

## Reward Offered for Historic Axe

A \$200 reward is being offered for the return of an ice axe stolen nearly two years ago from historic Rippon Lodge in Woodbridge.

Retired U.S. Navy Reserve Rear Admiral Richard Blackburn Black offered the reward for the axe in a Jan 23 letter sent to *The Journal Messenger*.

This morning Black told *The Journal Messenger* he carried the ice axe on five expeditions to Anarctica between 1933 and 1965.

Black said the ice axe has a three-

foot-long wooden handle. The steel head has a pick point on one end and a spade blade on the other end. He said the steel head has been stamped with his name "R.B. Black" and initials of persons on the different expeditions with him.

The axe, along with a personal letter to Black from Sir Winston Churchill and a small U.S. Coast Guard ward room lantern were taken from his study in a small building separate from Rippon Lodge. The theft occurred about two years ago, but Black said he did not report the incident to

the Prince William County police until a year later.

Black said he believes the axe may have exchanged hands and is hoping the current owner would take the \$200 reward in exchange for the return of the axe. "There will be no questions asked," he said.

Black has left a check made out to "cash" at Rippon Lodge with his housekeeper, Mrs. Estelle Fortune. According to Black's letter, Mrs. Fortune will ask no questions or attempt to identify the bearer of the axe.

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