



City, citizens remember, respect those who served

BY DAVID BOSSICK
MANAGING EDITOR

Ludington, in the course of its history, has solemnly remembered those who served in uniform both far and wide.

There's a deep respect. The city's adulation and respect for its veterans shined throughout the decades.

Within Lakeview Cemetery are the souls of those who served in the Civil War. That includes a monument that can be seen from Lakeshore Drive as it runs north out of the city.

One Civil War veteran remembered in Ludington but not buried here was Charles H. DePuy.

DePuy arrived in the Village of Pere Marquette after the Civil War. DePuy was a first sergeant in the Union Army as a part of Company H, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters. DePuy earned his Medal of Honor through his actions on July 30, 1864, at the Battle of the Crater in Petersburg, Virginia. DePuy was born in Sherman in Wexford County in 1842 and was awarded the Medal of Honor 32

years after his actions. He died in 1935 in Elk Rapids and was buried in Kalkaska.

Petersburg is situated south of Richmond, Virginia. DePuy's citation stated, according to the American Battlefield Trust, "Being an old artilleryman, aided General (William Francis) Bartlett in working the guns of the dismantled fort."

William R. Charette was distinguished with the Congressional Medal of Honor in March 1953, receiving it from President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Charette, a U.S. Navy hospital corpsman, was sixth from that branch of the armed forces to receive the honor.

Shortly afterward, in 1957, Charette was asked to select the unknown serviceman to be placed in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. He was the only active enlisted serviceman who received the Medal of Honor at that time. He spent a 27-year career in the navy, retiring in 1977.

When he received the honor, Charette received the key to the city, and

a large portrait was unveiled during a ceremony in 1954. The portrait hangs in the Commissioners Room of the Mason County Courthouse.

The veterans mall at Stearns Park also got its start in 1958. The Memorial Association of Mason County Allied Veterans constructed a veterans' memorial at Stearns Park that year. A dedication service was hosted on Memorial Day, and a service continues on that day each year concluding a parade from the Mason County Courthouse to Stearns Park.

More recently, the community showed its outpouring for support for Spc. Joe Lancour and Sgt. Eric Lund.

Lancour of the U.S. Army was wounded in an ambush Nov. 9, 2007, and died of his wounds Nov. 10 while serving in Afghanistan. His actions earned then private first class Lancour a promotion to Army specialist, a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart.

His funeral was hosted at Hawley Gymnasium, and a somber procession left the school to his final resting place later that fall.

Lund, who served in the U.S. National Guard in Afghanistan, was severely injured in May 2012 when he lost both of his arms. He retired and began to rehab from there. His rehabilitation included a double-arm transplant received in 2017.

The Memorial Day parade that concludes at Stearns Park received a bit of an update, too, in 2017.

A new memorial called the Veterans Mall was constructed adjacent to old War Memorial and features an expanded lighting area, new flagpoles showcasing the service flags of all branches of the military and seating around the bust of Charette.

The outpouring of support for veterans wasn't only reserved for those who recently fought in Iraq or Afghanistan, either. When the Cost of Freedom Vietnam Traveling Wall arrived in Ludington in 2014, the outpouring of support for those that served in the conflict in southeast Asia was evident now as perhaps it could have or should have been when they arrived home initially.

Ludington native reminisces about winning Medal of Honor

BY LLOYD WALLACE
LUDINGTON DAILY NEWS

LAKE WALES, Fla. — It was March 27, 1953 and three hills, collectively called the Nevada Outposts — Carson, Reno and Vegas — had recently been overrun by the Chinese.



Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines was one of the units assigned to retake Vegas, located some 1,300 yards forward of the main line of resistance. Moving up with them was Hospital Corpsman Third Class William R. Charette of the third platoon.

Over the next 18 hours, Charette, then a 20-year-old Ludington native, would earn the Medal of Honor, according to the official citation of the action, "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in action against enemy aggressor forces during the early morning hours."

The site of that engagement is now located in North Korea, not too far from Panmunjon, where peace talks that would eventually end the Korean War were taking place.

"They brought us up and it was probably about noon when we started out," says Charette, who was 74 when he spoke with the Daily News from his home in Timberlane subdivision, a wooded area a few miles from Lake Wales just off Lake Pierce near a wildlife refuge.

The assault began with Charette's platoon in reserve, supplying overhead fire for one of the advance platoons. The call came down that one of those platoons needed a corpsman.

"Something happened to their corpsman. I don't know what happened him to this day," Charette says. "They had people hit and they were on what you would call the point position. In other words, they were way up there."

He treated a man wounded the

night before and then hunkered in with the rest of the second platoon which had gotten word that it would be the point unit on the next assault.

"I'm laying there knowing that the second platoon is going to be the assault platoon. I'll never forget this sergeant," says Charette. "He stood up and he's carrying this machine gun and he says 'OK, men, let's move on out because if they don't kill you, by God, I will.' I'm thinking, 'Well, I'll tell him I'm not with this platoon, but on second thought, maybe I better move on out.'"

Taking high ground is never easy and the first casualty wasn't long in coming.

According to a published account of the action, Charette and five men moved past the front line to attend two wounded Marines.

"That's when they started rolling grenades into us, which is a smart thing — for them, anyway," Charette explains. "It got pretty bad. There were quite a few grenades and the next thing you knew, just about everybody was hit."

Charette included. A gre-

nade exploded several feet from him and he was temporarily blinded and deafened.

His injuries were minor and he returned to treating the wounded.

SEE CHARETTE,
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Law enforcement going since city was founded

BY VANS STEVENSON AND DAVID BOSSICK
LUDINGTON DAILY NEWS

Law enforcement in Ludington is as old as the city itself.

Ever since Ludington was established in 1873 and John Davidson was appointed by the common council to pound the first beat around town, the city has had a peace keeping and safety arm.

In the early days, Ludington had only one marshal to watch over it. As the population grew, so did the number of complaints, thus two constables were added to the city's payrolls.

Records are incomplete to the exact dates, but the marshal and his men used horses at various times on patrol and the police department, several years after it was formally organized in the early 1920s, utilized motorcycles and later a car was purchased by the city for the department.

The Ludington Police Department was officially established May 15, 1916 when the city commission appointed William McGuire chief of police along with naming him street commissioner.

By 1920, four night patrolmen were walking the streets of the city and Bert E. Peterson became one of Ludington's first motorcycle cops in 1922.

During the early years of an organized department, a special police unit was created by the city commission. These men worked without compensation at various public facilities including the German Hall, Lyric Theatre and the baseball park.

Ludington second police chief was T.J. Barber, succeeded McGuire in 1919.

Under the leadership of Barber, many progressive changes took place during his 31-year span as chief.

Warren A. Cartier, the late president of the Electric Tamper and Equipment Co., left a gift of two radio receiving units in 1935 to be installed in the police car and in the police office. The new units would be tuned into the Michigan State Police Radio Network in Lansing.

In 1936 the Ludington City Commission amended the city charter and placed the police department under the civil service system. The action was taken on a suggestion from Chief Barber.

Chief Barber noted a substantial increase in the activities of the police department following the release of the annual report of activities in 1942.

In response to this increase in activities over previous years, Chief Barber instituted an 'in service' training course for officers which included lectures and discussions sessions during which time City Attorney Eugene Christman instructed the group on the legal fundamentals of law enforcement and Chief Barber outlined the duties and responsibilities of a police officer.

Two additional men were also added to the depart-



Members of the Ludington Police Department and Mason County Sheriff's Office apprehend Lowell Fetters on North Delia Street in 2014.

DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO

Ludington patrolman slain in 1958

BY PAUL S. PETERSON
LUDINGTON DAILY NEWS

On the night of July 20, 1958, two Chicago men — Charles Hanna and Benjamin Davis — came to Ludington with the intention of getting back a car that had been impounded by Chicago police.

Hanna had a police record, and came to Ludington armed with a pistol that he used to threaten a waitress at The Grand tavern while trying to get her to help get the car back. According to the book, "In the Line of Duty: A Tribute to Fallen Law Enforcement Officers from the State of Michigan," the tavern owner said Hanna handed the waitress a .38-caliber bullet and said, "This one has your name on it if you don't come to Chicago with us."

Police were summoned, and three officers responded — Wallace Karp, Stanford Kollar and Arlo Slagle.

They began to take the pair into custody, but Hanna pulled out his gun and shot officer Arlo Slagle in the chest at point-blank range, killing him almost instantly. Hanna ran from the tavern, and with pure luck came upon a car with a full gas tank. Davis surrendered at the scene.

It's unclear how far Hanna got before being apprehended. Some accounts state he was arrested in Illinois by Chicago police, others have him making it as far as Valdosta, Georgia.

ment during that year.

Fred Nankee, a veteran officer with the police department, succeeded Chief Barber in February of 1951.

A new special police force held an organized meeting in January of 1951. The new unit was called the Ludington Civilian Auxiliary Police and was composed of 40



DAILY NEWS FILE

Charles Hanna, handcuffed, arrives at the Mason County Jail following his arrest in Georgia for killing Ludington Police Patrolman Arlo Slagle. Flanking him are Ludington Police Chief Fred Nankee, left, and Mason County Sheriff Ed Anderson.

Hanna was convicted on Oct. 17, 1958 and sentenced to 20 to 40 years in prison.

While there, he became an expert at reading and writing brail. He was the subject of two detective magazines and newspaper stories throughout the Midwest.

He was released from prison on Dec. 1, 1966 following a new trial, at which he pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, having served about half of his minimum sentence.

area citizens.

In the late 1940s and early 50s, an ingenious communication system between the dispatcher and the man in the field made do until later a transmitting and receiving system was installed.

The police dispatcher in the office would receive a call and if an officer's assis-

The 27-year-old Slagle was a Korean War veteran. He left behind a wife, son and daughter.

The former Ludington Police Station, located on the southwest corner of Rath Avenue and Loomis Street (now the location of West Shore Bank) was named in honor of Slagle.

His son, Duane, later went on to become mayor of Scottville.

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tance was required, a flashing yellow light, located at the intersection of Ludington Avenue and James Street would be turned on. This signaled the officer on patrol to call the office and find the nature of the complaint.

The first sophisticated radio network was bought by the city for the department



The front page of the April 21, 2012, edition of the Daily News covering the first trial of Sean Phillips regarding the disappearance of his daughter, Katherine "Baby Kate" Phillips.



The front page of the Sept. 10, 2013, edition of the Daily News covering the death of Tpr. Paul Butterfield.

gun. Officers entered the bar and while they were escorting the two subjects outside for questioning, one drew a pistol and shot and killed Patrolman Arlo Slagle. Slagle was the first and only policeman in Ludington's first century that was killed in the line of duty.

Ludington Police, Mason County Sheriff's officers, Michigan State Police and other authorities from throughout Western Michigan set up (one of) the largest manhunt in the history of Ludington in an attempt to nab the suspect.

Charles Hanna, the prime suspect in the shooting, was later arrested in Valdosta, Ga. He was brought back to Mason County where he was tried and convicted of the murder of Patrolman Slagle.

Following the death of Police Chief Fred Nankee in 1962, Harold V. Mehl was appointed Chief of Police.

More changes came to the department under Mehl's administration. Additional cars, officers, a cadet program, clerk dispatchers and even a police dog named Caesar were added to the force.

A new police department complex was acquired under Chief Mehl. A building, previously used for offices during the construction of the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant, was sold to the city and converted into new offices for the department. Prior to that time the police department was located in the southwest corner of the Municipal Building.

Capt. William Hartley was appointed acting Chief of Police in 1973 when Chief Mehl retired from the force. Hartley was a 22-year veteran of the force at that time.

In reviewing the years he has been with the department, Hartley says that probably the biggest changes came during the 1960s when more officers and various new programs were implemented.

Looking into the future of the department, Hartley worked to get a detective bureau established, so more officers could be put out in the field.

"The problem we have now is with follow-up investigations. For example, an officer who investigates a breaking and entering has to follow up on his investigation and this takes him off patrol. With a detective bureau, we could have men that specialize in this type of investigation," Hartley told the Daily News in 1973.

While the Ludington Police Department has dealt with the very serious issues of crime within the city, there were also some very different responses it needed to give.

In the early 1970s, the police were called to respond to what they described as illegal gatherings. One was when 11 people violated a curfew of 10 p.m. at Stearns Park. Ludington Police Chief Harold Mehl asked for back-up from the Michigan State Police to assist his officers in dispersing the group several times, but they

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Ludington's fire department dates back to early 1880s

BY VANS STEVENSON
AND DAVID BOSSICK
LUDINGTON DAILY NEWS

From a few unorganized volunteers along with a bucket-brigade comprised of local citizens, which attempted to bring under control a fire that burned Ludington to the ground in 1881, to what was an organized department of 20 trained volunteers and a fleet of six modern pieces of fire equipment in the 1970s, the Ludington Fire Department has played a vital role in preserving the history of the city.

Fire Department records are sketchy during the first several years of its existence, however Howard Miller, a long-time veteran of the old Phoenix Hose Co. No. 1, did log some of the early activities of the department which remained (50 years ago).

