



# Legionnaire

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For God and Country

February 2014

## It should be a quiet year for vets issues in the legislature, maybe

This should not be a big legislative year for veterans, and that may be a good thing.

"We asked for a lot last year, and we received it," said Mike McElhiney, director of the legislative office at the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. "We're still happy that the governor and the Legislature were so supportive of us this past year."

This will be a shorter session, but will include a bonding bill which is expected to be quite substantial. The MDVA, however, will only be asking for money to keep the state's veterans homes in good shape.

Last year, in an 11th hour decision, the Legislature approved \$18 million for Phase III of the plan to basically rebuild most of the Minnesota Veterans Home at Minneapolis. That money will cover the state's share of the

funding for Phase III, which will include tearing down the south half of Building 17 and constructing a 100-bed skilled nursing facility to replace it.

The \$36 million that is needed from the federal government now stands 21st on the list of government projects that are eligible for \$80 million the government has set aside for veterans home projects.

"If we don't get the money this year, we'll be positioned well to get it next year," McElhiney said. "Because of the timing of the projects, we don't actually need the money for another 18 months. We should be number one or number two on next year's list."

In the meantime, Phase II of the project is moving ahead, and the north end of Building 17 is scheduled for demolition in February. That phase will also result in a new 100-

bed facility. Phase I of the project was completed last year with the construction of Building 19, also a 100-bed nursing home.

In the end, three state-of-the-art facilities will be built with 300 beds replacing 291 substandard beds on the campus.

For this year, there are only four legislative priorities that have been approved by the Commander's Task Force, a coalition of veterans service organizations that includes The American Legion.

All four will affect a portion of veterans. "None of our priorities will have sweeping implications for all veterans," McElhiney said.

The four include:

**Continued on Page 2**

## 'They do pretty well by us old folks'

### New adult day center at Minneapolis vets home campus good for veterans, families

By Al Zdon

Ed Dzielsky, a veteran of three wars, says he really likes the new adult day center at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis.

"It's outstanding. It's a good place to rest, and a good place to get exercise. And the food is outstanding. That guy can really cook."

Dzielsky was a chief warrant officer in the Navy, serving in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. "I was a gunner's mate. Big guns, little guns, you name it. I served on submarines, destroyers, cruisers and battleships. The 16-inch gun on the battleship was the biggest gun I ran."

Dzielsky has been a daily client of the center. "The people here are so nice. They treat us so well." Dzielsky laughed. "And if you fall down, they pick you up."

"They do pretty well by us old folks." Dzielsky was immediately challenged by one of the other players at the domino table. "What do you mean old guys?" Bill Hamilton, younger veteran, said indignantly.

"Well, I'm pushing 90," said Dzielsky.

Dzielsky was one of 18 clients at the center on a day in January. The center has been open since 2012 and is licensed to serve 35 veterans a day.

Ann Rostratter, director of the center, said the program was created with two main goals, to help veterans and to help their families and caregivers.

"We want to keep these guys in their homes. It's cost

**Continued on Page 7**



**DOMINOS ANYONE?** Ed Dzielsky and Bill Hamilton get ready for a competitive game of dominos at the Adult Day Center at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis. The center opened last year. Dzielsky, who served as a gunner on Navy ships in three wars, said he enjoys coming to the center every day.

**A tough Irish kid from St. Paul found a home in the 82nd Airborne**

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# New Legion mobile app now available

A new American Legion mobile app offers several reasons to join the nation's largest veterans service organization, along with a direct route to join, renew, donate or find a local post from any smartphone or electronic tablet. The app is now available through iTunes and the Google Play Store. Download the app here.

The American Legion app is the fourth in a series of mobile platforms developed by National Media & Communications Division, which also produced The American Legion Claims Coach app for veterans filing benefits claims, as well as annual apps to promote and provide information about the national convention.

The new app, introduced to market last week, includes the following channels:

### "About Us"

- Our Mission: The Legion's role in advocacy, troop support, youth programs and Americanism is stated in simple terms.
- How We Help: A brief explanation of the ways in which The American Legion fulfills its mission to assist veterans, military personnel, families and communities.
- Member Benefits: A listing of membership benefits, from discounts on hotels and prescription drugs to a one-year subscription to The American Legion Magazine.
- Find a Post: Search either by ZIP code or by simply allowing your phone to find your current location. American Legion post addresses, maps and directions are presented, as well as phone numbers and websites.
- Join: The app provides easy access to The American Legion's online membership application platform and the ability join or renew using a credit card.

### "Donate"

- The app offers easy access to The American Legion Charities mobile giving page and the ability to make fast, secure, tax-deductible donations.

### "Follow Us"

- There is no faster, easier way to access American Legion Facebook and Twitter pages than through the new app. Under "Follow Us," you can keep up with the latest news and information and jump into the social media conversation.

### "Images"

- A variety of photos and videos housed on the organization's YouTube channel flow into the app.

### "Renew"

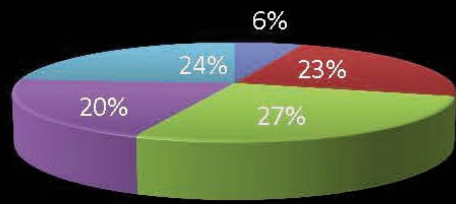
- Anyone with a current membership number can easily renew with a credit or debit card.

### "Contact Us"

- All three American Legion National Headquarters locations – Indianapolis, the Geiger Operations Center and 1608 K Street in Washington – are listed and mapped with contact phone numbers and website links.

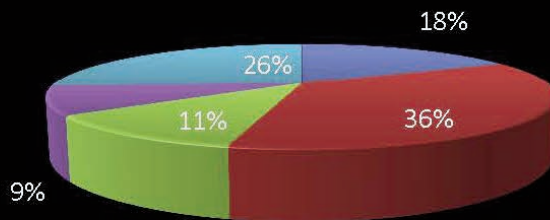
## MN Veteran Population by Age

■ 18-34 ■ 35-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65-74 ■ 75 and over



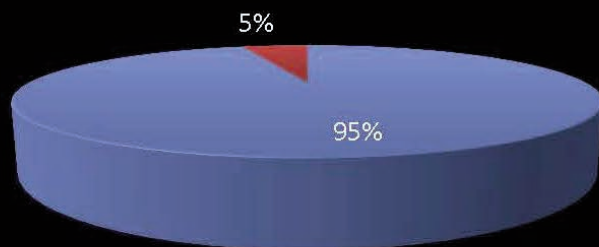
## MN Veteran Population by Era

■ Gulf War I & II ■ Vietnam Era ■ Korean Conflict ■ World War II ■ Peace Time



## MN Veteran Distribution by Sex

■ % Male ■ % Female



**PARTS OF THE PIE** -- Charts from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs show three breakdowns of Minnesota veterans, by age, by war era and by sex. Such charts are used by the MDVA to plan veterans services and to inform the Legislature.

