

"The Lincoln Brigade"
One Story of the Faculty of the USMA Department of Social Sciences
By CPT Martha S. H. VanDriel

The engraving on monuments does not mark achievement. Only the engraving on the character and competence of our cadets and our young officers counts towards fulfillment of our mission.

Brigadier General George A. Lincoln,
Head of the USMA Department of Social Sciences from 1954 to 1969

I. The Picture

At first glance, the faces in the West Point yearbook photograph are un-extraordinary. Taken in the spring of 1973, this photograph of the faculty of the USMA Department of Social Sciences shows a group of seemingly average young captains and majors who were teaching American Politics, Economics, and International Relations to the cadets of West Point at the time. It would be easy to dismiss these fresh-faced, sometimes bespectacled officers as being members of a closeted academic elite who had little acquaintance with the outside world.

However, upon closer inspection, one notices that many of the smiles in the picture are belied by the marks of hardship - virtually all of the rotating faculty are wearing combat patches and Combat Infantryman Badges from serving one, two, or even three combat tours in the war in Vietnam. Many are also wearing Purple Heart medals on their chests, awarded for wounds sustained in combat.

As one studies the faces more closely, another surprise emerges - some of the faces look vaguely familiar. There in the second row stands a smiling Captain Wesley Clark, Rhodes scholar, future four-star general, and future Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). To the right is a youthful-looking Major Howard Graves - Rhodes scholar, future Commandant of the Army War College, future Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and USMA Superintendent from 1991-1996. At the far left of the picture, there is Captain Barry McCaffrey, future four-star general, future SOUTHCOM Commander, and Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy from 1996 to 2000. To the far right of the picture, there is Captain Daniel Christman, who graduated first in his USMA class and who would later serve as Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as a member of Dr. Henry Kissinger's National Security Council staff, and USMA Superintendent from 1996-2001. Immediately one row down is Captain James Golden, who would become the Head of the USMA Department of Social Sciences in 1989, and who would also serve intermittently as the Senior Staff Economist on the Council of Economic Advisers for three U.S. Presidents. And just to the right of Captain Golden is Major Don Snider, who would serve as a member of the Defense Directorate on the U.S. National Security Council Staff under Presidents Reagan and Bush, and later as Strategist Analyst in the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

What could bring together such an extraordinary group of Army officers? The answer: The vision of one man, Brigadier General George "Abe" Lincoln. General Lincoln, a Rhodes Scholar

from the USMA Class of 1929, voluntarily took a demotion from the rank of Major General to Colonel in 1947 in order to return to West Point to become Deputy Head of the newly named Department of Social Sciences. When he became Head of the Department in 1954, he implemented his vision of helping his country by enhancing the quality of U.S. national decision-making. He did this by recruiting some of the best and brightest young officers in the Army, sending them to top graduate schools, bringing them to USMA to teach in the Department of Social Sciences, and then presenting them to decision-makers in Washington, D.C. as intelligent, hard-working officers, capable of being placed in most any demanding job. After these faculty members left West Point, he monitored and, as opportunity allowed, promoted their careers in both the Army and throughout the U.S. government through a network of Department alumni, a group that became known as "the Lincoln Brigade." The Lincoln Brigade expanded with each departing cohort of Department faculty members, and it continues to grow today. This paper is about how General Lincoln formed the Lincoln Brigade, with a focus on the Department of Social Sciences rotating faculty of 1973.

Although General Lincoln had retired from the Army in 1969, before this cohort arrived to teach, this group's story clearly demonstrates how General Lincoln's vision, which was further implemented by those who followed him, has had a lasting, positive effect not only on the faculty members he recruited, but on West Point and the country that he loved.

II. BG Lincoln's vision

As a Rhodes Scholar, George Lincoln studied both politics and economics at Oxford after graduating from West Point in 1929. As the Army rapidly expanded to meet the demands of World War II, Lincoln's talents in the economics of national security quickly caught the attention of then-Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, who chose him to become one of his senior war planners on the Army General Staff. Lincoln quickly became a key figure in U.S. national security planning, as he helped plan for the defeat of Germany and Japan, prepared key U.S. leaders for President Roosevelt's wartime conferences, and helped reorganize America's postwar defense. Promoted to the rank of Brigadier General at the age of 38, he was the youngest general in the Army by the end of WWII. His last mission at the end of the war was assisting President Franklin D. Roosevelt and General Marshall prepare for the Allied conference at Yalta - a fact that would command widespread respect and awe from the cadets he would later teach.

