Museum of Augusta Military Academy News

Ad Astra Per Aspera

MUSEUM OF AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

June - 2020

"Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain. And most fools do."
-Benjamin Franklin-

Chairman's Notes

June 1, 2020

It is nearly summer and we are excited to announce that the AMA Museum will be open to the public once again on June 15, 2020. When we reopen, we will be implementing some new protocols and guidelines that all visitors will need to follow. The new protocols have been made necessary by the COVID-19 scare.

We are pleased that our door's will be opening to anyone that is interested in learning a little about life in a Military Prep School and the impact AMA had on the Shenandoah Valley and the great Commonwealth of Virginia.

Neil, Rich and Christopher have never stopped working during the COVID-19 shutdown and have spent the museum "Down-Time" rearranging and updating museum exhibits and generally keeping the house **Sunday Morning Room Inspection** ready!

I have spent many hours the past few weeks talking and listening to many of our Alumni that represent 70 years plus of AMA memories. One of the takeaways I have gotten from nearly every alumnus I speak to, is that the museum's theme and message should focus on AMA history and cadet life while they attended the school.

Founded on that input, I have instructed the Museum Staff that moving forward, our displays and storyline shall only contain information of the legacy and stories that 119 years of our school's history has created. Every display on the museum floor will have a direct connection to AMA or someone that studied, worked or had a significant impact on the school. We have a fascinating history, that includes thousands of unique individuals, students, staff and faculty and their stories and accomplishments that make up the fabric of the history of AMA.

Our storylines and displays will strive to clearly and straightforwardly tell the REAL stories of the AMA experience. Do not be surprised that with this assertive focus on discovering and sharing our past, we will probably uncover and display some of the scars and warts that were also part of the AMA experience!

Team effort!

Saludos,

Douglas W. Pennock
Chairman

"The Greek" at the Acropolis. L to R wife Robin, daughter Lindsey, Nick's Kookla (Granddaughter) Lucy, son Andrew and NIck.

Augusta Military Academy

ORAL HISTORY

By: Nick "The Greek" Syropoulos AMA '69

NOTE: Nicky spent 10 years at AMA starting in the third grade September of 1959 to graduation in June of 1969. To put that in time perspective, Nick attended AMA for about 8.33% of the school's history!

I remember PMS (Professor of Military Science) III. You got three single stripes on your right sleeve, denoting 3rd year PMS training.
S/Sgt. Swartz, I believe was my instructor for this class. He was a tall southern Staff Sgt. Recently returned from Vietnam. Most of our military instructors were getting a calm stateside assignment after their tour in Nam.
They all relished the assignment and enjoyed teaching cadets their profession. We loved getting hands on with various weapons, grenades, radios, and other equipment used by the Army.

This day we were “treated” to a movie. Army training films were so funny. Old 1950s training films covered everything from weapons cleaning to personal hygiene.
Today we were to learn about “Cold Weather Injuries”. Oh boy another epic movie!
Well the film starts to roll showing the proper way to take care of yourself in the cold. Clean, dry socks, and clothes are the key. As we learned.
All was going pretty cool then they showed us the results of not taking care of yourself.
We saw various stages of frostbite on fingers, face and TOES. That last thing was the money shot. We saw a soldiers’ foot. Half of his foot was black, a doctor took hold of the big toe and peeled it off the foot with the rest of his toes and a great shot of puss shot out as the toes were pulled off. Well it was at that moment when maybe a third of the class deposited their lunch on their desktops, there were those who just ran out of the classroom. The rest of us just roared with laughter.
Another day at AMA!

The "Big Room"

-The Next Step-

Our goal for 2020:

$125,000

PLEASE WRITE A CHECK! Wire Transfers and PayPal also welcomed!

THANK YOU!

DONATE HERE

MUSEUM
DOCENT DUTY

THANK YOU!
To those who have volunteered!

The AMA Museum was closed in May.

Museum Volunteer
We will need Volunteer Docents

starting June 15, so please sign upbelow.

SIGN UP HERE

AMA Alumni Foundation Board and Museum NEWS

AMA Museum to reopen on June 15, 2020!

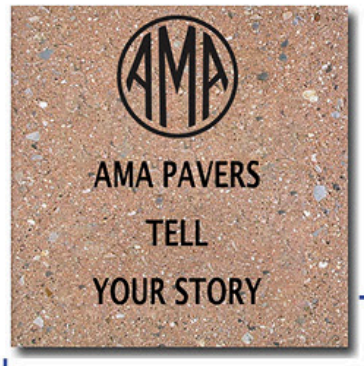
After being shuttered for nearly two months due to the COVID-19 panic campaign, the museum will open to the public on June 15th.
Social distancing protocols such as limiting the amount of people allowed to enter the house at one time, mandatory wearing of masks, and having hand sanitizer stations available to every visitor will be the new norm.
The Foundation Board and the museum staff are planning to hold an open house and Grand Reopening of the museum on Friday July 24, 2020 beginning at 1000 hrs. Social distancing protocols will also be observed at this event. Directors and Alumni are urged to attend the Open House to meet and greet all visitors.
There will also be an Alumni Foundation Board meeting at the museum Saturday July 25, 2020 following the reopening event.

