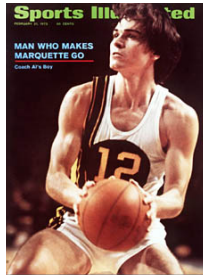


THE VAULT

# All-America, All the Way

Major Pete Dawkins, a man of his times—of good days past and now of the present

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He was in New York to attend a board meeting of the YMCA, and he was standing there, of all perfect places, under the Biltmore clock. There have been so many rowdy, bumptious years of change since he was an All-America, boy and halfback, but he was instantly recognizable. He does not look older; and, of course, the way things are in his line of work, his hair is not that much longer these days.

There is real comfort to be had waking up one fine, polluted, polarized morning and discovering that there still is a Biltmore clock and a YMCA and a Pete Dawkins. These things actually have survived. Perhaps each morning one last hero should be assigned to stand under the Biltmore clock so we can hear the ticks from the good old times, when peace and prosperity were both lit up at this end of the tunnel and the only shaggy-haired perverts were the four who were making noise in a Liverpool cellar.

Used to triggering such reveries, Dawkins suddenly dropped his smile and spoke almost plaintively. "Do me one thing," he said. "Just one thing. Don't treat me like just another piece of nostalgia. You know, I don't live in the '50s anymore, either."

The trouble with Pete Dawkins, All-America, is that despite his protests he is locked into time. In a professional era when great athletes are ongoing household names from puberty to pension, Dawkins' career seems to have lasted only somewhat longer than a half-time show and hardly as long as a twinight doubleheader. So much of him was jammed into that glorious Eisenhower autumn of '58 that, like Conway Twitty, much of him must always remain there.

The other youthful stars of that year—Aaron, Unitas, Palmer, Shoemaker, Robertson and West—still ride shotgun across the sports pages. And those athletic eminences of '58 who have left the scene—Russell and Mantle, for instance—did not retire before spending the prescribed number of seasons as "aging veterans." Of course, they all took home a lot of money. Dawkins' trophy was his calendar year.

He was the very essence of that time, a period that prized humility, respect and cleanliness from a silent generation. By now we have forgotten that those well-rounded, level-headed scholar-jocks who succeeded Dawkins—men such as Jerry Lucas, Terry Baker and Bill Bradley—were pale imitations of the original Joe Renaissance. There was nothing Dawkins was not, that dreamy senior year of his.

He was appointed First Captain of the Corps and elected class president. He was a Star Man, 10th in a class of 499, and accepted as a Rhodes scholar. He was captain of the football team, everyone's All-America, the nation's leading scorer and winner of the Heisman and Maxwell trophies.

It was written, first facetiously but gradually at face value, that it was unfortunate that Cadet Dawkins and General MacArthur could not have matriculated at the same time at the Academy since MacArthur would have made such a serviceable adjutant for Dawkins. There were so many New Testament metaphors applied to the young man that, it was reported, he grew sensitive at the sacrilege. After all, he was a former acolyte, a member of the cadet choir, and he collected the offering.

Dawkins could play six musical instruments, he was the highest-scoring collegiate hockey defenseman in the East, he had constructed his own hi-fi (as he had previously built his own Soapbox Derby vehicles) and he went about industriously lifting rocks when he had no quick access to his body-building weights. He was modest, had a sense of humor and made out all right with the honeys, too. Moreover, breathless journalists informed America that Dawkins was actually given to such State U. vernacular as "no sweat."

All accounts of Dawkins began by reporting how he had "conquered polio." He had, in fact, suffered a spot of the disease as a child, which had left him with a slight curvature of the spine, but the implication usually was that he had burst forth from a sideline iron lung midway through the Navy game.

In the Academy yearbook, his classmates wrote a truly incredible encomium, a reverent tribute that began simply: "We have stood in awe of this man." And ended: "We were not completely sagacious, but we knew a great leader, a great friend, a great man." It was left for Colonel Red Blaik, the coach, to say aloud what everyone else was whispering, that Cadet Dawkins was destined to be chief of staff of the United States Army.

