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AMA
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"Ad Astra Per Aspera"
MUSEUM OF AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY
NEWSLETTER
Februrary - 2025

First snowfall of 2025
Photo credit: Rich vanBreemen

Chairman's Message

February 1, 2025

Dear Friends,

January kicked off with a large and very cold and snowy weather event from Texas to Massachusetts. It became so bad, that I decided to cancel my flights to Virginia to attend our January Board meeting for the weekend of January 10-12. I did the right thing, because my flight between Charlotte NC and Richmond VA on the 10th, arrived at midnight, or about 9 hours later than scheduled! That meant that I would have had a15-hour layover inside the Charlotte airport!

In light of the January weather disruption, the date for the AMA Alumni Board meeting was changed to Saturday February 22, at the Hotel 24 South starting at 0930 hrs. As is customary, AMA Foundation Board meetings are open to all AMA alumni. I would strongly recommend that you check with the museum before you come to Staunton to join the meeting to assure that it has not been cancelled.

In spite of the nasty weather, we as an organization, continue to have many logs in the fire. The Reunion Committee is way ahead of the curve in terms of Reunion 2025 logistics. Herb Maher, Lee Ramsey, Jeff Wenzel and the rest of the

committee have been active since shortly after Reunion 2024 ended. I expect another great event in September. Once again, we have a fantastic and brand-new M1A (M-14) rifle available for raffle, and yes, you may begin purchasing raffle tickets and register for Reunion 2025 immediately.

Garry Granger has taken over the AMA Legacy Scholarship Committee responsibilities and is looking for qualified candidates , If you know someone who would qualify for a scholarship, please have them fill out the application forms in the AMA Museum webpage. Nomination for AMA Sports hall of Fame are still open and the AMA Alumni Foundation Board of Directors will hold our annual election process over the next few months. We will publish the Director election calendar and procedures in the March Newsletter. Lastly, the AMA Memorial steering committee is ready to present the board with an exciting presentation of the recently completed architectural renderings of the proposed AMA Memorial which would be located on the Old Stone Church property, overlooking Lilly Valley and with a beautiful vista of the AMA Campus.
So, as you can see, we really are a very active organization! Thank you for being part of it.

The January post snow event shut down Museum visitor count for almost two weeks. After the big snowfall of early January, the roads, paths and parking spaces inside campus were un-plowed and very slick. The reason the access to the museum was in such bad state, was that our old friend Pastor Greg Douglas, who had lived on the AMA campus for many, many years, moved to a home in Staunton in December. Greg has started his own church and was no longer able to be the “UPC Camp Administrator” and general handyman at the

AMA Campus. Greg took care of everything from plowing the roads when it snowed, cutting the lawn on campus Spring through Fall, not to mention handing over FEDEX and UPS boxes destined to the Museum that had been inadvertently delivered to his house. I was told by the UPC leadership in early January that they are in the midst of a "search process" for a new Camp Administrator and expected to have him in place in February. We wish Greg Godspeed in his new endeavor and we hope he will pass by the Museum once in a while to say hi.

In the meantime, to all of you that live north of Latitude 18.5, stay warm and safe and I will try and stay cool. Hopefully, the AMA Alumni Foundation Board will be able to hold our meeting in a few weeks, and if all goes as planned, I will be able to share some exciting news with all of you regarding the **AMA Memorial project**.

Cordially,

Douglas W. Pennock

2024 AMA Alumni Foundation Board

AMA Alumni Foundation Board Elections

As is customary, our annual election cycle will commence mid March 2025 with Director nominations, and election of members commencing April 13 2025. Elections will wrap up at midnight April 28, 2025.

The list of members that will be asking to be considered for re-election are:

John Arthur '75
Gordon Metz '68
Lee Ramsey '74
Brett Thompson '75
Vacant seat

Note: As per Foundation Board guidelines, there will be a reduction of one Director's seat from the current 16 to 15 in this election cycle. There will be an additional two seat reduction in the 2026 election cycle, which would bring the maximum board membership to the original 13 members.

Alumni Memories

Reunion 1983

L-R Back row
***Gary Nicholson '70, Tom Del Valle '73, Rick Ellett '72, Bruce Strange '72, P.J. Thompson '72**

Middle row
Lewie Kennett '72, Garry Granger '71, No ID, No ID

Front Row
Andy Becker '71, Steve Traylor '72, *Mark "Henry" Femrite '71-'72

- **Deceased**

Augusta Military Academy Alumni Foundation Scholarships

THE DEADLINE HAS BEEN EXTENDED

The NEW "postmark" deadline for receiving the AMA Scholarship applications for this year is April 30th, 2025

Don't wait, get your applications in the mail early!

This year we are offering:

- **Two (2) $2,000 AMA Legacy Scholarships**
- **One (1) $1,000 McVey – Leonard Scholarship *(Louise McVey Leonard - Robert P. Leonard Memorial Scholarship)**

Below, find links to open and print the criteria letter, which are the official rules and requirements as well as the application for each Scholarship offered

AMA Legacy Scholarship Letter & Applications

Legacy Scholarship Letter

Legacy Scholarship Application

McVey-Leonard Scholarship Letter & Application

Louise McVey Leonard - Robert P. Leonard Memorial Scholarship

McVey Scholarship Letter

McVey Scholarship Application

Scholarship Scoring Rubric

Applicants – Make yourself familiar with the SSR (Scholarship Scoring Rubric), Understand what the judges are looking for and how best to model your application.

Need more information?

Click the link below to go to the AMA Alumni Website, find the Scholarship tab and you'll discover all the necessary details

https://amaalumni.org/scholarships/

Nominations are being sought for the Class of 2025 AMA Sports Hall of Fame (SHOF). You may nominate an individual athlete, coach, team or anyone that you feel contributed in a significant way to AMA sports. Personnel / Team(s) selected will be recognized during Annual Reunion in September 2025.

Please email your nomination to **John Arthur '75** email: john.arthur@cdg-1.com AND Rich VanBreeman, the Museum Curator, email: amacurator@gmail.com. John can be reached at 757-650-6309 for any questions.

All nominations must be received no later than FRIDAY, February 21, 2025.

Jim Mitchell '76, Head of Security for Reunion 2025

AMA Alumni Reunion
September 4-6 2025

Honoring the classes of
'44, '50, '55, '60, '65, '70, '75, and '80

Headquarters Hotel
Hotel 24 South (Stonewall Jackson)

Call 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 $125.00 per night which includes covered parking.

