



COURTESY PHOTO

At age 91, U.S. Army veteran John Dewey, left, lives at home with support from The HUB on Smith's Help at Home services. Tatiana Hom is one of the team members who supports Dewey living on his own at home.

## Heroes living next door

retired from the Veterans Affairs Medical Center here in Sheridan after 23 years of service to our veterans. It was a fulfilling job and I expected to continue to work there for many more years, but a change in leadership and new regulations pre-empted that. I really did not have the time that I wanted to spend with the vets.

Now I work at The Hub on Smith (formerly the Sheridan Senior Center) as an RN case manager for more than 60 veterans who need personal care or homemaking services that enable them to live outside of an institution or nursing home. I find myself having the time to really get to know these individuals. Their stories are amazing and reflect a great love of country and pride in their service. They are reluctant to accept any praise for the sacrifice they gave to their country. Service given during peacetime as well as during conflict. Veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, all with incredible stories to relate, if you know what to ask and have the time to listen. Stories about the atomic and hydrogen bomb testing, stories about meeting John Wayne in Vietnam, stories about being at Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, the Chosin Reservoir — the list goes on and on.



DAVE SCHWAIGER

I will always remember the time when I went to a veteran's home that the VA had sent me to see to set up a program for him. I had the mandatory forms to fill out, which of course had ethnicity questions on them, he responded that he was not Latino but was part Japanese. I was surprised and asked him about that, he told me "I've got a piece of Japanese shrapnel in my a-!" We both had a good long laugh over that.

Another vet has had difficulty with falling a lot. "What is going on?" I asked him. He then related how his feet had been frostbitten over and over in Korea, turns out he was one of the survivors of the "Frozen Chosin" (an interesting story to read if you don't know about it). This was more than 60 years ago, from his service in Korea and he just now was asking for some help. Almost to a man or woman they say, "Give this service to someone that really needs it." They are humble and proud Americans who are still ready to sacrifice.

One common thread that weaves through a lot of these stories is the camaraderies these vets developed during their time in service. Stories of shared meals, tricks that they played on each other or their commanding officers.

In closing I would remind readers that we have heroes in our midst, individuals who are proud of their service and deserve all the respect that we can give them because they gave so much for all of us. Say hi to them and spend some time getting to know them.

God bless all of our veterans.

**GUEST COLUMNIST DAVE SCHWAIGER, RN,** is a nurse for The Hub on Smith's Help at Home program that provides in-home care services in Sheridan County communities. Center Stage is written by friends of The Hub on Smith for the Sheridan community. It is a collection of insights and stories related to living well at every age.

### SENIOR EVENTS

• Shopping Sheridan Days for Tongue River Valley residents are available every first and third Thursday of each month through The Hub on Smith and include trips to Albertson's or to Walmart. We can shop for you, with you or leave you on your own. Call ahead to reserve your spot at 655-9419, Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The shopping bus will leave Dayton at 12:30 p.m., pick up riders in Ranchester at 12:45 p.m. and return to Ranchester at 3:45 p.m., and to Dayton at 4 p.m. The cost is \$8 for a round-trip ride.

• Young at Heart Players present: "Saved by the Serendipity Circus" or... "She Was Trapped With Ease" by Jill Rust and directed by Pat

Tomsovic. Sponsored by Tandem Productions, performances will take place Nov. 2-4 at 1:30 p.m. Suggested contribution \$2 at the door at The Hub on Smith.

• Nov. 6-12, Veterans Wall of Honor display at The Hub on Smith.

• A presentation on tips and techniques for living with a chronic disease of any kind, Nov. 7, 5:30-7 p.m. for the November "When I'm 64...or more" topic on Stanford University's Living with Chronic Disease program. The keynote speaker is master trainer Kathy Watson. The presentation is free to the community of all ages. Join us in the café of the Hub on Smith at 211 Smith St. No advance call-in required.

## Help at Home supports veteran who has beat the odds

BY LOIS BELL  
THE HUB ON SMITH

SHERIDAN — U.S. Army veteran John Dewey knows what it's like to defy odds. When he was told his marriage wouldn't last, he celebrated 65 years with the love of his life, Elizabeth (nee Wallmark). At basic training, Dewey and fellow inductees set a record for completing a 20-mile hike. And when an officer left a base Dewey was assigned to, Dewey received a field promotion from private first class to corporal.

