



COLBY FREE PRESS

12 pages

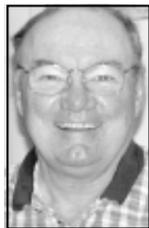
A time to remember Former fighter pilot Ron Evans to give Memorial Day address

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Thomas County Commissioner Ron Evans will be the guest speaker at the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion Memorial Day Services on Monday at 10 a.m. at Beulah Cemetery.

Evans, who retired from the U.S. Air Force as a Lt. Colonel in 1986, flew 378 combat missions as a fighter pilot in Vietnam between May of 1968 and December of 1970.



Ron Evans

"I have a great admiration for all the veterans still alive and the utmost respect for those killed in action," Evans said.

"It is an honor and a privilege to give the address at the Memorial Day service."

Evans is Colby native who entered the Air Force after graduating from the University of Kansas in 1965. He is married to the former Sue Smith, also a Colby native.

They returned to Colby shortly after his retirement from the Air Force. He is a real estate salesman and farmer and Sue is director of the Northwest Kansas Prevention Center.

They have one daughter, Jill, who will be a sophomore at the University

of Kansas.

The ceremony will start with seating of the public, followed by a parade of veterans and remarks by the commander of the American Legion, Dr. Gary Sanden.

The annual ceremony will also include the reading of the names of members of both organizations who died in the last year. They are: Bennie Chambers, James Domsch, William Dougherty, Kenneth Engleman, Dab Gaines, Glendora Grover, Don Hiett, Emery Moses, Paul Pabst, Melvin Rowley, John Stickelman, Dean Strayer, Melvin Vaughn, Floyd Voisin, Max Weber, Gerald White, Walter Woolfer, Conrad Zodrow and George Karnes.

Preparation key to survival, disaster volunteer tells group

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

One of the speakers at a recent meeting of the Thomas County Red Cross Chapter pointed to preparation as the key to survival when tornado activity befalls an area.

"Pay attention to the watches and warnings during severe weather forecasts," said Molly Oliver, co-disaster chair, "and remember what to do."

Recalling her experiences in Hoisington after the April 21 tornado, when winds reached speeds of 262 mph, she said a flashlight would be one of the most important items to have.

"At 9:18 p.m. the tornado struck and in two minutes, the central part of the town was left in total darkness," she said.

"There were no street signs, street lights, or even landmarks left — these people walked out of their basements or other safe locations to find total darkness."

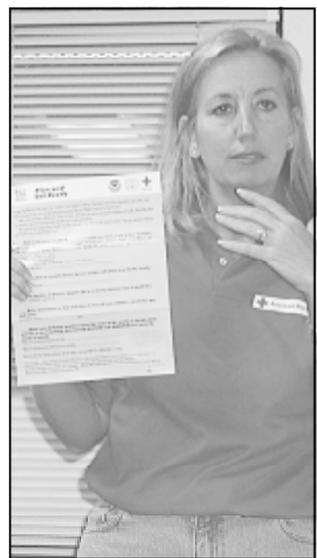
Molly told the group at the meeting that everyone should have a tornado plan and a first aid kit on hand with essential medications, battery-powered radio and flashlights, canned food, water and sturdy shoes and gloves.

Helping drive home the point about being ready, Molly's husband, Jim, spoke of a tornado he experienced firsthand in Topeka.

"It was June 8, 1966 and one of the most frightening days of my life," he said.

"Sixteen people were killed and many others injured when a tornado, that nobody thought was possible in that area, slammed Topeka.

"I looked up at the sky and saw vehicles and fences flying by — it was



Molly Oliver, Red Cross volunteer

extremely noisy, like being under a train trestle — and within 30 seconds to a minute it was over," he said.

After the tornado had passed, he said, it was "morbidly calm." His house was in shambles, but the structure was still there.

Five vehicles were upside down in front of the house and when he looked left or right in the neighborhood, there were no houses at all.

"Nobody said anything as we walked out of the shelter," he said. "It was just like being in a war zone and it started getting really cold."

What Jim said they needed most, but didn't have readily available, was a flashlight.

"We couldn't walk around because

of the broken glass and debris and even if our car was functional, we couldn't drive anywhere since the streets were in shambles as well," he said.

Another helpless feeling that Jim experienced was not knowing how badly damaged Topeka was beyond his neighborhood.

"Without a cellular telephone or radio," he said, "even if we started walking out for help, we wouldn't have known which direction to go."

For Jim, one of the main reasons he is involved with the Red Cross is because they were there for him — three times.

"Every time I had a problem, the Red Cross was there to help."

Jim talked about the fire at his home in 1973 and how Natalie Urbom, former director of the local chapter, was there even before the fire department went out.

