

# POINTER VIEW

INSIDE



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SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF THE U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY

JUNE 2, 2006

## Bush to cadets: Trust in your convictions

By Eric S. Bartelt  
Assistant Editor

Comparing the Global War on Terror to the Cold War, President George W. Bush told 861 U.S. Military Academy graduates that they will face a more elusive enemy -- global terrorists.



President Bush speaks to grads Saturday at Michie Stadium.

SPC. BENJAMIN GRUVER/PV

Comparing the years after World War II to the years following 9/11, he said the dedication of President Harry S. Truman helped the United States build a stronghold against its challenges.

"By the actions he took, the institutions he built, the alliances he forged and the doctrines he set down, President Truman laid the foundation of America's victory in the Cold War," Bush said. "Today at the start of a new century, we are again engaged in a war unlike any our nation has fought before. And, like Americans in Truman's day, we are laying the foundations of victory."

Bush remarked that less than 10 classes throughout USMA history have entered and exited the academy during a time of war. He added that he was certain these young officers

would make a difference.

"The war began on my watch," Bush explained. "But it's going to end on your watch. Your generation will bring us victory in the war on terror."

The president also took a moment to mention the 39 graduates who have died in the fight against terrorism.

"We will honor the memory of those brave souls," he said. "We will finish the task for which they gave their lives ... each loss is heartbreaking, and each loss has made you even more determined to pick up their mantle, to carry on their fight and to achieve victory."

He reassured the graduates and their families that progress has been made in the Middle East, pointing out some major milestones like liberating Afghanistan from Taliban

power, eradicating terror camps and arresting and prosecuting Saddam Hussein.

"We're still in the early stages of this struggle for freedom and, like the first years of the Cold War, we've seen setbacks and challenges and days that have tested America's resolve," Bush said. "Yet we've also seen days of victory and hope."

Facing the daunting challenge of changing fanaticism abroad are the 861 who celebrated at West Point Saturday. However, the president gave them some tips for success.

"Trust in your convictions," Bush told the graduates. "Stay true to yourselves, and one day the world will celebrate your achievements."

"You have chosen a difficult and dangerous vocation," he added. "And America is grateful for that choice."



Salute to 2006, see pages 8-9

## 1999 grad killed by IED

By Eric S. Bartelt  
Assistant Editor

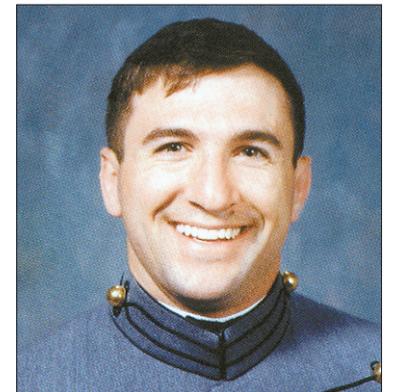
Captain Douglas A. DiCenzo, 30, of Plymouth, N.H., died May 25 in Baghdad, Iraq, from injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during combat operations, according to Department of Defense officials.

DiCenzo, a 1999 U.S. Military Academy graduate, was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Baumholder, Germany.

The company commander, who had been deployed to Iraq since November, was killed with another Soldier, Spc. Robert E. Blair, 22.

In an *Associated Press* story, DiCenzo's Little League baseball coach, Norm LeBlanc, said, "This is going to devastate our town ... I can sincerely say he is one of the best products of our school in the 37 years it has been there."

DiCenzo was class president in high school and the captain of the football and wrestling teams. Since he was an avid outdoorsman and sports enthusiast, his family



Capt. Douglas A. DiCenzo

is discussing setting up a fund in his memory to help children go to summer camp.

He was survived by his wife, Nicole, and their 15-month old son, Dakin; his father, Larry; brother, Daniel; and mother, Cathy Crane.

His burial date and resting place had not been determined at press time.

## TSP TICKER

May changes (as of 5/31)	
C FUND	-- 2.87 percent
I FUND	-- 3.87 percent
S FUND	-- 4.36 percent



## Graduation is a family tradition

Retired Air Force Master Sgt. James Johnson stands center of his two grandsons, Air Force 1st Lt. Kevin Graham, (left), and 2nd Lt. Kyle Graham just outside of Michie Stadium in front of Lusk Reservoir. Johnson, a 21-year veteran, attended the graduation ceremony Saturday to see his second grandson graduate from a service academy.

SPC. BENJAMIN GRUVER/PV

## safeTALK suicide alertness training helps educate

**Commentary by  
Ingrid Walsh-Brown  
Alcohol and Drug  
Control Officer**

The suicide alertness training safeTALK was hosted by the West Point's Suicide Prevention and Resources Task Force May 16. The Garrison Commander, Col. Brian Crawford, along with 30 other participants, including U.S. Corps of Cadets Chaplain Maj. Darrell Thomsen, Provost Marshal Maj. Michael Gorreck, and first- and second-line civilian supervisors were all in attendance.

The safeTALK trainers, Tarie Kinzel and Joe Crumpton, from LivingWorks Education, Inc. were compelling and awe-inspiring in their efforts to educate us on the importance of suicide alertness and how it can be a life-saving effort to those in our community.

Research indicates that more suicidal thoughts occur than injuries requiring cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Yet if you took a query of how many individuals are trained in CPR versus suicide prevention, there will be more CPR trained personnel than suicide prevention, as was proven in our group. One out of 20 individuals had thoughts of suicide.

Crawford reiterated the importance of being trained in suicide alertness/prevention and how valuable it is to the whole community. While doing so, he

referenced the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Suicide data.

"Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the U.S., and is the third leading cause of death between the ages of 15 and 24. More people are hospitalized or treated and released as a result of suicide attempts than are fatally injured each year," he said. "Contemplating suicide as a response to a stressful event is a complicated issue. Many people who attempt or complete suicides are overwhelmed by present life circumstances and would rather live if they could find the support to deal with their problems."

This point was re-emphasized by the trainers. Suicidal people are in pain and they want their pain to end, but do not necessarily want to die. safeTALK training increased our competence and confidence in recognizing a person with thoughts of suicide. How to engage in direct and open talk about suicide with that person and how to move quickly to connect that person with someone trained in suicide intervention. The acronym safeTALK stands for suicide alertness for everyone -- Tell, Ask, Listen, KeepSafe.

**Tell** speaks to the "invitations" people with thoughts of suicide usually broadcast. These invitations may be in the form of what we see, hear, sense and learn. Some examples of invitations that we see are withdrawal, alcohol/drug misuses, carelessness and mood

swings. The invitations we may hear are, "I feel alone all the time."

"What's the purpose of living?"

