Ad Astra Per Aspera

MUSEUM OF AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

June - 2022

Chairman’s Notes

June 1, 2022

Dear fellow Alumni and Friends,

For all of us AMA Alumni, the month of June was always one we all kept clearly marked on our calendars.

If you were an undergraduate, June meant the end of the current academic year and a wonderful 3-month summer vacation was about to begin.
If you were a Junior, June was not only the end of the academic year, but it meant that the following September, you would be a Senior!
If you were a Senior, June really meant that you were going to graduate and you would be done with all things AMA!
Well, that is what many of us thought….
50 years ago, on June 6, 1972, I along with dozens of fellow classmates graduated from AMA. The last few days of my 6-year stint in Ft. Defiance went by in a blur. Final exams, the last parade where all Seniors marched on the parade field as a platoon and when we were dismissed, we threw our hats up in the air. The last formation on the Blacktop immediately after graduation with all of us seniors clutching our Sheepskin Diplomas turned into a confusing rush of emotions where one was thrilled to be free of Academy life, yet torn apart by the reality that our world would never be the same and worse still, we probably would never see the brothers that we had grown up with again.
I cannot recollect another time in my life that I cried, sobbed, hugged and laughed so hard for so long.
AMA was a very important factor in molding me into the person I have been for the last 50 years. How good or bad a person I have been, will be judged by others...
At this stage of my life, I find the challenge of leading our small organization during a time where our ranks are thinning, the world is in chaos, and when tradition and history is shunned by our younger generations is exactly where I want to be.
I invite all AMA Alumni to come back home, visit the Museum, attend Reunion 2022, and rekindle the memories of what was most probably were the most important years of your life!

Team effort!

Douglas W. Pennock
Chairman
AMA Alumni Foundation, Inc.

Alumni Foundation Board Notes

-Spring Festival-

The spring festival was not as well attended as we wished because the weather was cold and rainy. All of the events were moved to the gymnasium and all that attended had a great time. Thank you to all the Alumni and Board members that showed up to help Amy and the staff.

-Noble Legends-

Herb Maher '72 spoke on Hurricane readiness and his time in search and rescue in Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina.

REUNION 2022

September 9 - 11

Honoring classes of:
1947, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982

PLEASE REGISTER NOW!

Many of you have made hotel reservations at our Headquarter Hotel, in fact, we have about used up our room allotment.
There is a large gap between hotel reservations and actual Reunion 2022 registrations. This makes it very difficult for Amy and the Reunion Committee to set up all of the activities in terms of food and beverages.
We would appreciate your prompt cooperation with this matter.

Headquarter Hotel
Hotel 24 South (Stonewall Jackson)

Call 866-880-0024 or 540-885-4848 to make your reservations now and be sure to tell them that you are with the AMA group so that you get the Reunion group rate of $115.00 per night which includes covered parking.

Spring Fling

GUN RAFFLE 2022

It has been customary over the past few years that we raffle a firearm during Reunion Weekend. This has proven to be a terrific fundraiser and very popular with our Alumni. This year's raffle choice, is a Springfield 1903A1. The rifle is in perfect working order and was recently field tested and fired by our Collections Curator, Rich vanBreemen. This rifle is similar to the ones the Roller Rifles carried at all of their performances.

1903 model Springfield bolt-action rifle, caliber .30 (30-06), with reproduction 1907 leather sling. It has a 4 groove barrel which is dated 10-36 with little to no pitting. It is considered to be a "high number" rifle and bolt which eliminate the concern some people may have about early receiver issues.

Total value of the weapon is roughly $1000 and will be considered NRA Very Good - Good condition at auction.

The rifle will have a new leather sling. Also included, are a cleaning kit and manual placed inside the storage area in the butt.

Tickets for a chance to win this Springfield 03 rifle are running out!

