ALUMNI WEEKEND 2023

September 7-9

Visit our Website

Ad Astra Per Aspera

MUSEUM OF AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

September - 2023

Big Barracks
Foto credit: Malcolm "Flyboy" Andrews

Chairman's Note

September 1, 2023

Dear Alumni and friends,

Let me begin by expressing my sincerest appreciation to this years Reunion Sponsors. We would not be able to make this reunion work without your financial support!

When you open this edition of the Museum Newsletter, we will be one week away from the commencement of our annual Alumni reunion.
We are happy with this year's attendance numbers, but hopefully many more of you will decide to join us at the last minute!
We have a nice and relaxing weekend planned so that there will be plenty of time for old friends to catch up, and hopefully make new friends. The four meals that we are planning at Friday Banquet, Saturday breakfast, Saturday lunch and Saturday dinner, should meet or surpass everyone's expectations.
There are slots available for golf and Sporting Clays. Also, do not miss the opportunity to join the group that is going to Dynamic Aviation at nearby Mt. Crawford. You will have the opportunity to see a beautiful Lockheed Constellation that is currently going through a full restoration. This airplane is the first to be designated Air Force One and was used by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Plus, there are many other fascinating historical aircraft to see while you're there.

Watch a short video on the restoration

Contact Amy at the Museum **Museum@AMAalumni.org** if you are interested in signing up for one of these events. If you are interested in joining the Dynamic Aviation tour, you must give Amy your name no later than Wednesday September September 6, 2023 in order to comply with their security protocol.
Our hospitality room will be available to everyone beginning early Thursday afternoon and will be open most of the time thought the weekend until 0000 hrs.
All of us on the AMA Alumni Foundation Board are looking forward to seeing everyone next week!

Team effort.

Douglas W. Pennock
Chairman
AMA Alumni Foundation, Inc.

Museum visitors highlights for August

Captions by Chris Correa

John J. Douglas ’69 was here on August 25th while passing through the

Cadet Douglas '69

area. After AMA, John studied business administration at East Carolina University.

Eugene E. Humphreys ’54 visited on August 8. Long before and after his year as a cadet and Cadet Waiter, Eugene’s parents, Ollie and Marie, were the academy bakers for Captain Fontaine (a “jolly” man who “ran a tight ship”) and then Captain Peduto.

Cadet Humphreys '54

(left to right) Andrew, Ricardo, and Juan, all from coastal Virginia, spent several nights in the gym basement for the UPCI's Spanish Camp, one of several summer camps the church holds on campus. These middle-schoolers were fascinated by the barracks, made PX purchases, AND donated their change. As you can see, Ricardo went a step further, meticulously customizing an AMA decal for his phone. These are three intelligent gentlemen whom we hope to see again next year.

Steven Zwicker '84 brought wife Heather and son Caleb to the museum on August 13 and recalled his experience of the school closing in the middle of the year. He later joined the Air Force, attaining the rank of lieutenant colonel by 2004.

Attention in the Barracks!

If you are attending Reunion 2023, and if you are a member of the "Ad Astra" society and or a recipient of the the AMA Alumni Medal, please remember to wear your pin or medal and display it on your jacket at the Friday evening Banquet or any time during the reunion. Thank you.

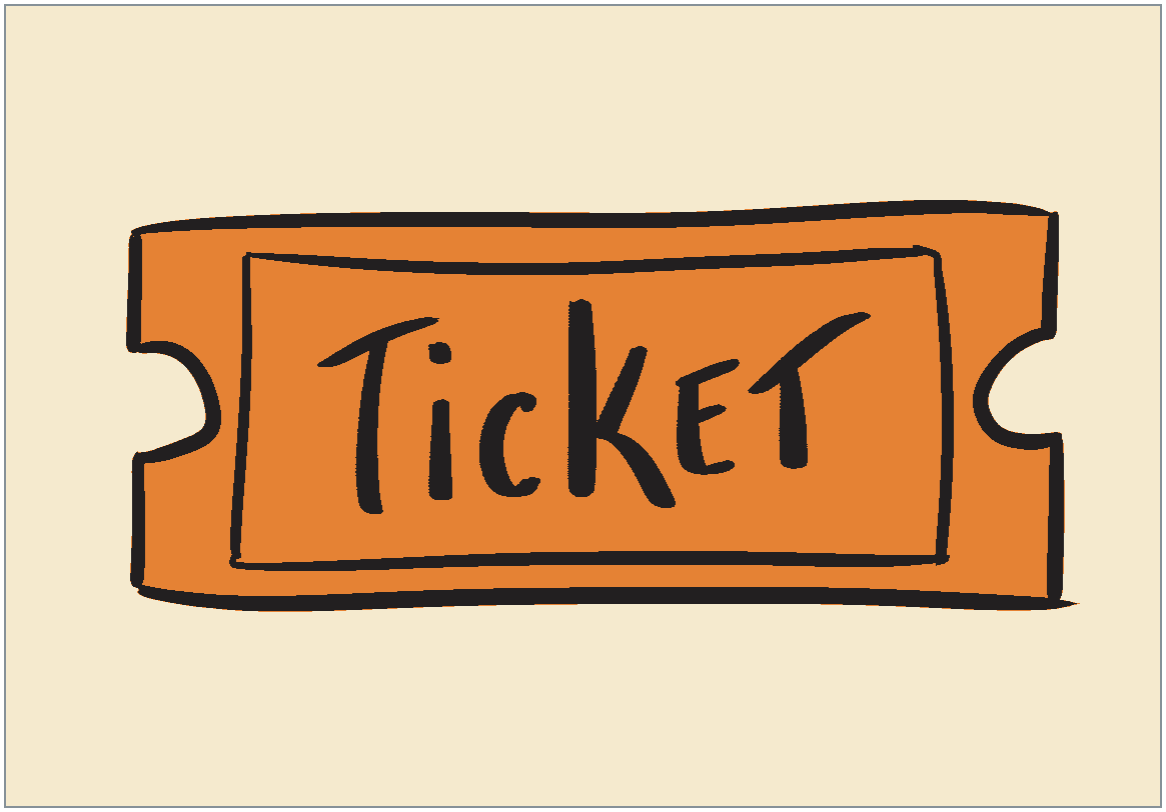
This year, our Sports Hall of Fame Inductees are:

