

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today is Veteran's Day! It reminded me of two stories I read a few months ago. My brother sent me the articles featured in the "Waukesha Freeman." They are about Charles Franzke, a 97-year old Navy veteran. I have known Mr. Franzke (Chuck) for as long as I can remember. His wife, Bev, was a substitute teacher at our grade school. His son, Craig, was a good friend of my brother, Les. Chuck and Bev live a couple of blocks away from my childhood home (across the street from Julaine Summerfield Ristow and her husband, Jerry).

One article was about Chuck and a special event which was held to recognize his service during World War II. He "served in the Navy from 1943 to 1945, flying Grumman TBF avenger torpedo bombers off the carrier USS Saginaw Bay in the Pacific" (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel online, April 6, 2020). Organizers of the event wanted to recognize and celebrate his service, but didn't know how to do so during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic and "Safer-At-Home." So, they initiated a drive-by parade! Chuck stood in the doorway of his home, or on the porch, as people drove by waving, cheering, saluting, and thanking him for his military service.

The other article was about his nickname, "Dancing Chuck." He loved to dance the jitterbug when he was younger, and he continues to love to dance! Karyn Roelke of the Stars and Stripes Honor Flight shoots short cell phone video clips of Chuck dancing and posts them online ("Quarantine 'can't stop the feeling' for Waukesha World War II veteran," Evan Peterson, Fox 6 News, April 9, 2020). Roelke said, "The first one was a bit accidental, and since then he's always asking when can we do another one. Or is game for it whenever his birthday rolls around." A recent video is of "Dancing Chuck" performing to Justin Timberlake's "Can't Stop the Feeling."

These articles remind us that even during a pandemic, there are ways to say "thank you," and to recognize our veteran's service. These two examples are day brighteners for all of us--a parade outside one's home, and dancing--not in the streets, but in stocking feet in the safety of one's home or on one's front porch! If you would like to watch a video(s) of "Dancing Chuck," just enter his name, Charles Franzke, in an online search, and several of his videos pop up. Enjoy!

Let us remember and keep in our prayers our veterans who have served, and our church members who are currently serving in the military: Jacob Picha, Todd Nofsinger, Dylan Dougherty, Seth Tormoen, and Robert Cale. May God continue to watch over them and keep them safe.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy