FLORIDA MILITARY SCHOOL

THE HISTORY

Compiled and Written by Sue Elliott
Cadet Code

To love and revere my God and my country.

To be loyal always to the Florida Military School and to the ideals for which it stands.

To perform all duties and carry out all orders with conscientious fidelity.

To refrain from any act or deed or the use of any word that might bring discredit to myself, my fellow cadets, or the School.

To apply myself diligently to my academic studies and military training.

To be honest and truthful at all times and in all my dealings with others.

To know that honorable failure is better than success achieved through unfair means.

To maintain my self-control and self-respect.

To take pride in the wearing of my uniform.

To show unfailing courtesy in my conduct and speech.

To exhibit at all times those manners which characterize the society of gentlemen.

To seek the friendship of refined and intellectual people.

To improve my mind by the reading of good literature and by engaging in cultural activities.

To devote time for the physical improvement of my body and general health.

To assist others in cleaving to the path of right-doing and to restrain them from the commission of wrongful acts.

To face and solve all problems which confront me with manliness and fortitude.

To obey and enforce all rules and regulations of the School.

To recognize and appreciate the sacrifices which my parents have made to further my education, and to show them all due gratitude and respect by my every act.
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated, with our admiration and respect, to Colonel Carl Ward, the founder and guiding light of Florida Military School

1956

1971

2006
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The members of the Florida Military School Association wish to thank and acknowledge the contributions of Max and Sue Elliott. The establishment of FMSA was possible only due to their dedication, commitment and hard work. Thank you Max and Sue. You brought back many friendships and memories. We will always be grateful.

We must also acknowledge the countless hours of photo editing work that was done by Rex Riley ’70, and proofing done by Thornton Ridinger’59 and publishing research and formatting done by Harry Silvis ’65.
INTRODUCTION

This volume was an idea that was voiced by many and is finally a reality.

A Message from Col. Ward

Dear Florida Military School Association members and friends,

I offer you all my sincere appreciation for your hard-working, industrious efforts, which have resulted in the formation and continuation of FMSA, and your expression of the commonality that you share with each other. I wish to commend you all for your enthusiastic endeavors in the continuation of your camaraderie.

It has been through FMSA, and with great pride, that I have been afforded the opportunity of being able to follow the growth, development, accomplishments, and contributions of all the fine young men and women of FMS. It has been gratifying to hear of your successes and of your complimentary comments concerning the encouragement of the faculty, staff, and your fellow cadets and how they enriched your experiences and interactions at FMS.

This book, presenting the history of Florida Military School, has been prepared for you by FMSA to be presented in celebration of the third all-classes reunion, FMS Reunion 2009 – The Return of the Knights!. I hope you will enjoy this book and cherish the memories that it is sure to invoke.

I’m looking forward to seeing those of you who are able to attend this reunion. For those who are unable to make the event, I’m sure that the FMSA newsletters and website will contain pictures and articles apprising us of the activities.

Best wishes,

Col. Ward
Florida Military School had its genesis in the acceptance of a teaching and coaching job at Carlisle Military Academy by a young teacher at Mainland High School in Daytona Beach. When Carl Ward, at age 30, was offered the opportunity to coach basketball and teach social studies at the Bamberg, South Carolina military school, he thought he was fulfilling his dream, not setting the stage for the establishment of an honor rated military academy of his own.

The military school setting was a good fit for the former U.S. Marine. He enjoyed the organized and disciplined life of the military and was particularly pleased to be able to return to athletics in his role as coach.

During his tenure at Carlisle, Ward conceived the idea of starting a military school in Volusia County. He envisioned a school that would attempt to instill the principles of Honor, Wisdom, and Self-discipline through a balanced program of academics, athletics and military discipline. He enlisted the support of Willard Beman of Daytona Beach. Willard Beman, a Stetson University graduate, was then teaching at Seabreeze High School in Daytona Beach and coaching baseball and basketball.
Working with two friends in Volusia County, Willard Beman and Arthur Seeholtz, a college friend of Ward’s from Eastern Kentucky State College, Richmond, Kentucky, the Deland City Commission was contacted and the group obtained a three year lease, with a renewal option, on three buildings at the former naval air station. It included the old hospital building, officer’s club, and naval brig. The agreement granted the school unlimited use of a basketball court in one of the nearby hangers. The school also obtained an option on the use of several other buildings to be used as enrollment expanded. By August 18, 1956, remodeling, painting, and furnishing the three buildings had been completed.

Thus, the Florida Military School was founded in 1956 at Sky Harbor Station, Deland, Florida, as an independent college preparatory school. The Daytona Beach News Journal reported the school as a first of its kind in Volusia County. The school opened with an enrollment of sixty-three cadets in grades seven through twelve. The minimum age for acceptance at the school was twelve years old. Several former Carlisle Military cadets accompanied Ward to the fledgling school. Cadet Maj. Jerry Alleyne, of Jacksonville was one of those cadets and would become one of the first graduates of the school.

The campus of the new school was located near Route 92 approximately four miles east of Deland and eighteen miles west of Daytona Beach, on property that would later become part of the Deland Airport.
The local newspaper reported: “The building which first housed students, five faculty families…apartment suites were installed in each wing… classrooms and administrative offices, was originally a small hospital at the U.S. Naval Air Station during World War II. Later it was refurbished for the St. Louis Cardinals when they trained here for a few years. The school added study tables – for which the ball players had little use, in each cadet room.”

The Officer’s Club was converted into the dining hall and the brig structure, barred windows and all, was used as an armory and indoor rifle range.

Colonel Ward became the first (and only) Headmaster. Lt. Col. Arthur Seeholtz became Commandant of Cadets, and Major W.K. Beman was the Athletic Director.

From the beginning, the school was a family operation. In the beginning, Colonel Ward’s wife, Mary, managed the school canteen, Mrs. Seeholtz served as the school secretary and Mrs. Beman became the librarian. Mrs. Carl Evans, Mrs. Ward’s sister, was the dining hall supervisor. While Mrs. Evans actually supervised the operation of the dining hall, the actual preparation of meals was done by the Morrison Cafeteria staff in the school kitchens.

“Our job is to prepare boys for life to help them prepare themselves for leadership in their chosen fields.” Headmaster Colonel Carl Ward of the new Florida Military School declared. “We will teach basic curricular subjects, with few electives and no frills,” the 31 year old Kentuckian stated in an interview with the Deland newspaper from his offices at the Deland airport.

“Discipline, while firm, will be fair.” Stated the headmaster called colonel because of his school position. And with a determined glint in his eyes, he goes on to say, “And there will be no hazing.”
The Purpose

Florida Military School was primarily a college preparatory school and for this reason primary emphasis was placed on the academic part of its program. The program was designed to extract the maximum effort from each cadet and to encourage each cadet to do academic work to his fullest capabilities. This academic program was strengthened by the best features of military training.

This military training emphasizes the value of system and order in approaching tasks, of alertness, self-confidence, and physical and mental fitness. Any well-educated young man must be prepared to cope with difficult situations effectively, to think logically, and to make decisions with confidence. Military training was not given at the expense of academic excellence but was considered to be an important aid toward reaching the latter goal.

A cadet’s life at FMS was closely regulated. Cadets arose at 6:40 in the morning and were in bed by taps at 10:00 in the evening. In between at least six hours were devoted to class work, one hour to military training, and one hour to athletics. Five evenings a week were devoted to an enforced 2 ½ hour study period for all cadets.

Academic work took precedence over all other activities in the daily schedule. With small classes, individual attention could be stressed by the instructors. A conscientious effort was made to teach cadets “HOW TO STUDY”. During the
evening study period faculty officers were available to assist cadets with their work, and additional help classes were available for extra assistance.

Academic excellence was recognized at the end of each grading period at the Sunday dress review, when the ranking cadets academically were named. At the end of the year, awards were made to the highest ranking cadets, and medals were awarded for outstanding work in each of the fields of study.

To be eligible for admission to FMS a young man had to be of proven good character, of average mental ability or above, and in sound enough physical condition to take part in all required physical activity. Those applicants who had appeared before juvenile authorities, other law enforcement agencies, or had been expelled from another school were not normally eligible for admission to FMS.

The corps of cadets at FMS was organized as a battalion composed of four companies. Upon entering FMS each cadet was placed into one of the companies on the general basis of age and grade. In addition to the four companies, there was a cadet staff, and a Band company.

Under supervision of the commandants, the cadet staffs were responsible for the administration of the demerit system, cadet duty rosters, merits, and the performance of many other duties.

The normal system of military rank was utilized in the cadet corps. Each cadet entered the school with the rank of cadet private and had every opportunity to work his way up to the position of cadet colonel, which is the rank held by the battalion commander. General promotion orders came out at approximately three month intervals, and at these times every cadet was considered for promotion. Additionally, especially deserving cadets were promoted on special orders at any time during the year.

Promotions were on a highly competitive basis with many factors being considered in the selection of cadets for promotion. Probably the most important factor was a cadet’s attitude toward all aspects of his work. Also considered were progress in schoolwork, ability on the drill field, and demerits.

Cadets were quartered in military style dormitories with two cadets assigned to each room. The rooms were Spartan in appearance, each being furnished with twin beds, dressers, spreads on the bed, curtains at the windows, and rugs on the floor to give a somewhat homelike atmosphere. The cadets took pride in the appearance and
cleanliness of their rooms. White-gloved inspections by senior cadet officers and faculty were conducted regularly.

Cadets themselves were also inspected for their appearance at daily formations. The first uniforms came from a shop in Columbia, South Carolina, and were sturdy enough to stand up to active youths.

All cadet activities were regulated by the CADET HANDBOOK that was issued to all cadets upon entrance to the school, and to which the cadet was to thoroughly familiarize himself within the first two weeks of attendance.
On September 4, 1956, Florida Military School opened its doors to 63 cadets. The first class of the Florida Military School will be “pioneers in tradition” according to a newspaper statement by Col. Ward. “To them will fall the rare privilege of creating the traditions, selecting the songs, and laying the foundation for classes of the future.”

“That first year was one of trial and error, changes and improvements, and a constant striving to prove to anyone that we would make our mark. As the year progressed, we knew we would reach that goal.” Commencement speech in 1960 by class historian, Gary Aiken.
The senior class of 1957 numbered five cadets. These five were honored by the naming of main buildings on the campus after them. The school started mainly in the old Naval Air Station Infirmary, with the mess hall in the old Officers Club, which later became the canteen, which in turn was named the Joe C. Long building.

“My Impression of Our Headmaster

When I first saw Colonel Ward I said to myself, “There is a man who commands respect.” I have never seen him smoke or drink, and I have never seen him degrade himself in any way. Colonel Ward is a clean shaven man and from what I have seen of him, he dresses
very neatly. When I see Colonel Ward at the Sunday Dress Parade standing there beside the faculty officers, I see a man who is worthy of being Headmaster of such a fine school. The cadets of Florida Military School give Colonel Ward a great deal of respect, and indeed they should, as he is an excellent example of a leader of men.” By Don Drake (The Lance –Feb. 14, 1958)

During the first months of the school, it became apparent that some of the principals had not realized the 24 hour a day/seven day a week commitment that was required for starting and maintaining a new school. By Christmas break that first year, Lt. Col. Seescholtz and Major Beman had left the school, leaving Colonel Ward as the sole remaining partner. Fortunately, an Ohio businessman, Carl C. Schaefer, Sr., a trucking company executive, recognized the investment opportunity that the new school provided, and he provided the necessary capital to keep the school operating. Mr. Schaefer was brought into the corporation and given the title of Vice President (to Colonel Ward’s President and Headmaster). He maintained a partnership interest in the school until about 1961.

