

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilors  
**From:** Michael Spurgeon, City Manager  
**Date:** December 09, 2016  
**Re:** Notes to Council

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### **1. STAFF REPORTS / ITEMS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION**

- Development Services Memo - Broken Arrow Comprehensive Plan Update

### **2. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE / NOTIFICATION**

- Press Release – Aspen Avenue Resurfacing Project Completed
- Press Release – Community Input Sought on Rose District Residential Development
- Press Release – City Council Approves New Utility Rates

### **3. SPECIAL EVENTS / ACTIVITIES**

- Broken Arrow Community Playhouse - Newsletter
- Military History Center Newsletter – December

Respectfully submitted,



Michael L. Spurgeon

jmh  
Attachments

## 1. STAFF REPORTS / ITEMS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION



**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** Michael Spurgeon, City Manager  
Kenny Schwab, Assistant City Manager – Operations  
**From:** Michael W. Skates, Development Services Director   
**Date:** December 9, 2016  
**Re:** **Development Services Report**

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1. **2017 Comprehensive Plan Update** – City staff have worked internally to review our current Comprehensive Plan. We prepared a Comprehensive Plan Guide Update that identifies a timeline, revisions to the current Comprehensive Plan and possible areas of focus for the future Comprehensive Plan. This guide update is attached.

Our initiative is to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) early next year and select a Consulting firm to update the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The 1997 plan was last updated in 2003. This will be the City’s sixth Comprehensive Plan since 1968.

We will present this guide update and briefly discuss the particulars at the December 20, 2016 City Council meeting.

## **Broken Arrow Comprehensive Plan Update**

The last major update of the Broken Arrow Comprehensive Plan was in 1997. A partial amendment was completed in June 2003. The Comprehensive Plan policies suggest updating the plan every 10 to 15 years.

The following principle steps are being proposed to launch a process to update the Comprehensive Plan, Although the Comprehensive Plan update will be coordinated by retaining a consulting firm, the following steps are proposed, before a consulting firm can be retained.

### **Timeline**

1. Discuss scope of work with the Planning Commission and City Council. (December 2016)
2. City Manager, Staff and Departments to review the needs for RFP, RFQ or RFI process. (January 2017)
3. Advertise (1 month) for retaining a consulting firm. (February-March 2017)
4. Interview consultants and retain one team (1 month). (March-April 2017)
5. Comprehensive Plan process to be completed in approximately 18 months

### **Revisions to the Current Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

- This chapter will need to be completely updated to document the process used in the Comprehensive Plan update, as well as modifications that have occurred to other documents (i.e. Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, Engineering Design Manual).
- Evaluate Section 1.6, what worked, what did not work.

#### **Chapter 2 – Development Opportunities and Constraints**

- Update city limit boundaries, zoning districts and base maps to reflect current data. (1997 plan has data from 1995).
- Revised building condition survey in the center of the city.
- Are there sections in this chapter that should be deleted (i.e. soils), or sections that need to be added or strengthened? Yes-allow section to remain with updates.

#### **Chapter 3 – Growth Policies and Standards**

- This has been a good section and has been referenced in reports presented to the Planning Commission and City Council. It needs to be refined and strengthened. This section should set the Cities position and vision for the future.

#### **Chapter 4 – Alternative Development Process Overview**

- Zoning Ordinance description and pictures need to be updated in Section 4.1. Otherwise, this subsection is in good condition.

### Chapter 5 – Future Development Guide

- This section has worked well, but needs to be updated along with the maps. The maps also need to be more user friendly.
- Pages in this chapter are used on all rezoning requests.
- How can this section be kept up to date?

### Chapter 6 – Future Needs

- This section needs to be updated and needs to include other plans that have been adopted (i.e. parks plan, GO Plan, fire department plan, utility plan, streets and storm water management, etc.).
- This section needs to be coordinated with the Capital Improvement Plan.

### Summary Brochure

- The Transportation Plan needs to be incorporated into this brochure.
- The brochure has worked well. However, how can the Comprehensive Plan brochure be kept updated and easily accessible?

### Additional Items

- The Comprehensive Plan needs to include a section regarding the future vision.
- Other modes of transportation (i.e. trails, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, BRT, rail and self-driving vehicles) need to be incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Comprehensive Plan needs to be easily accessible and be able to be kept up to date.
- Comprehensive Plan should include a section on health and fitness?
- Health Assessment of the community and future goals.
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- Sustainability Plan

**The future Comprehensive Plan should address:**

1. Time Frame
  - a. What Broken Arrow should look like through 2035-2040
2. Different Sections of the Comprehensive Plan
  - a. Land Use (Update of current plan)
  - b. City Demographics
  - c. Infrastructure Inventory
    - i. Utilities (water/sanitary)
    - ii. storm water
  - d. Transportation Network, Highway, and Streets
    - i. Arterial street width
    - ii. Trails
    - iii. Highways and Interchanges
    - iv. Complete Streets
  - e. Area Plans
    - i. Rose District
    - ii. Bass Pro District
    - iii. East Side District
    - iv. Warren Theater District
    - v. Arkansas River District
    - vi. Innovation District
  - f. Public Education
    - i. Goal (**Public Education and Public Health Impacts**): Address negative perception and fear of walking/biking as a form of transportation. Perceived danger is often more common than actual danger.  
Objectives:
      1. Create promotional material, host walk-shops, etc.
      2. Incentives to encourage building sidewalks in subdivisions.
    - ii. Goal (**Public Education and Public Health Impacts**): Partner with B.A. Schools to create/promote walking programs (walking school buses).  
Objectives:
      1. Evaluate and improve pedestrian infrastructure around schools.
      2. Develop guidelines for non-typical traffic calming mechanisms near schools (ex. Street painting).
  - g. Parks and Open Space
    - i. Goal (**Sustainability, Parks, and Public Health Impacts**): Promote healthy lifestyles for citizens of Broken Arrow by providing infrastructure and appropriate developments, where needed, within walking/biking distance of their homes. Existing Parks Master Plan shall be enhanced

and included in the new Comp. Plan along with Open Space Management.

Objectives:

1. Identify percentage of population living within a reasonable walking/biking distance to a healthy food source and promote appropriate development in areas with less access.
2. Improve pedestrian connectivity between schools/parks and homes within a ½ mile radius. (With B.A. Schools reducing bus service, this will become an important issue in the near future.)
3. Establish an Urban Forrest enhancement policy

h. Public Safety

- i. Goal (**Public Safety**): Create social cohesion within the Broken Arrow Community. Recent experiences have shown that social inclusion and cohesion can be promoted through urban planning and design measures.

Objectives:

1. Create opportunities for social mixing within neighborhoods and larger areas.
2. Increase the sense of identity and belonging to the City of B.A.

i. Sustainability

- i. Goal (**Sustainability and Public Health Impacts**): Create a better environment for aging populations by creating a city that is safe and accessible without a car.

Objectives:

1. Connectivity to grocery stores, parks, etc.
2. Public transportation? Perhaps limited service, like the Tulsa Lift program.

j. Public Health Impacts

- i. Goal: Participate in Health Impact Assessments conducted by the Tulsa Health Department.

Objectives

1. Identify strengths and weaknesses of B.A. Planning Policy towards health planning
2. Use findings to guide future small area plans and city policy.

k. Environment

- i. Goal (**Environment and Public Health Impacts**): Reduce environmental exposures and increase air quality by promoting active transportation for short trips.