"I didn't know they could do that," Dewey said.

But what makes Dewey particularly special is his

hands. Dewey survived an electrical shock that threw him 12 yards, causing his hands to be at risk for amputation. It was June 1944.

"I was cleaning a radio transmitter after dark," Dewey said. "In Arizona in June, it's kinda warm. I was in my shorts and undershirt."

While a fellow radio operator was transmitting on another transmitter, a short in the electrical wiring turned the transmitter on that Dewey was cleaning. The voltage threw him 12 feet and burned his hands. Dewey got up. Using his forearms, he managed to open the door from the

transmitter building and went for help.

"They commandeered a full colonel and his family to take me to the base hospital," Dewey said. "When I woke up the next morning, a one-star general was sitting by me."

The general wanted to know how Dewey survived. Seven other such accidents had occurred around the country with no survivors.

Dewey went back to his childhood on his family farm in Mount Carroll, Illinois, for the answer.

"My father had hired an electrician and wanted me to shadow him to learn everything I could," Dewey said, adding that he had learned the importance of respect for and safety when working with electricity.

Dewey wanted a rubber mat while working on the radio transmitter.

"But the Army didn't have any rubber mats in their warehouses," Dewey said. "So a sergeant at one of the warehouses told me that I could go look for something in the salvage yard."

Dewey took a piece of conveyor belt for a crusher in the yard and stood on the belt in front of the transmitter. He told this to the general.

"Now I know why you're alive," the general said.

The initial prognosis for Dewey's hands was not good. A young doctor on duty said they were going to have to take his hands off, but no surgery was done. Two days later, the head of the medical division commandeered air transport to take Dewey

to the William Beaumont military burn center in El Paso, Texas.

"A B24 was ready but I had to climb a ladder to get in," Dewey said. "I had to put my arms through the rungs of the stairs and pull myself up with the help of a strong man behind me to push me."

News for Dewey changed at El Paso. The doctor said rather than remove the hands, they were going to fix them.

Dewey was in the hospital for six months losing only the tip of one thumb and one forefinger.

"That's not bad at all," Dewey said.

Dewey was honorably discharged, married and spent a lifetime in farming, insurance, auto mechanics, construction and mining. Today, at age 91, Dewey lives at home with support from Hospital Home Care and from The Hub's Help at Home team.

Tatiana Hom is a Help at Home homemaker and part of the team that visits Dewey each week to assist with laundry and light housekeeping.

Dewey is one of four veterans on Hom's weekly rotations. For years, the VA has been in partnership with The Hub on Smith (formerly the Sheridan Senior Center) to provide in-home services for veterans.

"I'm really happy the VA is working with us," Hom said.

"Damn lucky that I am alive. That rubber mat saved me," Dewey said.

Yes, John Dewey is a lucky man who has beat odds.



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\*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

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Thu- Breaded Cod  
Fri- French Dip au jus  
Sat- Chicken Florentine  
Sun- Hungarian Goulash  
Mon- Turkey Pot Pie

**UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS**

Tue- Crafts Class	1:00-3:30 p.m.	Art Studio
Thurs - Pinochle Single Deck	1:00 p.m.	Café
Mon- BOOM Circuit Training	9:00 to 10:00 a.m.	Fitness Room

Lunch Service Hours: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., 365 days a year at 211 Smith Street Home Delivered Meals (307) 672-6079

Loan Closet, Outreach, and Administration Services, 672-2240. Mondays - Fridays.

Help at Home Services, 675-1978. 232 North Brooks: Mondays - Fridays.

Day Break Adult Care Services, 674-4968. 241 Smith Street: Mondays - Fridays.



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## Health law sign-ups start, and some see a 'hostile takeover'

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's sign-up season for the Affordable Care Act, but the Trump administration isn't making it easy — cutting the enrollment period in half, slashing advertising and dialing back on counselors who help consumers get through the process.

Many people already faced fewer choices and higher premiums and other out-of-pocket costs.

But President Donald Trump's decision to cancel subsidies to insurers that lower consumer costs compounded the turmoil, pushing premiums higher.

The number of uninsured people may start rising again, eroding gains that drove the uninsured rate to a historic low.