

Spring 2012

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History of the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum and the Arboretum Committee



Located by the DuPont Gate are over one hundred fifty trees with plaques honoring military service men and women. From generals to privates their names are recorded, as well as some aspects of their military career. The markers are placed beside maples, oaks and cherry trees and date from 1972 to 2006. This living military memorial, known as the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum, was the result of the efforts of the Tacoma Chapter of Retired Officers Association (TROA) Arboretum Committee.

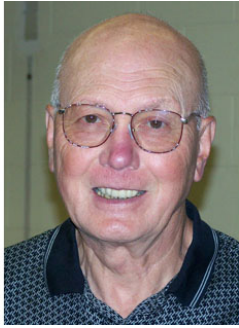
Formed in 1970, the Arboretum Committee's mission was "... to promote the plantings of trees and shrubs on the grounds of our military instal-

lations and to support the (Fort Lewis) Military Museum." Their stated purpose was "...to enhance the beauty of these installations and to recognize and honor the men and women who have served our country in uniform in peace and in war, those living, and those who have passed on" ("Arboretum Committee Notes" – February 1975).

The Arboretum Committee was first chaired by LTC Albert E. Semler (Ret.) and co-chaired by LTC Bertie Edward Craig (Ret). The roots of the Committee can be traced back five years earlier with the planting and dedication of three trees at Madigan Army Hospital and two memorial trees by the Main Gate in 1965. The first official act of the Arboretum Committee was the planting of five additional dedication trees at Madigan Hospital (Old Madigan) in 1970. These dedication trees along with those planted in 1965 formed the basis of the Madigan Army Medical Center (AMC) Gratitude Grove. By early 1975 Gratitude Grove contained twenty-seven dedication trees ("Arboretum Committee Notes" – February 1975). On Arbor Day 1976, the Committee placed a plaque and stone marker in Gratitude Grove to commemorate "200 years of military medicine presented in gratitude for the compassionate care given by the officer, enlisted and civilian staff of Madigan Army Medical Center." Plantings and dedications continued into the mid 1980s. However, by the 1990s Gratitude Grove began to fade away and is now largely forgotten. As early as 2001, only two dedication markers remained in place in addition to the 1976 dedica-

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President's Report-Ian Larson



After over two years undergoing renovation, the Museum is now open now three days a week, Thursday through Saturday. At present, most of the first floor galleries are open to the public, with

other galleries being reconstituted and made available for viewing as they are completed. The Museum Director has more details in his column. The Cannon Shop will open at the same times as well. It has been long, but worth the wait. Come out and see your Museum in its restored state! I think you will be impressed with how well the historic properties of the building were retained.

The Friends funds come from Cannon Shop profits and from dues and donations; the funds directly support needs of the Museum staff that are not normally available through appropriated funds. Some future expenditures are described below.

The Friends will be actively involved in supporting the Museum as the exhibits and galleries are reconstituted. The Friends Board approved funding of up to \$10,910 for supplies and labor not available through appropriated funds for several specific actions that will be needed to continue and complete the reconstitution. These include installation of a Public Address system on the first floor/mezzanine, rolling wardrobes for storage and preservation of reproduction uniforms and other exhibit material, and labor for work on specific exhibits.

The Friends were also involved in funding an Eagle Scout project for the construction of a concrete pad for the Sheridan vehicle on the east side of the Museum. The Friends provided the funds to purchase most of the construction materials, and the Scout provided the labor to complete the pad. The project was completed below budget and on time, resulted in a pad that could not have been better

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Director's Report-Myles Grant

Dear Friends,

Spring is now upon us and we continue to make steady progress on reconstituting all the museum's galleries (and designing a few new ones). The museum opened to the general public in a limited fashion on 21 February 2012, with exhibits in the Lobby and Soldiers of the Early Pacific Northwest Galleries, and open for public view only one day a week, Thursdays from 12 noon to 4 pm. Through March and April we were able to complete the Army Family Gallery and make improvements to the displays in both the Lobby and Pacific Northwest Gallery.



At present we are now open to the public three days a week, Thursday through Saturday from 12 noon to 4 pm, and have received delivery of all artifacts and display cases associated with the museum's largest gallery - the Fort Lewis Gallery - and have begun work in earnest its re-establishment. The Fort Lewis Gallery's storyline begins with the founding of Camp Lewis in 1917 and takes the viewer through to the present day integration of Fort Lewis with McChord Air Force Base to form Joint Base Lewis-McChord in 2010.

The Friends Board graciously approved a request to hire the former Museum Director, Alan Archambault, on a part time basis in order to help us complete the establishment of the Fort Lewis Gallery in a more expedient manner. While completion of exhibits is very important to a museum, the supporting infrastructure is equally important to allow the museum to operate, and I am in regular dialog with installation leadership regarding the funding and way ahead to mitigate some security shortfalls in the vicinity of the museum's arms

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tion stone. Albeit now a shadow of its former self, a portion of Gratitude Grove still exists at the Old Madigan Hospital at the corner of Lincoln Street and McKinley Street.

