

Editor's Note: We present here the second of a two-part history of the United States Military Academy Preparatory School. A brief sketch about the authors, instructors at the present Prep School at Ft Belvoir, was presented in Part I published in the March issue of ASSEMBLY. A summary of current USMA Prep School admission information was also included in Part I. Graduates are encouraged to make this information available to interested applicants. Comments on these articles are invited by Colonel A.P. DeLuca, USMA '53, the Commandant, USMAPS, Fort Belvoir, Virginia 22060.

A BRIEF

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edited by
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PHASE III: 1943-46

THE prelude to and final outbreak of World War II resulted in a heavy drain on qualified military instructors at the same time that the training of an increasing number of Cadet Candidates became a necessity. The old diversity and informality of the Corps Area schools had to give way to a more structured approach. During the third year of America's involvement in the war, the over-loaded Corps Area schools were discontinued, and the prep school system was consolidated under the Army Service Forces. Because of the war, many liberal arts colleges were at a loss to find enough students to fill the vacant classrooms. In response to requests from these institutions, the War Department experimented with a new system of farming the prep students out to civilian schools; thus a college atmosphere was substituted for the traditional barracks style of the earlier phases.

Three institutions were selected by the War Department to set up prep school programs using teachers paid by the colleges, not by the Army. Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, conducted a school commencing with the 1943-44 school year, while Cornell University presented the prep program through 1945; finally the training was consolidated at Amherst from 1943 until the end of the third phase in 1946.

In August 1943, enlisted men from all major commands and military theaters of war were selected to participate in the prep program. As Colonel Howard Sargent (USMA '47) recalls, his class at Amherst (1943-44) consisted of about 350 students. As in earlier phases, the class constantly practiced old USMA entrance exams throughout the 10-month course. Class schedules were built around the West Point curriculum: math, English, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, political science, military topography, engineering drawing, and surveying. Mr. M.J. Chamberlain (USMA '47) relates that the school consisted of "a year of academics which was roughly equivalent to a freshman course in a conventional liberal arts program." The prep school had obviously come a long way from the World War I bunkers.

The students were frozen in their enlisted grades. Through the series of examinations and interviews at various stages in the course, the classes were usually cut to about one-third of their original size. Those eliminated were sent back to their units, some arriving in Europe just prior to the Battle of the Bulge. Those who made it through the final stage of the course took the West Point competitive exam in late spring.

Lieutenant Colonel Junius J. Bleiman (USMA '47) notes that the students at

Amherst were housed in the Pratt and Morrow dormitories, which were much more inviting than the old barracks of Phase II. The two harried lieutenants who were in charge of the Cadet Candidates had their hands full, especially because Amherst lies conveniently between Smith College and Mt. Holyoke College—two girl's schools. Bleiman comments that, considering the location "it was a very unwarlike year." Lieutenant Colonel E.L. Garabrants (USMA '47) states that the "natives were friendly, young men were a scarce commodity and unlike recent years, soldiers were treated well, and treated often."

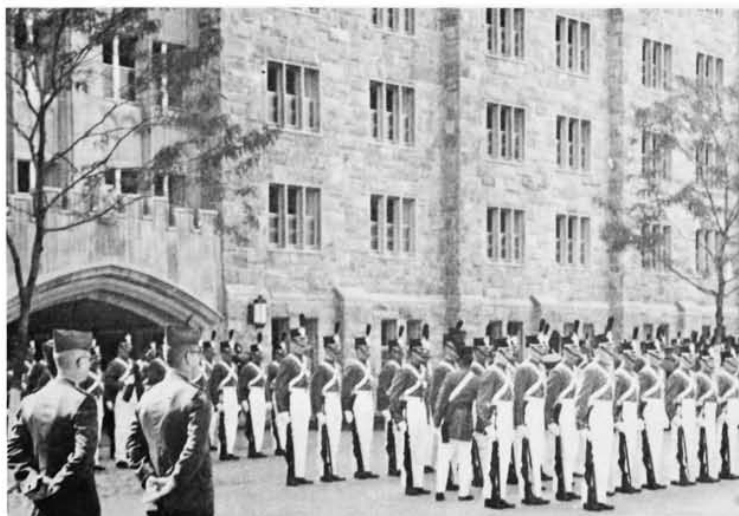
Along with the more serene atmosphere of college life, as compared to barracks life, a more formal academic spirit came to the prep program. A large portion of the distinguished Cadets at West Point came from the classes of Phase III, especially from Amherst. The civilian college experiment had proved very beneficial to the prep system. However, because of changing circumstances following World War II, the system was returned to direct Army control.

