

# Army Engineer Spouses' Club

## Castle Gram

Volume III, Issue VII

March 2013

### Inside this issue:

The Gavel	2
Nominations	3
Upcoming Event Mar 2013	4
The Capital Connection	5
Wine Tasting	6
Wine Tasting	7
Volunteer Story	8
Member Celebrations	9
Recipe	10
Our Sympathy	11
Sharing	12
Membership	13

### Women Played Key Roles in The Manhattan Project

The U.S. government's effort to produce an atomic bomb during World War II was assigned to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in mid-1942. Under the command of then-Brigadier General Leslie R. Groves, the Manhattan Engineer District (MED), based in New York City, began a construction effort that would include production sites across the United States and a workforce of 125,000. The four-year-long project of research and development, completed at a cost of \$2 billion, was the most expensive public works project ever undertaken in U.S. history to that point. By the summer of 1945, three atomic bombs were produced, all of which were detonated by the end of the war.

While significant numbers of civilian women served at all of the project sites, most of the women serving in MED were soldiers and officers of the U.S. Army. During World War II, more than 150,000 American women served in the Women's Army Corps (WAC), and WACs assigned to the Corps of Engineers participated in the Manhattan Project. As early as 1943, women soldiers were brought into MED to undertake clerical, technical, and other administrative work. The need for additional personnel led to the establishment of a Manhattan District WAC Detachment on June 3, 1944. By the end of the war more than 400 WACs served in the Manhattan District.

Job specialties of women assigned to MED included scientists, cryptographers, classified information handlers, metallurgists, electronics technicians, spectroscopists, stenographers, telephone operators, laboratory technicians, nurses, photographers, and clerks. There were a large number of notable women, both WAC and civilian, who worked on the Manhattan Project. The first commanding officer of the WAC detachment was First Lieutenant Frances W. House. She was succeeded by First Lieutenant (later Captain) Arlene G. Scheidenhelm in March 1944. Master Sergeant Elizabeth Wilson ran the cyclotron at Los Alamos. Electronics technician Jane Heydorn helped to develop bomb-testing equipment. Second Lieutenant Catherine Piccolo wrote official press releases explaining why the bombs were used. Physicist Chien Shiung Wu played a key role in developing the gaseous diffusion uranium separation process. Leona Woods monitored the first nuclear chain reaction. Elizabeth Riddle Graves developed a neutron reflector to surround the atom core at Los Alamos. The head of a vital research team, Maria Goepfert Mayer, later received the Nobel Prize in physics.

In commending the WACs for their contributions to MED, on August 9, 1945 Major General Groves wrote, in part: "I wish to express to you, the military personnel of the Manhattan Project, my official and personal appreciation for the industry, ability, and attention to duty under most trying conditions that you have displayed since the inception of the project. Without you, this project could not have achieved success. Your devotion to duty, and particularly your conscientious efforts to maintain the vital security of the project, has been of the highest order."

Photo Credit:

Special thanks to the Society for the Historical Preservation of the Manhattan Project.



**"Keeping our worldwide Engineer family connected - through the years and across the miles."**



**Kathy Moakler**  
President

The Gavel



## ...a note from our President

*Dear AESC friends:*

*There are promises of Spring but as I write this mid-February the cold winds are blowing in Northern Virginia. Our thoughts are with those who've had to suffer with massive blizzards this winter. But spirits were warm at Fort Belvoir last Saturday night as our annual wine tasting event was hosted by the Semonites. Conversations about congressional actions on sequestration vied with catching up with old friends as we tried new wines with cheese, dessert and yummy chocolate pairings. Thanks to those who came and shared fabulous appetizers and special thanks to Todd and Connie for opening their home.*

*Plans are firming up for our future programs (see the listing on the website). Folks have stepped up to the plate to serve for next year as Bette Meuleners and her team of Pat O'Neill and Mollie O'Neill search for nominees. We thank Kathy Candido *again* for her great work with the Castle Boutique and applaud Connie Semonite for stepping in the take over the huge job. We also thank Jeanne Marie Rowan for being reservations chair this year but understand when real life gets in the way of volunteer intentions.*

