STATUS REPORT, FEBRUARY 2016:

ADVANCED METAL DETECTING FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGIST,

AN RPA-CERTIFIED, CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION COURSE

RPA Register of Professional Archaeologists

Brief History

The AMDA class was born in 2011, when archaeologists Patrick Severts and Chris Espenshade recognized the need to teach best practices in metal detecting to professional archaeologists. They saw that professional archaeologists were finally accepting that metal detecting was a valuable tool, but there was no good source for instruction in metal detecting. AMDA began as a conference/class hybrid in October 2011 in Helen, Georgia, underwritten by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Based on the response to the Helen event, and in conjunction with the new RPA program for certifying continuing professional education classes, the founders of AMDA chose to focus solely on instruction. The founders included Sheldon Skaggs, Garrett Silliman, Patrick Severts, Doug Scott, Terry Powis, and Chris Espenshade. After formalization of the instructor corps and course offerings, AMDA was certified by the RPA. We were proud to be the first continuing education course to receive this important certification.

To date, AMDA has trained more than 150 archaeologists in eight classes. We have received overwhelmingly positive reviews for our classes, and we continue to fine-tune and improve our offering. Our instructors and students have also contributed many persondays of professional research to the sites that sponsored our classes.

Nature of the Class

The AMDA class recognizes that the three main factors affecting the efficacy of a metal detector investigation are: 1) competency of the operators; 2) appropriateness of the device to the task at hand; and 3) suitability of the research design. The class includes eight hours of classroom instruction, where we present best practices. The class notebooks also include a case study CD with examples of successful research efforts.

We also recognize that professional archaeologists need an opportunity for instructor-monitored, hands-on, practical field experience with a variety of currently available devices. AMDA has created a partnership with several manufacturers and retailers who provide trial models at various price points. Our fieldwork sessions are designed to contribute to the research needs of our local hosts, and we work on real problems on real sites.

First Class: August 2012, Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site, South Carolina

Our first offering of the AMDA class was at the Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site (CTL), South Carolina. Our local host was the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. Twenty-four students completed the 16-credit course. Both the classroom and field sessions took place at CTL.

In addition to demonstrating the robustness of metal detecting for delineating and sampling the many historic loci of CTL, the field work also yielded items for museum display (once their analysis is complete). A significant example was the recovery of an 1814 slave tag. There are less than 100 such tags in any museums, and the CTL museum had none before our discovery. The CTL archaeological staff GPS mapped all MDFs, and the analysis is ongoing.

Site Boundary Delineation, Charles Towne Landing.

Excavating targets, class at Charles Towne Landing.

Slave Tag discovered by class.

The instructors at the first class were Chris Espenshade, Terry Powis, Patrick Severts, Garrett Silliman, and Sheldon Skaggs.

Second Class, April 2013, Troup Factory, Lagrange, Georgia

Beginning with this second class, AMDA and RPA began offering the option of 16-credits or 24-credits. The former included one day of classroom instruction and one day in the field. The latter added a second day in the field. The class review forms and informal comments from those who chose the 24-credit option reflect positive feedback. The second field day offered students the opportunity to work one-on-one with a manufacturer's representative or instructor. At Troup Factory, fourteen students

chose the 16-credits and eight students chose the 24-credits. The classroom session was taught at Pine Mountain Chalets State Park, and the field sessions were at Troup Factory, location of a 19th century textile mill and workers' village. The private owners of the Troup Factory site, Kennesaw State University, and anthropology graduate students from Georgia State University were our local hosts.

As before, our field sessions benefitted from the presence of several manufacturers' representatives and their model lines. Between the devices provide by the representatives and the personal models of the instructors (or their employers), students had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with more than 20 different devices. Minelab, Fisher/Teknetics, and North Georgia Relics and Metal Detectors had representatives present.

The results from both the dig and non-dig portions of the field work will contribute to the ongoing site analysis by Laine Graham, a graduate student at Georgia State University. All collected Metal Detector Finds, flagged but uncollected ferrous items, and limits of delineated nail clouds have been GPS-mapped and added to the site database. The class equaled approximately 30 persondays of volunteer labor, and significantly advanced the research at this interesting site.

