

Augusta Military Academy

Oral History

Jim Atchison, '73
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I have a few minutes while I'm away from home tonight, traveling in Northern Michigan. It is truly beautiful up here and I encourage all who get the opportunity to visit our great State in any of the four seasons we enjoy. It's my understanding that some people never experience all the seasons.

The things that stick out most about my almost four years at "Camp Augusta" border on the mischievous.

I remember the times we would sneak out of the barracks and walk the tracks down to Verona to the Drive-In and watch whatever was showing. We did this a number of times and never got caught. I remember one time on the way back we passed the Holsum Bakery as they were loading the trucks for delivery -- the smell of fresh baked pies overwhelmed us and we felt it was our duty to abscond with a few trays for our friends back at school.

There were also the school rock 'n roll bands and the talent shows, which never ceased to amaze me. There was a ton of talent in that school albeit some misguided, but none the less plenty, of it. It was at A.M.A. that I picked up my appreciation for music, as well as many other art forms. The Instructors were not only educators in their specific field, but shared their knowledge of life.

I remember sitting in Military class and disassembling the rifles and pistols, always waiting for the spring to shoot out of the 45 and fly to the ceiling on some poor New Cadet. The times we flipped the bolt lock on the 03's and watched someone send there bolt flying down the formation during our GI inspections. Needless to say I spent a good portion of my spare time on the blacktop.

As a member of the Roller Rifles I remember marching in The Tobacco Festival parade in Richmond, wondering why the hell we were still in wool pants -- that's when I was first introduced to the freedom of boxers.

We also marched at halftimes of the Squires basketball games, both in Richmond and Hampton Roads at which four of us marched to the middle of the circle and threw our rifles back and forth between each other.

I can't recall who the other three were -- I think Jeff Van Horn may have been one. Dr. J. was just a kid with a big fro and red shoes back then... These memories just can't be replaced!

I haven't many regrets in my life, but if I were to single out one thing, it would have to be pulling out of A.M.A. my Senior year with two months left, to come home and graduate with my friends.

I would like to express my gratitude to the people that were so instrumental in getting this Website up so that I had the opportunity to get back in touch with my old classmates and friends. I am looking forward to coming back for the reunion this year and trying to give back some of what was given to me.