



THE ECHO



Denver Jones Memorial Issue

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DEATH CLAIMS ECHO COMMANDER

Echo Company Staff Meets to Select New Commander

By Linda Deschane

Lieutenant Colonel Denver D Jones, KMS class of 1947 lost his valiant struggle against a malignant form of brain cancer and died peacefully at home in Ft Smith, Arkansas. Denver had been receiving treatment at MD Anderson hospital in Houston, Texas for the ailment. He was visited by the Command Staff of Echo Company in May of 2007 and hosted a formal dinner and reception on the occasion.

"We've lost a very good man!"

Dr. Ed Ridgely called the ECHO to report the news and to provide details of the arrangements including funeral services. The catafalque of LtCol Jones was adorned with the Kemper Colors in a final tribute from the school of his youth and in honor of the organization he founded - Echo Company. Said Captain Don Bruning upon learning of the news, "We've lost a very good man!"

An emergency session of the Board of Directors for Echo Company, Kemper Military School, Incorporated was called to effect the selection of a new Commander and no announcement has been made as of this printing. The entire Corps of Kemper Old Boys reacted with shock at the news and a day of mourning was called for - flags were lowered to half staff at the headquarters and in the homes of all Board members.

This special edition of the ECHO has been dedicated to LtCol Jones who was one of Kemper's biggest supporters and most loyal sons.

Gone But Will Join Eternal Corps

Denver Jones' dream of a unified Kemper Corps of Cadets was never realized in his lifetime and may likely never come to pass on this earthly plane. However, his vision of life after death and the belief that an eternal Corps of Cadets silently parades the grounds of Kemper inspired Echo Company and has swelled the ranks of the fledgling organization he started in Kansas City, Missouri only days after the closing of the school he loved.

SAW KEMPER AS A VALUABLE TOOL

Denver Jones experienced Kemper as a cadet, soon learning the lessons and experience of being a cadet were valuable tools. Denver saw these teaching values and reasoned they should not be lost. He was determined to preserve the Kemper experience so that the youth of the future would have the opportunity to experience Kemper as he had.

In the years preceding the school's closure Jones held some of the highest offices possible in banking and finance circles. It was not uncommon for him to postpone meetings with some of the most important people in America so that he could attend personally to the affairs of Kemper.

It was a devastating blow to Denver when the school did finally close. However, his devotion to the ideals of the school and love for his fellow Old Boys insured that part of the school would live on in the organization of his founding - Echo Company. **"We shall do this differently!"** said Jones at the inaugural meeting of the organization. **"Echo Company must stand on its own two feet, lead by Old Boys and funded by Old Boys. It must not depend on the generosity of any one person for all of us have a stake in the future of how our school shall be remembered."**

Denver Jones so loved the school of his youth, Kemper Military School that he was laid to eternal rest wearing the Kemper crest above his heart. *Nunquam non Paratus.*

DISDAINED POLITICS, SOUGHT HEALING

All of his life Denver held a keen dislike for the workings of politics and the "quid pro quo" of getting things done. Indeed Denver Jones was one of the most gifted and articulate Oklahomans since Will Rogers, still he never used his charisma and personal appeal for his own gain. His Christian upbringing and strident belief that all people are basically good earned him friends all over the world. Indeed one story had it that Denver Jones stepped off an airplane in a remote Asian country where he was immediately greeted by a local who he had befriended years earlier. The stunned onlookers in his traveling party watched as Jones and the local native got caught up on affairs as if separated by only a few days instead of many years.



DENVER D JONES
26 November 1929 30 August 2007

Denver Dennis Jones was born in Hartshorne, Oklahoma to Denver D Jones Sr and Cecelia Katigan Jones in 1929. He attended elementary schools in the town of Hartshorne until entering Kemper Military School in 1944. Upon completion of Kemper, he went on to the University of Oklahoma and earned degrees in Business and Finance.

Denver entered into several businesses in the eastern Oklahoma and Arkansas area and recalled fondly the close relationships he formed with many families in communities there.

Colonel Jones was elected to the Board of Directors for Kemper Military School and was subsequently nominated as the Chairman of the Board for Kemper. In 2002 he was named the *Chairman Emeritus* of Kemper and he continued to provide watchful guidance until the day the school closed.

Happy is the heart which is rained upon and the heavens wept upon the service.

Nunquam non Paratus



RIDGLEY RECALLS JONES

Dr Ed Ridgley, the President of Echo Company, spent some time reflecting on the powerful impact which Jones had on Kemper. Shown here in a file photo, Ridgley urged the members of Echo Company to consider the example which Jones set.

"I was deeply saddened upon learning of the death of Denver Jones. He was one of my closest friends and someone I came to admire and respect. In many ways Denver was much like a brother to me and I loved him as one would love a brother."

"I loved him as one would love a brother."

Ridgley, who continues to serve Echo Company, stressed that the day to day of the corporation will not be jeopardized by the death of its founder. "We are a strong group and getting stronger each day. One of the most profound legacies which Denver left us was a determination to see us stand on our own two feet without his sole financial support.

President Ridgely also serves as the Corps Commander of the Eternal Corps of Cadets and, when asked how those duties merge with the news of Denver's death Ridgely responded, "I do not profess wisdom beyond the here and now but my guess is that Denver Jones is with the Eternal Corps! If, when my time comes, I find myself on the parade field you can bet your bottom dollar that I'll be looking for Denver to help me."

"My guess is that Denver Jones is with the Eternal Corps!"

"Denver is missed by hundreds, if not thousands, of people he befriended, said Ridgley. I can tell you many stories of Old Boys he helped and they never even knew he was their benefactor. He was a great businessman and a benevolent provider who loved to display generosity but so modest he would often defer the credit or remain anonymous.

One Old Boy I know personally had some difficulty, money troubles. Not that he didn't work hard, he just had more responsibilities than money. Anyway, it came time for college for one of his youngsters and it didn't look like it was going to happen. Denver contacted a college and paid the tuition but stipulated that it be offered to the Old Boy's kid as a 'scholarship' and that Denver not be given any notice in the matter. It was all sort of a face saving exercise.

"Denver contacted the college and paid the tuition."

It was very satisfying to Denver to hear that Old Boy talk about the scholarship which his youngster received from the college. The Old Boy was so proud and Denver filled with a sense of giving, everyone was happy all the way around."

Ridgley assured the *ECHO* that Denver Jones would not soon be forgotten and that plans are under way for a suitable means of memorializing the man who kept Kemper alive for nearly ten years.

Quick Fact

Denver Jones was the Chairman Emeritus of Kemper Military School and received the keys to the school during the 2002 commencement ceremony. Days later the Board of Trustees voted to close the school.



**Denver Dennis Jones
KMS Cadet 44-47**

Denver Jones once recalled his Kemper experiences as a cadet for the *ECHO* and we are pleased to be able to print his recollections for you here.

"In 1944 we were at war and my dad and my uncle were both military. I really don't know if I got to be a handful for my mother or not but the next thing I knew I was on the train headed towards Boonville, Missouri.

When the train arrived in Boonville that August afternoon it was around 3:00pm as best I remember. Hot?! Oh man let me tell you it was hotter than the hubs of hell! There were a bunch of older cadets at the station to 'greet' us. Well, they commenced to yelling at us to get out trunks and baggage and get moving. Up Third Street towards Kemper.

I thought, "What have I gotten myself into?" I suppose I wasn't any different than anyone else who processed in that day but it sure did seem a long way from home.

For years I used to tell the story that I learned to hate everything about Kemper, the uniforms, the Old Boys, the formations, the food...I even hated the KATY railroad for taking me to Kemper. After my first visit home it got a lot better and I found myself waiting to get back to Kemper. Of course

I'd never admit that to anyone especially as a cadet.

The friends I made at Kemper were the best friends I have ever had in my whole life. Jim Ewing, Warren Long, Clyde Hashagen, Ted Guy, Mltry, they were all there...the people you hear about everyday. Man I was so proud to be standing in the same place as those guys it was just amazing.

I never really gave any thought to the fact that Will Rogers went to Kemper. I thought that the people who were going there while I was there, they were going to be doctors, lawyers, they were the ones who would change the world after we won this war. The lessons I learned at Kemper in the classroom were nothing compared to the lessons I learned from those other Old Boys. I owe everything I am and have become to the character which they forged in me.



Denver Jones shown here in May of 2007

ALWAYS A CADET

While some Old Boys seem to want to disconnect as much as possible from the events of their cadet days, Denver Jones always held a place in his heart for the days of his youth at Kemper. In 1994 he returned to Kemper for an Old Boy weekend to help celebrate the sesquicentennial of the school and to recall his early days at the school upon his fiftieth anniversary of attending Kemper.

Denver saw the school dilapidated and in shambles and set about resolving the problems of the place he so loved. In short he put his money where his mouth was! Nearly immediately Denver was elected to the Board of Directors for Kemper and, after an inspection tour of the campus he personally purchased and paid for over 150 new mattresses for cadet rooms.



Later, Denver purchased vehicles for the schools use Denver went to a local Boonville car dealer and purchases five brand new vans for the school's use

and without comment or promise of reward he donated the sleek new fleet of vans to the school without condition.

