

Association of Military Musicians

AMM's Mission

The Association of Military Musicians is a fraternal organization that strives to preserve the proud tradition of military music. Military musical ensembles don't just play marches and ceremonial music—today's audience demands much more than that, and with panache to boot!

Membership is open to any and all who have served in a military musical organization, whether a band, orchestra, fife & drum corps, or a vocal group.

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Sound Off!

Association of Military Musicians

2012/2013 Officers

- Jon Eggleston—President
- Harry Booth—Vice President
- Deby Kidney—Secretary
- Allen Lawless—Treasurer

Serving AMM

- Mike Noland—Entertainment Chairman
- Gary Hartman—Chaplain
- Bill Von Kamp—Librarian
- Frank Hill—Historian
- Glenn Moore—Webmaster
- Allen Lawless—*Sound Off!* Editor

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New Beginnings

The Association of Military Musicians has lost an incredible number of members since the last publication. Not less than six members, some of them long-standing and active members, have passed due to illness and age.

None of us truly like being confronted with our mortality. Whether through fear of the unknown or an unwillingness to let go of this thing called Life, we would prefer just motoring along.

Unfortunately, that's not the way it works. We're all going to make that transition one day and when we do, we hope that we leave this world in a slightly better condition than we found it. We also hope that family members and loved ones have little to worry about while those final arrangements are made for us.

Rather than dwell in the negative, it's reasonable to think that each of these members who have passed would much prefer that we celebrate their lives and remember the good times. So while we do that and perhaps lift a glass in a toast to their memories, collective and individual, let us also think of the future of this

organization.

Membership has dwindled. Longstanding members transition to God's Band. We who are left look at the empty chairs and wonder who is going to fill them. And, maybe just a little, who is next to make that transition.

For the first time perhaps since the beginning of AMM, we have a President who, while a long-time member, is not a military retiree. That fact had concerned him, but it need not. Those who elected him at the last Reunion assured him that his talents, skills, diplomacy, and dedication to the principles under which this organization was first organized were far more important than his prior military status. Let us welcome Jon Eggleston and enjoy his leadership.

Oh, and Jon? By the way, we could really, really use a decided effort to form a Recruiting committee to begin the process of getting new members, new beginnings, and new hope for a vibrant, thriving AMM. Time to get to work.

Just sayin'...

For Your Information...

- If your dues are not current, this will be your final issue of *Sound Off!* For those who get the newsletter by snail mail, the month and date shown on the address label shows your dues status. For those getting your newsletter by email, your dues status will be shown on the organization roster attached to your email. Please update your dues by sending a check for \$15 to the Treasurer. Contact info is on the last page.
- Plans are under way to incorporate a Paypal/credit card option to pay dues on the AMM web site. Please check the web site soon!
- We need an Editor for the newsletter! If you believe this is something you can do for the organization (even if you don't believe, but don't mind learning a new skill), please contact Allen Lawless (you know where the Contact Info is). Three to four newsletters are published each year, which gives you plenty of time to plan the next issue.

2013 Reunion Update

Mike Noland—Entertainment Chairman



The 2013 AMM reunion will be held in Clarksville, TN on the 19th through the 21st of September 2013. This will be the fourth reunion to be held in Clarksville and I hope it will be the biggest and best one to date. The reunion site will be at the Riverview Inn in downtown Clarksville.

For the members who have attended previous reunions here the location will be about 1/2 mile upriver from the Quality Inn. The hotel overlooks the Cumberland River and when you step out the front door you are in downtown Clarksville. Please feel free to check out their website for additional information.

The agenda for the reunion will be pretty much the same as in the past. Thursday the 19th of September will a registration day and you will be free to take in the sights of Clarksville or head off to Nashville or Bowling Green as some of you have done in the past. Bowling Green is the home of the Corvette museum and Nashville is now the home of Antique Archeology which is where the American Pickers have their new store. Clarksville is also home to the 101st Airborne Division and they have an outstanding museum. The post is also home to the largest PX in

the AFEES system and we also have a new commissary. The hospitality room will also be open.

