



# West Point Women

WestPointWomen.org

*West Point Women is a global network providing mentorship, education, and support to women graduates and cadets of the United States Military Academy. Members network and work collaboratively to pursue a diverse array of professional, personal, and philanthropic opportunities.*

A Quarterly Newsletter

W E S T P O I N T W O M E N

Volume 6 July 2007

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## Message from the President

*Niave Knell came up with the idea for WPW in 2003 after learning about what other women were doing for each other through women's networks. Niave is currently a student at the School for Advanced Military Studies at Ft Leavenworth, KS.*

Hello to all West Point Women from our new home at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas! The post has not changed too much since we left two years ago – still lots of kids in the neighborhood for our kids to play with and lots of Majors riding their bikes to class because there's no parking.

Since we just made our journey here and went through the "fun" of unpacking and getting settled, it is very appropriate that our newsletter theme is transitions. We found, once again, that no matter how much we plan ahead, and how many times we've done this before, there's always something – a flat tire the morning you were supposed to leave, a missing favorite teddy bear, more time in a hotel than expected waiting for housing, etc. Moving is stressful, changes are stressful, transitions are stressful. We are so grateful to have a network of support to help us through all this. This network includes my mentors and friends; I rely on them for everything from career advice to mothering tips to a shoulder to cry on. The board of West Point Women is working hard to establish a great mentoring program for our members so they too can reach out to others for support and advice, especially during transitions. I'd encourage all of you to follow Donna McAleer's instructions on page 5 to update your profile in the Ward Book and volunteer to mentor, search for a mentor, or do both!

I hope you also enjoy our articles about lifelong learning, an inspiring female officer with many roles, and the Army Women's

Basketball team's outstanding response to last year's tragedy. We get these articles from our members, and we thank them for sharing their stories. Please keep the inspiration and information coming!

Niave



ACADEMY Women

4TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM  
WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE  
FOR AMERICA MEMORIAL  
ARLINGTON, VA  
OCTOBER 26 - 28, 2007

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. A newsletter that is completely dedicated to the Women of the Long Gray Line. We come from very diverse backgrounds that espouse various beliefs. This newsletter does not promote any specific belief, lifestyle or political movement. Rather we promote articles of interest that draw attention to current events and issues that may affect West Point Women. Likewise, our Mission is clearly stated on the header of the first page. We should all recognize that we cannot be everything to everyone and there may be articles or events that we may disagree with. With that said, if you have a topic that you believe affects WPW, send it in. Every effort will be made to have your voice heard. This is your newsletter. Get involved!*

Cindy M. Doane

WPW Newsletter Editor

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## Other Links

*The Women on the USS Ronald Reagan rock!*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcFzNHeXncw>

## Letter to the Editor

I'd like to respond to Theresa (Arndt) Rudacille's '86 letter published in the April 2007 edition of *West Point Women* newsletter. I realize she has opted out of the WPW listserv, and I'm glad she chose a healthy decision for her to alleviate the anxiety she feels about WPW; however, it's important that grads who choose to remain understand the value of this network and the voluntary efforts that have been invested to make it a reality.

While Theresa is entitled to her opinion and criticisms, I don't agree that many of us feel the need to be "special" or exclude men from being part of the process of shifting the Academy, DOD, and VA cultures to be more inclusive of women. If anything, as a USMA cadet, during my career as an Army officer and paratrooper at Fort Bragg, and as the lone woman leading Teamsters in a corporate manufacturing distribution center, I struggled to minimize my femininity, adopt masculine behaviors, and even diminish some of my female counterparts in order to "fit in" to the boy's clubs. I'm ashamed of my actions, but still observe them regularly in other women who want so desperately to be accepted by those in power. I've experienced sabotage from other women in male-dominated cultures and am sickened by it. I've also observed the competitive spirit of women graduates among each other, and I can't understand it.

