



# *Kadet Newsletter*

## *Peacock Military Academy*

### *Alumni Association, Inc.*

(830) 816-5013

Michael A. (Mike) Vlieger, '62, Editor

Address of Record: 113 Emery Lane, Boerne, Texas 78006

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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

My Dear Brother Kadets;

This might be my last article for our Kadet Newsletter as your President because when the next Newsletter comes along, you will have a new Board with new Officers that will be as good as or better than what we have tried to be. Let me first say, what an honor and pleasure it has been for me to serve as your Board President for the last six years. I have really enjoyed it, simply because our meetings have been so lively and so much fun. Believe me when I say, we actually have accomplished a lot of things for our Membership, all with the help of our Board Members. I would like to thank all of them for their help and support. Let me also mention our Chief Executive Officer Mike Vlieger, '62. He has always been there at all times for me and our Association. As you know, there are twenty-five Board Members, which includes the officers. As of right now, we have twenty-four because one member has not been replaced. That place will be filled at the Reunion in October of 2012. Out of twenty-four, we had twenty-three members present for this last meeting. Members come from out of the Country, out of State, and throughout the State of Texas. Talk about good support from my Brothers? Your Board does not get paid nor do they get any special privileges. Well, maybe just one. We do get a box lunch when we conduct our meetings twice a year.. Maybe it's that box lunch that does the trick? The reason is my Brothers! We enjoy being on the Board to serve the PMA Alumni Association, each and

every graduate!! Most of all, it is to keep the Spirit of Peacock Military Academy alive for many years to come.

Make plans to attend this year's Reunion in October. I know it will be the best ever. We will hold it in Boerne, Texas, beginning on October 5th at Ye Kendall Inn, which was established in 1859. The Reunion will be very casual with a Western flavor on Friday Evening, Chuck Wagon and all! Call your classmates, roommates, and friends. Come enjoy the fellowship and laugh at old stories of your years at Peacock. Remember you are one of us and we would like to see you. It does not matter if you are rich, a very important person, or just a regular person. All that matters is that you are one of us and you will be welcomed with open arms by me and all your old classmates from the best school that was ever opened—

"The West Point of Texas"  
Peacock Military Academy

PMA Alumni Association President  
Frank R. Torres  
"Pancho"  
Class of 1963



## 2012 REUNION INFORMATION

### MUST READ!

The 2012 PMA Reunion will be at the Ye Kendall Inn in Boerne, Texas, on October 5th, 6th, and 7th. The Registration Package will be mailed Mid-June. The Ye Kendall Inn is an old, 1859 Stagecoach Stop that most will find interesting, historic, and comfortable. However, you may not find the Inn to be to your liking if you prefer a modern up-to-date Hotel. For this reason, listed below is information on the Hampton Inn in Boerne, Texas, as an alternate.

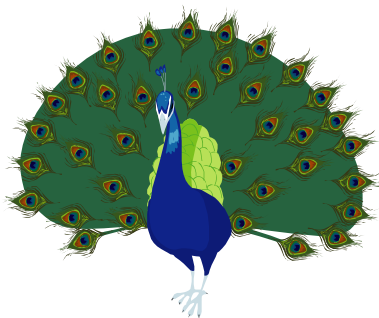
### CALL FOR EARLY RESERVATIONS

Most Alumni will find Ye Kendall Inn fascinating and comfortable:

Ye Kendall Inn  
128 West Blanco  
Boerne, Texas 78006  
Joyce at 1-830-249-2138

Modern Alternate:

Hampton Inn  
34935 IH 10 West  
Boerne, Texas 78006  
1-800-Hampton or 1-830-816-8800



### New Life Members

Paul L. Mantle, Jr., '73

Don Yust, '71  
(Deceased)

### 2012 Dues

The Alumni Association is collecting dues for 2012 and a Dues Form is included with this Newsletter. The Dues Form may also be used to make a contribution to the Association. If you have already paid your dues, please disregard the reminder!

