

# VETERANS DAY

★☆☆★★★ HONORING ALL WHO SERVED ★☆☆★★★

## Unexpected breakdown fuels a lifelong bond with German family

### Weiland's 35 years of service

**BY MEGAN MOLSEED**  
Spencer native Gerald "Jerry" Weiland has felt a strong sense of duty to serve his country since he was a child.

"Joining the military was part of my family's history," he says, "I felt it was a duty." His grandfathers, father, and uncles served in major wars.

"My mom's dad was in WWI," he recalls. "All of my uncles were in either WWII or Korea, and my dad was in the Korean War."

In the spring of 1976, when he was just 17 years old, Jerry Weiland set out to fulfill this destiny, signing up for the Delayed Entry Program. A few weeks later, Weiland took his official oath of active duty.

Weiland, who now assists local veterans in Storm Lake as a Veterans Affairs Officer, recalls that his first assignment abroad took him to Frankfurt, Germany—a big adjustment from his training at Fort Knox.

"Getting off the airplane in Frankfurt, Germany, was a rude awakening," he says. He saw German police patrolling the airport in pairs, their dogs alongside them and automatic weapons in hand. According to Weiland, the region had been dealing with "severe terrorism" from far-left extremist groups at the time.

After being picked up from the airport, Weiland and his group were taken to the 21st Replacement Battalion in Frankfurt. From there, Weiland was given his assignment. He

was sent to Alpha Troop (A-TRP), 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (1/11 ACR) in Fulda.

"I had never been on a train before, so that was a unique experience," Weiland laughs, remembering his journey along the German countryside.

Germany was a new experience for the young soldier in many ways. Along with discovering new places and modes of travel, he was also picking up a new language. Traveling with six other privates, Weiland relied on the limited German he knew from "Hogan's Heroes" as they made their way to Fulda. They managed to get off at the right stop, and upon arrival, someone was there to meet them and take them to Downs Barracks on the west end of the German town.

### BEGINNING A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES

During his years in Germany, one memory stands out for Weiland because, he says, he gets to "re-live on at least an annual basis."

Weiland remembers one afternoon in April 1977, traveling through Lauterbach during a maneuvering exercise. About 15 miles from Fulda, the soldiers were concerned as the M113 they were driving began to slow down, prompting an unscheduled pull over to the side of the road. Thankfully, they happened to be in front of a house, Weiland remembers, and a young girl soon popped out with two classmates, asking



**Jerry Weiland (right) reconnects with Police Commissioner Tegethoff.**

if their vehicle had broken down.

"At the time, I didn't know much German, but enough to let her know it was a small breakdown," Weiland relates, adding that he asked the young girl he was soon introduced to as Gesine if she could bring him a glass of water to cool off from the unusually sunny and warm weather that day.

A few minutes later, Gesine's older sister Iris came home, and Weiland was smitten. "We talked a lot," he recalled.

After a quick check of the vehicle, the crew saw that the repair was minor, but they still had to wait for their platoon leader. While they waited, they got to know the family, including Gesine and Iris's parents, the girls' father, Gerhard, and their mother, Hannalaura, who kindly offered them a home-made meal.

"That was my first real taste of German food," Jerry says. "Oh my gosh, it was so good!" Hours went by without the



**Jerry Weiland (second from right) celebrates his promotion from SP4 to Sergeant.**

platoon leader's presence. Gerhard invited the soldiers to join him and his friend Herbert for a "few adult beverages," Jerry laughs. The other soldiers eventually returned to the vehicle, but Jerry stayed behind, chatting with the two men.

Around 10 p.m., a knock on the door interrupted their conversation. It was 1LT Bob Sigl, the platoon leader, telling Jerry to get into the armored personnel carrier and follow him. Despite the potential for consequences, nothing came of the situation. Before Jerry left, Gerhard handed him his phone number and told him he was always welcome to return.

"I started visiting regularly, usually every other weekend, and was treated like a son by Gerhard and Hannalaura," Weiland says.

### A CRITICAL ROLE

During his years stationed in Fulda, his mission was to patrol the Inner German Border between East and West Germany. It was a crucial and sometimes tense duty, with nearly 340,000 Warsaw Pact soldiers stationed just across the border. Jerry was based in the Fulda Gap, a region long considered a likely route for a Soviet advance toward Frankfurt. To prepare for this potential threat, three platoons were assigned to patrol the border at all times, supported by additional Squadron and Regimental Border Operations personnel.

The job required constant readiness. Monthly alerts, inspections, training and vehicle maintenance were routine. The soldiers had little time to prepare when an alert sounded—usually in the dead of night. An air raid siren would blare, signaling they had to gather their gear, weapons and supplies quickly, load them onto their vehicles, and prepare to move out. Sometimes, they were sent to predesignated positions; other times, they weren't.