“I know I presented a new Ford station wagon to Col. Ward at graduation that was donated by the Schaefer family. I believe they had a fleet of semis. I remember some years later seeing one of the 18 wheelers with the following painted on the side of the trailer: “Florida Military School –Home of Scholarly Gentlemen “. Jerry Alleyne ‘57

Schaefer trucks carried a rolling advertisement for Florida Military School.

During the second semester, the cadets moved into the naval station’s Bachelor Officers Quarters that would later be named Howard Hall.
“The original parade grounds were directly behind the (old hospital) building across a large ditch that we traversed over a makeshift bridge.” Walter Cowart (Col. Walter Preston ‘60)

“That first year we did not have rifles, although everyone looked forward to getting them. I believe they arrived in the middle of the second year. The first year, before we got fitted for our West Point style wool dress uniforms, we all had white helmet liners, which we wore on parade. The first photograph of the entire cadet corps was taken wearing these helmets. The photograph was used as a postcard and shows not only the eighty or so cadets, but also, in front, Col. Ward, Lt. Col. Seescholtz and Major Beman, the three principles in the school when it first opened its doors.” Gary Aitken ‘60

“...I am amused now, looking back, on my various encounters with Col. Ward. Even though I was Cadet Major, it did not shield me from discipline. He would hook his finger in your belt loop to keep you from moving and let it rip. I got it several times. Usually it was my foul mouth that got me in trouble. ...And the licks were not delivered in private. It was done in front of the entire corps in the mess hall.” Jerry Alleyne ‘57

A small marching band comprised of approximately sixteen cadets under the direction of Capt. Kenneth Hewitt was formed. Although a fledgling group, they did at least receive Honorable Mention in all their appearances and a second place in Eustis and third place in Leesburg in parades.

In the beginning, the school offered flight training for the cadets, and 18 cadets began ground school classes at the municipal airport on October 30, 1957. The cadets were to study the theory of flight, meteorology, basic navigation and FAA regulations two hours a week under the direction of R.H. Leigh of the Bob Lee Flying Service. After the death of a cadet pilot, Donald Thompson, who crashed while on his first solo flight, flight training was soon discontinued. Subsequent equipment failures made the administration determine that the facilities were not safe enough for the students to continue the program.
In sports, FMS fielded basketball, baseball and track teams but not a football team.

“I started for the team (basketball) and although I was only 6’2” played center. At that time anyone over 6’5” was sort of freakish and usually clumsy and awkward. Our uniforms were something else – black and gold with black knee socks with gold rings and those white Converse canvas basketball shoes. We must have looked like something out of a circus.” Jerry Alleyne ‘57

“This was their first year of operation and a very poor one it was as far as sports and records go…

Basketball..........1 – 22  Baseball..........0 – 7
But the old adage, “records don’t tell the whole story” is very true in this case as Capt. Carl Evans, head basketball and baseball mentor, was faced with nothing but a schedule at the opening practice this year.. None of his basketballers had any high school experience…Only three of the baseball players had ever participated in an interscholastic game…..No one had ever thrown a baseball as a pitcher in high school competition….
The cadets have come a long way since last September – and there is still a long way to go until the new school attains its full potential.

One thing you can be sure of –win or lose – they’ll be good sports.”  

Daytona Beach News Journal article.

“I guess no reminiscing would be complete without some mention of the ‘townies’.  Guys and girls.  Some fights with the guys and some really neat experiences with the girls.  It was bound to happen.  This new school, ...guys with uniforms.  The girls were curious and the town guys were jealous.  I had only one fight as I recall, and I don’t remember what it was over – probably a girl.  I remember getting beat on pretty good until a cadet named Bill Causey came to my rescue.  ...He just stepped in between us and hustled me away.  It’s a good thing because I was just about to get my rhythm.”  Jerry Alleyne ‘57

There was also a Drama Club which put on a hugely popular play.

“On the road between the school and the dining hall was a theater used for amateur productions.  I believe it was Capt. Arnold who had created a drama club and produced a play using cadets in all the roles.  I can’t remember the name of the play (South Pacific?), but it took place in a military hospital ward during the war in the Pacific.  The unlikeliest role was played by a cadet.....he played a native woman and his memorable line was to say ‘Blossom,...Blossom’.  He was the hit of the show.”  Gary Aitken ‘60

The cadet corps was under the command of Cadet Col. William V. Howard, and Company B was named the Honor Company of the Year.  There were five graduating seniors the first year.  Their names would be remembered by all subsequent cadets because the major buildings on campus were named in their honor.
Florida Military School
Senior Class 1957

T. Col. William Howard
New Smyrna Beach, Florida

Clark Joe Clark Long
Moultrie, Georgia

1st Lt. David Cannon
Rock Hill, South Carolina

Maj. Jerry Alleyne
Jacksonville, Florida

Capt. Kenneth Hewitt
Moultrie, Georgia
The Second Year : 1957-1958

Ariel shot of school and parade grounds

Ariel shot of school and parade grounds
The second year of the school saw a four-fold increase in attendance with more than 260 cadets beginning the year, and expanding into two dormitories, known as Howard and Alleyne Halls. The Dining Hall was moved into the main dormitory now known as “William V. Howard Hall,” named after the Battalion Commander the first year. The second dormitory, “Alleyne Hall,” for the younger students was named after Jerry Alleyne, second in command behind Howard the first year. The school library was transferred from the Cannon Building to Alleyne Hall.

The old dining hall was used as the Student Union and named the “Joe C. Long Student Union”. Long, one of the original five graduates was responsible for keeping the school spirit at a high level the first year. The Florida Military School Canteen was housed in the Joe C. Long Student Union Building.

The purpose of the canteen was to provide pleasure and relaxation for visitors and cadets. Improvements being made were the Cadet Officers Club and a Cadet room. The Faculty Officers Club was completed. The Barber Shop location was on the front porch.

“Of course we marched to every meal and back, a much longer route then, often whistling what must have been the Colonel’s favorite tune, ‘Col. Bogey’ and other various cadence-keeping songs like the innumerable verses to ‘Sound Off’, that became quite obscene once out of faculty earshot. I’m guessing that tradition continued in later years. When it rained we were driven to the dining hall in the black school bus.” Gary Aitken ’60
The main administration building was known as the “David C. Cannon Administration Building”. Cannon had the highest scores on the College Board examinations the first year.

The athletic fields were named after Kenneth W. Hewitt, a sportsminded first graduate.

An old ships stores building (gymnasium and recreation hall) left by the Navy was in stages of remodeling, as funds became available. FMS bought a basketball court floor and goals in a hanger at the Deland Air Base from Stetson University, which had used it previously. This was soon moved to the building being prepared. The New Smyrna Beach Cudas beat FMS 77-54 in the first game played in the new gym in February, 1958.
A football team was fielded for the first time under the tutelage of head coach Capt. Earl Looman, with assistance from Faculty Capts. Joe Siekaniec and William Bradford. Football remained a part of the school’s athletic program until it was discontinued after the 1961-62 school year. The fledgling football team faced off against both class “A” and “AA” schools. There was also an extensive intramural program with required participation.

This year also marked the introduction of the cavalry unit. Sixteen quarter horses arrived from Oklahoma and were stabled at the school. Twelve cadets participated in the program, which met every afternoon for two hours. The unit was under the direction of the Captain of the Cavalry Cadet 2nd Lt. William M. Dubberly and their instructor, Capt. Bowman. The unit had Army officer-style saddles. The cavalry unit participated in the Sunday Dress Parades of the Cadet Corps, as well as other parades and activities.

Cadet Bill Dubberly
With the expanding cadet corps, new faculty members were added. Miss Alda Earp came aboard as Librarian, and also taught English, Latin and civics. Col. Ward, in addition to his duties as headmaster, taught history and military science. His wife, Mary, taught typing. This year also saw the addition of a full-time nurse, Mrs. Guessel Raulerson of Deland.

“On vacation from the Pentagon, General Andrew McNamara, Commanding General of the U. S. Quartermaster Corps, took time out to pay a visit to Florida Military School as guest of Headmaster Colonel Carl Ward. After watching the retreat of the corps of cadets, the General gave a brief talk about the fabulous scope of the Quartermaster Corps. They deal in billions of dollars from this business man's section of the army, and they cover such fields as food, clothing, oil supply, and burials for the army.” Excerpt from The Lance  May 23, 1958

“One of the most valuable courses I ever had was the typing class from Mrs. Ward. I have used it consistently throughout my life.”  Max Elliott ‘58

The Buglers
The Buglers

The Band

Marching to classes
Miss Jane Campbell, a professor of music theory at Eastern Kentucky State College in Richmond, Kentucky, wrote the Alma Mater for Florida Military School. She was approached to do the task by Captain Larry James, the FMS Band Director. The Alma Mater song was adapted from the Eastern Kentucky State College song with the lyrics changed to fit Florida Military School.

ALMA MATER

Hail to thee, Our Alma Mater,
Faithful Guide of Youth—
Holding high amid the darkness
Duty, light and truth.
Still above the skies attend thee
Still thy stately palm trees stand,
Still thy sons shall always love thee
Sing thy praises ‘eer the land.

When belove’d Alma Mater
Memory recalls, other days
Of youth and laughter
In thy gracious halls.
When thy sons who have been
Scattered turn again to thee,
Still Thy lamp is brightly
Lighting us afar that we
May see.
The school gained accreditation from the State of Florida Department of Education. The school was also approved by the Third Army Corps as an Honor National Defense Cadet Corps School. Colonel Ward indicated that this meant the school would receive ordinance supplies and training aids, and that students completing three-year prescribed courses could receive one year of college credit in military science. FMS was one of the few military schools in Florida to receive the Third Army approval.

“On a cold, dreary December morning in the winter of 1958, the black bus (FMS had two buses) with Florida Military School painted on its side headed west on state highway 40 toward Ocala, Florida. The bus, filled with the FMS band company and drill team, was on its way to Ocala to participate in their Christmas parade....As I daydreamed while looking out at the Ocala National Forest, a tire from the bus began to roll past us. Captain Albert K. Whitler in a heroic effort of driving got the bus stopped as the naked axle streamed sparks into the air each time it hit the pavement during the slow down procedure. After calling for a replacement bus..., we boarded the....bus and continued along our way. The FMS band was awarded 1st place among the bands in the parade (as was often the case).” Cadet Col Walter Preston ’60

There were twenty-one graduates that year, with the total number of cadets being about 260. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Lawrence R. Foster. Company C was the Honor Company of the Year.
A Civil Air Patrol junior squadron, a ground unit, was organized in cooperation with the CAP senior unit in Deland.

The character traits found in the Middle Ages are instilled in the cadets of Florida Military School. These traits of honor, wisdom, self-discipline and courtesy, which the school is emphasizing in its training of scholarly gentlemen, should be a mark of distinction to the cadet for the remainder of his life.

