THE OCS EXPERIENCE
Memories of Robinson Barracks
Artillery Officer Candidate School
Fort Sill, Oklahoma 1941-1973
Compiled by Randy and Penny Dunham
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Fort Sill, Oklahoma 1941-1973

Compiled by Randy C. Dunham
Field Artillery OCS Class 10-69
and
Penny L. Dunham

The Field Artillery Officer Candidate School
Alumni Chapter, Inc.
P.O. Box 33612
Fort Sill, OK 73503-0612
Dedicated to the Artillery Officer Candidates who were billeted in the OCS Hutment area during the 1940’s and to those who would later pass through the Robinson Barracks archway (in its many variations) during the 1950’s, 1960’s and 1970’s on their journey to becoming Commissioned Officers in the U.S Army.

They served our Nation with honor and valor
931 gave their lives in WW II
69 were lost in the Korean War
314 made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War
Two were awarded the Medal of Honor
83 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 1940’s 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 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 plunder. 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 he 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 he 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 battle field 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 Untergriesheim, Germany, in 1945. The OCS area was named "Robinson Barracks" in his honor on April 15, 1953.

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, housing the Artillery OCS Hall of Fame was named "Durham Hall" in his honor on May 20, 1999.
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LTG Carl H. Jark
First Field Artillery OCS Commandant
July 1941-July 1942
“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 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 more than 26,000 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 commissioned an additional 22,600 second lieutenants before closing on July 6, 1973.

The story of this remarkable institution remains virtually untold. 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 to the FAOCS Alumni Chapter in every imaginable format (hand written, voice mail, typed, PDF, email, word document, JPG, etc.) and have been formatted into a single word document. I 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. I apologize for any errors that might have been made in the transcription or conversion.

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 gleaned from the FAOCS Alumni Chapter archives and historic information found in the Morris Swett Technical Library at Fort Sill’s Snow Hall has been 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 that has previously been written. Every effort has been made to present accurate information based on the available historic records of the school.

I hope this compilation will help students of history and the families and friends of OCS graduates 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 13 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 story is told in chronological order by class.

Randy C. Dunham Class 10-69
March 26, 2014
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 10, 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. 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.

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 13 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 13 weeks duration, the instruction was conducted by the Departments as follows, with the instruction starting on Thursday morning:

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This plan was followed, with very little deviation, until the course was expanded to 17 weeks on 2 July 1943.

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.

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 achievements in the army, his intelligence score, and the grades given by departments, also of course entered into the decision to graduate a man.

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 days 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 percentage of graduates varied sharply from class to class, depending on the level of the class itself.

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 6600 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.

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

When Class # 169 graduated on 9 Feb 1946, 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%)

2138 candidates were relieved for academic deficiency
2163 resigned voluntarily
1721 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

26,209 second lieutenants had been commissioned when the school closed on 12
December 1946.
Chapter One
1941 - 1942

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)

William R. Dempsey Jr.: 8-42
From Custermen.com (G.I Biographies - Captain William Dempsey Battery C, 328th FA Bn, 85th “Custer” Division by Bill Dempsey)

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 a 1997 Paris Review Interview*

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.

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.

Robert F. Dunning: 20-42

From Recollections of a Citizen Soldier, 1935-1945 (Unpublished Work)
By Robert F. Dunning, Copyright 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 myself. 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 plebians 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 mid afternoon 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 lollled 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 1000 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, Donovant 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. Donovant 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 end 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 loud speaker 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 half way 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 105mm and 155mm 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 155mm 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 155mm 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 MP's 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 (Jark'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 (Jark) 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 was 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 blushed, 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 348th 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 105mm howitzers were available, 75's 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 1000 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 Tee was used when the guns were off to the side a short distance and Large Tee 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 Tee 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 wild life 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
tought 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 val pack 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 am 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 (Jark) 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 am, 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.

**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.
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 Negroes, 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."
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."
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. Paper work 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 (155mm 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 240mm 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 class rooms and the 5000 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 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 1000 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 75mm Gun, the 105mm Howitzer, and the old World War I Schneider 155mm 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). Good bye 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 South West 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 this 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. Baldridge, who is interested in the history of the FAOCS. (Mr. Baldridge 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.

**Major Clark: 33-42**

*From 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 155mm 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.
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 M. Brown: 35-42

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 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.

Raymond C. Kerns: 44-42
From Above the Thunder – Reminiscences of a Field Artillery Pilot in World War II By Raymond C. Kerns, Copyright 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 "voice 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 BCscopes - one for the instructor, one for the students. Behind us, radio operators to relay our commands or sensings 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 giggled 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 of 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 officers 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 105mm 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, 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.

Candidates prepare their 6-man hutment for inspection

Tactical Officer conducts an inspection
Observed Fires Class

Original OCS Hutment Area 1941-1946
Looking Northeast from near Miner and Currie Roads
Chapel and Artillery Bowl are in top left corner - north of Ringgold Road
Chapter Two
1943 - 1946

Charles H. Taquay: 48-43
A “Frog” at Fort Sill
From the 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 opportuneely 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 criss-cross 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 missensing; 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." "BA, 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. RSOP's 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.
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 myself 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 O.C.S. training was a valuable experience, and I have fond memories of those years.

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 three or four days getting shots, more clothes, seeing indoctrination film, 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 actually 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 or eight (I forget) 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 life-style 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 hail 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 ½ 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 mills 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 it 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-mill 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 over's 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 indicate 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 forth-coming 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.

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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!

**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 13 to 17 weeks when Class 84-43 started the course on July 2, 1943 and graduated on October 28, 1943**

*(From History of the Field Artillery School, Volume II, World War II)*

When the course was of 13 weeks duration, the instruction was conducted by the Departments as follows, with the instruction starting on Thursday morning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consecutive Weeks</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, 1st wk--Sat, 2d wk</td>
<td>Motors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon--Sat, 3d wk</td>
<td>Materiel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon, 4th wk--Wed, 9th wk</td>
<td>Gunnery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, 9th wk--Tues, 10th wk</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed, 10th wk--Wed, 13th wk</td>
<td>Tactics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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. However, the “block system” was still followed by the academic departments, approximately as outlined above.
With the 17 weeks course in effect, Gunnery instruction started on Friday of the 6th week and ended on Wednesday of the 13th week. Effective with Class No. 125, starting 16 October 1944, the block system was modified by spreading the Gunnery instruction over the remainder of the course, instead of stopping it in 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. It had been found that the candidates were not doing well with the firing required in the RSOPs and field exercises scheduled for the last week or 2 of the course. A corollary effect of the change was some economy in instructors in the Department of Gunnery, which was quite important in view of the demand for officers for duty with troops.

**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 RSOP’s 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, 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; a clear frosty October night. One of the Tactical/Instructional Officers was bedded down near my post and the group of us shot the breeze for awhile. 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: 90-44**

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!

**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?

**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.

**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.

After a few months there I was sent to join the 286th Joint Assault Signal Company at Fort Lewis, Washington. The outfit was transferred to Fort Ord, California, and then to the Naval Amphibious Base at Coronado, California, just down the road from the fancy Hotel Del Coronado, where good looking women hung out on the weekend. Being an Army officer on a naval base was fine duty.

I was made a naval gunfire spotter, which changed my MOS from 1193 (artillery line officer) to 1189 (forward observer artillery). My job was to land with the third wave of Marines and start adjusting shells from our ships onto enemy troops defending our amphibious landings. We went on maneuvers twice, but the war had already been over. I went on terminal leave in February, 1947, went back to Waco after two years and two days in the Army, and let the GI Bill put me through Baylor University and Baylor Law School.

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 NC 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. First, a little story. I was really enjoying the training at Fort Sill in the fall of 1946, and doing rather well. One day, we were out on one of the ranges firing 105mm howitzers, learning about high-angle fire. I was on one of the gun crews. The battery fired at a very high angle, and my gun's projectile detonated prematurely about 20 or 30 yards in the air. A fragment took a small piece of flesh off my left knee but (thank God!) didn't hit the kneecap. Another fragment went through the head of a sergeant who had survived the invasion of Normandy. 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".
Marching to class

Gunnery Class break-time ("Smoking and Joking")
HISTORICAL NOTE FROM THE FAOCS ARCHIVES (1946):

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.

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 (General Order 2, 9 January 1947) and Field Artillery OCS was officially closed when class number 179 graduated 21 individuals.

Since opening in 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 (AOC S) 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.

**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*
From History of the US Army Artillery and Missile School, Volume III, 1945 – 1957
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. Infantry OCS, Fort Benning and Field Artillery OCS, Fort Sill were reactivated in February 1951. The Branch Immateriel OCS program at Fort Riley, Kansas continued operating and by the end of 1951 Signal Corps OCS, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, Engineering 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 book store were made from 2700 area mess halls. From post exchanges, recreation halls and former classrooms buildings in the 2600, 2900, and 300 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.
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 8407 candidates.
1658 candidates were turned back during the period
4740 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
1846 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: 3370 candidates were enrolled in classes 7-52 through 31-52 and a total of 1985 graduated – 58.9 %

Calendar Year 1953: 1289 candidates were enrolled in classes 32-53 through 45-53 and a total of 764 graduated – 59.3 %

Calendar Year 1954: 1503 candidates were enrolled in classes 46-54 through 59-54 and a total of 747 graduated – 49.7 %

Calendar Year 1955: 1020 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 2386 candidates
1306 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
Chapter Three
1951

OCS at Sill Set to Open
*From the Lawton Paper 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.

*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 NCO’s, 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 well being. First, that physical training be held in the morning and, thus, utilize the coolest part of the day; second, that a period of ½ 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-filed 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 shred 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 hast 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 upper-classmen. 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 a 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 bloc 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.
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.

**From the Class Book 5-51: John E. McGlone**

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 blind 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.
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

HEADQUARTERS
AAA AND GUIDED MISSILE CENTER
Fort Bliss, Texas

GENERAL ORDERS 16 October 1951
NUMBER 110

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, ASC
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 to 15 November 1951. This then accelerated all plans for activation. COL Robert H. Krueger was designated Director, LTC George J. Bayerle, Jr., Assistant Director, MAJ Asa P. Gray, Jr., Plans and Operations Officer, and MAJ James A. Sullivan, Coordinator of Administration. Shortly afterwards, MAJ Forrest I. Rettgers was designated Senior Team Instructor for the first officer candidate class.

The first problem facing the small cadre was the finalization of the Table of Distribution. A tentative table had been prepared prior to activation, but it was felt to be weak in certain respects. The first actual table which was approved and under which the department operated was based on the operating plan directed by the Commanding General, AAA & GM Center, in which all branch material subjects would be taught by certain departments in the AA & GM Branch, The Artillery School, and all common subjects were to be taught by the team of tactical officers working with each candidate class. In short, each team would be responsible for conducting instruction in all the common subjects to the class to which they were assigned. Because of this, each team was provided with a larger group of officers and enlisted men to out the directive. The team then had the double responsibility of performing leadership evaluation and instruction. Time and experience proved that while this plan could work if officers with proper background and experience could be provided, practical dictates called for a revision in the Table of Distribution, and so a section of instructors or instruction pool was organized and the officers assigned to the teams working with the candidates were reduced in number. As the department gained operational experience, the Table of Distribution was modified by Army Field Forces; the table was further revised until the final table was approved.