"I wish I could just escape this burdensome life."

The invitations that we may sense are feelings of desperateness, hopelessness, numbness and ashamedness; and our fifth invitation, learn, deals with learning about life situations that the person may be experiencing -- financial difficulty, divorce, death, etc.

All five invitations or a combination, may be tell signs of a person with thoughts of suicide.

How do you find out if a person is thinking of suicide?

**Ask.**

As pointed out in the training, you will not make a person suicidal by asking.

Most likely, they will feel relieved you asked.

How do you ask?

What do you say?

"Are you thinking about suicide?" Is direct and encourages open talk about suicide.

Not many of us would be comfortable asking that question of a relative, friend, employee or stranger. Instead we hide behind platitudes, because we don't know how to ask the simple yet compelling question, "Are you thinking about suicide?"

Misinformation and fear of suicide can cause any of us to miss, dismiss and avoid the topic. But once we counteract our fear and marshal our motivation to offer assistance, it is soon evident how much our assistance is needed. Once you have asked the questions listen to what is said.

**Listen** to what the person tells you.

Remain calm and do not judge. Do not tell the person what he or she should feel and what he or she should say. Instead listen to what the person has to say, and encourage the person to talk about it.

Talking can be therapeutic; sometimes the individual can talk the person out of the action.

Let the person know that what he or she has to say is important and encourage the person to talk with someone who will be able to help.

**KeepSafe** encourages you to know what resources are available, approachable and able.

After listening and recognizing the need for extra help, find the resources in your community that can provide assistance and keep the person safe.

This is not a time to solve the person's problem nor is it a time to promise that you will keep his/her secret and not tell anyone.

USMA Reg. 600-24 provides information on the USMA Suicide Prevention Policy, the Suicide Prevention and Resources Task Force and also the resources that are available to West Point and surrounding community.

Kinzel and Crumpton ended the training by encouraging participants to trust the structure that safeTALK teaches -- do the steps.

When a person with thoughts of suicide, answers the way safeTALK says he or she will, go on to the next step.

Learn the basic principles and trust your own intuition and your judgment. safeTALK challenges us to have hope, hope that we can do something to help persons with thoughts of suicide in the future.

Embracing this hope is ultimately the safety of safeTALK, and when used correctly, it will lead to the early recognition and referral of persons with thoughts of suicide.

Crawford reminded participants that suicide is a preventable form of death.

"Lives can be saved with comprehensive, suicide risk reduction strategies (i.e. public awareness campaigns, education and training.) It is unlikely that all suicides can be prevented, but public health awareness efforts can dramatically lower the risk. It is imperative that we recognize the warning signs (safe) and take quick, bold action (TALK) to save the lives of our at-risk community members and not wait for them to ask for it first," he said.

### SARP INFO

The members of the Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Team are Col. Jeanette McMahan, Shelley Ariosto (Garrison), Maj. Samantha Breton (USCC), Maj. Kim Kawamoto (ODIA) and Catherine Ruvolo (Dean).

Community members can e-mail McMahan at [Jeanette.McMahan@usma.edu](mailto:Jeanette.McMahan@usma.edu) for advice or to offer any recommendations on the program here.

Cadets can also call the sexual assault support helpline at (845) 591-7215.

West Point Soldiers and civilians needing assistance can call (845) 938-3369.

### Weekly Sudoku by Chris Okasaki, D/EECS

6					7		5	
			8	5		2		
	8	4				7	1	
					9			
		2	5		3	4		
			2					
	7	5				9	6	
		1		7	4			
	3		9					1

Rules: Fill in the empty cells with the digits 1-9 so that no

Difficulty: Medium

digit appears twice in the same row, column, or 3-by-3 box.

See Solution on Page 12

## POINTER VIEW®

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## Abizaid imparts leadership lessons to '06

Story and photo by  
Spc. Benjamin Gruver  
Staff Writer

The commanding general of the U.S. Central Command left the Class of 2006 of the U.S. Military Academy with his own remarks on the eve of their graduation May 26, welcoming them into the nation's Army.

General John P. Abizaid, the evening's guest speaker, thanked them for their service during a time of war and urged them to take care of the nation's armed forces.

"These young men and women that you will lead are the most precious resource the nation can give to any person and we are going to give it to you starting tomorrow," said Abizaid, a 1973 graduate of the academy. "I know that the past four years have not always been easy and I know that the challenges that lie ahead may seem daunting, but beginning tomorrow you will become part of something much larger than yourself or much larger than this great institution called West Point. Tomorrow most of you will join the commissioned officer ranks of the United States Army which for 231 years has defended American freedom and defended American independence.

"You will become part of an organization dedicated to preserving our way of life," he added, "not just for the current generation, but for posterity, and, as classes have done for over 200 years, you will rise to the challenges that the Army, the nation and history present to you."

Abizaid told the new officers that what propels this nation forward is the firm belief that a better future can be achieved, an era of peace and prosperity, but that without the willingness of a select few to lead America's armed forces in the defense of freedom there can be no such era.

"All of us should reflect on just how good it is to be an American,"

Abizaid said, "and just why it is so important to defend our dreams and our ideals."

The former commandant of cadets talked about the Soldiers that the new lieutenants would be leading, calling them the best fighting force ever fielded. The general used words such as courageous, confident, competent and professional in describing America's troops and reminded the graduating class that they will be looked to for leadership.

"West Point has taught you to lead, and your Soldiers will expect you to lead," Abizaid said. "Trust in what you have learned here, trust in your noncommissioned officers and trust in your own common sense."

The wisdom Abizaid imparted to the Army's new leaders came from 33 years of service, beginning his military career in the infantry with the 82nd Airborne's 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Fort Bragg, N.C., as a rifle platoon leader. The officer played a role in several of the nation's conflicts including leading a Ranger Rifle Company during the invasion of Grenada and commanding the 3rd Battalion, 325th Airborne Battalion combat team out of Vicenza, Italy, which deployed to Kurdistan in Northern Iraq during the Gulf crisis.

According to Abizaid in an interview prior to the banquet it was those first experiences with leadership at the academy that he kept looking back to throughout his career to make him a better Soldier and leader.

"West Point is the beginning. It is one of these places where you learn some hard lessons and you learn some good lessons," Abizaid said. "I can remember really one of my first experiences with leadership was being a cadet company commander, and still to this day I look back to being a cadet company commander especially with regard to dealing with my peers ... where I learned for the

first time what a difficult thing it is to lead people."

Joining the U.S. Army's officer corps shouldn't be much different for the Class of 2006 than it was when Abizaid first put on gold bars in 1973.

