

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

THEME: Education

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC United States Military Academy

AND/OR COMMON  
West Point

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN	<u>West Point</u>	___ VICINITY OF	___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
STATE	<u>New York</u>	CODE	<u>26</u>	COUNTY
		<u>36</u>	<u>Orange</u>	CODE
				<u>071</u>

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	___ AGRICULTURE ___ MUSEUM
___ BUILDING(S)	___ PRIVATE	___ UNOCCUPIED	___ COMMERCIAL ___ PARK
___ STRUCTURE	___ BOTH	___ WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL ___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___ SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	___ ENTERTAINMENT ___ RELIGIOUS
___ OBJECT	___ IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	___ GOVERNMENT ___ SCIENTIFIC
	___ BEING CONSIDERED	___ YES: UNRESTRICTED	___ INDUSTRIAL ___ TRANSPORTATION
		___ NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY ___ OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME United States Department of the Army

STREET & NUMBER  
The Pentagon

CITY, TOWN Arlington \_\_\_ VICINITY OF STATE Virginia

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Orange County Courthouse  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Goshen STATE New York

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE None

DATE

\_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The United States Military Academy at West Point contains within the bounds of its military reservation the remains of Revolutionary War fortifications, as well as present Academy structures, which include a range of buildings from the early years of the Academy, up to buildings constructed within the immediate past.

The Revolutionary War fortifications consisted of a series of batteries, redoubts and forts constructed on the western shore of Constitution Island, as well as on the plain and surrounding hills of West Point.

The fortifications on Constitution Island were constructed in two phases, the first occurring between 1775 and 1777, when four batteries, constructed of stone and earth, and some wooden outbuildings, were erected to control the Hudson River. These were demolished in 1778, during the British offensive and were not rebuilt. Following the American reoccupation of the Highlands in 1778, three redoubts, numbers 5-7, and a battery and later a magazine and barracks were constructed on the western shore and the high ground of the island. These were eventually abandoned. Constitution Island today has changed little from colonial days. One house, the Warner House, which may encompass one wall of the stone barracks is the only structure on the island. ~~This is nonhistoric. The redoubt and battery sites have been located by the Academy and archeological research has been done as well.~~ There are no outstanding plans for any major development of the island.

The West Point fortifications, begun in 1778 comprised the major American stronghold of the Highlands. They were designed by a series of foreign engineers, including Radiere, Kosciuszko, Gouvion and Villefranche.

The main fortification, Fort Arnold, renamed Fort Clinton (#1, numbers 1-8 keyed to USGS map), was situated on the plain on the tip of the Point itself. It consisted of a stone and earth bulwark, topped with tree trunks, on a natural stone outcropping on the west bank of the river. A portion of the eastern wall has been stabilized with new masonry and earthwork, and is preserved as a monument. Above Fort Clinton, on the high ground to the west is Fort Putnam (#2), named for its builder, Colonel Rufus Putnam. Its stone ramparts enclosed a powder magazine, cistern and garrison quarters. It has survived partially original and partially reconstructed. A stone quarters has been recently constructed inside the fort to house an historical interpretation facility. Below Fort Putnam, covering the southern approaches, were built Forts Wyllis, Meigs and Webb. Only Forts Wyllis (#3) and Meigs (#4) survive, and they have been stabilized. On the hills above and to the west of Fort Putnam, four strong redoubts were constructed (#'s 5-8), with connecting trails. These redoubts are still extant, although Redoubt #3 is in bad condition. Redoubt #4 was recently excavated and is being stabilized. In addition to these major works, there

(Continued)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1775, March 16, 1802 BUILDER/ARCHITECT  
 (Academy Founded)

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The United States Military Academy was established by Act of Congress on March 16, 1802, and was formally opened on the following Fourth of July. In existence continuously since that date, the Academy at West Point, New York, has trained the officers who in peace and war have developed and commanded the Regular Army of the United States. Military interest in West Point dates from the early years of the War for Independence and troops have been stationed there since January 1778, making it the oldest permanently occupied military post in the country.

