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'Indian stone' remembers WWI soldiers

Wisconsin Rapids area families were sent word from 'no man's land'

By MYSTIQUE MACOMBER
News Editor

The red granite stone sits in the summer sun. Poised near the sidewalk, its surface is turned so passersby might read the inscription carved there. Weathered with age, the words are difficult to read.

"AH-DAH-WA-GAM Chapter DAR — In recognition of the loyalty and patriotism of the Winnebago Indians.
Corporal Foster Decorah
Robert Decorah
Mike Standing Water
Nelson R. Delorvale
Jesse Thompson
Dewey Mike
James Greengrass
1919"

The "Indian stone" recognizes seven men who died in 1918 of either disease or wounds in the great conflict of World War I. They are seven among millions who fought and died in the "war to end all wars."

The boulder had been selected by a committee of the Ahdawagam Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Originally placed as a monument on the west side of the Wisconsin River July 4, 1923, it was moved to the east side, to Veterans Memorial Park Oct. 18, 1993.

The stone is a symbol of the debt paid by these men — a local symbol of all who served in WWI. Some of their stories, of their lives, deaths and wounds, were recorded on newspaper pages of the time. Letters written home from "the front" were published in the Grand Rapids Tribune in the latter part of 1918, some even appearing after the Armistice was signed, ending the war Nov. 11, 1918. America had entered the war in April 1917.

A letter from Alex Jones, a private serving with the U.S. Army in France, "gives an idea of things over there that one does not get in the average letter from soldier boys," an editor's note introduced a lengthy letter published Aug. 8, 1918. The letter is dated July 2, 1918, and was written from a hospital train, traveling through France.

"We have just returned to Paris from a trip to the front and to southern France, where we detrained a capacity load of the boys who, within the last fortnight have been making glorious pages of American history. We got these boys hot off the griddle, figuratively and literally, for the sector of trenches and the surrounding wooded country there is one of the hottest on the western front, and has been for some time ... They had taken positions that could only be gained by direct attack for the big rocks and natural formations in the hills made it possible to dust them with the biggest guns. They had pushed thru in the face of the most withering machine gun and artillery fire in broad daylight. French soldiers with whom I talked while we were up there said they did not understand how the Americans had done it.

TOM CHARLESWORTH/Daily Tribune

Veterans Memorial Park on the east bank of the Wisconsin River, has been home to the "Indian stone" since 1993. The stone originally was installed on the west bank of the river but later was moved after creation of the park. Patriotic ceremonies are held annually in the park.

"But after 24 hours with those boys I could understand it. Men fresh from field hospitals who have yards of white gauze where an arm or leg ought to be, or whose bodies are literally covered by one great bandage to cover wicked wounds — men under these circumstances who will grin at you and insist on whispering how they help wallop the Huns, or who will weakly point to a wad of gauze pinned to their bloody shirts and not be content until you examine every piece of shrapnel the surgeon took from their bodies and gave them for souvenirs — men like these do anything. And during the long hours we had them there was never a complaint. ..."

Jones went on to detail stories of individual men he encountered on the hospital train as well as celebrations planned by the Americans and French for the July Fourth and July 14th holidays (American and French, respectively). He concluded his letter with this story:

"There are ten machines in the air now that I can see. Getting ready for the evening performance. That raid thing is getting on my nerves. I have passed the point of standing out in the open watching them. You remember how the population of Cologne petitioned the Pope, thru their Archbishop to ask the Allies not to bombard that city by the air route on last Good Friday. The Allies agreed. On the same day a big shell hit a church in Paris and killed 75 women and children and wounded 90 others, some were Americans. I saw them taking the debris out of that church and I saw brown stains on the white stones. The blood of women and children. That, Mother, is Kultur. Keep that in mind while you knit and play around in your war garden. That is Kultur. I wish to God some of the weak kneed citizens I know in the states had seen that, it was enough to make a jelly fish fight."

Hank Karnatz, with the American Expeditionary forces in France, also had a letter published Aug. 8, 1918. He told his family at home about the industrious French and their primitive farming techniques.

"We have had a little excitement a couple of times when Fritz dropped a few shells around us. The first few make you feel kind of queer but you soon get used to it, and the roar of the big guns do not bother us any more," he wrote.

