



HELPMATE BULLETIN

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of the
284th F. A. Bn. WWII

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Greetings, Helpmates,

Well, each time the sun goes down something pops up to remind me that in spite of all that I can do, my body, and my brain, begins to lose a little of it's capacity to always do good. I got the last issue out almost exactly when I had planned to do the mailing, and that is the good news. Several small glitches occurred, tho. I hope nobody noticed that our grand and glorious group got a new name on the front page. It is now 'HELMATE", at least it was last month. It may have been the same for months, but I did not notice it.

I also noticed a misused word in the text. I put a spelling corrector on the job, but it will not correct context, or any other use of a word as long as it is spelled correctly as another one. In other words, I might write that "Jim got hit with a can", and it would not raise a flag, but I meant that "Jim got hit with a van". Oh, well, don't get old. Sometimes you get odd. And it won't hurt Marion H. to dray Bill around if she just doesn't drag him.

Now for some really bad news. Just as I had finished the last issue copied, I received word from George Ralcewich that Moe Sweetgall had died. He had been in the hospital, and was transferred to an extended care facility, and had fallen, and was unable to be resuscitated. He had not been in good health for several months, and was not able to participate in any of the gatherings in the recent past, with the exception of one in which the folks went to his area of Sarasota. His arrangements were made, and he was returned to New York for his burial. Moe will be missed. He had changed so little in all those 58 or 59 years that it was remarkable. He and Janet were a steady part of the West Coast Regiment, and we so much appreciated his company, as long as we did.

And a day or so later Ray Crismond E-mailed me that another of our steadies on the west coast had also passed away. Charles Cody had been in bad health for a long while, and got progressively worse, and expired. I hope that Ray will pass on some of the details on this to me, and I will put it in the newsletter as soon as I get it.

I have sent letters to both of the families, and expressed our sympathy, and included a small memorial for our departed members. I am afraid that there will be many more of these in the future.

I received an address correction for Henry Curran. His correct address is:

R.R. 1, Box 1D, Apt. 4
Versailles, IL 62378

Joseph Summers was put on our letter list when his mother died, and I had a wrong locate for him. He lives at:

58 Main St. Apt 9
Little Ferry, NJ 07643-1544

I received a "NOT KNOWN" bulletin from one of our Memphis members, James Shelton. If any of you are in touch with him, let him know that I need an address, or he is history.

John Wasilewski is in the process of making a few cosmetic changes to the website. He is unable to put on some things which would be nice, but we have only so much free space there, that we must be practical, as well as well meaning. I noticed that just under 700 people have visited our spot since the new speedometer was put in place there. I have heard from several of our group who have connected there, and really enjoy it.

Now, I have more bad news—personal type. I just got a new computer last month, and was tearing up the world with it. Well, at

least digging up, a little. To make a long story short, it quit turning over dirt. Hard drive just quit working, and when that rascal quits working, it stops the whole machine. I am unable to resurrect a thing from it, and I had the first draft of this issue thereon, and all the stuff I was carrying in my internet folder is not available to me. Well, after all, the machine was 17 days old, but I still was devastated by this turn of events. So if I miss anything, blame me for not backing up the newsletter to a floppy disk and saving it. The unit will get a new hard drive soon, and I will quit cussing it, but it leaves one very helpless when you count on the thing being dependable, and throwing the letters and notes away because you have it written in stone on your dumb machine.

It has given me a minute to look into the origin of the "HELMATE" thing, too. I keep a year of material on this computer, and as of the issue in December 1999 we were always the "Helmate" bunch. So if none of you noticed it in all that time, I guess It wasn't all my fault. I get blamed for many of the other goofs I make, but got by this time.

I have received a little mail in the last few days. Don Haaning (our Don Henning) who remembers very fondly some names which I had placed in last issue with reference to my chat with Ed Rafferty. Don was in Service, and was so glad to have met on a recent reunion with Hartley, Ralcewich, and others from his unit. He hopes to join the west coast group some time soon when he is making a winter trip down there, and he will be most welcome. Don sends a donation for Miss Kitty, and that is much appreciated. His birthday us Jan. 13, but he didn't put a year of birth.

Another note from Paul Martin included a donation for kitty. He will try to be available for future visits to Pappas, or the like. He lives just a few blocks west of Hiway 19, he tells me and would enjoy visiting. His health is fairly good at this time. Will keep this in mind, Paul. Thanks much for the donation.

Speaking of birthdays, as you may have noticed, I have omitted putting them in the newsletter for the past year or so. Some of us are living in the past, and do not want to be reminded of the fleeting years. If you would like

me to resume this, I will do so. I have most of the birthdates of the group, somewhere.

I would like the group to know that for a while I have another screen name on AOL. I have a free spot for 6 months, and I am at johnsmm1@aol.com. I got this with my new busted computer, so I have a small working interest in the industry yet. It allows me to make my HLPMATE284 account less expensive, so it makes my computer less costly as well. And son Dan has gotten his own account there now, so I will do OK, I think. I can always switch back and I intend doing that in 6 months.

I had hoped to get some of the details on the recent deaths I reported earlier, but that is not the case so far. Lots of time yet, though.

