Museum of Augusta Military Academy News

July - 2025

Chairman’s Message

July 1, 2025

Dear friends,

July has arrived, and we are preparing to celebrate our Republic’s 249th birthday.

It troubles me that we, as Americans, are so divided and polarized because we now live in a world with little to no interest in engaging in the long-standing American tradition of “compromise”. I wish folks would sit down with friends and family members—who might now be political foes—and talk openly, working toward a reasonable consensus on most of their current political and social disagreements.

I have been lucky to travel through most of North, Central, and South America, nearly all of the Caribbean, and part of Europe, so I know first hand that even though life in the USA isn’t perfect— and sometimes not even close— it’s still the best place to live on this big blue planet!

So, when you celebrate July 4, 2025, consider reaching out to your neighbor or a family member you no longer speak to because of differing views on our country. Aim to find common ground, share a hug, and enjoy the blessing of living in the greatest nation on earth! Warts and all…

Happy 249th Birthday, USA!

Cordially,

Douglas W. Pennock ‘72
Chairman

Alumni News

Jorge Rovirosa ’70 received the attached letter from Marianne (Ritchey) Reissig, daughter of John Mathews ’27, which I hope you will enjoy reading. She also thanks the AMA Foundation and those who attended the dedication of the special bricks honoring her late father and 1st Lt McClatchey at the National D Day Memorial in Bedford, VA.

June 6, 2025

Dear Jorge ~

Thank you for your informative letter and photos.

The 2 bricks to honor my Dad, Lt. Col J. Mathews '27 and 1 Lt. J. B. McClatchey '38, are a very special memorial, and mean so much to me. Thank you all for your thoughtfulness and great respects.

Jorge, I am so happy that you and all the others were able to visit the cemetery to pay respect and homage to my Dad. Today, being the 81st year ago of the horror that happened.

Yes, I met Bob Braddford while visiting AMA with my

son and his family. Bob was
so kind to us and we
certainly enjoyed our visit.

During the war my uncle,
Col. W. W. Naramore was Aide de
Camp to Gen. Leslie J. McNair,
who was killed 2 weeks after
my Dad, and buried in the
same cemetery. Every time Mrs.
McNair visited her husbands
cross, she always layed a very
small bouquet at the base, the
go to my Dad's cross and do
the same. So when I visited
the hallowed ground, I had 2
very small bouquets; one for
my Dad and one for Gen. McNa
cross. My favorite true story.

Thank you again Jorge and
AMA Foundation and Alumni for
your love, respect and homage.

Sincerely,

Marianne (Ritchey) Reissig

The museum of Augusta Military Academy has once again won Gold for Best Museum in the Shenandoah Valley!

JUNE MUSEUM VISITORS

The family of **Edward Barkley Brown III** (1961-64) visited the museum on June 15. After AMA, Ed spent his career in his family's scientific glassmaking business and was a devoted owner of several race cars. Ed died unexpectedly last July at the age of 79. His obituary is **Here.**

(L-R) grandson John Edward Brown; widow Elizabeth M. Brown; grandson Kevin Robert Brown II.

From Richmond, Susan (Josephson) Sparks stopped by the museum on Thursday, June 26. She enjoys returning to her father's campus whenever she's in the area. She told

Chris that Sivert “Joe” Josephson (though only his mother called him Sivert) was so determined to join the army at the age of 17 that he convinced his mother to sign a waiver, allowing her youngest child to enlist.

Master Sergeant Josephson’s career involved many family relocations, notably to Bad Tolz, Germany, where he was

stationed with the 10th Special Forces Group. For Susan, these years included regular bedroom inspections familiar to any AMA cadet (to this day, she still dusts the tops of her doors.) Nearly as frequent were her father's many sudden deployments to parts unknown. Still, surrounded by idyllic Bavarian scenery, she remembers these years as the best of her childhood.

In retirement, her father stayed in contact with his army friends, but Susan recalls that this veteran of the Korean War and Vietnam was rarely interested in sharing war stories. Among the activities he did love was assisting the coaching staff at VMI (Susan called it his dream job), as well as constantly working on AMA museum displays with Ben Zinkhan and Don Studer.

Augusta Military Academy Alumni Foundation Scholarships

There were eleven Scholarship applicants this year! Five applications were received after the deadline date of April 30, 2025, but were postmarked on or before April 30. Therefore, the Scholarship Committee began to review the applications two weeks later than expected.

The Scholarship Committee convened via Zoom teleconference on Thursday, May 23, for a preliminary review of all candidates and held a second and final meeting on June 4.

