



Colors pass in Review during Alumni Review at the USMA, West Point, N. Y.

U. S. Army Photograph

### Foreword

This book is the record of the annual National Debate Tournament at West Point since its inception in 1947. The tournament is a creation and an instrument of the entire American forensic community. The United States Military Academy has provided the physical facilities and a focus of central organization and management. Much credit should go to the many cadets and young officers who have labored to build and improve the event.

The tournament has been made possible only by the teamwork of many diverse people. The Superintendents of West Point, from Maxwell Taylor, who encouraged the initiation of the tournament, to Garrison Davidson, all have strongly supported the effort. But the "World Series of Debating" in April of each year at West Point is sustained basically by the voluntary team efforts of many dedicated debate directors throughout the country.

The Military Academy considers that its forensic program, of which the tournament is a part, supports its own basic mission. That mission, stated simply, is to graduate each year another class of young men specifically prepared to join the flow of leadership dedicated to our country's security in these dangerous times. Their future responsibilities require disciplined, trained minds. Debating fosters mental discipline leading to trained minds. Sigurd Larmon, donor of the National Tournament trophy, said in a speech to the 1958 National Tournament participants: "Debating develops the muscles of the mind, increases the power to think and the power to express the thoughts

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clearly and convincingly." The quotation cites qualities which are so essential to the professional army officer of today.

The cadet forensic activities are one of the ways in which West Point deliberately keeps open its windows on the world. Association with civilian contemporaries broaden the cadet outlook and lay essential groundwork for a free, articulate, and hence understanding interchange of views between civilian and military leaders of the future.

Because of the values which debating and the tournament associations have contributed to West Point, this publication of the record is welcomed. It is equally welcomed for its recording of outstanding debating and of the efforts of the many debaters, coaches, and judges who have built and maintained the tournament. This published record is bound to preserve and enhance the effect of their achievements on nationwide debate activities.

GEORGE A. LINCOLN, Colonel, USA

Professor and Chairman of the  
Department of Social Sciences

Chairman, Cadet Extra-Curricular  
Educational Activities Committee

United States Military Academy

## THE WEST POINT NATIONAL DEBATE TOURNAMENT

by

Captain Herbert Y. Schandler\*

I.-Establishment and Growth of the National Debate Tournament

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor abruptly removed cadets from participation in intercollegiate debate competition. However, in 1945, little time was lost in reorganizing the West Point Debating Society once the pressures of war had been relaxed. In January, 1945, a West Point team, against Yale at New Haven, re-entered intercollegiate debate competition. With the enthusiastic support of Col. Herman Beukema, Captain George A. Lipsky, and the Cadet Tom Schwinn, the Debating Society participated in 27 intercollegiate debates in 1945, and visited M. I. T., Harvard, Cooper Union, Pratt Institute, and New York University in addition to Yale.

Also in 1945, the West Point Debating Society sponsored the only major tournament held in the East that year. Eight eastern schools (M. I. T., Boston U., Penn State, Columbia U., Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, U. S. Naval Academy, West Point) participated in this first tournament sponsored by the Debating Society. The cadet team defeated Penn. State in the finals, thus emphasizing the progress that the West Point Society had achieved in one brief post-war year.

The West Point Debate Tournament was held again in 1946, this time with sixteen participating colleges. The Naval Academy team defeated West Point in the finals.

The success of these two West Point Invitational Tournaments led several members of the Debating Society to think in terms of a larger, more comprehensive tournament, perhaps national in scope. Simultaneously, there was much discussion in debate circles concerning the desirability of an independent debate tournament of national scope which would not be affiliated with or sponsored by a forensics association or fraternity. West Point seemed to be a logical, neutral, and generally acceptable place at which to convene these annual meetings. The ambition of the cadets and the interest of their college associates probably would not have reached fruition, however, had it not been for the aid, advice, and active interest and encouragement of Major General Maxwell D. Taylor, then Superintendent of the Military Academy, Colonel George A. Lincoln, present Professor and Head of the Department of Social Sciences, and Lt. Col. Chester A. Johnson, then Officer-in-Charge of the Debating Society.

With the advice and support of these officers, the Debating Society polled over one

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\* Captain Schandler has been an Instructor and Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at West Point since 1957. He was director of both the 13th and the 14th National Debate Tournaments. Graduated from West Point in 1952, he served in Korea with the 38th Infantry Regiment and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, and he was made honorary member of the Netherlands Battalion.

