

"If Only The Walls Could Talk"

Veteran's Day Special Edition

Celebrating Veterans Day

Veterans Day (originally known as Armistice Day) is a federal holiday in the United States observed annually on November 11, for honoring military veterans, who are people who have served in the United States Armed Forces (that were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable). It coincides with other holidays including Armistice Day and Remembrance Day which are celebrated in other countries that mark the anniversary of the end of World War I. Major hostilities of World War I were formally ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 when the Armistice with Germany went into effect. At the urging of major U.S. veteran organizations, Armistice Day was renamed Veterans Day in 1954.

Veterans Day is distinct from Memorial Day, a U.S. public holiday in May. Veterans Day celebrates the service of all U.S. military veterans, while Memorial Day honors those who had died while in military service. Another military holiday that also occurs in May, Armed Forces Day, honors those currently serving in the U.S. military.

History

On November 11, 1919, U.S. president Woodrow Wilson issued a message to his countrymen on the first Armistice

Day, in which he expressed what he felt the day meant to Americans:

ADDRESS TO FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN

The White House, November 11, 1919.

"A year ago today our enemies laid down their arms in accordance with an armistice which rendered them impotent to renew hostilities, and gave to the world an assured opportunity to reconstruct its shattered order and to work out in peace a new and juster set of international relations. The soldiers and people of the European Allies had fought and endured for more than four years to uphold the barrier of civilization against the aggressions of armed force. We ourselves had been in the conflict something more than a year and a half.

With splendid forgetfulness of mere personal concerns, we remodeled our industries, concentrated our financial resources, increased our agricultural output, and assembled a great army, so that at the last our power was a decisive factor in the victory. We were able to bring the vast resources, material and moral, of a great and free people to the assistance of our associates in Europe who had suffered and sacrificed without limit in the cause for which we fought.

Out of this victory there arose new possibilities of political freedom and economic concert. The war showed us the strength of great nations acting together for high purposes, and the victory of arms foretells the enduring conquests which can be made in peace when nations act justly and in furtherance of the common interests of men.

To us in America the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service, and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of nations.

WOODROW WILSON"

The United States Congress adopted a resolution on June 4, 1926, requesting that President Calvin Coolidge issue annual

proclamations calling for the observance of November 11 with appropriate ceremonies. A Congressional Act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U.S. Code, Sec. 87a) approved May 13, 1938, made November 11 in each year a legal holiday: "a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as 'Armistice Day'".

In 1945, World War II veteran Raymond Weeks from Birmingham, Alabama, had the idea to expand Armistice Day to celebrate all veterans, not just those who died in World War I. Weeks led a delegation to Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, who supported the idea of National Veterans Day. Weeks led the first national celebration in 1947 in Alabama and annually until his death in 1985. President Reagan honored Weeks at the White House with the Presidential Citizenship Medal in 1982 as the driving force for the national holiday. Elizabeth Dole, who prepared the briefing for President Reagan, determined Weeks as the "Father of Veterans Day".

U.S. representative Ed Rees from Emporia, Kansas, presented a bill establishing the holiday through Congress. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, also from Kansas, signed the bill into law on May 26, 1954. It had been eight and a half years since Weeks held his first Armistice Day celebration for all veterans.

Congress amended the bill on June 1, 1954, replacing "Armistice" with "Veterans," and it has been known as Veterans Day since.

The National Veterans Award was also created in 1954. Congressman Rees of Kansas received the first National Veterans Award in Birmingham, Alabama, for his support in offering legislation to make Veterans Day a federal holiday.

Although originally scheduled for celebration on November 11 of every year, starting in 1971 in accordance with the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, Veterans Day was moved to the fourth Monday of October (October 25, 1971; October 23, 1972; October 22, 1973; October 28, 1974; October 27, 1975; October 25, 1976, and October 24, 1977). In 1978, it was moved back to its

PIGEON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Denny Esch, President
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Six Regular Meetings:
Second Monday of the month
May - July - Sept. -

Oct. - Nov. - Jan. - Mar. 10:00 a.m.

Board Meetings:

Fourth Monday of every month

All meetings at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Location:

original celebration on November 11. While the legal holiday remains on November 11, if that date happens to be on a Saturday or Sunday, then organizations that formally observe the holiday will normally be closed on the adjacent Friday or Monday, respectively.

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veterans_Day

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Armed Forces Call 20 From Huron County

Ordered to report for induction in the armed forces are the following Huron county men: Harold A. Bergman, Pigeon; Albert J. Ellicott, Elkton; Andrew R. Warack and Robert J. Grasel, of Gagetown; Clemence R. Baur, Elmer Crabtree, James R. Stoeckle and Orville B. Radabaugh, of Sebewaing; Joseph J. Klee, of Port Austin; Charles R. Western and Edward F. Czewski, of Uby; Peter B. Flannery, Sidney H. Marks, Charles J. Becking and Frank Rifenburg, of Bad Axe; Warren T. O'Neil, Kenneth C. Booms and Kenneth A. Tenbusch, of Harbor Beach; Bernard A. Reilly, of Grindstone City, and Melvin P. Schulte, of Port Hope.