On Friday the 20th of September we will also continue registration. At 1900 hours will have a concert performed for us by the Cumberland Winds. This is a local concert band and a few members are also members of our organization. During the second part of the concert, AMM members will be invited to sit in and participate in the remaining portion of the concert. We hope to have a jam session afterward and invite members of the Cumberland Winds to sit in. Of course the hospitality room will be open all day but will be closed during the concerts. Refreshments can be purchased at the bar during this time.

Saturday the 21st will be the big day. We will continue registration and will have a concert band rehearsal in the morning. Our business meeting will be held sometime in the early afternoon. Later on that evening we will have our dinner dance. The hospitality room will be closed during this time and we will have a cash bar provided by the hotel. Dinner music will be provided and I have been in contact with the Tennessee National Guard to provide a combo for our dance. Dress for the dance will be

(Continued on page 5)

President's Message—by Jon Eggleston



As your new president (believe me, I'm very new at this sort of thing), I think it appropriate to introduce myself. I have become acquainted with many of you in the last twelve years, but I'm sure that to many of you I'm no more than a familiar face, if even that. As military musicians, though, we share a common experience, and connect with each other through the network of places, events, and musicians we have known and remember, each in our own way.

Unlike any previous president of this association, I was a one-hitch military musician, not a career soldier. In 1965, after receiving my draft notice, I enlisted (dodged the draft?). I completed BCT at Ft. Knox, the basic course at the SOM, and shipped out to Korea in May 1966. I was assigned to 8th Army Band more because they needed bodies than through any superior musicianship. I was auditioned by Earl (?) Mays, who was himself overdue for PCS. After the standard 13-month tour, I extended for an additional year (life was good there, and I knew it). I left Korea in June 1968, and went straight to Ft. Lewis for separation. Thus I was not only a one-hitch soldier, but served at only one duty station. That was not, to be sure, the end of my military experience. A dozen or so years later I joined an Army Reserve ambulance company, retrained as a 91A/B combat medic, and ultimately

served in Desert Shield/Storm in 1990-91 (our theme song was "It's Saudi Duty Time").

In the Nineties I tried to reach as many 1966-68 8th Army guys as I could find, but arranging a reunion was like herding cats. Finally I tracked down Igor, who told me with great enthusiasm about ARMM, and the annual reunion made sense as a place for us to gather. As many as ten or twelve of us 8th Army folk came to a couple of reunions, but by then some of us had made so many new friends in the association that we were coming back no matter what. See you in Clarksville.

Speaking of which, please clear your calendars, book your rooms, and send your fees to Mike as soon as possible. We know Mike will do his best for us, so let's give him the financial flexibility to make the best possible arrangements. Mike is way above and beyond in hosting once again, so let's make his job as easy as we can. Thanks.

Finally, there's one more serious matter which requires our attention. We are reminded, way too frequently (see Taps), that ours is a dying organization. It needs also to be a self-renewing, growing organization. Please, in your contacts with military musicians—young, old, active, and retired—promote and recruit to the best of your ability. Thank you very much.

Sincere wishes for a joyful and music-filled holiday season.

Secretary's File

Deby Kidney, AMM Secretary



On 9/22/12, the annual business meeting of the Association of Military Musicians was held at the Research Park Holiday Inn Express as part of the annual reunion. What follows are highlights from the official meeting minutes. I thought that

those of you who were unable to attend might like to know what we discussed.

Outgoing President Dave Ratliff thanked Newsletter editor Allen Lawless for the numerous improvements made since taking over. He also vehemently stressed the need for valid, up-to-date email or snail mail addresses. Members must take ownership of informing the secretary or newsletter editor when an address changes.

