



MCHS News

November 2014

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 2 No. 6

715 N Main Street
Edwardsville, IL
62025

Hours:

Wed-Fri 9 am - 4 pm
Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm
Group Tours Available

Free Admission

Museum Phone:

618-656-7562

Library Phone:

618-656-7569

Web Address:

madcohstory.org

E-mail:

info@madcohstory.org

About Us:

The MCHS museum complex, consisting of a modern archival library, a museum in the 1836 Weir House and the Helms Collection Center, is owned by the nonprofit Madison County Historical Society and operated jointly with Madison County.

The Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

NEWS FROM THE WAR: WORLD WAR II

During the Second World War, thousands of Madison County men served their country at locations far from home. Their families and friends were anxious for any reports about their military "boys," as they were often called. News came from letters which were written regularly, but delivered sporadically, and from the dreaded government telegrams which rarely held news families wanted to hear. But for the community as a whole, the local newspaper was the best place to get news. Families notified the newspaper when they received letters or telegrams, and the wire services provided reports on the progress of the war. Many soldiers even wrote letters directly to the newspaper.

In this newsletter are excerpts from newspaper articles that demonstrate the variety of service, the patriotism, courage, and sometimes

the homesickness of Madison County soldiers. One article tells of the loss of a soldier in one of the war's worst atrocities, and another relates the sad irony of a soldier killed on his way home for discharge. Stories of the many women who also served will be saved for a future issue of the MCHS News.

Although the United States officially entered the war in 1941, reports of local casualties didn't become frequent until mid-1944. Then they

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The above drawing depicting the D-Day invasion was made by Preston Bagent of the 149th Combat Engineers. Bagent settled in Collinsville after the war.
(Collinsville Historical Museum)

VETERANS' VOICES

BEGINNING NOVEMBER 9

Veterans and descendants of veterans of all wars/military conflicts are invited to participate in the launch of a new program to preserve the stories of Madison County soldiers. Our staff will distribute free informational packets that will assist veterans in recording their memoirs. In addition to stories, the Society preserves copies of photographs, news clippings, correspondence, uniforms, and other items that document service.

The launch of Veterans' Voices will include a new exhibit of military memorabilia in the museum, also opening on November 9. For more information call (618) 656-7569.

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER CALENDAR

Exhibit Opening

Sunday, November 9

1 p. m. - 4 p. m.

VETERANS' VOICES

**Madison County Historical Museum
and Archival Library**

Continuing Exhibit

OLD, NEW, BORROWED AND BLUE

**Wedding Traditions and Customs
Madison County Historical Museum**

Event

Sunday, December 7

1 p.m. - 4 p. m.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

**Madison County Historical Museum
and Archival Library**

ABOUT US

MCHS BOARD

Gary Denué, Pres
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Arnold Meyer, Treas
Donna Bardon, Sec
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Mary Westerhold
Archival Research Mgr.
LaVerne Bloemker
Archival Research Asst.
Carol Frisse
Archival Research Asst.
Jenn Walta
Curator

VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the museum or the archival library. Please call if interested.

MEMBERSHIPS

Several membership levels are available to those interested in supporting the work of preserving Madison County history through an MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our web site, at the MCHS Museum or at the Archival Library.

PUBLICATIONS

MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor

WEB SITE

madcohistory.org

ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

By Mary Westerhold, Archival Research Manager

Probate File Update

The staff and volunteers at the Archival Library have been working for over a year with the Madison County Circuit Clerk's office on a project with the probate files. A little over 500 boxes of probate records have been processed and added to the Archival Library collection. These files are available for researchers to view.

Recently, we were able to help a family find the guardianship file of their grandfather, George F. SCHMITT, whose mother died when he was three years old. While the child's surname was SCHMITT, it was recorded in various records as SCHMIDT and, of course, SMITH. Luckily, using the first names and middle initials of the child and his parents, we narrowed the search down to four possible files in two different boxes. I retrieved the box-

es from our nearby storage facility and one of the possibilities was a winner! Not only had George F. Schmitt's mother died, but his father had moved to Nebraska. George had inherited land from his mother's estate, so a legal guardian was appointed. The family was surprised that the guardian was not a relative since they thought George's grandparents were still living in the area. According to law, at age 14, the child could choose their guardian. And at age 14, George chose his grandparents as his guardians. The family was thrilled with the file, because not only did it explain some mysteries regarding George's childhood, but it told when his grandparents became his guardians. The legal document specifically stated the relationship - that they were George's grandparents. And it was proof of a relationship that had been assumed but not verified.

MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

By Jenn Walta, Curator

MCHS proudly displays Roy Edward Take's Purple Heart at the museum for the month of November. The Edwardsville resident joined the United States Navy in January 1942, and was declared missing in action in the Pacific in October 1943. A year later, Take was presumed dead. Under the original criteria, Take would not have been awarded this medal, but regulations were changed regarding the actions which merit a Purple Heart.

On August 7, 1782, General George Washington established the Badge of Military Merit. The Continental Congress had forbidden Washington from bestowing promotions and commissions upon soldiers for meritorious conduct. Sergeants Elijah Churchill, William Brown, and Daniel Bissel are the only known recipients of the Badge of Military Merit. After the Revolution ended, the award disappeared from use until the 20th century. In 1918, General Pershing proposed the idea of a similar award, but it was fourteen years before the Purple Heart was created. On May 28, 1932, 138 World War I veterans were presented Purple Hearts at Temple Hill, in New Windsor, New York (the site of the final encampment of the Continental Army during the winter of 1782 through 1783).



President Franklin Roosevelt signed an executive order in 1942 to extend the award to qualifying Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard personnel. Prior to that, only Army and Army Air Corps would be awarded the medal. The 1932 regulations prohibited awarding the Purple Heart posthumously to the next of kin. Later in 1942, the rules changed and the medal was made available to all servicemen and women killed on or after December 7, 1941.