The department at its close was organized with the usual staff officers with the exception of an intelligence officer. Specifically, in addition to the Director and Assistant Director, there was an adjutant and personnel officer, a plans and operations officer and a supply officer. In addition, there was provided an officer known as the coordinator of administration who provided staff supervision of internal housekeeping, supply and personnel activities. Also, and because of the mission of school, a permanent president of the officer candidate board, assisted by a recorder, was set up to process candidate cases submitted to the board for disposition. This board, composed of permanent members and alternate members, reported directly to the Director, OCS.

The 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. Actually, 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.

As pointed out before, 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.

Not mentioned before was a detachment called 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 cubiced, 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 cubiced. 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.

Of course the major problem incident to the organization of the officer candidate school was the operation of the school itself. And in the operation of the school, the factor causing the greatest concern was organization of an effective leadership evaluation system. There was little time originality in the system eventually utilized, and so key officers were dispatched to other officer candidate schools then in operation to study their systems. In the short time permitted, attempts were made to select the best from each of the other Officer Candidate Schools. However, it was difficult to determine what the best and many mistakes were made. Because of this, the department found itself saddled with a system, that to say the least, was complicated.

Briefly, a candidate was to be rated on ten different traits. The total of these ratings would then determine the candidate’s class standing in leadership and adaptability. Other factors affecting his leadership standing were the comments of his classmates who were required to evaluate him. All evaluations were totaled after each four weeks of training, and the scrutiny of those in the lowest and borderline areas was intensified. The biggest drawback to the system, however, was the job of rating each man in ten traits. All too frequently, the young tactical officer was not sure just what some of the traits meant. Although he might have good understanding of what constituted good leadership, he could not be sure that his evaluation of a candidate’s cooperation was a
valid evaluation. Because of this, the number of observable traits was narrowed down to five. Further, each trait was more lucidly defined for greater clarity and understanding by the tactical teams.

The system was modified frequently as experience was gained. Modifications were also made at the suggestion of army psychological research groups. Every effort was made to evolve a system that would provide the department with the finest evaluation system possible. At the close of the school, the system was not necessarily perfect, but at least almost all of the inadequacies were eliminated and a valid system was in effect. This was verified by a study conducted in December 1952. Basically this study consisted of research into the performance of graduates with units in the field and a comparison with their performance in OCS. The results showed consistent comparisons.

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 antiaircraft 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.

One of the most disturbing factors in the operation of an officer candidate school is the attrition rate. Naturally, the lower the attrition rate, the more economical the operation. At the same time, if standards are to be maintained, no selection system can be instituted that will reduce OCS attrition rate to zero. The selection system should, however, eliminate those who obviously should never go to an officer candidate school. The fact remains, however, that during the period of operation of the Fort Bliss OCS, obvious misfits were found in every class, although the over-all ration in each class was reduced as time progressed. This indicated that selection procedures were becoming more rigorous, although far from perfect. It may be stated the factor of selection affecting attrition rates the greatest was the factor of improper selection. Whether this evil can ever be corrected is outside the province of the operation of any officer candidate school, but it is a most disturbing influence in the operation of a school.

The Officer Candidate School at Fort Bliss terminated its activities with the graduation of the last class on 17 July 1953. Its operation could be classified as highly successful and its product a credit to the corps of commissioned officers.
Chapter Four
1952

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 mine 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 120mm 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 clackety-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 but 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 half way 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 Penemunde 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.

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 has 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 upper classmen 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”.

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“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: 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 hill top 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 hill top OP with the class seated on folding canvass chairs arrange 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 50’s humiliate 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.
Leonard A. De Bord: 8-52

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”... 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!!

**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 upper classmen, 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 upper classmen 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 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.

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 foot locker 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 or 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 the mountain. 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 fire on MB 4, cleaning and polishing the barracks floors and windows, keeping everything (clothes and books) straight and clean, and the 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 Nov 51. 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 upper-classmen 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 attribute to a mis-scrutinization of "Memorandum No. 44, This Headquarters." Word got around fast and by 1800 hours 16 Dec 51 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, I 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 the Base, Captain Key thanked me, and I reassured him that it was a pleasure and honor to be able to deliver the packages for him.
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 in order 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 fail 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".
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 raveled 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 Laceeey!"

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 cubicule 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 Mundinger, 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 the 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!). Upper-classmen 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.

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 and 1951-53 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' pigtails, 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 41's, a psychiatrist's couch, and is turned loose on the terrified officer candidate.

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, 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 of 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.
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 insure 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 ones 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.

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 team mates of some of the nation’s finest young men. It taught me that by dedication, perseverance and team work 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.

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 was 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 Mundinger, 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:

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<tr>
<th>Self-Discipline</th>
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<td>Attention to detail</td>
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<td>Leadership</td>
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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, and 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 home town 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 have 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, "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.
SPIDER WEB EXTENDING FROM BOOKS:
DATE OF REPORT 14 JANUARY 1952.

1. THE REPORT IS CORRECT.
2. I CAN ONLY ATTRIBUTE THIS TO A VERY PROLIFIC SPIDER. I DUSTED THE BOOK SHELF THIS MORNING.

3. THE OFFENSE WAS UNINTENTIONAL.

[Signatures]

Candidate mastering the skills of a Forward Observer
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.

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. Some 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; 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 also were reactivated at that time, and the OCS program at Fort Riley, Kansas, 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 highly 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.

**The Artillery School**

Antisubmarine and Guided Missiles Branch
Fort Bliss, Texas

Graduation Exercises
OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL

Class Number Eleven

Thursday 19 February 1953
1700 Hours
Theater No. 1

*AAA OCS Class 11-53 Receives Oath of Office*
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, 253nd 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 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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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 Masters 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 to 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/C's 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 . . .
than 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.

**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.

Robert S. Sandia: 39-53

Not too long ago my OCS class 39 year book 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 hail, 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 year book as the "Flying Candidate", like the eternal Flying Dutchman""] who is doomed to forever making short pivots off of 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 drop-outs. 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 candidate's autobiography was a significant tool in predicting his ability and, interestingly enough, 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 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 actually 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 sun screen. 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 really 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 upper classman, 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!
Chapter Six
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, be 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 frigidity, 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.
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, 30mm 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.
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 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 our class's distinguished military graduates. 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 liked 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 in with the aiming circle, how to use the BC scope, drove 2 ½ 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 105mm 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?).

Middleclass 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 ball 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
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.

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.
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 cannoneers 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 Hall 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.

Willis B. McDonald: 61-55
From Cold War Warrior
By Willis B. McDonald, Copyright 2005

The parents of my last platoon leader in Korea owned the Tip Top Laundry and Dry Cleaners in Lawton, Oklahoma. They wrote to me at my folks in California and offered to put me up for a few days so that I could reconnoiter the place and look it over. I jumped at the offer. This family had twelve branches of their cleaners all over Fort Sill, but their flagship was a little store in the Officer Candidate School (OCS).

With most of us going through three uniforms a day, they must have thought they had died and gone to laundry heaven. Of course, they did small tailoring jobs like tucking in the waist and stuff like that. They took my khakis, tailored them a little, sewed OCS patches on, shoulder patches on, the whole works. Then the coup-de-gras. I had a gorgeous Air Force Officer's TW uniform. It looked like you wouldn't know it was an Air Force TW except it looked like an Army TW that was about seven years old. It had that beautiful, faded look. It was gorgeous.

Anyway, we took that out and it was tight, skin tight, and fit me great. We put on the OCS patches and my correct shoulder patch; my 2nd Division patch over on the right shoulder, and then tacked the sergeant's stripe back on very loosely, but very neatly.

I arrived by design, well fed, and well rested, just after the evening meal. At least, they couldn't harass me in the mess hall.

As I stepped out of the headquarters where I'd signed in, the first Red Bird hit, an upper classmen in the last month of the six-month school. They wore red tabs on their epaulets. The first one saw me. From ten feet away he yelled at me to come to attention. I, course, snapped to. As he gave me the business on everything and anything, I stood at rigid attention and about three more Red Birds, about twenty feet away, started screaming at me to report down there immediately.
Of course the louder they yelled, the louder he yelled for me to stand fast. Finally, he let me go down to them and they repeated the same scene about twenty yards at a time. At last, some great big guy, I guess the head Red Bird, came up, stuck his chin into my forehead, and pointed out my barracks.

He told me I had exactly two minutes to get in there and get those illegal sergeant stripes off my shirt. I took off at a run. Two or three followed at each side, a couple at my heels, and one or two real tigers running backwards screaming at me all the way. I say couple of terrified looking guys inside the barracks. They swung the door open for me. I threw the duffel bag over my shoulder.

Then, before the bag went straight forward, I took about three steps in, slid into a left side facing movement and with hands to each sleeve, gave a couple of jerks and then a big pull. As the Red Birds came in the door, the big, bad one followed by his gaggle of others, I stood at a rigid attention not only with the stripes off but with the OCS patches in place. I was not supposed to be issued those patches for another twelve hours and they were sewed tightly in place. I couldn't suppress the grin but I was sure gonna pay for it.

Does the expression, Win the battle and lose the war, mean anything?

OCS has a zero week. During that week you draw your books, get your uniform squared away, and you get your hair cut. I was the first guy, I think, to ever get probation on the first day of zero week. I was on probation for attitude. Seems nobody likes a smart ass, especially OCS. It didn't matter much because I traded my attitude probation for an academic probation.

A few weeks later, my tack officer said, “Candidate, you're still a wise ass, but you can only be on one kind of probation at a time.”

I still think my record of thirty-seven weeks probation for a twenty-two week school still stands.

There's some real magic between NCOs and OCS. I think my saving grace is I've never had an experience in the Army, be it combat, parachute school, OCS. Nothing proved half as bad as I had imagined. Obviously, I have a morbid imagination.

I thought the entire process would be like Beast Barracks at West Point. Of course, even Beast Barracks only lasts a month. Anyway, I prevailed, but they came down on us really hard. I had held to a bit of folklore that said they never really kicked an NCO out of OCS, except possibly for an honor violation. They just like to make your life so damn miserable that you left, and I guess it’s true. About 95% of all the NCOs there left. The ones who stuck it out did fabulously except, of course, for me.

I had gotten through by the skin of my teeth. I guess I held onto couple of things when I felt really down. One was the fact I'd already lost an E6 stripe and I was pissed, so I damn sure made up for that. The other was, while I’d gotten to the point where I kind of liked being a sergeant and didn't mind being one for the rest of my life, I wanted Nancy to be an Officer's wife. They really know how to get to you though.
No matter what you did, they'd counter it. I had proudly worn my five puny little ribbons and my Combat Infantry Badge, trying to intimidate the upper classmen who didn't have any, but got a demerit for each ribbon. So, I left them off the next day and scored ten demerits. One for each one and four for good measure by the same grinning S.O.B. because I had not worn the proper uniform. Proper uniform says you will wear all awards and decorations. I couldn’t win for losing, but that’s the system.

I think only one thing would’ve ever made me quit OCS: inspection training. This was a real sweetie. Immediately after lunch on Saturday, we always had to go in through the mess hall but we didn’t have to sit down and eat. So if they were really on your case, you’d march, you’d wait God knows how long in the chow line, march through the mess hall, and out the back door. You ran back to your area and took everything you owned including your bunk, your mattress, your foot locker, and all 147 Field Manuals, which I might add, were never, never, ever used because getting them stacked up right took about two hours. And once you had all this stuff in the new building, you prepared for inspection.