*For those of you mystery lovers, plan on the trip to the Crime and Punishment museum. The deadline is very close to the publication of this newsletter so get your reservation in quickly to the PO Box.*

*Remind your high school seniors to finish their applications - the scholarship deadline is looming.*

*As an Irish lass myself, St. Patrick's day is an important holiday. I don't know if I've shared that my six sisters and I are singers and we specialize in Irish songs. We hosted a St. Pat's party for years and now my daughter has taken the tradition over, so we'll be singing a few songs from the Auld Sod there. I hope you enjoy my traditional Irish soda bread recipe - we do! Keep your Irish eyes smilin' - even if you are only Irish for a day!*

*Essayons!*

*Kathy Moakler*





## A note from Bette

### Nominations for AESC's Executive Board for 2013-2014



As the nominations chairperson for AESC it's my responsibility to fill the elected Board of Officers and as many of the non-elected positions as possible for the next year (2013-2014) for our club. According to our constitution, we are supposed to have the slate for the elected officers in time for our March meeting and to be voted on at the April meeting.

The positions (and a brief job description) that we need to fill the most are:

**Elected** (we really need to fill these as soon as possible):

**Vice-President**--Plans activities and takes over for the President in her absence.

**Secretary**--Records notes from monthly meetings and distributes them to board members prior to the next monthly meeting. Occasionally sends out letters or cards.

**Treasurer**--Keeps record of the AESC funds and works with other board members regarding monetary issues.

**AEMA Chairperson**--Watches over the funds for our "scholarship" awards for AEMA and the Geraldine Morris Award. Another member is in charge of the collection of applications and ranking them.

**Appointed:**

**AEMA Scholarship Chairperson**--Heads the committee to review applications for our awards.

**Castle Gram Editor**--In charge of putting together our monthly newsletter, the Castle Gram.

**Parliamentarian**--In charge of updating the AESC constitution and checking it when needed.

**Philanthropy**--Manages any community services or welfare activities for the club.

**Publicity/Historian**--In charge of publicity for the club and keeping a record (scrap book, photo book) of the year's activities.

**Reservations**--Takes reservations for events, makes nametags when necessary.

More detailed descriptions of our board positions are in AESC's "Red Book". Also, you can contact the current board members in positions you might be interested in to find out more information. Their numbers and email addresses are in the "Red Book".

If you are interested in any of the above positions, PLEASE let me know as soon as possible! We may have other positions available, but are working on these first!

Thank you very much for considering my request!

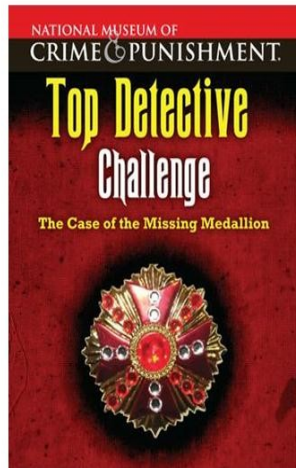
Bette Meuleners  
AESC Nominations Chairperson, 2012-2013  
571-235-3566

NOMINATIONS



Anna Marie Cox  
VP

UPCOMING EVENT—MAR



### Crime & Punishment Museum

March 14, 2013

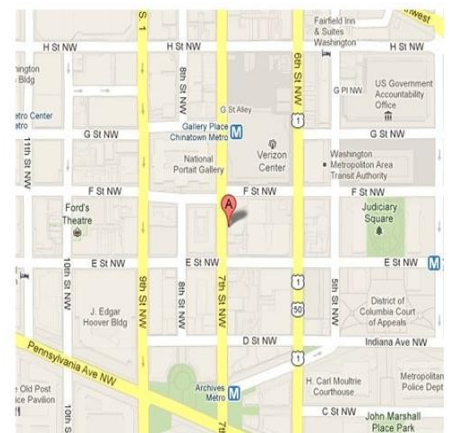
10:00 am

\$19 per person (includes Top Detective interactive workbook)

Lunch afterwards at Rosa Mexicano (bring \$\$)

Please RSVP by 4 March

The AESC has been tasked with finding a missing artifact from the Museum's private collection. While exploring the Museum we will answer a series of questions contained with clues, these answers will help you break the code and crack the case. There is a reward for solving the case and becoming the Museum's Top Detective!



