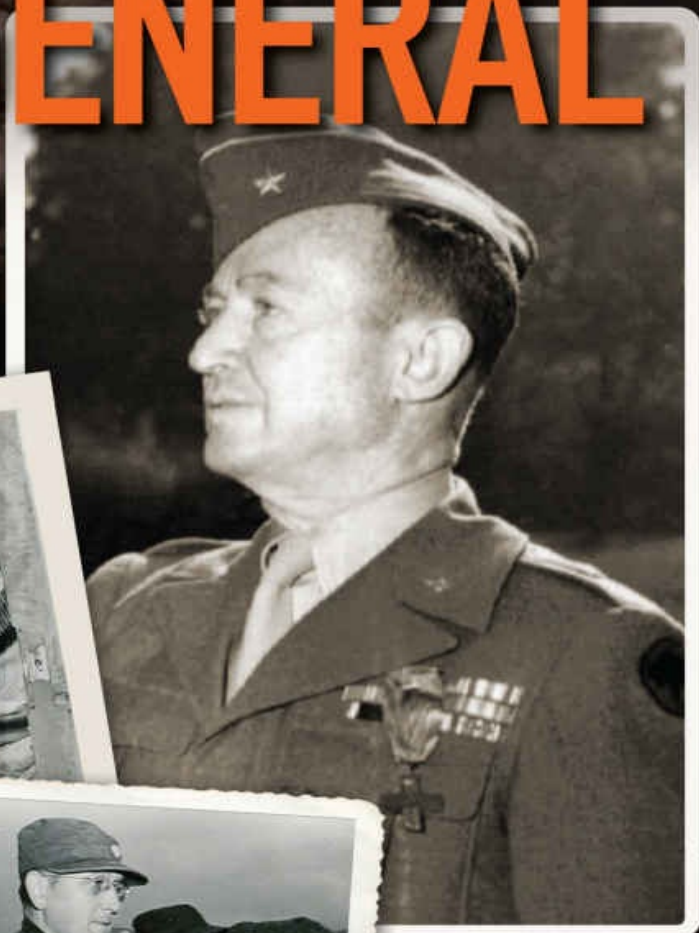


SMOKEY JOE & THE GENERAL

THE TALE OF
GEN. JOHN E. WOOD
AND HIS PROTEGÉ
LT. ED ROWNY



BY
FORMER AMBASSADOR & LT. GENERAL (RET.)
EDWARD L. ROWNY

EDITED BY ANNE KAZEL-WILCOX

Title Page

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Edited by

Anne Kazel-Wilcox

Washington, D.C.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my wife and children, and many loyal friends who have supported me during its writing.

A Man with a Mission



Colonel John E. Wood, 1944

National Archives

In July 1941, shortly after graduating from West Point, I was assigned to the 41st “Singing Engineers,” commanded by Colonel John “Smokey Joe” Wood. Colonel Wood was nicknamed after Smokey Joe Wood, the Red Sox pitcher famous for his curve and fastball. Colonel Wood threw as many curved and fastball ideas as the Red Sox player had pitches. Shortly after arriving, I overheard a telephone conversation between my boss and Brigadier General Jacob “Jake” Devers, the post commander of Fort Bragg in North Carolina.

“Good morning, Colonel Wood,” began General Devers. “I’m calling with instructions for you to furnish us 30 men for two weeks, beginning next Monday, to be the Bragg manure detail.”

“Sir, I don’t understand,” said Wood.

“Then let me repeat,” said Devers. “I’m ordering you to send 30 men to the horse-drawn field artillery stables. It’s your unit’s turn to help us dispose of the horse manure as it accumulates.”

“I’m sorry,” said Wood, “but furnishing details is against my principles.”

“Dammit,” said Devers, obviously irritated, “I don’t give a goddamn about your principles. It’s your unit’s turn to furnish the manure detail and I don’t want a lecture on principles.”

