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## AMERICAN HOME



### AMERIŠKA DOMOVINA

SLOVENIAN MORNING NEWSPAPER

Serving in Ohio and nationwide over 150,000 American Slovenians

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50c

OKINAWA 1945



Henry Zupancic, (arrow) back, left, with a captured Japanese flag taken in Okinawa, 1945.

## Army travels of Henry Zupancic

Serving with the 77th Infantry Division  
in the South Pacific During World War II

### December, 1942

10 Physical examination and inducted at W. 6th St., Cleveland, Ohio

17 Left Cleveland at 1 p.m. at Pennsy Depot, W. 9th St.

17 Arrived at Ft. Hayes, Columbus, Ohio at 8:30 p.m.

26 Left Ft. Hayes

28 Arrived at Ft. Jackson vicinity of Columbia, South Carolina.

Basic Training

### February, 1943

20 Left Ft. Jackson, South Carolina

23 Arrived at Louisiana Maneuver Area, Camp Polk vic. of Leesville, La.

(Maneuvers on infantry tactics)

### April

25 Left Louisiana Maneuver area

29 Arrived at Camp Hyder, Arizona, 120 miles west of Phoenix.

(Desert maneuvers)

### October

3 Left Camp Hyder, Arizona

8 Arrived at Fredericks-

burg, Virginia

(Mountain Maneuvers vic. of Elkins, W. Vir.)

28 Left Elkins, West Vir.)

29 Arrived at Indiantown Gap, Pa., vic. of Harrisburg.

### November

14 to 29 Fifteen day furlough

29 Arrived at Camp Pickett, Virginia, vic. of Blackstone.

### December

14 Left Camp Pickett, VA

14 Arrived at Camp Bradford, U.S. Navy, vic. of Norfolk, Virginia

### January, 1944

1 Amphibious Maneuvers aboard the U.S.S. Fremont in the Chesapeake Bay.

6 Returned to Camp Pickett, Virginia

### March

11 Left Camp Pickett, VA via railroad

16 Arrived at Camp Stoneman, Calif., vic. of Pittsburg, Calif.

23 Departed from the United States

30 Arrived at Oahu, Hawaii: Ft. Hase, vic. of

Honolulu, U.S.S. Fairland (Jungle warfare training)

### July

7 Left Oahu on the U.S.S. Sheridan, Pa. 50

23 Arrived at Agat, Guam (Combat)

### November, 1944

2 Left Guam on U.S.S. Leon APA 48

15 Arrived at Manus Island (Admiralty Is.)

17 Left Manus Is.

23 Arrived on Leyte Is., Philippines at Tarragona, Leyte Gulf.

(Combat)

### December

8 Left Leyte Gulf on LCI U.S.S. Haba Haba

9 Arrived at Ipil, Leyte near Ormoc

(Combat)

### January, 1945

30 Left Ipil, Leyte on LSM No. 39

31 Arrived at Tarragona, Leyte Gulf.

### March

7 Boarded the U.S.S. La Grange, PA 124

(Continued on page 2)



## Okinawa Invasion Began on Easter

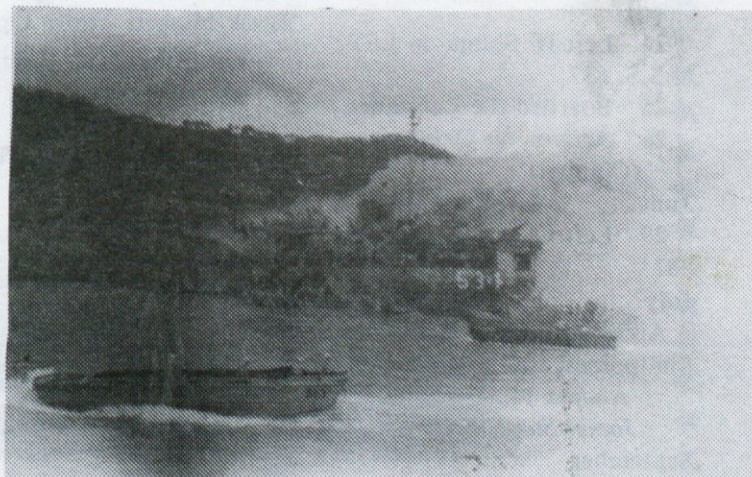
by TONY GRDINA

After the three month operation at Okinawa which began with the invasion of the island on Easter Sunday, April 1st, 50 years ago in 1945, we set sail for Leyte Bay in the Philippine Islands where we arrived on July 4th.

We were sent there for R & R (rest and recreation) and also to replace our rocket launchers with newer models with greater capacity. According to information at that time we were to prepare for the November 1st invasion of Japan. Fortunately, we were all spared that hazardous task by the dropping of the two Atomic bombs.

Having just completed with the battle of Okinawa and the Japanese suicide pilot Kamikazes we knew we would be in for a very rough time with the invasion of Japan. The two bombs saved many thousand lives.

The LCI National reunion I attended in San Diego at the end of April of this year stressed they are looking for former LCI sailors to join its organization. Information can be obtained by contacting me: Tony Grdina, 16711 Pearldale Ave., Cleveland, OH 44135-4433.



LST 534 on fire after being hit on the starboard side by a Kamikazi. The LST has settled in shallow water. My ship, the LCI(R) 648 went alongside to help fight the blaze. Most of our crew, including myself, went aboard to help fight the fire. This occurred on June 21, 1945.

## AMERIŠKA DOMOVINA

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AMERIŠKA DOMOVINA (USPS 024100)

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## Army Travelogue

(Continued from page 1)



13 Left Leyte Gulf  
14 Arrived at San Pedro Bay, Leyte, Invasion dry run for Ryukyus Is.  
15 Another dry run  
27 Invaded Tokashiko Is. in the Kerama Retto Group. Did not participate — no reinforcements needed.

