

USMA 1957

Our Graduation Parade



CHAAARGE!!

Graduation Parade, 3 June 1957, a day indelibly inscribed in the collective memory of the members of the USMA Class of 1957! But what do we really know or remember about that Parade, the events of that day, the days prior, the post-Parade consequences, and the reverberations in the years following. With the help of the many who provided input for this article we will explore and confirm or dispel some of the myths that have come to surround what arguably was a seminal event in Class history.

The Parade has generated something of a legend. It earned for the Class the sobriquet of “Black ’57,” and provided the Class with its unofficial motto of “You Man, HALT!” It was a command we had heard often, from our first day at the Academy, as we transitioned into new cadet life after passing thru the East sally-port into Central Area, and a command the collective TD probably was shouting mentally at our last military formation on The Plain.

Our Parade has inspired a ballad and a poem, and had the unintended consequences of causing the Superintendent to put tightened disciplinary measures in place for following Classes, while placing our Class under a “black” cloud of sorts in his subsequent missives to the Long Gray Line. Some Classmates reported during the early stages of their commissioned career of being given dire warnings from fellow graduates that our Class had been flagged and no 1957 graduate would make flag rank. Fortunately, with a total of 30 Classmates achieving general officer, to include; CSA, CinC SPACECOM, ChEngr, Dir DIA, CG 1Div and many more, those grim predictions were not fulfilled. Even more improbable, given the brass’ strong adverse reaction on

that fateful day, were the subsequent postings of two Classmates as aides to two of the principals. Leon Bieri was GEN Taylor’s aide in 1968/69 when he was the Special Consultant to the President, and Speed Negaard was GEN Throckmorton’s aide in 1967/68 when he was CG 3rd Army. Indeed, irony is a beautiful thing to behold!

Now as we celebrate our 50th Reunion, what are the retrospective views of the members of the Class? Was the Class’ “breaking of ranks” an honoring of a Corps tradition, or a unique break in discipline? Was it an expression of youthful exuberance, or a blatant disregard of military authority? Was it a Class unifying event, or a divisive event? While the majority of the Class broke ranks, by most accounts four companies stayed intact (I-1, L-1, L-2, M-2), along with most of the Brigade, Regimental and Battalion staffs. Was it something of which to be proud, or something for which to apologize? In reviewing the recollections provided by Classmates, Tactical Officers, members of other Classes, the Supe’s report in the July 1957 Assembly and in his Annual Report to the Chief of Staff of the Army, the answers to the above questions appear to depend somewhat on where one stood, marched or ran.

I sincerely appreciate all who provided their recollections for this article. The number of submissions was so overwhelming that each submission could not be included in its entirety. This article will use representative “shots” from the recollections to evolve a story, with source attribution primarily to the company. In a few cases, specific attributions are made because of the significance of the recollection to the Graduation Parade. However, all inputs will be incorporated into a DVD, which will also include film clips and photos from The Parade that were submitted for the Yearbook, but not included due to space limitations.

What follows are recollections, in the contributors own words, showing how different, and sometimes conflicting, are individual memories and perceptions. It is not surprising, as these stories are derived from 70-year old minds about memories of 50-year old events. Hopefully, they will evoke memories and images of our Graduation Parade and help answer questions that have lingered with us since that day.

PRE-PARADE INTELLIGENCE

What did we know and when did we know it?

From Our 1st Captain: Here is how it went for me: Mid-afternoon June 3, 1957, I received an unusual phone call from Jack Meehan, Company Commander of H-1, telling me that some Firsties had mistakenly turned in their cartridge boxes prematurely to the supply room. Something so bizarre and farfetched caught me off guard. My response was, "Improvise, Jack, improvise." Thinking back to that time, nothing else occurred to tip me off that something was afoot. In the rush of the events of the remaining 24 hours, we never had a chance to discuss it further.

From E-1: The morning of the parade was much like many other parade days...I was not aware and do not know of anyone in Company E-1 who was aware that many of us were about to reawaken an old tradition that had fallen out of favor over the years.

From G2: I was one of the clueless ones that nice day; no hint that the run had been discussed, probably a result of our being hidden in the "lost 50s." I had never thought of "running" even though I thought the talk we were given earlier (I believe by the

Comm) about behaving at the parade was overly harsh.

From I-2: I never heard any rumor about this and my company had no words of caution from our TAC.

From D-1: As I remember the events leading up to Graduation Parade ... I heard through the class grapevine that there was a move afoot to break ranks and run.

From M-2: ... we discussed the run the night before in the sinks, with the majority opinion being that it was not the thing to do ... Hank Emerson was our TAC at the time, and was very highly respected. It would have reflected badly on his leadership if we ran, and maybe that entered in to the general attitude.

From H-1: At a parade rehearsal ... the subject of breaking ranks was raised by the Comm, BG John L. Throckmorton, to the assembled 1st Classmen. His remarks about not breaking ranks were controversial ... as they were interpreted by many to be more of a challenge than a warning. By Monday afternoon, somewhat vague plans had been

made to break ranks, but no specifics had been spelled out, and to my knowledge, little, if any, coordination had been made with any other companies on a plan of action.

From L-1 CO: In the weeks and days before, there were rumors in the corps. Even some attempts at historical justification of a past tradition of breaking ranks ... The TD's response was, "NO WAY!" There was no such thing as a tradition contrary to orders or regulations. In L-1, we had a class sir meeting. I have no recollection of what was said. I do know it never entered my mind to countenance a break.

From K-1: ... Carl Burgdorf came in my room in South Area, and related the scheme...how he would work the Confederate flag from his trousers while we stood at attention and maneuvered to the front of the center. At the command of "March", he would unfurl the flag, let out a Rebel Yell and restart this grand, old tradition ... I think I said something like, "You're crazy as hell" and promptly forgot the whole thing.

Views from our Classmates

From D-1: The rationale advanced [to break ranks] was that prior classes had done it. Although the Commandant had issued orders that we would march to the reviewing line and not break ranks, this would break tradition.

From I-2: ...had we not done what we did in 1957, the tradition would have died (as it did when the last witnesses graduated in 1960). I was present at the 1952 Graduation Parade in which they too broke ranks, waiting however until they had saluted the reviewing officer. ... I thought it was a great show and something that must have been a longstanding tradition.

