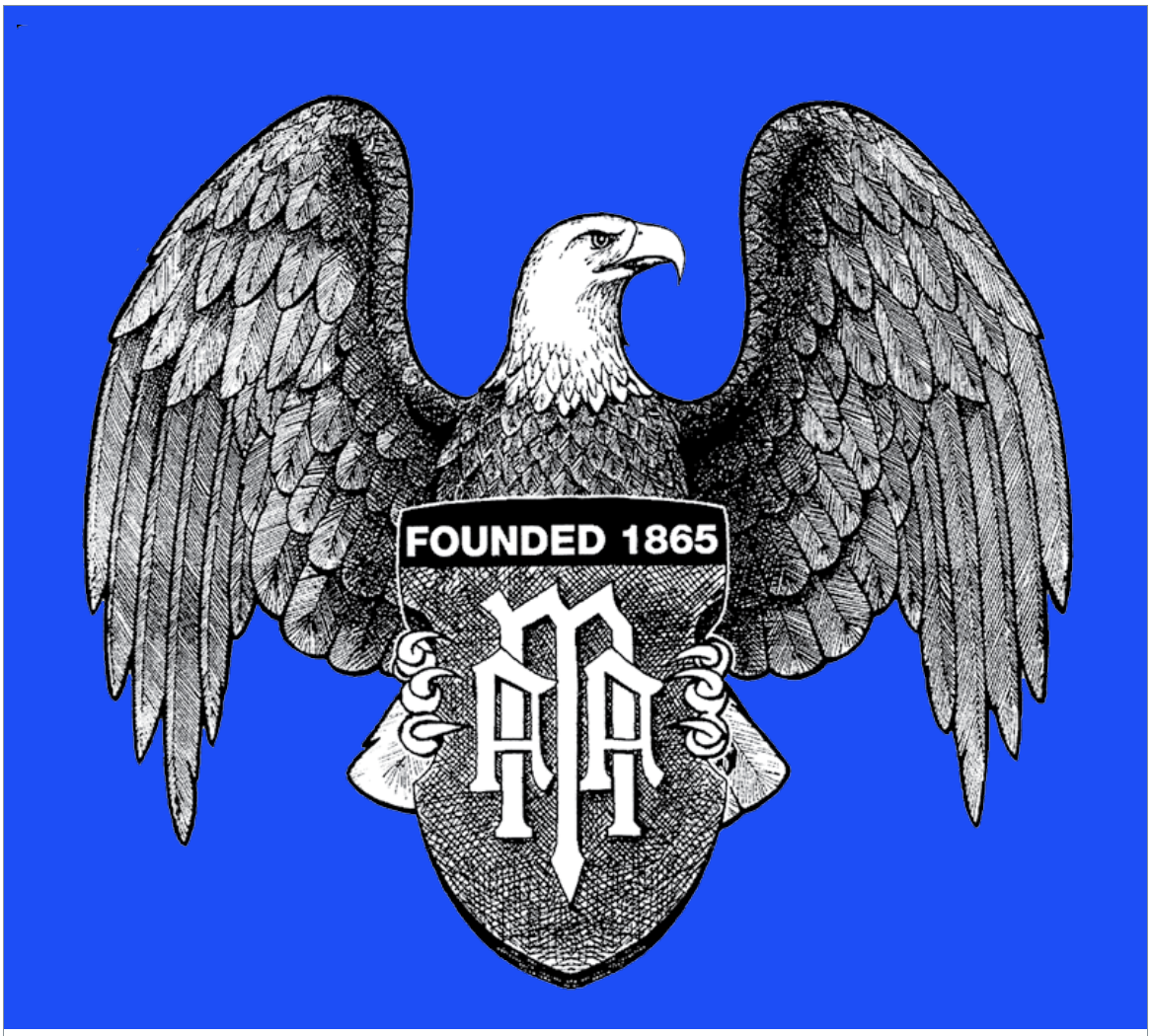
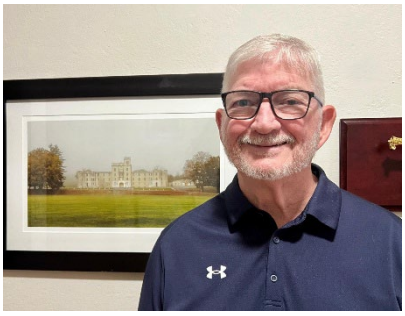


AUGUSTA MILITARY ACADEMY ALUMNI FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

April - 2026

THE AMA MEMORIAL



Chairman's Message

Douglas W. Pennock '72

April 1, 2026

Dear fellow alumni and friends,

I want to apologize to everyone for the lack of content in this month's newsletter. To be honest, I've been overwhelmed with personal matters. One of them is that I'm in the middle of finalizing a book manuscript I plan to publish this year.

