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Edgar Masters (left) went to an exhibit by the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society about World War II last week, to look at photos and other memorabilia that he loaned to the society so others could learn more about that pivotal time in history.

Photo by Judith O'Hara Balfe

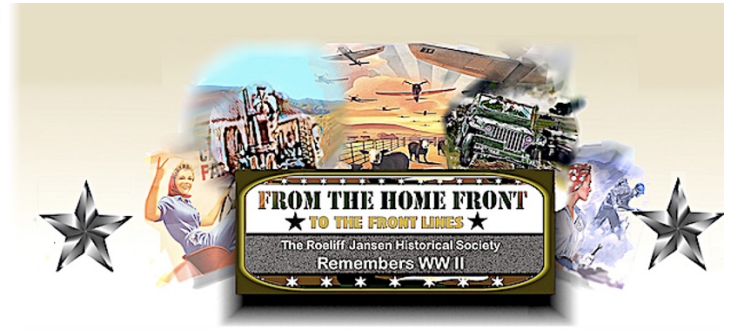


Exhibit shares local war stories BY JUDITH O'HARA BALFE 7/20/2022

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COPAKE FALLS — From the Home Front to the Front Lines is the new exhibit offered by the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society, which opened on Saturday, July 16. The exhibit is an impressive compilation of photos, letters, uniforms, re-created posters, etc., of World War II.

What's so special about this show is that all of the materials in the exhibit were loaned to the society by local residents, all preserved with tenderness and respect from loved ones who served overseas, while waiting for them to return home.

While for a few old timers the exhibit will undoubtedly bring back memories, for many it's an opportunity to look at the second World War from a local standpoint rather than simply from what's taught in history books.

One of the first parts of the exhibit includes a collection of five-years' worth of correspondence from one young man who enlisted right out of high school. It tells the story of his service and his coming home five years later as an adult man.

The Historical Society is hoping younger generations will stop by to view the exhibit. Those who helped put it together believe it would be a great learning moment for youngsters, who may not realize so many soldiers were barely out of high school themselves when they went to war.

The exhibit includes a collection of uniforms — many different types from various branches of the Armed Forces, all lovingly preserved.

Particularly interesting are the many exhibits of individual servicemen and women with their families. The photos are coupled with letters and medals. The remembrances serve as stark reminders that so many never made it back home.

A main part of the exhibit is filled with re-created posters full of history lessons, offering tips on using food ration coupons, creating Victory Gardens, and avoiding venereal diseases.

Other posters offer lessons on the meaning of the Purple Heart medal, censorship, saving rubber and so much more. All are interesting to read and the pictures are just as engaging.

The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society was founded in 1974 and is located on 8 Miles Road in Copake Falls in the former Copake Falls Methodist Episcopal Church, now the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society Museum.

The building is owned by the town of Copake and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The museum is open on Saturday and Sunday, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Admission is free, but donations are appreciated, and there are many interesting books on sale. The exhibit runs through September.

For more information go to <http://www.roeliffjansenhs.org/>

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