And, oh yes, perhaps more than all these things, this too: at that time, 1958, professional soldiers were not popularly dismissed as blackguards. Soldiers were even generally considered to be quite respectable people.

Major Pete Dawkins, at home in faded blue jeans and boots, listening to the music of his friend Kris Kristofferson: "When I was studying at Princeton [at the Woodrow Wilson School, 1968-70], that was the most heated time of the war. People were very suspicious of me, of anyone military, though after a while some people would condescend to say: 'You know, you're really not like those soldiers.' That was supposed to be a big compliment. I'd reply: 'But don't you see, I am a soldier? I am what I am.' Nobody wanted to hear that. Nobody wanted to believe that it was their stereotype that was wrong. I didn't fit the popular stereotype, therefore I was out of place.

"Then one day during that same period at Princeton, somebody came up to me and said: 'You know, looking back, I think of you as the Bob Dylan of the '50s.' That's the greatest compliment I ever received."

Last January Dawkins' orders to return to Vietnam were pulled, and he was assigned to SAMVA, the office of the Special Assistant for the Modern Volunteer Army. SAMVA appears to be both a think tank and a lobby. On the one hand, it must make the new Army attractive for volunteers. On the other, it must convince the old Army (which is still the only Army) that modernization is not necessarily a sign of frailty, that the Republic will be safe even if doors are put on soldiers' toilet stalls.

Dawkins, if the truth be known, is not overly optimistic, but he tries. As soon as he settled

himself at SAMVA, he wrote a couple of memos. The subject was hair, that is to say, the length of hair. "I simply maintained that we could not win over the hair issue," Dawkins says. As a reward for his interest he was taken along to a high-level briefing on the subject that General Westmoreland was conducting. Before Dawkins knew it, Westy had him up before the gathering posing as the military hair model. As Colonel Blaik predicted, the kid was really going places.

In the upper echelons of the Pentagon, some of the old soldiers still wax rhapsodic about the halcyon war years when any man in Army issue with a dandy regulation whiffle cut would be set upon by all available women, beside themselves at the very sight. It came as some surprise to a number of officers that a) this was no longer the case, and b) it had nothing to do with Communism.

Symbolically, nothing speaks more directly of declining military prestige than hair. At the time when Pete Dawkins entered the Army, the whole nation aped the military haircut, just as the whole nation—and not just the American Legion and defense contractors—cared deeply about the outcome of the Army-Navy football game. Now a military haircut is a source of shame. The PXs do a thriving wig business, and many of the most dedicated career men try to assuage their social embarrassment by letting their hair sprout some on top. Unfortunately, that only makes the wearer appear as if he had submitted to one of those two-bit Depression bowl cuts. Many of the most outstanding officers in the Pentagon look like members of Our Gang.

"You know," Dawkins began tentatively at another of the hair hearings, "it's not just the new recruits who want long hair like everyone else. It's my wife, for instance, and a lot of the wives of my friends, of good officers, who want to know why we can't have longer hair."

A bull general rose, horrified at this clear endorsement of henpeckery. "By God," he thundered, "do you mean, Major, that now the Army should be run by what a bunch of women want?"

Dawkins bowed his head, believing he had been defeated, but happily another general took a stand in his defense. "You know," he said, "the Army's in a lot of trouble these days, but it's nothing like the mess we could be in if all the women turn against us."

So the battle for longer hair turned; but how much longer? The debate raged. This long and that long, how long for hygiene, and how long for discipline; so long for white people, and so long for black people, and what about sideburns vis à vis ears, which is all the more complicated because hardly anyone is familiar with precise ear terminology except for lobes. (At West Point it is decreed that for Duty, Honor, Country sideburns must terminate at the top of the tragus, which sounds like something you should not be talking about in polite company.)

