



THE UNITED STATES ARMY OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

OCS Alumni,

The 75th anniversary of the Officer Candidate School program has arrived and we look forward to the activities this year. First on the agenda is the Alumni Reunion to be held at the end of this month. The reunion is held in conjunction with the OCS Hall of Fame Induction and the Patterson Award Dinner where we honor the most outstanding recent OCS graduate.



John Ionoff
Col. In USA (Ret.) | President

We have a very distinguished line up of speakers with LTG (R) Joe Kinzer, HOF Induction; LTG (R) John Brown, Patterson Award Dinner; CPT (R) Florent Groberg, most recent Medal of Honor recipient, Alumni Luncheon; and LTC (R) Ralph Peters, Fox News Strategic Analyst, at the Alumni Association Dinner. I don't think you want to miss any of these events, so if you have not registered, please do so on our website as soon as possible.

In addition to the reunion activities, we are planning a September event in conjunction with the annual Army Maneuver Conference held at Ft Benning. We are looking at a panel discussion and an evening dinner, featuring a well-known OCS graduate speaker. More to come on this.

A major event at the reunion will be the General Membership meeting and the election of nine Board members. The quality and experience of these individuals is truly outstanding and their

stated commitment to give back to their alma mater is inspiring. Please review their bios on the website and vote for them online or in person at the membership meeting. With this election, we will have Board members from Arizona, California, Ohio, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Texas, Virginia, Florida, and Georgia. This new Board expands our reach throughout the United States and gives the Association a foundation for the formation of regional chapters.

We need your input and your involvement to continue our movement forward as a vital and visible advocate for the OCS program and the thousands of alumni worldwide.

This change is not without loss as we say farewell to three long-serving members. They are COL (R) Dorn Backman, past president; LTC (R) Ed Burroughs, Treasurer; and CPT (R) Jack Paul, a vital member of past reunion committees. I thank them for their great contributions to the Alumni Association.

One last request: I would ask you to spread the word about the Alumni Association and the OCS program throughout your communities and to reach out to your classmates and OCS friends to become members. There is nothing like personal contact. Our VP of Operations, Dr. Pat Smith, is in charge of membership and will be happy to assist you. With your help, we will continue to grow in numbers and influence in the Army and civilian communities. We have a product that each of us should be proud to talk about – a history of providing the nation with skilled, competent, and confident

leaders who have made a difference in the military and civilian world.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the reunion and receiving your comments and suggestions on how the Association can better serve you.

Forward Ever,

John Ionoff

John Ionoff | Col In USA (Ret.)
President, USAOCSAA
(813)505-8335
jionoff@aol.com

Commander's CIRCLE

Faithfully We Strive...

During the last 90 days, the Officer Candidate School has achieved a string of notable accomplishments: commissioned 248 lieutenants into all 17 basic branches and all three components of the Total Army; continued our student and instructor exchanges with the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) and the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS); submitted our revised program of instruction for a 14-week course to HQs, TRADOC; and selected 31 OCS alumni for induction into the Hall of Fame.

The next 90 days look equally bright. OCS is currently training 260 candidates and has restarted platoon-level field training. We will commission the first female Armor officer who will join approximately 30 other lieutenants in Armor BOLC this summer. We will continue our exchanges with both RMAS and WOCS. We are poised to execute a Hall of Fame induction and reunion that will pay a fitting tribute to those members selected for induction.

In my nine months in command, I have travelled to the TRADOC centers of excellence. In my conversations with the leaders of the various branches, it is clear the OCS commissioned officers of the present continue to uphold the legacy of those who have gone before them. The cadre at OCS continues to provide the best program of instruction: coaching, teaching, and mentoring candidates to lead American sons and daughters both while deployed and in garrison to accomplish the complex missions given to them in an uncertain and ever-changing operational environment. OCS has done this for the past 74 years and is poised to continue well into the future.

As this newsletter goes to publication, we are just over three weeks from the Hall of Fame induction and reunion scheduled for April 24 to 28. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible attend. This is my first Hall of Fame as OCS Commandant. I can't wait to hear guest speakers LTG (R) Kinzer for the HoF Induction, LTG (R) Brown for the Patterson Award, LTC (R) Peters for the Alumni Dinner, and CPT (R) Groberg for the Alumni/Candidate Lunch. This year's reunion will also be a great spring board into our 75th anniversary year which we will kick off with a dedication ceremony on Friday, June 30, 2016 and then celebrate in depth as part of the Maneuver Warfighting Conference in September 2016. If you haven't signed up for the reunion events, I urge you to do so as soon as possible so you can add your stories of service and sacrifice to those who are attending as you interact with and educate the next generation of OCS alumni as they start their careers as Army officers. See you at Mother Benning in April!!

