



RED OAK ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

THE *Heart* OF SOUTHWEST IOWA

By the Red Oak Heritage Foundation

Volume 3 | Issue 1 | April 2024



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

1979 Red Oak Graduate Maj. Gen. Christopher P. Hughes, U.S. Army, Ret.

Maj. Gen. Christopher P. Hughes, U.S. Army, Ret., a 1979 Red Oak graduate, was elected as chair of the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) Foundation Board of Trustees on Oct. 11, 2023.

Among many other duties he had over a 35-year Army career, Hughes notably served as deputy commandant of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College from Oct. 2013 to June 2015. In that role he was the co-founder and first provost of Army University.

Hughes last assignment before retirement was as commanding general of the U.S. Army Cadet Command and Fort Knox from May 2016-May 2018. He retired from the Army in July 2018.

After his military retirement, Hughes served as a Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army for Iowa (West) from 2018-2020. He also founded his own business – Northwest Consulting-M&C, LLC – in 2018, and more

He is currently a doctoral student pursuing an interdisciplinary leadership degree at Creighton University.

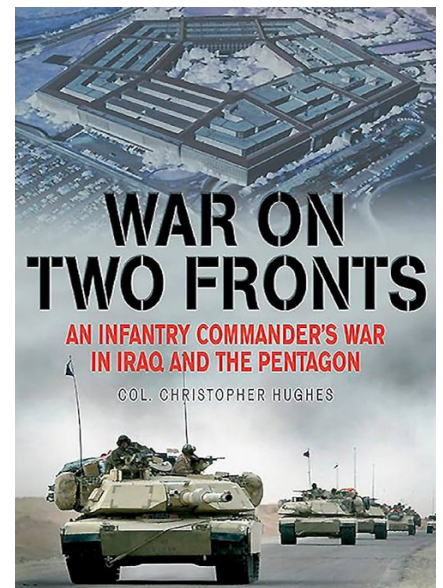
Hughes' military assignments included the 4th Infantry Division, two tours with the 101st Airborne Division (AirAssault), the 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment and the Joint Readiness Training Center. He also served in the Pacific as a war planner for U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) and with the Deployable Joint Task Force Augmentation Cell at U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM).

His key troop leading assignments included battalion and brigade operations officer duty with the 25th Infantry Division (Light); commander of 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division; commander of Joint Task Force Bravo in Honduras; and as the deputy commanding general (DCG) (Maneuver and Support) for the 3rd Infantry Division; and as the DCG Operations for Regional Command South, Afghanistan.

Hughes' key military staff assignments included executive officer to the Secretary of the Army; chief of the Army Liaison Division to the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington D.C.; operations officer for the Army Initiatives Group G-3/5/7; and as an operations officer for the J34 Combating Terrorism Directorate, Joint Staff, Washington D.C., where he served as the

investigating officer for the USS Cole Commission; and as the chief of Army Current Operations G-3/5/7 in the Pentagon.

Hughes' primary awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal (two awards), Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (three awards), Bronze Star Medal (two awards), Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the Army Meritorious Service Medal (seven awards), the Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, Ranger Tab, Master Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Joint Staff Identification Badge, Army Staff Badge and numerous foreign Airborne Wings. He is also a published author and winner of the 2008 Army Historical Foundation's Distinguished Writing Award for Excellence for his book entitled *War on Two Fronts: An Infantry Commander's War in Iraq and the Pentagon*.



A native of Red Oak, Iowa, Hughes has a B.S. in Political Science from Northwest Missouri State University, an M.A. in Business Management from Webster University, an M.S. in National Strategic Studies from the National Defense University and has earned an Honorary Doctorate of Laws degree from Northwest Missouri State University. His military education includes the Infantry Officer Basic Course, Infantry Officer Advanced Course, Combined Arms Services Staff School, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the Armed Forces Staff College. Hughes is also a distinguished graduate of the National War College.

Hughes is a Distinguished Member and Honorary Colonel of the 327th Parachute Infantry Regiment; a life member of ROCKS (he was selected 2017 ROCK of the Year); and a life member of the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA). He was selected as 2016 National Merit Award Winner Phi Sigma Kappa; honored as the 2017 Citizen of the Year by the National Association of Black Broadcasters of America; selected as the 2013 Northwest Missouri State University Distinguished Alumni of the year; and was inducted into the Army ROTC Hall of Fame in 2022.

Hughes and his wife Marguerite reside in Red Oak, Iowa and have three children and six grandchildren.



Maj. Gen. Christopher P. Hughes, U.S. Army, Retired

RED OAK BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

RED OAK FABRICATION :

TRUSTED FAMILY-OWNED METALWORK SINCE 1913



Rooted in tradition since 1913, Red Oak Fabrication has become a one-stop solution for all metal fabrication needs.

Established in the heart of Southwest Iowa, Red Oak Fabrication evolved from its humble beginnings in 1913 to become a cornerstone of the fabrication industry and home to the region's most expansive Carhartt storefront. Their legacy is deeply rooted in a commitment to exceptional craftsmanship and a dedication to meeting the diverse needs of their clientele. From a state-of-the-art fabrication service to a sprawling 4,600 sq ft Carhartt store filled with the

finest merchandise, they stand proud as a testament to quality, innovation, and the enduring spirit of community service. At Red Oak Fabrication, every project and purchase is a journey through a storied heritage.

Quality service has been their standard since Red Oak Machine Co. was established in 1913 as the Pike Machine Shop. Pike Machine Shop was changed in 1923 to Red Oak Machine Co. Ted Fort began employment as one of the three in the shop in 1928. In 1944 Ted purchased a half interest in the business and eventually the other half in 1946 when J.C. England retired.



Red Oak Machine Co., www.redoakfabrication.com/about/

In 1931 Red Oak Machine Co. began selling Linde Oxygen on a pickup basis. Ted's son, Bill, ROHS class of 1944, launched the outside sales of oxygen and welding supplies in 1946, following his service in World War II. Another one of Ted's sons, Jack, joined the sales force in 1947 following his service in World War II as well. Jack graduated with the class of 1948.

Starting with only two trucks, covering Southwest Iowa, Red Oak Machine has transitioned to Red Oak Fabrication with 5 locations in Red Oak including the South Plate Processing shop, Central Machine shop, and the North shop, the Carhartt retail store and a recently added Warehouse facility.

Jeff Fort, ROHS class of 1977, current owner and CEO, bought the business from his father Bill. He continued to expand the business with additional purchases of both property and equipment. In 2004, Jeff sold off the Industrial Gases portion of the business to focus on welding and fabrication. This expansion has taken the employee count from 12 employees in 1978 to 90 employees in 2024. In January 2022, Jeff brought his three sons on as partners making them the fourth generation of the Fort family to own Red Oak Fabrication.

Jacob, Red Oak class of 1998, started his career with Red Oak Industries Gases in 2001. After several years with other gas and welding companies, and obtaining a degree from Iowa Western Community College, he returned to the family business in 2014 where he currently manages the day-to-day requirements within the welding and tube laser departments.

Jordan Fort, a Stanton grad, class of 2008, has been working full-time for Red Oak Fabrication since 2015 and currently manages the powder-coating and blasting departments. He attended the University of Missouri for International Business/German. Jordan's prior experience in the aviation industry allows him to fall back on familiar techniques that are used in both manufacturing and aviation.

Justin Fort, Red Oak class of 1998, has been working within the manufacturing industry since 2004. He attended Kirkwood College before coming back to Southwest Iowa and Red Oak Fabrication in 2022 where he currently manages the metal operations.

The message to their customers clearly states their mission: "From advanced laser cutting to impeccable powder coating, dive into our diverse suite of services, each tailored to bring your vision to life with precision and quality."

The different services they offer include Powder Coating, water jet cutting, Plasma cutting, laser cutting, CNC Lathe and Milling, robotic/manual welding, high temp burn off, press break, Bystronic M3 FL300 Tube laser, and Finishing services. The latest service that they are offering is 3D Printing. Plus, housing the largest Carhartt Store in Southwest Iowa.

Jeff Fort, ROHS class of 1977 is married to Kelly (Hill) class of 1979. Jordan is married to Maci (Kinard) ROHS 2009 grad. Jacob married Whitney (Amos) ROHS grad of 1999 and Justin married his wife Reagan who grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

This is truly a well-established heritage business that Red Oak can be so proud of knowing that its roots are well planted here, and their growth has expanded good quality jobs for so many.



Personalized Memorial Garden Bench, Photo by Red Oak Fabrication



Red Oak Fabrication's Carhartt Storefront, Photo by Red Oak Fabrication

RED OAK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Written by: Mark Erickson, Activities Director

RED OAK ACTIVITIES - APRIL 2024

The Red Oak School District Activities Department is proud to highlight our students, participants, and athletes from our winter seasons! Our coaches, directors, and sponsors strive to instill positive character qualities within our programs. Our activities department would like to publicly thank our alumni, businesses, and entire community for their ongoing support! Please read the exciting news about our programs and students below.

WINTER SPORTS AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Since our last article, we have learned of many awards earned by our winter participants. 16 of our senior participants earned Hawkeye Ten Conference All Academic recognition by earning a 3.5 GPA or above throughout their high school career. Those participants are listed below. The girls basketball team led all sports teams with a combined average of 3.90 GPA.

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Olivia Bozwell, Cloie Bruce (MGR), Kaysie Kells, Jaydin Lindsay, Merced Ramirez, Hailey Rydberg, Grace Wingfield, Kayden Wingfield

BOYS BASKETBALL: Tyler Beeson, Bryton Bergren, Max DeVries, Cyrus Mensen

GIRLS WRESTLING: Joselyn McCunn



Nicloe Bond and Josie McCunn – Girls Wrestling



BOYS WRESTLING: Joshua LeRette, Abigail Johnson (MGR)

Max DeVries finished his career as our boys basketball all-time leading scorer with a total of 1,672 points. Max also holds the school record for career three-pointers made. Max was named unanimous 1st Team All Conference and was named to the IBCA All Substate Team. Many would consider Max to be in the conversation for the greatest player in program history.

Hunter Gilleland earned 2nd Team All Conference honors. Hunter completed an outstanding career and holds school records in three categories: steals in a season, career steals, and three-pointers made in a season.

Merced Ramirez earned 2nd Team All Conference honors in girls basketball.



Kyler Sandholm – Boys Wrestling

Kyler Sandholm went 1-1 at the state wrestling championships in Class 2A at 138 pounds. He had one fall and one major decision.

Nicole Bond (130) and Josie McCunn (125) qualified for the girls state wrestling tournament. Josie finished 2-2 with two decisions. Nicole finished 2-2 with two falls.

Lizzy Baucom was honored to receive Class 1A West District 2nd Team recognition for girls bowling.

BAND

On the weekend of January 25-27, we had two students selected to participate in the University of Northern Iowa Festival of Bands in Cedar Falls.

On February 14th, we had six students who passed an audition and were accepted into the Southwest Iowa Band Masters High School Honor Band. They rehearsed all day and performed the evening of the 14th.

On the weekend of February 16-17, we had eight students who were accepted into the University of Iowa Honor Bands Festival in Iowa City.

The Red Oak High School Jazz Band has also completed their competitive season this past March. They had the opportunity to perform and receive feedback at both Southwest Iowa Band Masters Jazz Band Festival in Atlantic on February 23rd and at the Council Bluff Jazz Festival on March 2nd received a Division II rating. The Jazz Band closed out their performance season with the Red Oak Jazz Night performance on March 7th with performances from the Jr. High and High School Jazz Band.

The Red Oak High School Concert Band had the opportunity to participate in the All Iowa Concert Band Festival at Atlantic High School on February 20th. This was the first time that Red Oak has participated in this event and the students received great feedback and an informative clinic from participating judges.