Then it was a time right after the Vietnam War and most of the units were filled with combat veterans, many of whom were much older than the 2nd lieutenants, explained Abizaid. Today's young officers will also be taking charge of combat veterans who will be looking to these young college graduates to lead them.

"Over time you learn, but the one thing you can never walk away from is the responsibility to lead," Abizaid said. "That wasn't any different for me in 1973 than it will be for these young officers that will join the ranks in 2006."

Many, if not all, of the Class of 2006, who is one of a few classes to spend all four years at the academy during a time of war, will soon be under the general's command in the

Middle East Region. That region, during the tenure of Abizaid, the senior ranking U.S. military officer of Arab descent, has not only sought the demise of terrorism, but the rebuilding of two nations, Iraq and Afghanistan, to include their governments and militaries.

Abizaid said that the problems faced in that region are challenges that can be handled by the good people of the region who no longer desire to live under the threat of terrorism and trusts them to resist what he called the "dark ideology" represented by Osama Bin Laden and Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi. He said he also trusts the American troops, from the general officers to the lowest private, to get the job done.

"I know that while the job is hard, it is tough, it is demanding, it entails a lot of sacrifice, we have to fight this fight now in order to keep our children and our children's children safe here at home," Abizaid said. "I say that only because my Soldiers in the field say that every time I see them. We believe it. We



**General John P. Abizaid speaks with Cadet 3rd Class Ryan Brown before the dinner.**

know we are making a difference. We know by being abroad we are keeping people back home safe, and the challenge and the sacrifice for me is not nearly as difficult as it is for a young rifleman who is in the middle of downtown Baghdad, so I trust that young rifleman to do his or her job. But, I also know that we generals have got to give them the tools necessary to achieve success. I am very confident that if we just stick with it we will make the world a far better place than what it was on Sept. 11, 2001."

# Army honors top officers with MacArthur award

By Spc. Gretel Sharpee

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) -- Army leaders who exemplify duty, honor and country gathered in the Pentagon courtyard May 17 to receive

the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award.

"The Army prides itself on growing its leadership from within. We select from among our volunteers those whom we have identified as having the requisite character and

competence to be entrusted with caring for and leading Soldiers through challenging times," said Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker.

In this annual ceremony, 26 Army officers and Mary Cahill, the widow of Capt. Joel E. Cahill, who was awarded posthumously, stood for applause from the crowd of family members, previous MacArthur recipients and former commanders as they each received a 15-pound bronze bust replica of Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

One of the finalists was U.S. Military Academy 1996 graduate Capt. Robert G. Born, Active Army.

Each company-grade officer was selected by a HQDA board for demonstrating the ability to motivate others, understand fellow Soldiers, and inspire commitment, teamwork and esprit de corps while in a leadership position.

"It is truly an honor to stand before such a magnificent group of young officers who carry forward the legacy of Gen. Douglas MacArthur," said MacArthur Foundation representative G. Conoly Phillips, who was also on hand to present the award with the Army Chief of Staff.

"Upon reading the nomination packets it made me proud to serve alongside these gifted Soldiers

and it reassured me that the future of our Army is in good hands," Schoomaker said.

Award recipients folded their hands and bowed their heads during the opening prayer to remember the Soldiers who were defending freedom that very moment.

"The 27 finalists in this year's Gen. Douglas MacArthur Award competition are truly an amazing group," Schoomaker said. "They have earned the right to lead our Army's most valued resource - our Soldiers. Each officer here represents the very best of what America has to offer. They are exceptional Soldiers, leaders and even better citizens."

## President approves combat-pay contributions to IRAs

WASHINGTON (Military Report) -- President Bush approved a bill Monday that allows tax-free combat pay to be placed in tax-deferred Individual Retirement Accounts.

The decision caps more than a year of minor disagreements about details of the Heroes Earned Retirement Opportunity Act or HERO Act.

The bill's chief sponsor, North Carolina Rep. Virginia Foxx, said the issue was brought to her attention in 2004 by the father of a deployed National Guard member.

"The father asked for help because U.S. tax law prevented his son from putting money earned in a combat zone into an Individual Retirement Account," Foxx said.

The IRS previously did not allow Soldiers to put combat pay

into IRAs because the U.S. tax code did not permit the mingling of tax-free money and taxable income in personal retirement accounts.

Foxx called this a "glitch" that could be easily corrected.

While the opportunity to contribute tax-free combat zone earnings to an IRA is available to all service members, the bill is aimed mainly at National Guard and reserve members who have IRAs in their civilian lives and want to continue making contributions when they are mobilized for active duty in a combat zone.

The provisions of the HERO Act are retroactive to calendar year 2004.

All service members who did not make an IRA contribution during 2004 or 2005 because of previous ineligibility, have until May 28, 2009 to do so.

## Residents' invited to attend RCI meeting

By Irene Brown  
Chief, Command Information

West Point will hold two Residential Communities Initiative Information Meetings this month. Residents and those who are eligible to reside here are encouraged to attend either the Wednesday or June 13 meeting. Both will be held in the Eisenhower Hall auditorium at 7 p.m.

Col. Brian Crawford, West Point's garrison commander, Michael Colacicco, the residential communities initiative director

and Jim Kennedy, chief of the housing division, will discuss what residents can expect from the RCI partnership and how they can provide input into the process.

"This is an important part of RCI because it's when the residents can tell us what they hope the partnership will achieve," Colacicco said. "This is very much a community initiative, we need the community to take an active part."

The GC is scheduled to brief participants for 30 minutes and then take questions for 30 more. He said this is the place to be for anyone

who has questions about RCI.

"This is an opportunity for residents to get their questions answered and their concerns alleviated," Crawford said. "It will also stop the rumors and give the community a better understanding of the entire process."

In addition to these two briefings in June, another RCI briefing will take place in August for residents who arrive during the summer months, he added.

For more information about RCI or the meetings, call 938-5948.

# West Point Soldier/NCO win NERO awards

Story and photo by  
Jeremy Heckler  
Special to the Pointer View

It was all-West Point at the Installation Management Agency

Northeast Region Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the year competition held at Fort A.P. Hill, Va., May 22-24.

Spc. Jason Reese and Sgt. Jose De La Sierra from the U.S. Military

Academy Military Police Company took top Soldier honors at the three-day event.

The event covered all Soldiers tasks, from physical fitness and weapon's qualification to a written essay.

"The board is designed to have tough, realistic warrior tasks designed to challenge Soldiers," said Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Chavez, NERO command sergeant major.

The challenges began on the first day of competition as the contestants took on the Army Physical Fitness Test and the rifle qualification.

