

GEORGIA MILITARY ACADEMY IN THE 1950s

GO BACK NOW TO YESTERYEAR, TO THE DAYS BEFORE BLACK SHOES AND BLUES

***“GIVE A CHEER, GIVE A CHEER,
FOR THE BOYS WHO BREW THE BEER,
IN THE CELLARS OF OLD GMA...”***

The United States was the world's strongest and military power. The economy was booming. This prosperity—new cars, suburban houses and other consumer goods—were available to more people than ever before. However, the 1950s was an era of emerging conflict and radical shifts.

Some continue to call the 1950s: safe, stable, secure, and the social modernization expansionism.

Despotism and xenophobia lurked on the global stage.

The post-World War II boom, the emerging Cold War the Civil rights movement; The crusade against domestic and international Communism exposed the growing underlying divisions in American society.

American society began to perceive massive shifts in Industrial, political, financial, religious, and educational institutions.

Especially, with the expanding “cold War”, superpowers, educational theories and practical emphases on expanding fundamental teaching into more scientific and mathematical frontiers.

GMA: No more Little red schoolhouse.

Georgia Military Academy , too, a half century old, was caught up in a changing world.

A monastic-like military school, to be sure, along the West Point discipline lines.

Imagine this campus, without IT, Internet, computers, interstates, FAX, nor cell phones. Communications in those times were, as Colonel Russell, Geometry teacher said, “graphite and cellulose”, old dial phones, and campus inclusive very loud PA system.

***THEY ARE BRAVE, THEY ARE BOLD,
AND THE LIQUOR THEY CAN HOLD,
IS A STORY CAN NEVER BE TOLD....***

Many events shaped future GMA generations.

From the world stage to our American backyards, some amazing and ground-breaking events that had people agog, sometimes aghast throughout this decade and beyond. During the Cuban revolution, many Hispanic families sent their sons to private schools in the US to escape tyranny, and for a superior education.

Many remained on the GMA campus during Summers and school holidays.

Some never returned to their homelands nor saw their families again.

Restricted travel and stifling political forces prevented many students from returning

home, even for short periods.
Many didn't see their families for years. Some never.
MANY DIDN'T SEE THEIR FAMILIES FOR YEARS.
GMA was their home.
GMA families provided room and board.

AIRPORT:

During this decade, GMA students saw and heard the nearby airport motors noise. It was a harbinger of reciprocating airplanes transitioning to jet powered planes.

MILITARY/MONASTIC-LIKE CULTURE:

Discipline (not extreme). Cadets learned words and deeds have consequences.

CLASS PRANKS:

Typical pranks, but '56 stands the creativity test.

THE GREATEST PRANK OF THE DECADE OR

THE FORD IN FOUNDERS

(FOUNDERS HALL, A CLASSROOM BUILDING THAT ALSO HOUSED THE LIBRARY)

IT WAS A WARM APRIL MORNING, 1956, AS I ENTERED THE CAMPUS AROUND 7:45 AM.

I LIVED OFF-CAMPUS, EAST POINT, AND WAS OFTEN REFERRED TO AS A "DAY DOG".

AS A CADET LT. COLONEL IN THE CADET OFFICER CORPS, I OFTEN ARRIVED ON CAMPUS BEFORE THE FIRST ACADEMIC FORMATION AT 8:15 AM.

THESE ARE MY RECOLLECTIONS OF EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE THAT MORNING. THIS MORNING, I SENSED A STRANGE MOOD AS SOON AS I ENTERED THE CAMPUS. CADETS WERE STANDING AROUND IN SMALL GROUPS, SNICKERING OR LAUGHING AMONG THEMSELVES. I IMMEDIATELY FIGURED THAT SOMETHING WAS "UP". THE PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM CAME ALIVE AT ONCE; IT WAS COL. BURNETT, THE COMMANDANT, ORDERING ALL CADET OFFICERS TO REPORT TO THE GUARD ROOM, ON THE DOUBLE.

UPON ENTERING THE GUARDROOM WE WERE INFORMED THAT SEVERAL STUDENTS, IDENTITIES UNKNOWN, HAD LIFTED THE SMALL ENGLISH FORD (ANGLIA) UP A FLIGHT OF STEPS INTO THE FOUNDERS HALL ENTRANCE HALL, BLOCKING DOORWAYS INTO TWO CLASSROOMS, AS WELL AS THE LIBRARY.

COL. BURNETT WAS FURIOUS. COL. BREWSTER WAS LIVID. SOMEONE HAD ALERTED THE ATLANTA JOURNAL, THE AFTERNOON NEWSPAPER, AND A PHOTOGRAPHER WENT OUT AND TAKEN A PHOTOGRAPH WHICH WAS TO APPEAR IN THAT AFTERNOON'S EDITION.

COL. BURNETT IMMEDIATELY ORDERED: "YOU OFFICERS DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, BUT GET THAT GODDAMNED THING OUT OF THERE AT ONCE.

WE QUICKLY ASSEMBLED FIVE OR SIX OF THE BIGGEST GUYS WE COULD FIND, AND THEY LIFTED IT BACK OUT. I ALWAYS FELT TWO OR THREE OF THOSE BIGGEST GUYS HAD A REAL EASY TIME DOING IT. (HAD THEY HAD PRACTICE?) I DO NOT RECALL IF ANYONE WAS EVER FOUND GUILTY OF BEING INVOLVED, OR IF ANYONE WAS EVER REMANDED FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION; IT WAS JUST A SENIOR CLASS PRANK. THE PHOTO DID APPEAR IN THE AFTERNOON EDITION.

BOB EVANS, '56

(1956:English Ford (Anglia)-Some seniors, with ingenuity and team effort disassembled the Academy-owned English Ford “Anglia” and hoisted it into the Founders Hall lobby.

When Colonel Burnett, the stern yet fair, , long-enduring, tight lipped, hard-bitten, cadet-feared Commandant of Cadets learned, later discovered the incident was going to be in the Atlanta Constitution Journal, the Fury of the Gods descended on the campus.

The Day Dogs (day students) rejoiced.

The Bull Ring was full.

Years and even decades later. Beer cans/bottles and cigarettes were discovered hidden behind building bricks.

These student misadventures and machinations were subjects of many subsequent reunions discussions and memories

MANTRA:

GMA focused on preparing preparing students for the future with many enabling objectives.

These weren't necessarily “taught”,

These values, substantiated by “lessons learned”, and were inculcated into every cadet through idealistic (especially for young boys) lessons learned:

- **It isn't all about you**
- **Life isn't a dress rehearsal; do it now**
- **Time awareness. Woe betide a cadet who was late for class, formation, events**
- **Attention to detail**
- **Go beyond the box. Don't enter the box**
- **Embrace your NOW, memories, not things**
- **It can be done**
- **RIGID rules, standards, expectations,, and consequences.**

NO fear

DARE to live the Great Adventure (THEODORE ROOSEVELT)

CHALLENGE Uncertainty