

METAMORA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

NEWSLETTER

June 2019



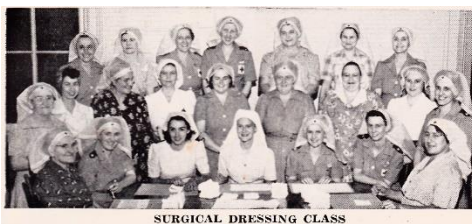
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D-Day June 6, 1944... June 6 marks the 75th anniversary of the largest seaborne invasion every. Over 156,000 Allied troops stormed five beaches in the 50 mile stretch of the Normandy coast, losing 4,000 killed and countless wounded. It is often regarded as the turning point of the war. As important as it was, the local paper did not devote a lot of extra coverage as one of the most significant battles of World War II. Below you'll find a few of the limited stories from the Metamora Herald. You'll also find letters from service men to friends and family that provide a glimpse of their service experience. If you have any stories or pics that you can share with the Newsletter about this momentous event, we would surely like to share them with our readers. The large pictures are from the June 9, 1944 Herald.



The area indicated in white on the above map is the Nazi defense zone. Continued bombing of key communications lines complicated the enemy's transportation problems and the past months of hammering at the German Luftwaffe so weakened that unit that the Allied air force dictated terms on which they should meet. Several weeks ago it was reported that Field Marshal Erwin Rommel had moved approximately a quarter of a million men to that area.



SURGICAL DRESSING CLASS



EARLY MORNING SHIFT ENROUTE TO PEORIA WAR INDUSTRIES

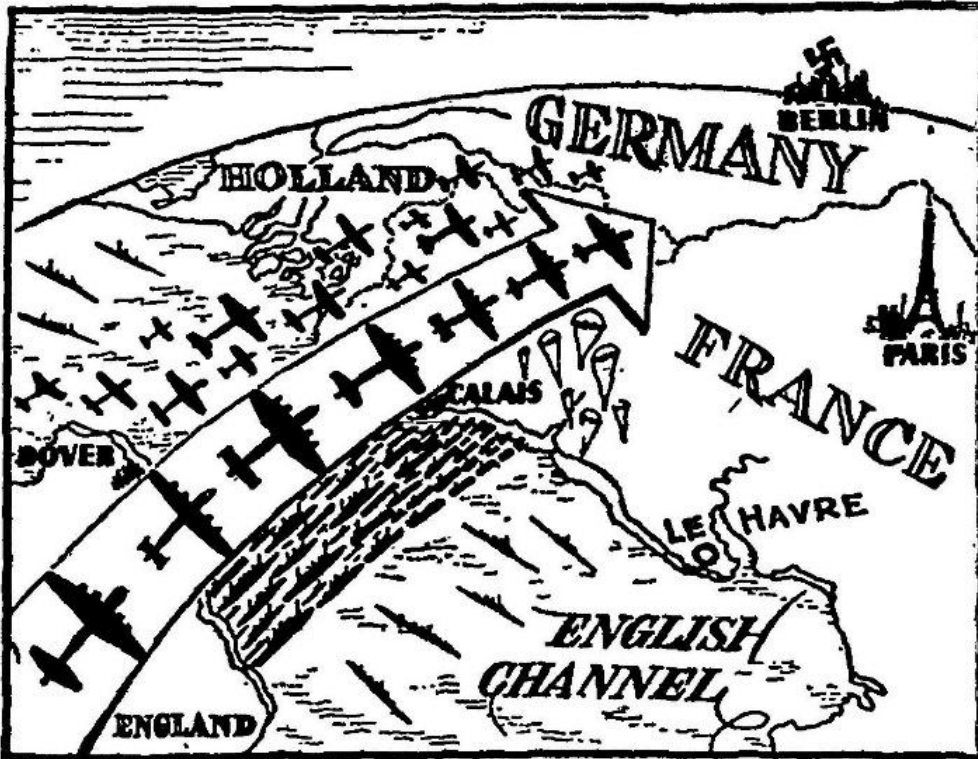


HOMEWARD BOUND

These pictures were taken from a pamphlet that was sent to WW II servicemen.

This Is the Way It Happened

Long Awaited 'Second Front' Spells Liberation for Many Occupied European Countries



Nazi sources first broke the story, announcing that naval units were shelling Le Havre, France, and that landing craft were nearing the shores. Landing attempts, general along the English channel coast, followed in reality the arrowed diagram of planes and ships from England to France.



way on "D-Day."

'D'-Day Tests Allies' 4 Years Of Planning

The most daring undertaking in military history—the Allied invasion of western Europe—came as the result of four years of complex, methodical planning on the part of United Nations' military leaders.