During the early years of lumbering in the Ludington area, steam pumps were installed by lumber mills around clusters of houses for fire protection.

Two years after a fire destroyed \$35,000 worth of property in the southeast section of Ludington before it became a city, a large meeting of local residents was held to organize some sort of fire department. During this session, 26 men were selected for the first fire company.

The first fire house was located on the corner of Rath Avenue and Court Street and it housed a two-wheeled hose cart, a hand fire engine and a hook and ladder truck. Peleg Ewing, a local wagon maker, constructed the first fire truck for the city.

Chief B.J. Goodsell, Michael J. Danaher, Thomas Criley, F.B. Pitt and Dr. L.T. Southworth were names synonymous with the early fire company.

When the bell on city hall sounded the alarm, the race was on to the fire house because the first driver who arrived received a fire dollar fee.

There were internal problems in the company in the late 1870s; the organization was loose and volunteers were dissatisfied because at this time they were not receiving compensation.

Ludington paid its dues on that ill-fortuned morning in 1881 when a fire raced through the city destroying 65 buildings in its path and virtually leveling the entire business district before the fire company aided by a force of local citizens brought the conflagration under control.

As a result of that fire, the most disastrous in Ludington's history, a recognized fire department and municipal water system were established.

Thomas Ford was named fire chief and under his direction the fire department was reorganized and 27 volunteers were divided between two fire companies: The Phoenix Hose Co. No. 1, located at the corner of Rath Avenue and Loomis Street and the Fourth Ward Hose Co. No. 2, located on North Madison Street.

There were three divisions of the fire department at this time comprising a hook and ladder company, an engine company and a hose company. Each company wore fancy uniforms all with a different color scheme.

In those days a team of galloping horses would dash the bright-red fire wagons through the unpaved streets of Ludington to the scene.

Ludington had its share of fires in the years to follow. A city built from lumbering interests could not help escape the inevitable. The biggest fires were those that destroyed several mills and industries in the city.

Fire department records date back to March 9, 1897 when William Miller, secretary and treasurer, kept journals of the meetings held twice a month.

The fire department had a very small operating budget in its early years and to supplement their allocation from the city, an annual firemen's ball and firemen's fair were held to raise additional revenue. These affairs were huge in their day. The fair consisted of a large carnival with games, rides and all manner of concessions.

A constitution and by-laws were submitted by a special committee and approved at a special meeting of the Fourth Ward Company on Feb. 28, 1899.

In 1922 Ludington Fire Chief Nathan Joseph was elected vice-president of the National Firemen's Association.

Two firemen lost their lives fighting blazes in the city during the 1920s, the only fire department casualties in the history of Ludington.

Fireman James Schiffeneder was killed when an explosion ripped through the V. L. Teaford Tire Shop during a fire Nov. 19, 1925 and Arthur Greenwald lost his life when he grabbed a live wire running out of a burning building at a fire Sept. 29, 1929.

After Chief Ford retired H.V. Huston became chief and he was



Family members console each other at the James Street fire in 1993. Nine people died in the blaze, the worst fire in the history of not just the city, but also the county.



The front page of Ludington Daily News from March 1, 1993, when nine people died from a fire on James Street in Ludington.



Former Ludington Mayor Kaye Holman gives then Ludington Fire Chief Jerry Funk at the ribbon-cutting of the fire station that opened in May 2019.



Greg Calhoun holds the hose during a training session near the carferry slips.

DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO



A couch that burned in a home is inspected during this undated image.

Firefighters douse the supporting tresses of a church fire in this undated image.

DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTOS

succeeded by a list of chiefs that includes S. I. Stillwell, Nathan Joseph, George Barber, Charles Boerner, Arthur Lange and a man that has been around fires longer than any other member of the department today, Ludington Fire Chief Harry Ziemkowski.

Ziemkowski became a volunteer fireman May 28, 1943 and he lived, for a number of years, in the Fourth Ward Fire House.

Chief Ziemkowski says his first fire fighting initiation was the night the Epworth Pavillion burned in the summer of 1943.

"That was a hot one," he recollected. "The wind was blowing right off the lake and there wasn't much we could do to stop it." The fire department did, however, manage to prevent the fire from spreading to nearby cottages and the Epworth Hotel.

During the war years, Ziemkowski operated a fire truck given to Ludington by the state to be utilized as a prime source of protection for Dow Chemical Co., since it was producing war materials and operating as a defense plant.

At this time there were 12 men assigned to both the Fourth Ward and Phoenix Houses.

In recalling some of the biggest fires he has ever participated in fighting, Ziemkowski rates the Masonic Temple fire in the late 1940s above the rest. He recalled that he was the first man to arrive at the former downtown landmark and the last to leave. He manned a hose for 23 hours.

Ziemkowski also told of another fire in the late '40s that the Ludington Fire Department fought, along with scores of other departments from all over Western Michigan at a box factory in Filer City. "The fire was declared a state emergency and the state police were calling on departments from all up and down the Lake Michigan Shoreline."

Ziemkowski has seen a lot of changes in the department since he joined and primarily they have been additions and improvements in equipment and the quality of volunteers he says. "We have some of the latest fire equipment in existence and a well-trained group of young volunteers." Ziemkowski boasts of having one of the finest groups of firemen in Michigan. "I'll wager anyone that it won't take us more than two to three minutes to have a truck rolling after a call comes in," Harry added.

One big change during the continuing Ziemkowski years was the phasing out of the Fourth Ward Hose Company in the 1960s because of a lack of funds to sufficiently operate it and an increase in railroad traffic, which divided the Fourth Ward, at times, from the rest of the city.

Into the 1970s, major fires damaged various sites in the city. Firefighters from Ludington, Pere Marquette and Hamlin fought a blaze that destroyed the old Ludington Lumber Co. in the 400 block of South Rath Avenue was one such notable fire.

And in that decade began the career of some of the longest-serving firemen in Ludington history, Jerry Funk, Fred Hackert and Ron Jabrocki.

Orgie's Restaurant burned in downtown Ludington on Sept. 16, 1986, and another major fire claimed Peterson's Furniture Specialties about two weeks later on Oct. 2, 1986.

The worst fire, though, was and remains to be the fire at 208 N. James St. on Sunday, Feb. 28, 1993. The fire killed nine people in an apartment house. The victims' ages were between an 18-year-old woman and a 2 1/2-month-old boy.

"That was a rough one, 'cause all of us (firefighters) pretty much had kids the same ages as the ones who died in the fire," Funk told the Daily News in 2020 when he marked 50 years with the department, 26 as its chief. "Of all the fires I have been to, that was probably the worst. We have had other fatalities, but one big fire like that was just devastating."

