



**PLEBE PARENT HANDBOOK
CLASS OF 2020**

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INTRODUCTION

The WISCONSIN WEST POINT PARENTS ASSOC. (WWPPA) is a friendly group of people and we hope that you will join us as members. Our functions will give you an opportunity to meet other parents who are going through, or have gone through, the same experiences as you will during plebe year.

West Point parents agree that the first year at West Point® is the most difficult, not only for the plebes, but for their parents as well. This handbook has been designed to help you through this special time in your lives as you give support to your son or daughter and still survive plebe year yourself.

To assist you during this entire year, we will assign a club member to be your mentor. Mentors are available to you when you need answers or just to be there as a sounding board. They have volunteered to help, so do not hesitate to call. We have all been through what you are about to begin and are here to assist you in every way. Of course, if your mentor is not available, please call any of the Board Members. The WWPPA directory and newsletter have the contact information of the Board Members and Class Representatives.

We hope that this handbook will handle most of your immediate questions and offer helpful advice. It is only intended to supplement the information you will receive from the admissions office and the Commandant at West Point.

Remember, this is the Army! Anything can change at any time!

WEBSITES AND HELPFUL LINKS

Several Web sites and networks provide a tremendous amount of information about West Point. The primary West Point home page is <http://www.usma.edu/>. This site will link you to many others for helpful and up-to-date information about the Academy. Another site is <http://www.west-point.org/>. This site has all sorts of information about West Point. From here go to <http://www.west-point.org/parent/parent-forum>. Here you can subscribe to the Plebe Net which allows a free exchange of information and ideas among West Point parents. You can also subscribe to Plebe-net at <http://www.west-point.org/parent/plebe-net/>. On Plebe-net you can ask questions and receive information that applies directly to you and your plebe.

If you are on Facebook, there are several pages that you may choose to join: West Point Moms, West Point Dads, West Point Parents, Wisconsin West Point Parents Association, and West Point – the Military Academy.

Last, but not least, go to <http://www.west-point.org/parent/plebe-net/links.htm>. This web page has lots of information of interest to plebe parents such as schedules (academic, athletics, transit), maps of West Point and surrounding areas, visitor and travel information which includes guides to local hotels, restaurants and airports. You can subscribe to Plebe-net on the web page.

FOR YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION!

Convince your candidate to RUN, RUN, RUN, and then RUN some more. Equally important is practicing push-ups, pull-ups and sit-ups. Being in excellent physical shape before he/she arrives at West Point will greatly assist the new cadet through Cadet Basic Training (CBT). It will position him/her to perform well on the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) which is administered within the first few days and repeated during the second half of CBT. Caution - run on grass or dirt, not hard surfaces, to avoid shin splints. Try using golf courses, dirt roads, or high school tracks if at all possible.

Complete and mail all paperwork requirements for West Point. **KEEP COPIES** as paperwork does get lost!

Purchase items needed for Reception Day (R-Day). Travel light - one bag. Bringing one bag means the candidate will need to fill out only one tag (the first trying test under control of the upper class cadre on R-Day).

Review the handbook Information for New Cadets and Parents, Class of 2020 for other required items and restrictions.

The following list, while by no means all inclusive, contains suggested items for the candidate to bring with him/her on R-Day:

- Black leather shoes w/laces- **well broken-in** and highly polished. (We suggest a uniform store. Note - Plebes are not allowed to wear the high shined Officer style Chorofram shoes that are available from Military Stores.)
- A pair of **well broken-in** running shoes
- Razor - safety razor with shaving cream or electric/battery operated
- Wrist Watch - sturdy, inexpensive, a waterproof one with an alarm and lighted dial is suggested
- Sports bras (female candidates - clasp bras tend to fall apart)
- Alarm clock- battery operated (Meaningful redundancy - see watch)
- Small penlight flashlight with extra batteries
- Nail clipper or small key chain type pen knife - to remove threads from uniforms, a Leatherman-type multi-purpose fold up tool works well
- Small lint-free cloths/rags for shining shoes (old white T-shirts work well)
- Small address book (completely filled out including important dates)

- Stamps and supply of addressed stamped envelopes (of family and friends), extra return labels and stationary
- One 8x10 picture in a frame OR an 8X10 collage works well
- Bic-type lighter
- Lip balm
- Bandages and moleskin
- Black pens
- Re-sealable quart-sized freezer bags to keep items dry
- Medicated foot powder
- All white crew socks (no logos, stripes or colors,)
- Toothbrush (if you like a particular brand)
- Spending money (no more than \$100)

Make hotel/motel reservations for R-Day, if attending. We highly recommend that you do, but if your family can only travel once to West Point during plebe year, you may wish to save it for Plebe/Parent Weekend. It is about an 18-hour drive from the Milwaukee area. We recommend that you consult WWPPA's "Five Star Suggestions" which lists not only area lodging, but also recommended restaurants and activities in the West Point vicinity.

Set up a **checking account** for your candidate. They must have this so they can receive their pay from the Army. Yes - they are paid for all of this "fun". You can use your own bank or one in the West Point area. There are several good choices for banking accounts that have presence in the Highland Falls: Pentagon Federal Credit Union which has an ATM and local branch in the cadet area, and USAA and Navy Federal Credit Union which both have presence in Highland Falls just outside of the Thayer Gate. These banks have accounts which will provide a credit cards, attractive rates and often offer refunds when Cadets use other banks ATM fees. Make sure you have the "direct deposit" form completed by the bank where your cadet will have their account in advance, so the form can be turned in by your candidate on R-Day. It is also a good idea for one parent to be on the bank account to assist with banking issues when your Cadet needs help.