From F-1: I remember well the graduation parade in 1954 when the First Class moved to the center of the Corps and solemnly marched across the field. However, when they reached the other side (to render the honors), someone let out a yell and all hell broke loose. In 1955, President Eisenhower was the graduation speaker and we were informed that since the parade would be on

WAS IT A CORPS TRADITION?

television, it would be unseemly to "break ranks" and could create a bad impression for the Academy ... but I assumed that the hallowed "tradition" of breaking ranks at graduation would resume the next year. It did not. For whatever reason, the Class of '56 did not "break Ranks." In F-1, we chided them for "Not having any guts!" I, for one, was mightily chagrined that a wonderful tradition was going to be lost. Thus, the stage was set for "Black 57."

PROBABLY UNOFFICIAL But Somewhat Tolerated

From Members of '54: In the three graduation parades we witnessed prior to our own, all First classes broke ranks and formed up informally for the review. No question about it, that was the way it was. It was tradition!

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Renfro, Zartman, Ziegler, Lodge, Peisinger, and I were out in front in the exalted position of the regimental staff. I remember a rumbling sound to our rear as classmates

in droves did a huge 'Lemonade Run' to the "Post" and began running pell mell for their positions beside their company guidons. [the Comm] "Iron Mike" was really p... and so were many senior TAC's. But we were already 2nd lieutenants so there was no quill to be given, but "Iron Mike" did rule out Article 15s.

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... we were not the first class to do it. If I were to place a bet on who started the "tradition," it would be on BLACK 51. It seems there were some cautions from the TAC's that this would be a naughty thing to do, but my opinion is that, with the notable exception of BG Michaelis, the senior members of the Tac Dept had a well-developed sense of humor and sometimes their instructions regarding our behavior were delivered tongue-in-cheek. Some of the guys had been real hell-raisers in their cad days (and in WWII).

From a Member of '55: Our class did not break ranks ... but the matter came up with

our Class was addressed by the Supe, LTG Blackshear Bryan, shortly before graduation. My Class was crowded into one of the academic lecture rooms and the Supe gave us guidance... breaking ranks must have come up as well as the issue of staying out all night on the night of the graduation ball. The Class was all for staying out. The Supe forbade it. Walt Stander stood up and told the Supe something to the effect, "Sir, if you let us stay out all night, then we will agree not to break ranks." LTG Bryan ... went ballistic - giving Walt five minutes of verbal abuse ... making Walt a legend in our Class, as well probably making him wish he had never been born. I think that ended any thoughts among my Classmates of breaking ranks.

From One of Our TAC's - '51: At my class's graduation parade, we were supposed to, and did, break ranks and run that 50 yards to our guidons, reform, and take the review! '51 rehearsed running and reforming. I hazily remember that three classes before '51 might have done the same.

From the Class of 1886: While no member of that Class was available to report on

From G2: After we started the march forward in those two long lines, with the staff and their feathered buckets out front, I remember watching out of the corners of my eyes and thinking that those guys on the right weren't keeping a very straight line. Then I got a prod in the rear with a saber (I think from Whit Hall) who said, "They are running - let's go!" Never one not to support a united effort, I went! I also remember passing our



The Scramble to the Reviewing Stand

their graduation parade, the WP Museum has an engraving of a drawing by Rufus F. Zogbaum, entitled "entitled " GRADUATION DAY AT WEST POINT - THE CAVALRY CHARGE" that was printed in a June 1887 Harper's Weekly. It would appear that a mounted charge across The Plain was a traditional part of the P-rade during



"Graduation Day at West Point -- The Cavalry Charge" by Rufus F. Zogbaum (1849-1920). Wood engraving from an original painting created in 1886 and published in Harper's Weekly June 1887. Credit: West Point Museum Art Collection, USMA

VIEW FROM THE PARADE The Runners!

Company CO, Rip McCoy, still properly marching forward ... I greatly admired Rip, as he went into confinement with the rest of us although he did not have to.

From G-1: I believe most of us in the class would have preferred not to break ranks, but most of us also felt if one Classmate ran, we had to go too.

From A-1: The parade proceeded normally until we formed on line and began to move

that period. Perhaps our Class' Charge subliminally inspired through the grip of hands with that Ghostly Assemblage before, but it probably would have helped too had been mounted with swords flashing in the air. It certainly would have been an awesome sight!

forward as a class; then I remember hearing a yell and seeing the line to my far left to run forward ... I also remember some running from the reviewing area onto The Plain. All I could think was "the Class knew more about this than I did!" A-1 did not break en masse; ... Our "breaking ranks" was gradual, reluctant and brought on by the disintegration of the line to our left. Company A-1 more of the initial "breakers" appeared to have "second thoughts" and fell in behind Art Johnson's BN staff to our front. Later many of us rationalized that, while we had not planned to break, once started we decided to "do it" together.

From F-1: I heard ... a rebel yell and at the corner of my eye, I saw classmates beginning to sprint across the plain toward our company guidons, where we were to review the Class. I took off too and was proud of the fact that I was the first to the F-1 guidon (track to the left). When I looked back across the Plain to the corps, it looked terrible! Not everyone had run. There were groups of Classmates who had not run scattered across the Plain.

company commander and guidon bearer ... a couple of Classmates ... It looked as if someone had used a machine gun and cut holes in our Class.

From K-2: I wound up, for the Graduation Parade, as the right guide for K-2 ... as we marched forward ... I strained to maintain as steady a pace as I possibly could ... I thought we were doing damned well, until suddenly I spied the mother of all whip-lashes headed down the line right at us. I turned to my left to holler "Whip lash coming!" in hopes that I could successfully dampen it as it hit K-2. But as I looked down the front rank of my beloved K-2, I saw, to my great surprise, that several of my cohorts were already at a dead run. Then I looked back to my right and gazed upon total chaos. It wasn't a whip-lash; it was pandemonium!

For the next few moments, I reflected on the events of the previous couple of days, and my mind focused on the little chat we had had with BG Throckmorton the day before...when, after the practice Graduation Parade, he dismissed the other three classes and held us for a severe tongue-lashing ...

From 2nd BN/2nd RGT Staff: I was on the staff as the Training Officer. Jim Murphy was the BN CO and I was marching behind him with Jim Cortez on my right and Ted

he advised us that he knew what we were planning for the next day's ceremony, and warned us, in the darkest of terms, not to try anything cute, or we would come to regret it. He concluded by saying, "Don't screw up my parade." I don't recall his exact words, but the term "my parade" was definitely in there somewhere. I was thoroughly p---ed off. What the hell was he talking about? ... when had the Graduation Parade become his parade? Of all the myriad parades over the previous four years, this last one was going to be our parade. With this last thought, a big smile broke across my face, and I said to myself, "Well, Throck old boy, here's your parade!" With that, I took off to catch up with the rest of the troops of Kappa Dos, the last company to fall, as L-2 and M-2 managed to hold firm.

