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Over there

Veterans remember the big wars

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Tucked into the wallet more than 30 years later is a black and white photo of Charles Currie and his older brother standing in front of a doorway in London.

They are dressed in the uniforms that carried them through World War I. The picture shows a younger Currie. The hair's a little darker, the figure a little trimmer than the one Currie has now as he sits in the American Legion Hall on Grand River.

But as the time arrives to celebrate another Veteran's Day on Nov. 11, memories of days spent slogging through the mud of France came back.

"You know, I wouldn't take a million dollars for that time but I wouldn't take \$10 million to do it over," Currie said.

Nearby, with memories stretching back to another world war, Joe Devriendt, 79, remembers the trench in which he saw Armistice Day in 1917.

"Sometimes I think that I wasn't really there," he said of the far off memories.

Sitting on his sunny enclosed porch in Farmington, Devriendt remembers the day he calls Armistice Day instead of the more recent Veterans' Day and recalls the comrades who didn't return.

DEVRIENDT WAS FIGHTING near the Belgian border in 1917 close to the Meuse River. He and other members of his company suspected some sort of cease fire to be announced but no one knew exactly what would happen.

He and another man were sent to the front to pick up small arms ammunition for the company's rifles and pistols. When they returned the morning of the Armistice, they discovered more German shelling than they had experienced at other time in the war.

"The shelling was terrible that morning. They (the Germans) acted like they tried to get rid of everything they had," he said.

"I remember a priest from Bay City who thought it was the 11th hour already and he went outside and was hit with a bullet right between his eyes. He was killed five minutes before the Armistice.

"A lot of men were killed right before the cease fire," Devriendt said. The cascade of shells that fell on his infantry company ended at 11 a.m., when the Armistice became official.

Then, the scene changed suddenly. "At 11 when the fighting ceased the Germans and the Americans came out



JOE DEVRIENDT

of their trenches and began swapping things. We gave them tobacco for binoculars and such," he said.

"THEY WERE JUST AS glad as we were to have the war end," he said. After 18 months of nothing but the deafening thunder of shells, the birds finally gained an audience.

"It was so funny. I'm fond of birds. And you could hear the birds' song for the first time in 18 months. They were meadowlarks and they sounded eerie and strange," he said.

Eventually he was transferred out of the infantry and became a mounted orderly for a general. While his trenchmates walked, he rode a horse through Belgium and Luxembourg into Germany.

"The rest of my buddies were foot-slogging it," Devriendt laughs in glee. "They called me a dog robber and I'd slob mud on them in return," he said.

When the war officially ended in 1918, he was 19 years old and had been in the armed forces since he was 16. He had begged his father in Grand Rapids to allow him to join the National Guard so he could fight with General John Pershing and his older brother in Mexico against Pancho Villa.

His father relented in time for Devriendt to see the last three months of that conflict.

"I went down to Mexico and then came back here with my brother," is

the way he describes the action he saw.

"I NEVER SAW Pancho Villa. But I heard he was a character. He robbed from the rich and gave to the poor."

After his return from his first abridged adventure, he was sent to Camp Grayling and Waco, Texas to train for the Great War.

He and 10,000 officers and soldiers sailed to Europe on a American sized German cruise ship, the President Grant.

They slept in three decker bunks seven decks below the water line. Most of the men preferred to stroll above deck to escape the stagnant atmosphere down below.

Times were tense during the 19-day crossing. The Lusitania had just been sunk.

Once the men ran aboard board when they heard gunshots being fired.

"We had a scare there. We saw floating wreckage and we thought it was a sub. We came up out of the bowels of that ship like termites," he said.

His division followed the Marines into Chateau Thierry, outside of Paris.

He was manning a machine gun as the Germans approached Paris, confident of capturing it.

"They were coming like waves from an ocean. I've never seen anything like it in my life," he said.

"THE GERMANS WERE stopped 15 miles from Paris. That day 40,000 men were killed. The Germans were singing and yelling they thought they were going to Paris," he said.

