



Kadet Newsletter

Peacock Military Academy

Alumni Association

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Address of Record: 2811 West Ashby Place, San Antonio, Texas 78201

Mike Vlieger, '62, Editor

June, 2001

Vol. XX, No. 2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings!



Many thanks to all the board members who attended the board meeting on a beautiful Saturday in April!

The board was formed eighteen years ago and during those years the board has always been able to conduct business because we have always had a quorum.

That's a pat on the back to all the dedicated board members who attend at least two meetings a year. For some that's a great effort for the distance they travel.

Hope all of you have a nice summer!

Bob Meuth, '72

PEACOCK KADET MEDAL WINNERS - 2001



San Antonio Academy - Chandra Vemvlapalli
Texas Military Institute - Paige Cooper
San Marcos Academy - Timothy R. Moffett

SOLDIER AND EDUCATOR

For six years, Dick Thiesen was a familiar campus figure to Peacock cadets, and he has continued a close association with the Academy ever since.

He graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1941 and, at the same time, earned a commission in the Army Reserve. A month later, he was called to active duty and was assigned to the 23rd Regiment of the famous "Indian Head" Second Division at Fort Sam Houston. The



Division was in training six months and then shipped overseas, where Thiesen and the others were engaged in combat action on the second day of the "D-Day" invasion at Normandy.

After the war ended, he returned to San Antonio and attended Trinity University, earning a master's degree in education. He then began his six years at Peacock in a dual capacity as Professor of Military Science and as an English instructor. In 1952, Thiesen resigned to become Dean of Continuing Education at San Antonio College, a position he held until 1986.

After being an honorary member of the Peacock Alumni Association Board of Directors for seventeen years, he now becomes an ex-officio member, having been designated by Colonel Donald Peacock to be the Board's Peacock family representative.

MY FATHER'S HAT

by
Sue Ellen Peacock Hains

My sisters and I grew up at Peacock Military Academy. Our father was Commandant of Cadets, our uncle Superintendent, and our aunt Secretary/Treasurer. We awakened to the bugle call of Reveille and went to sleep with the silver notes of Taps. We ate our meals with the cadets in the Mess Hall under the watchful glass eyes of a stuffed buffalo head hanging over the piano.

A colonel in the Texas State Guard, our father owned a variety of military ensembles: khaki and white for summer, olive drab for winter, always topped with the appropriate hat. My sisters and I thought he looked like Henry Fonda--slender, tall, and handsome.

Our house sat across from the campus. In the entrance hall there was a heavy mahogany stand where our father kept all his hats--both uniform and civilian. Every weekday morning, he would dress carefully in a uniform, then take a hat off the table, placing it on his balding head as he walked across the campus to have breakfast with the cadets. They would be waiting, lined up in companies ready to march into the Mess Hall.

On one such morning our father noticed that there was an inordinate amount of smiling among the corps of cadets. In a benevolent mood, he opted to ignore it. Entering the Mess Hall, he removed his hat. Laying it aside, he saw for the first time that it was his favorite civilian Fedora, hardly the correct complement to his colonel's uniform. This certainly explained the cadets' amusement. They must have relished the irony of the situation: how my father expected them to be flawless in their uniform dress when his was so clearly out of order. But with his usual flair, my father made the most of what could have been an awkward moment.

"Boys," he announced, "when I was a young reserve lieutenant attending my first active training period at Fort



Clark, I was told that when a cavalry officer was discovered with his spurs upside down or insignia incorrect, for example, the tradition demanded that he

buy drinks for all present. In this similar situation, I feel I should do the same. As you leave the dining hall, get yourself a free soft drink at the PX."

PMA TIDBIT



In the early years of the school, the original dining hall building was a duplicate of McKinnon Hall. The upstairs was mostly one large room which was a gymnasium with exercise equipment. The kitchen was a separate building in the rear near the windmill. The cooks and other related help lived upstairs over the kitchen. This original dining hall building burned in 1927.

An Elephants' Graveyard We're Not

Jerry Houston

Why don't you old farts get a life?" he demanded to know. An honest, albeit harsh, query, from a 1972 Peacock graduate when asked to join the alumni association. "I prefer to look ahead, not backwards," he'd said.

That got me thinking. From his point of view, a family bread-earner, many things take precedence over optional social organizations. As well they should. Case in point: only after retirement did I become active in the association.

What does this have to do with elephants? Nothing. Elephants are still reproducing; there are no new Peacock Cadets. But each of us, at a highly impressionable age, shared a unique experience. Our youngest graduates are now 46-year-olds. Barring some down-the-road miracle, there'll not be another Peacock Military Academy. Fact: we Cadets will become extinct.

How do we handle that? Bengal tigers of eastern India and Bangladesh will completely disappear before we do. Yet, when the few left come in contact.....well, they snarl and fight, protecting territory. They should be frolicking and remembering their youth.

Each reunion, each board meeting, and anticipating both, bring satisfied smiles to my face. And fellow, former Cadets, with memories much better than mine, water my garden of times-gone-by.

We're smarter than the tigers; we know the value of memories. So we'll keep the association alive until you younger Cadets can come aboard. Look forward to it; you won't be disappointed.

But at least give us a head-nod to show that you're interested. Remain active, dues-paying members. For everyone, but especially our San Antonio Cadets, plan ahead. Next reunion in San Antonio: October 2002.

A VOICE ACROSS THE HALL

I HAVE BEEN ASKED MANY TIMES WHY I HAVE SUCH A COMMITMENT TO THE SCHOOL THAT I GRADUATED FROM 39 YEARS AGO. THE QUESTION USUALLY COMES FROM SOMEONE WHO WAS NOT A PEACOCK CADET. INSTINCTIVELY, A PEACOCK CADET HAS NO NEED TO ASK THAT QUESTION. SO, HERE IS THE ANSWER STRAIGHT FROM MY HEART.

WHEN I STARTED WORKING WITH THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ABOUT 18 YEARS AGO, I BECAME REACQUAINTED WITH COLONEL DON. THE ASSOCIATION WAS NEW WHICH GAVE US A LICENSE TO BE CREATIVE WITH THE NEWSLETTER, PARADE REST BOOKS, REUNIONS, BOARD MEETINGS, AND THE DAILY OPERATION OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION. THERE WERE MANY DECISIONS TO BE MADE. AFTER A TIME, I BECAME AWARE OF "A VOICE ACROSS THE HALL" THAT WAS GUIDING ME, DIRECTING ME DOWN THE PATH TO A CORRECT DECISION. I LISTENED MOSTLY BECAUSE OF THE TREMENDOUS RESPECT I HAVE FOR COLONEL DON BUT ALSO BECAUSE HE WAS USUALLY RIGHT.

AS THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MATURED, I STARTED LOOKING UPON COLONEL DON AS A FRIEND AND TREMENDOUS ROLE MODEL FOR MY LIFE. I WAS TRULY AMAZED BY HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS. THE VOICE NO LONGER COMES FROM ACROSS THE HALL, BUT NOW THROUGH A PHONE CALL OR A VISIT TO COLONEL DON'S APARTMENT. HE IS STILL THERE GUIDING AND ENCOURAGING ME TO MARCH STRAIGHT AND COMPLETE MY ASSIGNED TASKS.

SO, THERE IS THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION. THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO GET TO KNOW COLONEL DON, WORK WITH HIM ON MANY PROJECTS AND BE IN AWE OF HIS LIFE.

COLONEL DON, YOU ARE MY FRIEND AND, YES, MY HERO.

MIKE VLIEGER



PHELPS HALL PHONE BOOTH

A wood phone booth, removed from Phelps Hall, has been restored. This phone booth was originally built into the wall along with two others. The phone booth has been made fully functional with the light, fan, and phone all in working order. The plan is to return the phone booth to the Campus to be called to active duty again. As a final touch to the restoration, a brass plaque was made and installed inside the phone booth, with the following message:

PEACOCK MILITARY ACADEMY

This phone booth restoration is dedicated to the thousands of Peacock Cadets who called their sweethearts from the barracks pay phones.

A special thanks to Major Howard Bratcher, Area Commander, Salvation Army. Major Bratcher made this restoration possible.

May, 2001

April 30, 2001

Col. D.W. Peacock
The Forum at Lincoln Heights
311 Nottingham West
San Antonio, Texas 78209

Dear Col. Don,

I have just returned from a board of directors meeting for the alumni association.

In your absence, Col. Thiesen kept us in line. I'm sure this is no surprise to you. However, your presence was missed. I'm sure Mike or Col. Dick will give you the details of the meeting.

How are you feeling? Better, I Hope! I heard you were having a little bit of rough sledding. I'm sure that it is nothing serious and that you are back at it by now. How is Ms. Ellen? I hope she is OK.

Every time I return to the campus I realize just how much Peacock means to me. I remember some bad experiences but the good ones certainly outweigh the bad. I thank you and the rest of the faculty for such rewarding times.

I watched my first Battle of Flowers parade last Friday. It seems strange to have marched in four and have never seen one. I want you to know that the so-called high school military units were pathetic. I even anxiously awaited the arrival of TMI so there would be at least one decent marching unit. Well, TMI finally showed up and they were no better than the rest. Honestly, they all looked as if they were taking a stroll down the street. I remarked to Rudy Johnson, who was sitting beside me, that Col. Thiesen would be pulling his hair out if that were us. No telling what would have awaited us when we returned to campus. Another fine example of just how wonderful Peacock was.

