



*Sam is pictured with the Advent Calendar that was purchased in Germany.*

Sam Schmitz, Celina, was the featured speaker at the January meeting of the Mercer County Chapter of Ohio Genealogical society.

Sam's topic, "To Germany and Back," was about his trips to Germany. Sam had been stationed in Germany while in the service. He speaks German and can translate German to English. He is willing to assist with German research. Look for his new column in the club's quarterly newsletter.

Sam had pictures of the cemetery of soldiers from past wars. They were marked with a stone cross. These plots will never be disturbed.

He said each community has a plaque, at church or town somewhere that lists those from the area that are missing or dead from World War I and WWII.

He went on to say, that while the Germans maintain their cemetery plots, like beautiful gardens, they are reused after twenty-five years. The headstones are

removed, and can be recycled as steps, or wherever marble may be needed. The plot, which had a wooden coffin from the previous death, is then reused for another person, for the next twenty-five years. This is due to shortage of land for cemeteries.

While in Germany, Sam was able to research a friend's surname back to 1617 and visit the ancestral hometown of the friend.