



'Your service will never be forgotten'

Veterans attending the commemorative program in Eagle Lake were, from left on the back row, Raymond R. Thomas, Victor Scott, Frank Davidson, Rollin Baker, Frazar Wallace, Bruce Waddell, T.J. Smith, Hugh Sheridan, Willie L. Woodard, Ed Causey, David Sunderman, George Causey, Lee Barnett, Walter Lee Bauer, Robert Griffith, Alex J. Williams, E.H. "Sonny" Brethaupt and Walter Willis.

In the second row were G.A. Rodriguez, Frank Broesche, Charles Spatinger, Raymond Kohleff, Orville Powers, Victor Valdez, Isidoro Ramirez, Edwin Gold, Joe Leopold, Manuel Gutierrez, Alvin Wiese, Butch Szymanski, John Canaris, Sidney Frey, Alfred Priboda and Fred Frnka. In front were Erven Hurd, Grover Sundberg, Jimmy Thomas, Robert "Snip" Wells, Henry Kretschmar Sr., J.K. Davidson, Robert S. Martin, Johanna Balas Payne, Marvin Tyler, Walter Sommer, V.J. Kana and Tom Halbert.

Commemoration in Eagle Lake, 'indescribable'

By a Veteran of WWII Words are almost inadequate to describe the wonderful 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the end of World War II staged by the citizens of Eagle Lake at the Knights of Columbus Hall last Saturday evening, Sept. 23.

Speaking for the veterans of WWII who live in and around Eagle Lake, "We do appreciate so very much the celebration. It was one of the finest ever held here or anywhere."

Plans for the commemoration were made by a committee named HEROS (Helping Eagle Lake Remember Our Soldiers), consisting of Becky Anderson, Jonna Bowen, Jeff Frnka and Kate Spalinger.

A hundred or more volunteers assisted in staging the event including the outstanding patriotic decorations, serving the dinner prepared by Annie Broesche and the inspiring program.

The red, white and blue decorations were everywhere thanks to Judy Cooper of This Old House. A huge U.S. Flag formed the background of the stage.

Especially beautiful were the banners welcoming and honoring the veterans and guests which were prepared for the occasion by Julia (Thomas) Pardue.

Photographs of WWII battles were framed and hung on the walls along with messages of thanks from students throughout the Rice School District.

Doors opened at 5:30 p.m. and as the vets registered, they were pinned with a red carnation boutonniere trimmed with white and blue ribbons by Miss Eagle Lake Rachel Mathys. Name tags on which miniature flags were placed were presented to each

vet by Jr. Miss Eagle Lake Andrea Contreras. The carnations were donated by Creative Expressions and a beautiful patriotic floral arrangement was provided by Lake Crest Flowers. Numerous plants were positioned around the hall and graciously provided by Canaris Nursery.

The dining tables at the west end of the hall were covered in white and centered with red, white and blue ribbons. Impressive floral arrangements were used as centerpieces for each table, adding to the red, white and blue theme.

The unique centerpieces were constructed of white and red carrying bags with patriotic markings filled with flowers which continued the color motif.

Many young and old volunteers did an excellent job serving the roast beef dinner.

The dessert, a huge cake with white icing and red and blue messages honoring the vets on this special occasion, was made by Penny Henske as were two small side cakes done in a similar motif.

Each slice of cake was topped with a miniature US Flag. To add to the patriotic effect, sizzling sparklers were used at different advantage points around the hall as dessert was served.

After dinner, the veterans gathered in the front room of the hall to prepare for the public part of the ceremonies.

Following the welcome by Rev. David Mann, pastor of the First Baptist Church, members of the third grade class of Eagle Lake Primary School (bolstered by a few other young people from the audience) paraded down the center aisle waving U.S. flags while military marches played.

Following the students, the veterans were introduced as they entered the main hall one by one and were seated in specially marked chairs in front of the audience. Boy Scout Troop 334 presented the colors to end the procession.

Rev. Mann delivered an inspiring invocation, thanking God for the safe return of the honored vets and for their service in protecting the freedoms which we enjoy today. The Pledge of Allegiance and singing of the Star Spangled Banner began the program.

Charlyne Spanihel, the first speaker, talked on "The Home Front", recalling her own memories as well as those of Kate Spalinger. She discussed the days before, during and after the war which were significant and brought back many wonderful thoughts of the years and victory celebrations.

Charlyne, accompanied by her daughter, Cynthia Sunderman, on the piano, led those in attendance in the singing of "God Bless America".

One of the highlights of the program was the recollections of Dr. Russell Thomas, entitled "Still Heroes."

