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## **“Historic Elms to be removed”**

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Two historic elm trees in front of Mahan Hall have contracted Dutch Elm Disease (DED) and will soon have to be removed. Although this operation is still being scheduled, it will most likely be performed in the next two weeks. Obviously dead trees are unsightly, but they also shed dead branches, which are a safety hazard in this high traffic area of the academy. These English Elm trees are possibly over 180 years old and have an incurable fungus that prevents the transport of water inside the tree.

When the first sign of the disease was noticed late last summer, the infected branch was removed. This sanitation procedure is a must in managing the disease and can sometimes delay further infection for years. Unfortunately, the two trees at Mahan Hall are now both exhibiting the symptoms of DED. The trees are less than 20 feet apart and have undoubtedly root grafted, thus transmission of the disease has occurred. The symptoms of the disease (wilting foliage turning to brown), has already begun on several of the lower branches in the second tree. Disease normally starts near the tree top when infection is spread by insects, but almost always starts at the bottom when spread by root graft.

West Point has battled the disease since the 1950’s and has lost many American and English Elm trees. As bleak as this story may sound there is a future for elm trees at West Point. Hybrid elms that are resistant to the DED are being grown in field trials across the United States and here at the academy. Many of the hybrids look promising for restoring the elm to the American landscape.

Two historic elm trees in front of Mahan Hall have contracted Dutch Elm Disease and will soon have to be removed. That’s the word from Col. Tom Julich, director of West Point’s Directorate of Housing and Public Works. Julich explained that although the work is still being scheduled, he felt it was important to tell the community it was coming.

“Because these trees are located in front of Mahan Hall and roughly 180 years old, we wanted to let the community know why they have to come down,” he said.

Workers will remove the trees sometime in the next two weeks, Julich added.

“They also shed dead branches, which could be a safety hazard in this high traffic area of the academy,” he explained.

Jones said the English Elm trees have an incurable fungus that prevents the transport of water inside the tree.

“When the first sign of the disease was noticed late last summer, we removed the infected branch,” he said. “This sanitation procedure is a must in managing the disease and can sometimes delay further infection for years.

“Unfortunately, the two trees at Mahan Hall are now both showing the symptoms of DED,” Jones added.

The trees are less than 20 feet apart and have undoubtedly root grafted, the disease is often spread this way, he explained.

“The symptoms, wilting foliage turning to brown, has already begun on several of the lower branches in the second tree,” Jones said. “Disease normally starts near the treetop when infection is spread by insects, but almost always starts at the bottom when spread by root graft.”

West Point has battled the disease since the 1950s and has lost many American and English Elm trees. However, Jones was optimistic about the future for elm trees at West Point.

“Hybrid elms that are resistant to the DED are being grown in field trials across the United States and here at the academy,” he explained. “Many of the hybrid trees look promising for restoring the elm to the American landscape.”