Historian Frank Hill suggested the organization purchase a pair of digital frames for digital photos to be displayed at reunions. Each will hold a few years' worth of reunion photos, eliminating the need to haul around heavy scrapbooks from reunion to reunion. A motion was made, voted on and

passed for \$500 to be allotted to purchase frames and digitize historical photos.

Our Librarian, Bill von Kamp, stated that the library is doing very well, since we frequently make us of a "free music" website.

As this year's entertainment chair, Bill presented letters from the mayor, county commissioner and the visitor's bureau, as well as a report on monies collected for the reunion and expenses to be reimbursed. He also read a moving letter from Jean Villanveuve (Meyer's wife) expressing how much the AMM meant to Meyer and to her.

The group recognized the many members and friends of members who have passed away in the past year.

In Old Business, a discussion ensued about how to reinforce our membership by bringing in younger members. Jimmy Belcher suggested forming a membership committee. We discussed using a marketing strategy to sell our group. Dave Ratliff presented a letter from Ken Fidler requesting a second chance to fulfill the marketing strategy for merchandise. However, we all agreed that mem-

bership needs to take priority over merchandise. We need to have people to give/sell merchandise to.

In New Business, Dick Pinter re-introduced his ongoing drive to make everyone aware of the bill that is in Congress to designate "Taps" as the National "Song of Remembrance." He asked everyone to send a letter to their Congressman if they are so inclined, because the bill is currently stuck in committee.

Outgoing Treasurer Mike Noland announced that new Lifetime membership dues cards are now available.

The site of the 2013 AMM reunion was announced as Clarksville, TN. Dates will be 19-21 Sep 2013. Official hotel is the Riverview and the rate is \$79.20 + tax until 19 Aug. Reunion registration fee is \$55 per person. Entertainment chair is Mike Noland.

Last business of the meeting was election of new officers. Jon Eggleston was elected President, Deby Kidney was re-elected Secretary, and Allen Lawless was elected Treasurer.

Taps (continued)



Vernon Ketten, 81, passed on Nov. 27, 2012. Resident of Columbia, SC. Vernon enlisted in July 1950 and retired in August 1972. Vernon was a Vietnam veteran having received the Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal with 2OLC, Vietnam Ser-

vice Medal with 3 Battle Stars, and various other decorations. Vernon is survived by his wife, Ruth, five sons, three daughters, and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and even two great-great-grandchildren.

At AMM Reunions, Vernon always had a story at his fingertips and loved relating his ex-

periences in service to our country. Whether in Korea, Vietnam or Ft. Ord, Vernon never failed to bring a chuckle to those listening to him. We are grateful that Vernon will be put to rest while being honored by a live bugler—a rarity these days. God Speed, Vernon. Don't worry about bringing your tuba—God has one you can use.

Chaplain's Corner

Gary Hartman, AMM Chaplain



No article from Gary for this issue.

Treasurer's Report

Allen Lawless, AMM Treasurer



The transition from Mike Noland, the previous Treasurer, to myself went without a hitch. Mike's records were organized, complete, and revealed his care in maintaining accountability of finances.

After having reimbursed Bill von Kamp \$177.60 for Huntsville-related reunion expenses; Frank Hill \$19.63 for miscellaneous historical equipment; and various other expenditures including administrative expenses and memorium/flowers totaling \$176.43, AMM has \$6,794.19 in the checking account. Several members have renewed their dues and we have one new Lifetime Member, who is Markus R. Bertel.

Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps



"The Commandant's Own," The United States Marine Drum & Bugle Corps, performs martial and popular music for hundreds of thousands of spectators each year. Comprised of over 85 Marine musicians, dressed in ceremonial red and white uniforms, it is known world-wide as a premier musical marching unit.

The history of the unit can be traced to the early days of the Marine Corps. In the 18th and 19th centuries military musicians, or "field musics," provided a means of passing commands to Marines in battle formations. The sound of various drum beats and bugle calls could be easily heard over the noise of the battlefield and signaled Marines to attack the enemy or retire for the evening. Through the 1930's, Marine Corps posts were still authorized a number of buglers and drummers to play the traditional calls and to ring a ship's bell to signal the time.