This year's scholarship selection facts:

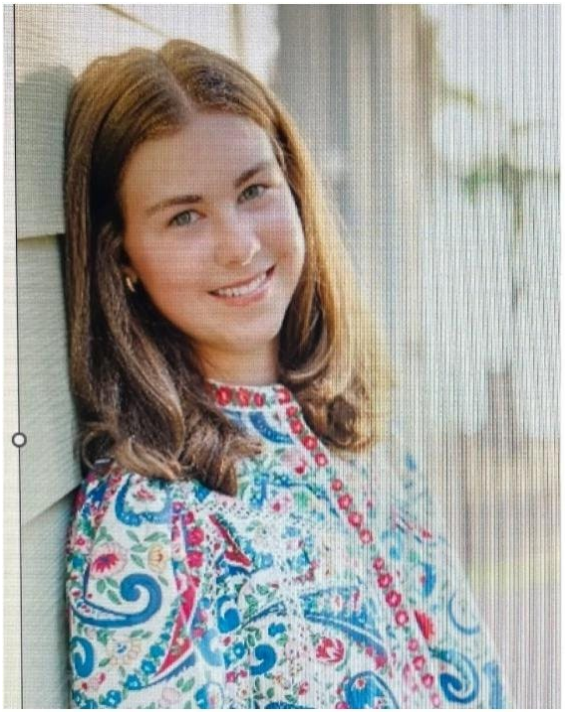
1. **This year's candidate pool is robust.**
2. **Due to the large turnout and strong academic records of all candidates, the committee added a third $2,000 Legacy Scholarship, which Marc Aronson has generously funded.**
3. **Dr. (Admiral) Mary DeCredico, a long-time nonvoting member of the AMA Alumni Foundation Board of Directors and a former professor of history at the US Naval Academy, decided in early June which applicants were awarded scholarships.**

Congratulations to this year's winners, who are:

Augusta Military Academy Alumni Foundation Legacy Scholarship

An AMA Legacy Scholarship is awarded to **Elyza Dayao**, granddaughter of Alumnus **Victor Gomez '69**. Elyza will be a senior at San Pedro College in the Philippines, pursuing her Nursing Degree. She has a servant's heart. Her work ethic and involvement in youth ministry, the arts, and outreach programs are exemplary!

Congratulations Elyza.



An AMA Legacy Scholarship is awarded to **Mary Powell Chesnutt**, granddaughter of Alumnus **William Johnston ’55**. Mary Powell will attend Clemson University this fall. She is a member of the National Honor Society, a math whiz, an accomplished pianist and swimmer, and an effective leader. She attended Rocky Mount Academy, so she is Academy Trained 😊, albeit probably more advanced than us. Congratulations, Mary Powell.

An AMA Legacy Scholarship is awarded to **Gudrun Campbell**, granddaughter of Alumnus **Harry Campbell ’70**. Gudrun will begin her studies at Duke University in Durham, NC, this fall, with aspirations of earning a degree in engineering. She is innovative, creative, and loves to be challenged. She is also an accomplished symphonic cellist at the highest level and has established herself as an effective leader. Congratulations, Gudrun!

Louise McVey Leonard- Robert P. Leonard Memorial Scholarship

The recipient of this scholarship is **Molly Jones**, whose grandfather is **William Roberts, a 1959** alumnus. Molly has been accepted into Concord University in Athens, WV, and will start this fall as a freshman. She is an athlete who competes in Cross Country and Track & Field at her high school, and she is also a creative and talented artist. Molly has faced challenges in her life, which have prepared her for the future. Congratulations, Molly!

AMA Sports Hall of Fame

2025 AMA Sports Hall of Fame Inductees

Thank you to the AMASHOF Committee members.

Chairman - John Arthur '75
George Richardson '64
Bruce Strange '72
Tom Del Valle '73
Larry Nicholson '75
Todd Livick '81

The following teams and individuals have recently been elected for induction into the AMA Sports Hall of Fame:

