

Augusta Military Academy

Oral History

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It was a cool, chilly morning nearing the end of the Winter 1979 school season when my mother and I pulled up to AMA for my interview with **Colonel Savage** to see if I would be admitted to the school and to which grade I would be admitted.

Needless to say, as an 8th grader I was pretty intimidated. I remember sitting in the interview in his office - he was so kind and welcoming. The office was sort of dark with paneling, a lot of books and the musty smell of an old library. After the tour and the process I was accepted and told to return to start in two weeks.

Back then, I think my biggest concern was getting my cool surfer hair all cut off. In those days, I was into music real heavy, as I still am today. My favorite bands at that time were The Cars, The Clash, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin and The New York Dolls...Oh, and Iggy Pop and David Bowie.

So on my arrival at AMA two weeks later I was put into the Band Company as I had been playing the trumpet since the 4th grade. I was bunked up with **Ricky Tuttle**, a little blonde kid from the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

I remember **Kevin Kilroy** was our next-door neighbor in room #120 - we were in room #118 if I recall correctly. I had a cool stereo system, so soon we all used to just collect in my room to jam out, drink Kool-aid (sometimes mixed with rum). I had a black and white TV so we used to play pong on it and we had a pretty fun time with that.

I remember the smell of Brasso in the room from shining the buttons all the time and polishing my boots and shoes with 100% cotton underwear ... remember burning the polish on?

Frank Berg was my Company Commander my first year and he was a genuine leader. I remember looking up to **Tony Beneventi** who was in my company and a real good trumpet player!

I played Lacrosse on the 1980 team and I think we won only one game all season. **Taylor Livick** and I shared the goal tending duties - we became pretty good friends. I feel he is in a better place....**Todd Livick** was bigger than life to me then. He was a great athlete also. Our coach was **Lt. Sedr**. I remember that year the U.S. Olympic Hockey team won the Gold Medal. I tried to emulate the goalies' play at the time on the Lacrosse field.

In 1980, Senior **Gary Laffen** was a good friend of mine and he came home with me on Easter break in 1980. We got ourselves into some trouble - anything from sneaking my mom's sports car out late at night and getting it stuck in the mud to breaking into a sport and tackle shop and getting caught. Pretty comical now, but at the time no one else seemed to think so.

I remember The Commandant being **Maj. Mines**....he was not the warmest of characters. Of

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course **Mr. and Mrs. Livick** were always around.

I made it to Buck Sgt. Squad Leader in all my years there. Climbing up in rank was not one of my specialties, but I was a good leader though. Many times I took over as acting company commander during football season when I was the highest ranking cadet in our company. Didn't all that power make you feel great?!

I remember feeling so cool to be able to walk through the courtyard in my second year and making all the new kids do push ups and running them around and making sure those rats were walking the line.

I remember borrowing \$20 from **Frias** and getting a good punch in the nose ... see the valuable lessons to be learned? Take what's not yours and there are consequences to be had.

Remember the scary stories of Alfredo in the Tower? Thank God for **Colonel Hoover!** He saved me from marching the blacktop countless times by having me mop the Fencing Hall, then recruiting me on the Fencing team, were I flourished. I loved that man!

Remember policing up the cigarette butts? My grades were OK, so I spent some time at nights in the Big Room in Study Hall. When I was in my room at night to study I would just goof off anyway. I remember the smell of walking into the Armory and down the steps....that musty smell of books and fresh uniforms all mixed up into one. Still has that smell as I walked down those steps last May at the Reunion 2001.

Tony Beneventi and I shared the bugle calls together. I remember getting woken up 15 minutes earlier than the rest of the cadets and it being so quiet just before I sounded Reveille...

I remember the pay phones being real busy in the evenings and guys waiting to use them. I remember so many wonderful things about AMA. I feel the time I spent there shaped the person who I am today.

I have two wonderful daughters, Ashley 5 and Kiley 3. I live in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. I still have two homes in Baltimore, Maryland. I own a web design company with my brother which is successful beyond my wildest dreams.

I know we are all here for a certain amount of time ... like we are all water in a river, we hit a waterfall and become droplets of water bumping into each other on the way down then hitting the bottom and becoming one with the river again.

These are just a taste of my personal memories from those wonderful years I spent in little Ft. Defiance. No matter what becomes of those hallowed grounds and wonderful Barracks, which will probably be torn down, the memory and place will be alive for me for eternity.....

I LOVE YOU AMA!!!