At about 2:00 or 2:30, the upper classmen would come up, throw all your stuff on the floor, yell and scream about how gross you were and then tell you that they'd be back in a little while. And they would. And they would do it again.

At about 5:00 or quarter till, they’d say, "Well, you have to go to supper now so inspection training is over."

You’d go through the supper line, but, of course, you wouldn’t eat. You’d run back up there and get your stuff. If you were really organized, which I wasn’t, if you were really fast on your feet which I wasn’t, if you were really sharp, which I wasn’t, maybe you could be ready for Monday morning's inspection by lights out Sunday night. That is, if you did no homework or anything.

After three or four weeks, out of a hundred-and-ten-man class only forty -five of us remained. And every Saturday, for thirty-seven weeks, with the exception of two weeks off at Christmas, we were subjected to inspection training.

Once in a while, we had the best barracks or something of that nature and as a reward we got a blanket pass and blanket amnesty from stuff like this. Of course, as an upper classmen I got to do it and got to harass the underclassmen, but I never acted as harshly. Though I have to admit it sure jolted my memory just being down there on Saturday when the other upper classmen made life a living hell for the new guys.

Anyway, OCS taught you priorities. Everything had equal priority. They knew they gave you only enough time to finish twenty percent of what they told you to do and do it right. But you had to make the decision every time, every day, a hundred times a day. I can remember sitting there on a Sunday night, time to go to bed, when I had to decide whether to go to the latrine, shine my boots, or study because I only had a few minutes until lights out. Then the latrine was where you studied or shined your shoes.
On more than one occasion I remember saying to myself, "Self, you got a ninety-six in motors and if you get one more gig on your boots this week you're gonna really be in trouble." It's a bozo no-no to get the same gig twice in a row.

By the end of my tenth week, I was taking on water bad and asked for a set back, which didn't surprise anyone. That happened quite a bit for people busting out of gunnery. But, they set me back four weeks. I wanted to go back six weeks to the beginning of gunnery. I began to have a wonderful time, and even starting to understand the theory, what I was doing and why. The staff was wonderful to me and gave me lots of help and encouragement, but despite all the help and encouragement, I managed to carry a seventy-two average, only two points above passing Seventy-six got you probation. I slipped further behind each day, so I made a decision that probably affected me the rest of my life. I asked to go back eight weeks into the beginning of gunnery. I figured I could sand bag a good enough score for the first couple of weeks and, perhaps, learn a little more, then just creep off to the finish line. My startled TAC officer said he had a better idea. He recommended dismissal for lack of academic achievement. The CO concurred and I was on my way out. I demanded to see the Commandant, a request that shocked everyone. No one ever wanted to see the commandant. I quoted them chapter and verse from the rulebook, and reminded them my request was totally kosher, totally legal.

Sure it was legal, as legal as a first semester freshman demanding to see the university president. But everyone thought the idea ridiculous. Nobody had ever done it. But I insisted. I wanted to see the commandant.

Then I got the word. "Candidate, the commandant will see you. Report to his office at 1730 hours. In the meantime, you can pack your bags, and if you're so inclined, arrange transportation to the Repel-Depot."

I arrived ten minutes early as I always do. I was really pumped. However, deep down inside, I felt as close to terrified as I've ever been in my life. Just as in a combat situation, there's nothing wrong with being scared to death as long as you don't let it show. And as long as you go ahead and do what you have to do.

The Colonel, thank God, had only been there less than a month. He probably thought candidates had some sort of civil rights and that they were basically decent fellows who'd shown somebody something at one time in their life. I stomped into that room after I was called, and snapped to attention. I'll bet his ears rang from that heel click for a long time. My voice sounded a lot louder and clearer than I felt.

"At ease," he said.

Of course I interpreted to mean a very stiff parade rest.

He looked me over for the longest time without saying a word. As his eyes fell from mine to his desk, mine followed. The wonderful old bastard was reading my service record. Not just my OCS file, which admittedly had more shit stains than I wanted to think about. He was actually reading my service record. I might get a fair hearing after all. He said, "Your battery has recommended dismissal due to lack of academic achievement."
Shrilly, I responded, "They're not correct, Sir. I'm still passing gunnery. I've gotten my overall grade point average in the high eighties." I then went into my full act. "Sir, I was the best damn rifle squad leader sergeant in Korea. I wanted an Infantry commission. But I was told this is where the Army needs me. I don’t have any aptitude or any training at all in artillery but had been told that I had a high enough I. Q. to make it.

"I was told if I had guts enough I could stay in OCS if it took me twenty years." I finished in my best Gary Cooper act and said, 'Sir, I haven't been here a year yet. I'm ready to hang in. I'm ready to finish."

I also explained about why I asked for a six-week setback the first time and how the four-week setback was what had just precipitated this whole thing.

He looked at me long and hard, then dismissed me and told me to wait outside. The adjutant passed me in the door on my way out. As soon as the door shut, I heard a great bellowing, shaking belly laugh. Terrified. I didn't know if he was laughing at me or with me.

The adjutant came out in a few minutes and looked me over with a deadpan expression and said, "I see you've got your gear. That's good. They're waiting for you in G Battery."

Equally deadpanned, I saluted, and said, "Thank you, Sir," and stepped out of the building.

Outside I gave my war whoop and ran all the way to G Battery with my duffel bag and my B-4 bag on my back. Heavy? Hell, no. I was about to start my third week of OCS. I only have eighteen weeks to go and as a perk I was two company streets closer to the area used for inspection training. The world is always good if you just know which prism to look through.

We measured every day at OCS in dog years. Every day seemed months long, but I had three things that kept me going. That lost stripe, which really pissed me off, and Nancy. I wanted her to be an officer's wife. The third was the thought that in ten or twelve years, these two or three months wouldn't amount to a hill of beans, so I hung in there and hung on.

My gunnery grade never got over seventy-five and often dipped to sixty-eight, but never for over a week. My other grades were superb. Survey gave me a feeling of déjà vu, but I understood the method to their madness. The math wasn't giving me fits, but the arithmetic. Yet, I crept relentlessly toward graduation. I found every day a challenge. My instructors scrutinized my grades scrutinized day by day, and every pop quiz caused my stomach to churn. Yet, I made it to middle class.

Near the end of middle class, we broke for Christmas. Nancy, five months out of nurses' training, worked the night shift so she could save extra money for that beautiful wedding dress.

We both figured that you could do a lot of loving in fourteen days, and we both figured the hell with graduation, let's get married. I got a funky little apartment and she came out with her sidekick and chaperone the week before.
I picked them up at the bus station then ran back to the barracks. The next morning we got our license and I had to go back to the barracks to wait excitedly. I was about to enter the joys of matrimony.

On the seventeenth of December, after 6:00 p.m., everyone got to leave. They had charter buses lined up all over the place. Airplanes, taxis, everybody left. The only ones who stayed behind were people who didn't have reservations to go somewhere, which was two or three married people, young couples too broke to go anywhere. So we didn't get turned loose until 7:00 a.m. on the eighteenth. At 9:00 a.m. I was married.

I looked forward to living happily ever after. In the meantime, I had to survive the next five weeks, not an easy task. In fact, for a while, it looked as if I wouldn't make it at all.

This is the story about my Army service, however, and so from the moment of my marriage, it was a hell of a lot more important to me than the Army. But, I loved the Army. I gave 'em sixteen years after my marriage, but never, never was the Army ever as important to me again or to be the center stage of my life.

I was in the second week of middle class, before my wedding when we did buddy reports. Usually, they ask between two and five guys to leave later in the week after the third and last buddy reports. It was Christmas vacation, so no one left. We all felt the school just didn't have time to get around to the reports and they would be hanging over our heads until we got back, just one more thing to worry about.

Buddy reports had always been a mystery because those who left generally were not the guys at the bottom of the food chain. They usually were somebody in the middle. The mystery was enhanced by the fact that these folks always pulled out early in the morning while we were in class. When we returned, they were gone. Books, clothes, bed, all gone.

Sure enough, the week we returned after Christmas, we suddenly had four empty slots in the barracks. Everybody looked at one another as though we had just survived a firefight. We grinned with that guilty relief thinking, I don't know why the hell it was him and not me, but I sure am glad. Things started to ease noticeably.

One ball buster exam in gunnery and I thundered through with a 70.9. I finished with a GPA of 73 in gunnery. That test covered a lot of ground and my average dropped to 71.0. I only had two observed fire missions left to go on the hill. My shooting was the best part of gunnery. So I finished gunnery with a barely passing grade.

I didn't think upper class was too bad. We had a four-day, three-night field problem coming up with everyone changing jobs three or four times a day. Most people, especially those with any problems, were closely observed in many roles. People didn't usually get bounced after that.

There was one memorable cycle, just ahead of A Battery, (my short-lived interim battery). To this day no one knows what happened or how it happened, but the problem was called off about twelve hours early. The next morning, twenty-two guys were set
back four weeks, twelve were dismissed, and a whole bunch more just quit. I guess they didn't like the idea of a setback.

About half our work included instruction that tried to make gentlemen out of us. We had lots of information classes, which we'd never be tested on. Of course, we had lots of time to torture the lower class folks. Some Red Birds, also slobs like me, got to conduct inspection training. Now I realize why they were such mean bastards.

Of course, we still had MB-4, a title that came from its map designation, Medicine Bluff above four hundred meters high, located a mile and three quarters from OCS. During zero week on Sunday after dinner, everybody got to go up there and back with full field packs, steel helmet, the works. Two trips after zero week, only the dorks, and some semi-dorks had to do the trip on Sunday. But only the full bored dorks had to make two trips. I don't like to talk about it, but your trip to MB-4 was decided by the numerical score of your individual barracks gigs. Like inspection training, it sometimes got canceled for special affairs, but they always scheduled two trips a week. Well, Dork here got scheduled for two trips every Sunday for all thirty-seven weeks. As a Red Bird, I got the honor of taking charge of all the dorks in the school.

With less than 24 hours prior to graduation, we learned we'd graduate and receive our commissions at 9:30 on Tuesday morning. We finished PT about 4:45 on Monday, and right after dinner I got the word to report to the Battery Commander. I'd been on probation for three different batteries, for 37 weeks and had never received a summons to see a Battery Commander. I tried once but never made it.

I learned TAC Officers were very capable of degrading you to somewhere below a single cell. Masters of the technique, a TAC Officer could harass you in a million ways with no problem at all. I saw no reason to see a Battery Commander. This was definitely not a good thing.

I thought of my beautiful uniforms, $157 each, minus the hat, hanging up in the barracks right now. I thought of the stripe I had earned but hadn't gotten in Korea. I thought of the thousands of pounds of bullshit I had taken and grew angry, and then real sad then very, very tired. I thought of my beautiful wife and how much I wanted to go home and make love to her. They could all go hell.

Then I thought five, ten, twenty years down the road. I just said real loud to myself, "I'll stay in the son-of-a-bitch another thirty-seven weeks." Then and there it would have taken a platoon of MP's to drag me out the door. I was pumped.

I soon found out the CO, Captain Marshall, had served in Korea about the same time I did, and he had been a classmate of my first CO in the 23rd. We made a little chitchat and then I could see he had to do something he didn't want to do at all, and it scared the shit out of me.

