

Visiting Angels Times Client Highlight

Pueblo, Co



The Amazing Matt Peulen

Former Pueblo
County Commissioner

Father of 5 Grandfather of 9

Matt Peulen was born in 1929 in a town called Heerleen, Holland. He was the eldest son of 7 (5 boys and 2 girls). Only being about 5 miles from the German border back in 1944 you can imagine what his hometown and his family experienced. He recalls the Germans coming into town and collecting the Jews. On one particular day they were loading a truck and a small girl was being brought to the truck and a Nazi soldier kept pushing her down. The little girl's dog tried to rescue her by attacking the German soldier. The soldier kept kicking the dog while the dog yelped. Matt says he still can hear the girl or dog at night sometimes. This is part of the reason He and his father helped American soldiers in WWII by hiding them from Nazi soldiers. Him and his father would watch for Americans parachuting into Holland after their plane was shot down. They would hike to them and bring them into hiding until they could be rescued. Usually hiding them in the church's rafters. It's amazing to think he was only around 15 years old at the time.

Such bravery for a young man.

Matt recalls how families would have to keep their house "dark" at night to prevent being bombed.



The Battle of the Bulge was not far from his house.

Matt did not know much English, but when the Americans came to his town, Matt tried to warn them. He knew the Germans were waiting for their arrival and might blow up the bridge. Just then, Germans did blow up a tank nearby and killed many American soldiers and townspeople around it.

Christmas Day in 1944 lives in his memories, they had no midnight mass, because there was so much shooting, it was hard to hear. The Americans blanketed the windows around the church so they could not be seen by aerial view. That way the people could have a Christmas service. He said the most amazing thing happened. Americans, Polish and all present sang Silent Night in unison in different languages. That is something he will remember forever.



**Learned Respect
and Service to
others at a young
age**

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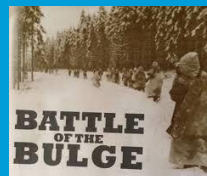


Humble Hero are words to describe Matt Peulen

HID AMERICANS FROM NAZI SOLDIERS



BATTLE OF THE BULGE

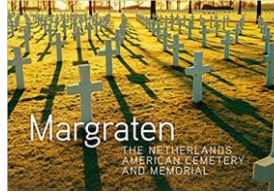


NETHERLANDS



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WWII saw many deaths, many American soldiers died in the Netherlands in those times. Matt not only helped his dad save several American soldiers during this time; he assisted his father in the burials of thousands of American soldiers in the Margraten US Cemetery. He said it started at 5,000 and grew to 18,000. He thinks about 10,000 American soldiers are still located there. It took over a year for the burial process. Mr. Peulen was a boy scout so he started an honor guard to salute the American Soldiers as their bodies were brought to the cemetery. It was to show respect to them all.



Mr. Peulen was a soccer player for the Dutch Army National Team

After burying Soldiers, he worked in the coal mines, but his lungs gave him problems. Because of his dad's service to the Americans, he was given a green card in which he gave to his son Matt.

Matt immigrated to the U.S. by boat in 1957. When he arrived to Ellis Island he was supposed to work in Lafayette Louisiana, but they gave the job to someone else. He was put on a train to a strange place called Pueblo, Colorado. He loved his new home town. He worked for the Steel Mill who was looking for workers. There was a strike in 1959 and he was promoted to a Millwright. He worked in the Tube Mill or the "Powerhouse". He was named Main Grievance Man for the Rail Mills due to his passion for fairness. He became a Community Liason for the Mill and spoke to many organizations. Mr. Peulen became Union Chairperson on Community on Political Education and was the Union's Retirement Representative. That led him to the White House meeting President Clinton. Mr. Peulen was inducted into the CF&I Hall of Fame in 2019. He worked there from 1957 to 1986.

In 1998, he was elected Pueblo County Commissioner he worked hard for Pueblo until 2016. He enacted the first Christmas Tree lighting at the Court House in 2001. The lighting still exists today and is loved by the community.

After leaving office he said "I'm leaving the title of commissioner, but I'm going back to the most important title: Citizen of the United States of America"



Husband/Father/Grandfather/Role Model



His best accomplishment is marrying the love of his life Margaret in 1960. They were married 57 years before her passing. He loved that she was a vibrant sole that enjoyed Polka dancing and loved to go to the VFW to dance. He said once a lady asked him to dance at the VFW and Margaret told the woman to go get her own man. He smiled at that. He is proud of all of his 5 children and talks very highly of each of them. He also has 9 grandchildren that he adores. His wife and family are the jewels of his life. Family is everything to him.



Community Leader/Volunteer/Citizen



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