

Former Millersburg Military Institute to reopen next year with a new name

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Cadets Teddy Gray, left, of Naples, Fla., and Kyle Witcoff of Philadelphia took part in a "pathfinder" course Thursday. The course includes setting up a tactical operations center, conducting patrols and other exercises. MARK CORNELISON — Herald-Leader

MILLERSBURG — A new military-style boarding school for boys and girls in grades six through 12 is scheduled to open next August on the campus of the former Millersburg Military Institute.

Forest Hill Military Academy will emphasize academics and technology, accompanied by military training and discipline, all designed to help students prepare for success in the corporate world or the military, said Col. Joseph Land, chief of staff of the United States Army Cadet Corps Inc., the private group that bought the 18-acre Millersburg campus three years ago.

Registration will start next week, Land said.

The plan is for the first class to be made up of about 65 students, including youngsters who would live on campus and "day students" who could commute from home, according to Land. Day enrollment would be limited to girls only, he said.

Enrollment eventually could reach 150. Since buying the campus in 2008 after seeing it advertised on eBay, the cadet corps has operated the Millersburg campus as its national headquarters and training center for its nationwide cadet programs for boys and girls ages 12 to 18. But the organization had said from the beginning that it intended to re-establish a military school on the property within five years.

Now, after making more than \$1.5 million in improvements, officials are ready to carry through on that promise, Land said Thursday.

"We said we'd make it happen in five years, and we're actually going to be a year ahead of schedule next August," he said."

It took us two years of work before we could even think about opening a school here. We've taken very steady steps because we wanted to make sure we did the job right. But now we're ready to move head. It's very exciting."

The name Forest Hill Military Academy comes from the old Forest Hill Plantation, which originally included the land on which the Millersburg Military Institute was launched in 1893. Once popular, MMI fell on hard times, and enrollment declined. The school briefly changed its name to Forest Hill Prep Academy before closing in 2006.

Almost 1,000 members of the U.S. Army Cadet Corps, representing 39 states and 21 counties, have trained at Millersburg since the corps acquired the former school campus.

About 17 students, including one from Ukraine, are on campus this week, for the corps' eight-day "Pathfinder" course. They were training Thursday at nearby Blue Licks Battlefield State Park, where they will camp out in tents, set up a tactical operations center, conduct patrols and do various exercises.

Some of the visiting youngsters are likely to enroll in the new school, officials said Thursday.

Land said Forest Hill Military Academy mainly will appeal to three groups of youngsters: kids who could improve their academic performance through more structure and discipline; those who might need a different environment to avoid getting into trouble; and those seriously interested in joining the military or preparing for West Point, the Citadel or similar colleges.

Land said that in three to five years, the cadet corps hopes to expand the new school into a two-year junior college that would qualify students for an Army commission as a second lieutenant upon graduation. Only seven junior colleges in the country offer that now, he said.

The sixth- through 12th-grade program would be retained at Forest Hill even if the junior college program becomes a reality, Land said.

Land said youngsters who already are members of the cadet corps will have priority when registration for the Forest Hill Military Academy starts next week. However, some slots will be available for interested youngsters in the area, he said.

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The new Forest Hill Military Academy will open on the former Millersburg Military Institute campus next August. Photo by Mark Cornelison.



Triston Lucero of Colorado chopped wood during the Cadet Pathfinder camp at Tanner Station, part of Blue Licks State Park, as part of the new Forest Hill Military Academy. Photo by Mark Cornelison.



Tanner Station is the site of the Cadet Pathfinder program, which is part of the new Forest Hill Military Academy. The academy will open on the former Millersburg Military Institute campus next August. Photo by Mark Cornelison



Tanner Station, part of Blue Licks State Park, is the site of the Forest Hill Military Academy's Cadet Pathfinder program. Photo by Mark Cornelison.



Colonel Joseph Land, chief of staff of the corps, in front of Allen House at the new Forest Hill Military Academy in Millersburg, Ky. Photo by Mark Cornelison.



Cadets set up their tents and got ready to spend the night at Tanner Station during the Cadet Pathfinder Course as part of the new Forest Hill Military Academy. Photo by Mark Cornelison.



The Allen House on the campus of the new Forest Hill Military Academy. Photo by Mark Cornelison.



Oleksey Solovyov of the Ukraine sharpened a saw at Forest Hill Military Academy's cadet training. Photo by Mark Cornelison.



Cadets walked through a field during the Forest Hill Military Academy Cadet Pathfinder Course. Photo by Mark Cornelison