



The Skirmisher

Spring 2013

Volume XCIV No. 3

St. John's Military School

Commencement
Class of 2013
125th Anniversary

The members of the 125th..... *make their mark for the history book!*

This was indeed a year for the history books! Grade point averages reached levels not seen in many years. The Corps spent many hours in Salina and the surrounding areas doing community service. Sports teams provided thrilling victories while taking defeat with honor and dignity. The basketball team won the Paul H. Kellogg tournament with four Muleskinners making the all-tournament team. Three football players made all-league. James McCaffery represented St. John's at the Bagpipe Clinic at the Military School Band Association Festival held at Fork Union Military Academy in Palmyra, Virginia. The rifle team won numerous medals in spite of fielding a predominantly 'rookie' team. The drum line thrilled the crowd during Parents' Weekend with their Point-of-Light presentation. During AFI, the Corps of Cadets scored 1000, an unprecedented perfect score. This will be a year to remember, but the Corps that follow are sure to try and exceed the accomplishments of the 125th!



Leadership was stable, with only minor changes occurring during second semester.



The Robotics team did a great job and represented the school well at the FIRST Regional Competition in Oklahoma City.



The Red Cross Blood Drive was so successful that all the time slots were filled.



Matthew Lewis challenged the Cadets to raise money for missions. The prize for meeting their goal was to slam a pie in Matthew's face...done!



The sixth grade class learned about the voting system and conducted a 'mock' presidential election in the library for Cadets and staff.



Three members of the soccer team made the ALL-KCAA team: Eduardo Melendrez, Luis Garcia, and Levi Harmon, with Andre Popovic receiving honorable.

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A cultural trip to New York City

Front Cover

Photo by Terry Plumberg
Wei Feng, Battalion S2,
stands at attention with his
sabre drawn.

Back Cover

Tom Hanks



**E. Andrew England,
President**

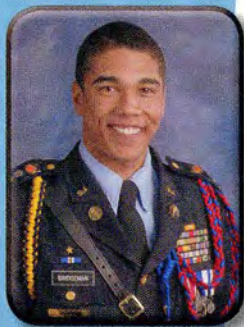
"This year's senior class approached their year very intentionally. From day one, they had a plan and goals in place. Throughout the year, they did not let the challenging times deter them from their vision. Their leadership resulted in one of the finest Corps in recent history by many measurable standards. I am so very proud of them and grateful for having had the opportunity to work with them."

"This year's senior class has worked very hard to achieve their personal goals. These young men have the potential to do great things with their lives and I fully expect them to do so. After all, they are the class that earned a 1,000. I wish them all the very best as they strike out in the future to achieve the very best they can."



**MAJ George Stelljes,
Commandant**

125TH GRADUATING SENIORS



**Darius
Bridgeman**



**Jack
Busacker**



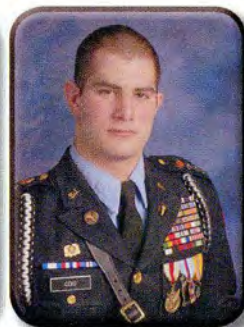
**Michael
Cain**



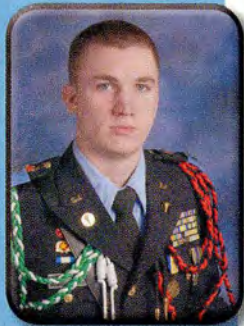
**Juan
Calero**



**Luke
Clayton**



**Sergio
Cois**



**Levi
Gottsponer**



**Adam
Harrington**



**Tanner
Haycock**



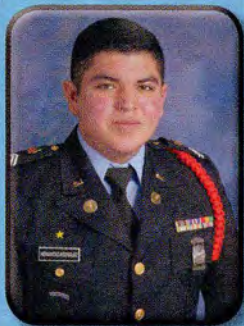
**Logan
Jones**



**Jase
Lacy**



**Ryan
Lynch**



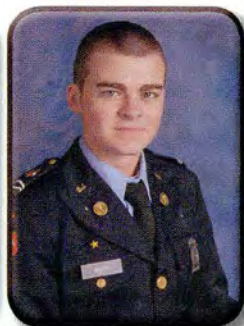
**Osvaldo
Hernandez
Rodriquez**



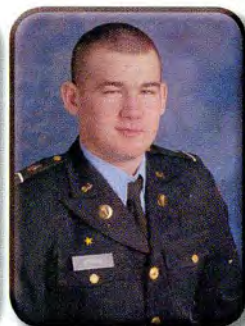
**Craig
Roukema**



**Austin
Searls**



**Clay
Smith**



**Montana
Strnad**



**Dillon
Sweet**



Ginger Wooten,
Academic Dean

"It has been my pleasure to work with the senior class of the 125th Corps of Cadets. Academically, they not only developed programs to ensure the Corps performed well, but many were also role models, exhibiting the hard work, sacrifices, and talents that result in top grades. I could count on members of this class to assist me at a moment's notice. I never had to ask for help more than once; as a group, they are amazing problem solvers. During the upcoming years, I know we will hear about many great accomplishments achieved by the senior class of 2013!"

"I thoroughly enjoyed working with the seniors this year. They have set their goals and I feel we have given them the necessary tools to meet them."



