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# HELLCAT NEWS

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NO. 3



## President's Message



The winter holidays are fast approaching. My work often takes me to England this time of year for a week or two and I get to visit the Salisbury Plain and Tidworth Barracks.

The British still maintain a tank training facility at Tidworth Barracks and there is frequently lots of activity. Large patches of mud where the tank crossing signs are posted and even an occasional tank traveling down the main streets. In the past, I have cautiously ventured down the long narrow entrance road to the main gate of Tidworth Barracks, lined with a high fence topped with concertina wire, to be met by soldiers with automatic weapons. I pulled out my Hellcat History book and some topo maps of the Salisbury Plain and asked for directions to Windmill Hill. They invited me in the guard shack and we found it on their more detailed topos. Today Windmill Hill near Tidworth even shows up on a search of the internet mapping tool, <http://www.googleearth.com>, so it's a little easier to find.

I will also be traveling again down to the port of Southampton, England, where many units of the 12th embarked on ships like the Empress of Australia to cross the channel. Down near the old town wharf, just outside massive stone walls of the old city, there is a tall stone monument dedicated to the Mayflower expedition, very close to the point where they took on more provisions and set sail for the epic voyage to Plymouth, MA, where they started a great experiment in self government in the creation of Massachusetts Bay Colony which we also celebrate this month.

At the base of this monument in Southampton is a large brass plaque put up by the people of Southampton, whose city was virtually destroyed by German bombing. The plaque commemorates and gives thanks to the two million service men and women from America who returned to England, a little over 300 years after the Mayflower departed, and sailed out of Southampton and other British ports on their way to Europe to fight in WWII to preserve our way of life.

This Holiday season I strongly encourage every family to give a gift of a *Hellcat News* email edition and an association membership, and don't forget a 12th AD Museum membership too, to a few more interested relatives: children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews etc. My guess is they are more interested than you think. It's a great communication and educational tool and especially gets the young people in school interested in learning about what happened in WWII, and the years leading up to it, so

*continued on page 3*

*Questions about the Branson, Missouri,  
August 12-15, 2009, Reunion should be addressed to:*

**vandy33@windstream.net**  
**TOM and SHARON VAN TEAM**  
**RR #2**  
**Purdy, MO 65734-9802**



## 66TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION

**George R. O'Bryan**  
**1016 Monroe, Red Bud, IL 62278**  
**618-282-6079** [geo@htc.net](mailto:geo@htc.net)

Now that the Abilene reunion is history everyone can begin to concentrate on the next one to be held in Branson, MO. We understand that you won't have any trouble finding something to do in Branson. Although we have not been there since it has become so popular, many people from this area have visited and they all recommend Branson, MO, as a wonderful place to spend some time. See you there!

We have received shocking and bad news from C/66th buddy **Steve Czecha** who reports legacy member **Stuart Weiss** passed away on Sept. 2 due to heart complications. Steve wrote, "Stuart Weiss was born in Philadelphia, PA, on May 25, 1956. He is survived by his beloved wife Tanya and daughter Jasmine."

"Stuart came to the 12th AD Museum dedication in Abilene back in October 2001. He was searching for information relating to his uncle, **Elwood W. Mondelblatt [C]**, who was reported missing in action on Jan. 16, 1945. He had been wounded and apparently died of those wounds after being taken prisoner by the Germans."

"Stuart had some help from a C Company buddy, **Robert Mancill**, who knew Elwood from ASTP Socorro School of Mines. Stuart arranged for a military funeral for Mondelblatt in Arlington National Cemetery back in April of 2003. He followed up by making a trip back to France seeking unidentified soldiers from WW2. He was assisted by Lisa Pommois, historian, in France by meeting with the mayors of Gambsheim, Herrlisheim, Weyersheim, France, and Friesttet, Germany, checking records for unidentified soldiers. Stuart was accompanied by his wife Tanya, daughter Jasmine and **Steve Czecha [C]**. Stuart video taped that trip and created a CD that is now in the 12th Armored Division Museum and the Library of Congress."

The 66th extends their prayers and condolences to Tanya and Jasmine and the Weiss family. He will be missed by us all.

Our X-POW buddy **P. W. Rice [C]** writes, "I received a most

*continued on page 3*



**66th Group, Abilene 2008: X-POW's Rich, O'Bryan, Fitts, Hoeweler and Wood seated with their families standing in the back.**



# HELLCAT NEWS

Official Publication of the 12th Armored Division Association  
1289 N. 2nd St., Abilene, TX 79601

Writers submitting articles for this publication are solely responsible for their contents, not this Association nor its Editor.

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## Editor's Comments:

**COLOGNE...KOBLENZ...MAINZ...WERTHEIM... WURZBURG...BAMBERG...NURNBERG...** Do these names sound familiar to you veterans??? Certainly they do. While you are reading this in the *Hellcat News* I will be floating 'peacefully' up the Rhine River in Germany, crossing over to the Danube on the way to Vienna, Austria.

I remember 63 years ago, as a gunner in a Sherman tank, of being at least partially responsible for the destruction of some of these major cities along the Rhine River. Today, cruising the Rhine River and the Beautiful Blue Danube River, you can never tell that the Second World War left many of these cities in real bad shape. Our Eighth Air Force helped out considerably and lost a lot of men doing it.

I ran across a little story in an old Hellcat newspaper that I am sure you will enjoy reading. The title is..... **"WHO'S OLD?"**

Remember in combat how we felt when someone bought the farm?

Sorrow and a trace of fear – fear we might be next. The next day it started all over again. The fear was still there but we did what had to be done.

All we ever thought about was getting the darn thing over with and going home. Our dreams were about what a great life was ahead of us.

It all came true.

Time has passed. Over 63 years. Now much is said about age. Or at least we seem to hear more, now that we're in our 'twilight years'.

What idiot dreamed that one up?

Although we might walk a little slower and hold the newspaper a little closer, why should we accept 'twilight'?

We never accepted our mortality when they were shooting at us. Why should we accept it now?

Twilight be damned!

Age is a gift, not a liability.

LET'S ENJOY IT!

(Author unknown)

Your *Hellcat News* editor  
John E. Critzas

**Annual Dues - 12th Armored Div. Assoc.**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\$20.00** for ALL Association Members

**\$48.00** for First Class Mail and International Mailing

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Make all checks payable to the 12th Armored Division Assoc.  
Mail to: Vanessa Harris, 12th Armored Museum, 1289 N. 2nd St., Abilene, TX 79601.

Return this completed form with your remittance.

Membership fees due and payable on or before January 1st.

**NO NEW LIFE MEMBERSHIP WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Those in existence are NOT transferable. Widows will receive the *Hellcat News* for one year following the death of the Veteran spouse. **All yearly membership expire Dec. 31, 2008.**

that it doesn't happen again.

We will be telling you about some exciting new projects at the museum in the next few issues. Special thanks to Bob Hoelweler and others for their generous donations and work at the museum on some of those new projects. Also special thanks to those who took the time to give their audio/video histories at the last reunion. Another great gift idea for the holidays are those MP3 voice recorder gadgets they sell at Radio Shack. Hopefully the younger folks can show us how to work them. If you have a good war story about a particular event, some of the younger people can help you get it recorded and we can email the voice file to the museum for the archives and for use in the museum to make it more interactive.

Hope you all have a Happy Thanksgiving with your friends and families and thanks to all you veterans for defending our freedom.

Bill McCarthy, President.

**66TH AIB** (continued from page 1)

welcomed phone call Monday evening, 25th of August '08, from **Maria Harm** inquiring about my health and welfare. She is quite busy at work having little time for traveling but plans to once again return this December to her family in Brazil.

"To those who do not recognize the name, Maria was **George Harm's [C]** fun loving wife who catered to his many needs. I remember on one 12th Armored Division reunion, George attended in his original army uniform much envied by many. At one other more recent reunion they attended in full two piece costumes and hat – cowboy style. George and Maria made known their presence, a delightful joyous fun loving couple."

Another C Company buddy **Bill Gould** writes, "Just a line to let you know that there are a few of us, as replacements, still around and still kicking. We don't have the history of the Division behind us but we were still a part of the 12th Armored Division."

"In a recent *Hellcat News* there was an article about **Walter Grabert [C]**. I found the same article in a magazine, *The Spearhead* of June 21, 1945. I was with Walt that evening at Hettstadt, where I had my helmet shot off my head and the account was very accurate. It ended by having support of a tank at the foxhole. The German soldier shot a panzerfaust at the tank commander, just missing hitting him in the head.

"My daughter and her husband escorted my wife **Alice** and I to Abilene, TX, in July. We visited Phantom Hill and other local



**Cherry Smith, widow of C/66 buddy Sam Smith, and her sister Virginia at the Abilene reunion. They are both faithful attendees at 12th AD reunions.**

**2009 MEETINGS**

The Council reminds all "that no activity shall be authorized which would conflict with the annual reunion date."

**63rd NATIONAL REUNION**

**Wednesday-Saturday, August 12-15, 2009**

Radisson Hotel  
Branson, MO

(Stay tuned for more information)

Tom and Sharon Vanderhoef  
RR #2, Purdy, MO 65734-9802  
vandy33@windstream.net

**WESTERN CHAPTER MEETING**

**Thursday-Saturday, March 5-7, 2009**

Biltmore Hotel & Suites  
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Santa Clara, CA 95054  
800-255-9925

John Blumenson, chair  
736 Garner Ct., Santa Clara, CA 95050  
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Ted Glogovac, co-chair  
408-499-0188



sites. The most amazing visit was at the 12th Armored Division Museum. We spent almost six hours there and still didn't see it all. I was asked to be interviewed by the curator of the museum. It was quite a thrill of a lifetime. If at all possible any and all who are able should visit the museum. We were treated like royalty during our visit. Also anyone who can should take advantage of the 'Honor Flight' to Washington D.C. to see the WWII Memorial."

Another note from **Irving Maslov [C]**, who was original 56th AIR at Camp Campbell. Irv wrote, "After reading the article in the July *Hellcat News* about **Carl Beisman [C]**, I just had to write this letter. As you know, you, Carl and I were together in basic training in the old 56th AIR. Thank God you and I are still around. My story about Carl was that he asked me if I would mind if his cousin Ildra Brodbeck of Batchtown, IL, could write to me as a service man. I agreed and Ildra and I wrote to each other for many years until she passed away. Did you know her? I thought you would like this story but before closing I wanted to ask you if you remember another C Company buddy by the name of **Earl B. Reid**. He was from Detroit, MI. Let me know if anyone remembers him."

Once again we are coming up on the holidays so it's time to wish everyone a very happy Veteran's Day, think of the servicemen who are serving our country; and another happy Thanksgiving to all.

While visiting the museum during the reunion I picked up 'Charlie's' M1 rifle and was astounded at the feel and weight of that old relic that we all carried throughout our service with the 66th AIB. For some reason it was much heavier that it was back then. We promptly pushed the chamber open and there it was, waiting for us to put a clip in. Basically to reload an M1, all one must do is shove the whole eight round clip of cartridges into the top of the rifle until it clicks and then get your thumb out of the way so the bolt can close and chamber the top round. It is accomplished in a flash. Since there was no clip to insert, no way was I going to put my thumb in there to release the spring and snap it closed. Some bystander (I believe it was Steve Czecha) accomplished that task for me.

Charles Karwan wrote for *Guns Magazine* back in 2002, "The M1 was a wonderful weapon but as good as it was the M1 had its drawbacks. The two most prominent were its substantial weight (officially 9.5 pounds but actually well over 10 pounds fully loaded with sling and cleaning kit in the butt trap), and its eight round clip feed system. The last shot fired from an M1 causes the empty clip to be ejected out the top along with a distinctive ping sound. Some concern was raised by reports that this ping sound

was used by enemy soldiers to identify when an individual soldier had emptied his rifle so that his position could be attacked. My personal combat experience makes me doubt if that scenario ever actually happened. In the clamor of a battle, such noises and their exact location would be virtually impossible to distinguish even at close range.

"Besides, the time it takes to reload an M1 is well under the time it takes a sprinter to cover 25 yards. The bottom line is that the ping of the clip on ejection is not and never was a big problem except in the mind of some paranoid troops and pseudo-expert desk jockeys."

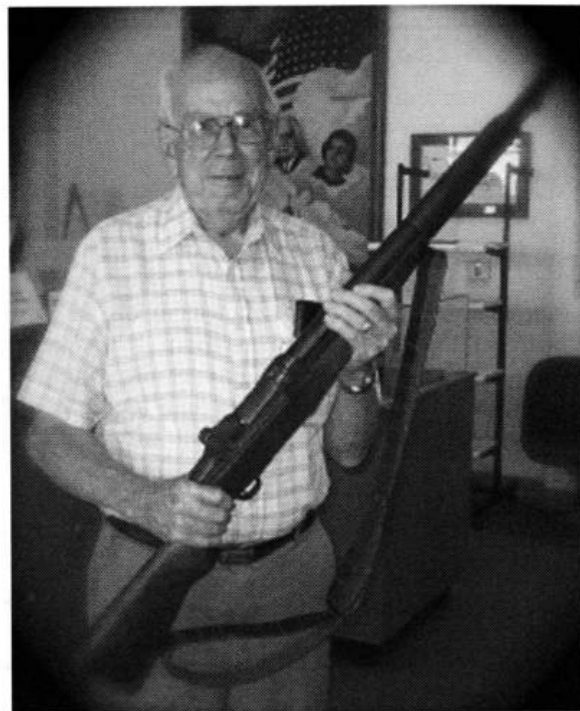
An interesting article in the 16 March 1944 *Hellcat News* details, "If you Don't Know, Here's What K.P.'s Do."

"How do K.P.s pass the day besides sitting around peeling potatoes and goldbricking? That's the latest latrine question. Let's therefore look into the mess hall of 'B' Company 66th AIB, as dawn brightens the sky and discover the truth of how each K.P. passes the day.

"Washing dishes we find not only **PFC Dan Mitchell** but also **PFC Merkel Friedman**. Teamwork is emphasized in their job, which is based upon the art of passing dishes from Dan to Merkel to the drying rack. These men estimate that 600 dishes, 600 cups, and as many spoons, knives and forks will pass through their wash-tub during the day. 'We think we have the better brands of K.P. duty,' smirked Mitchell, 'We get a certain thrill in seeing each dish come out white, spotless, and pure.'

"Pot and pan cleaning runner-up for the title of the 'most hated job on K.P.' was found to be well handled under the able elbows of **PVT Edward Coen**. He commented, 'This is a job for WAC's' as he glared down at a particularly greasy pan.

"Then we came upon **PVT Homer Skelton** doing odd jobs around the kitchen. His job is to 'arrange'. He arranges things at eight, re-arranges them at nine and re-re-arranges them at ten, etc. And time simply flies. He left off munching an apple to state that he does not particularly mind his job. To him K.P. is K.P. in any form.



**66th Unit Rep with M1 rifle at Port Arms.**

"Finally there is **PVT Albert Dickinson**, the dining room orderly. He ceased his long sweeping of the mop as we approached and confided, low enough so that the others could not hear, that his job gives him time to take a break now and then.

"Do not imagine that the duties as outlined above are strictly confined. They are subject to the vivid imagination of **S/Sgt William Austin** (and the cooks). The K.P. never wins."

Remember when you were called to do your turn in the mess hall on K.P.? Even if you were not on K.P. we know you can recall all of your wonderful days at Camp Barkeley because, "It's Great to Be a Hellcat."

