



# HELPMATE Bulletin

## Official Newsletter

### of the

#### 284th F. A. Bn. WWII

November 18  
2002  
Issue 02-6

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Greetings, Helpmates,

Happy Thanksgiving to all. Just a few more weeks to another year start.

I received the bulletin sent to Irene Grogan back with a notation that her address was not correct. The post office is always changing the places where we get mail, but usually a slip with the correct address is attached. Not so on this return. So another one lost on our roster, and cannot tell you why. I have a program on my computer to find addresses from phone #s, but it didn't find Irene. If anyone out there is in touch, please tell her that I have lost her.

As I returned Clair Schneider to Norris, II, I picked up the boxes of copy paper which Gerry Stensberg had gotten for me from his old company connections. I sure do appreciate this, Gerry, because I use a lot of it, and it is not prohibitive in cost, but it does use up the kitty funds. It is most appreciated by the kitty, believe me. Hi to Mugs for me. Several at the reunion asked about you.

I received a note from Bill and Marion Hartley, and they reported getting home OK, and that they would try to keep in touch a little more. They also included some kitty fodder. Thanks for the dough, and for the letter.

I also got a note from Mel and Betty Donaldson with a check from the reunion funds left over. I thank you all, and will use it wisely.

Well, our St. Louis Rams have started acting like the usual St. Louis Lambs again this year. We were 0—3, and managed to lose the game with 1 second to go. Will be a long season. The quarterback fell on his right little finger, and it was fractured. That will be 6 or 8 weeks on the bench.

I received a letter from Irv Merrill who was so glad to see a second generation at the reunion. He thinks this trend should be exploited,

and perhaps even trying to get more of the widows back into our company. His thought has some merit, because after we are gone, who will even consider our unit a real entity. I would like to work on this more. Any suggestions from you all will help. Thanks, Irv. Hi to Ginny.

I received a short note from Michael Kittell, the son of Dr. Kittell, our battalion surgeon, with news that his mother, Florence, died on Sept. 8 of heart disease, and complications from a fall. I have several of the Kittells in my internet lists, and sent them our deepest condolences on their great loss.

I called Al DeMonaco to tell him of the fact, and we had a nice talk. Al's son has suffered a severe medical setback when he developed a convulsive episode and has lost his recent memory. It is being pursued, but so far nothing has materialized, and he is improving so slowly.

All else goes well in West Pittsburgh, and in spite of the fact that Minnie didn't know who she was talking with, they do better than average, Al believes. I hope that something can be found out about the medical complications in his family.

And then I called the other surviving member of our detachment, Harry Podolsky, and found him in great shape. He is in the middle 80's, is battling diabetes, and doesn't get out of the house much any more, but he and Florence enjoy life as is possible. It was good to talk with my associates from wartime. Al was our Jeep driver, and Harry was the Hq. Btry aid man.

I received an E-mail from Dr. Jim Cristol who is married to Rebecca Kittell, Dr's middle girl. I had been in touch with Jim last year

when he had planned coming to Atlantic City to join our reunion. This became impossible, but we have maintained some kind of contact by internet. I sent them our deepest sympathy, and condolences, and received their assurance that Rebecca wished to remain on our mailing list. Their address:

Rebecca Kittell  
641 Broad Acres Road  
Penn Valley, PA 19072-1510

This will be done. They will stay in touch with our group.

Michael Kittell had changed E-mail locates, so Dr. Jim Cristol sent my letter on to him. His new locate is:

mikhl@mac.com

He also wishes to stay on our mailing list. He tells me that his mother enjoyed reading of our escapades, and he greatly appreciated the condolence correspondence I sent. I had asked that they send Mimi's (oldest daughter) E-mail locate, and I am sure they will.

David Hawkins called on the 2nd, and has made a suggestion that the 2003 reunion be moved to early October. This change lets the Snowbirds go from reunion to southern locations, and I heartily agree. He is going to get inputs from his sources, and will keep in touch about any changes. I would appreciate from the membership any objections which they see to this move. The hurricane season is still active, ordinarily over just a short bit later. But as I write this, New Orleans is buttoning up to diminish the fury of Hurricane Lili, expected to hit the city hard on Thursday, Oct. 3. More on this later.

Now this is a small world. I received a brochure from David in the mail today, and it is advertising the Brent House. He has not seen the facility, but would select it as his first choice at this time. Well, I have several family member living in N.O., or nearby, and one of my nephews is on the staff at Ochsner Clinic. Brent House is a facility which accepts use by the patients families at this clinic. I have made both David and my nephew, a doctor, aware of this odd circumstance, and our road may be easier if we could take advantage of this happy turn of events. My nephew and I have exchanged E-mails, and believe that we possi-

bly can, we can get an inside track on this motel arrangement. I will keep in touch with both my nephew, and David, and will keep all informed via this means. Small world, indeed.

I have sent my nephew's E-mail to David H. and he will get back with me when he gets set up in Texas. In the meantime, he plans hitting New Orleans to look over the facility, and will not know of the inroad which we may be able to use to our advantage. I believe that my communication with David was too late before he left Wisconsin, but things will work out, I am sure.

Well, the St. Louis Cardinals took Arizona to task, and will enter the National League final games, but the poor hapless "Lambs" took another one on the chin. It looks like St. Louis has a 2 or 3 man football team, and 11 opponents do a number on them, easily.

I had told Ruth Williams that Dick's maps were enjoyed greatly at the reunion, and thanks for the gift were repeated. She answered me by E-mail that she was very glad that they were in good hands, and that if she runs across any of Dick's other mementos, she will make them available to us. It is always good to hear from Ruth. I see her on the internet often, and she is talking with her kids, her relatives of just using some extra time on line. You should try to make one of the reunions, Ruth. You and Dick were frequent visitors at our functions.

Got a quick line from Ray Crismond a few days ago. Told him that I would be down in the near future, and I will.

John W. sends news that he has been able to finish the "Lest We Forget" page of the website after much work on the area. He has been able to find some remote facts from various sources and it looks superb to me. I believe it covers all of our battalion deaths, even those which were not combat connected. Our "hit" counter is on the bum, but there were over 1000 visits up to the time it disappeared. Popular site, and very well constructed. Thanks, John.

Going down to Florida next Tuesday (15th). I will be going to the west coast first, and work on the problems I have with the mortgages now in force. I have outlived the "death expectancy" part of my trust, so have to do whatever is needed to get the odd spots situated in the body of the trust. Hard work, for me at least,

and needs changing or updating too often to suit me. I will be in touch with our members by means of E-mail, and then see them whenever possible.

I just heard from Hawkie, and he and Virginia got to see the location which they had sent brochures about. The facility is clean, has nice furnishings (including a refrigerator and coffee making equipment, is a little isolated from the touristy places, and has the possibility of a nice meeting place therein. The facility serves the hospital patients families as a main base, but also hosts small reunions such as ours. The Hawkins' did not get to meet my nephew, but the manager handled our needs, including a shuttle to the airport, in a splendid manner. They will send me more of the material discussed, and I will get it out to all of our members.

Back to the frigid north after 2+ weeks in the balmy south. Didn't see the ground on the trip back because of the weather related phenomena (dense clouds). My niece met me at the Orlando airport, and was buzzed over to get my car at her house. Did not linger there, and moved to the Lakeland area where my brother Gene lives. I had lots to do on my four remaining mobile home units in New Port Richey, so I went over to the west coast the next day. When I got there, I put all of my paper work on the realtors desk, and listened to her give me the devil for not keeping up with all of the changes which have occurred. I had to get all the mortgages changed over from joint ownership to my trust, then get the mobile titles changed from joint ownership to my trust. You get the picture. All of the problems were of my doing, or lack of doing. This took me the better part of 2 days, and I still do not know if it is being done.

Went to Crismond's house the next AM, and was greeted by Ray with news that my daughter was trying to get in touch with me. It seems that my nephew had died, and I needed to get in touch, and then stay in touch. Again, I was the bad guy. It so happened that my nephew was just being buried 20 or 30 minutes later, and was to be buried in the military cemetery in mid Florida immediately. I did get to talk with my great nephew, an MD in So. Carolina,

and his step mother, my nephews widow. They appreciated the call, and assured me that all was being carried out as Tom (my nephew) had wished. I felt badly that all of this was happening just miles from where I was, but I at least got to talk with the relatives a little.

