



Sound Off!

MONDAY 15/08/2022

WWW.MILITARYMUSICIANS.ORG

AMM BOARD

- **PRESIDENT - DAVID SMITH**
- **VICE PRESIDENT - CAROL M. HERON**
- **TREASURER - JEFF GOTTWIG**
- **SECRETARY - TOM ZALE**

SERVING AMM

- **DAVE & KAY SMITH - REUNION HOSTS**
- **DENNIS LOWE - CHAPLAIN**
- **KAY SMITH - LIBRARIAN**
- **KATHY SCHIAFONE - HISTORIAN**
- **ED BEJARANA - WEBMASTER**
- **MARK EDWARDS - SOUND OFF! EDITOR**

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

GREETINGS FROM THIS YEAR'S REUNION SITE, ASHEVILLE, NC! FIRST OF ALL, I WANT TO APOLOGIZE FOR THE DELAY IN GETTING THE NEWSLETTER OUT. IT IS 100% ON ME. THINGS ARE REALLY COMING TOGETHER FOR THE ASSOCIATION'S 40TH REUNION...[READ MORE HERE](#)



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT REUNION 2026

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT'S TIME TO START MAKING PLANS FOR OUR 40TH ASSOCIATION OF MILITARY MUSICIANS REUNION, TAKING PLACE SEPTEMBER 24-27, 2026 IN BEAUTIFUL ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA! WE HAVE INFO ON ACCOMMODATIONS, PERFORMANCES, AND MORE!

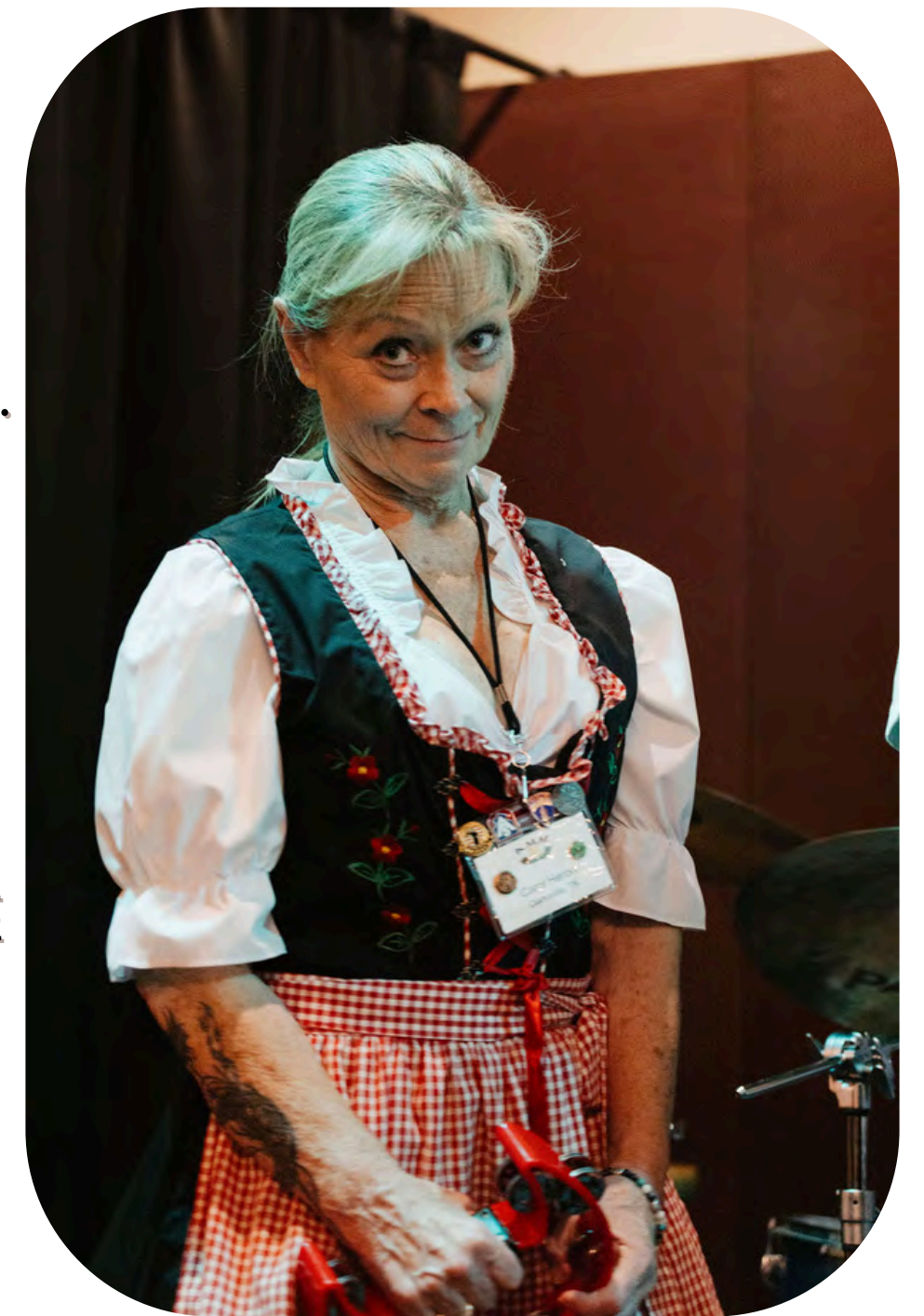
[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILED INFO](#)