The second class marked the first appearance by new instructor Dan Elliott. The other instructors included: Terry Powis, Sheldon Skaggs, Patrick Severts, Garrett Silliman, and Chris Espenshade.

Third Class, November 2013, Clermont Farm State Historic Site, Virginia

Our third class was offered November 15-17, 2013, near Winchester, Virginia. The classroom lectures were presented at Shenandoah University, and the field sessions were at the Clermont Farm State Historic Site. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the Community History Program of Shenandoah University, and the Clermont Farm Foundation were our local hosts for this class. Ten students completed the 16-credit option and 19 students completed the 24-credit option.

Before the third class, we expanded the case study CD provided to students. This CD includes 70 articles or reports, demonstrating the successful application of metal detecting to a variety of site types and levels of investigation. The third class also saw the addition of a mobile test garden. This was installed outside the classroom, so that students could start to get a feel for the devices after the classroom session the first day.

Representatives from Minelab, Fisher, and Teknetics were present and introduced their current lines of detectors. The course benefits significantly from having these representatives involved in the field exercises. At the Winchester class, Fisher donated three detectors for use in the class, and these were raffled off to three students at the end of the weekend.

The third class also saw the increased regimentation of the field days. This translated into less idle time for the students and a better understanding of who to see for what. Our Saturday began with the no-dig search for and delineation of nail clouds from lost outbuildings in the farm core (curtilage). Students changed devices every 30 minutes, with the goal of sampling at least one machine each at the price points of $300, $500-700, $900-1100, and $1500+. Saturday afternoon and Sunday focused on 100 percent coverage of a pasture. This area had been reported to contain a possible Civil War camp, but instead showed evidence of a previously unsuspected slave cabin.

The research conducted at Clermont Farm fulfilled needs identified in the Historic Site Management Plan. The class contributed approximately 50 persondays of free labor. The nail clouds and MDFs were GPS-mapped by our staff, and the resultant data and associated artifacts have been provided to Clermont Farm. The analysis will be completed by the historic site staff. The information from this weekend effort will enhance the interpretation and management of this historic resource.

Between the second and third classes, Jo Balicki joined our instructor corps. The instructors at the third class were Jo Balicki, Dan Elliott, Chris Espenshade, Doug Scott, Patrick Severts, and Sheldon Skaggs**.**

Fourth Class: August, 2014, New South Associates, Stone Mountain, Georgia

In August of 2014, New South Associates took advantage of the option of having a small class taught only for their own staff and one individual from another local firm. If your CRM firm or agency has 5-10 potential students, it is less expensive to bring two AMDA instructors to your location than to pay travel and lodging expenses for 5-10 employees. The class at Stone Mountain was a 16-hour class taught by Chris Espenshade and Josh Blackmon. Josh had provided IT support to AMDA from the beginning, and was made an instructor in late 2013. Six students completed the class. The classroom and field sessions took place at the Stone Mountain campus of New South Associates. Because New South already owned a large selection of recent detectors, the field session focused on training the students on the devices they would be using day to day.

Fifth Class, Brownsville Texas, February 2015

At the request of NPS and state parks employees, AMDA taught a two-day class in Brownsville, Texas, on February 4-5, 2015. The instructors were Doug Scott, Patrick Severts, and Garrett Silliman. Thirteen students earned 16 credits.

The classroom session was held at the Palo Alto National Battlefield Park Visitor Center, and the field training occurred at the Palo Alto battlefield.

Sixth Class, Kennesaw State University, Georgia, March 2015

In March 2015, the 16-hour AMDA class was taught to 11 students at Kennesaw State University as part of their instruction in field methods. The classroom session was held at the university, and the field session occurred at the Walnut Grove plantation, former residence of at Major General Pierce M. B. Young.

Patrick Severts and Dr. Terry Powis served as instructors.

Seventh Class, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, April 2015

On April 23-25, our seventh class was our largest to date. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation served as our local partner for the April 2015 class. Eight attendees earned 16 credits for a two-day class, and 29 attendees earned 24 credits for the three-day class. The tuition costs for five

student attendees were paid through Minelab Continuing Professional Education Scholarships. The instructors were Jo Balicki, Josh Blackmon, Chris Espenshade, Doug Scott, Patrick Severts, Garrett Silliman, and Sheldon Skaggs.

