

CMAAA Board of Directors Meeting— Oct 23rd



Volume 36, Number 3

Fall 2026

From the President



Summer is almost over and most everyone I know is looking forward to the cooler weather of Fall. This time of year does bring back some memories of CMA though. It was this period when I made my first trip to campus. For some reason, I thought showing up for football camp two weeks before school started would be a good introduction to my future military school career. At a whopping 115 pounds, my football future was short-lived, but the memories of meeting my fellow cadets and coaches have lasted much longer. Of course the heat of the practice field, running wind sprints, and swallowing copious salt pills is indelibly etched in my memory cells.

I would like to thank Monica Hayes for the wonderful job she does keeping us informed with the Reveille. It's truly a blessing to have the Columbia Academy staff and administrators supporting our association as they do. By the time you read this, the open house of Academy Hall will have already taken place, but let me assure you, it is a true work of art that meets modern times. Monica in-

cluded a video in the last edition to illustrate some of the before-and-after views, and I hope you'll take the time next visit to campus to see the wonderful work accomplished.

Speaking of your next visit to campus, please join us for CMA day on October 23, 2026 at 9:00 in the CA Chapel! It's an uplifting experience to watch, answer questions, and talk to the students and future leaders of [tomorrow](#).

It is now a year away from our next reunion and the dates are [September 16-19 2027](#). We had hoped to get our customary first weekend in August, but the dates we have are all they could offer us. As expected, the rates are higher this time coming in at \$179/night. It still includes breakfast, which is a plus, but it's still a great deal for all they do for us. More to come on details later.

Enjoy each day and I hope to see you soon! Until then...

CARRY ON!

Mike

Mike Glover
Class of 1974
CMAAA President

New Look Bugle

The Publisher software program that has been used to develop the *Bugle* all these years is being abandoned by Microsoft in October. This will most certainly impact the look and feel of the *Bugle* in future publications. No replacement software has been identified yet so the Winter publication of the *Bugle* will be a surprise for us all.

CMA Day 2026 Join in the Fun

CMA Day on the Columbia Academy campus has been set for Friday, October 23rd and 9:00 AM in the Columbia Academy Chapel (Old Main). We are looking forward to another great time with the current CA students and hope that as many alumni as possible can join in the event. It is always a good time for all the alumni that participate. In addition, the CMAAA Board of Directors will be conducting their Fall Meeting in the Mess Hall at 1:00 that day after the school finishes serving lunch for the students (which the alumni that participate in the CMA Day event will be eating with the students). And, as an added attraction, those who are in town on Thursday night in preparation for the Friday events will be having dinner at Legends at 6:00 PM. This dinner is for anyone that would like to join in with the group...local Columbia alumni as well as those that have come to town for the events on Friday. CMAAA Past President Robin Salze is doing the leg work for these events and needs to know who will be participating so proper arrangements can be made. Please let Robin (frsalze66@gmail.com) know if you can join the group (1) Thursday night for dinner, (2) Friday morning for CMA Day on campus and (3) Friday afternoon for the CMAAA Board of Directors meeting in the Mess Hall. Anyone is welcome to participate in the CMAAA board meeting; you do not have to be a member to attend. Make plans to join in these activities and continue to share the CMA story. Please let Robin know as soon as possible if you will be participating in any of the activities.

Colonel C.A. Ragsdale Powerful Force behind CMA



Douglas H. Hansen, Class of 1967, provided this photograph of Colonel Ragsdale at a morning chapel service at CMA sometime between 1940 and 1942. Douglas's father, Harvey Robert Hansen Jr., CMA Class of 1942, was the first in his family to attend CMA and was a great admirer of Colonel Ragsdale. He was followed by Douglas's uncle James M. Hansen, Class of 1944, then another uncle Nikolas F. Hansen who attended CMA for one year, and then Douglas who attended for two years graduating with the Class of 1967.

