



Laporte Honor Roll (left) with Maria (Elderfonse)Blasi, Louis Blasi, Teresa Blasi and Frank Meylert. Bernice-Mildred Honor Roll (right) with Frank Meylert. Se

Sept. 6, 2016

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

This summer a visitor had interest in a photo of the Sullivan County Honor Roll dedicated in the front lawn of the courthouse on July 17th, 1943. Then on Oct. 3rd that same year a similar Honor Roll was dedicated in Bernice-Mildred on the old school grounds “in tribute to the 140 odd young men from that area who are serving in the armed forces”. Unveiling of this Honor Roll was conducted by gold star mother from Bernice, Mrs. John Rokus, mother of Joseph who gave his life in the battle of Guadalcanal. Sponsorship was by contributions of the citizens of that area and designed by Wilfred T. Buck of Laporte. It was erected by Arthur Miner, lettering by Emil Coleman, both of Mildred and electrical work by James Daly of Dushore. “The land where the Honor Roll is erected was appropriated for the purpose by the Bernice Land Corporation.”

The Honor Roll in Laporte was “Through the efforts of the members of the Board of County Commissioners of Sullivan County. Enough space will be available for 900 names. We now have approximately 600 men in the service and their names will all appear on the Board”.

Within the World War II compiling, you'll see quite a bit of American pride from local people and man young men photographed in uniforms. From a 2007 lecture by Mr. Robert Webster he states the following: “World War II was the costliest war in modern history in terms of lives lost. During the period of 1937 to 1945 (8.5 years of 3,735 days), 18,000 died EACH DAY! This totaled 6,723,000 lives lost.” For America, by the end of the war 15,000,000 were in uniform, “one out of every 9 people were affected by the draft. The United States spent 1,365 days in WWII. 300 Americans (409,500 total) died each day. 500 Americans (682,000 total) were injured or wounded each day”. Rationing came into effect, no vacations were taken and prices were frozen. The Mafia, for certain considerations, made sure the docks were secure so ships could sail on schedule. Patriotism began at home, and home was as much where we are here in Sullivan County as is the streets of this country's bustling cities. Any home could sport a star flag, and many thru the course of this war changed those small flags for ones with black stars for loved ones lost.

Even though those 1943 Honor Rolls are now longer there, even though the Sullivan County Courthouse now has a Memorial Patio distinguishing all branches of the military and even though we've celebrated Memorial Day and 4th of July – in this autumn of the year, please, when you meet a veteran of any war gratefully thank them for their duty to country and thereby all of us here on “home front”.