“As you have probably heard, General, I think fatigue details are demeaning and demoralizing to soldiers. Therefore, I’d like to be excused from subjecting my men to performing menial tasks. My mission is to train the 41st Engineers for combat.”

“I know perfectly well what your mission is,” Devers retorted. “But it takes a 30-man detail every day to get rid of the horse manure as it accumulates. Otherwise the post would soon be overrun with

manure.”

“I don’t believe in details,” insisted Wood. “Perhaps you can tell me what the mission is, and in this way I can help solve your problem.”

At this point one could feel Devers hit the roof as he exploded at the other end of the line. But he collected himself and said in a measured tone: “The mission is for you to supply 30 men a day for two weeks.”

“I don’t mean to be disrespectful,” said Wood, “but that’s not a mission. Perhaps if I understood what’s to be accomplished, I could comprehend the mission. Marshal Ferdinand Foch used to ask, ‘*Quoi s’agit-il?*’” Wood often liked to impress people with his knowledge of foreign languages, in the case of questioning, as did the French general, “What is the purpose?”

“Colonel Wood,” said Devers, now exasperated. “I’m not asking you to understand the task, I’m simply ordering you to supply a 30-man detail, and I don’t want all this French bullshit. The mission is to move each day’s accumulation of manure.”

“Oh, I think I begin to understand,” said Wood. “The mission is to get rid of the manure at the stables.”

“Thank God I’ve finally gotten through,” said Devers. “But you only have to move each day’s accumulation of manure.” Before he could say more, Wood interrupted.

“If I understand correctly, the mission you’ve assigned my unit is to move the manure.”

“Right!” shouted Devers. “Now it is clear that you will furnish 30 men a day for two weeks to the stable master.”

“But general,” replied Wood, “you’re not giving me a mission and telling me what to do but how to do it.”

Those of us overhearing the conversation could sense Devers’ complete frustration, and we feared Wood would be charged with insubordination.

“If I remove the entire pile,” said Wood, “will you exempt the 41st Engineers from what you call details as long as we are at Fort Bragg?”

“It’s a hell of a lot bigger job than you think, Colonel, but if you want to take it on, be my guest,” said Devers.

“Let me formulate the mission and see if you approve,” said Wood. “The 41st Engineer Regiment is assigned the mission of removing Fort Bragg stable’s manure pile. Is that correct?”

“Yes,” said Devers, dejectedly.

“Then we’ll start on Monday morning and will complete the job as soon as possible,” said Wood.

“You had goddamned better,” said Devers, before slamming down the phone.

Colonel Wood, smiling and obviously pleased, told me to assemble the staff in his office. When they arrived he said:

“The 41st Engineer Regiment has been assigned the mission of removing the manure from

the Fort Bragg stables commencing Monday morning. It is now 0830 and I want you to present a plan by 1300 for my approval.”

Captain Robert Seedlock, the regimental operations officer, spoke up. “I understand that each unit at Fort Bragg has been furnishing 30 men a day simply to move the manure as it accumulates. But now, Colonel, you’re telling us to move the entire manure pile, which must be quite large. Do you have any idea how big a job it is?”

“That’s what I have a staff for,” said Wood. “You are all excellent officers, the Army’s finest, and I don’t want you to ask me questions, but furnish me with a plan.”

We filed into the office of Major William Beard, the regiment’s executive officer.

“Does anyone know the size of the job?” asked Beard. “Has anyone seen the manure pile?”

Lieutenant George Hamner spoke up: “I ride by there coming to work. It’s the size of a soccer field and about three feet high. The manure details apparently seem to take from one end as fresh manure is added to the other end. The 30-man detail maintains the pile at its current size.”

Captain Seedlock asked us to help him brainstorm.

“It’s perfectly clear,” he said. “We have to devise a plan to move an enormous amount of manure.”