First Ray, then Marge, beat hell out of my depressed body at our various card games. They took little, or no pity on me, but it was very good to get to be beaten by this talented crew. I was unable to get on the internet on Ray's PC, and remembered later that his numeral "4" does not work properly, and my password has a "4" in it. I called one of my daughters friends in Palm Harbor, and had an enjoyable meal which he himself prepared. His mother, and his lady friend, joined us to devour the repast, and I had a nice time while visiting. The next morning, I called Paul Martin, but caught him feeling quite poorly, so didn't chat long. While at Ray's a meeting of the west coast group was planned, and with that I drove back to brother Gene's house.

Once there, I was stunned by getting an E-mail from Nancy, telling me that my 57 year old nephew-in-law had suddenly died. He was the husband of my daughter Nancy's nearest cousin, and his death was certainly unexpected. I did what I could with this event, and got back over to the East coast. I did not get to call Jeep Rafeld this trip, and did not get a trip to the China Jade eatery unfortunately.

On my return westward, the group of Bill and Marian Hartley, George and Dorothy Ralcewich the Crismonds and myself met at one of our favorite spots, the Cracker Barrel, where we had such a nice lunch, and a lovelier chatting visit. We found out that Marian was going to have a cataract removal the next week, Bill was just as forgetful as ever, George and Dorothy were all OK, and the Crismonds were doing as well as could be expected. It was so nice to see these good people again. We discussed the upcoming reunion, and will try to help the Hawkins' get that show on the road. With that, we went our separate ways, and I went back to the East Coast.

Now folks, wouldn't it be nicer to send me some of your news, and not have to read my running account with hints of the group here

and there in the dialogue? Remember, about 5 years ago when I chastised you with the story of my family? I may have to do that again, tho. I guess that I will have to follow the suggestion of several of the group at this last reunion. Write less often. Things written weeks or months after they occur do not get reported accurately. Timely is what I try to maintain, but it is difficult to do.

Back to the drawing board. I arrived home Halloween evening, and faced a few stray kids who showered me with their same jokes and gobbled up the loot they left with. I started opening my mail, and got a rather complete story of our next reunion spot, New Orleans.

It is not written in stone yet, but it looks as if we will meet at Brent House, a facility which is connected with one of the University Hospitals. The coordinator met with the Hawkins', and showed them the facility, and also took them on several of the side tours which they recommended. This hotel hosts many military reunions, and they were very glad to offer us a very favorable rate, but would make a meeting room available to us. They comped the Hawkins room charge, and this was much appreciated. As soon as David puts his signature on the contract, I will relay more of the facts to you. It would be helpful if you could let me know which of the members will be flying in, so that we can tell the hotel when to shuttle the travelers to the hotel.

There are several Casinos in the area, and the city tour, and the WWII Normandy Memorial are suggestions for doable trips in the area. In addition, a 3 hour night cruise on the Mississippi with meal was suggested by the hotel. We will be getting final costs, and other input in the near future, and you will be informed in the bulletin of the plans.

My mail table was full of various parcels when I got back. Don Haaning had asked for a roster, and I sent him one over the internet, but his machine was unable to handle the large file required. So I will do something else for him. It is too much to put in the bulletin, and in past years I put in a double page at a time, and this confused many of the

members, so that is improbable. He is anxious to get in touch with the Hartleys, the Ralcewich family, and others in the area as they are planning a trip to the south in late January, or early February. He also was glad for the choice of New Orleans, as they get down that way every 4 or 5 years, he tells me. I thank Don for the note, and the kitty donation, and will send him a roster by mail.

Les Lenker sent a letter to report that he has begun some macular degeneration in his right eye. He drives yet, but has not gone back to Florida, as he does not want to drive that far with his problem. His wife is doing well.

Les applied for the French government certificate, and after some time received it. Said he got quite a laugh out of his efforts.

H enclosed a check for Miss Kitty for which I am thankful. He will keep in touch, but not by computer. Suspects they may not be as good as we all make them.