Objective:

1. Make walking for short trips possible by evaluating the proximity of basic necessities, such as grocery stores, to neighborhoods.

2. Designate walking routes along arterial street to give pedestrians safe and comfortable access to essential services.
  3. Establishing an Urban Forrest.
- I. Storm Water/Flood Plain and Open Space Management.
- About 15 % (to 17 %) of the land area of the City will remain open for storm water management. Some of this area will be used for Private or Public purposes. Long term sustainability, maintenance, ownership and economic viability to maintain such a large asset should be addressed.



## 2. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE / NOTIFICATION



***PRESS RELEASE***

**Contact: Krista Flasch**  
**Director of Communications**  
**City of Broken Arrow**  
**Phone: (918) 259-2400, ext. 5309**  
**Mobile: (918) 409-7771**  
**Fax: (918) 259-8226**

## **Aspen Avenue Resurfacing Project Completed**

**Broken Arrow, Okla. (12/6/2016)** – Contractors have completed resurfacing a nearly two-mile stretch of Aspen Avenue, starting at just north of Washington Street (91<sup>st</sup>) to Kenosha Street (71<sup>st</sup>). The work involved removing the old roadway surface and installing a new asphalt overlay. During this project, the contractor also patched failed pavements down to the subgrade. The project cost \$1.6 million and was paid for through 2011 General Obligation Bond and Sales Tax Capital Improvement funds.

“This stretch of Aspen Avenue is one of the busiest in Broken Arrow, so we’re very appreciative of drivers’ cooperation and patience while we completed this necessary work,” said Alex Mills, Director of Engineering and Construction. “The City is extremely pleased with the quality of work and the timely manner in which construction was completed, and I believe anyone traveling on Aspen will enjoy the smoother drive.

The pedestrian signal modifications at the intersections of Aspen/Detroit will be completed shortly after the new year in order to accommodate holiday traffic.

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Contact: Krista Flasch**  
**Director of Communications**  
**Phone: (918) 259-2400, ext. 5309**  
**Mobile: (918) 409-7771**

**Community Input Sought on Rose District Residential Development**  
*City to host community workshop on Dec. 14*

**Broken Arrow, Okla. (12/9/2016)** – The City of Broken Arrow will hold a community workshop at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 14 at Central on Main to gather citizen feedback on the future of residential development in the Rose District.

Broken Arrow’s revitalization of its downtown corridor through public/private partnerships has been a tremendous success, with new commercial and retail development continuing to attract visitors to eat, shop, work and entertain in the Rose District. The City is now focusing its efforts on housing in the areas surrounding the Main Street core. With the help of ADG, a planning consulting firm retained by the City, the zoning ordinance in the Rose District will be updated through a community process. Some project objectives include:

- Engage the community to determine the appropriateness of various residential building types
- Create a strong and unique sense of community
- Increase project feasibility by removing development barriers in the current zoning code
- Ensure compatibility with the Rose District’s established residential districts

“Living in the Rose District is something more and more people are seriously considering these days, and we want to make sure we’re meeting today’s housing needs and wants, while at the same time preserving the unique character of the area,” said City Manager Michael Spurgeon. “That’s why this community workshop is so important, and I encourage everyone in the community to come out and participate in Wednesday’s event.”

**WHAT:** Community Workshop  
**WHEN:** Wednesday, December 14  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Central on Main, 210 N. Main Street

###

***PRESS RELEASE***

**Contact: Krista Flasch**  
**Director of Communications**  
**City of Broken Arrow**  
**Phone: (918) 259-2400, ext. 5309**  
**Mobile: (918) 409-7771**

## **City Council Approves New Utility Rates**

**Broken Arrow, Okla. (12/7/2016)** – The Broken Arrow City Council at the December 6 City Council Meeting approved new utility rates for water, sewer and stormwater services. The rate increase is necessary to continue providing utility services in Broken Arrow and will pay for both operational costs and debt service payments on \$90 million worth of capital projects for the utility infrastructure.

Starting with the January 2017 bill, a typical residential customer using 7,000 gallons of water per month will see their water bill increase about \$3.36 per month and their sewer bill increase about \$2.75 per month. The stormwater fee will increase by \$0.76. Increases will occur once a year for the next five years. Subsequent increases will be less than the first year.

“The City has experienced explosive growth over the past 30 years, and major capital investments are needed to make our utility systems reliable and efficient, and to ensure we have the capacity to accommodate future growth anticipated in the next 10-15 years,” said City Manager Michael Spurgeon. “These problems have to be addressed now, otherwise the cost to complete the projects is only going to increase. Moreover, we must have the ability to provide high quality utility services to both current and future customers and position ourselves to accommodate continued economic growth in Broken Arrow.”

Earlier this year, the City of Broken Arrow Administration completed the process of updating its operations and five-year Capital Improvement Plan for the Utilities Department. With regard to infrastructure reinvestment, the Administration identified a need for a total of \$140 million worth of improvements to include: \$26 million to improve our water system, \$102 million to improve our wastewater (sanitary sewer) system, and \$12 million to improve our stormwater systems.

*(Continued)*

The City will pay for the utility systems improvements through the utility rates charged to customers and a possible General Obligation Bond that voters could consider in late 2017 or early 2018. Last year, the City hired the engineering consultant firm of Black and Veatch, which specializes in helping municipalities analyze costs for services delivered and establish appropriate utility rates. Black and Veatch, working with staff, has determined what Broken Arrow's water, sewer and stormwater fees should be in order to pay for the necessary utility systems improvements and the additional staff needed to maintain the systems.

### **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

The City's utility infrastructure includes a water production plant, two waste-water treatment facilities, six water storage facilities, 29 lift stations, four booster pump stations and approximately 1,500 miles of water and sanitary sewer lines. The City is also responsible for managing stormwater conveyance systems, so that stormwater runoff is transported to natural drainage ways.

A tremendous amount of utility infrastructure growth and expansion occurred in the late 1960s through the mid-1980s. Much of this early expansion is now aging and beginning to show significant signs of deterioration. Additionally, nearly 100,000 people have been added to our community in the last 46 years. In 1970, the population of Broken Arrow was almost 12,000. Today in 2016, it is nearly 110,000. This nine-fold growth has significantly impacted and stressed our utility infrastructure, coupled with the fact that a substantial amount of it is at the end of its useful life.

A stressed system can lead to service interruptions, which are not only costly to address, but also affect day-to-day life within the community. Some recent examples include:

- April 2016 – County Line Sewer Main collapse. Crews had to close the intersection at New Orleans and County Line for nearly three weeks, forcing drivers on a lengthy detour to work and school. It cost the City approximately \$160,000 in repairs and fines.
- Fall 2015 – Oneta Road Sanitary Sewer Lift Station discharge. Outdated pumping equipment failed and staffed installed temporary equipment, which malfunctioned and caused raw sewage to be discharged onto the ground. ODEQ fined the City \$5,625 for the unauthorized discharge.

*(Continued)*

## **WHAT THE RATE INCREASE PAYS FOR**

The City's aging infrastructure has not kept up with growth. Capital improvement investments are needed to minimize service disruptions, ensure the system works as intended and comply with state and federal regulatory standards. As a result, rate increases are needed to fund the replacement of old sewer and water lines, upgrade the wastewater treatment plants, as well as pay the loan on the new Verdigris River Water Treatment Plant. The following lists some of the projects in the Capital Improvement Plan:

### **Water Project Highlights**

- Improve supplemental water supply line connection with the Oklahoma Ordnance Water Works Authority (OOWA) in order to increase the supply of available water.
- Install upgraded water distribution lines to improve water delivery throughout the community.
- Construct new 2-3 million gallon water storage tank in south Broken Arrow.