The Military Academy reservation is open to visitors throughout the year although many buildings and areas are closed to the public. Sites of significance range from Revolutionary fortifications through the Federal-style Superintendent's Quarters and the more imposing Gothic Style Cadet Chapel.

## HISTORY

With the outbreak of open hostilities in the spring of 1775, the Continental Congress "Resolved, that a post be...taken in the highlands on each side of Hudson's River and batteries erected in such a manner as will most effectually prevent any vessels passing."

Colonel James Clinton and Christopher Tappan were deputized by the New York Provincial Congress to reconnoiter along the Hudson, and following their report, the first fortifications were begun where the river makes a sudden shift in its course and passes between West Point and Constitution Island (then Martelaer's Rock). Colonel Bernard Romans was engaged as the engineer for the fortification, and he drew up a plan which called for a "Grand Bastion," four blockhouses and four batteries on Constitution Island, and a single blockhouse on West Point. In fact, only four batteries, one blockhouse and some outbuildings were completed all on Constitution Island, and these were abandoned by the Americans during Sir Henry Clinton's Highlands offensive in the fall of 1777. Following Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga and Clinton withdrawal to the City of New York, the Americans set about refortifying the Highlands. On January 20, 1778, West Point was occupied and new fortifications were begun there, Fort Arnold on the tip of "West Point" itself

(Continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 2500 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	5 8 8	8 5 0	4 5 8 4	9 7 0	B	1 8	5 8 6	7 0 0	4 5 8 0	3 0 0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C	1 8	5 8 3	6 2 0	4 5 8 1	1 0 0	D	1 8	5 8 4	3 2 0	4 5 8 5	0 0 0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	New York	CODE	36	COUNTY	Putnam	CODE	79
STATE		CODE		COUNTY		CODE	

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Task Force

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

11/10/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D.C. 20240

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)  
 Designated: 12/19/60. date  
 Boundary Certified: *Conelia Home* 12-8-75 date  
 Chief, Hist. & Arch. Surveys  
 DATE  
 Boundary Revisited: *Conelia Home* 12/12/81 date  
 Director, OHP

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were a series of shore batteries, including the western Chain Battery, as well as barracks and huts on the lower ground along the river bank. These sites have been virtually eliminated by the expansions of the Academy plant.

When the Academy was established at West Point in 1802, there were several buildings on the site which were hastily adapted to serve their new functions as best they could. It was not until 1815 that Congress appropriated funds for buildings specifically designed to serve the needs of the Academy. While the Mess Hall, the Academy and the South and North Barracks erected with these funds no longer survive, their former presence is still felt in that they established the location of the main Academy buildings at the southern edge of the West Point plain. Still remaining from this early building period are the Superintendent's Quarters (100)<sup>1</sup>, built in 1820, the Commandant's Quarters (101), erected in 1821, and the three double houses known collectively as Professors' Row (103-108) dating from 1821-1828.

The Superintendent's and the Commandant's Quarters are both handsome brick structures in the Federal style, the latter being somewhat less imposing in size and elaborateness. While both have been altered, the clean crisp lines of their original design are still clearly discernible. More altered than these two Quarters are the houses comprising Professors' Row. These structures, of locally quarried stone, with brick wings occupy an impressive location and give a distinctly residential character to this portion of the campus.

The first building at the Academy which seems to have been designed in a conscious attempt at architectural distinction is the Old Cadet Chapel (638), dating from 1836. This stone structure is a fine example of Classic Revival Style. It contains elements of both Greek and Roman design; the building itself is a modified Roman basilica and its portico is Greek Doric in inspiration. This chapel has been moved from its original location on the south edge of "The Plain."

Following the Classic Revival, Major Richard Delafield, who served as Superintendent of the Academy from 1856-61, introduced the next phase of building at West Point. Apparently Delafield was much attracted by the architecture of medieval England, with its militaristic overtones, and saw the appropriateness of transplanting this style to the Military Academy. Of the major academic buildings erected at West Point at this time, only

<sup>1</sup> These numbers in brackets refer to the numbers assigned on the official Guide Map of West Point, enclosed within.

