

# Local receives Naval Academy appointment



KIPP SCHOOL

**Alexander Vann, shown following his KIPP graduation, is one of 11 students that have received appointments to the U.S. Naval Academy. He is the son of Carl and Virginia Vann of Helena-West Helena.**

**By RANDY HOGAN**

[The Helena World](#)

Posted Jul 25, 2011 @ 06:10 PM

HELENA-WEST HELENA — Alexander Vann, the son of Carl and Virginia Vann of Helena-West Helena, is one of 11 Arkansas students that have received appointments to the U.S. Naval Academy, according to Navy Capt. Scott Pursley, the U.S. Naval Academy's admissions coordinator in Arkansas. Vann's father is a captain on the Helena-West Helena Police Department.

Vann is a 2011 graduate of KIPP Delta Collegiate Preparatory High School. He lettered two years on KIPP's varsity basketball team and was selected to serve as captain his senior year. He also played bass drum in the school's drum line.

During summers Vann worked as a member of harvesting teams at area Mississippi Delta farms. He

honed his Spanish during his work experiences frequently the only person to speak English in his work groups.

After a year at the Naval Academy preparatory School in Newport, R.I., Alexander will enter the Naval Academy as a member of the class of 2016. Last summer, he attended the Naval Academy's 2010 summer session to prepare for his future career as a U.S. Marine Corps officer. Besides being accepted to USNA/NAPS, Alexander was also awarded the Frederick C. Branch Leadership Scholarship, the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps' scholarship awarded to exceptional students attending one of 17 historically black colleges and universities.

"I first met Alexander back when he was a junior at KIPP," commented Pursley. "He struck me as a focused young man who early on expressed his desire to become a Marine infantry officer."

According to Pursley, Vann attended USNA's weeklong summer seminar, which, he said, further peaked his interest in the Marines. He went through all of the application and nomination processes but did not get an offer from the Naval Academy.

Meanwhile, he pursued a separate course to get a Marine officer commission through the NROTC. Last spring, Vann was awarded the Frederick Branch NROTC leadership scholarship to Tennessee State. While he was disappointed about not being selected for USNA, said Pursley, he was excited about starting his college career and eventually becoming a Marine officer by the NROTC.

"All this changed on Friday, July 15," reported Pursley, "when I received a call from USNA's dean of admissions. I was told they had one position open and they wanted to know if Alexander was interested in it. However, there was one catch he had to decide that day because NAPS entrance day was July 26 and it would take a lot of quick action by USNA admissions to get him in with only two weeks to go."

Pursley promptly called Alexander. He and his mom were attending freshmen orientation at Tennessee State in Nashville. "It took Alexander about an hour to decide," commented Pursley.

After accepting the NAPS offer, Alexander packed up and left the orientation, headed back to Arkansas and quickly completed all of the required paperwork. He now has orders to report to the NAPS on July 26. Once he successfully completes this course of instruction, he will then be appointed to USNA' class of 2016.

"He is a great kid and we are very happy that he is on course to eventually lead sailors and Marines in our great Navy and Marine Corps," said Pursley.

Pursley said the 11 recruits is the largest class from Arkansas in eight years. They were selected from 17,000 applicants nationwide. The Naval Academy is rated among the most selective colleges in the country. Upon graduation, each student will serve a mandatory military service ranging from five to 11 years.

<http://www.helena-arkansas.com/features/x410262483/Local-receives-Naval-Academy-appointment>