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West-Point Military Academy

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Why is the Academy called West Point? Because it is located in the city of West Point, the State of New York, 80 km to the North of New York. Besides, the oldest museum of the US Army is also located here. A military fort was built by order of George Washington on the territory of the academy in 1778. The project was drawn up... by Tadeusz Kosciuszko, a national hero of Poland. The main task facing the fort was not to miss the ships of the British fleet along the Hudson River and a large chain was stretched across the river for doing this. This fort played a key role in the US War of Independence.

The Academy itself was founded in 1802. Great importance was initially attached to engineering. In the first half of the 19th century West Point graduates designed most of the US roads, bridges and railroads. In 1976, women were admitted to the academy for training for the first time.

Candidates for admission should apply to the academy directly, but at the same time receive a letter of reference, usually from a member of Congress. Students have the status of studying officers and are addressed as the Cadet. Training at the Military Academy is free of charge for the cadets, but the graduates must go on active military service as officers. Cadets of the academy are obliged to follow strictly the Code of Honor, which states: "Thou shall not lie, steal or cheat".

Currently, the vice-president of the United States and each of the congressmen have five studying places in the academy. When one of places is released due to the completion of the cadet's studies or for other reasons, the congressman recommends one or more people to the vacated place. Most often, these are ten people. If he recommends several people, a contest is held between them. If he recommends one person, he is recognized as suitable for training and admitted to the Academy automatically. The process of receiving a recommendation usually involves submitting an application, writing one or more essays and submitting letters of reference.

In addition, 100 places are provided each year for the children of officers, 170 places for soldiers on active military duty, 20 for cadets of the reserve officer training corps and 65 for the children of those who were seriously wounded and became disabled, died in battle or missing. In addition, about 20 foreign cadets are admitted each year.

A person entering the academy must be aged between 17 and 22 years old, unmarried and not paying alimony. The training lasts 4 years. A graduate of the academy receives a Bachelor's degree and is commissioned as junior lieutenant (Second Lieutenant) with an obligation to serve in the army for 5 years. Every year about 900 lieutenants graduates from the Academy. The Cadet Corps is officially organized into a brigade. The brigade commander is traditionally known as the First Captain. The brigade consists of four regiments. Each regiment has three battalions of three companies each. Companies are indicated by letters A to I, and the number means which regiment they belong to.

Cadets are not called freshmen, sophomores, third-year students and seniors. Instead, they are officially called fourth, third, second and first class cadets. At the local slang, freshmen are plebeians, sophomores are annual or

yuks, the third course is unexpectedly "cows," and the last course is "first men".

Since 2015, cadets have received a monthly scholarship of \$1,017 for books, uniforms and other things. This amount is automatically deducted for the cost of uniforms, books, supplies, services, meals and other miscellaneous expenses. All money remaining after deductions is used as the cadets wish. The commander at the Academy is the superintendent. The Academy is a direct subordinate unit, and as such the superintendent reports directly to the chief of staff of the Army. In recent years, the post of superintendent has been held by a lieutenant general. Now this honorary position is held by the 60th Superintendent, Lieutenant General Darryl A. Williams.

The US Military Academy cooperates with a number of higher educational institutions in Russia. Among them is Voronezh State University. West Point is lays a great emphasis on sports achievements. Not surprisingly, the academy has 15 men's and 9 women's sports teams of the National Student Athletic Association. And some teams (for example, American football) were successful.

The graduates of West Point receive an individual ring - and this is generally a wonderful tradition. There are also some other traditions at West Point. On the outskirts of the Academy, there is a monument to Civil War General John Sedgwick. Sedgwick's bronze statue has spurs with freely rotating ridges. The legend says that if a cadet is threatened with failure in the exam, he must wear a dress uniform in the evening before this very exam. The cadet comes to the statue and spins scallops at exactly midnight (and it is forbidden to leave the barracks at night). Then the cadet returns to the barracks as soon as possible. According to legend, if Sedgwick's ghost catches him, he won't pass the exam. Otherwise, the cadet passes the exam.