

## **History of the Fort Sill Patriot Spouses Club**

The following brief history of the Patriot Spouses' Club (PSC) is based on information taken from an article titled "Over the Years," by Linda Evans and Lisa Lawing. It appeared in the OCSC newsletter, "The Lanyard Lines," in the late 1980s.

PSC, originally known as the OWC (Officers' Wives' Club), and more recently as the OCSC (Officer's and Civilian Spouses Club) has been a part of Fort Sill since the first soldiers arrived with their wives in the 1870s. At first, the wives banded together informally, with sewing parties, cooking classes and the occasional dinner-dance. They seemed to recognize that in order to survive as military wives they needed each other. By the early 1900s they had evolved into a formal, though purely social, organization.

The club, like almost all social clubs on post, disbanded around 1914, with the start of WWI. Other post organizations, like the Red Cross, needed the women's attention and talents. For years, these things took precedence.

The OWC formed again in 1954, when Mrs. C.E. (Virginia) Hart, the Commanding General's wife, called together about a dozen Colonel's wives to formally reorganize the club. A Constitution was written, various committee chairwomen were appointed and they planned the first meeting. A thousand women attended that gathering and officially joined OWC. They elected Mrs. H.E. (Ruth) Liebe as the first president.

Like now, there were monthly luncheons, with programs that reflected the interests of the members, but the main focus of the club was to provide an opportunity for non-working women to get out of the house and meet other wives.

Over the years, the club has evolved from being a pure "social club" into a service organization. OWC had their first major fundraiser in 1961. Today, PSC prides itself on their contributions to the Lawton/Fort Sill community; in the form of scholarships and welfare grants as well as the willingness to lend a hand to the community in whatever way is needed.

The club has changed over the years, shifting in focus to reflect the changing times, but the basics remain. Club functions are still designed to enlighten, teach and entertain our members. The club provides opportunities to be of service and to support worthwhile organizations in our community. It provides a community for sharing information and support – at luncheons, one-on-one friendships, through newsletters and even on the web. It provides a place where a spouse, new to Fort Sill, can come and meet others who share the same lifestyle, who understand the unique position of being the husband or wife of a soldier or government civilian, and who will welcome a new member of their community with empathy and appreciation.