When the war was over, General Marshall asked his faithful deputy, who was now a Major General, where he wanted to go; Marshall would see to it that Lincoln would receive any duty assignment he asked for. To Marshall's surprise, Lincoln requested to go to West Point to become the Deputy Head of the Department of Social Sciences - a position that would require Lincoln to take two reductions in rank, from Major General to Colonel. General Marshall tried to dissuade Lincoln from his decision, but Lincoln was determined, and ultimately got his wish in 1947.

Why did General Lincoln want to come to West Point to teach, even when it meant surrendering not only choice assignments, but also a drastic demotion in rank? The answer lies in General Lincoln's unique friendship with Brigadier General Herman Beukema, who was then Head of the Department of Social Sciences. Coming out of WWII, both recognized that policymakers in the U.S. government, especially military officers, had not been trained or educated to understand the vastly increased dimensions of national security in the complex post-war world, especially in

the areas of economics and international relations. Indeed, General Lincoln's extensive international experience and deep understanding of how national policy was made convinced him that West Point needed to create officers who would understand the new world emerging in the aftermath of WWII. Both believed that the Department of Social Sciences could be used to remedy the situation by training West Point officers to "meet changing forecasts of our national security needs."

To this end, when he became Head of the Department of Social Sciences in 1954, General Lincoln continued and greatly expanded a tradition that General Beukema had begun in the years immediately following WWII. General Lincoln recruited bright young officers to return to West Point to teach in the Department of Social Sciences, and after their tours of teaching duty were over, Lincoln used his extensive contacts in the American policy making community to place these young officers into positions throughout Washington. For example, while he was assigned to West Point, General Lincoln would go to Washington every year to help write the U.S. Army's annual posture statement. Since he knew most of the Army Chiefs of Staff because of his work on General Marshall's staff during World War II, he was able to place many Social Sciences ("Sosh") alumni throughout the Department of the Army and the Department of Defense. Before long, General Lincoln's West Point protégés had established reputations among those who sought their services as being "men of gold" and "Renaissance men" who displayed "effortless superiority." As a result, such officers, and "the Lincoln Brigade" from which they had emerged, earned a reputation as sought-after experts in national security policymaking.

III. The recruiting process

As recently as 1975, West Point academic departments collectively selected their faculty members from a pool of USMA graduates serving on active duty, who had volunteered to return to West Point to teach. However, when General Lincoln became Head of the Department, he implemented personnel procedures that were conducted separately from the rest of the Academy. Like any commander with a demanding mission, he wanted the best officers possible on his staff, so he began to track promising young graduates into their early careers, and then requested them by name to return to USMA to teach in the Department of Social Sciences. Promising firsties who wanted to return were told to maintain contact with the Department when they left, and a surprising number responded, given that many had only been able to take a few electives with the Department when they were cadets. Many had developed close relationships with their "Sosh" instructors, and all were fascinated by the material they had studied as cadets. Among them were Captain James Golden, Major Don Snider, and, in 1974, Captain Daniel J. Kaufman, who would become Head of the Department in 1996 and Dean of the Academic Board in 2000. All three had graduated as Distinguished Cadets, finishing in the top 5% of their USMA classes. Lincoln also recruited Rhodes scholars, such as Captain Wesley Clark and Major Howard Graves.

Likewise, officers with good academic records who had demonstrated great leadership abilities in the Army were singled out by Sosh alumni in the field and personally encouraged to apply for the rotating faculty, in order to ensure that the Department faculty would not be exclusively made up of West Point "starmen." For example, Captain Barry McCaffrey, whom the Army Infantry Branch had ranked as the #1 Infantry captain in his year group, and who was widely considered to have been one of the best company commanders in Vietnam, was aggressively recruited to come to

the Department. Another former Sosh "grad," Lieutenant General Frederic J. Brown, "brought several in from RVN [Republic of Vietnam] observation - clearly superb high-return people."

