

For Plebe Parents – Useful Things to Know...

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Approved by Commandant of Midshipmen, CDR Fell

Weeks before Indoctrination (hereafter referred to as Indoc)

Class of 2013: You must obtain a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) at a cost of approximately \$132.50. I can't emphasize enough how important it is to not delay applying for this credential. To obtain a TWIC your son/daughter must go to a Transportation Security Administration enrollment center twice, once for enrollment, the second time to pick up the TWIC. Enrollment and pick-up must be done at the same enrollment center. Once you enroll, there will be a six to eight week wait to pick up the TWIC, so enroll early. There is NO expedited process for an additional fee like passports. Here's the website to pre-enroll and schedule an appointment and I highly recommend this procedure:

<https://twicprogram.tsa.dhs.gov/TWICWebApp/Welcome.do>

When pre-enrolling, indicate the purpose for the card is for employment as a Merchant Mariner and that the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy is the employer. Consult the Logging In Reporting Instructions <http://www.usmma.edu/admissions/PDFs/LoggingIn2013.pdf> for procedures if you do not have sufficient time to obtain a TWIC before reporting for Indoc. If the nearest enrollment center is more than 200 miles from your home and/or it is a hardship or a significant burden on the student or family to enroll for a TWIC card prior to reporting you may supply a written statement to Midshipmen Personnel during in-processing that states this. In this case, the Academy will arrange for the student to obtain the TWIC sometime during the academic year at the NYC enrollment center. The student must provide funds to pay for the TWIC card and the transportation to and from the center. The TWIC card must be paid by either credit card or check (no cash).

Make reservations for Indoc and Acceptance Day NOW. Many places are already sold out. The Andrew hotel and the Inn at Great Neck are the closest. Acceptance for 2013 will be the weekend of 11-13 September 2009.

Make your Candidate work out every day, especially running. The workout program is included in the Logging In book. Remember your Candidate may be transitioning from a sedentary lifestyle to one where they will be on their feet and active all day. The work out routines work if followed. Indoctrination includes a lot of physical activity, including distance running. Speed is less important than distance/endurance. Physical fitness will be assessed periodically throughout their time at the Academy. The assessment always includes measuring body fat, running, sit-ups, and push-ups.

Candidates can't have too much underwear – buy the cheap stuff and replace w/ higher quality during parents weekend. Make sure they are comfortable for running. Some males prefer boxer briefs but they must be white. All cotton underwear will be more comfortable in the hot summer during Indoc.

Good athletic socks and good running shoes. Beginning with the Class of 2013 Candidates must bring running shoes with them to Indoc. Running shoes must be New Balance, white with blue in one of the following models: 1063, 769, 757 or 749. Consult the Logging In Reporting Instructions for a complete list of all the other items Candidates are required to bring with them to Indoc.

Teach them how to wash clothes – at times they will do their own laundry. A commercial laundry service will do most of their laundry, including all personal and uniform clothing but not pillows or blankets. There are three self service laundry facilities on campus for student use at no charge.

Female Haircuts – Beginning with the Class of 2013, females are not required to cut their hair prior to Indoc. This is the ONLY time in your life you will go for function over fashion and it WILL grow back. In short, here's what it says in the 2013 Logging In: Hair shall be neat, clean, proportionately shaped and arranged in a professional style. When in uniform, hair on the back of the head may touch but not fall below the lower edge of the collar. It must be neatly and inconspicuously fastened, pinned or secured to the head presenting an attractive hairstyle and must not show under the front brim of the headgear. Be sure to have plenty of neutral or same color barrettes as required depending on your hairstyle.

Male Haircuts – regardless of the length of your son's hair when they report for Indoc, it may be cut to conform to regulations within minutes of leaving O'Hara Hall. So as long as it is reasonably short, neat and clean – don't worry about making sure it is exactly $\frac{3}{4}$ inches long before reporting.

NOTE: (For both Male and Female) REGARDLESS OF THE STANDARDS, SHORTER HAIR THAN THE MINIMUM STANDARDS IS ENCOURAGED AS IT IS EASIER TO CARE FOR IN GENERAL AT THE ACADEMY, WHERE TIME MANAGEMENT IS CRITICAL.

Get high speed internet (cable/DSL), install an Instant Messenger (IM) program and learn how to use it. If you have a data capable cell phone you might also want to learn how to set up/use AOL IM on your cell phone. IM is the primary form of communication once computers are issued. Learn how to use it at home as well as on your IM capable phone.