We developed a plan by noon and then spent the next hour drawing up charts to accompany our presentation to Colonel Wood. Promptly at 1300 the colonel strode into the conference room. We all snapped to attention.

“At ease,” said Wood. “You may present your plan.”

Captain Seedlock placed his first chart on an easel. It read: “Mission. The 41st Engineer Regiment will remove the Fort Bragg stable manure pile within 72 hours.”

“Excellent,” said Wood. “You’re off to a good start.”

The next chart read: “Solution. The 41st Engineer Regiment will train steam shovel operators and truck drivers by removing the Fort Bragg manure pile.”

Wood smiled approvingly. “You are all learning quickly,” he said.

The next chart laid out the magnitude of the task. The pile contained approximately 1,000 cubic yards of manure. If each truck could hold two yards, this amounted to 500 truckloads. Allowing 15 minutes to load a truck and the balance of the hour to dump the manure and return would mean each steam shovel could load six truckloads an hour. Using two steam shovels and 20 trucks, the job would take just over 40 hours. This appeared to be well within the 72 hours allotted, but there were only 12 hours of daylight, which meant that the job would require working into the night and using the regiment’s floodlights and generators.

However, since our regiment had yet to be assigned heavy equipment and vehicles, we had no steam shovels or dump trucks.

The next chart gave the solution to this problem. The regiment would use its Special Fund for

Exercises (SFE) to rent two steam shovels and hire four civilian operators, two of whom could work overtime. We would also rent 20 trucks and hire 40 truck drivers. Soldiers from the regiment would be assigned to each civilian shovel operator and truck driver to train them. This gave us a completely justifiable rationale, we reasoned, for the SFE expenditures.

Wood was delighted. "I commend you," he said. "You have produced an imaginative and workable solution for carrying out the mission. The plan is approved."

But then Major Beard asked, "Where will we dump the manure?" Obviously, we had neglected an important element. "Where have other details taken the manure?" Beard inquired.

Lieutenant Hamner, who seemed to know most of the answers, spoke up: "I understand the manure is delivered to farms near Fort Bragg."

Wood directed the lieutenant to see the stable chief. Within an hour Hamner returned with the stable master's logbook of farms receiving the manure.

"I'd better handle this task myself," said Wood. "I'll start calling the farmers in the morning and determine where to deliver the manure. Meanwhile, I'd like Captain Seedlock to arrange for the rental of the steam shovels and dump trucks and the hire of operators and drivers. Also, I'd like him to have one of you select soldiers who will receive the training."

The next morning, a Saturday, Colonel Wood began calling local farmers. The conversations were something like this:

"Mr. Abel, I'm Colonel Wood at Fort Bragg. My unit has been assigned the mission of delivering horse manure next week. I see you have been receiving five truckloads every week."

"That's right," answered Abel.

"Can you use 50 loads?" asked Wood.

"Oh, no," said the astonished farmer. "Five is as much as I can use."

"All right," said Wood. He wrote the number five opposite Abel's name; only 495 truckloads to go.

"Mr. Bates, this is Colonel Wood at Fort Bragg. I have the mission of disposing of horse manure. I see you have been getting five truckloads every week. Can you use 50?"

The startled farmer said no but thought he could use 10 loads.

"Okay, 10 loads," said Wood. He subtracted 10 from the total. "Only 485 loads to go," he said cheerfully.

And so it went for the next hour. By using all his persuasive powers, the colonel was able to get down to 450 loads by the time he reached the G's. The next customer on his list was the Fort Bragg Golf Club.

"Mr. Brown, I understand you're the manager of the golf course. I'm Colonel Wood ..."

"Colonel Wood," said Brown. "I seem to be low on the post's priority list. The officials at Fort Bragg are always playing politics with the local farmers. I haven't received any manure in over

year.”

“This time you’re in luck, how much can you use?” asked Wood.

“Colonel,” said the unsuspecting manager, “I can use all you can give me.”