In addition, because of his high-level connections throughout the highest ranks of the Army, General Lincoln wielded a significant influence over the Army personnel system, which he often used in order to get the quality faculty members he wanted. For example, when Jim Golden graduated from West Point in 1965, he first went directly to graduate school at Harvard, because at that time, the top 5% of each graduating class could go directly to graduate school. After two years and completing his Masters Degree, Lieutenant Golden left Harvard for Ranger School, in preparation for his next duty station in Germany. One day, while slogging through the swamps of Florida, Lieutenant Golden was suddenly pulled out in mid-patrol and sent to the rear - it was an emergency, he was told. But when he got back to the cadre's offices, he was handed a phone - it was his Branch manager in Washington, D.C.! Apparently, General Lincoln had contacted the Army Personnel Command and told them that he wanted Lieutenant Golden to finish his PhD and return to West Point to teach. So, the Branch manager was calling Lieutenant Golden to propose an altered professional timeline to make this happen. Would Lieutenant Golden accept the changed timeline? Dumbfounded (and thankful) that General Lincoln had enough power to get him temporarily pulled out of the field during Ranger School, Lieutenant Golden gratefully accepted.

When General Lincoln retired as Head of the Department of Social Sciences in 1969, his legacy was perpetuated not only by successive Department Heads, but also by Department alumni. It was "unspoken, but expected" that former faculty members, wherever they were working and whatever they were doing, would recruit outstanding young officers to come to West Point to teach. Lincoln and his successors also attempted to select a broad array of officers, as the Department became one of the first at the Academy to select non-West Point graduates, women, minorities, and civilian instructors as members of its rotating faculty. Overall, this idea - that the academic departments at West Point ought to go after individuals by name to serve on the faculty - was introduced in the Department of Social Sciences, and this practice is common throughout the Academy today.

IV. Graduate schooling

Before World War II, the faculty at West Point had been composed of Academy graduates who had no additional schooling besides their USMA bachelor's degrees. However, after World War II, West Point adopted the concept of providing graduate schooling for its faculty, but only in engineering. General Lincoln broadened this concept by getting Department officers into top graduate schools to obtain degrees in the Social Sciences. Here, General Lincoln's influence and extensive contacts were key, for graduate schools in Economics and Political Science were initially hesitant about accepting USMA graduates, who had earned Bachelors degrees in engineering, with very few Social Sciences electives and no academic majors. However, Lincoln's protégés quickly established a reputation for performing well in graduate school, so much so that many graduate schools began to readily accept faculty candidates when the Department endorsed them. In addition, West Point paid for the graduate school tuition for its faculty members in full, which was obviously very attractive to many universities.

Finding officers who were skilled in areas such as national strategy and economics were in short supply in the 1950s, so the first officers that General Lincoln sent to graduate school were quickly incorporated into the Washington policy making community when their West Point faculty tours were up. Members of the Lincoln Brigade played critical roles in developing the newly established Department of Defense and the new National Security Council. Among these young officers were Brent Scowcroft, who would become the National Security Advisor for Presidents Ford and Bush, and Bernard Rogers, who would become Supreme Allied Commander Europe from 1979-1987.

The Department of Social Sciences under General Lincoln also sought to send its instructors to a diverse range of schools, in order to broaden the educational backgrounds of its faculty. For example, although Dan Christman, Barry McCaffrey, James Golden, and Don Snider all taught Economics during their tours as rotating faculty, their degrees ranged from an MPA and MSE degree in civil engineering from Princeton University (Christman), to an MA in civil government from American University (McCaffrey), to an MPA and PhD in economics from Harvard (Golden), to MPP and MA degrees in economics from the University of Wisconsin (Snider). In addition, the Department helped potential faculty members through the process of selecting and applying to graduate schools. In several cases in the Sosh cohort of 1972-73, the Department actually gained acceptance to graduate school for officers who were serving in field assignments in Vietnam, who understandably didn't have time to apply to graduate school from overseas.

V. Faculty development

General Lincoln's vision did not end with simply recruiting and educating outstanding young officers to handle the challenges of the Cold War. While assigned to the Department, rotating faculty members developed intellectually and professionally in a hard-charging atmosphere that promoted academic debate and encouraged critical thinking. The young captains and majors were also given numerous academic and professional opportunities to excel.

