

Honored to serve honorable veteran

BY LOIS BELL
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — He quietly comes in and sits at a table he favors in the dining room. Soft-spoken Charles “Charlie” Gazdik has seen the tough side of battle. He is the recipient of a Purple Heart and Bronze Medal from battle in the Pacific campaign of World War II. But Gazdik was rejected at first by the U.S. Army.

“I went down to the draft office in the post office at Gould and Loucks,” Gazdik said. “And a group of young men rode to Cheyenne from Sheridan on a bus.”

The U.S. Army paid for the trip.

“But at my physical examination, they discovered I had a hernia,” said Gazdik. “I didn’t know I had a hernia. They sent me back home. I was supposed to get an operation before I could serve.”

Gazdik returned to Sheridan. He didn’t have the surgery but instead went to work in the coal mines.

“Then they called me again,” Gazdik said. “It was about 1943. I got this little card in the mail about the size of a recipe card. It said my status was that I could go back to service. So, I reported back to the draft office in the post office building, and was back on a bus to Cheyenne. This time, I passed the physical exam. Go figure.”

“They told me just to bring what you need,” Gazdik said. He trained at Camp Roberts in California, leaving his family and girl behind. Following basic training he returned home to prepare to be assigned.

“It was for 30 days,” Gazdik said. “It was time you were to spend with your family. That may be the last time you’ll see them.”

He boarded a ship at Fort Ord, California, and headed for an unknown destination. Gazdik said they did not know where they were going. They found themselves on the Zamboanga Peninsula, Philippines, and soon engaged in battle.

“I was part of the infantry,” said Gazdik. “I was an explosive specialist because of my work in the mines. We were right up front. You couldn’t carry too much on your back.

I was carrying ammunition for my M1 and for my barman (machine gun) plus explosives.”

Gazdik speaks as if he still sees that battle.

“When we landed, we had a perimeter line. There were four companies, A, B, C and D. We had to climb a hill to face the enemy. As we were going up the hill, the whole hill was dynamited by the enemy. After we got to the top, the whole line blew up. We lost two whole companies — B and C — and part of D.”

Gazdik was in Company A. The soldiers regrouped and kept going.

“We fought for two weeks then we were pulled back and replaced by other infantrymen,” Gazdik said.

The troops filled their ranks and went to battle on the volcanic island of Jolo.

“The terrain was 90 percent hills,” Gazdik said. “We had this commissioned officer new from the states. He was going to show us how to win the war. He was the first one to be killed.”

The Americans were victorious in that battle. For his participation, Gazdik and the men of Company A were awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Medal.

“We went back to Zamboanga to prepare for the Battle of Japan,” Gazdik said. “But then we heard the war was over. It was hard to believe. We didn’t know what our destiny was going to be. There was no party, no hoop-do-la.”

Gazdik did not have enough points in the Army system to be sent home. He was assigned to the recruiting office at division headquarters at the Kure Naval Base in Japan and found himself in the clerk typist staff pool for General Douglas MacArthur.

“We were in a marble building near Emperor Hirohito’s palace,” Gazdik said. He experienced an earthquake during the assignment.

“There was a wave that went from one end of the building to the other,” Gazdik said.

He also saw the aftermath of the bombings on Nagasaki and Hiroshima before being sent home to his life in Sheridan and becoming a familiar face to many.

At age 92, Gazdik is a great-grandfather and a volunteer ambassador at the Sheridan Senior Center. He is one of the veterans the center is honored to serve.



COURTESY PHOTO

World War II veteran Charles Gazdik holds a photo dated September 1944 of himself in uniform during his basic training at Camp Roberts, California. Gazdik was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Medal for his participation in a key battle in the Philippines. Today, at age 92, Gazdik, is a great-grandfather and continues to volunteer as an ambassador at the Sheridan Senior Center.

CENTER STAGE

LENDING A HELPING HAND

Supporting Green Boomerang supports services to elders

I am delighted to announce that Amanda Munford has been hired as store manager for Green Boomerang.