The Crime & Punishment Museum is located at 575 7th St Washington DC

#### Crime & Punishment Museum Reservation Form

Mail to AESC, P.O. Box 6332, Alexandria, VA 22306-6332

Name(s) of those attending:-

---

Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of payment: (\$19 per person) \_\_\_\_\_ (Make check payable to AESC)

### Upcoming Board Meeting

Wednesday, 6 March 2013

1100-1300

At the Home of  
Mollie O'Neill

5901 Mount Eagle Dr #1406  
Alexandria, VA

Members are welcome

\*\*\*\*\*

PROGRAMS FOR 2012-2013

March 14 <sup>th</sup>	10:00am RSVP with payment by March 4 (\$19)	Crime and Punishment Museum Lunch at Rosa Mexicano (bring \$\$ for lunch)
April 10	10:00am	Knollwood Bake Sale
April 21	1:00pm RSVP with payment by April 12 (\$25)	AEMA Scholarship Brunch, The Fairfax (couples event)
May 9	11:00am-1:00pm RSVP with payment by April 23 (\$33)	Tudor Place Victorian Tea and Tour Tea with finger sandwiches and dessert included



THE CAPITAL CONNECTION



**Left to Right:**  
Isabel Stevens  
Cathy Candido

**Left to Right:**  
Holly Scherer  
Cathy Candido  
Barb Fleming  
Isabel Stevens

**CASTLE BOUTIQUE SUPER TEAM**



WINE TASTING FEB 16, 2013



***MANY THANKS TO  
THE SEMONITES  
FOR HOSTING !***





WINE TASTING FEB 16, 2013



Photo Contributor:  
Gene Villiva



## Volunteer Story

Contributor: Mollie O'Neill

I volunteered to work at USO National Headquarters in Arlington, VA on February 7. Volunteers were asked to be available from 10 AM until 3 PM. You could volunteer on February 6, 7, and/or 8. Volunteers were also asked to have a working knowledge of Microsoft Excel.

The volunteer effort was the result of a USO campaign to send phone cards to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. People could send a personal message along with the phone card. The USO provided a pre-printed message on a 3 x 5 card, but people could add something to that, and most did. The hand-written messages were mostly along the lines of "Thanks for all you do;" "God bless you"; or "Thank you for your Service".

There were nine volunteers the day I was there. We were each given a laptop and a stack of cards. All of the volunteers, with the exception of myself, worked at other USO locations. There were two men and seven women, including myself. The volunteer effort consisted of entering onto the spreadsheet the name of the sender of the phone card, and any hand-written message that had been added to the pre-printed card provided by the USO. I should mention at this point that I'm definitely going to work on my penmanship - some of that hand writing was pretty hard to read! But people helped each other decipher some of the tougher ones.

As a nice addition, lunch was brought in a little after 12 noon - pizza and sodas. This provided a short break to learn about other USO volunteer opportunities and the volunteers themselves. One of the men worked at the warehouse putting together USO "care packages;" the other was a roving volunteer who worked at any location in the Metro D.C. area where he was needed. Two of the women work in the new Wounded Warrior Center at Fort Belvoir; one worked at the USO at Dulles; another at Reagan National Airport; another at BWI; and two split their volunteer hours between Fort Meade and BWI. Everyone was surprised that I wasn't a regular USO volunteer, and they all were surprised that I had heard about this opportunity at USO National HQ. The group, even though they all seemed to know one another, was very nice, very open, and very helpful to me. I've been looking for a volunteer "job", and USO is now prominently on my radar. I intend to look into volunteering for the USO at Fort Belvoir. And I'll be volunteering at USO National again soon. Justin Reynolds, the volunteer coordinator, promised he would get in touch with me as soon as they schedule another day to work on the phone card messages. I'm looking forward to that email!