De La Sierra said his proficiency on the APFT gave him an early lead in the competition, which caused him to relax a little too much at the rifle range.

"After weapon's qualification I kicked it up a notch and studied

most of the night on my warrior tasks," De La Sierra said.

The second day was all mental as the competitors took on warrior task training and day and night land navigation.

"Land navigation was really difficult for me because I had never done it at night before," Reese said.

It was all down hill on the final day, which combined an oral board, written exam and essay.

Taking the title of Soldier and NCO of the Year was all about preparation. Reese and De La Sierra said they had two weeks to prepare for the competition. Reese said De La Sierra outlined a physical training plan so they would be ready for the APFT event on day one.

Reese said his girlfriend helped him everyday by reading him questions and kept him on task. De La Sierra said his wife gave him

time to study.

"If it wasn't for my wife and daughter I wouldn't be here," De La Sierra said.

The title of NCO of the Year is special to De La Sierra and means a lot to him because it reminds him of how far he's come from his days growing up in Miami.

"I've been out on my own and it means a lot to be able to go and do things for my country and excel," De La Sierra said.

He said he hopes he can inspire his Soldiers by his example.

"I hope my Soldiers will look up (to me) and want to be here next year," De La Sierra said.

For both Soldiers the goal is the Installation Management Agency competition scheduled to be held in July at Fort A.P. Hill.

**Editor's Note:** Heckler is the Editor of *Up and Down the Hill*, Fort A.P. Hill's newsletter.



U.S. Military Academy Military Policemen Sgt. Jose De La Sierra (left) and Spc. Jason Reese won the Installation Management Agency Northeast Region Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year competition at Fort A.P. Hill, Va., May 22-24.

## Delivery problems?

For Pointer View home delivery problems contact Valerie Mullane at the Poughkeepsie Journal at (845) 437-4730 or by e-mail at [vmullane@poughkee.gannett.com](mailto:vmullane@poughkee.gannett.com).

**Healthwatch: Skin cancer awareness**

Submitted by  
**Maj. Jane  
Ralph**  
Army Public  
Health Nurse



Year-round protection from sun exposure is important, even before the strongest rays of summer arrive. Keller Army Community Hospital Department of Preventive Medicine and Wellness reminds you that simple precautions at any time of the year help protect you and your family from skin cancer caused by exposure to the sun.

The sun emits harmful ultraviolet rays (UV-A and UV-B), which we cannot see. Long-term, unprotected exposure to these UV rays causes up to 90 percent of all skin cancer. In fact, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States.

More than one million new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year. It is important to start from childhood to protect against skin cancer.

Most of a person's lifetime skin damage, which increases the risk for skin cancer, occurs before the age of 18. Remember, sunburned or tanned skin is damaged skin. Even if a child's sunburn or tan fades, the damage caused by that tan or burn is permanent.

The damage keeps adding up with each sunburn or tan and may one day result in skin cancer. No matter how hard adults work at protecting their skin, the sun damage they received as children cannot be undone.

The good news is that skin cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer. The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention recommends these simple steps for sensible sun protection:

- Limit exposure to Midday Sun.
- Limit the amount of time children spend in the sun.
- Schedule outside activities for early morning or late afternoon. Avoid the hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when the sun's UV rays are strongest and most harmful.
- Avoid Indoor Tanning -- sunlamps, tanning parlors, other artificial tanning devices.

Be especially careful to protect children from the sun on cloudy or hazy days. Clouds do not block most UV rays. Also, be careful around surfaces, such as sand, cement and water that can reflect the sun's damaging rays on the skin.

When out in the sun, be aware of the effects of certain medications. Some prescriptions and over-the-counter medications can cause the skin to be more sensitive to the sun.

Use sunscreen to reduce exposure to the sun's harmful rays.

- Choose a sunscreen that offers both UV-A and UV-B protection.
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside.
- Rub a generous amount of sunscreen on all uncovered skin. Do not apply near the eyes. Light

clothing does not filter out all UV rays, so use sunscreen on areas that will be covered by light clothing, as well.

- Use a sunscreen stick or lip balm on sensitive areas, such as the lips, nose, ears, hands and feet.
- Choose a water-resistant or

waterproof sunscreen for children playing in the water.

- Sunscreen should be re-applied every two hours.

- Towel-dry your child before re-applying sunscreen if your child is wet.

For more information about skin

cancer and protecting yourself and your family from the sun's harmful rays, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-4CANCER or visit the New York Health Department's Web site at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/environ/skin.htm>.

**Army birthday celebration, June 11, 7 p.m., Trophy Point**

# WPES principal to help open school in New Orleans

Story and photo by  
Kathy Eastwood  
Staff Writer

West Point Elementary School principal Ed Drozdowski will retire Aug. 1 to take a position with Mosaica Education to open one of the first charter schools in New Orleans.

"I've been working in DoDEA schools for 37 years and have always enjoyed it as it has been a great experience," said Drozdowski. "The Mosaica people contacted me and I thought this would be a great experience and an interesting challenge."

Mosaica Education and the Choice Foundation will open the Lafayette Academy to bring quality educational programs to New Orleans, a desire that is given more importance due to Hurricane Katrina to give residents a school choice option.

"The school will give anyone, especially under-privileged children, a private-school education," Drozdowski said. "That means a lot to me, to be able to give these kids a chance that they may not have had before. I just couldn't pass that up."

Drozdowski said the school will be located in an existing building that sustained some damage from Hurricane Katrina.

"The school has a rigorous academic curriculum and I am very impressed with it," he said.

Drozdowski explained the school will have a 90-minute block for arts and English, a 60-minute block for math and a 60-minute block for science. The afternoon will be devoted to something called a paragon curriculum, which is the intertwining of arts, history and social studies and works with the child's individual learning styles.

"This is learning about the ancient world and tying those studies in to what is happening today," Drozdowski said. "And like this school, the Lafayette Academy encourages parental involvement with teachers scheduling regular goal-setting conferences with individual parents."

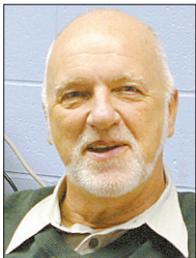
Drozdowski said he will miss the tremendous children and their families that he has worked with here.

"I've enjoyed my stay here, but going to New Orleans is a real

challenge and a chance for me to make a difference," he said.

Drozdowski's wife Debbie, a fifth-grade teacher at the middle school here, will stay to continue teaching for the next school year.

