

**WHAT EVERY MOM NEEDS
TO KNOW
ABOUT MILITARY SCHOOL!**

by Dr. Charles W. Stewart

What Every Mom Needs to Know About Military School!

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What Every Mom Needs to Know About Military School!
A short text explaining what most military schools offer children and how to know if your youngster needs to attend.

To the Colors



Running at Dawn



Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: WHO ARE MILITARY SCHOOLS CUSTOMERS?	1
CHAPTER 2: WHAT IS A MILITARY SCHOOL, AND WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER SCHOOLS?	9
CHAPTER 3: HOW TO MAKE CONTACT WITH A SCHOOL	15
CHAPTER: 4 THE NEW CADET	23
CHAPTER 5: VALUES; WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT VALUES IN EDUCATION?	26
CHAPTER 6: WHAT ARE YOUR NEEDS?	30
CHAPTER 7: A LISTING OF QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK	38
CHAPTER 8: WHAT SORT OF STUDENT NEEDS TO ATTEND MILITARY SCHOOL?	54
CHAPTER 9: SOME GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT TO EXPECT	60
CHAPTER 10: WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT TO PAY FOR CHARGES AND FEES?	69

CHAPTER 11: WHAT SORT OF PROBLEMS SHOULD YOU EXPECT?	74
CHAPTER 12: WHAT ABOUT THOSE MILITARY SCHOOL HORROR STORIES?	80
CHAPTER 13: THE FUTURE OF MILITARY SCHOOLS, MISC. INFORMATION, AND THE CONCLUSION	84
CHAPTER 14: WHO ARE THE ASSOCIATION OF MILITARY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES?	97

Author's Note:

In the fall of 1959 a shy retiring non-college bound C.W. Stewart enrolled in military school. His parents thought that he lacked incentive and motivation to be successful. He was not college material. His English teacher had put him in the group that was not planning to attend college. His social graces were so poor that his mother once remarked that she thought he might have been a backward child. No one in his family had been in the military for two generations. The military school he was enrolling into cost a lot of money and his father was not in favor of his attending. No one in his family had ever attended college of any kind. C.W. hated military school! The first year was terrible and he had great difficulty in just getting by. He returned the next year with an open mind. However, he never really was happy at military school and he felt that he never fit in.

Two years later C.W. graduated from military school with many honors and awards. He graduated at the head of his class. After a successful career in business and education he returned to become president of the military school he attended. The institution he became president of was in danger of closing. Six years later the school is full of students, and the institution is prospering. He makes a point of speaking personally with every parent at the time they enroll their youngster so his understanding of what problems parents face is real. And yet his experience is not unusual for those who attend military school. More leaders, more successful individuals in many different career fields come from military schools than probably any other of the selective private schools. This text will attempt to explain why that occurs and the criterion you should use to see if a military school should be in your youngster's future.

Writing a book entitled, "What Every Mom Needs to Know About Military School," assumes a lot. It assumes the writer attended military school and became president of one. It assumes that the author believes he is very qualified to "tell is like it is" so that parents can make the most of the potential military

school experience. Written from a parent to parents, this text is written from a standpoint of practical useful knowledge. I hope you find it helpful as you attempt to do the right thing for your youngster.

Introduction and Foreword

The decision to feel the need to send one's son or daughter to military school is an emotional one. I tried to meet each and every parent who placed their students with us over the years I was president of a military school. Without a doubt, it is an emotional moment for the family. Some parents agonize for years as they start to enroll then back away, as the difficulty with their youngster becomes more imprinted and ingrained. What you have to understand is that military schools are in the business of producing outstanding young adults. Young adults that are patriotic, honest, educated, and highly motivated are produced daily. The process that produces these outstanding young adults is wonderful and universal. The institution can only do its work with the parent's support. In particular, the biological mother is always the key to a school's success with the student. If the school has the support of the mother the success rate with students is very high. Without this support, the adventure is a waste of both time and money. Creating outstanding young adults is not a spectator sport for either the parents or the institution. Working together however, military schools have produced more CEOs, more doctors, more attorneys, more sheer wealth than any other institutions of their size in the United States educational system.