Beckoning to several of us to overhear the conversation, Wood said, “Mr. Brown, can you repeat what you just said?”

“Colonel Wood, I can use all the horse manure you can give me,” said Brown.

“Thank you very much,” said Wood, beaming. He wrote down 450 and subtracted it from the remaining total. The new balance was a big round zero.

In the two months that I had been in the 41st Engineers, I heard a great deal about Colonel Wood’s principles. One of his strongest convictions was that soldiering was an honorable profession. Quoting from the Roman generals, he said that soldiers should be treated with dignity and respect.

“If I had my choice,” lectured Wood, “I’d like my soldiers to be like the Spartans: well trained and aggressive. Better yet, I’d like my soldiers to be like the Janissaries, who were taken from the families at the age of 14 and raised for 10 years by professional soldiers.”

To Wood the dirtiest words in the English language were “fatigue detail.” Such work, trivial tasks that did little more than eat up time, had become a way of life in the small army between the wars. The motto in those days was, “If it moves, salute it, if it doesn’t move, paint it.” Short of funds for training, ammunition and fuel, soldiers were kept busy raking leaves and whitewashing stones. To these chores were added innumerable “fatigue details”, such as picking up cigarette butts and beer bottles.

Wood said there was nothing wrong with leaves on the ground and ordered all rakes removed from tool rooms. He also ordered that no stones, walkways or fences be whitewashed. He reduced the need for cigarette butt and beer bottle details by issuing an order: “Don’t throw it down; if someone else has, pick it up.” He set the example by picking up any litter he saw in the barracks area.

Wood believed that a soldier should devote all his time to training and not be distracted by such tasks as peeling potatoes or washing dishes. He said these chores only served to take time away from training. At one point he even tried to get the Army to pay for civilian cooks and dishwashers but failed to get his order approved. He even went so far as to assert that soldiers should not be required to make their beds or sweep barracks floors. Such jobs were for “lowly civilians.”

Unable to convince superiors to allocate funds for such tasks, Wood sold the idea of recruiting patriotic women from nearby Fayetteville to cook, clean and do laundering for his soldiers. It was quite the anomaly at the time — local white women waiting on a regiment whose enlisted men were all black. But while the women were nonplussed, pleased to help a good cause, Wood’s superior ended the practice because it appeared too much like the Army was providing camp followers. Such female entourages were against regulation. In short, soldiers needed to learn to cook and perform other housekeeping chores.

Wood's stand against "fatigue details" was uncompromising. "If something other than training must be done," he said, "it must be done by assigning missions and exercising the chain of command. Leaders at all echelons will supervise the work to assure that it is done efficiently and well."

It was clear that so long as he was in command, no soldier in the 41st Engineers would ever have to be a member of a "fatigue detail." "I'd rather have soldiers occupying themselves with sports than with make-work," he often said.

Despite his intentions, Wood's men were at work shoveling manure Monday morning at 6 a.m. when the colonel received a phone call from a furious Devers. "Colonel Wood," he shouted. "Get down to the golf club at once. I've just halted your parade of dump trucks that have deposited 20 loads of horse manure between the tee and green at the first hole. I want you down here right away."

Captain Seedlock, Lieutenant Hamner and I accompanied Wood. Devers was so upset he could hardly restrain himself. "Colonel Wood," he thundered. "What in the hell do you think you're doing?"

"I'm carrying out the mission you assigned the 41st Engineers," said Wood. "I'm disposing of the horse manure. Mr. Brown said he could use all I could give him."

"You goddamn fool," barked Devers. "Get some men down here to scrape up the manure. Move somewhere else."

"Yes sir," answered Wood. He turned to Seedlock. "Issue an order in my name, through the battalion commander, to Company A. Instruct them to assign the proper size units to scraping up the manure from the golf course, loading it into trucks and disposing of it at Site A." Site A was the location specified in Captain Seedlock's alternate plan, the city of Fayetteville's landfill.

