

CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

October 2012

Chartered: Nov. 1, 1985. **Past Presidents:** *Nelson Oats, *Harold Ballard, *W. O. Mullin, *Verle Oringderff, *Harold Trammell, *William Oakley, Frank Polenta, *S. L. Baker, *George Payne, *Harry Steinert, & *Al Clement. *deceased. **Current Officers:** President-Mike Pixler, phone contact: 817-929-1557, First Vice President-Jim Rau, phone contact: 817-367-3343, Second Vice president-Pat Mann, phone: [info later], Secretary/Treasurer-Blanche Howerton, phone: 817-578-6542, Sergeant at Arms-Troy Jones, Chaplain-Rev. James Pixler, Kitchen Committee, Lillie Payne, Historian-Ruby Pixler, Reporter at Large & Newsletter Editor-Bill Stallings, phone contact: 972-255-7237.

Monthly Meeting is held on the *second* Saturday of each month from 10:30 AM to 1PM at the North Side Multipurpose Center, 1801 Harrington [North], Fort Worth, TX 76106. Dues are \$10 a person annually and are effective from Oct. to Oct.

Directions: Interstate Hwy 30 runs east & west. It accesses the downtown Fort Worth area from the south. Exit north on Henderson St. After a couple of miles it crosses a fork of the Trinity River and becomes State Hwy 199 which goes to Lake Worth, and the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. When you reach the traffic light at the intersection of 18th St. NW, turn right [east] and go up the hill four blocks to Homan St. Turn left [north], and go a block to the Y. **Stay right and continue into the Center's rear parking lot.** Our meeting room door with the CCC sign is to the right as you approach the building. Bring a friend & enjoy fun, fellowship & food. Sign the register for you may win the \$10 door prize.

- WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES: Merle & Evelyn Timblin, Bedford, TX, 10/27, No. 67! Our humble apology to Allen & Kitty Wilkerson of Fort Worth, TX, for leaving out their No. 57th Anniversary of 9/30 last month!
- HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Doris Minshew, Perrin, TX, 10/6; ~~William "Bull" Ellis, Edna, TX,~~ and Troy Jones, Everman, TX, 10/17; Blanche Howerton, Weatherford, TX, 10/21.
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MINUTES OF MEETING OF CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123, ON SATURDAY, October 13, 2012, Weather: Clear; Temp. 70[°]; Attendance: 16.

President Mike Pixler opened the meeting at 11:00 AM. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and read a few jokes from the Senior News.

Merle Timblin gave the invocation in the absence of our chaplain, Rev. James Pixler.

Troy Jones, Sgt-at Arms, led the pledge to the flags.

Blanche Howerton, Sec/Treas. read the minutes for last month. Motion to accept as read was made by Troy Jones, 2nd by Marcia Doherty, motion carried. Blanche then gave the financial report. Motion to accept as read was made by Bill Stallings, 2nd by Pat Mann, motion carried.

Sick Calls, anniversaries and birthdays were given. The group sang happy birthday to those present. We all celebrated Merle and Evelyn Timblin's 67th wedding anniversary.

Pres. Pixler reported that he had been unable to reach Joe Minshew. Since Joe had worked at the Cleburne State Park, they wanted him to be their "special guest" at the re-dedication ceremony at the park. Several of Chapter 123 members made plans to attend.

Pres. Pixler told of several instances where there are several generations who are members of our chapter at the same time.

Pres. Pixler and Bill Stallings made a report about the trip to the National Reunion of CCC Legacy held at Missoula, Montana. Our Chapter was presented a certificate of Acknowledgement as being the only chapter that follows all rules and by-laws set forth by National CCC Legacy.

Marcia Doherty, election chairperson, reported on all the ballots for re-election for positions of President and 2nd Vice President. No nominations were made from the floor and ballots were for Mike Pixler, President and Pat Mann, 2nd Vice President. Oath of office was given by Blanche Howerton, Sec/Tres.

The drawings were held for door prizes. Winners were Larkin Dilbeck, who won the \$10 and donated it back to the chapter; others were Wanda Jones, Ruby Pixler, and guest Terah Jones.