PHASE IV: Since 1946

With the swamping of universities caused by the return of the GI's in 1946, USMAPS was forced to leave Amherst. On the basis of recommendations from various studies conducted following the war, the school was again made an official

Cadet Candidates visit West Point for four days each year to learn first-hand about the life of a cadet.

Prep School today at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.



COL Frank G. Davis, USMA '19, first Commandant of the current version of USMA Prep School.



HISTORY OF USMAPS

part of the Army; for the first time the school was formally established as a single independent military organization. A return of greater discipline and more effective training methods were combined with the spirit of professional education which had developed during Phase III.

Stewart Army Air Field was chosen to host the school. Colonel Frank G. Davis (USMA '19) was named as first commandant. Since the site was adjacent to West Point and under the Superintendent's command there was, more than ever before, a close coordination between West Point and the prep school. General Maxwell D. Taylor (USMA '22), who was Superintendent of the Military Academy at the time, wrote in the 1947 yearbook that the new setup would give "the double advantage of a reinforced secondary education and considerable insight into the conditions of cadet life. . ."

With a well rounded academic, military and physical training program, increasingly larger proportions of the classes were successful in meeting the high standards of admission to the Military Academy.

General Maxwell Taylor often visited the Prep School in an unobtrusive manner. He observed many classes and chatted frequently with staff and students. He did not require the young Cadet Candidates to come to attention since he felt that this would make them more at ease in telling him their views.

Despite this close coordination, Phase IV brought many growth pains reminiscent of the earlier phases of the prep program. Because the USMAPS program was not very well advertised and since there was little Army-wide coordination for sending soldiers to the school, students kept arriving at irregular intervals through the first two or three months of the course; sometimes, by the time the full class was assembled, the staff could hardly handle the courses. Mr. Robert Barnum, former Head of the Mathematics Department, recalls that the work load at times seemed like "nine years in nine months" for both teachers and students. Special sequences of courses had to be prepared to accommodate the students who arrived after the initial courses began. The Academic Department created many syllabi which eventually were called simply "X," "Y," or "Z." For the very late arrivals a whirlwind course was set up and called "GW"—"Gee Whiz." Often students would remain at the school for more than the regular one year course since there was the option for the student to attempt to complete the full prep course three times. It was not uncommon for a class to begin in the fall with about 14 members and conclude in the spring with nearly 400 members. Mr. Barnum comments that the students in these classes ranged from fourth grade up to college sophomore levels and therefore had to be dealt with

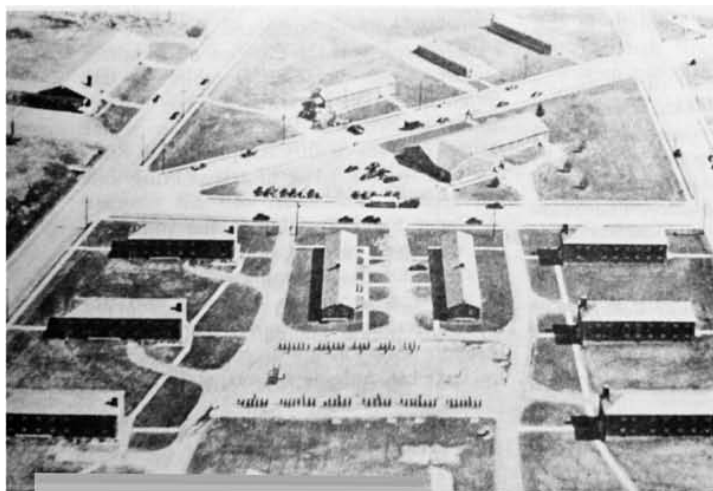
individually rather than as a class. Classrooms had to be partitioned and some classes were held in the damp basement of the old administrative buildings of the Air Field. Mr. Barnum remembers that the walls of these make-shift cubicles were so thin that often one class could not be held without disturbing another.

The highly developed athletic program had to be phased out because of the strain on the training program. The instructors were quartered in a decayed BOQ; they became overburdened with a complicated rotation schedule and the constant shifts in classes and subject matter. Things became so confused that the school was almost abandoned. When word got around that the school might close, many of the instructors left for other teaching positions. This put a double load on the remaining teachers who sometimes had to conduct two classes at the same time in adjacent rooms: while one class did paper work, the other class had a discussion or lecture period, and vice versa.

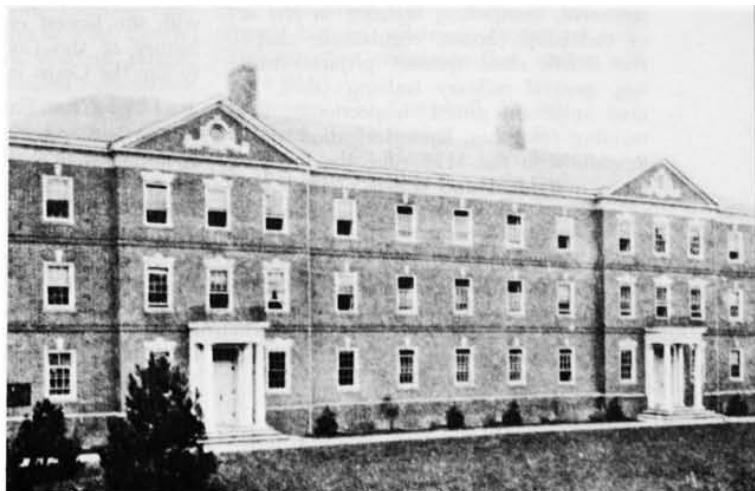
When Stewart Field was selected as a headquarters site under the Air Defense Command, the Department of the Army decided to move the school once again. The program was discontinued at Stewart Air Force Base on 1 July 1957, and was thereafter established as a Class II activity under the jurisdiction of the Chief of Engineers at Fort Belvoir. The school was

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Prep School area at Stewart Field, 1946.



Prep School building at Lafayette College, 1943.



contact with unfamiliar individuals of their kind, to display a great amount of *curiosity* and even *hostility*. This professor was then 66 years old and was evidently thinking of a possible kinship (and probable) of the human animal with lower forms; and this was prior to the publication of Darwin's descent of man, so that any such view was not at all prevalent.

Quite a good number of the cadets were rather displeased that one of our distinguished professors should have compared in the public press cadets to lower animal orders. Inspired by this feeling, one . . . very prominent member of the corps wrote to the same paper . . . taking exception to the professor's comparison and attempting to justify "*devil*" on account of its beneficial effects etc. He merely signed his communication W.P. Cadet. The paper acknowledged receipt of the letter, but added, "Since definitive signature is not attached, and since the writer spells 'Chicago' with two 'g's' we do not publish the letter." The writer was known to many of his associates, who also knew that if there were two "g's" in Chicago it was due to a "slip of the pen;" but the paper's acknowledgment was considered a good joke on the cadet.



