but still managing to get together on a regular basis.

**“Sill Inaugurates New Concept in Field Exercises”**

***Lawton Constitution and Morning Press (Sunday October 11, 1970)***

A new concept in field exercises was inaugurated at Fort Sill last week when Problem T-2899, “the four-day war,” was launched after several months in the writing and rewriting stages.

The problem conducted by the Reconnaissance, Selection and Occupation of Position (RSOP) Branch of the Field Exercise Division, Tactics-Combined Arms Department for students in the Officer Candidate, Field Artillery Basic and Artillery Combat Leader courses.

A 76-hour live fire exercise, the problem is designed to give students the opportunity to apply principles, techniques and skills learned in the classroom while acting as members of a field artillery cannon battalion-battery in a simulated tactical environment for an extended period of time.

The goal of the problem is for each student to perform as many of the officer and enlisted duties and functions in the battery and battalion as possible. Duties include administration, command, communication, fire direction, fire planning operations and intelligence, logistics, observation, survey, airmobile planning, service of the piece, maintenance of equipment and defense of the unit.

The problem replaces several smaller problems and what was earlier called the “two-day war,” which included on night in the field.

**William M. Coleman: 23-70**

One night we smuggled a big watermelon into the barracks. I can't recall whether it was one of the spouses or a taxi driver who brought it in or one of the candidates, but soon after we started slicing it up a TAC Officer decided to drop by for a surprise inspection. Someone came up with the brilliant idea to flush the remains of the watermelon down

one of the toilets that we never used – you know one that was always ready for an inspection.

We survived the inspection, but something was amiss with the watermelon pieces. Evidently some of the watermelon got lodged in the interior of the toilet and every day we kept finding tendrils growing their way back to the water surface in the bowl – like those “science experiments” at school where you submerged part of a potato in mason jar filled with water and it started growing roots. As I recall we had to keep an eye on that toilet whenever there was an inspection until we graduated but we never got caught.

### **Department of the Army**

#### ***Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1971 (page 37)***

Under the Officer Candidate School program, 2,809 officers were commissioned at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and Fort Benning, Georgia. A 14-week branch immaterial course (as opposed to the current 23-week course) was also being tested at Fort Benning. It will be evaluated in July 1972.

#### **Lalit Piplani: 3-72**

**Red Dot Day** Our training at OCS tried to prepare us for all the challenges we would likely face after commissioning. At that time (1972) the most likely deployment scenario was to combat in Vietnam. All our TAC Officers were recent returnees and attempted to ensure we were aware of the threat posed by “trench foot.”

As a result, we were trained to change (or rotate) our boots every day. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays were “Red Dot Days,” when our boots had to have a red dot painted in the arch outer sole. Likewise, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays were days on which we wore our non-Red Dot pair of boots.

As lowerclassmen, we were standing inspection on the sidewalk in front to our barracks. A middleclassman came behind me and barked, “Do you have your Red Dots on today, Candidate Piplani?”

My immediate and automatic response was, “Sir. Yes, Sir!”

His comeback was, “Today is Tuesday, Candidate. Why are you wearing your red dots?”

Again, my immediate response was, “Sir, if today is Tuesday, then I do not have my red dots on.”

Naturally, he had me bend my knee so he could inspect the bottom of my boot, and (much to my relief) I did not have my red dot boots on. I may not have been aware of the day of the week, but I knew that I had rotated my boots from the previous day.

Such was the degree of “training.” We were trained to act automatically in many instances. Often, a quick and automatic response to an action could save your life and, more importantly, that of those around you.



**Keith Rensberger: 3-72**

My memories of OCS are not so much monumental events, as they are small incidents that have stayed with me all these years.

Woody Diehl was a classmate whose personality did not particularly stand out. One weekend, staying in the Blue House on a Saturday night, it was late and Woody had wet down the aisle between the two rows of cubicles. He found that he could glide on his bare feet on the wet concrete. So, he began several runs from one end to the other. I was in my rack, watching as he passed by, first left then right. When he realized I was there, he held himself stiff as he passed by my cubicle. In the light of the EXIT sign, Woody slid past my bed in a rigid pose, saying "...Re-up..." That image has stayed with me all this time.

Everyone must remember the Purple Bunny nightclub in Lawton. I remember one Saturday night when I was Green, and a Red classmate was there, that I saw a demonstration of machismo. He held a beer glass in his hand, and "ate" the walls down to the base of the glass. Not only that, I swear that he chewed it and swallowed the shards. Now that was a man's man.

A vivid memory was having our cubes "nuked" by the upperclassmen, while away during class hours. Next to my cube was a Texan that I had known in Basic, and his was a rare sense of humor. It was clear to him and all of us, that soon as it would be allowed, he would drop out of OCS. In the meantime, he did his best. One day, his cube was totally nuked. When we returned, the middleclassman came to harass Joe about his mess kit. Apparently it had a "pubic hair" in it, thus the need to dismantle his cube. Joe stood at attention with a straight face, while the middleclassman asked how a scumbag like Joe could manage to find a female pubic hair, much less get it into his mess kit. Joe responded in his Texas twang "Well sir, even a blind hog finds an acorn once-t in a while." The middleclassman lost it right there.

As I think about that time, there are so many snippets of memories: working the desk at Battalion all night and falling asleep in class all the next day; the clever uniform putdowns by upperclassmen (shoelace lanyards, swim fin shirt sleeves, Joe's Pro Shop mismatched trousers and blouses); formations and parade ground police calls on Saturday morning before the JARK; grotto runs by wives; PT in the early morning dark; sleeping in our sweat clothes to be ready for wakeup; 1-minute showers; using the janitor sink to shave; brushing our teeth in bed and swallowing the toothpaste; hitting the wall; calling in fire (my favorite class), and many, many more.

Fort Sill OCS was a watershed time in my life. The lessons learned there have shaped me and my way of dealing with the world, unlike any other experience. I never saw real combat - I was spared that horror. Instead, OCS was my trial-by-fire, and I will always remember it with a sense of pride, and a time shared with people that I consider to be my lifelong brothers.

**A.J. Gasperini: 5-72**

If my memory serves me correct this short note was from an underclassman's or peer evaluation/observation of some sort. Not exactly sure.

*“Mr. Gasperini did not need to attend Harvard or Yale to learn to debate. He has a naturally learned “gift of gab” which probably comes from an Italian heritage. I believe he could deliver a two hour dissertation on the mating habits of wooly buggers and not repeat himself once! This ability to discourse when used at the right time and place is a definite asset.”*

The reference to wooly buggers is those DUST BALLS AND OTHER DUST that we were forever chasing around the cubical areas especially under bunks. No matter when or how often we cleaned and dusted they always seemed to show up minutes after sweeping, mopping and dusting.

They seemed to be constantly multiplying and giving birth. If you remember we were always placed on the wall (HIT A WALL CANDIDATE) and lectured on something no matter how trivial - hence the MATING HABITS OF WOOLY BUGGERS. Time was a precious quantity then and someone always seemed to be eating it up - not that we were ever guilty of that as upper classman. I thought it might bring memories back for all of us.

### **Department of the Army**

#### ***Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1972 (Page 84)***

As a result of increased emphasis on minority officer procurement, the number of minority group cadets at the United States Military Academy and in Reserve Officer Training Corps and Officer Candidate School programs has expanded.

Enrollment of blacks in the Plebe Class at West Point rose from 9 in 1968 to 53 in 1971 and 50 for the 1972-73 school year; the output of black lieutenants from Army Officer Candidate School increased from 2 percent in 1971 to 5 percent in 1972, while 8.5 percent of candidates enrolled as the year ended were black.

The Army's goals for minority group personnel in Officer Candidate School is 11 percent in calendar year 1973, 13 percent in 1974, and 15 percent in 1975.

Where participation in ROTC is concerned there were also minority group increases, from 7.7 percent in the 1970-71 school year, to 10.8 in 1971-72, with a total of 5,443 black cadets. The program has been enhanced by the increase of ROTC detachments in predominantly black colleges and universities, with an annual increase of two from 12 in 1969 to 18 in 1972. Opening enrollment for the 1972-73 school year revealed that 13.7 percent black and 3.7 percent other minority group cadets were participating in the Army ROTC program.

### **Jim De Lane: 2-73**

As a class we were told (I don't remember by whom, probably our upperclassmen) that it was traditional for each class to celebrate their “Hump Day” by planning and executing a prank or some other event for which there was risk of incurring the wrath of the TAC officers, and the resulting consequences.

I'm not sure how, but we arrived at the decision to have hamburgers delivered to us at the OCS barracks after lights out on our Hump Day. Obviously, we couldn't run down to the local hamburger emporium and pick up burgers for everyone, so I enlisted the assistance of my very pregnant wife, Sandy.

That evening, my wife called the local McDonalds and ordered 45 Big Macs to go. The timing of the delivery was critical (to minimize the chances of getting busted), so she needed them in a hurry. They were unwilling to make all 45 burgers in advance but indicated they would make half of them in advance and the rest of them after she got there and paid for them. Under the circumstances, it was the best we could do.

Sandy and Sue Travilla (the wife of my OCS cube mate, Greg Travilla - now deceased) picked up the illicit meal, delivering it to (or near) the OCS barracks. The candidates quickly distributed the burgers and the party began. Actually, I don't think the party lasted very long. I remember being concerned about getting caught, so I ate my hamburger in about three bites. However, I believe I was less concerned about being punished than I was about a TAC officer catching me and taking away my burger before I finished it.

I don't remember being found out, so our Hump Day celebration may have been a complete success. My wife seems to remember that we did get caught. If that was the case, I'm pretty sure it didn't happen that night. However, I don't remember what we did with the burger refuse, so it is possible this was discovered the next day. Regardless, it was worth it.

#### **“Fort Sill OCS to Close in July”**

##### ***Lawton Constitution (Wednesday, March 21, 1973)***

Fort Sill officials received notification Tuesday from the Department of the Army that the post's Field Artillery Officer Candidate School will be closing in July. Lawton newspapers received confirmation Monday from Rep. Tom Steed that the post's OCS program was to be terminated. However, no closing date was given.

A Fort Sill spokesman said Tuesday about 120 officer candidates are presently enrolled in three field artillery OCS classes. One class, comprised of 40 candidates, will graduate Friday. A second class is scheduled to graduate on May 18, and the post's last class will graduate in July.

The spokesman said an OCS class scheduled to begin on April 1 has been canceled, and members of that class will be transferred to Ft. Benning, Ga., to begin a new “branch immaterial” course there. Lt. Col. Beverly L. Barge, commander of the Field Artillery Officer Candidate Battalion at Fort Sill, said most of the soldiers who were to have begun OCS training on April 1 are currently on leave. “If any of them report here, we'll send them on to Benning,” he said.

The Department of Army message to Fort Sill officials also announced that Ft. Benning's Infantry OCS course will be reduced to 14 weeks and will become the Branch Immaterial Officer Candidate Course. Graduates of the course will subsequently be ordered to attend a branch basic officer course. Those graduates who are slated to enter the field artillery branch will attend the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course at Fort Sill, the spokesman said.

## **“Final OCS Class Graduates - a Chapter of Sill’s History Closes”**

### ***Lawton Constitution (Friday July 6, 1973)***

A Chapter of Fort Sill History closed today as the Officer Candidate School graduated its final class, officially inactivating the post’s OCS program after a 32- year career. Twenty-six graduates received second lieutenant bars in the 9:30 a.m. ceremony at Snow Hall auditorium attended by some 350 persons from the Lawton-Fort Sill community.

Special guest and speaker for the last graduation ceremony was Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Carl H. Jark, the first commandant of the Fort Sill Officer Candidate School. Gen. Jark served, as OCS commandant from July 10, 1941, when the program was activated at Fort Sill, until July, 1942. He was a captain at that time. “The Jark,” a 4.2-mile mandatory jog for OCS students every Saturday morning, is named after the general.

Gen. Jark told the graduates: “You are entering a different Army from the one I went into in 1930.” He said, among other things, that today’s soldiers are better educated and better paid. He also said the Army has undergone many changes’ since he first entered, adding, however, that he did not believe that “change for the sake of change” was good and that in many cases he felt that “change is being overdone,”

Gen. Jark advised the new second lieutenants to “Be in the right place, at the right time,” and said’ that sometimes “Lady Luck” needs “a little nudge,”

He advised graduates to continue their formal education and to be “flexible, ‘but not limp.” The general cautioned the graduates against letting other activities interfere with their duties as Army officers. “Those of you who will soar with eagles in the morning should not hoot with owls at night,” he advised.

Also on hand for the ceremony were Maj. Gen. David E. Ott, Fort Sill commander; Brig. Gen. Robert J. Koch, assistant commandant of the Field Artillery School, who issued the oath of office; Lt. Col. Beverly Barge, officer candidate battalion commander, and other post and city dignitaries.

The 77th U.S. Army Band H provided music for the ceremony and a reception in the Fort Sill Officers Club was held following the graduation. With the inactivation of OCS training at Fort Sill, all future such training will be-carried out at Fort Benning, Ga.

With the exception of the period between the end of World War II and the beginning of the buildup for the Korean conflict in 1951, the Fort Sill OCS program operated continually until its inactivation today. The first Fort Sill OCS class reported on July 10, 1941, with 125 students enrolled. Seventy-nine were graduated as second lieutenants after the 13 week course.

In 1943, the course was lengthened to 17 weeks. During 1942 OCS had a capacity of 6,600 students, with class of 500 beginning every week.

The school closed on Dec. 12, 1946, after graduating 26, 209 students. It reopened on Feb. 21, 1951, with the beginning of the Korean mobilization. The course consisted of 23 weeks of training upon its reopening.

In 1967 expansion programs at Fort Sill made it possible for OCS to support an input of 9,600 candidates. The program cut back sharply in 1970, as the Vietnam War began to wind down.

During its 32-year career the school graduated some 48,500 young Army officers. Two of the graduates were awarded Medals of Honor posthumously, and many others also distinguished themselves during combat and in peacetime. Several graduates of Fort Sill's OCS program went on to attain the rank of general.