The United States Marine Drum & Bugle Corps was formed in 1934 to augment the United States Marine Band. The unit provided musical support to ceremonies around the nation's capitol and, during World War II, was tasked with Presidential support duties. For this additional role, they were awarded the scarlet and gold breast cord by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, which they still proudly display on their uniform.



When the war ended, the Drum & Bugle Corps resumed performing at various military and public ceremonies.

In the early 1950s the unit gained considerable acclaim performing for an increasing number of civilian audiences. Music composed specifically for their unique selection of instruments helped establish their reputation for excellence during this period. These factors also led to the unit's formal designation as "The Commandant's Own"—a title noting their unique status as musicians for the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

In the tradition of their "field music" predecessors, these musicians in "The Commandant's Own" are Marines in the truest sense of the word. Every enlisted member is a graduate of Marine Corps recruit training and is trained in basic infantry skills. Prior to enlisting, each Marine must pass a demanding audition for service in the Drum & Bugle Corps. Following Recruit Training and Marine Combat Training, the Marines are assigned to "The Commandant's Own."

The unit travels the world along with the United States Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon and the Official Color Guard of the Marine Corps as the United States Marine Corps Battle Color Detachment.

Taps (more on Page 7)



Myer Villanveuve, 71, of cancer, on August 3, 2012. He was a retired carpenter and musician, and a veteran of the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy. Myer and his wife Jean made it a point to attend every ARMM/AMM reunion going back to almost the beginning.

Myer was one of the few US Navy veterans in AMM. His musical skills on acoustic bass and tuba

never ceased to impress those attending reunions. Ever the considerate, generous musician, his accompaniment and solos were always tasteful, appropriate, and soulful. Myer continued to perform despite suffering from arthritic hands, somehow finding a way to play through the pain and physical issues.

Myer was a welcome, prized member at reunions. Ever gracious, he will be missed like few others.



Leonard "Lenny" Sabia, Jr., 77, passed away August 31, 2012, due to respiratory failure. Leonard is survived by his son Robert (Susan), John (Johanne), and daughter Denise. His son Leonard III (Amy) preceded him, passing away from brain cancer on August 6, 2012.

A veteran of the USMC, Lenny served in the Korean Conflict in 1952, but re-enlisted in the US Army as a trombone and bass viol player. Lenny

served in the 7th ID at Fort Ord, CA; several tours in Germany, and in Washington D.C. with the Army Band. Lenny also served one tour in Lebanon and two tours in Vietnam. Lenny's decorations include the Silver Star, Bronze Star with V-device with oak leaf cluster, Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster and the Air Medal.

Lenny was a long-time member of ARMM/AMM who attended many, many reunions until health issues prevented him from traveling. Like Myer, Lenny will be missed by many in AMM.



Allen L. Kelps, 68, a resident of Kenosha, WI died Wednesday, July 25, 2012 of an undisclosed illness.

Allen was born and grew up in Kenosha. He served in the Fifth Army Band while at Ft. Sheridan, IL, 5AB was known locally as "The President's Band". After the Army, Allen

worked at the G. Leblanc Corporation, capitalizing on his excellent reputation within the Army as a superb instrument repairman. A Lifetime Member of ARMM/AMM, Allen played the saxophone and clarinet and worked in several local dance and wedding bands.

Allen is survived by his wife Charlotte, his daughters and various grandchildren.



Robert "Bob" Parzek, 75, died October 6, 2012, at his home in Merritt Island, FL.

He is survived by his wife, Alice Parzek; son, Bobby Parzek; stepchildren, Debi Martin and Steven Carter; sister, Mary Faust; and brother, Jack Parzek; and eight grandchildren.

After 21 years in U.S. Army Bands, Bob retired to Florida followed by 38 years as a small business owner in auto repair. Bob served his customers in Melbourne and Merritt Island.

