

THE TRAGEDY of WEST POINT'S CLASS of 1950

Sent straight from classroom to Korean battle, these young officers fought and died for their country's freedom and West Point's glory



1ST. LT. ARTHUR, M.
APMANN JR.
23 AUG. 1951
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In West Point's quiet cemetery, Gail Wilson gazes at Elliott Knott's coffin awaiting burial beside another classmate killed in Korea. For the class of 1950's story, turn the page.

From their hour of



June 6, 1950: Diplomas in hand, 671 brand-new graduates hurl white-hats skyward.



Arthur M. Apmann, Jr.
Ansonia, Conn.



Courtenay L. Barrett, Jr.
Cincinnati, Ohio



Aubrey L. Benson
Colorado City, Texas



John M. Garrett, Jr.
Memphis, Tenn.



Thomas P. Greene
Drexel Hill, Pa.



Carter B. Hagler
Augusta, Ga.



Peter H. Monfore
Springfield, S. D.



William E. Otis, Jr.
Cleveland, Ohio



Robert W. Robinson
South Haven, Mich.



Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway writes to LOOK as commander-in-chief in Korea: "Another proud page has been added to the illustrious record of United States Military Academy graduates by officers of the class of 1950. Many of this class quickly exchanged their cadet shakos for steel helmets and combat assignments in Korea. They received their baptism of fire at the most critical period of our United Nations military operations in Korea. Their kin, their country and their comrades have a deep pride in their achievements and deep faith in their future."

By J. ROBERT MOSKIN • Photographed by JAMES HANSEN

THE story of West Point's class of 1950 begins exactly at noon on June 6, 1950. In the tremendous cadet field house, the speeches were over, the diplomas awarded. Cadet First Captain John M. Murphy bellowed: "Graduating class dismissed!" With a joyous shout, 671 young men flung white hats high in the air. Eighteen days later, war erupted in far-away Korea.

They went to their posts — some straight from the classroom to lead men left leaderless on the battlefield.

Heroes are born in crisis. In this national crisis, the class of '50 has come to symbolize the long gray line of classes graduated over the 150 years that the U. S. Military Academy is celebrating this year. These are not the reluctant-to-arms; these are a breed of men who believe the science of war is a profession that promises its masters a vision of peace.

Four summers earlier, they had puffed up the hill to "beast barracks" in sports shirts and old sun-tans. They came for a hundred differ-

ent reasons, from every state and a few other countries. They came straight from high school, from college, from the Army, Navy and Marines. Forty-six gave up commissions, one a major's rank. Their fathers were anyone: a car dealer named Warner, a mill hand named Maladowitz, a general named Crittenberger, a mason named Listro, a manufacturer named Heit, an admiral named Joy.

When the North Koreans crossed the 38th Parallel, the class had scattered on graduation leave. Of 10 classmates honeymooning on the beach at Sea Island, Ga., six would soon fly to Korea — three to be killed in action, two to win Distinguished Service Crosses for extraordinary heroism.

A third of the class has now seen Korean action. First to go were 114 who had, before graduation (and war), chosen peacetime duty in the Far Eastern Command and 27 who had chosen the 2nd Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, Wash. By mid-August, planeloads of new lieutenants from the class were speeding over the

Pacific. In one plane rode nearly 35—Jack Murphy, Louis Genuario, William DeGraf (the class's No. 1 man) among them. When September began, these young officers, out of West Point less than 12 weeks, were leading platoons against the enemy.

The decision to plunge the class of 1950 directly from West Point's theoretical classrooms into Korea's inferno has stirred heated debate in military circles. In his new book *Men of West Point*, Col. R. Ernest Dupuy charges that they were sent right into action "by someone's bad judgment."

The class was caught in a high-policy switch that postponed their practical field training until they had served with troops. Most members of the class disagree that the resulting assignment to duty with war-bound troops was "bad judgment." They were needed; they were called.

The Pentagon chiefs prefer to stay out of the argument. The Military Academy's superintendent, Maj. Gen. Frederick A. Irving, who was himself graduated on the eve of war in April, 1917, says firmly, "These young men went right to duty, using what they had learned at West Point. They are dedicated to the devotion of life to service."

Until now, no one has recorded what these young West Pointers, all in their 20's, have done for the nation. President Truman, who as a youth had West Point hopes, recently paid tribute to them and to all of West Point's 13,000 living graduates, saying:

"Their devotion to 'Duty-Honor-Country,' their courage and their character have greatly

joy...these went to duty...and death



Warner T. Bonfoey, Jr.
St. Paul, Minn.



