



*Carlisle & Camden*  

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**A CENTENNIAL HISTORY**

## Chapter Four

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### CAMDEN MILITARY ACADEMY

Again, someone briefly enters the story without whom the story might not have continued.

After the anticipated sale of the property fell through in January 1958, the board of the defunct school had no choice but to regroup and try again. The two Camden banks, the Commercial and the First National, held mortgages for over \$70,000, and an additional unsecured amount was owed to the school's suppliers.

Throughout the spring, a committee of board members headed by Henry Carrison, president of the Commercial Bank, searched for a buyer, preferably someone who would reopen the school. The weeks passed; no buyer could be found. The banks began to consider seriously the prospect of putting the property up for public auction.

One of the favorite meeting places for the town's business and professional men was the coffee shop of the Sarsfield Hotel. Each morning around ten o'clock or so, store owners, clerks, lawyers, bankers, and others from "the street" would arrive, pushing through the swinging glass door and finding a seat at the counter or in one of the booths. The Sarsfield in the morning was a male domain, a place to talk high school football, replay golf matches, swap gossip, or bring the latest joke to an appreciative audience. It was not the place to discuss serious business.

The owners of the Sarsfield were the Schlosburg brothers: Carl, Elihu, and Leon. Before and during World War II they had operated the Sarsfield Supper Club, an attractive restaurant in a quiet residential neighborhood that provided steaks, mixed drinks and dance music, mostly to officers and their dates from the Southern Aviation School and from nearby Fort Jackson. After the war, the Schlosburgs closed the supper club and bought an old hotel in downtown Camden, which they modernized and reopened as the Sarsfield. Located on DeKalb Street (which is also U.S. 1) just a block from the center of town and the intersection of the other major highways running through Camden, the Sarsfield

Hotel was situated to attract both commercial travelers and the growing number of tourists passing through Camden on their way to and from Florida. The hotel's dining room and its coffee shop enjoyed a large local clientele.

One of the topics that spring among the morning coffee drinkers was the increasingly gloomy news following in the wake of the closing of Camden Academy. Rumors about likely prospects and impending sales gathered to a head only to fade and die. Finally, one morning Carl Schlosburg, listening to the latest bad news about the school, asked, "Why don't we get Colonel Risher from Carlisle up here?"

Carl was told that the Colonel had been approached about the school several times and he had made it clear that he was not interested. Carl answered, "Let me talk to him!" and reached for the phone.

Carl Schlosburg was not a member of the committee searching for a buyer; he was not a member of the board of trustees. He had, however, been among the original supporters of the school when it was still just an idea, and he was always interested in anything that could be of benefit to Camden.

Carl got his appointment and drove down to Bamberg. He was a large man—a *huge* man, to be honest—with a shock of black hair, a full black mustache, and lively black eyes under heavy black eyebrows. He was an impressive figure and an imposing presence. He was also a born salesman: a hearty, genial man whose broad smile and infectious laugh only helped him in the dogged pursuit of whatever goals he was determined upon. He and the Colonel hit it off right away.

It is not known what Carl said to Colonel Risher during that initial meeting, but at the end of it, the Colonel said to Carl, "I've got a private plane. I'll fly up to Camden and take a look."

Actually, approaches from the school's trustees had been made to Colonel Risher as early as 1954, and on one occasion in 1955 the Colonel, along with Lanning and Billy, had come up to Camden, at the request of Henry Savage, to look over the campus. Once prior to that, the Colonel had telephoned Lanning, stationed then at Fort Benning, to ask him what he thought of the possibility of operating the school. But the truth was that Colonel Risher had little interest in the project. It is not difficult to understand why. At 68, he was approaching the end of a long and satisfying career. Why should he take on the challenge of developing a second school at this point in his life? The only compelling reason lay in the fact that Carlisle was now turning away qualified boys for lack of space. The Colonel recognized that Carlisle had grown as large as it should become. The opportunity to extend the Carlisle experience to other young men would necessarily entail another campus, and it was this opportunity that gradually gained a hold on the Colonel's thinking.

After Carl's visit, the matter was far from settled, but an opening had been made, and momentum gathered behind this new initiative. Over the following weeks, Schlosburg, Henry Savage, Henry Carrison, and others continued to press the Colonel. They had no doubt that the interest in making a deal was strictly on their side. At one point, the Colonel, in response to the question of how much he might be willing to pay for the property, answered, "*Pay for it!*"



*Camden businessman Carl Schlosburg worked hard to bring the Rishers to Camden. In talks with the Colonel, he just wouldn't take no for an answer.*

*Frankly, I wouldn't take it if you gave it to me!"* That moment aside, committee members recognized in the Colonel a new willingness to listen. Their urgings were also being seconded at home by Bill Risher, whose support of the idea was instrumental in helping the Colonel make up his mind.

In mid-May, a decision was reached. The Rishers would come to Camden.

What remained to be worked out were the details of the sale. With so many outstanding debts against the property—far more than the Colonel or anyone else would be willing to pay in purchase price—the only sure way to clear the title would be for the banks to foreclose the mortgages and proceed with the public auction. The banks and Colonel Risher reached their agreement, and on Monday morning, June 2, the auction was held on the steps of the county courthouse. No one from Carlisle was among the crowd that gathered, but in effect it was the Colonel's bid of \$30,000 that was offered by Edward Royall of the Savage, Royall, Kennedy law firm, acting on behalf of the two banks, which in turn assigned the bid to Colonel Risher. (At the auction, Carl

Schlosburg heard that someone was thinking of offering a bid for the salvage value of the buildings. When Carl found the man and explained that the auction had been arranged in order to save the school, he immediately relinquished the idea.) The auction price did not cover the second mortgage or pay off the unsecured debts, but at least it cleared the way for a new school to operate. A painful period of uncertainty over the fate of the property that had lasted almost a year had come to an end.

Later that month Carl Schlosburg was publicly recognized for his role in convincing Colonel Risher to purchase the school. "What little this committee did," Henry Carrison wrote to Schlosburg in a letter released to the *Chronicle*, "was far overshadowed by your own activity and interest." At a ceremony in the lobby of the Sarsfield, Carrison, along with other board members, presented Schlosburg with a silver platter inscribed in part, "for valued service to the community." And, it could have been added, to Camden Military Academy.

That was the name of the school announced by its new owner in a statement to the *Chronicle* on the day of the sale. Colonel Risher also told the newspaper that fifty boys had been assigned to the school from the Carlisle waiting list and that one of his sons would be headmaster. The *Chronicle* in reporting this information failed to mention the son by name, but two days later, after an interview with Lanning and Bill, the paper had more details to share with its readers. Lanning was identified as the head of the new school, which, it was reported, would be strictly military and would accept only boarding students. No varsity football team was planned for the first year, though there would be varsity basketball and baseball. "Whatever athletic program we have," the Rishers announced, "it certainly will not be subsidized by athletic scholarships."

An editorial in the same issue praised Colonel Risher as a successful businessman and educator, and recommended him to the community. "The pres-

ence of a Risher-owned-and-operated school in Camden will certainly lend prestige to the city," the editor wrote.

The decision to purchase the school, as well as other major decisions and calculations concerning its operation, had taken place over a period of just a few weeks, but much thought and discussion among members of the Risher family had been involved. One of the major decisions, however, did not require much discussion. In spite of his youth, Lanning had apparently been in the Colonel's mind as a likely choice for headmaster of the new school from an early point. When the decision was reached to buy the school, Lanning was teaching at Carlisle. He had returned there in 1955 after a 21-month tour in the Army as a first lieutenant at Fort Benning, Georgia. Prior to that, he had graduated from The Citadel in 1952 and had subsequently enrolled in the Medical College of South Carolina. Although he had been doing well in his medical studies, he realized after only a few months at the medical college that being a doctor was not what he wanted for his life. Characteristically, he immediately informed his advisor that he planned to discontinue his studies and notified the Army that he was no longer eligible for deferment.

It was while he was in service that he and Deane were married. She was Deane Rast, raised on a farm near Cameron, South Carolina, not far from Orangeburg. They had met in 1951 when he was a Citadel cadet and she a sophomore at Winthrop. When they married in August 1953, Deane had a semester left at Winthrop to complete her graduation requirements (she was the valedictorian of her class of 330), and then she joined Lanning at Fort Benning in January. At the end of his military duty in March 1955, Lanning had several career options open to him: he could have applied for a regular commission in the Army; he could have returned to his position as a chemist at DuPont's Savannah River Plant where he had worked for several months while waiting to enter the service; or he could have taken up an uncle's offer to join his bank. Instead, he and Deane returned to Bamberg, and Lanning told his father that he would like to try teaching at Carlisle. He made it clear that he wanted no preferential treatment and that he was not making a long-range commitment to the school: he simply wanted the chance to see if he would like being a teacher. Over the summer he helped with the maintenance work on campus, and in the fall he joined the faculty as a math and history teacher and B team football coach. It did not take him long to realize that he loved the work.

Like his brothers, Lanning had grown up on the Carlisle campus and had lived as a cadet in the Carlisle barracks. He knew military school life from every point of vantage. He had absorbed its philosophy and routines, its demands and rewards. Returning to Carlisle, he came home, without fully realizing it, to what he knew and loved best. From the start, he impressed cadets as a demanding and stimulating teacher, one who knew his subject, knew his students, and cared about both. "Without a doubt, the best instructor I had," one alumnus of that period recalled recently, "and always a friend."

When the Camden opportunity came up, he had been teaching at Carlisle for three years. Did his life's experiences qualify him, at age 26, to take on the responsibilities and pressures of leading a school? Only time would tell, but the



*Lanning as a senior cadet at Carlisle in 1948. He returned to Carlisle to teach in 1955.*

Colonel thought so, and the Colonel had always been a good judge of young men.

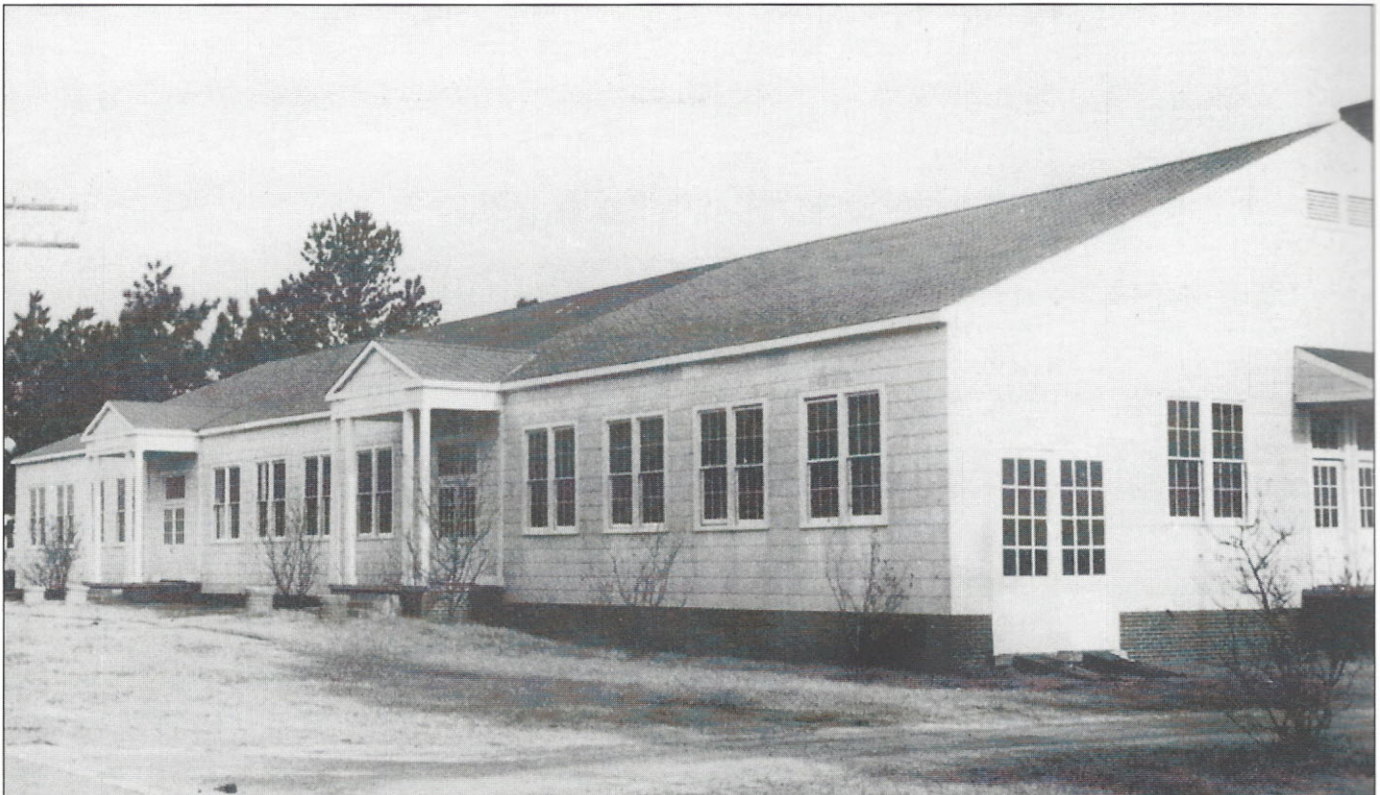
“I hate to see the children work so hard,” Mrs. Risher had said to her husband at one point in the family’s discussion concerning Lanning and Deane’s move to Camden. She knew the demanding life that lay before the young couple. “What do *you* think about it?” the Colonel had asked Deane. “Wherever Lanning is going, I’ll go, too,” Deane had answered. Not long after, Mrs. Risher had confided to a friend, “Deane can do it!”

And so Lanning and Deane, with their two little girls, came to Camden, not at all sure of what lay ahead of them, but with the unconscious confidence of youth that they could meet the challenges, whatever they might be.

“I simply want to sincerely recommend him to the people of Camden,” R. M. Hitt, editor of the *Bamberg Herald*, wrote to the editor of the *Camden News* in regard to Lanning shortly after the Rishers arrived in Camden. “He is a good friend of mine, as are all of the Rishers, and I know that he is going to be a great asset to your town. Lanning is one of the finest boys I have ever known, and no better choice for a head of Camden Military Academy could have been made. He and his charming wife will mean a lot to Camden and the school. Lanning knows how to get along with boys, and my prediction is that the future of the school under his management is assured.”