## *What -- No Bath Tub!*



This peep driven by Tec 5 Charles J. Miller, Hq Co, 66th AI Bn. has everything on it but the kitchen sink—and it may have that concealed somewhere. The de luxe collection of gadgets includes a flag carrier, dual windshield wiper, water can carrier between seats, compass, two flashlight holders (one for blackout flashlight), radio phone holder, clamps for aerial, and message clip on windshield. Miller, who drives for the company commander, started adding the gadgets one by one last November. Now he has the best equipped peep in the division. His home town is Elgin, Ill.

## **DIV. ARTY & DIV. HQS. UNITS**

W. W. Hardin, P.O. Box 846, 1513 Forest Ave., Fulton, MO 65251

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bill\_hardin223@sbcglobal.net

Where in the world did the summer go? Wherever it went, it went fast. Betty and I attended and enjoyed the weddings, family reunions, several short trips, and of course the highlight of all was the 12th Armored Division Div/Arty reunion in Indianapolis. We didn't have to travel very far, didn't have to spend a lot of money. The hotel and meals were super and we got to spend some quality time with 25 of the best people on the planet!

**Marian Miller Tervay**, 119th Engineers, passed away on June 16, 2008. A friend of the family notified me. I met Marian some 20 odd years ago; at that time she was married to **Dale Miller [HQ/493]**. A few years after Dale passed away she married **Julius Carl Tervay [C/119]**. Both of these gentlemen were members of the 12 Armored Division. Marian was well known as the one person that could keep the hospitality room full of food and drink, however she was very active in the association, having served on numerous committees as a member and chairperson.

One of her last responsibilities was serving as association historian and having taught history for 21 years in the Houston, TX, school system, she was a natural for this job. Really enjoyed dragging those extra large books around the country to our reunions. Marian was always a great lady and the association owes her a large measure of genuine appreciation for all of the work and effort and time she so willingly gave to the members and association. Marian, thanks so very much for everything you did for us, a job well done.

Association reps have a common habit of placing the phrase,

"when you read this a certain event or occasion will have happened." So starting with the above phrase the national election of many state and national offices, including the President, will be history. Yes, I have a strong preference but I am not going there in this column. I just hope and pray that the new President will have the ability and experience to bring us out of the most disastrous and troubled time in our history.

There is no doubt that we are in very deep trouble. Making one comment, I would very much like to see the war in Iraq come to an early close and our service people brought back home.

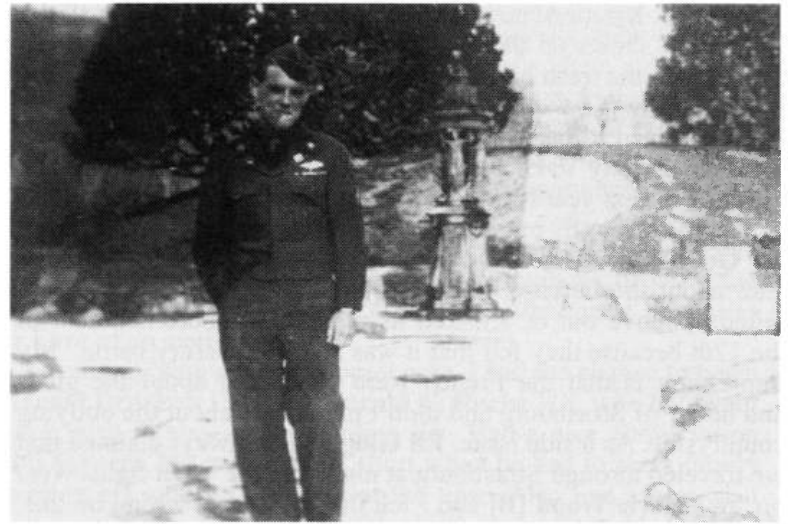
Phil Minsky [Div/Arty] has sent me some great pictures in the past, however he sent me a most magnificent poem and certainly appropriate due to the recent death of my good friend, **Ted Blostein [HQ/23]**. I am going to share it with you with the thought in mind that you would find some solace in the event that you too, had lost a good friend.

*Around the Corner*

by Charles Hanson Towne

Around the corner, I have  
a friend in this great city  
that has no end; yet days  
go by and weeks rush on,  
and before I know it a year  
is gone and I never see my  
old friend's face, for life  
is a swift and terrible race.  
He knows I like him just as  
well as in the days when I  
rang his bell and he rang  
mine. We were younger then,  
and now we are busy, tired  
men; tired with playing a  
foolish game; tired with  
trying to make a name.  
"Tomorrow" I say, "I will  
call on Ted, just to show  
that I'm thinking of him."  
But tomorrow comes - and  
tomorrow goes, and the  
distance between us grows  
and grows. Around the  
corner - yet miles away....  
here's a telegram, sir....  
"Ted died today." And  
that's what we get and  
deserve in the end;  
around the corner, a  
vanished friend.

Thank you Phil, for sending me such an appropriate poem.  
Until next time.



**Ted Zawacki [HQ/17], ready to go on pass.**

Enough already with politics. We have a new President to be supported with encouragement and a lot of prayer.

Letters bring different messages as did a recent one from **Ed and Trudy Goeppinger [B]**. We gripe and complain and have our fears, but read a paragraph from their letter and ponder this message. They wrote, "We live in a country that offers us freedoms and life like none other. Our Czech son-in-law, Vit, reminds us periodically what it is like to live under communism and that he is now a happy U.S. citizen." Right on! Ed and Trudy are active in their church and recently Ed helped with some air conditioning installations. The building is getting older and as Trudy states, "Old buildings and people's bodies are about the same. You have to keep patching and patching." Never thought of it that way, but she is right.

If you are in need of some patching, hop-to-it so all the patches will be in place for the coming Chapter meetings and of course the next National. Thinking about a reunion nine or ten months away may seem foolhardy to some, but for Hellcats, it is a way of life that keeps them operating. Without a plan there is no reason to get up in the morning or look to the future. It may not always work out, but by golly, it keeps the juices flowing.

Vanessa Harris sent a letter to the 17th from the 12th Armored Memorial Museum in recognition of the support gift from the unit. This was money raised from the raffles held during the reunion and sent to Abilene in September. In part it reads, "Dear 17th AIB unit. We thank you for your help to further achieve our goals. We appreciate your helping us remind others of the atrocities that were faced in the 1940s. The men of the 12th Armored Division want future generations to know, in order to prevent future repeats of this history. We thank you for your support. Sincerely, Vanessa Harris."

The raffles for some years have been a fun part of the reunions and provide a means of support of the museum from everybody attending. Hunt up those old unwanted diamond rings, Rolex watches, and bring them along to Branson. For those who have not been there, this 17th bunch is very talented and there are always super items crafted by the members.

Some years ago, **Walter Gaines [D]** sent me the original, yes original, order cut for them assigning them to a unit. This was signed by General Eisenhower and Walter B. Smith, later Secretary of State. What a rare document. It was sent through channels to the museum but either never got there or is "resting" among some of the material the staff is still going through. Anyway, Walter sent me a copy he had but it is very difficult to read so if any of you brilliant types know if it could be enhanced by computer, please tell us. It should be in the D Company's material in the museum.

Email is a wonderful thing, but it can still give one fits. For instance, a transmission came to our house recently from a

## 17TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION

William "Bill" Funke, 1312 Alford Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524  
970-482-0255 fwilliam46@msn.com

Over the river and through the woods, etc., etc. That old song brings back memories of Thanksgiving for some of you, but for those who never went over the woods and don't remember a grandmother, still sing it because it conjures up pleasing visions. If there is anything we need now it is more pleasing visions that are sometimes hard to come by.

The election is over now and you did your patriotic duty and voted. Don't know how it was in your state, but Colorado had the biggest ballot in the history of the state. No amount of study cleared up all the amendments to amend the amendments, which were amended at the last election. Confusing? Not at all when you do as some did, just vote "no" on all of them.

'Chavela2'. It popped up in the junk mail section (a lot of stuff you don't want shows up there), so not recognizing the name it was deleted into the trash bin. Later it was brought to my attention by **Bettie Shultz [C]** the name 'Chavela' meant 'Rachel' in Spanish and was given to her by a teacher in 1947. Egad, Chavela, how was this 'dummy' to know? Well, it all turned out OK, and yes, the trip for her next year is going to be much easier.

You history buffs might want to add to this story by contacting **Ed Goepfinger [B]**. He wrote, "The last definitive book that I read about the defense of Strasbourg indicated that the French failed to move out of Killstett as planned in coordination with the 12th because they felt that it was an 'unnecessary battle.' My impression is that the French were concerned about the glory and honor of Strasbourg and didn't much care about the outlying countryside. As a side issue, **Eli Glogow [B]** always claimed that we traveled through Strasbourg at night and the street lights were on, etc. **Merle Wood [B]** and I felt that he was all wrong on this. I think we went around the outskirts of town." Now you know the rest of the story, or do you? You B types who have anything to add to this historical report write to Ed or to your rep.

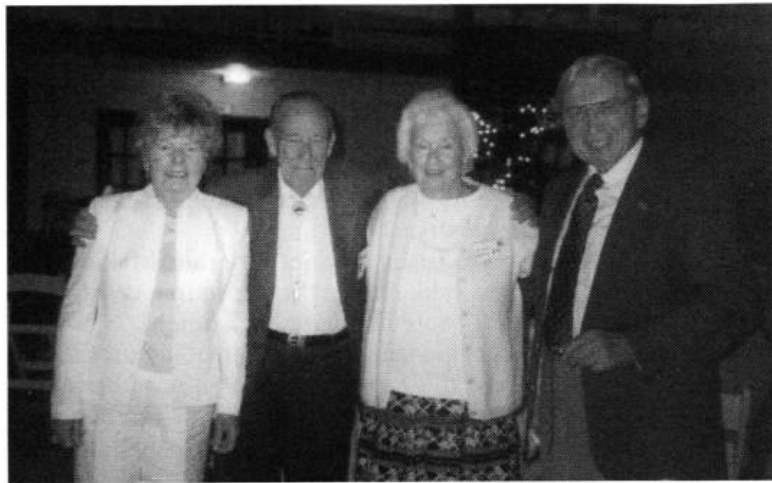
There are 17th people in the areas hit by recent hurricanes but we haven't heard from any of them as to their damage status. We did hear that the Ohio area got a lot of storms that left them without power but that is about it. Come on you Southern folks, let us know how you fared with mother nature. One year the 12th had the reunion hurting because of a big storm in Houston that put down the airports in the area, and once we just missed a hurricane on the east coast. Many, including the **Funkes** who went sightseeing to the south, were driven back north by officials turning back travelers. Do they have hurricanes in Branson?

Mistakes printed in this column are purely the fault of the computer. The operator is without blemish so it must be the machine. A call from **Stella Jordon [C]** gently chided me for missing them and the **Priestleys** in the families attendance paragraph in the September issue. She was right, but it was because of the list that was current at the time of the writing. Check the October issue and there they are, just as big as life. Whew, sneaked out of that one.

Time out from the good stuff for a bit of campaigning. We have talked a lot about the changing times and how some of our planning for the *Hellcat News* has gone by the board because of a lot of reasons. Looking ahead, there will be some kind of financial changes needed, but the best way to insure the continuance of the *HCN* as we want, is to make some extra effort. The best way right now is for an increased booster donation and for life members to recognize the need and put themselves back on the yearly donation plan. Many have done that, but if more would do so, the financial



*The 17th's most photogenic. Front row: Harry Freyer [HQ], Nathan Schwartz [A], ??, Bob Beeman [B]. Back row: Grover Cunningham [SV], ??, Harley Bickel [SV], John Micetic [SV], and Idus Cleveland [SV].*



*Lisa Norris [A/714], Bill and Audrey House [B/17], and Earl Norris [A/714] at the banquet at the August 2008 Reunion.*

picture would look a lot brighter. If you haven't done this yet, consider giving yourself an early Christmas present and send the twenty-spot along with the form in the paper.

This has been pretty serious stuff so a time out is in order. The following quips are actual headlines from publications. 1) "Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash" - (No, really?); 2) "War Dims Hope For Peace" - (I can see where it might have that effect); 3) "If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile" (Ya Think?)

Good friends, now and then word comes to your rep with a bit of news that is not just exciting, it is exhilarating. This is a story of devotion to another's well being. **Kimberly Arndt, Harles Miller's [B]** driver, knew he had lost contact with his friend and fellow POW **Ed O'Sullivan**. They had talked back in 1993, but since then phones had been disconnected and communication was nil. They had not seen each other since 1945, 63 years ago. Harles was reluctant to try to find his buddy, but good hearted Kimberly knew he was probably somewhere in the Chicago area and started looking through the phone book until she found three Ed O'Sullivans.

On the third call she hit "pay dirt," reaching Ed's son who then put them in contact with a daughter-in-law and she said her father-in-law had served in WWII. Harles and Kimberly live in Michigan, but with the daughter-in-law, set up a meeting at the Flame Restaurant in LaGrange, IL. She contacted newspapers, but because of the coverage area none seemed interested, but a friend of Kimberly's cousin thought, "why not try the Chicago TV stations?"

Here was a bit of history about to be made. Because of some time problem, not one but two Chicago stations, Channel 7 ABC and Channel 5 NBC showed up. Imagine if you can, I can't, the emotion of two old soldiers meeting for the first time in 63 years. WOW, isn't that something? Ed's address is here for you to use. Edward O'Sullivan, 7301 Willow Springs Rd #405, Country Side, IL 60525; phone 708-482-0180. Hope some of you will contact this man.

I know there are a lot of stories similar to this in the 12th, so "dag-nab-it," why don't you let us know about it? Any story after this would be anti-climatic so that is it for now.

We hope you have a fine Thanksgiving, and truly in spite of aches and pains, there is a lot to be thankful for.

## Moving?

Let your administrative secretary  
know your new address:

**Vanessa Harris, 1289 N. 2nd St., Abilene, TX 79601**  
**325-677-6515 hellcatsmuseum@yahoo.com**

## 23RD TANK BATTALION

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615-382-6959 brdsy@comcast.net

Co-Rep: Jack Treaster, 6975 Lindsey Rd, China, MI 48054-2414  
810-765-3117 jack.treaster@fraser.misd.net

Historian: James Francis, 1756 Shuey Ave. #119, Walnut Crk, CA 94596  
925-988-0709 jimfrancis18@sbcglobal.net

By the time you read this column, Halloween will have come and gone and you're busily chasing down that turkey for the dinner table.

Congratulations to the 23rd's **Virgil Thorp [HQ]**, named as a director.

Almost all the info you would expect to find here is actually elsewhere in the *HCN*.

Next year's reunion is set for Aug. 12-15 in Branson, MO, at the Radisson Hotel.

Inasmuch as we had only one person registered when a hospitality suite was requested for the 23rd, said request was not considered. Therefore, it is urged that anyone even thinking about next year in Branson, please watch for the registration blanks and send them in **immediately!** And let your unit rep know so he can successfully argue with the powers that be for a hospitality suite.

And in reference to last month's column, the mistake made in listing **Lt. Col. Meigs** as the commanding officer of "Combat B," when it should have read the 23rd, was made by your unit rep's computer. Told you it had a mind of its own.

### Commentary

Guess this should be in the form of an open letter to the board of directors. We have seen the expansion of costs each year as prices for postage, paper, etc., do nothing but rise. Inasmuch as the association always negotiated with hotel on the basis of X number of rooms PLUS a hospitality room for EACH unit – such rooms were not paid for, they were "donated" by the hotel, wonder why that system was abandoned?

And even if the hotel refuses such a deal, certainly the association could afford to spend the money to accommodate its units.