**April**  
16 Invaded IE Shimna in the Ryukyus Group. (Combat)  
(Ernie Pyle killed by a sniper)  
24 Left IE Shima on LST U.S.S. 837  
25 Boarded the LaGrange  
26 Arrived on Okinawa (Combat)

**June**  
29 Left Okinawa on LST 687

**July**  
Arrived on Cebu Is. on the Philippines, south of Danao  
**August 14, 1945 —**  
**Japan Surrenders —**

**September**  
23 Boarded U.S.S. Eastland, PA 163

**October**  
4 Arrived on Hokkaido, Japan city of Hokodate

**November**  
7 Left Hokodate on the Jap transport FKEI-FUKU Maru

7 Arrived at Amori, Honshu. Traveled by Japanese railroad Sendai, Haranomach, Yotsukura, Taira, Tomobe, Matsudo.  
8 Arrived at Zama, Honshu, 4th Repl. Depot.  
19 Left Zama, at 7 a.m. Arrived at Yokohama at 10:20 a.m.  
Boarded the U.S.S. Sea Sturgeon at 3:30 p.m.  
20 Left Yokohama  
27 Crossed date line.

### December

5 Arrived at San Pedro, Calif, 7:20 a.m.  
6 Left Camp Anza, Calif.  
10—Arrived at Camp Atterbury, Indiana  
12 **DISCHARGED** at 10:13 p.m. Central Standard Time at Camp Atterbury.

### FLASHBACK December 12, 1947

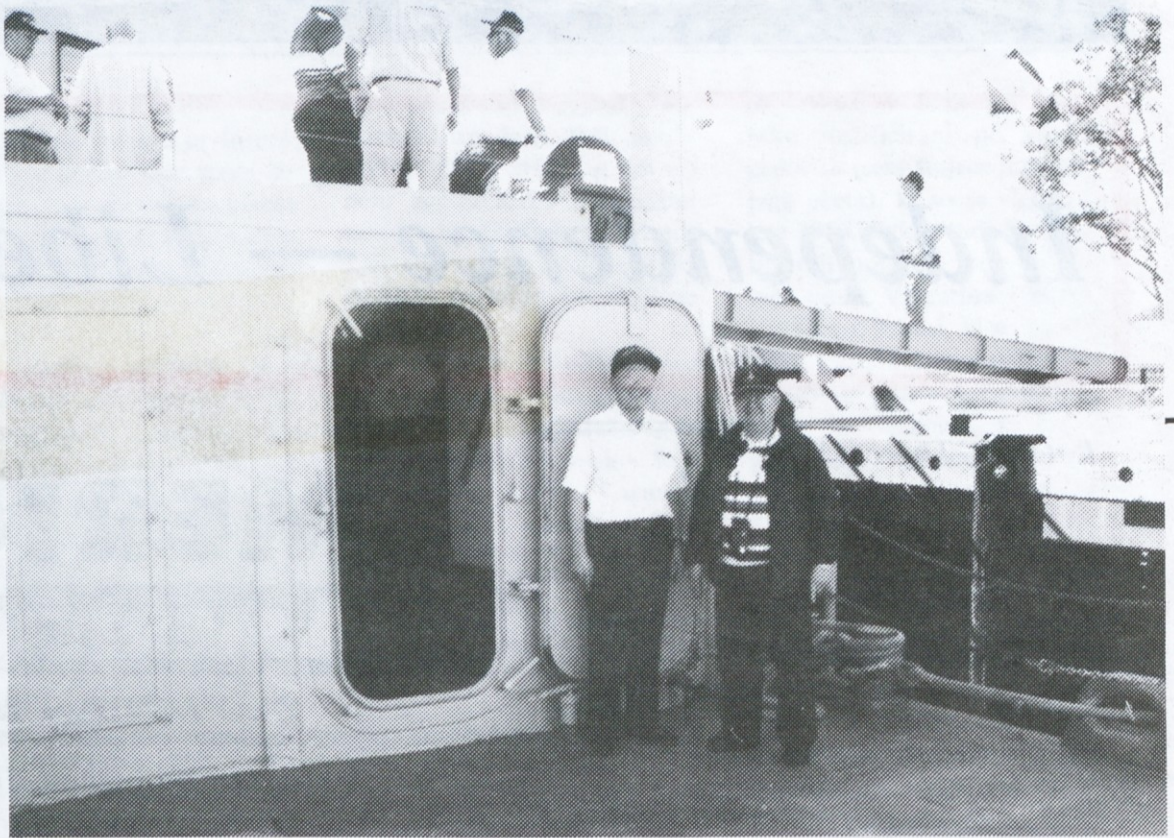
#### Gloomy Germans

Third Winter of Peace:  
There's Even Less Fuel  
And Food for This Year

Black Markets Thrive Openly  
On \$160-a-Ton Coal and  
\$28-a-Pound Butter

Average Wage: \$8 a Week

BY JOSEPH E. EVANS  
Staff Correspondent of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL  
BERLIN—Germans find things are getting tougher all the time in this third winter of peace.  
One man who survived last year's gruesome winter says he wishes now he hadn't. Germans are weaker and less able to resist cold, hunger and disease. And they are far poorer; they can't supplement official food and fuel rations with black-market purchases so easily as last year.  
"This isn't living; it's vegetating," complains a 47-year volcanizing worker. "Everything is a problem, and the problems begin as soon as you get up and start to dress. You break a shoelace; new ones aren't to be had except on the black market for 4 Reichsmarks (40 cents). You have to ask yourself if you can afford it.



Tony Grdina, left, and Bob Mills reminisce their gallant years aboard an LCI in the Pacific during the Second World War.

## Grdina, Mills board a LCI

During the week of April 24-28, my wife, Betty, and I attended the "LCI" National Reunion in San Diego, California. Also in attendance were Marcie and Bob Mills of Cleveland.

David Stadtner and his wife, Rose, came from San Francisco. David and I had served together on the same ship LCI(R) 648. When we all saw the LCI(L) 1091 tied up at the dock, it brought back a lot of memories.

It was hard for our wives to

realize we had served on a ship that was so small. We said they must have shrunk it. Betty remarked it was unbelievable that there were 60 sailors serving on board that tiny ship.

