

World War II: 1945-2015

# Veteran Recalls Pearl Harbor

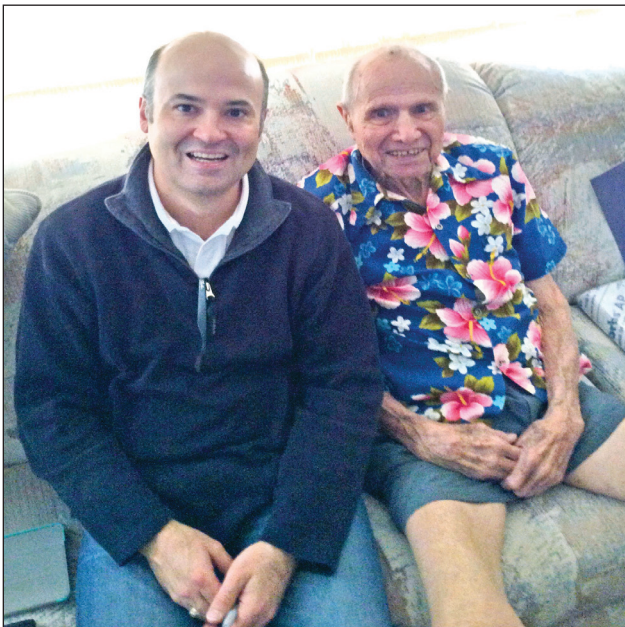
BY DAVE HOSMER

For the Press & Dakotan

Werner Klemm, a friend of mine who lives in Port Richey, Florida, may be in his 90s, but his mind is clear as a bell. When I interviewed him he was wearing his Hawaiian shirt and eager to talk. His language was vivid and his gestures were deliberate. They looked like “fluttering cards” and they got so close to him that he could have “thrown potatoes” at them!

Werner happened to be at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, a day that will “live in infamy.” His story is one of the many wherein common men exhibited exemplary courage. His message should ring true to the ears of the Greatest Generation, but, more importantly, its importance should also resonate with younger generations as well.

Werner was in the Civilian Conservation Corps when he first read about joining the US Navy. His CCC camp was in Montana, where it was darned cold. San Diego sounded warmer so he joined. Ultimately, as a 1st Class Boilermaker, he was assigned to the *USS Dobbin*, a destroyer tender. Boilermakers are “fixers” and it is obvious that Werner could fix absolutely anything with his hands.



COURTESY PHOTO  
Author Dave Hosmer is shown with Werner Klemm, a Pearl Harbor survivor who now lives in Port Richey, Florida.

Friday, Dec. 5, was just like every other day. Through his porthole, which was open to catch a breeze, Werner saw a lot of ships coming into Pearl Harbor. It was Field Day, the day when all of the ships were scrubbed down. He could see several big, beautiful battleships moored to his southwest and atop them were men standing at attention along

the rail. They were readying to go ashore. It was always a contest among the sailors to be the first to go ashore. However, the men could only leave the ship “after colors,” which began at 7:55 a.m. Pretty much each battleship had its own band.

Destroyer tenders provide maintenance support to destroyers, which are fast,

long-endurance warships used to escort larger vessels in a convoy. *The Dobbin* assisted several destroyers – the *Tangier*, *Utah* (sunk), *Raleigh* (heavily damaged) and the *Detroit* - at moorings located a few hundred feet off the northeast corner of Ford Island, located in the center of Pearl Harbor. On the southeast side of Ford Island were eight battleships: *California* (sunk), *Maryland*, *Oklahoma* (sunk), *West Virginia* (sunk), *Tennessee*, *Arizona* (sunk), *Vestal* (heavily damaged) and the *Nevada* (sunk). Adjacent to the *Dobbin* in her “nest” were several other ships: the *MacDonough*, *Phelps*, *Dewey*, *Hull* and *Worden*.