- William J. Lane '42: Basketball & Baseball
- Watson *Hill Ellett '63; Football, Basketball, Baseball & Track*
- *Bruce Reyngoudt '70: Football & Lacrosse*
- 1972 Lacrosse Team

Each inductee will be recognized at the Saturday lunch at the September reunion.

Congratulations to everyone that was selected!

Rifle Raffle 2023


Ticket

Springfield 1903

Ø Springfield 1903 rifle. Caliber 30/06
Ø Serial Number 838XXX
Ø Manufactured in 1918. "High Number" rifle.
Ø Swept back bolt, that post production, had a serial number engraved on the body. Number does not match rifle SN.
Ø Stock is military with no cracks or defects other than normal wear. No proof marks.
Ø Rifle has not been customized or sporterized.
Ø Rifle has been examined by a gunsmith and test fired – deemed safe and fully functional.

The value of this weapon is roughly $1,800 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.

Use the form on our website to purchase your chances to win.

(https://amaalumni.org/spring-2023-raffle/)

The cost is $25 per chance per item, or five chances for $100. On the form, if you so choose, you can add an additional amount to help us cover the cost of the payment processing fee. There is no limit on the number of chances you may purchase.

Checkout is through PayPal. It may take a minute or two for the transfer to the PayPal page. Be patient and do not close your browser while waiting. There is an option to use a credit card once you get to the PayPal site. If you'd prefer to pay the museum directly, simple close your browser once you reach the PayPal Site. Print your email purchase confirmation and send that and your check to the museum.

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

ALUMNI Reunion 2023

Sharing Past Memories.... Making New Ones

September 7-9 2023

ONLY 1 WEEK TO GO!!

It's not too late to register!

REGISTER HERE

Reunion Committee Co-Chairs Herb Maher and Lee Ramsey along with perennial Alumni Reunion planner Steve Trent, are hard at work to make this year's reunion even more memorable than last year's. We will continue to focus on offering everyone outstanding food and lots of low stress time to give everyone the opportunity to relax and enjoy catching up with old friends.

Reunion 2023 Headquarters Hotel will again be the Hotel 24 South in Staunton (Stonewall Jackson). The special AMA Reunion 2023 rate will be $123.00 per night plus taxes. The hotel rate includes parking.

All reunion events with the exception of Saturday lunch and the Dynamic Aviation tour will be held at the hotel. To reserve a room, call the hotel directly at 540-885-4848 and make sure that you ask for the AMA Reunion rate..

Honoring the Classes of:

1943, 1948,1953, 1958, 1963, 1968, 1973, 1978, 1983

2023 AMA Reunion
Hotel 24 South
September 7th, 8th & 9th, 2023

Thursday, September 7th

9:00 am – 12:00 pm AMA Foundation Board meeting
@Blueridge Room - Hotel 24

10:00 am – 4:00 pm AMA Museum open

Open at 1:00 pm Hospitality Suite
@Skyline Room - Hotel 24

5:00 pm – 8:00 pm Registration & appetizers
@Skyline Room - Hotel 24

Closes at Midnight Hospitality Suite - Hotel 24

Friday, September 8th

BREAKFAST ON YOUR OWN!

8:00 am – 12:00 pm Golf - *"Ingleside Golf Course"*

10:00am – 4:00pm **Registration open**
@Shenandoah Ballroom - Hotel 24

10:00 am – 4:00 pm AMA Museum open

10:00 am – 2:00 pm Sporting Clays – *"Flying Rabbit*
Sporting Clays"

10:00 am – 12:00 pm *"Dynamic Aviation"* Tour
Group will depart AMA Museum @ 9:30 am
*Note: There will be no transportation provided to Dynamic Aviation

Open at 1:00 pm Hospitality Suite
@Skyline room - Hotel 24

LUNCH ON YOUR OWN!

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm Registration Open
@Shenandoah Ballroom - Hotel 24 South

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm Cocktails
@Shenandoah Ballroom - Hotel 24

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm Banquet
@Shenandoah Ballroom - Hotel 24
** Scholarship awardees presented
** Alumni Medals presentation

Closes at Midnight Hospitality Suite - Hotel 24

Saturday, September 9th

8:00 am – 9:00 am Breakfast

@Shenandoah Ballroom - Hotel 24

9:00 am – 10:00 am Annual membership meeting
@Shenandoah Ballroom - Hotel 24

10:00 am – 4:00 pm AMA Museum open

11:00 am – 11:30 am "Founders Day" Ceremony
@Augusta Stone Church Cemetery

12:00 pm – 2:00 pm "Mission Barbecue" Lunch
@ AMA Memorial Gym
***Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm Tour of "the Fort" (the old post office)
****All AMA Alumni welcome to this "Open House"

Open at 3:00 pm Hospitality Suite
@Skyline Room - Hotel 24

2:00 pm – 6:00 pm Fellowship time
"You're on your own!"

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm Registration Open
@Shenandoah Ballroom – Hotel 24

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm Cocktails
@Shenandoah Ballroom - Hotel 24

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm Dinner
@Shenandoah Ballroom - Hotel 24
*****Raffles will be selected

Closes at Midnight Hospitality Suite

List of registered Alumni and guests

Dr. Larry Reed '69 and Geri Reed
Jeff Wenzel '70
Marc Aronson '68
Jorge Rovirosa '70 and Kiki Rovirosa
Garry Granger '71 and Becky Granger
Larry Nicholson '75 and Deborah Nicholson
Herb Maher '72-73 and Anne Maher
Phil Bentley '83
Doug Pennock '72 and Trudy Pennock
Tom Del Valle '73
Doug Driscoll '72 and Anita Driscoll
Don Studer (faculty)69-84
Luis Marien '73
Ainsley Bloomfield
Willie (Lee) Ramsey '73 and Karen Ramsey
Brett Thompson '75
Susan Lambert Yates SH '73
James A. Johnson (Jim) '70
Bob Adams '63
Mike Payne '76
Brian Hart '63 and Sue Hart
Karl Haleamau '71
David Brown '73 and Sarah Brown
BJ d'Orsay '70
Jim (Mitch) Mitchell '76 and Krista
Mike Kidd '72

Steve Trent '70
Victor Gomez '69 and Evelyn Gomez
Steve Casey '75-76 and Brenda Casey
Thomas White III '77 and Debbie White
George Mineff '77
Lee Lewis '77
James Rochelle '68
Albert Smith`66
Dr. Richard Whitaker `72, Anna Whitaker, Henriette Verdonk
Mal Livick Jr`75
Col William E. Lane (USA, RET) '68, Mrs. Mindy Lane, Mr. Calvin Lane, Mrs. Beth Lane
Gary Cripps '71
Henry Gutshall (Scholarship recipient), Josh Gutshall, V
Howard Rosenthal`68, Ruth Rosenthal
Jeff Clark`73, Nancy Clark
Lenny Pannell `68, Trudy Pannell
Rick Ellett '72, Nancy Ellett
Bud Oakey '70, Daphne Berkowitz
John Arthur '75,
Jeff Schroeder '67, Claire Schroeder
Marina Jeirles (Scholarship recipient), Shannon Jeirles
Teresa Vetick (wife of Chris Vetick `77), Chelsa Vetick, Kevin Kurdziolek
Greg Duran '73, Sandy Duran
Carl Kellog '73
Herb Housmann '58 Carol Hausmann
Gordon Metz '68 Brenda Metz

VIP Guests

The Honorable Chris Runion, Member, Virginia House of Delegates, and his wife, Jennifer
The Honorable John Avoli, Member, Virginia House of Delegates and his wife Lynn
The Honorable Ellen Campbell, Member, Virginia House of Delegates
The Honorable Jeffery Slaven, Vice Chair, Augusta County Board of Supervisors, and his wife Dana
Julie Hensley, Project Director, Augusta County Economic Development

A Letter From the "Other" Doug

For decades I didn't give AMA's annual alumni reunion much of a thought. Up until three years ago, I had attended just two of them, the last one in 2012, the year my lifelong friend and Band Company classmate Al Samuels passed, after which I pretty much lost interest. I was recently reminded that I once scolded Lewie Kennett by email or letter (I can't remember which) for trying to persuade his 1972 classmates, myself included, to attend a reunion. Apparently I told him that some of us lived too far away and were far too busy with real life issues to make time for a reunion year after year, or words to that effect.

Which was true in a way. Then. Distance was a real issue. A year after graduating from AMA I found myself back on the West Coast. You could call them lost years – fun, interesting in a lot of

ways, but not very productive, unless you consider becoming really familiar with the Grateful Dead a worthwhile use of one's time. At any rate, a couple of years later I returned to Virginia, fully intending to spend the rest of my life there.

That didn't go as planned. I wanted to get into the newspaper business, but UVA and W&L weren't having me, so after one year at Roanoke College Doc Savedge persuaded me to transfer to Ball State in Muncie, Indiana, where I got married, landed a newspaper job, had a couple of kids, got a job and found myself stuck in the land of Bobby Knight, Larry Bird, Dan Quayle and Mike Pence.