Ticket cost are $25.00
or
(5 tickets for $100)

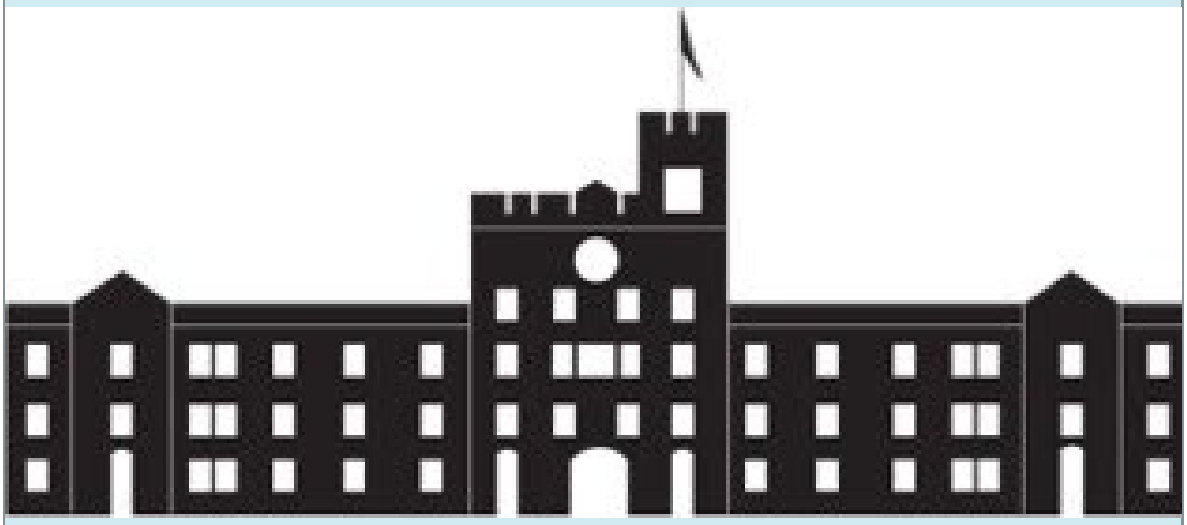
Buy your raffle tickets HERE

As of May 31, 2022, 214 of the available 250 raffle tickets have been sold!

You may also purchase tickets by contacting the Museum at 540-248-3007

The winning raffle number will be drawn at the Saturday evening Reunion event. You do not need to be present to win!

You must be 21 years or older to participate in this raffle.
This raffle is void where prohibited by law.



ATTENTION IN THE BARRACKS!

Augusta Military Academy
Legacy Preservation Corps

Purpose:

To create a committee of descendants and/or friends of Augusta Military Academy Alumni, Faculty and Staff, who are as passionate about the Academy and dedicated to Preserving AMA's Legacy and to:

- Learn the history of our Academy
- Be trained to be an effective docent at the museum
- Keep the memories and stories of AMA alive
- Manage the AMA Alumni Foundation into perpetuity

Expectations:

- Meet regularly
- Develop a structure of management / leadership
- Seek participants
- Assist with financial stability
- Protect and preserve AMA's history, artifacts and legacy

How to get involved:

- Contact AMA's Curator at **amacurator@gmail.com**
- Contact AMA's Museum Director at **museum@amaalumni.org**

The Museum of Augusta Military Academy

PRESENTS ; N O B L E L E G E N D S

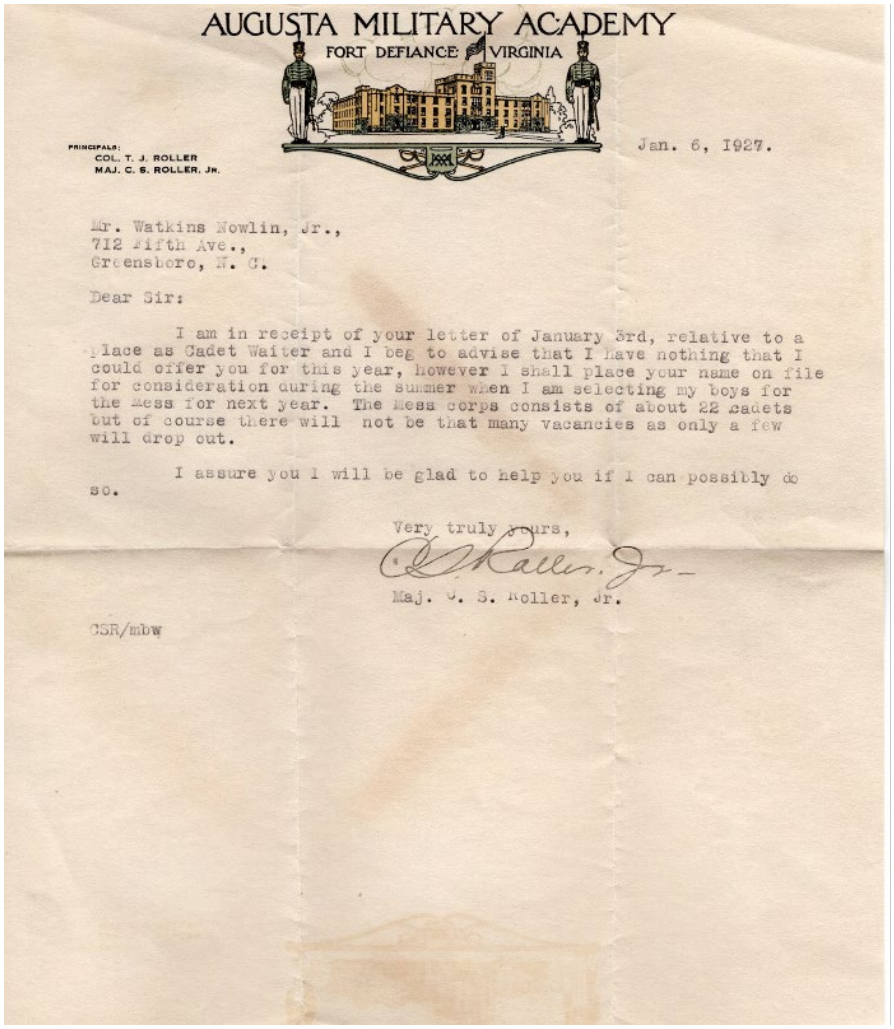
Augusta Military Academy
SNIPPETS FROM OUR ARCHIVES

