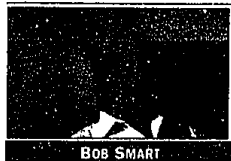


CHAT ROOM



BOB SMART

Just 16, war was a way to see the world

I was born on Feb. 18, 1935. All through my childhood, I heard about the war (WWII), so you might say I was oriented. When the Korean War broke out June 25, 1950, our government called it a "police action." But to the men and women who were there, it was a war.

Consider: killed in action 54,236; wounded, 103,284; and missing in action, 8,177.

This is a part of my life. I was having problems at home and at school. When my older brother, Fred, joined the Marines, I decided to join the Army. I sent away for his birth certificate; when I received it, I went to get a draft card also in my brother Fred's name.



I told my family I signed up with the Merchant Marines and I left. We were living in the projects (Fort Wayne) at the time. It was easy for me to leave the projects, a big family, high school and the few friends I had had. After all, I was 16 years old now, having my birthday just a month before I joined the Army.

Training in Hawaii
I took my basic training at Seefield Barracks, Hawaii, along with 28,000 others. We were trained for Korea. We went to California (Camp Stinson) and from there to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. We pulled into Pearl Harbor and saw the U.S.S. Arizona sitting in the water. There was no monument then. You could have heard a pin drop, it was so quiet. Some of us saluted and some of us prayed. Off to my left, I saw the Oklahoma and the Utah sticking out of the water with oil trickling out the hull. No one mentioned them, just Arizona. I couldn't believe I was in Hawaii, so many miles from home. It felt great.

When I got my first leave I walked the beaches in Waikiki. What more could a 16-year-old boy from Detroit ask for? I was in tropical paradise! I had my own bed, shoes, clothes and money coming in every month. This was my escape from problems at home and school. I loved it. The hardest part of it all was getting used to being called Frederick Smart. I wrote my family and told them what I had done. I told them not to try to get me out and this was what I wanted to do. My father said, "If that's what he wants to do, leave him alone."

My mother wrote to the President of the United States to get me some leave for a home visit. Of course, I couldn't and I didn't want to go. I still have that letter she wrote.

Boot camp was supposed to be for 14 weeks, but a weapon blew up in my face. I was there for an additional six weeks. While I was in boot camp, I met a Hawaiian family. I had many meals there and learned a lot of their culture. We had a lasting relationship up until their death 15 years ago.

Shipping out

In August 1951 we shipped out. The ship was filled with Canadian soldiers and years later I would find out that my wife's brother-in-law was on that same ship. Our first stop was Yokohama Bay and then onto Camp Drake for inoculation and orientation. Three days later, we were on our way. Incheon, Yong Do Po, We Jonbu, Kimbo, and then onto the Choswon Valley. We stayed on a hill for four months.

I was in the 1st Cavalry Division until Dec. 2, 1951. The division went back to Japan and left 81 men sitting on that hill waiting for the 45th Division to arrive. I stayed on the front lines until January 1952 when I got

Please See CHAT ROOM, B1

School lunch

Production goes high tech with new district kitchen

Farmington Schools has a new kitchen to prepare the thousands of meals served to students each day.

BY JOANNE PORRETTA
SPECIAL WRITER



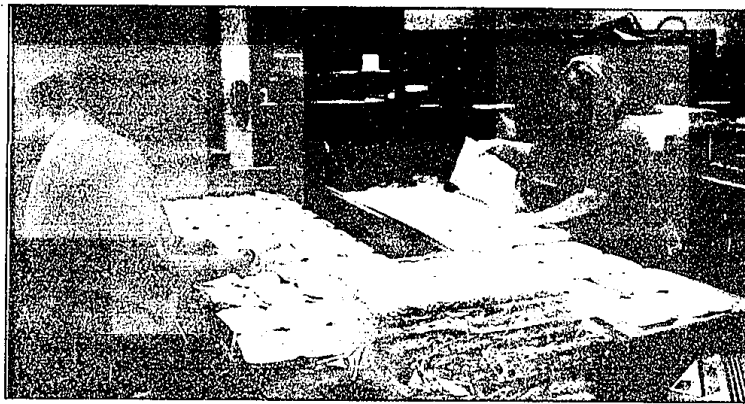
Walking into the new central kitchen for Farmington Schools, one first notices the shine. Gleaming chrome kettles, stoves and refrigerators line the walls of the one-month-old facility. The floors are spotless and the storage rooms neatly organized. Every piece of equipment is up to code.

