

THE ECHO



"Continuously in print since 2002, Serving Kemper Old Boys and the Kemper Family"

Official Publication of Echo Company, Kemper Military School

COST \$1.00

March 2009

www.echocompany.org

Vol VI No 1

ECHO COMPANY SCHEDULES GENERAL CALL-UP

The Commander of Echo Company, Kemper Military School has announced a general membership call up and get together scheduled for May 16th of this year. The call-up, which is planned for the Iron Horse Hotel in Blackwater, Missouri includes a dinner on Saturday evening, followed by presentation of awards and also a Standard of Honor ceremony. The Iron Horse Hotel is a familiar location to Echo Company members who have adopted the historic location as a kind of local headquarters.

ECHO COMPANY TO SPONSOR STANDARD OF HONOR CEREMONY



The President of Echo Company, Dr. Ed Ridgley, has directed the staff to prepare plans for a Standard of Honor ceremony to be conducted on Saturday evening the 16th of May during ceremonies at the Iron Horse Hotel. The SOH ceremony will replicate the original in every detail and include the presentation of the living Standard by two original Standard of Honor commission members. The candlelit ceremony is a moving tribute to the values of Kemper and will include a signing.

Evening Dinner "Not A Fund Raiser" Says Downs



"There is no desire on the part of Echo Company, Kemper Military School to capitalize on the occasion of our reunion to raise money. This get together is not a pretense for fund raising. We just want you all to have a good time and know you will be among friends who respect and cherish the memory of Kemper." So Echo Company Secretary John Downs told members of the Board of Directors.

Fund raising is disdained within the leadership of Echo Company as being reminiscent of the schemes being perpetrated upon Old Boys for several years leading up to the collapse of the school. The May 16th dinner at the Iron Horse Restaurant in Blackwater, Missouri is without any ulterior motive and does not pretend to raise money or build a museum on money raised from the dinner – in fact, says Downs. The dinner costs what the hotel charges.

ECHO ARCHIVE PRODUCES UNIQUE PHOTO

By Tracy McKeown



During the nearly 160 in which Kemper existed as a formal school, there is little evidence that any significant number of students were admitted on their own volition. That is, most students had the full knowledge and consent of their parents if, in fact, their parents did not make the enrollment decision for them.

This extraordinary letter accompanied by the photograph at left clearly demonstrates the power, prestige, and magnitude which Kemper projected to the community at large. Here three young boys, all brothers, sought admission to Kemper as if volunteering for active federal service and were quite prepared to serve their country as young recruits. Also, from a purely historical perspective, this letter demonstrates the Heightened sense of patriotic fervor which permeated the country immediately preceding the Spanish American War.

Three small recruits who sought to join Kemper Military School in May 1897. They felt their uniforms and toy guns would help them get admitted, from left to right: George, John, and Bud Casey of St Joseph, Missouri

Although there is no of record of a reply to this correspondence, Kemper Military School did not admit any of the three brothers for the school years immediately after 1897. At least there is no record of a John, George, or Bud Casey attending Kemper Military School. What likely happened was that Colonel Johnston responded to the boys' letter by addressing correspondence to their parents. Perhaps he included a view book for prospective students and may have even placed the family on the summer visit schedule. Just the same it seems rather incredible that three small boys would solicit enrollment as if they were enlisting in the US Army.

George Casey
Bud Casey
John Casey
514 North 7th Street
St Joseph, Missouri

11 May 1897

Dear Kemper,

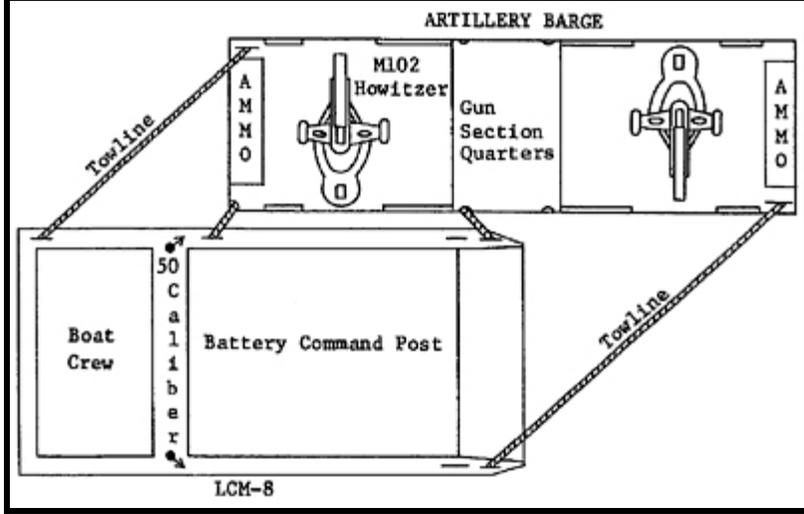
My brothers and I have decided that we would like to go to school with your class if you will take us. We are ready to do what we need to do. I can write and do well in my studies. I am in the sixth grade. John is not as good at arithmetic as I am but he is baseball keen. John and I will watch out for Bud and none of us will get in any trouble.

I see Boonville on the map but we will need some direction on how to get there. Can you tell my parents that we have to go or they will not let us. We have our own uniforms and guns but the guns don't shoot which is why we want to join your army of cadets.

We do not get tired when it is hot and we do not smoke or gamble. We do not use bad words. John is the best runner and I can see real good for enemy (sic).

Thank you, George, Bud, and John

The letter from the Casey boys as reproduced above. The original letter is maintained in the archive at Echo Company, Kemper Military School and is complete except for the original envelope. There were several misspellings and crossed out words.



Colonel Meek's handwritten schematic depicting the firing platform of his revolutionary artillery system. Fire support for the Riverines was only a phone call away thanks to this innovative Kemper Old Boy.

A FEW FEET FROM WHERE I STOOD

By LT Michael Gerring

"... it very interesting that American soldier (could) live in ships anchored in the middle of the river and we, unable to do anything more than fire a few rounds of harassing fire at them from the riverbank and then run away." **Nong Vo Kiet, NVA foot soldier**

That is how an enemy NVA soldier saw the RIVERINE mobile combat force. The Riverines were not new, but they had not been used since the American Civil War. The concept was to employ giant barges which had armor-plated superstructures supported by a flotilla of smaller assault boats which the resident warriors used to pursue and kill the NVA enemy with success.

On any given day a young lieutenant, Ed Ridgley, could watch the artillery fire of US batteries from the deck of the USS Benewah. It had to be a curious site to see the homemade barges with field guns strapped to their decks, all tied together with rope and cable.