Frankly," he said, "I never really should've put this off. We should've had this talk about a month ago. What do you know about buddy reports?" He really looked distressed. "Normally, TAC officers make some sort of adjustment after we evaluate these reports, but in rare cases, I get called in."
My God, I thought, they were really gonna buddy report my ass out sixteen hours before graduation! We had an old saying in school, "It ain't over 'til you get your bars pinned on, your records in your hand, and you're a hundred and fifty miles down the road."

I wanted to put my head in my arms and cry. I swallowed a great bucket of bile and then took the offensive. I said in a voice that should've been his, "What seems to be the problem here, Captain?"

He proceeded to give me a thirty-minute course on Buddy Report 101. For a Buddy Report, they handed you a book, nine by six, where you provided all your pertinent data on the front cover and then you rated every person in your class. They always gave you a roster because there's always some gray son-of-a-bitch in the middle you didn't even know was alive. But, you had to rate everybody, and the top ten percent and the bottom ten percent, had to be filled out on both sides, front and back. We were down to sixty-two, but we had to write about every person and rate them.

The Captain started very slowly. "Frankly, I don't really know how to start this. I just know that before you leave tonight, we have to resolve something."

Well, at least I was still in the game. I began to rally.

He went on. "In West Point, we have an almost identical system. I was there as a TAC Officer for four years and we used these damn things. I've been a Battery Commander here for three cycles. The system has always worked wonderfully. And you, young man, have completely messed up a foolproof system. I don't know what we're gonna do about it, but I have to resolve it tonight. What do you really know about the buddy report system?"

I said, "Well, I went through it three times, but I don't really know how it works. I think everyone just assumes that if enough people dump on you, they drop you out of the course."

He smiled. "Well, we've never told anyone that, but we've never gone out of our way to dispel it either. It's not really true. Do you remember the four candidates dropped from your class a few days ago?"

The hair on the back of my neck stood up. "Yes, Sir."

"Well, were they at the bottom of your ratings?"

"As a matter of fact, no, they weren't," I answered. "To the best of my knowledge, as long as I've worked with these reports, no one has ever been dropped for being at the bottom of the rating. See, you guys are all pretty special. Even if you end up on the bottom of the pile, it's a pretty exclusive pile. Unless we have serious questions about someone being psychotic or criminal, what your peers say about you really doesn't mean as much to us as what you say. We worry most about what you and your peers are like.

"Do you remember anything about those four guys?"
"Not much," I answered truthfully.

"Tell me in one or two words what you honestly felt about them."
"Well, if I can remember, I think they were three dorks and a prick." We weren't supposed to use that kind of language in OCS but he surprised me when he laughed.

Buddy Report 101 continued. "We use the buddy report mainly to check out your level of honesty and your judgment. See, some people use the buddy report to help out their friends or to screw their enemies. Would you believe, your evaluation of your peers was 100% accurate? Would you also believe that your evaluation, all of your evaluations, were within two percentage points of the list that we've put together here in the faculty, which included academics, leadership, and a whole lot of other things?

Now, the people who left had evaluated people at the wrong end. Everybody got the ninety to ninety-five percent at either end of this thing. The exact order varied a little bit, but most everybody got some top ten percent and the bottom ten percent. The order varied a little but the ends of the spectrum were picked by the entire group.

Now about these people who got buddy reported out. We found the majority of their top people are on the bottom or bottom people are on the top or something of that nature, which means they either were dishonest or they had no judgment. Are you following me so far?"

I nodded in bewilderment. He went on, "Almost all of you picked the same people at the top as I just said and the same people at the bottom and we in the school agreed. The majority viewpoint used the values and standards of measurement that we all use. Those who differ widely are suspect. No personality should be strong enough to overshadow what we're doing. If we're all honest and we're all using the same frame of reference."

He had just told me I had great judgment so what the hell was he trying to tell me? What was he rambling about? He was uncomfortable. "To be honest, I should've had this conference before. Certainly, I have to have it before you ever receive a commission if you do indeed receive a commission."
What a zinger!

"You've completed the course. Your buddy reports placed you too squarely in the middle of your class." He handed me my book. They'd been taken apart and re-stapled so all my reports were under my cover. "The cover had sixty some pages in it. Go ahead. Read it."

I couldn't believe it. They were wonderful. Born leader. We'd follow this guy anyplace. It was great, wonderful. I was completely bewildered. After I'd read three of 'em, I looked up.

He said, "Look at some of the ones at the rear."
I did as he said. Blowhard, cocky to the point of nausea. That hurt. Under pressure, he has the ability to make instant decisions, usually wrong. By the time I looked at this one, I was fighting back tears of shame.
In a real tired voice, he said, "As you can see, Candidate, you've blown 150 years of the system and we here at the school are really at a loss to know what to do about you. And I find it my unenviable job to decide in the next few minutes, whether you're gonna be a Lieutenant or not.

"I told you that statistically you find yourself in the middle of the class, but you're also in the top and the bottom, so that must tell someone even with your math skills that almost half the class put you in the top ten percent and almost half of the class put you in the bottom ten percent, a phenomenon we've never even seen or heard of or even thought about before.

"We've had a lot more discussion about you than you'll even know because as we said before, the main purpose of the buddy report is to find out if the person writing the report is honest and if he has good judgment.

"Well, we'll assume that 90% to 99% of these people were honest. We kept them in the school. We liked the way they rated with some sort of consistency. We'll also assume that they're intelligent. They just finished this course. So, the question is what in the heck is there about you? Are you really a leader? Are you really a hero? Or are you, to use your own phrase, a dork? I've got to decide in the next few minutes and it's not going to be easy."

In the next few minutes, I turned on all my Celtic charm, plus all the logic and leadership skills I possessed. I just laughed with a confidence that I didn't have, and said, "Well, Captain, I think it's pretty simple to figure out. The fact that I've been here thirty-seven weeks, as you know, every day's a dog year in OCS and a lot of People think I'm absolutely insane to stay here this long. And other People think I'm a complete hero to stay in here this long. And you and I know, I'm only a guy who has a lot of trouble with gunnery and is determined to be commissioned." With that he chuckled and I knew I was coming into the home stretch. He looked philosophical, gazed off into the skies looking like he wanted to go back to Korea. Finally he stood up, stuck out his hand, and said, "Candidate, if you can stay out of trouble until 9:00 tomorrow morning, I think we can commission you an officer in the United States Army."

Though ecstatic, I tried to be cool. "Thank you, Sir." I saluted and walked out of the room.

Already past 8:30, it was too late to go home. I couldn't call Nancy so I just went to the barracks and tossed and turned.

We always had to go through the mess hall in OCS. No one required that we eat, but they had to keep a running head count of people so they could determine rations.

We marched up there as a class, the first time since we'd become Red Birds, but today, there was one critical difference. Instead of wearing our red tabs, we had on our pinks and greens. We were cocky. We were relieved. We were happy. We walked in the mess hall. If anybody stayed it was just to shake hands with some of the other people and bask in their glory.
Then I went home to pick up Nancy. At 9:00 we marched into the gym together, one of the few things we were ever allowed to do on our own. Would you believe it? We made it. We marched in together, the wives and families.

Lots of parents and others trooped in behind us. The three distinguished military graduates got their bars pinned on by the Commandant and their Battery Commander. The rest of us got a handshake, an envelope full of paperwork, and a little box of bars and then we went on back to join the families.

The families pinned on the bars. Nancy pinned me and two or three grinning, envious looking guys sittin' around me. And then, would you believe, it was over. There's the old adage about you're not really out of there until you're a hundred miles down the road with your records clutched to your breast, but it was good enough for me. I was an officer and a gentleman and I was on my way to glory. Let me end this with one little footnote. We'd been married about seven weeks, and Nancy was already about six-and-a-half weeks pregnant so we barfed our way from Fort Sill, Oklahoma to Fort Bragg, North Carolina where I was to join the 82nd Airborne.

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.

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 of 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

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—droopy 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 Lindys 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 mat 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.
One of two Brass Cannons at the Robinson Barracks Archway

Candidates enter the new Snow Hall for classroom work
Chapter Seven
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 out doors (in the gutter) and having an upper classman 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 weekend 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 DC 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 unranked 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.
Message from the Commandant, OCS to the Graduating Class 3-56
From 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
From 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 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 one’s self 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 of service with no expectation of being promoted. I had some experience with the 60mm 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 lower classmen, 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 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 class-mates. 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 class-mates. 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.

*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 middleclass, 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 Upperclass 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 Upperclass 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.

**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 foot locker. Brasso was banned as an inflammable. When asked what it was, Smitka replied "Liquid aspirin sir." The upper classman said "Liquid aspirin?" and Smitka 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.

**Guy A. Wilhelm 2-59**

I attended OCS in 1958-59 and graduated with class 2-59 on March 17th 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 kindy man, although very impressive and imposing in appearance, explained to me how the system worked.

Eligibility to take the OCS test was based on 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 was 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, Booth (I can't remember his first name), 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 drain pipe. 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 Peak 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, 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 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 eleven 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 easier than marching at this pace but was not allowed. It was customary to carry a small pebble in ones 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 AM 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, "C 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 oat meal for my first meal in the OCS mess hall and regretted it all day. The oat meal spill on the front of my jacket seemed to attract every upper and middle classman 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 Guards, 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 were 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 U.S. 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 lower classmen were privates and did all the physical work. I was amazed at the amount of work that a lowerclassmen 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 PM 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 actually 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
each 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.
Chapter Eight
1960 - 1963

OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL TODAY
By Captain Talbott Barnard
US Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School
From the February 1960 issue of Artillery Trends

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.

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, NJ 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.

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 middle classmen 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 (sp?). 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 hystericst. 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.

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., Copyright 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 1000 those same units. The Navy uses degrees and hundredths of a degree, and the Army uses mils in regulating gunfire. Mil allows 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 middle-classmen (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, 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 upper-classmen, 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 middle-classman, 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 candidates 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 girl friends 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.

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 lay 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, arrange 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 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 at a rate As lowerclassmen, we were servers providing a “family style” meal using bowls and dishes. A Redbird sat at the head of the table with one or two middleclass men and six lowerclassmen. 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 rung 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.

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 of the upper class in Alpha Battery were subject to an hour of rifle PT......the crime is still unsolved.

Leonard Deege: 3-63

My experiences in OCS may not be typical, but I am sure they were shared by some of my contemporaries during the period that I attended, which was in late 1962 to early 1963 and just before the Army started to actively recruit college graduates for OCS. For me, OCS was a life altering experience transitioning me from a happy go lucky collegiate student athlete to a hard-boiled officer. OCS taught me how to survive pressure situations without losing one’s head or temper. 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. For that I will always be grateful. Thank you OCS TAC Officers and fellow candidates for helping me to grow up in a hurry.
Having been born and raised in the Netherlands, I personally did not know much about the Army or OCS before I applied. I had just completed basic and medical corps training, which was not anything like being in a regular Army unit. I knew, of course that I had a military obligation, that officers made more money, that in OCS I would need to run a lot (which I loved in any case) and that I would have to put up with lots of harassment. I therefore prepared myself by periodically running 10Ks on cross country roads and by studying the battles of WWII. (While the latter activity turned out to be interesting, but a waste of time, the running preparations helped a lot.) However I had already got an idea of how the Army operated; upon enlistment I had volunteered for ranger, airborne, and Infantry OCS, but once I had signed the dotted line, the Army thought it best for me to train as a medical corpsman. Luckily, while learning some emergency surgery and how to make up a hospital bed, I found a kindred medical corpsman, who helped me to apply for OCS. My flat feet had ruled me out of the infantry, but an artillery officer on my OCS screening panel thought I might make an artillery officer. Even though I did not have the foggist of what that entailed, I strongly agreed with the officer. It appeared to be a way of escaping the fate of the “bedpan artist.”