While most soldiers embraced the opportunity to head out on alert, the same could not be said for the German civilians. The noise of the vehicles rumbling by at night disturbed their sleep. Many residents left their windows open and watched the soldiers pass. Some waved, while others shook their fists. Depending on how long Jerry and the others remained at their positions, local children and adults would come to visit. The children were particularly curious about the soldiers' C-rations, which contained cans of cheese, jelly, crackers, chocolate, and either meat and fruit or a larger can of beans and wieners.

After eight years of active duty, Jerry spent another eight years in the Army National Guard, followed by four years as a part-time Army Reservist. His final 14 years in the service were spent full-time in the



**Jerry Weiland (right) with his German "mom," Elisabeth Haas, while holding her beloved pup, Aster.**



**Weiland with his platoon.**

Army Reserve, where he served in roles ranging from instructor and motor sergeant to his final position as first sergeant overseeing the health and welfare of 169 soldiers. Throughout his career, Jerry held a variety of positions, including mechanic, tanker, infantryman, mortarman and maintenance supervisor, ultimately rising to the rank of First Sergeant. He also earned a bachelor of science in education with a minor in German and an AAS in Automotive maintenance technology.

Throughout it all, Weiland's connection with the German family he met that day on the road has remained strong. He attended Iris's wedding in 1990, and just last year, he reconnected with her at a friend's birthday party. Since 2005, Weiland returns to Fulda once or twice a year.

Now living in Aurelia with his wife, Barbara, Weiland's family includes five children: Kathryn, married to Ken and with daughters Sloane and Degan; Kiersten, married to Chris and with daughter Margaret; Grace; Jared, married to Camryn; and Michael.

Over the years, Weiland has grown close to five generations of two families in Fulda, who have welcomed him into their tight-knit circle. He considers them extended family. Elisabeth's daughter has invited Weiland and Barbara to join them for a weeklong vacation in northern Germany next year.

"We are really looking forward to it," Weiland says. "It's only 90 minutes from where my great-grandfather came from, and we hope to do some genealogy research."

Social media is also helping him reconnect with many of the people he served with during his military career. "I would be remiss if I didn't mention my platoon sergeants, SFC Gilbert, and SFC Jimmy Jackson," he says.

Thanks to Facebook, he's reconnected with two of his old roommates, others from his promotion ceremony, and several family he met that day on the road has remained strong. He stays in touch with fellow Blackhorse soldiers through unit reunions and military restoration projects. He even meets up with them several times yearly, often chatting with them over the phone.

On a recent visit to Germany during asparagus season, or "spargelzeit," Weiland had the chance to visit his old barracks, now a police headquarters. He met the Polizei President, a gracious host eager to hear about Weiland's time there.

"You get out of the military what you put into it. I had a great experience, but it didn't come without some hurdles," Weiland said. "You are not always lucky enough to get great leadership like I had during my first assignment in Germany."



**Military convoys move through terrain during a training session.**



**Bob Meseck, left, received a Quilt of Valor the same day Marvin Peterson did. At right is Sandra Otto. Photo contributed**



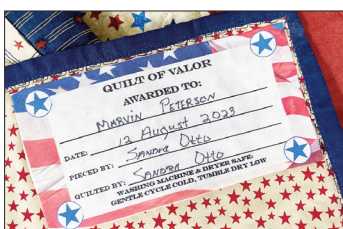
**We photographed Peterson with his quilt as a background. He was happy to be able to find an Army Engineer cap. TIMES PILOT photo by DOLORES CULLEN**

bridges over the Rhine to facilitate the movement of supplies.

Peterson was able to sightsee in Europe, he said. "We went part way up the Eiffel Tower." He saw the Colosseum and the Vatican and he was only 22 years old at the time.

He also served as best man at a friend's wedding. One of his friends married a French woman.

The Quilt of Valor means a lot to Peterson, he says. "It's



**An official label on Peterson's quilt.**

too pretty to use."

Peterson grew up north of Alta and now lives in Alta. Thank you for your service!

## More than a quilt

**BY DOLORES CULLEN**  
When a veteran receives a Quilt of Valor, the message, "Thank you for your service and sacrifice in serving our nation," is expressed in a touching way.

To be a true Quilt of Valor, the quilt must be a specific size and must have a label with required information. It must be awarded – it is not a gift – and it must be recorded.

This quilt was made by Sandra Otto. It was presented at Albert City Threshermen & Collectors Show to Marvin Peterson – Corporal Spec 4 in the U.S. Army.

Peterson served from 1960-1962. He took basic training in California, signal training in Augusta, Ga., and engineer training in Missouri.