There is nothing new to report regarding the AMA Memorial project. The balance in the Memorial building fund is currently about $245,000, and we continue to prepare the long-term rental contract between the Stone Church and the AMA Foundation for the land on which the Memorial will be built. Tom Del Valle has taken the lead in working directly with our attorney to develop a document that protects both sides. If any of you have worked with a lawyer in this kind of collaboration, you understand that it is an agonizing and tedious process. I really appreciate all of the hours Tom has spent on this!

We expect to have a document in the Church's hands within the next 30 days, and I expect that we should have a signed contract sometime in May.

Remember to register for the September 2026 reunion. The sooner the Reunion Committee knows the headcount, the sooner they can let the hotel know what we will require of them. I am very pleased to report that Reunion 2026 sponsorship pledges and payments are exactly where they were at this time last year. Registration is behind, and the Rifle raffle is pretty much on par with last year.

Please continue to send your donations to the AMA Memorial Fund and to support the Museum operating fund, as one is distinct from the other.

Cordially,
Douglas W. Pennock
Chairman

QUICK LINKS

[Register for Reunion 2026]

[Buy Rifle Raffle Tickets]

[Reunion Sponsorship]

[AMA Memorial Sponsorship Donor Agreement]

[Museum General Fund Donation]

HERB MAHER '73
Co-Chair Reunion Committee

WEBSITE IS OPEN FOR 2026 REUNION REGISTRATION!
September 10th, 11th & 12th

YES! The website is open amaalumni.org/2026-reunion for our 2026 Reunion Registration, Sponsorships, and the Rifle Raffle.

This year's 2026 Reunion Committee has made a few changes to enhance the pleasure of attending our upcoming reunion.

These changes are:

· Suggested excursions for you and your travelling companions while in Staunton. We have selected numerous

sites that you may want to visit during your stay. Information is available on the reunion website and at the Registration Table.

· Purchasing a Reserved Table ($500.00) for *either* Friday's or Saturday's dinner. This is a new concept we thought would help you be surrounded by your closest friends (up to 8 persons) and make your meal more enjoyable. You can reserve your table when registering on the website. When purchasing a table, the price of a meal is **not** included.

· Cocktail hour and meals have been moved an hour earlier.

· The cost of the rooms is only $127.00 per night for a limited number of rooms, so please register early!

· "Ladies Time Out" on Friday, beginning at 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, will be decided by our wonderful ladies either on the day of or before their activities.

· The Founder's Day ceremony will return to the Old Stone Church Cemetery.

· Following the Founder's Day ceremony, we are moving our Saturday Founder's Day Luncheon to the John Craig Fellowship Hall in the Old Stone Church, followed by the annual Sports Hall of Fame inductions.

This year's reunion committee realizes we are not as young as we used to be, which is why we are doing everything we can to slow things down and allow more time for fellowship with one another. Some of us have traveled a great distance to attend our reunions, and we want to make sure your efforts will be appreciated. This is an event you will not want to miss! Roll Call will be taken, so be there, be square, and be on time!

We look forward to seeing you in September!

AMA Alumni Reunion
September 10 -12, 2026

Honoring the classes of
'46, '51, '56, '61, '66, 71, '76, and '81

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 $127.00 per night, which includes covered parking.

You may register for Reunion 2026
HERE

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Become a Reunion Sponsor

For the past several years, our Alumni Weekend has been fully funded by the generosity of our own. That says a great deal about the kind of men that AMA produced.

If you would like to help sponsor one of this year's events or venues, we would be grateful. Every contribution, regardless of size, plays a role in making the weekend something we can all be proud of.

Sponsors will be recognized throughout the reunion.

Please click HERE to sponsor an event

Below is a list of this year's sponsorship opportunities.

You may sponsor a portion of the venue or the entire venue. Your choice.

