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Helping the census

Soccer game draws crowd

By Victoria English
vickie.english@thomnews.com

DASHER — Futbol americano o soccer? That was the response in area farm workers' camps yesterday.

The Airport Church of Christ hosted an afternoon event for the area's Hispanic community at the soccer field at Georgia Christian Academy. The event included an awareness and education program for Census 2000. Enumerators were on hand to answer people's questions and assist them in completing Census forms.

Representatives from Telamon, a private advocate agency for farm workers, and The Haven women's shelter, were at the cookout to provide information about programs that are available in this area.

Ralph Romero, minister to the migrant community with the Airport Church of Christ, had tables set up with free clothing for the migrant workers and their families.



Paul Leavy/The Valdosta Daily Times

THE BIG EVENT: Soccer was the draw that pulled a crowd to Georgia Christian Academy Saturday. While they were there, they heard from census enumerators and were offered other opportunities.

"When they travel from camp to camp they often have only the clothes on their backs

or what little they can carry in a small box," said Romero. There is always a need for clothing and old suitcases, he said.

Romero organized a soccer tournament to be played between the workers' teams. Hundreds from the Hispanic community attended.

Trophies were given out after the games were over and each player on the first-place team was given \$50 as a prize.

Groups or individuals interested in learning more about migrant workers' programs may contact Carmen Wilkinson at Telamon Corporation, 244-4920, Ana Maria Horst at The Haven, 241-7047, and Ralph Romero at The Airport Church of Christ, 242-8952.



Paul Leavy/The Valdosta Daily Times

CENSUS 2000: Attendees at Saturday's soccer match heard about how important the census is as part of an outreach to the Hispanic community.

To contact reporter Victoria English, please call 244-3400, ext. 237.

Thursday, May 11, 2000

Clemons replaces Davis as principal

Slated to take over at LMS next year

By Peter Failor

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VALDOSTA — The Lowndes County Board of Education went into executive session Tuesday at a called meeting, and when they emerged, a new principal was named.

Sam Clemons, who has served in the Lowndes County school system at Westside School, Moulton-Branch Elementary School and Lowndes High School, was selected to replace Fred Davis as principal of Lowndes Middle School next year.

Ron Irwin, assistant to Superintendent Tom Hagler, said Clemons is well-qualified for the job due to the fact that he comes

Continued from page 1A

School

from a family of educators, and over the years has had experience in both high school and elementary school.

The March 21 decision to transfer Davis to the Teacher Resource Center, and also to remove Marie Evans, assistant principal, angered many county residents. Among their complaints is a lack of a full explanation from the board for

the decision to remove the popular principal from the school.

Although it has been decided Davis will go to the Teacher Resource Center, Irwin said the board has yet to decide where Evans will be assigned.

To contact reporter Peter Failor,
please call 244-3400, ext. 247.

Saturday, May 13, 2000

Weed & Seed expands programs

By T.S. Rose

tod.rose@thomnews.com

VALDOSTA — With city council approval under their belts, Weed & Seed Steering Committee will be expanding several community programs under their umbrella.

The \$6,813 request approved Thursday in council chambers adds to the \$17,677 total project expansion costs, which also includes \$2,437 in matching funds from the Tree Commission and an identified \$8,426 in FY 2000 budget that was uncommitted to specific projects and available for use inside the Weed & Seed target area.

While council approved the request, the decision was not unanimous. Councilman Levy Rentz opposed use of contingency funds for anything other than

emergency needs. At the other end of the debate, Councilman Bunnis Williams, who also serves as chairman of the Weed & Seed Steering Committee, urged other councilmen to approve the request.

"These people are volunteers and what they are asking for is a drop of money in comparison to other requests," Williams said Thursday.

Discussing the expenditure Friday, City Manager Larry Hanson said the use of the contingency fund is sometimes unusual, but the mayor and city council is always extremely cautious when using it.

"We were very successful in securing the federal funds to start the Weed & Seed program," said Hanson. "Last year when the city was short on funds we used \$100,000 of Weed & Seed money ... this year the city has given them money to expand their programs."

He added that Valdosta's contingency fund is the lowest in the region but that this year the council made a special exception and granted money to Weed & Seed.

He said that computers for kids and money for after school programs are worthy causes and besides, "\$6,813 is a small amount of money."