When I arrived at Fort Sill’s Robinson barracks, I was quickly made aware that new candidates were lower than scum and we therefore owed everyone with more rank (everyone else) lots of pushups and reaction drills. Because I had only just achieved the rank of E-2, which gave me all of $83 per month and was just slightly above the lowest Army rank, the upper class welcoming committee could do not do much to me. However, the erstwhile sergeants, now entering as candidates, received their first taste of what was about to come. I watched the scene of the entering candidates getting all of their hard earned stripes and qualifications ripped from their uniforms. Welcome on board candidates!

Initially I accepted the many challenges presented as “enjoyable” testing and a bit over the top, sort of like training for a long distance run by running backwards. I eventually learned that the “enjoyment” part was not always present and that the primary requirement for succeeding in OCS was to have an overwhelming desire to graduate. While the academics were easy for me, the feeling of always being on edge and having to react swiftly to others was not.

However, there were many comical times, which helped to relieve the pressures. For example, a mass funeral procession was organized for the burial of “candidate praying mantis.” This illegal pet had finally given up the ghost after having been too closely kept out of sight from the TAC officers. Apparently as a result of an unannounced inspection, the mantis was inadvertently stuffed into a Class A pants pocket, which caused his untimely end. The procession was marked by much wailing and grief. Even the TAC officers participated in the parade to the mantis’ final resting place, which was next to one of the barracks.

For most of us there were friendships that also helped to smooth the path. “Cooperate and graduate” was our theme and for the ones who did not heed this song, the times were tough. During the first week in a welcome lecture, an upper classmen told us look to one’s right and to one’s left and one of those aspiring candidates would not be there at graduation time. I think neither of my compatriots remained until the end.
I honestly did not mind the psychological and physical challenges of the first week of OCS (called “zero week”) or most of the six weeks in lower class. Most of it was so pathetic that it is seemed funny. While we had to learn the definition of “hazing” by heart, there were some overzealous candidates and luckily only one of the TAC officers, who wished to ensure us that we fully understood the meaning of that term. They were quick to help us experience what it was like to stand with bent knees against a pole for as long as we could stay up, and while being shouting at by at least four other candidates, at the distance of about two inches from our faces. Spittle was often flying into our face and we were of course not allowed to wipe that off. Also there were the low crawling exercises underneath the barracks (later banned by a general whose son underwent the experience), across rough gravel, and other choice places helped us to better understand what we were forbidden to do. Most of us saw the farcical side of things and accepted the challenges of self-control. We would not let anyone have the pleasure of showing a reaction to any possible abuse. There was one unfortunate candidate who always appeared to be smiling. He was always foremost in line for having “to wipe that smile off his face.” His smile infuriated upper classmen who were used to having everyone suffer and look glum. “Smiley” had previously been a semi-professional fighter and had undoubtedly endured countless punches. However, he found hitting himself continuously in the face too much to bear and he finally quit.

We were taught to do things quicker with infamous “reaction drills.” We learned that one only needs one and one half minutes to change from fatigues into a Class “A” uniform and fall in outside in a formation. The early ones were asked to rest in the front leaning rest position until all candidates had made it to the formation. Unfortunately no one had thought to take a shower in between uniform changes and the drill had to be repeated several times until the TAC officer grew tired of the game. We never actually made it within the required timeframes, but we got very close. However, our uniforms never passed the inevitable inspections after we had fallen in. At another occasion, we had to fall out dressed up in ponchos, galoshes without boots, helmets without helmet liners and our mess kit in one hand. The other hands were used to grab a poncho of the candidate in front of us, because we could not see with the bobbling helmets covering our eyes. In this way we double timed around the barracks until it was time to change back into our Class C’s. Those were very funny times; however, some candidates could not see the humor. Even as soon as the first week (or zero week) some decided that they were not having a good time and a large number could be heard to cry in their bunks at night. I was then wondered to myself how those potential officers would be able to react in combat. Aside from the unnecessary drama, self-pity seemed a waste of time. After the lights went out and the TAC officers had left us alone (sometimes after having us go through dismounted drills in bed), this was the time to give ourselves a “dry” shave in order to save time in the morning, when only a few minutes were allotted to do pushups, shower, shave and get dressed for the day. I was only caught once in a morning inspection for having omitted shaving a few of my whiskers. I think it earned me lots of pushups.

Then there were also the occasional zealots who tried to impress with their ability to meet out extreme physical or psychological pain. Most of the usual insults were comical, such as “are you dog eying me, candidate” (at someone who took a side way glance) or “are you hot for my body.” Sometimes however, a higher ranked candidate would go overboard. I remember a deliberate attempt to wash a candidate out, by
having him quit. One such unfortunate candidate was made to walk like a dog and to retrieve countless stones being thrown by upper classmates. And then there was that big former airborne sergeant who lined up all the lower classmates in the magic room, but out of sight of TAC officers. This former parachutist attempted to solicit respect by having candidates repeatedly attempt to fly through a wall. No body/wall impact was sufficiently hard enough for him, but all he got for his efforts was well founded fear. The candidates were finally released when the “magic room” was covered with sweat and tears and the sergeant’s sadistic impulses were somewhat satisfied.

Aside from the occasional abuses, however, most of the discipline/punishment was not excessive, but was awarded with the purpose of applying psychological and physical stress, similar to what one would endure when performing a demanding sport. I therefore found nothing wrong with the Jark marches, the two hour drillings twice over on the parking lots, the running with rifles at high port, reaction drills, and the countless pushups. In most formations I was lucky to stand between two bigger and taller candidates, who drew more punishment than I, primarily because they were exemplary physical specimen. It was mostly all very comical and a big game to me. Occasionally I hoped that time would fly by.

I remember the square meals, two inches on the front of the seat and four inches from the table sitting at a brace showing seven wrinkles in the chin-and the periodic “line to march” commands. Lots of psychological harassment was dished out during the meals. Very effective, when one is hungry and cannot get enough on one’s fork while looking at a spot on the ceiling. Also never forgot the candidate who was asked to eat underneath the table and beg like a dog. His howling for food, like a dog caused us all to laugh-when we were allowed to. Also never forgot the candidate who attempted to slice his wrist during a meal and who was considered to be trying to attract attention. When that did not work, he slammed his fists on the table, which gave lucky underclassmen (me being one of them at the time) an opportunity to stuff some food into their throats while the ranked candidates were distracted by the outburst. Hunger was definitely a factor in lower class. My big brother taught me to volunteer to take the left over cereal after each morning meal to the kitchen. I was then able to slip some cereal cartons into my pants, which remained there the rest of the morning until we had a class break in the Artillery School. During class breaks candidates immediately lined up before all the candy machines, which were then quickly emptied. I normally got my candy and went into the bathroom to consume the candy and cereal, while polishing my belt buckle and boots. Midway through the lower class, I suffered from toothaches and had to see a dentist.

My honeymoon in OCS came to an end when I started to wonder whether the military was a good fit for me. Some of my ideals about the Army had been busted and all that was left was a contract to serve for three years. If I quit I could be expected to serve as an enlisted man, perhaps even a buck sergeant, but for at least another two years. If I graduated I could get out in only six more months because we were allowed to choose between six months and two years. What I did not know was that the wrath of the whole unit would come to pass when I opted to choose the six months alternative. This decision caused hell to descend and everyone seemed intent to make me regret that decision. My demerits increased disproportionally so that I eventually achieved the OCS record for disciplinary tours. The increased pressure caused me to have to make a firm
commitment to succeed regardless of the costs. I could no longer just get by, I had to excel or I would undoubtedly fail.

For one week I was made battery commander and was set up to fail by being given the weakest possible staff. At the start of the week, I met with my assigned staff and explained what I understood to be TAC staff's intent to fail us all. I solicited and got the best possible effort from each staff member and that week we won all the inter-battalion competitions. We all went out of our way to help each other to do well and we managed to excel beyond all expectations. Consequently, I did not even have to look for support but had several high ranking candidates volunteer to testify on our behalf during the mandatory separation panel proceedings. Together we reduced the prosecuting officer, who wanted us to fail, to a bumbling. We focused on looking extremely composed, while rattling off all of our achievements. Our volunteer supporters also confirmed that we had impressed them and the rest of the proceedings were just perfunctory. I never forget the prosecuting lieutenant (an ROTC officer) who looked very confused by all of our support and who was then unable to make a rational case for dismissal. Luckily the Commandant was a pretty good judge of character and he completely dismissed the case against us. That was a hard fought victory and my respect for military justice reached a new high. It was also a learning experience for me that I needed to strengthen my resolve to excel in future assignments. I want to thank those brave candidates who went out on a limb for me and I want to assure them that they did not make a mistake. I also want to thank my wonderful, supportive “big brother,” whose name I have forgotten, but whose kindness I will never forget.

Although I had signed up for only 6 months, I actually stayed several more years and enjoyed some of the best work experiences ever. My two year stint as 155SP Howitzer Battery Commander for the 11th Cavalry, in RVN was the best job that I have ever had and I have since regretted not staying in longer.

**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 upper classman 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…”
This Patch Needs a Sleeve
From Artillery Trends November 1963
LT James J. Dorsey; 1-62

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.
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.


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.

Candidates “Standing Tall” under the watchful eye of an Upper Classman

Square meals in the mess hall – “Hit a brace Candidate”
Robinson Barracks Archway
during the time the school was designated the
US Army Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School (1957-69)

Blockhouse Signal Mountain
Chapter Nine
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.

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 Upper Class 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 105mm 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 middle class 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 lower class candidates had prior service and they were busy removing unit patches and stripes from their uniforms. Ten minutes before evening the meal (announced by a candidate at the corner of our battery street and the battalion street – DELTA BATTERY, EVENING MEAL FORMATION, ONE ZERO MEENOTS) 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 upper class 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 middle class 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 155/158mm guns near the grade school. The temperature was well below zero and we wore long johns, sweat pants, 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 upper classmen 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.

**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 from 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.

**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!

**Fred Gesin: 9-64**

When I made Redbird 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 TAC's 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.

**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 lower classmen 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) 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 Upper Classman, 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 Upper Classman 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 Upper Classmen. 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. Obliviously, 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 Upper Classmen and TAC Officers.

Ah, but the blessing of reaching “turning green” and Middle Class. But the real moment was reaching Upper Class. 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 lower classman 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, he was 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 kinda 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.

Gold fish 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 pogey 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 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 half way 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.

**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 ambuscade. 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 OCS 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 middle classmen (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 upper classman 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 taped 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.

Edward R. Hines: 5-65

My memories of OCS are vivid and enduring. From the moment my friend and I checked in with 55-lb. 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 TAK 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 2d 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” was (an elastic band placed around the top of your ankle to secure your pants bottom) up to the torso. 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!!