*The original academic building provided adequate classroom space for the first decade of the school’s history.*

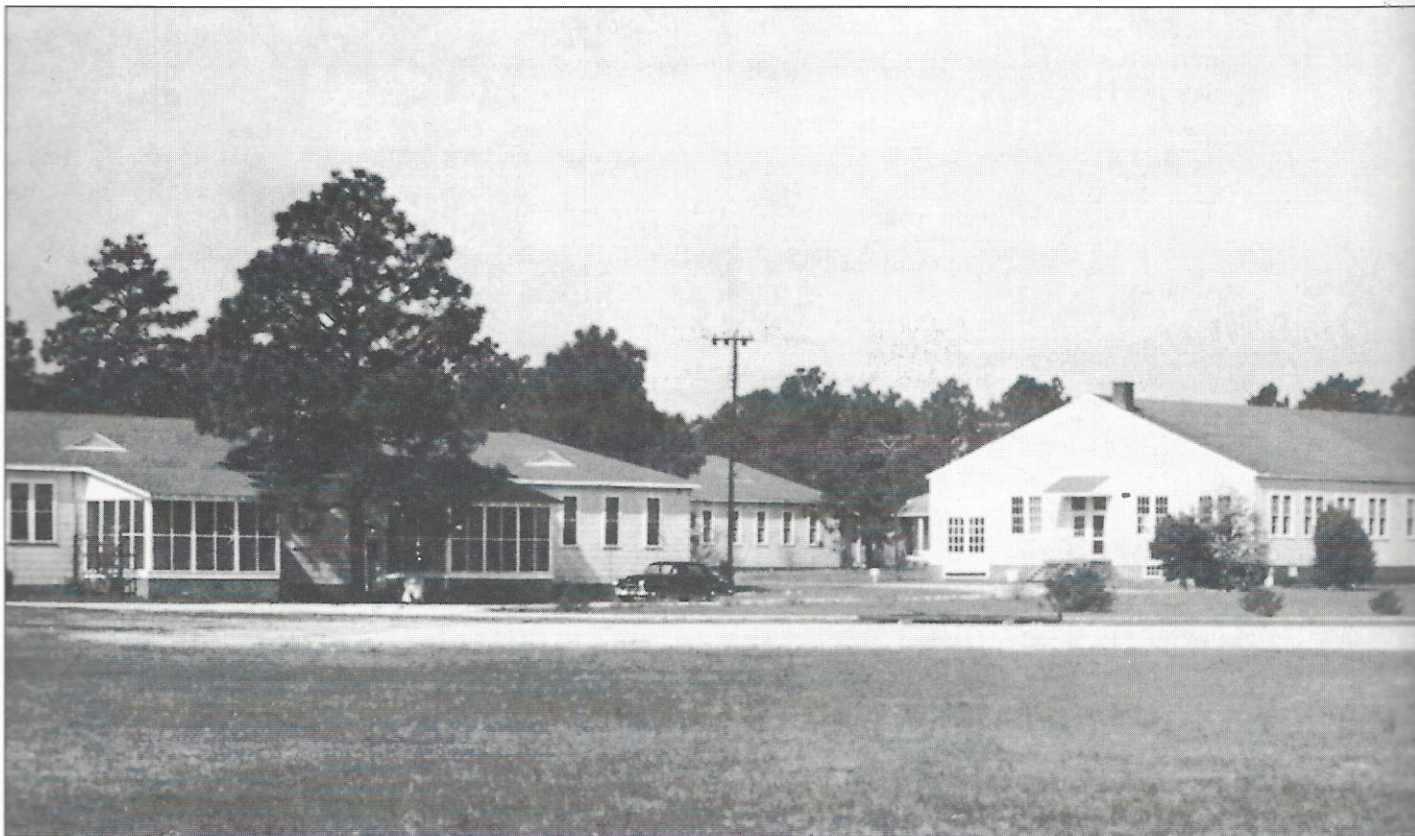
The work began as soon as they arrived. Like the summer eight years earlier when the first Academy was making its start, much had to be done in a short time. Fortunately, from the beginning they had excellent co-workers to help them. James and Anne Dallas moved up to Camden from Carlisle at the



same time as Lanning and Deane. James, who had been teaching at Carlisle for seven years, was Lanning's choice for commandant of the new school. Tommie Pylant, who with her son Johnny had continued to live in an apartment on campus the year the school was closed, was now a secretary for Mr. Henry Beard, a Camden businessman. Within days of Lanning's arrival, Mr. Beard came out to the school and suggested that Mrs. Pylant return to her position as school secretary. "She's just who you need," he told the young headmaster, "and she's far too capable to stay in my little office." Mr. Beard, after seeing the amount of work that would be required to get the campus ready for the fall, had another suggestion. "I've got a man doing some work for me now who can get this campus ready for you by the time you need it—there's nothing he can't do. I'll send him out to talk to you." And so, Zellie Williams joined the staff as maintenance supervisor, and a team that would work together for many years to come was brought together in a matter of days.

Enrolling students, preparing the campus, hiring faculty, organizing the office, ordering materials and supplies—it was a busy, busy summer. Thanks to Carlisle's waiting list and the Carlisle reputation in general, building the enrollment was not as much of a concern as it would have otherwise been. Lanning wrote a brochure and placed ads in the newspapers announcing that Camden had been acquired by Carlisle and was accepting applications for the fall. He also notified former cadets from Camden Academy of the school's opening, and a few elected to return. The Rishers hoped to open with 150 boys, a stretch under the circumstances and a goal that they did not reach, but the applications came in at a satisfactory rate.

*The Camden campus when the Rishers arrived was in basically good shape, but after a year of disuse, a lot of work needed to be done before the school could re-open.*



Preparing the campus for school opening was a different matter. It absorbed all of the spare time and energy that everyone working that summer could give it. Lanning remembers crawling out from underneath the barracks, where he had been repairing the plumbing, to meet parents and enroll a student, and then crawling back underneath the barracks again. Replacing the burnt-out dining hall and kitchen was the major project and the one that kept the Rishers awake at night wondering if the work would be finished in time. They had chosen the middle of the three empty barracks on the south side of the campus to become the new dining facility. The building had not been used since Southern Aviation days, and under the pressure of time, the remodeling job took on the aspect of a nightmare. The rest of the campus, after a year of disuse and several years of deferred maintenance, needed more work than the staff that summer could possibly give it, but they did their best. The parade field was grown up in broomstraw, the buildings were dotted with broken windows, and, inside, dirt and mildew had accumulated everywhere. Zellie, with help from anyone available—including Deane's two brothers, who on one occasion came up from the farm to haul away a truckload of debris—worked steadily through the summer to get the facility ready for the fall.

Fortunately, the two barracks and the academic building were in basically good shape and would meet the school's present needs. Lanning set up the school office in the classroom at the northeast corner of the academic building. (He had a small enclosed cubicle in one corner. The rest of the room served as the outer office where Mrs. Pylant had her desk. Fortunately, also, there was a place for everyone to live. The Rishers moved into the apartment that the







*James Dallas in his first year at Camden. He came up from Carlisle to help Lanning operate the school.*

Garners had occupied (now the Henry House). In one of the building's other apartment were Mrs. Pylant and Johnny. Across the campus, in the Academy's infirmary building, James and Anne Dallas moved into another faculty apartment with their young family.

By September, the rest of the faculty had been hired: Lt. William P. Beckham, Lt. Terry Dukes, Lt. William McLean, Lt. Anthony Samarkos, and Lt. Harold Bullard. The school also hired a school nurse and secured the services of Dr. Francis McCorkle as school physician, a position he still holds at the time of this writing. Deane, with a dietician and several kitchen helpers, managed the dining hall, a job she held, more or less by default, until the arrival of Mrs. Bessie Davis ten years later.

School opened on September 8, 1958, with 95 cadets from sixteen states and four foreign countries. Immediately, the staff faced the problem of how to organize a cadet corps without a cadre of experienced cadet officers. Their solution was to appoint a new set of cadet officers each week for the first several weeks until they had observed all of their more promising cadets in leadership positions. By the end of October, the corps—organized as a battalion of two rifle companies (without rifles), a band company, and staff—had a full contingent of commissioned and non-commissioned officers representing the school's best leadership talent. Major John Stokes of Greer, South Carolina—a former cadet at Camden Academy who had transferred to Carlisle when Camden closed and had now returned—was named the school's first battalion commander. On Sunday, November 9, the Academy held its first dress parade and open house. Because the Camden band was not yet organized, the Carlisle band came up to play for the occasion. About 1200 Camden residents and community leaders attended the event, which included a tour of the campus and a reception in the dining hall.

The months went by smoothly, and the corps functioned. The five faculty officers rotated the OC duty, coming on once every five weekdays and two or three Saturdays or Sundays a month. (Part of their duty involved checking the coal furnace in each barracks—and cleaning out the clinkers—before going off duty at night and again first thing in the morning.) It was all part of the job, everyone pulled together, and the young staff (Bill Beckham at 38 was the old man of the group) were filled with energy and enthusiasm. Camden Military Academy ended its first year with an enrollment of 125, only a small deficit, and a confirmed sense of confidence in its future.

Colonel Risher flew up to Camden once or twice a week during that first year and for several years thereafter. The visits gave him time to discuss school matters with Lanning, acquaint himself with the staff, and share his thoughts with cadets during his after-meal talks in the dining hall.

These talks, the same that he had been giving to Carlisle cadets for years, were one of his ways of passing the Carlisle tradition on to the new school. At Camden they made as deep an impression on his listeners as they had always done at Carlisle. But the passing of the tradition did not depend upon the Colonel and his talks. Once Camden Military Academy was in place, with



*Dr. Francis McCorkle has been the school physician since its first year. Dr. McCorkle has done an outstanding job of responding to cadets' serious medical needs.*

Lanning Risher as its head, the tradition had passed. Camden was not Carlisle: the individuals were different, the surroundings were different, and times are forever changing, but as nearly as it is possible to transfer the essentials of one institution to another, that transfer was made.

The tradition includes the system and the routine that are recognizable to any former cadet of either school. But it is based on much more. Driving it all is a core of values intelligently and faithfully applied. They were the values that the Colonel worked a lifetime to impart to cadets at Carlisle, not just in words but through experience: self-discipline, acceptance of responsibility, honesty, concern for others, faith in God. They were the values that came to Camden and continue to drive and direct the operation of the school. And they came in the person of Lanning Risher.

There was never any question in Lanning's mind about the basic job he had to do. He never had a doubt about whether he had chosen the right career. The school became the work of his life and having embarked upon it, he devoted himself to it completely. He and Deane had not only made a right decision; they had made *the* decision of their lives.

The story would be more dramatic if Camden Military Academy had gone through some of the uncertainty and turmoil that many private schools experi-

*Colonel Risher made regular visits to Camden during the first few years. Here he talks with an appreciative group of the school's second-year staff. From left: Harold Bullard, Bill Wearmouth, Lachicotte Zemp, Terry Dukes, Richard Patry, Bill Beckham, Melvin Price, Tony Samarkos, Lanning Risher, and Colonel Thomas Alexander.*



ence during the time it takes for them to become established. Unfortunately for the drama, Camden went through little of this. Having Carlisle as an older brother helped the young school avoid the period of uncertainty in the two ways noted: Carlisle's reputation assured a ready source of applicants for Camden, and Carlisle provided for Camden the clear sense of mission and the methods to achieve that mission that many schools have to struggle to find.

By the second year, enrollment was already up to 180. By the next year it had gone beyond 200, and since then it has continued to range from that figure up as high as 270 or so. Just as importantly, the school, except for small deficits in two years, has operated within its budget. Each year the Academy has made do with whatever tuition revenues were available. This meant that in the early years money was scarce and improvements beyond the essential were often postponed, but it also meant that the school was not accumulating the debt load that sinks so many small struggling schools and other new businesses. Camden, in other words, early reached a degree of internal stability that it has never lost. Staff energy and time that might have otherwise been required in rescue and survival strategies were all directed toward the effective execution of the school's program.

Also contributing to the school's early and sustained success has been the caliber of the staff itself. From the very first year, the Academy's staff has been marked not only by a generally high level of competence and commitment, but also by the presence of individuals whose dominant personalities imposed their own unique stamp upon life at Camden Military Academy.

Certainly one of the dominant personalities through the first three decades of the school was Lieutenant—later Captain, Major, and Lieutenant Colonel—Bill Beckham.



*Anne Dallas serves punch to Lanning and Deane and Carlisle visitor Carson Sturgeon during one of the Academy's first dances.*



*Bill Beckham at the time of his retirement in 1983. Bill was the first faculty member hired by Lanning in Camden. He was a dominant figure on the staff for the next 25 years.*

“I have a large bark, but I’ve never been known to bite anybody,” Bill says to characterize himself, and twenty-five years of CMA cadets can vouch for both the effectiveness of the bark and the absence of the bite. Bill loved his job at Camden, and the cadets (most of them) loved him. He was a natural. First, he was thoroughly military. The son of an Army officer, Bill spent much of his youth moving with his family from one post to another. Within a month of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the 20-year-old Beckham joined the Army Air Corps and, after a few months of training, found himself flying missions as a bombardier over Germany. When his B-17 was shot down, he was captured and spent 20 months as a prisoner of war. After his release from service, Bill returned to the University of South Carolina and earned an engineering degree. An instructor and later a unit commander in the National Guard, he was called up during the Korean conflict for stateside service. Hoping finally to settle down, he came back to Camden, took a job with DuPont, and, with his wife Willie, built a home. A couple of years later, however, DuPont wanted to transfer him to Chattanooga. Instead, Bill took a job

with the City of Camden, and that is where he was the summer the Rishers came to town. Carl Schlosburg recommended him, and Bill was hired to run the school’s military program and to teach physics and math.

Once here, Bill knew he was where he belonged. Nothing suited him more than the lively company of men and boys, and he was always in the center of whatever was going on. To Bill, no one was too high or too low to fall outside the range of his instant, sometimes needling, familiarity. “Hey, Bo—”, often followed by a pointed suggestion, was his way of addressing almost everyone, from a visiting dignitary to a first year cadet. The cadets loved it.

When JROTC came to Camden in 1966-1967 and the military program became the responsibility of Army personnel, Bill Beckham, who had always given valuable assistance in handling discipline problems, was named assistant commandant. It was a role that he greatly enjoyed. When serious discipline infractions occurred, he loved matching his wits and will against the suspects. It is probably unnecessary to remind you that in these affairs, strategy and perseverance are often needed to get down to the truth of a matter. Bill and Lanning made a good team; they rarely closed an inquiry until they had the information they needed to reach a fair decision. Alumni of the period may not realize that Beckham also had an undercover agent who kept him informed of things going on beneath the surface. At night during study hall, one cadet at a time from each barracks would come over to the barber shop to get a haircut. While a cadet was in the chair, two or three others waited. The setting was conducive to casual talk, and the cadets sometimes seemed to forget that Mr. Brown, the barber, was listening to their conversations. Later Mr. Brown would pass on to Beckham anything of interest that he had heard.

The driving force behind all of his dealings with cadets, however, was Bill’s genuine desire to help boys become men and his belief in the school’s military

program as an effective way to achieve this result. Despite his role as disciplinarian, cadets had no difficulty recognizing in Beckham a true mentor and friend.

For several years, beginning in 1969, Bill and Willie Beckham organized a Christmas party for the youngsters in the Children's Home, an orphanage in town. Cadets contributed money and the Beckhams bought gifts for each child. Sometimes cadets would go to the Children's Home for the party; in other years, the party was held in the Academy dining hall. It was a wonderful experience for everyone involved.

When Bill retired in 1983, he was extremely proud of the dress parade held in his honor. Two years later, in the presence of many former cadets returning for their reunion, he was again honored by the dedication of Beckham Hall, the classroom building where he had taught for so many years.

As Camden Military Academy moved through its first decade, several important events marked the growing development of the school. In the second year, the Army approved Camden as a National Defense Corp Cadet Unit, a designation that entitled the school to government rifles. In the summer of 1959, a brick and steel armory was constructed under Army specifications to store the weapons. Also during that summer, a building that had stood empty since Southern Aviation School days was renovated and partitioned for school offices and a cadet supply room. The Academy's new administration building was to be around for a long time.

Meanwhile Deane Risher was beginning her efforts to improve the appearance of the grounds. She planted—and, because of mowing, replanted—hundreds of pine seedlings out along the front, put in the juniper and other shrubs around the administration building, bordered the front drive with magnolia trees, added to the number of crepe myrtles already dotting the grounds, and planted a hundred 12-inch dogwoods sent up from Bamberg by Colonel and Mrs. Risher. Her landscaping projects would continue over the next thirty-five years, during which time her little sprouts grew to transform the appearance of the campus.

Football was added as a varsity sport during the school's second year, joining basketball and baseball to complete an all-season varsity program. Harold Bullard, who had been a Little All-American player at Lenoir Rhyne, was head coach. The fledging Spartans' first game was against former coach Billy Seigler's Hartsville Red Foxes, who pummeled the Spartans 46-7. An Academy spokesman reminded local fans that the school had no intention of rebuilding the subsidized football power teams of an earlier period.

Also in its second year the school was visited by Major General Christian H. Clarke, the commanding officer at Fort Jackson. After touring the campus

*CMA's first football coaching staff: Richard Patry, Harold Bullard, and Terry Dukes, with managers Traylor and Williams.*





*Inspection by Fort Jackson commanding officer, General Christian Clarke, showed the cadet corps to be well prepared.*

and reviewing the corps, General Clarke (at the headmaster's request) issued amnesty, thus inspiring Cadet James Bridwell to compose the following lines in the general's honor:

*He Was the One*

*No greater man will there ever be,  
 Than General Clarke, you know who freed me.  
 Twas a lot of trouble to spit and shine,  
 But to be free, I'd do it any time.  
 I believe I know what did the trick,  
 The band for the first time didn't sound sick.  
 It might have been Darby Dukes, whom we all like,  
 When he forgot to give his first platoon, "Eyes Right!"  
 It might have been Parsons when the General's eyes slipped,  
 But you know, his pants did come unzipped.  
 Yep, it was a great day when General Clarke was here,  
 And I hope to God he'll do the same next year!*

The spring of that second year also saw the introduction of the Academy's track program. Faculty officer Bill Wearmouth, a graduate of Carlisle and a first-year teacher at Camden, took a group of cadets out into a stand of small pines behind the dining hall and, over a period of months, carved out a 440-yard oval and a 100-yard straightaway with infield areas for discus, shot put, and jumps. By the end of the season, the same cadets, organized as a track team under Coach Wearmouth, had compiled a 5-3 record.