1964-65 Wrestling Team

Thomas J. Stillwagon ’62

Gordon R. Metz ’68

Herbert C. Maher '72-’73

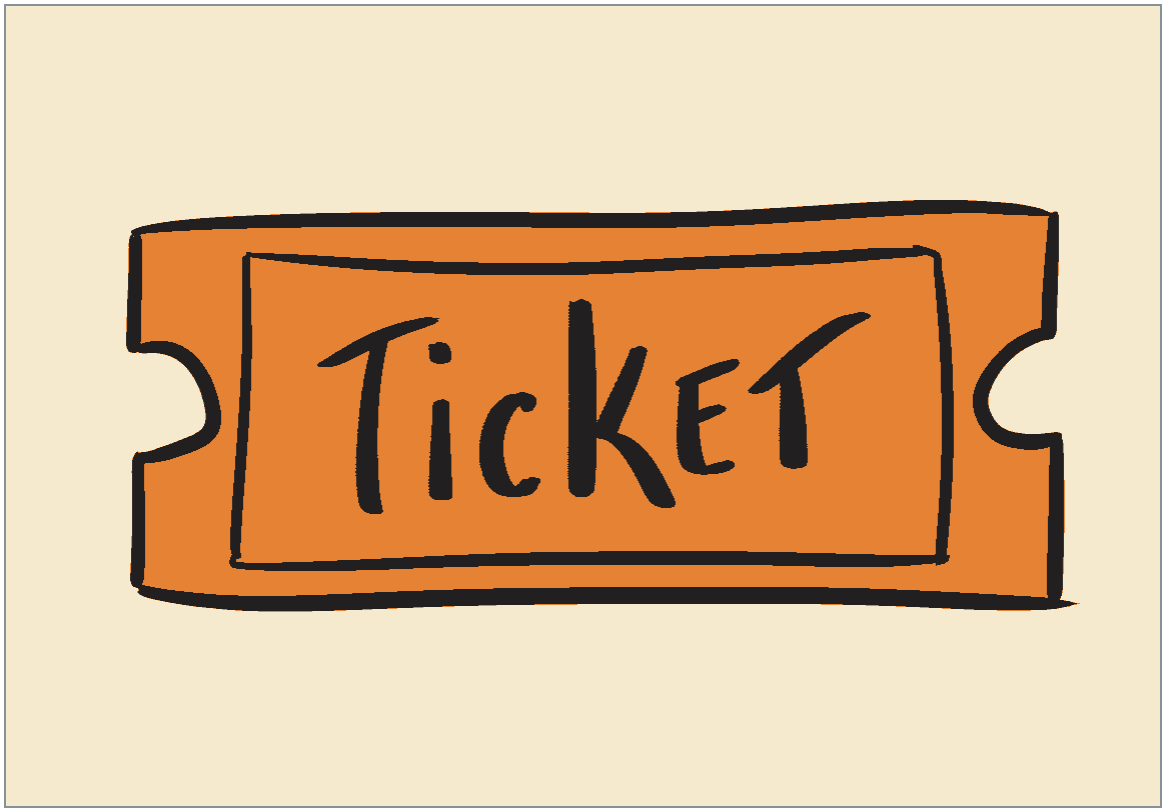
AMA Alumni Reunion September 4-6 2025

Honoring the classes of '45, '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 you can get the Reunion group rate of $125.00 per night, which includes covered parking.

Please use our new and easy Reunion 2025 registration HERE


Ticket

Springfield Armory M1A Rifle

RIFLE RAFFLE 2025

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

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.

Please buy tickets through our new and easy Stripe credit card account HERE.

If you'd prefer to pay via phone, please get in touch with Jeff Wenzel at:

Mobile 352-445-4967 or email jgraveswenzel@gmail.com

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

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 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 to 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 the event
2. Names mentioned with thanks during the event

To all Alumni and Readers

Today, we are 50% behind on registration and 33% behind on reunion sponsorship compared to this time last year. If you're thinking about joining your fellow alumni for Reunion 2025, please register now. Consider sponsoring all or a portion of a reunion event; sponsorship revenue plays a crucial role in helping to cover the Museum's operating costs.

THANK YOU!

Reunion 2025 Sponsors

Category	Cost	Sponsors	Pledge	Status	Paid	Date
Registration	$ 1,500	Doug Pennock '72	$ 1,500	Pledge	$ 500.00	2/14/2
Hospitality	$ 1,500	Steve Trent	$ 1,500	Pledge		5/3/25
Reunion General Fund	$ 2,000	Jeff Wenzel '70	$ 1,000	Paid	$ 1,000.00	2/13/2
		John Chichester '55	$ 160		$ 160.00	5/31/2
		Brian Miller	$ 200		$ 200.00	6/24/2
		Brett Thompson '75	$ 170	Paid	$ 170.00	6/24/2
		Larry Reed '69	$ 420	Paid	$ 420.00	2/21/2
		Anonymous	$ 500	Pledge	$ 500.00	2/13/2
		Anonymous	$ 1,000	Paid	$ 1,000.00	6/30/2
Band Breakfast	$ 1,000	Anonymous	$ 500	Pledge	$ 500.00	2/13/2
		Anonymous	$ 500	Pledge	$ 500.00	2/13/2
Friday Dinner	$ 6,400	Class of 1967	$ 3,000	Paid	$ 3,000.00	5/28/2
		Carl Riedell '63	$ 1,000	Pledge		6/6/25
		Anonymous	$ 1,404	Pledge		6/26/2
Saturday Breakfast	$ 2,300	Jeff Wenzel	$ 500	Paid	$ 500.00	5/14/2
Saturday Lunch	$ 4,200		$ -			
Saturday Dinner	$ 6,400	Marc Aronson '68	$ 3,200	Paid	$ 3,200.00	1/29/2
		Bill McVey '60	$ 600	Paid	$ 600.00	3/10/2
Flowers	$ 500	Elizabeth Andrews	$ 500	Paid	$ 500.00	4/21/2
TOTAL	**$ 25,800**		**$ 17,654**		**$ 12,750.00**	