Vandeventer 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 17:00 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, 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 of 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 lower class!" 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., slid them into my shirt-and headed for the stairs. Coming up those stairs were two upper classmen 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!"

**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 they 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 (Upper Class) and Big Brother (Middle Class), 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 Upper Class, 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 Upper Class) 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 Upper Class, 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. Lower Class was supervised by the Middle Class. Upper Class had overall supervision. However, the Upper Classman 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 Middle Class to insure the Lower Classmen kept their feet and elbows off the table.
A way for a Lower Classman 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) Upper Classman 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 Upper Class. I guess we were not so reserved toward them.

One of the many unpleasantantries 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 Upper Class, 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 Middle Class; 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 Upper Class, 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 FAOCS 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 wheeling a pistol in the city. In reflection I probably would have done nothing different. After all....it worked.

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 upper class. 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 upper classmen had in store for us. When we became upper classman we would go back and try to invent new ways to make life hell for the lower classmen. Each barracks had the lower, middle and upper classmen 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 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 lower classmen and wore blue ribbons on our epaulets to show my status... bottom of the barrel. Bill was middle class. It was maybe the 3rd or 4th week when I got a visit from Bill.

Another middle classman 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 upper classmen. 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 upper classman 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

**Davidson Loehr: 11-65**

Almost everything I did as an officer that I’m proud of, can be traced directly back to Fort Sill, the classmates and TAC Officers we had – especially Captain Donald Whitehead, whom some of us would still proudly salute if he could walk in. I have several stories, from silly to serious.
First, a funny but unforgettable story. One of the things I learned at OCS was that I could not read a map. I still can’t – last week I even got lost using a GPS. It must be genetic. But I only knew of one other classmate with this topographical deficit: Bill Catron. And I was sure throughout Upper Class that OCS put us together as roommates, just in case our affliction was contagious.

But it got worse. During the last month, we were taken out to play Forward Observer, but not told where we were going. The 1LT instructor (wish I could remember his name) told us we needed to watch our maps, and follow where the bus driver was taking us. I was lost before we got out of the parking lot, as was Bill, who was sitting beside me. As everyone reading this knows, there were two firing ranges: the east, and the west. Our maps were glued to a piece of Masonite about 1/4” thick and a foot square, with the east range on one side and the west range on the other. Eventually, after the bus driver made all the zigs and zags he could think of, we wound up … somewhere. As we were getting out of the bus, Bill quietly asked if I knew where we were. “Hell,” I said, “I don’t even know which side of the map board we’re on!” Then I heard the sound of someone clearing his throat in an overly dramatic way, and turned to see that the instructor had overheard us. I suspected this would probably be a memorable day.

After we had taken our seats – what, were there folding chairs? I forget where we sat – the Lieutenant started sort of humming, in that way that means Evil is afoot. He was looking for a suitable target, as far away as he could find one. Finally, a “Ha!” He pointed toward a spot where he thought he saw most of a rusting yellow car body, out near the horizon. “See that rusted yellow car body? That is your firing point, Candidate Loehr!” As I remember it, the laughing began immediately, though maybe it took two or three seconds to build. I looked at both sides of the map board – which made as much sense as a deaf man listening for clues. It looked like there was a little stream way out on both firing ranges, in about the same spot. With that as my only clue, I decided it was a 50-50 chance, so chose the East range. Then, I decided to call in target coordinates – which if I had guessed right on which firing range this was, might have been sort of close. The field phone rang as the class began giggling. When I picked it up, the guy wanted to talk to the TAC Officer. The Lieutenant kept saying, “Yes, yes, yes, I know – but is the target within safety? Yes? Then fire it.” As the class howled, I had the distinct feeling that they weren’t with me on this one. I called the gun section and very quietly said “Request Splash, over!” It seems I spoke too low for anyone but the instructor and the guy on the other end of the phone to hear, so our Lieutenant asked me to say it louder so the class could follow. So now I listened to the field phone until the folks at the guns said “Splash” – meaning the shells should hit in five seconds. Now mind you, both the instructor and I were trying to play it very cool, like we had things under control. And I was trying to pretend that I had some reason to be playing it cool. This didn’t fool anyone else, but we had this game going – maybe it was the game of who would be able to pretend he was still cool by the end. I didn’t want to give it away by rotating my head everyway like a Bobblehead doll to take in the whole East range, or I’d look silly. And looks are everything. The FDO on the phone yelled “Splash!” and I quietly began counting to five while trying to scan the entire east range without moving my head – and while the instructor was telling the class “You won’t need your binoculars for this one.” I thought the sheer volume of their laughter was a bit rude, but didn’t raise the point. I was looking for those two puffs of smoke. They had to be there,
but I didn’t see a thing. I had a great vantage point above the East Range, and was quite sure I didn’t see any smoke.

At that point I gave the Lieutenant a set-up that no decent person should stoop to take. Looking, I’m sure, completely calm and cool, I turned to him and said (quietly), “Sir, do you think they’re duds?” A tad faster than the speed of light, he said, “The only dud I can see here is the Candidate holding onto the field phone.” That would be me. “Why don’t you turn around and look out on the West Range where you called in your artillery?

Nuts. It was a whole new world over there! I turned around and could barely see two puffs of smoke out by that far horizon. The class was howling, but that was easy for them – I had to fire two more shots and try to bring this sucker somewhere near the real target. As I remember it, my first correction to the guns was something like “Right thirteen miles, add 1200.” This business of howling had by now completely incapacitated the whole class. The second set of two rounds, weirdly, were in the general ballpark of that rusted yellow car body that was my firing point. So I called in something like “Left eight hundred, add 250, fire for effect!” After “Splash,” we were all counting to five.

And then, when the two rounds landed in the right area, one of them actually HIT that rusty yellow car body, and blew some of its parts flying. By this time, classmates were just about falling out of their chairs. The Lieutenant and I, for no sane reason at all, were still trying to play it cool. I got it together and said, “Well Sir, it looks like an “A” doesn’t it?” He must have had a good rhythm section, because he never missed a beat. “Yes, Candidate Loehr, that was truly a magnificently lucky shot! And the second round was also beyond belief, coming over thirteen miles and landing within a few hundred meters. Unfortunately, your first rounds completely wiped out all of your support troops, leaving you surrounded by an angry enemy. That’s about a C-minus.”

I thought this feat should have been celebrated with some kind of trophy to note that I held the record at OCS for missing a firing point on my initial rounds by thirteen miles. I hope that record still stands.

Now we move from light to heavy. This next story is one of which I’ve always been ashamed: a mark of immaturity where I wish I’d been more grown-up. Near the end of Middle Class, Captain Whitehead called me into his office. He told me that my combined grades made me fourth highest in the class, qualifying me for Honor Graduate. I laughed, and said something like “What a hoot!” Captain Whitehead said, “That’s why I called you in, Candidate Loehr. I cannot in good conscience make someone an honor graduate when they think the school is a joke.” I said OCS had been a very good experience, one I would never forget – but that, yes, I did think it was kind of a joke. Captain Whitehead said he wanted to send my name up as an Honor Graduate, but not if I intended to keep that attitude for the next two months. I said something very silly and immature: about how getting that award by pretending to be someone I wasn’t, meant that I wouldn’t really be getting it, if I just faked an attitude for two months. I know he was disappointed in this answer. He said he would give me a chance to think about it by making me battery commander – either the next week or the week after. I asked him not to do it. I knew this was a leadership position that carried a lot of weight,
and could be used either to push promising candidates up, or push inadequate candidates toward recycling, and asked him not to waste it on me, but to give it to someone else who was qualified, and had the “right” attitude. Though I’ve always identified with Groucho Marx’s quip that he wouldn’t join any club that would have him as a member, I still count this as one of the opportunities I’ve missed in my life. It’s funny how something so small can cast such a long shadow after 45 years – more proof that the experience at OCS was both serious and powerful.

Then again, if I had been more grown-up at 23, I would have missed the next experience – which happened when Captain Whitehead, damn his beloved hide, made me battery commander for a week. It was the week before the IG inspection, a week in which we also had a field operation. Early in the week Captain Whitehead came up to me in formation. Talking very quietly, he said he needed a command decision from me on ... something. I said ok, but I needed more information. What about this, and this, and .... “That’s all the information there is, Candidate Loehr. I’ll expect your decision at the next formation.” I don’t remember what the issue was, but there were only two paths we could take, I didn’t have enough information to make an informed decision, so figured the best I had was a 50-50 chance at guessing whether we should do A or B. At the next formation, sure enough, we again stood face to face. “Well, Candidate Loehr, what have you decided?” “Sir, I’ve decided the battery will do option B.” “Why?” “Sir, because I’m the Battery Commander and it’s my decision to make.”

Whatever option B was, it was the right one, and I thanked Fortune for smiling on me. We went on a two to three day field operation the next day. While in the field, Captain Whitehead decided to have another go at me. Again, a command decision was needed in a few hours. But this was a bigger decision, and guessing wrong would make a mess for the whole battery. I told him this, and asked, if he had no more information, where I might get some. “There is no more information Candidate Loehr.” It was a complete toss-up. I could see no way on earth to know I was picking the right course, and there was a lot at stake. A few hours later, again the face-to-face summit meeting. I told him I again chose option B, and when asked why, gave the same answer. This time option B was a complete disaster! I felt that everyone in the battery was angry at me for such a bone-headed course of action. At the end of the week, I went to his office to get my grade for the battery commander position. It was actually a high grade – I forget how the positions were graded, but think I got about an A-minus. He kept going over details he’d observed through the week, and I found myself getting angrier and angrier. Of course he noticed this – or was playing to make me angry. At the end, he asked if I had anything I wanted to say about the experience. I asked if I could speak freely, and just exploded at him. I told him I thought the week had been a stupid joke. What the hell kind of leadership did you show, Sir? Demanding uninformed decisions even when the decisions made a difference. How in hell is this teaching leadership, setting up phony scenarios where the decisions made would never have more than a 50-50 chance of being right? This is just the kind of crap I had in mind when I said the school was a joke, dammit!”

Captain Whitehead was magnificent. He slowly rolled his chair back from the desk, leaned back in it, and said, “Oh, Candidate Loehr, I’m disappointed. If you only learn one thing from your six months here, it should be the realization that life’s most important decisions must always be made with insufficient information.” I went numb,
thanked him, saluted and left. That scene took place around September of 1965. It remains one of the half-dozen most powerful and memorable experiences of my life.

Of the many good and/or powerful memories of my 43 months in the Army, almost all had their roots in my six months in OCS at Fort Sill, the influence and memories of a few classmates, and one very special TAC Officer. As I said in that speech, no matter how perverse it sounds, for me it was sacred time.

In OCS, I was sometimes referred to as a "magic" candidate -- I assume that word is known by everyone who went through the school. Basically, it seemed to mean, for instance, that if the rules were that everyone had to do a Jark march, but somehow you got out of it (legally, honestly, mind you), you must be "magic."

I was made the class social director. I think Lt. Manupella gave me the job. In this capacity, I remember two things of note, if not of merit: We sponsored a dance for our class, rented a ballroom in a Lawton hotel. I think the name of the ball was something pretty dark, about how this was a Christmas dance because we might not be alive when the real Christmas came. I drove up to a girls' school -- in something like Chickasha, maybe a state college, though a small one. Anyway, I got them to post an RSVP notice inviting women from the school to come to our OCS Christmas ball.

