



# **Carved from Granite: West Point since 1902 (Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series)**

*Lance Betros PhD*

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The United States Military Academy at West Point is one of America's oldest and most revered institutions. Founded in 1802, its first and only mission is to prepare young men—and, since 1976, young women—to be leaders of character for service as commissioned officers in the United States Army. West Point's success in accomplishing that mission has secured its reputation as the foremost leadership-development institution in the world. An Academy promotional poster says it this way: "At West Point, much of the history we teach was made by people we taught."

*Carved from Granite* is the story of how West Point goes about producing military leaders of character. An opening chapter on the Academy's nineteenth-century history provides context for the topic of each subsequent chapter. As scholar and Academy graduate Lance Betros shows, West Point's early history is interesting and colorful, but its history since then is far more relevant to the issues—and problems—that face the Academy today.

Drawing from oral histories, archival sources, and his own experiences as a cadet and, later, a faculty member, Betros describes and assesses how well West Point has accomplished its mission. And, while West Point is an impressive institution in many ways, Betros does not hesitate to expose problems and challenge long-held assumptions. In a concluding chapter that is both subjective and interpretive, the author offers his prescriptions for improving the institution, focusing particularly on the areas of governance, admissions, and intercollegiate athletics. Photographs, tables, charts, and other graphics aid the clarity of the discussion and lend visual and historical interest.

*Carved from Granite: West Point since 1902* is the most authoritative history of the modern United States Military Academy written to date. There will be lively debate over some of the observations made in this book, but if they are followed, the author asserts that the Academy will emerge stronger and better able to accomplish its vital mission in the new century and beyond.

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