The WPW network gave me hope that maybe we could finally be ourselves and accepted for who we are rather than having to prove ourselves continuously to fit in. I've been active in local West Point societies and been patronized on committees as the young "girl" grad who had big ideas that were ignored. I'd rather contribute where my voice is heard, and I can make a positive difference for all graduates and veterans too.

As a business researcher and diversity consultant, I've reviewed a lot of material on social support systems and the benefits of networks for women and "people of color". Large corporations recognized in *DiversityInc's* Top 50 companies for diversity regularly use them not only to attract and retain top talent but also to harness culturally relevant marketing ideas. Bottom line, the business case has been established, and if WPW can help the Academy attract and retain top female talent to give soldiers unique perspectives, leadership styles, and role models, then why not?

If my views offend anyone, then I would like to recommend a great book by Don Miguel Ruiz called *The Four Agreements*. In it, he espouses the importance of taking nothing personally and not making assumptions to avoid sadness, suffering, and drama. There's no use "stewing" over our differences—and yes, we should celebrate them. Unlike a T-shirt,

one size does not fit all people and situations fortunately.

And, to answer Theresa's question about my reaction to male graduates formalizing West Point Men or male networks which currently do exist in the form of golf groups, fraternities, veteran service organizations, etc.—I would be comfortable with it. I wished our corporate "old boy networks" would have been openly visible so at least we would have understood the playing field and how to "play the game" more effectively. Having visible "old girl networks" is courageous and leading by example in the face of the criticism we've already received.

Celia Rentería Szelwach, USMA '90  
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## Incoming Class of 2011

WEST POINT, N.Y. - Approximately 1,310 cadet candidates, including more than 310 minority candidates, ten international cadets and 20 combat veterans who served in Afghanistan, Iraq or both, are expected to report to West Point on Monday, July 2, Reception Day for the Class of 2011.

The incoming class was selected from a pool of more than 10,800 applicants. There are 225 women, who comprise 17 percent of the class. Minority enrollment includes 81 African-Americans, 104 Asian-Americans, 124 Hispanic-Americans and ten Native Americans.

## Female Cadets Raise Bar as Ranks Swell to New High

Article Submitted to WPW by Donna Wright

Boston Herald  
Sunday, June 17, 2007  
By Jessica Van Sack

The U.S. Military Academy at West Point is on track to make history this year with its largest ever class of female cadets.

Megan Snook, 17, is among the 224 young women who have accepted offers to enter the class of 2011, representing a record-breaking 17 percent of the 1,314 future Army officers that West Point had on its rolls as of May 31.

"I get excited about getting to serve my country, and the patriotism just hits," said Snook, who graduated this month from Carlisle Regional High School in Concord. She is the only woman from Massachusetts entering West Point's class of 2011, officials said.

The 200-year-old academy didn't admit any women until 1976. Now, even as the total number of male and female applicants has fallen over the past five years, West Point administrators say more women are applying and fewer are declining invitations to attend.

Of 284 women who were offered spots in the freshman class, 60 declined. Last year, 65 of 249 women who were offered admission decided to go elsewhere.

The Army is aggressively recruiting gifted female students such as Victoria Schuele, 18, who received a letter of assurance in September guaranteeing her a spot before she even applied. Schuele, who graduated last week from Cranston High School West in Rhode Island, visited the academy and immediately knew it was for her. She applied nowhere else.

"I absolutely love it there," she said of West Point.

Also recruited was Laura Burdick, 17, a star athlete and student in Farmington, Conn., just outside Hartford. Initially, however, her family was wary.

"Of course my family were all proud, but also my mom I know is nervous," Burdick said. "When I explained to them what it's about and how it's making me feel to go there, they accepted it."

With basic training set to begin July 2, Burdick said she's "definitely nervous."

Advocates for women in the military say they'd like to see the proportion of female officers at least reach that of women in the military, which stands at about 22 percent. They say West Point is making strides.

"There's room for improvement, but they're moving in the right direction," said Marene Allison, who graduated with West Point's first class of women in 1980.

"Certainly you have a much different working environment from when I was there," said Allison, a Bay State native who went on to be an FBI agent.

Of the original crop of 129 women in 1976, just 60 made it to graduation after four years of hazing.

"It was like, 'I am just going to survive until tomorrow,'" said Allison, who now is on the board of directors for the West Point Women Organization.

Today, female cadets still face challenges beyond that of their male counterparts, a recent study suggests. According to the 2006 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey, 10.5 percent of female students reported having been exposed to unwanted sexual contact, which can include rape and attempted

rape. Sixty percent reported experiencing some type of sexual harassment at West Point, and 89 percent said they experienced sexist behavior. Those levels are slightly above those of the U.S. Naval and Air Force academies.

## Life Transitions from the Dark Mahogany of Board Rooms to the Dark Catacombs of Libraries

Article Submitted by Lissa Young '86

Most people who know me superficially, look at me as if I've taken complete and total leave of my senses. "You're going back to school, now?!" "Isn't this a bit late in life?" "What about your income?" "Where will you live?!" However, all of the people who know me well, tell me they've been wondering when I would finally come around to this. It happened, not as the result of some eye-opening epiphany, like some sledgehammer of meaning careening down on my head, but rather unremarkably, and quietly, while I was on a business trip in the United Arab Emirates. I was working for a highly respected aerospace technology company, selling air traffic control systems, and after a long day of meetings and contract negotiations, I went to one of my favorite places to unwind - a very small and out of the way, pipe smoking café. In my travels to the Middle East, I had come to really appreciate smoking hookah pipes. I loved the taste of the sweet tobaccos, and I enjoyed the quiet conversation and gentle fellowship of the other patrons in these cafes. When given the opportunity and freedom, I typically chose to not frequent the establishments where foreign businessmen and women felt more comfortable. These places were westernized and predictable, and tended to amplify the worst stereotypes of American and European businessmen and women. They were always loud, and despite the fact that it was supposedly well after "close of business", the air was thick with the quiet, haunting desperation of those who had failed to close the deal. I hated those places, and didn't feel much better about the people who frequented them. So, as usual, on this night, I headed deep into town, down the coast, to my favorite tiny, quiet hookah café, and pulled up a chair at a table just outside the protective cover of the awning, underneath the night sky. The young attendant came over immediately with a flask of water and a small empty glass. He asked me what flavor of tobacco I would like, and I selected my favorite - the flavor for wimps - apple & date. He smiled knowingly, and quickly returned with a beautiful, tall blue glass pipe body, a smoldering tin with bright orange embers, and a long decoratively embroidered smoking pipeline with a brand new mouthpiece, still in its wrapper. He then asked me if I would like tea or coffee, (no alcohol is served in hookah cafes) and I ordered tea. After

chewing the thick, savory smoke in my mouth, I sat back and watched the moon's reflection on the Persian Gulf. I felt myself beginning to relax - I would inhale longer and exhale deeper with each breath, and finally slumped back in my chair and just let go. When I came to consciousness, I realized I was completely engrossed in a conversation taking place way off to my right. It was a quiet conversation between two young men talking about a shared semester in school. They spoke in English, but thickly accented. They were discussing one of their professors with an electrifying intensity. For each of the professor's assets and liabilities, there was a lively story illustrating the observed characteristic. There were equal parts laughter and sobriety accenting their conversation, but one thing was clear. This teacher had left an inspirational mark on both of them. And that mark lasted, way into this warm evening, and carried these two young men through an entire conversation filled with joy and reflection. Unsuspectingly, I was smiling at that thought, and looking out at the light on the water, and then I realized I was mumbling to myself, "I can't wait to get back in the classroom." And that was the very unremarkable and quiet moment that I realized my next logical professional step would be toward earning a doctorate.