Presently, "The Purple Heart, per regulation is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity with one of the U.S. Armed Services after April 5, 1917 has been wounded, killed, or has died after being wounded."

♦ ♦ ♦

"... The General ever desirous to cherish virtuous ambition in his soldiers, as well as to foster and encourage every species of Military merit directs whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings, over his left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk edged with narrow lace or binding." — selection from George Washington's General Order on August 7, 1782

RECENT NEWS

Annual Meeting & 2014 Dining in History

By the time members receive this newsletter, the Annual Meeting and 2014 Dining in History event at the National Great Rivers Museum and Melvin Price Lock and Dam will be a thing of the past. Thank you to everyone who made the evening what we are certain will be an exceptional event.

Vets & Feds Event

The September educational program at the Archival Library was well attended and generated many questions for Ashley Mattingly and Theresa Fitzgerald, Archivists at the National Archives and Records Center in St. Louis.

Volunteers On the Road

MCHS volunteers and staff at the MCHS Archival Library began visiting local libraries and museums a few months ago. The group has become good friends while working on the Probate Files, so once a month many in the group treat themselves to an excursion. It's been a lot of fun!

New Museum Intern

The Museum welcomed Audrey Parker to its staff this fall. Parker, a Madison County native, is a History major at SIUE, minoring in Anthropology. Her internship will include working in collections management, specifically with items in the kitchen collection.

Christmas Open House

Stop by MCHS on Sunday, December 7th from 1 - 4 p.m. to help us kick off the holiday season in the beautifully decorated Weir House with refreshments and good cheer!

MCHS at Parkfest

The Society hosted a booth at LeClaire Parkfest again this year where they were able to answer questions about Madison County history as well as encourage membership in the Society.

Class Reunion

The EHS Class of 1954 paid a visit to the Madison County Historical Museum and Archival Library on Oct 18 as part of a day-long celebration of their 60th anniversary.

New and Renewing Members

September - Mid-October

Columbia

Mark Waldemer

East Alton

Karen Hertenstein

Edwardsville

Kurt Ackerman

Gordon & Holly Broom

Susan Buckley

Patrick Bury

City of Edwardsville

Gary & Benna Denué

Dennis & Lela DeTroye

Gerald Gilman

Robert & Anne Gregor

Edna Grench

Joe & Kathy Gugger

Beverly Kane

Larry & Betty Krapf

Bill & Susan Lucco

Henry & Shirley Malench

Don & Marlene Metzger

Jack Minner

Theresa Morrison

Patricia Rudloff

Ed & JoAnn Small

Meg Solon

David & Phyllis West

Carol Wetzel

Highland

Roland Harris

John & Joanne Klueter

Lynette Schuepbach

Lawrence Schwarz

Maryville

Mary Bohn

Robert & Sharon Kilzer

Troy

Gloria Mannz

Waltham, MA

Vicky Kruckeberg

Chesterfield, MO

Caroline Schmidt Golfin

Thank you for supporting MCHS!

Membership Renewals Due

If you haven't renewed your membership for the coming year, please consider doing so now. MCHS memberships expire December 31st of each year. Reminder postcards are sent if needed, but you can save us a stamp by renewing before your membership expires. If you have already renewed, we thank you!

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE

ASK FOR A GIFT CERTIFICATE!

CALL 618-656-7569

MARY'S RESEACH TIP

If you read my library article, I am sure you understand the importance of searching for name variations. My personal research always finds me searching German surnames. I FINALLY learned to say the surname out loud as a new immigrant might have said it and then write down the spelling as a native English speaker might have heard it. Saying the

name to someone else and having them write down what they hear is another good way to come up with variations. And then there is the handwriting. Upper case letters that are often confused in old handwriting include F - H, J - I, K - R, S - L, O - Q, P - R, U - V, and W - M. Be sure to check for these when using an index or a transcription of a document.

An example from my family is the surname LUCHTEFELD, which I have found listed as Lightfield, Locktiefeld, and Sightfield to name a few. So, be flexible with those surnames even if you are sure your family has always spelled the surname only one way because those who created the records only wrote what they thought they heard.

Soldier Writes Home About Different Culture

October 15, 1942 (CH)
LETTERS FROM OUR BOYS
WAYNE ROPER

Dear Folks:

In the future my letters must of necessity appear dull as ditch water. You see, our letters fall under the censors' axe, (in this instance a razor blade) which, because of military regulations, "hacks and hews instead of cutting clean."

Popular opinion here seems to indicate that the local citizenry seems to still believe that Indians make occasional attacks upon Mid-West settlers; however, neither did I, with all the innocence of a "furriner," expect to find the thatched roofs so popular with the "smart set."

Sunday, if it is at all possible, I plan to attend a church with some of my friends. I've picked the church dated A. D. 1839. Sometimes I think it's the most difficult thing in the world to be a Christian. It is often a lonely difficult road to travel but I have good friends who feel the same as I.

The people here are friendly and innocent as a puppy but also as talkative as a magpie. Their homes are shining examples of housewives'

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NEWS FROM THE WAR: WW II (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

seemed to be weekly, sometimes daily, occurrences in Madison County that didn't end with the V-E or V-J Day. Soldiers were often temporarily buried near the field of battle. When the war was over, many were exhumed and sent home for burial. Their families often waited years for the bodies of their loved ones to come home. All soldiers were celebrated as heroes and entire communities mourned, no matter the date when bodies finally arrived back on American soil.

There isn't room in this newsletter to honor each and every one of these soldiers, those that died and those that survived. The excerpted articles that follow are representative of local news stories about life in the military during WW II.