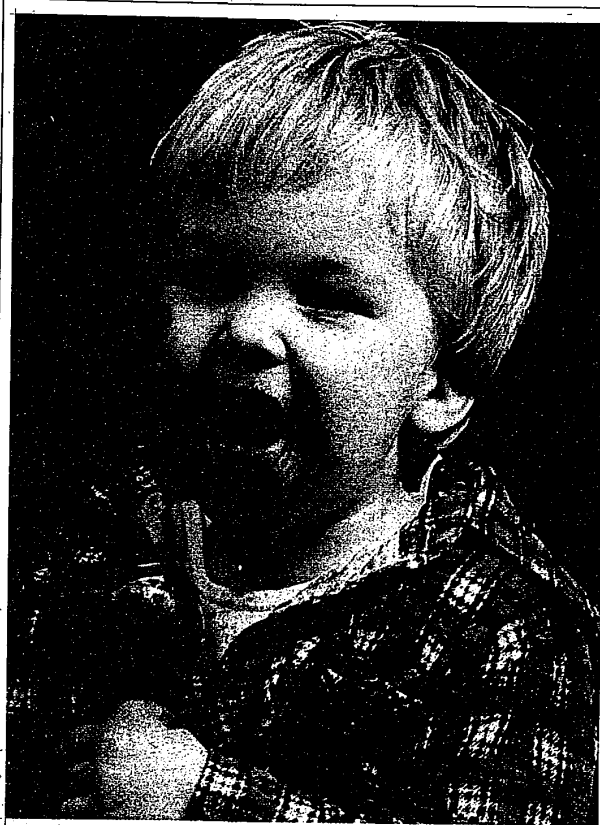
After the war jobs were scarce. Those who stayed home were entrenched in a job. Devriendt joined the Michigan Constabulary and stayed with the precursors of the state police until 1920. He was with the sheriff's office for 12 years and in 1942 became the chief of police for Farmington.

The city gave him a watch when he retired in 1964.

Three years before Devriendt retired from the police, Currie walked into the American Legion post on Grand River and joined. Until then he had been too busy raising a family and building his home to be an active member.

But he enjoys the fellowship of the

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The Candy Apple Kid

If an apple a day keeps the doctor away, what does a candy apple do? For Mark Jackson, it probably made his dentist happy and his mother exasperated. But what's more fun than a gooey candy apple on a warm, Indian summer day? Enjoy while there's time! (Staff photo by Steve Cantrell)

It's back to drinking pop

Age limits hike lamented by students

Even though they were directly affected by the outcome of the vote on Proposal D, which raised the legal drinking age to 21 in the state, the election did not draw most young voters to the polls.

Judging from the responses of students between the ages of 18 and 21 at Lawrence Institute of Technology, the majority of young people opposed the proposal but few found time to vote.

Most students older than 19 but under 21 indicated they could "live with" the plan recently approved by the state legislature which will raise the drinking age to 19 on Dec. 3, allowing 19- and 20-year-olds another 19 days to drink before the higher drinking age goes into effect Dec. 22.

Two persons interviewed said they supported the move to raise the drinking age but only one voted. Thirteen other students said they oppose the higher drinking age, though only one under the age of 21 voted against Proposal D.

LIT student Roman Bronislawski, 20, of Sterling Heights, said he voted against the proposal because "you can't take people's rights away suddenly without a grandfather clause.

Although I'll be almost a year before he can legally drink again after Dec. 22, Bronislawski has no plans to become a teetotaler.

"I don't go to bars that much but I'm still going to drink," he said. "People might have more trouble purchasing it but I'll still get it. They'll find ways to get it. The state can't expect drinking to stop. Social functions, especially in an older crowd, I'll be exposed to it."

BRENDA HAUER, 18, a student living in an LIT apartment building, said the same thing happened in Maine, where she comes from. Voters raised the drinking age to 21.

"I don't think it's right," said Ms. Hauer. "A lot of times you get out of class after a hard day of school and you want to go to a disco, socialize, have a drink or two."

Mike McKenna, 18, and Mike Kump,

19, walked up to the LIT student apartments carrying 18 cans of beer between the two of them.

Predictably, they were opposed to the hike in the drinking age. However, neither one of them voted on Tuesday. McKenna just turned 18 and said he wasn't aware that he could register at 17 if he would be 18 when the election was held.

Kump is registered to vote in Flint but didn't transfer his registration to Southfield when he moved to attend LIT.

Kump said he wonders if the LIT apartment manager will have to become a policeman in the building once the drinking law goes into effect.

