

Livermore Heritage Guild

Saving Yesterday For Tomorrow



Join the Calendar Parade!

Yes, an annual Heritage Guild wall calendar is waiting for you at the Carnegie History Center for a mere \$15. We've held to last year's pricing AND we got it to you before December! This year we went to the old tradition of featuring all historic photos of Livermore, such as this parade on First Street (at J Street, looking westerly). Thanks to Loretta Kaskey for sorting the photos and Bill Nale for pulling it together for publishing!

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Remembering Livermore's World War II "Gold Stars"

Veterans Day was commemorated on November 11th. Starting with the "Gold Star" honorees of World War II, this newsletter begins a series of articles about local men and women who made the "Supreme Sacrifice" during military service. More tributes will follow in the May/June issue.

At least thirty persons associated with Livermore died in uniform during World War II, including at least sixteen aviators at Livermore Naval Air Station who were fatally injured in local airplane accidents. Livermore High School dedicated its swimming pool as a "living memorial" to the community's "Gold Star" honorees in a dramatic ceremony attended by thousands in May 1948.

Perhaps the most touching tribute was a "Memory Book" prepared as an English class project by the L.H.S. class of 1946 for the nine men associated with the school who died in the war. The sting of their pain and the rawness of their loss are still palpable 63 years later. Part of the introduction reads: *Continued on page 4*



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A Message From the President

Dear members,

November 12, 2009

Last year around this time I wrote about some goals we had for the coming year, so this seems a good time to look over the year and see what went according to plan and what things created plans of their own.

Our regular events went well this year, from the popular annual auction to the compelling speakers in our History Lecture series all year. We even had an encore performance by Susan Canfield of the photos by her father, Elliott Dopking, at our Annual General Meeting. If you have not had a chance to attend one of the monthly talks, I highly encourage it. I will be kicking off the new year with a talk on "Joesville" in January. Want to know more? Drop in!

History walks, museum visits and other interactions with the schools were even more popular this year, keeping Gary Drummond and his team of tour guides busy all spring. At a talk on oral history at Mendenhall Middle School, it hit me that history for them included the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake! My analogy about historic value referencing a Jimi Hendrix guitar drew only blank looks. Saving yesterday is tough - it gets bigger every day.

Sadly, we were not able to reprise the Legacy House Tour this year. It requires a mammoth outlay of resources, and our volunteers were stretched too thin this year. We look forward to being able to repeat the tour as time permits.

While Nancy Mulligan's committee works towards a new one, the old History Mobile lumbered out again to visit 3rd-grade classes. Tilli Calhoun kept about 100 students interested and engaged, a day after her 80th birthday! Thanks to Tilli and the rest of the crew and a reminder that Nancy's committee can still use helpers.

We did update our membership rates and at the same time have automated our membership records and renewed efforts toward recruiting new members. I am happy to say that we have grown to over 250 members or member families in the Guild, and we aspire to increase that in the coming year. You bring the interest and motivation that keeps us going. Haven't renewed? Drop by the History Center!

A major effort has gone into improving the condition and availability of our collection this year. Maps are being safely stored and indexed, thanks to Terry Rossow. Hundreds of photos are housed and filed thanks to Susan Junk, and our whole collection is being stored more carefully under the guidance of Terry Berry. We are now working on getting these items properly inventoried and cataloged in the computer to make searching easier for visitors and researchers. There are still some glaring opportunities, such as historical newspapers that need scanning and indexing, so if you have an interest in helping us to move that program ahead, drop me a line.

The Duarte Garage under curator Bill Junk has had quite a life of its own this year. Chuck McFann's crew, having completed the award-winning Model-T, is doing an amazing job of restoring Livermore's 1920 Seagrave Fire Engine. Parts just came back from the painters in head-turning Fire Engine Red. There is still a lot to do, but we are excited by the progress. At the same time, Neil Riley has been researching the historic tools and renovating the tool room to create proper storage for our collection. Our goal is to be able to exhibit the workspace and tools appropriate to the garage up through the 1940's. Our fund raising drive in memory of longtime Guild friend and volunteer Jerry Bireley will help these garage projects keep moving ahead. I wish you and your families a Happy Thanksgiving.

Jeff Kaskey

W.P. Bartlett, First *Herald* Editor



In February 1877, William Pitt Bartlett, 21 years old, put out the first issue of the *Livermore Herald*. Bartlett's previous experience beginning at age 17, had been working as a compositor for H. H. Bancroft, setting type for Bancroft's "History of the Pacific States."

