# DEETS LAMAR PICKETT, PHD, SMA '29

## (1911 – 2003)

Lamar Pickett had attended Eastern High School in Washington, DC, before he entered Staunton Military Academy in September 1927. He was honorably discharged from SMA in June 1930 as a private first class and later earned his PhD in Chemistry with a minor in Physics in 1935. During World War II, he worked for the Department of Navy as a research chemist in the Naval Research Lab in Washington, DC. Lamar had been published in the Journal of American Chemistry and was an inventor with many patents to his credit. These patents enabled Lamar to retire at a relatively young age.

Lamar traveled extensively. Through his readings of South Africa, he became infatuated with the country. By age fifty, his travels found him in Durbin, South Africa, where he fell in love with a horse he named Von Reign and bought a small holding farm. He spent the next 30 years in Africa, returning to America for short visits with his family. Eventually, he relocated his parents and his sister to Durbin. They each preceded him in death.

A true renaissance man, Dr. Pickett, like the gems he cut, was many faceted. Due to his interest in lapidary, he became quite skilled at gem stone cutting. Also included in his many interests was falconry and wood carving. He also enjoyed time as a ham radio operator during his time in Africa.

His decision to return to America brought much sadness to those he was leaving behind. On the eve of his departure, he celebrated his 80th birthday. A party hosted by his friends included, among other things, a cake with candles that stayed lit no matter how hard he blew on them. He returned home to America in 1990, settling in Dunnellon, FL.

The computer age was expanding, and Dr. Pickett was not to be left out. The computer opened up a whole new world for him. Not only could he stay in contact with his friends in Africa, he could also enjoy the fascination of meeting and making new friends. Several of these friends made trips to Florida to meet and spend real time with him. One of those friends, Ms. Jennifer Lawrence, donated to the SMA-VWIL Museum a small cannon which Lamar designed and built.

An excellent cook, he was best known for his bathtub fudge. A gifted storyteller, Dr. Pickett regaled his friends with stories of his incredible experiences.

Dr. Pickett died on March 28, 2003, in Dunnellon, FL. Prior to his death at the age of 92, he was the oldest living Staunton Military Academy alumnus.

Follow are two of the many patents received by Dr. Pickett:

**CLEARING WATER SURFACES OF OIL** Patented Aug. 24, 1948 by William A. Zisman, Washington, D.C., and-Lamar Pickett, Arlington, Va.

No Drawing. Application - June 22, 15143, Serial No. 491,838!

This invention relates to a method of cleaning water surfaces of oil, and to compositions used therewith. In particular the invention is concerned with the protection of the crews of torpedoed or sinking ships where fuel oil or gasoline from the ship has spread over the water.

The fuel oils, lubricating oils and the gasoline escaping from a bombed or torpedoed ship or storage tank often spread out over the water forming a layer or blanket which may be anywhere from less than a thousandth. of. an inch to many inches deep, depending on the viscosity of the oil the amount of escaping oil and the effects of the wind. If the oil film is of the order of a thousandth of an inch thick it is not a serious menace since it is kept cool by the water underneath, although it may cause discomfort to swimmers. On the other hand, films or blankets only one-fourth of an inch thick are a fire hazard and even when not burning they tend to blind and suffocate swimmers.

This invention provides a method of clearing limited areas of water surfaces of oil where the original oil film or layer is not greater than about one-fourth to one-half inch thick, and it is especially adapted to the protection of swimmers and survivors in life boats or on rails by holding the oil film at a distance. The lengthier time which the oil film may be held at bay depends largely on the weather prevailing at the time, as rough weather tends to counteract the effects of the method. However, moderate winds tend to blow the oil film away from the vessel so that there is a better chance of escape by leaving from the windward side, whereas in calm weather the oil tends to form a blanket or pool equally extensive in all directions about the ship. It is under the latter circumstances that the method of this invention is most efficacious. The invention also includes certain compositions of matter used in repelling the oil film.

**METHOD OF PROTECTING A METAL SURFACE WITH A COATENG F PRIMARY-N-OCTA- DECYLAMINE AND ARTICLE PRODUCED THEREBY** United States Patent Office 3,015,580 Patented Jan. 2, 1962 3,015,580 William A. Zisman, Washington, D.C., and Lamar Pickett, Tidwell, Va. Filed Aug. 30, 1948, Ser. No. 46,844

This application is a continuation in part of application Serial No. 530,236 filed by William A. Zisrnan and Lamar Pickett on April 8, 1944, for Protective Films, now abandoned. It is distinguishable there from in the matter of greater specificity of the solvents and film forming compounds used; in the method of film application; and in the area covering characteristics of the film.

As set forth in the above referenced application, this invention relates to a method of coating or protecting surfaces by applying thereto a monomolecular film, and it is particularly concerned with the protection of metallic surfaces from the corrosive action of water, aqueous solutions and gases, and with the lubrication of small bearings under certain conditions.

The general object of the invention is to provide a method of protecting surfaces from contact with air or water, or aqueous solutions, by coating on the surface [of] a certain type of monomolecular film.

It is a further object of the invention to provide a method of protecting surfaces by coating said surfaces with a continuous hydrophobic and oleophobic film which is not only monomolecular in structure but which is composed of molecules which are oriented by adsorption of their polar ends to said surfaces with their opposite ends forming a surface of closely packed hydrocarbon radicals.

It is an additional object of the invention to provide a method of treatment of surfaces whereby oil may be restricted to a particular area and prevented from spreading over the entire surface.

Editor's note: Most of the information contained in this biography was extracted from Dr. Pickett's obituary that was provided by his friend, Jennifer Lawrence, of Ventura, CA, and published in the *Kablegram of August 2003. Patent information from* *google.com/advanced_patent_search.* Edits by Kelly McGavock, SMA '59.