

The Center Piece

Summer 2025



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Auditorium Roof Repair

We continue to make progress on our campaign to raise funds towards the Auditorium Roof Repair. As of this printing we have raised \$29,250 toward the roof repair cost of \$70,000. A huge Thank You to those of you that have donated towards keeping this important community treasure usable for the future. If you are able to make a donation, please send a check with the memo indicating roof repair to the Brandon History Center or stop in at the Brandon City office.



A light-hearted news article from the 1950s:

Clinton Moe Batters Toe

Clinton Moe, who operates the Brandon Cafe*, had an unusual and painful accident on Tuesday. While he was sleeping with the fan running, he got his foot caught in the fan with the result that he pulled the toenail off his big toe and cut his toe. Two poems written by Mr. and Mrs. Sam Myers tell the story very nicely:

Too Bad

A certain businessman in Brandon
By the name of Clinton Moe
Had a accident quite painful,
Sure, he nearly lost a toe.

He was sleeping very calmly
On a night so still and hot,
With his fan a-running swiftly
'Til his toe it finally caught.

His pleasant dreams stopped shortly
As he felt that bunged-up toe
And now we find him limping,
That poor old Clinton Moe.

By Hazel Myers



Clinton Moe
1906-1982

Clinton Moe
He not so slow
But when he sleep
He sho do sno'
Dat 'electric fan
She come, she go
An "By Gar"
She bust his toe.

By Sam Myers



*This Brandon Café was located on Front Street where Moe Insurance is now.

World War II Articles

An assortment of World War II articles from a scrap book donated by Richard Bitzan.

Brandon Pilot Has Two Costly Sorties

A NINTH AIR FORCE BOMBER BASE, FRANCE—Probably two of the costliest sorties in a long time were those flown recently by 2nd Lt.



Donald J. Korkowski, 3-26 Marauder pilot from Brandon. On successive days, the 21 year old airman crash-landed expensive bombers — but not before their bomb loads were delivered to German targets.

Although both medium bombers have been consigned to the scrap heap, not a single member of the crew was injured on either landing.

On March 21, after the pilot had dropped his charges on Ahaus, Germany, he landed his bomber at a diversionary airdrome for refueling. On takeoff for the return to the home base, one of the plane's two engines suddenly cut out. Korkowski held the plane to the runway, and by the time he was able to stop it, a wing was snapped, an engine was torn out, and the main landing gear had collapsed.

Only the night before, the Minnesotan had belly-landed a bomber after he had discovered the landing gear mechanism had been shattered by flak during the day's attack on Vreden, Germany.

Korkowski, son of Mr. and Mrs. August Korkowski of Brandon, has 36 missions to his credit, and holds the Air Medal with six oak leaf clusters. Before entering the air forces, he was a student at St. Cloud State Teacher's college.

Writes Parents of Pacific Experience

John E. Miller, petty officer 3/c, wrote an interesting letter to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Nick Miller of Millerville in which he described his activities in recent weeks. He described the taking on of troops at Pearl Harbor, and reloading of supplies and equipment. Most of the large task forces are made up there, and it is the largest carrier base of the United States.



His ship reached the Marshall Islands the first week of April, and he was surprised to find the smaller islands green and beautiful. The beaches are covered with coral and swimming is at its best. The larger islands were occupied and ~~and~~ all the trees and bushes had been blown up during the invasion.

"We have an airfield on each of the larger islands and the Mitchell and Liberator bombers take off twice per day to bomb Panape and Truk. They are escorted by Corsairs and while we were there we'd watch for them and all of them always returned. We really must have Japan on the run."

Peter S. Thoennes Is An Interpreter For 9th Infantry

Mrs. Math Hockert of Brandon relates the Echo some interesting side-lights in the life of her soldier-brother, T/5 Peter S. Thoennes of Millerville.



"T/5 Peter Thoennes' knowledge of the German language recently paid off. While passing a halted group of German prisoners on a pitch black night, he heard two of them arguing about turning in a pistol. The situation was full of possibilities until a guard was informed and the holder disarmed of the weapon.

"At another time, 22 cars of German ammunition were captured intact in a tunnel before retreating Germans had time to seal the entrance. Two officers rode through a small town past a road block, to catch four Germans in the act of mining the entrance of the tunnel. T/5 Thoennes was one of four soldiers to enter the tunnel after the Germans had been captured."

"Peter has been in the army 2½ years and in Germany since January. He is serving as an interpreter for headquarters of the 9th Infantry and writes that he likes the work. He thinks, to, they are making good progress toward Berlin but the war

Brandon War Hero Helped Wreck 12 Ships and Bomber

SOMEWHERE IN THE PHILIPPINES—Flying a patrol course is often uneventful, but William H. Lehn, Aviation Ordnanceman Third Class, U.S.N.R., of Brandon, Minn., and his fellow crew members sank or damaged 12 Japanese vessels and destroyed one enemy bomber during a single recent mission.

