

Last winter I was living in an RV in a parking ramp under the freeway. I paid for the parking space: \$30 a month. It was warm when I had the propane heater going, but I'd run out of propane.

After five months of living in those conditions I went to Veterans Outreach because I was really getting desperate. It was -14 degrees the day I walked over there using my walker. They called Brandon [St. Stephen's Street Outreach Worker] and he took me over to St Stephen's Shelter and they let me stay there with Puffy for two weeks until Brandon got me into this senior apartment.

I served on a Destroyer in World War II—I was the lookout on the bridge. I was in thirteen battles in the Asiatic Pacific Campaign. I signed up for the service even though I could've gotten a farm deferment because I was working on a farm at the time, making good money, too. I was on that ship for 3½ years and never had a shore leave.

They say I have post traumatic stress and survivor guilt. I was depressed, anxious. And I was a drunk. I'd seen too much combat. I was in a bad mental state when I got home but they refused me disability. I felt useless, like what I had done in the service was useless.

I never cared too much whether I lived or died, but since I got Puffy I care. I've had Puffy for five years. I stopped by the dog pound, not intending to buy a dog, but that Puffy was barking. He said, 'Take me home! Take me home!' I just love him. He helps me mentally and I don't get lonely.

Senator Wellstone helped me get 50% disability. Then after the *Star Tribune* wrote about me and Puffy in the RV the Veterans gave me full disability. That's after sixty-some years of doing battle with them.

The best thing about living here is my view—I look at the church across the street all the time. I have a problem with crowds, so I just say my rosary by the window and it's just like being in church.

Ed



*St. Stephen's **Street Outreach** connects with people living outside in Minneapolis. The Street Outreach hotline is a first contact for people in need (or people concerned for them) and provides a more effective social service connection than a law enforcement response.*



Ed and his dog, Puffy, and Ed with a photo of the Destroyer on which he served in WWII.

Opposite page: Ed and Puffy after arriving at St. Stephen's Shelter.

