MOVING ON

Clyde tops Perkins 21-17 in a Division III postseason opener - Sports, 1B



The News-Messenger

SATURDAY, 11.07.15 || FREMONT, OHIO || A GANNETT COMPANY || THENEWS-MESSENGER.COM



FILE PHOTO

Sandusky County Courthouse

Sandusky County servers restored

Bad switches blamed for problems

CRAIG SHOUP
REPORTER

FREMONT - After computer problems caused delays in production and communications, Sandusky County's servers were restored this week, officials say.

A firm hired to fix the problem, Great Lakes Computer in Fremont, discovered the network was turning on and off because of bad communication switches and printer information that overloaded the county's server, county administrator Theresa Garcia said Thursday.

"There was no information lost or stolen. There was way too much information coming through the printer," she said.

"There was no information lost or stolen. There was way too much information coming through the printer."

THERESA GARCIA
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Because of the server problems, the county was unable to update its website, emails between departments were not delivered and day-to-day court records could not be completed unless some departments were shut out of the system.

During the weeklong delay, Garcia said, the county would reboot the system so some departments on the network, such as payroll, could complete their work.

Garcia said all files go through one folder on the server, meaning every email, court record and payroll stub is sent through the network into the folder and then dispersed.

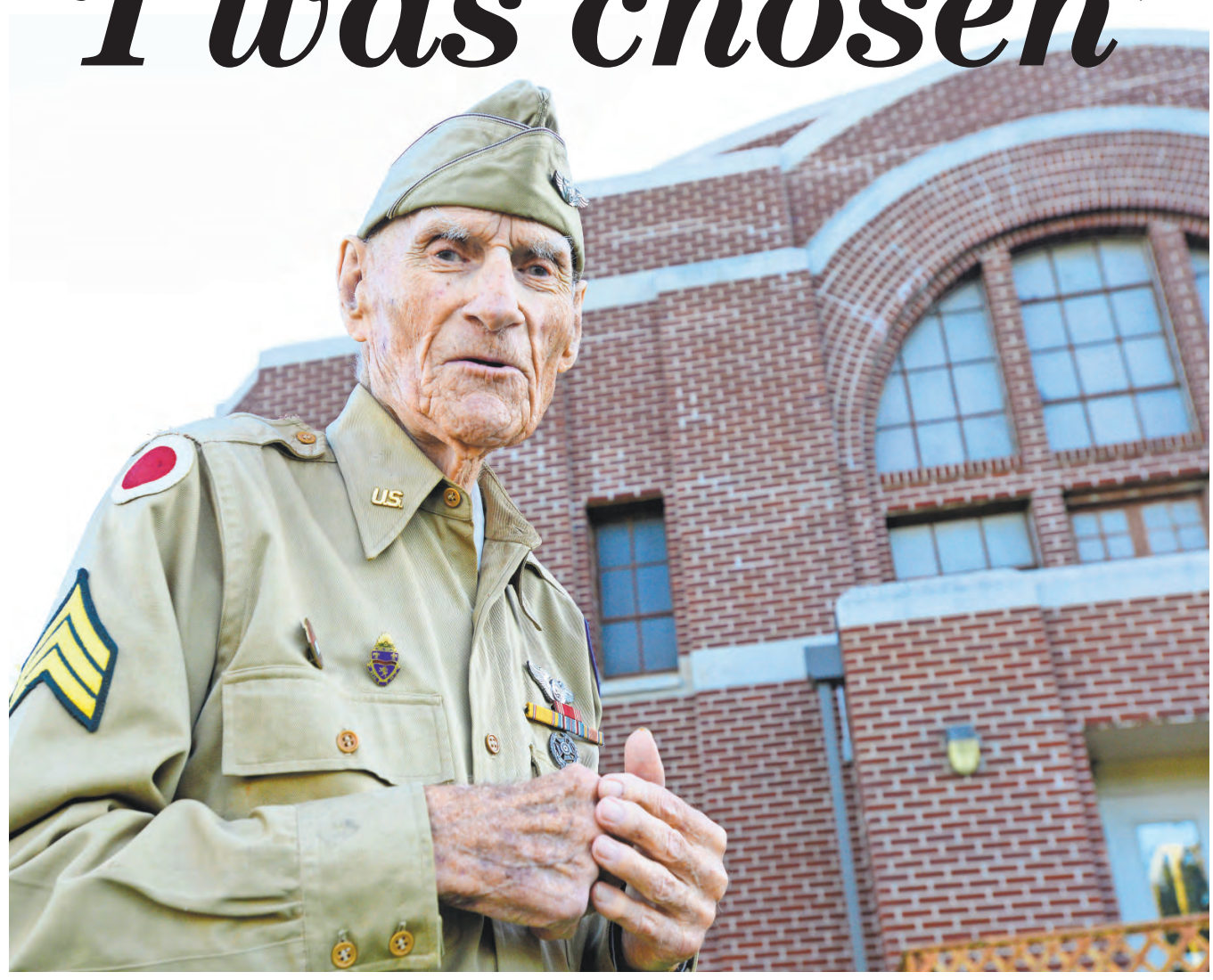
Because there was so much information coming through at once, Garcia said, the network would shut off to protect itself.

Garcia said the county could consider moving certain departments to another server to prevent future problems.

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WORLD WAR II: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

'I was chosen'



MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

World War II veteran Jim McGrady, 97, of Fremont, stands in front of the Old Armory where he trained for his service.

McGrady makes good on mission

STORY BY DANIEL CARSON

FREMONT- Every person who's born has a mission to complete in their lifetime.

It's something Fremont resident and World War II veteran Jim McGrady believes to his bones and tells visitors from time to time.

He thought his ultimate mission, his dream, during World War II was to fly in combat. McGrady trained hundreds of aerial gunners and eventually earned his Silver Wings as an armament specialist and nose gunner on a Liberator B-24 bomber crew.

The 97-year-old veteran never flew over Europe or Japan and didn't see combat. But he saved lives on two separate training flights, and those proved to be his defining moments of the war.

"Every mission is a danger. You understand that?" McGrady said as he talked at his Fremont home about his roles as a nosegunner, cameraman and armament specialist aboard the B-24 bomber.

"Every mission is a danger. You understand that?"

JIM MCGRADY
WORLD WAR II VETERAN

Dressed in a sharply pressed military uniform and occasionally sipping from a VFW cup, McGrady had the energy of a man half his age as he expounded on the dangers of high octane fuel leaks on routine bomber training missions and his wartime brush with celebrities.

While a story about saving his crew mates from a potentially dangerous fire brought McGrady to tears, he smiled and gushed about the extra effort he took to get a photo with famed 1940s actress Betty Grable on a California training base.

A dream of flight

In his bedroom, laid out on his bed, were rows of photos detailing McGrady's war service and the other airmen he trained with as he prepared for combat.

For McGrady, life started in 1918, with his birth coinciding with the end of World War I — the war that was supposed to end all wars.

He got his first airplane ride when he was 12, a short flight that piqued his interest in being in the air.

His military career started in 1935 in the Ohio National Guard's 148th Infantry, 37th Division, where he rose to the rank of corporal before receiving an honorable discharge in 1939.

McGrady enlisted in the U.S. Army on Feb. 25, 1942, and later passed a test to enter the Army Corps Cadet School. After being shipped to Fort Bragg, N.C., McGrady was promoted to corporal and assigned to be a section leader and a field artillery basic training instructor.

That's how he spent the next 10 months before his transfer to Air Force pilot training school in Santa Ana, Calif.

There, he resigned his rank of flight officer while retaining his dream of flying as he took on a new assignment as an aerial gunnery instructor. McGrady taught two classes a day, five days a week, in the use of .50 caliber machine guns, .45 caliber pistols, .30 caliber rifles and .45 caliber submachine guns.

While training on an air base, McGrady said he felt safe, like it was the safest place in the world as a two-front war raged in Europe and the Pacific.

He had to serve as a teacher for two years before getting a chance to ask for a transfer.

"I wanted to do what I was teaching. I wanted to shoot the gun," McGrady said.

Beginnings on the bomber

It took a number of requests to Army Air Corps officials before McGrady was granted a release and attended a technical school in Denver. From there, he went to a different base and qualified as an armament specialist and gunner on a bomber air crew.

Finally, McGrady earned his Silver Wings and a promotion to the rank of sergeant.

He trained to fly on a B-24 Liberator bomber in Europe, a plane he described as massive, taking up to 10 men to fly it — the crew included two pilots, an engineer, navigator, bombardier, a radio operator and three-to-four gunners.

See MCGRADY, Page 6A

Lindsey man enters race for commissioner

CRAIG SHOUP
REPORTER

FREMONT - With two county commission seats up for grabs in the 2016 election, a Lindsey man with business management experience said he is running for office and wants to continue moving the county in right direction.

Russ Zimmerman, 63, announced Thursday night he would seek election to the Sandusky County commissioner seat to be vacated by Terry Thatcher, who said in August he would not seek re-election.

"Sandusky County has a lot to offer individuals and industry. I would like to help the county continue to manage its resources and to provide services that move our county forward," Zimmerman said.

He said the county is heading in the right direction and he sees no major issues plaguing the county, but wants to help improve the county's finances.

"I just want to run to make sure the commissioners are doing what they are supposed to do to promote business," Zimmerman said. "I've lived in Sandusky County my entire life and my family has six businesses in Sandusky County. I want to see the county continue to grow and provide a place helpful to small and large businesses as well as agri-business."

See RACE, Page 6A

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$2.00 retail

Race

Continued from Page 1A

The Lindsey resident joins Fremont Baptist Temple pastor Gary Click as the second Republican to seek one of the seats to be vacated by Thatcher and Dan Polter, who announced in August he would not seek re-election next year.

Sandusky County Republican Chairman Justin Smith expects several candidates to step forward between now and the March 15 primaries. The state filing deadline for declaring candidacy is Dec. 16.

"I imagine there will be contested Republican primaries for both seats," Smith said.

He has never held public office, Zimmerman has worked for Romanoff Electric in Toledo for 34 years, holding a management positions with the company the past 25 years.

Zimmerman will be retiring from the company in December 2016 as he seeks election. During his employment, Zimmerman said he served as vice president of estimating and project management and vice president of operations at Romanoff.

"Although I have not held a public office, I feel my career experience is well-suited for the commissioner's position. I would welcome the opportunity to serve the residents of Sandusky County as county commissioner," Zimmerman said in a news release.

Zimmerman said he considered running for commissioner in 2013 when Matt Damschroder resigned his position, but the timing was not right because he was still working in Toledo.

He has been involved with Lindsey Volunteer Fire Department, where he serves as its safety officer.

Zimmerman has served on the Washington Township Zoning Board of Appeals and the Lindsey Cemetery Association.

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McGrady

Continued from Page 1A

McGrady was 26 when he was assigned to the crew, the oldest man on the B-24.

His training missions took him all over the United States, with flights to Texas and California. It also exposed him to the very real dangers of leaving the ground for what might be seen as "routine" training missions.

The crew flew at different altitudes, McGrady said, with the temperatures at 32,000 feet dropping as low as 30 degrees below zero.

On one training mission, McGrady was forced to use some of his clothing to extinguish a fire while in flight.

There were two gasoline heaters on McGrady's bomber, he said, one on the plane's upper deck and another on the lower deck.

Fire in midair

A fire started in midair as the high-octane fuel ignited and flames burst three feet high from the top of the lower deck heater. McGrady was one of three airmen on the plane's lower deck when he heard the panicked call, "Fire! Fire!" come through one of the bomber crew's throat microphones.

As McGrady explained it, the fuel burned but was not explosive due to the plane's high altitude.

Still, the fire needed to be put out and the two younger men pleaded with McGrady to take charge of the situation.

"The old man had to do something," McGrady said. "I ripped off my heavy leather jacket and put the fire out. And they hugged me and said thank you. And we kept flying and we did not blow up and we did not have to land."

He recounted another mission where a training instructor with 50 combat missions under his belt came to observe McGrady's crew.

After McGrady demonstrated his ability with the plane's .50 caliber machine guns, the instructor told the sergeant to stay out of the way while he got a closer look at the rest of the crew during a training run.

McGrady found a spot and laid down by the B-24's three-foot high nose wheel, which could be extended in and out of the plane through hydraulic means.

The instructor moved on to examine the handiwork of a 6-foot tall airman test firing a gun out of the bomber's Sperry ball turret.

Without warning, a trap door for the nose wheel opened up and McGrady started to fall out of the plane.

"You will never understand what it feels like when something opens up and you're going three miles down, real quick," McGrady said.

He grabbed a part that supported the nose wheel and managed to pull himself back into the plane, so shaken he could hardly breathe.

Perhaps the Fremont veteran's most vivid war memory took place on a later mission to Texas — a training trip for officers that he didn't have to take.

McGrady said that despite being told he didn't have to go, he asked the pilot if he could tag along.

"I said, 'I like to fly. Is it okay if I go along for the ride?'" McGrady said.

Leaking liquid

McGrady sat alone in the fuselage for the Texas mission and the flight engineer asked him on the plane's intercom if he could check and see if the bomber's wheels were up on each side.

He said he checked the right side, then the left, where he saw a lot of liquid running from the plane's wing to the four engine exhausts.

"It could be water, it could be gasoline," McGrady remembered telling the engineer.

He quickly found out it was gasoline, as gallons of it quickly erupted into a wall of fire when they hit the plane's hot exhaust. The engineer told the pilot to turn around and take the plane back to base.

On board, McGrady said he didn't know how bad it was at the time. Then he saw the fire engines and crash crews following the plane as it headed toward a landing on the runway.

He said the pilot told him to open the hatch under the plane and run.

The plane landed safely and no one was hurt. A tearful McGrady said crew members hugged him and thanked him for noticing the gasoline leak.

"I didn't get no medal. I didn't need one. I just done my job," he said.

Not all of McGrady's war experiences were fraught with peril.

While in California, McGrady met two of the era's bigger celebrities—one a famous baseball player and the other one of the biggest Hollywood celebrities of the 1940s.

Meeting the stars

He met Joe DiMaggio, the great New York Yankees centerfielder, in Santa Ana at an Air Force base. McGrady said a lot of the country's top athletes had been assigned to the same base where he served as an aerial gunnery instructor.

At the time a corporal, McGrady noticed one of the athletes sitting on a bench and smoking a cigarette while the others exercised nearby.

The corporal wanted a cigarette, too, so he walked up, sat down on the bench and asked the athlete what sport he played.

"He said, 'Oh, I play a little baseball,'" McGrady said, smiling at the memory. The soldier eventually introduced himself as Sgt. Joe DiMaggio, although McGrady confessed he was more of a football fan.

McGrady said he asked DiMaggio about a car — a new 1941 Buick Roadmaster convertible — parked next to his in the base's parking lot. The baseball star acknowledged it was his ride and asked McGrady if he ever went to Hollywood. The corporal told the sergeant he went about once a week to go dancing at the American Legion.

DiMaggio replied that he went three times a week and asked McGrady if he wanted to ride with him.

McGrady said he asked the star player how he would get back to Santa Ana, some 40 miles away.

"'I don't know, because I don't know when I'm coming back,'" DiMaggio replied, so McGrady never took him up on the offer.

His encounter with Betty Grable only lasted a minute or so, with McGrady summoning up the courage to walk up and ask her to take a photo with him at the base.

An officer told him he and 99,000 other troops wouldn't get within 200 yards of the actress, McGrady recalled with a grin.

Up for the challenge, he walked up to Grable, introduced himself, and asked if he could get a photo with her next to her Jeep.

"She said, 'Why don't you put your arm around me?' I said, 'I won't object.' So I did," McGrady said, looking at the photo in his Fremont bedroom.

Friends lost

With the amount of airmen he trained during the war, McGrady said it was tough to keep track of people, where they were going and where they ended up after the war.

Normally animated, McGrady turned quiet as he acknowledged the loss of three men he was close to, all of them casualties of the war.

He said he misses Robert McGrady, who died in the Battle of the Bulge, Mike Zwir, whose ship was sunk in the South China Sea, and Rodger Young, the celebrated Congressional Medal of Honor winner and Sandusky County native who died in combat on New Guinea in 1943.

The war in Europe ended as his crew's training concluded stateside. McGrady switched gears and prepared to be sent to the Pacific theater. On his way to California to join a new B-24 bomber crew for an attack on Japan, McGrady found out the atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Japanese had surrendered.

He received an honorable discharge three months later, near the tail end of 1945.

After the war, his mission locally has been as an unofficial ambassador and advocate for Sandusky County veterans.

His personal mantra remains, "You have not failed until you have tried," and McGrady maintains a high profile in the community with his signature white cowboy hat, paisley tie and satin Corvette jacket.

Go to any parade in downtown Fremont and there is a chance McGrady will be there, riding on the back on one of his two black El Caminos and dressed in one of the uniforms he kept from the war.

As he approaches 100, McGrady says he has done everything he can to honor the veterans of World War II in Sandusky County.

"There always has to be the last man. I was chosen," McGrady said.

dacarson@gannett.com

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WORLD WAR II: IN THEIR OWN WORDS



PHOTOS BY MOLLY CORFMAN/GANNETT OHIO

James Reardon, 90, served in World War II on a U.S. Navy troop transport ship in the Pacific Ocean.

Reardon served in toughest spots

Was Navy storekeeper aboard USS Mellette

DANIEL CARSON
REPORTER

FREMONT- James Reardon spent long days during World War II as a Navy storekeeper aboard the USS Mellette, a 450-foot-long troop attack transport ship.

But he still found time to write letters — primarily to his sister, Alice.

Those letters from Reardon captured moments in time that placed him in many memorable locations of the Pacific war theater: Iwo Jima, Nagasaki and Tokyo Bay.

His sister lived in Fremont and Port Clinton during the war. Reardon talked to her about the day-to-day routine aboard his ship and offered what observations he could on the war in the Pacific and his job. He asked how things were at home.

The letters also showed a young man still in his teens who took in all of the popular movies of the era, sent money home to his family and got to see a part of the world he might not otherwise have seen.

"She kept all of my letters. I didn't have any room to keep hers," said Reardon, 90, as he talked about his three years of service during the war at Fremont's Bethany Place senior apartment community.

Reardon is humble as he looks back on his military service, insisting "nothing traumatic" happened to him.

But as a 19-year-old sailor in 1945, Reardon's ship served as an auxiliary hospital station for wounded troops extracted from the Battle of Iwo Jima.

Like other sailors on the ship he filled multiple roles, which included firing anti-aircraft guns at Japanese kamikaze pilots during the Iwo Jima and Okinawa battles.

Reardon also saw the aftermath in Nagasaki, where the U.S. dropped a second atomic bomb and hastened the end of the war, and he watched from his ship as the Japanese formally sur-

See REARDON, Page 2A



James Reardon, World War II Navy veteran, holds his dog tags and a piece of shrapnel that he found on his ship.

World War II: In Their Own Words

James Reardon is the second in a series of five local World War II veterans to be profiled by the News-Messenger and the News Herald in honor of Veterans Day. Reporter Daniel Carson and Photojournalist Molly Corfman capture their stories, from serving on the front lines to flying fighter planes to being captured by the enemy, in print, photos and videos.

Local tragedy gives new life to Galion woman

MARK CAUDILL
REPORTER

GALION - Pat Heffernan received a lifesaving phone call on Nov. 4, 2014.

A lung transplant coordinator contacted Heffernan while she was enjoying her morning coffee.

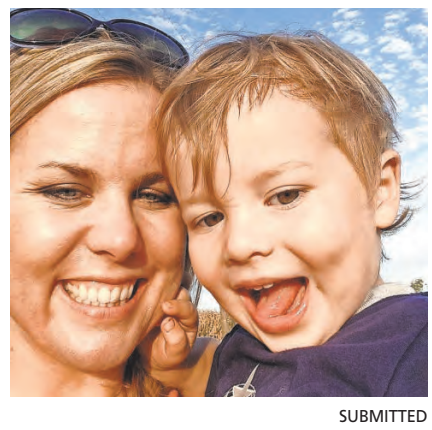
"She asked what I was doing. I said I was drinking a cup of coffee. She said, 'Dump it out,' " Heffernan said.

Heffernan learned later her donor was a young mother from Clyde who had died unexpectedly.

Heffernan rushed to the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, where she underwent a lung transplant. She spent 10 days in the hospital and more than five weeks in what she called a "grown-up Ronald McDonald House."

A Galion native, Heffernan was a longtime nurse. She also formerly served as the director of the Lexington Senior Civic Center. She talked about the lung transplant on the one-year anniversary of the operation.

In July 2010, Heffernan got sick with what she suspected was a sinus infection.



SUBMITTED

Sarah Crawford and her son Jack before her death in 2014.

"I was very short of breath," she said.

Trips to the doctor and taking antibiotics didn't help. She eventually went to the Cleveland Clinic for a lung biopsy. Heffernan was diagnosed with bronchiolitis obliterans, a fixed airway obstruction that causes severe shortness of breath and a dry cough.

After three years of treatment, including two and a half years of being on oxygen 24/7, Heffernan had experienced enough.

"I told my husband that I was not going back, that I was going to let nature take its course," she said.

Without a transplant, doctors expected Heffernan to live six to 12 months.

Heffernan did later take an appointment with a pulmonary doctor, who suggested she try OSU. She met with her current doctor in January 2014.

OSU had recently reopened its lung program when Heffernan became a patient.

"It was really fortunate timing," said Jessica Petersen, media and public relations coordinator for Lifeline of Ohio.

According to Lifeline of Ohio, there are 3,342 people waiting for an organ

See LUNG, Page 3A

FENTANYL A SECRET PROBLEM

Ohio investigators seek answers to laced heroin

JONA ISON
GANNETT OHIO

Every week, the Marion City Fire Department makes someone angry because they saved their life.

With an estimated three calls for drug overdoses a week, Assistant Fire Chief Chuck Deem said his crew rarely bats an eye at the call, the fact they typically save the person's life, or the anger fueled by the person's rapid shift into side effects of withdrawal.