Registration	$1,500.00
Hospitality Suite	$1,500.00
Band Company Breakfast	$1,000.00
Friday Banquet	$6,400.00
Saturday Breakfast	$2,300.00
Saturday Lunch	$4,200.00
Saturday Dinner	$6,400.00
Flowers	$500.00
Reunion General Fund	Any Amount

Reunion 2026 Sponsors

Category	Cost	Sponsors	Pledge	Status	Paid	Date
Registration	$ 1,500	Doug Pennock '72	$ 1,500			
Hospitality	$ 1,500	Jeff Wenzel '70	$ 1,500	Paid	$ 1,500.00	3/10/2
Reunion General Fund	$ 2,000	Doug Driscoll '72	$ 500	Paid	$ 500.00	2/19/2
		Herb Maher '72	$ 500			
Band Breakfast	$ 1,000	Doug Driscoll '72	$ 500	Paid	$ 500.00	2/19/2
		Joe Gallehugh '70	$ 500			
Friday Dinner	$ 6,400					
Saturday Breakfast	$ 2,300					
Saturday Lunch	$ 4,200		$ -			
Saturday Dinner	$ 6,400	Marc Aronson '69	$ 3,200			
Flowers	$ 500					
TOTAL	**$ 25,800**		**$ 8,200**		**$ 2,500.00**	

Springfield M1A
50th Anniversary Rifle

[Watch the Video]

This year, we are offering a very special rifle for our annual Rifle Raffle.

In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Springfield M1A version of the iconic semi-auto M14, Smithfield Armory produced a limited production of 1,974 units. This beautiful collector's rifle includes a handcrafted wooden display case, laser-engraved operating rod, a certificate of authenticity, and additional accessories.

Tickets will go on sale immediately. Ticket prices are $25 per single or $100 for a five-pack. You may purchase your tickets online HERE, or you can send a check to the Museum at: PO Box 100, Ft. Defiance, VA 24437-0100

22" BARREL

The G.I. 22-inch carbon steel barrel on the M1A 50th Anniversary rifle wrings all available performance out of the 7.62 round.

MATCH-GRADE APERTURE REAR SIGHT

The match grade non-hooded rear sight features a small .052" aperture, ½ M.O.A. windage adjustments, and 1 M.O.A. elevation increments.

ARMY TECHNICAL MANUAL

Like M1A rifles from 50 years ago, a reproduction M14 Army TM-9-1005-223-12 technical manual is included.

TWO-STAGE TUNED TRIGGER

MIA CLEANING KIT

OD GREEN SLING

AMA Alumni Foundation, Inc.
2026 Annual Election Nomination Announcement

In 2022, the Foundation updated its By-Laws to hold annual spring elections using easy online voting.

Five Director Positions Open
Each Director serves a three-year term. This year, the following five members are finishing their terms and would like to serve another term:

- Victor Gomez, ’68
- Jorge Rovirosa, ’70
- Garry Granger, ’71
- Herb Maher, ’72
- Tom Del Valle, ’73

Nominations Are Open and Encouraged!

Any qualified AMA Alumnus (see By-Laws Article II, Sections 2.1 & 2.2) may nominate themselves or someone else.
Nomination Deadline: Friday, April 10, 2026

Email nominations to Doug Pennock at **chairman.amafoundation@amaalumni.org** and copy John Arthur at **john.arthur@cdg-1.com**.