The request includes: \$445 for file cabinets and snacks for kids participating in workshops aimed at reduction in teen-age pregnancy, drug use, dropout and failure rates; \$700 for expansion of Teen Plus Center's Pregnancy Awareness Program; \$5,212 for computer equipment, tutoring and trash containers for the Safe Haven Site; \$4,500 for 39 children, three community organizers, seed and fertilizer for neighborhood clean-up; \$5,652 for trees, landscaping and irrigation; \$1,000 for rye seeds and \$320 for Phonics Games Reader Systems at the Boys and Girls Club.

“These people are volunteers and what they are asking for is a drop of money in comparison to other requests.”

Bunnis Williams
Steering Committee
chairman

To contact reporter T.S. Rose, please call 244-3400, ext. 245.

Education officials fear school councils will become unwieldy

Sunday, May 14, 2000

ATLANTA(AP) — It will be like having a back-seat driver in every school in Georgia, looking over the board of education's shoulder and offering advice on which way to turn, or how fast to go.

By October 2003, each public school in the state has to install a seven-person advisory council in accordance with Gov. Roy Barnes' education reform package, which the Legislature approved this year.

That's nearly 11,000 volunteers who can offer recommendations on nearly everything the school does — from hiring a principal, to setting a budget, to buying textbooks.

Opponents of the school councils have said the councils could be bureaucratic monsters that steal power from elected school boards. But after some initial trepidation, many school officials are warming to the idea.

"I see the councils as folks in our school — parents, business people, teachers — all working together," said Thomasville High School Principal Tim Helms. "I'm a firm believer that seven or eight heads are better than one."

Many schools already have something similar to school councils. Thomasville has Positive Parents, for example, and DeKalb County has School-Community Action Teams in about 50 of its schools.

But the governor's school councils are different. They have strict rules for electing members. They must create by-laws. And they have to make sure all council meetings are open to the public.

Perhaps even more significantly, the local board of education is required by law to consider any recommendations from the council. School board members can accept or reject the advice, but they have to listen and respond.

By October 2003, every school in the state of Georgia will have a seven-person council to make recommendations on nearly everything the school does. Here's how the councils work:

- It consists of two parents, two teachers and two business people. The school principal is the seventh member and chairs the council.
- Each member serves a two-year term.
- Parent members are chosen in May by other parents who have children in the school. Teacher members are chosen in May by their fellow teachers. One business representative is chosen by the local board of education, and the other is chosen by the other five council members.
- The council must meet once a month at the school, and the meeting must be open to the public.
- The law explicitly states that the school councils are advisory bodies. The local board of education remains the final legal authority and can accept or reject any recommendation.

Plowden, vice chair of the Dougherty County Board of Education in Albany.

Those rigid, legal requirements are what make school councils a bad idea, said state school Superintendent Linda Schrenko, who opposed the governor's proposal.

"When you have up to 150 councils in some of the larger school districts, (school boards) could literally be meeting day and night, trying to overturn the hundreds of decisions that could be made by these councils," Schrenko said.

Communities need to be involved in schools, but there's no point in creating formal school councils when most schools already have informal committees up and running, Schrenko said.

"All this rigidity ... goes beyond what the state needs to do," she said.

But many educators and administrators, eager to have parents and business leaders get involved in their schools, are willing to put up with the extra work and legal requirements.

"We're always interested in having more parental involvement," said Chip Sellers, vice chairman of the school board in Dalton. "I personally don't look at this as a threat."

In its initial stages, some school board members around the state were worried the councils would become rival boards of education, said Jerry

But the final version explicitly states, "School councils are advisory bodies." Plowden said that should be enough to make sure the final authority rests with the elected board of education.

"I'm satisfied with the final version," said Plowden, who also serves on the Georgia School Board Association board of directors. "Parental involvement in schools is lacking, so if it will make that happen, I'm very excited about it."

Still, creating and coordinating these councils will be a lot of work, particularly in larger school systems, said Virginia Edwards, superintendent of Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools.

Edwards said it will be difficult to train all of the council members as required by law, and then to make sure the councils work properly at each of her 53 schools.

"We have our work cut out for us," she said.

But Renie Hallford, superintendent of DeKalb County schools, the second largest school system in Georgia, said he expects it to be reasonably simple to convert DeKalb's existing advisory groups into legal school councils.