"After the James Street Fire, counselors were called in to talk with the department and that helped a lot."

Current Fire Chief John Henderson was a member of the department on that fateful night.

"The first big fire we have, I run down, get dressed, and we do what we need to do. I get the hose, go to put this fire out, and after I get my air pack on, while I'm moving to the door, here come two young moms screaming, 'My kids, my kids,'" Henderson told the Daily News in January 2021. "It went from 'we're going to put this fire out' to 'this impacting people and it's extremely real.'"

The former Handy Things Manufacturing plant was destroyed in December 1995, and firefighters had to return to the scene three times because of rekindling.

Many of these fires were responded to from a fire station located at the intersection of Loomis and Robert streets. A new fire station was constructed on Tinkham Avenue, and it officially opened in 2019, and with the move, the beloved fire siren that sounded at noon and 10 p.m. each day was removed.

"We have a new building that will last 40 to 50 years so that is taken care of. We have a fire district that is set up to take care of new fire trucks purchases. We have an operating budget from the city," Funk said in June 2020.

Today, Henderson is the fire chief for Ludington. Henderson has 30 years of service alone with the department.

THIS STORY is republished from the Nov. 10, 1973, edition of the Daily News, originally written by Vans Stevenson. Updates from the past 50 years written by David Bossick.

With active port, Coast Guard stood ready

BY DAVID BOSSICK
MANAGING EDITOR

The roots of the U.S. Coast Guard are deep within Ludington.

Well before the Coast Guard was organized as an armed service, Ludington had a lifesaving station located along the waterfront. According to Paul Peterson's book, "The Story of Ludington," Congress appropriated funds for a Life Saving Station in Ludington, a precursor to the Coast Guard.

"The reason was all too clear," Peterson wrote. "Between 1848 and 1881, 61 vessels had been lost in an area 10 miles south of Ludington to Big Point Sable, and 146 men went down with them. The worst losses were on the barge Neptune in 1848 when 37 were lost; on the schooner Reindeer in 1855, and the steamer Columbia in 1881, both off Big Point Sable and each with 16 men lost; the schooner B.J. Wright off Ludington in 1855 with 12 deaths; and the schooner Cherokee in 1855, and the brig A.H. Mitchell off Lincoln Village in 1866, each with 10 men lost."

The estimated costs in losses was more than \$1.7 million.

Ludington's first station opened on Sept. 12, 1879, and it opened with six men manning the station. The station itself wasn't on the northern side of the channel, but rather, it was built on the Buttersville Peninsula side of the channel.

During the early years, the stations were closed in the winter months, but the servicemen weren't far away. Rousing volunteers and those with the life saving station was critical in those winter months.

The members of the life saving station/Coast Guard sprung into action when the carferries of Ludington's fleet had issues. From the groundings of the carferries early in the 1900s to the Armistice Day storm of 1940. Between breeches and running lines to carferries stuck, the Coast Guard did all it could when ships and boaters got into trouble.

The U.S. Coast Guard Station — the current Port of Ludington Maritime Museum — was constructed in 1935. Congress spent \$25,000 at that time for the station's construction, and it was something that was in use until 2004.

In the 1980s, part of the Coast Guard's mission was educating the public. Those education efforts continue through its auxiliary to ensure boaters have the proper life preservers and up-to-date fire extinguishers.

That education, too, was in the form of working with local fire departments on ice rescues. When the ice is right on area lakes such as Pere Marquette Lake, the USCG and the local departments work on those training efforts, just in case.

The Coast Guard's mission is search and rescue, and those operations have changed at Ludington over the years. In the 1980s, the USCG had a 20-ton, 44-foot motorlifeboat at the station and a 22-foot Boston Wheeler for search-and-rescue missions. In 1986, there were 17 serving the area out of Ludington, including three women.

At the turn of the 21st century, the Coast Guard's footprint in Ludington was changing and getting smaller.

The Coast Guard built its new station in 2002 and move into it in 2003. Once it vacated its original building, it was pitched as a location that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources could use, or it could turn into a location for the Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers Association.

Instead, the historic building was leased by the Mason County Historical Society as the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum.

The Coast Guard proved to be critical to events in and around Lake Michigan near Ludington. The Coast Guard was one of many, many entities that responded in July 2010 to a plane crash in the lake that claimed the lives of four people.

Besides Dr. James Hall;



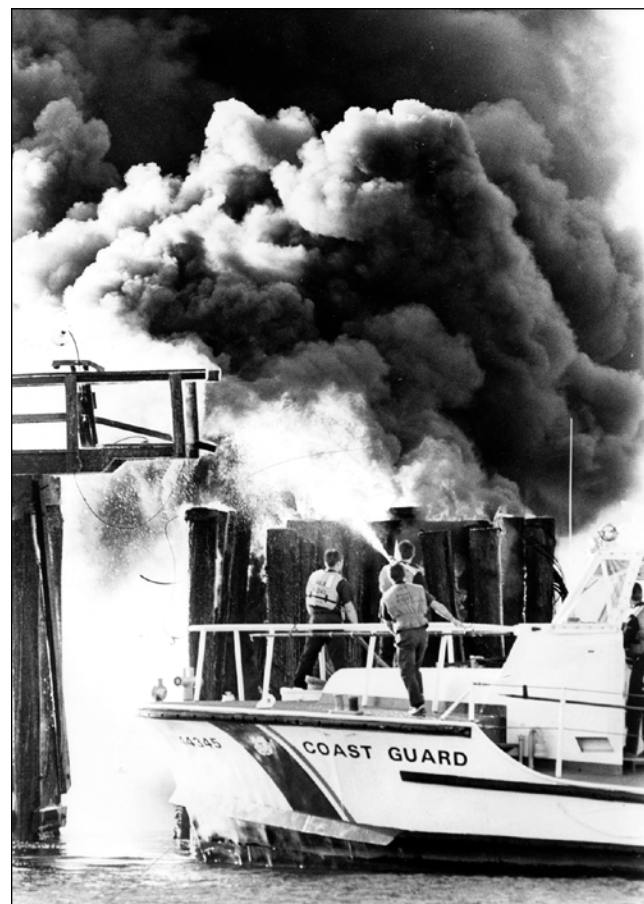
A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter conducts a search near the Lake Michigan shoreline as three people watch in this undated photo.

DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO



HAROLD HOLMES PHOTO VIA DAVID PETERSEN

Crew members of the U.S. Coast Guard row ashore during the Armistice Day storm of 1940.



DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO

Members of the U.S. Coast Guard spray water on a fire in the Pere Marquette Lake harbor.



DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO

The Ludington North Breakwater Lighthouse is seen in the distance on some rough Lake Michigan waters.