From *The Pigeon Progress*, September 8, 1951

From the pages of *The Pigeon Progress*, seventy-seven years ago, April 21, 1944: The new IGA Super Self-Service Market will open Saturday in Pigeon, according to Amos Lowe, who purchased the store from Mr. and Mrs. S. G. Aschliman.

Contributors

Ted Leippandt - Ted is a long-time member of the Pigeon Historical Society and contributed his interviews with John & Jay Mitin, Otto Voelker, and Austin Rogers.

Steve Schulze - Steve is a board member and archivist of *The Pigeon Progress*. He photographed all the copies for reference.

Ardra Schaaf - Ardra is a board member and archivist who keeps track of the resources at the Woelke Research Center. She has compiled the Past In Print.

Anyone can contribute articles, pictures, and other items to be published in *The Recorder*.

HURON COUNTY BUYS \$366,450.

Huron County Falls Short of Her ...Quota of Liberty Bonds.

Huron county did not subscribe her quota of the Liberty Bond but it was not the fault of Winsor, Bingham, Sebewaing, Bad Axe and Harbor Beach who were over subscribed. While there were a few townships that did nobly even if they did not raise their allotment, there were some in the county that have some reason to feel that they failed to put any effort behind the proposition. Lack of organization in latter mentioned townships can possibly be used as an excuse for their miserable showing.

Below is a list of the townships and cities with the amount they subscribed and the amount allotted to them:

	Allotment	Subscribed
Bingham	\$28,000	\$29,000
Bloomfield	\$18,000	\$3,350
Brookfield	\$28,000	\$12,500
Caseville	\$11,000	\$10,500
Chandler	\$25,000	\$7,550
Colfax	\$22,00	2,500
Dwight-Hume	\$44,000	3,450
Fair Haven	\$20,000	\$12,250
Gore	\$3,000	\$100.00
Grant	\$18,000	\$5,000
Huron	\$18,000	\$1,350
Lake	\$6,000	\$2,800
McKinley	\$14,000	6,900
Meade	\$22,000	\$10,250
Oliver	\$36,000	\$20,150
Paris-Sh'man	\$51,000	\$6,000
Pt. Aux Barques	\$1,000	
Port Austin	\$25,000	\$10,000
Rubicon	\$16,000	\$3,200
Sand Beach	\$23,000	\$1,100
Sebewaing	\$54,000	\$55,750
Sheridan	\$16,000	\$6,000
Sigel	\$20,000	\$1,650
Verbna	\$16,000	\$3,000
Winsor	\$50,000	\$56,450
Bad Axe	\$31,000	\$60,000
Harbor Beach	\$31,000	\$33,650

From *The Pigeon Progress*, November 2, 1917

From the pages of *The Pigeon Progress*, Seventy-five years ago, January 11, 1946: John Danks, Jr., who was recently discharged from the Army, has purchased the old Huron County Creamery building on Nitz Street in Pigeon. He is remodeling the second story which will be used as living quarters.

From the pages of *The Pigeon Progress*, Eighty years ago, January 3, 1941: Carl Milliken, who was station agent in Pigeon 26 years ago, has been advanced to assistant superintendent of the Chicago-Grand Rapids Division of P.M.

Interviews by Ted Leippandt

January 2008

Jay Mitin - John Mitin - Austin Rogers - Otto Voelker

It has been 63 years since the end of World War II, and the remaining Veterans who fought to preserve the freedoms that we enjoy today are becoming less with each passing year. Needless to say, we are very grateful to the servicemen who fought for our freedom. Some returned to enjoy the fruits of that freedom, some lie in graves on foreign soil as their sacrifice for our freedom, and still others came home maimed physically and mentally to live a substandard life as testament to the sacrifice they made for us. For all of them we are truly indebted.

Many members of the Salem United Methodist Church have served with honor in World War II, Korea, Viet Nam, Desert Storm and now Iraq, and during times of peace as well. We salute all our Veterans!

Those who had served in World War II are now in their high eighties and early nineties, and are becoming fewer each year. We are fortunate to have four of those individuals who still attend Salem Church on a regular basis. They are Jay Mitin, John Mitin, Austin Rogers, and Otto Voelker. It has been my pleasure to interview each of these gentlemen to recall some of their memories of their military experiences, and how the war had impacted their lives.

Since we are a farming community, all four had something in common. They were all in their early twenties, and were all working on farms. John & Jay Mitin were with their dad, as was Otto Voelker. Austin Rogers was working on a farm as a hired hand.

I was eight years old in 1941 and remember a little about the beginning of World War II. I remember my parents speaking about what was being reported in the newspapers concerning Hitler's armies taking over much of Europe, and the bombing of England. Meanwhile I remember the relations with Japan were not good and the U.S. was employing trade embargoes as Imperialistic Japan was invading and taking over many of the Pacific Islands. Thus, the stage was set. The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 resulted in the U.S. immediately declaring war with Japan. Four days later Germany declared war in the U.S. and in turn the U.S. declared war on Germany. Now the U. S. was involved on two fronts: The European and Pacific Theaters.

In 1941 as the "Storm Clouds" were approaching, the U. S. had already instituted a draft.

