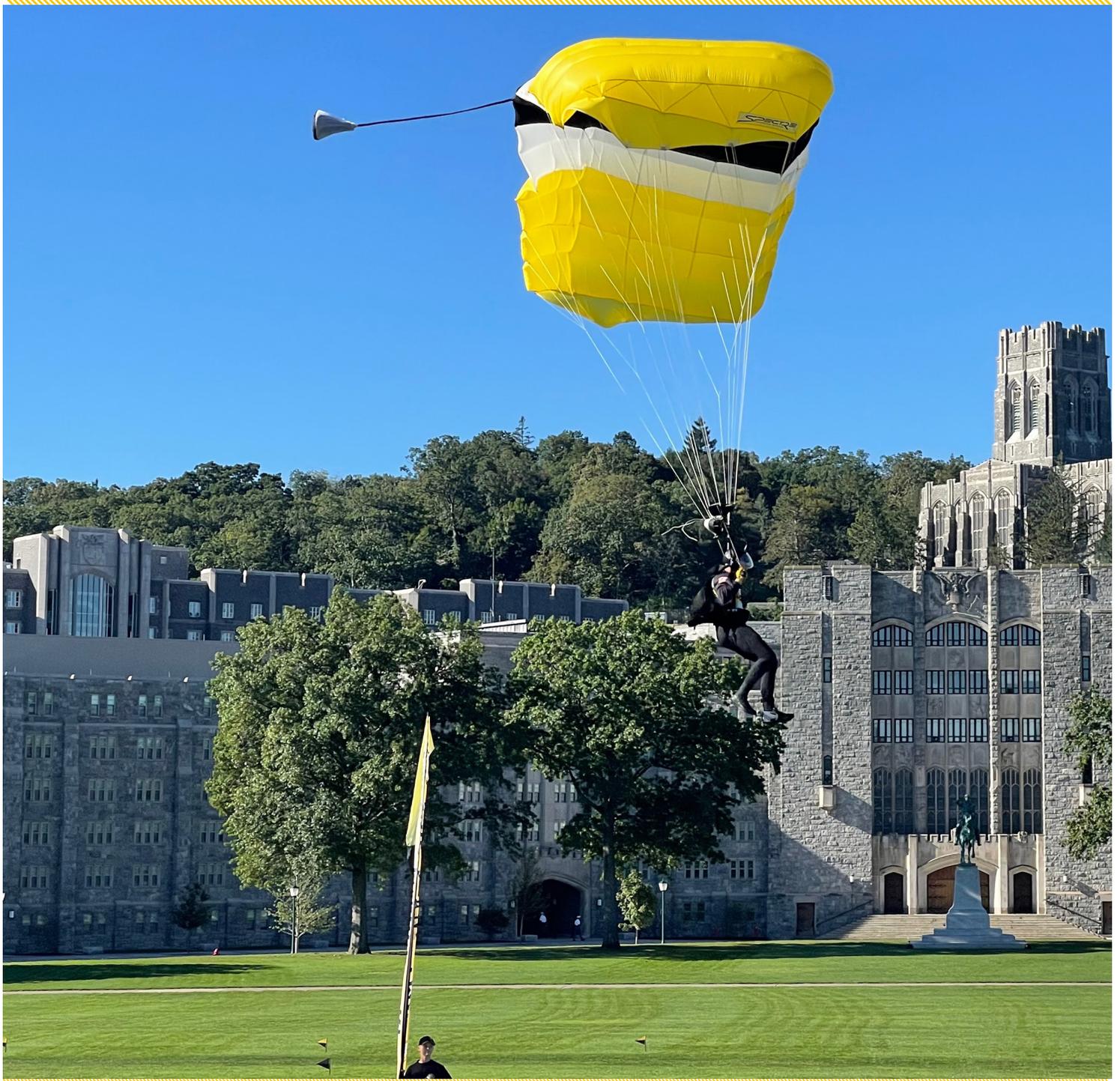
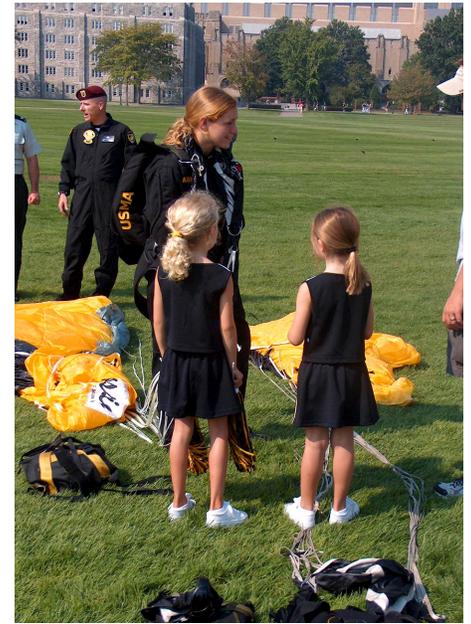


# WEST POINT PARACHUTE TEAM



West Point  
**READY** 

READY TO SERVE. READY TO LEAD.



Many cadets play sports for the rush of adrenaline. Whether on the court or on the track, they enjoy the sense of competition, the chance to push their abilities and their stamina. For some, the quest to find that adrenaline rush takes them to more demanding locations than the manicured fields or polished courts of traditional play. Members of the West Point Mountain Hiking Club, for example, regularly test their limits on multiday hikes across the rugged terrain of the Catskills. However, few cadet-athletes can claim to find their adrenaline rush where members of the West Point Sport Parachute Team regularly find theirs—at 12,000 feet above the ground.

Began in 1959, the West Point Sport Parachute Team is one of the oldest continuously operating parachute teams in the U.S. Military. The team has a record of cultivating not only leaders in the sport—over the past five years the team has won 155 individual national medals and two national championships—but also leaders for West Point and the Nation.

Indeed, the team is unmatched in its ability to produce leaders. Since 2001, a number of the Academy's First Captains, Regimental Commanders, and other leaders within the Corps of Cadets have been members of the Sport Parachute Team. More than fifty fourth class cadets try out each year for the eight to ten coveted spots on the roster. In the sky and on the ground, the team contains some of the best cadets at West Point.

The Sport Parachute Team endowment expands this important and popular Cadet club by providing cadets more jumping and competition opportunities as well as ensuring that they have access to the best equipment for peak performance and safety.

## VOICES FROM ABOVE

*"Being a member of the parachute team has given me friends for life and unforgettable memories. The team has also helped me understand my limitations while teaching me how to make quick decisions under pressure and fear management!"*

—James Fenn, Class of 2023

*"Being a member of the team not only has provided me with a once in a lifetime opportunity but has fostered my growth and development as a leader at the academy. Gaining a new rating meant to be able to participate in more demonstrations and more events at our national competition, but also being qualified to aid and train the lower classes on the team. I have met lifelong friends whilst being on the team and I will never regret the sacrifices I had to make to fully commit myself to the team."*

—Bianca Greer, Class of 2022

*"The leadership and personal lessons I learned from this team primed me for leadership in the Army and in combat. The high-risk, high-reward, demand for excellence mindset of the team taught me to think clearly and calmly under pressure. I was able to transfer the lessons I learned as a member of this team to my training as a lieutenant, platoon leader in Afghanistan, and company commander in Iraq. The team mindset of this team remains strong. I and many other graduates often talk about how we stay in touch with our teammates and look forward to taking to the skies together again."*

—Chris Gaulin, Class of 2010, Officer-in-Charge



## THE CADET JUMPMASTER

The cadet jumpmaster is responsible for ensuring that everyone has received an equipment check. After boarding the aircraft, the jumpmaster must communicate with the pilot and continually monitor the safety of those aboard. After reaching the correct altitude and verifying with the pilot that the winds on the ground are still safe, the jumpmaster must direct the pilot on the correct approach while continually monitoring the airspace for other aircraft. Once the exit point is 30 seconds out, the jumpmaster tells the jumpers to 'stand-by'. At the exit point, the jumpmaster must decide if this operation is safe and if they have selected the correct exit point. Allowing enough time for safe separation between jumpers, the jumpmaster gives the exit command to the other jumpers before exiting last in the stack. Now the jumpmaster must do their job as a demonstrator and land on target. Jumpers often use devices like pyrotechnics (smoke), flags, and streamers and must consider the safety of the crowd and crew. Being a jumpmaster during a parachute demonstration is an operation full of leadership challenges—ones that prepare for challenges they'll face in service to the nation.

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## EQUIPMENT & TRAINING

Despite the history of parachuting excellence at West Point, other academies and teams with better resources have undercut the team's competitive edge. Many civilian collegiate competitors now enjoy sponsorships from gear companies, giving them the chance to jump year-round or, at least, throughout the summer. Many competitors simply have more funding to purchase both expensive equipment and time in vertical wind tunnels to build air skills.

Funding for the equipment needed to preform demonstrations and compete safely at the national level is critical. Equipment, such as altimeter, canopies, and automatic activation devices used in the skydiving community, comes at a high cost due to the level of quality required to save lives in this extreme activity.

West Point's famous "gray period" of weather and competing academic and military requirements necessitate that the team conduct intense training trips during the spring and fall. These trips often involve the opportunity to jump with experts such as the U.S. Army Golden Knights or other service academy teams which helps develop each more competitive teams and fosters inter-academy relationships. In addition, the ability to train in the winter requires funding for use of commercial vertical wind tunnels which are a great tool to train freefall competitions.





Photo: Lee Ross '73

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

**GENEROUS GRADUATES AND FRIENDS OF THE ACADEMY WHO SUPPORT THE WEST POINT PARACHUTE TEAM WILL TAKE PRIDE IN THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF THEIR GIFTS.**

*Funding & Recognition Opportunities*

Cadet Sport Parachute Team Endowment (*funded*) ..... \$1.2 million

Support for the West Point Sport Parachute Team Endowment will enable the team to expand in many possible ways:

- Host an Annual West Point Collegiate Invitational
- Travel and participation in Nationals Competition
- Increase jumping opportunities in nearby Gardiner, New York

MARGIN OF EXCELLENCE



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