

CODA



The Official Newsletter Of...

The United States Air Force Musicians' Alumni Association - Founded 1980

January, February, March

E-mail address: TheCoda2001@aol.com

Volume 22, Number 1

Reunion 2002 - Sacramento, California

Many Activities Planned

As the 2002 reunion draws closer, the reunion co-chairmen, Dick Bordy and Larry Lawrence, would like to let everyone in on some of the things that their committee has been planning. There may be some final adjustments, but here is what the schedule looks like at press time:

Wednesday, August 7

1:00 - 4:00 p.m. **Registration**

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. **Welcome Reception** (pay as you go) Meet new friends.

Thursday, August 8

9:00 a.m. **Gambler's Special** departs for Reno and Lake Tahoe. Tour price will be about \$17.00. (\$10.00 will be returned in cash and \$5.00 in food coupons) Return to hotel about 9:00 p.m.

Friday, August 9

Morning (Time TBA) **Golf** at Mather AFB. \$60.00 includes lunch, prizes, fees)

City Tour(s): (Time TBA) Points of interest are so close to our hotel that we may not need transportation

Saturday, August 10

10:00 a.m. **Reunion Critique**. Please bring your ideas and views with you.

Evening (Time TBA) **Farewell Banquet**. (Coat and tie for men, women in appropriate attire.)

The reunion dates are during the "**Hot August Nights**" celebration. This involves a vintage car convention that occupies part of the main strip of the city. Musical support for the reunion may be furnished by the Travis

AFB Band.

The Hyatt Regency Hotel will be the reunion headquarters and is located in downtown Sacramento. When making your reservations ask for USAFMAA rates at \$99.00 per night. (1-866-333-8880) or (1-800-233-1234).

Ground transportation from the airport to the hotel will cost approximately \$11.00. To make reservations for this service contact: <http://www.super-shuttle.com/htm/cities/smf.htm#Sample> or call 1-800-BlueVan (258-3826).

USAFMAA Officers to be elected! Nominating Committee Selected

Members of our Association have been asking about the process for the nomination of new officers and when will this process occur. By the time you read this edition of the CODA, you will have received the USAFMAA Directory of Membership. Included in the directory is a copy of the By-laws of the association. As outlined in Article 5, "Any member in good standing (paid-up dues) can volunteer to run for office by contacting any member of the nominating committee. The committee will prepare a slate of officers."

Unless there is only one nominee for each office, on June 1, 2002, the Secretary/Treasurer will mail a ballot to each member in good standing of the USAFMAA. Ballots will be returned to the Past-president by June 20th.

The Executive Committee has designated Dr. Harold L. Copenhaver the duties of the Past-president as defined in the By-laws.

Ballots will be counted and winners announced at the reunion on August 10, 2002.

Members of the Nominating Committee are as follows:

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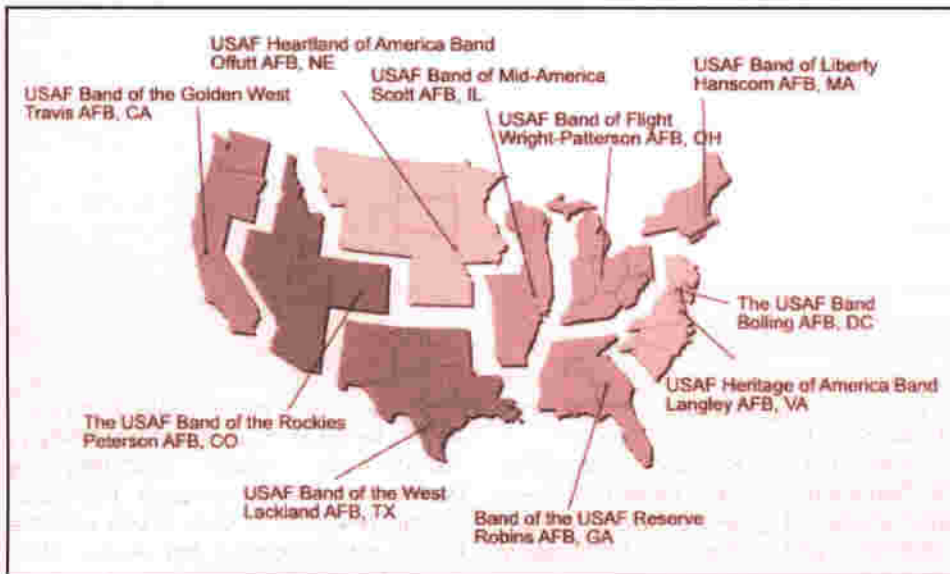
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**Will this be the last CODA
you receive?
It will be if you haven't paid your
2002 dues!**

Air Force Band Locations



I Remember...

by Dick Daugherty

+ Being approached by a Troop Commander just prior to a base parade. He said, "There are only two people that can screw up this parade - you and me." I agreed but didn't have the heart to tell him I had done dozens of base parades in my career. (We got through it.)

+ The SAC Band appearing in the Glenwood, MN Waterama upon several occasions. The crowd was extremely responsive when the Colors passed by! I have always regretted not writing the local paper in Glenwood to tell the citizens how impressive they were.

+ Being paid about \$80.00 per month and living in a small room with three other men. We each had a bunk, a footlocker, a small wall locker and a barracks bag. Eight men shared two open commodes and one small shower. (Not all at the same time!)

+ As a lowly CWO noting the deference accorded me when I inspected Air Force bands. I always had meetings with the base commander and often, with the commanding general. Being from the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force probably helped!

+ The 525th Band falling out to march to a Retreat Ceremony with no instruments; just combs and tissue paper. I called the bluff with "Bug Band Forward March!" The Band then pan-

icked and ran for their horns. I think **Harold Ray** was the instigator of that caper.

+ Singing in a barbershop quartet on television in Montgomery, Alabama. Luckily, we wore handlebar mustaches and straw hats and weren't recognized.

+ **Ivey Coburn** in the 604th Band at Maxwell. He, **Charles Vesely** and **Cedric Smith** were mainstays of the band and taught us young dudes a lot. Ivey was also a great softball player and a member of the base team.

+ The day I put in my retirement papers. I don't know what was expected but I thought that, someone would try to talk me into staying on. Actually, there was some weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. But that was **Arlene** wondering if we could make it in the real world!

+ Playing an Air Force ROTC Ball for Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. We were not allowed to compete with civilian musicians so a union band was paid to sit and listen. I always thought that was strange since civilian bands routinely played at clubs on military bases.

+ Being in England for only a few days when I needed transportation to get my family settled. The only solution was to rent a car. So, my first driving efforts in London required sitting in the right seat, using a stick shift with my left hand and driving on the left side of the road. That was almost as difficult

as learning to speak their language!

+ Seeing a matador gored in a bull ring in Madrid. He was tossed over the bull's horns several times and trampled. The Spanish band never missed a beat as he was carried to the small hospital under the stands. There was also a chapel there, just in case, so I guess he was covered either way.

+ Being assigned to Sewart AFB, Tennessee as an acting band director. My first official order was to declare rehearsals as a formation requiring a "Class A" uniform since that was the Band Program's policy at the time. It took me about fifteen minutes in a stifling rehearsal room without air conditioning to remind that order and we were shortly in fatigue uniforms. I also learned quickly to listen to the advice of people with local experience.

+ Being asked by the officials of the White City Tattoo in London to omit the second eight bars of the Star Spangled Banner to save a few seconds. I refused, of course, but did offer to do it in 3/4 time. They seemed satisfied!

Warren "Cookie" Cooke

Back in 1958, the AF Drum & Bugle Corps was on tour in Europe and spent 5 or 6 days at the World's Fair in Brussels, Belgium. Our job during the day was to march down the promenade through the Fair and end up at the American Pavilion. We were sort of Pied Pipers - especially the Bagpipe contingent. At other times we did our half time show routines. The evening entertainment was Benny Goodman's Band with his vocalist Ethyl Ennis from my hometown of Baltimore. Inside the pavilion, by a large pool with fountains was the Wiesbaden AF Band led by Arnold Gabriel. Ed Dougherty was our OIC.

The Disney Company had a circular theater which was in a separate building. As we exited the back door, we came face to face with Walt himself. We chatted for a few minutes and then our bass drummer, Jack McVaugh asked Mr. Disney to autograph the bass drum head. He did, with a flourish underneath. It was up by the rim and Jack was thrilled. He kept it covered, and upon request, he would show it to all.