Thus, the school chooses the knights of old – the symbol of the well-disciplined man – as its goal in the training of each cadet.” Excerpt from 1959 Knight, Thornton Ridinger, editor

The school also produced its first yearbook “The Knight” dedicated to Mary Ward.
The Third Year: 1958-1959

With everyone else talking about recession, Florida Military School was talking about expansion. Two new buses were purchased and plans were announced for a new Canteen.
The third year of the school saw the completion of a new mess (dining) hall, which was named the “Carl C. Shaefer, Sr. Building”. A great deal of the work on this building was done by the cadets themselves. Later after Mr. Schaefer ended his relationship with the school, the building was renamed for Kenneth W. Hewitt, one of the first year graduates.

“When we went to town on leave and headed to the movie theater, we would inevitably arrive in the middle of the film and leave when it got around to where we had come in. This is the way I saw movies for four years. In those days we would
also be driven to town to church. We would assemble in a downtown parking lot and march in separate groups through town to our respective churches…….Church in town was a better deal, they had girls.” Gary Aitken ‘60

The year also brought the arrival of head football coach Captain Thomas Sperling and the addition of Captains Dinkins and Pendarvis as faculty members. Captain Prentiss became the Commandant of Cadets with a promotion to Major.

“In early December 1958, Colonel Ward’s black and white Ford station wagon left the FMS campus with Major Prentiss at the wheel. The passengers included Captain Carl Shaefer, Jr., Lt. James Purucker, Cpl. Ron Brinkerhoff and me, Capt. Walter Preston. We were on our way to represent the city of Deland at the Columbus Exhibition Center in New York City. The State of Florida leased the center to show off its wares to the New Yorkers about to retire and cities of interest had individual booths……Johnny Mize a hall of fame first baseman for the St. Louis Cardinals ….was also at the booth. ….Needless to say, the people were not interested in the four military school cadets when they could talk to Johnny Mize.” Cadet Capt. Walter Preston ‘60
In February, the Florida Military School Band played the Star Spangled Banner at the first running of the Daytona 500 at the new Daytona International Speedway. It was reported that “merely” 41,000 people were in attendance. The FMS Color Guard presented the colors on the track near the start/finish line. The band, and many additional cadets, sat through the race on temporary bleachers in the infield near the finish line, after crossing the track on foot. No infield improvements were completed and the 20,000 fans in the temporary bleachers were near the start/finish line.
During the second semester, the Army M-1 rifles arrived.

“...During the first year the army promised the school that as soon as our enrollment exceeded 100 cadets, they would supply us with the rifles. We looked forward to them because with them we would become a true military school.

They did not arrive the first year but we had the right numbers the second year and eagerly anticipated their delivery. We did not anticipate quite enough however and the rifles did not arrive for another year and a half. When they did come, they were quickly issued to us the following day when we had an extended drill period,(extended about seven hours). After that little session, many of us would have been happy to have the army take their rifles back to Fort Benning.” Gary Aiken, class historian in a speech at commencement in May 1960.
The highpoint of the year for the senior class was a trip to New Orleans for the Mardi Gras, under the somewhat watchful eyes of Captain Whitler and Captain Pendarvis. In addition to the party atmosphere of Mardi Gras, the trip brought the class together in bonds of friendship and camaraderie that had not been previously experienced.

“The 1959 senior trip was to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. I’m not sure why Colonel Ward let us go, but we had a great adolescent time. The father of Bobby Polk, one of the seniors, owned an auto dealership and loaned us the cars to caravan to New Orleans. We slept on the floor of the dressing room at Morrison’s Cafeteria on Canal Street. (Morrison’s had the contract for furnishing food for the FMS Mess Hall). We did not wear our uniforms, and we found New Orleans was quite a treat for teenagers. …..God bless Captains Whitler and Pendarvis who managed to look the other way most of the time. I’m afraid all of us would have been shipped if not for their understanding attitude.” Thornton Ridinger ‘59

“We were pre-Tom’s Pizza, so our hangout was at Kemp’s Donut Shop. What a delight for us to eat fresh glazed donuts and drink homemade root beer. Ah, the simple pleasures of life.” Thornton Ridinger ‘59
Formal dances were held periodically throughout the year, interspersed by more informal affairs.

There were twenty-three graduates that year, with a total of 226 cadets listed in the yearbook. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Dennis J. Eyre. Company D was named Honor Company of the Year.
“Our class had the distinction of being the first to wear white duck pants. We did that at our graduation ceremony. I seem to remember that it was a suggestion of one of the seniors, and I guess the Colonel thought they looked good enough to make them part of the standard uniform in later years.” Thornton Ridinger ‘59

There were two publications edited by cadets: a newspaper, the “Lance”, and a yearbook, the “Knight”.

The 1959 Knight was dedicated to the coaches: Bradford, Evans, Pendarvis, Prentiss and Sperling.
This year brought further growth to the school. There were 42 seniors listed in the yearbook, with the total number of cadets being 294.

“There are six of us who are graduating today who were present four years ago when this school was founded. As freshmen in high school and being away from home at boarding school for the first time, we soon discovered the enjoyment of companionship and fell into the run of school activities. The freshman class, the class of 1960, was the largest class in the school that initial year.” Address by the Class Historian, Gary Aiken at commencement.

The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Walter L. Preston. Company B was named the Honor Company of the Year. 1960 also saw Major Prentiss become Director (later Dean) of Education, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Major Robert L. Moore became Commandant and the arrival of Major Carl Steely as the Professor of Military Science and Tactics.
In the beginning smoking was allowed in the barracks but only in the latrines, which were built of concrete. Later, smoking was only allowed at the smoking ring behind Howard Hall. It was a well-worn oval with a 55-gallon drum in the center with the top removed to deposit the butts. You had to be 16 years old and have parents’ written permission to smoke and were issued a blue smoking card to use the smoking ring. You had to walk around the ring in single file and not talk as you smoked. The ring was open only after meals, during free time, and just before taps. If a cadet saw a faculty member in the area behind the barracks, they would announce “Backs to Alleyne Hall”, “Backs to Howard Hall”, “Backs to mess hall”, or “Backs to road”. The smokers would stop and put their backs to the area and stand there until either instructed to change where their backs were or to continue walking.

“My earliest memories are probably similar to every former cadet, that is to say, the first meal and coping with the novel military approach to dining, followed by the Commandant reading out the complete regulations and demerit system from beginning to end. I was paralyzed by the thought that it would not be possible to make a move, let alone get through the day without breaking some of those regulations. Then came the first of what became an impressive annual event when Col. Ward rhymed off the names of every boy in the room. For many of us, that was the beginning of a lifetime of admiration of a man who had so much influence on so many young men’s lives. Among the many qualities of Col. Ward, I admire him for the fact that he was so firmly consistent in his style, manner, decisions, and actions. I didn’t know it at the time, but he was only thirty-one when he founded the school. In the four years of my experience he steered the course in a remarkably steady way.” Gary Aitken ’60

Paddling was a fact of life at the school, as in most high schools of that period. In the early years of the school, paddling privileges were given to all the administration and faculty, who handed it out very liberally. Later, it was done only by Col Ward, Lt.Col. Prentiss (dean of Education), Commandant of Cadets (Howard Hall), and the Assistant Commandant (Alleyne Hall). Paddling was sometimes used instead of demerits and some cadets preferred it. You could also trade one lick for 5 demerits. At Christmas leave Col Ward lined up the senior officers and gave them 1 lick for each year they had attended the school as a Christmas present.
Athletics were an important part of cadet life and all turned out to send off the team when they went to face Deland in a friendly battle.

Cadets give team a sendoff.

The Knight was dedicated to Lt. Col. William C. Prentiss.
Year 5: 1960-1961

Announcement was made of the addition of the College Division during the fall of 1960, and the first college class enrolled for entrance in September 1961. Florida Military School and College was ranked #1 among 85 similar schools in the nation and in the number of returning students, with 75%. There were a total of 70 staff members. Colonel Ward expressed a goal for Florida Military to become “a Citadel of Florida – with cadets busy 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. – 7 days a week – too much for problem students.”

The school used the Marine Corps general orders, which each cadet had to memorize. You would most likely be asked to recite one during Saturday Morning Inspection as you stood in ranks on the street.

Before the school year could get fully underway, it was interrupted by the visit of Hurricane Donna that made her appearance in Central Florida. The faculty and cadets spent the duration of the storm in the Dining Hall with the school’s buses lined up in front of the glass windows on the west side of the building.

“...couldn’t forget the Cadet Corps cramming into the Mess Hall (glass front) for two days/nights as Hurricane Donna (Cat III) roamed our shores in September 1960.” Paul Denson ‘64
This year saw the opening of the new Olympic size (75’ x 35’) outdoor swimming pool on campus, and the start of a competitive swim team for the school in 1961. The cadets in 1960 actually helped dig the hole for the pool, which was completed prior to the September 1961 opening.

The physical plant now included two large dormitories, an administration building, a classroom building, a canteen, gymnasium, dining hall, swimming pool, tennis courts, and other athletic facilities.

The cadet radio station operated Friday afternoon broadcasts. It began broadcasting from Howard Hall.
WFMS/(WJBS)
“Sunday Dress Reviews were held in a field that had a large FMS billboard, to the west of the school. It’s not the parades I remember so much as the interminable drilling and rehearsals in the hot sun. People fainted on a regular basis, although it only happened to me once. I remember that odd sensation when everything goes quiet, you can’t open your eyes and next thing you wake up flat on your back.”
Gary Aitken’60

The biggest news of the year was when Colonel Carl Ward, guest speaker at the monthly meeting of the Deland Chamber of Commerce, announced plans to expand into a full four-year liberal arts college in the fall. The liberal arts schedule will begin in the fall and enrollment, now 300, was expected to exceed 3,000 in five or six years.

The school now had a library with over 5,000 volumes, meeting the specifications of the Southern Library Association. Full accreditation was extended to the High School division by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in December 1961.
Ah, the infamous Bull Ring. The grass has long since grown over the well-worn path, but memories of marching along the Bull Ring remain vivid for many Florida Military School former students. During the first several years of the school, you were allowed 15 demerits per two-week period. Originally you walked the hours off behind Howard Hall. When M-1’s were issued, they became part of the Bull Ring experience. At that time a demerit could be walked off in 25 minutes.

Later the Bull Ring became the well-worn oval path located behind the administration building. It was located directly outside Col Ward’s back door, which had a small deck, between the entrance to the Armory and the end of the building closest to the classrooms. You were allowed 5 demerits every two weeks. The excess had to be walked off on the “Bull Ring” at a rate of 1 demerit for each hour marched. Any faculty, cadet officer, or NCO could report you for any one of 108 infractions that were listed in the blue book. For more serious infractions the Commandant accessed the demerits, and they were classified as tours to be walked (TBW’s). Until the demerits were walked off, you could not leave the campus on town leave.

You would draw your rifle from the armory after the end of classes in the afternoon during the week and report to the Officer of the Guard who would supervise the Bull Ring. On Saturdays, you would do the same after the noon meal. You would march around the area at right shoulder arms, not talking for the prescribed time. If you were lucky, a faculty member would want you to work on a work detail during your Bull Ring time at the start of the afternoon’s Bull Ring. The faculty used the Bull Ring for free labor and to protest the harsh sentences that some cadets received.

Florida Military School approached the City of Deland in an attempt to purchase 100 acres of city airport land. The ownership of this land would facilitate the school applying for and getting federal aid.
“The school term ending with this ceremony (commencement) today began under the most optimistic of conditions. The senior class, forty one strong, is the largest ever, and it predominated the three major aspects of our school. Scholastically it dominated the honor roll and placed a higher percentage of its graduates in the “Eligible for college” bracket on the Florida State Testing Program, more than any other school in the county. On the military side, with the senior class providing the majority of cadet leaders, the school received superior ratings from the U.S. Army Inspection Team. And, in athletics the class made a good showing in all sports, particularly the track team, which won the county championship this year.” Gary Aiken, class historian ’60 in a speech at Commencement.

The senior class numbered 37 graduates, with a total of 289 cadets listed in the yearbook. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Geoffrey Gentill. Company A was named the Honor Company of the Year.

It was noted in the yearbook that the FMS football team beat Admiral Farragut Academy in the annual “Junior ARMY-Navy Game” by a score of 28-0.

The 1961 Knight was dedicated to Colonel Carl Ward.
The first six week grading period ended with a busy weekend with the cadets participating in a parade in Daytona Beach for Fire Prevention Week, participating in an intramural swimming meet, followed that evening with the first dance of the year. Climax of the weekend will be the first Dress Review of the year. Making its first public appearance in Deland this year was the 50 piece marching band, the Color Guard, and the precision rifle drill team of the Lancers. These three units will also be performing in several Florida towns, including Jacksonville, the Missile Bowl in Orlando, and the Sun State Festival in St. Petersburg. The newly formed College Company made its first dress parade appearance.
In September of 1961, Florida Military College began operation, with full courses for their freshman class. The school planned to add a second year college.
program the following year until a full four-year program was implemented. The yearbook cited the new college class as the “Class of 1965”, which indicated the plan at that time for a four-year college to be established. That goal was not realized. It became, and remained a two-year college during its existence.

Eight members entered the freshman college class. They were Kenneth Jones, Kris Cooney, Robert Schell, Jim O’Connor, Jim Stewart, Robby Duncan and Michael Grassi. The Cadet Major of the College division was Al Riethinger, a 1958 graduate of FMS.

The year saw Captain Pendarvis become Assistant Commandant with a promotion to Major. This was the last year of interscholastic football, with teams being fielded at both the high school and college levels.

The Honor Council was comprised of cadets that held the rank of Captain or higher whose function was to supplement the administration in enforcing the rules and regulations of the school. Other duties ranged from everyday responsibilities of training, discipline, welfare of the corps as well as assisting the administration with various decisions it was called on to make. The most important responsibility of the group was to maintain, protect, and enforce the Honor Code for which the group was organized. The group was not utilized from the early 1960’s to the closing of the school.
“I remember drill practice being briefly interrupted as we watched Alan Shepherd’s launch from the Cape (just down the road from FMS) in May 1961…the first American in space.” Paul Denson ‘64

Florida Military School and College was beginning to feel the need for expansion space. The big news of the year was that FMS made an offer of $50,000 to the City of Deland to purchase about 140 acres at the airport where the school was located. Colonel Ward explained to the city that it was necessary that the school hold free title to the land so that new dormitories, additional classroom facilities and improvements to athletic grounds could be obtained. Florida Military School had become Florida’s only Military College, and it was an accredited school and honor rated by the U.S. Third Army. The school was paying the City of Deland $6,439 annually for the use of the airport buildings. The school had maintained a vital interest in the economy of the City of Deland by scheduling activities during the slow months of September, October and May, along with other activities during the course of the year that helped to fill local motels and restaurants. Weekend dress reviews, formal dances and athletic events had become major attractions for spectators throughout central Florida. It was estimated that approximately 60,000 out of town patrons of the school visited Deland during a nine month period. These 60,000 annual visitors to the campus spending an average of $7.00 contributed about $420,000 to the local economy. This was enough to convince the city fathers that the sale would be to their best interests.

The Federal Aviation Agency was in control of the city-owned airport and presented certain obstacles to the sale of the land. The FAA objected to that much land being considered for sale and also stipulated a reverter clause. The eight buildings and land for which Florida Military School offered $5,500 were appraised for $45,000. Their feeling was that the school’s offer was unrealistic. With the addition of the reverter, the offer from FMS was withdrawn.

Francis P. Whitehair, a prominent local attorney, former Under-Secretary of the Navy, and friend of the school made 200 acres of land known as Whitehair Farms available to the school for a new campus. The land was located about three miles
north of Deland on S.R. 15A (the truck route), on the west side of the highway about one-half mile north of Glenwood Road. Plans were drawn up for the new campus and construction was to begin within a year. The expansion program would include construction of classrooms, administration buildings, library, dormitories, chapel, armory, gymnasium, fieldhouse, swimming pool, faculty housing, rifle range, infirmary, and maintenance shop. Forty acres of the land would have free title to permit the school to obtain federal grants-in-aid for its expansion program. The school planned to lease the balance of the property. However, the arrangements were never completed and the school remained at Sky Harbor Station.

The Belt Line meant different things to different groups. In the early sixties, the belt line was part of the Block “F” Club activities. All members of the Block “F” Club were required to run the traditional belt line after lettering in their sport before they could wear the club’s jacket.

Later, use of the belt line was taken up by the seniors in defense of the "Grass" areas of the campus which were the property of the senior class. While all other cadets had to walk on the roads, which were the long way to everywhere, the seniors were allowed to walk across the grass, taking the most direct routes. From time to time during the year there was a belt line of seniors, to punish the underclassmen that they determined, had violated the no walking on the grass. This was done after the noon meal and each offender was started off with a lick from the Commandant with a paddle.
A group of Deland businessmen gathered at the campus and formed “The Knight Club” and showed their interest in the return of college football to the local scene. Their first project planned was a “Buddy Program” where two or three local men would have one of the college players to take a special interest in and take to various special events and outings. The aim of the program was to help the players get to know people in Deland as well as giving the local residents a chance to know the boys they would be watching on the football field. The funds they raised would also be used to aid the school’s scholarship program.

The “Squires” a musical combo was formed last year, as was a Pep Band.
The senior class numbered 51, with 277 cadets listed in the yearbook, plus 34 in the college program. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Peter A. Still. The Honor Company of the Year was Band Company.

The 1962 Knight was dedicated to Marcene Evans, who managed the dining hall throughout the school’s existence.
Mealtime

A typical cadet dorm room
Year 7: 1962-1963

By now Florida Military School and College had continued to grow and the faculty and staff now numbered 76. The library contained an impressive 8,000 plus volumes and public documents. There were twenty-one states of the United States represented, and several foreign countries. 94% of the cadets’ families were residents of Florida.

As of December 31, 1962, the total combined assets of the Florida Military School and the Florida Military College totaled $576,666.67. The total operating budget exceeded $600,000 annually. The annual advertising budget had a range from $13,000 to $15,000 per year. The average faculty salary exceeded $5,000 per instructor for a nine month term.
“I vividly recall going to reveille formation one Thursday morning in late October 1962 and wondering with the entire Cadet Corps why an entire armored brigade of the U.S. Army troops occupied the drill field, spilling over into Sky Harbor Station next door, and all the Army brass joining us for breakfast. Later to learn that the Pentagon had given a ‘dispersal’ order in case the nukes started flying from Cuba.” Paul Denson ‘64

The band was now a fifty-five piece marching band and the Exhibition Drill Team, the Lancers, was made up of 48 members. The Lancers and the FMS band were very much in demand throughout the state, covering over a thousand miles this year to make appearances. As they had in the past, the Florida Military School Band and The Lancer drill team were invited to perform at the Daytona 500 in February. They not only played the national anthem, they also gave a performance that lasted approximately thirty minutes.

The senior class numbered 52, with 258 cadets listed in the yearbook, plus 32 in the college. There were also nine college cadets receiving Associate of Arts degrees. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Joseph Leer. Company B was named the Honor Company of the Year.
The first Sixth Yearmen in the history of the school were: John Barry, Thomas Bokor, William Edmonson, Joseph Leer, and David Tooker. There were also 34 members of the Fourth Yearman’s Club.

A highlight of the year was the visit to campus of the Vienna Boys Choir. The approximately 25 members of the choir sampled cadet life and made new friends as well as thrilled the corps with their music.

“My first year as a junior, near Christmas time, we had the Vienna Boys Choir ...that brought something special to all of us. We got a part of Europe and got to see the outside world for a couple of hours. Dave Brubeck played at Stetson ....took Co.’s A & B to the event. It was a pleasure to see college women but even better to have witnessed such an event.” Edward Albers ’64
Another highlight was the 1963 Senior Class trip to Washington, D.C. The group traveled to Washington by train and stayed at the Willard Hotel. They toured all the major sights including a visit to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.
There was even time for an impromptu snowball fight while visiting Washington.

“About 2:00 in the morning..., the ceiling in Band Company caught fire. We evacuated in our underwear, and waited for the fire department to arrive. Because we were a military school, things were done with precision and in an orderly manner at all times.” Edward Albers ‘64

The yearbook was dedicated to Major Carl V. Steely, who had become Commandant that year with the departure of Major Moore. Major Pendarvis remained Assistant Commandant, in charge of the junior high school cadets.
STUDY PERIOD
Once upon an evening creepy,
While I sacked out, really sleepy,
On my bunk in Howard Hall,
I snoozed while camplight wavered o’er.
Suddenly their came a tapping,
As so soundly I was napping,
It was the O.C. standing at my door.
I was read the riot act awhile at attention on
the floor.
Ah, how clearly I recall there,
It was at the start of fall there,
That the O.C. caught me as he came in storming
through my door.
“Son” he said, “I’ll make you king,
Of all the men that walk the ring.”
He wasn’t kidding, now its spring,
I’ve only 80 hours more.
The next time, only if and when,
I plan to hit the hay again,
I will not be that foolish then.
I’LL LOCK THAT *$@ DOOR!

Corporal Lee Hansen ’63 (The Lance)
“I was on the Color Guard and I recall some good times with that unit. ... I volunteered for and was awarded the position of Commander of the Color Guard. I was truly proud to be a part of the school team that raised and lowered ‘Old Glory’ in front of the mess hall every day...However, my fondest memory, and one I am also proud of, was the fact that the 1964 FMS Color Guard was the first ever to win a Sunday Dress Parade on the drill field. Prior to 1964, the Color Guard was never considered as a participant....We drilled for months and were granted permission to participate in the Sunday parade competition. As a result, we were honored to win....To this day I am still honored as a cadet to have been a small part of Florida Military School history.” Robert B. Walker ’64

Less than one week into the school year, Hurricane Dora made her visit. Extensive preparations were made for the storm on campus, and only minor damage to few buildings resulted, and no injuries of any kind. The cadets and faculty spent an entire night in the dining hall as a precaution in case the storm veered to Deland. Each cadet brought his mattress from his bed, and although cramped, most slept well.
“...anything to get out of public school was okay with me. So my mother took me out to the school to get me enrolled. I seem to recall my first contact was with Colonel Prentiss. At the time he seemed like a giant in his stature but with a kind and gentle demeanor. He met with us and explained about the school to my mother. Before I knew it I was a cadet!” Gary McCracken ‘69

The mood was somber when the cadets and administration paused to pay their respects at the announcement of the death of John F. Kennedy.

This year saw the return of the first FMS graduate to become a faculty member, Jerry Allyne, Class of 1957. Three other cadets, Greg Jackson, Rodney Stork and Lee Ruffner, would later return to their Alma Mater as faculty members in 1970.
“I had never had to be responsible for self upkeep until I went to the school. You know, clean your room, fold your clothes, shine your shoes, etc. and then line up, stand at attention, salute, march and so on. I mean when you take a country boy who only had to worry about what he was going to do on next Saturday and catapult him into strict regimentation, its culture shock! I began to wonder if I had made another BIG mistake.

Well, as the days went by, I began to become adjusted to the regulations and regimentation and soon began to enjoy it.”

Gary McCracken ‘69
FMS fielded the tallest varsity basketball team in the school’s history, and although long on height, they were short on experience and had to fight hard for their wins, winning only 4 of its 10 games. The Junior Varsity team fared better with eight out of eleven wins.

“Home basketball games allowed the entire campus to delight in an evening activity that put us past our bedtime. The atmosphere was so electric after those games that it took the cadets many hours to wind down. I remember that College Company and the high school teams were awesome, for the record in 1963, was one of the best for both teams.” Ed Albers ’64, C’65
Intramurals continued to play an important part in the life of the cadets. With 15 minutes of vigorous exercise and 45 minutes of sports several days a week, the cadets built their muscular coordination. The intramural sports included basketball, football, track, softball, tug of war, volleyball, and during the warm weather, water polo. The swimming pool continued to be a favorite among the cadets.

The senior class of 1964 numbered 56, with 291 cadets listed in the yearbook, plus 28 in the college division. There were only two Sixth Yearmen this year: John Venable and Mike Costello.
The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Venable. Company C was named Honor Company of the Year.

“The two (sometimes butt painful) years I spent at Florida Military College changed my life. I went from a totally self-centered-wiseass-punk-kid to a responsible young man who could function successfully in society. I will be forever grateful to the school, to my Dad who forced me to go there, to the faculty (especially Col. Ward and Major Steely) and to the upper class students that disciplined me, because it was they who made me realize that the world did not revolve around me, that I was tougher than I thought I was, and that my life would be easier if I learned and followed all the rules. In those two years I learned that I could compete with anyone, if I planned my time wisely and if I worked harder than everyone else. I also learned that if I failed at something that failure is not the end of the world, that the best way to handle failure was to admit the mistake, correct it, to take whatever punishment there is coming like a man, and then to move on with back straight and head held high....” Bill Arnold C’63
The 1964 Knight was dedicated to Major James William Pendarvis.
The senior class numbered 63, with 249 cadets listed in the yearbook, plus 29 in the college division. There were 4 Sixth Yearmen this year: Wayne Arnold, Don Campbell, Bruce Palmisano and Donald Rounds. There were about 40 members of the Fourth Yearman Club. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Palmisano. Company D was named Honor Company of the Year.
This year brought the arrival of Lt. Col. Rex T. Henry as the Professor of Military Science and Tactics and Lt. Col. Donald G. Williams as the Commandant of the College. Unfortunately, he was only able to serve a one year appointment as this became the last year of the College Division.

Dr. Wendell Jarrard, Sr., while serving as chairman of the Florida Development Commission, was responsible for the production of a film entitled -- "A Day in the Life of a Cadet" at the Florida Military School. The film was completed during the commencement exercises in May and was to be distributed throughout the United States. (a copy of this film is in the FMS Museum at the Hospital Museum, in Deland, Florida.)
The Florida Military School Band continued it’s tradition of performing before dignitaries, when they performed at a political rally for President Lyndon B. Johnson in Orlando, where he was giving a speech. Some cadets were privileged to meet the President. The Black Knights Marching Band was presented its first Presidential commendation October 26th at the conclusion of its performance. The band also performed in parades in cities around the state, such as: Orlando, Mount Dora, Daytona Beach, Deland, New Smyrna Beach and Holly Hill.

Other notable people who touched the lives of the cadets this year were Senior Senator Spessard Holland who attended a Dress Review held in his honor, Mr. Fred Karl who addressed the Cadet Corps at the Honor Society tapping, and Dr. Albert Burke, of television fame, who lectured to the Cadet Corps on world affairs.

The Senior and Junior National Honor Societies were installed on campus on February 11, 1965. The Senior Chapter was named in honor of Cadet Col. Walter Preston who graduated in 1960 as class Valedictorian, and the Junior Chapter was named in honor of Cadet G/Sgt. David Diffendale who graduated in 1964 as class Salutatorian. There were eight charter members of the Junior Chapter, and 13 charter members of the Senior Chapter.
The Sunday Dress Review represents important facets of military life and customs. Each review was composed of a “Sound Off” by the Band, a presentation of the colors and the cadet officers, and a “Pass-in-Review” by all companies. The Lancer Drill Team also was a major aspect of the Reviews. In addition to recognition of Honor Roll cadets, those excelling in the physical fitness tests were also recognized. Each of the Reviews was enjoyed by up a thousand spectators gathering around the parade field.
Yearly, the Third Army was required to visit the school to inventory the M-1’s and other Army property that was assigned to the school. This was always in the spring of the year and entailed many hours of preparation by the cadets of cleaning, painting and polishing the entire school. Col Ward also talked the team into doing a Saturday Morning Inspection as well as a full dress review.

For the first time in the school’s honor rated history, FMS received superior in every category of the government inspection. The inspection team chief remarked that perhaps they had something to learn from the cadets about shining shoes.
“The furniture manufacturing plant located in one of the buildings of the airport burned. The large barrels of paint and other chemicals really put on an explosive show. We could feel the heat all the way to the mess hall.” Bill Ackerman ‘68

The 1964-1965 school year marked the end of the school’s growth. The class of 1965 set school records for its size. The class left its mark on the campus with the erection of the brick school sign that still remains today.

“Mail Call was important in the lives of cadets, as they were not only getting letters from home, with spending money, but also the more prized letter with sweet smelling perfume from the girl(s) you were currently in love with. The mail arrived during drill and the field was directly across from the administration building, so we knew when
the mail truck pulled up and unloaded the bag(s) of mail... When the mail arrived, I was excused by Colonel Palmissano to sort the mail. The school secretary would come in to sort out the school mail and the faculty and staff mail. Well, I saved her that task every day, as I sorted the mail only once and even sorted the faculty mail into their boxes for her. There was though one special pile of mail, mostly those with the sweet smell of perfume, which went into my shirt and was eagerly waited for by those on the Regimental Staff.”  Harry Silvis ‘65

Care Packages from home were eagerly anticipated.
The 1965 Knight was dedicated to Captain Chaplin A. Dinkins.
The senior class numbered 49, with 243 cadets listed in the yearbook. There were two Sixth Yearmen: James Gaberle and Robert Mouro. There were 18 members of the Fourth Yearman’s Club. The cadet Corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Chris Bolton. Company B was named Honor Company of the Year.

“In the summer of 1965 the college was closed...we only had two weeks to have our transcripts sent to a new institution and to be admitted. It was a very scary time and a rude awakening for many of us. This was the start of the downturn for many military schools. Today you couldn’t start your own school because of the many building codes that were not in place in those days, let alone the financial nightmare.” Edward Albers ‘64
The year brought the introduction of the Interact Club, the school’s first service club, sponsored by the Deland Rotary Club. Members were elected on the basis of service, leadership, and interest in their fellow cadets. Eighteen cadets were charter members.

“I attended FMS for two years: from 1965-1967; graduating in May 1967....I did not study hard in 10th grade (Cocoa Beach HS), and made bad grades,...and I preferred to surf and goof off. My parents had had enough, and sent me off to FMS.....

I really did not want to be there. Of course, years later now, I realize it probably created some order – that was needed – in my life.....I learned to get up with the bugle and go to bed with the bugle. We got up early, formed up in companies out in the street before breakfast (and every meal), and marched into the chow hall. We sat at attention until the command to ‘rest’ and ‘eat’. Food was OK I guess......I do remember every FMS Sunday breakfast though. We always had the same Sunday breakfast: platters of scrambled eggs and sweet rolls.

I remember after weekday breakfasts (Mon-Fri,) we formed up in the street and marched to the armory and drew out our rifles. Then we went off in the fields, drilling for an hour or so before school. Then, we marched to school, had a few classes, marched to lunch, back to school, and then went back to our dorms around 4:00PM. We changed into gym clothes and practiced exercises out on the parade ground. We had a few minutes before dinner to go to the canteen and buy some valued things: candy bars, grooming supplies, always more shoe polish, etc. ....... Then we got showered, formed up for dinner in the street, marched into the chow hall, ate, and went back to our rooms around 6:30. The only good thing (even though I didn’t realize it at the time) was we had to stay in our rooms all evening and
study....from about 7:00PM to 10:00PM. Every evening one teacher from the faculty circulated through the entire school.....to see if we had questions with our homework. There was nothing to do but homework! .... ” David Serbe ‘67
“Everything else was kind of a blur of marching, cleaning things and getting yelled at. We had room inspections all the time. I remember having to draw my rifle and walk off demerits walking around the ‘bullring’ behind the dorm and next to the armory. I especially remember Dress Parades on Sunday afternoons out in the parade grounds. … A lot of Sundays were so hot that you spent most of the two-hour parade standing at attention or parade rest, and trying not to faint. I remember the sounds of rifles, then the thuds of bodies, as some boys passed out. Maybe that’s why the folks from town came out to watch!” David Serbe ‘67

“There was a big rivalry between the cadets and the local boys when it came to girls. The girls liked our uniforms!” Jeff Waidelich ‘66

Sixteen cadets were inducted into the Junior Honor Society and there were 20 members of the Senior Chapter.
The Knight was dedicated to the memory of Mr. Howard C. Snyder, who was cited as a true friend of the school and the father of Mrs. Mary Ward and Mrs. Marcene Evans.
The senior class numbered 39, with 251 cadets listed in the yearbook. There was one Sixth Yearman, Steve Kinsell. There were 14 Fourth Yearmen. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Kinsell. Company B was named Honor Company of the Year.

“I remember my first year, the stigma and mystery of my first Government Inspection. The mystery and intrigue instilled by our Squad Leaders and Company Leadership. It seemed that if we didn’t do it ‘well’, the world would come to an end and we’d all be ‘executed’. I recall being able to stay up all night in preparation. I remember seeing my Company Captain and Platoon Leader (Carl Voelker) sweeping, mopping and then waxing (good old Glo-Coat) the hallways at 3 in the morning. The joy and exhilaration of ‘passing’ Government Inspection that next day. Truly ‘esprit de corps’.” Bill Watkins ‘69
Major Pendarvis became the new Commandant of Cadets. Captain Dinkins became the new Assistant Commandant with a promotion to Major.

“The few times each year that we had furloughs were few and far between, and we often dreamed of having just a few extra days back home. Well, I recall two times in my tour of duty at FMS that we almost had unexpected furloughs assigned. ....

The first one occurred in the 1967 school year. The water main over at the airport that served the school broke, and we were completely without water for at least two days. I remember taking ‘baths’ in the pond in the woods across the road from the armory, and I still don’t know how George and Willie cooked the meals. The rumor was rampant that if we did not get water by that last day, we were going to be sent home for a long weekend while the reparations were made. Guess what? They fixed it, much to our dismay.” Carlos Mendez ‘71

There were 34 Junior Honor Society Members and 18 Senior National Honor Society members this year.
The Interact service club ran the concessions at the basketball games.

The 1967 Knight was dedicated to Lt. Col. Rex T. Henry

Col. Henry inspects the Corps.

The winning company gets to ring the Victory Bell.
THE ERA OF DECLINE

Year 12: 1967-1968

The senior class numbered 29, with 200 cadets listed in the yearbook. There was one Sixth Yearman: Tim Tyndall. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. David Moroz. Company C was named Honor Company of the Year.
The Senior Honor Society was 14 strong and the Junior Society had 13 members.
Morning Formation

For this year only, the dress uniform was replaced by the standard green army uniform indicating the Jr. ROTC designation of the school. No one was happy with the change.

“I recall the change from our dress Salt and Pepper to the ROTC ‘greens’. While the greens were nice, I don’t think anyone was really pleased with the change, including Col. Ward!” Bill Watkins ‘69
“We were using the standard West Point type uniform and the school decline was due to the Vietnam War, ... The military life style was out of favor so to speak with the public. Remember that was at the peak in 1967... the war getting bigger and drugs in the culture. We had NO, I repeat NO drugs at FMS, and they would not be tolerated by the cadet staff or administration.” David Laing ‘67
The year signaled the arrival of two new service clubs – the Key Club (sponsored by the Kiwanis) and the Hi-Y (sponsored by the YMCA) joined the existing Interact Club. A new sidewalk was a service project by the Interact Club.
The Knight was dedicated to Sergeant First Class William W. Douglas for his contributions to the development of the school’s military program as an honor rated ROTC school.
The senior class numbered 26, with 196 cadets listed in the yearbook. There were 2 Sixth Yearmen: George Graham and George Knight., and eleven Fourth Yearmen. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Graham. Company C was named Honor Company of the Year.
“During my 10th grade year in public high school in Daytona Beach, I was not a model student. Well, to be honest I skipped 45 days that year. No one could tell me anything. ...I had no male role models. I got 1 ½ credits that school year and into a lot of trouble.....A friend I ran around with (we skipped school together) was sent to the Sanford Naval Academy by his parents. When he came home to visit, he told me of the good things you have in a military environment: everyone dressing alike, a routine, etc. It looked good to me since ‘pot’ was starting to come into the schools then, and I knew I didn’t want anything to do with it. It took several weeks to talk my mother into letting me go on a weekend trip to visit to Sanford Naval Academy. I was so impressed and wanted to go, but they weren’t and they rejected me because of my grades. So we applied at Florida Military School......A couple of weeks later I was accepted for the 1968-1969 school year as a junior if I completed English in summer school.

The first six weeks at FMS was equal to boot camp orientation. First is getting uniforms in the Gym, then being assigned to a room and learning that you are part of a company and platoon, and then learning to march, dress, make your bed and get along with a roommate.

I learned a lot those first six weeks. They called me wrong way Norman because I would always turn the wrong way. The fellowship and family environment created by company life was something new to me then, and it has not been repeated often since. By my eighth week, on my way back from the smoking barrel after morning drill, I caught myself singing a then popular song ‘It’s a Beautiful Morning’. It hit me then I was starting to like it at FMS. I was falling into a routine and had structure in my life. What was nice is that you made it on your own accomplishments. I fit in for once and it was great.” Glen Norman ’70

---

The text continues with more details about the author's experiences at Florida Military School and how it shaped his life.
The Senior Honor Society had 13 members and the Junior Society numbered 24. The service clubs continued to be active. The 27 members of the Interact Club built a new sidewalk and a TV lounge. Key Club had 26 members and the Hi-Y had 19. The service clubs continued to grow in membership. Key Club painted in Hewitt Hall and built a senior bridge, and Interact worked on the library remodeling and did landscaping around campus.

“...(I remember) The Interact Club fixing up a senior TV room off of the lobby in Howard Hall, and watching Star Trek every Friday night.” Bill Ackerman ’68

That year, the cadet corps returned to the distinctive West Point style uniform.

‘Faculty, Leadership, and Teachers: The mystery and pure awe instilled by Major Steely. A man you did ‘not’ want to get on the wrong side of!!! The soft and gentle nature of Col. Prentiss, but you knew he could and would be a task master! The caring nature of all the faulty. Something I never saw in any public school. They truly wanted us to do well.” Bill Watkins ’69
“The Sunday parades, oh my god, the parade field on that campus was the only place in Florida it never rained on Sunday!” Bill Ackerman ‘68

Lt. Col. Rex T. Henry became Commandant, with the departure of Majors Pendarvis and Dinkins.

“Towards the end of...year...Col. Ward announced that we would be going co-ed the next year, as day students. That first was also the first year for Day Students. The next year we had several girls...” Glen Norman ‘70

The 1969 Knight was dedicated to Evelyn Doyle, the School Nurse.
In the 1969-1970 year, girls attended Florida Military School for the first time. All the female cadets were from the Deland area and they were day students. This was done to provide additional income as enrollment was slipping each year as world affairs made military school and anything military less desirable.

One cadet reported: “It meant we could actually have some real cheerleaders at basketball games. Also that year the team actually WON some games – about half wins – half losses as I recollect. Maybe it was the female energy.”
“In 1968-1969 A Company had enough cadets to make two nice size platoons, but in 1969-1970 we really only had enough for one platoon. When we formed in company formation...that first year we used single arm spacing and the next year we used double arm spacing to make it look like we had more cadets than we did.” Glen Norman ‘70

The Christmas Formal
The senior class numbered 26, with 192 cadets listed in the yearbook, including 13 coeds and 12 male cadet day students. There were no Sixth Yearmen noted. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Charles Kuharske.

Greg Jackson, a cadet who graduated from FMS in 1962 returned to his alma mater in 1970 as a faculty member. He was one of four cadets to return as faculty members.

Captain Rodney L. Stork, a former cadet graduate of FMS in 1964 also returned to join the faculty this year.
The fourth and final faculty member who was also a former cadet graduate of FMS in 1962 was Capt. Lee Ruffner. (Jerry Alleyne was the other, previously mentioned.)

The Senior Honor Society had 4 returning members and inducted 10 new members and the Junior Society had 9 returning members and inducted 29 new members, eight of which were female cadets.
Only two service clubs remained this year. The Interact Club had 27 members and continued with library remodeling, and the Key Club that was working on a student directory.

A new Club appeared however… The FMS Commuter Club. There were twelve members and all were day students.

“Every week we had to clean the company area for inspection, (Saturday Morning Inspection (SMI). SMI means Friday night clean up. What a way to keep boys busy and out of trouble. Friday night cleanup means cleaning cadets' rooms, rifles, shower areas, and halls. I remember many a night on my hands and knees with a scrub brush and a bucket of soapy water scrubbing hallways. Most times it was two cadets side by side each scrubbing his section of the hallway floor and someone going behind mopping up the dirt and soap….For Saturday Morning Inspection we had to form up and march to the parade field and had our uniforms and rifles inspected. We had to know our rifle number and the General Orders and the chain of command not just for the school but for the United States. Then we had to stand by our rooms while the inspectors came around and inspected our rooms: beds, closets, footlockers and everything else. Of course there was a contest to see which Company got the least amount of gigs (discrepancies). Then on Sundays we had Dress Parades ....The
SMIs, Friday night cleanups and Dress Parades really helped to build togetherness and make those long held friendships.” Glen Norman ‘70

A drill team for the junior high cadets was organized, and called the Junior Lancers. This drill team was to prepare cadets for the Senior Lancers when they reached high school. They performed in several dress parades and showed remarkable precision.
“One of the best times I had was …when all of the cadets were taken to Orlando for the Christmas Parade. The problem was that we didn’t have enough running busses to take all of the cadets to Orlando. So Col. Ward asked for cadets that had parents that lived close by to ask their parents to drive a car load. Luck was with me, my mother was available to drive a car load. We had fun on the trip, but I just remembered that parade was about six miles long. We marched forever.” Glen Norman ˈ70
The band plays on the courthouse steps

“I recall my Senior Year (1969). Things were changing in the world and we as cadets knew that also. I wore my ‘hippy beads’ under my T shirt. Cadets tried for longer hair, but most times not successfully. The music we were listening to on our record players changed....The Senior Class seemed to be coming into a worldly maturity. Looking back at my annual and some of the club photos, we see semi-hidden peace signs. The cadet newspaper staff having a copy of the ‘Village Voice’ on the desk. Hidden things like that showing our brand of ‘resistance & rebellion’. While FMS was absolutely one of the best things that ever happened to me, I truly believe that ‘Military Schools’ fell out of favor. I recall with a certain amount of sadness here that the school went ‘co-educational’. Certainly no ill-intent meant to any of the ladies that attended, but 1969 was a turning point year, the ‘end of an era’ “. Bill Watkins ‘69
The senior trip this year was to St. Augustine, and they stayed several nights in a motel and went to the beach.
“People were being drafted left and right in 1970, and no one wanted to go and serve. An Army general flew in to FMS one day and met with all the top cadet graduating officers. They wanted us to enlist after graduation, and said we would get special consideration….Scholarships to university and then go in the Army for a minimum of 6 years as an officer, or enlist now and go in to boot camp as a Lance Corporal. I remember hanging on to the certificate signed by the General just in case I got drafted! At least it might have made boot camp a little easier.” Mark Berry ‘70

The 1970 Knight was dedicated to Mrs. Frances B. Miller, citing her 14 years of service to the school as teacher and guidance counselor.
Year 15: 1970-1971

The senior class numbered 20, with 153 cadets listed in the yearbook, including 18 coeds, plus 46 students in a non-military elementary school. There was one Sixth Yearman: James Hyer. The cadet corps was under the leadership of Cadet Col. Lee Rackley.
The Black Knight Fight Song

We’re the Black Knights, the fighting Black Knights –
We’re the men and women in black and gold –
Marching onward, and onward
‘til the final battle’s won, won, won!
We handle trouble – on the double,
With our banners flying high. (Rah, rah!)
We’re the Black Knights, the fighting Black Knights
And we never will say die!
A highlight of the year was that the Rifle Team won the National U.S. Championship, an indication that the quality of instruction at the school had not diminished.
Although the school was strong physically, it was struggling financially, as were so many of the military institutions. Academically, the cadets continued to excel, with eighteen male cadets and 8 female cadets in the Jr. Honor Society and four male cadets and one female cadet in the Senior National Honor Society. The service clubs, Key Club and Interact, continued to offer their community service, and the athletics were also “business as usual”.

The presence of the female cadets, in their distinctive plaid, pleated skirts with white blouses and knee socks, was prominent in all phases of cadet life.
The Library was named after Miss Alda Earp the librarian. She has remained an active supporter of Florida Military School and attends all the annual meetings of FMSA.
There were 11 members of the Fourth Yearmen Club, but none in the Sixth Yearmen group.

Outstanding visitors to campus this year were former (FL) Governor Farris Bryant and his wife, Dr. John E. Johns, President of Stetson University, and the Honorable Francis P. Whitehair, and “Mr. Florida”, Dick Pope.

On March 11, 1971, Florida Military School experienced a major fire on campus. This proved to be a major setback for an institution that was already fighting an uphill battle.
In a last ditch effort to keep the school afloat, an elementary division was added with grades one through six attending. Approximately 50 of the local elementary students attended the “Walter L. Preston” division. The elementary division even had its own basketball team and cheerleaders, the Walter L. Preston “Squires”.

The elementary grades perform at Christmas.
The 1971 Knight was dedicated to Dr. Loren A. Dunton, who was the school doctor for 15 years.

“During these strange and unusual times that we are going through in today’s world ---with the breakdown of so many of the principles that established our country and the attitude of rebellion and disrespect so prevalent among our young people today, it is indeed encouraging to see clean cut young men that seem to appreciate the true values of life.

We are extremely pleased that we made the decision to send Edwin to Florida Military School five years ago. Col. Carl Ward does an outstanding job, and we are glad that our son has been under his direction and influence.”  Edwin W. Peck, father of Edwin Peck ’71
THE LAST LIGHT

At the Closing : October 1971

The school was closed in October 1971, a victim of the anti-military feeling resulting from the war in Vietnam. FMS thus became one of the more than two-thirds of the nation’s military academies to close their doors during those turbulent times.

“During its existence FMS was the great focus of Dad’s life. He was not averse to trying new methods to keep the school going. As the military school enrollment declined from 1968 to 1971, he started an elementary school and allowed girls to attend day classes. By October 1971, though, FMS had become untenable as a business. Enrollment had so declined that only Howard Hall was used for cadets. Though I know it was a crushing decision for him, Dad made the right decision to close the school in October 1971” Paul Ward ’71, son of Col. Ward.

So for 15 years, Florida Military School operated as an accredited National Honor School with the motto of Honor, Wisdom, and Self-Discipline. The school’s literature stated that Florida Military School was dedicated to achieving in its cadets the finest possible mental, spiritual, and physical development. Through three phases of cadet life – academic, military and athletic. It reported that the environment of Florida Military School was one of fellowship, academic thoroughness, and strict discipline.
The program was designed to make it possible for every cadet to become solidly prepared for college and for life itself. Most former cadets, whether they loved it or hated it (or maybe a little of both), will likely agree that the experience was a positive one for them and for their lives.

These snippets from the comments of cadets over the period of the school fairly well reflect the feelings of most who walked through those portals.

“I will tell you this, the indoctrination I received and the regimentation I learned at FMS has followed me through my entire life.” Gary McCracken ‘64

“What I learned from FMS was self-discipline, independence and to stand on your own two feet and that has carried me through life.” William Lamar ‘63

“I attribute much of my success in life to my experiences at FMS” Jim Lucas ‘66

“Every day for the last 40 years I draw on the lessons, skills, training, and character developed at Florida Military School. When you were there, you wanted to be somewhere else; but when you were somewhere else you wanted to be there. I know we can never have what we had, but I am sure I am not the only one that wishes we could.” Glen Norman ‘70

“The skills and disciplines I learned at FMS have been a positive influence in my life. I am thankful for having been a part of its family, and I wish the very best for all who attended.” Jim Burroughs ‘69

“I learned many lessons at FMS. Loyalty was one. Maybe because of a lesson in loyalty, learned from my roommate at FMS, I did a better job for the people who worked with me all these years.” Alex Nelon ‘63

The following comment from a parent written October 27, 1971:

“...My wife and I want you to know that we have no ill feelings toward you or the school. Lisa was very happy there, and we felt very badly when we heard that the school was closing.

We understand your reasons and offer our deepest sympathy. We feel that you did an excellent job as headmaster, and we want to wish you all the success in the future.” C.C. West, father of Lisa West ‘75

“It took me a long time to learn some humility, but the lessons started at FMS.
It took me a long time to learn how to dress (I still remember one of the guys from College Company saying something to the effect that if I put on a tuxedo, it would look sloppy in after about five minutes of just standing there), but now at least I can keep the tux looking good, at least until the meal is served.
But the lessons on taking pride in your appearance began at FMS. It took me a long time to learn how to not just be clean, but to be neat, and to value those practices in others. The lessons started at FMS.” Peter Bakos ‘64
“In sum, like most who attended FMS, there are many positive and negative memories of those formative years. From my perspective the FMS experience instilled discipline, and self-confidence that served me well as a military college cadet and a 30-year Army career. However, perhaps the best testimony of my military schooling and active duty experience is my son’s decision to seek admission to Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA. I have never encouraged my children to follow my “military footsteps” but will readily admit I am proud of my son’s decision. VMI embraces the citizen-soldier tradition and enjoys the highest alumni endowment of any public university in the U.S. A visit to the campus will bring back many memories to FMS alumni. As a member of the last FMS Corps of Cadets, I salute you.” Chuck Rowcliffe, FMS Class of ‘72
Florida Military School existed fifteen years from 1956 through 1971, and then it faded away with the rise of anti-military feelings of those times. The buildings crumbled or were moved, and the swimming pool was filled in, and for forty years not a vestige of the school remained except the crumbling remains of the original sign, hidden deep in a weed infested lot.

“In 1999, one of my FMS classmates with whom I kept in touch, Jay Seitz (1958), mentioned that Carl Schafer (1959), whose father was one of the early investors in FMS, wanted to start a list of the people that were connected with FMS. I then began to try and see whom all I could locate. I started with my class of 1958. I used my 1958 yearbook for my source of names. Most were listed with their hometowns indicated. Using the Internet (white pages, search engines, and web sites that specialized in registering classmates), I began actively compiling my list of FMSers. Early in 2001, I joined forces with Thornton Ridinger (1959) who, like me, lived in Ormond Beach. We began a truly systematic search to locate others from all years 1956 to 1971. We found others from the later years that were also trying to locate classmates. We joined forces with Andy Staley and Tim Tyndall, class of 1968, and Robert Mouro (1966) who had banded together and were also actively attempting to locate others. Tim and Andy developed FMS websites. Additionally, Andy accomplished the Herculean task of scanning every FMS yearbook onto a CD. We used those CDs and attempted to contact each and every Faculty, Staff, and Cadet listed within. Sue and I entered the names and addresses of all those located into a database that we still maintain. That database is the one used for the newsletter mail outs.” Max Elliott ’58 (FMSA Newsletter June 2003)

“Following The Lollapalooza, our main reunion held in DeLand, we set out to formalize an FMS Association. Ingo Kozak (1960), our Legal Committee Chairman, led us triumphantly through the bewildering mazes of officialdom to become, officially, FMSA on 04/10/03! And the rest, as they say, is history.” Max Elliott ’58 FMSA Newsletter (FMSA Newsletter June 2003)

The search for former cadets was on. The most frequent response we encountered when locating cadets was, “My God, I haven’t heard from anybody from that place since I left”. From a mere handful of names, we were able to locate and account for almost 900 men who had passed through the FMS portals at one time.
April 10, 2003

“Florida Military School Association: A Reality - Finally!

Congratulations everyone! We now have an official Florida Military School Association (FMSA). After many meetings, a Gathering, The Lollapalooza, and much hard work from many capable people, we have now evolved, effective 10 April 2003, into Florida Military School Association, Inc., a Florida Non-Profit organization.

.....” Max Elliott, FMS Class of 1958  FMSA Newsletter 2003

The first Board of Directors of the Florida Military School Association, Inc. were:

President: Max Elliott  Member-at –large:  Jerry Alleyne
Vice President: Thornton Ridinger  Member-at-large:  Dennis Eyre
Secretary: Sue Elliott  Member-at-large: Rex Riley
Treasurer: Andy Staley

118
THE SPIRIT LIVES ON

July 14, 2001 a few cadets met at the “Perfect Spot”, a restaurant at the Deland airport to reminisce about their days at Florida Military. Other small, scattered gatherings occurred prior to the first official “Gathering.”

A reunion committee was formed consisting of Max Elliott ’58, Thornton Ridinger ’59, Robert Mouro ’66, Andy Staley ’68, and Tim Tyndall ’68. Sunday, December 2, 2001, “The Gathering” was held at the Tomoka Oaks Country Club in Ormond Beach, Florida. About 100 people, former cadets and faculty, attended.

“and what a roller coaster ride for the committee. First we worried that no one would come. Then we got so many registrations that we had to quickly find another place to hold it (not enough room at the first two places). Boy, did we get lucky. The Tomoka Oaks Country Club was a great setting and everyone seemed to enjoy it.”

Written by Thornton Ridinger ’59 in March 18, 2002 Newsletter

With the enthusiasm generated here, plans evolved for a bigger, all-school gathering. The same team planned the first all school, all classes reunion, “The Lollapalooza”, which would be held October 12 & 13, 2002, at the Holiday Inn in Deland, Florida, close to the former site of our school.

“When the Reunion Committee met in January of this year to discuss our October Reunion, they jokingly gave it the moniker of “The Lollapalooza”. Little did they realize then how appropriate that name would be. The task of planning it alone was gargantuan. The four member committee had the vision, and it soon became evident that they would have to have the push. Starting with the nucleus of identified cadets from the December 2001 Gathering, the first obstacle was increasing the numbers. What could have been a very cumbersome endeavor was simplified by the efforts of Andy Staley who single-handedly scanned each and every page of every yearbook and placed them on a CD.

The famous saying, “Build it and they will come” is proving to be true. Once the date and place was decided, and the ball was rolling, things have really snowballed. Enthusiasm is running high from all sides.” Excerpt from June 7, 2002, Newsletter by Sue Elliott, editor

As part of this reunion, the first ever formal Alumni Directory was assembled and printed. Any cadet, college cadet, coed, day student, faculty or staff member located was included. For some, this was the first opportunity cadets had to reconnect with former friends or roommates since they left the school.

A moving Memorial Service was conducted for those confirmed as deceased. A Color Guard participated as well as buglers to play the echo taps. A bronze plaque was
dedicated and placed on the remaining pillar as a lasting tribute to the school and to the cadets and staff who were part of that school.

"To try and describe the highlights would be to describe every moment of the weekend. From Check-In time on Friday through Sunday around noon, the spirit of F.M.S. was definitely present in DeLand (especially on our former campus grounds). With even a little recollection, you could almost hear the cadences of marching platoons at drill (left, right, left), some senior yelling "GET OFF THE GRASS!!!" (that would have a whole new meaning today). The thought of walking the campus and knowing (for sure) I'm not restricted this weekend; "Column-Left - March!"; Wiborg strategically rotating between Major Moore and Major Pendarvis' offices and the resulting echoing of the character-building pats on the back (I believe Major Pendarvis called it that). Our "Free-Time" which was spent anyway we wanted, as long as it involved shining shoes or brass; "Tap - Right Shoulder Arms" (pre Col. Henry days); the Saturday Night Movie in the Gym - usually "SHANE"; Soupee in the Mess-Hall (some of which resembled what I saw Thursday in the Painter's Studio, which currently occupies our former Mess-Hall), and you could picture Gene Johnson or Rex Riley coming out of the back with a tray full of something Willie didn't serve us; Frank (I won't mention his last name) observed that there is no longer a ditch for the cannon to - uh - well let's not go there; and of course (you didn't really have to listen that carefully) you could almost hear Robert Mouro on the telephone.

Saturday was a full day of ghost stories (so to speak). This was very strange visiting the former Florida Military School Campus and seeing an Industrial Park where Alleyne Hall, the Mess Hall, Howard Hall, the Bull-Ring, the Canteen, the Drill Field, Administration Building, Classroom Building, Dress Parade Field, Gymnasium, Laundry, and Pool formerly resided. But even though there was no indication of their presence, I think their presence was felt and realized, very much (as was the purpose of the Ghost Tours). Next to where the Laundry was - is a tavern? Now here's where timing comes into play - I think we could have lived without the Laundry being there (had the Tavern been there instead) and speaking of the Laundry, I'm still wondering where they got that Industrial Strength Starch -
remember trying to get into those white-duck pants before parades? And then when you finally got the pants on - good luck being mobile at all, but not only did we have to eventually break the crease so we could walk - uh - march - but we also had to figure out a way to put our shoes on and tie them.”