He was deployed to France to aid in the building of





Robert Rolfson  
Warrant OFC- U.S. Army



Don Fisher  
SP4 - U.S. Army



Dan Young  
SP5 - U.S. Army



Darel Burns  
E4 - U.S. Army



Kenneth Lenz  
SP4 - U.S. Army



Darwin McConkey  
PFC. - U.S. Army



Paul Meyer  
SP5 - U.S. Army



David Meyer  
SP5 - U.S. Army



Desel Caboth  
U.S. Army



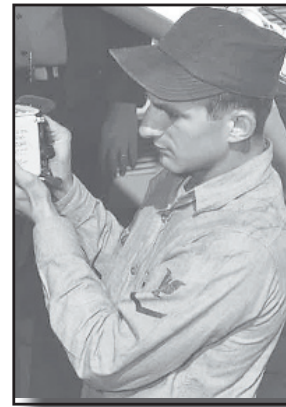
Master Sergeant  
Brandon Dahlstrom - USAF



TSgt. Tim Dahlstrom  
United States Air Force



TSgt. Aaron Dahlstrom  
United States Air Force



Kenneth A. Rassler  
E5 - U.S. Navy



RM1 Ray Delp - U.S. Navy,  
Air Force and Coast Guard



MSGT. Ryan S. Bonebrake  
U.S. Air Force



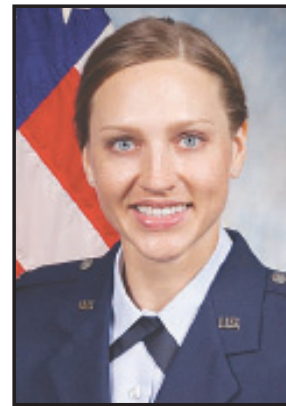
SPC. Clinton Butler  
U.S. Army



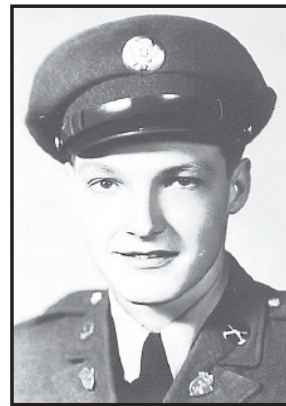
SPC. Cody Cameron  
U.S. Army National Guard



SPC. Dulce Salinas  
IA Medical Detachment



Capt. Casey M. Randall  
U.S. Air Force



Sergeant Richard J. Hussey  
Company C - U.S. Army



Lance Corporal Dave Holmes  
U.S. Marines



Lt. Col. Kirtis Christensen  
Chaplain, Army National Guard



CPO. Edmund A. Rassler  
U.S. Navy



Sergeant Seth Rachuy  
U.S. Army

# VETERANS DAY

★★★ HONORING ALL WHO SERVED ★★★



James R. "Bones" Hamilton  
Captain, 385th Bomber  
U.S. Air Force

**HAMILTON**  
LAW FIRM, P.C.  
STORM LAKE - DES MOINES - SIOUX CITY

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE





Pvt. 1st Class Albert I. Peterson  
U.S. Army



Staff Sergeant Butch Engel  
U.S. Army Reserves



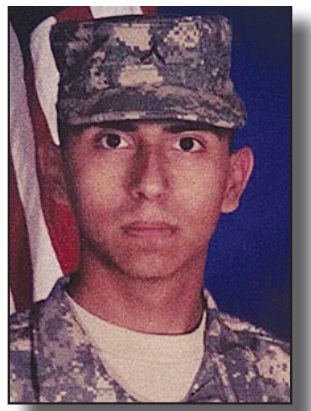
Specialist E4 Lloyd Myers  
U.S. Army



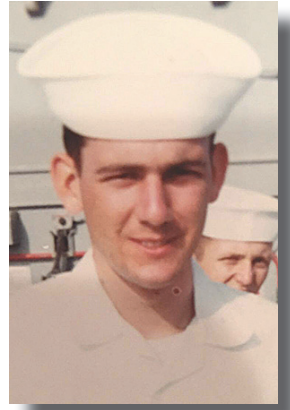
Sgt. George Engebretson  
5th Air Cavalry, U.S. Army