Leaning over the guard railing of his ship the APB Benewah, Ridgley could have heard the thunder of the guns rolling across the delta waters of Viet Nam. Never did this Kemper Old Boy consider that the person responsible for conceiving and constructing the floating artillery platform was another Kemper Old Boy – Carroll S Meek KMS '45. Separated by less than a quarter mile, the 105mm howitzers which Meek commanded often supported Ridgley while he was in the field engaging the enemy in lethal firefights.

Meek, a 1945 graduate of Kemper Military School and a 1949 West Point graduate, conceived and designed the mobile floating firing platform which so revolutionized artillery support that his concept was adopted and is still in use today. Meek's idea was reviewed by the command levels within the US Field Artillery and he was asked to present a detailed briefing to the highest levels of the US military. Upon his return to the United States, Meek was asked to lecture at the US War College on his innovation. He was subsequently assigned instructor status at the US Army Artillery School and allowed to choose his next command. He asked for the honor of being the Professor of Military Science at Kemper Military School which was granted. Shortly after Meek's arrival at Kemper the full extent of the School's financial difficulty became clear and Meek was asked to assume the Presidency of Kemper.

Carroll S Meek served as Kemper's eighth President until a replacement could be identified and brought on board. Meek died on 12 February 2007 and is buried at the West Point Cemetery. Meek has been posthumously nominated to Echo Company, Kemper Military School as one of the school's most gifted sons. Ridgley KMS '66 today lives in Texas and is the President of Echo Company, Kemper Military School. Ridgley says, "I found it even more interesting that two of Kemper's future Presidents served nearly side by side in Viet Nam."



USS Benewah (APB 35) with compliment of attack craft alongside, July 1967. Artillery barges composing Meek's firing battery are not in picture

So it went for nearly forty years that two Kemper Old Boys fought side by side and never knew that each was only a few feet from where the other stood. Then recently, thanks to Echo Company, Kemper Military School, Ridgley was informed of the identity of his protective benefactor and the contribution which Meek had made to help keep the Riverines safe from harm. "Thanks," Meek, you were a helluva soldier! I'm sorry I never got to personally say thank you!" is how Ridgley summarized the events.



Meek shown above on left in 1944 class photograph from Kemper Military School and later (center) as the PMS&T at Kemper. Photo on right shows Ed Ridgley KMS '66 (left) who always wanted to say thank you to whoever provided the fire support for his Riverine fighting force of the 3/47th. Ridgley is shown here with two Kemper Old Boys, Martin Speicher KMS '64 (right) and Dennis White KMS '64 (center) when the three met unexpectedly in Viet Nam. Photograph courtesy White collection.

SILENT EYES ARE WATCHING YOU

By Rudy Vogt

Many Kemper Old Boys have written to tell us of stories wherein they feel an invisible hand has helped them with their career or elsewhere. In situation after situation as in the story of Meek and Kompe, Old Boys have reported that hidden benefactors have assisted them.

On at least two occasions the benefactor was made known and discovered to be a Kemper Old Boy who was not even known to the individual. Take Scott Van Camp of Springfield, Illinois – he was employed by a paving company after graduating from college as a site manager or construction engineer. Soon afterward he was promoted several times and enjoyed great successes within the company.

Van Camp believed his own ability was the making of his success and it was not until the death of his benevolent employer that he learned his employer was also a Kemper Old Boy. So as to dissuade favoritism he never told Van Camp of their mutual connection.

INVISIBLE NETWORK CASTS LONG SHADOW

By Rudy Vogt

An Old Boy who was loved and admired by his contemporaries needed the best medical care available to fight a dangerous brain condition, and got it. A destitute Old Boy lacked funds to send his son to college when an anonymous benefactor funded a scholarship for the youngster. An Old Boy's stagnant career gets a boost at the right time from company insiders. Coincidence? No, it is not the "Mano Invisibile" of the Mafia. This invisible hand is a closely guarded network of Old Boys who listen, care and act with surprising ability.

One Kemper Old Boy expressed concern over a sagging career and, within a short time it was resolved to the satisfaction of everyone. Another Kemper Old Boy experienced the pain of a sort of mid-life crisis but the invisible network allowed the Old Boy to languish in the misery of his own adultery.

We have found the invisible network, the silent eyes, and they deny meddling in the affairs of anyone or of resorting to philanthropy in any form. Still, they did not deny helping Echo Company and assisting us in writing this story.

EL BUTTITO PACKITO



"Butt Pack? We don't got no butt packs! We don't need no stinkin' butt packs, I don't have to show you no butt pack.....!! Choo want chore mail gringo?!" WHOAAA! Let's slow down there pardner! Here is where we print your letters and our responses to them. It's your butt pack section—read 'em n weep!



One more time...

Echo Company member **Charlie Hendricksen of Chehalis, Washington** wrote to tell us the following: "Regarding the photo on page two of the December *ECHO*, 1954-1955 was my 'rat year' at Kemper. I was in Able Company (to become Alpha Company the following year) and roomed on the street side of "D" Barracks. I missed the party because I got early leave to travel to Portland, Oregon for the holidays. In those days that meant three days on the Union Pacific (flying was for the wealthy then).

"I do remember some of the party members, **Powell** included. The First Sergeant was **Neil Smith, from Marshal, Texas**. Neil became Alpha Company Commander in 1955-56. Unfortunately, Neil died in the sixties, likely the first of us to pass. At the center of the group just over Smittie's head was the Company Commander, **Adamson, of Des Moines, Iowa**. Later that year Adamson was promoted to major and became the Battalion Commander, **Walt Yaeger's** Adjutant. (Walt is now retired after a career with NCR and lives near Seattle.) The cadet with the cap to Adamson's left I believe was **Means**, and between and behind Adamson and Means was **Burden**, a ferocious platoon sergeant. The cadet in uniform behind the fellow in the KMS T-shirt was a high school junior named **Ira Click** who, three years later, became Battalion Commander and went on to receive his commission and retire from the Army. I recognize several other faces but, after fifty-three years I cannot assign the names."

ECHO – Charlie, you did good, darn good! Thanks for adding the names to the photograph.

Herb Silverberg – Texas "Want to say again what a great job you all are doing with one magnificent obsession. It makes us proud! A word to the families of those who lead Echo Company, thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Ray Reutlinger – Portland, Oregon "Was that Dick Johnson who was tying his tie in the mirror on the front page of the *ECHO's* December edition? Dick

was my roommate 1943-44 and was from Omaha, Nebraska. I've heard rumors that he passed away."

ECHO – We knew that the cadet in the photo was Dick. We have no information on whether he is living or dead. He is not on the active rolls of Echo Company.

Jim Ewing – Texas "I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in Blackwater, Missouri."

ECHO – We are looking forward to seeing you and many of our other members and friends.

Dan Ochsenlager – Florida "I would be pleased to receive membership in Echo Company."

ECHO – Dan, we've looked for you for quite some time and we are glad that we have finally found you. You belong in Echo Company!

Doc Warren Long – Louisiana "Hell! How in the world are you all? Hey, I have a book I commend for the reading of anyone who loves Kemper, 'The Boys From Dolores', by Patrick Symmes, Pantheon Publishing, 2007. It follows Castro in Cuba and recounts his days in a private Jesuit school which reminded me of Kemper so much I had to call and recommend it."

ECHO – Thanks Doc, our own book report will be in the June issue of the *ECHO*.

Dr. Robert Heath – Illinois "My *ECHO* is addressed 'lieutenant' which is a bit of a denigration since both **Don Sandifer of Bossier City, LA** and myself were separated from the US Air Force as captains. I know his feeling as we frequently converse."

ECHO – No insult is intended and your title has been corrected in the official records. New members of Echo Company are automatically inducted as "second lieutenants". Your corrected rank will be reflected in all future mailings, our apologies.

Clyde Hashagen – Albany, Oregon "In reply to the request for information on the Kemper flying Club photo which appeared in the December issue – **Neal Russell, Kimball, Nebraska** is shown. I went for a short flight with Neal when I visited him in Nebraska. Neal was killed in an air accident out in Wyoming later in his life. **Boyd Russell**, a US Marine who was visiting his brother is also shown in the photo.



Shown first arrow is **NEAL RUSSELL**, second arrow (on right) is **BOYD RUSSELL**."

ECHO – Roger that! And thanks Clyde. **George Bush Jr – Jonesboro, GA** "Years ago I stopped in at Kemper during the summer and I walked inside "D" barracks. It was vacant so I got a drink of water from the cooler and, you

know, as I looked at the pictures hanging on the walls I thought I could almost hear them speaking to me. It's just hard to believe that it's all gone."

ECHO – It's not gone George, we're still here to carry on and remember.

Bob Ruland – Greeley, Colorado "That was a nice article about the Wilkinson boys in a recent issue of the *ECHO*. I dated Rodine Wilkinson for three or four years but I only knew her as "Rodney" which was her nick name."

ECHO – Thanks Bob.

George Swan – "This is my Class A uniform which was issued to me when I entered Kemper in 1939. I was proud of it then and I am proud of it today."



ECHO – George came to a recent Echo Company get together and brought his class A. Even the brass was shined and it was in perfect condition just like the day he graduated in May 1941. We wanted George to try it on but he admitted it would not fit so he settled for the Echo Company windbreaker you see him wearing here.

Dennis J White – Murphysboro, Illinois "Here is a picture of the command staff from 1964. It includes **Martin Speicher**, myself, **Frank Moyle, Frank Barnes, Fletcher Reynolds and Scott Lowdermilk**."



ECHO – Dennis, your command staff is still in step with not less than two of you being added to Echo Company in the last few days alone.

Dr. Homer D Hardy Jr – Tulsa, OK "I note in the Vol.V No 3 issue, on the last page, I'm listed as **HARDY, HOMER D II**. It should be 'HARDY, HOMER D Jr.' My son, **HARDY, HOMER D III**, is correct. I spent 4 years at Kemper, '39-'43 – the best four years of my life. My son also states that his four years there were the best four years of his life. In the early '40s we had a corps of 513. I was the only high school cadet officer; all the rest were college students.

I also note mention of Wiley Post in that issue. I don't believe Wiley Post was ever a cadet at Kemper. If I'm correct, is he therefore an 'Honorary' member of Echo Company?

I owe everything I have attained in life to my years at Kemper, and in particular to my favorite instructor John E. Gould. He was a GREAT role model to attempt to emulate. Thanks for all you're doing to keep Kemper alive."

THE RED SASH

By Tracy McKeown



December 1863 image showing a Confederate Army Officer wearing a scarlet sash.

Most schools have traditions and customs which are an outgrowth of their experiences. Kemper Military School in Boonville, Missouri, had a number of such traditions, many of which lived with the Corps of Cadets up until the school closed. One of the more notable of these customs was the Standard of Honor. There were, however, some lesser known and nearly forgotten traditions, and one of these, awarding the scarlet sash, is the subject here. During the annual spring encampment at Camp Dunton, Boonville, Missouri, on the campus of Kemper Military School, a fierce competition took place among members of the Corps for the honor of winning the scarlet sash. This sash was awarded to that cadet who demonstrated the greatest bearing, military attitude, soldierly aptitude and conduct in the field during trials or inspection.

Sashes are a distinctive feature of the modern French Army for parade dress. They are worn around the waist in either blue or red by corps such as the Foreign Legion, the Spahis, the Chasseurs d'Afrique and the Tirailleurs which were originally raised in North Africa during the period of French colonial rule. In its traditional Franco-Algerian or Zouave form the sash ("ceinture de laine") was four metres in length and forty centimetres in width.

At the time of the American Civil War (1861-65), red sashes were authorized for officers and sergeants of the regular US Army (Army Regulations of 1861). U.S. Generals continued to wear buff silk sashes in full dress until 1917. In the Confederate Army of the Civil War period sash color indicated the corps or status of the wearer. For example: gold for cavalry, burgundy for infantry, black for chaplains, red for sergeants, green or blue for medics, and grey or cream for general officers.

When the field encampment exercises at Camp Dunton began in the early twentieth century, it was recognized early on that the competitive nature of the young men who participated warranted some form of official recognition. Colonel Thomas A. Johnston, the Superintendent of the School, had earlier in the year been given an honorary ceremonial sash by the United Confederate Veterans Association. This sash denoted Johnston's position as post commander or "lodge leader." Johnston wore the sash as an accouterment to his uniform while visiting his cadets at Camp Dunton. As the story goes, Johnston arrived in time for the official recognition ceremony of the cadet who was selected by the Professor of Military Science as the exemplary student of the exercise. During a Corps assembly, the Cadet was called forward, and, having no official trophy or medal, Johnston removed and presented the Cadet with his own ceremonial crimson sash.

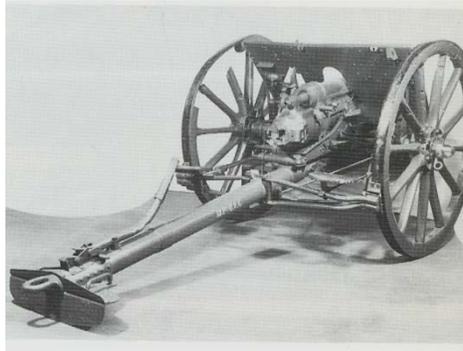
Another story has it that the selection criteria for the sash was one of demonstrated cadet bravery. Whatever the criteria for award, one thing seems clear and that is that the sash was red and it was awarded annually during the spring training exercise. That is, until the sash was unreturned to Colonel Johnston. The practice was discontinued after the awardee either refused to return the sash, absconded with it, or the sash was pilfered from him. The exact date of the discontinuation of the "Sash Award" is not known, but the practice was in effect from 1895 through 1911.



Cadet Harry C Gantz from Deadwood, South Dakota seen here in 1907 at conclusion of the spring encampment wearing the ceremonial scarlet sash (fourth from left). Gantz was an exemplary cadet and commanded Company "B" which had responsibility for one of the two Kemper field guns.

When the designated cadet (usually a cadet officer) was identified, he was called forward from the formation, and the sash was placed around his neck and under his left arm. This cadet was then given ceremonial command of the two guns which made up "Battery Kemper." He then proceeded to align

and fire the guns by giving the appropriate commands. Once the guns had fired it signaled the end of the encampment exercise and a beginning to the end of the school year. Almost certainly this elicited a rousing cheer from the Corps of Cadets.



Number five battery gun of the Royal Field Artillery which British Veterans of Bois De Buttes 27 May 1918 wheeled past the reviewing stand for many years until all the members were deceased.

Once the practice of awarding the sash was discontinued it was decided that recognizing the battery which won the most competitions was more desirable as a form of acknowledgment. This allowed for more cadets to participate in the winning ceremony. The only catch was that the winning battery had to wheel their gun past the reviewing stand when the command "pass in review" was given. While still quite an honor, it had to be a Herculean task to push the nearly three ton cannon and caisson past the reviewing stand while still reminding oneself that he is doing so because he won. Some years later during WWI British members of battery 5, Royal Field Artillery won honors for their defense of Bois des Buttes. That gun, now a national treasure in Great Britain, was routinely wheeled past the reviewing stand during British ceremonies by veterans of '5' battery.



Gantz' battery of Company "B" prepares to retire from the field at conclusion of field trials, 1907. Rolling the field gun at pass in review had to be a difficult task to say the least.

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND

Echo Company, Kemper Military School will host a general get together, social, and dinner as well as a Standard of Honor ceremony at the Iron Horse Hotel in Blackwater, Missouri. We would be pleased to have your attendance and hope that you can make it.

**General Call Up – Echo Company
Iron Horse Hotel
Blackwater, Missouri
Saturday May 16th, 2009
Cocktails 5:30**

**Dinner 6:30 with awards presentations to follow
Standard of Honor ceremony afterward
SPEND AN EVENING AMONG FRIENDS REMEMBERING WITH GOOD
CHEER**

HALL OF FAME PREMEIRES AT ECHO WEB SITE

www.echocompany.org

Echo company is your organization and the web site is yours too! Take advantage of the great features and exciting interactive pages of this unique, custom designed web site.

Recently Echo Company, Kemper Military School added the Kemper Hall of Fame which features three wings to place the spotlight on the school's heroes. There is one wing for Administration, one wing for Old Boys, and still another for Faculty. You can submit nominees for the Kemper Hall of Fame just by submitting the individuals name and a brief nominating statement about why they should be placed in the Hall.

We welcome your input and you can look forward to more innovations in the days and weeks ahead.

THE ECHO ANNUAL STATEMENT OF CIRCULATION

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THE ECHO is published quarterly in cooperation with Mercury Media, Inc. Approximately 350 copies of *THE ECHO* are printed each quarter and 280 are mailed to subscribers. There are 65 non-paid copies mailed to associates of Echo Company, Kemper Military School.

The term "member" as it applies to those affiliated with Echo Company, Kemper Military School does not imply a share in part or whole in the assets of Echo Company, Kemper Military School.

Echo Company, Kemper Military School, Inc. does not recognize any group, organization, faction, or club which purports to speak for the Old Boys of Kemper Military School and members of Echo Company, Kemper Military School. Such notice having been placed in this March 2009 issue of the *ECHO*, all interested parties are advised that Echo Company, Kemper Military School is a legally registered corporation in the State of Wisconsin and that a violation of this claim of proprietary management may subject the offender to civil penalties.

THE ECHO is the 2007 national winner of the "Outstanding Newsletter Award" presented by the Wisconsin Regional Writers Association.

BLEES MILITARY ACADEMY

By Tracy McKeown

A review of previous articles done on closed military schools which were published for the *ECHO* newsletter indicated that the articles were a general overview of the physical plant of the school, its construction, and layout. I asked if I could explore the background of the selected school and try to investigate what it might have been like to attend the school which is the subject here. Also, I wanted to look into the history of the school and find out how it may have been like or unlike Kemper in some respects.

Blees Military Academy, Macon, Missouri was, in effect, the successor to St James Military Academy which was originally founded in 1875 by the Episcopal Church and headed by Reverend Ethelbert Talbot. Blees accepted the school from the Episcopal diocese of Missouri along with the financial obligations in 1881 and attempted to manage the school until 1886 when he closed the doors. Blees was a foreign born, Prussian Army officer who came to the United States in early 1881. He had originally accepted command of the Davenport Corps of Cadets at Griswold College before marriage to Mary Staples. He also inherited a huge fortune from family interests in Germany.

Blees founded and managed several businesses in Macon including a carriage factory and a scissors

plant. He also founded and managed the largest bank in Macon County. Colonel Blees found himself perplexed at the failure of St James and determined to make the school succeed. For five years from 1886-1891 he studied, planned and rebuilt the school which would become Blees Military Academy. To a greater or lesser extent he invested nearly all of his personal fortune in the school, incorporating the most modern and up-to-date features of the day in the futuristic school.

Blees personally interviewed and hired all of the staff for his school. He consulted architects in the design of his dormitories, which used state-of-the-art concepts such as natural lighting and open living areas. Each student at Blees had his own room complete with running water, steam heat, and electric lighting. A giant glass ceiling covered the main area of the dormitory hall and Blees purchased artillery pieces and saddle horses to augment the ration of government equipment.

Colonel Blees, Prussian schooling and influence were evident everywhere at the school. The Wabash Railroad line transversed the campus and Blees had a private station built to his own specifications for the school. This station, on the campus of the Academy, was a replica of the station in Aix-la-Chapelle, Prussia his home town in Germany. Money seemed to be no object and Blees, fueled by the failure of St James, spared no expense to make sure that Blees Military Academy succeeded.

Cadets of the Academy learned to become expert horsemen. They played polo and Colonel Blees made exotic purchases of well-known horses to augment the stables of the Academy. Two such horses were world famous race winners "George Washington" and "Rex McDonald". Such expenditures seemed to reinforce the idea that Blees Military Academy appeared determined to become known as a polished school for aristocratic youth.

