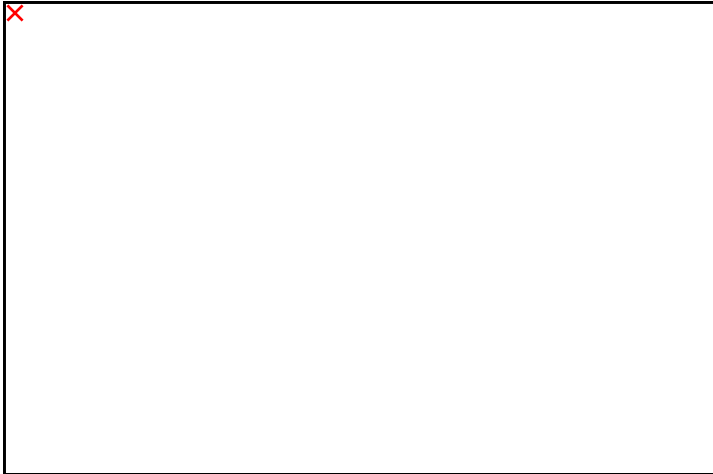


# 54th annual holiday social a 'family affair'

*Erin O. Stattel, Army War College Public Affairs*

## 54<sup>th</sup> annual holiday social a true 'family affair'



*Air Force Lt. Col. Shaun McGrath, USAWC student, talks with his guest Bill Stamm, during the 2009 Senior Citizens Holiday Social Dec. 10 in the Letort View Community Center. Photo by Thomas Zimmerman.*

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Dec. 10, 2009 - The Letort View Community Center was full of smiles, holiday cheer and family Dec. 9 and 10 during the 54<sup>th</sup> Carlisle Barracks Senior Citizens Holiday Social.

On both days as many as 300 guests from area nursing homes are accompanied by nearly 400 volunteers including Army War College students, faculty and other Carlisle Barracks community members, as they enjoy the talents of local acts such as the Carlisle High School flute and saxophone ensembles, the Hamilton Elementary School 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade choir and the Coyle School of Irish Dance, in addition to other entertainment provided by the Carlisle Barracks Child Development Center and many more. Guests also enjoy special appearances by Santa and Mrs. Claus, and the time-honored tradition of an Army War College student "Elvis" performance.

### **WWII vet, wife attend first Holiday Social**

Two of the guests were Emery and Kathleen Roe who have been married since February 14, 1942 and now live in Chapel Pointe at Carlisle. The couple has been together ever since except the time spent apart when Emery was sent to Italy with the 5th Army during World War II.

"We were married on Valentine's Day, before he went to war," said Kathleen.

"I was with the combat engineers and spent three years in Germany and Italy where we landed in

Naples," recalled Emery. The Roe's were escorted by student Col. Rob Timm and his wife, Teri.

"I remember being camped outside the Pisa Tower when I was serving in Italy and that was in 1945. It certainly was an interesting time in my life."

After leaving the Army in 1945, Emery made a living as an upholsterer and "spitting tacks," but both Emery and Kathleen agreed it was nice to be back with "family."

"It is just so nice to be back among so many people in uniform and their families," Kathleen remarked. "There is a feeling of home among Army people and our escorts are wonderful, this is just wonderful."

After living most of their lives in Iowa, the Roe's moved to Carlisle to be closer to their three daughters.

"All three of our daughters live in the Carlisle area, so we have been here for the past nine years," Emery said. "This is our first year coming to the Holiday Social and it is really nice, what a great thing to go to."

#### **Other vets, local residents attend**

Guest Ken Walters said he served in the Air Force for 10 years and enjoyed the afternoon with his escort, student Col. Greg Wilcoxon.

"I like watching the little ones performing all their songs, it is very cute," he said.

Student Col. Michael Fleetwood escorted Kathryn Sheaffer, who worked in the Army War College Department of Academic Affairs for 24 years.

"This was my first year coming here and it was absolutely wonderful," Sheaffer said. "I liked the Irish dancers and the Elvis performance, it was all great. I liked everything."

Bob Brown, from Claremont Nursing and Rehab Center, has been coming to the social for 10 years and always looks forward to this event.

"This is the best part of the holidays for me," he said. "I love seeing the kids sing and the music really gets me into the spirit."

In addition to receiving an escort all afternoon, each guest receives a gift bag of homemade treats and a framed photo to remember their visit. Following the event, cookies and poinsettias are delivered to

the area nursing and retirement homes for residents who are not physically able to attend.

Sue Frederick, a certified nursing assistant from Manor Care, called the event a nice opportunity for the home's residents.

"This is my first year coming to this and it is really nice that they do this for all these people," she said.

Sharon Horn, activities coordinator for Manor Care, echoed Frederick's sentiments.

"This is a really nice thing to do for the community, and clearly, you can see how happy everyone is to get to spend the afternoon with the officers and people here at Carlisle Barracks. The residents look forward to coming every year."

Guest Sue Hoffman said she comes for the cookies and the music.

"I've always loved the holidays since I was a little girl," she said. "This reminds me of the holidays as a kid when the whole family would get together."

### **Volunteers enjoy event as well**

"We always have a fantastic time in the cookie room," said Linda Davis, operations assistant, directorate of plans and operations. "This year we had 1,300 cookies."

For some, the holiday social reminds volunteers they are a part of the post "family." Michele Pritchard's husband, Col. Jack Pritchard, was president of last year's academic class, but is deployed in Iraq this year.

"I baked last year, but I decided to volunteer and hostess this year," she said as she served cookies. "I just love doing this. My husband is away this year and so I thought this would be a great way to give back to this generation. I just love seeing their faces light up."