



THE NVH OBSERVER

N O R F O L K V E T E R A N S H O M E

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

From The Desk of Jerry Eisenhower, NVH Administrator

Greetings,

Around 4:30 pm on December 17, 1941 a waiting crowd at the North Platte train depot saw a train approaching and began to cheer. However, when the train pulled up the soldiers inside revealed that they weren't the 134th Infantry Regiment of Nebraska as expected; they were from Kansas. The huge crowd at the depot stopped their cheering and instead murmured to each other in disappointment. And then one person stepped up to the train and handed over the gifts they brought for the Nebraska soldiers. It caused a ripple effect, an avalanche of kindness. Soon, all of the gift-bringers had passed their gifts to the soldiers on the train, many of whom were moved to speechlessness at the incredible generosity of these strangers.

That one simple act of kindness led to four and a half years of the same. One of the people at the depot that day was 26-year-old Rae Wilson, a shop girl who had expected to see her brother on that train. She was so moved by the display at the depot that she suggested the people of North Platte should make a permanent canteen there to greet every single train of soldiers that rolled through. She helped organize the original volunteers (who were almost exclusively women) and fundraising. After working out of the nearby Cody Hotel for a while, Wilson convinced Union Pacific president William M. Jeffers - a North Platte native - to let the canteen operate out of the vacant train depot lunch room. It was from this headquarters that the ladies of North Platte and surrounding areas provided a little bit of joy and comfort to service men and women for more than four years.

The volunteers worked tirelessly to garner donations and prepare treats for the soldiers on the trains. Each train that stopped at the depot did so for approximately ten minutes while the wheels were lubricated, the water was topped off, and other maintenance was performed. This gave the volunteers a very short amount of time to interact with the soldiers. At first, the soldiers weren't allowed to leave the trains due to security concerns so the ladies simply handed baskets of fruit, cigarettes, magazines, playing cards, cookies, and other treats up through the train windows. Eventually, security loosened a little and the soldiers were allowed to disembark. The ladies in the canteen fed them, gave them coffee and gifts, and even helped them send postcards and make phone calls to home.

By the end of the war, the North Platte "Canteen Ladies" had served more than six million military men and women. On August 17, Governor Pete Ricketts will be at Norfolk Veterans Home to dedicate a bronze statue of the "Canteen Lady" sculpted by Cambridge, Nebraska artist Sondra Jonson and donated by a group spearheaded by local resident and veteran Larry Dinkel. The statue is proudly displayed in Heroes Park for all to see and enjoy. A huge THANK YOU goes out to Larry and fellow contributors!

Sincerely,

Jerry Eisenhower
Administrator

GOVERNOR:
PETE RICKETTS

**NEBRASKA
DEPT. OF VETERANS'
AFFAIRS DIRECTOR:**
JOHN HILGERT

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STATE OF NEBRASKA VISION:
GROW NEBRASKA

STATE OF NEBRASKA — MISSION:
CREATE OPPORTUNITY THROUGH MORE
EFFECTIVE, MORE
EFFICIENT,
AND CUSTOMER FOCUSED
STATE GOVERNMENT

HOME HAPPENINGS



When the weather is nice the members enjoy quality outdoor patio time and some cool lemonade.



Below: Member's lined the sidewalk to watch the Legion Riders cruise around the circle drive during a recent poker run.



Long time NVH bus has a new home.

Pictured to the left is Mary Swensen, Activity Assistant. Mary and her co-workers spent many hours driving members to and from off ground activities creating many great memories over the years. This past month we bid farewell to the bus.

Plans are in the works for a replacement van or two in the future.

Volunteer applications are currently being accepted. Stop by the front desk to pick up an application.

IN REMEMBRANCE

*In Remembrance of Those
Members Who Have Passed.*

No person was ever honored for what they received. Honor has been the reward for what they gave. ~Calvin Coolidge



Duane Hansen
U.S. Army Veteran

Delores Nelson
Spouse of a U.S. Army
Veteran

NEW TEAMMATES



Caitlin Curran
RN



Liby Lange
Staff Care Tech II



DeAnn Stodola
Activity Assistant



Julia Harley
RN



Creighton Blain
LPN



Mary Statler
Food Service Assistant



Jahaira Arciniega
Staff Care Tech II



Bits & Pieces

CENSUS
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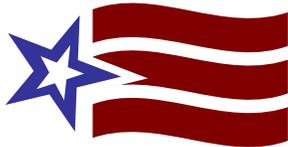
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Norfolk Veterans Home

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**THE NORFOLK VETERANS HOME IS A STATE-OPERATED
FACILITY PROVIDING LONG TERM CARE FOR ELIGIBLE
NEBRASKA VETERANS.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING
ADMISSION, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR
LOCAL COUNTY SERVICE OFFICER OR
DODIE FINKHAUS @ (402)370-3109
COLLEEN BENSON @ (402) 370-3469**