The articles were pulled from the pages of the *Alton Evening Telegraph* (AET), the *Collinsville Herald* (CH) and the *Edwardsville Intelligencer* (EI) primarily from 1941-1945. The *Telegraph* and *Intelligencer* had more world news and fewer local stories, but at the *Collinsville Herald* it was more personal as the editor had four sons in service. From the beginning of the war, it offered a free subscription to hometown boys in service with the help of local citizens who donated to the cause. As a result, many of the men wrote letters directly to the newspaper telling their news. There were often two full columns of letters from soldiers in addition to personal stories of the war. For the soldiers, the paper provided a way for them to tell everyone their changes of address and sometimes resulted in reunions of Collinsville boys on foreign soil.

NEWS FROM THE WAR: 1941-1942

1941

December 18, 1941 (CH)
NO WORD FROM TWO SAILORS ON SHIPS WHICH WERE SUNK

No word concerning their sons had been received Wednesday afternoon by the parents of William Mathias, Jr., and James E. Oberto, sailors on two United States ships which were sunk in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor December 7.

Mathias, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Mathias, Sr., 258 North Seminary street, was on the destroyer Shaw and Oberto, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Oberto, Troy road, was on the target ship Utah.

Mrs. Della Novero, 128 Collinsville avenue, received a letter Wednesday from her son, Louis Novero, who is assigned to the USS Pyro. He wrote: Everything is o. k. Don't worry. Give folks my regards. Keep your chin up. The letter was dated December 9.

January 8, 1942 (CH)
LOCAL SAILOR LOST LIFE IN JAP ATTACK

Merle J. Wagner, 31 year old sailor is the first reported Collinsville casualty of the present war according to notification received Tuesday night by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. William F. Wagner, 214 Center street.

A telegram from the Navy department informed them their son lost his life at Pearl Harbor December 7.

Wagner, who was born and raised in Collinsville, was aboard the USS Arizona.

Another Collinsville sailor, Billy Mathias, was wounded during the attack on Pearl Harbor

but he was not seriously hurt. He was on the USS Shaw which was sunk Dec. 7 at Pearl Harbor. In a telephone conversation he told his parents that after receiving the slight wound in



Robert Kubicek is pictured above in one of his Army "uniforms" circa 1942. Drafted in June, 1941, Kubicek played baseball for the Army's Fort Lewis Washington Eagles for two years before being sent overseas to the European Theater where a different uniform was required. The Army teams provided entertainment and boosted morale, but were discontinued as the war progressed. Kubicek was playing minor league ball before he was drafted and returned to professional baseball after the war.

(Photo courtesy Robert Kubicek, Jr.)

one arm, he was taken off the ship for medical attention. Some fifteen minutes later the Shaw went down, he said.

Word was also received during the past week from James E. Oberto who was aboard the target ship Utah which was sunk. In letters to his father and mother he said he was all right and indicated he was uninjured.

November 5, 1942 (CH)

Letters from Our Boys

(The following letter was read Sunday over radio station KSD on the Our Buddies program.):

Dear Mom and Dad:

Well it is Sunday and I have a little time to answer your last and lovely letter. I enjoy them one and all and look forward to hearing from you at all times with all the news from back home.

We have been very busy as you well might know, we are working very hard as we have a big job to do and the sooner we do it the better we all shall be and how we shall do it!

You all know as well as I that a country like ours with our principles and way of life is worth fighting for and to give our all is not too much and that we shall do and as I speak, I know I voice the sentiments of millions of other boys, who feel just the same and how good we feel when we stand at attention and salute old glory, as she waves high in the morning breeze. You swell up inside and feel so good knowing it is our flag and always will be forever and forever.

Your letters each day are a great source of inspiration and they do help so much. Folks should write to the boys. It means so much to all of them.

Often I get homesick and I take out the pictures of you and Dad and the home and I look at them for a while and this eases the homesickness quite a lot.

Lots and lots of love from your soldier son.

PFC Harry M. Neudecker

November 26, 1942 (CH)

FUNERAL OF HARRY C. LEPP IN ENGLAND

A letter describing funeral services held for Pvt. Harry C. Lepp, son of Mr. & Mrs. William Lepp, who was killed in England earlier this month was received last week by his mother. The letter was written by Chaplain Christian Westphalon, who conducted services:

"It was my sad duty yesterday to conduct services for your son, Pvt. Harry C. Lepp, who died in the service of his country. Mere words, I know, cannot ease the heart and lighten the sorrow of family and friends when a life is taken from us....

"Services were held in the beautiful Chapel, a graceful building of classic design, at the American National Cemetery in Brookwood, England, and a committal service with full military honors took place at the grave."

January 7, 1943 (CH)

LETTERS FROM OUR BOYS – SIMON IN WASHINGTON

Gentlemen:

Well, here's a line to let you know I'm still defending Washington against the invaders. Say, this Army is alright. And while praises are being heaped on the Navy and our quaint cousins, the Marines, let no one sneeze at the Army, and more so at the infantry. It is our boast that we can go to hell and come back riding on the devil's tail. And we aren't kidding.

You know, I was never much of an athlete but after I've done my umpty millionth push up from the ground with full combat equipment and finished running a 500-yard run on the double, and I've hit the ground and with panting breath "prepared to rush" and "rushed" and "hit the dirt" as I have done over and over again, I sometimes wish that my gym teacher could see me then.



Ensign Harold F. Metzger, Edwardsville, was the pilot of a "Hellcat" shot down by the Japanese on February 17, 1945. (MCHS)

industry. Everything reflects this – from the shining fenders of the hearths to the stiffly starched curtains at the front windows.

A love of community singing is much in evidence here. The narrow streets frequently resound to the not unmusical harmony of a motley crew.

It is 11:00 P. M. and as the hands of the clock close "snipping off another day" I send my love to all.

Sincerely,
Wayne

Jan 7, 1943 (AET) GLEN GRAY LAUDED FOR MARKSMANSHIP

Brilliant Marksman-ship of Capt. Millard Glen Gray, eldest of the seven fighting sons of Mrs. Flora Gray of Alton, in getting a Japanese tree sniper at a range of 250 yards with a rifle in an assault on the Japs in New Guinea, was described in a recent news dispatch.