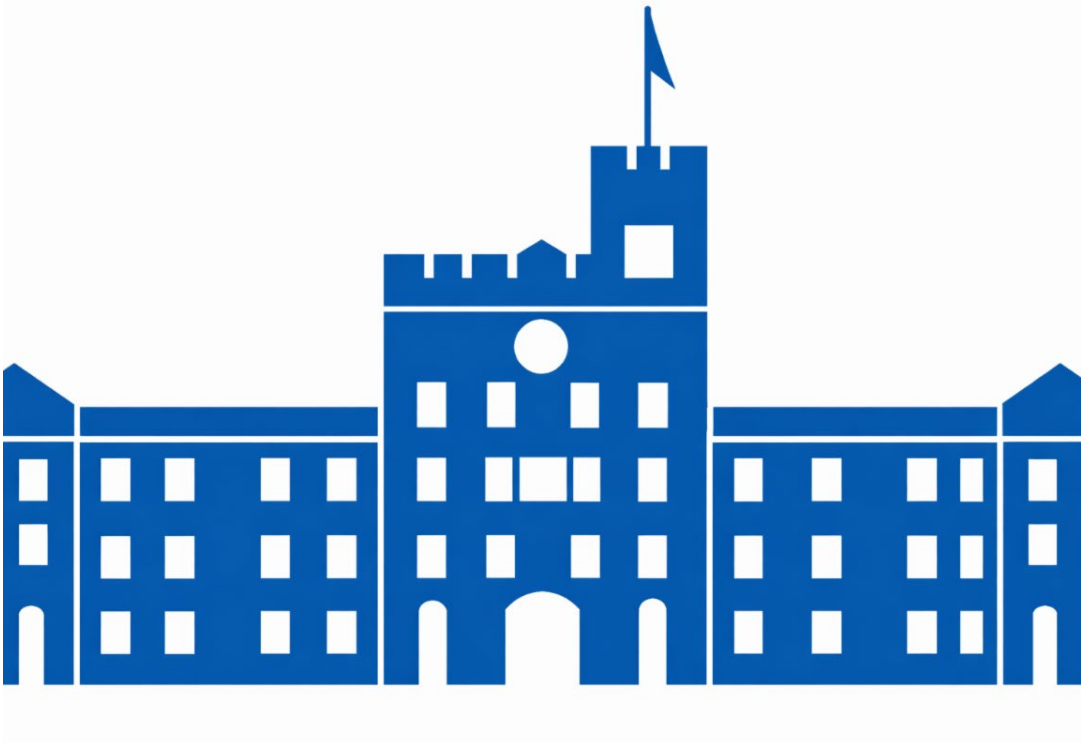
How to Vote
A simple 15-day online ballot (via Google Forms) will be sent to everyone on the AMA email newsletter list.
If you're not receiving the newsletter and want to vote, click here to join the list.

Voting Window:
Monday, April 13, 2026 – Tuesday, April 28, 2026 (closes at Noon Eastern DST)
Key Dates

- March 13, 2026 – Nominations announced
- April 10, 2026 – Nominations close
- April 13–28, 2026 – Online voting
- Saturday, May 2, 2026 – New Board holds organizational Zoom meeting to elect officers
- Monday, May 2, 2026 – Results and new officers announced via newsletter and social media

We look forward to your participation!

Augusta Military Academy Alumni Foundation Scholarship



AMA LEGACY SCHOLARSHIPS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

THE DEADLINE HAS BEEN EXTENDED, AND THE APPLICATIONS ARE DIGITAL

The NEW "postmark" deadline for receiving the AMA Scholarship applications for this year is NOW 11:59 PM April 30th, 2026

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

The following link to the AMA Legacy Scholarships includes all the information you need to apply.

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

Garry Granger '71
AMA Scholarship Chair

A monthly pledge from everyone who reads this newsletter supports the Museum's operating costs.

MUSEUM

DOCENT DUTY

THANK YOU!

Visitors in February

33

SET UP YOUR MONTHLY DONATION HERE

Museum Volunteers

Elizabeth Andrews
Brian Miller '67
Welcome back, Brian!

***Be* a Volunteer Docent for a weekend. You may be surprised how much fun you will have!**

Online PX has been discontinued

Online PX sales have virtually ceased, so we have decided to discontinue the Online sales feature. You can still purchase items and bricks at the PX, but you must do so in person, by phone, or via email.

You may call the Museum during regular business hours, Wednesday through Sunday, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm.
Email - museum@AMAalumni.org

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

Frank Spencer Jr '49
Friend, Volunteer &
AMA Chaplain
1929-2023 Godspeed

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

Gary Paul ’68

Climbing and Finding His People

By: Chris Correa

April 1, 2026

Conrad Paul didn’t tell his son that his mother was sick, but Gary thinks that’s why his father sent him away for school. He doesn’t know how his father learned about AMA from their home just north of Buffalo, “but I’m glad he did. It was probably the best thing that ever happened to me. It really made me who I became.”

New Cadet Gary Conrad Paul 1966

In three years, Gary became many things at AMA. In his graduation year, he was in the **top 20** of his class, won the Best in Spanish award, and rose to senior NCO. In that latter role, the ***Recall*** notes that Gary “seldom caught up with the

demerit book, but he managed to keep the Commandant's office happy."