**Ed Drozdowski will retire Aug. 1 to take a position in New Orleans to help open a charter school.**



# Local youth wins national art contest

Story and photo by  
Kathy Eastwood  
Staff Writer

Seventy-seven youths submitted 139 art pieces to compete in the Youth Services and the Boys and Girls Club of America's fine arts competition in the local, regional and national divisions. The art work was exhibited Jan. 13 at Youth Services here. Sixteen-year-old Ray McCourry won 1st place in the national competition in Atlanta in early May for his sculpture, 'Heavy Metal'.

"McCourry is an incredible painter and musician and has won in the local and regional divisions for his paintings," said Julie Vanderberg, facility director for Youth Services here. "He's gotten

very involved in our art program here and visits quite often."

McCourry's art work consisted of pieces of metal welded together with metal bits attached to the sides.

"I wanted to try something other than painting for this art competition," he said. "I needed a pencil holder so I decided to make one out of metal."

McCourry said he takes courses in welding at the Board of Cooperative Education Services in Goshen, N.Y. and attends James I. O'Neill High School in Highland Falls.

Art is a hobby that McCourry said he enjoys very much, but he does have other priority interests.

"I would like to work on football first before I think about going into art as a profession," he said. "One of my dreams is taking a ride in a

helicopter around West Point and landing in Michie Stadium."

McCourry said he was surprised that he received first prize in the national levels.

"I thought I may reach the semi-finals like my paintings did, but I was happy when I got to the Nationals," he said.



Ray McCourry

# GRADUATION DAY

Story and photos by  
Spc. Benjamin Gruver  
Staff Writer

Cracks of blue sky seeped through low-laying clouds and an early-morning fog just in time for the Class of 2006 to toss their hats in the air and end their 47 months at the U.S. Military Academy.

The day was filled with smiles and jubilee for the class that entered the academy during a time of war in the summer of 2002 and now heads out from USMA under the same circumstances.

President Bush left the 861

graduating seniors words to remind them of the job ahead during the commencement speech, but also let them know how proud the commander in chief is of their accomplishment in finishing their schooling.

Thousands of parents, family members, friends and community members also were on hand in the stands at Michie Stadium watching as each member of the Class of 2006 marched up the dais to receive their diploma.

Spectators were quick to rush onto the field after the hat toss to congratulate the graduates.

*47 months are over for the Class of 2006*



A Class of 2006 graduate raises his diploma in the air at the end of the graduation ceremony Saturday. Once the hats were off it was all hugs amongst the graduates.



The new second lieutenants hurl their hats overhead to end their cadet careers at the U.S. Military Academy. The moment filled Michie Stadium with a rush of excitement among the graduates, their family and friends. West Point community members all there to share in the moment.



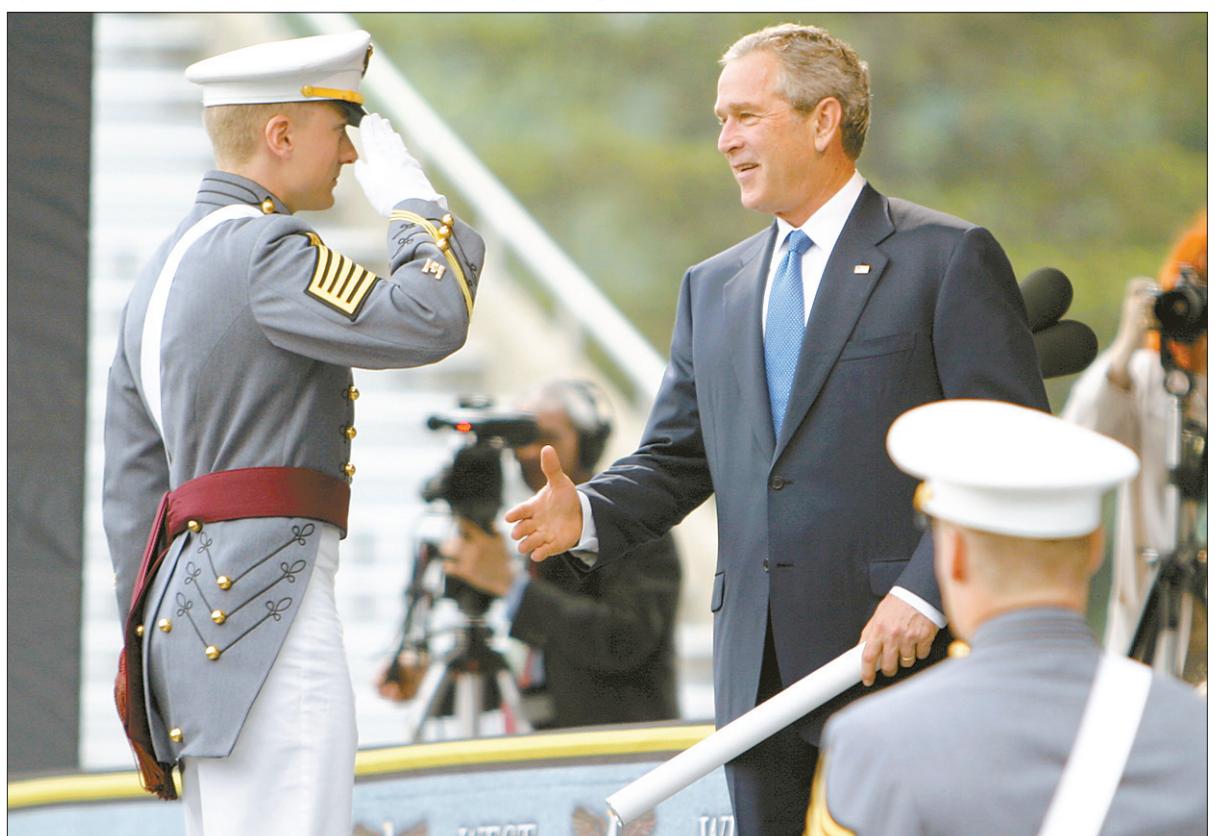
The Class of 2006 marches on to the field at Michie Stadium to begin the graduation commencement ceremony Saturday. There were 861 members of the 208th class to graduate from USMA which spent its entire four years at the academy during a time of war.



Academy. The  
ends and the



Second Lt. Chelsea Haviland raises her right hand to take the oath and accept her Army commission.



President Bush hands out a diploma to a new USMA graduate Saturday. The first 55 graduates received diplomas from the commander in chief, which includes the honor graduates, Athletic Association Award winners and the First Captain.



