

it became apparent to George F. Dixon Jr. '40, then President of the AOG, that for the Board to know where the AOG was headed and how it would get there, future planning was necessary. Dixon had been Chairman of the Carlisle Corporation for many years and had served on the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee; the AOG's need for long range planning at this point in its development was very apparent to him.

Dixon convened the first AOG long range planning conference at Boiling Springs, PA. in June 1981. To the meeting the Board of Trustees invited some 30 leaders of the AOG - not only Trustees, but also committee chairmen and others. After reviewing the history of the AOG, its current operations and possible future directions and after extensive and uninhibited discussion, a broad consensus evolved for the current and future Boards of Trustees to consider and develop. The conferees agreed the AOG should move and develop in three ways: (1) The AOG should encourage increased graduate support of the Academy through West Point Societies; (2) The AOG fund raising program should be expanded as necessary to assist the Academy; and (3) The AOG should improve its management by developing and maintaining a planning, programming, budgeting system, including, importantly, a five-year program. Except for the management system, specific actions were neither sought nor encouraged; the conference was designed to develop directions the AOG should take; programs and activities would evolve from those directions over time.

One of the participants in the 1981 conference was Michael S. Davison '39. Davison had retired some years earlier as the Commander-In-Chief, U.S. Army, Europe and had served as President of the USO. At the time of the conference he was a member of the Board of Trustees and a member of the Executive Committee. He was to be elected President of the AOG in 1983 and would serve 6 years, the longest of any president since Chauncey L. Fenton '04 served eight one year terms from 1947 to 1955. It is important to note Davison's participation in the conference because its three-path consensus was to become one of the primary guides to his presidency.

In its backward look the planning conference participants and the Board of Trustees could see that there had been significant change in the AOG during the period since Thompson succeeded in consolidating the Academy's alumni functions in the AOG and placing the AOG staff on a professional, expandable, financially stable basis. There was growing confidence among the Board, the Academy administration and the AOG staff, encouraged by the

challenges met and lessons learned, that the AOG could produce helpful results for the Academy when needed. As the AOG reached this level of capability and apparent readiness for expansion and future support, instances of more being asked than could be undertaken had been rare. Reality and expectations were pretty well balanced.

## EXPANSION AND PREPARATION FOR FUTURE SUPPORT

In this two-decade window of the history of the AOG the period of the '80's would see further expansion of the fund raising program, including increased participation by the Academy in the statement and definition of institutional needs for private funds. With increased operating funds available, the AOG would realize a vision long held by some Trustees and staff members and reinforced by the long range planning conference of '81 - the establishment of a West Point Societies program, the most far reaching and potentially beneficial addition to the AOG support of the Academy since the reorganization of the early '70's. And, in order that Board of Trustees decisions to go forward with those and other enhancements would be based on sound financial and resource information, the Board initiated a planning, programming and budgeting process which had been foreseen in the '81 planning conference and which would help maintain stability and credibility in the increasingly complex management of the AOG's increasing resources.

These would obviously be major initiatives, requiring unusual staff effort and Board of Trustees patience and understanding. But before they were undertaken, the AOG would address one more major challenge, which had its origin in the '70's and which would result in added responsibility - how could and should the AOG participate in the Academy's rehabilitation of the intercollegiate athletic program?

While the Military Academy might view its intercollegiate athletic program differently from other colleges, West Point graduates, like alumni of civilian colleges, believe that their alumni organization should support the Academy's athletic program. In the '70's the losing record and image of the Academy's athletic teams, especially football, together with reduced athletic program revenues and an NCAA investigation of the football program caused the AOG Board of Trustees to evaluate more closely AOG support of the athletic program and to take action as indicated.

This evaluation included recognition of the AOG role as sponsor and donor of the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy. Initiated in 1973 by the alumni organizations of the three service academies, the award goes each year to the Academy with the best record in football games with the other service academies. Over the years since its beginning the award has received increased public attention and its winning has been used increasingly as a measure of football

program success, most recently as a discriminator in selecting the service academy to play each year in the Liberty Bowl.