The author attended military school some 40 years ago and it saved his life. Nearly every thing worthwhile that has occurred to him happened because of the things he learned in military school. Now 40 years later he is president of a military school and college. His insights into the inner working of these special institutions and how they help young people is a necessary guide to parents considering sending their youngsters to such a school. This is not an advertising brochure for private military education, because faults and problems are discussed openly. It is, however, a frank discussion of what parents can expect, what works and what doesn't in the guidance of young lives as they

transition from being a child to becoming a responsible young adult.

It has often seemed to the author that military schools are a best-kept secret. The lack of familiarity with the military traditions creates an uncomfortable feeling with many parents who were young during the Vietnam period. Military schools have less military content in many cases than a Korean Methodist Girls Academy just outside of Seoul, Korea, that I visited some years ago. When we discuss military schools in the United States we are talking about a school which simply contains a lot of student controls, ethics, quality education, and military style uniforms. The term used for these items collectively is "structure" in education. Parents without military backgrounds should not feel uncomfortable dealing with staff of military schools. Many military schools have admissions staff not in uniform because they are concerned about the image they may present to the prospective client customer; the parent.

This text is broken into sections that should allow parents to both read the book in its entirety or to jump around and visit sections they might have a specific need to read. The parts of this book that apply to you as you think about whether or not to send your youngster to military school and select which school would be the best is important. As you read, try to emphasize and visualize your son or daughter in many of the examples and slowly both the decision to send your youngster to a military school and which type of school should become apparent to you.

Holiday Ensemble



Chapter 1:

Who Are Military School's Customers?

The Military High School

In the high school a diverse group of students attend. First the children of alumni are a high quality group of some size. Many schools have clubs and associations of second-generation alumni. Alumni's children are great for an institution and validate that the institution is following its mission statement. The size in number of the alumni's youngsters in attendance is a good indication of how the alumni believe the school is run and if the institution is true to its purpose. Remember, the alumni want the school operated like it was when they were there and so such institutions have a tendency to be more dogmatic and slightly more violent than those in which the alumni are not as loyal in sending their youngsters. On balance, however, the better schools retain and recruit alumni's youngsters more successfully than those schools that are not as well run. The number of alumni's children in attendance at a military school in many cases is a quality indicator for potential parents of future students.

International Students

International students make up an important part of the population at military schools. International students bring their culture which gives the schools a special favor. The only sin of the international students is that they often are from wealthy families and have an excessive amount of money to spend during their free time. The intermingling of different cultures is especially important today as we contemplate competing in the world economy. International students will usually make up from 10% to 25% of the corps of cadets at most military schools in the United States. Schools that have a larger population of international students need to have a good explanation of how that will not adversely affect your youngster. Groups of any kind that are

too large tend to try to gain special favor in the operation of the school.

Students Striving to Excel

Students looking for leadership opportunities and opportunities to improve their self-discipline also make up a large group of students. In addition to youngsters trying to improve both their behavior and academics in hopes of getting into a well-known college, military schools have the traditional student that is sometimes labeled as "the problem student." Students who know they need to attend a military school tend to be very successful cadets. Individuals who know what they need are unique individuals and they excel in whatever they do.

Problem Kids

The behavior modification group of students at military schools is actually not that large and they break down into two groups. Those parents who wish to withdraw their youngster from the public system or other private school because the needs of their student are not being met. In some cases this need is for extra academic help or for self-discipline from a structured environment. The other group of students in the behavior modification category is the more serious group. This group of students the public school system has decided is too disruptive, and does not wish for them to attend their school. This group of students military schools really do not want to have but is undoubtedly part of the market they serve. They may allow your youngster to attend, however they try to minimize this group of students as a whole. Military schools will often turn your youngster away if they understand your youngster is thought to be so disruptive that they are not wanted by public school as they believe they will even more disruptive in a boarding school situation.

Rate of Success

In defense of students some are good and some are not so good. The success rate for both groups at military school is about the same. As children grow and become young adults, a wonderful

process takes place. Having that process take place at a military school is simply insurance that you are going to get back the potential every parent sees in their offspring. Military schools will be successful with truly problem youths, however schools may not wish to spend the time and effort necessary if it takes resources away from the better students.

Middle School Students

Younger students represent a subset of the groups that attend the junior high school except that because they are so much younger, their problems are likely to be minor. They are however more likely to be on medication than older students. Where possible young cadets need to be kept from the older students. An important item is the supervision and housing needs for young students. Their housing needs to be separate and more secure and have additional supervision than with older cadets. For an example, youngsters have problems with personal hygiene, laundry, and similar items that older cadets do not have problem with. Extra supervision and personal care are extremely important to this group.

