



# THE LIBERATOR™

VOL. 42 NO. 3

Official Publication of the  
14th Armored Division Association

SPRING 2008

## Message from the Reunion Planner...

### DETAILS OF KALAMAZOO REUNION REVEALED!



**E. DUDLEY PARTRICK**

Our plans are nearing completion, as you can see from the reunion schedule, events sign-up, and hotel reservation forms included in this issue.

We cannot overemphasize the important role of our sons and daughters in this year's reunion, and our two off-site events will be especially appealing to young people.

The Gilmore Car Museum (Event 1) was a huge hit in 1995, and with new additions it is well worth a repeat visit.

The Air Zoo (Event 3) is completely different. The Michigan Space and Science Center has been added to the old site. The new building offers balloon and biplane rides, a 4-D theatre

showing WWII air warfare in Europe, and flight and space shuttle simulators. The building contains the world's largest indoor mural, "The Century of Flight." Finally, the numbers and quality of aircraft shown in both buildings are second only to the USAF Museum in Dayton, Ohio.

For both of the above events, we will ensure that those needing wheelchairs will have them, together with a buddy to provide assistance.

As we Liberators and our wives become older it is increasingly difficult to project reunion attendance, and we need to be able to adjust attendance figures in advance to avoid paying for empty hotel rooms which have been contracted for and not used.

**We have a cut-off date of August 4 for events sign-up and hotel reservations. We ask your compliance in meeting this date so that we can make timely adjustments in event attendance and hotel reservations. If later you find you are unable to attend, you will receive a full refund.**

As we go to press we have no new information on the Barn Theatre's schedule. We have left Friday evening open and will make every effort to offer this event if the Barn is still open on this date.

On Friday afternoon and evening, we will make full use of the hospitality

room (Meadows) for watching DVDs and having special food and beverages so that you will enjoy meeting in small groups.

Gus Hinrich, our Executive Director, wants to ensure that *The Liberator* continues to be available well into the future. It costs about \$9,000 per year to produce and mail *The Liberator*, and he asks you to consider giving donations.

I've been in contact with Edith Barton, who continues to do a wonderful job for our organization. Remember to bring your raffle gifts so that we can fund the snacks and refreshments in the hospitality room and make our annual VA donation.

We hope to see you in Kalamazoo!  
Ogden S. Jones, Jr.  
Reunion Planner

#### FROM GUS HINRICH

The division history books that I ordered are gone. Individuals may order them from Turner Publishing

at: 412 Broadway

P.O. Box 3101

Paducah, KY 42002-3101

Cost is \$54.50 plus S.H.

Web - [www.turnerpublishing.com](http://www.turnerpublishing.com)

Phone: 800-788-3350

**44th NATIONAL REUNION**  
**Kalamazoo, Michigan • August 27-31, 2008**

## FROM THE LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT



**EDITH BARTON**

Baby, it is cold outside today and we have snow, snow, snow, and more snow this winter. It is an old fashion winter.

We wish you all a very happy, healthy new year! We received word that Clifford Prickart of Fond Du Luc, Wisconsin, passed away Dec. 4. He was 90. He and Russell were the only two 125th Engineers at the reunions the last couple of years.

Clifford had his 2 sons bring him and they enjoyed it also. Clifford was a great friend for many years. We visited back and forth many times and he visited Russell in the home. He will be greatly missed. Our sympathy to his family.

There is not alot to write about this time. Be sure to remember the Mid West reunion in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, May 1-4, 2008. We have a great time. It is a very nice spring break. Beautiful country, we enjoy the food, exchange of gifts and most of all each other's company.

And please ladies, step forward to help with offices in our national reunion. Those in office now have done it for many years. But we wear out also. But we must keep the auxiliary going. We cannot let the men down. We've got to last as long as they do.

My husband Russell is still at Hill  
ver  
one  
improved alot. He is walking with his walker very well, but has other health problems. I bring him home for a few hours as often as I can. Keep him in your prayers, along with others in need.

Until next time, God watch over you all always.

Edith Barton

Honorary National President  
MAJOR GEN. A.C. SMITH, USA-Deceased

Honorary National President  
LT. COL. ANDREW W. WINIARCZYK, USA-Deceased

## ★★★ LIBERATOR ★★★

Official Publication

14th Armored Division Association, Inc.

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<i>National Jr. 2nd Vice Pres.</i> Office unfilled at present time		<i>Executive Director Emeritus</i> HORST FROELICH 1926-2006

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### PLEASE FILL IN ALL BLANKS

Enclosed is \$3.00. Please enroll me as a member of the 14th Armored Division Assn., Inc. Auxiliary.

