



HISTORICAL NOTES

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LZ LAMBEAU™ WELCOMING HOME WISCONSIN'S VIETNAM VETERANS

by Jerry Abitz and Ron Heuer



In a recent *Green Bay Press-Gazette* was an announcement about an upcoming celebration honoring all Vietnam veterans – “LZ Lambeau,” scheduled for May 20-23. The purpose of this event is to give a “welcome home” to Vietnam veterans who never received one 40 years ago, an attempt to instill pride in those who gave so much, but received so little recognition for their service. Special efforts will be made to encourage participation of families of both those killed in action and whose veterans are now deceased.

Activities during Green Bay’s Welcome Home weekend include a motorcycle ride across the state (La Crosse to Green Bay), concerts, exhibits, vehicle and helicopter displays, social get-togethers, and reunions. “The Moving Wall,” a half-size replica of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., also will be on display. Anyone can examine and find names of those fallen in this war, including the 1,200 from Wisconsin. The culmination of this weekend will be veterans and their families filling Lambeau Field for an official Memorial Ceremony for those fallen in combat. This presentation will feature music and spoken word performances, and screenings of excerpts of a documentary produced by Wisconsin Public Television of interviews of Wisconsin veterans shown on Tundravisision. (A similar format was used in a previous production about Korean War veterans.)

The screening and interviewing for the documentary, however, has been much more difficult for this group of veterans. Vietnam vets came home to hostile crowds who refused to honor them for their patriotic service overseas. The war was very unpopular, especially among those groups eligible for the draft. Many draft dodgers fled to Canada where they sought asylum; others prolonged their college careers to avoid the draft. Students on campuses rioted. My nephew at UW-Madison was gassed in his student dormitory. Sterling Hall, where I attended physics classes as an undergraduate, was bombed; I saw the devastation in the surrounding area several days after the event. At Kent State University in Ohio, where my son-in-law attended college, students protesting the war were fired upon and killed by National Guard troops.

In a recent e-mail, a distant cousin provided some revealing insight. In this war, the enemy did not necessarily wear a uniform, so it was very difficult to determine who the enemy was and who were innocent civilians. Had he killed innocent civilians? Did anyone know? Certainly he felt no honor in that which weighed heavily on his conscience. In addition, once home, many veterans had flashbacks and trouble coping as civilians.

During the Vietnam War, no soldiers returning home were treated as heroes. On the contrary, the one thing all Vietnam vets had in common was a “chilly welcome.” What follows is the personal experience of just one of those veterans.

If you wish to receive notification that the most recent issue of the KCHS newsletter is available online, send your request to gabitz@centurytel.net with your name and email address.





1st Lt. Ron Heuer, originally from Algoma, is pictured here in the city of Tuy Hoa, Vietnam, in June, 1967. The young girl, about 7 years old, was hauling the two buckets of water home from the well. She apparently had gotten a bit tired and stopped to rest. *Photo provided by Ron Heuer.*

"My name is Ron Heuer. I was drafted in 1965, attended OCS, (Officers Candidate School) and then, after training officer candidates for a year, I was off to Vietnam in 1967, just in time to join in the Tet Offensive that began in January of 1968.

"Having been born and raised in Kewaunee County, specifically north of Algoma on a dairy farm, I was brought up with a strong belief in God and America, and my obligation to serve both. So, going to Vietnam was my duty – my duty to serve and to serve with pride.

"I was Company Commander of a Supply and Service Unit which was primarily involved in offloading supplies from vessels at the port of Vung Ro onto our trucks, then hauling those supplies to various units in the surrounding area. Our greatest threat from the enemy came in the form of incoming mortar fire, land mines in the roads, and ambush. It was a challenging time for all of our troops. I was proud of my service, as were 90 percent of the troops that served with me. We didn't necessarily enjoy the time in Vietnam, but we were serving our country and it was our duty to serve with honor.

"Shortly after arriving in Vietnam, all hell broke loose. 1967 was a bad year but, with the onset of the Tet Offensive, things got worse real fast. There were a total of 58,193 U.S. lives

lost during the course of the this war with nearly 48 percent of those lost in 1967-1968; we lost 27,745 troops in those two combined years.

"I returned home on December 13, 1968. I flew from the Republic of Vietnam to land at McCord AFB in Washington. Having completed my active service and mustering out, I and other troops were transferred by bus to SEATAC (Seattle-Tacoma Airport) for our flight home. Earlier I had met another lieutenant from Minnesota; as we were both flying to Minneapolis, we passed through SEATAC together. Because we were flying on special military-ticketed fares, we were told we had to fly home in uniform.

