

A close-up, vertical shot of the American flag, focusing on the blue field with white stars and the red and white stripes. The flag is slightly out of focus, creating a soft, patriotic background.

# VETERANS DAY

NOVEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>

To All Who  
Served,  
Thank You

*A Special Section of the Saratoga Sun*





## Supporting those who served

### HEM continues tradition of Veteran breakfast

by Mike Armstrong

Watching a movie like "Saving Private Ryan", "Platoon" or "Hurt Locker" it is easy to be reminded of how grateful Americans are for the people who served in the armed forces over the years. Once a year, the United States celebrates the service of those veterans.

On November 19, Hanna Elk Mountain, Medicine Bow (HEM) High School's National Honor Society will host a breakfast for veterans, inviting all three schools of northern Carbon County, veterans and their family members. This will be the 10th year for the event.

"Sarah Jones (who is now a 4th grade teacher at Hanna Elementary) was the Honor Society advisor and I was helping, and she put together a dinner on honoring the veterans as well as Thanksgiving, so it was more of a community gathering," Crystal Clark, HEM math teacher and current Honor Society advisor, said. "From this event it went more towards

the Veterans celebration."

Clark said to get the students more involved, the format was changed to make it more of a learning opportunity.

"We want the students, from kindergarten all the way to 12th grade, to have them understand Veterans Day and why it is so important to celebrate these people who served," Clark said. "We added a coloring contest for the younger kids and we put in a poster creation contest for the 3rd and 4th graders. For 5th and 6th grade, they do an essay for whatever our theme is that year."

For the middle and high school students, displays are created.

"These displays are on the line of museum exhibit again based on the theme," Clark said. "The displays are at the breakfast and the essay winners read what they have written to the audience at the breakfast."

Clark said over the years, there has been a strong channel with the Francis E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne for guest speakers.

"We are also in contact with our Army National Guard representatives that comes



Photo by Mike Armstrong

**Crystal Clark is honored to continue a tradition of connecting students and veterans.**

and works with the students throughout the year," Clark said. "They come out of Laramie and do quite a few things with the students during the year. They will be here this year, so this means we will have active veterans at the breakfast."

Clark said all these activities open up Veterans Day to be a teaching moment for all grades.

"We teach why Veterans Day is important and that Armistice Day is basically the foundation of our present day, Veterans Day," Clark said. "This lets the teachers use this event as a foundation for a lesson or a unit and the breakfast is the closure of this particular teaching moment."

She said the breakfast allows approachability for

students of all ages to talk to veterans about the history that they have learned.

"This breakfast allows students to meet and see people who are and have been in the military and allows a connection," Clark said. "Kit Felton, our music teacher, has each of the military hymns played and the vets stand up as hymns are put forth."

Clark said the message to vets is simple for the breakfast and presentations.

"It is to say thank you," Clark said. "Thank you for what you have done, or are doing, to allow us live in the country safely."

Clark said they have a data base to contact vets and work hard to keep it updated so when this event happens, all the local vets are invited.

The reason the breakfast is on November 19 this year, instead of Veterans Day is so all students would be able to attend.

"With scheduling to get three schools all here, it was easiest to put it on that Friday, so there was as little disruption to the different schools," Clark said. "So the 19th was picked so we can keep that total involvement

of all the students."

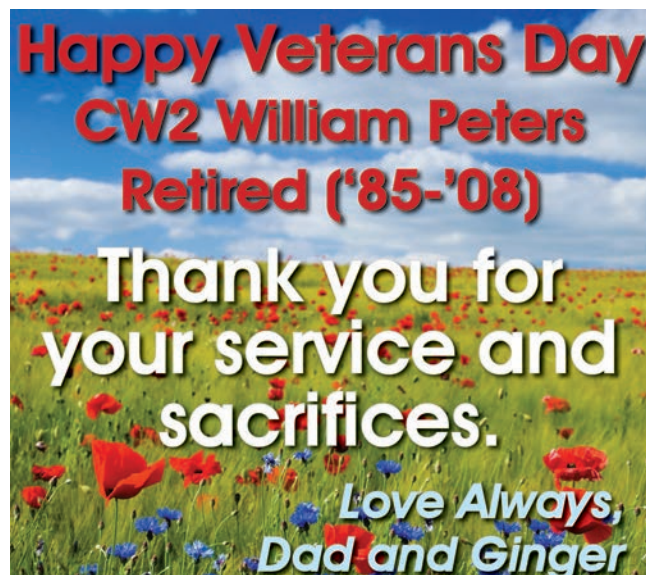
She said the students are made aware of why November 11 was chosen as Veterans Day.