Here begins our story:
Jay Mitin



Jay Mitin in his dress uniform shortly after his induction into the U.S. Army

Prior to Jay's induction to the Army, he lived with his parents in the 140-year-old house that he lived in during all of his married life. The farm and home were previously owned by O.P. Chapin. The Walter Mitin family took up residence there in 1929. It is there that this story begins:

"Jay was farming with his dad and brothers when he received his draft notice. He was inducted into the Army on June 10, 1942. He and several other draftees reported to Ft. Wayne in Detroit, where everybody passed their respective physical exam. They were transported to Ft. Custer in Battle Creek, Michigan where they were issued uniforms. From there they went to New York where they camped out in tents for two weeks. They were issued rifles which had to be cleaned because they had been packed in grease. Subsequently they shipped out on a troop ship for Scotland. There were 3,000 men on the troop ship that was equipped to hold half that many. Since he was one of the last to board, Jay and several others had to stay on the top deck all the way to Scotland. They were exposed to the elements and were quite cold with only one army blanket. The ship encountered a German U-boat that was intent on sinking the troop ship. But thanks to a destroyer escort that did not happen. The destroyer began dropping depth charges and Jay believes either scared off the sub, or sank it. Apparently the German submarine commander felt confident enough that they would sink the Monterey (Jay's troop ship), that he radioed ahead. When the ship arrived

in Glasgow, they read in the papers that their ship had been sunk, which of course did not happen.

They then boarded a train and ended up in Swindon, England. There was a World War I airfield there, and they set up a camp of tents. They spread out all over the place to make German spy planes think there were more troops and there actually were. This is where Jay's basic training took place. Before long they loaded on another troop ship and headed north toward Liverpool. Then all of a sudden, they turned south and headed for Gibraltar. The reason they took that route was to avoid German U-boats. When they entered the Straights of Gibraltar the French fired upon them. They apparently didn't want



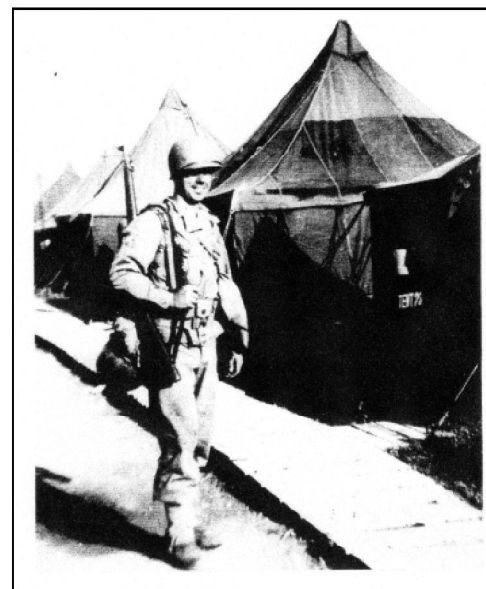
R.A.F. Wroughton is an airfield which sits about 4 miles (6.5km) south of Swindon, England

them coming into the Mediterranean, but they made it through and landed in Algeria on November 9, 1942.

The British were already in Algeria, but the U.S. was on their own, as a build up to enter into Italy. U.S. Air Corps was also there. They were engaged in bombing runs to destroy refineries and oil fields in Romania. This was the source of Germany's fuel supply. Apparently, the area was very heavily armed and fortified as Jay remembers that on one particular mission about 100 planes left and only 5 returned. In World War II there was a song written entitled "Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer". This made reference to the many aircraft that returned to base damaged and shot full of holes.

They went across Algeria to Monterey, and in the spring, they were back in Algeria. At this time Jay was working in Ordinance. One day the company clerk came along and said he had orders for Jay and four others to figure out a way to waterproof the trucks so that they could be driven into 8 to 10 feet of water. The cabs were waterproof but the motors would get wet and stall out. Jay had experience back on the farm with a tractor that would stall when the coil would get wet. That was remedied by packing grease around it. If it worked on the tractor, perhaps it would work on the trucks as well. Every electrical circuit was shrouded with grease and the

air stacks and exhaust pipes extended. They tried this with one truck at first. A 40 year old man that was part of their group volunteered to take it into the water. He drove in, going deeper and deeper until the cab was totally submerged. He lost his bearings temporarily and had difficulty knowing which direction he was headed. But finally, he figured it out and came back to shore and the truck was still running. They immediately began to prepare the rest of their trucks the same way. They all checked out O.K., so apparently it was a good plan. Several days later they were asked to conduct a training session for other "outfits" to waterproof their trucks as well. The reason for all of this became clear as they began to make the beach landing on Sicily. The landing craft left them off in pretty deep water. The trucks had to be driven to the beach through



Jay Mitin in his full combat uniform and gear while serving in North Africa

that water. Later in the war trucks were waterproofed during manufacture and did not have to be retrofitted for all the amphibious landings that had to take place.