At the Pentagon the hair dilemma remained unresolved until Major Dawkins devised a strategy. His maneuver may not go down in tactics textbooks along with Jackson's Valley Campaign, but it was a bold stroke just the same. Major Dawkins suggested, "Let's not say how long the hair has to be. Let's just take pictures showing how long." Stunningly, the Dawkins Arrangement was accepted, giving him the honor of fathering the only visual—rather than verbal—regulation in the history of the U.S. Army.

"We must make changes in the Army, if only because everything is changing," Dawkins says. "Too many people in the Army still think that if we can just hold the line, be the last

bastion of traditional America, that the country will come to its senses, get its hair cut and form up again around the Army." He shook his head at this hypothesis.

"You know, to much of the military, Vince Lombardi remains the greatest contemporary civilian hero. I believe that he was so genuine that his teams experienced a contagion for winning that overrode the exceptional demands that he placed on players. But I also believe that his methods—arbitrary and imposed—have become anachronistic. But Army people don't want to believe that. It is like, if you were a theologian, trying to apply things to the present that Reinhold Niebuhr said years ago. Possibly, Niebuhr and Lombardi would have had new approaches for this time. It is wrong to assume that their attitudes were ever intended to be pertinent today. Understand, I am not critical of the way Lombardi operated: I am critical of those who continue to hold this model reverently. I know Lombardi's methods will not succeed in the Army today, and I suspect they would have even less of a chance of succeeding in football.

"Kids demand room for expression in sports as much as in anything else. It may sound frivolous, but I don't believe that enough significance has been attached to the popularity of Frisbee. Think of it: it's the ultimate of its kind, a complete free form. There aren't any rules unless you make them up. The fact that so many people everywhere are devoted to such an unstructured sporting expression says something, I think."

In a poll of the 1971 Army football team to determine the players' sporting idol, Dick Butkus was the overwhelming choice.

Captain Dawkins, in 1966, while he was in Vietnam: "This is the big stadium. This is the varsity."

Pete and Judi Dawkins, and their children, Sean, 7, and Noel, 4, live a half-hour's commute from the Pentagon in one of those developments that has streets named for chic colleges. Their house is on Vassar. The Heisman Trophy is in the living room. Until this past year his parents kept it, but now Dawkins feels enough time has elapsed for the sculpture to become a period piece, so he has taken it on. Sean Dawkins has only one observation about it. "Nice carving," he says. Maybe somewhere a developer is naming streets after Heisman Trophy winners.

Most career servicemen move so regularly that they invariably rent housing. The Dawkinses have bought their home, however, because Judi Dawkins comes from the Washington area, and she and the children will stay there when the major is shipped back to the Far East for a year. "It is not just that Pete has to go, like any other husband off on a long business trip," Mrs. Dawkins said. "It is that he might always be away from us." She means that he might be killed.

Dawkins was first posted to Vietnam in 1965. "We found out in '63 that Pete would have to go two years later," Mrs. Dawkins says, "but that didn't bother me at all, because of course I was perfectly sure that the war would be over by then, by 1965." She shrugs, smiling at the innocence of the time, not the irony.

Though the children are too young to know much, or care, about their father's profession, the Dawkinses have experienced something of the alienation the war has brought to many American families. Dawkins has an older brother Dale, who is an automobile executive; he also has a younger sister Sue, who is a full 10 years his junior, and an even younger brother Mike, now 18.

Mike was only five when Pete had his 1958, and he would toddle about in a sweater with a big, proud Army "A." But as Mike and his sister grew and the war wore on, they more often came to look upon their older brothers not as model successes but as the personification of the military-industrial complex, infiltrating their very family.

"One effect of the tragedy of Vietnam," Dawkins says, "was that the Army was profoundly baffled by the attitudes developing toward it. We didn't understand why we were blamed. The vast majority of soldiers, of lifers, viewed the war with no joy. Just a sense of responsibility.

"Guys picked up and left their families simply because events had occurred and their duty was advanced. Somehow, because of the nation's frustration, the attitudes of these men, our soldiers, were perverted to mean that most of them were opportunistic and self-seeking. Good God, would you want a military that shrank from combat when combat presented itself?"

