

THE EDGE



KRAWERENDA

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE

WORLD WAR 2 Historical Re-enactment Society

Rockford, ILL WW2 Days – September 2016 (Peter Krawerenda)

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THE EDGE * VOLUME 25 * ISSUE 10 * NOVEMBER 2016



Rockford, ILL WW2 Days – September 2016 (Alexia Thoms)



Rockford, ILL – Midway Village Museum September 2016
Photos By Peter Mowat - WW2 HRS Press Corps

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2016 WWII HRS Board of Directors Vote

Voting will be conducted through Ballotbin.com, the same system we have used the last several years. You will be emailed a link to your ballot through the email address you included with your 2016 HRS membership. If you need to update or change your email address please contact the HRS Secretary. Just a note but some have opted out of the election in the past and you will not be emailed a ballot. If you do not receive a ballot this may be the reason. You can submit an alternate email address and still participate. A note on security, no one can see how you vote or your responses to the survey.

The results are available to anyone who received a ballot at the conclusion of the vote and will be made available on the website and Edge.

The following positions are up for a vote.

See their biographies and photo in the October Edge found on the WWII HRS website.
<http://worldwartwohrs.org/Edge/TheEdge-Vol25-2016-Issue09-Oct.pdf>

Vice President:

Charles Bolanis III
Doug Loge

Treasurer:

Wayne McCulley

Allied Representative:

Ronald Kapustka
Corey Vaughn



2016 WW2 HRS Scholarship Award



Dear HRS Members,

It is my pleasure to announce this year's recipients of the WW2 Historical Re-enactment Society Scholastic Scholarship. Based on suggestions from the Scholarship Committee and per my recommendation to the Board, we voted to award 2 scholarships this year. Zachary Williams of the Soviet 95th Rifles Division received the full \$500 scholarship and an award of \$250 was given to the second place finisher, Alexandria Van Tilburg of the USO Camp Shows. Per precedent, The HRS has always granted just one scholarship but the Board agreed with the Scholarship Committee that as we currently have an excess of funds and the top two candidates were well deserving, that 2 grants would be made. I would like to thank the following HRS members who graciously took the time to review all the applications this year, they are Melissa Lenczewski, Mike Hoffman, Dave Jeglinski and Tim Scherrer.

The WW2 HRS wishes to congratulate Zac and Aly on their scholastic success and is grateful for their passionate devotion to World War 2 reenacting and living history.

Regards,
Chuck Bolanis,
World War 2 Historical Re-enactment Society, Vice President
3./SS Panzergrenadier Regiment 21 "Frundsberg", Unit
Commander

Here are the letters submitted to us from the scholarship recipients.



Zachary Williams

My name is Zachary Williams, and in the fall of this year I will be transferring to Illinois State University in order to complete my degree in History. I have just earned my Associates Degree from Moraine Valley Community College, in the area of General Studies, graduating Summa Cum Laude. My ultimate goal, and one I have had since I was 12, is to become a high school, or even university/junior college teacher of history. I have always had a keen interest in history, as I found that I was much more adept at remembering and recalling facts than I was (or will ever be) at "crunching the numbers." I wish I could say how this interest began; perhaps it was the first book I ever read at the age of 6 being about the Weimar Republic (it had a lot of pictures), or maybe it was the old war films that our grandfather would play for my brother and I when he would watch us. Either way, the damage is done, and the goal set. I want to transfer my love of history onto a new generation, one that seems to be lacking in an appreciation for the events and conditions that result in the world we live in today. I hate the cliché of "History Repeats", but just because it is a cliché, does not mean it contains a grain of truth.

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I have been reenacting for just over two years now, and my main impression is of a Soviet Infantryman of WWII, my unit being the 95th Rifles/75th Guard. I feel that, especially in western culture, the role the Soviet people played in the defeat of fascism is criminally under-represented. I hope, as a teacher, I could attempt to right this wrong, while at the same time acknowledging the sacrifices made by all of the Allied powers during the conflict. To that end, I feel that reenacting is a fantastic tool that will make history more tangible to future students. As a result, I have no plans to cease reenacting once I "grow up." If anything, I would hope to increase my attendance, and to incorporate other reenactors into a sort of curriculum that would use Living History displays as a key tool of learning. While reenactors themselves do not provide the complete historical picture, their insights into material culture, and (hopefully) the culture of the time period they represent will make learning history much more interesting for a student, and also more memorable. It is my sincere hope that the HRS Board of Directors finds my case noble enough to be awarded. While the scholarship is modest, even a modest contribution is greatly appreciated, as it will make the fulfillment of my goals much easier.

Thank you!



Alexandria Van Tilburg:

My name is Alexandria Van Tilburg, but most of you know me as Ally. I am currently enrolled at the Indiana University School of Nursing at Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis, with two semesters left until completing my Bachelors of Science in Nursing. I have been reenacting World War Two for nine years. I am currently a member of the USO Camp Shows unit. I have been a member of the 2629th WAC Btn., and the Great Lakes Naval WAVES units. I was also part of the team who helped to regulate civilian impressions within the society over the past few years. During my time as a reenactor, I have portrayed the Army Nurse Corps., a German refugee, a French refugee, French resistance, a civilian nurse on the homefront, a civilian on the homefront, Cadet Nurse Corps, Women's Army Corps., American Red Cross, and Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. I am also an avid collector of items that help me to understand what life was like during the war. Over the years, I have used my collection and my impressions to volunteer with the Indy Honor Flight. One of my primary responsibilities with this group is to co-ordinate reenactors to set up their displays for homecomings and to help the reenactors honor the veterans in a tangible way. One of the most vivid memories I have is the look on the Army Nurse Corps veterans when they are welcomed home from their Honor Flight, by me in the uniform they wore every day during their service. One example of this is shown in the photo I have included.

Through reenacting and volunteering with the Honor Flight, I have realized that my passion is taking care of veterans. I plan to combine my love of nursing and my love for veterans and work in the inpatient setting in the Veteran's Administration system. This became apparent to me when I was the only staff member able to talk to a veteran who was an inpatient at the VA hospital in Indianapolis about his military experience based on my research from reenacting. I plan to use the money from this scholarship to pay for fees associated with nursing school over the next year. Upon graduation and achievement of full-time employment I would love to be able to have the opportunity to travel to more reenactments throughout the country during the year and continue to expand upon my nursing impressions, telling the stories of the women who served throughout the war in both civilian and military positions. One of the greatest joys of reenacting, other than the opportunity to visit with and honor our veterans, has been the friendships that I have made over the years and I look forward to my many adventures and friends that I have yet to make at WWII reenactments after completing my degree in nursing.



