

# BRIDGING

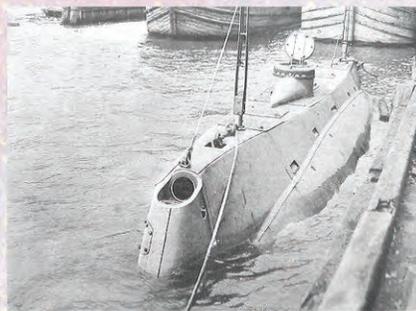
## THE GAP



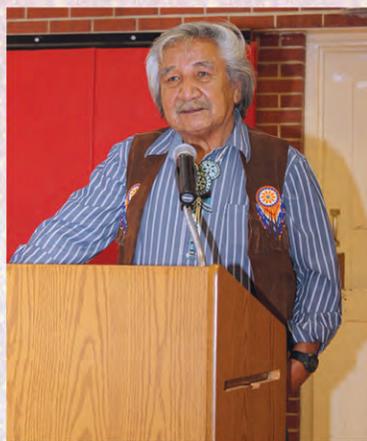
ISSUE 29 ❖ FEBRUARY - MARCH 2012



WREATHS ACROSS  
AMERICA



NAVY TRIVIA



NATIVE AMERICAN  
HERITAGE



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*Interested in becoming a member of the SEP Group?  
 Please contact LaVonne Roesnthal at the email address listed above.*

## SEP NOTES

In January, the SEP Group met to discuss the past year's accomplishments and what we would like to achieve in the next year and beyond. We had a lively discussion on our past accomplishments. The main topic was the fact that we brought Bridging the Gap (BTG) back from its short hiatus. Another positive was to start having heritage events every other month instead of once a quarter (from four to six a year). In addition, we have added many new members to the group who are very eager to promote diversity in the Nebraska National Guard and the community.

The discussion became even more animated when we began to talk about what we would like to achieve in the next year and beyond. One of the items we discussed was how to solicit more authors for BTG including more military and civilian members of the Military Department, and civilians from the many communities in Nebraska. Along with this, we brainstormed on how we, as a group and as individuals, could become more involved in our communities and how we could become better informed as to the many

diverse events going on in different communities in the entire state of Nebraska.

Senior leaders of the organization joined us mid-point in our meeting. With these additional perspectives, the main topic of discussion was how to expand our diversity educational efforts to traditional Soldiers and Airmen. This has been a goal for several years, and with the advantage of having commanders involved in our planning session, we were able to formulate action plans to put this in motion. One of the options is to have an ethnic heritage luncheon during a drill weekend for one or more units. It will be even more exciting as the unit takes the lead in developing and organizing the event and making it a success.

There were many other topics discussed during the day. We may not accomplish them all in one year, so our goal is to continue moving forward and making positive strides in the vast area of diversity. The SEP Group is grateful for the continual evidence of leadership support in our collaborative endeavors.

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## THE NEBRASKA MILITARY DEPARTMENT VALUES DIVERSITY

*The purpose of the SEP Group is to work with leadership and management in carrying out their joint responsibility to identify barriers to the recruitment and advancement of special emphasis groups, devise solutions, and draft plans to implement the solutions.*

*In addition, the SEP Group provides opportunities for positive exchange among diverse groups through community outreach, education and cultural diversity awareness.*



# DIVERSITY DEMOGRAPHICS

By BG Scott A. Gronewold

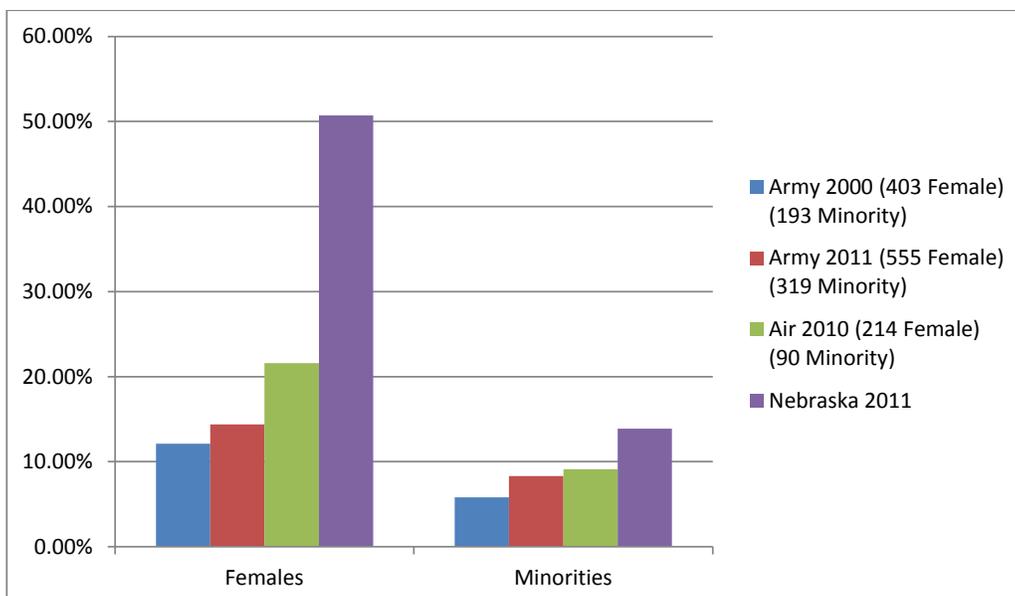
I have been procrastinating writing an article for *Bridging the Gap* for quite some time. Not because I am not excited about diversity; just the opposite. I have struggled to find a new way to repack the same important senior leader message about the value of diversity without being accused of plagiarism. I can assure everyone that the senior leadership has discussed diversity's critical importance to the organization and has spent countless hours spiritedly discussing ways to increase the diversity of our Nebraska National Guard. This has been a leadership priority for at least ten years; yet it is sometimes difficult to see if we have made any progress. I was convinced that despite all the leadership emphasis and the hard work of numerous groups and individuals, we had not found the silver bullet to solve this challenge, but have been merely chasing our tail. I am a numbers person, so when in doubt, I consult the metrics.

