

Jack Murph Pollin

- Born 26 April 1922
- 6 June 1944: graduated USMA and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Field Artillery
- Sep 1947-Sep 1949: Student, University of Pennsylvania
- Sep 1949-Sep 1952: Instructor, Department of Mathematics, USMA
- Aug 1953-Aug 1954: Commander and Executive Officer, 38th Field Artillery Battalion, Korea
- Jul 1957-Jul 1960: Associate Professor of Mathematics, USMA
- Jan 1962-Jun 1963: Commander, 3rd Missile Battalion, 79th Field Artillery
- Mar 1966-Sep 1968: Student, University of Arizona
- Sep 1968-Aug 1974: Professor and Deputy Head of Mathematics Department, USMA
- Sep 1974-Jun 1985: Professor and Head of Mathematics Department, USMA

Jack Murph Pollin was born into a military family on 26 April 1922, in the town of Lawton, Oklahoma. His father served in both World Wars and retired as a Colonel in 1946. Jack attended Lake Forest High School in Lake Forest, Illinois and graduated in 1940. The inspirational teaching of his mathematics instructor in high school brought him to realize the powerful influence that outstanding mathematics instructors exert upon their students.

He was appointed to the United States Military Academy by Senator C. Wayland Brooks of Illinois and entered West Point in the fall of 1941. Cadet Pollin graduated forty-eighth out of a class of four-hundred seventy-four on 6 June 1944. Upon graduation, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Field Artillery. Immediately after graduation Lieutenant Pollin received his first assignment as a forward observer with the 232d Field Artillery Battalion, 42nd Division, then stationed at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. He deployed to Europe with the battalion in January 1945 and remained in the 42nd Division until 1946 when the Division Artillery was redesignated as the 4th Constabulary Regiment.

On return to the United States in 1947, Captain Pollin attended the University of Pennsylvania for two years. In June 1949, he received a Master of Science degree in Electrical Engineering. He was subsequently assigned as an Instructor in the Department of Mathematics, USMA and remained at the Academy until August 1952. After receiving additional Field Artillery training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Captain Pollin departed in August 1953 for the 38th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, in Korea. Here he served as Battalion Operations Officer, Battalion Executive Officer and ultimately Battalion Commander.

Upon completion of this assignment in Korea, Captain Pollin attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, graduating in June 1956. He then attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute for one year earning a Master of Science degree in Mathematics. In July 1957, Captain Pollin was once again assigned to the Department of Mathematics, USMA, this time as an Associate Professor. At the Academy, he assumed the duties of Director of Third Class Mathematics.

In July 1960, Lieutenant Colonel Pollin was assigned to the Operations Division of Headquarters, US Army Europe where he assumed the duties of a staff officer. He remained in that capacity until January 1962 when he assumed command of the 3rd Missile Battalion, 79th Field Artillery Regiment, stationed in Giessen, Germany. On return from Germany in August 1963, Lieutenant Colonel Pollin attended the Army War College. After graduation, he was assigned to the Artillery and Missile Center at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. His recognized abilities earned him a role in the deployment of the First Field Force Artillery to Vietnam in November 1965. He was called back from Vietnam in March 1966 to attend the University of Arizona to begin work on his Doctorate in Systems Engineering in preparation for his professorship at West Point.

Colonel Pollin was appointed as the Deputy Head of the Department of Mathematics in September 1968 and was awarded his Ph.D in 1969. In September 1974, he was appointed as Professor and Head of the Mathematics Department. Colonel Pollin's tenure as Department Head can best be described as one of creativity and innovative change. He was instrumental in the external evaluation of the department and formed the Visiting Mathematics Consultants Program. He also recognized the need for the department to assist the Department of Defense in external research and formed the Mathematics Consulting Element. This Element provided research on over seventeen major projects and resulted in recognition of the credentials of the faculty. His concern for faculty improvement was proven when he initiated a Visiting Professor's program for the Mathematics Department.

As an educator, Colonel Pollin was an outstanding teacher. "He advocated not only an education in mathematical principles, but also development of the ability to think logically-to demonstrate a 'disciplined initiative.' He stretched the capacities of the most mathematically adept students by designing both an Advanced and Honors Program that could provide the intellectual challenge and stimulation necessary to develop these students fully."

Colonel Pollin was not only concerned with the Department of Mathematics. He took an interest in the Academy as a whole. He had the opportunity to chair a variety of important committees designed to benefit the Academy during his tenure as Department Head. He chaired committees on admissions, the honor code and athletics at the Academy. Colonel Pollin was instrumental in the development of curriculum changes resulting in the formulation of an academic program sponsoring the disciplines of operations research and management, as well as the creation of a mathematics major.

General Pollin retired from active military service in June 1985 after over forty-one years of service to the nation. He provided stability to the Department of Mathematics during a period of great change at the Academy and graduated to the nation officers who could meet the mental challenges of a modern Army.

Publications:

Pollin, Jack Murph, *Theoretical Foundations for Analysis of Teleological Systems*, PhD dissertation, The University of Arizona, 1969, 171pp. [6910051](#)

Pollin, Jack; Sanders, J.L., "Foundations of Teleological Systems," *The Journal of Systems Engineering*, Volume 1, Number 1, January 1969.

Pollin, Jack, "Improving Student Awareness of the Utility of Mathematics," *International Journal of Education, Science and Technology*, Volume II, Number 2, 1980.

Pollin, Jack and I. J. Schoenberg, "On the matrix approach to Fibonacci numbers and the Fibonacci pseudoprimes," *The Fibonacci Quarterly*, Volume 18, Number 3, October 1980, pp. 26-268. Preprint: Mathematics Research Center #1741, April 1977 (See CD in Chandra and Robinson below).

Pollin, Jack; Giordano, Frank, "Developing an Undergraduate Mathematical Modeling Course," *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology*, December 1982.

References:

"Brigadier General Jack M. Pollin...A Case Study in Leadership," *Assembly*, Volume XLIV, No.2, September 1985, page 22.

Cullum's Register, Volume IX, page 1314.

1987 Register of Graduates and Former Cadets, Association of Graduates USMA, page 433.

COL Pollin is pictured on plate 7 (see also p. ix) of *An Uneasy Alliance: the Mathematics Research Center at the University of Wisconsin, 1956-1987*, by Jagdish Chandra and Stephen M. Robinson, SIAM 2005 (ISBN 0-89871-535-0).