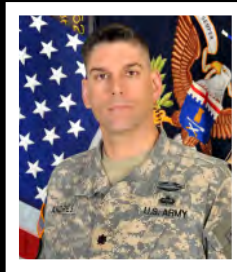
Standards!! No Compromise!!

Mark C. Andres

Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

Email: mark.c.andres.mil@mail.mil

Office Phone: 706-545-3507

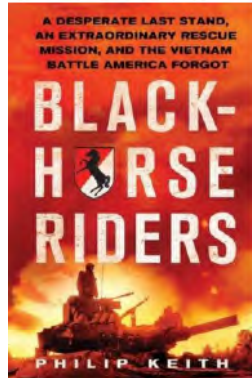


Mark C. Andres
Lieutenant Colonel,
Infantry
Commanding





The OCS BOOKSHELF



Blackhorse Riders: A Desperate Last Stand, an Extraordinary Rescue Mission, and the Vietnam Battle America Forgot

-Information Compiled by Doug Burmester

Philip Keith's *Blackhorse Riders* is the incredible true story of the soldiers of A Troop, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Vietnam, who risked everything to rescue the outnumbered and surrounded Company C, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division and the 39-year odyssey to recognize the bravery of the A Troop soldiers.

On the morning of March 26, 1970, soldiers of A Troop began hearing radio calls from an infantry unit four kilometers away that had stumbled into a hidden North Vietnamese Army stronghold. Outnumbered at least six to one, the 90-man American company was quickly surrounded, pinned down, and fighting for its very survival. Helicopters could not penetrate the dense jungle, and artillery and air support could not be targeted effectively. Without help, the company would be worn down and eventually all killed or captured.

Overhearing the calls on his radio, Captain John Poindexter, A Troop's 25-year-old commander and Armor OCS graduate of Class 21-67, realized that his outfit was the only hope for the trapped company. It just might be possible that he and his unit could get through enough jungle by nightfall to reach them. Not making the attempt was deemed unacceptable, so he ordered his men to saddle up. With courage and determination that makes legends out of ordinary men, A Troop conducted a daring rescue and fought a pitched battle at considerable cost. Many brave deeds were done that day, and Captain Poindexter tried to make sure his men were recognized for their actions.

Thirty years later, while John Poindexter was reading the book *Into Cambodia*, which included an account of the daring rescue and ferocious battle he had led, he realized that few of his men had received the medals he had recommended for them. Even the records of the battle had somehow gone missing. Thus began the second phase of this remarkable story: a battle to ensure that his brave men's accomplishments would never be forgotten again.

Those efforts were rewarded when President Obama stepped to the podium on October, 20, 2009 to award A Troop the Presidential Unit Citation--the highest combat award that can be given a military unit. John Poindexter, a member of the OCS Hall of Fame, remarked, "This will be closure for me. It's not about healing any emotional wound, rather it's the profound satisfaction of fulfilling a duty to my men." Those last few words reflect not only Poindexter's high standards, but also the high standards of OCS.

Blackhorse Riders was the winner of the 2012 USA Best Book Award for Military History, the winner of the 2013 Silver Medal in History from the Military Writer's Society of America, and a finalist for Norwich University's 2013 Colby Award for Military Writers.



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

RMA Sandhurst

Part 3 – Intermediate Term

2LT Blake A. Grasso

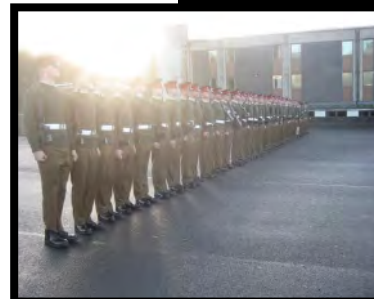
My Intermediate Term at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst is almost complete, and I am grateful to have made it through unscathed. Much of this term has been spent in the field, giving me an intimate taste of the British winter in all its glory. Along with the enhanced emphasis on fieldcraft, the scope of our training has also broadened as we were handed the reins for company-level operations and have begun defensive exercises. These recent training events have provided me with plenty of opportunities for leadership growth, while also testing me both physically and mentally.