-AMA MEMORIAL BRICK MAPPING-

Rich vanBreeman, our Museum Collections Curator is currently working on a memorial brick mapping project. You will soon be able to identify where any one of the over 700 bricks that are displayed along the Museum front yard walkway is located! The mapping and ID informational database will be similar to the one used at the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington DC. and will be accessible on line or on a computer station at the Museum.
Special thanks to Bj d'Orsay for providing the basic brick inventory database and the pictures of the individual bricks. Bj plans on taking all of the remaining brick pictures during our visit to the Museum in July of 2020.
Phase 1 of the brick mapping site should become operational by July 2020.

2021 REUNION DATES SET

The Reunion Committee has decided that Reunion 2021 will be held on April 15,16 and 17 of 2021. The Blackburn Hotel will be the official AMA Reunion Hotel. The hotel's management has agreed to keep the $99 plus tax rate that we had this year. The Blackburn Hotel is a small Boutique hotel that has limited amount of rooms available. All of the rooms had been booked one month before this year's reunion so we urge you to reserve your room as early as you can. The Reunion Committee is also working on special rates at alternate hotel's in the Staunton area. We should have more information on this and other reunion information in the July issue of this publication.



Paver Order Form

Options:

4" x 8" ~ 3 lines of 20 characters each - $50
8" x 8" ~ 6 lines of 20 characters each - $100
8" x 8" ~ 3-6 lines of 20 characters plus graphic - $225
*number of lines depends on size of graphic

Left: example of 8 x 8 with graphic and three lines of text.

Fill in the blanks below. **PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY!** Only one paver per order form. Print additional copies for additional pavers. When you buy a paver, you SUPPORT AMA'S ALUMNI FOUNDATION.

Your Name : _____ Class, if any: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Email: _____

WHAT SIZE PAVER DO YOU WANT? ____ 4" x 8" - $50
____ 8" x 8" - $100
____ 8" x 8" with _____ graphic - $225
graphic at ____ top or ____ bottom

Punctuation marks and spaces count as characters!

* contact museum for custom size and placement of graphic, additional charges may apply

Please PRINT below what you want on your engraved brick:

Line 1: _
Line 2: _
Line 3: _
Line 4: _
Line 5: _
Line 6: _

Mail form to: AMA Museum, PO BOX 100, FORT DEFIANCE, VA 24437
Include check or money order made payable to AMA Alumni Foundation
OR call the museum at (540) 248-3007 with your credit card information
OR email form to museum@AMAalumni.org, then call with payment information
OR call the museum to place your paver order over the phone.

BAND AMA ROLLER RIDERS ROLLER RIFLES

Revised May 2020

Download the Brick Order Form

Doug Pennock's Viewpoint
June 2020

Editor's Note:
The following expressions are mine alone. I look forward to your feedback. You may contact me directly at:
dpennock2002@yahoo.com

As I sit in my office at home pecking away at my computer's keyboard, I find it hard to believe that we are well into our third month of the Puerto Rico government mandatory lockdown. Daily routines have become well, routine and boring. It is amazing what people do to break the monotony of being a prisoner in one's home.

Social media has become an important tool to help release stress and to stay informed of what is going on in the world and even what is going on a block away! UBER and other Food delivery services are now the norm, and sitting at a restaurant with family and friends is practically a felony. Time will tell if the extreme rules and forced lockdowns that today's political leaders have decided to use to tackle this Virus was the correct strategy.

Maybe, maybe not, but the unintended consequences caused by the massive shutdown of the entire globe will probably cause Virus deaths to pale in comparison to the amount of suicides caused by depression, bankruptcies, divorce and spousal abuse and so many other emotionally charged events. All of which are clearly spiking as I write this commentary.

Hunger due to massive unemployment and the financial failure of Mom and Pop businesses and our private health industry due to the fact that people have quit going to hospitals and are postponing long and medium term preventative and curative treatments such as chemo, radiation and dialysis and surgeries, which in turn are keeping hospitals and doctors' offices empty, are worrisome patterns that point to severe and terrible outcomes.

Time will tell.

With a bit of luck, our descendance will honor the historical truths of today's world events, and will record 2020's historical data accurately and without a political spin. Imagine that!

Hopefully, what people in the future will read and study about what happened today, will be reasonably accurate.

Written history and historical monuments are for us to study and learn from. The destruction of books and statues goes counter to honest and responsible historical preservation.

Our mission at the AMA Museum is to tell the story of our history fairly and honestly and as transparently as possible. By us showing the good and the not so good of what we were, will

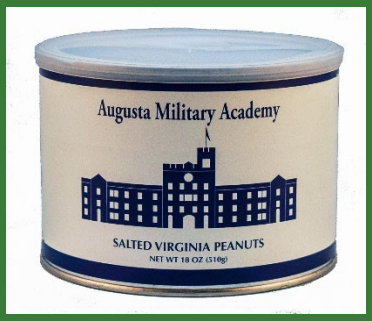
assure that any visitor that paces around the rooms of our little house, will leave it with a clear and truthful representation of what the 120-year-old AMA story was.

