

WE'RE ON THE WEB! [HTTP://MILMUSICIANS.COM](http://MILMUSICIANS.COM)

**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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(refer to our website or member directory for other contact information)

Association of Military Musicians  
 1504 Terrace Rd  
 Cleveland, MS 38732



**Sound Off**



**Association of Military Musicians**

**2015 AMM Reunion A Success**

**Officers 2015/2016**

Peter Swanson - President  
 Karen Mayfield - VP  
 Jamie Hillen - Secretary  
 Allen Lawless - Treasurer

**Serving AMM**

Allen Lawless - Webmaster  
 Rickey Lumpkin - Chaplain  
 Bill Von Kamp - Librarian  
 Frank Hill - Historian  
 Gary Hartman - *Sound Off!* Editor

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**2015 Indianapolis Report**

By Gary Hartman

As this was the first time AMM traveled to Indianapolis for a reunion, 54 members, family members, and guests thoroughly enjoyed the weekend event, hosted at the Radisson Hotel by the airport.

Those who arrived Thursday evening got an early start with our Hospitality Room, and enjoyed plenty of social time, followed by ample site seeing the next day. Friday arrivals joined in, and were treated to a series of free concerts at a local Music Festival in neighboring Carmel, as well as Beer Festivals that some chose to partake in.

Saturday's events started with the usual jam session, as there was no "rehearsal" involved, followed by a quick photo shoot.

The afternoon business meeting was well attended, and numerous topics were discussed and voted on, including our new officers and next year's reunion site.

SGT Osweiler from the 38th Inf Div Band provided dinner music during our evening banquet. On cue from former VP Dave Ratliff, the crowd cheerfully sang "Happy Birthday" to me, and shared a special Alligator pastry, with candles. The dinner was scrumptious, and ended with another photo shoot, early farewells, and more time in the Hospitality Room.

The Radisson Hotel staff was extremely cooperative, friendly, and willing to serve us.

Hope to see everyone at next year's reunion! Merry Christmas!



**PRESIDENT'S PEN** by Peter Swanson

Greetings, one and all,

As your newly elected president, I am humbled to have the opportunity to add some thoughts in this newsletter. After surfing the web last month, I saw many of my Facebook friends posting pictures that are somewhat "dated". I even did it myself, to the mirth of some of my colleagues. I have to reflect, though, that what we have in this organization is special.

First, we were given the talent to play a musical instrument at a decent level, and then we elected to do this in service to our country. While I haven't been a member of this organization for a long time, I took the plunge a few years back.

Just over a year ago, I asked my wife if she'd like to go to Branson, MO. While she admitted that it wasn't really on her bucket list, she agreed to give it a try. We had a great time and when the vote was taken to hold this year's gathering in Indianapolis, she was ready to go.

While some folks think it's just about the members sitting around drinking, telling stories that have been told more than once over the years, while our spouses wait

patiently (or just go out shopping), there have been some connections made and strengthened. This year, I got to see a friend I hadn't seen in almost 20 years who wasn't in Branson due to illness, and another friend who I hadn't seen in over 30 years and became a member so he and his wife could attend the gathering. We all fell back into that friendship like time had stood still.

Next year's gathering will be on a ship out of Port Canaveral, Florida, for a short cruise. While I'm sure there is more information in this newsletter about that, I want to encourage folks to give it a try. Yes, it may be a little out of your comfort zone, but I suspect that few of us envisioned a career (or even one tour) playing music in the military when we were young. Furthermore, I challenge folks to recruit someone new to join us in AMM and on the cruise. I know of several friends who have retired in Georgia and Florida, who are going to be pestered by me to join us.

Until the next newsletter, I wish everybody a happy holiday season. Remember, cruise reservations are the perfect Christmas/Hanukkah present.

Pete

**IN MEMORY**

(Editor's Note: Due to AMM not having a Newsletter Editor during Jan-Sep 2014, the following article was not published)



SFC Barry Lloyd Shaw (United States Army, Retired) passed away Tuesday, August 19, 2014 at the family residence in Daleville. Memorial services were held on Friday, August 22, 2014 at IAM 2003 Union Hall, Highway 84, Daleville, AL; Dr. James G. Choate officiated, and Sorrells Funeral Home and Crematory of Enterprise directed. The family received friends at the Union Hall on Friday prior to the service.