The most challenging portion of Intermediate Term has been Exercise Allenby's Advance. This six-day exercise took place in Brecon, a training area in Wales and home to the British Army's various infantry schools. Brecon is mountainous and renowned for its weather, which is capable of producing four seasons in a single day. Unfortunately for Commissioning Course 153, we would see only one season: winter. For the first three days, the temperature hovered just above freezing as rain blew in sideways. Our company harbor location was soon a muddy pit and getting anywhere after the sun had set was an emotional experience. Overseas cadets from warmer countries began going down with non-freezing cold injuries as the temperature dropped on Day 4 and snow began falling. I stubbornly held on, knowing that I could not sully the proud reputation of the United States Army and OCS because of a little rain and wind. By the end of the week, even British cadets began to feel the effects of the elements. Nearly a third of our company had to be treated by the medics, and those of us left at the end of the exercise hobbled out of Brecon like Napoleon's army departing Russia, completely humbled by the weather and terrain of Wales.

After surviving Allenby's Advance, the course's focus has shifted to defensive warfare. We have been taught how to dig proper trenches, a number of ways to string up concertina wire, and how to correctly position minefields and other obstacles. We have our summative defensive exercise in one week (complete with more CS gas and operating in a CBRN environment) and then a British version of a staff ride to the Normandy beaches. After that I will be off to Albania and Bosnia for adventure training in the form of mountain climbing. Other cadets are going diving in Malta or hang-gliding in Germany. Adventure training is one of the things emphasized in the British Army that I would like to continue when I get back to the U.S.

Ultimately, Intermediate Term has been more difficult than Junior Term, but I am better for it. I know that as tough as training here can be, it pales in comparison to both Ranger School and actual operational deployments. The large amount of time we have spent in the field has provided me with countless opportunities to improve, and I have exploited them to the fullest. Next term, we move on to counterinsurgency operations. I am excited for this change of pace from the conventional warfare we have been practicing. It is hard to believe, but the next time you hear from me I will have completed the commissioning course and be on my way back to the States.

2LT Grasso





CANDIDATES CORNER

Originally Published in the January 2016 Newsletter.

TO PROTECT THE FREE, FOLLOW ME!

BATTLE HARD! PANTHERS NEVER QUIT! ORDER AND DISCIPLINE!

These were just a few of the mottos obnoxiously repeated at the start of Officer Candidate School when Bravo Company Class 013-15 was nothing more than a battle of the basics. With a class primarily comprised of college option soldiers, our only military knowledge was that of basic training. However, in just a few short weeks, numerous tire flips, and one too many buddy carries later, “order and discipline” slowly faded away and the call of the Bravo Blackhawks began to rise.

“Over just 12 weeks, I have come to know the most genuinely compassionate, motivated, and selfless individuals I have ever met”
-OC Caitlin Connor

As much as OCS is meant to develop strong, confident leaders for the United States Army, what happened here was something of much larger magnitude. Over the past 12 weeks we have pushed, we have fought, and we have surpassed limits that none of us thought would be possible—and we did so as a team. Whether it was making a literal leap of faith off a wooden plank at the Leadership Reaction Course or enduring sleepless nights teaching each other 250 years of United States military history in 48 hours, Bravo Company Class 013-15 proved we were not just any group of soldiers; we were a family.

“You always knew you had a battle buddy there with you in the grind and always had someone to lean on to embrace the suck.”
-OC Alastair Merkel

Land navigation was our first true test of confidence. While every event had the ability for us to demonstrate teamwork to establish success, this was the one event where you were left with only a protractor, a compass and your own self-assurance to lead the way.

“Some say land navigation & the 12-mile ruck march will make a man/woman out of you, but in my case it took the man right out of me.”
-OC Chemal Cruz

From the first step we took on the OCS footprint, our cadre showed us they were here to set the standards for how to lead from the front. Day in and day out, from PT sessions to late night classes, they continually exhibited their personal levels of heart and dedication.

