

G.A.R. Cemetery

MIAMI
City of Vision, Spirit & Opportunity

JULY 2018 – ISSUE 16

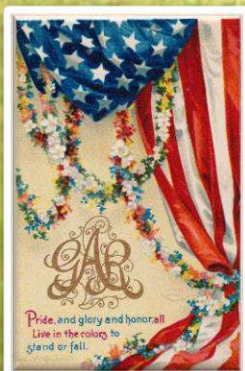
The G.A.R. Legacy
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From the Staff
Windmills

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Sgt. Harold E. Rogers

8/19/1914 – 7/2/1944



Staff Sgt. Harold Rogers Reported Killed in Action

(photo, Left) **SERGEANT ROGERS WITH 'MISTER'**

(Miami Daily News-Record, Miami, OK, Sunday, Aug. 5, 1945, p. 1, Col. 7-8)

Staff Sgt. Harold Rogers, who had been listed as missing since July 2, 1944, has been declared killed in action, according to word received from his wife by Mrs. Maude Jones, a close friend of the couple. The sergeant, who was born and reared in Tiff City, Mo., and attended grade school there, was graduated from Wyandotte high school. He later attended Chilocco Indian school. Enlisting in the service in May 1942, he went overseas a year later as a tail gunner on a Flying Fortress, attached to the 8th air force in England. He was accompanied overseas by his dog, "Mister," half chow and half police hound. Together they made 25 missions, once bailing out over the North Sea. Rescued, they returned to the United States in May 1944. At that time, they and Mrs. Rogers visited in Miami. Assigned to an airbase as an instructor the veteran was dissatisfied and at his own request was returned to active duty, Mister, left behind, accompanied Mrs. Rogers back to their home in Hollywood, Calif. Sergeant Rogers was assigned this time to the 15th AAF, based in Italy, and was on a mission over enemy-occupied Hungary when attacked by 130's (German fighter planes). When the pilot signaled to abandon the crippled plane, he was notified that there were several crew members whose wounds would prevent them making a parachute jump, whereupon he elected to attempt to bring the plane in. The uninjured members of the crew bailed out and a few minutes later the big ship exploded in midair. The 34-year old former Miamian and motion picture actor was among the victims. He has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with five Oak Leaf clusters. Mrs. Rogers is the former RoMere Darling, a graduate of Haskell Institute.

OBITUARY

(Miami Daily News-Record, Miami, OK, Sunday January 16, 1949, p. 1, Col. 6)

Body of War Hero Arrives in Miami For Rites, Reburial

The body of T/Sgt. Harold E. Rogers, who was killed while serving with the 18th Air force in a mission over Budapest, Hungary, in July 1944, arrived in Miami Saturday for final rites and reburial. Sergeant Rogers, a resident of Miami during his early school days, was the recipient of the Air Medal with nine Oak Leaf clusters, the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart, the latter posthumously. He is survived by his widow, Mrs. RoMere Rogers, Hollywood, Calif., and two brothers, Robert Rogers and Hubert Hardy. Funeral services will be held at the Cooper Funeral home chapel at 2 p.m. Tuesday. Russell Martin will officiate. Miami's Veterans of Foreign Wars will conduct a graveside service. Chief Watson Whitewing of the Seneca Indian tribe will be in charge of the graveside ceremony at GAR cemetery.

ORIGINS: According to our records Oklahoma was Rogers's home or enlistment state. Furthermore, we have Miami listed as the city and Ottawa County included within the archival record.

SERVICE: Enlisted in the Army Air Forces. Served during World War II. Rogers had the rank of Sergeant. Served with 8th & 15th Air Force.

CIRCUMSTANCES: Rogers experienced a serious casualty which ultimately resulted in loss of life on July 02, 1944. Circumstances of the casualty were attributed to: "MIA, Missing in Action".

AWARDS: Listed are some of the awards and medals that Sergeant Rogers received.

★ Air Medal ★ Distinguished Flying Cross ★ Purple Heart ★ American Campaign Medal ★ World War II Victory Medal

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Harold E. Rogers, Seneca Indian from Miami, Oklahoma, was reported missing in action on July 2, 1944, when his plane failed to return from a mission over Budapest. Sgt. Rogers had flown 25 missions with the 8th Air Force in England, and then served as instructor in the United States for six months. He went back into action, this time with the 15th Air Force, based in Italy. He had the Air Medal with nine oak leaf clusters, and the Distinguished Flying Cross. The Purple Heart was awarded to him posthumously.

(Credit: HonorStates.org)



Left: WWII US Air Medal

Below: Single Oak Leaf Cluster. Awarded to denote subsequent decorations and awards.



Right: Distinguished Flying Cross



Left: Purple Heart

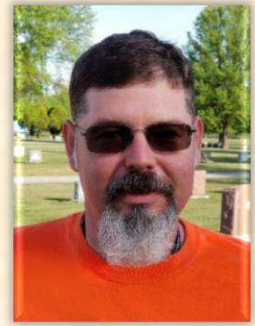


Right: American Campaign Medal



Left: WWII Victory Medal



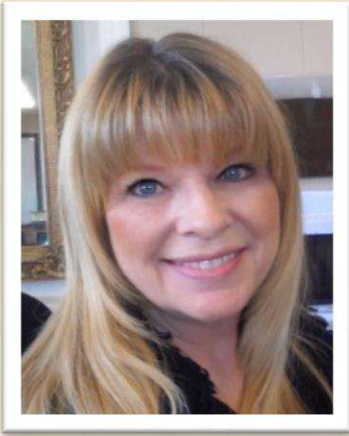


FRED BILLUPS
G.A.R. Cemetery Manager

Imagine a typical trip to the local grocery store. On the way you see a City employee on a brand-new tractor. Next you stop to get fuel, and a young man fills your tank with 10 gallons, checks the tires and washes the windshield, you pay him \$2.20. While riding in your auto you turn on the AM radio and out belts a new smash hit by a young man you have never heard of before, Elvis Presley with the song "Heartbreak Hotel" ... catchy tune you think to yourself. After that the news comes on about the next election, November will be president Dwight D. Eisenhower Vs. Adlai Stevenson. When you get to the store you go in and buy the essentials; a dozen eggs, milk, bread, and a 3lb chuck roast... \$2.59. You make one more stop at the post office and mail a letter, \$0.03. Once you get home, your neighbor calls you over to show you his new Ford Fairlane. He tells you all about how he got a deal: \$2050.00 with the undercoat. You go in your house turn on the radio you catch the last few innings of the Yankees game. Mickey Mantle just knocked a home run, and you think to yourself, the home town boy is having a great year! And, at the end of the day you start dinner cooking and have a relaxing evening before retiring for the night.

The year is 1956. The prices and pop culture references came from a web search. The "brand-new" tractor in 1956 is at the G.A.R. cemetery in use still to this day. The tractor is an International Harvester 130. It's the 20hp industrial version of the Farm-All 130. With an MSRP of \$2000.00 that wasn't too far from the price of a new car at the time. At some point in time a dump trailer was built for it, and we used it to move dirt to and from grave sites. As the world progressed so did the equipment. The tractor's role changed, and it was used sparingly to move materials around the cemetery. Then the Adopt-A-Flag Program came along the tractor was used to haul the flags on holidays, and it has also seen some parade duty over the years. Every Memorial Day the Scouts come to the cemetery to put stick flags out on veterans graves the tractor hauls flags and water around for the Scouts. The tractor has moved into a new era as we now use it to haul 250 gallons of water around the cemetery to clean markers. Every time we get on it and start it up, it is like having coffee with an old friend... it just brings a smile to your face. Sometimes even inanimate objects can feel like family. In 62 years the tractor has been through a lot and seen many other pieces of equipment come and go. It's been broken and rebuilt and still show scars of the past. But, when the time comes it starts up and chugs along, and I personally would not have it any other way.





Nancy Bro

G.A.R. Cemetery Office Manager

A Day at G.A.R.



Our Gazebo

*H*ave you seen our beautiful gazebo? Have you ever used it for a loved one's funeral? Or, enjoyed refreshments and fellowship after one of our annual Memorial Day Ceremonies, or other events?

Our gazebo is here for you to use. In the case of inclement weather, rain, snow, blistering heat, or even if it's a beautiful day and you just want to use it for your family's services. We at G.A.R. Cemetery do not charge for the use of our gazebo, it's absolutely free for the public's use.

We have about 10 chairs and a small wooden table that we can set up for you. Or a vault company, or funeral home can make the arrangements to have a more formal set-up.





Kim Horn

HR/G.A.R. Cemetery Director



“We cannot become what we want by remaining what we are.”—Max Depree

When I enter the gates of G.A.R. it is always comforting to me.... like once I’ve entered time has stood still. There is so much history contained within the Cemetery. History that our staff strives to honor and remember.

So, change is a challenge. How do we keep moving forward with improvements and additions to the cemetery while continuing to honor the tradition and historical significance of G.A.R.?

With change comes challenges. Our recent “Angel of Hope” project is a good example. It is a project that the staff worked on for many years before implementation. Planning and making sure that this addition was constructed in a way to become a welcome addition to G.A.R. that “fit in” with the historical elements of the Cemetery.

Another example of change within G.A.R. during this past year is our monument restoration project. The staff at G.A.R. saw the need to work on monuments in the older section of the cemetery. Some of these monuments are 100+ years old. Bruce Lawrence, Cemetery Maintenance I, has taken on this project over the last few months with tremendous results. He has completed approximately 200 monuments making them appear almost like new. Many of these markers you were unable to read the wording on are now clear. Work will continue as this project moves forward. With new methods we are continuing to honor the history and story of the people who are interred at G.A.R.

At G.A.R. we have the philosophy that small changes can eventually add up to big results.

“When the winds of change blow, some people build walls and others build windmills.”—Chinese Proverb.

Our staff plans to continue to build windmills.



Babbitt to attend the ICCFA University, Memphis, TN



Keith Babbitt
G.A.R. Cemetery,
Grounds Maintenance II

Thanks to generous donors who believe that professional development is important to the well-being of the profession, the Educational Foundation could award a total of 31 scholarships to the 2018 session of the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) University. ICCFAU took place July 20-25, 2018, at the Fogelman Executive Center, University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee.

Keith Babbitt, G.A.R. Cemetery Grounds Maintenance II, is one of the 31 scholarship recipients. He was awarded the Veterans Scholarship by writing an essay, and attended the College of Land Management and Grounds Operations.

This five-day program is designed to offer intensive instruction and networking opportunities in a college-campus setting. Students can attend for just one or two years, or you may go on to complete four years and become an "ICCFAU graduate."

This scholarship was made possible by Gino Merendino, Owner of Merendino Cemetery Care and Dean of the course that Keith attended.

Congratulations Keith!

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What if I need information or assistance during the Memorial Day holiday?

Our staff will work during the three-day weekend and is available to assist you.

2. Why must all decorations be removed from the graves during certain times of the year?

Four times a year, always on the same days (referenced below), the city requests the removal of all grave decorations. This allows us the time to do any necessary construction-type maintenance and to thoroughly clean the cemetery to provide the most attractive atmosphere possible.

The dates are:

- The first Monday in February,
- The second Monday following Easter,
- The first Monday following Memorial Day,
- And the first Monday in October.

3. What assurance do I have that the grave sites will always be maintained?

As a city owned cemetery, a cemetery care fund exists for the purpose of on-going cemetery upkeep and maintenance.

4. How deep are the graves dug?

Contrary to common belief, graves are only 4-feet deep and are 18 inches apart.

Do you have a cemetery related question that you have always wondered about?

Just email your questions to nbro@miamiohla.net and your question could be featured in the next G.A.R. Cemetery Newsletter!!

Clip and Save!

Genealogy

Miami Public Library

200 N Main * Miami, OK

Barbara Becker

geniedept@miami.lib.ok.us

www.miamipl.okpls.org

918-541-2292

Staff Hours

Mon, Wed, Thu. 10:00 am - noon, 1:00-5:00 pm

Tues 9:00 a.m. – noon, 1:00-4:00 pm

G.A.R. Cemetery

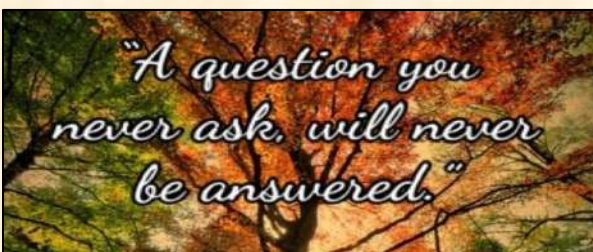
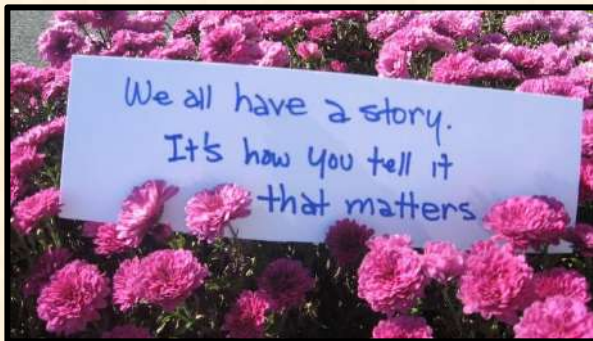
Decoration Removal Schedule

****All Decorations Must Be Removed from Graves By 8:00 a.m.**

On the Dates Listed**

<u>DECORATION REMOVAL</u>	<u>DATE</u>
First Monday in February	02/05/2018
Second Monday Following Easter	04/09/2018
First Monday Following Memorial Day	06/04/2018
First Monday in October	10/01/2018

- Wrought iron basket hangers are not permitted except for the time period of December 15th through January 15th and one week prior to Memorial Day until the first Monday following Memorial Day.
- Notices for our decoration removal schedule will be posted on signs at cemetery entrances the week preceding decoration removals.
- All decorations not collected by date and time listed will be disposed of with no exceptions.
- For more information about the G.A.R. Cemetery decoration removal schedule, please call the cemetery at 918-541-2288.



Adopt~A~Flag

For a one-time \$50 fee, we will supply a 3'x5' flag and pole, with a personalized plaque in honor, or remembrance of your loved one.

**Order by October 12th
and have yours displayed
This Veteran's Day!**

For more information:

Call: (918) 541-2288

Email: nbro@miamiokla.net - Or visit: www.miamiokla.net

2018 BFRC EVENT SCHEDULE

- **British Flyers Remembrance Ceremony**
- **Guest of Honor; Researcher and Historian, CURT PENLAND**
- **Saturday, October 20th, 2018 @ 10:30 am**
- **Reception to follow at The Coleman Ballroom and Theatre**

P: (918) 541-2288 ~ F: (918) 542-2421 ~ Mail: PO BOX 1288, Miami, OK 74354 ~ or Visit us at: 2801 N Maim, Miami, OK