Captain Schandler received his Master's Degree in Public Administration from Harvard in 1956 and is currently working there toward his doctorate in Political Economy. In 1959 he became West Point's first Assistant Professor of Political Philosophy.

thousand colleges and universities throughout the nation to determine their opinion on extending the West Point Tournament to include the entire nation. The response to this poll was overwhelming approval, and plans were rapidly made for the first National Debate Tournament at West Point.

In April of 1947, thirty schools from twenty-four states attended the first National Debate Tournament at West Point. The subject debated was, "Resolved, that labor should be given a direct share in the management of industry." Southeastern State College of Durant, Oklahoma defeated the University of Southern California in the final debate and thus became the first tournament winner and the first recipient of the Sigurd S. Larmon Trophy.

Mr. Larmon, president of Young and Rubicam, Incorporated, a large advertising firm, had been an active debater in his undergraduate days at Dartmouth College and was vitally interested in promoting and increasing debating skills. He felt that in our international, as well as our national affairs, it was vital that leaders be developed who were articulate and who could hold their own in public discussions. Approving completely of the idea of a National Debate Tournament to stimulate interest in debating throughout the country, Mr. Larmon donated the trophy which bears his name. The Larmon Trophy was to be awarded annually to the team winning the West Point Tournament. Mr. Larmon was present in 1947 to present this trophy, which has since become symbolic of the national intercollegiate debating championship.

It is interesting to note that this National Debate Tournament in 1947 also marked the first time in the history of the Military Academy that women had engaged in competition with cadets in any field of endeavor.

After the 1947 Tournament, steps were taken by the West Point Debate Council, successor to the Debating Society, to formalize the procedures for inviting participants to the National Debate Tournament. The country was divided into eight districts as follows:

District I	-Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, Hawaii
District II	-Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming
District III	-Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
District IV	-Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin
District V	-Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio
District VI	-Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee
District VII	-Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia
District VIII	-Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

Each of these districts was to be allowed to select four teams to attend the West Point Tournament. In addition, the previous year's winner would automatically receive an invitation and the U. S. Military Academy, as host school, would participate. Thus, the Tournament was established with a total of thirty-four participating schools distributed throughout the nation.

Since 1947 in each district a group of individuals who are outstanding speech and debate teachers have volunteered to serve as their respective district Nominating Com-

mittees. These Committees have had full power to select the teams to be invited from their district to attend and compete at the National Debate Tournament. Thus, West Point has acted as host but has not attempted to set standards for the District Committee or to influence their choice in any way.

At the 1948 Tournament the national topic was debated. In 1949, at the suggestion of several district committee chairmen, an alternate but much debated topic was used in the Tournament. For the 1950 Tournament, the chairmen of the District Nominating Committees voted to use several sub-topics related to the national topic. The topics used were: (1) Resolved, that the United States should nationalize the basic non-agricultural industries (used in seeding rounds 1 and 2 and final round); (2) Resolved, that in the interest of national security, the United States should nationalize the basic, non-agricultural industries (used in seeding rounds 3 and 4 and in the quarter-final round); (3) Resolved, that in order to control the business cycle, the United States should nationalize the basic non-agricultural industries (seeding rounds 5 and 6 and semi-final round); (4) Resolved, that the United States should nationalize the steel industry (seeding rounds 7 and 8 and first elimination round). In 1951, the Tournament returned to the procedure of using the national debate topic exclusively.

In 1952, at the Sixth National Debate Tournament the University of Redlands team of James Wilson and Holt Spicer won the Tournament and the Larmon Trophy for the second consecutive time, the first time that this feat had been accomplished in the history of the Tournament.

By this time, the National Debate Tournament had achieved a widespread acceptance in the American debating community. Professor Egbert R. Nichols, of the University of Redlands, stated in his "Historical Sketch of Intercollegiate Debating," published in 1952, that the past fifty years had produced only one significant event in college debating. He further stated, "That one event is the coming of the National Tournament at West Point. For the past five years, West Point has entertained a tournament truly national in scope. The Tournament has been marked by such skillful and well-planned management that the West Point Tournament has been hailed as the best and the superior tournament of the country."

