



MILITARY VETERANS OF ZIONSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

ZIONSVILLE AMERICAN LEGION FRANCIS NEIDLINGER POST #79

This first Soaring Eagle presentation is a remembrance and a tribute to thousands of Zionsville- Eagle/Union Township female and male graduates and alumnus who were or are United States of America Armed Service Veterans. They served our great nation in time of need whether it be right or wrong! Some may have served an enjoyable tour or career while others may have given their life and/or experienced the horrific actions and memories of a war or conflict. We are here today to honor our veterans for their service and sacrifice over all these centuries.

To me, our formal school system began in 1854 in Zionsville. Our town founded in 1852 when Millard Fillmore was President of our country. Two years later, in 1854; the first schoolhouse was built on the northeast corner of present Main and Poplar Streets. One classroom was on the street level for primary and intermediate grades, while the upper level was a subscription school. There have been many schools since such as in 1867 with the Zionsville Academy on Walnut Hill or located west end of Walnut Street today, where Hussey-Mayfield Memorial Public Library stands.

Local veterans groups like Boone Post #202, Grand Army of the Republic- veterans of the Civil War; was organized on June 25, 1882 and the Victorian Romanesque Hall still stands at 395 West Walnut which was built circa 1870 for the Christian Union Church which eventually served as classroom space for fifth and six grade classes while the new school building was under construction west of the intersection of Fifth and Walnut. The Hall later was the headquarters for our Francis Neidlinger Post # 79 of the American Legion, chartered on 27th May, 1921. After World War I they were deeded one-half interest from the G.A.R. for repairing the structure and today the Legion is located on North Ford Road since 1977.

Francis William Neidlinger, born at New Augusta, 6th of January 1898; son of Louis M. and Anna E. Neidlinger, of Zionsville was a World War I volunteer and enlisted in August 1917 and trained for the Red Cross Ambulance Company NO. 18 in Illinois but was not shipped out to Europe so he ask to be transferred to the infantry and was sent to France in August, 1918 as a member of Company G, 342nd Infantry after being married to Hazel French on August 17, 1918. Less than two months later, Pvt. Neidlinger was killed in action, November 7, 1918 in France at the age of twenty and just weeks before the armistice was declared. Francis had two sisters Mary Amy and Ruth. He had a lot to live for!

He was one of many that we remember with gratitude for their unselfish service and sacrifice. We also salute those veterans not here on earth but in our hearts and minds! To the memory of members who were engaged in the World's conflicts and trying to keep the peace for freedom. As was said, "Greater Love Hath no Man's then those that lay down their life, their mind, their health, and their youth for his country!" Many gave their today, for our tomorrow! In honored memory of those that served and saved our country." All of our veterans present today please stand and be recognized. Please, let us pause for a few moments of silence and remembrance,, thank you!!!!

We have with us today on this stage two veterans: Bill Shoemaker, "Class of 1943", Army, First Lieutenant from the Korean War and Terry Engledow, "Class of 1967", Army, Specialist E-4 from the Vietnam War who will accept and hand carry and help to display this Soaring Eagle at Francis Neidlinger Post #79 of the American Legion. Nominated by Zionsville Alumni Association Selection Committee and compiled by Ralph W. Stacy, "Class of 1961" and Soaring Eagle Recipient.