



Legionnaire

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For God and Country

February 2015

Mostly quiet year seen on legislative front

By Al Zdon

It looks to be another fairly quiet year for veterans' legislation, much like last year. But there's always the chance for some controversy, much like last year.

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Legislative Director Mike McElhiney said there have been great gains and changes in the last many years, and the agency is not proposing big changes this time around.

"We're not pushing too hard for anything. We're still soaking up all the things in the last four years. We want to be operationally sound rather than seeking a bunch of new legislation."

Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl, who coordinates

much of The American Legion's lobbying effort, also said this will probably not be a watershed year.

"It seems pretty quiet to start. Maybe it's because there's a surplus. Maybe because there has been a shift in leadership, and maybe just plain and simply because most everything is going pretty darn good."

Tesdahl said the veterans' programs in Minnesota are recognized as some of the best in the nation.

That doesn't mean there will not be ongoing debate on some ongoing issues. For instance, two bills have already been introduced to add another veterans nursing home in the state.

The Minnesota Veterans Homes is a group of five nurs-

ing facilities across the state aimed at bringing first class care to veterans and spouses. There has been movement in recent years to add a sixth or seventh home to the mix.

This year, so far, legislation has been introduced to approve bonding for homes in Bemidji and Montevideo. Potential sites for new homes also include Willmar and Brainerd.

McElhiney said the legislature is concerned, however, about the ongoing costs of veterans homes. "The costs continue to go up. We are on the cutting-edge of patient-centered care at our veterans homes."

Finding money to build a new veterans home is one
Continued on Page 2

American Legion's Minnesota Military Hall of Fame



LESLEY MCNAIR
VERNDALE, MINNESOTA

Pages 6-7

Website redone; check it out

The Department of Minnesota website had undergone major remodeling in order to make information more easily obtained, and to make the site more dynamic and changing.

Check it out at mnlegion.org.

More changes are expected as the year goes by.



USS MINNESOTA IN PORT -- The USS Minnesota in a recent Navy photo enters its homeport at Groton, Connecticut. The boat will add three female officers this year.

USS Minnesota adds it first female crew members

(From Stars and Stripes)

The first woman to serve aboard a Navy fast-attack submarine has reported to the USS Minnesota. She is one of six officers expected to join fast-attack crews in the months ahead.

Two more women will report to the Minnesota by the end of January, with three more slated to join the USS Virginia in the spring, said Lt. Cmdr. Tommy Crosby, a spokesman for the Navy's Submarine Force Atlantic.

Integration of Virginia-class submarines comes three years into the Navy's effort to gradually bring female officers and enlisted into its undersea service. Female officers first came aboard Ohio-class submarines in late 2011. As of last summer, more than 60 women were serving in 14 submarines.

Submarines were one of the few remaining areas of military service off-limits to women when the Navy lifted its prohibition in 2010. Three years later, the Pentagon removed the military-wide ban on women in combat units and required gender integration plans from each of the services.

The Navy's 10 Virginia-class fast-attack submarines are armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles and designed to conduct surveillance, seek out and destroy other submarines and carry special operations forces. They are smaller and have tighter quarters than Ohio-class submarines, the designation for ballistic-missile and guided-missile boats. Fifteen officers typically make up the wardroom in both classes.

The plan to bring the six female officers aboard Virginia-class submarines was announced in 2013 by Vice Adm. Michael Connor, commander of Navy submarine forces. Two of the women were to be supply officers, with the other four nuclear trained. Submarine officers must first go through an intensive 18-month training.

The service says it will open positions for enlisted women on some Ohio-class submarines next year and for

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Legion compliments DoD on opening its bases to VSOs

WASHINGTON -- National Commander Mike Helm praised Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's recent directives for military commanders to be more welcoming of non-profit groups that wish to provide support for troops and their families.

"Secretary Hagel has broken through the bureaucratic walls that Legionnaires sometimes face when they try to access military bases so they could provide needed support for troops and their families," Helm said.

"The Legion has approximately 3,000 accredited service officers that are eager to assist troops access the benefits they have earned.

"Additionally, we have outstanding support programs such as Operation Comfort Warriors for wounded, injured or ill troops, job placement, transition assistance, a family support network and many other initiatives adopted by American Legion posts throughout the United States and overseas.

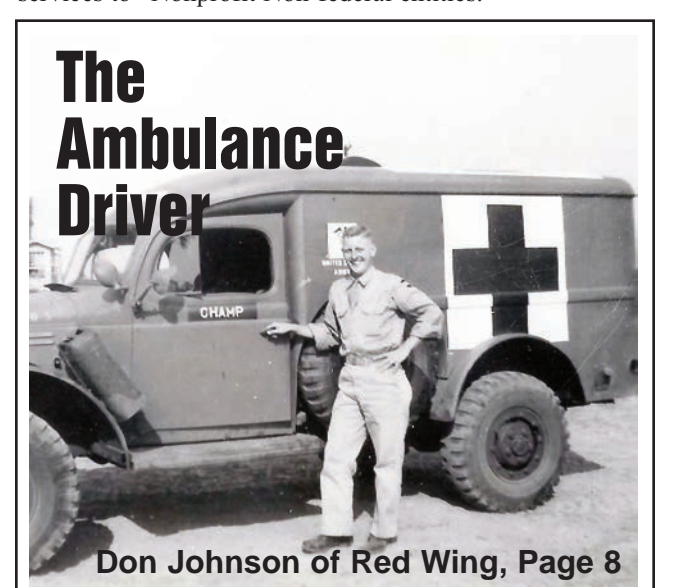
"With frequent personnel changes on military installations, some base commanders haven't had the opportunities to establish long-term relationships with the Legion and were uninformed of our intentions and the services that we provide.

"Secretary Hagel has taken measures that re-emphasize the importance of military installations to standardize their procedures and grant greater access consistent with their mission requirements."

In a letter to American Legion National Security Director John Stovall, Hagel said, "I want to express my deep appreciation for the wise counsel and support you and your organization have provided during my tenure as Secretary of Defense.

"Our many roundtable meetings and other engagements gave me valuable insights and thoughtful perspectives into how our Department can best address the needs of our service members, veterans and families."

Hagel issued two directives to each of the military services, one calling for greater access and support services to "VA-recognized Veteran Service and Military Service Organizations" and another calling for access and support services to "Nonprofit Non-federal entities."



The Ambulance Driver

Don Johnson of Red Wing, Page 8

Minnesota Legislative session underway

Continued from Page 1

thing, but keeping it running at a high level is another thing. The issue became more cloudy with the formation of a new committee in the House on long-term care across the state. A \$250,000 grant has been established for five entities in the state to look at the future of nursing care facilities.

The committee will not strictly look at veterans' care, but it will be in the mix, McElhiney said. There has been a push with some legislators to provide veterans care at existing nursing facilities rather than build more homes.

The committee will report back to the legislature in time for the 2017 session.

Tesdahl noted that the state spent a lot of money and time to develop a report on where new veterans homes might be built. "Let's use that information to the overall benefit of Minnesota veterans. Don't let that information just sit on a shelf."

The Commander's Task Force has recommended eight legislative priorities for this session. (See story on Page 3.) "The overall message is one of maintenance," Tesdahl said.