A Message from the Reunion Committee

July is here, and the Reunion Committee is concerned. Reunion registrations are down 50% compared to last year. We urge everyone planning to attend our annual reunion in Staunton this September to PLEASE register now. Hotel 24 South and Mission Barbeque need accurate attendee numbers to prepare the right amount of food. AMA guys, DO NOT want to run out of chow, and

your Reunion Committee wants to ensure there is plenty for everyone! Thank you in advance for taking care of this. Register now for the 2025 AMA Reunion at amaalumni.org.

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!

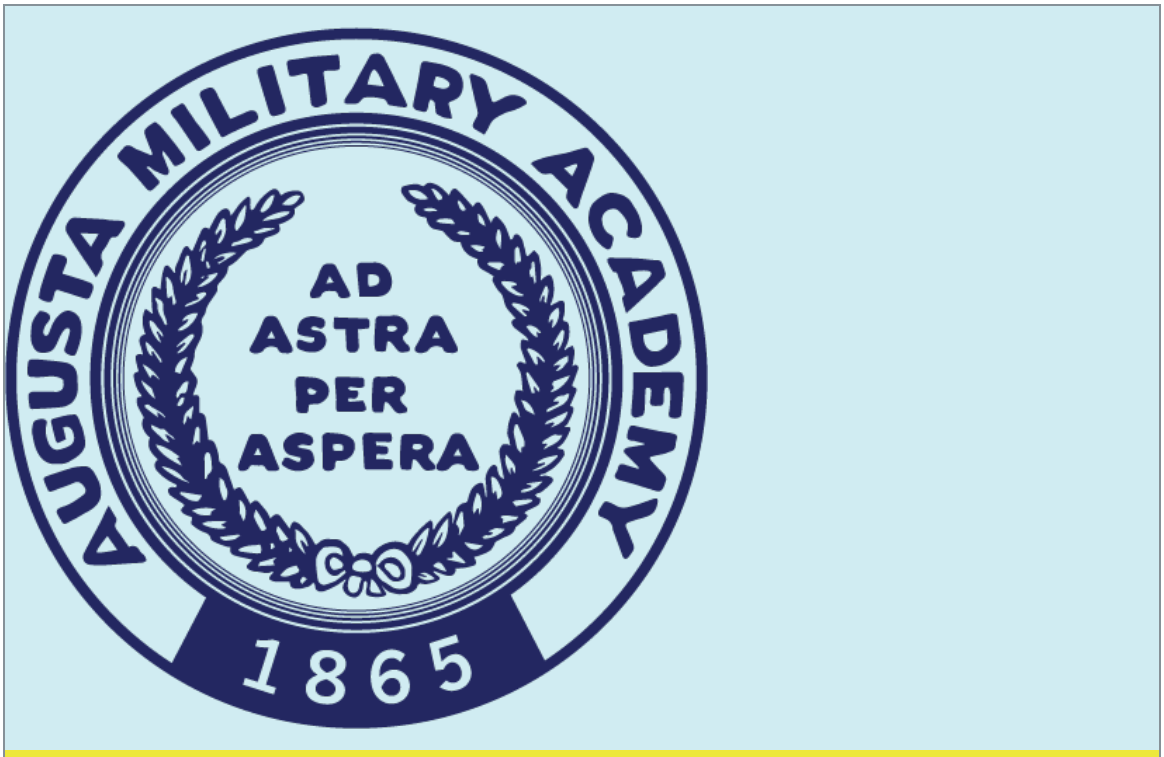
Visitors in June

74

Museum Volunteers

Brian Miller '67

***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!

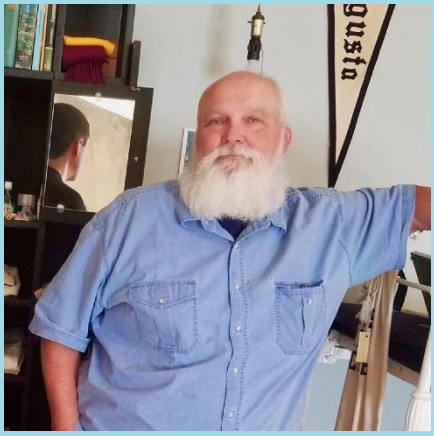
The AMA Alumni Foundation would like to clarify that all of the profits from merchandise sold through our Museum PX store go exclusively to help offset Museum operation costs.