SFC Shaw was born July 27, 1948, in Charleston, MS. He was a 1971 graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi. Before his retirement from the US Army in 1995, he received many awards, among which were the Meritorious Service Medal (2nd award) and the Army Commendation Medal (4th award). He retired from AFS in October 2013. His

father, Raymond Shaw, preceded him in death. Survivors include his wife, Susan J. Shaw of Daleville; his mother and step-father, Sue and Ernie Enmin of Charleston, MS; two brothers: James Carol Shaw (Rebecca) of Ooltewah, TN and Raymond Shaw of Charleston, MS.



SSG Sally Gerry, (United States Army, Retired), passed on October 11, 2015 from lung cancer.

Donations in her memory may be given to the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute at:  
www.dana-farber.org  
or mailed to:

450 Brookline Ave, Boston, MA 02215

**TREASURER'S REPORT** by Allen Lawless

As of November 21, 2015, AMM has \$8,245.90 in the checking account (Renasant Bank), and \$28.52 in the Palpal account, which will be transferred to the checking account by the end of November. The Bank Midwest account has been closed, and all monies transferred to the Renasant checking account.

The Indianapolis Reunion Financial Report has been completed; AMM incurred a \$407.07 loss overall, due

to the travel and lodging expenses incurred during the search for a venue. Since the 2015 September Reunion, AMM picked up 11 membership renewals. The Indy Reunion accounted for three new memberships. All bills have been paid, and no monies are owed to the organization.

**WEBMASTER'S REPORT** by Allen Lawless

AMM's website, <http://www.milmusicians.com> has received over 5,756 hits to date. The website has been configured to allow readers to register on the site, and for readers to submit comments; all of these are reviewed before approval. Spammers are intercepted in this fashion, and their comments are deleted before registered users even see them.

For this reason, legitimate registered members may have to wait a day or two until I can review the site and approve those registered, paid members of AMM. Facebook "members" are not permitted to register on the website until they become paid members of AMM, and thus do not have the same privileges.

A significant amount of work has gone into the Photos page, with several members having offered digital photos. Most of these have been compressed and uploaded to the site, and sectioned off according to the reunion at which those were taken.

The attending members at the Indy Reunion voted for a cruise reunion, in lieu of a more traditional onshore reunion at a hotel or similar venue. AMM Secretary Karla Hillen submitted information and a link to a registration portal.

Those interested in attending the 2016 Reunion Cruise are encouraged to visit the Reunions page on the website, and from there to further follow the hyperlink to the registration portal for all available information, including costs, travel tips, passport/ID requirements, and an entire list of FAQ's for your convenience.

In previous years, registering to attend the reunion entailed paying a registration fee. There will be NO fee this year, as all costs are associated with the cruise and none by AMM.

Regarding AMM's Facebook page, those who have registered on it total 1,319. The vast majority of these Facebook users are not paid members of AMM. However, many new memberships have come in from the various military premier bands and those currently active duty and reserve. It's always refreshing seeing how the current military band program - much smaller these days than in years past - continues to serve our military and our communities.



## 2016 REUNION STATS by Jaime & Karla Hillen

### Military Musicians on the High Seas

Tradition, tradition. In "Fiddler on the Roof", Tevye was all about tradition, but he has nothing on the members of the Association of Military Musicians. AMM has been getting together once a year since 1986, in various places throughout the country. We agree on a location, someone agrees to organize it, they find a hotel, set up the hospitality room and wait for people to show up.

Thirty to fifty members, and their significant others, arrive and have a great time getting reacquainted and swapping war stories. Everyone catches up with old friends and makes some new ones, but the only thing they may see is the inside of the hotel.

The cost stays low and is easily attended by anyone who wants to go, but it's mostly the same stories year after year. Most everyone brings their instruments and enjoys a couple of hours playing a few marches, but they play the marches inside the hotel in the same hospitality room where they have been swapping the same stories. I think you get the idea. We have a good thing going, but we may need to shake things up a bit.

Enter 2nd-year member Karla Hillen and her love of cruising. We went to our first reunion in 2014 in Branson, and had a great time catching up with old friends and meeting some new ones. We came back this year to Indianapolis and enjoyed ourselves again, but suggested something totally insane. Why not do all the things we normally do, but do them on a cruise ship in the Caribbean?; at the same time, be waited on hand and foot, have beautiful ocean views and the opportunity of exotic ports of call! Let's take our show on the road!

Karla made her proposal at the business meeting last September (which can also be held on the ship this year), and the members agreed to go forward with our insanity.

Karla, with some help and advice from Carla Guerding, contacted the travel agency, "Vacations To Go", and after much research and discussion, this is what was decided would be best for our group. We have a group rate set up through "Vacations To Go" with Royal Caribbean. **The cruise is scheduled to depart on Friday, September 23rd, and return on Monday,**

**September 26th.** This Caribbean cruise will depart from Port Canaveral FL and go to the Bahamas. That is the general information about the cruise.

