

It was my incredible honor to take command of the Corps of Cadets on 23 November as the 72nd Commandant of the Corps of Cadets. It is a sincere and humbling privilege to serve once again at this national treasure that is West Point. This is a “get to” kind of job, and my family and I look forward to every minute here at the Academy.

I use the term “national treasure” because the nation holds this special place in incredibly high regard and depends on its graduates to lead America’s brave men and women in combat and in a lifetime of service to our nation. Americans believe in our cadets and our graduates; they believe in West Point; and they know, deep in their hearts, that the Long Gray Line will be there to defend their interests whenever and wherever called.

The accreditation of our graduates in the college of professional officership comes from privates, sergeants, and captains in small, isolated outposts in Paktika or Khowst or Mosul. Our job is to embrace that special trust and push to even greater heights the mission of developing Leaders of Character for our Army and Nation.

I’m impressed by the changes since my graduation in 1984 and since I taught in the Social Sciences Department during 1994–96. In my short time on the job, I’m impressed with the quality of cadets, staff, and faculty, and I’m confident that the Corps is in good hands and heading in the right direction. I give my most sincere thanks to Mike and Brenda Linnington for their leadership and devotion to the Long Gray Line. BG Linnington made significant strides in preparing cadets for the demands of service, and his positive impact on the Academy will continue to be felt for years to come. Our best wishes go out to Mike as he serves now in Afghanistan.

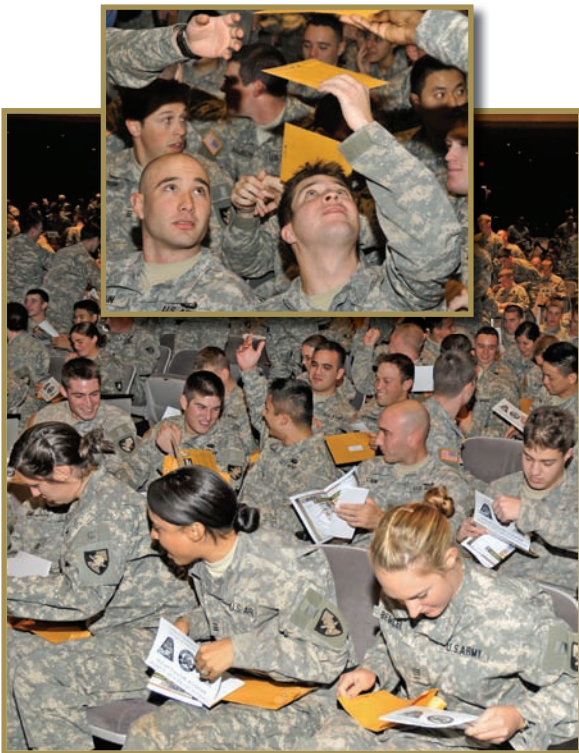
Many of you may be interested in Branch Night on 1 November 2009. Let me briefly tell you about that great evening. At Ike Hall, and with a mix of excitement, anxiety, anticipation and some dread, the 1,039 cadets of the Class of 2010 ripped open their sealed envelopes. The momentary silence erupted in a series of cheers and “Hooahs” as cadets read the contents. Branching was a great success! Seventy-three percent of the cadets received their first choice of branch with 92% receiving one of their top three choices. The four largest

branches were Infantry (201), Artillery (144), Engineers (142), and Aviation (111). Cadets received their branch insignia from senior officers and mentors immediately after opening the envelopes and then enjoyed a great evening of camaraderie. Representing the 50-Year Affiliation Class of 1960, LTG (Ret.) James Johnson addressed the Firsties during the ceremony. He described the similarities between both classes and noted that, like his class, 2010 will enter the Army during an extended counterinsurgency fight where small unit leaders have an enormous impact. I am proud of these Firsties and I know they are ready to serve as lieutenants in our great Army!

I firmly believe that West Point is truly a national treasure and the pre-eminent leader development institution in the world! It is the highest privilege to be able to serve here, and I look forward to representing you as Commandant.

**GO ARMY!**

**BRANCH NIGHT RESULTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2010**



Branch	Number Males	Number Females	Total Assigned
<b>Combat Arms</b>			
Air Defense	54	0	54
Armor	91	0	91
Aviation	96	15	111
Engineer	128	14	142
Field Artillery	143	1	144
Infantry	201	0	201
<b>CA Total</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>743</b>
<b>CS/CSS</b>			
Chemical	9	1	10
Military Intelligence	49	22	71
Military Police	14	12	26
Signal	38	6	44
Adjutant General	2	23	25
Finance	4	2	6
Ordnance	26	3	29
Quartermaster	5	21	26
Transportation	19	9	28
<b>CS/CSS Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>265</b>
Medical Corps	8	5	13
Medical Service	12	6	18
<b>Totals</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>1,039</b>