The 20 men of SAMVA are assigned to the C-Ring of the Pentagon, an area where everyone uses the word "synthesis" profusely. The offices of SAMVA are well lighted; that much can be said for them. Three posters serve as the only decoration. One is an Easy Rider photo with Dennis Hopper providing a naughty hand signal. Another, over Dawkins' desk, is by Ben Shahn and carries the message: YOU HAVE NOT CONVERTED A MAN BECAUSE YOU HAVE SILENCED HIM. The third poster features a model posing as a t.t.u. soldier—a t.t.u. soldier is a tough, thoughtful, unarmed soldier—which is about the only breed of that cat the public will accept nowadays. Around SAMVA, only "synthesis" is heard more often than "tough, thoughtful, unarmed."

Dawkins, having spent much of his career studying at Oxford and Princeton, teaching at West Point and on policy assignments in Saigon and Washington, is, obviously, very much a living, breathing t.t.u. soldier. He did win an array of impressive medals for his courage in Vietnam, but he does not wear them as a rule, limiting himself to the most austere ornamentation and, of course, his West Point ring. Other officers know Academy graduates as "ring knockers."

The higher up Dawkins moves (and his promotion to lieutenant colonel has been approved), the more scrutiny he will receive. Already, old-line lifers, in from another bivouac, grumble about Dawkins' pantywaist desk tours, and an Iowa Congressman once rose on the floor of the House to protest that the Government was paying for Dawkins' fancy book learning.

Nevertheless, Dawkins is escorted by two totems as he ascends the hierarchy, and one is his football reputation—or, anyway, his overall cadet fame that was founded on the playing fields. In a business that treasures tradition, Dawkins is tradition on the hoof. Moreover, his celebrity gives him a potential outside the military that translates to leverage within. Says Major Josiah Bunting, a close friend who is a novelist and a history professor at West Point: "If ever a time comes when Pete is faced with compromising his principles, he can always say, 'O.K., I'll go be a Senator instead.' Now how can they handle that?"

In fact, most people wonder why he bothers to keep tilling the feudal Army soil. Says Kris Kristofferson, the songwriter, who was also a Rhodes scholar and a combat helicopter pilot: "It used to bewilder me why someone with Pete's intelligence and charisma would stay in the Army. I have such tremendous respect for him. But he sold me. Look at it this

way: it's great just to have someone like Pete Dawkins in the military."

Dawkins' biggest edge, however, comes from his contemporaries who have stayed in the service and continue to hold him in awe. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas sits in the middle of the country, and, in the insular manner of most Army posts, in the middle of nowhere as well; the denizens refer to "the outside world." Leavenworth is a large post, and it can be an important one, too, a crucial station for rank-conscious young officers.

A lanky career major, Ranger and Airborne and bowl-cut, drew on his cigarette. "Sure, you find it here at Leavenworth, you find it anywhere in the Army," he said. "There is always a certain amount of resentment about Dawkins—you know, the glory boy. It comes especially from guys like myself who didn't go to the Point. Everybody knows he did only one tour of Vietnam, but that he got special attention from the press. He's on the 5% [early promotion] list, but he hasn't had to get all his tickets punched, like everybody else. But you see, every time this comes up, there's always somebody around who was with Dawkins at the Point or somewhere, and they say, 'Hey listen, he's special, he really is, and the Army would be crazy to make him go through the same garbage as everybody else.' "

The major put out his cigarette on his boot and intently field-stripped it. "You know," he said after a while, "that's a helluva thing when you think about it, when you realize that kind of talk comes from his rivals, so to speak."

Jonathan Swift, in *Gulliver's Travels*: "A soldier is a Yahoo hired to kill in cold blood as many of his own species, who have never offended him, as possibly he can."

Dawkins, stuck in rush-hour traffic near the Pentagon: "The military is never so evil as some would have it, nor so gallant as others. If you do believe that we live in a world where we can abdicate forces, then yes, obviously, the Army is a caricature. But if you read the tea leaves of history, one is obliged to believe that we cannot possibly get by without a competent military force, that we cannot achieve decisions other than in consonance with a military reality."

