The War Years

Chapter Two | Book of Beloit II

Members of Beloit's Company L marched to war. Many would not return from fighting.
Marching for Freedom

As bombs rained on Pearl Harbor, signalling the beginning of America's involvement in the war, Beloiters rallied to defend freedom. The effort would be long and costly.

Beloiters in Southern Wisconsin, and South Beloiters in Northern Illinois, awoke to a crisp and sunny morning on Dec. 7, 1941.

Beloit churches were crowded, as they generally were, and at the West Side Presbyterian church parishioners congratulated the Rev. C.C. White on his sermon the previous Sunday discussing "The Golden Rule."

Including church, folks were going about their normal routines, planning to hustle home to a big Sunday dinner, and an afternoon of recreational skating, skiing, or taking a drive in the area's lovely countryside.

On the radio, The Matson Line was advertising a vacation cruise to Hawaii, and Beloit theaters were offering attractive weekend bills. The Majestic had Gene Tierney, Bruce Cabot and George Sanders playing in "Sundown," while the State was showing Hugh Herbert and Peggy Moran in "Slightly Tempted." Tickets were 36 cents. The popular Rex movie house was showing another Laurel and Hardy comedy, "Great Guns," for 31 cents.

In Washington, Secretary of State Cordell Hull was in his office about 10:15 a.m. awaiting an answer to his latest proposal to Japan. It was around noon when he received a phone call saying that the Japanese envoy wished an appointment to deliver Japan's reply.

Air attack came without warning

Half a world away to the west in Hawaii it was still early morning. Soldiers at Hickam Field filed into the mess hall for breakfast. In the harbor on Battleship Row sailors were eating and preparing for a day of rest or leisure activities. Over at Wheeler Field American fliers still lay in their bunks.

All of them ... the enlisted men and "the commanding brass" ... were unaware of the destruction and horror which was thundering down upon them from the sea.

And then it came. Pearl Harbor was attacked in an act of war!

Community-of Beloit and South Beloit men died in the attack as moored ships rolled, exploded, burned and sank.

In their wildest notions they couldn't do such a thing with even the slightest hope of winning.

Smoke rose from the wreckage of the USS West Virginia on Dec. 7, 1941, after a Japanese sneak attack at Pearl Harbor, on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. The attack signalled the beginning of U.S. involvement in the war.

Citizens swamped telephone facilities as they called relatives and friends to spread the news of the Pearl Harbor attack. Groups gathered all over town to listen to radio reports ... and rumors. Was San Francisco going to be bombed next? What was happening in Washington? Had the President been shot? What were our officials doing? How bad actually were things? What was being done? Was this the beginning of the end for carefree days and the American way of life?

The next day some of their questions were answered. "Congress Declares War" the two-inch banner Beloit Daily News headline screamed. A second ribbon reported "1,500 Killed." And the next prominent news was that "18 Beloit and South Beloit Men at Hickam Field. They included: Robert Lanning, Robert G. DeDouglas W. Pfaffl, Ervin J. Leslie Gilbertson, Albert Schlen..."
Area rallied for America

Reaction to the reported attack from prominent Beloit citizens drew the following from attorney Allan Adams: "I was surprised and shocked. I don't agree with some people that Japan will be a pushover."

Prof. George F. Rasweiler told The Daily News: "This morning I brought the symbol of American democracy."

We've got to go all out now. There can't be any holding back."

The public schools of Beloit will meet the emergency."

Vern Zimmerman, Beloit's bubbly Boy Scout executive, told a Daily News interviewer that he was "shocked." He declared: "Our 266 leaders and 462 Boy Scouts will do their part to support the protection of freedom in any way they may be called upon to act."

Capt. V.O. Smith of the high school R.O.T.C. commented: "This shows the treachery of Japan. This is time for national unity, and all of us must appreciate the seriousness of the situation."

And let's get Hitler first," referring to the war in Europe. "When somebody jumps on you while you're negotiating for peace, then it's time to get going."

Judge Chester Christensen had this to say: "When you meet a man on the street last week he might have been an interventionist, or an isolationist, or what not. Today that man is just one thing... an American!"

One of Beloit's best known clergymen, the Rev. E.J. Evans of the Episcopal church, asserted: "There's only one thing to do now. Go out and lick them!"

Unqualified support of the Beloit schools was pledged by Supt. V.F. Dawald: "Unprovoked war has been made upon our way of life. The rights of liberty, and privileges we hold dear, are under attack. The public schools of Beloit will meet the emergency."

H. Harold Hilton of the Daily News staff in his story on the day following the attack said that "most people were stunned when they heard radio news of the attack."
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announcers break in on peaceful pro-
grams and tell them we are at war. The
news was so unexpected." And so it was!
In his editorial on the Pearl Har-
bor attack Editor Mason Dobson pointed out
that alert and thinking Americans had
been fighting lethargy and pacifism for
months, and really shouldn't have been
surprised "all that much."
"When the black bombers of Nippon
poured death and destruction upon Oahu,
where was the fancied isolation that has
hauled some Americans into quiescence?
Where now is the confident assertion
that Americans could live in a little
world of their own?"
"What now? ... At whatever the cost
(and the cost will be great) we must
fight the good fight of free men ... Above
all we must not let ourselves be de-
cieved. The war which Japan wages
upon us is no little private war, but it is
part of the whole Nazi Pattern, which
aims at World Domination or World
 Destruction."
The reaction to the news of Pearl
Harbor did not spread panic. The same
newspaper reported the Red Cross
chapter would start an immediate fund
drive of $11,000 for the war effort. Clubs
and organizations, like the VFW, the
American Legion, the Elks, Moose, Ma-
sonic order, Knights of Columbus and
others, immediately pledged full support
of their membership.
Chairman Eugene Crowley announced
that age brackets for the Peace Time
Draft, which had been in progress, and
which were set at 21 minimum and 35
maximum, "might be changed to 18 and
64" as a result of the new situation.

Thick black smoke and debris filled the
air around the doomed battleship Ari-
zona, sunk with great loss of American
life by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor.

The World’s Largest Manufacturer of Disc Grinders
and Abrasive Disc Wheels

81 Years of Service
to the Greater
Beloit Area!
Farm organizations in and around Beloit immediately called upon all members to grow all possible crops, and assist in an all out war upon Japan.

The first casualties

Corp. O.A. Burnett, who was in charge of the local recruiting office, reported that 405 Beloit men were already serving in the Army when the attack came, and 67 were in the Navy. They were divided as follows: enlisted in the army, 172; National Guard in training in Louisiana, 103; selectees (drafted), 130; Marine Corps, 5; Coast Guard, 2; and Navy 67.

