

June 9, 1971

To: 1971-72 Members of the Crack Squad
From: Robert L. Curry, Headmaster
Subject: The Crack Squad and Its Future

Following graduation we have had two days of meetings of the faculty and various committees. The full faculty has met for 6½ hours over the two days, and the subject which took far and away the greatest amount of time was - The Squad!

I think it fair to say since my arrival 18 months ago to the Shattuck camp the number one subject has been - The Squad. I have been asked: What are you going to do with The Squad; don't make up your mind about The Squad until you have seen in action; will The Squad be affected by the change-over in ROTC; will you get The Squad out on the road, etc.

The faculty has held strong feelings, I would gather, about the Squad for a long time. It expressed these feelings again after graduation, and again I have listened. Yesterday, in our second meeting of the faculty, I asked for concrete and positive suggestions for The Squad. However, before I give you the suggestions which I want you to chew on for the next few weeks, let me give you my "gut thinking and position."

Wherever people gather together and form a group (e.g. school, church, town, fraternity, etc.), there has to be a top or central loyalty to which the group ascribes else it will not long remain a cohesive group.

Whenever I have come into a school, that school has been given my top loyalty for me Shattuck is to become the finest school I can help build - this above all else. To make Shattuck the finest school possible requires many parts - academic, athletics, chapel, ROTC, social activities, and The Squad. But NONE of the parts make up the whole - rather all of the parts make for Shattuck, and it becomes greater than any of the parts. Every state in the Union is equally important in the Senate to make ONE nation. The Shattuck football team, basketball team, golf team - none of these are ends in themselves - they are means to the end of a better Shattuck. Likewise The Squad.

Regardless of why The Squad has gone apart from the whole, the fact is becoming pretty clear that for a number The Squad demands AND GETS the greatest loyalty of many members of The Squad, and thus is breaking away from THE SCHOOL. What the Squad determines, that it does, even in light of what the headmaster asks it to do (e.g. haircuts or the lack of them).

The Squad has worked hard over the past two years, at least, to get across the School that it is not a militaristic organization. It goes out of its way to try to make this clear. The Dean reported to the faculty that of the five boys asking him for letters of recommendation for CO status, all give are from The Squad. In the article on The Squad in The Shad, this point is made. On the field, some members of The Squad have been numbered among the poorest cadets and in some instances have openly tried to submarine the ROTC.

What caused me to raise the question of The Squad was the week-end. Old Shattuck members of The Squad, returned for the drill, were around through the last night hours, but a number of them never appeared at the Alumni Luncheon, nor did these same people take part in the Old Shads' Drill, nor did they come near the Rectory Chapel - it is The Squad.

I dissent from the "letter to the Editor" in The Spec recently about not supporting The Squad. I have supported it, went to all ten drills a year ago, and to all but one this year.

However, some things need to come clear for 1971-72:

1. The Board of Trustees has charged me to run The School - no organization or combination of organizations within the school are to have priority over The School.
2. The Squad is not inviolate and free to do as it wishes - spending an inordinate amount of time drilling, hazing (which is still reported by masters and boys), letting grades and courses slip, doing little or nothing about room inspection (one housemaster reported that the biggest slob in his dorm were Squad members).
3. The Squad members need to realize that they are part of the School, they work for its betterment and its glory, not that of The Squad.
4. Time for tryouts is to be shortened and limited.
5. Time for practice is to be limited.
6. A faculty supervisor is necessary for liaison with the headmaster.
7. If The Squad is to travel and drill outside, then it goes out as a representative of The School (e.g., an athletic team or Honor Guard). If the Squad is not representing the School, then I will make no effort for it to drill outside.
8. The Squad should lead in the participation of school activities and be supportive of them including Air Force ROTC.
9. The attitude of some Squad members toward ROTC wants to change, for it is patently ridiculous to argue the The Squad is not military in posture drill, etc. You may argue yourselves blue-in-the-face but you carry guns, love to flash your hair as you aim-and-fire, as you march, etc. Therefore, to try to undermine the AF ROTC which will have no guns, and claim it to be militaristic while you are not, will not go down many throats.

The Squad as an organization is terrific in what it does in its drill. But don't fool yourselves that you are as highly regarded and respected as The Shad indicates - too many of the members have flaunted too much else in The School to be highly regarded and respected in some areas of The School.