Terry Plumberg,
Alumni Director

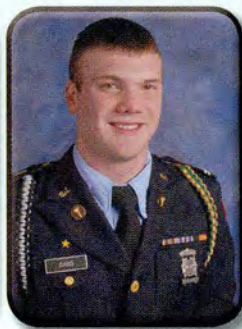


Jordan Covers



Salutatorian

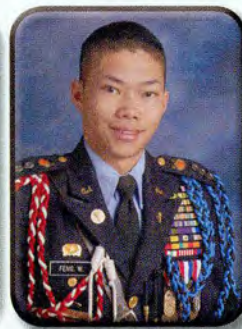
Merit Davey



Matthew Davis



Connor Dempsey



Wei Feng



Joey Glavan



William Malone



Jonathan McSwan



Eduardo Melendrez Rosales



Valedictorian

Eduardo Nestorovic Gabuteau



Edeki Okoh



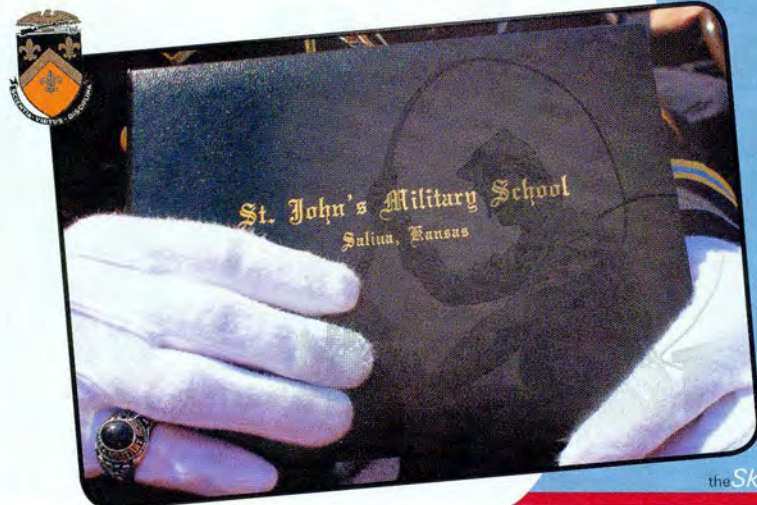
Leconte Prophete



Cameron Wasserman



Daniel Weisman

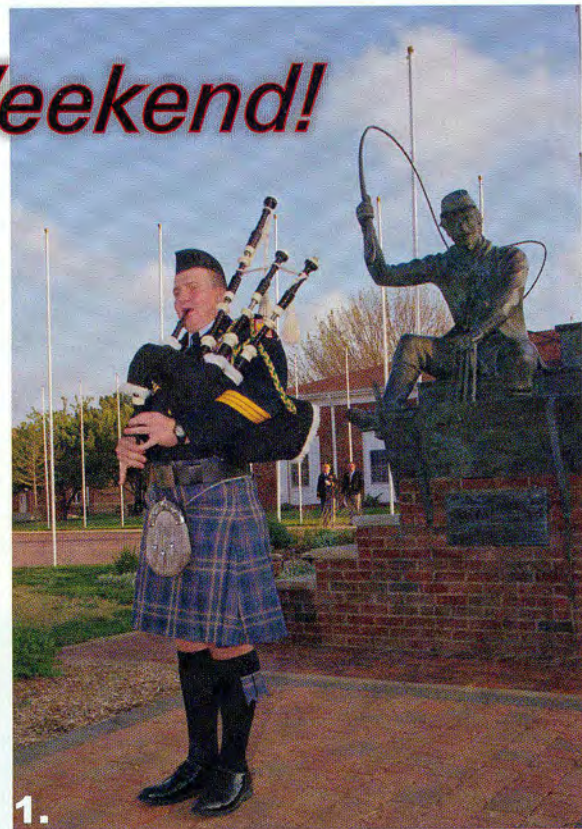


125th

Commencement Weekend!



2.



1.

The 125th Corps of Cadets raised over 150 flags on the morning of May 10, 2013, kicking off three days of award ceremonies, Cadet performances, and long held traditions, which culminated with the graduation of the senior class and the final pass-in-review on the Browning Parade Field.

1. James McCaffery made his debut on the Scottish highland pipes playing "Amazing Grace" just prior to the final roll call.

2. Gabrielius Gurskas helped raise the garrison flag while struggling to keep his cap securely on his head.

3. "F" troop swelled to numbers not seen in many years and formed in front of Sage Hall for a formal portrait.



3.



1. COL Al Ransom, class of 1954, spoke during the 125th ceremony. His first comment was to give both the other speakers, Larry Britegam and David Dumler, a technical foul for having more technology at their disposal while they were speaking. Al spoke from the heart about his time at St. John's and the people that made a huge difference in his life. 2. David Dumler, class of 1987, provides a Kodak moment with Reece Turner, commander of the middle school drill team. 3. The drum line consisting of Wesley Dishron on quints, Richard Reynolds on bass drum, and Calvin Guardiola and Jake Whitting on snare drum, performed on the grinder on Friday afternoon. 4. Black Knights members Brooklyn McKnight, Brantley Snodgrass, Francisco Arismendi, Logan Murtha, Cameron Webb, Jake Whitting, Lester Ostertag, Caelon Tautz, and Andre Popovic spin their rifles on the grinder. 5. Ryan Lynch displays his special moves as commander of the drill team with assistance from Brooklyn McKnight and next year's commander, Andre Popovic. 6. D. Dale Browning hosted a dinner for "Old Boys," faculty, staff, and former faculty and staff at Martinelli's on Thursday night. He stands here with "Old Boy" Ed Lehman and his wife Connie. Mr. Lehman graduated from St. John's seventy years ago! The 125th anniversary coin was distributed that evening to all in attendance.