Duane Hopper and Jim Finley, co-captains of the Beloit High School football team were pictured on the front page of the Beloit Daily News in their football uniforms with the announcement that they had enlisted in the Marines. They had passed their physicals and were awaiting final approval to enter the service.

First Beloit son reported killed in action in the Pearl Harbor attack was Ensign Curtis Davis, a Navy flier. This report later was amended to show that two Beloit boys, Arnold E. Field and Robert L. Brewer, also died on that day. Ensign Davis attended Beloit schools and the University of Wisconsin, and took his flight training at Pensacola, Florida. His stepmother, Mrs. Minnie Davis of South Beloit, was notified of his death.

Field, 24, was an army private stationed with the air corps at Hickam Field, while Brewer was a seaman first class serving aboard a battleship stationed at Pearl Harbor. Pvt. Field's death was reported to his mother, Mrs. Clara Field, by the War Department, while Seaman Brewer's death was announced to his father, H.M. Brewer, by the Navy Department.

Official casualty lists immediately were banned from publication by the military departments, and "next of kin" were notified in telegrams beginning... "The President regrets to inform you that..."

Pvt. Field was born in Beloit, and attended Parker, Lincoln Junior High, and Beloit High Schools. He attended Our Savior's Lutheran Church, and was an amateur baseball player. He had enlisted in 1940. Seaman Brewer also was born in Beloit, attended Beloit schools, and had enlisted in the Navy in May of 1928. He left a widowed wife.

Other reports of casualties came in succeeding editions of the Daily News. Marvin Geise, 21, of Beloit, Laurence Funk, 19, of Rockton, and Walter Bovian, 23, of Delavan, were "reported missing in action"... a term which was to become familiar to newspaper readers in the days ahead. John Fletcher, 32, also was reported early as a Pearl Harbor casualty. Fletcher was a private in the Army Corps.

In reality, to those who saw more than our sphere of activity, who read and listened, the war need not have been a surprise. Daily News headlines for a couple years told of Japan's continued on page 53.
Beloit prepares for its role in helping to achieve victory

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expansionism and growing military might. Even in Beloit, Wisconsin, scrap iron was bought, and shipped to Japan, but few people questioned how the scrap was used.

There was war in Europe. Nazi Germany was running wild, and while Americans worried about the dangers of involvement in the European War, perhaps more serious trouble was brewing with Japan. On Sept. 27, 1940, the Japanese had entered into the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy, one part of which seemed to be directed at the United States.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had been urged by leaders within his administration to impose an economic embargo on Japan, especially on shipments of oil. But the President's defense advisers cautioned him against such a policy, which might precipitate a war for shipments of oil. War clouds were gathering, but the American military urged caution and delay.

Following debates in Congress, all pretexts of neutrality vanished. America shipped war materials to Great Britain, and Beloit boys joined the Coast Guard to man freighters as "armed guards." Later in April 1941, the president proclaimed an unlimited emergency, and in June froze all German and Italian assets in America. He closed their consulates.

A month later Hitler invaded his ally Russia with whom he had previously signed a non-aggression pact. In September a Nazi submarine attacked the United States destroyer "Greer" off Greenland, and a week later Roosevelt told the nation of Germany's "piracy," ordering the U.S. Navy to shoot on sight "those rascals of the Atlantic." That fall Congress repealed the 1930 Neutrality Act, allowing merchant ships to be armed and American ships to sail into combat areas.

The next day, July 26, 1941, President Roosevelt received an urgent message from Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill that Britain was "in mortal danger," and it needed vast quantities of arms from America. It also was desperate for cash and credit. Responding quickly, Roosevelt unveiled a "lend lease" plan to provide arms at once with later payments.

Activities aim toward defense

Secretary Schofer recalls that he and Bob McMaster, a county probation officer, produced the "I Love America" movie, and toured the area showing it. "Bob would show the movie, and I would give a little talk, stirring up patriotism," Schofer recalls.

But with the war now at hand, the

Jerry invites everyone to stop in and see him for all your boat, motor, trailer and accessory needs!!

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work of the Council of Defense intensified and took on new significance. In a Daily News editorial Editor Dobson charged the Council with high responsibilities, praising and admonishing President Fisher in his highly important community role.

The Council immediately took charge of all rationing work for goods and services, organizing committees. It urged the Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Chamber of Commerce and veterans organizations to key up for participation along a dozen avenues of service.

President Fisher was assisted at the top by E.E. Crowley, vice president; Col. R.P. Robinson, second vice president; banker B.P. Eldred, Jr., treasurer; and Fred M. Benti, a former school teacher and director of pupil personnel, executive secretary. Offices were on the ground floor of the Public Service Building at Pleasant Street and Public Avenue.

Every man leaving Beloit for induction into the Armed Forces received a personal letter from Council of Defense President Fisher, expressing the pride and best wishes of the community. Notices of induction were received here from Local Draft Board No. 3 of the Selective Service System from Clerk David Fifield.

Those elected or selected by a “luck of the draw” lottery first were examined at Beloit Hospital on Olympian Boulevard, now the Community Services Center, were classified, and told to be ready to leave for the Milwaukee Induc-

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The story of Company L, during World War II

As Beloit began its second 100 years in the mid 1930s, the Wisconsin National Guard was represented by Company L, 128th Infantry, 32nd Infantry Division, the famous “Red Arrow.” Before the turn of the decade, the unit was called to state duty to control the disturbances caused by the milk strikes, but soon returned to civilian status at its home armory.

Meanwhile, Hitler had invaded Poland and “World War II” had begun. As the Germans overran more and more of Europe, the U.S. government decided that military forces must be brought up to acceptable standards. National Guards units were called to active federal service. The 32nd Division, split between Wisconsin and Michigan, was ordered to duty Oct. 15, 1940. This included Beloit’s Company L.

The unit’s first station was Camp Beauregard, near the city of Alexander, La. After the turn of the new year, the unit was moved to Camp Livingston, a short distance north. All of this time the unit engaged in individual and small unit training, often with improvised weapons used to take place of weapons on short supply.

Brought up to strength

The unit was brought up to full strength with Selective Service inductees from Michigan and Wisconsin. Some of the original members were separated and sent home due to expiration of enlistments and others were transferred to other units in the Division and Corps.

The term of service was extended beyond the one-year call. The 128th Infantry was temporarily organized as a motorized regiment and participated in the Carolina Maneuvers. Company L returned to Camp Livingston on Dec. 5, 1941. Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941: Pearl Harbor. War! Company L was in for the duration.

The Division was ordered to Port Devons, for shipping to Ireland and the European Theater Forces. At this time all hometown officers were transferred to other units. This was War Department policy.