Many of the cadet organizations and activities, following Carlisle models,

# What Camden Military Academy has Meant to Me

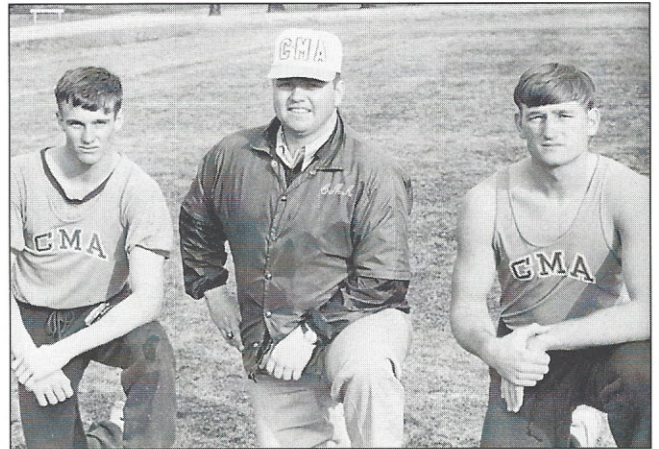
By Van Webber, CMA 1959-61

My father was a businessman and through the years made wise investments; but probably the best investment he ever made, as far as I am concerned, was to enroll me at Camden Military Academy my junior year. To my father's surprise, he got no objections from me when he announced to our family that I was headed to military school. I am sure that the reasons leading to the decision to enroll me at Camden were not that much different than those of any of my Camden classmates; but the results of that decision have had a very positive domino effect on my entire life.

There is no doubt that my stay at Camden as a student far exceeded my parents', and probably my own, expectations. Then again, my public school did not have the likes of Bill Beckham, Tony Samarkos, or Dick Patry, with their direct manner of motivating young men when they were not used to being motivated. By the same token, the same cadets could look to the calming voices of Bill Wearmouth or Lash Zemp pointing to a better way but always instilling responsibility for one's own behavior. The discipline, the military organization and the bar that was set so I had to reach a little higher than I thought I could—coupled with the blend of the right people at the right time in my life—permitted me to mature into a fairly responsible young man by the time I graduated. I can say that now because I remember I felt that way then.

Throughout college I never gave serious thought to going into education until the beginning of my senior year. In late winter of that year, I wrote Colonel Risher a letter expressing a desire to return to Camden to teach. At that time my father had a thriving private business which would have provided an easy way for me to step into the world, but I was not sure that the business world was where I would find reasonable contentment. Even at that age, I knew I wanted something different than the business grind, even though it would probably mean giving up monetary rewards in the future. Colonel Risher responded with the first and only telegram I ever received, saying that he had an opening, but I would have to be willing to do *this* and *this* and *this*. I did not care what I had to do; I knew I could do it—such are the dreams of a twenty-two-year-old. I would be the first Camden Military Academy graduate to return to teach, but I knew I was ready.

I taught and coached at Camden for the first six years of my professional life. They were great years; they were nurturing years. The same Bill Beckham who had screamed and yelled at me in physics class a few years earlier took me under his wing as a member of the Camden faculty. I understood better Terry Dukes' humor and appreciated the intelligence of James Dallas—and Colonel Risher, who had four years



*Coach Webber with 1971 track team co-captains Tommy Wall and Doug Dills.*

earlier handed me my high school diploma, now handed me my first professional paycheck along with a pat on the back.

The work was difficult and long—studying every night in order to keep up and be a good Senior English instructor. The hours on the football field and track were tiring but rewarding. My family lived on campus and became part of the bigger Camden Military Academy family. We all enjoyed watching my two small sons marching and saluting the flag or running the track after one of my meets: it was a nice place for a young family. During my tenure at Camden, I picked up a master's degree and began to evaluate my situation. Where at twenty-two and just out of college, I had had no answers, I now felt at twenty-eight I had most of the answers, and I decided it was time to move on.

A good number of years have passed since I left Camden, but I am still in private education and I still work with young men. I do it because engineers like to build bridges, chemists like to work in labs, and bakers like to bake bread. I feel that my calling is, in a variety of ways, working with young men as the people at Camden worked with me. During my career I have taught young men in the classroom, have coached them on the playing field, and have worked with them in several administrative positions. There are very few days that pass that I do not see "myself" in a current student. I guess there will probably always be a Van Webber out there.

I will always be thankful for the foresight my parents had to enroll me at Camden. It was a great decision. I will always be thankful that Camden gave me a chance to begin building a foundation in maturity, responsibility, and education. It has taken me a long way in living a very contented life.

*Van Webber is currently director of alumni relations at Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Virginia.*



*Cadet Hisle was the worthy first of a long line of CMA buglers who have blown formations with verve and style.*

had been introduced during the school's first year, including the *Excalibur* yearbook, the *Adjutant* newspaper, the Dance Committee, the Commissioned Officers Club (renamed Sash & Sword), the NCO Club, and the Flight Club. In the second and third years, other important groups were added, including the Training Cadre, Delta Kappa Sigma Honor Society, and the Honor Council.

CMA's Alma Mater and the Cadet Prayer were both introduced at the 1962 commencement. The Alma Mater, sung to the tune of "O, Canada," was presented by the faculty to the cadet corps for approval that spring, and only after their vote of endorsement were cadets told that the words had been written by their headmaster and his wife. The Cadet Prayer was written at Lanning's request by Rt. Rev. Albert S. Thomas, retired Episcopal bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina, who, as a Citadel graduate, had written a similar Cadet Prayer for that institution.

A near brush with disaster and a significant loss to the school occurred during that fourth year when in the early evening of Thursday, February 15, 1962, while cadets fortunately were at supper in the dining hall, fire broke out on the second floor of Carolina Hall. The barracks, which housed 88 cadets, was completely destroyed. A subsequent investigation indicated that the fire had started in a room where several electrical extension cords extended across the floor under a rug. Classes were cancelled for Friday and cadets sent home for the weekend. When classes resumed on Monday, quarters for the displaced cadets had been set up in the one remaining unoccupied barracks, now Thompson Barracks, near the east end of the campus drive. When the cadets moved in, it was still an open barracks, with bunks

lined up along the walls. (The other previously unoccupied barracks, now Grimes Barracks, at the west end of the campus drive, had already been partitioned into rooms and put into service as Band Company quarters.)

In April construction began on a sixty-room two-story brick barracks, located close to the north boundary of the campus. Lanning, who had been worried about the fire hazard of wooden buildings from the beginning, said that he could only thank God that no one had been injured or lost in the Carolina Hall blaze. He told his father at the time that he would not send boys back into the barracks for another year without the protection of sprinkler systems, and that summer sprinklers were installed in each of the wooden barracks.

As the 1960s moved through their swirling crescendo in the outside world, life continued more or less smoothly at Camden Military Academy. The Academy received its first flag in 1963-1964, a gift of Colonel and Mrs. James Risher. An eighth grade class was added in 1964-1965, perhaps in response to a slightly declining enrollment. The following year, the rifle team and the golf team made their debut at the school. In 1966, Camden was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, an important event that fully validated the school's educational program and indicated the steady work that the Academy





*Zellie Williams, the maintenance supervisor, handled just about any job that needed to be done on the Camden Campus and buildings from the Academy's opening until his retirement in 1974.*



*Beck Russell, a Carlisle graduate and Camden businessman, operated the canteen with his wife Nina during the 1960s.*



*Joe Parsons, a 1961 Camden graduate, returned in 1966 as a faculty member and later served as assistant commandant until 1982.*

had accomplished since its opening six years earlier. To fulfill SACS requirements, Lanning earned a master's degree in history from the University of South Carolina and took the required courses in educational administration during the summer at Appalachian State College in Boone.

In 1966-1967, Camden was designated a JROTC unit, and the Army sent two instructors to join the staff: Captain Russell Ware and Sergeant First Class Charles Wilson. SFC Wilson was the first of several Army non-com's— among them, CSM John Layne and CSM Rosvelt Martain—who over the years have blessed CMA with their scrupulous and rigorous approach to military tradition and discipline. Having to satisfy the demands of men like these, some cadets have encountered for the first time in their lives a counterforce, applied face to face, superior to their own willful plunge through life. In his first year, SFC Wilson organized the school's first drill team, the James F. Risher Guard, and continued to work with and develop this team until he was transferred three years later.

Other staff members who contributed to Academy life during the 1960s and beyond included Terry Dukes, who at one time or another coached practically every sport the Academy offered; Beck Russell, a Carlisle graduate and Camden resident who operated the canteen during most of the decade; Francis Brown, barber and security guard from 1966 until his retirement in 1982; Van Webber, a Camden graduate who returned as a faculty member in 1965 and whose track teams compiled an outstanding record through the next six years; Mrs. Andy Rose, the capable, personable infirmary nurse from 1965 through 1976; Joe Parsons, another Academy graduate, who returned to teach science and math in 1966 and served for several years as assistant commandant until 1982; Zellie Williams, who, true to his recommendation, handled about every maintenance job that came along until his retirement in 1974; and, of course, Mrs. Bessie Davis, who for twenty years ran her kitchen and dining hall as an independent fiefdom.

In 1968-1969, LTC Charles Ray White came to Camden to head the JROTC program, beginning eighteen years of invaluable assistance to the headmaster and service to the Academy. Cadets quickly recognized the strength of this cheerful, explosive, tough little man. In his first year he put the military department in such good order that the school won its first Honor Unit with Distinction, the Army's highest rating. Shortly after that he told Lanning, "Look, Colonel, the military program's in good shape; what else can I do?" By 1970 he was assistant headmaster.

Ray White grew up in Florence, South Carolina. As a 17-year-old in World War II, he volunteered for the Marine Corps and later fought and was wounded in the Pacific. After the war he entered the University of South Carolina where he earned a degree in accounting, but instead of pursuing a career in that field he opted for a commission in the U.S. Army. His career included tours in Germany, Okinawa, and Korea. His last Army assignment before coming to CMA was as chief of the offensive tactics section at the Command General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.



*LTC Ray White, senior army instructor and assistant headmaster, handled cadet discipline problems with understanding, a sense of humor, and bulldog tenacity.*

As assistant headmaster Colonel White took over most of the school's discipline problems. Ray had a mild exterior and a ready smile; no one on campus was friendlier, and he loved a joke, even when it was on himself. But he was hell to cross. He had been a boxer in high school, and that pugnacious spirit, though combined with the natural courtesy of an absolute gentleman, lived on in the adult. He never backed away from a confrontation, and he was always determined to get to the bottom of whatever problem arose. Once, for example, after a cadet had confessed to him that he had been drinking, Colonel White pressed the boy tell him who else had been involved. Finally, after a good deal of haranguing, he got the names of two others. When he confronted them in their room, however, the two vigorously denied the charge. Frustrated but not about to give up, White went back to the confessed cadet, who told him, "Listen, Colonel, they've been drinking all year and pitching the empty bottles down a hole in the wall."

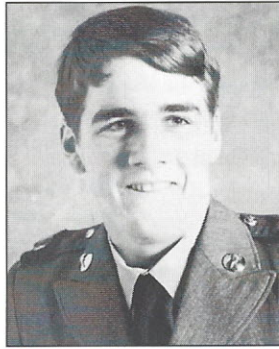
Colonel White hurried back over to the barracks to confront the two again. Pacing back and forth in their room while they stood at attention, he was saying, "Look, boys, we've got to get to the bottom of this drinking thing," and at the same time glancing around for the hole. Suddenly he spotted a poster on the wall, and exclaiming, "Don't you boys know it's against the rules to hang posters in your room?" he rushed over and snatched it down, reacting with admirable surprise when he uncovered the hole. The two cadets immediately began explaining that the damage had been reported long ago and they were just waiting for it to be repaired. Colonel White brushed them aside and peered down the hole, but it was too dark and too deep for him to see anything. He barked to the cadet officer who was with him, "Go tell Mr. Caulder to bring his saw over here!" The maintenance man soon arrived with circular saw in hand, and Colonel White told him to cut out the whole section around the hole. While the boys stood agape, Mr. Caulder plugged in the saw and, amid flying sawdust and the piercing scream of the blade, cut away a large piece of the wall, whereupon several empty bottles clinked out onto the floor. Colonel White let out a snort and wheeled toward the door, calling out to the two cadets, still standing in shock in the middle of the room: "You boys put on your uniforms and meet me in the office!" Striding down the hall, he thought of something else he wanted to tell them and was re-approaching their door when he heard the two arguing.

"*Didn't I say we should have told him from the beginning?*" one of them was saying.

"*Yeah,*" the other answered. "*But how'd I know the little son of a b\_\_\_\_\_ was gonna saw down the whole barracks!*"

# One of the best times of our lives

By Cam Walters  
CMA, 1969-73.



*Cam Walters, 1973*

During the early 1970s Camden Military Academy was led by a strong group of individuals, many of whom were there when the school was first established in 1958. Ray White, James T. Dallas, and Bill Beckham were the backbone of the staff under Colonel Lanning Risher's command and today are considered legends of the school by many a man who was molded by them. These men, along with several other faculty members, had grown up during the hardships of the Depression, and many had fought in our country's battles for freedom from Guadalcanal to Khe-San. Because they had to grow up sooner than we did, they were tough and demanding on us, not always easy to be around, forever insisting that we could do better—but they truly loved us and loved the opportunity to help us grow into men.

Our headmaster was the son of one of the most dynamic individuals any of us had ever encountered. Small in stature but a giant in character and personality, Colonel James F. Risher was already a legend as a South Carolina educator. He would stop by CMA on occasion, usually at lunch to address the cadets in the mess hall. His talks were about life and life's experiences, what it means to be a man and a leader of men, and above all about the importance of spirit and faith in God. Colonel Risher was remarkable at bridging the age gap between himself and a cadet. He never spoke down to us and he had the wonderful ability to make us all feel good about ourselves, equal as God's children, with the same opportunities to live a full life. Although he rarely came to the school in the last years of his life, his presence and wisdom were evident in the leadership of Lanning and his staff as well as in his effect upon those cadets whose lives he touched.

Many other faculty members gave their all to the cadets during this period. In addition, the school would never have made it had it not been for the women working on campus in those days. Deane Risher, along with Bessie Davis, saw to it that we were fed the proper diet. Mrs. Dallas was our librarian as well as our banker, doling out \$5.00 per week to each cadet. Mrs. Tommie Pylant served many years as our school's office manager. We even had a "mom" on campus: Mrs. Andy Rose was our campus nurse as well as substitute mother. Her love and caring for us was real, and she nursed just about all of us from afflictions ranging from homesickness to the flu. Today, some of CMA's alumni are just beginning to realize the gift these individu-

als gave to us. Many of us turned a corner at Camden, and they were there to see us through.

The cadets at Camden ran a pretty tight schedule during the weekdays. Around 6:30 a.m. a cadet bugler would sound reveille over the guard house PA system to start our day. Morning breakfast, "soupy," would be followed by 45 minutes of drill on a section of the airport parking lot, followed by classes, then lunch and more classes until around 3:15. After classes a cadet would either report to physical training, "pt," or the practice session of his sports team. Some had to march tours on the dreadful "bullring," toting an M-1 rifle with other cadets who had been disciplined, or "burnt," for infractions of CMA's code of conduct. To this day I can still see cadet Mickey Faile from Lancaster, South Carolina, walking lap after lap around the sandy, oval-shaped path. Mickey did so with pride and dignity, for he held the title of "Bullring King" during his years at CMA. Supper was around 6:30, and then a mandatory study hall in our rooms until 15 minutes before taps. A cadet could not play his radio or TV during this period and had to ask the cadet sergeant of the guard on duty in the hallway for permission to use the latrine.

On Friday nights a cadet, if not burdened with demerits, "hours," was free to ride the bus to Camden. Off campus we could see the latest movie at the Little Theatre, gorge ourselves at the local pizza parlor, or get a date with one of the town girls. We pretty much stayed in groups when going downtown. The fact that the town girls liked us meant that the town boys hated us. When a town boy lost his girl to one of our uniformed studs, some form of retaliation would soon follow. Occasionally a town boy screaming "Bellhop!" would throw a bottle from a passing car at our Sunday dress parade formation. Another more direct encounter occurred one night in 1972 when a dozen or so town boys walked up to the airport end of A barracks looking for a particular cadet. What ensued was swift and decisive as a group of cadets charged into the gang in what must have resembled a rebel charge at Gettysburg.