Check One of the following:     New Member     Renewal     Life Membership \$30.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Husband's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. No. \_\_\_\_\_

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# A WARTIME ODYSSEY – Army Hospital Provided Many Life's Lessons

By Verlyn Hofer

*(Editor's Note: This is the second and final installment of "A Wartime Odyssey" which describes the author's experiences, as well as those of fellow patients, in Army hospitals after sustaining battle injuries.)*

Ward 22 was filled with a cross-section of America, geographically speaking, but most patients were typical GI Joes. They were not particularly happy about Army life in general nor about having gotten injured, but most were happy simply because they were alive and on their way home. Some I got to know quite well and will try to convey a few thoughts about each one and his particular situation as I remember it.

## Loyd Kelly

Tough and gritty describe Loyd Kelly, but the first day I set eyes on him it was difficult to tell just what kind of a guy he was. I had been in the ward a short time when Kelly showed up in the bed next to mine. I tried to talk to him but I thought he was just plain unfriendly, not wanting to carry on a conversation. The truth of the matter was that poor Kelly was more dead than alive and hardly had the strength to talk.

As I later found out, Kelly had gotten shot up very badly, being hit in the leg and the head and other parts of the body. He had almost bled to death before the Germans had been driven off and he could be rescued from a pig pen where a hog had actually tried to eat him before Kelly was able to snap the hog in the nose with his finger. He was afraid to move because the Germans would shoot him again if they saw any life in him, he figured.

Because the circulation had been cut off to his foot for a period of time, gangrene had set in and his toes turned black. In the days that followed, I actually saw one of Kelly's toes fall off. He was a mess, so much so that the doctors decided he should be put in a body cast in preparation to be sent home by plane because they believed he would get better treatment stateside. About

this time the war ended in Europe and thousands of Americans were freed from POW camps. They were given top priority for returning home by air and Kelly got bumped, so to speak. It was hard for me to understand how anyone could be worse off than Kelly, but perhaps there were some.

As the days passed, Kelly waiting in his body cast to be sent home, the days were getting warmer, adding to his discomfort while his wounds drained into the cast. Finally it was decided that Kelly wasn't going to get that airline ticket home soon and the body cast would have to be removed so he could be treated. As the two attendants began cutting the cast off, the stench was terrible. Other attendants and nurses began moving patients outside or to the opposite end of the ward to get away from the smell. Those two fellows who had to cut off the cast, as well as Kelly, suffered through it somehow. Eventually transportation home was found for Kelly, but aboard a hospital ship rather than a plane. He spent many months in the hospital near his home which was, and still is, near Kearney, Missouri. He lost the front half of one foot as well as the full mobility of his legs, but that never seemed to slow him down much.

It should be noted that Kelly was no kid when called into the Army. He had a wife and two little boys, and much to live for. That, I believe, is why he made it back home – he had to. From Kelly I learned what uncomplaining sacrifice means. He sacrificed much in health and possibly opportunities, but not once have I ever heard him complain about his lot in life.

We still see one another occasionally after all these years, but we both wonder how much longer advancing years will allow us to travel. For a good number of years we would go pheasant hunting together here in South Dakota, Kelly tramping through the cornfields on his "stub" foot but never complaining about the extra effort it took for him to keep up.

This old Missouri farmer, I believe, has proved to be a man worth knowing, and I'm glad our paths crossed those many years ago. (Note: Kelly, to the best of my knowledge, is the only one of my hospital buddies still living, and he is suffering from Alzheimers.)

## Eddie Lee Davis

In all my 19 years I had never personally known a black person until Eddie Davis was carried into Ward 22 one day soon after I had arrived there. With Kelly on my left and Eddie on my right, I would learn much about two cultures slightly different from my South Dakota upbringing. Kelly confided that in that part of Missouri where he grew up, there were those who were very prejudiced against blacks but I saw no evidence of that in Kelly.

Eddie had served for several months as a truck driver on the Red Ball Express, hauling fuel and supplies up to the front for General Patton's fast advancing Third Army. But Eddie wanted more action. He wanted to prove that this black high school football star from Chattanooga, Tennessee could fight with the best of them against the Nazis. So he volunteered for the infantry, and after a brief training period was sent up to the front to join a black infantry platoon. Advancing across an open field, someone in his unit tripped a wire setting off a booby trap in the form of a panzerfaust – sort of a bazooka. It came right at Eddie, exploding near him.

Eddie's right leg was almost blown off right above the ankle, but somehow enough circulation was maintained to save his foot. About an inch or more of the large bone in his leg was missing so after Eddie underwent a flap skin graft to his leg, he would later have to have a bone graft to regain use of the leg. This would follow in the States over a period of many months.

During Eddie's 21 days of purgatory in that large cast with his legs sewn together, everything seemed to go wrong. His legs apparently had

*(Continued on page 7)*

# CHECK PRESENTED TO VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Illiana Health Care System  
1900 East Main Street  
Danville, IL 61832-5198

Dear Mrs. Meyer:

I thought you might enjoy the photos taken of your donation presentation on October 4, 2007 - and what a lovely speech!