"I have no fear of these at all, nor any apprehension," he said.

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

2B The Valdosta Daily Times

Sports

NEWS IN BRIEF

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Quarterback charged with assault

HOBOKEN, N.J. (AP) — Penn State quarterback Rashard Casey and a high school teammate beat an off-duty police officer until he was unconscious because the white officer was at a bar with a black woman, police said Monday.

"What are you doing with him? You should be with us. You're one of us," Casey and Desmond Miller told Officer Patrick Fitzsimmons' acquaintance at the River Street bar early Sunday morning, according to Hoboken Police Chief Carmen LaBruno. Casey and Miller are black.

Casey, who led Penn State to a victory in the Alamo Bowl last year, punched Fitzsimmons, 34, as he was walking to his car, LaBruno said. Casey and Miller, both 22, kicked the officer in the head once he fell, and continued to kick him after he lost consciousness, LaBruno said.



CASEY

STATE & REGION

Coke invests in diversity

Coca-Cola plans \$1 billion over five years

ATLANTA (AP) — The Coca-Cola Co. is committing \$1 billion over the next five years to promote diversity, but denies that the move is a response to a racial discrimination lawsuit against the company.

In an announcement Tuesday, Coke promised to boost business opportunities for women and minorities — in part by doing more business with minority and women-owned companies and financial institutions.

The diversity initiative comes has nothing to do with the discrimination lawsuit filed by eight current and former employees, said Carl Ware, executive vice president of global public affairs and the highest-ranking black executive at Coke.

Instead, it is a natural extension of Coke's mission to be a model corporate citizen and a positive force in local communities where Coca-Cola is sold, he said.

"This is a correct and proper business decision, a part of the company's overall business strategy, rather than ... something we just came up with," Ware said. "This is the new Coca-Cola."

The initiative, which will almost double the company's spending on such programs, includes:

- Increasing spending with minority and female-owned businesses by more than 50 percent over the next five years, spending an average of \$160 million a year compared with about \$100 million currently.

- Establishing a new supplier mentoring program among minorities and women.

- Expanding a program Coke began in New York's Harlem area in 1998 to increase economic partnerships and marketing investments. Thirteen communities are already



Associated Press

DIVERSITY SPENDING: Brokers gather at the post that trades Coca-Cola Enterprises Tuesday on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Also Tuesday, Coca-Cola pledged \$1 billion over the next five years in diversity spending.

involved in the program that targets smaller entrepreneurs, but Coke plans to invest about \$50 million over the next five years to add 50 new cities.

- Strengthening financial ties to firms owned by minorities or women. For example, Coke trustees recently doubled the portion of its employee pension fund managed by such firms to \$115 million. The company also plans to double the value of its insurance coverage through minority and women-owned firms.

- Spending \$50 million over five years to support nonprofit organizations, such as scholarships for minority youths, mentoring programs and support for community outreach and advocacy programs.

Despite Coca-Cola's assertion that the \$1 billion diversi-

ty initiative was not related to the lawsuit, activists in Atlanta saw a connection.

"Certainly it's an attempt to address the lawsuit," said the Rev. Timothy McDonald, president of Concerned Black Clergy. "But I'm absolutely thrilled. What Coke is doing, I hope other corporations will heed and follow.

"You would be hard-pressed to find any corporation that has done more for the black community (than Coke)," McDonald said, but he added that the company has an obligation not to discriminate against its black employees.

Cyrus Mehri, the lawyer for the plaintiffs in the discrimination suit, said the announcement confronts only external issues of diversity.

"It will largely be for

naught unless the internal issues of discriminatory treatment of African-Americans is addressed," Mehri said.

In a separate announcement Tuesday, Coca-Cola said it will invest \$200 million to expand its business in South Africa as part of a \$1 billion investment in Africa over the next three years.

The investment in South Africa will be used to build bottling and canning plants and production lines and to launch new soft-drink brands.

"We believe this will significantly increase local economic value, local revenues, local jobs and other local opportunities," Chairman Douglas Daft said Tuesday after a meeting with South African President Thabo Mbeki.

Men arrested for 1963 church bombing

Former KKK members turn themselves in

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Two former Ku Klux Klansmen were arrested on murder charges Wednesday in the 1963 Birmingham church bombing that killed four black girls on a Sunday morning — a crime that shocked the nation and galvanized the civil rights movement.