Get a **credit or debit** card for your candidate. While this is optional, it is a good idea for them to have for emergency purposes.

The candidate is still a Wisconsin resident. They should register to vote so they can vote absentee when the time comes. Call your County Clerk's office for information and the procedure for requesting applications for absentee ballots.

Read and re-read West Point's Information for New Cadets and Parents, Class of 2020, Parents Almanac and Instructions for Candidates Offered Admission along with this handbook.

New cadets receive limited and timed phone privileges during Cadet Basic Training and the calls can come at anytime. If you don't have a speakerphone or answering machine, now may be a good time to invest in one.

Remind your candidate that he/she may want to get their hair cut or styled before leaving if they currently have long hair. This will help relieve the "shock" on R-Day. Males should not arrive with a beard or mustache.

Before you leave for R-Day write an upbeat letter to your son or daughter to be mailed at West Point that day (once you receive their address). Funny, encouraging, upbeat greeting cards are also a good idea anytime.

Post Office Boxes will be given to you at Reception Day in Ike Hall if you do not receive it prior to then. The P.O. Box number does not change during their time at West Point. Instructions for mail and packages can be found on page 13.

Cadets use only their last name during their Plebe year. It is only after their Plebe year that your cadet will have a first name included on their mail.

Make sure everyone (friends, family, **everyone**) follows these guidelines to save your cadet any grief as a result of mail. A good rule of thumb - white stationary and a stamp that has a U.S. flag on it. Stay away from colors. Your cadet is trying to blend in. Do not send packages prior to A-Day.

THE WEST POINT EXPERIENCE

West Point is not only a place; it is a way of life . . . a new way of life which will affect both your offspring and you dramatically in the coming months. The United States Military Academy at West Point® is a major source of the Army Officer Corps, which is the symbol of our nation's military strength. Nowhere is "tradition" stronger than at the Academy. It is a place where uniformity, obedience, duty and honor are the keystones of its existence. You are about to become part of this 214 year tradition!

Your son or daughter will enter the United States Military Academy in late June or early July as a "new cadet." They are there because they have displayed an impressive combination of academic, athletic and leadership credentials. They possess the potential to be successful.

New cadets enter into a time-honored tradition of Cadet Basic Training or "Beast Barracks." During this time they are indoctrinated into the military life, and at the same time, are exposed to traditions that have, in great part, existed since the 1800's. This experience is, in effect, the final severing of the "umbilical cord" which linked your son or daughter to another way of life. During this six-week period, you will see a dramatic change in just about every aspect of your son's or daughter's demeanor and lifestyle.

THE BIG DAY IS HERE . . .

R-DAY (RECEPTION DAY)

This day marks the end of your child's dependence on you and the beginning of a unique experience for them and to some degree for you. We strongly suggest that you accompany your candidate to West Point for R-Day. West Point, the oldest continuously operated military post in the country, is seeping with the history of our great country and its many exceptional leaders. It helps to be able to picture where they are going to be for the next four years. If possible, arrive a day or two early so you have time to tour West Point and get to know the surrounding area.

Wear comfortable casual clothes and your best walking shoes. Casual dress at the Academy is defined as: Men - slacks with collared shirt, sweater or sports coat; Ladies-slacks with blouse, skirt and blouse or pantsuit (blue jeans, shorts and T-shirts are frowned upon; it is safer to wear "dress casual").

Other family members may accompany you for this important day. Note - If elderly relatives come, it may be a grueling day for them because of the heat and the amount of walking which is mostly uphill. No matter where you go at West Point, it always seems to be uphill. This is a day of many emotions. **Bring plenty of tissues** as these emotions are all normal and natural.

With respect to arrival time, you should be neither be too early or too late. Follow the schedule based on the last digit of your candidate's social security number. Your candidate will very rapidly learn to not draw attention to themselves and become a part of the team. Being first or last in anything only makes them stand out. Be sure to say your good-byes **BEFORE** you get to the reporting-in location because you only get a few seconds for a quick hug after the greeting by the Officer of the Day and the instructions "Candidates exit down the stairs and out the door." Just remember to try to be strong and put up a good front at least until your son or daughter has walked through the door. This will be the last that you will see your candidate until CBT is finished in August. Relax, your child is totally occupied and in the best of hands. If you should happen to come across your candidate during training on R-Day (very unlikely) **DO NOT** try to talk to them.

After your candidate has departed, be sure to visit the Parents' Welcome center at Eisenhower (Ike) Hall. You will have the opportunity to sign up for lunch tickets at one of

the sites on post, buy football tickets, buy Class of 2020 souvenirs, some of which are only available on R-Day, get your candidate's company assignment and P.O. Box number, mail your first letter to your candidate and visit various exhibits. After visiting the welcome center you are free to eat lunch on Post. You will have time to walk around the Plain area and Trophy Point, but will not be allowed in the Cadet Area which is beyond the chains in front of the Barracks and Washington Hall. There will be some locations near the central area where you can observe the candidates being instructed by the cadre, but again remember even if you are close enough to talk to your candidate, **do not**. Also, the large grassed parade area (commonly referred to as "The Plain") in front of the bleachers is off limits to pedestrian traffic. Therefore, refrain from walking on the grass.

After lunch, be sure to attend the Superintendent's Briefing for new parents in the Eisenhower (Ike) Hall Auditorium. This will be an uplifting, emotional, and very informative introduction to Academy life along with a soft seat and an air-conditioned room to rest. You may even see a picture of your candidate in the slide show! This is also when you will learn the dates when your new cadet will be able to call home up to A-Day and the Facebook address where pictures of Cadet Basic Training will be posted daily.

