

## **HISTORY OF WESTERN NEBRASKA VETERANS' HOME**

Western Nebraska Veterans Home (WNVH) opened March 19, 1975 using dormitories of the former Hiram Scott College located northwest of Scottsbluff, Nebraska. This was the third veterans' home in the state. WNVH operated with a Boarding Home for the Aged Licensure. The home opened with only 12 members who lived in the dormitory and had to walk outside to the cafeteria for their meals.

In the fall of 1975, the home increased bed capacity from 12 to 24 beds. In conjunction with this, WNVH was given VA approval and became eligible for matching VA funds to enable the remodeling of the existing facility and partially constructed ancillary area. In 1977, the work was completed and WNVH was enlarged to a licensed capacity of 118 beds.

In April of 1979, a small chapel was moved to the home to provide all faith services. The members voted to purchase an old church, raised the funds, and bought the church from a congregation in Mitchell, Nebraska.

In 1982, a pond was built and stocked with trout for members' enjoyment. Trees and shrubs were planted. In 1984, the Union Pacific Railroad donated a surplus flat car used as a bridge spanning the fishpond. Lighting and a walkway surrounding the pond were added in 1991. Other additions to the pond area include an Avenue of Flags and a Bell on loan from the Department of Navy from the USS Pyro.

A Dedication Ceremony was held in September 1986, for a 50 bed Skilled Nursing wing that had been built adjoining the Domiciliary. Nine Domiciliary members (in need of a higher level of care) were moved to the nursing wing. On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, seven nursing care members from the Grand Island Veterans' Home arrived by bus. Some of these members had previously lived at WNVH (were transferred to Grand Island for nursing care) and happily returned to Scottsbluff.

In 1988, our residential licensure was reduced to 90 when some rooms were remodeled for physician's office, examination rooms, pharmacy, director of nursing and other staff offices.

In 1992 a Memorial Wall, constructed of mahogany granite from South Dakota, was erected. The only names that appear on this Wall are members who expired while a member of WNVH which would include veterans, wives, widows, Gold Star Mothers and Fathers.

Construction in 1993 added a new roof and furnaces to the Domiciliary. Thermostats, new doors and windows were installed in members' rooms making the domiciliary rooms more comfortable.

Construction of a multipurpose addition was complete in 2004. The new addition features a large area for activities, new canteen, beauty shop, and reception area along with providing space for physical and occupational therapy.

WNVH is very appreciative of all the support and donations received from the various service organizations and volunteers. Through their help and efforts, we have been able to make several additions and changes to our facility.

WNVH will continue focusing on our members living well and adding quality of life for all members.