

Memories of the Army Cadet School and the Military Academy

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I was born in Tomitsuka in Showa 2nd (1927) as an eldest son of six male siblings. Encouraged by my father, a former Army officer who was a wounded soldier at the time, I took the Army Infant School (an Army boarding institution) and entered when I was in the second year of the old system Higashi-Katsushika Junior High School. There were six cadet schools nationwide, but it was a narrow gate that could only accommodate 900 students, and 150 people from Higashi-Katsushika Junior High School took the entrance examination, and only 3 people including me were able to enter. After passing the exam, I remember that many upperclassmen came to see "What kind of guy is Kawakami?" I was assigned to a kindergarten in Sendai. I think I had the best education during my three years of kindergarten. At school, I studied the subjects in the morning, and then I studied practical training such as mountain climbing, skiing, swimming and everything in the afternoon in addition to exercises. There were smart people in this school who could memorize books and dictionaries after one glance, and it was very difficult to keep up with their studies. All the instructors were excellent people like university professors, and they said, "Kawakami, come play for a bit," and taught me to feast at home on holidays and study them, and took care of the students so that they would never fall behind. In Showa 20th (1945), I entered the Army Preparatory Military Academy (an educational institution that trains cadets) in Asaka Town (now Asaka City, Saitama Prefecture). There were many people in the same year, close to 3,000 people. In April, shortly after entering the academy, the U.S. Army bombed, and about 25 people were buried alive in the bomb shelter and died. There were so many air raids that I spent more time running away. By that time, I had a gun but no ammunition, and I felt frustrated that I could fight back if I had some bullets. In the exercise, I practiced jumping into enemy tanks with bombs of about 4 kg, but at that time I thought that this war was approaching the end.