### **Wastewater Project Highlights**

- Construct Haikey Creek Lift Station Force Main improvements to capture peak wet-weather events, facilitate future growth and improve system reliability.
- Install Supervisory Control and Activation System (SCADA) to provide continuous monitoring of the 33 sewer lift stations and 2 water booster pump stations.
- Construct Oneta Road Sewer Lift Station modifications to improve the safety environment for city crews, improve lift station reliability, reduce potential overflows and reduce service interruptions.
- Replace County Line Trunk Sewer.
- Construct new Headworks and Degritter facility at Lynn Lane Waste Water Treatment Plant to improve treatment efficiencies and control odor.

### **Stormwater Project Highlights**

- Construct multiple storm detention facilities throughout the community to improve stormwater conveyance.

*(Continued)*

- Construct improvements to the Broken Arrow Creek watershed.
- Construct improvements to existing detention facilities.

View the complete Capital Improvement Plan at [www.BrokenArrowOK.gov/UTILITYCIP](http://www.BrokenArrowOK.gov/UTILITYCIP).

###

### 3. SPECIAL EVENTS / ACTIVITIES





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# THE LION AND THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE



BROKEN ARROW COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE  
Presents

## "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe"

By C.S. Lewis Dramatized by Joseph Robinette

The Broken Arrow Community Playhouse is excited to present  
"The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe"

Based upon the book by C.S. Lewis and Dramatized by Joseph Robinette December 9,10,11,16,17,18, 2016. Friday and Saturday at 7:30 PM Saturday and Sunday at 2 PM, here at the playhouse located at 1800 S. Main Street in Broken Arrow. Please note that for this production we have added two Saturday Matinee performances! Tickets are on sale now at [www.bacptheatre.com](http://www.bacptheatre.com) or call our Box Office 918-258-0077 to reserve your seats today! A Show for all ages!

This year we are collecting toys for our local Broken Arrow Marine Toys for Tots at each of our performances. If you wish to participate, please bring an unwrapped toy for ages newborn to 12, please no food or realistic looking toy weapons.

Joseph Robinette's dramatization of C.S. Lewis' classic, set in the land of Narnia, faithfully recreates the magical and mysterious land of Narnia. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is a wonderful, inspiring and imaginative tale with a slew of colorful characters. It is the tale of Aslan, the great lion, his struggle with the White Witch, and the adventures of four children who inadvertently wander from an old wardrobe into the exciting, never-to-be-forgotten Narnia. The intense action features chases, duels and escapes as the witch is determined to keep Narnia in her possession and to end the reign of Aslan. All the memorable episodes from the story are represented in this exciting dramatization: the temptation of Edmund by the witch, the slaying of the evil wolf by Peter, the witnessing of Aslan's resurrection by Susan and Lucy, the crowning of the four new rulers of Narnia, and more. The supporting characters are also here: the unicorn, the centaur and other forest animals, along with Father Christmas, Mr. and Mrs. Beaver and Tumnus the Faun. This story of love, faith, courage and giving, with its triumph of good over evil, is a true celebration of life, truly a delightful play for all ages.

Director Tee Brown has been seen on our stage in several productions over the past two seasons; he most recently choreographed and performed in October's *Young Frankenstein the Musical*. Tee has selected an amazing cast of BACP veterans and new actors to bring these classic characters to life; Megg Hayhurst as the White

Witch, Bryne Zuege as Aslan, Wesley Dotson as Tumnus the Faun, Zach King as Peter, Chloe Haroldson as Susan, Sam Bailey as Edmond, Anna Farley as Lucy, Jon Solla as Mr. Beaver, Sidney Treat as Mrs. Beaver, Howard Harkness as Father Christmas, Gabriel Sawyer as the Elf, Darrell Muse as Fenris Ulf, Noah Schatz as the Dwarf, Noelle Trahan as the Unicorn and Jeff Johnson as the Centaur. They are joined by a marvelous ensemble of Animals, Wood Nymphs and the Witches Army played by; Emily Gomez, Julian Valles, Glenn Woodward, Trey Thompson, and Mallory Berry. An added plus is the Hair & Makeup artistry of Tara Tumey, Treu Ayers, Ruth Samuels and James Scott from Delilah Morgaen Visual Enterprise. We hope you can join us for classic children's tale!


**More information for this production can be obtained by calling the BACP at 918-258-0077. The BACP is located in The Main Place at 1800 S. Main in downtown Broken Arrow. "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" is produced by special arrangement with The Dramatic Publishing Company of Woodstock, Illinois. This production is made possible in part by grants from the Oklahoma Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. The BACP would like to thank Landmark Business Systems and Arkansas Valley Bank for their generous sponsorship of the 2016-2017 Season. The Broken Arrow Community Playhouse is a member of the Oklahoma Community Theatre Association and the American Association of Community Theatre.**



1901 W Detroit St, Broken Arrow, OK 74012  
(918) 258-0120


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**The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe**



**Friday December 9, 2016 to Sunday December 18, 2016** This dramatization of C.S. Lewis' classic, set in the land of Narnia, faithfully recreates the magic and mystery of Aslan, the great lion, his struggle with the White Witch, and the adventures of four children who inadvertently wander from an old wardrobe into the exciting, never-to-be-forgotten Narnia. The intense action features chases, duels and escapes as the witch is determined to keep Narnia in her possession and to end the reign of Aslan. All the memorable episodes from the story are represented in this exciting dramatization. This story of love, faith, courage and giving, with its triumph of good over evil, is a true celebration of life.

[Buy Tickets Now](#)



## **The Broken Arrow Community Playhouse**

**OPEN AUDITIONS! December 11, 2016 6:00 PM**

**“Barefoot in the Park”**

**By Neil Simon**

The Broken Arrow Community Playhouse will be auditioning for Neil Simon's "*Barefoot in the Park*" on **Sunday December 11, 2016 at 6 PM** at the Playhouse located at 1800 S. Main Street in Broken Arrow.

*Barefoot in the Park* will be directed by Denny Meredith-Orr. Auditions are open and will consist of cold readings from the script. We are looking for 2 or 3 Females age range 23+ and 3 or 4 Males age range 25+. Resumes and Photos not required but helpful. Performance dates will be February 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 2017, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, Sundays at 2:00. Callbacks may be scheduled for Monday December 12, 2016.

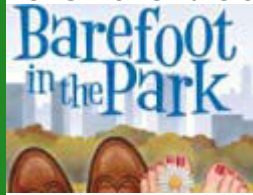
**Traditional description of the play**

Paul and Corie Bratter are newlyweds in every sense of the word. He's a straight-as-an-arrow lawyer and she's a free spirit always looking for the latest kick. Their new apartment is her most recent find - too expensive with bad plumbing and in need of a paint job. After a six-day honeymoon, they get a surprise visit from Corie's loopy mother and decide to play matchmaker during a dinner with their neighbor-in-the-attic, Velasco, where everything that can go wrong, does. Paul just doesn't understand Corie, as she sees it. He's too staid, too boring, and she just wants him to be a little more spontaneous. Running "barefoot in the park" would be a start...