Department Commander Peggy Moon, chairman of the CTF, said she has been meeting with legislators and more meetings are planned. "There appears to be a lot of interest, so I am really looking forward to this session."

Moon said the CTF's role includes making sure the MDVA has the support and money needed to help veterans. "We also want to promote educational needs, housing and jobs." She said that the Legion is often called upon to testi-

fy before House and Senate committees.

"Minnesota has paid a huge price in our recent wars, and we need to make sure those returning from action don't merely just return home - we need to bring them all the way home to welcoming homes, supportive communities, well-paying jobs, and good, accessible health care."

McElhiney said the expansion of the Minnesota GI Bill would be a great improvement for veterans. The new bill would allow veterans to use Minnesota GI Bill money to pay for application fees, exams, licensing or other certification.

It would also allow veterans who do not plan to use the GI Bill themselves to have spouses or children to use it.

One major issue from the past that will not be an issue this time around is funding for the final phase of construction at the Minnesota Veterans Home at Minneapolis. The state is still in construction of Phase II of the project, creating a new Building 17 north.

The news is that the project is now fully funded, with the federal government coming through this past summer with the matching funds for the money the state had put up.

One other bill that has been introduced that may again stir some controversy is the "Honor and Remember Flag." The bill would allow for some recognition of the flag and authorize its use on public buildings. The American Legion and other veterans service organizations have opposed the bill, saying the flag is unnecessary and that its copyright is owned by a private organization.

Tesdahl said there are great hopes the session will be non-partisan on veterans issues.

"I find it very interesting that both sides talk about the need for compromise and cooperation, yet the other day at a veterans committee hearing so many insisted on wearing their 'colors.' I have never seen so many bright red or bright blue ties," Tesdahl said.

"Some would say, 'I'm just wearing my team's colors.' Well, I would say, if you're on a veterans committee, your colors are red, white and blue."

Sub to have women aboard

Continued from Page 1

several Virginia-class subs in 2020. All future submarines will be designed for integrated crews, the Navy has said.

The Navy has described the integration process as smooth, although a recent episode aboard the Ohio-class USS Wyoming raises questions about that. The Navy investigated 12 petty officers for sharing and watching a video of a female officer showering aboard the submarine, according to the Navy Times. One of the petty officers made the recording and passed it along, according to the report.

Connor, the submarine force commander, has said two more fast-attack subs will be integrated next fiscal year, this time in the Pacific. The Minnesota and Virginia are ported in Groton, Conn.



MOON EMCEES FRENCH LEGION HONOR -- Department Commander Peggy Moon emceed the awarding of the French Legion of Honor to William "Bud" Schwartz in Eden Prairie. The award is given to American soldiers who fought in France during World War II. From left: Moon, French Honorary Council Christina Bouzouina; Schwartz; Rep. Eric Paulson.



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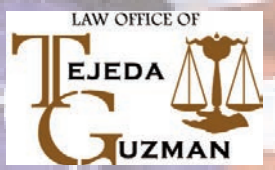



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MOON LOBBIES LEGISLATORS -- Department Commander Peggy Moon met with key legislators recently at the state Capitol. From left: Sen. Lyle Koenen, DFL-Clara City, Majority Whip; Sen. Kent Eken, DFL-Twin Valley; Sen. Fong Hawj, DFL-St. Paul; Moon; Sen. Jim Carlson, DFL-Eagan, vice chair, State Departments and Veterans Budget Division; DFL-Champlin; Rep. Bob Dettmer, R-Forest Lake, Veterans Affairs Division, Chairman. Moon is chair of the Commander's Task Force, a group of veterans service organizations that lobbies for veterans issues.

CTF announces agenda for 2015 session

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Funding and Mission

The CTF urges lawmakers to continue support and funding of MDVA. As the nation enters its 14th year of war fighting and as we watched the Federal VA issues unfold, the role and mission of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has never been more important. The CTF urges the legislature to place priority on MDVA and to enable them through proper funding, the flexibility to support veterans as needed.

The CTF has watched the recent evolution of the department since the merger of its Programs and Services Division with the Veterans Homes in 2007. Many necessary improvements have taken place; however, it is the estimate of the CTF that more are needed to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability into the future. The CTF believes there is still room for improvement in the realm of professional staffing throughout the agency. The CTF supports MDVA's workforce development plans, full funding for the Little Falls Cemetery and ongoing maintenance funding for all its buildings.

Guardianship Program Removal from MN Statute

The CTF supports the removal of the Guardianship program that is contained in MN Statute. The Guardianship program allows for a district court to appoint the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs as guardian of the estate of a veteran or dependent if necessary. The Commissioner manages the accounts and all transactions that occur under that guardianship. At its height, the program had 3 full-time employees and 1 full-time clerical staff person.

The agency was allowed to take a 5% fee on the income of any court-appointed client (averaging \$2K-\$3K per client/month). However, as non-court-appointed cases grew more common, the program became unsustainable due to a decrease in incoming fees. The guardianship program accepted its last clients in 2004, and the last cases were reassigned between 2005 and 2006, effectively shuttering the program.

Removing the program from MN statute would eliminate an unneeded service, and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to clean the books in order to best serve the state's veteran population. Veterans or families in need of help to manage their estates may do so by seeking a private fiduciary.

July Hire a Veteran Month

The CTF supports changing the May-designated "Hire a Veteran Month" to the month of July.

It is suggested that the month of July would better accommodate the initiative to hire veterans.

Removing distractions and prior engagements would free up veterans to make it to employment fairs, job interviews, and focus on tasks that would assist in their hiring.

The current "Hire a Veteran Month" of May coincides with a number of other calendar events, to include Memorial Day weekend, and most high school and college graduation dates. Shifting "Hire a Veteran Month" to July would allow state and private events and promotions to be more visible, and therefore more successful in the end goal of helping veterans gain employment.

Amend the "Support Our Troops" Fund

The CTF supports expanding authorized uses of the

Support Our Troops Fund and placing the funds in an account that accrues interest. This proposal would amend MN Statute to provide MDVA grant-making authority and reclassify the fund account type. This is funding achieved through the sale of license plates, collected by the Department of Transportation, split between MDVA and the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and then transferred to the respective agencies. MDVA would like to broaden eligibility criteria for whom it may award SOT grants. This would allow MDVA to award the Support Our Troops license plate funds through grants to additional veteran groups and support networks who have proved themselves legitimate and worthy of assistance. Additionally, MDVA would like the account type reclassified to 2304 (Gift and Donations) funds in order to accrue interest on the balance.

Currently, the requirements for SOT fund awards are limited by their amount, and to whom they may be awarded. Additionally, the statute provides for four ways in which the funds can be disbursed/ used within MDVA. Outside of the approved options, there are many outstanding causes that these funds could be used for. As was the original intent and development of the fund, the account should be used for as many veteran needs/issues/programming in Minnesota as the Commissioner deems appropriate.