Distinguished graduate of the post's final OCS class was William Zekas, of Wilkes Barre, Pa. Other graduates included: Gary R. Anderson, Manhattan Beach, Calif.; Lawrence W. Baker, Pensacola, Fla.; Jerome D. Belobraydic, Collinsville, Ill.; Ross W. Branstetter, III, Palos Verdes Peninsula, Calif.; Marvin E. Bridges, Miami, Fla.; Don E. Craighead, Nashville, Tenn.; Keith G. Dunlap, Seattle, Wash.; Howard H. Fancher, Las Vegas, Nev.; Richard C. Gabardy, Fairfax, Va.; Thomas S. Grodecki, Ravenna, Ohio; Ronald L. Hackney, Elkhorn City, Ky.; Robert M. Horner, Amarillo, Tex.; Thomas R. Hydock, Beavers Meadows, Pa.; Stephen A. Kirby DeWitt, Iowa; Donald L. Lederer, Spring Valley, Calif., and Robert E. Mann, Houston, Tex.; Wayne A. McGlamry, Quitman, Ga.; Elijah Mitchell, Columbia, Ga.; Willie L. Moore, Lincoln, Ala.; Mirko Rakigiji, Thibodaux, La.; Richard G. Read Jr., Atlanta, Ga.; John R. Rupp, Clinton, Minn.; Thomas P. Ryterske, Racine, Wis.; Tyrone L. Waller, Baltimore, Md.; and Curtis W. Watson, Boston, Mass.

## **Department of the Army**

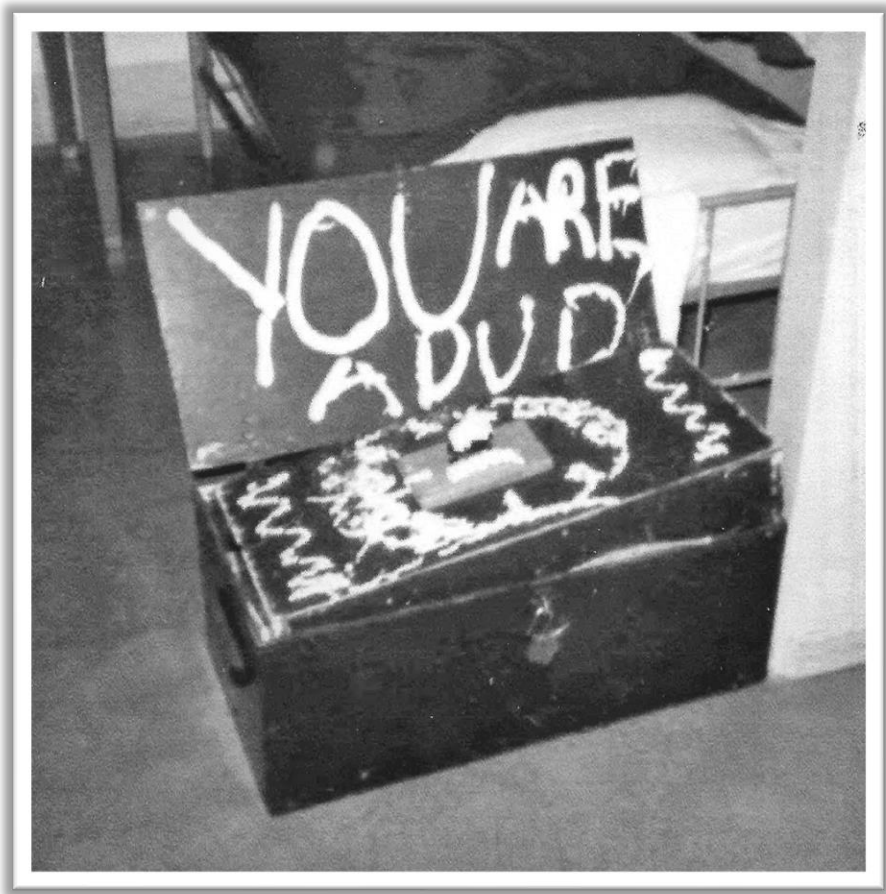
### ***Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1973 (page 33)***

The male Officer Candidate Program was modified in March 1973 after a two-year test to determine the practicality of reducing the length of the course. As a result of the experiment, the Officer Candidate Course was reduced from twenty-three to fourteen weeks in length and redesignated the Branch Immaterial Officer Candidate Course.

Graduates will immediately attend their Branch Basic Officer Course. Input to Officer Candidate School (OCS) was reduced, and only in-service applicants are accepted. The OCS program at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, was terminated in June 1973, leaving Fort Benning, Georgia, as the only installation to conduct male officer candidate courses.



*Class 4-73 – The Fort Sill OCS Class*



*Message from the Upper Class after finding a footlocker left unsecured*



*Class 2-70 two days before Graduation - January 7, 1970*



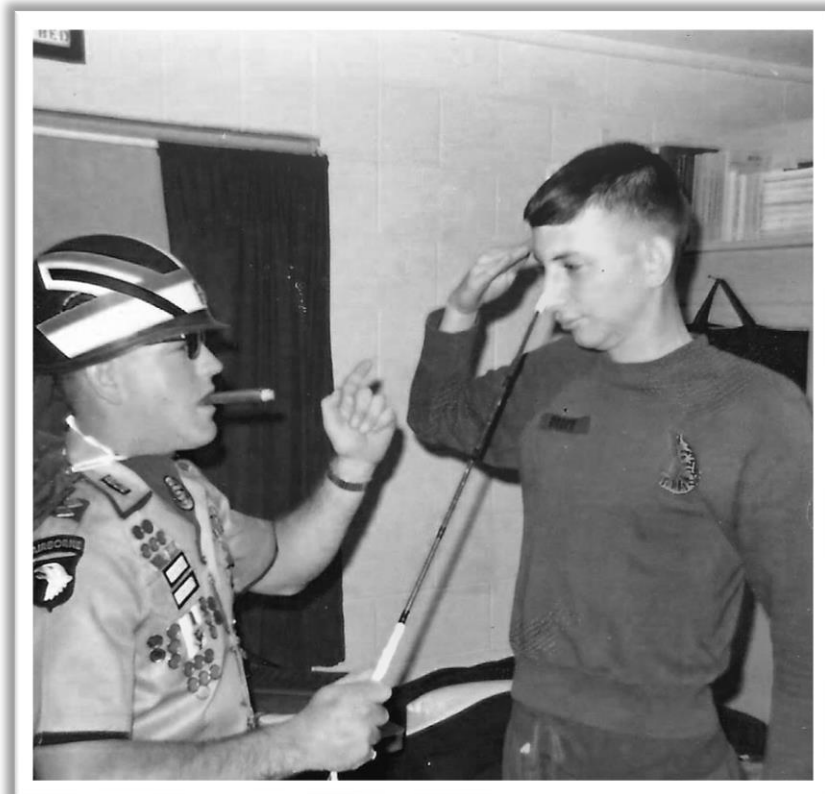
*Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor signs OCS Hall of Fame visitor register during a visit to Fort Sill. OC Brigade Commander COL Thomas E. Watson, Jr and Candidate Charles P. Jones, Class 5-70 look on. (February 6, 1970)*



*Candidate Jones takes Secretary of the Army on a guided tour of the OCS area*



*The fictional "Continental Army Command (CONARC) First Candidate of all OCS programs" showed up at Fort Sill and sent shock waves through the Officer Candidate Brigade – Class 5-70*







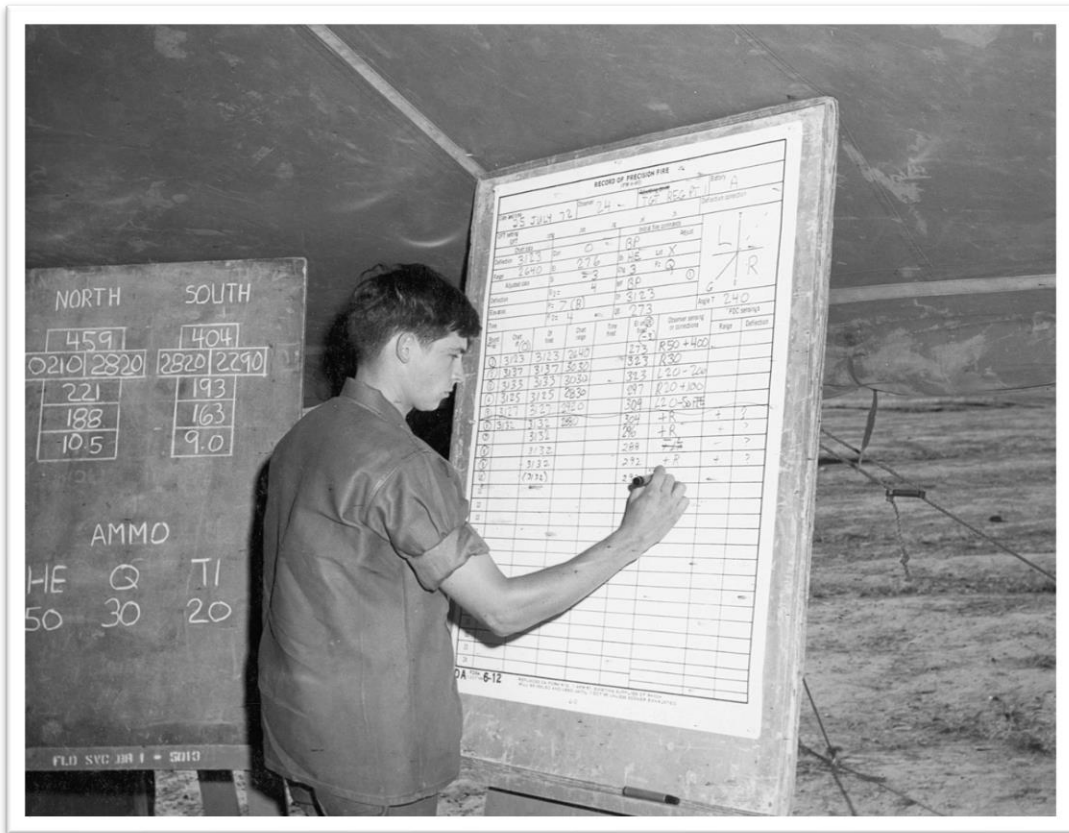
*Class 5-72 turns Red (Upper Class) on July 13, 1972*