Young Women's Programs

The Social of the Year

Many military schools accept females and as a parent you must decide whether or not socialization is important to you between your son or daughter and members of the opposite sex. While single sex education is becoming more



popular in the United States females at military schools give the schools a social balance, and they make very good cadets.

Should a female be sent to military school?

Actually the same principles that apply to males and their enrollment are the same as for females with just a few exceptions. Females are sometimes sent to military school because they have become sexually active at an early age or have exhibited an "out of control sexuality problem" that their parents believe can be better handled at a military school. Females also are sometimes sent to a military school to get them away from a boyfriend who the parents do not approve of. Females are totally different from males in how they respond to the characteristics of a military school.

Females adopt and adapt much more quickly than males of the same age. Females are already adept at how to handle laundry, how to keep a room straight, and wear the uniform much better than their male counterpart. Female cadets are about two years more mature than their male counterparts, and of course, this helps them a great deal especially at this young age. If I were to make a general statement about young women attending military school, it would be that it works better and more quickly than the same process does for the boys. Boys are more likely to spend time fighting the "system" while the females will make the system work for them. They will work together for a common goal much more quickly than the boys of the same age group!

The problem with the females is that after they have the system figured out, after they have made the system work for them, after they are receiving the benefits of attending the school, then they become adept at making the system work for them to do what they wish. They have talent at finding flaws in your institution's systems and exploiting those weaknesses.

Religious Accommodation

Religious accommodation is prevalent at most military schools. Most denominations get to church on Sundays and Jewish youngsters usually can be taken to temple on Friday night provided the community is large enough to have the facility. The real limiting factor is the amount of services provided by the school as well as the services provided in the community.

Some groups take special accommodations. Moslems in general are easily handled except during certain seasons of the year. Ramadan requirements are that no food or drink is consumed during the daylight hours. While the season moves a bit each year usually one or more of the meal periods during Ramadan occur either before or after daylight hours so that is not much of a problem. Most schools provide a carry out meal if it is daylight so it can be eaten after dark. Because American schools are accustomed to having Jewish students the issue of not eating pork is not an issue for the Moslem students. If you have special religious needs please feel free to discuss these issues with the commandant's office. You will find them helpful.

Signing the Standard of Honor



Buddhist students are so well mannered and quiet that special accommodations and problems usually do not arise. The same rules and principles apply to all groups and accommodations will be done in the spirit of the religious freedoms that we all enjoy.

College and Junior College Students

In the Junior College several different groups attend. Cadets who wish to pursue a military career may decide to attend one of the six military junior colleges where they will be commissioned as a second lieutenant at the end of their college sophomore year. Schools having this program are fortunate because they can call upon this group of students to help provide leadership for their corps of cadets. These advanced ROTC cadets are super individuals. They have to be in peak academic and physical condition for the ARMY to allow them to be commissioned. These individuals represent the cream of the corps as well as cream of the crop. Student athletes, members of the band, international students and regular students make up the rest of the Corps of Cadets. This makes for a balanced student population.

What is a Military Junior College?

There are 6 military junior colleges in the United States today. These schools commission a graduate as a second lieutenant in the US ARMY. They have high academic, athletic, and moral standards. These students will provide much of the leadership for the schools, which they attend. There are about 40 military schools today in the United States of which 6 are military junior colleges sometimes referred to as MJC's. More traditional ROTC programs produce a second lieutenant in four years after graduation. What is so unusual about the 6 military junior colleges is that the US Army pays nearly all the tuition and fees for these young people. What a bargain! Students have an opportunity to go to college for free and have a great career afterwards. If the student doesn't desire a military career after a fairly brief

period the student can resign from the Army and gets to keep the education.

The effect of these young people in the leadership and the quality of the corps of cadets are immeasurable. Both the leaders and the cadets being lead are given excellent leadership training that is unique among military schools.

Athletic programs are a major part of many MJC's. The college athletes and senior ROTC students make up the majority of college students that attend the MJC's. Some of these schools also allow day students to attend and this gives the institutions a community college or continuing education flavor.