Bartlett's parents had separated when he was young, and he came to California with his mother and sister. He had little formal education. Bartlett himself admitted that he got an encyclopedia and educated himself. But his major achievement working as a printer was a clear, direct style in writing.

Regarding his newspaper, Bartlett's slogan was "Independent in Everything; Neutral in Nothing." He advocated plowing under the stubble instead of burning it; graveling the roads; planting groves of blue gum in the hills and miles of shade trees, primarily black locust. He was a prolific writer on the subject of business opportunities in Livermore Valley.

Bartlett championed the Livermore Valley viticulture. The *Herald* was seldom without an article about some winery or vineyard in the valley. In December 1881, he wrote, "In 1878, we predicted that within ten years the wine industry would closely encroach on, if not quite equal in size, the wheat growing industry in this valley. This prediction, wild as it then appeared, seems likely now to be verified." Bartlett was right: from only a few small vineyards in 1881, by 1885 there were over 3,400 acres of grape vines.

In addition to his work as a newspaper publisher, Bartlett and his partner George Stanley were in the real estate business. When the partners proposed to donate two town blocks in the Northern Addition for a public park with the condition that the Board of Trustees

provide \$75.00 a year for maintenance, the Board declined the gift.

In 1889 Bartlett commissioned a panoramic view of the south and west parts of Livermore Valley. It is the only known panoramic scene of vineyard country. He sold copies for 25 cents each. A panoramic view also appeared in the *Herald* masthead (seen above).

Bartlett was married to Anna Laumeister, whose father was a local miller, in 1880. During their married life, she always addressed her husband as "Mr. Bartlett" and he, in turn, always responded to "Mrs. Bartlett", so her first name was almost unknown, even to friends.

Bartlett was 6 feet, 4 inches tall, and large proportioned. He wore a close-clipped beard and always a derby hat and white shirt with stiff collar. A relative, who had never seen him, asked a bank cashier to describe him, and was told, "If you see a grizzly bear coming down the street, that's Mr. Bartlett."

After over fourteen years of publishing the *Herald*, he sold the paper, and moved to Porterville, Tulare County, where he had magnetite mining interests. Years later, in a message to a successor *Herald* publisher, he said "You have a better town, better schools, a larger population and a larger and better *Herald* than those I knew. And your town, your schools, your community spirit and your newspaper will be just what you make them."

William Pitt Bartlett passed away in 1929 at Porterville.

-By Gary Drummond

Most issues of the Bartlett-era Herald are missing. Gary Drummond and Anne Homan are now cataloging Herald articles that appeared in 1880s and '90s Oakland newspapers.

Gold Stars *(Continued from Page 1)*

"They were here before us. Their laughter rang through these halls. Their footsteps sounded in these corridors. They sat in these desks. They studied and learned from these books. Their glory was the school's glory on the field, track, and floor. Their spirit lives on here, in the hearts and minds of those who knew them and those who followed them, and is a part of the very texture of the spirit and traditions of this, their school."

Here is a summary of the nine biographies in the "Memory Book," supplemented with information from newspaper articles and interviews:

John Thornton, class of 1931, served as a pilot with the Canadian Royal Air Force after the U.S. Army Air Corps rejected him. He presumably died in a mission over Germany in August 1942; his remains were never found. (There is a Pilot Officer John Lawton Thornton, RCAF, who possibly was the same man, listed in Canada's 1943 Book of Remembrance.)

The death of **Pvt. Nathan Maclean** at age 18 stunned Livermore, especially his young classmates. He was the first "local boy" to give his life in World War II in an American uniform. His parents received the news on November 20, 1942 and word circulated through the community (population: 3,000) for seven days before the next *Herald* issue somberly announced beneath a photo of Maclean: "The war came home to Livermore last Friday". That November 27th edition broke the paper's record for single copy sales; due to a newsprint shortage the *Herald* offered to buy back issues from readers in order to re-circulate them.

Betty Beaudet (*nee* Beyer), class of '43, recalls the pall over the community after each war casualty. "It was a real shock. The whole town was affected. Everybody knew everybody else. We were like brothers and sisters, the same kids in the same classes from elementary school through high school," she said in 2009.

Active in 4-H and Future Farmers of America, Maclean was reared on a farm with a Dutch Colonial house (later the Caldeira place) on today's Wentz Street. While Maclean was an L.H.S. senior, he enlisted in the Marines the month after the Pearl Harbor attack. He and eight other seniors were absent from school during their last semester for military training. Although other

students in military service were given leave to attend the Senior Ball, Maclean was stationed in the San Diego area and unable to return to Livermore for four months.