Sunday, Dec. 7, was Werner’s opportunity to take liberty. He was eager to go ashore. He and a friend on the *USS California* wanted to view a blowhole beyond Waikiki Beach. During rough winds it was said that water would shoot up to 30 feet in the air. Werner dressed in his last clean suit of whites and headed up top.

He stood at attention, listened to the band play, and watched the presentation of the colors.

“Here I see these planes coming down over the

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## CASA Holiday Fundraiser Tuesday

The Southeast CASA Program is hosting “Holiday Cheer for CASA,” a free holiday social, at Rounding 3rd Bar and Casino in downtown Yankton on Tuesday, Dec. 8. The public is invited to attend this “friend-raiser” anytime from 5-7 p.m.

Enjoy some treats, win a door prize, and hear about how the Court Appointed Special Advocates program promotes and protects the best interests of abused and neglected children in Yankton, Clay and Bon Homme counties.

For more information, you can also call me at (605) 760-4825.

## Human Trafficking Rescheduled Monday

The human trafficking that was originally scheduled for last Monday in Yankton has been re-scheduled for Monday, Dec. 7, at 6:30 p.m. at the Avera Physician’s Office Pavilion.

Deb Fischer-Clemens, RN, BSN, MPH will provide information and discussion about human trafficking in South Dakota. Learn more about the symptoms and signs that the victims manifest and the need for continual awareness of this problem in the Midwest.

This program is sponsored by the South Dakota Nurses Association, District 11 and open to interested persons.

## Help Light Up Downtown Yankton

The Riverfront Events Center has announced it will be working with the City of Yankton to put the small white lights back in the trees in the downtown area.

Previously the lights in the trees were put in place by Riverfront Events Center staff and last year, Gregg Koppetsky raised the money to do so. This year, the City has agreed to put the lights in the trees with City equipment and staff if the downtown businesses can raise the initial amount of funds to purchase the lights.

The trees look magical when lit and the whole downtown becomes more inviting. However, these lights require time and equipment of the city to be installed.

The downtown is more than just stores, or businesses or pubs, it’s a place of history, imagination and intrigue. It’s a tourist attraction, a place where newcomers go to see, hear and experience a feeling, a time of long ago. The stores, businesses and pubs allow them to take a piece of that home with them. The lights in the trees are just one of the elements in helping to do just that. It will begin to change the perception of the downtown. We hope you will help us to make it happen.

Donations can be made out to the City of Yankton and dropped off at Bella’s Restaurant in the Riverfront Event Center, 3rd and Walnut, or to Suzie Wann at Head to Heels, 108 W 3rd. If you have any questions, call MelCena Bernard at 605-661-2509. Any amount will help. Thank you so much.

## Holiday Mascots Make Their Way Back

Once again, area residents will have a chance to visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus at 1000 W. 11th St. in Yankton during the holiday season.

The Clauses will be there Dec. 11-13 and Dec. 18-20, from 6-8:30 p.m. each night. Each child receives a goodies bag.

Bring a camera and enjoy the memories.

## OBITUARIES

### Raymond Kostel

Raymond J. Kostel, 80 of Wagner, passed away December 4, 2015 at the Good Samaritan Society in Wagner, with his wife Jane by his side. He is at peace now and will be spending his first Christmas in the arms of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Mass of Christian Burial will be held 10:00 a.m. Monday, December 7 at St. John Catholic Church in Wagner. Burial will be in the parish cemetery with military honors.

Visitation will be 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, December 6 at the Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home in Wagner, followed by a 7 p.m. rosary/wake service at the church.

Raymond John Kostel was born in Wagner on January 4, 1935 to Edward and Rose (Swatek) Kostel. He grew up on a farm south of Wagner with brother Ernest and sisters Florence, Irene and Betty. He attended country school until 8th grade, then when on to Catholic School in Tabor, and graduated from Wagner in 1954. In high school, Ray organized and played trumpet for the Red Raven Orchestra. After graduation, he spent two years in the Army where he was stationed in San Francisco with the Guided Missile Unit. After serving, he returned home to farm with his dad and brother Ernie.