We had money that we had paid into ... something. I think we paid for hotel rooms for all the girls (not for couples, just women). I know we had a bar with liquor and beer. I remember Captain Whitehead coming over to me in the OCS area. He said he had heard a rumor that I was arranging a dance, with liquor, with women brought from a nearby girls' school, and that I'd paid for rooms with the OCS fund we had all paid into. I said I had heard that rumor too. He said that he could not approve or permit a dance with liquor, women and hotel rooms, under the auspices of OCS. He paused, and then said that the only way this rumored dance could happen would be if he had no confirmation of the rumor from me. He asked me if I understood. I said yes, Sir. Then he said that if there were such a dance, it would probably be much appreciated and well-earned. I said yes, it probably would be. He said, "That's all, Candidate Loehr"; I saluted, we parted.

The party went off pretty much without a hitch, though one classmate got drunk and, I think, got a ticket for driving on the sidewalk. I think one girl complained that a classmate had been kind of pushy with her -- though nothing more serious or physical. I believe -- not sure on this one -- that I contacted the faculty member who had posted the invitation, saying I had heard this as gossip, and if she heard of it and thought it was serious, that I would take full responsibility. She said not to worry about it, the girls said they had a good time, and she had heard that the one girl was drunk, but that the Officer Candidates, from all reports she had, behaved themselves like gentlemen. I wondered what planet she had come from, but instead thanked her and said goodbye.

The next story concerns the graduation night dinner, or whatever it was. This was the other thing I devised as class social chairman. The assignment was to prepare a program for the gathered candidates, staff, and wives. So I organized a choir. We sang either three or four pieces -- someone in the class was a pianist, I think. I took some artistic license by rewriting the words to the first two songs: "The Twelve Days of Christmas" and "I Wish You Love." I made them about Vietnam, with some pretty stark
lines. All twelve days of Christmas were about Vietnam, though I can only remember the first five:  "Five dead Marines. Four falling bombs, three mortars, two hand grenades, and a sniper in a Ming tree."

I don't remember many words from the "I Wish You Luck" adaptation, really just the eight-bar bridge:  "On the OP, there you will be, with your M-2 and radio, The Viet Cong will tag along to keep you busy until you go...."  I just had a duet sing the "I Wish You Love/Luck" song, because I thought some classmates wouldn't want to sing it. I think it was Bill Catron and I who sang it.

I remember that we ended the program with "Climb Every Mountain" (with its real words), introduced by saying that, although the first two songs showed the honest and appropriate anxiety we felt about the prospect of going to Vietnam, that the anxiety and fear did not define us, and we wanted to close with a song about the deep spirit and character of Class 11-65. There were a fair number of wet eyes in the audience after we sang it.

After the show, an officer came over to me and said the General wanted to see me. He wanted to know whose idea this was, and whether I thought two of the songs were appropriate for this graduation dinner. I fessed up, and said yes I did think they were appropriate. The reality of Vietnam had become a little scary, as the troop buildup over there increased throughout our six months in OCS. Sometimes, I said, the fear was palpable -- and not just mine. I thought that when it was kept as a forbidden subject, it gained power, and by naming it we could and did reduce its power to scare us. I don't know what he thought of it, but he thanked me and that was that.

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 lower classman, 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 upper-class 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.
Double Cubicle Display Diagram
SOP for Officer Candidates (March 1965)

“Let Fortune Yield to Experience”
Or
“Skill is Better than Luck”
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.
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, regretfully, 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.

March to Mess
Chapter Ten
1966

Wulf R. Lindenau: 1-66

I remember a rather amusing incident involving a lower classman when I was a Red Bird - pretty close to our graduation date in December 1965. As I was slowly walking somewhere, I do not recall where to, I heard someone with a loud and commanding voice address me from behind with a phrase something like "freeze you puke, what do you think you're doing"...so I "froze" and came to attention.

I believed a tactical officer was about to read me the riot act for a transgression, or chew me out just for good measure. As the loud voice moved from behind to face me, and as I looked at his helmet and he at mine, we both immediately grasped the situation and there was an eerie silence. Relieved that I was not the recipient of unwanted attention from a tactical officer, I continued my walk - leaving the loud voice behind. I never did determine who it was, but I'll bet he remembers me.

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 upper classman 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.

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.

**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. Half way 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 half way 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 upper classman’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"

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**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 of 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 Redbird 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).

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 middleclass (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!

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 2000 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 POW's 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 insure 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 0-3 or 0-4 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 thru 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 upper class 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.

**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 Middleclass status. The remainder of our captivity was as Upperclassmen.

During the first half of our Lowerclass 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!!!"
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.

by George L. Skypeck, Reg™, Copyright © All rights reserved, used with permission of Mr. Skypeck

Jeff Dossett: 28-66
From Delayed Detonation
By Jeff Dossett, Copyright 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.

**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 by 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.

**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.

**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 47,000 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
The principle 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.
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.
Welcome to “Xing Loi”

Simulated POW Compound gained world-wide attention in 1967
Chapter Eleven
1967 - Part 1

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.

Tommy Franks: 5-67
From American Soldier
By General Tommy Franks, Copyright 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 105mm 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 105mm 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 splotted 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 100,000-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
Observers 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 105mm shell passed overhead to explode with a Fourth of July blast on a target 1000 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
"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.

**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, bath mats, 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 bath mats 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 foot locker. He made John eat the whole package and to this day, John cannot stand Thin Mints.

My next memory was during the 10th 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.

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: the above claim concerning the “last official drop” has not been widely accepted.

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 1000. 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 Ft 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 1500 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 identifying 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.

**Vance Marsh: 17-67**

The skills of the Field Artillery began during my tenure at the OCS at Fort Sill
Oklahoma and the tensity 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 were 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.

**Tom McCourt: 18-67**

*From To Be A Soldier*

*By Tom McCourt, Copyright 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 upper classmen 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 upper classman 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 upper classman 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 upper classman snapped. I dug into my folder and produced the official documents. The upper classman 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 upper classman 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 upper classman 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 upper classman 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 upper classman 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 cut back to 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 eight or nine 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 (Training and Cadre) 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 lower classman, and he wore a blue tab on each epaulet. Lower classmen were treated worse than cattle, and it was part of the plan.

As Lower classmen, 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. Lower classmen 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 any time. 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 upper classmen 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 upper classman 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 upper classman would give us permission to eat. We would no sooner get a taste of scrambled eggs than a whistle would blow and the upper classman 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 lower classman, 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 middle classman. Things began to lighten-up from there on out. A middle classman 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-umphant!" 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 lower classmen 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

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 eight or nine 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 middle classmen, 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 eight or nine 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, upper classmen were the enforcers and the drill instructors for the outfit. It was in dominating the lower classmen 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 upper classmen 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 upper classmen 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 upper classman 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 upper classmen 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 175mm. They make a big splash. For intermediate work, and for heavy hitting on fortified positions, a 155mm does a good job. But most often, we were taught to shoot using the smaller, 105mm 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.

**John F. Crowley: 24A-67**

Two "Memories"...I was drafted on December 28th 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 bowels 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**

*From Into the Green (A Reconnaissance by Fire)*
*By Cherokee Paul McDonald, Copyright 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."

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 1000. 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 "Illegitimi Non Carborundum" or don't let those fellows 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 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 class mates, 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.

**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. The night we packed over to the OCS area was when it dawned on me that something new was finally happening. 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 2.5 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 up stairs to our cubicles.

12. Study time came just before bed time 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 cussed, 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 caste 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 blanks round 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.

James E. Snyder: 26A-67

Before I left for Ft. 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 Ft. 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 Ft. 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 5:30a.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” (middleclass). 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 middle-classmen 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 redbirds (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 Ft. 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 redbirds, 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, AR. 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 accepted a late program setback, and graduated with later classes. One of these, Mel Lembke of Grand Forks ND, 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 Ft. 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 provide 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.
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 "Redbirds" 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.

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 1½ 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 FAOCS 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 5½-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 ½ -sq.-mi. 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.

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 TAC 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!

**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.

**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.
Candidates returning from the top of MB-4 to assemble at the “Big Tree” before returning to Robinson Barracks to complete the 4.2 mile “Jark March”
Chapter Twelve
1967 - Part 2

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 upper classman. 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 upper classmen, as opposed to marching as the other two classes did. I think the upper classmen 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 Ft. 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 was 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 -- which meant Putting Hubby Through. I was allowed to visit the parking lot once each week to see my wife at arms 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 loosing 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 Ft. 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 Geronimo 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**

**Redbird**  Finally, it was time to pin on the Red Bird collar tabs and out 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 Ft. Mac, CA. 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 redbird 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 a 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 then 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 Arty 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 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 uses 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 Sh@t to me, to me,
R - O - T - C,
And Bull Sh@t 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.

“Foot Locker” This was a little olive drab painted plywood box where we kept the items were allowed to have on display. We never sat on made bunks so the foot locker was our chair, shoe shine 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 out 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 I 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 half way 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 foot plunge in to the 2 foot 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 Redbird. The middle class wore green collar 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.

“Redbird” The third and final phase of OCS. During this phase Candidates were granted some minor authority and privileges. There was a Redbird 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 table cloth 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 lower classman. 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 OCBDE area except on official business. Smacks could be identified at a distance by the lack of any colored collar 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 lower classmen 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 meal time 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.

**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 begin 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. And the answer is “NO”; we didn’t HAVE to get married. 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 46-67 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.”
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 an alumnus 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.
Candidate perfects his Firing Chart Procedures

Observed Fires Class
TAC Officer observing, evaluating and developing a candidate

Double-timing to class
Rappelling down Medicine Bluff - MB 3

Candidate works Registration of Precision Fires problem in FDC
Officer Candidate Brigade 1968-1970

From History of the Field Artillery School

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 ½ day integrated field problem was initiated into the Officer Candidate Brigade training program. The exercise was reduced to 4 ½ 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 ½ days the battery participates in RSOP’s, culminated by a battery helilift and firing exercises. The battery is then captured by aggressors and forced 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 ½ 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 untieing 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 6468 Officer Candidates in calendar year 1967 to 2595 in calendar year 1968. During calendar year 1968, the Officer Candidate Brigade commissioned 1432 second lieutenants, with the largest graduating class, OCC 505-68, totaling 138.

The Officer Candidate Brigade input increased from 2595 in calendar year 1968 to 2994 in calendar year 1969. A total of 1922 Second Lieutenants were graduated, of which 1260 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 2994 in Calendar Year 1969 to 2642 in Calendar Year 1970. There were 1232 second lieutenants commissioned, with the largest class 13-70, totaling 105, graduating on 25 June 1970. There were 1438 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 1045 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.
Stairway in Candidate “House”

Candidates training with 105mm howitzer
“Drop Candidate!!!”

Instructor critiques Observed Fire Procedures
Chapter Thirteen
1968 - 1973

From the FAOCs 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.

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 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.
“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 drop outs 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 summer time 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 class room work was also difficult but in a way it was a break. It was often difficult to stay awake. I did well in the class room. 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 then 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.

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 FAOCS Hall of Fame).

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 moral and I ended up making a scrap book (the class all chipped in to pay the costs) and we presented 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.