Please use our new and easy Reunion 2025 registration portal

HERE

Springfield Armory M1A Rifle

RIFLE RAFFLE 2025

This year we will be offering a unique and historically important weapon for raffle. This beautiful and brand new out-of-the-box weapon is a semi-automatic rifle made by Springfield Armory, Inc. The rifle is based on the M14 platform, for the civilian and law enforcement markets in the United States and fires a .308 round.

The cost is $25 per chance, or five chances for $100. If you check the box on the purchase form, you can authorize an additional 5% to help us cover the cost of the payment processing fee. There is no limit on the number of chances you may purchase.

Buy your tickets through our new and easy Stripe credit card account HERE.

If you'd prefer to pay via phone, please contact Jeff Wenzel at: 352-445-4967 or email Jeff at jgraveswenzel@gmail.com

You must be 21 years or older to participate in this raffle.
This raffle is void where prohibited by law and the following States:
Delaware, Maryland, New York and Washington

Reunion 2025 Sponsorships

Your AMA Reunion Committee has been working diligently since the day after the 2024 Reunion organizing a new format and events for Reunion 2025. We are trying to continue to significantly improve in the overall quality of the reunion experience each year. In order to make it affordable for as many alumni as possible we are opening certain events for sponsorship opportunities to help offset some of the costs. Excess sponsorship donations will be rolled over to the AMA Foundation as a donation. Click HERE to sponsor an event.

All Sponsors will be recognized at all events and venues.
Here are the events/needs and the sponsorship amounts we are seeking:

Reunion 2025 Sponsorship Opportunities

Event/Activity	Sponsorship Amount	Partial Sponsorsh
Registration	$1,500.00	5 @ $300
Hospitality Suite	$1,500.00	5 @ $300
Band Company Breakfast	$1,000.00	5 @ $200
Friday Banquet	$6,400.00	6 @ $1,000
Saturday Breakfast	$2,300.00	5 @ $500
Saturday Lunch	$4,200.00	7 @ $600
Saturday Dinner	$6,400.00	6 @ $1,100
Flowers	$500.00	2 @ $250
Reunion General Fund	Any Amount	

General Fund: Any Amount

Acknowledgement of sponsors:

1. Signage at event
2. Names mentioned with thanks during event

Please be generous and consider becoming a sponsor at whatever level you can afford.

MUSEUM

DOCENT DUTY

THANK YOU!

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 January

26

Museum Volunteers

Brian Miller '67

Charlie Pascale '69
IT Support

Elizabeth Andrews
Professor Charles S. Roller's Great-great Granddaughter

***Be* 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

Brick Order Form

SHOP HERE

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, go exclusively to help offset Museum operation costs.

AMA "Knock off" 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.

17 oz. Mug
Only $14.00 (Plus tax and shipping)

To order items from the PX, call the Museum at
540-248-2007

Wendell August Forge metal serving tray

$50.00

Mr Dan Ray, son of AMA Alumni Eddie Ray '52 has been able to identify a trusted and high quality provider for AMA branded merchandise. After not being able to purchase a replacement "Coach" windbreaker jacket at the AMA Museum PX, Dan found Brandon Flippo of Great Day Branding, who was very helpful and was

able to provide Eddie a practically identical AMA branded replacement Jacket.

Note: Dan paid for the AMA logo art setup, so that savings will be passed on to you.

You can check out the catalogue section HERE

You may contact Brandon Flippo at (816) 898-4353 or

@greatdaybranding.com

Eddie Ray '52 wearing one of his two new AMA branded Jacket

Eddie Ray '52 wearing one of his two new AMA branded Jacket

vanBreemen's Expressions

February 1, 2025

Remembering Joseph T. Winn
It's our Duty

By Rich vanBreemen
AMA Museum Curator and Administrator

Please bear with me as I attempt to tell a story worth our attention. After a grueling holiday season, I am finally able to get back to my main job (and passion) as museum curator. Since I have not written an article in a few months, I may run on a bit. Suck it up.

When you enter the museum, you have the option to turn right, left or go straight. If you are lucky enough to have Chris Correa, give you the tour, you will start off going left. His tour will lead you through the history of the school; it's rise and it's fall so that by the end of the tour, you will walk away with a thorough understanding of the school itself. At the museum, we always say that what really MAKES the school is the people. Without them, the museum is just a collection of old buildings and dusty "stuff".

AMA's most notable characters – faculty and alum are readily and easily identified. Some of them have been written about ad nauseum in the Bayonets, Recall and numerous other publications. This is as it should be, but that could give you a slanted view of AMA. Not everyone who attended the academy

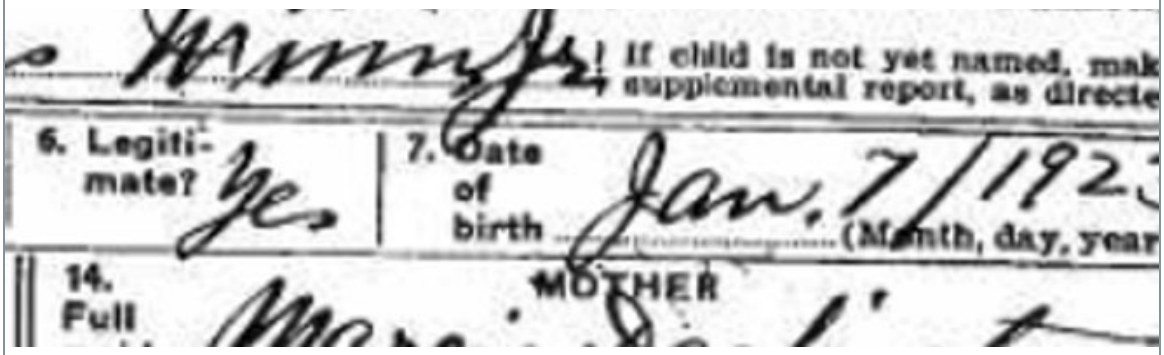
went on to be a Pulitzer Prize winner or win the Lombardi Award or command people in combat. In fact, most AMA alums were just normal everyday boys who came from average homes and went on to lead regular lives. While perhaps not “spectacular” their lives were important to the people close to them and their stories are no less interesting.