The Red Oak Bands had a great performance at their 2024 Bandtasia Concert on the evening of March 5th. The Jr. High and High School Bands performed some exciting pieces that they had been working on since the beginning of the semester.



Max Devries – Boys Basketball

Currently, both groups are preparing for the end of the year Large Group performances. The Jr. High is preparing for the Richard Simpson Music Festival hosted here at Red Oak on April 27th and the High School band preparing for their performance at SWIBA Large Group Festival.

VOCAL

The Red Oak High School Band and Combined Choirs performed for our community's Veterans Day assembly on November 10.

Red Oak High School had 1 student selected for the prestigious Iowa All State Choir and that student participated in the IHSMA All State Festival on November 16-18.

The Red Oak Junior High Vocal Music Department presented the musical "Elf Jr." on December 8 and 9 which included a cast and crew of 33 students.

The ROHS Minnisingers (our show choir) enjoyed performing their 30-minute Christmas show around town to over 14 schools and organizations. This is a great way for ROHS students to give back to their community.



Madi Parker, Grace Goldapp, Josie Goldapp – Large Group and Individual Speech

SPEECH

Large Group Speech: we had eight students earn their way to large group state speech. Results: Ensemble with Connor Knight and Tony Filpi entitled The Battle of Brown and Whitmore: 2, 2, 2; Reader's Theatre with Kaz Jackson, Cade Lovell, Auden Coover and substitute performer Ethan Strunk entitled Emergency Protocol: 1, 1, 1; Radio Broadcasting with Ella Johnson and Grace Goldapp entitled Murderous Minds: 1, 2, 1; Musical Theatre** with Grace and Josie Goldapp entitled Wicked: 1, 1, 1 Grace and Josie were honored at the Large Group All State Speech Festival at Iowa State on February 17th.

December 16 was the annual Christmas Extravaganza concert which featured all vocal and instrumental ensembles 6th-12th grade. Ensembles included the 6th grade band and choir, Junior High band and choirs, High School Band, Varsity Choir, Junior Varsity Choir, and Minnisingers. This concert was performed in 2 shifts and was very well attended by over 800 family and community members.

February 1 and 2 was the Nebraska Wesleyan University Honor Choir of which Red Oak High School had 5 students who were selected and participated in the festival.

February 29-March 3 was the ROHS annual musical theater production which was "Seussical the Musical". The musical was a great success and involved over 65 high school students. The musical was adjudicated for the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards.

On March 1 we invited all of the Inman Primary students to a special performance on "Seussical the Musical" where we performed the first half of the show to all K-6 students and then gave them each a ticket to come back to the show on the weekend for free.

On Saturday, March 23, 27 cast members from "Seussical" hosted a Dr. Seuss birthday party at our local library. We had 40-50 young people in attendance for games, crafts, stories, and treats. It was a great morning at the library.

Individual Speech: We had 10 students earn their way to state speech. Results: Gabby Smith: Storytelling, Creepy Pair of Underwear- 1, 1, 1; Lauren Dean: After Dinner, Profit Maximization- 1, 1, 1; Grace Goldapp: Solo Musical Theatre, Showoff- 1, 1, 1; Mariella Richards-Hernandez: Prose, She Said Yes- 2, 2, 2; Madi Parker: Lit Program, Monday's Not Coming- 1, 1, 1; Lauren Dean: Storytelling, Dragons Love Tacos- 1, 1, 1; Josie Goldapp: Storytelling, A Bad Case of the Stripes- 2, 2, 1; Madi Parker: Solo Musical Theatre, Screw Loose- 1, 1, 1; Griffin Eubank: Improv- 1, 1, 1; Griffin Eubank: Original Oratory, Alzheimers- 1, 1, 1; Paige Pruett: Poetry, Original poems entitled His Love Connection & Love Changes- 2, 1, 2.

Madi Parker was honored at Individual All State on March 25th, at UNI in Cedar Falls. This is a huge honor and means she is an outstanding performer. She made it in her category of Literary Program.