**Potential casting twist for this version depending upon auditions**

Corie and Paul are newlyweds, but they are an older couple and Paul is just returning to lawyering. The visit is from Corie's daughter. The neighbor-in-the attic is a young, Bohemian free-spirit.

**Neil Simon's Barefoot in the Park**



**Friday February 17, 2017 to Sunday February 26, 2017** Paul and Corie Bratter are newlyweds in every sense of the word. He's a straight-as-an-arrow lawyer and she's a free spirit always looking for the latest kick. Their new apartment is her most recent find-too expensive with bad plumbing and in need of a paint job. After a six day honeymoon, they get a surprise visit from Corie's mother and decide to play matchmaker during a dinner with their neighbor-in-the-attic Velasco, where everything that can go wrong, does. Paul just doesn't understand Corie, as she sees it. He's too staid, too boring and she just wants him to be a little more spontaneous, running "barefoot in the park" would be a start...

[Buy Tickets Now](#)



# Tulsa Festival Ringers

Tulsa's  
only auditioned  
community handbell  
ensemble.

[TULSAFESTIVALRINGERS.COM](http://TULSAFESTIVALRINGERS.COM)

[TULSAFESTIVALRINGERS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TULSAFESTIVALRINGERS@GMAIL.COM)



The Broken Arrow Community  
Playhouse  
Presents The  
Tulsa Festival Ringers  
Monday December 19<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM  
Presenting -  
Christmas Memories  
Old and New

The Tulsa Festival Ringers will once again be making our Christmas Holiday here at the BACP even more spectacular! Come join us for some holiday cheer, **Monday December 19, 2016 at 7:00 PM** here at the playhouse located at **1800 S. Main St. in Broken Arrow**. The concert is free with General Admission seating. Donations are gratefully accepted at the door. All donations benefit both the Tulsa Festival Ringers and the BACP.

The concert will feature many Holiday favorites old and new such as; *Jingle Bells, It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year, The Christmas Song, All I Want for Christmas is You, Carol of the Bells, Coventry Carol, Merry Christmas, Darling, Sinfonia, The Grinch, Frosty the Snowman, Home for the Holidays, The First Noel and Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*. We hope that you and the whole family will join us as the Tulsa Festival Ringers "ring in" this joyous Christmas season!

Tulsa Festival Ringers, Inc., Tulsa's only auditioned community handbell ensemble, is more than a musical novelty; it is an ensemble of musicians who specialize in handbell ringing. The members are handbell directors and ringers from various churches throughout the Tulsa area who want to share their love of music and handbells.

Formed in the spring of 1991 to attend a handbell festival in San Antonio, Texas, Tulsa Festival Ringers have been ringing for audiences everywhere from their concerts right here in Tulsa to handbell festivals in Texas and Arizona.

They are dedicated to educating, entertaining, and promoting their musical art. They have performed with the Tulsa Philharmonic, OK Sinfonia, and Signature Symphony at TCC, at Tulsa Ballet events, on Six in the Morning and Good Morning Oklahoma, at PAC Brown Bag-It concerts, and on a Christmas television special.



### **Blow the Roof Off**

The Broken Arrow Community Playhouse has kicked off a fundraising campaign to improve our Performance sound quality here at the Playhouse and bring it up to the current standards. All Money raised will go toward new technology including but not limited to new speakers, monitor Equipment and microphones as well as any new wiring and installation needed.

We hope you can help us meet the goal of \$15,000 needed to raise the roof with sound!



Donate Now

PLEASE REMEMBER THE BACP  
THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON!

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/73-1091280>

Many Thanks to all of you who remember us when making your orders at AMAZON.COM using AMAZON SMILE! We appreciate your continued support in using Amazon Smile to donate a portion of your purchases to the BACP.

THANK YOU!  
HAVE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND A  
HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!

Broken Arrow Community Playhouse uses [Vendini](#) for ticketing, marketing, and box office management.

Broken Arrow Community Playhouse - 1800 S. Main St., Broken Arrow, OK, 74012, (918) 258-0077  
Vendini, Inc. - 660 Market Street, San Francisco, CA, 94104, 1 (800) 901-7173

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# Freedom's Voice

The Monthly Newsletter of the  
Military History Center

112 N. Main ST  
Broken Arrow, OK 74012  
<http://www.okmhc.org/>



**“Promoting Patriotism through the Preservation of Military History”**

Volume 4, Number 12

December 2016



## Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



### Important Dates

December 24 thru January 2  
Christmas/New Year Holidays

**Military History Center Closed**

**Happy Hanukkah**

### From the Editor

With this edition, we have completed one year of the re-constituted MHC newsletter. We have endeavored to bring readers timely news of MHC activities and events. We have featured many stories of individual's military experiences with a focus on Oklahomans. We are especially proud of our series on Oklahoma's Medal of Honor recipients.

Each month we have highlighted a specific exhibit or artifact of the museum. The MHC is a different military museum, as most typically feature a single branch of the armed forces or military unit or a particular war or individual. The MHC displays artifacts from all America's wars from the Revolutionary War to the present War on Terror, for all branches of the armed services. A great many of the artifacts and photographs cannot be found in any other museum. However, artifacts are only part of the story. Our mission is "Promoting Patriotism through the Preservation of Military History". This obviously includes written history, which is also an integral part of the newsletter.

We hope you have enjoyed the newsletter as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you.



The USS *Oklahoma* Memorial in Oklahoma City features one of *Oklahoma's* anchors, salvaged at Pearl Harbor.

### Museum Hours and Admission Fee

Tuesday – Friday: 10:00 – 4:00; Saturday: 10:00 – 2:00  
Closed Sunday and Monday and major Federal holidays

Adults – \$5.00

Members and Children under 18 – Free

**For more information, call (918) 794-2712**

[www.okmhc.org](http://www.okmhc.org)



**Aviator Santa by Sue Rose**

Sue Rose: "This sculpture derived from both my parents being in WWII. My dad was in the Navy, based in San Diego, California. My mother, before she married my dad, worked at Douglas (Tulsa) during the war doing modifications to the ammunition chutes on the B-24 aircraft. She married my dad in San Diego, and she went to work for Ryan Aeronautical, which had built the *Spirit of St. Louis*. I did several months of research on the pilot so he would be correct for the period of time. The toys are WWII correct, and his clothing is as close as I could get. He has a Bible in his right front pocket, and he is wearing red one-piece underwear! His head was sculpted by me and took a couple of weeks. It was a labor of love for all veterans, but WWII has a special place in my heart."

For the past two years, Ms. Rose has loaned the *Aviator Santa* to the MHC for display during the Christmas Season. Come in, and see it. You will be impressed.

Editor: The aircraft in the background is a restored B-17G. This particular aircraft never saw combat. It commemorates the original B-17G with tail number 42-102516 of the 601<sup>st</sup> Bomb Squadron, 398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (Heavy), 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force. That bomber was shot down over Le Manoir, France on August 13, 1944, on its thirty-fourth mission, one short of the required thirty-five. After the war, the bomber was sent to Altus AFB, where it was stripped of all military equipment and sold for scrap. It was rescued, renamed *Aluminum Overcast* and passed through several owners before being donated to Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Aviation Foundation. EAA restored it, and its pilots fly it on annual tours around the country. B-17 veterans are delighted for the chance to rekindle old memories, with one more flight.