One such individual is Joseph T. Winn. I ran across his name as I was working on the PEOPLE section of our database. I felt like I should know that name - like I had seen it somewhere before. Then it hit me - you take that tour with Chris, and it will be shown to you, although not specifically pointed out. Why? Because Joseph Thomas Winn is the last name to have been added to the WW2 Memorial plaque, almost as an afterthought since it was added after the original plaque had been cast. Having personally cleaned that plaque last summer; I remembered where I saw it.

Other than the above marker, there is (was) little known about Mr. Winn. The only reference to him is in 1 2004 Bayonet saying that a record of his death in WW2 was found. The 1942 RECALL lists his name, but no other information. What we had in Past Perfect was just what I have already mentioned. Thanks to the Herculean efforts of BJ d’Orsay and his trusty scanning machine, some of Winn’s time at AMA was made available. The rest of his short life

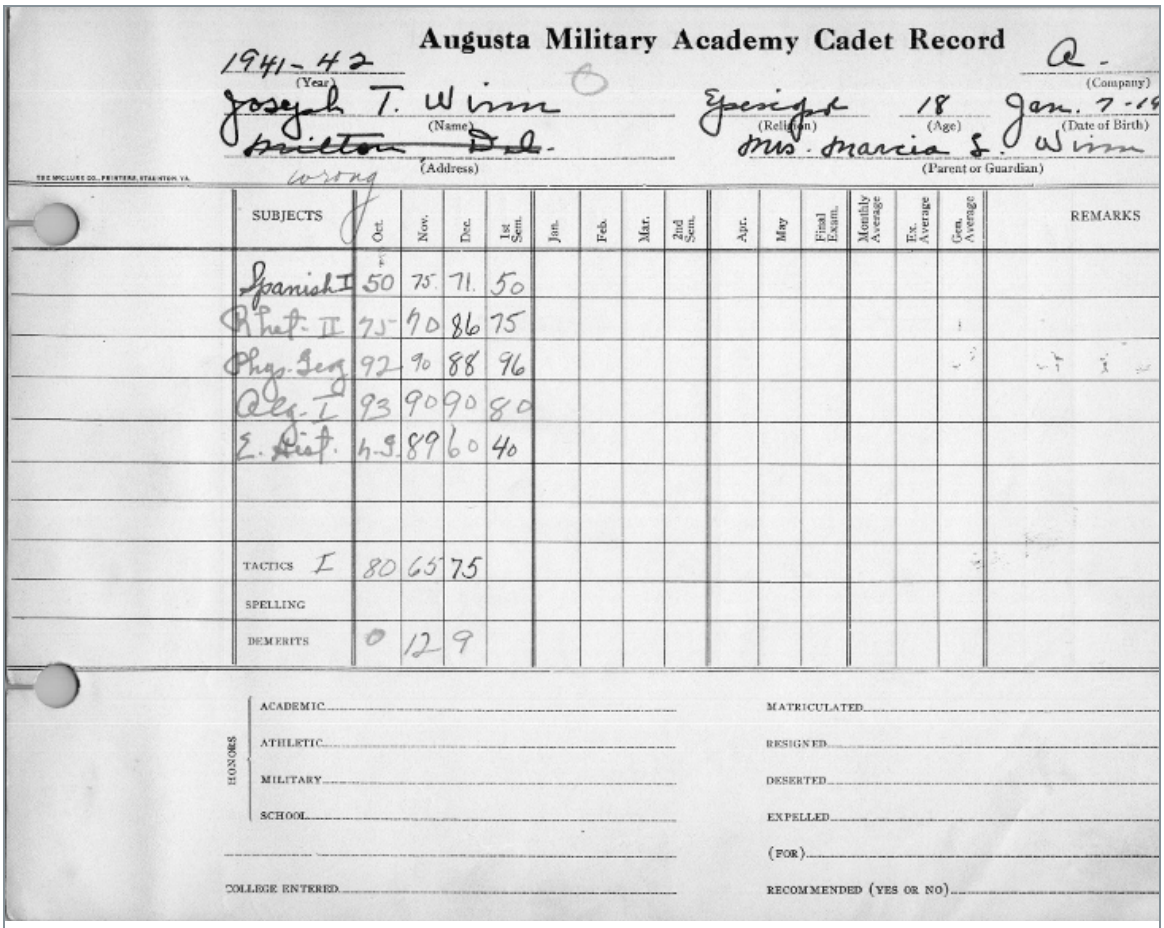
was gleaned from several online sources and pieced together with some effort.

Joseph T Winn Jr. came into this world on January 7, 1923, in Pinal Arizona. Almost as if to define the rest of his life, little was documented of the event. In fact, his birth certificate doesn't even list his birth weight, or length. It DOES however, make certain to note that his birth was "legitimate (how times have changed):



We know nothing about what happened after his birth, other than at some point, his family ended up in Milton Delaware. Joseph was able to attend a few private primary schools such as the Jacob Tome Institute in N.E Maryland from January to June of 1938. From there he left to attend Morgan School for Boys in Petersburg, TN for the 1938-1939 school year. (NOTE: Thanks go out to Kate Young of the TOME school for providing this background information.)

Joseph was enrolled at AMA for the 1941-1942 school year, but according to his grade sheet (scanned by BJ) he withdrew after completing his first semester. We cannot determine from the data on hand whether he was here as a postgrad or not. While we celebrate alum who were at AMA for years, the number of students who attended for just a short time are many, so this isn't out of the ordinary. To also put this into perspective, he was 18 years old in the waning days of his first semester and WAR just broken out with Japan. Many young men at that time were anxious to do their civic duty. We have records indicating that Maj. Roller went to the local military recruiters specifically asking them to report any of his cadets trying to enlist and to notify him before accepting them.



