

# Emmaus Historical Society

218 Main Street • Emmaus, PA 18049 610-966-6591 ~ emmaushist@ptd.net www.emmaushistoricalsociety.org



### President's Message

Dear Members,

These past few months have brought quite a bit of joy to the Emmaus Historical Society with the Grand Re-opening postponed annual picnic on September 15 where we enjoyed great food with our members and the Past Presidents' Brick Good times were had by all on these happy occasions and a big thank you goes out to the Special Events and Hospitality committees for the planning and handling of these events as well as to all of our volunteers.





Last Collection - The last 100 Years Ago garbage collection for the season will be made today. Citizens are kindly asked to note same.

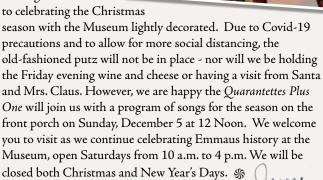
The Morning Call, Friday, November 25, 1921..

We are now in the fall to winter season which has always been one of my favorite times of the year. In October, the Emmaus Halloween Parade celebrated their 100th anniversary. Who doesn't remember so many happy times of either watching or participating in the parade either wearing costumes, marching with scout troops, on a float or marching with the band? When I was younger, my family would walk to my grandmother's house on Walnut Street where the parade would pass. My grandmother would have apple cider and donuts and lots of blankets for us to sit on and be covered with when we sat on the concrete banister of her front porch. When my sisters and I had children, we continued to do the same with them and my grandmother, Mazie, loved having her great grandchildren there to celebrate the night like we did when we were their age.

When I was young, we celebrated Armistice Day in November, now known as Veterans Day. With this issue, we are highlighting and honoring the lives of two of Emmaus' WWII heroes. It is so important to remember those who fought for the freedom that we still experience today.

Although without some of our annual traditions, we are looking forward

to celebrating the Christmas





Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for Historical Tidbits.



Visit our website for updates and other information at: www.emmaushistoricalsociety.org



### Recent Acquisitions

The Emmaus Historical Society recently received World War II military memorabilia relating to the Army service of Milton H. H. Kratzer of Emmaus, who was one of the twenty young men Emmaus lost in that war. His last living sibling Loretta (Kratzer) Meitzler died in 2020 and her daughters and grandchildren generously donated Milton's memorabilia to the Historical Society. It was the family's wish that it be seen and preserved for future generations to learn the stories of these men and women who served our country and died protecting it. For Veteran's Day, we honor the memory of Milton Kratzer and the rest of the men Emmaus lost in WWII. Below is his story:



### Milton Herbert Hunter Kratzer – His Early Years by Darlene Dunn (his niece)

Milton Herbert Hunter Kratzer was born on Monday, September 25, 1916 to Herbert Oscar and Clara Victoria Carl Kratzer at home on S. 5th Street, Emaus, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. On Nov. 14, 1916, Thursday evening, he was baptized by Rev. Daniel C. Kaufman in the Lutheran faith in the parent's home.

As a responsible young teenager, Milton was given a cart



horse & wicker cart by his father that he used to run errands and other things for the family. His father and uncle Howard Francis Kratzer were in the drayage profession for many years, which is where Milton learned about taking care of and handling horses. Plus, horses were a way of life at the time as cars were a luxury and just beginning to be used.

While attending school in 6th grade at the age of about 12 in 1927, he and his cousin Raymond Aaron Kratzer worked part-time as caddies at the Lehigh Valley County Country



Club. By watching the golfers and practicing during his breaks, he learned how to play golf. On August 29, 1928, he and Raymond played in the caddy gold tournament. While he did not win the tournament, he must have given the other caddies a sporting challenge as reflected in the photograph of him playing in the tournament showing he had a very good form.

It was not unusual for boys to discontinue going to school to either

find a job to help support the family or to work the family farm during the early 1900's. Milton was no exception so when he completed 7th grade about 1930 at the age of 14

when they lived in Salisbury Township, he accepted a fulltime position as a caddy at the country club.