Teaching was the first duty of the rotating faculty. This simple fact had a profound intellectual and professional impact on the officers that General Lincoln and his successors recruited, since, "You learn what you teach." Therefore, faculty members who taught courses on National Security Strategy or Economics grew to become experts in their fields. According to GEN(R) Barry McCaffrey, who taught economics and national security from 1972 to 1975, his rotating faculty years were the "most important transformational experience" of his Army career. After eight years of tactical and often bloody combat experience, learning at graduate school and teaching cadets helped him to mature as an officer. He gained a much more sophisticated understanding of national issues, learned how to think analytically, and learned how to write quickly and effectively about complex subjects, which helped prepare him to become a senior Army officer. Likewise, the act of teaching - explaining, educating, and interacting - made him a more effective briefer and officer.

But contrary to many popular expectations, this "teaching" assignment was far from cushy. General Lincoln and his successors had recruited talented officers, and they expected a lot from them. For example, after working 14 hours a day to prepare his first semester lesson plans (since he hadn't studied economics in graduate school, but was assigned to teach it initially), Captain

McCaffrey was then given the additional duty to organize the Student Conference on U.S. Affairs (SCUSA), which was the largest undergraduate conference of its kind in the United States. After the conference was over, he was assigned to be the Department Personnel Officer, who was responsible for the rotating faculty recruiting and selection process - a process which required a great deal of work because it was conducted separately from the rest of the Academy. The next year, he was assigned to be the Department Executive Officer - yet another demanding job. This type of workload, in addition to teaching and grading a full course load, was typical within the Department. As COL(R) Don Snider later recollected, "We all left [West Point] after three years with our tongues hanging out - we loved it, but we were exhausted."

General Lincoln, like General Beukema before him, also believed that the Department's mission was broader than simply teaching in the classroom. He believed that Department officers needed to engage in outreach to assist the Army and agencies of the Department of Defense (DoD). For in order to teach effectively, faculty members were already abreast of the latest trends in their disciplines, often in regard to Army-related issues. This meant that they held a tremendous potential to contribute to the decision-making processes of the Army and of DoD. In order to harness this potential, General Lincoln used his extensive connections throughout Washington and the Lincoln Brigade in order to provide "summer jobs" for the Department faculty. These jobs were really opportunities to excel at demanding jobs in Washington, D.C. He also required his faculty members to conduct research, write papers, and publish scholarly articles during their faculty tours.

For example, in the early 1970s, each rotating faculty member spent his first summer assigned to a West Point training detail, either at Cadet Basic Training or at Camp Buckner. The following summer, however, he would be assigned to work in Washington at a high-level policy making office. For Major Don Snider, he was assigned for two months during the summer of 1973 as an analyst in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. His main duty was to write daily morning reports and summaries on the war in Vietnam, which were read by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the National Security Adviser. All rotating faculty members were expected to work in positions like this; the only exceptions were given to those who were working on completing their doctoral dissertations.

In addition, as noted earlier, General Lincoln strongly supported faculty research and writing, particularly in the area of national security. General Lincoln wanted his faculty members to contribute to their respective disciplines, become known, and in the process, cause West Point to become known and respected in academia and in government. Rotating faculty members were encouraged to present papers at conferences, brief government agencies and officials, and publish the results of their research. They were also encouraged to write jointly with the other armed services. Although the Department's teaching emphasis limited the amount of research that could be done, the faculty benefited from remaining current in areas related to their academic course material.

At times, these research projects would clash with Army policies, drawing criticism from senior military officers. For example, in 1973, Captain McCaffrey presented a paper on the future role of women in the military at a conference at the Air Force Academy. His findings were revolutionary: "His recommendations to the conference included discontinuing the WAC, integrating women into the Army mainstream, and allowing them to compete for jobs in all military

occupations save those related to direct combat, which he defined as anything at the combat brigade staff or lower." Captain McCaffrey earned a great deal of notoriety from presenting this paper, drawing fire from the USMA Superintendent and even from his own father, who was also an Army General Officer.