Troy Jones blessed the food. Meeting to adjourn was made by Jim Rau, 2nd by Bill McKee, motion carried. We adjourned at 12:32 PM. A wonderful meal and fellowship was enjoyed by all.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Blanche Howerton, Sec/Treas.

The President's Corner, 10-13-2012

The subject for this corner is: You just had to be there.

You just had to be there. Where? It was Missoula, Montana, for the CCC Legacy Reunion, 2012. Our host was noted author, Stan Cohen, had the event well planned and in hand. I will share with you just a few of the reasons why **you** just had to be there.

~~Thursday's registration and concession set up~~ went off without a hitch. The chapters and other organizations represented, included the Montana Forestry Department, host Stan Cohen had a display with a history book of the CCC in Montana, complete with a uniform worn during the period. CCC Legacy Chapter 123 had a full display for all to enjoy. Several of the attendees took group photos in front of our display. During the welcome reception meet and greet some of the ten CCC Boys who were there shared their experiences not only during their time in the CCC, but stories of their life, period. I met four new CCC Boys who I had not met before. For some, this was their first gathering. They will tell you they had a wonderful time and will try to make others in ~~the future, health willing. I don't know,~~ you just had to be there.

This reunion was special for many reasons. The visit to the Nine Mile CCC camp, the largest in the nation, was the base for three CCC companies, with upwards of 600 men who built the Remount Depot and the first U.S.

Forestry Smokejumper Airstrip, was the highlight of Friday. Guided by our host Stan Cohen, you could just look at the remains of the camp and imagine the activity within the camp. Following lunch, it was off for a tour of the Smokejumpers Visitor Center and the Flying Museum, which was begun by Stan Cohen. You just had to be there.

The more important reason, in my opinion is the support of the CCC Legacy that the 21st Conservation Service Corps, Americorps, and the Montana Conservation Corps offer. These young people, lead by Jono Kenedy, were helpful at every turn. From the building twenty picnic tables of CCC design, and barbeque at Fort Missoula on National Public Lands Day; to the Nine Mile Ranger and Remount Station , and everything in between. Our guide at Nine Mile, a member of the Montana Conservation Corps, was Danielle Boulais who was very **knowledgeable of the station and guided up through its' history. You just had to be there.**

Did I mention the tour of the Military Museum, or the tour of Fort Missoula [thanks again, Stan]; or the Guest House Inn, Anne and rest of the staff; the meals, the hospitality, the entertainment [all the best]? Thanks Stan. I guess you just had to be there. A wonderful time was had by all. Perhaps you missed this meeting in Missoula, **but don't miss the next CCC Legacy Chapter 123 meeting, 10 November, 2012.** 1st Vice President Jim Rau will have the controls. I will be involved again this year with the Fort Worth Veterans Day Parade, and the Merchant Marine Veterans.

A last, bittersweet statement of congratulations to our chapter! CCC Legacy Chapter 123 was recognized as the **ONLY** chapter operating within the guidelines of the bylaws of CCC Legacy, Inc., and is meeting on a regular basis, **IN THE NATION!** Way to go, Chapter 123!

Yours in Service,

Mike Pixler, President
CCC Legacy Chapter 123

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A Report on Our Poet Laureate, Jack Bragg

We finally were able to talk with Jack the other day, and found that he has been having a tough time of it lately. It has been very hard for him to get to the phone. He has been having a lot of back pain and other problems so keep him in your thoughts and prayers. His grandson and other family members have been helping with meals and etc., allowing him to stay at home. Jack says he will try to have a poem for us when he is able.

Missoula, Montana, and Our 2012 National Reunion of CCC Legacy

Missoula is situated in an immense valley in Western Montana, and when we arrived there we noticed how hazy the sky was and that the surrounding mountains were hard to see. We soon learned that the haze was actually the smoke from big fires south and west of town, about 100 miles and 50 miles distant. You could smell it, but it **wasn't enough to really bother you. The area has been very dry, as has virtually the entire Western U.S.** It is still a very beautiful area, and on the last day we were there the mountains were clearly visible, and we could really appreciate the beauty.