His father recognized that Milton had great potential and probably allowed him to keep the tips he earned at the country club. Milton did not spend it on frivolities, but instead quenched his thirst for knowledge and a passion for learning by mailing away for correspondence courses and instruction guides from as far away as New York and Chicago. The studies ranged from "High School Subjects for Home Schooling", "Smithsonian Easy Writing Book", "How to Improve Your Vocabulary", "Perfect Voice Institute", learning to speak Spanish, "Saddle-Horse Instructions", "Horse Training", "Complete Horse Doctor", "National School of Animal Breeding", "Camp Cookery", "Sportsman's Encyclopedia", boxing, modern dancing, ballroom dancing, and "U. S. School of Music" correspondence violin lessons. He played the piccolo and self-taught to play the violin. He purchased a used violin and practiced daily.

As noted in The Morning Call newspaper, on December 28, 1935, his father hosted a Christmas party at his home at 638 Chestnut St., Emmaus where Milton helped provide music by playing the violin.

It's unknown when he left employment at the country club, but according to the 1940 Federal Census when he was 23 years old, he was working as a crossing watchman for the Reading Railroad at the 3rd St. crossing in Emmaus. He was living at 638 Chestnut St. with his family and I'm sure that he paid rent to his father to help with the expenses. It was about this time that he became a member of the Emmaus Lodge of the International Workers.

Milton was confident, honest, well natured, hard-working, dedicated to see things through, enjoyed life itself, and willing to help anyone. He was a young man that anyone would want to call friend.

### Milton Herbert Hunter Kratzer - Military Career

With the inevitability of WWII looming, at the age of 24, Milton submitted his draft registration card on October 16, 1940. He was living at 638 Chestnut St., Emmaus with his father and two younger sisters, Loretta and Althea, and worked for the Reading Railroad Company, East Pennsylvania Junction, Allentown. On the afternoon of June 5, 1941, Milton and 37 other Lehigh County young men were boarding a train in Allentown headed for Fort Meade, Maryland, for induction and basic training. They were given a sendoff at Town Hall by Judge James Henninger and music furnished by the Emmaus High School band. Among the other men was his cousin Francis Kratzer Kline.

Milton became a member of the American Legion,

Emmaus, and was carrying his Hospitality Card in his wallet while serving overseas. This card was returned to his father with his personal effects.

Upon completion of basic training, he was assigned to the 36th Engineers, Fort Scott, Plattsburg, New York, in



April 1942. Their mission was to provide support to troops by building bridges, clearing roadways, and anything to assist troops to travel from

point A to B. After graduating from training at Fort Scott, he was assigned to the 9th Infantry Division, amphibious group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he graduated in April 1942. While they were still engineers, they had extensive training as infantry soldiers lasting until early fall of 1943, when they embarked for North Africa.

Milton's first encounter with the German army was when he landed in North Africa during Operation Torch



Milton in Uniform

on October 24, 1943. Milton was assigned to the Western Task Force in Morocco. After pushing the Germans east through Spanish Morocco and into Algeria, they joined the Central Task Force and continued pushing the Germans eastward into Tunisia, Sicily and Sardinia, Italy. His cousin Francis was among the soldiers who landed with the Western Task Force and fought their way to Tunisia. It was in Tunisia

where they parted. Francis returned to Camp Dix, New Jersey, for special training for the D-Day Invasion in Normandy where he died of his wounds.

On July 10, 1943, Milton and his division landed in Licata, Sicily and drove the Germans into the mainland of Italy. By August 19, 1943, his unit returned to Bizerte, Africa in preparation for the September 10th landing in Salerno, Italy, to construct a by-pass around route 18 over the Sele River. During the night, his unit laid mines and strung wire in front of the 36th Division position.

On January 5, 1944, Anzio Operations (also known as Operation Shingle) started where most of the soldiers were coming from the southern part of Italy. However, Milton's unit was attached to the 56th Infantry which landed near Anzio to the north. At approximately 1800 hours (6:00 p.m.), Milton's unit landed in the port near Anzio, Italy. Initially, they did receive heavy fire, but later in the evening there was intense shelling of 170mm guns. At this time, Milton's unit was committed as infantry soldiers with the 56th Infantry Division on the left flank of the beachhead. They moved about 4-1/2 miles inland and 9 miles north of Anzio moving towards Rome. They held the line for 45 days against the Germans. On March 26, 1944, the 5th Division relieved the Engineers and the regiment reverted to Corps control of performing engineer tasks. This was the day after Milton was killed in action on March 25, 1944, after receiving fragments to his left chest area. If they were only relieved one day sooner, Milton may not have been killed that day or perhaps during the war.