Editor's Note:
The AMA Museum collection includes thousands of documents that were originally kept in files which were found some years after the school closed. The files were discovered in the barracks basement where the old armory was housed. Over the years, volunteers and Museum staff have gone through most of the old files and all of the documents that were found to be of historical significance were saved and cataloged.
Having read hundreds of these documents myself, I was amazed at how much insight they give regarding the day-to-day life of AMA back in the day before internet, computers, TV and any other means of transferring information rapidly existed.
When I studied the handwritten and typed letters, I realized that our grandparents and great grandparents were vastly more capable of putting together huge amounts of information in a classical, graceful and punctual manner in a single one page letter than most of us are today! This wonderful talent and style has mostly been lost due to what we refer to as "progress".
I hope you enjoy reading these interesting snippets from our schools past.
DWP

Memories from the Filing Cabinet

By: Rich vanBreemen

I couldn't tell you how or why this folder ended up on my desk, but its contents have provided me with an investigative challenge. In the folder are a couple of typed pages from AMA and a number of handwritten letters, all addressed to a "R Watkins Nowlin, Jr." of Greensboro, NC., also known as "Wat". The story begins with this letter and envelope:



AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY
FORT DEFIANCE VIRGINIA

PRINCIPALS:
COL. T. J. ROLLER
MAJ. C. S. ROLLER, Jr.

Jan. 6, 1927.

Mr. Watkins Nowlin, Jr.,
712 Fifth Ave.,
Greensboro, N. C.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your letter of January 3rd, relative to a place as Cadet Waiter and I beg to advise that I have nothing that I could offer you for this year, however I shall place your name on file for consideration during the summer when I am selecting my boys for the Mess for next year. The Mess corps consists of about 22 cadets but of course there will not be that many vacancies as only a few will drop out.

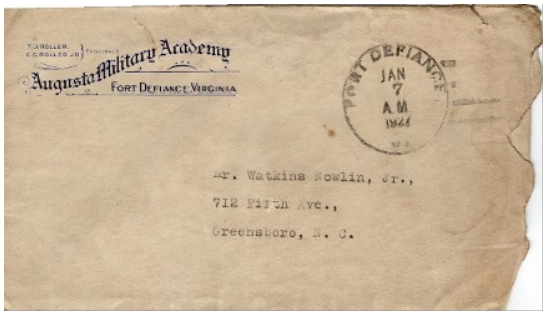
I assure you I will be glad to help you if I can possibly do so.

Very truly yours,

C. S. Roller, Jr.

Maj. C. S. Roller, Jr.