The EDGE is the WW2 HRS's own publication.

This is where we promote what we do.

The EDGE promotes and features the works of WW2 HRS Members.

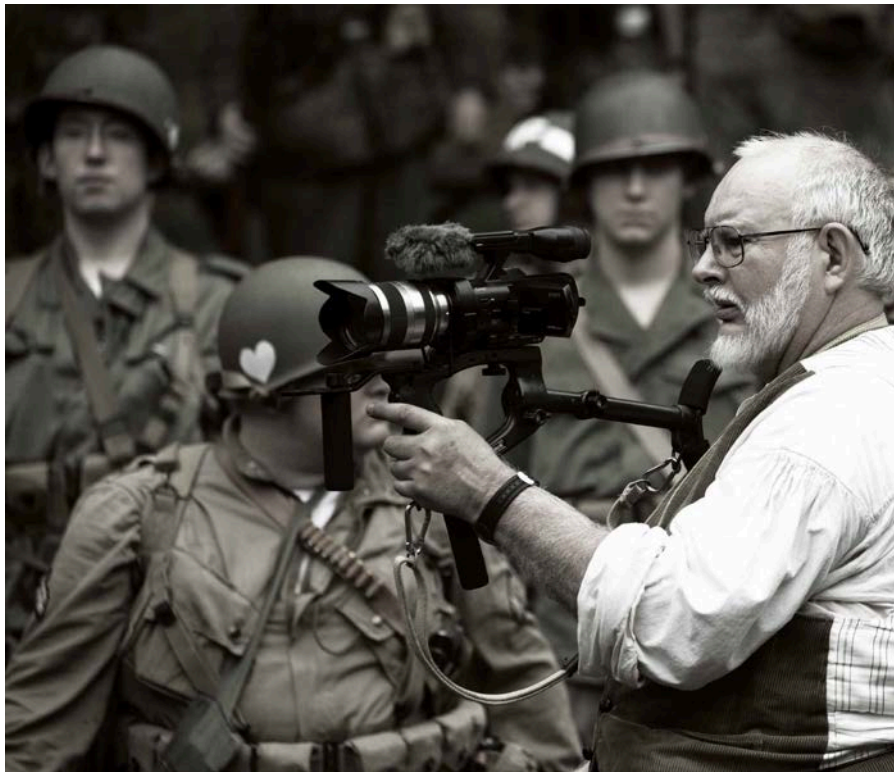
WW2 HRS Units are welcome to advertise their Events and Accomplishments in The Edge.

ANY WW2 HRS Member can submit an item for publication here in The EDGE.

If your unit has news it would like to published in The EDGE,

Or if a member would like to submit an article,

Then simply e-mail it to me and I will put it in The EDGE.



Heinz Thiel - WW2 HRS Press Corps

GD5.Heinz.Thiel@Gmail.Com

I am willing to spend a day with your unit to get photos and video.

Please contact me if you would like some special coverage of your unit or event.

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Treasurer Wayne McCulley

**TREASURER'S REPORT
WORLD WAR II HISTORICAL RE-ENACTMENT SOCIETY
OCTOBER 2016**

ACCOUNT BALANCES AS OF SEPTEMBER 30TH 2016

PNC Bank Non-Profit Checking Account	\$11,299.59
PNC Bank Money Market Account	\$52,443.53
Wells Fargo Bank Account	\$302.20

Account Totals

\$64,045.32

INCOME FOR SEPTEMBER 2016

Membership Income	\$1,790.00
Interest from Money Market Account	\$5.16
Total Income	\$1,795.16

EXPENDITURES FOR SEPTEMBER 2016

Eventbrite Service Fees	\$215.23
Email Marketing Service	\$12.80
Prizes for Midway Village WW2 Days vehicle inspection drawing	\$1,000.00
Refund of Overpaid Family Memberships	\$40.00
Food For Thursday Evening meal at Midway Village WW2 days	\$963.44
WW2 HRS 40th Anniversary Magnets	\$829.18
Total Expenditures	\$3,060.65

2016 Membership Income	\$12,545.00
2016 Interest Income	\$42.41
2016 Miscellaneous Income	\$300.00
2016 Total Income	\$12,887.41
2016 Expenses	\$12,562.06
2016 Total Income Less 2016 Expenditures	\$325.35

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TREASURER'S REPORT THIRD QUARTER 2016
WORLD WAR II HISTORICAL RE-ENACTMENT SOCIETY
OCTOBER 30th 2016

BEGINNING BALANCES 3RD QUARTER 2016

PNC Bank Non-Profit Checking Account	\$11,949.27
PNC Bank Money Market Account	\$52,427.72
Wells Fargo Bank Account	\$302.20

ACCOUNT TOTALS **\$64,679.19**

3RD QUARTER INCOME

Membership Income	\$2,555.00
PNC Bank Money Market Account Interest Income	\$15.81

TOTAL 3RD QUARTER INCOME **\$2,570.81**

3RD QUARTER EXPENDITURES

Eventbrite Service Fees	\$303.97
Email Marketing Service	\$38.40
Postage	\$19.69
Refund of Overpaid Family Memberships	\$50.00
Prizes for Midway Village WW2 Days vehicle inspection drawing	\$1,000.00
Food for Thursday Evening Meal at Midway Village WW2 Days	\$963.44
WW2 HRS 40th Anniversary Magnets	\$829.18

TOTAL 3RD QUARTER EXPENDITURES **\$3,204.68**

ENDING BALANCES 2ND QUARTER 2016

PNC Bank Non-Profit Checking Account	\$11,299.59
PNC Bank Money Market Account	\$52,443.53
Wells Fargo Bank Account	\$302.20

TOTAL ENDING BALANCES **\$64,045.32**

2016 MEMBERSHIP INCOME	\$12,555.00
2016 INTEREST INCOME	\$42.41
2016 MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	\$300.00
2016 TOTAL INCOME	\$12,897.41
2016 EXPENSES	\$12,572.06
2015 INCOME LESS 2015 EXPENDITURES	\$325.35

Respectfully Submitted by
Wayne McCulley
Treasurer
World War Two Re-Enactment Society Inc.

