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HONORING OUR VETERANS

Heavy equipment was his weapon

■ Love of machinery served soldier well in wartime

Editor's Note: This is the sixth in a series of articles published in the Hibbing Daily Tribune honoring World War II veterans. The stories were written by HDT summer student intern Matt Nelson.

There is just something about the intricacy of moving metal parts, shifting and pushing in tandem to accomplish a desired task—something that has captured the minds of young children and raised the blood pressure of watchful mothers.

Harvey Richart, born in 1917, was a kid who could not be kept away from machines. “Right from the time I was a little kid I loved machinery,” he said. “When someone drove in with a car, I’d go out there and I’d look it over.”

The early years of Harvey’s life were spent on a farm near Iron. His father had been a shovel runner, a high-paying mining job, but he had a love of animals and decided to start a dairy farm in 1920—to his wife’s unease. “My mother didn’t want him to.

She said, ‘Bob you’ve got the

best job in the mine, and you’re going to give that up and go into dairy farming?’ That’s what he wanted and no one told him what to do.”

The farm did fairly well for a while as the Richarts acquired more and more cattle.

Tragically, his father’s dream turned into a nightmare for the family nearly overnight.

“TB got into the herd. The farm, the machinery, the horses—he lost everything. The farm was 160 acres, and they left him two acres down by a lake. That’s where I grew up.”

Richart’s father tried to get his old job back, but he could only find summer work in a smaller mine. The strategy of making money during the summer to pay through the winter worked until the Great Depression hit in 1929. Harvey was 12 at the time.

“He was out of work entirely. When ‘29 came, it was rough.”

Harvey’s father and brother, who was 16 at the time, went to North Dakota to work at harvesting.

“My father was a teamster—he’d always get the good jobs.

My brother always got the hard work!” Harvey said, laughing. “He would chuck bundles of oats or wheat into the threshing machine. The wagons came constantly, so he pitched those bundles for the whole day. That was really the only income we’d have”

The family was able to save a single cow out of their entire herd. “What she produced for our family was amazing. You’d have her milk—and we’d get our butter from that or cottage cheese and if you separate, you get the whey or the skim, and that goes to feed a pig. She has a calf once a year, and we get that calf and we keep that over winter until next fall, and we’d butcher it, and we’d have our meat. If we didn’t have that, I don’t know what we would’ve done.”

Harvey’s father died in 1933 from a massive stroke. Harvey remembers that his mother asked him to stay home the day his father went to the hospital, and the truant officer drove to their home later that day wondering why he wasn’t in school. After an explanation, the officer understood and left him alone.

“Three days after my dad went in the hospital, he died, and the next morning I had to get up at 5:30 a.m. and go to the pasture and get that cow and milk her at the barn. And then I’d have to change clothes, eat breakfast, and then go wait for the bus. That was a routine after that. I had to do everything my dad did.”

See Heavy, Page 5A

Harvey Richart poses at his home in Virginia.



Photos submitted by Harvey Richart operating a bulldozer during his Army service.

EVENT

Reindeer dash the grounds of Ironworld

■ Become local celebrities

by Jeff Warner
Staff writer

CHISHOLM — Neither Dancer nor Prancer nor any other of Santa’s reindeer visited the Festival of Lights this year; however, their reindeer role models, Noel and Holly, did visit.

It’s not every day one gets to pet the coarsely laid-back hair and observe the pale yellow antlers of a reindeer.

This year, there were two of them for festival-goers to enjoy, a first for Ironworld.

In an oblong pen, strewn with snow and hay, Noel and Holly basked in their status for the few hours they visited the Iron Range.

Adults and children alike also delighted in the rare treat.



Denise Clusiau and her daughters Claire and Lexi (striped hat) take a few moments to enjoy Noel the reindeer at the Festival of Lights on Saturday.

See Reindeer, Page 6A

SHOOTING

Gunman opens fire at mission center

■ Chisholm native killed

ARVADA, Colo. (AP) — A Minnesota woman was among two people killed when a gunman opened fire at a training center after being told he couldn’t spend the night, and a gunman fatally shot a person at a megachurch in Colorado Springs before a guard killed him.

The Minnesota victim was identified as Tiffany Johnson, 26, who a family friend said grew up in Chisholm, Minn. No arrests had been made in that shooting by Sunday evening. The shooting happened at about 12:30 a.m. at the Youth With a Mission center in this Denver suburb, police spokeswoman Susan Medina said.