On Saturday mornings we had inspection, either on the parade ground or in the barracks. This was the time we had to look our best. The barracks and our rooms had to be perfect, our rifles spotless, our shoes and brass shined, our gig lines straight. We all sported fresh Professor Brown haircuts. After inspection, our Saturday afternoons were free until supper and then we returned to study hall on Saturday nights. On Sunday mornings we attended the church of our choice, which gave us some interaction with the more peaceful residents of Camden. On any given Sunday afternoon a cadet could be returning from a weekend furlough or just taking it easy on campus. Our dress parade was at 4:00 on Sunday afternoons and was usually attended by a collection of

parents, friends and girlfriends. It was always amusing to watch unsuspecting spectators of this event jump at the report of the cannon during our ceremony. A cadet enjoyed free time again on Sunday evenings, usually shooting pool or shooting baskets or just watching TV.

Guard duty was assigned to cadets on a daily basis. The cadet officer of the day was in charge of the corps for a 24-hour period, strolling the campus and the barracks, checking on the sergeant of the guard stationed in each of the four companies. Night guard duty was the least popular duty on campus. Two cadets would be stationed in the guard house for two-hour intervals from taps until 6:00 a.m.

Our cadet corps was made up of individuals from all over the country as well as many parts of the world. The diversity of cultures and personalities made for a unique group of students compared to schools back home. Our soccer team was coached by a CMA graduate Gerd Becker, a German and former collegiate player at the University of Tennessee. Some of Captain Becker's players were cadets from Panama and Guatemala, and had played soccer since birth. Needless to say, we never had any problems with our opponents on the soccer field, plus the rest of us learned the game of soccer and learned a bit of German and Spanish as well.

There were some really strong teams as well as athletes at CMA in the early 1970s. The football team, coached by Captains Dozier and Kazor, was not a conference member and therefore was often scheduled with larger schools with a greater talent pool of players. Cheraw High, Boiling Springs High and Cowpens High were all 2-A and 3-A schools at the time, and typical opponents on our schedule. Although outsized, we usually were hard hitting and a tough opponent. One game on our 1972 schedule included the state 1-A champion, Lockhart High School. That Friday night in Lockhart, I discovered that my blocking assignment was 6'-5" 280-pound town hero Mickey Sims, later a standout at South Carolina State and the NFL's Cleveland Browns. Our tight end, Dick McKinnon, and I double-blocked Sims on just about every play and managed to hold him to just one sack of quarterback Barry Tanner. Our biggest rivalry and last game of the season was always against our brothers at Carlisle. They traveled to Camden in 1971 and we trounced them 44-0. At the end of that game, I remember the victory lap we ran behind Dennis Bivens carrying the Carlisle-Camden football trophy in the air before the Carlisle and Camden cadets.

A player for the Spartans in the early 1970s was Jeff Washington, the first black cadet to attend CMA. Jeff was a standout student, leader and athlete at CMA, attending West Point after graduation. Jeff's cousin, Charlie Fielder, also attended CMA and was one of the fastest sprinters in the state. CMA had a reputation of having a top track program under the coaching of Van Webber. Under Captain Webber, state recognition was achieved by Marshall Fowler in the

high hurdles, Doug Dills in the discus, and Max Fine in the 100-yard dash. The 1972 and 1973 baseball teams, coached by Steve Kazor, later to become an NFL assistant coach, accomplished a 34-1 record over the two-year period. Our basketball teams over the same period were led by the great play of Barry Tanner. Other all-round athletes during this time were Glenn Ribelin, Skip Harley, Walter Anderson, Mike Buckley, Ray Hobby, Dewey Trantham, Mike Couch, Donald Shapiro, Travis Casey, Russell Dickerson, Steve Stickland, Stan Mabry, and Buddy Ivey, just to name a few.

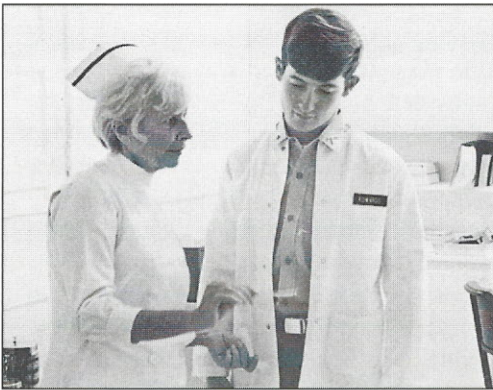
Many other activities were also available to cadets, including the rifle and drill teams. Our band, under the direction of Major Joe Parsons, along with the drill team, would perform in several area Christmas parades each year. Our rifle teams always performed well in competition. A cadet had plenty to do in those days other than his studies and his duty. Some of the best times were in just being teenagers and cutting up together. Cadets could play some of the most hilarious jokes and pranks on each other as well as on the faculty. In the fall of 1971, Cadet Ralph Hempton decided it was time for the students to have a revolution—as in Bolshevik—against the school administration. Ralph was calling for more free time, longer hair, and fewer restrictions and military inspections. For several weeks pamphlets were handed out and meetings were held. Then one day the hammer fell when Colonel White and Colonel Beckham discovered some of our propaganda. Colonel Risher immediately herded us all into the mess hall to inform us of what was what at Camden Military Academy. I'm sure Risher, White, and Beckham got a big laugh after reviewing some of our plans. To document all of these capers would require the efforts of a Tolstoy, and then he would not get all of the facts straight. These stories are best told by gray-ing former cadets, including actual participants and witnesses, at Carlisle and Camden reunions.

Many of us today look back on our time at CMA as one of the best in our lives. Back then we didn't speak much about the advantage Camden was providing us. At times, like most teenagers, we would complain about the regimentation or the restrictions. But most of us knew that the experience was planting a seed of self-discipline and self-reliance within us. One of the cadets of the Class of 1973, Verne Packer, knew the advantage. After completing his eighth and ninth grades at CMA, he returned to his home high school, only to return to CMA his senior year, paying his own tuition from money earned on summer jobs. Most of the CMA students during these years have gone on to become husbands and fathers and leaders in all kinds of occupations and careers, both civilian and military. One thing that they all have in common is the fact that none have ever experienced anything quite like Camden Military Academy.

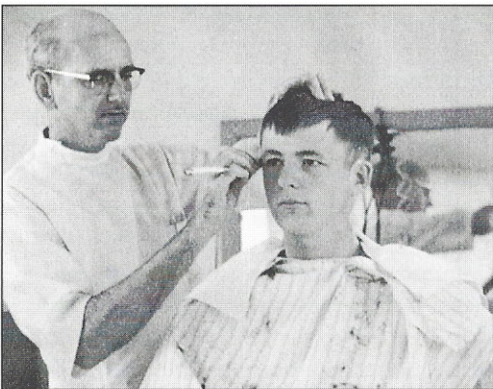
*Today Cam owns a telecommunications business in Greenville and is chairman of the Academy's advisory board.*



*Mrs. Anne Dallas served as Academy librarian from 1965 to 1981, a period of continuous growth and improvement in the facility.*



*Mrs. Andy Rose was the school nurse during much of the 1960s and '70s. The infirmary has always been an important and demanding part of the school operation.*



*Francis Brown was Academy barber, night watchman, and undercover agent for 18 years.*

When Colonel White retired in 1986, the school's gymnasium was named White Field House in his honor. The gym, built in the the summer and fall of 1969, the year after Colonel White's arrival, was an appropriate tribute to the retiring assistant headmaster, who had lobbied for its construction. For the first time, Spartan basketball teams, instead of being bused down to the National Guard Armory in Camden, had a place of their own to practice and compete, and all cadets had access to the gym in their off-hours. The 14,400 square-foot structure also included a stage, providing a convenient assembly place for school programs, dances, and commencements. The White Field House, since expanded to include a band room and a weight room, continues to be a popular spot for cadets, a versatile campus resource, and a fitting reminder of the man who gave so much to Camden Military Academy.

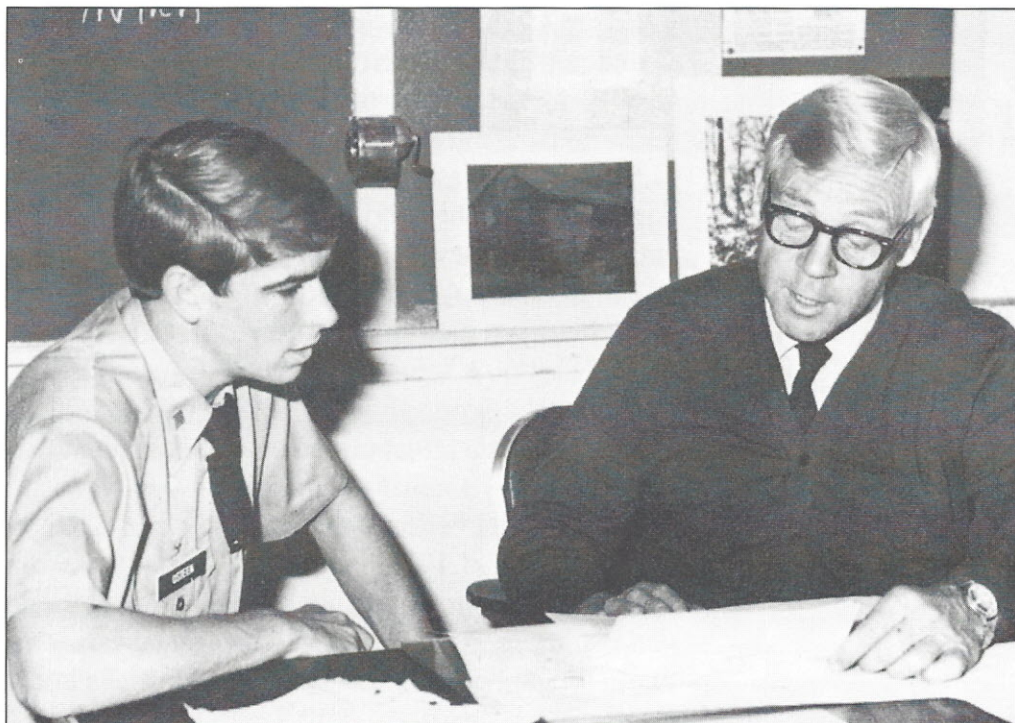
Another major personality arrived at Camden a few years after Colonel White and became a part of the Camden experience that cadets of the period will never forget. In 1973 Major Burton Gale began his 22-year reign in the classroom. For many, Major Gale's senior English class was the highlight of their academic career at Camden. "Major Gale pushed you hard and expected your best—always," remembers Price Osteen, who graduated in 1981. "He always had the ability to capture the attention of all types of cadets and to convey the importance of a strong command of the English language. His no-nonsense, but lively classroom environment provided an atmosphere which made learning stick with you."

Major Gale's teaching produced results. A Clemson English professor told Colonel White several years ago that he loved getting CMA graduates in his freshman English class because they were so well prepared. Gale himself strongly believed that his teaching task was to develop not only good communication skills, but the underlying thinking skills as well. "I believe implicitly," he wrote, "that what a person says or writes, and how he says or writes it, directly reflect the mind and intellect which produced it." Clearly, in Major Gale's view, the world needed some relief from its surplus of sloppy thinkers.

Gale was born and brought up in Montpelier, Vermont. After his graduation from the University of Vermont, he served for twenty years in the Air Force. During one of his assignments, as a staff member of the USAF Officer Training School in San Antonio, he earned a master of education degree from Our Lady of the Lake University.

A Vietnam veteran, Major Gale's duties during that war were what he calls paper pushing, but managed to involve "stories of

Major Burton Gale reviews yearbook matters with 1981 *Excalibur* editor, Price Osteen. Gale's high standards and genuine concern for cadets made him an outstanding teacher.



dicey deliveries of emergency messages in the dark of Southeast Asia nights” that roused the interest of two decades of cadets at moments when their attention to the lesson had momentarily drifted.

In 1973 Gale applied for retirement from the Air Force to accept a position at CMA. Upon his arrival at Camden, he and his wife Phyllis built a home across the airport from the school, where “fully attuned to nature,” he “transformed a few acres of Carolina sand and pine into a nature conservancy.” Many former cadets will remember, with David Utz, who graduated in 1982, performing such tasks for the Major as “stretching hog-wire fence, . . . culling out dead trees with an axe and dropping them where he pointed, and digging up scrub oak stumps so they couldn’t sprout back.”

An enthusiastic horseman, for several years Major Gale sponsored a riding club for cadets. He also handled the Dance Committee for several years, and for most of his tenure produced the *Excalibur*, the Academy yearbook.

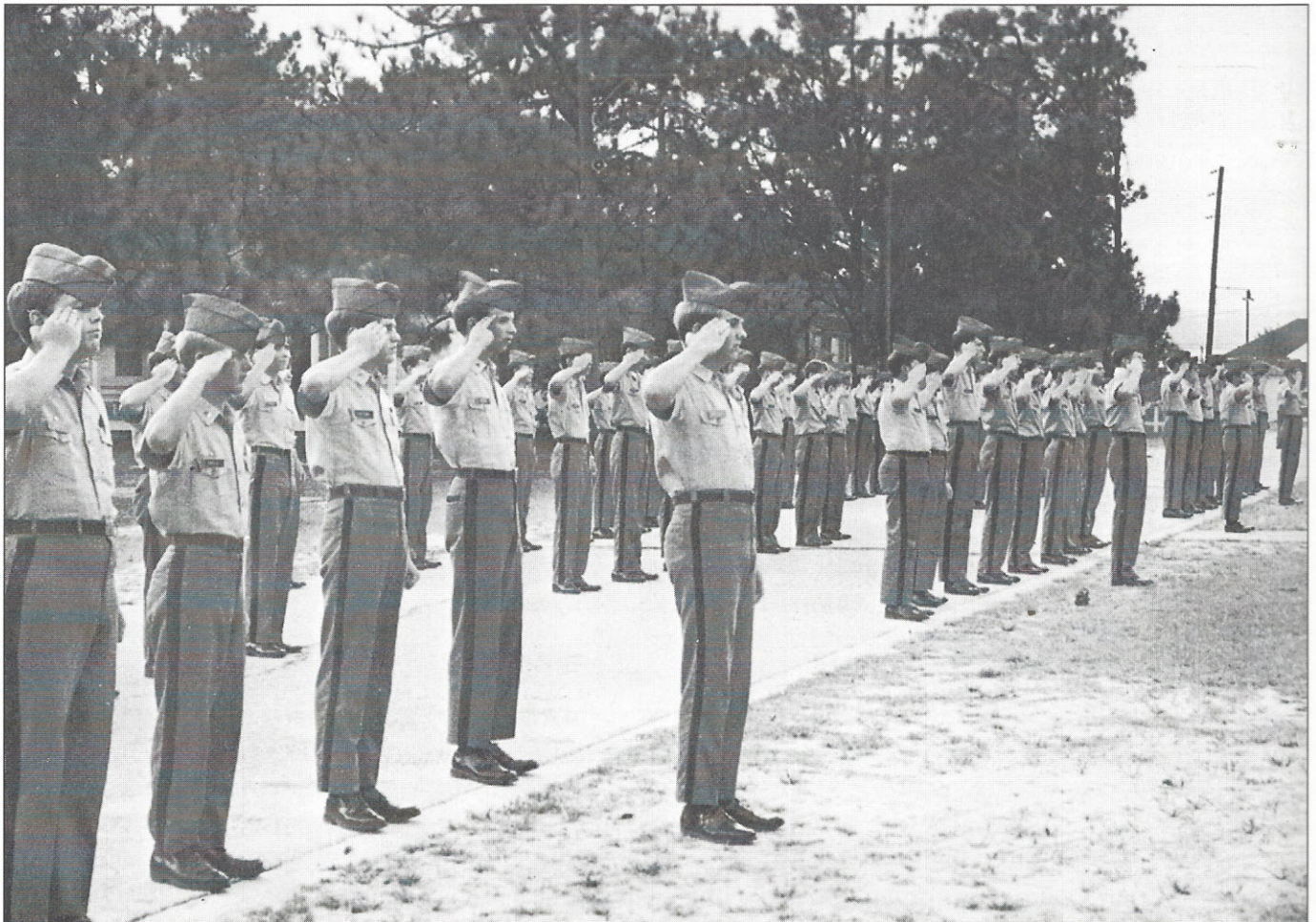
The secret of Major Gale’s effectiveness as a teacher went beyond the life experiences that he brought into the classroom, beyond his commitment to language and thought, beyond his underlying philosophy of education. His special qualities include all of these, but rest finally upon the strength of his personality and the personal impact he exerted upon the young men in his classroom. “He really cares about cadets,” commented Lanning Risher at the time of Gale’s retirement in 1995, “and they know it.” Long after graduation, former students continue to stay in touch with “the Maj” through letters, telephone calls, and visits. It is this personal caring that came across in so many ways during his teaching career—in his rigorous demands, his friendly greetings, his fatherly admonishments, and his occasional rages—that distinguishes Major Gale in the minds of hundreds of cadets and makes him an unforgettable force in their lives.

