



Page 14

GREEN HILLS NEWS



~~Neeley: Tennessee's unemployment recovery will take a lot of time~~

By James Nix
Staff Writer

While the bleeding of jobs has stopped, the state's labor commissioner said healing the wound of unemployment in Tennessee will be a slow process.

Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner James Neeley said a full recovery could hinge on the trickle-down effect initiated by a few major construction projects tentatively scheduled across the state.

September numbers, the latest to be reported, set the seasonally adjusted state unemployment rate at 10.5 percent down 0.2 percentage point



James G. Neeley

from August. 
"It looks like even with all of the positive factors that I see in the state about people going back to work and so forth, it's going to be a slow process," Neeley said.

"It's going to continue to be a drain on our unemployment trust fund, and we're probably going to see unemployment still in double figures all the way through the second quarter next year."

Neeley said some predictors indicate the

See Neeley on Page 10

Bravo Co. 'brothers' reunite, remember fallen comrades

By Sandy Campbell
Editor

It all began as a young man's attempt to better understand his favorite uncle's Vietnam war experience.

It eventually became one part of a larger project that has touched the lives of hundreds of people from all over the U.S. and has helped renew friendships interrupted as much as 40 years ago.

Steve Pipes was 8 years old in 1968 when he went with his family to take his uncle Keith Settles to the airport. Army Staff Sgt. Settles, of Gainesboro, Tenn., was leaving to join the 1st Cavalry Division in South Vietnam.

Upon his return the following year, he brought his nephew a replica 1st Cav uniform which Pipes treasured. He didn't, however, have much to say about his war experiences.

Settles enrolled at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville, graduated

Veterans Day 2009

and eventually started his own business selling cleaning chemicals for metal pretreatment in Clinton, Miss. He did pretty well and travelled a good deal, sometimes stopping to visit the Pipes family in Nashville.

In 1993 Pipes and his wife Deborah went to Mississippi to visit Settles and for the first time the veteran was willing to discuss Vietnam. He showed Pipes two albums of photographs and seemed to enjoy telling stories about the young men shown mugging for the camera back in the '60s.

"About half way through he went from being light-hearted to real serious," Pipes said. "It was almost as if he was getting angry. He started to tell me about some of the guys who had been lost in the battle of Angel's Wing."

See Veterans on Page 3



Patient readers stood in lines that wrapped around the halls of the Main Library waiting to hear a free public lecture from Pulitzer-Prize winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin. In photo at right, the author, left, is with Library Foundation Director Tari Hughes.

Photo by Sandy Campbell



~~Literary Award becoming major Nashville event~~

By Sandy Campbell
Editor

For what has become a major annual event for Nashville, the awarding of the Nashville Public Library Literary Award, an overflow crowd packed the Main Library Saturday morning to hear historian/author Doris Kearns Goodwin.

The free public lecture drew so many that the library had to open "overflow rooms" where those without tickets could watch Goodwin on a large screen.

While some 250 people saw

Goodwin live, another 400 or so wound up in the overflow rooms. Library Director Donna Nicely said the crowd speaks well for Nashville as a city of readers.

Although she discussed her personal working relationship with Lyndon Johnson and her earlier works, the bulk of her talk was about her latest book, "A Team of rivals: The political Genius of Abraham Lincoln."

She said Lincoln is "more relevant for us in terms of leadership wherever we are."

Goodwin told the audience

she faced a challenge in finding a new way to relate to Lincoln, a historical figure that has inspired more than a thousand books.

At first she said she thought it could be approached the same way she dealt with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, but soon learned that Mary Todd Lincoln was hardly the active and interesting partner that Mrs. Roosevelt had been.

When she settled on focusing on Lincoln's cabinet, she

See Goodwin on Page 9



Keith 'Big Howie' Settles in 1969

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Veterans ...

From Page One

Pipes said Settles told details about the battle. The direction from which they were attacked put half of the company in a crossfire. By orders of command, half of the company could only watch helplessly as the other half was overrun. They were unable to fire, without inflicting "friendly casualties." The battle took place on the Cambodian border overnight on a flat plain (technically, it was a rice patty) under bright moonlight. Half of the 112 U.S. soldiers were overwhelmed by a Division of North Vietnamese estimated, by official sources, to be 500 to 600 strong. The U.S. casualties were severe.

Pipes was glad his uncle was finally sharing some of his Vietnam story but didn't press him for many details. He looked forward to other conversations in the coming years.

But it wasn't to be. Big hearted, gregarious, Keith Settles died a few months later.

But Pipes wanted to know more about this horrific battle at Angel's Wing (so-called because of the shape of the Cambodian border at that point). But to his surprise, there seemed to be nothing written about the battle.

For about seven years Pipes periodically searched the Internet and various military books for information but had no luck. Then in 2001 he found two Internet "buddy listings" - people searching for veterans who had been in Settle's platoon. Pipes was ecstatic.

One of them refused to discuss the battle, and the other, Jerry Rohr of Raymond, Wash., said he didn't remember a "Keith Settles." (Later, Pipes would discover that his Uncle Keith, whose first name was Howard, was known as "Big

Howie" by his comrades and was indeed well remembered.)

But Rohr would eventually prove to be the source of much information. He had gone on Rest and Recuperation leave in Okinawa just before the battle so he wasn't there for the fighting, but in 2004 he had a book published that provided graphic details of the battle, put together from accounts of men who survived.

