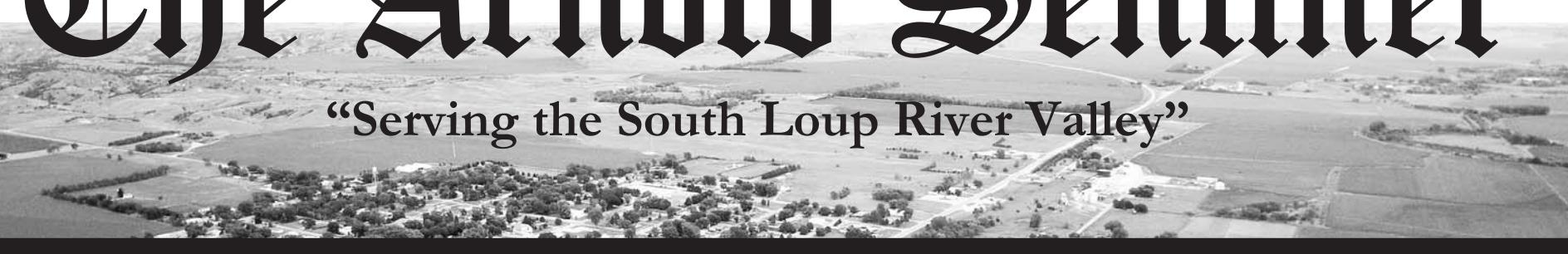


The Arnold Sentinel

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Arnold Vietnam Vet Finds Closure in Flight to D.C.

By Janet Larreau

When Arnold resident John Phillips came home from serving his country in Vietnam in 1972, he didn't get much of a welcome.

“When I flew back to Oakland, California, I was processed out to fly military standby, so I wore dress greens. I was spit-shined up and looked pretty sharp. I was proud to serve my country,” he said. “I flew into Denver, and during my eight hour layover, I never experienced any taunting or anything like that, but I never had anyone thank me for my service or offer to buy me a cup of coffee in those eight hours.”

None of John's family knew that he was coming home, so when he arrived at the North Platte airport, he called his Aunt Jackie and asked her to take him to Arnold. When he got to town, he went to the café and called his mom to drive in from the country and take him home.

“I went into the pool hall while I waited, and a couple of my classmates were in there playing pool. One said, ‘Oh, you're back from Nam. How many gooks did you kill?’ The other classmate responded, ‘Oh, about 100.’ I just looked at them and thought, they aren't even glad to see me. I just turned around and walked out. Only my family was excited to see me. Mom had been

painting boards in my room a sort of red, white and blue—whatever color she had or could afford—she had no idea I was coming home.”

John was drafted into the army in 1971. He and another Arnold boy, Ed Tullis, were good buddies. Ed wanted to go at the same time as John, so he enlisted. Both got orders for Ft. Leonardwood, and both had mechanical and machinery backgrounds, so they were put into Advanced Individual Training for engineering. The army needed ten guys for a water drilling course, so they both volunteered. They were both ranked the top two in physicals and academics in the two AIT classes.

Again, both got orders for Vietnam.

“We would have been in the same place, too, and the odds would have been incredible, but because Ed's brother Allan was already serving in Nam, Ed wasn't sent,” said John.

John was based in Long Binh, where he built fire support bases for the artillery as a combat engineer. During that time, he took shrapnel and was awarded the Purple Heart. He was also awarded a Bronze Star for meritorious service.

“In Vietnam it was Gorilla Warfare, so you never knew when you were going to get attacked by sniper or mortar attacks,” he said. “My most



Arnold resident John Phillips (third from left) was one of four veterans asked to place the memorial wreath at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., during May's Vietnam Memorial flight that carried over 600 veterans from Nebraska to view the monument.

vivid memory was when I had to go to the morgue and identify my good friend,

James, in the body bag. I looked and said, ‘Yea, that's him.’”

John said unlike World War II soldiers, who were discharged in units, Vietnam vets were discharged individually and not given time to decompress. Vietnam was something he never really wanted to talk about, but a recent experience has given him some closure.

“She often told stories of covered wagons and traveling by wagons. She made a game of cutting wood with her brother, taking the wagon to pick berries, and

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Flight, sponsored by Pinnacle Bank. His only cost was two nights of accommodations in a hotel. As for food, he said there was plenty of it. Over a half a million dollars was raised by sponsor Patriotic Productions, and adding in work by volunteers, he said it is hard to calculate the total.

“When we flew into Washington, D.C., we walked through the terminal. People from all over the world were there, and they cheered and waved the U.S. flag. It was thunderous. None of us expected anything like that.

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Family Places Sign at Little Known Cemetery Near Arnold



A new sign was erected at the end of April at Powell Canyon Cemetery, east of Arnold, by the family of Mabel J. Brooks. Established in 1886, the cemetery was first named Rosebud Cemetery due to the wild roses growing there. The cemetery went relatively unnoticed by passersby until the sign was installed.

Take a drive east of Arnold, and you will pass by an unnoticed, quiet spot called the Powell Canyon Cemetery. Located about five miles outside of town, just off Highway 92, the cemetery is small and unkept, but loved ones of the people buried there know it as a special place. Toward the end of April, one of those families gathered there to bury their grandmother's ashes and to erect a large steel sign that will mark the spot for generations to come.

Before erecting the sign, the family buried the ashes of former Arnold resident

Mabel J. Brooks at the gravesite of her husband, Lawrence P. Brooks. Mabel passed away at the age of 100 on December 8, 2016.

“My dad Roger, Uncle Buddy, and grandma and grandpa, are buried in the heart of the Sandhills. It is the most beautiful, quiet, peaceful place. It's our hope that this sign will bring more families' loved ones here and shine light on the goodness in people's hearts. Now when people pass the cemetery, they will know it's Powell Canyon Cemetery,” said Mabel's granddaughter, Loni (Brooks) Waddell.

At last week's APS spring music program, family members and friends were treated to listening to a guitar band made up of seven sixth graders.

Ms. Chrysanne Bailey, music instructor, said last year the school purchased 10 guitars and offered the junior high chorus and sixth grade class the chance to learn to play. This year, the program was offered to just the sixth grade class, and the

students have really enjoyed playing and are wanting to learn more.

The class practices two days a week for a half of the period, which is about 27 minutes, using a beginner guitar book to learn songs using one to three strings.

“The kids are learning simple melodies; no power chords yet,” she joked.

With only ten guitars, many students have to share. However, there are funds from the late Marion Fuller

that are marked to be used for elementary music, so the school will be purchasing ten more. Ms. Bailey is hoping the students can advance more when the new guitars are purchased.

The guitar is a social instrument,” she said. “You are free to play chords and sing-along, which makes it very flexible, as well. It is also a very portable instrument.”

The students picked two songs to play at the program. The first was a simple little

Guitar Program Gaining Ground at APS



(From left) Sixth graders Silas Cool, Devin Peterson, Clay Witthuhn, Chester Oberg, Halie Recoy, Lance Jones and Johnathon Lamphier perform on guitars at last week's spring APS music program. (Jessica Tickle photo)

By Fallon Gibson

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Ms. Bailey is very excited that the students have enjoyed playing the guitar this year, and she is hoping more kids want to stick with it in the future.