The AOG evaluation of its support of the Academy athletic program also recognized that even though the AAA conducted its own fund raising activity among its members, many of whom are also AOG members, the AOG membership as a whole, acting through contributions to the West Point Fund, provided substantial funding support to the intercollegiate athletic program.

Of all of the AOG actions in support of the athletic program the most significant resulted from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) investigation of that program in the late '70's; the action was AOG acceptance of responsibility to conduct a preparatory scholarship program on behalf of the Academy. As stated previously, Andrew J. Goodpaster '39 had been recalled to active duty as Superintendent in 1977 in the aftermath of the EE304 Honor investigations. In addition to guiding the Academy through a period of continuing change, his was the task of implementing the recommendations which flowed from those investigations. As the Academy was moving through these actions, the NCAA found that in addition to other activities of the football program, the preparatory scholarship activity as executed by the Academy and for its benefit by the Delafield Foundation, which had been organized under NCAA rules, had been mismanaged.

The NCAA preparatory scholarship activity, which had been adopted in the '50's, sought to provide the service academies with a more nearly level playing field in comparison with their potential civilian college football opponents. Under the NCAA regulations each academy could derive support from a private foundation, created for the academy's benefit, in the form of funding one year scholarships to admission aspirants who thereby would be better prepared to enter the academy. While the regulations provide that there be a specified ratio of "non-athletes" to athletes in the program, the overall purpose was clearly to assist the athletic program. The regulations also provided that there be no control exercised by athletic departments (for USMA, the AAA) over the private foundation.

In the NCAA investigation of the Academy football program of the late '70's the NCAA found that the AAA, and thus the Academy, had exerted influence over the Delafield Foundation which exceeded the intent of the NCAA regulations governing the preparatory scholarship activity. The obvious

inference was that the Delafield Foundation had permitted its processes to be influenced by the Academy.

In response to this part of the NCAA findings Goodpaster and Raymond P. Murphy '42, whom Goodpaster had brought back to the Academy for a second tour as Director of Athletics, asked the AOG to establish under its own charter a preparatory scholarship program for the Academy in conformance with the NCAA regulations. The AOG would thereby replace the Delafield Foundation and would assume all of the responsibilities for administering a sensitive and complex program for the Academy. Interestingly, similar programs at the Naval and Air Force Academies are performed by organizations which are separate from the alumni organizations.

After an AOG check of the legal and financial arrangements under the proposal, as well as its acceptance by the NCAA, Luke W. Finlay '28, then President of the AOG, informed Goodpaster that the AOG would accept the responsibility and establish the preparatory scholarship program. Under the new activity the AOG, in only a few years, would place some 50-55 young Americans each year in one-year preparatory school and college programs around the country, some 12-14 of whom would be designated scholar-athletes, all receiving additional academic preparation for admission to and matriculation at the Academy.

As the preparatory scholarship program was initiated and as it has matured under the staff direction of Herbert '50, questions concerning the program, its operation and its long term cost/benefit to the Academy have been reviewed jointly by the staffs of the Academy and the AOG. Each such review has concluded that both the athletic program and the overall admissions program are helped by the preparatory scholarship activity of the AOG. The AOG's capability to undertake and operate the program for the Academy has not been questioned and it is significant that the Academy's readiness to request the AOG expansion and the AOG willingness to undertake a major new activity are illustrative of the competence the AOG had attained in its growing process and the confidence the Academy now placed in its alumni organization.

Later in the decade, during the Davison presidency, the AOG undertook one additional major project in support of the Academy's intercollegiate athletic program, in this case, the football program. Davison was a staunch supporter of the Army football team, never missing an opportunity to give the football program increased credibility and visibility.

But, he was an even stauncher supporter of the Army and especially the Army in its combat role in defense of the nation. So, when NFL Films Inc., the film production company for the National Football League, renewed an earlier proposal to make a video film on the history of Army football, Davison was enthusiastic and moved the AOG into a position of cooperation with NFL Films. With the concurrence of General Dave Palmer, who had become Superintendent in 1986, with the knowledgeable assistance of graduates in the film industry and with the spirited staff work of Herbert '50, who also served as Assistant Executive Vice President, the AOG contracted for the film. While remaining in an essentially oversight role, Davison, nevertheless, made a major and lasting impact on the film, an impact which reflected his strongly held conviction that the Army football program has an objective beyond winning football games and training football players. Of greater importance is the objective of preparing cadets who choose to play football for service in war and peace.

