

Raeferd Native Leads Maryland Team

Reservists Inventory City Assets

A four-man team of an Army Reserve company based in Riverdale, Md., spent last Wednesday, Thursday and Friday in Raeferd taking an inventory of all the city government's equipment and facilities, for the state.

The leader of the team, part of the 450th Civil Affairs Co., is a Raeferd native -- Staff Sgt. Johnnie Long, son of Mrs. Retha D. Long of Raeferd. He's now living in Washington, D.C., teaching -- as his civilian job -- special education to handicapped students. Long is a 1966 graduate of Upchurch High School (now Upchurch Junior High) and of the University of the District of Columbia. At Upchurch, besides doing his class work, he played varsity basketball.

The other members of the CA team are: Sp5 Phillip Stevens, also a graduate of the University of D.C., and employed outside his Army Reserve duty as a computer programmer for the State Department in Washington.

--Cpl. George Butler, a Morgan State University graduate, who is a microbiologist for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, working in Washington, D.C., is his civilian job. He lives in Laurel, Md., near Washington.

-- Staff Sgt. John Plourde a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., a New York University engineering graduate whose civilian work is in the engineering department of the federal Walter Reed Hospital in Washington.

Officially the work they were

doing is a Fixed Assets Inventory, which the state requires be made in all towns in the state.

Long explained Thursday that the men were getting a system to keep up with the fixed assets, from office furniture and equipment to piping and the water treatment plant, for examples. He said the inventory goes with the state requirement that each town be accountable to the state for its assets.

The team came from the District of Columbia to Ft. Bragg, first, since the inventory is being done in conjunction with the 82nd Airborne Division.

Long said one copy of the inventory would be given to the Region N Council of Government office in Lumberton for the state government; another, to the 82nd Airborne; and another to the 450th CA Company.

He said another four-man team was doing the inventory for Maxton, and a three-man team for Pembroke. Both teams are with the 450th. Long's team was doing an inventory for Laurinburg this week.

In Raeferd, the team's primary contacts were Assistant City Manager and Public Works Supt. Bill Sellars and City Finance Officer Helen Huffman. (City Manager Ron Matthews, under going treatment at Moore Memorial Hospital, was unavailable last week, as was Mayor John K. McNeill, Jr., who works in Raleigh during the week in the hours when the CA team was making the inventory.)



Civil Affairs men doing paper work Thursday morning in City Hall. L-R, Sp 5 Phillip Stevens, Cpl. George Butler, and Staff Sgt. Johnnie Long, the team leader. Long, who lives in Washington, D.C., now, is a native of Raeferd. [Staff photo.]



Preparing for inventory-taking: L-R, Cpl. George Butler, Raeferd City Finance Officer Helen Huffman, Staff Sgt. John Plourde, and Raeferd Assistant City Manager Bill Sellars in Sellars's office March 11. [Staff photo.]

Requests Public Hearing

Council Opposes McCain Closing

Members of the Raeferd City Council in a special meeting Monday morning formally expressed disagreement with a state committee proposal that McCain Hospital be closed.

The council requested a public hearing on the proposal be held before official action is taken.

The expression of disagreement and the request for the hearing were contained in a resolution adopted by the council members. The motion to adopt the resolution was made by Councilman Sam Morris and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Graham Clark. Councilman Bennie McLeod also voted in favor of adopting the motion.

Earl Fowler, manager of the Raeferd-Hoke County Chamber of Commerce, told the council and Mayor John K. McNeill, Jr., that he wanted to send a copy of the resolution with a package of information gathered by the Raeferd-Hoke chamber about the hospital to proper state authorities.

He said information published about the hospital by *The News & Observer* of Raleigh was inaccurate and that he challenged it. Fowler said the chamber is requesting of the state that "nothing more but that accurate information be gathered." Fowler was referring to the newspaper's report of March 10 quoting figures regarding the numbers of patients the hospital serves and the hospital's budget.

(Also see the separate story about the hospital on the front page of today's edition of *The News-Journal*.)

He said that he feels "the majority of the people in Hoke County feel that accurate information has not been published."

and that if the hospital is closed the state "should not use inaccurate information to close it."

Clark suggested that the chamber's information and copies of the council's resolution be sent to Hoke County's representatives in the General Assembly: State Sen. Sam Noble and State Reps. Horace Locklear, William C. Gay, and David Parnell.

The complete text of the council's resolution follows.

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina many years ago recognized the need for control and treatment of tuberculosis and other pulmonary diseases; and

WHEREAS, the State filled this need by establishing the North Carolina Sanatorium System, presently known as the North Carolina Specialty Hospitals, of which McCain Hospital serves our County; and

WHEREAS, recent reports and trends indicate that McCain Hospital is scheduled to be closed in 1981 as recommended by the Specialty Hospital Task Force;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the members of the Governing Body of the City of Raeferd, North Carolina, disagree with the decision to close McCain Hospital and hereby request that a Public Hearing be held prior to a final decision concerning this matter.

Upon motion by Councilman Sam Morris, seconded by Councilman Graham Clark, the above Resolution was adopted on the 16th day of March, 1981.

BY: CITY OF RAEFERD
John K. McNeill, Jr., Mayor

Request State To Hold Hearing

Commissioners Back McCain Operation

The Board of Hoke County Commissioners Monday night by a unanimous vote adopted a resolution saying the board supported continuing operation of McCain Hospital and requested state officials to hold a public hearing on the proposed closing for economy reasons.