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the old "First Division" (756) of the Central Barracks remains. Erected in 1851 of locally quarried stone, it is a fine example of the early Gothic Revival, with its battlements, drip stones and Gothic moldings.

In addition to the academic buildings erected in the Gothic Revival Style, this mode is also reflected by several officers' quarters. The most familiar of these is the Dean's Quarters (102) erected in 1857. It exemplifies the Picturesque or Carpenter's Gothic and is complemented by the later (1870) officers' quarters (146).

The earliest Gothic Revival structure on the campus is the Ordnance Laboratory, now the First Class Club (#'s 635, 637, 671) which was built around 1842. It incorporates two buildings dating from 1837, within its miniature fortress-like walls. Adjacent to the Ordnance Lab, is the old Boodler's Shop (147) which dates from 1878. Its very existence, and the purpose for which it was built, as a sort of candy shop, illustrate that life at the Academy was not all drill and study. It is a rather simple two story brick structure, used today as a community activity building.

With the exception of Cullum Hall (605), a Classic Revival structure built by the firm of McKim, Mead and White in 1898, the bulk of the West Point buildings erected at the turn of the century and in the expansion program which followed, were in the style of the Gothic Revival. The West Academic Building (751) designed by Richard Morris Hunt in 1895 reintroduced the Gothic style, which was taken up by the firm of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson in the 1903-1914 expansion of the Academy. Notable products of that expansion are the Cadet Chapel (722) and the Administration Building (600). The militarized Gothic style has utilized in the majority of the academic buildings since that time. In the most recent expansion which began in 1964 and is still continuing, the Gothic style was utilized in the new Academic Building on Cullum Road, just south of Thayer Hall and in the Washington Hall/Barracks complex (745). Eisenhower Hall (655), the cadet activities center, is faced with brick rather than the standard gray stone and although it maintains the Perpendicular style of the Gothic, its blank walls and absence of detail distinguish it from the Gothic manner.

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and Fort Putnam on the heights to the west of Fort Arnold. A new chain and boom were constructed in a very short time and were placed across the river from West Point to Constitution Island in April of 1778. The Americans built a whole network of fortifications, redoubts and batteries at West Point, on Constitution Island and on the hilltops above the east bank of the river. These works were laid out largely by foreign engineers, including Rاديere, Kosciuszko, Gouvion and Villefranche. The West Point complex effectively sealed off the Hudson valley through the Highlands and it was never challenged by the British. In September of 1780, it was discovered that Benedict Arnold, then commandant of West Point, had plotted with British Major John Andre to sell West Point to the British. The treason was discovered; Andre was hung and Arnold fled to the British.

Following the close of the war, a regular garrison continued to be stationed at West Point but it was not until 1801 that Congress created the military academy and provided for its establishment at West Point. Two compelling reasons made the formation of an American military academy both logical and necessary: the experience of the Revolutionary War and the ominous international political situation during the early years of the Republic.

The experience of the Revolutionary War, during which the colonies had to rely in large part on foreign drillmasters, artilleryists and trained engineers, made the military and political leaders of the day energetic backers of a military academy. The papers of Henry Knox, Benjamin Lincoln, Jedediah Huntington, Timothy Pickering, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton and George Washington mention time and time again the need for such a school. In his annual messages to Congress, Washington always included a plea that Congress provide facilities for the study of military art.

The second compelling reason for the immediate establishment of a military academy was America's vulnerable position in the international politics of 1801-2. The previous two decades had been troublesome ones. The trouble with the Barbary pirates, Shay's Rebellion, the Whiskey Rebellion, boundary disputes, frontier battles and currency quarrels had plagued the young nation, and now it was threatened by the danger of involvement in the complexities that arose in the wake of the French Revolution. Public opinion moved toward more energetic national government and better trained armed forces.

So it was that Congress, by its Act of March 16, 1802, authorized a Corps of Engineers, set its strength at five officers and ten cadets and provided that it be stationed at West Point in the State of New York and constitute a Military Academy. Jonathan Williams, Chief of the Corps of Engineers and the first Superintendent was able to open the Academy on July 4, 1802, with ten cadets present.