One young Marine wrote to his father on Sept. 17, 1918, as the war drew to a close. Private Fred W. Webster's letter was published Oct. 31, 1918, in the Grand Rapids Tribune.

"I suppose the people in the states are feeling rather good over the victories of the Allies. Well, we are pleased with them too, and if keep it up and I guess we can all right It may not last a great while, and we are all anxious to get back to the states again.

"I would like to be back to

Please see INDIAN STONE/3B

Bringing Education into the 21st Century

Advantage Learning Systems (ALS) publishes the educational software called the Accelerated Reader computerized reading management program. The Accelerated Reader was originally developed by Judi Paul, who was trying to motivate her own four children to read more and better books. In 1986, Judi and her husband, Terry, formed Advantage Learning Systems (originally Readop, Inc.) to market the software commercially.

The Accelerated Reader caught on quickly – everywhere from inner-city to parochial schools to some of America's most prestigious private schools. Advantage Learning Systems – which started operations in the Pauls' basement – now operates out of their continually expanding 32,000 square foot headquarters in Wisconsin Rapids.

ALS is continually enhancing its research, product development, and customer service capabilities to better serve the needs of our schools.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Our primary purpose is to accelerate learning on a worldwide basis for all children and adults of all ability levels and ethnic and social backgrounds.
Advantage Learning Systems, Inc., is helping to fundamentally improve education through the new technology of learning information systems. Our efforts provide the essential tools that empower educators to help all students succeed to their greatest potential. By motivation and managing time-on-task in the classroom, educators who use our products develop both academic skills and critical-thinking ability in their students. The result is improved performance on both standardized and performance-based tests for students of all ability levels and socioeconomic groups.
Our innovative approach to learning technology is the reason why Advantage Learning Systems products are used in more than 43,000 schools throughout the United States and around the world.

What Educators Say.....

Charles Weiss
Immanuel Lutheran Grade School
111 11th Street North #10
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-4848
(715) 423-2650
Here's what Charles has to say about the Accelerated Reader program:
"Accelerated Reader provides an additional tool for teachers to evaluate students' reading proficiency and comprehension."

"Students used to argue for 15 practice problems instead of 25. Now they gladly tackle three or four sets of 30 or more in an hour. And they even ask for tests because they have proven to themselves that they are ready!"
Cindy Bies, 5th Grade Teacher, Our Lady Queen of Heaven School, Wisconsin Rapids, WI

"I'm learning more this year because I can go ahead at my own pace. I wasn't challenged last year, but now I can go ahead of the class, so I'm learning more."
Don Arneson, 6th Grade Student, Our Lady Queen of Heaven School, Wisconsin Rapids, WI

"I like going at my own pace to master objectives. If I don't get something right the first time I get it with more practice and help from my teacher and I get it."
Katie Hladilek, 5th Grade Student, Our Lady Queen of Heaven School, Wisconsin Rapids, WI

"Last year in fifth grade, I got C's in math. Now I get A's. I used hate math because I wasn't very good at it. Now I'm one of the top three math students in my room."
Cindy Bies, 5th Grade Teacher, Our Lady Queen of Heaven School, Wisconsin Rapids, WI

"With STAR, the immediate feedback on testing and placement is very helpful in a classroom, especially when a new group of students comes in and the teacher is totally unaware of what their level of understanding might be."
Phyllis Noland, Immanuel Lutheran School, Wisconsin Rapids, WI

What Students Say.....

Math Student is Challenged, Moves at Own Pace
Don Arneson, sixth-grade student, St. Mary's School, Wisconsin Rapids, WI
"I'm learning more this year because I can go ahead at my own pace. I wasn't challenged last year, but now I can go ahead of the class, so I'm learning more. I like Accelerated Math because you learn the material, do the practices, take a test and get the results right away, then go on to the next objective. And there's no homework to lose on the way to school. Taking the tests is no big deal, because the practices show you that you know the material."

Student Analyzes Books More Closely
Jarrod Wong, eighth-grade student, St. Thomas the Apostle School, San Francisco, CA
"I like to analyze books more closely because of the Accelerated Reader's questions. I think about parts of the book that the questions refer to, and have learned over the years to read the ENTIRE book closely. I try to visualize during reading what I might do in a character's place."

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