I was provided demographic data for the last eleven years for the Army Guard and the last five years for the Air Guard. I then compared them to the 2010 Nebraska Census. After consulting the

numbers, I have come to the conclusion that there is good news and bad news (see table below). The good news is the Nebraska Army National Guard increased the number of female Soldiers by 38% and the number of minority Soldiers by 65% over the last eleven years. The bad news is that the current percentage of female Soldiers (14.4%), and female Airmen (21.6%) is well below the female composition of Nebraskans (50.7%). The percentage of minority Army Soldiers (8.3%) and minority Airmen (9.1%) is also well below the minority composition of Nebraskans (13.9%). I cannot tell you what success will look like, but I know we are not there, yet. While we have increased the number of females and minorities in our organization by hundreds, we need to increase it by hundreds more to reflect the rich and changing diversity of our



state. I am confident that the increases already are and will continue to provide a positive influence in our efforts to reach out to all Nebraskans as these Soldiers and Airmen progress through the ranks.



I am reminded that change does not come quickly in large institutional organizations. However, I do feel this battleship of our organization is on the right course, and it will take constant course adjustments by many dedicated groups and individuals to sustain the progress we have made. It may take bold initiatives not yet thought of to make the progress left to achieve. We, at all ranks and positions, must continually seek and create new ways to increase the diversity of our organization. Only by being a reflection of the communities we serve will we continue to enjoy the immense respect and trust that they have in us.



# BOOK REVIEW:

*Book Review By MAJ Drey Ihm*

# CONDI: THE CONDOLEEZA RICE STORY

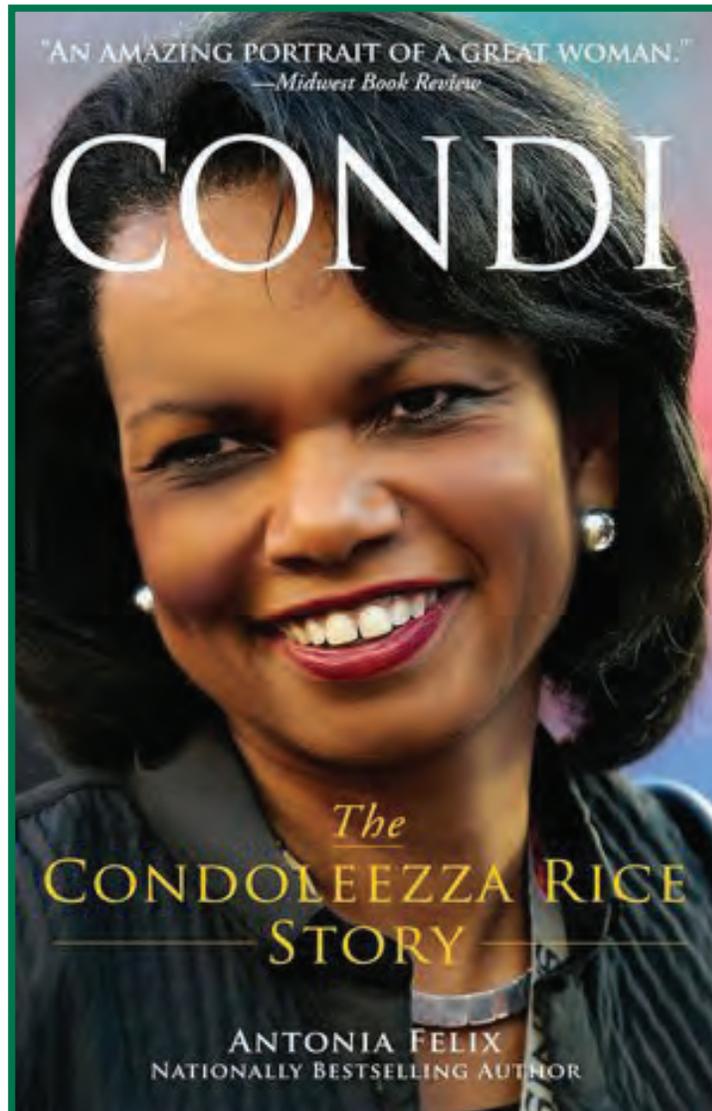
*Written by Antonia Felix; Copyright 2002; Reprinted 2010*

Antonia Felix's biography is one that is honest and well-documented. The reader doesn't have to rely on the author's take on the individual; the book's original sources provide a wide spectrum of personal interviews, magazine articles and government reports. The book paints Ms. Rice in a very favorable light, with chapter titles providing touchstones throughout her career: The Scholar, Professor Rice, Bush I, Room at the Top and Portals of Power: Bush II.

Ultimately, this biography is a very good overview of an intelligent, brilliant woman who has reached heights almost unimaginable for a Black woman born in Alabama in 1954. But not for Condoleezza Rice, who predicted she would be "in that house" when she was a ten-year-old girl.

Rice began to learn French, music, figure skating and ballet at the age of three. At the age of fifteen, she began piano classes with the goal of becoming a concert pianist. While Rice ultimately did not become a professional pianist, she still practices often and plays with a chamber music group. She accompanied cellist Yo-Yo Ma playing Brahms' *Violin Sonata in D Minor* at Constitution Hall in April 2002 for the National Medal of Arts Awards.

Learning at a young age that the world is a dangerous place (a friend of hers was killed in the bombing of a Birmingham church), Rice still maintained an



optimistic viewpoint in life. Her love of football (a game much like world politics) also figures prominently, which developed since her father was a football coach. She has often spoken about her perfect job - being the commissioner of the National Football League.

The book touches very briefly on Rice's firsthand experiences with the injustices

of Birmingham's discriminatory laws and attitudes. She was instructed to walk proudly in public and to use the facilities at home rather than subject herself to the indignity of "colored" facilities in town. As Rice recalls of her parents and their peers, "they refused to allow the limits and injustices of their time to limit our horizons."

However, Rice recalls various times in which she suffered discrimination on account of her race, which included being relegated to a storage room at a department store instead of a regular dressing room, being barred from going to the circus or the local amusement park, being denied hotel rooms, and even being given bad food at restaurants. Also, while Rice was mostly kept by her parents from areas where she might face discrimination, she was very aware of the civil rights struggle and the problems of Jim Crow laws in Birmingham. Rice said of the segregation era: "Those terrible events burned into my consciousness. I missed many days at my segregated school because of the frequent bomb threats."

