

# West Point R-Day:



**T**he spectacle of a perfect summer morning on the Hudson River, the awe-inspiring majesty of the solid stone work of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., and the nervous shuffling of the class of 2012 as more than 1,100 young men and women, and perhaps

three times that number of family members who have come to say farewell, line up at Eisenhower Hall: It is Reception Day (better known at the academy as R-Day), a machinelike in-processing ritual that in eight hours will hew the haphazard line of incoming teenagers into a formation of

new cadets in a parade ceremony.

R-Day is not unlike any reception process in the Army. There's the necessary incoming personnel station, paperwork signing, medical review, new gear and clothing shoveled into a duffle bag, haircuts, quarters assignment, haranguing and hurry. It is a shock-and-awe ritual that cuts the lines to adolescence and

# Forging New Cadets

Photographs by Dennis Steele



civilian life and begins the shaping of soldiers. The added wrinkle at West Point is that before sunset that first day the new cadets will march before their parents and well-wishers in tailored gray and white uniforms—having been dazed, dazzled and drilled—and raise their hands in a formal oath ceremony at Trophy Point, symbolic of their

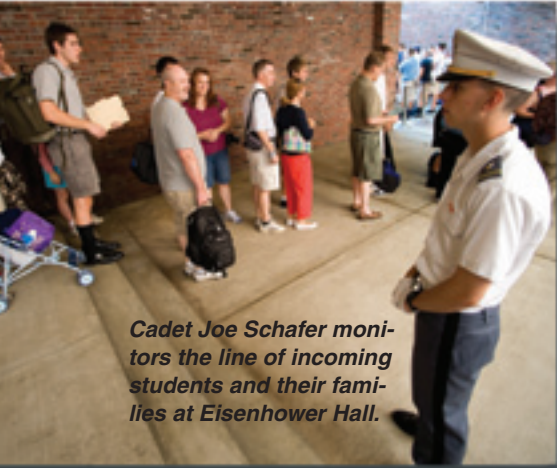
transformation and staged for the benefit of their families. (The official oath was taken hours earlier in a drab classroom, administered by an Army lawyer who oversees the reading and signing of a multipage contract.)

The morning line at Eisenhower Hall, the first stage of the process, is divided into groups that are sized by the number of incoming students

who can fit on a single shuttle bus. There, the families and incoming cadets are welcomed, congratulated on their accomplishments to achieve acceptance at the academy and given precisely 30 seconds to say good-bye. The busload group of incoming cadets moves out, the families funnel away and the process begins.

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*Corps of Cadets leaders march the class of 2012 to its formal oath ceremony to conclude Reception Day (R-Day) events. R-Day activities prepare the new cadets for the ceremony, which marks their single-day transition from civilian life.*



*Cadet Joe Schafer monitors the line of incoming students and their families at Eisenhower Hall.*



*Above, new cadets and their families are welcomed in the Eisenhower Hall auditorium. Left, at the conclusion of the welcome speech, students and families are given 30 seconds to say good-bye, and, below, members of the class of 2012 file out to begin R-Day processing.*



*Left, Cadet Thomas Comer issues strict instructions to a busload of new cadets as they arrive from Eisenhower Hall. Below, a new cadet exits the bus to begin the machinelike process of R-Day.*





Above, Cadet Christopher Rice addresses a formation of new cadets, outlining the R-Day steps. Right, Jane Ludwig, a seamstress at West Point's uniform factory, takes measurements. Tailored uniforms will be issued to each new cadet within hours of the initial measurement. Below left, new cadets hold open their bags as they move down the line for clothing issue.

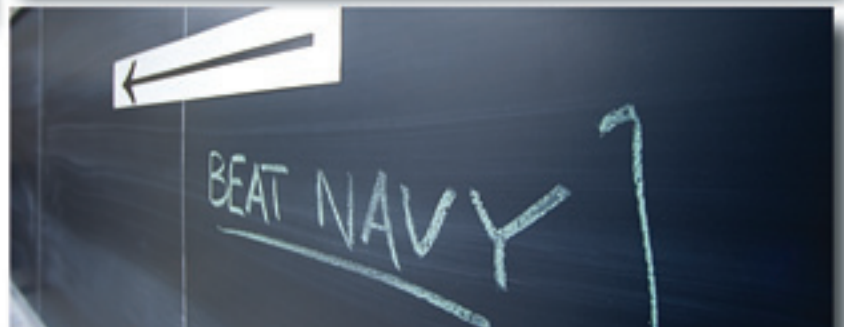


Left, Spc. Jennifer MacDonald administers inoculations.

Below, Penny Glackin oversees acceptance of contract paperwork packets.



Above, optometrist Maj. James Truong issues military glasses to meet a student's prescription. Right, the "Beat Navy" slogan is reinforced at every R-Day station.