## JUNE MWR COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Visit MWR online at [www.usma.edu/mwr](http://www.usma.edu/mwr)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>ACS, bldg. 622 ♦ 938-4621                      AEC, bldg. 683 ♦ 938-3762                      Arts &amp; Crafts, bldg. 648 ♦ 938-4812                      Auto Crafts, bldg. 648 ♦ 938-2074                      BSP/BOSS, bldg. 628 ♦ 938-6497                      Bowling Ctr., bldg. 622 ♦ 938-2140                      CDC, bldg. 1207 ♦ 938-4798/4523                      CDS, bldg. 1207 ♦ 938-2092/2035                      Community Rec Div ♦ 938-2401                      Delafield Pond ♦ 938-5139/5158                      Fitness Center, bldg. 683 ♦ 938-6490                      Golf Course ♦ 938-2435/2327                      Holleder Center ♦ 938-4236</p>	<p>ITR, bldg. 695 ♦ 938-3601/2401                      AVC, bldg. 2104 ♦ 938-3655                      Morgan Farm, bldg. 2036 ♦ 938-3926                      Outdoor Rec ♦ 938-2503                      Post Library, bldg. 622 ♦ 938-2974                      Round Pond ♦ 938-2503/3860                      School Age Services, bldg. 1207 ♦ 938-8530                      West Point Club, bldg. 603 ♦ 938-5120, 446-5506                      Ski Lodge ♦ 938-3726/3727                      Youth Services, bldg. 500 ♦ 938-3727                      Veterinary Clinic, bldg. 630 ♦ 938-3817  <b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> For more information, contact the office listed for each activity.</p>		<p><b>West Point Bowling Center</b>  <b>Open Bowling:</b>                      Sun.-1300-1800                      Mon. 1600-2100                      Tue. Closed                      Wed. &amp; Thur. 1130-1900                      Fri. 1130-2300                      Sat. 0900-2300  <b>Galactic Bowling:</b>                      Every Fri. &amp; Sat. 1700-2300  <b>Home of Lil' Skeeters BBQ &amp; Primo's Pizza</b></p>	<p><b>2</b>  <b>Soldier Appreciation Day,</b> Camp Buckner, 0930  <b>Budgeting/Debt Liquidation,</b> 0830, Insurance, 0945, ACS  <b>Pony Softball Tournaments,</b> MWR Sports, 0700-Dusk</p>	<p><b>3</b>  <b>Golf Course Closed,</b> Dawn to 1400  <b>Shawangunk Wine Trail,</b> ITR, 1000-1800</p>	
<p><b>4</b>  <b>Family Night,</b> 1800-2100 every Sunday at the WP Bowling Center</p>	<p><b>5</b>  <b>Wee Ones Play Group,</b> ACS, 0930-1100  <b>Dollar Night,</b> 1800-2100 every Monday at the WP Bowling Center</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Musical Theater Arts,</b> YS, 6 Jun. -29 Jun. (ages 5 &amp; up) 1800-2000</p>	<p><b>7</b>  <b>Re-Entry Workshop,</b> 1030, 0930, <b>Newcomers Welcome Brief,</b> 0930, <b>Financial Readiness for 1st Term Soldiers,</b> 0830, ACS</p>	<p><b>8</b>  <b>Targeting Stress,</b> ACS, 1130-1300  <b>Theater Van to Broadway,</b> ITR, 1700-2330</p>	<p><b>9</b>  <b>Pony Softball Tournaments,</b> MWR Sports, 0700-Dusk (Jun. 9-11)  <b>MWR Swim Areas Open for the Season,</b> 1000</p>	<p><b>10</b>  <b>Bosu &amp; Core,</b> 0900, <b>Spinning,</b> 1000, MWR Fitness Center every Saturday</p>
<p><b>11</b>  <b>Ballroom Dancing Buffet,</b> WP Club, 1200-1600 (No Sunday Brunch Served)</p>	<p><b>12</b>  <b>Golf Course Closed for Outside Event</b>  <b>SAS Summer Camps Begin,</b> SAS, 0600</p>	<p><b>13</b>  <b>Volunteer Advisory Council Mtg.,</b> 1300, <b>Introduction to Diversity &amp; Volunteerism,</b> 1600, AVC  <b>Preseparation Briefing,</b> ACS, 1400-1500  <b>Museum Mile Festival,</b> ITR, 1600-2200</p>	<p><b>14</b>  <b>Anger Management Overview,</b> ACS, 1130-1230</p>	<p><b>15</b>  <b>Overview of ACS,</b> 0830, <b>Financial Institutions,</b> 0945, <b>Personal Financial Readiness,</b> 1100, ACS</p>	<p><b>16</b>  <b>Golf Course Closed,</b> Dawn to 1400  <b>All CYS Programs Closed,</b> Staff Development Day  <b>Overview of ACS,</b> 0830, <b>Financial Institutions,</b> 0945, <b>Personal Financial Readiness,</b> 1100, ACS  <b>Delafield Pond Water Slide Grand Opening Celebration,</b> 1100</p>	<p><b>17</b>  <b>Golf Course Closed,</b> Dawn to 1400  <b>Defensive Driving,</b> Register at ITR, 0800-1500  <b>Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Tour,</b> ITR, 0900-1600</p>

### REPAIR OF EROSION DAMAGE – CROWS NEST STREAM

Beginning Wednesday a DPW contractor will begin mobilization and work to repair erosion damage to Crows Nest Stream in the Lee Housing Area until roughly July 7.

For the safety of community members, the lawn across Barry Road in front of quarters 211 – 216 will be fenced off and will be used as a temporary staging area for the project.

## DPW Notes

### Water quality report

To comply with state and federal regulations, the Garrison Directorate of Public Works must issue an annual report on the quality of drinking water here.

The purpose of this report is to ensure consumers know what is in their drinking water. The report is also intended to raise awareness about the source of drinking water and about the importance of preventive measures, such as source protection.

Last year the installation's tap water met all drinking water health standards and the water system operated without violation. The report describes the water sources, treatment methods, recent system improvements and discloses any detected contaminants discovered during routine testing.

The full report is available in hardcopy form at the following locations: Environmental Management Division, building 667; Housing Division, building 626.

It is also available online at [www.usma.edu/dhpw](http://www.usma.edu/dhpw). To access the report from this location, click on annual water quality report.

For more information on the report call the DPW Environmental Management Division at 938-3224.

### Housing draw participants

Personnel participating in the 2006 Housing Draw and/or their sponsors will soon begin to look at quarters that will be available this summer. With this in mind, we

would like to remind personnel that they are not authorized to enter the New Brick construction site. Please ensure that all of your inbound personnel, as well as, their sponsors are aware that they must not enter the construction site.

Personnel may view West Point housing (their interior/exterior pictures and floor plans) at <https://onestop.army.mil>.

### Construction site dangers

All personnel are reminded that construction sites and staging areas are restricted areas and should not be entered by automobile or pedestrians.