I moved from New Mexico to Kerrville last June. I wonder why I didn't do it a lot sooner.

I read in yesterday's Kerrville Daily Times of the death of Joseph Washington Burkett, PMA '29. He was a successful lawyer and legislator in the area.

Goodness, I intended for this to be only a note and it has turned into quite an epistle. So, I'll end it with a wish of good health to you and Ms. Ellen. And, a sincere thank you for PMA.

Best Wishes

L.R. Doty
PMA '53

REMEMBER?

- Cadets returning from vacation for the 1960-61 school year were happy to find that the new Academy swimming pool was completed and ready for their enjoyment. The first to dive in was Colonel George Cole!

A good sized 20 x 40 feet in length, proper depth at the back for swimming, and deep enough at the front for diving by advanced swimmers and 'show-off's.'

The senior class of 1961, under the leadership of the class president, Don Scoggins—who was also the Battalion Commander—donated funds to have a cabana built at the back end. It was 20 x 12 feet in size, with an enclosed room at one end for swimmers to change clothes and for serving refreshments at class parties on weekends and evenings.

- Alumni who were cadets in the late 1960's and those in following years will always remember the new, more relaxed, rules adopted concerning certain meals on weekends.

On Saturdays, instead of having to meet a 5:30 p.m. supper formation, cadets who were not on permit could go to the dining hall at any time between 5:00 and 5:30 p.m., enter the kitchen where the chef was busy cooking french fries and hamburgers, build their own burgers with a choice of 'fixings' and sit anywhere they wished in the Mess Hall. Another favorite policy involved Sunday mornings. Instead of having to get up at first call (already an hour later than usual), meeting breakfast formation and then going to breakfast in the dining hall, cadets had an option: they could sleep in and skip breakfast altogether or sleep in and still report for breakfast anytime between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m.

Cadets on campus on Sunday evenings could go to the dining hall where they could build their own sandwiches from ham, other cold cuts, cheese, and peanut butter.

Remember?

THREE YEARS AT PEACOCK

Following Colonel Lawson Richardson's death in an automobile accident in June, 1965, Captain John N. Hains—who had returned from military service in Germany and was teaching at Peekskill Military Academy in New York—came with his wife (the former Sue Ellen Peacock) to San Antonio to become Headmaster at PMA for three years, beginning with the 1965-66 school year.

During his three years at the Academy, Captain Hains was responsible for many changes, including the following:

With John Hains' encouragement, the seniors cleaned up the old Log Cabin Playhouse on the campus and put it back to productive use for the first time in years. It became the site of a snack concession, the yield from which helped finance bigger and better school and individual class parties. Newly named Richardson Hall became the more official Student Lounge and when the "campy" television show *Batman* premiered for the 1966 season, somehow the administration was talked into adjusting the dinner schedule slightly two nights a week to accommodate cadets who wanted to see and hear *Batman* and *Robin ZONK!* "The Penguin" or "The Joker."

Other interesting differences in attitudes could be noted. A quick look through the 1966 Yearbook faculty section will find most of those individuals dressed in civilian clothes. In fact, even the Superintendent, Colonel Wesley Peacock himself, had his picture taken at his desk wearing a suite and tie instead of the usual uniform. This deviation from the military uniform requirement was encouraged by the new Dean of Studies, John Hains who felt that the faculty members should have more choice in their dress except for times when they were Officer in Charge or on certain other official military occasions. Hains also suggested a dark green civilian blazer, striped tie, and gray flannel slacks for seniors to wear when they were on pass or for various non-military functions on and off campus. The seniors could wear the blazers during the second semester before graduation. Naturally, this was a popular innovation and significant concession on the part of the administration.



PROFILE

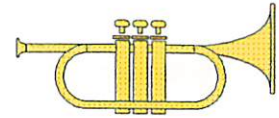
Ben Sutton, '42, has been a PMA Board Director since 1984, when the organization membership was increased to twenty-four directors.

He and his wife Elizabeth have made many trips to San Antonio over the years, always stopping in Corsicana on their way from their Tyler home to buy four dozen or more of the famous cookies at Collins Street Bakery for the enjoyment of the Board every six months.

When Ben graduated from PMA in 1942, World War II was underway, and he immediately entered the Army Air Corps as a flying cadet, stationed first at Lincoln, Nebraska; then at Salt Lake City--qualifying as an engineering flying observer, making reconnaissance flights and taking pictures in an experimental B-24. After the war, Ben entered The University of Texas at Austin, graduating with a degree in Business Administration and minors in biology, engineering, and law. He was recalled to active duty during the fighting in Korea.

Ben is now an independent oil operator, active in city and civic associations in Tyler, Texas.

TAPS



Joseph Washington Burkett, '29

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