But Captain McCaffrey's findings were exactly the type of spark that General Lincoln had sought from his faculty. Sound national security decisions and ideas could not be generated in an environment that stifled creativity or the frank discussion of issues. Indeed, the atmosphere in the Department was very collegial, for the Department leadership recognized that good ideas could come from any rank. During the early 1970s, Department faculty examined U.S. policies with a critical eye and from multiple perspectives, which didn't always go over well in this divisive era of the Vietnam War. Because "Sosh" faculty members were willing to openly question national policy, other West Point academic departments often derided them as "liberals" and "long-hairs." Could an officer intellectually disagree with national policy without being disloyal? For many members of the Lincoln Brigade, the answer was "yes," because they used their honest critiques of the Vietnam War to identify problems with the military, and then took their knowledge, education, and expertise to rebuild their beloved Army. Among them were Zeb Bradford, Jr. (Sosh cohort 1964-1967) and Frederic J. Brown (Sosh cohort 1963-1966), who co-wrote the book, *The United States Army in Transition* in 1973; and Bill Hauser (Sosh cohort 1965-1968), who wrote *America's Army in Crisis*, also in 1973.

VI. The Legacy of the Lincoln Brigade

Because of his vision of bringing some of the best and brightest young officers to come to West Point to teach, General Lincoln changed the course of many prolific Army careers, and in the process, the course of West Point, the Army, and the nation. Some, like Captain Jim Golden and Captain Dan Kaufman, decided to stay at West Point to become Permanent Faculty members, having discovered an alternative way to contribute to the Army that they hadn't thought of previously. As Heads of the Department of Social Sciences from 1989-1996 and 1996-2000 respectively, they would institute major changes to the USMA curriculum that would prepare scores of new West Point lieutenants to deal with the uncertain, brave new world that emerged with the end of the Cold War. They also assumed advisory roles to national decision makers, with General Golden serving on the President's Council of Economic Advisers, and General Kaufman contributing to the transition of several Army Chiefs of Staff. In addition, both continued to recruit bright young officers to return to the Sosh Department to teach, thus perpetuating General Lincoln's legacy.

Other members of the Lincoln Brigade went back to serve in the line Army, kept in touch with each other, and helped each other professionally. For example, in 1970, when CPT Don Snider was a Brigade S3 in the 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam, then-LTC William Odom, who a member of the Lincoln Brigade, was the intelligence officer for the MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) Staff in Saigon. Because CPT Snider had been earmarked to go to the Sosh Department already, LTC Odom felt comfortable calling CPT Snider whenever he didn't believe the reports that were coming into Saigon from the field, to find out what was really going on. LTC Odom would also travel "up country" to visit another Sosh alum, LTC Dale Vesser, who was an Infantry

Battalion Commander in the 1st Cavalry Division, and tromp around with him in the field as well to determine if the intelligence reports he was receiving were accurate.

Later, many members of the Lincoln Brigade were called back to Washington to assume demanding assignments in the policymaking community, for former Sosh faculty members had gained a reputation for being well-prepared, highly motivated risk takers who sought hard jobs and did good work. For example, as a continuation from the above story, in the mid-1980s, Lieutenant General Dale Vesser was now the J5 of the Joint Staff, Lieutenant General Bill Odom was now the head of the National Security Agency (NSA), and Colonel Don Snider was now the Deputy Director of Strategy for the Army Staff. Likewise, senior members of the Lincoln Brigade often recruited more junior members of the Brigade to work on their staffs throughout the U.S. government. For example, Brigadier General Amos Jordan, who was head of the Department of Social Sciences from 1969-1972, went on to work at the Department of Defense and subsequently at the State Department. While in these positions, he brought in a number of former rotating faculty members to serve on the DoD staff and in the political military section in the State Department.

During the 1950s and 1960s, members of the Lincoln Brigade could expect General Lincoln to closely monitor their careers and place them in key assignments. For example, General Lincoln was friends with General William DePuy, future creator of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), who was the Coordinator of Army Studies in the 1960s. DePuy would consult General Lincoln regularly on the future of the Army, resulting in a number of Lincoln Brigade alumni working in that office on revolutionary projects such as VOLAR, OPMS, and EPMS (including Bill Hauser and Frederic J. Brown, as mentioned earlier, who wrote books recommending ways that the U.S. Army could rebuild itself after Vietnam - see page 15). However, General Lincoln's influence continued well after his retirement in 1969. A number of Lincoln Brigade members, including Major Wesley Clark, went to work for the Army Chief of Staff because of the past personal links between General Lincoln and General Bernard Rogers (Army Chief of Staff from October 1976 - June 1979), and General John Wickham (Army Chief of Staff from June 1983 - June 1987).