USMAPS History—Part II

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set up in abandoned World War II hospital buildings on the northern portion of the Post. The barracks and company area were in deplorable condition and there seemed to be little or no supplies and equipment for conducting classes. The rooms were unpainted and the ceilings bulged with leaky water pipes which pounded and groaned during classes; many student papers and texts bore water stains which resulted from unexpected sprinklings within the rooms. All the old hospital equipment had to be maintained in the rooms in case an emergency required that the school be turned back into a medical station. The school was spread throughout the many wards of the old hospital; since the corridors were endless and all the wards looked alike, both teachers and students found themselves lost, constantly searching for classes or offices. Many times, to simplify movement between classes, students would jump out the windows and walk through the breezeways beneath the buildings. During the warm weather the Cadet Candidates stripped to the waist, and floor fans were used to keep the air circulating; unfortunately, the fans also kept student papers and chalk dust circulating around the rooms. The school had to be rebuilt practically from the inside out and carpentry repairs constantly interfered with class-work.

In 1966, with the expansion of OCS brought about by the Vietnam War, USMAPS was displaced from the old hospital buildings in the wooded section

of Fort Belvoir's North Post to the reconditioned (vintage 1920's) brick barracks on the main South Post where the school has been ever since.

Beginning in 1968 the physical training was broadened to that of a well-balanced athletic program including physical training, intramural sports, and varsity teams in the major sports. A position for a full time athletic director was established in 1969. In addition to the individual benefits derived by the Cadet Candidates who take part in the varsity program, the program helps in the development of an *esprit* in the Battalion. The competition with the Naval Academy Preparatory School in football, soccer, cross country, basketball, wrestling, track, and lacrosse has developed into a spirited rivalry which occasionally has resulted in "moonlight" raids into the enemy's camp: an Army cannon and a Navy anchor have become the coveted prizes of these excursions.

With increased emphasis on publicizing the school, the number of active duty applicants each year has increased from about 400 in the early 1950's to an average of 1500 in the 1970's. The prep curriculum has been revised, enriched, and expanded through regular liaison with the academic departments at West Point. The present course schedule provides for two terms. The first term, extending from August to January, involves an intensive review of secondary school English and math to prepare the Cadet candidates to qualify for West Point. College Entrance Examination Board Tests are given in November, January and February. Concurrent with the first term, the students undergo a full physical training program, live under a strict disciplinary system, and are given limited military training. Comprehensive final exams are administered just prior to the January College Boards. The second term runs from January into May; this term provides college-level academic instruction, military training, and physical conditioning. In addition to the standard academic course of instruction, a variety of electives is offered in both English and math, all of which are designed to assist the students to cope better with their first year at West Point. Each term is divided into five units of instruction of about 20 class days each, with exams held at the end of each unit.

Commenting on a recent trip to West Point, Mr. Harold Townsend, until recently a math instructor at the Prep School, said that he experienced the greatest reward of his career when he was mobbed by former "Preppers" who wanted to thank him for the advice and knowledge which he gave them in their classes at USMAPS. Mr. Townsend would try to relate math to the reasoning process used by military officers and often spiced his classes with many interesting and pungent war stories—it will be recalled that Mr. Townsend was one of the first "Preppers" to attend the school at Beaune, France, in 1918.

The students usually interest themselves in the various extracurricular activities of

the school: yearbook committee, camera club, chess club, scuba club, sky-diving club, Bible study group, martial arts class—taught by students holding brown and black belts—and the newspaper committees—which have chosen such school paper titles as "The Banana Peel," "Hard Times Picayune and Intelligencer," and "Knight Crier." Each year the students also publish a volume of essays and poetry titled "Volleys" for which the best composition class papers are selected. It can be seen that the energetic spirit of the Cadet Candidates has not waned over the years.

The experiences of Brigadier General Robert L. Scott Jr. (USMA '32)—of Flying Tiger fame and author of *God Is My Co-Pilot* may serve as an interesting concluding comment of the history of USMAPS. General Scott explicitly states that,

"the ONLY way for me to have entered the U.S. Military Academy—and managed to stay there and graduate into the finest career a young American could possibly have . . .—was by way of the West Point Preparatory School. . . ."

