

T/4 Clarence J. "Inky" Jungwirth

Location - East-A: R10, C36

Served in the 32nd Infantry Division in WW2 from
1940 to 1945 in the battles on the Philippine
Islands in the South Pacific.

-battle of Buna, New Guinea

[Oshkosh Diaries Episode #8: Clarence Jungwirth
\(YouTube\)](#)

A living lesson in history

Veterans discuss their World War II experiences with students

By Doug ZELLMER
OF THE NORTHWESTERN

Clarence "Inky" Jungwirth didn't mince words on his experiences in World War II.

An infantryman in the 32nd Red Arrow Division, Jungwirth Thursday told students at Oshkosh West High School that war was a living hell for combat soldiers.

"You're getting shot at all the time and getting bombed, but you had to develop a psychology in your mind that you won't get hit. Otherwise, you'd go insane," he said.

Jungwirth said he didn't consider himself a hero for his war efforts.

"I was just as scared as the next guy," he said.

Jungwirth, who fought the Japanese in the Pacific, was among several area World War II veterans, who shared war stories with history classes. The veterans also are doing what President George W. Bush wants — to talk with young people about their war experiences to preserve a piece of history.

"We're telling you these stories so you'll know why Tom Brokaw wrote his story on the greatest generation," Jungwirth said. "We helped save democracy in the United States"

Patrick Bertram, a social studies teacher at West, and Warren Toussaint, of the American Legion



MARINE VETERAN Irv Tesch discusses the many uses for his helmet.

Cook Fuller Post 70 in Oshkosh, coordinated the effort to bring veterans in to speak to students. Those who spoke are members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion and work at the Military Veterans Museum at City Center in Oshkosh.

"We're covering World War II in

classes and having the veterans come here to tell their personal stories is something that books can't convey," Bertram said.

Kam Koplitz, a junior at West, said he enjoyed listening to the veterans and finding out what life was like 60 years ago.

"I also learned some of the struggles they had to battle for the country. I give them a lot of credit," Koplitz said.

Some of the veterans brought swords, mess kits and helmets and told stories of how the equipment was used during wartime.

Irv Tesch, who served with the Marines in World War II, said a soldier's helmet was used for more than just protection to his head.

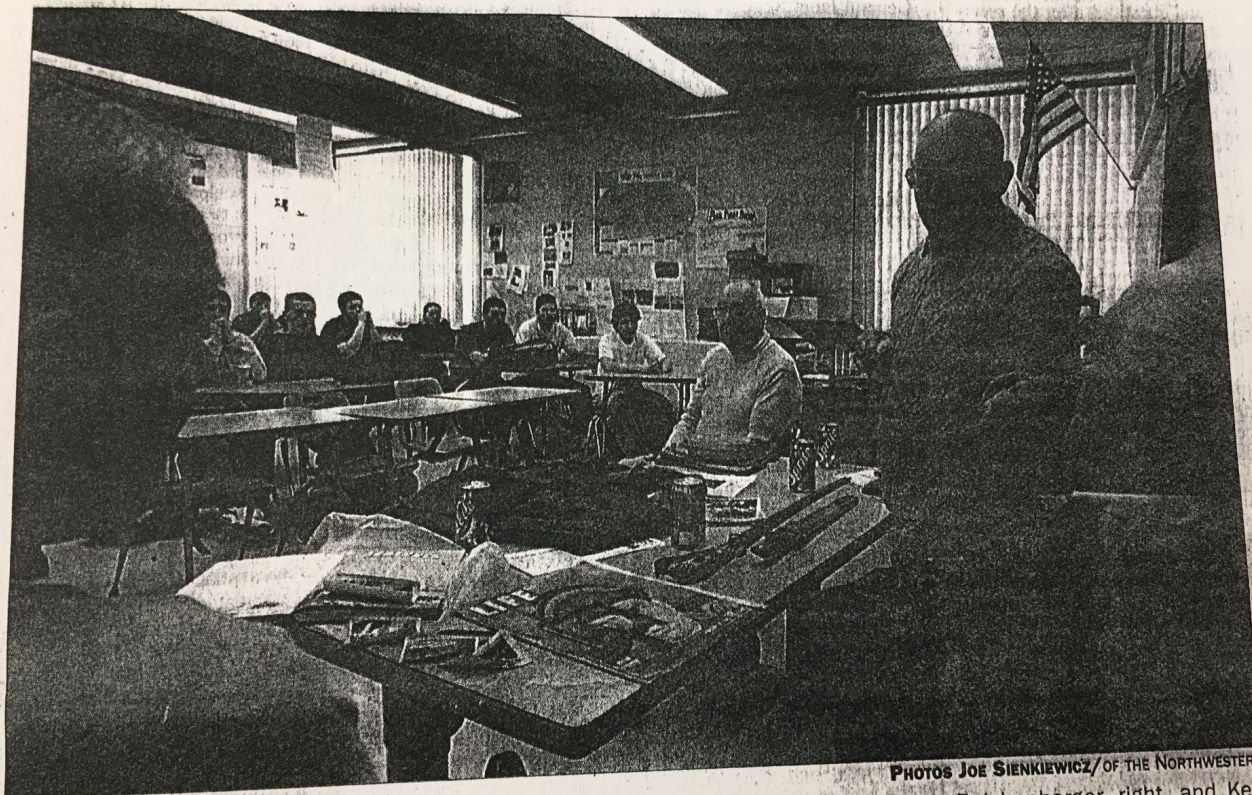
"You dug a fox hole with it sometimes," he said. "You also washed in it and shaved in it."