Thomas W. Boydston
McPherson, Kan.



Howard G. Brown
Tupelo, Miss.



Lynn H. Camp
Willcox, Ariz.



Frank P. Christensen, Jr.
Brooklyn, N. Y.



Willard H. Coates
Clearwater, Fla.



Robert F. Flinn
Schenectady, N. Y.



George E. Hannan
Pierre, S. D.



Elliott R. Knott
Montclair, N. J.



Russell E. Leggett
Catasauqua, Pa.



Edmund J. Lilly, 3rd
San Antonio, Texas



Warren C. Littlefield
Santa Monica, Calif.



Frank R. Loyd, Jr.
Laramie, Wyo.



James D. Michel
St. Paul, Minn.



Harry E. Rushing
Montgomery, Ala.



Stanley P. Shankman
Brooklyn, N. Y.



James W. Smyly, 3rd
Edgewood, Md.



Henry E. Tisdale, Jr.
Chevy Chase, Md.



John C. Trent
Memphis, Tenn.

"We pledge our hopes,
our faith, our lives
That freedom shall not die—"



strengthened our democracy and helped make it possible for us all to survive as free people."

But even a tribute like this cannot record the heart of these men in the class of '50:

Of Howard Brown (Tupelo, Miss.), who was shot between the eyes on Battle Mountain and lived long enough to tell his platoon sergeant what to do next and to write his folks to collect his insurance.

Of Albert Fern (San Diego, Calif.), a company commander after 18 days in Korea, who led 16 men out of an enemy trap.

Of Peter Monfore (Springfield, S. D.), the class's vice-president and champion boxer, who was killed after a year in the line. A classmate wrote from the battlefield, "The men of L Company were devoted to him. It is a shame that men like Pete die in this racket, but dying is part of the game."

Of Arthur Apmann, Jr. (Ansonia, Conn.), drowned while trying to secure a precious pontoon bridge, and Gerald Kelley (Pittsfield, Mass.), saved after clinging to that same bridge for four hours.

Of Carter Hagler (Augusta, Ga.), who had dreamed of West Point since he was 12 and is probably the first of the class to have an American Legion post named in his memory.

Nor can tributes record the heart of those they leave behind:

Of Charlotte Leggett, who kissed her husband Russell good-by at their Hampton, Va., home one morning last December and saw him drive off for a jet-bomber flight out of nearby Langley Field. By midmorning, he was dead. His classmate and best friend, Elliot Heit (Pel-

ham Manor, N. Y.), came up the walk to break the news. Heit says, "Charlotte was hanging clothes on the line. I told her straight. God, it was tough. She was stunned but got hold of herself. Finally, she said, 'I'd better keep busy' and went on doing her work. There were no tears then—she had complete control of herself then. What love birds they had been! We sent Charlotte back home to Catasaqua, Pa., where she and Russ came from."

Leaped From Crippled Jet

Of Ann Streit, whose pilot-husband John bailed out of a crippled jet over North Korea. She and their baby son Jep wait in South Orange, N. J. She wrote the class of Jep, "He looks more and more like Johnny every day. He is a real joy, and when his Daddy comes home, he'll be proud as punch."

Of Mrs. Roy M. Foster, who waits in Florida for her son George, missing in action. She wrote, "We have had no further news of George—but won't let ourselves give up hope that perhaps he is a prisoner and we will hear from him real soon. Of course, we have no means of knowing whether our letters ever reach their destination, but, anyway, we write the one letter allowed each week."

Tragedy arrived swiftly for the class of '50. Edmund (Ted) Lilly was the first, killed on September 3, 1950. He was 22. A telegram had cut short his honeymoon: The 2nd Division was moving out. In battle, his platoon was encircled. The Air Force dropped them ammunition and canned beer. They stayed in their fox-

CONTINUED

RECORD OF THE CLASS OF 1950

(from official military sources)

