



## John Joseph Hinchliff

July 8, 1921 - November 17, 2020

John J. Hinchliff, 99, most recently of Robbinsdale, MN, passed away peacefully from complications of COVID-19 on November 17, 2020. Preceded in death by his wife, Muriel Hinchliff (nee Claflin), son, Kevin (Pat) Hinchliff, and granddaughters, Megan Hinchliff and Ann Wright. Survivors include his four children: Sherrill Ostergren (Wayne), Jon Hinchliff (Cindy), Timothy Hinchliff (Pam), Jacqueline Evers (Patrick), 9 grandchildren, and 9 great-grandchildren.

John grew up in Park Rapids, MN. He joined the National Guard at age 16. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he volunteered for service with the newly forming Airborne Corps. Before leaving for Europe, he married the love of his life, Muriel, in 1943. After discharge from the Army in 1945, he settled in Minneapolis where he and Muriel raised their 5 children.

John was a long-time member of Teamsters Local 546 serving as Vice President of his Local. He retired in 1984. After his military service, he was a life-long member of the 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association. John was an avid sportsman.

John's exploits during World War II are legendary. He served as a machine gunner with the 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment, earning three Bronze Stars. He was awarded the French Legion of honor. John fought with

distinction, parachuting into Normandy the night before D-Day. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He participated in Operation Varsity, a daring daylight jump into Germany and the largest Airborne operation in history. His heroics played a part in many books, articles, and recordings. He was featured in several documentaries including "D-Day Down to Earth: Return of the 507th" and Tom Brokaw's Dateline NBC episode "Eyewitness to History." His story has been preserved by the Minnesota Historical Society and remains on display at the Minnesota History Center as he narrates his D-Day experience inside a C-47 exhibit. John was the LAST surviving member of the 2,004 men of the 507th who parachuted into Normandy on D-Day.

To his family and friends, John was larger-than-life, a true hero of World War II, and an exemplary member of the greatest generation.

# Cemetery Details

## **Epiphany Cemetery**

10955 Hanson Boulevard  
Coon Rapids, MN 55433

# Tribute Wall

FA

“ I read about Mr. Hinchliff's heroism during World War Two especially winning the French Medal of Honor in the book *Graignes* by Gary N. Fox. Also, he received a letter of commendation from former 82nd Airborne Division Commander, James Gavin. I also read the book by Stephen G. Rabe's *The Lost Paratroopers of Normandy*. His bravery, heroism and conduct is a great example of how paratroopers fight.

*Heroes like him makes me proud of my 82nd Airborne Division Legacy as a paratrooper. RIP Sir, Airborne All the Way and "Down To Earth"!!*

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**Felix Alicea** - November 28, 2022 at 01:45 PM

HI

“ I was John's neighbor in NW WI, and he shared many stories about his military service and the love of his life, Muriel, with me. He and his brothers-in-arms are Great American Heroes, and we need to honor and remember them.

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**HARM WEBER III** - January 20, 2021 at 07:25 PM

JL

“ I met John a couple of years ago while he was still living in Danbury, WI. The Burnett County VSO invited me , a Vietnam War Airborne veteran, to go meet John. Upon entering his home and after a short introduction, John brought out a bottle of brandy and was ready to pour a shot. I said no thank you. John piped up and said, “ what the hell is the matter with you?” I said that I haven’t had a drink in over 25 years. We all had a good laugh. To me , John was a heck of a guy. His legend will live on.

*Old paratroopers never die . They just slip away.  
RIP John. Airborne All The Way!!*

*Sincerely, John and Mary Lesniak, Siren, WI*

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**John Lesniak** - November 27, 2020 at 12:10 PM

SO

*Thank you so much! Bye, Daddy! Love you so much!*

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**Sherrill Hinchliff Ostergren** - January 04, 2021 at 09:40 PM

TH

*I was not able to attend the funeral due to COVID, but I toast my Dad pretty much every day and remember him for who and what he was; a good guy with a great sense of humor, a loving father and grandfather, and a very loving husband to my Mom. He is at rest now and I would advise the Almighty to try and not tee him off.  
Love you, Dad!*

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**Timothy Hinchliff** - May 29, 2021 at 10:41 AM

JE

“ It was a great Honor to get to meet John just a couple of years ago a person everyone should Honor and look up to and the perfect example of what a GREAT AMERICAN HERO IS, and one of a kind as I am sure the mold has been broken, you would love the man within minutes of meeting him you knew what kind of a Man he was and you knew where he stood there were no grey areas with John and you would feel like you have known him your whole life. We all owe him a great deal, the one and only JOHN, Love Jim and Vickie

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**Jim Evers** - November 20, 2020 at 05:26 PM