



# SEVENTH HEAVEN

## This family has long ties at West Point

By Ken McMillan  
Times Herald-Record  
kmcmillan@th-record.com

West Point — Every once in a while, as cadet Caroline Miller walks the grounds of the U.S. Military Academy, she pauses and realizes she is following in the same footsteps of seven generations of relatives who went before her on the campus.

"I am in Legion Square so every time I walk to breakfast, I see the chapel up on the hill," she said. "I was thinking, 'My grandfather could have walked there.' My sister was in the company that I am in right now — I know she walked on the exact same spot 11 years ago. It is real cool to think about it."

Caroline "Coco" Miller and her older sister, 1998 West Point graduate Kate (Miller) Corliss, are the only cadets in the 204-year history of the Academy who have a direct line of seven generations of family members who have attended West Point. Their second cousin, Will Swearingen, also attends West Point from the same family line, though his parents are the only generation not to attend.

Miller, a sophomore, and Swearingen, a junior, play for their respective Army soccer teams.

It all started with 1836 graduate Israel Carle Woodruff, Caroline and Will's great-great-great-great grandfather. Direct-line descendants have nearly 200 years of military experience and there are more than 30 extended family members with West Point ties.

They have played roles in every conflict since the American Civil War. They settled the West, pursued and prosecuted criminals and participated in many U.S. wars. Some put in their five years of service and headed into the civilian world, while others made the military their life until death.

"It's amazing that I have this family that has this kind of background," said Miller, who lives in Boulder, Colo. "It's an honor. It's a blessing from God that I was able to be part of this family and tradition."

Change comes slowly at West Point, where tradition and history play a large role in a cadet's education.

"I am one of the ones that is glad that (the history is) still there," said Swearingen, who has pictures of West Point family members adorning the walls of his home in Cary, N.C. "It doesn't matter if you graduated in 2005 or in 1934 — you can relate to them because you were both



Seventh-generation West Point cadet Caroline Miller, right, and second cousin Will Swearingen compete for their respective Army soccer teams.

schooled under the same principles, the same honor code. You wore the same uniforms. To me it's cool to carry on that same tradition and have almost the same experiences."

Both cadets said their family's rich military history had an influence on their lives but the decision to attend West Point was purely their own. "If you come to West Point for your family and not for yourself, you're not going to make it," Miller said.

The school's strict honor code was very appealing for Swearingen. Miller was attracted by the educational opportunities. Both were accomplished soccer players in high school and recruited to play for the Black Knights. In fact, Caroline was just 9 years old when she ran onto Clinton soccer field and announced to

her father that she would play for Army one day. Last season, Jerry Miller had his daughter pose along the same goalpost, this time wearing her Black Knight uniform.

The family heritage is a who's who of accomplished military officers. Lt. Col. William King wrote a book on torpedoes and pursued Jesse James' gang. Major Gen. Fay Prickett fought in the Battle of the Bulge, pursued Pancho Villa in Mexico and was president of the military tribunal held at the Dachau death camp. Col. Charles Raymond received the Bronze Star and the United Nations Service Medal. Col. Chester Ott was the director of Radio Free Europe. Gen. Frank Miller served on the staffs of generals Douglas MacArthur and William Westmo-

reland. Col. Lee Cage received the Bronze Star and Legion of Merit medals.

The two young cadets are inspired by their heritage, not intimidated.

"Caroline and I don't feel pressure from the family to be a general," Swearingen said. "They want what's best for us. It's just exciting to look back and hopefully one day I can have that record and have someone in future generations look back and see what I accomplished."

Miller acknowledged the pressure of her family tree, but she is only concerned with making the most of her military experience. "I don't want to be a disappointment to the family," she said. "Thankfully, I know my family would support me in whatever I did and however I did it."

## The long, gray lineage

(The seven generations of Will Swearingen and Caroline Miller's family at West Point, with class, rank and relation)

### 1st generation

1836 — Brig. Gen. Israel Carle Woodruff (great-great-great-grandfather to both)

### 2nd generation

1863 — Lt. Col. William Rice King (great-great-great-grandfather to both)  
1871 — Inspect. Gen. of Volunteers Thomas Mayhew Woodruff

### 3rd generation

1884 — Brig. Gen. Irving Hale  
1889 — Capt. Robert McGregor (great-great-grandfather to both)  
1889 — Col. Allen Dwight Raymond  
1893 — Col. Robert Rossiter Raymond  
1897 — Capt. John Carrington Raymond

### 4th generation

1912 — Maj. Chris Miles Burlingame  
1916 — Maj. Gen. Fay Brink Prickett (great-grandfather)  
1917 — Col. Duncan Gregor McGregor  
1918 — 1st Lt. Bernard Skinner Stearns  
1919 — Col. Robert Rossiter Raymond Jr.  
1919 — Col. Donald Carson Hardin  
1931 — Col. Chester William Ott  
1931 — Col. Charles W. Raymond II

### 5th generation

1938 — Maj. Gen. Frank Dickson Miller (Caroline's grandfather; Will's great uncle)  
1942 — Brig. Gen. Francis Joseph Roberts (Will and Caroline's great uncle)  
1942 — Col. Lee Emir Cage (Will's grandfather; Caroline's great uncle)

### 6th generation

1962 — Col. Frank Dickson Miller Jr. (Caroline's uncle)  
1964 — Col. Brink Prickett Miller (Caroline's uncle)  
1967 — Maj. Lee Emir Cage Jr. (Will's uncle)  
1972 — Capt. Jonathan Morgan Cage (Will's uncle)  
1972 — Maj. Robert McGregor Miller (Caroline's uncle)  
1973 — Capt. Jeremy King Miller (Caroline's father)  
1993 — Maj. Carl Raymond Ott

### 7th generation

1998 — 1st Lt. Katherine King Miller Corliss (Caroline's sister)  
1999 — Capt. Christopher David Corliss  
2008 — William Thomas Swearingen  
2009 — Caroline Margaret McGregor Miller

Kate Corliss said her West Point experience brought her closer to her family.

"It has definitely brought us together like nothing else has," Corliss said, "and now Coco is in that inner circle having experienced West Point."

Corliss has two girls of her own, ages 5 and 2. Jerry Miller doesn't believe his daughter will push the girls toward West Point, but he said he will perform his grandfatherly duties and keep alive stories of the family legacy.

Should Caroline Miller have children of her own, she said she would be "overjoyed" if they decided to attend West Point and foster an eighth generation of military recruits.

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