Connor Dempsey awaits his turn to speak on behalf of SGT Johnnie McGee who retired after many years of service to St. John's as a military advisor.



Wei Feng speaks on behalf of retiring assistant quartermaster, Wand Radke. Mrs. Radke was Wei Feng's St. John's Mom.



Luke Whitting, the CSGM of the 126th Corps of Cadets, is flanked by his parents Janine and Dave Whitting in celebration of Luke being awarded the D. Dale Browning Scholarship for the 2013-2014 school year. His name is engraved on the plaque in the front hallway of the Vanier Academic Center.

THE PLAQUE IN THE HALLWAY OF THE VANIER ACADEMIC CENTER READS:

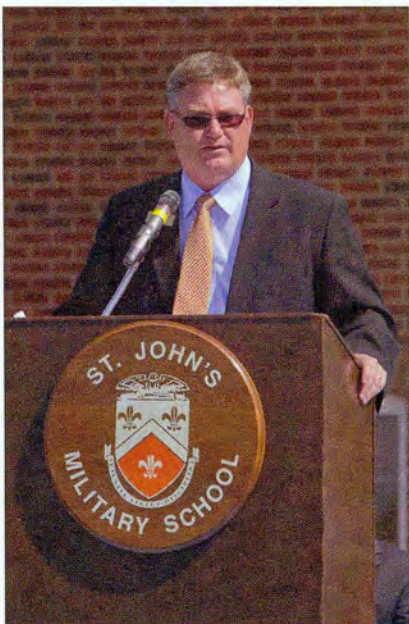
The Cadets listed below exemplify the characteristics of integrity, intelligence, and desire for excellence that have distinguished D. Dale Browning's association with St. John's as a Cadet, faculty member, and trustee.

Established by the members of the Plus System, Inc. January 26, 1994

"There is nothing we can do that is more important than helping the young people of America." D. Dale Browning

George Norton, "Old Boy" Class of 2002, stands with Old Boy Association Board Members David Dumler '87, Lou Barnett '73, and Dick Retrum '66, following his induction into the St. John's Military School Wall of Fame. SSG George Norton is an Instructor/Shooter for the International Shooting Team of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, and is working towards making the 2016 Olympic games in Rio De Janeiro. Norton spoke about his time at St. John's as being crucial to his development as a man of character and as a critical stepping stone towards his success in the United States Army. Norton distinguished himself as a member of the SJMS rifle team while at St. John's and was a member of the Battalion Staff during his senior year.





President E. Andrew England welcomed everyone to graduation exercises.



"Old Boy" Mark Richards, Class of 1993, delivered the commencement address.



Battalion Commander, Levi Gottsponer gave his final address to the 125th.

Three men offered their thoughts to those in attendance at graduation. President England spoke about the state of the school and the bright future ahead. Mark Richards quoted Charles Swindell, saying, "Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it." Richards related life lessons he learned at St. John's and the importance of standing together when times are hard. He said, "Courage: It's not the absence of fear, but the will to act in the face of it." Levi Gottsponer reflected on his year as Battalion Commander and reminded the Corps they were "perfect for three hours during AFI!"



Above: Jack Vanier, long time friend and benefactor of St. John's, enjoys a lighter moment during Levi Gottsponer's address. Bob Miller, SJMS trustee, sits among the many distinguished guests in attendance at graduation. Below: 125th Corps of Cadets, dismissed, forever!

Tearful goodbyes tell the final story of commencement. Commencement is a noun meaning both 'a ceremony in which degrees are conferred on graduating students,' and a 'beginning or start.' Members of the 125th Corps of Cadets say farewell for now, but are sure to meet again someday on campus in the years ahead!



Levi Gottsponer hugs his friend.



Jordan Covers celebrates graduation.



Jase Lacy hoists Brandon Mudd into the air.



Ryan Lynch and Darius Bridgeman say their farewells.



The members of the honor guard greet the inspector.



Wei Feng takes his turn at the Battalion Staff briefing.



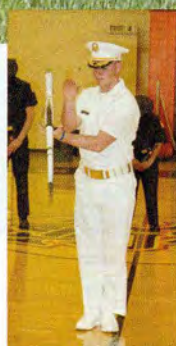
Charlie Company stands the in-ranks inspection.



From the opening ceremony, to the Battalion Staff briefing, to the in-ranks inspection, to the pass-in-review, to sound-off performed by the band, to the casing of the colors by the color guard, to the drill team performance in the gym... the day went... well...



The band performs sound-off.



Lynch leads the drill team.

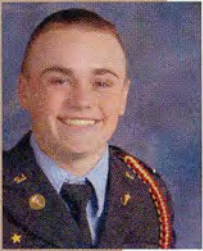


The score is announced!

