

United Mine Workers Local Union 1147  
WWII Roll of Honor  
Narrative

The honor roll was discovered in May, 2015 on the second floor of what is now the Coal City Police Station at 525 S. Broadway St. At one time the second floor was the village board meeting room and the village library was located in the west end of the space. The village allowed the use of the meeting room by local organizations including the Mine Workers union.

A portion of the second floor was being converted to a police evidence storage area and village Maintenance Department workers were clearing out accumulated debris when they discovered the honor roll in its original frame missing the glass. They notified Officer Kevin Jones who is the police department's evidence custodian. Jones, whose uncle served in WWII, is a WWII re-enactor and recognized the significance of the document. Jones and Police Chief Tom Best took the honor roll to Village Manager Mark Fritz.

On June 22, 2015 Coal City was struck by an EF3 tornado and the document remained in Fritz's office while village officials tended to the immediate needs of the residents.

In September 2015, Jones contacted Charlie Brown the Commander of St. Juvin Post 1336 VFW and asked if he would like to see the document. After viewing the honor roll Brown approached the village board about taking possession, having it restored, and displaying it in the Local History section of the Coal City Public Library. The board decided to have St. Juvin Post get the document in condition for public viewing.

Brown then started looking for a firm to do an evaluation of the documents condition and develop a plan for conservation and preservation.

He also contacted the Coal City Public Library District's Director Jolene Franciskovich and Head Reference Librarian Irene Shepkowski regarding research on the names on the honor roll and display in the library. Shepkowski and her staff started the research using the 1930 and 1940 census and obituary files from local newspapers trying to identify where the veterans lived and if any were still alive.

After some research it was felt the Art Restoration Experts in Downers Grove IL was a good candidate to be the service provider. ARE is a subsidiary of Contents Recovery Experts who was contracted by Serv-Pro, a disaster recovery firm, for document treatment for some of the Coal City residents affected by the June 22<sup>nd</sup> tornado event.

Brown met with Jessica Price ARE's Production Manager in October 2015 and Price suggested that Jackleen Leary, a professional paper conservator, view the document and develop a plan of preservation. Brown, Price and Leary met in late October 2015 and Leary developed an evaluation which pointed out the troublesome areas of the honor roll.

At the time it was framed it had been glued to a cardboard backing which, like most paper products, contained acid, causing the paper to become brittle, additionally the missing glass in the frame allowed the paper to become soiled and water spotted. The use of sepia ink caused the names of sixteen of the forty veterans to become nearly illegible. Leary's plan proposed to remove the backing, de-acidify, clean, flatten and repair the damage to the edges of the paper and re-letter the illegible names, duplicating the original hand as closely as possible. The honor roll would also be backed with Japan tissue to strengthen and stiffen the paper. The cost of this work, less preservation framing, was estimated to range from \$1250 and not to exceed \$1875.

St. Juvin Post members decided that when fundraising reached \$950, the deposit required, they would proceed with the project. Fund raising began with the United Mine Workers union, and proceeded to local municipal governments who had residents named on the honor roll and to local veterans' organizations.

Along the way private parties also donated, Ann Gill of the Coal City Courant and Heidi Litchfield of the Morris Herald News provided publicity that raised public knowledge of the project and the library staff researched and verified all the names on the honor roll with the exception of one.

A complete list of donors appears on the hand out pamphlet and in the compendium with information on the veterans named on the honor roll.

By February 2016 the \$950 goal was reached and work started on the restoration, estimated to take four to six months, while fundraising and library research and preparation continued.

In August 2016 the restoration by Jackleen Leary was completed and the honor roll was taken to Mike's Paint and Paper in Morris IL for preservation framing by Mary Motter.

Total Cost of the project, which eventually raised \$2233.78, was \$2108.00 plus \$133 for one half sized copies presented to donors.

The honor roll went on a "victory lap" visiting municipal boards and veteran's organizations that had contributed to the restoration.

The UMW Roll of Honor will be displayed at the Coal City Public Library District's 8<sup>th</sup> annual Veteran's Day Program held at the Coal City High School auditorium on November 11, 2016.

The ultimate resting place for this important piece of our heritage and our debt to those who risked all to defend our freedom and way of life is the Local History section of the Coal City Public Library District where all can view the names of those who served their country at a time when the free world was in its greatest peril.