During the violent days of the Civil Rights Movement, her father Reverend Rice, armed himself and kept guard over the house while Condoleezza practiced the piano inside. Also, Reverend Rice instilled in his daughter and students that Black people would have to prove themselves worthy of advancement, and would simply have to be "twice as

*Continued on Page 5*



Review By MAJ Dan Kubn

# RESTAURANT REVIEW: THE OLD MATTRESS FACTORY BAR & GRILL

501 North 13th Street; Omaha, NE ; 402-346-9116; <http://www.themattomaha.com/>

The Old Mattress Factory Bar & Grill (The Matt) is North Downtown Omaha's newest event bar, but is located in one of the area's oldest historic buildings. Just west of the CenturyLink Center (formerly Qwest Center) on 13th and Cass Streets, The Matt is an ideal place to gather before the big concert, after a sporting event, or for an evening out with friends. I last visited there while traveling to Fort Irwin, California with two fellow Soldiers, Captain Cory Huskey and Master Sergeant Dean Reicks.

Within the original 1883 brick walls of the newly renovated building, you find yourself surrounded by Omaha's

historic past while you enjoy the comforts and tastes of all The Matt has to offer. Personally, I would recommend the Matt Double Play, eight ounces of Pulled Pork and eight ounces of Pulled Brisket served open faced with picnic slaw and their homemade barbeque sauce for \$13.95. The Matt features other menu items ranging from pizza and gourmet burgers to fish.

Sit back and watch your favorite game on the projection television and enjoy one of the wide varieties of local brews. Patio seating is available which offers not only a casual outdoor atmosphere, but also an amazing view of the Omaha riverfront

and CenturyLink Center. We experienced friendly service, but unfortunately, no military discount was offered.

Visit the web site for Game Day Specials such as \$12 Buckets, 10 Wings for \$5, \$2 Pulled Pork Sliders and \$3 Chips/Salsa. Jell-O Shots are on the house when the Huskers score their first touchdown.

The Matt menu also offers some great desserts, such as the Mixed Berry Cobbler, served warm with Vanilla Bean Ice Cream, Key Lime Pie, Chocolate Mousse Pie or Vanilla Bean Cheesecake.

Source: <http://www.themattomaha.com/> 

*Book Review continued from Page 4*

good" to overcome injustices built into the system. Rice said "My parents were very strategic, I was going to be so well prepared, and I was going to do all of these things that were revered in white society so well, that I would be armored somehow from racism. I would be able to confront white society on its own terms."

Her early political views were Democrat until 1982, when she changed her political affiliation to Republican, in part because she disagreed with the foreign policy of Democratic President Jimmy Carter, and because of the influence of her father, who was Republican. As she told the 2000 Republican National Convention, "My father joined our party because the Democrats in Jim Crow Alabama of 1952 would not register him to vote. The Republicans did."

Condoleeza Rice was the first woman to serve as National Security Advisor, and the second to be nominated to serve as Secretary of State. Her life is a story of overcoming many prejudices. It is perhaps

fortunate for the country that she decided she wasn't good enough to be a concert pianist. She instead was attracted to studying the Soviet Union. From 1989-1991, she was the one who provided President George H. W. Bush with the advice that helped America navigate the turbulent times during the fall of both the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The book's last chapter relates Ms. Rice's experiences during September 11, 2001. When she began her day at 6:30 that morning, she had no idea that she would be calling together members of the National Security Council to deal with a terrorist attack on the United States. "Two minutes after the plane hit the Pentagon, the White House was ordered to evacuate, and Condi was instructed to leave the Sit Room and go to an underground bunker. Cheney was already there, but before Condi left, she called the president once more to urge him not to return to the White House. She told him that his cabinet and staff feared there could be another hit on Washington. The president heeded their advice and was

flown to various locations throughout the day."

Rice's visibility increased after the attacks of September 11th. She provided media updates on the war on terrorism, and spoke with Secretary of State Colin Powell and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on a daily basis. The information gleaned from these updates were delivered to President Bush by Rice. She is quoted as saying "I try very hard to remember that I have to be very disciplined about making sure I'm giving the president the whole story, that I'm making sure he knows everything." Clarity between her personal views and others' opinions were identified in those conversations to ensure the president had accurate, unbiased information.

I found this book to be very insightful of the complexities that surround such an astonishing individual. I have nothing but the utmost respect and admiration for Condoleeza Rice and her efforts to serve her country in her own way. The book is an easy, quick read for anyone with constrained time to fit in a good book. 



## TRIVIA: NAVY

*“It follows than as certain as that night succeeds the day, that without a decisive naval force we can do nothing definitive, and with it, everything honorable and glorious.”*

*~President George Washington*

1. What historical figure of the American Navy was also a member of the Russian Navy?
  - a. Captain John Barry
  - b. Captain John Paul Jones
  - c. Captain Nicholas Biddle
  - d. Captain Abraham Whipple
2. I was the first United States Navy Admiral that never served on a U.S. ship; however, I have a ship named after me (an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer) and I was a pioneer in the computer field. Who am I?
  - a. Rear Admiral Lillian E. Fishburne
  - b. Rear Admiral Linda J. Bird
  - c. Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hooper
  - d. Rear Admiral Alene Bertha Duerk
3. The “commissioning” is the first milestone in the life of a Navy ship.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. The Continental Congress established the Continental Navy on what date?
  - a. October 13, 1775
  - b. July 4, 1776
  - c. April 30, 1798
  - d. January 1, 1777
5. On what type of U.S. Navy ship would you see a “Rainbow Wardrobe”?
  - a. Frigate
  - b. Destroyer
  - c. Aircraft Carrier
  - d. Submarine
6. Which is NOT a nickname by which a naval Executive Officer is referred?
  - a. Number One
  - b. XO
  - c. Jimmy
  - d. Johnny
7. Warships are christened with an official name, but the crews (or crews from other ships) often give them a nickname for various reasons. What ship was given the nickname “The Big E”?
  - a. USS Enterprise (CV-6)
  - b. USS Essex (CV-9)
  - c. USS Midway (CVB-41)
  - d. USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69)
8. What Navy organization was established on January 1, 1962?
  - a. U.S. Naval Observatory
  - b. U.S. Navy Reserve
  - c. Navy SEALs
  - d. Military Sealift Command
9. These brothers were killed on November 13, 1942, when the light cruiser USS Juneau (CL-52) sank off Guadalcanal. Who were they?
  - a. The Wrights
  - b. The Nelsons
  - c. The Greens
  - d. The Sullivans
10. What year did the Navy commission its first submarine?
  - a. 1900
  - b. 1910
  - c. 1930
  - d. 1935

