

AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION DEDICATION HONORS MRS. EDITH G. FANNING

Article and photo by Kathleen M. Doyle

FORT SILL, OKLA. – A long-time resident and active member of the El Paso and Fort Bliss community, Mrs. Edith G. Fanning, was recognized at Fort Sill, Okla., on 25 November 2013, by the Air Defense Artillery Association (ADAA) membership. Office members of the ADA Association unveiled a plaque dedicating their conference room to Mrs. Fanning acknowledging her unwavering dedication and work with the Association on behalf of Air Defense Artillery (ADA) soldiers and their families worldwide.

Following the morning and afternoon session of the ADA Leadership Panel and the ADA Association General Membership Meeting, one of the panel's guest speaker, retired Col. Vincent J. Tedesco Jr., spoke sincerely of his great admiration for "Edith," as she would insist you addressed her, to the young soldiers seated in the auditorium. Tedesco expressed his pleasure at being able to be a part of this presentation honoring Fanning, as he illustrated instances of her selflessness, commitment and loyalty to the ADA branch, a branch that they were all member of now. He imparted to the crowd, that Edith exemplified the attributes of leadership.



"Edith Fanning was a leader in ADA even before women were allowed in the branch," Tedesco said.

The newly voted in President of the ADAA and also a guest speaker of the panel, retired Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Green, said, "Edith took care of her ailing husband Jack, a retired ADA colonel, who passed away in March 2011; she took care of the soldiers and their families; she took care of the [ADA] branch; and she took care of the association. I remember setting her up in an office in the headquarters building at Fort Bliss, so she was more accessible to the soldiers and visitors that required her expert assistance."

Fanning was known as the face of the ADA Association for decades, until her retirement in December 2010. She was one of the grass-root volunteers that established the ADA Association in 1975 under the direction of the then, Fort Bliss Commander, Maj. Gen. CJ LeVan. Edith and Mr. Sam Hoyle, the former curator and director of museums at Fort Bliss, drafted the ADA Association's Constitution and By Laws ensuring its incorporation on 14 June 1975.

Selling ADA Association memberships fell squarely and solely on Fanning's shoulders – her first stop was LeVan's office where she may have stressed that "a leader leads by example" – LeVan ended up with membership number one. Edith actively recruited membership candidates for the ADA Association throughout all the Fort Bliss housing areas, literally walking the streets of Fort Bliss. During a 2010 interview with Fanning, she admitted that there were times she felt much like the "Fuller Brush Man" going door to door trying to sell her wares, and later from classroom to classroom selling memberships to newly accessed ADA officers.

Edith hosted many events and sponsored many ADA soldiers and their families over the years. Adding to her list of accomplishments and significant contributions to the ADA community were her involvement in association projects such as fundraisers and exhibits. She was instrumental in raising funds for the new ADA Museum Project, the Annual Gala/Auction, the Children's Bi-Cultural Living History Program, the Museum Gift Shop and the Order of Saint Barbara & Molly Pitcher Awards Program. She unselfishly attended every retirement, awards and recognition ceremony and gave full participation on behalf of the ADA Association at venues such as conferences, symposiums and class graduations.

With a heavy heart, Fanning was also instrumental in providing historical data, files, advice and training to the new generation of volunteers who would carry on the mission at Fort Sill, Okla. Far from its humble beginnings at Fort Bliss, at least the ADA Association would continue, she imparted thoughtfully.

In reflection Green mused, "When one thinks about putting the 'right foot forward,' Edith Fanning comes to mind – always representing ADA in the best light."

Closing out the dedication ceremony, Green; Tedesco; Col. Kevin F. Ciocca, assistant commandant for the U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery School (USAADASCH) and Command Sgt. Maj. Jerome Wiggins, ADA's regimental command sergeant major, unveiled a bronze commemorative plaque that will be mounted at Callaway Hall, Building 758 McNair Road at Fort Sill. The plaque has an etched likeness of Mrs. Fanning and the inscription reads:

EDITH G. FANNING CONFERENCE ROOM

The Air Defense Artillery Association dedicates this room in honor of Mrs. Edith Fanning

Edith Fanning is the "Heart" of the Air Defense Artillery Association. For over thirty years, Edith was a stalwart supporter of our mission, serving Soldiers and their Families, and preserving the heritage of the Air Defense Artillery Branch. All who encountered Edith sensed the love and pride she felt for all Air Defenders. She will always be the "First Lady of First to Fire" in our hearts. We, the Air Defense Association members, thank you Edith for your dedication, love and support!



Pictured above is a photo of the Air Defense Artillery Association commemorative plaque honoring Mrs. Edith G. Fanning. The plaque was unveiled at the end of the Air Defense Artillery Leadership Panel on 25 November 2013 at Fort Sill, Okla.