Captain Gray, an aide to the American commander in the bombardment, had just taken the tree sniper when his post was visited by newspapermen.

Three of Glen's brothers are in the navy, two in the army, and one in the marine corp.

IN MEMORIAM

On December 23, 1943 the Collinsville Herald confirmed that Daniel Jackstadt had been killed on December 1st.

Jackstadt, who had worked for the Herald prior to his service, was Collinsville's first fatality in the Italian Campaign. Below is a moving tribute written by his former boss at the newspaper, James Monroe. The tribute was reprinted in Stars and Stripes and later read into the Congressional Record. Another Collinsville soldier, Irving Dilliard, read the editorial in an overseas shortwave broadcast from London.



Daniel M. Jackstadt
1918 - 1943

December 23, 1943 Undestroyable

I am framing Danny Jackstadt's picture and putting it on the wall above my desk where I write. Nearly every time I look up I will see the broad grin of that

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NEWS FROM THE WAR: 1943

I wouldn't exchange the Army for civilian life, not when there's a war going on. And I wouldn't exchange the infantry for the Navy or the Air Corps or anything else.

So long,
Johnny Simon



Milton "Mike" Reinhardt, U. S. Coast Guard signalman aboard the U. S. S. Dickmann saw service in Africa, Italy, the Pacific and at D-Day. His uniform was recently donated to MCHS. (MCHS)

February 25, 1943 (CH)

LETTERS FROM OUR BOYS

Dear Editor,

I noticed in a recent issue of your Herald some people are against sending it to fellows in service. I wonder if these stick-in-the-muds know just how much joy we get out of reading a paper from home. I think it is a very fine thing and hope it can be kept up. I for one would be lost without my weekly Herald. Good luck to all who make it possible.

Yours truly,

Henry H. Bantz, SC 3/C

March 15, 1943 (AET)

NO WORD YET OF MISSING PLANE

An inquiry today at Lockbourne Field, Columbus, O., regarding the B17 bombing plane missing on a flight from Portland Ore., to Las Vegas, Nev., brought the reply that no information was available. Inquiry was made by the Associated Press on behalf of the Telegraph. On the bomber, missing since March 4, was Capt. Rex Latham of Alton.

March 18, 1943 (CH)

LETTERS FROM OUR BOYS - R. S. MELVILLE

Dear Sirs:

Just a few lines to thank you for sending me the Herald. It sure makes a fellow feel closer to home when he gets his home town paper. It relieves the blues and homesickness and you can sure quote me as saying I was

and still am homesick. Seems funny a fellow should be that way.

Since receiving The Herald I have located some of the fellows I was inducted with. Now we can correspond with each other.

How are things at home? The gas rationing and point system probably have made the paper do a lot differently than before. Well, the reason for this is a great and worthy cause. When it is all over I don't think any of us will forget or regret it.

With the cooperation the military personnel is receiving from the civilians of our great country, we can't and won't be beaten. We in the military service of our country really appreciate what is being sacrificed by you loved ones at home as well as our own, so that our efforts will not be in vain.

Well, enough of that. I will close and write again soon. I figure on changing addresses so I will send a new one as soon as I get situated. Thanks again for The Herald.

Sincerely yours,
Pvt. R. S. Melville
New Orleans, La.

May 20, 1943 (CH)

TROY MAN IS KILLED IN NORTH AFRICA

Cpl. Arthur J. Sprick of Troy was killed in action April 1 in the North African area, according to a telegram received from the Secretary of War by his mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Sprick. He was 24 years old.

Col. Sprick was the driver of what is known as a "half-trac," a vehicle used for transporting machine gun crews to most advantageous points. His letters indicated that he had been in almost constant action since November 25 and up to the time had been in 19 engagements. The last letter his mother received from him was dated March 30, two days before his death. He wrote that he had been dodging lots of bullets but had not yet found one labeled Arthur Sprick.

A memorial service for Cpl. Sprick was held at 9 a. m. Monday in St. Jerome's Catholic Church at Troy.

June 15, 1943 (EI)

GREEAR BOMBING WITH DOOLITTLE FORCES

A couple weeks ago, Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Greear, living along route 140 between Hamel and Alhambra, received a letter in which their son, Staff Sgt. Kenneth Greear, 23, told them in a minor way about his participation in one of the greatest air raids. He probably had some references to Tokyo

NEWS FROM THE WAR: 1943

but members of the family are still in darkness of just what he meant.

The War Department revealed Tuesday that he now has some connection with Major General Doolittle's Strategic Air Forces, and participated in a raid upon Cagliari, Sardinia, on May 15. If he participated in the Tokyo raid that fact will not be learned until later.



Robert F. Davis, second from right in back row, spent most of the war at Marana Air base in Arizona, but was also stationed in Kansas and Ohio. (Gary Forshaw)

June 17, 1943 (AET)

BUNKER HILL BOY DIES IN JAP PRISON CAMP IN PHILIPPINES

Arnold Oldenettel, 22, son of Assessor and Mrs. Edward Oldenettel, died in a Japanese prison camp in the Philippines, his parents were informed this morning in a message from the War Department.

Young Oldenettel left Bunker Hill for army service with the first contingent under selective service, before war was declared. His parents last heard from him on Christmas Day 1941. Some months ago they were informed by the government that their son was a prisoner of the Japanese. He died in a prison camp on the island of Luzon.

He is the first Bunker Hill boy to die in service during the present war.

September 30 1943 (CH)

LETTERS FROM OUR BOYS – BILL WAPPLER

Dear Mr. Monroe:

This is Bill Wappler writing you from this hell hole of New Guinea. Thanks a million for sending me The Herald, and thanks for having my picture in the paper.

