



West Point Women

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 1, August 2005

Dear Women of West Point,

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter for our fledgling organization. We are a little over a year old now, and I would like to take this opportunity to tell you what we are all about, and what we have accomplished so far.

First of all, we were founded about a year ago when I recognized that women graduates from West Point really expressed a desire to network with each other, both in the civilian world as well as those of us like myself, who are still on active duty. Thus, with the help of volunteers, we developed the following mission statement:

“The mission of West Point Women is to provide a forum for women graduates of West Point to pursue a wide range of personal, professional, and philanthropic opportunities while representing the voice of its members within the West Point community. Additionally, this organization will serve as a link among women in the Corps of Cadets, the military, and the civilian community.”

As I look back on the past year, we have come a long way, and I am excited about our future. Our organization is run by 15 volunteer board members who generously volunteer several hours a month to put together programs, update our website, and otherwise further the interests of women graduates by acting as a voice to the academy, the AOG, and the world in general. During the last 18 months, we have hosted our first face-to-face Board meeting in April 2005 in Orlando (see article). In June 2004 we hosted the First Annual Academy Women’s symposium at the “Women in Military Service for America” Memorial in Washington, D.C. About 75 women graduates, cadets, and women from our sister academies attended this inaugural event, and with great enthusiasm, encouraged us to host similar events on an annual basis. So it is with great pleasure that I announce our second annual symposium in September in Washington, DC, this time hosted by our umbrella organization, “Academy Women” headed by Susan Feland, Air Force ’93. (See article on Academy Women). And finally, our organization is supporting the planning and organization of “Celebrating 30 years of Women at West Point” to be held at West Point, April 27-29, 2006. I look forward to seeing you there!

In summary, we have a vibrant and growing organization. Check out our website at www.westpointwomen.org. We are fortunate that WP-ORG agreed to host our web site. Until our non-profit status is filed and approved, our only source of funds are our members, event sponsorships, and generous board members and friends. To support our organization, we encourage you to attend our upcoming events and get out and network!

Finally, as many of you know, my family and I just PCS’d to Ft. Lewis, and I join my unit in Iraq in August. Nancy Gucwa ’80, Vice President, with your generous help and support, will keep things moving forward until my return at the end of the year. Thank you for your participation and support. BEAT NAVY!

Niave Knell
Founder and President
USMA -92

Celebrating 30 Years of Women at West Point

On October 8, 1975, the President of the United States signed into law a bill directing that women be admitted to America’s service academies. The first class to include women entered the United States Military Academy in 1976. Since that time, women have continued to join that Long Grey Line as cadets and West Point graduates serving the Nation as leaders in and out of military uniform. It is this great success and accomplishment that we celebrate this conference weekend.

Tentative agenda:

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| Thursday, 27 April | Meet at Ike Hall and move to the plain for a Retreat Review in honor of Women Graduates followed by a reception at Ike Hall. |
| Friday, 28 April | Command briefings, panel discussions. Speakers: BG Anne Macdonald (USMA ‘80) and BG Rebecca Halstead (USMA ‘81) |
| Saturday, 29 April | Tours of gyms and barracks, alumni athletic activities, Sandhurst competition. |

Visit www.west-point.org/usmawomen regularly to learn more and to fill out an interest survey. Use the following to login: userid—usmawomen, password—goarmy.

West Point Women in the News

West Point woman grad named general
From PoughkeepsieJournal.com:



Rebecca S. Halstead, 43, a U.S. Army career officer who has served at the highest levels of command from Fort Drum to the Pentagon, has become the first female graduate of any U.S. military academy to make general. "They just kind of screamed and hugged and smiled," Halstead said of her parents' reaction when she told them President Bush had nominated her to be brigadier general.

Book about Women of the Long Gray Line

The women of the long gray line are a small, ordinary and extraordinary group of Americans (2957 to date). We are soldiers, officers, wives, professionals, mothers, combat veterans, volunteers, entrepreneurs, teachers, athletes, cancer survivors, widows, coaches, quilters, pilots, athletes, clergy and musicians to name a few. We have experienced and overcome emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual challenges throughout our lives that have provided strength and understanding to lead others and make difficult decisions. We have pursued many varied paths—military, intellectual, business, non-profit, political, athletic, familial, and spiritual. We are role models to future generations of young girls and young Americans. We have unique stories and experiences.