Flashback!

by Carl Costenbader

Nearly 50 years ago, effective midnight on April 2, 1952, under special order #52, ten USAF Band sergeants were honorably discharged from the USAF to accept appointments as Warrant Officer Jr. Grade in the Air Force. The swearing in ceremony was on the next day at the USAF Band Studio at Bolling AFB where WOJG bars were pinned on and orders given to report to Lackland AFB for the Officer Basic Military Course on April 13 through June 7, 1952. Upon completion of 352 hours of instruction, each WOJG received a training certificate before reporting to his assigned AF Band.

In alphabetical order the OBMC graduates & new bandleaders were: Carl Costenbader, George Dietz, Edwin Dougherty, Fredrick Gillespie, Louis Kriebel, Joseph Lanzilloti, Harry Meuser, Patrick Veltre, Herman Vincent, and Douglas Williamson.

After departing Lackland, each WOJG has a story of his own first assignment as a bandleader and since I had the least distance to drive, across San Antonio to the 633rd AF Band at Randolph AFB, Texas, I can safely say I was the first WOJG on duty.

I drove my 1940 used Chevy club coupe from Bolling to Texas with my homemade folding motor scooter behind my seat. I originally designed it when I was single, to be strapped in the rear seat of a plane when flying. I had to bring the scooter with me because they wouldn't ship it with my household goods as a musical instrument! It would also be good insurance if my car broke down, and easily solve any car parking problems by parking even miles away, unfolding the scooter and driving it to my destination. After all it was averaging 100 miles on a gallon of gas!

I recall visiting Randolph before reporting to Lackland and made at least two other trips later. At the housing office, I was welcomed with open arms and in complete shock, I was told that I would be considered "key personnel" and as bandleader, General Davies wanted me in base housing. On one of my visits to the base, I was taken to inspect and sign for my house at 47 Outer Octagon. It was a huge Spanish style home with thick walls, 3 baths a screened breakfast nook and what looked like maids quarters. There were several pecan trees in the yard and I felt better when they showed my shared semi-

enclosed garage space, where I could "hide" my 1940 Chevy! The housing representative must have seen disbelief in my eyes and assured me only my housing allowance would be deducted from my pay. I quickly realized that as the lowest ranking officer in the VIP circle, I would be giving up a ridiculously small amount of money and of course, "All utilities included." I signed some papers, was handed the keys and pointed to a hand pushed lawn mower. Once outside, he showed me my mowing responsibilities.

Having just been married about 6 months, I don't recall phoning my wife Ruth to describe the quarters for I didn't have enough money to talk that long and she would have thought I was out drinking and/or hallucinating.

I remember one Saturday, while taking Ed Dougherty (my roommate in college and for whom I gave the eulogy several years ago) and another WOJG to show them my new living quarters. We had a beer party and some Colonel's wife living behind my quarters came out to the back yard gate when she heard us step on the pedal to open the lid of the underground trash can to dump in our empty beer cans. This did not appear to be a social call to welcome new neighbors, and learned later, she had a drinking problem.

Our meager household goods were delivered and in place while I was on "an individual P.E. training run" from OBMC Lackland to Randolph. I got more exercise unpacking household goods than driving golf balls! I could hardly wait for my wife to have a cozy dinner with me in the dining room, using the solid walnut table surrounded with 14 chairs and huge matching walnut buffet that I signed for, furnished with the quarters.

I picked up my wife Ruth at the San Antonio airport and was anxious to show her Randolph AF Base and our Quarters at 47 Outer Octagon in contrast to my bachelor apartment at 443 Orange Street near Bolling AFB. I took her on a tour of Randolph before driving to our quarters. She thought I was joking when I pulled up to our quarters until she saw the newly painted sign WOJG Costenbader, 47 Outer Octagon at the curb. She was in complete awe of the house. I do remember my wife asking, "What are we going to do about drapes?" This had never occurred to me as an ex 33 year old bachelor. I do recall a few days later I had to borrow some money from her to go shopping and all we could afford to buy were Paper Drapes!

I met with General Davies before I actually conducted my first rehearsal. I was told to work hard with the band for about 3 weeks so they know they have a new

bandleader, and he had already arranged a blanket leave for the entire band. While the band was on leave, I was to meet with headquarters CrewTAF and visit their bands and work on the best utilization of the band both on and off base. He indicated to me that he had already informed the housing office if anyone comes in to question "pulling rank" to get my quarters, they were to be sent to him. I learned later that this happened a few times. I couldn't have had a better assignment anywhere, and we were utilized often both on and off base.