NOTES FROM VICE PRESIDENT CAROL HERON

HELLO ALL!

I HOPE MY MESSAGE TO YOU ALL FINDS YOU HAPPY AND WELL. WE HAVE MADE IT THROUGH ANOTHER HOLIDAY SEASON AND NOW WE PRESS ON INTO SPRING! THE DAFFODILS WILL BE POKING OUT SOON. NOW LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS. OUR ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ARE CURRENTLY DOWN FROM THE PAST TWO YEARS. IF YOU HAVE NOT RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP SINCE THE 2025 REUNION, YOU ARE DUE. PLEASE STAY CURRENT! WE NEED AND WANT YOU, WHETHER YOU ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE, PLAY YOUR HORN, OR JUST WANT TO WATCH FROM THE SIDE LINES...

[**MORE FROM CAROL HERE**](#)



OUR 39TH AMM REUNION TOOK PLACE SEPTEMBER 18-21, 2025 IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE. PERFORMANCES BY THE FULL VETERAN'S ENSEMBLE, ALONG WITH THE JAZZ AND OOM-PAH BANDS, HIGHLIGHTED A SPIRITED AND PATRIOTIC TIME TOGETHER.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO REUNION HOSTS CAROL AND SCOTT HERON!

THROUGH THE EYE OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER IRIS LEONARDO, HERE'S A LOOK BACK ON MEMORIES MADE IN THE MUSIC CITY!

[**VIEW PHOTOS HERE**](#)



REMINDER

IF YOU HAVEN'T RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, YOU'LL NEED TO DO THAT TO ATTEND REUNION 2026. WE HAVE SEVERAL WAYS FOR YOU TO PAY AND OFFER YEARLY AND LIFETIME OPTIONS. JUST CLICK THE BELOW LINK FOR ALL THE INFORMATION.

[DUES & MEMBERSHIP INFO HERE](#)

AS OF JANUARY 20, 2026, WE HAVE \$17,835 IN THE AMM CHECKING ACCOUNT. THE CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE REFLECTS THE 2025 REUNION HOSPITALITY FEE AND T-SHIRT COSTS FOR A TOTAL OF \$4,980.00.

WE HAVE 171 ACTIVE MEMBERS WITH 86 HOLDING LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP. IN MARCH, 2025 WE HAD 151 ACTIVE MEMBERS AND 85 LIFETIME MEMBERS.

SEPTEMBER WILL BE HERE BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!! GREAT THINGS WILL BE HAPPENING AT THE 2026 AMM REUNION IN ASHEVILLE, NC!

JEFF GOTTWIG | AMM TREASURER



A PRAYER FOR FALLEN MILITARY MUSICIANS

HEAVENLY FATHER, WE LIFT UP TO YOU THE SOULS OF OUR DEPARTED BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO SERVED AS MUSICIANS IN THE ARMED FORCES. THEY BROUGHT MELODY TO TIMES OF WAR AND HARMONY TO TIMES OF PEACE, HONORING OUR NATION WITH THEIR TALENTS. WE ASK THAT YOU GRANT THEM ETERNAL REST AND, IN YOUR MERCY, WELCOME THEM INTO THE ETERNAL CHOIR OF ANGELS IN YOUR HEAVENLY KINGDOM. MAY THEIR MUSIC LIVE ON IN OUR HEARTS, AND MAY THEIR FAMILIES FIND COMFORT AND SOLACE IN YOUR DIVINE LOVE. THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD, AMEN.