It wasn't until April 23, 1944, that his father received the dreaded and feared telegram from the Government advising him of the death of his son Milton. By then, Milton had been buried in the Beach Head War Cemetery in Nettum, Italy, 2.6 miles north of Anzio, Italy. He was buried in Plot R, row 32, grave 2389.

As a result of his involvement in different campaigns, he was authorized to wear the European-African Medal, Eastern Theatre Campaign Ribbon, American Defense Service Ribbon and considered for a Good Conduct Medal. He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart. It is unclear when these ribbons and medals and Milton's personal effects were sent to his father.

In his grief, Milton's father sent many correspondences to the Government, specifically requesting that his son's remains be returned to Emmaus along with military honors during his reburial. Meanwhile, on June 4, 1944, and June 30, 1944, special memorial services were held in honor of Milton.

After WWII ended, the Army transport ship, Carroll Victory, docked in New York carrying 4,842 remains of soldiers who died during the war. These service member remains were the first to arrive in the U. S. after the war. Twenty from Emmaus were sent by train to Allentown, then transported by military hearse with a military escort to the funeral home selected by their families. His father arrived at the Ritter and Buzby Funeral Home on August 1,1948, where he was reunited with his son whose coffin was draped with a U. S. flag.



Like many soldiers of the period, I believe that Milton was patriotic and felt that he was making the right choice to serve his country. He

was an accomplished young man with common sense and gave 100% to being the best he could be. Unfortunately, during war that is not always enough to come home safely.

On August 1, 1948, Milton was laid to rest in the Northwood Cemetery, Emmaus, next to his mother. Rev. D. C. Kaufman, who baptized him as an infant, conducted the service. Milton was buried with full military honors headed by Robert Stauffer, commander of the United Veterans of Emmaus. Scores of friends and family attended the funeral. His father was never the same after Milton's death, as if the best part of him died that day in March 1944. As long as there are wars, there will be sacrifices and people left behind to morn and remember their loved ones. As long as the dead are remembered, they will never really die.

100 Years Ago

Committee Appointed - The following committee has been appointed to work in conjunction with the committee of Charles Henry

Schaeffer Post of the American Legion to make arrangements for the holding of another Hallowe'en parade in town. No parade has been held for the past years, and with the legion in back of the movement, another splendid parade is assured. Just when the parade will be held will be announced as soon as the committee has decided this date. Albert Buck, Horace Wennig, Howard Moatz, Wilson L. Kratzer, Raymond Palm and Howard Knauss compose the committee. The Morning Call, Wednesday, October 12, 1921.

### A Conversation with Local Veteran Bert Winzer - Part One

By Bob Boehmer

On Veterans Day, people across our nation will pause to remember, honor, and thank the brave men and women who served in our country's military. To those who actually served, Veterans Day is more than just a holiday. For some, like long time Emmaus resident, Bert Winzer, it is a time to reflect on his life, years of service, and a chance once again to remember his comrades-in-arms.

As he has done many times before, on the day before his ninety ninth birthday, Bert agreed to tell me about his time in the service.

He doesn't relive those memories for self-gratification, he does so because he knows we can't forget the sacrifices of those who gave all for their country.

"Come on in," Bert's voice calls out "the door's open, have a seat." I enter his home and pull up a chair at his kitchen table. Bert was already busy organizing his files and the collection of military memorabilia he intended to share with me. Instantly, this unassuming, seemingly mild-mannered man, with a big warm grandfatherly smile puts me at ease.

"Now, if you' re going to write a story, don't make me sound too good," he cautioned. "Remember, I'm just the guy next door." In the novel, Slaughter House Five, Kurt Vonnegut wrote, "The nicest veterans...the kindest and funniest ones, the ones who hated war the most, were the ones who'd really fought." Just sitting a couple of minutes with Bert, to hear a bit of his life's story, will leave no doubt in anyone's mind that he was definitely one of those soldiers who'd really fought! It's been said that tough times don't last but tough people do.