I don't recall the actual date, but about 6 to 8 months after I first took over the band, I applied for my first leave and second furlough for the entire band. It was approved. This was the first time my wife and I visited her family in Virginia and my family in Pennsylvania since becoming a Bandleader. (We drove home, but not in my old 1940 Chevy Club Coupe with the folding motor scooter, but in our 1952 Buick Riviera my wife purchased for us to keep from embarrassing our neighbors on base.)

On our first day back from leave, I held a somewhat light fun rehearsal in the morning, and as we had done before taking leave, marched up to headquarters for the retreat ceremony. I notified the Taj Mahal staff that we were back from leave and to turn off the "canned music" and have the microphone set up near the flag pole to pick up the live band music. There were no troops scheduled to participate on our first day back from leave. My position conducting the band for retreat is very close to the flag pole with an unobstructed full view from the large double traffic circle and the entire boulevard to the main gate a little less than a mile away. The band and any troops are all facing Taj Mahal. Looking from my position about 200 feet just outside the traffic circle is the beautiful Spanish style church. The base school is about 500 feet from the circle and from the school to the main gate on each side of the boulevard I would estimate 50 to 75 barracks type buildings. (I found a 360 degree panoramic photo over 6 feet long taken from Taj Mahal which clearly shows the church, the school and the many buildings between the flag pole and the main gate).

For this first retreat ceremony after being back from leave, I did the usual, having the trumpets sound retreat which takes about 20 to 25 seconds and then started conducting the National Anthem. After a few measures into the Anthem, something I never expected or heard at retreat before scared the living daylights out of all of us in the band. We marched the usual route back to our band building and we all concluded that a jet plane made a high speed

pass at Taj Mahal. Motor scooters, of which I had two, were permitted on Randolph, and I drove my Cushman scooter from the band building back to my quarters.

Early the next morning, anxious to find out what happened at retreat yesterday, I took my folding motor scooter up to Taj Mahal because all the Air Police knew that General Davies and my folding scooter shared the same parking space! When I arrived at headquarters they knew immediately that I was very upset when asking what happened at retreat yesterday. I knew all of them in the room and one officer grinned and said we forgot to tell you, while the band was on leave, we decided to add fly overs at retreat! They informed me that it was perfectly safe as one jet flies high cover while the other comes in low over Taj Mahal.

To my question, what would happen if the plane had a flame out? Their answer was, "The jet would be going fast enough to pass over the base into the open area. I received no answer to: Isn't the Hospital (which is close to my residence) over there? What if the plane had a problem on the peel off long before coming over the main gate? Still no answer. Since I was outranked, I quit asking questions. (I even thought of going across the hall to see General Davies, but that might have cost me my parking space!) My last statement to them was: "I don't like the fast low flying jet coming over the band and any troops standing retreat." I walked out on them. I kick-started my scooter and drove the long way to band rehearsal. I knew we had troops scheduled for this evening's retreat formation and I discussed this at length with the band. I remembered telling the band that at retreat tonight, I would be looking at my watch and concentrating on the jet while conducting the band, and not to take their eyes off of me.

The band and troops were lined up facing Taj Mahal and I was near the microphone facing them but looking to the skies beyond the main gate. For some strange reason before beginning the ceremony, I glanced to my left and noticed two ladies standing together near the outer circle. I learned later on that they were the wives of the T-33 pilots but that neither one knew which of their husbands was to be flying cover or which one was making the low pass.

The order was given to sound retreat. I started conducting the trumpets while looking well beyond the main gate up in the skies for the planes. I saw one T-33 starting to pull out of a left dive in the direction of the main gate. I saw a piece of aluminum "skin" peel off the upper side of the wing beginning next to the left wing tank,

and I remembered the exact measure of retreat when this occurred. I said something like "oh no" which might have been picked up by the microphone near me. I kept on conducting "retreat" and recalled the exact measure when a huge piece of aluminum "skin" peeled off the upper side of the left wing when suddenly the plane flipped nose up and both wing tanks broke loose. The plane kept coming in a nose up and tail down attitude as it came over the main gate, passed the barracks area and when near the school, it began tilting left like it was about to stall. I was talking to the band all the time while conducting the trumpets playing retreat. I assume my yelling: "there is going to be a crash" was picked up by the microphone. The plane crashed on a grassed area between the church and the traffic circle, approximately 200 feet from the troops. Luckily there was no fire, for both wing fuel tanks came off somewhere outside the main gate. When I saw the plane was going to crash, I quit conducting and waved both hands in the direction I wanted the band to run. The pilot was the only one killed, and since there was no fire, I felt I could have saved the band but felt helpless moving the troops.

