

County's 323rd Barn Quilt Honors Former "Fly Boy"

Janalee Gansen of Shawano has sponsored Shawano County's 323rd barn quilt in honor of her husband, Adrian, who died two years ago at the age of 89. The patriotic quilt pattern, called American Pride, was selected and designed to recognize Adrian's patriotism and service to our country. In the center of the quilt pattern is an airplane propeller surrounded by a painting of Adrian's first set of Air Force gold wings.

"Adrian was always a very patriotic person," Janalee said. "His mother, Eva, told me that when he was a small boy, he would always salute the flag when he saw it in hometown parades."

When America declared war on Japan on December 7, 1941, Adrian put his education on hold and enlisted with the United States Air Force and became one of the "Fly Boys." His military career took him to many different flight training bases, but Chickasha, Oklahoma was where he took most of his training.

"Some of Adrian's happiest memories were connected to his flying days," Janalee said. "There was a time when the Washita River had dried to a sand bottom, so some of the "fly boys," including Adrian, flew their Fairchild PT19s under one of the bridges over the dry riverbed."

The barn on which the quilt is displayed is on a farm that was homesteaded in the late 1800s at W4550 County E east of Shawano. Otto Weisnicht, the grandfather of current owner, Bruce Weisnicht, purchased the farm in 1915 from Albert Bleck. Bruce's dad, Louis, purchased the farm in 1958. After Louis died in 1976, his wife, Bernice, continued to operate the farm with Bruce. She retired in 1980 when Bruce married Peggy Przybylski. Bruce had a Holstein dairy herd of 30-35 cows until he dispersed the herd in 2008. Now, he and his son, Brad, do carpentry work and small building projects.

The barn quilt was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee and was put on display by LeRoy and Keith Raddant of Raddant Electric in Shawano.

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