



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Long Gray Line Marches To Albany

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) April 6, 2005

Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson), today hosted the fifty-fifth annual "West Point Day" at the New York State Capitol in Albany.

"Today, the State Senate recognized and honored the special relationship New York State has had with the United States Military Academy at West Point since 1802," said Senator Larkin, a retired Lieutenant Colonel who served 23 years of active duty in the United States Army. "As Orange County's representative in the Senate and as an Army veteran, I am honored to have been able to present the West Point delegation to the full Senate. These talented young people are the future leaders of the United States Army."

The cadets were joined by USMA Dean of the Academic Board, Brigadier General Patrick Finnegan, to receive a formal resolution from the State Senate. Governor Eliot Spitzer also prepared a gubernatorial proclamation which was presented to the delegation.

Senator Larkin said, "As we continue the war on terror we are reminded of the tremendous responsibilities undertaken by these young men and women and the sacrifices they are willing to make to preserve the freedoms on which this great country is founded. We owe a debt of gratitude to the United States Military Academy and the corps of cadets for their invaluable service to this nation."

A true national treasure and historic site, the United States Military Academy at West Point is America's oldest continuously garrisoned army installation, the nation's first engineering school, and the home of the United States Corps of Cadets since 1802.

This year's ceremonies mark the fifty-fifth year the State Legislature has honored the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Below, is a copy of correspondence from USMA '05 graduate 2LT Scott Cassidy to USMA Dean of Academics, BG Patrick Finnegan. LT Cassidy has now been awarded 3 Purple Hearts.

Sent: Friday, August 04, 2006 12:08 AM

Subject: Re: Hello

Well, we're going on over 3 months in Iraq and I still love my job. I have a great platoon with strong NCOs and junior leaders, and the soldiers do things daily that I find simply amazing and unbelievable. It looks like we have roughly 60 days left in Country, and I know that we will finish strong. July hit our Company hard and we are still feeling the effects of it. We lost 2 soldiers at the start of the month as the Battalion increased our target list. I have now been wounded twice, but that makes me part of the majority in my platoon, with nearly every soldier owning a purple heart. Now we run missions constantly, hoping to drive the enemy out of our sector while we prepare to hand over control of the area to the 10th Mountain Division. My platoon took part in multiple air assault, mounted, and dismounted missions that led to the capture of several key terrorist leaders. It was a rewarding experience, but exhausting at the same time. At one point we spent 23 days outside the wire trying to meet the demands of the fight. That's 23 days without a shower, in the same clothes, eating the exact same packaged meals. We sleep on sheets of plywood, and the guys pull guard even when we rest. Everyday they enter the most dangerous neighborhoods that our world has to offer, and they do so without question and without fear. I must say that I'm proud and honored to call myself a leader in this platoon. I can't imagine a more rewarding experience.

Now we are back on rotation for the most part. We have a Stryker Company attached to our Battalion, which relieves us of most of our route security missions and makes the roads safer to travel on for the time being. However, we spend our new found time planning and running missions into unoccupied territory, looking to bring the fight to an enemy who likes to stay hidden. I like the new tempo, because its aggressive and suits the guy's personality much more than a defensive campaign. I am positive that my guys would choose to air assault onto a hostile objective before they would want to defend a quiet base. They are good at their jobs, and love being challenged under pressure.

If you watch the news, you know that the greater Baghdad area is in turmoil. We are on the outskirts of the city, controlling the rural area between Baghdad, Ramadi, and Fallujah. We believe the area became hostile when terrorist cells fled here during the Coalition invasion of the urban areas. Now our task is to control this area and give the enemy no safehaven. We are spread thin, but we are getting the job done.

The Television highlights every explosion and loss of life, but you miss what we do. You miss my soldiers giving water and food to local nationals. You miss my soldiers giving the little kids high-fives and soccer balls. You miss my soldiers emplacing sewer systems and rebuilding roads. You miss my medic treating the locals for injuries. The News shows death, murder, and violence; but daily I see smiles, hard work, and hope. Is the area in turmoil? Yes. Is it lost? No, and every day American soldiers bring hope to these people. You won't see it in the morning paper or Evening news, but I'm telling you its here. I know, I'm seeing it and doing it.

I miss everyone and look forward to coming home. Know that your Army is making you proud to be an American.

God Bless America.

Scott