



OCS Alumni Association Newsletter

3rd Quarter 2020 USAOCSAA Newsletter

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President's Message

Greetings fellow graduates of OCS,

We held our third quarter board meeting on August 8. It was a virtual meeting in which we installed three new board members. Welcome, retired Col. Ken Davis, retired Col. Dave Taylor, and Capt. Adam Rupert. Each come with a wealth of experience. You can view their biographies at our [website](#).

The OCS commandant and I hosted a small Hall of Fame induction ceremony on September 2 for retired Lt. Col. Rich Wood. Congratulations, again, to the 2020 Hall of Fame inductees. We will continue to work with you to ensure you are properly recognized.

We continue our support to the OCS Battalion which includes talking to candidates, attending graduations,

helping with Hall of Fame issues, and project work on the Memorial Walk and the OCS Heritage Center.

- **Memorial Walk-** New to the walk this summer is 18 class bricks, two class dedication blocks, and a stack of cannon balls next to the cannon.

Our Remaining Memorial Walk Capacity- 30 24x24 granite dedication blocks, 600 8x8 granite pavers or 1,200 4x8 granite bricks, and seven years' space for the Hall of Fame.

Our Memorial Walk Campaign Continues. I challenge each Hall of Fame member to buy a paver for themselves and at least one for a deceased Hall of Fame member. I encourage other alumni to participate and buy a paver or brick for themselves and a battle buddy. In addition, consider purchasing group pavers; class dedication blocks; division, brigade, and regiment dedication blocks; or memorial blocks.

- **OCS Heritage Center-** The OCS Heritage Center in Wigle Hall is complete with minor refinements left to do. We are planning to dedicate the building in December.
- **Nett Award-** We are accepting nominations for the 2021 Nett Award. The deadline for submission of nominations is November 15. Nomination packets include a picture, biography, and a letter of recommendation by a USAOCSAA member. Submit your nominations to Tom Evans, the USAOCSAA secretary at Secretary@ocsalumni.org. The USAOCSAA board will make the selection at the December board meeting.

The purpose of the Nett Award is to honor the service of Col. Robert B. Nett, Medal of Honor recipient and OCS graduate, to our country, the Army, and the OCS program by recognizing and honoring annually a Hall of Fame or OCSAA member or current/former cadre who has provided superior support and advocacy of the OCS program. The nominee through years of continued service, support, and action has furthered the ideals and promoted the welfare of the Officer Candidate School, the officer corps, and the U.S. Army.

- **OCS Hall of Fame-** It is time to submit nominations for the OCS Hall of Fame. The deadline for submission is November 1, 2020. The OCS Battalion [website](#) has details on the requirements for the induction packets. The OCS Hall of Fame was established in 1958 to honor graduates who had distinguished themselves during World War II through valorous combat leadership and subsequent superior meritorious service. The first honoree was Medal of Honor recipient 2nd Lt. Thomas Wigle.
- **USAOCSAA 2021 Reunion.** I am happy to announce that Ken Davis has volunteered to be the reunion coordinator! The reunion is scheduled for May 7 to 11, 2021. The reunion will run concurrently with the Hall of Fame induction activities. Activities include the Hall of Fame induction ceremony and dinner as well as dedication ceremonies at the OCS Heritage Center and the Memorial Walk. This is a great time for families to celebrate successful careers and honorable service. We will also provide unscheduled time on Friday and Tuesday for individual class, branch, or unit reunions. We will reserve a block of rooms at the Columbus Marriot. Final planning is underway and we will share details as they are available. Registration will start in January 2021.

- **USAOCSAA Website.** We have been on a quest to improve our website. We are working with a new webmaster to fully restore our website with all the information and capability we need to support our mission and support you, the members of this Association.
- **Support to USAOCSAA.** Our goal is to have every graduate join and actively participate in the Association's activities. If you are not currently a life member of the Association, I highly encourage you to join and purchase your personal paver or brick. Please go to our [website](#) and convert to life membership, buy your brick or paver, and maybe a dedication block for your class or an Army unit in which you served. And, if possible, consider making a tax-exempt donation to the Association to help sustain the Memorial Walk, Heritage Center, and our support to the OCS Battalion.

Please follow us on [Facebook](#) and visit our [website](#) for more information on Association activities. You can also contact me directly at President@ocsalumni.org or 706-610-7251.

Standards no compromise. Semper Fidelis. Follow Me.

Frank L. Harman III
Colonel (USA Retired)
President/CEO, USAOCSAA



Commander's Circle

Greetings from Fort Benning!