Vehicle Reg. Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans

The CTF supports a vehicle registration tax exemption for 100% service connected veterans. This proposal would amend MN Statute in order to exempt 100% service connected veterans from the motor vehicle registration tax. Disabled veterans who are 100% service connected often require modified vehicles in order to conduct daily living and work related activities. With such a high disability rating, those veterans are often at a disadvantage with their healthy counterparts.

The CTF believes the best way to implement this is to have MDVA certify the 100% service connection, and in doing so, it could count the number of recipients. That information can then become public as requested. This could affect 9581 veterans or 2.6% of the state's veteran population – a sliver of the greater state population, but one that is at a tremendous disadvantage compared to their healthy counterparts. This initiative would reduce income disparities for a small portion of disabled veterans making them better off.

Minnesota GI Bill Expansion

The CTF supports expansions to the MN GI Bill. This proposal would amend Statute to expand the use of the Minnesota GI Bill, matching the flexibility of federal Chapter 33 (GI Bill) benefits. Currently, paying for school applications, exams, licensing, and other certifications using the Minnesota GI Bill is not allowed. By allowing a broader use of the Minnesota GI Bill, the veterans could use their benefits at their discretion and in the most appropriate way. Additionally, current law precludes the veteran from using the benefits for their spouse or children, even if the veteran has no intention of using them otherwise.

This proposal would solve the problem in two ways. First, it would allow for benefits to be used on application fees, exams, licensing, or other certifications and expenses accrued in the process of self-betterment. Secondly, the proposal would allow benefits to be transferred to a spouse or children of an eligible veteran. Broadening the approved

American Legion official sponsor for Tree Town Festival

Forest City, Iowa – Tree Town Music Festival has announced that the nation's largest wartime veterans organization, The American Legion, will once again serve as the official charity of the annual country music event, which is fast becoming the largest of its kind.

In 2014, thousands of fans descended on Forest City, Iowa, for the first-year Memorial Day weekend event to catch performances by some of country music's biggest stars, including Brad Paisley, Toby Keith, Brantley Gilbert, Chris Young, Scotty McCreery and more.

For the second year, American Legion service officers from Iowa and Minnesota will be onsite to meet with veterans and their families to help them with their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits and health-care interests. American Legion service officers are well-trained experts in VA programs and services. Soldier's Wish will also be in attendance, granting wishes to soldiers, veterans and their families as a way to honor them for their bravery and sacrifice to our country.

"The continued support of Tree Town Music Festival is a great display of patriotism," said Ron Struble, Department Commander for The American Legion of Iowa. "We look forward to spending the weekend leading up to Memorial Day at Tree Town Music Festival with veterans and their families while remembering our fallen heroes who have paid the ultimate price for our nation's freedom."

Tree Town Music Festival is bringing the hottest rising stars and established hit-makers in music to Forest City, Iowa, Memorial Day Weekend (May 21-24). The newly-expanded four-day event will feature performances by Blake Shelton, Dierks Bentley, Rascal Flatts, Lee Brice, Eli Young Band, Thomas Rhett, Chase Rice, Maddie & Tae, Danielle Bradbery, Old Dominion, Casey Muessigmann, The Last Ride, Joe Denim, Hairball, Williams & Ree and more. This year's festival will also feature The American Legion Stage, hosting .38 Special, Chris Hawkey, Iowa native Ben Lau and others. In addition to non-stop music from multiple stages, the grounds of the event will once again be filled with beer tents, food vendors, rock climbing, zip lines and much more.

Single-day tickets are now available for \$35 for Thursday and \$80 for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Four-day passes are available for \$150 and VIP tickets for \$525 until April 6. For ticket-holders looking for the true festival experience, camping is available starting at \$100. Whether you have a two-person tent or jumbo home on wheels, Tree Town Music Festival has campsite options to meet your needs. For more info on tickets, camping or for any of your Tree Town Music Festival needs, please visit: treetownfestival.com or call 877-569-7767.

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use of the Minnesota GI Bill would add value to Minnesota communities, and promote the welfare of veterans and their families.

Amend Expedited Licensing for Veterans & Spouses
The CTF supports amending MN Statute 197.4552. This proposal would amend MN Statute concerning veteran and veteran spouse expedited licensing by including the definition of "veteran" (as per M.S. 197.447), and clarifying that eligible spouses may also qualify if they are the spouse of a veteran who is 30 percent or more service connected, or if they are the unmarried spouse of a deceased veteran.

Under current law, spouses of deceased or disabled veterans do not qualify for expedited licensing benefits. In the case of a single parent widow or widower, or the spouse of a disabled veteran, that individual may be the primary breadwinner of the family. With the unique challenges that come with those situations, those individuals may benefit by any available means to expedite licensing requirements. This would help in avoiding a break in employment or loss of income.

Veterans Preference

The CTF supports general improvements and clarification for Veterans Preference in hiring.

Additionally the CTF supports funding necessary to ensure Veteran Owned Small Business can be certified at the state level. In the 2014 legislative session law was passed to create a mechanism for veterans with small businesses to get certified at the state level through the Department of Administration in order to compete for state contracts however there was no funding allocated to implement that change. The CTF urges the legislature to include necessary funding this year to ensure proper implementation of the current law.

COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Peggy Moon



Hello again friends.....

I can't believe that it's already February, and I am more than half way through my year as your Department Commander. As I write this article, all of the Mid-Winters are in progress, and I am impressed with your dedication and commitment to The American Legion. Thank you for your continued efforts for our programs and members. You continue to amaze me.

So far, I have attended six Mid-Winter Conferences, well, almost six. I arrived in Olivia for the Seventh District Mid-Winter just as everyone was leaving the Post, but I had a nice visit with their members and their Commander in the parking lot. Driving in from LaCrescent where the First District was meeting took longer than I thought. All the Mid-Winters will wrap up just before the National Commander's Tour.

Please make plans to attend one of the functions during Commander Helm's visit to our great state. We want to show him our Minnesota pride. I wish we could visit more Posts along the way, but timing is everything, and we need to stop in locations that can draw the most members. I've already made notes on places to stop next year, and will be passing that information along to next year's team. Remember, if your Post is at goal, or better yet, All Time High, you can have your photo taken with our National Commander and it will appear in the *Legionnaire*. Bring as many of your post members with you for this opportunity.

Speaking of membership, as you know, Commander Helm is very concerned about retention, and has asked each Post to call three lapsed members per week to renew them. I'm sure he'd be interested in your progress, both positive and negative. Most of the Posts that are making the calls are reaping great results. I am getting good feedback for your efforts. Our members deserve our time, and we need to listen to their concerns. It gives us the opportunity to improve.

Mail Call

Coast Guard Members Sought To the Editor:

My name is Mike Roberts and a dues paying member of the Wallace Chute Legion Post 76 of St. Cloud which has met in St. Augusta for the last few years since selling the Post 76 Building in East St. Cloud. I am also an ex-Coastguardsman who served in the United States Coast Guard from April 1966 to April, 1970 on Lake Superior. I read the monthly Minnesota Legionnaire Newspaper from cover to cover and find it immensely interesting. You have many articles germane to the U.S. Military and thought you might like to do a human interest story on the happenings of some local Minnesota U.S. Coast Guard Veterans.