In August of 1954, the Committee on Intercollegiate Debate and Discussion of the Speech Association of America announced that the national debate topic for 1954-55 would be, "Resolved, that the United States should extend diplomatic recognition to the Communist Government of China."

Approximately two months later, in October 1954, the Department of the Army advised the Military Academy that cadets would not publicly debate this topic. It was stated that: "It is Department of the Army policy not to have U. S. M. A. cadets involved in debate on such a controversial subject, on which in any event national policy has already been established." This ban was also applied by the Navy Department to debate activities at the Naval Academy.

The cadet debate program was reoriented toward other topics and the Cadet Debate Council petitioned the Committee on Intercollegiate Debate and Discussion to approve an alternative national topic. The Committee was unable to approve this petition as the national topic was adjudged to have been democratically selected, to involve issues of current importance, and to be properly balanced for clarity.

The Military Academy and the Cadet Debate Council finally put the controversy in the proper perspective by making the decision to hold the Ninth National Debate Tournament at West Point as scheduled, debating the national topic. The West Point Debate Council would again be host for the Tournament but the West Point team would, of course, not compete. The 1955 Tournament was won by the University of Alabama. That year, the second place team, Wilkes College, received the first award of the Military Education Foundation Trophy. This rotating trophy, henceforth to be awarded to the second place team, was donated by this non-profit foundation devoted to the furthering of military education.

It was decided at the 1955 Tournament that the Military Academy should again undertake a survey to determine interest in NDT among the nation's colleges and universities. A questionnaire was sent to 1274 institutions throughout the nation. On the basis of this study, which included such factors as the number of interested schools in each district, student population of those schools, ratio of active debaters to students, demonstrated interest in debating in general, and past performances at the National Debate Tournament, a reapportionment of team quotas for the eight districts was made. One team was added to the quotas for Districts IV, VII, and VIII, while the quota for District II was reduced by one. This had the effect of increasing the number of schools attending NDT from thirty-four to thirty-six.

In addition to being the first West Point Tournament at which thirty-six schools competed, the Tenth National Debate Tournament was significant in other respects. The Military Academy team of George Walker and James Murphy, demonstrating that the enforced limitation on West Point debating activities the previous year had been no serious handicap, won the Tournament and the Sigurd S. Larmon Trophy.

The 1957 Tournament also was accorded some measure of nation-wide publicity through the cooperation of Miss Dorothy Gordon of the New York Times Youth Forum television program. That year, and every year since then, a Youth Forum program has been devoted to the national debate topic with the panelists chosen from participants in the West Point Tournament.

The Twelfth National Debate Tournament, to be held in 1958, was marked by somewhat of a crisis. The teams selected by the District II Nominating Committee found themselves unable to pay the heavy transportation costs involved in sending two debaters and a coach cross-continent to compete in the West Point Tournament. Consequently, the national character of the Tournament was threatened. The authorities at the Military Academy moved swiftly to meet this threat. The travel schedule of the Cadet Debate Council was restricted to some extent, and permission was received to use the funds thus saved for the purpose of issuing invitational travel orders to the coaches of teams from the west coast schools in Districts I and II. These orders would require that those coaches attend the Tournament to serve as guest judges. In return for this service, the Military Academy would pay the transportation expenses of these coaches. Although this plan did not solve all of the financial problems entailed in bringing debate teams to the east coast, it did make the travel expenses of western schools comparable to those of the midwestern schools. This project met with the complete acceptance and approval of the schools concerned and has been instrumental in preserving a complete geographical representation at the National Debate Tournament.

Further national publicity was also achieved at the 1958 Tournament when the tournament winners appeared on the Today and College News Conference television programs.

At the 1959 Tournament, the Lt. George W. P. Walker Memorial Award was established. This award, wrist watches presented to the two outstanding speakers in the seeding rounds, was established in memory of the former West Point debater and Tournament winner. Lt. Walker was a member of the West Point team which won the NDT in 1956. In 1958 he was president of the West Point Debate Council. His untimely death in an aircraft accident on January 31, 1959, shocked his many friends in the debating community.

The 1959 Tournament also marked the second successive victory of the Northwestern University debating team of Richard Kirshberg and William Welsh.

This Thirteenth National Debate Tournament was awarded a George Washington Honor Medal and \$100.00 by the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge for its "outstanding contribution in helping to bring about a better understanding of the American way of life."