Two men were also wounded. All four were staff members, said Paul Fil-

idis, a Colorado Springs-based spokesman with Youth With a Mission.

Meanwhile, police were investigating the other shooting about 65 miles away in Colorado Springs. A member of New Life Church was killed, Senior Pastor Brady Boyd said. The gunman in that shooting was shot and killed by a church security worker, Colorado Springs Police Chief Richard Myers said.

It wasn’t immediately known whether the shootings were related, though the mission training program has a small office at the church’s World Prayer Center on the New Life campus.

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Inside

The Hibbing Historical Society has been exhibiting a surveyor’s transit in a number of locations throughout the community

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DEATHS

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FROM PAGE ONE

Heavy: Ingenuity served Harvey well during war

From Page 1A

In 1936, his neighbor suggested he join the Civilian Conservation Corps. Harvey spent most of the next 32 months at Gooseberry Falls, helping to create what is now Gooseberry Falls State Park. Harvey remembers the CCC as being completely different from his life growing up.

"It taught us discipline, and it taught us to get along with people. Always before that, when you go to school, you're in school for so many hours, and then you're home. There, we were together 24 hours, every day of the week, every week of the month. That was very good training for us."

The last CCC job Harvey had was blacktopping roads from Zim to Worthington and then to Mankato. "I loved that work," he said. Harvey received a letter from his mother one day in 1941 telling him he'd been drafted. He quit his job and came home briefly. He was then sent by train to Fort Snelling. To Harvey's surprise, nearly everybody else shipped out within the week, but he stayed at Fort Snelling for three weeks.

"The Gophers had a good football team in those years. So for three week-ends I went to football games, and they were good. They always honored the servicemen."

Finally Harvey was sent to Fort Belvoir, Va., an engineering base where he received basic training. He didn't have much trouble, although it took him a little longer to master firing.

"I didn't make it right away because you had to have timing. One interesting thing about it is that we were still using the rifles from [World War I] in 1918. You got to aim and fire and eject the shell each time, and you only have so many seconds. But I learned it, and then I became an expert. I also wanted to be in heavy equipment, and I got with a group who drove bulldozers. I didn't have any problem with that because I'd done it before in the CCC."

Harvey's sister worked in Washington, D.C., in late 1941. Harvey called her up one Sunday and asked her to get together with him in Alexandria, Va., about halfway between Washington and Fort Belvoir. While they were having a meal in a restaurant, the news hit that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor.

"[The news on the radio] was that all personnel had to return to their bases immediately. When I was coming back, I met some engineers who'd been in service for a year and were trained—they were going to go home. But now they were going overseas."

Basic training was cut short for Harvey and he was sent to Panama to defend the canal there. Because of his work experience, Harvey built and blacktopped roads, coming into contact with some machinery he had never seen before.

"There was an air compressor that was mounted on a truck. There were pins on the side, and in those pins was every type of tool powered by air. We had a chainsaw and a circular saw—jack hammer and drill saw—all run by air." The truck was to play an important role in Harvey's military career.

Panama's defense no longer remained a priority after the United States won the Battle of Midway in 1942. A Puerto Rican outfit took the place of Harvey's, and he and with the other members of his outfit were sent back to the States. He got a 30-day furlough and went home to Minnesota.

"I took the time to get reacquainted with my wife, and did some hunting and fishing. Then I went back." Harvey was sent to Flori-

da, where his unit built obstacles modeled on those the Germans were using and then blew them up, to see which methods worked best. One night, a plane missed its target and set the woods on fire. Harvey jumped onto his bulldozer.

"I pushed sand up onto those palmettos again and again—I put that fire out." Eventually Harvey was ordered overseas. En route, he discovered he got seasick when he went below deck. For the rest of the voyage, he remained topside.

When Harvey arrived in Europe, he was part of the crew that unloaded the ship. "We had to unload all the 11-E (Eleventh Engineer) Baggage. It took us about four or five days." The day they finished was the day they were to ship out to their outfits by train, arriving in Wallace Cheshire, England, on Nov. 25, 1944.

"We were so tired by the time we got to the building they wanted us at, we fell asleep. When I got up the next morning, there was my truck, my air compressor, sitting there. They had shipped it over. I stayed on that truck all through the war, right to the end."