While I was busy with kids, a career and making ends meet, AMA was pretty much an afterthought, like a brother or sister who lives a long way away and whom you haven't seen in decades.

Then in 2021, my kids grown with lives of their own, my newspaper career in the rear view mirror and a good number of my Indiana friends passed on to the next world, something happened. I met up with Larry Reed for the first time in decades. Larry, my platoon leader in Band Company during my new cadet year, had been something of a mentor to me both at AMA and during that year at W&L that I don't like to talk about. We'd touched base rarely over 40 or so years, but now that his medical career had landed him in Indiana, we and our wives met for dinner.

As it happened, he had recently been to *his* first reunion in many years, and he described the experience of hooking up with old friends and making new ones as really rewarding and something

he fully intended to do again. So I bit, and we made plans to drive from Indianapolis to Fort Defiance later that year.

Larry had described the experience accurately. It was an absolute blast. Both Larry and I returned last year, wives in tow, and all four of us will be there this year and, most likely, the year after that and the year after that and so on.

Here's the thing. By definition, we AMA cadets are or are fast becoming old men. Most if not all of us have lost people along the way – friends, co-workers, family members, even in some cases kids. In my case, at least, getting reacquainted with fellow cadets after all those decades has filled some of the void left by the passing of so many loved ones and friends. I've rekindled old friendships and made a lot of new ones, and I can't begin to describe how much I look forward to seeing these guys each year … even Trent.

For years when I lived on a lake and had little money and less time, I spent many a Friday and Saturday night in my neighbor's garage with a bunch of guys drinking beer, listening to old country music, swapping lies and throwing darts. Today, every one of those old friends has passed on, and we've moved away from the lake. So, while those times were no more productive that my days of following the Dead around, they're memories I'll always cherish.

No matter what our experience at AMA was like, whether we were there for one year or as many years as Pennock was, there's a fraternal bond we all share. As time and the important people in our lives slip away from us, that bond becomes ever more meaningful. If you've been to a recent reunion or two, you know

what I'm talking about. If you haven't, I firmly believe that you'll find the experience just as rewarding as I did.

If you're reading this, it may be too late for you to break whatever commitments you have and get to the 2023 reunion next week. If you can, great, but if not, maybe you could consider helping out in other ways and helping to ensure that these reunions can be held in future years. You can help out by becoming an event sponsor by contacting Amy Hensley at **Museum@AMAalumni.org** or by making a contribution to the AMA Alumni Foundation at: **www.amaalumni.org/donate**

Let's keep this thing going for as long as we can!

Doug Driscoll '72 - Band Company

REUNION SPONSORS STILL NEEDED!

Individual sponsorships are the reason that we have excellent events and meals at our annual get together. The 2021 and 2022 Alumni Reunion were so successful because so many of you generously sponsored part or an entire venue.
Many Alumni have been very generous again this year by sponsoring our various events. But we are still a

little behind on sponsorships pledges this year. So if you can, please help us out.
Contact Amy at the museum or go to the AMA Webpage donate page at:
DONATE

A huge thank you to the following Alumni and friends that have donated towards a sponsorship so far this year!

Diamond

Jeff Schroeder

Platinum

Tom Del Valle

Gold

John Arthur
Jorge Rovirosa
Lee Ramsey
Gary Cripps
Doug Pennock
Steve Trent

Silver

Bill Mcvey

Jeff Wenzel

Doug Driscoll

Bronze

Brian Miller

Luke Snyder

Charlie Pascale

Jame Johnson

Ainsley Bloomfield

Amy Hensley

GET IN THE NFL FOOTBALL SPIRIT!

Tom Del Valle has donated this Dallas Cowboy memorabilia to be auctioned off exclusively to AMA Alumni and Friends at Reunion 2023. All proceeds will be added to the Reunion sponsorship tally.

The first item is a brand new out of the box official Dallas Cowboy Helmet. Minimum bid $600.00

The second item is a replica helmet that was worn by Dallas Cowboy players during a game honoring the Military Services. Minimum bid $450.00

The third item is a limited edition autographed (#13 of 20) of Micah Parsons. Minimum bid $1,100.00

All of these items will be on display Thursday, Friday and Saturday at Reunion. There will be a silent auction sheet with each item so you may bid on any or all of them.

If the minimum bid is not reached by the Saturday evening dinner, the items will be offered to the general public on eBay the week after reunion.

As we mentioned before, all proceeds will go to the Reunion 2023 sponsorship tally.

COWBOYS

Official NFL Dallas Cowboy Helmet

Minimum Bid $600.00

DAL

Replica Dallas Cowboy game helmet (Green)
Minimum Bid $450.00

HM
The Highland Mint
HM
The Highland Mint
Certificate of Authenticity
MICAH PARSONS
COWBOYS
LINEBACKER
AUTOGRAPHED PHOTO MINT
Limited Edition 20
13
DALLAS COWBOYS
EST. 1960
HM
THE HIGHLAND MINT
HM
THE HIGHLAND MINT

Limited edition autographed Micah Parsons picture
Minimum Bid $1,100.00

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

MUSEUM DOCENT DUTY

THANK YOU!

To those who volunteered in August

Brian Miller '67
Victor Gomez '69
Susan Yates '73 (Stuart Hall)

Visitors in August

185

Busiest month since August 2016!

