



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shrine to dedicate St. Michael statue in memory of Edwin A. Gerlikowski, Lieutenant, 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division

GREEN BAY, Wis. (Nov. 4, 2015) – The Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help will dedicate a statue of St. Michael the Archangel in memory of Edwin A. Gerlikowski, Lieutenant, 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division, on Sunday, November 8, at 10 a.m. on the Shrine grounds, 4047 Chapel Drive, Champion, WI 54229.

The statue will be placed in the Shrine's devotional grotto commemorating those who have valiantly and faithfully served in the Armed Services. The statue dedication and blessing will be followed by the rosary at 10:30 a.m. and Mass in the Chapel at 11 a.m., which includes a special remembrance of veterans.

Before leaving to serve in World War II, Edwin A. Gerlikowski asked his mother to go to Mass at the Shrine Chapel every Tuesday to pray for his safety. She didn't drive, so her 12 year old daughter, Ellie, drove her there every Tuesday rain or shine. He returned from World War II unharmed. Ellie, now in her 80s, and her daughters will be at the dedication.

Gerlikowski received several decorations from the service, including the Bronze Star Medal and the Soldier's Medal. The President of the United States presented the Soldier's Medal to Lieutenant Gerlikowski for heroism while serving with Company E, 232d Infantry Regiment, 42d Infantry (Rainbow) Division, on 25 March 1945 near Rumbach, Germany. When another officer was overcome by poisonous fumes in a Siegfried Line pillbox which had recently been dynamited, Lieutenant Gerlikowski entered the fortification and carried out the unconscious officer. Lieutenant Gerlikowski then successfully administered artificial respiration. By his heroic act, Lieutenant Gerlikowski saved the life of a fellow officer.

In late April 1945, after fierce battles in Wuerzburg, Schweinfurt and Furth, Gerlikowski's unit was advancing toward Munich. They were informed that just off the main road was the Dachau Concentration Camp. Prior to finding the camp, they discovered a railroad track with 30-50 boxcars all stacked with emaciated dead bodies. Proceeding to the Camp and as they approached the main gate, a German under the flag of truce offered to surrender the camp. Lieutenant Gerlikowski was among the first US soldiers into the camp to liberate the over 30,000 prisoners who still survived in the camp.

When Gerlikowski returned from service, he studied at Marquette University and became a lawyer in Green Bay. He never forgot his devotion to the Shrine. Through a generous bequest, he ensured this special place of prayer would be available to many future generations of faithful Christians.

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About the Shrine: On Oct. 9, 1859, the Queen of Heaven appeared to Sister Adele Brise in Champion and said to her, "Gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation. Teach them their catechism, how to sign themselves with the Sign of the Cross and how to approach the sacraments; that is what I wish you to do. Go and fear nothing. I will help you."

On Dec. 8, 2010, Bishop Ricken granted formal Church approval to the Marian apparition at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. It is the first and only approved Marian apparition in the United States. The announcement was made during a Mass for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception at the Shrine.

Contact: For more information, please contact the Shrine at 920-866-2571.