## Legislative session approaches

### Continued from Page 1

-- An initiative that will streamline the Veteran-Owned Small Business certification by developing a state-level process. At the present time, small businesses must certify with the federal government in order to be given a preference in state procurement contracts. Other groups, such as minorities or women who get state preference, only have to be verified at the state level, putting veterans at a disadvantage.

-- A change in the law that will allow all 100 percent permanently disabled veterans in the state to qualify for a reduction in the cost of vehicle registration. At the present time only 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans who access certain federal benefits can get the reduction.

-- A bill that would exempt military pension payments from state tax. Only seven states in the nation still charge tax on retired military pensions. It is thought that many retiring military choose to live elsewhere because of Minnesota's tax laws.

-- A change in a statute that would allow more widows or widowers of veterans to continue to receive the Homestead Tax Exemption. At the present time, the veteran must have applied for and received this benefit for their surviving spouse to continue to receive it after their death. The new law would allow surviving spouses to continue the benefit even if they didn't know about it, or apply for it, while the veteran was alive.

Compared to recent years, the veterans' requests are not far reaching, but McElhiney said they are important.

He said there may be legislation forthcoming from the Legislature in response to a recent report delivered by the House Select Committee on Veterans Housing. The report had several recommendations including the decentralization of oversight in the veterans' home system, and a tiered system of allowing veterans into the homes that would give veterans with disabilities top priority.

Commissioner of the MDVA Larry Shellito called the report "anchored in state history, steeped in innuendoes, short on substance regarding recommended costs, and long on assumptions."

Still, it is apparent that Rep. Jerry Newton, DFL-Coon Rapids, the chair of the select committee, is determined to press ahead with legislative initiative related to the report.

McElhiney said the Department of Veterans Affairs has been implementing the changes that were created following the problems at the Minneapolis Home, and he said he hoped new legislation wouldn't hamper the good that has been accomplished.

Since the federal and state investigations of the Minneapolis home, the veterans' homes have been turned over to the MDVA for oversight. Major policy changes were implemented.

"We're saying that the momentum has been created, that we're going down the right path and don't mess with that," McElhiney said.

The session will begin Feb. 25. Committee meetings are already being held.

## Legion leader incensed by threat to military commissaries

American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger is incensed by a threat to the survival of military commissaries – the U.S. military's grocery stores. The Department of Defense reportedly is discussing a \$1 billion cut over the next three years to the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) budget. As a consequence, all but a handful of servicemembers' and military retirees' grocery stores could be closed.

"This is yet another undeserved blow to our men and women in service – and their families – in the name of 'necessary cutbacks' to reduce an ungainly national deficit," Dellinger said. "Like the trimming of expenses to be made by reducing military retirees' pensions, this is an inexcusable way of attempting to fix a fault by penalizing the blameless."

The DeCA currently operates nearly 250 stores worldwide with a \$1.4 billion annual budget. With the proposed budget cut to \$400 million annually by fiscal 2017, all but 24 stores would close. Those remaining would be overseas

and in rural areas stateside.

"Commissaries are extremely important to young military families who are just trying to make ends meet," Dellinger said. "By using commissaries, financially challenged military families can save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared with commercial supermarkets."

"This important benefit helps compensate for the significant difference between military pay and comparable civilian salaries. In addition to improving the quality of life for the troops and their families, commissary privileges help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve our country."

The American Legion leader's comments echo the points made in a resolution adopted by Legion leadership in 2012, which stated, "The value of commissaries in the quality of life equation for junior enlisted families and military retirees and others is indisputable. Military commissary usage has ranked second only to medical health care in the

non-pay compensation package... Any effort to reduce or dismantle the integrity of the military commissary system would be seen as a serious breach of faith with a benefit system that currently serves as a mainstay for the active and reserve components, military retirees and military survivors, military personnel involuntarily discharged or released from active duty, and 100 percent service connected disabled veterans and others."

Dellinger encouraged DoD to reconsider the proposal, saying, "The costs in both fiscal and human terms would be far higher than the temporary savings realized. It's a bad idea, plain and simple."



# Endorsements

## Anderson endorsed in Third

Elysian Post 311 has endorsed Duane Anderson for the position of District Commander for the 2014-2015 year.

He is currently serving as Post 311 Adjutant and as the Third District Membership Director. He is also active in the Post 311 Honor Guard and other post

activities. He has been a member of Post 311 for the past 35 years.

Anderson served in the US Air Force as a hydraulic technician and received a medical retirement in 1969. He has since worked as a technical school instructor, farmer and business owner, retiring in 2010. He was a

Vice Commander for the Third District for two years.

Anderson lives on Lake Frances by Elysian with his wife Jane. They have three daughters and seven grandchildren.

He is a PUFL of The American Legion and a life member of the DAV.



DUANE ANDERSON

## New, simplified PUFL program explained

### Question: What is a Paid Up For Life Membership?

**Answer:** Paid Up For Life membership is a lifelong membership plan of The American Legion. It ensures you receive all the benefits of Legion membership for life. Lifetime membership is paid either in one payment giving you an immediate savings offer – or charged to your credit card in 12 equal monthly payments. Once you fulfill your membership dues, you'll never pay another dime in American Legion membership dues.

### Question: How is my cost calculated?

**Answer:** Starting on Jan. 1, 2014, The American Legion rolled out a new, simplified procedure and cost calculation formula.

Previous PUFL forms (printed in 2009) are still accepted if submitted; however most will find the new cost structure and incentives to be a better value.

Age is the primary component used in the new pricing structure. In most cases, post dues are NOT a factor in the calculation.

The cost is specifically calculated for you. Go to [www.legion.org/join/PUFL](http://www.legion.org/join/PUFL) to get your personalized Paid Up For Life offer.

### Question: What if my post's dues increase?

**Answer:** Being a Paid Up For Life member will protect you from any future dues increases at the post, department or national levels. That alone can save hundreds of dollars over the lifetime of your membership.

### Question: What about my subscription to The American Legion Magazine and other member benefits?

**Answer:** As a Paid Up For Life member, you'll have a life-time subscription, plus, you'll receive all active benefits of American Legion membership for life. And once your lifetime membership dues are fulfilled, you'll receive

a permanent plastic card identifying you as a lifetime member. You'll also receive an annual American Legion membership card each year.

### Question: Am I eligible?

**Answer:** Anyone who is currently an American Legion member or who is eligible for membership may become a Paid Up For Life member.