Pvt. Raymond H Rassler  
U.S. Army-Airborne Ranger



Sergeant Gerardo Bravo  
U.S. Army National Guard



Scott Petrich - ETR2, E-5.  
U.S. Navy



AT2. Joseph Lindenstein  
U.S. Navy



Sgt. (P) ISBCT 410  
Andrew Polich



Bradford Raveling  
Spec. 4th Class U.S. Army



Trevor K. Pritchard  
E4 Sr. Airman U.S. Air Force



SPC. Mitchell Fritz  
U.S. Army Reserves



Spec. 4 Jerry Sellar  
U.S. Army



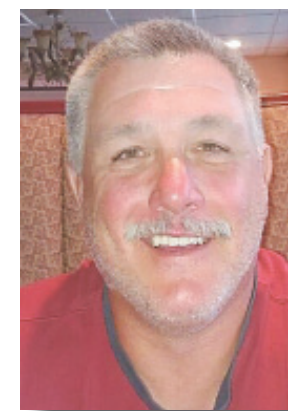
PR3. Jason Carlson  
U.S. Navy



TSgt. Shane Swanson  
U.S. Air Force



Gerald Weiland  
Sgt. First Class - U.S. Army



Daniel Joseph Maloy  
Boatswain Mate 3 - U.S. Navy



Corporal Randy Weflen  
U.S. Marines



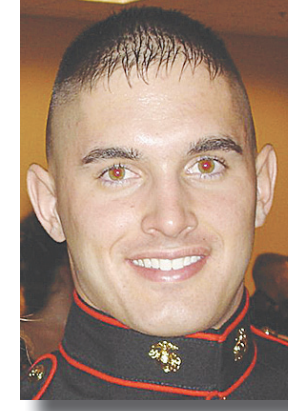
Sgt. Bob Bennett  
U.S. Air Force



Zach Brebner  
U.S. Army National Guard



Sgt. 1st Class Shane Schreck  
U.S. Army Special Ops



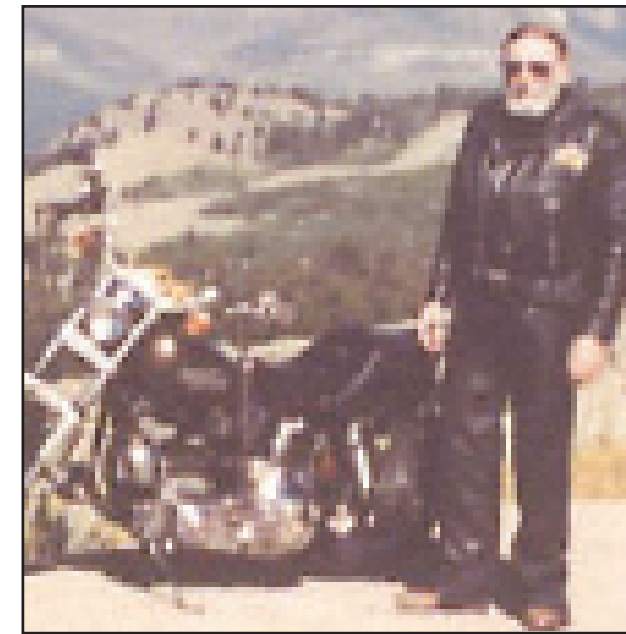
LCorp. Michael Pertzborn II  
U.S. Marines



Pvt. Tyler Gaes  
Iowa Army National Guard



Sergeant Thomas Lane  
U.S. Army National Guard



SP5. Rich Merten - U.S. Army



SSgt. Margaret Roark and  
SSgt. David Roark, U.S. Air Force



LTC. Andrew J. Kelly (Ret) and  
2LT. Eric J. Kelly - U.S. Army



VETERANS DAY

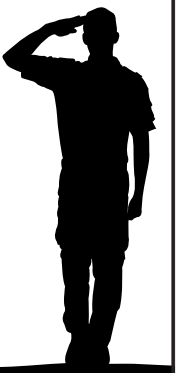
*Thank you  
for your  
service.*



120 E. 16th St., Storm Lake, IA 50588  
(712) 213-0003 bvglassco@gmail.com



To our men and women  
in uniform, past,  
present, and future,  
God bless you  
and thank you.



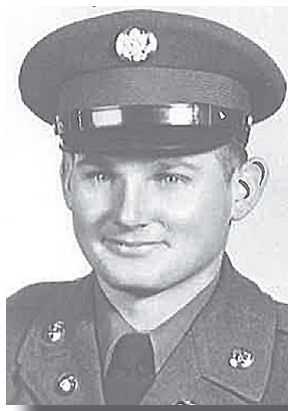
**SUBSCRIBE TODAY**

TO THE TIMES PILOT FOR JUST \$8 PER MONTH AT [STORMLAKE.COM](http://STORMLAKE.COM)





SSgt. Christopher Schmitz  
Army National Guard



Donald LeRoy Stille  
U.S. Army



Amy (Boyer) Vander Broek  
M.P., National Guard



YNC Terry J. Rosene  
U.S. Navy



Caleb Vander Broek  
E5 Sgt., U.S. Army



TSgt. Tyler Munden  
U.S. Air National Guard



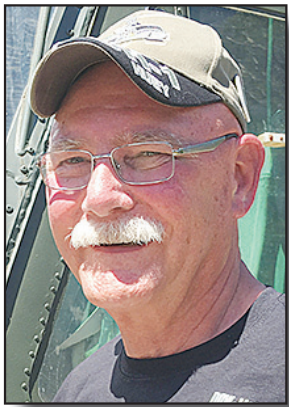
MSgt. Dennis E. Warner



SSgt. William C. Warner



Specialist Alex DeRoos



Bob Rohlfen  
Chief Warrant Officer



Specialist Bradley Mattson  
U.S. Army National Guard



Corporal Tom Prchal  
U.S. Army



AEAN Brian Anderson  
S.A.R. Crew - U.S. Navy



Jace Piercy "Old Guard" PV2  
3rd U.S. Infantry-U.S. Army



Pvt. 1st Class Walter A. Peterson  
U.S. Army



Chaplain Major James D. Little  
U.S. Army



Yeoman 3rd Class Fred Melohn  
U.S. Navy



Sergeant Dennis Launderville  
U.S. Army



Capt. Christopher J. Reis  
Dep. Flight Commander  
U.S. Space Force



MSgt. Jaymie E. Bral  
Air National Guard



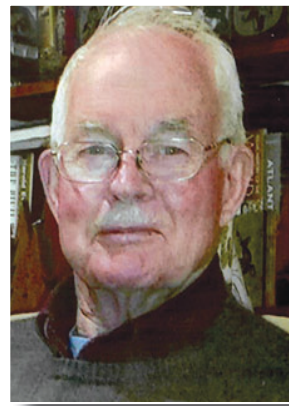
PFC. Cody Palmer - U.S. Army



Major Ryan Hartwig  
U.S. Army Special Forces  
U.S. Army Special Ops



Specialist Doug deRoos  
U.S. Army National Guard



SPC. James Selleck  
U.S. Army



Veterans Day 2024

thank you  
FOR YOUR SERVICE

**LAKE POINTE VILLA**  
Senior Apartments  
408 Barton St.  
Storm Lake

**OTSEGO PLACE**  
Assisted Living  
520 Otsego St.  
Storm Lake

**BAYSIDE VIEW**  
Nursing & Skilled Services  
1206 W. 4th St.  
Storm Lake

(712) 732-1120 • [www.mmrcsl.org](http://www.mmrcsl.org)







MA1. (EXW) Marty De Muth  
U.S. Navy



Sr. Airman Lexi Vander Woude  
U.S. Air Force



SSgt. Logan Wolthuizen  
U.S. Air Force



2nd Lt. Floyd C. Gustafson  
U.S. Army Air Corps



Specialist 5 Ron Neir  
U.S. Army



Sergeant Adam Dublinski  
U.S. Army



E6 SSgt Ronald L. Lahr  
U.S. Army



1st Lt. Russ Hinkeldey  
Army National Guard



Spe. Andrew Michael Polich  
U.S. Army



1st Lt. William U. Patton  
U.S. Air Force 5th-543rd, Korea



SPC. Joe Hernandez  
U.S. Army



SPC. John Auten  
U.S. Army Reserves



SFC Justin Warkentin  
U.S. Army



Corporal Dave Holmes  
U.S. Marine



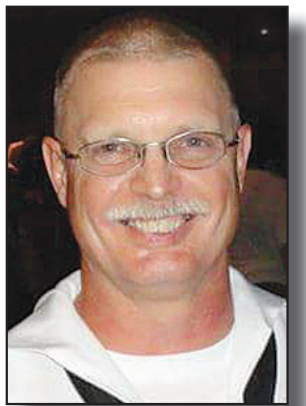
Pvt. Waylon Stark  
Iowa National Guard



SPC. Judd Sennert  
U.S. Army



SPC. Paul Sennert  
U.S. Army-Retired



Seabee James D. Kracht  
U.S. Navy



Spec-4 Mike S. Gergis  
U.S. Army



PFC. Russell B. Baxter  
U.S. Army



Corporal E-4 Bob Babe  
Iowa National Guard



PFC Brandon Pöss  
U.S. Army



Brigadier General  
Gary Eischeid



1st Lieutenant Jaymes Bral  
Iowa Air National Guard



Master Sergeant Douglas D. Zinn  
U.S. Air Force



Jim Watts  
Section 5, U.S. Army



Staff Sergeant Joy Crouch  
Wyoming National Guard



Sergeant Lance Anderson



Specialist Lance D. Anderson  
U.S. Army



Sergeant Lee Anderson



Corporal E-4 Philip D. Queen  
U.S. Marine Corps



CM-2 Camden Bailey  
U.S. Navy



Specialist Lee deRoos  
U.S. Army National Guard



Staff Sergeant Lee Meth  
U.S. Army Reserves



Louie deRoos  
Sgt. First Class



Lt. Colonel Richard Crawford  
U.S. Army

**Thank you to all who serve our country.**



*Thank you to everyone  
who has served our  
country.*



1711 N Lake Ave • Storm Lake, IA 50588 • 712.732.6595





Lt. Colonel Rich Crawford



Palmer Olson



Specialist E5 Paul Monson  
U.S. Army



Sergeant Reagan Launderville  
U.S. Army Air National Guard



Sergeant 1st Class Robert Carmichael - U.S. Army



Sergeant Ron Gullickson  
U.S. Army



Major Scott Monson  
U.S. Army



Sgt. Major Bret Shirkenbach



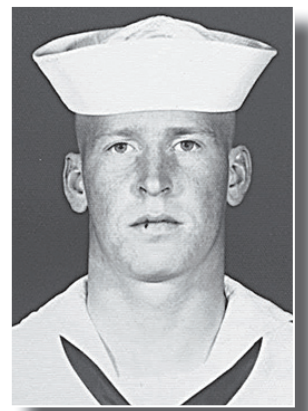
SPC. Peter Nielsen



Sergeant Shane Younie



Staff Sgt. Jose Ledesma  
U.S. Army



Dennis Wayne Holmstrom  
U.S. Navy



Major Chad Kelley - Physician Ass't  
Nebraska Army National Guard



SPC. Mitchel McDonald  
U.S. Army Military Police



SPC. Vu Nguyen  
U.S. Army Reserves



Master Sgt. David Spinelli  
U.S. Air Force



Robert Kramer  
U.S. Army



SPC. Andrew James Paulsen  
U.S. Army



Sgt. Jorge L. Cardenas  
U.S. Army



Kyle Bartz - US Navy  
FMF 1st Marine Division

# THANK YOU TO OUR VETERANS



1063 590th St | Storm Lake, IA  
(712) 732-5376  
CBEQUIPMENT.COM

**Efficient CONSTRUCTION** *Specializing in Energy Efficient Homes*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE**

**COMMERCIAL/ RESIDENTIAL**  
1507 E. 4th St  
STORM LAKE, IA 50588  
712-213-4827

**Pete Bodholdt** General Contractor

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE**

**SECURITY TRUST & SAVINGS BANK**

www.securitybanksi.com

601 Lake Avenue Storm Lake, IA 50588 712-732-3022

101 East Main St. Rembrandt, IA 50576 712-286-5491

FDIC

*Thank you all for your service*

**AA Automotive & Tire**

**CENTRAL BANK** **CENTRAL INSURE**  
Member FDIC

**WE HONOR AND REMEMBER OUR VETERANS!**



**Veterans Day**  
Honoring All Who Served



**15% OFF**  
FOR ALL VETERANS



**Storm Lake Candy Co.**

510 Lake Ave., Downtown Storm Lake

we salute **you**, we honor **you**, we thank **you!**

This Veterans Day, we take the time to honor and celebrate those who are willing to put their lives on the line for millions of Americans. We appreciate your sacrifice for our **FREEDOM.**



**UBI**  
United Bank of Iowa  
Member FDIC

Alta • 712-200-1234  
Storm Lake • 712-732-1620  
unitedbk.bank

**VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE**  
**WWW.STORMLAKE.COM**



**NUTRA TECH**

To our men and women in uniform,  
past, present, and future,  
God bless you and thank you.




**THANKS TO ALL VETERANS WITH A**  
**“FREE”**  
**MEDIUM BLIZZARD ON YOUR DAY!**  
**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!**






# Buena Vista University Remembers: A tribute to Beavers who gave their all in World War II

## '38 SLHS grad Otto Boettcher

### KIA in Allied invasion of North Africa exactly 82 years ago

*"Youth travels on through all futurity  
Yet hoping here to leave a name  
That will not perish in the dust"*

**BY PHOEBE FEIS**  
The quotation above is what the Beaver Log Yearbook staff inscribed on the page dedicated to Victory Hall, now Edson Hall, in the 1937 yearbook. The quote was likely a reference to many things: the hopeful athletes who spent their hours striving for greatness on the basketball court in Victory Hall, the students who studied in the basement below the thunderous noise, and those to whom the building was originally dedicated.



**PHOEBE FEIS**

#### BVC'S "LIVING MONUMENT"

For, though used as the athletics center for BVC, Victory Hall was originally built as a monument—the only one in the entire county—to the dead of WWI. The cornerstone was dedicated in 1919 on the first anniversary of the end of the Great War and the building opened exactly one year after that. The construction of Victory Hall followed the trend of building "living monuments," which were not to be places of solemn reflection, but places of continued life, where each breath drawn within the walls honored those who had breathed their last. Each game played in the gym and each student who stepped through the door paid tribute to those honored

dead. One such student who frequented Victory Hall was Otto P. Boettcher.

