

Here are bits of personal D.C. history from a really old guy. Just one week after the Pearl Harbor attack in December 1941, our school sent us on a senior class trip to Washington. We stayed at the Mayflower, now the Renaissance Mayflower. I don't know what the room rates were, probably a luxurious \$15 a night, but four boys were stashed in each.

What's my clearest memory of the trip? As we were herded through the various monuments and government buildings, we could see soldiers on the rooftops wearing World War I helmets and manning obviously outdated 1918 machine guns. How those few guys could have protected the city from an invading army or fought off air raids, Washington residents fortunately never had to find out.



On one free afternoon, we sneaked over to the city's premium burlesque house, the Gayety (later a Shubert theater, demolished in 1973), where the headline dancer was Tempest Storm. Later, our class attended the required movie at the Central Theatre, where "Sergeant York" was playing. Maybe it was Gary Cooper's screen heroism and heavy patriotic propaganda that induced most of our class to rush out immediately after our 1942 graduation to join the Army, Navy or Marines.

In today's Washington hotel situation, you might be interested in knowing the elegant, but musty old Renaissance Mayflower lists rooms at \$415 per night, while the Capital Hilton more modestly charges \$242. Keep in mind that all list prices are subject to discounts if you can get them through some kind of agency or association influence. On the other hand, all list prices do not include heavy city taxes and other charges that often boost the rate by 20% or more.

Here are some more city hotels and their list prices: Hampton Inn Convention Center, \$203; Sofitel Lafayette Square, \$310; Homewood Suites, \$250; Carlyle Suites, \$247; Embassy Suites Convention Center, \$295 (suites are usually two rooms, relatively economical for larger families); Quincy, \$232 (tiny, but charming); Holiday Inn Capitol Hill, \$284; and Omni Shoreham, \$276.

By surfing the net and taking advantage of internet bargains, Washington visitors may be able to get much lower prices than those listed. Be sure to shop around with online and neighborhood travel agencies, as well as by calling D.C. hotels directly, you may be able to knock down some of those sky high list prices.