

West

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To ensure that only the most needy get the five single unit cottages available, male and female veterans who qualify must be referred to the ESR staff by the Salisbury medical center or by the staff of the VA Out-patient Clinic here in Winston-Salem.

And depending upon individual situations, the vets will have a set amount of time to reside in the cottages.

ESR will refer residents to Goodwill Industries, the Department of Social Services, JobLink Center and a variety of other agencies that can provide additional assistance.

"If it deals with ESR, I'm willing to do whatever," Congressman Richard Burr said.

While Burr praised the organization for its more than 30-year commitment to helping the needy, he said agencies like ESR cannot do it alone. Burr urged the community to support the down-trodden as they try to lift themselves up through programs like those offered by ESR.

"Without your support, it doesn't happen," Burr said.

ESR was also lauded by Mayor Jack Cavanagh and Alderwoman Wanda Merschel. Merschel - who represents the ward in which the cottages sit - said the agency did wonders with a similar transitional

housing complex on Spring Street.

"(The) location had unfortunately fallen into disrepair, (but) ESR turned it around. I can (speak to) the character of ESR," she said.

Over the years, the Vives Cottages have been used for a number of transitional housing programs, but for the last year or so the cottages have been vacant and in need of repairs.

The job of making the buildings suitable for human habitation fell into the hands of the Winston-Salem Service Corps, a city-sponsored program that provides a group of 30 young people with hands-on training in construction.

The students did everything from installing the beige-colored vinyl siding, to painting the porch railings and laying down the carpet.

"The only things they didn't do were the skilled trade type things like the electrical wiring and the plumbing," said Monica Lett, director of Winston-Salem Housing & Neighborhood Development.

Each service corps student received a certificate of appreciation from ESR. They also received a standing ovation as they marched before the audience, at Wellman's direction, during the ceremony.

"We are so proud of them," Wellman said.

Frank Williams is one of the service corps students responsible for the cottages' transformation. Williams said the nearly six months that it took him and his co-workers to complete the project was time well spent.

"It was a wonderful experience," Williams said. "That's what made it fun...because we were helping other people."

West - an Atkins High School graduate and Winston-Salem native - said homelessness in America was a disgrace, but that homelessness among veterans is one of the nation's most shameful secrets.

Supporting programs like ESR's, West said, is one of the ways his agency is trying to combat the problem.

"America can do better. The VA is concerned about housing (for veterans)," he said.

Looking out at an audience filled with many service men and women, West hailed military service as one of the most honorable professions one could enter, and - quoting his boss, President Bill Clinton - he reiterated why such programs for homeless veterans are so important.

"The most distinguished decoration that one can wear is an armed service uniform," West said. "President Clinton said that it's a national disgrace when people who lay their lives on the line for this



Photos by T. Kevin Walker

Vives Cottages - located at the corner of Green and Watkins Streets - will provide transitional housing for five veterans.

nation, have no place to lay their heads."

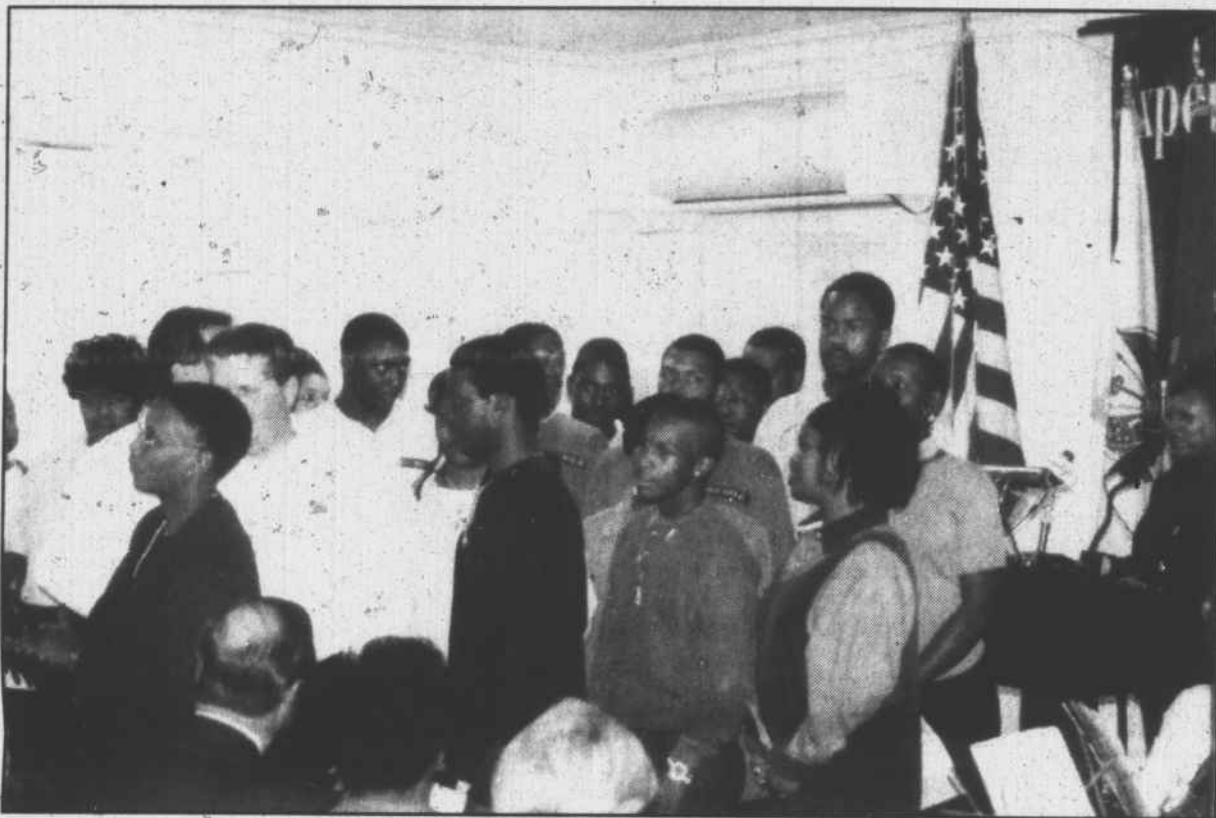
A nearly \$70,000 check was presented to ESR by West from the VA. The money will help offset some of the costs involved in reno-