The 45-minute film was shown nationally on television and copies were sold through numerous outlets, including those of the AOG, AAA and NFL Films. The project was directly illustrative of Davison's belief that the AOG, possessing diverse capabilities, should help the Academy in diverse ways, using the talents of graduates wherever possible.

While challenges to what had been accomplished as well as additions and adjustments to changes already made would continue throughout the decade, it was increased private funding support through the fund raising program, increased grass roots support across the country through West Point societies and a comprehensive management tool to guide the overall effort which would occupy the AOG's center stage. This second surge of change in the continuing realization of the AOG's potential for major assistance to the Academy was guided and overseen by two presidents of the AOG. The first, Dixon '40, saw the necessity for long range planning and set in motion the planning process which produced the substantive agenda for the decade. In addition, he steered the AOG through a range of internal refinements and adjustments which would make further expansion possible.

The second president who would guide the AOG during this second surge of expanded support was Davison '39. A strong proponent of an active AOG who believed that the Academy both needed and deserved the explicit support of all graduates, Davison found in the 1981 long range planning conference both the themes and their ratification which

would become the basis for the expansion of AOG support during the latter years of the decade.

The basic fund raising program which had been established in the early '70's was by nature and purpose subject to ready expansion, assuming Academy and AOG agreement. In the program's early years there was an unsuccessful attempt by the Academy to expand it broadly and there was a modest expansion by the AOG Board of Trustees in the late '70's with the initiation of the planned giving program. It was apparent to Davison, however, that any significant enhancement of the AOG's fund raising support would depend upon proper implementation of a major provision of the memorandum of agreement on fund raising, the requirement that in order for the AOG to raise significant sums of money the Academy would have to develop comprehensive statements and definitions of projects, programs and activities for which the funds would be raised. While the Academy's choice not to implement this provision previously might have stemmed from an estimate by one or more superintendents that such active solicitation would not be in the Academy's best interests, this was not the case under Palmer's superintendency.

General Davison, like his predecessors as President of the AOG, believed in frequent and continuing dialogue with the Superintendent as a means of assuring an effective and harmonious relationship between the Academy and the AOG. In one of the very first meetings of the two after Palmer's arrival at West Point, Davison emphasized to Palmer that the AOG could raise private funds for major Academy projects only with detailed statements and definitions of projects and activities to be funded, for which the Academy had functional responsibility under the fund raising memorandum of agreement.

Palmer's initial response was to offer as a fund raising project the renovation and enlargement of the Thayer Hotel, a \$30 million project which was under detailed study and definition by the Academy staff. Davison noted that while a project of that nature was inappropriate for the AOG fund raising program, the AOG might be able to help in other ways. It remained one of Davison's hopes that the AOG might be able to assist the Academy with the Hotel project, recognized by most people as sorely needed. As the project moved through the government planning process, however, it became apparent to Davison, the Board of Trustees and the Academy that there was no organizational role for the AOG in developing or soliciting funds for the Hotel renovation.

The Academy's development of statements and definitions of potential fund raising projects and activities for the AOG was another matter. At considerable expense in staff effort the Academy developed an ambitious and comprehensive catalogue of projects for the AOG fund raising program, which was a significant addition to the program and which, by the end of the decade and the beginning of the '90's, became a seminal force for an explosive and far reaching expansion of the fund raising program.

As Davison reviewed the growing fund raising program in the mid-'80's, he saw an increasing acceptance of and response to an active and vigorous AOG solicitation of annual funds for use by the Academy. He saw impressive planned giving results with a significant potential return which would require the application of considerably more resources than the part time staff effort then devoted to the activity. And, he saw a whole new undeveloped source of gifts, that of major gifts from individuals and organizations, or "special gifts." Annual and planned giving were up and running effectively; the remainder of the field was wide open for development.