He spoke of the valuable accomplishments by the veterans during WWII in keeping this the "land of the free".

Special mention was made of Congressional Medal of Honor winner Johnnie D. Hutchins of Eagle Lake and Lissie, and excerpts were read

from the citation issued with the coveted honor. Dr. Russell also recalled the incidents leading to the awarding of the Medal of Honor to Roy Benavides during the Vietnam War. "We must not let our children forget the bravery of these men and many other veterans not mention," he stated.

His inspiration talk brought tears to the eyes of many in the hall, veterans and guests alike, as they recalled the service given this country by all veterans.

The third grade of Eagle Lake Primary School, directed by Lynda Appelt and accompanied by Mrs. Thurston (Sharon) Webb, rendered two patriotic songs from the stage.

Rev. Joe C. Fling, pastor of Living Hope Church of Eagle Lake and author of "Colorado County's World War II Dead", praised the services of veterans, living and dead. Fling gave a list of those from the Eagle Lake area who made the supreme sacrifice during the war, detailing the situations in which each lost his life.

During this silence, the lights in the hall were dimmed and Floyd Spenrath, past director of the Rice High School Band, blew taps. The audience was presented with a silhouette of Spenrath and his bugle cast on the large flag draped across the stage.

After the entire group sang "American The Beautiful", each veteran was introduced by Eagle Lake Mayor Robbie Cook and Jeff Frnka.

Individual service records, commendations and remarks from the vets were read as each was introduced to the audience.

Among the honored vets was one lady, Johanna Balas Payne of Houston, formerly of Eagle Lake. She served as a nurse during WWII. Also in attendance was a survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Tom Halbert of Garland. Tom will be remembered here as a former Highway Patrolman for a number of years.

Clark Powers, along with the third grade singers, performed "God Bless the USA" while members of the HEROS committee took the opportunity to distribute beautiful desk plaques personalized for each vet.

The plaques, bearing a U.S. flag in the center and inscribed with each vet's name, were engraved with the wording, "WWII 50th Anniversary, Your service Will Not Be Forgotten, Sept. 23, 1995, Eagle Lake, Texas."

The desk plaques came as a surprise to all the veterans.

Fred R. Frnka, Commander of American Legion Post 108 and repre-

senting all the veterans living and dead, expressed the group's appreciation for the wonderful meal, program and tribute paid them.

He concluded by calling the HEROS committee members to the stage, called the vets to attention and all delivered a hand salute to the committee and those who assisted.

Following the salute, the tradition "Hip, Hip, Hooray" was voiced three times. On the third "hooray", veterans wearing caps sent them flying into the air as a final gesture of appreciation.

Frnka, speaking again for all the veterans said, "We want you to know that we willingly did our best to help meet all of the challenges which came before us during World War II and the other wars and conflicts. We were doing our small part to preserve the free way of life which we enjoy in these United States of America."

Rev. Mann closed the program with an inspiring benediction and final salute to the honorees.

Special thanks were extended by the HEROS committee to Lynda Appelt, Sharon Webb, Cynthia Sunderman, Floyd Spenrath, Brice Stephens (who handled the background music), the Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts and their leaders from Eagle Lake, and over 100 others who assisted in so many ways.

All volunteers in attendance were identified by the stars and stripes bandanas they wore.

The committee also extended thanks to every person, organization or business who assisted in financing the program; with a special thanks to the Eagle Lake KC Council for donating the use of their hall.

During the entire evening, Jay Anderson took numerous photos; and video was recorded by Dwight Hadley, Melvin Schmitt, Ray Sykowski, David Sommer and Howard Wilkerson from various positions around the hall.

The opening page of the printed souvenir program pretty well said it all. "Remember Those Who Wore The Uniforms; Those Who Fought The Battles; Those Who Died To Keep Us Free. A special salute to those from the Eagle Lake area: YOUR SERVICE WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN." The HEROS committee says that a number of copies of the program are still available and may be picked up at Laker Printing & Trophies on N. McCarty in Eagle Lake.

Surely, the veterans, their spouses and guests will never forget the great program prepared in their honor in observance of the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II.

Members of Boy Scout Troop 334 of Eagle Lake served as the color guard for the evening. Flag bearers were Anthony Salinas and Mark Contreras.



Jeff Frnka, the driving force behind Saturday's salute to WWII vets, is shown with Johanna Balas Payne (the only female vet in attendance), Dr. Raymond Thomas and John Canaris as they wait their turn to be introduced to the audience.