The 1970s saw the beginning of a new phase in the development of Camden Military Academy. By the end of the 1960s, Camden had established itself as a reputable institution: its finances were sound, its enrollment high, its academic and military programs validated by the Southern Association and the U.S. Army. All of these achievements were significant steps in building a strong foundation for the school. By the end of the 1970s Camden had achieved an important new level of institutional development and was preparing to move even farther along the road toward institutional maturity.

It has been previously pointed out that the 1970s was a difficult period for military schools across the country. Camden missed the brunt of the decline in military school enrollments, but the trend still had its effect upon the school. Fortunately, that effect turned out to be salutary. Confronted with the possibility of lean times, Lanning made some decisions that ultimately resulted in a stronger school better prepared to move into the future.

In the fall of 1973, enrollment dipped by about 30 students, and Lanning, perhaps for the first time, felt real doubt about the school's future. Several years earlier, through a series of steps taken by his father and the Risher family, Lanning and Bill had become joint owners of Carlisle and Camden. Then, in 1971, the two brothers had decided to separate the ownership of the two schools, Bill becoming the sole owner of Carlisle and Lanning the sole owner of Camden.

*The cadet corps of 1973-74. Though the daily routine of the school was unaffected, a major change in the organization of the Academy was initiated this year.*



Lanning, therefore, facing an enrollment drop at the beginning of the 1973 school year, felt personally vulnerable in a way that he had never quite felt before.

He remembers one night shortly before the opening of school lying in bed unable to sleep. As he always does when faced with a serious problem, he turned that night to God. He remembers praying,

*Lord, I am asking you, first, to help the school. Let us get the boys that we need and let us be successful. But if we aren't going to be successful, if we aren't going to make it, please give me sense enough to turn loose before I involve myself and my family in ruinous debt. And, finally, Lord, if You don't grant either of these requests, give me the guts to take whatever comes.*

The answer came immediately, and, as Lanning describes it,

*It was so like God. . . . God told me, 'You're worrying about the wrong thing. You're worrying about the boys you don't have; you'd better worry about those you do have. You do the job with the boys that you have, and I'll take care of the rest.' And, as if by afterthought, God added, 'And, by the way, you've been thinking about making the school eleemosynary. Why don't you go ahead and do it.'*

*Colonel Risher and Colonel White were always among the Spartans' most enthusiastic fans. In the mid-70s, when this photo was taken, Lanning was in the process of converting the Academy to a non-profit institution.*

The decision was made that night. The next morning, Lanning contacted his accountant (who at first objected strongly to the idea) and then Jack White, a family friend and lawyer in Charleston, who immediately responded, "Sure, that's what you ought to do. Let's get it done."

It took a year to accomplish, but at the end of the process, Camden Military Academy was no longer privately owned; it was a non-profit, eleemosynary corporation governed by a board of trustees.

For the next several years, Lanning leased the property to the new corporation at about a third of the usual lease rate. The first board, made up of a few trusted friends and family members, were lawyer Edward W. Laney of Columbia, chairman; Richard Lloyd, a Camden resident; John Tatum, the husband of Lanning's sister Mary; and Lanning himself.

As the Academy moved through the 1970s, it became clear that another step was needed. Lanning and the board realized that the school, in order to reach its potential, should organize a development program, but Lanning was unwilling to raise money for the school as long as he was in a position to benefit financially from such contributions. Consequently, in 1982, he transferred his ownership of the property to the school corporation, donating about a third and taking promissory notes, payable at his death, for the remainder. These notes were covered by insurance on his







*Commander John Feltham*



*Helen Feltham*



*David Green*

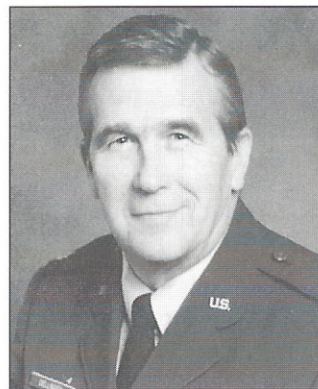


*Kelly Schrader*

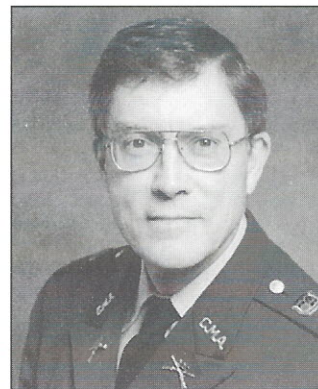
life, so that when he dies, they will be paid in full and the school will own the property debt-free. (When an IRS appraiser came down from Washington to review the transaction and make sure that Lanning's gift of property to the school was not overvalued, he appraised the worth of the gift at \$100,000 higher than Lanning had reported it—one of the few times perhaps in IRS history that the agency has increased the value of a taxpayer's charitable contribution.)

The value of the school property was far greater by 1982, of course, than its \$30,000 auction price in 1958. In addition to nearly 25 years of inflation, there had been major improvements and additions, beginning with the renovations and construction of the first few years. In 1972 a second classroom building (later Beckham Hall) had been converted from a barracks; in 1975, the school library was moved from the academic building into its own refurbished building (located by the airport); and in 1981, a new student center, the Carlisle House, was built. The 1982 visiting committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, making a periodical re-evaluation of the Academy, found "Camden Military Academy to be an unusually fine school" and singled out improvements in the school's facilities for special commendation.

Several faculty members who joined the staff in the late 1970s and the 1980s made their distinct contributions to the school over the next decade or so. Commander John C. Feltham and his wife Helen arrived in 1976. Commander Feltham taught mathematics, and in 1981 Mrs. Feltham became the first director of the Carlisle House. Both of them were good at seeking out and making friends with cadets who needed a little extra support and direction. They retired in 1991. David Green also arrived in 1976 as the Academy's band director, a position he held until 1988. Under David's direction, the Academy band made numerous off-campus appearances, including performances at Shaw Air Force Base, Historic Camden, Veterans Day parades, and other nearby events. Kelly Schrader joined the staff in 1980. Schrader did an excellent job for several years as a history teacher and as coach of the Academy's outstanding debate team. In 1987 he was named dean of academic affairs and remains in that position today. Retired Air Force Major Leigh Dellinger began his academy teaching career in 1981. Major Dellinger's direct classroom approach pumped a lot of mathematics into a lot of cadets; he coached football and track as well.



*Major Leigh Dellinger*



*James Watson*



*Major David LePage*



*Young cadets received close attention from English instructor Scott Sloan.*

James Watson, a former member of the Carlisle faculty, came to Camden in 1982 as an English and social studies teacher. Always dependable and even-tempered, for many years he took on the challenging role of Dance Committee advisor. Both Colonel Watson and Major Dellinger retired in 1997. Ms. Melinda Kane became the school's librarian in 1983. Her experience and professional training have been extremely helpful in guiding the library through a period of expansion and modernization in the intervening years. Scott Sloan arrived in 1986 to teach seventh and eighth grade language arts and high school English. He exerted a steadying influence on young cadets for the next ten years. Retired Air Force Major David LePage began his teaching career at Camden in 1988 and continues on the staff today. Cadets love Major LePage's zany humor, but they also respect him as a serious and demanding science teacher.

Eric Boland joined the staff in 1983 as a teacher and coach. The following year he was named athletic director as well. Under Boland's direction, the Academy's athletic program has grown and improved. In particular, Camden's varsity football and basketball teams, both coached by Boland, began performing at consistently high levels by the end of the decade. Between then and 1996, the football team won seven conference titles and the basketball team six. The baseball team won three conference titles in the same period. (In the mid-1980s, the Academy teams moved from the Palmetto Athletic Conference, which was losing members, to the Carolinas Athletic Association, currently made up of nine independent schools in North and South Carolina.) The soccer team missed the state title by one point in 1988, and the golf team, beginning in 1987, won three



*Coach and athletic director Eric Boland has overseen an expanding sports program through the 1980s and '90s.*

conference titles in a row. (The golf team of 1982 was also outstanding. That spring they went through twelve matches undefeated, winning one match by over a hundred points and achieving a record low match score of 292.) Wrestling was introduced as a varsity sport in 1986 and has since produced several outstanding conference and state contenders. Through the use of a well-equipped weight room for year-round conditioning, CMA athletes in recent years are stronger, more self-confident and less prone to injury. In addition, the completion in 1996 of the Academy's running track gave the school for the first time a top quality facility for practicing and hosting track and field events. Improvements in the football and baseball fields were made at the same time, and a year later, a new heated swimming pool was completed. The Academy's total athletic program, still under the direction of Boland, is looking better than it ever has in the school's history.

In the early 1980s, the Academy continued to take significant steps to improve its programs and to strengthen itself organizationally. In 1982, the Academy initiated a series of steps to create more open communication with the local community and with its own alumni family, including, of course, the alumni of Carlisle and Camden Academy. In the summer of 1982, a consultant to nonprofit institutions, Dr. W. R. Cumerford, began talking with alumni, parents, and local residents to determine their perceptions of the school. What he discovered was not particularly surprising but nonetheless disconcerting: most of the alumni he spoke with had lost meaningful contact with their alma mater. Community residents, he found, thought of the school as a place for bad boys who could not be controlled by their parents. Most of his respondents also assumed that the school was still privately owned by the Rishers. In other words, in spite of over twenty years of solid accomplishments, the school was not presenting itself very accurately or favorably to its own alumni or to the community at large.

Among Dr. Cumerford's recommendations was the creation of a Camden-Carlisle alumni organization, with an initial plan to set up chapters in eight cities in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. "There are graduates living in the same town within blocks of each other and they don't even know it," Cumerford pointed out after completing his survey. Frannie Ashburn was hired that fall as the Academy's first alumni secretary. With the help of Deane Risher, Frannie began a lengthy search through records dating back to the 1920s for the names and locations of the estimated 4,000 living alumni of the three schools. As the information accumulated, it was stored on the large nine-inch disks of one of the school's first computers. It was the beginning of the alumni data base that is in use today. In 1984, Colonel Phillip Minges, a Citadel graduate

*Mrs. Bessie Davis arrived at Camden as assistant dietician in 1968 and operated the kitchen and dining hall throughout the '70s and '80s.*





*Reunions have become a popular event on the annual school calendar. Here alumni from the Camden classes of the 1950s and '60s see how much they remember about drill. They are under the command of the first CMA graduate, Jerry Alvarez, and deputy commandant, CSM Rosvelt Martain.*

and a retired DuPont engineer, was hired as the Academy's director of development and alumni affairs. During his two years in the office, Phil, with Frannie's help, organized the school's development program; initiated the annual fund drives and phonothons; established alumni chapters in several cities; commenced publication of *The Bugle*, the quarterly alumni newspaper; and began the series of annual alumni reunions. (The first reunion held at Camden, by the way, had already taken place in April 1981, when Bob Glenn, a 1949 Carlisle graduate and later a president of the Alumni Association, called Lanning and asked if he might organize a reunion for the Classes of 1948-1950 on the CMA campus. It was during that gathering of Carlisle alumni that the Carlisle House was dedicated.) When CMA graduate John Mitchell took over the development office in 1986, he had a firm basis on which to expand the development and alumni activities; these efforts have continued to grow and to benefit the school and its alumni ever since. The annual fund drive, which includes gifts from hundreds of alumni, parents, and other friends of the school, has become a significant source of income for cadet-related expenditures such as recreational and athletic equipment, enhanced library resources, student-used computers and software, and tuition assistance. In addition, large individual gifts have made possible such recent campus improvements as the new track facility, the new swimming pool, and the newly completed administration building. To pay tribute to these larger donors, The Society of the Excalibur was created in 1986 to recognize those who contributed at least a thousand dollars or more in a single year or \$10,000 or more over a period of time. Each year members of the Society are honored at a formal dinner and recognition program. The alumni office's computer files now contain nearly 5,000 names and addresses of Carlisle and Camden alumni, former staff members, past parents and others. The office's activities over the past several years, including the organization of the Camden Carlisle



*Board Chairman Banks Scarborough welcomes Mayson Callaway (CA, '53) and wife Cathy as Silver Knights in the Society of the Excalibur. A 1945 Carlisle graduate, Scarborough has been board chairman since 1985.*

Alumni Association, the hosting of the annual class reunions and the publication of *The Bugle*, have done much to bring many alumni back in touch with their alma mater and with former schoolmates.

The consultant in 1982 also recommended the formation of an advisory board to oversee and make recommendations about the school's operations. The advisory board would be made up of representatives of parents, alumni, and the community. Nearly fifty members were invited to join the new board, which held its first meeting in December 1982. Ben Bostick, a Camden resident, was chosen as the board's first chairman; the vice-chairmen were CMA alumnus (and future trustee) David Cline of Greenville and Carlisle past parent Walter Rodgers of Beaufort. Sibby Wood, another Camden resident and later a trustee of the Academy, served as the advisory board's first secretary.

In the meantime, the Academy's board of trustees was evolving into a more independent and representative body. By the mid-1980s the number of board members had grown to include several Carlisle and Camden alumni and past parents. Its chairman since 1985 is Banks Scarborough, a 1945 graduate of Carlisle and a successful banker from Timmonsville, South Carolina.. Banks combines

several important characteristics that have made him an excellent chairman. First, he has an abiding love for Carlisle, and has found it quite natural to extend that affection and loyalty to Camden Military Academy. (His grandson, Jeff LeVine, graduated from Camden in 1991.) Next, he is an astute businessman. In an era when community banks were being swallowed by larger competitors, he kept his Pee Dee Bank alive and growing by carefully responding to community needs and anticipating future trends. His stature in the banking community has been recognized by his appointment as a director of the Richmond Federal Reserve and as the first chairman of the South Carolina Bankers School. In addition, he has always shown an interest in community service, especially in education. For many years, he was a member and chairman of the Timmonsville school board. He has also served on the South Carolina Board of Comprehensive and Technical Education and on the boards of Florence-Darlington Technical College, the Business Development Corporation of South Carolina, and the Florence Symphony Orchestra. (Banks, who has always been a music lover, played saxophone for the Carlisle Brigadiers and later, as a student at the University of South Carolina, played in several other dance bands as well.) As the chairman of Camden's board of trustees, Banks has been instrumental, with Lanning's help, in gradually leading the board towards its proper role in governing the school, still another sign of the Academy's growing maturity.

In an important sense, these major developments of the 1970s and early 1980s—the incorporation of the Academy as a non-profit institution with an increasingly independent board of trustees, and the creation of an alumni association and an advisory board, each reaching out to the school’s various communities—represent the coming of age of Camden Military Academy. By these actions, the Academy demonstrated that it was now a mature institution: that it was looking for ways to keep alive its affiliations with the past, to reach out to the surrounding community, and to prepare itself for the future. The vision was clearly long range, and the message was unmistakable: “We are here to stay!”

Other campus improvements, begun in the 1980s and continuing into the present, have dramatically changed the face of the school. When an electrical fire damaged the roof of the academic building in the summer of 1983, requiring extensive repairs and remodeling, it sparked a series of renovations that reached across the campus. Over the next several years, the academic building, the second classroom building, the dining hall, the two one-story barracks, and then the library, the faculty apartments, the infirmary—in fact, every one of the original buildings on campus except the administration building—received a major face lift and, eventually, internal remodeling as well. These buildings with their pale-green asbestos siding—which admittedly looked cool and at-

*Many campus improvements were made in the 1980s, though the administration building was not one of them. On the porch are Color Guard members Jeff Mercer, Denis Evin and Matt Breen.*



# CMA: A Life-Changing Experience

By Justin Campbell  
CMA, 1986-89

A lifetime. To some it is a long time, to others it is but a brief moment in time. Thinking back on my nearly 27 years of life, I have countless memories, both good and bad. We all do. What makes life special are those few experiences that not only leave us with lasting memories, but actually mold who we are. These events are so dominant in our lives that we are forever changed by them. For some, it has been war, the loss of a loved one or basic military training, to name a few. All of these events mold, change and forge us into who we are. Camden Military Academy is one of those experiences that forged and honed many young men into who they have become today.