That routine escalated in May when powerful fentanyl-laced heroin, called blue drop for a dye added to it, hit the streets, sending them to upwards of six overdose calls a day.

"During the blue drop situation, I saw the guys get frustrated, and I had to give a pep talk to pull them back in," Deem said.

The scenario is one playing out more and more across the state. Not only did preliminary Ohio Department of Health data reveal a nearly sixfold increase in the number of fentanyl-related overdoses in 2014, but this month a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention health alert noted Ohio labs had the most positive results for fentanyl in the nation last year. Ohio had 1,245 fentanyl-related seizures in 2014, nearly two times more than runner-up Massachusetts.

The rapid, drastic increase of fentanyl and its deadly effect across the state has prompted some legislators to craft a bill that would increase the punishment for possessing and trafficking fentanyl or fentanyl-laced heroin.

For Deem's team, the fentanyl — which is 30 to 50 times more powerful than heroin — overdoses required two to three doses of naloxone to reverse.

"Even then they weren't waking up and being completely out of the woods like we would see with a routine overdose," Deem said.

Unlike the overprescribing of opioid pain killers that led to the heroin issue, this newest twist isn't being caused by prescribed fentanyl, a synthetic opiate typically used to manage severe pain or manage pain after surgery. This fentanyl is being made in secret labs.

While no fentanyl labs have been found in Ohio, Scott Duff, who heads the heroin unit for the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, said it's not a stretch to think one might be operating quietly in the Buckeye state.

"Our lab submissions are off the charts. This is really powerful heroin," Duff said. "If your body is used to low-grade powder heroin, this fentanyl heroin really wreaks havoc."

Chasing a high

Fentanyl's potency is not only what makes it so deadly, but also in high demand. As addiction progresses, a person's tolerance level for the drug increases.

"When a heroin addict uses, they're not necessarily getting high; they're maintaining to prevent themselves from getting sick," Duff said. "They look for fentanyl because they can get a high

See FENTANYL, Page 3A

"Our lab submissions are off the charts. This is really powerful heroin."

SCOTT DUFF
OHIO BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

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LOCAL WEATHER

TODAY
HIGH: 57
LOW: 44
Mostly sunny

TUESDAY
HIGH: 53
LOW: 36
A bit of morning rain

WEDNESDAY
HIGH: 57
LOW: 47
Mostly sunny and mild

THURSDAY
HIGH: 54
LOW: 41
Windy with a shower

FRIDAY
HIGH: 48
LOW: 37
Mostly sunny and windy

ALMANAC

Through 4 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURES
High..... **53**
Low..... **30**

PRECIPITATION
24 hrs..... **0.00"**

SUN & MOON

Today's sunrise/sunset:
7:13 a.m./5:19 p.m.
Today's moonrise/moonset:
5:03 a.m./4:30 p.m.

New	First	Full	Last
Nov 11	Nov 19	Nov 25	Dec 3

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Zephyrhills, FL..... **91°**
West Yellowstone, MT ..... **3°**

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LOTTERIES

SUNDAY'S NUMBERS

Pick 3 (D): 4-6-9
Pick 4 (D): 3-6-7-7
Pick 5 (D): 7-1-3-6-7
Rolling Cash 5: 1-17-21-37-38
Pick 3: 2-3-7
Pick 4: 9-0-1-5
Pick 5: 2-6-2-6-9

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OBITUARIES

Obituaries and photographs submitted to the Fremont News Messenger may be published, distributed, repurposed and otherwise used in print, electronic and other media platforms.

Vincent Wasserman

HELENA: Vincent Wasserman, age 73, of Helena, passed away on Sunday, November 8, 2015 at Valley View Healthcare Center, Fremont.

Arrangements are entrusted to the Herman-Veh Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Gibsonburg.

Ronald Whisler

FREMONT: Ronald Whisler, age 83, of Fremont, passed away on Saturday, November 7, 2015 at the ProMedica Toledo Hospital.

Arrangements are entrusted to the Herman-Karlovetz Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Fremont.

Louis R. Marquez



FREMONT: Louis R. Marquez, 87, of Fremont, OH passed away on November 6, 2015 at his home.

He was born on January 11, 1928 in Chicago, IL the son of Jose and Rita (Razo) Marquez. He served in the US Army during WWII from 1946-1948. He received the WWII Victory Medal and Army Occupation Medal Japan.

Louis married Marilyn R. Penn on May 26, 1972 and she preceded him in death on January 9, 2013. He was the General Manager at Howard Zinc Company for over 20 years until he retired. Louis was a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and a Life Member of the V.F.W. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge and Moose Lodge where he received many awards for his newsletters.

Louis is survived by his brother, J. Frank (Sherri) Marquez, Chicago, IL; children, Louis Marquez, Jr. and Rita "Linda" Petrie both of Phoenix, AZ and Stephen Marquez, Florida; several grandchildren and great grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his parents; wife, Marilyn Marquez; son, Michael Marquez; and sister, Reina.

Visitation: Monday from 7 to 9 p.m. at Wonderly Horvath Hanes Funeral Home and Crematory, 425 E. State St., Fremont, OH. Service: Tuesday, November 10, 2015; 10:00 a.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 206 N. Park Ave., Fremont, OH with and hour of visitation prior to the service at the church. Burial: Oakwood Cemetery, Fremont, OH with military honors provided by the VFW and American Legion.

Memorials: St. Paul's Episcopal

Online condolences may be expressed at www.whhfh.com

William E. Sheets





FREMONT: William E. Sheets, 77, of Fremont, passed away peacefully at his home on Friday, November 6, 2015 from complications related to Lewy Body Dementia.

Bill was born December 14, 1937 in "Houston Holler, over the hill from Candy Run" (near Portsmouth, Ohio) the son of Roy and Lillie (Walker) Sheets. He was a 1957 Ross High Graduate and went on to attend The Ohio State University.

He entered into Basic training Ft. Benning in 1959 and served in the Reserves until 1964.

Bill worked alongside his brother Dave at Warner Mechanical as part of the Local 50. In 1984, an opportunity presented itself and together the brothers established Sheets Supply Inc. He was described as a "Jack of All Trades" able to do it all, quick to give his time, labor and expertise to anyone in need, never expecting the favor returned.

On July 2, 1983 he married Diane Mitchell Binder in Wayne, Ohio. He was a member of Old Fort United Methodist Church and attended the Walk To Emmaus in 1996. Bill enjoyed boating, traveling, racecar driving at Speedway, snowmobiling and dirt bikes. He also was an avid golfer achieving Ace status at Sycamore and Green Hills for a hole in one at each course.

As Vice Commodore of the Fremont Yacht Club, Bill worked diligently with his brother to restore the clubhouse and increase membership, providing others the opportunity to share in his passion of boating and friendship.

Few things brought life to Bill like his family especially his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Even in his death Bill has made the choice to continue helping others. His brain has been donated for research to the Lewy Body Dementia Association in hopes of a cure.

Surviving is his wife of 32 years, Diane Sheets of Fremont, OH; children: Susan Sheets, Jennifer (Tony) Hotz, Cindi Flores and their mother, Nancy Fowler Park all of Fremont, OH; Kendra (Peter) Ochs of Vickery, OH; Karrie (Daniel Madrigal) Ruiz, Nicole (Michael) Willis both of Fremont, OH; Stephen (Lisa) Sheets of Amherst, OH; Jeffrey (Tana) Sheets of Arizona; Michael (Renee) Sheets of Strongsville, OH and Rick (Nikeata) Sheets of Arizona; 25 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; brother, Virgle (Sandra) Sheets of Ft. Myers, FL; sisters, Audrey (Al) Krock of Gates, NC; Phyllis (David) Buehler of Fremont, OH; Betty (Jim) Fick of Hilton Head, SC.

He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers, Dearl, Roy Jr., David and infant sister, Carolyn.

Visitation will take place on Monday, November 9, 2015 from 2-4 and 5-8P.M. at Keller-Koch-Chudzinski Funeral Home, 416 S. Arch Street, Fremont, OH. Funeral Services will begin at 11:00 A.M. on Tuesday, November 10, at Hayes Memorial United Methodist Church, 1441 Fangboner Rd., Fremont, OH, with additional visitation beginning at 10:00A.M. Pastor Marc Quinter will officiate. Committal services will follow at Oakwood Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to: Lewy Body Dementia Association, Heartland Hospice or School of Hope. Online condolences may be expressed at www.kokm.net

POLICE LOG

SANDUSKY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SATURDAY

CHARGED

» 2:06 a.m., a man was charged with domestic violence after an incident in the 7300 block of Ohio 101.

FREMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUNDAY

CHARGED

» 2:10 a.m., a 26 year old Napoleon man was charged with improper transportation of a firearm after officers located a loaded and accessible Hi-Point handgun in his vehicle during a traffic stop at Arch Street near W. State Street.

» 12:07 p.m., Deborah A. Cherry, 64, Fremont was charged with aggravated menacing in the 700 block of Kentucky Avenue after her nephew claimed she threatened to get a gun and shoot him. She was transported to the Sandusky County Jail.

SATURDAY

CRASH

» 8:09 a.m., a hit-and-skip crash was reported in the 1200 block of Sycamore Street.

THEFT

» 8:27 a.m., a bike was reported stolen in the 700 block of Castalia Road.

» 8:34 a.m., a cell phone was reported stolen in the 200 block of Sandusky Avenue, with investigation pending.

CHARGED

» 1:09 p.m., a 33 year old Fremont man was charged with intoxicated disorderly conduct and criminal trespass after he was found wandering into an apartment in the 700 block of S. Buchanan Street.

Reardon

Continued from Page 1A

rendered in Tokyo Bay.

TRAINING

He said he was influenced to go into the Navy by a man he worked for at Falquette's Drug Store in Fremont.

The store owner had served in the Navy and had a son in that branch of service, and Reardon said the man promoted the Navy to everyone he could.

Reardon graduated from high school when he was 17. Given the choice of being drafted or enlisting, Reardon chose enlistment so he could pick his branch of service.

"Like all young men, you didn't realize what that meant," Reardon said of joining the Navy and his part in supporting the U.S. military in World War II as it fought a two-front world war.

In September 1943, Reardon reported for duty in the U.S. Navy at Chiacgo's Great Lakes Naval Training Station.

After he attended boot camp, Reardon went to service school in Toledo to learn how to be a storekeeper on a ship.

His training continued in Seattle with a crew selected for the Mellette before he set out for the Pacific.

ON-BOARD DUTIES

As a storekeeper, Reardon kept the ship's payroll, made payments to sailors aboard the Mellette and kept money for troops to either save for later or send home to their families.

"A lot of them at sea didn't draw their pay," Reardon said.

When the Marines were aboard the ship, Reardon and the other Mellette personnel tried to take care of troops' needs. This included giving them Japanese occupation money when they went ashore into Japan after the end of the war, Reardon said.

There were 450 men on board with Reardon. He said the ship could carry 1,500 troops if needed.

When it transported troops, the Mellette sent out a boat crew that took Marines ashore in small boats.

Reardon said there also was a "beach party" that directed traffic on the beach when troops departed from the boats.

There also were assigned battle stations on-board for Reardon and other Mellette sailors, where they manned anti-aircraft guns against Japanese air raids.

In addition to his storekeeper duties, Reardon was also a gunner and used a 20 millimeter anti-aircraft gun.

At Okinawa, Reardon said he and other men fired on Japanese kamikaze pilots as they buzzed around the ship.

"We never hit one of them," Reardon said.

IWO JIMA

The Battle of Iwo Jima lasted from Feb. 19 to March 26, 1945, with American Marines landing on the island and eventually defeating the Japanese Army.

At Iwo Jima, battle casualties were brought on board, with the Mellette serving as an auxiliary hospital ship, Reardon said.

"They treated the ones they could," Reardon said. Marines with more serious injuries were transported to Guam for further treatment.

The men who didn't survive on the ship were buried at sea, Reardon said, with a corpsman enclosing the deceased in a weighted canvas bag, putting them on a plank at the ship's edge and dropping the bodies into the water.

A sailor played "Taps" during the burial ceremony.

In a March 24, 1945, letter to his sister, Reardon mentioned the radio report he heard from Tokyo Rose regarding the Iwo Jima battle. Tokyo Rose was a Japanese propagandist who broadcast radio programs aimed at American troops.

Reardon wrote that he and other sailors seldom got to listen to a radio, and when he did, it was usually Tokyo Rose or "some other Japanese fanatic."

"While we were at Iwo Jima, Tokyo Rose reported that Iwo Jima had been invaded but that the invaders were driven away and while we were yet on our way there she reported the same thing," Reardon wrote.

He explained his ship's transport duties at Iwo Jima and what sailors were doing to serve the wounded to Alice in an April 17 letter.

"We took Marines to Iwo Jima, unloaded them and their cargo and waited there until we got a good load of casualties. I think we had about 450 of them to take back to our operating base with us. That was the worst part of the whole affair, watching them come aboard and leaving," Reardon wrote.

"All hands helped to feed them three times a day. I helped carry them off the ship the first day we got in port. Five of them we never took into port."

NAGASAKI

For an extended period in 1945, Reardon could not tell Alice where he had been on the Melette after Iwo Jima due to wartime censorship rules.

He informed her of this in an Aug. 13 letter, but Reardon told her he hoped to be able to tell her soon.

By Sept. 26, Reardon told Alice in detail about Nagasaki, which was bombed by the U.S. Aug. 9, 1945.

The Mellette went into the city's bay, but avoided the blast area of the atomic bomb dropped in August. Reardon wrote his sister that there were a lot of beached and sunken Japanese ships in Nagasaki's harbor.

He said he had heard the area around the atomic blast had been leveled down to a pile of rubble.

"The buildings outside of the (blast) area are all leaning away from the blast with many of their walls down. Even here all the windows are broken," Reardon wrote.

Seventy years later, Reardon described the city as a mess.

"I didn't go ashore. They wouldn't let us go ashore," Reardon said, adding, "The devastation in the harbor was amazing."

COURT MARTIAL FOR COMMANDING OFFICERS

While in Tokyo Bay, an admiral boarded the Mellette to conduct an investigation of the ship's captain and executive officer and their treatment of the men.

Admiral Kelly Turner, commander of the Amphibious Force, South Pacific Force, led the investigation

Reardon said the officers were court-martialed for mistreating men on the ship. He said an article written in the Christian Science Monitor about the mistreatment of the Mellette's personnel spurred the naval investigation.

While on board the ship, men were denied chances for liberty (recreation). Reardon said any little infraction resulted in sailors being thrown in the brig with only bread and water for meals.

"Yes, it was," Reardon said, when asked if the newspaper story was true. "Conditions on the ship were a lot better after that (court martial)."

Admiral Turner also took part in the formal Japanese surrender ceremony, which took place on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

"That's why we were still there when the treaty was signed," Reardon said.

While his ship anchored far away from the Missouri in Tokyo Bay, Reardon said he could make out in the distance the boats bringing American and Japanese dignitaries to the Missouri.

He said he could see all of the Missouri's sailors decked out in their dress white uniforms as they stood at attention during the surrender ceremony.

JAPANESE SURRENDER, END OF WAR

The Japanese signed the surrender treaty on the USS Missouri on Sept. 2, 1945. Reardon's naval service lasted through May 1946.

The Navy veteran kept a few mementos from the war, including Japanese occupation money and a piece of shrapnel that fell on the Mallette's deck during a firefight.

He said he didn't know if the shrapnel came from American or Japanese guns.

His service continued after the war when the Mellette brought returning troops from Manila to Seattle.

He made another trip back to Okinawa to get returning troops as part of what he called the "Magic Carpet," the transport of eligible U.S. troops back home for discharge.

Each trip, the Mellette brought back about 1,500 troops, Reardon said.

Reardon eventually crossed the Panama Canal aboard the Mellette, with the ship put into the Navy's reserve fleet in Yorktown, Va.

Here, Reardon wrote one of his last letters from the service to Alice on March 4, 1946. He talked about getting a copy of the Feb. 28, 1946 News-Messenger and wondered aloud what he would do once he got out of the Navy.

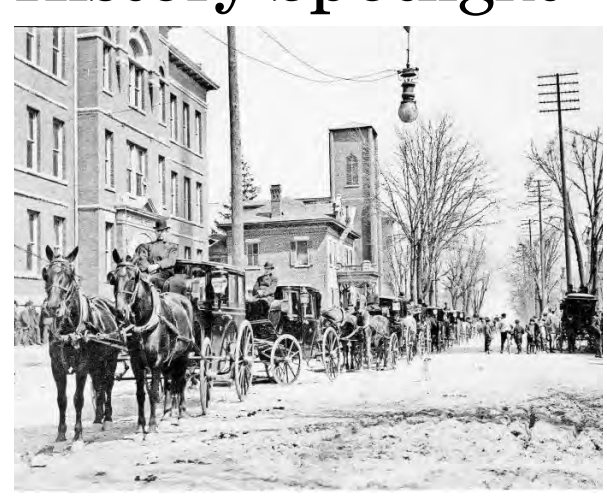
"I'll have to see what kind of business I can start when I get out. I'm still undecided as to what I will do," Reardon wrote.

He returned to Great Lakes Naval Station, where he received his honorable discharge from the Navy.

"I was just glad to get home again," Reardon said, adding, "That was quite an experience for a 17, 18 year old man, to go right in and be involved in invasions and stuff like that."

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History Spotlight



LARRY MICHAELS
AND KRIS MICHAELS

A single street light hangs over the intersection of Croghan and Wood Street, as this long funeral procession travels west past St. Joseph's 1908 school and 1857 First Church building. The large funeral was probably for beloved priest Seraphin Bauer on April 6, 1911.

HISTORY

Becky Duncan makes it come alive for young people, Local 3A



ROCKET GIRLS TABBED TO WIN SBC

Sports 6A

The News-Messenger

TUESDAY, 11.10.15 || FREMONT, OHIO || A GANNETT COMPANY || THENEWS-MESSENGER.COM

New park coming to Ballville



MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Ballville Township trustee Bob Kusmer, from right, Allen Fore, vice president of public affairs for Kinder Morgan, and Ballville Township trustee Dave Stotz view the site of the new 35-acre park.

Kinder Morgan donates $100,000 for project

DANIEL CARSON
REPORTER

BALLVILLE TOWNSHIP - Trustees got a boost to their plans for a new park, recreation facility and community center Monday, as energy company Kinder Morgan donated $100,000 to the township for its nature-themed project.

Bob Kusmer, a Ballville Township trustee, said the township plans to create a 35-acre park near the Tindall Bridge, a project that has been in the making for more than a decade. Ballville Township already has $60,000 on hand and is applying for wetlands grants, Kusmer said.

Kusmer said construction will start in the spring of 2016 on the lower area of the park to create the meadow areas, walking trails and wetland ponds.

"This is hopefully the start of a new park for the township. We're very excited about it," Kusmer said.

The park will be named Chudzinski Johannsen Park and will be dedicated to Katheryn Chudzinski and Marie Johannsen. Ballville Township purchased the 35 acres in 2006 with a Clean Ohio Conservation Fund grant.

In an email, Kusmer said he and fellow trustee Dave Stotz agreed to work with Kinder Morgan regarding the company's proposed natural gas pipeline that would cross the park. He said he had numerous meetings with Kinder Morgan officials over the past year in regards to the park.

"It's a real shot in the arm to us," Stotz said of the donation.

Kinder Morgan presented the check Monday.

See PARK, Page 3A

WORLD WAR II: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

FIGHTER PILOT MAKES HIS MARK



PHOTOS BY MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Harold H. Brown, 91, Tuskegee Airman, holds a picture of himself at 20 years old after he returned home from the war.

Trailblazer overcame many obstacles to achieve his dream

About the Series

Harold Brown is the third in a series of five local World War II veterans to be profiled by the News-Messenger and the News Herald in honor of Veterans Day. Reporter Daniel Carson and Photojournalist Molly Corfman capture their stories, from serving on the front lines to flying fighter planes to being captured by the enemy, in print, photos and videos. On Wednesday, we chronicle Charles Holcomb, a B-24 nose gunner that survived the his time as a prisoner of war in the infamous "Black March."

DANIEL CARSON
REPORTER

CATAWBA ISLAND - To realize his dream of becoming a World War II combat fighter pilot, Harold Brown had to overcome the steep obstacles of institutionalized racism and segregation in his time.

Once he achieved his dream, earned his Silver Wings and became a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen, the trailblazer faced a life-and-death challenge behind enemy lines.

Brown bailed out of his badly damaged plane on his 30th mission — a strafing run near Linz, Austria, in the winter of 1945 — only to be taken prisoner and threatened by a group of angry villagers.

"I knew I was going to die," Brown said, remembering the mob of angry, German-speaking villagers that surrounded him.

He survived the mob and two months as a prisoner of war near the end of the war in

See BROWN, Page 4A



Harold H. Brown holds a model of the P-51 C Mustang, the plane he flew as a WWII combat fighter in Europe.

ANALYSIS



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

John Kasich, left, has called out Donald Trump, Ben Carson and Jeb Bush — but not Marco Rubio.

Kasich, Rubio may be a GOP dream for 2016 ticket

CHRISSIE THOMPSON
GANNETT OHIO

CINCINNATI - John Kasich is calling out Donald Trump and Ben Carson, and, on occasion, Jeb Bush . But so far, he's laid off Marco Rubio. And so far, Rubio is reciprocating.

It may not be intentional, and it may not last forever. But the truce of sorts between the two presidential candidates evokes the sentiment of Republican donors, operatives and random people at countless campaign rallies: Wouldn't a Rubio-Kasich ticket — or a Kasich-Rubio alliance, for that matter — make for a formidable 2016 team?

"It's one of the possible alliances that are starting to emerge in conversations among political operatives and corporate executives," said Ron Bonjean, a GOP strategist who now works in corporate consulting. "Rubio has been

See DREAM, Page 3A

Watch the GOP debate

Kasich once again sneaked into the main GOP debate, where a stricter national polling threshold has limited the stage to eight candidates. The prime-time debate, taking place in Milwaukee, airs from 9 to 11 p.m. on the Fox Business Network and FoxBusiness.com.



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Brown

Continued from Page 1A

Europe.

Brown, 91, was a Tuskegee Airman, a member of a select group of African-American fighter pilots that broke down barriers and played a significant role in President Harry S. Truman's decision to desegregate the Armed Forces in 1948 (the Air Force became integrated in 1949).

“I was absolutely determined,” Brown said of wanting to be a combat pilot, as he talked about his career with the Tuskegee Airmen's Red Tails, the U.S. Air Force and how he overcame prejudice to become a part of one of the military's most celebrated 20th century stories.

START AS A PILOT

With the Tuskegee Airmen, Brown was a member of the 332nd Fighter Group. The fighter group protected bombers with the 15th Air Force, and was one of six fighter groups charged with escorting the bombers into Germany, Austria and southern Europe.

Brown's first combat mission took place June 6, 1944.

It proved to be the culmination of years of Brown wanting to fly and pursuing his dream, despite having no college education and a political system that did not embrace the idea of African-Americans serving as combat fighter pilots.

“I just fell in love with the idea of flying,” Brown said.

When he was young, Brown started building model airplanes until he was in high school

He signed up for flying lessons at 16 at the airport in Minneapolis, his hometown. Brown was a junior in high school at the time and he saved up money — $35 — for five lessons through his job as a soda jerk.

"Back in those days, it took a long time to save 35 bucks," Brown joked, noting that he tells school children the $35 would be the equivalent of $775 today.

Those first five lessons consisted of learning the basics in a Piper Cub, which Brown described as holding a 65 horsepower engine and reaching speeds of 65 to 70 miles per hour.

Brown worked on keepiing the plane straight and level in the air, one of the fundamental skills he learned during those lessons.

There had been a requirement that anyone going into military flight training needed to be a college graduate, he said.

Brown was 17 when he graduated from high school in 1942, something he said was not uncommon at that time.

He said the pool of available pilots became very dry by the time World War II started, with not very many college graduates and a shortage of eligible men who could fly a plane.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced the start of the Civilian Pilot Training Program in December 1938, and it was offered to a couple hundred colleges beginning in 1939, including six historically black colleges and universities, according to the U.S. Centennial of Flight Commission.

The inclusion of Tuskegee Institute in the ranks of CPTP participants, along with Hampton Institute, Virginia State University and Howard University, helped open the doors for the first African-American military pilots, including Brown.

“The whole idea was to give them basic flight training,” Brown said.

When he graduated from high school in 1942, Brown immediately applied for flight school.

Brown was accepted and went to Biloxi for six weeks of training in January 1943.

TRAINING AT TUSKEGEE

After he finished training in Biloxi, Brown moved on to the Tuskegee Institute as part of a college training detachment in March 1943.

There, he went through four phases of flight training — pre-flight, primary, basic and advanced — as well as classroom studies in math, physics and English.

Brown said his two favorite subjects in high school were math and physics.

The Tuskegee Airmen came into existence in January 1941 by order of the War Department. Brown said prior to the group's creation, politicians felt blacks didn’t have the intelligence to be pilots.

Brown and his fellow trainees learned their craft at Tuskegee Army Air Field — about eight miles north of Tuskegee Institute — with an additional 10 weeks of training.

Brown became an aviation cadet, and he said the focus of his training changed with a heavier emphasis on flying planes.

When cadets weren’t flying, they were in ground school. where Brown said he and the other students learned about code, weather, basic physics and aerodynamics.

Primary flight training was done in the PT-17, Brown said, and he completed the cadet program with 60 hours in the air.

Forty of 60 cadets completed the program. Brown said there were times when he wondered if he would get through the program.

“After your first few hours, they had a way of humbling you,” Brown said of his African-American instructors at Tuskegee, adding, “We got excellent instruction and they really tried Brownto save as many of us as they could. But there were standards. And they hold us to those standards."

In basic flight training, Brown flew a B-13 Volte Vibrator, a low-wing airplane with fixed landing gear and a 450 HP engine.

He said he and the other pilots-in-training flew with their instructors until they were confident enough to fly solo.

"Most of us were flying solo in three or four hours," Brown said.

Basic flight training consisted of 60 hours of instruction, including formation flying, night flying and acrobatics.

Advanced flight training involved flying the T-6 aircraft, a plane with retractable gear and 650 HP engine with the ability to load a .30-caliber gun.

Brown said he was later introduced to gunnery at Elgin Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

SERVICE WITH THE 332nd FIGHTER GROUP IN EUROPE

At 19, Brown graduated from flight training and got his Silver Wings as a second lieutenant. He described the feeling as being "head over heels."

“If I didn’t feel that way, the general public made you feel that way,” Brown said. “We were the greatest things in the world.”

Brown served in the European theater, flying 30 missions with the 332nd Fighter Group and escorting bombers on raids over several cities, including Munich.

He went overseas in a big convoy, spending 32 days on a ship as it wound its way through the Strait of Gibraltar.

In Europe, Brown and his fellow Red Tails flew the P-51 C Mustang, a plane that has been restored and now flies around the country as part of the Rise Above Exhibit.

PRISONER OF WAR

On Brown's 12th mission, he had the first of two crash landings as a pilot. His P-51 got tangled up with a twin-engine German jet, his first encounter with a German jet.

The German planes were about 100 mph faster than the P-51, but not as maneuverable, Brown said.

Brown said the German jet was in his gun sights and he followed the plane down. Meanwhile, the Germans were returning fire from the ground.

"Everything that had a bullet in it, they're shooting at us," Brown recalled.

Brown's P-51 ran out of fuel and he had to find a place to put it down. He made an emergency landing in a four-foot ditch next to an abandoned 2,000-foot air strip, with the P-51 breaking in half.

"Any (crash) landing you can walk away from is a good landing. And I did it with a 2,000-foot strip," Brown said.

He wasn't so fortunate in early 1945 on his 30th mission, when his aircraft was badly damaged by a collision with a locomotive and Brown had to bail out of the plane.

A couple of constables took him prisoner and paraded him to a nearby village.

SAVED BY A CONSTABLE

As he faced an angry village of Austrians, Brown didn't speak or understand any German. But he could figure out what they wanted to do to him. He was the pilot who minutes earlier had been strafing their homes in his P-51.

"They wanted to kill me. There wasn't a doubt in their minds and they made it clear," Brown said, remembering the anger in the villagers' voices and their poking at him with ski poles.

"There I was, a POW and looking like this and I just shot up the place on a strafing mission," Brown said.

Another constable arrived and intervened on Brown's behalf against the mob.

Brown vividly remembered the lone constable putting a round in his rifle chamber, standing between Brown and the villagers and holding off the mob of people.

Decades later, Brown said he still tells the story to people and asks them to imagine the lone constable holding off the mob of 30 to 35 people, people who were his friends and relatives, and saving the American's life.

"Still, he said no," Brown said.

The constable and Brown retreated a couple of blocks to a pub, where they barricaded themselves inside for protection against the crowd. Around midnight, they went out the back door and walked a few miles to the next village. Brown then spent two months as a prisoner of war.

LEGACY AS A TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

The Congressional Gold Medal was awarded to the Tuskegee Airmen as a group on March 29, 2007. Brown was there to receive the honor with other Tuskegee colleagues. As he and the others walked out of the Capitol rotunda, they picked up their medals.

As the Ottawa County resident sat in his living room recently, he acknowledged that he and the other World War II veterans still around were rapidly decreasing in numbers.

"Within the next five or six years, there will be very few around," Brown said.

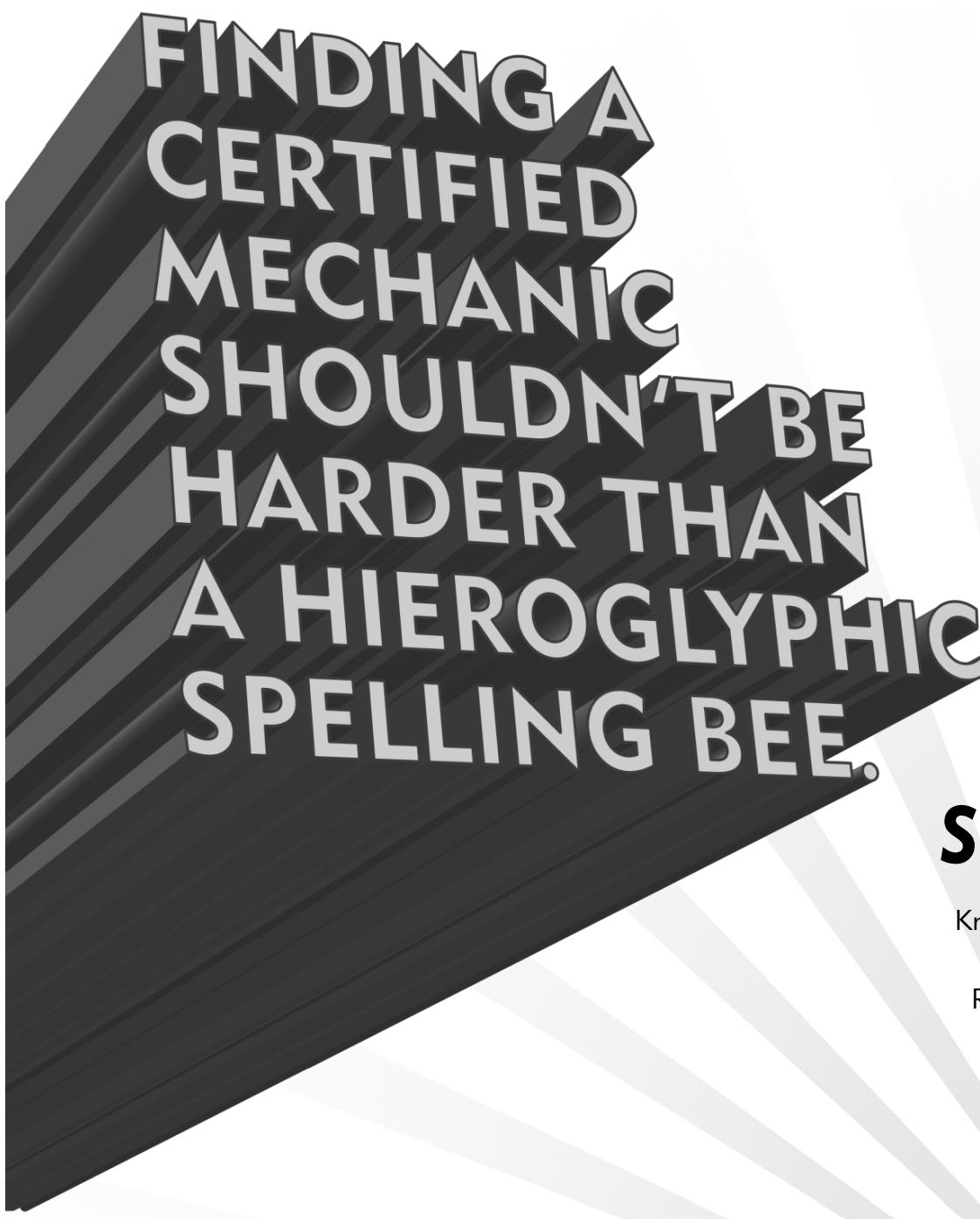
The story of the Tuskegee Airmen has been made into a major Hollywood motion picture, "Red Tails," released in 2012 with George Lucas as director and executive producer.

Brown still does periodic speaking engagements at schools and historical/aviation museums, sharing his story and those of the other Tuskegee Airmen — stories still relevant to new generations.

He served in the Air Force until 1965, retiring as a lieutenant colonel. Brown said he will always be known for his service between the ages of 17 and 20.

"I am known for the three years I was a Tuskegee Airman. I'll always be a Tuskegee Airman," he said.

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The News-Messenger

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Veterans assembly brings tears to eyes

JON STINCHCOMB
REPORTER

FREMONT - The annual Veterans Day Assembly organized by the leadership class at Fremont Ross High School offered a new perspective, one that brought tears to the eyes of the speakers and spectators alike on more than one occasion.

"The purpose of Veterans Day is to show our appreciation to those who are the most deserving," said Dominique Darr, a senior. "Veterans are the pillars of our society and without them we would fall."

Darr outlined the freedoms made possible only by the sacrifices of U.S. military veterans, including even the ability to hold such an assembly.

"They write history with each battle they fight, changing the textbooks with their every action," said Henry Nguyen, a senior. "Today we gather to celebrate the achievements and appreciate the sacrifices of our veterans."

He said these men and women have always chosen to carry the burden, the price of freedom, for Americans back home.

"Knowing how they defend

See ASSEMBLY, Page 2A



JON STINCHCOMB/THE NEWS-MESSENGER
Tricia McElfresh, military wife, delivers the keynote address at the Fremont Ross Veterans Day Assembly.

WORLD WAR II: IN THEIR OWN WORDS



Charles Holcomb served three years in the U.S. Air Force during WWII.

Holcomb remembers camp, 'Black March'

Photo of future wife kept him going during war

STORY BY DANIEL CARSON
PHOTOS BY MOLLY CORFMAN

HELENA-

Charles Holcomb carried a small photo of his future wife, Carol, with him in a matchbook during his first two years of service during World War II.

The matchbook didn't make it out of a German prison camp, where Holcomb was held for several months before he was forced to walk hundreds of miles in the brutal winter as part of the infamous "Black March."

But Holcomb held onto hope of survival, even in the grimmest conditions, and the idea he would see Carol, his true love, again.

He survived— still holding on to his photo of his future wife in the center of a cigarette case— 11-and-a-half months as a prisoner-of-war and made it back home to Carol.

"I think more about it now than I did then. All I was thinking about then was living," Holcomb, 92, said of the Black March and his experiences during the war at his Helena home.

HIS ENTRY INTO THE WAR

A nose gunner on a B-24 bomber flying out of England, Holcomb's plane was shot down over Berlin on June 21,

See HOLCOMB, Page 4A



Charles Holcomb's WWII 8th Air Force patch

About the Series

Charles Holcomb is the fourth in a series of five local World War II veterans to be profiled by the News-Messenger and the News Herald in honor of Veterans Day. Reporter Daniel Carson and Photojournalist Molly Corfman capture their stories, from serving on the front lines to flying fighter planes to being captured by the enemy, in print, photos and videos. On Thursday, we chronicle Walter Auxter, a U.S. Army infantryman who took part in the Battle of the Bulge.

1 dies, 2 injured in head-on crash

Distracted driving may have played a role

STAFF REPORT

WOODVILLE - One person was killed and two were injured in a two-vehicle crash on Ohio 51 north of U.S. 20 Tuesday morning, the Ohio Highway Patrol reported.

James M. Vallance, 72, of Gibsonburg, died after his 2009 Chevy Impala was struck head-on by another vehicle, according to a news release. Vallance was heading northbound on Ohio 51 when a 1993 Ford Econoline van driven southbound by Steven M. Squires, 17, of Woodville, went left of center and struck the front driver's side of Vallance's car around 7 a.m.

The crash is still under investigation, but the highway patrol reported that distracted driving appears to have played a role in the crash.

Both Squires and a passenger in his vehicle, Molly J. A. Wilburn, 18, of Elmore, were taken to Toledo St. Vincent Hospital for non-life-threatening injuries.

The speed limit in the area of the crash on Ohio 51 is 55 miles per hour. The weather conditions at the time were overcast and rainy.

Ohio 51 was closed for more than 2 1/2 hours, reopening around 9:40 a.m., according to a highway patrol dispatcher.

Woodville and Elmore fire departments responded, as did the Sandusky County Sheriff's Office and Sandusky County EMS.



DAVID YONKE/THE NEWS-MESSENGER
Emergency workers respond to a two-vehicle crash that killed one and injured two on Ohio 51 Tuesday morning.







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Holcomb

Continued from Page 1A

1944.

Holcomb remembered it as the first day of summer, a hot day in Berlin but cold thousands of feet in the air before the plane came down.

He enlisted in the Air Force in 1943 right out of Gibsonburg High School after graduation, joining two of his friends on a Saturday night in their decision to help the war cause.

Born in Sandusky and raised in Helena, the slightly built Holcomb, standing all of 5'5", went to gunnery school.

He was assigned to a B-24 bomber crew in Kansas City and Holcomb said he flew the Southern route—with stays in Trinidad and Brazil— before he left for England as part of the 8th Air Force, Second Air Division, 389th Brigade and started flying missions in France and Germany.

The English were receptive to the American airmen being in their towns, Holcomb said.

"If you went to town, they greeted you really well. Even bought you a drink," he said.

SHOT DOWN OVER BERLIN

Holcomb and his B-24 crew flew missions into France to accompany the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944. He said the bomber's mission was to destroy airfields and railroad lines operated by the occupying German forces in French territory.

The B-24 flew two missions into France on D-Day, Holcomb said.

He said the first mission took place before the Allied invasion forces gathered along the Normandy beaches. On the second mission, Holcomb could make out a little better the massive gathering of ships and troops along the shoreline.

"When you're flying over, you don't see too much," Holcomb said.

Two weeks later, Holcomb flew his final mission of the war.

On his 17th mission, Holcomb's plane was shot down over Berlin. Heavy flak in the skies over Berlin from German guns overwhelmed the B-24, called the "Uncle Sam" by Holcomb and the crew, and the Gibsonburg man was forced to bail out with rest of the men.

Eight of the plane's men bailed out. Two men didn't make it, Holcomb said.

"They took two engines out. We bailed out," Holcomb said.

Holcomb ended up in the middle of a street after he bailed out, with the wind taking a couple of his crew mates to a nearby airport. He said an older German soldier stuck his gun in Holcomb's back and told him to put his hands up.

"He marched me down through town to an air raid shelter. And he took me down in there," Holcomb said.



MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Charles Holcomb's metals from his service during WWII.

Holcomb said the prisoners didn't get a whole lot of food, with occasional boxes coming to supplement their diets courtesy of the Red Cross. Two men shared one box, he said.

At one point, Holcomb spent 33 days in solitary confinement.

An interrogator who spoke good English grilled Holcomb for information and the airman said he was uncooperative, only revealing his name and rank and serial number.

"I told him to blow it. He didn't like it," Holcomb said.

Holcomb was eventually shipped to a prison camp in eastern Germany.

PRISON CAMP IN POMERANIA AND A CIGARETTE CASE

He kept several items from the German prison camp and still holds onto them at his Helena home as a reminder of his time as a POW.

Another American prisoner, from Iowa, taught Holcomb how to knit and the Gibsonburg airman made a knit cap out of an unraveled sweater.

A Russian prisoner in the camp made a cigarette case out of aircraft aluminum for Holcomb, who liked to smoke Lucky Strikes.

The case also served as a placeholder for his photo of Carol, his high school sweetheart pictured with his young niece, Sandra, who also went by name "Cookie."

Holcomb had carried Carol's photo around in a matchbook for most of the war, but the Germans took the matchbook away during an interrogation. However, they let him keep Carol's photo.

With a little imagination and craftmanship, the Russian prisoner fashioned a heart atop the cigarette case. He carved a circle into the heart. Inside the circle, he carefully fitted the photo of Carol for Holcomb.

The Russian spoke no English. Holcomb said the fellow prisoner made other cigarette cases for camp POWs in exchange for food. Holcomb said that the Russian prisoners were treated much worse by the Germans than any of the Americans, British or other prisoners.

"I don't have any idea how he made it," Holcomb said of the cigarette case.

BLACK MARCH

The Black March started on Feb. 5, 1945. Holcomb said he slept on the ground in a foot of snow the first night of the march.

John Frisbee and Col. George Gudderley, a march survivor, described the conditions of the forced march in a 1997 Air Force Magazine article, calling the weather "the most severe winter Europe had suffered in many years."

The Germans evacuated prisoners at Stalag Luft IV in Pomerania (where Holcomb was being held) ahead of an advancing Russian army and forced U.S. and British airmen to march in a winding path with no sanitary facilities and a diet of about 700 calories per day.

The authors compared the march to the more famous 1942 Bataan Death March in the Philippines, in terms of death rates, and praised the heroism of the airmen that survived and helped others to make it through the ordeal alive.

There was no explanation given to Holcomb or the others as to why they were leaving the prison camp or where they were going.

"We didn't really know what was going on. We couldn't figure it out," Holcomb said.

Holcomb's prison camp was in eastern Pomerania, then a German-held territory that is now part of Poland.

He said he ended up walking about 530 miles on the Black March over roughly 80 days.

After three or four days of the forced march, Holcomb said one of the other prisoners told everyone that the Russians were coming. The Germans didn't want to free everyone, the man said, because the Russians treated prisoners badly.

There were 1,500 men—all of them American and British airmen— in the group on the march with Holcomb.

Severe frostbite, dysentery, pneumonia were all dangers to the men as they plugged along on the march, with Holcomb wondering if he would make it home alive.

"You saw other guys dropping out. You think about it," Holcomb said.

At one point, Holcomb couldn't walk and was taken on a horse-drawn wagon on the march.

BACK HOME

The march came to an end on May 2, 1945, east of Hamburg, Germany. Of the roughly 6,000 men overall that were forced to march, about 1,500 died from disease, starvation or at the hands of the Germans.

The Germans officially surrendered to the Allies and ended the war in Europe on May 7 of that year.

Holcomb weighed about 158 pounds when he went into the service. He was down to 105 pounds by the end of the march when he entered a hospital in Paris, he said.

With time, Holcomb's strength came back and he returned to the United States.

There are a number medals and ribbons neatly displayed in a brown, wooden case on Holcomb's wall at home from his time of service.

"The Purple Heart is the only one that counts," Holcomb said.