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



vanBreemen's Expressions

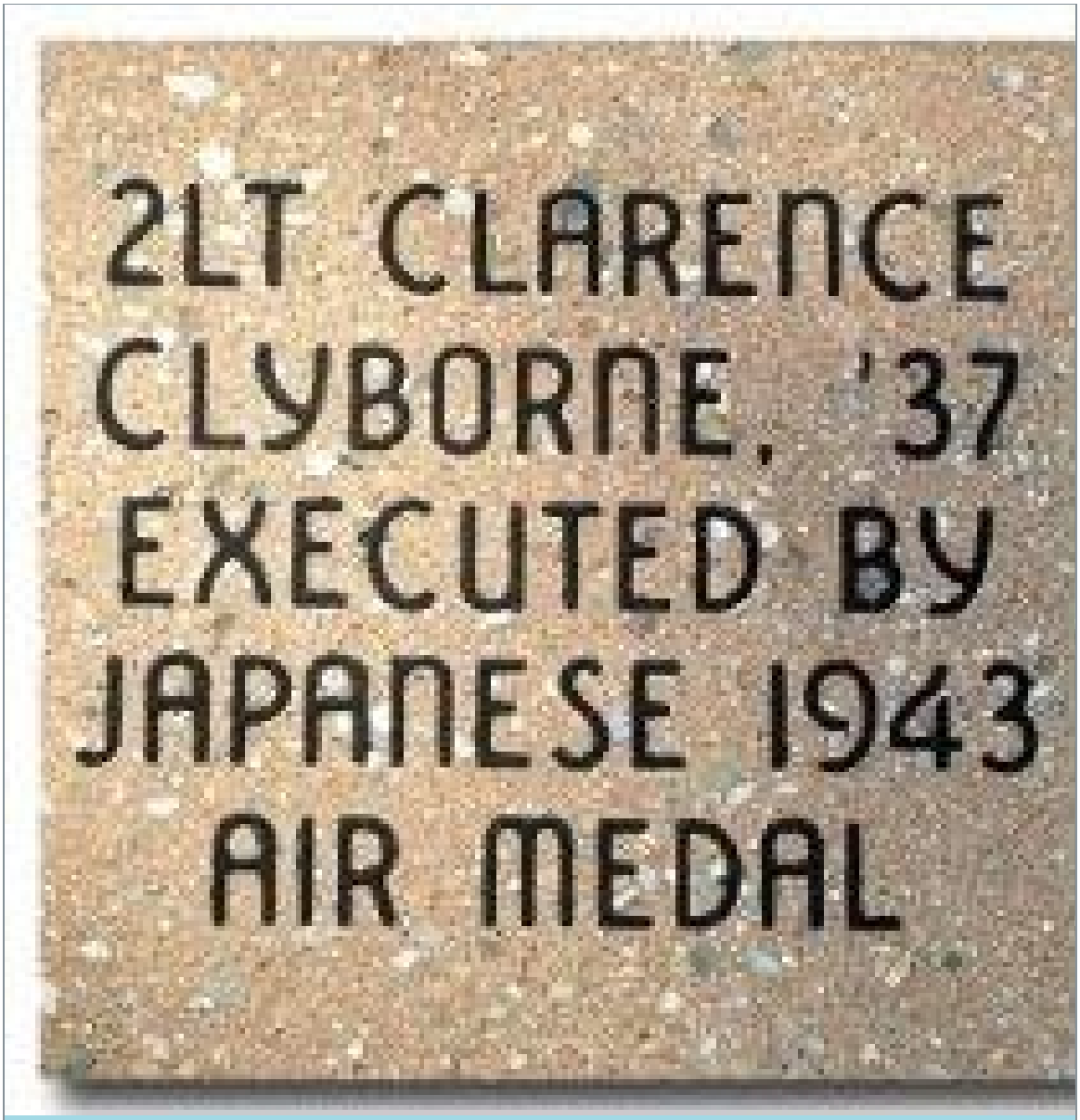
July 1, 2025

Facts vs Rumors

By Rich vanBreemen

I still find it hard to believe that I started at AMA 5 years ago. Having recently retired from my professional life in 2020, I answered the call for a part-time curator job at AMA. At the time, I had no idea where that adventure would lead me. To say it's been a fascinating journey would be a gross understatement. Admittedly, when I first sat down at my new desk, I had no idea what I was supposed to be doing, and at the time, neither did my supervisor. Leaving me alone without adult supervision is never a good idea. Left to my own devices, I fell back on what I knew and what I was good at – making lists and organizing.

