

Fort Worth ISD senior accepted at all five military academies

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What to do? In addition to school, varsity baseball, church work, serving as Honor Society president, tutoring other students and practicing cello for the Fort Worth Youth Orchestra, 18-year-old Andy Butte had to find time for one more thing – deciding where he would be going to school this fall.

Not an unusual task for a high school senior, but for this high school senior, it has been very unusual.

Butte was not only accepted by the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, an accomplishment on its own, he had also been invited to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. Mind boggling to some; for Butte, a dream come true.

“This military is something I decided I wanted to be part of when I was in elementary school. I saw the Blue Angels flying in an air show and I was hooked. As a kid, I even went to see the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs with my dad and years later sent letters to the various academies telling them he was interested. I’m the kind of person that, when I set my mind to something, I work for it. I don’t give up.

“After a visit to Annapolis last year, an officer there suggested I apply to all the academies,” said Butte.

“The officer, who had done the same thing himself, reasoned that if you apply to only one and are not accepted, you’re done; if you apply to more than one, you give yourself a better chance of being accepted somewhere and fulfill the dream of a military career. So I did. But I really had no idea I would be accepted by all of them.”

Sheer determination is no guarantee of acceptance into even one of the academies. West Point, Annapolis and the Air Force Academy reportedly receive over 16,000 applications each year but have only approximately 4,000 students attending at any given time, with an incoming class of about 1,200 students.~The Merchant Marines and Coast Guard~have approximately 1,000 students attending and a new class of about 300.~

Butte’s story is not that of a career military student, in fact, he has never attended a military prep school or even taken ROTC in school. He is a product of the public schools of the Fort Worth ISD.

“The Fort Worth public schools have been the most positive experience,” said Butte’s mom, Vicki, of her only child. “Andy has just thrived and we couldn’t be more proud of him.

“Since kindergarten, he said he wanted to go to the Air Force Academy, which sort of shocked us at the time, although we’re happy he’s always had a goal. As the years progressed, he really patterned his lifestyle to what they look for -- what classes to take, staying involved in extracurricular activities and sports. Representatives from the academies attended the Fort Worth ISD career days got him even more excited about it.”

Butte attended back-to-back seminars at the Naval and Air Force academies last summer. The grueling pace gave him a taste of what life would be, an experience that convinced a few others attendees to abandon the whole idea right then and there. But not Butte. He fell in love with Annapolis and, out of 650 kids in his Company, received the Iron Man award based on fitness and leadership. Also last summer, as a Texas High School Aerospace Scholar, he received a nomination and attended a weeklong Space Camp at the Johnson Space Center in Houston.

As his busy summer was winding down and he prepared for his senior year, Butte began the official application process complete with endless essays and interviews. He first applied to the U.S. Naval Academy (Annapolis, Md.), then the U.S. Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, Colo.), the U.S. Military Academy (West Point, N.Y.), followed by the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (New London, Conn.) and finally, the U.S. Merchant Marines (Kings Point, N.Y.).

First came the good news from the Naval Academy, followed by West Point. Things couldn’t get any better -- until they did. He soon received acceptance letters from the Coast Guard, Merchant Marines and finally, the Air Force Academy.

“It was great and exciting, but I also knew I then had a tough decision to make,” said Butte.

And, after seven months, has he finally made a decision?

“The hardest part of the decision was choosing between the Naval Academy and West Point, I really liked them both. I actually like the school at West Point better, but thinking about what I would be doing afterward – I want to be flying fixed-wing planes, so that would be Navy. I will report [to Annapolis] June 27 for Induction Day.”

It's a decision that has seemingly left him, well. . .at ease.

Source: Fort Worth ISD

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