After Christmas, Harvey was shipped to France. One night, Harvey was on guard duty when the sirens sounded.

"My orders were to make sure all the lights were off if the sirens sounded. While I was doing that, here come these German planes. I heard kind of a pulsating noise as they went by."

Harvey found out a day later, after seeing photographs of damaged Manchester, that this was a "bug bomb," the first guided missile used in war and the forerunner of today's cruise missile.

France differed from England in a big way. "The English all were in these drab, dark colors, blackout conditions and all. Here in France, all the women were in pinks and blues and stuff—such a contrast!"

The leaders of Harvey's unit seemed to be having as much difficulty getting oriented as the newly shipped servicemen were.

"We left a French town square, and we were going, half an hour or so, and pretty soon we came into a town and went into the square, and it's the same one we left. We made a whole circle!"

When the lieutenant straightened it out, he took them into open fields to bed down for the night. As night came, the lack of shelter proved costly.

"It was January. I had a cab on my car, and most people had canvas too. I thought we'd be warm, but it was cold! My partner lit up a blowtorch, but we couldn't seem to get any heat out of. Oh, it was cold." The next morning Harvey told the lieutenant they had to get in some protected area, and that night, they built a fire in a forest clearing.

Harvey's resourcefulness

and ingenuity served him well as the war progressed. His Northern Minnesota background helped keep the trucks moving.

"We were going, and we ran into ice. We couldn't make the hills with the bulldozers. I told the lieutenant I could get those trucks over." Using a combination of the air compressor truck and the bulldozers, Harvey was able to get the sliding trucks up and over seemingly insurmountable hills.

The engineers were often sent wherever and whenever they were needed, in whatever numbers were available. If a division was making a push, they would draw from the engineers. Harvey was sent on a variety of jobs, each one making a different impact on him.

He will never forget the job that opened his eyes to the horrors of war.

"I was sent to a cemetery in France. This was right after the Battle of the Bulge, and my job there was to furnish the spaders for digging graves. They had a hundred German prisoners and they each had to dig a grave a day, each one. They were hauling guys in, two and a half ton trucks. That was quite a rude awakening, for one just getting over there. I thought the war was really going well. They needed the spaders to get through the six inches of frost—this was still January. They had two spaders going all day long. I would go from one man to the next with the spaders. That was my job."

On another job, he was stationed in a cheese factory near a mountain range. The atmosphere, however, was anything but idyllic.

"A division had an order to put up a Bailey Bridge over this river there. The guys on the other side built the bridge—this big, Bailey Bridge. The Germans were up in the mountains and they watched us build that whole bridge. When it was done, they rolled this big artillery piece out on a flat-car (the Germans had railroads in that mountain) and they blew the bridge out. They put the bridge up a second time—hard to do, each piece weighed 500 pounds, and it was all by hand. The Germans blew it out a second time. The air force was called and they bombed the heck out of the mountains. They put the bridge up a third time. I saw these guys coming across it to the cheese factory—these big, burly guys, and they were just crying they were so tired. Nobody said a thing about it."

While this job was difficult, there were some that were utterly impossible.

"We got into a town we couldn't take. They said there were S.S. Troopers there. They were the worst ones." The S.S. began as Adolf Hitler's personal bodyguards and grew to become one of the most powerful organizations in Nazi Germany. "They wouldn't let the regular army retreat—they'd fire on

them." Eventually the unit called infantry in to get some prisoners out of the town. "I think the world of the infantry," Harvey said. "I think every one should have a Bronze Star for what they went through."

A fourth job Harvey remembers contains a mystery he never quite understood. "We were putting up a bridge over the Danube River, and it was wide. There was a town on both sides of the river. Every section of the bridge had been dropped in the water except for the piers. Across the river there was a cathedral that looked like it was standing perfectly normal. Everything else around it was leveled—there was nothing standing. I wanted to get across so I could see it. Finally we got across and I got to see that cathedral. There were pock marks in it and some tiles were damaged, but how they leveled everything else and not this cathedral—I don't know how they did that. It was interesting."

The end of the war came quickly for Harvey. There was a school in England called the Wharton American Technical School that taught about running a shovel and crane, which Harvey still wanted to learn. He planned to enroll, but the war was winding down, and he had nearly enough points to go home. He made a well-timed visit to a high-ranking officer and got clearance to ship for the States.