BIOGRAPHICAL	Caribbean 14
Entered Academy . . . 921	Foreign missions 4
Pre-Academy duty . . . 378	
As enlisted men . . . 332	PRESENT RANK
As officers 46	2nd Lt. 213
Sons of officers . . . 215	1st Lt. 403
Graduated 671	Captain 4
On active duty 620	
Married 258	CASUALTIES
	Total deaths 28
BRANCH OF SERVICE	Killed in action . . . 15
Army 464	Dead of wounds . . . 3
Infantry 198	Korean non-battle . . . 4
Artillery 118	Air Force in U. S. . . . 4
Engineers 65	Auto accidents 2
Armor 48	Missing in battle . . . 10
Signal Corps 33	Prisoner 3
Quartermaster 2	Wounded-battle . . . 55
Air Force 156	Injured-battle 4
	DECORATIONS
CURRENT DUTY	DSC 6
In U. S. 252	Silver Star 48
Far East 143	Bronze Star 79
Europe 129	Air Medal 13
Enroute overseas . . . 58	Soldiers Medal 2
Alaska 20	Purple Heart 67



"Follow me!" Teaching lessons of Korea, Phil Harper, Art Porcher, Ray Maladowitz and Hugh Holt (front to rear) lead way through

Brave young hearts pumped life into West Point's creed 'Duty-

holes and fought. Ted Lilly won the Silver Star in his first and last battle.

Lilly, Frank Loyd and Gail Wilson had gone to grammar school together in the Philippines, where their fathers were serving as Army colonels. Loyd was killed 23 days after Lilly. Armed only with a pistol, he led 15 men to wrest a hill from 150 of the enemy. He was killed in the final assault and received the Distinguished Service Cross in death.

Even so quickly won, Loyd's was the class's second DSC. The first went to Jack Murphy of Staten Island, N. Y., captain of the corps and class president, a rare West Point combination. "Black Jack" won his DSC in the night of September 5-6, exactly three months after his "Class dismissed!"

On September 2, Murphy had picked his way through machine-gun and artillery fire to reach G Company, 9th Infantry Regiment, on the Pusan perimeter. He found his company commander in a foxhole, the only officer still

alive. Two platoons were left. Murphy took over one; a master sergeant, the other. Sgt. 1st Class Loren R. Kaufman (The Dalles, Ore.) became Murphy's platoon sergeant.

G Company, bolstered by three tanks, moved to a horseshoe ridge. Murphy and his platoon mounted a small hill 3000 yards to the company's right. At 3 a.m. on September 6, the enemy knocked G Company off its ridge. Murphy was ordered to attack.

"We made our way back along high ground," Murphy says. "Suddenly, in the darkness, we heard men in a ravine below. Kaufman, a soft-spoken man with a large mustache, whispered he'd find out who they were.

"He walked ahead; I was about 10 feet behind him. Kaufman grabbed the first man by the helmet, looked into his face and yelled, 'Them's gooks!'"

Ten of the enemy lunged at Murphy; he bayoneted two. Behind him, his men scattered. Murphy picked up a machine gun and fired

from the hip. The next morning, 22 of the enemy lay dead in the ravine.

Pressing on to the company's lost ridge, Murphy led his men quickly around to the hill's flank. He, Kaufman and their two squad leaders started to attack. Their men did not follow. Those four charged that hill.

They ran into a machine-gun nest with five men. Kaufman fired two rounds and bayoneted the remaining three men. Moving up, Murphy killed six or seven. By 11 a.m., there were 120 enemy bodies on the hill. The rest of the enemy fled through a village at its base. Kaufman mustered a patrol and destroyed the village.

For this action, Murphy won the DSC and Kaufman, who was to be killed six months later by our own mortars, posthumously received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Murphy later won two Bronze Star Medals before coming home from Korea.

On September 4, two days after Murphy

Lewis Page, Jr., ex-German POW (he bailed out of B-17), flies fighter in Korea.

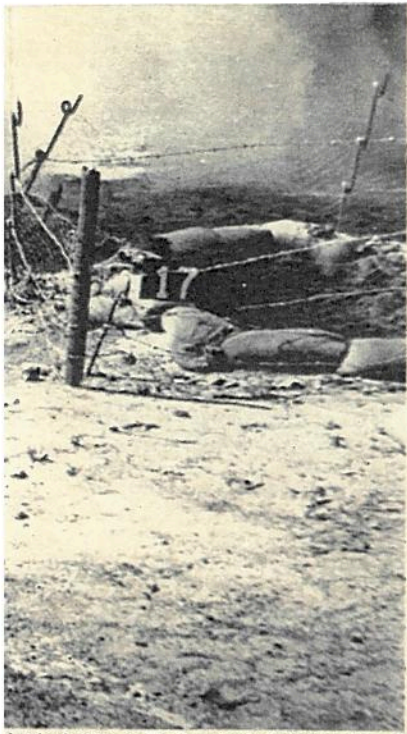


Football star Arnold Galiffa, aide to General Ridgway, gained fame in Korea as grenade-tossing platoon leader.