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September 2016 Rockford WW2 Event Vehicle Inspection Drawing Winners

By Wayne McCulley

The following WW2 HRS members were prize winners in this year's Rockford Vehicle Inspection drawing. They were drawn at random from those whose vehicle passed the safety and authenticity inspection at Rockford WW2 days. They were each awarded a \$50 gift card.

Congratulations to all the drawing winners.

Mike DeCroix
Rick Eisele
Dave Fornell
Russell Gordon
Thomas Haynes
Dave Jeglum
Terry Johns
Joseph Karr
Mark Kolupa
Phil Lauricella
Kevin Lavin
Sean Loughran
Patrick Maylen
Rich Pate
Steve Roersma
Jim Schouten
Steve Sloane
Sam Snell
Scott Wallick
Paul Wirth

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EVENTS

November	November
04-06 Nov 	17TH ANNUAL OTTAWA KANSAS VETERANS DAY EVENT Loc: Forest Park 600 N Locust Ottawa, Kansas Dates: 11/4-6/2016 The WWII Camp site and Battle will be on Saturday 11/5/2016 at 3:00PM Event Times: Saturday 11/5/2016 8:00 AM till 5:00 PM Registration Times: Saturday 11/5/2016 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM Pre-Registration: none Fee: None Contact: John Colyer nordland1@cox.net Website: http://www.ottawaveterancelebration.com Authenticity Notes: WWII HRS Safety & Authenticity rules will be enforced Prohibited Vehicles/Items: No alcoholic beverages in camp sites during the public display on Saturday. No live ammo of any kind in camp or near battle site Restrictions on Minors: HRS rules on minors will be in effect Other restrictions: No One will be allowed on the Battle field who has not signed a waiver Sponsoring Unit(s): 11th SS Nordland
04-06 Nov 	1944 OST FRONT WW II TACTICAL Loc: Camp Siman Events - 10135 Oakland Tiff, MO 63674 Dates: 4-6 November 2016 Event Times: Gate opens 12 noon 4 November, Event 9am - 4pm 5 November, gate closes 12 noon 6 November 2016 Registration Times: 7-9 am 5 November Pre-Registration: (click here) Fee: \$15 at the gate. Contact: papajoadfssf@sbcglobal.net or sapphiredragon495@gmail.com Websites: https://www.facebook.com/events/557586434419564 http://fssf6-3.com http://www.6thcorpslhq.com http://campsimanevents.webs.com Authenticity Notes: Per HRS regulations Prohibited Vehicles/Items: NO live ammo. Restrictions on Minors: Per HRS regulations Other restrictions: All blanks need to be in a clear plastic bag. End blocks, stripper clips and belts may be preloaded, all Magazines must be empty for inspection. Sponsoring Unit(s): First Special Service Force 6th CO 3rd REG
11-13 Nov 	WADE HOUSE FALL TACTICAL Loc: Old Wade House Historic Site, Greenbush, WI Dates: 11 NOV – 13 NOV, 2016 Event Times: 1500 Hrs, November 11 – 1200 Hrs, November 13, 2015 Registration Times: Friday, November 13, 1500-2300 hrs; Saturday, November 14, 0600-0800 Pre-Registration: Strongly preferred (click here) Fee: \$12.00 for the event; additional \$10.50 for a barracks spot (subject to availability, first come first served) Contact: 401gliderhq@comcast.net Website: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1521887244725518 Map: (click here) Authenticity: WWIIHRS rules apply. Setting is Fall, 1944 ETO. Prohibited Vehicles: Wheeled vehicles allowed. Contact us regarding tracked vehicles. Restrictions on minors: Per HRS rules Motels: In neighboring Plymouth, WI Sponsor of event: C/401GIR (WWIIHRS)

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US Rifle, Caliber 30 Model of 1917

By Kerwin Law September 2016



The “US Rifle, Caliber 30 Model of 1917” originated from a British rifle they called the Pattern 13 (P-13). In the early 1900s, after seeing some deficiencies in the .303 cartridge, the British were looking to replace the Lee-Enfield rifle. The P-13 like many other rifles of its time borrowed features from the venerable Mauser family of rifles. The P-13 utilized a “sub-caliber” high performance rimless cartridge called the .276 Enfield. The rifle and its new cartridge showed a good deal of promise, but as fate would have it WWI intervened. Therefore, it was decided to drop the .276 Enfield from consideration and rather than replace the Lee-Enfield, the P-13 design would supplement it. The rifle was rechambered to .303 British and designated the Pattern 14 (P14). The British weren’t able to produce the P14s in numbers anywhere near what was needed, so they looked to their cousins across the Atlantic. Winchester, Remington and its subsidiary Eddystone, were contracted to bridge the gap. These US companies were able to help alleviate Britain’s need for rifles by supplying over a million P14s.



When the US declared war on the Central powers in 1917, we too were faced with a similar dilemma of rifle shortages. Given the fact that Springfield Armory and Rock Island Arsenal were not going to be capable of producing enough of the 1903 Springfield rifles, another source was desperately needed. It was realized that it would take too much time for another manufacturer to tool up and make the 1903, not to mention the usual teething problems associated with someone unfamiliar with making a particular rifle. A better solution was obviously needed. It was decided that because the British contracts awarded to Winchester, Remington and Eddystone for the P14 were fulfilled, and very few modifications were needed to convert it to our standard cartridge of .30-06, they could begin producing a US type rifle fairly quickly.

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In short order they began producing the M1917 and by war's end they would have made over 2 million of them. Thus, a new "American" military rifle was born. The "US Rifle, Caliber 30 Model of 1917" made its transition from a British experimental rifle to a mainline US battle rifle quite well. It was actually better than the P14 in some aspects. The .30-06 cartridge was more powerful. The rifle tended to feed the rimless .30-06 better than the rimmed .303, so reliability improved. The magazine capacity was also increased by one round because of the smaller diameter of our rimless cartridge case. It even had some advantages over the M1903. Including the 6 round capacity mentioned above, the M1917 had a bit stronger action, better combat sights and a longer sight radius (distance between the sights). A longer sight radius allows for more precise aiming especially at longer distances. Its design protected the sights better as well. It was unfortunately a half pound heavier and three inches longer than the M1903. The rear sight was not windage adjustable either.