After getting checked in Thursday evening, we began meeting our fellow Legacy members and the ten "Boys" in attendance [the next day an 11th "Boy" appeared]. Our motel was well situated with good facilities for us, and they went out of their way in welcoming our group. Our host and Missoula resident was Stan Cohen, a man who wears many hats. He is the author and/or publisher of many thousand books, particularly on the CCC and military history. Many of us have a copy of his "The Tree Army - A Pictorial History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942." He has also established three museums in the city.

Bright and early Friday morning we boarded a school bus and headed out on Tour One, to "The Nine Mile Camp." This was said to be the largest single camp in the country with 3 companies totaling about 600 men. It was situated in an open glade of a National Forest with beautiful tall trees. Except for a few visible foundations, the only thing left to mark the camp is an immense rock fireplace marking the site of the recreation/chow hall. Here we met our guide and soon good friend, Danielle Boulais, member of the Montana Conservation Corps. This young lady is team leader of a corps group that builds and maintains Forest Service hiking trails, and is the reincarnation of what an original CCC team leader was. She knows how to use a chain saw, grubbing hoe, or an axe, and after a week's work out on trail projects, she relaxes on her days off sometimes by taking a thirty-six mile hike. Danielle grew up in Indianapolis, Indiana, and graduated from the university there. In the summer of her junior year she visited her grandmother [who had worked in a CCC camp] and other relatives in northern Montana, and fell in love with the mountains and trees. She was so taken with the area, that she moved here and made the outdoors her life's work.

After we left here we moved on to "Nine Mile Remount Station" a few miles away. Here a great deal remains of what this CCC camp accomplished while here.

Some Background: The U.S. Forest Service was established in 1905 to preserve and protect the country's forests. Forest fires soon became a major focus, and getting to them a big problem. There were no roads into forest backcountry; only game trails or narrow pathways. So, enter the idea of horse and mule pack trains to move men and equipment into the backcountry to fight the fires. At first the Forest Service had little experience in fighting fires or training its men in the "how" of it. They rented half wild mules and horses, and as a result, it would take half a day for the men just to get the animals harnessed up and move out. Luckily the Forest Service had hired an ex-U.S. Army cavalry officer who pushed the Service to establish a remount station like the Army had done back in the horse cavalry days. As a result, the Nine Mile Remount Station was begun there in Montana in 1930. Its purpose was not just to have a place for horses and mules to be held until needed, but to be a working ranch that actually bred its own stock of animals, trained men to handle and use them in pack trains, and maintain all the needed equipment. The CCC was brought in to build the post into what it is today. They built a massive barn with hand-hewn support beams, many stalls for the stock, and tack rooms. They built dormitories for the men and a number of out buildings to either make or repair equipment. They even built a special smaller breeding barn. We got to see some of the stock; beautiful horses and mules. The Station is in a wide, open area of golden color grass sweeping upslope to high ground, and then higher yet to the mountains in the background. This is the last Forest Service Remount Station left in the country, but it is still an active part of fighting backcountry fires. We enjoyed a sack lunch here, and then it was back to Missoula and its airport to visit a different kind of fire fighting station.

We walked into a building there and were introduced to the world of the Smoke Jumpers - a change of pace indeed. We were met by our guide, an experienced smoke jumper, and were shown the ropes, so to speak. The place is a working fire house - with a few differences. There is a very tall room or parachute loft where chutes are repacked and repaired if need be. Also there are no fire engines, but there are a couple of airplanes parked out

back on call at a moment's notice. It is similar to any fire station where the men are on duty so many hours and then off for a few days or so. The smoke jumpers typically work as a two person team whose job is to jump directly onto a small fire just getting started before it can spread. They are dressed in heavy protective gear with pockets for all kinds of stuff in their clothing and pants – even coffee, food, and a camp stove. A separate chute is dropped with their fire fighting gear. In case they land in or caught in a tree, they can disconnect their chute and use a separate rope to rappel down to the ground. The reason for the food is that they often have to walk out a number of miles to the nearest road. There are two basic types of parachutes used; depending on the type of jump or terrain involved, and the chutes are limited to the times they can be used. We got on board one of the aircraft and were shown the technique of jumping. We were told that typically 13 jumpers would go out on a jump, and if need be they could jump more than two or the whole group depending on the size or number of fires. From here we went to the other side of the airport to the Aircraft Museum of Fire Fighting operated by our host, Mr. Stan Cohen. The museum is well laid out and has a unique collection of aircraft and related equipment. Oh well, just another boring day in Montana.