DAILY NEWS FILE

A postcard depicts the U.S. Life Saving Station in Ludington. The service predated the Coast Guard.



A Coast Guard boat and helicopter are shown in front of the Ludington station in this undated photo.

DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO

Alma School Superintendent Don Pavlik and his wife Irene Pavlik; and copilot Earl Davidson all perished in the crash. Pilot Jerry Freed, the only survivor, was released from the hospital shortly after the crash.

The new station coincided with a change of how the service viewed Ludington. The Ludington and Frankfort stations were put under the supervision of the service in Manistee under what was called the Grand Haven plan.

In 2018, Station Ludington became a seasonal operation, but the community received assurances locals shouldn't notice much change in the years ahead.

"We are not leaving any of these communities," said then-Chief Boat-

rickson told the Daily News then. "It may take some time to realize, but this is going to better our response time."

Fredrickson was installed as officer in charge of the Ludington station on July 6, 2018. He now oversaw stations in Manistee, Frankfort and Ludington. He took over the station during the Coast Guard's time-honored change-of-command ceremony.

Ludington's change followed that of Frankfort, the year before, in large part because of the ending of nearly all of the car ferry shipping taking place out of both ports.

A seasonal station means giving USCG leadership the discretion to determine when the boating season is over and the crew is not needed to man the station.



A Coast Guard boat is lifted toward the station's wells in this undated photo.

DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO

Congratulations on 150 years Ludington!

FloraCraft has called Ludington home for over half of the sesquicentennial—77 years to be exact. Starting – and staying – here was one of the best decisions we’ve ever made.

The Schoenherr Family



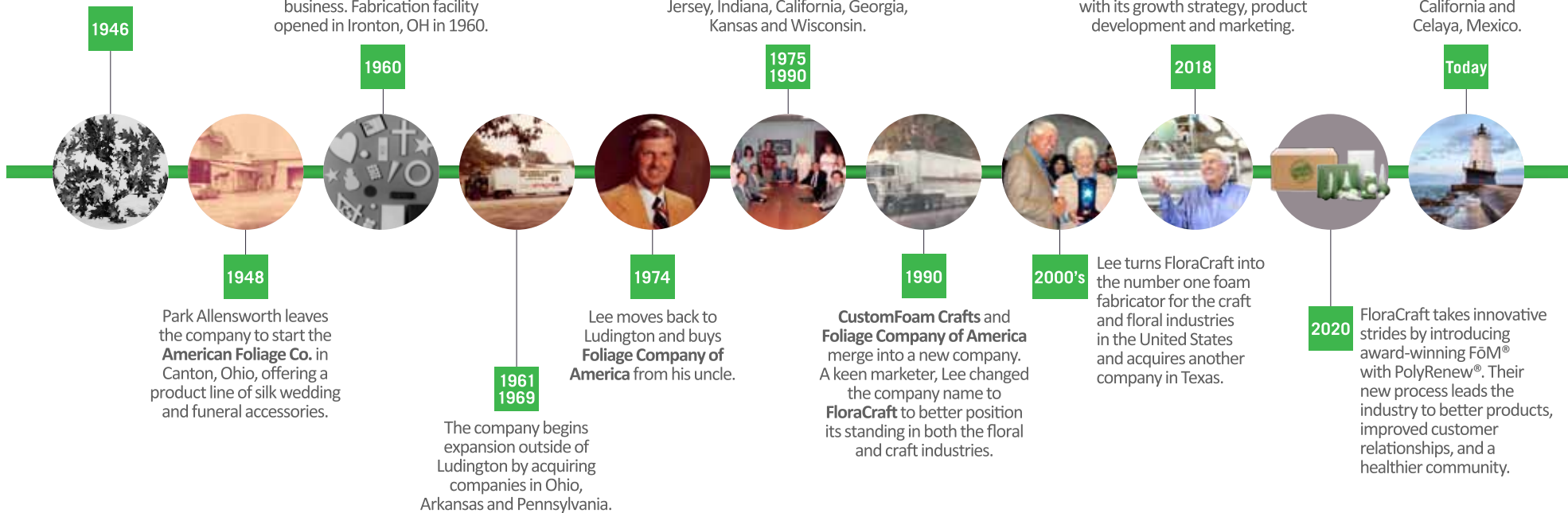
Leonard Schoenherr and Park Allensworth launch the **Foliage Company of America** in Ludington, Michigan.

Lee spends time in the Army, following by a brief stint at the Dow Chemical Co. before coming to work for the family business. Fabrication facility opened in Ironton, OH in 1960.

FloraCraft continues to expand and become the industry leader by acquiring companies in Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, Indiana, California, Georgia, Kansas and Wisconsin.

Though aggressive in his drive to build his company, Lee never forgot the community and the people who powered his success. As chairman of the FloraCraft board, Lee remains actively involved with its growth strategy, product development and marketing.

We now have plants in Ludington, Michigan, Ontario, California and Celaya, Mexico.



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CHARETTE: Congressional Medal of Honor winner reflected on Korea, career in 2003

FROM PAGE H1

Then another grenade landed. "Close, it was real close," says Charette.

That wasn't all bad, he added. "Unless you get hit direct, sometimes the better off you are if you're real close; you just get the concussion; you don't get the fragment," he says.

Charette had time to push his medical bag toward the grenade and cover the severely wounded man he was working on with his own body.

According to the citation, Charette "absorbed the entire concussion of the deadly missile with his body."

His helmet was ripped off by the force of the blast and he sustained painful facial wounds and was momentarily dazed.

"I know my hospital bag was blown all to bits. I never could find it," says Charette.

He started out with one wounded Marine and quickly wound up with five.

When darkness fell, he moved about the hillside, treating men from three platoons. Without his medical kit, he improvised, using pieces of his uniform for bandages and tourniquets.

"The way it ended up, just about everybody was in bad shape except myself," Charette explained. "My main function was to treat those guys and then try to get them out of there."

And always there was the fear of a Chinese counterattack.

Later that night, while helping a party of Marines to evacuate the wounded from Vegas, an explosion opened up a portion of the trench they were in, exposing them to enemy fire.

According to the citation, "Charette stood upright in the trench line and exposed himself to a deadly hail of enemy fire in order to lend more effective aid to the victim and to alleviate his anguish while being removed to a position of safety."

"We started moving the wounded out of there. If you read the citation, there was a part of the trench that was blown out and it was pretty heavily covered by machine guns — their machine guns," says Charette. "We seemed to stagnate there; we weren't moving."

Five times, Charette straddled the trench, lifted a wounded man and carried him to a safer position, all the time while under fire from the Chinese positions located less than a hundred yards away.

