

The "Camden Experience"

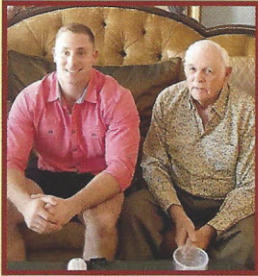
memory of LTC "Sonny" Brown (4/19/1936 to 2/26/2007), former English teacher and yearbook adviser

For long term teachers, the late Colonel Sonny Brown, best described the term. People that utilize the term instinctively know what it means because they have lived it. The important question is what does it mean to a new cadet? It means living away from family and friends, often for the first time. In order to be a successful cadet at Camden you will be required to do a lot of things that may be different from your regular routine. For example, due to the ultimate aim being discipline, one must get up and go to bed on time. Since CMA is a military school, you will be constantly exposed and introduced to the military system and experience having a roommate. Even though the process will go through may seem rough, the faculty, staff, and TAC Officers will ALWAYS be there to guide you and answer any questions you have. Most importantly, you must always remember that at the end of your "Camden Experience" you will have a wealth of knowledge and understanding that will last you a lifetime.

Rocky Pasut

Class of 2004, Bravo Company

Late in my junior year after an 'altercation' with another cadet, I was reprimanded by LTC Armstrong, harshly. He told me something that I didn't take lightly nor believed he said often to other cadets; he told me that I am a leader and possess a God-Given gift that can't be taught, but I am failing to use that for the greater good. He gave me examples of great leaders in history, one being Hitler – that possessed tremendous leadership ability but used it for terrible purposes. He challenged me to never misuse or ignore the talent I had, because it can't be taught nor do many people naturally possess it. He moved me from Alpha company to Bravo company with about three months left of the school year. Already being demoted back down to Private, I had no stripes nor favor from my new TAC officer, SGM Irtenkauf. He made it very clear that he wasn't fond of me, nor liked things he had heard about me and suggested that I stay far down under the radar because I have no room on my leash. Humbled, I listened to him and started to become a better influence moving forward and strayed away from nonsense and trouble. As the remainder of the year passed, SGM and I had begun to grow a better and respected foundation with one another. We shared passions for working out, and enjoyed talking about our strategies in fitness. At the very end of the year, SGM asked if I would like to be a Sergeant First Class for his company, my senior year? Of course I said I would, I was highly honored but also very shocked... I was still a private and didn't ever think a promotion in rank this high was ever in the cards. During the seniors graduation, the announcement of next year's rank for returning cadets began. When Bravo company started, they announced "Company Commander, Captain Alessandro Pasut." Many of my peers around me were confused, but I was baffled the most in that room. I already thought promoting me from private to Sergeant First Class was beyond crazy, but I've just been given the keys to Bravo company's car. I will always remember that time period, from the brutal tough but rewarding conversation with LTC Armstrong to the promotion from SGM Irtenkauf who went from despising me to believing in me. I realized the potential I had in life could be put to good measures as long as I was willing to 'get on board' and strengthen my character as one with discipline and good will. I'll never forget the opportunity given and potential seen by others of a reckless and lawless troublemaker. My heart was forever turned because of that, and still follows their words and memories.



Brian Czech

Class of 2004, Band and Staff Company

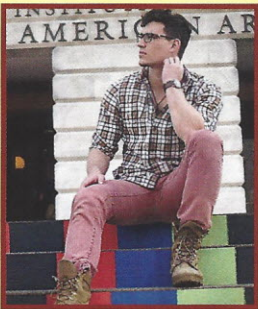
Having to pick a moment about my time at CMA is hard. So many moments were memorable and I wish I could go back to the days when I didn't have bills or mortgages and life was simple. Something that still impacts me to this day is something that happened to someone else. It was the middle of summer between my junior and senior year when I had a voicemail on my landline (ya no cell phone for me in 2003). It was my good friend Dave, in tears and sobbing and all I was able to make out was that someone was killed. Calling him back, I find out that one of my close friends, Wayne Blackburn, was killed in a drunk driving incident. I myself was also brought to tears. That moment has forever lived with me and I have never allowed another friend, nor myself, to get behind the wheel if intoxicated. Even after only one beer or glass of wine. Life is too short, and too many people love you to make decisions like that which can end your life or someone else's. Although this was not a direct result of something CMA did, I would have never made the close friends I have, or have lost, if it wasn't for this school. CMA is a place I will never forget. The friends I made there over 13 years ago are still some of my good friends. Enjoy your time there. You'll miss it when it's gone.



Karl Kalthoff

Class of 2010, Alpha Company

Camden Military Academy offered me countless memories I will never forget. But there is one memory I have that I do decide to retell often to teens and parents that ask me about military school. It was a December night, a very cold one at that. It was the night before company inspections and the last week before break. Everyone was exhausted, but some not tired enough to clean their rooms and go to bed. Inevitably, a group of cadets, made enough of a ruckus for me to take everyone on a nighttime march. I should mention that I was captain of A Company, aka A town, at the time. A certain individual, who had caused a lot of trouble by playing around consistently all year, but never anything malicious, stormed immediately out of formation and refused to march a single step further after two laps. He was throwing an absolute fit, screaming, running around, trying to throw chairs on the football field. As soon as I walked over to address the situation, I noticed he was doing this not because he didn't want to march, but because he was very upset for other reasons back home. This cadet was not welcomed home and didn't know where he was going to spend the holidays. He was only 12 years old. It was at this moment I realized that my role expanded far beyond just giving orders. He broke down in tears and told me this is why he was so upset. I saw the pain in his face and gave him a hug and sent everyone in for the night. Afterward, I made sure he was welcome to spend the holidays with my family and I. This was my last year at Camden and he was as happy as I ever saw him during those holidays. He's someone I still check up on when I am able. Being a leader by simple definition is the ability to get others to follow. But, a key to leading people on a path of personal growth and self-awareness starts with empathy. That's what I learned from that moment and carry with me to this day.



"Destiny" by Johnny Elliot

We may have come to those doors in the corridor of age,
Whose locks we must open, and in a man's life engage.
Many paths await our choice to the realms of tomorrow,
But one only can we choose, and one only can we follow.
Which will you select to journey upon,
Will it lead to happiness, or to the slough of despond?
Will your travel be profitable and abundant in gain,
Will its completion be rewarding, or futile and vain?

We have laid the foundation for our castle of fate,
Its construction to finish with our future estate.
We have lasting materials with which to build,
Study, prayer, and virtue—all God has willed.
Let us hew these structures with beauty and grace,
Till they glow in time's sunshine, as a memorable place.
Let us exalt their spires to seraphic heights,
As beacons to others, with their guiding lights.

Engrave your name in the book of ages,
With hallowed writings on immortal pages.
Let your deeds be remembered ones,
And honored by pilgrims in the time yet to come.
Emblazon your success as stars in the skies,
To dazzle with light, the learned one's eyes.
But become not too proud of accomplishments made,
Instead, strive to deserve all the praise that you're paid.

Wherever your journey in the parade of the years,
Do not falter in steps, or be repelled with ill fears.
Mold your destiny with an immortal trust,
Secure your eternity ere morality is dust.
Time is fleeting, and the years are few,
To color life's sunset with a rosy hue.
Establish your goals for the heavens to share,
And plan your destiny in the glory that's there.