In 1959, many schools requested that the administrative facilities of the Military Academy again be utilized to conduct a poll of American colleges and universities with a view toward re-districting and re-allocating district quotas to take cognizance of shifting population trends in the United States in recent years. This poll was conducted early in 1960. Over 1200 colleges and universities were canvassed concerning their interest in the National Debate Tournament. At the Fourteenth Annual Tournament in 1960, a committee of prominent debate professors met to evaluate the results of this poll and to make recommendations based on those results. It was recommended by this committee that the number of schools annually invited to participate in the West Point tournament be increased to thirty-eight. One extra school would be allotted to District IV and one to District I. These recommendations were approved and henceforth all tournaments will consist of thirty-eight competitors.

A major problem confronting the National Debate Tournament over the past several years has been that of insuring competent and adequate judges for the all-important elimination rounds. To alleviate this problem during the 1960 National Debate Tournament, the West Point Debate Council invited twenty-four prominent debate coaches from all sections of the nation to act as guest judges for the elimination rounds of the Fourteenth National Debate Tournament. Invitational travel orders were issued to these outstanding individuals which would allow them to travel to West Point at government expense to provide this vital service. The funds to meet this expense were made available by savings from the travel funds of the West Point Debate Council. Since these funds were necessarily limited, a military aircraft was utilized to pick up guest judges in Kansas City and Cleveland and to return them to these points.

This "judge's junket" met with such enthusiastic approval and was so successful in providing competent guest judges for the elimination rounds that the decision was made by the debate coaches present to institutionalize this procedure and make it a permanent policy of the Tournament program.

Thus, the history of the National Debate Tournament at West Point has been a history of progress in administrative arrangements and of progress in the support and acceptance accorded this event throughout the entire American speech community. This nationwide support and encouragement has been a source of gratification to the United States Military Academy and has helped West Point in its efforts to make this tournament become truly representative of the national debating championship.

## II--Administration and Operations of the National Debate Tournament

Since its inception, the National Debate Tournament at West Point has been regarded as one of the most successful and one of the most efficiently conducted of U. S. college debate tournaments. The basis of this efficiency and success is two-fold: (1) the widespread and active support and assistance accorded this tournament by the great majority of speech teachers, debate coaches, and other members of the American forensics community; and (2) the administrative procedures of the tournament over the years have become routinized, standardized, and regularly improved upon.

At the heart of the operation of the National Debate Tournament is the District Nominating Committee. As noted previously, in 1947, the Cadet Debate Council divided the United States into eight districts for the purpose of choosing teams to attend the West Point tournament. In each of these eight districts a prominent speech professor offered his time and services as chairman of a district nominating committee. The membership of these committees was elected in each district by the schools who had expressed an interest in competing for an invitation to the National Debate Tournament. Each chairman of the district nominating committee selects and appoints his successor. These district committees have functioned for fourteen years in this manner.

The district nominating committees have full and complete control, authority, and responsibility concerning the selection of teams from their respective districts to attend the national tournament. Each committee operates a district tournament to select the teams which will come to West Point. Thus, the National Debate Tournament is preceded by eight district elimination tournaments, usually held in March.

Each district committee establishes its own rules and procedures for these district tournaments and each establishes criteria for participation in these elimination tournaments. These procedures, rules, and criteria vary from district to district based upon local practices in various parts of the nation. However, each committee attempts to ascertain that the best teams from each district are chosen to represent that district at the National Debate Tournament at West Point.

The number of invitations issued to each district is based upon the number of interested schools and the debate population of these schools in each particular district. These quotas are periodically reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted to reflect growing interest in debating in particular sections of the nation. In past years this review of district quotas for teams to attend the NDT has been based upon nationwide polls conducted by the authorities at the Military Academy.

The National Debate Tournament at West Point is distinctive among college debate tournaments in that it represents the culmination of a series of elimination debates throughout all sections of the country. Invitations to the West Point tournament are issued solely on the basis of success in these eliminations. These invitations are also issued by local authorities and experts who are familiar with the records of the teams they choose to attend the NDT. In this manner, a large segment of the American forensics community is directly involved in the administration of the West Point tournament. The Military Academy emphasizes that it serves as the host, and not the sponsor, for the National Debate Tournament at West Point. The sponsor is in actuality the American speech groups who, by their interest and support, makes this annual event possible.

