

Anthony DiNallo

Proving Perseverance Can Break Boundaries

COVER STORY

By Jenna Caputo

Photos by SuperSourceMedia.com

Even from a young age, Anthony DiNallo always felt a pull to be in the military. Growing up in Mechanicville, he enjoyed living in a small, close-knit town, where he was friends with almost everyone there. As an eight-year-old boy, Anthony visited West Point with his Cub Scout pack. The trip made an instant impression on him, and his dream of someday being in the military was born. "I went home and told my mom all about the trip. I told her I wanted to go to college there, although I thought it was an impossible

dream. Fortunately, my mom kept me focused on my goals and she and my dad were very supportive in my pursuit of my dream of attending the United States Military Academy (USMA). I can remember watching reports of the Vietnam War on the evening news. I somehow thought that I belonged there. I guess patriotism is in my DNA."

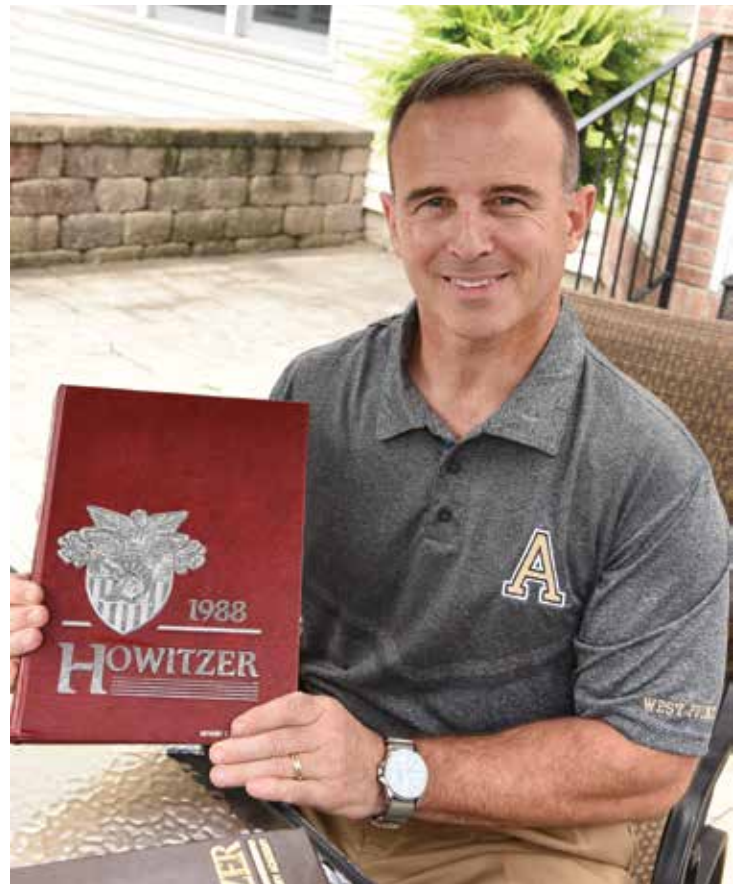
In 1988, Anthony realized that dream, graduating with a mechanical engineering degree from West Point before earning his MBA from Union College and later becoming a Certified Financial Planner. He planned to stay in the military for his career, yet only spent 2.5 years in the US Army,

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working his way to 1st Lieutenant with the 101st Airborne Division before he had to medically retire. "The Army was my dream job," he says. "I was privileged to work with some of our nation's best young soldiers in the 101st Airborne Division. Being a leader in such a high-paced environment was exhilarating. My soldiers and I competed in every way possible – whether between ourselves or other units in the division. We were very hard on one another, but that is what made us great. I had excellent training to include Ranger, Airborne and Air Assault schools. I would have stayed on active duty for a long time had I not been injured and medically disqualified."

The injury happened in 1990 in the line of duty. He was conducting a rappelling demonstration for the Indiana National Guard and their families. Just before the demonstration was to begin, he was ordered to perform a "slack rappel" by an Indiana National Guard Colonel. Unbeknownst to Anthony, the colonel had incorrectly set up the ropes. "When I stepped off the tower," remembers Anthony, "I fell 50 feet and landed in a seated position, which caused three vertebrae in my spine to explode; it is referred to as a burst fracture. The injury left me paralyzed and I spent the next seven months learning to walk again in the West Roxbury VAMC. It was a very difficult process."

This arduous process included both physical and occupational therapy. Anthony found himself slowly moving from full paralysis, to moving his toes a bit, then walking in parallel bars, to walking with a walker. With his hard work and determination, he then moved on to walking first with

