

W. Robert Nolan  
Army Veteran of World War II  
Central Intelligence Agency and Army Reserve officer during the Cold War

W. Robert Nolan, a Rochester native now living in Fairport, served his country in two distinct yet both vitally important ways. During the Second World War, he served with the 104th Infantry Division, the Timberwolves. After his wartime service, Mr. Nolan also spent decades in the service of the Central Intelligence Agency.

During his wartime service with the Timberwolves, Mr. Nolan landed in France a few months after D-Day. He then travelled through Belgium on his way to the Netherlands, where his division was hailed as the "liberators of Holland." They later saw heavy combat in Germany. In his memoirs, Mr. Nolan writes of coming under attack near the village of Franhoven, where 88mm shells seriously injured two of his comrades -- one of whom lost a foot -- who he had to drag them out of the line of fire and back to seek medical attention. For his heroism under fire, he received the Silver Star.

Later, Mr. Nolan volunteered for a dangerous mission going solo across the Roer river, to test its depth, speed and firmness of the bottom for a later combat excursion. Under the cover of a heavy artillery barrage, he crossed the river, checked the conditions for climbing over the bank on the other side, and returned. Although Mr. Nolan did not receive the bottle of cognac and vacation pass to Paris he'd been promised, he later received the Bronze Star for the dangerous solo mission.

After the war, Mr. Nolan spent decades in intelligence work, living with his family in Germany in the 1950s and Vietnam during the war. In the late 1970s, he was the CIA representative to the National Military Command Center. Although his work in the intelligence community can't be elaborated on with specifics, Mr. Nolan spent decades helping to keep the United States safe from its Cold War adversaries. He also served as an Army reserve officer, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

For his service in the Second World War and during the Cold War, Mr. Nolan deserves our state's gratitude and respect. His addition to the Veterans Hall of Fame honors not only those soldiers who helped defeat the Axis powers, but also the many intelligence agents who served on the front lines of the Cold War, and whose heroics and sacrifices must out of necessity often remain unsung.