## Annual Christmas Tree Exhibition

Museum Broken Arrow welcomes the Christmas Season each year with a showcase of community donated and decorated trees at their annual Christmas Tree Exhibit. The Exhibit features a variety of themed Christmas trees decorated by local businesses, organizations and individuals. Featured trees are donated to Broken Arrow Neighbors at the close of the exhibition. Broken Arrow Neighbors then distributes the collection to families in the Broken Arrow community. In addition, Museum visitors are encouraged to bring an unwrapped toy suitable for children under twelve, to be donated.



The MHC donated this Christmas tree, beautifully decorated by MHC volunteers, Claudia Price and Susan Virdell, to Museum Broken Arrow for the 2016 Christmas Tree Exhibition.

### Year-end Giving

As the year draws to a close, many of you will be contemplating your year-end giving. We realize that most of you are committed to your church and/or favorite charity. But, if you have a place in your budget for discretionary giving, we ask you to consider the MHC. We believe the MHC provides a valuable service to the local community, especially to students and our veterans by "Promoting Patriotism through the Preservation of Military History". We invite you to join us in promoting patriotism and recognizing the sacrifices made to keep America free.

Please go to our Support/Donate link on our website at [www.okmhc.org](http://www.okmhc.org) for more information.

Monetary donations, as well as gifts in kind, are tax deductible, subject to IRS regulations. Record the donation on Schedule A as MVA, Inc. dba Military History Center.

## World War II

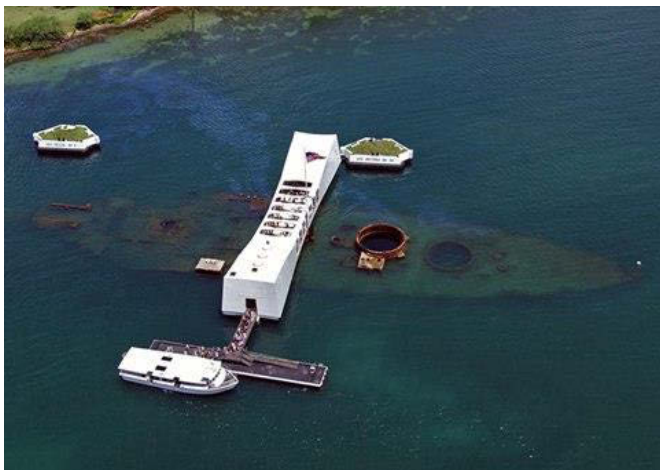
The United States was thrust into World War II seventy-five years ago, at 7:48 a.m. Hawaii time (11:48 a.m. Oklahoma time), on Sunday, December 7, 1941, when 353 Japanese fighters, bombers and torpedo planes launched in two waves from six aircraft carriers, began their attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet anchored at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. All eight battleships moored at the base were damaged, with four being sunk – *Arizona*, *California*, *Oklahoma* and *West Virginia*. The Japanese also sank or damaged three cruisers, three destroyers, an anti-aircraft training ship and one minelayer, destroyed 188 aircraft, almost all on the ground, killed 2,402 Americans, almost half of them aboard *Arizona*, and wounded 1,282 more. The Japanese were fixated on the battleships and failed to attack such important base installations as the power station, shipyard, maintenance, fuel and torpedo storage facilities, as well as the submarine piers and headquarters buildings, which included the intelligence section.

*California* and *West Virginia* were raised, repaired and re-entered the war. *Oklahoma* was also raised, but was too badly damaged to be repaired and was sold for scrap. While being towed to San Francisco in 1947, 540 miles out of Pearl Harbor the tow lines parted, and the once grand, old lady sank in 18,000 feet of water, avoiding the indignity of being cut up for scrap. *Arizona* rests on the bottom of Pearl Harbor as a memorial and a tomb for 1,177 of her crew.

Japanese losses were light: twenty-nine aircraft and five midget submarines. Sixty-five Japanese servicemen were killed or wounded. One sailor from a midget submarine was captured.

On the day following the attack – December 8 – Congress declared war on Japan. Germany and Italy declared war on the United States on December 11, which was reciprocated by the United States the same day.

Because of the lack of a declaration of war or any warning by the Japanese government, particularly while negotiations were ongoing, President Roosevelt called December 7, 1941, “a date which will live in infamy.”



USS *Arizona* Memorial

## Oklahoma's Pearl Harbor Survivors

Oklahoma lost two of her Pearl Harbor survivors this year. Domenic Joseph “Don” Baldrachi died at age ninety-seven, on March 30. Most Pearl Harbor survivors were (are) Navy personnel. Don Baldrachi was one of the exceptions. He was a member of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Combat Battalion, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry “Tropic Lightening” Division, based at Schofield Barracks near Honolulu. On Saturday night, December 6, Baldrachi decided to stay overnight with a friend stationed at the Pearl Harbor Submarine Base. That’s where he was on Sunday morning when the Japanese attacked. He quickly made his way back to Schofield Barracks, which had not been attacked.

Baldrachi joined the Army on January 15, 1940, because he needed a job. The United States was still suffering from the Great Depression and jobs remained scarce. His job with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Engineers was construction, primarily bridge building. The 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division entered combat on Guadalcanal in December 1942. It would also see combat on New Georgia, further up the Solomon Islands chain. Altogether, the 25<sup>th</sup> would be engaged in 165 days of combat.

Don Baldrachi was born at Syracuse, New York in 1918. After his discharge from the Army in 1945, he returned to his home in New York, but didn’t stay long. He lived in Michigan and California before settling in Bartlesville in 1954.

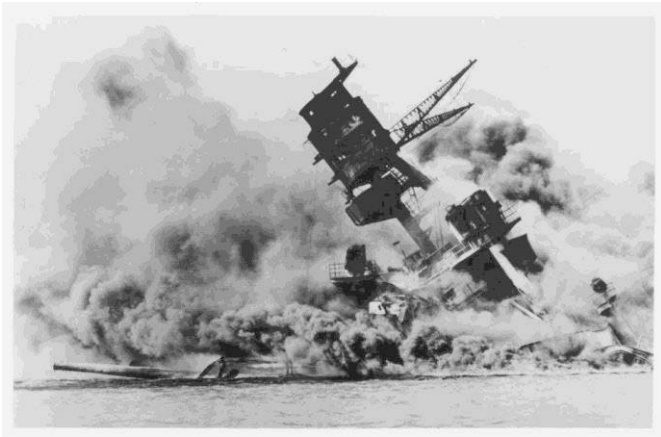
Edward Earl Vesey, Jr. who died on January 2, at age ninety-five, was a gunnery officer on USS *Oklahoma*. He is believed to have been the last survivor of USS *Oklahoma* living in Oklahoma, and maybe anywhere. He was born in Sweeny, Texas on June 3, 1920. He left the Navy in 1945 as a Lt. Commander. After his wife died in 2008, he moved to Moore, where his son lives.

At this writing, there are five Pearl Harbor survivors living in the Tulsa area – the Last Man’s Club: Arles Cole, Tulsa; Lonnie Cook, Tulsa; Gene Meeker, Sand Springs; Joe Alsup, Tulsa; and Arlon “Jim” Jenkins, Claremore. Altogether, less than 300 Pearl Harbor survivors remain.



Interior of the USS *Arizona* Memorial – the names of 1,177 of her crew, who remain entombed in the ship, are inscribed on the wall.

## Death and Destruction at Pearl Harbor



*Arizona* was struck by an 800-kilogram (1,763.7 pound) bomb at 8:06, eighteen minutes after the attack began. The bomb is believed to have penetrated into the forward ammunition magazine, where it exploded, tearing the ship apart. The fires burned for two days.