On behalf of the OCS cadre, family members, and officer candidates, please allow me to give my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all of the OCS alumni who make OCS special. As I tell the officer candidates throughout the course, they are entering a long and distinguished legacy. This month we were able to showcase one of these distinguished alumni, retired Lt. Col. Rich Wood, as we inducted him into the OCS Hall of Fame. One of my favorite activities as the OCS commandant is having the chance to recognize those who came before us, be it with an induction ceremony, a reunion, or just having a conversation with an OCS alumnus. Unfortunately, with COVID-19, there are far fewer chances to have these engagements, which made this ceremony even more special.

We continue to train officer candidates despite the global pandemic. We implemented extremely strict measures to prevent this disease from affecting our training. For example, candidates are not allowed to leave

the OCS footprint except for field training and ruck marches, both of which remain under the watchful eye of the cadre. We also decentralized training to limit the amount of cadre each OC interacts with. Measures such as these have had a positive effect. The battalion has only experienced nine cases of COVID-19 thus far, and only three candidates missed training because of it. Continuing to train leaders of character and competence remains the battalion's mission, and protecting the OCS population is paramount to accomplishing it. While frustrating for both cadre and candidates, we remain an agile and adaptive organization that prepares our officer candidates for serving our nation's greatest asset – the Soldiers of the United States Army. That is not to say that COVID-19 has not affected OCS at all. Because all the basic training battalions across the country shut down for a period of time and travel was restricted for in-service personnel, two out of five classes this summer were not conducted due to lack of candidates. The two companies that experienced the cancellations took full advantage of the off-cycle time by retraining and recertifying instructors, assisting the battalion to improve the program of instruction, and sending cadre members to professional development schools across Fort Benning. We are anticipating the Army will turn on the pipeline in full in Fiscal Year 21 and make up for the officer shortfall that COVID-19 caused this year. These preparatory improvements to the course will become critical as we expect 2021 to be the busiest year at OCS in quite some time.

Again, thank you all for your service to this great nation, for your sacrifices in the call of duty, and your continued support to your alma mater – the Officer Candidate School. It is truly an honor to serve you.

Standards! No Compromise!

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Chaplain's Corner

What Model Do You Drive?

I love cars! I bought my first car when I was 14. When I was a teen in South Carolina, it was legal to drive from dawn to dusk by yourself and after dark with a licensed driver over 21. My first car was a 1955 Nash

Metropolitan. It cost me \$160 and only burned two quarts of oil a week! Today, young men want to drive a “babe magnet.” My little Metro would never qualify. My own sister would hide if she saw one of her friends. But I loved that car! I often dreamed of a black and gold 1955 Chevy or a red and white 1956 Ford, but I drove a yellow, white, and rust Metro. Note to reader: Rust was not an original color.

Miss Teresa and I have been married over 45 years. I drive, including the car I brought into the marriage, my fifth car. My favorite, show-room new – not used, was my 1988 yellow Honda CRX Si. She had over 358,000 miles when I sold it 15 years later. Every time I would get trading fever, I would look in my car folder and check my monthly payment—\$0.00! It made it drive so much better. I would always park my CRX away from “door dingers” even when waiting on Teresa at the Piggly Wiggly (smile).

While stationed in Korea and home on leave, I learned a very valuable lesson about life, cars, and happiness. I watched as three different cars parked in nearby spaces. The first was a beat-up, two-door, and to the best of my memory it was a 1970-model Ford. I watched as a woman and a teenaged boy got out of the car. They took out a wheelchair and rolled it to the driver’s side of the car. I heard laughter and watched the exchanges of what apparently were a mother, son, and disabled father. They worked together to slip him into the wheelchair and then make their way into the store.

Only a few moments passed and another car, a small, mid-1980’s Oldsmobile pulled into the next space. Three adults got out and interestingly enough the driver was also disabled. A wheelchair was taken from the trunk to transport him into the store. Laughter could be heard as they made their way into the same store.

Then a brand-new, show-room clean car pulled in even closer to me. The car and its four passengers immediately caught my attention. I would have remembered the car just by the sight of it alone. It was brand-new, top-of-the-line BMW. It announced its own arrival! However, this car was occupied by four of the unhappiest-looking, well-dressed people I have ever seen. They got out of the car on healthy legs, having a full-blown argument while they walked towards the store!

Not all happiness comes by way of late-model cars, unencumbered health, and fashionable clothes. Oh, I don’t mean to suggest that never a cross word was spoken in that old Ford or that driving an old Oldsmobile carries a guarantee of happiness. But I am saying getting your priorities and values in order will help you live above your circumstances—regardless how old your car is!

Jesus must have looked into the future and into that parking lot when he said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33)

What model do you drive?