The book, "Lives on Hold," published by PublishAmerica in Baltimore, is a very well-written personal account of Rohr's attempt to deal with the live-changing experiences of war and the ironic loss of a son on the anniversary date, March 9, of the Angel's Wing battle.

Pipes, who is his family's historian, was able to retrieve the photo albums his uncle had shown him back in 1993. His late uncle's girlfriend had held onto them.

He decided that he needed to share the photos with members of his family, but also with the veterans and their families as well. He launched his Web site, www.penandsaber.com/1stCavB25 with those pictures, asking people to help identify those he could not.

Today his Web site is growing as 1st Cav vets have sent their own photos. He is in regular correspondence with vets all over the country. The site also contains a casualty report and after action reports that give official information about the events he had so much trouble confirming when he started out. Due to the work of Pipes and others, the roster has grown to include more than 450 men that served in Co.B, 2/5, from 1964 to 1972, when the company returned home. Since then, many of the men have rekindled long lost friendships, and have started having regular reunions. Pipes said "it has been beautiful to watch the healing and closure it has brought to these men."

Rohr first organized a pla-

Related story on Page 6

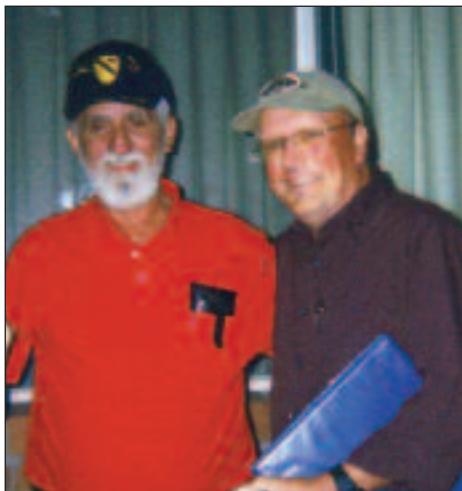
toon reunion for six veterans in 2002 in Sacramento. He held two more, in Denver in 2004 and in San Antonio in 2006. There were a total of three reunions in 2006, including one in Nashville, where Steve Pipes finally had the opportunity to meet some of the men who served with his uncle.



A member of Bravo Company took this photo of the landscape near Angel's Wing. The tree line in the distance is probably Cambodia from where the North Vietnamese came in force.



At left is Larry (Augie) Underwood of West Union, S.C. in 1969. At right a bearded Underwood is shown with Steve Pipes at the Nashville reunion in 2006.



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A vet's emotional Nashville weekend

By Joe Luster
Cincinnati, Ohio

One evening during late February or early March of 2006 I received a phone call wanting to know if this was Joe Luster who was B2/5 of the 1st Cav when they did the Cambodian invasion.

It was John Schmit from Iowa, my platoon medic who patched me up before the medic vac picked me up. I had not seen or talked to him since that day in Cambodia 36 years earlier. He had been contacted by Donnie Hill from Chattanooga, Tenn. Donnie had been in touch with Shorty (Russ McKinney) from Jackson, S.C.

After several phone calls between the four of us we started looking for more of our comrades. We set up a private Web site so we could have a central place to track our progress. We started talking about getting together as we were locating more guys.

About May we decided to get together in Nashville, Tenn., just after Labor Day.

(Although the four had only sought to find members of their platoon, they "did not know where to draw the line" and wound up including anyone who served in Bravo Company in

Vietnam.)

When September came we had 33 Bravo vets plus wives and friends collect in Nashville. It was the most emotional weekend I have spent in my life. It was every emotion I believe known to mankind felt that weekend. When we left I drove past Louisville, Ky., before my eyes were finally dry.

The following year I hosted a reunion here in Cincinnati with 54 guys plus family and friends. In 2008 we had a reunion just outside Chicago. This past September we got together again in Louisville. Each year our group becomes larger.

Next May on the weekend after Mother's Day our group is getting together in Chattanooga for the 40th anniversary of the Cambodian invasion.

Some of our comrades want nothing to do with us when we find them. We understand their feelings and just back away, but let them know we are here if they change their minds. ... We were a band of brothers four decades ago and still understand the bond combat veterans have. Our unit has seen more than its share of action in Vietnam. ... I am proud that in 1969 I went to Vietnam, not Woodstock or Canada.

Cooper votes yes to force Senate action

U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper was one of two Tennessee Democrats to vote for the House Health Care

bill Saturday, November 7. Prior to the vote Cooper sent out a press release explaining why he had decided to support the bill, which he termed "deeply flawed."

"My vote is not an endorsement of all the provisions of the bill because I find much of the bill to be deeply flawed," he wrote. "There is little chance that H.R. 3962 will become law due to the long legislative process.

"My reason for voting yes is to advance the cause of health care reform by forcing the Senate to act. Without passage of this House bill, the Senate could delay reform indefinitely. That would be the worst possible outcome because our current health-care system is not sustainable. Congress needs to pass good health legislation in the next few months for the good of the country.

"Passing legislation is a little like writing a term paper in school. The first draft is usually not very good. The second draft is better - H.R. 3962 is the second draft. The bill that the Senate will vote on will be the third draft, which I expect to show major improvement. The final draft will be written next month when the House and the Senate vote on the same bill."

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