Sue von Kamp reports that Bob was a frequent attendee at AMM reunions in the early days of the organization.



Paul A. Rivers, 80, died, October 17, 2012, at home with family by his side after a short illness with Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Paul was a Lifetime Member of AMM. He served combat tours in Korea and Vietnam and was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart with OLC.

As the photo attests, Paul held the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

He later went on to work at the ITT Rayonier Paper Mill in

Jesup, GA for 17 years. Paul held a lifetime love of music, fishing and woodworking. He was a member of the VFW, American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans.

He will be greatly missed by all of those who knew and loved him.

Survivors are his wife, Mary Vivian Rivers of Hinesville; three sons, Robert Las Vegas, NV., Kenneth of Pensacola, Fla., and Patrick of Hinesville; three daughters, Alice, Peggy, and Mary along with a host of grand- and great-grandchildren.

Vietnam—A Musician's Hell

By David M. Smith, CW4, USA, Retired. Used by permission.



My iPod nano has the capacity to store about 4,000 songs on its 16GB memory. I have a Master of Music degree from one of the country's most prestigious universities and have spent over 40 years in a career as a performing musician. I'm not sure that I know or have heard 4,000 songs in my

lifetime. Ah, brave new world that has such technology in it.

The shifts in technology (not necessarily advances) during my lifetime read like the genealogical begats in The Book of Exodus. The iPod (or any other MP3 player of the 1990s) was fathered to some degree by the 1980s-era compact disc and its ability to store data digitally. The precursor to the CD was the analog cassette tape of the mid-1970s which replaced the 8-Track player of the late-1960s. The 8-Track was a more portable means of playback than the cumbersome reel-to-reel machines that were the state-of-the-art when I was in Vietnam.

One month, a hootchmate of mine bought the very last Ampex AG-600 reel-to-reel machines in the Phu Bai PX. Its size made it anything but portable...the tape deck measured about 24"x36"x8"

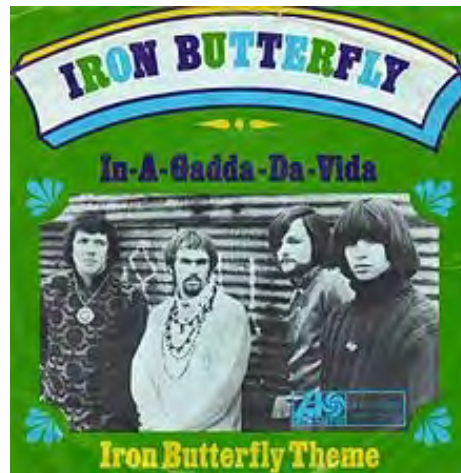
and it was heavy enough to make us wince at the thought of rearranging our limited furniture. Add its attendant speakers and amplifier and the whole rig was equivalent in size to an upright piano.

The purchase set him back almost all of the discretionary income that his staff sergeant's monthly pay of \$236.00 plus \$65.00 hostile fire pay plus \$17.00 foreign duty pay allowed. But the soft, honeyed glow of the indicator lights; the interactive play as the needle on the VU gain meter skipped in time to the music; the chance to focus on the slow, relentless turning of those 7½ inch reels made it worthwhile for him. Unfortunately, he only had enough money left for one album.

He played his one album...over and over. He played the album every waking moment when he was in the hootch...over and over. He played the album from start to finish without a break...over and over. When guys from other hootches dropped by with beer, he would show off his new toy and play his only album on it...over and over. He would play the album first thing in the morning and he would play the album last thing at night...over and over.

What was the soundtrack to this little preview of Musician's Hell? The Iron Butterfly's album "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" which remains burned into my brain over forty years later as my most memorable musical recollection of the war. Rather than groan with each repetition, I would mentally analyze the limited harmonic and melodic devices the group used.