"We really hadn't kept up with what was going on back in the U.S. while in Vietnam, so we weren't prepared for the anti-war protesters who were at SEATAC. Later we learned this was an ongoing effort by the protesters, as they knew returning vets passed through SEATAC.

"We weren't close enough to them to engage them in conversation, which was probably a good thing, but we could hear them screaming at us, calling us "killers" and other names. This was the extent of our welcome home, and our thanks for serving our country and military.

"Having worked in the airline industry, I knew once we checked in for our flight that no one would check up on that "flying in uniform" issue. So, after checking in, we went to the men's room to change into civilian attire. We encountered no other insults on either the flight to Minneapolis or mine to Green Bay. I went back to my old civilian job on December 18, and never looked back.

"In 1969, I joined the Wisconsin National Guard and served as the Headquarters Headquarters Company Commander for the 32nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade in Milwaukee for another six years. I finished my Army career as a captain.

"It wasn't until 1985 that I took out my citations and other military paraphernalia, put them in a shadow box, and proudly displayed them in my office, saying to the rest of the world, "I am home, and I am proud I served."

"There were four brothers in my family, and we took, quite literally, what John F. Kennedy said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.' Between us, we served 93 years in the U.S. Army: myself, a captain – 10 years; Lieutenant Colonel Martin "Marty"

(cont. on page 3)

SUDETEN GERMANS: LUXEMBURG AREA SETTLERS

by Richard L. Dorner

Settlement of the border regions of Bohemia by German-speaking people occurred over a long period of time. In the 13th century, the Bohemian King, Ottakar II, encouraged Germanic peoples to settle these border areas in order to create a buffer zone. With this zone, it was hoped that the various German states would not invade the Bohemian lands. During the nearly 700-year period, these people were called “border people,” “German Bohemians” (although they were not Bohemian) and, finally, “Sudeten Germans.” The study of these border people and their settlements could be divided into various phases and by regions.

During the 20th century, these people were referred to as Sudeten Germans as they lived in Sudetenland, named after the nearby mountains in Northern Bohemian and Moravia, states within this nation.



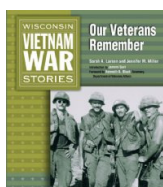
LZ LAMBEAU™

(cont. from page 2)

Heuer – two tours in Vietnam, 20 years; Major General David A. Heuer – 39 years; and Master Sergeant Wayne Heuer – 24 years.

“Martin, Wayne, and I will be part of the entertainment on May 22 at LZ Lambeau. We will be singing songs that were written and sung by soldiers while serving in Vietnam.”

Editor’s note: LZ Lambeau events on the grounds around Lambeau Field on Thursday through Sunday, May 20, 21, 22, and 23, are free and open to the public. The Saturday evening Welcome Home Ceremony in the Lambeau Field seating bowl will be a ticketed event due to seating capacity limitations. Self-identified Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans may receive a complimentary ticket for the Saturday evening Welcome Home Ceremony upon request. All tickets, including complimentary tickets, require a \$2 handling fee; tickets for all others are \$10. All proceeds from ticket sales will support programming at LZ Lambeau. For further information the event, the book, or to order tickets, visit <http://lzlambeau.org/>. A printable flyer is also available at this site if you wish to help promote this event.



*LZ Lambeau logo and banner used with permission.



Map of Sudetenland. Image courtesy of Gross-Raden Map Room; used with permission (<http://www.skylighters.org/graden/maps.html>).

After World War II, during the period of 1945-1948, these people were expelled without compensation, and were forced to move to Germany, Austria, or other areas. During this expulsion there were many acts of violence against them because of the atrocities that had been carried out by the German army during the war. They were loaded into cattle cars with only the possessions they could carry; the trains were moved over the borders and the cars randomly unhooked. Some Sudetens were transported by truck to the nearest border and dumped. Families were separated and left to fend for themselves. Many thousands died during this “ethnic cleansing.” By the end of this forced migration, nearly 3.5 million Germans had left the only country they had known as their homeland.

The phase of Sudeten German history important to this story would be the Austrian history phase. Bohemia, from early 1500s until 1918, was under the control of the Hapsburg royal family; it was one of the 19 crown states that made up the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. The German language was made the official language in Bohemia in 1740. During this four-century reign, tensions existed between the Germans and the Czechs. The glue that held the peace was the strong arm of the Austrian government, which kept control of the many ethnic groups within their borders.

