

Just Saying.....

By Doris Elmore

I was "Just Saying" to a friend how proud I am of the members of the Atwood Police Department, Atwood Fire Protection District, Douglas County Search and Rescue, Douglas & Piatt County Sheriffs' Departments and other volunteers who braved the bitter cold to search for a missing Atwood youth on Sunday, Jan. 27. According to the news article the youth was not wearing clothing appropriate for the cold temperatures and the sooner they found him the better.

Thanks to everyone who assisted the youth was later found, not injured.

I talked with one of the members of the fire protection district this morning and he said he thought he had enough clothes on to keep warm, but said it was still bitter cold. These people sacrificed their lives for several hours to save another. Thank you all for your unselfish dedication to help others.

My nephew, Kent Macklin in Decatur was "Just Saying" to me yesterday that he was taking part in the memorial service for "The Four Chaplains" on Sunday, Feb. 3 at the American Legion Castle Williams Post 105 in Decatur. Kent is presently commander of this post. I was totally unaware of this story and memorial service and it intrigued me.

I will try to give you the Reader's Digest version of this memorial foundation in case you have never heard of it. According to an article on the Internet, "It was the evening of Feb. 2, 1943, and the U.S.A.T. Dorchester was crowded to capacity, carrying 902 service men, merchant seamen and civilian workers. Once a luxury coastal liner, the 5,649-ton vessel had been converted into an Army transport ship. The Dorchester, one of three ships in the SG-19 convoy, was moving steadily across the icy waters from Newfoundland toward an American base in Greenland. SG-19 was escorted by Coast Guard Cutters Tampa, Escanaba and Comanche.

Hans J. Danielsen, the

ship's captain, was concerned and cautious. Earlier the Tampa had detected a submarine with its sonar. Danielsen knew he was in dangerous waters even before he got the alarming information. German U-boats were constantly prowling these vital sea lanes, and several ships had already been blasted and sunk.

The Dorchester was now only 150 miles from its destination, but the captain ordered the men to sleep in their clothing and keep life jackets on. Many soldiers sleeping deep in the ship's hold disregarded the order because of the engine's heat. Others ignored it because the life jackets were uncomfortable.

At 12:55 a.m. on Feb. 3, a periscope broke the chilly Atlantic waters. Through the cross hairs, an officer aboard the German submarine U-233 spotted the Dorchester. The U-233 approached the convoy on the surface, and after identifying and targeting the ship, he gave orders to fire the torpedoes, a fan of three were fired. The one that hit was decisive—and deadly—striking the starboard side, amid ship, far below the water line.

Captain Danielsen, alerted that the Dorchester was taking water rapidly and sinking, gave the order to abandon ship. In less than 20 minutes, the Dorchester would slip beneath the Atlantic's icy waters. Tragically, the hit had knocked out power and radio contact with the three escort ships. The CGC Comanche, however, saw the flash of the explosion. It responded and then rescued 97 survivors. The CGC Escanaba circled the Dorchester, rescuing an additional 132 survivors. The third cutter, CGC Tampa continued on, escorting the remaining two ships.

Panic and chaos had set in on the Dorchester, the blast had killed scores of men, and many more were seriously wounded. Others, stunned by the explosion, were groping in the darkness. Those sleeping without clothing rushed topside where they were confronted

first by a blast of icy Arctic air and then by the knowledge that death awaited.

Through the pandemonium, according to those present, four Army chaplains brought hope in despair and light in darkness. Those chaplains were Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist, Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish, Lt. John P. Washington, Roman Catholic; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, Dutch Reformed. Quickly and quietly, the four chaplains spread out among the soldiers. There they tried to calm the frightened, tend the wounded and guide the disoriented toward safety.

"Witnesses of that terrible night remember hearing the four men offer prayers for the dying and encouragement for those who would live," says Wyatt R. Fox, son of Reverend Fox.

