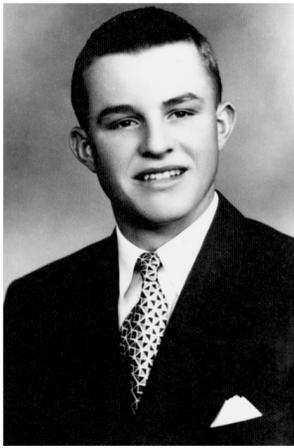


Back: Ray Walder coach, Roland Valentine, Allan Eich, Pete Petersen, William Richards, Jack Mohr, Duane Monson, Wayne Vennink, Larry Gillespie head coach
Middle: Richard Mullenax, Willis Kruse, Dick Zerwas, Roger Nielsen, Roger Vollstedt, Deanes Rowedder, Russell Spies, Larry Kasperbauer
Front: Gary Nady, Fredric Dethlefsen, Merlin Ramsey, Robert Neubaum, Art Zerwas, Richard Rix, Alan "Goose" Vennink, Claus Bunz, Lowell Stribe, Kenneth Graves, Raymond Christensen



Allen "Goose" Vennink remembers:

"Larry was a tough man. During practice he wouldn't have any pads on and he would tell us "hit me, hit me." Larry wanted his players to never be afraid of tackling people. "We didn't have a very good season that year, until we played against Manilla."
Manning was in the Coon Valley Conference...
Before the Manilla game, during the last period of the school day, Coach Gillespie and the players practiced their plays on the south side of the old high school where the Senior Center and Rec Center parking lot is located now.

Allen remembers telling coach Gillespie "We're going to win this game." Coach asked, "How do you know this?" Allen replied, "I'm playing against my former teammates - when I was in junior high I went to Manilla School, and now I'm playing against them in high school." Allen attended Iowa No. 7 country school through the eighth grade and then attended high school in Manning. Manilla's Coach George Garber came to the Vennink farm the summer before Allen entered ninth grade...Garber was trying to recruit Allen to come to Manilla. Allen would have been required to walk a mile over to Ray Ehlers' corner to ride the Manilla bus to school. Allen's dad told the coach, "nope, my son is in the Manning district and that is where he is going to school."

Manilla was undefeated for the year... "We were tied up, 14 all." Going into the last quarter Manning had to punt to the south goal and had Manilla pinned back on the 10 yard line. Allen said to Gary Nady: "they're going to be coming our way on an end run." Gary and Allen provided some interference so the Manilla runner fumbled, and Allen recovered the football. With only about 10 yards to go the Bulldogs scored to win the game.

Allen's dad commented that the Manilla fans driving back home seemed like they were in a funeral procession - driving so slowly.

Some of the Manilla players were Franklin Akers at quarterback, Morey Akers and Larry Hansen halfbacks, Gary Conlin fullback, Dick Saunders played in the line, Wayne Steckelberg, Roland Grage, Pete Richey.

Allen remembered a number of the farms kids on this Manning team were only able to come out for football in 1951 (their senior year) so they didn't have much experience. Their dads wouldn't allow them to participate in sports previous years, but if they would have been able to come out earlier they would have had more experience and there would have been a tougher defensive Manning team.

Apparently Coach Gillespie didn't think the Manning boys blocked very well during the Glidden game so the next Monday coach made Allen Vennink, Lowell Stribe, and the defensive team practice on the blocking dummy. Coach Walder and Gillespie were behind the dummy and made the players practice until they were bruised and worn out.

Ray Walder was the assistant coach. Allen remembers how well he could punt - "It would spiral every time - I don't know how he did it." Ray played college football before coming to coach at Manning.

Allen joked at the end of the interview: "I must have been a bad boy player because I had a different coach each year, first Bill Steneker, then Larry Gillespie, and lastly Kermit Tannatt."

Allen remembers Tannatt was very good at softball. "He was a lefty and pitched for the Manning town team."



Betty Gillespie with their daughter, Shelley, who came to Manning too.