In 1972, the Arboretum Committee also established a grove of memorial trees at McChord Air Force Base. The McChord Memorial Grove was dedicated on 2 March 1972 with an opening ceremony attended by the Base Commander COL Frank Mertely, the Vice Commander COL Charles F.G. Kuyk and LTC Alphonse Brown (USAF Ret.), Chairman of the McChord Memorial Grove. On that same day, the first tree, a black oak, was dedicated to the famed and admired army aviator and airpower innovator, MG William "Billy" Mitchell. Spanish oaks were planted on either side of the Mitchell tree to honor a B-17 tail gunner killed in 1944 and a Navy pilot also killed in 1944 ("Retired Officers Dedicate Trees" – LTC Alphonse Brown, 1972).

The Memorial Grove at McChord was almost discontinued within three years of its dedication due to vandalism and a lack of support ("Arboretum Committee Notes" – February 1975). The Commander of McChord AFB pledged full support for the grove in November 1975 resulting in the continuance of the grove and the appointment of CWO Marvin T. Higginson (USAF Ret.) to oversee the planting and maintenance of the Grove ("Arboretum Notes" – November 1975). McChord's Memorial Grove continued to expand through the 1980s (aerial photographs 1976, 1981, 1985). Recently, the Memorial Grove has been re-landscaped to include models of airplanes. The McChord Memorial Grove is located on West Entrance Road east of the Officer's Club.

In April 1971, the Arboretum Committee had received permission from the Fort Lewis Post Commander, MG Alexander Bolling, to create a Fort Memorial Arboretum. The approved location was near DuPont Gate, east of the Hudson's Bay Trail Marker and north of Stone Station (Building #4176). Permission was granted for the eventual planting of 100 trees in the approved area. Dedication of the Arboretum oc-

curred on 27 May 1971 (Information Paper – History of the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum, undated).



The first tree, a scarlet oak, was planted in April 1971 in memory of LTG Alexander R. Bolling, the Commander of the 84th Infantry Division during WWII and later the Commander of Third U.S. Army who died in 1968. The tree was planted by his son, MG Alexander Bolling, Jr., the Post Commander of Fort Lewis ("Record of Trees Planted in the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum", COL Craig, 4 January 1983). Soon thereafter trees were planted to memorialize General of the Army and President Dwight D. Eisenhower and to honor General Mark W. Clark ("Record of Trees Planted in the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum", COL Craig, 4 January 1983; Letter from Mark W. Clark to A.E. Semler, 7 December 1973; Letter from Co-Chair COL Craig to Rusty, 30 October 1975).

For Memorial Day 1973 the Arboretum Committee created a focal point for the Arboretum by adding a semi-circular concrete bench and a large boulder with an attached metal plaque which reads, "This Arboretum is dedicated to those who served their country honorably in the armed services of the United States" (Red Shield Banner 1990 article entitled, "The Arboretum Committee").

Within three years, over thirty trees had been planted and dedicated in the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum. More than half of these were do-

nated by family members of those honored (“List of Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum Trees”, 1973). With the rapid growth of the arboretum the Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum officially assumed joint responsibility of the Arboretum (“Record of Trees Planted in the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum”, COL Craig, 4 January 1983).

By April 1975, over 100 trees had been planted and dedicated to members all four branches of the Armed Forces (living or deceased). By far the largest group represented



was the 84th Infantry Division (Railsplitters) with over 30 trees dedicated by or for one of their members. This overrepresentation by a single organization that was never stationed at Fort Lewis was due to the fact that most of the retired officers associated with the Arboretum Committee were Railsplitters, including the Co-Chair Bertie Craig (“Arboretum Committee Notes” – February 1975; Letter from Co-Chair COL Craig to COL Robert E. Wallace, AUS – Ret, 18 April 1975).

By making dedication requirements rather lax (anyone associated with the U.S. military or who was the spouse of armed serviceman could be dedicated) and actively soliciting dedications from other retired Railsplitters Craig was soon

