

DEATHS

Oberhouse saw community's needs

PEMBERVILLE — Though blind, Robert "Bob" Oberhouse, was able to see needs and ways to serve those needs as well as anyone.

"Having been blinded in World War II, he has been an inspiration for a lot of people in this community," said Glen Gamber, who like Mr. Oberhouse, was a past district governor of the Lions Club.

Mr. Oberhouse, 80, of Pemberville, died Sunday (Feb. 6, 2005) at Otterbein-Portage Valley Retirement Village, Pemberville.

Several friends and associates noted how he saw and remembered things many of his sighted friends did not.

While serving in the Army's 37th Infantry Division during World War II, he was blinded Dec. 23, 1943 on the Island of Bougainville in the South Pacific during the Northern Solomon Campaign. He received a good conduct medal, Purple Heart and an Asian-Pacific Ribbon with one bronze star.

Mr. Oberhouse did not let the lack of sight hinder him. Rather, upon his return, he attended Bowling Green State University and was the first blind student to graduate at BGSU.

He organized and chaired the

Northwest Ohio Lions Eye Bank, and was a public speaker on World War II and blindness for various groups all over Northwest Ohio. Mr. Oberhouse also organized two national conventions for the Blinded Veterans Association.

As a civilian, he was a rehabilitation counselor for the blind for 24 years through the Bureau of Services for the Blind.

As a member of Pemberville United Methodist Church, he served as a Sunday school teacher for 40 years. He also was a member of the board and adviser to youth fellowship.

Geraldine "Jerry" Garwood began working with Mr. Oberhouse on the Sunday school lessons when his wife died.

"I would read and go through the lesson and he would come and teach the class," she said, noting that he had a great memory to recall the lesson and incorporate a lot of his life story into that biblical lesson when he taught.

"Since I have known Bob he has always amazed me," Mrs. Garwood said, mentioning his being on his hands and knees out weeding the yard on nice days or cutting and chopping wood for the family fireplace.

He also was a member of Pemberville Legion Post No. 183 for 60 years, and served as commander.

"He was very dedicated to the Legion," said Doug Wegman, who

was active in the Legion with Mr. Oberhouse. "I've never seen a guy as dedicated as Bob Oberhouse. The Legion was his life. He put a lot of energy into it."

Mr. Wegman noted that he also was very dedicated to his family and their needs.

Mr. Oberhouse also was a member of Pemberville Boy Scout Committee; and served on the boards of WSOS, Pemberville Park and Toledo Sight Center. He also was a member of the Pemberville Fire Department and Pemberville Civic Club, and served as president of Pemberville PTA.

Mr. Oberhouse was past president of Pemberville-Freedom Area Historical Society, and was named its outstanding citizen in 1992. In 2000, he also was named the Outstanding Citizen of Pemberville. He was a member of Wood County Historical Society.

He served two years on Pemberville Town Council and was a past chairman of Wood County Easter Seals.

He was a member of the Lions Club for 51 years, and had 40 years of perfect attendance. He helped organize nine club; Mr. Gamber noted that some of the clubs were dying clubs that Mr. Oberhouse revitalized. He was district governor for the Lions Club District 13A, and was a charter member of both the Pemberville and Bowling Green clubs, serving both as past president. He was awarded the Melvin Jones Fellowship through the

Lions Club.

"He was just a great person and an organizer from the word go," Mr. Gamber said. "He had an uncanny way of remembering voices and picking up on names of people who came into the room."

When not busy with his many civic organizations and duties, he enjoyed reading and traveling. Mr. Gamber noted his abilities while traveling to know various locations and would know when and where to turn in advance of the driver.

Born April 25, 1924 in Pemberville to William and Catherine (Kill) Oberhouse, he married Luella Davidson on May 20, 1948. She died Sept. 15, 1999.

He also was preceded in death by two brothers, James and Glen; an infant sister, Dorothy; and a grandson, Douglas Oberhouse.

Surviving are two sons, Steven and Edwin, both of Luckey; a daughter, Laurie Housholder, Portage; a brother, Donald, and a sister, Opal Blausey, both of Pemberville; and seven grandchildren.

The funeral will be Thursday at 11 a.m. at Marsh Funeral Home, Pemberville. Rev. Pete Johnston will officiate.

Visitation will be Wednesday from 2 to 5 and 7 to 9 p.m.

Memorials may be made to the church or Lions Club.

Condolences may be made at www.marshfuneralhomes.com.



Bob Oberhouse