

COMMUNITY NEWS

GOOD NEWS

Roofers Helped Restore Grant's Tomb

Ulysses S. Grant can thank Dieter and Wayne Pfisterer for putting a roof over his head.

Specialists in the restoration of historic roofs, the Bergen County father and son team had the monumental task of restoring the 120-foot-high rotunda dome roof and the 70-foot-high periphery roof



Rosalie Longo

on Grant's tomb at Riverside Park in upper Manhattan in the summer of 1995.

The five-month assignment was no easy task.

Due to the historic significance of the building, workers at the Pfisterers' firm, (Pfister Industries in Fair Lawn) had to dispense with conventional fasteners to secure the roofing to the substrate. They also had to use extreme caution in stripping the roof to the original brick deck to retain the tomb's original architecture.

Because a conventional boom truck could not reach the height of the rotunda roof area, a specially constructed rooftop hoist had to be used to lift roofing materials and the ballast to the narrow deck.

For 10 days, four men loaded materials in five gallon pails, which were moved, one at a time, to the upper rotunda area. And the weather didn't always cooperate. Toiling for weeks in torrid temperatures, workers had to hoist gallons of fresh water to the roof to quench thirst and avoid dehydration.

When workers discovered that the existing 16 ounce copper counter-flashing was in poor condition, they replicated the original century old design in the Fair Lawn shop. They also did some custom fabricating to provide new PVC metal drop tubes which would extend approximately 2 feet into the old masonry spill-



Dieter (at right) and Wayne Pfisterer and a team of workers from their roofing firm, Pfister Industries Inc. of Fair Lawn, have helped the National Park Service restore Ulysses S. Grant's Tomb in upper Manhattan by restoring the dome and peripheral roofs to their original grandeur.

cated nearly 100 years ago.

The job should certainly please Ulysses S. Grant. Ditto for descendants who were saddened by recent neglect and deterioration of the ornate monument.

Angered that the stately structure had become a haven for graffiti artists and drug users, Grant descendants filed suit against the National Park Service in 1994 demanding full restoration and maintenance.

No doubt, National Park Service officials will praise the Fair Lawn roofing contractors to the rooftops when the magnificent monument (modeled after the Tomb of Mausolus... one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World) is unveiled on its centennial, April 27, 1997.

It won't be the first time that Pfister Industries Inc. has been recognized for outstanding work.

The company was recently chosen RSI Magazine's 1996

Good News

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cognized nationally," says president Dieter Pfisterer, 57, who is continuing a long-standing tradition of excellence established by his grandfather, Ernst, who started the firm in 1889 in Essen, Germany.

In 1914, one of Ernst's 10 sons, Herman, took over the business and successfully managed it through troubled times.

While studying mechanical engineering evenings in college in Germany, Dieter began work as an apprentice in roofing, sheet metal crafting and plumbing, and earned the title of master craftsman in roofing.

Before launching Pfister Indus-

stitute, Dieter spends his spare time making artistic metal sculptures.

While residing in Wyckoff, the artistic roofing executive created a huge globe mobile with the moon and Apollo spacecraft in copper and brass for the center lobby of the Wyckoff Public Library.

Wayne, 34, says he became involved in the family business "from day one."

Following his graduation from Ramapo Regional High School in Franklin Lakes, he joined his father in business and now serves as vice president of operations.

When he isn't working (he usually puts in 12-hour days), the Oakland resident unwinds by playing guitar or writing articles for trade publications as a member of the editorial advisory board of Roofer Magazine.