Museum Volunteer

***B*e a Volunteer Docent for a weekend...**

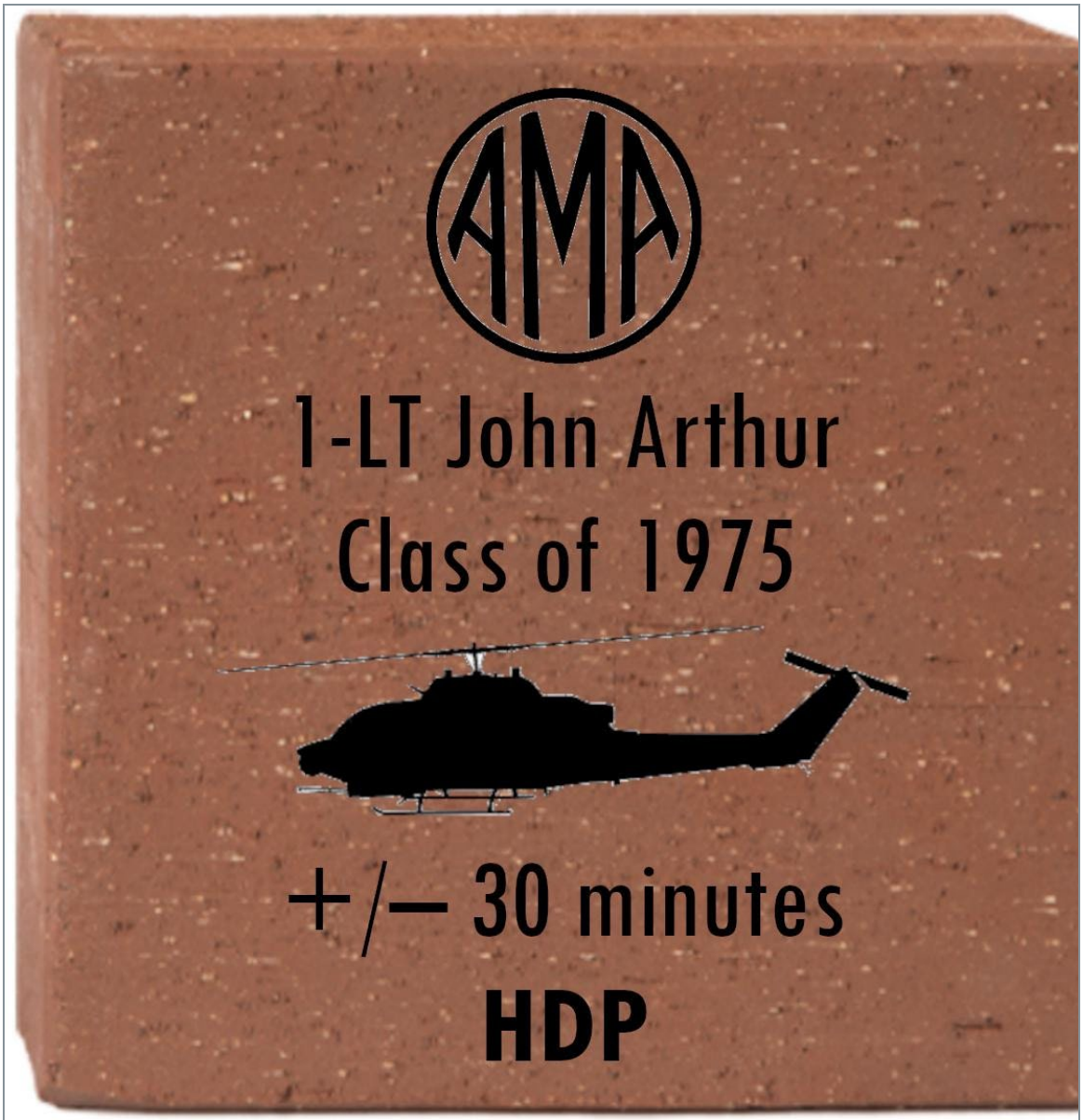
Purchasing a Paver Brick allows you to recognize anyone you knew while attending AMA

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 at the PX

Important Notice!

The AMA Alumni Foundation would like to clarify that all of the profits of the merchandise

that is sold through our Museum PX store, the official AMA Facebook page or the AMA webpage, go exclusively to help offset Museum operation costs.

AMA branded merchandise that is sold outside the Museum PX store, an unsanctioned Facebook page or unsanctioned eBay account has no connection or benefit to the AMA Alumni Foundation, Inc. or the AMA Alumni Museum.

AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY

AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY

AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY

Augusta Military Academy

AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY
AD ASTRA PER ASPERA
1865

17 oz. Mug

Only $12.00 plus tax and shipping

Just arrived to the PX!

Beautiful Wendell August Forge metal serving tray

$50.00

(Limited quantity)

THE PX ONLINE STORE IS NOW OPEN!

SUMMER SALE!!!!