*Maryland* in the foreground – *West Virginia* burning in the background  
*Oklahoma* lies capsized to the right



USS *Shaw's* forward ammunition magazine explodes.

## Navy Salvage Diver

Homer Lee Rutledge, called Lee, was born in Knox County, Texas on August 7, 1916. After high school, with farm life during the Great Depression offering few prospects, he went to NAS Dallas and joined the Navy, in 1934. He served four years, and after separation, returned home. He didn't like his prospects any better than he had four years earlier, so he returned to Dallas and re-enlisted. The Navy sent him to diver's school, from which he graduated in 1939. He was promoted to Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class and ordered to Pearl Harbor Submarine Base, reporting for duty on March 1, 1941.

The following is excerpted from his memoirs written for "Survivors of Pearl Harbor". The excerpt relates Rutledge's activities at Pearl Harbor until he was transferred to the Fiji Islands. Except for minor editing, this is an exact transcript.

"On the morning of December 7, 1941, I was at my home at 210 Beach Walk on Waikiki Beach in Honolulu. Hearing the noise from the air raid, I turned on the radio and the announcer was repeating, "Japan is bombing Pearl Harbor. This is no drill. All military personnel return to your duty stations."

I arrived at the Sub Base prior to 9:00 a.m. The ships were on fire, sinking, and capsized. Due to the urgency required on these ships, divers were needed in lots of places. At the training tank, I was the only trained diver, having graduated from the Deep Sea Diving School, Washington, DC in 1939. The remainder of the crew were rated men, qualified for serving on a submarine. The decisions were made to assist the ships that could be quickly made ready for action. At the training tank, we had a 40-foot motor launch, rigged for diving with all the necessary equipment including high pressure air in torpedo air flasks.

December 7-8, 1941, p.m. – In the late afternoon, we were requested to assist the USS *Maryland*. The *Maryland* was in-board of the USS *Oklahoma*. She was hit by an armor piercing projectile bomb which entered the ship at about the waterline and ruptured a flood valve in a sea chest about midway on the forecastle port side. When we arrived, the ship was down by the head from the flooded compartment. The ship's crew were prepared to place a collision mat over the opening. The upper part of the hold was pushed in and the lower edge was lipped out. I was asked to cut the extruded metal away. I cut the metal away with an oxygen-hydrogen torch. The ship's crew was unable to seal the hole with the collision mat because at this point the forecastle deck flared out to such a degree that the lines could not pull the mat tight at the hole. While this was going on, that evening, the carrier, *Enterprise*, had dispatched some planes to Pearl Harbor for our defense and our gunners shot all of them down. Improper Communication!!!!!!

We were asked to find the ruptured flood valve and plug same on the bottom of the ship. We did locate and plug this valve. The *Maryland* pumped out the water and was ready for duty a short time later. No sleep that night!

USS *Oklahoma* received a dozen or so torpedoes (Ed. actually nine) on the port side, capsized and rolled over approximately 160°. I was asked to go under the ship and find a hatch to go into the ship for men trapped inside. The *Arizona* was still on fire and the USS *Tennessee* had her props turning over slow to

keep the fire away from itself and the other battleships. (Ed. Oil on the surface of the harbor was on fire.) As soon as you got in the water the glass face plate in the helmet was covered with the heavy bunker "C" fuel oil, with the consistency of tar. I was unable to see my 1000-watt diving light. Under *Oklahoma*, it was a mess. All of the main guns had fallen out, the starboard side boats were still in the skids. I was under several minutes, when a swimmer bumped into me. Top side signaled for me to return. My face plate was opened and I was told by a chief petty officer that he had dived out of the ship through a battle hatch from the CPO quarters. I went back down, and in a couple of hours located the hatch where the chief had come through. A battle hatch is a small opening into a larger hatch which is closed for damage control. There was no way I could get in through the small opening with my dive gear on. The large hatch which was wedged tight. I secured a line to the hatch, went topside, explained the problem, and it was decided to cut through the keel, etc. This was done by the navy yard and I believe some 36 men (Ed. actually thirty-two) were saved.

USS *Shaw* – destroyer (in a floating drydock) A bomb went through the ship just forward of the bridge. I made a dive to check if the ship from the bridge forward was loose from the damaged bow and the dry dock. The bow was loose, and the *Shaw* was moved out of the flooded floating drydock.

USS *Saratoga* was torpedoed at sea. I made a dive to check if the damaged area would prevent her from entering drydock.

I worked two days on a Jap Midget Submarine that was sunk by one of our ships in East Port. Tunneled under the sub, reeved cable around the sub, had it hoisted with a yard floating crane, unloaded it at a dock at our sub base.

USS *Raleigh* – light cruiser (approximately three days) and recovering gear and equipment that the ship's crew had put overboard to prevent their ship from capsizing from a torpedo. They did a fine job tossing over torpedo tubes, guns, cranes etc.

USS *Litchfield* – destroyer – removed damaged propeller, installed another alongside a dock, worked overnight.

Recovered rope guards around the propellers of our submarine prior to it being sent on patrol. This was to prevent the Japs from snagging with grapples – used oxygen-hydrogen cutting torch.

Made a dive into submarine flood tank to repair high pressure air leak to avoid having to drydock (December 21, 1941).

January 1942 – About this time, I was given a group of divers to assist in raising the USS *West Virginia*. Took a break to help on the USS *California*, to seal off the leaks at the quarter deck. On the *West Virginia*, we opened all of the compartments which had been closed for damage control, set up pumps, patches, etc. I had two machinist mates assigned to work with us that were familiar with the engine room pump system. On one of the M/M's first dive he recovered a Government check out of his locker for over one thousand dollars. The other M/M was sent into the engine room and becoming panicky, ended up spread eagle against the overhead with excess air in his suit. Another more experienced diver fastening his air hose and lifeline, went up and cut the air supply valve and helped him down. After several weeks, we were able to raise the *West Virginia*, with salvage pumps and patches under a very capable Lt. Painter. (Lt. Painter, Naval Reserve, was the sharp-

est salvage man I had the pleasure of working with. Later, he directed the righting and raising of the *Oklahoma* using "A" frames and Asund (?) tackles. While working, I received a message on the *West Virginia* to come into the dock. When I arrived, I was sent to the sea-faring tug boat, *Navajo*, which had some diving equipment on board. We headed to Midway prior to the battle. I did not even have a tooth brush, just oil soaked dungarees. We spent the night at French Frigate Shoals. The day of the Midway battle one of the *Navajo's* main diesel engines would not operate; otherwise, we would have been at the USS *Yorktown* when it sank.

USS *Utah* – made dive to survey hull damage.

So far as I know, I was never [officially] transferred from the Submarine Base to the Navy Yard at Pearl Harbor. After the battle of Midway, shortly after the *West Virginia* was floating, I was given verbal orders to board the seagoing tug *Navajo* for a second time. No personal record, pay record, or health record, although this time I did have a few changes of dungarees, underwear and a tooth brush. We went past Samoa and stopped at Tonga. While at Tonga, we were ordered to the Fiji Islands".

After his salvage duties at Pearl Harbor, Rutledge was sent to the Fiji Islands and then posted to Nouméa, New Caledonia. While operating from USS *Navajo* in the southwest Pacific, Rutledge dived on six more battle damaged ships. In late 1943, he was ordered back to Pearl Harbor, promoted to Chief Petty Officer and then sent to the United States. His wartime diving days were over. He served at naval stations at Orange Texas, Bayonne, New Jersey and on Guam. He was twice recommended for an officer's commission, but was denied both times. On January 1, 1952, he was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer Three. In November 1964, CWO Rutledge retired after nineteen years, six months and ten days of naval service.