Suddenly orders were changed. The Japanese were getting close to Australia. The Division crossed the continent to San Francisco where units were brought up to strength with trainees in the west.

The 128th Infantry embarked on the S.S. Monterey for parts unknown. Suffering the usual hazards of convoy shipment, the Monterey passed within 200 miles of the naval Coral Sea Battle. This battle became one of the turning points of the war in the Pacific. On May 14, 1942 the Monterey docked at Adelaide, South Australia, half a world away from home. The 128th was sent to Camp Woodside equipped with the comforts of a territorial training camp; the balance of the Division was sent to a tent camp at Sandy Creek, near Gawler, South Australia.

Troops in Australia

As the Japanese worked their way along the north shore of New Guinea, crossing in on Australia, the Division was moved to Camp Cable, near Brisbane, Queensland, and assigned defensive areas along the coast.

The Japanese captured and established a base in the Buna-Gona area. They started up the trail to Port Moresby, 140 miles away over the 18,000 foot Owen Stanley mountains to capture the shipping port and airports there. Local Australian troops were slowly being pushed back.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur decided that American troops were needed. Only enough sea transport was available for one regiment. The 128th Infantry was embarked. On Sept. 18, 1942, the 128th became the first regiment ever lifted into a battle zone, to Port Moresby. Meanwhile the Japanese were stopped high in the mountains by a combination of defense, heavy malaria casualties and supply problems. MacArthur decided to counterattack, blunt the forward movements of the Japanese, and capture the Buna-Gona area.

From Port Moresby, the 128th Infantry sent one battalion overland, over the Owen Stanleys by foot on native trails. The 129th was flown piecemeal to the north coast near Wanigela, 75 miles east of Buna. From there by small boat and foot marches over the foothills of the Owen Stanleys, the soldiers slowly approached Buna. Finally they made contact and the battle began. The Japanese were found defending a perimeter of ground surrounded by swamps. Early on they had command of the air and American supply was limited. The two regiments were supported by one twenty-five pounder Australian gun and later by one 105 mmm Howitzer of the 32nd Artillery. With rifles, bayonets, and hand grenades, the men tried to reduce and capture the entrenched enemy.

Into the battle zone

Company L, as a part of the 3rd Battalion, attacked along the coast toward Buna. They ran into heavily fortified positions along the airstrip and were stopped cold. Over the following days, small progress was made but at a terrific cost. Supply problems reduced the rations to about a third, ammunition was scarce and malaria fever had begun to take its toll. Finally by Christmas with the help of Australian tanks, the victory came.

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Beloit troops off to the war

Continued from page 55.

force in offices and industries, women of Beloit followed their menfolk into uniform. They joined "The WACS" of the Navy and "The WAVES" of the Navy, serving side by side with soldiers and sailors at home and abroad.

They weren't allowed to take combat roles, but their essential contributions in supply depots, and military installations of all types made more men available for duty in the field lines and action fronts.

Other Beloit women entered military nursing, working in processing centers, military camps and bases of all types, field hospitals, on hospital ships in the Pacific, and in hospitals here in the United States, Europe and the Pacific. They saved lives, built morale, kept men of all types made more men available for duty on the front lines and action fronts.

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Company L does its part

It was dreary that October day in 1940. October 23, to be exact...when Beloit National Guard Company "L" under Capt. Chester ("Chet") Allen mobilized in the Armory on Colby Street about
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The Aldi Food Store is located.

There was plenty of excitement for these
many of them still in high school,
usually. They were young, bright, en-
thusiastic.

They answered roll call, listened to
their captain and other officers give a
series of talks on where they were going
and what was expected of them. Then
they drew their "gear" and marched
to the station bidding goodbye to many of his
fathers, sweethearts, friends, city of­
ficials
and favorite athletes, young men who had
enlisted in the company.

Seeing the company off for what was
announced as "a year of training" at
Camp Beauregard, La., were mothers,
Lieutenant Carl Fryday. Fryday · was to
state basketball championships than any
series of talks on where they were going
and received commands in the New
Guinea campaign. Roworth, Fryday and Florey,
later to head the Beloit High School
R.O.T.C. as professor of military sci­
ce and tactics, returned home after the
war as lieutenant colonels.

Sandell was killed in action when he
was 28 years old, and was awarded the
Silver Star posthumously for "gallantry
in action," along with other decorations.
The medal was awarded for action at
Buna Mission, a bloody campaign. It was
reported that Capt. Sandell three times
drew his "gear" and marched
to participate in the New Guinea
campaign. Sandell, Howorth, now a captain, Fryday and the
other city in Wisconsin, was at the
station bidding goodbyes to many of his
fathers, sweethearts, friends, city of­
ficials
and favorite athletes, young men who had
enlisted in the company.

A layout of pictures in The Daily News (taken by the author of this arti­
cle) shows Jacobson hugging and shak­
ing hands with Sid Alford and Second
Lieutenant Carl Fryday. Fryday was to
become captain and commanding officer
of "I" Company during the fighting in
the New Guinea Campaign.

Another Daily News story notes that
Corp. Merle Howell also was wounded in
New Guinea, while six from the Beloit
area were decorated in a review by Lt.
Gen. Robert Eichelberger, commander
of American troops on the Buna front.

Beloiters made up boxes and
sent Christmas gifts to members of Company
L, and a letter written by
Sgt. Eugene F. Ely from "Somewhere in
New Guinea" dated Feb. 8, thanked
Beloiters for those gifts.

"I want to thank you for the most
useful Christmas gifts," he wrote, to
the Mouse Society of Beloit. "I received
the box with the toilet articles, writing
paper, etc... all proving to be of great
value." He and his friends appreciated
receiving cigarettes, "which arrived in
good shape." He reported seeing "quite
a few Beloit boys," including "Jack
Roworth, now a captain, Fryday and the
Howell boy." He also mentioned
"Harris, Armlin, and Florey boys.

"They are in pretty terrible shape and
are things you only dream about," Ely
wrote to Beloiters.

Capt. Roworth, second in command of
Company L when the unit reported for
training, was a member of the high
next went to Australia, and went into
action when the Japanese began their
drive over the Owen Stanley mountains
in New Guinea toward Port Moresby.

Subsequent dispatches from the
Southwest Pacific listed others as
wounded in action:
Sgt. Buford Phillips,
Willis Long, Corp. Merle Howell, Sgt.
Theo. Wright, Sgt. Robert L. Mohney,
Dorn, and Sgt. Fitzgerald.

Sandell was killed in action when he
28 years old, and was awarded the
Silver Star posthumously for "gallantry
in action," along with other decorations.