Saturday morning after a quick breakfast, we headed out again; this time to Fort Missoula which was near our motel. The Fort dates to the 1880s and is now a large part of a city park. The buildings of the Fort date from about the teens or twenties, and are in beautiful condition, being used by various non-profit agencies of the city. Our first stop was the CCC and Military Museums, also projects of our host Stan Cohen. This guy gets around! Then around 10:30 AM or so, we adjourned outside where a gang of young men and women had assembled. They were members of the 21st Conservation Service Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Montana Conservation Corps, and had brought with them the cut pieces of exact copies of enough parts to build twenty CCC design picnic tables. Interestingly, the wood had been cut from logs that had recently been salvaged from being inundated beneath an old dam lake [note: no "n" in there] that had been demolished. The wood looked new. They had two hours to do this, so naturally we said no way. Sure enough, they proved us wrong. The neatest part of watching this controlled chaos was seeing the original CCC Boys mixed in and talking with these young people, and both groups had big smiles on their faces as they interacted with each other. Definitely worth the price of admission! After this a "Boy" and a new Corps "Girl" helped dedicate a new trail in the park, and then we all enjoyed a barbeque "dinner on the ground." Soon after, we noticed a group of Ford Model 'A's circling through the park. This proved to be a local club, and they were invited to join us, which they gladly did. They fit right in, and gave many of us rides in their beautifully restored vehicles; many of the owners complete in period dress. And so, thus ended another boring day.

We do need to mention the excellent evening meals of both days. That first evening our host, Stan Cohen again, arranged for a local singing group of three girls to sing songs of the era of the Andrews Sisters. They fit the bill perfectly. For Saturday, he booked a trio to play folk, bluegrass and some jazz instrumentals for us; again to great applause. Mike, our President, was recognized as having driven the longest distance to the reunion, but one of the "Boys," Ernest Hubacker, age 97, on his walker, traveled by himself, by bus for eighteen hours from Jamestown, ND, to get to Missoula; his first reunion!

Our group was small this year, but everyone had a great time and said that it was a great success. We have to thank our host Stan Cohen and the many other locals that put so much time and effort into this great 2012 CCC Legacy Reunion. We have not mentioned it before, but none of this would have been possible without the hard work and long, solitary hours of our CCC Legacy President Joan Sharpe. A hearty **WELL DONE, JOAN!**

CHAPTER 123 IS GUEST OF HONOR AT A SPECIAL TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE EVENT

Our Chapter 123 was invited to attend the Re-Dedication of the Rebuilt Camp Creek Bridge at Cleburne State Park which is southwest of Fort Worth near the Brazos River. The park consisting of a substantial rock dam and Cedar Lake, the Camp Creek Bridge below the dam, and other structures was built by CCC Company 3804 in the 1930s. The well built rock piers of the bridge are just as solid now as built, but the wooden road deck was rebuilt in the 1950s with steel bed and railings. It came to be called the "Iron Bridge." Recently a new road and bridge were built next to the old to meet new standards, and the older bridge was made into a walking/biking bridge and returned to the original design of a wood deck and railings. The railings were made with native wood from the park itself. It is a beautiful bridge again. The story goes that when the original cut limestone piers were being built, a wheel barrow was accidentally dropped down the open center of one pier, and since no one wanted to fish it out, it was cemented in place.