One of the first things I recognized that could use some "organizing" were the pavers laying in front of the museum and down the walkway. It was difficult to find any specific paver so, one of my very first projects was inventorying them and mapping out their location. This had a secondary benefit of introducing me to a lot of people's names and traditions of the school. When the museum first opened, it seemed a lot of pavers were purchased in memory of the many names on the bronze plaques, now housed inside the museum. This one paver, lying just to the right of the front doorsteps, really caught my eye:



Paver in front of the museum

Being a military history buff, I wanted to know the back story of this paver and its claim. Not knowing much about the school's history or records, BJ d'Orsay turned me on to reviewing the online BAYONET collection. In the Spring of 2002, there was a special WW2 Tribute edition and contained within was a story about Clarence Clyborne. Forced to bail out of his disabled B-24 bomber, December 1st, 1943, he was wounded, captured and executed by

the Japanese. An interesting and tragic story no doubt. My curiosity in the matter was, for the time, quenched.

Jump ahead 5 critical and informative years. During that time, numerous other projects came across my desk; one of the most critical was the updating of our database and the digitization of our records. That "project' has since evolved into the VIRTUALIZATION of our museum and hopefully, preserving the legacy of AMA far beyond our physical presence. But I'm getting ahead of myself. As you all very well know by now, updating our online biographies of the AMA's War Dead has been a large part of my duties the past several months. It has been the source for numerous Newsletter articles and continues to provide literary fodder – this month included.

I have been working my way through the World War II casualties by their last year at AMA. When I reached 1937 and it was time to write up Clarence Clyborne, I realized I needed more information about the man, his time at AMA, and the circumstances surrounding his death, aside from the brief review I did in 2020

Clarence Alfred Clyborne Jr.

Born in 1919 in Richmond, Virginia, he moved to the mountains of Bluefield, West Virginia, at a very young age, the only son of a prominent Railroad and Coal mining businessman. Clarence (also known as Cleaber) arrived at AMA in the fall of 1933, a scrappy little boy, assigned to B Company. Although born to some wealth, on his own merits, he proved himself to be a good cadet. His grades for his first year were above average, and he played minnow sports and was the Intramural Boxing champion for his weight class (115 pounds). His successful first year at AMA set the tone for his next 3 years in Ft. Defiance.

Cleaber, 1934

With each successive year, he rose in rank and stature within the school. His grades consistently kept him on the Honor Roll, and his involvement in school activities increased accordingly. By the time CA (no longer known as Cleaber) reached the end of his AMA career, he was Captain of "D" Company, President of the Student Body, YMCA, Honor Committee, and Bible Class. These were but a

few of his extracurricular activities, so it should come as no surprise that he was one of six young men welcomed into the Ad Astra Per Aspera Society in 1937.

Clarence (CA) Clyborne, 1937

CA returned to his home in Bluefield, WV after graduating from AMA. The 1940 US Census shows that CA had completed only 1 year at the Univ. of TN by that time. His 1940 draft card lists him as a student Univ of TN. However, a newspaper article from the

Richmond Times Dispatch (Feb 14, 1942), lists him as having been a UVA student as well. There are notes in his military records as having completed 3 years of college. Other records indicate he was employed as a salesclerk. Not certain of the actual timeline, we can safely assume CA was continuing his education and working part time – that is until 1941.

December 1941, war breaks out and CA answers his country's call to arms. He joins the US Army Air Corps January 5,1942 (service #15073578). Despite not having a college degree, his college experience coupled with his military training at AMA and his academic record enabled him to join the armed forces as an officer (candidate).and he entered flight training as an Aviation Cadet that same year ('42). Upon completion of his training, he was designated as a bombardier on a B-24 Liberator. Eventually assigned to the 10th Air Force in the Pacific Theater of Operations, he arrived at his duty station in Pandaveswar, India. It is interesting to note that Thomas A. Roller '36 was in the same theater of operations around the same time. They would most certainly have known each other at AMA. Thomas was assigned as a navigator on cargo aircraft, so the odds of the two of them ever crossing paths in theater are very, very slim. However, the dreamer in me can't help but think if they had, they would have tipped back a few at the Officer's club for good old AMA.

So far, most of what I was able to dig up on Clyborne tracked with the story as we knew it, but this is where things begin to skew. Undisclosed in pervious articles about CA, I learned that he had gotten married in June of 1943 in El Paso TX (Biggs Field), shortly before shipping out for war. In September of that same year, the couple had their only child, Ronald Clyborne. *(NOTE: Some of the information contained in this article was obtained from a paper written by Ronald about his father in a VFW Post's Memorial for fallen WW2 service men.)*

Continuing to dig into Clyborne's military records, I was able to determine that the aircraft he was on when shot down was B-24J #42-73222 (named "BUGS BUNNY"). Once you have that, a lot of other information becomes available. There is a web site, specifically dedicated to lost aircraft in the Pacific during the war called "pacificwrecks.com". Searching that web site led me to a detailed account of the final mission and the fate of the aircraft and crew.