Early in the evening there is the R-Day Parade and swearing-in ceremony that is usually held on the Plain or at Trophy Point. Arrive early (at least 1 hour) to obtain a good location to observe this ceremony. It gets very crowded. Bring your camera, video camera or binoculars. Remember that all new cadets will look alike. They are not easy to identify because all have the same haircut, uniform, and no expression. They will be lined up by height, front to rear of each company, and this may help you pick them out during the Pass in Review. The information on your candidate's company assignment will also help. When the class is lined up in formation, as viewed from the Battle Monument side of the street, Company A will be on the left and Company B, C, etc from left to right. They will also march in and leave in Company order. Listen to the announcements during the Parade so you know when to stand at various stages of this ceremony.

You probably have noticed that up until now, we have called your sons and daughters "new cadets." Prior to taking the Oath during the swearing-in ceremony at the evening parade they will be called "**candidates**". Only after they complete Cadet Basic Training and are accepted into the Corps of Cadets at the Acceptance Day Parade in August will they become "**cadets**".

After the swearing-in they will march off directly to Washington Hall (Mess Hall) for their first evening meal as new cadets. The day is over for you and your family at the conclusion of the parade. Don't forget to mail those letters and cards before you leave so that your new cadet will be one of the first to receive mail. Mail from home is **extremely important** during Beast and the entire first year. Make out post cards, envelopes or address labels with your new cadet's address and send them out to their

friends and relatives. Write often yourself, preferably daily. Keep it upbeat as you let them know how your summer is progressing. Be as newsy as possible. Be sure to give your new cadet an address book with family and friends' addresses, important dates, lots of stamps, envelopes, and writing paper **before** they go to R-Day. You may even want to address and stamp several envelopes with blank paper inside for writing. This little task saves them time and time is always limited. However - **DON'T EXPECT A LOT OF MAIL FROM THEM**. New cadets have almost no time to write. The Cadre normally requires them to write a letter home that first night. It will be short and should arrive 4-5 days after R-day.

CADET BASIC TRAINING

"Duty-Honor-Country. Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be. They are your rallying points, to build courage when courage seems to fail, to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith, to create hope when hope becomes forlorn."

-- General Douglas MacArthur (Excerpt from his Farewell Address delivered to the Corps of Cadets on 12 May 1962.)

R-Day is the start of Cadet Basic Training or "Beast", as it is affectionately known. Some new cadets actually like it, but others hate it. It is a time when a group of high school graduates are molded into WEST POINT CADETS. Don't worry!! They are in the best of hands and are practically tucked in each night by their Cadre. When was the last time that you knew where your son or daughter was at 10:00 PM every night?

A cadet's daily life begins before 5:00 am and during Beast Barracks will extend late into the evening hours. In addition to extensive military training including military courtesy, marching and the handling of firearms - the new cadet will be schooled in the traditions of West Point and will learn what it takes "to make it." They are graded on a daily basis.

This is a particularly difficult adjustment period for the new cadet. His or her lifestyle will undergo a complete change when they are totally immersed in a military setting. Stress is a major part of the program along with the ability to memorize data, learn military drill, courtesy and the "West Point Way." It is a time when all are in need of encouragement and support since you may hear a lot of negative reaction on the part of your new cadet. Insist that they "hang in there", insist that they give it a fair try. Staying power and the ability to perform well under stress is the hallmark of a West Pointer.

For the first few weeks of Beast, new cadets will be very, very busy. The concept of **"One-Day-At-A-Time" ("1DAAT")** will help them over this initial experience and adjustment. Sometime during the first week or 10 days, each new cadet will be allowed to make a short, timed and supervised phone call home. This call can come at any time so an answering machine, call waiting or cell phone comes in handy. Your new cadet will be calling from someone else's cell phone, so answer any calls from unexpected numbers. If they do not make direct contact with you, they will be allowed to call until

they get through directly to you. This is a time to let your new cadet do the talking and you do the listening. It will probably be a few weeks before your new cadet will be able to call again. This first call is usually filled with emotion and is sometimes a "downer". That is normal! The new cadets have had it with standing in lines, learning Plebe Knowledge, haircuts, testing, mess hall formality and the intense nature of the whole thing. It may be the worst experience of their lives at this point. **Encouragement and support** is what they need the most from you. Remember, more than 200 plebe classes have survived, so can they. If you do not get a phone call in the first couple of weeks, don't panic. Sometimes new cadets will intentionally pass on the first opportunity to call because they are not yet ready to hear your voice and all of the emotions that a call home brings.

Keep those cards and letters coming. Don't be discouraged if another parent tells you that they heard from their new cadet and you haven't. Assignments and free times differ greatly throughout the various companies. Notify them about times you will be gone from home. Decide on good times for calls and then make every effort to keep phone lines open and be there for the calls. With so little free time, it is very disheartening to get a busy signal when a new cadet needs a lift from Mom or Dad's voice. Keep a pencil and note pad handy by the phone to write down questions you will have and to jot down information from your new cadet.

Toward the end of July, just when the new cadets are starting to get comfortable with their cadre, the upperclassmen change with a whole new set of cadre and leadership. (This is training in leadership for the upperclassmen as well as basic training for the new cadets). This change can be particularly stressful for the new cadets. Prepare for a possible "downer" communication after this change. Remember: "**1DAAT**".

Several Wednesdays during beast your son or daughter will have the opportunity to attend Chaplain's time. This includes a short church service followed with a social hosted by the church members. This time is a very enjoyable for the new cadets.

The last week of Beast is spent at Camp Buckner, a military camp on the West Point reservation. The new cadets will bivouac (camp out, for us laymen), learn military skills and bond as a class with a variety/skit night and the selection of their class motto.