Thomas E. Blanton Jr. of Birmingham, who is in his early 60s, and Bobby Frank Cherry, 69, of Mabank, Texas, surrendered on the state charges and were jailed without bail. If convicted, they could get life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Prosecutors have long suspected that Blanton and Cherry plotted with former Klansman Robert Edward Chambliss to bomb the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Chambliss was convicted in 1977 and died in prison in 1985. A fourth suspect, Herman Cash, was never charged; he, too, is dead.

U.S. Attorney Doug Jones would not say what led to the break in the case after 37 years.

But over the past year, estranged family members of Cherry have said publicly that he talked of helping plant the dynamite.

The blast was one of the most shocking crimes of the civil rights era and came just months after police in Birmingham used dogs and firehoses to drive back black marchers.

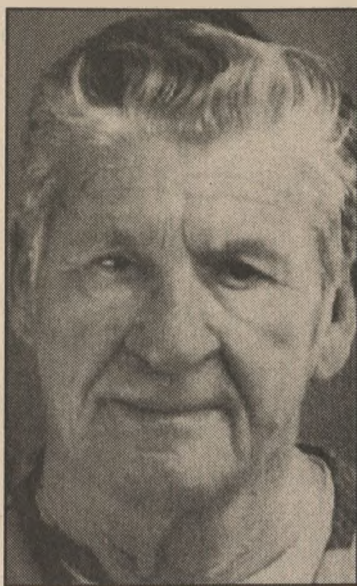
The Sept. 15, 1963, blast demolished an outside wall of the church and killed four girls who were in a basement restroom, preparing for a youth program: 11-year-old Denise McNair and three 14-year-olds: Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Addie Mae Collins.

The indictment marked the latest in a series of 1960s racial crimes in the South that are being brought for prosecution decades later.

In 1994, Byron de la Beckwith was convicted in the 1963 assassination in Jackson, Miss., of NAACP organizer Medgar Evers.

In 1998, former KKK leader Samuel H. Bowers, 73, was found guilty in the 1966 firebomb death of Mississippi civil rights activist Vernon Dahmer.

"No one should stop until the people who are responsible



Associated Press

FORMER KLANSMAN: Bobby Frank Cherry, in this May 17 Jefferson County Sheriff's Department photo, is charged with eight counts of murder, two counts covering each of the four girls who died in a church fire 37 years ago.

are brought to justice," Attorney General Janet Reno said in Washington.

Blanton and Cherry for years have denied any role in the Birmingham bombing.

Mickey Johnson, Cherry's lawyer, said his client is in ill health.

"He wants the world to know his story, and he thinks he'll be vindicated," said Johnson.

Janet Reno
Attorney General

Blanton and Cherry were charged with eight counts of murder each — two counts covering each of the four slain girls. One count was for intentional murder and the other involved "universal malice" because the bomb was placed where it could have killed any number of people.

Jones said the evidence lent itself better to state charges than to federal ones. He said the capital murder statute on the books in 1963 could not be used because it was replaced in the mid-1970s after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down capital punishment. Stanley Wilson, 39, a black man who works for a staffing services company, said it was unfair that whoever bombed the church had remained free for decades.

"They should have taken care of this a long time ago," he said.

But a white resident, Stan Leo, who was 16 when the church was bombed, questioned the point of pursuing the case.

A separate peace

By Dean Poling
The Valdosta Daily Times

VALDOSTA

As a prisoner of war in the Nazi-controlled stalags of World War II, black Army pilot Carrol S. Woods was integrated for the first time with white U.S. soldiers.

"No one ever minded," Woods says. "There was myself and a guy from another squadron, and we were housed with white soldiers in a barracks of German Stalag 3. We all bunked side by side. There was no segregation of any kind there. The Nazis were tough on everybody with a lack of food, hot showers and just not knowing what was going to happen."

After Gen. George S. Patton's forces liberated the U.S. POWs, Woods returned to the America and the segregation of blacks and whites.

"As soon as we got off the boat in New York, segregation hit me again," Woods says, "that was when we were separated."

"But I didn't really think much about it then. I didn't expect things to change here. I was just happy to be back home, safe, and looked forward to seeing my family and things."

