



PRESERVATION NEWS

June 1st, 2017

Newsletter of the Wichita County Historical Commission

Volume LXXXIV Robert Palmer, Chairman

Wichita County Archives

720 Indiana Avenue

Wichita Falls, Texas 76301

Telephone 940-763-0020

Hours of Operation: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10:00am - 12:00pm & 1:00pm - 4:00pm

E-mail Address - archives@co.wichita.tx.us

www.wichitacountyhistoricalcommission.org/

AGENDA FOR MEETING

Lunch at 11:30am Meeting 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm

1. Call to Order

2. Introduction of Guests

3. Business

4. Program

5. Adjourn

Monthly Meeting: Location: Luby's.

PROGRAM

The Great Minnow Case - Gary Southard

From the Desk of Robert Palmer -

"The story of the cost of the world's most destructive war, written by a pen of destiny, dipped into the spilled blood of this area's own native sons."

This was the lead for a story written on the front page of the WICHITA FALLS RECORD NEWS by Porter Oakes in the June 27, 1946 edition of the paper. The story detailed the release of U.S. Army death totals for World War II. They were listed by County for the surrounding counties and by Community.

As we recognize another Memorial Day, these numbers become even more sobering. Memorial Day is a day with a specific purpose. It is to recognize the people who died serving our country in the military. Veteran's Day recognizes all who served. Memorial Day was originated in 1868 and was then called Decoration Day. It was celebrated in many ways in many locations. There was no uniform date. It was celebrated both in the North and in the South. At one time, it became a time for political speeches. It never lost its meaning as a time to recognize the dead from various wars. It was a day for decorating the graves of soldiers killed during the Civil War. Cemetery Decoration Days were quite common throughout the history of our country. Many small communities still have Decoration Days. The name Memorial Day was first used in 1882. It was officially named that by Federal Law in 1967.

Wichita County and the 29 surrounding counties lost 1,116 Army service personnel during World War II. This does not include those killed in the other branches of service. Wichita County lost the most with 189 dead. Combat killed 101 soldiers. Six died of wounds. Eighty-two died of non-combat causes. This included training, traveling to and from

assignments, and other various causes. All were serving their country when they died.

Outside of Wichita Falls, Electra lost the most with 22 total, ten in combat. Burkburnett lost five in combat and four of other causes. Iowa Park lost five in combat and seven total. Kamay and Valley View had two killed in combat and two of other causes. Non-community areas of Wichita County lost six killed in combat and three of other causes.

Wichita Falls lost 73 killed in combat and 65 of other causes. These were the numbers available in 1946. The number would rise over the years as some "missing in action" became "killed in combat". Many would die years later as a result of serving in the war. Growing up in the late 40s and 50s, a neighbor suffered from a disease of the feet and legs contracted during service in the South Sea's action. It eventually wore him down and resulted in an early death. Many carried physical and mental scars throughout the rest of their life.

Texas lost 15,764 soldiers. This was 4.87% of the nation's total.

All of these numbers represent soldiers never to see their parents, spouses, children, and friends again. Death in war is a horrible price to pay, and we should never cease to honor their sacrifice. Wichita County has done this in many ways. The latest is the memorial planned for Lake Wichita.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

List the memorials in Wichita County recognizing Veterans and those killed in serving their country.

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NO MEETING IN JULY - SEE YOU IN AUGUST

We need volunteers, both in the Archives and at the Museum. No experience necessary. Need a cool place to be this summer? Come on in!

The Wichita County Archives now have a Facebook page dedicated to spreading the word and work of the County Archives. There will be stories and pictures associated with the history of Wichita Falls and surrounding areas. The first feature is F.M. Davis, first Sheriff of Wichita County, 1882.

Current exhibits at the Museum of North Texas History focus on the Farming and Ranching Heritage of our area. Come by and get a look!

FIVE CAME BACK A STORY OF HOLLYWOOD AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Five acclaimed Hollywood directors went to war in the 1940s to make propaganda films and came home changed by what they saw and what they did. The directors included John Ford, George Stevens, John

Huston, William Wyler, and Frank Capra. Some of their exploits include Ford filming the opening salvo in the Battle of Midway from a rooftop; Wyler riding along on bombing missions over Germany; and Stevens filming the horrific scenes at Dachau.



The documentaries made by these famous directors include: The Battle of Midway (1942, John Ford); Prelude to War (1942, Frank Capra); The Battle of Russia (1943, Frank Capra); Undercover: How to Operate Behind Enemy Lines (1943, John Ford); Report from the Aleutians (1943, John Huston); The Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress (1944, William Wyler); The Negro Soldier (1944, Stuart Heisler; produced by Frank Capra); Tunisian Victory (1944, John Huston); Know Your Enemy: Japan (1945, Frank Capra); The Battle of San Pietro (1945, John Huston); Nazi Concentration Camps (1945, George Stevens); Let There Be Light (1946, John Huston); and Thunderbolt (1947, William Wyler).
