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From the Editor —

The past month has been interesting — many people came in with names, dates served and branch of the service they served in. Many had stories to tell — more than we had time to get ready for this special Freedom issue. In the weeks to come, we will try to contact other servicemen, past and present, and tell their story. If someone knows of a person who has an interesting story, call us — because unless you do, we may never know there is a story.

We were told over and over again by many of these brave servicemen, “We would do it again!” But many also stressed that “Freedom isn’t

free!” Many soldiers lost their lives so we, in the United States of America, can enjoy peace and freedom.

This special issue was supported by many businesses who were either contacted or called to ask if they could run an ad to help with the issue. Check out the ads and tell these merchants “thanks.”

If there is enough interest and support, the special Freedom issue may become something that is printed each year or possibly every other year. Your response would be welcomed and we will see what we can do.— *Karen Krien*

World War II bow gunner rides 30- to 50-foot waves

By Karen Krien

Raymond Armknecht joined the Navy under the selective service in 1943. By joining under the selective service, he allowed someone that needed to stay at home.

He was a bow gunner on a patrol bomber on a sea plane, Squadron VPB18. They operated 18 miles west Okinawa and his squadron’s job was to watch for enemy submarines and enemy ships.

Most of the time their routine was pretty uneventful until May 15, 1945, the plane carrying Armknecht and his crew and a sister plane found three enemy ships. They sank two of the ships and damaged a third. However, the port engine was hit on Armknecht’s plane and, while trying to get back to base, 300 to 400 miles away, they were attack by a Japanese fighter squadron made up of 10 planes. The sister plane was hit and it went down, killing all aboard but its crew took down one of the enemy planes before plunging into the sea. About 45 minutes later, the port engine on Armknecht’s plane caught fire and they went down glancing off the water five times. The first glancing blow sheered the burn-

ing engine off and snuff out any of the other flames.

The crew lost three men and the other 10 crew members survived with no food nor water in two four-man rafts for 13 to 15 hours in 58-degree waters. The waves were 30 to 40 feet high and the rafts kept flipping over. Armknecht said the most difficult part of the duration was getting back into the raft after being dumped in the water. (They were all wearing life jackets.) They finally let the rafts fill with water and then the raft wouldn’t flip over.

In the meantime, the Navy planes had spotted the men and were tracking them until the U.S.S. Ray, a submarine, picked up the men. Armknecht said that many people were picked up and saved in different ways during the war but he thinks he is the only person in the tri-state area who was saved by a submarine.

Each year, Raymond and his wife Bonnie travel to the U.S.S. Ray and his squadron’s reunions and they have seen a lot of country doing it. But what is special is renewing acquaintances each year. Of those 10 who survived the 1945 mission, six are still living.

Sainty student doesn’t approve of how some represent U.S.

By Luke Keller

When I turn on the television and see people bashing our president and our leader, I can’t see how they call themselves “Americans.” They say how bad it is and that we are so evil. I say if you don’t like it, then get the heck out! I know people have the right to say whatever they want in this great land but some people say things that should be kept to themselves. I think that we have every right in the world to go in to countries that are harboring people that would harm America. But no, some big movie stars have to open their big, fat mouths and tell people what we are doing is wrong. They try to use their power to make people hate us. I would like to ask those big movie stars if it was ok for terrorist to fly planes into buildings and kill their own countrymen. I

would like to hear what they would say about that or we could have the kids of the brave men and women that lost their lives on 9-11 sit in front of those movie stars and they could be told that the people who helped kill their parents should just be let go and not have to pay for all the pain they have caused. I wonder if the Dixie Chicks of the world would be so mouthy in front of those kids. I would put money on it they wouldn’t!

I would also like to say that we are lucky enough to have a president who has enough guts to do the right thing even though people might not like it. I think by running the evil out of Iraq that he might have saved many Americans’ lives. Maybe even those who hate him!

Men and Women in the Service

The Saint Francis Herald - Feb. 15, 1945

Pvt. Jackson L. Maupin arrived in Goodland a week ago last Monday enroute to St. Francis to visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. H.J. Maupin, other relatives and friends. Jackson left Tuesday to report to a new base which cannot be disclosed for reasons of military security. He has been stationed for the past four months at Camp Wolters, Tex.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hammers have received a card from their son, George, who has been a German prisoner for the past year, stating he was well. The card was written on June 11 and was received by his parents last week.

Pvt. Marvin Shields, who was inducted into the Army a few weeks ago, is now stationed at Camp Hood, Tex.

Pvt. Lester Ferdig left Monday for Maryland after having spent the past week here with his family.

Pvt. Ross Indorf was accompanied to St. Francis Saturday by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Indorf, of Denver and were guests in the John Indorf home for several days. Pvt. Indorf is stationed in Louisiana and is enjoying a furlough at this time.

Seaman and Mrs. Ed Bowans arrived in St. Francis last week from Seattle, Wash., where Ed has completed four months specialized training in fire control. He departed Sunday for Denver and from there will go to Shoemaker, Calif., for assignment. Mrs. Bowans will remain here for the present.

Raymond Duell arrived home from Denver Sunday morning where he enlisted in the Navy, returning there Tuesday, he will go to the Great Lakes naval training station at Chicago.

Mrs. Louise Cress this week received a letter from her son, Pfc. Clarence F. Cress, which was written on Nov. 18, stating he was well. Mrs. Cress was notified on Oct. 29 that her son was missing in action, and this is the first message she has had regarding him since that time. The letter was written on German stationery which confirms her belief that he is a German prisoner. He asked the family not to write until they heard from him again.

Sgt. John F. Cook of the 405th Infantry Regiment, with the 102nd Division in Germany, has been awarded the Bronze Star for heroic achievement in connection with military operations against the enemy in Germany on Nov. 23. Sgt. Cook led a group of four volunteers forward during a withdrawal to rescue a machine gunner who had been wounded in an exposed forward position. The group succeeded in getting the man and the gun safely to the rear. Sgt. Cook, who is 23 years old, is a squad leader. He is the son of Lawson Cook of St. Francis.

Daniel H. Rueb, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Rueb, who live on Route 4 northwest of St. Francis, is receiving his initial Naval indoctrination at the U.S. Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill. When his recruit training is completed, the seaman will receive a period of leave.

Howard A. Armknecht, 22, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Armknecht of Kanorado, gunner on a B-24 Liberator, has recently been promoted to the grade of sergeant. He is with the 15th AAF in Italy. Sgt. Armknecht is authorized to wear the Distinguished Unit Badge as a member of a heavy bombardment group which has been cited by the War Department for "outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy."

SM3-c Glenn Keller arrived in St. Francis Monday for a short visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Keller, after having spent two weeks of his 30-day leave with Mrs. Keller at Denver. Glenn has been in the Navy three years, assigned to merchant ships, the last being the John A. Dix. He has crossed the Atlantic six times, his last voyage being to Italy and southern France. A crossing requires from 18 days to three weeks. Crews on merchant ships are assigned to a ship for a period of eight to 10 months, however he was on the above named for the past 13 months before it docked at Brooklyn, N.Y., at the time of his leave. No doubt as many times as he has crossed the Atlantic in these convoys, docking at all of the major Atlantic ports, he has had at least a few harrowing experiences, but only smiled when approached on the subject. Signalman Keller went to Bird City on Wednesday to visit his sister, Mrs. Ed Byers, and left from there Thursday on his return trip to Brooklyn, where he will be assigned to another ship.

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