On May 21, 1942, L.H.S. held an extraordinary graduation ceremony for 82 seniors. The semester had been shortened because "so much confusion was going on" related to the war, according to James "Bud" Lima of the Class of '42. The school's service flag was dedicated during the program, featuring 95 blue stars inside a red border on a white field; the blue stars representing the Class of '42 were arranged in a victory "V" in the center. Maclean was among the six members of his class in the armed forces who were granted leave to return to the school to receive their diplomas in uniform with their classmates. Their long absence and sudden return wearing Navy blue and Army green reminded classmates that their lives had forever changed. This was the last time that most Livermoreans saw Maclean. He was sent to the South Pacific in August and was killed in action at Guadalcanal in fall of 1942.

On December 2, 1942, L.H.S. held "simple but impressive memorial services" in Maclean's honor, a mere 11 months after he left school to join the military and just six months after his graduation. Principal Vernon J. Stoltz read a selection. He presented the school service flag to Student Body President Jack Volponi and charged him with placing a gold star on the flag. The student body stood in silence before singing the National Anthem.

Lt. Thomas "Tommy" V. Kelly, Jr., graduated with the L.H.S. class of '41, just one year ahead of his sister. "He took care of me," Betty Guerena (*nee* Kelly) said in 2009, "he was always looking after me." He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942. "He was motivated from the instant that they bombed Pearl Harbor. Nothing was going to stop him. He couldn't wait to go," she said, "It's amazing the way those kids responded." After extensive training at multiple bases, including the bombardier training school in Roswell, N.M., Kelly was sent to Australia and New Guinea.

En route overseas in 1943, Kelly and three other officers of his bomber crew were Thanksgiving guests at the Kelly home in Livermore. In 2009, his sister recalled that after dinner they all attended a dance at the naval air station. Betty Kelly's then-boyfriend was a training pilot

Gold Stars *(Continued from Page 4)*

there; he and Tom talked during much of the visit about their common interest in aviation. The crew returned to the Kelly home a couple more nights. "We knew them all well before they left," Mrs. Guerena said.

Jack Volponi worked with Kelly at the Shell service station at First & L. In a 2009 interview, Dr. Volponi recalled seeing Kelly on leave in Livermore, "I was drooling when he came back with his Air Corps wings," inspiring Volponi to join the Air Corps, too.

Part of 320th Bomber Squadron, 90th Bomber Group, Heavy, Kelly died on March 11, 1944 over Wewak, New Guinea, after three months of active duty. He was 21. His mother was alone at home when the War Department delivered the telegram on St. Patrick's Day. As for many of the other local casualties, the Livermore City Council adopted a resolution of condolence. A Solemn Requiem High Mass was celebrated at St. Michael's Church on March 23rd. A squadron of planes from Livermore Naval Air Station flew over the church and high school, rendering a naval salute to an Army hero.

L.H.S. paid tribute that day by stationing four cadets, in full uniform and armed with rifles, as an honor guard at "parade rest" at the school flagpole each school period. The flag was at half-mast. A non-commissioned officer was in charge of each detail. At the end of the school day, the entire company stood at "present arms" at the flagpole and a bugler sounded "Taps." The school held a memorial assembly on March 31st.

Alice Bruns (*nee* Kruger), class of '45, recalled Lt. Kelly in a 2009 interview, "Tommy was like a brother to me." He was a best friend of her brother Don Kruger, who was a paratrooper in the "D-Day" invasion of Normandy (Don Kruger is in the famous photograph of General Dwight Eisenhower speaking informally to soldiers on the eve of D-Day). While on leave, Kelly visited often the Kruger family. He stored gasoline, then subject to rationing, at the Kruger place on East Avenue during the war. He drove Miss Kruger to her job at the Golden Rule Creamery downtown one hot summer day in 1943, the last time that she saw him.

When the news reached Livermore in 1944, "We just couldn't believe it. It was so sad," she said. She and other L.H.S. students were excused from classes to

attend Lt. Kelly's memorial service at St. Michael's. Lt. Kelly is memorialized on the "Tablets of the Missing" at Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines.

The loss of **Corporal Peter Barthe**, class of 1930, was especially devastating to his sister Marie Barthe, an L.H.S. teacher (she eventually became Dean of Girls). A manager of the Livermore and Hayward Hagstrom grocery stores, he enlisted in the Marines in 1942. Corporal Barthe spent two years in the South Pacific, participating in the attacks on Eniwetok and Saipan, before dying in the July 28, 1944 attack on Guam.