General's son Robert M. Grow steps out in front of his paratrooper platoon taking off from base in Japan.





barbed wire at Ft. Benning's Infantry School.

Honor-Country'

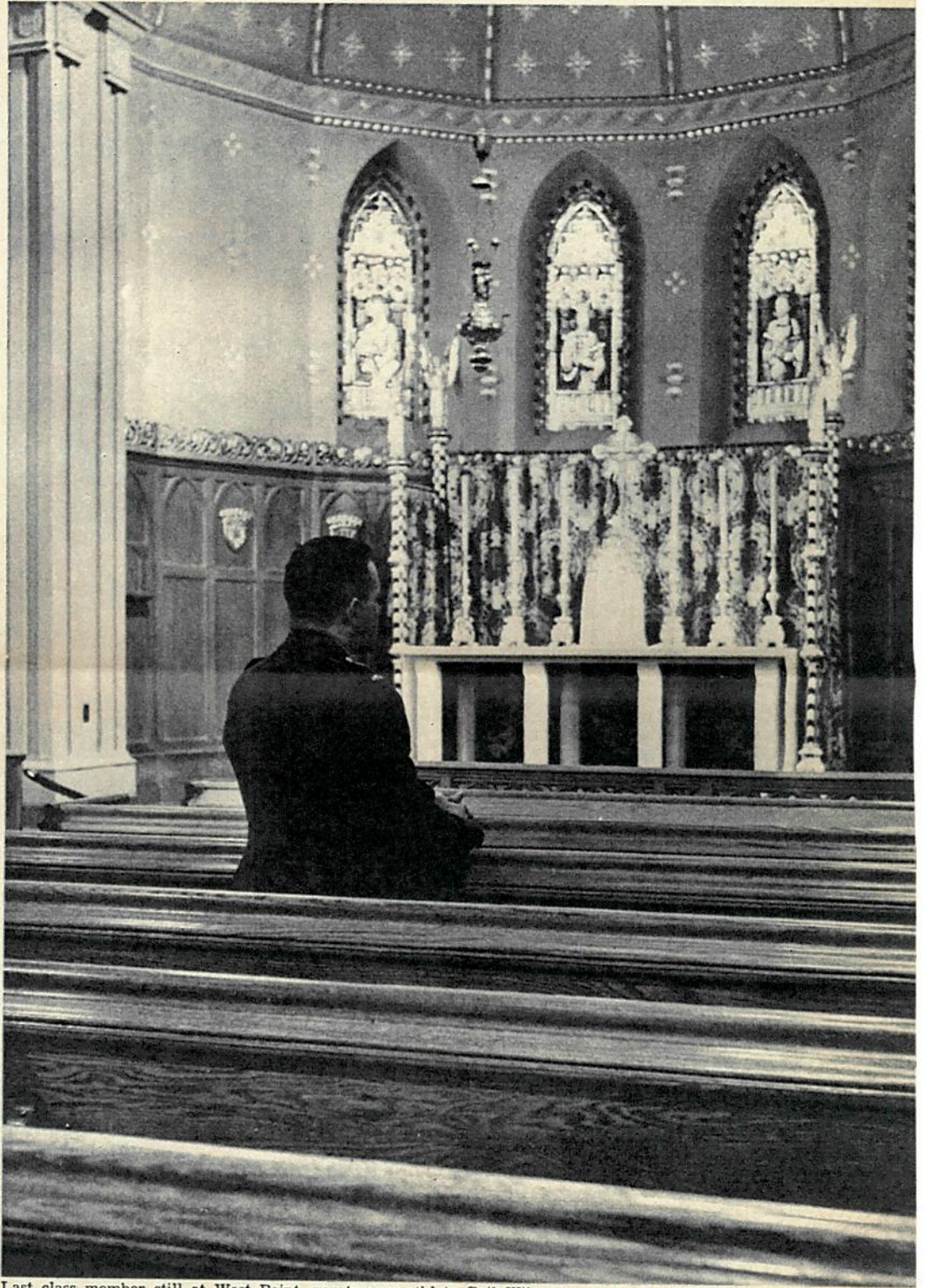
joined his unit, Louis Genuario (Norwalk, Conn.) reached his battalion headquarters in the 38th Infantry Regiment. The battalion CP had been hit just before he showed up. Genuario remembers, "My company commander pointed out a knoll on which the platoon I was to lead was dug in. He told me to go over and get the platoon ready to jump off. Ten minutes later, I was in my first attack."