The crew of "BUGS BUNNY", standing in front of another aircraft.
C.A. Clyborne is standing on the right of the photo.
On the fateful flight, navigator Erwin replaced Kaufman.

According to after action reports, the B-24 was intercepted by Japanese fighter planes and shot down. The planned fighter escort of P-51s had failed to meet them at the rendezvous point, so they carried out their mission unescorted. This proved to be disastrous with 10 of the 50 bombers in the group being shot down. "BUGS BUNNY" was one of them. There were only 2 known survivors of the plane being shot down, Clyborne being one (bombardier) and the navigator, 1st Lt. Grant Erwin. Erwin and Clyborne were taken prisoner with only Erwin surviving the war, so his account is the only known record of events that day.

After the war, the Fetterman family asked Grant Erwin about the flight crew he was with - this is his account: *"The B-24 Liberator of which I was the navigator was shot down on Dec. 1, 1943, near Bassein, Burma. I had never heard of Inye, Burma, but I now know that it is less than a mile from Bassein. There certainly were banana groves where I landed. I was with a crew that included pilot Carpenter. The entire crew, except for myself, had just arrived in India and was* ***on its first combat mission****. Its regular navigator had the good fortune to contract malaria in Cairo, where the crew stopped en-route from the States. Most of the crew I had been flying with (normally) were dead, so I filled in here and there. Our colonel introduced me to the two pilots the morning of that mission, but I never heard the names of the others in the crew, except the bombardier, Clyborne, the only other crew member who bailed out, to my knowledge. He (Clyborne) died that same month in Bassein, having been severely injured when he landed (because his parachute had been set afire by incendiary bullets from a Japanese fighter plane). None of the rest of that crew ever turned up. Assuming that crew list you have is correct, and I have no reason to think otherwise, then Bill Fetterman was indeed on that B-24.*

Stricken B-24 Liberator (not "BUGS BUNNY")

The mission that day was to bomb Rangoon's railway marshaling yards, which we did. It included 50 B-24s, of which ten were shot down. We were supposed to be escorted by P-51 fighter aircraft but missed our rendezvous with them. They caught up with the B-24s after most or all of the ten were already shot down. One P-51 was shot down and its pilot, Allen DuBose, ended up in the same cell as I was in in Rangoon. Just before Clyborne and I bailed out, there was a tremendous explosion in the cockpit. The nose gunner (already dead) and the bombardier and I were in the nose, ahead of the cockpit. I looked back through the astrodome and saw the cockpit windows were gone and no pilots at the controls. I knelt down beside the nose wheel intending to go back to the flight deck and help out, having done just that on an earlier mission, but discovered this time that the entire fuselage from the flight deck back was a roaring tunnel of flames. I ordered Clyborne to bail out and then did so myself. By then we were at an altitude of about 200 feet, so I landed pretty hard but not nearly as hard as poor Clyborne. The B-24 continued its dive, disappeared over a low hill, and then exploded as it hit. There should have been eight bodies, but it is possible that the flames and the explosion consumed or scattered three of them."

It should be noted at this point, that nowhere in the official records or in this only firsthand account, is it inferred that Clyborne was EXECUTED by his Japanese captors. This doesn't mean it didn't happen; it just means that saying so is speculation. A couple of historic things to consider: The Imperial Japanese were NOT signatories of the Genevia Convention and therefore did not feel obligated to treat their prisoners of war humanely. Numerous accounts prove the opposite to be true – the Japanese captors were often barbaric in their treatment of POWs. They themselves would also have had limited medical resources in theater and it would be reasonable to believe they withheld medical treatment to Clyborne who would succumb to his wounds naturally.

At the end of the war, the other 8 members of the "BUGS BUNNY" crew were MIA and presumed dead. None of their bodies were recovered at the time. Clyborne's remains were never recovered, and he was officially declared Dead as of December 31st, 1943. For all practical purposes, our story would end here, but as the saying goes, "BUT WAIT – THERE'S MORE!"

Almost as a footnote to the PACIFIC WRECKS account, there is a link, taking us to another connected, and equally tragic story. Following the fall of Rangoon near the end of the war, the US Army's Grave Registration service located what they believed to be the remains of 5 of the BUGS BUNNY's crew, buried by local natives or the Japanese in a banana grove. These remains were exhumed and were to be transported to the Philippines for identification and proper burial.