**November 15, 1951 Manning Monitor
Manilla's Hopes for Perfect Grid Season Broken by Locals
Bulldogs Upset Dope Bucket By Trimming Hawks
Loss Was Manilla's First in Nine Games; Loop Crown to Guthrie Center**

Coach Larry Gillespie's Manning Bulldogs wrote a glorious finish to the gridiron performance this season by trimming heretofore undefeated Manilla Hawks 21 to 14 in the season's last game here Friday night in a Coon Valley loop game.

Manilla's club had waded through eight opponents during the year with comparative ease, including Odebolt and Avoca, two undefeated clubs until they met the Hawks. By virtue of this defeat, Guthrie Center with a 4-0 loop mark, succeeds Manning as conference champions the first year they are members of the league.

Powerful Eleven

The game Friday was a keyed-up affair and the Hawks, led by Delmar Kloewer and Jerry Conlin were definite favorites in the climax game of the 1951 year. The visitors represented one of the finest clubs Manilla has produced in several years and Coach George Garber has done a commendable job tutoring his lads into a precision, powerful and dangerous eleven.

Difference between the two teams was Manning's aerial blitz that clicked throughout the night with passes from Roger Nielsen to Deanes Rowedder setting up all three crossings.

Manning took the kickoff and paraded cross-field to score with the game only a few minutes old. Aided by a five-yard penalty against Manilla, the Bulldogs had a first down on the 12. Rowedder's clip to

Nielsen was good to the 1, from where Nielsen slipped through the line to score and Rowedder's educated toe booted his first of three conversions during the evening.

Conlin Tied Score

Manilla came right back with Kloewer and Conlin alternating to advance through Manning. Conlin's out-of-bounds race after catching a pass put the ball on Manning's three, from where he crossed and Kloewer converted to knot the score.

On the next kick-off, Manilla held and took possession on their own 42, from where they started another parade cross-country that eventually resulted in their second and last touchdown of the evening as Kloewer crossed from the three. Conlin converted to have the score read 14-7 for the Hawks at the half.

Manning's second tally came after Nielsen's ball-tossing ease found passes good for 40 and 20 yards. Roger Vollstedt slid over from the one in the early fourth period and Rowedder again converted to present a stalemate at 14-all.

After a see-saw affair, with Manning's defensive ability holding the Hawks, the Bulldogs had possession late in the period and once again Nielsen flipped the locals into scoring position. He counted the clincher himself on a 10-yard gallop with about a minute left.

The clean, hard-fought contest was Manning's best of the season. After winning only from Bayard and Coon Rapids, the Bulldogs had an unimpressive record until the Manilla contest closed. Defensively, the locals were in fine fettle, Claus Bunz, Allen Vennink, Willis Kruse, Nielsen and Vollstedt were shining marks.

Manilla closed a brilliant season with a defeat that takes little away from their capabilities. Kloewer, sensational sophomore Hawk, lived up to expectations, as did Jerry Conlin. Linemen who sparked the Hawks were Steckelberg and Akers.

Seven seniors who played their last game for Manning included Deanes Rowedder, Roger Nielsen, Gary Nady, Kenny Graves, Fred Dethlefsen, Allen Jensen and Raymond Christensen. Fans were heartened by the play of linemen since practically all will be back next year.

Score by quarters:

Manning 7 0 0 14 21

Manilla 7 7 0 0 14

Scoring: Manning touchdowns, Nielsen 2, Vollstedt. Points after touchdowns, Rowedder 3 placements. Manilla: Conlin and Kloewer, touchdowns; Extra points, Kloewer placement and Conlin plunge.



Claus Bunz remembers:

I certainly remember Larry. I found him to be an excellent coach and person. And, yes, he was a WWII veteran. As a junior, I remember when we played Manilla in football. Manilla had an excellent team that year. However, we were able to defeat them. I am not sure of the score but it was somewhere in the vicinity of 21 to 14.

What enabled us to win the game was the defense Larry devised. Manilla had a strong ground attack with very little, if any, passing. Larry devised a defensive scheme whereby we went with a five man line and four line backers. On each play we were on the defense, the line would slant one way and the line backers would slant the other way, thus completely filling up any possible running lane.