Mr. Monroe, you are for us men who are over seas, aren't you? Well do this for us; I can talk for the rest of us "Yanks" who are over

seas. The letters you publish in the Herald are OK, but when a fellow writes and tells you how tough he has it on maneuvers, that really takes the cake. Some of us boys have been through a shelling, and they talk as though they have been through the real thing in the states.

To us men who are over seas, the fellows in the States are a bunch of crybabies. So do what you can for us fellows. I know you can do it.

I'll close now, Mr. Monroe. Guess I've said enough, so take good care of yourself. So I remain.

Your friend,
Bill Wappler

Oct 2, 1943 (AET)

EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM WINS DSC FOR GLEN GRAY

Major Millard Glen Gray, eldest of Mrs. Flora Gray's famous fighting sons, recently was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by Gen. Douglas MacArthur for extraordinary heroism in action during the Buna Mission.

His citation for the DSC, in part, reads: "Learning of a shortage of company commanders, Major Gray during an inspection of the front lines volunteered to lead one of the

companies engaged. After making several reconnaissances at great personal risk, he took command of a company that had been pinned down and disorganized by enemy fire. Although suffering from malaria, he restored morale by his fearless example and led the company in successful attack and obtained its objectives, despite heavy crossfire from enemy automatic weapons."

October 6, 1943 (EI)

TWO LOCAL BROTHERS MEET BY CHANCE ON SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND

Two Edwardsville brothers in the armed forces and who had not seen each other for 34 months had a visit recently on an island in the South Pacific, according to a letter received Tuesday by their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Godfrey.

One brother had been in the Pacific since Pearl Harbor and the other is believed to have stopped on a neighboring island for a short time. One of the brothers is Sgt. Frank Godfrey, Jr., an aerial photographer, who is with the Seventh Air Force. His younger brother is Private Charles Godfrey, a machine gunner in a regular army division, this outfit cannot be revealed for military secrets.

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young printer of ours who a month ago gave his life in Italy to help keep us safe from savagery and let us continue our lives as we all lived them together before Danny went away. And I will smile back at Danny now and then, as I used to when he was here, and behind my smile there will be a firm determination, as there always was behind Danny's, to live life faithfully and well the daily life ahead. And while I shall not be called on to make the sacrifice which he made all in one sudden sharp, unheralded moment, I am called upon by his smile above me to make every sacrifice of time and effort, every exertion of heart and brain, to be worthy of him, to carry forward the cause for which he lived and fought and died – the cause of a good life in a free world. Danny was good. To see his picture every day will make me better. And thus in God's strange way, Danny's sacrifice weigh in the moral scales, creating a balance of good in others equal to the good life he himself would have lived if he had been permitted. It must be that no good is ever

NEWS FROM THE WAR 1944

January 5, 1944 (EI) EDWARDSVILLE YOUTH GETS FIRST NAZI PLANE

First Lieut. Dick H. Mudge, Jr., recently shot down his first Messerschmitt 109 and got two "possibles" during an air raid over Germany, according to dispatches from a fighter command station in



England.

Lieut. Mudge was leading his flight of Thunderbolts and swooped down to head off a flight of seven Messerschmitts. Lieut. Mudge and his flight were protecting bombers.

Lieut. Mudge, who has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal and three Oak Leaf Clusters, wrote his father he has completed more than 50 missions, making him eligible for retirement from combat duty, but added he preferred to remain on the fighting line.

January 15, 1944 (AET) JOSEPH BORMAN KILLED IN ACTION

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Borman of 822 Douglas street gave a birthday party, Wednesday night, for their son, Joseph, 21, marine paratrooper on duty in the South Pacific. The parents were hosts at the party in his honor. A birthday cake ornamented the refreshment table. Clippings from the Telegraph describing the party were mailed to Joseph.

Today, they received notice from the War Department that their son had been killed in action.

May 25, 1944 (CH) LETTERS FROM OUR BOYS – WORD CONCERNING BOLANDIS

The following letter was received by Mrs. Michael Bolandis from England, where her son, William, was stationed:

Dear Mrs. Bolandis:

I hope you will excuse me writing to you, but I thought you might like to have a line from me, as your son, Bill, has been living with us for about six months, and I hope he will be with us for the duration, as one couldn't wish for anyone nicer. He is so kind and considerate, always ready to give a helping hand. He is so good natured that everyone is fond of Bill and I am sure you are very proud of such a good boy.

With all my best wishes,
Mrs. Lily Finnegan
The Red House Cottage
Shropshire, England

June 6, 1944 (EI) GERMANS REVEAL MAN IS PRISONER

Otto Wiegand, 839 Prickett Avenue, is in receipt of two telegrams indicating that his son, Pfc. Elmer Wiegand, has been taken a prisoner of war in connection with the Italian campaign and is now held in Germany. No official information has been received from Army officials. The information originated in Germany.

The first message was from the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service Federal Communication Commission. The message follows: "Mrs. Adolph Wiegand, phone and mail 839 Prickett Ave., Edwardsville. The name of Pfc. Wilmer Wiegand has been mentioned in an enemy broadcast as a German prisoner. These enemy broadcasts aim at getting listeners for their propaganda. However, the Army is checking for accuracy and will advise you as soon as possible."

The second message is from Provost Marshal General Lerch and quotes the

message recorded from the air: "Dear ma, am prisoner of war in Germany. Am well and feeling fine. Pfc. Wilmer Wiegand."

Pending further confirmation this report does not establish his status to being a prisoner of war.

Note: A few months later, Elmer's status as a POW was confirmed. Despite the errors in names, the above message brought hope for his father who had two sons in the war, Elmer in Europe and Harold in the Pacific zone. Elmer was liberated in May, 1945.

July 6, 1944 (CH) LETTERS FROM OUR BOYS – TOGETHER D-DAY Dear Sirs:

Thought I'd take time out today to write and thank you and all who make it possible for us to receive the Herald. During the hot times on the beachheads there were times when news from home was all that kept anyone going. As far as I know, there were four fellows from Collinsville there from D-Day on: Frank Pace, John Bickel, Baldy Spalding and myself. Now I don't know where any of them are but I suspect they're somewhere around on the front, too.