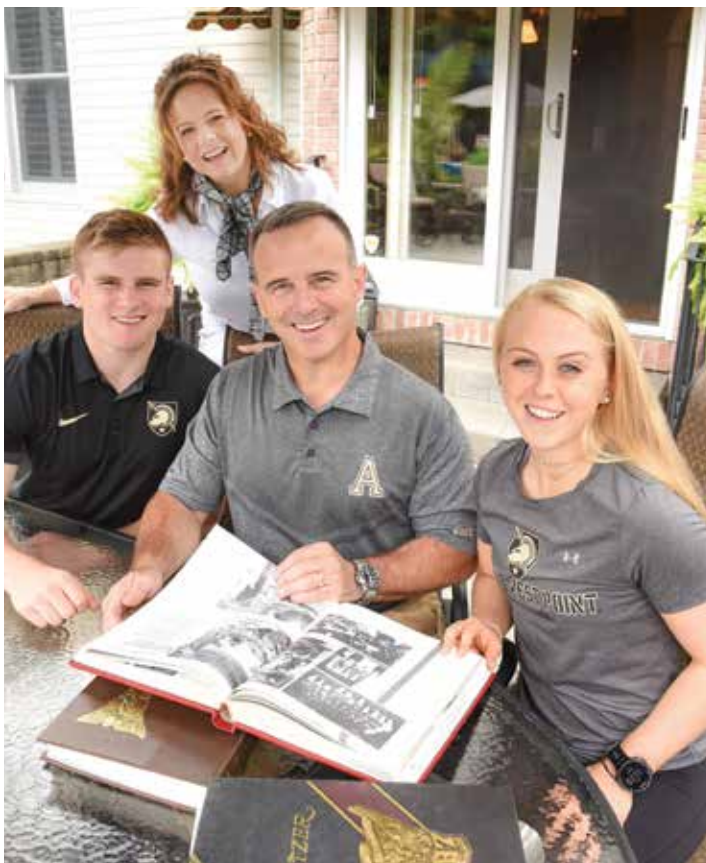


forearm crutches, then regular crutches, before transitioning to a cane and finally walking without any aid at all. "My mom would walk with me and (at my request) scrutinize my gait in the extreme," he says. "It was my goal to walk without a limp. I viewed my rehabilitation as my job. I rehabbed like I was training for the Olympics." His recovery was a success, but as with any serious injury, there were still some lingering effects. As a result of his spinal injury, Anthony continues to deal with pain on a consistent basis.

Now, Anthony works at Wells Fargo Advisors in Albany. Along with his business partner, C.W. Kelleher, they manage assets for local families, small businesses and retirement plans. While the unpredictable nature of the financial markets can be frustrating, he really enjoys the challenge of earning the trust of his prospective clients and working with them to achieve their financial goals.

He also is developing a second business. Command and Control Solutions Corp is a computer consulting and staff augmentation company that works primarily with the federal and state governments. He will be hiring more veterans to work with him as he continues to build this new venture.

Anthony met his wife, Marybeth, in high school and, after they were married, they moved to Clifton Park to begin their lives together in a place that was still close to their families. Marybeth was a tenured teacher before deciding to stay home to take care of their family, which includes Anthony III (20), Emily (18) and their dog, Ranger. Anthony says, "As a teacher and loving mother, Marybeth did a wonderful job





providing an environment from which the children could succeed academically and in sports, while also allowing me to grow my own business." Marybeth volunteers at her parish, All Saints on the Hudson, in Mechanicville, where she continues to teach second grade faith formation. Her love of teaching has never waned.

Anthony III was a wrestler and football player during his time at Shenendehowa High School. He began his 47 month experience at West Point in the summer of 2016 and is now in his third year, majoring in Space Science. Currently ranking in the top 5% of his class, Anthony is also on the Army Strength Team. He has been through Space School, Air Assault, Scuba and was chosen to complete an internship at Johnson Space Center for NASA this past summer. "He displays character traits of a great leader and has great potential in whatever he sets his mind to," says his Dad. In their spare time, the two of them enjoy hunting and fishing.

Emily was a three-season, four-sport athlete at Shenendehowa High School, playing lacrosse, field hockey, cross-country and indoor/outdoor track while maintaining her high level academic coursework. She has participated in equestrian competitions since she was a young girl and still continues to compete. Like her brother, she also possesses a killer combination of athleticism and intellect. Continuing the family's tradition of attending West Point, Emily is now a freshman (Plebe) at the USMA. Since she is just beginning her academic career, she has not yet chosen a course of study, but will likely be pursuing Biology or Chemistry. Recently, Emily competed for a coveted spot on USMA's Marathon team. With determination running through her blood, she beat out 30 competitors for one of two open slots. Emily ran her first half marathon the weekend of September 23rd and finished first in her age group.

Growing up, both children had the opportunity to visit USMA, spending time with Anthony and Marybeth while attending football games and reunions. Anthony III and Emily seemed to have internalized the motto of the academy – "Duty. Honor. Country." – their whole life. The hectic pace of the academy, coupled with the intense academic and military rigor, challenges both kids, but they wouldn't have

wanted their college years to go any other way.

While most schools require 120 credit hours in four years, West Point requires that every student graduates with 158 credit hours. In addition to their academic studies, each cadet is required to participate in a sport year round and they all receive extensive military training during most of the summer months. Everything at West Point is merit based and their scores in their athletics and military training, as well as their academics, will all be considered when choosing which Army branch they will serve.

Since they are such a hardworking family, down time is something the DiNalloos value. Anthony loves the outdoors and enjoys spending time in the woods, fishing and hunting. He bought an overgrown dairy farm along the Hudson River in Easton, NY, to allow him, his family and friends a place to do these things. "I enjoy working with my hands on the weekends, as it completely engages me in such a



way that is very different than the intellectual pressures of managing my clients' financial affairs during the week. It is a wonderful distraction, a labor of love, a real sanctuary from my professional responsibilities," he says. It is a great place for him to renew his spirit and regroup for the week ahead.

Anthony knows that he and his family will always continue on in success, as well as anyone that continues to work towards their dreams and overcome any challenges standing in their way. His mantra for success? "I believe with perseverance a person is almost limitless in potential."

For more information on how Anthony's business, Command and Control Solutions, helps state and federal governments, visit <http://www.cacsolns.com/>. ■

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