He relates that he realized that he needed quite a big educational boost to be able to compete with other West Point applicants. Thus he joined the Army at Ft. McPherson to attend the IV Corps Area Prep School.

Stating that he wanted to participate in the prep program "because I want a life in the Service, Sir. . . ." he was accepted in September 1927. He studied "each day—all day" and even risked ruining his eyesight by late night or all night book sessions. He was, in his words, "determined to be not only a West Pointer—but a regular Army Air Corps pilot. . . ." He memorized all the old USMA exams and eventually came out with the highest grade in the West Point entrance competition in March of 1928. He was then sent back to his unit as a private; to his great joy he was finally informed that he was one of eight in the class of 40 candidates who had been accepted by West Point. His desire to become a pilot caused him to fear further endangering his eyesight; thus he never went back to studying all night as he had done at the Prep School. Nevertheless those long months of intensive studying got him through West Point, and he emphasizes that:

"West Point always meant my life's goal to me. . . . AND I NEVER WOULD HAVE MADE IT—WERE IT NOT FOR THE WEST POINT PREP SCHOOL."

He goes on to say that he "never met a man at West Point who had come from that Prep School route that was not a better soldier. . . ." One reason for this was that these Cadet Candidates had been enlisted men and therefore understood "what a basis the non-com was to the Service. . . ."

It can be said that the experience gained at the school helps each Cadet Candidate develop a self-confidence which comes when he knows himself equal to his challenges. Over the years, a large portion of the more important positions in

the chain of command of the Corps of Cadets at West Point have been filled by "Prepsters." The First Captain of the Class of 1974, Jack Pattison, and two of the four Regimental Commanders, Cadets Jerry Johnson and Joe LeBoeuf, were products of USMAPS as were the 1974 Football Captain, Bob Johnson, and Indoor Track Captain, Al Sample. The following list of statistics indicates the record of USMAPS graduates at West Point since 1951:

**Record of USMAPS Graduates at USMA
—Classes 1951-1974:**

I. Total Cadets Entering	
USMA	20,891
USMAPS Graduates Entering	
USMA	2,584
Percent of Total Cadets	
from USMAPS	12.36%
II. Total Cadets Graduating	
from USMA	14,809
USMA Graduates from	
USMAPS	1,521
Percent of USMA Graduates	
from USMAPS	10.27%
III. Total USMA Cadet	
Captains	1,240
Total USMA Cadet Captains	
from USMAPS	191
Percent USMA Cadet	
Captains from USMAPS	15.40%

Although attrition of USMAPS graduates at West Point is slightly higher than the average, there is a greater degree of commitment to a service career by those who do graduate from West Point. A recent study of USMA classes of 1954 through 1968 revealed a separation rate of 19.5% for USMAPS graduates of West Point compared to 29.7% for their non-Prep School counterparts.

The USMA Prep School continues its role of providing upward mobility for the soldier. For the young man with the desire to lead there is no better way to prepare for soldier leadership in today's Army.

NOTICE

The Prep School has a Memorial Board honoring Prepsters who were killed in action. It has been particularly difficult to identify those Prepsters who did not enter or graduate from West Point but who continued on active duty and gave their lives for their country. Assistance is solicited in updating this Memorial Board. Please send any information to Commandant, USMA Preparatory School, Fort Belvoir, Virginia 22060.



Cadet Military Training

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while eight others will have the opportunity to do intern research work at government laboratories or with federal agencies, or even pursue assistance programs in the "Crossroads Africa" adventure. Last year cadets worked on research projects with the Harry Diamond Labs, with SHAPE, with the Office of Management and Budget, with the Environmental Pro-

tection Agency and five traveled to African nations. The opportunities for full service are plentiful.