As our involvement in "The Great War" progressed, M1917 production ramped up enough to be issued to our "Doughboys" by nearly a two or three to one margin over the M1903. One of the more famous soldiers in WWI may even have used it to single handedly capture 132 Germans in 1918. The man's name was Alvin York. A pretty decent movie was made about him in 1941 called Sgt York. I say may have used a M1917, because there is no definitive evidence of which rifle he used. He was definitely issued a M1917, but had expressed his preference of the M1903 sights. An article in the NRA's "American Rifleman" a few years back quoted his son as saying he was pretty sure his Dad used the "Springfield" rifle. This was a bit of a wet blanket for the 1917 fans. We will probably never know for sure. One thing that is for certain, Alvin York was a true American Rifleman who richly deserved the Medal of Honor he was awarded.

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Although the rifle's story mainly revolves around WWI, it was used somewhat sparingly by US forces during WWII. It was used a fair amount for training stateside, but was used quite rarely by our troops in combat. There is evidence of its usage by 4.2" chemical mortar men and artillerymen. For sure some artillerymen used them in North Africa and possibly a few were in US hands in France. The M1917 was used by our WWII allies in large numbers. Britain purchased 600,000+, and then later received over 100,000 from the US under the Lend Lease Act. The Chinese and French received them too. Some of our Cold War allies got them as well. Like the 1903 Springfield, the rifle's service came to an end and they were rendered obsolete and eventually disposed of. They are still frequently used by VFW Honor Guards today though. In spite of increased collector interest today, the M1917 just doesn't seem to get the love it deserves, partly because it lived in the shadows of our famous 03 Springfield I would say.

Kerwin Law 2016
(kclaws@consolidated.net)

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HOW TO ATTEND a Board Meeting:

Monthly teleconference Board meetings are open to all members. Members do not need to register for the meetings nor do they need to contact the president or any board members.

They need to contact their unit commander for the call information to include phone number and password. This creates less of a choke point and gets the information out to more with less hassle.

The monthly board meeting time/dates will change to accommodate the board members time schedules.

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About Us



The World War Two Historical Re-enactment Society is an organization of over 1200 men and women members from coast to coast, as well as Canada and Europe. Our mission is to bring the history of World War Two to life with public displays, simulated battles, participation in parades, and a variety of other community activities.

The society strives to honor and preserve the memory of those who served in World War Two, as well as preserve the artifacts of that period.

Our members carry out a wide range of historical impressions, including those of The United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, Poland, and Germany.

Our focus is entirely on the military history of World War Two. We have no sympathy for the ideology of Nazism or fascism. Such beliefs are not welcome here.

If this exciting and rewarding hobby appeals to you, please consider joining us. Our hobby is dependent upon the talents and enthusiasm of its members and there is always room for new interest! Please contact any of our board members today for more information.

www.WorldWarTwoHRS.Org

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MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the WWII Historical Reenactment Society
Board Meeting
13 September 2016
Meeting Start 7:31 PM

Welcome and Roll Call:

Position	Name	Present
President	Jonathan Stevens	YES
Vice President	Chuck Bolanis	YES
Secretary	Doug Loge	YES
Treasurer	Wayne McCulley	YES
Allied Representative	Ron Kapustka	YES
Axis Representative	Dave Fornell	YES
Commonwealth Rep.	Brian Jones	YES

HRS Members Present
Mike Saltzgaber, David Serikaku

Approval of Agenda

The September agenda was approved by unanimous BOD vote.

Reading of the Minutes

August Minutes - Read by DL - Approved by unanimous BOD vote.

Officer Reports:

Vice President - CB said
HRS scholarship - 4 applicants being reviewed by 2 person committee at this time.
Jennifer Sustar
Matt Lemasters
Alexandria Van Tilberg
Zachary Williams

Probationary Charters -
11th Guards Rifle Div., - Passed by SA - Passed by BOD vote.
D Co., 135th Rgt., 34th Infantry Div. - Passed by SA - Passed by BOD vote.
New charter - GD Feldlazeratte - Passed by SA - Passed by BOD vote with expectation that unit is a combat unit, and that their nurses will not participate in battlefield combat scenarios.
Jaegerdivision 28 - Did not pass S&A vote. The BOD tabled their vote indefinitely.

Treasurer -

TREASURER'S REPORT

WORLD WAR II HISTORICAL RE-ENACTMENT SOCIETY
SEPTEMBER 2016

ACCOUNT BALANCES AS OF AUGUST 31ST 2016

PNC Bank Non-Profit Checking Account	\$12,570.24
PNC Bank Money Market Account	\$52,438.37
Wells Fargo Bank Account	\$302.20
Account Totals	\$65,310.81

INCOME FOR AUGUST 2016

Membership Income	\$330.00
Interest from Money Market Account	\$5.67
Total Income	\$335.67

EXPENDITURES FOR AUGUST 2016

Eventbrite Service Fees	\$38.28
Email Marketing Service	\$12.80
Postage	\$9.40
Refund of Overpaid Family Memberships	\$10.00
Total Expenditures	\$70.48
2016 Membership Income	\$10,755.00
2016 Interest Income	\$37.25
2016 Miscellaneous Income	\$300.00

2016 Total Income	\$11,092.25
2016 Expenses	\$9,501.41
2016 Total Income Less 2016 Expenditures	\$1,590.84

WM brought up the reimbursement request for the previous Dundas MN. Event. The BOD voted to pay the \$300 for reimbursement, with the expectation that original receipts be turned in for future requests.

Secretary - DL said

Current membership total - 1060 which is similar to last year's totals at this time.

Membership cards mailed - 586 for the year so far.

New events - New events are listed on the HRS website.

Commonwealth Rep - BJ said nothing new.

Allied Rep - RK said nothing new.

Axis Rep - DF said nothing new.

HRS Media Staff Reports

Media Coordinator - Dave Fornell - No report.

Committee Reports:

S&A - CB said Rockford S&A rules and regs are determined by the event hosts. DF said that Rockford will enforce stricter minor firearm rules.