ATHLETIC BOOSTERS, MUSIC BOOSTERS, FFA ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS

Our activities department is blessed with the amazing support of our Red Oak Athletic Boosters, Red Oak Music Boosters, and the FFA Alumni and Supporters. The groups help raise funds and volunteer for our activities programs. Without these amazing people, our students would not have the funds to purchase items for their programs. The work they do also go toward providing opportunities for students to be involved in ways that would not be otherwise possible. If anyone is interested in donating time, money, and/or wants to learn more about how to support these groups, please contact Activities Director Mark Erickson at ericksonm@redoakschools.org or 712-623-6610.



RED OAK COMMUNITY HEART & SOUL

Written by: Samantha Williams, Project Coordinator



Red Oak Community Heart & Soul continues to provide a resident-driven process that is planning for the future of Red Oak. Earlier this year Samantha Williams was welcomed as the new Project Coordinator to help organize events and work with the volunteer heart & soul team. Some of the recent events that have taken place was the Red Oak Community Heart & Soul Survey that was completed in January this year for Phase 2 that covered the Red Oak Community School District. A training event was also held in March, as a part of Phase 2, where our volunteers learned how to interview and gather stories within the community.

Currently we are reaching out to community members to interview over the next few months to better understand our community history, what we love and what our concerns are about Red Oak, and what hopes and ideas we have for Red Oak's future. If you would like to share your story, you can contact us through our website at www.roheartsoul.org.

We have been connecting with nonprofits and industries to help host and organize events over the next few months. Through these events, we hope to engage with community members who would like to volunteer with Red Oak Community Heart & Soul. To keep up on upcoming events and the most recent news follow us on our social media pages at [roheartsoul](http://roheartsoul.org).

When Phase 2 is complete, the survey data and community stories will be presented later this year to the Red Oak community, the Red Oak City Council, and the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors.

If you would like to get involved or learn more, there are many opportunities to volunteer, donate, or help spread the word. Please visit our website at www.roheartsoul.org or send us a message on Facebook or Instagram at roheartsoul.



Samantha Williams speaking at the Red Oak Community Heart & Soul Story Gathering Training Event in March 2024. Photo by Joey Norris

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FAMILY YMCA

Montgomery County Family YMCA Press Release (Red Oak, Iowa)



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The Montgomery County Family YMCA will be changing our current Pool Viewing Room into a youth center for the community of Red Oak. Towards that end, the Red Oak Kiwanis Club made a donation of \$10,000 to the Montgomery County Family YMCA on Monday, March 18th. The Kiwanis Club is a civic and social organization that focuses on providing support and services to individuals and businesses, aiming to promote social well-being. “This new youth center will provide a place for our local youth to get together. We want to provide a safe place for them to socialize, learn, and play.” Explained Macy Reeves, Aquatics Director, who is overseeing the changes. The youth center will have comfortable group seating, a gaming system, and accommodations for youth meetings or tutoring/learning sessions.

The Montgomery County Family YMCA, YMCA Thursday Men’s Bible Study Group, and the Montgomery County Ministerial Fellowship Organization hosted the Annual “Good Friday Breakfast” at the Montgomery County Family YMCA on Good Friday Morning, March 29th, 2024. This marks the 10th year of celebrating Good Friday with the community at the YMCA. Over the years, we have been blessed to have many pastors involved in giving the Invocation, Message, and Closing Prayer and members of the community contributing their musical talents.

It was a morning of praise and fellowship with featured speaker Pastor Jenn Van Nostrand of Red Oak First United Methodist Church and Villisca United Methodist Church with songs led by Frank Hidalgo of Red Oak, who sang original compositions, “It Is For Those Like You”, “If That Isn’t Love”, and “The Road, the Way” after a breakfast buffet.



Red Oak Kiwanis Club’s donation of \$10,000 to the Montgomery County Family YMCA

The Master of Ceremonies was Steve Colerick who began and closed the program which had an Invocation by Pastor Kevin Berry of River of Life Church of Red Oak, Iowa and Closing Prayer by Pastor Matt Keller of Citylight Southwest Iowa of Emerson, Iowa.