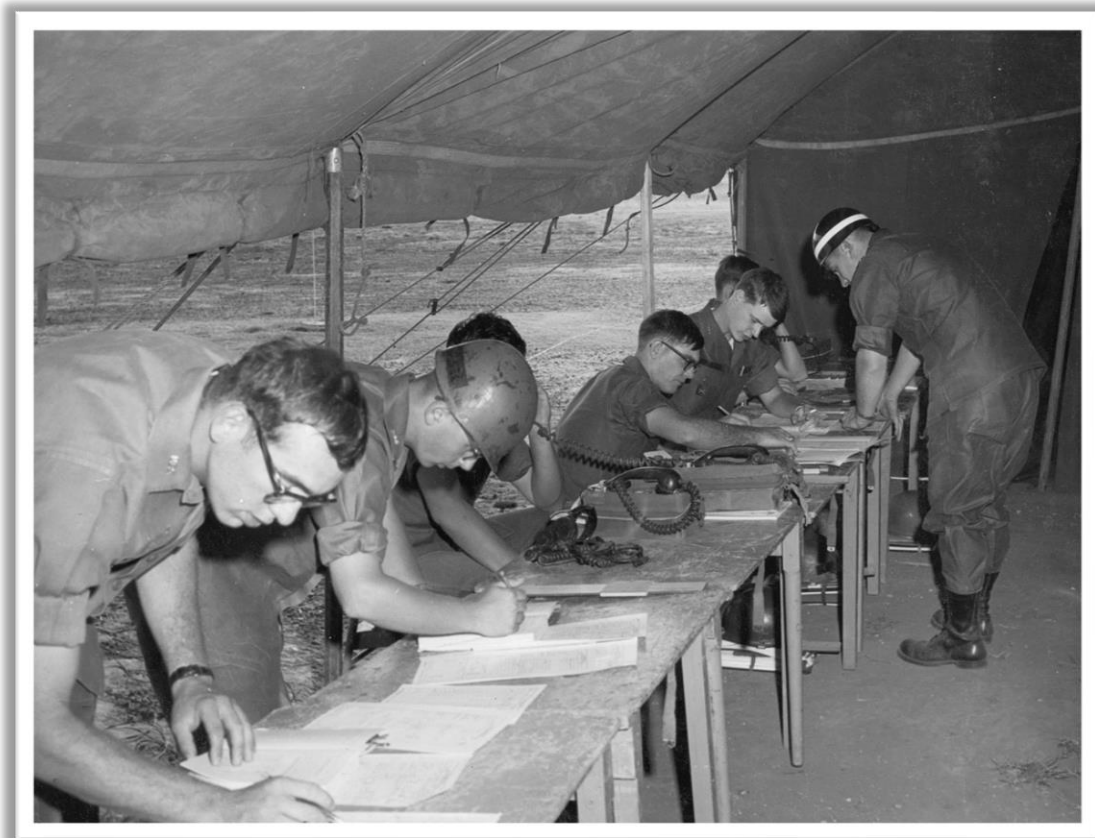


*Class 5-72 training in the field on the 155 mm Howitzer*



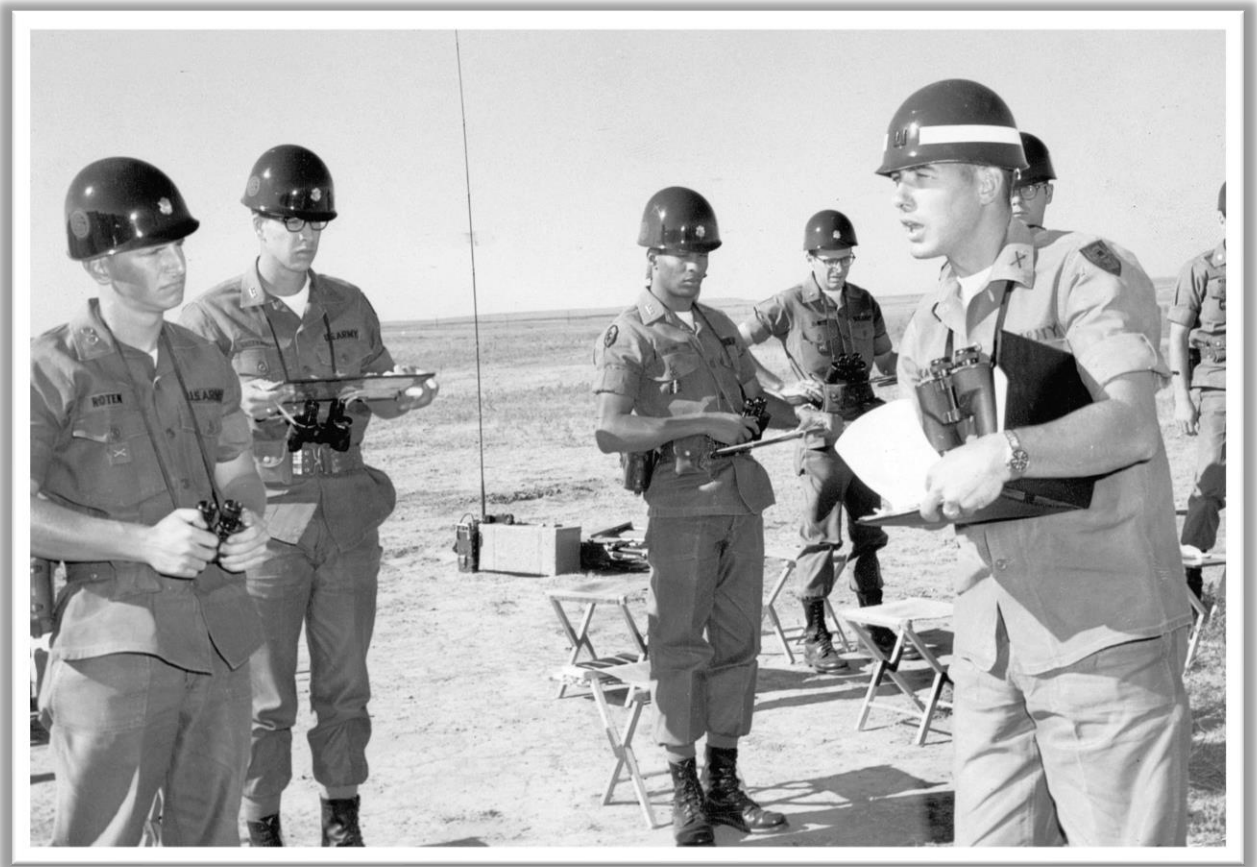


*Class 5-72 works on Precision Registration computations in the field (above)  
And meteorological (MET Data) computation exercise in the field (below)*





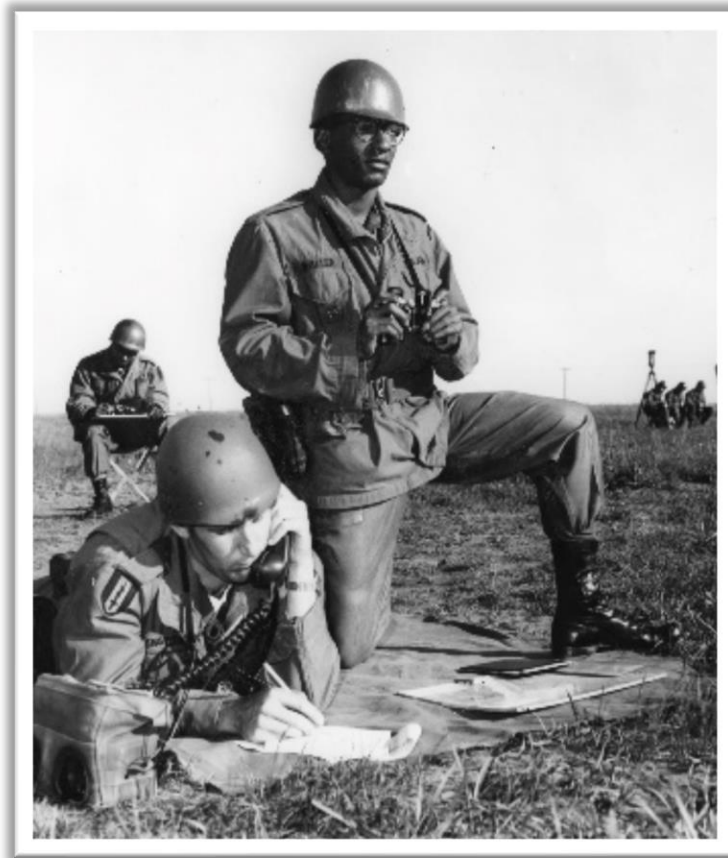
*Candidates from Class 5-72 in the field for Observed Fire Training exercise*



*Instructor critiques candidates on the mission after it is completed*



*Lower Class Candidate Cubicle Class 2-73*



*Members of Class 4-73 during Observed Fire training. Tyrone Waller is the FO. Jerome Belobraydic is the RTO and behind them on the stool is Elijah Mitchell.*

EDIFICE



# Chapter Nineteen

## After 1973

### Other OCS Programs, The Jark and MB-4, Traditions, Legends Artillery Branch Roots, OCS in 2022 and More

#### **James M. "Mike" Harris: BIOCC Class 3-75 Fort Benning**

**Mental Attitude Brown Recluse Anecdote:** Sometime while on Yankee Road Land Navigation Course I received a nick on my right forearm. At first, I thought it was just an infected scratch or large pimple on my forearm. After a couple days my roommates saw the red streaks going up my arm. Any candidate going on sick call or put on profile could subliminally observe his military career vanishing. Reluctantly, I went to the dispensary and was referred to the Post Hospital. A LTC doctor examined my arm and told me I'd been stung by a Brown Recluse Spider. He said he was admitting me to the hospital. I said, "No sir. I'm going back to the program." The doctor then braced me at attention, placed his face about two inches from mine and said, "Candidate. We are going to put you in the hospital, right now, or we are going to amputate your arm, right now. Which is it going to be?" I looked him square in the eye and said emphatically, "Sir! Candidate Harris. Let me think about it, Sir!" Discretion became the better part of valor. I spent five days in the hospital with my right arm wrapped in a warm moist bandage. My left arm was strapped to a board and had a high powered antibiotic pumping into my vein. I was in a large open ward with several candidates from Class 3-75. Next to me a guy had his right knee split wide open to the bone and they flushed it with saline every hour. Others were in traction. Several had broken bones. When I had to relieve myself, it was necessary to get up and roll my IV bottle down the hall with me. When I got back to bed my IV was usually backed up with fresh blood, so the nurse inserted a new needle somewhere else. I had almost twenty holes in my arm and hand by the end. On the fourth day the doctor lanced my right arm and pushed out a brittle hard core about three inches long and a half inch in diameter. He said without the antibiotic that would have happened to my whole arm. The next day I reported back to the Company in time to go for an extended run and remedial PT. My takeaway was to conserve your limbs as you may need them another day. And never ever quit as long as you have anything left to give. I graduated and the spider died.

**Ours Was the Toughest** Any story about the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School (OCS) must begin with the premise that "our course was the toughest, or the hardest, or the most brutal." True or not, that is the mindset and firmly held belief of every OCS graduate. There's a reason for that perception. Of the three most common sources of commissioning Army officers, OCS stands apart from the others. The United States Military Academy (USMA), the Reserve Officer Training Corps Program (ROTC) and Officer Candidate School (OCS) are the most frequent producers of commissioned Army officers. Direct Commissions benefit the Army by recognizing and accepting significant technical training or professional expertise. Battlefield Commissions reward exceptional leadership under combat conditions.

The United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point is a vigorous four-year academic program designed to produce career military leaders. It is world famous for its

technical curriculum, discipline and famous alumnae. Credit must be given where it is due. USMA is a tough and demanding system that has produced some fine officers and leaders. However, some of its graduates do not relate well to enlisted personnel because, other than their military academic training, they've never served in a troop unit or functioned as a soldier in the ranks.

The Reserve Officer Training Corps Program (ROTC) provides an academic study of Military Science at numerous colleges and universities. It typically runs four years and results in a commission as a Second Lieutenant. ROTC is perhaps the most common source of commissioned Army officers. Granted its graduates have completed a lengthy academic program, but many will acknowledge that all ROTC programs are not equal. Some ROTC programs are excellent while some have serious shortcomings. The result is the commissioning of a few lieutenants who are substandard in terms of leadership, tenacity and mental toughness. ROTC graduates typically have never served as soldiers and must rely only upon their college experience for military interaction and experience.

U.S. Army Officer Candidate School (OCS) is a rigorous course designed to train, assess, evaluate, and develop second lieutenants for the U.S. Army's sixteen basic branches. It is the only commissioning source that can be responsive to the U.S. Army's changing personnel requirements due to its short length, compared to other commissioning programs and their requirements. In many cases OCS graduates have prior enlisted service and thus a better appreciation of the enlisted soldier's viewpoint. Most of the time this facilitates a better rapport with the troops an officer must lead. OCS graduates are recognized as leaders in the nation's first and best line of defense in the Army. The mission of OCS remains; to train selected personnel in the fundamentals of leadership; basic military skills; instill professional ethics; evaluate leadership candidates potential; and commission those who qualify. Standards! No Compromise!!

A key factor that makes OCS so valuable to the Army is its ability to quickly produce commissioned officers who have the military skills, ethics, leadership and physical and mental toughness to function in very stressful environments. While USMA and ROTC graduate fine officers, they require several years and take place primarily in an academic environment. OCS alumnae earn their commission through trial by fire. Short of actual combat, the OCS program applies as much (physical and mental) stress as possible to evaluate each candidate's ability to function, lead and succeed when most people would quit. When national priorities require an immediate increase in commissioned officers, OCS responds.

Whether the course was 12, 14 or 17 weeks or more, every class will remember their stressful time in the OCS program. From Infantry, Field Artillery and other branch OCS courses to the Branch Immaterial Officer Candidate Course (BIOCC), every candidate is certain theirs was the toughest. And, in a way, they are all correct. Although none would ever admit that another class was any harder, every class suffered attrition. Candidates dropped out. Some failed for academic or leadership reasons. Some simply decided an officer's commission was not right for them. Attrition from an OCS class is the closest thing to suffering real casualties. Military leaders must continue the mission in spite of casualties, weather, terrain and changed conditions. Those that succeeded gained the satisfaction of knowing they endured, they measured up, and they would lead soldiers in any sound and fury that was to come.



**To Sleep. Perchance to Dream.** Sleep is something a candidate never gets. The day officially starts at 05:30 and goes non-stop until 22:00. But the nightly platoon moves plus painting and other over-night projects, assigned by the Tactical Officer, meant we rarely got more than 2 hours sleep a night and that was usually broken into two or three segments. The purpose was to apply stress and it worked. Eyes became red and sunken. Expressions became more sullen and downcast. Candidates became tired. After a few weeks we all were questioning our decision to apply. The surprising thing about sleep deprivation is that we kept going and even found a little "gallows humor" in it. We worked hard and we became exhausted. But we also laughed and joked and helped to buoy one another's spirit. We learned that when we were at the end of our endurance, there was always something in reserve to be tapped.

**What Have I Done?** OCS Class 3-75 was scheduled from 10 February to 20 May, 1975 at Fort Benning, Georgia. Fourteen short weeks to a commission. What's so hard about that? Let's go. As OCS Alumnae will tell anyone, qualifying and getting selected is no easy feat. After passing the required tests, being evaluated by one's chain of command and succeeding on the PT Test there was the Board of Review and the limitation on the number of slots allotted to the geographic command. The U.S. Southern Command could send only two candidates for that course. I was happy to be one of them. Only fifty percent of SouthCom's allotment would graduate.

Arrival at the Columbus, Georgia Airport was uneventful. I shared a taxi to Main Post with Honor Bell, and we checked in the day before the course was to start. We were assigned a platoon and roommates. Our class started with 236 candidates in six platoons. That evening we prepared our rooms and desk displays, clowning around a bit and were excited as we drifted off to sleep. We had little idea that life, as we knew it, was over.

At precisely 05:30 our slumber was raucously and violently terminated. There was a blinding flash of light, the explosion of glass, the crash of a 40 gallon galvanized steel trash can slamming into the fan grating at the end of the hall, a dense fog of chlorine scouring cleanser in the air, air horns blaring, people running in all directions and someone screaming in every ear to "Get up!, Get dressed!, Get out on the hardstand!, Get moving!, Get up and get out!!, Why are you moving so slow?!" We were severely traumatized and slow to catch on. But soon we got outside in formation where the verbal tirade continued. Each platoon reported its status as best it could. Then it was "right face! forward march! double-time march!" Off we ran to Physical Training (PT) wearing our combat boots. We never stopped running until graduation. Running is the thread that binds every activity at Fort Benning.

The Tactical Officers ran us for nearly an hour before stopping on Stewart-Watson Field for calisthenics followed by the Advanced PT Test. Then we ran back to the company area for 5 minutes of personal hygiene followed by breakfast, followed by formation and running off to our first training event. The nose-to-nose verbal bombast never ended. We were braced to attention, saluted, did push-ups, moved out smartly and always lambasted with taunts and orders. It was obvious to our Tactical Officers that there were too many of us. They unceremoniously told us there was not enough billet space, so they intended to reduce our numbers quickly. Planned or not they ran our formations onto and off curbs to see if we could adapt. It worked beautifully. Soon we had several

candidates on crutches, and some admitted to the hospital with broken knees and swollen joints. This taught us to keep up, stay in formation and look out for one another.

**Leave a Wake-Up Call.** Every morning started the same. The galvanized steel trash can and sometimes its lid slammed into the fan grating at the end of the hall after careening off the block walls and gouging huge chunks of floor tile. The Training Schedule allowed us three minutes to get up, get on our PT gear, make our beds, get to the hard-stand in formation and move out for PT. After PT we had a few minutes to shower and prepare our rooms for inspection. Then we were off to class or training. When we returned to the company area for lunch, we always discovered our rooms had been inspected and failed miserably. As a result, our uniforms were on the floor, our academic issue of Field Manuals and Regulations were scattered about, our desk drawers were out or empty, our bunks were torn up and our TA-50 gear (Pistol Belt and Load Bearing Equipment (LBE)) was in a heap. Of course, we had to restore everything to its proper place in minutes because, "An Officer Candidate is prepared for inspection at all times." After lunch we double-timed to training. Late each afternoon we returned to our rooms to discover our displays had failed inspection again. We called it "getting nuked." We were, "Wrong, wrong, wrong!" The rooms were readied for inspection before we headed out for an afternoon run. Sometimes we ran the Airborne Track. Sometimes we ran to Libby Army Airfield. Sometimes we ran to places we never heard of. We returned for supper where the harassment continued as we attempted to eat. Then we had details to perform before study hall. Details might include cleaning the Battalion HQ, maintaining Wigle Hall, arranging the Day Room, cleaning weapons, moving equipment, or working on a pet project for the Tactical Officer. Study hall was intended to give us time to review and prepare for classes and to complete reading and writing assignments, but that was quickly overcome by events. The Tactical Officers invariably took the opportunity to use the study hall time to conduct "health and welfare" inspections. Looking back, this is just like military life. No plan survives first contact. Things interfere with routine schedules. Learn to deal with it.