CSR/mbw



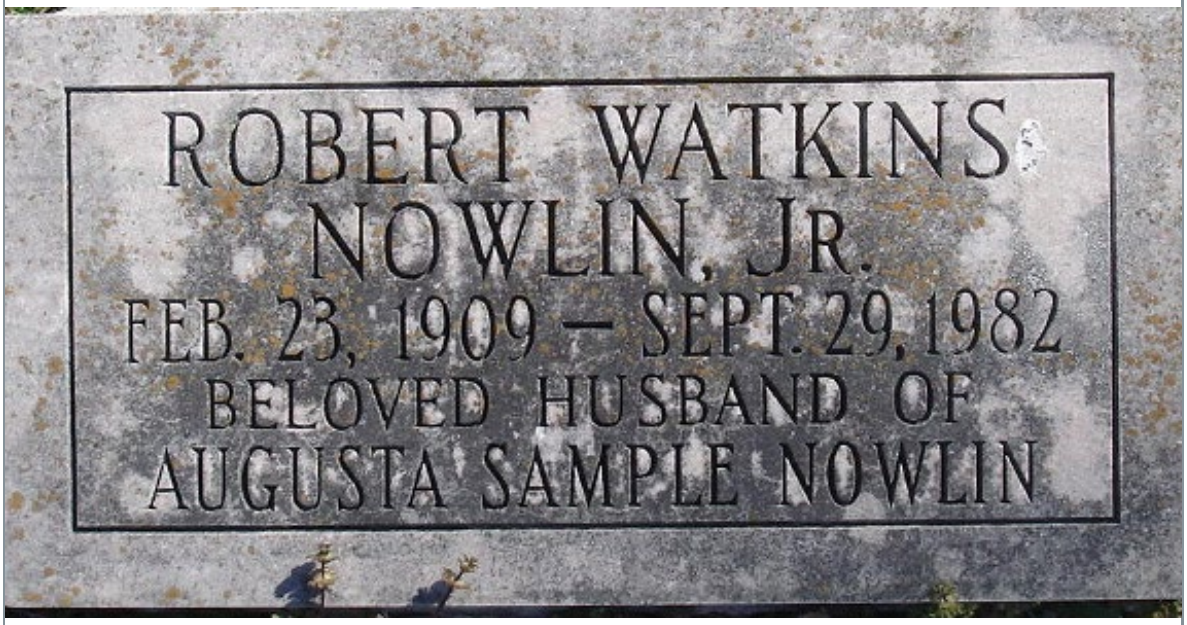
On the surface, this is a generic type of letter from the school to a prospective student (yawn). Chronologically, the next 6 pages are handwritten letters from an “illegible” cadet to “Wat”, talking about how he owes him letters back (which he may have written but we don’t have). Evidence points to this cadet being I.H. Adams, but I haven’t verified that completely. What we can decipher from those letters is that this older apparently childhood friend has been working tirelessly to get “Wat” into AMA. Records indicate that Cadet Nowlin did attend AMA for the 1927-1928 school year. Those records and the RECALL for that year paint a picture of a young man, not overly interested in or excelling at AMA.

Pvt – Quarter Master Co.
Wrestling Squad
Algebra II – 62%
Eng. Lit - 56%
Eng. Comp – 63%
Geography – 66%
Spanish 1 – 65%
Tactics – 86%
Bible – Pass
Demerits - 0

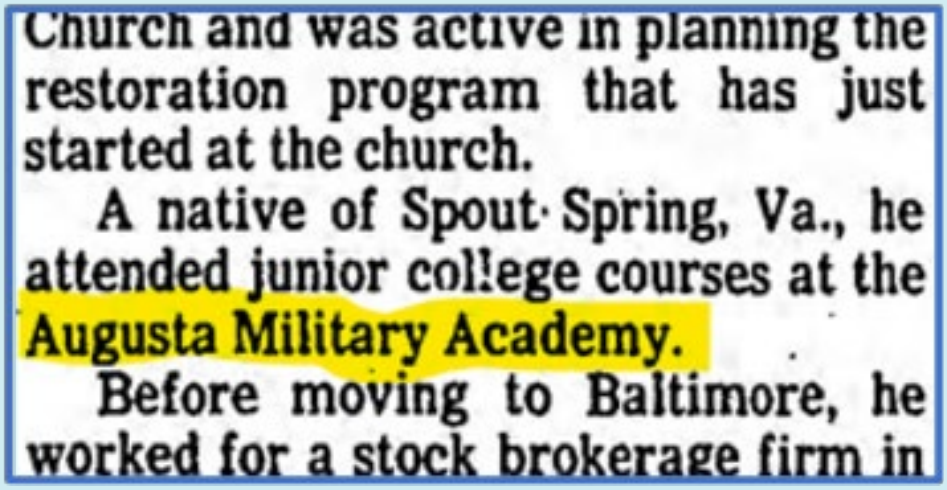
He finishes the school year, never to return. (NOTE: This was also the 6th and final year for CS Roller III at AMA). The final typed letter is from Maj. T.J. Roller to “Wat” letting him know that his application

to be a Cadet Waiter in the 28-29 school year has been received, but based on his previous year's grades, not to get his hopes up.