Colonel Ragsdale applied to join the CMA faculty in 1931 and did so as the President of the school, a position he held for 31 years. Colonel Ragsdale launched the most successful years of Columbia Military Academy, solidifying a faculty that included such notable members as William O. Batts, Thomas R. Fishburne, J. B. Gracy, Clyde Wilhoite, E. Blythe Hatcher, W. D. Prickett, John B. Thomas, Ernest P. Hart, and Earl G. Sparkman. Members of the faculty that Colonel Ragsdale put in place were instrumental in leading CMA from the early 1930's until the 1970s. Colonel Ragsdale retired as President of CMA in 1962 but remained with the school as President Emeritus until 1964, thus serving the cadets at Columbia Military Academy for thirty-three years.



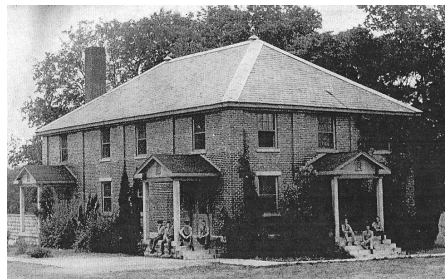
Sharing Memories of Life as a CMA Cadet

Jim Dickinson has great memories of his time at CMA and shared a few of them for use in this publication of the *Bugle*.

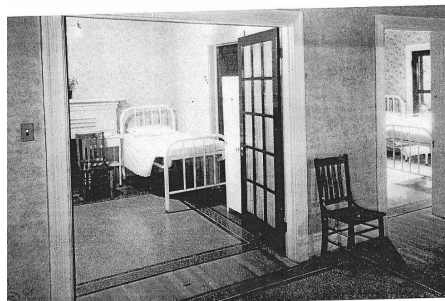
Jim developed an interest in attending CMA early in 1951. His father, Ellis Dickinson, notified CMA that his son James was interested in becoming a student at CMA. As a result, Major Thomas Fishburne, Director of Activities and Physics Instruction at CMA, visited the Dickinson Family store in Brilliant, Alabama and encouraged the family to make a visit to the CMA campus.



The visit was a success and James and his family visited the campus in the Spring of 1951 with Major Fishburne serving as their host for the visit.



THE SCHOOL HOSPITAL



INTERIOR VIEW OF TWO WARDS

Part of the tour included visiting the CMA medical facility on campus. That tour of the campus was also a success and Jim was enrolled to enter CMA for the upcoming school year. When Cadet Dickinson arrived on the CMA campus in September 1951, he learned that the medical facility had located two blocks off campus and that the former medical

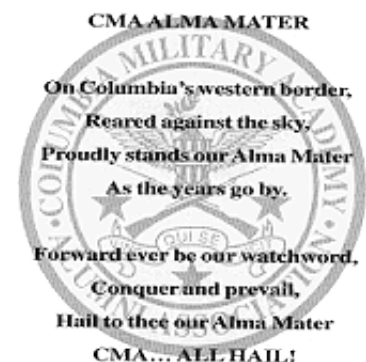
facility had been renovated to become a barracks, Lee Hall, his new quarters for the coming year.



Jim attended CMA for two years, his freshman and sophomore years, and is very proud to have been a member of the Gold Star Drill Platoon that won the Tennessee Championship while he was part of the platoon. Major Charles T. Boyle, Professor of Military Science and Tactics, organized and managed the activities of the Gold Star Drill Platoon. In February 1952, the platoon was invited to participate in three New Orleans Mardi Gras Parades. While in New Orleans, the platoon was quartered in the National Guard barracks.



We all have memories and great stories to tell of our time at CMA. Jim's two years at CMA certainly left an impression on his life and provided him with great memories that he carries to this day.



Veteran's Memorial Park

When David DeVore, CMA Class of 1964, got out of college he bought 80 acres in Northern Michigan and has kept it all this time. He was approached by the Veterans Memorial Park staff to donate field rocks from his farm to build a Veterans Memorial Wall that represents the 59,000 soldiers killed in Vietnam. He donated 10 dump trucks full of rocks to the park and today there is a wall representing all those soldiers. The Veteran's Park is located in Cadillac, Michigan and supports all military veterans who are in need of assistance. It is the largest veteran's assistance program in Northern Michigan, and it is run completely by volunteers. The man who started the program was a pilot in Vietnam and came back and realized there was no support organization to help military veterans in the area, so he started the park which is based on a 60 acres area with park like setting for families to enjoy. David recently found out about this rock at the entrance of the park with his and his wife's names.