For more information about the Montgomery County Family YMCA, its programs, memberships, and volunteer/donor opportunities, call us at 712-623-2161, stop by the Y located at 101 East Cherry Street, Red Oak, Iowa, visit us on Facebook, or our website at www.mcymca.com.



Pastor Jenn Van Nostrand & Frank Hidalgo

JUNCTION DAYS 2024

JUNE 27TH - 30TH

WWW.REDOAKIOWA.COM



UPCOMING EVENTS

Junction Days 2024 | June 27-30

[THURS] **27** | JUNCTION DAYS KICKOFF
OPENING CEREMONY

[FRI] **28** | ROAR - RED OAK ALL
CLASS REUNION
EVERGREEN CEMETERY WALK

[SAT] **29** | FUN RUN / WALK
CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT
VENDOR FAIR
DOWNTOWN BEVERAGE
GARDEN & LIVE
ENTERTAINMENT

[SUN] **30** | RED OAK AMBASSADORS
FLIGHT BREAKFAST

Red Oak
Chamber and Industry Association

Facebook Instagram @RED OAK CHAMBER VISIT WWW.REDOAKIOWA.COM

FUN RUN WALK

5 MILE / 2 MILE

SATURDAY, JUNE 29

Registration required and available online at redoakiowa.com or at the Red Oak Chamber and Industry Association. Call 712.623.4821 or email info@redoakiowa.com for more info.

Online Registration Due through June 26 (no paper registration due date)

Packet Pickup begins at 6 am
No Registration after 7 am 2 Mile
/ 5 Mile begins at 7:30 am

Red Oak
Chamber and Industry Association

VISIT WWW.REDOAKIOWA.COM
Facebook Instagram @RED OAK CHAMBER

ROAR

RED OAK ALL CLASS REUNION

FRIDAY, JUNE 28
7PM - MIDNIGHT

\$10 ENTRY FEE

FOOD WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

LOCATION:

CHAUTAUQUA ROAD BAND

ROAR SPONSORS

Davis-Taylor Insurance

AGRI-VISION
EQUIPMENT GROUP
Sellersgren Lindell DeMarce Funeral Home

BAND SPONSORS:
 JAMES & JAN NORRIS

Montgomery County Memorial Hospital + Clinics

Houghton State Bank

KCSI
Contractors | Engineers

CLARIOS

BUILDING CRAFTS, INC.
Contractors | Engineers

FAREWAY
MEAT & GROCERY

Bank Iowa

Red Oak Chrysler

RAGBRAI LI

JULY 20TH - 27TH, 2024

WWW.RAGBRAI.COM

RED OAK, PEDAL TO THE PUMPKIN

WWW.RAGBRAI.REDOAKIOWA.COM



RAGBRAI LI

FULL ROUTE

REVEALED!



Home Sweet Home

July 20th-27th, 2024

RED OAK ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Thank you for following the Red Oak Alumni Newsletter!
Be on the lookout for the next issue coming out in Summer 2024.

Follow the link and share with others to join the [Red Oak Alumni Network](#) and receive the Red Oak Alumni Newsletter quarterly!

Want to catch up on past Red Oak Alumni Newsletters?
Visit the [Red Oak Alumni Newsletter](#) webpage!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Do you have any ideas or suggestions for articles you want to see in the Red Oak Alumni Newsletter? Or do you have a candidate for our Alumni Spotlight? We want to hear from you! Send us an email at, redoakiowa.alumni.newsletter@gmail.com

SUPPORT FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

We are passionate about keeping the Red Oak alumni up to date about our community.

If you would like to help support future newsletters, like this one, [make a donation today.](#)

Thank you for your continued support!



Red Oak Water Tower, Photo by Hawthorn Digital Studios



SPONSORED BY THE RED OAK HERITAGE FOUNDATION

The Red Oak Alumni Newsletter is sponsored by the Red Oak Heritage Foundation, our community foundation. If you would like to help support them or for more information on them go to www.redoakheritagefoundation.org