*“A good Navy is not a provocation to war. It is the surest guaranty of peace.”*

*~President Theodore Roosevelt*





# WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

By Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez

The kick-off for the Wreaths Across America Week in Nebraska was held in the Warner Chambers of the Nebraska State Capitol on December 5, 2011. The theme for 2011 was *Remember the Christmas They Never Had*. The main purpose of the ceremony was to present an evergreen wreath bearing the flags of our military branches and a POW/MIA flag to Lieutenant Governor (Lt Gov) Rick Sheehy for display in the capitol during the holiday season.



Diane Bartels, avid supporter of all things military and author of *Sharpie: The Life Story of Evelyn Sharp, Nebraska's Aviatrice*, was the Master of Ceremonies. Lincoln's Air Force Junior ROTC Color Guard reverently presented the colors. One of the highlights of the ceremony was the music, sung by the Northeast High School's "Voices of Harmony" group. Their beautiful voices rang out in the chamber in a glorious tribute to the United States. They sang two numbers: *The Star Spangled Banner* and *Gospel America*.

The guest speaker for the ceremony was Brigadier General (BG) Michael D. Navrkal, the Nebraska National Guard's Assistant Adjutant General – Army. BG Navrkal's speech can be found immediately following this article.

The presentation of the wreath was led by Ralph Bierman from Wyuka Cemetery. Following this Lt Gov Sheehy read the Governor's Proclamation and made a few remarks, during which he stated that "Nebraskans are proud of our Veterans."

The year 2011 marked Wyuka Cemetery's second year of involvement with Wreaths

Across America. They laid 645 wreaths, nearly double the 344 wreaths from 2010. One other Nebraska cemetery was represented at the ceremony (many couldn't make it due to the weekend's snow and ice) from Pawnee City. When this started three years ago, they had 26 wreaths; in 2010 they had 50 and in 2011 they had grown to over 100 wreaths.

## History of the Wreaths

The tradition of laying wreaths to honor our veterans during the holiday season began in 1992, when Morrill Worcester of Worcester Wreath Company (Harrington, Maine) was stuck with a number of extra wreaths at the close of the holiday season.

Remembering a boyhood trip to the Nation's capital and the sacred grounds of Arlington Cemetery, he donated 5,000 unsold wreaths to be placed at the headstones in an older section of Arlington Cemetery.

What began as one man's gesture grew into a national movement, when in 2006 Wreaths Across America was formed as a non-profit organization. In 2011, over 700 locations around the Nation, 24 off-shore countries, and our ships in the Seven Seas participated in this event. There are eighteen cemeteries across Nebraska registered with Wreaths. As part of the program, Wreaths Across America sends a large wreath to each state capitol to honor veterans during the holiday season.



On Saturday, December 10, hundreds of evergreen

wreaths were placed on veterans' graves in the Soldier's Circle section of Wyuka Cemetery. Several organizations collected donations to purchase wreaths to place on the veterans' graves. Military, civic organizations and youth groups helped lay the wreaths.

Each wreath honors all servicemen and women for their selfless sacrifice – and that of their families who are without loved ones during the holidays. The message that Wreaths Across America would like to share with all veterans is that from one generation to another, we will NEVER FORGET that the freedoms we enjoy came at such a great cost.

To learn more about the effort, please visit [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org) (also a source for this article).



# WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

## SPEECH GIVEN BY BG MICHAEL D. NAVRKAL

### AT THE STATE CAPITOL ON DECEMBER 5, 2011

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, welcome to this Wreaths Across America event. It is a privilege for me to be here as we honor and remember a very special group of Americans today - America's veterans. I can think of no place I, as a Soldier and fellow veteran, would rather be than here today.

Our nation owes a great debt to its veterans, whose service spans every decade, and continues every day of our country's existence. Through untold courage and sacrifice, America's veterans have secured the liberty which the founding fathers sought to establish here. Whenever and wherever the nation has called - in times of darkness and danger as well as in times of peace and prosperity - America's veterans have been there.

For nearly ten years, we've been engaged in a long-term struggle against violent extremism. We continue to fight to defend our freedoms and combat terrorism. It is right for our Nation to honor those veterans whose service is recorded in the history in past conflicts, and recognize our current warriors who add to our nation's rich history. As we all know, our Armed Forces are stationed around the world standing in harm's way to protect us at this very moment.

Lest we forget, the graves at Arlington and at countless cemeteries worldwide remind us that freedom is not free. It has a cost.

Wreaths Across America's mission is to Remember, Honor, and Teach. These missions are carried out in part by coordinating wreath laying ceremonies on the second Saturday of December at



Arlington, as well as veterans' cemeteries in all 50 states and beyond. What a great way to remember and honor our Veterans.

The theme this year, *Remember The Christmas They Never Had*, is in honor of those who've spent a holiday apart from loved ones and in memory of those who never made it home. This theme is very poignant for me. Back in 2006 and 2007 I spent several holidays away from my family while deployed to Iraq. I especially remember the school kids who sent cards to us hoping to lift our spirits during the Christmas season. In fact, I still have a couple of those cards because that simple and innocent way to support and thank Service Members means so much to those of us who serve. That is one of the reasons why I believe the teaching mission of Wreaths Across America is so important.

I remember as well the numerous civic organizations and churches who sent us care packages which included plenty of food and other essentials. People we did not know took the effort to show simple acts of kindness that were really extraordinary. Individuals just like you who are part of the Wreaths Across

America organization. I know you as an organization and as individuals want to thank Veterans but, as a Veteran, I want to say thanks to all of you for making a difference for all of those who are serving, have served and for remembering those who've made the ultimate sacrifice.

Our men and women in the military have superb training and the best equipment and able commanders. They have the example of American veterans who came before them. From the very day George Washington took command, the uniform of the United States has always stood for courage and decency and shining hope in a world of darkness. And they have another great advantage - The American people who support them. People just like you.

