

★ Letters . . .

—from page 1A
such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts were organized. In 1943 Brigadier Len Stranks, formed the Salvation Army Band saying "the people need music." The 15-piece brass band serenaded their liberators with an emotional medley of National Anthems, on that hot August day; a piece arranged and practiced despite the Japanese guards not allowing the playing of such anthems.

But despite spirits being high, supplies inside the camp were few. There was little clothing to protect the people from the cold winters. Previte tells of making "coal balls" used for cooking and for heating their dormitory rooms, out of a mixture of coal dust and mud. She also remembers eating egg shells which were ground up into a powder or scavenging edible weeds to consume.

Sanitation was a huge problem. Toilets were pits in the ground and flies and rats ran rampant throughout the camp. This led to several health problems for the prisoners of the camp. In fact, Previte was 12-years-old lying in a second-floor hospital dormitory, withering with diarrhea. That's when she heard the buzz of the B-24 flying overhead. Forgetting her illness she raced to the dormitory window to investigate the unusual sound.

She said that the euphoria felt by the prisoners when they realized the plane was American, was indescribable. Prisoners ran in circles, pounded the skies with their fists, wept, cursed, hugged, danced and cheered themselves hoarse.

The seven men parachuted into a nearby cemetery where they were met by hoards of prisoners who stormed past the Japanese guards and escorted



A Japanese-American sergeant watches a backyard cook

Illustration of Sgt. Nagaki by War Correspondent William Smith. ©

the Duck Team back to their camp aboard their boney shoulders.

The American liberators brought with them food and supplies. Many of the children got their first taste of chewing gum courtesy of the Duck team. The children followed the seven men around for days, collecting their autographs, begging for more gum, and taking souvenirs from the men including buttons and even chunks of hair.

Previte asked Nagaki, 52 years later, what such adoration felt like.

"Like being put on a pedestal," he said.

It would be two months before the camp was completely evacuated with delays caused by Chinese Communist Guerilla activity. But the people of Weihhsien Camp were at last free and the events of August 17, 1945, Tad Nagaki and the men of the Duck Mission were forever etched in their minds.

In 1997 Previte set out on a

cross country mission to find each man from the Duck Team and tell them thank you "face-to-face." She found them all — Jimmy Moore, a former FBI agent and the son of missionaries to China; Jim Hannon, an adventurer who had prospected for gold in Alaska; Major Stanley Staiger, an ROTC student, snatched from his third year at the University of Oregon; Raymond Hancuklak, a man from the coal mines of Pennsylvania and the youngest of the team Pete Orlich, who at 21-years-old memorized the eye chart so he wouldn't be excluded from the mission and taped his glasses to his head when he parachuted to liberate the Weihhsien.

In Alliance, NE, she found Tad Nagaki, now a widower. In 1946 he returned to America and married his fiancée "Butch," whom he had met in Minnesota while attending Military Intelligence Service Language School. Butch and her parents had been imprisoned in the Poston relocation

camp in Arizona during World War II. Despite the unfair treatment of his wife's family, Nagaki remained proud of his country and was proud to serve it.

Nagaki still lives and farms in Alliance, and his usual hang-out is Alliance Tractor and Implement, Co.

Standing approximately five-and-a-half-feet tall, few would assume that he was a standout on the athletic fields and courts of his Minatare High School, let alone a World War II hero. But those who he helped liberate will tell you, looks can be deceiving.

Previte, who has remained in close contact with Nagaki in the years since their reunion said, "The spirit of this man and his story is that heroes come in all shapes and sizes."

The son of Japanese immigrant Minoseke Nagaki, Tad was born in Bayard, NE and grew up in the North Platte Valley area. His Japanese heritage would serve him well despite the prejudices he would encounter.

He was drafted into the Army in November 1941, and as he left to serve his country, his mother proudly displayed a star in their farmhouse window.

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor the following December, The Selective Service classified Nisei (children born to Japanese immigrants) as 4-C (aliens or dual nationals not subject to military service). While some of Nagaki's Nisei peers were decommissioned and sent home, others were disarmed and given menial labor tasks.

Nagaki, who had passed his physical and collected recommendations to become an air cadet, was shipped to Fort Thomas, KY where he and his Nisei brethren were assigned to landscaping duty, and the loading of food onto troop trains.

It would be two years before the War Department realized that a Japanese regiment may be an asset to the war effort. They formed the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and Nagaki volunteered. Soon after, Strategic Services (OSS) was asking for Nisei volunteers for Detachment 101, a highly secret and highly dangerous ("more hazardous than combat") intelligence team. Tad volunteered for this elite team as well.

OSS Detachment 101 would become the first espionage unit the United States used behind Japanese lines.

Deployed in China, Burma and India where Japan had moved to protect its gains and cut off Allied supply routes to China. Detachment 101 is credited for rescuing some 400 downed Allied flyers in the jungles of Burma. Their knowledge of the Japanese language was used to interpret documents and gather information.

In 1945, things quieted in Burma and the Detachment was deployed to China. Japan's fate in the war was bleak and reports reached American headquarters in China that Japan planned to kill all POWs. Rescue became a top priority in China, Manchuria and Korea as the OSS organized eight rescue missions, all named after birds: Magpie, Raven, Flamingo, Cardinal, Sparrow, Quail, Pigeon and Duck (Nagaki's team).

Previte on more than one occasion has asked Nagaki why he would sign up for such a dangerous mission, knowing full well that capture meant certain death, especially with him being of Japanese descent.

His standard reply is "I did what any American would have done."