First, he proposed, and the Board of Trustees approved, a major expansion of the planned giving program, sharply increasing the staff effort available. Second, in response to the absence of a capability for soliciting special gifts, i.e. large gifts which were part of neither the annual nor planned activities, the Board approved the creation of an additional staff executive position, broadening the dimensions of the AOG fund raising program. This new and essentially undeveloped area of larger individual and organizational gifts complemented and was made necessary by the Davison-Palmer determination that the Academy would state and define the Academy fund raising projects and activities which the Academy thought necessary. And it was this added AOG staff capability which became the base upon which new AOG leadership of the early '90's would seek to build quickly a private fund raising organization which seemed different in philosophy and scope from that which Thompson, Knowlton and Gavin set in motion in 1972.

Following his retirement from the Army as Commander-in-Chief of US Army forces in Europe, General Davison had been directly involved in fund raising for the USO, which he served as President, and he was vitally interested in assuring that the AOG fund raising program for the Academy was "all that it should be." But, his convictions were even stronger with regard to the "human resource" assistance which graduates could give to the Academy by their participation in West Point Society



activities to promote the Academy's interests in cities around the country. He knew that there had been a largely unsuccessful effort in the '50's to encourage a close Academy - West Point Societies relationship, and he had participated in the 1981 long range planning conference, one result of which had been to point the AOG toward "tapping the enormous reservoir of loyalty and affection" which graduates hold toward West Point as a means to increase their support, including fund raising support. Davison would also put it another way: "The AOG needed to harness graduate support of the Academy to its benefit."

To build support for the Academy and for his concept of greater assistance by graduates through West Point societies Davison began a rigorous personal campaign of visits to West Point societies in all parts of the country. No president before him had undertaken such an extensive program of personal promotion of the Academy, a program he would continue during the remaining years of his presidency.

To help the Board of Trustees determine how best to bring reality to his vision of increased graduate support through West Point societies, Davison appointed a committee of graduates of diverse backgrounds - some who were more knowledgeable of the Academy in the mid-'80's, some who were more knowledgeable of the capabilities and limitations of West Point societies and some who were more familiar with how to make a new West Point society program work within the AOG.

While there was general agreement within the committee regarding the types of activities which should be conducted under a societies program, there was by no means agreement concerning the fundamental issues - the purpose of the program and the relationship which should be established between the AOG and the some 70 societies then in varying degrees of organization, from active to dormant. With regard to the purpose of the program, the disagreement concerned whether the program should be designed to support and assist the West Point societies in achieving THEIR objectives on behalf of the Academy or should it be designed to encourage societies to assist the AOG in achieving ITS objectives. The matter of the relationship concerned whether West Point societies should retain their then-held complete autonomy with the combined focus of the program largely dependent upon AOG and West Point societies compatibility of objectives, or should there be a formal legal and financial link established between the AOG and societies similar to the relationship between the Association of the United States Army and its chapters, or something in between, perhaps an affiliative tie.

Finally, with Davison's strong recommendation the Board approved a West Point Societies Program, with staff and budget, which would place the AOG in a position of assisting West Point societies in their support of the achievement of the AOG's objectives for West Point and which would accomplish that general purpose through coordination, guidance, persuasion and the provision of timely information, rather than through legal and financial ties, or through formal affiliation.

Since the central, substantive element of the West Point Societies Program was to be support of the Academy admissions activity, the new West Point Societies Committee was formed using the former AOG Admissions Committee members as a nucleus and, importantly, with its chairman, Denis F. Mullane '52, as the chairman of the new committee. As a major element in implementing the Societies Program and to enhance its effectiveness, Davison proposed and the Board approved the conduct each year of a conference of West Point society presidents at West Point, thereby providing an extremely valuable forum for the Academy and the AOG to exchange views with the societies and for the societies to communicate directly with each other.

In addition to Admissions Program support the Societies Program included other important activities. Among them were: USMA public relations activities in local communities around the country; job placement service for graduates; support for cadet athletic teams when they compete in West Point society areas; and West Point societies support of the AOG fund raising program.

At the end of the decade, it was apparent that based on the growth in the number of societies, better understanding by West Point societies of developments at West Point and increased interaction between societies and Parents Clubs, the Societies Program was successful. By then the West Point Societies Committee's first chairman, Mullane '52, had been elected President of the AOG, succeeding Davison, and a former Army Chief of Staff, Edward C. (Shy) Meyer '51, had agreed to lead the program into the '90's. The base, tone and organizational framework were in place for what is potentially the AOG's most productive program of assistance to the Academy.