High school class



The Diversity of Success

The truth is that a number of diverse groups attend military schools and this is also true of their parents. The diversity of the customer base is strength as it is helpful to youngsters to have the experience of living with so many different types of indi-

viduals from so many places. This diverse group has an unexpected effect on the results of success. You would expect those who attend military schools with out problem backgrounds would do better than those attending with "problems" or personality disorders. The fact is that military schools experience about the same success with those "problem kids" as with those who obviously have both academic and personal traits we desire. This is one of the rewards of working with youth that we believe to be troubled. The structure and stress placed on the students tends to cause all the groups to improve their performance.

Most Schools Feature Daily Physical Training



Chapter 2: What is a Military School, and what makes it different from other schools?

The Structured Environment

The real difference between ordinary schools, private schools, and military schools is largely control. Military schools exert much more control over everyday life than the most rigorous private school. This scheduling rigor, this structure to the everyday life of the cadet is what really makes a difference. The teaching of values, the obtaining an education while living in this complicated daily structured schedule, is what military schools are really all about.



Personal Responsibility

One of the things that military schools invariably do is make the students responsible for their actions. The connection between behavior, responsibility, and outcomes from inappropriate behavior is the strength of these systems. In a society where everyone is a victim and no one is responsible for his or her actions' military schools stand out as an anomaly. Most military schools only have three acceptable answers for questions, "Yes sir, no sir, and no excuse sir," are the right answers. "I couldn't because," has no place in the military school lexicon. This change in behavior alone is one of the quality spin-offs that is

not usually touted when schools are telling you their good points.

You should have allowed for that!

When a student would give an excuse that seems plausible, experienced military school staff simply respond, "You should have made allowances for that." So this is a response for a system where everyone is totally responsible for his or her actions. This has a real dampening effect on what we would classify as minor vandalism, petty larceny, and other similar traits that students come out of the public system thinking that these actions are acceptable or at least excusable. This accountability for one's own actions could be the most important thing a youngster learns at military school. Getting out of the victim mode is the key to your youngster's future success.

Structure

While structure has much in common with the definition of program, a clarification should be made between the two. The program is what the youngsters do during the day. The structure is the organization and format that the program falls into. Structure usually refers to the daily schedule and objects of a repetitive nature. Basketball is a program, athletics each afternoon from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. is a segment of the daily structure.

Most military schools begin their day at about 6:00 a.m. Morning formations and breakfast usually have occurred by 7:00 a.m. First classes usually meet from 8:00 a.m. till about 2-3:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Some school feature free time from 3:00 p.m. till 5:00 p.m. if homework has been completed properly. If home work was not completed properly or timely, students usually spend this free time completing assignments. Athletics and other activities are usually performed in this 3:00p.m. to 5:00 p.m. slot.

Dinner formation is usually near 6:00 p.m. with evening study period beginning near 7:00 p.m. Study period is usually over at 9:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The remaining hour is used to do chores and to get ready for lights out. At most schools lights out occurs between 10:00 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.

What Do They Do on Weekends?

While weekends are slightly different, this compact structure is a feature of virtually all military schools in the United States today. A constant complaint from the corps of cadets is, "Can we just have a free day when we can sleep in and don't have to have the program"? Structure is also more than a "thing." Structure becomes an attitude about what is proper and correct and what isn't. Once this permeates the corps of cadets, as it does each school year, the cadets are on their way to a new life.

Supervision

While quantity in supervision is measurable and quantifiable, some method needs to be used to ascertain the quality of supervision. First, supervision is easily measured in its raw form. How many students per staff member, how many personnel living in the barracks, how many staff in the classrooms are quantifiable? The commandant's office usually has some constant value they use. The number of 62 students per staff for the commandant's office is normal. Four students per staff overall is more or less a standard. Less than 20 students in the classroom is desirable but depends on the subject matter being taught. German II maybe overloaded at 9 students, whereas typing lab might be comfortable with 30 students. It may be helpful if the institution has a security or night security force separate from the commandant's staff. Security forces combined with camera surveillance have greatly improved the safety of most campuses in the late evening hours.