Nagaki will celebrate his 90th birthday Monday, January 25. He is the last surviving member of the Duck Mission team.

While he will downplay his heroics, birthday wishes and letters of thanks from former internees and their families on page 6A say otherwise:

For more information on Weihhsien, the Duck Mission Team and the internees visit www.weihhsien-paintings.org

Celebrating 90 years



The family of Tad Nagaki invites everyone to join them at an open house celebrating this extraordinary man's 90th birthday. Tad was born January 25, 1920 in Bayard. The open house, hosted by his grandchildren Jason and Lisa Nagaki and family of Castle Rock, CO and Ryan and Amy Nagaki and family of Broomfield, CO, will be held at the Alliance Country Club from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. this Saturday, January 23. The only gift requested is your presence. If unable to attend, you may send birthday wishes to 5851 Logan Road, Alliance NE 69301.

Obituaries
Lloyd D. Lockman rites

Lloyd D. Lockman, 93, was born on the family ranch to Robert and Rose Lockman on July 12, 1916 where he and his wife Isabelle, of 38 years, still resided. He passed away on January 13, 2010 at Highland Park Care Center.



During the first 54 years of his life, Lloyd lived for his animal friends and the young boys he hired for summer help. He gained great pleasure in teaching the boys lessons of life both good and bad.

He was widely known for having the top Polled Hereford bulls at his annual bull sales. During that time he was secretary of the Polled Hereford Association. He also was a member of the American Legion, Elks, and the Eagles and was active in 4-H and FFA.

On June 1, 1972, ranch life as Lloyd knew it changed when he married the love of his life, Isabelle Hamar. The next 38 years were spent farming and ranching together, raising Angus cattle, basset hounds, and a "few" cats. When asked about retirement, he stated he will live on the ranch and only work seven days a week.

Lloyd always enjoyed having family and friends drop by. He never let them leave without

Rex David Gange services

Rex David Gange, 58 died Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at his home in Alliance.



He was born December 19, 1951 in Rapid City, SD to John and LaRhea (Mullender) Gange. Rex lived most of his life in the Alliance and surrounding area working as a cowboy for ranches and cattle feed yards. He taught country western dance lessons for many years.

He is survived by his children Kelly Robinson, Eva (Mike) Russell, Tammy (Ted) Standage, Tany (Kent) Seebohm and Casey (Misty) Knaub all of Alliance; his mother LaRhea Gange of Alliance; his sisters Nan (Ted) Adam of Rapid City, SD, Nadine (Jack) Pusel of Monitor, WA and his brothers Jack Gange of Denver, CO and Jay

sharing a good story or a joke. Lloyd is survived by his wife Isabelle; his step-children, Loretta Millburn of Hill City, SD; Yvonne Green of Iowa City, IA; Marvin Hamar of Crawford; Ron Hamar of Crawford and Stan Hamar of Severance, CO. He is also survived by a nephew Doug Mackey of Denver, CO and his niece Nancy Leider of Alliance and great-nieces and nephews as well as numerous step-grandchildren and step-great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his sisters Gladys Travis and Elsie Mackey.

Lloyd lived by his father's philosophy of life "What the world needs is the teaching of common sense and kindness."

Funeral service will be Saturday, January 16 at 2:00 p.m. at the Bates-Gould Chapel with the Reverend Cheryl Harris officiating. Burial will be in the Alliance Cemetery. Visitation will be Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the funeral home.

Memorials may be made to the Hemingford Volunteer Fire Fighters Association.

Online condolences may be left at www.batesgould.com with Bates-Gould Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

New exhibit at Carnegie Arts Cntr.

Carnegie Arts Center's first exhibit for 2010 is displayed in the Marjorie Leu Skala and Gretchen Garwood Galleries. "A Little Winter Renaissance" will be shown through February 21.

Featured artists for the new exhibit are Jana Schefcik Van Housen and Mark Van Housen of Aurora, Nebraska, and Stephanie Mantooth of Alliance. The exhibit features photographs along with lumira and giclée prints.

Pieces in the exhibit include *Snow's Beginning*, a photograph by Steph Mantooth; *The Fairy Ring*, a photograph by Jana Schefcik Van Housen; *Destination Unknown*, a metallic photograph by Mark Van Housen; *The Masquerade*, a lumira print by Jana Schefcik Van

Housen; *Out to Pasture*, a metallic photograph by Mark Van Housen and *Starting With St. Andrew*, a photograph by Steph Mantooth.

A reception for the three artists will be held on Sunday, February 21, from 2 to 4 p.m. This will be the final day of the exhibit. Carnegie invites everyone to stop by to enjoy the art and to greet Jana, Mark and Steph.

Carnegie Arts Center is sponsored in January by Bob Neville Insurance Agency, Inc. and Randy Langemeier, CPA HD Vest-Licensed Investment Representative.

Lt. Johnson reports for duty

Marine Corps 2nd Lt. Joshua J. Johnson, son of Janet M. Bandel of Alliance, recently reported for duty with Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron One, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in Okinawa, Japan.

Johnson is a 1997 graduate of Alliance High School and joined the Marine Corps in June 2003. He is a 2008 graduate of University of Nebraska with a BA degree.



A Tribute to Red . . .
... was given Saturday night at the Alliance High School Auditorium as Tom Mullica portrayed the late Skelton and performed several of his acts including "Guzzlers Gin." Unfortunately Mullica fell ill about 75 minutes into the performance and was unable to continue. If those in attendance wish a partial refund of the ticket price, they are asked to contact Alliance Arts Council Executive Director Cindy Randall at (308) 762-3087. Ledger/Lyle Fodnes

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