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The initial purpose of the Academy was to train military technicians for all branches of the military service, to encourage the study of military art nationally and, thus, raise the level of training of the militia, and to encourage the practical study of every science. How well the Academy succeeded in its purpose for the first ten years of its existence was summarized by Henry Adams. In his "History of the United States," which covered the Jefferson and Madison administrations, Adams offers the tribute that American scientific engineering "...owed its efficiency and almost its existence to the military school at West Point established in 1802."

The growing threat of war with England impelled the Congress to pass the Act of April 29, 1812, by which the Corps of Cadets was increased to 250, the academic staff was enlarged and the cadets were placed under the discipline of published regulations. In the war that followed, the Academy graduates served their country well. A quarter of the more than one hundred who saw action were killed or wounded; and not one of the fortifications constructed under their direction was captured.

Following the cessation of hostilities, the aims of the Academy's training were focused more on civil engineering and its application to the nation's internal expansions. Colonel Sylvanus Thayer, Superintendent from 1817 to 1833 was the prime force in the reorganization of the educational curriculum, and many of his innovations are still incorporated in the Academy today. At the same time that the cadets were studying the principles of surveying, road and canal construction, and other elements of engineering and architecture, however, the art of military science was not neglected. The records of the Mexican and Civil Wars amply demonstrate the importance of the Academy's training. Grant, Lee, Sherman and Jackson, to name but a few from both the North and South were Academy graduates who distinguished themselves in both wars.

After the Civil War, changing conditions necessitated a shift in the Academy's curriculum away from the emphasis on civil engineering. The increase in the number of technical and engineering schools made it possible for West Point to drop its strong emphasis on engineering subjects. In addition to this, the tremendous expansion of the body of scientific knowledge in the last half of nineteenth century was enforcing specialization in all technical fields. Military science proved no exception to this situation and it became obvious that the Army officer would need specialized training in his particular branch as well. Consequently, the Academy severed its direct relationship with the Corps of Engineers. Several Army postgraduate schools were established and West Point gradually came to be looked on as only the initial step in the Army officer's education.

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After its centennial in 1902, the Academy underwent a thorough structural renovation and became known as the New West Point. Coincident with this reconstruction, Superintendent General Albert Mills had the entire curriculum, military and academic reassessed. As a result, military instruction was transformed from a series of mechanical drills to practical training in minor tactics and field work. A gradual liberalization of the curriculum went on until the outbreak of World War I.

World War I tested and proved as never before, the soundness of the Academy's training. Although the course was shortened and a number of classes graduated early in order to meet the sudden demand for trained officers, the qualities and abilities of the graduates remained high.

General Douglas MacArthur was installed as Superintendent of the Academy after the war's close. His primary concern was to adapt the curriculum to reflect the terms of the recent war. The wide-ranging ramifications of total war required a new study of tactics and the national and international scenes. A greater stress was placed on physical education as well.

World War II and the Korean War once again generated a necessary revision of the concepts of military education. A comprehensive analysis of the entire program conducted from 1956 to 1960 resulted in increased emphasis on modern technological advances and the increasingly complex aspects of national security and international relations.

The academic and military training program is a vital, everchanging one that is continuously examined and adjusted to the changing times, and yet the Academy builds always on the cornerstone of the Thayer system: leadership integrated by excellence of character and excellence of knowledge.

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The United States Military Academy National Historic Landmark consists of that portion of the Military Reservation which is located to the east of the eastern curb of State 218, the Storm King Highway. Thus, the boundaries are indicated by the eastern curb of Route 218 from its point of intersection with the Reservation boundary to the north of the West Point itself (just east of the Necor horizontal control station), south along said curb to its easternmost intersection with the southern Reservation boundary (to the southwest of Dassori Pond) and from that point, along the Reservation boundary to the east, and then north along the shore line, including the docks, to the point of origin. Constitution Island, within the Reservation boundary, constitutes a discontinuous portion of the landmark. These boundaries are indicated by a solid black line on the enclosed USGS map. The Reservation lands to the west of Route 218 do not contain important historic sites associated with either the War for Independence or significant phases in the use of the Academy as a training institution.