Myself and another ex-Coastie, Chris Kalogerson who served from 1951-1954, have co-organized and co-hosted an All U.S. Coast Guard Reunion in June of 2013 and August of 2014 in the Twin Cities. We have had a good turnout of ex-Coasties and spouses during the past two years. We are having the 3rd annual USCG Reunion this coming summer on Saturday, June 20, 2015 at the Hopkins VFW on Shady Oak Road in Hopkins, Mn. We are currently looking for all ex-Coasties throughout Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota and Wisconsin who might like to attend this summer get together with all other ex-Coasties who served. The story of how this USCG Reunion came about is as follows:

During my hitch in the USCG, I was stationed on Lake Superior for my whole 4 year enlistment except for taking boot camp training in Cape May, New Jersey. I served on small boat Search & Rescue at two different Lifeboat Stations, one in Duluth and the other at North Superior in Grand Marais. I also was the last U.S. Coastguardsman to be stationed at the Split Rock Lighthouse on the North Shore when it was closed down, de-commissioned and went dark on January 1, 1969.

The book "The Last Keeper at Split Rock" was published by North Star Press of St. Cloud in 2010 and came out at the same time as the Lighthouse was celebrating its 100th year founding in July of 2010. During the next few years, I was asked to give talks on my USCG & Split Rock L/H experiences. On October 16, 2012, I gave two presentations in St. Louis Park. An ex-Coastguardsman from Edina, who served from 1951 to 1954, came to hear me speak and that's how I came to know Chris Kalogerson. He

As you know, we have been working on membership in the Department Office as well. Some of you have had your memberships returned for corrections. This process started after I received a call from one of our Post Commanders who was upset that "Department lost our membership. How come we have to do everything perfect, and there is no accountability down there?" I talked with our Department Adjutant, and we decided to do some research. The next week, we pulled out all membership transactions that could not be forwarded to National as they were submitted. If we did, they would simply be returned to us. Imagine my reaction when I walked into Randy's office to find the conference table overrun with mail. It was overwhelming. I looked through many of the transmittals myself. Some had checks with no cards, some had the incorrect number of cards for the money sent it, some had cards with no checks - you get the picture. We decided to still have Department staff do the "easy" fixes, and those that required phone calls to fix, or involved Post funds that were incorrect, were to be returned.

In addition, a report detailing the returning mail would be sent to each District Commander, District Membership Director, and Department Vice Commander. They would receive the entire report because I want and need them to understand the depth of the issue. We've gotten lax out there, and probably need some additional training. Ultimately, did we lose that one Post's membership? It still hasn't shown up. However, if our staff needs to call 80 Posts each week to fix membership, it's totally possible that something got lost along the way. After all, we're all human, and our staff does an incredible job when you understand the difficulty of working with over 550 posts. The procedures I have outlined is making us all accountable, and the results are measurable. Thank you for your resolve to help fix this problem.

Another program in full swing is the Oratorical Contests. Each District is selecting their winner, and the Department Oratorical Contest will be Friday, February 13th. Even if you are not a judge, timer, or escort, still make plans to attend. Not only will these young people impress you, you may learn something. I always do.

I was reading through the SAL's National Newsletter, and found a wonderful story about Legionville. If you have your copy, please share it with others. It's a great article, and will put a smile on your face. As you know, Legionville is my project this year, and I am so proud of the work they accomplish there.

It's time for me to wrap this up - thanks for reading. After this last weekend, I am now at 20,074 miles on the car, and it's time for yet another oil change. Obviously, I have made a lot of new friends at the car dealership.

Until next month.....

asked me if I ever thought about having a USCG Reunion where all ex-Coasties could get together to talk about our USCG Service. I said I had but never got the job done.

Chris was a member of the Golden Valley VFW and it seemed like a good place to hold the gathering, so we picked June 8, 2013 for the 1st annual event. As I went around Minnesota doing my "Last Keeper at Split Rock" presentations, I meet some ex-Coasties. Ex-Coasties are hard to find as they are not found in flocks but are discovered one at a time, like eagles. At the 1st annual Reunion, we had about 70 ex-Coasties and their spouses attend from all over the Midwest and one guy and his wife came up from New Orleans and a couple of guys came over from Kansas City. We were so encouraged with the attendance of the ex-Coasties, we decided to hold a bi-monthly meeting to plan the next Reunion. The meetings have turned into a social gathering as well as a Reunion planning session and we have around 25 guys who presently attend the meetings on a regular basis.

The second annual USCG Reunion was held on Saturday, August 2, 2014, and around 55 ex-Coasties & spouses attended. At both Reunions, we had a great meal and the ex-Coasties were asked to speak about their time in the service as to what they did & where they did it.

Due to the closing of the Golden Valley VFW, Our USCG group has moved to the Hopkins VFW on 100 Shady Oak Road. The 3rd annual USCG Reunion will be held on Saturday, June 20. All ex-Coasties are invited to attend. The next Reunion Planning/Social Meeting will be on Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at noon for lunch at the Hopkins VFW.

It would help to get the word out to all ex-Coasties from around the Midwest who could gather to relive their vast USCG experiences while serving all over the world. Thanks for any consideration you might give to this USCG Reunion story. Semper Paratus. Please contact:

Mike Roberts
mike.roberts41@gmail.com

or
Chris Kalogerson
chriskalogerson@gmail.com

Chaplain's Corner

By
Steve Klinkner



As I sit by the computer thinking what to write, my first thoughts come to a man that I myself had the honor to meet when I became a District Commander. I attended the past Second District Commander Donald Hansen's funeral, a cold day this January in Minnesota. The minister was sharing about Don's life; that he was one of the WWII heroes. If he were here today and you asked him about WWII, he would tell you it was a very cold war and what they went through and that brings me to this story:

On the morning of February 3, 1943, the U.S.A.T. Dorchester was wallowing through icy seas off Greenland. Most of the 900 troops on board were asleep in their bunks. Suddenly a torpedo smashed into the Dorchester's flank. Frantically pounding up the ladders, the troops gathered in confusion on the decks; could you imagine what they all thought about on coming out on a cold morning on a ship? I used to think about that as I was out in the cold filling LP gas tanks for homes and hog barns; at least I could get in my truck and warm up; these men didn't get to a warm place.

In those moments of panic, the calmest men aboard were four U.S. Army First Lieutenants: Clark V. Poling (Reformed Church of America); Alexander D. Goode (Jewish); John P. Washington (Catholic); and George L. Fox (Methodist). The Four Chaplains led the men to boxes of life jackets, passed them out to the soldiers with boat-drill precision. When the boxes were empty, the Four Chaplains quietly slipped off their own precious life preservers, put them on four young GIs and told them to jump.

The Dorchester went down 25 minutes later in a rumble of steam. Some 600 men were lost, but the heroic Chaplains had helped save over 200. The last anyone saw of them, they were standing on the slanting deck, their arms linked in prayer to the one God they all served.

Far away in North Africa, Dr. Daniel A. Poling, distinguished American clergyman and the father of Chaplain Clark Poling, was coughing in a fox hole when he learned of the heroic death of his son and his fellow Chaplains. In his mind was born the idea of a shrine in the memory of this noble sacrifice; a shrine where people of all faiths could worship God in a spirit of unity.

