ARTHUR DWIGHT CURFMAN

RESEARCHED BY: Mary Bezbatchenko

DATE OF BIRTH
October 14, 1896

DATE OF DEATH
June 22, 1974

HOMETOWN
Westerville, Ohio

ENTERED THE MILITARY
July 3, 1918

BRANCH OF SERVICE
U.S. Navy

UNIT
Naval Auxiliary Reserve, Ninth Naval District

RANK
Seaman Second Class

CEMETERY
Mausoleum, East Wing, Tier 3
Otterbein Cemetery
Westerville, Ohio
PROFILE: ARTHUR DWIGHT CURFMAN

BEFORE THE WAR

On October 14, 1896, Arthur Dwight Curfman was born in Glouster, Ohio in Athens County to Vinton and Sylvia. He graduated from Glouster High School in 1914 and enrolled in the school of journalism at The Ohio State University (OSU).

While at OSU, Curfman was active on campus. He was the business manager of The Lantern, the campus newspaper, a staff member of the Makio, the yearbook, and a violinist in the university orchestra. Curfman also served as the secretary for the Pan-Hellenic Council and was a member of Sigma Delta Chi, a journalism fraternity, and the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. Curfman graduated in May 1918 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

MILITARY EXPERIENCE

Curfman was a seaman second class in the U.S. Navy. Although he enlisted in July 1918, he was not called into service until October. Curfman was sent to the Naval Auxiliary Reserve School, stationed at the Municipal Pier in Chicago, Illinois. This was part of the Great Lakes Naval Training Station, which was authorized by Congress in 1904 and opened in 1911. Great Lakes was established to train men with officer-like qualities and prepare them for future naval training.
Originally designed to accommodate 1,500 recruits, Great Lakes expanded greatly during World War I. By October 1917, over 13,000 recruits received instruction there. When Curfman arrived in October 1918, he was trained in signals, buoyage systems, and navigation systems. He was still stationed there when World War I ended in November. Curfman was discharged from active duty on December 23, 1918 but remained at the Naval Auxiliary Reserve School until January 1919.

**VETERAN EXPERIENCE**

Upon his return to Ohio, Curfman began a successful career in journalism. Curfman worked in advertising at B.F. Goodrich and as an advertising manager for the *Akron Daily News*. He married Ruth White on August 2, 1919 and she gave birth to their first son, Arthur Dwight “Bud” Curfman, Jr., in 1920.

In 1922, the family moved to Westerville, Ohio where their second son, Robert, was born in 1924. Curfman purchased the weekly newspaper, the *Public Opinion*, with a former OSU classmate, Ray W. Gifford. Gifford served as the editor and Curfman was the business manager. Together they ran the paper for 25 years.
THE FIRST MOVIE THEATER IN TOWN

Curfman further contributed to the city of Westerville by opening the first movie theater. The State Theatre, named after the street it was located on, opened in October 1927 and began showing silent films. The first film to be shown at the theater was *Now We’re in the Air* starring Wallace Beery and Raymond Hatton.

Curfman ran the State Theatre with his son, Bud, until his death in 1974. Bud continued operating the theater until 1975 when it closed due to increased competition from chain theaters. The marquee of the theater still remains as a strong visual landmark on the main street of uptown Westerville.

COMMEMORATION

The Curfman family experienced hardship during World War II when Robert was killed in action. Robert participated in the Normandy invasion and received the Purple Heart after being wounded in August 1944. He returned to combat in Germany and was killed in February 1945.

Throughout his life, Curfman was dedicated to his work and his town. He died on June 22, 1974, survived by his son Bud and four granddaughters. Arthur Dwight Curfman is buried near his son, Robert Curfman, at the Otterbein Cemetery Mausoleum in Westerville, Ohio.

Otterbein Cemetery Mausoleum, 2018. Courtesy of Mary Bezbatchenko.
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