Augusta Military Academy Cadet Record

1941-42 (Year) — Q (Company)

Joseph T. Winn (Name) — Episcopal (Religion) — 18 (Age) — Jan. 7-19 (Date of Birth)

Milton D.C. (Address) — Mrs. Marcia S. Winn (Parent or Guardian)

wrong

SUBJECTS	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1st Sem.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	2nd Sem.	Apr.	May	Final Exam.	Monthly Average	Ex. Average	Gen. Average	REMARKS
Spanish I	50	75	71	50											
Chem. II	75	70	86	75											
Phy. Geog	92	90	88	96											
Alg. I	93	90	90	80											
E. Hist.	49	89	60	40											
TACTICS I	80	65	75												
SPELLING															
DEMERITS	0	12	9												

HONORS

ACADEMIC

ATHLETIC

MILITARY

SCHOOL

COLLEGE ENTERED

MATRICULATED

RESIGNED

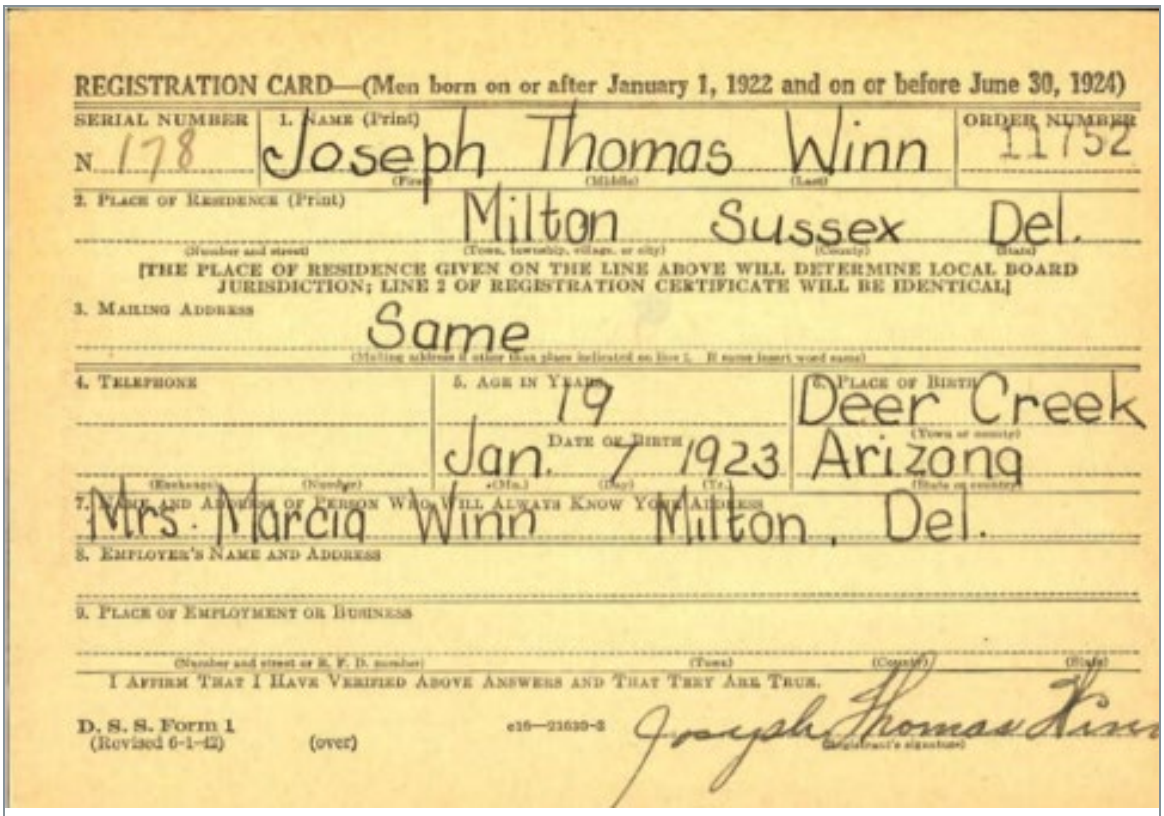
DESERTED

EXPELLED

(FOR)

RECOMMENDED (YES OR NO)

Joseph did fill out a draft card, but to the best of our knowledge was neither drafted nor enlisted in the military.



REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after January 1, 1922 and on or before June 30, 1924)

SERIAL NUMBER N 178 | 1. NAME (Print) Joseph Thomas Winn (First) (Middle) (Last) | ORDER NUMBER 11752

2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) Milton Sussex Del.
(Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)

[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]

3. MAILING ADDRESS Same
(Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If none insert word none)

4. TELEPHONE (Exchange) (Number)

5. AGE IN YEARS 19 DATE OF BIRTH (Mo.) Jan. (Day) 7 (Yr.) 1923

6. PLACE OF BIRTH Deer Creek (Town or county) Arizona (State or country)

7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Marcia Winn Milton, Del.

8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS

9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS
(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE. Joseph Thomas Winn
(Registrant's signature)

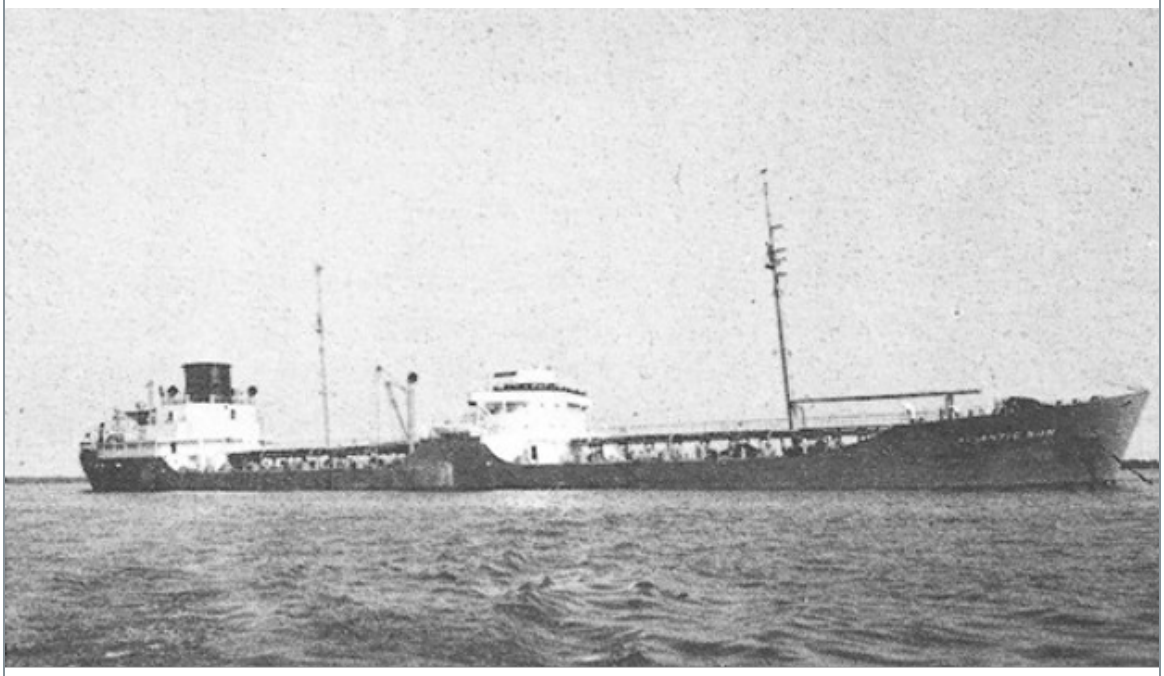
D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 6-1-42) (over) e16—21639-3