- You will really appreciate the high speed connection during Indoc to view all the pictures posted daily on the academy website. Dial up is simply too slow.
- IM is the best way to “talk” to your son/daughter when they get their computers. Computers are normally issued towards the end of Indoc, and once issued; IM and e-mail will be the best forms of communication with your Candidate. The exact date of issue was not determined at this writing, but you will know when they are issued because you will begin to get email and IM's from your Candidate.
- Cell phones will be allowed only at specified times during Indoc and up until acceptance in September.

Calculator: They will need a graphing calculator – the school standard is any TI-80 series with the most common being the TI-86. Most students already have one from their high school days. If the functions are similar to the TI-80 series - it will probably be ok to use in lieu of buying another calculator now. If the graphing calculator they bring is not acceptable, they can always buy the

appropriate calculator at the Navy Exchange on campus, order online (see credit card discussion below), or have one shipped from home.

Combination Locks – will need at least one – also will need another for athletic team lockers – consider buying in sets w/ same combination.

Fans are a must during Indoc – you should bring it w/ you or your Candidate can purchase one from the Navy Exchange. Candidates will be allowed to frequent the Navy Exchange during Indoc but at this writing it is not certain when during Indoc this will occur. If you bring one, leave it in the box and make a sturdy handle – they will have to run w/ it across campus. Put an extension cord in the box. Three of the five companies of Candidates will be housed in the newly rebuilt Jones, Barry & Palmer Halls, which are air conditioned. (The assignments are totally random and not made until the Candidates are actually on board.) Window fans will not be needed or allowed in Jones, Barry or Palmer Halls, but smaller desk top or floor models are allowed and recommended.

Camera: Consider taking a hand me down during the first year then upgrading before they go to sea. Any type will work, but a digital will allow them to show/share photos instantly.

Get them a credit card for school supplies & travel home and an ATM card from your local bank. The Navy Federal Credit Union is on campus and all are eligible for membership after Indoc. Discuss now how you will handle spending money for your son/daughter. Traveler's checks might be needed if you choose not to use a credit card. Figure out how to send money electronically to their accounts – a home based bank ATM card might be easier if you are computer challenged but the Navy FCU works fine also.

Give them pre-addressed / stamped envelopes (not postcards), if you want any mail from them, especially during Indoc. If you really want mail from your son/daughter – fill each pre-addressed/stamped envelope with a form letter like this (personalize as you desire):

DEAR MOM & DAD:

Today is _____ and I'm feeling (circle appropriate) ☺ ☹ ☺ ☹

Check all that apply:

- I LOVE THIS PLACE!
- I HATE THIS PLACE!
- I MISS YOU
- I LOVE YOU
- THE FOOD IS GOOD (but not as good as yours mom)
- I LOVE MY DI'S
- THE FOOD IS NOT SO GOOD
- I'M GETTING LOTS OF SLEEP
- I'M NOT GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP
- I'M HAVING FUN
- _____

After Indoc your primary means of communication will be either email or instant messages.

Pack some safety pins

Day before Indoc

Many KP coaches (traditional sports and waterfront) host a BBQ the day before Indoc –this is a must attend event and is usually ‘by invitation-only’. Coaches and fellow teammates can play a significant role in the success of your Candidate, besides it’s nice to meet other kids and parents. Check w/ coaches.

Get a good night's sleep and get up early and have a good breakfast.

Candidates are better off having as few personal possessions as humanly possible until AFTER acceptance day (that’s Parents Weekend in September). Bring photos of family/home in small book or frame.

Try to convince them to take a little extra time during uniform issue time, while there is no opportunity to try them on – at least hold them up to gauge the size. Bigger is better than smaller in most cases. Nothing is worse than having to run in tight shorts during Indoc.

Discuss and remind your Candidate that nothing they do during Indoc will be correct – it’s just the way it is and when corrected – DO NOT take it personally, everybody gets corrected, it’s part of the program. To become a good leader and give orders, one must learn how to be a follower and take orders. Plebe year is all about learning to follow orders and working with others for the good of the whole.

Discuss w/ them the thoughts they will likely experience that first night on campus “What the heck am I doing here?” or a few nights later when they say “I can’t take this crap anymore!” Everyone will likely experience these thoughts and feelings – BE PREPARED and discuss ahead of time, only you know how to guide your child through this difficult process. Bottom line - Indoc is tough and it’s meant to be that way, but it will be over before they know it. They will survive.