Students also were reminded that the sacrifices made by men and women in the military helped build what America has today.

"I want you to realize that you live in the greatest country on earth," said Charlie Krueger, who fought with the Army in World War II. "They made some real sacrifices for what you have today."

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FOCUS Veteran histories,



PHOTOS JOE SIENKIEWICZ/OF THE NORTHWESTERN

VETERANS CLARENCE 'INKY' Jungwirth, standing, Irv Tesch, sitting center, Ralph Reichenberger, right, and Ken Neubauer, left, talk about their World War II experiences with Oshkosh West High School students Thursday.

SPECIAL TO THE NORTHWESTERN

A SLEIGH, on display inside the Michler plant in Fond du Lac. A sign on the sleigh's bed reads: "This is a Michler No. 9 Common Sense Sleigh." The sleighs were used by the Navy during the war and later by the Army.

Division, was home on he heard of the attack on Pearl Harbor from his druggist. "It was Sunday afternoon. I called Mel Leffingwell, a druggist friend, to ask him a question," he said. Wauda heard commotion in the background.

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Red Arrow: Many 32nd Infantry soldiers were teens when they signed up

FROM PAGE B1

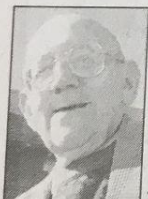
soldiers were green recruits compared with the battle-tested Japanese troops.

Johnson was just 16 when he joined the 32nd Infantry Division in 1937. Zmuda joined soon after graduating from high school.

Clarence Jungwirth of Oshkosh signed up with the 32nd Infantry Red Arrow Division's 127th Regiment in 1940. The Great Depression still had the country in its grip, and he was 20 years old.

"I didn't have a job," Jungwirth said. "The National Guard was paying a dollar a night. ... So it was \$4 a month, and that was a lot of money in 1940. And of course, there were the three weeks in the summer."

On April 22, 1942, Jungwirth and others got on ships to "destinations unknown." They eventually ended up in New Guinea to stop the Japanese from reaching Australia.



Jungwirth

"It became known in history as the Battle of Bloody Buna, because of the casualties," Jungwirth said. "It was a nightmare, one of the bloodiest battles fought by the 32nd Infantry."

The Americans found it difficult to get supplies over the cloudy mountain passes to Buna, and food and equipment were scant, Jungwirth said. The rainy weather also meant air strikes often were unavailable to support missions against Japanese forces that had dug in, built fortifications and stockpiled equipment for more than a year.

32ND HISTORY

FROM PAGE B1

The last time the 32nd Division was called to active duty as a unit was in 1961 and 1962 during the Berlin Crisis. Individual 32nd Division guardsmen also served in Korea and Vietnam. The division was recognized for its long service on Dec. 27, 1967, when it ceased to exist as a full division, but the 32nd Infantry Red Arrow Brigade (Separate) was created to carry on its famous heritage. In 1971, it became the 32nd Infantry Red Arrow Brigade (Separate) (Mechanized) Brigade.

The Americans found allies in the natives of New Guinea.

"They liked the Americans because they didn't rape their women and destroy their villages," Jungwirth said. "I can still see them carrying our wounded out on their backs and on stretchers."

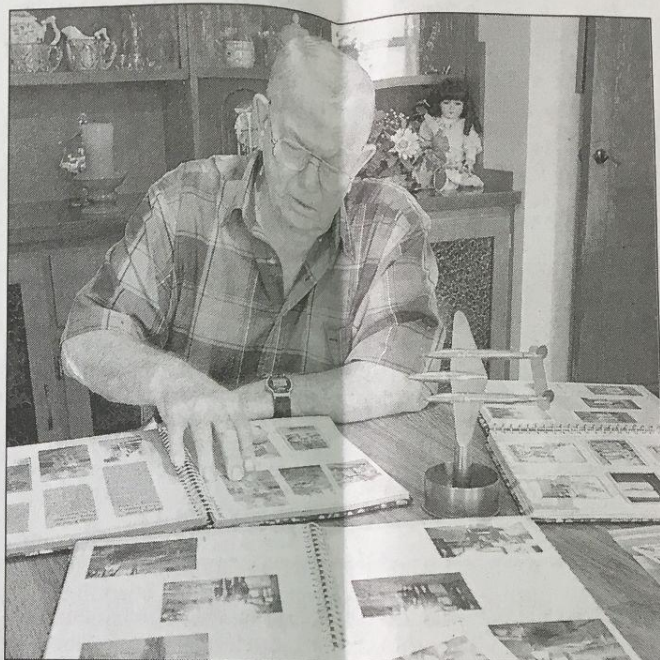
It took several months to capture Buna. More than 1,954 guardsmen were either killed or wounded, and another 2,952 were hospitalized due to disease.

Diseases such as malaria, dengue fever and typhus took a deadly toll on the men of the 32nd, afflicting from 70 percent to 80 percent of the soldiers.

Dysentery was rampant.

"Quite a few of my buddies died of malaria," said Zmuda, who also got the disease.

Jungwirth was among scores of soldiers evacuated to malaria hospitals and eventually sent



DOUG WOJCIK/FOR THE NORTHWESTERN

GEORGE ZMUDA, Stevens Point, looks over scrapbooks of clippings and photos from his service with the 32nd Infantry during World War II.

back stateside. A retired engineer, Jungwirth wrote two books about the division, "The Diary of a National Guardsman of World War II" and "Bloody Buna: 1942 to 1943, A Picture History."

Now 82, he recently started work on his 14th book.

Zmuda served in the Pacific until late December 1944.

"There weren't many from my outfit there by then," he said. He had been away from home almost five years by the time he next set foot in Stevens Point.

Johnson finally left the South Pacific in April 1945. He

stayed on with the National Guard in Green Bay and retired as a captain 22 years after the end of World War II.

A member of the Red Arrow Club of Green Bay, he served as its secretary-treasurer for many years. Many of the chapters throughout the state now are inactive.

"We've disbanded," Johnson said. "I've got the flags. When someone dies, I take them to the funeral."

