

The original documents are located in Box 121, folder “West Point Cheating” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Ron Nessen donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

PRESS GUIDANCE
9/10/76

WEST POINT AFFIDAVITS

Q: What is the Presidents response to the confidential affidavits presented by a group of West Point cadets listing names of other cheaters?

A: On the President's behalf, Phil Buchen sent a letter to Rev. Thomas J. Curley (of the Catholic Chapel at West Point who had sent the affidavits to the President) explaining that the President could not accept the affidavits under the stipulated conditions of confidentiality and requested Rev. Curley to submit the affidavits to the Secretary of the Army as part of his investigation of Honor Code violations.

(Copy of letter attached -- we will not release the text.)

chron

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 9, 1976

Dear Reverend Curley:

On behalf of the President, this is in response to your letter of September 3, 1976, enclosing affidavits prepared by members of the Corps of Cadets of the United States Military Academy.

As you know, the Secretary of the Army is personally monitoring the situation at West Point. He recently announced a series of actions addressing not only the specific cases that have arisen from the electrical engineering 304 cheating incident, but also the broader issue of the overall integrity and vitality of the Honor Code System. The secretary is aware of charges that there are members of the Corps, as yet undetected, who may have committed Honor Code violations either in connection with the electrical engineering 304 home study project or in other ways, and he has continuously reaffirmed his intent to pursue every lead and to give attention to any case where there is evidence to support a charge of an Honor Code violation. However, in so doing, the Secretary believes it is essential to deal with all charges in a systematic and even-handed manner, so as to protect the rights of cadets and to assure equality of treatment among cadets similarly situated.

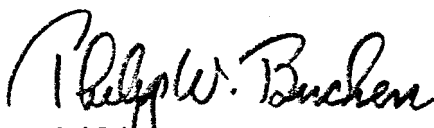
You can be assured that any information concerning possible Honor Code violations supplied by members of the Corps, by means of affidavit or otherwise, will be carefully reviewed and fully investigated. However, it is not appropriate to accept the proffered affidavits under the conditions you have imposed, specifically, that use of the information be subject to the attorney-client privilege. To do so would be fundamentally unfair since it would result in unequal treatment as between cadets already charged with Honor Code violations and those



against whom charges may be made in these affidavits. Accordingly, I am returning these affidavits to you.

I strongly urge that you provide these affidavits, without conditions, directly to the Secretary of the Army in order that he may be afforded an opportunity to review the information they contain, and may institute, where warranted, appropriate investigations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Philip W. Buchen". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Philip W. Buchen
Counsel to the President

The Reverend Thomas J. Curley
Catholic Chapel of the Most Holy Trinity
United States Military Academy
West Point, New York 10996

WEST POINT CHEATING

Q. As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Services what are you planning to do about the cheating scandals at West Point.

A. I am, of course, deeply concerned about the reports of cheating at the Military Academy.

The Army, however, is handling the matter through its normal channels, and it would not be right for me to comment on this specific matter.

I do, however, support Secretary Hoffman's desire to look into the Academy's Honor Code system when this specific incident is resolved, and I trust that this incident will not discredit any of the service academies, which represent the cornerstone of our officer corps and an important part of our entire national defense effort.

WEST POINT CHEATING

Q. As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Services what are you planning to do about the cheating scandals at West Point.

A. I am, of course, deeply concerned about the reports of cheating at the Military Academy.

The Army, however, is handling the matter through its normal channels, and it would not be right for me to comment on this specific matter.

I do, however, support Secretary Hoffman's desire to look into the Academy's Honor Code system when this specific incident is resolved, and I trust that this incident will not discredit any of the service academies, which represent the cornerstone of our officer corps and an important part of our entire national defense effort.