The real quality test is less easily measured. What is the quality of the supervision? If the staff is working with the students the quality of supervision is very high. If the staff are living in the barracks but do not engage in student control, which is not that uncommon, the quality of supervision is very low. The real measure of the supervision is what are the results achieved. Supervised students do their studies, do not smoke pot, nor do they engage in alcohol or sexual activities. Students not supervised may engage in all or none of the above. Parents necessarily want a high degree of supervision. That is what they are paying for. A true test of supervision and program quality is the retention rate for the institution. What is their drop rate and how long do students stay at the institution? Historical trends are toward poorer retention rates and for shorter stays in the school than a generation ago. Total population growth of an institution is a good indication of the retention of the institution. If the school is being poorly run no matter how good enrollments are the population of the institution will have a difficult time growing. Asking about how many students are attending and what the population trends are is a good indicator of general operational quality.

Control

Who is responsible for your youngster on a twenty-four hour basis? Who, how many, and what are the credentials of those in charge? This series of questions will be asked at several places in the text because of their importance. After-hours activities are sometimes the activities parents feel unsure of. Is my youngster going to get in fights, etc.? When a student is living at home, if a problem arises at school, the student goes home in the evening and gains a respite or gets some relief from the tense activity. Not so when the student lives at the same place where he or she attend class. This situation is wonderful when character, ethics, and academic skills are to be acquired, but takes a dark side if the bully down the hall want to terrorize your youngster. After-hours supervision is the key to minimiz-

ing this sort of unofficial terrorism that can go on in a barracks of under-supervised youth.

Staff Control

Schools have a tendency to use lower cost labor at night and to use fewer staff at night than during the day. Schools need supervision after class hours and on weekends more than during the week. Once again you need to ascertain is the school scheduling its labor force according to its needs rather than the 8-5 syndrome that schools can easily fall prey to. There are several types of control at most military schools. Faculty control, Staff control, and cadet corps control.

Staff control is usually under the control of the commandant's office. Staff control is usually in the barracks and mess halls. The commandant's staff runs daily out-of-class activities.

Faculty Control

Faculty control is the control of the teachers of their classroom. Military schools historically run much tighter class discipline than their public school counterparts. Visit classrooms if you can. If you see students with their heads down sleeping during class, I would recommend against enrollment in such a school. Also, if the students seem to be milling about and not under the control of the teacher, the institution should be regarded with suspicion. Students during class time should either be in class or going to and from. The only exception to this rule would be someone in sick bay or going to a sports event as a team member.

Faculty are usually in charge of the youngsters during the school day until the program begins in the afternoon of sports, drill teams, etc. In some schools the faculty also are responsible for running the evening study program. Even in cases where the faculty are not responsible for evening study, the faculty are

usually involved in "walking the halls" in the evening. One problem military schools and all schools can have if they are not properly managed is a disconnect between the academic function and the control function. Teachers must correct behavior if it is inappropriate. Some faculty will have a tendency to want to teach and not be in the role of a control mentor. Schools who allow teachers to disconnect from the total role of an adult behavior control officer do a disservice to their students as well as the faculty. This allows the faculty to slowly isolate themselves from school operations, and the warm interpersonal relationships that will normally occur between teacher and student will not happen in this environment.

Youngsters Controlling Youngsters

Cadet corps control is by far the most difficult for most youngsters. Many young people come out of an environment where they do not obey their parents into an environment where they are being told what to do by students. Because you are only with the faculty part of the day and staff part of the day being with the student officer corps 24 hours each day make this the strongest force and most in control of the student population.

Particularly, the new student population finds the officer cadet corps their worst nightmare. It is this group which they (the new cadets) themselves will one day be part of that teaches leadership more than any other facet of the institution. New minority students often confuse the strict control exercised by their officers as a form of racism even when the officers are minorities themselves. Being a new cadet as a minority is a special burden that quickly disappears as the cadet learns that it is the system not racism that is just difficult in the beginning for everyone.

Chapter 3:

How to make Contact with a School



How do you make contact with a military school? Where can you find them? Some of the more likely contact methods are discussed in the next paragraphs. The Internet is quickly becoming the most popular method of contact although you can never underestimate the power of the telephone. The importance of this is that if you feel you need the help of a military school, make the call. Parents often labor over whether they should or shouldn't send their youngster to military school for several years. In the meantime valuable years are being lost. Cadets that take several years to get into the program might have only taken one year if the behavior was stopped while the youngster was still in junior high school.

Advertising in your paper

Military schools will sometimes run advertisements in both newspapers as well as on the local TV stations. This advertisement will draw student enrollments and they work well for the school, but they are not of much use to the parent. The content of the advertisement is usually not of much use, but you can