Thanks for the letter, Les. And thanks for the kitty food. Keep in touch.

I just received an E-mail from Harvey Smith, a steady Helpmate supporter, that he and Ann are going to relocate to the west coast. Some of their family is in that area, and they made a prolonged trip there, and will follow up on their plans to relocate there. This will happen in the middle of December, and their new address will be:

851 NW Meadowood Circle,  
McMinnville, OR 97128  
PHONE #: (503)474-1300

They no longer anticipate attending reunions, and are sorry to miss all the goodies accompanying the meetings. We certainly understand, even though I hope you will be able to make the affairs occasionally, as you could join your east coast families at these times. Harvey's E-mail address will remain HSmith4580@aol.com so the group can contact him through this means.

A returned bulletin came notifying me that our member, Harry Danneman has moved, and left no address. I anyone out there is in touch with Harry, let him know that he is among the missing for the time being, and should notify me of his new address. Harry has been a stalwart in the past, and we hate to lose touch with our regulars.

I have been assured that the next reunion in 2003 will be held Oct. 13—16. The later date is not going to change our hotel arrangements, and will allow some of the group to go directly from the reunion to their winter haunts. If this is a problem with anyone else, please make us aware of it, and we will investigate further. Our 50th reunion date was approximately the same ones, and it worked out fine.

Got a nice letter from Bob Rosen today. He just got back from one of his rejuvenating trips to the Caribbean, and had several weeks of rest and relaxation. He did his kayaking, his tennis, and even did some casino time several times a week. He spent a few days on the SE Florida coast with friends, and returned home.

Sumiko had an 18 day visit with relatives in Japan, and returned just before Bob left on the above hurricane dodge. She is sponsoring a trip to America for one of her nephews and family next summer. Bob figures this is just payback for his trips to the Caribbean. Everybody gains.

Bob had a good time at the reunion, and will in the future call his "B" battery buddies, and get some more of his battery at the reunions.

Thanks for the letter, Bob, and for the donation for Miss Kitty. T'll be used. Keep in touch. Hi to the family there. Tell Sumiko that every 10 years is not enough for Helpmate.

John Wasilewski has been in touch with me via E-mail, and he has discovered an error in the history of the 5th Rangers war activities. He found that in the Hamm segment of their history the firing was done by the 28th Field Artillery, and not the 284th. He has found some added documentation, and has contacted the author of the piece to tell him of the error. If he can make any changes in this part, the record will be correct, and we will have credit for what we did in that action. Will report further on this if the author contacts us. Thanks for the homework, John.

Just got another E-mail from John, and the author tells him that our unit is listed correctly in the original text, and that he will correct it in the internet piece. So we were still at Hamm, shooting up the world. 5000 copies of his book has been printed, and the wording is accurate in those distributed. Thanks, John.

Got a few days of Indian Summer this week. The temp got into the middle 80's, and the sky was clear as could be. I enjoyed the warmth, as I had to traipse about doing my petty chores to keep alive.

Time is sneaking up on us, and Armistice Day is rapidly approaching. The Battle of the Bulge unit which I belong to will be taking part in 2 local parades, and there is usually a goodly number of veterans present and parading. Our educational units have done remarkable work in getting the WWII message to the school kids whose teachers request this contact. In addition, they have gotten together a videotape with interviews which covers this important phase of our service. Many of the members were soldiers of the 26th Division, the unit in Belgium which received many of the personnel we lost in December, '44, I have asked several of the 26th if they remembered the 2 of our members who were killed within weeks of their transfer, but none of those I contacted had any accurate memory of the soldiers. I attend the monthly meetings of this unit, and some very interesting dialogue develops between those attending. But we always re-win the war—every time.

I am going to wait until our next reunion spot is finalized before I put information about the registration costs and procedure into the newsletter. I am going to close this one, and try to get this issue in the mail. I will send another issue before Xmas, and I would like to wish all a Happy Thanksgiving in a couple of weeks. Try to stay healthy, and try to include the next reunion into your plans. There are only a few more left, and they will be smaller and smaller, of necessity.

Write to the message center, and let the other Helpmates know what your activities may be. We are interested.

As usual

JBS