PERFECT!!!

BLUE BERET

HIGH School



Adam Walther



Thomas Elliott



Eli Harmon



Yixiu Li

DEAN'S HONOR ROLL



Timothy Pilcher



Brandon Wright



Yifan Xu



Levi Harmon



Merit Davey



Christian Sanchez



Sergio Cois



Wei Feng



Duncan Farrell



Austin Searls



Caelon Tautz



Jake Whitting



Matthew Giachetto



Logan Murtha

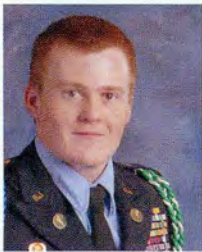
HONOR ROLL



David Schmaus



Zeth Mayeaux



Craig Roukema



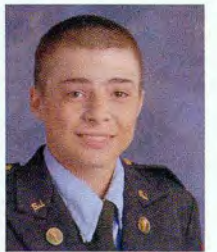
Chase Rose



Levi Gottsponer



Paul Meyer



Phillip Cain



James McCaffery



Cahill Shpall



Darius Bridegman



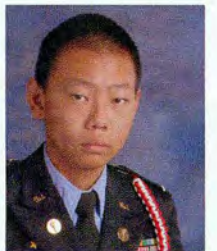
Juan Vuillemier



Ryan Lynch



Zachary Reimer



Xinyang Du

ACADEMIC Stars

HONOR ROLL



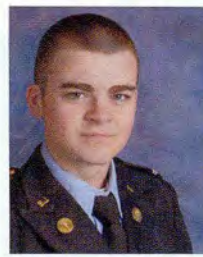
Luis Garcia



James Smith



Richard Reynolds



Clay Smith



Eduardo Melendrez



Alberto Elias Romero



Jack Busacker



Braydon Phelan



Colton Brown



Eduardo Nestorovic



Jonathan Mc Swan



Dustin Wiechman



Lester Ostertag



Brantley Snodgrass



Francisco Arismendi



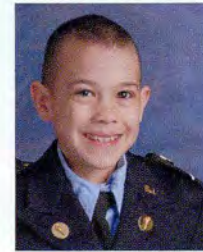
Christopher Kessler



Nicholas Vetter



Erik Cabildo Arias



Robert Conde

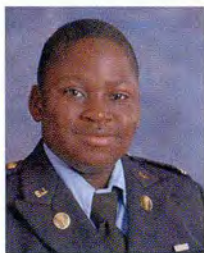


Blase Whitting

MIDDLE School

BLUE BERET

DEAN'S HONOR ROLL



Bryan Udofia



John Garon



Kole Stoltz



Cody Tao



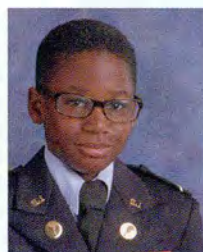
Daniel Ritchie



Christopher Reilly



Dacian Wise



Jackson Brinn



James Sadler



Bryce Kisner



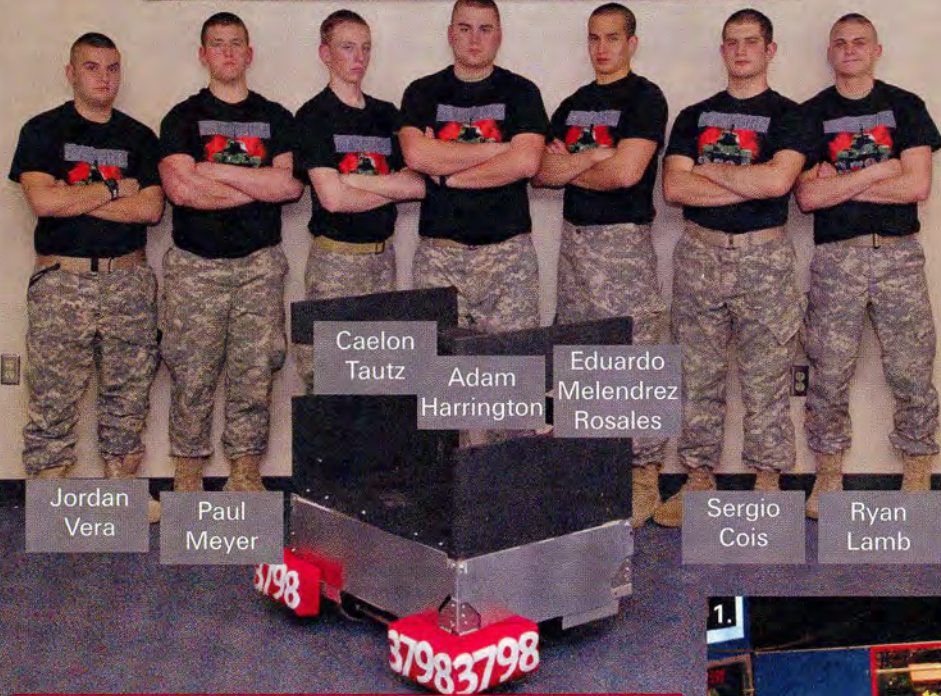
Tyler Clark



Seth Gundlach

HONOR ROLL

ROBOTICS *makin' it click!*



Jordan Vera

Paul Meyer

Caelon Tautz

Adam Harrington

Eduardo Melendrez Rosales

Sergio Cois

Ryan Lamb

SJMS applied for and was awarded a Pat Mullen three-year grant for \$12,000.00. The robotics team receives \$4,000.00 each year if they re-apply, continue to fulfill the grant requirements, and submit annual reports. Mr. Mullen was a self-taught engineer and inventor. He was a life-long Salina native who valued innovation and education. According to his wishes, the Foundation established a field of interest fund to create grants for the education of youth in the areas of arts and humanities, technology, invention, and science. The fund generates

annual grants in the spring.