On September 12, Genuario led his 16 men up a hill on which waited 100 Koreans with automatic weapons. One burp gun pinned down Genuario's platoon. He took his carbine and grenades and crawled out alone to get the gun. Under fire, he knocked out gun and crew. For this action, he received the Silver Star.

Genuario can't see this as heroism. "There are occasions when leadership

CONTINUED

William Yeoman, football captain in his junior year, trains machine gunner in Germany.



Last class member still at West Point, paratrooper-athlete Gail Wilson prays for his fallen classmates.



Class's No. 1 man William DeGraf won five Bronze Stars, instructs in California.



Jack Murphy, class president, corps captain, Korean DSC winner, leads Ft. Dix recruits on battle course.



DSC winner Charles Butler demonstrates Korea-learned camouflage techniques at Ft. Benning's OCS.



Nights of horror and days of desperate battle

means the lieutenant goes first," he says. "This was one of them."

Genuario was put out of action 11 days later. He and his men assaulted a hill and the enemy threw them back. As Genuario tells it: "I called the company commander for tank support. While talking with him, two rounds hit my right foot. My two machine gunners were hit. We moved down to the bottom of the hill and crawled through a muddy rice paddy. Climbing over one dike, trying to keep low, I was hit through the hip. I fell right on top of one wounded machine gunner. We both started to crawl; we couldn't get far. The six men left tried to get us to cover. Four would stand and fire while a couple of guys would drag the machine gunner and me from bunker to bunker. My platoon sergeant saved my life."

"They shipped me back to St. Albans Naval Hospital in New York and kept me there a year: six months in traction and six more in a cast from the waist down. But I'm coming along fine now."

"I can't stay in the Infantry, but I'm going to stay in the Army. With all this, I really love it—the duty you get, the places you go, the life you have. I seem to fit."

Search for Way Out

Early on September 4, in the hours before Genuario had joined his platoon, Fred Dickerson (Pueblo, Colo.) had his night of horror. He had been in action just two days with the 21st Regiment, guarding a roadblock at Angan-ni. Now, at 3 a.m., his company was encircled.

"The company commander told me to find a way out," Dickerson relates. "I went alone back down the road for about a quarter of a mile, when I was jumped by the enemy. They grabbed me, knocked me down. Two of them stood watch over me."

"Soon our company started coming down the road. As our boys passed near where I lay, I lunged at the nearest guard, pulled away my rifle and bayoneted him. The other guard, out of reach, shot me through my right shoulder."

"I smashed the guard near me with the butt of my rifle, raced to the road and ducked behind a tank. We forced our way through, but only a platoon and a half made it." Dickerson continued to fight in the line for 14 months before he was rotated. "I was lucky to come out

of it," he says now. "A lot of us got hurt because we were new to combat."

John Trent, captain and end of West Point's football team in his senior year, was killed when he was brand-new to combat. Trent landed with the 15th Regiment at Wonsan in North Korea on November 14. His platoon, made up of a handful of Americans and a large number of raw South Korean recruits, dug in to protect an airfield. Enemy guerrillas hid everywhere.