An astonished soldier, waving biting flies from his face and arms, humorously yelled out "Goddamn Stinky Joe Wood." The nickname, however, didn't stick. The colonel's loyal and admiring men were pleased that he was saving them from any further manure details. To them, he would remain Smokey Joe Wood.



41st Engineers, Color Guard, Fort Bragg, NC, 1941

Arthur Rothstein photographer, Library of Congress

My Early Years



Maryann Rowny and Edward L. Rowny, 1917.

Rowny Photo Collection

As background to my relationship with Smokey Joe Wood, I should share my early years up until I graduated from West Point.

I was born on April 3, 1917, in Baltimore, Maryland. My father, Gracyan John Rowny, born in 1893, emigrated from Poland in 1912. The spelling of the family name dates back to 1657. Before then, it was spelled “Rowne.” The name has two meanings: a traditional one — “plain” — that describes the territory, and a modern definition — “straight and true” — which is more flattering. I naturally prefer the second meaning.

My father came from the farm village of Nagoszewo, 80 kilometers northeast of Warsaw, which was then part of Russia. Poland had ceased to exist in 1795 when it was partitioned among three countries: Prussia, Russia, and Austria. My father was the fourth son, and as was the custom, only the first three sons inherited fractions of the farm, one-third each. Any more heirs created parcels too small to sustain individual families. Accordingly, Gracyan had to make a living elsewhere.

Early in his teens, my father decided to go to America to follow in the footsteps of his Uncle Peter. His uncle wrote his nephew that the streets of his new home “were paved with gold.” My father saved the equivalent of \$10 by selling eggs to Russian soldiers on maneuvers in the area. This allowed him to put down a deposit on a \$100 steerage class passage to Baltimore, Maryland. The remaining \$90 — a loan from the ship’s agency — could be repaid at any time along with interest at five percent per

month. My dad, now calling himself G. John since his name was too often confused with the girl name Grace, was proud that he was able to pay off his loan within six months. The only job G. John could land was that of a stevedore in Baltimore Harbor unloading bags of fertilizer from Chile. This was extremely difficult work since the bags weighed 90 pounds and my dad then scarcely weighed more than 100 pounds. After several days of unloading the fertilizer in 100-degree heat, he collapsed and was fired. My dad said that he broke down and cried, longing for the fresh air of his farm in the old country. He debated going back home but decided to stick it out.



Oyster fleet in Baltimore Harbor, Md., circa 1885.

National Archives



Littered alleyway entrance to a Baltimore garment factory, 1921.

National Archives

G. John had the good fortune of “graduating” as he put it, to a job as a ditch digger at the Baltimore Gas Company, where the work was much easier. Within a year, he broke the mold and replaced the Irish foreman by being put in charge of 10 “Polacks.” When he learned that Henry Ford was paying \$5 a day to mechanics, twice his earnings, he decided to move to Detroit. After a week on the assembly line, bored by tightening the same bolt on each engine and ill from oil fumes, he decided it was not the life for him. Spending \$20 of the \$30 he earned, he bought a bus ticket to go as far west as the money would take him.

Arriving in Fargo, North Dakota, he was immediately corralled by a farmer looking for farm hands. He trained my father to operate a threshing machine. After a year of hard work in the fresh open air and with plenty of milk, eggs, bread and sausage, he gained two inches in height and 100 pounds in weight. His stay on the farm came to an abrupt end when he took the farmer’s daughter to a Saturday night dance. Instead of bringing her back at the specified time of midnight, my dad and his date returned at 2 a.m. The irate farmer, in true shotgun wedding fashion, told my father he was to marry his daughter on Monday.