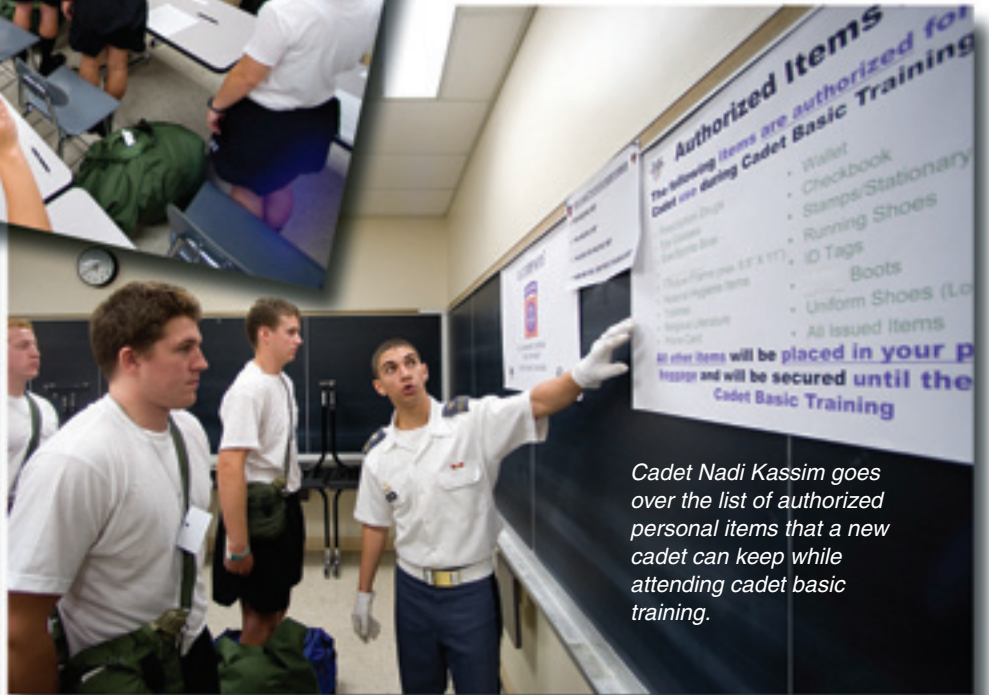




After new cadets sign their U.S. Military Academy contracts, Staff Judge Advocate officer Capt. Lev Jacoby administers the official oath ceremony.



Above, Cadet Casey Astrup stares down a new cadet in line to report to his assigned West Point company.



Cadet Nadi Kassim goes over the list of authorized personal items that a new cadet can keep while attending cadet basic training.




Cadet Arthur Middlebrooks corrects a new cadet's attitude.

Below, an upperclassman checks his watch: The R-Day schedule must be maintained.



The possessions that new cadets have brought to the academy—and which are not authorized to be kept during basic training—is stored for them and will be returned at the prescribed time.



*A group of new cadets marches to the next R-Day station as they make the crossing from civilian life.*



*Above, wearing new low quarters, incoming cadets lug their issued equipment across campus. Right, at the barber shop, Stacey Wilson shears a new cadet. At the end of R-Day, barbers weigh the take. The class of 2012 lost 38 pounds of hair.*





*Tailors Domenico DiMarzo (foreground) and Anthony Tornatore perform final fittings. Both now retired, the two tailors volunteered to return to West Point to help meet the R-Day rush.*



*Bottom left, racks of West Point bathrobes will soon be issued. Bottom right, Angela Penzato performs final stitching.*

*Cadet Jessie Ramirez squares away a new cadet.*



*When their attention is not specifically required, new cadets must use waiting time to read their New Cadet Handbook. In the surrounding photographs, that function is being performed in various settings.*





*New cadets come in all sizes, but the load is not proportional.*



*Cadet Andres Pazmin—who spent prior enlisted service with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, before selection for the U.S. Military Academy—issues instructions as he teaches basic drill and ceremony to a group of new cadets.*

*New cadets are tagged with necessary information.*



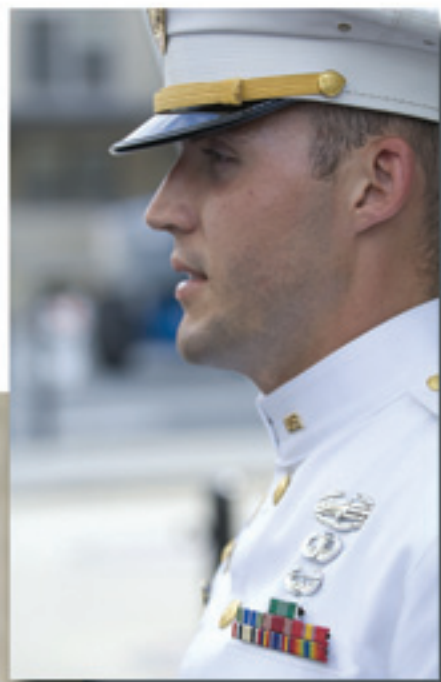
*Cadet Clinton Roberts demonstrates a proper salute to new cadets.*



*Cadet Katrina Kamel points out deficiencies.*



*At left and right, Cadet Capt. Matthew Rosebaugh, a West Point senior and Company G commander, looks over the crop of new cadets assigned to his company. His prior enlisted service was with the 2nd Battalion, 319th Field Artillery, 82nd Airborne Division.*



*Cadet Jamie DeSpain corrects a new cadet's salute.*



*New cadets must achieve acceptable skill levels in drill and ceremony and understanding commands on their first day, preparing for the Trophy Point oath ceremony.*

*The very interested mother of a new cadet tries to spot her child.*

*The class of 2012—shorn and uniformed—marches to Trophy Point and the R-Day-ending oath ceremony.*



*New cadets raise their hands to take the oath.*



*New cadets render salutes to end the R-Day Trophy Point ceremony.*



*A well-wisher holds a sign aloft as the formation of new cadets marches away.*