The event went off as scheduled on the beautiful morning of Wednesday, October 17, 2012, at 10:00 AM. Our chapter was well represented by Pres. Mike Pixler, who made a very nice presentation to the group, Historian Ruby Pixler, Larkin Dilbeck & Larka Tetens, Ernest & Helene Hubbard, Merle Timblin & friend Paul Simon ...[no, not THAT Paul Simon], and Bill Stallings. Member and "Boy," Joe Minshew actually worked at Cleburne State Park, but was unable to attend. We were made welcome by Park Superintendent Collis Park and his able staff, along with many representatives from Texas Parks & Wildlife home office in Austin, including Brent Leisure, Director of State Parks. They had even brought a CCC hand made park bench that had been built in the '30s at the shop at Bastrop State Park. We missed seeing our good friend, Janelle Taylor, CCC Coordinator for TP&W who wanted to be there, but could not. The Ribbon Cutting to officially re-open the bridge was ably done by our three "Boys": Ernest, Larkin, and Merle with typical CCC "Can Do" attitude. The event was covered by Matt Smith, Reporter for the "Cleburne Times-Review." We then had refreshments and a "meet & greet" at a shady rest area next to the bridge. Several of us were treated to an escorted tour of the park afterwards by Bryan Frazier of TP&W. All in all a great occasion!

We Now Continue our Series of Curtis Greer's Story in WW II

We pick up his narrative as his unit enters Germany in late 1944: "I've forgotten the exact date of our baptism of fire, but we relieved the veteran 29th [or 30th] Infantry Division in the Siegfried Line at Aachen, Germany, and boy were we proud. We were 10 miles inside Hitler's Germany and just a rookie division. We soon became veterans and were engaged in some heavy fighting in November and December in the Linnich, Roer River area. The British were on our left and the 84th American Division [Rail Splitters] on our right. We were part of the newly formed 9th Army commanded by Gen. William A. Simpson which was known as the Ghost Army [that seemed to appear out of nowhere]. I got to meet him several years later at the VA office at Brooke General Hospital, Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. He came in to place a claim and I stood up at my desk and asked for his autograph. He put me at ease and sat down at my desk and visited with me for about 10 minutes. Over the years I lost that autograph. He was a nice man and physically very large and his hometown was Weatherford, TX.

I was a medic and worked primarily in the Battalion Aid Station. Combat medics were authorized the Combat Medical Badge, very similar to the Infantryman's Combat infantry Badge. We wore it proudly on our dress uniform and we received 10 dollars a month extra pay for the length of our army career. That doesn't seem like much, but it came in handy at times. We wore red crosses on each arm and four painted on our helmet. We carried a huge first aid kit [we called it a pill bag] instead of a rifle and were supposed to be covered under provisions of the Geneva Convention rules, but sometimes the Germans would shoot at us; sometimes not. However, Hitler's SS troops were known for taking no prisoners. Our casualties resulted mostly from shrapnel. Looking back I'm glad I never had to kill another human being, but I'm sure I could have if that would have been my war-time assignment. One day there was a huge, long 240 mm cannon mounted on a long trailer and set up near our aid station. It was towed by a large, several ton truck. Two men loaded the huge shell using a cart. The artillery man shouted, "Hey medic, do you want to pull the lanyard?" I answered him, "No, for if I did, I would be violating the Geneva Convention Treaty." He hollered, "Well I do, Hitler count your men!" as he pulled the cord. The recoil was something else. Even shingles were shaken from the building rooftops.

Can you remember where you were on VE and VJ Day and what you were doing? Can you remember the excitement you felt when you heard the good news? We like to think about those happy occasions in our lives. After the war in Europe was over in May of 1945, our 102nd Infantry Division moved from within 35 miles of Berlin to southern Germany and became a part of the Army of Occupation. We were in the process of preparing to embark for the South Pacific to participate in the hostilities there. It was a beautiful mountainous wooded area and from our physical vantage point we could see Bavaria, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. Then, all of a sudden, we learned the war with Japan was over and that two powerful bombs had been dropped and Japan had surrendered! I can't tell you how happy our group was – you talk about a burden being lifted from your shoulders – this was a huge one. My wife has fabricated a counted cross-stitch picture which is framed and hangs in our living room. It reads, "Those of us who have never gone, don't always understand, The sacrifices you made, protecting hearth and land, We take for granted our freedom and forget to count the cost, To those who protect that freedom from war and holocaust. So this simple poem is a thank you, to tell you someone cares, And that you are remembered, in our hearts and in our prayers."

-----more later.

The Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy is a non-profit organization dedicated to research, preservation, and education to promote better understanding of the CCC and its continuing contribution to American life and culture. *"I propose to create a Civilian Conservation Corps to be used in simple work, more important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work."*

--FDR, 1933

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