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FIRST MAN IN FIRST CLASS at the newly established United States Air Force academy which opened this week at Lowry Air Force Base, Denver, Colo., is Valmore W. Bourque, son of Mr. and Mrs. Valmore V. Bourque of 5 Lamb St., South Hadley Falls. Arriving at 6 a. m. Monday, Bourque, who plans to be a fighter pilot, was the first to register at the new service school, counterpart for the Air Force to the Army's U. S. Military academy at West Point, N. Y., the Navy's U. S. Naval academy at Annapolis, Md., and the U. S. Coast Guard academy at New London, Conn. He was graduated from South Hadley High school and Williston academy at Easthampton. His mother is the former Cecila Lucey of Holyoke. He was nominated for the academy by U. S. Rep. Edward P. Boland of Springfield.

Only The Hardy Survive At New Air Force Academy

By HAL BOYLE

LOWRY AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. (AP)—Any young man who thinks admission to the new U. S. Air Force academy here is an easy step toward a soft life in the armed forces, gets a quick disillusionment.

Only the hardy survive.

Of the 306 cadets selected last summer from 6,300 applicants to join the first class of the nation's third service academy, 41 have already been washed out.

The reason most of them left: The going was simply too rugged, the discipline too Spartan.

The survival rate actually so far has exceeded expectations of academy officials, who deliberately have planned a four-year course of study tough enough to strain the stoutest. They aren't interested in creating a corps of swivel chair warriors. Each cadet signs a statement that upon graduation as a navigator-observer he will go on and become a pilot.

As Lt. Gen. Hubert R. Harmon, academy superintendent, points out:

"Today a single officer in the U. S. Air Force may be called upon to carry out a mission which, during World War II, would have required the crews of a thousand planes. That officer must have the courage, the character and the patriotism to press home his mission against any and all odds. He may have to do this alone in the skies with no other American within thousands of miles to observe his conduct."

What kind of a boy aspires to become this type of officer?

The average cadet here is 19 years old, serious-minded, a good student, and comes from middle-class parents. Comparatively few spring from families with a professional military background. He may not be of varsity athlete caliber, but he will be in top physical condition and he has 20-20 vision.

Typical are Mike Lipscomb of Tucson, Ariz., and Richard Lee of Kalamazoo, Mich. Both are 19. Mike's dad is in real estate. Dick's dad is a truck salesman.

They each get $111.15 a month out of which they can keep only $8 for spending money.

Almost every minute of their day is rigidly controlled, from the time they rise at 5:50 a.m., and make their beds until "lights out" at 9:30 p.m.

They march to and from classes, and practically everywhere else. They spend at least 20 hours a week in class, more than that preparing their lessons. Among the arts they are expected to learn: How to deal a deadly judo blow effectively, how to dance gracefully.

At the dinner table they practice Air Force lingo, and each cadet in turn acts as table pilot, navigator, or crew chief. When the coffee reaches the table, for example, the navigator may announce:

"Sir, the JP4 (coffee) has completed its cross-country and is on the ramp."

Or: "Sir, the fuel injection (water) has met its ETA and is on the ramp."

The cadets have an honor code which is unbelievably strict and to which they are fanatically loyal, as they enforce it themselves. Its main tenet is undeviating adherence to the truth.

One cadet who stepped across the hall to borrow some tobacco quibbled when asked by an officer if he had permission to leave his room. After the 12-man cadet honor council investigated his case, they asked him to resign from the academy. He did.

The cadets can date twice a week, but during the first year are restricted to the base, except during parental visits. They are expected to abstain from liquor completely until graduation.

Do the cadets like the life?

"Yes, it definitely brings a closer comradeship," said Lipscomb. "You're not only closer to one man—you're closer to all."

"Yeah," grinned Lee, who wants to be a fighter pilot. "The suffering brings us together. There isn't time for monotony to set in. They keep us too busy."