It is important for us to honor and remember our veterans from the Greatest Generation to the Latest Generation. We owe them a debt we can never repay.

We honor every Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine and Coastguardsman who gave some of the best years of their lives to the service of the United States and stood ready to give life itself, on our behalf.

President John F. Kennedy once said that "a nation reveals itself not only by the people it produces, but also by the people it honors, the people it remembers."

Ladies and gentlemen, we are here and the Wreaths Across America organization exists to Honor, and Remember those who have served this great nation in the Armed Forces.

So may God Bless you and bless the beacon for freedom, the United States of America. Thank you.



# WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

## SPEECH GIVEN BY LTGEN (NE) (RET) ROGER P. LEMPKE AT MOUNT HOPE CEMETARY ON DECEMBER 10, 2011

Today we gather to continue a tradition began in 1992 by the owner of a small company. There was no request for government support or hand out. There was no marketing analysis done to determine feasibility or profitability.

A businessman in the state of Maine named Morrill Worchester had a Christmas wreath inventory problem. He also had something else - a memory from a trip made to Arlington National Cemetery at age twelve. There he saw the rows upon rows of headstones marking where those who had served their country with honor, and often heroism, were laid to rest.

Years later he developed a very successful business. Always, he appreciated the fact that his success emanated from the freedom "fought, protected, and handed on" by generations of military veterans.

It didn't take long to realize what to do with the excess wreaths. And it didn't take long to garner support from other patriotic and appreciative businesses.

Perhaps the most special aspect of the Wreaths Across America project is that the ceremony has continued unbroken since 1992. Of course, it has taken on a special significance since 9/11.

But think back to the 1990s when America's might was unchallenged. The Cold War was over and the Soviet Union had been dismantled. After a century of war and conflict unmatched in human history it would have been easy to celebrate the moment and forget America's history of sacrifice to defeat tyranny.

The truest test of character is when you do the right thing when no one is watching. For thirteen years not many paid attention, but the wreaths ceremony continued, becoming a testament to American character that President Reagan described - Americans don't forget.

Today at Mount Hope this gathering will see the 200 wreaths that have been placed on veterans' graves. In 2008, over 300 locations across the nation held wreath laying ceremonies in every state, Puerto Rico and 24 overseas cemeteries. Over 100,000 wreaths were placed on veterans graves. Over 60,000 volunteers participated. This year the number will approach 400,000 wreaths and 150,000 volunteers.

It takes millions of cells to build a human being. But a few thousand patriotic citizens donating time and effort under the freedom we so richly enjoy can

assemble a tribute to human beings who have sacrificed to preserve these freedoms. Valentine and Mount Hope Cemetery are part of this most significant moment on this most significant day.

I hope that everyone here today notes the special elements of the wreath laying ceremony. One member of the presentation team is an Iraq veteran and a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard. All of the services are represented on the team. Finally, someone is assigned to represent our POWs and MIAs who are still unaccounted for.

This is a busy time of the year with family gatherings to plan and Christmas gifts to buy. That Valentine citizens are willing to carve time to honor our veterans on a crisp winter day in December speaks volumes to the patriotism of this community.

As a military leader who has sent soldiers to the battlefield and then had to bury some of them, I want to express my personal gratitude to volunteers and sponsors who have made this ceremony possible.

God bless this great city, this great state and most particularly, this great nation.



***Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.***  
***-Ronald Reagan - 40th United States President (1911 – 2004)***



# WEBSITE REVIEW:

# AGING PARTNERS

Review By SSG Mandy Cunningham

<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/mayor/aging>



The increasing aches and pains of aging may be not-so-gentle reminders of what our elderly loved ones experience on a daily basis. Many of us will inherit the role of caretaker and face the challenges of how to meet the needs of our loved ones' declining health and mobility. Whether you are concerned about a parent, a neighbor or have questions yourself, Aging Partners' website is a great place to find answers.

Aging Partners' services range from answering questions about aging to offering fun things to do with others, finding a meal program, or locating someone to come to your home to help with more serious problems as well as all the issues in between.

It's encouraging to know that all of this information is easy to access right from the home page. It is a launch pad to a wealth of resources such as a

calendar of events, how to request a speaker, caregiver resources, resources for seniors, and much more. It also provides "What's New!" hyperlinks to quizzes, clinics and classes, "Quick Links" to employment, scam alerts, and the Seniors Foundation to name a few. It can also take you directly to the *Living Well* magazine or *My Center News* newsletters. This may sound

like an overwhelming amount of information, but due to the website's well-thought out organization you don't have to worry about getting lost and digging through the links. However, if you decide you still prefer speaking with a real, live human being, the local and toll-free numbers are two of the first things you'll see.

The agency has a well-defined mission: "to help older persons avoid or resolve the questions, concerns, and difficulties which occur after age 60. Helping older persons to remain independent in their homes is a continuing central purpose of the total program." Their goals are

*There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age."*

*—Sophia Loren*

very important as they focus on older individuals:

- To assure the safety, well-being, and maximum independence of older individuals.
- To increase the benefit older persons derive from human services by improving their access, understanding, and appropriate use of those services.
- To comprehensively address the needs of older individuals through inter-agency cooperation and the active involvement of friends and family.
- To actively represent the needs of older persons and develop new answers to their concerns.

Overall this website has a wealth of

information for older individuals. So, if you or someone you know can benefit from their knowledge, please share the contact information for Aging Partners.

*"This Agency is focused on giving you choices about how you want to live your life. Staying healthy as we age is vital."*

*—June Pederson, Director*



# SEP MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

## BRIGADIER GENERAL MICHAEL D. NAVRKAL

### ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL - ARMY



I was born and raised in and around the Nebraska City, Nebraska area and graduated from Lourdes Central High School, Nebraska City in 1979. I wanted to attend college but needed to figure out how to pay for my schooling. Around that time I became aware of the National Guard and began my military career in February 1979 when I enlisted in the Army National Guard. I went to Basic and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Benning, Georgia and trained as an Infantry mortar man or 11C. When I flew to basic training that summer it was the first time I had flown on a commercial airplane. That fall I started college and served as an 11C enlisted member in Co A/2-134th Infantry located in Nebraska City. A good friend of mine suggested I become a commissioned officer and I entered the Federal Officer Candidate School (OCS) program in April 1981, graduated and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in June 1981.