Was one of these cars the Chaplain’s cars?



Chaplain (Colonel, USA Retired) Sam Boone served in the Army for over 38 years as an enlisted Soldier, infantry officer, AH-1G cobra pilot, and chaplain. His final assignment was commandant of the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, Fort Jackson, S.C. He is a graduate of OCS Class 2-74.



OCS Bookshelf

The Benning Anvil: Memoirs of Infantry OCS Graduates Before, During & After Their Forging

Darrell S. Mudd

The 1960s were as turbulent a time as the days that tore our country apart in the 1860s. The catalyst of unrest was the war in Vietnam. Some young men demonstrated in the streets, some burned down ROTC buildings on college campuses, some imposed exile upon themselves and became expatriates in Canada, and some chose prison. Others either submitted to conscription or volunteered for service in the armed forces. A very few of those volunteered for the rigors and challenges of Infantry Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga. Those very few young men endured the tough discipline of basic combat training, advanced individual infantry training, and six months of even tougher training to see if they could withstand the pressure required to be officers in the United States Army. The Benning Anvil either broke them or forged them. Their stories appear in these pages. You will read of classmates that gave their todays for the tomorrows of fellow members of Infantry OCS Class of May 9, 1967. It is to our fallen classmates that these most sacred remembrances are dedicated.

Darrell Mudd is a graduate of Class 27-67. He left active duty in 1971 and worked for the Coors Brewery in Golden, Co. until retirement in 2003. He credits his alma mater, Regis College, with his interest in writing through their Center for the Study of War Experience.



Candidate's Corner

Face Masks and Ascots: OCS during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Jesse Elrod with contributions from Gray Streetman

The energy was palpable, belying our exhaustion from a final sleepless night disinfecting barracks at basic training. As our bus concluded its journey from Fort Jackson to Fort Benning, our eyes were greeted by the historic charm of the OCS campus with its terracotta roofs and endless porticos. We did not know what lay in store for us, but my basic training battle buddies and I were eager to embark on the next phase of our Army experience, hopefully with more responsibility and freedom.

After six years working in international affairs for the federal government, I joined the Army. I wanted to continue serving my country, with a greater emphasis on leadership and learning new skills. But, unbeknownst to me, fate had a 14-day quarantine in my immediate future. Time in HHC passed slowly, filled with preparatory American history readings and spy movies, punctuated by MREs and Hot-A's. But early on day 15, we packed our duffle bags and moved across the field to the third-floor home of Charlie Company—our base for the next 12 weeks. Then, training started with a vengeance.

Attending OCS during a pandemic has been unusual in some ways; though, by week ten our COVID-19 mitigation measures seem like a normal part of the training experience. We reach for our masks anytime we leave our rooms and only remove them to eat or conduct PT outdoors. We social distance in formation, in the classroom, and in line at the DFAC. Perhaps most strikingly, we do not leave the OCS footprint except for ruck marches and field exercises. By avoiding contact with nearly all outside populations, the likelihood we will contract the virus is greatly reduced. The downside is that our interaction with the cadre has generally been limited to one trainer each day. The upside is that we get to know each trainer very well over time.

Despite the irregularities brought on by COVID-19, we have conducted the same rigorous physical training as prior classes. In addition, we have had the advantage of training at the Tactical Athlete Performance Center (TAPC). This state-of-the-art facility provides Fort Benning Soldiers with exercise equipment and expert coaches whose training is specifically designed for the physical demands required for the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT). (Editor's note: If you haven't been in the Army in the past few years, you may not be aware that the Army has developed a new physical fitness test. In design phase for several years, the ACFT is the Army's only physical fitness test of record beginning October 1. See <https://www.army.mil/acft/> for more information.) The innovative training provided by the TAPC truly defies previous Army PT standards. For instance, instead of the traditional Army performance preparation drill, we have learned a series of dynamic warm-up stretches and mobility movements targeting muscle groups needed for a particular day's training. After the warm-up comes the fun part. Whether it be repetition deadlifting, running intervals at high speeds, or muscular endurance work, the coaches at TAPC lead our company through workouts targeting specific exercises of the ACFT. COVID-19 has not, however, spared our TAPC experience entirely: minor adjustments have been required. Coaches and OCs wear masks at all times inside the facility and we skip every other rack when deadlifting or using the pull-up bars.

