

# Enterprise

Park Rapids

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

www.parkrapidsenterprise.com

## WWII HERO COMES HOME

**By Robin Fish**  
rfish@parkrapidsenterprise.com

A local man who died in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor is finally coming home.

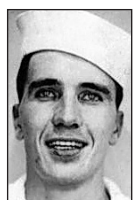
Fireman 1st Class Neal K. Todd, 22, was one of 16 members of the class of 1938 at Akeley High School and one of eight sons of Irena Todd Staffenhagen who served in the U.S. military. His life was cut short on Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941 when Japanese aircraft attacked Naval Base Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Almost 80 years after his death, Todd is returning to Akeley, where he will be buried on July 10.

"Being able to recover and identify the remains of sailors aids in closure for the families, and it is especially important to the Navy to honor these sailors who paid the ultimate sacrifice," said Lt. Salisha Labonte, head of the U.S. Navy's POW/MIA branch.

Labonte said notifying the family that a loved one has been identified is "emotional, overwhelming and relieving all at the same time."

In this case, the primary next of kin is Orville Staffenhagen of Rogers, Todd's youngest half-brother. Labonte reported that Orville's son, Anthony Staffenhagen, told him that his goal has been "to do all that he could to see this



Todd

through before the passing of his father."

"I felt like I knew the sailor a little, listening to the amazing stories shared by the family,"

said Labonte, adding that he feels honored to be a minute part of this moment in their family history, the homecoming of a hero.

### What happened to Neal Todd?

According to a June 3 press release from the U.S. Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), Todd's ship, the USS Oklahoma, was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked. After sustaining multiple torpedo hits, it quickly capsized and settled upside-down on the bottom of the harbor.

The DPAA release says USS Oklahoma crewmen's remains were recovered during the early 1940s and interred in two Hawaiian cemeteries. Later, the American Graves Registration Service transferred the remains of U.S. casualties to a laboratory that could only positively identify 35 men from the USS Oklahoma at the time.

The unidentified remains,

**HERO:** Page A3



Robin Fish / Enterprise

Todd's memorial at the Akeley Paul Bunyan Historical Museum includes a Pearl Harbor medal, his mother's gold star pin, a bundle of his letters home and even some of the holiday menus from his ship, the USS Oklahoma.

## Crowd descends to stop Line 3 in Park Rapids area

**By Michael Achterling and Shannon Geisen**  
machterling@dlnewpapers.com, sgeisen@parkrapidsenterprise.com

Indigenous leaders and activists showed up by the thousands to protest continued construction of the Enbridge Line 3 oil pipeline through northern Minnesota.

Calling it "Minnesota's largest ever anti-pipeline mobilization," more than 1,000 people marched with Indigenous leaders to the headwaters of the Mississippi River for a treaty ceremony.

Further south, over 500 Indigenous people and allies shut down an active Line 3 pump station.

These actions were a part of the Treaty People Gathering, a mass mobilization planned by Indigenous-led groups, communities of faith and climate justice organizations.



Shannon Geisen / Enterprise

A group of protesters assemble at an Enbridge pump station on U.S. Highway 71, north of Park Rapids, on June 7, during the Treaty People Gathering, a gathering of activists protesting the Enbridge Line 3 oil pipeline.

### Protest at headwaters

After marching for nearly 2 miles to the Mississippi River on Monday, June 7, activists were met with no resistance from the

Clearwater County Sheriff's Office deputies who were on scene to keep the peace and protect the protesters on County Road 9.

Those gathered remained peaceful throughout the after-

noon and loudly voiced their concerns through chants and singing.

"A spill, a rupture will harm the environment in this area," said Dawn Goodwin, co-founder

**PROTEST:** Page A2



Special to Forum News Service

Eight-month-old Henry Kraus has a rare and life-threatening hereditary condition known as Marfan syndrome. The boy from Park Rapids, Minn., has already endured surgery on his eyes and his heart.

## Park Rapids baby faces rare, life-threatening hereditary disorder

**By Robin Huebner**  
Forum News Service

In many ways, Henry Kraus is a typical baby. He has his first few teeth coming in, likes to look at books and is thoroughly entertained by the antics of his older sister.

But what this 8-month-old has that few others do is a life-threatening condition that will forever change his and his family's lives.

Henry was diagnosed shortly after birth with

neonatal Marfan syndrome, a rare, hereditary disorder that affects the body's connective tissues, thus impacting development of the heart, lungs, skin, bones, joints and eyes.

Henry's parents, Danielle and Derek Kraus, had no idea their son would have health problems.

It's a reality they are still processing now that Henry has already undergone surgery

**HENRY:** Page A5

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER FOR HUBBARD COUNTY



### SPORTS

**Section qualifiers:** Three Park Rapids and three UNC golfers advance to Section 8AA tournament. - Page 7



### ENTERTAINMENT

**'Ant-Venture':** Now a permanent park fixture, Al Bellevue's sculpture draws viewers into the art. - Page 11

### ONLINE

**Now playing:** Click on "Marketplace" for videos, special deals and a local business directory.

OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS

\$2.00



8 04879 16241 4

For real-time news updates and in-depth coverage not found in print, go to [parkrapidsenterprise.com](http://parkrapidsenterprise.com). The e-paper, available daily, lets you access digital stories in the same format as the paper. Find it by clicking the yellow e-paper button at the top right of the homepage.

### Get help at

[parkrapidsenterprise.com/news/epaperhelp](http://parkrapidsenterprise.com/news/epaperhelp)