"I was pretty strong then and I took them and lifted them over," says Charette. "It wasn't very far — maybe 10 feet, 15 feet, something like that."

"I just wasn't hit; don't ask me why."

The night passed and when morning came, the survivors of the three platoons of Fox Company pulled back under cover of a smoke screen. They had suffered 75 percent casualties, their dead lay over about a five-acre area and their attack had failed.

The next assault was successful because the Chinese were no longer there.

"Oddly enough, they left. They pulled out. They couldn't hold any of the hills because of our artillery and our air," says Charette.

Dating back to the Civil War, the Medal of Honor has been awarded fewer than 3,500 times. At the present, there are fewer than 150 living recipients.

Only seven U.S. Navy personnel earned the Medal of Honor in Korea and five of them — Edward Benford, William Charette, Richard Dewert, Francis Hammond and John Kilmer — were Navy corpsmen. Charette was the only one of the five to survive his medal-winning action.

He knew he had been recommended for a decoration several days later. He had originally been put up for the Navy Cross and thought it would be pushed down to a Silver Star.

To this day, he debates whether or not he deserved the Medal of Honor.

"I didn't want it. I never thought I earned it and I still don't," Charette says. "My wife and I debate this all the time. I was the one who was there but, quite frankly, I've never, ever thought I had earned it."

He told Brad Monroe, a fellow corpsman, "There's got to be a way. I don't want this thing, I really don't."

The surviving members of the three platoons that Charette treated up on Vegas, including the sergeant with the machine gun, thought otherwise.

"Charette was everywhere seemingly at the same time, performing inexhaustibly," Staff Sgt. Robert S. Steigerwald, who was on the hill that day, would later testify.

In April, Charette rotated off the line to battalion aid. From there he went to a med company, the navy's version of a MASH unit.

In September he found out he was up for the Medal of Honor and immediately went to his commanding officer to protest. Then he found out he would be home for Christmas, 1954.



William Charette looks over a mural depicting himself with the flag behind him and while rendering aid. The Ludington native earned the Congressional Medal of Honor from the U.S. Navy.



President Dwight D. Eisenhower poses with three Korean War veterans after presenting each with the Medal of Honor at the White House on Jan. 12, 1954, in Washington. The recipients are, from left, Army 1st Lt. Edward R. Schowalter Jr., Army Pfc. Ernest E. West and Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William R. Charette.

He has only one problem with the glowing citation, one portion of which reads: "Observing a seriously wounded comrade whose armored vest had been torn from his body by the blast from an exploding shell, he selflessly removed his own battle vest and placed it upon the helpless man, although fully aware of the added jeopardy to himself."

That wasn't quite accurate, says Charette.

He didn't have an armored vest; it was just a jacket. He took it off and put on a wounded man who was suffering from shock. The temperature that night on Vegas was near freezing.

He has tried to get the citation changed but to no avail.

On Jan. 12, 1954, Charette received his medal from President Dwight D. Eisenhower in a ceremony at the White House.

"There were three of us, two Army men. One was an officer and one worked for the C & O Railroad. His name was West, and myself," says Charette, who was honored that day along with First Lieutenant Edward Schowalter and Private First Class Ernest West.

He was anything but relaxed that day.

"Eisenhower, when he was putting the ribbon on — it hooks in the back — when he was putting it on, he says to me, 'Charette, they tell me you're more nervous here than you were in Korea,'" says Charette. "I had to admit I was."

That wasn't the first time that Eisenhower had come in contact with a member of the Charette family.

During World War II, Bill Ezdebski, the husband of Charette's sister, Peg, won the Bronze Star. It was given to him by Eisenhower, who was then the Supreme Commander of allied forces in the European Theatre.

"When (Bill) was leaving Europe, he was leaving on a troop transport and Eisenhower came down," Charette explained. "Here are all these people, and you have to understand that Eisenhower meets soldiers, geez, by the thousands, and he spotted my brother-in-law and he yelled at him, 'Hey, Ezdebski, you're finally going home, uh?'"

"I think she asked me out," Charette says with a laugh, glancing off to the side, wondering whether or not Louise has overheard.

Actually, the adjutant of the class his future wife was in was a friend of Charette's and it was he who introduced them.

They were married in November 1954.

He left the Navy in January 1955, with the intention of going to college.

"Let's see now, I'm going to go to college, my wife is pregnant," says Charette. "I can't remember what the (Veterans Administration) paid but I know it wasn't all that much. I thought, 'Well, I'll go back in.'"

How did he wind up in submarines?

"They had a good recruiter there. This guy made it sound so good," says Charette.

Out of a group of approximately 100 corpsmen, about 30 volunteered for submarines. It was a good move because the Silent Service was about to change drastically — for the better.

"What we didn't know was that the Nautilus (the first atomic-powered submarine) had already been commissioned and gone through sea trials," he says. "We didn't understand then how fast the submarine service was going to build up because somewhere along the line they thought, 'Well, what we're going to do is put a nuclear reactor in a sub and then put missiles on it.'"

Several years later, he attended nuclear power school in New London, Conn., where he studied reactors for six months followed by six more months of nuclear health

medicine study.

When he retired from the Navy in 1977, he left as a submariner, having spent, by his calculation, about four years of his life under water.

On May 26, 1958, Charette was asked to perform a special duty. In a ceremony aboard the cruiser USS Canberra, he chose to honor the unknown soldier of World War II.

"I didn't exactly feel right because I wasn't in World War II, so I thought it was very unusual that they would have me do it," says Charette, who, at the time was the Navy's only active-duty Medal of Honor recipient. "That was why I was asked."

There were three coffins lined up on deck. The center one contained the remains of the unknown soldier of the Korean War and the two outboard coffins contained the remains of World War II victims. One was from the European campaign and the other from the Pacific theatre.

"They had been shifted around aboard ship so many times that nobody had any idea what theatre, Pacific or Europe, he had come from," says Charette, who initially moved to the coffin on the left, hesitated, and then placed the wreath he held on the coffin on the right, signifying that this was the unknown soldier of World War II who now lies buried in the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va.

His part in the selection process is chronicled at the site.

Growing up in Ludington, Charette lost both of his parents, one to cancer, the other to heart disease, just months apart. He was 5 years old at the time and he and his sister were raised by an uncle, Albert Furlong.

When Furlong, a bachelor, was in the service during World War II, Charette was sent out to C.J. Hansen's farm, the old Hansen's Evergreen Dairy.

When he was 16, he went to work on the car ferries. It was good money in those days.

"I'll put it this way, I made 10-something for an eight-hour day, room and board thrown in, and my sister was a nurse working at the hospital and she made eight-something," he says with a chuckle.

