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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Praise for 'Ghere Bowl' celebration Friday at Arcola High School

On behalf of the family of Lillie and Roy Ghere, I would like to extend a thank you to the Arcola and Villa Grove communities. Your kindness at The Ghere Bowl warmed our hearts.

John, George, Donnie, Harry, Bobby, Russ, and Jim were all great athletes, and patriots who served their country during World War II. Most importantly, they were good men who worked hard and were great role models for their families and the community.

Kevin Monahan, thank you for organizing The Ghere Bowl. Carolyn Cloyd and Mike Monahan, your articles in the Arcola Record-Herald were greatly appreciated.

ARCOLA IS TRULY AMAZING!

Respectfully,
Ron Ghere

David,
The school did a great job on honoring the Ghere family. I know this family is very

deserving of the honors bestowed upon them.

Kevin Monahan could not have arranged the helicopters if the Army did not respect the contribution of Ghere 7 son's to WW 2.

How many schools can claim a visit from the Army with helicopters. We owe this to the Ghere family.

Donnie and Harry Ghere worked with the Thomas Monahan for most of their working life.

We can attest to their honesty, work ethic, and good common sense.

They were great people to work with.

The Thomas Monahan would not as successful with partners like Harry and Donnie Ghere.

Everyone involved should be proud of the Ghere family and what Arcola did in their memory.

Tim Monahan
The Thomas Monahan
Company



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THE GHERE FAMILY parades onto the field Friday night in Arcola. Photo by Nancy Rairden.

Ghere

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ly our teachers took a minute to explain what it was for. You see them (Blackhawk and Lakotas) on tv and things like that and it was just neat to give them the experience to see one up close. I was talking with some of the other people and some of the other staff and it is a once in a lifetime opportunity type of deal for these kids and even for the staff too. It was really neat."

The seven Ghere brothers are John, George, Donnie, Harry, Bobby, Russ, and Jim. Only Bobby did not make it home as he died of injuries on March 3, 1945.

The helicopters did a fly over above the field as they turned toward Decatur.

Many Arcola students took time to see the helicopters and sit in the aircrafts themselves. One person with Ghere ties, drove his three-year old son, Colin, over from Arthur. That person is Jory Borntreger.

"I saw it on the Ghere family facebook page," said Borntreger, a 2003 graduate of Arthur. "My grandma was the youngest of the Gheres (Jo Ellen Ghere Chancellor, who died in 1997 at the age of 65). It was pretty cool. Whenever they said they were doing it and it was going to start at 2 p.m. I thought I could try and get off work to bring him over before I have to leave for our game at Cumberland (Borntreger is an assistant coach at Arthur). Colin got to sit in the driver's seat (Blackhawk)."

As for honoring the Ghere family, Borntreger said, "It is



Bobby Ghere at Arcola High School

pretty special... the recognition that family is getting. It is a pretty special thing to honor everything the Gheres did. It makes you feel proud of your family."

About 40 Ghere family descendants lined up and walked behind the golf carts, including one that had Elsie Ghere (widow of Jim Ghere), 93, and the last surviving member of her Ghere generation. She presented the game ball to the officials prior to the game. After the National Anthem (flag was raised by two members of the Arcola VFW), there were fireworks a little longer than normal.

Isley said they found out two weeks ago that they would be doing this, his first time to a high school with the helicopter.

"They reached out to our PA office and they reached out to the state aviation office and we started prepping to use the aircrafts for this," said Isley. "We do numerous air mission requests throughout the year. I have done Arlington Race Track, Illinois State football, Vietnam traveling Wall in Bethalto. We do 2-3 a month across the state. This is the first time I have ever

been to a high school."

Isley said of the UH-72 Lakota, "It is part of a security of support detachments and is basically a reconnaissance aircraft. It has cameras, a laser and a big search light. That is what this aircraft is used for."

Also on the grounds was Zach Butler, a 2022 Arcola grad serving as a member of the Paris National Guard.

"The staff sergeant told me they were going to bring in helicopters and the National Guard was going to be in Arcola if I just wanted to come and hang out and talk to people and see everyone. I thought I would come down and enjoy the atmosphere of today," said Specialist Butler.

Arcola third graders Noah and Luke Biggs (sons of Allison and Dr. Robert Biggs) enjoyed sitting in the helicopters and acting like they were flying them.

"It was really cool," said Luke Biggs of the landing. "It is big."

Noah Biggs said, "I would rate it a 98 (the Blackhawk), but if it had ice cream, it would be a 100."

Doug Maroon, the Blackhawk pilot, said, "it was very cool to see everyone out there.

We are actually about to do a flyover at Illinois State in October. We have done a couple of Chicago Bear games and Chicago Cub games and occasionally colleges, but this is one of the firsts for us."

As for the Ghere family, Maroon said, "It is very humbling and very cool what they have gone through and what they have done for this country. I am definitely happy to be here in honor of them."

Arcola football coach Steve Snider said, "It was just really humbling to be in a town with a family like that with seven brothers that served in World War II and to have the family still this close and supportive of both programs. To see the military support, and I know Kevin (Monahan) had a lot to do with this, but that just doesn't happen for anybody. You don't get that show of respect unless you have earned that respect and that is humbling to be in the presence of them and all of the descendants. It was great."

Lindsey said it all ran well.

"It was so great to have as many show up (Ghere descendants) as they did," said Lindsey. "They are all so thankful and appreciative. One of them made the comment, 'It has been so long since the brothers and family have been around the school and just to have that much pride still in them and in the community. It meant a lot to them. Anytime you can recognize a family like that it is a great thing. Kevin Monahan did a great job of organizing everything and reaching out to the family. Overall, it was a really great night."

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