I remember when we defeated Manilla the entire team, along with many others, went to Larry's home which I believe was on First Street and celebrated with him and his wife on their lawn. It was quite a night.

I believe we were all very sad when Larry did not come back to Manning for a second year. However, as I recall, he was offered a position at another school which he could not afford to turn down. In any event, his leaving was a great loss.

Claus Bunz alluded to the fact that Larry Gillespie is a WWII Veteran. As soon as I found out I contacted Marty Gillespie to see what he had for pictures and information. At the time of this feature, I continue to work with Marty and Larry for more military information and pictures which will then be added to his story in the Manning Veterans' history book.

Some people may wonder why Larry would be included in the Manning book since he only lived here in Manning for one year and really has no other family ties to Manning.

As I have previously explained in many Manning articles, the qualifications to be included in the Manning book is to have a Manning connection and living here in Manning for one year is considered a connection.

Below is an overview of Larry's military history, including two pictures.

After the 1942 Missouri Valley high school football season, Larry accepted a football scholarship to Arizona State. He was drafted before he was due to report in the spring.

Larry was sent to Camp Roberts in California in January 1943 for basic training.



He was then sent on to Arizona State where he was in the ASTP program while enrolled at ASU. Later in the spring of 1943, he joined a special forces type of outfit which was being formed at the time: the Ski Troops Division of the 10th Mountain Division.

Larry scored very high in handling the 50-caliber machine gun and was assigned as a forward machine gunner; a position that he was informed later had an average survival rate of one week.

His Ski Troops outfit shipped out from Hamton, Virginia on the USS America in fall of 1943. They landed in Naples, Italy, and they fought mostly in the Apennine Mountain area around the

Po River Valley all the way down to southern Italy. His outfit spent most of the winters of 1944 and 1945 in deep snow in the mountain regions and involved many "behind enemy lines" missions. These involved going in under cover often posing as German soldiers. They were on recon and scouting missions as well as capture missions.

Larry was awarded the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, the US Army Citation for Bravery above and beyond the call of duty by General Mark Clark, as well as marksman and sharpshooter designations.

He returned to Missouri Valley on his birthday August 23, 1945. Larry married Betty Asklund September 29, 1945, while she was teaching at Oakland, Iowa.



Larry Gillespie's grandsons ---

Tate Gillespie is Marty's youngest son, Brock - the oldest plays pro-basketball, and their daughter, Kari (Gillespie) Barbier attended Kansas.

Tate is a freshman at Navarro College (JC) in Corsicana, Texas. He played baseball and basketball at Lake Travis High School in Austin, Texas. LTHS has a storied history in athletics with many D-1 players in football and baseball as well as a number of professional athletes in both sports. Tate's teams were the winning-est baseball teams in school history and he was a shortstop and pitcher. He is pitching in college only and he has interest from MLB teams as well as a number of Division 1 programs. He chose the JC route so he would not have to wait three years to get drafted.

He was a Marucci All-American and played on the Marucci National Champion summer team in 2014. Tate is 6-3 185 and is right-handed.

Brock is in his 11th year playing professionally. He played for me at Rice University where he scored over 1,000 points and is on career lists for 3-pt FG, 3-pt FG%, and career games played. His teams had the most successful three-year run in school history winning over 60 games and going to post-season tournaments twice.

He has played in the D-League twice, in New Zealand, Spain, Romania, Japan, China, Germany, Canada, and Switzerland. Brock is 6-1 170 and is left-handed.

Larry (right-handed) played at 6-2 215 and Marty (left-handed) played at 6-4 185. Interesting thing: Larry's best sport by far was football; Marty's was basketball and baseball equally, and Larry has one grandson in basketball and one in baseball.



To the left: Coach Dennis Johnson with Brock Gillespie. Dennis drafted Brock. This photo was taken in 2007 - Brock's second season as a pro player.



Tate Gillespie, son of Marty, grandson of Larry