

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans AffairsVA Manchester Healthcare System
Contact: Lori Flynn, Public Affairs Officer
(603) 624-4366 x 6779
Lori.Flynn@va.gov**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 8, 2023

By Lori Flynn

NEWS RELEASE**WWII centenarian receives military service letters 80 years apart**

MANCHESTER, N.H. — As a young man growing up in Massachusetts, Alfred Pinell’s life changed when he received a letter in the mail March 15, 1943, stating his country needs him—and many others—to fight and protect our nation. Within seven days, and just shy of Pinell turning 20 years old, he was drafted into the U.S. Army, Battery B 399th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. He became part of World War II history June 6, 1944, landing on the beaches of Normandy, France.

“There is no advice for anybody going to war. Keep yourself out of the way of bullets. That is all you can say, nothing else,” shared World War II Veteran Alfred Pinell. “They [military service members on the front lines] are there to protect the ones that are back home.”

More than 80 years later, Pinell received another letter regarding his military service. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Secretary Denis McDonough, prepared a personal letter for Pinell to recognize his service to our nation, honor him, celebrate his 100th birthday, and to thank him for being a part of the VA family.

Upon entering Pinell’s residence, the American flag is displayed on his wall like a three-pointed hat and is among photos of loved ones and keepsakes from his life’s journey. Surrounded by family, Pinell received the note of appreciation and coin from McDonough presented by Manchester VA Medical Center Director Kevin Forrest.

“This was not the first time the two of us Veterans met,” shared Forrest. “Julie McCabe, a social worker with Manchester VA, and part of Veteran Pinell’s case management team, began health care services for him over five years ago. His family invited Julie and I to attend his 100th birthday celebration earlier in the year.”

Pinell is a witty man and a ‘sharpshooter’ calling it like it is, with a mischievous smile and eyes that light up a room when you speak with him. He strongly believes in his faith and family.

“God is watching me pretty closely,” shared Pinell. “Keep your feet on the ground and not up there.”

Denise, Susan, and Lynn are Pinell’s three daughters. Denise and Susan were able to attend the VA presentation a couple of months ago, as well as his two sons-in-law Robert and Anthony, who all share in the pride of their father’s service to our nation and now, the health care he receives through the VA.

-more-

“About the VA, I can’t say enough,” stated Susan Parolisi. “My dad has received such personal care since the first time I signed him up. His case workers are always checking on what he needs and making sure that he never has any issues.”

Added Parolisi, “Julie McCabe has shown such compassion and attention to my dad. She has responded to every need that my dad has and sent us to the right person when the need arises for something more he has needed.”

“I have been working with them since 2019 and the family is lovely and very appreciative of the VA and staff,” expressed McCabe. “Mr. Pinnell’s birthday party was inspiring. It was an honor to be invited and to hear his story.”

Having served a combined 29 years of military service in the active-duty Army, Army Reserves, and Air National Guard, Pinell does not share much about his time on the beaches of Normandy.

“At that time, a lot of guys were laying all over the ground ... they never got up.” shared Pinell. “We are all part of the system ... the question is, how long do some live?” Whatever else happened, talk to the guy upstairs, he had trouble too.”

Forrest read aloud Secretary McDonough’s letter to Pinell expressing Americans enjoy the blessings and liberty because of patriots like you [Pinell] who answered the call to defend our nation.

Pinell shared his mother gave him some good lessons in life, “So long as we stand up, we are alive.”

Maybe, those words helped build his resiliency and our nation as the U.S. entered World War II on Dec. 8, 1941.

“We are still alive, the country is still going, and we are free,” said Pinell.

###

VA Manchester Healthcare System is part of the VA New England Healthcare System which includes eight medical centers, located in the six New England states. Manchester VA is comprised of one main campus located in Manchester and four community-based outpatient clinics located in Conway, Portsmouth, Somersworth, and Tilton. The Portsmouth outpatient clinic is located at Pease Air National Guard Base.

Photographs and Captions:



On September 13, 2023, Alfred Pinell shares his appreciation for receiving a personal letter and coin from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough at his residence in Kittery, Maine. (Photo: PAO Lori Flynn, VA Manchester Healthcare System)



Picture L to R: Kevin Forrest, Denise Palumbo, Robert Palumbo, Alfred Pinell (seated), Anthony Parolisi, Susan Parolisi, and Terry Dubois

World War II Veteran Alfred Pinell (center, seated) is surrounded by family and friends during a presentation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on Sept. 13, 2023, to honor his military service and 100th birthday with a personal letter and coin from VA Secretary Denis McDonough presented by Manchester VA Medical Center Director Kevin Forrest in Kittery, Maine. (Photo: PAO Lori Flynn, VA Manchester Healthcare System)