### Question: Why does Paid Up For Life seem to cost more than other organizations' "life" memberships?

**Answer:** National Headquarters maintains a special Paid Up For Life Membership trust. Money from this trust can only be used to pay annual dues to your post, department and national headquarters. Each year the trust pays annual dues amounts to your post, department and national organization.

Though we can't speak with authority on how other organizations set up their "life" memberships, they may not pay annual dues to the local, state and national organizations, resulting in a different cost structure.

### Question: What if I want to transfer to another post?

**Answer:** You may transfer your Paid Up For Life membership to another participating post.

### Question: How do I become a Paid Up For Life member?

**Answer:** It's easy. Just go to [www.legion.org/join/PUFL](http://www.legion.org/join/PUFL) and enter your name and member ID. You can either choose to pay by credit card or print out the personalized form and mail it in with your check.

### Question: What if I still have questions?

**Answer:** Call our customer service phone number: (800) 433-3318 (Monday – Friday).

## Nearly \$50,000 raised in annual Pheasant Dinner

There was a total of 31 donations of 50 or more pheasants in 2013. Donations that came in after December 1 that were not listed in the January 2014 issue of the Legionnaire were received from the following:

Blue Earth	437
Mankato	126
Adams	123
Austin	106
St. Louis Park	100
Kimball	71
Bricelyn	63

Blue Earth's donation amount places them in second place in the state on the total list of donations.

Other donations of 50 or under were from: Ashby, Brandon, Barrett, Cold Spring, Coon Rapids, Delavan, Hendrum, Kenyon, Lake Wilson, Lamberton, Long Prairie, Madelia, Mound, Russell, Silver Lake, Sioux Valley, and Wabasha.

A new auxiliary donation is from the Savage unit. There were 258 donations from throughout the state contributing \$49,939.58 (This included the legions share of cost of pheasants). This amount is \$2,135.28 less than last year's amount. The money above the cost of the pheasants is \$40,457.26 which was placed with the department in the American Legion Hospitalized Veterans Pheasant Dinners Dedicated fund.

"If your Post, Unit, Squadron or Voiture has not acted on participating in the program yet, please do so as soon as you can so that you can be listed with all of the others who have already donated and be eligible to receive a pheasant pin at the Department Convention being held in July. This will also let the Hospitalized Veterans know that we of The American Legion care," said Chuck Stone, chairman of the Pheasant Dinner program.

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## VETERANS on the LAKE RESORT

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## Legion: VA has problems

At a Jan. 15 congressional hearing, The American Legion testified on the Department of Veterans Affairs tracking system for surgical implants. The Legion also addressed VA's practice of allowing vendors into its operating rooms, and the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) habit of circumventing the Federal Supply Schedule.

The Legion's testimony was presented by its assistant director for health care, Roscoe Butler, before the House Veterans' Affairs subcommittee on oversight and investigations.

"There are several problems with VHA policies and implementation of implant medicine healthcare," Butler told the subcommittee. "Most of these problems could be fixed with clear written directions from (VA) Central Office, and better oversight and consequences to enforce compliance."

The American Legion believes that VA still has a problem tracking surgical implants, and until it is fixed veterans remain at risk. An audit made by VA's Office of Inspector general two years ago identified expired surgical devices on VA supply shelves. The Government Accountability Office has also indicated that VA has an inaccurate tracking capability in recording the serial numbers of implant devices.

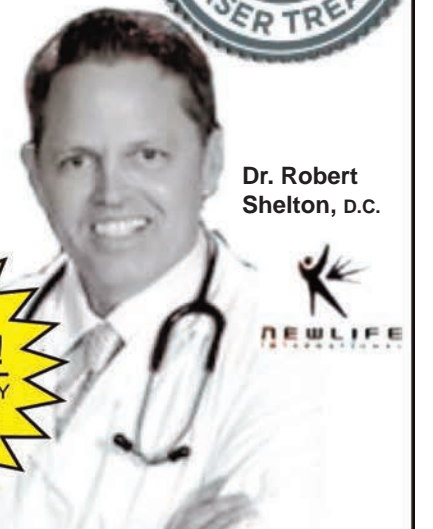
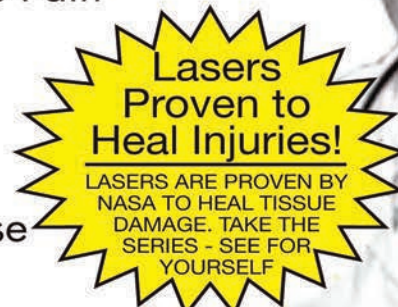
The American Legion is urging Congress to require VA to implement an automated tracking system that (1) initially records the serial number of a surgical implant device when procured and placed into VA's inventory, (2) records the expiration date and (3) alerts VA staff when the product is near its expiration date. The Legion wants VA to accelerate its timeline for implementing a new Prosthetic Inventory System that includes these components; it also wants VA to verify that no veterans currently have expired surgical implants.

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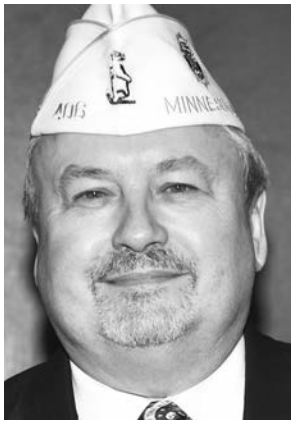
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## COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Mike Ash



Mid-winters are now history (I vowed to make them all, but the weather kicked me to the curb at least once – keep me informed of what's happening at your posts and in your districts, so I can drop by and say "Hi"). Now it's time to really dig in. Membership goals in the past months have been mowed down like thin blades of grass, but now we're about to get into the taller weeds.

Nationally, our recent membership totals have been 15,000 over the previous year totals at the same time. All the districts are working hard, and all I'm asking is they work a little harder – get the phone trees working, visit those members who have been hunkered down during the blustery winter, and let your post and districts know we continue to fight for veterans rights and need their help.

As we approach our 100th year of existence, we need to make sure that every eligible veteran knows how important it is to have a tried and true tested outfit like The American Legion on their side and how proud we'd be to have them among our ranks. Just ask, then just ask again.

National Commander Dan Dellinger will be traveling through our state in early February, if you get a chance to come out and meet him, please do. He's a very personable individual and a strong leader of the world's largest veteran's organization. Whether it's a government shut-down, a threat to close all U.S. commissaries, or COLA reductions for disabled and retired members built-in to the budget – you will always know where the Legion stands because

Commander Dellinger will shout it from the highest mountain.