These areas are under the control of the contractor during construction activities and is not considered to be operated and maintained by the Army.

Construction activities seem to capture the interest of all, especially children.

Dangers in the site include holes, uneven surfaces, dangerous materials and heavy construction equipment in operation.

While trespassing has occurred in most of our constructions sites, it has been particularly prevalent in the New Brick Renovation Site.

Please do not enter the area for any reason.

All personnel should obey construction signs and barricades, even if the site appears to be shutdown for non-duty hours and avoid vehicular or pedestrian activity in the site.

For information, contact DPW Customer Relations, 938-4407.

## What's Happening

### WPWC

The WPWC Shoppe is closed for the summer. The shop will open by appointment during the summer, for information, call 446-8798.

WPWC has table decorations and other party items to rent for your next event.

Call 446-2974 for a complete list of rental items.

### Summer playground fun

The Protestant Women of the Chapel will host weekly summer playground fun Wednesday from 9:30 to 11 a.m. at the Five Star Inn (on post) playground.

Call 859-4182/446-5307 for more information.

### Army birthday celebration

The Army birthday will be celebrated June 11 at 7 p.m. at the Trophy Point Amphitheater as part of the U.S. Military Academy Band's Summer Concert Series, "Celebrating the Army's Birthday."

### Jewish Chapel services

There will be no Friday night service at the Jewish Chapel throughout the month of June until June 30 when services return.

Local services are offered at nearby congregations at:

Congregation Agudas Israel, Newburgh, (845) 562-5604.

Temple Beth Jacob, Newburgh, (845) 562-5516.

Monroe Temple of Liberal Judaism, Monroe, (845) 783-2626.

Temple Sinai, Middletown, (845) 343-1861.

### Sacred Heart Open House

Don't miss the Sacred Heart School Open House Monday and Wednesday from noon to 2 p.m. each day for preschool to 8th grade.

For more info., call 446-2674.

### WP School Board meeting

The next meeting of the West Point School Board is Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. in the West Point Middle School conference room.

The meeting is open to the public.

### Current policy symposium

The U.S. Military Academy's Dept. of History will hold a three-night, two-day symposium on Current Policy here June 15-17.

The event will feature several guest speakers in the area of the application of military history and the shaping of American foreign policy.

Panel topics will include insurgency and counter-insurgency, nation building and occupation missions, historians shaping American policy and the future of military history as an academic field.

Guest panel speakers include Douglas Porch, Jeffrey Race, Robert Mackey, Michael Schaller, Stephen Ash and Conrad Crane.

RSVP by June 9 to Maj. Peter G. Knight at [peter.knight@usma.edu](mailto:peter.knight@usma.edu) or call (845) 938-5594.

### Ladies Golf Clinic

The West Point Ladies' Golf Club is hosting a golf clinic Tuesday and June 29 for interested lady golfers. The lessons are from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the West Point Golf Course with golf pro Shawn Kapusinsky.

E-mail Barbara Fletcher at [yb1956@usma.edu](mailto:yb1956@usma.edu) to sign up.

### DUSA college mixer

DUSA is holding a college mixer Thursday at the Benny Havens Lounge from 8 to 11 p.m.

Bring a friend to this free event and join us to socialize and enjoy some refreshments. Call Jessica, at 446-1385 for more information.

### WPES cutoff date change

Revised cutoff date for West Point Elementary School preschool and kindergarten students.

The cutoff date for children entering WPES's preschool or kindergarten in school year 2006-2007 are students entering preschool who must be four by Oct. 31, 2006 and entering kindergarteners who must be 5 by Oct. 31, 2006.

For more information call Phyllis Caputo at 938-3827/2313.

### Fourth of July volunteers needed

The Town of Highlands Ambulance Corp is looking for dedicated and responsible volunteers on the Fourth of July to help at their fundraiser booths.

Call Gen at (845) 446-3101 to sign up or e-mail [THACVolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:THACVolunteer@gmail.com).

# MWR Blurbs

## West Point Library

Registration for the Summer Reading program is from Wednesday to June 16. The program is open to all West Point community children ages 3 to 12 years old.

To register, stop by the West Point Library, Bldg. 622, or call 938-2974.

## Youth Services

Free overnight summer camp for military kids at Kamp Kiwanis in Taberg, N.Y. from July 2 to 7, ages 8 to 14. Must be active duty military residing in NYS. Apply at YS or call (315) 336-4568.

### Solution to Weekly Sudoku

6	2	9	4	1	7	3	5	8
7	1	3	8	5	6	2	4	9
5	8	4	3	9	2	7	1	6
3	4	8	7	6	9	1	2	5
1	6	2	5	8	3	4	9	7
9	5	7	2	4	1	6	8	3
2	7	5	1	3	8	9	6	4
8	9	1	6	7	4	5	3	2
4	3	6	9	2	5	8	7	1

## Command Channel 8/23

June 2 - June 9

### FRIDAY

9 a.m. Army Newswatch  
6 p.m. Army Newswatch  
6:30 p.m. 2006 Graduation  
Ceremony

### MONDAY

9 a.m. Army Newswatch  
6 p.m. Army Newswatch

### TUESDAY

9 a.m. Army Newswatch  
6 p.m. Army Newswatch  
6:30 p.m. 2006 YS Dance  
Recital

### WEDNESDAY

9 a.m. Army Newswatch  
9:30 a.m. 2006 YS Dance  
Recital  
6 p.m. Army Newswatch

### THURSDAY

9 a.m. Army Newswatch  
1 p.m. 2006 YS Dance  
Recital  
6 p.m. Army Newswatch

### JUNE 9

9 a.m. Army Newswatch  
6 p.m. Army Newswatch  
6:30 p.m. 2006 YS Dance  
Recital

## NOW SHOWING

in the movie theater  
at Mahan Hall, Bldg. 752

Friday -- **The Wild, PG, 7:30 p.m.**

Saturday -- **Scary Movie 4, PG-13, 7:30 p.m.**

June 9 -- **The Sentinel, PG-13, 7:30 p.m.**

June 10 -- **Akeelah and the Bee, PG, 7:30 p.m.**

June 16 -- **Stick it, PG-13, 7:30 p.m.**

June 17 -- **Hoot, PG, 7:30 p.m.**

The theater schedule can also be found at [www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com).

# Army and Community Sports

## Vrabel, Sakala use adversity to improve officer skills

Story and photos by  
Eric S. Bartelt  
Assistant Editor

Jubilation culminated four years worth of blood, sweat and tears Saturday for 861 second lieutenants who now look to lead Soldiers in the Global War on Terrorism.