The hop was made as a "fill-in" for another patrol plane which had returned with its pilot seriously wounded by enemy antiaircraft fire.

Entering the area in which the pilot had been hurt the Privateer crew bombed and destroyed four small Jap freighters proceeding north up the West Coast of Borneo.

Later, two similar ships were worked over in a low-level strafing run as the Privateer gunners accounted for their fifth and sixth victims.

Shortly before dusk on a Borneo airstrip the fliers strafed and destroyed a Jap twin-engine bomber

sitting at one end of the grass runway.

At Pontianak Harbor in West Borneo, another bombing and strafing attack left one Jap freighter destroyed and five others afire and heavily damaged. Another sweep made quick work of a supply building and adjacent lumber mill, both of which were seen to burst into fire.

As the Privateer streaked in low over the water small calibre ack-ack riddled the fuselage directly aft of one of the top turrets, but the gunners were not injured as the plane was not seriously damaged.

Lehn, gunner and bombardier on the Privateer, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. John M. Lehn of Brandon.

Arrives at Camp McCoy

Pvt. Leo C. Shea has arrived at Camp McCoy, Wis., the redeployment center, after serving with the 503rd Reinf. Co. in the European area. He wears the purple heart, C. I. B. and one battle star, and is a son of W. H. Shea of Brandon.

Veteran's Corner



Ralph W. Townsend
United States Navy
Vietnam Era

Ralph Townsend enlisted in the United States Navy May 12, 1965 at Great Lakes Illinois. He was stationed in San Diego, California and in Vietnam. During his time in the service Ralph was awarded the National Defense Service medal and the Bronze Star for his service in Vietnam. Ralph reached the rank of Shipfitter Petty Officer Second Class. He was honorably discharged December 1969.

Ralph passed away March 26, 2025

He is resting in peace at
East Moe Cemetery -- Garfield Minnesota



Edward Goering
U.S. Army
Korean War Era

Edward Goering served in the United States Army from July 1953 to July 1955. He received his basic training at Fort Riley, Kansas. Edward served in Germany as an office clerk at Oberammergau. Edward passed away May 23, 2025

He will rest in peace at Fort Snelling National Cemetery
Minneapolis , Minnesota

Thank you!

To everyone who requested research on family members, other Brandon/Millerville research, or other, items, we are glad to help. Thank you to all who have donated money, items for our history collections, and information about people of the area for our family files.

- Jeff Olson—Photos and School ledgers
- Gary Adamson—various bank items
- John Lund—AQUA locator used by the city of Brandon
- Kay Larson—various Brandon and Millerville memorabilia
- Evansville History Foundation—Brandon Lumber dust pan and The Scandinavian Pioneers book
- Deb Shea—Brandon warrior sports clothing
- New lifetime family membership Mark & Becky Erickson family.
- Donation in memory of Orville "Hap" and Rosemary Jones

Membership Information

Annual Memberships are \$10 for individuals, \$15 for family. Life time memberships are \$150 for individuals and \$200 for family.

In addition to renewing your membership, you may want to consider a tax deductible charitable contribution of \$100 or more to the History Center. The Brandon History center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

With a \$100 donation, the donation is remembered on the wall plaque with either your own name or in memory of a family member or friend.

History Center Hours

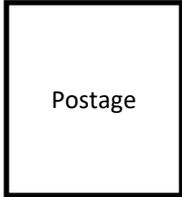
The History Center is usually open on Friday from 9-12, please e-mail to verify, or by appointment. It is open for research or to donate items of historical value such as family pictures and stories. Email brandonhistory@gctel.net to arrange a time for a visit.

Our Mission Statement

To collect and preserve the history of Brandon, Millerville, and the surrounding area for future generations.

To assist in the preservation of the Historic Brandon Auditorium and other local historic sites

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BOARD MEMBERS:

- Florence Bitzan
- Carol Ramler
- Mike Cleary
- Ruth Plaster
- Cheryl Johnson
- Karen Thoennes
- Dennis Korkowski

Brandon and Brandon-Evansville YearBooks Needed

The Brandon History Center does not have a copy of the Brandon and Brandon-Evansville YearBooks for the following years: 1950, 1951, 1953, 1989, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2015, and 2018. If you are willing to donate, please contact the History Center.

Trivia

From the Douglas Country Trivia game published by the Douglas County Historical Society 1986

1. Who owned a scenic excursion boat on Lobster Lake?
2. What man from Moe Township served as postmaster for six years from his farm home?
3. What band played at Chippewa Park fair?
4. Who brought the Great Northern Railroad through Douglas County?

1. Norman & Nola Foslien, 2. Carl Pipo, 3. Land O'Lakes Band, 4. James J. Hill