
STORIES FROM THE HOME FRONT

RUTH ELOISE BIRGE

Ruth Eloise Birge , 1920-2015, was born in Fond du Lac. She was the daughter of Robert and Eloise Konow. She graduated from Rosendale Primary School and received her Bachelor's Degree at Ripon College. On May 26, 1944, Ruth married her college sweetheart, Robert Birge, born in Marchfield in 1920. Robert graduated from Ripon College in 1944 where he was active in the college ROTC unit. He attended officer training school at Fort Benning, GA, and after receiving his commission as second lieutenant on May 23, 1944 was assigned to Camp McCoy, WI. He served there until November when he went overseas.

In a 2005 interview with the Ripon Historical Society, Ruth spoke about Robert,

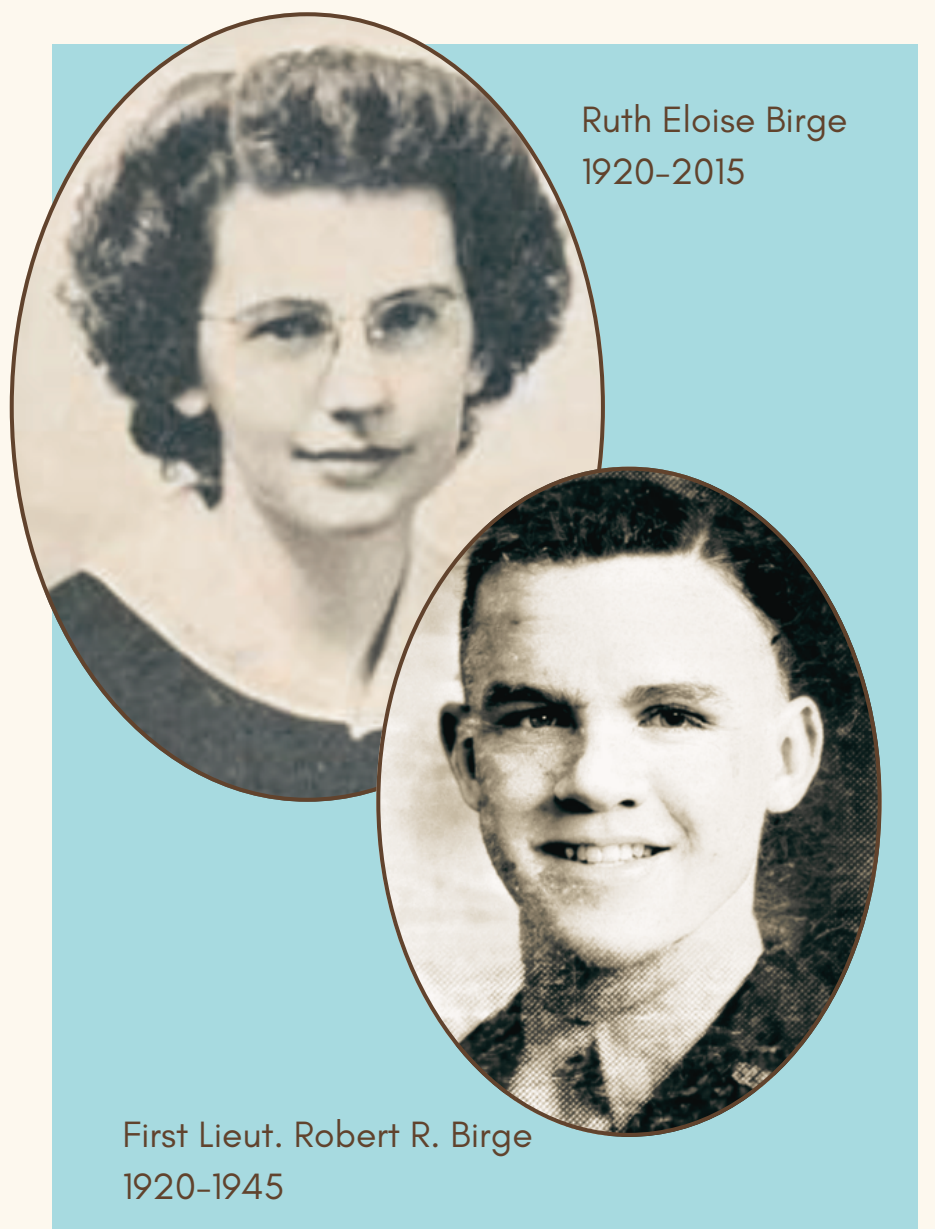
"When he was a junior he had to go, and he went to Anniston, Alabama, for his basic training. Then he got his commission at Columbus, Georgia. He was then stationed at Camp McCoy and then shipped overseas after that. He went first to London, and he was killed in the Battle of the Bulge. He died in Luxembourg, three days after he was wounded."

"After he was killed I worked at the College for awhile. They had a Bureau of Student Personnel...where they test people. I had a major in psychology, so I worked there for five years. Then I decided that I didn't want to do that for the rest of my life, so...I thought that I would go into elementary teaching. My first job was in Fond-du-Lac, so I taught there for two years and my home was here, so I applied and got a job here. I stayed for 29 years."

Robert was serving with the 26th Infantry Division ("Yankee Division") of General George S. Patton's Third Army. On the exact day he was wounded, the 26th Infantry Division was engaged in intense, brutal combat to breach the heavily fortified German bunker networks and minefields along the Saar River.

On February 22, Ruth was notified by the war department that her husband had been wounded. First Lieutenant Robert Birge passed away three days later from his wounds on February 25, 1945 at Luxembourg.

Ruth never remarried. She devoted her life to being an educator from 1952 to 1983, when she retired.



Ruth Eloise Birge
1920-2015

First Lieut. Robert R. Birge
1920-1945