If that's true, then this ninety-nine-year-old, highly decorated, World War II Veteran surely is one of the toughest men I've ever met. Bert's long and fruitful life has been forged in the fires of adversity. He will tell you with a hint of pride that he was born on September 17, 1922 in Emaus, Pennsylvania but graduated from Emmaus High School in 1940. His parents, Paul and Florence Winzer,



Bert and his brother Clarence his family faced trying to survive after losing that same family home in the Great Depression.

a small florist shop and landscaping business called the Viaduct Dahlia Garden. The business became successful enough to enable the family to eventually build a comfortable home next to the flower shop right there on State Avenue and Elm Street. All seemed right with the world, until the Wall Street Crash of 1929. Like many of his generation, some of his most vivid boyhood memories still center around the hard times

In order to make it through these perilous times, just to get by, Bert along with his parents and four brothers and sisters were all forced to live together in the tiny flower shop. Soon after those traumatic times in 1931, tragedy struck again with the loss of his sibling. George, Bert's older brother, passed away right in front of him from an unforeseen heart condition while they were running to Keck's Sunday School. These early life-changing events are painful reminders of his past and still weigh heavily on his mind. Little did Bert know or ever imagine, back then in his early years, that somehow all the challenges and tragedies he faced as a boy would prepare him for what the future would have in store.

George Will, author, writes, "The future has a way of arriving unannounced." And literally, out of the blue, on the morning of December 7, 1941, the future did just that. Squadrons of Japanese Zeros began dropping bombs on Pearl Harbor. Once again, Bert had no way of knowing, while busy working as a yarn-winder for the Jute Mill at Gordon and Jordon Streets in Allentown, and for the Roy C. Wieder Gas Station in Emmaus, that these unforeseen events would once again change the course of his life. Bert recalls thinking that the war would be over in a short period of time and he wouldn't be called up.

But as fate would have it, the war escalated, and Bert received his notice informing him that Uncle Sam needed him. His fiancée, Joyce Marie Meeker, wanted to get married before he shipped out. But always pragmatic, Bert told her that she was too young to be a widow, and she would have to wait for his return. While still living in Emmaus, on December 10th, 1942, Bert was drafted into



Bert with his gear

the Army and told to report to Camp Maxey, Texas, for basic training as an Infantry Rifleman. Always up for a challenge, Private Bert Winzer, volunteered to go to Fort Ethan Allen in Essex, Vermont.

He was assigned to and underwent advanced training with the 1st Special Service Force, an elite joint American-Canadian parachute commando unit, the forerunner of today's

special forces. On July 11, 1943, Bert left with his unit for Alaska after the Japanese had seized American soil. He fought in the Aleutian Islands Campaign at Kiska and Segula Islands. Bert returned to the states until October of 1943, when his unit would be tested again and deployed overseas to Africa. This action was just the first of many for the men of the 1st Special Service Force, or as they were better known later in the war as "The Devil's Brigade". The Devil's Brigade was a nickname given to his unit by the Germans at the Battle of Anzio, because the enemy never

heard them coming. In 1968, a hit movie was made about the unit's exploits. A TV History Channel documentary was also made to tell the story of this unique courageous band of brothers. To let the Germans know the commandos had paid them a visit, the brigade began leaving stickers everywhere they went. The brigade's commanding officer, General Frederick, had stickers and cards printed up with the unit's insignia on them and the words "Das dickie commit nosh!" or "The worst is yet to come" printed in red ink down the right side. The brigade would leave the stickers as a form of psychological warfare. As the war continued and the battle hardened, "Devil's Brigade" would be sent into harm's way on numerous other dangerous missions, all considered to be virtually impossible to carry out. But for Bert and the other brave men of his unit, their mission was clear, to carry on in

spite of the odds. For the men of the Devil's Brigade, just as the stickers they carried in their pockets predicted, the worst was yet to come for them too!



The Devil's Brigade Calling Card

Our conversation with Bert Winzer continues in the February 2022 newsletter. Don't miss Part Two as Bert talks about the battles fought and his personal life while living in the Lehigh Valley.