Unit Commanders -

JS said HRS membership registration information was posted several times on the group.

Vehicle Committee -

JS said Jim Schouten is still working on getting volunteers for inspections at Rockford event.

Civilian Committee - Nicole Fornell - Nicole said there will be a meeting at the Rockford event.

Old Business:

JS said that the 709th Inf offered to cook for HRS on Saturday. CB said there was already an arrangement for the 353rd to cook on Sunday.

JS said that the Midway Village may increase the funding for Thursday's dinner. RK said was looking at different options to stay in within budget for Thursday's dinner.

New Business:

MN Event support "Advance to St. Lo" - BOD approved up to \$300 reimbursement for food with original receipts from food purchased, as well as event waivers turned in.

Announcements: Next BOD meeting 10/18/16

Adjourn: 9:06pm

All of the HRS Board Meeting Minutes from the past six years are posted on the HRS WEB Site.
Current HRS By-Laws call for these official business reports to be re-published here in The Edge.
See the BOD Minutes Page at
<http://WorldWarTwoHrs.org/Business.htm> for past meeting Minutes

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Almost 75 years after Pearl Harbor, A Hero finally comes home from war.

By Michael A. Krizsanitz
70th Tank Battalion Re-enactor, WWII HRS



Chaplain LT JG Aloysius H. Schmitt

If you grew up anything like I did, you most likely didn't just start WWII re-enacting on a lark. Something triggered your interest, or caught your attention. For me, it was a television program called "The World at War"...An amateur historian was born. Too young for WWII re-enacting, then in its infancy, I began with Civil War in 1978, and joined the HRS the first time in 1984.

It is interesting sometimes, to remember a story told by a veteran, or a story written in a paperback book from the 50's or 60's, and later on to find the same story again, after it has been extensively researched and told **as it happened**. Many times things are kind of different, from how it was told the first time.

Of course, it goes both ways...I can remember, back in the 1970's, listening to a "Simpson's 9th Army" veteran, (who had rode an M-10 Tank Destroyer across Europe) telling me how General Patton was killed by his own troops. Of course I listened politely, since I was just an 8th grader...

But one story I either heard or read, concerned the Catholic Priest at Pearl Harbor, who was too fat to get more than half way through a port hole, and made those outside push him back down, where he stayed helping others escape, until the compartment flooded, and he died.

Years later, in September of 2016, it was announced that some of Father Aloysius Schmitt's remains had been identified, and he was to be returned to his hometown in Iowa for a funeral service. Following

this by several days, Father Schmitt would then be interred at the Christ the King Chapel, at Loras College in Dubuque Iowa.

So, unlike the story I once heard, I'll relate actual events concerning Father Schmitt that have occurred during the seven and one half decades since he made the supreme sacrifice for his fellow sailors during the Japanese attack on that December Sunday morning, so many years ago.

St. Lucas, Iowa to the Navy

On December 4, 1909, in St. Lucas, Iowa, a small farm community near the Northern border of Fayette County, Aloysius H. Schmitt was the tenth and final child born to Henry and Mary Schmitt. From an early age, Aloysius expressed his great desire to become a priest. He enjoyed school, athletics, worked on the family farm and had a favorite dog named Biff. He rode the family's horse to Mass daily. Not much is available about his pre-college schooling, most short histories have him in Iowa until he finished College, but the Campion Jesuit High School in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin lists him as a Class of 1928 graduate.

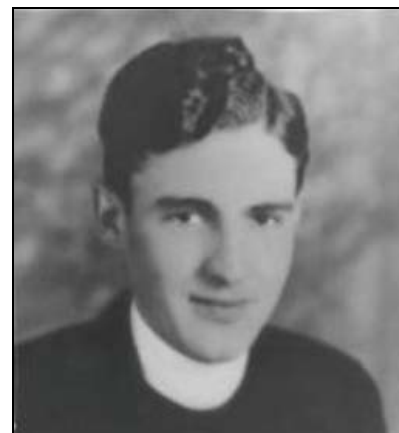


Lt. Aloysius H. Schmitt, '28, Chaplain

Lt. Schmitt, the first chaplain killed in service during World War II, was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal posthumously, Oct. 31, 1942. He was cited "for distinguished heroism and sublime devotion to his fellow men while aboard the USS OKLA-HOMA during attack on the United States Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor by enemy Japanese forces on December 7, 1941." The citation asserted that his magnanimous courage and self sacrifice were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

From Campion-Knights Nostalgia Web Page

Following high school graduation, he entered Columbia College in Dubuque, Iowa, where he adopted the school's motto, *Pro Deo et Patria* - "For God and Country", as one of his life's guiding principles. Columbia later changed its name to Loras College in 1939. After graduating from Columbia (Loras) College in 1932, Aloysius Schmitt commenced on the path to the priesthood, studying theology at the North American College in Rome and was ordained a priest on December 8, 1935, realizing his dream, becoming Father Aloysius H. Schmitt.



Father Schmitt on the day of his Ordination

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North American College – Rome, Italy

Returning from Italy in 1935, Father Schmitt served first as parochial vicar at St. Boniface Church in New Vienna, Iowa, then at St. Mary's Cathedral in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and at St. Mary's Church in Dubuque, Iowa. (A parochial vicar is a priest who is assigned to act as an agent of the pastor, helping the pastor to ensure that all responsibilities are fulfilled. They're an assistant to the pastor and are subject to their authority. In later times, this position is sometimes called an Associate or Assistant Pastor.)



St. Boniface Church Father Aloysius H. Schmitt – 1st Mass

The photograph of St. Boniface is of the first Church Father Schmitt served in. The Church was actually the third built on that site, in 1887. Bishop Mathias Loras of Dubuque had celebrated Mass at the first St. Boniface in 1848. This is the same Bishop that Loras College was named after in 1939, where Father Schmitt graduated in 1932.

While he enjoyed parish work, as events overseas foreshadowed the possibility of War, Father Schmitt recognized the necessity for military Chaplains to address the needs of the army of citizen soldiers that were beginning to be called up. He requested permission from Archbishop Francis Beckman to join the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps and was appointed Acting Chaplain with rank of Lieutenant, Junior Grade (LTJG) on 28 June 1939.