Likely of greater appreciation to the corps, he also became a performer.

"BROTHERS TWO make with the 'soul.' Gary Paul [left] and Tom Lasley let off steam – often." ~ Recall 1968

The '66 yearbook shows **fencing** and varsity **soccer** taking up his first year, but as an Old Cadet, Gary stood out for his

musical talents with Lasley, **Wayne Davis**, and **Jim Watts**, making up the band, **Aftermath**, until about **early 1968**.

In another group, Gary and his team gained notoriety as not-so-covert operators. Thirty years before Gary's graduation, the AMA catalog warned Depression-era parents that if "your boy is unwilling to give obedience to our regulations, and to deport himself in an honorable manner, we do not desire him" (Catalog 1938-39, p.10). There was, however, room for nuance. "Of course," it clarified, "we are broad enough to expect a certain amount of innocent mischief and breach of regulations which do not reflect on the character and standing of the boy." This was the loophole that allowed The Re-Decorating Committee to flourish.

Not to be confused with the long-distinguished cadet groups, the **Decorating Committee** and **Cotillion Club**, the re-decorators were in a parallel lineage of guerrilla comedians. "Oh, we just pulled school pranks," Gary answered casually. Among their simpler actions were telling ghost stories about Alfredo or getting a New Cadet out of bed in the middle of the night to take their picture.

For these rudimentary ops, they required only stealth and left no trace, but AMA cadets always level up. Gary admitted, "I can't remember all the stuff that we pulled," but he remembered rolling what were probably **WWI French** cannons from the blacktop up to Commandant **Christy's** office. These pieces were over **1,000 pounds** each, requiring coordinated grunt work, thus fulfilling the "*Per Aspera*" part of the school motto. The "*Ad Astra*" creative flourish was inserting the barrel through Christy's office window. Relocating massive school property

partially into the commandant's lair after hours? Bold, but still rather restrained and brawny.

For a feat of true daring, elevated by technical finesse, they needed to get more personal. "Oh yeah, my Spanish teacher. Nice guy. We rolled his car under the arch right by the bell tower, turned it sideways so if you looked in the courtyard, you'd see the car. Jacked it up. Took all the tires off," took a picture, and disappeared into the night. The souvenir was an extra risk since the camera needed a flash, but nearly 6 decades later, the picture hangs on Gary's wall:

