

The Last Man Club

By Lori Adams

Armistice Day, now known as Veterans Day, was originally designated as a holiday in the United States to honor the end of WWI. The armistice was signed between the allies of WWI and Germany in France on the eleventh month in 1918, at the eleventh hour of the day. The armistice did not stop the shelling that day, so the formal agreement that truly ended WWI was reached the following year through the Treaty of Versailles.

On June 1, 1954, November 11 became the official date to honor not only the veterans of WWI, but all American veterans of all wars. Prior to this date, some local WWI veterans organized and started their own unique club to honor the armistice.

In 1947 or 1948, the club was formed here in Ashland and was named The Last Man Club. The club began with 12 members and was started by local members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars clubs who served in WWI. The object of the club was “to foster and perpetuate an enduring comradeship among its members with a fellowship of mutual understanding.”

The charter members of The Last Man Club were J. Ed Arnold, Clifford M. Cothren, Leo C. Dessenberg, Glenn E. Falkner, Harry J. Fridline, R. Harley Hicks, Dorance R. Howell, Ralph L. Kestner, Albert M. McCracken, Glenn D. Morr, Elmer W. Stiffler, and G. Homer Weis. Additional members elected into membership were Lisle Gault, Marshall Morr, Roy E. Price, Stanton L. Rupert, and Glenn E. Stentz. From club records, it appears there were never any more than 17 members in the club.

The Last Man Club got its name because the last surviving man would get the privilege of drinking a bottle of champagne that was purchased when it was formed. The bottle was entrusted to the club president throughout the years.



Members of The Last Man Club each autographed the bottle of champagne. Keeping track of the bottle was charged to each club president over the years.

Club members met on the 3rd Friday of every month and often proudly included their wives in their social activities. Their first anniversary dinner was held at the old Ashland Airport on May 27, 1948. G. Homer Weis was appointed their first president. By 1983, the club was down to five members.

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The last surviving member of the club was past president Stanton Rupert. He served with Company E of the local 146th Infantry beginning in 1917 and served a total of 21 months, ten days of which were overseas. Stanton shared the bottle of champagne with his family and friends and toasted the memories of all the fellows who went before him.

We honor the members of The First Man Club and all of our Ashland County veterans for their service to our country, as well as those currently serving in the Armed Forces throughout the world.



Stanton Rupert, second from the right, eventually became the “last man” as a member of The Last Man Club in Ashland.



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