



210 Easterling Drive
Alice, Texas 78332
November 20, 1977

Dr. Hector P. Garcia
Official, American GI Forum
Corpus Christi, Texas

Dear Dr. Garcia:

This letter has been prompted by the article in the Corpus Christi Caller concerning your visit to West Point. I find it necessary to point out that my son, Cadet Miguel Noe Leal from Alice, Texas, is in his third year at the Academy. He received his nomination from Rep. De La Garza.

You are right about West Point taking only the elite; those who qualify must excel in three areas--physically, academically, and emotionally, (stability wise). One quality which West Pointers must exhibit is leadership, lacking this, they cannot be cadets. I believe that you overlooked that crucial fact in your disappointment over the small numbers from our group. But, leaders will always be few and outstanding.

I deplore the fact that you found a scapegoat, the school system. As a school teacher, I disagree with you. If the Alice School District can produce two cadets--Air Force Academy Cadet Mario Garza, class of 1977, and Miguel at West Point--the schools cannot be the reason why similarly qualified and inclined young people from your area cannot compete. It is not that the school is not preparing them; it is that not too many young people are willing to accept the discipline which is required to excel in the areas required. The challenges presented in seeking a nomination are in themselves formidable. If a young person is really dedicated, then he will go through the steps needed to become eligible. Still, eligibility and nomination are only the first steps, after that the cadet must be able to compete successfully with his peers, earn their respect, and show his ideals to be "Duty, Honor, Country". Many cadets cannot endure the rigors of the plebe year. They are harassed and worked to the straining point, yet those who do, show that they can function under stress. This is another essential quality for those who would be leaders.

Miguel is of average ability but great determination. He excels in math. Physically, he is smaller and lighter than others in his group, yet he has met all the challenges and has, so far, succeeded. He is proud of his heritage and is bilingual. Presently, he is vice-president of the Pan American Club at West Point, and he helps to promote the Spanish language and culture so that others may learn about our contributions. This summer, he was honored with the distinction of being cadet representative to Argentina, one of two chosen. They visited the Argentine Military Academy, and upon their return, escorted two Argentine cadets coming to visit the U.S. and West Point.

As for school, Miguel attended the first two years in Benavides. Then, he went to San Diego Schools for two more years. The last eight years, he attended Alice schools. While in the junior high and high school, he always worked part-time. I have told you enough, and again I repeat--you cannot blame the schools. Our young people are molded by three major forces: the home, the church, and the schools. Without faith, love, and encouragement, our youth cannot excel.

If you are interested in getting more students into West Point, perhaps we can be of help. I know Miguel will be glad to talk to and encourage any students who are seriously considering West Point.

Sincerely yours,
Elia Olivares Leal
Ms. Elia Olivares Leal
A.H.S. English Teacher

P.S. This letter is not for publication. It is only in response to your comments about not meeting any Texans.

Please excuse my typing. I very seldom do it, hence, the corrections.