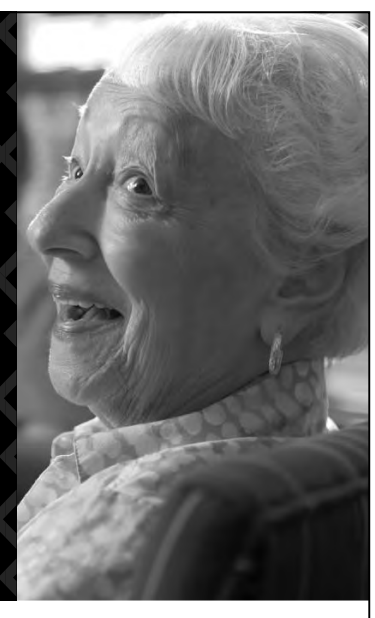
Holcomb also brought back the aluminum cigarette case with Carol's photo inside a heart, along with the utensils he used in the Pomeranian prison camp and the knit cap he made from an unraveled sweater.

After Holcomb returned home, he married Carol later in 1945.

Holcomb's eyes showed a glimmer and he smiled as he mentioned he and his wife had been married 70 years. And he still has her photo from high school, an enduring memory of his love that carried him through the darkest times of the war.

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CECIL PARTY

Oak Harbor's Andrea Cecil celebrates signing with BGSU, Sports 8A



'HUNGER GAMES' HUNTING CASH

Entertainment, 10A

The News-Messenger

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VETERANS DAY

'Desire to lead' defines Fremont veterans

Men, women share their stories at ceremony

JESSICA DENTON
REPORTER

FREMONT - Sandusky County residents learned about the dedication, desire to lead and sacrifice military service-members make from a 20-year U.S. Air Force member and Fremont native in honor of Veterans Day on Wednesday morning.

As the sun shone brightly and a light breeze blew through the streets surrounding Sandusky County Courthouse in downtown Fremont on Wednesday morning, a black-haired riderless horse slowly made it way south on Park Avenue as more than 100 people looked on.

PHOTO GALLERY

To view a photo gallery from Wednesday's Veterans Day ceremony in Fremont, please visit www.the-news-mes-senger.com.

The horse, led by Sgt. Michael Sanchez of the U.S. Marine Corps, symbolized the sacrifice of fallen veterans, complete with empty boots attached to its saddle.

The program's featured speaker Major Julie Burke Barriere, was born and raised in Fremont and has served 20 years in the U.S. Air Force. Now stationed at Little Rock Air Force Base with her fellow Airman husband and children, Barriere said hard work, dedication, a desire to give back and a desire to lead have fueled her and other veterans service to their country.

Barriere defined a veteran as "a person who wrote a blank check to the United States up to and including his or her life."

During her speech, she also stressed the importance of women in the service, who before being legally allowed to enlist, disguised themselves as men in order to serve their country as far

See VETERANS, Page 5A



JESSICA DENTON/NEWS-MESSENGER

Sgt. Michael Sanchez, of the U.S. Marine Corps, walks with a horse to symbolize the servicemen and women who died in combat during a Veterans Day ceremony.

Auxter checked skies for 'Charlie'



MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Walter Auxter, 95, was drafted 10 days after registering, and served in the U.S. Army delivering supplies to troops in Europe.

Veteran drove transport truck during the war

DANIEL CARSON
REPORTER

CLYDE -

He watched for "Bedcheck Charlie" every night like clockwork in the darkness as he drove a transport truck loaded with ammunition.

But Walter Auxter hoped Bedcheck Charlie didn't see him.

Auxter, 95, served in World War II as an Army infantryman from February 1942 to October 1945 in the Army's 324th Infantry Regiment, 44th Division.

Bedcheck Charlie was an unknown, lone German pilot that flew at night, every night, around 11 p.m. and sought to seek out and destroy American supply trucks and other vehicles lumbering along the roads that Auxter and other truck drivers took after dark.

Auxter transported rations and supplies by truck during the day, but took on the more dangerous assignment of moving ammunition along supply lines and avoiding attention from the likes of Bedcheck Charlie.

The motors on the German planes produced a different sound than their American counterparts, which helped Auxter know who was in the sky on his ammunition runs.

If it was Bedcheck Charlie, the Americans were directed not to fire on the German plane and reveal their positions.

"We often wondered about Bedcheck Charlie," Auxter said, as he detailed his service in World War II and the lasting images he took away from the European theater.

Auxter's defining moment as a World War II infantryman took place as a participant in the Battle of the Bulge with other American soldiers in the 324th.

But the Clyde veteran also vividly remembered other details, like the nightly encounters with Bedcheck Charlie, a band severed from his wrist watch by shrapnel and his struggles coping with the war's lasting effects.

DRAFTED, SENT TO EUROPE

Auxter was working at the Erie Proving Grounds when he was drafted in 1942 at the age of 21.

It was the first military draft instituted after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

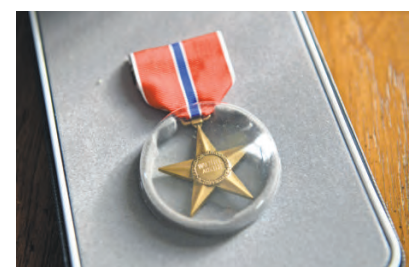
He went with 250 other men from Clyde, Fremont and other parts of Sandusky County to sign his papers at the Camp Perry induction center and find out what branch of service he would be in.

See AUXTER, Page 2A



SUBMITTED

Auxter poses in his early 20s for a photo at home before he left for basic training in Washington state.



MOLLY CORFMAN/THE NEWS-MESSENGER

Auxter was awarded The Bronze Star Medal for his service in a combat zone.

About the Series

Walter Auxter is the final veteran in a series of five local World War II veterans that were profiled by the News-Messenger and the News Herald in honor of Veterans Day. Reporter Daniel Carson and Photojournalist Molly Corfman captured their stories, from serving on the front lines to flying fighter planes to being captured by the enemy, in print, photos and videos.

■ ■ ■

2015 is worst year for Lake Erie algae bloom

Key contaminate is toxic compound from farm manure

JESSICA DENTON
REPORTER

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has confirmed what many living and working on Lake Erie have been saying for months: 2015 was the worst year yet for harmful algal bloom.

In a bulletin released by the government agency that has been studying the blooms on the smallest of the Great Lakes since 2002, this year has eclipsed 2011 for the most severe blooms to date, covering a staggering 300 square miles of the freshwater lake.

The severity index, which captures the amount of biomass in the bloom over a 30-day period, was measured at 10.5 for 2015, as compared to 10 for 2011.

One of the major contributors to the Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) is the dissolved phosphorus from farm manure runoff containing microcystin-LR, a toxic compound that can contaminate drinking water.

In early July, the agency released a seasonal forecast of 8.7 for the blooms' severity, anticipating 2015 to be the second-worst year after 2011.

"While we correctly forecasted an extremely large bloom, the forecast was still an underestimate," Tuesday's bulletin said.

Captain Paul Pacholski, owner of Erie Hopper Sportfishing Charters, said the news of the algal blooms' severity wasn't a surprise to him or other charter boat captains who fished Lake Erie's waters for walleye, perch and bass this year.

See ALGAE, Page 5A

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LOCAL WEATHER

TODAY
HIGH: 54
LOW: 41
Very windy

FRIDAY
HIGH: 47
LOW: 36
A passing shower

SATURDAY
HIGH: 50
LOW: 38
Partly sunny

SUNDAY
HIGH: 57
LOW: 38
Sunshine

MONDAY
HIGH: 58
LOW: 48
Episodes of sunshine

ALMANAC

Through 4 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURES
High..... **57**
Low..... **37**

PRECIPITATION
24 hrs..... **0.00"**

SUN & MOON

Today's sunrise/sunset:
7:17 a.m./5:16 p.m.
Today's moonrise/moonset:
7:54 a.m./6:17 p.m.

First	Full	Last	New
Nov 19	Nov 25	Dec 3	Dec 11

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Edinburg, TX..... **92°**
West Yellowstone, MT .... **-9°**

AccuWeather.com
Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather, Inc.** ©2015

LOTTERIES

WEDNESDAY'S NUMBERS
Pick 3 (D): 0-2-2
Pick 4 (D): 5-5-4-4
Pick 5 (D): 4-4-0-2-7
Classic Lotto: 2-6-8-11-33-46
Kicker: 9-4-3-5-7-1
Rolling Cash 5: 3-4-13-19-22
Pick 3: 2-3-5
Pick 4: 0-1-0-6
Pick 5: 6-0-3-3-2
Powerball: 4-26-32-55-64 +18
Power Play: 3

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OBITUARIES

Obituaries and photographs submitted to the Fremont News Messenger may be published, distributed, repurposed and otherwise used in print, electronic and other media platforms.

June E. Emery



CLYDE: June E. Emery, 70, of Clyde, OH, died Wednesday, November 11, 2015 at her home. She was born in Fremont, OH on November 8, 1945, a daughter of Samuel and Elsie (Nitschke) Tillapaw.

June retired from the Woodbridge Corporation, Fremont, where she was a supervisor. An avid follower of The Ohio State Buckeyes, she was also a fan of the Cleveland Browns and Cleveland Indians. She enjoyed playing cards, especially poker, and loved vacationing in Myrtle Beach. Her greatest love however, was for her family, especially her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

June is survived by her daughter Tonya (Carl) Starkweather, LaPorte, IN; her niece and best friend, Marcia Rockhold, Woodland Park, CO; sisters, Elsie Bowerman, Ovid, MI, Marilyn Smith, Sandusky, OH, and Sharon Guhn, Bellevue, OH; grandchildren, Christopher Zieber, Lindsey (Mike) Franks, Ashley (Rick Sebetto) Zieber, and Jarrett (Alisha) Zieber; 13 great-grandchildren, (and one on the way), and many nieces and nephews. June was preceded in death by her parents, and brothers, John, James, and Keith Tillapaw.

Family and friends are invited to call from 3-7 P.M. Friday at Crosser Funeral Home & Cremation Service, Oak Harbor. Graveside services will be held at 10:00 A.M. Saturday, November 14, 2015 at Roose Cemetery, Salem Township, with Pastor Gary Click officiating.

Online condolences may be shared with June's family at www.crosserfuneralhome.com

Gladys (Bingel) Weilnau Frantz



BELLEVUE: Gladys (Bingel) Weilnau Frantz, 90, of Bellevue passed away Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at The Bellevue Hospital.

She was born April 7, 1925 in Sandusky Hospital, the daughter of John "Jack" and Emma (Sengstock) Bingel.

Gladys married Kenneth Weilnau in 1943; He preceded her in death in 1985.

Gladys was a member of the Busy Bees Farm Women's Club, Clyde Eagles Auxiliary, Groton Farmers 4-H Club Advisor, St. John's Lutheran Church in Monroeville, and the Order of the Eastern Star.

She is survived by her husband, Nyal Frantz, whom she married in 1993; one daughter, Starleen (Ken) Meyer of Clyde; a son, Duane (Sue) Weilnau of South Carolina; step-son, Jimmy (Nancy) Frantz of Indiana; grandchildren, Teri (John Campbell) Meyer, Kenn Lyn (Linda) Meyer, Lyle (Libby) Meyer, Geof Meyer, Tiffany (Robert) Parliar, Brett (LeAnn) Weilnau, Shannon Frantz, and Kris (Theresa) Frantz; five great grandchildren; 12 step-great grandchildren; and eight step great-great grandchildren.