Coming home

Woods grew up in Valdosta before serving with the now revered Tuskegee Airmen — the U.S. Army's first group of black

fighter pilots commissioned in World War II. And though his reception was anything but a hero's welcome after the war, one Valdosta man is now trying to honor Woods.

The Rev. Willie Wade, Valdosta, plans to build a monument to Woods.

"We had hoped to do this this weekend for Memorial Day," Wade says, referring to memorial service for veterans, 11 a.m. today, Sunset Hill Cemetery. "But he couldn't make it."

Woods, who is now 80, a retired Air Force major, living in Montgomery, Ala., says "I was surprised and elated to hear about it. It's a little embarrassing because so many people gave so much, but it is very nice of them to think of me."

He plans to visit Valdosta later this year.

Activists of the air

Before Jackie Robinson broke the race barrier in major league baseball, before Rosa Parks refused to sit at the back of the bus, before Dr. Martin Luther King spoke of his dream, there were the Tuskegee Airmen, but few people realized their contribution to the civil rights movement until the past decade.

During World War II, the air divisions of the U.S. military were under the Army's command. There was no Air Force branch of the military.

The Airmen were the first black Americans placed in U.S. war planes and trained to fly missions over war-torn Europe. The Airmen were an experiment — one many Army officials believed would fail.

"This was the beginning of the civil rights struggle," Woods says. "The NAACP and many others worked for the opportunity for black soldiers to fly."

Woods realizes this now but, at the time, he was a farm kid in his early 20s, the tenth child from a South Georgia family of

12 children, who was suddenly learning how to fly and preparing to fight a war.

"I was elated to be flying," he says. "It was like a dream almost."

As for the historical importance of his training and mission, Woods says "from my own personal experience, I didn't realize the the importance of it. I could have taken more photographs or wrote down my thoughts, but I didn't. Now, it's too late. An opportunity lost."

For many years, the pioneering contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen were lost.

Then about 10 years ago, Hollywood made the movie "The Tuskegee Airmen," and many people took notice.

"After the movie, recognition really took off," Woods says. "Since that time, there has been a lot of recognition and tremendous recognition from the military."

Like any Hollywood version of history, Woods says, there are inaccuracies and the broad use of dramatic license, but many of the struggles of the squadron are on the mark.

The Tuskegee Airmen, members of the Red Tails of 332nd Fighter Group, were assigned to escort bombers. The airmen flew alongside the massive airships as the bombers traveled to drop their payload, then return to base. Here's one fact the movie got right: The 332nd Fighter Group, the men of Tuskegee, never lost an escorted bomber to enemy planes.

Prisoner of freedom

Woods flew 107 combat missions over Europe. "It was the same thing every mission," he says. "You visualize that this might be your last mission. Not getting hit for as long as I did was a miracle."

Over Athens, Greece, Woods' plane was hit by enemy fire. "All of a sudden, there was an explosion under my plane," Woods says. He got out of the falling plane and opened his parachute.

"I remember I hollered a couple of times before I hit the ground." Pulling the chute behind him, Woods hid in an abandoned house. "I was there about 20 minutes before the Germans found me. A guy with a machine gun," Woods says.

The enemy put Woods against a wall. He saw 10 men with machine guns facing him. "I thought of all those movies where someone was facing a firing squad," he says.

"Then a German walked up to me and asked in English, with almost a Brooklyn accent, if I was hurt. All I had was a

sprained ankle, and they took me away."

After interrogation, Woods was on a prisoner train three weeks later for the German stalag.

Living in America

After liberation and the war, Woods stayed in the military. During the peace of the late '40s, he was taken out of a plane and assigned to military food services and maintenance.

The military, however, was slowly moving toward integration — yet it was making this move much faster than most civilian pockets of America. Woods was promoted to positions of command.

By the time of American military involvement in Korea, Woods was back in a plane, fighting for his country again.

"There were some higher-ranking, white officers who had a problem with race," Woods says, "but there were many who did not. It depended on who the person was as to how you were treated."