After retirement he worked for Shell Oil Company and Du Pont. He made several trips to Tulsa for Du Pont because of its several heat exchanger manufacturers. He liked what he saw of Tulsa and relocated to the city after retirement in 1964. Lee Rutledge died at his home in Tulsa on March 15, 1998. He is buried in Memorial Park Cemetery.



Rutledge, standing second from left with members of his diving crew, wearing the rank insignia of a Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class, a rank he attained in 1940. The date and location of the photograph is unknown.

## USS *Oklahoma* at Pearl Harbor

Moored outboard of *Maryland* and ahead of *West Virginia*, *Oklahoma* was subject to a devastating port-side torpedo attack, sustaining nine torpedo impacts within the first fifteen minutes of the attack. Combined with near misses by bombs, the damage was so extensive that she capsized at her berth. Although her salvage was questionable, it was decided to rid the harbor of her hulk to make her berth at F-5 available for other ships. In what was the most technically difficult task faced by the salvage division at Pearl Harbor, she was successfully righted in June, 1943 and refloated in November of that year. She was moored in Middle Loch until 1947. She was sold to the Moore Drydock Company of Oakland California as scrap for \$46,000.00. She was being towed to the West Coast by two tugs when she was lost, 540 miles northeast of Pearl Harbor on May 17, 1947.



Rescue efforts that saved thirty-two trapped sailors.  
414 sailors and fifteen Marines were lost.



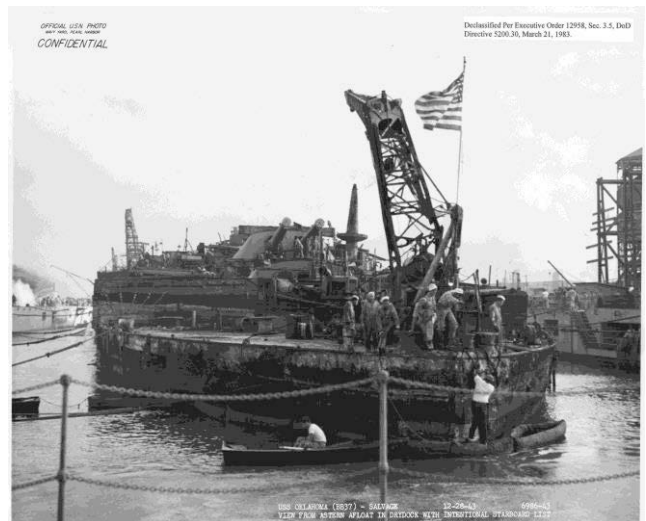
USS *Oklahoma* (BB-37) – built by the New York Ship Building Company at its Camden, New Jersey yard – launched on March 23, 1914, and commissioned May 2, 1916.



Righting *Oklahoma* – The complex task was contracted to the Pacific Bridge Company under Navy supervision.



*Oklahoma* capsized after receiving nine torpedo strikes.  
*Maryland* is at the right.



*Oklahoma* lying in a drydock at Pearl Harbor – December 28, 1943. Irreparably damaged, but still a commissioned warship, she defiantly flies the Stars and Stripes. *Oklahoma* was decommissioned and struck from the rolls on September 1, 1944, and sold for scrap.



## This Month's Featured Artifact



This pair of extremely rare World War II German army straw overboots (*Strohschuhen*) is an exceptionally important artifact. When the German army invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, they expected a quick victory. Consequently, they were woefully unprepared for the severity of the Russian winter. Thousands of German soldiers suffered frostbitten feet. Because of the need to give their soldiers immediate relief, the Germans resorted to the expedient of straw overboots.

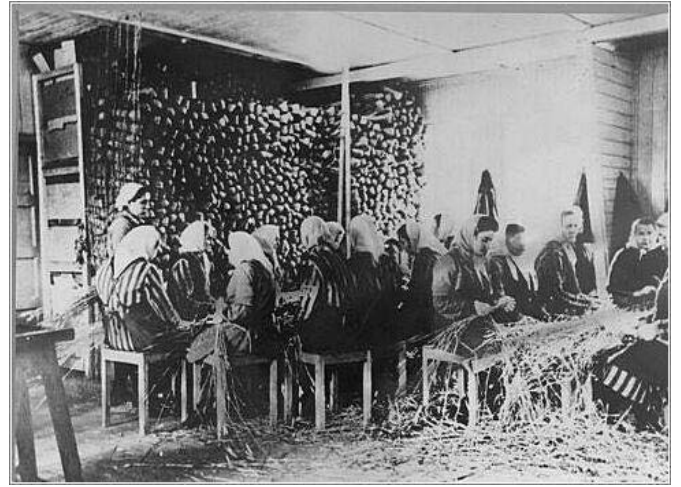
Women slave laborers at Ravensbrück work camp made all the straw overboots for the German army, including the pair at the MHC. They were issued to soldiers, such as sentries and guards, whose duty required them to stand in place. German soldiers also wore straw overboots on the Western Front during the severe winter of 1944-45. During World War I, some German and Austrian soldiers wore straw overboots in the Italian Alps.

Because they are made of straw, the overboots have a very short life expectancy. We know of only two other museums that have examples of World War II German straw overboots: the British Imperial War Museum in London and the Bastogne War Museum in Bastogne, Belgium. The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Trento and Rovereto (MART), located in Rovereto, Italy, has a pair of World War I straw overboots.

The MHC is very fortunate to have this extremely rare artifact. We are grateful to Ms. Mary Beth Allen of Muskogee, who donated the boots, which her father acquired from a Russian soldier in Berlin at the end of World War II. The exact circumstances of the acquisition are unknown.



Ravensbrück prisoners await liberation by the Red Army – 1945.



Women slave laborers making straw overboots at the all-female labor camp at Ravensbrück, located about fifty-six miles north of Berlin. The Ravensbrück prisoners were literally worked to death and otherwise brutalized by all the usual Nazi methods. Note the women bundled against the cold.

“Between 1939 and 1945, some 130,000 to 132,000 female prisoners passed through the Ravensbrück camp system. Around 40,000 were Polish, 26,000 were Jewish from all German occupied countries, including Germany, also 18,800 Russian, 8,000 French and 1,000 Dutch. According to Encyclopædia Britannica, about 50,000 of them perished from disease, starvation, overwork and despair. Some 2,200 were killed in the camp’s gas chambers. Only about 15,000 of the total survived until liberation.” (wikipedia.org) Many who passed through the camp were transferred, as needed, to other work camps in Germany. Jewish women were more likely sent to one of the extermination camps in Poland, as their work output diminished because of the brutal treatment and lack of food and medicine.



German soldiers wearing straw overboots on the Russian Front.