However, what he did do, was get married to Ms. Joy Reed in October of 1942 and he joined the Merchant Marines at roughly the same time. His marriage certificate lists his occupation as "Merchant Marine". Joseph was a busy boy in the fall of 1942 and was apparently trying to squeeze as much living as he could into a short time. Little did he know how short that time would be.

WAR

The USA declared war against the Empire of Japan on December 8th, 1941. Japan's ally Germany, declared war against the USA on December 11th, 1941. As the kids say, "GAME ON!". Both Japan and Germany had been engaged in active warfare for years prior to America's involvement so to say they were more prepared than us is an understatement. For the Germans part, they wasted little time getting to work against US Navy and commercial maritime activities in the Atlantic (which honestly had been going on for some time already). The first German submarines (post declaration of war) arrived off the US coast on January 13, 1942.

German Wolf Packs enjoyed a “Happy Time” against allied shipping throughout 1942, but by the year’s end, German’s luck was beginning to change. Convoy configurations, sonar, along with increased allied air cover was allowing more allied shipping to make it through. That is not to say, life was good for the allied Atlantic sailors. U-boats continued to sink allied shipping totaling 397 ships at nearly 2 million tons in 1942! Untold numbers of ships were damaged with a loss of lives but remained afloat.



Atlantic Sun

One of the ships to be torpedoed and survive was the Atlantic Sun, an 11,355 ton oil tanker out of Philadelphia PA. Commissioned in 1941, on March 16, 1942 she departed Beaumont, Texas, en-route to Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania with a load of 156,840 barrels of crude oil. On March 21st, 1942, the unescorted tanker was spotted by U-124 (under the command of Korvettenkapitän Johanna Mohr) off the Beaufort Sea Buoy on the coast of NC. Mohr could not get into a favorable firing position because of the tanker´s speed of 15 knots. As a last resort, Mohr fired a torpedo at about 4000 yards at 10:05 hours. This torpedo struck on the starboard side in the forward tank but did not severely damage the ship. The Atlantic Sun reached Beaufort,

North Carolina under her own power to receive temporary repairs. None of the crew of eight officers, 32 men and five armed guards (she was armed with one 5in and four .30cal guns) reported any injuries.

How long the Atlantic Sun was in port for repairs is not documented (at least not that I could find). However, at some point before the year was out, she was back on the high seas. Near the end of that year, newlywed Joseph T. Winn, age 19, newly enlisted in the Merchant Marines, soon found himself assigned to the Atlantic Sun on its next convoy across the ocean. Joseph T. Winn was assigned as a “WIPER” in the engine room of the ship. A "wiper" in the Merchant Marines refers to the entry-level position within the engine department, essentially considered the most junior rank on a ship's engine crew, serving an apprenticeship to become an oiler; it's the first step on the career ladder for those aspiring to work in the engine room.

The Atlantic Sun, under the command of Master William B. Longtin, had developed engine trouble and straggled behind convoy **ON-165**. Whether or not this engine trouble was a result of its previous torpedo damage is mere speculation. At 10:00 hours on 15 February 1943 about 150 miles off Cape Race, Newfoundland, Canada, the tanker was trying to catch up with the convoy, when it was struck by two torpedoes on its port side from **U-607** of the German Navy under the command of Korvettenkapitän Ernst Mengersen,.

The first torpedo split the ship in half abaft the midships house and the other blew a large hole in the bow. The forward section sank in 20 minutes. The after section appeared sound enough to be taken into port under power. After the ship broke in two, 22 men led by the chief officer abandoned the after section. They returned two hours later and re-boarded the after part of the ship, going below to change clothing. 30 minutes later, with the men still below, a third torpedo from **U-607** struck near the stern post, causing the stern to sink 30 minutes later.

After the third hit, a lifeboat with eight men cleared the ship, half-swamped and without oars. Others went over the side into the sea just before the ship turned over keel up and sank. The ordinary seaman William Golobich was taken prisoner by the U-boat, landed at St. Nazaire on 9 March and eventually taken to the POW camp Marlag und Milag Nord. Those who remained behind faced moderate seas and 25° weather. None of the ten officers, 36 crewmen, 20 armed guards (the tanker was armed with one 5in, one 3in and eight 20mm guns) and one passenger on board survived, except the man who had been taken prisoner. Joseph Thomas Winn, age 19 was lost at sea with his ship's crew.

The tragedy of this story does not end with Joseph's death in the cold waters of the North Atlantic. His young bride, Joy, never remarried. She was living at her parent's home when the sad Western Union telegram arrived in that late winter of 1943. She apparently never got over the loss of her husband. Just 25 years old, she was found dead in her father's garage December 6, 1948 after "a long illness"

DISHONORED in WAR

There were 243,000 mariners that served in WW2. 9,521 perished while serving—a higher proportion of those killed

than any other branch of the US military. Roughly four percent of those who served were killed, a higher casualty rate than that of any of the American military services during World War II. There were 733 Merchant Marine ships sunk due to enemy attacks, and the Japanese captured 609 mariners as prisoners of war. The Germans and Japanese sank six ships manned by the Merchant Marine in 1941 before Pearl Harbor, making mariners some of the first American casualties of the growing global conflict.

Mariners risked their lives supplying the various branches of the armed forces and joint operations with the tools needed to win the war. But their "behind-the-scenes" logistical work, public misunderstanding over their service status, and rumors of their demands for labor rights contributed to mariners failing to receive their much-earned recognition for their courage through GI Bill benefits. VA Medical Benefits were eventually granted to Merchant Marines who served in WW2.

American Merchant Mariners Memorial ~ Battery Park ~ New York. Dedicated to all Merchant Mariners who have served America from the Revolutionary War through the present day! Dedicated October 8, 1991.

