

Augusta Military Academy

Oral History

Allen Tomlin, '48
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I attended AMA from 1945 until I graduated in 1948. No doubt it was the best three years of my life.

Prior to 1945 I attended a small school in a small town, Crozet, Virginia, where the senior class was no more than 20 or so. My grades were average at best. I cannot recall doing much outside homework.

Coming to AMA was a revelation for me. Everything was different from what I was used to. When my parents and I arrived, it was a rainy, cloudy and really dreary day. I did not know anyone there. Walking up to the main entrance we met **Major Blackburn**, head of ROTC, who introduced himself. In his uniform, cavalry boots, hat, baton, he was the epitome of a proper military officer, very striking in appearance, speech and bearing.

After the protocol of checking in, getting a room assignment and uniforms, I met my roommate and was shortly thereafter initiated into the military school life of bracing, formation, attending classes, study hall, drilling in the afternoon and athletics.

Students (cadets) came from all over the USA, South America, Mexico and Europe. Their backgrounds were as varied as their cultures, beliefs, attitudes and abilities. Until AMA, I wasn't very knowledgeable about the differences among Protestants, Catholics and Jews because I had not been exposed to the different religions. It did not seem to make any difference to me growing up. I learned that as with people there are no significant differences, just a different understanding of the Deity.

More importantly, I learned to get along with everyone regardless of their background, religion or their beliefs. Equally important was that I learned to study. It was difficult to make the Honor Roll, but once there, it was easy to stay on it. I am pleased to say that I graduated as an **Ad Astra Per Aspera**. I just recalled that I was given the cup for Best New Cadet of my Company my first year.

Major Roller, later Colonel, was a great influence on me. He was the type of person who inspired others and who struck a chord in most of the cadets which made them want to do their best to please him. I can still picture him sitting under the goal-posts at football games while the cadets chanted: "*Take it to the Big Boy*".

My three years at AMA were wonderful! I embraced the military aspect with no difficulty. I'm glad I went and would not trade my experience there for anything. AMA has influenced my life in so many positive ways - I am a better person for having gone there.

You can view the 1948 RECALL online here:
<https://galleries.amaalumni.org/Recalls/Recall-1948/>