Here are the nitty-gritty details you need to know:

1. The cost is listed on the website listed later in this announcement. (\$380/person)
2. This is a group reservation and rate. All persons signed up with the group will receive:
  - a. The price includes the cabin, all meals and gratuity.
  - b. The price does **NOT** include shore excursions, or alcohol and soda.
  - c. You will need to place a **\$200.00 deposit per cabin** to hold your reservation. You can get a full refund up until 90 days prior to the departure date.
  - d. \$50.00 on board credit when our group has reserved eight cabins.
  - e. Dinner seating each evening with the other members of AMM (let the stories begin!)
  - f. The services of "Vacations To Go" to help mediate/resolve any problems that arise.
  - g. Full participation in all AMM group activities.

3. If you intend to go, you should make your reservation as soon as possible. As stated above, you can get a full refund until 90 days before departure. The cruise line will cut off group reservations at that point.

4. If you wait too long in an attempt to get a better rate, the most inexpensive cabins might be gone and you will not be seated with the group for dinner or receive the \$50.00 on board credit.

5. If the rate does drop, the group will Receive the cheaper rate.

6. We plan to continue the general schedule of events that we have had every year.

a. The cruise ship is supposed to give us a designated "hospitality room."

b. **BRING YOUR INSTRUMENTS!** We will have a room to get together and play like we do every year.

c. We will hold our annual business meeting on the ship. (I propose we hold it on the sundeck at the bar, but that's just me.) :-)

7. If you plan to go by yourself, but would like to share the cost with a cabin-mate, Contact Karla at the email below and she will try to connect you with someone to room with. You can have a cabin to yourself, but there will be a surcharge attached.

8. To sign up for the cruise go to:

## REUNION STATS CONTINUED

[https://secure.vacationstogo.com/vtg/group/home.cfm?](https://secure.vacationstogo.com/vtg/group/home.cfm?uid=7B193EA540A8F023F66C32DA2180153B)

**uid=7B193EA540A8F023F66C32DA2180153B**

9. If you have questions that aren't answered on the website, you can email Louise Smith, our POC with Vacations To Go at lsmith@vacationstogo.com or Karla Hillen at ammcruise2016@gmail.com (Louise : 800-514-9986, x7582) (Karla: 912-756-7505 home)

10. Some people have expressed an interest in a slightly longer cruise. (Karla for one) You can book passage on the same ship the Monday before, and then already be there when the rest of the AMM group arrives on Friday. This would be an individual reservation you make on your own. If you think you might be interested, email Karla at the above email address and she will send you the information.

We expect people to wait until the last minute like usual, but we would like everyone to **sign up as soon as possible**

for planning purposes. Tevye accepted that change and knew it was going to happen, whether he liked it or not. We can either embrace it and see how it goes, or stay home and reminisce about how great things were in the old days. I say we embrace it and have a great time on the cruise. If it's not quite what we thought it would be, don't worry; we'll be back in the hotel next year, unless someone comes up with another plan! See you in the Bahamas!!!

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT by Gary Hartman

In keeping with my connection to the 282nd Army Band, Fort Jackson (my last duty station), CW2 Thomas Jackson, Jr. asked me once again to be their Concert Announcer for this year's Holiday Concert Tour.

The opening concert was held December 7th at the Koger Center for the Arts, in Columbia. Although there were about 400 people in the audience, the venue can easily seat 2,500. So in retrospect, a rather light crowd, but the band put on a "high energy" performance.

The second concert was held December 8th at McAllister Auditorium, on the campus of Furman University, Greenville, SC. Since there was the perception that the size of the band was larger than the size of the audience, I later found out about the home basketball game on campus, during the same time as the concert. So again, very lightly attended.

The third, and last, concert was held December 13th at Sottile Theater, on the campus of College Of Charleston, SC. I chose to drive the 2-hr trip to the ven-

ue, since the comfort time on a military bus is usually 45 minutes.

As in likewise manner to the previous concerts, I wore a brand new suit (had to justify buying one anyway), and had to completely trust that the suspenders would do its job. Needless to say, another small audience. But I was really impressed by the way the band unfolded its top-notch performances.

Does this scenario remind anyone of those "special" events during our active duty days where the band outsized the audience or participants? I'm sure everyone can think of many.

Here's to another year of staying involved with your local civilian or military band/orchestra.

Until then,

Bb Chord

**KEEP THE MUSIC PLAYING!**