However, our ship was converted to a rocket launching vehicle so we had additional men to assemble the rockets and to load them in the launchers. Also, we had a 40mm. gun installed on the bow that replaced a 20mm. gun which necessitated additional

handlers for the ammunition. We were also the flagship of Group 47 which meant an additional 15 sailors.

The compartments where the troops were normally carried, housed over 700 5-inch shells and rocket motors. About 600 rounds were fired during the invasion of Okinawa on Easter Sunday, April 1st 1945. We were there for the entire three months of the Okinawa operation.

—Tony Grdina

## Marie Dye recalls war end

What could I say during the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II? I recall it so vividly — my girl friend Anna was the first one to call me and give me the news. She had lost her brother Cyril in the Italian front battles.

My relatives who were still there — aunts and uncles, etc., suffered much. We tried to send them many packages through the Red Cross — which graciously handled them. We were grateful that we could help at least a little in this way, as my relatives there (on both sides of the family) suffered greatly.

My Uncle John (Dad's brother) was even put up in front of a firing squad. By some miracle — because his wife spoke several languages — he was spared at the last second. I don't exactly understand how it happened.

Most of my relatives died soon after the end of the war since all that suffering and starvation broke their health.

Though I was a child during the war — I felt my childhood escaped me — as I was a child with sympathetic feelings towards the suffering and I matured early. I cried so much

I enjoy hearing about others who came to the U.S.A. — as did my parents. The events at St. Vitus interest me, as my

half-brother Victor, was raised and educated there. I was born in Detroit. I still live in the same house. Though the neighborhood has changed, I love it here — and will not move.

My parents are both gone — my mother Kristina (nee Drolle) and my Dad Matko. Mom passed away in 1951: My Dad in 1976. My half-brother

Victor, passed away in 1990... So I am the last one left of the immediate family. I have a sister-in-law, cousins, nieces and nephews — but we do not get together as I'd wish.

On this Memorial Day I will remember all of them — and I want this as a tribute.

Thanks for listening.

Mrs. Marie Bombach Dye  
Detroit, Mich.

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★ **Book Review:**

# ★ **Pilgrim Among the Shadows**

by *Boris Pahor*, *Harcourt Brace & Company*, 182 pages.  
Translated by  
*Michael Biggins*, \$20.00.

Review by  
**Mara Cerar Hull**

This slim book, translated 28 years after it was first published in Slovenia, is a haunting and compelling account of 14 months the author endured in various concentration camps at the end of World War II, from Belsen to Dachau as the Germans abandoned the prisons and moved internees from camp to camp deeper into the Reich in order to escape advancing Allies.

In his visit to the somewhat reconstructed camp in the French Vosges Mountains years later, walking on the terraced steps of the camp, Boris Pahor recalls the days and nights of pain and hunger, the freezing cold and the glimmers of hope. Always hope.

He unflinchingly describes the daily routine of work contingents sent to labor in mines and factories, hasty evacuations from the camps when Allied bombs began to be aimed and hit the prison headquarters, long and inhumane transports, the morning formations and evening roll-calls, the humiliating showers and shavings of hair — all hair, the burning of corpses and execu-

tions of prisoners, the burials.

As a medic at the camp he saw the most emaciated of the prisoners and looks again — and makes the reader also see — the human bodies ravaged by disease, hunger, and brutal conditions of the camps. And always, on journeys to and from the work place, in the barracks, at the infirmary, at meal times, on the last truck leaving the deserted camp, the presence of working ovens and smoke and the smell of burning bodies. But also, throughout the book, there radiates unmitigated and indestructible human energy, courage, and compassion.

The German captors are inhuman in retrospect only, barbaric solely because the reader is made to view the prisoners' human bodies, and spirit captured therein, as seen by this intimate look of the author.

After the end of the war some of the survivors wished for the total destruction of their jailers, but Boris Pahor looks at them through his own so very humanitarian eyes and sees humanity. His field of vision is never narrow or distorted. His self-observation is unflinching.

His experience did not make him bitter or has it in any way paralyzed his life work. Since

1948 he has written eight other books, mostly on the history of the Slovenes. Even his feeling of 'guilt' because he survived while so many had perished, works as a creative force in his life. As a teacher and writer, he counterbalances his past ordeal with that hopeful creativity that makes this book a literary happening.

Five decades after the end of World War II we need this book of a stark and realistic testimony of a wartime ordeal. As we need also The Holocaust Museum, The Wall in Washington, D.C. We need to know, to see, and to remember.

*In her cover letter Mara Cerar Hull writes:*

Boris Pahor is a renowned Slovenian author living in Trieste, who has written and published over eight books since 1947, is the last year's recipient of Presern's prize for literature in Slovenia for his life work, and continues to write and publish in Slovenia, Trieste and neighboring countries.

I have read the book in one evening — and half the night, and become transported by the author's words, so powerfully written, lucid and arresting, as to conjure the very images of the horrors of concentration

camp, the feel of stone and gravel and ashes of human bodies, and at times even the sense of smell, of smoke, of emaciated prisoners.

Yet the book is not a hopeless yard of defeat and death, but a dynamic recounting of a man who had surviv-

ed, had kept the faith, and has become enriched with the experience.



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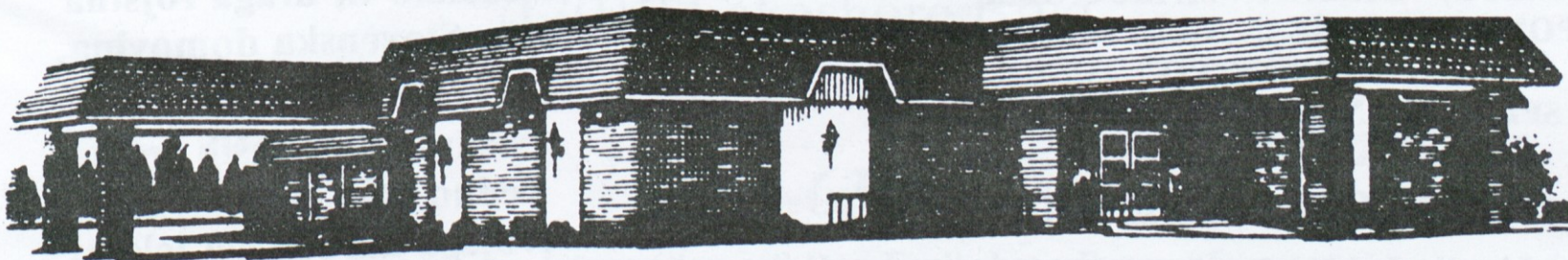


