Shot down

Former Tuskegee airman shares his story at Cloverdale

Shot down over enemy territory in Germany, retired U. S. Air Force Lt. Col. Alexander Jefferson, a combat pilot, vividly remembers both World War II

son, a comoat pitot, vividiy remembers both World War II and his return to civilian life.

Jofferson, 80, and a Detroit resident will speak at a 1 p.m.

Jan. 21 Peace Pole dedication at Cloverdale Developmental Center, 33000 Freedom Road, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

He was among about 1,000 pilots who received their wings at the Tuskegee Institute and the Tuskegee Army Airfield in Alabama and received the Purple Heart just last year. In January 1944, he graduated from flight school. Jefferson's P-81

Mustang with a single seat and a 1,500 horsepower engine was considered a Porsche. The P-51 could accompany bombers all the way to Berlin and back.
On August 12, 1944, Jefferson was shot down over Germany while firing at radar stations close to the ground, under heavy fire from troops below.
"I got hit 50 feet off the ground," he said.
Fellow pilots saw his plane go down, but didn't see Jefferson bail out. So, at first. they thought he was dead.
"They sent a KIA (Killed in Action) telegram back to my mother and father," he said.
His parents learned three months later that he was still alive." My mother's hair went white," Jefferson said.
Jefferson's parachute didn't



Guest speaker:

Alexander Jefferson is a Tuskegee Airman and former German prisoner

open until he reached the trees, so he had scratches, bruises and

contusions.

He remained in a German prisoner of war camp for nine months, where, he said, "I was REMODELING

treated like an officer and a gen-tleman. I was treated better in Germany than I was in Missis-

dermany than I was in Mississippi."
Jefferson explained that Germany and the United States had
signed an agreement at the
Geneva Convention regarding
treatment of prisoners of war.
"They knew more about me
than I knew about myedif," Jefferson said. "The Germans knew
everything, had all my grades,
oven knew how much taxes my
father paid on his Detroit house
at 28th and Michigan and his
social security number. I didn't
even know that. They knew
more about me than I knew

gence."
When Jefferson flew, he protected the bombers, who blew up trains, barges on the Danube River and trucks. Unfortunately, as a prisoner, he suffered when those supply lines were disrupted

ed. mithat's the reason why we did-"That's the reason why we did-nit have enough food," Jefferson said. "I sat the war out inside barbed wire, reading and knit-ting socks. The only thing lack-ing was food."

When the war ended, he came back home to the "same old, same old," forced to sit in the back of the bus and drink from separate water fountains. Jefferson also believes he and his wife, Adella, experienced "red-lining," a term used to describe discrimination in housing, home loans or insurance.

The couple had \$5,000 in 1949 but couldn't get a mortgage to buy an \$6,000 house at Outer Drive and Ryan.

"It's in the mortgage and the deed," Jefferson said. "It showed you the redlining and the discrimination between banks, lending institutions and real estate dealers."

The couple found a vacant lot on which to build. When Jefferson began teaching school, he got a loan through the Detroit Teachers Credit Union. At Duffield Elementary at Clinton and Chene, he taught elementary science.

"As a black teacher in 1948, they could only place me in one of five schools," Jefferson said.

In 1954, he was sent to Pattengill Elementary, at Joy Road

of five schools, Jefferson said.

In 1954, he was sent to Pattengili Elementary, at Joy Road and Maplewood. Jefferson fin-

ished his career as an assistant principal at Ferry Elementary at Palmer and Chene. Over the years, he has experienced great sadness. His wife died in 1970 and daughter Alexis died from complications of anorexia in 1996 at age 47.

But he has never forgotten his years in the service or his ties to friends and comrades. Jefferson belongs to the Detroit Chapter of Tuskegee Airman which has 120 members, one of more than 40 chapters in the United States.

Jefferson also shares his experiences as a public speaker all year long, except for February when he heads to Hawaii.

He tells young people to value their freedoms, providing a sample of what he says to them during his speeches:

"You have freedom of speech, freedom of worship, all these freedoms. Yet you sit here fat, dumb and stupid, degrading your women with this Rap. Wake up. I've been to Africa, and I'm not going back. I was so glad to get back here. Read, read. Take advantage of this wonderful land we live in. God bless America.

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Chinese buffet awaits approval

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM STAFF WRITER hneedham@oc.homecomm.

A new Chinese buffet restaurant is awaiting final city approvals and will tentatively be open within a couple weeks.

Rong Rong Buffet, 28333 Grand River, will specialize in Szechuan, Hunan, Cantonese and Chinese cuisine, as well as fresh seafood, said owner Rong Ltu, a Chin native. Liu spoke through interpreter Joe Huang.

The rostaurant's tentative hours of operation will be 1 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. A full menu will be available in addition to the buffet, and carry out and catering services will be

tion to the buffet, and carry out and catering services will available, too. A 33-tem daily lunch special menu will include such favoritee as Kung Pachicken, General Tao's chicken and chow mein, chop sucy, and sweet and sour dishes made with a variety of seafeod and meats.

Lunch buffet prices will range from \$4.25 for children under 12 to \$225 for adults, and will be served until 3 p.m. Monday through Saturday, Dinner buffet prices will range from \$6.30 for children under 12 to \$9.96 for



STATE PHOTO BY BILL BRESLES Ready for business: The Heady for business: The signs are up at Rong Rong Chinese Buffet, located on Grand River in the former Blakeney's Restaurant. Owners are waiting for official approvals to open.

adults, and will be served from 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 4:30 p.m.

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resticatly reduces the efficiency of steam & hot restilators and wood enclosures are poor heat

to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturdays. On Sundays, all-day dinner buffets will run \$7.50 for chil-dren under 12 to \$10.99 for adults.

Liu has worked in the restau-rant business since coming to the United States nine years ago. Most recently, he worked as a chef, and he plans to supervise the cooking at Rong Rong. "So far, this is the first one," he said, adding that he may open another restaurant if Rong Rong goes well. Liu hails from the Fu Keng province in Southeast China, and his wife and children still live there. Liu has worked in the restau

and his wife and children still live there.

Rong Rong is opening in a building previously occupied by Blakeney's, which closed a coupley occurs ago.

Hills City Manager "Stave"
Brock said the city gets calls periodically from people interested in opening new businesses and attempts to match the people as best as it can with property. In this case, the former Blakeney's spet turned out to be a good match for Rong Rong.

"I think its great," Brock said.

"I wish them well — and plan to stop in, too."



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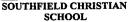








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