Trudy Stewart is a reporter for Gannett Wisconsin News Service/ Stevens Point Journal.

SGT Clarence "Inky"

Jungwirth

Class of 1938

U.S. Army:

1940-1945

Technician Jungwirth served in New Guinea, Papua, southern Philippines and Luzon, and received the good conduct medal, presidential unit citation, with oak leaf cluster, Asiatic-Pacific theater service medal, American defense service bars, four discharge emblems and the Philippine liberation ribbon with two bronze stars.

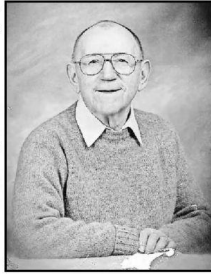


Clarence Jungwirth

OSHKOSH - On Sunday, January 21, 2018, local historian, author, WWII vet and Oshkosh Truck engineer Clarence "Inky" Jungwirth, 98, died peacefully in his sleep at Mercy Hospital, after suffering a heart attack. Born October 5, 1919, the eldest son of John and Josephine (Wolf) Jungwirth's three children. Clarence was baptized, attended school and remained an active life time member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church. He especially loved being director of the Catholic Youth Organization through the 1960's.

In 1940 he joined Company H 127th Infantry Regiment of the 32nd "Red Arrow" Division of Wisconsin National Guard which was folded into the US Regular Army and deployed to Australia to fight in the Pacific Theater. As an Infantryman he was in the battle of "Bloody Buna" in New Guinea, invasion of the Philippines, and the Liberation of Leyte Island. As a company clerk, he took great pride in figuring out how to circumvent army regulations to supply the needs of the troops. With an Honorable Discharge, Clarence returned home and found a job at Oshkosh Truck, staying until the week of his death, 72 years. After working his way up to Engineering Design Supervisor, he tried to retire in 1987 only to be called back to consult at the Oshkosh Truck Service Center.

When he was in his 50's, his life took several eventful turns, finding and marrying the love of his life and pursuing his dream of a Bachelor Degree from UW-Oshkosh. His love of history resulted in writing over twenty books on the history of Oshkosh, Oshkosh Truck, and his WWII experi-



enced. "The Diary of a National Guardsman in World War II" is part of the libraries at the US Army War College in Carlisle, PA and the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. Clarence gave life to his stories giving over almost 500 lectures to Fox River Valley church groups, social organizations, school groups and UW Oshkosh. He enjoyed being a frequent interview guest of Oshkosh Community TV Channel, UW-O, WBAY TV-2 and both Wisconsin and Milwaukee PBS.

For his contribution to preserving local history, in 2000 The City of Oshkosh Landmark Commission awarded Clarence the "Acanthus Award". In 2015 to recognize the outstanding body of work, Clarence created while documenting local history, The Winnebago County Historical & Archaeological Society created the "Clarence J. Jungwirth Historian Award". This new annual award will honor an individual's significant contributions to identify and preserve local history.

