

The West Point Mission:

"To educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the Nation as an officer in the United States Army."

About the Academy

Since its founding over two centuries ago, the Military Academy has accomplished its mission by developing cadets in four critical areas: intellectual, physical, military, and moral-ethical - a four-year process called the "West Point Experience." Specific developmental goals are addressed through several fully coordinated and integrated programs.

A challenging Academic Program that offers 45 majors provides a balanced education in the arts and sciences. All cadets receive a Bachelor of Science degree, which is designed specifically to meet the intellectual requirements of a commissioned officer in today's Army.

The Physical Program at West Point includes both physical education classes and competitive athletics. Every cadet participates in an intercollegiate, club or intramural level sport each semester. This rigorous physical program contributes to the mental and physical fitness that is required for service as an officer in the Army.

Cadets learn basic military skills, including leadership, through a demanding Military Program which begins on their first day at West Point . Most military training takes place during the summer, with new cadets undergoing Cadet Basic Training - or Beast Barracks - the first year, followed by Cadet Field Training at nearby Camp Buckner the second year. Cadets spend their third and fourth summers serving in active Army units around the world; attending advanced training courses such as airborne, air assault or northern warfare; or training the first and second year cadets as members of the leadership cadre. Military training is combined with military science instruction to provide a solid military foundation for officership.

Moral-ethical development occurs throughout the formal programs as well as a host of activities and experiences available at the Military Academy . These include formal instruction in the important values of the military profession, voluntary religious programs, interaction with staff and faculty role models, and a vigorous guest speaker program. The foundation of the ethical code at West Point is found in the Academy's motto, "Duty, Honor, Country." Cadets also develop ethically by adhering to the Cadet Honor Code, which states "A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do."

Admission is open to all young men and women, and is extremely competitive. Candidates must receive a nomination from a member of Congress or from the Department of the Army. They are then evaluated on their academic, physical and leadership potential. Those candidates who are fully qualified receive appointments to the Academy.

The life of a cadet is demanding, but leisure time does permit recreational activities such as golf, skiing,

sailing, and ice-skating. Intramural clubs include a cadet radio station, orienteering, rock climbing, and Big Brothers-Big Sisters. A wide variety of religious activities are available to cadets from virtually all religious backgrounds.

From the day of its founding on March 16, 1802, West Point has grown in its size and stature, but it remains committed to the task of producing commissioned leaders of character for America's Army. Today, the Academy graduates more than 900 new officers annually, which represents approximately 25 percent of the new lieutenants required by the Army each year. The student body, or Corps of Cadets, numbers 4,400, of whom approximately 15 percent are women.

A favorite expression at West Point is that "much-of the history we teach was made by people we taught." Great leaders such as Grant and Lee, Pershing and MacArthur, Eisenhower and Patton, Westmoreland and Schwarzkopf are among the more than 60,000 graduates of the Military Academy. Countless others have served society in the fields of medicine, law, business, politics, and science following their careers in uniform.

Ever mindful of its rich heritage, West Point continues to prepare its graduates to serve as commissioned leaders of character in America's 21st Century Army. 2002 marked the bicentennial of this American "national treasure." Guided by its timeless motto, "Duty, Honor, Country," the Military Academy is poised confidently to provide the Army and the Nation with its third century of service.

USMA FACTS

Location

The Academy is located approximately 50 miles north of New York City on the Hudson River. The campus and central post area comprise only a small portion of the nearly 16,000 acre reservation.

Admission

To be considered for admission to West Point, a candidate must be at least 17 but not yet 23 years old on July 1st of the year of admission, be unmarried, and have no legal obligation to support children. Candidates must be qualified academically, medically, and physically, and must receive a nomination from an approved source, such as a member of Congress.

Corps of Cadets

The 4,400 members of the Corps of Cadets represent every state in the U.S. and several foreign countries. About 1,300 New Cadets enter the Academy on Reception Day each year (about July 1st).

Classes

In addition to a core curriculum, balanced in the arts and sciences, and a required five-course engineering sequence, cadets may select from 45 majors. Classes are small, usually 18 students, and the faculty to student ratio is 1:6.