SPONSORS

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SMOKY HILL CONSTRUCTION
THE SCHWAN FOOD COMPANY
ANONYMOUS
GREATER SALINA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

Upon returning to school following Christmas break, the SJMS FIRST Rangers Robotics Team 3798 faced what seemed to be an inconceivable task—build a robot in six weeks that could shoot Frisbees through narrow openings and then climb a 3-level, 10 foot jungle-gym-like pyramid. At the end of March, the six-member team, along with fifty-seven other FIRST teams, had the opportunity to take their finished robot to the Oklahoma City FIRST Regional competition to determine whether they

were able to successfully complete the task.

Preparing for competition involved over eight hundred hours of hard work by team members Sergio Cois, Adam Harrington, Eduardo Melendrez-Rosales, Paul Meyer, Caelon Tautz, and Jordan Vera, as well as sponsors Anna Robles, Pam Kraus, and mentor Mary Cerny. The team ultimately designed and built their robot Prometheus to be an efficient shooting robot with the capability of hanging on the lowest bar of the pyramid.

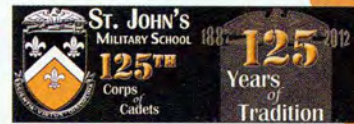


1. Caelon Tautz, Adam Harrington, and Paul Meyer in the competition arena removing the robot from the pyramid after a match.
2. Paul Meyer, Eduardo Melendrez-Rosales, and Sergio Cois practice shooting frisbees in preparation for a match.

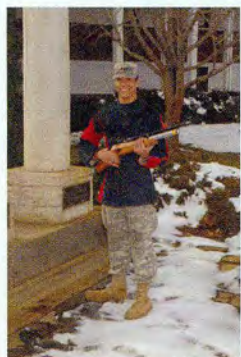
The team was fortunate to be able to spend a few hours at the Murrah Federal Building Bombing Memorial and Museum upon arriving in Oklahoma City. Once at the Regional competition, Team 3798 set up their pit and began the inspection process. After 2 years of building very light-weight robots, this year the team encountered its first challenge when they discovered their robot was 2.2 pounds over the 120 pound weight limit. Eventually, they were able to reduce the weight to an acceptable 119.5 pounds. On Friday, the qualifying matches began and Team 3798 continued to work to improve Prometheus between matches. By the end of the qualifying matches the Rangers had met with mixed results, ending with a 3-6 record.

Pam Kraus & Anna Robles

RIFLE TEAM



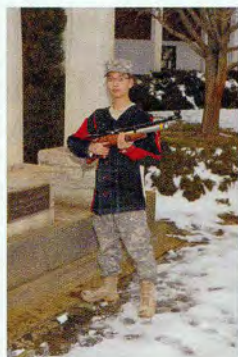
*front row: Jacob Wiese, Coach Tony Blair, Darius Bridgeman, and Mason Clanton.
back row: Philip Cain, Yixiu Li, and Yi Fan Xu.*



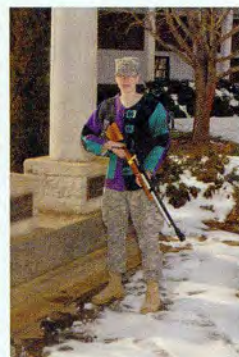
BRIDGEMAN



CAIN



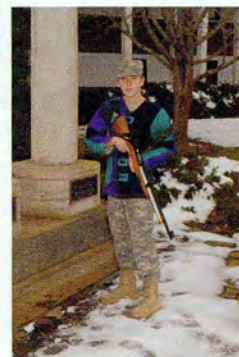
LI



WIESE



XU



CLANTON



"I could not have been more proud of or happy for this year's team. What they lacked in experience, they more than made up for in desire and teamwork. They did not let their inexperience as first year riflemen affect their competitive spirit. From the first day of practice to the season ending State Championships, they believed they could win. After acknowledging the fact that they were going against shooters with more experience, the team members

immediately went to work at making up that deficit. Their hard work paid off, helping them shoot scores far beyond those of a first-year shooter. We ended up winning half of our league matches and earning many medals. The exciting thing is, it looks like next year we will start where this year left off. Hopefully, we will have five returning lettermen on the team. It is going to be a fun ride!"
Coach Tony Blair



*"My heart is so full from everyone's love and care for Mr. Nelson. I want to give you all a big hug. I know I have no idea of everything that happened behind the scenes to get the Final Roll Call flag and plaque posted. My thanks to all the St. John's parents, staff, faculty, and administration, but mostly the young men who touched Mr. Nelson's life in such a powerful way. I'm so proud of our St. John's sons, Francisco, Adam, Eli and Levi, and all their accomplishments. May the power of Jesus' love touch you all as you anticipate the future. Thank you, thank you."
Debbie Adams-Nelson*



Merrell Nelson

December 16, 1953 - April 17, 2013

Merrell spent many months preparing for the events scheduled to take place during commencement weekend. Merrell Nelson, beloved

friend and SJMS family member, died before he could see the fruits of his labors planned for the 125th anniversary celebration.