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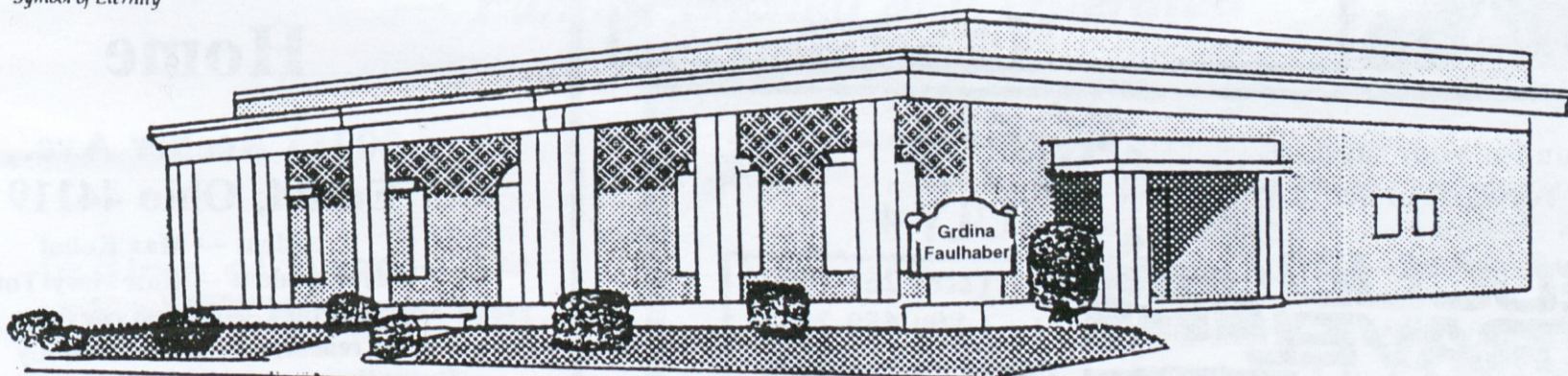


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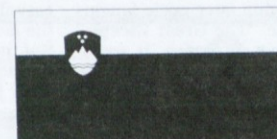
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# Air Force veteran relives dark days of World War II

By JEFF PIORKOWSKI  
Staff Writer

It's almost like another lifetime for Ray Rossman.

It was 50 years ago that Rossman became a free man after being interred at a German prisoner of war camp in Sagan, Poland.

Last month, 72-year-old Rossman returned to that camp, Stalag Luft III, as part of a reunion/celebration.

"We had over 10,000 American officers there," Rossman said. "At the reunion, there were about 150. I didn't know any of them."

But the fact that there were no familiar faces didn't mean Rossman was dreaming. Rossman spent several months of his life there in late 1944 and early 1945 as a prisoner.

It was a camp later made famous in the movie "The Great Escape," starring Steve McQueen. It was a camp where men were executed on

orders from Adolf Hitler when that escape failed.

"I cried a little when I got to the spot where the men were shot," said Rossman, who now lives on Edgecliff Drive. "It brought back a lot of memories for me."

Though Rossman arrived at the camp three months after the would-be escapees were put to death, the story was passed on to those who lived at the camp — a place few people ever expect to find themselves.

It was 2:10 p.m. May 28, 1944 and Ray Rossman, in the famed 100th Bomber Group, was on a mission over Magdeburg, Germany.

The Allied forces had bombed Berlin the day before during daylight, as was their custom. There were 690 casualties on that first run, making the next mission anything but safe.

But the 100th was known for its daring, as well as for its personal vend-

etta against the Luftwaffe ever since German flyers shot at an American plane that had obviously given up.

"In those days, there was still some honor among enemies," Rossman said.

Rossman's plane went down when "a German ME 109 came from 10 o'clock high and shot us down. They shot us from nose to tail and I was hit in the leg. The bombardier, the pilot and myself bailed out, and one guy rode down with the plane.

"As I jumped out of that plane I thought, 'What if the plane isn't hit as bad as I think and I end up a prisoner of war for nothing?'"

Bailing out at 28,000 feet, Rossman remembered that he was taught not to pull the ring on his parachute until the last possible moment, to prevent being shot on the way down. He pulled the ring at 3,000 feet after hitting a speed of 160 miles per hour.

At that speed, and with the small military parachutes issued flyers, injury was almost a certainty. But the bullets in his leg caused the most damage.

"I landed in a corn field outside the city and when I sat up, there was a farmer there with a gun in my hand," Rossman said.

Luckily, he was taken to a military hospital where a German doctor educated in Philadelphia operated on his leg.

"It was real quick service, probably faster than I would have got in the States. The doctor spoke very good English. He removed 11 pieces of shrapnel from my leg.

"The first thing he said to me was, 'You know, it would be much easier to amputate the leg.' He was giving me the business. After the operation, he told me his fee would be my flying boots, which all Germans loved, my wristwatch, and a fountain pen which I, for some reason, had in my shirt pocket."

Things took a darker turn afterward. With other newly captured prisoners of war, Rossman was taken to an old castle in Frankfurt for interrogation. The experiences of an Englishman, who survived the Great Escape, helped him.