Following the landing at Sicily the troops made another landing on the beach in Italy. They moved up Italy until they reached Rome. When they got there Jay and his squad (five G.I.'s) were given the order to check the catacombs for German soldiers, who might be hiding there. It was very dimly lighted and they saw someone move, they were immediately frightened, but it turned out to be a priest. They went into the small dark dungeon room and were told by the priest that was where Paul was imprisoned. They left that area and walked into St. Peters Cathedral. There was St. Peters tomb. "Quite a place all covered with gold". Jay walked down the isle and saw a door and walked in. There stood the Pope (Pope Pius the 12th). "So how do you greet a

Pope"? He waved to the Pope and he waved back, however there were some Catholics in their group and they knelt down and kissed his feet. Following that experience they got back on the ships again near Naples and were headed somewhere, not knowing just where. They landed in German occupied Southern France on the 15th of August 1943. They were again dumped off in about 6 feet of water. Everything in their back packs got wet. They had to help some of the shorter men as the water was over their heads. They got to the shore and dug fox holes fast. Jay was in the third wave of troops and they met a lot of resistance. This was about 50 miles from Marseille, France. They went all the way to Paris, where they met up with the troops that were coming from the Normandy invasion. They then turned and went east until they got to the Siegfried line. It was so fortified that even a kitten couldn't get through. They had big concrete structures that the tanks couldn't get past. It was mined very heavily and reinforced with barbed wire. However, every so often there would be a narrow passageway through which the Germans would drive their own vehicles through. These positions were very heavily fortified as well. Near the end of 1944 they finally made it through.

Jay made the comment; "with 11 million men in the Armed Forces it seemed that there were so few actually on the front". Jay was in the 63rd Infantry Division and held the rank of Sergeant.

It was about this time that brother John was also in Europe serving in the Artillery. Through V-mail back home John found out that he and Jay were only about 30 miles apart. One day he got the use of a jeep and took off. He drove from one unit to another asking for Jay's unit. Finally, he found someone who knew. The GI said the 63rd is just down the road a little way. When John arrived at his destination Jay happened to be working on a



Jay Mitin in his fatigues at an Army training camp

truck, flat on his back on the ground. John came along asking for that Mitin guy, and he was pointed out under a truck. John reached down and grabbed Jay's feet and proceeded to pull him out from under that truck. What a surprise, and what a reunion they had!

As Jay's unit moved along East, the further they went the worse the fighting became. They then turned South to Switzerland. They got to the Swiss border, then North to Austria. Eisenhower was the General in charge of the European theater, however Patton was one of the General's under whom Jay served. (Old Blood & Guts Patton he was called). Jay said many mistakes were made as often the leaders didn't assess the situation accurately. The Generals were warned that Hitler's armies were building up at the front, but they didn't think that was possible as his army was on the run. Which proved to be totally wrong, and that was the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge. It all began when German soldiers who spoke very good English and knew American slang and also the pass word broke through our lines. They were dressed in white uniforms and could not be easily seen in the snowy blizzard. They captured or disabled many of our tanks and broke through our front lines. Many lives were lost in the big push. Jay was in a group of 14 men trudging through the snow when they came to a little country church. Windows were blown out and they entered and sat on the pews. This was Christmas 1944, and they took the

From the pages of The Pigeon Progress, seventy-seven years ago, April 28, 1944: A total of 27 county men will leave May 4 for induction in the U.S. Navy. From this area they include: John Grime and Robert Hoppe, Pigeon; Harold Britt, Bach; Clarence Soper and Donald Thompson, Elkton; Roy Woods and Orval Zapfe, Owendale; Wm. Reige, Norval Parsell, Sebewaing; Alvin Kreh, Caseville and Robert Hottzman, Bay Port.

opportunity to sing a few Christmas carols. They couldn't stay long and headed towards Bastogne. Many in Jay's unit had been killed in action and replacements joined them. As the Germans advanced in counterattack, they drove the Allied Forces almost back to Paris. The stalling factor was that the G.I.'s were ordered to destroy all fuel as they retreated. Eventually the German tanks ran out of fuel (they had been counting on using the fuel the U. S. forces would leave behind). That was the end of the counteroffensive. The Bulge lasted most of the winter and many lives were lost on both sides.

As the Allied Forces moved across the Rhine it was necessary for the Engineers to construct a flotation bridge for the tanks, trucks, and men to cross. This was done under a heavy smoke screen and at night, The German's had no idea what was happening, or where they intended to cross, consequently

they had to spread their troops out over a 15 to 20 mile stretch of river. Jay was asked to drive a tank across. First time he had driven a tank and was very apprehensive, but he made it O.K. After they crossed the Rhine, they came to a little town called Ulms. Not one building was left standing. They thought they would try to get into Switzerland but border guards would not let them pass. They then went north to Austria. It was May 10th and they were a band of 24, and were asked to take a certain hill. They stayed at the bottom because they felt it would take many more to accomplish that task. It was 9:00 a.m. and the war was over at 10:00 a.m. It wasn't necessary to take that hill after all.

He said the guys simply got down on their knees. He said one might have thought there would be a big celebration, but there was not.

Jay had made it through three years of War. A couple of days later the order came to get your gear together we're moving out. They all guessed what that meant - that they would be shipped out to the Pacific front. Nobody moved anything for three days, then on the fourth day the First Sergeant made the announcement "if you have been in Europe for a (certain) length of time you didn't have to go (to the Pacific theater). G.I.'s who hadn't been in Europe very long did a lot of moaning and groaning.