At the end of Buckner the class marches back (the "March Back") 12 miles to West Point proudly displaying the new class motto at the head of the column. The entire community of West Point turns out to welcome the class of proud new cadets as they march back in fine fashion. They are met at the North (Washington) gate by their 50-year affiliation class, the military band and the Army mules as they proceed to march the last two miles, winding their way through the West Point community, culminating in a Pass in Review at the Superintendent's house (Quarters 100) where the Superintendent and honored guests will receive the Pass in Review.

Check with your new cadet about the exact schedule if you plan to attend. Take your camera/camcorder and make up a large sign to welcome the class back to the Point.

KEEP IN MIND, BEAST BARRACKS IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE HARDEST TIMES EMOTIONALLY, PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY THAT YOUR CADET WILL EXPERIENCE DURING THEIR ENTIRE FOUR YEARS AT WEST POINT. DURING THIS TIME YOU SHOULD BE SUPPORTIVE, POSITIVE, UNDERSTANDING AND UPBEAT!!!

Should a situation arise during this time where you need guidance, help or just an ear to bend - CALL your WWPPA mentor or any one of the Board Members.

REORGANIZATION WEEK

Reorganization From Field Training (CBT) To Classroom Preparedness

Reorganization Week, commonly called "REORGY" is considered by many to be the absolute worst time of the plebe year. Throughout Beast, there has been about 1 upperclassman for every 12 new cadets. Just as the new cadets are feeling happy and proud that they survived Beast and look forward to being cadets instead of "bean heads", etc, they are confronted by a mass infusion of the dreaded upperclassmen. These upperclassmen are returning from various summer assignments all over the world and have nothing more important to do than to get up close and personal with the new cadets. The ratio is now drastically changed to 3 upperclassmen for every new cadet, and much worse, they have to live with them in their new companies and eat with them in the Mess Hall. It only lasts for a week, actually 5 days for the new cadets, but it can be intense. During this week, each new cadet will move in with new roommate(s) from their own class and become part of one of the 36 companies that make up the Corps. This company will be their HOME for the next year. They will also receive their computer and something new - a homework assignment for each class - to be completed **BEFORE** they report to the first class. Such is the Thayer method of teaching. The new cadets are not free to meet with their families during reorg week. If you are at West Point for the week, you will **not** have an opportunity to see them.

A-DAY (ACCEPTANCE DAY) PARADE

The Saturday after "March Back", the new cadets are accepted into the Corps of Cadets with the Acceptance Parade. This is one of only three parades that are totally dedicated to a particular class during the entire West Point experience. (R-Day and Graduation are the others). CBT training culminates with the Acceptance Parade. Your new cadet will notify you which permanent company he/she has been assigned to. You will want to place yourself in the stands aligned with his or her new company using the markers

on the field. The upperclassmen march onto the field and the new cadets march along the outer edges of the Plain forming in front of the bleachers. After their "acceptance" the plebes take their places with their permanent academic companies as members of the Long Gray Line® and pass in review.

The cadet parade out and line up in front of the bleachers. There are four regiments (1, 2, 3, 4). Each regiment has three battalions and each battalion has three companies. First battalion is made up of companies A, B, and C. Second battalion is made up of companies D, E and F. Third battalion is made up of companies G, H and I. So as you sit in the bleachers, facing Washington Hall, the first regiment will be to your left, the second and third regiment will be in the middle and the fourth regiment will be to your right. If your cadet were in company H1, that means that he/she is in the first regiment (H1), company H (H1), and H falls within the third battalion.

1st Regiment	2nd Regiment	3rd Regiment	4th Regiment
C1 F1 I1	C2 F2 I2	C3 F3 I3	C4 F4 I4
B1 E1 H1	B2 E2 H2	B3 E3 H3	B4 E4 H4
A1 D1 G1	A2 D2 G2	A3 D3 G3	A4 D4 G4

=== BLEACHER LOCATION ===

The Parade is scheduled at 10:00 AM on A-Day, and held on the Plain, weather permitting. The bleachers fill up early, so plan to get there well before the start of the Parade. The new cadets will wear their white hats for the first time and formally be accepted into the Corps. If you attend, be prepared for the weather and bring your cameras and camcorders. CONGRATULATIONS - your son/daughter is now officially a cadet of the United States Military Academy at West Point. In past years, cadets have been released from duties by mid-afternoon and can spend time with you for the first time since R-day. They usually also have all day Sunday off to spend with family (due to report back to their company by late afternoon). Your cadet will be required to stay at the barracks Saturday night, and will not be able to stay at your hotel with you.

There are distance limits on how far a new cadet can travel from West Point, therefore plan to spend the day at West Point or within those boundaries. Your cadet will be informed on the limits as well as what they are allowed to do prior to being released from duty.

Plan on bringing dress casual clothes and other items, such as cell phones, to leave with your new cadet. Your new cadet will probably suggest many other items to bring or send to them.

E-Mail and Telephone Access

Each cadet has a computer at their desk that is tied into the West Point network and hence the internet. Your cadet will have access to their current email addresses and to social networking sites sometime after A-Day depending on their company. Please note that emails to the West Point email account are for **official business only** and are subject to open records requests.

Each company will decide when the plebes can have individual cell phones.