Defense Attorney Barney Greenwald in Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny*. "See, while I was studying law 'n' old Keefer here was writing his play for the Theatre Guild, and Willie here was on the playing fields of Princeton, all that time these birds we call regulars—these stuffy, stupid Prussians in the Navy and the Army—were manning guns....Of course, we figured in those days, only fools go into armed service. Bad pay, no millionaire future, and you can't call your mind or body your own. Not for sensitive intellectuals...[but] a lot of them are sharper boys than any of us, don't kid yourself, best men I've ever seen, you can't be good in the Army or Navy unless you're goddamn good."

Dawkins at 33 is a trim 6'2" with large sloping shoulders. He moves with purpose at all times at what may be described as an organized lope. Tennis is his sport now, although he began playing it just two years ago. He took up skiing a while back and was winning slalom races before the snows were gone. If anything, he took longer to master football than any other game. Baseball was his best high school sport. He scored 19 runs in his first cricket game, he made the West Point hockey varsity shortly after he picked up a stick and he earned his Oxford blue in rugby only eight weeks after he first saw a scrum.

In football, though, Dawkins was nothing special in prep school, a weak-passing left-handed plebe quarterback and a fifth-string sophomore halfback. He was a starter as a

junior but merely the other halfback; Bob Anderson was the All-America. It was as if they were saving 1958 for Dawkins. He started off with four touchdowns in the opener, Army never lost, and all along Dawkins drew an inordinate amount of publicity because of the Lonely End formation. Colonel Blaik, nobody's fool when it came to destiny, just upped and quit after 25 years of coaching following that season.

West Point makes it especially easy for Dawkins to haunt Saturday afternoons. There is still a ring dance in the fall at the Academy, a formal, no less, with corsages. The lettermen wear dated little malt-shop zipper jackets with those big fuzzy A's on them—no sweat. Pep rallies are fervent large productions, and football players are treated with deference by their classmates. The Academy chaplain, the Rev. James Ford, thinks it's helpful to hire former football stars as preaching assistants.

"It's important to have a winning attitude," says Colonel William Schuder, the director of athletics who was First Captain of the Corps in 1947, a classmate of Davis and Blanchard. "It's one of the things that encourages a young man to try the Army as a career. You can't have an Army with a losing image."

In support of this widespread notion, bad news has no place at West Point, and, like PDA (public display of affection), simply is not tolerated on the premises. When the superintendent was removed last year to face trial for having concealed war atrocities, the cadets were ordered to go mill under his window as a spontaneous warm tribute. When the football team went 1-9-1 in 1970, the Academy yearbook declared: "It can truthfully be said that bad breaks prevented us from enjoying another successful season." It can also truthfully be said that this is the same rationale which gave us fanciful body counts all these years, too.

The first of Dawkins' classmates to die in Vietnam fell in January 1963, when the present plebes were in the fourth grade. It has been that long that the funeral bargages have been cracking above the Hudson, and almost that long that the Army has wrestled with its soul and the Academy has fought to preserve the middle word—Honor—in the motto it venerates. "It's particularly hard to be an artist as a soldier," Dawkins says, "and if you do have pride, life is trying to be an artist in your job. But being a soldier must always be a derivative value. There is no absolute value in performing the soldier's manifest task: that is, killing. A soldier's life can only draw value from the society that gives it meaning, by preserving those qualities that society believes are worth preserving. The Army must always gain a sense in itself that derives from the public."

When Dawkins first set out to be a soldier in the summer of '55, that sense was easy to behold. A military man, the absolute t.t.u. soldier, sat in the White House, presiding over the nation's massive deterrent. The star-spangled heroisms of Iwo Jima and The Bulge were only a decade past, and the soupy words from the general the civilian had fired had hardly left the top of the Hit Parade: Old Soldiers Never Die. It was so easy to want to be a young soldier then.