Because Merchant Mariners were civilians, they did not qualify for any military medals or ribbons. However, the US Merchant Marine issued its own medals and ribbons to mariners, such as this Combat Action Ribbon. This award signifies that the recipient served on a merchant vessel that came under enemy attack during the war. The attached silver star means that the recipient was forced to abandon his ship.

The Merchant Marine Mariner's Medal is a **decoration** of the **United States Merchant Marine**. Because the Merchant Marine was not considered a branch of the **U.S. Armed Forces**, the **Purple Heart** was not available to Merchant Mariners; as such, the Mariner's Medal was established by an Act of Congress on 10 May 1943 to solve this dilemma. While this may seem like bitterness over a "medal", the benefits and VA entitlements given to military participants in WW2 were denied the seamen of the Merchant Marines for many years.

Awarded only to members of the United States Merchant Marine, the Mariner's Medal recognizes seamen who were killed or wounded as a direct result of conflict against an opposing armed force; in specific, it was awarded to any seaman who while serving in a ship during a war period is wounded, suffers physical injury, or suffers through dangerous exposure as a result of an act of enemy of the United States. In the event any such seaman dies from the wounds or injuries before the award can be made to him, the medal may be presented to the person named in the War Risk Policy as his beneficiary. 6,635 Mariner's Medals were awarded for service in the **Second World War**; all further awards of the Mariner's Medal were suspended on 30 June 1956 and has not been awarded in subsequent U.S. theaters of conflict.

AMA Museum Today

There has been more than one occasion in which the flying of the Merchant Marine flag in front of the Museum has been the source of some contention. Remember that more than one AMA alum served in the Merchant Marines and I believe it dishonors their service if we think they don't deserve recognition. If you disagree with me, you can take that up with Joseph T. Winn if you ever have the honor or meeting him.

EPILOGUE

Please, go back and look at the photo of the WW2 plaque. Joseph Winn's name is only 3 lines down from J. Hubert Mathews (USA, LtCol.). Col. Mathews is notable in that he is the only war dead alumni that has a dedicated exhibit in the museum. Killed on Omaha beach on D-Day, his medals and commendations have been on display for years. His story is well known, yet until now, the story of his neighbor on the plaque was virtually unknown to the AMA family. One had an illustrious career and the other, a life that had barely begun, yet both lives were tragically snuffed out in war. It's important that both of their stories, along with those of so many others, are remembered equally.

That brings me to the last part of this lengthy and sometimes rambling article. So much of the information presented here was only made possible by sifting through vast amounts of data on the internet. This information is the result of countless hours spent by volunteers and other museum historians, doing the research and sharing that information with the world. AMA is joining with this prestigious group of historians as we gather more and more information on the Augusta Military Academy and its people. By sharing this information through our public web page and perhaps more importantly our Public Portal into our records database, we are allowing other like-minded historians a chance to peek behind our curtain and find answers to questions they have been struggling with.

Sometimes that information is noble, uplifting or possibly entertaining. Occasionally, it may be dark or less than flattering. It is our responsibility at the museum to tell the whole story, warts and all, so that the truth, as best as we can ascertain it to be, is shared with the world. Thank you, the alum who have allowed us to do this work by your continued support. We hope that you are as satisfied with the results as we are. We expect that information to grow substantially in 2025.

You can see some of that work at the AMA Past Perfect Public portal:

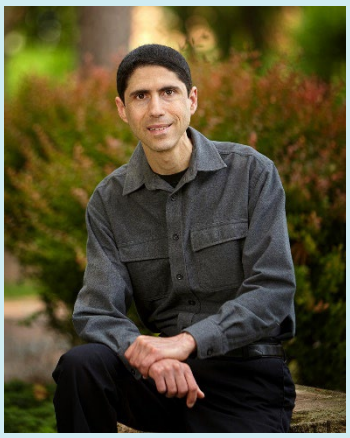
https://amamuseum.catalogaccess.com/people

PARTIAL LIST OF SOURCES:

Ships hit by German U-boats during WWII - https://uboat.net/allies/merchants/ship/2654.html

The History of Merchant Marine in World War II - https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/merchant-marine-world-war-ii#:~:text=Merchant%20Marine%20Casualties,courage%20through%20GI%20Bill%20benefits.

Battle of the Atlantic - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Atlantic



Chris's Corner

Chris Correa, Museum Historian

February 1, 2025

Page 158
Conclusion: Like a Wisp Away

Recap

In the last two newsletters, I recounted the death of 12-year-old cadet John Leroy Gregson. He was accidentally shot by another student on March 23, 1957. He died not on the rifle range and not from a school weapon but in big barracks, in a room assigned to junior school cadets. The rifle was a .22-caliber pump-action Remington owned by another student. It was left unattended in a first-stoop bedroom. It was found by still another cadet, in whose hands it went off, striking Gregson in the chest. He died where he fell.

This story includes only one person known to be alive. Jerome Lee Griffin owned the rifle. It was a gift from his father. Rich and I talked with him at the museum in October. I discovered as he told his story that there were discrepancies between what he remembers and what details were made public. The most important was the report that the rifle had been in the armory until being checked out to Jerome on that first day of spring break, and that Jerome was the one who left it on his bunk. On the contrary, Jerry remembers that, for the prior two weeks, the rifle had been

in his room, not the armory. That day, he loaned it to a friend. The rifle was left, and the shooting occurred, in that friend's room.

After 67 years, details are compromised. There was no witness to the shooting. Jerry isn't 100% certain which cadet borrowed his rifle, so he's chosen not to speculate on the record and risk naming the wrong person. We do know the name of the shooter. It was in the papers. You can find it, but I'm not using it. The 14-year-old who pulled the trigger was a minor in an incident ruled an accident by police. He probably never should've been named in the first place. Jerry Griffin has consented to his own name being included.

So much went wrong. The shooter never should've picked up a weapon he didn't know how to use. The borrower never should've left it loaded and unattended. Jerome should've returned his weapon to the armory two weeks before – but following that rule would not necessarily have saved John Gregson. Had Jerome returned it after using it, he told me that there was nothing preventing him from simply checking it out again when his friend asked to borrow it. So before the shooter, the borrower, and Jerome, it was adults allowing cadets to possess firearms without supervision that ended up killing a student.