On the academic front, COVID-19 did little to assuage OCs' dread regarding the infamous garrison OPORD, with its complexity, precision, and jargon. Instead, the pandemic added a layer of encumbrance. Briefing OPORDs privately in the office of a cadre member would have been daunting. But briefing OPORDs on the company breezeway—within earshot of other candidates and subject to the hot southern sun—ratchets up the pressure. Wearing masks required OCs to wield their command voices sooner rather than later to overcome the muffling effect. Ultimately, Charlie Company persevered, realizing that the OPORD is not as scary as it first appears. If anything, briefing garrison OPORDs in this fashion prepared us more for the situational training exercise OPORDs, where the conditions were analogous.

When we arrived at OCS, our class was eager to embark on this new phase of our lives. We wondered how COVID-19 would impact our training and if we would somehow miss out on the complete OCS experience. Now that the end is in sight—with only the history exam, four-mile run, and ACFT remaining—I can confidently say that while our training has been affected by the world-wide pandemic, OCS has been a time of personal and professional growth. The cadre has been supportive, our training has been challenging, and I feel prepared to move on to the Basic Officer Leader Course and the next stage of my Army career—with my nose and mouth covered at all times.

Candidate Jesse Elrod graduated September 25 from OCS. He is branched Military Intelligence.



Mermite Memories

James Wright

Mermite: (n.) container used to transport Hot-A's from the DFAC to service members. 2. (v.) "We'll mermite chow out to that OP."

I suspect many of us have a mermite memory. Although I enjoyed countless fine dining experiences thanks to these wonderous devices, I will always remember one occasion in particular.

In 1967, I had been diverted from a Special Forces assignment to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) to replace a casualty. The 1st Cav was decisively engaged in the conduct of combat operations in III Corps, Bong Son, Vietnam. Being an infantry officer, I was initially assigned as an infantry platoon leader. One of my first search and destroy missions as a platoon leader involved the conduct of a combat assault into the An Lao Valley to disrupt North Vietnamese Army (NVA) operations. As the company newbie lieutenant, I was assigned to lead the first helicopter assault lift. As we began our descent into the valley, we started taking enemy fire and were being threatened by a hot landing zone (LZ). I immediately got on the radio to call for suppressing fire and began giving directions to our fire support as the assault continued. The helicopters were hovering just above a rice paddy, but continued to advance as troopers on board my aircraft intermittingly leaped from the aircraft. At first, I did not comprehend the hesitation to depart a helicopter obviously taking enemy fire. Finally, it was my turn to exit and I immediately went chest deep in the rice paddy. My men had been smart enough to jump onto rice paddy dikes while I was distracted with a fire support mission. It took a couple troopers to help me clear the rice paddy. They were none too happy about having to dodge bullets while extracting their dumb newbie platoon leader - lesson learned!

We managed to clear the rice paddy and reach the cover and concealment of an adjacent tree line all the time taking heavy enemy fire. I continued to adjust artillery battery and aerial rocket artillery (ARA) support when, all of a sudden, I received a radio call to pop smoke. Looking back, I saw a helicopter hovering just above the rice paddy throwing out mermite containers. At first, I thought this was a technique to secure ammunition in a water tight container so I sent a couple men to extract the mermites from the rice paddy. When we opened the mermites, we discovered they were filled with coffee and donuts that had been dispatched from a donut-producing capability back at the 1st Cavalry Division base camp at An Khe. So, we periodically fired a burst of six, ate a donut, and gulped a swallow of coffee.

Eventually we continued to proceed up the valley intermittently engaging NVA snipers and small NVA units. Again, I was decisively engaged in employing artillery, ARA and the Cav's infamous GoGo birds (cavalry equivalent of the AC-47 Spooky, nicknamed, "Puff, the Magic Dragon"). In the middle of all this and about noon, I received another radio call to secure an LZ to receive a logistical resupply bird. Sure enough it landed and threw out mermite containers. This time filled with ice cream. Turns out An Khe had developed an ice cream producing capability! We back hauled the mermite containers and proceeded to conduct the search and destroy mission until ordered to establish a night defensive position (NDP) before the sun set. As soon as the NDP was established, here comes three helicopters with company mortars, field packs and, you guessed it, more mermite containers—this time filled with turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, and other goodies. As we dined with all our mermite treats, the fire support blasted away all around us. Nevertheless, by this time I was thoroughly convinced I had been blessed with my assignment to the 1st Cav. The advantage of hundreds of assigned helicopters offered many dividends with mermites being one of them. Unfortunately, this one-day search and destroy mission was never again replicated, although mermites would occasionally make an

appearance during our endless combat operations.

James Wright is a retired lieutenant colonel who was commissioned an infantry officer upon graduation from OCS Class 5-66, April 14, 1966.