**Cooperate and Graduate.** Health and welfare inspections meant we were at the position of attention by our bunks while the Tactical Officer checked the area. He often rummaged through our wall lockers and desks in search of contraband, i.e., items we were prohibited from having in the barracks, like flammable paste floor wax, spray paint, food, "Poggie Bait" (candy/sweets), unauthorized reading material, non-military items, etc.). Our foot lockers were supposedly our refuge for personal items and not normally opened when we were away. He always had us hold our foot lockers in our arms with the lids opened to touch our noses. The Tac would often find "contraband" in footlockers. If it was spray paint, it got sprayed up and down the walls requiring them to be repainted to the two-tone, white over gray. Paste wax got hurled into the whirling ventilation fans at the end of the hall, splattering the wax in the screen and all over the fan blades. Candy and food was thrown onto the floor where we marched over it until it was a squishy mess. Personal letters were opened and read aloud by the Tac, especially the mushy parts or when a wife would offer comfort about the "mean old tactical officer" who was mistreating her hubby. We quickly learned to read our mail and then destroy it. The inspections usually ended just before lights out. Every night the Tactical Officer would get us to bed and then strut up and down the hall telling us we were, "Duds. We should "save ourselves a lot of pain and anguish and just request relief from the program." (SOP paragraph 5-5). Without fail he would depart by giving us an order to, "move to another platoon's area before he

returned in the morning." This entailed moving everything a candidate owned except the bunk, mattress, wall locker, chair and desk. The new platoon area was always on another floor and an opposite end of the barracks. This required a lot of cooperation and planning. The barracks looked like a giant ant hill, with footlockers and books going up one staircase and uniforms, TA-50 and laundry bags going down the other. It made for extra unwanted PT and a lot of lost sleep. Also, we had to paint our platoon crest on the wall in our new area, on the hard-stand and on the Tactical Officer's parking space. And everything had to be ready for inspection by reveille, including all the common areas. We discovered a hidden benefit to the nightly moves. We could not make our room super good while a fellow candidate's room was poor. Tomorrow we might have that room. We learned to "cooperate and graduate."

**Senior Status Dining-In** When we turned Senior Candidates we were considered "Third Lieutenants" so that Basic and Intermediate Candidates had to salute us and defer to our presence. We hosted a formal Dining-In at the Officers Club and were allowed to bring spouses and girlfriends. Since many of us were away from family and many were bachelors, we dispatched a contingent of candidates to travel to Fort McClellan, Al and invited the Female OCS Class from Fort McClellan to be our guests. We had one restriction. We had to procure the prettiest Female OCS Tactical Officer as a date for one of our Tactical Officers. The mission was successful. We had a very nice dinner and of course we roasted our cadre in several skits. That weekend may have been the first time we were allowed an overnight pass. We got out of Dodge, so to speak, and went to motels in the area for a hot soaking bath and more to drink. Sunday, we returned by noon and got right back into the program with an Advanced PT test.

**Drill and Ceremony** The screaming, taunting and inspections continued at all times. Uniform infractions, un-shined boots, poor personal appearance, failure to salute quickly, and many other failures on our part resulted in assignment of demerits. Demerits came in dribs and drabs. A "Class III" meant 10 demerits. "Class II" or Class I" was a very serious breach of ethics or honesty and resulted in a boat-load of demerits and appearance before a review board for continuation in the program. Every candidate was required to carry in his right rear pocket one three by five card and a pen to record his day's demerits. The Honor Code required us to keep a tally of our demerits daily and report them to our Tactical Officer. After accumulating 50 demerits a candidate had to march "punishment tours" to reduce the demerit count. A "punishment tour" consisted of reporting to the hard-stand in full tactical uniform with LBE and practicing Drill and Ceremony (Field Manual 22-5) for an hour. Lots of demerits meant multiple punishment tours, sometimes back-to-back. These consumed hours when a candidate might otherwise have precious free time to turn in or pick-up laundry or get a haircut or shop for necessities. We learned "22-5" through mechanical repetition. I recall preparatory and execution commands to this day.

**Weapons Cleaning.** As graduation loomed closer the Executive Officer declared that our M-16 rifles must be thoroughly cleaned before being turned in for the final time. Every weapons inspection was a failure, and we were sent back to clean them again. Brushes, patches, LSA, pads, rods and lots of elbow grease were used. Nothing would satisfy the XO. The barrels must have been paper thin after so much rubbing. Then we realized that the Hot Water and Steam Generation Plant was only a hundred yards from our barracks. Hot water came out as hot as steam. We don't know if it was bad for the M-16s, but it

surely took away everything inside and outside those barrels. The weapons finally passed inspection and were stored in the arms room. A clean weapon is a good thing, but one that functions is better.

**Final PT Test.** I had previously served in Germany with a candidate in another platoon. He told me he twisted his ankle in the last class and was medically recycled to Class 3-75. As we neared to end of the course his Tactical Officer slammed an office door on his hand and badly injured it. At sick call they told him it was broken in multiple places and needed to be in a hard cast. He responded that he couldn't complete the horizontal ladder event on the PT test with his hand in a cast. He had it wrapped in an Ace Bandage instead. He completed pushups and the horizontal ladder and passed the final PT test. What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger. He wins my prize as the most tenacious candidate.

**Military Letters.** Occasionally writing assignments were assigned. One Tactical Officer observed a candidate who failed to completely break starch on his fatigue trousers. His Tac called the unbroken starch creases fins and assigned a requirement for a 5,000-word military letter on the importance of underwater operations in the U.S. Army. I received a requirement for a 2,000-word letter on some insignificant topic. Many of us wrote letters of varying lengths. Remember, in 1975 we had no computers, only manual typewriters.

My roommate, Gary Stufflebeam, had a dilemma when it came time to request his choice for branch commissioning. He spoke to one Tactical Officer to ask if it was OK to apply for two branches, because Gary had served enlisted time in one branch, but he also had a Degree in Engineering and thought himself qualified for either. That Tac told him to apply for both. When Gary's applications arrived at the Executive Officer's desk, the XO berated Gary for being so stupid as to think that was acceptable. At this point in our program it seemed humorous to Gary that the XO was calling another Tactical Officer's idea stupid. He chuckled. Big mistake. The XO assigned Gary to write a 10,000-word letter on proper military courtesy. The letter had to be typed, double spaced, no errors, no strikeouts, military format, numbered above each word in blue pencil and due within the week.

Gary worked on his letter, but this was during Senior Status, when the pace of activity picks up even more. He was unable to meet the deadline and asked for an extension. The XO gave him an extension but raised the word count to 50,000 words and Gary was restricted to the company area until it was completed. We all suffered the torment of the XO, but he seemed to take delight in punishing Gary, simply for laughing out loud. Gary wrote. We all gave him copies of our papers to incorporate into his "novel." The wives worked off-post typing the pages and getting them into proper format. The "Stufflebeam Letter" became a Company effort. After many hours, the letter was completed. When Gary delivered it, the XO accepted it and immediately dropped it into a trash can. Gary graduated and was commissioned into the Corp of Engineers.

Most of us understood the rationale behind the writing assignments and the tough standards. Like it or not, we all have to comply with orders we may find distasteful. The Stufflebeam Letter, however, was one of several situations we endured in our tenacity to graduate. Ours is not to reason why. Ours is to try and comply.

**Turning Senior / Hell Night.** Scuttlebutt told us a little of what to expect on "Hell Night," our last day as Intermediate Candidates. The following day we were to turn Blue and become Senior Candidates. After supper we were in our supposed "study hall." The Tactical Officer directed us to fall out in ponchos, boots and helmets (with no liners). We were sprayed with cold water and sent back into our platoon areas to scrub the floors. We used scrub brushes, mops and toothbrushes to take away every speck of wax on the tiles. We then had footlocker races down the corridors, which scratched large grooves in the tile. Next, we were "ordered" to produce every bit of Poggie Bait hidden in the area. There was a surprising amount of candy tucked away. It all went on the floor into a huge pile that we expected to crush. We were then given two minutes to consume every morsel. We then took a communal shower in ponchos and helmets. Next, we were in formation on the hard stand starting a long run into the night. We ran to Infantry Hall and low crawled across the parking lot. Then we went snorkeling in the drainage culverts (but without snorkels). Those culverts run for miles. Wet, cold, tired and pretty grubby, we then went on a 10K run in boots. While we were out of the barracks the TACs were removing all our footlockers and placing them in a mountain on the hard stand. As they stacked the foot lockers ten high, they removed our name tapes so it would be impossible to tell one locker from another. But scuttlebutt helped this time as we had secretly placed our candidate numbers on the back of our padlocks. Upon return from the run, we discovered the Company Commander sitting atop the pile with all the Tactical Officers up there too. Standing in formation we were told we must get our footlockers back into our rooms and change into fresh fatigues and return to the hard-stand within ten minutes. By this time, we were old hands and complied easily. In a midnight formation we were presented with our white OCS ascots and invited to the mess hall (what the Dining Facility used to be called) for pizza and beer. That was the first time a Tactical Officer or Company Cadre spoke to us as human beings. We could see the light at the end of the tunnel. That night after pizza we used an automotive paint sprayer system to paint our helmet liners blue and painted the perimeter of our company area with Infantry Blue paint. We were Senior Candidates and dared anyone from the neighboring 50th Company (who were in Intermediate status) to cross the line without our permission. Turning Blue, in some ways, made getting commissioned anticlimactic.

**POW Camp.** During our Senior Status we actually picked up the pace and accomplished more than before. Largely this was because we had become an efficient cooperative team. Still, it surprised us that we had reserve fuel and were pouring it on. During a patrolling exercise we were "captured" by an opposing force consisting of cadre from the Ranger Committee. We knew it was coming but were taken aback to learn the Ranger's only directive was, "don't kill them." We were treated roughly with physical blows, bloody noses and lips, lots of bruises and a few contusions. Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) training was very demanding. Our administrative instructions said we could not all rush the wire to escape as it would result in mass casualties. We were passed chits that allowed us to organize an escape attempt or to bribe guards for water or food. This was training. Reality would mean weapons and guards willing to use them. Everyone has his own memories. These are mine.

We were herded into pens, made to strip and place everything we had including watches, glasses, rings etc., into laundry bags. I am legally blind without glasses so I was very limited as to what I could see. We were then given rags and bits of uniforms to wear. As night was coming, we were told the rules of life in the POW camp. Never speak. Keep your

head bowed. Never look at a guard. Do what you are told, etc. As we were listening, the Opposing Force (OPFOR) cadre wandered into our ranks to enforce the idea. Fists to the face. Knees to the groin. Body slams to the ground. Elbows to the ear. Teeth were loosened, blood was spilled, and we learned to pay attention. This was not an academic exercise.

We were taken into another compound where we were divided up into groups. Some dug a bottomless pit. Others moved heavy crates from one place to another and then back again. Candidates were forced to kneel on oak pallets which is very painful. Others were forced to exercise. Worst was being low-crawled across a ten-foot-wide fire ant mound. My entire body was covered in puss pockets from the fire ant stings. I was lucky. It only hurt. One candidate had an allergic reaction and had to be medically evacuated to the Post Hospital. He woke up two days later from a coma, but he graduated.

Occasionally we were called out for interrogation. Taken into a steel CONEX container we faced the OPFOR sitting behind a desk. They would ask us questions and if we did not respond the way they wished we were butt stroked in the kidneys or slammed against the side of the CONEX. We did not know that our personnel files had been delivered to the Ranger Committee, so they knew everything about us and our families and careers. They used this to show their omnipotence. When asked to sign a paper admitting my transgressions, I tore it up. That resulted in a quick trip to the floor, a knee on my throat and a five gallon can of water poured on my face until I choked. I continued to resist and was beaten all over with rubber hoses. I had the bruises all the way to graduation day. I feel fortunate that I was not placed in "the box." A small, corrugated steel box about a yard cubed was used as punishment. Cramped, dark and exceptionally hot, it caused much suffering.

As luck would have it, I was slipped a chit that allowed me to attempt an escape. With very poor eyesight I knew my chance of success were slim or none. I passed the chit to Hervey Martin. We organized a distraction for the guards so Hervey could climb the wire. It worked beautifully. Hervey got outside the compound and took off running into the woods at a full gallop. He would have made it had he not run directly into an oak tree and split his lip from his nostril to the corner of his mouth. The crash knocked him out cold. The OPFOR guards simply scooped up his limp body and tossed it over the fence back into the compound.

Later I was taken into a small cabin and allowed to sit down opposite another OPFOR interrogator. I discovered that the CONEX crowd were the "bad cops" and the cabin people were the "good cops," who would go easier on us. As the questioning progressed, the interrogator did not know that I was blind as a bat. I could see his head but no details. As a result, I stared into his eyes and never blinked. I'd been through the harsh treatment and wasn't going to give an inch this time either. After a while I could tell the interrogator was getting a little rattled. He tried to say, "OK, now we are going admin so I can tell you some important things to help you survive captivity." He explained that giving blood type was OK because it could help you. He said, "everyone breaks. Try to protect yourself by giving a little as possible, but don't get your arm broken if you can help it. Stay alive and continue to resist as best you can." I continued to stare daggers into his eyes until he finally gave up and said, "next prisoner." I wasn't buying much of it then, but I think he was truly trying to educate me.