Cadet Paul, Re-Decorating Committee, mission accomplished 1967

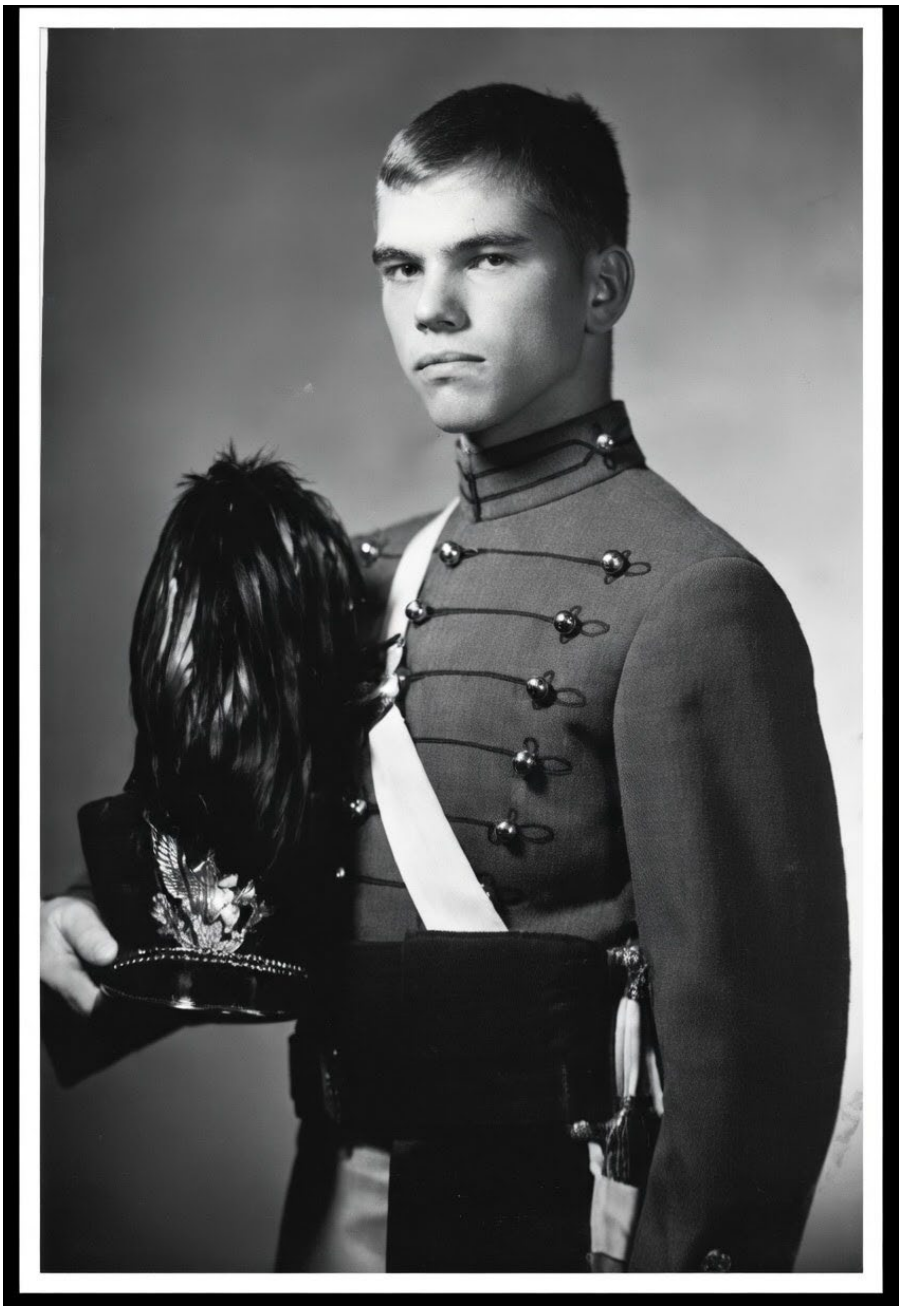
Having exfiltrated, the Redecorators could claim another success – but there was a catch. Gary wonders if one of the rats on the committee got cold feet and turned informer. "We obviously got caught, because I think I was busted a couple

of times that year. I came in as a staff sergeant, and I think I lost rank a couple of times."

In keeping with the academy's judicious approach to "innocent mischief", demotions did not mean disgrace. The team even got official recognition of sorts in 1967:

Was it really worth it? In the wee hours, four cadets representing the "Redecorating Committee" sought to improve the appearance of AMA. Their efforts and call beyond duty was so appreciated by the administration that each decorator received a special pin and 15 penalty tours. It was hard and tedious work – and now, for Gary Paul [center], Scott Shearer [left], Rick Starr, and Don Johnson [right], it's all over – even the penalty. ~ Recall 1967 1967

Gary's moonlighting as a redecorator barely slowed his AMA career. In an administrative decision with hints of wisdom, irony, and clever vengeance, he was promoted one more time. Gary remembers returning to campus at the start of his final year and hearing, "Gary, Sergeant Major, in charge of discipline for the corps."



Sgt. Major Gary C. Paul 1968

Now, he was keeper of the book to which his actions had provided so much detail, and he was reporting to the

Commandant on much friendlier terms. The job even came with an office.

It changed his priorities. In that third year, having to "keep tabs" on every disciplinary case in the corps, "I was getting responsibility. Obviously, my second year, we screwed around so much….but those days were behind me. I tried to be on the straight and narrow."

It was a lot to manage. Even after dropping athletics and performance from his schedule, the yearbook still **noticed** that "his spare time was scarce", though he eventually managed to find some off-duty time:

Final Ball
Monday, June 3, 1968

*“Merci, Uffner gives Gary his reward under the arch.”*Page 68

"HAVE MERCY, or Melodie… and Gary Paul knows that he can have both at the Final Ball." Page 241

With his AMA responsibilities fulfilled at graduation, Gary found himself without occupational goals to replace them. In the fall of 1968, he enrolled at **Bradley University** in Peoria and studied "general business…nothing specific. I had no idea what I wanted to do", but he had a connection. His father knew the personnel manager at the Bank of Buffalo. Gary had never considered banking, but his father reminded him, "you gotta get a job," so he agreed to an interview that turned into a minimum wage post that began

his career. “One thing led to another, and I thrived in that. I had some good mentors along the way.”

