

Other Duties

Unless an officer-instructor - during the summer non-academic months - was still working at completing his Masters degree, or pursuing a Doctorate, he was assigned other duties too.

They included helping out with summer Tactical Training of cadets, under the supervision of Tactical Department officers. In effect becoming added 'Tacs' for summer training.

I spent two months, during 1956 assisting, in the field such training.

But one other unusual task was given me in May of 1957. I was tasked to be the 'Aide' to the Oldest Living Graduate - General Henry Hodges, class of 1881.

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Always the very oldest graduates try to come to West Point during 'June Week' - graduation week. They are honored as the head of the 'Long Gray Line' and at

Alumni Services, which includes a march by every graduate attending around the 'Plain' - Parade Ground - while the Oldest Living Graduate leads, whether walking or in a walker or wheel chair to the Statue of Sylvanus Thayer - the 'Father of the Military Academy' and, together with the Cadet First Captain, lays a wreath at the foot of the statue.

Then all the Alumni graduates go into the Bleachers on the Parade Field and witness a full Cadet Parade - where the most senior classes at their 25th or later Reunions, 'Take the Honors' at the parade.

Henry Hodges, the oldest member of his class still alive and able to attend - was 96. He was attended by his daughter - in her 80s - who knew just what he needed and did not need. My wife also accompanied them during the two days he was in attendance. Army wives have duties too!



Henry is on Patsy's arm. Two other very old grads walk with him toward the Parade Field.

Association of Graduates Assembly Magazine

Listening to the old Major General who commanded a World War I Division, and had been a young lieutenant in the mountains of Colorado as an Engineer officer in 1885,

when he was summoned to come back to West Point and teach Mathematics, was interesting.

But I was given another task related to this one. Every year an article, either short or long is written for the Association of Graduates Assembly Magazine by the 'scribe' of every class. It reports on what classmates and their families are doing now.

Since very old Henry Hodges had no more living classmates -to write about by him, the Association asked me to research the Class of 1881 and write about that class.

THAT was fascinating. One man designed the lighting system for the Statue of Liberty. Another classmate, Captain Andrew Rowan 'Carried the Message to Garcia' in 1898, spurring a famed essay by Elbert Hubbard that reached 40 million copies, touting the can-do spirit of the young captain who did the President's bidding. Another founded Georgia Tech University.

But the most fascinating 1881 graduate to me, became the Adjutant General of the Army, Enos Crowder who when he was asked by the President to figure out how to raise the Army in order to fight in Europe in World War I he rose to the occasion. Various forms of conscription in Europe failed.

Crowder's understanding of the American political

character was so deep, he was able to write the law that became the "Draft."

For he invented the local 'Draft Board' which - in a largely rural America, was to be made up of local men who would decide, legally, which of the young men in their county or town would go to war, and which would not.

He thus put the grave responsibility on the shoulders of the lowest local American political entity - the voter, instead of the bureaucracy in Washington. Or you have men be selected by a pure chance lottery. Which is why the Draft worked far better for World War I and II than trying to decide matters in Washington.

My Article on behalf of the Class of 1881 was published by the Association of Graduates in its 1960 Assembly.