

Retirement community veterans remember past, celebrate present

By JEFFREY V. SMITH

CENTENNIAL – For the residents of Holly Creek Retirement Community, Veterans Day was all about recalling the past while celebrating life in the present. Tables of memorabilia from America's wars, provided by the veterans themselves, were proudly displayed, Nov. 11, throughout the community's Town Center as if it were a museum. An "ice cream parlour" and "mess hall" added to the atmosphere, as did employees dressed in military uniforms and post-World War II costumes. A band also played favorite selections from bygone eras while couples danced.

The memorabilia displayed, most of which was from World War II, made evident the large number of distinguished veterans living at Holly Creek. Fascinating stories of combat and heroism abounded.

One unique story of service came from Howard Erickson, who was one of the few American's who served in the China Burma India Theater during World War II. During the war, he assisted with training Chinese troops and taking part in offensives into Burma.

"It was the luck of draw," Erickson said that placed him in exotic locations in China, India and Burma during the war.

A uniform was displayed that had his name and rank written in Chinese. Other fascinating items, such as a Japanese Senior Non-Commissioned Officer's saber and Kukri, a curved knife used as both tool and weapon, from a Gurkha (Nepalese soldier), were also on display.

Although he enlisted in 1942, Erickson continued to serve the U.S. in the armed forces until 1977.

Another fascinating chroni-



Howard Erickson stands with unique World War II items from China, Japan and Nepal.

cle of World War II came from 90-year-old John Rowe. A Purple Heart and Silver Star, awarded for gallantry in action against an enemy, on display only began to tell of his heroism during the Allied invasion of Normandy on D-Day.

Rowe was part of the first wave to attack the beach. Spur of the moment decisions to jump over the side of his transport boat and splitting off from his squad once on the beach kept him from facing the same fate of countless numbers of his fellow soldiers. Before the day was over, however, Rowe had been shot numerous times in the back, had shattered his leg and was captured by enemy troops.

Despite a failing memory, Rowe remembers the "thunder of canons" and that the "waves were

high" that day. He also remembers jumping into the water with a 75-pound pack of gear.

Although she was not in the military herself, Daphne Lovelace, who just relocated to Colorado and Holly Creek to be near her daughter, is a Pearl Harbor survivor. She was 16 years old and on her way to church shortly before 8 a.m. when she and a friend heard the sound of what turned out to be bombs falling on the nearby Naval base.

"We heard the booms and could see the Rising Sun on the planes as day," Lovelace said.

Despite orders to keep cars off roads, a cousin drove up the street to get Lovelace and her friend to return them to their worried mothers. Everyone thought the Japanese were about to invade the island and



Daphne Lovelace stands near a photo of her husband, Bowman, and his brother being sworn in to the U.S. military in 1942.

Lovelace remembers family members gathering up jewelry and burying it "in a bed of violets." She also recalls having to cover all of the windows in her home with newspaper to block light and bombs falling all night.

After the raid, Lovelace found it had affected her family and people she knew on the island in many ways.

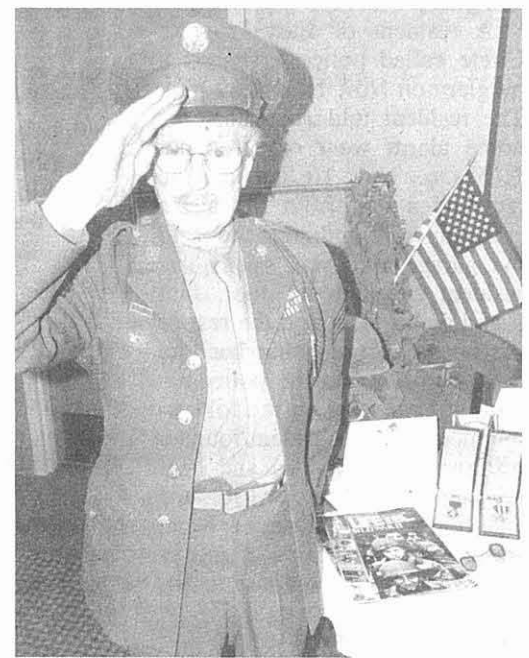
A bomb intended for a nearby power plant destroyed a local dressmaker's home and took a little girls arm.

Lovelace' own brother called the following day to tell the family a large bomb was sitting undetonated about 50 feet from his house.

