

THE POWER OF ONE MAN'S VISION

Not many people know who Captain William (Bill) Gary, USMCR (Ret) was. But his death in January of 2014 gave me pause to think about the impact his vision has had on me.

Captain Gary was the driving force in founding the Marine Military Academy (MMA) in 1965.

He had a vision of providing young men, including his own son, with an education based on traditions and ideals inspired by the United States Marine Corps. In the early 1960s, Captain Gary began looking for a school for his son. He specifically wanted to send his son to a secondary school that embraced the ideology of the Marine Corps.

Captain Gary believed the concepts of leadership, discipline, and moral values could be successfully applied to a college-preparatory education.

He could not find such a school, so he decided to start one. In 1963, he recruited a group of prominent Marines to assist him, including Gen. Vernon McGee, USMC (Ret); Lt. Gen. Edwin Pollack, USMC (Ret); Lt. Gen. Holland Smith, USMC (Ret); Brig. Gen. Walter McIlhenny, USMCR (Ret); and Maj. Orrin Johnson, USMCR (Ret).

MMA's home was to be in Prescott, Arizona—that is, until Captain Gary and his supporters learned of Harlingen Air Force Base, located in the southernmost part of Texas. The defunct military base had been used to train combat navigators during World War II. Captain Gary envisioned the base as a campus for an all-boys, military boarding school. He began building the educational laboratory that would develop today's young men into tomorrow's leaders.

Captain Gary spent two years laying the foundation for MMA, finding financial backers and recruiting staff. On September 9, 1965, MMA opened its doors to fifty-eight cadets, six of whom would comprise the first graduating class of 1966.

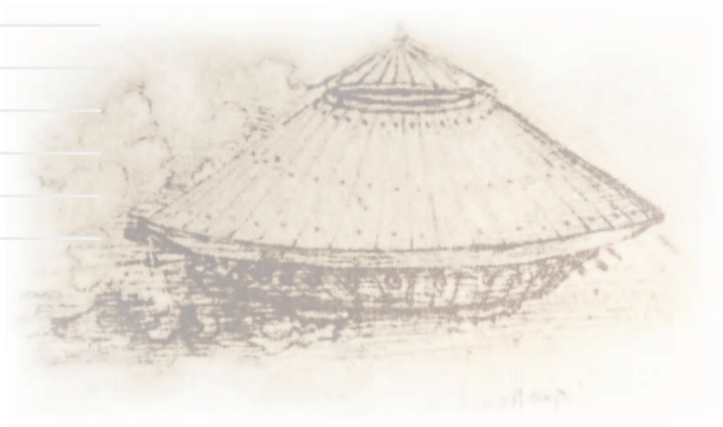
I attended MMA from August 1968 until I graduated in May of 1974. My first year was the same year that the first four-year cadets (six of them) graduated. Six years later, I was the first six-year cadet to graduate. I am a direct beneficiary of Captain Gary's vision. I learned concepts of self-discipline, preparedness and honor that, in many ways, have been more valuable to me than the rest of my education.

Captain Gary was tireless in bringing his vision to life despite having limited personal resources. As MMA Superintendent Colonel Glenn Hill said, "Captain Gary loved this school and cared deeply for the cadets. Because of him, thousands of young men from around the world received a quality education and became true leaders. . . Captain Gary

NOTES

Do you have a vision lurking inside
of you that you may be hiding?

Do you have a vision lurking inside
of you that you may be hiding?



was greatly admired and respected by everyone at MMA. Nothing was impossible for him.”

The impact one’s vision can have on community is too often undervalued, but Captain Gary gave me first-hand knowledge of the power of believing in your vision. My vision is of a world where more people find true happiness and satisfaction with life, in part by transforming their relationship with financial assets.

The lesson I learned from Captain Gary is this: If you have a vision of something bigger than yourself, do not hide it. MMA has graduated hundreds of young men equipped with values and principles that have a positive impact on society, thanks to one man’s vision.