In the heart of Philadelphia, the Chapel opens its doors to people of all races and religious faiths. It is also a memorial to the Four Chaplains who went down on the U.S.A.T. Dorchester. It is an interfaith shrine; in it are three altars, one for each faith. Above the entrance burns an eternal light which calls men to the unity these Four Chaplains so heroically demonstrated. Chiseled deep into the stone is this:

Chapel of Four Chaplains

An Interfaith Shrine

Here is Sanctuary for Brotherhood

Let it never be violated

After reading this story many times, I think of what went through those soldiers' minds, the ones that got saved and the ones that went down with the ship. Most likely they were praying harder than they had ever prayed before to their God that they believed in. It doesn't make any difference what religion you believe in as long as you believe and have a strong faith in your God during difficult times. Remember the sacrifices of the Four Chaplains on that cold, black morning and we won't think it is so bad out there in the cold Minnesota winters.

The Minnesota Legionnaire

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Al Zdon, Editor

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What's Happening

Coast Guard Reunion

The third annual Coast Guard Reunion will be held at the Hopkins VFW Post on June 20. It will begin at 11 a.m. with lunch at noon. All Coast Guard veterans and those currently serving are welcome. For more information, contact Chris Kalogerson at chriskalogerson@gmail.com or 952-935-9065.

Round Tables

The Fort Snelling World War II History Round Table will feature "Italian Struggle," about the brutal combat fighting involving the U.S. in the campaign from Salerno to Rome. Author Tim Brady, author of "A Death in San Pietro" will speak as will combat veterans of the Italian front.

The meeting will be held on Thursday, Feb. 12, at the Fort Snelling History Center at 7 p.m. Admission is \$5, and free for students.

The Rochester Veterans Round Table will be "Fighting in the South Pacific and Returning a Japanese Sword," featuring Orville Amdahl and Ron Amdahl. The meeting will be held at Autumn Ridge Church at 7 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 9, with a \$5 admission.

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Round Table will meet on Feb. 23 at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater, and the subject "Fort Snelling and the Civil War" will be discussed with guest Steve Osman. Contact Steve Anderson at 715-386-1268 for more information.

Commander's Testimonial

The Testimonial Dinner for Department Commander Peggy Moon will be held at the Northern Lights Casinoo in Walker on Saturday, March 21.

The featured speaker for the event will be Past National Commander Butch Miller of Virginia.

The event will begin with a social hour at 5:30 p.m. with dinner and the testimonial program to follow at 6:30.

The cost is \$25 per person, and dinner reservations should be sent to "Commander Peggy's Testimonial," Kriesel-Jacobson Post 560, Box 123, Zimmerman, MN 55398. Reservations must be received no later than March 14.

Rooms at the Northern Lights are blocked out under "Commander's Dinner." For room reservations, call 1-866-

652-4683.

Other hotels in the area include the Country Inn and suites, 218-547-1400 or the America's Best Value, 218-547-2200.

The dinner will include garden salad, choice of dressing, garlic roasted red potatoes, green beans, slow-roasted prime rib with creamy horseradish, rolls and butter, beverage, cheesecake.

Tree Seedling Purchase

Information on species and prices for purchasing tree seedlings will be mailed to the posts in January. That information will also be available on the Department of Minnesota website, mnlegion.org, at a future date.

"It's never too early to be thinking about purchasing tree seedlings from The American Legion," said Energy and Conservation Chairman Carl Hendrickson. "Spring will be here sooner than you think."

For more information, call Hendrickson at 218-393-0079.

Tour of WWII Italy

The World War II History Round Table will be sponsoring a tour to Italy in May. It will depart on May 20 for Rome and include three days there. Memorial day will be at the Anzio Military Cemetery before traveling to Salerno. Other

Thank You

It's not always easy with the loss of a loved one. The American Legion Family with the cards, prayers and thoughts have made the loss less painful. We know she is in God's hand and with dad, enjoying no more pain. Thank you all.

**Families of Ruth Goede
Bill, Jean, Julie**

Thank you all for your prayers during my recent accident. American Legion Family is the best. Thanks also to the King Tuts for the flowers. Also, Nurse Marie for being there.

**Bill Goede
Past Department Commander**

stops will include the Amalfi Coast, Pompeii, Rapido, San Pietro, Monte Cassino, Florence Cemetery, Pisa, and the Gothic Line. The last stop will be Siena. Flint Whitlock will be the tour guide.

For more information or a brochure, call Don Patton at 612-867-5144 or email coldpatton@yahoo.com.

Waseca Vets Memorial

The new Waseca County Veterans Memorial will complement the existing memorial at the courthouse. It will recognize those serving from World War II to the present. Donations are being accepted and veterans may be recognized with the purchase of a plaque for the memorial. For more information, including forms, see www.wasecaveteransmemorial.org.

Legal Clinics

MACV will sponsor legal clinics at the Anoka County Government Center on Tuesday, Feb. 10, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center on Tuesday, Feb. 3, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Flag Atrium Balcony.

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Jeff Olson elected to AZ HOF

Former Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Jeff Olson has been elected to the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame.

Olson, who was born in Spring Grove in 1949 and lived for many years in Mabel and Stillwater, has been living in Green Valley, Ariz., for several years.

Olson served in the Army Courier Service from 1973-1976 and is a Vietnam Veteran.

He served as assistant director of Veterans Employment and Training Service at the University of Minnesota before being appointed Deputy Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs in 1982.

He took over as commissioner in 2000.

Before and after retirement, he was very active in The American Legion at all levels.

He served as chairman of the Legion's National Convention Corporation for many years, organizing and preparing for the Legion's annual national meeting.

He is presently the national commander's representative on the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

In 2009, he was appointed by the Arizona governor to the Arizona Veterans Service Advisory Commission and has served

as chairman. He also continues to serve as chairman of the Resolutions Assignment Committee of the

Minnesota American Legion. He also heads up a committee looking at the celebration of Minnesota's Legion centennial.

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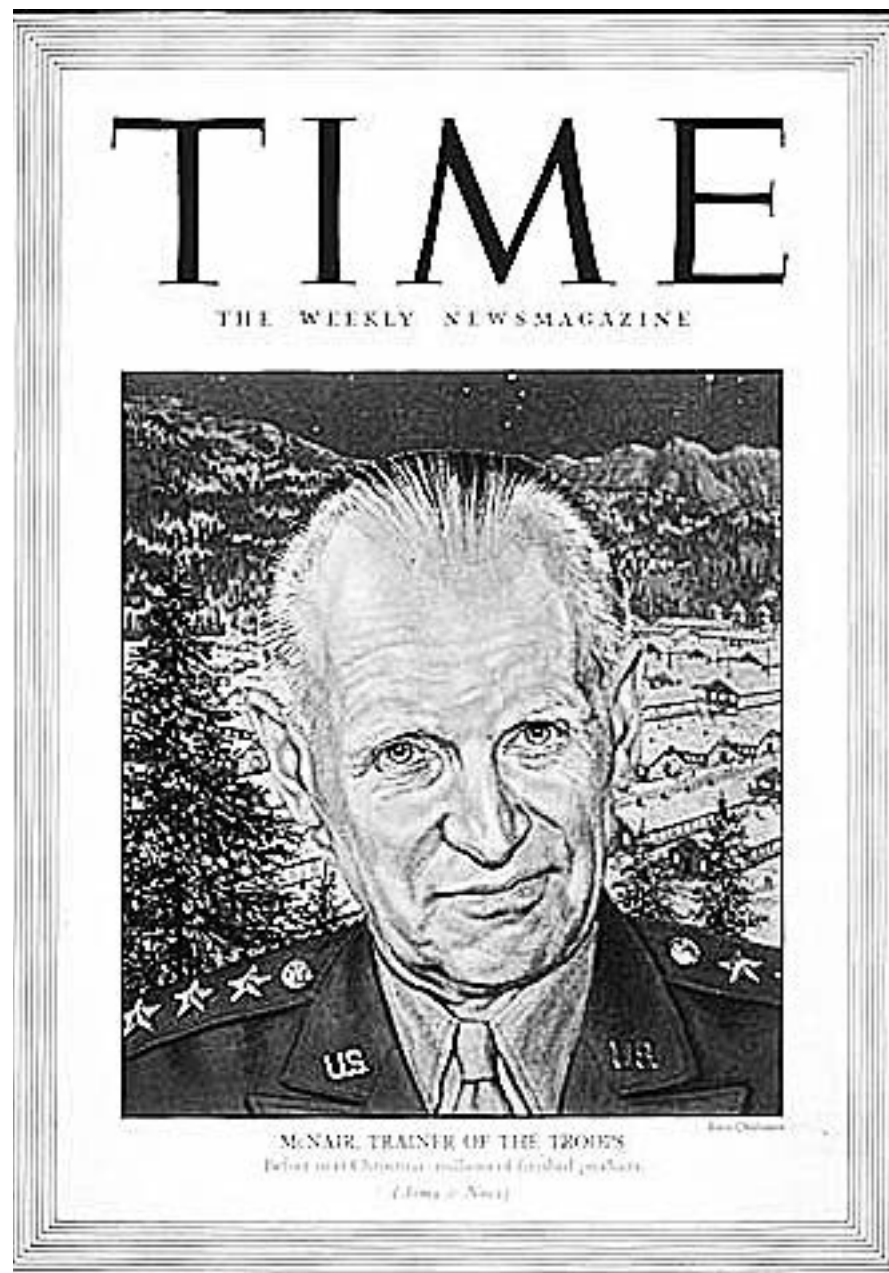
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Minnesota American Legion Military Hall of Fame

LESLEY J. MCNAIR

VERNDALE, MINNESOTA

By Al Zdon

Verndale was a bustling little community in north central Minnesota in 1883, with a population nearing 600 and two grain elevators and a grist mill to keep the economy humming.

On May 25, James and Clara McNair brought a baby boy into the world and named him Lesley. The proud father was a merchant in the community, operating a general store on the main street of Verndale.

The growing little town was probably a great place for a young lad to grow up. Many of the local men were Civil War veterans. In fact, over 100 Verndale families could claim at least one Civil War soldier as a son or father.

Young Lesley graduated from ninth grade in 1897, and his parents moved the family to Minneapolis where the lad could finish his high school years. He was very bright, and when he did graduate he had his heart set on becoming a naval officer.

He won an appointment to the Naval Academy, but at that time there was a long waiting list of candidates. For a time, he attended the Minnesota School of Business, but when he graduated in 1900, he was still on the Navy's waiting list. Discouraged, young McNair instead applied to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He was accepted for that year.

Four years later, he graduated 11th in his class of 124 cadets and was commissioned as a second lieutenant. During his time at West Point, he earned a reputation as a mathematical genius, and he gained the nickname, "Whitey," which would follow him the rest of his life.

His first duty was with a field artillery unit in Fort Douglas, Utah. He spent the next 35 years or so mostly with artillery and ordnance commands. In 1905, he married his sweetheart, Claire Huster, and they had one son, Douglas.

With the Great War raging in Europe, the United States got involved in Mexico in two incidents. McNair joined the 4th Field Artillery when it was assigned to occupy the Mexican port city of Vera Cruz as part of the 5th Reinforced Brigade. The U.S. was protecting American oil interests in the area, and occupied the town for seven months.

McNair was back in Texas when Mexican bandit Pancho Villa staged a raid into Columbus, New Mexico, in 1916 killing 19 Americans and burning the town. President Wilson ordered a "Punitive Expedition" and sent Major General John Pershing to lead 4,800 men into Mexico to find and destroy Villa's paramilitary forces and capture Villa.

McNair, now a captain, commanded the 4th Field Artillery as part of the U.S. forces that plunged 300 miles into Mexico, not only taking on Villa's forces, but also those of the Mexican government. Gen. George Patton also

served in the expedition. After mixed results, negotiations ended the expedition in January, 1917 — just in time to get ready for the World War.

In May, 1917, McNair was promoted to major and sent to France as part of the U.S. First Infantry Division. His job was to train the artillerymen, and his good work caused him to shoot up through the ranks. He became a temporary one-star general in October, 1918, just before the war's end. He was the youngest general officer in the Army at that time at the age of 35.

With the war over, McNair reverted to his permanent rank of major and returned to the U.S. Between wars he held a variety of positions including becoming a professor of military science and tactics at Purdue University for four years. He also was involved in several training commands, and earned a reputation along those lines.

By 1937, he had worked his way up to brigadier general, and by 1940, he was a major general and had advanced to the position of commandant of the General Staff College where he made changes that helped prepare the graduates for the rigors of the new world war.

He was Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters of the Army from 1940 until 1942 when General George Marshall appointed him the commanding general of the Army Ground Forces.

It was a daunting job. America was poorly prepared for war, and now had to make up for lost time. McNair's responsibility was to develop a training regimen for three million soldiers, taking them from farmers and gas station attendants and soda jerks to professional soldiers -- in a hurry. He used large-scale maneuvers in Louisiana and North Carolina to get the army ready.

The maneuvers were as authentic as McNair could make

Editor's Note:

This is the first of a planned series of stories that will look at some of the extraordinary people from Minnesota who served in the military through the years. The occasional stories will take a historical look at their lives. If you have someone you think should be in this series, please email Legionnaire Editor Al Zdon at azdon@mnlegion.org.

General Marshall: McNair was the 'brains of the Army'

them, and he later wrote, "The truth is sought regardless of whether pleasant or unpleasant, or whether it supports or condemns our present organizations and tactics." He concluded, "The principal obstacle now is that commanders lack either the guts or the discernment to act."

Part of reorganization of the Army, after watching the success of the German armored divisions in Europe, was to increase the role of tanks. McNair, however, wasn't moving quite as fast as his Mexican expedition partner Gen. Patton in this trend, and the two were at loggerheads long before the U.S. ever got to the battlefields.

Around this time, just before Pearl Harbor, a story in the Fayetteville, N.C., Observer, tried to capture the essence of McNair, who by this time had earned his third star. The reporter noted that McNair did not strut or make a show of his rank, and that the only way he could be differentiated from the soldiers he commanded were the three stars on his shoulders.

"He is as far from pretense... as a man can be."

The reporter said, "He is just the sort of man who might be selected in the event the United States should become involved in the present war, to lead our fighting forces, though in a thousand years you couldn't inveigle such a suggestion from the general himself."

The story said McNair talked, "in the easy, slow drawl of the westerner. And when he gives orders, they are obeyed." McNair and Marshall, the chief of the Army, were said to be close friends, the story said. "Each has a sincere regard for the abilities of the other."

A booklet on McNair's life, published in 1976, further explores the personality of the man from Verndale. It was said that he would borrow a shovel from a soldier to find out for himself what it was like to dig a foxhole. When he did an inspection of a camp he would first go to the kitchen and garbage pails, "knowing that health and morale center around chow."

He cared little for protocol, and instructed his staff: "Don't write formal letters when a note will do. Don't write notes, when a call will do. Don't use a telephone when you can just call out, 'Hey, Joe.'"

McNair disliked publicity and personal praise. When his picture was put up at the war college, he ordered it taken down. He is reported to have said, "They can put it up when I'm dead if they want to." And that's exactly what happened.

Marshall reportedly called him the "brains of the Army." He was "slender, short, gray-haired and sharp-featured." He often worked 16 hours a day. He suffered from some hearing loss, which some said led to his shyness around people.

With the necessity of putting a vast army in the field, McNair cut short some of the training time, and when American forces had great difficulty against the experienced German Army early in the invasion of North Africa, McNair received some criticism for his decision.

McNair, as an artilleryman, had also put an emphasis on anti-tank weapons that were towed into battle. Patton favored self-propelled tank destroyers, and as the war went on, Patton was proved to have the better insight.

McNair didn't shy from the criticism and went to North Africa himself to see how the tactics and training he had helped develop were working on the actual battlefield.

He reported that the artillery was doing well and that a new weapon, the bazooka, was showing its effectiveness. He said the leadership was good. And he was especially impressed by the medical treatment.

In April, 1943, while touring the front lines, he was hit by shrapnel that badly wounded his shoulder and struck him in the face. His steel helmet probably saved his life.

He wrote about his experience: "The medical service was superb. I was wounded at 2:30 in the afternoon. Within 10 minutes they had me at a battalion aid station. There, two soldiers put a tourniquet on my shoulder to stop the bleeding, bandaged me, fixed me up so I could be taken to the rear. I went there in a Jeep to the Division Clearing Station where they gave me blood plasma and checked my dressing. They put me on a litter in an ambulance and started to take me further to the rear. At 5:30, three hours later, I was in a field hospital, had been treated twice, had X-rays taken and was ready to be operated on. That evening, I came to in a warm bed, with no after effects from the operation. I felt fine, ready to get up again."

He concluded, "I didn't get this sort of treatment because I was a general officer."

He returned to Washington and immediately put into practice changes he felt were necessary in the training to better reflect the reality of war.

His training emphasis was not strictly on the combat skills and discipline necessary to create a good soldier. A speech he gave during the war said that training could only go so far, and that American soldiers must have a "fighting spirit."

He said, in words that bring Patton to mind, "If you call that hating your enemies, then we must hate with every fiber of our being. We must lust for battle; our purpose in life must be to kill; we must scheme and plan night and day to kill. There need be no pangs of conscience. For our ene-

mies have lighted the way to faster, surer and more cruel killing; they are past masters."

With D-Day approaching in 1944, McNair requested a transfer to England to take command of an army.

Eisenhower partially granted his wish by putting him in charge of an army that didn't exist. Like his longtime peer, Gen. Patton, who was now in disgrace after the slapping incident in Italy, McNair was put in charge of a non-existent army. His phantom army was to invade France at the Pas de Calais, and was a diversion from the actual Allied attack at Normandy.

His real purpose was, once the invasion was underway, to once again go to the front and find out first-hand how the training and preparation of the American soldier was holding up in combat conditions.

It was in this role that General McNair was in a slit trench near the city of St. Lo on July 25, 1944. The American forces had been bottled up in the Normandy countryside, and General Bradley and others had conceived of "Operation Cobra," a major effort to break out and take the war to Germany.

The first part of Cobra was a massive carpet bombing of the German positions by the Air Forces.

Correspondent Ernie Pyle describes with some horror what transpired on that day as the bombing continued. "As we watched, there crept into our consciousness a realization that the windrows of exploding bombs were easing back toward us, flight by flight, instead of gradually forward, as the plan called for. Then, we were horrified by the suspicion that those machines, high in the sky and completely detached from us, were aiming their bombs at the smoke line on the ground — and a gently breeze was drifting the smoke back over us."

In the end, over 100 U.S. troops were killed by our bombers that day. Bradley himself later recounted the tragedy in gruesome detail:

"The ground belched, shook and spewed dirt to the sky. Scores of our troops were hit, their bodies flung from slit trenches. Doughboys were dazed and frightened....A bomb landed squarely on McNair in a slit trench and threw his body sixty feet and mangled it beyond recognition except for the three stars on his collar."

McNair was 61 years old.

Eisenhower in a letter to General Montgomery said, "His death cast a gloom over all who had known the most able and devoted officer."

McNair was buried in the American Cemetery at Normandy and his body was never brought back to the United States. In 1954, Congress passed an act that granted him, posthumously, the rank of four-star general. He is the highest ranking American to be buried at the cemetery.

Along with lieutenant generals Frank Maxwell Andrews, Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. and Millard Harmon, McNair was the highest ranking American to be killed during the war.

Two weeks after McNair's death, his son, Colonel Douglas McNair, who was chief of staff of the 77th Division, was killed by a sniper's bullet on Guam. He is buried at the Punchbowl in Hawaii.

In 1948, the Army honored McNair by renaming a post just outside Washington D.C. as Fort Lesley J. McNair. The fort has been the headquarters of the Army's military district of Washington since 1966 and it is home of the National Defense University.

While McNair was credited with building an army that won wars on both sides of the world, his untimely death left him unable to personally defend himself against many of the military critics after the war.

In recent years, though, with the passage of time, McNair has once again begun to get the praise and recognition for his key role during the war.

In a 2012, historian Mark Calhoun wrote in a doctoral paper:

"Contrary to many critical analyses, McNair developed a remarkably accurate concept of modern warfare. In those areas that fell within his span of control, McNair provided invaluable service to the nation in preparing the Army to fight in the conditions he anticipated they would face. In doing so, he established the model for the Army training system that is still in use today."

Calhoun noted that many historians after World War II have argued that America won the wars primarily through its industrial might. Calhoun disagrees:

"Rather, they did so by relying on the fundamentals McNair helped to develop throughout the interwar period, ideas about how to fight and win wars which the Army incorporated into its 1941 doctrine, and which McNair instilled in the psyche of the American soldier by leading the most effective pre-war mobilization training effort the nation has ever implemented."

Historian Marc Blackburn wrote:

"The new view of American combat performance in World War II highlights how adaptive and innovative Americans were in the European and Pacific theaters. While the resources available to the United States and its allies played a large role in victory, a newer understanding of McNair's tactics emphasizes the manner in

which these resources were used. His pivotal influence on the formation of the U.S. army during World War II is finally being recognized.