*Birthdays.....*

Beth Mazzanti	Mar 03
Barbara Fleming	Mar 08
Diane Messinger Galloway	Mar 11
Lynn Munch	Mar 15
Roz Riley	Mar 16
Tammie Morris	Mar 17
Mollie O'Neill	Mar 20
Susan Hill	Mar 22
Jyette Hambric	Mar 27

Sally Ball	Apr 02
Carol Pawlowski	Apr 09
Jackie Danielson	Apr 12
Mary Scott	Apr 15
Lee Boutin	Apr 18
Susan Oliveri	Apr 20
Mary Lorber	Apr 23
Dolores Felch	Apr 29
Jennifer Riordan	Apr 30



MEMBER CELEBRATIONS



Okay, Ralph .... let me 'splain it you again. You're big, I'm little; BUT!!! you're dog, I'm cat ..... that makes me the boss. Got it ??

**THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE BOOK DRIVE—THE CHILDREN REALLY APPRECIATE IT!!**



## *Peggy's Irish Soda Bread*

*St. Patrick's Day recipe from Kathy Moakler*

*This is my sister-in-law's Irish Soda Bread recipe lovingly handed down for generations. She has refined the measurements - her mother's recipe had just the ingredients. You learned to bake it from the generation before. Some make this with caraway seeds, some make it without the raisins. Make it your own!*

*I serve this with orange butter - mix a little orange juice and grated orange peel with softened butter.*

*Pre-heat oven to 350*

### *Ingredients:*

*15 oz box of raisins - soak in warm water until plump, drain and set aside  
4 cups flour  
2 generous tablespoons sugar  
4 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 cups buttermilk  
2 eggs whisked in a separate bowl*

*Mix dry ingredients in large bowl*

*Cut butter into flour mixture with pastry blender or whisk*

*Add raisins and stir gently*

*Mix in buttermilk and eggs*

*Mix any way you'd like - spoon or hands - very gooey*

*Turn onto a floured surface and knead gently while shaping loaf (add more flour if necessary)*

*Place in a 10 inch skillet (I use a 2.5 quart corning ware round casserole dish - buttered)*

*Cut a cross in the top with a knife*

*Bake in a 350 degree oven for about one hour until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean*

*It should slide right out of the pan*

*Serve with butter*

*Best within a day or two of being made*

**ENJOY !!!**

Obituary – HILMES, Geraldine McDonough

Contributor: June Suermann

Geraldine McDonough Hilmes, 76, was taken by our Lord on Wednesday January 16, 2013 in Sarasota, Florida. Geri, a devout Catholic, was born in Albany, NY to Jim and Helen McDonough. The oldest of three, Geri graduated high school in Albany and studied at Albany State Teachers College.

Geri met Jerry Hilmes at West Point, New York in 1956. The couple married in Albany in 1959 before moving to Hanau, Germany for Jerry's first assignment as an Army officer. The Berlin Wall went up during this time, and Geri became very familiar with evacuation drills. Unfazed by the realities of overseas Army life during the Cold War, Geri came to fall in love with the Army during this tour, becoming active with numerous spouse support groups. Bruce was born in 1960, followed by Gary in 1961. After transferring back to the United States and Iowa State University in 1962, Doug arrived in 1963.

Doug was diagnosed with a Wilms Tumor in 1967 - 99% fatal in those days. Geri took Doug, alone, to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C., in an area literally burning down due to the fierce racial riots marking that period of our history. She lived there with Doug for almost two months, fighting and winning the battle to save his young life. Geri had cemented her role as a resilient Army wife.