My Commander's project, Legionville, continues to move along, however, we continue to need the help of every post and district to make it "battle-ready" when schools from around the state send up their students this summer to be trained in school safety, canoeing, and first aid. Please consider fund raisers, silent auctions, or a jar labeled "Donations for Legionville" in the post home to help us collect funds to make sure the Educational Building (Barn) is ready when the first bus arrives. My heartfelt thanks to all the posts, districts and individuals who have already contributed to this most worthy cause – it is truly appreciated by me, the camp board, and most importantly the students who will bring back some unforgettable memories after a week's stay.

Another revitalization has been planned, this time for the 5th District. As we go to press, we are working with the National organization. We have the knowledge, after the first event in the 4th District, to make the effort a success in every district and any post – however, we are greatly helped by the National organization with a pre-mailing to eligible veterans in the surrounding area about a month prior to kick-off.

The 5th District is looking at February 21-23 at Post 435 in Richfield. If you're interested in conducting a revitalization in your district or at your post, contact the Department Membership Director. Now is a great time to think about doing it, the beginning of the calendar year is a great fit for recruiting new members.

Remember, the secret to membership is retention – you gave them a reason to join and you must give them a reason to remain. Communication – letting all your members know what's happening at your post and in your district -- is the only way members will know what's happening and want to remain members. Discounts are nice, the camaraderie is absolutely necessary, and the results of our programs from Post to National are what will keep us a strong viable organization.

Remember – keep your information for the Consolidated Post Reports updated, so that when they're called for, we don't have to send out a follow-up reminder. Thank you.

## Chaplain's Corner

By Richard Wog



The time has come to write another letter. There are times like today when I look at the blank paper and think, "What am I going to say that I haven't already said?" Then I think about what you have not said that you wish you had. I know I have many times. But then I think about what I have said and wish I could take back. The only thing left to say then is: "I am sorry" and ask for forgiveness. I know at times it seems hard to ask for forgiveness, but think about the person or people that you are asking. They too have to make a decision to say, "Yes, I forgive." God never has to think about whether he will forgive you or not, because God is always ready to forgive. One just has to ask. Try it, because it works and I know you know that is true.

2013 is gone and the new year of 2014 is ahead of us. I am sure a lot of us have made some New Year's resolutions. Maybe you made a resolution to lose weight, stop smoking, or stop over-spending and budget better. I know there are a lot more resolutions than just those. The question is, "How is it going so far?" I used to make those types of resolutions and for some reason or other I did not follow up on them. So, I stopped making them. However, I have made one for this year. If or when we happen to see each other, ask me what resolution I've made and I'll share it with you, and how it's going. It is so easy to say or think, I can skip today and start tomorrow. I read a sign that said, "Yesterday is the past, today is today, tomorrow never comes." How true is that? Every time I read that sign, and I see it every week, it makes me think just how true that saying is. Live for today!

In my last letter I spent some time on the chaplain's role in the military and how important they are to the soldiers. I know this to be true just by my time in the service. Non-military people may not understand that, but I'm sure each of you knows what I'm talking about. As the Battalion Command Sergeant Major, one of my duties was to work with the Battalion Chaplain and to help get him to the units if he didn't have a vehicle. I would notice when we arrived at the unit how happy the soldiers were to see him. The Chaplain would hold a service wherever and whenever he could, no matter the soldiers' denomination. They would all be together as one. After the service, I felt like a big load had been lifted from my shoulders. The Chaplain's duties cover so much more than just holding a service. I really feel our own Post Chaplain does the same. They do more than just say the prayer at our post meetings. I asked Brigade General Dean Johnson, ret., how many are in the Chaplain Core in the National Guard and Reserves. He would know as he was in charge of them. I forgot the number, but I'll tell you next time. I asked, "Why so many?" His answer; there are over 180 different denominations in the world today.

I think of our soldiers serving today and of all the places we have soldiers deployed in the world. I think a lot about those in Iraq and Afghanistan; those who have served and given so much. There are times they must feel alone, but remember they and you are never alone because your God is with you. Always. Be safe, good health, for God and country.

# Guest Editorial

## Why do you belong?

(Editor's Note: This opinion piece originally appeared in the Apply Valley Post 1776 newsletter.)

By Dave Adamson

Recently I was asked at a social event, "Why do you belong to The American Legion?" This person had the impression that belonging to The American Legion gave one a place to drink and eat. Well, I enjoyed putting that person straight. My reply was that The American Legion is not about a place to drink and eat, although we do have a club with a bar and great food. The American Legion is an organization that is pledged to support veterans for their medical, physical, mental and social needs as well as a large variety of other activities that support communities all over Minnesota and the nation. It is also an organization that, like the founding fathers of our country, believes in God and Country. The philanthropy of The American Legion puts millions of dollars into activities that help young adults to grow into responsible adults through scholarships, Legion Baseball, Boys and Girls State, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and a multitude of other youth and community activities. The American Legion also supports child welfare programs and programs to assist and support veterans who have suffered injuries in service to our country. The American Legion is also there to support people in need

after national disasters. A nice feature of charitable giving to The American Legion is that 100% of what you give goes to support the named charity. All overhead costs of charity are absorbed by the Legion. There are no CEO's in The American Legion paying themselves hundreds of thousands of dollars taken from the charitable gifts they solicit. Lastly, the American Legion is where one can share the camaraderie of veterans—people who served their country in a time of need. So many times I have heard leaders of business, industry and government say, "there is nowhere I would rather be than around veterans." That is what The American Legion is all about for me.



# Mail Call

## Inspiration

To the Editor:

Thanks for doing such wonderful work as an editor.

The January issue has the best stories of past memories that are part of my life.

My first high school coach, Bill Martin, now living in Roseville, has a son that looks just like him, Bill Martin Jr.

His moments that gave me inspiration were as a mentor and coach. He wrote in my high school yearbook (Le Center) in 1957: "Tom, be a worker and a doer."

The January issue has a great story about what Bud Grant thinks of veterans.

The special portion was a photo of a disabled American veteran, Jade Zimmerman, at the McLeod County Memorial Park with friends and brothers who care.

My cap and prayers go to those gentlemen with leadership and continued patience. I pray for those leaders who promote programs of good health, positive thoughts for others like myself. God bless America.

Tom Chouinard  
LeCenter

## Passing the Buck

To the Editor,

The article written in last months Legionnaire, "Minnesota House report gets cold reception" quite simply should disgust all Veterans. Throughout the article I read nothing but fingerpointing from those members listed on the Minnesota House committee. From recommendations such as "more federal money should be sought" which is irresponsible and nothing more than passing the buck, to Representative Hausman blaming the federal government for MDVA's ills.

It's quite obvious that these members do not possess the leadership qualities required to serve on the Select Committee on Veterans Housing let alone in the Minnesota Legislature. I truly hope that come election time, Veterans will remember this and vote accordingly.