In addition to her parents, and first husband Kenneth, she is preceded in death by step-son, Michael Frantz.

Friends will be received on Thursday, November 12, 2015 from 5-8 p.m. at Foos & Foos Funeral Service, 151 Yorkshire Place, Bellevue where a funeral service will begin on Friday at 11 a.m. Burial will follow at Bellevue Cemetery.

Memorials can be made to St. John's Lutheran Church, 9416 OH-99, Monroeville, OH 44847.

Memories and Condolences may be shared at www.foosfuneral.com

Robert "Bob" L. Aldrich



ASHLAND: Robert "Bob" L. Aldrich, age 85, of Ashland, died Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at Samaritan Regional Health System.

He was born December 8, 1929 in Clyde, Ohio, the son of Ralph "Ted" and Ruth (Knappenburg) Aldrich. Bob had been employed as a Harness Race Driver across the United States from 1946 till 1979, he then worked for Janesville Products in Norwalk from 1976 till 1990, and most recently he had been Owner / Operator of his Horse Farm where he also raised Coon Dogs in Shenandoah for 26 years before retiring and moving to Ashland. Bob was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. Bob was a member of the Professional Kennel Club (PKC) from 1993 till 2004. He enjoyed coon hunting, boating, bass fishing, and was an avid wine maker. He never met a stranger and never had a bad word to say about anyone. His moto was always "Don't Stress".

On September 7, 1964 Bob married Nancy Belak who survives. Other survivors include his children, Robert "Rob" E. Aldrich of New London, Mary (Andrew) Dorrell of Ashland, Terry Aldrich of Freemont, and Dianna Vollberg of East Liverpool; his ten grandchildren; several great grandchildren; one great great grandchild; along with his sister, Carolyn (Tom) Batty of Norwalk.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and brothers, Gene, Jack and William "Billy" Aldrich.

There will be a memorial service held at the Church of Christ 1185 Co. Rd. 1356 Ashland, on Monday November, 16, 2015 at 11:30 A.M. with Pastor Tim Knowlyn officiating. Friends may visit with the family one hour prior to the service at the church. Heyl Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements.

The family suggests memorial contributions may be directed to Heyl Funeral Home 227 Broad St. Ashland, OH. 44805. An online register book is available to express condolences to the family at www.heylfuneralhome.com.

James Vallance

GIBSONBURG: James Vallance, 72, of Gibsonburg, passed away on Tuesday, November 10, 2015.

Arrangements are pending with the Herman-Veh Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Gibsonburg.

For information on placing an obituary, please visit our website.

Click on obituaries.

John P. Shorts

FREMONT: John P. Shorts, age 46, of Fremont, passed away on Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at ProMedica Memorial Hospital, Fremont.

Arrangements are pending with the Herman-Karlovetz Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Fremont.

Sydelle M. (Stetzel) Widman

SANDUSKY: Sydelle M. (Stetzel) Widman, 82, of Sandusky, passed away early Wednesday morning, November 11, 2015, at her home.

At her request, visitation will be private and a Mass of Christian Burial will be held Friday morning, November 13, 2015, at 10 am at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 429 Central Avenue, Sandusky. Cremation will take place following the service.

Arrangements are entrusted to the David F. Koch Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Sandusky.

Elmer Ernest Elkins, Jr

FREMONT: Elmer Ernest Elkins, Jr., age 61, of Fremont, passed away on Sunday, November 8, 2015 at Stein Hospice Care Center, Sandusky.

Born on August 14, 1954 in Fremont, he was a son of Elmer E. and Ila Jean (Rohm) Elkins, Sr.

On July 24, 2010, Elmer married Sheryl Ptacek in Fremont; she survives him; also surviving are three children; two step-children; eight siblings; and several grandchildren. He is preceded by his parents; three siblings; and a beloved pet cat.

Family will welcome friends on Saturday, November 14, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the Herman-Karlovetz Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Fremont, where Memorial Services will begin at 12 p.m. Bishop Mark Conley will officiate. Afterwards, a Time of Fellowship and a potluck meal will be held at New Apostolic Church, 817 Mulberry St., Fremont.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the care of his family to be used towards funeral expenses. To send an online condolences or view Elmer's Memorial Tribute Video, please visit: www.hermanfh.com

Lorenza Palomo Castillo

FREMONT: Lorenza Palomo Castillo, 90, of Fremont passed away at her home on Monday, November 9, 2015.

She was born on September 5, 1925 in Dolores, TX to Manuel and Victoria (Obregon) Palomo. Lorenza grew up in Texas; where she married her husband, Juan A. Castillo, on February 14, 1945. Together they moved to Ohio, raised their four children and shared 55 years of marriage until Juan's passing on November 29, 2000. Lorenza worked for many years for the Fremont City Schools as a custodial matron. She was a member of Sacred Heart, the Guadalupe Society and the Spanish Prayer Group.

Surviving are her children, Virginia Scazzero of Lanham, MD, Gilbert Castillo of Bellevue, David Castillo of Port Clinton.

Lorenza is preceded in death by her husband; and daughter, Maria Louisa.

Visitation will be held on Monday, November 16, 2015 to the Herman-Karlovetz Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Fremont from 10 a.m. till 12 noon. Funeral services will begin at Noon Rev. John Blaser will officiate. Burial will follow at Greenlawn Memory Gardens, Clyde.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer Association www.ALZ.com

To send an online condolence visit:www.hermanfh.com



Vallie Stanley

CLYDE: Vallie Stanley, age 75, of Clyde went home to the arms of Jesus, Monday November 9, 2015 at her residence.

She was born January 2, 1940 in Paw Paw, WV the daughter of the late Dewey and Flossie (Moyer) Herrell.

Vallie was employed with the Ohio Turnpike and was a member of First Freewill Baptist Church, Clyde.

She married Edward Stanley, Jr. June 11, 1960 in Clyde. He preceded her in death May 23, 2013.

Survivors include her sons, Jeff Stanley, Rex Stanley, James Stanley all of Clyde; daughter, Mary (Alan) Hillman of Clyde; six grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; and her sister, Donna Prenzil of Bettesville, OH.

In addition to her parents and husband she was preceded in death by her daughter, Dolly Sue Newsome; and brothers, Raymond Herrell, Charles Herrell and Glenn Herrell.

Friends will be received on Thursday, November 12, 2015 from 2-4 & 6-8 pm at Foos Funeral Home & Cremation Service, 504 E. McPherson, Clyde, where a funeral service will be held Friday, November 13, 2015 at 11:00 am. Burial will follow at McPherson Cemetery, Clyde.

Memorials may be made to the Sandusky County Humane Society.

Memories and condolences may be shared at. www.foosfuneral.com

To send flowers to the family, please visit our website. Click on obituaries.

Auxter

Continued from Page 1A

For basic training, Auxter went to Fort Lewis in Washington for 13 weeks.

He performed Coast Guard duty in Oregon and Washington along U.S. Highway 101 for eight months. Auxter traveled to Boston and deployed to Europe on a ship convoy with thousands of other troops.

DUTIES DURING THE WAR

Auxter served in the Northern France, the Rhineland and Central Europe during the war.

He got transferred from a line to a service company and spent most of his time transporting supplies and troops.

A member of the company's second Battalion, Auxter said there were five companies in the battalion he serviced on a daily basis.

"Usuallly every day I had to go get the rations for all five kitchens. Then after that, I would haul a load of water and then get gas for their stoves when they needed it," Auxter said.

At night, Auxter's role changed and he drove in the dark and navigated by natural landmarks as he delivered ammunition.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE

The Battle of the Bulge started in the Ardennes Forest on Dec.16, 1944.

The National WWII Museum described it as a major German offensive designed to cut the Allied forces in two and capture the Belgian port of Antwerp.

Allied forces were called in to reinforce the lines and the Germans, after initially advancing 60 miles behind American lines, were eventually pushed back by Gen. George Patton and the Third Army.

By late January 1945, the Americans had pushed the Germans back to their original position. The museum estimated that nearly 1 million soldiers took part in the battle, with 67,000 American casualties and more than 100,000 German casualties.

Auxter recalled the extremely cold winter at time of battle, with heavy snow, and the fact that he developed trench foot—a medical condition caused by prolonged exposure to wet, cold and unsanitary conditions— during the battle.

"I haven't liked cold weather since," Auxter said.

Unlike other battles, the American air support wasn't much help at the Battle of the Bulge given the nasty weather conditions, Auxter said.

A piece of shrapnel took the wrist band off of his watch and lodged into his arm during the battle.

"You just don't forget those things," Auxter said.

At the end of the war in Europe, Auxter's unit was hauling prisoners from the 19th German Army that had been holed up in the mountains in Austria back to Germany.

Auxter said some of the Germans didn't realize the war was over and had been shooting at American soldiers. He said one of his fellow drivers was shot and killed during the exchange between the two sides.

The American soldiers were disgusted with the situation, he said.

"We thought we ought to go home. We didn't care about them," Auxter said.

END OF WAR

Auxter was scheduled to go to the Pacific after combat ended in Europe. He got a 30-day leave back to the United States which started on Aug. 5, 1945.

The U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima Aug. 6, 1945 and another one on Nagasaki three days later, effectively ending the war with Japan.

He was awarded the Bronze Star and the Combat Infantry Badge for his efforts in the war, and Auxter is proud of his service to his country.

Active in several local veterans' organizations over the years, Auxter participated in the Hayes Presidential Center's Northwest Ohio Veterans' Oral History Project in 2014.

At the time of the war, Auxter thought World War II was very necessary, as did his fellow soldiers, he said.

"I wouldn't want to go through any of it again," Auxter said.

Auxter acknowledged he has dealt with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) since the war.

He said he remembers things like getting his watch wrist band being blown off and the shrapnel marks left behind in the incident.

Auxter had a hard time dealing with the death and destruction surrounding the war, and seeing somebody next to him and wondering the future would be.

The Clyde veteran said he remembers John Vickery, a friend of Auxter's that joined him in basic training and a soldier in the same company as his during the war.

Vickery died and is buried at York Free Chapel Cemetery, where Auxter periodically visits his friend's grave.

"I always check to see if he has a flag," Auxter said.

Going to military reunions helped him deal with the war's after effects quite a bit, Auxter said.

"I kind of wanted to forget things when I first got home," Auxter said.

As one of the last surviving World War II veterans in the county, Auxter has his own thoughts on war in general.

"At my age, I hate to see it anywhere. Because it's not good anywhere. You have to go through that to know that. I don't know why things can't be settled without shooting at one another," Auxter said.

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Walter Auxter holds a copy of his honorable discharge certificate.

Northwest Ohio Glass Association
3rd Annual Artistry in American Glass Show
Saturday, Nov. 14, 2015 10:00am-5:00pm
Sunday, Nov. 15, 2015 10:00am-3:00pm
St. Joseph Activity Center at Calvert Elementary School
54 Melmore St. | Tiffin, Ohio 44883
Admission: $5
Thomas Maiberger: tmaiberger54@yahoo.com
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