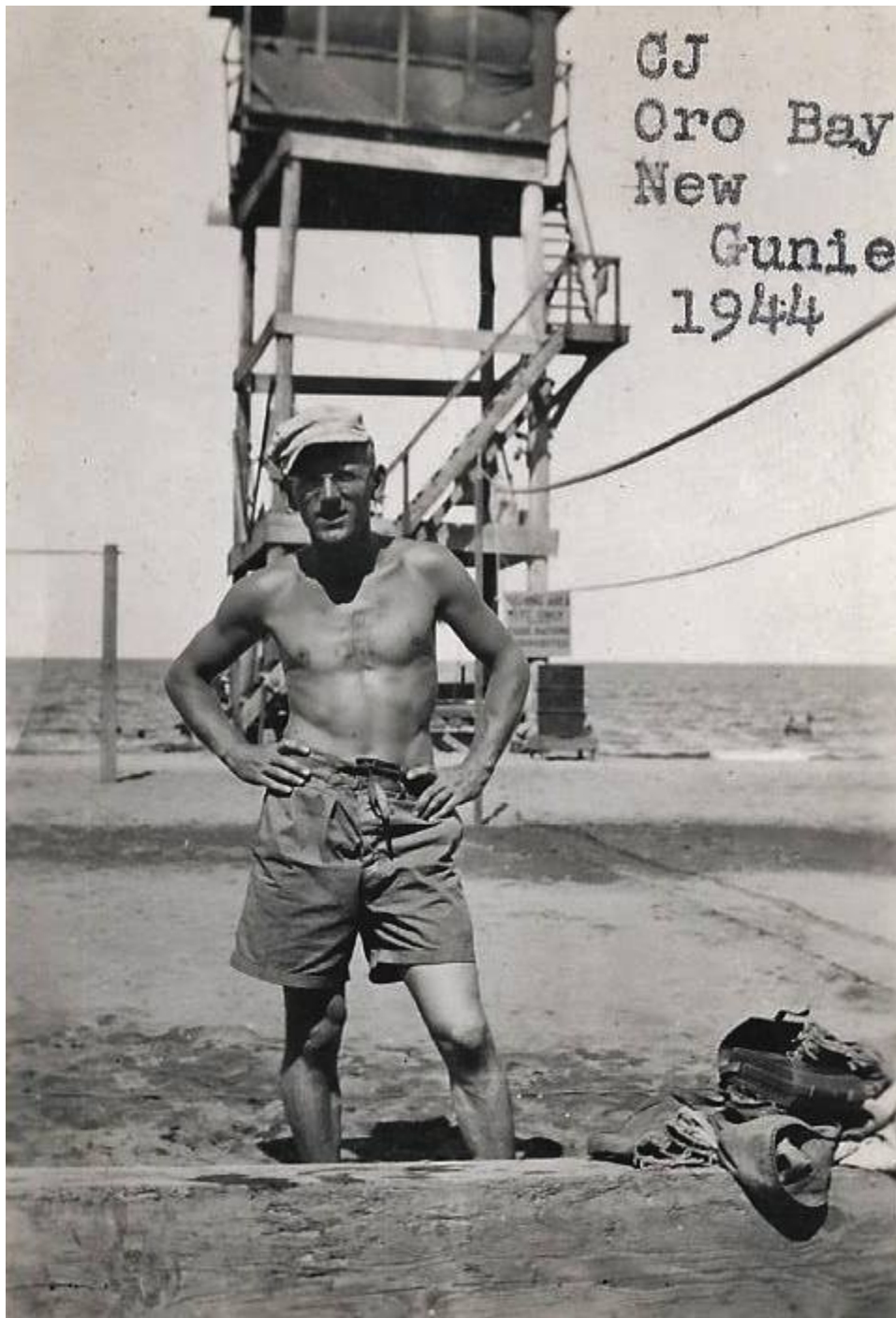
Clarence is survived by his love, "his baby," his wife, Virginia Shurbert-Georgeson; his dearly loved children, Katherine Scott Georgeson, Clay (Debbie) Georgeson, Julie Ruck and daughter-in-law Karen Wolfert; eight grandchildren; and six great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his father and mother; sister, Grace (Jungwirth) Duhm; and a brother Robert Jungwirth.

Visitation will be at Konrad-Behlman Funeral Home- Westside, 100 Lake Pointe Drive, on Friday January 26, from 4:00pm to 7:00pm. Visitation will continue at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 519 Knapp St, on Saturday, January 27 from 9:00am until the time of Mass at 11:00 am.

Instead of flowers memorials have been established, or a donation may be made to the Oshkosh Public Museum and The Winnebago County Historical & Archaeological Society in Clarence's name.

Konrad-Behlman
Funeral Homes & Crematory
100 Lake Pointe Drive
Oshkosh • 920-231-1510
www.konrad-behlman.com

CJ
Oro Bay
New
Guinea
1944



Inky 1941