Richard O'Brien  
Albertville

# Legionnaire

The Minnesota

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Al Zdon, Editor

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# What's Happening

## Vets Art Experience

Red Wing Arts Association has been selected by the Minnesota State Arts Board to host the 2014 Minnesota Veterans Art Experience in May. There will be a gallery show, print project, art retreat and public presentations. All Minnesota veterans are encouraged to apply and participate. Forms are available at [www.redwingartsassociation.org/MNVetProject.htm](http://www.redwingartsassociation.org/MNVetProject.htm) or by email at [info@rwarths.org](mailto:info@rwarths.org) or by calling 651-388-7569.

The gallery show will be held from May 3 to June 22. Each artist is limited to one piece. Any medium is welcome including written work and music. A Veteran Print Project will match 20 veterans and their stories with a print artist who will make a print based on the story. There will also be a six-day art retreat for 40 Minnesota veterans.

There are different deadlines for the applications for these events.

## Mulligan Stew Cookoff

Madison Lake Auxiliary 269 will host the second annual Mulligan Stew Cookoff and Scholarship Fundraiser on Saturday, March 8, from 4-7 p.m. Admission is \$5 per person. Those attending can sample all the stews and vote for a favorite. There will be cash prizes. Beverages and desserts will be available for purchase.

It will be held at the post, 463 Shepard Circle.

To enter a stew, call Danielle by March 3 at 507-995-3737 or email [AmericanLegionAux.269@gmail.com](mailto:AmericanLegionAux.269@gmail.com).

## Twins Game

Save the date for the annual American Legion Family Day at the Twins. The game will be played on Saturday, June 7, at 1:10 p.m. vs. the Houston Astros. Ticket ordering information will be announced shortly.

## Guard Nominations

The Camp Ripley Memorialization Board is now accepting nominations for candidates to be inducted into the 2014 Court of Honor Induction Program. Those Guard members nominated must have been officially recognized for acts of heroism, and must have attained a level of prestige within

the organization. The deadline is April 1.

Contact Kathleen Radziej at [Kathlee.m.radziej.ngf@mail.mil](mailto:Kathlee.m.radziej.ngf@mail.mil) for information or nominations forms.

## Baseball Coach Clinic

American Legion baseball coaches are invited to a coaching clinic being offered by the University of Minnesota Baseball Coaching Staff. The clinic will be held on Saturday, Feb. 8, at the Gibson-Nagurski Football practice facility at the Minneapolis Campus. Cost is \$25 payable at the door. Registration begins at 10 a.m. and the clinic starts at 11 a.m. Coaches can pre-register by emailing Lee Swenson, [swens060@umn.edu](mailto:swens060@umn.edu).

## Ash Party

A 60th Birthday Party for Department Commander Mike Ash will be held at the Rosetown Post at 700 West County Road C from 3-10 p.m. on Saturday, March 22.

RSVP to Teresa Ash, 612-499-1403, [mrsash1@yahoo.com](mailto:mrsash1@yahoo.com), or facebook, [www.facebook.com/miketeresa](http://www.facebook.com/miketeresa).

## Pancake Breakfast

Zumbrota and Mazeppa Posts and others will sponsor a Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, Feb. 16, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Stary-Yerka VFW banquet room at 25 E. 1st St. in Zumbrota. Cost is \$7 for adults, \$3 for children, and preschool are free. Cakes, eggs, sausage, milk, orange juice and coffee will be served.

## Coast Guard Reunion

The second All U.S. Coast Guard Reunion will be held Saturday, Aug. 2, in Golden Valley at the VFW Post. Social hour will be from 11-noon followed by a lunch buffet. A program will follow and there will be a social gathering all afternoon. All ex-Coasties and spouses and family are welcome.

For more information, contact Chris Kalogerson at [chriskalogerson@gmail.com](mailto:chriskalogerson@gmail.com) or call 952-935-9065.

## Round Tables

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Roundtable will feature "Grant's Experiments before the Siege at Vicksburg," with speaker David Page. The group will meet on Feb. 24 at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater. To make reservations for dinner or for other information, call Steve Anderson at 715-386-1268 or email [rossandhaines@comcast.net](mailto:rossandhaines@comcast.net).

The World War II History Round Table at Ft. Snelling History Center will feature "Senior Leaders of World War II, Insights into their Personalities." The speaker will be Jonathan Jordan, the author of "Brothers, Rivals, Victors." The program will feature officers who won the war and veterans who met them will be present.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 13, with an admission of \$5.

The Veterans Round Table in Rochester will feature, "Korean War, 1952 to the Armistice" with Warren Potter, Bob Hermer, and Bob Nelson. The program will be held at the Assembly of God church on 18th Ave. NW, and admission is \$5. There will be music at 6:30 followed by the program at 7 p.m.

## Tree Seedlings

Orders for Tree Seedlings are now being accepted. Order forms have been mailed to all posts, and are also available for downloading from the Department's website: [mnlegion.org](http://mnlegion.org).

The deadline for ordering is March 31. Shipping charges are included with each order. The order form lists all tree species and prices.

For more information, contact the Energy and Conservation Chairman Carl Hendrickson at 218-393-0079.

## Department Rally

The next Department Rally will be the American Legion Family Appreciation Rally on Saturday, March 8, at Richfield Post 435. Membership turn-in will be from 3:4:30 p.m. with a plated dinner at 5 and the program to follow.

Tickets are available through district commanders.



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# Preserving History



For your home or community library, War Stories, Volume II, has 35 stories about Minnesota veterans and over 300 pictures.

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# Membership Chart

## As of Jan. 22, 2014

District	2014 Goal	Total 2013	Total 2014	Percent of Goal	Same Date '12
1	10,370	10,312	9,201	88.73	9,622
2	8,528	8,443	7,518	88.16	8,062
3	12,927	12,862	11,467	88.71	12,009
4	2,686	2,663	2,336	86.97	2,448
5	3,112	3,089	2,661	85.51	2,842
6	13,192	13,121	11,727	88.89	12,358
7	7,545	7,467	6,638	87.98	7,042
8	5,049	5,008	4,402	87.19	4,625
9	7,659	7,594	6,905	90.16	7,113
10	11,741	11,688	10,228	87.11	10,920
At-large	1,733	1,748	2,151	124.12	1,733
<b>Totals</b>	<b>84,542</b>	<b>83,995</b>	<b>75,234</b>	<b>88.99</b>	<b>75,529</b>

## American Legion challenges VA to protect personal info

The American Legion is challenging the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to take whatever measures are necessary to protect veterans personal information after a recent software defect on its eBenefits website exposed the online accounts of about 5,000 veterans to unauthorized users.