The call to education as a craft came to me early in my professional life. In mid 1982, soon after women were offered admission to the federal service academies, I became a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point. It was there that I found myself utterly inspired by the power of what unfolded in the classroom, and attracted by the profound responsibility of an academic administration to affect that. Because of the education philosophy and methods used by West Point, I unexpectedly found myself completely responsible for my own learning and development, and this seemed incredibly counterintuitive in an institution regarded as oppressive to individual creativity. The truth is that the learning model at West Point is one that is utterly dependent on individual and group creativity, and an unparalleled commitment to learning through real problem solving. And not only was I surprised to find that, but I was also amazed by the tireless passion and hard work of the staff and faculty who were entrusted with ensuring the success of that educational approach. I had amazing role models there, whose fingerprints I bear as a person, as a leader and as an educator. This four year experience at West Point sparked in me a desire to become a part of that kind of enterprise at an institution equally dedicated to those same desired outcomes. That is when I decided I wanted to teach, lead, teach leading and lead teaching.

After graduating from West Point, I served as a commissioned aviation officer, and throughout my 16 years as an aviator and leader, I was repeatedly struck by how much opportunity I had to be a teacher more than anything. My classroom happened to be a flight line,

and my students happened to be U.S. Army aviators and crew chiefs, but nonetheless, my role as their leader was to teach and to learn from them. My role as their commander was to create a learning environment that energized curiosity and discipline, both. I learned early on that leadership and teaching are **not** synonyms, but rather integrated aspects of the same ribbon – not unlike the inseparable twists and curves of the Mobius Strip. The two enterprises are at once, so clearly independent and interdependent that it is nearly impossible to tell when leadership stops and teaching begins.

As luck and hard work would have it, soon thereafter I was asked to return to West Point and serve on the faculty of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership. While serving on the faculty at West Point, my passion for being a member of a learning organization and creating change in that organization expanded. Over a three year period, I was able to serve in a variety of roles that provided me a broad experience base of both scholarship and leadership in an institution of higher learning.

So, why continue my education toward earning a doctorate at the ripe ole age of 44? Well, frankly, because I've only been skimming the surface. Armed with an M.A. in Social Psychology, I have dallied in the comfortable world of practitioners who are not the actual standard bearers in education. I want to go deep into the theory and practice of education and educational administration, so that I can influence its future and potentially add directions that will yield even more discoveries and understanding in the field. I am also interested in the theory of adult learning and the transformation of professional development models. Currently, professional development occurs as either a collateral benefit of operational assignments or as a prescriptive and lock-step set of curricula based on unfounded assumptions about what makes development occur best in adults. Given my deep experience in professional development as a practitioner, I am interested in investigating further the cognitive aspects of adult development to determine more effective ways to transform adults throughout a lifetime of professional development and learning experiences.

Given the time I've spent on earth leading, teaching, leading teaching and teaching leading, I cannot think of a better time, than the second half of my life, to "put it all together" as both a scholar and a practitioner. One of the most abiding lessons I learned as a cadet at West Point was how to become a lifelong learner, ultimately responsible for my own education and knowledge. I owe a debt of gratitude to that institution for instilling that understanding and igniting that thirst in me. It is a lifelong commitment I have made to myself, and my heading off to earn my doctorate at 44 years of age, is simply a testimony to that. In addition, I owe a debt of gratitude to those two young men in that hookah café

overlooking the Persian Gulf, who were gracious enough to let me eaves drop on their quiet conversation that fateful night.

## A Day in the Life of the Quintessential Mother-Wife-Soldier

By LTC Dean Chang



Being a mother is a full-time job; being a wife is a full-time job. But, climbing that career ladder is also a full-time job. Add being a soldier as part of that and one does not find too many who can carry on and succeed in that role for any great length of time. But how about being a mother and a wife from 10,000 miles away and being the second-in-command for 20,000+ soldiers in a combat environment?

That person is Colonel Christine Gayagas of the United States Army. Colonel Gayagas has worn the uniform since 1980 when she entered the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. In her years as a successful military officer, Colonel Gayagas has been able to delicately balance the responsibilities of being a mother, wife and officer with great aplomb.

