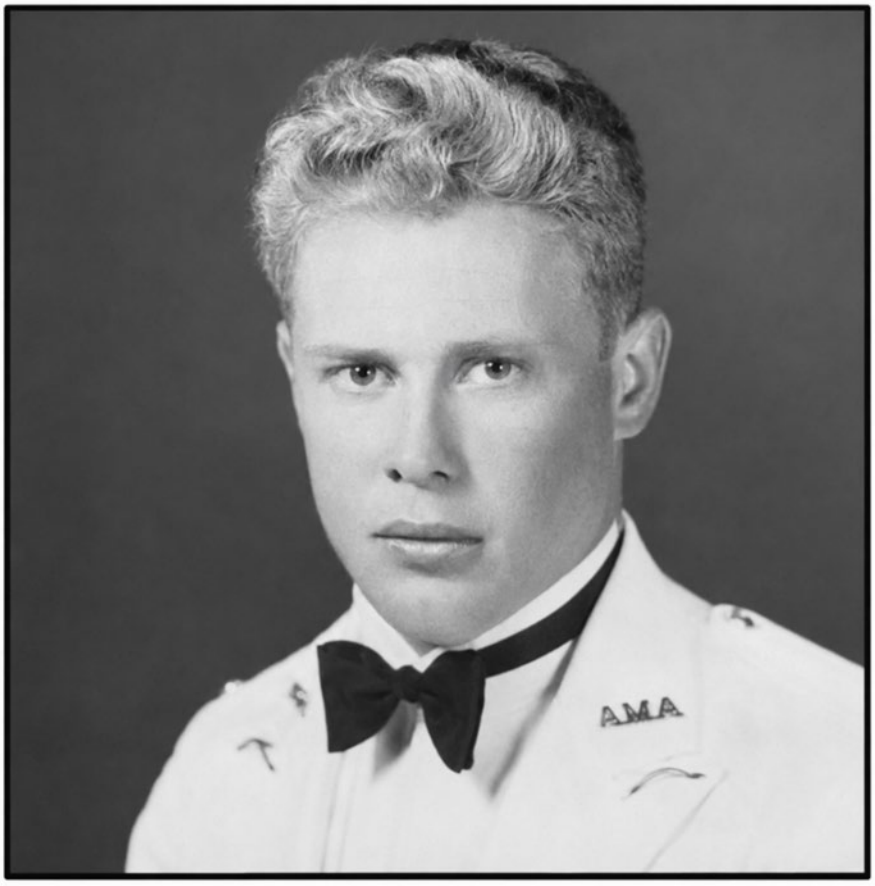
MARSHALL ABRAHAM SHIRES ‘36



Marshall “Abe” Shires was born and raised in West Virginia, working labor jobs his entire life. Wanting to take advantage of his skills during the Great Depression, Abe caught a freight train from Hinton/Alderson West Virginia heading East. He got off the train in Staunton with no money or place to go. He had the look and physique of an athlete, so people in town told him about General Roller and Augusta, suggesting that he could find a place and food there. Abe caught a ride out to AMA, walked up the driveway to meet General Roller. Abe agreed to play sports and work as a Cadet Waiter in exchange for schooling and board. While at AMA, Abe’s athleticism shown in several sports:

- Varsity Football:
  - Played 1935-36 (one year): Lettered on both Offensive and Defensive Line
  - 1935 All-League Honors: Defensive Line
- Varsity Baseball:
  - Played 1935-36 (one year): Lettered as an outfielder
  - Led team in hitting with a .533 batting average: 1936
  - 1936 All-League Honors in outfield

- Varsity Boxing:
    - Played 1935-36 (one year): Lettered in Unlimited Weight Class
    - AMA Runner-Up for South Atlantic Prep League: 1936
    - 1936 South Atlantic Prep School Champion in Unlimited Weight Class

Abe also was selected in 1935-36 as :

- Corps Voted: "*Best Built Cadet*"
- Corps Voted: Runner-up "*Best Athlete*"
- Corps Voted: Runner-up "*Most Popular New Cadet*"

After, AMA, Abe went back home for a year, and then was recruited/enrolled in the University of Tennessee in Knoxville to play football. He played several years (1937-40) as an offensive lineman. The Alderson, West Virginia native was a part of legendary Volunteer (Vols) offensive "front walls". It was a time in which the Vols compiled a 31-2 record, won three SEC Championships, two National Championships, and were selected for three bowl games – the Orange, Rose, and Sugar Bowls. The success of those three teams, considered among the greatest in Tennessee history, can be traced to outstanding play up front. Abe Shires, who played at 6′2″, 212 pounds, was a vital cog in making it all happen. He was selected as All-Southeastern Conference in 1939 and 1940, and for the 1940 College Football All-America Team as an offensive tackle. Abe Shires played in the 1941 College All-star Game. Abe Shires was the 14th overall pick in the 1941 NFL draft. However, due to military service during World War II, Abe did not make his debut in the National Football League until the 1945 NFL season. He did so as a member of the Philadelphia Eagles.

Abe Shires was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant (Armor) in the U. S. Army for World War II. Interestingly, Abe brought his boxing experience into his Army unit/Regiment. While they were stationed in Tidworth, England while preparing for D-Day, 1LT Shires was the Officer in Charge of the 2nd Armored Division's boxing team. When Shires' unit landed in Normandy, it was D-Day plus 3: June 9, 1944. By then, the Company's main vehicle was a smaller armored car. They also used jeeps, motorcycles and their own leather boots for their reconnaissance missions. By July 19th, 1944, the 2nd Armored Division was still trapped between the massive ancient hedgerows in Normandy. On October 8, 1944, 1LT Abe Shires was wounded in combat, and listed on the Reconnaissance Company's Battle Casualty Report as Seriously Wounded in Action (S.W.A.). He returned back to the United States, to heal and recover.

Abe never married, but had a life-long girlfriend who lived in Mount Sidney, Virginia, right up Route 11. Abe's great nephew, Shawn Ogimachi attend AMA, graduating in 1977. In July 1993, Marshall Abe Shires passed away at age 76, while living in Sacramento California. In 1994, Abe Shires was posthumously inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame.