



MacWain Phillips

As a kid, I watched a show called "West Point" which revolved around the honor code, etc. It was inspiring. No one in my family had served, my father joined the Red Cross during Korea and WW2. As a junior in high school in Hillsdale Michigan, I met a congressman who guided me via the USAF Prep School to an appointment to the USAFA.

Had my first beer with friends in Colorado Springs, and not my last!

The ride by train from Chicago amazingly derailed just inside the AFA property. It was late and was to drop us off in Colorado Springs which would have been very very late to the reporting time. My first hour was spent running with luggage and another fellow (turned out to become a lifelong friend) from the derailed train to the sign-in point, I was not going to be late!

Those four years formed lifetime friends, a vast interest in sports and military affairs, love of the environment anywhere, and a keen awareness of world politics.

I married during pilot training, graduated near the top of my class which gave me a high choice of assignments, and chose Instructor Pilot.

I could never understand how I could get paid well to do a job I absolutely loved. Teaching characteristics of thunderstorms in the morning, and flying around them in the afternoon. The value of learning was never so linked together with the usefulness of what was learned. Most of my students were training for Viet Nam in those years.

At the Academy, I had been trained well to speak up about things that seemed wrong and for me the involvement in that war seemed a tragic mistake. I could not see another path than to resign when my commitment was finished, and that is what I did. I was deeply saddened to leave the service. Our graduating squadron (21st) is still in close communication as we go through life's challenges and share them with each other. Something very special about going through an all out tough program together. I waited till age 57 to have kids, now my splendid daughter of 15 and my brilliant son of 12 years are in this world going for it.

I am forever grateful for the Academy and how it shaped my sense of truth, honor, and commitment. This sabre I was proud to give my mother and father thanking them for their support, they have passed on, my mother just passed on in December at 97. I want to pass on this token of camaraderie and spirit to the next generation of servicemen, you. Serve with your heart and your skills, there is no better life than that.