Contrary to popular belief, even small units like to spend time with their compatriots, wives, children and grandchildren (and even great-grandchildren) in a quiet, intimate atmosphere. After all, why should the treasury outlive our veterans?

**Jim Francis [A]** contributes the following "...and then" gags.

When I got home last night my wife demanded I take her somewhere expensive...so I took her to a gas station...and then the fight started.

I tried to talk my wife into buying a case of Miller Lite for \$14.95. Instead, she bought a jar of cold cream for \$7.50. I told her the beer would make her look better at night than the cold cream....and then the fight started.

My wife and I were seated at a table at our high school reunion. I kept staring at a drunken lady at a nearby table swigging her drink alone. My wife asked, "Do you know her?"

I answered, "Yes, she's my old girl friend. I understand she took to drinking after we split those many years ago, and I hear she hasn't been sober since."

"Ye gods," my wife said, "who would think a person could go on celebrating that long?"... and then the fight started.

### ITEM OF INTEREST by John Critzas Editor

We have all heard about Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA, right across the Potomac River from Washington D.C., so here is an interesting bit of history of which you may not be aware and how it links to the 23rd Tank Battalion.

Mary, better known as Mrs. Robert E. Lee, was the wife of the Commander in Chief General Robert E. Lee of the Confederate forces during the Civil War of 1861 to 1865. Mrs. Lee had inherited the 1,100 acre Arlington property from her grandfather,

but now in January of 1864 as the Civil War was drawing to a close, the Arlington property was confiscated by the United States Government and purchased for the sum of \$26,800. In May of 1864 the Arlington Estate was designated a National Cemetery by order of the Secretary of War Stanton who appointed UNION Quartermaster General Montgomery Cunningham Meigs to convert the Arlington Estates into a graveyard. Meigs considered Confederates to be traitors and General Robert E. Lee the worst of the lot.

You veterans of the 23rd Tank Battalion certainly remember the untimely death of **Montgomery Meigs** as captain of your Battalion during combat, and remember his son, Montgomery C. Meigs, who became commander of all American forces during the Desert Storm era. I thought you might enjoy this little bit of historical information.

## 43RD TANK BATTALION

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**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:** Earl Kirkpatrick - 2nd, Frances Ann Jenzen - 3rd, Anna Jannelli - 5th, Arthur Hoeg - 5th, Anna Miller - 7th, Jim Stone - 8th, Freddie Jacobson - 8th, Ernest Price - 11th, Ralph Jeter - 12th, Henry Zazzi - 12th, Cindy White - 16th, Charles Zurk - 18th, Bill Houston - 20th, Robert Allan - 22nd, Sara Burris - 23rd, Barbara Lamarra - 28th, Sigrid Casey - 29th, Sara Bates - 29th, Mary Ellen Lansbach - 29th, John Seaman III - 30th, Anna Houston - 31st, Victor Heffner - 31st.

**DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:** Howard and Viola Wood - 4th, 65 years; Harold and Florence Miller - 25th, 67 years.

**HELLO FOLKS:** Starting the November 43rd column of the *HCN* on Monday, Aug. 25, 2008. *Birthday and anniversary dates:* I hope you appreciate all the work Ann does keeping up on the dates and mailing the anniversary cards.

**Aults:** Ann and I are waiting on my sister **Patty** to take us to Indy. Ann is to have surgery on her right knee at St. Vincent Hospital at 2 p.m. She has to be there at 12 noon to get ready for surgery. Ann was getting better by going to the therapist but was in constant pain. I called Dr. Frank Johnson, sports physician; he comes to Kokomo from Indy twice a week. Frank does his surgery at St. Vincent Hospital at Indy. He examined Ann and read the x-rays and told her she didn't have a Bakers Cyst but Arthroscopic Meniscectomy. He will make two small incisions, one on each side of the knee, and remove the torn tissues. (Just think of all the massages, four times a day, for several week that I performed on



**Bette Stone [D/43]** won this year's 'bumblebee whirligig' made and furnished by **Clif Hunter [C/43]** at the 43rd and 56th Friday evening unit dinner, Aug. 15, 2008.

her leg, all for naught, although we believe it did get rid of the swelling.)

We will know in a couple of weeks if the surgery was a success. Several years ago Dr. Johnson operated on my right hand for gangly tumor (bible tumor). The saying is, that you take your bible and slam it down hard on the tumor and it will burst the tumor, you wouldn't need surgery. I was chicken and went with the surgery.

**REUNION:** I didn't have any info about the reunion when I wrote the October column, so we will try to add it here in the November column. From all the reports I have received, **Sara and Carl Burris** did a super job on the hospitality room (many, many thanks Sara and Carl). The following people were there. **Andy and Eleanor Andrews [C]**, **Jim, Bette** and son **Matt Stone [D]**, **Quentin and Marie Skelton [SV]**, daughter **Shirley Jackson**, granddaughter **Christy**, husband **Robert** and baby **Carter**, granddaughter **Jama Baskin**. **Dennis Root** and girlfriend **Linda Goodman [L-C]**, **John and Mary Sathrum [B]**, **Sara and Carl Burris [L-B]**, **Claudette Ippolito**, widow of **Charles [D]**, son **John and Diane Ippolito**. A grand total of 21. What's bad, there were only four veterans; one from B, one from C, one from D, and one from Service Company that attended the 43rd reunion.

There were two from the 152nd, **Jack and Rita Winters**. The 43rd had their Friday unit dinner with the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion. The 43rd invited the 56th to share in the drawing of the 'nutcracker.' **Rita Douglas** from the 56th won the 'nutcracker' this year. The 'nutcracker' brought in \$103. I called **Clif Hunter [C]** who makes the 'nutcracker' and he was very happy it brought that much. (Thanks Clif, that helps with the expense each year.)

**63RD ANNUAL HELLCAT REUNION:** The 63rd reunion will be held on Aug. 12-15, 2009, at Branson, MO. If you haven't been to Branson, don't miss this opportunity, you won't be sorry. Plan on going a couple of days early or stay over a couple of days and take in some of the shows that are available. Ann and I were there a few years ago and people tell us we will not know the place with all the changes. Please plan on attending this reunion, there's not too many more of us old vets who will be able to attend.

**NEW APARTMENT:** A property manager of single-family residences was showing a unit to prospective tenants and asking the usual questions. "Professionally employed?" he asked. "We're a military family," the wife answered proudly. "Animals?" "Oh, no," she said earnestly. "They're very well behaved."

**Andy Andrews [C]:** We made the 62nd reunion and had a great time. We stayed at the Marriott because the headquarters hotel was sold out. We waited too long for our reservations. We really missed you guys but Sara and Carl did a great job in your absence. The 2009 reunion is in Branson; we hope to make that. The museum has really improved and we enjoyed seeing it for the last time. Not many of the 43rd were present, take is taking its toll on us. It was wonderful that someone donated \$50,000 to the museum, that should help to keep it going.

I understand to get the HCN the new rate is \$20. I am sending a check for it enclosed. I assume it's made out correct, if not let me know.

Hey Ann, you better keep Mark from getting hurt. Seems like every newsletter he keeps calling for you when he is in trouble. Maybe you should be with him before anything happens. I hope all is well now. Take care, and if God is willing we will make the 2009 reunion. Best regards, Andy and Eleanor.

(Andy was good enough to send a copy "In Memorial August 15, 2008." The 43rd deceased were, **Melvin Bending**, **Ernest E. Price**, **Arthur Posten**, **Elmer Morefeld**, **Lorenz Kleinschmidt**, **Everett Jones**, **Charles Ippolito**, **Donald Ford** and **Dorothy Blair**. Our chaplain, **Bill Funke**, had the following: "Listen as my footsteps fall upon this long and weary bridge. The bridge of joy, happiness and peace, this bridge of sorrow, regret and grief. Yes I see unending days and fields of green at the end of this long and weary bridge. This bridge of joy, happiness and peace. This bridge



**Rita Douglas and her husband George (I understand they are newly married) from the 56th won this year's 'nutcracker' made and furnished by Clif Hunter [C/43]. The 43rd joined the 56th for their unit dinner on Friday, Aug. 15, during the reunion.**

of sorrow, regret and grief. Listen as my footsteps cease upon this long and weary bridge. No more sorrow, regret or grief. Now only joy, happiness and peace."

**THE ORIGIN OF TAPS:** Place...Harrison's Landing, Virginia. Time...1862, the Civil War...at night! Union Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near the landing with the Confederate Army on the other side of a narrow strip of land. During the night, Capt. Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who was severely wounded on the field and, not knowing if it was a Union or a Confederate soldier, the captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the captain reached the soldier and began pulling him towards the encampment.

When he finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead. The captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath...and went numb with shock. In the dim light he saw the face of the soldier... it was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning...heartbroken...the father asked permission to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted. The captain asked if he could have a group of army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was denied since the soldier was a Confederate...but out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him one musician. The captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the dead youth's uniform. The wish was granted. The haunting melody we now know as "TAPS" was born.

**BACHELORS:** Two confirmed bachelors sat talking, their conversation drifted from politics to cooking. "I got a cookbook once," said one, "but I could never do anything with it." "Too much fancy work in it, eh?" asked the other. "You said it. Every one of the recipes began the same way - 'Take a clean dish.'"

**The Rollin' Stones:** The Rollin' Stones plus one rolled out of Dekalb for Abilene, TX. Son Matt took his two week vacation so he could travel so far. Our destination for today is Kansas City, MO. First stop near the Amana Colonies' Ox Bow Restaurant for gas at \$3.69, better than the \$3.89 we got in Dekalb; it had been as high as \$4.27. Saw beautiful looking corn fields along the road. Not a whole lot to see along #80 but made good time. Arrived in K.C. around 6, checked into our Comfort Sleep Inn. Good nite's rest, breakfast and rollin' again.

Beautiful green fields and later the blue Flint Hills. Gas was

more in Missouri than it Illinois. We get 29 MPG so Merlin sold us a good car. Did see cattle and oil wells the closer we got to Oklahoma City. Checked in to Comfort Inn. Up early and off to find the Oklahoma City Memorial. A very sobering experience. So many chairs, big and small, representing adults and children (169). They keep adding things - a memory tree - a museum - items on the walls. All should see it and remember the tragedy.

Rollin' on we passed a very neat Fort Sill, OK, polo field and horses; looked like a lot to do there. Driving on, little did I know we were heading into barren desolate land - 150 miles of it. Jim and I watched as mile after mile of cattle, cactus and barren land rolled by, finally a town named Stanford. It had a café called the Cliff House. On the turnpike we went 75 MPH and paid \$3.79 per gallon.

Arrived in Abilene, checked into the Elegante Suites. Matt will have his own suite, the works. Home for the next four days. Happy hour from 5:30 to 7:30 each night, free pop, beer and other stuff. Full buffet breakfast is served daily to hotel guests - delicious! They have changed and added many exhibits to the museum, it is a fabulous museum, a video (6 minutes) explaining how it came about. All private funds, so the board and men could retain control of the artifacts and not wonder where the government might place them. It is a teaching museum and they can use donations!

Returning to the hotel, we went to the hospitality room to visit. They weather was hot, 96 degrees. Guys went to happy hour. Up for breakfast, then to the lovely Memorial Service honoring all the members whom we lost this last year. Jim read the names and Matt took care of the flag.

My, the ladies were in for a treat! Delicious beef, au jous sandwich, cheesy spuds and green vegetable, roll, tea/coffee and pecan pie. We received a salad also, plus the chairman made pecan pralines for all gals. We then had an excellent "Elvis" impersonator entertain us. Kinda loud but excellent. "Elvis" will sing and entertain again at the dinner. We joined the 43rd with the 56th for the Friday dinner. It was a buffet featuring roast beef, chicken, spuds, vegetables, roll, coffee/tea plus lemon cake. Raffled off the 'nutcracker' and it was won by a lady from the 56th. I won the hummingbird whirligig.

Last day is our meeting after breakfast. Election time, all the candidates picked by Steve-Jim-Bob were elected unanimously, so shortened meeting. Ended up visiting friends from Crystal Lake, IL, retiring president **Ed and Terese Waszak**. I went to happy hour and then to banquet hall at 6. Salad, roll, tea, huge rib eye steak, spuds, zucchini veg medley, roll, a cream cake and coffee. The steak was so tender I could hardly believe it, I loved it and I am not a steak person.

After dinner several were honored with awards. "Stoney" was honored as "Most Distinguished Hellcat." He's done so much, it is well deserved. A 91-year-old **Dr. Phibbs**, author, practicing doctor, spoke to the group. He is a member of the 12th and quite amazing at 91. The Abilene City Band played for our entertainment.

Up, to breakfast, check out, and I was upset as I found out we're going back up through Oklahoma on boring road, but we did it and cut over to Arkansas. Lotts casinos in Oklahoma. Got to Alma, AR, checked in, called sister Barb, she drove over to visit and eat at Cracker Barrel with us. Saw charolais cattle, red soil and many green trees, and lots of tiny churches. Ended up in Fort Leonard Wood, MO, at a lovely Comfort Inn at St. Robert, MO. We cancelled at Branson as Matt had no interest, it was a wild place. Headed home, cat greeted us like long lost pals, good to be home. (Thanks Bette, it is a good report.)

Did you hear about the auto mechanic who bought a hospital and he is making a fortune? You take your wife in for an operation and they give you a loaner.

Husband to loquacious wife: "You are just like a broken old umbrella, you just can't shut up." Wife: "How right you are. I am like an old umbrella. A bunch of ribs, covered with rags, and tied to an old stick."

**Farmer Kile:** Talked to Naomi, Charlie was at the other farm.

She states they are doing well, she still has to use a walker. Charlie has been going to the doctors for his heart and cancer.

*Don't be content with being average. Average is as close to the bottom as it is to the top.*

Take care, until next month, keep a smile on your face, a song in your heart, and a prayer on your lips for our service people.



## 56TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION

Otis G. Shull

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### TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT

In the September 2008 issue of the *Hellcat News*, in the 17th Infantry Battalion column, there is a photograph of **Walter Gaines [D/17]** and **Edwin and Allene Carter**, son and daughter-in-law of **Sgt. Edward A. Carter**, Congressional Medal of Honor winner. The caption states that Sgt. Carter was a member of D Co. 17th Infantry.

*The Congressional Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously to: Sgt. Edward A. Carter, 12th Armored Division, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, Company D.*

When the Honor Medal was awarded posthumously to Sgt. Edward A. Carter's widow and the Carter family at the White House in 1997, **Marvel Rowland**, 12th Association president and 56th unit representative, was invited to Washington to represent the 12th and the 56th at the presentation. Later that year, at the annual reunion being held in Columbus, Edwin and Allene Carter were invited to attend at the 56th expense. Marvel detailed me to assist the Carters when his duties made him unable to be with them. At the dedication of the museum in Abilene, Allene Carter was invited to be present to represent Sgt. Carter and to sell her book about his life. She requested that a special area be established at the front of the museum and be permanently devoted to Sgt. Carter. When she was told that such an area was not available, she declined to be present at the dedication.