The medal was awarded for action at
Buna Mission, a bloody campaign. It was
reported that Capt. Sandell three times
turned down "desk jobs" to take active
combat duty.

Florey also was wounded, and about
the time Sgt. Paul Niles suffered fatal
wounds. Sgt. Niles went into action on
Nov. 21, 1942, with a small combat patrol
around the enemy's flank to destroy a
machine gun nest. Wounded, he told his
comrades to attend to others. He later
was found dead. His brother, Fred Niles,
became a Japanese pris­
oner.

Sgt. Russell E. Fitzgerald was seri­
ously wounded, seeing action at age 20,
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school R.O.T.C., and joined the company after graduation. He was a member of Sigma Pi fraternity at Beloit College, graduating in 1936.

Col. Allen continually praised the men of Company L, who left Beloit with him in 1941 and came home with rows of campaign ribbons and decorations. He also praised those who didn’t come home.

“They were a great organization,” he said, always talking about the men of Company L and discounting his own decorations from New Guinea and the Philippines.

City produced military brass

After taking Company L to Louisiana, Col. Allen left the company and the 32nd Division, being transferred to the Third Army as an instructor of the Junior Officers Training Center at San Antonio, Texas. Transferred again he was shipped to Australia, and became a member of General Krueger’s Sixth Army headquarters staff. He served with General Krueger through the New Guinea and Philippines campaigns, and his promotions came as follows: Major, September 1942; lieutenant colonel, May 1944, in New Guinea; and colonel in May of 1945 in the Philippines. Col. Allen also served in Korea, winning the Bronze Star, and later was commandant of the R.O.T.C. program at the University of Wisconsin.

Gen. William S. Wood, prominent Beloit civic leader and Beloit Iron Works (Beloit Corp.) executive, became Beloit’s first World War II Field Grade Officer when he became a brigadier general. A graduate of West Point in the class of 1920, General Wood became commander of 121st Field Artillery of the Wisconsin National Guard, 32nd Division, as a colonel when “the Guard” was federalized in 1940.

At that time he was transferred and charged with organizing the 116th Field Artillery. He was ordered to Louisiana along with other National Guard troops in 1940.

Following West Point graduation, Gen. Wood served the regular army for nine years, and then the National Guard. He was promoted to major in 1934, and to colonel in 1936. He returned to his duties at Beloit Corporation a brigadier general to take a key role in the war effort, holding successively key posts with the industry.

The Beloit Corporation, C.H. Besty Co., Fairbanks-Morse and several other industries were cited for their contributions to the war effort by the Navy and Army departments. The industries won the coveted "E" Award for production excellence, and prominent officials of the national war effort came to Beloit to make presentations in civic celebrations attended by management and city officials, workers and townsmen.

Col. John K. Stotz, who retired from Fairbanks-Morse in 1963 as assistant to the director of engineering, came to Beloit in 1919 after serving as a captain of infantry in World War I. He was assigned by the U.S. Army to establish the Reserve Officers Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) at Beloit High School, and served as the first commandant of cadets.

Working at F-M as a diesel locomotive electrical engineer, Col. Stotz was recalled to active duty with the Army in 1942, serving with the Signal Corps in various commands. At one time he was in command of the army’s electrical training center at Cambridge, Mass. He returned to Beloit in 1946, and was active in reserve officer affairs.

Mayor Earl Rice, who served Beloit and the area as a Boy Scout executive, also was a veteran of both World War I and World War II, and was widely known and loved for his youth leadership. Other Boy Scout leaders who entered service from Beloit, and became officers with outstanding records of performance were Vernon Zimmerman and William Keown.

Many Beloiters served both wars, including men like Bill Waugh, Fred Day, Col. William Huempfner, in whose honor the World War I "barracks" organization is named, and Col. George A. (Bed) Garrigan.

Friends and relatives bid them a tearful goodbye at the Chicago and Northwestern depot.
Beloit had its heroes

While the nation had heroes like Sgt. Alvin York in World War I, and Admiral "Bull" Halsey, and Generals Marshall, MacArthur, Patton, and Eisenhower in World War II, Beloit had a host of heroes of its own. Sgt. Beauford Anderson won the Congressional Medal of Honor, and Col. George Garrigan and Bill Waugh were among the most decorated. Marine Barney Gremmels came home with rows of combat decorations.

The first American combat units to see action in Europe in World War I was the First Division, in which Lt. Garrigan commanded a platoon, and at times a company, of machine-gunners. He distinguished himself again and again, returning to Beloit and his excellent law practice. He was a civic leader, and instrumental in building the Reserve Officers Association on the old Garrigan's property. "Bull" Garrigan was the 19th Centennial commander of the American Legion Post in Beloit, and busy with the Boy Scouts, Red Cross and a dozen other things. Col. Garrigan was recalled to fight in World War II, and his tour of duty was distinguished by additional decorations.

Col. Florey served 33 months overseas, held numerous state-side posts, and returned to Beloit to head the ROTC, before being recalled for more duty. His many decorations include the Bronze Star with Honorary "V" insignia and Oak Leaf Cluster, the Purple Heart medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, having been wounded in action several times; the Asiatic-Pacific campaign ribbon with three stars, the Philippine Liberation Medal with one star, the American Theater and Victory Medals.

He, too, modestly doesn't talk about his own exploits, but continually talks about his comrades in arms. He has been active in arranging Company L reunions.

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Cadets used Beloit College

The cadets used the campus between the Eaton Chapel, Middle College and Pearson's Hall as a parade ground. They held roll call formations, drilled, and held morning and evening flag raising and lowering retreats.

"About that same time," Emilson recalls, "an agreement was reached with the Navy to house a diesel unit which was attending classes at Fairbanks-Morse. Porter House, and the former president's home were used, and later the contingent moved into the men's North Dormitory."

Emilson remembers the diesel Navy men marching to and from the Fairbanks plant, and the activities planned for them and others at the downtown Beloit "USO." Local woman's groups provided doughnuts, cakes, cookies, coffee and milk "for the boys," along with magazines, phonograph records, a radio and "a few of the comforts of home."

Various entertainments were provided, and young ladies from Beloit families "hosted" to serve and provide chaperoned companionship for the sailors and servicemen home on leave. Soldiers stationed at the Camp Grant training center south of Rockford also frequented the Beloit USO, and found diversions in local taverns and clubs.

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Beloit Council of Defense organized war effort

The initial idea for the organization of the Beloit Council of Defense originated in the minutes of the members of the Beloit Commercial Club early in the summer of 1940.