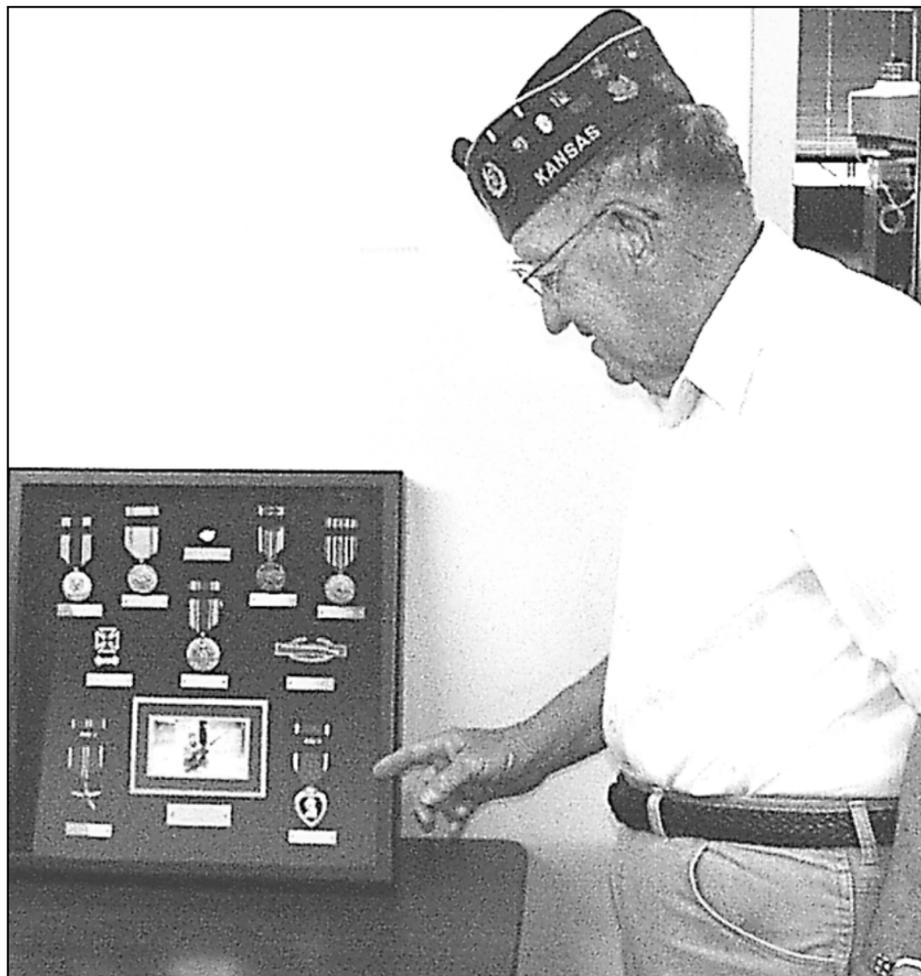
He will always remember the help he received in the Topeka tornado and how the local Red Cross was there during the Colby flood in 1975.

Donna Finley, the executive director of the Thomas County Red Cross, said there are many ways people can help.

"People can serve on the board, a disaster committee, can become a shelter volunteer, take care of the Emergency Response Vehicle or make a donation," she said.

"We don't ever want to see a disaster in Colby or Thomas County," she said, "and if something were to happen here, we hope people know that there will always be others from the Red Cross to help."

For information on volunteering or donations, call Finley at the local chapter at 462-7161.



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Paul Layland pointed out the purple heart he received in combat in World War II. His grandson Kevin Kriss made the case for the medals.

Colby veteran received many medals during WWII duty

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

In keeping with the honoring of veterans for Memorial Day, and in correlation with the 60th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, Paul Layland's grandson Kevin Kriss has made a display case for Layland's World War II medals.

Layland enlisted December 1940 in Company M. 137 Infantry 35th Division, Famous Wagon Wheel Division made up originally of Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri personnel. They were mobilized in Lawrence; spent 10 days there and then went to Camp Robinson, Little Rock, Ark., for basic infantry training which was rough and rugged and the pay was \$21 per month, according to Layland.

"We mobilized for one year's training and then Dec. 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor happened, we were retained," he said. "We were sent to the West Coast with only a few guns, mostly wooden guns, to defend the West Coast from the Japanese. It has often been said that if they had hit the West Coast instead of Pearl Harbor we would still be fighting them, probably in the Colorado area. We spread out and interned all American Japanese, and did guard duty at airports and dams."

Layland said that after one year of doing guard duty on the west coast, "we were sent to Camp Rucker, Ala., for advanced infantry training. Next move was to Camp Buckner, N.C. for more training. Then to Camp Kilmer, N.J. for shipment to Europe."

Layland remembers landing in Liverpool, England about 30 days before the invasion of Europe. "We landed

in Omaha Beach in France and contacted the enemy about 11 kilometers inland," he said. "We joined Gen. Patton's 3rd army and fought the Germans until Sept. 25, 1945, where I got hit with a German 88 artillery shell."

Layland said he was operated on in the field hospital and flown back to England for six months stay in the hospital. He was then sent back to Germany and did limited service until the war's end.

"I really believe the A-Bomb saved lots of lives in the long run and was indeed the thing to do," Layland said. "The year's training turned into five years, and I sure wouldn't want to do this again, but if we had to fight it is better on their land than on ours."

Layland said that "souvenirs I received were shrapnel in my left leg, Combat Infantry Badge, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and lots of memories." He said he has no desire to own an automobile made in Germany or Japan. Layland is a life member of the Disabled American Veterans, VFW and American Legion.