After CMA and college Dave entered the Army Reserves for 6 years so he has a pretty good military background and this park is special to him.

Make Plans Now to Attend the 2027 CMA Reunion

We are a year out for the 2027 CMA Reunion to be held September 16-19 2027 at the Marriott in Cool Springs. This is the 50th celebration for the Classes of 1976 and 1977. Additionally, our Honor Group for this reunion will be all former cadets that were members of the CMA Rifle Team. Make plans now to be part of the festivities in 2027.

CMA Endowment Growing



Help Preserve CMA's Legacy

As has been mentioned in previous *Bugles*, the administration of Columbia Academy, in conjunction with its Board of Directors, established a Columbia Military Academy Endowment. This endowment will be used exclusively to provide funds to preserve and protect the legacy of Columbia Military Academy. The goal is to (1) ensure the maintenance and upkeep of the CMA Museum for perpetuity, (2) preserve and protect the original buildings of the Columbia Arsenal and other buildings that were part of Columbia Military Academy, and (3) maintain the memorials and markers across campus that are dedicated to CMA and its alumni. This endowment is accounted for separately from the other endowments at Columbia Academy and the CMA Alumni Association receives an accounting of the funds each year. This endowment was established with an initial investment of \$10,000 that was provided by an anonymous Columbia Academy alumnus. For the fiscal year June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2026, gifts totaling \$5,244.95 were made to the fund and @2,301.86 was withdrawn to provide funds for renovations and improvements to facilities original to the CMA campus. As of May 2026, the amount in the endowment had grown to \$63,919. The hope is that this endowment will grow and provide a sound financial basis to preserve and protect the legacy of CMA. To make a donation to the endowment, please send a check made out to Columbia Academy and annotated as a donation for the CMA Endowment to Columbia Academy, 1101 West Seventh Street, Columbia, Tennessee 38401. All donations are tax deductible and will result in the donor receiving a receipt from Columbia Academy that can be used when filing tax returns. We ask that all alumni and friends of CMA consider a donation or bequest to the CMA Legacy endowment.

You Can Help Keep the Bugle Interesting and Fresh

With this edition of the *Bugle* we have over 36 years of publication of our quarterly newsletter. During that time the *Bugle* has gone through numerous changes and you can help the *Bugle* maintain its value by providing your stories, pictures, news updates, and information on CMA Family losses so it can be shared with the association members through the *Bugle*. Please provide anything that you think would be good for inclusion in the *Bugle* to the below address and help keep the *Bugle* moving forward. Let's keep it fresh and interesting for everyone.

Woody Pettigrew
101 Sansberry Lane
Madison, AL 35756

wpettigrew@knology.net

Use Your Board of Directors to Influence CMAAA Activities

Everyone is encouraged to review the last page of the *Bugle* and see your current CMAAA Board of Directors members. These representatives are there to support you and advance the Association. If you have suggestions or items that you want brought to the Board's attention, you can work that through any one of the Board members.

MOVING?

STAY IN TOUCH...

Please forward your new address to:

CMA Alumni Association
804 Athenaeum Place
Columbia, TN 38401-3156

NAME: _____

GRADUATING CLASS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: (____) _____

E-MAIL: _____

SILVER TAPS

James W. Bell, Class of '53

James William "Jim" Bell passed away on May 15, 2026 at Fort Sanders Hospital in Knoxville. He was 91. Jim was born in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee on October 4, 1934. He was abandoned by his father and raised by his mother in abject poverty. Her attended CMA graduating with the Class of 1953, but with no