She also remembers two neighbor boys who responded to a call for truck owners to help pick up body parts at the Scofield Barracks and deliver them to trenches for burial. They were forever affected by the duty.

Lovelace's uncle designed battleships for the U.S. Navy and after the bombing was taken to a hill to overlook Pearl Harbor. He cried at the destruction. He later designed the plaque to commemorate the lives lost on the Battleship Arizona.

"They were all so young," Lovelace said recalling the lives lost on the Arizona. She said most of the Navy men on the Arizona were from Nebraska and that a friend who had gone to college there had been dating one of them,



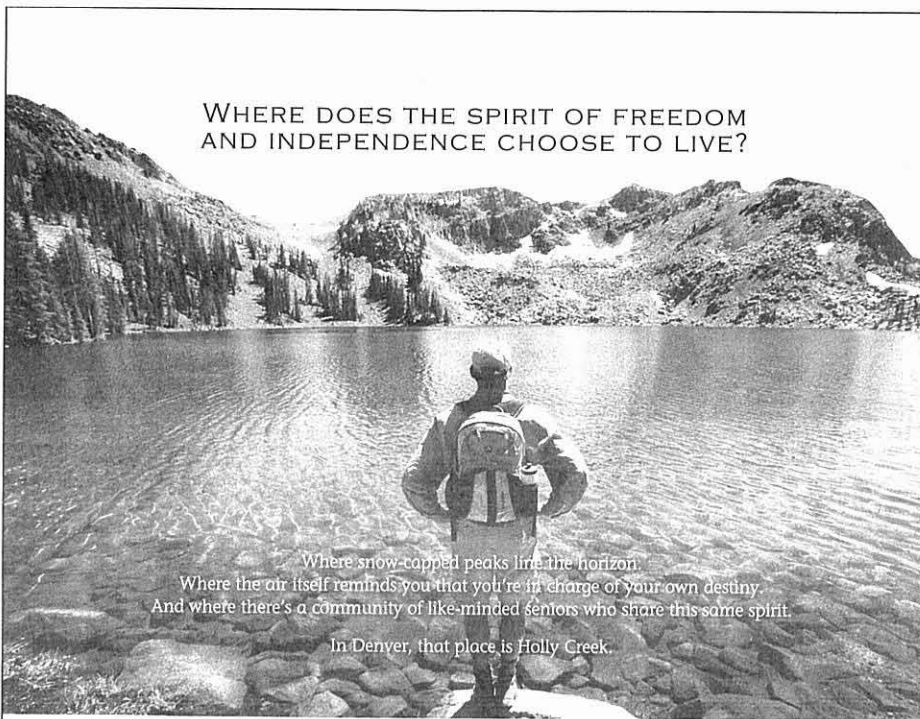
Normandy survivor John Rowe proudly displays his Purple Heart and Silver Star along other items from his service to the U.S.

Photos by Jeffrey V. Smith

Once the U.S. declared war on Japan, Lovelace's sisters went to work for the Engineering Corps while she went to work for the Army Port and Service Command. She later married her boss, Bowman Lovelace, in 1945. She also recalls how many of her friends of Japanese decent were taken to the mainland and placed in camps.

Once the band began to play, thoughts of war and its impacts, however, quickly turned to more pleasant memories for the Holly Creek residents and their guests, as well as Lovelace, who was instantly reminded of seeing Tommy Dorsey and his band in Hawaii.

jeff@villagerpublishing.com or 303-773-8313, ext. 318



WHERE DOES THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE CHOOSE TO LIVE?

Where snow-capped peaks line the horizon.
Where the air itself reminds you that you're in charge of your own destiny.
And where there's a community of like-minded seniors who share this same spirit.
In Denver, that place is Holly Creek.

Now that Holly Creek retirement community is complete, it is more than home to spectacular beauty, quality and comfort. It's designed to encourage you and your approach to life. You'll find guaranteed access to complete health care services, which include assisted living, skilled nursing care and memory support. And you'll capture the opportunity to make your life as healthy, active and fulfilling as you want it to be.

Holly Creek™

NO LIMITS
Christian Living Communities has been serving Colorado seniors since 1972.

CALL US TODAY AT (303) 713-9004 TO SCHEDULE A PERSONAL TOUR.



5500 East Peakview Avenue • Centennial, CO
www.HollyCreekRetirementCommunity.com



— STOP BY OUR HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE —
NOVEMBER 28 — DECEMBER 31, MONDAY - FRIDAY FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.