The region of particular interest is the Bohemian Forest, known as *Böhmerwald* or *Sumava* in German or Czech. In the northern tier of the Bohemian Forest were the eight districts collectively known as the King’s Free Judge Districts; it was from these districts that many immigrants who settled in the Luxemburg area originated. Hammern, Eisenstrass, and Seeweisen are of particular interest as the homeland for many of these immigrants. This border

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SUDETEN GERMANS

(cont. from page 3)

region in Bohemia had received many privileges from the Czech Crown to encourage the German-speakers, mainly from Bavaria, to settle these rugged lands. With the abolishment of serfdom (economic slavery) in 1848, the special privileges were revoked, causing discontent.

These border people were citizens of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire until its at the end of WWI. During the reign of Franz Josef I (1848-1916), the immigrants who came to Luxemburg in the 1870s and 1880s renounced their allegiance to the Emperor and Austria, and pledged to support America as the first step in becoming citizens in their newly-adopted homeland.

These immigrants were among the great wave of immigration to America during the late 19th century; among them was the extended family of George Dorner. Through research of the Czech records (church, land, and tax), the following story of the Dorner/Glaser family can be told.

George (Georg) Dorner was an immigrant to the Neuern area, southwest of Luxemburg, in November 1873. He left Bremen, Germany, on a ship of the same name on Sept. 16, 1873; family members traveling with him were: Joseph Glaser, Sr., stepfather; Franciska Stahl Dorner Glaser, his mother; Joseph Glaser, Jr., his half-brother; Catherine Dorner Rickil, his sister; Michael Rickil, his brother-in-law; and Maria Rickil, his niece.

The Dorner family, as gleaned from Bohemian records, owned 11 acres, had a team of oxen, two cows and two heifers in 1630. Hans Dorner, the family patriarch, was the great-, great-, great-, great-grandfather of George Dorner. He was a glassmaker and a farmer.



Anna and George Dorner on their golden wedding anniversary on July 1, 1925. *Photo courtesy of Richard L. Dorner*

Krystoff (Christopher) Dorner owned and operated the farm (1820-1848). Johann Georg Dorner, his son, took over the farm that had increased to 74 acres (1837-1848) and passed it on to his son, Jacob Dorner, Sr.

Jacob, Sr. married Franciska Stahl in February 1848, and they had three adult children: Jacob, Jr. (married Rosina Weber), Catherine (married Michael Rickil), and George (married Anna Schaetz in Luxemburg in 1875), and three who died as young children (George, Klara, and Franceska). Jacob, Sr. died in February 1862, and seven months later his widow married Joseph Glaser. Their son, Joseph, Jr., was born in 1868.

The Glasers operated the farm until 1873 when her son, Jacob Jr., and his wife, Rosina, took over the farm. In 1884 they too left for America with their three surviving children — Franciska, Theresa, and Jacob, Jr., and also settled in Luxemburg Town.

The Dorner and Glaser immigrants were farmers in the area around Neuern on the border between Montpelier and Luxemburg Towns. These immigrants left their homeland to seek out a better way of life for themselves and their families. They truly gave us, their descendents, a great gift.

NEWS FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ... FROM THE TRENCHES

by Jerry Abitz

The Museum is closed for the season, so there is not much to report from there. With the resignation of our manager, Virginia Johnson, along with her cadre of workers, things are in transition at the History Center. Bevan Laird has stepped into the breach and is assisting long-time volunteer, Carl Braun; Hans Nell and Ken Wolske are also helping.

Things, however, are progressing.

☞ We hope to have a winter series of speakers; watch for announcement(s) to that effect in the local newspapers.

☞ In closing their Sturgeon Bay office, Harman Studios have gifted us more than 3,000 negatives produced by Kewaunee photographer, Mark Von, to scan and add to our collection.

☞ Former newsletter co-editor, Jill Dopke, is assisting Tom Konop in researching the history of Franklin Town using the collections in the History Center.

SEYK FAMILY LEGACY LIVES ON

by PattySue Powell

The Kewaunee Historic District has many beautiful houses, each with its own unique memoir of the family that first called it home. Tom and Bonnie Schuller now own one such house, built by then-Mayor Wenzel Seyk in 1890. He came to America with his parents in 1854 from Bohemia, and settled in Kewaunee in 1864. He was influential in the community and a very successful entrepreneur who owned several businesses, including one of the city's leading clothing stores; he also built some of the early grain mills in the county, and their exports made Seyk a well-recognized name throughout the United States.