### 2008 REUNION STORIES

#### RITA MARRIES GEORGE - Part 2

**Martha (Marty) Clarke [HQ]** writes that when the 56th decided that there should be a wedding present for **Rita and George**, the "girls" got together and took Rita downtown. Included with Rita were: **Nancy Cook, Norma Hicks, Betty McKinley, Sharon Van Derhoef**, and **Marty**. They went to "Dillard's" department store, but couldn't find anything that Rita would approve. There is a rumor that one of the girls then suggested "Victoria's Secret," but nothing came of it. Finally Rita stated emphatically that she



**August '08 Abilene Reunion: The girls take Rita to purchase a wedding gift. L-R: Marty Clarke, Norma Hicks, Rita Douglas, Nancy Cook, Sharon Vanderhoef, and Bette McKinley.**



**At the August Reunion taken in front of our museum are Harry Schultz [A/493], Rita, and George Douglas [B/56].**

would only approve something that could be shared with all in the 56th. How like Rita to put herself last and her friends in the 56th first. No wonder we all love her so much. So the next stop was "Lady Godiva" where they all selected different types of the exquisite chocolates available there, and took them back to the reunion for all to share. Rita later said there were some not eaten and she and George took them home. May their life together be as sweet as those chocolates!

#### *THE VAN CLAN – Part 2*

If you recall, there were six of the **Van Clan** at the beginning of the reunion. But what I later discovered was that they had quite a bit of a problem getting to the reunion. It seems that they had some car trouble that delayed them more than six hours. By the time they finally arrived they were "bushed." For the reunion banquet a friend of **Floyd's**, Bob Plaster, flew in to Abilene in his private plane, bringing in **Bill Van Derhoef's** wife, **Gwen**, who works for Mr. Plaster. When the banquet was finished, Bob Plaster turned to Floyd and asked if he would like a plane ride home, and avoid a long car ride. No sooner said that done. Floyd and Aunt Mary got a plane ride home and were in their beds sound asleep by the time the others in Abilene were just getting to bed. What a way to get out of Abilene and get home!

#### *THE UNIT DINNER*

At the Unit dinner, the 56th was joined by the 493rd, 4th and 5th Armored Field Artillery Battalions, and the 43rd Tank Battalion. The 43rd, like other battalions, had personnel who brought gifts to be given by chances. Among the 43rd gifts was a "nutcracker" about 1' tall, hand made and painted by **Clifton Hunter [B/43]**. Clifton is around 90 years old and has done these exotic wood carvings for years. The 43rd decided to open up their gift offerings to all present, and the nutcracker was won by **Rita Douglas** of the 56th. She has it proudly sitting on her mantel and says it will be a favorite display at her Christmas tree every year. And in between it will grace her mantel where it is now.

**Ronald Weller [B]** lives with his wife in a retirement community

that publishes a monthly bulletin, "*Major Mirror*." Ron submitted the portion of the *Hellcat News* 56th August column where I described my trip to D.C. on the Honor Flight. The object was to make it known to any veterans in his community that there was a free trip to see the WWII Memorials in D.C. It occurs to me that it would be good if others ensured that their local Legion/VFW/Marine/etc. Posts were aware of this opportunity. Pay attention to the first page of the *Hellcat News* where **John Critzas** indicates the number of 12th veterans still living. Then look at the obituaries on the last page. Next month the number of living will be smaller. If the 12th veterans are decreasing this quickly, our brothers in other units must be experiencing the same sad fact. We should make it known that there is a free trip for those still living. If they don't know, they can't go.

**Mike Woldenberg [L]**, Professor of Geography (retired) at the N.Y. State University at Buffalo wonders: WITHOUT GEOGRAPHY, WHERE WOULD U B?

**Milan (Mike) Nadelkov [HQ]** came to the 12th via Camp Campbell where he was in the recon platoon. He recalls that after a 25 mile march, when everyone had blisters, there was a truck on the other side of the field. He got permission to shed his equipment and go get the truck. He ran to the other side of the field, got the truck, and drove it back to his group. They rode back to the camp in style. (I don't know what happened to the truck!) Mike was wounded at Herrlisheim. He was in the HQ, machine gun platoon at the Waterworks, firing his gun, when he was hit in the head by some shrapnel. He went to the medic who put some sulfa on the wound, bandaged it and sent him back to work.

Mike made it through the war with no further trouble. Mike went back to Beaver, PA, and in 1946-47 he played semi-professional football as quarterback for the Beaver Valley Giants. He was paid the princely sum of \$25 per game. After drifting from job to job, he spent two years learning about heat treatment for tools. After tools are formed, they must be heat treated to give them the right degree of hardness to perform their proper task. He went to work, in 1949, for Westinghouse in their tool and dye plant and retired after 37 years. In 1951 he made another major change. He and **Anna** got married. They have two sons and one daughter, and three granddaughters and two grandsons.

Mike spends his spare time doing his own outside lawn and garden work, tending a vegetable garden. But his great passion is golf. He gets on the course an average of five times per week. Like most of us at this age, Mike and Anna are 86, he takes about five pills daily. But both of them are in very good health. Mike remembers being in the same squad with **Angelo Pasquesi [HQ]**, and on the golf course in western Pennsylvania he came across **Stephen Palko [C]**, a resident of Aliquippa. Mike welcomes calls from his buddies. His phone number is 724-495-6709.

**Victor Mattson [B]** and his wife of 57 years, **Shirley**, spend their time between their home in Mississippi and a cottage in



**Jack and Norma Hicks [C/56] at the August Reunion.**



**Chuck and Bette McKinley [A/56] at the August Reunion.**

Maine, where their children and grand and great-grandchildren live. There is one son and daughter, three grandsons and one granddaughter, and one great-grandson and great-granddaughter. Victor was wounded in the shoulder and thigh at Herrlisheim. He spent three months in the hospital and then was put on limited duty in the chemical lab in Paris. In August 1945, his unit returned to the States on the way to Japan. With the end of the war Victor finally had enough points to get discharged in March 1946.

He went to Union College in Schenectady, NY, and graduated with a degree in chemistry. He was hired by Great Northern Paper Company in Maine. They sent him to graduate school in Wisconsin for additional studies in the chemistry of making paper. Here he met Shirley and in 1951 they married. They returned to Maine for the next 20 years. Then Great Northern sent him to their mill in Connecticut for two years. When Great Northern decided to build a mill in Hattiesburg, MS, Victor was sent there to help get the mill built and up and running. He remained with Great Northern another eight years and then retired.

At 83 he still does his own yard work and considers himself to be in good health. However, there seems to be one marital problem. In the 12th rosters there is no listing for his wife. But if you check the 12th web site, Victor's wife is listed as Elizabeth. Shirley says she is still looking for this Elizabeth female to kick her off of the 12th web site roster. Victor's e-mail address is: [nvictor@comcast.net](mailto:nvictor@comcast.net) and his phone number in Mississippi is: 601-268-6014.

Did you hear the joke about the sky?

Well, it's over your head anyway!

What is the difference between a cat and a match?

A cat lights on its feet and a match lights on its head.

## 82ND ARMORED MEDICAL BATTALION

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I received this letter from **Bernie Rice [C]** during the summer but I did not put into a previous column since I wanted to write about the events of the convention. The October issue has my summary of my impressions of the convention.

"**Norma** and I have had our ups and downs the past few months. The garden started off good with plenty of asparagus, followed in early June with strawberries. (Picked 40 quarts in the peak week of harvest.) Then disaster struck! The cornfield across the road from our house is now filling up with houses and left a bunch of hungry raccoons that promptly raided our early sweet corn just at harvest time. There went our frozen corn for the winter.

"But we did get over 40 pints of red raspberry jelly put up. Been giving away yellow summer squash and zucchini for weeks now. Green beans are plentiful and again we canned what we needed for winter and the family is now picking them.

"In other news....I was on the local "WAR" TV presentation on the local PBS station last fall and they made a "promo" of me telling about the 12th AD liberation of the concentration camp at Landsberg. It ran for months.

"On my last visit to my cardiologist, they took an electrocardiogram and the doc came in and laid the sheet of paper on my lap and said, 'Look at that! I hope I have as good a heart as yours when I get to be 85 [he is 40]. Now, what's your secret?' I told him I had no secret, but I always have something to do each morning and do my best to do it.

"But I know I have slowed down a bit. I am working on that history of local aviation and haven't had any time for it since Aug. 3. Just too much to do with the yard work, household chores and the garden. I hope this finds you and **Naomi** in good health and spirits."

## 92ND CAVALRY RECON (Mecz)

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**Dick Oeding's [E] continued letter:**

Dick dwelt a little on his combat experiences, including one episode in and around Colmar, and followed this with a description of setting up with the Field Artillery. I have to get back to him on this as it contained a lot technical terms I couldn't relate to: i.e. power charges, 75 millimeter pack, and a few other terms relating to firing degrees and other jargon familiar to those in the Field Artillery

Dick then gets down to business with a very interesting story calling for a very loud DUH?? Seems that the terrain where his unit was located was snow covered and the Germans were wearing white sheets for camouflage, and had also painted their vehicles white. As Dick states it, "So the powers decided that we would whitewash our tanks, halftracks, Jeeps and stuff. Low and behold everything is nice and white so they send us south, where there is no snow, and everything is dark gray, and we stick out like sore thumbs. No power washers and very little water to take



**92nd Cavalry Recon at the August 2008 Reunion. Carol Bland and Sid Brickel, both of F Troop.**



**Judy Jansky, co-rep for the 92nd Cavalry Recon, and her husband relaxing at the 2008 August Reunion.**

the whitewash off! A lot of effort finally got it off, but I don't remember how."

Continuing on with another Army goof, Dick looks back at an incident which occurred on the beach after we had crossed the English Channel. "After the invasion and the advance into France, there were some Germans left on the Channel Islands off the coast of France." Your Rep's remembrance says these were the Guernsey Islands. Dick continues, "Our Recon Squadron was sent there to patrol the coast, watching for any Germans who might try to come on shore. That was rather light duty as we figured no one would be stupid enough to take a chance on getting shot while landing if they could stay where they were with no one bothering them. As I remember, there was a 30 or 40 foot cliff overlooking the beach. There was a narrow road cut into and parallel to the cliff which would give you access to the beach with your vehicles.

"One day two troopers from either A, B, or C troop decided to wash their jeeps in the ocean. One jeep was a radio jeep and the other had a machine gun mounted on a post in the middle of it. I gather from what transpired, that these troopers were flat-land farmers with no knowledge of the ocean or tides. We were up on the cliff watching when the tide started coming in. The two troopers felt the sand getting soft and decided to get back before the jeeps got stuck. They made that decision too late as one of the jeeps got stuck. No problem, they just put one jeep behind the other, tied them together and started back.

"Again, the decision was too late. Now they had two jeeps stuck with the tide coming in; so they ran up the cliff and got a halftrack with a winch on it and parked it well back. They ran the cable out and hooked onto the rear jeep and began winching it in. Apparently the person who had tied the jeeps together didn't have Boy Scout training, as the jeeps separated. About that time an officer appeared on the scene and we saw him take off his pistol belt and head out into the water toward the jeeps. It was getting deep about then and he had to go down to fish up the ropes and he did get them together again, but now another revolting development popped up. By this time the water came in far enough to drown out the halftrack. Now they had two jeeps, one halftrack, one officer and two troopers in deep trouble. They came to us and wanted to take one of our tanks down to what was left of the beach to pull them out. No way!!! I don't remember how they got them out; maybe someone involved in this incident can enlighten us."

If you are one who had a part in this story how about contacting me with your version. It would make good reading and, after all, it happened 64 years ago. It should seem funny to you by now.

Now that I think about it, this story has a familiar ring. Dick names as a possibility three troops; one of which was involved in the vehicle saga; Troop A, B or C. B Troopers experienced a similar situation when a lieutenant, whose name will remain unknown to all except those who were with him, decided the right thing to do was to have the vehicles washed. I was not an eye witness but, as the story goes, a number of vehicles, mainly

Jeeps, were parked near or just in the water's edge and the washing procedure began. Before the job was completed, mess call was sounded and all vehicles were promptly abandoned. You guessed it; when the wash detail returned all vehicles were almost completely submerged. Obviously there was more than one who knew nothing about tides.

Dick's mention of the Channel Islands prompted me to go to Google; if for no other reason than to determine if both my memory and spelling were correct. I was correct on both counts and remembering this after 64 years encouraged me to the point that the next time I walk into a room and try to remember why I was there I'll have a good memory item to fall back on.

For those of you who remember patrolling the beach just in case the Germans might be crazy enough to attempt to get to the mainland, I am enclosing a bit more about those islands; courtesy of Google.

Their location is described as "A group of islands in the English Channel off the French coast of Normandy. They comprise two separate bailiwicks: the Bailiwick of Guernsey and the Bailiwick of Jersey." This then, dictates that our mission was doubled and we were guarding against any possible enemy action evolving from the Jersey Guernsey Islands. A bailiwick is a territory administered by a bailiff. The bailiff in each bailiwick is the civil head, presiding officer of the States, and also the head of the judiciary. The American Heritage Dictionary (second college edition) describes a bailiwick as "The office or district of a bailiff, or a person's specific area of interest skill or authority." The islands are classified as British Crown dependencies. Total population about 160,000. I'll bet that on D-Day, Hitler's finest were thanking their lucky stars that they were just island keepers and not faced with the Allied invasion force.

Google also reports the islands have been administered separately from each other since the late 13th century and have no common laws, no common elections and no common representative body. There is no common newspaper or radio station, but a common television station, ITV Channel Television.

During the war, the islands were the only part of the British Commonwealth occupied by Germany. The occupation, 1940-1945 was harsh, with some island residents being taken for slave labor on the continent. Native Jews were sent to concentration camps. Slave labor, primarily Russians and eastern Europeans, were brought to the islands to build fortifications. The Royal Navy blockaded the islands from time to time, particularly following the liberation of mainland Normandy in 1944.

The German troops on the islands surrendered only a few days after the final surrender in mainland Europe.

November brings another Veterans Day and in looking for something appropriate for the occasion I thought that a rerun of the article that Judy wrote about D Day 1994 would fit the bill just fine.

Judy wrote as follows; "As I sit here watching the images of June 6, 1944, the 50th anniversary of D-Day, I am still awed at the



**F/92nd Cavalry Recon. Son Andy, son Greg, and Doris Bland.**



**Millie and Sid Brickel [F/92].**

size of that operation. There were so many men - over the sides of the ships they came like so many ants leaving a picnic table. But, this was no picnic. How scared they must have been. But still they came. From the Maginot Line to a line in the sand they fought and died for their country. The bravest of the brave.

"I watch as President Clinton walks along the beach - strictly for a photo opportunity. His actions are so obviously insincere and an embarrassment to our country. He has no idea of the tremendous sacrifices made here. John F. Kennedy once wrote, 'Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and success of liberty.' These words tell me that we need to say it like it is, act accordingly and stop worrying about who might be offended.

"Throughout history, there has always been someone who either wants to take away what you have, or give you some ideology that you don't want. We thought we were safe for a long time, but now we know that wasn't true. Let freedom ring."

June 6, 2007, there was only mention in the media of D-Day, end quote.

Most of us were born within a few years after the end of WW I; the "War to End all Wars." That statement was followed by Prime Minister Chamberland's, "There will be peace in our time." Neither proved to be true and WW I was followed by WW II, followed by the Korean War which we were told was a "Police Action," followed by Viet Nam, followed by engagements in Panama, Bosnia, a small country in South America; name of which I can't recall, and the present day conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Maybe therein lies the reason people seem to forget - we have too many to remember.

**PRESIDENTS' FRIENDS** - No, not the ones appointed to lucrative jobs, but the four-legged ones. This is taken from an article appearing in our local paper, *The Carroll County Times*, listing the various pets who made it to the White House with their owners.

Truman - two dogs

Washington, Jackson, Grant - their wartime mounts

Jefferson - mockingbird

Adams - alligator and silk worms

Van Buren - two tiger cubs

Johnson - pet mice

Taft - a cow

Wilson - a ram

Coolidge - wallaby and pigmy hippo

Kennedy - butterflies

T. Roosevelt - lion, hyena, wildcat, badger, coyote, zebra, barn owl, raccoon, guinea pigs, bears, horses, ponies, dogs, cats, snakes, rats, lizards and roosters.