The veterans of WWII came together from diverse backgrounds and differing heritages to make our country what it is today. Captured are they intently listen to the presentation were, from left, Frazar Wallace, Robert Samuel Martin and Alex J. (A.J.) Williams.



Members of Boy Scout Troop 334 of Eagle Lake served as the color guard for the evening. Flag bearers were Anthony Salinas and Mark Contreras.

Charlyne Spanihel

Robbie Cook and Jeff Frnka

'Just a small way of thanking them'

To Those Who Answered the Call:

There are so many who contributed in so many ways to Saturday night's salute to WWII vets that it is almost impossible to list everyone. So, thanks to the over one hundred proud citizens (individuals, businesses and organizations) that helped make the World War III 50th Anniversary Commemoration at the KC Hall such a huge success.

Honoring our veterans was just a small way of thanking them for the sacrifices they made for our country during from 1941 to 1945.

From the decorators and table waiters to the greeters and the speakers; from the help

in the kitchen and the talented musicians to the Scouts' color guard and the florists decor; from the cake makers and picture takers to the planners and bannermen... it was truly a night for heroes... those who Helped Eagle Lake Remember Our Soldiers to those who kept America the "land of the free and the home of the brave".

Thanks to the HEROS and thanks to the HEROS, "Your Service Will Never Be Forgotten".

Sincerely, The HEROS Committee Becky Anderson, Jonna Bowen, Jeff Frnka and Kate Spalinger



Members of the third grade class at Eagle Lake Primary School, bolstered by some other young people in attendance, performed two patriotic songs under the direction of Lynda Appelt, accompanied by Sharon Webb.



Kate Spalinger assisted in handing out individual commemorative plaques to each veteran. Pictured with Kate are V.J. Kana, Earl Rodgers and Doyle Waldrop.



Lead by American Legion Commander Fred Frnka, the veterans saluted members of the HEROS committee who were responsible for bringing together the entire evening.

"America's triumph in World War II was so much more than a military victory. It was a victory that energized democracies around the world, primed the economy at home and secured the continuation of the American way of life. There are no words that can bestow enough honor upon those who served, but WWII veterans know how important their contribution has been and continues to be. We must be sure that future generations never forget their bravery, sacrifice and service to our country. World War II veterans have earned our eternal gratitude." (Take from "The Road To Victory", American Legion magazine, Sept. 1995)



Rev. Joe C. Fling



"Americans expect a lot from victory. And after World War II, they got more than anyone could have hoped for. Fifty years later, we celebrate these great accomplishments while honoring the men and women who made them possible. Without the World War II veterans and the men and women who championed the war effort on the home front, our country would not be what it is today. They gave everything they had for America—many gave their lives when it really mattered, and when their country and way of life were at

stake. We can never repay them for their service. We can only honor what they did, and work to build on the great nation we have inherited from them.

World War II had so many heroes and the "folks" of Eagle Lake, Texas, can be proud that its young men and women were among them. The celebration on this night, September 23, 1995, commemorating the 50th Anniversary of World War II, is a tribute to those brave individuals who served." (Taken from the souvenir program.)

CLUB & ORGANIZATION NEWS

Nada Catholic Daughters

The Nada Catholic Daughters of America held their monthly meeting on Sept. 12.

Regent Ernestine Schneider opened the meeting with prayer, pledge to the flag and opening ode.

Regent Schneider informed the court of the upcoming White Ribbon Campaign to promote Pornography Awareness Week Oct. 29 to Nov. 5.

White ribbons will be passed out at the masses on Oct. 28 and 29 to make people aware and help combat pornography in the country.

Pat Wobbe reminded members of the Senior Citizen party on Sept. 27 at the parish hall. Seniors were encouraged to attend for an afternoon of dominos and fun.

Regent Schneider thanked the ladies who collected for Muscular Dystrophy and those who helped assemble and handout the new year books.

A living rosary will be recited in church before the Oct. 10 meeting. Please try to attend.

National CDA Day will be celebrated with a mass at 9:30 a.m. Oct. 15.

The next CDA meeting will be held Oct. 10.

Eagle Lake Rotary Club explores rice industry

A discussion of the rice business, often complicated and sometimes bewildering to the average citizen, was lucidly described by two experts at the Aug. 30 meeting of the Eagle Lake Rotary Club.

Club members Don Adams of Eagle Lake and J.C. Rod of Katy spoke about Texas coastal production, leaving a view of the international situation for presentation by a short film. Although the United States produces most of the world's supply of "high quality" rice, our exports are decreasing, ranking third behind the top exporters, Thailand and Vietnam.