Copies of the resolution are being sent to Gov. James Hunt, the State Department of Human Resources, and the legislative committee concerned.

The Raeferd City Council Monday morning adopted a resolution saying the council disagreed with the reported decision to close the hospital and also called for a public hearing before a final decision is made.

Eight people, including McCain Hospital employees, and Earl Fowler, manager of the Raeferd-Hoke County Chamber of Commerce, appeared at the hearing, but Fowler told the commissioners he didn't know the other people were coming and they probably didn't know he was coming. Fowler told the commissioners the chamber objects to the proposed closing on the basis of current information published, which he called inaccurate. He said there would be no objection if accurate information should show the closing is feasible.

McCain Hospital staff people in the group individually gave the commissioners this information, among other details, about the hospital:

-- Ninety-five percent of the tuberculosis patients came to McCain because treatment at other hospitals failed. McCain is still getting patients from other hospitals.

-- Twenty-five of the patients there now have nowhere else to go. They have no money and are not eligible to receive Medicaid or Medicare payments.

-- Petitions opposing the planned closing and bearing 5,000 signatures have been mailed to state officials including members of the General Assembly. Signatures of people throughout the state who oppose the closing are still being gathered.

According to McCain staff people's information quoted at the meeting, the hospital was to be closed by October: all patients were to be moved out by September 30. (Last week, however, a "freeze" directive was issued by the state TB Control Office, stopping all phasing-out activity for the time being, McCain Administrator John Watson informed *The News-Journal* Friday, replying to a question. The original, unofficial instruction was the hospital's 100 beds were to be reduced to 50.)

John Balfour, chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, said that not providing the public with information about the proposed closing was "very poor public relations" on the part of the state.

Fowler said the inaccuracies

about the hospital were contained in a news report published in *The News & Observer* of March 10, referring to savings that could be made by closing the hospital. The report about McCain was on a list of state programs the governor submitted to the chairmen of the General Assembly's appropriations committees.

The publication of the report was the first public notice that the closing of the hospital was to be considered.

The commissioners also were told Monday night, by another member of the McCain staff, that five other hospitals were being studied for suitability for treating tuberculosis patients. These, she said, include Craven County Hospital at New Bern, a hospital in Hendersonville, and one at Fletcher, (near Hendersonville). The others were not identified by the speaker.

Another member of the staff told the commissioners TB is not completely under control in the state and that the McCain Hospital "got quite a number" of children from Whiteville.

APPOINTMENTS

In other business, the board appointed Tom Cameron, Clio Bratcher and Tony Pate as the county members of the nine-member Raeferd-Hoke County Blue Ribbon Airport Study Commission. The commission will study the Raeferd Airport essentially to determine its role in the future economic development of Hoke County. It will work in cooperation with the city and county governments.

The chamber of commerce has appointed its three members, and the Raeferd City Council is to appoint the three others.

Mrs. Wood Passes Exam

Mrs. Sarah Moses Wood of Raeferd was notified recently she has passed the state pharmacy board examination which she took in January.

Mrs. Wood is a graduate of the School of Pharmacy of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is employed as a pharmacist at Cape Fear Valley Hospital in Fayetteville.

From the Superintendent's Desk

by Raz Autry

OUCH!

There is no way I can continue the saga of the confused man who is alone in a house he knows very little about. Nevertheless, there is one little incident I must relate to prove a point, the point being that friendship is sorely tested in trying situations.

While Ireni was in the hospital I learned very quickly that if I didn't impose on my friends I would starve to death. The decision to impose was the real beginning of my test of friendship. Bashfulness has never been one of my traits. Being fully conscious of this, I proceeded to invite myself to the Jack Tucker's for dinner. Jack and Ola Rae have been close friends of the Autry's for many years. I don't mean pseudo friends. I mean friends who hang with you when the going gets tough.

Therefore, I felt perfectly at ease when I invited myself for dinner. I knew Ola Rae was a wonderful cook. Her collard greens and hog jowls would rate with the best of them. Jack was glad to have me come because he constantly complains about having to eat sardines and crackers. Ola Rae did herself proud. On that long dining room table was stew beef and dumplings, chicken stew and dumplings, field peas, corn, cabbage, sweet potatoes, biscuits, cornbread, gravy, and store-bought cake for dessert. I tried to gain back in one meal the sixteen pounds I had lost.

As I reached for my third helping of chicken and dumplings, the chair I was sitting on just sort of disintegrated. I have always been pretty adept on my feet but there was no way possible a 54-year-old man could be adept under these circumstances.

My safety was my first concern but I could not escape the embarrassment of destroying a prized chair simply because I was too heavy, or the chair was too fragile. (No one would admit either.) My head and rib section hit the back of the cupboard. While I was sitting there, stunned, Ola Rae yelled, "Look what he has done to my chair," and in a higher pitch, "Did he break the cupboard?" I believe I did state earlier that she is one of my true friends.

To make matters worse, as I staggered out the door, holding my head, I tripped over the rug, bumped my aching head on the

door, stepped on the cat's tail, got bit by the dog, and wound up backing my car into the ditch. The only reason I didn't fall in the swimming pool was because it had a fence around it.

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