The corporation was formed by Oscar Nelson, Col. Rolf Rosman, John J. Gray, and John B. Clark, who signed the Articles of Incorporation on Aug. 27, 1940.

Colonel Robert P. Robinson had been selected as president of the new organization, William L. Schofer as executive secretary, and Eldred, Jr. as treasurer. The original Board of Governors was composed of 65 members, and the executive committee of 22 members.

The first meeting of the Board of Governors was held on Sept. 3, 1940. The first task was to plan a campaign for membership. The campaign which was put on during the month of September resulted in a total membership of approximately 40,000 people. The only requirement for membership was American citizenship and willingness to sign a card pledging allegiance to the American flag.

Donations were accepted, but no one was turned down for membership because of inability to donate. The contributions as a result of the membership drive brought in $1,760.85 in pennies, nickels and dimes.

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but was denied again and again because of his age.

"Dobby" as he was affectionately known to the Daily News staff and the community became a Red Cross administrator working with medical teams and hospitals in Italy and Sicily. He became a relief administrator in Europe and Africa. Following the invasion of Italy by Allied Forces, Mr. Dobson became director of civilian war relief to Italian refugees, dispensing and administering medicines, clothing and food. He returned to work at the Daily News in February 1945. Because of his meritorious service to the Italian people, he was awarded the Cross of Merit, First Degree, Order of Malta.

The Cross of Malta Award is granted to those who have given meritorious service to the sick and wounded. The Order of Malta was known once as "The Hospitaliers," having its origin in the Crusades. Mr. Dobson also was elected to Beloit's "Hall of Fame" maintained by the Beloit Historical Society, the Greater Beloit Association of Commerce, and the Bartlett Museum.

Jim Miller, who worked in the Fairbanks-Morse first aid "hospital" while attending Beloit College and living at the Sigma Pi house, graduated in 1934, and served three years in the Southwest Pacific. An orthopedic surgeon in Madison, Miller received an Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Ribbon with four battle stars, and the Philippine Liberation Medal with two battle stars.

Three Beloit College students with close Beloit ties had brilliant military careers. They are Robert Ferguson, John Samuels and Fred Ascani. All three left the college to complete their degrees at West Point, and all three rose through the ranks to major general.

On Dec. 18, 1941, the Board of Governors met and placed the organization on a war-time basis by adopting the war program provided for in the original plan. From that time on, the Beloit Council of Defense was actually functioning as a local civilian war council...

The recruiting of qualified chairmen and personnel for the various divisions delayed the organization with work for the next two and one-half months. No sooner had this work been initiated than the new secretary was overloaded with directives on rationing, and activities which the war-time organization had to take over.

While waiting for instructional materials for the specific courses in the Civilian Defense Training School, the Beloit Chapter of the American Red Cross was training the public school faculty and others in the basic first-aid as well as the first-aid teachers’ course. By the latter part of April, many public school teachers were ready to assume their new duties as teachers of volunteers for the various blackout units. The first Civilian Defense Training classes opened in the Beloit senior and junior high schools by May 4.

By the middle of May, the volume of work in the central office was so great that the executive committee authorized...
Council of Defense

Continued from page 62.

the hiring of an assistant to the executive secretary. Fred H. Benti was hired temporarily to assist in supervising the training program, to recruit new volunteers, and to organize additional classes in order to fill the quotas requested by the Federal Office of Civilian Defense for the various units. By the middle of the summer of 1942, approximately 600 volunteers had completed all of the requirements including the first-aid course required for certification.

On Aug. 19, the Beloit Civilian Defense Corps graduating exercises were held in the Walter Strong Memorial Stadium. At this time, all those who had completed their training were awarded certificates and armband insignia.

Blackout practices

During the summer of 1942, a center was set up in the Beloit police station, and shortly after certification, blackout practices were initiated. In the late summer, Col. Swenson of the Sixth Service Command inspected the Beloit organization and was highly complimentary in his appraisal, giving Beloit an A-1 rating.

In September 1942, Dahms resigned after having turned over the rationing program to G. Otis Ross. On Oct. 1, Fred Benti was hired to replace Dahms. Since the supervision of rationing was removed from the new secretary, he was able to devote his full time to the three divisions of civilian defense, and the Citizens Service Corps began to receive more attention from the central office.

On Oct. 14, 1942, an organizational meeting for a Women's Block Plan was held and the new unit in the Citizens Service Corps was started with Miss Nellie Jones as chairperson. On Oct. 27, a dinner meeting with the members of the executive committee and all of the chairmen of the three divisions was held.

Each chairman reported upon the work done in his unit as well as the work to be done and the problems to be met.

One of the major conclusions derived from the meeting by the office of the Council was that the Citizens Defense Corps was sufficiently well along so that greater concentration could be applied to the Civilian War Services.

Efforts increased

Although recruiting and training of additional personnel for the Defense Corps proceeded through the winter and following summer, the less glamorous but fully as important branch of civilian war services began to absorb an increasing amount of time and effort from the central office.

The organization of the Women's Block Plan was sufficiently well organized through the winter of 1942 to be able to take over many of the programs requiring house-to-house contacts. In the spring of 1943, as one of its major functions, the Women's Block Plan rendered invaluable aid to the Sixth Service Command in its first WAC recruiting campaign in Beloit by surveying the various wards for prospective enlistees.

In the subsequent campaigns under the civilian chairmanship of Mrs. R.A. Williams, Beloit became one of the top cities in Wisconsin in WAC recruiting.

Beloit Council of Defense received numerous honors and recognitions for its success, attributed to close coordination of its various divisions.

Beloit's First Community Credit Union

SEE US AT: 1702 Park Ave., Beloit 362-9077
Cooperation the watchword in ‘home front’ war efforts

Continued from page 62.

Flying Cross for daring bombing raids over France, and a second Flying Cross for hastening the liberation of French territory. After the war, Maj. Gen. Ascani shattered a world speed record for a 100 kilometer course by flying an F-86 Sabre jet at over 600 miles per hour. He also served in high Pentagon posts, and received the college Distinguished Service Citation in 1952.

With the war many changes came to life in America and life in Beloit. More and more men departed for military service, having received "Greetings" from Uncle Sam with a request to report for the draft and military service. A stream of women entered the workforce, which at one time counted 18 million women doing work for the war effort.

Beloiters used to going where they pleased had to get accustomed to rationed gasoline, and "stamps" to buy scarce meat, sugar, butter and automobile parts. Residents "judged" their neighbors on Rationing Boards with the power to deny them gasoline, foodstuffs, clothing, and tires. Everyone was commanded to end waste, to "make do," save tin cans and rendered fats, and put up with citywide "dimouts" and "blackouts." Homes installed blackout curtains, and City Manager A.D. Telfer enlisted Beloit Pilot Russell E. VanGelder's services as "blackout observation" official for the community. VanGelder on surprise notice would take observers aloft over Beloit, and as sirens wailed would time the minutes it took for the entire Beloit and South Beloit area "to go black."

