

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 1992

FARMINGTON
NOTES

Drivers beware!

There were three deer/car smashups in Farmington Hills during a recent week, and police are warning drivers to keep their eyes open. "A deer is the last thing people expect in an area like Farmington Hills," said Sgt. Ray Cranston of the police department's Traffic Safety Bureau, "but they're here just the same."

Deer are most active around sunset and sunrise, Cranston said. Most deer are hit along I-696 and in the 12 Mile/Hogarty area.

There were no injuries in the recent accidents, Cranston said, "but there was extensive car damage."

He's an agent

Paul J. Messier, a Farmington Hills resident and an active member of the local Chamber of Commerce, has been appointed an agent for The Equitable — Hobley Agency in Troy.

His formal education includes a bachelor's degree in accounting from Ohio State University and an MBA in finance from Eastern Michigan University. Messier serves on the chamber's Ambassadors Committee and is a member of the Farmington Jaycees.

On the board

Brian M. Connolly, a Farmington Hills resident and president and chief executive officer of Providence Hospital and Medical Centers, has been elected to the Michigan Hospital Association Corporate Board for a one-year term.

The MHA, based in Lansing, is a trade association representing about 200 hospitals.

Prior to joining Providence in 1984 as executive vice president and CEO, Connolly, a Birmingham native, was assistant vice president of operations for Oakwood Hospital in Dearborn and regional director of Health Management Advisors, an Ann Arbor consulting firm.

He has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Western Michigan University and a master's degree in public health from the University of Michigan.

Farmington's Richard Wolff, a retired artist and architect, can show you what it was like on Guadalcanal and in other parts of the Pacific Theater in World War II. He produced hundreds of drawings depicting the lot of fighting men there.

BY TOM BAER
STAFF WRITER

Like most World War II veterans, longtime Farmington resident Richard Wolff has his share of war memories.

But Wolff doesn't have to rely on memory alone to recall visions of the combat he endured — and survived — as a machine gunner in the 1st Marine Division that stormed the beach at Guadalcanal in the South Pacific 50 years ago tomorrow.

He has his drawings, hundreds and hundreds of them, to help him remember.

Wolff was a budding artist with a diploma from Cass Tech when, swept up in the patriotic fever that followed Pearl Harbor, he joined the Marines in March of 1942.

Wherever his war service took him — to the foxholes of Guadalcanal to other Pacific islands to the very shores of the empire of Japan — Wolff's soldier's kit usually included sketch pads and pencils and charcoal.

"It (the artwork) was the only thing that kept me going," said Wolff, who was one of the first U.S. troops to land on Japan in September of 1945.

He drew the war as he saw it. And now the black-and-white images of dog-face Marines slogging through the rain,



SHARON LE MERE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

War remembrance: Richard Wolff of Farmington shows off a drawing he produced while a U.S. Marine in the Pacific Theater of World War II.

or soldiers at an outdoor movie, or the conquered Japanese, are closeted away in his house on Leelanau.

Wolff, now 71 and a retired architect and artist, seldom looks at those drawings. He took a few out last week, though, and thought about Guadalcanal and some of the bloodiest and most difficult fighting of the war.

Of the 37,400 combatants killed in the battle, four of five were Japanese. Wolff himself wasn't wounded, al-

though he came down with malaria, which still bothers him today.

"There was fear, but when you saw so many dead bodies around, you became used to it," he said. "A lot of it was just sheer boredom . . . waiting in chow lines . . . and it was hot and I've never seen so many insects, lizards and bats."

And what did his buddies think of the man in the foxhole with the sketch pad next to his rifle?

"Well, a lot of them were professional

soldiers. They could take down a gun and put it back together with their eyes closed. To them, I was a man from another planet."

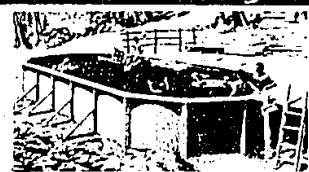
"They liked my work, though. They'd want me to draw them so they could send it home. Sometimes there were problems with the censor."

Some Pacific war vets still have bad feelings toward the Japanese, but Wolff

See DRAWINGS, 13A

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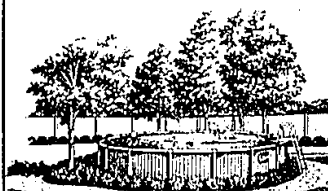
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