## The Unlikeliest Hero

Desmond Thomas Doss served in Co. B, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 307<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry "Statue of Liberty" Division. He first saw combat on Guam, then on Leyte in the Philippines, where he was awarded two Bronze Stars for heroism, and finally on Okinawa. It was his repeated acts of extraordinary heroism on Okinawa during twenty-three days of continuous, ferocious combat by the 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division that resulted in his Medal of Honor. His Medal of Honor Citation best describes his actions:

"The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Private First Class Desmond Thomas Doss, United States Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action above and beyond the call of duty from April 29 – 21 May 1945, while serving with the Medical Detachment, 307<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, in action at Urasoe Mura, Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands. Private First Class Doss was a company aid man when the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion assaulted a jagged escarpment 400 feet high. As our troops gained the summit, a heavy concentration of artillery, mortar and machine gun fire crashed into them, inflicting approximately 75 casualties and driving the others back. Pfc. Doss refused to seek cover and remained in the fire-swept area with the many stricken, carrying all 75 casualties one-by-one to the edge of the escarpment and there lowering them on a rope-supported litter down the face of a cliff to friendly hands. On May 2, he exposed himself to heavy rifle and mortar fire in rescuing a wounded man 200 yards forward of the lines on the same escarpment; and 2 days later he treated 4 men who had been cut down while assaulting a strongly defended cave, advancing through a shower of grenades to within eight yards of enemy forces in a cave's mouth, where he dressed his comrades' wounds before making 4 separate trips under fire to evacuate them to safety. On May 5, he unhesitatingly braved enemy shelling and small arms fire to assist an artillery officer. He applied bandages, moved his patient to a spot that offered protection from small arms fire and, while artillery and mortar shells fell close by, painstakingly administered plasma. Later that day, when an American was severely wounded by fire from a cave, Pfc. Doss crawled to him where he had fallen 25 feet from the enemy position, rendered aid, and carried him 100 yards to safety while continually exposed to enemy fire. On May 21, in a night attack on high ground near Shuri, he remained in exposed territory while the rest of his company took cover, fearlessly risking the chance that he would be mistaken for an infiltrating Japanese and giving aid to the injured until he was himself seriously wounded in the legs by the explosion of a grenade. Rather than call another aid man from cover, he cared for his own injuries and waited 5 hours before litter bearers reached him and started carrying him to cover. The trio was caught in an enemy tank attack and Pfc. Doss, seeing a more critically wounded man nearby, crawled off the litter; and directed the bearers to give their first attention to the other man. Awaiting the litter bearers' return, he was again struck, by a sniper bullet while being carried off the field by a comrade, this time suffering a compound fracture of one arm. With magnificent fortitude, he bound a rifle stock to his shattered arm as a splint and then crawled 300 yards over rough terrain to the aid station. Through his outstanding bravery and unflinching determination in the face of desperately dangerous conditions Pfc. Doss saved the lives of many soldiers. His name became a

symbol throughout the 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division for outstanding gallantry far above and beyond the call of duty."



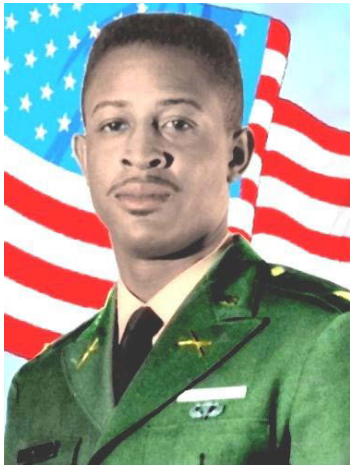
Doss on top of the Maeda Escarpment – Hacksaw Ridge, as the soldiers of the 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division called it – May 4, 1945

In addition to the Medal of Honor, CPL Doss received two Bronze Stars with V device and three Purple Hearts during the war. Doss was wounded four times on Okinawa, and shortly before leaving the Army, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis, which cost him a lung. He was discharged from the Army in 1946. He spent five years undergoing medical treatment for his wounds and illness.

Desmond Doss was born at Lynchburg, Virginia on February 7, 1919. He was working in a shipyard at Newport News, Virginia, when he decided to volunteer for the Army in 1942. Doss was a committed conscientious objector and refused to carry a weapon. He wanted to serve as a medic – save lives, not take them. Doss was severely disabled by his wounds and worked on his small farm in Georgia after the war. He died at Piedmont, Alabama, on March 23, 2006. He is buried in Chattanooga National Cemetery (Tennessee). The recently released movie, *Hacksaw Ridge*, depicts his life and extraordinary heroism.



A proud President Harry Truman presenting CPL Doss with the Medal of Honor on the White House lawn – October 12, 1945.



In October 1967, Captain Riley Leroy Pitts was serving in Vietnam as commander of Co. C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, the "Wolfhounds", 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry "Tropic Lightening" Division. Just one month before he was to be rotated home, his unit was called upon to reinforce another company heavily engaged against a strong enemy force.

Captain Pitts "distinguished himself by exceptional heroism while serving as company commander during an airmobile assault near Ap Dong, Republic of Vietnam, on 31 October 1967". His "exceptional heroism" was falling on a grenade to save the lives of his men. His widow, Mrs. Eula Pitts, accepted his Medal of Honor at a White House ceremony on December 10, 1968. Captain Pitts was the first African-American commissioned officer to receive the Medal of Honor. He had already been awarded a Silver Star for an earlier act of battlefield heroism.

Riley Leroy Pitts was born October 15, 1937, at Fallis, Oklahoma. He graduated from Wichita State University in 1960. He was later commissioned an officer in the Army and sent to Vietnam. Because he entered the Army in Kansas, Captain Pitts is accredited to that state in Medal of Honor records, but he is truly a heroic Oklahoman. He is buried in Hillcrest Memory Gardens, Spencer, Oklahoma.



A somber President Lyndon Johnson presenting Mrs. Eula Pitts with her husband's Medal of Honor at the White House – December 10, 1968.



Lt. Junior Grade Richard Miles McCool, Jr. was serving on a landing craft support ship (LCS) off Okinawa, on June 10, 1945. He helped rescue the survivors of sinking destroyer, USS *William D. Porter*. The next day, his LCS was hit by a Japanese kamikaze. Although he suffered severe burns and shrapnel wounds in the initial explosion, McCool continued to lead his crew in firefighting and rescue efforts until relief arrived.

His Medal of Honor Citation reads in part: "By his staunch leadership, capable direction, and indomitable determination throughout the crisis, Lt. McCool saved the lives of many who otherwise might have perished and contributed materially to the saving of his ship for further combat service. His valiant spirit of self-sacrifice in the face of extreme peril sustains and enhances the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service." President Truman presented Lt. McCool his Medal of Honor at the White House, on December 18, 1945.



*William D. Porter* sinking. McCool's LCS is behind LCS(L)3-86

Richard Miles McCool, Jr. was born at Tishomingo, Oklahoma on January 14, 1922. He graduated high school at age fifteen and went on to receive a degree in political science from the University of Oklahoma, in 1941. After Pearl Harbor, he was accepted into a new Navy ROTC program, and later was appointed to the U.S. Navy Academy. He graduated from the Navy Academy in 1944. (Because of the Navy's pressing need for officers, his class of 1945 graduated a year early.)

McCool went on to a career in the Navy, serving in Korea and Vietnam. He retired with the rank of Captain in 1974. He died at Bremerton, Washington, on March 5, 2008. He is entombed in the United States Navy Academy Cemetery at Annapolis, Maryland.

# *“Lest We Forget”*

## **Christmas in Iraq – 2004**



Soldiers of the 133<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Battalion, Maine National Guard at a Christmas service  
Forward Operating Base Marez – Mosel, Iraq

## **Christmas in Afghanistan – 2014**



Soldiers, enjoying a traditional Christmas dinner, toast with non-alcoholic beer at  
Headquarters-Security Assistance Force – Kabul, Afghanistan

*Freedom is not free.*