Vibrant and vivacious, a devoted wife, mother and steadfast friend, Geri lived the rest of her adult life alongside her husband, supporting him and their four sons (with Andy arriving in 1972) while developing lifelong friendships. She orchestrated 27 moves around the world during their 33 year Army journey, keeping morale up and the family together as her sons left yet another school and sports team for new ones. Geri made them "bloom where they were planted," ensuring they would be ready for the challenges of life. She handled the rigors and uncertainty of raising a young family by herself, with grace and a genuine focus on selfless service, while Jerry served two 1-year combat tours in Vietnam and participated in countless month-long training exercises around the world. While stationed at West Point, NY, Geri was active in the faculty wives club and the American Red Cross. She was a Cub Scout den leader and volunteer service provider to a special geriatrics ward at the VA center near Ft Leavenworth, KS. She served many roles in Germany as an Army commander's wife. As the "first lady" of the command, Geri helped thousands of Soldiers and their family members within our military communities, focusing on quality of life issues. She furthered German-American relations, forming a German-American youth soccer team. Geri was awarded the Helping Hand Award there, for her service to the community. While in the Washington D.C. area, she served as a member of the Arlington Ladies, representing the Chief of Staff of the Army at hundreds of Army funerals over 10 years, touching the hearts of many survivors. During Operation Desert Storm, Geri worked tirelessly at the Army Family Liaison Office (FLO), helping families of soldiers in Iraq, especially Reservists, whose families faced more challenges. She could relate to those challenges, as her eldest son, Bruce, was leading a tank company during the operation. Geri's efforts resulted in numerous leader spouses joining the FLO effort, and she was recognized with the Army Public Service Award.

Geri's lifetime was characterized by her generous gift of time, advice, love and humor to others. She was as beautiful on the inside as she was pretty on the outside.

Geri loved to host parties and entertain family and friends, which she did - ranging from Members of Congress to privates with nowhere to go for Christmas - over the 33 years in the Army. She also relished her membership in and accumulated friendships from the Engineers Wives Club, Signal Officers Wives Club and DC Women's Club. She received awards from the Chief of Staff of the Army and others for her unselfish support and devotion to duty to the people in or relevant to various commands and communities. But the best "awards" were from other military spouses and Soldiers who were so grateful and respectful of the assistance she provided them.

Geri's proudest achievement was serving as the lifelong guide for her four sons, keeping them in check and on azimuth to a life of success and personal fulfillment, with all four achieving graduate degrees. Three of them would go on to serve careers as Armor officers in the Army, with Bruce and Gary retiring from active duty as Lieutenant Colonels with a combined 46 years of service. The youngest, Andy, is currently a Lieutenant Colonel, commanding a cavalry squadron in the 3rd Infantry Division. Doug is a successful businessman and former telecommunications executive.

Geri is survived by Jerry, husband of 53 years; Bruce and family, Di, Chris and Megan; Gary and family, Sabine, Ryan and Angelique; Doug and family, Jean, Alex and Ashley; and Andy and family, Nikki, Jocelyn, Andrew Jr. and Madison. She leaves a brother Jim and a sister Joan Spear, both of Albany NY. She also leaves numerous nieces and nephews in the East, Midwest and South. She is remembered and deeply loved by all her family and friends for her caring giving nature.

The family will receive friends Sunday evening January 20, 2013 from 5 until 7 o'clock at Toale Brothers Funeral Home - 40 North Orange Avenue, Sarasota. The Funeral Mass will be held Monday morning at 10 o'clock at St. Martha's Catholic Church. The interment will be at 1 o'clock Monday afternoon at Sarasota National Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations be made to Accelerate Brain Cancer Cure at [www.abc2.org](http://www.abc2.org) or Autism Speaks at [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org).

Published in Herald Tribune from January 18 to January 19, 2013

OUR SYMPATHY

SHARING

**Is your information up to date in DEERS?  
Changed your address, phone or email? Added a family member?  
Here's how you update:**

You can verify your DEERS information by contacting your regional TRICARE managed care support contractor, your local TRICARE service center or the nearest uniformed services personnel office (ID card facility). Sponsors or registered family members may make address changes, however, only the sponsor can add or delete a family member from DEERS, and proper documents are required such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree and/or birth certificate.