The unexpected drama of his career started in the first week. He was working as a teller in a “hoity swanky” part of downtown Buffalo. “I got held up. A guy in a long trench coat, mirror sunglasses, and some kind of a hat held a pistol to my forehead, but that didn’t turn me off. I think I got out of that part of banking pretty quick to go into the corporate side.”

The Bank of Buffalo became the Bank of New York. He ran their Visa credit card department for 10 years. A friend moved to a Maryland bank and lured Gary and his wife down to Severna Park to work with him. After several years, he was hired by First American Bank. This was an honor for Gary, because of how much he respected its chairman, the former Defense Secretary, presidential adviser, and DC lawyer, Clark Clifford, “a very distinguished gentleman.”

From First American, Gary’s climb continued through banks in Baltimore and DC. Before retiring, he spent his last 10 years in DC as the head of all corporate lending for two banks owned by the same “billionaire, crazy guy….[H]e was so rough, you wouldn’t think he had a high school education, but [he was] a multi-billionaire….I liked him a lot. He reminded me of my father.”

Dealing with extravagant sums of big city money became routine in Gary’s life, and so did the players with so much intellect and ambition that they had scarce room for a conscience. One of them was a mentor in the technical aspects of banking. “Moral character of a piece of spaghetti. You either loved the guy or hated him”, but Gary was pragmatic. “I knew what he was, but he treated me well,

and I learned. He knew the basics down to the core, and that's what kept me going all my career."

Many clients had similar character defects. "I've been exposed to so many things in my line of work." In a couple instances in Buffalo, he got urgent tips to bail out of deals before the client's business practices, or the occasional dead victims thereof, literally became federal cases.

He took the advice each time, but the government still visited him regularly. "In my last years [in Buffalo] and throughout my career in Maryland and DC, I had to go through almost annual FBI background checks and be interviewed because of the positions that I held. Believe it or not, I passed. I don't know how," he chuckled.

Amid constant dealings with Scorsese-esque shady operators, Gary was eager to help out smaller or emerging businesses. "I always said in my last 10, 15 years to the people who worked for me, I'd rather do business with someone who's seen the downside and crawled their way back up, because that to me shows ethics, character, and desire. They're not in it just for the quick buck. They want to build a legacy for their families."

Of his colleagues, the one that means the most to him now defied stereotypes. In the mid-90s, Gary was working out of a bank in downtown Baltimore when he met a newcomer. "A young Black fella, and some of the hoity-toities of the bank didn't treat him very well. *I liked him*. Good strong Christian background, and all that kind of stuff, and I mentored him." Were there more like him in the industry? Gary sighed, "generally not. Few and far between."

That young protégé didn't forget, especially after Gary's wife of 52 years, Marsha, died **in 2024**. "To this day, particularly for the last two years since I've been sick, and my wife passed, he sends me *daily* motivations, and he calls me once a month or more often….Super sweet guy" (who, perhaps not surprisingly, got out of banking and is now a consultant for a finance company.)

For a while, Gary had had enough too. He left banking to be the CFO for one of his Maryland clients, an elite, family-run event planner that had orchestrated every presidential inaugural event since Truman's. That's how Gary and his wife found themselves in a stretch limo bound for President Clinton's inaugural ball.

Being part of a family business was a welcome change, but when strife within the family began to complicate Gary's job, he returned to his previous bank for the last chapter of his career. It was brief. "That bank started to turn, and that's when I ended up retiring. I said, 'enough is enough.'"

Retirement was transcendent. He built a cabin in a small mountain town in North Carolina where it was "8 bucks for a haircut. I was in heaven." When he also gifted his barber the tuxedo he'd worn to the inaugural ball, "I could see the glow. You would've thought I gave him a million bucks."

Gary knew he was in his element. "Yeah, no more corporate crap for me….I've gone back to basics. Seen two kids grow up and grandkids. They're all doing well….I have some very very nice neighbors….Salt of the earth people." While his yearning for a rod and reel faded once he

finally got the time, he gets his contentment from “traveling here and there and just enjoying the country. It’s peaceful.”

Gary Paul ’68 (right), son Christopher, and dog Sha-Sha

October 5, 2025

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

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.

Augusta Military Academy Museum | 540-248-3007
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