As I said in January, this piece isn't about excoriating the academy for its procedures. This part of its system was a fatal accident waiting to happen, but it had apparently been working. It had avoided casualties long enough to lull the adults into complacency.

I'm also not especially concerned about why Jerry's recollection differs from Col. Roller's statement in *The Staunton News-Leader*. Besides the detail about where the gun was left, there's a significant discrepancy about

timing. Jerry remembers the borrower coming to his room, telling him about Gregson, then taking him back to the borrower's room and up to Gregson's body. There, the borrower lifted John's shirt to reveal the entry wound. That would've taken a lot of time, while Roller's statement reads, "[o]ther cadets outside heard the shot and entered the room, reporting also to Majors Wales and Lucas, who were some 50 yards away." These two scenes are in conflict. What Jerry remembers in such detail couldn't have happened in the seconds that would've passed between the rifle firing and bystanders entering. Is Jerry misremembering the incident? Life-changing events tend to leave vivid memories, but time can also be an editor. Meanwhile, was Roller misquoted, misinformed, or controlling the narrative. There's always room for cynicism, for the suspicion that accounts are malleable even to benign self-interest, but there's at least as much room for the benefit of the doubt. Anyway, neither account, one public, one private, obscures that the school had lax rules on student weapons.

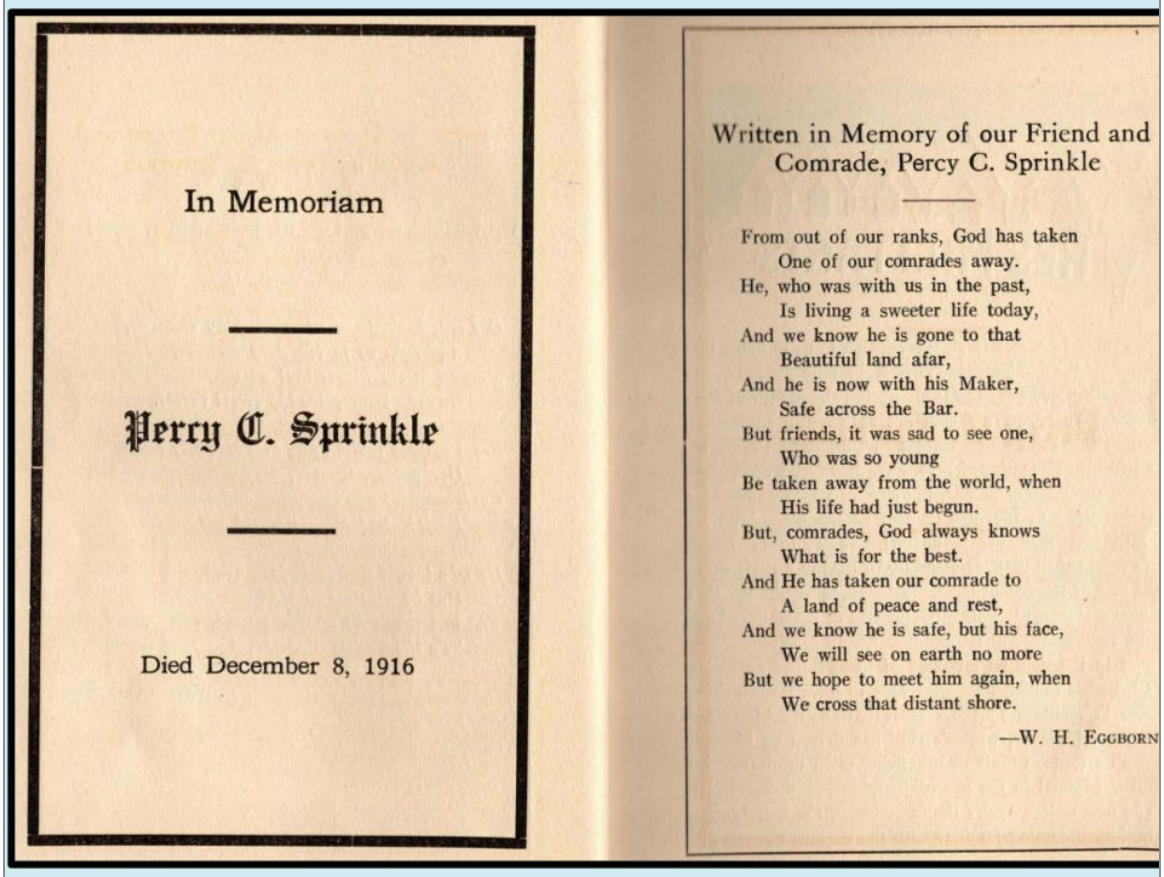
My purpose here is to look at what happened afterward and give it context. This analysis doesn't drill down on conflicting accounts or systemic weaknesses. John's death involved multiple bad decisions made without knowing that they would lead to a tragedy. What happened in the days and weeks afterward involved decisions that were more subtle, and more deeply considered, if for no other reason than the school had more time to make these decisions. The result was that the death of John Gregson was given almost no place in the school's history.

How to Mourn

There was no apparent protocol for where or how to memorialize the dead. We don't know how Professor Roller's death was acknowledged. He died on August 26, 1907. The first *Recall* was four years in the

future. The *Bayonet* had been publishing for a year at that point, but no editions from the Fall of 1907 are known to exist.

As I wrote in the September newsletter, when Percy Sprinkle fell victim to food poisoning in December 1916, *Bayonet* staff **in January** gave 2 pages for a modest memorial and a poem by a fellow cadet.