Merrell's musical gifts can be described as extraordinary! He began playing the piano by ear at the age of 6. By the time he was 8, he was serving as organist and pianist at his parents' church in Puerto Rico. Merrell used his God given talents to serve both the Lord and his community.

For the past 11 years, Merrell served as accompanist, organist, praise band director, and director of vocal music at St. John's Military School. Merrell gave much more than musical service to St. John's; he gave love and care to everyone he touched. His generous spirit overflowed to the young men he coached in the praise band, choir, and to his St. John's sons.

Merrell worked tirelessly side by side with several St. John's chaplains. He adjusted to each new personality and managed to create a complete worship service satisfying both the chaplain and the Cadets.

When Matthew Lewis arrived on campus two years ago to become the St. John's chaplain, Merrell took him under his wings and quickly developed a strong bond of friendship. Merrell and Matthew also formed an amazing musical partnership. Merrell's musical gifts coupled with Matthew's weekly inspirational messages combined to make worship services at St. John's very meaningful to the Cadets. The praise band comprised of Adam Walther, Cory Church, Ryan Lynch, Tanner Haycock and Christopher Wilson thrived under the leadership of these two great men.



Merrell Nelson, Adam Walther, Cory Church, Christopher Wilson, Ryan Lynch, and Tanner Haycock performed in Lincoln, Kansas, for a Christmas Cantata.

Merrell treated his St. John's sons Eli and Levi Harmon, Francisco Arismendi, and Adam Walther like they were his own. His generosity knew no bounds.



Eli Harmon, Levi Harmon, Adam Walther, and Francisco Arismendi lay a rose and then salute in memory of their St. John's Dad, Merrell Nelson, during the final roll call ceremony on Friday morning during commencement weekend.

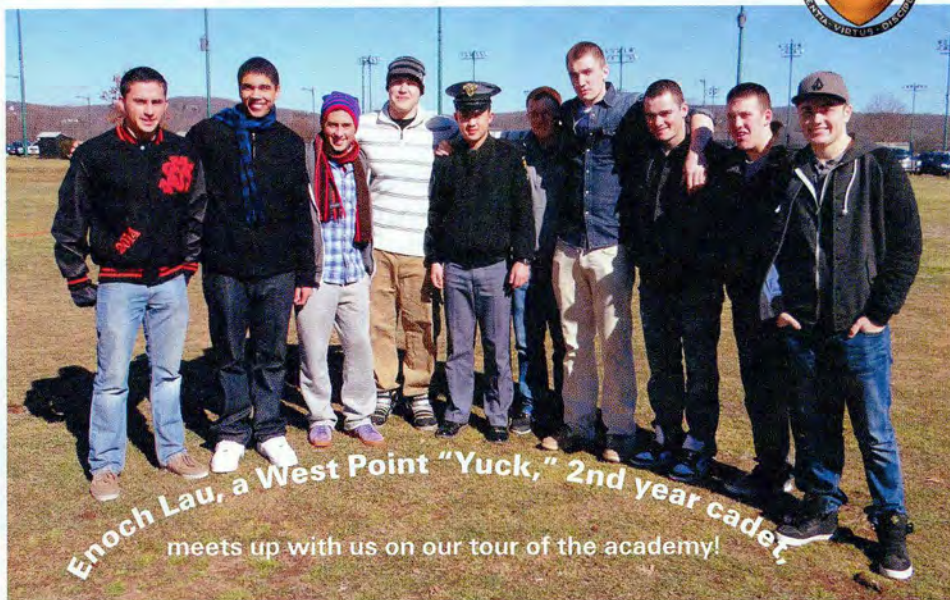
The entire St. John's family will miss seeing Merrell around campus, hearing his beautiful voice booming out the hymns, and his jolly laughter while he subbed for Mrs. Stein.

*Farewell, Dear Merrell, until we meet again!
Thanks for the music and the friendship!*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK



The New York trip, March 5-9, 2013, was a trip of a lifetime. One highlight was a tour of West Point, where we met former SJMS Battalion Commander, Enoch Lau, a second year West Point Cadet. Two musicals, *Once*, and *The Lion King*, and the play *Lucky Guy*, starring Tom Hanks, filled evening entertainment slots. A tour of NBC studios, and visits to the "Top of the Rock," the 9-11 Memorial, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and St. Patrick's Cathedral filled our days.

