

SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY ALUMNI RECEIVE MILITARY HONORS – INCLUDING SILVER STAR – AT VETERANS' DAY ASSEMBLY

Col. Dennis Wier '76 of U.S. Strategic Command to Keynote Assembly

MENDOTA HEIGHTS, Minn., Nov. 11, 2008 – Veterans Day 2008 at Saint Thomas Academy will be one that Carl Baumgaertner '42 and James Garberg '41 will remember for some time. Both men received military honors at a special assembly at the JROTC Academy today – Baumgaertner his Silver Star medal earned over 60 years ago and Garberg a Regimental coin and letter from the current commander of the 32nd Infantry. In addition both were the first recipients of the school's Fleming Alumni Veteran Award, or the Fleming medal.

“As a ROTC charter military institute, our list of graduates who have served this nation in our armed forces is long and distinguished,” said LTC Michael DePuglio, U.S. Army (ret.), commandant of cadets at Saint Thomas Academy. “Mr. Garberg and Mr. Baumgaertner are two of the most distinguished, and worthy recipients of the first Fleming Alumni Veteran Awards honoring our veteran graduates. The additional honors they received today are a testimony to their valor and service. It was my privilege to present them both with these honors.”

Baumgaertner was stunned to receive his Silver Star medal, which was bestowed on him by Gen. George S. Patton Jr., commander of the 3rd U.S. Army for his acts of heroism and gallantry in 1945 during WWII. Due to combat, Baumgaertner never received the medal. In his remarks, Baumgaertner deferred the accolades stating that all of the U.S. military service personnel are deserving of recognition.

Baumgaertner was a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, 94th Infantry Division, which landed in France, 12 weeks after D-Day. He was involved in numerous campaigns throughout the liberation of France. During the Battle of the Bulge in late 1944, the 94th Division was transferred to Gen. Patton's III Army deeply involved in the repeal of German advances. Baumgaertner became commander of C Company, 302nd Infantry Regiment at 21 and saw extensive combat during the latter phases of the Battle of the Bulge, the penetration of the Siegfried line, crossing the Saar river, and entering into Germany. At the end of the war, he and his men stopped operations in Czechoslovakia. He was awarded three Bronze Stars and one Silver Star for Heroism, which he finally received today.

Garberg is a highly decorated WWII veteran as well, having received the nation's second highest award for heroism – the Distinguished Service Cross. Garberg was a rifle platoon leader in the 32nd Infantry during its 1943 defeat of Japanese forces from the Aleutian island of Attu. His leadership saved the lives of many of his men and after the battle was finally won, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The last sentence of his award nomination reads: “His gallant, determined heroism, and aggressiveness were inspiring to us all.”

Cadets and guests also heard from Col. Dennis R. Wier '76, the senior military assistant/executive officer to the commander of United States Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., about the value of the leadership training at Saint Thomas Academy for all who attend – even those who choose non-military careers.

About the Silver Star:

The Silver Star is awarded to a person who, while serving in any capacity with the U.S. Army, is cited for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force, or while serving with friendly foreign

forces engaged in armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

Baumgaertner's citation reads:

1LT Carl J. Baumgaertner
Commander, Company C
302nd Infantry Regiment
94th Infantry Division

is awarded the Silver Star....

For heroism and gallantry in leading his unit during combat operations on or about 22 Feb 1945, 1LT Baumgaertner led his company in a dramatic river crossing assault on German positions on the eastern bank of the Saar River near Taben, Germany. Through his leadership and bravery, Company C achieved their objectives and established a bridgehead, thus allowing follow-on forces to capture the city of Trier. In addition, he led his company during periods of intense fighting around the village of Reinsfeld, Germany, where after repeated German counterattacks, Company C held a vital road junction. 1LT Baumgaertner's valor and leadership is in the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon him, the 94th Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

Signed,
George S. Patton Jr.
General
Commander, 3rd U.S. Army

About the Fleming Alumni Veteran Award

The Fleming Alumni Veteran Award, or the Fleming Medal, is named for Cpt. Richard Fleming '35, recipient of the Medal of Honor and the Academy's highest decorated graduate. Andrew Sheaffer '08 designed the circle-shaped medallion, a melding of the Maltese cross worn on the Cadet Class A lapel with the school crest of a crossed rifle and saber. Four blue stones symbolize the foundational attributes of Saint Thomas Academy. Inscribed on the top of the medal is "*PRO DEO et PATRIA*" (for God and Country). The Class of 2008 funded the development of the design.

About Saint Thomas Academy

Founded in 1885, Saint Thomas Academy is an all-male, college preparatory, Catholic, military/leadership school committed to preparing young men to succeed in college and in life. Nationally accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS), the academy challenges young men to excel academically, spiritually, morally and physically in and out of the classroom. For more information, please visit www.cadets.com.

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