From E-1: ...our First Captain directed our graduating class forward. Suddenly, from H-1, I heard "Rebel yells" and saw a "Confederate" flag emerge from the Company ...Initially, a sprinkling of Classmates surged forward, breaking ranks, but the numbers dramatically increased within seconds.

VIEW FROM THE PARADE The Non-runners!

Voorhees on my left. We were completely unaware of any planned activities ... when all of a sudden cadets were running past us. I remember saying to Jim Murphy that we

E-1 Classmates joined the celebration. And I became part of it as well, running with a deliriously happy throng of fellow classmates. As we ran toward the crowd near the reviewing stand, my father, an Army Force Colonel in uniform, spotted me and stood up in the bleachers clapping, giving me a "thumbs up." The crowd appeared to be enjoying themselves and celebrating this unfolding and unexpected event.

From D-1: When the appropriate command was given I proceeded to march as ordered but suddenly was caught up in the commotion. It appeared that everyone was running so I did also. ... Anyway, I ran, I'm proud of it, I was a follower rather than a leader but I accept personal responsibility.

From K-1: Sitting in the stands, Joan and Barbara (soon to be brides of Bert Tullington and Ted Felber), watched with interest as a Classmate's significant other ran out onto the field and jumped into the arms. Said Joan to Barbara; "Are we supposed to do that?" They couldn't decide, no additional damage was done.

should go also; but he said "No," or something to that effect. We continued to march to the proper spot and took our place with the rest of the company.

From L-2: ... we formed up on the left flank as you recall. This may have been the reason that we did not get the word about the coming event. I cannot recall any discussion or even rumors about the possibility of the class breaking ranks. As a result, when things started to go to hell in the center after "forward march," it took us awhile to figure out what was happening. It looked like the wave was moving up almost by company - D, E, F, G, H, as they broke. This gave us a chance for a quick discussion about whether to join in whatever was going on. We did not vote, but somehow no one broke the parade. I-2 broke and finally K-2. I believe that Bill "Rockie" Rawls was on the flank of L-2 next to K-2. He jerked a few times but held steady (the same steady guy who gave me a life in Vietnam). By then we were only ten or fifteen meters from the reviewing line and L-2 stiffened and straightened. We did not talk about face and Captain Chuck Reed USAF our TAC immediately told us that there m



Here's to the Ladies Who Come Up In June!

be severe repercussions from this, but that no one in L-2 would be punished.

From L-2: There was a bit of a surge in L-2's front rank, but Waxey Gordon, a major hell-raiser, shouted, "Don't run." We held fast. Our TAC, an Air Force officer was ecstatic ... I believe that we didn't run because we had time to think about it and that Gordon, oddly, articulated our thoughts and may have stopped us. We were not confined. I felt a little guilty about not running...

From L-1 CO: L-1's '57 were formed in two ranks in front of our company. Perhaps with more than the usual banter. In recent years, Hal Dyson recounted in my presence reaching forward with his saber and tapping someone on the shoulder. (This was in the context of a Classmate's wife quizzing us about the story which had me threatening to "run through" anyone who broke.) Dick Caldwell, toward the right in the front rank, was clowning and saying "Wally, let's run." I growled something at him over my shoulder ...

When the First Captain commanded the class to march forward, a yell went up on our right. Cadets on our right ran forward. A small Confederate flag was left stuck in the turf on what appeared to be a short, flexible staff. I called out, "Continue the March." As we continued to march forward, the break of companies in succession swept past us, right to left... while marching we were not silent in our ranks. There were some blurt outs - "Holy (expletive)!", "Steady!" etc.

The First Captain was supposed to have halted the class on a line between the line of troops and the line of review. As we approached that line, I realized that the command would not be forthcoming and prepared to halt L-1. As I called out the preparatory command, a voice from over my left shoulder called out, "We're all alone, Keep going!" I responded with "Continue the March". On our right and slightly to our rear, walked a solo staff zebra, the picture of dejection... carrying his tar bucket.

From I-1: ...I had heard nothing of a plot to transit The Plain at Graduation Parade in any but the approved manner. During the initial chaos of the surge, I remember only Tex Gauntt saying, "Stay where you are!" As a result, my company, was one of those excused from restrictions following the parade.

From M-2: The run started in the middle of the Corps, and like a "Wave" in a football stadium worked its way out to the left and right flanks progressively. When it got to M-2, I'd guess we were 15 or 20 yards from the final line, at which time Hop Keeler either turned around or commanded over his shoulder some phrase which imparted the order that we should continue to march to the final line rather than break and run. It might have been something like "Continue to march", or "Hold ranks", or some other normal sounding official command. It was not an ad lib like "Don't run" or "Keep together", etc. We held, we halted, we did an about face, and we were not confined.

From Our 1st Captain: When we came to that point in the parade, I gave the command for the Class to march to the reviewing line and as I did so I, of course, heard the commotion over my right shoulder. It appeared to me to start in the 3d Bn, 1st Regiment. It grew, but to how great an extent I have never been certain ... the most prolific prankster in our Class was my Adjutant (and roommate), Paul "Ace" Chase. When the commotion started as we were marching toward the reviewing line he said, "Oh, hell!" Then, somewhat to my surprise, he responsibly said to me and the rest of my staff, "We're not running!"

When we reached the point where the class was to halt, report to the reviewing officer, and be released to join the review-

ing line, it was obvious that the review party (Secretary of the Army Wilbur Brantley, Chief of Staff, Gen Maxwell Taylor, Davidson, and BG Throckmorton) looked perplexed.

From One of Our TAC's - '51: A TAC officer overheard, at the command "Graduation Class, front and center" each company's 1st Class formed in a double rank facing their own metal company guidon, about 40 yards away, to which they were to march straight ahead, halt, face about and take the Corps review. ... I took station that placed me a bit to the right of the Colors as I viewed the Brigade. I had an excellent view of the companies ... At the command "March" the 1st Class company groups stepped out to their respective guidons. So far, so good. After this phalanx had marched about 100 steps, a cadet in the rear rank of G ordered them to let out a yell, and that company's 1st Class detachment broke ranks, and started to march toward their guidon yelling and waving their arms. The action rippled out, compelling the company toward both flanks. ... There was a notable exception, Company L-1 ignored the pandemonium on both sides and marched in perfect order to its guidon. As I remember it, L-1 was commanded by a cadet of 1st Class descent, who merely turned his head to look at his company classmates, spoke to them, and they never wavered!