IN MEMORIAM

HARVEY PITTEL, REGARDED AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S FOREMOST CLASSICAL SAXOPHONISTS, DIED 23 JANUARY, 2026, AT AGE 82. HE STUDIED AT USC AND NORTHWESTERN, SERVED WITH THE U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY BAND, AND WAS LONGTIME SAXOPHONE PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN. HE WAS LAID TO REST ON 28 JANUARY IN LOS ANGELES.

DANNY SHEPHERD, WHO HAD A REMARKABLE AND DISTINGUISHED CAREER IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY BAND PROGRAM, PASSED AWAY ON 13 NOVEMBER, 2025, HE BECAME THE ORIGINAL TRADOC ROCK DRUMMER, A RESPECTED INSTRUCTOR AT THE ARMED FORCES SCHOOL OF MUSIC, AND A MENTOR WHOSE IMPACT TRAVELED FARTHER THAN ANY SINGLE PERFORMANCE.

DR. JOHN HENRY "HANK" HAMILTON, JR PASSED AWAY ON 4 JANUARY, 2026. HANK ENLISTED IN THE U.S. ARMY BAND PROGRAM, WHERE HIS TALENT AND LEADERSHIP PROPELLED HIM THROUGH THE RANKS TO CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER (CW3). HE SERVED WITH DISTINCTION AS THE COMMANDER AND BANDMASTER FOR THE 26TH ARMY BAND AND BANDMASTER OF THE 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION BAND. AFTER TWENTY-FOUR AND A HALF YEARS OF HONORABLE SERVICE, HE RETIRED IN DECEMBER 1982.

OSWALD TALMADGE HOBBS JR. PASSED AWAY ON 26 JANUARY, 2026. SSG OSWALD WAS TUBA PLAYER IN THE 33RD ARMY BAND, 26TH ARMY BAND AND THE FORSCOM BAND.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

IT WAS THE WINTER OF 1976. I WAS A PERCUSSION STUDENT AT THE UNITED STATES ARMY ELEMENT SCHOOL OF MUSIC, EAGER TO FINISH MY STUDIES AND HEAD TO THE WEST COAST - THE 7TH INFANTRY DIVISION BAND AT FORT ORD, CA. DURING LUNCH, I RECEIVED THE DREADED "DEAR JOHN" LETTER FROM MY LONGTIME GIRLFRIEND. I WAS HEARTBROKEN. IMMEDIATELY AFTER LUNCH, I HAD MY WEEKLY LESSON WITH DANNY SHEPHERD, THE TEACHER WHO WOULD SWITCH ME FROM TRADITIONAL TO MATCH GRIP, MUCH TO MY RESISTANCE. AFTER READING AND RE-READING THE LETTER, I WAS A MESS. MY LESSON BEGAN. I SIMPLY COULDN'T PLAY. I WAS FUMBLING OVER EVERYTHING. DANNY ASKED ME WHAT THE HECK WAS GOING ON. I TOLD HIM MY GIRLFRIEND JUST BROKE UP WITH ME. INSTEAD OF BEING OVERLY SYMPATHETIC OR GIVING ME A PASS, HE WROTE ME UP AND PUT ME ON IP. (IF YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW).

IT ENDED UP BEING ONE OF THE BEST THINGS TO EVER HAPPEN TO ME. IT SHARPENED MY FOCUS AND MADE ME LOVE BEING A DRUMMER/PERCUSSIONIST EVEN MORE. I ENDED UP SCORING A 3.0 ON MY FINAL AUDITION AND I THINK THEY EVEN PUT MY NAME AND SCORE ON A PLAQUE AT THE USAESOM. UPON ARRIVING AT FORT ORD, I WAS NAMED SECTION LEADER.

AT THE REUNION IN NASHVILLE, THEY PASSED AROUND A "GET WELL SOON" CARD TO SIGN. SOON, I LEARNED IT WAS FOR DANNY, WHO WAS NOT DOING WELL BATTLEING CANCER.

SHORTLY AFTER THAT, DANNY LOST HIS FIGHT.

UPON LEAVING THE MILITARY, I WENT ON TO TOUR FOR NINE-YEARS, FULFILLING MY DREAM OF BEING A FULL-TIME MUSICIAN. ALTHOUGH I TOOK A PAUSE DURING MY TV SPORTS/NEWS CAREER, I NOW PLAY IN SEVERAL BANDS.

EVERY TIME I LOOK DOWN AT MY HANDS I THINK OF DANNY.

I'M CERTAIN HE DIDN'T REMEMBER ME. CERTAIN HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW HE SHAPED MY ABILITIES AS A MUSICIAN.

BUT I NEVER FORGOT.

AND NEVER WILL.



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.