THROWBACK THURSDAY



**LIKE & SHARE IF YOU'VE EATEN
A MEAL FROM ONE OF THESE.**

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A Graduate Remembers OCS

David Peart

Far across the Chattahoochee
To the Upatoi
Stands our loyal Alma Mater
Benning's School for boys.

Forward ever, Backward never
Faithfully we strive
Toward our final destination
Follow me with pride

When it's time and we are called
To guard our country's might
We'll be there with head held high
To lead in Freedom's fight

Yearning ever, Failing never
To keep our country free
The call is clear, we meet the task
For we are Infantry

Fort Benning is a tough place to explain. Why I decided to request to go there is tough too. I wanted signal but was offered infantry. I knew when I accepted I was basically a "dead man walking." Infantry second lieutenants didn't have a very long-life span. Vietnam was near its peak so they were in great demand.

I reported on August 14, 1966 and was assigned to 80th Company, 8th Student Battalion. We were assigned to our barracks and bunks and began the process of getting things in order.

The barracks were built out of cement block, three stories high with rows of windows about three feet off the floors.

Blue Monday

The very first thing that happened was Blue Monday, which gets its name from the infantry blue helmets and epaulets worn by the senior candidates. It's hard to describe Blue Monday.

What happens is that a company of senior candidates are quietly let into the barracks before reveille on the first day of training. When the bugle blows reveille to start the day, all hell breaks loose. The senior candidates start banging on anything they can get their hands on, screaming as loud as they can in your ear, "WHY ARE YOU IN BED? CAN'T YOU HEAR THE BUGLE TELLING YOU TO GET UP?"

It goes downhill from there.

One will tell you to get up and make your bed and then walk away. Then another man will walk in and scream in your face and ask you what the hell you are doing. Then he will order you to the latrine to wash and shave. You run to do that and the first guy will come in and scream in your face and ask what the hell you are doing in the latrine. "I TOLD YOU TO MAKE YOUR BUNK!"

This complete pandemonium goes on for about an hour or so. I saw guys get socks stuffed in their mouths for saying the wrong thing. We had to do pushups for every infraction we committed, and they were constant. The screaming in our faces seemed to never stop. When it finally did, the senior candidates melted away and the Tac officers took over and completed the job. Welcome to OCS.

At the first formation we had, the company commander welcomed us to OCS. Part of his speech was telling us that walking was a privilege, talking was a privilege, sleeping was a privilege, breathing was a privilege, etc. If we screwed up, our privileges would be taken away.

And some of them were taken immediately. We were not allowed to walk anywhere unless we were marching in formation. Most marching, no ALL marching, was done at double time, which is running. You learned early on not to speak unless you had to and when you did it went like this: "Sir, Candidate Peart requests permission to speak, sir." Every sentence had to start and end with "sir". If you weren't given permission to speak, you stood at attention until you were dismissed. One Tac officer had a line of white tape just inside his door. About four feet in front of that were a set of white tape handprints. When you walked in the door, you put your feet on the white line and dropped to the floor in the "front-leaning rest" position (ready to do a push-up) with your hands on the handprints. Your conversation took place from that position.

Training...On Limited Sleep

The training was intense to say the least. We got up early, double-timed in formation everywhere we went carrying our rifles and a small pack. When we arrived at our classes, we stacked arms and went in to study every conceivable infantry weapon and maneuver possible.

We were tested regularly to make sure we understood what we were learning. It was hard to stay awake after getting five hours of sleep.

We also went to the field to do weapons and maneuver training. We rode in "cattle car" or busses most of the time. Once in a while we would ride in the back of "deuce and a half" (2 ½- ton trucks). I remember one such ride after wading through water up to our thighs in the winter. We crammed into the back of a deuce and a half and tried to cover ourselves with tent shelter halves. It didn't work. Everybody was down as low as they could get and hugging one another for body heat. I got so cold and frustrated I stood up in the full force of the wind and just stood there. When we arrived back at the barracks the other men had to help me down off the truck. I

could hardly move.

We spent days and nights in the woods. We were under attack by the enemy and had to man defensive positions all night long. Greg Hammond, my roommate, and I found a previously dug foxhole during one of these maneuvers. It was big enough for him to get into his sleeping bag, slip to the bottom of the hole, and sit up with his back against one side. I got into my sleeping bag, slipped into the same hole with my legs on top of his, my back to the other side. When I zipped my sleeping bag up a big clod of dirt fell onto my chest. I was so tired I took my fist, crushed it, zipped up my bag, and went to sleep.

We went to the rifle range and fired M14 rifles, M60 machine guns, 50-caliber machine guns, and M79 grenade launchers. We trained in bayonet and hand-to-hand fighting. We did PT every day. We learned how to use artillery and tanks.