As living costs climbed and store shelves displayed fewer consumer goods, workers were "frozen in their jobs," and could not leave their posts even when offered higher paying posts elsewhere. Beloiters worked longer and harder for less money as time went on. They bought "War Bonds" at street Bond Rallies; the cuffs on men's pants disappeared to save materials, the frills in women's dresses likewise vanished.

Coping on the home front

Flags began appearing in business and residential areas, and special window banners appeared carrying a blue or gold star. The blue star signified that someone from the home displaying the banner was in service, while a gold star told the sad story that the serviceman in that home had made the supreme sacrifice. A Gold Star Mothers club was formed for mutual support.

Everyone helped the war effort on the home front. Shown here are Beloit Boy Scouts, collecting scrap metals and aluminum for the defense effort.
Harry Wade of Beloit came up with the blue and gold star flags, and his idea later was adopted nationally. Wade was a local youth leader and YMCA gymnast, who organized a Boys' Brigade. This unit later became Troop One of the Boy Scouts of America sponsored by the Second Congregational Church.

Many households sent two or three brothers to fight in World War II, but the Delaney family on Gerald Avenue set some kind of local record when five brothers were involved in the war effort.

Corporal Elvin Delaney was reported serving in the Pacific Theater, while Orvin Delaney was serving in a medical detachment on the west coast. Thane Delaney was training at a Texas camp, while Harold Delaney was busy doing his job with the Beloit Home Guards, which replaced Company L. Wayne Delaney worked long shifts in a defense job, while Carl rounded out the efforts of the Delaney boys by enlisting in military service later in the war.

Shoes also were rationed here and across the country, and families with kids used their rationing stamps to buy footwear for the youngsters while they walked around on thinner and thinner soles. Cigarettes became rationed and scarcer as more were sent to the Armed Forces. Groups of patriotic citizens in service clubs would send their allotments of cigarettes to loved ones and USOs rather than smoke themselves. It became commonplace for Beloiters to give cigarettes and sewing kits to soldiers on "Troop Trains" moving through the two railroad stations here and in Clinton.

Coffee became a luxury with many substitutes, good liquor was hard to come by, seats on trains and airplanes for pleasure by civilians not connected with the military became next to impossible to get. Magazines and newspapers were put on quotas and forced to limit circulation because of the paper shortages. The military had first call on hotel rooms as officials, soldiers, sailors and other personnel moved back and forth across the nation.

One of the worst experiences of all was a new experience, which got worse and worse — standing in long lines for everything!

Beloiters became Air Raid Wardens and plane spotters, practiced blackouts, plowed vacant lots and planted "Victory Gardens" all over town, and by 1944 were producing 40 percent of home consumed vegetables. Blood drives were conducted by the Red Cross with blood going to the battlefields to aid the wounded.

Housewives in addition to baking for the USO, making bandages for the Red Cross, and acting as helpers in numerous other ways, became volunteers in Beloit hospitals to replace nurses called to military service. Nationally, it was estimated that by mid-1943 there were some nine million volunteers busy across the land, according to the Office of Civilian Defense. And Beloit had its share of them. Four out of every five citizens on the Beloit home front felt they were "doing Continuing on page 66.
The following men from Beloit, South Beloit and the area contiguous to Beloit gave their lives for their country during the period when the United States was engaged in war, in the 1936-1936 period.

"In solemn salute to those Americans, our comrades—great, brave men that they were—for whom there will be no homecoming ever." — Ernie Pyle.

World War II

Linwood I. Allen; A.W. Anderson; Gordon L. Adams; James A. Anderson; Keith Bauman; Philip L. Baumler; Leonard W. Beadle Jr.; Gordon Beck; Bryce C. Bender; Alvis S. Bennett; Donald C. Bjork; M. Borck; Richard L. Bowen; Lester F. Brandt; Robert J. Brenehan; M.J. Brobeck; Robert L. Brewer; John Brewer; Richard Barnes; Clarence E. Belken; Harvey Brewster; O.A. Burnett; Charles F. Burns; James A. Carey Jr.; Meredith Carr; James R. Carringer; Clarence E. Carson; James R. Chaplin; Daniel Chapman; Donald Clippert; Norman E. Cosmoen; Lotharia Franke; Lawrence Funk; Marvin F. Geise; Harry K. Genung; F.F. Giffen; Gustavo Ghinazzi; Robert Golden; Robert Graham; Leslie Gunderson; Robert G. Haskell; Roy A. Hankins; Evert Hannawall; Roy L. Hanson; Richard L. Hartwick; Eugene R. Hayford; Claude L. Heaton; Austin Hefelfman; Donald R. Henshaw; John Louis Howe; Elmer J. Hughes; Frankin lverson; Norman Johnson; Duane Jordahl; Robert J. Joy; Stavos Kanell; Donald E. Kautz; Clyde J. Kennedy; Eugene Kenucane; Paul N. Nielsen; Paul E. Niles; Donald A. Olson; Richard Olson; Robert Peter Oquist; James R. Park; Delos Peilt; Gordon A. Petterson; Charles J. Pasjidi; Kenneth E. Purdy; N.O. Purviance; William W. Reed; Accy Rhoads; Thomas G. Rieff; Harry Ring; Clyde M. Ross; Robert A. Roth; Anton H. Roth; E.H. Sandell; Joseph Saris; Zeno Schlittler Jr.; William E. Shaffer; Wayne L. Sheed; Redene W. Simonson; Charles R. Smiley; Frank Soben; Elmer R. Speich; Edward J. Stindle Jr.; John Stokes; Merle R. Stone; Andrew Collins Jr.; Denzsmore Collins; Marvin M. Condon; Robert F. Corey; Richard Crans; Donald Creake; William C. Curtis; Byron Dary; Burnell Davis; Frederick C. Davis; Foster R. Davenport; R.K. Davey; Edward M. Daze; Elvin Lloyd Delance; Charles L. Denos; Joseph DeVita; Alan N. Dickson; Junior D. Dietz; Heif J. Duboek; Raymond J. Edwards; Ellsworth Everston; Harold W. Fad; Arnold E. Field; Carl K. Fischer; Myles Kencucane; George L. Kiesling; Robert C. Koper; Raymond E. Kramer; G. Wayne LaDue; John L. Lanning; Robert W. Lanning; Gilbert Likert; Arden D. Luebek; Paul Lynch; Gerald A. Martin; Eddie May; Robert W. McCaw; John H. McClellan; Floyd McGilvra; Robert D. McVey; John Peter Mockus; Elwood Morris; Milton Murie; Boyd L. Muselman; Otto W. Myers; Eleanor L. Nelson; George E. Nelson; Orville Steffenson; Paul R. Stott; Peter Paul Swinocon; Dean M. Thompson; Donald L. Thorson; Andrew L. Thrasher; Jack F. Tiffany; William H. Walker; Milo H. Wallace; Ralph Wallace; Richard Walmer; Ray C. Walters; Bernard D. Watts; Charles F. Webber; Joe D. Wickham; Emil Wise; Ivan Wilmer; Mathew J. Wilson; Roy E. Wilson Jr.; Roy Wiltsie; Glen K. White; Charles W. Wonts; Donald C. Younger.