Jay then spent the next three months in the Army of occupation. There were not a lot of men available, so each was given a town. Jay was in charge of a town about the size of Bad Axe. He took a jeep and parked it right in the city square, all by himself without even a "billy club". As he took a walk down the street, two old gentlemen came up behind him jabbering in German. He couldn't understand what they were saying. They apparently wanted Jay to get them some fuel . . . it was forbidden to cut down trees. Upon Jay's suggestion to do so, they simply said "nine", "nine". He then suggested they cut down every other one. They then agreed with "ya", "ya", "ya". Apparently, this was O.K. because no trouble came of it. It was now summer and the U.S. had dropped the atomic bombs on Japan precipitating the unconditional surrender. Jay and his fellow G.I.'s were engaged in driving army trucks back across Germany. He remembers many of the girls along the route called out "take us with you".

One of his most awful memories is when his unit arrived at Dachau. They had thought it was a concentration camp, not a death camp. His unit actually helped to liberate that camp, which involved quite a fire fight before taking it over. He remembers the mounds of

body ashes and graves, and he can testify that everything we have ever heard about the Nazi death camps is true.

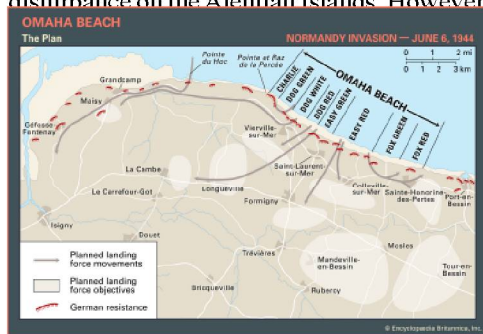
Eventually he was shipped back to England, loaded on a troop ship, and sailed for the U.S. He arrived home in November, just in time to help harvest beans and sugar beets that were still in the field. He left home on June 10, 1942 and gave three years and five months of his life for the freedoms that we enjoy."



Jay and John Mitin as they had an opportunity to meet each other while serving in separate Army units in Europe.

John Mitin

John was born on August 25th, 1918 and was drafted into the Army in the summer of 1941. The draft had been on for a few years prior to his induction because of the storm clouds building in Europe (Hitler began his aggression in the late 1930's). He had been farming with his Dad and really did not enjoy doing so, therefore when his number came up it was off to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. He was inducted with a big group of men from Michigan. Upon completion of their basic training most of the guys were shipped out to Alaska because Japan was causing some disturbance on the Aleutian Islands. However

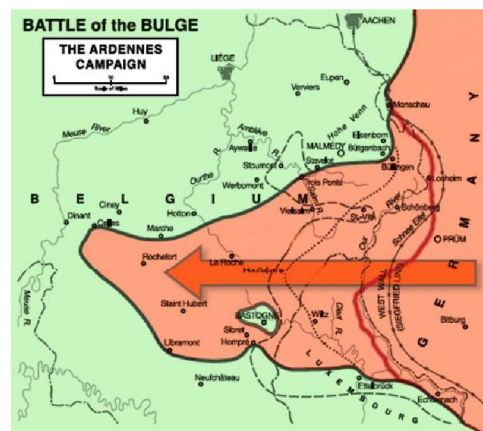


John, along with a handful of men from his unit were kept at Ft. Leonard Wood to serve as cadre to train incoming recruits. There he remained for approximately one year.

From there he went to California for desert training because the U.S. was then engaged in fighting in North Africa. He remained there for almost another year, at which time he was sent to New York, then on to England to take part in the Normandy Invasion. Since

he was in the Service Battalion of the heavy artillery (155 howitzers), they landed on Omaha Beach on the second and third day. The Infantry had secured the beachhead by this time. John recalled driving a truck through pretty deep water until he reached the beach. From there they pressed on across France and eventually into Belgium. This took from May to December. Along the way they witnessed much destruction of cities and towns. In contrast much of the countryside was beautiful however, because there was no need to bomb farms and fields. John mentioned they lived on K Rations as they moved forward (K Rations are a daily pack of dehydrated food good for two meals). Usually there would be some chocolate included with the rations, which they would share with children that would meet them along the road to beg for "Choc O Lat". One might realize that they didn't engage in combat every day as there were down times when they could visit with "locals".

Christmas 1944 was a different story. It was very cold, with a lot of snow on the ground. The German army had trained some English-speaking soldiers American slang and folklore. These individuals had been outfitted with U.S. uniforms and had managed to infiltrate our line of defense. They also had learned the password for the day. They would approach a tank and tell them that they were



cold and would like to get inside to get warm. When the tank operator opened the hatch, they would drop in a grenade. Many tanks were disabled in this way, which weakened the U.S. line of defense.

John stated that the Intelligence reports stated that the German Army was building up in preparation for a counter offensive. The U.S. Generals did not believe this as they thought the German Army was "on the run".

Because of the extremely cold weather, and lack of preparation and the fact that it was Christmas eve, all contributed to the success the German Army had in overrunning the lines. This offensive became known as "The

Battle of the Bulge". There was much loss of life on both sides as this battle lasted until early Spring. John told about the countless frozen bodies that were picked up and taken for burial, and he well remembers the cemetery with row upon row of white crosses marking each and every grave.

The counter offensive by the German army failed because they had counted on the fuel that the U.S. forces would leave behind as they retreated. This didn't happen as the G.I.'s were ordered to destroy all fuel as they retreated. Consequently, when the German tanks ran out of fuel they were done. From that point on there was mass surrender by the Germans. The G.I.'s were kept busy guarding compounds of prisoners. Meanwhile the Allied Armies crossed the Rhine and continued their march toward Berlin. It would have been easy to push right into Berlin, but General Eisenhower made an agreement with the Russians, and they arrived first. This in retrospect was a huge mistake.

When the War ended in Europe in May, the soldiers with the least points were shipped back to the States then into the Pacific Theater. Those who had accumulated the most points, like John, stayed in occupation a while longer. (Points were given for the number of months of overseas service, number of battles, etc).

The war with Japan was over in August of 1945 and John finally boarded a troop ship and went back to the U.S. in the fall. He remembers the welcome that their ship received when it entered the New York harbor. They had "fire boats" shooting streams of colored water, horns blasted, crowds cheered, etc.

He and Jay both got home in time to help harvest 100 acres of beans as they were still out in the field due to a wet fall. They also helped to complete the sugar beet harvest. John, of course, received an Honorable Discharge and retired as a Corporal. He was in the military service from August of 1941 to November of 1945, just over four years. He entered the service at age 23 and was discharged at age 27.

Austin Rogers

Austin Rogers gave up his life as a civilian farmer and was drafted into the Army early in 1942. He did his basic training at Ft. Knox, Kentucky, then was transferred to Watertown, New York for additional training to become a Sherman M-4 tank driver. However, because of an injury to his leg while practicing pole vaulting in high school, the leg began to swell and cause extreme pain with the many times of climbing up and down from the tank. He was relieved from that duty which he really liked, and placed into the Military Police, which also proved to be very bothersome to

his leg. In today's Army he would probably have received a medical discharge. But in 1942 every man was needed in one capacity or another to help defend our country. He was then transferred to baker's school where he learned to bake. However, that too changed when he was transferred to Camp Lee, Virginia. From there he boarded a troop ship and ended up at a huge U.S. Air Base in Portugal. It was at this base the many bombing missions throughout central Europe originated. His job there was to help uncrate bombs and ammunition as it arrived from the U.S. and to get it ready for loading unto the bombers.

Austin was at the base in Portugal from 1943 until January 9, 1946. Prior to his overseas duty he had married Florence Limberger. Thus, when he received his Honorable Discharge as a PFC he immediately headed for Detroit where he and Florence took up residence. After many years in Detroit, they retired and moved to Pigeon, where they became faithful members of Salem U. M. Church.



Otto Voelker

This is the story of World War experiences as told by Otto Voelker.

Otto enlisted in the Army in April of 1942. Prior to that, he worked on the farm with his Dad and brother. He had been deferred from the draft twice prior to his enlistment. It so happens that Otto's Dad had filled out papers declaring that there was only one son on the farm. A member of the draft board knew differently and made a visit to the farm. He asked Otto if he would be interested in joining the Army. Otto said "sure" and he was soon on his way to Detroit, then on to Camp Custer in Battle Creek for interviews and IQ

testing. He then did 10 weeks of Basic Training at Camp Grant in Illinois. From there he was transferred to Ft. Riley, Kansas for X-Ray technician training. It was a twelve-week course, completed in ten weeks.

At this time the Army was assembling a group of doctors, nurses, and technicians who would make up the 46th General Hospital. There were 50 doctors, 100 nurses, and 500 enlisted men to staff the 1500 bed hospital.



Camp Grant, Rockford, Illinois

Many of the doctors were from Portland, Oregon. Many of the Medical Schools put together the medical staff for the General Hospitals. There were many hospitals organized by medical schools throughout the United States and sent to the front. The 46th was originally sent to Africa. When the Germans were driven out of Africa, the hospital was moved to France.

Early in the War as the U.S. was gearing up the troops were not well trained and the equipment was lacking in quality and quantity. Farmers could not get machinery. People could not get cars. Tires and gasoline were rationed, as were many food items, such as



Fort Riley, Kansas

meat, sugar, and butter.

As mentioned before, the 46th Hospital unit shipped out in August 1942. The ship zigzagged down to the equator and then traveled across to North Africa. It took 14 days to cross the ocean. They slept on the top deck with a blanket. There were 3,000 troops on board the ship with capacity to hold 2,200. They managed get past the German U-boats that were patrolling the Atlantic Ocean. They entered the Mediterranean Sea and made a safe landing in Algeria, North Africa.

The hospital was located in Oran, Algeria



about 15 miles from the seacoast. Two medical buildings were set up. One for x-ray and one for surgery. The patients were in tents. A steel wall provided radiation protection for the X-ray technicians. Lead aprons were only worn for fluoroscope. They had about 13 X-ray techs. Some took the x-rays, others developed them and others filed. Otto took the x-rays.

While in North Africa, they were short of medics on the front. They asked for the x-ray technicians to go but the doctors said that they were too valuable and that they were needed at the 46th General Hospital. Some of the men who worked in the wards did have to go to the front. But the X-ray technicians, laboratory technicians and the surgical medics stayed at the hospital.

The x-rays could only be developed at night because the dark room did not have a door. Otto told the doctor that he could build a door. He said, "Go to it". So, the next day he gathered tools. He got a dull saw and a file to sharpen it with, a hammer, square, hinges and latches. Next, he needed lumber. There was a pile of lumber from which he tried to get some boards but was stopped by the Colonel. He reported the problem to the radiologist, who talked to the Colonel, explaining why the boards were necessary. The boards were made available and Otto was able to construct the door so that the room could be darkened and X-rays could be developed in the day time as well as night.

There was not a lot of free time. When there was, they played basketball or went for walks. Once they took a bus to Oran. Oran is French speaking and the population is about one-half Moslem. Another day they went by vehicle to the French Foreign Legion. While there he typed a few letters home.

Otto played in a basketball tournament with 120 teams competing. They played in an empty airplane hanger. In high school Otto played either center or forward. The officer

LOCAL MARKET Nov. 6, 1941

Wheat	96c-98c
Oats	44c-45c
Rye	64c-66c
Barley	\$1.37-\$1.40
Beans	\$4.60
Eggs	35c
Butterfat	37c

who ran the team had him play guard. They had a very strong center and the officer wanted to play forward. His team played until the last night when they were beaten.

Around Oran they grew grapes to make wine. They would collect a cart full of grapes. They would put the grapes in a machine to extract the juice and then fill cisterns 4 to 5 feet deep with the fermenting juice. One day they saw a GI lying on a plank over a cistern scooping up the fermenting juice, and drinking it. Shortly, the boss came out to stop him. His face was covered with purple wine.

One day Otto overheard a conversation that something was coming off and that they expected to lose 25,000 men. That was the Anzio landing in Italy. As it would happen the U.S. sent in two divisions consisting of 20,000 troops each. Out of the 40,000, 12,000 were lost. The Germans sent in 10 divisions or over 100,000 men. The Germans also lost large numbers of men. The invasion

of the x-ray technicians could not handle the stress and were sent home early.

The Germans had their tricks. They left an empty house with two wine bottles on the table. One wine bottle was filled with lye and the other with wine. A soldier drank from the bottle containing the lye. Otto saw him and mixed the barium for an x-ray. His esophagus was closing up and only a trickle of barium was going down. The doctor's treatment was to tie a string to a ball bearing and have him swallow the ball and pull it back up several times a day to keep his esophagus open.

One day in Toulon, near Marseille, in southern France, someone yelled, "Hey Voelker, where are you going"? It was Hornbacher from Sebewaing. He was General Clark's head veterinarian.

When the war was over, they would get a two- or three-day pass and hitch hike to Paris. One could easily get a ride. There were soldiers and vehicles traveling the roads con-

It has become apparent that many of our youth and adults as well, take for granted all too often, the freedoms that we enjoy in this United States of America, and especially right here in this little town called Pigeon. Many have sacrificed much for us to be able to maintain the "way of life" to which we have become accustomed.

It is to this end that we would like to take this opportunity to honor those from our own Salem United Methodist Church who have served in the Military of the United States. Some have served in time of war, some in time of peace. Some had been drafted into service, some had volunteered to serve. And one member of our beloved congregation gave the ultimate sacrifice, (his life) in World War II.

From the files of our church secretary, we have a listing of all who have served in the military in the twentieth and twenty first centuries, beginning with World War I right through the present war in Iraq.

DECEASED - WORLD WAR I

Eichler, Alfred
Henke, Walter
Henne, Frank

DECEASED - WORLD WAR II AND VIETNAM WAR

Allen, Perry	Maxwell, Dale
Avalos, Apolonio	Morin, Jack
Belding, Royce	Orr, Robert
Brown, Don	Paul, Harold, Jr.
Brown, Ellery	Reist, Clarence
Buschlen, LeRoy	Roberts, Ruth
Damm, Clayton T.	Rothfuss, Floyd
Damm, Merlin	Schneider, Marvin **
Davis, Roger	Shope, Earl, Jr.
Faust, Cecil	Smith, Allan
Faust, Lyle	Smith, Hugh
Haist, Dr. Willard	Steadman, Bruce
Hayes, Arnold	Steadman, William
Henke, Robert	Walendzik, Arthur
Kisner, Frank	Weichert, Edward
Kreh, Jim	Weidman, Leland
Kretschmer, Leroy	Wing, Ed
Koch, Etril	Wurtz, Van
Motz, Freeman J.	
** Killed In Action	

From the pages of *The Pigeon Progress*, Eighty years ago, January 31, 1941: Eight o'clock coffee, three lb. bag 39 cents: fresh oysters, 25 cents a pint; Florida oranges, five lbs. for 19 cents at the Pigeon A & P Store.



was successful for the Allies, but a great cost of lives.

After 12 months in North Africa, the 46th was moved to France. They landed near Niece at St. Maxine, which is a nice bathing beach and summer resort area. They had to hurry off the boat and run, but the Germans had cleared out, and the danger was over. They saw much damage to the fortification bunkers that had been blown up by the GI's.

They took a train to Besancon where they set up a hospital in French Army buildings made of concrete. The hospital was equipped to handle 1,500 patients but mostly had up to 3,000 at one time. Some of the patients were housed in tents. They were in Besancon for 15 months. By that time their group had been together for 27 months. They were examined individually and sent home to the U.S. A new crew was sent in to staff the hospital. The new doctors and nurses were from the Bronx, New York City.

During Otto's examination they found his blood pressure to be high. They said go home to Michigan and "get lost for a month". Some

stantly.