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 Society of Graduates of the Artillery Officer Candidate School – 1969**

**From the FAOCS 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, a 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**

From the FAOCS 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.

Billy R. Cooper: 1-69
From The Reluctant General
By Billy R. Cooper, Copyright 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 cannonier 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 TAG 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.

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 were 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 FAOCS 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 grave yard. 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 look-outs 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.

Ken Tricinella: 9-69

*The JARK ROCK was presented to the FAOCS 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.

**Hazing: Separating Rites from Wrongs**

By Hank Nuwer

Excerpts from Legion Magazine, July 1999 Issue, Vol. 147, No. I

**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.
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. Upper classmen (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 105mm, 155mm 175mm 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 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 middle classman 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.

**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 in to 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)"

Thomas M. Ellis: 18-69

A Jark was 4.2 miles, from the middle of OCS to the top of MB4 and back. Lower class was M14’s at port arms, middle class at sling arms and upper class with no rifles. Also everyone in jump boots. I made about 22 trips up MB4 and about 10 of us had to do two Jarks (on the running track) the night before graduation and the morning of, just before we were commissioned, because we missed formation the next to last day.

Roughly ten in my class of 70 got Signal Corp commissions. About a third got ADA and the rest Field Artillery. I along with seven others (all Field Artillery) went straight to Vietnam. We all returned alive, only one of us was wounded seriously enough to go home early, but he survived okay. OCS was great training for combat and the rest of life. I sure miss those Jarks.

In 1969 we had "Grotto Runs" from the local McDonalds. They would deliver large orders to a designated spot just off the OCS track area. One night when another candidate and I went to pick up the order and were on our way back, we heard "hold it right there candidates", from one of the TAC officers waiting in the dark. We took off running and got away, but he had his choice of milkshakes and Big Mac’s.
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 uniform as 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 26 weeks.

While we successfully completed the E&E, it was not without problems. Most notable was the fact that one of my group, cannot remember the name, dropped his M14 while climbing along a ridgeline. When we made it to the bottom all that remained was the M14 minus the stock, which shattered completely.

I remember finding some vehicles parked along the road, but no people around. 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 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.

Remember how all of the classes were numbered from start to finish? I remember the "501 Problem" which entailed working as a 105 Battery in the field for a week. We
would trade positions daily and the end of the problem found us rappelling down the face of one of the Medicine Bluffs.

Steak and egg breakfast after completing the rappel and crossing the river on a rope without falling in the water or dropping your M14.

Escape and Evasion - 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.

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.

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.

The 501 problem is etched forever in my memory.

**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 class mates, 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 though 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.

From 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

Charles M. Counsell: 5-70

Christmas break 1969 found me flying to San Diego, having a wedding rehearsal, getting married, briefly honeymooming in S.F., driving back to S.D., packing, driving to Ft. 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.
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 middle classman 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 McDonald's 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.

Class 11-70 - All Commissioned Field Artillery
From the FAOCS 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.

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 week long 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.
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 under classman’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 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.

Final OCS Class Graduates
A Chapter of Sill’s History Closes
The Lawton Constitution, Friday July 6, 1973
By Dave Brittain

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 47,500 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.

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 is still used as the assembly point for the pre-dawn “Jark Stroll”
during the annual FAOCS Alumni Chapter Reunions
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 FRIEND)

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

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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 is some degree of stress
A big event in mine was enduring OCS

I’ve cleaned a lot of weapons packed in cosmolene,
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
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 ARTLLEY 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.
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 (SOCR) 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). It is similar to the old OBC, but much longer.**

**Field Artillery BOLC B at Fort Sill is eighteen and a half weeks long**

**Week 1:** In processing, Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), Combatives  
**Week 2:** Basic Rifle Marksmanship (BRM) Range Week/Qualification  
**Week 3:** Convoy Operations, Land Navigation, Combatives  
**Weeks 4-18:** Field Artillery Core Competency Training
Congratulations on your commission and welcome to the Field Artillery Branch – "The King of Battle" and the 428th Field Artillery Brigade – the "Cornerstone Brigade." You have volunteered to lead Soldiers in an Army at war. I am proud of you for making that commitment and eager to help prepare you for such an awesome responsibility.

**Our Mission:** for Field Artillery BOLC B 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.

**Hard Chargers!**

Robert A. Krieg
LTC, FA
Commanding
The Army is changing the way it trains its newest second lieutenants by merging two basic courses and having officers from the same branches train together from the onset of their careers. The Basic Officer Leadership Course B, or BOLC B, is about to begin at installations Army wide. Field Artillery BOLC B begins Tuesday, when 150 Soldiers start the new training at Fort Sill.

“I think it’s a good thing,” said BOLC B Officer-in-charge Capt. Mike Ernst, of the 1st Battalion, 30th Field Artillery, 428th FA Brigade. “It’s refocusing what we need to do at the level for junior officers for initial training. It builds that cohesion factor starting with the basics and graduating to higher-level training.”

The 18.5-week BOLC B is a consolidation of the seven-week BOLC Phase II and the 15-week BOLC Phase III, said Maj. Celester Thomas, executive officer of the 1st-30th FA. BOLC II covered 55 Soldier skills, such as land navigation, and its officers were from a variety of branches. Some of those tasks could be better learned at other points in the officers’ initial training, said Gen. Martin Dempsey, commanding general of the Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe, Va.

Of the 55 functional skills, some if done once, the Soldiers had the skill down pat, Dempsey said. Other tasks required repetitive learning and still other skills atrophied so quickly that even if learned in BOLC II, would have to be relearned at the officer’s first assignment. So now those skills are being spread out over the new officers' training.

Upon graduation from BOLC II Soldiers would go their separate ways on to BOLC III, whose curriculum was branch specific, i.e., field artillery, medical, adjutant general, air defense artillery, etc. (BOLC Phase I is the officer’s commissioning source, such as officer candidate school.) Dempsey said there will be benefits from BOLC B over BOLC II and III. “It allows us to make better use of resources, and it reduces backlog because we were experiencing some significant (second lieutenants) backlogs,” he said.

Ernst provided details on the BOLC B training.

Lieutenants from OCS, ROTC, the U.S. Military Academy, as well as direct commission officers, are first administratively processed into the Army. "That runs the gamut from getting them into DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System), finance, all the medical and dental - so that’s primarily the first week of the course,” Ernst said. “It’s just like a private going into basic training who gets a week of in-processing.”

Then for the next two weeks, the neophyte officers learn seven core Soldiers skills: land navigation; small arms marksmanship; small-unit tactics, techniques and procedures; convoy operations; sexual assault prevention; equal opportunity training; and lastly combatives, or hand-to-hand fighting.

They are certified as level 1 in the combatives program, a designation similar to a colored-belt system used in some martial arts, said Ernst, who has taught BOLC II for the past 18 months. The seven Soldier skills will be used and reinforced throughout the 4.5-month program, Thomas said.
On March 8, BOLC B becomes field artillery specific and the class will pick up Marines and international officers, swelling the number of students to 168, Thomas said. In a mix of academics and field exercises, 24 instructors will teach the students virtually everything about field artillery.

This includes fire support and coordination, working with maneuver commanders, tactical communications and leadership and platoon operations that will prepare the lieutenants to become company fire direction officers, fire support officers and platoon leaders.

The students will also be introduced to the 105 mm howitzer; 155 mm Paladin howitzer, which is a tracked vehicle; and the M777 155 mm howitzer a towed system, Thomas said. Instruction is primarily on the 105 mm howitzer for Soldiers, Thomas said. “If we can teach you on the 105, everything else can translate to the 155.” Academics are rigorous and the officers study, in addition to fire theory and weapons systems, things such as Earth rotation and weather, which can affect the delivery of artillery, Thomas said.

Students must maintain at least a 70 percent academic average throughout the course, except the safety curriculum, where minimum passing is 80 percent, Thomas said. In BOLC III, one of the toughest parts of the training was the gunnery test, where students had to put rounds on targets designated by a maneuver commander, Thomas said. They were given three opportunities to pass. “Ninety-nine percent of our failures come from the gunnery exercise,” Thomas said. “It’s hard for some lieutenants to figure out the technical side of it.” A typical BOLC III class would lose 10 to 15 students, who did not pass the course, he said.

BOLC B will culminate with a five-day capstone exercise consisting of everything the students learned, Thomas said. “Now they are out in the field, it’s ‘Hey, lieutenant you have the conn, it’s your turn to show what you learned throughout the course,’” Thomas said.

Following completion of BOLC B, the new field artillery officers will get further training in the specific weapons system they will use at their next assignments, such as the Multiple Launch Rocket System. For that they will attend a week and a half advanced officer’s training here, Thomas said. The goal of the FA BOLC B is to produce a competent, confident field artilleryman who can advise a maneuver commander, Thomas said. “Those are our three main outcomes.”

Thomas and Ernst said they are excited about BOLC B. “I’m ready to get started,” Thomas said.
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.

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.

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, antiaircraft weapons.

Antiaircraft artillery equipment was initially tested and developed at the Coast Artillery Board at Fort Monroe. On 9 March 1942, a separate Antiaircraft 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 antiaircraft 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 Antiaircraft Artillery was under the umbrella of the Coast Artillery Corps when World War II began. In March 1942 the Antiaircraft Artillery formally separated from the Seacoast Artillery and the Antiaircraft Artillery (AAA) Command was established. Thereafter, all seacoast instruction was assigned to Fort Monroe and all antiaircraft artillery instruction was at Camp Davis.

At that point in time, the Officer Candidate School at Camp Davis became part of the newly established Antiaircraft Artillery School and would be known as the AAA (Antiaircraft Artillery) OCS.

In October 1944 the AAA School moved to Fort Bliss, where the headquarters of the Antiaircraft 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.
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.
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.
The Order of Saint Barbara is an honorary military society of the United States Field Artillery. Both U.S. Marine and Army field artillery along with their military and civilian supporters are eligible for membership. The order is managed by the U.S. Field Artillery Association and two levels of recognition exist.

The most distinguished level is the Ancient Order of Saint Barbara and those who are selected for this honor have achieved long-term, exceptional service to the field artillery surpassing even their brethren in the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara. The order links field artillerymen of the past and present in a brotherhood of professionalism, selfless service and sacrifice symbolized by 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 of the following individuals were compiled by the FAOCS Alumni Chapter 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.

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Earl E. Strayhorn: 22-42
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The Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill commissioned more than 26,000 second lieutenants from the initial opening on July 10, 1941 until the first inactivation on December 12, 1946. After the outbreak of the Korean War, the school was reactivated on February 21, 1951 and commissioned an additional 22,600 second lieutenants before closing on July 6, 1973.

The Fort Sill Artillery Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame was established on June 26, 1968 to honor the heroism and exceptional achievement of its graduates and to recognize the outstanding contributions of these officers to the nation and the Artillery branches.

The FAOCS Alumni Chapter, Inc. assumed responsibility for operation of the Fort Sill Artillery OCS Hall of Fame on June 10, 2002. Randy and Penny Dunham have served as the curators since 2005. They continue to research and document the history of the Officer Candidate School program. The Hall of Fame preserves the rich heritage of the institution and helps foster the esprit de corps that exists among all graduates.

“The OCS Experience” is a compilation of selected excerpts from published and un-published works, historic documents, observations, personal recollections and written memories submitted by graduates and cadre of the program.