An April 18, 1890, edition of *The Kewaunee Enterprise* wrote,

"Mayor Seyk is about to begin the erection of a fine new residence on Milwaukee Street. Contracts have been let out... cost to be several thousand dollars."

On May 16, 1890, ground was broken for the house that stands, today, on the corner lot at 908 Milwaukee Street.

Wenzel, according to the 1905 Wisconsin State Census, lived in the home with his second wife, Josephine, four of the seven children, and his father, Frank Seyk, who was 101 years old. Wenzel passed away in 1907, and his son, Edward, took over the family business. In 1910, Josephine still lived in the home with daughter, Rose, and son, Frank. If you were living in Kewaunee at that time, perhaps your child would walk over to the Seyk House for a lesson with Rose, who was a music teacher. Josephine continued to live in the house until a smaller, more 'modern' home (also on the Historic Register) was built for her in 1916.



Seyk House — The Seyk House as it looked when built in 1890. Photo courtesy of Pat Kacer.



Seyk House — Now owned by Tom and Bonnie Schuller, the Seyk House as it looks today. Photo by Jerry Abitz

The simple, Queen Anne-style Seyk family home was put on the Historical Register in 1993. Its nine rooms include four bedrooms, two full baths, a magnificent formal dining room, kitchen, and three parlors, one of which is now a downstairs bedroom. The original porch and entrance on the northwest side of the house was made into an additional room, and the back/east entrance has disappeared, perhaps when the kitchen was updated. The small porch, once off the kitchen's south side, is no longer there; it's now just a door with an awning. At some point, the gable peaks were replaced with the 'jerkin head' or clipped roof style; the triangle-shaped gingerbread trim, which adorned the original peaks, was also removed.

Tom and Bonnie purchased the home in 2005. Entering their front foyer feels like a step back in time. It is absolutely gorgeous, furnished perfectly with period colors and classic pieces, right down to the Victorian parlor palm. Outside they have planted literally *thousands* of bulbs and perennials so that the yard is a burst of brilliant color in early spring; the changing colors throughout the seasons beckon you to stop and admire as you pass. When Bonnie was a child, her family lived next door (in the Metzner House), and she fondly remembers being invited in for a cookie by Mrs. Duvall, who lived in their home at that time.

Author's note: The Seyk family has three other houses in the Kewaunee Historic District. More information can be found at the Kewaunee County History Center (219 Steele Street, Algoma) and/or at both the Algoma and Kewaunee Public Libraries.

JOE BLAZEI: A MAN OF UNBOUNDED ENTHUSIASM

by Jerry Abitz

A very unassuming man, Joe Blazei is the salt of the earth. Some would say he is a courtly gentleman, and has the unbounded enthusiasm of a young person. He graduated from Kewaunee High School, and retired years ago from his job with the Hamilton Corporation in Two Rivers. He prides himself as a self-made man, has a generous spirit, and seems to know everyone. Joe's head is filled with bits of historical information; he is extremely inquisitive, and is rarely stumped when you ask for information about a topic associated with our county.

He appears to fit in wherever he goes. Of Polish ancestors, Joe was born on a farm on Old Settler's Road in the Stangelville area in the Town of Franklin, and raised in a Bohemian ethnic enclave. He had relatives living in West Kewaunee among the Germans. He keeps his eyes on real estate sales and gleanes in-

formation from many sources. He knows the history of families and farms, and has immediate recall of these facts. Living right across the street from the Kewaunee County Administrative Center located in Kewaunee, he regularly attends court proceedings as a spectator.

In 1972 he was recruited as a board member for the recently reorganized historical

society that had been founded in 1921 but moribund for a long period. The following April he was elected treasurer, a position he has now held for 36 years; as such, he has the greatest longevity on the KCHS Board of Directors. He has been one of our best boosters, and has quietly donated funds to keep us in business. When a workday is scheduled at the Museum, Joe will be there; he also volunteers to work at the Museum during the tourist season. At annual meetings he will volunteer to provide the kolaches, those Czech pastries everyone seems to love. And at our Christmas potluck, he will furnish a roasterful of chicken and potatoes.

I know that when I call him and say, "Joe, let's go out for breakfast together," he will never turn me down. I do look forward to those occasions, and feel it recharges my batteries just visiting with him and seeing him bubble over with enthusiasm.


He has had five hip replacements over the years due to a childhood injury, and today he walks with a cane. Despite this problem, you will never hear him complain – Joe is *always* upbeat.




Joe Blazei, KCHS treasurer.
Photo supplied by Joe Blazei.