The article went on to say that one witness, Private William B. Bednar, found himself floating in oil-smear water surrounded by dead bodies and debris. "I could hear men crying, pleading, praying," Bednar recalls, "I could also hear the chaplains preaching courage. Their voices were the only thing that kept me going."

Another sailor tried to re-enter his cabin but Rabbi Goode stopped him. The sailor was concerned about the cold Arctic air and explained he had forgotten his gloves. The Rabbi responded that he had two pair of gloves and gave the petty officer his own gloves. In retrospect, the officer realized that the Rabbi was not conveniently carrying two pairs of gloves, and that the Rabbi had decided not to leave the Dorchester.

By this time, most of the men were topside, and the chaplains opened a storage locker and began distributing life jackets. It was then that Engineer Grady Clark witnessed an astonishing sight. When there were no more lifejackets in the stor-

age room, the chaplains removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men. "It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven" said John Ladd, another survivor who saw the chaplains' selfless act.

Ladd's response is understandable. The altruistic action of the four chaplains constitutes one of the purest spiritual and ethical acts a person can make. When giving their life jackets, Rabbi Goode did not call out for a Jew; Father Washington did not call out for a Catholic; nor did the Reverends Fox and Poling call out for a Protestant. They simply gave their life jackets to the next man in line.

As the story continues, as the ship went down, survivors in nearby rafts could see the four chaplains—arms linked and braced against the slanting deck. Their voices could also be heard offering prayers.

Of the 902 men aboard the U.S.A.T. Dorchester, 672 died, leaving 230 survivors. When the news reached American shores, the nation was stunned by magnitude of the tragedy and heroic conduct of the four chaplains. "Valor is a gift," Carl Sandburg once said. "Those having it never know for sure whether they have it until the test comes."

That night the four chaplains passed life's ultimate test. In doing so, they became an enduring example of extraordinary faith, courage and selflessness. The Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart were awarded posthumously December 19, 1944 to the next of kin in a ceremony at the post chapel at Fort Myer, Va.

I found this to be a wonderful story of four men, chaplains, who gave unselfishly to save the lives of others. While on a smaller level, re-read the first ar-

icle about our local first responders who put their lives on the line every time they

are called out to save the lives or property of others. Have a good week!

Illinois Sheriffs' Association Announces Scholarships

The Illinois Sheriffs' Association announces that it will be awarding over \$50,000 in college scholarships throughout the State of Illinois to students wishing to pursue higher education during the 2019-2020 academic year. The scholarships are to be applied to tuition, books and fees only. The student must be enrolled full-time at a certified institution of higher learning within the State of Illinois.

Sheriff Joshua Blackwell, Douglas County, will be awarding one scholarship in the amount of \$500. There will be no restriction on any applicant by reason of race, age, creed, color, sex or national origin. The only limitations are as follows:

- Applicants must be permanent Illinois residents

- Scholarships must be utilized at institutions of higher learning within the State of Illinois

- Students must be enrolled as a full-time student during the 2019-2020 school year (excluding summer session).

Applications are now available at your local Sheriff's office or on the ISA Website www.ilsheriff.org. Students must complete the application; answer the essay question and return all documentation to the Sheriff's office in their permanent county of residence by March 15, 2019 (must be postmarked by this date).

For more information, please contact your local Sheriff's office, Illinois Sheriffs' Association, high school advising center or college financial aid office.

LET US HELP PROTECT YOUR DREAMS.



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Faisal Bukhari, MD Adult Medicine (left) & Whitney Kauffman, PA-C (right)

The HSBS St. Mary's Arthur Medical Facility is re-opening.

We are pleased to announce that we have re-opened our Arthur Medical Facility located at 525 N. Vine St. in Arthur.

Medical internist Faisal Bukhari, MD along with Whitney Kauffman, PA-C and Hayley Yoder, APN will be accepting new patients beginning Feb. 18, 2019.

To schedule an appointment, call the office at 217-928-1041.



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