THANKS!



### *MOVING???*

If you are moving, please let the Alumni Association have your new information: address, telephone numbers, etc.

*gingervlieger@aol.com*

*210-835-4996*

*830-816-5013*



## FOUR CADETS AND A '38 CHEVY

By Butch Daughtry, Class of 1958



Upon my arrival at Peacock as a Junior in the Fall of 1956, one of the first friendships forged was with Darwin Harris (Class of 1957). It didn't matter to Darwin that I was a lowly first year day student with zero rank even though he was a Senior and a cadet officer who might have naturally ignored a new guy like me. What was important to Darwin was what we had in common. He was learning to play the guitar and when he discovered that I could play a bit more than he could and sing some Johnny Cash songs, he was impressed. Then, he found out that I was really, just a country boy living on the edge of the city and that I shared his interest in rodeo as a sport. Darwin had been a member of the equestrian drill team and was still lamenting the fact that the horses were gone from Peacock. We quickly became friends and shared some experiences that still prompt many fond memories.

I drove a black 1938 Chevrolet four door sedan with no running boards...NOT a cool car for sure, but it WAS transportation. And it was not long until Darwin, Jim Kenney (B.C., Class of 1959), and I used the old Chevy for a weekend day trip to Stockdale, just southeast of San Antonio. We headed out in search of some guys Darwin had heard about whose parents had a farm with some rodeo stock and roping horses. By sheer luck we found their place and they were most hospitable. These folks were of Polish descent, spoke with noticeable accent and were "pure country" for sure. Here we show up on their doorstep, introduce ourselves and tell them we were hoping to engage in a bit of rodeo. Three high school students from a military school in the "Big City" who arrive unannounced must have been a surprise for sure. Instead of laughing and telling us to go away, they welcomed us! Then they rounded up some bucking horses, their roping horse and some calves and proceeded to show us their version of hospitality.

Jim Kenney immediately impressed them with his roping skills. Jim's family owned a big cattle ranch in the Guadalupe Mountains, near Pine Springs...just barely inside Texas. Beautiful country for sure. Jim's dad had been the WORLD CHAMPION calf roper in the late forties so Jim had a good teacher and he was a good student. I impressed them for my LACK of bareback bronc riding skill...probably setting some new records for shortness of a ride before being bucked off. That was our idea of a great way to spend the day. No doubt, we were probably breaking some or a LOT of PMA rules, especially for boarding students but that really never occurred to us. Lucky that we broke nothing more than some rules!

As the '57 Spring Break approached, Darwin invited his roommate, Phil Souza, and me to accompany him to his step-dad's ranch, located below Marfa right in the heart of the Texas Big Bend. He didn't have to ask me twice and when the break day arrived, the three of us plus Jim Kenney piled into my trusty '38 Chevy and headed out U.S. Highway 90 West. Jim accompanied us as far as Dryden, which is west of Del Rio, a rail siding out in the middle of nowhere. But Jim's grandparents owned a ranch in the area and they met us there to take Jim with them and then on to his parent's ranch out in the Guadalupe Mountains.

The remaining three of us chugged along right on up U.S. 90 on our way to Darwin's place "near" Marfa. Darwin said we should fill up with gas and then head due south on the highway towards Presidio. As I recall, it was about 30 miles down the road that Darwin said, "Turn left here"...onto a road that quickly became gravel. I asked how much further. The answer was "Oh maybe about another 30 or 40 miles...see those mountains ahead...that's where we are going." How big is the ranch?" I asked. "One hundred sections" was the answer. Suddenly it hit me that each section is a square mile or 640 acres and that meant 100 square miles or 64,000 acres.

