



HELPMATE Bulletin

Official Newsletter

of the

284th F. A. Bn. WWII

December 23

2002

Issue 02-7

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Greetings all. Happy Holidays:

Of course, having printed up the last issue, I get a letter from our Helpmate, Don Haaning, known to us as Henning. He wanted some of the material I keep on hand, so that he could look up some of his buddies when he went to Florida this winter. I sent him the fillers I gave out last reunion, and he acknowledged getting the material with another note, and some kitty litter. He will be going down to Florida next February, and I hope that I may be able to hang around there to help make him welcome. Thank you for your note, Don, and for the donation.

I hope that some of you keep up with John Wasilewski's efforts on our website. He has the latest newsletter there, along with all of the internet locates of our members, and lots of other pictures, history, travelogue, etc. and believes that we have had about 2000 inquiries on the site. He also has put several thousand of his dad's, and others, pictures on a CD, copies of which I gave out at the reunion. We owe John BIG, and I want to personally thank him for the interest he has shown our group. As you may know, his dad, Ed, was the driver of the HQ kitchen truck, and took numerous pictures of our service in Europe. Ed died several years ago of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, (Lou Gehrig's Disease) after a long illness. John is one of the Judges in the Chicago Judicial System, and is doing a good job there.

Our weather has taken a turn toward the cold side. It will get into the 20's tonight, if the predictions of the forecasters prevails. And it has been rainy all day, which makes cold weather seem even more distasteful. We have been due for some inclement weather, so one shouldn't gripe too much. Wouldn't help much.

Thanksgiving is creeping up on us, and it will be a definitely good break in the mid fall sea-

son. Son David is going to furnish the place on this occasion, but lots of other help will be tendered for the holiday. I always eat too much when I go "on leave", and I really run up my blood sugar at those times. No brains.

Got my first Xmas card on the 21st. Mary Ciccone sends greetings from Pa. Nothing for the newsletter, sadly, so things are probably going fine for her. Thanks, Mary.

I am going to try to report on all the cards I receive, and pass on any info that the card contains. I will get many donations, but those will not be listed, as some request this. I have followed this plan in the past few years, and it seems to be working. The kitty is adequate at this time, so I am happy for this fact.

I received an e-mail from Rita McCready's daughter, and she reports that Rita died early this month after a long bout with cancer. I knew that George Ralcewich has been in touch, so I called the R.'s to make them aware of Rita's death. George was not home, but other than sick relatives, and the care required, things go well for them.

Got a bulletin return from Leonard Leggett, who has apparently moved. It was returned as "delivery attempted, not known". So Len has apparently moved. If anyone is in touch with Leonard, please let him know that we have lost him for the present. Let me know of his new address, please.

And Vernon Loafman has moved from Wood River, Il to Bethalto. His new address is:
523 N. Prairie St.

Bethalto, Illinois 62010-1324
His bulletin has been forwarded, and his address changed on our roster.

Got a call from David Hawkins with info that he is cleaning up our contract with Brent

House, and he will report further when that is done. He is enjoying the balmy Texas weather and is sorry to know that his Wisconsin home is in the freeze zone, or worse. He and Virginia are not traveling much at this time, but wait a minute. He keeps busy. Thanks for the call, Dave. Keep in touch.

Getting ready for Thanksgiving. We all have a lot to be thankful for this year. Lots of things stand in the way of real peace, but hopefully a dent is being made in the process. Our family will go to the suburbs, and meet at David's new home, and I will get a chance to recount the grandchildren I now have. Someone always seems to be baking a new body.

The weather has really turned cold. We were supposed to get a dusting of snow last night, but it didn't happen. I used to like snow, as it seemed to filter the smog, and deposit it in the gutters, where it was washed away. And the snow always brought cold weather with it, and that kept the folks indoors, and away from the local virus diseases which always were in vogue. It chased the kids outside, to make a snowman—totally unrecognizable—but out from under foot, and that was always good. But not this year, so far. 'Twill happen.

I received a nice card and a personal newsletter from Harv and Ann Smith in today's mail. I had just gotten the news of his move, and had reported it earlier in this issue, and he just elaborated on it a little more. It will not be happy for Harv's attending more reunions, but maybe something will change, and we can see him again. He will be able to start some mini reunions on that side of the world, as we do in Florida. But they will not have the advantage of the close proximity which we enjoy on the west coast. The best of luck with your new move, Harvey and Ann. You will enrich our far west by just being there.

I have decided not to go down to Florida for a couple of weeks at this time. There are so many things going on right now, and my group in Florida will have more to do than baby-sit me, so I will go down after Xmas, and be glad of getting down there. I have E-mailed my relatives there, so I will not be expected at this time. Maybe next year I will plan things better.

Started to go to the Glennon Hospital where

they have continuing education lectures, and almost never got started. The early snow had melted, and it left a sheet of ice beneath the 2" of snow on the ground. There is a slight hill on my street, and I slid, slipped, spun, and went up that hill an inch at a time. I go to the hospital on the Interstate, and I saw the traffic backed up on the road, and it was still 15 miles to the spot where I was going. Turned around in the nearest mall, and went back home. There were 2 accidents right at my entry road, and I was glad to forego the educational experience for this week. Stayed in all day, and I will tomorrow if the weather stays this cold. Maybe I should have gone to Florida after all. But that die is cast.

Later today my phone was so quiet that I was afraid of problems, and sure enough, while doing some digging on a foundation down the lane an enterprising laborer had chopped both the cable TV cable, and the nearby telephone cable. It still is not working. My son came to my house to see if all was OK, because he was not able to get either my phone, or my daughter's phone (who lives next door). I was calling him on the cell phone which I got for emergency use, and he was just getting to our driveways as I called. Keep family around. They help.

I received a note from Zelma Rigney with news that she is doing well. She has planned making every reunion, but something always seems to happen. Will try again next year. Good to hear from you, Zelma. Don't wait so long next time.

Lois Weary sends news that things seem to be going OK for the present. She is going to make a trip to Florida with family in December, and I know she will enjoy it. She was an active member of Helpmate's trip to Europe. She travels well.

Shirl Dawson sends greetings to all. Things go well in Virginia, and she wishes good things for all of us.

And Bob and Sumiko Rosen also send wishes to all. Bob is looking forward to his January and February trip to the Caribbean. Rather likes the warm weather better than the snow he is now getting.

The Tony Lembo family wish all good holiday happiness, and a prosperous 2003. Just the usual aging aches and pains there, I guess. No

mention of any health problems for now.

Marge and Ray Crismond wish all well, and Ray is planning a get together when the Mel Donaldson family gets down in mid-January. I will be there, Ray.

Well, last week's snow has melted, and the dust and dirt are now part of the Mississippi. Most of the very disagreeable cold has moderated, and things are getting comfortable, or so to speak. Lots of birthdays in the family, and so. I hate to be the only one who seems to be getting older.

Had an unusual experience yesterday. I went into a local pharmacy to pick up some diabetic supply thing or other, and the pharmacist on duty nearly jumped over the counter to shake my hand. It was one of my first patients whose whole family I cared for, and then his own children were under my care. Max was a good friend, and I was as glad to see him as he appeared to be at seeing me. He was a prominent druggist, had a syndicated "Ask the Druggist" TV spot, and was well liked here in St. Louis. He pushed all the simple supplies into a bag, and promised me that he and his kids were going to take me to dinner in the near future. It was good to see the rascal, and I will get to that pharmacy often, just to see Max. I often see people whom I cared for at various spots, but it's always nice to see familiar faces. I don't remember most of their names, but I nearly always know the faces, and some little background info about them.

I received an E-mail from John W. who found the website of the 5th FA Group's record in WWII. It is found at :

<http://simmins.org/Fifth/f.html>

It details our association with the 5th Rangers and the Hamm action period. The 282nd began their action with the 5th FA Group. Interesting reading, and worth a look.

I received a greeting from Jeep and Gerry Rafeld today. They are doing well, and Jeep did not mention his eye problem, so it must be stable at this time. I will have to get together with him on the trip down south. I have been so rushed on recent visits that the China Jade was neglected.

Fred Beltz's card was also in the box, and he wishes to send his best greetings to all of

the Helpmates. He does not get around too much lately, and he doesn't know how much the group misses his visits to the reunions. He is just a "Teddy Bear" to many of our group.

Dick and Rae Bozzo send greetings to all. Rae had an accident last year, and apparently all of the complications of the event have not cleared as of this time. I hope you have better luck in 2003, Rae. Keep moving. Things get better, or at least we get used to having them around.

Sunday evening I received a call from Steve Entile, the son of one of our steady members, Pat. He tells me that his dad has been in poor health, and after recovering from pneumonia earlier this year, he began showing symptoms of Alzheimers. Consultation with specialist did in fact confirm this, and he has been requiring constant supervision in nursing homes, and the like. Steve and I went over some of the good times I remember with his dad, including the trip to Europe which the family made with us. I thanked him for making me aware of the situation, and was glad when he told me that Lloyd Lage, another Aurora Helpmate, had made a recent visit with his dad.

His mother was not at home, but she called me a little later with pretty much the same story. Patricia was a nurse in real life, I believe, and knows full well the rough road which may lay ahead for the family.

Thanks for the info, Steve and Patricia. Many of the group knew Pat, and might be able to contact you with support.

Do keep in touch with us. We care.

Received card from the Donaldsons who wish all of the group happy holidays. As you may know, their oldest daughter beat up on cancer about 4 years ago, but now has a lymphoma of some type, and has a positive attitude about doing the same again. This may shatter some of their Florida plans, but first things first. They enjoyed the reunion a lot, and are planning being there on the next one.