“The mentorship and energy the cadre in Bravo Company puts into their candidates is hands down the best I have experienced here at OCS.”
-OC Salone Jones

It is only when we take time to comprehend how far we have come in this journey that we realize all we have learned and experienced over the last three months. For instance, if something is too easy—don’t worry, we’ll fix that. You will never sound confident if you don’t sound off. And most importantly, when picking up brass, you will NEVER have enough brass. Ever.

“OCS is physically demanding, mentally challenging, and causes you to examine the “why” behind every decision you make.”
-OC Benjamin Jones

Being a part of OCS Bravo Company Class 013-15 has been an honor. We fought through our challenges; met amazing, like-minded individuals; experienced new realms of self-discovery; and brought into being the leader within us.

And for that—we say, hooah!





2016 OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL HALL OF FAME & ALUMNI REUNION



Guest Speakers

Don't miss the 2016 OCS Hall of Fame and Alumni Reunion Sunday, April 24, 2016 to Thursday, April 28, 2016 at Fort Benning, GA. The guest speakers include LTG (R) John Brown III former USARPAC commander; LTG (R) Joseph Kinzer former 5th Army commander; LTC (R) Ralph Peters, Fox News' Strategic Analyst; and CPT (R) Florent Groberg, Medal of Honor recipient. To view the reunion itinerary and to register to attend, go to the OCS Alumni Association website, www.ocsalumni.org. You don't want to miss this opportunity to reconnect with old friends and classmates and meet the current candidates!



LTG (R) John M. Brown III was Commander of U.S. Army Pacific, headquartered at Fort Shafter, Hawaii from August 25, 2004 to February 1, 2008. He enlisted in the Army as an Infantryman in 1969 and became an officer upon completion of Infantry Officer Candidate School in 1971 where he was commissioned a second lieutenant of Infantry.



LTG (R) Joseph Kinzer retired from the United States Army on August 31, 1998 after more than 39 years of service. Commissioned from the Officer Candidate School at the United States Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia in 1964, he served in numerous command and staff positions in both the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions.



LTC (R) Ralph Peters graduated from Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia in December 1980. After his initial assignment as an officer to the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, he served in Military Intelligence and then as a Foreign Area Officer for Russia.



MEDAL
OF HONOR
RECIPIENT

CPT (R) Florent Groberg entered the Army in July 2008 and attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. He received his commission as an Infantry officer Dec. 4, 2008.



ocsalumni.org

ELECTIONS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The annual election of OCS Alumni Association Board of Directors (BOD) has begun. All BOD officers and directors serve two years upon being elected and officers of the BOD serve three years. This year there are nine candidates for election: those previously elected and running for reelection, those appointed to the BOD and running for election, and those nominated for election to the BOD.

You can vote for any or all nine candidates listed below. Additional information to include a biography and a statement as to why each wish to serve is available at the OCSAA website, [VOTE HERE](#).



- COL (Ret.) Mayo A. Hadden III
Commissioned Infantry at Fort Benning, GA on 2 Dec 1964
- Mr. John Bowles
Commissioned Engineer at Fort Belvoir, VA on 2 April 1970
- COL (Ret.) Frank L. Harman III
Commissioned Infantry at Fort Benning, GA on 7 Sep 1979
- COL (Ret.) Karla Langland
Commissioned Military Intelligence at Fort Benning, GA on 18 Dec 1986
- Mr. Michael Mayo
Commissioned Infantry at Fort Benning, GA on 2 May 1980
- CPT Jefferson A. Davis
Commissioned Infantry at Fort Benning, GA on 29 Jan 2009
- COL (Ret.) Tom Evans
Commissioned Infantry at Fort Benning, GA on 14 January 1966
- COL (Ret.) Gary D. Jackson
Commissioned Infantry at Fort Benning, GA in 1956
- Dr. Richard Boyer
Commissioned Military Intelligence at Fort Benning, GA in 1965

Voting deadline is April 23, 2016. You can vote online at the OCSAA website. You can also vote in person at the membership meeting at the OCS Alumni Association reunion. Only members of the OCS Alumni Association may vote in the election.

