

Augusta Military Academy

Oral History

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Augusta Military Academy-World War II
September 1941-June 1942



My remembrances of AMA during the war years are tempered by the fact that this period was only from December 7, 1941 through June 1942, when I graduated.

During the September 1941–June 1942 period I roomed with **Donald Keesling** from Bramwell, West Virginia. We lived on the North side of the second stoop. We got along famously. Don played basketball and I played football. He was an outstanding student and did his best to conform to being a good cadet.

The Fall of 1941 was typically filled with renewing friendships, getting into the routine of classes and playing football. We had **John Kasunich** returning as head football coach after a highly successful first year. He had brought **Nick Forkovitch** from McKeesport, Pennsylvania to AMA the year before and we had beaten SMA and most of the other opponents on our schedule. This Fall Kasunick had seen to it that **Steve Vidnovic**, also from McKeesport, attended AMA. He was an excellent football player and added much to our football success that year.

The mood of the campus that Fall, in my opinion, did not portray any particular gloom about the ominous events taking place in Europe. There were some discussions with a few of the younger faculty that had reserve commissions about how this would affect their lives. One in particular was **Lt. Willard “WAC” Craft**, the basketball coach and assistant football coach. I became good friends with Lt. Craft and he would occasionally talk to me about when he would be called to active duty. I believe he held a Naval Reserve Commission.

It was not until that Sunday afternoon, December 7, 1941, that everyone was hit with the hard fact that this country was at war and we would all be involved somehow. Exactly how we heard of the attack on Pearl Harbor, I am not sure, but by the time we went to the evening meal it was all that was being talked about. **Major Roller** came to the mess hall, I believe, and made a short statement. There were some of the cadets making threats about leaving AMA and joining up immediately. There were none that I know of that actually carried out the threat.

Once the realization of what had happened to our country and what it meant to each of us young men for the immediate future, a sense of excitement took hold. We had all lived through the depression years and most of us had never traveled further than within the State of Virginia or the neighboring state.

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The United States at War meant that we would now be required to travel to places we had only thought about before. Besides, we would have money that we had never had before. In other words, this turn of events would release our generation to a new, lively, if not dangerous, and in many cases deadly excitement of a World at War. President Roosevelt aptly stated it when he said, “*This Generation of Americans Has A Rendezvous With Destiny*”.

The Winter and Spring of 1942 were back to the routine of studies, sports and preparing us for our final semester at AMA. A few of the faculty that held reserve commissions received calls to active duty. Most were deferred until after the school year. I think the only one that left early was **Lt. Col. Allen Fulton** the PMS&T. Most of the faculty at this time were older and would probably never see active service. It was the younger faculty like **Craft, Kasunich, Davisson, Ragno**, and United States Army Sergeant **Arthur Wilson**, Assistant PMS&T, who left AMA soon after Pearl Harbor.

My detailed remembrances of 60 years ago are not too sharp now, but my most vivid memory is the personal excitement that I felt after I realized what might happen to me in the next few years. Little did I know then what I would have to face before I resumed a “normal” life of college, career and marriage.