vating the cottages. The city paid for all the repairs up front, Lett said.

West, Wellman, Lett and many others made the short trip from the YWCA to the cottages for a brief

ribbon cutting ceremony. Guests were then given the opportunity to tour the small, neat cottages.

Wellman said the first vets should move by this week.



Members of the Winston-Salem service corps were at last week's reception. The group did most of the renovations on the cottages.

NEIGHBORHOOD AWARD NOMINATIONS

Winston-Salem Partners in Progress
Best Practice Award Competition

The City of Winston-Salem is accepting nominations to recognize neighborhood associations for their accomplishments in carrying out activities to improve their communities. Neighborhood associations can be nominated for recognition in one of the following categories:

- Neighborhood Beautification
- Neighborhood Capacity Achievement
- Neighborhood Safety

Nomination forms are available from the Housing/Neighborhood Services Dept., City Plaza, 225 West Fifth Street, 3rd Floor, 727-8575. For additional information please ask for Mr. Don Dwigins.

Nomination forms must be received by **5pm, Friday, March 12, 1999.**

Presentation of Awards Ceremony - **Monday, March 29, 1999, 6:00 P.M.**
Assembly Room of the LJVM Coliseum

Chance meeting

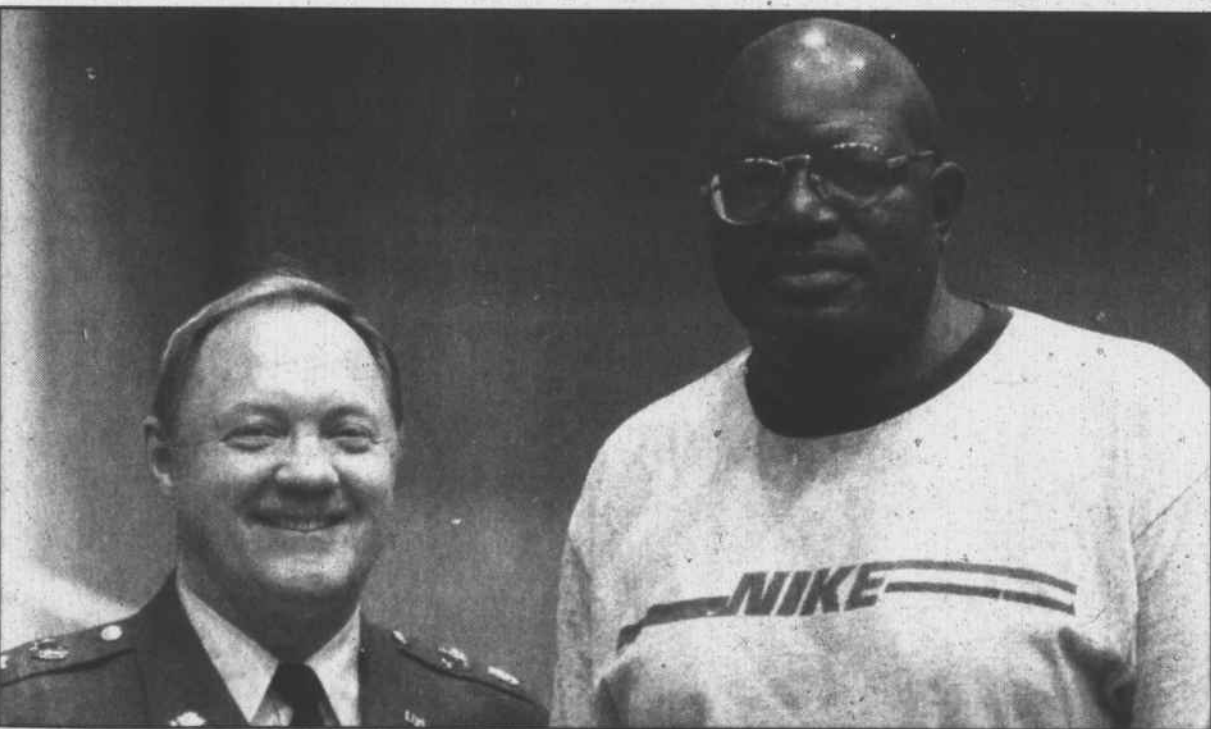


Photo by Bruce Chapman

Lieutenant Colonel Mathew Murphy shares a laugh with Kerinit Britt. The two who served in Vietnam together, were reunited at the CIAA tournament.

Vietnam vets reunited at tourney

By SAM DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

The CIAA is well-documented as a meeting place for old friends, teammates and classmates.

But recently it provided the backdrop for a chance meeting between two old friends, who hadn't seen each other in nearly three decades.