On their travel back to the U.S. Otto was on a train riding in a horse car with 40 other G.I.'s. They camped outside of LeHarve for 7-10 days before boarding a Liberty ship. Again, the ship was really crowded. They slept on beds that were bunked five on top of each other. It took about 6 days to return to New York City. Lots of ships were coming in as the soldiers were returning to the U.S. They were given a good meal then shipped by train to the Great Lakes Navel Base. He was discharged there, and took a train to Detroit where his dad picked him up at 2:00 a.m. then back home in Pigeon. This was early December 1945.

From the pages of The Pigeon Progress, Seventy-five years ago, September 1, 1944: New athletic director at Pigeon High School will be Karl V. Emerson of Walled Lake, who has been secured to coach athletics and teach social studies at the high school.

SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN - WORLD WAR II - THROUGH 2008

Adams, Jerry	Kreh, Ron
Allen, Robert	Kreh, Van
Avalos, Jason	Kretzschmer, Clark
Avalos, Joel	Krohn, Ronald
Belding, Elwyn	Kula, Tony
Binder, Dale	Lanuzza, Paul
Bolzman, Matt	Leipprandt, Ted, Jr.
Buehler, Matt	Lowe, Leonard
Buschlen, Calvin	McGathy, Susie
Buschlen, Roger	Miller, Robert
Bussema, Elmer	Mitin, Dave
Christner, Glenn	Mitin, Jay
Cox, Phil	Mitin, John
Crabtree, Earl	Morgan, Carl
Damm, Randy	Newman, Gary
Damm, Ronald	Nim, Aaron
Damm, Shawn	Paul, Jack
Damm, Terry	Pobanz, Clifford
Decker, Gerald	Pobanz, Robert
Eichler, Jason	Protzman, Bruce
Faist, Clark	Rocheftort, Harold
Fuller, Gerald	Rogers, Austin
Geiger, Ross	Santos, Joshua
Glaspie, John	Shope, Elmer
Gleason, Jack	Smith, Douglas
Haist, Donald	Smith, Elwood
Haist, Howard	Smith, Fritz
Haist, Robert	Swartzendruber, Lance
Heiman, J.C.	Turner, Greg
Heiman, Raymond	Voelker, Otto
Holtzhouse, Dr. Edward	Weidman, Howard
Huff Bill	Weidman, Orville
Kreh, Alvin	Weidman, Raymond
	Wertz, Kendall

What is a veteran?

Just look around-
Right where you're standing, he fought for
that ground.
A vet is a person who answered the call,
Who went into war and, gave it his all.

He defended a way of life that we love,
But much preferred peace like the way of the
dove.
He asked not the reason as he stood in the
trench.
He faltered not once in the muck and the
stench.

As soldiers in legions, they stood side by
side,
They knew some would fall, as many more
died.
They whispered their prayers in a helmet of
sweat.
Shells bursting above wouldn't let them
forget.

Tears in their eyes, as their friends lay so
still,
One hour ago, he was king of the hill.
Many more wounded, spilling of life.
When will it end, this battle of strife?

For many the battles never will end,
Now they are civilians and find they can't
blend.
Some are disabled, and some are disturbed,
After coming from hell, they find they've
been curbed.

A veteran is special, to be not denied,
He put it up front, he need never hide.
Now is the time to honor our vets.
Remember their pain, don't ever forget.

Remember them now, and give them their
due.
Stand by their side, 'cause they did it for
you.

Author Unknown

VETERAN'S DAY

On this day
We shall never forget
The men and boys
Who we all call Vets.

From the wars
We gave our best
And many of our Comrades
We laid to rest.

The poppies we sell
On this remembrance day
Are honoring the dead
In our small way.

We honor the living
With words of Praise
And we shall thank them
For the rest of our days

In other countries
We were called Yanks
But on this day
We give you thanks

The courage you showed
And the uniform you wore
Made our country great
During the time of War

Let us give Thanks
To God above
And pray we will all
Have peace and love.

Carol Jordan
Ladies Auxiliary Member

*From the pages of The Pigeon Progress,
Seventy-five years ago, January 11,
1946: John Danks, Jr., who was recently
discharged from the Army, has purchased
the old Huron County Creamery building on
Nitz Street in Pigeon. He is remodeling the
second story which will be used as living
quarters.*

*From the pages of The Pigeon Progress,
Eighty years ago, January 24, 1941: New
officers of Pigeon 4-H Club are Charles
Leipprandt, Robert Quinn and John
Leipprandt. Meeting was held at the home of
Dan Quinn.*

*From the pages of The Pigeon Progress,
Eighty years ago, February 28, 1941:
Because of the war situation, E. B. Mueller &
Company will not operate their chicory plant
at Bad Axe this year.*

We'd love to see you on our Team!

An individual or business can become a member by contracting any active member or by sending
your tax deductible cash or check to Pigeon Historical Society, 59 S. Main St. / P. O. Box 523,
Pigeon, MI 48755. Dues are renewed at the annual meeting each year.

Individual Membership: \$20.00 (active member with voting privileges)

Life Membership: \$120.00 (active voting member with lifetime privileges)

Supporting Membership: \$15.00 (non-active supporting member)

Business Membership: \$20.00 or more (contributing member non-voting)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings. Be our guest and become a member!