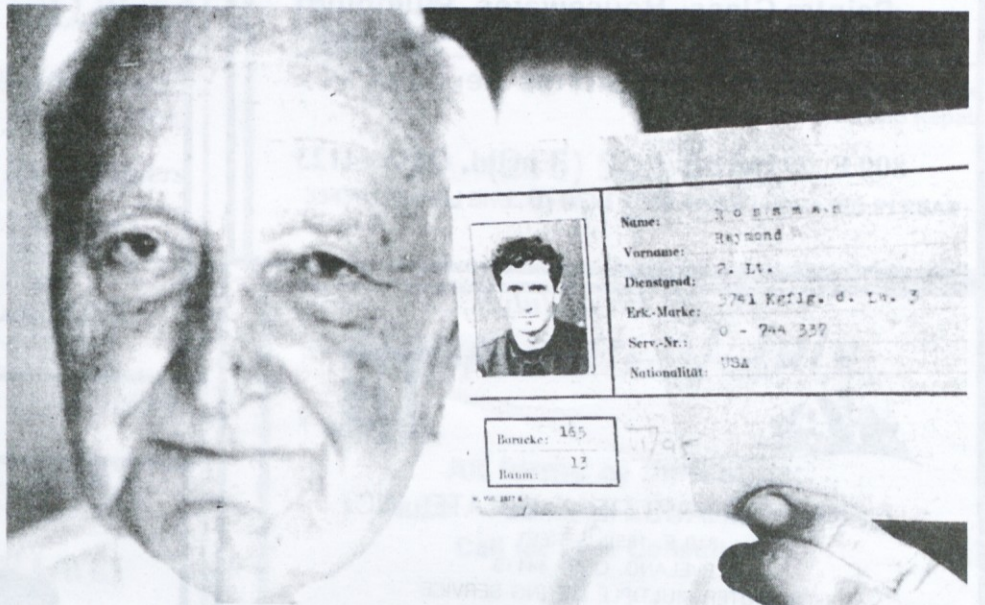
"This Englishman came to our air base in England after escaping and told us just what the Germans would do to us when they interrogated us. Of course, we were only supposed to give our name, rank and serial number.

"First, a sergeant interviewed you. He was wearing a black turtleneck and a gold tooth and spoke with a phony English accent. He tried to get information by interrogating me four times. Then, he told me that he would have me shot in the morning if I didn't cooperate. This is just what we were told they would do, so I didn't say anything.

"I got thrown into the dungeon the night before I was supposed to be shot. Early the next morning, they even removed someone from a cell next to me who was screaming to make it look like they were taking him to be shot. Luckily, we were told the right information by the Englishman."

To scare prisoners even more, Rossman said Germans meticulously collected American newspapers and kept copies of service information. As a result, the Germans were able to make some men feel insecure by knowing everything about them.

In Rossman's case, they were able to tell him that he grew up on East



Ray Rossman holds his prisoner camp identification card. Rossman was a prisoner of war at Stalag Luft III in Poland until he escaped just before the end of World War II.

72nd Street, that he graduated from East High School, and that he was studying engineering at Case University when he entered the Army Flying Corps in January 1942.

While being transported to a prison camp, Rossman and the other prisoners were taken by train past the infamous Dachau concentration camp.

At Stalag Luft III, guards were in their 60s and rules weren't extremely formal.

"They allowed us to pretty much run ourselves," he said. "Our American senior officer was the commandant. There were four or five guards who would wander around the camp."

"A German commandant would come to the camp twice a day for roll call at 9 a.m. and five o'clock in the afternoon and we all had to be there for that. Other than that, they pretty much left us on our own."

"There was a line drawn around the camp and a barbed wire fence beyond that. We were told we couldn't cross that line or they would shoot."

Rossman said prisoners kept busy by reading books, playing cards and exercising. Much like the old TV series, "Hogan's Heroes," prisoners pulled some tricks on their captors.

"Hogan's Heroes" was a farce, but a lot of it was very true," Rossman said. "Like them, we put together a radio and got all the latest news from England."

"We would put it together in the wash house, then take it apart when we were done using it. Each guy would carry a part back to his barracks with him. That way, the Germans could never find a radio. Because a lot of us were engineering students, we could put together a radio."

Rossman said the prisoners also kept a map of Allied troop advances based on information they got from England.

"One of the guards, an old guy who was a professor and who was mad because he wasn't made an officer by the Germans, would even come in and help me move pins on the map. He also taught me a lot of German. That helped me when I escaped," said Rossman, who studied German in high school.

"When they came up with Sgt. Schultz on 'Hogan's Heroes,' they had to have got him from a sergeant we had. He was just like Schultz."

Rossman said after the Great Escape, no one dared to tunnel to freedom again. But an opportunity presented itself when the tide turned against the Germans in 1945 and defeat was on the horizon.

To protect himself, Hitler had prisoners moved near his hideaway at Berchtagarten to be used as a bargaining chip. Hitler figured that Allied troops would not bomb his camp if Allied prisoners surrounded him.

Prisoners from Stalag Luft III were forced to make the 100-mile trek by foot and by rail to Berchtagarten.

"That was probably the hardest part about being a prisoner — when they loaded us on that train like cattle, just like you see in those movies about the concentration camps. We had to stand and take turns lying down we were so crowded in. Guys

had dysentery and there was (excrement) everywhere."

Rossman also became a father of five children. Other than the time when he took control of a friend's plane, he has not flown since 1944. His wife, Esther, died of cancer two years ago.

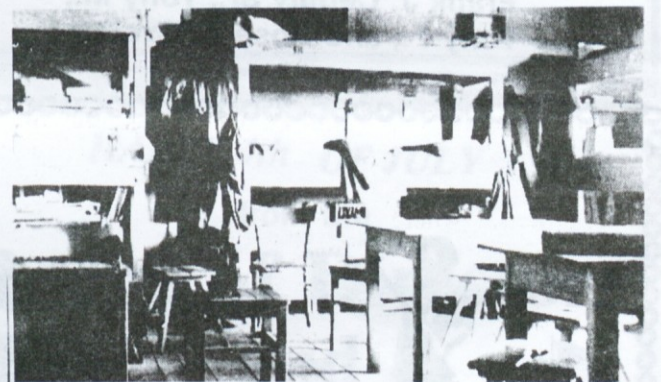
Today, he works as a consultant for Liberty State Bank in Twinsburg in what he calls his "final hurrah" in business and travels around the world, often accompanied by his daughters.

It's a long way from Euclid to Sagan, Poland, but that experience clearly defined the rest of Ray Rossman's life as an American.

It is men like Rossman, and the thousands who were unable to make the Sagan reunion that Americans remember on Memorial Day.



For his efforts during World War II, Ray Rossman was awarded the Purple Heart (left), the Prisoner of War Medal and the Air Medal. Also pictured are souvenirs from his confinement in Stalag Luft III, including a scrapbook he received shortly after the war.



This is what the barracks looked like at Stalag Luft III when Euclid's Ray Rossman was a prisoner of war there in 1944-45.

FLASHBACK October 25, 1945

Life in France

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BY CHARLES R. HARGROVE  
Staff Correspondent of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL  
PARIS—Any visitor to France from overseas these days soon perceives there is no plenty in this once plentiful land. The mere problem of finding lodging and food is the first one he encounters. Few well-known hotels are operating for civilians and others just returning to life cannot provide meals.

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# The Miracle of Vetrinje

*Translated from the Slovenian of an article from the newspaper "SLOVENEK" dated March 29, 1995 published in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Translator: Lija Zebot.*

The following is an interview with **JOHN CORSELLIS**, a Canadian writer and lawyer, about his experiences at the end of World War II as a humanitarian social worker in the refugee camps particularly at the Slovenian refugee camp at Vetrinje in southern Austria. Mr. Corsellis was interviewed after a recent speech he made at the University of Ljubljana.

## The Miracle of Vetrinje by MARJETA ŠIMUNIČ

John Corsellis is a member of the Quaker religion, a pacifist group which believes in God's direct inspiration on the faithful. Quakers have no clergy, church rites, nor sacraments. They are known for their world-wide humanitarian work, especially at the end of both World Wars.

During World War II Mr. Corsellis served in the British army as an unarmed officer. In 1945 to 1947, he was appointed to work among the Slovenian refugees in the camp at Vetrinje in southern Austria. Later he helped to organize two other Slovenian refugee camps in Spittal and Lienz. Vetrinje is a village on the Austrian side of the Slovenian border, where some 20,000 Slovenians took refuge in May of 1945 to escape Tito's army of Partisans. Among those Slovenians were about 12,000 Homeguards who were anti-communist defenders against the atrocities of Tito's soldiers.

As an eye witness to the events of May 19 to 31, 1945, Mr. Corsellis has a tragic story to tell. Tito demanded the repatriation of the Slovenian Homeguards, a certain death sentence to those doomed men who were bitter foes of the communists who now had control of Slovenia. Since Vetrinje was under the protection of the British Army, it was the British officials who ordered the return of the Slovenian Homeguards to Slovenia. The following is the account of Mr. Corsellis:

I can assert to you that these were the most degrading weeks and the most wicked acts of the British war operations.

The politicians had argued that this was exclusively an Army matter. The truth is, that the responsibility lay on both sides. The matter in question was a conscious knowledge of all possible consequences, an enormous organized treason, done only to please Stalin and Tito.

The 1945 massacre of the Homeguards, in my estima-

tion 9,000 to 11,000 men, involved the betrayal, brutal torture, and killing of them by Tito's men once the Homeguards were forced to return to Slovenia. It is a horrible crime and an historical aberration. The English ordered them into the hands of Tito with the lie that they were being sent off safely to Italy. I also witnessed the indignation of several British officers and soldiers who had watched with an utmost disgust at what was happening to the Slovenian anti-communists and how some refused to obey the orders.

I also remember the words of Major Johnson, Chief of the Army Administration for Displaced Persons: "We are not going to send back the Slovenian civilians. Do not tell me what is happening in Yugoslavia. We know what is happening there."

After the escape of a few Homeguards, the truth started to be known. The intervention of the Red Cross, numerous English humanitarian organizations, and the Slovenian Dr. Mersol prevented the repatriation of more than 6,000 Slovenian civilians from Vetrinje to Slovenia and prison and even death under the communists.

I want to point out that working among these Slovenians for 3 years was my privileged experience. They demonstrated an unusual spiritual firmness, adaptability, and courage. The quality and strength of their belief in their religion was as plain and direct as that of the 17th century Quakers who also were subjected to severe persecution.

A great number of Slovenian priests offered emotional support and help to those who had suffered the loss of family and or friends in the massacre of the Slovenian Homeguards.

All who served among the Slovenian refugees could not help admiring their courage, hardiness, and self-sacrifice. The conditions in the refugee camp were terrible. The weather was horrible. The rain prevailed. But the Slovenians went to church in their Sunday best. Men wore white, pressed shirts with ties. Women wore clean dresses. It was unbelievable, a wonder to me. How could they succeed in doing that under the conditions of a refugee camp?

Shall I point out the refugees' strong national identity and love of their language and culture despite centuries of rule by the Austrian Empire? The Slovenians were united by a group of born leaders whose determination and national pride served as an example to them all.

Hundreds of refugee children were provided with

schools. Within 8 weeks of the start of the camp, school instruction was organized despite the unenviable conditions. Qualified teachers were found for levels from kindergarten through high school the educational program of the classical high school especially impressed the Allied Educational Commission.

Their care for health and cleanliness were at a high level. Fourteen births were recorded and under these tough conditions only one newborn died. There were no discipline cases. A general awareness and respect for law and order, as well as good leadership enabled the Slovenians to take over the running of their own camps successfully.

How could these Slovenian refugees, who had under the most impossible life conditions shown such great care for the preservation of their national identity and culture, how could these Slovenians be called national traitors? May I make it more clear by the following proof: The Slovenian schools in the refugee camps were in great need of books. A few brave Slovenians simply trespassed the border into Slovenia in order to smuggle school books to the refugee camp schools. They risked their lives for this purpose. In one instance, the Yugoslav authorities arrested a sister of one of the refugees after they discovered that he had done this.

When Tito and his communists took over power in Yugoslavia in May, 1945, the majority of Slovenians chose to stay. They had to choose between joining with the Communist regime or enduring it. This lasted for nearly 50 years.

Several thousand Slovenians chose not to stay. Their story should also be told. They are part of Slovenia and of Slovenian history.

Thanks to Ernie Ryavec of Santa Monica, Calif. for submitting this article.



Tony Grdina, right, holds a captured Japanese flag.

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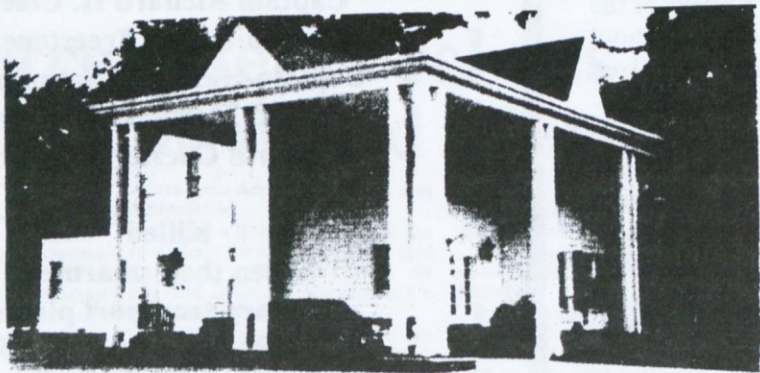
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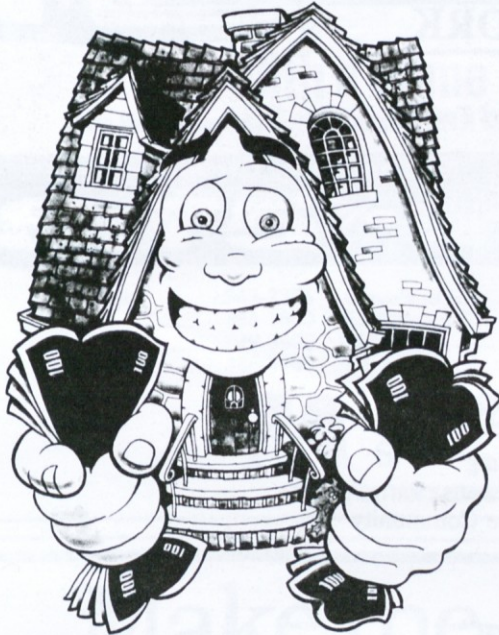
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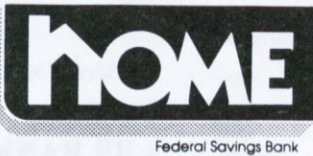


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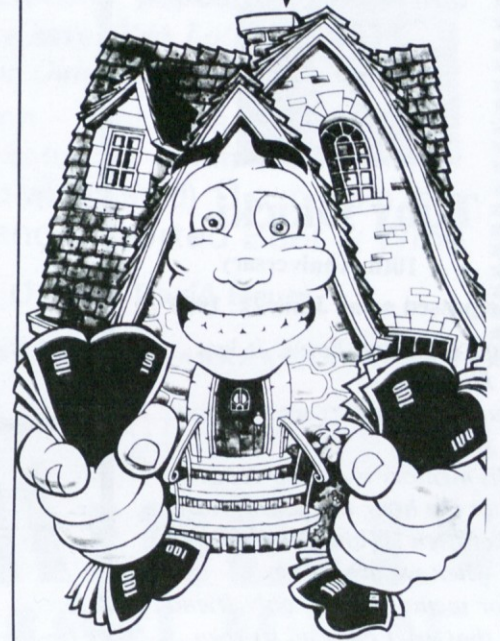


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At 9:30 a.m. on October 26, 1942, the USS President Coolidge, a 654-foot luxury liner conscripted for war duties, accidentally steamed into an American minefield while heading out of Luganville port, in the New Hebrides

(now Vanuatu), with 5,440 troops bound for Guadalcanal.

The ship hit one mine, then backed into another, and the captain ran it toward shore and ordered everyone overboard. At 10:55 a.m., the Coolidge went down on a beachside dropoff, its bow 70 feet below the waves and its stern at a depth of 240 feet.

The largest single shipwreck accessible to divers in the world, the Coolidge is an underwater metropolis of marine life, with hundreds of species of invertebrates and fish calling it home, including a 600-pound grouper named Boris, who mugs at divers for handouts of fish.

Only about a mile down the beach from the Coolidge, at a

place dubbed Million Dollar Point, rests one of the great piles of submerged junk in the sea. Here, departing Americans deep-sixth (purposely sunk) bulldozers, trucks, tractors, cranes and other war-construction hardware. It's a gloomy pile. Strangely, nothing much grows on it, although flat, brown-camouflaged

crocodile fish find its mangled masses of steel hulks inviting.



Tony Grdina

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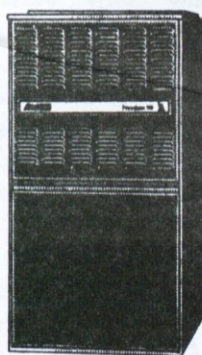
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# Tony Sustarsic saw action in WWII as a Tank Commander

Tony Sustarsic, former Mayor of Euclid, Ohio, grew up on Recher Avenue, near the Slovenian Home. He went to Roosevelt School and was graduated from Euclid Central after which he attended Dyke College majoring in Business Administration.

He was employed by the General Electric Cleveland Wire Works plant and for 23 years worked for Frank A. Thomas & Associates as a Draftsman. He also did Public Relations work which instilled in him a keen knowledge of engineering and conditions in Euclid and the surrounding areas which he used during his years of service as a Councilman, Administrator and then Mayor of the City of Euclid.

Tony further served his city and country by enlisting in the Army where he served during World War II as a Tank Commander, 3rd Armored Division in the European Theater. It was during the Battle of the Bulge where he received the Purple Heart for severe injuries.

Tony Sustarsic lost his right leg in the battle. He was a 19-year-old PFC with the 1st Army's 33rd armored regiment and part of Col. Hogan's Famous 400.

They were trapped behind enemy lines during the battle.

"The tank regiment I was in penetrated behind enemy lines," said Sustarsic. "That's when I got wounded in the arm by a sniper. We were called forward observers, trying to locate enemy fire. Then the artillery would back us up."

