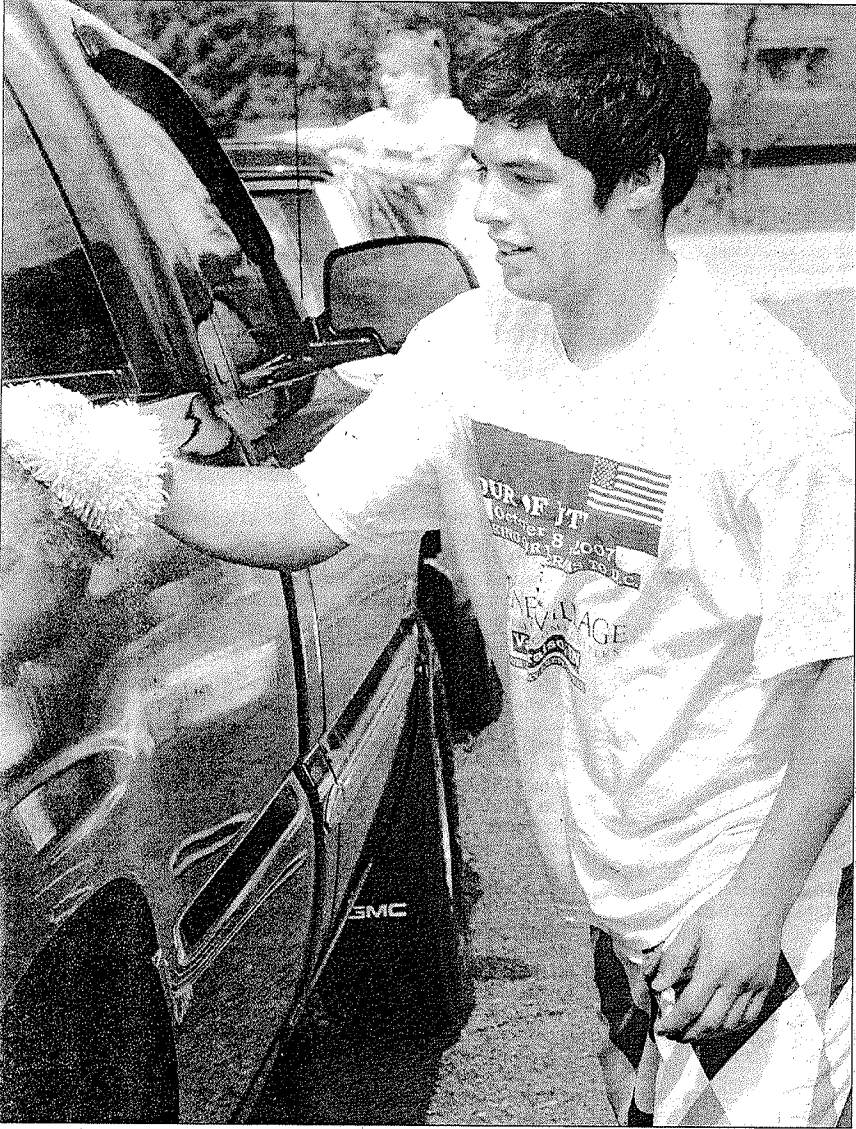


PORTER COUNTY

VALPARAISO



LISA SCHREIBER/POST-TRIBUNE

Adam Robinson, 18, washes cars Saturday in Valparaiso to raise money so World War II veterans can see the World War II memorial in Washington, D.C. Pines Village Retirement Communities is organizing the fund-raiser.

WWII vets heading to D.C.

Pines Retirement Village raising funds to help vets make the trip.

By DIANE KRIEGER SPIVAK
Post-Tribune staff writer

VALPARAISO — Les Haas was only 19 when he left his job making ammunition boxes in Ohio to go fight a war in Europe.

It was 1943. Now, 84, the World War II vet says he wants to make another journey, to Washington D.C., to honor his friends and all the others who didn't make it back like he did.

Haas is one of a group of 40 vets, family members, volunteers and support staff of Pines Village Retirement Communities, who will fly to the nation's capital to visit the World War II Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, and other sites.

"We had a lot of good buddies and some of them are still buried over there," said Haas, a U. S. Army combat engineer. "I have a responsibility to go."

The Tour of Duty, an all-expense-paid trip for the veterans, is set for Oct. 4-8.

The idea for the trip came from Pines Village CEO Laurie Mullet, said Program and Events Director Tracy Huyvaert.

Mullet, whose father and son are both veterans, had heard of another retirement community in Michigan taking its veterans

on the trip in 2005.

"Laurie said, 'We have to do this,'" Huyvaert said. With 1,200 World War II veterans dying every day, she knew it had to be done now.

Pines, a not-for-profit organization, is in the process of raising \$115,000 to help its veterans make the trip through cookie sales and fund-raisers through September.

They also hope to get corporate sponsors and private donations.

Karen Marben is one of the volunteers who will accompany the veterans on the trip.

Marben knew how much an impression World War II had made on her father when at age 72, on his deathbed and filled with morphine, his last words were his name, rank and serial number.

"I realized then what an impact this war had on his entire life," she said. "He was 18 when he went in the army."

"He talked very little about the war unless he was around another veteran and they wouldn't want anybody else to hear," she said.

Although her father was never able to make the trip to Washington, Marben wants to help other vets to go.

"I just want to see their faces," she said. "It will almost be like mission accomplished."

Contact Diane Krieger Spivak at 477-6019 or dspivak@post-trib.com

Tour of Duty fund-raising events

Volunteers are needed for all events. Door prizes needed for benefit dinner and dance. For more information on how you can help, call 465-1591 or visit www.pinesvillage.org

Cookie Sales: Fifth Third Bank parking lot, adjacent to Chesterton European Market. Every Saturday through the end of October.

Scrapbook Night: patriotic theme, Village Park Enrichment Center at Banta Center, 605 Beech St., Valparaiso, 6:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 24

Nelson's Port-A-Pit: Kmart parking lot, Valparaiso, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 25

Valparaiso Popcorn Festival
Cookie Sales: downtown Valparaiso, 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 8

Tour of Duty Benefit Dinner and Dance: American Legion, Wanatah, 6 p.m. to midnight Saturday, Sept. 15

Tour of Duty Patriotic Cookies: All profits go toward the veterans' trip expenses; can be purchased at or ordered from Campbell Street Cafe, 4245 Meridian Woods Drive, Valparaiso, 531-1800