However, the domestic market is on the rise with per capita consumption tripling from 1978 to 1991. Both speakers praised the high quality of rice grown in Colorado and Wharton

Counties. These two counties are also the largest rice-producing counties in Texas, growing 33% of the total crop. Adding the yields from Matagorda and Jackson counties, 55% of the Texas crop comes from our general area. Since rice fields and migratory geese go hand-in-hand, it's no wonder Eagle Lake is called the "Goose Hunting Capital of the World".

Rod praised the local rice farming fraternity for growing the finest white rice. He called attention to the efforts of Don Adams to get into operation Eagle Lake's own Colorado County Rice Mill to process the local rice crop (See Rotary, Page 12)

GED offered in Weimar

Adults who wish to earn an equivalency of a high school diploma (GED) are invited to enroll in classes which begin Monday, Oct. 2, and be held every Monday and Tuesday evening from 7 to 9 p.m. in Room 6 at Weimar High School, 506 W. Main.

Registration will be on the first evening of class, Oct. 2.

The classes offer training in five categories: math, science, reading, social studies and writing to prepare the person to take the high school equivalency test.

Anyone 17 years old or older may enroll in the classes, offered through Wharton County Junior College and Weimar Independent School District.

Those who successfully pass the five GED tests will be issued a Certificate of High School Equivalence by the Texas Department of Education, opening doors to opportunities otherwise unavailable.

For further information, call 409-725-9504 or 409-263-5468.

'Habitat' elects board, officers

Colorado County is well on the way to having a new Habitat for Humanity Affiliate in the very near future.

Home ownership for low income families is just around the corner. Evidence of the progress being made can be found at every meeting.

The official election of the first Board of Directors was held at the last meeting in Aug. You may know some of these people as neighbors in our community; Robert Gay, president; Lois Goodwin, vice-president; Barbara Pidgeon, treasurer; Mary Chris-

tal, secretary; and board members John Brasler, Blair Hickey, Larry Bailey, Valerie O'Brien, Margaret Rios, Judith Sellers, Leroy Frnka, Brenda Besch, Lois and Harold Raabe and Creed Henry.

We are looking forward to working together to build decent housing for those in need.

Our board is not complete yet and those interested in filling the remaining seats should let us know at the next meeting, scheduled for Oct. 3 at 7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 301 W. St. Charles Street, in Weimar.

Highlights

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gerrymandering. Last week, a panel of three federal judges approved a temporary redistricting plan that will change boundaries in Harris County's 18 state House districts and six Senate districts for the 1996 elections.

Plaintiffs argued that efforts to create safe districts for minority legislators resulted in gerrymandering district lines and political segregation, the Houston Chronicle reported.

The changes will affect voting patterns and representation for some 270,000 Harris County residents.

Dog Track to Close Declining business is forcing the closure of Valley Greyhound Park in Harlingen, which was the first of three dog-racing tracks to open in the state.

The \$16.2 million, 3,000-seat track, which has lost \$5 million since it opened in Sept. 1990, is to close Sept. 30.

Earlier this month, the Texas Racing Commission decided not to allow the dog track to simulcast horse races in partnership with the Cameron County Fair Association.

A bill that would have allowed Texas pari-mutuel tracks to operate off-track betting parlors failed to gain approval in the Legislature this year.

Other Highlights

The House Banking Committee voted in favor of an amendment to sweeping budget bill that would end the Texas ban on home equity loans.

The amendment, by U.S. Rep. Steve Stockman, R-Friendswood, would undo earlier legislation by U.S. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, D-San Antonio, who has fought to preserve Texas' homestead protections for more than 40 years.

Rayburn

Continued from Page 2

He said that he is excited about his chances to unseat 14-year Democratic incumbent Robert Saunders.

The race is reportedly one of the top targets in the Republican Party of Texas' "Majority '96" campaign to gain control of the Texas House. This would be the first time Republicans have had control of the House since Reconstruction.

"Mr. Saunders has failed to represent the conservative values embraced by the hard-working men and women of District 28. When elected, I will bring true conservative leadership to this district," Rayburn concluded.

America's Drug Problem Is Not As Big As You Think.



It can start as a dare. Or youthful curiosity. Or it may be a way to escape problems at home. Whatever the reason, studies show that an alarming number of young children are trying drugs. Unfortunately, too many parents still do not believe that their children are at risk.

The truth is, it's never too early to start teaching your kids about the dangers of drugs. If you are not sure how to talk to them, call the Texas Prevention Partnership at 1-800-269-4237 and ask for the free booklet called "Growing Up Drug-Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention." Call today because if you don't take care of little problems, they can easily grow into big ones.