Colonel Blees, worked hard to insure that education of cadets at the academy was patterned after the Prussian system of military education heavily influenced by "Moltke". This can be interpreted as a system of correction which included heavy doses of corporal punishment. In all likelihood punishments were administered in full view of the entire corps. An example of such a punishment might have been subjecting a cadet to being "cropped". This involved striking a cadet with a riding crop for an offense usually followed by explaining the infraction to the corps while standing formation.

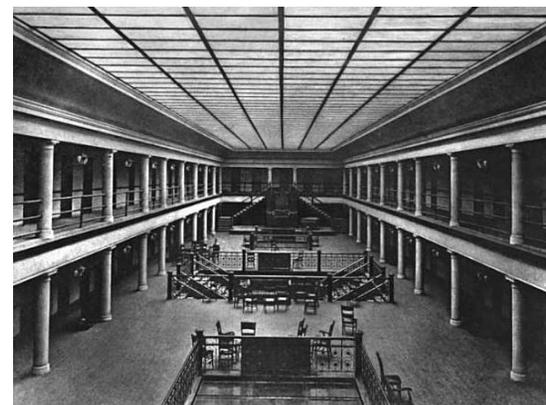
There is little doubt the facility and amenities of Blees Military Academy were unparalleled at any other school. However, the standard of discipline combined with the highest tuition of any other school of its kind in the day, lowered the enrollment. This was unimportant to Colonel Blees who

continued to use his personal fortune to insure the continuation of the school. However, in 1906 Colonel Blees died and, within months the school found itself bankrupt without the deep pockets of its founder and benefactor.

Shortly afterward the campus of Blees Military Academy was purchased by Dr. Arthur G Hildreth who founded a sanatorium on the campus. Today, two of the original buildings still stand on the former campus of Blees Military Academy and those are on the Missouri Register of Historical Landmarks.



The photo above shows the main living hall on the campus of Blees Military Academy. Its prominent feature, a glass ceiling, was a unique concept for the day and may have influenced the design of "D" barracks at Kemper. The school's highly regarded athletic building called "Artillery House" is shown at right. Photo below shows the main hall building from the interior, note the glass ceiling and colonnades characteristic of Greek revival style of architecture.



Tim Terry who came to Kemper from near Atlanta, Georgia



John Suhumskie, tough and fair, from Sioux City, Iowa

THE REB AND THE YANKEE

These two Kemper Old Boys and members of Echo Company, Kemper Military School had more in common after they left Kemper than they did when they arrived. Terry was a standout academic and today practices law in Dallas, Texas. Suhumskie was a varsity athlete even earning a "Blanket K". Today John is a retired high school administrator and lives in Goldfield, Iowa.

The Reb and the Yankee had little in common at Kemper except that both enjoyed lettering in sports, leading cadets, and earning the respect of others. Both men have led exemplary lives of service to their communities.

CUBA LIBRE!

By John Reppert, KMS '37

&

Tracy McKeown

Editor's Note: *This story is a creative reconstruction of one cadet's adventure in March 1937. It is submitted here in the style of a diary created from notes provided to Echo Company by Kemper Old Boy John Reppert. John is a member of Echo Company, Kemper Military School and one of the oldest surviving Kemper Old Boys.*

Thursday March 4th, 1937 9:00pm "D" barracks Dear Mom, I told you that I would do my best to write as often as I could, and that I would send you all a post card every chance I had. Tomorrow we are going to leave for the trip to Cuba, and I want you know how much I appreciate this swell graduation present. I really consider myself lucky to get to see a foreign country and travel part of the world. John Gould told me today the bookstore has a special scrap book for the trip so I bought one, and I will keep notes every day during the trip and make a diary which I will give to you when I return. I hope that you like it. All of us who are going on the trip met in the assembly hall tonight. Colonel Hitch told us that we had a busy day tomorrow and not to waste time but to be ready first thing in the morning.



Kemper cadets ready for inspection prior to departure for trip to Cuba. The trip cost \$150 which is about 1/1000 of the cost of what a similar trip would cost today.

Friday March 5th, 1937 7:00am Loaded bus after breakfast. Mr. Kirkland greeted us and helped us with our bags. I did not know Holiday was going on the trip and I hope I do not get him as a roommate. The bus trip to St. Louis was noisy as all the boys talked and joked along the way. When we passed a sign for "Missouri Military Academy" everyone booed. The train station was so busy I could not believe it. We found Kemper's private car which was called the "Dixieland" and got aboard. No sooner were we on the train than a porter announced that lunch was being served! It was really good and the ride was so smooth that one of the boys built a house of cards and got to the second story twice! At around five we found out that Colonel Hitch expected all of us to dress for dinner in our class A's for every evening meal. It caused a great deal of commotion as all of us polished brass and shined shoes.

After dinner I went back to our car and watched the scenery out of the window for a while but I fell asleep and woke up as the train was pulling into the station in Chattanooga. Some of the boys got off the train to look at the "General" which was a famous confederate steam engine. I couldn't find my hat though so I had to stay on the train. A porter later brought me my hat which I'd left in the dining car at dinner. The Pullmans were neat and not cramped at all (like Dad said they would be). I got an upper which was okay with me since my bunk bed at school is an upper too.

Saturday March 6th, 1937 7:30am I am starving this morning and I can't wait for breakfast because we can all smell the bacon cooking through the whole train. I think everyone on the train thought the same thing and when we went to the dining car, it was full. I had to sit with a businessman and his wife. They were from Chicago and seemed very nice. I ate breakfast fast because we were supposed to meet with Colonel Hitch and I didn't want to be late. Colonel Hitch said that we were allowed to go anywhere on the train but we were not to purchase anything in the club car. That was okay by me but it was the only place we could get magazines and newspapers. Thompson got in trouble for opening a window and sticking his head out of it. At around noon we got to St Augustine and took taxis to the Alcazar Hotel. I am in Florida! Mr. Kirkland said that lunch would be served in the main dining room of the hotel and to go to our rooms and get ready. I am glad that Ambrose is my roommate. I asked Colonel Hitch if I could have matchbooks from the hotel and other places we go. I thought I'd give them to Dad but Colonel Hitch said "no". Some of the other boys just took them though and Ambrose said he would share some of his with me.

We all went to Fort Marion which was some old fort in St Augustine. It was hotter than hot and I got tired of walking around the place. I am glad to be

back at the Alcazar even though I am getting tired of shining shoes and getting ready for dinner each evening. I don't want to ride the train anymore either but we have to get on the train at ten and ride all night to Miami.