Ray married Joan Andersh on August 27, 1957. To this union six daughters were born: Diane, Gloria, Susan, Cheryl, Linette and JoEllen. Joan passed away June 1992.

During his life Ray farmed and worked Civil Defense. He was also the head bus mechanic and drove school buses for Wagner Community School for 37 ½ years.

Ray loved to watch NASCAR, Vikings football, hunt, fish and build. His creations include a combine cab, log splitters, drive-on tailgate for trailers, camper, race car and mini hot rod. A cannon that he made and a pair of hand-crafted steel geese make their home in front of the Good Samaritan Center in Wagner.

In 2000, Ray and Jane Horner Andersh were married. With 12 grown children between them, their initial plan was to sell both of their homes and spend a month with each of their children... but, they decided to keep Ray’s home on Lake Andes where they enjoyed the lake and spent many hours watching wildlife out their patio doors. They continued to drive school buses, while enjoying their love of travel, fishing and visiting their families.

In 2013, Ray started slowly sliding down a long, slippery slope. It was a living hell for him, and extremely hard on loved ones standing by helplessly. On June 11, 2014 Ray had a hemorrhagic

stroke that left him unable to mobilize. He spent the rest of his life in the Wagner Good Samaritan Center. Jane moved to Wagner to be close to visit, feed and care for him. In January, Ray celebrated his 80th birthday with family and friends. Ray sang along with the band as they played Bohemian music and enjoyed cake and ice cream...he had a great day! On February 14, 2015 Ray and Jane celebrated their 15th anniversary with another day of family, friends and music.

Thankful for sharing his life are his wife Jane of 15 years; his daughters: Diane (Terry) Gudahl, Gloria Kostel, Susan Altieri, Linette Kostel and JoEllen (Chris) Graham; stepchildren Ed (Marge) Andersh, Kevin (Georgia) Andersh, Deb (Rich) Bures, Burt (Barb) Andersh, Tim (Elaine) Andersh and Tami Andersh; five grandchildren, 18 step-grandchildren, two great grandchildren, seven step-great grandchildren, one step-great-great grandchild; two sisters: Florence Kokesh and Betty Broz; and sister-in-law Lucille Kostel.

Ray was preceded in death by his parents; wife Joan; daughter Cheryl Kostel-Cessa; brother Ernie; sister Irene Cuka; brothers-in-law: Don Broz, Mike Kokesh and Bill Cuka; one nephew and two nieces.

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December 5, 2015

### Curtis Nelsen

Curtis John “Curt” Nelsen, 31, of Yankton, formerly of Vermillion, passed away on Monday morning, Nov. 30, 2015, as the result of an automobile accident in Yankton County.

The celebration of Curt’s life will be at 11 a.m. Monday, Dec. 7, at Kober Funeral Home in Vermillion with Pastor James Fowler officiating from Trinity Lutheran Church. Visitation will be one hour prior to the services at the funeral home. Burial will be in Meckling Cemetery, rural Meckling, after the luncheon at Howler’s in Vermillion.

Kober Funeral Home has been entrusted with the services.

Condolences may be posted online to www.kober-funeralhome.com.

### Gideon Bertsch

Gideon Bertsch, 91, of Menno passed away Thursday at the Menno-Olivet Care Center.

Funeral services will be held on Monday, Dec. 7, at 10:30 a.m. at the Salem MB Church of rural Bridgewater.

Visitation with family present will be from 5-7 p.m. on Sunday with a time of sharing at 7 p.m. at the Walter Funeral Home in Freeman.

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## Summit Center Pool Closed Friday

The Summit Activities Center pool will be unavailable to members and guests on Saturday, Dec. 12, due to the Yankton Swim Team Meet. The weight and fitness area, track and gymnasium will still be open for members and guests as normal.

For further information, call 668-5234 or stop by the Summit Activities Center at 1801 Summit Street.

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