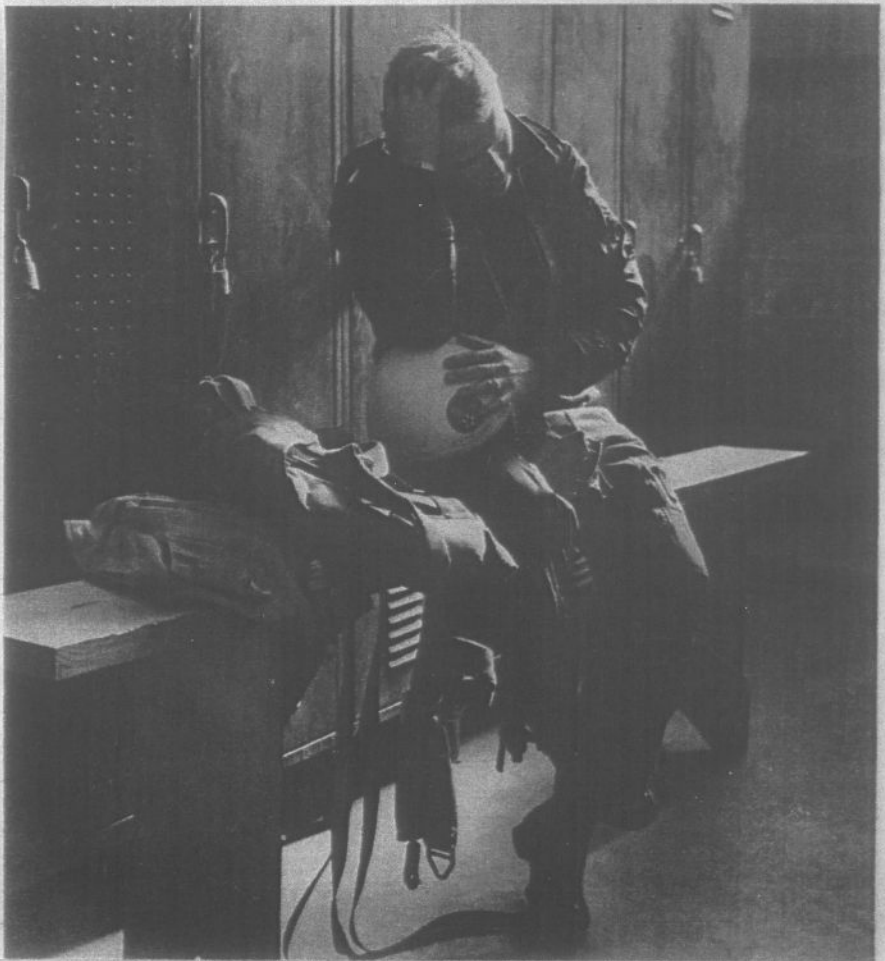
That first night, Trent, feeling his respon-

sibility, checked foxholes to see that his men were awake. Another officer might have had his sergeant check. Trent, in the Academy's finest tradition, made the rounds himself. He made an accidental noise at one point and was ripped by a B.A.R. He died instantly.

The next morning, Charles Friedlander (Sunnyside, N. Y.), stepping ashore with the 7th Regiment, was met on the beach and told of his classmate's death. Friedlander's L Company platoon moved up and sat for two weeks in the hills protecting X Corps headquarters.

CONTINUED

Jet pilot Elliot Heit had to break news to his best friend's wife of husband's death in bomber crash.



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Six won high DSC, two died in the deed

Then the Chinese entered the war and broke through; the 1st Marine Division was trapped near Changjin Reservoir. The X Corps started pouring back to the port of Hungnam. From their heights, L Company watched the lights of the convoys streaming south.

"We wondered when it would be our turn. It never came," says Friedlander. "Our battalion was to head north and link up with the Marines at Koto-ri.

"We stayed in the snow at Koto-ri for four days, a thin frozen line of fighters. On December 9, the Marines appeared. We were ordered to hold until they had passed through our line and then to form a rear guard behind them.

Retreat From Hell

"They had been through hell and looked it. Later, I learned that a classmate, James Barnes, Jr., (Norfolk, Va.), in the convoy with the Marines, alone had destroyed an entrenched enemy machine gun just above Koto-ri on December 7. He was awarded the DSC.

"The Marine division straggled back through our lines for 17 hours. Then we started out behind them. We marched and double-timed the 18 miles without a break. We had to get out by night. At Majom-dong, we didn't even dig in. We just lay down and slept.

"The next day, we took up defensive positions on the Hungnam perimeter. On Christmas Eve, we were evacuated. What a Christmas present! I never saw so many men go to religious services in my life."

Charles Butler (Grand Rapids, Mich.) won the DSC with the 7th Regiment on this same perimeter west of Hamhung. On December 15, he led his unit and five tanks to rescue an encircled platoon. "We suddenly came around an S curve in the road and on both sides of us the hills crawled with Chinese," Butler says. "I was hit in the left arm. Everything went fuzzy. I slid down the bank until I found I could move. Then I was hit in the groin.

"I had our seven wounded collected and told the platoon sergeant to withdraw with the tanks as mobile cover. The Marines laid down an air strike. My men lifted me into a tank and I sat on the bow gunner's lap where I could fire the

30-caliber machine gun. We bulled our way back to our lines."