Activities

Over 100 extracurricular activities are available, including religious, hobby, and sports clubs.

Graduation

Upon graduation, cadets are awarded Bachelor of Science degrees and commissions in the U.S. Army. They serve on active duty for a minimum of five years. West Point graduates have served our country in a

variety of capacities for more than 200 years, as military leaders, engineers, explorers on land and in space, and as leaders in business and government.

A Brief History of West Point

West Point's role in our nation's history dates back to the Revolutionary War, when both sides realized the strategic importance of the commanding plateau on the west bank of the Hudson River . General George Washington considered West Point to be the most important strategic position in America . Washington personally selected Thaddeus Kosciuszko, one of the heroes of Saratoga , to design the fortifications for West Point in 1778, and Washington transferred his headquarters to West Point in 1779. Continental soldiers built forts, batteries and redoubts and extended a 100-ton iron chain across the Hudson to control river traffic. Fortress West Point was never captured by the British, despite Benedict Arnold's treason. West Point is the oldest continuously occupied military post in America.

Several soldiers and legislators, including Washington, Knox, Hamilton and John Adams, desiring to eliminate America 's wartime reliance on foreign engineers and artillerymen, urged the creation of an institution devoted to the arts and sciences of warfare.

President Thomas Jefferson signed legislation establishing the United States Military Academy in 1802. He took this action after ensuring that those attending the Academy would be representative of a democratic society.

Colonel Sylvanus Thayer, the "father of the Military Academy ," served as Superintendent from 1817-1833. He upgraded academic standards, instilled military discipline and emphasized honorable conduct. Aware of our young nation's need for engineers, Thayer made civil engineering the foundation of the curriculum. For the first half century, USMA graduates were largely responsible for the construction of the bulk of the nation's initial railway lines, bridges, harbors and roads.

After gaining experience and national recognition during the Mexican and Indian wars, West Point graduates dominated the highest ranks on both sides during the Civil War. Academy graduates, headed by generals such as Grant, Lee, Sherman and Jackson, set high standards of military leadership for both the North and South.

The development of other technical schools in the post-Civil War period allowed West Point to broaden its curriculum beyond a strict civil engineering focus. Following the creation of Army post-graduate command and staff schools, the Military Academy came to be viewed as the first step in a continuing Army education.

In World War I, Academy graduates again distinguished themselves on the battlefield. After the war, Superintendent Douglas MacArthur sought to diversify the academic curriculum. In recognition of the intense physical demands of modern warfare, MacArthur pushed for major changes in the physical fitness and intramural athletic programs. "Every cadet an athlete" became an important goal. Additionally, the cadet management of the Honor System, long an unofficial tradition, was formalized with the creation of the Cadet Honor Committee.

Eisenhower, MacArthur, Bradley, Arnold, Clark, Patton, Stilwell and Wainwright were among an impressive array of Academy graduates who met the challenge of leadership in the Second World War.

The postwar period again saw sweeping revisions to the West Point curriculum resulting from the dramatic developments in science and technology, the increasing need to understand other cultures and the rising level of general education in the Army.

In 1964, President Johnson signed legislation increasing the strength of the Corps of Cadets from 2,529 to 4,417. To keep up with the growth of the Corps, a major expansion of facilities began shortly thereafter.

In concert with the increasing role of minorities and women in society and the military over the past three decades, greater numbers of minorities and the first women were brought to the Military Academy and the Corps of Cadets. Their presence has enhanced the quality and maintained the traditional representativeness of the institution.

In recent decades, the Academy's curricular structure was markedly changed to permit cadets to major in any one of more than a dozen fields, including a wide range of subjects from the sciences to the humanities.

Academy graduates are awarded a bachelor of science degree and a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army, serving a minimum of five years on active duty.

The Academy celebrated its 200th year anniversary in 2002. Today, it continues to ensure that all programs and policies support the needs of the Army and nation now as well as in the foreseeable future. The Academy, with its long and noble history, remains an energetic, vibrant institution that attracts some of the best and brightest young men and women. It offers a challenging and comprehensive array of opportunities while retaining its enduring commitment to Duty, Honor, Country.