**“Largest Museum in Army Hosts Variety of Events”**

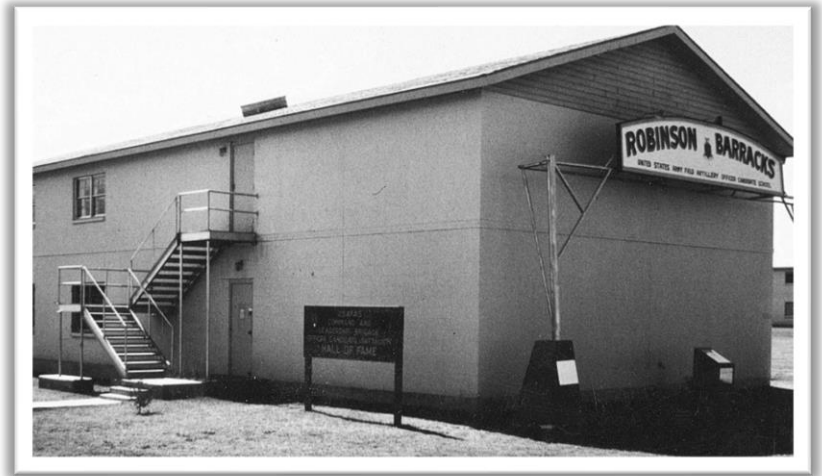
***Lawton Constitution (Sunday January 25, 1976)***

A new exhibit facility was opened by the U.S. Army Field Artillery and Fort Sill Museum on the Army’s 200th Birthday, June 14, 1975 in Building 441, one of the cavalry barracks of the Old Post. This was the Artillery Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame, formerly located in Robinson Barracks. OCS was phased out of Fort Sill in 1973.

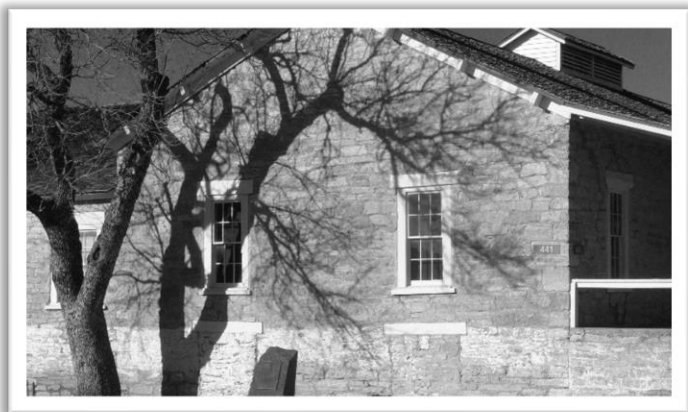
Note: The Hall of Fame was established in Building 3031 in 1968 and moved to Building 3168 in April 1969. After several years in Building 441 it was moved to Building 3025 in 1984. It was memorialized as Durham Hall in 1999. The Hall of Fame was voluntarily administered by Randy and Penny Dunham from February 2005 until closing to the public on October 15, 2021. Construction of a 3,200 square foot addition to the Field Artillery Museum, funded by graduates and friends of the Artillery Officer Candidate School and gifted to Fort Sill as the Artillery OCs Heritage Center will carry on the Artillery OCS Legacy.



*1968 (Building 3031)*



*1969-1974 (Building 3168)*



*1975-1983 (Building 441)*



*1984-2021 (Building 3025)*



*Two volunteers maintained the Hall of Fame from 2005-2021*



## **THE JARK**

The term “Jark,” was coined by the OCS Cadre to describe a fast paced trip from Robinson Barracks to the top of Medicine Bluff 4 (MB4) and back at port arms, a physically onerous task. The events were held every Saturday and Sunday afternoon for those candidates who had accumulated a certain number of demerits. The step was 30 inches and the pace was 130 steps per minute. The prescribed uniform varied throughout the school’s history, but in most cases it was the fatigue uniform, baseball cap, pistol belt with full canteen, poncho with first-aid kit, combat boots and rifle. Total distance: 4.2 miles.



*If you ever took the trip to MB-4 as a “Jark” participant  
you should remember the “Big Tree”  
It was used as the assembly point for the early morning “Jark Stroll”  
during the annual Artillery OCS Alumni Chapter Reunions*

## **The Beginning of the End of Rappelling on MB3 - 4 March 1988**

### **Memorandum thru DPTM (Directorate of Plans Training and Mobilization)**

1. The repelling site at Medicine Bluffs was recently inspected by DEH and several defects identified (Encl 1). Repairs to the tower, cable bridges, and platform on the cliff face are estimated at \$18,051.44 (Encl 2).

2. The Medicine Bluffs were entered onto the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 due to their historic significance to Fort Sill and the Nation, as well as their religious significance to the Kiowa, Comanche and Wichita tribes. The rappelling training site was established subsequent to that historic designation in violation of AR 420-40, USAFACFS Reg 200-2, Public Law 96-95, and Executive Order 11593, to name a few.

3. Deterioration of the bluff face has resulted from these rappelling activities. The visual impact of large, scarred areas, the platform, tower and cables is totally disruptive when viewed close up. Access to the area at the bluff base is restricted when rappelling activities are in progress.

4. It is my understanding that the rappelling activity is not necessarily mandatory and falls into an "adventure" training category. The recommended repairs to the facility will involve drilling new anchor holes for the cable bridges and also enclosing the tower to increase stability. Both of these actions will have an adverse impact on the site.

5. It is my recommendation the rappelling site be moved elsewhere and the scaling of the bluff face be terminated. If necessary, a new rappelling tower can be erected in another location and the bridges and platform demolished. If there is a training requirement to rappel from helicopters, this could be met by use of the tower alone. The tranquility and natural beauty of the Medicine Bluffs would be restored and Fort Sill would be in compliance with referenced ARs and public laws.

Towana D. Spivey  
Director  
Fort Sill Museum

### **Avoidance of Training Impact on Medicine Bluffs National Historic Site**

#### **I. History:**

The Medicine Bluffs have been considered a religious or sacred location by the Indians since long before the arrival of the white man. The steep cliffs were frequently used for fasting and vision quests to heal the sick or resolve problems for the Kiowa, Comanche and Wichita tribes. Numerous legends among these people are related to this site.

With the coming of the first white soldiers in 1834 and later in 1852, this national geological feature was noted and played a key role in determining the location of Fort Sill in 1869. Frequent visits by soldiers to the Bluffs for recreational purposes continued throughout the 19th century and to the present time.

In 1974, the Medicine Bluffs were officially entered onto the National Register of Historic Places due to their historic significance to Fort Sill and the Nation as a whole. The religious significance to the Southern Plains tribes was also a factor in setting aside this area to be preserved.

The army first began using the Bluffs for rappelling activities on a limited basis sometime in the 1960's. This involved actual rappelling down the Bluff and use of one cable bridge across the creek at the base of the Bluff. Subsequent to the 1974 designation, the training area was expanded with erection of another cable bridge and a wooden tower on the north side of the creek.

While rappelling is not a training requirement for any unit on post, the practice is considered a morale and confidence builder for trainees, National Guard and Reserve units, and also for the R.O.T.C. groups.

## II. Problems:

Several regulatory requirements affect the utilization and management of this site, e.g., AR 420-40, USAFACES Reg 200-2, Public Law 96-95. Executive Order 11593 and the Native American Religious Freedom Act, to name a few. The additional components to the training area which were built after the historic designation in 1974 are definitely in violation of the above codes.

Early in 1987, the facilities were inspected by DEH and again early this year. Recommendations for renovation and upgrading of the tower, cable bridges and platform on the Bluff face were made in order to meet safety requirements and to further enhance utilization of the area. This included replacing planking and enclosing portions of the tower, as well as new cables and anchors on the bridges.

Deterioration of the Bluff face has been evident for some time due to the continued heavy use. This scarring is noticeable from a good distance away. Access to the creek and Bluff base are restricted much of the time.

AR 420-40 requires that military training and construction should avoid or minimize adverse impacts on historic sites and alternatives developed to mitigate known or potential effects.

## III. Objectives:

To meet these requirements it is necessary to cease further development of the area first of all. The facilities should be rendered safe for present use without making additional modifications or in any way expanding the operation. Opportunities to reduce the utilization of the area should be taken advantage of to further minimize damage.

The ultimate answer of course, is to develop an alternate location to satisfy this recreational need. It is suggested that a new tower be erected elsewhere on post to teach the basics of rappelling. Since ATC is one of the primary users of this activity, perhaps that area would be appropriate.

There is no other bluff equivalent to Medicine Bluffs in this area, so an exact substitution would not be possible. There are steep bluffs approved for rappelling located on the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge which would provide a thrilling experience on a limited basis. Obviously, a phased-down rappelling activity would result from any changes to the present program.

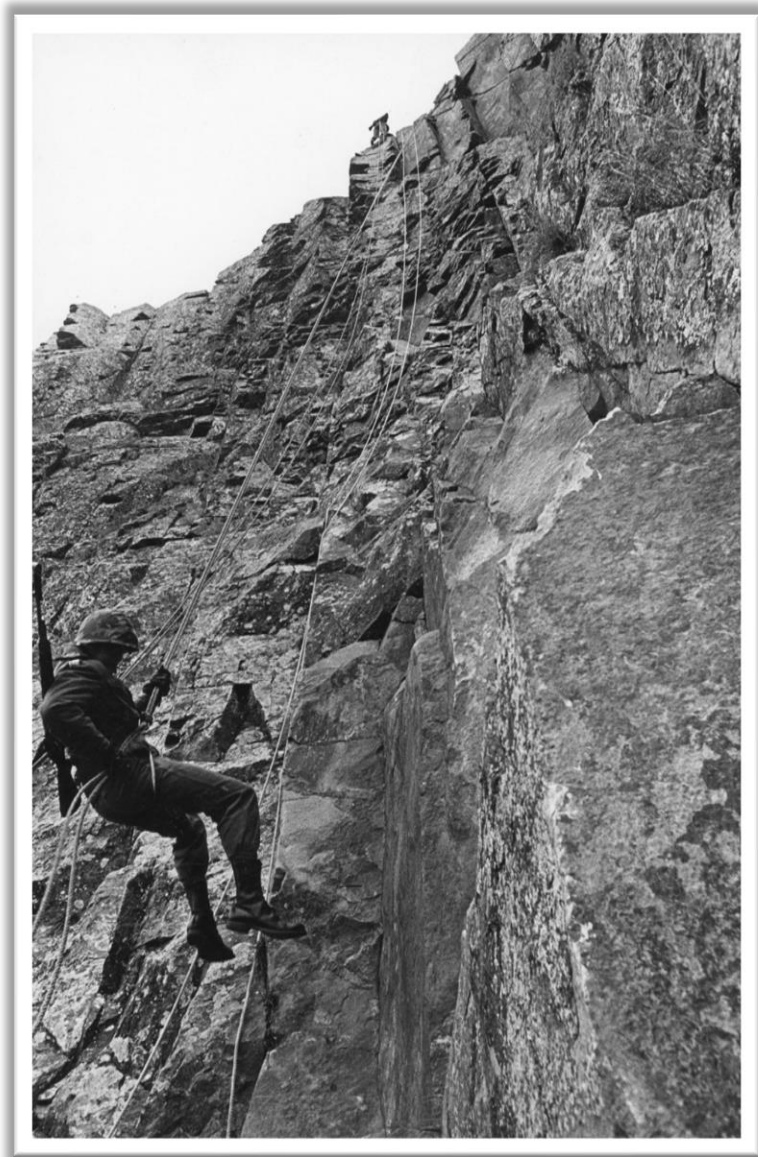
A proposed schedule for this change is listed below:

- a. Make necessary repairs to insure safety and begin slowdown of troop utilization - (April 1988).
- b. Eliminate extra cable bridge across creek - (Dec. 1988).
- c. Locate alternate training site and program into Post Masterplan - (Feb. 1989).
- d. Construct new tower at alternate site and resume activities - Oct. 1993).
- e. Eliminate old tower and remaining bridge - (March 1994).

#### IV. Summary:

In order to protect and preserve this valuable natural and historic site for posterity, an alternative to the present rappelling' activities must be developed. Realizing both funding and scheduling changes are involved, a suggested timetable is presented herein. Serious consideration of this problem should result in a satisfactory solution for the betterment of all.

Towana D. Spivey  
Director  
Fort Sill Museum



## FO's LAMENT

On top of old Arbuckle  
Crouched down in the ground  
I was hoping and praying  
To see my first round.  
When I got "On the way"  
I thought, "This is it!"  
I sprang from my foxhole  
To see the round hit.  
I searched the whole landscape  
And I felt mighty low  
When no burst appeared  
On the ridge down below.  
I dropped it eight hundred  
And crouched there in hopes  
That the next one would land  
On the visible slopes.  
Some three rounds later  
I was in quite a plight  
For I had not seen  
A single round light.

As my time was excessive  
I asked for white smoke  
And over the air waves  
I heard the "three" choke.  
When the smoke landed  
It required a big change  
I gave left eight hundred  
And repeated the range.  
I added four hundred  
And with my heart in my neck  
I said a small prayer  
And gave "Fire for effect."  
Well, my luck was all sour  
And I felt mighty sad  
For the range was way over  
And deflection was bad.  
Now you know why I'm feeling  
So sad and so blue,  
On top of old Arbuckle  
Where I fired my big "U."

**ODE TO MY TACTICAL OFFICER (*My Counselor and FriendD*)**

You say my brass is tarnished  
My tent pegs are not vanished  
I've got another demerit  
I guess I'll have to bear it  
NO EXCUSE SIR

You call me cowboy 'cause I bob  
But to myself I softly sob  
"I ain't neither bouncin sir"  
But to you I correctly purr  
NO EXCUSE SIR

My mess kit is deplorable  
To say nothing of my floorable  
My shirt is always out  
But to you i gladly shout  
NO EXCUSE SIR

To each formation I race  
To stand in a rigid brace  
But you say I'm not at attention  
Tis then to you I mention  
NO EXCUSE SIR

You tell me my pants ain't fittin  
You outline the ways of quittin  
Then you say pickup you dress  
I just look at you and confess  
NO EXCUSE SIR

I've got dirt on my rear sight  
I can't even dress it right  
My belt is dirty thru and thru  
So I say to you, to you  
NO EXCUSE SIR

You say my books aren't even  
Ney I'm thinkin of leavin  
What - my locker's out of line  
Well - as you've heard many a time  
NO EXCUSE SIR

You say my shoes need a shine  
My field display is out of line  
I go from bad to worse each day  
Still to you I always say  
NO EXCUSE SIR

If some day I get a bar  
On that day away off far  
I'll turn to you with gladsome glee  
And have you say to me, to me  
NO EXCUSE SIR

### **ODE TO OCS**

In retrospect I'm thinking of the things I've left behind  
And I need to put on paper what's going through my mind

We all live our lives in some degree of stress  
A big event in mine was enduring OCS

I've cleaned a lot of weapons packed in cosmoline,  
I've learned my general orders and I've kept my webbing clean.