I didn't have the band play the National Anthem while the flag was lowered. This would have created more confusion in the crash area preventing access for arriving emergency vehicles. As best as I can recall, I had the Drum Major, Sgt. Frantzen take the band behind Taj Mahal and through the housing area to avoid any traffic jams. It seemed like it took forever to get back to the band area. I talked to the band very briefly and then drove my scooter home.

Our living quarters were in the area near the hospital and somehow, perhaps the wife of the doctor living across from us, told my wife about the plane crashing at Taj Mahal. Surely she must have heard or seen ambulances departing the hospital. My wife says she really doesn't remember standing in front of our quarters when I arrived on my motor scooter. I recall her standing there looking as if she just saw a ghost. She walked up to me and squeezed my arm as to confirm if it was really me.

Within a day or two, I was asked to submit written statements to an investigative board in detail exactly step by step what I saw of the T-33 plane crash. Seems like I was asked not to discuss it unofficially with anyone, which I took to mean "the press." I was rather upset reading in the paper later on about "A pilot was killed at Randolph Air Force base during a routine training mission."

Some time later on, I was asked to

appear in person before the board that was conducting the investigation. I didn't know what to expect and probably showed it when I entered the room and saw a big chart or map beginning at Taj Mahal and extending far beyond the main gate. After putting me at ease, they started by saying: "In asking you to appear before our board, we are doing something we have never done before." They wanted to compare on their map what I had submitted in my statements.

One person was standing at the map with a pointer while another person began reading my statement. (with an 83 1/2 year old brain please don't expect me to remember the exact words)

"First, you stated you saw some metal skin peel off the upper side of the left wing next to the fuel tank." They pointed to the exact location on the map where it was found. They did the same procedure with where the large piece of aluminum skin was found as well as the location of both wing tanks. They said something about my being the most accurate and undisputed witness to a plane crash they ever experienced and wanted to thank me in person.

I had nearly forgotten about this and strangely on September 8, 2001, I received an e-mail from Ray Leafsted, a former trumpet instructor in the USAF Band school at Bolling in which he asked about the plane crash at retreat when I had the band at Randolph. I never answered Ray and just 3 days later was the 9/11 tragedy and that brought back all the memories of the retreat ceremony at Randolph with the 633 AF Band nearly 50 years ago. Now it seems as if it just happened a few days ago.

I didn't know what to do with my folding motor scooter at Randolph when I received orders for my next assignment to Germany. I walked into the band day room one day and there were 2 rather large plywood boxes complete with all the hardware and painted Air Force blue. No one knew who brought them in and what they were to be used for. One box was wide and flat and the other was tall and narrow. By piecing together bits of information, two shops on base built them and they were the exact size of my motor scooter. The scooter was shipped to Germany in the flat blue box as professional equipment and household goods shipped in the other. I still have the scooter in my garage and the household box still stored things in my basement.

**Did you know that
your Association is financed
solely through your annual dues?**

Spotlight!

on

Floyd Werle

by Harry Gleeson

Another honor in the illustrious musical career of Floyd Werle, the legendary former Chief of the USAF Band's Composing and Arranging Section, was added on October 7th, 2001 when he received an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts Degree from Rocky Mountain College which is located in Chief Werle's hometown of Billings, Montana.

The hooding ceremony took place on stage in the city's primary concert venue, the Alberta Bair Theater. The festivities immediately preceded a concert by the combined Rocky Mountain College and Billings Community Bands. Following the ceremony, the 105 piece ensemble presented a concert comprised of some of the published material from the pen of this exceptionally talented musician.

Highlighting the performance was a presentation of Werle's Concertina for Three Brass and Band." Also featured were two of Werle's most successful commercial arrangements - "A Cohan Broadway Festival" and "Charlie Chaplain Band Portrait." The concert portion of the gala afternoon was concluded with one of the selections Floyd wrote while serving the US Air Force, "Glider Pilots' Reunion March."