Previously housed at Lanigan Elementary, the district's central kitchen has recently moved to a newly built wing attached to East Middle School. The change has provided a slightly larger kitchen, but more importantly, the opportunity to upgrade equipment and bring the entire facility up to code.

"This whole wing is new. It's beautiful and we're thrilled," said Mary Rodriguez, nutrition services supervisor. "The Lanigan kitchen had been around for a while. Some of the equipment wasn't up to code, because codes change all the time. We have a beautiful new kitchen. It's just wonderful."

Smooth transition

Rodriguez has been with the Farmington District Nutrition Services since November 1998 as assistant supervisor. She was recently named supervisor in February and is enjoying the added element of a brand new kitchen in which to begin her new position.



Prep work: Linda Bergstrom and Teresa Ellis prepare many lunches. Below, pizza production.

and has been especially pleased with the smooth transition from the old to the new.

Executive director of school and student services Dr. James Myers echoes her enthusiasm with his comments: "It will cover the operations more efficiently ... and will serve our student population quicker and better. It's where we've really wanted to be for a long time."

Serving 14 Farmington and Farm-

ington Hills Elementary Schools, two pre-schools and one nursery, the five food preparation workers at central kitchen prepare a staggering 3,000 meals daily for the next day's school lunch. The lunches are prepared in the kitchen's four ovens or simmered in two 10-gallon kettles, then assembled in trays and wrapped individually. Although every school in Farmington

Please See KITCHEN, B2



CENTRAL Kitchen SCHEDULE



7 A.M.

Head cook begins day by baking several thousand cookies.

8 to 11 A.M.

3,000 preschool, nursery, elementary school lunches prepared. Drivers deliver to schools.

11 to 1 P.M.

Food prep for next day continues. Meals stored overnight in cooler.

Dozen contestants learn pageant ropes

BY MARY RODRIGUEZ

STAFF WRITER
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An even dozen contestants will compete for the title of Miss Farmington/Oakland County 2000 as the pageant, in its 27th year, moves to a new day and location this year.

"Cruising the Grand 2000" is the theme and the Civic Theatre in downtown Farmington will for the first time play host to the contest at 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 21. It will be the kick-off event for the Farmington Family Fun Fest - formerly known as the Founder's Day Festival.

The contestants convened at the Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills Saturday afternoon for orientation. Lunch was provided by Papa John's Pizza in downtown Farmington. Franchise owner Adrian Owens also provided gold pens for the eight pageant judges as well as coffee mugs for each contestant.

"It's the little things like that (business support) which takes time to build up," said Ginny Morris, longtime pageant executive director.

Jennifer Parks, a former Miss Kansas, kicked off the formal presentation with a short video produced by the Miss America Organization. The Miss Farmington pageant is affiliated with Miss Michigan and Miss America scholarship pageants. Parks, who relocated to Michigan earlier this year, has joined the board of directors of the local pageant.

Each contestant collected a packet spelling out the requirements they'll have to meet over the next three months. That includes identifying a social platform, providing talent information, garnering local sponsors and showing up for a half dozen mandatory practice sessions before the main event.

A job without pay

"Consider Miss Farmington a job without pay," Morris told the contestants. "But the experiences you have will more than make up for that."



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRENNAN

She told the contestants that Leslie Reinbold, the reigning Miss Farmington, recently spoke before the House of Representatives in Lansing on her platform issue, eating disorders. Plans are under way through the office of U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg for Reinbold to address Congress in Washington D.C. in April.

The orientation video explained that what began as a bathing beauty contest in 1921 has grown into an opportunity for college women to receive up to \$32 million in scholarship monies (amount available to contestants last year at the local, state and national levels) and is now advancing into the community service area. There are over 1,000 local programs across the country. Parks noted that it is the largest scholarship program available to women.

"It's not just the person wearing the crown who wins," she said. "Contes-

Orientation: Left, Jennifer Parks, a member of the pageant executive board, spells out some of the rules contestants need to know for the Miss Farmington/Oakland Scholarship Pageant in June. Below, Francesca Romero, a repeat contestant for the crown, listens to the advice. The pageant theme this year is "Cruising the Grand 2000."



Please See FARMING, B2