Thinking of my time at CMA, I remember many things. Thoughts race through my head as the three great years I spent at CMA come back to me in a flash. Things like my first drive through the gates, meeting the training cadre and the “new boys” who would be my friends, roommates, and support group. (For those who have never been through the Academy, these memories may seem like nightmares. They are NOT! They are fond memories, all of which make me smile and laugh while I remember them.)

Here are some impressions.

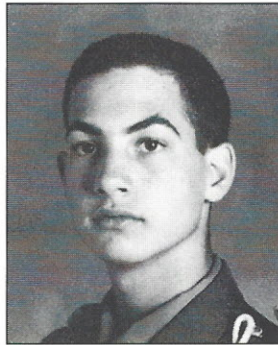
## My First Day

The training cadre: Watching members of the training cadre make my bed in a military manner, ask if I could do it, then rip it apart, throw the bedding on the floor and tell me to make it. Wow! That was the first ten minutes in my barracks. Band Company. I was 15 years old and was just hammered with culture shock!

My first hall party: I have always loved a good party. HELLO! This was not the type of party I expected. *Attention! Dress Right Dress!* Here is where we, the “new boys” learned who was who, what to do when passing an officer or NCO indoors and out, what would be expected of me, and many other things. Thank goodness it was a short 60-minute party.

## Life as a Cadet

The Mess Hall: Mrs. Davis. Our cook. She made the food and was Commandant of the Mess Hall. You would abide by her rules, or else! This was the only restaurant we feared. Has anyone out there figured out why we could not



Justin in 1986

have two condiments on our table at one time? No hot sauce and ketchup! One or the other. Why? I still do not know.

Parades: Those HOT Camden days. Sweat hot, no. . . HOT feet in the patent leather shoes. The band playing. The visitors. The jumps when the cannons sounded. The women!! Hey! Don't lock your knees while at attention. Remember those unlucky few who did? *Splat!*

Scrub Parties: SCRUB PARTIES!!! We all remember those long Friday nights spent cleaning, scrubbing, and having a little fun. Memories of water fights while cleaning the latrines. Being chased outside of Band Company in the snow after being soaked with extremely hot water, while I was wearing nothing but my boxers. The inspection on Saturday.

The Canteen: A break from life. A place to get away, stay out of the heat and enjoy ice cream, a sandwich, or just watch television. Play games, jump in the pool (when it was open) and relax.

Getting Slammed: The Slam King. Major Gale. The only man ever to lift a cadet and toss him several feet over a chair and into the hall. . . all while quoting poetry of his own creation. I was there. It happened! While he was academic dean, Lord help the cadet caught sleeping in class, late to tutorial, or just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Major Gale's senior Honors English class of 1989. We had one lowly junior in our class. His worst day? The day after our Ring Ceremony! Ring check, anyone?

## My Thoughts

I could go on for 20 pages reminiscing. Were these things the negative parts of my stay? NO. Just some of my fond memories. When a cadet (we will be cadets forever) looks back at his time at CMA, it is filled with many memories. How can I pick a few that will bring some of yours back to you?

What did we learn at Camden? With all the rules, regulations, and structured life, we learned more than one could imagine. Discipline, honor, integrity and duty. Things that set an Academy man apart from the world. We learned that through the great times and the bad, we can prevail, overcome, and win. We owe more to CMA than just fond memories. This is a place where we were forged into the men we are. This is a place where I made the best friends of my life. They are family. And not just those that I knew when I was there. I hold all cadets—past, present, and future—near and dear. They are members of the long grey line, and I will honor that tradition and respect the men who made it through.

*You got burnt! Fried! TBW's!*



*The renovated library was named in honor of Mrs. Martha Cline, shown here with her husband Nesbitt and librarian Melinda Kane.*

building and was moved into its own remodeled building by the airport. At last, the Academy had a real library, one whose appearance and contents would serve as an impetus to study. In 1987, the library underwent another major overhaul when the building was moved to its present location near the center of the campus. In addition to new brick siding, the renovations included extensive interior remodeling that doubled the shelving and reading areas. A large meeting room and a barber shop were added at the rear of the building. These improvements were made in part through a grant from the Cline Foundation of Greenville, South Carolina, a charitable fund of Nesbitt and Martha Cline and their son David, a 1964 graduate of the Academy. The new facility was named the Cline Library in honor of Martha A. Cline.

As the 1980s moved forward, the Academy continued to make additional organizational changes to help it meet the changing times. In 1982, Colonel Bart Hayward became the Academy's first academic dean, providing full-time supervision and direction for the school's instructional program. In 1985, Colonel Hayward was named the Academy's first admissions director, passing on the duties of academic dean to Major Gale. The addition of a full-time staff person to oversee admissions was a recognition of a change in the environment for boarding schools. Having survived the decline in military school enrollments that closed over two-thirds of America's military schools, Camden Military Academy was in a strong competitive position when interest in military schools showed an upturn in the 1980s. However, the quest for students—and, as we will discuss later, the operation of a military school—was no longer quite as simple as it once had been. The heady days of the 1950s, when sufficient numbers of students to fill Carlisle, for example, appeared at the door with a minimum of recruitment effort, were definitely over. Parents in recent years, according to Gene McCaskill, who has been the Academy's admissions director since 1990, have become increasingly discriminating in their search for a

tractive beneath the pines, when the light was right—over a period of a few years were all covered with brick. By the end of the decade, the school finally looked like—a school—rather than the faded military facility it had once been. Alumni returning to the campus hardly recognized the place.

The library was one of the most ambitious of these projects. Since its first year, when Mrs. Carrie Rice, the Carlisle librarian, came up from Carlisle to help select the books for the original collection, the library had been considered an important part of cadets' schooling. By 1975 the collection had outgrown its room in the academic



good school. "They want the best situation for their son," according to McCaskill, "and are willing to take the time and effort to look at a number of schools before making a decision." The addition of an admissions director to the staff simply recognized the new circumstances and the new level of competition from other military schools that, like Camden, had successfully passed through the trials of the recent past.

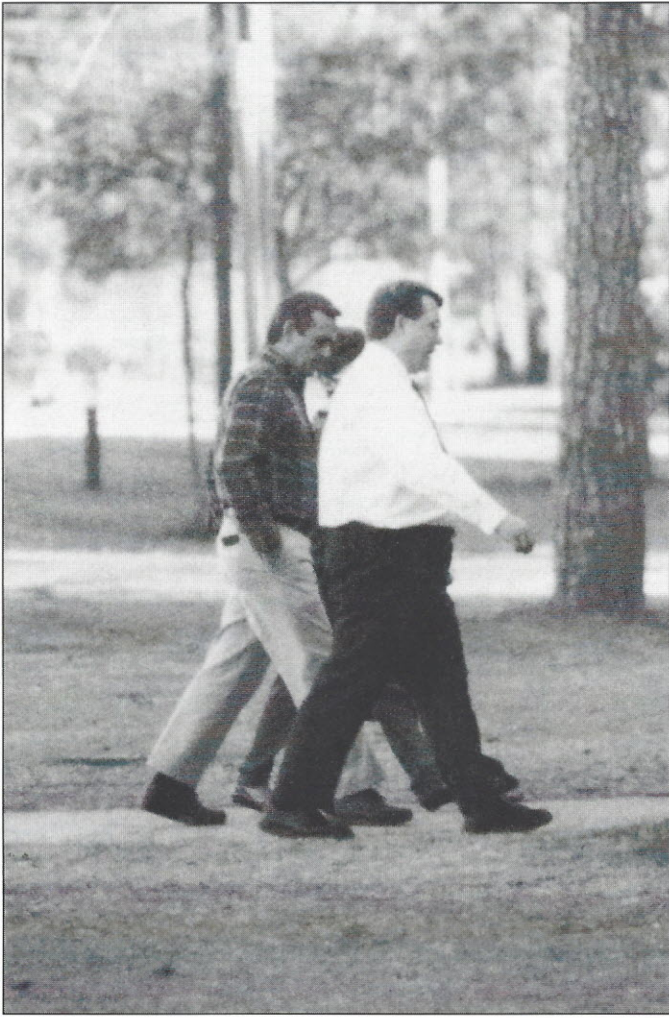
Since its introduction, the Academy's admissions office has put more effort into the standard recruitment practices of earlier periods as well as introducing some new practices of its own. When Professor Guilds back in 1912 requested an automobile from his board to canvass the surrounding countryside for potential students, he was following what was already an accepted method of recruitment. In his day, Colonel James F. Risher made recruiting forays into Florida, North Carolina, and other outlying states, as well as day trips to schools within South Carolina. Henry Moore, for example, remembers the Colonel's visit to Bishopville High School in 1940 that resulted in Henry's enrollment at Carlisle the next fall. It seems strange today, but Bishopville High, like a number of other public schools, scheduled an assembly program for Colonel Risher, who

*Admissions efforts to select applicants who will respond positively to the Academy's program result in happier and more successful cadets.*

spoke to students about military school education and showed them a group of his sharpest Carlisle cadets in dress uniform. Henry—like many other youngsters at other schools—couldn't resist the challenge and the glamour of military school life as presented by the Colonel and his cadets. Camden Academy's Colonel Garner and Major Collins spent part of their first summer, and later summers as well, in their automobiles tracking down prospective students and meeting with parents in living rooms and kitchens to talk about the benefits of the military school experience.

Recruitment visits are still very much a part of Camden Military Academy's enrollment efforts. For the past several years, however, instead of one or two individual staff members hitting the road to follow up leads, the school has organized regional meetings to which it sends a team of school representatives—from the admissions office, the commandant's department, the academic department, and the athletic department—to meet with students and parents in an attractive hotel or motel conference room or reception center.





*A well coordinated admissions program has become an essential part of the Academy's operation. Gene McCaskill, shown here with prospective parents, has been admissions director since 1990.*

During such meetings, which are advertised ahead of time in the area media, families can get a comprehensive and detailed view of the Academy and its programs.

As in the past, personal recruitment efforts such as these are supplemented by newspaper and magazine advertisements, brochures and catalogues. The school's present use of media also includes occasional radio and television advertisements (usually in support of an upcoming regional visit) and a professionally produced video presentation which may be mailed to families or shown to them during their campus visit. Camden Military Academy also has a page on the World Wide Web and receives frequent e-mail inquiries.

All of these efforts are directed toward a campus visit by the prospective student and his parents. Although such a visit was not considered necessary in the past, in recent years it has become a required part of the application process. The visit, of course, provides the student and his family their best opportunity to become familiar with the school and to understand in advance its programs, policies and philosophy. Just as importantly, the campus visit is also the time when the school makes its expectations clear. "During the face-to-face interview, we attempt to determine the level of commitment that the student will bring to meet the opportunities and challenges he will face at CMA," explains Gene McCaskill. "In order for the Camden experience to be a positive one

for every cadet and for the entire corps, it is important each prospective enrollee decide for himself that he is willing to be here and understands ahead of time our expectations of him. We also need to make sure that he has the potential to become a positive addition to the cadet corps." With the changes in American society over the past several decades, the Academy has become extremely careful in its selection process. The mission remains the same: to help boys achieve academic and personal success. To accomplish that mission, however, requires a basic level of cooperation and commitment from the students themselves, qualities that can no longer be assumed to exist within every applicant.

The evolving changes in society and in the attitudes and values of young people prompted a change in the school's admissions procedure. It also brought about another important change in the operation of Camden Military Academy. According to Lanning, in the 1980s he became increasingly concerned about the ability of the school to meet the challenges posed by a new generation of cadets. Of course, the school had always dealt with discipline problems, but these problems were well within the management of school authorities and were considered by staff and cadets to be a normal part of military school life. Scat-



*A strong cadre of cadet officers has always been, and continues to be, at the heart of the Carlisle-Camden approach to school regulation.*

tered among the flood of daily minor infractions were the occasional instances of AWOL, drinking, theft, and fighting. Everyone understood the penalties for these more serious violations, and there was never a time when they threatened the overall quality of life at the Academy. In the 1970s, when drugs made their appearance at Camden, staff members had to learn how to detect and deal with this new and vastly more dangerous threat to the security and stability of the school community; but the school's stringent response to drug use or possession (immediate dismissal on the first detected offense, whether on or off campus) and its close scrutiny for any signs of the presence of drugs in the barracks kept even this scourge at a manageable level. As potentially damaging as drugs were to the well-being of the school, however, it was the more basic change in the attitudes of young people—or at least of a significant number of them—that especially worried Lanning and made him wonder whether the Academy could continue to operate in the way that it—and Carlisle—had operated in the past. That method of operation was based upon cadet leadership. Discipline, especially in the barracks, depended upon the effectiveness of the cadet chain of command. Adult staff members were never far away,

but, especially in the evenings, they were seldom directly on the scene. The system worked because cadet officers, carefully selected and trained, assumed responsibility for those under them, and because the other cadets, however grudgingly, usually gave their officers obedience and respect.

By the 1980s, however, many cadets—raised in a society where even parents and other adults often have trouble accepting their obligations—were not as willing to accept the responsibilities of leadership or to follow the leadership of other cadets. The problem for the school was philosophical, going as it did to the heart of the operation, but it was also painfully practical: the progressive breakdown in leadership would result in a deterioration of discipline, and that, of course, could quickly destroy the school. And this is the process that Lanning feared he was beginning to observe.

Before going further, it should be inserted that the above is not a blanket condemnation of the cadets of the 1980s. Alumni even from the placid fifties can point to plenty of instances when the cadet chain of command did not work as well as it should. Besides, the concerns that finally crested at Camden in the '80s were initially felt at least as early as the 1960s and '70s. Finally, the high level of cadet achievement and performance during the 1980s is attested to in many different instances. Anyone familiar with those years at CMA need only look

*The commandant's staff in 1996: LTC Thomas Austin, commandant; LTC Paul Cook; CSM Rolf Irtenkauf; CSM Rosvelt Martain; Major Ronald Horn.*



through the yearbooks to remind himself of the many outstanding young men who attended the school at that time and of their numerous accomplishments. This was a period, for example, when year after year, Camden cadets won top honors in the various essay and public speaking contests sponsored by the DAR, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and other civic organizations. It was the period when the Academy's debate team repeatedly distinguished itself at state and regional competitions, winning several state championships and sending individual team members to national competition. It was in this period that two of the Academy's graduates received appointments to West Point in the same year, another won an appointment to the Air Force Academy, another to The Citadel on a full four-year Star of the West scholarship and still others received full four-year ROTC and other scholarships to colleges of their choice. Measured in many ways, the level of cadet performance and the caliber of individual cadets were high indeed.

However, there was also present in the cadet corps the general trend reflective of the society at large that Lanning felt he needed to respond to. The solution came after considerable prayer and search for guidance. In 1988, he began a course of action that left the basic structure of the cadet chain of command intact but provided a much stronger system of



*Tactical officers like LTC Woodmansee have added an extra measure of support and supervision for cadets.*

adult support. To assist the commandant in his daily supervision of the campus, four assistant commandants would be hired, one for each cadet company. The assistant commandant would be a visible presence within his company. He would also be an adviser and a support for the company's officers and non-coms. The new assistant commandants would, in addition, take over from the faculty the duties of the Officer in Charge, rotating these daily tours among the four of them. The faculty would now rotate nightly study hall supervision in the barracks, so that a faculty officer would be present in each company from shortly after supper until after taps. Eventually a night guard would also be hired for each barracks from taps until reveille the next morning.

Not only would the presence of capable adults in the barracks become a much greater part of each cadet's daily experience, the assistant commandants would provide an important communication link with cadets' parents at home, notifying them of problems or potential problems and bringing them into the problem-solving process when needed.

To handle this kind of assignment, Lanning wanted only well-qualified men who had already proven their worth in their own military careers and who would serve not only as disciplinarians and counselors, but as wholesome role-models and mentors as well. Within a year, he had brought onto the staff LTC Harry Woodmansee, LTC Paul Cook, LTC Steve Mowe, and CSM John Layne as the four assistant commandants, and as the new head of the commandant's department, a Camden Military Academy and Citadel graduate, LTC Tom Eller. By the school year 1988-1989, the new staff members and the new system were in place.

It worked beautifully—partly because of the thoroughness of the new level of supervision and partly because of the uniformly high quality and commitment of the men who came in to run the system. As the new commandant Tom Eller was uniquely qualified for his position. Not only had he been a cadet officer at the very school he was now administering, but he also held a master's degree in guidance and had served for several years as a company tactical officer at West Point, a position equivalent to Camden's new assistant commandants. In fact, almost from the beginning, the four new staff members were being called tac officers, though the term assistant commandant remains the official title.

