



Calumet County Historical Society Museum

**Open Sundays June-September 1:00 to 4:00
or by appointment**

(On November 20, 1966 John Mortimer, from Chilton was hunting at a sportsman's club east of Chilton near Riesterer & Schnell. He was hit by a stray slug that was mostly stopped by his steel Zippo lighter. John's daughter Paula tells the story every year on Facebook)

Life Saved by a Zippo!

By Paula Mortimer

November 20, 1966, My Dad "Dad Mort" was shot by a deer hunter from a neighboring camp while Dad & his friend were tracking a deer that dad had shot.

Dad Mort smoked at the time. The slug hit the steel lighter which was in Dad's chest pocket (over his heart!) The slug was then deflected & went into Dad's leg near his hip. Doctors Said the cigarette lighter (given to him by his friend Elmer Wagner) **Saved His Life!**

A friend who was hunting with him (Ralph Schaff) used his own belt as a tourniquet & ran MILES for help! I just recently learned that there was someone else with them, a young guy who had just turned 16! (it was his first time hunting!) His name Is Ken Groh.

Dad Mort spent the next 7 months In the hospital in traction, followed by months At home in a hospital bed, then back to the hospital again for a total of a year!



Only On Sundays! Before Regular Visiting Hours! That's The ONLY Time My Brother Grant & I Could See Dad Mort!

One of my earliest memories is the big hospital bed in our dining room & a traction bar hanging from the ceiling. I was almost 4 years old & my brother was 4 months old.

While most hunters display a "Trophy Buck Rack" in their homes, we display a plaque with the lighter & slug (given to Dad Mort by his friend Dick Werblow).

The Plaque Is A Constant Reminder Of How TRULY THANKFUL We Are!



Elmer Wagner



Ralph Schaff



John Mortimer, Ken Groh and Paula Mortimer in 2023



Kenneth Groh

That is a day I will never forget. It was my first year of deer hunting and your dad had shot a buck on my dads land. So we were tracking it for some time because it had snowed that night the night before. When John was hit I was walking to left of him and saw him as was falling backward. It was over a hour before they could get a ambulance near the swamp.I remember had the pins through his legs and in traction all that time. A great guy to know.

Like Reply 6y



Kathy Muenster

Rosie (Pfeffer)Roebken and I just started working as nurses aids at "Calumet Memorial Hospital" and I remember your dad was one of our most famous patients. Regardless of how much pain he was in he always had a smile on his face for us when we came in to freshen up his room or help him with something. He endured alot during that difficult time, but thanks to that infamous lighter there is a happy ending!! I'm sure for your family that's what Thanksgiving is all about👍

Like Reply 6y



Dick Werblow