He attended St. Simon School in Ludington and retains pleasant memories of playing football for the not-too-successful Shamrocks.

"It was a lot of fun, but it really wasn't because we didn't win many games," says Charette. "Hoyt (Payment) was my first coach. Fred Adams was the head coach and Hoyt was the line coach."

After enlisting in the Navy in January 1951, Charette became a corpsman and then decided to serve with the Marines.

"The Marine Corps has no medical unit of its own and the Marines have always been a part of the Navy," Charette explains. "When a guy is calling for a Corpsman in the Marine Corps, he's calling for a Navy corpsman."

"You couldn't tell what he is except by the medical bag. We dressed the same as they did and carried a gun — or whatever we wanted to carry."

He never knew what happened to the many men he treated on Vegas.

"The only guy — he called me just the other day — that I kept in touch with who was on the hill with me, was the other corpsman, Brad Monroe," says Charette.

His contact with Ludington has also dwindled.

"My sister. Really, she's about the only one, and Donald Keating," he adds.

He hasn't been back home in a while.

"I think it was probably three years ago I was home, but I wasn't there very long," Charette says. "Peggy's niece got married so we

went home for that. Maybe it was two years ago; I lose track of time."

When Charette won the Medal of Honor, Ludington honored him with a parade, a reception at which he received the Key to the City and monetary gift of a then-sizeable \$3,200 that would eventually go toward the purchase of a house.

Charette and his wife have lived in the Lake Wales area for, he says, "Oh, 14 or 15 years" (when he spoke to the Daily News in 2003). It was an easy choice for a Michigan boy exposed to Florida early in his service career and besides, his wife hails from there.

The Charettes raised five children and the medical background of their parents rubbed off.

"I have three girls, two nurses and one pharmacy tech. They all live up in Somerville, South Carolina, which is next to Charleston," says Charette. "My son lives down here and works over at Disney World. My one son, my youngest, was killed."

William and Louise lived in a roomy, two-story house that sits on Limberlost Lane, which appears on no map. When asked to furnish directions to his home, Charette replies, "Do you have a cell phone? You'll need it. Nobody finds this place, nobody. We're not even on the county map. Now the one down there, the main drag, is and Parkway Lane is. This is called Limberlost, this road here."

Lush, flowering plants highlight the interior and exterior of the house reflecting Charette's horticultural interests. Outside, the air is filled with the sweet smell of the orange groves. In the back is a fenced-in swimming pool that he shares with a couple of black snakes on occasion, much to Louise's consternation.

The honors continued to come Charette's way, even in retirement.

In 1999, he saw the dedication of the William R. Charette Medical Center at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Va.

It was a flattering, if sobering, occasion.

"It's probably one of the largest hospitals on the east coast," says Charette. "It's so rare that they would name something like that after somebody who is still living. I was amazed. God only knows what (bad things) you could still do, but if you're dead, then they don't have to worry about it."

"So I've got a hospital named after me and it's amazing. I must tell you that it's probably one of the most modern hospitals in the United States today," he adds. "Again, it has a huge amount of people to treat. You name it, they've got it."

Charette has several copies of the medal. One, the original, sits in a shadowbox on a wall in his home, flanked by a picture of the almost baby-faced, 21-year-old sailor who is wearing it.

"That has HM3 (Hospital Corpsman Third Class), I believe, on the back of it. The other one has HM1 on it because I was first class when I received it. They gave it to me when I went aboard the Canberra," says Charette.

He still made appearances around the Lake Wales area in 2003, mostly at schools, through the Korean War Veterans Association to talk about America's "forgotten war." The post is named for him.

"Somebody sent me 18 big posters and it shows the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima, and guys in the cold weather. Some woman did the posters and they're numbered," says Charette. "Duane Dewey, he's from Michigan, down around Holland. He lived up around Irons in the summer time, he (was to get) it next."

"What they want are signatures. I've signed it but the box is so beat up, that I'm going to go down and get another box for them, rebox them and send it out tomorrow."

There were already over a dozen signatures in 2003, each of them a Medal of Honor recipient, at the bottom of the much-traveled posters.

At the bottom of the list, Charette has signed "Bill 'Doc' Charette."

"It's all Marines. I'm not a Marine, but I'm included with the Marines," says Charette.

Although it was over 50 years since he participated in the action on Vegas that earned him the Medal of Honor when he spoke to the Daily News, Charette is still trying to be a worthy and responsible recipient.

He remembers being nervous before that action began half-a-century ago and wondering how he would perform under fire.

"You can't help but think that. You worry about it," he says. "Am I going to be able to do it? Am I going to be able to do the job?"

"I think once it starts, you have fear going in and then suddenly, hey, this is it. You don't have time to think."

THIS STORY is republished from the March 31, 2003, edition of the Daily News. Since the story's publication, a bust of him was installed as a part of the Veterans Mall at Stearns Park. The U.S. Navy also commissioned the building of an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer to be named in his honor at the Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine.

JEFF KIESSEL | DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO

U.S. NAVY | COURTESY IMAGE

POLICE: Ludington Police Department served since founding, handled tough incidents

FROM PAGE H2

continued to regroup. There was no violence between the two sides, and the crowd eventually broke up around 2 a.m.

Not long afterward, on Aug. 1 and 2, 1972, young adults were milling around downtown Ludington in what officials called a riot. These so-called riots were the result of reactions to the arrest of six area people for selling and possession of various drugs including heroin, cocaine, LSD, hashish and marijuana.

During the two nights of melees, several businesses were damaged by thrown objects. Fire hydrants were turned on and threats issued. The disturbances began in what is now Rotary Park and moved east up Ludington Avenue. Ludington police again called for back-up, this time to include deputies from Mason and Lake counties, auxiliary police, reserves and state policemen from six different posts.

Into the 1980s, the Mason County Central Dispatch began, and it eventually became the Mason-Oceana Central Dispatch with the advent of 9-1-1. Computers were introduced into the police force. Part of that change was the start of the Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN).

On top of policing the streets, officers today need to conduct investigations with computers and smartphones.

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With the county seat within Ludington, it's also been home to the county jail. The jail went through several renovations over the decades, but the land the jail is on now is the same parcel used in 1879 when it was first built for \$9,000. The original jail was torn down nearly 80 years later to make room for the current jail and its expansion in 1959.

In the 1990s is when the county jail really expanded. A multi-million dollar expansion took place, with voters approving a request in 1997. The total capacity boosted up from 36 beds to 86 beds with security in place for those lodged there.

It took a millage and more for the jail expansion, and it marked a significant change for those in law enforcement.

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In June 2011, with so many other cases and incidents that occurred over time, perhaps no other case captured the attention of people locally or around the state as the disappearance of "Baby Kate" Katherine Phillips.