# Emmaus Brothers in Sports Earl Jr., Theodore and Roland

By James F. Knauss, PhD

During the 1940s and 50s, family names in sports were important. As a child, I remember Houseknecht, as did most Emmaus sports-minded kids. Nicknames were just as common at that time. The Houseknechts had three brothers, "Corny", "Ted" and "Rollie". What follows are true first-hand experiences, and in Earl Jr.'s case, stories told to me.

Corny, the oldest of the three, was likely the only Emmaus player in baseball that the famous pitcher, "Curt" Simmons, could not beat at the plate. Corny was probably one Curt wished he didn't have to pitch to. While most hitters feared this famous pitcher, Corny relished it, or so I was told.

For the young folks reading this, Curt Simmons was such an outstanding pitcher that the major league team in baseball, the Philadelphia Phillies, signed him immediately out of high school and Legion ball, to pitch in the majors. Curt was an outstanding pitcher but not when he faced Corny.

I was privileged to see "Ted" pitch as a member of my favorite Emmaus Legion teams. Oh how I looked forward to watching those Legion games and all of the Emmaus players! As a matter of fact, Emmaus at that time, and not to be outdone, had its own "Curt". Curt Yeakel was an outstanding outfielder and hitter.

The best story is about "Rollie". Like his two older brothers, he was outstanding in every sport he participated in. I know this as fact since I was two years behind him in school. Rollie was especially outstanding in football and basketball. As quarterback, he would always lead the team onto the field (see photo). Note the special plastic protective

100 Years Ago

Schools Close - The public schools of town will close on Friday (Armistice Day) at 11 a.m., at which time the pupils

will assemble at the Washington school grounds, where a short armistice program will be rendered by the pupils. The Morning Call, Wednesday, November 9, 1921. mask attached to his helmet to protect his face. I'm sure the girls appreciated that when he removed his helmet.



Space restricts this account on Rollie and will be continued in the sport where he was truly the master, basketball. Oh, how he could do it all, even dunk the ball at his height! His memory in my 83-year-old mind will never fade. I will also never forget, for whatever reason, his coach benching Rollie for the full first half of the league championship game. Finally, after the Emmaus team was losing so badly, the coach put Rollie back in charge of the offense and defense. Rollie directed the team using incredible offensive talents to within a striking distance of victory. Too late, however, as time ran out. Forever shame on the coach but accolades to Rollie. I know all of this to be fact for, as I, like so many Emmaus fans, listened to the game on the radio. Heck, what true Emmaus basketball fan that couldn't attend the game, didn't?

What a tribute to Emmaus (Emaus) and Emmaus sports these three brothers were and will always be a significant part of Emmaus sports history! §

100 Years Ago

Christmas Trees - Morris Conrad, of Chestnut Street, and Grover Boehm, of Broad Street, have two

very fine Christmas trees in their homes. The

Christmas trees are complete in every respect and are attracting a great deal of attention. The public is invited to come and see the "Putz". The Morning Call, Thursday, December 29, 1921.

# Contributions to our Capital and General Funds

We acknowledge and offer our sincere thanks to everyone who has generously contributed to the Emmaus Historical Society during the period from July 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021. Capital Fund contributions fund those major projects that are necessary to maintain and preserve our beautiful building and property, as well as our mortgage. Capital projects of the front façade painting and repairs of the upper porch area and the electrical wiring on the third floor have been completed. Additional pre-payment of the 30-year mortgage will be completed prior to year-end. Contributions to our General Fund provide for the expenses related to running the Museum as well as funding programs, activities and this newsletter.

Capital Fund Founders - \$250.00 to \$499.00

Darlene Dunn

### General Fund

### Diamond Jubilee - \$5000.00 or more

Marion Butler, in memory of Jack Knaus

Founders - \$250.00 to \$499.00 Darlene Dunn Michael and Linda Waddell

Heritage - \$100.00 to \$249.00 EHS Class of 1952

Historian - \$50.00 to \$99.00 Terry Oswald

#### Friends – up to \$49.00

John and Karen Baer, Jeffrey and Donna Marks, Glenn and Jean Deischer, Joan Matura, Jeanne Harakal in memory of Jack Knauss

# Membership

We will resume meetings and programs when the church opens the parish hall to us. Our membership meetings and programs are open to the public and held the third Wednesday of the month (except January, Lenten Wednesdays, June July and August) at 7 p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church Parish Hall, 5th and Chestnut Streets in Emmaus. Our members include individuals (local and from afar), as well as Emmaus-area businesses and organizations.

