



Myth 1: You need 20/20 vision to get into USAFA and/or become a pilot

I can tell you, absolutely, 100% this is a lie. I wear glasses and I fly planes.

Myth 2: The Spaatz automatically gets you into the Academy

I have heard about this magical Spaatz exception since I was 12 years old. I have now spoken with dozens of Academy Liaison Officers, Spaatzens, and even the USAFA Director of Admissions himself. Having gone to USAFA as a prior CAP cadet and knowing just about every CAP guy at USAFA when I went through, I have NEVER seen any evidence that this is the case. The closest this comes to being true is that a Spaatz background gives you some advantage/reserved slot at the USAFA Prep School.

Myth 3: Getting in is all about politics, your parents need to know a general or a senator to get in

The admissions process is almost entirely computerized. Your application gets fed into a computer and it rank orders you compared to the competition. The USAFA admissions office has a saying: "EVERYONE knows a general."

That said, you do need to be nominated by a US Representative, US Senator or the President to be considered for admission. That process is almost entirely based on how competitive you are relative to the other people in your district. Most congress members use committees of local community leaders and military members to select Academy nominees for them.

Myth 4: No one will respect you as an officer if you haven't been enlisted first

Once you get commissioned, you are a Second Lieutenant and every Second Lieutenant I have ever met gets about the same amount of "respect" (not much). Prior enlisted guys tend to fall into one extreme or the other between exceptionally awesome and exceptionally pathetic. But at the end of the day no one really cares about your background, they mostly just care that you are a good dude and that you are good at your job.

Myth 5: USAFA isn't as fun as a real college

Well, actually that one is true. You don't have to march to breakfast at Cal State Legoland. But I got to do plenty of drinking, partying, traveling, and girl chasing in spite of the environment - and I was pretty straight laced compared to most of my classmates. There are plenty of things that suck about going through an academy experience, but my friends at "real" college also didn't get to jump out of airplanes, shoot mini guns from helicopters, teach combat survival, or get to take "unarmed combat" for PE. I guess it all depends on your idea of fun.

This list of Air Force Academy myths is provided by an Air Force pilot and Air Force Academy graduate, class of 2003.