We just kept driving and the mountains seemed to be getting larger and higher and we kept climbing as the road got smaller and a bit rougher. Good thing that the old Chevy's suspension had been raised a bit so we could handle the potholes and rocks with no problems. Our destination was the top of a huge mesa or table top mountain where the Rawls Ranch was headquartered. The main house was a huge adobe brick hacienda...something right out of a movie set...BUT with one difference: It had an attached garage that was really an aircraft hangar which housed a two passenger Ercoupe which was piloted by Darwin's step dad, Mr. Rawls. It was used on the ranch and to go back and forth to Marfa where Mr. and Mrs. Rawls kept a car at the airport.

That Ercoupe got my attention completely and a couple of days after our arrival, Mr. Rawls invited me to accompany him on a flight to check out water conditions. Do a Google search on Ercoupe and you will learn that this plane has a fixed V tail. That means no rudder pedals and the only directional control is a "steering yolk" that controls the wing flaps. Left, right, up and down...what more could you want from a plane? Well, for one thing, a tail rudder is almost a MUST to correct for cross winds on a landing but Mr. Rawls had compensated for that by building three run ways that criss crossed so that no matter the wind direction he could find an approach with a head wind. That brief plane ride would have been worth the entire trip as far as I was concerned. But there was much more adventure ahead.

During our stay, the three of us spent one memorable day using a four wheel drive Jeep pickup to pull "sucker rods" from a water well that had a windmill tower. The objective was to reach the "pump leathers" located on the last joint of sucker rods, replace the leathers with new ones and then put each threaded joint of rods back into the well hole. No water or very little BEFORE but a nice stream of water AFTER. That's the way a wind mill pumps water...until the leathers wear out and have to be replaced again. A great sense of accomplishment for us and greatly appreciated by Mr. Rawls. Indeed, he was sufficiently impressed to ask us to come back for the coming summer to help with the construction of the Rural Electrification power line that he had a contract to build to bring electricity to the area ranches. I would have accepted had not my uncle in Odessa offered me more money to drive a truck hauling steel.

But back to the trip. What Darwin REALLY wanted was for us to be in Pecos, Texas, just as fast as we could get there. Reason? His true love and the one he would marry lived there. So Phil Souza and I took our directions from Darwin and made our way to Pecos for his visit with girl friend and her family, who turned out to be delightful people. But even so, Phil and I were really looking forward to the next destination: the Kenney Ranch and the Guadalupe Mountains.

We arrived there just before dark and were up way before daylight the next morning to get ready for a day in the spring cattle roundup. Mr. Kenney picked out horses for us, found us some chaps and spurs and we were headed out to a day that I can never forget. The scenery was spectacular and so was the sighting of a huge heard of antelope. That funny hopping antelope gait and their prong horns are still in my mind's eye. We kept gathering up cows and penning the cattle they had encountered. That was where the REAL fun began.

Some of the riders were constantly working to sort out the cows from their calves and put the calves in an adjacent pen. Poetry in motion is the best description of riders and cutting horses sorting out calves. A cutting horse can turn on a dime and give you some change and only an experienced rider can keep his seat. But it all seems to happen so effortlessly and the calves end up where they are supposed to be and separated from their mamas. Which is a good thing considering the fact that a lot of those mamas are not very happy at



what is happening to their calves in the adjacent pen. The calves are not very happy about it either and their bellowing announces it loudly for all to hear.

One by one they were roped, flanked and then held down for branding, vaccination and castration (that's to make a bull calf into a steer and, thus, eventually suitable for steaks for the benefit of you city slickers). All of this involves team roping where one roper throws his noose around the calf's head (the header) and the other puts his loop around one of the calf's back legs (the healer). That enables them to stretch the calf out...just enough to permit someone on foot to run up beside the calf, reach over its back and grab the "flank" and then use a knee as a pivot to bring the calf down to the ground. Then the flanker grabs the back leg not caught in the rope and holds it to keep the people doing the branding, vaccination and castration from getting kicked. If that sounds like the flanker has a tough job, let's just say it helps to be in pretty good shape. But, like most things, it is a LOT easier once you know how to do it.