George Carvis, who manages the student housing facility, said he isn't a typical dorm director.

"THIS ISN'T A DORM," Carvis said. "It's a high-rise apartment. Everyone has their own apartment and what they do is their own business as long as it doesn't disturb the neighbors. This is not a prison. I don't go around listening at the doors."

One of the reasons the drinking law was hiked, McKenna said, was that people are concerned about alcohol falling into the hands of high school students.

"Half the people who voted yes, I'll bet didn't know that the drinking age was going up to 19 on Dec. 3 anyway," McKenna said. "Nobody gave that law a chance."

Both he and McKenna support the move to make 19 the legal drinking age even though McKenna admitted he'd have had to wait until he turned 19 to drink legally.

"I know a guy who's been married close to a year," Kump explained. "He owns a trailer, yet the state says he can't buy a beer or alcohol."

Most students who oppose the age hike said it is unfair to call an 18-year-old an adult with all adult privileges and responsibilities except the right to drink.

ONE OF THE students who said he supports the higher drinking age, Dave

Foss, 20, didn't vote in the election but would have voted in favor of Proposal D.

"The main reason is drinking's effect on school—college and high school," he said.

"I know they were going to raise the age to 19 but most colleges students in their first and second year are still wondering where they're going with their life. Alcohol would confuse them and delay them in choosing how to go."

A lobby that worked to defeat Proposal D, the Three O'Clock Lobby, has indicated that the group will attempt to fight the law on constitutional grounds.

"I think that within the next year or six months people will be seeing a court case regarding this amendment," said Chris Magnus, spokesman for the Three O'Clock Lobby.

ONE OF the more popular bars in the area among those under 21 is Uncle Sam's on Telegraph in Redford.

Steve Hanley, manager of the bar, said voters may see drunk driving increase instead of decrease under Proposal D.

"They're trying to control drunk driving but what they've done is take the kids out of the bars and into the car. At least in bars there's super-

vision. And (voters) can have that on their consciences, not mine."

Yesterdays, a lounge in Southfield, should not be affected adversely by the new law, said Dan Murphy, manager.

"With our bar, many of the customers are professional people, executives types, or, among females, clerical in nature. It's an older crowd, 25 to 40, so in reality it shouldn't hurt our business."

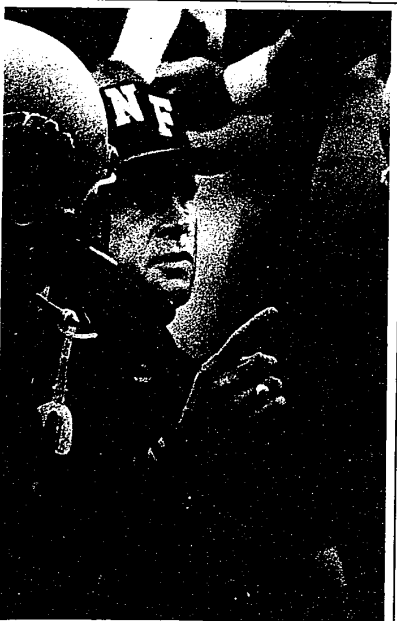
Steve Kopitz, manager of the Perfect Blend, also said most of the regular customers are older than 21.

"During the days, most of our crowd's above 21," Kopitz said. "In the evenings we do get young people but they're not that big of spenders anyway. The seats they don't fill we'll fill with someone else. There's usually a line on the weekends."

Kopitz said what bothers him most about the new law is that he'll have to fire about one-third of his staff. Five of 15 barmaids and bartenders are under 21.

Debbie DeLonge said she plans to get in all the discoing she can until the Dec. 22 deadline. She didn't vote on the issue.

"I might buy a case on Dec. 21st and you can be sure I'll get my fair share of discos before that date too."



Raiders advance

North Farmington coach Ron Holland advises his football team during last Saturday's state Class A playoff game against Livonia Churchill. The Raiders must have taken Holland's advice: They came up with a 14-3 win over Churchill to advance to the Class A semifinals next Saturday. For details, see the sports section. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe).

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WINTER SOLDIER REMEMBERS

Although the Vietnam War wasn't that many years ago, many Americans have forgotten those who fought it and care to remember the other wars on Veterans' Day. To see how one Vietnam veteran feels about his war, turn to Page 10B.