TAC Officers on Patrol

IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES -- ON THE PLAIN

From E-1: When we reached the reviewing line and faced back toward the Corps, we were soon joined by our TAC who paced behind us chewing us out and repeatedly instructing us to report to our barracks immediately after the ceremony to await further instructions, as we were now confined to our rooms. As soon as we were dismissed, I went to find my visitors and was amused at my mother's reaction to the ceremony. She thought the parade was spectacular, especially the part when we ran across the parade field. I had to tell everyone that I did not know when I would see them next because the authorities were not too pleased with this unrehearsed part of the parade.

From 2nd Rgt Cmdr: Before the parade was over our TAC told me quietly that most of the class would be restricted, but the Second Regimental Staff would not because we didn't run. The primary reason for that was the geometry of the formation that put us almost to the reviewing line before we understood what was going on behind us. My folks took my date and me to dinner at the Bear Mountain Inn where I was the only cadet in a dining room full of angry/anxious parents, dates, and fiancées – a memorable evening!

From A-1: ... my next memory was of TAC's walking behind our ranks directing us to return to barracks and remain there, awaiting further instructions. My next re-

membrance of that afternoon was talking with a member of the faculty after the parade. Apparently unaware of the Comm's edict, he commented on how well things had gone, never once chastising me for breaking ranks. My uncle, Class of Aug '17 came up to me and in no uncertain terms said we should be rounded up and marched back on line, so that we could do it correctly. Fred Smith's Granddad ('03) was mildly amused at the "prank", but his Dad ('29) was not happy at what had transpired.

From E-1: The TAC's were furious and paced behind us as we formed up for the Corps to Pass-in-Review under the Class of 1958 leadership. I heard several threats from the TAC's behind us. One was that "our commissioning would be held up until all ROTC new lieutenants were commissioned ahead of us." Another was that "we would be confined to the barracks and that the Graduation Hop would be cancelled."

From H-1: Later, we heard that Col Julian Ewell, the Assistant Commandant, looked out at the oncoming thundering herd and said, "Jesus Christ, here they come!" It seemed like a long way to the other side of the Plain, but once we got there the line was reformed, facing the rest of the Corps. At least two H-1ers, in their haste to get across The Plain, got tangled up with their sabers and took a header. Down the line in the 2nd Regiment, Jack Hill's girl friend created

some additional hubbub by running out on the Plain to greet and embrace Jack before everyone arrived and lined up.

From L-1 CO: The bleachers directly in front of our barracks were occupied by general officers. As we approached the line of review, they stood and applauded. To me, this was a high point – more so even than being handed my diploma the next day. I felt that at that moment, we of L-1/57 had been accepted into their profession.

From One of Our TAC's - '51: In the crowd of spectators, much buzzing. Among the staff and faculty, the grinding of teeth! On the reviewing stand, an embarrassed Army Chief of Staff, GEN Taylor called a meeting of equally embarrassed responsible seniors on the Supe's porch to determine the fate of the Class of 1957. Among the TAC's, varying reactions, L-2 and M-2 Flanker TAC's were a mite smug, most others were chagrined, professionally embarrassed, and beginning to smolder. On the Supe's porch various proposals were discussed ... Put the Class in confinement. (Done). Cancel Graduation hop. Delay Graduation a few days. Give each member of class an Art. 15. Letter of Reprimand or a fine. Do nothing - just get 'em the hell out of there. Gen Taylor rejected all of the above and elected to speak to the class, without TAC's present.

POST-PARADE EVENTS

From D-1: After the commotion, we formed up, and Pass in Review proceeded as planned. The TAC's informed us we were confined to quarters. Rumors flew. We were not getting commissioned; we were getting commissioned late; other penalties, etc. We were marched to the Army Theater and there were reprimanded by no less than GEN Max Taylor. Other than the march to the Army Theater for the verbal reprimand, we were confined to our rooms. I was one of the few classmates privileged to have a phone in my room ... for my duties. This came in handy. Calls came in from various drags and families, wondering what was going on, and what was going to happen. My roommates and I tried to pass on messages through the door and the window.

From L-1 CO: Peachy (Kean, L-1 TAC)

addressed us as "Soldiers of L-1." Dick Caldwell came up to me with tears in his eyes to assure me that he had just been kidding back on the line of troops.

From H-1: ... we heard the announcement requiring the 1st Class to return to the barracks. As I was walking back to the barracks along the west border of the Plain towards the South Area, I happened to come upon BG Throckmorton, with Col Julian J. Ewell, Assistant Comm. After exchanging salutes, I overheard Col Ewell say to BG Throckmorton, "Aw hell Throck..., it ain't all that bad." By the look of anguish on BG Throckmorton's face, I could readily imagine that he might have felt as if his career was going down the tubes in front of the CSA, GEN Taylor, Class of '22, all caused by a gaggle of young, wild 2nd LT's-to-be. BG

Throckmorton later commanded the 82nd Airborne Division, the XVIII Airborne Corps, the 3rd Army, and STRICOM and rose to the rank of GEN. In reflection, the Class of '57 didn't seriously alter his career path with our "breaking of ranks."

From K-2: Shortly after we all returned to our barracks, we were called out, via the loudspeaker from the Guard House, to fall out in the area in a given uniform. The TAC gave us a perfunctory inspection and dismissed us. About a half an hour later we were again summoned to the area, this time in a different uniform. Again the brief inspection and dismissal. 20 minutes later we were once again called out to the area, yet another uniform. It then finally hit us – they were putting us through the age-old Plebe "Clothing Formation" drill – about

only thing they could come up with in their fevered effort to inflict punishment.

From 2nd Bn/2nd Regt Staff: After we marched back to North Area, the Bn TAC Officer told us we were free to leave as we had not run. I then went out to meet my parents who were wondering what was going on. At that point all I knew was that most of the rest of the company was in confinement. I had to go to the TAC Officers HQ in Central Area to get permission for my brother, who was a Cow in I-2, to go on a picnic with my parents. I walked into the outer office to find my TAC Officer, and you would have thought WWII had broken out. It seemed to me it was mass pandemonium among the TAC's. I finally received permission from my TAC to have my brother go with us and left the area. I always felt guilty about not being confined, as I thought that, if not for Jim Murphy, I would have joined the running crowd.

From H-1: ...the announcement was made for the class to report to the Army Theater for a meeting. There we received a "chewing out" by GEN Taylor, the Army Chief of Staff, who was scheduled to give the graduation address the next day. GEN Taylor made his points very well. It was clear a master was admonishing us. We were duly chastised for lacking discipline and "making a mockery of our graduation parade in front of our families and Army dignitaries." His remarks were about 10-15 minutes in duration ... he said he would not mention our "undisciplined prank" in his graduation speech the next day. And he was true to his word – he did not bring it up.

Unbeknownst to most of us at the time, this particular June Week was the 30th year reunion of the Class of '27, of which the Superintendent, LTG Davidson, was a member. With many of his classmates in attendance at the Graduation Parade, he was embarrassed, to put it mildly ...

We had heard that various disciplinary measures had been considered ... Fortunately, none of them were carried out. We were allowed to graduate on time, all scheduled weddings went off as planned, and we went off to start our budding careers. But to many of the old grads, and within our Class itself, we were thereafter known as "Black '57."

From One of Our TAC's - '51: I was walking past Thayer Monument (then in front of Washington Hall) when I was accosted by an irate LTG Frank Farrell, G3 of the Army. He locked my heels together and delivered one of the finest ass chewings I have ever received. Never one to carry the burden of stress alone, I went over into North Area and the B-2 barracks area and put those LT's through a real 1946 style clothing formation - "Clotheys" which were very much in vogue during Beast Barracks. Then GEN Taylor called the class together and told them that although the Class of 1957 ran on the parade ground, he was confident they would not run in battle.

From Our 1st Captain: Immediately following ... the review, I reported to the Commandant. He was handling the situation very well by then and told me simply to meet with him in his office later.

That meeting turned out to be with GEN

Taylor and LTG Davidson as well as Throckmorton. Many thought I got my ass chewed. Nothing could have been further from the truth. They had all been embarrassed in front of their civilian superior, Secy Brucker; and they knew I was at least equally embarrassed. Taylor and Davidson made some comments about temporarily closing the class until the reprimand could be made at the Army Theater and then exonerated themselves.

BG Throckmorton, as he had done the year before, treated me like a brother and a friend. He certainly let me know of his disappointment, and in no way did he make light of the situation; but he did not make it out to be a truly earth-shaking. One of his regrets was that he was not able to casually stroll the area during Recognition to watch his friend Thomas, a member of the class of 1960, be recognized.

As you recall, GEN Taylor spoke harshly to us for about ten minutes at the theater. For me, that pretty well ended the matter.

A number of classmates apologized to me later in the evening for having broken ranks, but to all of that I felt somewhat ambivalent. I viewed it, simply, as an untimely prank of no great significance: one that I wish had not occurred because it would possibly have been misinterpreted (as I think, over the years has been). I did not want it to be misinterpreted because we were not a belligerent, rebellious Class. Quite the contrary, we were products of the disciplined 1950's and the docile 1950's. With one or two exceptions, everyone in our Class honored, respected, and loved West Point.

WAS THERE SOME SORT OF CONSPIRACY?

From the Chief, Unindicted Co-conspirator, Carl Brugdorf, H-1

For some three years prior to our graduation I had listened to the respective First Classmen discuss the tradition of breaking ranks. The common factor in their not carrying on this tradition seemed to be the commissioning ceremony, i.e., those classes were commissioned and subject to the UCMJ. When I learned that we were to be given the oath sometime after the parade, I initiated the possibility of restarting the tradition in company H-1. The response was a guarded O.K. We surveyed G-1 and friends in other companies including the 2nd regiment. These surveys also seemed to be positive, with

some exceptions.

After a drill exercise on the plain, the Comm met with the First Class and, in my mind, challenged us to break ranks. It was as if he dared us to do it. Others in H-1 agreed we could not let this challenge go by without a response.

I asked my mother to bring a small Confederate flag when they drove up from SC ... It seemed appropriate to signal the charge with a rebel yell and waving the flag. We then began planning in detail and contacted as many classmates as possible. A majority

approved our course of action.

The day of the parade I attached the flag to a coat hanger folded up my left sleeve. We marched to the plain and there was some doubt if we should go forth with our plan. The command of "Front and Center" was given and "Forward March," I put down the coat hanger but decided not to carry it with a waving flag that would spotlight me. Instead, I pushed it into the ground with my foot, flag on top.

Bill Meyerholt was directly in front of me, and I said, "Bill, it is now or never."

I pushed him in the back, gave the rebel yell and we were off and running. For what seemed like eternity, no one was behind us until H-1 and G-1 broke. Then the flood gates opened and all but two companies in each regiment responded. As we stood facing the Corps with TAC's buzzing around us, I saw the flag standing tall until a cadet officer's

saber cut it down during the pass in review. The rest is history.

Although a number of Classmates, graduates and, of course, the military staff of the academy, were furious, I believe that our military service and service to our nation more than made up for this indiscretion. I do regret not waiting until we saluted the

Chief of Staff and receiving the forward march command, but we had no first hand knowledge of the "Tradition."

THE SUPE'S REACTION DOCUMENTED

As the foregoing amply demonstrated, our Class' Graduation P-rade hijinks were a source of great consternation to the brass, particularly the Supe and the Comm. This consternation was imparted to the LGL by the Supe in the July 1957 ASSEMBLY and to the Department of Army in his 1957 Annual Report to the CSA. Below are salient passages from those documents from the AOG and USMA archives.

Excerpt from
Assembly,
Vol. XVI, No 2 (Sum
'57)

The Class of 1957 disappointed everyone present for June Week when they broke ranks as they moved forward to the reviewing line during Graduation Parade. Apparently, members of the Class felt that they were perpetuating a tradition since some classes had rushed to the reviewing line at Graduation Parades in recent years. You may be sure that I am taking the necessary steps to prevent a recurrence of this practice that tends to destroy the solemnity and dignity of the Graduation Parade.



Lt. Gen. USA, Superintendent.

Excerpt from Superintendent's '57 Annual Report

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY WEST POINT, NEW YORK

25 November 1957

Herewith is a report on the operations and administration of the United States Military Academy from 1 July 1956 to 30 June 1957. ...

