



### Anthony (Tony) D'Iorio Jr., SMA '63PG



Tony entered Staunton Military Academy (SMA) in the fall of 1961 as a senior in C Company. He played halfback on the League-Champion varsity football team and ran track (hurdles). Graduating in June of 1962, Tony returned as a post graduate that September until leaving SMA in March of 1963. Following is Tony's story of his exciting life during and after SMA in his own words:

"I reported to football camp [at SMA] in August of 1962, two weeks before classes began. We practiced in a sunken gully with no air in the hot and humid summer days of Virginia. Practice was exhausting. In those days you did not get to drink water. You had to "be tough." We never ever heard the word hydration. So here I am, a 17 year old, short, Italian kid surrounded by *men*. There were guys on the team who were 6'6"/270 lbs, and soaking wet I was only 165 lbs at 5'8". There were a lot of high school all-stars (especially from Philly), on the team and guys wanting one more year of play before college. I made the team even though I was the lightest player by 20 lbs. In spite of that, I did score a touchdown for the team against Fishburne Academy in a game we won 63 to 0.

"To get ready for track season, during the winter of 1961, even through snow, I would run, run, run like Forrest Gump. So in the spring, when the season started, I was in near perfect shape and began winning the high and low hurdles every meet, sometimes by 10 - 15 yards. Early on a back injury

kept me from practicing during the week, so I would just run in the meet getting a shot in my back for pain. I kept winning, but because of the injury I would win by less and less each week. Finally at the Virginia Military School Championship, I was again about to race everyone I had beaten, but couldn't even take a trial run over a hurdle. With my parents and sister in the stands, I came in fourth or fifth or last. It was one of the most crushing moments of my life.

“Now here’s the good stuff. My second year at SMA, I came back as a post graduate and was given the rank of Sergeant First Class and a platoon consisting of mostly football players who, like me, definitely lacked discipline. My claim to fame at SMA is setting the unofficial all time, 100-year old record for nightly AWOLs (86) before getting caught. At some point during my run of AWOL’s the brass heard rumors and moved me to the 3rd floor in South Barracks so the guards could keep their eyes on me. My reason for going AWOL was a ‘Town Girl’. ‘Town Boys’ would lend me their cars for gas so she and I could ride around the city. Sometimes the Tidbit was open and we’d have a cheese burger and then look for a gas station until my return before reveille.

“After being moved to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, I went to the school gymnasium and swiped the thick rope used to fold up the basketball backboard and hid it in a space I made in the floor of my room. At night after taps I would tie it to the radiator and climb down to flagpole hill, running across Mary Baldwin to meet my future wife. I was busted from SFC to private and sent marching with an M1 for countless hours rain or shine outside South Barracks.

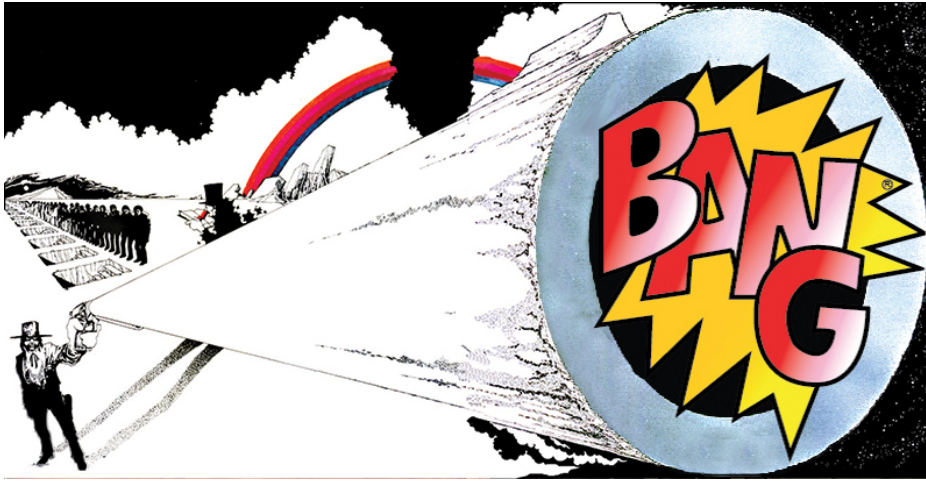
“Fast forward six years in my life: It’s 1969, two weeks after Woodstock, I was married with three kids when I answered an ad in a Philadelphia paper ‘Looking for Drummer’. It was placed by two 16 year old budding musicians, Frankie Gilcken and Frank Ferrara. The three of us hit it off immediately and I became part of a rock band initially named the *Magic Band*. Later we changed our name to **BANG** with a slogan ‘Music shot from guns’.



L to R Frankie Gilcken, Guitar & Vocals; Frank Ferrara, Bass & Lead Vocals; Tony Diorio, Drums & Lyrics

“**BANG**'s crazed ascent up the ranks of proto-metal pioneers is near-legendary among the underground circles. From out of nowhere, **BANG**'s first real gig was opening up that night for Rod Stewart & Faces, Deep Purple and Mathew’s Southern Comfort.

“**BANG** produced a series of albums for Capitol Records toured with most of the big rock acts of the early 1970’s, from Black Sabbath to Ike & Tina Turner; from the Allman Brothers to Parliament Funkadelics. Believe it or not, Bruce Springsteen even opened for **BANG** as an acoustic act in Richmond.”



Dec. 1971 First Capitol Records release **BANG** s/t

“After all these years,” Tony writes, “the band is still together, writing music, preparing to release a new album and touring. I have long retired from playing but continue writing the lyrics of **BANG** music and also doing graphics and videos. Living in Dallas, I own a custom cabinet company ‘Priced Per Foot’. Frank lives in Philly and strangely enough Frankie lives in Staunton, VA, with the cousin of my ex, the ‘Town Girl’. One big circle in life.”

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Edits by Kelly McGavock, SMA '59