Yours truly,
Pvt. M. J. Gaskill



Leslie Sutton (left) on leave at New Zealand during WW II. (Collinsville Historical Museum)

August 10, 1944 (CH) SGT FRANK T. BRYANT WOUNDED IN ACTION IN FRANCE JULY 20

Sgt. Frank T. Bryant, 29, husband of Mrs. Mildred Bryant, 228 South Washington avenue was officially reported wounded in action July 20 somewhere in France according to word received in a telegram by his wife from the War Department, Saturday, August 5.

Bryant, a member of the infantry, entered the service September 2, 1943, and was stationed at Camp Phillips, Kansas. He was

NEWS FROM THE WAR: 1944

sent overseas April 1, 1944, and has been stationed somewhere in France.

In a letter received by his wife and dated Tuesday, July 18, Sgt. Bryant said, "I don't want you to worry, I just got a little nick in my leg just enough to get the Purple Heart, but it didn't stop me from going, so don't worry Honey."



Fred Bloom, standing in front of a 2.5 ton Quad Mont 50, was in an anti-aircraft unit in Europe, Battery C of the 565th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalions of Patton's Third Army. (Blume)

August 31, 1944 (CH)

WESLEY COULSON KILLED SAVING LIVES OF BUDDIES

A first hand account of the death of Pvt. Wesley Coulson was delivered this week to Mrs. Joe Kilna, his sister, in a letter from Sgt. John Pickrell, Coulson's company leader:

"It is my privilege to be the one to tell you how well liked and how courageous your brother was. He was without a doubt one of my best men in the sense of cooperation and team work.

"I know the circumstances leading to his death and you can well be proud of your brother's sacrifice as are the men he left behind.

"During a street battle two of our men were cut off in a store where they had gone after being severely wounded. They were laying in that place bleeding to death, and we were unable to get any medical attention to them, for the Jerries had the only entrance to that store covered with fire.

"The officer called for a volunteer to accompany him while a rescue was being affected. Your brother volunteered to go forward with a machine gun and try to drive the Jerries from their position.

"Almost as they left the spot, the officer was seriously wounded and unable to go any further. But rather than return to shelter as he could easily have done, Babe chose to continue the attack on this position by himself. He did dislodge the enemy, but in doing so, he also gave his life.

"We are eternally grateful to your brother for having been so courageous and brave as to give his own life for a buddy and another soldier. We will never forget his heroism."

October 5, 1944 (CH)

SGT. M. G. BOLLMAN SERIOUSLY WOUNDED

Sgt. Marlin G. Bollman, husband of Mrs. Iona Bollman, 621 East Main Street, and son of Charles Bollman, of Bethel road, was reported seriously wounded in action in Italy Saturday, September 16, in a telegram received by his wife Wednesday morning from the War Department.

Prior to receiving the telegram Mrs. Bollman received three letters from her husband dated September 19, 21 and 24, telling her that he was wounded. Sgt. Bollman was previously wounded in July 1944.

In the letter dated September 24, he told her that he had just been sewed up and was indeed sore. He went on to say that he had had just about enough of this war.

December 14, 1944 (CH)

FOUR COLLINSVILLE BOYS INJURED AT SAME TIME BACK OF LINES

It is not always the man with the most dangerous front-line position who feels the effects of the brutality that civilized nations call war. And safety does not always lie in numbers, or so four Collinsville boys will probably testify at the end of the war. Ray Goetter, Lewis Gudelauski, Arthur Kueker, and Edward Frey, all Collinsville area members of the Quartermaster Laundry Company, and all serving overseas, this week have all been reported wounded in action in Holland on December 1.



Sgt. Wilbur Volz is pictured next to his parent's home on Troy Road in Edwardsville. (MCHS)

October 30, 1944 (EI) FRENCH PATRIOTS HID EDWARDSVILLE FLIER FROM NAZIS

How three American airmen were hidden by French patriots for nearly six months after their bomber crashed in the English channel last March 27, was recounted briefly over the weekend by Sgt. Wilbur E. Volz, 21, one of the trio who eluded capture by the Nazis, following his return home Saturday for a surprise visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Volz.

Sgt. Volz, waist gunner on the bomber, related that the plane had just crossed the Channel on March 27, when German anti-aircraft fire damaged the craft, and it crashed into the Channel. Volz and two others swam to shore, where the French Underground hid them for almost six months "under the noses" of German occupational forces.

The three airmen remained in hiding until French Forces of the Interior liberated the area where they were secreted. The other seven crewmen were captured when picked up in the Channel by Nazi patrol boats.

January 29, 1945 (EI)
**LOCAL SOLDIER IN THRILLING
ESCAPE**

Press dispatches Monday reveal that Staff Sgt. Robert E. Bode, 20, Edwardsville, and Lt. William Bruce, Godfrey, were two members of the Flying Fortress, based in England, who had a thrilling experience and escape from the Germans after the plane had been severely damaged by flak on a mission over Germany.

The first near-belly landing occurred over Belgium in an area occupied by the enemy. Riddled with flak and two of the four engines out of commission the pilot steered the plane towards the ground while still over Belgium. The plane was flown between two brick chimneys only 115 feet apart and with a wing spread of 103 feet there was a clearance of only 12 feet.

To miss some power lines the plane was brought to within a few feet of the ground. A small building was barely cleared. The plane thudded on a snow-covered field, damaging the tail and blowing out a tire. The crew flew on to another field and finally made a belly landing in Allied territory.

Note: the above is taken from two accounts on the same day, one in the Edwardsville Intelligencer and the other in the Alton Evening Telegraph.