It was a day of highlights in the career of one of the most legendary and productive individuals in the history of military music. Born in Billings on May 8, 1929, he began the study of piano at age five, adding clarinet at age eight. As a youngster he played in dance bands in the Billings area, always accompanied by a relative since he was "under age" according to the laws of the time. He also was a member of several student dance and jazz combos, and performed with them regularly on radio in Billings. His very first composition, "Buck Rake Boogie" for solo piano, was written early in his high school days.

Following his high school graduation in 1947, Floyd enrolled in the band department at the University of Mich-



M/Sergeant Henry Gass, S/Sergeant Floyd Werle, and A/2Class Al Lessner go over a new score.

igan, and it was there that his talents as an arranger came to the fore. As a sophomore, he created a medley for band titled "M Rhapsody" comprised of university school songs, and this selection remains to this day in the active repertoire of the University of Michigan Band. In addition to works for the concert stage, he also created innumerable marching arrangements for the famed university marching band.

The Korean War interrupted his education, and in 1950 he auditioned for and was accepted into membership in the 695th Air Force Band at what is now Malmstrom AFB in Great Falls, Montana. At about that time, Col. George S. Howard heard the University of Michigan Band play a medley of songs from "South Pacific," and was so impressed with the scoring that he checked with the band's director, William D. Revelli, to find out who had created that most impressive medley.

When informed by Revelli that the arranger was already in the Air Force, Howard returned to Washington and set the wheels in motion to bring this exceptional young talent to DC and, as they say, the rest is history.

Arriving in Washington in 1951, Floyd discovered not just a world class band, but also a symphony orchestra and the Singing Sergeants. The latter ensembles were especially important during those years because of the weekly national Air Force radio broadcasts in which they were the primary attraction, and the brilliant young arranger quickly became a key contributor to those national broadcasts.

Werle's major output as a composer

can be dated to 1964 when Col. Arnauld D. Gabriel became Commander and Conductor of the USAF Band and the doors to creativity were flung wide open. Until Floyd's retirement in 1982, he created over 50 new works, including four trumpet concerti for Doc Severinsen and two symphonies.

As to Werle's "interrupted" education, to his total and complete surprise, Chief Werle received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Michigan during a concert by the USAF Band and the Singing Sergeants in the University's Hill Auditorium on January 21st, 1982.

But perhaps the greatest honor came later, when the legendary Director Emeritus of University Bands, Dr. Revelli, referred to Floyd as "the most talented student musician I ever had - he was the best."

Following his retirement in 1982, Werle has continued to live in Springfield, VA. His primary musical activity - Minister of Music at Faith United Methodist Church in Rockville, Maryland, a position he has held since 1967. Following her unusually long battle with Alzheimers' disease, he lost his wife of 39 years, Violet Rose Lowser Werle, in November, 1999.

Taps...

David McIlhatten

November, 2001

Frank Rinaldi

November, 2001

Ivey Coburn

December 2001

George Beebe

January, 2002

Oscar McGregor

February, 2002

Patients & Patience! by Hank Uhland

While patients at VA hospitals are deserving of our heartfelt sympathy, some rather amusing incidents can occur at mental hospitals such as at Menlo Park, CA, where in 1950 the 573rd AF Band played a series of concerts at the request of the hospital superintendent.

On our first engagement, our bus was met at the gate not only by the guard but also by presumably an ex-motor pool man who lifted our bus hood, peeked at the motor, kicked the tires and OK'd our passage through the gate. This procedure occurred with our every visit.

Also on our first visit, we were escorted on a tour of the hospital by a staff member (probably a shrink). About four months later the same man was a patient in our audience.

At one concert, a loud argument broke out in the middle of the auditorium. Two

patients were loudly arguing as to what piece we were playing at the moment. One insisted it was "William Tell", the other argued vehemently for "Poet and Peasant." It was neither.

At the end of the first concert, the superintendent thanked us and told us a rather interesting story. It seemed that some years before an ex-Army band leader was a patient. This man could not get the military out of his mind. Five evenings a week he would go to the hospital flagpole and conduct an imaginary band in a Retreat Ceremony. In summertime, weather permitting, he conducted the same imaginary band on the hospital lawn for a concert.

This same man had long wanted a trumpet and finally the day came when the hospital got one for him. At the presentation, held in the superintendent's office, he was handed the trumpet. He immediately looked at the engraving on the bell, threw the trumpet on the floor and said, "It's not a Conn."

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