Currently, as the deputy commanding officer of a division-size unit that provides all logistical support to our forces in the Iraqi theater of operation, she is the "eyes and ears" to the commander, a seasoned, respectable non-nonsense officer of 28 years in General Mike Terry.

Just outside the farming village of Bakir, Iraq at Logistical Support Area Anaconda, Colonel Gayagas often starts her day by coinciding her wake up with the rise of the early morning Iraqi sun at 5:00AM. After a quick 45 minute run or a swim, she is quickly at her desk poring over the myriad stacks of data from the past few hours. This includes reports that have come back from "outside the wire" to ensure that all the combat logistical convoys have arrived safely at their destinations or to double check that the units at the major bases in Iraq have adequate supply of food, water, ammunition and fuel to accomplish the next mission.

But, even before all of that, she is always able to squeeze in a phone call back to Fort Hood, Texas to make sure that her 9-year old daughter Madison has done her homework and is tucked in for the night (where there is a nine-hour difference). Colonel Gayagas realizes that Madison is at a critical point in her young life where every chance mother and daughter can talk will be important to cement the maternal bonds forever. Time does not wait, regardless of whether one is in Texas or in Iraq, for a fast-growing and maturing nine-year old.

After all that, Colonel Gayagas is ready to start the bulk of her day. Perhaps it is a breakfast meeting with the generals and admirals who want to visit the largest support base in Iraq and see how "miracles" are being performed by the unit day in and day out to ensure that our troops never go hungry, thirsty or run out of fuel or bullets. Perhaps it is to attend a briefing for a congressional delegation from inside the beltway that wants to show their support for their hometown guys and gals.

Then there are the dedications and ceremonies that call for senior leadership presence. It could be the symbolic planting of olive trees along the main road of the base to improve its overall scenery or dedicating a new set of incinerators to improve the environment of this desert base under the continuous, hot baking sun. But it is often the keynote speech that needs to be given at celebratory events, like when a reserve unit from Hawaii (coincidentally, Colonel Gayagas' native state) successfully puts on a 90 minute show commemorating the Asian-Pacific Heritage Month in May for the entire base of almost 30,000 military and civilian contractors. Or it is to co-chair a session with all female soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines on base about effective leadership. Sadly, there are also times when Colonel Gayagas has to attend memorial services for those soldiers who unfortunately paid the ultimate sacrifice in the performance of their duties.

Turning on her operational and tactical hat, Colonel Gayagas goes from meetings to meetings to lead discussions about ways to improve the soldier's survivability. She often takes on the role of a diplomat to bring together groups in order to get the mission accomplished. For instance, there is a warehouse that troops are working in that does not have air conditioning or workable toilets. She was able to gather two civilian contractor agencies and the military section to talk through to a resolution. When the first light went off that certain bases were to run low on water, Colonel Gayagas aptly brought in a congregation of water experts, the military lawyers, the budget analysts and higher headquarters (the approving authorities) through a series of late night conference calls to detail out options to ensure that our soldiers do not lose access to drinkable water: a critical need when operating in 115F+ temperature and in a desert environment.

Colonel Gayagas is always at the side of the commanding officer, General Terry, at the daily battlefield update assessment. He often leans over to her when he has questions. But when the general is off to another base visiting with the soldiers, Colonel Gayagas picks right up and continues to ask the challenging questions. "How many days before we run out of fuel?" "When can we get the repair parts to support their needs?" "How can we give them assistance to lighten up their workload?"

Toward the end of the afternoon, Colonel Gayagas would never forget to pick up that phone and call again to Madison and her husband, Doug, a retired Army officer who was also deployed to Iraq before. This is their wake-up call. "How was your sleep?" she asks. "Did you take the dog out for a walk?" All comforting words, but words that reinforce the bonds of a family that is temporarily separated by time zones and a war. And they are the words of a loving mother and wife.