ACADEMIC YEAR

The academic year commences immediately after REORGY week. Classes usually have less than fifteen students and are very challenging to even the brightest students. Encourage your plebe not to neglect their academics. It is 60% of their class rank grade. (Military- 25% & Physical 15% make up the other 40%.) The Academy, while educating the whole person, stresses academics. Your plebe is well advised to study hard and develop good study habits. One of the most important lessons to be learned is TIME MANAGEMENT. The Academy offers a short course on this subject for plebes. Encourage your cadet to sign up. Classes begin creating stress of another type. The Thayer method of instruction is study and application first with explanation later. This is a unique approach that usually creates frustration until adjustment can be made. The top honor student that has never had a grade below a "B" has now failed their first two quizzes or WPR's (Written Partial Reviews). This is also normal, not to panic. On top of the NEW academic strain, there are also plebe duties, room management, and personal military inspections. Upperclassmen are also "helpful" in reinforcing everything and then some. This is when your cadet learns the most efficient way to MANAGE TIME. Homework is done before the class, not after. The cadet should be prepared BEFORE the first day and BEFORE every class.

Encourage your plebe to become involved in clubs and similar activities in order to afford some outlet from academics. Several extra-curricular activities are performed outside of West Point and these will provide the plebes with an opportunity to leave the Academy for a while. Sign-ups are done throughout the year so your new cadet should inquire early about joining a club or activity that interests them.

Sunday is a day of relaxation, unless the plebe has a specific duty. They will be free to sleep late, attend church and do as they please until Sunday evening study period.

Due to the heavy academic schedule, many cadets will use Saturday afternoon and Sunday to complete their assignments for classes.

Keep sending those cards and letters. Now that the academic year has started you can send BOODLE BOXES - those care packages from home with HOMEMADE cookies, candy, snacks, etc. Send the local Sunday comics as well as local sports and news articles of their high school team. The first boodle box could also contain an airtight (plastic) container to hold future food such as baked goods from home or items delivered by specialty shops in the West Point area. Ask your cadet about the size of their container since storage space is severely limited. Cadets can also purchase boodle box containers at the Cadet Store.

Refer to the address instructions below for shipments via UPS, US Postal Service, etc. Send small, but frequent packages rather than large ones because space is limited.

When shipping packages:

Cadet <last name>

745 Brewerton Road # _____

West Point, NY 10997 - <PO Box number> *(Do not send packages before A-Day)*

When shipping letters and flats:

Cadet <last name>

P.O Box <cadet's PO #>

West Point, NY 10997 - <PO Box number>

It is highly suggested that you write your Cadet's P.O. Box number and Company ID on the sides of any package. This allows for easier identification in the mail room.

Note: During Beast, the above mailing address must start with the word "**New**" as in New Cadet <last name>. After A-Day, they are no longer "new" and thus Cadet <last name> is proper.

Remember that you will hear the worst from your cadet. You are the outlet for all of their frustrations. When you talk to other parents, it seems their cadet is always doing better (NOT SO!). Most times your cadet will feel much better after the phone call while you feel worse. Be a good listener. Be positive. Be understanding. Be supportive. Don't ask how they like it. Postpone that question for about 20 YEARS. Do talk with other parents for moral support. If you have concerns, call your WWPPA mentor or a club officer. Calling the TAC officer should be reserved for more serious matters such as family emergencies, etc. Tactical Officer (TAC) and TAC NCO's (there is one each per Company), provide the military structure to the Corps. Working for the Commandant, they are the disciplinarians that watch over the Corps.

Each Plebe will have the opportunity to sign up for the West Point Sponsorship Program. Encourage your cadet to do so. Military personnel at West Point volunteer each year to help 3-4 plebes as personal mentors. They provide a "home away from home". This is a place where plebes can go, when invited, and relax in a family environment.

For those that are experiencing some problems with their studies, Additional Instruction (AI) is available to all cadets. Each instructor at the Academy has only one responsibility and that is to help the students learn and succeed. They are available each day to provide special help to any cadet that schedules an appointment. They will not come to the cadet, even when they know the cadet needs help. **The cadet must request this help.** Encourage your cadet to avail themselves of this service as often as needed. Get help EARLY- don't wait until it's too late. Mentors have even been known to help cadets with additional instruction as well as other classmates in their company. There is always someone to help. All the cadet has to do is ask. Asking for help is not a sign of failure or weakness. It helps all students succeed and builds teamwork among classmates.

LABOR DAY

Your cadet may be able to take a pass for Labor Day to come home. Check with your cadet after the term begins. Updates will also come via email from your class representatives or the WWPPA president. These frequent changes in policy are another reason for joining our Parents Club and keeping in touch with the Academy through the Web sites and Nets. Just a note - your cadet will tell you very little about what is going on. You will need to have other sources of information to be informed.

It is often easier for the parents to make the flight reservations than it is for the plebes, as they have precious little time for this sort of thing. Allow at least two hours for the cadet to get from West Point to Newark, LaGuardia or Kennedy and about one hour to Stewart. Buses (from GMK Travel) run between the airports and West Point. Round trip or one-way tickets need to be purchased at West Point, usually in Grant Hall. Sales schedules for the bus tickets will be posted. Do not make travel arrangements until you know when the buses will run. Parents can find the bus schedules at www.west-point.org/parent/plebe-net/. Click on Helpful Links, and then scroll down to the Travel section.

Note: Many Milwaukee area families have found that Southwest Airlines non-stop service from LaGuardia to Milwaukee is one of the more reasonably priced routes.

Expect to see a changed person. Weight loss may have occurred. Also, if your cadet comes home, be ready to adjust. There will be friends to visit, places to go or just plain sleep to catch up on. Let your cadet set the schedule this time. This is their first break away from West Point and although you have a long list of questions, they may want quiet time. Also, be prepared for a "let down" feeling after seeing them off at the airport.

ALERT!! (Do this today!!)