#### "ALWAYS WHERE HE WAS MOST NEEDED"

Even before attending BVC in 1939, Otto Boettcher was a fixed presence in Storm Lake and on the Buena Vista campus. He grew up within walking distance of the school, spent summers jumping off docks and swimming in the lake, and had at least two older siblings who were BVC students during his youth. Perhaps most notably, he was a prominent student at Storm Lake High. Otto was an athletic marvel, with the Storm Lake Tribune calling him the "offensive and defensive star" for his basketball team and the "star guard of Storm Lake's undefeated football team." The Storm Lake High 1937 yearbook also praised his football skills, noting that he was "always where he was most needed."

After graduating from Storm Lake High in 1938, Otto's athletic career continued when he briefly played basketball and football at the University of Iowa before returning home to attend BVC. In Victory Hall, he jogged around the state-of-the-art track that ran along the second floor balcony and shot hoops in the main floor's gym, preparing for the incredible seasons he no doubt hoped to have. But that was not to be.

#### "SLIPPED BENEATH THE WAVES"

With war looming omi-



**OTTO BOETTCHER**

nously on the not-so-distant horizon, Otto joined the National Guard, eventually moving to Des Moines in 1940. On Feb. 10, 1941, he was called into active service with the 168th Infantry Regiment. Although he could not have known it then, Otto and the 168th would soon be participating in the first Allied action against German and French troops in the war: Operation Torch. Otto's older brother, Herman, was also to partake in Operation Torch, and the two boys would find themselves less than a thousand miles apart during one of the most significant actions in the course of human history to date. It was the closest they would ever be again.

In the early morning hours of Nov. 8, 1942, the churning, tossing waters of the Atlantic Ocean may have reminded Otto of the gray waters of Storm Lake on a rainy day. As his LCT jolted in the pitch black of night and his boots plunged into the freezing water, perhaps the silhouetted coast of North Africa didn't look so different from that of Storm Lake. Perhaps he didn't feel so far from home at all.

Otto, by then a staff sergeant, was given the momentous task of leading his men ashore in tandem with the British Commandos as the spearhead of the invasion.

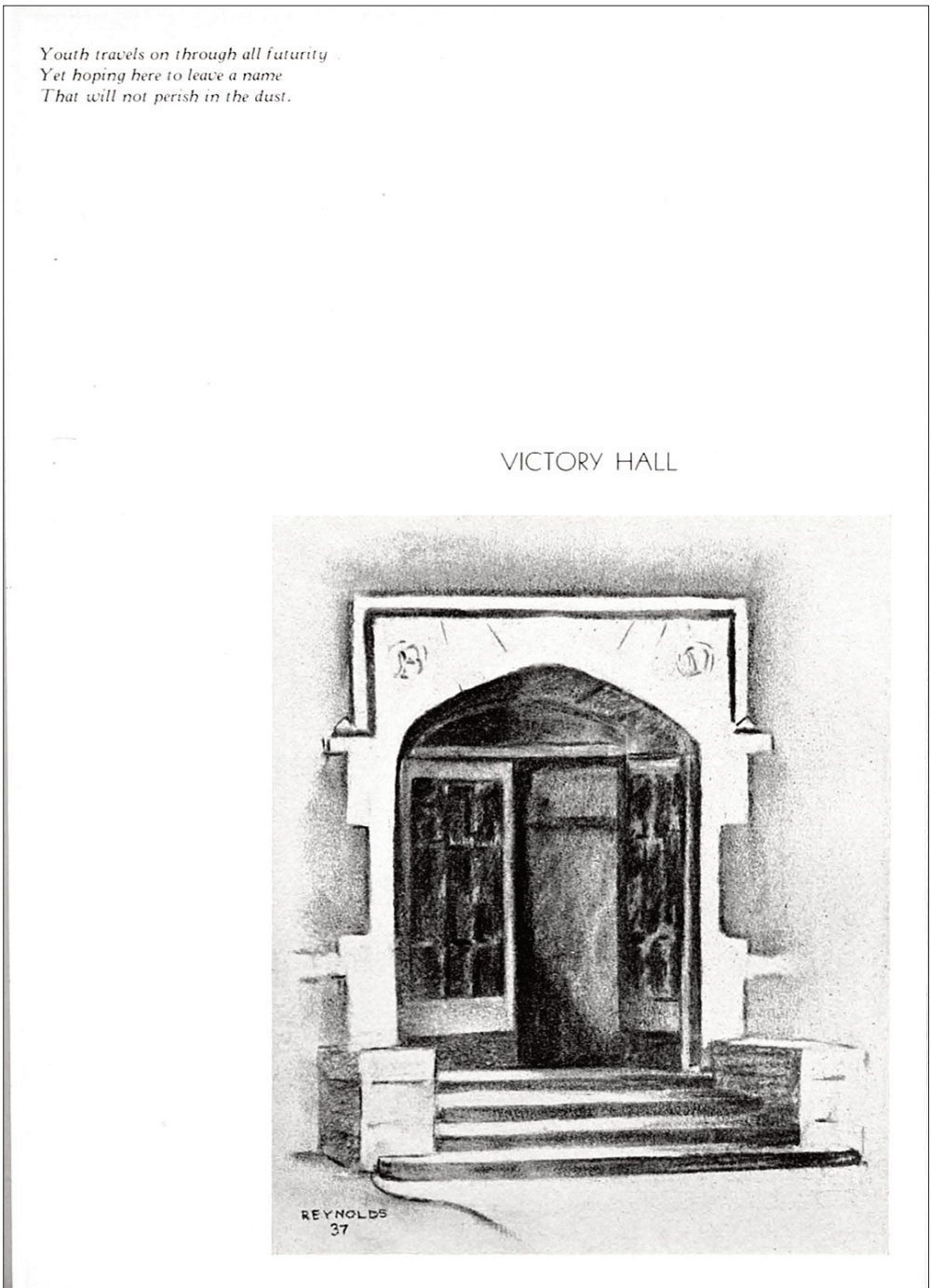
Once ashore, the men would push inland and make way for the thousands of Allied soldiers set to pour onto the beaches mere hours later. Due to the currents and inclement weather, Otto's unit landed in the wrong place at the wrong time and under heavy fire. Several LCTs were lost before the door could even be dropped and dozens of men were killed or captured. Somewhere in the chaos, in between the machine gun fire, the thrashing, black waves, and the heavy equipment weighing him down, Otto slipped beneath the waves and did not come back up. He was just 22 years