This is not a complete list as there were 24 Presidents before and after Truman who had one or more dog and other pets that found

their way into the White House including eight parrots, 14 cats (including T. Roosevelt's I believe), 10 canaries, six parakeets, four Billy goats, five guinea pigs, 12 hamsters and a great number of rabbits.

The article also noted that Obama and family had no pets at present but McCain has 14, including one dog, two turtles, three parakeets, 13 salt water fish and one cat. Now all of this is interesting, but I don't believe that it will help you one bit in deciding who our next President will be.

**IN MEMORIAM** - Both **Ken Knorr, [A]** and **Leoda Aten** wrote informing of the passing of **Arden D. Watts** (troop unknown). Both included a copy of his obituary.

Arden passed away Sept. 9, 2008, at age 86. After the service he worked for AC&F Industries until that plant closed, and then for Berwick Forge and Fabricating, retiring in 1983 from the Whitaker Corp. He was a drop hammer man and millwright during most of his working career. He was preceded in death by his wife, eight brothers, and four sisters. He was the last surviving member of his immediate family. He is survived by one son and daughter-in-law, five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

He was a member of the Berwick Christian Church, Trail Blazers and Good Sams Camping Clubs and Rock Run Fishing Club. Other interests included gardening and spending time with his great-grandchildren.

Just a couple of final thoughts; by the time you receive the November edition of the *HCN* we should have a new President-Elect. Whether your candidate won or lost, I hope you voted. I've heard a lot of promises lately from those who are running, but I wonder how many of them we'll actually see put into action.

I'm still waiting for some more letters or calls or emails. I need then to keep this column going.

As usual, please remember our service people; especially those in harm's way.



## 119TH ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION

**Mary Anne Delker**

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Email change: I have been in the process this month of changing my internet provider. The dialup service just isn't applicable anymore. I have gone to DSL wireless, which means a new email address. As noted above my new email address is mdelker@att.net. Please update your address book so you have the new email address coming up. The old email address will end in March.

As winter is approaching, I feel like I am sounding like a broken record this year. Once again we have been drenched upon with rain from Hurricane Ike. Our thoughts and prayers go out to any of our 12th Armored Division members along the Gulf Coast who have been affected by the hurricane. Hopefully we have seen the last for a while.

I hope everyone has enjoyed reading the October issue with all of the write-ups on the reunion in Abilene. I can speak for everyone when I say what a great time we all had.

I received a birthday card and letter from **John and Mary Jane Parkison** of B Company. I had written to them earlier and they were responding back to me. John also stated that **Glenn McCune** and **Wayne Johnson**, both of A Company, birthdays are also in September. A happy belated birthday to both Glenn and Wayne. If you would let me know when your birthday or anniversary is I'll gladly put it in the newsletter for that month so everyone

will know. Please remember I need the information two months ahead. John and Mary Jane were both very pleased to hear about my Outstanding Legacy award. In John's very first letter to me he wrote that I was a Godsend to be the 119th unit rep. He wrote now that he stands by what he said.

John also gave me an update on his VA formal appeals in Washington, DC. He received a letter from the Dept. of Veterans Affairs Regional Office Remand & Rating Development Team in Huntington, WV, on Aug. 21, 2008. Evidently his local Regional VA office backlog is so great they found that Huntington, WV, had time to handle his claim. He was happy that Oakland office was not in the picture at this time. On Aug. 27 they mailed my statement in support of claim to West Virginia. Hopefully they will be in touch with him soon.

John is working on a number of home repair projects that he wasn't able to get to this summer because of all the smoke from the wildfires in California. John, please stay off the roof and be careful.

I received a telephone call last night from **Julia Romano**. She wanted me to know that **Mike [HQ]** has been in the hospital since Sept. 9 (two weeks). After the reunion Mike went in for a stress test where they found a number of arteries that were blocked. He went in for angioplasty and they inserted a couple of stents. He had complications from the surgery and ended up in intensive care. He is currently in the rehab area and they are hoping that he will be able to go home later in the week. Our thoughts and prayers are with Mike for a speedy recovery. I have sent a get well card to Mike on behalf of everyone in the 119th.

Julia also told me that their son, Mike Jr., had a successful cataract surgery right after we saw them in Abilene and that he is hoping to get the stitches out later in the week. Hopefully now the Romanos can get some quiet time and stay away from the hospital and doctors for a while.

I received a call today from **Ernie Fitzherbert [C]** thanking me for sending him photos from the reunion. He was having trouble with his camera, so between my photos and photos from the **Confers** I was able to send him a nice selection. I also sent photos to **Bill Funke** of the 17th AIB that I had taken of the 17th members. Ernie was doing fine. He has been helping out a lady neighbor who has been having trouble getting around.

It looks like I will be getting a new car in the next couple of weeks. I was in a car accident and there isn't much left of the front end of my Hyundai. I'm doing fine. I have a nice size bruise from the seatbelt, but thankfully nothing is broken. Now it is just the hassle of dealing with the insurance company.

I received a very nice email from our treasurer, **A. Edward Pierce [A/56]** congratulating me on receiving the Legacy award. He enjoys reading my column every month and finds it very informative and interesting. I'm so glad to hear that the column is



*The Bill Confer [A/119] family at the Abilene Reunion.*

read and enjoyed by others outside the 119th. The column is really the voice of my men and their family members. I am just their means of getting it out.

It's not too early to start sending in your membership dues for the coming year. There was a membership form in the October *HCN* that you can fill out and send in. The new price is \$20 for the yearly membership. This is for all members who are not lifetime members. The organization is also asking that if our lifetime members are able, to please send in a donation to help cover the cost of postage and shipping of the *HCN* to you every month.

Now more reunion highlights: It was really a pleasure for me to meet more of the members of the 119th this year. For some of the veterans it had been a very long time since they had last seen each other. Such was the case for **William Confer** and **Russell Lowe**. We had so many different conversations going on in the hospitality room.

To show how small a world this really is, William Confer [A] realized that he had poured the concrete foundation for the house that **Bill and Lola Funke** of 17th AIB lived in back in the 60s, and to add to that the school that Bill taught music at was where his son and daughter-in-law went to school. They were not there when Bill was though. William was able to provide the museum with a number of names on photos that they had posted.

Update: I received a call from Julia Romano to update me on Mike. He is at home and doing much better. He has a lot more medicine to take now and has started rehab. She had heard about my car accident from Ernie Fitzherbert and wanted to know if I was okay. I reassured her I was.

On a personal note, I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to the family of legacy member, **Stuart Weiss [66th]**. I've known Stuart for a number of years and always enjoyed our conversations together. Last year in Covington we sat in the lobby of the hotel till after midnight talking away. I noticed in Abilene that he was not there and missed our conversations. The legacy organization has lost a dear individual.

I hope everyone has a Happy Thanksgiving. If you are going to partake in all of the fixings then remember to wear expandable pants, that way you still stay comfortable.



*Russell and Jackie Lowe [A/119] at the 2008 Reunion.*



## 134TH ARMORED ORDNANCE BATTALION

Kenneth Klinedinst

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Don Hering, Unit Rep Emeritus

Hello to all, November has arrived, along with the Birthday Club, provided by **Cliff Woycke**.

**Janice Bullwinkle [C]**, **John McNull [A]**, **Doris Beaver [C]**, **Lee Mizer [A]**, **Gladys Lehman [B]**, and **Doris Fish [C]**. Happy

With little communications from the unit, I thought it would be appropriate repeat the 134th column from the September 1964 *Hellcat News*.

### 134th Ord. Bn. News

"These reunions are sure a big part of my life. I'll spend the next six months thinking of this one and from February on thinking of the next one. I'll be able to spend at least five months reminiscing about the Fort Knox tour alone. The V.I.P. treatment we received there was fabulous including the chow they served to 300 of us Hellcats on the tour. One of the highlights of the tour was the Patton Museum but what impressed me most was a tour of the motor pool. The newest types of equipment were on display including an armored wrecker that can lift a tank completely off the ground. A large part of the heavy equipment is also water borne. As a matter of fact the only thing we could recognize from the old days was the color of the paint. One tank had changed so much **Roy Davis** had trouble figuring out what end was the front. Nowadays the battalion C.O. has an armored tank completely fitted out as an office for operation with desk, cabinets, about six radios and still enough headroom to pace the floor.

"The 134th didn't have quite the turnout that many of us expected. However nearly everyone showed up on Thursday night and a handful on Friday and Saturday. **Fay Pinno** let **Herb** come alone. She couldn't make it as the famous Leonard's Department Store of Fort Worth, TX, changed their inventory date the last minute.

"The really big news that was kept a secret was that our own **Melba Ray** was expecting a new little tax deduction on our reunion weekend. Every year at the reunions **Melba** and **Kenny** saw the 12th Armored Free Baby Sitting Service and they wanted to take advantage of it. We congratulate **Melba** and **Kenny** and as I've been telling you all the time, these reunions sure help keep you young.

"**Col. Paul Wood** sent his regrets from Manila, Phillipines, on not attending the reunion. They are just starting to dig their way out after experiencing one of the worst hurricanes in their history.

"**Wayne Dozier [C/HQ]** invites anyone visiting near Edison, GA, to stop in and see him at his 3 Springs Ranch. It must be a mecca for hunters. His wife must be another **Bonita McNaull**. Between these two women I bet they could cook up a storm. Too bad **Wayne's** plans for attending the reunion did not materialize because the "C" Co. men in attendance are making plans to get as many of their men as they can go to Cleveland in 1965.

"B Co. pooped out a little this time in attendance and the 134th had to settle for a tie with the 714th in having the most attendance this year. Cleveland should be the biggest turnout we've ever had. It will be easy if we who plan to go will write and talk it up with the other 12th Armored men we correspond with or meet.

"Don't forget to plan on our 19th reunion in Cleveland. As **Kenny Ray** says, "Do it now!" Oh yes, get your dues in now and receive your new association roster. There are 131 names listed from Ordnance with many new members and corrected addresses. So for a lousy three bucks let's get with it." Written by **Harold Henricks [A]**.

Hope all of you have a Happy Thanksgiving.

## 152ND ARMORED SIGNAL COMPANY

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The eternal election 'campaign' (and I spelled it that way for a reason) is settled and I pray each of you are snug and safe in your

homes enjoying this season. Today is Sept. 29, the history making day the stock market took a plunge of 777 pts. The highest points drop in history. We do not know if the House will eventually pass this 700 billion dollar package or if by some chance someone finds the guts to trust the market to correct itself and let the dust settle. By the time you read this we should have an idea of how this thing will work out. I wonder if the bailout has cost us a trillion dollars yet? So we wait and see. Not having lived through the Depression I must admit to being a little bit nervous about the whole thing. As a 'starving college student' and single mother in the mid sixties, I learned how to squeeze a dime and I can do that again. But there are a whole lot of people out there who have no idea how to live on less.

I could really bore you with one of my pet peeves about taking Home Economics out of the schools. It might still be there, but generally in a way that is so watered down as to be useless to the students now and in their future. For some, the thought of cooking something from scratch or repairing clothes is a completely foreign idea. Enough!

I received a letter from **Grace Riggio Greenberg**, daughter of the late **Dominic Riggio**. The letter reads as follows: Dear **Bill and Martha Velasquez/Bill Cure**, haven't talked with you now for a year or two. Dad is gone now for four years (Sept. 12, 2004) and we still miss him dearly. Just wanted to let all of you know that I enjoy reading the *Hellcat News* each month. Sorry to hear about **Albert Sharer's** death. I remember Dad speaking of him and remember seeing him and his family at reunions in the past. Please extend my sympathy to his family. Wanted to also say hello to **Larry Mintz** and wish him improved health. I remember him and **Janet** also from many of the reunions. I am sending a big hello to **William Cure** and his family. He is another wonderful man whom Dad always looked forward to seeing at the reunion. I understand the reunion is this month. Regards from the family of **Dominic Riggio** whose birthday we remember today. We are proud of Dad and proud of the good men with whom he served in the 12th Armored Division, 152 Signal Company. God Bless all of you. Sincerely **Grace Riggio Greenberg** and family.

I received an email from **Bill and Martha Velasquez** asking for prayer for **Sarah Palin**. Thank you for your support and keeping me in emails.

I have not heard how **Walt Brokop** is doing this month so how about a shout out and we hope this finds you well on your way to recovery!

I received a phone call from **Richard and Pat Houston** about the two pictures that appeared on page 15 in the column for the 494th Armored Field Artillery of the August issue of the *Hellcat News*. They said that it had appeared in the *HCN* about seven years ago with the names identified when they sent in the picture. The picture was taken in early October of 1942 at Camp Campbell when the 152nd Signal Company was just forming. They also said that it is **Richard Houston** who is pictured in the top row, the second from the left in the first picture. In the second picture **Richard** is the first person on the right in the back row. They also said that **Larry Mintz**, **Richard Quinn**, **Byron Avery Hurt**, **Frank Crowell**, 'Scotty' (can't remember the last name but he left the company), and **Lt. Van Cortland** (he broke his back) were also in the picture. **Pat and Richard** said that age and poor eyesight prevented them from identifying the men in the picture now. Thank you so much for letting us know this much and maybe someone with back issues of the *HCN* can further refine this information and solve this mystery.

I spent two weeks with Dad (**William 'Bill' Cure**) rather than come to the reunion. At the time of the reunion Dad thought he had broken his back and he was in considerable pain. He does have some compression of the 12th vertebrae but it is not considered a fracture. He really wanted to be with you all again at the 62nd Reunion.

His last blood tests showed the highest cancer levels yet. He has been in a rehabilitation hospital since his second resection. Rick and I are leaving on Thursday morning to go to Indiana. Dad wants to come home and I will stay in Indiana to see if I can do what needs to be done to keep him home. Well, you never know what you can do unless you try.

I got this as email. There are four things you can never get back: The stone after it is thrown; the word after it is spoken; the occasion after it is over; the time after it is gone.

#### *The Garbage Truck Life*

One day I hopped in a taxi and we took off for the airport. We were driving in the right lane when suddenly a black car jumped out of a parking space right in front of us. My taxi driver slammed on his breaks, skidded and missed the other car by just inches! The driver of the other car whipped his head around and started yelling and screaming at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy; and I mean he was really friendly! So I asked, 'Why did you just do that? That guy almost ruined your car and sent us to the hospital!' That is when the taxi driver taught me what I now call 'the Law of The Garbage Truck'.

He explained that many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it and sometimes they'll dump it on you! Don't take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on. Don't take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home, or on the streets.

The bottom line is we do not have to let garbage trucks take over our day. Life is too short to wake up in the morning with regrets, so... 'Love the people who treat you right and pray for the ones who don't.'

Today take the time to tell someone that you love them! Have a Happy Thanksgiving and count those blessings no matter the 'swirl' that is around you!