Mr. Kenney took pity on my first futile efforts at "flanking," dismounted and then patiently demonstrated that the "trick" to flanking or flipping a 300 pound or even bigger calf on its side is to wait for him to jump off the ground and at that moment use the knee and over the back flank grab to turn him on his side while in mid air. Just like in Judo where a much larger opponent's weight is used against him by a nimble smaller person. Suddenly, I could "flank a calf" with the best of 'em. And the ultimate compliment was when Mr. Kenney announced he thought I could "make a good hand."

Watching Mr. Kenney and the other ropers at work was a sight to behold. He would anticipate the calf's gait and toss his rope just above the ground so that one of the calf's rear legs just stepped into the loop. Time after time and never a miss. The result of thousands of hours of practice.

We stopped at noon for a meal of steak, beans, biscuits and gravy. What a feast! I can still taste it now. Then back to work.

After our hard day's work, Phil and I were ready for a hot shower and bed, but, not Darwin. He wanted to talk to his Pecos Sweetie, so we all piled into the old Chevy, still in our boots, spurs, and chaps and drove to the nearest phone which was almost to Carlsbad, New Mexico. We all got out and went inside a roadside joint frequented by tourists. They were delighted to see and photograph some "real" cowboys and we reveled in their interest. We were dust coated and must have smelled worse than the cows we had been working, but no one complained.

Our stay with the Kenney family was all too brief for me. One of my favorite memories was of Jim's dad telling about the events leading up to his becoming World Champion calf roper (about 1946 as I recall). He and another roper were in hot contention for the top winnings and Championship. The competition continued right up until the National Finals, then held at Madison Square Garden in NYC. Calf roping is judged based on the time from when the calf leaves the chute until it is roped and has its legs tied and the roper throws up his hands to signal a tie down. There are typically three "go rounds" spread over a matter of days at each rodeo and the times of each "go round" are averaged to determine the Champion for that rodeo. Mr. Kenney had good times his first two go rounds, but so did his competitor. The roper with the best time in the third go round would be the World's Champion. The time slot Mr. Kenney drew for the last go round was also the last night of the rodeo. Talk about suspense! The afternoon before the performance, Mr. Kenney decided to take a nap to help get rid of some of his tension and he had a dream. He dreamed that he drew the number of a calf that was known to be really easy to catch and tie down. And sure enough, he drew that calf's number before the event. And sure enough his time was good enough to become the World Champion Calf Roper. A dream come true...in more ways than one.

After our stay at the Kenney Ranch, the events of our return back to San Antonio get a bit hazy. Unspoken to this point, but implied is that we spent a lot of hours just driving to do all this in a short period of time. Miles and miles and hours and hours of Texas, but we relished every one of them and talked and talked and talked. Darwin graduated shortly thereafter and went on to graduate from A&M. Phil Souza went back to Hawaii where his family lived and was there the last I knew. Sadly, Darwin and I lost contact over the years. I don't know where he lives now or how to get in touch, but I would drive miles and miles of Texas to see him and his wife again. Yep, even if I had to drive them in that long gone, but fondly remembered, old '38 Chevrolet.

I understand that Jim Kenney and his family still own their ranch out in Guadalupe Mountains and would really like to see him again as well. Jim, consider this as your personal invitation to attend our Reunion in October. But only on the condition that you confirm every detail of this long winded story.



## TAPS

Jimmy Earl Cain, Class of 1947  
Charles David (C.D.) Grissom, Class of 1955  
James Edward Heath, Class of 1956  
Ruffin Paine Johnson, Class of 1950  
John Manford Lairsen, Class of 1931  
Fernando (Rivero) Lozano, Class of 1955  
Glaforo E. Montemayor, Jr., Class of 1955  
Robert J. Ransom, Jr., Class of 1958  
John Marion (Jay) Smith, Sr., Class of 1948



*The Alumni Association was saddened to hear of the passing of Mildred (Mimi) Taft Thiesen on Saturday, November 5, 2011. She was the wife of Colonel Dick G. Thiesen*