American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger wonders why such data breaches continue to plague the department.

"We've seen VA expose sensitive information about veterans before," Dellinger said. "Now it has happened with the relatively new eBenefits website. How can VA expect our veterans to file for benefits online when they may be risking identity theft by doing so?"

The defective software allowed veterans and servicemembers logged onto eBenefits to view account information of

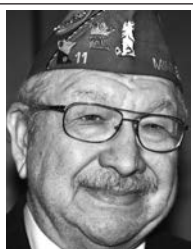
other users. After discovering the problem, VA shut down the system and switched over to an earlier version of the software.

VA's Data Breach Core Team (DBCT) is reviewing the eBenefits failure. According to a statement issued by VA, once the DBCT determines the individual veterans affected, "VA will take the appropriate response, which may include free credit monitoring for the affected individuals, consistent with VA's standard practice."

"There should be no 'may' in that statement," Dellinger said. "We want VA to guarantee credit monitoring services for every individual whose personal information may have been breached." The American Legion encourages any veteran who wants to file for benefits to contact an accredited American Legion service officer. Find a service officer in your state by visiting [www.legion.org/serviceofficers](http://www.legion.org/serviceofficers).

### Sons of The American Legion

By  
John W. Affolter



We are over half way through our year. Travel was restricted due to January blizzards. I attended a SAL breakfast at Nicollet Squadron 510 on Dec 26; District mid-winter Jan 4 (10th Anoka Squadron 102); Jan 25 (3rd Elysian Squadron 311). Coming up Feb 15 is the re-scheduled 7th District at Browns Valley Squadron 58; The American Legion National Commander's Tour is Feb. 2-7 and on Feb. 22th the 67th Annual Minnesota State American Legion Family Bowling Tournament at Sunset Lanes in Moorhead (runs through April 13th). I'm glad to travel where needed to represent the Sons of the American Legion. Let me know.

I encourage all Legionnaires and others eligible to be a "son" to join us. We hope to exceed 11,000 members for 2014 (we ended 2013 with 10,756). We currently have 7,669 as of Jan. 24 at 71.30% in 15th place nationally, 3rd in our region (Feb 15 goal is 75%). We have renewed 7,109 for 66.09% (6th nationally). Send in your memberships now. Especially reach out to our 3,647 last year's members.

Legionville is my Commander's Project. We use it. Use the Brick Paver program to contribute if you can, otherwise any contribution will be accepted.

Our Detachment (state) Spring Conference is March 14-15 hosted by Waseca Squadron 228 at Eagle Lake Squadron 617. SAL National Vice Commander (Central), Randy Eicher of Ohio, is planned to be in attendance. Please make plans on attending. Friday evening Finance and Executive Committees meet with full Detachment on Saturday. Contact Ron Wolff [www.ronwolff5@gmail.com](mailto:www.ronwolff5@gmail.com) for info. A number of hotels in Mankato are available (please ask for the state SAL Conference rate): Quality Inn 507-388-5107 \$80.00 - Holiday Inn Express 507-388-1880 \$89/99 - Fairfield Inn 507-386-1220 \$129 - Country Inn and Suites 507-388-8555 \$125. Please consider hosting a future Spring Conference we need bids for 2015 and into the future.

Please pass this on to those who may not receive the Legionnaire. Visit our website <http://mnsal.org> hosted by our webmaster Allen Amundson. It's often updated with info on all SAL activities. We can have fun and get the job done.

### Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By  
Tom Newman



National Personnel Records Center, Medals, Corrections, Rumors, and Fees....Oh My.

The purpose of this article is to simplify some of our veterans' requests for medals and administrative corrections and to shed light on a couple issues that have been raised recently by several veterans I've worked with.

As always, I strongly encourage all Veterans to continue working with your respective County Veteran Service Officer when attempting any application for veteran related records, benefits, services, or assistance.

According to their website the NPRC is one of the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) largest operations. It houses 70 million records, responds to roughly 160,000 inquiries a month and can process several kinds of requests.

The most common are requests for DD Form 214, Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) and Service Treatment Record (STR). The NPRC is also authorized to assist with medal requests and clerical corrections to DD Form 214.

There are two primary ways to request individual military service information NARA's electronic request system eVetRecs and Standard Form (SF) 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records: SF-180. Veterans and next-of-kin of deceased veterans can use eVetRecs or SF-180 to locate their records. Everyone else must use SF-180. Since the NPRC can process multiple requests clarifying the individual request is a must. This can be done by indicating the specific request in step 3: Comments of eVetRecs or by attaching a written statement to SF-180.

All requests have to be validated either by the records the NPRC has or by supporting documentation provided to them. Requests for the issuance or replacement of military service medals, decorations, and awards should be directed to the branch of the service in which the veteran served. Each of the military service branch addresses where the request should be directed can be found on the second page of SF-180. The Army and Air Force can use eVetRecs or

### Simplifying the veterans process is not so simple

SF-180. The Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard must use SF-180. The specific medals, decorations or awards being requested needs to be clarified in Step 3: Comments of eVetRecs or in a written statement attached to SF-180. Available supporting documentation that validates the request should be sent with the signature verification page or SF-180.

The NPRC can make clerical corrections of errors on the DD Form 214 such as misspelled name, missing information, incorrect birth date, social security number, etc.

Again, the specific correction request should be detailed in Step 3: Comments of eVetRecs or in a written statement attached to SF-180. Supporting documentation validating the request should be sent with the signature verification page or SF-180.

Contrary to recent rumors DD Form 214s, Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) and Service Treatment Records (STR) are not available for viewing online. Aside from the enormous cost that would be involved, Federal Law [5 USC 552a(b)] requires that all requests for records and information be submitted in writing, signed and dated.

The NPRC is authorized to charge fees for many of their services. For now, none of them apply to former service members or next of kin of deceased veterans requesting records relating to benefits or correction of their military record.

Therefore, it is important to clarify that the reason for the request in the in Step 3: Comments of eVetRecs, clearly on SF-180 or in a written statement.

Non-benefit and archival requests for records of veterans that were discharged, retired or died in service 62 or more years ago probably will be subject to a service fee. In those instances, the NPRC provides a breakdown of the cost to the individual or organization making the request.

*tnewman@mnlegion.org*

## DD214 no longer absolutely required as proof of veteran's status

From National Adjutant Dan Wheeler:

Enclosed is latest IRS information on the DD Form 214 issue. The DD Form 214 is no longer absolutely required by the IRS. Various methods of proving eligibility are discussed. In short, DD Forms 214 are now required only if the agent has any information that casts doubt on other methods. We are having this letter placed on our website.