Lt. Coyle Hillyard was an L.H.S. science teacher for two years until December 1942, when he reported for naval duty. Students nicknamed him "Mike" during cheers at athletic events. He graduated from the toxic gas handling course at the chemical warfare school in Washington, D.C. in August 1943. He was aboard the carrier *U.S.S. Bismarck Sea* when Japanese torpedo planes attacked it on February 21, 1945. Lt. Hillyard and twenty men under his command were stationed on the fantail of the carrier and were killed when a kamikaze plane directly struck them. His widow Katherine received notice of his death a few weeks later. Lt. Hillyard is memorialized on the "Tablets of the Missing" at Honolulu, Hawaii.

Pfc. Robert "Bobby" Holm was among the first of the many L.H.S. students who left school before graduation in order to join the military. He grew up with his extended family on the Holm place in what is now southwestern Livermore. He joined the Marines in February 1942 at age 17 while still a junior. He served in New Caledonia in 1944 and was stationed on Guadalcanal to train for the Okinawa invasion, in which he gave his life on May 20, 1945. Among his possessions returned to his family was a poem expressing his thoughts of home that he had written while on Guadalcanal. One stanza said, "The bugs and crickets sing/Through the night so clear/It's like being back on the farm/With the ones I love so dear." In 1945, family and friends erected an outdoor fireplace and BBQ pit (constructed of native stone from the Holm ranch) at First Presbyterian Church as a living memorial to him. It stood until circa 2005.

Staff Sgt. Arnold Paul attended L.H.S. for three years, but graduated from a high school in Winthrop, Washington in 1940. In 1943, he saw action in New Caledonia and New Guinea. He participated in two

W.W. II Fallen *(Continued from Page 5)*

major battles on Luzon in the Philippines, where he died at age 24 after a long illness on July 29, 1945. A lover of outdoor life and horses, he worked on a dude ranch near Winthrop prior to joining the Army. He left a wife Arnette and infant daughter Nancy.

Pfc. Edward Teeter, class of 1932, enlisted in February 1941, ten months before the Pearl Harbor attack. He saw overseas action in New Guinea and Australia with the 41st Infantry Division and returned to the United States in March 1944 for hospitalization in Modesto for back injuries suffered while in combat. Marilyn "Tilli" Calhoun (*nee* Holm) remembers joining her mother (Teeter's sister) on visits to the Modesto hospital and waiting in the car as minors were not allowed inside; she says that her uncle also suffered from tropical diseases. Pfc. Teeter served in Army post offices until his death at Oakland Army Hospital from pneumonia on July 4, 1945. His interment in Masonic Cemetery was perhaps the only military burial in Livermore during the war. Pallbearers were soldiers from his unit in Oakland. A squad from Livermore Naval Air Station fired the three-volley salute. A bugler from Camp Parks played "Taps."

Lt. Franklyn Mueller, class of 1941, earned the American Legion Freshman Award in 1938. Betty Holdener (*nee* Suits), class of '43, remembers Mueller as a "very pleasant" young man who would "do anything for anybody." After a December Sunday of hunting cottontail rabbits with "Bud" Lima in the Altamont, Lima and Kelly pulled into the Shell station where attendant Tommy Kelly anxiously informed them about the Pearl Harbor bombing. Mueller enlisted soon thereafter. An Army aviator, he trained in Texas, Georgia and Arizona. He received final combat training in England in July 1943. On July 19, 1944, he was reported missing in action after his B-17 Flying Fortress was damaged by enemy fire and exploded en route from England to the Munich area of Germany. Two members of his crew parachuted to safety and became prisoners of war. His family held hope that he, too, survived, but the War Department listed him officially dead just before V-J Day in 1945.

The remains of many Livermore "Gold Star" servicemen never were returned to their families. The first

casket to return to Livermore from overseas was that of Corp. Barthe. St. Michael's Church held a Requiem High Mass in his honor in April 1948, almost four years after he was killed on Guam. Pallbearers included Robert Haera, Otto Fachner and Francis McGlinchey. Sgt. Arnold Paul was buried in Hayward in February 1949. In March 1949, the remains of "Bobby" Holm were returned to Livermore and a private funeral held. Friends were invited to the graveside service at the Odd Fellows Cemetery. Six cousins (Carl Stebbens, Stanley Jorgenson, Lloyd Marsh, and James, Frank and Lowell Holm) were pallbearers. Tilli Calhoun in 2009 said that return of her cousin's remains was a relief to her extended family, "You felt that he was home. It gave you a release."