We went to live-fire exercises where we were doing the firing, and we went to demonstrations where other folks were showing us how it was done. One night-fire demonstration was remarkable. They used tracer ammunition with the infantry weapons, had live artillery coming in over our heads in the bleachers and exploding on a hill in front of us, and had planes come in and drop napalm. It was amazing. I don't see how anything could survive such an assault, but it was proven over and over again that men could not only survive but fight back.

Never Walk on the Floors of the Barracks with Your Boots On

Our shoes were spit-shined. Our boots were spit-shined. Our floors were spit-shined. Well, the floors were not so much spit shined as waxed. We used Butcher's wax and shined them with a floor polisher, then by hand. We didn't walk on them with our boots on. Every man carried a kitchen place mat with a foam backing rolled up inside his shirt. When we got back to the barracks everyone would take out their place mat and hand them up to the first man in line. He would lay them on the floor as he went in so the men coming behind him would walk on the place mats. Once to our bunks we would remove our boots and walk around in our socks. We NEVER walked on our floors with shoes or boots on. When we left the barracks, we reversed the procedure and the last man out picked up all the place mats and handed them back out to be carried inside our shirts.

We actually had furniture in our cubicles. We weren't allowed to use it. It was for display purposes only. The chest of drawers was to have each drawer pulled out in a stair-step look with certain items to be displayed in each drawer. You NEVER used the clothing on display. We had a desk that we could use, but it had to be kept in a particular order. We were allowed one picture of our choice to be displayed, usually a wife or girlfriend. The only place we were allowed to have personal items and clothing was in our foot locker. It was not off limits to the officers, they could inspect it, but they usually left it alone as long as things were neat and clean.

We did, however, maintain a sense of humor and a LOT of pranks were pulled. They were tremendous moral boosters. Even with the knowledge that what we were learning could possibly determine if we and our men

lived or died, we were still kids. During night patrol all you could see was the two fine luminescent strips of tape on the helmet of the guy in front of you. You blindly followed that dim glow. Once in a while, somebody would take their helmet off, put it on the end of their rifle, and then slowly ease their rifle off to one side. When he would run into a bush or tree, he would jerk the rifle back. The man behind him, who was blindly following those two strips, would walk right into the obstruction. A lot of cussing and laughing would follow...quietly.... of course.

Dining Facility: Not Meant for Dining

The worst harassment we got was in the mess hall. It was a large room with a wall with two doorways leading to the serving line behind the wall. The elongated officers' table was arranged between the two doorways so they could face the four-man tables throughout the rest of the room. We came in the doorway to the room straight in front of the officers' table. We formed a line to the entrance on the right of the officers' table that led to the serving line. We stood at parade rest until the man in front of us moved. He would come to attention, take one step forward, and resume parade rest. Only then could you come to attention, take one step forward, and resume parade rest. They wanted us to look like a giant centipede walking. Once behind the wall, we got a tray and the servers would fill it with food. We exited the doorway on the other side of the room and walked to the first available empty four-man table. Once there, we put our tray on the table and stood at attention until four men stood around it. The last man there would place his tray on the table and yell: "READY.... SEATS!!" Then all four men would quickly jerk their chairs out and sit ramrod straight occupying no more than the first four inches of the chair. Nine times out of ten one of the Tac officers would tell us we were too slow and to do it all over.

We ate a "square meal." That meant staring at the man's eyes across from you. Your fork was turned upside down resting on the right side of the tray. The knife was turned sideways on the left corner. If there was meat that needed to be cut, staring into your seatmate's eyes, you cut one piece and put the cutlery back where it belonged. Then you took the fork, put the meat on it while staring into your seatmate's eyes, raised it straight up to the level of your mouth, then 90 degrees into your mouth. Once it was in your mouth, you reversed the process, fork straight out, then 90 degrees down to the plate, place it in position, put your hands in your lap, and then you were allowed to chew the food in your mouth. This process was repeated for every bite you took. All the while the Tac officers were yelling at somebody to do something faster or neater, etc. If the line wasn't moving as desired, we were ordered to drop and do pushups. It was pure pandemonium with not much food consumed.

I don't remember what the time limit was to eat, but it wasn't long. When we finished, we asked permission to leave, picked up our trays, and marched back through the doorway leading to the serving line. Once behind the wall, we raised our trays to our mouths, took our fork, and raked all the food possible into our mouths before exiting the building and putting our leftover food in the garbage. Of course, the Tac officers knew what we were doing. Most of the time they left us alone, but occasionally one of them would be standing outside the back door

and catch us with a mouthful of food. Pushups followed immediately.