Butler was awarded the DSC for "outstanding courage" and evacuated to Japan. By April he was back again, in Korea and in battle.

The class has won six DSC's (two posthumously). Wilfred D. Miller (Watertown, Conn.) received one for reorganizing a hard-hit tank unit. He led it out of a trap and then repeatedly brought in supplies to beleaguered infantry men and carried out their wounded.

The sixth DSC man was George Hannan (Pierre, S. D.). After midnight of October 2, 1950, his Signal Corps detachment of one other officer and 17 enlisted men was banzaied by 2400 enemy. His troops tried to escape over the rear wall of their compound. Hannan dashed to the front entrance and distracted the enemy with harassing fire. Wounded several times, he held out until his men had escaped. When the enemy stormed into the compound, he was overwhelmed.

They Still Get Scared

The class yearbook says simply: "George was always doing something for the Corps." He had already been killed when West Point professor Lt. Col. T. H. Andrews reached Korea to see how recent graduates made West Point training pay off. Colonel Andrews says Hannan was not an exceptional cadet; he was typical.

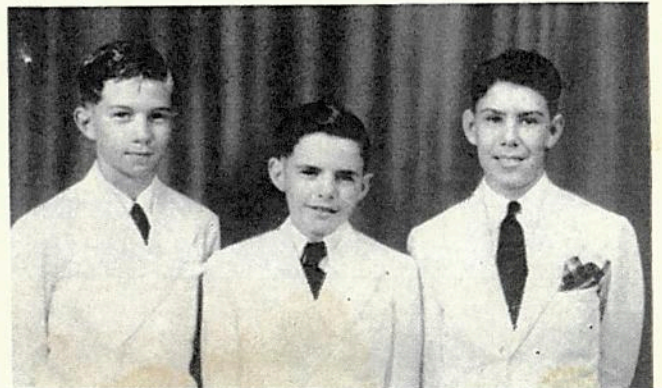
"This profession of ours is close to a religion," says Colonel Andrews. "I found in Korea that their sense of duty amazed even me. A graduate of the Academy doesn't automatically get an extra supply of courage. After a cadet graduates, he still gets scared and wants to live—don't forget he's human—but it's in them.

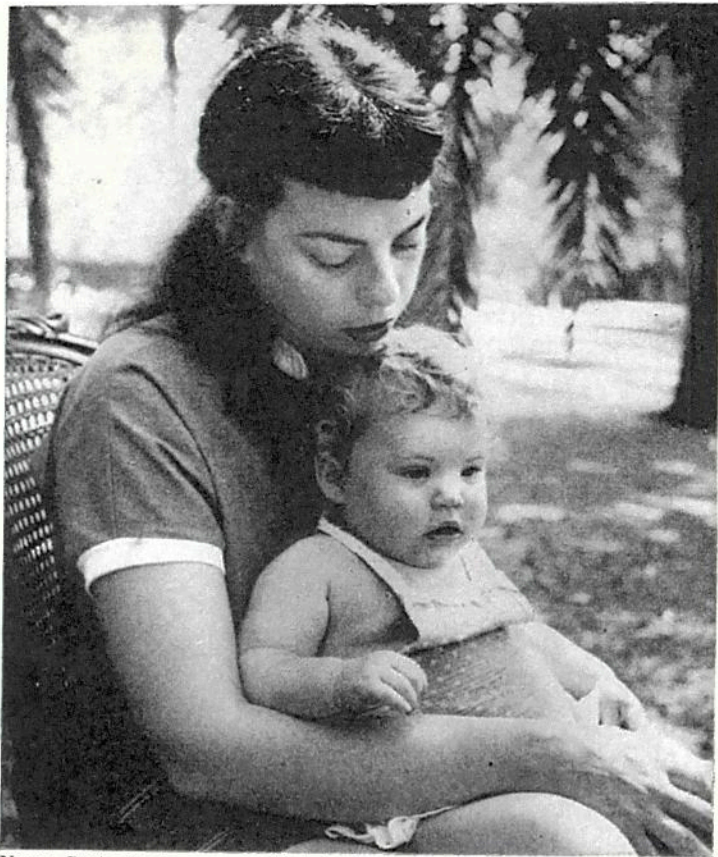
"I'm particularly proud of the class of '50. They had no time to learn. They had to plunge right in. They represent what was and can be done by young lieutenants just out of West Point. They had no post-Academy schooling, no troop experience. They were West Point products given a job to do. We needed men to lead the way."

