

Military, Civilian Housing Needs Stressed

By MAX WAUCHOPE

In recognition of the acute need for adequate rental housing in the Klamath Falls area, the Herald and News, in cooperation with the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee and U.S. Air Force officials, has compiled this section.

The aim of the information is to acquaint residents of the Klamath Basin with the situation in an effort to stimulate building and financing on a local level.

The problem began when the Air Force, realizing the need for a plug in the air defenses of the Pacific Coast asked Congress for authority to establish the Klamath Falls jet interceptor base. In February 1954 Congress gave its okay to the Western Air Defense Force to build and man this air base to link the Portland and San Francisco defenses.

With this authorization, the spotlight was turned on Klamath Falls. Soon after, Congress appropriated the initial \$4,133,000 for construction of the jet base. Additional appropriations have followed.

Major construction contracts were let last spring and immediately a need for housing for air base construction workers became apparent. In the following months, the first contingent of Air Force personnel arrived and made more inroads on Klamath's dwindling housing supply.

When the base is fully manned the Air Force estimates that approximately 1,000 officers and airmen will be stationed here. In addition, the USAF will probably man some type of radar direction station near the Klamath Falls area. These radar direction stations are usually located near all jet interceptor bases. They are used to vector the jets on to their target during interceptions.

It has also been estimated that about 2,000 dependents of the jet base personnel will further swell the population of the area.

This population growth in turn will attract an unknown number of service trades personnel. These trades people will be employed to provide laundry service, staff stores, restaurants and other businesses. Air Force officials have said there will be continuous maintenance and construction projects during the existence of the base, even after initial construction is completed. These projects include and include: new barracks, mess hall, recreation center, etc.

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In the community to take care of the Air Force's needs.

Defense department officials have stressed the fact that in view of the world political situation, this air base is to be considered a permanent installation.

The Air Force base is only one facet of the future growth picture of the Klamath Falls area. The California Oregon Power Co. is nearing final okay from federal authorities for the construction of several dams on the Klamath River. If approved, these dams will mean a long term building program employing several hundred

workers. These workers and their families will attract additional service trades personnel.

As the "hub of a distribution center for the Pacific Northwest," Klamath Falls is bound to attract new industries which will mean even more growth.

With modern scientific developments in the use of algae, it is conceivable that someday a revolutionary new industry will make its home on the banks of Upper Klamath Lake, where at present a scientific survey is being conducted through Oregon State College.

The community's normal growth and the anticipated new industries will quite naturally mean additional burdens on the city's school system and the accompanying faculty housing requirements.

Arnold Gralapp, city school superintendent, and Carol Howe, county superintendent, anticipate an increase of about 300 students in the two systems from the impact of the jet base alone.

The nation wide trend indicates a tremendous increase in school population over the next 10 to 20 years as a result of normal population growth. Added stimuli from other sources will further swell the schools' rolls.

The subsequent need for housing has been emphasized by Winston D. Purvine, director of Oregon Technical Institute. Purvine said his school had almost reached the limit of its expansion without additional student and faculty housing in the Klamath Falls area.

The problem is obvious. The solution is not quite so clear.

In an effort to explore all avenues towards a solution, the housing division of the Military Affairs Committee was organized under the chairmanship of Ed Bell, Klamath Falls businessman.

Bell has called several meetings of his committee with those most vitally concerned with the housing problem, in an attempt to promote a solution on a local level.

Studies by his group disclose that there is a definite need for a financing program which will involve building by local residents.

Another group which has recognized the dearth of adequate housing is the city planning commission. In view of the commission's study and subsequent recommendation, the city council has authorized posting of all city owned lots to encourage purchase for building sites.

The investigations by all these interested groups point up the need for adequate rental housing. The problem is local, and unless it is met and solved on a local level, it will have to be met by outside interests or by the federal authorities.

Cover Identification

The U. S. Air Force couple pictured on the cover of this section is Airman Second Class Dan French and his wife, Susan, of Chicago, Illinois.

Airman French enlisted in the USAF in January, 1955 for four years. He completed his basic training at Lackland Air Force Base and was then assigned to Paine Air Force Base, Everett, Washington and was reassigned to the Klamath Falls jet interceptor base from there.

The Chicago airman is an architectural draftsman in the Installations-Engineering Office at the air base under Major Oscar D. Whitten, base installations-engineering officer. Airman French plans to study architecture on the GI Bill upon completion of enlistment.

Airman French and his wife are at present seeking a larger apartment. He said he hoped to obtain suitable quarters in the \$49 price class.

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