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Irvin Ellingson accounted for, to be interred in ND

WWII POW perished in 1945 Tokyo prison fire

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced on December 9 that US Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Irvin C. Ellingson, 25, of Dahlen, killed during World War II, was accounted for on June 17, 2025. Ellingson's family recently received their full briefing on his identification; therefore, additional details on his identification can now be shared.

In the spring of 1945, Ellingson served as a radar observer aboard a Boeing B-29 "Superfortress" bomber assigned to 878th Bombardment Squadron, 499th Bombardment Group (Very Heavy). On April 14, during a combat mission to Tokyo, the aircraft was shot down over Chiba Prefecture. Of the six survivors of this crash, one crew member was able to escape and return to Allied lines, while five crew members were captured by Japanese forces. One crew member died shortly after being captured, and the other four were eventually taken to the Tokyo Military Prison.

The prison was hit during air raids on May 25-26, 1945. More than 70 Allied soldiers died during the resulting fire because guards would not allow prisoners to seek safety outside their locked structures.

Following the end of the war, the American Graves Registration Service was tasked with investigating and recovering missing American personnel in the Pacific Theater. Although the AGRS recovered 65 sets of remains from the Tokyo Military Prison, they were unable to identify any as Ellingson. At the end of AGRS identification efforts, US forces interred 39 Unknowns associated with the Tokyo Military Prison in Fort McKinley Cemetery, now the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in Manila, Republic of the Philippines.



Staff Sgt. Irvin Ellingson (1920-1945)

In March and April 2022, DPAA exhumed the 39 Unknowns associated with the Tokyo prison fire for comparison to associated casualties, including Ellingson, and accessioned them into the DPAA laboratory for analysis.

To identify Ellingson's remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis and circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA analysis, mitochondrial genome sequencing data, and nuclear single nucleotide polymorphism testing.

Ellingson's name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the National Cemetery of the Pacific, an American Battle Monuments Commission site in Honolulu, along with the others missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Senator John Hoeven, a member of the Senate Defense Appropriations Committee, stated, "We must never forget the courage and sacrifice made by our service

members during WWII. Irvin, who was killed along with thousands of other Americans during the war, continues to remind us of the bravery of the Greatest Generation. May we always honor Irvin's sacrifice and join his family, his fellow veterans and all North Dakotans in commemorating his life and service."

Irvin Casper Ellingson was born Jan. 5, 1920 to Tommy (T. B.) Ellingson (1888-1975) and Ella Ellingson (1898-1996). He was baptized and confirmed at Dahlen Lutheran Church. According to information provided to the ND Department of Veterans Affairs by his family, he attended grade school and high school in Dahlen, graduating in 1936, and attended Mayville State Teachers College from 1937-39. He also worked with the Civilian Conservation Corps, as an enumerator for the 1940 census in Dahlen Township, and at Solar Aircraft in San Diego, Calif. in addition to working on the home farm.

On Dec. 16, 1942 he enlisted in the US Army Air Forces and was sent to Sheppard Field in Texas for basic training. He then went to Chicago and trained as a radio operator and mechanic.

He did further training throughout 1943 and 1944 in Boca Raton and Panama City, Fla. as well as Salina and Herington, Kans. He departed for Saipan on Nov. 10, 1944, and flew several missions as a radar observer over Tokyo prior to his capture.

His siblings, all deceased, were Alpha Lundmark, Clarice Enerson, and Omer, Trueman, Clayton, Dennis and Leland Ellingson. Interment in his hometown is planned for June 20, 2026.

Library-museum needs repair

City of Lakota begins fundraising drive

The city of Lakota has launched a community fundraising campaign to support urgent foundation repairs at the historic A. M. Tofthagen Library-Museum, one of the community's most cherished cultural landmarks. A recent structural assessment by Groundworks Minnesota revealed significant deterioration beneath the building, highlighting the need for immediate action to protect its long-term integrity.

According to the repair contract, the project involves extensive stabilization measures, including the installation of 29 foundation push piers, 27 IntelliBraces, N-decking throughout the basement, crawlspace encapsulation, upgraded drainage systems, and humidity control components.

These improvements -- totaling \$188,988.53 -- are essential to prevent further settlement, moisture issues and structural damage.

The A. M. Tofthagen Library-Museum, listed on the National Register of Historic Places,



continues to serve as a vital community hub, housing historic collections, artifacts and public library resources.

"This building holds so much of Lakota's story," said Mayor Bill Solberg "It's essential that we step in now to protect it for future generations."

To help move the project forward, the city encourages residents, businesses and supporters to contribute to the Lakota Community Foundation, where all donations are tax-deductible and will be used exclusively for the museum's foundation repair.

Those wishing to donate may

send contributions to: Lakota Community Foundation, PO Box 468, Lakota, ND 58344.

Community foundation contacts are Jim Aaker (701-740-7962) and Jeff Anderson (701-247-2413).

Contractors estimate that if funding is secured soon, much of the repair work could be completed as early as this winter.

"This museum represents more than a building -- it represents our heritage," Solberg said. "Together we can ensure it stands strong for generations to come."

Lakota Cloverleaves 4-H Club news

BY MARGARET ESTVOLD
4-H club leader

On Dec. 14, 2025, Siena called the Lakota Cloverleaves 4-H Club meeting to order. Pledges were said. Roll call was: What is your favorite part of Christmas? Secretary and treasurer reports were given.

Old Business: Bake sale for Laura and Levi was a success. Nelson County 4-H project is December 30. The Christmas party will be held after the De-

cember meeting.

New Business: Please save vegetable-size metal cans for a project in February. Our next meeting will be January 11 at 2 p.m. The meeting was adjourned.

Laura and Levi Steffan did a demonstration on consumer decision-making. We had fun making Christmas tree ornaments out of buttons. We finished the day with some tasty snacks and a Christmas party.



Human knot game



Saran Wrap game



Snowman bowling



Throwing snowballs



Samuel Dahl and Levi playing the candy cane game



Members saying the pledges



Laura and Levi Steffan did their demonstration on consumer decision-making.



Members working on their button Christmas tree ornaments



Members with the button Christmas ornaments they made



Free ice fishing weekend

North Dakota's free ice fishing weekend is December 27-28. Resident anglers may fish those two days without a license. Residents 15 and younger do not need a fishing license at any time of year. All other winter fishing regulations apply. The weekend provides a great opportunity to try fishing for the first time or take someone new.