On Induction Day:

Reporting Day is 9 July 2009 between 0700 and 0830.

Bring your camera!

Don't be the first to show up for Indoc, nor the last. Put all documents that you need to bring in a big envelope. Take picture with family at the Gymnasium Eagle BEFORE they enter. Give them hug & kiss because once they enter, they will NOT return.

Remember to give them some cash - \$20.00 to \$50.00 is plenty, but not a twenty or fifty dollar bill.

Take one last look at your child (the backside) as he/she enters O'Hara Hall and commit to memory – you will need this image of your child to find him/her on Barney Square at the lunch muster. By this time, all Candidates should be in uniform (BDU pants grey tee shirt and boots) and it is extremely difficult to identify them.

Wear a somewhat distinctive color shirt to spot them at first, both child and parents.

Stand outside O'Hara Hall until you see your son/daughter exit and then disappear. Midshipmen (MN) in the area will encourage you to leave and go to parent's hospitality area – ignore this advice until you have seen your Candidate exit O'Hara Hall.

Walk around the campus and hit the Navy Exchange for goodies. You may see your son/daughter in the hallways outside in formation (see distinctive shirt). You may be told you can't enter certain areas – honor that when told. Take pictures and laugh (try not to cry).

Consider buying the “Acta Non Verba” photo book to take home. The author/editor of this book will usually be on campus to personally sign on Indoc day and parents weekend. The Mid-Atlantic Parents Association will have some of these books on sale the day of Indoc, and some of them are signed by the author.

At the appointed hour (usually 11:00 am) – attend the Superintendent and staff briefing in Ackerman Auditorium. Then follow the crowd to the Candidate formation where you will view the Mess Muster 1200 - 1215. This is your last opportunity to see (not talk to) your Candidate as they line up in their new shorts & shirt, already sporting a new haircut and all looking alike & terrified. You may have the chance to wave at them – which is why YOU wear the distinctive shirt.

Once you find your Candidate in the formation – take several photos of him/her and also the other Candidates in their company formation – you will need these pictures of others in his/her company to help you find your son/daughter on the daily web site photos. You may think you can spot your child in any picture – but TRUST ME – you will not be able to find them in group photos unless you know what others in their company look like.

Try to figure out what company they have been assigned to by observing their position in the formation and listening to the commands. Observe others in the same company – look for other tall/short kids so you can spot your Candidate in the Indoc pictures by cueing off other kids in the

Company since they travel in packs together. Also you may see your candidate running out holding their hand up. Their Company is indicated by the number of fingers held up, 1 finger = 1st Co, 2 fingers = 2nd Co, etc.

You will be dismissed by 12:30 p.m. or so after they march into the dining hall. You must leave. The Academy Grounds will be closed to visitors at 1300. Go to NYC for the night and celebrate! Go to a show/museum/spend the night!

Do not leave Great Neck until you mail that first letter (not a postcard). Here's how to address during the Indoc period:

Plebe Candidate {student full name here} 2013
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
Kings Point, NY 11024-1699

Mail call for Candidates is only Monday-Friday and not every day and never on the weekends. It's important to hear encouraging words from home – send mail everyday and number/date your letters as they may not arrive in order.

During the Indoc period, your student is a Candidate. After the Indoc period, your student will have the title of Plebe Candidate. As soon as they have been accepted on Acceptance Day, they will officially be Plebes. Your student is not a Midshipman until they have been recognized which takes place sometime in March/April.

Alarm clocks are not allowed during Indoc – if they absolutely must have one, you may ship after Indoc. If brought to Indoc, it will be confiscated and returned sometime after Indoc.

During / After Indoc

Check the website EVERYDAY during Indoc – view pictures. One of those days you WILL SEE your son/daughter, but in some cases – only if you followed the day of Indoc tip to memorize other Candidates in their Company. They always travel in packs w/ fellow Company mates.

The United States Merchant Marine Academy has established a cell phone and email alert system for parents to inform you of any developing campus emergencies. This system supplements a separate on-campus system for midshipmen, faculty and staff. To register for this system, go to: <http://www.e2campus.com/my/usmma2/signup.htm>

Be home to get that first phone call and make sure your Candidate has a phone card to call home (not necessary if they have a cell phone). Their call is limited to no more than 5 minutes, but it will seem like a 30 second call, so plan your discussion ahead of time and keep the list by the phone. Nothing is more discouraging for your child than to wait to call home and get the answering machine – he/she gets one chance, and may be able to call again later – but this is not guaranteed. You need to be there for him/her. Make sure he/she knows what phone number or numbers to find you at on Saturday and Sunday after the first week of Indoc. There are always a few Candidates who can't get in touch with their parents and usually at this point during Indoc encouragement from home is what is needed. Your mission is only to give encouraging words – some will be crying – be ready for this, it is very common.

During Indoc – if they are hurt, the standard procedure, even for relatively minor injuries, is to transport them to the hospital ER, and you likely will not hear about it, unless while in the ER – they just happen to call home. Remind them (now) that if they go to the hospital ER, USMMA is their home address – 300 Steamboat Road, Attn: Patton Hall, Kings Point, NY 11024 NOT their ‘real’ home address. The academy will handle ALL their healthcare needs either on campus or through a comprehensive contract with North Shore Hospital or through Federal workers' comp. If you chose not to follow this advice, be prepared to endure months of bills to your home address and several phone calls to the academy to correct. Trust me – been there – done that.

A math placement test will be administered during Indoc – this plus their SAT scores and high school math grades determine which level of math class they will have to take – there are 3 possible options: (1) remedial math or college mathematics (requires summer school the following year-nobody wants this), (2) Calculus 1 extended (meets 4 times/week) and (3) Calculus 1 (meets 3 times/week).

Church – whether you believe or not - attend – it’s an air-conditioned, hassle free zone to relax. Remember, parents are not allowed on campus until after Indoc, so if you want to attend church with your child please wait until after 26 July. Also, parents and visitors are not allowed to sit or visit with Plebe Candidates at church until after Parent’s/Acceptance weekend in September when they become Plebes. You will receive the visitor times sometime after Indoc is completed.

Send mail from all friends and relatives during Indoc AND into the year. Recruit EVERYONE to send funny and inspirational mail so they get something every day if possible. Do NOT send “stuff” until after September acceptance. Food is ok to send the second week but be sure to send at least 2 dozen (5 dozen is better) of whatever to share. These packages are considered community property and will be immediately consumed upon opening.

Many little notes & things via mail are better than saving up and sending one big package.

You may send school supplies and computer-related accessories after Indoc. Do not send games/movies until parent’s weekend – they simply don’t need the distraction.

Parents Weekend (11-13 September 2009)

This is a must attend event – plan now – be there for your son/daughter.

You will see a new person this weekend and especially when they come home for their October break! They will want to show off for their grandparents/teachers, etc. Let them! Some of their old buddies may now not fit that category anymore.

Consider arriving Thursday night before Parents weekend so you can go to the Friday a.m. classes, Colors are usually around 0730 so if you arrive Thursday night you can observe this Friday morning. Sign up for the “Beat Retreat” performance Friday night – it is awesome, but the room is hot (not air-conditioned so dress appropriately and arrive early as every seat will be filled. Saturday, after the football game, they will be released and want nothing else than to eat a good meal (translation – expensive) & sleep late Sunday morning. Find a good Sunday “all you can eat brunch.” Port Washington, NY has several and is scenic, but there are others.

DO NOT bring girl/boy friend to parent’s weekend without first discussing ahead of time with your son/daughter – their relationship may have changed – and surprise, mom and dad don’t know.

Consider bringing them a cell phone at this time, if they don't already have one. They can use them under limited circumstances. No cell phone carrier has superior service on campus and few can talk from their rooms. Nextel tower is right on campus – walkie talkie feature can be useful.

Headphone privileges may be granted to your student's company for good behavior so you may want to bring a pair of these. Speakers and computer monitors are not allowed.

Other General Comments:

Car Insurance: Check w/ your carrier to determine reduced rates. If your carrier is USAA, they will cover your student at no charge while at the academy provided you list him/her as a non-operator. When contacting USAA for this coverage, inform the USAA service representative that the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy is listed within IOP as one of the qualifying military schools.

Shopping on the Internet is good – ship direct to school. They can also get their own supplies, etc. that way.

DVDs & CDs are great presents during the year (but remember your plebe may not have permission to watch movies or listen to music, so check before you send these items).

Job opportunities: waiter at Melville Hall, park cars, server at local county clubs.

You may not see them after New Years – many teams have spring break trips.

Laundry soap is issued during Indoc – after that – buy your own, this plus toiletry items are available at the Navy Exchange on campus.