For most cadets, their tac is now likely to be their key adult contact at school. On their part, the tactical officers typically know the cadets in their company more thoroughly than does any other staff member. The tac makes it his business to keep up with each of his cadets in the barracks, in the classroom, on the drill field, in athletics—wherever that cadet participates in campus life. He also often maintains



*Three new faculty homes were built along the north edge of the Camden campus between 1993 to 1995.*

officers learn to do their jobs better, providing a level of on-the-job training and supervision that was not possible before.

Finally, tactical officers have made barracks life more secure for the typical cadet. Unfortunately, there are still occasional fights and instances of intimidation, but they are far less frequent than they would be without the tacs. Their presence not only reduces the opportunities for such incidents, but their close relationships with individual cadets encourage the reporting of incidents that in the past would have gone unreported.

Lanning knew when he made the decision to bring in the assistant commanders that he would have to provide them with campus housing. That was a problem because adequate housing for that many additional staff members did not exist. The cost would be considerable, but there was no question that in order to attract the caliber of person needed to fill these positions, the school would have to continue its investment in campus facilities. Between 1988 and 1990, each of the five campus apartments were completely rebuilt—two in the duplex (named the Henry House in honor Mr. and Mrs. George F. Henry of Gastonia, North Carolina, for their long-time school support) and three in the infirmary building. All were made attractive, convenient and comfortable—designed to pass the inspection not only of the men but also of their wives. In addition, a new two-story brick home (the Pylant House) was built at the north end of the campus, and by 1995 two more homes had been built along the airport drive, providing campus housing for key staff members and meeting the current need for staff housing.

Tommie Pylant, for whom the new faculty home was named, had retired in 1987. She was the school secretary and bookkeeper rolled into one. She was also, like Bonnie Martin at Carlisle, the unofficial clearing house for school news and information. Mrs. Pylant, in fact, essentially duplicated the job that

close contact with the cadet's parents back home. Thus, when he approaches a cadet to help him deal with a problem, he is in a good position to do so.

Also, as planned, the tactical officers have been able to strengthen and support their company officers and non-coms. Although it is true that the presence of these adults relieves the cadet officers of some of their responsibility, the tacs have helped the of-

Mrs. Martin performed at Carlisle. Before Lanning and Deane moved to Camden in June of 1958, Lanning flew Mrs. Pylant down to Carlisle where she stayed with the couple for several days and worked with Bonnie Martin to learn the Carlisle bookkeeping system. For the next thirty years, she used that system—and lots of common sense—to keep things straight at Camden. She was probably the most organized, the most efficient worker of her day on the CMA staff. Granted that life at the school was simpler during her years in the front office, but, even so, a lot of work landed on “Pye’s” desk. She kept the books, mailed out accounts, paid the bills, answered the phone, typed the correspondence, entered grades on transcripts, approved supply room purchases, passed out student allowances, kept the admissions records—whatever needed to be done. “I’d come in in the morning, throw down my pocketbook, and work til 5:00,” she said in explanation of how she got through it all. Colonel Risher used to tell her that her rank went up or down depending upon the bank balance. One year she signed her Christmas card to the Rishers, “Private Pylant.”

It is probably only coincidental that her retirement in 1987 came soon after the Academy plugged in its first computer. Not that Pye would have been intimidated by it. She was too smart to be buffaloeed by a machine. She may, however, have been pleased with the timing of her retirement, coming as it did at the beginning of a whole new era of office management and a major expansion in the Camden office staff. Today, you will not find a busier, more productive workplace than the CMA offices, but a lot of work got done in Pye’s day, too.

The retirement of James Dallas in 1991 was a sign that a rich and colorful period in Camden’s history was coming to a close. He and Tommie Pylant and Bill Beckham had all helped Lanning and Deane get the school started. Now the last of these three witnesses to all those days and nights, stretching back to day one, would no longer be on campus. A lot of institutional memory retired with them, much of it

*Mrs. Tommie Pylant was school secretary for thirty-five years, serving both Camden Academy and CMA.*



never to be recovered.

One of James Dallas’s own earliest memories was riding with his parents from his home in Greensboro, North Carolina, over to nearby Oak Ridge Military Academy for the Sunday afternoon dress parade. Those lines of marching cadets may have impressed him more than he knew, for later as a young man searching for his first teaching position, he applied to Colonel Risher at Carlisle Military School, thus beginning a forty-year career at Carlisle and Camden and a lifetime of service to hundreds of cadets.

The young teacher who moved with his wife Anne to Bamberg in the fall of 1951 had already experienced



*Colonel Dallas checks a document with Kevin McDaniel. In spite of the clutter, James could almost always dig out what he was looking for.*

much that would help him in his future career. At 18, just out of high school, he was drafted into the Army and later fought as an infantryman in Europe during the last months of World War II. After the war, he enrolled at the University of South Carolina where he pursued a double major in mathematics and French. His outstanding academic record at the University won him a Fulbright Scholarship to study for a year in France at the Universite d'Aix-Marseilles. His memories of the year he and Anne spent in France, studying the language and literature and absorbing the life of the country and its people, would inform and enliven his teaching for years to come.

When James and Anne, on a summer day in 1958, first unlocked the door of their apartment in the Academy's infirmary building and breathed the musty, year-old air of those dark rooms, they may have wondered, at least momentarily, if they had made the right decision. It would probably have surprised them to know that that apartment would become their comfortable home for the next thirty-three years. Through those years the Dallahses' porch light burned brightly each evening, a reassuring reminder to cadets of home and family, and an invitation to stop by for a friendly visit.

During his career at Camden, James taught French and mathematics, served as commandant and later as dean of student affairs, and eventually took on so many assorted tasks and duties that, upon his retirement in 1991, no one was quite sure how to reassign them. Out of his cluttered office, where he somehow kept track of multiple levels of scribbled lists and memoranda, came a flow of procedures, protocols, little ways of doing things, that diffused themselves into every corner of campus life and brought consistency and clarity to the performance of many of the Academy's official functions and ceremonies. Meanwhile, Anne served for many years as the school's librarian and assisted in any school activity where her helping spirit and musical talent were needed.

After retirement, James and Anne bought a home in Camden, and for several years enjoyed yardwork and remodeling projects between numerous visits to children and friends. In the spring of 1994, on the same occasion as the dedication of the Pylant House, the two-story barracks (as it had been called for thirty years) was finally given its official name, Dallas Barracks, in a fitting tribute to the permanent contribution made to Camden Military Academy by the career of James Dallas. In April 1996, James died of cancer. Camden cadets served as his pallbearers and the Color Guard displayed the Carlisle, Camden and American flags. Hundreds of friends, former cadets and colleagues attended the funeral, returning to James and his family the genuine affection that he had always shown to those around him throughout his life.



We have now passed the point where the schools' history blends into the more recent past and approaches the present. There are only a few significant details—and one major event—to record to bring us as close as we can come to the current day. For Camden Military Academy, that history has been a relatively quiet one. For most of its years, Camden has moved steadily forward, gradually making improvements, strengthening its programs, doing its job. There have been times when specific disasters threatened—the burning of Carolina Hall in 1962, which could have cost cadet lives; the passage of Hurricane Hugo in 1989, which brought down dozens of large pines but left campus buildings and occupants unscathed; the drug episode in 1988 when on one spring day a tenth of the cadet corps, over twenty boys, were sent home. Also potentially threatening was the 1970s' decline in military school enrollments, when many schools were closing and many others were making concessions to attract students—weakening their military component, accepting day students, converting to co-ed institutions. Lanning always believed that there was a place in American education for schools like Camden Military Academy, and because of his faith in this model and in this particular institution, the Academy passed through those difficult years and emerged an even stronger school. The 1980s' change in student attitudes posed its own special challenge to the school's well-being. In this crisis, as in other difficult times, Camden held firm. Its response was well thought out, measured, and appropriate. It neither held blindly to the past nor launched desperately into some untried novelty. In fact, over the years, the school has changed its basic approach very little, its essential

*Colonel Lanning Risher in 1991, about the time he began making plans for a transfer of leadership for Camden Military Academy.*



values not at all. True, it has renewed itself continually with the infusion of new talent and new energy from a dynamic and changing staff—but the school has never had to re-invent itself, never had to scrap anything basic to its philosophy.

When Lanning retired as headmaster in 1995, Camden's commitment to its long-standing mission changed not at all. In a sense, the transfer of leadership that occurred on April 22 of that year represented a real test of the Academy's viability as an independent institution, for it marked the beginning of the school's venture into the future almost entirely on its own. For the past 67 years members of the Risher family had provided the leadership of Carlisle and Camden Military Academy. Until twenty years earlier, they had actually owned the institutions. Now Lanning, who had guided the Academy from its beginning, was stepping down. He would remain close to the school as headmaster emeritus and a mem-

# It was a learning experience for us all

By Major Burton Gale

Alumni may recall my declaring in the classroom that no one learned more in a CMA academic year than I did. My 22 years there were continuing education, and keeping in touch with numbers of you has meant much to me.

Just recently at the Carolina Cup, a state highway patrolman stepped in front of me—I wasn't staggering, and I hadn't even had a first sip—and asked, "Do you remember me?" To my relief, he was an eighth grader in 1973, my first CMA year. Though aged, I'm apparently still recognizable.

Early on I had an additional duty as dance committee adviser, at a time when tea dances were pre-dress parade social functions on Sundays. My dance committee, however, envisioned more relevance to their times. We auditioned a deafening rock band in their mostly metal double-wide in, of all places, Rock Hill, and engaged them—nice, clean-cut kids with a really big sound. Fall hop rolled around and the band opened up right on time in the gym. But as the lights came up, what transmutation! Face paint; capes, high boots and leotards; bare skin; flashing lights; and smoke! Cadets loved it, but a senior staff member had to be restrained from calling the fire department. When the sheriff arrived after a neighbor's complaint, the musical blast was all but lifting the roof.

I was always impressed by the natural leadership of cadets I worked with in planning events such as Earth Day assemblies. One of my late CMA years, my senior Honors English class grabbed the reins and prepared an excellent planet-promoting program. The conclusion of the Earth Day gathering was a sharing of dining hall provided fruits, to the accompaniment of big sound contemporary music. Excitement mounted as oranges and apples crisscrossed the gym—but not so much celebrating the good earth's bounty, as flung missiles. My committee later commiserated with me over it all, including the Red Delicious that had caught me in the chest, and assured me they knew no one who would stoop so low as to promote or to participate in an Earth Day food fight. A couple of days later, however, a cadet brought me photos he had taken during the program. No cadet would have told me a lie—but photographs don't. One depicted the Earth Day program chairman, on stage, just in full windup, as he hurled an orange *at—not to*—the audience.

Some of you may recall my two-year stint as academic dean. I worked hard for order, quiet, punctuality, serious study. Making the round of dorms during one evening study



hall, I learned how respected I was in my new post. Look-outs traced my progress across campus, and as I reached A Company's steps, a deep, disembodied voice from within bellowed, "*Shut the — up! Here comes Gale!*"

I liked working with students directly, but administrative supervision (especially of faculty) was not fulfilling, and I finished out my teaching days in Classroom 27, which, by the way, now memorializes me, while still extant, with a brass plate above the door.

Good teachers, cadets tried to bring me into sync with their present. One evening, as Officer in Charge, I proceeded down C Company's long hallway, encouraging dedicated study. I encountered an eighth-grade Dean's List student lying on his bunk, totally immersed in a magazine illustrated with photographs no young gentleman should have been perusing—especially during study hall. Faithful to my OC instructions, I confiscated the worn copy of *Hustler*, hoping the innocent wasn't corrupted. Realizing my concern, the next morning a delegation of his company peers appeared before classes to reassure me that he was no little lost lamb in an unwholesome C Company environment. One confided that the cadet was physiologically well beyond an age of innocence, shaved daily, and even had hair on his chest.

I still bring copies of *The New Yorker* and earth friendly conservation magazines to the CMA library. Not long ago a student I knew introduced me to a very young, very small cadet, who exclaimed after introductions, "Oh, you're the one with the mighty forearms! I heard you threw cadets through closed windows!" Such spurious rumor. My classroom walls bore no imprint of any student body gently pressed against it, as I made whatever point in question. I do admit, however, that once a fight between two very big young gentlemen, in progress outside my classroom door, caught my attention and I quickly separated the combatants. The confrontation, though, renewed across the hall. Something primal in my nature kicked in, and in an instinctual response to ameliorate the situation, I firmly grasped one cadet, and somehow, as I separated him from his opponent, he became airborne and sailed right over two of those little classroom desks. Unfortunately, the incident gave rise to all sorts of exaggerations about my ordinarily gentle ways of resolving conflict.

In conclusion, I will quote just one memorable line of unrhymed, four-beat, alliterative Anglo-Saxon verse from *Beowulf* which some may recall: "True is the tale that I tell of my travels": my metaphorical CMA journey, of course, and a very memorable experience it was.

*Major Gale is now enjoying retirement, in part by pursuing an interest in sculpting, several examples of which have won awards.*

ber of the board of trustees, but for the first time in the school's history, someone else would be responsible for its operation.

It is not by coincidence, however, that since 1995 the Academy has continued on its course undisturbed. It is no accident that its philosophy and operation have remained the same. "The greatest tribute that could be paid to me," said Lanning at the time of his retirement, "would be for Camden Military Academy to continue to grow and prosper when I am no longer at its helm." For several years before his retirement he worked and planned to help insure that continuance.

Lanning began making plans for the transfer of leadership in the fall of 1992 when he informed the board of trustees that he felt the time was approaching when a younger man should take over as head of the school, and he asked them to begin a search for his successor. Although he did not specify a date, he made it clear that he would like the transfer to take place within the next two or three years, allowing at least one year for his replacement to serve as assistant headmaster. The board formed a search committee that publicized the position and began screening candidates. It was a slow process, but everyone involved, including Lanning, wanted to take whatever time was needed to identify and evaluate the best candidates available.

Meanwhile, Tom Eller, after four years as commandant, had informed Lanning that he was planning to leave the school to enter private business. LTC William K.

Orris, a West Point graduate, was hired as the new commandant and arrived to take up his duties in December 1992. By the end of the year, Bill Orris's leadership and administrative abilities had so impressed Lanning that he proposed him to the search committee as a candidate for headmaster. Bill received the nomination of the committee and was appointed assistant headmaster to serve with Lanning in preparation for taking over the leadership of the school.

During 1993-1994 Bill Orris, working closely with the headmaster, assumed increasing responsibilities for the operation of the school. The apprentice period allowed him ample time to learn the duties of the office, absorb the philosophy of the school, and thus provide for a smooth transition. In the fall of 1994, the board confirmed the choice of Bill Orris as the next headmaster, and in January Lanning announced his intention to step down before the end of the school year. The long months of planning and preparation were over; the time had come for Camden Military Academy to welcome its new leader.

The occasion chosen for the transfer of leadership was the reunion weekend for the Carlisle Classes of 1892-1959. Lanning explained that he preferred not to wait until the end of the year when the event would distract attention from the graduates. He also

*Lanning and Deane are given a bouquet from the corps of cadets during the dress parade in their honor.*

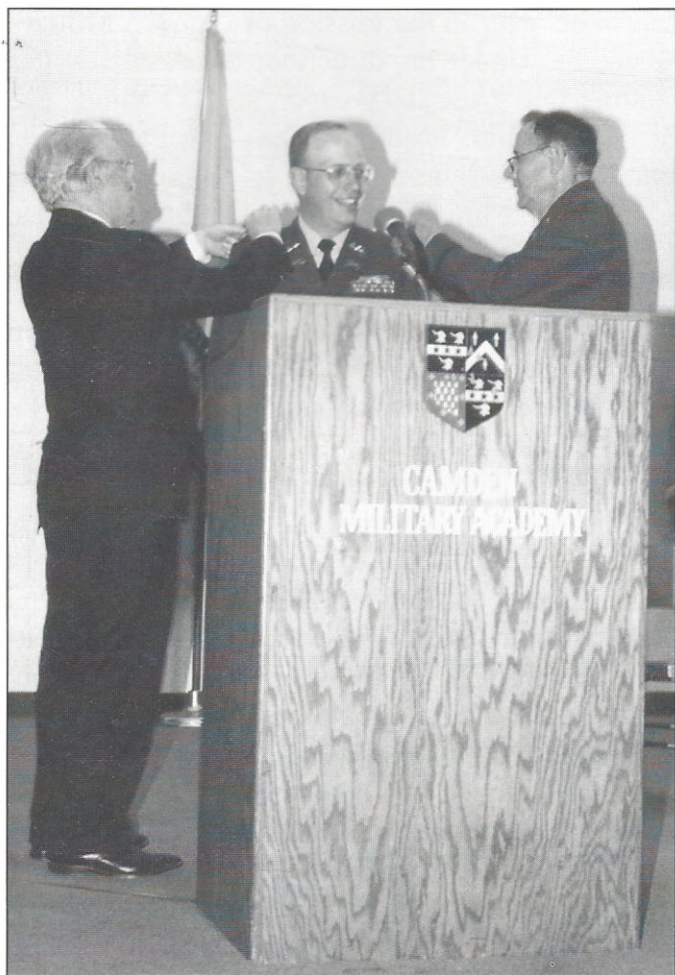


expressed his pleasure that this passage would be marked in the presence of his Carlisle schoolmates as well as older Carlisle alumni who had been on campus when he was a boy and of younger alumni who were his students when he was a teacher. The ceremony itself took place during a Saturday morning convocation in White Field House, preceded by a parade by the corps of cadets honoring Colonel and Mrs. Risher and the Carlisle alumni.