THIS ISSUE'S GUEST AUTHORS...

 **Richard L. Dorner** (*see page 3*)— A native of the Luxemburg area, Richard has always been interested in history and family history. Already with two degrees (B.A. from St. Norbert's College and a Master of Arts from UW-Oshkosh), his military career sent him to the Army Language School in Monterey, CA, to learn German. Spending 18 months as a German translator in Berlin, Germany made him even more aware of his family background which led him to research the Dorner family in the Czech Republic. Now retired from Proctor & Gamble in Green Bay, he worked there as an analyst and coordinator.

 **Ron Heuer** (*see page 1*)— Raised on a dairy farm north of Algoma, he moved to New York City to start his career. Other than the almost four years of active military service in the Army during the Vietnam conflict, Ron's entire civilian career has been in travel. He was a leader in the industry, managing companies and creating new and innovative approaches to marketing and distributing products — Universal Studios Florida, USAir Vacations, Southwest Airlines, FunPak Vacations to name just a few. Ron currently resides near Kewaunee with his wife, Gina, and operates a travel industry consulting company, Heuer Consulting LLC, from his home.

 **PattySue Powell** (*see page 5*)— Born and raised in Milwaukee, she has lived in Carlton Town in Kewaunee County since 1995. PattySue is an avid reader with a lifelong interest in genealogy and history; she also enjoys both indoor and outdoor gardening, and spending time with her two young granddaughters. She has most recently joined the KCHS *Historical Notes* as its co-editor.

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Sat., April 10

You're invited to the 2010 KCHS annual meeting on **Sat., April 10**, at 10:00 a.m., at the **West Kewaunee Town Hall**. A short business meeting will be held, followed by Don Honnef's powerpoint presentation focusing on historic photos of the Town of West Kewaunee. A light lunch will be prepared by Julie Bloor, chef and KCHS secretary.

- . 10:00 a.m.— Displays open
- . 11:00 a.m.— Annual KCHS meeting
- . 11:30 a.m.— Town of West Kewaunee presentation
Free lunch immediately following

CHANGES

by Jerry Abitz

You may have noticed in the editorial staff listing of this issue the disappearance of my co-editor, Jill Dopke. If you have recently visited the Kewaunee County History Center in Algoma (formerly known as the KCHS Research Center), you also would have noticed that Virginia Johnson is no longer there. Despite the ugly rumors circulating about people being "fired," there is no truth to the gossip. It is, however, unfortunate that both have independently resigned from active participation; both were valuable individuals whose talents and work ethics will be missed.

Dopke's skills were in research and writing articles for the KCHS newsletter. She spent countless hours talking to people and reading microfiche/microfilms of the early newspapers of the area. She added numerous names to our mailing list. She was an orderly person, and ensured that our bylaws were rewritten to correspond to our current practices. She developed the mission statement and helped create the new member packet for new board members. It was her idea to go to the individual town halls for our annual meetings. Last April the first of these meetings was held in Carlton and about 110 people showed up. She wrote the booklet, *The Early History of Carlton Town*, and showed a powerpoint presentation at this

meeting. She designed a t-shirt with our logo and personally sold many of them as well as her newly-published book about Carlton Town.

Johnson spent eight years building the Research Center from scratch, starting in 2001. She coordinated two difficult moves as the collection outgrew the rented facilities. Housing the collections previously stored in the basement of the Union State Bank in Kewaunee, she turned chaos into a valuable asset. The collections were indexed, filed, scanned, and whatever else – either by her or under her supervision as she acquired a cadre of helpers to accomplish this daunting task. As a result of those efforts, the KCHS Research Center won the prestigious *2005 Governor's Archives Award*. Featured on all the Gannett-based newspaper websites in Northeastern and Central Wisconsin, she was honored in December 2007 by the *Green Bay Press-Gazette* as an "Everyday Hero." Additionally, while under her guidance, the photograph collection grew to more than 29,000 prints.

With that kind of talent, these are individuals a group does not want to lose. But it happened. As things now stand, PattySue Powell is our new co-editor while board member, Bevan Laird, is holding down the fort at the History Center, at least for the time being.



Friends of the Kewaunee County Historical Society

~~ End of the Year Donations ~~

Thank you for your generosity in opening your wallets;
it is most gratifying to see we have friends who support us in our endeavor.

Note: The listing below is based upon donations received by January 1, 2010.
If yours has not been listed and was received at a later date, it will be acknowledged in the next issue.
If your name is not listed and you gave, please contact the editor (gabit@centurytel.net).

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