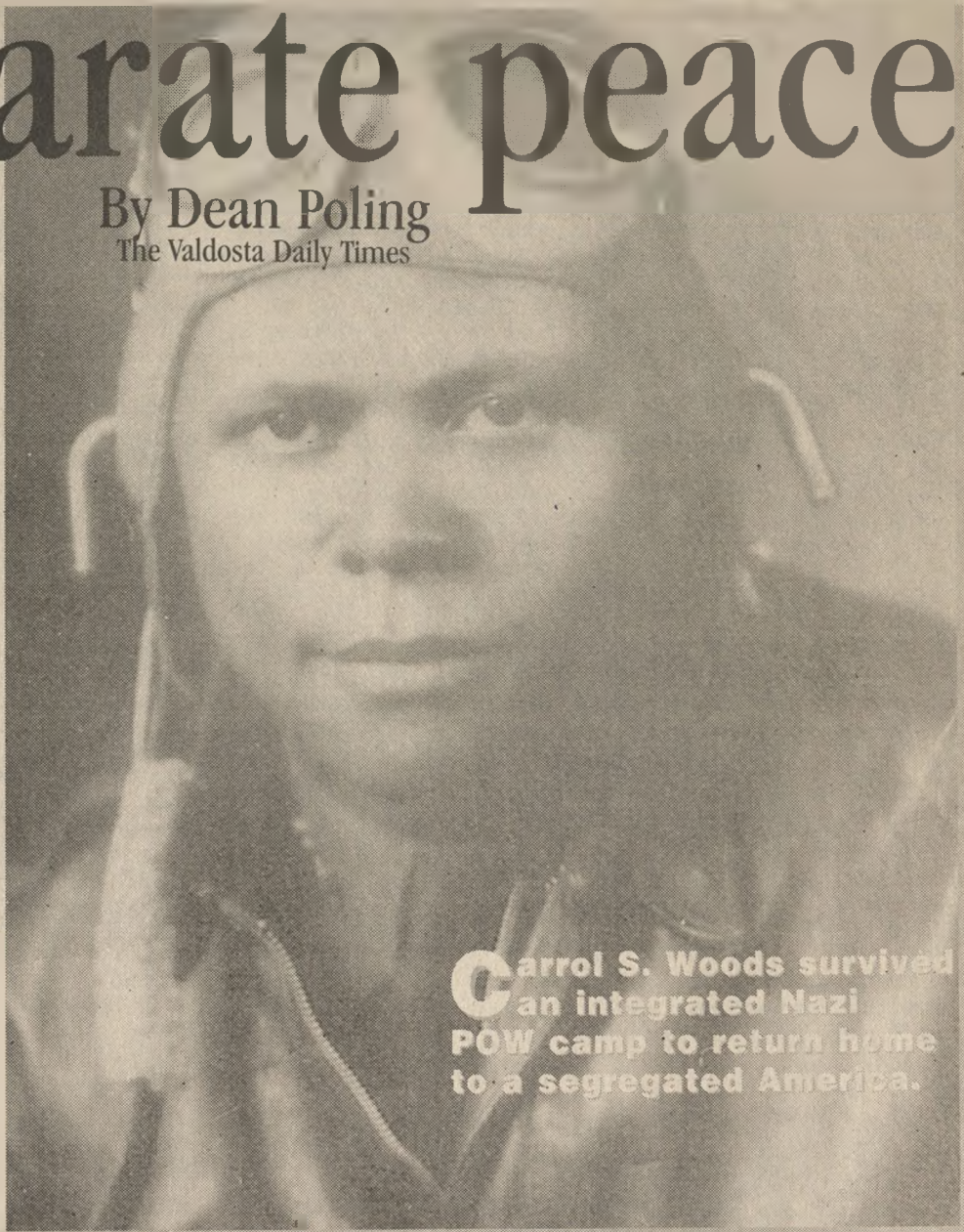
While integration was improving in the military, the rest of the world was another matter. Woods says he often wore his uniform, even when on leave, in the hopes of getting a fair break.

While stationed in Washington D.C., Wood's mother fell ill in Valdosta. "I remember driving down from D.C., with my wife and kids," he says. "We couldn't find a place to stay on the way down. A couple of places would let us slip in the back door to eat. I remember stopping at a filling station and I asked them if there was any place we could stay near by. They pointed us to this

place, which was run-down, dirty, bug-infested, but we stayed there for the night."