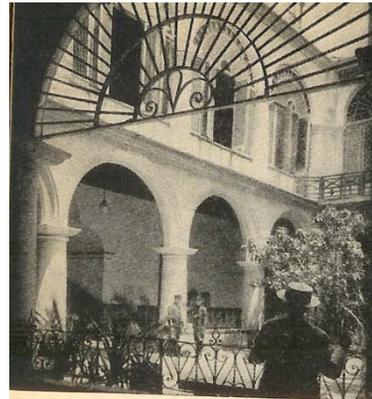
Sunday March 7th, 1937 8:00am We are at the Everglades Hotel and waiting for breakfast. I think there is a mix-up, so some of the boys went to the gift shop and bought Cokes and peanuts. This boy who was younger than me walked through the lobby announcing "church service in the Dade Room, Catholic and Protestant – nine sharp". Even though he was supposed to be spit and polish I noticed his shoes were not shined nearly as well as ours. In the afternoon Ryan and I went to the beach and spent the whole day there! We got back to the hotel in time for dinner and Captain Cartwright enforced all the dining rules like we were still at Kemper. I must admit that we commanded the attention and respect of everyone in the dining room of the Everglades Hotel when we stood behind our chairs and prayed, then stood at attention and then sat all as a group.

Monday March 8th, 1937 6:00pm I am really tired after today! We went all around town in a sight-seeing bus. The bus went to Miami University and also to the Seminole Indian Reservation. We got back to the hotel in time for lunch which, believe it or not, was shark! We had all afternoon to ourselves, but I just wanted to take a rest and get a nap. All the warm sunshine must have worn me out! We had to board the steam ship SS Colitta at five this afternoon anyway. I am waiting right now for the dinner bell to ring which is the way they do it on Spanish ships, then we can all go to the dining room.

Tuesday March 9th, 1937 3:00pm We had a first-class dinner last evening! Then the crew put on a dancing show complete with a band and everything. I went out on the deck and I watched the dolphins with Ryan until we were so tired that we called it a night. Everything is free on the boat. I have never drunk so much cream soda in my whole life. The crew even made us sandwiches at midnight in case we got hungry. Ryan took a deck of cards from the lounge and we played a guessing game and threw the used cards into the ocean. I wanted to put a message in a bottle and throw it overboard but I didn't have a bottle. Now we are at the Hotel Sevilla Biltmore which is right in the middle of Havana. It was raining here when we got in, so we came straight to the hotel. This afternoon we are supposed to take a tour of downtown Havana and look at the sights. I will be sure and get you some

post cards for my scrap book. We are supposed to see where the battleship USS Maine was sunk.

Private grounds of the Asturiano Club. Colonel Hitch was undoubtedly made an honorary member at one of the most exclusive private clubs in the Western Hemisphere. Cadets were viewed as future leaders of the free world by the staff who catered to their every



Wednesday March 10th, 1937 7:00pm Last night we went to

the Asturiano Club. Mr. Kirkland said it is the largest and most exclusive private club in the Western Hemisphere. I never saw so many servants and waiters! A colored boy had a silver tray with cigars which he offered to us but no one took one. The cigars were wrapped in white napkins and the servant had a glass lighter with a giant flame on it. Colonel Hitch did not join us last night and Mr. Kirkland said that he was making a phone call back to the United States and had to wait for an open circuit. We ate breakfast in the dining room of the Hotel this morning and Ryan told me last night that it is the custom here to leave your shoes outside the door to your room and they will be polished by the morning. They were! They do our laundry overnight also and even starch our shirts – but no one here knows how to shine brass! I even tried to ask someone at the desk for "limpiametales buscar" but they did not understand.

Thursday March 11th, 1937 8:30am Last night we had dinner here in the hotel and it was some kind of bar-b-que ribs with hot tomato sauce on it. It was so hot that the waiters were laughing at us because we drank so much water. I am excited that today we are going to see the Castle Morro and the Cuban West Point. Colonel Hitch said that we will each get to meet Cuban military cadets who will take us on a tour of their school.

Friday March 12th, 1937 5:00pm We are all waiting for dinner to be called and we are on the SS Dominga. This is a very nice steam ship but I think the dining room is small so we have to eat in shifts. When we left Cuba this morning, we had to be up, packed, and ready to leave by 7:00 so we had an early breakfast. I bought some souvenirs in the gift shop before we left, and I (Cont. on pg 7 "Cuba Libre")

A WINNER!

Each quarter, prior to publication of the *ECHO*, a drawing is held using the names of existing members of Echo Company, Kemper Military School. From the list is selected a quarterly winner whose name is then forwarded to the "prize committee". The prize committee confirms the individual's status as a member of Echo Company and confers the pre-selected prize to the individual.

This quarter's winner is **Joe Ray Blalack** KMS '54 from Houston, Texas. Joe is a retired attorney and was the first American US Citizen to re-enter Viet Nam. Joe Ray secured oil lease rights from the Communist government and also revisited the US embassy in Saigon.

Joe Ray wins a Kemper lapel pin which he can wear in his travels. Congratulations, Joe Ray, and keep watching for your chance to win in our next issue.



J.H. Windsor
Boonville, Missouri

W.H. Hanna
New Franklin, Missouri

Here are two interesting photographs separated by exactly twenty years. The connection these two Kemper cadets share is that they are both native to central Missouri and grew up in and around the area of Boonville. Likely as not both Hanna and Windsor were taken to Kemper on Sundays as toddlers to watch the cadets parade. In fact, Windsor may have observed Will Rogers drilling on the fields at Kemper.

Windsor is one of several generations of Kemper Old Boys and his son, Wilbur Windsor, became Kemper's eleventh President in 1974. Hanna is shown here as a graduate of the class of 1926. One of his descendants, Pat Hanna, is also a Kemper Old Boy and lives directly across the street from Kemper on Third Street. Pat is a member of Echo Company, Kemper Military School.

(CUBA LIBRE Cont.)

got Beck a comb made out of a coconut. It is painted and decorated with Cuban scenes. Colonel Hitch just told us it is time for dinner in the dining room.

Saturday March 13th, 1937 8:30am Last night there was a Spanish band which played music in the dining room after everyone had eaten. There was plenty of room in the dining room. I do not know why we had to eat by ourselves. The only people in the whole dining room were Kemper cadets but when the music started all the other passengers came in. Right now we are waiting for the ship to dock and Ryan went to watch the tug boat pull us into the dock at Key West. Holiday lost his hat and Colonel Hitch said he could just get another when we got back to school. I was sort of hoping he would get in trouble!

Sunday March 14th, 1937 9:00am Yesterday was great! We went to the Floridian Hotel here in Tampa, which is where we are now, and then we toured a US Navy wharf where they keep the ships. We got to tour the USS Tuscaloosa and see how sailors live. I am glad that we are Army! I gave my class A to the desk manager who said that he would have it cleaned and back to me by breakfast – he did! Some oil got on my sleeve in the ship and I couldn't go to breakfast like that. Anyway, we are all waiting right now to go to the train station. We are supposed to be there by ten so I better wrap this up.