All AMA branded merchandise will be sold at a *20% discount for August 2023

**The 20% discount does not apply to the Wendell August Forge Serving Tray

Doug Pennock's Viewpoint

September 1, 2023

Dear Readers,

As we begin the arduous process of digitizing all of our paper documents at the Museum, every once in a while, Bj. d'Orsay or Rich van Breemen will email me a sample of what they are preserving.
Recently, Rich sent me a scan of the *October 1911 Bayonet and I decided to read it on the spot. Not surprisingly, the same impression that goes through my head when I read old correspondence from Charles "Big Boy" Roller to a former cadet, or a cadet's parents, came to me once again. I am always struck by the difference in grammar, tone and style of the writing in those days. How things were communicated in writing 75 and 100 plus years ago is so much superior to what is written on paper or a computer today.
When I began reading this publication of that particular Bayonet, I read Editor in-Chief Cadet F.W. Morrasy Jr. commentary apologizing to his readers by saying "Apologies if this issue was a disappointment to you and ourselves" apparently he had inherited a brand new staff and he had only one week to prepare and print this first issue of the new school year. To be honest, I found it to be a terrific read!
I wish that journalists today, who are aided by computer generated word processors which have a built-in spell and grammar checker along with a Thesaurus and voice recognition software, could write half as well as Cadet Morrasy did over 112 years ago!

I am an amateur writer who is somewhat mediocre at this craft. Yet I am inspired by people that have the ability to transform a series of words into a message that one can follow, enjoy, visualize and comprehend with ease.

We have all been told numerous times that in the early years of AMA, the quality of education was excellent. Examining how AMA Cadets wrote at the beginning of the last century, confirms that this is an accurate assessment.

Today, many top and "Elite" Prep Schools, claim to offer an excellent and rigorous academic program. I beg to differ. When you compare the magical written compositions that were commonplace at AMA and in America back then, to today's unsatisfactory use of Shakespeare's tongue, it is clear that something distressing has happened in our schools to allay the ability of our youth to compose a well written sentence.

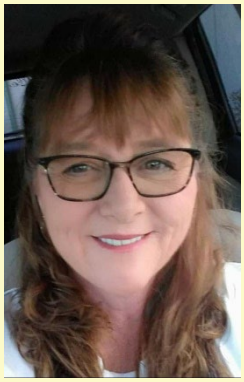
Doug Out

*You can check out the October 1911 Bayonet at the last page of the Newsletter.

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

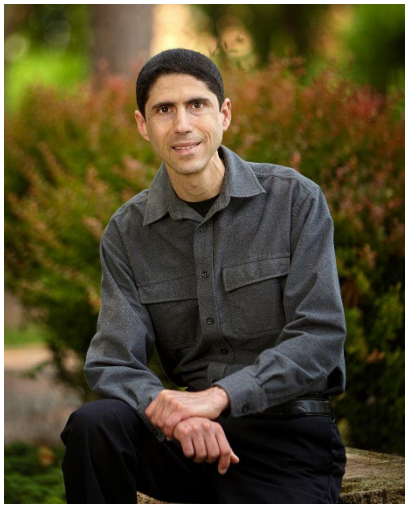
September 1, 2023

As I work with the reunion committee in making all the final preparations for next weekend, I am getting excited about seeing all of you! As I go over the registration list, I am so happy to see so many of you making your way back to AMA and saddened as well for those who cannot be with us this year. I can only imagine the memories that flood over you when you drive through the gate and make your way up the lane. For those of you who can attend reunion this year, I hope that you will enjoy, relax and spend some precious time with those you haven't seen in a while. For those of you who are not able to attend this year and would like to send a message to your old friends, please feel free to email me and I will make sure I deliver your sentiments. My email address is

museum@amaalumni.org

I wish you all safe travels and look forward to seeing you soon!

Amy Hensley
Museum Administrator



Notes on Museum Tours

by Chris Correa, Museum Volunteer Coordinator

September 1, 2023

I want to tell you about a Roller whom none of us knew. He wasn't a Big Boy, a Colonel, or a Professor. His grave isn't honored on Founder's Day, because he lies in the hidden "Old Stone Church Cemetery" across the road, but he deserves our appreciation.

Granted, there's a dilemma in talking about the Rollers. They started and sustained the school, and it was family property for over 104 years. Their lives and personalities shaped the course of the school's history. Still, they were just a few of the thousands of cadets, faculty, and staff that are the AMA story, so I try not to dwell too narrowly on the Roller storyline nor so long in the deep past.

I'm doing it here, because I doubt this Roller ever got his due. Duke Fancher '58 **mentions him** only as a farmer, merchant, and postmaster in Mount Sidney, but Duke doesn't cite his source, and I thought the trail ended there. Then I noticed a history book Don Studer donated long ago, *My Augusta: A Spot of Earth Not a Woman*, by C.E. May, and I learned how much this Roller matters.

Jacob Roller was the Professor's father. He was born in Rockingham County in 1809 but moved south to marry the wealthy Margaret Hyde. I don't how much her money helped, but he was able to buy 3 lots in Mt. Sidney, including his home on the valley pike, plus another 3 adjacent to town.

Altogether, Jacob had some decent acreage and did okay, but it appears he still wanted a different life for his son. We have no statement from him saying so, but why else would he send Charles to two prep schools and then law studies at UVa only for him to inherit the farm?