I am ready to work for you and with you in 1971-72 IF you place Shattuck School as your top priority - otherwise some changes will be in the offing - we cannot each go his own way without a central relationship to the whole which is Shattuck, which has had a glorious history and can again in the future if we make up our minds and our wills to pull TOGETHER.

Dear Dr. Curry,

July 9, 1971

I have read your letter to the 1971-72 Crack Squad through many times. I feel that it calls for an answer. I am writing, I feel, for the entire returning Squad.

The first thing that I would like to set straight is that I am not writing to you on the spur of the moment. I have thought about this letter for quite some time. I have written to the returning members and asked for their ideas. Now, I am writing to you. I hope you will accept this letter in the same faith it has been written in.

When I first read your letter to us I was a little mad. After reading it through several times I have instead found encouragement. I just hope that this assumption is correct.

One of the things that was mentioned in your letter was about when you first came to Shattuck School, how you tried to make it the best. Well, the same is true when a person makes The Squad. That person is trying to make The Squad the best drill team of it's day. He wants to perform his best in all drills and he keeps The Squad above everything else, including the school. His number one concern is The Squad. If it wasn't that way The Squad wouldn't be very good at all. This dedication goes indirectly, however, over to the school. After all where would The Squad be without Shattuck School?

The part about military that is mentioned in your letter is quite true. The only thing that I am wondering about is why does everybody always look at the negative side of the picture? Sure, there were some non-militaristic people on The Squad last year. But, there were also some very military minded people too e.g. John Cobb, Mark Gillett, Tim Clark, Jim Pabst, Dave Weber, Bruce Irvine, and I think that I can safely say myself. I just wish that you and the masters at Shattuck would look at it in this way. Out of the six people that are coming back in the fall only two of them are what you would say "anti-military." They are only mildly so, though. With just a little bit of persuasion I'm sure that they would support the military program.

I realize that The Squad has gotten away from the school in the past years. I feel that it is wrong, too. I know that we are going to have to come back to the school and I am confident that we will come back in the next few years.

I want to add right now that I am glad you have stayed behind us over the past two years. After all an organization can only perform so well if they are continually "hassled". Believe me, it is not my fondest dream to be "hassled" all the time next year. I only hope that your support for The Squad will remain the same or get greater in the coming years. There is nothing more that I want to see than The Squad in action in the next 10, 20, 30,... years. I think that it can be done if and only if The Squad comes back more to the school.

Speaking of grades, I feel that everybody on The Squad has the capability to keep his grades up high. We did have on The Squad last year three of the best students as far as grades go.

The idea of haircuts doesn't really bother me all that much. I'm willing to get my hair cut for the school, military, and also The Squad. I will make sure that all of the people on The Squad get theirs cut, too.

I think that The Squad should work for it's own betterment and glory. This in turn will help the school. The school, I feel, will get it's betterment and glory through the many organizations on campus, and one of them just happens to be The Squad.

I agree with you when you say that The Squad is a military unit. There is no need to argue that point any further. I also see how we, as Squad members can lead in the participation of school activities and be supportive of the Air Force R.O.T.C. If the people in the school see Squad members doing certain things, then they might be influenced in that way.

As far as shortening and limiting the time for practice and tryouts I disagree with you. I feel that in order for any organization to be good there has to be a lot of time for practice. This also goes for The Squad. Take the football team for example. They need to have many hours of practice in order for the team to be good as a unit. The only way that they can possibly be good as a unit is for many hours of practice. The same is true of the basketball, baseball, soccer, hockey, or any other organization on campus. The same is especially true of The Crack Squad. Without those many hours of practice we could never really keep the title of a PRECISION DRILL TEAM. So, without those many hours of practice and tryouts Shattuck School will have a precision drill team no more.

If you shorten and limit our time for tryouts then the only thing that I can do is to ask you if we could possibly start tryouts the first week of October. That way when the new Crack Squad is chosen we will have plenty of time to teach the people everything that they didn't learn in tryouts. That is the only thing that I ask of you to start tryouts the 3rd of October. I know that we have talked about it many times. I hope you will agree with me on that date.

The Squad members and I will try to make next year the best year for Shattuck School and The Crack Squad of Shattuck School.

Respectfully yours,

Doug Irvine and the returning Squad members

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