Always a Cadet cont.

Denver had every reason imaginable to distance himself from the school. Kemper was broke and in bankruptcy, lacked sponsors and had very dim prospects for the future. Still, he pushed onward because he believed in the cadets and wanted to insure that as many young people as possible enjoyed the experience of Kemper.



This 1996 photograph of the Board of Directors for Kemper Military School shows Denver smiling from the third row (arrow).

As times grew increasingly tense for the school and the end seemed clear Denver rallied and secured the appointment of Dr. Ed Ridgely who became one of Denver's closest friends. The two worked well together and devised plans which nearly saved the school. Through it all, Denver would often walk about the campus and always had the welfare of the cadets on his mind.

One story had it that on a particular occasion he observed a pizza delivery vehicle drive by and he reasoned that the cadets might enjoy a pizza after study hall. Denver called the local Pizza Hut and ordered 75 large pizzas in assorted flavors and styles for the cadets. Unaccustomed to such a large order, the owner called him back shortly to verify the order. Jones assured the confused manager it was no joke and restated the order.



This 1998 photograph shows Denver Jones as he announces to the Corps that their efforts during final examinations have earned them all a pizza party. Jones walked among the cadets who were completely unaware that he had bought the treat for them.

By the year 2000 Denver Jones had become the sole reason that Kemper remained open and he had earned the dubious honor of being elevated to the position of "Chairman" of the Board. The school was bankrupt, out of money, and with little promise of success. Still Jones devoted himself to the task and spent long hours traveling to Boonville in hope of resurrecting the school and restoring it to its place of former glory.

Denver loved the cadets and even found a curious sense of amusement at some of the antics the youngsters engaged in. It was not uncommon for Denver to be seen at the "Bull Ring" where he often asked the cadets why they were walking punishment. Denver delighted in telling the story that on one occasion he asked a cadet why he was in trouble and when the cadet replied, "My mouth is too big!" it was all Denver could do to keep from laughing.

Over and over the scenario played out. Kemper would run out of money, Denver would come to the rescue. Each time Denver responded with kindness and generosity and always displayed the same modest degree of humility which earned him the respect and gratitude of everyone who knew him.



Another view of the famous "Kemper Pizza Party" which cadets still talk about to this day.

One thing Denver Jones loved more than Kemper (beside his family) were the cadets. He adored the youngsters who rallied to carry on the traditions and learn about the heritage of the school.



Here Denver is shown awarding a decoration to the Corps Commander in ceremonies during the 2000 school year. Denver delighted in participating in school functions and loved the cadets.

Inspiring Words Will Continue

By John Downs

Each year for the last five years Denver Jones has addressed the family of Old Boys through the *ECHO* in the Christmas issue. A tradition which began as a means to reassure shaken Old Boys grew to become words of inspiration and hope. Jones prepared his

Christmas address each year months in advance and, the 2007 Christmas issue of the *ECHO* will carry his final address to the Kemper family.



Denver never faltered in his love of Kemper. He saw his duty and did it willingly and without reservation. His devotion and dedication set a standard and created a hallmark for others.

That I am fortunate enough to have known Denver Jones is a blessing in my lifetime and one which I will always cherish and hold dear. If it is that you did not have the honor of his acquaintance then I extend to you my regret for you have truly missed knowing one of Kemper's greatest sons. I say to Denver, my friend and brother, good bye, we all loved you, march proudly with the Eternal Corps of Cadets

"So Say You John Downs, So Say We All!"

Prayer For Denver Jones

By Fr. W.K. "Bill" Dewatch



Heavenly Father we pray that you receive the soul of our departed friend and loyal Kemper son Denver Jones into your keeping. Relieve our suffering in this hour of loss o Lord and bring us the truth which is the divine power of your infinite mercy.

Grant that we might prosper from the wisdom which Denver shared with us as an instrument of your teaching. His kindness generosity and compassion were all virtues which reflect the true beauty of the humankind. Give us this day your comfort in our sorrow and place upon the leaders of the organizations which he founded the strength and wisdom to carry on his good works.

Oh gentle Lord we pray this day that you comfort those who grieve and fill them with your love and comfort. As we remind ourselves of the promise of everlasting life in you and that, by the example of Jesus Christ, your son we are given the gift of being reborn with mercy and hope.

Father, we commend the soul of Denver Jones to your keeping. His earthly work having been done you called him home to heal his sickened and mortal body and to make full your love for this man. Let not our love for Denver be expressed in grief but realized in a joyful celebration upon learning the news that he has risen to be with you.