To update your DEERS information:

Visit your local uniformed services personnel office or contact the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office (DSO) at 1-800-538-9552. You can find the nearest uniformed services personnel office at: <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/>.

Fax address changes to DEERS at 1-831-655-8317.

Mail the address change to the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office, ATTN: COA, 400 Gigling Road, Seaside, CA 93955-6771.

Go online to Tricare to update your information: <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deers/>.



**Potential Budget Cuts Impact the Commissary**

Military families consistently tell us how much they value their Commissary and Exchange privileges. Families rely on the savings they get by shopping at the Commissary, and for families stationed overseas, the Commissary allows them to enjoy products from home that would otherwise be unavailable or unaffordable. The National Military Family Association has long worked to promote and protect these critical benefits to military families' quality of life.

Knowing how important the Commissary is to military families, we are increasingly concerned about potential threats to this benefit. We received notification the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) will plan for potential budget cuts by reducing operating costs. Some of these measures include:

- An agency-wide hiring freeze for all outside DeCA hires. These measures can include terminating temporary hires, eliminating travel that isn't mission critical, and freezing civilian employment.
- DeCA's hiring freeze applies to all outside-the-agency hiring actions with the following exceptions:
  - o Hiring commitments made before February 4
  - o Placements based on DoD Priority Placement Program
  - o The fill of critical positions approved by DoD
  - o DeCA reduced official travel for all conferences, training and any other events and activities considered noncritical to the agency's mission of delivering the commissary benefit.

DeCA cancelled its May case lot sales for overseas commissaries – including Alaska and Hawaii – to reduce the logistical costs associated with supporting these annual events.

Find more information about the commissary; check out the National Military Family Association's website at

<http://www.militaryfamily.org/your-benefits/commissary-exchange/>

(Source: [https://www.commissaries.com/press\\_room/press\\_release/2013/DeCA\\_19\\_13.cfm](https://www.commissaries.com/press_room/press_release/2013/DeCA_19_13.cfm))

AESC 2012-2013 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Army Engineer Spouses' Club welcomes membership from spouses of all U.S. Army Engineers and all civilian employees of USACE and, with approval of the Executive Board, other persons who are associated with the Corps of Engineers.

PRINT NAME as you would like to be listed in the Castle Directory (The Redbook)

Last \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname \_\_\_\_\_ If you are in the military, list your rank & job title

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

The Castle Gram (in color) is sent to you via email. If you do not have email, a black and white copy will be sent to your home address.

Your Birthday (month/day only) \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of contact:

- E-mail  Home phone  Cell phone  Do not contact me

Check one:

New member - I was invited by \_\_\_\_\_

Returning member

Eligibility Information:

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Check one: Is Spouse:  Active  Retired  Deceased

Spouse's title/rank/job assignment

If retired, use current firm, if any. If active duty, use official abbreviation.

By sending this application, you agree to have the above information placed in the Castle Directory. Membership runs from July 1, 2012 until June 30, 2013. Membership information received by Oct 15, 2012 will be included in the 2012-2013 Castle Directory. After that date, new member names will be published in the Castle Gram and information will be emailed to members to update their Red Book. Thank you.

Annual dues + 1 copy of the Castle Directory \$25 \_\_\_\_\_  
Additional Castle Directory(ies) : Each \$5 \_\_\_\_\_  
Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to AESC and mail to: AESC MEMBERSHIP  
P.O. Box 6332  
Alexandria, VA 22306-6332

You may also print the membership application online at  
[www.armyengineerspouses.com](http://www.armyengineerspouses.com).

Jackie Caldwell  
Membership  
Chairman

MEMBERSHIP



AESC  
P.O. Box 6332  
Alexandria, VA 22306-6332