## 493RD ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY

Marvin Bertelson  
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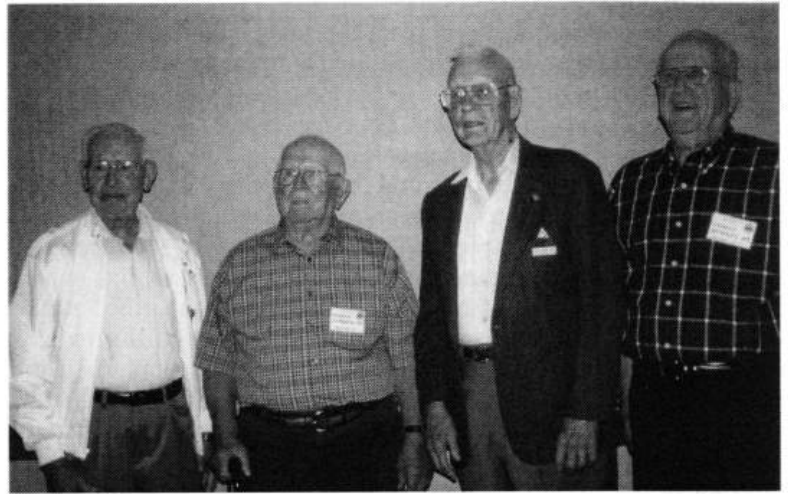
**NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS:** 1 - Rose Gangi [A], 11 - Irwin Metz [SV], 13 - Stephen Tratnik [C], 18 - Francis Beckman [C], Ann Tratnik [C], 22 - Amidio Passero [C].

**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:** 18 - Ramon Flores [A], 19 - Mrs. Samuel Gambitta [SV], 23 - Lois Bertelson [C], 25 - Jess Rollin [HQ].

I received a birthday card from **Dorothy Shoemaker [C]** in September and was glad to hear the next National Reunion is in Branson, MO. She plans to attend. Perhaps we will have a larger attendance than in Abilene?

I received a phone call from **Anne Sarles** and a letter from **Mike Woldenberg** that **Orville Sarles [B]** died on Sept. 4, 2008. There was an Honor Guard at the cemetery and *Taps* was played. Orville's son stated how proud Orville was of his service and of the 493rd FA and 12th AD. Mike sent a copy of the obituary from the *Buffalo News*. It stated Orville founded appliance stores, spent retirement running, golfing and gardening. He died in Beechwood Nursing Home, Amherst, at the age of 87.

He was drafted into the army at the age of 21 and served with the 12th Armored Division. A serious runner, Mr. Sarles won the 60 and over division of a five-mile race in the 1980s. Years earlier, his athleticism helped police collar two men who fled from the scene of an accident in front of his Grant Street store. Mr. Sarles chased the two suspects until they collapsed from exhaustion. The



**493rd Artillery at the Abilene Reunion, August 2008. L-R: Harry Schultz [A], Porter Hamrick [A], Marvin Bertelson [C], and George Hundley [B].**

Buffalo PD honored him as a Citizen of the Year.

During the 1970s and '80s Mr. Sarles hired many young men for part-time sales work. Many went into prominent careers. "For those kids, Orville was a mentor that really taught them some values," his son said. "These guys really feel the experience working for my father...shaped their lives in a lot of ways."

Besides the son and wife Anne of 56 years, survivors include three daughters, Janne Breindel, Cheryl Franz and Dorien; and a sister Evelyn Franclemont.

Don't forget to send in your membership in the 12th AD Memorial Museum. I just sent mine in to Vanessa Harris. The museum is on the top ten places to visit when in Abilene.

I received a birthday card from **Donald Betz [B]**. He is fine except for a balance problem and his knees give him some problem. His two daughters and two sons keep in touch with him often. He will be 87 on Jan. 14. He is proud of his kids and 16 grandchildren.

I received a birthday card from **Sarah Wates [B]** and that she enjoys reading my column and was very impressed with son Dale's *Father's Day Message*. She remembers when her husband **Vernon Wates** was unit rep many years ago. Sarah was sorry she could not make the Abilene reunion. She keeps in contact with **Marie Farrand**, **Rene Boland** and **Anne Sarles**. She states it is great to be a "HELLKITTEN." Thanks for the card Sarah, and write again.

In the photo in this column are those who attended the Abilene reunion in 2008: Left to right are **Harry Schultz [A]**, **Porter Hamrick [A]**, **Marvin Bertelson [C]**, and **George Hundley [B]** Who will drink the last bottle of wine?

Gentle thoughts for today: The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement. The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.



## 494TH ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY

Ted N. Glogovac  
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Greetings Hellcats and Hellkittens! This is the month of Thanksgiving and I hope we all have something to be grateful for; family, friends, loved ones, our freedom, and those whose sacrifices helped preserve this great country. It is also the month of Veteran's Day, so let me take this opportunity to say "thank you" for your service to all of the members of the 12th Armored Division and to the rest of the members of the association who have served in our armed forces.



**Alfred and Mary Tyler at the August 2008 Reunion.**

This November marks another very special occasion. No, not the Presidential election, although I'm sure by now the mud-slinging should be over or at least winding down! Nov. 6 marked the 100th birthday of the 494th's own **Joseph Ahles [C]**. Unless I'm mistaken, Joe is the oldest living veteran of the 12th. He was recently recognized for his service to his country during "A Salute to American Heroes" ceremony and dinner that was hosted by the Mayfair Veterans Committee, the Mayfair Lions and the 39th Ward Democratic Organization in Chicago on Nov. 2. I'm sure Joe doesn't think of himself as a hero, but he is, as are all of the veterans of the 12th Armored Division. Please join me in congratulating Joe on such a remarkable milestone!

I recently finished reading "*War's Winter Night*" by former submariner and friend of the Hellcats, **Edward Monroe-Jones**. It's a very good book about the 12th Armored Division and the 10th SS Panzer Division, who eventually clashed in Herrlisheim. The author expertly uses historical records and first-person accounts from selected individuals on both sides to recount the climatic and fierce meeting of the then-inexperienced 12th and the "Frundsberg" division, which was a seasoned unit of the Russian Front, Normandy and Arnhem campaigns.

Monroe-Jones begins the book with the young soldiers' initiation into the military, training, and subsequent baptism in combat. For some, the result of war is being wounded or enduring life as a POW. The author attempts to illustrate that both the American and German soldiers were just everyday people trying to survive and do the job they were assigned the best they could. Although the Germans in the book were volunteers in the Waffen SS, Monroe-Jones asks the reader not to lump them together with others from the Schutzstaffel, or regularly SS, who are often associated with the notorious atrocities committed by Nazi Germany. I will leave that conclusion up to the reader, especially those of you who fought in the ETO.

Lastly, in the August issue of the *Hellcats News*, **Benjamin Altchek [B]** provided a couple of photos of some good-looking GI's posing for the camera in their Class As at Camp Campbell. The identities of some of these guys remains a mystery, but **Richard Houston [152]** has help shed the light on a few of them. In addition to himself and Ben, he knows that the following men were in the photos that day; **Larry Mintz [152]**, **Brian Everhart**, **Frank (Fred?) Kroll [119]**, **? Boss (maybe Glen Boss [17]?)** and **Scotty ?**. If you can recognize any of the faces or names, let me know and maybe we can get this puzzle put together.



## 495TH ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY

**Kenneth E. Poucher, PhD**  
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765-288-0057 kenpoucher@comcast.net

Well, back to the drawing board for another column with no news received from the 495th membership. But I did get some pictures which may be reproduced in the column in future months.

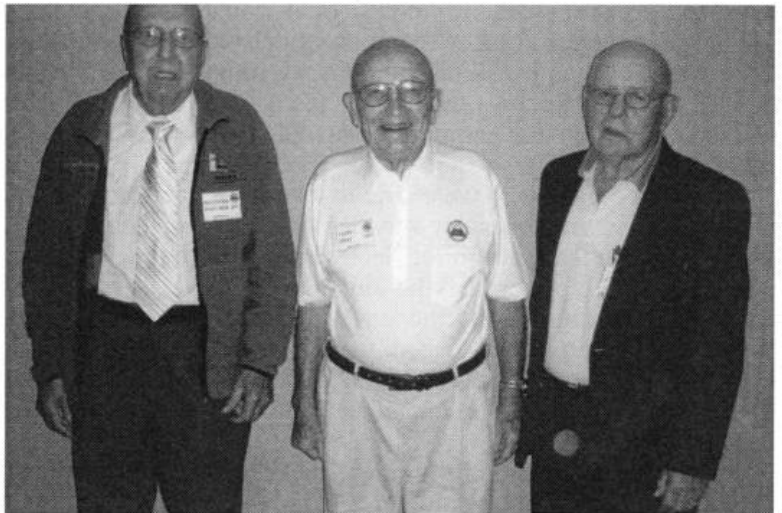
**Linda** and I have marked our calendar for Aug. 12-15, 2009, for the 63rd Annual Reunion of the 12th Armored Division. It is a ten hour drive to Branson from Muncie, IN, four lanes all the way, so to make the most of the drive, we will attend the reunion on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Then stay over for Sunday, Monday and Tuesday to see some shows, and drive back on Wednesday, the good Lord willing. We had a Branson bus tour scheduled for October which was canceled, so we will make up for it next August. We have a Caribbean cruise scheduled for January and a visit to Phoenix scheduled in May if all goes well.

To continue results from my membership survey – **Robert E. Burns**.

Bob was in his second year of college when WWI was declared and he tried to enlist in the Marines, but was rejected because of health reasons. He was permitted to complete his college, was subsequently drafted from Timberlake, SD, and sent to Fort Snelling, MT. Since he could type he had the option of staying at Ft. Snelling. He opted to ship out and was sent to the 12th Armored Division where he was healthy enough to perform the "cannoneer's hop." He was assigned to "A" Battery and was a corporal battery clerk.

After hostilities in Europe he was discharged on Jan. 24, 1946. He married Lafern Scott Lapointe, since deceased, and has one living son, one grandchild and one great-grandchild. Bob taught school in Hudson, CO. Healthwise he has not fared so well. He reported seven surgical procedures including three knee replacements, but still lives at home at 10876 Crosby Drive, Sun City, AZ 85351; telephone 625-815-8086. (Editor's note: Bob enclosed a letter which was very informative and I appreciate it very much. Thanks Bob.)

**Gilbert W. Fisher**. Gil was inducted from Belgrade, MT, and was a T/5 radio operator in Hq. Btry. After discharge he returned to civilian life and was leasee of a private telephone company. He later was associated with ATT and TTelCo and Quest. He did not explain the association. He married Florence G. Maichel on May 7, 1943, in Bozeman, MT and has two living sons, five grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His health is not bad, but



**495th AFA, Abilene, TX, 62nd National Reunion. L-R: Ken Poucher, Clint Seitz, and Len Gildehaus.**



**Abilene, TX, 62nd National Reunion. Ken Poucher [HQ/495] in his usual position, but out of uniform.**

has survived three surgeries including an aneurysm. Florence passed away in 1967 and he remarried in May 1969 to Lydia who is also deceased. He is living in a private home at 775 Doane Road in Bozeman, MT 59718; telephone 406-585-9851; email shergw@PeoplePc.com.

Next edition: Bob McMillen and Patrick Tomasulo and Dr. Arthur Wickham (deceased).

## 714TH TANK BATTALION

Pat and Mary Koenig, P.O. Box 238, Fairfax, SD 57335  
605-654-2181 koenig\_mary@hotmail.com

Note: On the way home from Abilene, Mom and I stopped for a couple of hours of shopping and to get our Reunion photos developed so we could get these in the September *HCN* right away – don't know if the article that got emailed was one of those "lost-in-space" ordeals or not, but it didn't make the column then. Will "grace" you with it now, along with a couple of other "add-ins" – sorry for missing you in September!

I have to start this month with an apology of sorts – "Elvis Milner," whom many of you may have seen featured on the two posters that were placed in each of the elevators at the Elegante in Abilene on Saturday afternoon before the banquet, was in fact, a creation of our "resident prankster" of the 714th, who's identity shall remain a secret, except to those who know him well, to those who are getting better acquainted with him, and especially to those who are the so-called "victims" of his countless, all-just-for-the-fun-of-it, practical jokes – and as you already know by now, there was no Elvis in action Saturday evening, no free scarves handed out, and hopefully, no broken hearts for those who maybe had their hopes up that another Elvis would be performing at our banquet!

For those of you who were able to take in the performance of the "real" Elvis impersonator at either the ladies luncheon Friday afternoon, or at the "second set" later that same evening, he was a very entertaining performer who did, in my opinion, do a nice job imitating "The King." And those who did remain at the banquet Saturday evening were treated to a fantastic array of many favorites, as played by the Abilene Community Band. Hats off to those who were able to line up such FANTASTIC entertainment for us to enjoy!

As for yours truly (and Mom, Pat, too), we've been counting our blessings over and over to have had worked out being able to make the trek to Texas – plans weren't looking very promising due to scheduling conflicts and an unexpected vehicle expense that ended up thankfully being half of what had been originally

estimated for repair. Getting together with our Hellcat family *always* makes any trip more than worth it if things can be worked out to go!

Numbers are definitely dwindling. Some of this can be attributed to the higher cost of oil and gasoline, but it's truly amazing to see those Hellcats and Hellkittens that are able to come, still maneuvering around in fine fashion, and many of them with a good number of family and/or friends in tow, as well!

On behalf of the 714th, I'd like to offer our heartiest congratulations to all of our most-deserving award winners at the Abilene Reunion. There are still a good number in our ranks who do a spectacular job in helping to keep our wonderful Division going strong and it's nice they can be recognized in such a special way. Notable mention here goes to our Blue Ribbon Award winner, **John Critzas**, his wife, **Ruby**, who was named Woman of the Year, and to **George Good Jr.** for his Outstanding Legacy Member Award. These 714th members, along with all of the other award winners, as well as so many others, really do take the time to more than go out of their way to do their part in helping to make this organization the special group that it truly is and always will be – we can't thank you enough!

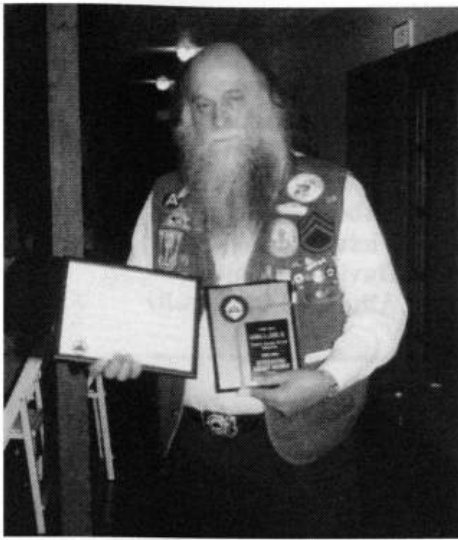
Another Reunion highlight, of course, was the museum and the many who had the chance to take the tour and check out the original displays, as well as the new additions. Contributions to this wonderful preservation of the 12th's History are always more than welcome. They can be mailed to: 12th Armored Division Memorial Museum, 1289 2nd St., Abilene, TX 79601. A number of very generous donors were graciously thanked at Saturday evening's Banquet, but such an endeavor is always in need of the income for all of the expense needed to keep such a project going, and our museum is something to take a lot of pride in, so please consider making a donation.

Some were able to take in a tour of the Frontier Texas Museum as well – good reports of an enjoyable time had by all who ventured there – and, unfortunately, all that is left of Camp Barkley is a historical marker at what used to be the entrance to the camp, but a few made their way out to reminisce of the training days there.

I heard some very favorable remarks regarding holding a buffet setup for the Unit suppers, which involved having everyone in attendance from all Units who registered for the meal, gathered as one big group to enjoy the fare, and **Dr. Brendan Phibbs**, former combat surgeon with the 12th Armored CCB, gave an excellent address at Saturday evening's banquet, relating a mix of some of his experiences with a bit of humor here and there, and captivating the audience with the rest of his talk, which included the topic of "Revisionists who want to stand history on its head and try to revamp the facts." They can't justify the Holocaust – who really can??? To even deny that it happened at all is abhorable to



**At our Abilene Reunion – The "Dynamic Duo" of John and Ruby Critzas [A/714], who both work so very hard for the 12th Armored Division.**



**Outstanding Legacy Member, George Good Jr. [C/714], displays the awards he received at Abilene.**

especially those who were there to live through it – those victims in the concentration camps, and our Hellcats, among others in particular!!! What a powerful speech . . .