Make hotel/motel reservations for Plebe/Parent weekend in March, if you have not already done so. Cadets may possibly have a 75-mile radius OPP (Off Post Privileges) that weekend.

THE REST OF THE 1st SEMESTER

From Labor Day on, things start to settle down. There will be emotional ups and downs along the way. Be ready to give your support and encouragement. There may be poor grades on papers or an "F" on a quiz or not doing well on a WPR (Written Partial Review). At this time, the challenges seem like mountains to the students who have never had a "C" on a paper before. By the end of the semester they should have worked things out and improved by the time TEE'S (Term End Exams) start. Looking forward to Thanksgiving and winter leave and the Army/Navy Game keeps them going.

THANKSGIVING WEEKEND LEAVE

Cadets are released at the end of their duty (after last class) on Wednesday and are due back at 7:00 PM on Sunday. This is the heaviest travel weekend of the year - get airline tickets in July for your cadet. Thanksgiving is a Superintendent's leave; he grants this leave and it is not a charged pass to the cadets. Check with your cadet before making final arrangements. Policies do change and your cadet **MUST** know the current policy. Transportation to airports is by bus. Cadets can purchase "round trip" bus tickets **IN ADVANCE** to travel to and from airports in the area of West Point. Cadets should buy these tickets early (a schedule will be posted). It is a good idea to schedule flights **FROM** West Point **LATE** in the day and **BACK** to West Point **EARLY** in the day.

To plan for winter leave, ask your cadet for their final exam schedule and details regarding dismissal from duties and time for reporting back so flight arrangements can be made. Your cadet needs to call you as soon as this schedule is released, usually sometime in mid-October. Getting the exam schedule in enough time to get the best priced airline tickets can be a problem. Historically, plebe exams are over on the day before the last exam day which is usually Thursday of exam week, but your cadet's situation may be different. Should your cadet get to the airport early and was scheduled on a later flight, they usually can be wait-listed on the next flight out and may get on the earlier flight with no trouble.

ARMY/NAVY GAME

"What counts is not the size of the dog in the fight; it's the size of the fight in the dog."
-- Dwight D. Eisenhower

The first game was played on the Plain at West Point Nov. 29, 1890 following a challenge by Cadet Dennis Mahan Michie. Final Score: Navy 24 – Army 0. In their 113 year history there have been 83 consecutive meetings. Navy leads the series 60-49-7 having won the last fourteen games.

All Cadets will travel to Baltimore, Maryland for the game and return to West Point that evening unless they receive a pass. Watch for information on our own Army/Navy party hosted by club members.

WINTER LEAVE

Remember to have your son/daughter bring their full dress uniform home if you and/or they are planning to attend the All Academy Ball. Do not be surprised if your cadet is reluctant to bring their uniform home. Many of them are just tired of wearing uniforms and want to be a civilian for the short time they are home. However, if they are planning on going to the Ball, their **full dress uniform is mandatory**.

The hardest farewell often comes when your plebe returns to West Point after the Winter leave. The time spent at home was so much fun and the freedom felt good. It is tough to go back to the regimentation and all the "gray", including the weather. This is aptly named the "gloom" period. Prepare for a readjustment period. Cadets will have new rooms and roommates for the spring semester.

THE GLOOM PERIOD

From January through March, everything at West Point is GRAY - uniforms, buildings, the mountains and the weather. Keep those words of encouragement coming. There will be another week of reorganization before the cadets start classes for the second semester. You will receive a letter requesting a donation to fund cadets' special activities. This letter will be followed up by a telephone call. You are not required to make a donation or pledge, but give special consideration if you feel you can afford to do so. Depending on their performance, cadets may take a three day leave over Presidents' weekend and come home, go skiing in New England or other off-post trips. This will help to break up the Gloom Period.

PLEBE PARENT WEEKEND

Plebe Parent Weekend is an absolute must for all parents who can possibly make it. A booklet from West Point with all the schedules for this special weekend will be posted on the West Point web site. Your cadet will have the opportunity to show off the Academy to family and friends. You will have the opportunity to see your cadet's room, classrooms, meet their instructors, TAC officers and their Sponsor. In the past, tours of such places as the Superintendent's Quarters, the Uniform Factory and the Mess Hall were offered. This changes from year to year and the booklet you receive from West Point is your best reference guide as to what will be available. On Saturday night there will be a formal banquet and Ball. Tickets are required for some of these events and some require reservations. Your cadet can order these in advance so remind them to do so. Cadets usually are given Off Post Privileges (within 75 miles) during this weekend, however they must be back in their barracks each night. Plebe Parent weekend starts on Friday morning, so you will probably want to arrive on Thursday night.

Be sure to come to the WWPPA 2017 winter meeting to get additional details on all the fun you'll have this weekend. Thousands of people come to West Point to visit their cadets. *You will never be allowed to see or visit some of these facilities again. This is a once in a lifetime experience that you should not miss.*

SPRING BREAK

Plebes are given time off along with all of the rest of the Corps for Spring Break. Make reservations in advance to get the best airfares and travel times. It will be a good time for you and your cadet to reflect on the experiences at West Point and relax a bit. Some cadets may even want to travel. Just be sure to make travel arrangements to have your cadet back by the necessary times.

SPRING OF THE 2nd SEMESTER

After March, the weather and moods lift. Sometime in March or April, the APFT will be administered. Passing the APFT twice yearly is required. It consists of doing sit-ups, push-ups, and a timed two-mile run. This is very important to all cadets. NOTE: The Army has announced a change forthcoming in the requirements of this test.

Once you know your cadet's summer schedule, make arrangements for flights for summer leave.

Except for special exemptions, all cadets MUST remain at West Point until after the graduation exercises have been concluded. .