FROM: Nanette M. Downing Director, EO Examinations

SUBJECT: Verification of Statutory Membership Requirements of Veterans' Organizations

This memorandum revises examination guidelines for tax-exempt veterans' organizations described in section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) by eliminating an agent's discretion to request DD Forms 214 at the outset of examinations for the purpose of determining whether the organization meets statutory membership requirements.

IRC sections 501(c)(19) and 170(c)(3) provide statutory membership requirements for certain tax-exempt veterans' organizations. Compliance with these requirements has a

direct effect on the qualification for tax-exempt status and the deductibility of contributions.

In order to confirm whether a veterans' organization meets statutory membership requirements, IRM 4.76.26.12(1) provides that examining agents may request, among other documents, DD Forms 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, of veterans' organizations. DD Form 214 is a military service discharge certificate issued to veterans, providing proof of military service. However, DD Form 214 also contains private information, such as medical information.

Effective immediately, if an agent needs to determine the composition of membership of a veterans' organization, the agent shall initially request and collect from the organization four sets of documents, as follows:

1. Membership list(s) that contain the names of the members, the military service dates, and the status of each individual member. This status information is to indicate whether the member is active duty, veteran, cadet, or spouse. The organization may provide list(s) from its affiliated parent organization.

2. A document that shows the dues structure and classes of memberships.

3. The documentary information used by the organization to create the membership list(s) noted above. Organizations should be informed that to satisfy this request they may provide membership applications, membership cards, or other similar documents, other than DD Form 214.

4. Documents showing the organization's policies and procedures on how it decides an individual is eligible for membership, including documents which show the means by which it enforces its membership requirements.

If an agent possesses information that contradicts documentary information provided or if the organization fails to satisfy a reasonable request, agents may then request DD Forms 214 or other discharge documents from the organization in order to ascertain compliance with the federal tax laws cited herein. DD Forms 214 must include the name, department, component and branch of service, and record of service dates. All other personal information may be redacted.



# Adult Day Center or 'the veterans' clubhouse'

Continued from Page 1

effective and it's better for the quality of their lives."

The center allows families of veterans to bring them to the center five days a week. "It might be a wife or a daughter, but it gives them a break, a chance to get their hair done or go grocery shopping," Rostratter said. "One woman said it gave her a chance just to clean her house."

A majority of the clients have some level of dementia. They are closely supervised by a staff of ten, including two registered nurses.

A typical day will include breakfast to order followed by a chance to catch up on current events. That's followed by an exercise period. "A lot of them call it the torture chamber," Rostratter said. "But if they were at home, too many of them would just sit there in front of the TV."

After exercise, there might be games such as crosswords, Uno, trivia, or dice games. Lunch is served, and after lunch there might be karaoke, bowling, bean bag toss, a musical concert, or movies and documentaries. At 3 p.m., the afternoon social begins.

In the warmer months, gardening is available.

"It's good. I like coming here," said Larry Larson, a Vietnam-era vet. "There's always something to do. And the food is outstanding. We have our own cook."

"Most of us here have some memory loss problems, and the staff is sensitive to that," Larson said.

The center serves Vietnam, Korean and World War II veterans. The cost is a \$20 per day co-pay with the federal government picking up the rest. The average cost per day at a private adult day center in the Twin Cities is about \$90.

The center is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and it must follow both state and federal regulations.

It is located in Building 4 on the Minneapolis campus, the oldest building on the veterans home property. It was originally a "cottage" for Civil War veterans.

Building 4 stood empty for several years. "It was a home for dead birds and raccoons," Rostratter said. But a \$2 million renovation that began with gutting the old structure has restored Building 4 to its original 1888 elegance. It is on the state's register of historic sites.

The staff includes a cook, a dietician, three program assistants, a social worker, and a recreation/ therapist. "I don't like to call it an adult day care center. I think of it as a veterans club. It's like a big family."

"And I'm the house mother," said Rostratter, a nurse for 36 years. "When they see me coming, they say, 'look out.'"

One of the ways the clients are watched is through an electronic gadget that each one wears. "When they get here in the morning, they know they're going to get clipped," Rostratter said. "They'll get both their name tag and a locator."

The locator can tell staff exactly where every client is in the building, plus the location of every other staff member. It also will sound a computer alarm if a client is leaving a supervised area.

"We've had veterans walk out the front door looking their wife's car or something," said Rostratter. "I'm pretty quick. I can get outside before they get on a city bus or whatever. We've never lost one yet."

The locator also contains a button the veteran can push if he needs assistance.

So far, the center has been used by only men, but all women veterans are also eligible. Spouses and widows of veterans are also welcome, but must pay the full rate because there is no federal assistance for them.

Rostratter said the center is only the second one in the nation to be operated by a state's veterans homes. The other one is in New York.

"We're still a baby. Part of the issue right now in attracting clients is that nobody knows we're here. It can be so valuable for families. If you give the caregiver some free time, it all can run so smoothly."

One of those caregivers is Marilyn Starr, the wife of Ron Starr, a five-day-a-week client at the center. "I'm very impressed with it. They're doing so much for my husband. He has Alzheimer's and the neurologist tells me that socializing can be very important for those with memory loss."

"The personnel there are outstanding. The people there relate to these old soldiers so well. It's just a happy climate," Starr said.

Ron Starr served in World War II in the Navy, and then served in Korea during the war as an officer in the Army. Marilyn said, "I think the day center is slowing down his Alzheimer's."

Marilyn said the program gives her time for chores and to have a better life. "I can run my errands, and if I want to go out with my girlfriends I can. If Ron were at home all day, I wouldn't be able to leave him for so long."

Starr said the only drawback to the program she can think of is that the location of the home in south Minneapolis is not very convenient for some people. It can mean long drives for the caregiver, or reliance on a public transportation system that isn't always the best.

"But I'd recommend it to any veteran who wants to have a little extra in his life," Starr said.

Rostatter agrees.

"Our veterans deserve this," she said. "You should hear the stories some of our guys tell. This is all about them. We spoil them rotten."



The day begins for most of the clients with a made-to-order breakfast. The center's own chef also serves up a noon lunch. The building has been remodeled extensively to provide modern, comfortable spaces.



Director Ann Rostratter shows off a bathing unit in the building's basement.



Rostratter is shown in her office. "Part of the issue right now in attracting clients is that nobody knows we're here."



Building 4 is the oldest building on the Minnesota Veterans Home at Minneapolis, and it is housing the home's newest service, adult day care. The building was constructed in 1888 as a "cottage" for Civil War veterans. It has undergone an extensive \$2 million remodeling which preserved the building's historic architecture and design while making it a comfortable, modern space for the center.



# From the tough streets of St. Paul to the Airborne

By Al Zdon

Bill Hannigan admits that he was kind of a tough kid who grew up in a tough neighborhood. During his youthful years, his nose was broken five times either in fights or from sports.

It wasn't surprising then that he ended up in the Airborne.

William J. Hannigan was born in 1921, and spent his youth in the Rice Street and Central Avenue neighborhood of St. Paul. He attended Washington High School, and he was a star basketball player.

In 1938, he joined the National Guard, and in 1940 his unit was federalized. "Pfffft. I was gone. They took me right out of high school and I never graduated."

His unit was sent to Camp Haan in California, but in July of 1941 Hannigan's three-year enlistment expired and he went home.

"I was walking to mass on Dec. 7th, 1941, when I heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. I volunteered to go back in."

At first Hannigan tried his hand at tanks. "But when they closed the lid on the tank, I knew it wasn't for me. I have claustrophobia. That's when I decided to join the Airborne.

"I wanted to see if I could be a paratrooper. I was always considered kind of a tough guy. My attitude was, 'Let's have some fun, I think I'll start a fight.' I fit right in with the Airborne."

He was accepted and was assigned to the parachute school at Fort Benning, Georgia.

He said he thrived on the training. "We'd run three miles to the river and back before they'd give us our breakfast. And then all day long it was exercise, exercise, exercise. It was challenging, but I jumped right into it, so to speak."

Hannigan recalled his first jump. "Mainly there was this eagerness to get out the door of the airplane. The actual jump is kind of a blank to me. What was important was that I accepted the fear and conquered it. After that, it was easy."

Each paratrooper is required to make five jumps in order to get his wings. "The last one was at night, and there was no moon. You just jump into the blackness, and it was blackness all the way down. You could not see the ground and you didn't know it was coming. But a paratrooper is trained to crumple his legs when he hits, and we were all in pretty good shape. But you were really alone on that jump. It was kind of fascinating. I suppose it was dangerous, but that's why they only made us do one night jump."

Hannigan got his wings and was able to blouse his pants, the ultimate symbol of the paratrooper. "It was a badge of honor, proudly worn."

He was shipped overseas after training. The ship went all the way down the coast of South America and then came up the coast of Africa in an effort to hide from German submarines. The men were put ashore at Casablanca and they traveled east across North Africa to Oujda, Algeria, and then to Kairouan, Tunisia. They practiced more jumps.

"I was in a replacement depot, and we were sent across the Mediterranean to the northeast corner of Sicily where I joined the 504th, part of the 82nd Airborne." He was assigned to Company H of the Third Battalion. He said there was no problem about being a replacement. "You're a jumper. Everybody's your backup."

The 504th landed on the Anzio Beachhead on Jan. 4, 1944. Company H was sent to the front and took up positions along the Mussolini Canal. It was Hannigan's first experience at combat.

"I was interested. I wanted to observe everything, but I also needed to keep my head down.

"What I remember was that one of our guys was hit and killed on the other side of the canal. We couldn't go get him, and he just laid there. I didn't like that. Our philosophy is that you go and get your own."

The Germans had the high ground, and the American troops had to hunker down below the level of the canal. Any movement might bring an .88 shell down on your position.

Hannigan saw a tall soldier standing and pointing. "I yelled at him that he should get the hell out of there, he was going to draw fire. He turned around and it was General Gavin (commanding officer of the 82nd Airborne). I said, 'Sorry, sir, I didn't know it was you.' He said, 'That's okay, son. I'll take care of it.'"

Hannigan also went out on his first combat patrol at Anzio. "They wanted us to cross the canal and get a prisoner. We found a place that the Germans had evacuated. One of the guys reached down and pulled out a little old guy, a German soldier. We took him back and they interrogated him."

All in all, Hannigan said he took his first taste of combat in stride. "At that age, you never believe that they'll take you out. You're confident that you'll make it."

The 504th was pulled out of Anzio on March 23 and sent aboard the Capetown Castle to England. But because of the huge number of casualties taken by the unit at Anzio, the 504th was put in reserve for the landings at Normandy.

*Bill Hannigan admits that getting in a fight was a lot of fun for him growing up in St. Paul. After a stint the National Guard and another with a tank outfit, he signed up for the Airborne. He ended up doing two combat jumps and he also fought in the Battle of the Bulge.*

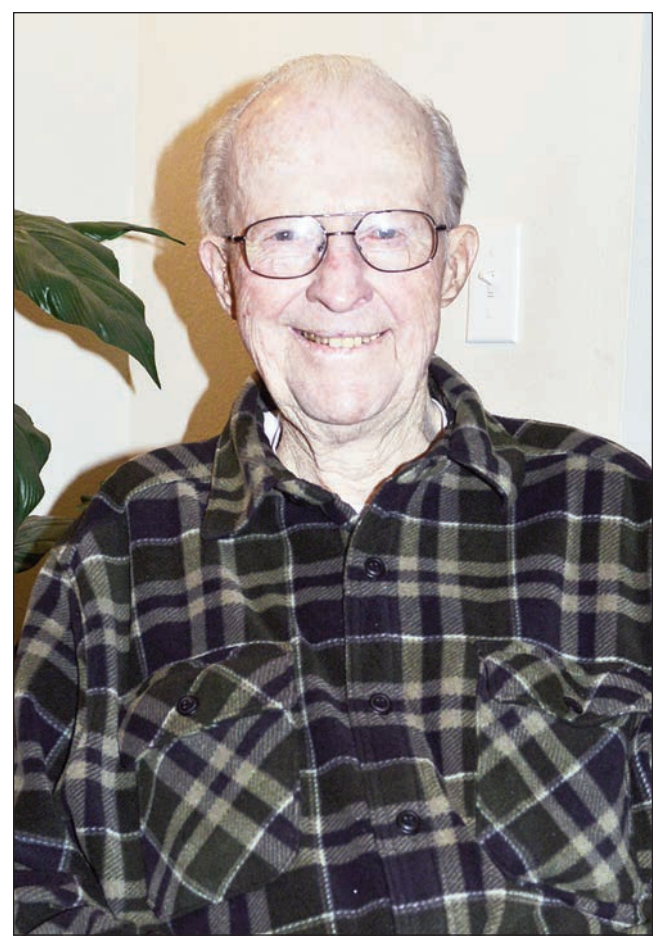


That didn't stop Hannigan. "They asked for volunteers for hazardous duty. My buddy Joe Burns and I volunteered. He was a hell raiser too."

They found out that they would be jumping with the pathfinder part of the Airborne assault into Normandy. They



**BILL HANNIGAN**  
During World War II



**BILL HANNIGAN**  
At home in Woodbury