We thank thee Father for your blessings this day and for granting to us the pleasure of sharing your most noble creation in Denver Jones. His examples to us are lessons rich in your teachings and your loyal servant Denver shared that love with us.

Amen.

EULOGY FOR DENVER JONES

By Dr. Ed Ridgely

Editor's note: Excerpted from the remarks of Dr. Ed Ridgely to the assembled family and friends of Denver D Jones on Tuesday, 4 September 2007 in Wilburton, Oklahoma.

All of us have an opportunity today and, in the truest spirit of Denver, we are here to share that opportunity. We share a common brotherhood of love and respect for a man who worked his whole life to help people forge understanding. Some of us knew Denver as a professional man, a businessman of keen insight and a quick sense. Some of us here shared simple things with Denver and some of us shared what must seem like ancient history.

Denver Jones has provided each of us a profound example of how to live our lives and, even in death he demonstrated that dying can be done with dignity. Denver gave us many things, his compassion, his love of life, his embrace of

laughter, but above all else he gave each of us the most profound and wonderful gift any man can bestow upon another, he gave to us his friendship.

I cannot recall ever hearing Denver having a cross word with anyone. Instead, Denver took pride in building bridges of understanding between voids of mistrust. In Denver Jones we were witness to profound Christian teachings, he gave us his example as a measure of how we should love one another.

I recall one occasion when we had gathered together for dinner. I have to admit that the atmosphere was a bit stuffy, formal if you know what I mean. Shortly after we began the meal, great laughter erupted from the kitchen where Denver had gone to talk to the cooks and their staff thanking them for such a fine meal. Denver was telling them jokes and asking them about their families.

I can tell you that I loved Denver Jones, he was my friend. I will miss his laughter and his companionship, I mourn the loss of his calm leadership. Still, I promised to share with you the notion of an opportunity which Denver has given to each of us. That opportunity is here in each of us today. Love your neighbor, help your fellow man, be a friend to the least among us. Laugh and create laughter, put aside sorrow, pain and suffering. Find the good in mankind and build upon that which is good.

You did not think that I could speak to you without mention of Kemper Military School did you? I apologize if you are not familiar with the fact that Denver was a cadet there. In the tradition of Wil Rogers and other great Oklahomans, Denver attended this school in his youth. The lessons he learned there, the Christian teachings, the military discipline, every part of the school helped form who he was. Denver loved that old school and he did everything he humanly could to preserve it.

One day I looked out the window of my home which was situated on the campus at Kemper. There

in the distance I saw Denver walking "tours" or marching in a big square called the "bull ring". This was a practice generally reserved as punishment so you can well imagine that it was quite a shock to see the Chairman of the Board walking in this manner.

I went to the marching area and asked Denver what he was doing. Denver replied, "Shhhh! I just want to remember what it was like to do this!" and he kept walking. Again I asked him why he was doing this and he responded, "I want to remember the good and the bad!"

So, there is a lesson there for all of us from our friend, Denver Jones. Remember the good and the bad. Build upon that which is good, avoid the bad but don't forget it or we might just find ourselves repeating it.

Rejoice my friends, be filled with joy and happiness. Let a smile fill your heart and be content knowing the promise of everlasting life and that Denver Jones is indeed resting in the celestial realm of God's keeping. Denver, it took only a moment to recognize you as a special person, a few minutes to appreciate you, and a day to love you as a brother. It will take the rest of my life to forget you.

GENERAL CALL UP POSTPONED

A general membership call up previously scheduled for 28-30 September 2007 at Mexico, Missouri on the campus of Missouri Military Academy has been postponed until further notice as a result of the untimely death of Denver Jones.

Old Boys React to News of Jones' Death

BUTT PACK

This is where we print your letters and responses. Usually a bit of levity entertains our readers but here are some of the reactions of Echo Company members upon learning of the death of Denver Jones.

JACK M - CO "I will miss Denver and he certainly leaves a profound impression on the people he knew and loved. I am fortunate to have known him and to have been able to work with him."

DON B - WI "The passing of Denver Jones is the passing of a great son of Kemper. He (Denver) was an example that each of us could look up to. He was always there for me in good times and in bad. I have lost a very dear friend. This is a sad day."

JAMES K - FL "That Denver passed surrounded by the people he loved is not surprising to me at all. That the last words he spoke were "I love you all" seem to somehow say more about him than anything else."

RICHARD B - NE "This is one that hurts. I have seen the passage of Old Boys and I have come to terms with the loss but the death of Denver Jones will take a while - a long while!"

CHARLEY M - MO "We have lost a truly great man and someone I both deeply admire and respect."