Although they are not formal training programs, many cadets volunteer to spend portions of their leave participating in the Foreign Academy Exchange. This program involves exchange visits with cadets from selected academies in Europe, Latin America and Mexico. A second leave program is the Language and Cultural Orientation in which 10 cadets study at the U.S. Army Institute for Advanced Russian Studies at Garmisch, Germany, and four cadets attend the American Embassy school in Republic of China. The countries with whom we have cadet exchange programs are shown here:

Belgium	Mexico	Uruguay
France	Chile	Colombia
Germany	Bolivia	Venezuela
Japan	El Salvador	Nicaragua
Netherlands	Paraguay	Honduras
Great Britain	Argentina	Guatemala
Austria	Dominican	Brazil
	Republic	

Mexico and the Latin American exchanges are conducted annually while the others are conducted on alternating years. USMA cadets traveling on even years, foreign cadets on odd years.

On the first day of academics, the Second Classman incurs his first service obligation. By now he has had two years of Military Science in the classroom—Map Reading, Squad and Platoon Tactics, Company Tactics, Military Heritage. He was fully equipped during New Cadet Training. The key was developing his motivation, self-discipline and a sense of duty while being taught individual soldier skills and a progressive routine of physical conditioning. At Camp Buckner he tasted the flavor of the Combat Arms and was further schooled in soldier skills. And during his "Cow" summer, perhaps he has been to airborne school or off on the Troop Leader Training Program to Germany or Fort Hood. His Military Science course in second class year—Combined Arms Operations—moves him into task forces, teams, advanced tactics of the company and battalion. His first class summer—Cadet Leadership Training Program—will be one of certain satisfaction.

First Class Cadet Leader Training Program

He may be a member of the New Cadet Training program as a company commander or a squad leader or a staff officer; he may go to Camp Buckner to instruct the new Yearlings or to be their commander, or serve on their staff. Or, as you recall, if he has not yet had a chance to be a junior leader in the Troop Leader Training Program, he'll do that instead. In all cases, it is a challenging culmination to his three years and one in which he will have a chance to test his own philosophy of leadership.

As an added opportunity, each year the Empire State Military Academy—the New York Army National Guard at Camp Smith—requests, and we are happy to provide,

a number of First Classmen who spend their leave as Tactical Officers and Drill and Command instructors for officer candidates in the New York Army National Guard.

Well, his four years are almost over. In his first class year he begins with a Military Science Course in Small Unit Training—simply and succinctly, "how to train your platoon or battery or troop." In February he will select his branch based on his General Order of Merit, and later his first station assignment. Once these are known he receives further classes in pay and allowances, officer evaluation reports, personal affairs, the officer personnel management system and briefings on his future schools and posts before he sets off for his branch course and the technical expertise he will need to succeed in his branch.

Do you agree now that we've moved a long way to bridging the gap? We hope the branch schools will receive a well rounded, broadly educated and motivated lieutenant who has made a thoughtful, intelligent choice and will serve with integrity and courage in The Long Gray Line.



New Commandant of Cadets

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College, General Ulmer remained on the faculty where he participated in the studies concerning officer education and professional development, Army leadership, and War College curricula. In April 1972, he left Carlisle Barracks for duty in Vietnam where he became Senior Advisor to the 5th ARVN Division and then Chief of Staff of the 3d Regional Assistance Command in Vietnam. Upon signature of the Cease Fire Agreement in January 1973, General Ulmer was appointed Chief United States Delegate, Region V, Four Party Joint Military Commission. He returned to the United States on 30 March 1973 and completed requirements for a Master's degree at Pennsylvania State University prior to arriving at Fort Knox in August 1973 to command the 194th Armored Brigade. Upon promotion to Brigadier General on 12 June 1974, he became Deputy Commanding General of the U.S. Army Armor Center and Fort Knox.

General Ulmer's decorations include: Silver Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Legion of Merit with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with "V" Device, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam National Order 5th Class, Republic of Vietnam Army Distinguished Service Order, Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Combat Infantryman Badge, Army General Staff Identification Badge, Master Parachutist Badge.