February 9, 1945 (CH)
**"YOU CAN'T BELIEVE IT IF YOU
DON'T SEE IT"**

Henry Busiere of 612 Keebler street has received a letter from his brother Arthur in France, the first communication since the German occupation of that country in 1941. In it he tells of conditions in the war-torn country, including the unbelievable atrocities committed upon the civilian residents.

Note: Henry Busiere came to the United States from France as a child, but after WW I returned to France where he married. In a long letter to his mother, brother and sister, reprinted in the Collinsville Herald, he tells of the German slaughter of innocent people and also explains how his family survived the war.

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and the other fellows take care of the laundry service. They are not in actual combat, but are probably right behind the lines. No doubt they were injured when their headquarters were bombed, possibly before they could take to any kind of satisfactory shelter.

January 17, 1945 (AET)
SGT. M. T. MARCH

Staff Sgt. Murlin G. March, 26, a member of Pennsylvania's "Keystone Division," the 28th Infantry which made a triumphal march through the streets of Paris then headed for Germany to batter defenses of the Siegfried Line, has been reported missing in action since Dec. 20 in Luxembourg, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph March, 280 Park drive, have learned in a telegram from the War Department.

January 26, 1945 (AET)
CAPT. A. W. CISCO RETURNS TO U. S.

Capt. Arnold W. Cisco, a P-51 Mustang fighter pilot and flight leader of the first All-Negro Fighting Group in the Army Air Forces, has arrived in the United States after a year's service at a Fifteenth Air Force base in Italy and hopes to come to Alton soon on leave, his mother, Mrs. George Ritchie, 1129 Highland, learned Thursday evening in a telegram from her son.

Capt. Cisco, a veteran of many combat missions, has been awarded the Air Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster. His brother, Lieut. George Cisco, also an air force pilot, was killed in a plane crash last August.

March 9, 1945 (CH)
**SECOND TURNER SON REPORTED
PRISONER OF WAR IN GERMANY**

First Lieutenant Austin Turner, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Turner, 339 Aurora, Wednesday was reported a prisoner of war of Germany as of December 16. He was previously reported missing in action since December 16.

Turner has four other brothers in service, one of whom is a German prisoner.

May 1, 1945 (AET)
SGT. M. G. MARCH, PRISONER, FREED.

With egg nog in a special diet provided to speed restoration to normal weight, Staff Sgt. Murlin G. March of the 110th Infantry, 28th Division, captured last December 22 in Luxembourg, was liberated by advancing forces in time to pass his twenty-seventh

birthday, April 22, in friendly hands.

June 2, 1945 (EI)
DELMAR EWELL TO GET ASSIGNMENT

All preliminary orders have been completed whereby the navy will assign Delmar Ewell, AMM 2/c, to shore duty to escape some of the hazards of war after two of his brothers were killed in action on the same day in France; their father's death occurred six days earlier and another brother being wounded and now in hospital in England. After three deaths in the space of a week, the Red Cross presented facts to the navy and advised Congressman Calvin Johnson of the circumstances.

June 14, 1945 (EI)
**GEORGE MOELHENRY LIVING IN OLD
HITLER HOME**

Pvt. George Moelhenry, son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Moelhenry, 719 North Buchanan street, is residing in the former quarters of Adolph Hitler of Germany. Pvt. Moelhenry, member of the famous 101st Airborne Division, is living in the summer home of Hitler near Berchtesgaden, and describes it as "beautiful, with snow-covered mountains surrounding the grounds."

June 22, 1945 (CH)
**K-RATIONS SAVE LIFE OF PFC. VIC
GERBIG IN BATTLE**

Like all GIs Pfc. Victor Gerbig, a patient at Mayo General Hospital, Galesburg, Illinois, goes for southern fried chicken and thick T-bones but also high on his list of foods are K-rations, "A box of K-rations saved my life, that's all," the Collinsville, Illinois, soldier said.

Continuing his strange tale, Gerbig said, "We were moving up on a little town just outside Cologne, Germany, when I got a shrapnel wound in the leg. The medics fixed it up and I kept going. After we had taken the town we took time out for chow."

"I reached down inside my shirt where I had stowed a box of rations and hauled it out. Smack dab in the middle of the box was a good sized hunk of shrapnel. If it hadn't been for the K-rations that metal would have lodged tight in my bread basket."

July 30, 1945 (EI)
HUBACH BROTHERS MEET IN ENGLAND
Two Edwardsville brothers, Melvin and Milton Hubach, are visiting in England

NEWS FROM THE WAR: 1945

today, according to a cable received by their parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Hubach. In October of 1944, when Milton landed overseas, the two had been within 16 miles of each other, but could not arrange a meeting.

Staff Sgt. Melvin Hubach has been stationed with the Air Corps at his Air Service Command depot in England since April, 1944.

Pfc. Milton Hubach received his present furlough after participating with the 7th Armored Division in the Battle of the Bulge and Western Germany.



Troop Ship at Le Havre, France, Feb 19, 1946.

In a recent letter, Milton disclosed details on how he spent Christmas last year. The local soldier had been sent to St. Vith in the Bulge and for an entire week lived in a cold foxhole with only one blanket. Only 12 men of his platoon were left, and each bitterly fought to prevent the Germans from gaining ground. It was impossible to bring up replacements, and Pfc. Hubach and the remaining men in his platoon had to fire continuously to hold off the Germans. Their rations were cut to one per day and the meat was frozen so that it couldn't be eaten.

"Finally the 82nd Airborne came to our rescue, and I saw them shot down helplessly in their parachutes," Pvt. Hubach wrote, "But with God's help we held out."

October 6, 1945 (AET)

PVT. ARTHUR ISKEN DECLARED DEAD

Pvt. Arthur Isken, 29, an armored infantryman, who was reported missing in action Sept. 25, 1944, at Duffenter, Germany, has been declared dead, according to a letter received by his mother, Mrs. Madie Isken, who resides near Bethalto.