4. ITEMS PERTAINING TO MILITARY INSTRUCTION.

a. Separations for Deficiency in Conduct. It will be noted that the conduct discharges of the Class of 1957 were well below the average losses of preceding classes. I have found that the Department of Tactics in the recent past has been very lenient in handling conduct discharges. ... the Class of 1957 behaved in an undisciplined fashion at Graduation Parade when it broke ranks as it moved forward to the reviewing line. I believe members of the Class felt that they were following an established practice since some classes have rushed to the reviewing line at Graduation Parade in recent years. Of course this raised grave doubts in our minds as to how well the Class of '57 had learned the lesson of discipline. Thorough soul-searching on the part of myself, the Commandant and other senior officers here led us to conclude that this was an isolated incident, not typical of the otherwise fine record of exceptional leadership which the Class of 1957 provided for the Corps during the year.

This incident may however have some correlation to the unduly boisterous mess hall and after taps rallies during the football season. I plan to tone the former down radically and either eliminate or restrict the latter to two or three selected occasions.

DID THE SUPE MAKE GOOD ON HIS COMMITMENTS? Apparently So!

Excerpt from Assembly, Vol. XVII, No 2 (Sum '58)

The Class of 1958 left a June Week record that will be difficult to match. Never have I seen the military ceremonies attendant to June Week better performed. Graduation Parade was a particularly military and dignified affair that made everyone who saw it proud to be a West Pointer.

POST PARADE ENCOUNTERS Later Years

From L-2: Eight years later I volunteered to escort then GEN Throckmorton from Graduation Parade to Central Area to see young John recognized. (I did this so I could ask for a space available ride to Japan, where he was headed in a special mission aircraft). I had found a little balcony in the

West Academic Building that looked right down on John's company. GEN T. said that he was fine observing from ground level at the opening between the West Academic Bldg and the 1st Div of Barrack. It was hot in the sun and he and his wife were standing 20 feet in front of the crowd gathered to

see the recognition ceremony. I sensed discomfort and again recommended we go to the balcony. He agreed. He really relaxed when he got to the balcony, with a direct shot on John's company, no sun and isolated from the public. He thanked me profusely and an easy conversation started between the three

of us. A natural question followed. "What class are you, captain"? My response was a proud but a little guarded, "57, sir." That ended all further conversation. The subject of a ride to Japan never seemed to come up. He did give me a curt thank you when I dropped him off at the Mess Hall.

From K-1: In 1968, I was a major stationed with the 2/9th Artillery at the Duc Pho base camp in Vietnam as the Fire Direction Officer. However, when the BN commander went on R&R, I stepped in as CO for the week. At that time the brigade commander had a working lunch each day for his commanders and staff; so, on my first day in my new role, I went up to the brigade mess and took a place at the commander's table.

The colonel, seeing a new face, asked me to introduce myself, then asked where I got my commission.

"West Point, sir." I responded proudly.

"Oh, what class?" The colonel inquired.

"57, sir"

Silence. A cold hard silence flowed from the head of the table. It was so penetrating that everyone stopped eating ... then a low, angry voice asked; "Major Wright, would you like to guess who was the young major in charge of parades and ceremonies at the United States Military Academy on the 3rd of June 1957?"

No, I didn't need to guess. I just sat up straight in my chair and started, "Sir, The Days. There are"

From M-1: This event took place in Richmond, VA, about 1975, when I was a Branch Manager for IBM. On one Saturday, I took my youngest child, Ken, to the mall to buy some Levis. Upon entering the store, I noticed a gray haired gentleman with a child who appeared to be his grandson. I assumed they were on the same mission as I and my son.

I approached the gentleman and said, "Please excuse me, GEN Throckmorton—it's nice to see you again." He replied (very steely eyed of course), "Have we met before?" My reply, "Yes, but I'd rather not say where or when". (I was trying to be cute). Without blinking an eye he said, "You must be a member of the Class of '57". And before I could answer, he just walked away. I didn't even get a traditional "Have a nice day!" That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

From G-1: In the aftermath, I had no immediate problems with subsequent assignments, although I heard a number of our Classmates did, particularly those who were assigned to the 101st Airborne. My early days were unmarred by our transgression. However, in 1970, as a LTC reporting for my second tour with the 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam, an incident did occur. ...I was slated to take a BN command. I was being escorted to dinner in the CG's Mess by the ADC, BG Gene Forrester (who had been the F-2 TAC our First Class year and who would be my rater in the division), and we were chatting amiably. He asked me what my Class Year was, and I responded "'57." He halted in mid-stride, spun around, stuck a finger in my chest and said, "Let me tell you about that Class". He wasn't complimentary and really tore me up on the issue of breaking ranks. I simply told him that I realized what we did was wrong; though most of us probably did not favor the action, we were a very loyal Class and when one Classmate broke ranks, the rest had to follow; and it simply cascaded. He started in on me a second time, so I just kept my mouth shut and said "Yes Sir". This was a perfect example of when the "Yes, Sir; No, Sir; No Excuse, Sir" responses were right on the mark.

From M-2: ...a number of years after graduation, I was going through a receiving line at Founders Day at Ft Bragg. I was a BN CO in the 82nd and was preceded in the line by then BG Hank Emerson, who was an ADC of the 82nd. Hank had been my old M-2 TAC, my BN CO in Vietnam, and very much was like a brother before and since graduation. Hank, years earlier, had been an aide to the honored senior officer, the then LTG Throckmorton. As Hank was talking with GEN Throckmorton, he turned and said, "Sir, this is COL Scott from the Class of '57." It was as if someone had thrown a bucket of cold water over Throcky. His face immediately changed from all smiles to the most contorted and unpleasant visage I can remember. Hank immediately saw what had happened and in a shrill voice blurted out, "He walked!! He walked." Throcky cooled down a bit, but Hank and I made a hasty retreat and got the hell out of his sight!

From E-1: In the early 1970's, at Fort Bragg, NC, GEN (Ret.) Throckmorton, made a visit. Along with two other '57 Classmates, I was

invited to the home of the Commander, Airborne Division to meet and welcome GEN Throckmorton back to Fort Bragg. We talked about our soldiers and our commands and the challenges we faced. Throckmorton then asked us what we were from at the Academy. Interestingly we shuddered, as we knew what was coming. Each of us indicated "Class of 1957, Sir". He asked us if we ran at graduation. I indicated that I had run. He then moved quickly to ask if there was a "conspiracy" in the Class to run at graduation. Each of us indicated "no." We indicated that the circumstances of breaking ranks were for the most part spontaneous ... that from our perspective the Class was running to maintain the tradition, with everyone overtaken by the spirit of the moment. Despite our comments, GEN Throckmorton ... still believed that there was a conspiracy within our Class to break ranks and run. We were unable to convince him otherwise. This was one of the most difficult social meetings with a senior General Officer that we had ever experienced in our active duty careers.