Aunt Suzie's Advice

By Susan B Avery

Dear Aunt Suzie,
My Kemper Old Boy husband recently lost his bid for election to a city position. We put a lot of our own money into the election but the other side used tactics which my husband would not stoop to in order to win. Now he is depressed and aimless. What should I do to cheer him up? Helpless in Oklahoma

Dear Helpless,
Take comfort in knowing your husband is honest and that politics won't have the opportunity to corrupt him. Tell him that politics is a sausage factory – only lips and assholes! If he still has an interest in running for future office construct an outhouse in the backyard so he can get used to the smell.

Dear Aunt Suzie,
Our daughter graduated from college about two years ago and returned home after being unable to find a job. Now she sits around the house all day, eats, doesn't contribute anything, and complains about everything. I even caught her on the computer selling some of my old Kemper yearbooks on Ebay. My wife says she needs counseling and therapy but I disagree. It seems like all we do is argue over what we should do about our daughter. What should we do? Lost in Oz

Dear Lost,
(877)263-6444, and don't say I haven't helped! That's the number for Two Men and a Truck. Tell them to come pack up your daughters crap and get it out of your house. If your wife objects, point to her closet and tell the movers to start there!

Dear Aunt Suzie,
I am pretty sure my Kemper Old Boy husband of sixty-four years is having an affair with a twenty-eight-year-old cocktail waitress. He is buying condoms by the gross and staying out until eight, sometimes nine, coming home smelling of gin. What should I do? Hapless in the heartland.

Dear Hapless,
I know what I would do but let's allow our readers to decide this one. Remember though, you're asking a bunch of Kemper Old Boys so their responses might not be what you'd expect!

Dear Aunt Suzie,
I'd like to surprise my wife and make her dinner some night. Do you have any suggestions for an easy to prepare meal which I can make without too much trouble? No cook in Indiana

Dear Cook,
I've seen the mess in the kitchen which almost all Kemper Old Boys tend to make when they experiment with dinner. You guys try as hard as you might but it still looks like World War Three was fought on the counter. Just let it go and take her out for dinner or buy Chinese carryout.

Dear Aunt Suzie,
My teenage son got an earring and it just seems to run against my grain. He says he just did it on a whim. My wife says there's no harm in it and I should leave it alone. Doubtful in Omaha

Dear Doubtful,

I agree with your wife. If the kid wants an earring let him wear one. Just be clear with him that you may decide to remove it "on a whim". Wait till he screws up (won't be long for a brain damaged teenager) and rip that sucker out like Clint Eastwood in Heartbreak Ridge.

If you have a question for Aunt Suzie you can write to her C/O: AUNT SUZIE, 1518 Kaby Avenue, Crivitz, WI 54114

YOUR HOROSCOPE

By Karl Schwendler

General horoscopes prepared using astrological charts specifically for members of Echo Company, Kemper Military School, This horoscope information is for the period March 2009 – May 2009.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) – A question presents itself which puzzles you. Don't worry and fret over the outcome, just do it! Luckiest day May 12th, lucky number 5.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) – Be careful! There's an accident waiting to happen and you may be in the middle, use caution when you approach one of life's intersections. Luckiest day April 19th, lucky number 12.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) – Find the one who is good to be with and explain that he has the gift which you admire. Make no claims or assertions which you know to be a gamble. Luckiest day May 20th, lucky number 14

CANCER (June 22-July 22)– You haven't much time! Don't put things off any longer! Set your mind to accomplish the tasks which you know must be done. Luckiest day May 3rd, lucky number 44.

LEO (July 23-August 22) A clash with friends or workmates can be avoided if you do not succumb to competition, you will lose if you do. Find your niche in leading and being above the fray. Luckiest day March 11th, lucky number 18

VIRGO (August 23-September 22) In June you will have a revealing dream which wakes you from your sleep, pay careful attention! Watch, listen, look and learn you are only beginning to live. Luckiest day May 12th, lucky number 19

LIBRA (September 23-October 23) Do not hide your talents any longer. There is strength in you which yearns to be shared with others. Don't tempt fate by flaunting a dare to old superstitions. Luckiest day April 30th, lucky number 2

SCORPIO (October 24-November 21) An unexpected windfall finds its way to your door. Take comfort in financial victory as many of your loose ends are tied up. Luckiest day April 15th, lucky number 7.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22- December 21) Stop! Do not boast during the month of May or suffer a serious consequence. A smiling acquaintance hides their true intention from you. Rise and greet the dawn each day in April. Luckiest day March 12th, lucky number 19

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19) Create a new self image, you are only as old as you feel or, as much of a success as you tell yourself you are. Start blowing your own horn and watch the crowd assemble. Luckiest day April 29th, lucky number 16

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) A strange travel brings an equally strange encounter which suggests money, love, and happiness. Stay away from the "R" person on Friday April 17th. Luckiest day May 12th, lucky number 8

PISCES (February 19 – March 20) You are not invincible so stop acting as though you are. Study a better diet plan, resolve to become an inspiration to the youth around you. Getting rid of bad memories is best done with someone you love. Luckiest day March 4th, lucky number 37.

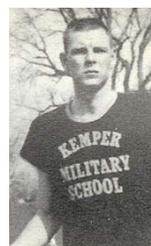
More Butt Pack (cont.)

MG Ed Giller Albuquerque, NM – I enjoy the *ECHO!* Here are some photos of my cadet days at Kemper which include my roommate, John Gould.

ECHO – Thanks General! You can bet you will see those photos in the next issue.

Pat Hanna – Boonville I love the *ECHO!* Keep it coming.

ECHO – We will publish the *ECHO* as long as we have loyal readers like you.



"SUPER JOCK" by J Spinner

In the Spring of 1961 no other cadet could catch Bill Rhodes. He set records for the hurdles which stood until the school closed more than forty years later. In fact Rhodes was an all around super jock and played football, basketball and nearly every other sport Kemper offered.

Bill Rhodes provided the foundation for Echo Company to get a start and has been a constant source of encouragement to all of us. Thanks Bill, er...Super Jock!!

SUPPLY ROOM



"Huh!? No, I'm not busy....what? Mmmmm I was just writing you a letter and thinking about you. Have you gotten any new medals? Ohhh! I wish I could see it...! I wish you were here! Huh? Cuz, I miss ya' that's why!" **"THIS IS THE OPERATOR, PLEASE DEPOSIT ANOTHER DOLLAR THIRTY FIVE FOR ANOTHER THREE MINUTES!"**

...and so it went year in and year out as long as there were telephones at Kemper Military School and young men sought to be comforted by their ladies. What most cadets never knew was that young Phyllis Hertzog and thousands of other young ladies like her put aside their own comfort and convenience to talk with their boyfriends. Oh, if phones only had eyes!!