I've learned the use and meaning of recesses, grooves and cams.  
I've lost a lot of sleep cramming for exams.

I've wiped a million beads of sweat waiting for the board,  
I've closed my eyes and bowed my head and asked assistance of the Lord.

When final Taps has sounded and I've laid aside life's cares,  
I'll do my last parade upon those shiny golden stairs.

The angels all will welcome me and harps will start to play,  
I'll draw a million canteen checks and spend them all that day.

The Great commanding General will smile on me and yell,  
Take a front seat, Candidate, you've done your stretch in Hell

By Glenn H. Phillips

### **COLD BLACK HUTMENTS**

A builder's nightmare ten by ten  
Said to house six full sized men,  
These are hutments all in a row  
Warm at even ten below (?)  
Center spot a range so square  
By six cots flanked to please the fair.  
Hangers four adorn the sides  
Overcoat, raincoat and all it hides.  
Towels so clean (?) out in open sight  
Books all sized from left to right  
Or vice versa if one or six.  
To keep it clean (HO) does tricks.  
Beds are neat, edges neatly tucked  
Or someone gets his feathers plucked.  
Floors are spotless (?) with broom and can  
At the back with the helpful pan.  
These, my boys, are your present homes  
That may inspire such foolish poems.

by Captain Joseph R. Kinzie, OCC 7-42

## **Some background perspective on the “Cold Black Hutments” at Fort Sill**

### **From a Fort Sill Field Artillery OCS candidate in 1943:**

That reminds me to tell you about our huts. They make a two-room apartment look like a Wall Street financier's country estate. Six men live together in a two-by-four tarpaper contraption which would cramp the style of a fully developed St. Bernard dog. The beds fit in place to the 69th of an inch. If the beds aren't just right the doors won't close and if the doors don't close, the shanty will blow over in a normal Oklahoma wind.

The tar paper on some of them is peeling off and they do little as protection against the elements except strain out the big chunks in a dust storm and break up the streams when it rains. If you put one of them up in a town and let six men live in it, every social worker and health officer in the place would be down to rout you out. Here they line 'em up, nineteen in a row, call it a hutment, and stick you in it for thirteen weeks.

Keeping the huts in shape for the tac officer's daily visits is a problem, though. All the aforementioned fugitives from Pinkerton, Inc., have housemaid's knee from looking under bunks for dirt, broom straws, and miscellaneous items which they term "foreign material under bunk" on the gig list. Other frequent causes for cuts are "literature beneath hood" (letters shoved under the blanket or your pillow), shoelaces not pressed, and failure to brace.



*There were 1,500 hutments in the OCS area by December 1946.*



## **Other Army OCS Programs that commissioned “Artillerymen”**

### ***AAA OCS - Camp Davis, North Carolina (1941-1944)***

AAA OCS graduated a total of 25,191 (25,109 by some accounts) out of 33,195 candidates. There were 100 classes. The first AAA OCS class had started at Fort Monroe and finished up at Camp Davis. The next 99 classes were at Camp Davis. Class # 1 started on July 7, 1941 and graduated on October 3, 1941. Class #100 started on February 22, 1944 and graduated on June 15, 1944.

The course was originally 12 weeks, was later lengthened to 13 weeks and was the first OCS in the Army to be extended to 17 weeks in March 1943. The candidates were trained specifically in Guns, Searchlights or Automatic weapons.

AAA OCS graduated as many as 1,800 per month at its peak and by the spring of 1944 a huge surplus of AAA officers existed. The weekly graduation numbers dropped to between 30 and 40 and AAA officers voluntarily transferred to other branches. By March 1944 5,668 AAA officers had transferred to other branches.

### ***SEACOAST ARTLLERY OCS - Fort Monroe, Virginia (1942-1944)***

The Seacoast Artillery OCS had a brief trial run at Camp Davis due to the overtaxed facilities at Fort Monroe. That was scrapped when the Seacoast and Antiaircraft reorganization took place in 1942 and it was moved back to Fort Monroe. The Seacoast Artillery Department of the Officer Candidate School was then established at Fort Monroe and would be known as the Seacoast Artillery OCS. The Seacoast Artillery OCS at Fort Monroe commissioned 1,964 lieutenants in 31 classes. Class # 1 started on April 20, 1942 and Class #31 graduated on March 17, 1944.

During World War II, Two Coast Artillery Officer Candidate Schools were established on foreign soil. The first was in England and the second was in Australia. Little information is available concerning the number of graduates from either of these schools.

**All graduates of the Seacoast Artillery OCS at Fort Monroe and the AAA OCS at Camp Davis were commissioned in the Coast Artillery Branch.**

### ***Army Officer Candidate School (AOCS) - Fort Benning, Georgia (1946-1947)***

The Army Officer Candidate School (AOCS) was established at Fort Benning, in August 1946. The course was twenty-four weeks long. The AOCS commissioned graduates in all branches. The first class began on September 9, 1946 and commissioned officers in fifteen branches, including ten in the Field Artillery. After commissioning, the graduates attended the officer basic course of their branch. The AOCS course ran concurrently with the Infantry OCS course at Fort Benning until the final OCS class graduated there on December 6, 1946.

Twelve AOCS classes were scheduled and two were cancelled. Only 915 of 1,899 enrolled in the course graduated, a failure rate of more than 51 %. Class # 12 graduated 52 of 109 candidates on November 1, 1947, and the school was closed.

### **Army Officer Candidate (AOC) Course - Fort Riley, Kansas (1947-1953)**

The Army Officer Candidate Course was established at Fort Riley as part of the Army Ground General School (later renamed the Army General School), which had been relocated from Fort Benning in November 1946. The Ground General School replaced the Cavalry School which was closed on October 31, 1946.

The first AOC class began on June 30, 1947. Graduates attended the officer basic course of their branch after being commissioned. Only 542 officers were commissioned through the program in 1950, the lowest annual production of officers in Army OCS. When the school closed in 1953, more than 5,000 candidates had been commissioned. The failure rate for the first nine classes was more than 48 %.

### **AAA OCS - Fort Bliss, Texas (1951-1953)**

The Anti-Aircraft Artillery Officer Candidate School opened at Fort Bliss, Texas on October 14, 1951 as part of the Anti-Aircraft and Guided Missile Branch of the Artillery School. The first class of candidates graduated on May 2, 1952. There were a total of 14 classes to graduate. Before closing on July 17, 1953, the AAA Officers Candidate School program at Fort Bliss graduated approximately 1,175 candidates. Most Graduates were commissioned in the Artillery Arm. After the school closed the plans were to earmark 40% of all candidates entering Artillery OCS at Fort Sill for Anti-aircraft Artillery Assignments prior to beginning Artillery OCS. After graduation, they would be sent to Fort Bliss for an eight week course doctrinating them into Anti-Aircraft techniques.



## **Some recollections of OCS Programs other than Artillery**

### **Excerpts from the History of OCS at Fort Knox**

#### ***The OCS at Fort Knox website (<http://www.ocsatfortknox.com>)***

The first classes of Officer Candidate School at Fort Knox graduated in August 1941. The school continued to produce new officers until it was closed after the last classes which entered in November 1944, graduated. The graduates had undergone the basic phase, plus additional training totaling 17 weeks to emerge as second lieutenants. Officially, OCS at Fort Knox produced 11,349 officers. While most of these served in armored units, many led anti-tank units and other units necessary to support the mobile force the United States produced, probably the most mobile force of the war.

The need for an increasing number of mobile troops for use both in Korea and on the plains of Europe caused the Army to open OCS at Fort Knox a second time on September 28, 1951.

As Captain Thomas J. Canavan observed in his essay "Let's Keep Armor OCS" (paper, United States Army Armor School, 1967): The program was to consist of 11 classes with 100 candidates per class. This time, however, they were to receive 22 weeks of training - a five week increase over World War II O.C.S. (sic) In addition, a class was to graduate every other week. At first, these goals were not reached. The first three classes had more than 100 candidates and started about one month apart. It was not until the fourth class that the Officer Candidate School was able to proceed as planned. The program was retained at Fort Knox until 12 May 1953, during which time 1,256 lieutenants received commissions.

On August 26, 1965, the Department of the Army ordered the Armor School at Fort Knox to activate an Officer Candidate School. The OCS there was one of the first to get underway. Because the Armor School was among the first to establish an OCS, the Army stipulated that during its first fiscal year of operation from 1 October 1965, through 30 June 1966, the school was to train some students only for the thirteen week branch immaterial curriculum common to all Officer Candidate Schools while retaining others for an additional ten weeks of training as Armor officers.

Those sent elsewhere finished their training in Transportation, Ordnance, or Quartermaster branch schools. After July 1, 1966, the Officer Candidate School at Fort Knox prepared only Armor officers through a full 23 week long course. The last OCS class at Fort Knox graduated on February 23, 1968. For the period December 1965 through February 1968, Fort Knox OCS trained and commissioned 3,354 second lieutenants in Armor, 21 in the Transportation Corps, ten in the Ordnance Branch and seven in the Quartermaster Corps. In addition, 929 individuals completed thirteen weeks of Fort Knox OCS Phase I training before being sent to Ordnance, Quartermaster, or Transportation branch school. 4,321 men completed Officer Candidate School in the Officer Candidate Brigade of the United States Army Armor School at Fort Knox, Kentucky and then served their Nation during the Vietnam Era. 115 graduates as a result of service in Vietnam were killed in action, died of wounds, or died from service related injuries.

## **“From Enlisted Soldier to Engineer Second Lieutenant”**

### ***Army Engineer, September-October 2006 (Page 44-49)***

During World War II, Engineer Officer Candidate School (OCS) provided the Corps of Engineers with approximately 24,000 commissioned officers. Reopened during the Korean War, Engineer OCS produced over 2300 commissioned officers, whose record throughout the war fully demonstrated the value of the OCS system. On September 15, 1965, the school was reactivated at Fort Belvoir, Virginia to help support the manpower needs associated with the initial stages of the Vietnam War. Before its inactivation in 1971, Engineer OCS produced over 10,000 officers (not all of them branched Engineer) and each again proved the worth of the OCS program to the Army.

In 1966, the U.S. Army Engineer Officer Candidate Regiment (USAEOCR) at Fort Belvoir, Virginia was composed of four training battalions, each with multiple training companies, sometimes having two separate OCS classes undergoing training at the same time. There were around one hundred or so candidates in each class. Needless to say, this was a busy time for the cadre assigned to the OCS Regiment. USAEOCR was commanded by a Colonel and he had a typical support staff at his level to manage administration, operations and supply for the regiment. Each battalion commander had a much smaller but adequate staff. It was at company level, however, where all the action was.

A USAEOCR company commander had the support of an Executive Officer, First Sergeant, Training/Operations NCO, Supply Sergeant, Mess Sergeant, and usual company administrative and supply personnel. The unit utilized World War II era wooden barracks, lined up starting with the headquarters (Orderly Room), and followed by a single line of open-bay, two story barracks buildings, with the company mess hall at the end of the line. The open area adjacent to this line of buildings was referred to as the “company street.” During the twenty-three week Engineer OCS program, candidates were given very intensive training in leadership, along with tactical and engineering subjects designed to equip them to cope with, and overcome challenges many were soon to face...on the battlefields of Vietnam. Each class was continually observed by a Senior and Junior Tactical Officer (TAC) who were usually recent OCS graduates or young officers just returning from Vietnam combat. Candidates struggled to develop confidence and teamwork with class peers, in order to overcome obstacles placed in front of them by their tactical officers. In the classroom, they had to adapt to the mental challenges of academic instruction provided to them during a long training day. The simple task of staying awake during class was a daunting challenge for many.

All were given ample opportunity to demonstrate leadership abilities, physical fitness, mental dexterity, and personal courage. They were also required to maintain the highest standard of personal and barracks appearance, and had to adhere to rigid requirements pertaining to military courtesy, customs of the service, conduct and discipline. As a result of such training, any graduate of Engineer OCS was a highly sought after asset by engineer troop units, since candidates began their military service as an enlisted man, and some had even attained NCO rank prior to being accepted into the OCS program. That experience, coupled with the rigorous training program at Fort Belvoir, usually combined to create a top-notch Platoon Leader.

The first day of Officer Candidate School is probably firmly cemented in the memories of all graduates. Initial arrival and formation on the company street near the Orderly Room,

including the most important introduction to company Tactical Officers, was a period of transition from being an enlisted man used to much less rigid training and daily operational standards, to a person referred to as a SMEAC (pronounced “smack”). The acronym was based on the five-paragraph field order...Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration & Logistics, and Command & Signal...something each candidate would rely upon daily for the next twenty-three weeks. The term was used to describe someone who had yet to master any of the rudimentary requirements necessary to meet even the basic standards of OCS. In short, it was not a compliment to be referred to as a SMEAC.

A typical class was initially composed of a mix of enlisted soldiers holding great promise for what they were about to undergo. However, after arrival in the training company, many saw a portion of that promise begin to fade. “Suck that chin in, SMEAC!” “Mister, do you know you’re standing on my company street and getting it dirty? Drop and give me twenty!” Confusion, fear, anxiety, and regret were rampant feelings, but soon the first formation was over, and in-processing continued. Buzz haircuts (usually taking less than a minute) were administered at an OCS barber shop, OCS related gear such as collar brass and black helmet liners were issued, personnel records were checked, and barracks bunk assignments were made.

Time was a most sought after commodity...and it seemed to candidates as if there was never enough. Barracks and personal appearance inspections were held at least once a day, with accompanying demands by TACs to “stand erect,” “pull your chin in” “keep your eyes straight ahead,” or “wipe that smile off your face, Mister.” When deficiencies were noted during such inspections, by incorrect placement of personal items in a footlocker for example, it was a usual practice to dump all items on the floor near the unfortunate candidate involved, so as to “make a point.” The same applied to items hung in wall lockers.

Unfortunately, progressively more disruptive “creativity” by TACs to devise ways to make their point required Company and Battalion Commanders to insert themselves so as to maintain the dignity of the program. Those TACs who went too far were soon replaced. Still, the definition in those days of what “too far” meant was not as concise as it should have been, so there were some abuses of authority. (Author’s note: Every OCS graduate can describe interesting “events” they went through while trying to stay out of harm’s way from the wrath of their Tactical Officers. Some stories are humorous, others less so.)

