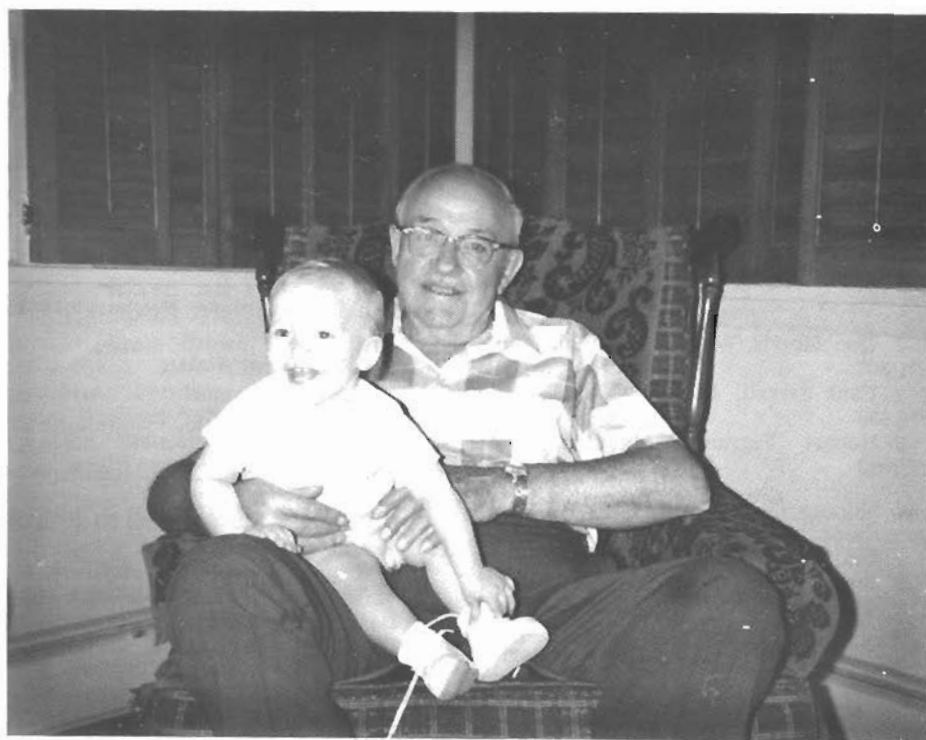


John A. DeLance - - Alaskan Scout



The late John DeLance, Alaskan Scout of World War II and his great-grandson, Donnie

John Arthur DeLance was a modest man. Although he likely was the only really deaf person to serve in the U.S. Army, rising through the ranks from private to first lieutenant, he rarely talked about his unique service record. In fact, it wasn't until after his death, September 25, 1974, at Mundelein, Illinois, that his widow, Barbara, learned all the details. After learning she was eligible for a pension as a widow of a veteran, she started probing into his military record and discovered he hadn't bothered to have many of his military papers filed with the State of Illinois. Recently, to her complete surprise, she received a Presidential Citation, signed by President Gerald Ford and honoring DeLance's service in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

DeLance was six years old and living in North Dakota when spinal meningitis robbed him of all his hearing. Transferring to the State School for the Deaf at Devils Lake, DeLance graduated with honors and was awarded a scholarship to Gallaudet College. After a year at college learning printing, DeLance entered the trade as a linotype operator, working for such publications as the *Duluth Herald* and *Fargo Forum*.

When the war broke out, DeLance tried to get in the service but was turned down as physically unfit. So he tried the next best thing: With the help of

a former employer, he signed up as a civilian employee working on a Navy Salvage Corps repair ship. The ship was soon on its way to Alaska. As DeLance once told it, "I got in the good graces of our superintendent and when he was later appointed a major to lead a group of scouts on Attu Island, I wormed my way into his party. We were assigned to 'Headquarters Intelligence' and known as the Alaskan Scouts. I was with them 36 months."

Before the war ended, DeLance had seen duty in Russia, Burma and India. His outfit transported bombs in C54 cargo planes in the Army Air Transport Corps, and he was sole survivor of a crew of four when his plane was shot down over the southern tip of Russia and was hospitalized for eight months.

How did he do it? In the same interview, DeLance chuckled: "I had men working under me for eight months before they learned I was deaf. I was a good lipreader."

After the war, DeLance moved to Diamond Lake, Illinois and prior to his death was working as maintenance foreman at St. Mary of the Lake School. Besides his widow, he is survived by two sons, John, Jr., and Robert, two granddaughters and two great-grandchildren. Barbara, who is hard of hearing, formerly was employed as a credit analyst for Carson, Pirie Scott, Chicago.

Hazards Of Deafness

By ROY K. HOLCOMB

403. Even when understanding nothing you often nod your head when others talk to you. Others often nod their heads when you talk to them although they, too, understand nothing. What actors we mortals try to be!

404. You have some idea of sounds but find it most difficult to grasp their meaning. You have some idea how the greyhound dog at the racetrack must feel when it can't catch the rabbit.

405. You go to a drive-in restaurant. For fun, you try to place your order through the intercom from your car. You order two french onions, two cheeseburgers, two vanilla milkshakes. You get two french fries, two hamburgers and two large Cokes.

406. You are always being reminded by people how lucky you are to be deaf and not blind. While you agree, you don't like the way people keep reminding you of it. Sometimes you feel like telling them how lucky they are that they are neither blind nor deaf.

407. Your kids hear and they never let you forget with their radio, stereo, TV volume on full blasts, telephone and other gadgets. You don't mind very much although at times you may wish they would share their world with you a little bit more. After all, you gave them life as well as purchased their gadgets for them.

408. Your mother tells something interesting. Your brothers and sisters get excited. You want to get excited, too, but can't because you didn't understand what was said. You ask your mother. She says that it was not important or that she will tell you later. If she does tell you later, you indeed find it nothing to get excited over as she does not tell her thing in the same manner as she told it the first time.

409. You are making love. Sweet words of love cannot be heard by you. Tender thoughts of love cannot or joy go unsaid. But then actions speak louder than words and perhaps words are not needed when making love??

410. You go to an air line booth to purchase a ticket. Your clerk moves to another booth. He asks you to move there, too, but you are unaware of his request and remain at the original booth. The clerk then waves you over and you are embarrassed as your mother and your teacher always told you never to use your hands in public to communicate and here, of all people, a hearing man is doing it.