



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### LUTHER HAVEN RESIDENTS HONOR THEIR VETS IN A VETERAN'S DAY CEREMONY

November 21, 2011 (Milwaukee, WI) – Luther Haven paid tribute to their veteran residents on Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup> with a Veteran's Day ceremony followed by an ice cream social. Veterans could put their memorabilia on display in the Rathskeller prior to the ceremony for fellow residents to observe during the ice cream social.

Residents Fred Harrington (Army) and Bill Raabe (Marines) gave the presentations of colors, while Gerry Biedenbender (Army) led residents in the pledge of allegiance. Pastor Seiltz began the ceremony with a prayer, and then Orval Hummitzsch (Navy) introduced Luther Haven's veterans. Luther Haven has three U.S. Air Force vets, one U.S. Marine Corps vet, 12 U.S. Army vets, seven U.S. Navy vets and five veterans who were recently called to their home in heaven were honored and remembered at the ceremony. George Haman spoke about his experience while serving in the U.S. Navy and Marian Biedenbender told the story of "Taps". David Erickson played "Taps" on his bugle and the Luther Haven choir sang "My Country 'Tis of Thee", "Battle Hymn of the Republic", "America the Beautiful" and "Let There Be Peace on Earth".

"One of the units I was attached to was 'hell on wheels'." Jay Rantanen, 76, said. "It was a tank unit, and they had tanks that were placed in Europe and especially Germany, so it was their job to go over there and make sure the equipment was in working order. The area I was in had a little tent that we worked in, so we made sure that the guys got their checks – checks that had to go back to their wives – every month. When that was taken care of, we got to take tours with German guides. Right after we got back from Germany that was when President Kennedy was shot in Dallas and we were stationed in Texas. I can still remember it. Nobody did anything that day. They just watched the television."

Jay has only been a resident at Luther Haven for two months. He completed a degree in accounting before being drafted and served four years in the Army. He had boot camp in Oklahoma where he learned how to shoot guns and cannons, then was assigned to do payroll for all divisions in a unit in Fort Hood, Texas.

"It was a chance to make a little money for school." Patrick McCarthy, 71, said. "It teaches you discipline and so forth, {like} you have to be in bed by a certain time. I'm very fortunate in that I was never in a situation that put my life in any danger." Patrick has been a resident at Luther Haven for four years. He was drafted in the Army and served two years as a rifle man. He took basic training in firing weapons and was paid well. He used the money to go to school to become a teacher.

"My outfit went into far Northern Korea with temperatures of 35 degrees and below." Bill Raabe, 81, said. "We were encircled by the Chinese and retreated towards the sea. We celebrated Christmas and fought our way back to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel where they had peace talk and then we went home. We brought back all of our equipment, wounded, injured and dead. That's what Marines do. The first time in, I was right out of high school and then in the reserves before Korea

so we all matured. A tank was five guys, and we didn't have camps, we just moved where we were needed. You're very close knit – you eat, sleep and everything together.”

Bill has been a resident at Luther Haven for nearly six years. He served in the Marines for six years and spent his boot camp in Paris Island, NC. He then went to Quantico, VA and then home for 90 days. He then went to Camp Del Mar, CA for training in landing ships, but was transferred to tanks because landing was over. He then served as a tank commander in Korea from 1950-1951.

The evening ended with an ice cream social, where all were able to enjoy the stories from the veterans, and also take the time to thank each one for their service to our country.

*WLCFS (Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service, Inc.) is a not-for-profit organization providing Christian Family Solutions to those in need through our senior wellness programs, independent and assisted living communities, certified Christian Family Counseling clinics and the online Member Assistance Program, bringing counseling and support groups to individuals and organizations across the country and around the world. WLCFS' mission is "Healing and helping people in need through the ministry of Jesus Christ" since 1965.*

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