Jim Bell

money in his pocket. He borrowed bus fare to go to the Army enlistment center and spent the happiest years of his life in the Army, never worrying about where he would sleep or eat. Jim attended the University of Tennessee on the GI Bill and received a degree in Chemical Engineering and moved to Delaware where he met Sandra Hudson. They were married 60 years. They returned to Knoxville where Jim received his law degree from UT and where he practiced law until his retirement. Jim was a public servant. He served on the Knox County School Board and adopted the nickname "School Board Bell" to distinguish himself from a lawyer with a similar name. Jim and Sandra raised five daughters. Jim was great at math but a terrible tutor. He was a Libra and a lawyer but his attempts to play King Solomon with his children backfired hilariously. He once was described as the funniest man in Knoxville. At least one daughter believed it. Jim had a photographic memory but never learned the names of his daughters' boyfriends – he called them "gerbils" or "keepers." Jim had many vices and once bragged that he passed all of them to his children. Jim's favorite book was *To Kill a Mockingbird*. His favorite movie was *From Here to Eternity*. He cried every time. He got his pilot's license when he was in his fifties. He learned Mandarin when he was in his seventies. When he was 81, he returned to Germany and found his old Army base. He was elated. He was a member of the Knoxville Racquet Club where he played tennis until he was 90. Jim was a good time Charlie. He loved margaritas and shrimp cocktail. Jim is preceded in death by his wife, Sandra. He is survived by his daughters Susan Riordon, Stacy McQuaide (Michael), Shannon Bell (Christopher White), Jennifer Bell, and Amanda Madson (Andrew), and four grandchildren.

Gordon B Guess, Class of '54

Gordon Blue Guess, 89, of Marion, Kentucky, died peacefully at his home on May 30, 2026. Born June 18, 1936, to Neil Gordon Guess and Virginia Blue Guess and raised in Marion, Gordon attended CMA for five years graduating with the Class of 1954. He then



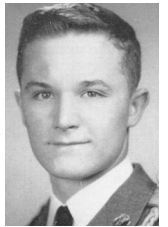
Gordon Guess

attended and graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1958. He joined the U.S. Army, serving at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota and Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. Upon completing his military service, he returned to Kentucky to pursue a banking career. Following positions at Louisville Trust Company and Florida National Bank, Gordon returned to his hometown in 1972 and went on to lead The Peoples Bank as President and Chairman until his retirement in 2007. Gordon served on the boards of numerous organizations, including: the Crittenden County Hospital, the Kentucky Hospital Association, the Community Bankers Association of Kentucky, the Kentucky Bankers Association, the Crittenden County Library Building Commission, and the Crittenden County Economic Development Corporation. He served six years on the Board of Directors of the Louisville Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. He played a key role in the development of the Marion-Crittenden County James C. Johnson Regional Airport and led the effort to establish both a youth recreational soccer league in Crittenden County and the CCHS girls' soccer program. A dedicated Republican, Gordon served more than four decades on the Crittenden County Republican Executive Committee, including eight years as chairman. He was a delegate to numerous Kentucky Republican conventions and represented his party at the Republican National Conventions in 1980 and 2016. Baseball, however, was his true passion. A lifelong Dodgers fan, he attended the Dodgers Adult Baseball Camp in 1987, where he earned the nickname "Big Scoop." He broadcast high school and semi-professional baseball games on 102.7 WMJL radio for many years and was later inducted into the National Semi-Pro Baseball Hall of Fame in recognition of his contributions to sports broadcasting. In retirement, he was a founding member of the Ohio Valley League and served as general

manager of the Marion Bobcats from 2008 to 2013. Gordon led the expansion of the outfield and the addition of stadium seating at Marion City-County Park, transforming it into a venue capable of hosting regional tournaments. The field is named in his honor. He was a lover of blues and classic country music, barbecue, golf, road trips, and the Indy 500, and could always be counted on for a good story and a hearty laugh. Few things meant more to Gordon than Marion and Crittenden County, whose people, traditions, and history he cherished throughout his life. Gordon is survived by his wife of 55 years, Carole Naber Guess; his son, Neil Gordon Guess II and his wife, Dusty; his daughter, Kathleen Mulloy Guess and her partner, Michael O'Hara; his daughter, Elizabeth Blue Guess and her husband, Lance Rohrecker; and his grandson, Gordon Christopher Rohrecker.