From I-1: In 1983, as a Colonel, I was assigned the task of presenting a one-on-one brief to GEN Taylor, then retired, as part of an annual pilgrimage to the Pentagon. The subject was the Ballistic Missile Defense program ... GEN Taylor came into the room hobbled with "Lou Gehrig's" disease, leaning on two canes, and refusing the wheelchair which had been provided ... After the technical material was completed, I requested permission to make a comment. GEN Taylor so graciously granted it. The entourage inhaled audibly. I told the general that he had given a speech at USMA graduation in which he left us with three main points: always have a watch on time); always carry a notepad (don't rely on everything to memory); and always have a tennis racket (stay in top physical shape). I emphasized to him that these had been his useful guidelines in my Army career. He wanted to thank him for that guidance. GEN Taylor replied, "That is very gratifying. I will be sure to tell my wife that I have done something useful." The General showed no evidence of rancor from the events of June '57.

From C-2: In 1983, I had an interesting encounter with GEN Taylor. By 1983, GEN Taylor's health was failing. He cared deeply about military organization and wanted to provide congressional

mony concerning his belief that fundamental changes were needed. As the responsible House Armed Services Committee staff member, I was concerned about ensuring that the elderly general's trip to the Capitol did not overly tax him. I decided to escort him from his home on Massachusetts Avenue to the hearing. Remembering that it was GEN Taylor who, as CSA, endured the embarrassment of our charge across the parade ground ... I pondered whether to identify myself as a member of the Class of '57. When we entered the car, I decided to 'fess up. I turned to the General and told him that I am a member of the Class of '57. GEN Taylor started, roused himself from his bent arthritic slump to a stiff posture, drew his right arm up, hatchet-chopped the air, and said, "You ruined my 35th reunion!" It took a little while but gradually the tension eased. Later, he invited me to his home to detail his views of needed organizational

changes. Rep. Ike Skelton later introduced a bill embodying GEN Taylor's proposals. Taylor's testimony and proposals contributed to the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986.

From I-2: In the years after LTG Davidson retired and became Chancellor at the University of California systems – all 11 universities – I met and talked with him several times (his oldest son was a grammar and high school classmate and friend of mine), and he discussed the event with detached amusement. I don't think his feelings were anything like those I have heard ascribed to Throckmorton.

From Our 1st Captain: Rumors, even myths, about the aftermath of the incident have apparently abounded through the years: that Ranger and Airborne instructors at Ft. Benning had dealt with us especially harshly, that GEN Throckmorton hated us and didn't

want to have any of us in his commands, etc. All of which was B.S. Ranger Class 1958, of which most of us were a part, was one of the largest classes up to that time and every member won the tab – a first.

My relationship with GEN Throckmorton grew over time. After I resigned my commission, we maintained a regular correspondence. It dwindled for a time after he retired in '73; however, it renewed again later, while I was serving as a Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army (1978-82). During all of that time, he harbored any ill will toward '57, he concealed it from me.

The same was apparently true with GEN Davidson. He commanded Seventh Army while I was in Germany and he always made me feel as if he was looking after me in a fatherly way. Later, after his retirement I was with him on numerous occasions at West Point and in Washington.

RETROSPECTIVE - BY THE CLASS Selected Diverse Views

From D-1: There was some thought that this would affect the future of our class – Carl Vuono went on to become Army Chief of Staff and 30 classmates became general officers. The event appeared not to have the negative effect on the careers of the Commandant or the other officers in the Tactical Department

From B-2: If I were given the opportunity to change one event in my life, my choice would be to change the events of that day ... My recommendation: Use your publication to issue an apology from the Class of '57

to the Academy and to the Long Grey Line. Bring this issue into the open and bury it once and for all.

From D-1: Our Graduation Parade is humorous in retrospect after fifty years and we continue to joke amongst ourselves. That said, in my opinion it is something we never should be proud of, and therefore I do not believe it should be highlighted with a separate section in the Yearbook. ... I may be accused of lacking a sense of humor, but in hindsight, deep down; the Graduation Parade experience should not be funny, then or now.

Why do we continue to trumpet it?

From E-1: In reflection, I am glad I ran and broke ranks as a member of Black '57 back on that June day, eons ago. Call it spontaneity, circumstances, Class togetherness or pride, I don't regret running. There was no conspiracy, just a happening. Our Class has represented itself well during years of active duty ... That our Class was responsible for creating and financing the Honor Plaza, a centerpiece at West Point says something about us. Duty, Honor and Country are important.

A FINAL POIGNANT RETROSPECTIVE From Gerry Galloway

In the spring of 1987, at the age of 85, General Maxwell Taylor entered Walter Reed Army Hospital with Lou Gehrig's Disease for what would be his last stay at that venerable facility. At that time, I was serving as a Professor and West Point Chief of Staff for the Superintendent, LTG Dave Palmer, '56.

When he heard of GEN Taylor's hospitalization, LTG Palmer decided to send him a plaque from the Military Academy noting his service to the Army and the nation. When the Supe learned that I was going to Washington for a Pentagon visit, he asked me to take the



GEN Maxwell D. Taylor

plaque out to Walter Reed and, if possible, present it to GEN Taylor. When I arrived at Ward 72, the VIP section, I was told that GEN Taylor was not seeing visitors, so they introduced me to his doctor. When the doctor learned that I was from West Point, he agreed to take me in to see the General, hoping that the visit might cheer him up.

When I entered his room, GEN Taylor was lying flat on his back with his head lifted from the bed by a couple of pillows. The doctor introduced me and GEN Taylor, who could barely speak, thanked me for coming. Recognizing his condition, I moved closer

to the bed and quickly presented him the plaque. Before I could leave, GEN Taylor grabbed the sleeve of my Greens and pulled me to his side. He then began to trace the West Point patch on my left sleeve with his finger, explaining to the doctor in a soft voice what the elements of the patch represented.

He then turned to me and asked, "What was your class?" I quickly and proudly said, "1957, Sir!"

At that, he turned towards me, extended and shook his index finger at me and said, in a gravelly whisper, "Naughty boys!" A big smile then broke out across his face and

he grabbed my hand to shake it.