It was just after the "miracle of Dunkirk," when Britain's army in France was rescued from almost certain destruction, that Allied military leaders began planning for a return trip. Observers recall that except for that almost unbelievable evacuation, Britain might have fallen in the months that passed. Dunkirk was one of the greatest feats of military history, with 337,000 men rescued from that little port city in the face of terrible odds.

During the months that followed, Britain was forced to content herself with a superbly courageous defense of her home islands against the Nazi blitz from the air. The blood, sweat and tears promised by Prime Minister Churchill proved a true prophecy. England suffered bloody blows. The crescendo of the battle was reached in September, 1940. Although air attacks continued, it was then the Germans realized their aerial losses were greater than the results warranted.

Although the story has never been told in its entirety, it was then, too, that a hastily planned Nazi invasion of Britain was choked. Fragments of news told how hundreds of German invasion boats had been located and sunk by the Royal Air force. That, more than anything, proved to the British that an invasion must be carefully, methodically planned to the most minute detail.

Then the Commandos were organized under Lord Mountbatten. All through the next year they developed their own techniques by hit-and-run raids against enemy-held coastal areas. The damage they did managed to keep the Nazis in a constant state of alertness.

Then came the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941. Britain had gained a powerful ally. It marked the beginning of the end for the Axis powers.

American troops landed in Northern Ireland in January, 1942. Plans for the invasion were shaping up. It was only a question of time. It wasn't long before U. S. fighting men were stationed in Britain itself.

Three months later American and British troops invaded French North Africa. The landings, carefully planned and perfectly timed, were brilliantly successful. It was here that an inexperienced American army got its baptism of fire. It learned the caliber of the foe, finding that the Germans were stubborn, brave opponents.

In May, 1943, the Americans, British and Fighting French eliminated the Nazis from Africa. Then followed the invasion of Sicily. It was a surprise assault and resulted in victory in 38 days. The Sicilian campaign marked the highest point to that time in Allied cooperation. But they still operated with separate armies, navies and air forces. Complete integration was impossible.

Then came the invasion of Italy. A mixed British-American army stormed the Salerno beaches on September 9. The landing was successful because of the smooth combination of air, sea and land forces. British and American air superiority was never questioned. Naval units of both nations landed men and equipment and kept them supplied.

During all these operations, plans for the invasion were going ahead in England. Nazi propagandists boasted of their fortress, all the while admitting that invasion was inevitable.

The battle of the Atlantic shipping lanes had been won. Submarines were still a menace, but the grave threat had been removed. Huge convoys of men and war materiel moved to Great Britain with losses at a minimum.

Air attacks on Germany and on the coast of France were stepped up almost beyond belief.

**Not Much To Do In
Italy, Sgt. Vincent J.
Heinz Tells Joe Noe**

Italy, May 17.—Dear Joe: I just had a letter from Mom: she said she was up to see you about some guns and that you gave it to her and wouldn't accept any money. Thanks a lot, Joe, you really have the right spirit and it's things like that that makes a fellow feel better. It isn't too bad over here, but there isn't a darn thing to do. All we have is ball games and a few shows. There's nothing to drink that's any good. How these guys can drink their wine, I don't know. It certainly isn't any good to my way of tasting. One thing that I really miss is those cokes. I'd pay \$10 for several bottles. On the boat I paid \$1 a lot of times, and money doesn't mean too much over here. It's still nice to have, though.

About a souvenir, sure I'll send you one in a few weeks. Right now I'm building a house. I may not be here long but I'll sure be comfortable while I'm here. Labor is very cheap. Our contract calls for \$35, complete. The building will be 16x26, with two closets and a fireplace. Everything is made of stone here, and we found some tile for a roof and with a cement floor, it should be very cool and by the way it really gets hot over here. Here it is May and it's very easy to work up a sweat. Of course all I do is sit on my dead fanny, and that isn't any too cool—I mean the job.

I'm glad to hear about Donnie, he's got a swell break, a nice plane and he'll have a lot of excitement before he's through. I only hope he never has to come across but if I know Donnie, he's probably ready to come now. When you write him, tell him I said hello. Tell him if he comes over this way to drop in and I'll risk my life with him.

Say, does Fred Isch still bother you? If he does, tell him I said hello, and tell him also that he's a very lucky fellow, especially since your pool table went up in smoke. That saved him a lot of money, but I'll get him some way or another some day.

Joe, I sure wish you could see this place. It's really a sight. Everyone is so poor as a whole. They ride around on bicycles or a two wheeled cart pulled by a donkey or horse that looks like it should have died centuries ago. The animals look just as lazy as the people. The people don't have shoes or clothes and their living conditions are lousy and filthy. I've seen a few that are clean, but most of them as a whole are black with dirt. All the little kids run around picking up cigarette butts and I honestly don't see how they live. They seem happy though, and after all, that's what counts. I was sorry to hear about your fire. That was really tough. I could always remember your place, but now since it's all fixed up, I'm behind the eight ball. How about sending me a picture of the place, with you drinking a drink for me. If you have a lot of good drinks on hand, put a quarter away some place and we'll celebrate when this thing is over.