The first eight weeks of OCS were the hardest. Besides the stresses associated with learning to adapt to unfamiliar standards, academics played a major role in daily lives of all. After the first week of training where physical and mental fitness were primary focus areas, weeks two through eight were filled with long hours of map reading and land navigation training, principles of basic field fortifications, and rigging. Hands-on instruction was paramount. Additionally, classroom instruction was presented in areas involving other branches of the Army such as Infantry, Armor, Signal, Ordnance and Artillery. There was a need to study at night, and time was especially set aside to do so before “lights out” at a precise time. However, some continued to study with flashlights under wool blankets.

Going to Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia’s field training area, 50 miles south of Fort Belvoir during the ninth week of training was a “water mark” for candidates, because it afforded them

an opportunity to get away from the routine of being in USAEOCR at Fort Belvoir. It was also the first time they would live as an Infantry soldier in an OCS field training environment. During that week, candidates were instructed in weapons: including firing the M-14 rifle, 3.5 inch rocket launcher, M-60 machine gun, M-79 grenade launcher and .45 caliber pistol. Infantry tactics played a key role with a focus on squad and platoon operations.

The week culminated with an all-night “escape and evasion” exercise designed to test the candidate’s ability to move undetected and elude enemy aggressors (who were liberally and strategically placed throughout the exercise area so as to capture as many candidates as possible). If captured, one had to endure the rigors of a highly realistic POW camp, and that threat alone drove many to do all they could to successfully evade their potential captors. After returning from Fort A.P. Hill, candidates spent weeks ten and eleven in preparation for a series of academic examinations and being introduced to Army communications equipment. This culminated in week eleven with conduct of a field training exercise in communications, to include setting up both a brigade and battalion radio net, while operating under combat conditions.

Having successfully completed eleven weeks of training brought significant recognition to each candidate standing in formation as part of a much more proficient and tighter knit group from what had existed during prior weeks of training. Being presented with a white plastic tab to mount behind their OCS collar insignia was clearly an item of pride, and it afforded the wearer with privileges of “rank” for the first time during OCS. Of course, with that rank came assignment of more responsibility to care for and lead others.

In celebration of their newly found status as Junior Officer Candidates, the class held an “Over-the-Hump” party at the OCS Club where for the first time they could relax in the company of their peers and cadre alike. At that time in the Army there were more “social” duties expected of an officer than there are today, so the event allowed all to sample what would lie ahead for them... assuming they completed the remainder of the course.

During the following weeks, candidates were immersed in subjects and completion of field projects most closely associated with the Corps of Engineers...demolitions, land mine warfare, bridging and construction in a theater of operations. This included learning to estimate materials for construction and actual erection of several types of military buildings. Also included was hands-on instruction with erection of military floating and fixed bridges of various configuration. Additionally, candidates were exposed to operation and maintenance of various items of engineer construction equipment which they would encounter later on in troop units to which they were to be assigned. And finally, while they were becoming more involved with “engineering” as a subject area, they were also required to demonstrate their leadership abilities by being placed in company leader positions on a rotating basis.

A top highlight of OCS was being presented with a red tab to replace the white plastic tab worn behind their OCS collar brass. As a Senior Officer Candidate, many were selected to serve in leadership positions at battalion and regimental level. Given that a weekly regimental parade was held during the twenty-three week course, these were the people who not only helped plan those events, but served as key leaders and staff during execution...proudly shouting out commands in front of a large audience from all over Fort

Belvoir. If you were selected by your cadre chain-of-command to be the Regimental or Battalion Commander during such a ceremony, you had definitely reached a pinnacle of success in OCS.

As time in the course neared an end, each class spent an entire week in the field on a specially planned combat simulated exercise designed to test just about everything learned up to that point. All command positions in the exercise were held by candidates, with company cadre standing by in the rear taking evaluation notes, and helping when needed. "Aggressors" provided realism to the exercise, as did the application of various pyrotechnics. Command, control and teamwork were key during the week, and for the first time candidates were practicing, on their own, the sort of leadership skills they would use as a Second Lieutenant in charge of a platoon in combat.

Graduation from OCS during week twenty-three was a great occasion for all. But, it was also another transition point, and a time when exceptionally close bonds of military service with classmates would be severed to a certain degree.

After having their new Second Lieutenant bars pinned on by friends or family at the Wallace Theater Graduation Ceremony, each new officer would depart in various directions of service throughout the Corps of Engineers. Many soon found themselves in Vietnam, and unfortunately some were killed or injured in action there. Others were initially assigned elsewhere. However, regardless of where they went, each took with them experiences and a strong sense of accomplishment of having successfully completed a very rigorous training program.

Some Engineer OCS graduates were more successful than others. Those who attained the rank of Colonel or higher, or who were awarded the Silver Star or higher, are recognized in the Engineer OCS Hall of Fame, administered with the Army Engineer School. Special plaques with Hall of Fame member names inscribed are displayed in the school's Lincoln Hall at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

Additionally, historical documents and memorabilia pertaining to Engineer OCS are important to sustaining the history and traditions thereof. To assist that effort, The Engineer OCS Association (TEOCSA) was organized as a non-profit entity. Members of the association meet at designated locations during the year to discuss various programs which ultimately may help the Engineer School collect and preserve Engineer OCS historical materials for their archives. Additionally, the association serves as a conduit through which to bring together Engineer OCS alumni, including graduates, faculty, and training unit cadre.

Being commissioned through an Army OCS program, no matter the branch specialty or location of training, signifies that the graduate has successfully completed numerous exceptionally rigorous and challenging tasks which allowed them to pin on the Gold Bars of a Second Lieutenant. In comparison to other sources of commissioning, OCS has the same essential requirements. However, for those graduates who withstood the many training adversities deliberately and carefully placed before them over a twenty-three week period in USAEOCR, there is a big difference.

## **Officer Candidate Course Today – Fort Benning (OCS SOP, 1 SEP 10)**

Federal OCS is a 12 week leadership course, during which the cadre develop and evaluate the performance and potential of the Candidates for commissioning as Second Lieutenants.

Program of Instruction (POI): The OCS POI consists of two phases: Basic Phase and Senior Phase.

**Basic Phase.** OCs are immersed into a 24/7 training environment with topics covering individual skills, doctrine, and theory sufficiently enabling OCs to study and learn their profession and the craft of officership. Candidates are shown the OCS standards by the cadre and then expected to meet them. As Candidates progress through the course, they are given increasing responsibility and work to integrate individual skills into collective tasks and missions.

**Senior Phase.** In this phase, Candidates demonstrate leadership, professionalism, and officership in field, garrison and social environments. They receive advanced leadership studies and scenarios with an emphasis on officership and self-development. Candidates will participate in senior leader seminars and social events during this phase. The senior phase is the final refining of the Candidate done by the cadre to ultimately prepare the Candidate for the officer environment.

**Immersion Training.** From the day a Candidate arrives until the Senior Officer Candidate Review (SOOCR) he/she will be immersed into a 24/7 training environment with topics covering individual skills, doctrine, and theory sufficiently enabling OCs to study and learn their profession and the craft of officership. During this time, all Basic Officer Candidates are restricted to the Battalion Footprint. Use of POVs is not authorized (with some exceptions for things such as religious services, student council leadership issues, community service projects - exceptions take OCS Commandant approval). Civilian Clothes are not authorized. Caffeine and snack machine privileges are initially off limits, but can be earned by each Platoon. There will be training on the weekends, to include PT. All haircuts will take place at the Airborne Shoppette, squads will march as a unit to the barber shop, they are not authorized to utilize any other portion of the shoppette, and will immediately return to the Battalion area upon completion of haircuts.

**Note: OCS is one of the pre-commissioning phase sources known as BOLC A. The second phase is the branch specific phase known as Basic Officer Leadership Course B (BOLC B).**



**Field Artillery BOLC B at Fort Sill is eighteen and a half weeks long. In general, each week is organized as follows:**

**Week 1: In processing, Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), Combatives**

**Week 2: Convoy Operations, Land Navigation, Combatives**

**Week 3: Basic Rifle Marksmanship (BRM) Range Week/Qualification**

**Weeks 4-18: Field Artillery Core Competency Training**

**Retraining and Re-test for Academics, Land Navigation, and Rifle Marksmanship may be conducted on Saturdays.**

**Welcome Message to BOLC B students:**

Field Artillery BOLC B mission is two-fold. First, to train, educate, and (most importantly) inculcate you into our officer corps and reinforce your knowledge of the Army values to help you better understand the Army officer culture. Secondly, we have a responsibility to the Army to make you proficient in Field Artillery core competencies so you can be an integrator of lethal and non-lethal fires to the operational force. When you graduate, you will be competent, confident and adaptive Field Artillerymen ready to lead Soldiers in your next unit of assignment.

Your pre-commissioning BOLC A experience has exposed you to basic Soldier skills. At the Field Artillery BOLC B, we will reinforce some of those skills that we consider most critical in the first three weeks working towards building the Warrior Ethos (i.e., combatives, marksmanship, land navigation and physical fitness). Most importantly, we will transition you from a cadet or candidate into an Artilleryman and a Leader. No longer merely in the receive mode as a student--you, lieutenants, will take an active role in your learning experience. At times, you will lead and instruct your classmates. Your developmental experience at Fort Sill will be augmented with officers and non-commissioned officers excited to be a part of your training and who will coach, teach, and mentor you throughout this training. Upon completion of the first three weeks of basic skills training, you will transition into 15 weeks of Field Artillery core competency training. This training and education will focus on making you proficient fire direction and fire support officers.

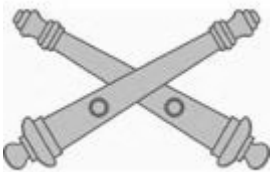
You will leave BOLC B with a stronger warrior ethos, job proficiency, and mentally and physically prepared to fight and win our nation's wars. Again, congratulations. We look forward to your arrival.

**Artillery - Field Artillery - Coast Artillery - Antiaircraft Artillery  
Air Defense Artillery**

**The present day Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery Branches  
trace their roots back to the Revolutionary War**

Regular Army artillery can trace its history back to the Revolutionary War. Known as the Artillery Corps, it was authorized in 1834 to display crossed cannons as its branch insignia. By 1898 there were seven regiments of artillery. Except in mission there was no distinction by designation between artillery which supported ground troops and that which defended America's ports and coastlines.

On 13 February 1901 the Artillery Corps was split into two components, the Coast Artillery and the Field Artillery, in recognition of the divergence in the two missions. Fourteen separate batteries of Field Artillery and eighty-two companies of Coast Artillery were organized and activated.

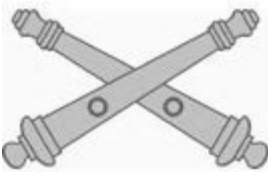


**Field Artillery Component  
Artillery Corps  
1901-1907**



**Coast Artillery Component  
Artillery Corps  
1901-1907**

On 25 January 1907 the Artillery Corps designation was dropped and Coast Artillery and the Field Artillery became separate branches of the U.S. Army.



**Field Artillery Branch  
1907-1950**



**Coast Artillery Branch  
1907-1950**

By September 1939 the larger proportion of Coast Artillery available was antiaircraft in nature, and as the threat of enemy invasion faded, coast artillery personnel and assets were increasingly transformed into Antiaircraft Artillery units. By the end of the war the seacoast defense role and, consequently, Coast Artillery had practically disappeared, and Antiaircraft Artillery prevailed. The World War II mission of Antiaircraft Artillery was the air defense of field forces and ground installations against all forms of enemy air attack by day or night.

Fort Monroe was the home of the Coast Artillery Corps when World War II began.

The Coast Artillery Board had existed since 1907 at Fort Monroe and was charged with review and development of harbor defense weapons, which included mine planters, underwater detection devices, submarine mines and mine-control devices, and, prior to March 1942, anti-aircraft weapons.

Anti-aircraft artillery equipment was initially tested and developed at the Coast Artillery Board at Fort Monroe. On 9 March 1942, a separate Anti-aircraft Artillery Board was established at Fort Monroe and moved to Camp Davis on 24 May 1942. Finally, on 28 August 1944, the board moved to Fort Bliss to join what became the center of army anti-aircraft activities.

When the rapid expansion of the Coast Artillery OCS program was ordered, it was obvious that the facilities at Fort Monroe would fall hopelessly short of meeting the needs and the entire program moved to the newly constructed Camp Davis, North Carolina in 1941. From spring of 1941 until the fall of 1944 Camp Davis was the focal point of AAA training and weapons and material development within the US Army.

The Anti-aircraft Artillery was under the umbrella of the Coast Artillery Corps when World War II began. In March 1942 the Anti-aircraft Artillery formally separated from the Seacoast Artillery and the Anti-aircraft Artillery (AAA) Command was established. Thereafter, all seacoast instruction was assigned to Fort Monroe and all anti-aircraft artillery instruction was at Camp Davis.

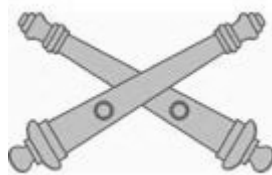
At that point in time, the Officer Candidate School at Camp Davis became part of the newly established Anti-aircraft Artillery School and would be known as the AAA (Anti-aircraft Artillery) OCS.



**Coast Artillery**

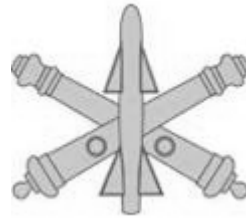
In October 1944 the AAA School moved to Fort Bliss, where the headquarters of the Anti-aircraft school was already located.

The Army Reorganization Act of 1950 consolidated the Coast Artillery and Field Artillery branches into the Artillery Arm with plain crossed cannons as the Arm's insignia.



**Artillery Arm  
1950-1957**

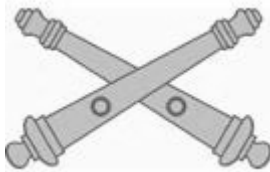
As part of the 1957 reorganization, the Artillery Arm was re-designated as the Artillery Branch. The new branch insignia was crossed cannons surmounted with a missile.