Korean War

Allen Anderson; Eugene Angell; James Barton; Richard Brice; James H. Briggs; James Goldwater; William Hutchins; Ronald Huesner; Kenneth L. Jensen; Robert Lenz; Donald Lahmann; Carl E. McCaffin; Brand Munson; Robert Naatz; Vincent Osen; Russell Peters; Bayard Phelps; Wesley Piper Jr.; Jerry Thompson; Robert C. Walsh; Russell A. Wright.

Vietnam War

Nolan E. Black; Jerald J. Balin; Edwin F. Brown; John A. DeBock; Robert O. Long; William P. Martin; James P. McConnell; Timothy J. Norman; Rodney H. Rickli; Michael C. Nielen; Gerald W. Schulte; Johnnie C. Sny; Gridley B. Strong; Leonard J. Tauschek; Ernest Tews; Dennis M. Wood.

Provisions to the Beloit war dead, since 1936

The Beloit Red Cross developed a disaster plan involving scores of residents, covering warning systems, evacuation routes, medical units, feeding stations, law enforcement, and other considerations. "Practices" were held to see how the plan functioned, and meetings of city and chamber officials and civic leaders were held to refine the plan.

The war seemed a lot closer a bit later when German Prisoners of War began arriving in the United States. Many were interned in Wisconsin in several camps. One was located at Camp McCoy, and another was in nearby Walworth County, between Delavan and Lake Geneva. Some of the prisoners learned the language, requested and received permission to remain in the United States after the war. They became "good farmers, good workmen and good citizens." Beloit clergymen found their work picking up as couples accelerated wedding plans and "tied the knot" before more and more young men were inducted into service. Many local young brides and sweethearts "followed the Beloit Schnellenbergers to suit your needs, at the right price and most importantly with a proper fit.

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Prairie Avenue Concrete, Inc.
their men" to training camps and naval bases "to be with dear ones as long as possible" before they "shipped out" for combat zones overseas. Many found jobs close to camps and bases, working as waitresses, hostesses, and secretaries in various installations.

Some Beloit veterans returned home after the war with a different kind of "war bride." Fighting through reams of government forms, documents and "red tape," they brought home wives which they had courted, won and married in France, Italy, Hawaii, India, the Philippines and even Germany, where fighting had been among the heaviest.

These war brides from foreign countries were welcomed by local families, and they attended classes set up at the Vocational and Adult School to learn sewing, cooking, the English language and American customs. They formed clubs and conducted social activities, and often were asked to detail their own customs and cultures.

Men shipped all over U.S.

Men inducted from Beloit and Milwaukee were processed and trained all across the country. Naval recruits were sent to the Great Lakes Naval Training Station north of Chicago near Waukegan along Lake Michigan, while new "Glis" (for government issues) went to Camp McCoy in Wisconsin, Fort Sheridan, Ill., Camp Grant south of Rockford, and...
U.S. struggled toward victory

Continued from page 67.
numerous installations in Indiana and across the land.

Troop movement around the nation and in foreign countries were "top secret," and publication and public discussion of them was strictly forbidden. Posters in public buildings, in meeting halls, and on billboards reminded residents to "button their lips," "hold their tongues," and protect the safety of their loved ones in military service.

A system of overseas addresses was worked out in "APO Numbers," which designated post offices and distribution areas from New York to San Francisco. Servicemen could write home, and Beloiters could write to their sons, daughters, fathers and husbands all over the globe, but no servicemen dared be specific in location details, or specific in duties and action.

Mail arriving in Beloit was heavily censored from bases, ships, and fronts as Beloiters fought in Europe, Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, and were stationed from Alaska to India around the globe. Sgt. Joseph Haffey wrote interesting letters on what men of Company L were doing from time to time in the 1940-43 period, and many of these found their way into the Daily News.

All news from overseas was joyfully shared among Beloit families and in neighborhoods all over town, but gossip and speculations were forbidden. Rumor was not only a social error but prohibited by law. "V-Mail" became popular both at home and with servicemen, speeding up deliverers. Stationary came in regulated forms and sizes, and such letters were sent to APO centers for microfilming and fast crossing and recrossing of the seas. Servicemen sent their mail home "free."

Fighting spread across the globe

Boxes of the ever popular cookies baked by wives and moms, small tinned delicacies, Christmas presents, birthday remembrances, and gifts from the Red Cross flowed in a steady stream from Beloit, all addressed to "GIs" through APO numbers.

Simultaneously with the attack upon Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Japanese launched attacks on U.S. bases at Guam, Midway and Wake Islands from the air, and ground troops attacked Hong Kong, Malaya, Thailand, and the Philippines. The ultimate objective was clear: Japan wanted nothing short of the expulsion of the U.S. and the United Kingdom from the Orient.

Manila fell on January 2, 1942, and American-Filipino defense forces commanded by Gen. Douglas MacArthur escaped by retreating to the Bataan Peninsula in Southern Luzon. The resistance here and the final fall of Bataan on April 9, 1942, is a gallant saga in itself, and has been the subject of songs, plays, musicals, and movies.

Much has been written about the war...
in the Pacific, the battles of the Solomon Islands campaigns, New Guinea, and the Chinese Front, but little has been said of the Aleutian Campaign. The first landing by Axis forces on North American soil occurred in June 1942, when the Japanese occupied the western Aleutian islands of Attu, Agattu, and Kiska. The occupation forces were finally wiped out in May of 1943 with an American landing on Attu.

While much Beloit interest focused on the war in the Pacific because of Company L, many of Beloit’s servicemen fought Hitler’s War in Europe. Some fought the African campaign to get there.

