



HELMATE BULLETIN

Official Newsletter
of the
284th F. A. Bn. WWII

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RONNIE'S MESSAGE CENTER JOHN B. SUMMERS, 5494 ABERDOUR LN. ST LOUIS, MO. 63129
INTERNET LOCATION HLPMATE284@AOL.COM TEL. (314)845-2086
284th FA BN WEBSITE: [HTTP://HOMETOWN.AOL.COM//FABN284/INDEX.HTML](http://HOMETOWN.AOL.COM//FABN284/INDEX.HTML)

Greetings, Helpmates,

Last issue went down great. Got it off on the 26th, a day earlier than I expected. I had hurried a bit, because I wanted to get to Florida as soon as I could. Daughter told me that there is a bunch of travel congestion on the holiday, and she certainly was correct. I got into a line outside the airport terminal that took me 2 hours to finally get to the ticket people. It didn't matter, tho. There was no room in the inn. I will try again, probably Sunday.

I went down on Friday, 28th, and had a nice trip on American. Then I started waiting for my brother to pick me up. He didn't show for about an hour, and I knew something had gone awry. And it had. On his way to pick me up, he went via I4, and that is a treacherous hiway. He rear-ended an auto on the hiway, and got a traffic ticket, and had to get another auto, and picked me up. To make a long story a little shorter, the car was totaled, and my stay in the lovely state was regulated by an insurance company who asked that I keep them notified as to my location, and availability. The accident was placed with my insurance co., and I was the responsible party. No one was hurt to any degree, but a seat belt rub was complained of in the accident.

Got a new auto from Enterprise, a Mercury Sable, and it had 1403 miles on it. It was a good car. Drove nicely, and had a lot of good features. The new car I got just 5 weeks ago was a Mercury Grand Marquis, so it was a lot like driving that car.

As I related, I had to let them know when and where I was located, and this was a bummer. Kept me locked in, so to speak, as they lumbered along with the logistics of a typical auto accident. They had told me that the car may be totaled, and about 10 days later this

fact was substantiated, and I drove to Lakeland to reclaim all the personal stuff in the auto. The car did not look like a total job, but I suspect that the adjuster did not know that. It was then cast in stone, and I had to call home to get the title of the auto, and all that stuff. I got a lecture from my former patient, and my present insurance agent, in capital letters. They did not like to insure my car if other people were driving it, or words to that effect. So much for that part of the trip. UGH!!!!

On Feb. 3 a group of Helpmates met at the Pappas Restaurant in Tarpon Springs for a luncheon, and to celebrate my 79th birthday. Bill and Marian Hartley, George and Dorothy Ralcewich, Marge and Ray Crismond, Mel and Betty Donaldson, and yours truly enjoyed several hours of good food, and very good company. All seemed to be in good health, and not many problems were put on the table for discussion. Marian was mad at poor Bill Hartley, because he had her take a rather long way around to get to the lunch, but she is going to let him live—for now. Bill no longer drives, and it is lucky for him that he has a neat chauffeur to dray his ancient body around. There were very few health complaints discussed, and most of the group is happy in their present situations. We left the luncheon after planning a possible repeat visit before the snow birds leave for the frigid north.

Did not reach several of the regulars on this odd visit. Jeep Rafeld was absent on the 2 times I called him, and on my trip to say HI to Martha Ellis, her car was not readily visible and I got no answer to my knock. I had bad luck on Paul Martin last visit, and this trip was so short that I didn't get to contact him.

Turned my rented car in on schedule, and

arrived OK in St. Louis last Monday, and got back home to a stack of mail.

On the 27th, I got a call from Pat Maier. He had called to apologize for a missing greeting, as he had not placed a stamp on the card. He has had recent surgery to clear up some medical problems, and at present is in good medical condition. He is not sure about the next reunion, but will certainly give it a try if at all possible.

Received a letter from Donald Dawes, and it was full of bad news. Harry "Rudy" Prince passed away on Jan 24, 2002 at Williamsport Hospital. Norma, who writes the letter, tells me that Bill Hartley would fill me in on the details but Bill didn't mention it at the luncheon. Harry was buried the following Monday in Jersey Shore Cemetery.

Norma also included a note regarding our member, Les Smith, from Ohio. She tells me that Les died a few years ago, and his widow, Doris, is now in a nursing home with Alzheimer's Disease. This is another of our group gone forever.

Thanks Norma, for the note. We expect more and more of the bad stuff in the future. I will continue to report, as Ron did. As long as I am able.

I received one of the bulletins (#01-6) sent to William Shelton, Memphis, as a "Returned—Not Known". If anyone is in touch with Shelton let him know that we need a new address if a bulletin is to be sent.

And still another bulletin was returned with a note that Ken Matlock is deceased. What a bad start for 2002. Life goes on.

And the latest bulletin with an expired forwarding order notation was returned from Chris Eliot. I know several people are in touch with Chris, so if you will let him know that his address has to be changed, I would appreciate having that info.

The Olympic Winter Games for 2002 have begun. The opening ceremonies were quite impressive, extravaganza quality. Seems like a super place to have the winter games. Salt Lake City used to be such a clean city. Hope it has retained that quality.

