AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY

FORT DEFIANCE VIRGINIA

Remembering our brothers who have passed from this life.

# John W. “Jock” Shirley ‘49

August 8, 1931 – October 7, 2025

Gladwyne, Pa. - John W. "Jock" Shirley died peacefully Oct. 7, 2025. Born in 1931 in Hailsham, England of an American father and English mother, he was sent from the age of six to boarding schools in France, Croatia, and Hungary.

He and his father spent the war years in Hungary, where they were trapped after the Hungarian declaration of war against the U.S. Despite being "enemy aliens," they were treated with consideration. With the German occupation of Hungary in 1944, they went into hiding, surviving the siege of Budapest and the early months of Soviet occupation. These experiences gave him a lifelong hatred of extremism of the left and the right.

Returning to the U.S., he graduated from the Augusta Military Academy and Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. Following four years in the U.S. Air Force, stationed in Germany, he joined the Foreign Service. During a 30-year career at the U.S. Information Agency, posted overseas and in Washington, he was a legendary figure among his colleagues and, for six months in 1981, served as acting Director of USIA. He spoke six foreign languages at a professional level. In 1984 he was named US Ambassador to Tanzania, retiring in 1986.

Eventually he and his wife Kathy moved to Stonington, where he pursued his lifelong passions for riding, sailing and rowing. In retirement, he founded and then shepherded a scholarship program, still flourishing 34 years later, at Sarospatak, the school he attended in Hungary. In 2016, he moved to the Waverly Heights retirement community in Gladwyne, Pa.

Jock is survived by his wife of 57 years Katherine; his daughters, Pamela and Jeanie Shirley; seven grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Jock Shirley lived a life of integrity and honor. He was amusing, kind and chivalrous. Unforgettable to all who knew him. Service will be private.

At AMA, Jock was Sgt. in “C.” Co., Fencing, Lacrosse, Debating Team, Roller Rifles.

See more of Jock’s cadet life at: https://archive.org/details/augusta-military-academy-recall-1949