It was fantastic to be in such good company once again with the almost 300 attendees. Our 714th faction consisted of: **Earl and Lisa Norris, Nancy Heublien, and John and Ruby Critzas**, along with their son, **Blake** and his family from A Company; **Ray and Edie Milner**, their son **Steve**, his wife **Karen**, and their 3rd generation representative, grandson/son **Josh, Hurshel DeHart**, his sister **Marie**, and nephews **Jim and John Seay**, and **Pat and Mary Koenig** from B Company; **Wayne Colony, George Good, Jr., and Joan Denman** (guest), of C Company; and **Pauline Ball**, with her daughter **Barbara Ball Campbell, Dorothy (Dot) Thompson**, and **Jesse Leon Russell**, along with a wonderful representation from his family, which included his wife, children, and spouses for a grand total of a party of nine! We do miss so many that have been able to attend past reunions who are now not able to do so, and we are so very thankful for those who are still able to come – hopefully we can keep the numbers strong for our future gatherings!!!

We had a message from **Blanche Turner** upon our return home from Abilene. She and her husband **Jim [B]**, weren't able to attend this year due to some health issues Blanche has been having, mainly with her legs. It was great having the chance to get to visit with them over the phone, though. The Turners were able to attend a local celebration called "Mountain Days" this past weekend where Jim had the opportunity to "jam" with some of the musicians he has played with over the years – two of whom have made it pretty big in the music world. Jim plays banjo, mandolin, and has a great big bunch of harmonicas – said he didn't play on the big stage at the celebration, but was able to still "mix it up pretty well" with the group otherwise!

We are saddened to have received the news of the passing of two more of our Hellcats recently – **Kinzie Watkins [SV]**, and **Billy L. Lucas [B]**. **Quentin Skelton [SV/43]**, relayed the news about Kinzie to his unit rep, who in turn, relayed the news to me. Unfortunately, no other details are available regarding Kinzie, but our most heartfelt sympathy goes out to his family in his loss.

**Doris Lucas**, Billy's wife, called with the news of the passing of her husband on March 14, 2008. He was 86 years old and had been residing in a nursing home – was diagnosed with cancer, had two operations that required blood transfusions that resulted in Billy contracting diabetes as well, and he passed away in a local hospital after a 10-year battle with his ailments. Doris and Billy were able to enjoy 68 years of marriage, and also enjoyed attending a few of the Hellcat Reunions. Your condolences can be sent to Doris, if you wish, at: 1004 N. Washington St., Springfield, OH 45123. Doris stated that both she and Billy felt great to be Hellcats! She also stated that Billy loved everybody, and everybody loved Billy! Our deepest sympathy goes out to you and your family, as well, Doris!

In a quest to find out about the whereabouts of five from the 714th Tank Battalion to see who to still keep on the active mailing list, I was unable to come up with any new contact information about **Paul Dapuzzo** (wasn't even able to track down which company he was with), or with **Elden F. Heusing** (got the message that the phone number had been disconnected and unfortunately haven't taken the time to go the regular correspondence route yet to see if there would be an answer from his end). We're sad to report that **Raymond C. Bailey [B]** is deceased. We were able to be in contact with him a number of times throughout the years and always enjoyed our visits over the phone. What good memories we have of so many . . . !

To counter with a much happier note, I had the chance to reach **Vincent Brackett [SV]** and **Gerald C. Roche [C]**, who both very much wish to stay on the mailing list. Had a nice conversation with Vincent, but had to cut it short when he had to see a family member off who was visiting at the time. Also had a nice visit with Gerald who celebrates his 91st birthday on Sept. 11. If you'd like to send a card you can do so at: Gerald Roche, 3910 Galen Ct. Apt. 2212, Sun City Center, FL 33573 – I'm sure he'd love to hear from any and all!

Gerald put me in contact with his daughter, **Pat**, who happened to be visiting him at the time. She is from Massachusetts and was scheduled to return within the next few days when we had "tracked" each other down, and, most fortunately for our sakes, Pat took the time to gather together and send our way the photos Gerald so graciously agreed to lend for use in our *Hellcat News* – a lot of remarkable treasures that will be published in future issues! He had sent the photos home from the front, and Pat notes that, "Thank God for that keepsake-saving grandmother, Anna Langhans Roche, or we'd have NO record!" We thank God for people like you, Pat and Gerald, as well!

One last item – it's understandable with the time constraints of being a mother, teacher, etc., that **Shannon Hardison** has regretfully decided to relinquish her role as co-rep for the 714th, but an open invitation is still hers if she would ever find the time to "sneak in" one of her columns if and when she does find the time. We appreciate your efforts, we've enjoyed your columns, and we wish you well, Shannon!

With that, I'll close by just letting all of you know that we really enjoy the phone calls, emails, personal chit-chats, etc., that we receive from you. In a nice visit with **Kenneth Poucher**, unit rep for the 495th Armored Field Artillery (also with his lovely wife and others in the hospitality room), he talked about a questionnaire he came up with to send to those in his Unit to "scrounge up" more tidbits for his column. I like that idea and hope to make the time to



**Gerald Roche [C/714], 1st Cadre to the 12th Armored, and a German Tiger tank.**



**Lisa and Earl Norris [A/714] enjoying the Abilene Reunion.**

be able to do the same with the 714th, so be prepared!

Until next time . . .

P.S. to **Bill Gould** – thank you for your letter. We also thank you for your compliments and will try to get the magazine clip out to our 714-ers and see what they have to say about it – What a wonderful assortment we're just starting to receive to put into our column! Keep on sending us the info!!!



## LEGACY GROUP

**Kenneth Klinedinst**

**94 Bean Rd, Warner, NH 03278**

**603-456-2717 kbk@conknet.com**

Hello to all, by the time you receive this issue Thanksgiving will be in full swing, wishing you and your loved ones a very happy holiday.

I have been reading a book titled, "*A Front Seat in Hell*" by **J.W. Arbuckle**. J.W. served as a Forward Observer [FO] with the 493rd AFA Battery C. What I find interesting is his story about his early days in the Army, starting in the National Guard, moving to active duty, training before Dec. 7, 1941, moving to Camp Campbell and on to Camp Barkeley. I recommend you get a copy of his book, since it is also the story of most of our 12th AD veterans in their early days as a division.

**Ed Pierce**, our association treasurer, asked me if I could find a list of past association presidents and publish their names. Some of you may find this interesting as well.

Regards, Ken

### *The early years.*

| YEAR | PRESIDENT                  |
|------|----------------------------|
| 1945 | <b>Richard R. Gorton</b>   |
| 1947 | <b>Jean Norton</b>         |
| 1948 | <b>Edward F. Seiller</b>   |
| 1949 | <b>John F. Sheehan</b>     |
| 1950 | <b>John F. Sheehan</b>     |
| 1951 | <b>William J. Cure</b>     |
| 1952 | <b>Wesley F. Gardiner</b>  |
| 1953 | <b>Karl G. Snyder</b>      |
| 1954 | <b>LeRoy W. Bense, Sr.</b> |
| 1955 | <b>Leonard P. Dooley</b>   |
| 1956 | <b>Leonard P. Dooley</b>   |
| 1957 | <b>Leonard P. Dooley</b>   |
| 1958 | <b>John T. Williams</b>    |
| 1959 | <b>John T. Williams</b>    |
| 1960 | <b>Jack Miller</b>         |
| 1961 | <b>Jack Miller</b>         |
| 1962 | <b>William Johnson</b>     |

1963  
1964  
1965  
1966  
1967  
1968  
1969  
1970  
1971

**John V. Clarke**  
**John V. Clarke**  
**Grady B. Rowell**  
**Grady B. Rowell**  
**Lawrence E. Mintz**  
**Robert H. Saehloff**  
**Victor Challen**  
**David Golden**  
**Albert L. Lipschultz**

# HELLCAT HISTORY

**Edward Waszak, Historian**

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## *History of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion Part Two*

This month I would like to present a further sample of the contents of the 56th AIB logbook that was discovered by legacy Hellcat, Mike Woldenberg, while searching for information on the 12th Armored Division at the National Archives in College Park, MD.

The logbook, 11 inches by 17 inches, when copied on standard paper (8½ by 11), yielded about 60 pages of very small hand writing.

Last month I tried to give you an example of the contents of the logbook. This time I selected a portion of the "Wounded In Action" section to emphasize a number of very bad days in combat. I imagine this will bring back some painful memories, but now after more than 60 years, it will give you some information and give you an insight in the great endeavor that we all experienced for our country.

The days selected are Jan. 8 and 9, 1945, and Jan. 16, 17, and 18, 1945. The place was Alsace, France, a few miles west of the Rhine River near the towns of Gambsheim, Offendorf, and Herrlisheim, about 24 mile north of Strasbourg. The weather was very cold with intermittent sleet and snow. The local civilians said it was the coldest winter in the past 50 years.

***The weather was very cold with intermittent sleet and snow. The local civilians said it was the coldest winter in the past 50 years.***

After the Ardennes Offensive (Battle of the Bulge) began to fall apart in the last week of December 1944, Hitler realized he had to launch his second surprise, "Operation Nordwind." On Jan. 1, 1945, as you all know, the Germans began a new offensive in the thinly held Seventh Army sector, with the objective of recapturing Strasbourg, Haguenau, and Saverne and destroying the Seventh Army. We know that the Germans did not reach their objectives and the offensive was a total failure.

The logbook had the following entries in the "Wounded In Action" section for the dates mention above.

8 Jan 45 – S/Sgt Murnik, Brzezicki, Pfc Windham, Kultz Co. A --- Sgt Begley, Pfc Dewitt, Evans, Havener, Kearney, Carr, Sgt --- Pfc Parker, Capt Beach, Pfc Piccinni, Pfc Sampsun, Philip, T/Sgt Gulley, Pfc Mohr, Zandoma (DOW), Garancheski Co. B --- S/Sgt Lane, Sgts Rallings, Trolinger, Pfc Allendoerfer, Tedrowe, S/Sgt Giangregorio, Capt Fairbairn, Pfc Douglass, Pokerilak, Turner,

Cromer, Jones J M, Mollan, Krueger, Sgt Carrigan, Pfc Ametrani Co. C --- Capt Zimmerman, S/Sgt Glusman M/D.

9 Jan 45 - Pvt Weaver, Sgt. Seymour, Pfc Oneill, Mattson, Keller, Learned, Heinig, Utterback, Moe, Rushing, 1st Lt Van Dehoef, Pfc Massey, Breitenberg, Cpl Dodd, S/Sgt Bator, Pvt Dye, Pvt Daniels, Rairr, Pfc Trimble, Thornburg, Novak, De Meo, 2nd Lt Casner, Pfc Paterra, Pfc Hurley Co. C, Pfc Day, De Silva, Hinojosa, Nienaber, Long, Oostman, Co C --- Sgt Petrella HQ Co. --- Pfc Blue Co B

The above two dates are remembered as the Initial Assault on Herrlisheim. The next equally bloody dates are Jan. 16, 17, and 18, 1945. This operation involved more of the 12th Armored Division and included attacks on Offendorf, Stainwald, and Herrlisheim.

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***On Jan. 1, 1945, as you all know, the Germans began a new offensive in the thinly held Seventh Army sector with the objective of recapturing Strasbourg, Haguenau, and Saverne and destroying the Seventh Army.***

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The logbook entries for those dates are as follows:

16 Jan 45 - T/Sgt Clubb, Bn Hq --- Pfc Ricketts, Safrin, Wolleburg, Sgt Russell, Hq Co --- Pfc Richards, Clarence, Ashford, Pvt Burnopp, T/Sgt Plawecki, Pfc Csider, Pfc Sprecher, Salas, McKinley, 2nd Lt Brown, Pfc Barnett, Pvt Letsinger, S/Sgt Argulewicz, Pfc Walter, Capt Drass, Sgt Keller, Cole, Pfc Segro, Siemers, Pvt Feiock, Pfc Diehl, Halfmann, Tarney, Sgt Carda Co A --- Pfc Blue, Neumann, Prsbrey, Carr, S/Sgt Peischel, Pfc Whitier, Miller, S/Sgt Swartz, Pfc Jadrich, Co. B --- 2nd Lt Ference, Pfc Anderson, Mathis, Kuester, 2nd Lt Russell, Pvt Gallagher, Pfc Sarkis, Young, S/Sgt Thomas, Schielke, T/Sgt Huddleston, Pfc Palma, Taylor, Pickleman, Orris, Kane, Ferrero, S/Sgt Otto, Co. C --- Pfc Baldwin M/D

17 Jan 45 - Sgt Benner HQ Co. --- Pfc Chapman, S/Sgt Owens, Pfc Porter, S/Sgt Mottola, Jaeger, Pfc Sparins, Sgt Courtwright, Pfc Simmons, Curd, Dickey, Sedesse, Welch Co. B --- Pfc Ballinger, Sekel, S/Sgt Warner, Pfc Killby, Fafrak, Fintel, Sgt Brings, Pfc Sorenson, Ahlman, Brown, Paterra, Co. C

18 Jan 45-----Pvt Williams, Pfc Welch, T/5 Summers, Co. B

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***Operation Nordwind lasted from the first hour of January 1945 till Jan. 26, 1945, when the German Army withdrew most of their battered forces for relocation to the Eastern Front.***

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Operation Nordwind lasted from the first hour of January 1945 till Jan. 26, 1945, when the German Army withdrew most of their battered forces for relocation to the Eastern Front. The Germans lost about 23,000 troops and the Seventh Army lost about 14,000 troops (KIA, WIA, MIA, and non-battle casualties) in the 26 days of combat. I would say that this was a major battle and it was the "last offensive" of the War for the Germans, but the media and the Army Brass did not see it that way. C'est La Guerre, as the French say.....

#### RESOURCES

Angelo Pasquesi [HQ/56]  
Mike Woldenberg [L-A/56]  
National Archives, College Park  
Unknown Logbook Authors



## HEROES ALL

By A. Edward Pierce [A/56]

The previous short stories that I have written have all been factual, but for the most part they have dealt with the more humorous occurrences that I experienced while serving as a rifleman with the first rifle squad, second platoon of Company A, of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion. This endeavor, however, is my recollection of some of the more horrific moments during our time in France and Germany.

It all began with the death of 2nd Lt. Neville L. Dillon on Dec. 21, 1944, the first officer of the 56th AIB to be killed in action. Lt. Dillon was the second platoon's leader. A few days later, I do not have the exact date, PFC James E. Hogue was very seriously wounded by rifle fire. We could not attend to him right away, and had to wait until nightfall to get to him for evacuation. Jim never returned to the unit, but he did survive his wounds after a long period of hospitalization both in Europe and in the U.S.A.

The war truly hit home with me on Jan. 9, 1945, when S/Sgt. James A. Sillery was killed just about ten feet in front of me in Herrlisheim. He was on the opposite side of the street from me when he spotted a sniper firing from the second story window of a home. He was in direct sight of the sniper, so he attempted to cross to my side of the road. He made it across but as he was running back to where I was located, the sniper shot him in the back and killed him. A short time later, PFC Troy B. Criss sneaked up to where the sniper was situated. Criss fired one shot into the sniper's neck and killed him outright.