It occurs on November 11 every year in the United States in honor of the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" of 1918 that signaled the end of World War I, known as Armistice Day. President Dwight D. Eisenhower officially changed the name of the holiday from Armistice Day to Veterans Day.

Clark is honored to be able to work on this event with the Honor Society, students, teachers and community to thank the vets.

Personally, I find these people who served our country to be incredibly selfless," Clark said. "They served because they knew it was the right thing to do, to keep the country as proud as it is. We need to say thank you as many times and many ways as we possibly can. We need to let them know, their time they protected our country, it is very much appreciated."

HEM's Veterans Breakfast will be held from 8 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. on November 19.



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# Proud to serve

**Carl Pigg one of few surviving WWII veterans in Platte Valley**

*by Joshua Wood*

At 94 years old, Carl Pigg is one of the last surviving World War II veterans in the Platte Valley. Now a great-grandfather, Pigg was once a young man proud to serve his country. That pride is still evident today.

Though he calls Saratoga home now, he was raised on a farm in Missouri approximately 50 miles outside of Poplar Bluffs. At the age of 18, he was drafted in the United States Army and went to boot camp at Fort Bliss, Texas. By this time, Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist Party had been defeated in Europe. Carl, with the help of his wife, Mary, recalled he was about to be sent to the Pacific Theater when Japan surrendered.

The formal end of World War II came on

September 2, 1945 with the official surrender of Japan, nearly four years after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Carl would never leave stateside during the war. He was, however, placed on active reserve with the United States Army. During that time, he returned home to Missouri and worked in St. Louis for a time. He also, during that time, helped his parents on the farm. All of this occurred before Carl and Mary met. While still able to engage in conversation and having a twinkle in his eyes, Carl admits plenty of time has passed since those days and he has trouble recalling from time to time.

Less than five years after the end of World War II, the United States became involved in the Korean War. On June 25, 1950 approximately 75,000 soldiers of the North Korean People's Army crossed the

boundary between the Soviet Union-backed Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States-backed Republic of Korea. By June 27, 1950 the United States had become involved on behalf of South Korea while the Soviet Union entered on behalf of North Korea.

Being on active reserve, Carl was once again called to duty. While he wouldn't ever set foot on Korean soil, he still served a critical role. Stationed at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, Carl was an anti-aircraft gunner. Though he never fired on any enemy aircraft, there was plenty of training. The young man from Missouri spent two years in Alaska before he returned home. Even now, he says if he had to do it all over again, he would. No regrets.

After he returned home, it was summer in Missouri and Carl told his parents he wanted to move somewhere with cooler

weather. It seemed, after two years in Alaska, the humid summers back home didn't agree with him. With two sisters and their husbands logging in the Platte Valley, he moved to Saratoga in early 1954.

In 2011, Carl had the honor of taking the Honor Flight from Wyoming to Washington, D.C. A group photo of the World War II veterans who took the flight hangs on the wall as soon as one enters the door of Carl and Mary's house. The veterans, all in white shirts, are gathered under a statue commemorating the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima. According to Carl, it was the best part of the trip.

A final thought from the World War II and Korean War veteran centered around the preservation of the United States and the sacrifice it would take to protect it.

"This is our country. If we don't take care of it,



Photo courtesy Carl Pigg

*A young Carl Pigg, circa World War II.*

ain't nobody else going to take care of it," said Carl. "If there's anything I've gathered over the years," added Mary, "its that he's proud of his service."



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# 'Where do we go from here?'