Often on other nights, she takes that five minute walk in the drenching desert heat over to the combat surgical hospital to visit with the wounded troops, some who were flown in from the battlefield just minutes or hours before. Underneath the low ceilings of the makeshift hospital connected together by brown, canvas tents, Colonel Gayagas makes sure that each one is being taken care of and that all proper support is given. For many, she is the mother figure in this desolate land. She will often stop at other wards where there was maybe a 3 year old Iraqi girl who was admitted because of burns to her body. Colonel Gayagas would put her right hand over her heart to give the proper local greeting to the father who sits and sleeps by his daughter's side. In a few days or weeks, this 3 year old girl may be able to go home to her mother in the nearby village.

All in all, Colonel Gayagas knows that all of this is fleeting: the war, the phone calls, the worrying over water shortages, and a myriad of other troop- and combat-related issues. They would all be resolved in due time. Another day will start soon and she will make another phone call to Madison. But she knows that her life will soon be dedicated to the livelihood of watching and caring for her 9 year old Madison grow up day by day in front of her mother's eyes. Having missed out on when Madison stopped sucking her thumb or lost her first tooth, one day soon, she will see Madison off to her first prom and take her first SAT test.

To the outsider, this is the full-time mother, full-time wife and a full-time soldier.

## Mentoring Continued

By Donna McAleer '87

Mentoring is when a role model, or mentor, offers support to another person. A mentor has knowledge and experience in an area and shares it with the person being mentored.<sup>1</sup> The West Point Women's Mentoring Database is a great tool for graduates seeking to share their experiences.

With the Class of 2007, West Point Women graduates now number 3090. The class of 2011, which entered on 2 July 2007, includes 225 women—17% of the class. Our graduates, in and out of uniform, are doing extraordinary things. They are soldiers, leaders, officers, wives, mothers, professionals, combat veterans, volunteers, sisters, doctors, entrepreneurs, nurses, daughters, teachers, athletes, cancer survivors, widows, coaches, authors, lawyers, pilots, and musicians to name a few. They have experienced emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual challenges throughout their lives that have provided them with the strength to lead others and to make difficult decisions. Some have lost soldiers in their command. Some have lost spouses. Some have buried children. Their personal and professional experiences leading soldiers, families and businesses, may help others navigate the triumphs, trade offs, challenges and disappointments that come with making life decisions, building careers, leading people and raising children.

For most, West Point and their experiences in the Army served as a launching pad that allowed them to make significant contributions. Many still regard leading soldiers as a privilege and defending our nation as an honor. The conditions, under which they serve, however, have changed radically. As the front lines of combat become indistinguishable from the rear echelon areas in guerilla wars and insurgency movements, women are everywhere on the battlefield. The front line is now a 360 degree circle, and women are often combat leaders, leading soldiers in harm's way.

To tap into this amazing network of women, West Point Women encourages all our graduates to participate in the West Point Women's Mentoring database. The Ward Book, hosted on-line by West-Point.org is the foundation of the WPW mentoring database. The Ward Book is an on-line living history of West Point graduates. Whether you are interested in providing assistance, seeking assistance or reconnecting, this searchable database is an easy to use on-line tool.

### Providing Help

Here's how to enter your data in the Ward Book:

1. Go to: <http://www.westpointwomen.org/>
2. Click on "Services" on the left side of the page
3. Click on "Members/Ward Book"
4. Log in with your cullum number and west-point.org password. If you do not have a west-point.org password, please send an email to Dian Welle at [feedback@west-point.org](mailto:feedback@west-point.org)
5. Click on "Edit Info" (upper right hand corner of screen)

At this point, you can enter as little or as much information as you wish, but obviously, the more the better.

Of particular interest to WPW is "**Mentor Areas**". Click on "**Mentor Areas**" and the screen will ask you to "Create New Entry". From here, you use the pull down menu and choose from a number of categories.

### Getting Help

If you are looking for someone to help or mentor you in a specific area, or you just want to take a look at what some of the graduates are willing to offer in the area of mentoring.

1. Go to: <http://www.westpointwomen.org/>
2. Click on "Services" on the left side of the page
3. Click on "Mentor Search Program"
4. Log in with your Cullum number and password
5. The next page will allow you to search within a particular area of interest.
6. If you go to "Mentor Category", and scroll down, you will see a number of different areas. By clicking on one of these, you will find women who may be of assistance to you in those areas. You can also refine your search by class, branch, name, etc.

The reach and use of this mentoring database is dependant on each of us to take the opportunity to complete the profile in the Ward Book.

WPW is most appreciative of West-Point.org for their initiative in the development and continued support of this e-mentoring database.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Adapted from *The Language of Learning: A Guide to Education Terms*, by J. L. McBrien & R. S. Brandt, p. 64, 1997, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



## A Heart Warming Story

Link submitted by Joe Gilbreth '49

<http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/sports/stories.nsf/othersports/story/01DF52520E9487BD86257301000C290C?Open-Document>

From sorrow, an inspirational story took root

By Kathleen Nelson

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

06/21/2007

Life-and-death analogies are everywhere in sports, yet they have no place in it. Nowhere is that more obvious than at the U.S. Military Academy.

"Death is something that these young men and women have to deal with all the time, whether it's a friend or a classmate," said Dave Magarity, women's basketball coach at West Point. "It's one thing when one of your friends goes overseas and something happens to them. It's part of the training. It's another when you don't see it coming."

Such was the case last year with Magarity's predecessor, Maggie Dixon. Just weeks after leading Army to its first NCAA Tournament appearance, Dixon died of heart arrhythmia. Life and death wasn't an analogy; it was reality.



## Women's Army Basketball V Foundation Comeback Award

By Cadet Megan Ennenga '09

Receiving the seventh annual *V Foundation Comeback Award* on 25 April 2007 at the Spirit of Jimmy V New York Gala was an absolute honor. Bittersweet emotion. Unexpectedly losing our Coach, our leader, our sister a year ago was the lowest of lows. Keeping her legacy alive and working hard every day in memory of her, culminated in winning the most games in school history this past season.

To be in a room full of cancer survivors, including Lance Armstrong, people supporting cancer research, and to be mentioned with the likes of Jimmy V was a humbling experience. We go to school and play basketball. We joke about things like surviving a WPR, surviving the IOCT or surviving the next SAMI. However, the people we were surrounded by that night are or were fighting for their lives to survive cancer. They are the ones who truly deserve the Award.

To think that one person can make such a difference in your life truly provides an enthusiasm to live. Both Jim Valvano and Maggie Dixon provide us with strength to optimistically encounter each day and desire to have an impact on others.

The Comeback Award is given to an individual or a team throughout men and women's college basketball that has accomplished triumph in the face of adversity, whether in life, health, or a moral dilemma. It is an award given in memory of the late Jim Valvano, who founded the V Foundation for Cancer Research and is an inspiration to us all with his unforgettable speech at the 1993 ESPY Awards and his motto Don't Give Up, Don't Ever Give Up®.



Diane Bracey '80 and Donna McAleer '87 on the last weekend of the ski season in Park City, UT. These days, you'll find Diane desperately trying to keep up with Donna on the mountain bike trails in Park City.



## "The State of Things"

featured Womack Hospital Cdr Terry Walters

Link submitted by Fred Black

<http://wunc.org/tsot/archive/sot0521a.mp3/vie>

She tells her amazing story of growing up at sea as a Brit sailing the world, losing her Dad, moving to the US, finishing high school in NY, becoming a US citizen, and entering USMA in 1976. Her classmate husband Wally was in Sosh while she was down at the hospital in the early '90s.

Terry is an award-winning athlete in figure skating and power lifting. In the hour-long interview, she covers her youth, her time at USMA, being a surgeon in Somalia during the Ranger incident, her tour in Iraq and the current situation with Army medicine, and especially Walter Reed, and much more.