Local historian and friend of the museum, Evan Knappenberger, says that Jacob worked for Jed Hotchkis at his school. Since Jacob was already farming, it's plausible that this additional labor was in trade for his sons' education.

However he enabled it, Jacob had a plan. He gave Charles extraordinary opportunities for a farmer's son, an education that would send Charles off the farm to a new level of success. Jacob sacrificed for his son and was soon to be the proud father of a lawyer.

AMA existed, because Jacob's plan failed. Charles never returned to Charlottesville. He came home after the war to teach in a little

schoolhouse at the family church. Now, Charles was the one sacrificing, passing up potential wealth and status to give the same extraordinary opportunities that he'd received, and he gave it to boys like him. The sons of farmers, ranchers, and craftsmen, lacking the cash for more patrician prep schools, could access the same education by what they made, grew, or raised.

Jacob gained nothing. May writes that, by the end of the war, Roller was widowed and financially ruined. He married again to a woman who insisted on *what's mine is mine, and what's yours is mine too*. At his death in 1884, his estate totaled $58.50, but he was in debt to his sons by over $300.

Despite all Jacob lost, I hope he was proud of what he'd given Charles. I hope he recognized that his chief legacy was his son's fledgling academy down the road. Even if not a plank of it went up with Jacob's money, his vision and sacrifice for Charles would culminate in AMA's life-changing education for thousands of boys. Jacob didn't live to see its greatness, but having learned about his goodness, I want you and our visitors to know it too. Thanks for reading.
Chris

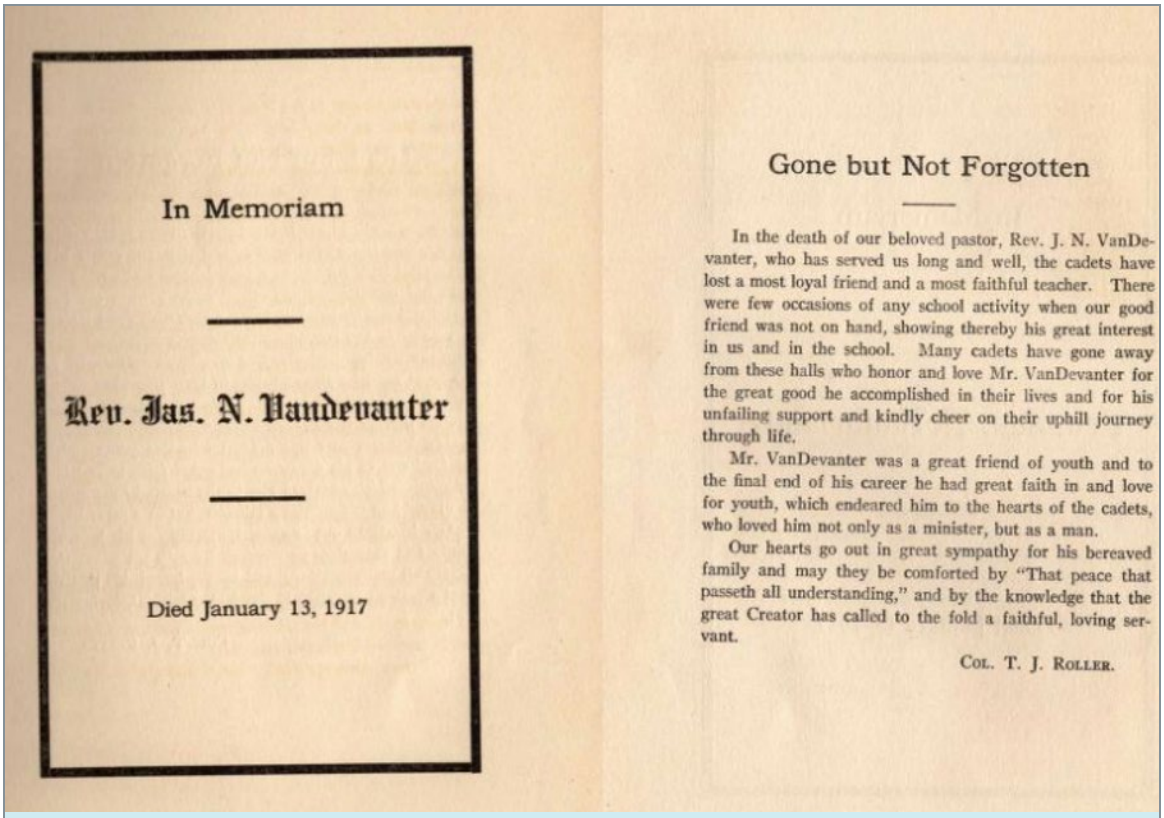
vanBreemen's Expressions

September 1, 2023

Gone but Not Forgotten

by: Rich vanBreemen

Those words jumped off the screen at me as I digitized the January 1917 edition of THE BAYONET. How often have we seen or even uttered those words. Almost always used in the form of a compliment, the speaker (or writer) is implying that the subject of the utterance was held in high esteem and will be sorely missed. That their influence and companionship will be forever in our hearts and thoughts. This was the meaning of Col. T.J. Roller's tribute to Rev. J.N. vanDevanter.



In Memoriam

Rev. Jas. N. Vandevanter

Died January 13, 1917

Gone but Not Forgotten

In the death of our beloved pastor, Rev. J. N. VanDevanter, who has served us long and well, the cadets have lost a most loyal friend and a most faithful teacher. There were few occasions of any school activity when our good friend was not on hand, showing thereby his great interest in us and in the school. Many cadets have gone away from these halls who honor and love Mr. VanDevanter for the great good he accomplished in their lives and for his unfailing support and kindly cheer on their uphill journey through life.

Mr. VanDevanter was a great friend of youth and to the final end of his career he had great faith in and love for youth, which endeared him to the hearts of the cadets, who loved him not only as a minister, but as a man.

Our hearts go out in great sympathy for his bereaved family and may they be comforted by "That peace that passeth all understanding," and by the knowledge that the great Creator has called to the fold a faithful, loving servant.

COL. T. J. ROLLER.

WAIT……. WHAT????? Who was J.N. vanDevanter and why did Colonel Tom think so highly of him. Secondly, why do we care? Those were the thoughts that buzzed through my pea sized brain. Well, here I go again. We had some information on the man in our database and there is a lot more out there. Reverend James N. vanDevanter was born in 1857 and graduated from Hampden-Sidney College then from Union Theological Seminary. He eventually wound up as the pastor of the Augusta Old Stone Church in 1883, faithfully fulfilling that role for 26 years. That would mean he was there when Professor Charles Roller was just getting the Augusta Men's Academy off the ground and its transition into the Augusta Military Academy. Retiring from his role as Pastor in 1909 (just 2 years after Professor Roller's own death), Reverend vanDevanter died suddenly at home in 1917.

The good Reverend is noted for being a strong influence on the Academy's students and was a staunch supporter of the athletic department, attending most home games. Although not an official AMA staff or faculty member, within the small Ft. Defiance community, he was certainly a man of great influence. He would have been ministering during the time that Thomas and Charles Roller were students at AMA themselves.

The Reverend is but one example from hundreds, of an individual worth remembering – alas, he was forgotten. No blame is being cast; how could ANY of you have known about him? Pretty much anyone who did know the Reverend was gone by the time you came through here. But what about Elliott M. Braxton III? You OUGHT to know him! Each of you have seen his name, you saluted him, you remembered him in ceremony.

Elliott M. Braxton III, AMA class of 1913 was killed in action on October 11, 1918, just one month before the end of the GREAT WAR. His name along with 8 others is engraved on a bronze plaque for the WW I casualties: just like the one above for the WW II casualties. I know this because I spend a lot of time in the

museum and on our database. I have ready access to this information and so much more that, unfortunately, you do not - and THAT my friends, is a travesty we are correcting.

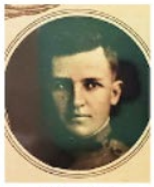
The museum's significant collection of artifacts and growing collection of stories and documentation are worthless if they cannot be seen. Sharing this data has been a concern of mine since I arrived at the museum. Finally, after years of preparation, and the hard work of several people, we can start sharing this information with the public and beyond the confines of the physical Roller House Museum. This has been made possible by dedicated work along with a monetary grant from the Augusta County Council on Tourism. The grant allowed us to turn on the PUBLIC ACCESS portal of our Museum Collections database (Past Perfect).

Through this portal, we can now pick and choose what items and information contained within our database are made available to the public. Before you panic, NO donor, financial or contact information is capable of being shared; that is locked down. However, physical items in our collection along with PEOPLE's histories **CAN** be shared – if we choose. We are in the building stage of this process and frankly, it will take years to get

everything working right, but each week, the information grows and improves.

Access to the portal requires nothing more than an internet connection and a web browser – you all have that. There is no log in, or cost associated with viewing the information. Presently, I am concentrating on the PEOPLE segment starting with the names and information of the school's alumni, who died in the service of our country. You might say that a lot of this has been covered in past Bayonets, and you would be right. **CHALLENGE: go find it.** While it may very well be out there, it is scattered and requires extensive digging to locate. Using the new ONLINE COLLECTIONS portal, select any of the names we have completed, and you will be rewarded with a bio on that individual, along with photos and links to more information. In this way, we hope to remember the PERSON and not just a name on a wall.

Person Record



Full Name	Braxton III, Elliott M.
AMA Class of	1913
Veteran	USA, 2Lt., WW1, KIA
Birth Date	2/27/1895
Deceased Date	10/11/1918
Died Where	Cunel, Departement de la Meuse, Lorraine France
Notes	Elliott Muse Braxton III won his Commissio as Second Lieutenant and was Killed In Ac

Lt. Elliott M. Braxton

Some of the best information pertaining to an individual is gleaned from the associated links, or URLs, listed at the bottom of each page. Through the use of these links, we can expand on the individual stories without tying up our own limited resources.

There is no denying that a growing number of our brethren are gone, but hopefully, using this new portal, they won't soon be forgotten.

Norris

The BAYONET

Published by the Cadets of
Augusta Military Academy

Fort Defiance, Va. October, 1911

112 YEARS AGO

Read the October 1911 Bayonet
HERE

The Bayonet Gallery
HERE

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

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.

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