Members of the Lincoln Brigade were able to keep in touch with each other easily because General Lincoln developed the philosophy that the Department of Social Sciences would always include those who had taught there in the past - "Once a [faculty] member, always a [faculty] member." Therefore, Lincoln directed that the Department administrative staff maintain a "Sosh alumni" roster, which included the updated names, addresses, and phone numbers of past faculty. He also organized spring and fall "Sosh Reunions," where past and current faculty members could meet each other. Lincoln was committed to ensuring that the Department would contribute to national security issues whenever possible; this goal was accomplished in part by the Department maintaining a close relationship with Sosh alumni, since many had assumed positions in the American policymaking community. However, the Lincoln Brigade was not merely a professional network; for many, it was a family, with young officers, spouses, and children merging in "forever" friendships that could only come from cherished experiences together. Thus, members of faculty cohorts stayed friends and kept in touch with each other over the years, long after their teaching days were over.

Overall, General Lincoln's legacy to the nation can be measured by the accomplishments of the Lincoln Brigade. Some took jobs at the National Security Council, including Lieutenant General William Odom, Colonel Don Snider, and General Lincoln himself, who, when he retired in 1969, became the head of the Office of Emergency Preparedness, which held a statutory position on the National Security Council. Others served with the U.S. mission in NATO, on the NATO staff, as speechwriters for the SACEUR, and as the SACEUR, including Generals Bernard Rogers and Wesley Clark. In the field of military education, a Sosh alumnus, General Robert McDermott, became the Dean at the U.S. Air Force Academy before going on to run USAA. Several of the Army War College's most recent commandants were members of the Lincoln Brigade: General Howard Graves, General William Stofft, and General Richard Chilcoat. In addition, the School of Advanced Military Studies, or SAMS, at Fort Leavenworth, was started by former faculty members of the Department of Social Sciences and the Department of History, principally BG Huba Wass de Czege. Outside the military and government, members of the Lincoln Brigade served with the Council on Foreign Relations and with Washington think tanks such as CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies). A number of Sosh alumni also went on to teaching positions elsewhere, such as General Wes Posvar, who became the Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh. As then-Department Head Colonel Jim Golden noted in 1995, "Those two areas of outreach have been important to the Department: Both the connection in the national security arena, and that in the broader academic community."

VII. Conclusion

When General Lincoln first implemented his vision to help build an Academy that would serve America's constantly changing national security problems, he surely could not have foreseen the far-reaching impact he would have on his Academy, his profession, and on his country. By recruiting and educating high-quality Army officers to teach at West Point, he established recruiting procedures that the rest of the Academy would adopt for its faculty, thus raising the quality of the West Point faculty as a whole and enhancing the Military Academy's reputation as being one of the best undergraduate institutions in the country. By emphasizing the importance of academic research and debate among his faculty members, he helped raise the intellectual level of the Army officer corps, which paid tremendous dividends when the Army had to rebuild itself after the ignominy of the Vietnam War. By placing members of the Lincoln Brigade into important jobs in national strategy, plans, and policy, he enabled his country to better deal with its unprecedented superpower status in the post-war world. Indeed, few could boast of a more prolific life.

General Lincoln's wide-ranging impact came from his recognition that cadets were not the only product of the U.S. Military Academy, but also its faculty. While all accepted that the West Point faculty existed to develop the cadets, General Lincoln also realized that the Academy had a role in developing its faculty to become leaders of the Army and the nation. The members of the Lincoln Brigade, who continue his legacy today, honor him with their accomplishments. Today, the Department of Social Sciences at West Point continues to develop new members of the Lincoln Brigade, while being located in, appropriately enough, a building named after General Lincoln. Inside Lincoln Hall, a plaque dedicated to General Lincoln quotes his words: "The engraving on monuments does not mark achievement. Only the engraving on the character and competence of our cadets and our young officers counts towards fulfillment of our mission."

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