

Another Bundle of Joy

In time Patsy became pregnant again. Which pleased us both, and especially Patsy, who once before we were married said she wanted 'Lots of Kids'.

It remained to be seen how many 'lots' would be, but right here in the hospital just 100 steps from our home at the United States Military Academy at West Point, our second child would be born. A true labeled 'Army brat' if there was one.

So, without fanfare or problems, Mary Rebecca Hughes was born, inconveniently, at 4AM on March 28th, 1957 - a year and a half into my 3 year instructional tour at West Point.

West Point Teaching (4)

Category: West Point Instructional Years

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Written by dave

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More photos are at Married Life (7)

Mother Hughes Visits

My mother, Helen, still working in Denver and living alone, wanted to see her grandchildren. So we supported her travel out from Colorado, and she was able to make a nice visit to the growing Hughes clan at West Point.

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One of the things really stuck in my mind happened during that 1957 mother's visit to us. She had her own room in our quarters, with a window that looked out across the Hudson River to the east of our home from high on our hill. Most days that was a lovely view in the sunshine. And she could see the sizable ships going up and down the Hudson either coming from, or going to, Albany.

The picture below shows, besides baby Rebecca on our overlook Porch, the Hudson River below.

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But sometimes also, the whole scene was foggy, especially in the spring.

The Real West Point Rock

One night we had all retired to our rooms about 9 or later, when we all could hear the fog horns on a large ship honking away on that narrow waterway. Nothing unusual in that.

But that night the fog horns seemed more insistant than ever, and I could hear my mother chuckling to herself over the sound so close by.

Suddenly the house shook and trembled - twice.

A cargo ship had gotten lost in the fog wandered over too far, hit and sheared off what is called the South Dock. A quite small dock with its pier sticking out into the river about 100 feet. Anchored in the bed rock that connected it to our house.

The ship's prow had ridden up several feet on the rock beside the river, and then slid back into the river.

Now if anyone doubted that West Point indeed sits on a huge - largely hidden - granite 'point' all they would need is a earthquake meter reading that night and they would have recorded the weight of a large vessel running aground on that granite mountain, and causing the ground to shake all the way - perhaps 300 feet higher - and higher behind our house to rattle it!

The accident did no great damage to the steel ships

prow. It simply backed into the river, dropped anchor while the crew inspected the damage, and saw the wrecked dock in the morning, As we did, walking down to the Thayer Road level and peeking over the low stone fence down on the once-dock.

I really remember that night's proof of just how big. and long the granite "Point" was, and my mother's chuckle when she heard the mighty ship run aground after the fog horn.

Exciting night.

And proving that West Point is one very large Rock, perhaps a mile long, parallel to the river on its eastern side. Which placement produces the narrow twice-turning Hudson River channel down below the high "Point' from which cannons could readily directly fire at ships. Which 'Point" even the British Navy dared not challenge during the 1776 Revolution.

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But of course, winter sometimes snowed late. And the academic building, where I taught, reminded me that Cadet life and education goes on too.