Before dawn, my frightened father packed his suitcase and caught a bus for Baltimore. The farmer’s daughter was bright and attractive, he said, but he had not come to America to spend his life on a farm. Back in Baltimore, a newspaper ad for carpenters for the William E. Woodall, ship building company, caught his attention. My father went to a hardware store and bought a chest of fine carpenter tools. He traded his new chest minus the tools for his friend’s old chest. He felt this combination of an old chest and new tools would convince the employer to hire him, since master craftsman only use the finest tools.

My dad rented a room in East Baltimore from a landlady who had one of the most beautiful daughters in town. Naturally, he, a tall handsome man, was soon dating her, even though the landlady discouraged the courtship. She had come to America from Posen, the Prussian part of Poland populated by “refined people” who looked down on “peasants” from the Russian part like my father. The girl’s father came from a town near Cracow, in the Austrian section, considered to be inferior to the Prussians but superior to the “Russkies.” Nonetheless, the romance prevailed and a year later, in 1916, my parents were married — but not until my father met my mother’s demand that he become a U.S. citizen. As my dad told it, he went before a sleepy examiner in the Baltimore immigration office and was asked to explain the U.S. system of separation of powers. He began rattling off that the Executive branch consisted of a President and Vice President, the Legislative branch of two Senators per state and one Congressman per 300,000 citizens, and the Judicial branch of a Supreme Court of nine justices. Before he could go further the examiner interrupted. “You know all that crap!” he said. “What ship did you come over on?” My father, revealing his independent streak, said to the yawning indifferent examiner: “Mayflower.” My father proudly displayed his citizenship papers showing that he came to America on the Mayflower. Using the document as proof, he applied for membership in

the General Society of Mayflower Descendants. The amused officials made him an honorary member.

At the outbreak of World War I, my dad volunteered to join the Army but was rejected because shipyard workers were exempted from service as being essential to the war effort. He started going to night school and continued to do so for 14 years, eventually earning a diploma as a certified architect from the Maryland Institute College of Art. By observing and imitating the best carpenters, he soon became a skilled craftsman. Within six months he was named foreman of the ship's carpenter's crew. By 1920, the war having ended, shipyards were closing down.



Edward L. Rowny, Age 5, 1922

Rowny Photo Collection

My father saw a new opportunity with civilian prosperity returning. People began buying houses, most of which needed remodeling. He asked several of his better fellow carpenters to join him in contracting business, and it was soon thriving. In 1922, when I was five years old, my parents and I moved into a house he had remodeled in the better part of town. Things went swimmingly for a year. Then disaster struck. My mother almost died giving birth to my brother. She was too weak to care for us. My brother went to live with our aunt and I went back to our grandmother's where I was born. My grandparents' home was near P.S.#3, considered one of the best elementary schools.

in Baltimore. My grandfather was a kind and gentle soul who devoted a great deal of attention to me. He took me with him on walks in the woods to gather seeds, leaves and roots for his collection of herbal medicines, mounting them in a large album with his descriptions of cures for various ills. He died when I was 8 years old. I stayed on with my grandmother, who was able to make ends meet with a small amount for room and board my dad gave her.

In several years, my mother recovered, but by then the economy was in a downward spiral. My younger brother returned home but my parents decided I should stay with my grandmother, since she was entitled to attend the prestigious Baltimore Polytechnic Institute (BPI). Growing up with my grandmother had its lighter and darker sides. On the bright side, my grandmother was a wonderful surrogate mother. Intelligent and highly educated, she spoke five languages. In Poland she had been a governess to a wealthy family that frequented places like Zakopane, a mountain resort in the south that attracted intellectuals, poets and painters.