My first assignment out of OCS was as a Platoon Leader in Co A/2-134 Infantry located in my hometown of Nebraska City. In 1984, I graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in Business Administration. After graduation I met the love of my life Jeanie, and within six months of our first meeting I proposed. We were married in Lincoln. Over 25 years later we're still going strong.

I went to work in the business world and then in 1985 I took command of Company A in Nebraska City. This was a dream job for me as I recognized the privilege and honor of command. During this time I started applying for full-time positions in the Nebraska Army National

Guard (NEARNG) but, after a few years of trying to no avail, I decided to really focus on my business career. In 1989, I started with a new employer and in 1991 I was asked to move to Chicago, Illinois as a Territory Manager. I vividly remember flying into Chicago and while riding in a limousine to an interview, I thought there was no way I would move to Chicago because of traffic and the big city culture and lifestyle. Despite my initial impression, we moved there and I transferred to the Wisconsin Army National Guard working on the 32nd Infantry Brigade staff serving in several positions as a Captain and Major.

During my time in Chicago I was promoted to General Manager of a business unit, which caused some challenges as I attempted to balance a civilian and military career with other priorities. We then made a corporate move to Denver, Colorado and I became

the Regional Manager with Nebraska being part of my region. I readily accepted this move and transferred back to the Nebraska Army National Guard serving as Squadron S-3. I was grateful to the leadership of the NEARNG for allowing me the opportunity to serve again in this fine organization.

In 1999, I was having trouble balancing my faith, family and civilian career as I had moved into a role as a Vice President. I hit twenty years of military service and decided to retire, moving into the Inactive National Guard (ING) so I could get the correct balance in my life. In early 2001, I decided to rejoin the NEARNG after taking a knee, so to speak. I served in JFHQ and then in 2003 I decided to do a six month Active Duty for Special Work (ADSW) tour at the Readiness Center in Arlington. This short tour was an excellent opportunity for professional development as I learned quite a bit during my time in DC.

Shortly after coming back to Nebraska I took command of the 168th Quartermaster Petroleum Supply Battalion (QPSB) located in Scottsbluff. In 2004, Jeanie and I decided to move back to Omaha so we could be closer to family as my Dad was very ill with cancer. He died a few months after we moved back, and moving home was one of the best decisions Jeanie and I ever made. In 2006, I was offered a short term transition position as Commander of the 867th QPSB after my command tour in Scottsbluff ended. Soon after I took command the unit was alerted for deployment to Iraq. My experience in Iraq was one of the most rewarding and most difficult challenges I've had serving this nation. I was blessed to have an awesome team and will always appreciate



# SEP MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

## MASTER SERGEANT JENNIFER ELOGE

### CONTRACTING SPECIALIST

I was born on April 12, 1976 in Milford, Massachusetts. I was an only child until I was nearly five when I got a new baby sister, Aimee. We grew up in Bellingham, Massachusetts, where I graduated from high school.

While there are many differences between the Northeastern part of the United States and the Plains, there are similarities also. The Northeast is very fast-paced and the people seem rude. In Massachusetts we eat grinders instead of subs and we put Rs in weird places in words. One similarity between the two regions is they both have farms (minus the corn in the Northeast).

Although I didn't grow up on a farm, we still had horses and I grew up riding them. I did everything from barrel racing to dressage.

My grandparents lived on a farm in Quebec in a single-wide trailer and had four children. My dad spent quite a bit of time in New York with his aunt, eventually moving there to live with her. My dad joined the United States Army when he was eighteen and served for three years. Somehow he ended up in Massachusetts.

I took frequent trips to Canada to see my grandparents who spoke only French. We tried to either go to Canada for Canadian

Thanksgiving (our Columbus Day) or New Year's Eve. Both holidays were a blast as my dad's side of the family really knows how to throw a party. The French Canadian culture was a huge way of life for me. We ate things like meat pies, unpasteurized cheese curd, and poutine (fries, sauce and cheese curd).

I graduated from high school in 1994 and joined the United States Air Force (USAF) so I could travel. I wanted to see the world and I was very lucky in that respect. The USAF has taken me to many countries, my favorite being Austria. The Alps are so amazing; words fail to describe them. I have been stationed in New Mexico; Geilenkirchen, Germany; Mildenhall, England; and in 2005 I transferred to the Nebraska Air National Guard when my ex-husband (Aaron Couture) got orders to Offutt (he was a crew chief in the Air Force and now is an expediter in the Nebraska Air National Guard).

I live in Lincoln with my husband Byron and four children; Nathaniel 12, Andrew 9, Samuel 8, and Brianna 3. My family is the most important thing to me and my husband is my best friend. Our life is very busy between family, work and my



hobby of running. I started running in 2008 right after Brianna was born just to get in shape for my fitness test. Never in a million years would I have thought that I would actually fall in love with running, but I did. In October 2009, I completed my first half marathon and loved it. Naturally I thought I must try a full marathon. I did another half in February 2010 then I ran my first full in May 2010. I instantly fell in love with the full marathon. I am not a fast runner by any means, but I love the distance. My current goal is to run a marathon in all 50 states. I recently ran my eighth state (Florida) on Thanksgiving weekend. I am lucky that my husband is supportive of my running as I couldn't do it without his and the kids' help. I am hoping to get all 50 states in ten years. I am always thankful for each race I finish. 

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the incredible support I received from those I served with. After returning from Iraq in 2007, I was assigned as the J-4 and then was detailed to the J-3 before assuming command of the 92nd Troop Command. My time leading the 92nd Troop Command was a very rewarding experience as we prepared and supported multiple units for mobilization and

demobilization. Again, as has been the case throughout my career, I was blessed to be part of an incredible team who performed brilliantly during my time in command.