forced to acknowledge that “the arboretum is close to reaching the original limits set by the Post Engineer...” (Letter from COL Craig to Rusty, 30 October 1975). In spring 1977, there were over one hundred forty trees marked with plaques in a seven acre area that was approved for approximately one hundred. Tighter, more compact plantings would be necessary if dedications were to continue (Fort Lewis Ranger article “FL Arboretum: Where living memories grow”, 31 March 1977). “We are not able to guarantee that we can continue to expand the Arboretum beyond the present confines, therefore we have discontinued the local Retired Officer Association policy of planting for each deceased officer” “We try to keep a few trees planted and in reserve...” “It was a shaky proposition when we started, but we now have a fine grove which has grown beyond the original area assigned to us and one we thought we could never fill with trees” (Letter from COL Craig to Jess, dated 1 May 1978). Between 1980 and 1981, two parallel rows of ornamental trees were planted adjacent to the Hudson’s Bay Trail marker at the very western edge of the Arboretum. Whether intentional or not, the two rows of cherry and crabapples trees approximate the original alignment of Clark Road. Named the “Avenue of Devotion,” these trees were originally reserved for widows or wives of servicemen. However, within a year this plan was dropped and the pre-planted alignments of flowering ornamental trees were dedicated to military officers (Fort Lewis Ranger article “Arboretum: Beauty of growing trees keeps old memories alive”, 18 September 1980; “Record of Trees Planted in the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum”, COL Craig, 4 January 1983).

Although in poor health by the late 1970s, Semler continued to develop landscape plans and memorial plantings. He did not limit himself to the confines of the Memorial Arboretum. His plans included the development of a “Ponderosa Pine Park” near the Fort Lewis Military Museum and the planting of a western white pine on the northeast side of the Museum as a memorial to MG Henry A. Greene, the first Commander of

Camp Lewis. Today, six ponderosa pines exist in a curvilinear alignment on the southwest side of the Museum along the former edge of Lewis Drive (now known as Constitution Drive). The Greene tree and plaque is still in place near the footprint of the original Salvation Army Red Shield Inn building, which was used as the original building for the Henry A. Greene Masonic Lodge #250 during the 1920s (www.mastermason.com/henry_a_greene/history.htm).

LTC Semler, the first Arboretum Chairman and driving force for the maintenance and expansion of the Arboretum died in the spring of 1981 at the age of 76. Co-Chairman Craig, assumed the General Chairmanship shortly thereafter ("Record of Trees Planted in the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum", COL Craig, 4 January 1983). By the time of Selmer's death the Arboretum had exceeded its original boundary and had amassed over two hundred trees, most of which had been dedicated ("Record of Trees Planted in the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum", COL Craig, 4 January 1983). His hard work did not go unnoticed. On 3 October 1980, the Commander of Fort Lewis, MG Howard F. Stone, dedicated the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum to COL Semler "for his efforts in establishing and perpetuating this arboretum for our fellow Soldiers and their families" ([Red Shield Banner](#) 1990 article entitled, "The Arboretum Committee"). The wooden dedication sign is still located at the southeast corner of the arboretum.

Without Semler's advocacy and verve and the advancing age of other founding members of the Arboretum Committee was unable to continue without outside support. In 1983, Fort Lewis assumed responsibility for the Arboretum's maintenance and the Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum assumed full responsibility for the "purchase and dedication of trees, recording of trees dedicated, and maintaining the funds". With these changes the Arboretum Committee was renamed the "Military Memorial Arboretum Society" (Letter from MAJ (Ret.) Katherine L. Sutherland, Acting Secretary of the Friends of the

Fort Lewis Military Museum to COL Craig, General Chairman, Arboretum Society, 22 December 1982; Minutes of the 5 January 1983 Meeting of the Board of the Military Memorial Arboretum Society).

In June of 1983, at age 76, COL Craig (Ret.) resigned as Chairman of the Military Memorial Arboretum Society. MAJ Robert D. Ball (Ret.) was appointed as the new Chairman on 21 June 1983 (Appointment of General Chairman letter to Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum dated 21 June 1983; Information Paper – History of the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum, undated). MAJ Ball was the longest-serving Chairman, holding the position for fifteen years through the summer of 1998. During his chairmanship the Memorial Grove was well-managed. Avenue of Devotion trees received dedications and Arboretum records were maintained.

In October 1998, SSG Joseph C. Hays IV was appointed the next Chairman of the Arboretum Society (Letter from Alan Archambault, Fort Lewis Military Museum Curator to Mr. McGrath, dated 21 October 1998). SSG Hays served from 1998-1999 and is the last known chairman. **This appointment was made to help replace lost plaques, and his interest was lost upon his transfer.**

Since 1983 the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum has been maintained by Fort Lewis Public Works with few additional plantings. Interest in the arboretum had begun to wane as the 1990s began. By the end of the decade the Arboretum Committee/Society was no longer in existence (Email – Roy Corn, 12 October 1999). Extant records of the defunct Arboretum Committee were transferred to the Fort Lewis Cultural **Resources Office in 2005**. A few random plantings and dedications have occurred since 2000 but they have been the result of individuals, and not part of a plan, design or committee decision. **Upon the death of Robert Ball, his wife Marion, assumed control fo the Arboretum funds. As a member of the Friends Board, she kept the board informed of replacements and the planting of 10 new trees. She also assisted in the dedi-**

cation of the few undedicated trees as well as the 10 newly planted trees. By 2005, all arboretum funds had been exhausted, and all trees had been dedicated. During the last 6 years many plaques were replaced, and all records were turned over to the Post Engineers in 2005.

The Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum is less than 50 years old and does not exhibit or contain exceptional or unique architectural or landscape features nor was it designed, engineered or landscaped by a famous person or master craftsman. Hence the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum is determined to be Not Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum has recently suffered from a lack of active management. The arboretum is routinely mowed and fallen limbs are removed, however some plaques and markers are missing and a few trees have died or have been removed and not replaced. The concrete bench is missing as well. The Arboretum area is currently viewed as an attractive landscape feature that one passes by while in a car on Interstate 5, Clark Road or West Way. Due to post-911 fencing and gating features the Arboretum is rarely visited and as a result, few people are aware that the attractive set of trees is actually a memorial park with dedications therein.

Although the Arboretum Committee no longer exists, their memorial groves at Fort Lewis, MAMC and McChord Field remain to inform people of the sacrifices made and those who have dedicated their lives to military duty.

Anderson, Willene. "Retiree plants living memorials". The News Tribune 21 Apr. 1980.

Arwine, SSG James. "FL Arboretum: Where living memories grow." The Ranger 31 Mar. 1977.

Black, Sue. "Arboretum: Beauty of growing trees keeps alive old memories." The Ranger 18 Sept. 1980.

Herbert, Orin A. "History of the Fort Lewis Memorial Arboretum." Unpublished information paper, undated.

"The Arboretum Committee." The Banner July 1990:

Addendum and notes by Marion Ball, 2010. (Red text above)

Presidents report (Cont.)

constructed if done professionally, and was a win-win for the Museum and the potential Eagle Scout – the Museum got a much needed pad for a vehicle, and the Scout completed his Eagle project requirement. Another Eagle Scout project that The Friends will fund is pending – the project will be for making new signs for the vehicles in the outdoor display.

Please join us at Patriots Landing on 3 June for our next brunch meeting. Our guest speaker will be LCDR (Ret) Cash Barber, a WW II Naval Aviation crewmember who recently had the opportunity to visit our Nation's Capital and the WW II monument under the auspices of the **Freedom Flight** program. I am sure the experiences of one who participated will make for an interesting presentation. We look forward to seeing you there.

Ian Larson, President

Directors Report (Cont.)

room and artifact storage area as well as work to fund a much needed public address system and upgrade or install lighting in future gallery space.

Hopefully, by the next issue of "The Banner" we will be able to report substantial progress in the amount of gallery space available to educate and inform the public about the mission of the Army and its role here at JBLM and its contributions to the development of the Pacific Northwest and the United States as a whole.

Myles Grant, Director

FRIENDS OF THE FORT LEWIS MILITARY MUSEUM
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
SUNDAY, June 3, 2012

Place: Patriots Landing, Evergreen Room
Time: 1145-1215 Social Hour
1215-1330 Brunch
1330-1415 Program

Program: Our guest speaker will be LCDR (Ret) Cash Barber, a resident of Patriots Landing who served during and after WW II in the Pacific with Naval Aviation . He recently was selected to participate in the **Freedom Flight** program, which provides veterans with an opportunity to visit the National WW II monument in Washington DC, at no cost to the individual. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for surviving veterans which will soon open up to Korean war veterans, then followed by those of the Vietnam era , and finally by Iraq/ Afghanistan veterans.



Please return your reservation form and check by Thursday, May 31 2012. Last minute reservations may be made by calling Paul Knoop at (253) 279-2598.

Return this form to LTC (Ret) Donald A Simpson, 6615 79th Street W
Lakewood WA 98499. Make checks payable to "The Friends".
Cost of Brunch for members and Guests: \$16.00 each.

Number of Reservations: _____ Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Name of Member: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Names of Guests: _____

Residents of Patriot's Landing do not need to make payment for the meal, but should make reservations for seating.

**The Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum
Board of Directors**

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The *Banner* is printed four times a year and is mailed to all members of The Friends of Fort Lewis Museum. Articles may be submitted to the Editor or left with the Director of the Fort Lewis Museum. The Friends assume no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts or other materials submitted for publication.

Editor.....Paul Knoop
 Assistant Editor.....Don Simpson

Reminder: Annual membership dues are now due if you are not a Life or Honorary member.

**Help Us Defend Our
Military Heritage-
Please Continue to be a
Friend of the Fort Lewis
Military Museum**

ANNUAL DUES

Individual.....\$ 10
Family.....\$ 15
Sustaining.....\$ 25
Benefactor.....\$ 50

(Please make checks payable to *The Friends* and send to Fort Lewis Military Museum, P.O. Box 331001, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA 98433-1001.)

***Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum
PO Box 331001
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA 98433-1001***