I have the final word now on the next reunion. It will be held at the COMFORT INN, in

Livonia, Michigan. It will be held from Sept. 10—13, and reservations are to be made before August 20, 2002. Mel Donaldson is hosting the meeting, and he has reserved 15 rooms, with 10 more available in reserve. The room rate will be \$59.00 plus tax, and we will have a meeting room in which soft drinks and snacks will be available. A Continental breakfast will be served daily.

**ADDRESS: COMFORT INN LIVONIA
29235 BUCKINGHAM DR.
LIVONIA, MI 48154**

Telephone #: 1-734-458-7111

**Please register under the group name
284TH FIELD ARTILLERY**

There are 3 restaurants within walking distance, and many others are within a mile.

Anyone who plans going into Canada MUST HAVE a Valid Birth Certificate, and picture ID.

There are 3 Casinos in the Detroit area, 10 miles +/- from the motel.

I will print up a registration form in several of the future bulletins to make it easier for you to get your registrations in early.

I am going to include the Obit announcement for our member, Harry Prince on the last page of this issue, and also an article which John Wasilewski found on the internet concerning one of our steady members. I had intended putting the latter in the last bulletin, but in my rush to finish the issue, it got laid aside. Could happen again, knowing my past history.

Not much news circulating right now. I am to get a phone call from a missing member this PM and I am anxious to welcome him into the group.

I just received notice that our bulk mail permit is about to be vacated. I am sending out about 170 bulletins at this time, and I pay about 26 cents apiece for the mailing. The minimum is 200 articles, so I pay about \$53 per mailing, and it about breaks even. I can put a small box on the front of the bulletin which declares this to be a bulk mail article, and I do not have to put a stamp or anything more on it. I will not have that bit of easy labor hereafter, if I let the permit go bye-bye. I will give it some thought, a little of my high school arithmetic, and make a judgment. My plans are to send out fewer bulletins, and to try to coax a bit more news from the

guys, and see if that works. It gets to be a narrative of my activities, and I would rather print NEWS, and what I am up to.

I just finished talking with a brand new member of the 284th whose son stumbled onto our website, and contacted both John Wasilewski and myself, for information about the unit. He is Ed Rafferty, one of the Service Bn. Members who has not had contact with any of us since his discharge. His son does the computing for the family, and he was delighted to find the super website which John W. manages. He printed out some of the good stuff which John has put on the site, and made arrangements to call me using E-mail to coordinate the efforts.

Ed asked about Denk, Capt. Williams, and several other men, all of whom were dead. We had a nice long talk, chiefly about his good fortune in locating our spot on the web. I will send him a roster, and put him on the mailing list. His son is well versed in computerese, and I am sure he will be able to get a few past Bulletins to print up for his dad.

We are always glad to get new faces into the fold, and I am so glad to welcome Ed into a close knit, loyal group of old soldiers. We win the war again at each reunion.

I got an E-mail from Ruth Williams with a note that she had come across some of Dick's maps from the war, and could I use them. Of course, I am always trying to keep an accurate record of our goings on, and I hoped that it would contain accurate records of our travels. They were maps of Germany and France, but no data at all was recorded on them, so I am in the process of trying to trace our route, and it is very difficult, indeed. I will bring them to the reunion, and maybe the group will be able to make this effort more fruitful. Thanks so much, Ruth. She has other things to go thru but wants to wait until the kids can select some material which may interest them. If any of the widows find such "booty", do not dispose of it. We can find somewhere to save it.

Our winter weather has been extra mild. We have had few days where the weather stayed below freezing for any length of time. We are in a very rainy week here in St. Louis now, but we did need some rain. We are over a foot

short in the snow category, and certainly will not be able to catch up on that much snow. Personally, I like snow. It is pretty on the landscape, it filters the air as it falls, and all the dust and smog it brings down washes into the sewers.

If any of you folks keep the forms I give to you each reunion up to date, on our "Travelogue" the town listed as Dusel needs to be changed to KUSEL. John W. made this change in the website, and altho there are other spots whose names are misspelled, I could find similar towns as I searched for our route. My juvenile memory of those days is far from accurate. I will bring the maps which Capt Williams had during combat to the reunion, and we can work together to piece in the locations we occupied.

The big rains predicted for our area turned out to be big drizzles. It just cleaned the roads of the mud which has been terrible while they build in this subdivision. They have built over half of those planned, and the disruption has been minimal. Of course, mine was one of the first ones built, and it has been nearly 2 years of occupation for me.

Well, my new blue car is about 3 months old, and I have just under 600 miles on it. You can see how much traveling I do. But it is comfortable, seems safe enough for my aging bones, and gets me around in good comfort, so what else do you need? Am going to have to get another one for Florida, and I will not be as expensive on that one. I really like having a car when I go south. You can pretty much do what you want, when you want when you have wheels.

My plan is to finish this page, and if any news shows up, another one, then put a few clippings on the inside of the back cover, and get this on the way. I have decided to drop the bulk mail permit. It is more expensive than regular mail, as I have to pay for 200 mailings, even if I use only 179. I will try to con my way into paying first class by using a box on the address page, as I can do with bulk.