"You must remember those times," Dawkins says. "I was so ripe for it all. I was obnoxiously headstrong. I'd show them. I was just 17. I had guys in my plebe class who were 21. I never would have taken that crap they threw at us if I had been 21. But everything up at the Point was right for me the summer when I was 17."

No one at the Academy likes to believe that the supply of quality plebes may have diminished in these times less congenial to military evangelism. "We still get those typical



red-blooded American kids who have wanted to come here since they were eight or 10 years old," says Brigadier General John Jannarone, the academic dean. Obviously, the general does not mean it exactly this way, but implicit in that assertion, one often voiced, is the fact that the U.S. Military Academy is largely inhabited by young men who have not been moved by the events of the 1960s. Certainly, to see Dawkins return to a football game is not so much to watch him come back to West Point but to watch him come back to 1958.

In the huge mess hall the air is feverish with glory be. Nothing seems forced; it is for real. The occasion: Army plays Rutgers tomorrow. That Rutgers has not been a gridiron juggernaut since it won the lidlifter in stocking caps a century ago is of small moment. Army is meeting somebody in football.

The band plays rugged martial music, interspersed with lively modern pop. As the meal nears an end, some cadets, as if suddenly infested with demons, climb on their chairs, take off their jackets and wave them like banners, around and around over their heads. This is a tradition.

Other cadets sit backward on their chairs and bounce them about, yelling like banshees, as if they were astride cavalry stock. In one wing of the hall, masters of the art start hurling cakes 30 feet into the air. It is announced that Army has this day defeated Rutgers in 150-pound football, and the hall explodes with cheers that, surely, could not have been rendered any louder or with more pride on the day the word came in that both Gettysburg and Vicks-burg were won.

Dawkins, his chest ablaze with ribbons, marches out of the hall, looking self-conscious, as the cadets give him the once-over. "He's still top priority around here," says Bob Antwerp, First Captain of the Corps. There are not many celebrities, never mind heroes, left in the U.S. Army of 1971.

Outside, in the chill winter air, cheerleaders are setting up a rally on a balcony of Washington Hall. The cadets begin to gather below in the courtyard. A cheerleader offers a rocket cheer as something of a benediction, then cries: "We got a super guest star here tonight."

The cheerleaders proceed next with a skit, which ends in a jousting match between the Scarlet Knight of Rutgers ("Hey, youse guys, I'm from Rutgers, New Joisey") and a Black Knight of the Hudson—who is, however, carefully identified as a janitor, not a cadet. This dramatic device is employed so that the Scarlet Knight can win the joust and gain rights to the beautiful Rapunzel without shaming the corps. But, alas, the Scarlet Knight is incapable of climbing up to the buxom lady's lair, which sets the stage for the guest star.

General George C. Marshall: "I have a secret and dangerous mission. Send me a West Point football player."

Cheerleader: "So who could be more worthy of this fair damsel than ST. PETER DAWKINS!?!?!?"

On cue, from the back of the courtyard, there is a tragus-shattering roar, and the beam from an unmuffled mighty motorcycle begins to lurch about. On the cycle, dressed in a silver lame helmet, large yellow sunglasses, fatigues and boots, is a cadet obviously playing (broadly, to the crowd) the role of the largely mythical St. Peter Dawkins. The chopper caroms about the crowd, at last finds a path to the stage and zooms toward it.



It screeches to a halt at a ladder, and the Dawkins character leaps toward the balcony stage, with, suddenly, the strains of Jesus Christ Superstar swelling to crescendo. On the balcony he removes his helmet and glasses and fatigue jacket, revealing a red, white, and blue, stars-and-stripes Captain America shirt underneath. He also reveals one more thing: that the actor playing the part of St. Peter Dawkins is none other than Major Peter Dawkins.

To the throaty cries of, "Give me some skin," Dawkins smiles brazenly and pulls off his shirt, to stand there, bare-chested in the freezing night. This is another tradition, and Dawkins decides to take it one step further. "O.K., we'll find out the ones who really have spirit," he howls into the microphone. "Everybody, take off your shirts."