There is another area where the support of the debating family is vitally necessary in order to make this tournament a success. This is in the all-important task of furnish-



ing guest judges during the course of the Tournament. It is tournament policy to have three judges for each debate in the seeding rounds and to have five or more judges per debate in the elimination rounds. Thus, a total of fifty-four judges is required for the eighteen debates in each seeding round. The Tournament could not be successful without the aid given by the prominent speech and debate teachers from throughout the United States who serve in this capacity. Approximately seventy individuals annually volunteer to attend the National Debate Tournament, at no remuneration to themselves, to act in the capacity of guest judge. The high quality of the judging at West Point, a vital factor in any successful tournament, is therefore the direct result of this interest and co-operation manifested by an important segment of the American forensics community.

The procedures used in the actual conduct of the National Debate Tournament at West Point have been another major factor in the success of that tournament. The Military Academy administration and the organization of the Corps of Cadets allow the lore that is gained year by year to be passed down to the new cadet tournament organization. Thus the administration of the tournament can be maintained and improved upon constantly.

The tournament is conducted through eight seeding rounds and four elimination rounds. In each seeding round strength is paired against strength. In other words, as the tournament progresses, the stronger teams constantly debate other strong teams. At the end of the eight seeding rounds, the top sixteen teams are announced and they compete in four elimination rounds to determine the tournament winner.

In order to insure that the teams are paired strength against strength, an elaborate statistics system has been established. The speed and accuracy of the statistics operation is vital to the smooth functioning of the entire tournament. Here is the nerve center of the National Debate Tournament at West Point.

The tournament ballot contains spaces for each judge to rate the teams as a whole and to rate each individual speaker (Figure 1). All of this information is used by the statistics staff.

After these requirements are met, teams are matched according to their won-lost records. In the case of identical won-lost records, teams are matched according to judges' points, and, in case of comparable records, according to team points.

Let us investigate the procedures and techniques used to achieve the required pairings.

In the first round teams are paired at random by the cadet statistics staff, making certain only that teams do not debate other teams from the same district. As the results of the first round are announced, each individual judge's vote is posted on the won-lost chart (Figure 2). "W" indicates a winning vote, "L" a losing vote. Each winning vote is one judge's point. Also indicated on this chart is the opponent for each school in each debate and the side of the topic debated.

When the complete results of the first round are available in the statistics room, the pairing for the next round begins. This pairing is in accordance with the criteria already listed (wins, judges' points, team points, and speakers' points). The team triangle (Figure 3) is used to determine if any of the paired teams have debated each other previously. When teams have identical won-lost records and the same number of judges points, team points must be used to determine the order of strength (Figure 4). In case

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\* teams have identical won-lost records, judges' points, and team points, speakers' points must be used to determine the order (Figure 5). This chart is also used to determine the top speaker in the seeding rounds.

An explanation of this procedure cannot be completely clear without seeing the statistics room in action. Therefore, let us follow the procedure step-by-step and actually make the pairings for the second round.

At the end of the first round, of course, eighteen teams will have won a debate and eighteen will have lost a debate. How are these teams to be aligned in an order of strength?

First, we must investigate the judges' points or number of winning votes of each winning team. Thus, we see that certain schools won their debates by unanimous decisions. They, therefore, have one win and three judges' points at the end of the first round (Figure 2). These schools are:

Gonzaga	Augustana
Houston	Miami
Kansas	George Washington
Eau Claire	

Next we would list the schools with one win and two judges' points, one loss and one judges' point, and one loss and no judges' points. A rough order of merit has been established. To refine the standings, we must now consult the team points (Figure 3). Using team points, we find the following order at the conclusion of round one:

Kansas	131
Augustana	127
Houston	125
Eau Claire	123
George Washington	116
Miami	108
Gonzaga	95

This procedure is followed for all of the other teams down our list.

We now seem prepared to pair Kansas against Augustana for round two, but we must first check one other element. Teams must debate opposite sides of the question an equal number of times. The statistics room equalizes this in each even-numbered round. Consequently, this must now be checked (Figure 2). Our order of strength then looks like this:

Kansas	131	A
Augustana	127	A
Houston	125	A
Eau Claire	123	A
George Washington	116	N
Miami	108	N
Gonzaga	95	A

This procedure, again, is followed for all other teams. For the sake of brevity, we will use only those listed above.