KP Parents' Association communication is almost exclusively thru email – some free services such as hotmail (unless you have paid for additional capacity) will not accept some of the emails w/ graphics and attachments. AOL will not confirm delivery and if you have on spam filters – it will reject all club email.

Pay attention to the Regimental Calendar – particularly to the leave and liberty periods. Midshipmen are not permitted to depart early or return late from a leave or liberty periods unless they have specific permission, and permission is only granted for the reasons below. If extra leave time is required for a specific function, a Midshipman must request it in advance. Some of the reasons that extra leave or liberty may be granted are:

- Personal or family emergencies (emergency leave for death or sickness of a family member will be granted without restriction)
- Medical appointments
- Rewards (i.e. extra liberty authorized by competent authority for scholastic, regimental, athletic or other achievements)
- To attend important family events (e.g. wedding or graduation of close relative)
- Exceptional circumstances (e.g. long distance travel where arrangements necessitate extra time)

Reasons extra leave or liberty will not normally be granted for:

- Personal convenience

- When travel arrangements that do not conflict with academic or regimental requirements are available
- To extend holidays or regular leave periods
- When instructors do not concur with missing class

Note: Getting a better priced ticket is not an adequate reason to extend leave or liberty time. Midshipmen who make travel arrangements that conflict with leave/liberty times, without getting permission for the leave/liberty first, are subject to disciplinary action. It is extremely important that your Candidate (and you) consult the Regimental Calendar which gives the times when students can leave and when they must return to KP. The Regimental Calendar can be found on the Academy Parents Page: <http://www.usmma.edu/parents/>

Electric Razors are allowed during Indoc but they don't shave as close as a razor. If your son prefers an electric razor, consider also bringing a regular razor for Indoc. A fabric pill shaver might be useful after Indoc to shave their blankets. Some kids won't like the issued pillow; a plain white standard size washable pillow might be desired by your student.

At some point the alumni foundation will request donations. Don't feel pressured to donate especially if this would compromise your family needs but if able, consider donating generously. It will directly benefit the Midshipmen. Be aware of what activities your student participates in and if they are adequately funded (especially travel funds) be that a sports team, the band, etc. Your donation can be restricted to that specific activity or unrestricted. It's your choice but I don't recommend restricting the funds unless you are aware of a specific need that you want to benefit. If you do make a donation the best form is unrestricted because the Alumni Foundation can then use the funds for specifically requested activities and needs as requested from the Academy. Also, when donating funds, make checks payable to the USMMA Alumni Foundation NOT to USMMA.

Usually on Thursdays during the academic year, Carol Guest holds the "Cookie Café" in Land hall for all Midshipmen. She has home baked goodies and milk/tea/coffee, etc. This has become so popular she has been unable to bake enough at Land Hall. Each Parent Associations signs up to sponsor the cookie café by sending home baked goodies during a certain week. Please visit <http://www.kpcookiecafe.com/> to check sponsor dates. This is a good chance for you to send a special baked goody that your child may miss.

There is a United States of America Service Academy Forum at: <http://www.serviceacademyforums.com> While there is much useful information on this website, remember that this is a public forum and anyone can post just about anything (translation=NOT always correct) and it certainly does not represent an 'official' position of the US Merchant Marine Academy. There is also a discussion board at <http://www.collegeconfidential.com>. Click on US Service Academies discussion and find USMMA.

(This section written specifically for Mid-Atlantic Parents)

From the Washington DC area, there is NO easy auto route to Kings Point. Throgs Neck route is the most scenic and many parents think this is probably the best route. Elizabeth, NJ Bridge from NJ Turnpike is OK if you can figure it out. Staten Island route is very unpredictable but can be a good choice IF there are no accidents on the Belt Pkwy. You will encounter traffic no matter what time you depart home – unless you leave at 10:00pm or later.

Check Amtrak's student advantage card (reduced fares) – train is good transportation from DC to NYC. Be sure to purchase a “reserved seat” ticket otherwise expect to sit on the floor. The trip is too long to stand. Air shuttles (Delta & USAir) have deals if you can buy in advance. Bus is the cheapest option. Also, there are several bus services to the Washington DC area. Vamoose <http://www.vamoosebus.com> is one.

Many of the sport/club teams travel to the area for local events – if I know ahead of time I will share with all; and if you know – please let me know. It's a real nice touch to be able to supply some home cooking, support on the sidelines and sometimes a place to sleep for team members when in town.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email Suzanne Graboski (President Mid-Atlantic Parents Association) at kpmom2011@yahoo.com