

*From CPT Ed Sobiesk (D/EE&CS):***A Non-Grad's Perspective on Teaching at West Point**

If West Point is not the source of your commission, what is it like to come here? As an ROTC graduate who has been teaching at West Point for a year and a half, I would say it's basically just the same as any other assignment. I think it's a great place to live and work and would like to share the following observations:

- Teaching at West Point is good duty, not easy duty. While parts of the Army outside of West Point might assume that I am on the golf course or ski slopes by 3:30 every afternoon, it's just not true. I work some fairly significant hours, but most of the work is extremely rewarding. I do get home every night, though.
- My coworkers and neighbors are some of the friendliest people I have ever met. As an example, when my wife and I were looking at the different housing areas available, prior to the infamous "housing draw," everywhere we went we were told the same thing: "This is the best place to live at West Point." I think everyone was right because we now feel that way about the neighborhood we're in (by the way, we were towards the low side on the Captains' housing draw list, and we still got very nice quarters). A small note, other than teaching my first couple classes, housing draw (including the preparation for it) was the most stressful thing I've done here.
- My coworkers are exceptionally professional and competent. Most everyone who comes here has had a successful company command. This level of maturity results in a much different leadership style than I have encountered while "with line troops." There is a very cooperative attitude across all levels of the chain of command, and most tasks are simply mission statements with the assumption that the taskee will successfully complete the assigned task.
- This is an excellent environment for raising a family. There are good day care and school programs. There are outstanding sports and clubs available for children. The numerous post activities that are constantly taking place never leave one without several options of what to do. Also, we're one hour north of New York city (with all that it offers) and don't underestimate the Hudson Valley area which surrounds West Point.
- There are ample extra-curricular opportunities at West Point. Whether one wants to be an officer representative for a varsity sport or club team, serve on a Cadet Honor Education Team or Respect for Others Team, assist in running a Wargames Club, assist in running a musical group, etc., there are many extraordinary experiences awaiting. A word of advice, though, go easy during the first year. It is very possible that one could over-commit oneself and have no time left for one's family.
- One's professional focus should always be on developing into a stronger teacher who inspires cadets to learn. The cadets have so many activities competing for their time

that it is doubtful one will ever get the 100% performance one would expect from them. They just don't have the time to do everything perfectly. We must find ways to assist them in the motivation aspects of this very challenging program. Your class will often not be their highest priority.

- So, what about being a non-grad? I've come to the conclusion that the reason West Point graduates seem to be so aware of one another is that they are basically friendly people who either know one another or have a great shared experience. I do not feel like an outsider, and for those few here that might, I think it is mainly in *their* attitude.