



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT, NEW YORK 10996-5000

11 October 2017

To the Men and Women of the Long Gray Line,

I have received numerous letters, emails, and phone calls from graduates expressing their concerns about the controversy surrounding Second Lieutenant (2LT) Spenser Rapone. I thank you for your time and your continued commitment to the United States Military Academy (USMA). I take this matter very seriously.

2LT Rapone's conduct is the subject of two ongoing investigations. As a result, what I can disclose at this point is necessarily limited. 2LT Rapone's current unit of assignment, the 10th Mountain Division, is in the process of investigating his recent conduct and determining any appropriate actions to take. I directed an additional investigation last week to look inward at the USMA's policies and procedures as they pertain to then-Cadet Rapone's time at USMA, and USMA's determination of his suitability for graduation and commissioning.

It is my duty to thoroughly investigate concerns pertaining to the effectiveness of our systems and processes to maintain the outstanding quality of USMA graduates that the Nation expects. I am committed to fulfilling that duty to both our graduates and the American people. It is imperative that this be done right.

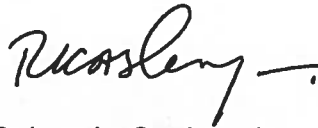
Because of the ongoing investigation, I am limited as to what I can disclose at this time. I can assure you when the USMA investigation is complete and appropriate follow on action is taken, I will release a report summarizing the facts surrounding USMA's knowledge of 2LT Rapone's actions as a cadet, as well as the actions USMA took based on the information known at that time. You deserve to know this information, and I believe in being transparent in informing you, to the full extent permissible by law, of our findings and actions.

In the meantime, I ask that you help me prevent the negativity associated with the alleged behavior of one graduate from causing us to lose sight of the thousands of graduates who sacrifice and serve honorably every day. Our graduates, like recent Nininger Award recipient Captain Nick Dockery, have consistently proven their worth to our Nation. Many of you have been there, but I would invite any of you to join me for one day on the streets of Mosul, or downtown Kandahar, to understand the incredible performance of our graduates and their honorable duty and sacrifice for our Nation over these last 16 years of war.

The bottom line is this: the United States Military Academy is committed to the development of leaders who internalize our values of Duty, Honor, Country and who live West Point's and the Army's Values. Every member of the staff and faculty is obliged to take that mission seriously. Responding appropriately to concerns raised about the quality of USMA graduates takes time, which includes gathering all the facts and taking a hard look at whether USMA is doing everything it can to develop leaders of character and maintain the public trust.

Like many of you, I have also recently read Lieutenant Colonel (U.S. Army, Retired) Heffington's open letter, criticizing the Academy leadership, to include calling us liars. I do not take these allegations lightly and will provide you a response with facts addressing his allegations and then you can judge for yourself whether our graduates are serving our Nation with character imbued with the values of Duty, Honor and Country, or not.

In the meantime, on behalf of the thousands of USMA graduates who have lived and served honorably and the 4,526 extraordinary members of the United States Corps of Cadets, thank you for your passion for our Alma Mater and for what it stands for and for what it does to provide for our Nation's security.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Caslen, Jr.", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert L. Caslen, Jr.
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
Superintendent