

Augusta Military Academy

Oral History

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I recall the time that we were having a prom. The girls from Mary Baldwin, Stuart Hall and Fairfax were already in transit to AMA.

Captain Fontaine outdid himself that night and prepared chocolate éclair's for our dessert. Being a 1st Lieutenant at the head of the dinner table, by tradition I had first choice of any food delivered to the table.

I had never developed a taste for éclair's so I declined taking one. Obviously someone else got mine and his also. We left the Mess Hall to get ready for the dance. Well, I don't think 45 minutes had passed by before some 400 cadets took sick with ptomaine food poisoning.

Apparently the éclair's were either left out for cooling or put into the refrigerator and cooled too fast, because they were all bad. The sinks were not large enough to take all the traffic and as a consequence cadets were hanging over the stoops and out the barrack's windows being sick to their stomachs.

When the dance started there were only a handful of us to dance with some 200 or 300 plus girls. What a time I had! I got more addresses and contacts than I could handle.

I guess it was that incident that led to **Captain Fontaine** getting the nickname, "Ptomaine Fontaine"

I often wonder if the "Major" was as an intimidating person to his peers and neighbors as he was to the cadets. I will always remember him in his Sam brown belt strutting around the campus.

He rode that "gray ghost" car of his over hill and dale checking for who knows what. I took care of his horses and rode horseback with him in the dress parades. I don't think he was ever more intimidating than when he was on horseback barking orders.

I also will remember Sunday morning room inspections -- we dreaded to have the "Major" inspect our room. I don't know if he manufactured dirt on the spot or could see dirt that wasn't there, but we always seemed to be written up for something.

The "Major" also taught us many things regarding our health. He told us that after showering we should rub ourselves with our towels until our skin was red, in order to avoid colds. He also explained that the May and June sun was harmful and we should not stay

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out in it too long because the sun's rays were the strongest in the Spring.

We always had a bushel of apples on each stoop during the Fall apple season, albeit probably picked by some cadets with penalty tours.

One day in class after a test the "Major" was on some cadet for not having answered a question on the test. He accused the boy of not trying and told him if he had filled the space by writing the Lord's prayer he would have given him a good mark for trying. I don't think he was mean, it was just his way of trying to mold boys into men.

You can view the 1946 RECALL online here:

<https://galleries.amaalumni.org/Recalls/Recall-1946/>