The doctor nodded that it was time for me to go. So I thanked GEN Taylor and left the room knowing that he clearly remembered the Class of 1957. Shortly thereafter, on April the 19th, GEN Taylor died.

THE CORPS LEGEND CONTINUES

From K-2: In Sept 1967, I was teaching English to a bunch of brand-new plebes. One morning, at a point in the year when the plebes were still struggling to get their bearings and knew but little of the deepest, darkest secrets of the Academy, one of my young charges raised his hand to ask if I were a graduate. When I answered to the affirmative, he then asked what Class I was in. When I told him 1957, he jabbed an elbow into the side of the classmate next to him and said, "See; I told you!" I asked what that was all about; and he responded in a somewhat accusatory tone, "Oh sir, that means you were in the Class that broke ranks at your graduation parade!"

I was quite taken aback. You would think that, 10 years since the heinous crime had been committed; it might have faded into obscurity. But here it was, one of the historical occurrences at our Rockbound Highland Home so significant as to be included in the lore passed to the new cadets early in their training, a full decade after the fact.

From D-2: About 5 years ago, I ran into another younger graduate. When he asked what class I was, I said '57, and he immediately said, "Oh, Black '57." But he showed me more respect after that. What a world!

From E-1: The lingering effect of breaking ranks depended on whom I encountered. Older grads generally disapproved, but the most memorable was having cadets approach us at the 40th Reunion to ask if we were from The Class of '57 and then show a lot of knowledge of the event. I gathered from what they told us that the chain of command has effectively squelched any further attempt to emulate our efforts.

From K-2: Some 43 years after the fact, while participating in a Plebe hike march-back, I was walking alongside a Plebe, who asked my Class; when I told him, "1957," he paused for a moment and then somewhat hesitantly asked, "Sir, wasn't that the Class that broke ranks at its graduation parade?"

Does anyone ask, "Sir, isn't that the Class

that produced a Chief of Staff of the Corps and a CINC Space?" or "Sir, isn't that the Class that built the Honor Plaza?" Do you call up any of our countless other, positive achievements? No, in spite of the fact that we were merely resurrecting "tradition" that had been performed many times in the past, the entire onus is heaped solely upon the beleaguered members of the Class of 1957.

From Our Class Scribe Reported in 1982 Assembly: I learned something at the reunion (25th) that I'm sure you'll appreciate. '57 has become something of a celebrity class among the cadets, along with the Class of '15, the "Class the Stars are on". They refer to us as the "Class with Guts" because they perceive our graduation run as an expression of individualism and determination to do our thing even when threatened with reprisal. It certainly seems to be a turn of events. The information the way, comes from cadets.

THE LEGACY OF OUR GRADUATION PARADE

It appears the old adage of "time heals all things" is operational here. For the most part, the Class has come to terms with the Graduation Parade events, and the sobriquet of "Black '57," has become an identifier we now use somewhat fondly with a bit of mischievous pride. The Class proved invalid the dire predictions projected for us. As previously mentioned, our Parade had even spawned a 40th Reunion ballad, an Ode, and has given us an unofficial Class motto of, "YOU MAN, HALT!" which has been playfully codified as a command revision to FM 22-5 by a member of the Class of 1954. All of this will be presented on the DVD previously mentioned. Surprisingly, it also created a bit of lore that somehow has become imbedded in the Corps of Cadets' DNA.

AND IN SUMMATION

One Classmate aptly summed all what we had wrought in a incisive one-liner by remarking,

"It is amazing to me how a one-minute event can define us for fifty years."

(Article prepared by Nick Monaco, with substantial assistance from Max Kovel, Bob Stevens, Tom Kehoe, and all who contributed their recollections.)

THE BALLAD OF BLACK '57

(Lyrics by Peggy Miller, Dick Mollicone & Bill Seely;
to the tune of "The Good Reuben James")

HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE BLACK '57 USMAY CLASS?
FULL OF FUN, FULL OF GRIT, FULL OF STARCH AND FULL OF SASS!
IN THE SPRING OF THAT YEAR, THEN, A BOLD PLOT WAS HATCHED –
WITH THE FIRSTIES NOT HEEDING THE WARNINGS OF THE TACS. WELL –

REFRAIN:

WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES, TELL ME WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES?
WHICH ONES BROKE FREE, THEN, AND WHICH ONES REMAINED?
WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES, TELL ME WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES?
WHO CHARGED THE LINE, THEN, AND WHO THEIR RANKS MAINTAINED?

SHINY SABERS WERE LIFTED, THEN A REBEL YELL WAS HEARD.
AND THEIR RANKS BROKE ASUNDER! OH DAMN, HAD THEY ERRED?
YET SOME STALWARTS MARCHED ONWARD, THEIR STRIDES SURE AND STRONG,
AND SO SURE IN THEIR MINDS, THEN, BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG. WELL –

REPEAT REFRAIN:

SENT TO STONY GRAY BARRACKS, RESIGNED TO THEIR FATE –
WOULD THEY DINE? WOULD THEY DANCE? WOULD THEY NOT GRADUATE?
HOW THEY CHEERED THE DECISION, THAT THEY WOULD GET THEIR BARS!
WAS NOT BOLDNESS EXPECTED OF THE MEN WHO FIGHT THE WARS? WELL –

REPEAT REFRAIN:

MANY YEARS NOW HAVE PASSED SINCE THAT FATEFUL SPRING DAY,
AND THE GOLD TRUTHS OF AUTUMN BECAME SOLDIERS' PAY.
THEY LEARNED TIMES TO BE BRAVE AND THAT BRAVE'S NOT ENOUGH.
ONLY DISCIPLINE'S STEEL COULD SUPPLY THE RIGHT STUFF.

REPEAT REFRAIN:

THERE WERE TIMES THEY SUCCEEDED AND TIMES THAT THEY FAILED,
BUT THEY HELD TO THEIR GROUND AND TO FRIENDSHIP'S FAST WELD,
AND THEY LEARNED HOW UNCERTAIN CAN BE RIGHT AND WRONG
WHEN THE HARD CHARGE OF LIFE BREAKS APART EVEN THE STRONG. WELL -

FINAL REFRAIN:

WE KNOW THEIR NAMES, OH YES, WE KNOW THEIR NAMES –
WHO'S FREE OF EARTH NOW, AND WHO HAS REMAINED.
CHERISH THEIR NAMES, OH YES, CHERISH THEIR NAMES –
OUR RANKS ARE FIRM NOW, AND OUR FAITH SUSTAINED.