"I believe we should respect and give due consideration to the veterans who made many things possible for our present way of life," he said. "I am really concerned over our government's proposal to cut VA hospital benefits, and medical care to veterans. Our congressmen and senators should remember we paid a debt to society for everyone and we pay for a loaf of bread the same as everyone else. We should never forget the ones who fought and gave their lives and bodies so we can enjoy our lifestyle today."

Kansas University faculty gets taste of Wheat State during tour

By Tom Betz

Colby Free Press

The whirlwind tour of the Wheat State developed five years ago for Kansas University faculty arrived in Colby this week on the third day of the fifth annual week-long trip.

The 33 faculty, along with university staff, tour coordinators and many area alumni, ended the day with a steak dinner at City Limits in Colby. The dinner was sponsored by Colby Community College.

Following the dinner Freddie Lamm, engineer at the Kansas State University Northwest Research Center, gave a presentation on water issues.

He began by saying "there is no such thing as a free dinner."

In the presentation he talked about the daily individual impact everybody has on water resources, and estimated that each of those present had impacted 2,933 gallons of water to produce all the items from the food eaten that evening.

The top item for water use Lamm said was the steak which took about 2,600 gallons per pound to produce. The potatoes were much lower at 57 gallons, the dinner rolls were 15 gallons, the margarine was 92 gallons and the ice cream for dessert was 143 gallons. He also had figures for the salad

and drinks to bring the total to nearly 3,000 gallons.

Lamm said not all of the impact was on Kansas because several parts of the dinner probably did not come from in-state producers.

Irrigation is the largest impact on water he said with 3 million total acres in Kansas. Over half that, 1.6 million acres, are irrigated corn. "You get 1-2 pounds of corn to each 54 gallons of water," he said. "Corn is the highest of all the grains in water use, but it is also the most efficient for water use compared to yield."

"We are facing a choice of reducing the acres of crops being irrigated or to

improve water conservation to save the Ogallala aquifer," Lamm said "We will probably be required to do both — conserve and use efficiently."

"The decisions have to be based on intellectual information not on emotions," he said. "The recharge rates are high enough for domestic, municipal and infrastructure uses."

Lamm said the recent years of irrigation improvements have reduced the impact on the depletion, but there remains a slow decline in the aquifer level. The use of center pivot and other types of sprinklers in Northwest Kansas has increased over the past 26 years from 28 percent in 1874 to about 85

percent today.

"A leak that pays," Lamm called the drip irrigation system. "Any incremental improvement we can make can buy us more time to make wise decisions."

The second presentation of the evening on water issues was given by Wayne Bossert, manager of the Northwest Kansas Groundwater District headquartered in Colby.

He gave the faculty an overview of the Ogallala aquifer and how the impact of irrigation has changed over the past 100 years since the aquifer began being developed.

The depletion of the aquifer has slowed since the 1980s Bossert said,

but the drop is about 24 inches per year.

"One size doesn't fit all," he said about looking at future solutions to saving the aquifer. "We have to face the fact that 97.7 percent of the water use is irrigation, and that choices will have economic impacts on the area."

He said the Kansas Legislature decided in 1972 that all the water belonged to the public and passed laws to regulate the use and establish the Department of Water Resources and the Kansas Water Office which are responsible for overseeing all the water use in the state. He said the groundwater districts were created through this law to be a local entity to oversee water use.

Briefly

Weather: Another record low

For the second morning in a row, a record low for the date was set in Colby. The temperature dropped to 32 degrees early today, breaking the old mark of 36 degrees set in 1946. But warmer weather is here, according to the National Weather Service. Tonight, clear, low in the middle to upper 40s and south winds 5-15 mph. Saturday, sunny, warmer, high around 80 and south winds 5-15 mph. Saturday night, partly cloudy, low in the middle to upper 40s. Sunday and Monday, low middle 40s to around 50 and the high around 75. Thursday's high in Colby was 67 and the

overnight low this morning was 32. Precipitation remains at 2.38 inches.

The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 65 degrees. The records for May 25: 98 in 1976 and 36 in 1946. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Help needed to plant sod

Volunteers are needed to help lay sod at the Fairview Estates Retirement Community east of Dillons. In exchange

for helping lay sod, ABC Construction company has donated three sets of portable bleachers to the community. Please report to the job site at 8 a.m. Saturday and again on June 2. At least 40 volunteers are needed and the minimum age is 16. For information call Rod Williams at 462-8260.

No Free Press Monday

The Colby Free Press will not publish on Monday, May 28 in observance of Memorial Day. "We are taking the day off to be with family and friends," said Tom Dreiling, publisher.

"However, because of the nature of our business, any activities of general community interest over the holiday weekend will be recorded and published in subsequent issues," he said. Normal hours, 8-6, will resume Tuesday, May 29.

Landfill schedule noted

The Thomas County Landfill will be open from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, May 26, and will be closed Sunday and Monday, May 27-28, for the Memorial Day weekend. For information please call Larry Jumper at 462-8139.