For two 2006 graduating classmates, character was built on the "fields of friendly strife" that will one day bear the fruits of victory on the battlefields of war.

Second lieutenants Megan Vrabel and Philip Sakala fought through their perspective sports and, not unlike any other cadets, academics and achieving military knowledge to become a new generation of "leaders of character."

Vrabel, who was encouraged by her dad, Michael, a retired Marine officer, to take another look at the U.S. Military Academy during recruiting, enjoyed her best season on the hardwood for the Army women's basketball team.

She was one of three players to start all 31 games, her first full year as a starter, and averaged 6.5 points and 4.4 rebounds per game while leading Army to a 20-11 record and its first appearance in the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Tournament.

Vrabel scored a career-high 19 points against Navy during the season, but her fondest memory was the one-point Patriot League Championship victory over Holy Cross March 8.

"The last 10 seconds of the tournament championship game and then the 20 minutes after that when the cadets stormed the court and we were all up on everyone's

shoulders, those were by far the moments in this whole season that sticks out," Vrabel said. "It was kind of surreal at the time and it still gives me chills to think about it."

Adversity threatened the early stages of their season as a coaching change just prior to the beginning of practice for the 2005-06 season almost derailed it before it began, but the new coach brought out the best in her team during her first head coaching job.

"We came together and Maggie (Dixon) was a huge part of that ... we lost some people to injuries and academics, but we just kept going," the Virginia native stated.

The awesome experience of playing Tennessee in the NCAA Tournament, as Vrabel recounts, subsided with the premature death of coach Dixon. But, the short seven months that Dixon spent with the team were enough to make a large impact on their lives, especially Vrabel.

"She was a mentor, a leader, a friend, a big sister. She was a mom (to us). She was all those things and was only six years older than me," she said. "It says a lot about her character and her parent's character that she was such a strong woman and made such an impact on everyone's life -- she was all those things to me and more."

Dixon's personable nature is what Vrabel would like to take most into her Army career as an Air Defense Artillery officer, and thinks it would make a world of difference to those who will serve under her guidance.

As Vrabel looks ahead, she can't help but remember the three most important people who spent everyday with her at the academy

*"We've been through absolutely everything together and they're my three best friends in the entire world ... We've been there when we've done great things in basketball and we were all there when Maggie died and that brought us even closer together."*

-- 2nd Lt. Megan Vrabel on her fellow graduating basketball teammates.

since July 1, 2002 -- her graduating teammates Adrienne Payne, Micky Mallette and Ashley Magnani.

"We've been through absolutely everything together and they're my three best friends in the entire world," Vrabel said. "We've gotten each other through the hard times. We've been there when we've done great things in basketball and we were all there when Maggie died and that brought us even closer together."

The team co-captain spent the last three years rooming with Payne. The pair made their unofficial visit of West Point together and have clicked ever since.

"We had a lot of fun and keep each other sane," Payne said. "I always had a shoulder to lean on and even through the difficult times there was always one of us there to pick the other up."

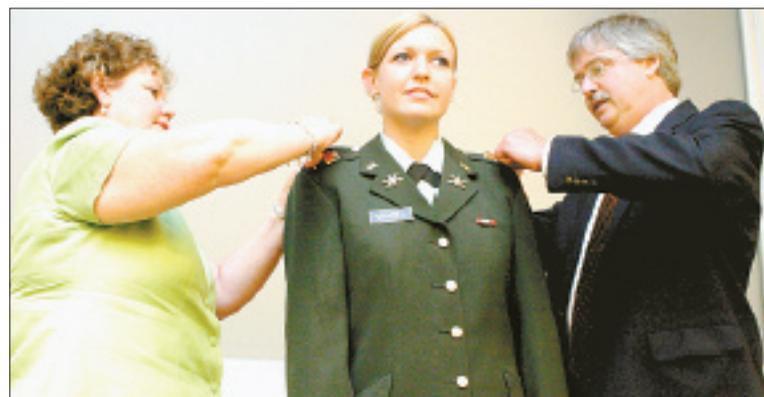
"We built a friendship here and will remain friends forever," Payne added. "We went through a lot, good times and the bad, but we're definitely going to stick together."

Sakala, on the other hand, had a different perspective of graduation as he was competing at the NCAA Track and Field East Regional in Greensboro, N.C., Saturday.

He earned his trip to the regional by winning his first outdoor crown, to go with his two indoor titles, at the Patriot League Championship in the 1,500m with a time of 3:47.87.

Sakala, who graduated May 24 with female track and field teammate Ashley Urick in an early ceremony at the Thayer Award Room, was appreciative of his first 1,500m title after going through adversity leading up to the spring season.

"I was coming off a very bad stress fracture right below my knee," Sakala said. "I started running in March and didn't start



Second Lieutenant Megan Vrabel is pinned by her mother, Denise, and AAU/high school basketball coach Eddie Cottrell, who coached her for six years. Vrabel will branch into the Air Defense Artillery in January after a term as Athletic Intern.

my workouts until the second week of April.

"I was out for three months," he added. "(Track and Field head coach Jerry Quiller) and I worked out a good program in the pool and on the bike and had the doctor help us through it."

Sakala credits Coach Q, as he likes to call him, for developing him physically as well as mentally for races over the last four years.

"If I have doubts, he'll talk me through them," Sakala explained. "With him, it's the small things and he always had confidence in me."

He was truly happy to be competing athletically on graduation day because he never looked at himself as an academic aficionado.

"I (did) something I love (on graduation day). I didn't come here because I was a great student or leader," said the future field artillery officer. "I went to a board with my senator and congressman, and I had a brigadier general tell me that I wasn't fit to lead and that I was too dumb for West Point and in no way in hell I should be an Army officer."

One man's opinion didn't deter Sakala from taking on the challenge of West Point and succeeding in athletics, leadership and academics (he made the Dean's List).

"I know I will be a good officer regardless of what he thought," the New Mexico native stated. "I had the opportunity to come here because I could put one foot in front of the other, and I had people who believed in me and my abilities as a runner, a student and a future leader."

Sakala's dream would be to someday follow his mother, Mary Ancker, and his grandfather's footsteps as a third generation colonel.

As that dream is still years ahead, he reflected on the past four years as a time that cadets should cherish more and reflect on what the academy instills in them even during all the hard times.

"It's been a good time here. I don't think cadets understand how good they have it here until they leave," Sakala said. "I've done a lot of maturing in the last four years here and I think I've done quite well for myself."



Second Lieutenant Philip Sakala receives his diploma from Superintendent Lt. Gen. William J. Lennox Jr., during a ceremony May 24 at the Thayer Award Room.