William E. Sheffield, Class of '60

Willam Edward (Eddie, Ed) Sheffield, Jr. died peacefully at home in Nogal, New Mexico, surrounded by Carol, his beloved wife of 43 years. A devoted father, stepfather, brother, grandfather, and friend, he was a man of great depth and many talents. Ed was born on October 25, 1942 in



Ed Sheffield

Memphis, Tennessee, to Dr. Willam Edward Sheffield, Sr. and Mrs. Dorothy Sheffield (nee Dorothy Anderson Wilkins). Ed attended CMA for two years graduating with the Class of 1960. He later went on to attend Southwestern University in Memphis, Tennessee. He majored in Chemistry and went directly to medical school, attending the University of Tennessee. He graduated on December 18, 1966, with a degree as a Doctor of Medicine. Ed was the great-grandson of a doctor, a son of a doctor, and a brother to two doctors. He enlisted in the U.S. military during the Vietnam War and was commissioned as a captain in the Air Force, serving as a flight surgeon. He first lived in Memphis, Tennessee, before being transferred to Lajes Air Base in the Azores and then to McCoy Air Base in Orlando, Florida. Ed completed his residency in Temple, Texas, moved to Corpus Christi, Texas and opened his

- Continued on Page 5 -

SILVER TAPS

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private practice in orthopedic medicine. He practiced for over 35 years and was a renowned physician. He enjoyed several hobbies, including photography, scuba diving, and restoring cars, especially his cherished MGBs. He also played piano, saxophone, and guitar, bringing joy to his family. Ed and Carol travelled extensively to Europe, the Cayman Islands, Mexico, Costa Rica, and transversed the United States from coast to coast including driving to Alaska and back. He is survived by his wife Carol Sheffield, daughters Michelle Sheffield Watson, Leslee Sheffield, Leah McEvoy and husband, Kris, son Benjamin Sheffield and wife Lori, step-daughter, Stephanie Sheffield, one step granddaughter, six grandsons, one step great grandson, and many longtime friends.

John H. Ferguson, Class of '69

John H. Ferguson passed away leaving behind a legacy of faith, kindness, adventure, and determination that will continue to inspire all who knew him. John attended CMA for seven years, graduating with the Class of 1969. At the age of 31, John founded his own sales company with little more than confidence and a will-



John Ferguson

ingness to dream big. When he asked his wife, Gail, to mail sales letters and product samples to companies such as JC Penney, Sears, and Walmart, she questioned whether he was serious. John's response was simply, "Why not?" Two weeks later, Walmart called and invited him to Bentonville, Arkansas, for a meeting. Although he did not secure the account, the experience reflected the fearless optimism that defined his life. He was never intimidated by obstacles and believed that every opportunity was worth pursuing. That determination led John to build two successful businesses and accomplish every item on his personal bucket list by the age of 63. Whether exploring new places with Gail or setting off on an unexpected journey, John believed the greatest experiences came from venturing beyond the ordinary. After striking up a conversation with a fellow airline passenger, he discovered the opportunity to rent a private island for a week, and before long, he and Gail were enjoying one of their

most unforgettable vacations together. While John's accomplishments were impressive, those who knew him best will remember him most for his extraordinary kindness. He was always willing to help others, whether it meant changing a light bulb for an elderly neighbor, visiting her after she moved into a nursing home, or stopping by a local elder care facility simply to sit on the porch and spend time talking with residents. John saw value in every person he met. He treated everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of their background or circumstances. After moving to Charlotte, he and Gail developed friendships with several individuals experiencing homelessness. John took the time to learn their names, hear their stories, and remind them that they were seen, valued, and loved. He understood that many were simply people who had fallen on difficult times and needed hope. John's greatest legacy is not found in the businesses he built or the adventures he enjoyed, but in the countless lives he touched through simple acts of compassion. His generosity, humility, and genuine love for others left an enduring mark on family, friends, neighbors, and even strangers.

Please let Woody Pettigrew know if you hear any news on the passing of former Cadets and Faculty members so it can be included in the *Bugle*. Silver Taps, while sad to read, is a key portion of the *Bugle* to help keep our association updated on our friends and faculty.

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