**Voice of  
Democracy local  
winner answers  
the question**

**by Jaden Campbell**

It began with an idea and a promise. A promise of freedom and of liberty. When the Patriots declared their independence, they knew not what the future would hold, but they knew that the roots of the seed of liberty they had planted would grow strong. The Enlightenment philosophers illustrated the principle of our inalienable rights - of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and our Founders intended for these simple ideas to grow and change and flourish with a new nation. Our leaders have known this promise. George Washington began with the assurance of our

liberty when he stepped down as president and allowed for the country to learn how to thrive on its own. Abraham Lincoln continued this promise as he faced a divided Union and understood the failings of the nation. Martin Luther King Jr. promised liberty when he cried, "I have a dream." He promised it when he fought for equality from Birmingham Jail and he promised it until his death. Equality and liberty are our inherent rights, and they are the very basis of this great nation. This principle of inalienable rights has held true throughout the history of America, and its influence can be seen in almost every aspect of our lives. Yet, in every age and in every great nation, there comes a period of time in which our core values and beliefs face extreme

duress. When the question is asked of where our country goes from its current state, there can only be one answer. We go forward. We continue to evolve and to hold onto the rights and values that founded this country almost 250 years ago. The seed of liberty that was planted so many years ago has grown strong, but it still needs more time to evolve. In the instant that we give up and no longer fight for what is good and just, we admit defeat and throw away the dream of America. We have fought hard for equality and freedom, and we still have a long way to go before this dream is finally realized. By allowing dissent and anger to win, we will never reach the promise that we have assured for every citizen of this nation. America is by no means perfect, but

we empirically know that we have the means to improve. For this reason, we have to allow ourselves the opportunity to create the environment in which unity is prioritized. No matter what challenges we face, we cannot lose hope. It is our ability as Americans to constantly innovate and change. More broadly, we should not ask ourselves where we go here, but we should ask ourselves how we go from here. How do we, collectively, allow for our country to address its problems and improve in an age where everything appears to be falling down around us? The answer is clear. We pay homage to those who have worked to build this country and who have fought for its rights. We listen to the opinions of those who might disagree with us and work towards

the greater good. We continue to advocate for our youth and improve their education as they are our future. The strife that exists in our nation can be overcome. America is still evolving, and its people are evolving with it. As long as we hold true to the promises of freedom and of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, we will continue to move forward in history as a strong, unified nation. The veterans that have fought for our country have ensured that these promises are protected for us, and we cannot let their sacrifice go to waste. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness have been promised to us since this nation was founded, and as we move forward, we move forward with the promise that these

rights are inherently ours. America is the land of the free and the home of the brave. We do not back down when we are faced with great challenges, and we will move forward with grace and with power. Liberty has been planted in America since this nation's founding. The roots of this liberty are strong, and we have cultivated our freedom with the understanding that it will grow as we do. Our problems do not define us as a country. We will continue to succeed and to ensure that our natural rights are protected. We have been promised life. We have been promised liberty. We have been promised happiness. Where we go from here is that we will make sure that these promises come to fruition.

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## The Poppy Remembers Veterans

Veterans Day honors our armed services and there are poems which honor these soldiers who have fallen.

Two stand out for veteran celebrations: "In Flanders Fields" and "Only a Paper Poppy". They are often associated with Memorial Day, but they are appropriate for Veterans Day as we remember the sacrifices our armed forces have made over the years.

On May 2, 1915, Canadian poet John McCrae's close friend and former student Alexis Helmer was killed by a German shell in World War I. Composed at the battlefield on May 3, 1915 during the second battle of Ypres, Belgium, this poem became the basis for poppies being the flower symbolically used to honor the war dead.

### In Flanders Fields.

**In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place: and in the sky  
The larks still bravely singing fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.**

**We are the dead: Short days ago,  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved: and now we lie  
In Flanders fields!**

**Take up our quarrel with the foe  
To you, from failing hands, we throw  
The torch: be yours to hold it high  
If ye break faith with us who die,  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders field**

American professor Moina Micheal conceived of the Flanders Field Memorial poppy in 1915 to decorate the graves of American soldiers. In 1919 her fame spread to such an extent she was known as the "Poppy Lady".

In 1920 the poppy was made the official memorial flower of the American Legion and the Auxiliary in 1921. In 1924, the Legion started the national poppy program, where paper poppies are made by disabled vets to be sold to honor veterans of wars. The disabled vets are paid for each poppy they make and materials are supplied free of charge. The proceeds from buying these paper poppies have the funds go Veterans Affairs for rehabilitation of vets and to help their families.

Symbolism of the Poppy is as such for the American Legion. The red petals stand for the vast outpouring of blood; the green and black center, the mud and desolation of all battlefields. The green of the stem is symbolic of the forests, meadows and fields where generations Americans have perished to make this land free. The stem represents the courage and determination of our fallen warriors. The assembled product, a flower, is a symbol of resurrection which is sure to follow.

There is poem written by an unknown author to make Americans aware of the paper poppy's importance to vets.

### Only a Paper Poppy

**Only some paper petals  
With two leaves of paper, too.  
Only a paper poppy  
Does it mean anything more to you?**

**The red is for the courage  
Of men who fought and bled,  
And then came back to spend their days  
In the ranks of the living dead.**

**The green of the leaves reminds me  
Of the sunny hillsides over the sea,  
Wherever rest the war torn bodies  
Of those who died that war might cease to be.**

**The cup that is formed by the petals  
Covers a heart of gold.  
It stands for a labor of love  
Whose value can never be told.**

**Only a paper poppy  
But it holds the hopes and fears  
Of numberless men and their loved ones  
As they carry on through the years.**

Although the red poppy is associated with Memorial Day, on Veterans Day, it makes sense to also read both poems to honor the vets during this time.







## Not for a million dollars

**'Cowboy' Bill Wadsworth reflects on time in U.S. Navy**

by Micky Jones

Starting his military service at the height of World War II with the active Navy Reserves, "Cowboy" Bill Wadsworth began in the "kiddie cruise", a division for service men aged 17 until the day before turning 21.

While most signed up for six years at the time, Wadsworth started with a four year term. Starting his term was an adventure in itself. While in Canada on a canoe trip for Boy Scouts, Cowboy was called to duty. Relaxing around the fire after a long day of paddling, Wadsworth was told he was to be in Kansas City the next morning to report for duty, a whole 2,000 miles away.

"I think just about everybody in Iowa got

on the phone to the Navy (and) besieged them with phone calls," said Cowboy.

After hearing Wadsworth was in Canada on a Boy Scout trip the Navy said informed the concerned callers they would save a spot for the young man.

So started the journey, paddling 40 miles by canoe to Minnesota before taking a train all the way to Kansas City. Wadsworth arrived in Kansas City to report for duty and began his term.

"If you signed up for six, you stayed for six. Even if the war ended you'd end up with your six years. Quite the commitment," said Cowboy.

One advantage of the kiddie cruise program was the option of a shorter term. Now a defunct U.S. Navy program, it was available to high school graduates under 18 years old with an obligation to serve until their 21st birthday. Instead of a four



Photo by Micky Jones

**'Cowboy' Bill Wadsworth still smiles when recounting his adventures in the United States Navy.**

or six year enlistment, one could theoretically serve as little as three years.

"I enlisted as a U.S. Navy Cadet to be a fly boy, or Aviation Cadet.

Except, then, the war was over and they didn't want any of us would-be pilots," said Wadsworth.

Switching gears to General Duty, it was off

to boot camp. After boot camp Wadsworth was sent to Lakehurst, New Jersey, the sight of the Hindenburg disaster which occurred on May 6, 1937. The German zeppelin Hindenburg arrived from Frankfurt and caught fire at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station, which is located in Manchester Township (not in the borough of Lakehurst).

Working with blimps instead of planes, Cowboy and the crews he worked with at the Naval Air Station of Lakehurst, New Jersey put the first two blimps into the air above Philadelphia for companies MGM and Ford Motor Company. Being stationed on ground crew, they were in charge of getting the airships ready to fly, as well as keeping them on the ground. To do so they used huge ropes and a lot of manpower to keep the

ships from lifting off.

"That meant you held on to these long ropes and held it down because they are LTA or lighter than air. So we would hold them down until they signaled us to turn loose. When it came time to land, there would be 20-30 people there ready to grab the lines and pull it down and hold it," said Cowboy. "Those airships have a lot of lift to them too. Instead of holding a line once I grabbed a rail, while using my whole weight somebody said 'don't you let go' well I was about 40 feet in the air and didn't know it. I kept my feet on the ground after that. They were something to be around."

Wadsworth recalled marveling at the newer airships.

"It was sure fun seeing them being built and flying over Philadelphia, I went out and watched


See "A million dollars" on page 9

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- Dan Lipinski





## A million dollars...continued from page 6

them flying over the city. Quite the sight to see. That was before anyone civilian wise really knew about blimps it seemed," Wadsworth said. "Dirigibles were more well known and commonly used in World War II. The dirigibles had a rigid frame and the blimps were more like an overgrown balloon."

The U.S. Navy began acquiring nonrigid airships toward the end of the 1920s. During the 1930s, the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company built a fleet of blimps it used for advertising and barnstorming. The Navy began expanding its fleet, and the K-type airship became the backbone of the Navy's airships program. They were not fast but, unlike an airplane which could

remain airborne for only a few hours, a K-ship could stay aloft for 60 hours.

The United States was the only power to use airships during World War II, and they played a small but important role.

The Navy used them for mine sweeping, search and rescue, photographic reconnaissance, scouting, escorting convoys and anti-submarine patrols. Airships accompanied many oceangoing ships, both military and civilian.

Of the 89,000 ships escorted by airships during the war, not one escorted ship was lost to enemy action. Only one airship was ever lost, and it happened off the coast of Florida in July 1943.

Lakehurst, New Jersey has a rich airship and naval history, though there's more than just a

Naval base.

"I spent the majority of my time in Lakehurst, New Jersey. Beautiful place with a lot to do. Toms River was a great place to go swimming. I was swimming out there on a holiday weekend one time and noticed a bunch of folks on the beach. As I was wondering why they weren't in the water, I saw three sharks in the water right behind me," said Wadsworth. "Boy, you should have seen this cowboy trying to get across that water."

Although the Navy base at Lakehurst will be remembered as the site of the Hindenburg disaster, many other significant events have taken place at the base. Many rigid airships called the station home, as did many U.S. Navy blimps. The station

was the western terminal for the commercial transatlantic flights of the German dirigibles Hindenburg and Graf Zeppelin. Naval Station Lakehurst was the first International airport in the US. The first Navy Helicopter Squadron and the first live ejection seat test were also at Navy Station Lakehurst.

Naval Air Station Lakehurst was the first station for Navy helicopter squadrons and related helicopter training, starting after World War II.

"The first time I saw helicopters was when they brought a squadron into the base. That was a sight, they weren't like the helicopters you see today by far. Just one rotating fan on the top and one on the fin, if they got out of sync it was a big

mess," said Cowboy "We had a parachute jumper school on the base too, they would build their own parachutes and then they'd have to take the thing out and jump it. Ain't a good way to find out your parachute doesn't work."

Being stationed at a place of history has a way of leaving its mark on you. Cowboy was able to leave his mark on history by making it into the Encyclopedia Britannica. Having a friend in the photo lab ask for pictures of blips and zeppelin airships Wadsworth was able to assist. Submitting photos and having photo credit to a famous encyclopedia isn't a claim many are able to make.

"A lot of good times and good memories. As

I turned around after reporting for duty in Kansas City, I ran into the same fella I was on the canoe trip with. Gosh, talk about a friendship. We kept in contact for years and years after. I would say everybody ought to do some kind of service. It's a maturity thing you won't find anywhere else," Wadsworth said. "You certainly grow up fast and with some good bases. Not to mention the friendships you make are truer than any others. Lifelong friends are made and you get a real good head on your shoulders by doing it. I would say if you have any inclination towards service to do it for sure. A great experience, something I wouldn't take a million dollars to change."

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# The importance of communication

**Typing class takes Dario Soto to important role in U.S. Navy**

**by Mike Armstrong**  
When Dario Soto was in high school in Pine Bluffs in the early 1950s, he was not inclined to join elective agriculture programs, so he and a couple other male students took typing class. He didn't know it at the time, but his typing skills would be instrumental to his career in the Navy.  
After graduating from high school, Soto went to a community college in Arizona where he played football for a year. Funds were tight for the young college student so, in 1954, he joined the United States Navy.

"I took all kinds of tests and, because of my typing ability, they put the earphones on me and put me into communications," Soto said. "I listened and learned how to copy Morse code."  
During his time with the Navy, Soto was stationed for two years in the Philippines.  
"My time in the Philippines, I spent time on the radio copying ship-to-shore," Soto said. "When I started my service, it was the time when they started teletype. It was interesting because we learned about things before anyone else did. It had applications with the weather to learning about what was happening in the United States almost immediately. Teletype was just starting to be



Photo by Mike Armstrong

Dario Soto is now a beloved Carbon County School District No. 2 educator.

used in the Navy when I joined."  
Soto said there were two ship-to-shore circuits and one was for spy planes. He didn't know about one circuit being for spy planes at first.  
"The only reason we found out was one time the plane was attacked and they used plain language," Soto said. "So we figured it out."  
While in the Philippines, Soto played on a basketball team in his communications division. He recounts an amusing story from the experience.  
"It was the year the Olympics were in a Pacific country (Australia) and where I was stationed they decided to get a team together that would contest some of the olympic teams," Soto explained. "So I was encouraged to try out and it turns out, I was the only "white hat" (enlisted) that tried out. All the others were officers."  
When they selected the team, Soto was told by the officer in charge that he was good, but not big enough.  
"The word got passed around what happened and when the communications team played the officers, the crowd started yelling at the officers, 'You aren't big enough', because a lot of people thought I should have been considered,"

See "Importance of" on page 9

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- Harry S. Truman





## Importance of...Continued from page 8

Soto said. "That was a funny moment."

After being stationed in the Philippines Soto was next assigned to the aircraft carrier the USS Princeton.

The Princeton was one of 24 Essex-class aircraft carriers built during and shortly after World War II for the United States Navy. The ship was the fifth US Navy ship to bear the name and was named for the Revolutionary War Battle of Princeton.

In October 1964, the ship once again entered combat operations. For the next four years, she served several voyages to support Vietnam forces. In April 1969, she acted as recovery ship for Apollo 10. In January of 1970, the ship was formally

decommissioned.

"It was a small carrier," Soto said. "It carried a S2F airplane and I spent my time on that carrier for the last two years."

The S2F was the first purpose-built, anti-submarine warfare aircraft to enter service with the United States Navy. Designed and initially built by Grumman, the tracker was of conventional design for its time. It was propeller driven with twin engines, a high wing which could be folded for storage on aircraft carriers, and tricycle undercarriage. Introduced in 1952, it saw service in the U.S. Navy until the mid-1970s.

The Princeton was not only used for surveillance, it also

did a mercy mission of delivering food to a Southeast Asian country which had been hit by a typhoon.

"This had us cross the equator, which is a special thing in the Navy," Soto said. "I became a Shellback."

The U.S. Navy has long established equator crossing rituals. Those sailors who have already crossed the Equator are nicknamed Shellbacks, Trusty Shellbacks, Honorable Shellbacks, or Sons of Neptune. Those who have not crossed are nicknamed Pollywogs, or Slimy Pollywogs, or sometimes simply Slimy Wogs.

According to Veterans United, the ceremony observes a mariner's transformation from slimy Pollywog, a

seaman who hasn't crossed the equator, to trusty Shellback, also called a Son or Daughter of Neptune. It was a way for sailors to be tested for their seaworthiness.

When a ship crosses the equator, King Neptune comes aboard to exercise authority over his domain and to judge charges brought against Pollywogs that they are only posing as sailors and haven't paid proper homage to the god of the sea.

High ranking members of the crew and those who have been Shellbacks the longest, dress up in elaborate costume and each play the part of King Neptune's court. For instance, the ship's captain might play the part of King Neptune himself. What

proceeds is a day of festivities, which builds camaraderie among the seafaring crew.

Soto said he listened to spy planes which were using Morse code. He does remember one time when one of the planes came under fire and the pilot used plain language.

Soto says there is information from that time he still can't talk about. He remembers war games could be grueling.

"They watched us closely in communications and they made sure we were up to the job during these practices," Soto said. "We wanted to be prepared."

Soto said one of the things he remembers was the sailors waiting to

see a plane crash.

"It never happened," Soto said.

Soto is grateful to the Navy because once he left, the Navy helped him go to the University of Wyoming where he majored in education.

At 87, Soto is still teaching physical education to the three northern Carbon County School District No. 2 elementary schools and is the coach for the Hanna, Elk Mountain, Medicine Bow junior high school basketball team.

That should come as no surprise for a 1956 Olympic basketball team hopeful from the U.S. Navy.







## Teaching civics and service

### Encampment's Leslie McLinskey nominated for VFW Teacher of the Year

by Joshua Wood

November 11, which was officially designated as Veterans Day in 1954 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, is a day to honor and thank those members of our community who served their country. While it is an important day to many, what is perhaps equally important is those who expand the lessons of Veterans Day throughout the year.

Each year, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) posts throughout the country submit nominations to sponsor a local educator for VFW Teacher of the Year. According to the nomination form from the VFW, teachers who are eligible are those

"who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism". This year, Platte Valley VFW Post 6125 has submitted their nomination of Leslie McLinskey, language arts teacher at Encampment K-12 School.

"After Doug Tieszen retired, Leslie took over the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen essays and has been participating every year with her students. It's not an easy task because it's not part of the regular curriculum and she has managed to keep it worked into her curriculum and to encourage these students to write about different themes every year," said VFW Adjunct Elizabeth Wood. "It's not an easy task. It required deep, critical thinking. It requires research. It requires them to ask questions of themselves. For instance, this year the theme is 'How can I be a good

American?' for Patriots Pen. The other theme, for Voice of Democracy, is 'Where do we go from here?' Especially for a high school student to talk about where do we go from here, we have leaders of our nation who can't answer that question yet we have 11th graders that are answering it very well. There's some good critical thinking there."

Along with keeping her students each year involved in the two essay programs through the VFW, McLinskey is the sponsor for National Honor Society. Both McLinskey and the students involved in the honor society plan an annual Veterans Assembly held each year at the school, reach out to the VFW and other local veterans to be involved, and present different programs during the assembly.

"She's also a leader in her community," Wood

added.

As if keeping junior high school and high school students on task wasn't enough, McLinskey also serves on the Platte Valley Healthcare Project board, which was the driving force behind the North Platte Valley Medical Center currently being constructed at 13th Street and Bridge Avenue in Saratoga.

"She's involved in the Platte Valley Arts Council and specifically helping develop art (programs) for children," said Wood. "She's also on various education committees for the school district and she cares very much about the community that she lives in and the community that her children are growing up in."

Being sponsored by the Platte Valley VFW, McLinskey is in good company. In the past, VFW Post 6125 had sponsored Cheryl "Mo"

Munroe who went on to be awarded Wyoming VFW Teacher of the Year. Wood admits the veteran organization hasn't kept up on nominations over the past few years, but made the decision this year to begin making nominations.

"Leslie came to the top of my mind and that's who I recommended to the VFW. She doesn't brag about it. There are a lot of excellent teachers in the Valley, at Saratoga and Encampment, so it's not easy to stand out in a field of excellent teachers," Wood said. "In this case, we felt she was deserving of this award."

According to Wood, the VFW takes both the Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy essays very seriously, which appears to be at least one factor in the local post's nomination of McLinskey.

"We're always amazed by the entries that we get

and how young people see their country. I was listening to one speech today and it's like 'This kid should run for president'. He's got more wisdom than people we've had in office," said Wood. "It's always interesting to see the perspective from a junior high school and high school student's (point of view). We see things from a veteran's perspective and an adult's perspective and a parent's perspective. To see the perspective of a young person is very enlightening and it's encouraging to know our country will be in good hands."

McLinskey will be presented with the local nomination during Encampment K-12 School's Veterans Assembly at 2 p.m. on November 11. The winners of the local Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy contests will also be awarded.

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## Preserving their memory

### Platte Valley VFW looks to add names to Encampment memorial

#### Staff Report

On the north end of Grand View Park in Encampment sits a monument to veterans, past and present, who live south of Wyoming Highway 130.

The monument, which was started by Jonathon Patishall-Baker as an Eagle Scout project, lists names of those who served in the Civil War to 2010. The names were compiled with the help of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6125. The first list of names were engraved in February 2010, the monument was dedicated in March 2010 and additional names were added in September 2010.