On Jan. 16 in the area close to Herrlisheim (Steinwald), PFC George C. Dawes, our assistant squad leader, was killed in action and S/Sgt. John J. Plawecki, our squad leader, was seriously wounded.

On Feb. 4 at Colmar, Pvt. Arthur J. Lopresti, a recent replacement, was mortally wounded and died a short time later. A portion of the shell fragment that killed Lopresti also went deeply into the casing and dry-cell battery of the walkie-talkie radio that was on the back of Pvt. Stephen Stavitsky. Stavitsky, too, was a recent replacement. God was definitely with Steve because the exceedingly close call only resulted in a few minor scratches to Steve's back.

March 23 was a particularly dark day when in the vicinity of Speyer I witnessed S/Sgt. Charles Trusty lose an arm as a result of enemy fire. I was less than ten feet to Charlie's right when he was hit. To avoid being hit, I jumped into an open sewage ditch. When I emerged from the ditch, I smelled rather bad, my handy-talkie radio would not function, but my M-1 rifle was very much intact.

In a matter of minutes, I came upon Pete, our medic, working feverishly over 2nd Lt. Frank H. Deeds who had been very seriously wounded. Deed's one leg was turned in the opposite direction from normal and one eye was completely out of its socket. I did not even recognize Frank. It was only the shipping tag that Pete had attached to Frank that gave me any indication as to who he was. When I learned it was Frank, I could not control myself and immediately began crying. It was the first time I had shed tears since I was a very little boy.

Continuing on my way, I ran across a small group of our men standing over a face-down, prone, lifeless body. I asked who it was, and learned that it was 1st Lt. Charles M. (Chuck) Willis.

Our squad leader T/Sgt. William C. Amason and Pvt. Joseph A. Irak, our squad sniper were killed in action on April 4 in an engagement where we were definitely overmatched by a well-dug-in enemy with superior troop strength. Then on April 5, S/

Sgt. William E. Lieser was wounded. After a brief hospital stay, Bill recovered from his wounds and returned to A Company.

My very best army friend, T/5 Harold K. Wells of Service Company, was killed in action on April 26 when an enemy artillery shell bounced off the hood of the half-track he was driving. Harold was the last person killed in action in the 56th AIB and may well have been the last KIA in the Division.

Thanks to the extensive research of Mike Woldenberg, legacy member and nephew of 1st. Lt. Charles M. (Chuck) Willis, I was able to supply the dates on which these events occurred.

The person that coined the phrase, "War is Hell," was right on the money.

The individuals mentioned in this narrative whether living or dead, are truly part of the greatest generation. I proudly salute them all.

## WARNING!!!

**DEADLINE FOR DUES IS DEC. 31, 2008**

**Annual Dues are now \$20 for membership in the 12th Armored Association which includes your subscription to the Hellcat News.**

Mail your check to our administrative secretary Vanessa Harris and make it payable to:

12th ARMORED ASSOCIATION, INC.  
1289 North 2nd Street  
Abilene, TX 79601

## MINUTES OF THE 62ND ANNUAL REUNION OF THE 12TH ARMORED DIVISION ASSOCIATION, A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION AUGUST 13 THROUGH 17, 2008

### MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AUGUST 14, 2008

Members Present: Ed Waszak, Bill McCarthy, Carol Bland, Bill House, John Critzas (guest), Steve Czecha (guest), Ken Klinedinst, Bettie Schultz, and Bob Von Esch.

It was determined that use of a proxy vote was not applicable for use in voting other than for election of officers at a general meeting of the association members.

Because the cost of publication and mailing of the monthly Hellcat News was running in the deficit, it was moved, seconded and carried effective immediately that (1) the association accept no new life memberships (2) that annual membership renewal fees be increased to \$20.00 per year (3) that all annual membership terminate on December 31st of each year and must be renewed by January (4) that all members help reduce cost by authorizing the HCN to be received by email, and (5) 1st Class and Foreign mailing be the sum of \$48.

The ex-counsel confirmed the 2009 reunion would be held in Branson, MO.

### MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AUGUST 15, 2008

Members Present: Ed Waszak, Bill McCarthy, Carol Bland, Bill House, Ken Klinedinst, Bettie Schultz, and Bob Von Esch.

There was a discussion regarding which week in either August or September would be more desirable for the Branson Reunion. It was noted that the hotels might provide a better rate in September. The setting of an exact date was delayed until the August 16th

executive meeting.

Ken Klinedinst asked that Section 4, Duties of Officers, the association constitution be amended to allow the assistant treasurer take steps to allow either the president or vice president to have access to all bank accounts rather than only the president if the treasurer becomes disabled. The reason for the change is to allow more flexibility to pay necessary bills due to greater risk of unavailability because of advanced age.

Therefore it was moved, seconded that:

(c) It shall be the duties of the treasurer to 6. Take steps necessary to assure the president or vice president of the corporation, upon being bonded, will have access to all bank accounts, checking accounts and investments of the corporation in the event the treasurer should become disabled (added portion underlined). Motion Carried.

The motion must be approved by the vote of the association members.

### MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AUGUST 16, 2008

Members Present: Ed Waszak, Bill McCarthy, Bill House, Ken Klinedinst, Bettie Schultz, Steve Czecha, Bob Von Esch, and guests Sharon Vanderhoef, Dan Vanderhoef, Thomas A. Vanderhoef, William Vanderhoef, and Nancy Vanderhoef Cook.

The Vanderhoefs related to the Ex-Committee their accomplishments in search for an appropriate hotel for the 2009 Reunion in Branson, MO, and comparing room prices for the 2009 reunion. Based on this input the Ex-Committee approved the Raddison Hotel; it is estimated the room charge will be \$89 a night. The dates for the reunion are August 12th thru 15th.

### GENERAL MEETING OF ASSOCIATION MEMBERS AUGUST 16, 2008

Persons Present: Members and guests.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Association Chaplain Bill Funke.

The meeting was chaired by President Ed Waszak. He indicated that the reunion was attended by approximately 150 veterans. He also noted that the legacy members are taking an active role in the association.

The Ex-Secretary stated that the Ex-Committee has proposed a change to Section 4 Article IV of the association constitution that would be printed in the Hellcat News with a Ballot that would allow the members to approve or disapprove the proposed amendment. Currently one of the treasurer's duties is to take the steps necessary that would allow the president to have access to the association bank accounts if the treasurer is disabled. The amendment would allow the treasurer to select either the president or the vice president and also require the person selected to be bonded. The Ex-Secretary also clarified that our constitution does not allow wives of veterans to vote; unless they become a paid member.

The audit report showed that the association had \$95,304.65.

President Waszak introduced Pamela Anderson who is part of a group that is creating a Memorial Holocaust Museum in Dallas. Since the 12th Armored came face to face with the Holocaust horror with the capture of the Landsburg Concentration Camp, she is requesting that each of us provide her any memories that you may have of the atrocities that you witnessed.

Steve Czecha passed out ballots with proposed candidates for various office and sought additional nominees from the floor. The new officers nominated by a vote of the association members were:

|                 |                                                                                      |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| President:      | William J. McCarthy, Jr. [Legacy CCA]                                                |
| Vice President: | Ken Klinedinst [Legacy C/66]                                                         |
| Treasurer:      | A. Edward Pierce [A/56]                                                              |
| Directors:      | Robert A. Stanton [A/17],<br>Peggy Anne Vosseler [C/66], and<br>Virgil Thorp [HQ/23] |

All officers were congratulated and then sworn in by Bill Funke.

The evening division dinner meeting guest speaker was Dr. Brandon Phibbs [CCB]. The Awards Committee, chaired by George Hatt, Jr. and comprised of Bettie Schultz and Bill Funke, presented the following awards:

1. Mr. Hellcat - Wm. J. (Bill) Cure [152nd]
2. Woman of the Year - Ruby J. Critzas [A/714]
3. Blue Ribbons - John E. Critzas [A/714]  
Edward Waszak [A/17]  
Robert Von Esch [B/66]  
Wm. (Bill) Riddell [C/43]
4. Outstanding Legacy Members - George Good [C/714]  
Mary Anne Delker [119th]  
Mike Woldenberg [A/56]

Duly submitted this 18th day of August 2008

Robert A. Von Esch, Jr.  
Executive Secretary  
12th Armored Division Assoc.



### 12th ADA Hellcats Western Chapter Meeting Registration March 5-7, 2009

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit/Btn \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse or guest \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Registration/hospitality & Friday lunch buffet: \$38 per person X \_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday evening dinner buffet: \$44 per person X \_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit Chapter registration with payment by:** Friday, Feb. 6, 2009

**Mail Chapter registration and check to:** John Blumenson  
736 Garner Ct., Santa Clara, CA 95050

**Make checks payable to:** John Blumenson

**Questions? Call:** John Blumenson, 408-510-9207; or  
Ted Glogovac, 408-499-0188

**Please bring:** For each person attending, please bring a wrapped gift for Saturday evening raffle. Please bring cookies or something sweet to compliment hospitality room.

**2009 Western Chapter Legacy Chair:** John Blumenson; Ted Glogovac, co-chair

### 12th ADA Hellcats Western Chapter Meeting HOTEL INFORMATION March 5-7, 2009

**Where:** Biltmore Hotel & Suites  
2151 Laurelwood Rd, Santa Clara, CA 95054

**Cost:** Garden Room: \$79/day\* - single or double  
Tower Suite: \$89/day\* - single or double

\*All room rates subject to 9.5% state and local taxes plus \$1 per night. Six handicapped accessible rooms are available for same rate - request if needed when making reservation. Above rates include an American breakfast buffet for two and complimentary airport transportation to and from San Jose International Airport. The Biltmore Hotel also offers transportation to anywhere within a five mile radius of the hotel. Hotel parking is free.

**Room Reservations:** Each individual/couple must contact hotel directly at (800) 255-9925.

**To receive rates:** Identify group **12th Armored Division Association - Hellcats Western Chapter**

**Reserve rooms by:** Thursday, Feb. 26, 2009

Contact Pamela Owens, Group Sales Manager 408-346-4718 for any reservation problems.

## One More Seat in Our Halftrack is Left Vacant

By A. Edward Pierce [A/56]

The first rifle squad of the second platoon of A Company of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion has lost another combat-tested member with the passing of **William E. Lieser** on April 17. His death was reported in the September edition of the *Hellcat News*. We extend our belated condolences to his wife, Ruth Ann, his children and other family members.

Bill, as he was affectionately known, joined the 12th Armored Division at Camp Barkeley when he was transferred from the ASTP. Bill joined the first rifle squad at the same time as did **James E. Hogue** and **Forrest A. Fowler**. After training, Bill shipped to Camp Shanks with us and subsequently sailed with us on the Empress of Australia to Liverpool, England. From there to Tidworth Barracks and shortly thereafter, we sailed across the English Channel to Le Havre.

Bill was wounded in action on April 5, 1945, but after hospitalization, was returned to our unit. Bill was promoted to sergeant and transferred to the First Armored Division just prior to many of us being transferred to the 2nd Armored Division for redeployment to the U.S.A. and subsequent separation from service.

We both shared a hobby in that we enjoyed solving cryptograms and doing crossword puzzles. Bill's mother used to cut out the daily cryptograms from the local newspaper and when she had a sufficient number, would mail them overseas to Bill. He and I would make quick work of the stash because we were both quite adept at cryptogram solving.

Our rifle squad, like many others, was a closely knit group. We looked out for one another and were truly a band of brothers. You were an exceptionally good soldier, Bill, and we shall miss you.



### SUPPORT YOUR MUSEUM MUSEUM CONTRIBUTION MEMBERSHIP GIFT DESIGNATION

1. Museum Membership - Regular \$30 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

2. I want to make a gift toward the continuing expense of my museum \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ CO/BTN \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Send check to: 12th Armored Division Museum  
1289 N. 2nd St., Abilene, TX 79601

**THANK YOU**

## HELLCAT NEWS

12th Armored Div. Assn.  
(USPS 350-210)

### ROBERT VON ESCH, JR.

Executive Secretary

### VANESSA HARRIS

Administrative Secretary

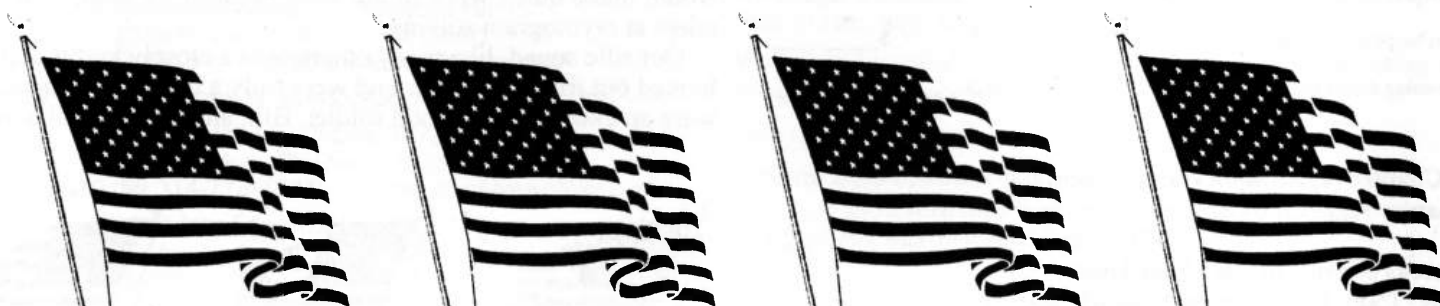
1289 N. 2nd St.

Abilene, TX 79601

*The Hellcat News is published monthly by the 12th Armored Division Association. All items should be sent directly to respective unit representatives. "Letters to the Editor" should be directed to the editor of the HCN. Direct other communications, including address changes and dues (with checks payable to the association), to the administrative secretary unless otherwise stipulated.*

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10/26/08 1,189 LIVING VETERANS that served with the 12th Armored



## IN MEMORIAM

**DIAL, PETER, JR. [B/17]**, died on June 20, 2008, in Red Springs, NC, at the age of 90. He is survived by his wife Lois, four daughters and three grandchildren. The death was reported by his nephew Nelson Dial.

**GRIMES, ELMER WILSON**, slipped away quietly to his next life on Sept. 1, 2008, at the age of 95. His last known residence was Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, and he is survived by his wife of 66 years, Sararuth Mohundro Grimes, two sons, two daughters, four grandchildren, three step-grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Elmer Grimes served as a Captain in the 106th Infantry Division as well as the 12th Armored Division.

**KWIATEK, HENRY S. [C/82]**, passed away Sept. 1, 2008, in Pittsburgh, PA. Henry's wife predeceased him, however surviving is his son Gregory and brother Edward. Henry was an usher for 40 years for the Pittsburgh Pirates Baseball Club and the Pittsburgh Steelers Football Club.

**LARSON, GORDON W. [B/56]**, died Oct. 31, 2008, in Waterville, MN, at the age of 85. He is survived by his wife Geraldine, one daughter, three grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. Also surviving are three brothers and one sister.

**QUINLAN, THOMAS [C/56]**, passed away Oct. 16, 2008, in Rochester, NY, at the age of 85. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Helen, two daughters and two grandchildren.

**WALKER, ORBIE A. "Jack" [A/17]**, died Aug. 29, 2008, in Canon City, CO, at the age of 91. He is survived by his wife Margaret, one sister, twin daughters, eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

**WATTS, ARDEN D. [C/92]**, passed away Sept. 9, 2008, at the age of 86. He was preceded in death by his wife, eight brothers and four sisters. He was the last surviving member of his immediate family. Surviving is one son, five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.