Third from left on the Tornado basketball team is Otto Boettcher.



Otto Boettcher's father O. H. Boettcher donated his labor to help construct the new dormitories for returning veterans in the attic of Victory Hall. Here is a section of what remains of those dorms.



The Beaver Log yearbook of 1937 recognizes Victory Hall, now Edson Hall.



Edson Hall as it looks today.

old.

#### A FATHER MEMORIALIZES HIS SON

Two months later and five thousand miles away, Otto's father, Mr. O.H. Boettcher, received a telegram telling him his son was dead. Four years after that, Mr. Boettcher donated his labor to help construct the new dormitories for returning veterans in the attic of Victory Hall. It was the building in which young Otto had likely spent most of his time while at BVC and it was the place he may have lived had he returned, so Mr. Boettcher could think of no more fitting place to memorialize his son. For two weeks, Mr. Boettcher helped to put in the dormitory floors in Victory Hall, pouring himself into helping create a life for others that his son would never get to live.

The dormitories opened in 1946, and the Vets Club offices moved into Victory Hall a short time after. It became the hub for all returning veterans, a place where they could study, converse, support one another and, ultimately, rebuild the lives they had left behind as boys. It was a place of



Bill Feis in the attic of Edson Hall.

memory and rebirth, a place where these young men could mourn all that they had lost and hope for all that could be. It was the heart of the campus's life. It was the hub of the campus's life.

#### BVU REMEMBERS

Now, nearly 80 years after the end of WWII, those young men are gone—Mr. Boettcher is gone—but Victory Hall remains. Though it has changed over the years, if you know where to look, that history is still there: in the practice rooms upstairs where glimpses of old track peek out through holes in the carpet, in the locked attic where the

walls still stand and the floor that Otto's father built still holds.

When the light is just right, just before twilight takes hold, the sinking sun illuminates the scratches worn into that floor by years of use. By shoes kicked off, books dropped, chairs moved around. Phantom laughter dances in the rafters and phantom pipe smoke drifts among the empty boxes.

Today, Victory-Edson Hall, built out of love and grief, is full of music.

And, in those shimmers of light at the dying of the day, there is Otto Boettcher: always where he is most needed and

Did you know that 18 young men who attended Buena Vista College were killed in action in World War II? It's a staggering number, arrived at by husband and wife BVU history professors Dixee Bartholomew-Feis and Bill Feis, along with their daughter Phoebe Feis, a 2019 graduate of Alta-Aurelia High School and graduate student at American University in Washington, D.C., studying Public History. All three have searched old issues of the student newspaper The Tack, Storm Lake newspapers and other sources to uncover the stories of the 18 deceased veterans. Now the Feis family wants to share the fruits of their research with Storm Lake Times Pilot readers in a series of columns by Phoebe about the young soldiers and the sacrifices they made. The series comes at a fitting time, the 80th anniversary of D-Day and the upcoming 80th anniversary of VE-Day next April.