CONGRATULATIONS!!

Your cadet is joining the oldest fraternity in the U.S. with the likes of Lee, Grant, MacArthur, Eisenhower and Schwarzkopf. This is not just a college education, but the development of leaders of character to lead our Nation in the 21st century. REMEMBER, nobody at West Point wants your plebe to fail!!

You and your cadet have made it through the first year. The cadets are now on their way to being all they can be mentally, physically and emotionally. They have withstood the test and they can be proud. You are button-popping proud of them. You are now experienced West Point Parents - we're proud of you. Take a bow.

Bring your new Yearling to the Plebe Parent Picnic next June and help welcome the Class of 2021.

Nothing comes without sacrifice and your son/daughter will make sacrifices during their years at West Point, but the reward is overwhelming in the education they receive and in the sense of pride that can never be taken away from them. They have paid the price and when they walk out to get that diploma on graduation day in just a few short years, they will be a part of one of America's greatest traditions - they will have joined the **Long Gray Line**.

OTHER TIPS AND ADVICE

Read your West Point's [Information for New Cadets and Parents Class of 2020](#) and [Parents Almanac](#) booklets. Many questions are answered in that booklet.

Your new cadet will be your best source for information such as scheduling trips, questions about their pay, income tax information, etc. They have access to the ultimate authority, West Point, and as such when they get the final details they will then and only then pass the information on to you. This may be at times very frustrating, but be patient, they will let you know when they do. Allow your new cadet to be responsible for getting the information to you. That said, the Plebe Parent Network has links to answer most questions. It can be frustrating as information may be updated at the last minute and schedules can change, but one must learn to be flexible when dealing with the Army.

The **cost of transportation** to West Point **for your cadet on R-Day** will be reimbursed by the USMA®, so save receipts and be sure to record mileage. Your cadet must submit forms for this reimbursement and they need the receipts. West Point will reimburse for only one night's hotel cost and they have a predetermined mileage scale. Don't expect to get these funds since they are given to the cadet and have a tendency to "disappear". If your cadet chooses to report on R-Day alone, he/she should refer to the Admissions

Packet (Instructions for Candidates Offered Admission) for prepaid travel and accommodations.

Monthly paychecks will be deposited directly into your cadet's bank account. Any bounced check from this account will cause extreme anguish (demerits and discipline details) so remind your cadet to be very careful with check writing.

DO NOT send boodle until your cadet tells you when they are allowed to receive it. Even a single stick of chewing gum, in a letter, during Beast can cause extreme anguish with disciplinary actions. Usually boodle is allowed after the start of classes.

Consider having your cadet purchase a small electric fan at the Cadet Store. The rooms in the barracks can get very hot during August and September.

Don't worry about medical attention for your cadet. The Academy has excellent facilities in the cadet area and at Keller Hospital which is on post. Since cadets are not allowed to remain in the barracks if they cannot attend class, they may be admitted to Keller Hospital for even the flu. Don't worry, if the problem is serious, you will be notified.

If there is a family emergency, you can contact your cadet's TAC Officer. You will receive their name and phone number on R-Day. You can also call the Central Guard which is open 24 hours a day at (845) 938-3030 or (845) 938-2555.

For Plebe Parent weekend, it is a nice idea to select a gift of appreciation to take for your cadet's Sponsor family. Perhaps a homemade item or something from Wisconsin would be appropriate. Also, a fruit/cookie basket from you and your cadet at Christmas time is a nice way to thank them for their special attention to your cadet.

Remind your cadet to **always** have his or her TAC Officer's phone number with them so they can call in the case of a delayed return.

Most airlines do not charge military personnel for baggage fees. The TSA will also allow Pre-Check with the Cadet's DOD number added to the Known Number during booking.

Set a pre-arranged spot to always meet your cadet when you are visiting West Point. It seems as though something always comes up for your cadet and the set time to meet is usually long gone and still no cadet. Stay put, they will show up as soon as they can.

Notify your auto insurance agent that your son/daughter is attending West Point. Many companies will not charge for military personnel.

Your cadet will receive a memo from the West Point Treasurer's Office by early February regarding income tax information. Be sure to remind your cadet of the importance of forwarding it on to you. It relates to both you and your cadet's income tax returns.

Be prepared for at least one letter or phone call where your cadet wants to quit. This may happen after your plebe has had some contact with a friend at another college telling him or her about all the free time and parties and lack of rules and regulations, but more likely after contact with an unfeeling upperclassman.

When the challenge arises, you may need to remind your son or daughter and yourself why they chose West Point to begin with: advantages they will have in the future, the responsibility of leading and commanding, a challenging and well-respected academic program, excellent student-teacher ratios, getting paid rather than paying tuition, etc. Or even better yet, remind them of why West Point chose them: they had and continue to have all the necessary qualities, that same academic and athletic leadership and the raw material to build a leader for the future. Be sympathetic and flexible with them. Try to persuade your cadet to give it one more day or week. Quitting is a serious decision, there is no second chance.

As a member of the Wisconsin Parent's club, you may want to purchase a name badge, with your name and your Cadet's name and graduation year on it. You will see many parents wearing these when you visit West Point. If you would like to order one for yourself contact pmonty@charter.net or call 860-429-1931.

Always know that the Wisconsin West Point Parents Association is here to support both you and your cadet. Feel free to contact any Board Member or your Mentor family, if you requested one, with any questions or concerns you may have. There is no such thing as a stupid question and if you are wondering about something, chances are so is someone else. We are all on this journey together, so feel free to use the knowledge and experience of those who are just a little further along the path to that day every cadet has engraved in his or her mind....GRADUATION!!!



2016-2017 WWPPA Planning Calendar

June:

Plebe-Parent Welcome Picnic: VFW Post 1707, 215 W. Collins Ave, Portage, WI
Jun 5th (*Sunday*)
R Day – Class of 2020
Jun 27th (*Monday*)

July:

Mom's Summer Coffee: 10 am Berres Brothers Coffee: 202 Air Park Dr, Johnson Creek
Jul 11th

August:

Summer Meeting: Hosted by:
March Back:
Aug 8rd (*Monday*)
A Day
Aug 13th (*Monday*)
First Day of Academic Classes
Aug 15th (*Monday*)
Ring Weekend
Aug 26-27

Sept/Oct:

3-Day Weekend: (Away Football Game)
Sept 5th –
Academy Day, EAA Oshkosh
Sept 19th
Football Tailgate at Michie: (Army vs Lafayette Leopards) {or North Texas Oct 22}
Oct 15th (*Saturday*)
3 Day Weekend: (Home Football Game)
Oct 22nd (*Saturday*)

November:

Milwaukee Veteran's Day Parade: Coordinated by: (Chris Wedholm)
Nov 5th (*Saturday*)
Thanksgiving Holiday:
Nov 24-27

December:

Army-Navy Party(ies): Hosted by: ? several hosts; Game in Baltimore 3 p.m.

Dec 10th (Saturday)

Wreath Laying at West Point Cemetery

Term End Exams

Dec 13-17

Winter Leave

Dec 17 - Jan 3

All Academies Military Ball hosted by Navy: Pfister Hotel, Milwaukee

Dec 30th

February:

Yearling Winter Weekend: (Class of 2017 Event)

Feb 8th

Winter Meeting: *tentative* Wis Dells;

Feb 10-11th (Friday/Saturday) [Gloom Gifts, Graduation, Board elections]

100th Night: (Class of 2017 Event)

Feb 17-19th

Academy Day, Milwaukee

TBD

March:

Plebe-Parent Weekend: (Class of 2020 Event)

Mar 10-12th

Spring Break:

Mar 10-19th

April:

Spring Meeting: Firstie Farewell, Plan for Plebe-Parent Welcome Picnic,

Apr 16th 2016-17 Calendar Hosted by:

Term End Exams

May 15-19th

Class of 2017 Graduation

May 27th

Please consult your Newsletter or Class Rep. for the most current information on dates and locations.



UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT.

June 26	Class of 2019 reports to West Point/Camp Buckner for Cadet Field Training 2
June 27	R-Day – Reception Day – Class of 2020 reports to West Point
July 17	New Cadet Visitation Day – Class of 2020 will visit with Staff & Faculty – 1:30-5 p.m.
July 25	Cadet Field Training Ends (Class of 2019) – Run Back from Camp Buckner
August 5	August Graduation – 4 p.m. August 7 Upper Class Cadets report to West Point
August 8	March Back from Cadet Basic Training August 8-12 Reorganization Week
August 13	Acceptance Day Parade – 10:30 a.m.
August 14	Affirmation Ceremony–Class of 2018-Event supported by staff, faculty, TAC teams and 50-year class
August 15	First Day of Academic Classes
August 26-27	Ring Weekend–Class of 2017 Event - 8/26-Ceremony @Trophy Point, 8/27-5K in the a.m. & banquet p.m.
September 5	Labor Day (No Classes)
October 10	Columbus Day (No Classes)
October 21-23	Parents Weekend – Parent Welcome Center will be located in Cullum Hall. Registration required.
November 11	Veterans Day (Holiday – No Classes)
November 17	Branch Night for Class of 2017
November 23	Modified class day - Cadets released by 1 p.m.
November 24-27	Thanksgiving Holiday - Cadets must return by 7 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 27
December 9	Modified Class Day/Last Day of Classes for first semester – Classes end by 1 p.m.
December 10	Army-Navy Game – Baltimore, MD – 3 p.m.
December 12	Reading Day
December 13-17	Term-End Exams (Final Exams)
December 16	December Graduation – 2 p.m.
December 17	Winter Leave Begins – Last day of Term-End Exams
January 3, 2017	Winter Leave Ends – Cadets must return by 7 p.m.
January 4-8	Winter Reorganization
January 9	First Day of Academic Classes – Second Semester
January 14-16	500th Night (Class of 2018 Event)
January 16	Martin Luther King Day (Holiday – No Classes)
January 19	Post Night for the Class of 2017

February 4-5	Yearling-Winter Weekend (Class of 2019 Event)
February 17-19	100th Night (Class of 2017 Event)
February 20	Presidents' Day (Holiday – No Classes)
March 10-12	Plebe-Parent Weekend (Class of 2020 Event) Plebes are released on Sunday, March 12 for Spring Break – approximate time – 8:30 a.m.
March 10-19	Spring Break – Cadets ('17-'19) depart after last duty on March 10, and return by 7 p.m. on March 19
April 8-9	Sandhurst Competition May 4 Projects Day and Inspiration to Serve Cemetery Tour
May 12	Last Day of Academic Classes
May 15-19	Term-End Exams
May 23	STAP I (Summer Term Academic Program) Begins
May 27	Class of 2017 Graduation
June 16	Class of 2017 June Graduation/STAP I Ends
June 20-July 12	STAP II
July 14-Aug 5	STAP III

***For information on events please visit the parent's page listed below or contact the Parent Communications Liaison.
Debra Dalton (845) 938-8826
mdeb.dalton@usma.edu
www.usma.edu/parents
Dates subject to change***

The institutional names and identifying marks of the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West point are used with permission of the United States Army



Go Army! Beat Navy!