In 1961, with 30 years of service,

Woods retired from the Air Force as a major. He still periodically visits his native Valdosta, laughing that "it's almost civilized now," compared to the days of segregation. Woods says he believes the U.S. is a much more civilized place than it once was for black Americans. "It seems kind of ridiculous now," he says of segregation, "but that's the way it was then."



Carrol S. Woods survived an integrated Nazi POW camp to return home to a segregated America.

Before Jackie Robinson broke the race barrier in major league baseball, before Rosa Parks refused to sit at the back of the bus, before Dr. Martin Luther King spoke of his dream, there were the Tuskegee Airmen.

"This was the beginning of the civil rights struggle. The NAACP and many others worked for the opportunity for black soldiers to fly."

Border War

Five area football players selected for annual Georgia-Florida game ... **SPORTS, 1**

THE VALI

Tuesday, May 30, 2000

INSIDE TUESDAY

While not a major crop for Lowndes County, farmers still planted 700 acres of wheat last year, harvesting 250 acres for grain, according to the Georgia Agricultural Statistics Service. Find out more interesting facts about Lowndes County and its residents at:

www.sgaonline.com

FIRST PERSON



Amanda Bristol loves working with children. She's a recent college

BRISTOL graduate looking for a teaching job. Learn more about her in **First Person, Page 2A.**

COMMUNITY CHAMPION

Lena Bosch helps preserve local access to the arts through the Cultural Arts Guild. Find out more about her in **Local Log, Page 14A**



BOSCH

INSIDE

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Horoscopes	5B

Paying

Memorial Day observances held at Sunset Hill Cemetery

By **T.S. Rose**
tod.rose@thomnews.com

VALDOSTA

Veterans and descendants of veterans of past wars attended the Memorial Day ceremonies at Sunset Hill Cemetery Monday morning to remember fallen comrades and reflect on the notion that "Freedom isn't free."

Congressman Sanford Bishop was in attendance for the ceremonies in honor of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

"We as Americans must pause and remember those who died to ensure that we have a secure representative democracy," said Bishop. "Those men came from all walks of life and were different in many ways ... but they shared one thing, loved ones who hoped for their safe return ... they answered the call of duty and they all died too young."

Bishop said that more than 2 million Americans have died in conflicts to protect our way of life. Of those, more than 100,000 were missing in action.

"America is summoned to greatness in the 21st century and their sacrifice proves that freedom is not free," Bishop said.

A poignant silence fell over the crowd as veterans adorned in their service caps stood and gave an eternal salute while a bugler played "Taps" in honor of America's fallen and surviv-

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www.sgaonline.com

IN FOCUS TODAY

Paying their respects

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By T.S. Rose
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"America is summoned to greatness in the 21st century and their sacrifice proves that freedom is not free," Bishop said.

A poignant silence fell over the crowd as veterans adorned in their service caps stood and gave an eternal salute while a bugler played "Taps" in honor of America's fallen and surviving heroes. Moody Air Force Base's Honor Guard offered a 21-gun salute immediately afterwards to complete the rendering of a profound memorial.



Paul Leavy/The Valdosta Daily Times

REMEMBERING HEROES: Guest speaker Congressman Sanford Bishop addresses the veterans and guest at the Memorial Day 2000 observance ceremony held at Sunset Cemetery in Valdosta Monday morning.

Vietnam veteran Calvin Graham said to him, Memorial Day brings with it memories of survival in adverse conditions along with reflections of more than a dozen other young men from Valdosta that fought with him.

"This is a great day," said Graham. "I served for 24 years and received two purple hearts while in Vietnam ... this day brings Vietnam back to me and the 19 veterans that died from Valdosta ... most of them I knew ... we returned one guy

named Sermons and buried him at home," Graham said.

He said that in Vietnam, there were days when he didn't know if he would be alive from one second to the next or if he would have a meal to eat. He said there is something about those 19 soldiers from Valdosta that is close to his heart.

For many, this Memorial Day was not only a day to remember war veterans, but a day to remember the thousands of slaves that died in making America what it is. Another

memorial service followed in the cemetery at 11 a.m.

Voices resounded in song throughout Sunset Hill Cemetery following the Honor Guard Salute as WWII veterans and the many slaves that died in Georgia were remembered at the Unknown Slave Monument.

"The black tile was imported from South Africa and symbolizes the slaves that were brought here against their will," said Fred Penleton, de-