Three more names are on the World War II tribute plaque in the Carnegie Library park: **Howard V. Munton**, **L. William Reifschneider** and **Ormond B. Smith**. **Second Lt. Margaret M. Phillips** left the V.A. Hospital to become an Army nurse. She died in a kamikaze attack on the *U.S.S. Comfort*. She often worked 15 hours per day.

Livermoreans not only feared a visit from a pair of military men who generally delivered news about deaths, but also dreaded the sight of an un-requested taxi arriving at their homes. The local taxi company delivered telegrams bearing news about injuries. Alice Kruger answered her front door in mid-1944 to find a taxi driver carrying a telegram that announced her brother Don's injury in France. "I shook like a leaf," she said.

"The war ends. The gloom, the smoke, the haze of war rises, and man stops -- stops to look back upon a world laid waste by his own actions," the L.H.S. Class of '46 observed. *"And his memory stops, too, and looks back with fond remembrance and quiet humility upon the memories of those who gave their lives in the conflict."*

A copy of the Livermore High School World War II "Memory Book" may be viewed on-line at livermorehistory.com and at the LHG Museum. Readers are encouraged to write up their own memories of World War II (concerning events or people anywhere in the world) and send them to the LHG. *-By Jason Bezis*

Books by and about local military veterans are available at the Livermore Heritage Guild Museum, including World War II memoirs *One Man's Army* and *Voyage to War* by George Wagner, a Livermore Lab retiree who served in Europe.

Calendar

NOVEMBER

Duarte Garage Open. Sunday, Nov. 15, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. On "old Lincoln Highway" at Portola Ave. and L St., Livermore.

No History Lecture is scheduled.

DECEMBER

No events are scheduled. Duarte Garage is closed.



Please Welcome Dori!

Yes, after years of excellent service in the Treasurer's role, Dick Lerche is stepping down and we have a new office holder, also new to the Guild, Dori Campbell (photo is above). Dori comes to us with her CPA and an economics degree and experience as an accountant and treasurer. She has an interest in working with non-profits and understanding their finances. The non-profit finance world is a somewhat unique area and we are delighted to be working with Dori to keep our books accurate and clear. Equally important, Dori has lived in Livermore almost all of her life and is very interested in learning more about our town's history. What a lucky combination for us – ability and interest! Dick and Dori have already met to start the detailed process of transferring knowledge about the Guild's books, so we are looking forward to a smooth transition. If you see Dori around the Guild or about town, please say hi and welcome her! *-By Jeff Kaskey*

Special Exhibit

Chief John Michelis Exhibit

David Abrahams has been digging into our collection and records to assemble an exhibit honoring old time Police Chief Johnny Michelis. David's diligent work not only created an excellent exhibit, but also helps spread the word about the Guild's resources. Current Chief Steve Sweeney announced the opening of the exhibit:

The Livermore Police Department (L.P.D.) is now exhibiting historical memorabilia on the life and career of the late Chief John R. Michelis, who served with the Department from April 1931 until June 1972. He is the longest serving police officer in L.P.D. history. Most of the material on display is on loan from the Livermore Heritage Guild. The idea for the display came from the L.P.D. Volunteer Historian, David Abrahams. The exhibit is open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, in the Police Department lobby at 1110 S. Livermore Avenue. (Part of the exhibit is depicted below.)



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The Livermore Heritage Guild newsletter is published six times per year. Contact the newsletter editor with comments or suggestions for articles.

Mysterious Brass Object in LHG Collection: What Is It?

We have been digging into the corners of our collection storage and found an item we simply can not identify. We think that some of you might be able to help us out, so we have included two pictures here (below & right) and will collect more of them on our website. The item featured here is a small brass mechanism that seems commercially made, but a little crudely finished. When the brass wingnut is loose, the two curved plates can move up and down. They are geared at the center, so they always move in unison. There are no mounting threads into the cast base. Any ideas?



If describing, identifying and cataloging historic objects is of interest to you and you can volunteer a little time, we could really use your help cataloging our collection and getting it into our computer database so it is available to visitors and researchers. Drop by the History Center or send us an e-mail (lhg@lhg.org) and tell us of your interest, and we'll teach you a little about museum cataloging and show you how you can help. -By Jeff Kaskey



A note from membership chair, Janet Von Toussaint:
Just a gentle reminder to check the expiration date on your newsletter label and renew your membership if necessary. I encourage you to keep your membership current. Exciting things are always happening at the Guild and we wouldn't want you to miss a single one!

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