90-Day Wonders in a 6-Month Training Cycle

We were referred to as "90-Day Wonders" because the program produced officers in three months during World War II when officers were in great demand. During my time, the program was six months long. It was broken into segments. We were junior candidates from the day we started until the twelfth week. We were nothing and had no privileges. During this time, we were encouraged to drop out of the program at every opportunity. "You don't like it here? Then QUIT!" There were no repercussions and no questions. You simply stated your desire to leave and were allowed to do so.

At the twelfth week we became intermediate candidates. We were still nothing and still had no privileges. There was a major evaluation made at this time and, if you failed it, you were given two choices: leave or be sent back to another company and start again at the eighth week of training.

Senior candidate status started at the 16th week. We wore infantry blue helmets and wore white neck ascots. All of the lower-class candidates had to salute us and treat us as though we were commissioned officers. We were supposed to be allowed to sit on the full area of our chairs in the mess hall and allowed to walk instead of run everywhere we went. Our company commander, however, thought otherwise. He said we were so lax and disgusting that we would continue to be treated as lower-class candidates. That went on until a few days before we graduated.

Our graduation ceremony was held on the February 10, 1967. We were class #10-67. My cousin, Noline Cordell and husband Jack, came along with a girl I was seeing in Greenville, Helen Howard, who pinned my second lieutenant bars on in the parking lot where the ceremony was held.

One of the interesting things, to me, was that if we were less than the pay grade E-5 when we entered the program, we got an immediate promotion to that grade for pay purposes. I was an E-3 when I entered OCS, so I profited from that promotion. We were also discharged as enlisted personnel and given a proper DD-214 certificate of discharge effective 11:59pm February 9, 1967. We were commissioned officers at 12:01am on February 10, 1967. We all stayed up until midnight that night so we could enjoy being civilians for two minutes.

It's hard for me to emphasize how important this training was for my life. I didn't have much direction, drive, nor confidence before then. OCS taught me to have confidence in myself and that I could accomplish anything I set my mind to. The training was exceedingly tough in every respect, but I did it. That alone was an accomplishment in my mind.

I left a "lean, mean fighting machine." What followed tested all that I learned at OCS.

David Peart went on to serve with the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. He left active duty in

December 1968 after serving over three years. After wandering around for a couple of years, David got married and settled near Greenville, S.C.

How different, or the same, was your OCS experience? The OCS Alumni Association is committed to preserving the memories and experiences of our members. If you would like to write your OCS story, send an email to socialmedia@ocs.alumni.org.







Reaching for the Stars: Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes

David Taylor

In 2004, then-Lt. Col. Jeff Holmes was at the tip of the spear, commanding an armored cavalry squadron during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Years later, he looked back on that command as a highlight of his long, 40-year Army career. He reflected, "We had a solid team with a hard mission, but that operation brought together all the years of my training." And that training journey began with his commissioning from the Army OCS program.

Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes began his military career as an armor crewman at Fort Knox, Ky. in 1979. After OCS, he spent his formative years in armor and cavalry units, although he also attained training in the field artillery, military police, and engineer branches. As he looked back on his career, he credits the OCS program for the opportunity to "leverage my enlisted experience to better make the transition from enlisted to officer responsibilities." He added, "OCS provided a unique opportunity to gain knowledge of other branches based on my peer candidates' experiences." As all OCS graduates will agree, this is a benefit not obtained by other avenues of commissioning.

As he moved up in increasingly more challenging assignments, his military education followed, beginning with the Armor Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Combined Arms Staff and Services School, Command and General Staff College, Dual Status Commander Qualification Program, the U.S. Army War College, and the Senior Executives in National and International Security Course from the Harvard Kennedy School. He holds a master's degree in Strategic Studies from the Army War College and a bachelor's degree in Architecture from the University of Tennessee.

During his career Maj. Gen. Holmes always looked for bright and talented enlisted Soldiers and encouraged them to consider the OCS program to "expand their career into gaining additional responsibilities and influence." In his view, the Army OCS option "provides a blend of the various commissioning sources that are available and provides a pathway for enlisted Soldiers with the potential for positions of increased responsibilities."

This was certainly the track that Maj. Gen. Holmes followed as he held commands at the troop, squadron, and regimental levels. After his command of 3/278 Armored Cavalry Regiment in Iraq in 2004, he returned to Iraq in 2010 as the commander of the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment. His national level positions include serving as the Deputy Chief of Engineers in the Pentagon and Deputy Commanding General for First Army. Maj. Gen. Holmes currently serves as the Adjutant General of the state of Tennessee since January 2019.