If it were not for this folder ending up on my desk, for our part, Mr. Nowlin would wallow in obscurity; another one-year cadet who didn't make an impression on anyone here nor did AMA make an impression on him. Our database contained even less information than what I have shared already. He was listed as UNKNOWN, so this was of no help to me. But it is that very lack of information that caused me to dig deeper. Our records said he was born Feb. 23, 1908; I assumed he has since passed so I began with looking for his grave.



Straight away, we find that our records of his birth year are wrong but it at least gives me the day he died and his wife's name. Using that information, I can now dig deeper. I found an obituary in the Baltimore Sun from October 1982 and much to my surprise, it states that he attended Augusta Military Academy! None of his other schooling is mentioned.



Church and was active in planning the restoration program that has just started at the church.

A native of Spout Spring, Va., he attended junior college courses at the Augusta Military Academy.

Before moving to Baltimore, he worked for a stock brokerage firm in

"Wat" was 73 years old when he passed away. I learned that he had worked for the C.G. Murphy stores for 38 years, starting in 1936, moving to Baltimore from NC at that time. There was no mention of military service but his obituary details most of his work experience; the fact that he was a Mason and active in his church. After a lifetime lived, a loving wife and family, a career experienced, somehow one of the few things mentioned in his obituary is AMA. You never know who or what affects people or in what ways.

There is more I would like to find out about Robert Watkins Nowlin, Jr. WHY? Because, like most of us, he is an everyday Joe – nothing heroic, fantastic, extraordinary or even noteworthy – he was just a man living his life. One day our lives will be reduced to a paragraph or two in the local paper – what will it say? What are the things that mean the most to us and have the greatest impact on our lives? Will there be an obscure piece of paper in someone else's filing cabinet that will encourage some other curator to review who you are? Let's hope so.

Rich vanBreemen
AMA Museum Curator

MUSEUM

DOCENT DUTY

THANK YOU!

To those who volunteered in May

Tom Del Valle '73
Bj d'Orsay '70
Brian Miller '67
Victor Gomez '69

FEED THE BARRACKS!!

Please remember that a monthly pledge from everyone that reads this newsletter means that the future of the Museum will be assured.

SET UP YOUR MONTHLY DONATION HERE

Visitors in May

100

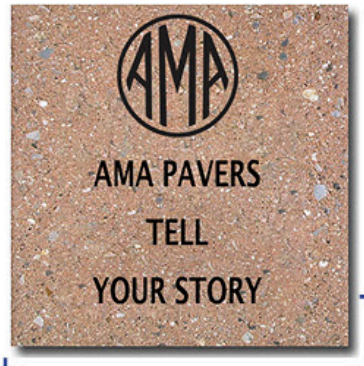
Museum Volunteer's

We really need Volunteer Docents! Please sign up by calling Chris at the museum.

Paver Special!!

If you buy a paver brick between March 1 and April 30, you will receive a 20% discount on the 4" X 8" and the 8" X 8" bricks.

If you order a 8" X 8" brick with the graphic, you will receive a 33% discount!



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

Purchasing a Paver Brick allows you to recognize anyone that had a positive impact on you while attending AMA

All Paver Bricks are placed in a permanent location along the sidewalk running East of the Museum

Visit the Brick virtual map HERE

Please order yours TODAY!

Brick Order Form

SHOP THE PX

THESE ITEMS and MANY MORE

ARE AVAILABLE IN OUR ONLINE STORE,

shop.AMAalumni.org

AMA

New AMA Blanket at the PX

We all remember our AMA blanket. It kept us warm and it was a little bit scratchy. This new version is even warmer and softer than a newborn baby's gluteus maximus!

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?