In uncounted deeds for which they will never be decorated, these young officers risked their lives beyond any civilian concept of

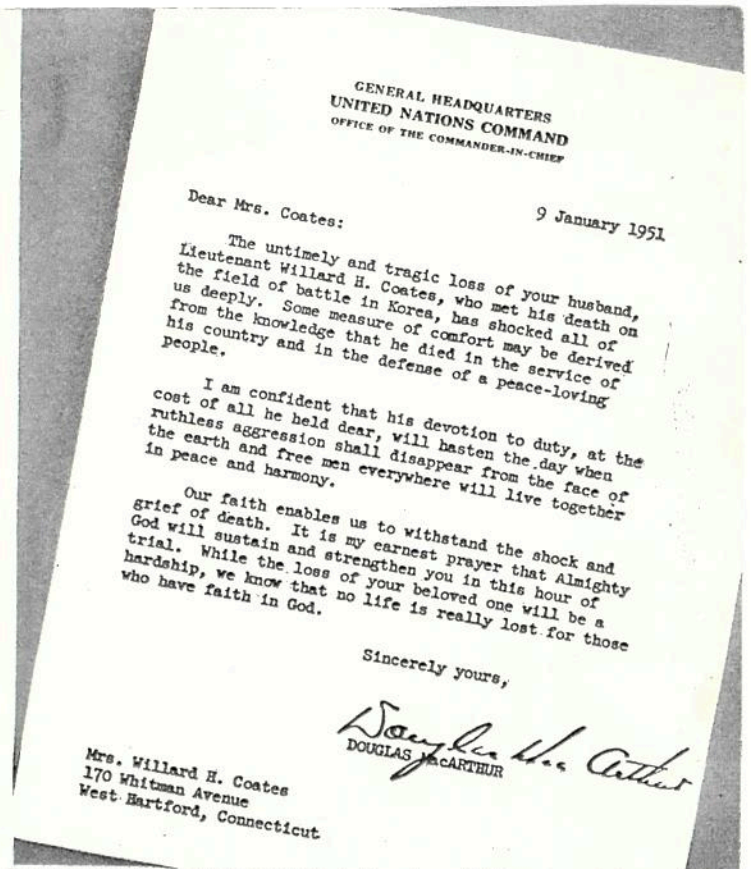
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These 12-year-olds went on to West Point together. Now, only Gail Wilson (center) is alive. Ted Lilly (left) and Frank Loyd were killed in Korea.





Nancy Coates is alone now with baby Anita. Her husband Willard was killed fighting in Korea with 7th Regiment four months before their daughter was born.



Treasured letter from General MacArthur brought Nancy comfort. Willard was his family's third generation to serve with 7th Regiment.



“He will never know the father so proud of him”

Wife Rose and baby Donna Maria take Louis Genuario home. General Crittenger, who has son in class of '50, presented Silver Star (inset) to Genuario during year in hospital with shattered hip.

“duty.” It is too early to know if what Tom Casserly did has been recognized.

Last December, Casserly went with 17 from the class of '50 to Korea as a fighter pilot. By the end of January, four were missing in action—Thurston Baxter (Piedmont, Calif.), George Eichelberger, Jr. (Norfolk, Va.), Medon Bitzer (Johnson City, Tenn.), and Johnny Streit.

On March 3, 23-year-old Casserly (South Orange, N. J.) and his best friend, Harry Rushing (Montgomery, Ala.), were returning from a combat strike at high altitude when Rushing's plane caught fire. He bailed out and was carried into the Han River, Casserly followed him down and crash-landed his F-51 fighter on a small sand bar. He tried to reach Rushing, who sank out of sight 100 feet from the bar.

Jean Rushing, Harry's wife, writes from Montgomery: “Harry and I were sweethearts in high school and waited five years after that to marry. Though we lived together only 18 months, I am happy and grateful that the time we had together was so perfect that it was worth the wait. We have a beautiful son who is now six months old. It is tragic that he will never know in person the father who was so proud of him, but he has the finest inheritance in the world—having the same name that was respected . . . by all who knew him, and a name that will be forever cherished by those of us who loved him.

“Rereading this, it sounds dramatic and I do not mean to, for tragedy is stark, not dramatic, and this is real tragedy.”

END