Some of our stories will be published in a collection of contemporary inspirational biographies written by Donna McAleer '87. This book looks at the decisions to attend USMA, the effects that thoughtful decision had on our lives and our country, and leadership from a woman's perspective. Look for this book in April 2006.

2nd Annual Academy Women Symposium

This event will be held the 23rd and 24th of September, 2005 at the Women's Memorial in Arlington, Virginia (www.womensmemorial.org). The schedule of events includes guest speakers LTG Claudia Kennedy, BG Wilma Vaught, Ms. Diane Morales (former deputy undersecretary of defense), Ms. Barbara Barrett (fought for women to fly fighters and bombers in Congress), several academy graduates back from Iraq and Afghanistan and other amazing women academy graduates!

Find out more details and register on-line at www.academywomen.org. If you register before 20 August, you will save \$25 on the symposium cost. If you are interested in helping or if you have any suggestions, please contact Susan Feland at feland@academywomen.com.

To submit information for upcoming events or the grad spotlight, contact Bridget Altenburg at bridgetaltenburg@hotmail.com.

West Point Women's Board Meeting

West Point Women held its first annual Board meeting in sunny Orlando, FL on the weekend of April 1-3, 2005. Seven Board members flew in from all over the country, the furthest being Micki Olsen, who flew in from Germany. We finally met the women with whom we had been speaking each month by phone. In attendance were Niave Knell '92, Nancy Gucwa '80, Kelli McKechnie '96, Marene Allison '80, Micki Olsen '91, Rebecca Patterson '96, and Bridget Altenburg '95. Unable to attend were Betsy Jackson '89, Cassandra Ralls '97, Daphne Curtin '98, Deirdre Dixon '84, Jane Allgood '82, Jill Schurtz '86, Marie Slaughter '94 and Patrice Sutherland '90. The meeting was very productive and we had a great chance to get to know each other in person. Hopefully we'll have even more people able to make next year's meeting.

Here's a short outline of some of the high points of the meeting:

- The Board will continue to have monthly phone meetings on the 3rd Monday of every month.
- Instead of working in our assigned positions, the board will organize functional groups for the time being. The three functional groups are: communications, membership, and events. The Pres., VP, Sec. and Treasurer will retain their roles.
- Our big push over the next year will be two upcoming events:
 - the 30 Year event at WP, which is now on the USMA master schedule for 27 – 29 April. We hope that all of you will mark your calendars for this wonderful event held in our honor. We'd like to start a firstie women initiation into WPW at this time, to include giving them our coin and possibly having our members sponsor firsties. We'd like to present the coin and any brass, rank, or shoulder boards you have to pass on (along with a nice note) to new women grads. We'd also like to have t-shirts or hats with the WPW logo. We may even do some alumni sporting events and other activities during the 30 Years event, and may even try to put together a Sandhurst team. This event is being chaired by Kathy Snook '80 and Ellen Houlihan '82, at <http://www.west-point.org/usmawomen>.
 - the Annual Academy Women Symposium at the Women's Memorial, in Washington, DC in September 23-24.

Board members will play various roles in planning for both events.

Many other items were discussed, but this is a strong start for our organization. We are also continuing to submit our non-profit paperwork, so that we will have status as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. We hope that members will log on to our website periodically for new information. If you have not yet done so, please log on to www.westpointwomen.org.

Submitted by Nancy Gucwa



Michelle Olson, Marene Allison, Bridget Altenburg, Nancy Gucwa, Niave Knell, Rebecca Patterson and Kelli McKechnie enjoying the sun at the board meeting in Orlando this spring.

Upcoming events

- Academy Women Symposium in Washington September 23—24, 2005 (see article)
- Homecoming vs Central Michigan October 8, 2005
- Beat Navy, Philadelphia December 3, 2005
- 30 Year Celebration of Women at West Point April 27-29, 2006