It was apparent to Dixon in the earlier years and to Davison later that the expanding fund raising program and the addition of the Preparatory Scholarship and West Point Societies Programs, along with a significant increase in overall AOG activity could not be supported and, indeed, could very well founder without an effective, comprehensive

and integrated planning, programming and budgeting process. Begun in the early '80s, the process which was adopted had at its center a five-year program, the first year of which was the budget year and any part of which would be changed with the appropriate approval of any plan significantly affecting resources. The planning, programming and budget process was designed to assure that plans which were approved by the Board of Trustees would result in appropriate changes to the five-year program and budget and that any change to the program and budget would identify its impact on overall costs and revenues. If it appeared that the cost of the approved plans and programs would outrun projected operating revenues, Board action would be proposed.

Perhaps the best example of the effectiveness of the process occurred in the late '80's when it appeared that as the expansion of AOG activity moved forward, additional operating revenues would be required. As the five-year program projections began to reflect a decline from surplus to breakeven in AOG operating income, a surplus which had routinely been shared with the Academy for unrestricted use, Davison and Palmer decided that the new, active AOG support of the Academy should be reflected in the allocation of increased annual contributions for AOG operations and away from activities supported by the West Point Fund.

The need for this reallocation was reflected in the five-year program some two years before it would have become a reality and, under the fund raising memorandum of agreement, the reallocation could be made only with the concurrence of the Superintendent. That in this case the concurrence was readily forthcoming was reflective of the mutual good will and understanding which Davison and Palmer had sought and nourished.

Those, then, were the major AOG initiatives on behalf of the Academy in the '80's. They were, however, not the only extraordinary examples of the significant support the AOG gave to West Point during this relatively trouble-free period.

First in time, but not necessarily in importance, the AOG adopted an alumni travel program as a member service activity. Long a part of civilian college alumni activities, travel programs offer alumni organizations an opportunity to cultivate the good will of relatively affluent alumni at no cost to the alumni organization or to the institution. The downside of travel programs is that they provide little, if any, benefit to the overwhelming majority of alumni, who cannot participate.

The AOG travel program during the '80's was modest, 3-5 trips each year, requiring the allocation of very little staff time, and was operated on an essentially dollar breakeven basis. It was well received by those who could participate, with many graduates and wives traveling on a repeated basis. Some were identified as significant donors, and the natural, traditional affiliation and cohesion among graduates were enhanced at places around the world which provided pleasure, beautiful scenery, adventure and a sense of history, or all of those.

As the decade moved on, the AOG's publishing activity came under increasing attention. To assist the President and the Board of Trustees in their oversight of the program, Davison nominated and the Board appointed a Publications Committee, with Peter L. Stromberg, '59, Professor of English, Chairman. Long limited to publishing four issues of Assembly and the annual Register of Graduates, the publishing program was not only the obvious vehicle for communicating more frequently and effectively concerning the Academy and the expanded activities of the AOG, but also for providing the Academy and the AOG with a capability in the complex book publishing business, the latter being an example of an activity which, like private funds solicitation, the AOG could perform but the Academy could not.

In the late '80's as the 1990 Register of Graduates, the expanded, decennial issue, was sent to press, the AOG, under Stromberg's Publications Committee chairmanship and the staff direction of Paul A. Childs Jr. '52, introduced new improved printing technology to the publications program, moved the Assembly publication schedule from four to six issues annually and carefully shepherded through what some perceived to be a conservative Board of Trustees a proposal to accept commercial advertising in Assembly, a move which would permit communication with AOG members through Assembly at a continuing lower cost than would otherwise have been possible.

In the book publishing, or non-serial publishing, area there was less a mandate and less enthusiasm for expansion. While there was a need for oversight of and staff responsibility for AOG interests, e.g. endorsements and sale of books about West Point and its graduates and assisting West Point classes in their selective publishing activities on behalf of the Academy, there was not a justifiable requirement for the AOG to take on the broad responsibilities of a book publisher.