### **Annual Membership**

Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$25.00
Junior (Under 18 – No vote)	\$ 3.00
Business	\$40.00
Charitable Civic Org.	\$25.00



### Life Membership

Individual \$200.00 \$350.00 Family \$300.00 **Business** Charitable Civic Org. \$100.00

### Welcome to our New Members - Thank you for Supporting Us!

Shirley Clauser Susan Keller Darlene Dunn Douglas Reeder

#### Deceased Members - We extend our condolences to the families of:

Carl George, Jr---Died June 29, 2021 Ronald Rieder--Died June 29, 2021

Anna Benner---Died July 21, 2021 Suzanne Mutchler---Died August 20, 2021 Geraldine Boyko---Died August 27, 2021

Phoebe Derr--- September 17, 2021 Barbara Keller - September 23, 2021

Please call the office at 610-966-6591 if you are aware of any member to whom we should send a Get Well, Sympathy or Thinking of You Card.

100 Years Ago

Accident - Mildred Weida, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Weida, of North Fourth Street was accidently struck of Stortz &

Eisenhard truck, on Tuesday afternoon. A Truck had just passed the house, and the child, in passing over the street behind the one truck stepped directly in the path of the other truck. Luckily, the child escaped with a few minor bruises. The Morning Call, Thursday, September 15, 1921. 100 Years Ago

Injured - Preston F. Schuler, of town, had a narrow escape from death while helping to dig a sink at the home of Watson Benfield

on Chestnut St. on Monday. A bucket containing fifty-two bricks was being lowered into the sink, which fell to the bottom, striking Mr. Schuler 58 feet below the surface. Luckily, he escaped with various bodily injuries. He is able to be about with the aid of a cane. The Morning Call, Friday, November 11, 1921.



## NEW MYSTERY PHOTOS

Can you help us with these photos?

If you know anything about these photographs, please contact us at emmaushist@ptd.net or at (610) 966-6591.





amazonsi

# Remember the Emmaus Historical Society when shopping on Amazon!

While shopping safely from home you have an opportunity to contribute to our fundraising efforts without spending additional money. We are now participating with Amazon Smile. If you purchase anything on Amazon, you can sign in through smile.amazon.com and choose the Emmaus Historical Society as the non-profit organization you would like to support. In return, Amazon will contribute ½ percent of each purchase to the Emmaus Historical Society.

Stay safe while supporting the Emmaus Historical Society!

# Mystery Photo Identified!



This couple was identified as Russell "Jake" and Marie (Kovish) Cope, Sr., married on November 25, 1944.
The photo was taken at the end of Furnace Street by the railroad tracks. Joan Matura and Jake Cope identified the photo.

#### **Executive Board**

President Ieanne Harakal Vice President Linda Boehmer Recording Secretary Linda Waddell Corresponding Secretary Teri Sorg-McManamon Albert Wieand

Treasurer

#### **Directors**

Patricia Mabus Michael Henry Andrew Kerstetter Gregory Owens Debra Hoffman Michael Flynn Solicitor/Parliamentarian - John Zettlemoyer, Esq.

Museum Hours

Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or by appointment or Special Event times Closed Christmas and New Year's Days

#### Our Mission Statement:

The mission of the Emmaus Historical Society is to collect, preserve and exhibit Emmaus artifacts, documents, histories, photographs and genealogy for displays and research and to offer educational programs and events throughout the year.



December 5th - Quaranttettes Plus One on the Porch of the Emmaus Historical Society -Singing Christmas Selections - 12 Noon

100 Years Ago

Santa Claus - Emaus Fire Company, No.1, will again play Santa Claus to the kiddies of the borough. In order to prepare for this occasion a committee has been appointed to canvass the entire

company for funds, and then ask the aid of the citizens in this matter. It is the purpose of the committee to purchase about 1400 boxes of candy for the children and present each with candy and oranges. The committee therefore appeals to the citizens of town to contribute something and when called upon to give their support and help. All contributions will be appreciated. The Morning Call, Wednesday, November 23, 1921.



NEMSTELLEB November 2021

Кетики Ѕекуісе Кедиезтер

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