Doug Pennock's Viewpoint

June 1, 2022

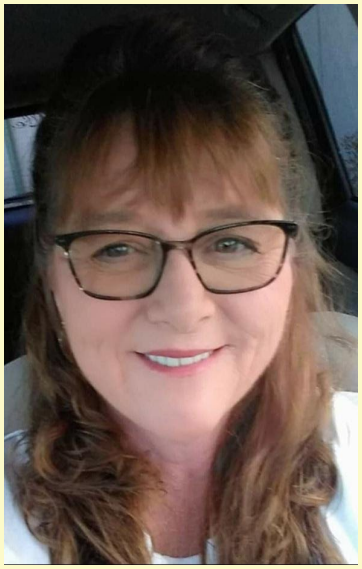
Dear Readers,

June has arrived. And as usual, I brace for Hurricane which will run for the next six months ending November 30.
I have progressed well with my hip rehabilitation and will soon be walking without a cane!
The inevitable came to be in our home yesterday morning when Trudy tested positive for COVID. A few hours later I also tested positive. I knew that eventually we would catch it, as I forecasted more than a year ago. Fortunately, Trudy seems to have gotten a mild case, probably thanks to the 3 shots she has had over the last two years. I only have a scratchy throat, which I am thankful for, hopefully this additional speed-bump in our lives will pass quickly and we will be able to continue our adventures exploring our "new normal" world.
I am very much looking forward to celebrate my 50th anniversary graduating from AMA. More importantly, I hope to meet up with long lost classmates and spend the weekend sharing stories of our years at AMA and catching up on what we have done with our lives the last half century!
So, we are all a bit older, slower, and as in my case, missing organs and now sporting a shiny new titanium hip. BUT… The spirit that lives inside my slightly damaged body, is still the exact same one that drove off the AMA Campus in June of 1972.

As far as I can tell, each and every one of my close AMA friends has been blessed with the same characteristic! Being 18 at heart and having the encyclopedia of knowledge we all carry is pretty cool.
Have a great Summer everyone!

Doug out

Editor's Note:
The following expressions are mine alone. I look forward to your feedback. You may contact me directly at:
chairman.amafoundation@amaalumni.org



From the Administrators Desk

June 1, 2022

Coming through the front door of the museum today, I noticed that a bird has made her nest in our wreath hanging on the door. Trying not to disrupt the nest, or leaving any kind of scent that would deter the mother bird from returning, I was able to see that in the nest are 3 tiny eggs. I thought, what a wonderful thing that is happening here! New life happening right at our front door! If the mother tends to this nest and sits with her eggs, soon, she will have 3 new babies to nurture. However, if she abandons this nest, the eggs will not hatch and they will dry up, and there will be no life to be sustained.

If we take a moment and ponder, We can apply this to AMA. Right now, at this moment we have some exciting things ahead for us. We have made great progress in our efforts of community outreach, and the community is reacting! We just had the Spring Festival, which brought many visitors to the campus, and we conducted tours for over 30 visitors the day of the

festival. Our Noble Legends Speaker Series is gaining traction in its second year. There are some exciting upcoming events in the near future that will only add to the foundation of community outreach we are building. If we nurture these opportunities, and give life sustaining assistance the sky is the limit! If we just continue with the status quo and abandon the effort, then everything dries up, and we fade away.

LET'S STAY ON TOP OF THIS WAVE!

Let us continue the momentum! Be a part of this wonderful thing that is happening right here AT OUR FRONT DOOR! How can you help you ask? **Volunteer.** You do not have to be here for every event or every weekend. Pick an event that fits your calendar. Be a volunteer docent for a weekend, weekday, or just a few hours if you cannot make a full day commitment. Being a volunteer Docent gives you a chance to share your experience as a cadet with our visitors. They love to hear the stories that ONLY YOU, an ALUMNI, can tell! If you don't have extra time to volunteer, you can **Donate**. You can make a donation for a specific event (festivals, speaker series, etc.) or, you can become a monthly contributor. Any amount is greatly appreciated! You can also contribute by donating toward supplies for the museum's items used on a daily basis.

Your participation in any form will help to sustain both the life of the museum and the great story of the history of Augusta Military Academy!

I would like to thank John Arthur '75, BJ d'Orsay '70, Victor Gomez '69, Gordon Metz '68 and grandson Connor, Brian Miller '67 and wife Vicki Miller, Gordon Metz and grandson Connor, Steve Trent, John Arthur, Bj d'Orsay, Brett Thompson '75, Steve Trent '70, Victor Gomez and my best friend, Cyndi Thompson, for your participation and help for the Spring Festival. I would like to also thank Jorge Rovirosa '70 for sponsoring the radio advertisements for the not only the Spring Festival but for the Noble Legends Speaker Series as well.