First assigned to the Bureau of Navigation at the Department of the Navy in Washington, D.C. and at the Marine Barracks in Quantico, Virginia, Father Schmitt then attended the Naval Training School for Chaplains at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Father Schmitt was assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown (CV-5) in January 1940. A few months later, he was transferred to the USS Oklahoma (BB-37). The officers and men of the Oklahoma held "Father Al" in high esteem. His love for the men's welfare was profound. He took advantage of all opportunities to witness his love of Christ and his Church. Father Al did not stay in his quarters, but made his way around the ship looking for ways to assist others in the most routine of tasks. Many men wrote letters home about the smiling chaplain who interceded on their behalf, conducted general services for the non-Catholic sailors, and offered Mass for the Catholic population. By all accounts Father Al enjoyed his duties aboard the Oklahoma, and the men were grateful for his presence. Father Al also enjoyed being stationed in Hawaii and during free moments, explored Oahu.

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Father Schmitt in uniform circa 1940
(Loras College/Special Register)

December 7, 1941 – Pearl Harbor Attack

Navy Chaplain, Father Aloysius H. Schmitt, on this particular day was to serve his last Mass on board the battleship Oklahoma. The following week, he would be transferred over to duty on shore. This Sunday morning, December 7th, 1941, Father Al had gone three decks down to prepare for the service and to hear confessions. After Mass, Father Al had begun getting ready for activities the next day.¹

Suddenly, in a matter of moments, there were four tremendous explosions as torpedoes struck the port side of the Oklahoma.² The lights went out when the second one hit. Father Al, and those in the compartment with him, made their way out and tried to get up to the starboard side where they hoped they could find an open porthole. They found one.

Father Al helped other men, one by one, to crawl to safety. When it became his turn, the chaplain tried to get through the small opening, said to have been only 14 inches in diameter. When he in turn tried to squeeze through, he was unable to do so, quite possibly because of the breviary in his pocket. As he struggled to exit through the porthole, he became aware that others had come into the compartment from which he was trying to escape. As he realized that the water was rising rapidly and that escape would soon be impossible, he insisted on being pushed back through the hole so that he could help others who could get through the opening more easily.

Accounts from eyewitnesses that have been published in the Arizona Memorial newsletter relate that the men protested, saying that he would never get out alive, but he insisted, "Please let go of me, and may God bless you all." In all he helped at least 12 men to escape before he died.

For Marine Private Raymond J. Turpin, the most painful of all was to watch helplessly through the porthole as the compartment rapidly filled

with water as the Oklahoma continued slowly rolling over, and Father Al, the last man in the compartment, declining to take his hand, saying "I've already tried. I can't get out." Turpin tried to convince Father Al to try again, to no avail. Father Al told Turpin, "I'm going to see if there are any more guys that I can help get out of here." Turpin remembers Father Al's face, how close he was, barely three or four feet, "I waited a few minutes. He never came back. I never saw him again," he said.

Four weeks after the attack, in a *Protestant* service, a *Jewish* sailor told how he lived because a *Catholic* Chaplain had pushed him out a porthole.

Refloating the USS Oklahoma

It was decided that the Oklahoma would be righted, and refloated. The story of the salvage divers, and their trials on the Oklahoma, as well as the USS Arizona, is truly an epic tale in itself, indeed several divers died, and the several extant books about the operations are well worth reading.

Initial salvage efforts were directed towards removing any ordinance, armament, or human remains as were able to be reached. It was during this time that the first of the 429 men that had been killed were recovered and interred.

On 15 July 1942, work began on righting the ship, before it could be refloated. Eight months later, twenty-one derricks had been attached to the hull, each connected to steel cables that led to hydraulic winches installed onshore.



Righting the USS Oklahoma, March 1943

The righting of the ship began on 8 March 1943 and was completed by 16 June 1943. After the ship was righted, cofferdams were built, and work began to remove any other military equipment, and to recover any of the crews remains still inside. Extensive damage to the hull was seen, and work continued to remove equipment and remains from the interior spaces of the ship. The photos below show recovery and removal of ordinance in the 14 inch and 5 inch magazines.

*



As the dates on the photographs depict, this was much later on, taken some two years after the Japanese attack. One can only imagine the state of remains that had been submerged for some 18 to 24 months. The majority of the remains was skeletal by this time, and unfortunately, highly comingled. In some cases, where sailors had died together, there was not much left other than a pile of bones. This is what led to the identification problems later on.

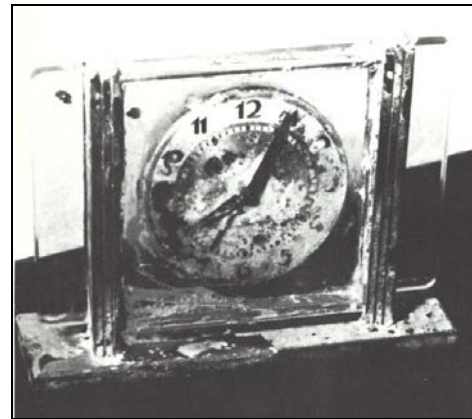
On the USS Arizona, unidentifiable remains, and the death of several salvage divers due to the heavily damaged condition of the ship, caused underwater work to be halted, and the decision made to leave those of the ship's company who remained unrecovered, wherever they were in the ship. One of the ship's officers was Captain Thomas Leroy Kirkpatrick, Navy Chaplain. Captain Kirkpatrick was the second Navy

Chaplain to be killed that during the attack that day, and He remains on the Arizona.



Captain Thomas Leroy Kirkpatrick

On Sunday morning, Kirkpatrick was in the wardroom of the Arizona having a cup of coffee. Most probably, when general quarters were sounded, Kirkpatrick made his way to his battle station in sickbay to assist with any casualties. The location of sickbay on the Arizona was on the same deck, and just forward of gun turret number one. In all probability, the men in that area of the ship were killed instantly from the massive explosions of the forward magazines.



Captain Kirkpatrick's clock stopped at the time of the first explosion

In the meantime, work continued on the USS Oklahoma. As compartments were cleared, human remains were brought out of the ship. By 1944, the comingled skeletons, saturated with fuel oil from the ship, had been buried as unknowns in two Hawaiian cemeteries where they would remain until 1947. As it was being towed to a California scrapyard on May 17, 1947, the stripped-down vessel capsized again and sank 600 miles northeast of Hawaii.

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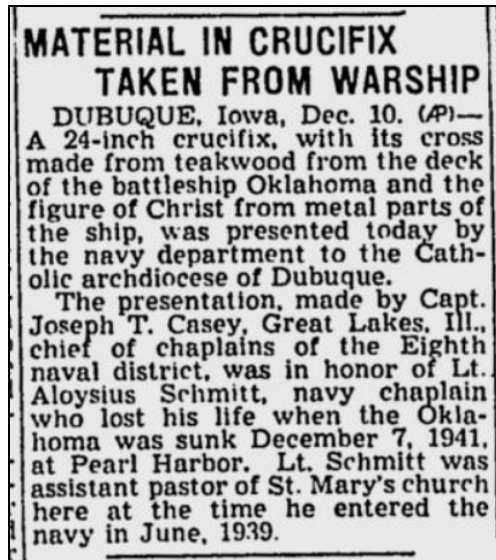


Memorials begin:

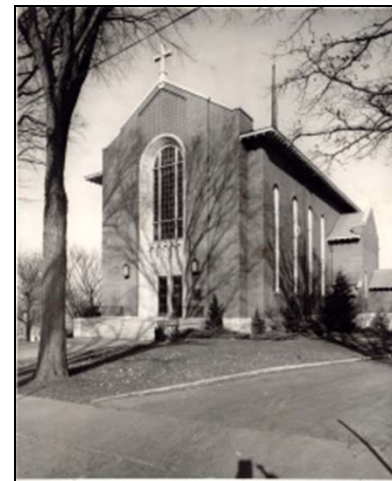
During the early months of 1942, the superstructure and armament of the Arizona were removed, and the main guns destined to become Coast Artillery Batteries "Arizona" at Kahe Point on the west coast of Oahu, and "Pennsylvania" on the Mokapu Peninsula. Battery Pennsylvania was fired one time on VJ day, and Battery Arizona was never finished. Once the decision was made to leave the Arizona crew in place, only those which could be retrieved without entering the ship were subsequently recovered. The Arizona was stricken from the Navy roles on December 1, 1942. The Arizona Memorial was dedicated twenty years later, on May 30, 1962.

Attempts to right the USS Utah in the same manner as the Oklahoma failed. The ship slid towards Ford Island, and was left where it settled to this day. No effort was ever made to recover the remains of her crew. After two initial memorials were dedicated, a memorial walk way and flag pole was constructed, and a Color Guard watches over the ship.

In December 1944 a 24-inch crucifix was presented to the ARCHDIOCESE OF DUBUQUE by the Navy Department. The cross was made of teakwood from the deck of the Oklahoma and the figure of Christ from metal parts of the ship. The presentation made by Captain Joseph T. Casey, Great Lakes, Illinois, chief of chaplains of the 8th Naval District was in honor of Father Schmitt. It is now displayed as part of a memorial with other relics of Father Schmitt in the Christ the King Chapel, Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa.³



The Spokane Wash, Spokesman-Review of Dec 11, 1944
Christ the King Chapel, Loras College



When Loras College completed the construction of its new chapel, Christ the King, it was dedicated as a memorial to servicemen of World War II, especially to Father Aloysius H. Schmitt on October 26, 1947. Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet during WWII, and Samuel Cardinal Stritch, archbishop of Chicago, were present for the dedication. An altar in the chapel was donated by Joseph P. Kennedy, in memory of his oldest son, Joseph, Jr., killed during the war.*

*



The Story of the Servicemen's Remains:

In the months, and years, after Pearl Harbor, the handling of the crew's remains was inundated by error, confusion and poor record keeping. It must be stated, that by and large, this was not done deliberately, no one back then could have envisioned DNA testing, nor that a pile of bones could ever be connected to a known human being, without some identifying artifact found with them.

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency would turn out to be the agency responsible for matching remains to identities. But this was over 60 years in the future.

Between 1942, and 1944, the remains of 429 crew members thought to have been entombed in the Oklahoma were retrieved and interred as unknowns. Mostly, this was accomplished by the end of 1943. After some 24 months inside the ship, in many cases an extended time underwater in a somewhat tropical environment, the bodies had decomposed, and what was left were skeletal remains. As this transformation took place, in many cases the bones of several people in the same compartment together when they died, became jumbled, or "comingled".

This condition made identification more than difficult, and impossibility of recognition was considered the norm.

** In the future, another of Joseph Kennedy's sons would become the 35th President of the United States.*

Sometime in 1947, the bodies were exhumed, and attempts at identification were undertaken at a military laboratory at Pearl Harbor. Primarily, dental records were used, and some 27 identifications were made, but were rejected by Military authorities. Though they matched names to 27 skulls using dental records, authorities decided to rebury all of the remains at Honolulu's National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific as "unknowns," because no complete bodies could be identified. Ultimately, only 35 men were ever definitively identified during or after the war, before efforts ceased.

Believing that the once again unidentified remains would be interred in a mass grave, the personnel at the Laboratory began placing the remains together neatly, skulls in one container, vertebrae in another, long bones of the arm or leg segregated together in other containers as well.

Once this practice was discovered, authorities put a stop to it, declaring that the skeletons be placed back reassembled as they originally should have been. As is obvious to any reader, this was an impossible task to perform.

The lab workers collected what looked like complete skeletons, wrapped them in bundles of white cloth, and placed the bundles in individual metal caskets, several bundles to each casket.

The remains were formally declared unidentifiable in 1949 and 1950 saw them reburied in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. There they waited for the next 53 years.

Research pays off:

In 2003, Pearl Harbor survivor Ray Emory, used files about one Oklahoma sailor he had found in the National Archives, to get officials to exhume the casket believed to contain Ensign Eldon Wyman's remains. Wyman was identified, along with four others whose remains were in the casket. But DNA testing also revealed that there were remains of 90 additional people in that one same casket.

In 2007 another casket was exhumed and remains within were positively identified as an Oklahoma sailor.

In light of those findings, the U.S. Department of Defense announced in 2015 that the remaining caskets would be exhumed and efforts made to identify the rest of the 388 unknowns of the Oklahoma's crew and return them to their families.

