

Augusta Military Academy

Oral History

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Sumptuous Greek Food Packages, Saluting Cars, The Smell of Skunks and other memories of AMA

I first came to AMA in September 1946 and I graduated in 1949.

It was a significant trip away from home. I had never visited the campus before and so it was all new to me, a green 16-year-old kid. I came on the C&O from St. Louis, Missouri. It was just after World War II and train travel was still pretty good, sleeping in the Pullman cars.

From St. Louis it was a two-day trip, traveling through Cincinnati and then on to Staunton. In addition to a couple of suitcases, I also was bringing my footlocker – green with a brass hasp and my name painted in yellow on the top. I don't have any recollection of my first trip from Staunton to Ft. Defiance. And the first few days at the Academy are lost for now.

I do remember I was sort of corralled by **John Morris**. He was my mentor for the rest of my three years at AMA -- both as a dike and as a friend and classmate. I remember that his room was on the second or third floor of the Tower. Even then he was a cadet officer. My last year there (1949), John was First Captain and I was First Sergeant of A Company.

My roommates that first year were **George Philopolous** and **Dan Radman**. George's older brother, **Nick [Philopolous]**, was a class ahead of us as I recall. Both George and Nick were on the wrestling team. George's parents would send him great packages of food, which were sumptuous, often including Greek delicacies.

I don't remember my roommates for the second year, but my third year roomies were **Ron Shillinglaw** and **Walter (Jerry) Jerichow**. We were on the second or third deck next to the tower.

Somewhere along the line, perhaps the second year, my roommate was **Hal White**. His father was a country physician who practiced nearby -- outside of Staunton. On some weekends we'd go over to his house. I remember his mother was French. And his dad, Dr. White, would visit his patients on a 1947 47-overhead Harley.

Throughout the three years I was at AMA my roommates were great guys and good friends. I sure would like to hear from any of them.

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And then there were the interminable card games -- mostly hearts. Even after lights out. We'd put blankets over the top bunk and sit below with a very dim light. Sometimes on Fridays these games would last all night into Saturday morning.

I remember sitting on the concrete steps in front of the barracks overlooking the parade ground having long discussions about arcane things as well as making plans for the future -- professions, colleges and so on.

I remember walking along the highway to the Ft. Defiance store/ post office and saluting cars as they came by. Also the Sunday corps march over to the Old Stone Church.

Another vivid memory is the pungent smell of skunks wafting down the hill behind the barracks from the apple orchard in the Fall.

You can view the 1949 RECALL online here:

<https://galleries.amaalumni.org/Recalls/Recall-1949/>