A special thank you to Herb Maher '73 for his speaker series presentation on Hurricane Readiness and sharing about his search and rescue work in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina for our May speaker series.

I hope you all have a wonderful and safe Memorial Day as we remember and honor all those who chose to serve our great nation and made the ultimate sacrifice for our FREEDOM.
And, I will keep you posted on the progress of little eggs in the nest!

Sincerely,
Amy Hensley
Administrative Director
AMA Alumni Museum

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vanBreemen's Expressions

June 1, 2022

D-DAY

By: Rich vanBreemen

To Americans, June 6, 1944 is forever known as D-Day. But truth be told, prior to June 6th, there had been a number of D-Days in both the European and Pacific theaters of operation. The term, used in planning, refers to the DAY of a military operation, since the actual date was both a secret and possibly unknown. An accompanying term is H-HOUR referring to the time the operation launches. However, since June 6th was such a momentous event, other operations conducted afterwards used a different term so as not to be confused with the Normandy Invasion.

Most of us have seen the movie, "The Longest Day" based on the book by Cornelius Ryan. The iconic helmet in the water, the deep resonating sound of the bass drum "dah, dah, dah, dooooom" {footnote – that is also the Morse Code for the letter V for VICTORY – no kidding}. Purposely shot in Black & White so that it would more resemble the newsreels of the war, it brought home that epic story for numerous generations of Americans. From beginning to end, the film is flush with Hollywood stars and eccentric tales of the Normandy Invasion. I'm certainly a fan - I've probably seen it more times than I have fingers and toes.

Yet, despite the great movie and the myriad of other films and books about that day, there is a lot about the D-Day we don't now or will ever know. The facts and figures are out there for all to find; 5 beaches, 156,000 Allied soldiers and 195,700 Allied naval personnel. Over 4000 confirmed dead and over 10,000 other Allied casualties on that day. One of those was Lt. Col. Hubert Mathews of the 1st Infantry Division – AMA class of 1927. He was the highest-ranking officer of the BIG RED ONE to die that day, raked with machine gun fire as the ramp of his LCVP was dropped. We have a tribute to him in the museum; there are several articles about him in past Bayonets. Certainly, a noteworthy subject and one to be remembered on D-Day as well this past Memorial Day.

But there are other stories, ones we never hear about or are even aware of. I read an obituary for an AMA Alum and buried deep in the notice was mention that he had been a chaplain in the Army on D-Day and had ministered to the dead and dying on the beach. As I read that, I wondered if he had said words over the body of Col Mathews or if he recognized him from AMA. We'll never know, we can only imagine.

As I sat down to write this article, I wanted to share that story. The details of Col Mathews, his time at school, his military record and his tragic death are all readily available. However, as it had been several weeks since I read that obituary, I was unable to conjure up the chaplain's name. I searched my emails, because I knew I had shared that story with others, but came up empty. I scoured past Bayonets and ran numerous queries in our database; NADA. It was as if the cosmos wanted his deeds to go unrecognized. So, for the moment, he remains a mystery. I will uncover his name and I will make sure that his story is known, because it is important for us to remember.

And that, my friends, is the point of this article. Everyone has a story, some great, some small, but all worth mention. Its more than a shame, it's a travesty that we are only made aware of the ones that involve death or some type of "heroic" exploit. The dead are immortalized in bronze on our museum walls, but the countless others who have a story to be told are unaccounted for. Those of us in the museum who spend countless hours digging through the archives and speaking with alum and family, strive to collect and preserve these stories as best we can. There are so many more to be collected and so little time left to do so. I urge you to get your story

written down and shared with us at the museum. You may think you didn't do anything noteworthy, but you are mistaken. Everyone's story has value and we want to know them all.

The story of D-Day is legend and it is at this time of year we focus our attention on the stories of those who won, lost or sacrificed. But don't confuse that with the idea that it is the ONLY story. They all have merit.

Rich vanBreemen
Museum Curator

NEW

The 2022 SPRING BAYONET

READ HERE

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

This issue of the AMA Museum Newsletter was sponsored by
The 2021 Reunion Committee

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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