In Memoriam

Perry C. Sprinkle

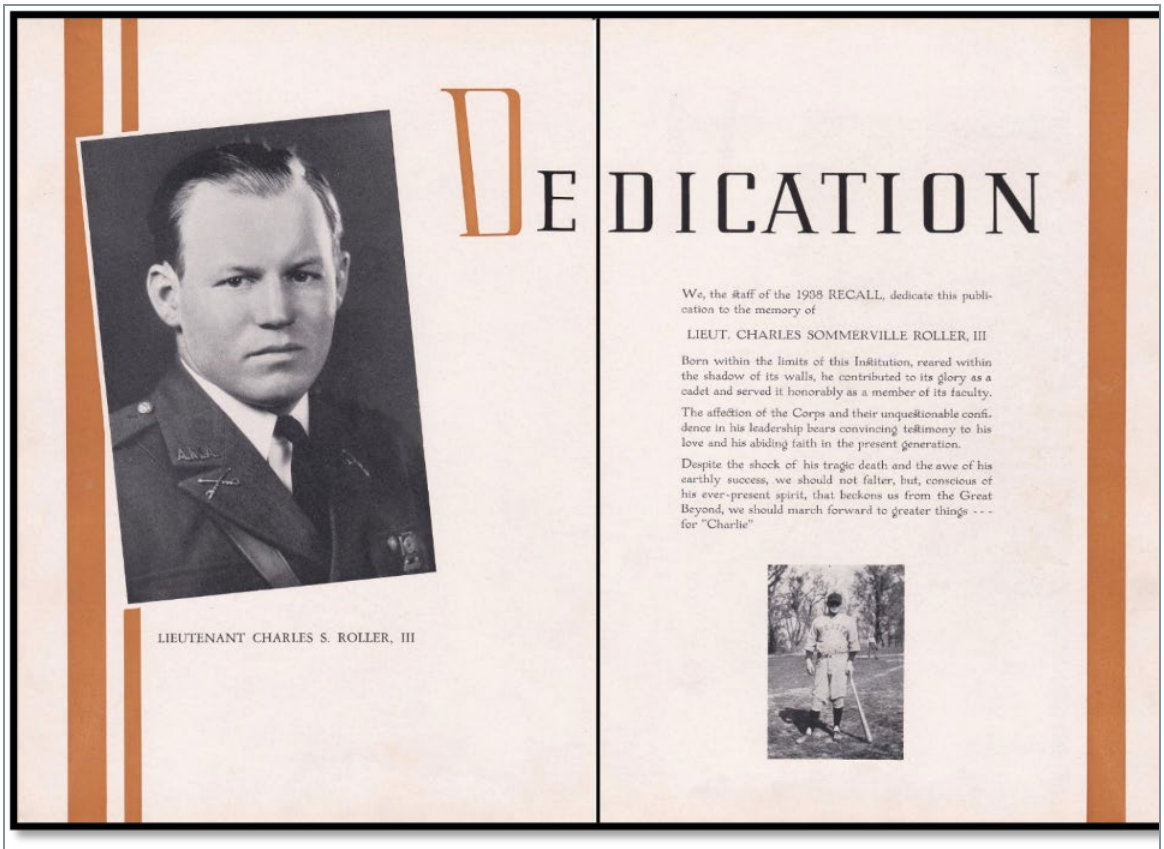
Died December 8, 1916

Written in Memory of our Friend and Comrade, Percy C. Sprinkle

From out of our ranks, God has taken
One of our comrades away.
He, who was with us in the past,
Is living a sweeter life today,
And we know he is gone to that
Beautiful land afar,
And he is now with his Maker,
Safe across the Bar.
But friends, it was sad to see one,
Who was so young
Be taken away from the world, when
His life had just begun.
But, comrades, God always knows
What is for the best.
And He has taken our comrade to
A land of peace and rest,
And we know he is safe, but his face,
We will see on earth no more
But we hope to meet him again, when
We cross that distant shore.

—W. H. Eggborn

After Charley Roller's fatal car wreck, his portrait is the first you see in the 1938 *Recall*:



LIEUTENANT CHARLES S. ROLLER, III

DEDICATION

We, the staff of the 1938 RECALL, dedicate this publication to the memory of

LIEUT. CHARLES SOMMERVILLE ROLLER, III

Born within the limits of this Institution, reared within the shadow of its walls, he contributed to its glory as a cadet and served it honorably as a member of its faculty.

The affection of the Corps and their unquestionable confidence in his leadership bears convincing testimony to his love and his abiding faith in the present generation.

Despite the shock of his tragic death and the awe of his earthly success, we should not falter, but, conscious of his ever-present spirit, that beckons us from the Great Beyond, we should march forward to greater things - - - for "Charlie"

Please continue to read the conclusion of Page 158 HERE

Doug Pennock's Viewpoint

February 1, 2025

Greetings everyone,

Winter! I sort of miss the short days, cold temperatures and that white slippery stuff that I experienced the six winters that I spent in Ft. Defiance. I still sort of miss that season enough to want to go back and live in it for one or two short visits per year.

Many of the young men that attended AMA that lived in Latin America or the Caribbean, experienced the winter cold, short days, long dark nights and snow and ice falling from the sky for the first time in their lives the winter of their Rat year.

As a resident of San Juan, Puerto Rico, I was one of those kids. I remember quite clearly the first snow event in the late fall of 1966. It was afternoon in early December. I went out on the blacktop, looked up to the gray sky in fascination, and opened my mouth to catch falling snowflakes on my tongue. Most of my fellow cadets thought that I was nuts, but that moment was one that I will always remember fondly.

Shortly after that significant moment in my short life, (I had just turned 13) a harsh reality set in. I had to learn how to walk on that slippery stuff! Stand in formation on the slippery stuff and march on that slippery stuff! We stood in Reveille formation on the Black Top very early on miserably cold and dark winter mornings, unable to move and hoping that your platoon leader would not walk behind you and finger flick your frozen ear with a pop! Members of "A" Company were exposed to the worst of the cold wind on the Black top because the wind was magnified by the Venturi effect when it passed by the barracks. I have a vague recollection of the location where "A" company stood at formations due to the fact that my stay in that company was a short one...

Keeping classrooms at a comfortable temperature was a balancing act of opening and shutting windows, unless of course you were in Col. Hoovers classroom, where he would keep the windows open all of the time to help “freeze the vegetables”…

The same window door orchestra was practiced In your room in Big Barracks. The steam radiators would put off a tremendous amount of heat, but we lacked a way to turn the

heat up or down because the radiator manual control valve was missing. By 3:00 am the room was meat freezer cold because the steam had been cut off hours earlier. Then, just before reveille, the radiators would begin making loud knocking and popping sounds as the steam was restored to the barracks, waking you up and quickly creating enough heat to warm your room enough for you to get out of bed in your underwear.

So, to all of you AMA brethren, I can clearly remember what it was like to bear the conditions of winter north of Latitude 18.5, within that phenomenon referred to in science books as “The absence of heat".

I really do enjoy not having to wear socks in February! Stay warm and safe!

Doug out

The Museum Newsletter is written and prepared by Doug Pennock
and edited by Trudy Pennock and Marc Aronson '68

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 a paid staff. Former cadets volunteer their time and talent most every month. 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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