Tim Tyndall ’68 as written in the January 2003 FMSA Newsletter
(Note: Tim was a Sixth Yearman who experienced many of the changes that FMS underwent.)

Several cadets were determined to find some remnants of their old school. The following are views of the remaining rooms as seen at the October 2002 FMSA Reunion in DeLand, Florida.

Rex Riley ‘70 actually found the inscription he left on the wall in his dorm closet.
“Several cadets who remembered the old FMS sign began digging through the jungle like underbrush and lo and behold, there it was.... the original sign. A little worse for wear but still proudly standing. It is located on some property presently owned by Mr. Roger Davis, who owns a local trucking company.

Mr. Davis noticed the “boys” digging around and came out to investigate. When he learned their mission, he sent his men with heavy equipment to clear away the brush and expose the sign. Because of his efforts, the sign was proudly visible during the Sunday morning memorial service.

Mr. Davis indicated that as long as he owned the property our sign would remain.”

January 2003 Newsletter

Tim Tyndall ’68

“I graduated in 1967, and never met anyone from my high school in the 39 years afterward; until that is – my wife and I attended the reunion in 2006 in Deland. I told my family and friends over the years, it was kind of like I never went to high school. You always saw movies about people in high schools, their reunions, high school buddies, etc. Both my sons graduated from high school in our hometown, have reunions, and see ex-high school friends around town. I never had those occurrences, and like I said – sometimes high school doesn’t seem real to me. I didn’t even know the school had passed in 1972, until I heard it years later. .....I didn’t realize that almost 40 years after I graduated from FMS, I was about to meet other students – and a lot of them. The 2006 reunion was on!
The 2006 Deland reunion was very surreal to me! I went from – never having met anyone in my life that went to my school – or even heard of it, to being around scores of FMS graduates. ...Nothing in Deland looked familiar anymore, and I had no interest in going out to the old school site to see flat grounds where the school buildings had been.....I enjoyed seeing Col. Ward and Lt Col. Prentiss, though I was kind of scared of them as a teenager. Obviously, when you mature and get older, your perspectives on many things change......FMS was kind of like a chapter in my life that was left unfinished, and I always wondered about things. At the reunion, I was actually together with a bunch of people who went to the same high school I went to and went through the same experiences I went through. FMS was one of those events/times/experiences – that if you didn’t attend it, you have no idea what the students went through.”  David Serbe ‘67

Dear FMS Alumni Association and FMS Cadets:

I sincerely appreciate your invitation to participate in the Reunion in Deland. It was wonderful to see so many former cadets who have achieved so much in life. My only regret is that I was unable to spend more time with each of them.

The plaque dedication was especially moving for me. The plaque itself will be reminder of our honor-rated school and all we accomplished together.

Shaking hands and looking into the eyes of the former cadets made the event one of the greatest moments of my life. It was such a pleasure to learn how FMS positively affected so many men.

My sons and I commend you for your superb work in making the Reunion so memorable for all of us. Every detail was nothing short of fantastic.

Thank you for the wonderful experience.

Col. Ward (as printed in the January 2003 FMSA Newsletter)

“For a long time Dad did not much discuss FMS, perhaps because he viewed the schools’ closing as such a negative event. However, I know he was touched greatly by the interest shown in him and the school at the 2002 reunion. This event meant a great deal to him. Excepting perhaps his family, no one means more to him than the FMS cadets.”  Paul Ward ‘71
The first annual meeting of the Florida Military School Association, Incorporated was held October 25, 2003, in Deland at The Perfect Spot, at Sky Dive Deland. This was the official beginning of the association and the termination of the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) that was formed at the Lollapalooza to draft the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws for a formal organization. The new officers took office and official business of the association was conducted. Steve Nash’s hanger at the airport was now our official meeting place and would be the site for future Annual meetings. We were off and running.
The first Florida Military School Association cruise sailed off from Port Canaveral, Florida on December 6th on the Carnival Glory. The 22 cadets and friends were soon well-known to the others on board because of their distinctive gold t-shirts.

“Any former cadet that wasn’t on this very nice cruise was A.W.O.L.” John P. Bulat ‘66
With the Lollapalooza a memory, the first annual meeting of the FMSA, Inc. a fact, and the FMS cruise also a memory, plans were underway for the **Golden Fiftieth** which would be held in August of 2006, to commemorate the opening of the school. It was planned that at future reunions, to be held every four to five years, a group of classes would celebrate the 50th anniversary of their graduation.

Meanwhile, an official website, Florida Military School Association: [http://www.fms-assn.org/](http://www.fms-assn.org/) was set up for the association and Asa Dean ’60 became the official webmaster.

We called this reunion the Golden 50th Anniversary Reunion, or the **Golden 50th** for short. The 50th Reunion was held at the Holiday Inn in Deland on August 4-6th, 2006, and it was a big success. The weather cooperated and everyone had a great time. The months of preparation paid off. Everything ran like clockwork. 228+ people attended this year, and there was representation from almost all the classes, even Sky Harbor Academy.

A large number of the group went off for a Luncheon River Cruise on the Beresford Lady Riverboat. Others took the “Ghost Tour” of what remained of the campus or participated in the afternoon pool party at the Holiday Inn.
The Saturday evening activity was well attended and began with the formal receiving line to greet both Col. Ward and Col. Prentiss.

The Business meeting on Sunday morning provided some interesting, unplanned entertainment for all. An auction and raffle was held to help offset reunion expenses, and it proved to be quite spirited. Sufficient funds were raised by this one activity to keep the association afloat financially for a few more years.
A moving memorial service was the final activity of the weekend.
Although the unfortunate destruction of the pillar that our memorial plaque was mounted on was not a reunion, it did bring together 14 hardy cadets who were determined to restore it to its original state. A semi-truck failed to negotiate a turn on to Yorktown Drive and our column was destroyed.

Like the proverbial phoenix, the FMS entrance pillars have once again arisen. Thanks to the concerted labors of Jeff Fawsett ’60, Steve Nash ’65, Terry Hollingsworth ’66, Lee Hansen ’64, David Scarborough ’65, Dennis Eyre ’59, and Pete Bulat ’66, the missing pillar is now restored to its former state. The group spent the weekend of November 18th, 2006, working on the project.
The FMSA story doesn’t end here. The dates have been selected and the contracts signed for the next official FMSA reunion gathering. It is being called “The Return of the Knights.” The dates are July 30th, 31st, August 1st, 2nd in 2009. We are starting on a Thursday and running through the Sunday this time. Thursday will focus on the 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960 & 1961 classes as it will serve as their 50th Anniversary. After a vote at the annual meeting, it was decided to make the Holiday Inn Express in Daytona Beach the site of the reunion. The reunion classes will gather at Gene’s Steak House for their dinner and in a break from the past functions, all activities this year will be informal. Replacing the formal dinner will be an enhanced pool party with an outdoor buffet. The weekend will conclude with a Memorial Service.
“The School that Refused to Die”
(Written by Rodney Stork, cadet ’64 and faculty member, following the 2006 reunion.)

“It is rare that individuals return for a reunion, and their school no longer exists.

Col. Ward and Lt. Col. Prentiss took us down ‘Memory Lane’ and revealed ‘secrets’ of the past and present.

Dormant emotions were revived and ‘Espriit De Corps’ again resurfaced in regards to times past.

Regardless of year, class, rank or company, we all came together as ‘brothers’ remembering the unique experiences that each and every one of us shared.

Even though there are just ‘bits and pieces’ of F.M.S. left, our school lives on in the hearts of cadets and faculty forever.

We all use daily ‘Lessons Learned’ in our formative years without realizing it.

Col. Ward always made us be ‘acceptable to a higher standard,’ and that confidence has grown within us through the years and made us excel in life’s challenges.

On a personal note, it was so enjoyable seeing and talking to ‘old friends’ again.

May the ‘Good Lord’ continue to bless us all with Health and Wealth until we meet again in two years.”
Postscript

Thanks to the original efforts of Tom Sperling, former FMS coach, and our “Mr. Deland” Bill Dreggors, West Volusia Historical Society director, Florida Military School will remain for future generations. Our yearbooks are on file in the historical society research room, and FMSA has its own Museum Room at the Deland Hospital Museum. Long after the last cadet has passed away, this museum should keep the memory strong.
“A Farewell Salute”
By Lt. Col. Rodney Stork

Revisiting our youthful years, and the transformation into young men,
Rekindling once past emotions, and experiencing deep pride, again.

Realizing the vision of Colonel Ward, with his consistent oversight,
Reliving regimentation by day, and our hallowed halls at night.

Recollecting life’s preparation with individual accomplishments, collective awards and accolades,
Remembering company formations, spirit de corps, classes and precision parades.

Reminiscing one’s history, knowing we have to close the book,
Reassured by the memories, its easier taking our final look.

Reminding us this is the last chapter of our glory,
Recalling the colorful days in our Florida Military School story.
World Events in Summary –

1956-1957
(Martin L. King, Jr. had led yearlong boycott in Birmingham; Sputnick launched by Russians, Federal Troops force school integration in Little Rock)

1957-1958
(US troops land in Lebanon, Explorer I launched, F-4 Phantom unveiled)

1958-1959
(St. Lawrence Seaway opens, Alaska & Hawaii become 49 & 50 states admitted to Union, Castro takes over Cuba, first X-15 flight)

1959-1960
(U-2 downed over Soviet Union, USS Enterprise launched, and Failed Summit in Paris)

1960-1961
(JFK Inaugurated, Bay of Pigs Invasion, Peace Corps formed, Berlin Crisis, Kennedy-Krushchev at Summit.)

1961-1962
(first American in Space, Cuban Missile crisis, prayer declared unconstitutional by Supreme Court in the schools, US commits military troops to Vietnam)

1962-1963
(Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Civil rights leader Medgar Evens slain, March on Washington, JFK visits Berlin, JFK assassinated)

1963-1964
(Beetles visit US, China explodes A bomb, Tonkin Gulf resolution, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Warren Commission report on JFK assassination, MLK,Jr. receives Nobel prize)

1964-1965
(Violence in Selma, Riots in Watts, Voting Rights Act, War on Poverty launched, War escalates in Vietnam)
1965-1966
(B-52 bomb, DMZ, Miranda Decision, direct dial phones arrive)

1966-1967
(Large scale war protest held, Six Day War in Israel, Johnson meets with KosygIn)

1967-1968
(MLK,Jr. assassinated, Robert Kennedy killed, violence during convention, Nixon wins election)

1968-1969
(Woodstock, Apollo 11 lands on the moon)

1969-1970
(Nixon announces Vietnam peace offer, begins troop withdrawal, war in Vietnam spreads to Cambodia, US invades Cambodia, four students killed at Kent State U)

1970-1971
(Large war protest marches in Washington & SanFrancisco, anti-war militant attempt to disrupt government business in Washington, Soyuz 11 launched by Russia, NY Times begins publishing Pentagon Papers)
PATRONS

DIAMOND PATRONS
• Elliott, Max & Sue
• Ridinger, Thornton
• Yonge, Richard

PLATINUM PATRONS
• Anonymous
• Kozak, Ingo

GOLD PATRONS
• Fawsett, Jeff
• King, Richard
• Jim Lucas
• Voelecker, Carl

SILVER PATRONS
• Drosin, Chuck
• Jubb, Peter
• Lowe, Bruce
• Schaefer, Carl
• Schaefer, Richard
• Waidelich, Ronald
• Ward, Carl

GENERAL PATRONS
• Parrish, Bill