Garrison H. Davidson  
USMA Class of 1927

Lieutenant General Garrison H. Davidson was born in 1904 in New York City; his father was a veteran of the Spanish-American War. Davidson reported to the U.S. Military Academy in the summer of 1923, and excelled in football, the indoor track meet, served as class vice president and on the Honor Committee. He graduated 22nd (of 203) in his class and after graduation coached football at the Academy while also serving as a platoon leader in Delaware and New Jersey. In 1930 he was assigned to USMA as a Mechanics instructor and then named Head Army Football Coach in late 1932 (he was the youngest head football coach ever at the Academy and compiled a 35-11-1 record in 5 seasons).

Commissioned into the Corps of Engineers, Davidson left the Academy in 1938 to serve in Hawaii, California, and then the Chief of Engineers’ staff in Washington, DC for planning the pre-war military build-up and also the construction of the Pentagon. During WWII he served in North Africa, Sicily, and was the Seventh Army Engineer for the invasion of southern France and their push into Germany. After a brief tour as the Darmstadt War Crimes Commission and Sixth Army in California, Garrison undertook the defense of Pusan in Korea and then was placed in charge of the defense of Seoul.

Davidson was selected to be the 44th Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy, serving from 1956-1960. According to his to WPAOG Memorial Article, his tenure “was marked by open communication with the Corps and constant attention to the career development of the future officers under his administration.” Davidson was known for initiating a process of revision and modernization of the academy’s instructional program during his time at the head of the Academy (to include adding the first electives to the cadet schedule); as well as shifting from enrollment criteria based solely on college board exams and instead focusing on the “whole cadet” attributes of academic achievement, character, leadership potential, and physical fitness.

After serving as Superintendent, Davidson went on to command Seventh Army in Germany during the Cold War, and First Army in New York City while simultaneously serving as the U.S. Military Representative to the United Nations. He retired in 1964 upon reaching the mandatory retirement age at the time.

Davidson died in 1992 and is interred in the West Point Cemetery.

His Howitzer entry reads, “With a generous heart, a gentle nature, a gripping personality, a perfect set-up, an enviable athletic record, and a firm command of every situation, Gar is one of the most natural leaders that West Point has produced.”