For the past 11 years, however, there haven't been any additions to the

monument. According to Elizabeth Wood, adjunct of the Platte Valley VFW, after the dedication of the memorial it was discovered some veterans in the area had been missed. Wood also said, since the last list of names added in September 2010, more veterans have moved to the Valley and, specifically, the Encampment area.

With both of those factors in mind, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6125 is hoping to make the monument at Grand View Park more complete. Veterans who may have been missed during the initial construction of the monument or veterans who have moved to the southern end of the Platte Valley since 2010 are encouraged to contact the Platte Valley VFW.

Commander Jason Campbell can be contacted by calling 307-710-1719 and Adjunct Elizabeth Wood can be contacted by calling 307-329-7734.



Photo by Joshua Wood

The Veterans Memorial at Grand View Park, which was first dedicated in 2010, is in need of more names.

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# Honoring those who served

## Assemblies and dinners held to thank veterans for service

### Staff Report

Since 1954, with the passage of a bill signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, November 11 has been recognized as Veterans Day. Celebrated nationwide, the day is often marked in communities

by recognizing those members who have served in the United States Army, Air Force, Navy or Marine Corps. In the Platte Valley and surrounding areas, schools and community organizations will be holding assemblies and dinners to honor those who have served their country. Saratoga Elementary School will be holding two Veterans Day assemblies.

Local veteran and Saratoga Town Council member Benjamin Spaulding will speak to kindergarten through 3rd grade at 8:30 a.m. and 4th through 6th grade classes at 9 a.m. A flag ceremony will also be held. Saratoga Middle High School will be holding a Veterans Day assembly beginning at 11 a.m. Local veterans are encouraged to attend the event and are

invited to join students and staff for lunch afterwards. Contact Michelle McWain at 307-326-5246 to reserve a spot. Encampment K-12 School will be holding a Veterans Day assembly at 2 p.m. with the Platte Valley Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6125. The local winners of the Patriots Pen written essay and Voice of Democracy audio essay will be announced as well.

Angus England American Legion Post 54 in Saratoga will be hosting a sit down dinner on November 13. A social hour with cash bar will be held from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. and dinner will be served from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Dinner will be donated to veterans and a guest by the American Legion Auxiliary. The St. Ann's Catholic Church Youth Group will

be holding a spaghetti dinner in honor of Veterans Day on November 14 at St. Ann's Parish Hall. The dinner is free though donations are encouraged. All proceeds will go to Staff Sergeant Tyler Pickett Memorial Park. Hanna, Elk Mountain, Medicine Bow (HEM) High School will be holding a Veterans Day assembly on November 19.

# 'How Can I Be A Good American?'

## by Korbyn Barkhurst

Every American is a link in the armor that protects the ideals of the United States. By coming together we defend the posterity of the U.S.A. When we disrespect each other's opinions and beliefs, we betray the founding principles of this country. When we choose to let politics and slight disagreements turn into

resentment, we break that armor. If we allow ourselves to bring each other down, we are losing before the fight even begins. The United States is headed for disaster. We are tearing each other apart. If we continue down this path, we will fall. Americans are so focused on our differences that we forget to look at what we have in common.

Americans have allowed politics to become such a naked fight of opinions that we forget what our goal is. If we're being honest, our biggest problem is ourselves. We are fighting each other instead of the real threats to our liberties. To be good Americans we need to unite to make it through our problems. To be good Americans we

need to set our differences aside. Instead of fighting over who is better, we need to remember that our real enemy is anyone who tries to strip us of our inalienable rights and freedoms. I am not saying that we are bad people or unpatriotic citizens, but that I know we can be so much more. I know that we can be more loving and united. America

wasn't a world superpower for 100 years because of our geographical location or our resources. We were a superpower because of the grit of our citizens; they were good Americans. If I aspire to be a good American, I don't have to look far for guidance. I can simply look upon our ancestors and strive to be like them. I, as an American, have

a certain responsibility, a reputation, an honor to uphold. I am the future of our country. I need to work to strengthen others. I have a duty to respect our soldiers and give credit to the fallen for our freedom. I need to act as my forefathers intended, upholding the base ideals of this great nation. This is how to become a good American.

















