

The Veterans' Voice

SUMMER 2011

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 Colorado Department
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Resident Jack Kohl visits World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Western Slope Honor Flight

110 World War II Veterans + 86 Guardians + 37 Whirlwind Hours = Priceless!

As told by daughter-in-law Fran Kohl and Kent Kohl, son of resident Jack G. Kohl

The pictures cannot adequately describe this incredible, humbling experience. It was a true honor to be in the company of these veterans.

When we arrived in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, May 4, we toured Arlington National Cemetery



Jack Kohl, seen here visiting the Iwo Jima Memorial in Washington, D.C. Jack witnessed the original placing of the American Flag at Iwo Jima during World War II.

and watched the very moving “Changing of the Guard” ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

On Thursday we toured the World War II Memorial, where we were greeted by Senators Mark Udall and Michael Bennet. We also toured the Lincoln, Vietnam, Korean and Iwo Jima memorials. A reporter from the KREX Channel 5 in Grand Junction who made the trip interviewed Dad at the Iwo Jima Memorial because Dad was at the actual raising of the flag at Iwo Jima during the war.

Everywhere we went, students and tourists shook hands with the veterans, thanking them for their service. Before heading to the airport, we took a bus tour of downtown D.C., including the Capitol and the White House.

During the return flight there were laughs as well as tears. During an on-board “mail call,” each veterans received letters of thanks, making it a very emotional time!

When we arrived back in Grand Junction Thursday evening, the run-



From left are Fran, Jack and Kent Kohl at the Washington Memorial.

way was lined with fire trucks and police cars with lights flashing. The fire department made a “water tower” for the plane to taxi through. Inside the terminal, more than 500 people cheered and waved to thank our veterans.

One of the nurses asked Dad if he would do it again. “I would go in a second!” he said. We would too!

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Kohl's life includes surviving World War II attack on high seas

Jack Gilbert Kohl was born on a farm in Hastings, Neb., on Oct. 3, 1925, but spent most of his young life in Woodland Park and Green Mountain Falls, Colo. Jack enlisted in the Navy in 1944 and served his country until 1946.

Jack spent time during World War II on the USS Bismarck aircraft carrier and was present during the invasions of Okinawa and Iwo Jima.

The night the USS Bismarck went down, they were hit by two Japanese suicide bombers with another twin-engine Japanese bomber flying into the fire. Many U.S. servicemen were killed. When the ship started to list to the right, the survivors were told to abandon ship. Running through the fire, Jack grabbed his lifejacket and jumped into the water, even though he couldn't swim a lick.

Ships started picking up survivors from the USS Bismarck. But if Jack hadn't grabbed a cable on the back of his ship, he could have drowned. He held onto the cable and was dragged through the water. An explosion on the water left him with burns to his wrists and arms. He thought he was going to die.

Jack and his surviving comrades were in the water for almost 36 hours before being rescued. During that time, Jack consumed large amounts of gasoline,



Kent Kohl with his father, Jack, at the World War II Memorial in front of the pillar inscribed with "Nebraska," where Jack was born. Each state is recognized at the memorial.

diesel and jet fuel as well as salt water, he said, leaving him very sick. After being rescued, he spent a week in a Pearl Harbor hospital.

When the war was over, and when he was home on "survivors' leave," Jack married his wife, Donna. They were married for more than 50 years when she passed away. Together they raised five children: Steve, Linda (who died of breast cancer at age 53), Kitsey, Becky and Kent.

To this day, Jack still will not eat Spam sandwiches, because the snack available during World War II was usually Spam!

COLORADO STATE VETERANS HOME AT RIFLE

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Our Mission

Under the direction of the Colorado Department of Human Services, the mission of the Division of State Veterans Nursing Homes is to honor and serve our nation's veterans, their spouses and Gold Star Parents by creating opportunities for meaningful activity, continued growth and feelings of self-worth in resident-centered long-term care and supportive living environments.

Our Vision

Our vision is that residents experience compassion, dignity and companionship in communities filled with life, love and laughter.

Key personnel

Paul D. Crook, Administrator
Margie Maynard,
Director of Nursing
Kim Coppock, Office Manager
Raquel Creamer, Dietary Manager
Deana Jacoby, Activities Director
with Eden Certification
Tom Elkins, Plant Manager
Christa Little-Fawn,
Restorative Nurse
Tammy Waller, MDS Coordinator
Lee Snyder, Social Services
Lindsey Doiel, Social Services
Jessica Strong,
Admissions Coordinator
Nikki Maynard, Medical Records
Lisa Adams, Marketing Coordinator
Charla Abbott, Infection Control
Bev Henderson, Wound Nurse
Audrey Inskip,
Pharmaceutical Nurse

Resident tribute

Resident Pete Bukowich showed his caring spirit by putting together this beautiful flower arrangement in memory of our veteran friend John Larkin, who recently passed away. John's wife, Thelma, who still resides at our Home, said Pete's kind gesture shows his giving nature. Pete's flowers are displayed outside on the second floor patio.



Hospice arrives at the State Veterans Home at Rifle!