**Artillery Branch  
1957-1968**

By 1968 the Army recognized that with evolving technologies the divergence of missions was too great to maintain one branch and the Air Defense Artillery Branch was established.

Once again the plain crossed cannons became the Field Artillery branch insignia while the crossed cannons with the surmounted missile was adopted as the branch insignia of the Air Defense Artillery.



**Field Artillery Branch  
1968 to Present**



**Air Defense Artillery Branch  
1968 to Present**

The Air Defense Artillery School moved from Fort Bliss to Fort Sill during June 2009. Fort Sill is now home to the Field Artillery School and the Air Defense Artillery School. Fort Sill has been designated as the Fires Center of Excellence (FCoE) and Fort Sill.

## **The Legend of Saint Barbara**

According to legend, Saint Barbara was the extremely beautiful daughter of a wealthy heathen named Dioscorus, who lived near Nicomedia in Asia Minor. Because of her singular beauty and fearful that she be demanded in marriage and taken away from him, he jealously shut her up in a tower to protect her from the outside world.

Shortly before embarking on a journey, he commissioned a sumptuous bathhouse to be built for her, approving the design before he departed. Barbara had heard of the teachings of Christ, and while her father was gone spent much time in contemplation. From the windows of her tower she looked out upon the surrounding countryside and marveled at the growing things; the trees, the animals and the people. She decided that all these must be part of a master plan, and that the idols of wood and stone worshipped by her parents must be condemned as false. Gradually she came to accept the Christian faith.

As her belief became firm, she directed that the builders redesign the bathhouse her father had planned, adding another window so that the three windows might symbolize the Holy Trinity.

When her father returned, he was enraged at the changes and infuriated when Barbara acknowledged that she was a Christian. He dragged her before the prefect of the province, who decreed that she be tortured and put to death by beheading. Dioscorus himself carried out the death sentence. On his way home he was struck by lightning and his body consumed.

Saint Barbara lived and died about the year 300 A.D. She was venerated as early as the seventh century. The legend of the lightning bolt which struck down her persecutor caused her to be regarded as the patron saint in time of danger from thunderstorms, fires and sudden death.

When gunpowder made its appearance in the Western world, Saint Barbara was invoked for aid against accidents resulting from explosions--since some of the earlier artillery pieces often blew up instead of firing their projectile, Saint Barbara became the patroness of the artillerymen.

Saint Barbara is usually represented standing by a tower with three windows, carrying the palm of a martyr in her hand. Often, too, she holds a chalice and a sacramental wafer and sometimes cannon are displayed near her. In the present calendars, the feast of Saint Barbara falls on December 4th and is traditionally recognized by a formal military dinner, often involving presentation of the Order of Saint Barbara.



*Saint Barbara*

## **Fiddler's Green**

We Redlegs are indeed a very privileged group. In addition to the protection of our Patron Saint during life, we can look forward to our own special heaven after the sounding of Taps. I refer, of course, to Fiddler's Green.

Down through the ages, all purveyors of the fire - members of the ancient profession of stonehurlers, catapulters, rocketeers and gunners, better known as Field Artillerymen have discussed this special place in the hereafter, where someday each of us will be privileged to roam. There are as many tales of the Green as there are old artillerymen. The stories are rich with the smell of gunpowder and campfires and flavored with a taste of artillery punch.

Imagine, if you will, a starry night in southwestern Oklahoma just after the Civil War. Nestled in the shadows of the Wichita Mountains is a battery of smoothbore cannon camped for the night. As the campfires dim and the flasks of rum and lemon empty, the conversation turns to life in the hereafter. A rugged, old chief of section is surprised to learn that all present have not heard of the special destiny of Redlegs. As the young cannoneers listen intently, he shares with them the legend of Fiddler's Green.

It is generally conceded, he explains, that the souls of the departed eventually end up in heaven or hell. Heaven lies about six miles down the dusty road to eternity, and Redlegs get there by turning left at the first crossroad. From this same junction, hell is about eight or nine miles straight ahead. The road's easy to identify: it's the one paved with good intentions. A little way down the road to hell, there is a sign pointing to a trail that runs off to the right of the main road. It reads: Fiddler's Green -Artillerymen Only.

When artillerymen die, their souls are assembled in the battery area and they're regrouped into gun sections. Then, they load their belongings on a caisson or limber, point their lead team down that long road to eternity and move out at a trot. Like most crusty old soldiers, they face the call to eternal damnation and pass by the turnoff to heaven. But unlike the others, artillerymen are met by a road guide at the next turnoff-the road to Fiddler's Green. The road to hell, which lies beyond, is crowded with engineers, infantrymen, cavalrymen and other soldiers, not to mention the droves of sailors and Marines (non-Field Artillery). But at this point, Field Artillerymen bid farewell to their old comrades of other branches and services and wheel their teams down the trail to the Green.

The Green nestles in a large valley spotted with trees and crossed with many cool streams. One can see countless tents and several large buildings in the center. Laughter can be heard from afar. At the entrance are several long picket lines for the teams. Artificers are on hand to service the pieces after the long march.

There is a representative of the Great Gunner to scan the rolls of the Orders of Saint Barbara and to attest to the fact that all who are seeking entrance are true Redlegs. Once certified, true artillerymen are met with open arms and immediately given a generous flask of that immortal nectar, artillery punch.

Fiddler's Green is a unique place. It is believed to be the only heaven claimed by a professional group as exclusively its own. (Even the Marines, who didn't choose Field Artillery, only claim to guard the streets of someone else's heaven.)

The Green is a gathering place of rugged professional soldiers. Their claim to fame is that they served their pieces well and selflessly while on earth. The souls of all departed Redlegs are camped here, gathered in comradeship. In the center of their countless tents and campfires is an old

canteen store where liquor is free. There are taverns and dance halls. Credit is good; no questions asked. There is always a glass, a friend and a song. At any hour of the day or night, one can hear old cannoneers singing The Caisson Song. Duty consists of full-time A&R. There isn't even a duty roster. Everything is strictly non-regulation. The chow is plentiful and good, and there is no waiting in line. The main pastimes are dancing, drinking and singing all day, drinking and singing all night. The Green flows with rum, whiskey and pleasures known only to a few on earth. The chiefs of artillery, old battery commanders, chiefs of firing batteries, section chiefs and gunners down through the last cannoneer, all are here. Many are even reunited with sweethearts of their youth.

Periodically, an artilleryman feels a compulsion to continue down the road to hell. He bids farewell to his comrades, repacks his gear, fills his canteen, makes provisions for his horse and departs for the main road, turning south toward hell. He was not forced to leave the Green but felt he must of his own accord. But don't despair! Not a single Redleg has ever made it all the way to hell. His canteen of artillery punch would be emptied long before he made it, and he'd return to the Green for a refill, never again to leave.

The legend of Fiddler's Green has been aptly summarized in a brief poem:

Halfway down the trail to hell,  
In a shady meadow green,  
Are the souls of many departed Redlegs  
Camped near a good old-time canteen.  
And this eternal resting place  
Is known as Fiddler's Green.

Though others must go down the trail  
To seek a warmer scene,  
No Redleg ever goes to hell,  
Ere he's emptied his canteen.  
And so, returns to drink again,  
With friends at Fiddler's Green.

The campfires die out, and the Redlegs doze off to sleep, knowing Fiddler's Green awaits them and all their cannon-cocking brethren in the life hereafter.

This, then, is the story of Fiddler's Green. There are many versions. This one is representative of them all, compiled from available written and verbal accounts. Of course, occasionally stories circulate to the effect that the Green is shared with sailors, cavalrymen, etc. Don't you believe it! Only the officers and soldiers of the noblest arm, the King of Battle, the Field Artillery could continue to enjoy the comradeship and spirit of their most honored and traditional branch after death. Just as in life, where not all are privileged to be Field Artillerymen, so too, after death may only these privileged few enjoy the rewards of a special heaven that is uniquely their own.

So fellow Redlegs, as we march-order and begin our road into the 238th year of service to our nation, we can proceed with confidence. Protected by Saint Barbara, we need fear nothing. And even if we should collide with the rocks of temptation or bog down in the quagmire of sin, remember: your comrades will be waiting by the campfire at Fiddler's Green.



Recollections and comments from the following individuals were compiled from direct submissions, Fort Sill Officer Candidate School historic documents, letters, emails and other published and unpublished works. Minor editing (mainly spelling and punctuation) has been done in some cases. Hopefully, this collection will give the reader a better understanding of what it was like to be an Artillery OCS Officer Candidate during the period 1941-1973. We also included experiences of candidates from other Army OCS programs.

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Charles E. Howard: 2-41  
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Kenneth Crawford: 5-42  
William R. Dempsey, Jr.: 8-42  
Shelby B. Foote: 8-42  
Laurence A. Scott: 9-42  
Gerald S. Rufer 10-42  
Isaia A. McCoy 12-42  
Robert F. Dunning: 20-42  
Wilfred O. Boettger: AAA OCS Camp Davis 21-42  
Earl E. Strayhorn: 22-42  
Frank E. Smith: 26-42  
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Charles M. Brown: 35-42  
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Hugh B. Mott: AAA OCS Camp Davis 1943  
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James E. Boman: 103-44  
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Frank A. Athanason: 162-45  
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John Rosenbloom: 5-51  
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Harlan N. Barton: 8-52  
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Don Melton: 8-52  
William J. O'Donnell: 10-52  
Talbot Barnard: 11-52  
Gene Richards: 11-52  
Paul I. Bonham: 12-52  
Richard B. Jones: 13-52  
Edward T. Mennona: 13-52  
Nathaniel S. Eek: 14-52  
David B. Isbell: 14-52  
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Tom deShazo 16-52  
Harold T. Quinn: 17-52  
Vernon D. Gallagher, Jr: 18-52  
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Gerald Nelson: 18-52  
Robert W. Sullivan: 18-52  
Charles A. Whiteford, Jr: 18-52  
Dwight Lorenz: 19-52  
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Thomas K. Hobby: 21-52  
Maurice J. Le Bleu: 21-52  
Arnold Carothers: 22-52  
Maurice Cohen: 26-52  
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Bert Kister: 26-52  
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Roy E. Peneacker: 28-52  
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John L. Patten: 61-55  
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Neil Springborn: 6-60  
Paul F. Titus: 4-61  
Cumberland A. Warden: 4-61  
Ronnie K. Livingston: R1-60  
John R. Coe, Jr: R1A-61  
Leo A. Lorenzo: R1A-61  
Donald W. Roberts: R1A-61  
James J. Dorsey: 1-62  
Harry B. Folk: 1-62  
Frank (Bart) Bates: 2-62  
Richard O. Frazee: 4-62  
Thornton D. Barnes: 5-62  
Daven N. Lewis: 5-62  
Charles A. Thompson: 5-62  
Joe B. Snodgrass: R1A-62  
Ivol C. Kenner, Jr: R2-62  
Wilhelm K. Bernhard, Jr: 1-63  
Thomas P. Easum, Jr: 1-63  
Charles R. Palmer: 1-63  
Arthur W. Reed: 1-63  
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Joseph Lausier: 2-65  
Charles A. Ray: 3-65  
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Manfred Groth: 8-65  
Al Harvard: 8-65 (and memory from Dee Harvard)  
Gary L. Meyer: 8-65  
O.H. Perry Cabot: 11-65  
Richard S. Cohen: 11-65  
Lucian Hill: 11-65  
Melvin Honig: 11-65  
Jack Sturtevant: 11-65  
Michael A. Watson: 11-65  
Walter B. Huffman 1-65R  
John Kalokerinos: OA-65R  
Wulf R. Lindenau 1-66  
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Bruce E. Johnson: 3-66  
Pat Mitchell: 3-66  
Norman L. King: 4-66  
John J. Gillespie, Jr: 5-66  
Richard D. Allen: 9-66  
Tobias Wolff: 9-66  
Guy Ferstl: 11-66  
John F. Moran: 11-66  
Edward W. Ross: 15-66  
Dick Kjellsen: 17-66  
Raymond F. Kreiner: 17-66  
Donald E. Zlotnik: 18-66  
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Roy V. Hogsed: 20-66  
John R. Burns: 21-66  
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James L. Lovrien: 23-66  
Jim Heldman: OCS Battery Commander 1966  
Jim Wambold 24-66  
Richard L. Marrocco: 24-66  
George L. Skypeck: 25-66  
Ronald D. Van Dyck: 26-66  
Tim Bodine : 126-66  
Douglas C. Clifton: 28-66

Jeff Dossett: 28-66  
Keith M. Renerfeldt: 28-66  
Ken Torreyson: 28-66  
Dennis Whitt: Artillery OCS/Infantry OCS  
William L. Ford: TAC Officer 1966  
George A. Bannon: 1-67  
Peter McLaughlin: 1-67  
John A. Walker, Jr: 1-67  
John M. Dennis: 3-67  
Charles G. White: 3-67  
Chuck Catania: 4-67  
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Brad Scheminske: 6-67  
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Robert Yowell: 1B-68  
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# ADDENDUM

OCS is a pattern. In the course of twenty-three weeks the image of an Artillery Officer is created. By the time a candidate graduates, he fits this design. As in the sculpting of a chunk of rough granite, the qualities and the proportions are evoked, smoothed and polished.

On 10 March of this year, class 509-68 was formed. The fledgling candidates were the stone, and OCS was to be the sculptor. As the artist studies his work, roughing in the outlines; so OCS first lays the groundwork. The first courses were basics. The new candidate learned the superstructure of the Artillery. He became familiar with the operation of the guns and their means of locomotion. He was introduced to the intricacies of Army life.

509 spent its time in these pursuits. The artist wielded his chisel and the flakes of stone fell away. OCS tested the strength, the flexibility, the enduring qualities of each candidate.

Soon the sculptor found his design growing clearer, its aspects became evident, its contours unveiled; 509 became candidates in earnest. They turned middle class. The secrets of gunnery were revealed to them. This is the core of the Artillery, this is the body of the design.

OCS creates officers. The last few weeks provide the texture, the polish. The retiring of this guidon represents the emergence of the finished sculpture. The results are different, each candidate is an individual, yet each is an Artilleryman.

The artist had to start with a monolithic block, consisting of those who might be leaders. Thus 509 began with 128 who might have been..... It graduates with 61 who are.....

OC M. Drew Mendelson

CLASS 509-68



**Coming Soon**

**More of the Artillery OCS Story**