2016 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Congratulations to the following 2016 OCS Hall of Fame inductees! Join us as we honor their service at the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Monday, April 25, 2016 at the National Infantry Museum, Fort Benning, GA. You can register at the OCS website. <https://www.ocsalumni.org/events/cart.php?id=1>

COL Richard Addo	LTC Peter Conaty	COL Robert George	LTC Michael Moore
COL William Aldridge	COL Manuel Coronado	CPT Florent Groberg	1LT Daniel Nixon
LTC Raymond Angeli	LTC James Dabney	MAJ Robert Hastings	1LT Robert Poxon
COL John Bircher	COL Michael Dupra	1LT Daniel Hennessy	COL Matthew Ruedi
CPT Richard Boyer	2LT Harold Durham	COL Robert Klein	COL Thomas Rybczyk
COL Philip Clayton	LTC Stephen Fitzgerald	COL Larry Lock	MG Kent Savre
MAJ John Cleckner	LTC Edward Flash	COL Timothy Loney	COL Samuel Williams
COL William Clerkin	COL Jerry Fry	LTC James McGarity	1LT Randolph Wright





THE UNITED STATES ARMY OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL



BRICK & PAVER MEMORIAL

A Lifetime Legacy and Tribute

On the grounds of the United States Army Officer Candidate School, overlooking the battalion parade field, dedicated to past, present and future leaders of OCS that bring honor and fidelity to this organization – memorials line the Memorial walk of honor.

Featured on the walk are monuments placed by OCS graduates and OCS classes. Some have been built on-site; others have been moved to this beautiful location. The Memorial Walk of Honor serves as a place for quiet reflection and for honoring Soldiers for their service. Heroes great and small, line the pages of history.

Now, your hero's name can be etched in stone on the new OCS Alumni Association Memorial Walk. There are countless occasions to say "thank you" to a Soldier. You can celebrate a graduation, recognize a retirement, memorialize a loved one or honor a warrior.

Your donation of \$100 reserves a 4"x8" gray granite paver with space for three lines of text. Your donation of \$250 reserves an 8"x8" gray granite paver with space for six lines of text. You will also receive a miniature replica of the brick and/or paver to place on your or a loved one's desk. Additional replicas can be purchased for \$25 each. Carefully fill out the order form on the reverse side to reserve your brick or paver today!

For more information regarding placing a military monument on the OCSAA Memorial Walk or reserving a Legacy Brick or Paver, please call 888-600-2077 or email info@ocsalumni.org.



THE UNITED STATES ARMY OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL

BRICK & PAVER MEMORIAL | ORDER FORM

- *Please print clearly and double check your spelling.
- * For additional bricks or pavers, please fill out separate forms for each request.
- * Please provide documentation for significant awards.

____ I would like to purchase a **4"x8" engraved granite brick** (\$100). Purchase includes one free 2"x4" miniature replica. Additional miniature replicas are available for \$25 each. Maximum of 3 lines and 18 characters per line, including spaces and punctuation.

____ I would like to purchase a **8"x8" engraved granite paver** (\$250). Purchase includes one free 2"x4" miniature replica. Additional miniature replicas are available for \$25 each. Maximum of 6 lines and 18 characters per line, including spaces and punctuation.

I would like to make an additional contribution of \$_____ for a total of \$_____.

Payment Options | Payment in full, with credit card, check or money order. Make check payable to: OCSAA

____ Cash ____ Visa ____ Mastercard ____ American Express | No. _____ Exp. Date _____

CVV _____ Cardholder Signature _____ Donor Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Payments are non-refundable and will be treated as donations to the Officer Candidate Schools Alumni Association. The Officer Candidate Schools Alumni Association is a 501(c)(19) organization. Brick and Paver dedications are classified as charitable donations by the IRS and are deductible in the calendar year in which they are made.

Please print this page (form) and mail with payment to:
OCS Alumni Association Memorial Brick & Paver Program | 3100 Gentian Blvd Suite 2B | Columbus, Georgia 31907

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If interested in sponsorship opportunities for the 2016 OCS Hall of Fame Induction Activities, please call Jan Hyneman at (520) 820-7426.

Salute to All Veterans from Shades of Green

Shades of Green, an Armed Forces Recreation Center at Walt Disney World, is offering military veterans with less than 20 years of service an opportunity to vacation at the resort during the months of January and September as part of their "Salute to Our Veterans" program.

Space in the "Salute to Our Veterans" program is limited. Early reservations are recommended. You must present your DD-214 showing an honorable discharge at check-in to be eligible for this program. You can make reservations at the Shades of Green website, www.shadesofgreen.org, or by calling 888-593-2242.

Join us on social media!



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