And Charles and Ruth Zimmer send greetings to all, and a picture of fat me sitting at my computer at the last reunion. We can always count on having the Zimmer's at our functions. Stay healthy, folks, and let's plan for New Orleans.

Also received a note from the Ralcewich crew from Florida. Dorothy has been ailing a wee bit with some respiratory problem, but the warm weather, and some medical RX will beat that. George is in great shape. He is looking forward to some mini-reunion action, and wants me to hurry down.

Also heard from the Hawkins family. They have bought a double-wide unit at their digs, and their new address will have just one small change. Change the unit # from #167 to #283. The next year will be their last one in Wisconsin. They will be in Texas all the time thereafter. They invite you to visit.

I am going to send you the complete text of the New Orleans trip contract. All 4 pages will be in this issue. This seems to be a very good agenda for the reunion, and is quite economical. The D-Day museum trip was not put in the deal because some of the group may not be able to take the exercise which will be needed, and others may already have seen the display, and would not wish to repeat it. All the conditions of our meeting are spelled out in the document, and there will be no surprises, as we have had before. As usual, I would like to urge those who will be attending to register early, so that the planners, and the hotel, will know about how many to expect. They will work with us as some of the group shows up a day early, and a few stay an extra day after the reunion. I have a nephew who is on the staff of this facility, and what Hawkie wants, I will help him get. (If my nephew has any pull, that is.)

It just does not seem to be Christmas to me. I guess I am not as "into it" as I formerly was. Babe was a fanatic at this time of the year. All the kids had to be bought for, and planned for, and now they are all grown up, and have their own responsibilities. And they all are trying to take care of the old man, and make things as easy for him as possible. Must be part of the aging process. Don't - - - you know.

Today's mail brought cards from Millie Nelson, and a new address is noted. Her recent address is BOX 88, Woodhull, IL 61490. In her note she will have 2 granddaughters being married next year.

She missed the reunion because of a bad hip, and suspects it will have to be replaced. I

can think of worse things, Millie. Keep healthy and keep in touch.

And a note from Jerri Polson hopes she will be able to make the next reunion. We certainly hope so, too, Jerri. I was afraid that some problem may exist up there. I usually hear from you every 3 or 4 months.

And Harry and Florence Podolsky send holiday wishes. Harry is sort of kept in with medical problems, but he is a trooper. He followed us all thru the war with a heart murmur, and surely did keep up with the rest of us. Stay healthy, folks, and do write oftener.

I got a call from Mugs Stensberg. She allows that she talks better than she writes. Things go well in Wisconsin, and Gerry is feeling and doing well. He putters in his puttering place, and still finds time to pick up some copy paper for the many needs I have. You are reading some of your donation, Gerry. Mugs tells me that if they can possibly do so, they will go for New Orleans.

I received a greeting card from the Stensbergs today, also, and true to her word, she does talk more than she writes. They plan to visit family over the holidays, if all goes well.

Bill and Marion Hartley send greetings to all, and Marion tells me that Bill is doing tolerably well. He is to get a physical this month, so I will be able to check on that when I get down. Marion has had cataract surgery done, and can attest that it is more fun to see clearly. She had both eyes done at surgery.

The mail on the 18th brought a card from Janet Klineman, whose name I will forever be misspelling. I hear about our Sarasota adoptee from the Ralcewiches, and hope she is doing well since Moe's passing. No hint from the card, so I am going to believe that she is doing well, and is in no medical distress. Please keep in touch with us, Janet. We treasure your continued contact.

And Bill and Millie Stepanek send best wishes to all. They have the usual run of complaints, and Bill tells me that his excursions have been shorter, and fewer. He also tells me that he tried to contact Harry Danneman and finally got in touch with a daughter in Chicago. Harry died on August 11 of this year, and no further details were available. So another of "A" battery has

gone. We are concentrating.

Bill tells me that his internet address is:

williethewheel@juno.com

I will add this to my list of surfers, and try it out to make sure it is accurate.

I received a card from the Pat Maiers, and have a new address for them. It is a little on the confused side, because the zip-code on the envelope is 97303, and the zip on the card is 97301, and both are in Pat's handwriting. So I am going to use the 97303 one.

Pat (Ruth) Maier

4757 Adobe St. SE

Salem, OR 97303 (01)

No other news from the west coast, so keep in touch with us, Pat. You know the Smith family is now somewhere around.

Had a long chat with George Ralcewich on the AM of the 20th. They are in relatively good health, but ill relatives of each take up some of the available time, and the illnesses involved are not likely to improve. The weather in Florida is not the best at this moment, but in 10 minutes things will get better.

George has been trying to get in touch with Joe Molnar, and the phone # on the roster is a bit wrong. The (941) area code has been changed to (863), so make appropriate change on your own rosters. George has been in touch with Janet Kleinman, and she seems to be doing OK. Golf, doctor visits, and home calls are taking care of the waking days lately. Thanks for the call, George.