The odds of the two meeting again, even though separated by only 30 miles, was slight. However, when Lieutenant Colonel Mathew P. Murray, Jr. of Clemmons took his ROTC color guard to Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum to present the colors prior to the national anthem at Monday afternoon's women's basketball game, he received a pleasant surprise.

Murray was looking at the action on the court when a tall, distinguished gentleman made

his way up the steps. As the two gazed at each other, the other man smiled.

It was a small one that Murray recognized. It was the smile of Kermit J. Britt, who served with Murray during the Vietnam War.

Although both had undergone alot over the years, the bond they established during their days together with the 2nd Battalion of the 501st Infantry in the Army's 101st Airborne Division during 1971-72 remained fast.

"At first I looked at him and knew that smile," Murray said. "I'm thinking that's Kermit. We're both older and chunkier, but I couldn't forget that name."

Britt, who joined the reserves after his tour of duty ended, is a Shaw alum who relocated to Greensboro recently. He was the tournament to watch the Shaw

women's team compete in the tournament.

Although Murray said he's known a lot of people over the years, Britt had several distinctive qualities.

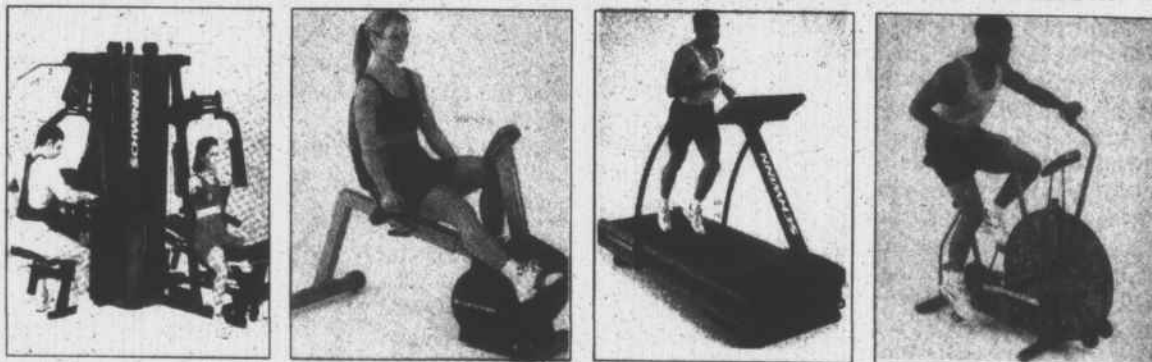
"One thing I remembered about him, even though he was a Lieutenant at the time, was his style," Murray said. "He always had an air of distinction about him. That's a funny thing to say when you're in combat, but he was a unique person back then."

Murray was a battalion operations officer. He said he could see the qualities in Britt, which eventually led to him becoming a Colonel in the reserves.

"He ended up out-ranking me," said Murray, who was in charge of the ROTC programs at Wake Forest and Winston-Salem State for many years. "You could tell then that he was going to do well in whatever he did."

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