Rifle's Home welcomes two local hospice providers

Please join us in welcoming Alpine Home Health & Hospice and Hospice of the Valley. These two hospices now lend support during difficult end-of-life decisions. They assist our nursing staff and will offer bereavement and grief support services for family members 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To improve services to friends living in our Home and to augment our own end-of-life program, we are happy to be working with these hospice providers:

Alpine Home Health & Hospice:

1517 Blake Ave., Suite 100 B, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601; 800-HOSPICE or 970-945-2838

2764 Compass Drive, Suite 110, Grand Junction, CO 81506; 970-260-3805

Hospice of the Valley:

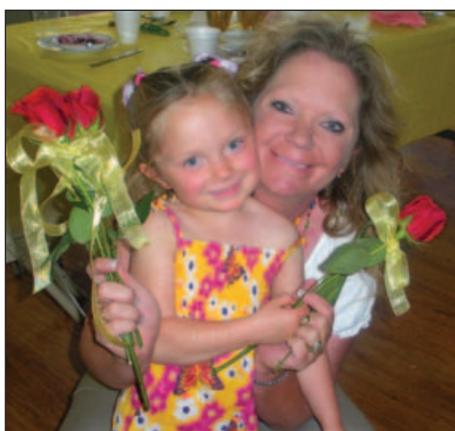
234 Cody Lane, Basalt, CO 81621; 888-927-6650 or 970-544-1568

Mom's special day

Mothers turn out to celebrate!

More than 35 people attended a special Mother's Day Tea at our Home hosted by Carolyn Creech (Activities) and Dianne Dayhoff (Administration). Resident moms dressed up and were greeted with beautiful corsages homemade by Dianne.

The tables were set with fine china and were decorated in soft, spring colors with roses. Resident Olga Godeski's daughter in law, Kim; and great-granddaughter, Do-Da, handed out long-stemmed red roses with gold ribbons to every resident mom! Their special day also included cookies,



DoDa Godeski and her mom, Kim, show off the red roses they made to hand out to each resident mom on Mother's Day.

homemade pies, chocolate covered strawberries, hot tea and splendid memories.

Special thanks also go to volunteer Kathy Mehl and to the wonderful daughters of our residents who pitched in and helped.



Joe Goldman, World War II B-17 gunner, savors the moment when he joins the women's party, wearing flowers in his hair to blend in with the crowd!

Kudo Korner

Our thanks go to:

- ★ Starbuck's in Rifle, with special thanks to Tina Puentes, Christy Blatter and Barbara Tweedy for their weekly deliveries of tasty pastries for our veterans and spouses.
- ★ The following organizations for their monetary donations (from January 2011 to present): *DAV Durango Chapter 48, American Legion Buzzard Monce Post #86, Glenwood Springs Art Guild, Silt VFW Auxiliary, American Legion New Castle Post #164, State of Colorado DAV Auxiliary, Independent Charities of America, Colorado Mountain Association of the U.S. Bowling Congress, DAV Longmont Chapter #16, C.H. Bernklau Charitable Trust, Aspen Elks Lodge #224, DAV Silver San Juan Chapter #48, DAV Auxiliary Knobb Hill Chapter #26, DAV Auxiliary State Department of Colorado, DAV Chapter #10, Browns Hole Homemakers Club, DAV Longmont Chapter #16, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, American Legion Edgewater Post #17 and all friends who made contributions in memory of a loved one or friend.*

Catch this!

Our friends enjoy a day of fishing

Our friends at the State Veterans Home at Rifle were recently treated to a morning of fishing at Harvey Gap reservoir, and it's apparent they had a great time!

Right: The worst day fishing always beats the best day at work ... Bill McCarthy, resident, and Carolyn Creech (Activities) show off the walleye they snagged at Harvey Gap. Not bad, eh?



Resident Mary Ellen Green-Bouchard enjoys the day out. Aren't some photos worth a thousand words?

Summertime, when the living is 'easy'?

Warmer months bring facelifts around grounds

Gazebo makeover

When Jamie West (Nursing) and Jennifer Sisseck (CNA/Administration) spearheaded a project to give the gazebo a complete makeover, they never dreamed it would take so many laborious hours. Sara Christen, also a nurse, joined in on the project. The gazebo now sports a new look with red, white and blue paint; a new white lattice; and new flowerboxes.



Staff members Jennifer Sisseck and Jamie West stand proudly at the gazebo.



The remodeled gazebo shows off its new colors, complete with flowers.

Employees' family members also helped with the project: Johnnie and Noah (Jamie's husband and son); Chris Sisseck (Jennifer's husband), Xavier and Christopher Sisseck (Jennifer's sons); Larry Hamby (Sara's husband) and Nancy Nicole Christen Hamby (Sara's daughter). Thanks everyone for your hard work!

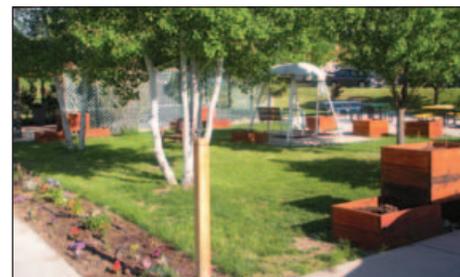
Garden upgrades

Sheryl Myers and Pat Shetler, daughters of resident Ruth Shetler, also had some lofty ideas to improve the condition of the "Stake Your Claim" garden area. With garden tools, including saws, in hand, the two women removed old, dead roots and bushes; replaced potting soil; regenerated the grass; cleaned up litter; replanted new flowers, plants and bushes; and even added a drip watering system!

The two received donated flowers and potting soil from Lowe's Garden Center of Glenwood Springs and Alpine Garden Center of Silt.

Special thanks goes to Chad Shilt of Rifle who renovated and rebuilt the garden boxes for an Eagle Scout project.

Everyone is now enjoying the beauty of the flowers while they take strolls in and around the garden or just enjoy taking a peaceful break. Thank you, Sheryl and Pat!



The Shetlers' new garden — the finished product!



Once word got out about the remodeled gazebo and garden area, Lily Farr, a first floor nurse, and her son Matthew took the initiative (and elbow grease) necessary to clean up the special care unit's back yard, pulling weeds, purchasing and adding flowers and new flowerpots and placing new soil and grass seed. Great job, Lily and Matthew!