On May 17, 1946, a C-47B Skytrain (serial number 43-48308), piloted by 1st Lt. Melvin L. Power, left Rangoon airport carrying a flight crew of 3 plus 8 passengers, and 37 remains which had been retrieved from makeshift cemeteries around the Rangoon POW camp. Amongst these 37 remains were 5 unidentified (suspected) members of "BUGS BUNNY". Two of the passengers on the flight,

were on their way to a conference and had in their possession extensive information on aircraft crash sites, Japanese executions and isolated burials obtained after weeks of investigations in Rangoon. That plane had to have been crowded and what a crazy collection of emotions and thoughts must have filled its cargo hold. As it is, fate can be a fickle thing and so it was for this aircraft. While enroute to Akyab Island, the pilot, Lt. Power, radioed that he was traveling northeast over land, which was a deviation from his filed flight plan. It is believed that he was encountering bad weather, and the pilot had a history of "not liking to fly over water". That position report was the last time C-47 #43-48308 was ever heard from. The wreckage of this aircraft has never been located. The entire crew and remains aboard remain listed as Missing in Action. The loss of life and the returning remains is tragic for certain, but the information that the two officers were carrying about other lost aircraft and POWs eliminated the chance to bring closure to many other families as well. There was a report in 2009 that the wreckage had been located, but that has proven to be in error when the wreckage was examined by JPAC (the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command).

Air Medal and Purple Heart as posthumously awarded to 2nd Lt. Clarence A. Clyborne Jr.

Looking back on this article, I am reminded of the incredible sacrifices made by millions of young men, as well as their families. Researching the lives and deaths of these cadets highlights that in war, there are no winners - only those who live and those who die. Some of the best and brightest of what we now call "The Greatest Generation" were lost. The impact of the war ended for these cadets with their deaths, but the war's impact on family, friends, and comrades who survived would follow them for

the rest of their lives and affect how THEY would interact with others. The ripple effect of each loss spreads further than just those lost souls. We pledge to remember them through their stories in the hope that we never forget what they did for us and pray we never have to do it again.
If you wish to see the official AMA online biography for Clarence A. Clyborne Jr. please follow the link below:
https://amamuseum.catalogaccess.com/people/2852

Doug Pennock's Viewpoint

July 1, 2025

Greetings everyone,

If you have ever wondered whether our work at the AMA Museum is worth the effort or just a waste of time, consider what has transpired over the past 60 days.

Event number 1. Our Board Secretary and the AMA Sports Hall of Fame Chairman contacted our latest inductee, **Thomas Stillwagon '63**, to inform him that he had been nominated to the Hall of Fame. John was unaware that at the time, Tom was in the ICU. This one phone call had an incredibly positive effect on Tom, according to his wife Linda. When John called Tom once again a week later to let him know that he had been selected for the HOF, Linda, Tom's wife, answered the phone and informed John that

Tom had passed away two days before. Linda went on to tell John that even in his weakened state, all Tom talked about after John's initial phone call was AMA and his Army days. So, an action precipitated by AMA, caused Tom to remain upbeat until the very end.

Event number 2. Jorge Rovirosa '70 arranged to purchase two bricks that are now placed at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia, to honor our two brothers, **LTC John Mathews '27 and 1st Lt. James McClatchey '38,** who lost their lives on that day in 1944. On May 26, 2025, seven AMA alumni attended the Brick dedication ceremony. Jorge was able to speak to Col. Mathew's daughter, Marianne, several times. Her thoughts about the bricks, AMA, and Bob Bradford '50, are printed in a handwritten letter that appears at the beginning of this newsletter.

Event number 3. Hopefully, you have read Rich vanBreemen's excellent article on **2nd Lt. Clarence Clayborne '37,** which appears just before my commentary in this month's issue of the Newsletter. Rich told me yesterday that he had spoken to Lt. Claiborne's 82-year-old son, Ron, the previous week, and had a very long and informative conversation with him. Ron was unaware that his father had attended AMA; he only knew that he had been in Military School in Virginia and assumed he had been at VMI!

Outcome: Over the past eight weeks, a relatively short period in the AMA timeline, the AMA Museum and AMA alumni have made a significant and positive impact on many alumni family members who are not part of our history and may also be unaware of our existence. Additionally, the many visitors to our museum are

treated to a master class in AMA's history by Chris Correa. The enormous amount of information that Chris, Elizabeth Andrews, Rich, Bj d'Orsay '70, and Jeff Wenzel '70 have added and continue to add to our digital library is impressive. Last but probably most important, every year in early September, we all gather in Staunton to celebrate our brotherhood. So yes, our work at the AMA Alumni Foundation and Museum is most certainly worth the effort!

Doug out.

The Museum Newsletter is written and prepared by Doug Pennock.
Trudy Pennock and Marc Aronson '68 edit it.

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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