In the bitter cold, only a few at first comply. Even for cadets with winning attitudes, there are, after all, some discernible differences between Rutgers and Notre Dame, especially as they relate to creature comforts. But Dawkins keeps after them with the oldtime religion. "The thing that this corps has got to do for the football team is take off their shirts together." In the face of this logic, more in the crowd strip, clutching their biceps and jumping about to stir up circulation.

At last, when only a few misfits remain clothed, Dawkins rears back with a zealot's patter. "One way, one corps, together, always!" he cries with a frightening fervor, ravishing the crowd with frenzy. If, on that balcony, it had not been just Pete Dawkins carrying on but Patton himself firing off his handguns, Sergeant York turkey-gobbling, U.S. Grant taking a Breathalyzer test and Nathan Hale being executed half a dozen times, the audience could not have responded more wildly.

In bedlam, the cadets pile onto each other's frozen shoulders, waving their undershirts and shouting, "Go Rabble!" There is so much shirt waving that, in the spotlight beam, lint particles fall like a heavy snowstorm. The cadets settle down to listen, chattering and slapping at their goose pimples, as Dawkins assures them how special they are and how vital their cheers will be in determining the outcome of the game.

A few days later a visitor made the idle comment to an Army lineman named Jay Kimmitt that the rally had been "quite a scene." Kimmitt, otherwise a most cordial young man, suddenly became testy and on edge. "I wouldn't call it a scene, sir," he snapped. And, well, this much we do know: Army beat hell out of Rutgers.

MacArthur was talking of games and wars when he expressed this homily, adapted from Wellington. It is displayed in a prominent place in the gym, as if to prove that sports have a solid vocational tie-in with battles and are thus deserving of the taxpayers' largesse: "Upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that, upon other fields, on other days, will bear the fruits of victory."

Dawkins may have been a better soldier in Vietnam for having played football. Bill Carpenter may have had the courage to call napalm down near himself because he had learned, as the Lonely End, how to stand out there naked and vulnerable and still make the right moves and judgments. Maybe these things do count. Don Holleder, another West Point All-America of that period, was killed in Vietnam, and someone once said that Holleder and a couple of journalists were the only names ever to be killed in that war.

Imagine that: names. This is not a MacArthur time anymore; certainly not so much as it is

a McLuhan time. Dawkins' roommate used to tell him: "You're the figment of a sportswriter's imagination," and Dawkins, laughing, reveals that the press "homogenized me." No matter, really: he is close enough to being what he has been portrayed as. Besides, it is not significant in his case whether or not he learned to react or think fast when midway between the sideline stripes. What is important is that Dawkins was ordained a celebrity for his part in the friendly strife.

One military expert blithely writes that Dawkins is "the most highly regarded young officer in the Army, the surest bet there is for chief of staff in the 1980s," and surely Dawkins would have reached this estate had he never played a down of football. But he profits that he did, and when he did—and not just like some other Whizzer White or Jack Kemp or Vinegar Bend Mizell. Sporting successes certainly helped those men demonstrably because they gained exposure in the stadiums; but exposure is just the stuff of TV spots these days.

Dawkins is defined in quite different terms. As the Army has fallen to its low ebb, it has come to mean a great deal to many people that Pete Dawkins ran wild as the leaves changed above Michie Stadium that autumn of his, 1958—and that he is still there on the team. At the age of 33, damned if he isn't a symbol.

A colonel's wife, sitting across the crowded living room from Dawkins, was on the defense about the Army for no good reason, except perhaps that she has become accustomed to that stance. "Only the bad, that's all you ever hear," she exclaimed. "Is that fair?" She suddenly thrust out her hand and pointed toward Dawkins. "Why do people think he stays in after all that has happened? He could do anything on the outside. Anything. Doesn't that mean something that Pete Dawkins stays in the Army? They all remember him.

"Good God, at least they still remember Pete Dawkins, don't they?"