The classroom session was held at the Pennsylvania State Museum. The field training occurred at Fort Halifax Park, site of a French and Indian War fort on the Susquehanna River. The class contributed 66 persondays of labor to the ongoing research by students from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. More than 1,000 artifacts were detected and GPS plotted.

After the Harrisburg class, AMDA was proud to add Lauren Walls and Charles Haecker to the instructor corps.

Eighth AMDA Class: Pensacola, FL

On February 5-7, 2016 AMDA conducted its eighth class aimed at training professional archaeologists in the best practices of systematic metal detection. The training took place in Pensacola, Florida where our hosts, the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN), had partnered with the Gulf Islands National Seashore (Fort Pickens unit). Classroom space was provided by the NPS, and the two-day field exercise was conducted in an area believed to be the location of the 6th New York Volunteers' (Wilson's Zouaves) camp at the time of the October 9, 1861 Battle of Santa Rosa Island. While the majority of the 22 trainees were affiliated with FPAN, others in attendance came from state agencies, CRM firms, and the Battle Road Archaeological Project (MA). All trainees attended for the entire three-day or 24-credit hour option.

As in previous classes, representatives from Minelab, First Texas Labs (Fisher/Teknetics), and North Georgia Detectors were in attendance. These industry representatives provided a valuable technical knowledge of the machines and their applications. As a result, we modified the classroom sessions to allow attendees more time to handle the machines and ask questions of the representatives at the end of the day. This provided a practical outlet for the attendees to initially test the detectors while the classroom sessions were fresh in their minds as well as save time in getting acquainted with machines the following field exercise day. Another modification to the classroom training was the addition of a mid-day lecture from the David Ogden, Cultural Resource Manager of Fort Pickens. Mr. Ogden's lecture and tour of the grounds provided an excellent context for the subsequent field days, and by having the lecture during the day, all AMDA participants were able to attend. Additionally, the number of case-

studies provided to attendees has swollen to nearly 100 reports and papers, which includes a greater regional and temporal diversity than previously represented.

The class was successful in not only demonstrating the efficacy of systematic metal detection, but specifically in aiding the NPS and FPAN in the re-discovery of the Wilson's Zouaves' camp. The success in locating the camp also underscored the need to adapt our recovery, data management, and sampling strategies to particular field conditions due to the sheer density of artifacts identified. The need for this adjustment provided an extremely effective example of a pedagogical touchstone from the previous day in the classroom.

Following the seventh class offering, two new AMDA instructors were added to the roster: Charles Haecker and Lauren Walls. Instructors in attendance at Pensacola were Daniel Elliott, Charles Haecker Douglas Scott, Garrett Silliman, Sheldon Skaggs, and Lauren Walls.

Future Classes

The response to our first eight classes demonstrated that there is still sufficient demand to support one-two classes per year for the next several years. The fourth and fifth classes underlined a cost-effective option for firms or agencies with multiple employees needing training. AMDA is evaluating regional demand, and we expect to begin offering the class in other parts of the country. Please monitor the web-site listed below to keep abreast of our next offering:

http://amda.modernheritage.net/

We continue to update our case study CD. If you have examples of successful application of metal detecting, especially on non-military sites, please send a pdf of the article or report to GSilliman@jmt.com .

AMDA is also open to adding to our instructor corps. If you are interested in being considered, please send a resume to GSilliman@jmt.com .

Minelab America has committed to offer Minelab Professional Improvement Scholarships to one or more undergraduate/graduate students interested in attending the class. The competitive scholarship will fully cover the tuition costs of the class. Students will be instructed to apply for the Minelab

Professional Improvement Scholarship by submitting a statement of not more than 1,500 words, which defines why learning best practices in the application of metal detecting will be important to their proposed research. The entries will be judged by two or more of the AMDA instructors, and the winners will be announced by the AMDA and Minelab. For the recent Harrisburg class, five students received the Minelab Professional Improvement Scholarship.

For further information about AMDA, please contact:

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