The trip home wasn't as uneventful as Harvey would have liked.

"Those North Atlantic storms were really brutal. Water came in through the windows way at the top. The nurses were up there and they had orders not to open the portholes. One nurse opened it and her stateroom got full of water." Harvey worked in the galley for most of the voyage, keeping himself busy.

Harvey was discharged at Fort McCoy, Wis, and returned home on Dec. 23, 1945, just in time to spend his first Christmas home in five years. "The next day (Christmas Eve) I picked up a ring from the jewelry store, and proposed to my wife when we were going to church. We were married on June 15th, 1946."

Harvey and Bertha Richart remained married until her death in September. He recently turned 90. He lives in Virginia.

His parting words were simple, but powerful. "I don't like war. But if you have to do it, you have to."

Gunman: Range woman loses life in shooting

From Page 1A

A gunman in a black trench coat and a high-powered rifle entered the church's main foyer about 1 p.m. and began shooting, according to a source at the church who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the police department had asked that it release all information.

In the Arvada shooting, the gunman came to the door of the dormitory seeking shelter, asking if he could spend the night, said Peter Warren, director of Youth With a Mission Denver.

When told he couldn't stay, the man walked inside, opened fire, then left on foot, Warren said.

Warren said he didn't know if any of the students or staff knew the gunman. He said the man had not been at a Christmas party that staff and students held at the dormitory that evening.

"We don't know why" he came to the dormitory, Warren said.

Witnesses told police that the gunman was a 20-year-old white male, wearing a dark jacket and skull cap, who left on foot. He may have glasses or a beard.

Police with dogs searched the area through the night, and residents of nearby homes were notified by reverse 911 to be on the lookout. Medina said residents were asked to look out their windows for any tracks left in the snow during the night. About 4 inches of snow had fallen in the area in the past day.

Brady White, who attends Faith Bible Chapel, where the center is located, said students he spoke to called the experience "terrifying."

"They're just wonderful people," White said of the center's students. "Their mission is to know God and to make him known."

Besides Johnson, police identified the other victim as Philip Crouse, 23, of Alaska.

The missionary center identified the wounded as Dan Griebenow, 24, of South Dakota, and Charlie Branch, 22, whose hometown wasn't immediately known. One of the men was in critical condition, and the other was stable, police said.

About 45 people were evacuated from the dormitory and moved to an undisclosed location.

Family friend Carla Macynski said Johnson grew up in the Iron Range town of Chisholm and graduated

from high school in nearby Hibbing in 1999. She earned an associate degree from Anoka Community College, then worked as a nanny before joining Youth With a Mission.

"Tiffany was a well-liked, easygoing 26-year-old. She was friendly, adventurous and a definite leader. She wanted to see the world," Macynski said as she choked back tears while reading a family statement.

With the group, Johnson had traveled to Egypt, Libya and South Africa.

"She especially liked working with children ... She was looking forward to being a mother," Macynski said.

Cheril Morrison, wife of chapel pastor George Morrison, said Crouse had just hung up Christmas lights at her home and Johnson was "an amazingly beautiful person."

One of the injured men was hospitalized in critical condition and the other was in stable condition, police said. Both are in their 20s.

Mimi Martin, who lives near the center, said she received the warning call at about 9 a.m. warning neighbors to keep their doors and windows locked.

"Why would anybody want to hurt those kids?" Martin said. "I just pray for their families."

People bundled up against freezing cold attended Sunday services at the sanctuary, about 300 yards from the dormitory on the campus of the Faith Bible Chapel. Police kept tight security on the chapel grounds.

"We never doubted that we would have a service," said Cheril Morrison. "We felt like our church faithful all needed to be together."

Darv Smith, director of a Youth With a Mission center in Boulder, said people ranging from their late teens to their 70s undergo a 12-week course that prepares them to be missionaries. He said the center trains about 300 people a year.

Filidis said staffers are usually former missionaries themselves and that the "mercy ministries" performed by trainees include orphanage work. He said he didn't know where the group being trained in Arvada was going to be sent.

Youth With a Mission was started in 1960 and now has 1,100 locations with 16,000 full-time staff, Smith said. The Arvada center was founded in 1984.

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