After the surrender of the Axis armies in North Africa in the spring of 1943, the Allied armies trained and assembled for the invasion of Sicily. The invasion began during the night of July 9-10 by paratroopers and troops landing on beaches after being transported by an armada of 3,200 ships. The May 8, 1945, Beloit Daily News headline heralded in type three inches high: “European War Ends,” but a second headline and story said something important about Beloit and Beloit people. They kept at their jobs; they redoubled their efforts; they entered a phase of new determination to end the war in the Pacific:

“Beloit was as quiet as the proverbial churchyard on this V-E Day,” the story said. “The sun was shining brightly; the birds were chirping and hunting worms; whistles blew as usual at 5 a.m. and lines of men and women filed into their places of employment. The flags waved in a brisk north wind.”

People listened to the radio to get the details of the end of hostilities and to hear President Truman talk ... kids were hustled off to school as usual ... taverns were closed by official action ... people went about their routines ... churches announced special evening prayer services.

The same paper reported that S/Sgt. Cloren Meade and T/Sgt. Eugene A. Lanning had been liberated from the prisoner of war camp at Banau, Germany. The McNeany department store displayed a full page advertisement which admonished: “Let this day be an eternal warning to all men who would deny human rights and outrage human decency.”

The next day the newspaper’s headline encouraged: “Army to Grant Two Million Discharges.”

Memorial Day two weeks later on May 30, was a tribute to men who served in uniform and to the home front volunteers. President Carey Croneis spoke at a service in the First Congregational Church, hundreds with Col. R.P. Robinson as marshal. There were prayers, and words of thanksgiving, and the sounding of “taps.”

Meanwhile in the South Pacific, General MacArthur “returned” as he promised his troops he would after the fall of Bataan, and conducted a series of successful operations and campaigns. He surprised the Japanese at Luzon and took Manila with the help of the Navy. The fortress of Corregidor was recaptured.

Beloit Hair Design College
Salutes Beloit’s 150th Anniversary!

Beloit Hair Design College opened on May 1, 1982 and is a nationally accredited cosmetology school. Students receive the training and skills needed to become true professionals in this growing, lucrative field.

We are proud to be a part of the Beloit community and look toward the future with pride and optimism.
Beloit and the nation celebrated victory over Japan, with the signing of the surrender instrument on Sept. 2, 1945. People spilled into the streets to welcome the end of bloody World War II, and the preservation of freedom.

Continued from page 69. bomb 60 percent of the city was devastated; an area of 2 1/2 square miles was obliterated, and "time" in hospitals and prisoner of war camps. Various separation centers were set up, and among the busiest were Camp Grant, Fort Sheridan, and the Great Lakes Naval Training Center. Trains and buses brought veterans home to happy reunions. Some restaurants offered the "returning boys" free meals, clubs and organizations held open houses, and parties were routine in homes and halls. And while all this went on, some churches and organizations erected and unveiled Honor Rolls of the dead in their meeting places.

The Chamber of Commerce and Council of Defense held several civic celebrations, and one such event was held in the Company L Armory. Representatives of all branches of the service were honored, and nationally famous newscaster and commentator Garret Utey was the speaker.

Returning veterans found a "new" occupant of the Armory, a Home Guard company commanded by Capt. Leo Radford. Some veterans transferred to the peacetime army, or took another hitch with the Navy, Coast Guard or Marines.

Victory didn't end Beloit role

Several of the original Company L officers elected to remain in service, rising to high rank. Among them were Col. Chet Allen, and Lt. Col. Chester Hill, Russell Sigwell, Gordon Bishop and Ted Florey.

Also after the war a number of Beloit Naval officers continued their service at the Naval Reserve Training Center in Rockford. Lt. Cdr. Herman Jayson and Lt. Cdr. Phillip Meyers at various times served as commanding officers, and others who attended weekly drill nights included Lt. Cdr. John Smiley, Lt. Cdr. Paul Nees, Senior Lt. Laurence A. Raymer, Lt. James Michae, and others.

A busy social schedule also was maintained with parties, dances, and various activities which included the ladies. Company L held several reunions following the war and far into peacetime.

In October 1946, 41 men who had left Beloit in October 1940 with Company L, many as high school juniors and seniors, gathered in the Beloit Holiday Inn. Three of the unit's original officers attended: Capt. Allen, First Lt. John Rowarth, and Second Lt. Theodore Florey.

The 1946 reunion included many wives and widows, and the four sets of brothers who left together in 1940 when the company was federalized, two sets were present. They are Delbert and Harold Stauffacher, and Ferdinand and Joseph Haffey.

"All the conversations of World War II were on the lighter and fun side," Joe Haffey said later. "The sad and horrible side of war was kept a mental secret. All of the men agreed the war was an experience, but none would care to relive those years."

The men and their wives spent three happy and sobering days together at the reunion, programs included buffet dinners, prayer meetings for the deceased, speeches, prizes, dancing, stories of the living and dead, and limitless camaraderie.

Pearl Harbor began this narrative chapter, and talk of Pearl Harbor will end it, giving Russell Warriner of Beloit a chance to tell his story. He survived the "Day of Infamy" when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and while that 1941 day seems long ago to many, to him it was only yesterday.

Warriner was eating his breakfast at 7:56 a.m. on Dec. 7, 1941, aboard the USS Arizona docked at Pearl Harbor, when the bombs came. There were 1,700 men aboard the Arizona that day, and less than 100 escaped to tell about the attack. Warriner was one of them.

Besides the Arizona, a ship longer than two football fields, the battleships Oklahoma and Utah were sunk, and the California and West Virginia also went to the bottom. The Tennessee and Maryland were damaged along with the cruisers Raleigh, Honolulu and Helena, destroyers Cassin, Shaw and Downes, the repair ship Vestal, and the seaplane tender Curtiss.

Rushing to his spot, Warriner in the explosions and following fires was burned on his hands, feet and arms. His shoes were blown off. His hands which had fashioned four violins, and created cabinets for Beloit factories before the war, would never play a violin again.

Warriner spent seven months in hospitals before returning to Beloit.

Saved by a miracle

"I know why I got off the burning ship," Warriner says of an experience he is reluctant to recall. "Because my Lord took me off. He had other plans for me. I have known my Lord since I was a child, and I know he was with me then. The Lord let me keep my hands ... I now could have books."

Warriner never has returned to Pearl Harbor, and he hasn't seen the Arizona Memorial erected there. The Arizona remains where it sank with its men, their bodies sealed in an aquatic tomb.

The Arizona remains a commissioned ship, the flag flies there daily, and thousands visit the memorial to pay tribute to the men who died at Pearl Harbor.

"Yes, I'd like to go back some day," Warriner says. "I lived with those men. They were my comrades and my friends."

— Laurence A. Raymer