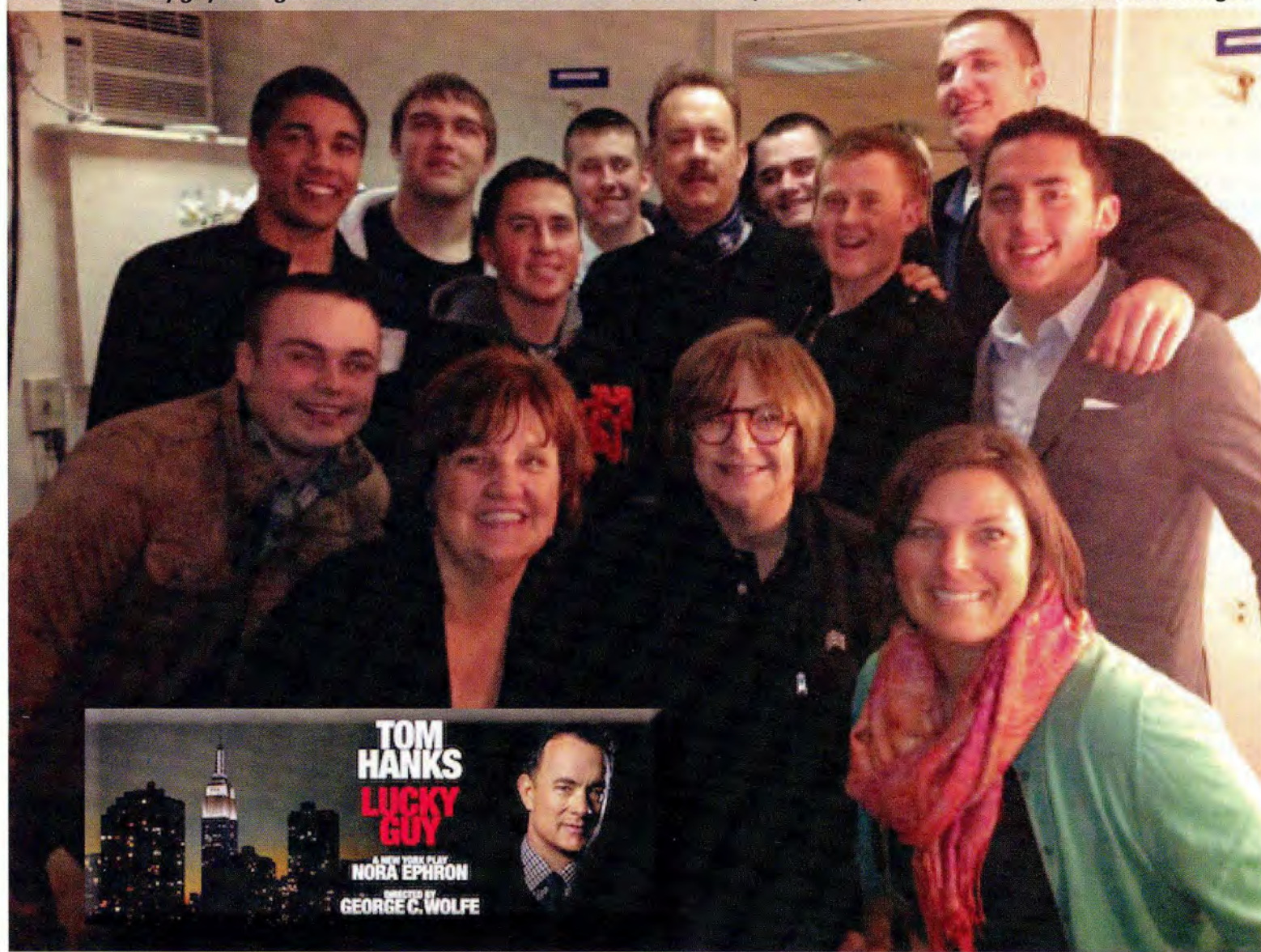


Enoch Lau, a West Point "Yuck," 2nd year cadet, meets up with us on our tour of the academy!



Our journey... about to begin!

A bunch of lucky guys and gals surround Tom Hanks after the show. Thanks, Roukema, for a moment in time we'll never forget!



in the big apple

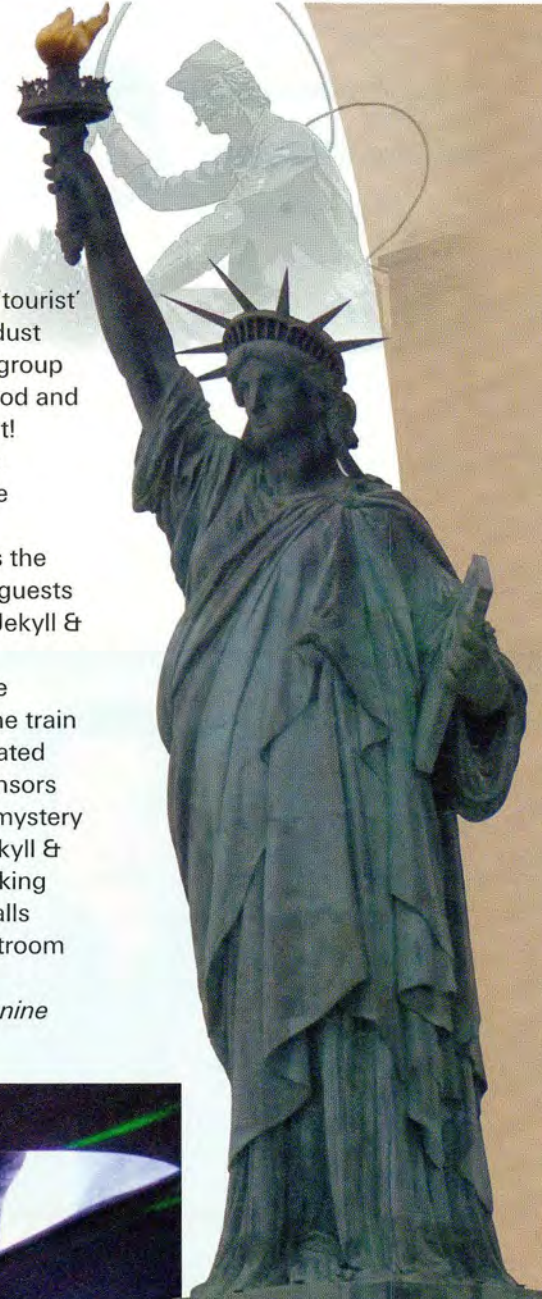
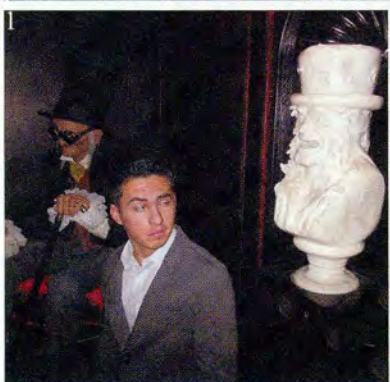