On the darker side, life grew harder as the economy deteriorated. When the Great Depression broke out in full force in 1929, my father's business dried up and he was able to contribute only a couple of dollars a week for my room and board. Although we didn't go hungry, our diet consisted mostly of red cabbage and potatoes. I got up at 4 a.m. to sell newspapers until it was time to go to school, my earnings amounting to 21 cents a day, most of which went toward a \$12 overcoat. My grandmother took up two jobs to help make ends meet. She worked for 10 cents an hour in a cannery factory from 4 a.m. to 9 a.m. and worked another five hours in the afternoons and early evenings for a coat factory. She earned a penny for each buttonhole she finished with a basting stitch. Between the two jobs, she earned over a dollar a day. This, plus the couple of dollars my father gave her, was enough to cover necessities but no luxuries. Still, life at home was cheerful. My grandmother recited poems by Goethe, Verlaine, and the poet laureate of Poland, Mickiewicz, all in their original languages followed by English translations.

Despite my working pre-dawn hours, I managed to skip grades and advance quickly in school. I joined the Baltimore Harmonica Band at age 10. The *Baltimore Sun* ran a special for delivery boys promising them a harmonica if they sold 10 subscriptions. I became the proud owner of a 1-hole Harmonica and received an hour's instruction for each of 10 weeks. Twelve other newsboys had harmonica winners and I decided to form the Baltimore Harmonica band. Our band played at various concert halls, which allowed us to get our fill of refreshments. I met a boy named Larry Adler, who took piano lessons and could read music. At his first-year recital at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University his Viennese teacher asked, "Vot are ve going to play?" "Madame, ve are not going to play anything, but I am going to play Yes! We have No Bananas," he responded. It was no surprise that Adler was expelled. But his ability to read music allowed me to teach him his first piece, Paderewski's Minuet in G. At our first harmonica band contest, I won first prize by playing Dvorak's "Humoresque." Larry and I won first prize in a duet of "La Donna e Mobile" from the

opera *Rigoletto*. In a second year contest Adler won first prize by playing Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," playing far superior to my rendition of Hoagy Carmichael's "Stardust." Continuing to outperform me, Larry Adler chose not to go to college but to Broadway, where he joined the Eddie Cantor radio show.

After several years, he moved to Hollywood, where he played background music for such movies as *The Great Chase*. Within a decade, he became known as a world champion harmonica player. Unfortunately, Adler also unwittingly ended up on Senator McCarthy's list of communist sympathizers. Incensed by the accusation, he moved to England. He returned for a visit in 1985 to receive an honorary degree from the Peabody Institute, which had expelled him in 1936. I joined him in the same duet that earned us first prize years earlier, but not before Adler introduced us with this bit of wry wit: "If Ed will hold up the right wing, I'll hold up the left wing, and we'll fly down the middle." He closed by saying "I don't know why they need guided missiles when they have us."



Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, North Avenue location prior to 1967.

Baltimore Polytechnic Institute Archives

Returning to my early years, I thrived at BPI, primarily because the school's dedicated and inspirational faculty included some of the best teachers I ever had. I later learned that BPI was ranked among the 10 best high schools in the U.S. And, at alumni meetings, I met such notables as Henry Louis Mencken, the satirist and renowned author of *The American Language*.

I spent a miserable freshman year in high school being bullied because I was several years younger and less physically developed than my classmates. Entering my sophomore year, I was rescued by Wilmer Dehuf, Poly's principal. He assigned me the job of tutoring a classmate who was a promising football player but failing in math. When my bullies saw that the student I was coaching was big and strong, they backed off. Life once again became pleasant.

In 1933, at the age of 16, I earned a scholarship for tuition to Johns Hopkins University. I studied engineering and earned my room and board by working as a research assistant to a teacher who was writing a textbook. I started at the minimum wage of 22½ cents an hour. During the summer break I got a job at the same wage at Crosse & Blackwell, an international food manufacturing company. I was delighted when President Roosevelt raised the minimum wage to 25 cents an hour and I was able to take home \$25 for each 100-hour workweek.