For example the title track was approximately 17 minutes long and, other than the extended drum, organ and guitar solos, the whole song rests on the ostinato repetition of a ten note motif...over and over. Like a prisoner scratching marks on his cell wall, I would mentally sing the Italian moveable-Do solfeggio of the motif: Do-Do-Ma-Re-Te-Do-So-Fi-Fa-Ma...or the French fixed-Do solfège: Re-Re-Fa-Mi-Do-Re-La-Si-Sol-Fa as a distraction. The tempo of the tune is about 100 beats per minute, the motif takes about 5 seconds to complete and occurs roughly 150 times during the song...over and over.



It was with utter relief that I greeted the first cut on the other side of the tape (on the old reel-to-reel machines, one flipped the tape much like a vinyl LP record) which was "Most Anything That You Want, Girl" and with complete dread that I waited for the ironically-titled last cut "Are You Happy?" which would signal a return to "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida"...over and over.

After two weeks and approximately 25,000 repetitions of the motif, I purchased a tape of The Beatles "White Album" even though I didn't own a tape deck. It was a double album and granted a measure of relief from the hootch's other album. I guess back then you could get by with a "capacity" of 6 Iron Butterfly songs counterbalanced by 30 Beatles songs.

Reunion Update (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

casual.

The cost for the reunion will be \$55.00 per person which will cover all expenses incurred during the reunion. We have made a \$500.00 deposit for the dinner dance area and the hotel is giving us the hospitality room and the room for our concert. Please make your check out to Mike Noland at 402 Andrew Dr., Clarksville, TN 37042. I ask you to make this out as soon as you can so that I can keep an accurate account of who will be attending. Several members wait until the last minute to send their money and this causes a lot of anxiety for the person putting on the reunion. I have to have a headcount in by 10 September. The hotel will have a 10% overage prepared for last minute guests. The meal will be a buffet with two meats so please sign up early. Late signers will be seated last and may run the risk of not getting fed.

The Riverview Inn's number is 931-552-3331. When you call for your reservation, please tell them that you are with the Association of Military Musicians. The cost of the room per night is

\$79.20 plus tax. We are all getting the military rate and I believe that this is the lowest rate that I have seen for several reunions. The cutoff date for guaranteed room prices and reservations is 15 August 2013. We are guaranteed 30 rooms. After that you may be taking a chance. I would hope that you make your reservations as soon as you receive this newsletter and send me your reunion money right after that.

We have had low attendance for a few of our last reunions and had to dip into our treasury to pay some bills. That is what the treasury is for but we cannot continue to do that. My goal at every reunion is to provide the best time for your dollar and to break even on the costs. Let us do our best to attend the reunion and talk this up with your military musician friends and encourage them to join the organization. If you have any questions or suggestions, please call me at 931-216-3221 or email me at waldhorn4@bellsouth.net. If you email me, please put AMM Reunion in the subject section. If that area is left blank, I usually do not open it or it sometimes goes to SPAM. More details will be provided in following newsletters or on the website. Have a Merry Christmas and a great New Year.

This 'n That

- Got an email from AMM member Richard Giroux. He's wondering if there would be some interest in developing a design for a ring—you know, something similar to what's shown here to the right—and purchase by those who might be interested. Just a quick scan of the Danbury Mint web site shows a military-style ring that sells for \$149. If this idea intrigues you, please give Richard a call at 207-283-8961 or email at cmdrvfw7997@aol.com.



TUBACHRISTMAS

- If you're a tuba and/or a euphonium player and you're still playing, you may be interested in knowing about a thing called TubaChristmas. This event, sponsored in various places all over the U.S. in the weeks before Christmas, features tuba and euphonium ensembles that play, oddly enough, Christmas music specially arranged for these ensembles. The number of players depends solely on who shows up, so each TC event is just a little different. Players are invited to decorate their instruments and themselves to fit the season. For more info, check the TubaChristmas web site at www.tubachristmas.com. They're a lot of fun, cost is minimal, and you get to hear what a boatload of tubas and euphoniums sound like under one roof. (Trust me, there are worse afflictions in life!)