Earlier this year I was honored and humbled to be asked by Major General Lyons to become his Assistant Adjutant General-Army and was promoted to Brigadier General. I never thought I'd

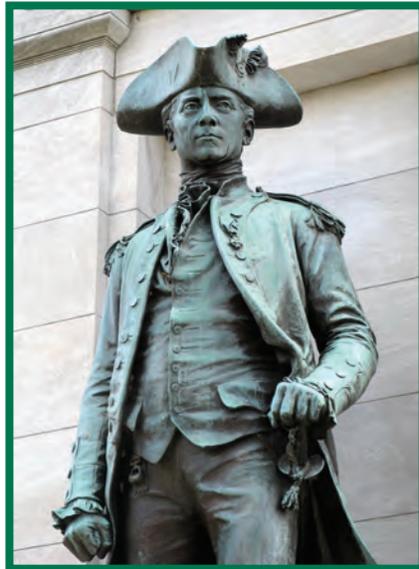
have the opportunity to serve at this level and I am very grateful. Being able to serve at this time with the incredibly talented Soldiers of the NEARNG is a tremendous privilege. Throughout my military career I've been very fortunate to have many mentors who have challenged me along the way with the right jobs so I was put in a position to be successful. I'm so blessed to have a strong faith, an incredible family and wonderful friends. 



*Navy Trivia Continued from Page 6*

## NAVY TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. b. Captain John Paul Jones was a Scottish sailor and a U.S. hero during the Revolutionary War. During his battle with HMS Serapis, Jones spoke (according to the recollection of his first lieutenant) the legendary phrase “I have not yet begun to fight.” After the war in 1788, and looking for active employment, Jones entered the service of the Empress Catherine II of Russia.



Captain John Barry was one of the most successful and courageous officers in the Revolutionary War Navy. He and his crew of the Alliance fought and won the final naval battle of the American Revolution. He was also the last officer of the Continental Navy in active service.

Nicholas Biddle was one of the first five captains of the Continental Navy. Commissioned into the Navy in December 1775, he was made Captain of the 14 gun-brig Andrew Doria.

Abraham Whipple was a Revolutionary War naval commander and has been credited with sinking the first British ship of the war, the British schooner HMS Gaspée in 1772.

2. c. Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hooper was born on December 9, 1906 in New York City. In 1928 she graduated from Vassar College with a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics and physics. While a faculty member at Vassar she continued her studies in mathematics at Yale University where she earned her Master of Arts in 1930 and Doctorate in 1934. She remained an Associate Professor at Vassar until 1943, when she joined the United States Naval Reserve. After her midshipman’s school she was assigned to the Bureau of Ordnance Computation Project at Harvard University where she worked on the Mark series of computers. On September 9, 1945, a “computer bug” was first identified and named by then Lieutenant Hooper while she was on active duty; she also coined the term “debugged.” Rear Admiral Murray retired from the Navy on August 14, 1986. She was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral (RADM) on November 8, 1983. At a celebration in Boston aboard the

USS Constitution to celebrate her retirement, she was awarded the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the highest non-combat award given by the Department of Defense. At the time of her retirement she was the oldest commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy (79 years, eight months and five days) and on the oldest commissioned ship in the U.S. Navy (188 years, nine months and 23 days). The USS Hooper (DDG-70) was commissioned on September 6, 1996.



RADM Lillian E. Fishburne (born March 25, 1949) was the first African American female to hold the rank of Rear Admiral. She retired from the Navy in February 2001.

RADM Alene Bertha Duerk (born March 29, 1920) was the first woman to be selected for the flag rank in the U.S. Navy in 1972. She was the director of the U.S. Navy Nurses Corps from 1970 to 1975.

RADM Linda J. Bird was the first woman in the U.S. Navy Supply Corps promoted to flag rank. RADM Bird retired November 1, 2005 after more than 31 years of service.

3. b. False. While the commissioning of a naval ship is a milestone, it is not the first. The christening of the ship happens first, followed by the launching and then the commissioning. Christening and launching are virtually inseparable and give the ship its name and identity. A ship is launched when it first enters the water. At this time the ship is far from complete – considerable work must take place before it is ready for use by the Navy. The engineering plant, weapons and navigation systems, galley and a multitude of other components are needed to transform the hull into a fighting warship. When the ship is ready for use by the Navy and the prospective commanding officer and crew are on hand, the ship is then placed into active service or commissioned. The Navy does not refer to ships as having a birth date, rather the date of first commissioning marks the beginning of a ship’s active service, which is ended by its final decommissioning.

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Navy Trivia Continued from Page 14

4. a. October 13, 1775. On Friday, October 13, 1775, the Continental Congress voted to fit out two sailing vessels armed with ten carriage guns, as well as swivel guns, and manned by crews of eighty, and to send them out on a cruise of three months to intercept transports carrying munitions and stores to the British Army in America. This legislation created the Continental Navy and as such is considered the birthday of the Navy. Within a few days, Congress established a Naval Committee charged with equipping a fleet. This committee directed the purchasing, outfitting, manning, and operations of the first ships of the new navy, drafted naval legislation, and prepared rules and regulations to govern the Continental Navy's conduct and internal administration.



On April 30, 1798, Congress established the Department of the Navy. This act established the Navy as a separate cabinet department. Up until that time naval matters were handled by the War Department.

5. c. Aircraft Carrier. Much goes into flight operations aboard today's modern Navy aircraft carrier. Preparations for launch and recovery of an aircraft very much resemble a well-choreographed ballet. Those involved have specific, clearly-defined roles, and are easily recognizable by the color of their jerseys. Here is the list:

**Purple** – Aviation Fuels (nicknamed: Grapes).

**Blue** – Plane handlers, aircraft elevator operators, tractor drivers, messengers and phone talkers.

**Green** – catapult and arresting gear crews, air wing maintenance personnel, cargo handling personnel, ground support equipment troubleshooters, hook runners, photographer's mates, helicopter landing signal enlisted personnel.

**Yellow** – Aircraft handling officers, catapult and arresting gear officers, plane directors.

**Red** – Ordnance personnel, crash and salvage crews, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).

**Brown** – air wing plane captains, air wing line leading petty officers.

**White** – air wing quality control personnel, squadron plane inspectors, landing signal officers (LSO), air transfer officers (ATO), liquid oxygen (LOX) crews, safety observers and medical personnel.

6. d. Johnny is not a term used for the Executive Officer.

Number One was traditionally used by members of the wardroom to refer to the Executive Officer. Despite what you've seen on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, it is not a term used by the Captain to address the Executive Officer.

Jimmy is a term the crew uses to refer to the Executive Officer; again they never addressed the Executive Officer by this term.