On January 15, Sustarsic was in a tank knocked out by enemy fire.

"The other men and I took cover in a livestock shelter. It was blown out by an 88mm shell. I was hit by shrapnel and concrete in 11 places and lost my leg, but they were able to save my left leg," he recalled.

"I was conscious the whole time. I knew I was alive, because I didn't have a tag on my toe, like the others around me who had passed on.

"I thank God that I survived. I almost drowned when we landed at Omaha Beach in the tide. Anyone who was in the Battle of the Bulge is very fortunate to have survived and to be around to talk about it."

Despite his handicap resulting from these injuries, Tony came home with the desire to serve his community.

He was instrumental in organizing the Euclid Veterans Club where he served as president and is a member of the Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion, Post 343. He has served on the Euclid Safety Council, Fireman's Pension Board, Euclid YMCA, Mary Mavec School, Director of St. Clair Savings, and the Euclid General Hospital Association. He is a member of St.



Tony Sustarsic on June 28, 1944 in Omaha, France.



Buddy Krall, left, with Tony Sustarsic in England before invasion of Europe in 1943.

Williams Parish and the Knights of Columbus. In his spare time he enjoys playing golf and is a football fan.

During his military service in the European Theater of Operations, he played on the Armed Forces football team while stationed in England. His interest in sports and youth was a foundation for his being a booster for Euclid High, Forest Park Junior High, St. Joseph's and St. William's Schools.

He lives on East 272nd Street with his wife, Helen. They have two children, Judy and Jerry, who is now a candidate for the position of Mayor of the City of Euclid.

Tony Sustarsic's parents, Mama Mary or Marija Breznikar was born in 1892 in the small village of St. Rupert in the Slovenian province of Dolensko.

Tony's father, Joseph Sustarsic, was born in 1886 in the historical town of

Zuzemberk also in the Province of Dolensko, Slovenia.

They both came to the United States as immigrants to the new world before World War I in their early youth.

They met in 1908 in Sheboygan, Wisconsin and married there. Tony's father, Joseph Sustarsic, worked in the coal mines of Pennsylvania and later he and his wife moved to Euclid, Ohio, where they lived with their family the rest of their lives.

Mr. Joseph Sustarsic passed away in 1935 at the early age of 49. He left a large family to his wife, Mary, the task of raising the children. Mama worked to support the large family and did so without complaining.

The Sustarsic family were very close-knit and proud to be Slovenian.

Cecilia V. Dolgan, *News-Herald Correspondent*, also contributed to this article.

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**DID YOU KNOW**

**Slovenia...**

Joseph Zelle

\*\*\*\*\*

Another article by Ivo Zhajdela describes how the Partisans destroyed the Postojna Cave, April 23, 1944. He points out that the celebration of the Day of Resistance was ironic, since the Cave was Slovenian territory and the explosion caused irreparable damage to the natural wonder. He also describes how five members of the Vekar family were savagely butchered on March 7, 1944. A cenotaph was erected by Ivan Vekar, now living in Australia. Slavko Vekar, one time Partisan, wrote the inscription, "Matija Vekar, 73 years old, killed by Partisan traitors". So reports Zhajdela.

Sonja Adam, widow of one of the heroes of the 1991 War of Independence, christened one of the new Bell 412 ER helicopters delivered to the defense department. The helicopter is the latest model in the world.

Renaming of streets and towns and villages goes on in liberated Slovenia. Many of the revolution's heroes are being scheduled with replacement of the original or even new more appropriate names for these times. Even some statues are going to be removed and put into the Museum of the Revolution. So passes the fleeting fame of unloved "heroes"!

In Ljubljana the Chapel of St. Jurij (George) has once again a bell. It was blessed by Archbishop Alojzij Shushtar.

Deep-sea diver and cave explorer, Rado Pristov, drowned in Divje Jezero, while exploring underwater. Special experts and specialized deep-sea rescue equipment came from Switzerland. However before they began operations, Tomo Vrhovec and a crew found the body 300 feet below the surface. Vrhovec brought the body up to a depth of 220 feet. Rescue operations then proceeded to recover Pristov.

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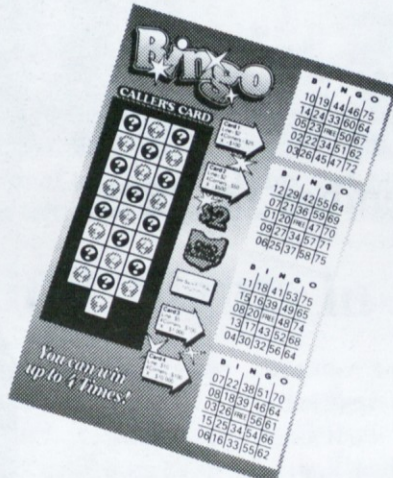
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**Margie Kamber**

**Died June 25, 1940**  
Darling Daughter

Gone is the face we loved so dear,  
Silent the voice we loved to hear.  
Too far away for sight or speech.  
But not too far for thoughts to reach.

Loving memories never die,  
As years roll on and days pass by.  
Deep in our hearts memories are kept,  
Of those we loved and will never forget.



**Joseph Kamber**

**Died Nov. 22, 1976**  
To my loving husband

A million times I've needed you,  
A million times I've cried  
If love alone could have saved you,  
You never would have died.  
In life I've loved you dearly  
In death I love you still  
In my heart you hold a place  
That no one else can fill.  
It broke my heart to lose you,  
But you did not go alone  
For part of me went with you  
The day God took you home.

Sadly missed by  
Julia Kamber — wife and mother  
Irene Pasalacqua — daughter - John — Stepson  
13 grandchildren — 15 great-grandchildren  
Family in Cleveland and Europe



**Frank M. Penko**

**Died Jan. 9, 1974**  
To My Loving Son

We often think of the days gone by,  
When we were all together;  
A shadow o'er our life is cast,  
A loved one gone forever.

Within our store of memories  
You hold a place apart,  
For no one else can ever be  
More cherished in our hearts.

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