Amanda comes to us with a vast amount of customer service and retail experience. She has exciting, innovative and creative ideas for the store and is a self-proclaimed thrift

store shopper and collector. Make sure you stop in and say hello! Exciting things are happening in the near future for Green Boomerang. Once Amanda gets settled we will hold a Grand Opening Party for the store, we have a fall fashion show in the works from our visual merchandiser, Elaine Burke, and we have also acquired an official pick up and deliver truck for Green Boomerang so now we soon will be able to better meet the needs of our customers by offering a pick up and delivery service.

If you have been in the store recently you may have

noticed the artwork hanging in the back of the children’s area, this is courtesy of the Sheridan County YMCA Summer Club first graders! Make sure to swing down and see if you recognize any of these wonderful paintings from an artist you may know. This display of artwork will continue all year by different children’s organizations in the community. Green Boomerang was also a host to an AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associate this summer, Maddi Jones, from Williamsburg, Virginia.

Maddi worked at the store as a cashier as well as helping out in other parts of the Senior Center, working in the dining room, teaching arts and crafts, leading group hikes and in the admin area. She will surely be missed!

We are always looking for more volunteers to join our

fun Green Boomerang team. We currently have openings for cashiers, merchandise sorters, (or as we like to call them, treasure hunters), and floaters that work in all areas.

Proceeds from Green Boomerang go directly to supporting services the Senior Center provides to support older adults living independently in their homes.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please call Haley Rougeau at 672-2240, or stop in the Senior Center and fill out an application today!

HALEY ROUGEAU is the director of volunteer services at the Sheridan Senior Center. Center Stage is written by friends of the Senior Center for the Sheridan Community. It is a collection of insights and stories related to living well at every age.

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS

- Aug. 16 Wyoming Primaries — the two precincts that use the Senior Center to vote will be voting at the Sheridan County Fairgrounds this year. If the change is an inconvenience, please contact the Sheridan County Elections office and request an absentee ballot to be sent to your residence. Their phone number is 674-2515.

- Many homebound older residents may only have a mid-day meal from the Senior Center. Could you spare 45 minutes one day each week to reach out to older residents in Sheridan? The Senior Center needs volunteers for the following home delivered meal routes and days: Monday - Route #8; Thursday - Route #1; Friday - Route # 10; Saturday - Route #9. For information, call Haley Rougeau, director of volunteer services, at the Sheridan Senior Center at 672-2240.

- The Senior Center has extended its deadline for its annual photo contest to Sept. 23. The theme this year is “Blazing a Trail” but please submit whatever photos you like that you’ve taken this past year — new adventures? New experiences? Information is available at the front desk.

- Grandparents raising grandchildren don’t get a summer break. Learn what resources are available to support you in your important role of raising a grandchild. There is a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group that meets the third Wednesday of each month at the Senior Center. This is a free support group and activities for grandchildren are provided. The next GRG meeting is Wednesday, Aug. 17 at 5:30 p.m. in the dining room at the Sheridan Senior Center, 211 Smith St. Dinner is provided. For information, call Stella Montano at 675-1978.



HALEY ROUGEAU

is a self-proclaimed thrift



Consider joining us for breakfast on Saturday, August 27, 7:30 - 9:30 a.m. Entrees and kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

Entrée Choice*	or	Soup Kiosk
Sun - Country Ribs		
Mon - Turkey Tetrazzini		French Onion Soup
Tue - Baked Breaded Cod		Wild Rice & Ham
Wed - Taco Salad w/ beef, cheese, chips, salsa		Butternut Bisque
Thu - Chicken Parmesan		Beef Stew
Fri - Chicken Fried Steak		Cream of Broccoli
Sat - Baked Potato Bar w/ Ham & Cheese Sauce or Chili		

*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

Tue - Wyoming Primary Elections		at your polling place
Wed - Open Mic	11:00 a.m.	Dining Room
Thu - Doll Show	1:00 p.m.	
You may bring one of your own dolls to share		
Fri - Conversation Pit	8:00 a.m.	Dining Room
Sat - Woodcarvers	9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Art Studio

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., 7 days a week
211 Smith Street Sheridan, WY 82801 (307) 672-6079
Senior Center Main Phone: (307) 672-2240



Room to RELAX

Respite Services at Westview Health Care Center

We provide quality service in a secure and compassionate environment. Respite is available year-round, and guests experience all of our benefits and amenities, including:

- Well-balanced meals • Variety of activities
- Fine dining • Private rooms available • Skilled rehab services



WESTVIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

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