Baby Kate was reported missing in June 2011 by her mother, Ariel Courtland, who testified she was in an argument with Sean about the child on the day of paternity testing.

Sean wanted to give the baby up for adoption, but Ariel, who had been caring for the infant, did not, testimony revealed.

Ariel went inside her Ludington apartment to get something before the three were to go to the hospital for Kate's portion of the test (Sean had his ear-



A bagpiper leads law enforcement and firefighters in the Blessing of the Badges at Waterfront Park.

DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTOS



liar in the day). Ariel had testified that when she returned to the parking lot, Sean and the baby were gone. Ariel called 911. Sean was found hours later with the baby's clothes in his pocket, her car seat and soiled diaper in the car, and no baby.

The public was engaged in searches alongside law enforcement, and all sorts of techniques were used to scour rural backcountry. The missing child drew headlines and coverage from news outlets locally to nationally.

Sean Phillips was first convicted in 2012 of unlawful imprisonment of the four-month-old baby and has been serving time at the Carson City Correctional Facility other than his return trips to the Mason County Jail for hearings.

Sean was later charged with murder of the infant and went to trial in October 2016. A jury found him guilty of second-degree murder — the highest charge allowed after a court ruling.

He was convicted, and he continues to serve his term in Carson City.

The whereabouts of the

baby's body remain a mystery to this day.

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Law enforcement was deeply affected by the murder of Michigan State Police Trooper Paul Butterfield on Custer Road in 2013.

Michigan State Police Trooper Paul Butterfield, assigned to the Michigan State Police Hart Post, was shot in the head and later died following a traffic stop on Custer Road south of Free Soil on Sept. 9, 2013.

About 6:20 p.m. that day, Butterfield stopped a vehicle on Custer Road near Townline Road. A few minutes later, a passing motorist called 911 to report finding Butterfield on the ground with a gunshot wound to the head. Butterfield was airlifted to Munson Medical Center in Traverse City where he died during emergency surgery.

Later that same evening, police arrested Eric Knysz and his wife, Sarah, after Eric was shot in the leg following a standoff with police in Manistee County.

Knysz was convicted of Butterfield's murder and eventually hung himself in a Jackson County inmate

processing center.

Sarah, 21, was sentenced in December for 2-5 years in prison after pleading to accessory after the fact of a felony and 11 months for unlawful driving away of an automobile. She was with Eric in his father's truck on Custer Road when the shooting occurred.

Eric's mother, Tammi-Lynne Spofford, 51, was convicted of being an accessory after the fact. She was sentenced to 18 months to five years in June 2014. Her earliest possible release date is Nov. 21, 2015.

Butterfield's memory lives on — from the decals that adorn vehicles in and around Ludington to the memorial sign along M-116 heading into Ludington State Park to the maintained memorial along that lonely stretch of Custer Road.

Each year, Fountain Area Fire Department's Shirley Chancellor helps to organize a service in honor of Butterfield that continues to be attended by those sworn to serve and protect and more at the site on Custer Road.

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With the memory of But-

terfield fresh on the minds of law enforcement, Ludington was in a standoff on a summer day in 2014.

Sgt. David Maltbie was shot while fellow officers were shot at by Lowell Fetters on a June 2014 day.

Fetters, 66, of Ludington, was sentenced to 18-52 years in prison in 51st Circuit Court for the June 26, 2012 shooting of Maltbie and shooting at his fellow officers — Ludington Police Officer Jason Smith, Ludington Police Officer Aaron Sailor, Mason County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Oscar Davila and Mason County Sheriff's Office Deputy Derrek Wilson.

Mason County Prosecuting Attorney Paul Spaniola agreed to recommend a sentence of 13-23 years plus two years for felony firearm at the time, a mandatory consecutive sentence, in return for Fetters pleading no contest but mentally ill to assault with intent to murder Maltbie.

He also pleaded no contest but mentally ill and was sentenced on charges of felony firearm and malicious destruction of police property as well as four counts of assault with a deadly

weapon, one each against Smith, Sailor, Davila and Wilson.

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The department had its share of chiefs, and Mark Barnett was one of the longer serving leaders of the department. Barnett served as the chief for 19 years and retired in late 2010s. He was chief during the "Baby Kate" ordeal, and he recalled in 2019, upon his retirement, the search for Sabrina Dalzell, a 12-year-old who was murdered.

"It was a Sunday. It was sunny, and as I turned west on that road, I was struck by how many people turned out, giving up a day that is typically spent with family, to volunteer their time to search for Sabrina," Barnett told the Daily News in 2019. "That meant a lot to me. Again it is a highlight for me because you see the true character of a community during the worst of times."

After Barnett was Tim Kozal, and the city recently hired its latest police chief, Christopher Jones.

THIS STORY was republished from the Nov. 10, 1973, edition of the Daily News, with additional information and updates by David Bossick in 2023.

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Dairy Queen

The story of Dairy Queen started on August 4, 1938 in Kankakee, Illinois, when a father and son served their first, yet unnamed, product at a friend's walk-in ice cream shop. Within two hours they dished out more than 1,600 servings of this new treat. Hence, Dairy Queen was born. In 1941 there were fewer than 10 Dairy Queens in the U.S., however, shortly after the war the company took off and over the years has grown to the 6,000 stores currently around the world today.

Ludington Dairy Queen is a part of that history. Arriving in Ludington in 1950, it was one of the first 10 original franchises in the state of Michigan. The store was originally located by the beach across the street from the old roller skating rink. After the roller skating rink burned down, the owner decided to move it to its current location at 66 S. Pere Marquette Hwy. Dick and Elaine Saxton owned and operated the DQ from 1965-1973 and then sold the building to Chuck Wallace who operated it for two years before selling it to its longest-term owners, Richard and Jane Nelson in 1976.

The Nelsons owned and operated the DQ

for 29 years and then sold the business to their daughter and son-in-law, Kirstin and Jeff McDonough, in 2004, who currently operate the business.

Over the last 48 years the building has changed a bit with additions of a new roof, two additions to the rear of the building, a picnic area, a drive-through window and a paved parking lot, along with countless smaller renovations and upgrades here and there. Buildings may change, but what has remained the same over the last 73 years is the privilege this Dairy Queen has had of being a part of a community's daily lives and memories — Little League wins or losses, birthday parties, wedding proposals, trips to the vet, prom dates, beach days, fishing trips, good grades on report cards, spelling bees and occasions of all sorts.

We truly feel blessed to be a part of this community's history and look forward to many more years of making memories with you and your families. May God bless you and yours.

— Kirstin and Jeff McDonough
Richard and Jane Nelson

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