Doug out.

PX/Gift Shoppe

SHOP HERE

Featured is a small sample of what we have for sale.



–NEW– VIDEO SPOTLIGHT –NEW–

MIKE KIDD '72

TRAILER

Full Interview Here

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Painless Giving

Imagine if you could send the AMA Foundation a little bit of money every time you bought something on Amazon. YOU CAN if you sign up to Amazon Smile.
You are going to buy stuff anyway, why not allow Amazon to help the Museum?

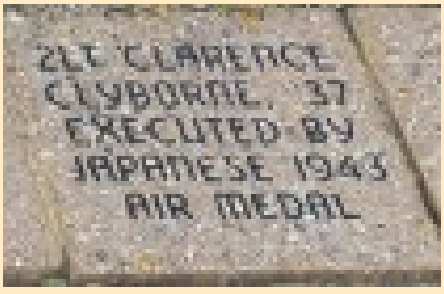
vanBreemen Expressions

Rich vanBreemen is the AMA Museum Collections Curator

My wife and I love to do puzzles. During the lockdown, we had lots of extra time to do numerous puzzles. What we like about them is, as each piece connects to another, a bigger picture emerges. Also, during the museum lock down, the staff and myself were tasked with organizing the brick/paver program in front of the museum. We developed a mapping system and have inventoried all existing bricks while determining how many open spaces remain. Look for more information on the updated commemorative brick program elsewhere in this newsletter. BTW, the PX has AMA puzzles for sale as well.

What do puzzles have to do with the bricks in front of the museum? Many of the bricks have cryptic messages that only mean something to the patron who purchased the brick. Others tell small stories or give us a glimpse at a potentially bigger story.

Point in case, there is this one brick:



Well you can't just throw something like that in front of me with no explanation! I had to find out more. Thankfully, we have the most incredible research tools at our fingertips with the internet. A little investigative work turned up this story:

2Lt. Clarence A. Clyborne, Jr., O-7389691, Bombardier
Prisoner of War: 1 Dec 43 - Died in Camp
Air Medal Purple Heart
Clyborne was the bombardier on B-24J #42-73222, nicknamed 'Bugs Bunny', serving with the 10th Air Force, 7th Bombardment Group, 9th Bombardment Squadron. They were part of a formation of B-24s on a bombing mission to Insein, Burma, near Rangoon. Fierce enemy opposition of anti-aircraft fire and fighter planes was encountered. Clyborne's plane was shot down during the air battle. Clyborne was able to bail out of the plane, but while descending he was strafed by a Japanese fighter and his parachute caught fire. He struck the ground so violently that he badly broke his right leg. He was taken prisoner and, due to a lack of medical supplies in the POW camp, his leg got infected and he died. Because his body was not recovered, he is memorialized on the Tablets of the Missing.
This led me to look into Clarence Clyborne, AMA cadet. Pulling out a copy of the ’37 Recall, we learn of a young man who was a 4-year cadet. His listing in the Student Directory is the largest for that year. He was very active in sports, held the rank of Captain and Company Commander of “D” Company and was a member of the Ad Astra Per Aspera Fraternity. It also put a face with the name and suddenly, the brick took on a whole new life:

Diving more into his life, I learned he was from Bluefield WV, the only child of Clarence A. Clyborne, SR and Vernice Hall Clyborne. He was a student at the University of Tenn. according to his draft notice. His early military training is still a mystery to me.

As I write this article, we have just finished the Memorial Day weekend. Often mistaken as a time to thank veterans, it is, in reality, the time to remember all those who paid the ultimate price for the freedoms we enjoy today. AMA Cadet Captain and USAAC 2Lt Clarence Clyborne, is one of those people. Before I reviewed the bricks, I was unaware of his story and his sacrifice. A small part of the bigger puzzle that is the AMA legacy was revealed to me because of those bricks. What other secrets lay waiting to be discovered and what stories will your brick tell?

The 2020 Summer BAYONET is now available

READ HERE

The Museum Newsletter was written and prepared by Doug Pennock and edited by Trudy Pennock

This issue of the AMA Museum Newsletter was sponsored by: AMA Class of 1971

AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY MUSEUM
- Fort Defiance, Virginia -

MISSION STATEMENT "To preserve the traditions of the Augusta Military Academy and to honor the memory of the life and times of its alumni, faculty, staff, and supporting families through permanent and temporary exhibits and diligent conservation the museum's collections of artifacts, archives and photographs."
The AMA MUSEUM is operated by the AMA Alumni Foundation, which is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization. The museum is manned by former cadets and faculty members, who volunteer their time and talent. Funding for the museum is totally dependent on tax-exempt financial gifts and donations made by the alumni, former faculty, and friends of Augusta Military Academy, as well as the community and visitors to the museum.

Augusta Military Academy Museum | 540-248-3007 | Museum@AMAalumni.org | http://www.amaalumni.org
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