



**Veterans' Association
of the
Chicago & North Western Railway**



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Long in the Service – The Rasmussen Family

Submitted by Truman Koehn, President of the Green Bay Chapter

Once in a while an obituary will jump out of the past and a flood of memories will hit like a ton of bricks. Today (January 14, 2010) was such a day. The Green Bay paper today had the obit of **Peter Hans Rasmussen, Jr.** (84) of Summit Lake up in Langlade County. Summit Lake is a tiny community of around 500 people, 20 miles straight north of Antigo, on what was at one time on the main line of the C&NW Ashland Division. This community is at the beginning of the famous "North Lakes County" and Summit Lake is surrounded by many lakes. The Ashland Division was pulled up, lock stock and barrel just about 30 years ago, so any former evidence of a railroad in those parts is long forgotten.

The father of this family, **Peter Rasmussen, Sr.**, was the C&NW depot agent and operator at Summit Lake, seemingly forever, and old **Pete** lived to be 103 years old, passing away in 1993. If there was a better known agent/operator on the C&NW, I have no idea who it may have been. **Pete, Sr.** was featured on C&NW posters placed in nearly every building on the C&NW system during World War II.

Pete, Sr. had a big family and had 6 sons; **Peter, Jr.** is now the last of the sons to die. Nearly all 6 sons served in WW II, which was the theme of the C&NW "war time" poster featuring the Rasmussen family participating in the war effort. **Pete, Jr.** served in the Navy as a radioman in the Pacific. The twin brother of **Peter, Jr.** was **Paul Rasmussen**, who was a dispatcher in the Green Bay depot for the Lakeshore Division. **Paul Rasmussen** was well known in Green Bay as well.

Pete, Sr., was head of just about everything in the area around Summit Lake at one time and helped to develop Summit Lake into the resort area it is today. Everyone knew **Peter Rasmussen** and he was a very successful man, owning quite a bit of prime lake front property, which still remains in the family today. **Peter Jr.**, the last of the sons of **Peter, Sr.** was also a telegrapher, agent, supervising agent and supervisor of station operations on the C&NW. There were also 2 daughters in this family, totaling 8 children. All of them grew up during the Great Depression in the woods of northern Wisconsin. To my knowledge, nearly all of the Rasmussen men were actively involved in the Masonic Lodge. **Paul**, who lived in Green Bay, was the organist for the Valley of Green Bay, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite for decades. **Peter, Jr.** was a member of Ancient Landmark Masonic Lodge #210 in Ashland.

The funeral for **Peter Rasmussen, Jr.** will be on Saturday, January 16, 2010. Burial will be in Summit Lake.