"McNair's untimely death obscured his vital role for too long."

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An Army for Victory: Lesley J. McNair's Influence in Organizing the U.S. Army, 1939-1944, by Mark K. Blackburn, Ultimate History Project, www.ultimatehistoryproject.com.



McNair, wearing his Purple Heart and with his arm tucked into his shirt, posed after being wounded in North Africa in 1942.



Gen. Omar Bradley points at a map as McNair listens during maneuvers in Louisiana in 1942.



McNair is shown with his comrade and sometimes antagonist George Patton early in the war.



McNair liked to visit the front lines to see how the training he devised was holding up in wartime conditions.

The ambulance driver

By Al Zdon

The war brings out different things in different people.

To see Don Johnson now, a gentle man in his 90s who often softly whistles to himself, it's a little difficult to see the Don Johnson of 70 years ago, all five-feet-seven of him, roaring down roads in Belgium and Germany as an ambulance driver.

But that's what he did, and he did it well, earning a Bronze Star along the way.

"I wasn't a very good soldier, but I did what I had to do to get by."

Johnson was born and raised in Red Wing, the son of a men's clothing store owner. He graduated from Red Wing High School in 1941 and headed off to the University of Minnesota.

"I remember we were in the State Theater in Minneapolis on Dec. 7, 1941. I can't remember what the movie was, but they stopped the movie and the manager came out in front of the screen and said Pearl Harbor had been bombed. We didn't really understand at first because no one had ever heard of Pearl Harbor."

He said many Americans were still hopeful to that point that America would not get caught up in the world war. "I know I didn't want to go to war."

Johnson was able to stay out of the draft with his student deferment until mid-1943 when Uncle Sam finally called. He reported to Fort Snelling.

"I was there for two months. I don't know why it took them so long to place me. I got very good at picking up cigarette butts in the campground."

He was finally sent to Camp Berkeley, Texas, near Abilene to go through medical basic training. He was happy with the assignment. "I wanted to be anything but a rifleman."

He had a choice at the end of training to head for a medical unit overseas, or to enter the Army Specialized Training Program that send GIs to college.

True to his thirst for knowledge, he joined the ASTP and was sent to Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge. "What a deal, but it only lasted two quarters before they closed the whole thing down."

He joined the 99th Infantry Division at Camp Maxey in Texas. In the wink of an eye, Johnson was in getting off the boat in England. He was a member of the 324th Medical Battalion, Company C. The division had never been in battle.

"At some point I had told the Army that I used to drive a truck on the farm for my Uncle Oscar during the summer. That experience with a farm truck got me into the ambulance service."

The problem was that Johnson really wasn't very good at driving the Dodge three-quarter-ton trucks the Army used as ambulances. "I kind of learned how on the job. There was a lot of double-clutching and grinding. I used to get hell from the walking wounded."

For a time, he drove wounded soldiers to various aid stations and hospitals in England. At the beginning of November, the 99th Division was sent to France and ordered to take its place in the line of battle.

"We had to drive a couple of days to get to the Siegfried Line."

The 99th was being sent to what was considered a quiet section of the Allied front to ease it into combat situations. That plan went down the tubes when the Germans launched

what it called the Ardennes Offensive and what Americans call the Battle of the Bulge on Dec. 16, 1944. The 99th was on the northern shoulder of the attack.

On that day, Johnson was transporting two American soldiers and one German prisoner to a regimental medical collection area at Malmédy, Belgium. It was 13 miles from the front.

He was told he could stay the night at the field hospital, but he wanted to get back to his unit. "That's where I made my big mistake. If I would have stayed where I was, I would have missed the whole thing."

It wasn't an easy trip back.

"I came to a crossroads northeast of Malmédy and there was a column of American tanks and trucks and everything else crossing the road in front of us going west. The column just went on forever. We thought we'd never get across."

What Johnson didn't know at that moment was that the long column was the U.S. Army in retreat.

He finally was able to cross the road and returned to his unit at Krinkelt, Belgium.

The first casualty in Johnson's war was the orderly assigned to his ambulance. He was a medic from Pennsylvania. "He just lost his mind on the first day of battle. He was totally out of it. The sergeant just put his overcoat around the guy. He just stood there."

There had been some shelling coming into Krinkelt the day before, but on Dec. 17 all hell broke loose. "The Germans threw everything at us, and they knew the country better than we did."

The advancing German army quickly surrounded the twin towns of Krinkelt and Rocherath and the Americans were under attack from both shelling and small arms fire.

"None of us had been in combat before. They called our division the 'Battle Babies.' Quite a few of us gathered in

Donald Johnson of Red Wing was chosen by the Army to be an ambulance driver. He arrived on the scene in Belgium just in time for the Battle of the Bulge. His 99th Division had never seen combat before, and it was a rude awakening.



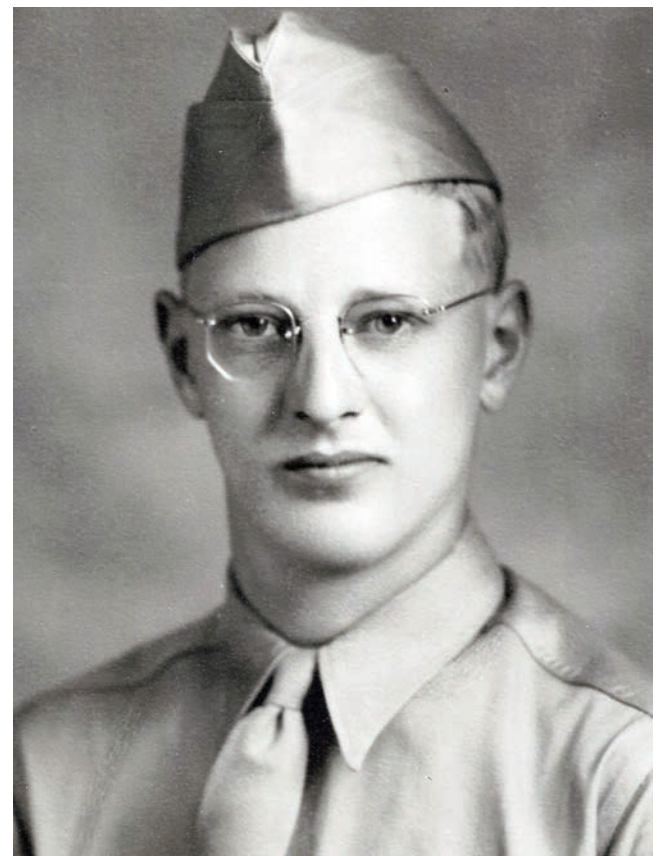
the basement of a church to hide from the shelling. There were probably a hundred soldiers in that church."

If Johnson thought he was going to stay out of the bombardment, he was quickly disabused about that line of thought. "A first lieutenant came into the basement of the church and yelled, 'Whose ambulance is that out there?' I had to admit it was mine. He said I'd better get to work."

Johnson went out into the shelling and rifle fire and got one more encouragement from the officer. "He said that he'd get me the Silver Star." For the next couple of days,



DON JOHNSON
At home in Red Wing



DON JOHNSON
During World War II