Portrait of Thaddeus Kosciuszko by Juliusz E. Kossak, 1824 -1899

In the spring of 1936, during my junior year, I was awarded a scholarship by the Kosciuszko Foundation to study in Poland. Thaddeus Kosciuszko was a Polish officer in the American Revolution who was credited by George Washington with turning the tide of the revolution at the Battle of Saratoga. He later designed and built West Point. The scholarship paid for my tuition, room and board for a semester at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland as well as my transportation to get me there. Since the course of study was not demanding, I reveled in the opportunity to travel to the major capitals of Europe. My scholarship gave me a free railway ticket and \$1 a day for food when I traveled. I was thrilled by such sights as the magnificent cathedrals in France and the fine paintings and sculptures in Italy.





Mass roll call of Nazi troops, Nuremberg, Germany, Nov. 9, 1935

National Archive

My next to last trip was to Berlin. I starved for two days in order to buy a \$2 ticket to the 1936 Summer Olympics. I was overjoyed to witness Jesse Owens win four gold medals and saw the American flag being raised at the presentation of each medal. I watched in bewilderment, however, when Hitler turned his back on the great black athlete. Apparently, only the Americans present seemed to understand its significance. I became alarmed at the end of the day's events when Nazi storm troopers marched onto the field. Carrying flaming torches, shouting "Heil Hitler" and stomping their hobnail boots, they were a terrifying spectacle. It was a shocking sight that struck pride in some, but fear — and fury — in me. I don't think I was ever the same again. I sensed that Europe was heading toward war, and decided then and there that when I returned home, I would begin preparing myself to enter the inevitable and imminent war.

My final trip was a memorable one to Turkey. Arriving at Istanbul, I learned that Kemal Ataturk, the Turkish President, was in the city. Taking a chance that he would be willing to meet with me, I was delighted to be granted a 15-minute interview. My meeting with the wise and learned president lasted over an hour. He wanted to know what Americans thought of his social and economic reforms. As a 19-year old engineering university student, I was not able to answer his specific and detailed questions, but told him that Americans admired the revolutionary changes he was bringing about in Turkey. He was especially interested in what I observed at the Berlin Olympics and agreed with me that war with Germany was inevitable. My most lasting impression was listening to the leader of a country half the way around the world from the United States recite the Declaration of Independence.

Returning to Johns Hopkins, I took more interest in my ROTC program, but realized that my commission in the U.S. Army upon graduation would be in the Reserves. Believing that I had a better chance of surviving a war and contributing to its outcome if I had more training, I wanted to be a regular officer. I applied and was accepted to attend West Point. In June of the following year, I graduated from Hopkins.

At the military academy, I began life as a plebe on July 1 and did four years of college study over again. In retrospect, this proved a good decision for several reasons. First, the Depression was not yet over, and jobs were scarce. Second, the academy allowed me to round out my education especially in what pertained to world history, which proved invaluable in my later career. The engineering course work at Johns Hopkins slighted such subjects as writing, literature and history. Third, and most important, my training at West Point gave me a solid grounding in the military profession and led to a regular commission. It was the best foundation for my chosen career as a professional Army officer.

I found my plebe year to be more an annoyance than a hardship, physically and emotionally. The academics came easily since the academy's engineering curriculum was similar to that of Johns Hopkins. In my yearling, or second year at West Point, no longer under stress as a plebe, and not needing to devote much time to study, life became more pleasant. This gave me the opportunity to spend most of my time reading great books on military history. I read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Will and Ariel Durant's *Story of Civilization* and Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Along with such others as Plutarch's *Lives* and Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, I read the best narratives of war. Because Johns Hopkins was the top-ranked lacrosse school, the West Point coach naturally assumed I played and put me on the lacrosse team. It didn't take long before I was bounced. I hadn't, in fact, ever played lacrosse and wasn't even a good athlete. However, I liked the sport and later became manager of the varsity team, which carried with it the award of a major letter. I also had time for extracurricular activities. Where I truly excelled was on the West Point debating team, which won the national championship in 1939. I had good company; my teammates included Andrew Goodpaster, later supreme commander of NATO, and William Kintner, who became ambassador to Thailand.

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