1 A popular local 'tourist' eatery, the Stardust Diner, provided the group with scrumptious food and divine entertainment!

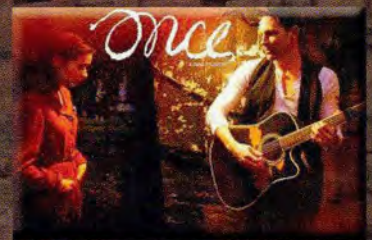
2 Paul Meyer was creative with the catsup bottle!

3 Eli Harmon eyes the statue greeting guests in the entry way of Jekyll & Hyde. *Spooky!*

4 Dave and Janine Whitting took the train into the city and treated the Cadets and sponsors to dinner at a local mystery restaurant called Jekyll & Hyde! It featured talking elephants on the walls and very creepy restroom accommodations! *Thanks so much, Janine and Dave!*



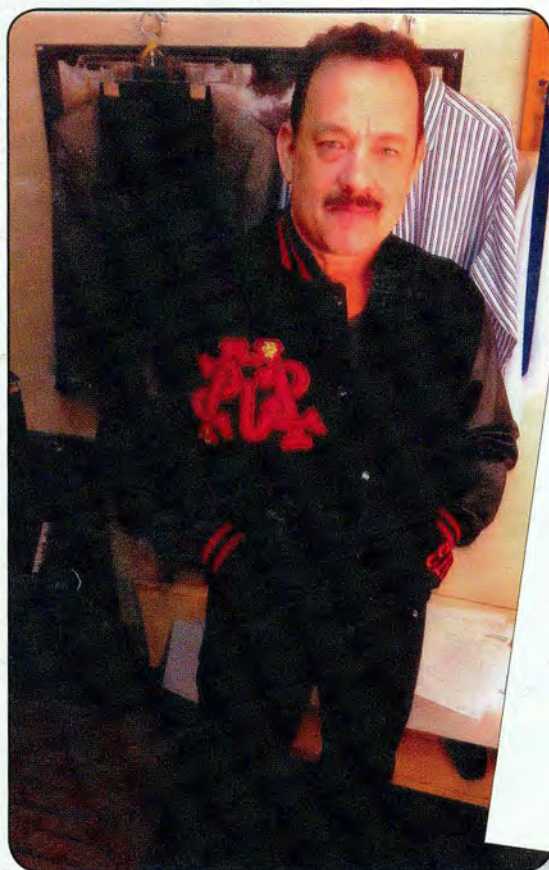
In the Hummer Limo...chillin' on our way to the 911 memorial, after a boat tour around Manhattan!





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12 May 2013

PLAYTONE

Film Television Music Typewriters

To the Cadets of St John's Military School

Paul Meyer, Levi Gottsponer, David
Bridgeman, Adam Walther, Craig Roukema
Eli Hermon, Levi Harmon, Ryan Lince,
As well as Katie, Darius, Wendy and Chris


I hope I have the names right, but if
not, sorry.

As you can see, I am one tough looking
dude these days and let me tell you,
the crowds part for the man who wears
this jacket.

I look cool and am proud to sport the
Black and the Orange.

Thanks for the cool threads, and
keep Salina KS safe.

All good things,



Tom Hanks

The New York Trip included tickets to the show Lucky Guy, starring Tom Hanks. Craig Roukema approached theater manager Hugh Barnett and explained how much the Cadets admire Mr. Hanks. Roukema asked if it would be possible to meet Mr. Hanks and have their picture taken with him. Mr. Barnett said he would see what he could do. Following the show, the St. John's group was escorted to the green room in the basement of the theater to meet Mr. Hanks. During our meeting, Mr. Hanks admired the letter jacket worn by Eli Harmon. This comment did not go unnoticed by Mrs. Stein, and upon our return to campus, she ordered a Cadet letter jacket with Hanks embroidered on the back. The Cadets signed the inside of the jacket and received this picture and letter from Mr. Hanks thanking us for the jacket!!

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