Addressing the convocation audience, Lanning paid tribute to all of those who had contributed to the development of Camden Military Academy: the alumni of Carlisle and Camden; the board of trustees and its chairman Banks Scarborough; the faculties of both schools, past and present; the parents who have sent their sons to Camden; his family and especially his wife Deane. Finally he expressed his gratitude to God:

*I would be less than a man, if I stood up and took credit for what has happened at Camden Military Academy without acknowledging that throughout these years at this institution, what has been done certainly could not have been done without the blessings of Almighty God. And I can tell you that my weakness has always been my greatest strength. When I didn't know what to do and I turned it over to Him, He never failed me. I can tell you that I have been unfaithful to Him many, many times, but He has always—always—been faithful to me.*

*Colonel William K. Orris is formally installed as the second headmaster of Camden Military Academy. Affixing his new insignia are board chairman Banks Scarborough and retiring headmaster Lanning Risher.*



Later in the ceremony board chairman Banks Scarborough read the General Order promoting LTC Orris to the rank of colonel and appointing him headmaster of Camden Military Academy. Colonel Orris pledged to continue the good works and maintain the high standards set by Colonel Risher and emphasized the continuing central place of character development in the education of the Camden cadet. In his first official act as headmaster, Colonel Orris, in celebration of the occasion, declared a general amnesty for all cadets. (It had been so long since such an act was performed, that many of the cadets turned in puzzlement to those beside them: "Amnesty?")

Bill Orris had not arrived at Camden three years earlier entirely by chance. He had a small but memorable connection to the school that at a critical point steered him in its direction. As a West Point cadet, Orris had roomed with 1973 CMA graduate Vance Riggs, whose self-discipline and commitment Orris admired. Riggs, in turn, had great respect for these same qualities in Bill. The two roommates became good friends, and from then on, Bill had



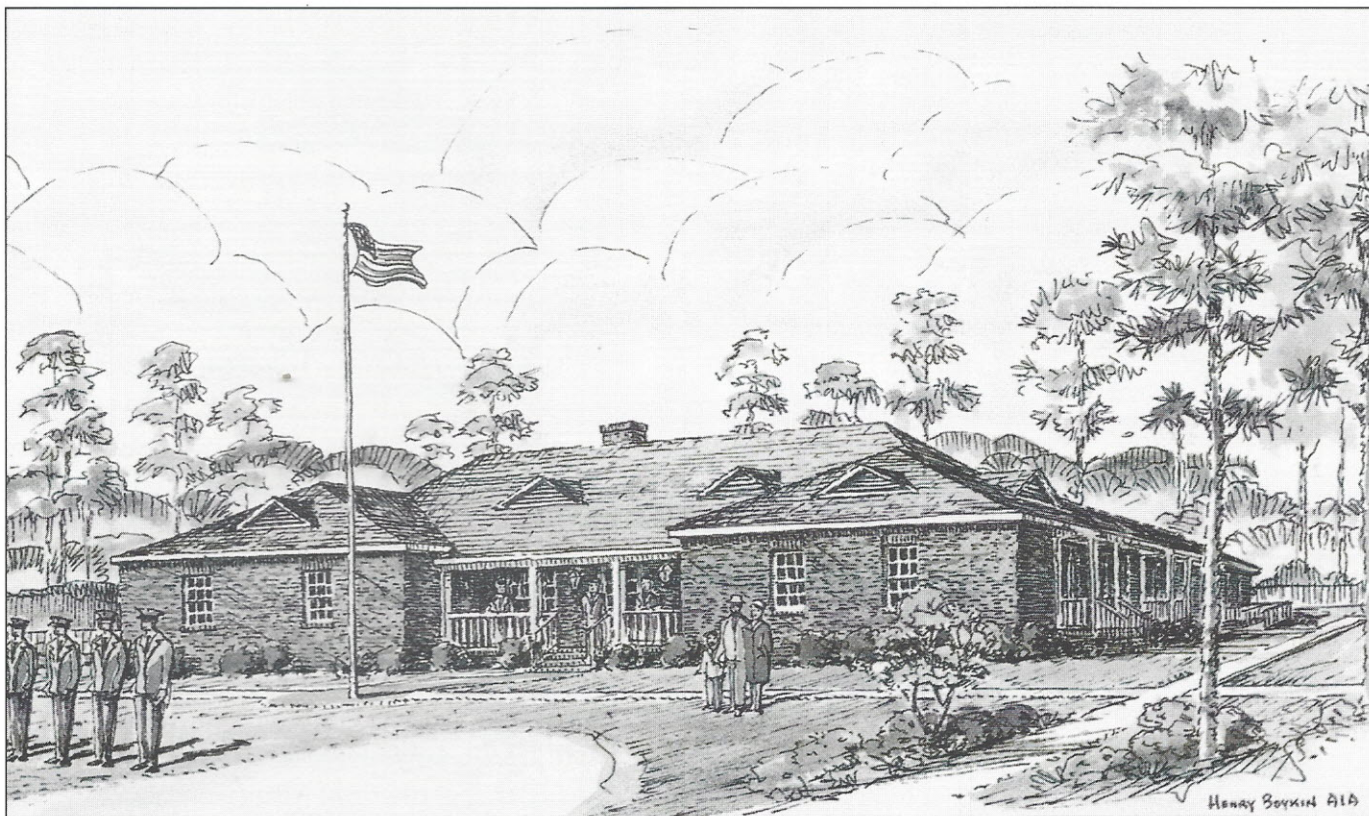
*Headmaster William K. Orris*

tucked away in his mind that Vance had prepared for West Point at Camden Military Academy. Years later, after a successful Army career, Orris, who had earned a graduate education degree at Auburn, began a search for a challenging career in education. He and his family—his wife Louise and their two small children—were living in Sanford, North Carolina, at the time. He was exploring a number of possibilities when in the fall of 1992, he heard of the opening for commandant at Camden. Although he had not previously focused his search on military schools, the old connection with Camden Military Academy immediately came to mind, and he applied for an interview. It did not take long for Bill or Lanning to reach a decision, and by December Bill was on campus ready to begin his new work.

Since becoming the Academy's headmaster, Bill Orris has more than fulfilled the expectations of those who appointed him. He is a keenly intelligent man, an excellent administrator and business manager, and a firm believer in the mission of Camden Military Academy. Under his direction, the Academy has continued to grow and prosper, just as Lanning had hoped it would. Enrollment has remained steady, graduates continue to enroll in colleges of their

choice, the faculty remains strong, and improvements in academics, in the library, in athletics, and in campus facilities all continue apace. Financially, the Academy is stronger than it has ever been.

The single largest project that Bill Orris has had to manage during his tenure as headmaster is the construction of the new administration building. Long after improvements had been made in the other campus buildings, the Academy's administration building remained essentially untouched—the sole reminder of the earliest days of the Academy and a monument of sorts to the frugality and proper prioritization practiced during forty years of financial management. If cadets ever wondered who stood first in the hearts of those who run Camden Military Academy, a glance at the administration building should have reassured them. Now at last its turn had come. The board of trustees adopted the project for renovating and expanding the building in the spring of 1996 and accepted the responsibility of raising the \$500,000 that the improvements would cost. By the spring of 1997, the money had been raised and construction begun. Today, the building stands completed and in use, an impressive focal point for the campus and a comprehensive center that houses the Academy's administrative offices as well as a gracious reception area and a memorabilia room for the safekeeping and display of records and artifacts honoring the history of Carlisle and Camden.



*The new administration building, completed in 1997, is the most recent and impressive of the campus improvements made over the past two decades.*

The Centennial Celebration that took place on the Camden campus on a beautiful autumn weekend in October 1992, brought together nearly 300 Carlisle and Camden alumni and their families as well as former faculty and staff members—all gathered to celebrate a tradition that at one time had touched their lives and thereafter had never left them quite the same. They came to honor the past, but a past that was still living, still steadily moving through the present and into the future. Lanning reminded his audience of the importance of this living past in his Centennial remarks. “The Carlisle-Camden tradition,” he told them,

*means honor, integrity, standing for what is right and for what is fair. It means being loyal to our country, to our fellow man, and to our God. And, more importantly, it means instilling these values in the young men of the corps of cadets of Camden Military Academy today. . . . It is interesting and rewarding to watch a boy who comes to us with little self-esteem, no leadership ability, and no defined system of values grow into a fine young man who can stand before a crowd, express himself clearly, be sure of his values, and stand up for what is right. . . . The hundred years from 1892 that we now celebrate would be meaningless were it not for the cadets of today. And without these cadets, the next hundred years would not even be a consideration. . . . They are the centerpiece of the Academy and of the whole Carlisle-Camden tradition.*

Young people—including CMA cadets—are, of course, splendidly unaware of the past, and that is probably the way it should be. We might expect them to

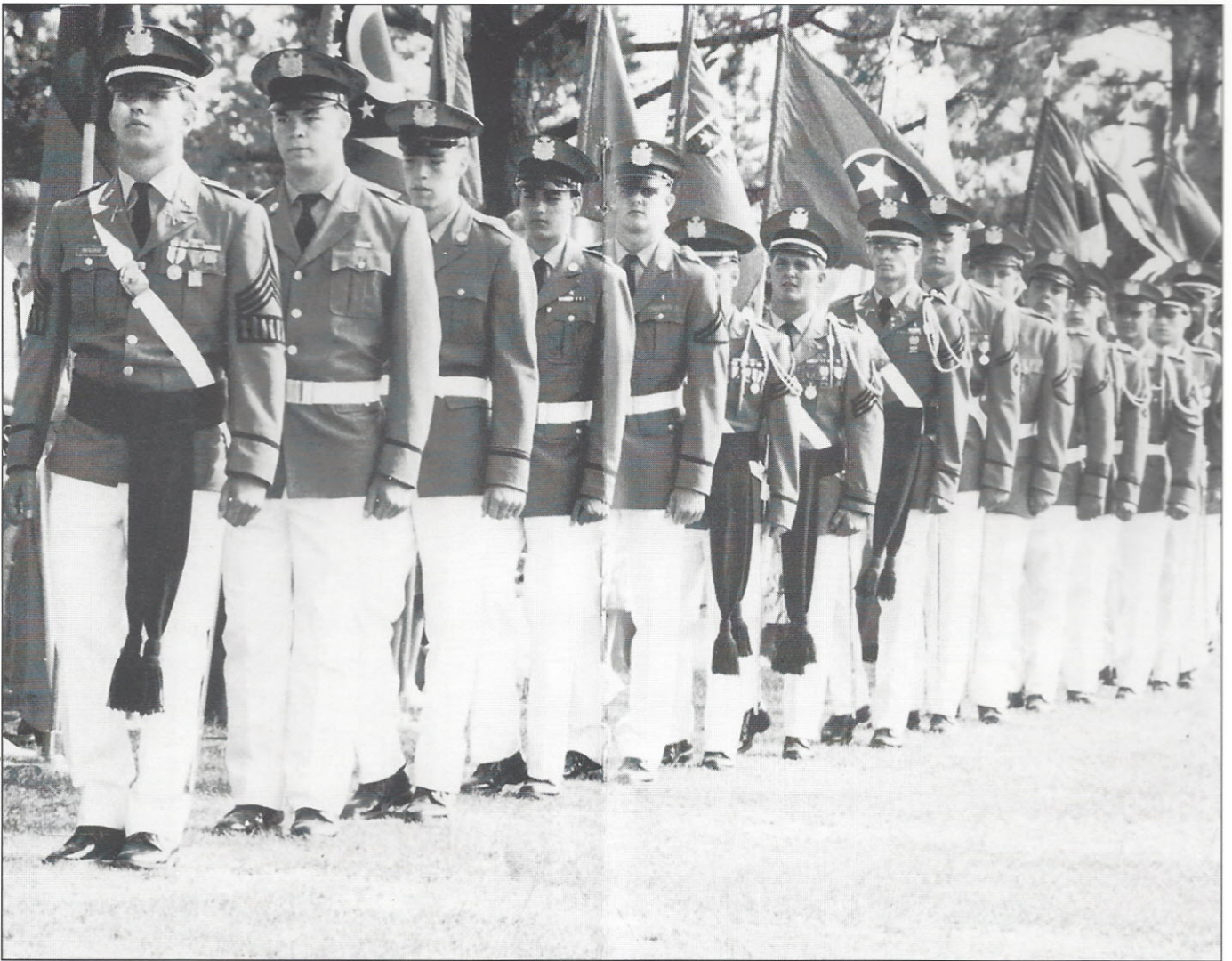
care little or nothing about the history of their school while their energies are so focused on meeting the demands of its present. It is enough, for the time being, that they reap the benefits of their heritage without fully appreciating it. But alumni, being older, wiser and less put upon, do seem to develop a growing appreciation for their school's past and may even find themselves wanting to know more about its details. That is why the Centennial Committee commissioned this history. They felt such a book would be interesting to members of the Carlisle-Camden family and would be useful in helping them understand and appreciate how their own school experience—far from springing out of nowhere—was the result of a long, often deliberate, sometimes fortuitous, stringing together of events. Such a book would be useful, also, to the institution that currently carries that history forward. Camden Military Academy can only benefit from a fuller understanding by everyone concerned of how and when its foundations were laid.

When, over a hundred years ago, the people of Bamberg petitioned the Methodist Conference for a school, they were driven by a desire to meet the immediate needs of their children. When, twenty years later, Professor Guilds spent his summer canvassing the countryside, he was seeking students to fill his new dormitory. After another twenty-five years, when Colonel Risher undertook to rebuild Carlisle's Main Building, destroyed by fire, he was responding to an urgent choice between survival and extinction. Ten years later, when Colonel John Wall bulldogged the Army into releasing their airport property, he was simply taking the next step to insure a place for a new school. After another ten years, when the Rishers purchased Camden, they were looking for a way to accommodate an overflow of Carlisle students. And fifteen years after that, when Lanning Risher converted his school from private property to an eleemosynary institution, he was responding to the changing private school environment of that time.

In each of these situations, individuals were responding to demands and needs of the present, but certainly—*certainly*—they had an eye out as well for the future. And even if their vision could not extend quite as far as 1998, their implicit faith in the future of their institution did. They builded better than they knew.

And now we must continue to do the same. Board members, administrators, faculty, alumni—all share the responsibility for our school's future. We cannot see into that future any farther than our predecessors did. But we can, like them, do our best to insure it by making decisions and taking actions based not only upon the immediate demands of the present but also upon an understanding of our past and a determination that our school, in some meaningful way, will continue to enjoy its long and beneficial life.

The story of our first hundred years has shown that the progress of Carlisle and Camden has not been easy or assured. Operating a school is hard work on a daily basis. Each student brings his own challenge and his own promise. Each year produces its own opportunities for success or failure. Each day is a new beginning. No matter what the achievements of the past, they must all be earned again—and again, through every day that passes. That is the lesson of our history and the inspiration for our future.



*The Class of 1990 prepares to step out into the world. Each cadet is another measure and another test of the Carlisle-Camden tradition.*

Remember the verses that Colonel Risher was so fond of quoting?

*Look well to this day,  
For it is life, the very life of life.  
In its brief course lie all the verities  
and realities of your existence:  
The bliss of growth,  
The glory of action,  
The splendor of beauty.*

*For yesterday is but a dream,  
And tomorrow is only a vision,  
But each day well lived  
Will make each yesterday a dream of happiness  
And each tomorrow a vision of hope.  
Look well, therefore, to this day,  
For such is the salutation to the dawn.*