The last of the caskets were dug up in November 2015. The painstaking process of identifying the remains has proven to be challenging but ultimately successful. Military officials began releasing the names of newly identified crewmen this January and have continued to do so throughout 2016. They hope to complete the project by the end of this year.

With the mandate from the Defense Department, the bones were exhumed from cemeteries in Hawaii and most were brought to a new lab at Offutt Air Force Base, where members of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency have begun the task.

In a laboratory, the crew of the USS Oklahoma rests on special tables covered in black foam. Their bones are brown with age after 50 years in the ground and, before that, months entombed in their sunken battleship beneath the oily waters of Pearl Harbor. Some have tags tied with string which identifies the type of bone. Some have tags indicating that scientists also want samples for DNA testing.

After the remains were exhumed recently, they were cleaned and photographed, and most of them were flown to the DPAA lab for further analysis. Skulls however, were retained in the lab in Hawaii, where forensic dentists are based.

Personnel working with the remains have said that when the caskets are opened, in many cases forced using crowbars due to the caskets having been interred for so long, that the remains, still in their white cloth bundles, smell of fuel oil from the time spent inside the ship.

Preservation was an unlikely byproduct of the two years the fallen sailors and Marines spent in their watery grave before the ship was righted during a massive salvage operation. No one knew it at the time, but the skeletonized remains were exposed to leaking fuel oil that would protect the bones from micro-organisms, preserving the DNA.



Coming home:

On September 8, 2016 it was announced that the remains of Father Schmitt had been identified by a piece of his skull via DNA, and would be coming home to his family in Iowa. The family was contacted in June when the military told them that they had received a positive DNA match.

His remains were transported to Iowa and a memorial service was held at St. Luke's Church in his hometown of St. Lucas, Iowa on October 5, 2016.



Lt. Brian Lewis, U.S. Navy escorts the casket during a Mass of Remembrance for Chaplain Aloysius H. Schmitt on Oct. 5, 2016, at St. Luke's Church in St. Lucas, Iowa.

Upon the reception of his remains at Loras College, a vigil was held for Father Schmitt from 3-8 p.m. at the campus' Christ the King Chapel on Friday October 7, 2016. Archbishop Michael Jackels led those who gathered in a midafternoon prayer service. Two other prayer services were held later that evening.

The following morning, October 8, 2016 members of the Schmitt family, priests of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, veterans and representatives of the U.S. military, members of the Loras College, Dubuque and St. Lucas communities, as well as other clergy or public came together at Christ the King for Father Schmitt's funeral Mass.



Recessional concluding Funeral Service for Father Aloysius H. Schmitt Christ the King Chapel, Loras College October 8, 2016

After the Mass was celebrated, during a private service, Father Al was interred beside the altar in the Chapel that was dedicated to his service to his God, his country, and his fellow man.

Michael A. Krizsanitz
70th Tank Battalion Re-enactor,
WWII HRS
October 24, 2016

Grateful thanks to Dr. Steve Sloan, member of the Loras College Board of Regents and great-nephew of Father Schmitt, and Ms. Bobbi Earles, Executive Director of Alumni and Communications, Loras College.

A note on sources:

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This story is based on published veterans recollections, historical websites or reference materials, periodicals by the Dubuque Archdiocese, various materials published by Loras College, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, as well as WWII period newspapers, or published U.S. Navy historical literature.

Notes:

1. Father Schmitt's corroded chalice and water-stained Latin prayer book were found in the wreckage. The book was still marked with a page ribbon for Dec. 8 prayers.
Father Schmitt artifact, Loras College, Christ the King Chapel.
2. After the ship was righted and damage was examined, it was found that the USS Oklahoma was hit by as many as 9 torpedoes. *Naval History and Heritage Command*
3. Christ the King Chapel was dedicated as a memorial to Father Schmitt on 26 October 1947. *Loras College*



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Rockford, IL. September 2016
Photos By Heinz Thiel



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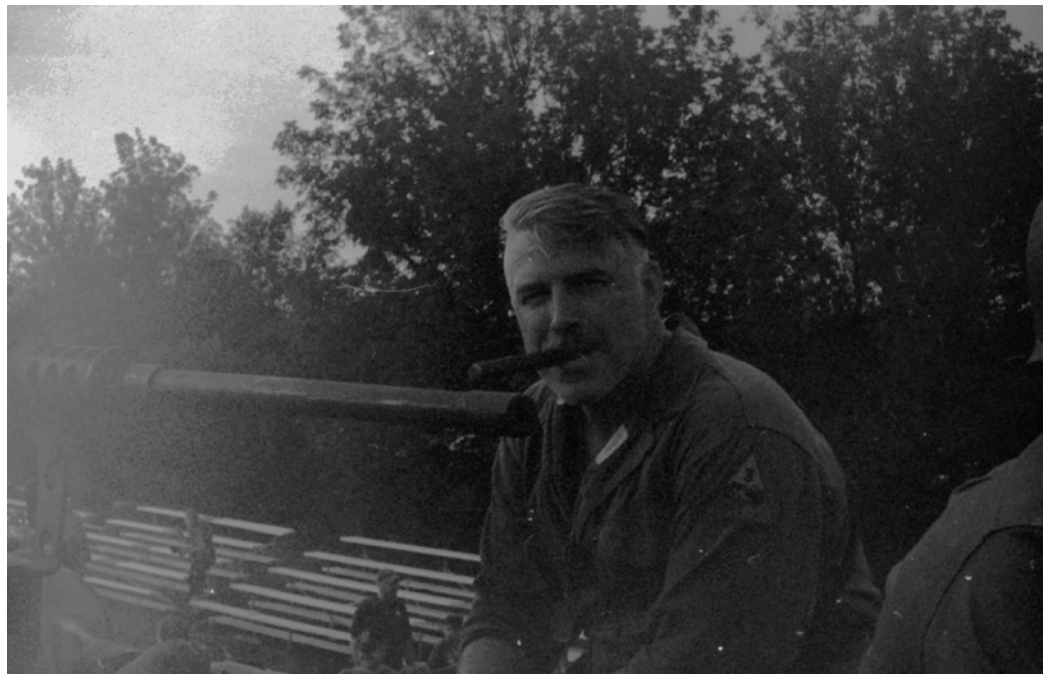


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Photo by Peter Krawerenda- Rockford, ILL WW2 Days – September 2016

From: _____



To: _____