XO is the shortened version (acronym) of the title Executive Officer.

In the United States military the XO is typically responsible for the management of day-to-day activities and may also take charge in the absence of the Commanding Officer (CO). In the U.S. Navy XOs are normally assigned to all ships and shore units.

7. a. The USS Enterprise (CV-6) was also known as the "Big E." The USS Enterprise was launched October 3, 1936, and commissioned on May 12, 1938. After her legendary service in World War II the "Big E" was decommissioned in 1947 as the most decorated ship in U.S. naval history. The newest USS Enterprise (CVN-65) was the world's first nuclear powered aircraft carrier and the eighth ship to carry the name.



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*Air Force Trivia Continued from Page 15*

8. c. Navy SEALs. Responding to President John F. Kennedy's request to develop an unconventional warfare capability, the U.S. Navy established SEAL Teams One and Two in January 1962. The teams were formed entirely with personnel from Underwater Demolition Teams and their mission was to conduct counter guerilla warfare and clandestine operations in maritime and river environments.



The U.S. Naval Observatory is one of the oldest scientific agencies in the country. It was established in 1830 as the Depot of Charts and Instruments. Its primary mission was to care for the U.S. Navy's chronometers, charts and other navigational equipment.

The Navy Reserve was officially formed in 1915 – just as the United States was emerging as a world power and the outbreak of World War I. But the concept of the American Citizen Sailor actually precedes America itself. Even before the Continental Congress established the Continental Navy, there were bands of residents in seaside towns engaging in combat with British warships.



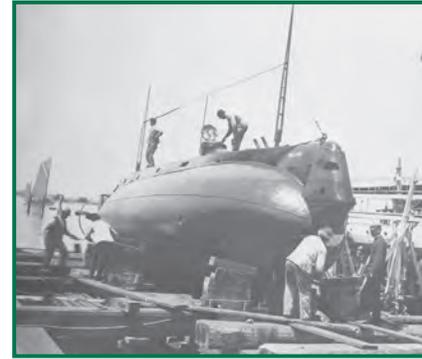
The Military Sealift Command operates approximately 110 non-combatant, civilian-crewed ships that replenish U.S. Navy ships, conduct specialized missions, strategically preposition combat cargo at sea around the world and move military cargo and supplies used by deployed U.S. forces and coalition partners.

9. d. The Sullivans. On November 13, 1942, the light cruiser Juneau (CL-52) sank off Guadalcanal, with the loss of all but ten of her crew. Among the dead were all five brothers of the Sullivan family from Waterloo,



Iowa. Albert, Francis, George, Joseph, and Madison Sullivan had enlisted together on January 3, 1942, with condition that they be allowed to serve on the same ship. News of the deaths of all five brothers became a rallying point for the war effort, with posters and speeches honoring their sacrifice, extensive newspaper and radio coverage, and war bond drives and other patriotic campaigns which culminated in the 1944 movie, *The Sullivans*.

10. a. 1900. On April 11, 1900 the U.S. Navy accepted its first submarine, the USS Holland (SS-1) which was named for her inventor John Philip Holland. The submarine was commissioned in October 1900. Although the Holland was always considered an experimental vessel, she was the Navy's first satisfactory submarine and was instrumental in the development of undersea warfare. By 1910 she was considered obsolete.



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***“The Navy has both a tradition and a future—and we look with pride and confidence in both directions.”***

***Admiral George Anderson***





# UH-72 LAKOTA ARRIVAL CEREMONY

By Pam Makovicka



On November 22, 2011, I had the opportunity to attend the Lakota helicopter arrival ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF) #2, in Grand Island, Nebraska. This helicopter will provide the flexibility to respond to Homeland Security requirements, conduct civil search and rescue operations, support damage assessment, support training centers, perform medical evacuation missions and support counterdrug operations.

The Lakota helicopter was delivered right off the assembly line. Its modern cockpit and advanced avionics provide the flight crew with the ability to navigate the civilian and military airspace and communicate with government and non-government entities on the ground and sea. In standard configuration, the internal cabin accommodates the seating and transport of a pilot, copilot and six passengers. In a medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) configuration the internal cabin accommodates the loading, unloading and transport of a pilot, copilot and two standard



litters with patients and one medical attendant with equipment plus one additional passenger. It was amazing to see the compact helicopter with such impressive capabilities.

To celebrate Native American Heritage Month and the arrival

of the Lakota helicopters, Myron Long Soldier, a Lakota Sioux, blessed the Lakota helicopters. Myron used burning sage for its healing powers at the blessing. In his Native language he spoke the blessing and fanned the sage smoke on the helicopters. He translated part of the blessing in English, "Creator God, watch over the helicopters, the Soldiers and their families. God watch over our Country and God bless our Country." The ceremony was very beautiful and meant a great deal to the aviation community and the Nebraska National Guard. Major General Lyons honored Myron Long Soldier with a framed print of the Lakota helicopters. 

BTG  
DIVER-CIPE  
CORNER

Submitted by  
MAJ Dale Burrage

*I grew up in Dayton, Ohio, and as a kid my family had sweet potato pie at each and every family function or holiday event. I'd never heard of pumpkin pie before moving to Nebraska in 1987. I tried it and it just wasn't the same. When I went home after my first year in college my stepmother spoiled me with sweet potato pie all summer and she even sent a couple back to school with me. When I went home the second Christmas, I told her that I wanted to learn how to make them myself so that I could have them when I was away at school. She never really measured anything so I had to watch her and write down approximately the amounts she used, and this is what I came up with...*

### Ingredients

- 2 - 9" Prepared deep-dish pie crusts, unbaked
- 2-3 Cups peeled, raw sweet potatoes
- 3 Cups evaporated milk
- 3 Extra large eggs
- 2 Sticks butter
- 2 Tablespoon nutmeg
- 1 Tablespoon cinnamon
- 2 Cups sugar
- 2 Tablespoons vanilla



Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Boil sweet potatoes until they can be easily mashed. Blend/mix them into the milk which has been poured into a large mixing bowl. Thoroughly mix in the remaining ingredients and pour into pie crust. Bake for 15 minutes and then reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees. Bake about 1 hour or until knife inserted in center of pie comes out clean. 

SWEET  
POTATO PIE