



TOP STUDENTS - PAGE 4A GRADUATION SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE **Lancaster High School Class of 2023**

Krusers, Patzner welcomed back after Honor Flight

Brothers had been planning since 2018, Julius passed before could make the flight

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The promenade of the Dane County Regional Airport in Madison was packed Saturday night, as family, friends, and ordinary people greeted the veterans returning after taking part in the Badger Honor Flight.

Midway down the procession of those who gathered were family and friends of the Kruser family, as well as Tom Patzner. It is unknown whether the Potosi-based group was the largest in the airport, but they were certainly the largest group with matching shirts to greet the veterans that night.

This event was nearly five years in the planning. The first request was sent in in late 2018 for the trip. Organizers wanted to send five of the eight Kruser brothers who served in the military, along with friend Tom Patzner. While eight Krusers brothers served in the military, at the time three had already died.

Wayne, who served from 1958 to 1960 and lives in Dickeyville, is the most senior of the brothers living. He served in Germany. Marcellus, nickname "Mert," served from 1963 to 1965 in Alaska. Harvey served from 1965 to 1967 and deployed to Vietnam. When Harvey returned, Randy, who served from 1967 to 1969, went to Vietnam.

One other brother, Julius, who served from 1961 to 1963 stateside, was originally on the list, but he died at the end of 2021.

Badger | SEE 11A



TOP - Randy Kruser was shaking hands on the other side of the promenade when he looked over and was surprised by the large group of family and friends who were there to greet him and his brothers Saturday night after they returned from the Badger Honor Flight to Washington D.C.

ABOVE - A selfie for the family and Mert Kruser during the return.

LEFT - The Kruser family went all out, including getting matching shirts with the names of all five brothers who were suppose to go on the flight.

Father, son die in murder-suicide in Boscobel

Christopher Mezera's social media was filled with inspirational sayings. He posted his last one on the evening of May 17 at 10:07 p.m., saying "Love the ones you care about and don't forget about the ones that wanted to be apart of something greater."

By the next morning, both he and his father would be found deceased in the enclosed porch of the home they lived at, with authorities determining that Christopher, 32, fired the shots that killed both him and his father, Russell, 58.

According to the Boscobel Police Department, they were dispatched to a home at 7 a.m. on May 18 where two people were suspected to have died. Once arriving, officers determined both individuals had died due to gun shot wounds, and one of the individuals had fired the weapon, they issued a news release to alert the public it was an isolated incident, and that there was no threat.

Boscobel Police continued their investigation, and informed family members who were involved, formally identifying Christopher and Russell in another public release Saturday morning.

From the investigation, it was believed that sometime in the overnight hours of May 17-18, both Christopher and Russell were seated in the enclosed porch. At some point, Chris fired two rounds at Russell, striking the father in the chest with one of the rounds.

Christopher then turn the weapon on himself, and took his own life.

Alcohol is believed to have played a role in the incident, but authorities did not have a motive known at press time.

According to Boscobel Police Chief Jaden McCullick, the investigation is still ongoing, and further details will be released if they become available.

Curley's sacrifice to be recognized on Memorial Day

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"Time is short, so will close for now. Hello to everybody and write to me when you can. P.S. Give Ruth a kiss for me"
Love Jerry"
PFC GERALD F. CURLEY - JAN. 1 1945

In what looks to be his next-to-last letter to home, Gerald Curley shares with his family that he got their Christmas package, and that it arrived in good shape, and he hopes they get his gift that he got in Paris during a short stay at the Red Cross.

"I'm now someplace in Belgium," Curley told them in the small note, one of dozens he seem to send twice a month while he was deployed during World War II. Before he could send his next, however, Curley was killed near Bostogne during the Battle of the Bulge, on Jan. 13, 1945.

"Don't worry because its not so bad," Gerald wrote in closing his final letter home on Jan. 6, 1945, seven days before he was killed protecting the Boircy region.

Gerald's story is going to be shared during the Lancaster Memorial Day observance taking place in Memorial Park Monday, starting at 10:30 a.m. In addition to the "Boy From Lancaster" series spotlighting a veteran, musical

numbers, and speeches, there will be a Gold Star Family part of the program.

The Gold Star is a symbol that has been used for families to show that they had seen a loss during war. Started during World War I, families would display banners in their front windows to show they had people fighting in the conflict, a blue star for each person serving.

When families got the news that they had lost one of their own, the star on the banner would turn to gold to symbolize the sacrifice.

The only person who may remember him is his sister, Ruth Slater, the same Ruth that is the one he tells his mother to give a kiss to from him. Ruth was only seven years old when Gerald was killed in action, and what she remembers of her older brother was a young man who dotted over his young sibling, bringing her a pig and a dog when he had leave home from the war front.

While a young child when she last saw him, Ruth recalls quite a bit about her older brother. For one, an injury caused by a BB gun took the vision in one eye when he was a boy, so he couldn't initially pass his physical.

"He memorized the eye chart because he wanted to go so badly," Ruth remembered.

Curley | SEE 5A



The niece of Gerald Curley made a special memory box to hold the Purple Heart that was given to his family after he was killed during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. As part of the Lancaster Memorial Day observance Monday, Curley will be recognized during the Gold Star Family portion.