Well, I guess I'd better quit, hoping of course you're having good luck. Tell my friends hello, and I'll be seeing you soon. As always, Vince.

**Letter Dated Before
Invasion Comes From
Lt. Julian G. Ryan**

Somewhere in England, 27 May —
Dear Folks: Time has been flying by and we are well into the English summer, with trees and flowers in full dress. Those who scoffed at Britain's weather can now find little to complain about. Personally I like it fine.

Bill Briggs is over here, he writing 18 May that he had been in Swansea, Wales, and Plymouth, England, and had tried to find us, without success. I don't have any idea where he is now located, but sooner or later we're going to encounter his LST ship and have a real reunion. There's always a chance that we'll take a trip with him. We've been on some 63Ts, close to Bill's ship.

You know the big news perhaps better than I, as the papers are full of it. We're hoping for a short war but not counting on anything. We have a great deal of faith in General Eisenhower, and General Montgomery, too. Don't worry about anything, because we'll make out all right.

Here's a request for the package, so Postmaster Uncle Otto can let it go. I received the package containing the presents from Mrs. Erickson and appreciate them very much. Best wishes and love, Julian.

**Anthony Noe Writes
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph
P. Noe From England**

June 5.—Dear Aunt and Uncle: I am finally getting around to writing you a few lines once again. Kept on putting it off till I just had to take the time, which will be more scarce before very long.

I read in the London papers today about that false invasion report that reached the States. You'd think everyone was happy about it the way everyone acted. I guess little do they realize who is waiting on the other side. I see also that Rome has fallen to the Allies. That sure was good news. I suppose a lot of the hometown boys were in on that. Kind of wish I was in some other branch and could see a little action. Although I suppose we have been doing our share, it just doesn't seem right being so far back here. Received the Unit Citation some time ago.

I was able to get a pass to London a few days ago. Was about the same as always. Took in a little sight-seeing and visited one of the old palaces which housed the kings and queens in the 16th and 17th centuries, near the outskirts of London. It was a pretty good change from here, however.

Well, I have just been told that I have to go back to work. Have to load up a few more for Jerry. It's been 24 hours a day since I got here, so never know when we get off or get sleep.

Hope you have your tavern back in good shape again. Suppose it was quite a loss, anyhow all those souvenirs. Well, I have to go as work is calling and we can't hold up this war, anyhow now. I still get The Herald and like the news. So long for now.
Your nephew, Anthony.

Cpl. Harold Meister Writes Uncle, Jos. P. Noe From Sardinia

Sardinia, Dec. 26.—Dear Uncle Joe: Just thought I would drop you a few lines this evening to let you know that I haven't forgotten you. It's been a long time since I got your letter but I've just been putting it off. I want to thank you for the cigarettes you sent me before I forget about it. They sure came in handy for we didn't get any for about two weeks.

Now that Christmas is over and this is the second one overseas, we are hoping we will be home by the time the next one rolls around. We had a nice dinner with plenty of turkey and chicken, and all the food that goes with a good dinner. Everybody had plenty to eat and then they had all the wine they wanted to drink. They have good wine here, but since I don't drink much they wouldn't get rid of it very fast.

Guess Donnie has his wings by now, and I bet he is really proud of them. We have plenty good flyers in our squadron, but I bet Don could beat them all. Suppose there are a lot more boys from Metamora will get their wings soon too.

The Lions club sent me a picture folder with about twenty pictures in it of the old home town. Sure was glad to get it and wish I was back there again.

I guess you know that I am in Sardinia by now. It isn't such a bad place to be but there's nothing like home. One thing, we like it better than Africa. Am in the best of health. Hope to see you soon, and say hello to the rest of the family, and to the folks in town.—Harold.

MTHS Class of 1946



Metamora Township High School Class of 1946 seated, left to right: Phyllis Boswell Mace, Lois Bengard Aldridge, Donna Gamble Marshall, Wilma Goetz Dooley, Mary Schaer Hoyland, Phyllis Schierer Kerker, Shirley Kerker Williams and Arlene DuBois Schierer. Standing, left to right: Coach Allen Coon, Robert Schertz, Teresa Kiesewetter Grebner, Owen Aldridge, Roberta Elbert Harbers, Rosemary Giehl Huber, Rose Marie Kiesewetter Neff, Ray Ruder, Loretta Rohman Guy, Shirley Seckler Adams, Roland Seckler, Clifford Jenkins, Glenn Stehr, Jack Engel, Richard Broers, Mary Wernsman Miller, Luella Kiesewetter Shawhan, Thelma Patterson Schaer, Lambert Nauman, Rosemary Kunkel Curless, Francis Bockler and Eugene Obery.