He entered service in February 1944, and received basic training at Camp Blanding, Fla. En route to Fort Meade, Md., for embarkation he spent a furlough with his mother and brother, Edwin Isken. Pvt. Isken went overseas in August, 1944, and served in England, France and Belgium before going into combat in Germany.

Note: Pvt. Isken's body was not recovered after the war, but was uncovered many years later during construction on the former German battlefield. The remains were positively identified through DNA testing and returned to Madison County for burial in 1999, fifty five years after his death.

September 14, 1945 (AET) "DIXIE" FLEW 42 MISSIONS, NOW MOTHER OF 10 PUPPIES

Dixie, at one year of age, has flown 42 missions in a B-25 over the

southwest Pacific.

She was grounded after meeting a tall dark and (she thought) handsome male, or she would have raised the total to 48 missions before her master, Staff Sgt. Harold Hodge, 22-year-old Bethalto Marine Air Corps tailgunner, was sent home on furlough.

Now Dixie, who gave birth to 10 puppies as she and her master travelled home on their steamer from the Philippines where they were based, is visiting here.

September 22, 1945 (EI)

SGT. HOFEDITZ IN MANILA

S/Sgt. Clarence F. Hofeditz of Edwardsville is now serving with the 29th Replacement Depot in Manila, the Army announced today. Staffed with hundreds of experienced personnel like himself, and trained to handle expeditiously large numbers of individuals, he is playing host to thousands of recoverees - Allied and civilian internees and prisoners of war who have been liberated by the Japanese.

September 15, 1945 (EI) EDWARDSVILLE MAN MASSACRED BY JAPS

Sgt. Carroll F. Spindler, 26, an Army Air Forces radio operator was one of the 140 prisoners of



war ruthlessly massacred by Japanese guards when advance American units neared their prison camp on Palawan Island in the Philippines last Dec. 14, according to a letter from the War Department received by his mother, Mrs. Marie Spindler, 317 South Kansas street.

Sgt. Spindler, the letter states, was one of a group of 150 United States soldiers, sailors and marines imprisoned by the Japs who were attacked as Gen. MacArthur's forces prepared to retake the island.

"This group of prisoners was attacked without warning by the Japanese guards, who attempted to massacre the prisoners to the last man," the letter continues. "Ten prisoners succeeded in escaping. They were the only survivors. It has been established by the War Department that all the remaining prisoners, including your son, perished as a result of this ruthless attack."

Sgt. Spindler, who volunteered for the Air Forces shortly after his graduation from Edwardsville High School in 1939, received his training at Chanute Field and was sent to the Philippines after Pearl Harbor. Listed as missing after the fall of Bataan and Corregidor, Sgt. Spindler was officially reported a prisoner of war nearly a year later. Since that time his mother has received only an occasional postcard from her son during his imprisonment.

Continued on page 12 sidebar



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AFTER THE WAR: 1947-1949

Continued from page 11

October 27, 1945 (AET) DEATH BRUSHES ALTONIAN NEAR OKINAWA BLAST

After experiencing the typhoon which hit Okinawa two weeks ago, Oran Arthur Brown, RdM 3/c, narrowly escaped death a short time later when a dynamite dump exploded about 100 yards from him on Brown Beach at Kuha, his wife Mrs. Wilma Brown, 510 Porter, has learned in a letter from her husband.

November 2, 1945 (CH) BAUDINO KILLED IN CRASH OF B-29 ENROUTE TO USA FOR RELEASE

Sgt. Peter Baudino, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Baudino, 616 Indiana avenue, was killed in a plane crash on October 5, according to a wire received by his parents last Thursday, October 25. Baudino was traveling from the Mariana Islands in a B-29 which is reported by the government to have crashed in Saipan.

The message stated that further details would be sent later in a letter.

Sgt. Baudino was on his

February 24, 1947 (EI) LOCAL MAN GETS ANOTHER MEDAL FOR WAR SERVICE

Jerry Legow, local merchant, who had a part in the famous Nuremberg trial of German war criminals, has added another medal to his collection, it was learned today after a French citation in which he received a second Croix de Guerre for his work at the trial. He and six other Americans were in a body to help handle and guard prisoners and gather evidence for the Nuremberg trial.

September 30, 1947 (EI)

William Straube, local funeral director associated with his father, William C. Straube, will leave here during late October for a two-year sojourn in France to assist in preparation of bodies of soldiers to be returned to the states. He will go directly to Paris to receive his instructions.

Note: Straube spent a year working with the American Graves Registration Command before returning to Edwardsville in September 1948.

October 27, 1947 (AET) 10 ALTON AREA WAR DEAD DUE FROM EUROPE

Ten Alton area veterans will arrive in their home communities in the next few weeks, part of a contingent of the first deceased members of the armed forces and army air corps of World War II to be returned to this country from Europe for final burial. The bodies will be accompanied by a military escort.

February 11, 1949 (CH) MARYVILLE ARRANGES TO HONOR ITS ONLY WORLD WAR II DEATH

T/5 Julius Zupan, son of Frank Zupan of Maryville, who was killed in action on Luzon, P. I. May 24, 1945 at the age of 35, will be returned to Collinsville for burial.

Zupan was Maryville's only fatality in World War II and the Maryville American Legion Post (established in 1946) has been named in his honor. Maryville business places will be closed from 4-5 p.m. Thursday February 10, the hour of arrival of the body of the late Julius Zupan and from 9-10 a.m. Saturday, February 12, the hour of his funeral.



The Bode brothers all joined the Edwardsville VFW simultaneously on the evening of June 6, 1947. Pictured from left are S/c Ralph Bode, who served in the southwest Pacific, Staff Sgt Eugene Bode, southwest Pacific and Japan, Post Commander Joe Carnella, Tec. Sgt. Robert Bode, air forces in England and Germany and T/4 Charles Bode who spent time in England and France. Robert and Charles were also in Russia for short periods.

(MCHS)