Well, the Supply Room doesn't have eyes but it has cool T's and great athletic gear that will make you run faster, jump higher, and be a star on the field. Well, maybe it won't make you a star but it will make you *feel* like a star. You tell Delbert what you want and it can be on the way.

WOW!! Mix 'n Match!!

Any two items for \$25

- T-Shirts (white, black, navy, blue)
- Sweat Shirts (grey, black, or navy)
- Athletic shorts (white or grey)
- Baseball hats (black only)



ALL ITEMS CUSTOM EMBROIDERED WITH KEMPER CREST AND DISTINCTIVE ECHO COMPANY, KEMPER MILITARY SCHOOL LOGO

No, we won't sell you the towel off of Miss Phyllis!

TAPS

Jay Steinberger KMS 62 Echo Company member and loyal Kemper son, of Greeley, Colorado passed away 17 December 2009. Steinberger is remembered as a tough-as-nails cowboy who loved horses and rodeo. While at Kemper he was a standout basketball player who drew the attention of college scouts.

CWO Abraham "Iggy" Ignacio passed away at his home in Rocheport, Missouri on 12 December 2008. Iggy was the band director at Kemper for a number of years and was a member of Echo Company.

Bill Patman KMS '44 US Congressman Bill Patman, of Texas died on December 11th 2008. He is to be buried in the State Cemetery in Austin, Texas.

COL Carroll S Meek KMS '45 died 12 February 2007 and was buried with full military honors at the West Point Cemetery. He was named a posthumous member of Echo Company, Kemper Military School.

Jim Bitzer - KMS '71 passed away in his home town of Shelbyville, Illinois on December 29th 2008. He was the Commander of "A" Company in 1971 and will be remembered as kind, giving, thoughtful and wise.

Mrs. Gnell Doyle, KMS Hostess and wife of Professor James F Doyle passed away Friday, December 19th 2008 Mrs. Doyle loved the cadets and considered them her own children. There were always homemade cookies and fruit punch for visitors when Mrs. Doyle was the hostess of Kemper.

THE QUEEN OF CLEAVAGE AND WHY I LOVE CHARLIE HAWKES
By C J KILLEN

Throughout the years Kemper's Faculty Lounge has held a fascination, if not at least a curiosity for cadets; and, indeed, it was a wonderful retreat. There was pool to be played; there were cigarettes to be smoked; there was coffee to be drunk, and a myriad of issues to be calmly and vigorously debated. AND.....there was the Queen of Cleavage to be ogled and discussed. And discussed she was as her assets were obviously obvious to all.

During the morning breaks, the Queen, who was someone's secretary, made her daily trek to the lounge for a cup of coffee and a cigarette. She always arrived ten minutes after her cleavage; unless, of course, it was a cold day..... then she arrived eleven minutes afterward. She invariably sat in a chair facing the pool table, carefully resting her endowments on the lounge table like the treasured chests I'm sure they were. She would then, ever so slightly, bend forward much to the amusement of the pool players who spent the next few seconds winking, coughing, smiling, and leaning over the table to execute their next shot.....whatever that might have been.

Rumors abounded about the Queen of Cleavage. One rumor alleged that she had a yellow rose tattooed on her left breast to match the yellow of her hair. Yellow, beyond a doubt, was her favorite color as she always was dressed to resemble a daffodil swaying in the warm breezes of springtime amid the swarms of honey bees seeking sweet nectar.

One warm, spring morning, the Queen arrived in the lounge all decked out in a tight, low-necked, bright yellow sweater. After carefully assuming

her pose, she proceeded to enlighten those of us who were enjoying our last sip of coffee and our last puff of nicotine, about the inequity of clothing manufacturers in the sizing of sweaters. She ranted on and on about how hard it was to find the right sized sweater for an endowed woman.

We all sat mesmerized as she used her hands to get her "points" across by tugging here and pulling there at her sweater, illustrating the problem(s).

My colleagues and I were spellbound. Ruthie was kicking my foot underneath the table. Her husband, Dick, had rolled his eyes to the top of his head and was intently staring at the ceiling while his pipe was belching smoke like a steam engine. Tom was focused on the demonstration which was rapidly gaining momentum; and Mr. Hawkes, the absolute class act of the lounge, listened with a bemused expression of incredulity on his face. It goes without saying that the pool game had ceased as the clacking sound of the balls was silenced. This was a performance that no one wanted to miss.



The Queen culminated her fifteen minutes of fame by turning to me, who could not even begin to imagine her dilemma, and proclaimed, "You are so lucky to be flat-chested because you can wear anything!" And with that she finished her coffee; she put out her cigarette, and followed her cleavage out of the room.

The lounge was stunned into silence as we were all in shock, not fully believing the performance that had just played out. I remember

seeing a first as Ruthie's ashes, which always dangled unendingly from her cigarette, fell in slo-mo onto the table as she leaned forward and hissed at me, "I told you NOT to be nice to that woman!! Now you see why!" With that she and Dick left for class. Tom exploded into gales of laughter; the pool game resumed; I heard a gasp escape me when dear, sweet Mr. Hawkes reached over, patted my hand, and said, "Some of the world's most intelligent, most intriguing, and most desirable women such as Greta Garbo, Kate Hepburn, and Cleopatra were smaller breasted women." I will forever LOVE Charlie Hawkes for speaking those words.....of truth.

By lunchtime every female on campus had heard about the lounge performance and Charlie's comments. He became our hero, our Don Juan, our Valentino. He was hailed by us ladies for his wisdom; and although, in our minds, he had always reigned at Delphi, this day Charlie Hawkes began his walk with the Titans.

Do I harbor resentment toward the Queen of Cleavage for publicly exposing my deficits while emphasizing her assets? Not at all. I hope she lives to a ripe old age and that her back aches eternally, that her shoulders are stooped and deeply rutted from heavily laden straps, and that her tattooed yellow rose grows a very, very, very long, long stem!

Yet, in all honesty, I still ponder the question: when was the last time a man held a woman in a passionate embrace while he hoarsely rasped into her ear, "God I love your brain!!"

MISSOURI MILITARY ACADEMY
204 Grand

Mexico, Missouri
65265
(888) 564-6662



info@mma.mexico.mo.us

Missouri Military Academy continues to rise above all other contemporary military schools it is compared with. If Kemper were still open these two schools would be great rivals. Instead, our brothers at MMA have extended their hands and opened their hearts to Kemper Old Boys, offering a \$5000 scholarship to the son or grandson of any Kemper cadet who otherwise meets admission requirements. Call, write, or e-mail Missouri Military Academy and find out for yourself what tradition this school has.

Missouri Military Academy – Leading the Way