Looking back on his career, Maj. Gen. Holmes vividly remembers what one of his mentors told him when Holmes was considering the OCS option. He said, "You can look back on this opportunity some day and say 'what if' or 'remember when.' I am happy I can now say, 'remember when.'"

Maj. Gen. Holmes is a registered architect licensed in Mississippi, Kentucky, and Tennessee. He serves on numerous boards and advisory groups in Tennessee. He is a founding board member of the Leadership Middle Tennessee, a regional leadership program.

Maj. Gen. Holmes' awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit (with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Bronze Star Medal (with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Commendation Medal (with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Combat Action Badge, Iraq Campaign Medal (with two Bronze Service Stars), along with numerous other federal and state awards.



David Taylor is a retired colonel, Special Forces. He graduated from 91st Company in February 1968 and is currently a member of the OCS Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Memorial Walk



If you have considered purchasing a class brick, personal or Hall of Fame paver, or a unit/class or branch dedication block in the Memorial Walk, now is the time. Our contractor is ready to help, but he is on the verge of retirement and prices will not be this low with a new vendor. If you want a larger monument with bronze plaques or memorial benches or a customized monument, we have another contractor available for those orders. Now is the time to honor your service and the service and dedication of other OCS graduates. Go the [website](#) for current pricing and to place your order.

OCS Heritage Center

We are just about finished with the OCS Heritage Center at Wigle Hall!

The OCS Heritage Center is an interactive museum designed to celebrate the heritage and legacy of the officer candidate schools. Our theme is to honor the valor and sacrifice of the OCS graduate as a small unit

leader from 1941 through today.

We still need your help. We need more pictures and quality memorabilia that showcases the various experiences we had as OCS candidates and officers, regardless of OCS school location or branch. We have four display cases to fill. We have the capacity to use thousands of pictures as we have six TV screens that will run continuous picture loops for the six eras of OCS (World War II, Korea/Cold War, Vietnam, Volunteer Army (VOLAR), Army of Excellence, and the Global War on Terrorism).

If you would like to help in preserving our history, please send digital pictures to Phyllis Aaron at phyllis.aaron.ocs@gmail.com.

For memorabilia, please contact Phyllis and provide a description of the item(s) to ensure we have proper space and appropriate display capability.

We must preserve our history. It starts with you.





Member News

We have a new chapter! Dave Taylor, chapter commander and an USAOCSAA director, established an Ohio chapter in August. The chapter will initially have two meetings annually, one in northern Ohio in the Cleveland/Akron/Canton area and one in southern Ohio in the Columbus/Dayton/Cincinnati area. The chapter plans to meet next spring in Columbus (COVID-19 permitting). The guest speaker for this meeting will be a retired Air Force general who was a POW in Hanoi for six years. The chapter is open to all OCS graduates of all branches, active, reserve, and guard. OCS grads in neighboring states are invited to join the chapter. For more information, contact Dave Taylor: at 330-321-3370 or dave.taylor@zoominternet.net.



We are seeking voluntary assistance with appropriate expertise in two areas:

Small Business Tax Expert: The Association must complete and file our 2019 taxes. The work should take two hours and all processing and mailing costs will be paid by the association. We hope your labor time would be donated; we will provide an appropriate tax letter.

: We also seek the services of a certified accountant experienced with conducting audits. The Association's books require their annual audit. The work should take two to three hours and all processing and mailing costs will be paid by the association. Again, we hope your labor time would be donated; we will provide an appropriate tax letter.

If interested, please contact Rick Jung, Sr, Class 3-79, Treasurer, OCS Alumni Association at treasurer@ocsalumni.org.



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- 2020 OCS Hall of Fame inductee retired Col. George "Mike" Lind passed away on July 20. Col. Lind served his country for over 30 years. You can view his obituary at this [link](#).
- OCS Hall of Fame member retired Col. Richard Carvell died on Sept 8. Col. Carvell graduated from OCS in 1954. He earned two CIBs for service in Korea and Vietnam. You can view his obituary at this [link](#).
- The Association of the United States Army (AUSA) is excited about the relationship with the U.S. Army OCS Alumni Association! As an Association Teammate, USAOCSAA members receive AUSA benefits, which include professional development opportunities, meetings and events, educational and news publications, exclusive scholarship access, member savings, and more. Please visit www.ausa.org for the full range of AUSA offerings, and download your copy of the member benefits guide at www.ausa.org/guide. A quick way to access the member savings online is at

www.ausa.org/savings. This allows you to click and activate your member discounts. Comments, questions, or suggestions? Please contact Susan Rubel at srubel@ausa.org.

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