D-Day Facts — 156,000 troops from the U.S., England, Canada, France, Norway, and other Allied nations. 5 beaches along a 50 mile stretch of Normandy, American casualties (killed, wounded, captured) — 2,400, 6,000 ships and landing crafts, 50,000 vehicles, 11,000 planes, 12,004 total killed, wounded or captured from all Allied forces, 326,000 Allied troops who crossed by June 11 with 100,000 tons of military equipment, 496,777 U.S. WW II veterans living in 2018.

"You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hope and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory!

Good luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking."

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander

Open Houses Resume Watch our Facebook page for details! And if your group would be interested in a tour, just let us know! There's lots of really interesting artifacts, including artifacts in the following article.

What's "New" ... E-r-r-r – "Old" We have two terrific new additions to the Stevenson House. Recently added is a book of archived newsletters from the Woodford County Historical Society. A second new arrival is a 2-book set of the Alig and Fandel family histories. There's a lot of overlap between the two families and you might be surprised how many local families have roots in these two families. Read the article below to find out more or, better yet, stop by the Stevenson House and read up on your ancestors.

A Special Thanks to Larry

Hagemann. Larry generously donated two genealogy books about the Alig and Fandel families. Written by Sister Cecilia Fandel, OSM, these two books extensively chronicled the stories of the Alig and Fandel families, dating back to the early 1700's in what is now Germany. These books are incredibly detailed and include stories about not only these families, but also the families of Elbert, Koch, Todden, Wernsman, Dubois, Grebner, Schupp, Schwenk, Schneider, Gunzenhauser, Winkler, Durst, Adams, Kiesewetter, Noel, Nauman, Rohman, Kerker, Eckstein, Gangloff, Hagemann, O'Russa, Bolle, Klein, Schmitt, Gaetz, Grafelman, Marchand, Parr, Meister, Meismer, Kneip, Schierer, and others. The books are now on display at the Stevenson House. (See Facebook for open house hours.)



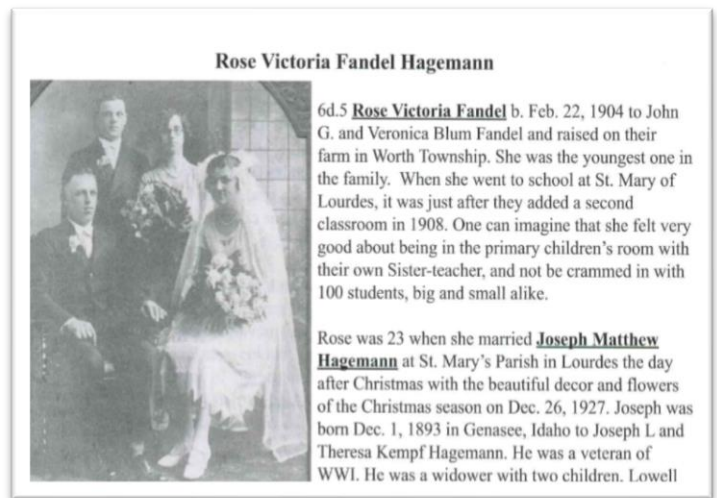
*Back- Mary Joyce, Leo, Frieda.
Front- Kathleen, Lee, Margie*



Alvin Hagemann



*Rudolph Grebner and Anna Fandel, Grebner Family
Back - Virginia, Florentine, Joseph, Wilbert, Joseph L, Richard & Bernadine
Front - Rudolph, Fannie, Georgianna, Marie, Ernest & Anne*
Later they developed a truck farm. Anna was a tall woman, stocky, and a very hard-working woman on the truck farm. Georgianna, one of the youngest, would go with her father to work in the stall at the farmers' market in Peoria.



Rose Victoria Fandel Hagemann

6d.5 **Rose Victoria Fandel** b. Feb. 22, 1904 to John G. and Veronica Blum Fandel and raised on their farm in Worth Township. She was the youngest one in the family. When she went to school at St. Mary of Lourdes, it was just after they added a second classroom in 1908. One can imagine that she felt very good about being in the primary children's room with their own Sister-teacher, and not be crammed in with 100 students, big and small alike.

Rose was 23 when she married **Joseph Matthew Hagemann** at St. Mary's Parish in Lourdes the day after Christmas with the beautiful decor and flowers of the Christmas season on Dec. 26, 1927. Joseph was born Dec. 1, 1893 in Genesee, Idaho to Joseph L. and Theresa Kempf Hagemann. He was a veteran of WWI. He was a widower with two children. Lowell

Contact Us

Questions, Ideas - Love to hear from you

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