The contribution of \$700.00 from the 14th Armored Division Auxiliary was deposited in the **CF-2208 Nursing Home Care Unit Fund** and will be used for "culture change" - making the nursing home more "home-like." I will give you a call as to what was suggested to purchase with the donation monies to make the unit more like home.

Certainly veterans will benefit as a result of the kindness you have shown to them through this generous donation. Again, thank you for thinking of our veterans in this very special way. Enjoy the photos - we had such a good time meeting you both!

Sincerely yours,  
*Jan Filicsky*  
for Bob Robinson  
Chief, Voluntary & Recreation  
Therapy Service



Mertyce (Mrs. John) Meyer is shown at the left presenting a check for \$700.00 to representative of VA Health Care System in Danville, Illinois.

## GOLF IN KALAMAZOO

Chuck Hurl has agreed to coordinate this year's golfing during the Kalamazoo reunion.

Here are the details:

**WHERE:** Milham Park (in Kalamazoo, 3-1/2 miles from our hotel)

**WHEN:** 9:30 a.m., Friday, August 29

**COST:** \$25 for 18 holes, plus cart

Players WILL NOT miss the Gilmore Car Museum event.

There will be a make-up trip to the Car Museum at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday.

To register, telephone Ch will be paid  
at the golf course.

## TAKE A CRUISE

If you live west of Michigan, you may want to incorporate a "cruise" into your travel plans when you attend the 14th AD Association reunion in Kalamazoo this year. You could cross Lake Michigan on a high speed ferry (with or without a vehicle) from Milwaukee to Muskegon, Mich., or you could cross the lake on the larger S.S. Badger which operates between Manitowoc, Wisc. and Ludington, Mich. You may decide to cross the lake coming and/or going as there are one-way and round-trip rates to consider. Those interested in more information regarding rates and schedules should call 1-800-841-4243 for the Badger ferry, or for the Lake Express, call 1-866-914-1010. Brochures are available upon request.

### TROOP ASSIGNMENT CARD

Ship's Company No.                      Bunk No.

Each man upon finding his bunk will place his equipment and himself thereon until released by his Ship's Company Commander.

**NO SMOKING in Troop Quarters At Any Time.**

This card will be used as a meal ticket throughout the voyage.      **SAVE IT!      DON'T LOSE IT!**

By Order Of

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16  
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41 40 39 38 37 36 35 34 33 32 31 30 29 28 27 26

Did anyone, other than Harold Kiehne, save his meal ticket issued aboard the troop ship sailing for France? Harold says he never did find his bunk so slept on the deck or a top bunk to get away from the smell and "vomitters."



## THE CHAPLAIN'S COMMENTS

John A. Burgess

Have you viewed the Ten Commandments as vital instruction for building successful, meaningful and pleasing relationships? When asked to identify the most important commandment Jesus answered "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." He added that the second important commandment was "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:29-31)

Jesus commented "There is no commandment greater than these."

The first four identify principles by which to build our relationship with God.

You shall have no other God before Me.

You shall not make and bow down to an idol.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

You shall keep the Sabbath holy.

God desires to have an intimate relationship with each one of us. These first four commandments are designed to create this relationship. No other person or thing is to be considered more important and to take first place in our life. His will is to be followed in every aspect of our life. His instructions are to be the rules by which we live. God's commands and teachings are to regulate our individual behavior. Often God is dishonored by the use of His name in cursing. While eating dinner in the home of George Washington, one of the guests used God's name inappropriately. President Washington laid down his eating utensils and reprimanded the man. Probably most people would not dishonor a wife, husband, child, friend or neighbor by using their name as a curse term. Yet many prevent enjoying in the lives the hope, security and benefits that could be gained from

an intimate relationship with the holy God, Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth by failing to obey these four commandments.

The next six commandments are concerned with human and social relationships.

Honor your father and mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house, your neighbor's wife, manservant or maid servant, ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Would it not be true that if these six commandments were obeyed the activities that destroy social and family

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS



harmony would be prevented? Obeying these six commands would respect others and create social relationships that would benefit ourselves and others with whom we have association both on a permanent or limited basis.

Does not this view of the Ten Commandments demonstrate that God desired that we experience a life that is meaningful, pleasant, enjoyable and beneficial? Would it not be logical to conclude that all of His commands and instructions should be obeyed so that we can enjoy the blessings they are designed to enable us to live and enjoy? Perhaps we could also conclude that we should seek to identify and obey divine instruction that would improve the quality of our life?

Chaplain John A. Burgess

## Donations To Liberator/Postage Fund Much Appreciated

Many members of the 14th Armored Division Association have expressed their hope that *The Liberator* will continue to be published even if reunions are terminated and/or other functions of the Association cease. This arrangement may or may not be possible, depending on available funds to offset the publication and postage costs for the newsletter.

Treasurer Gus Hinrich reports that although there is a fair balance in funds of the Association, these have been diminished considerably of late for a number of reasons. One reason is that membership fees no longer are sufficient to offset the cost of printing and mailing. Both printing and mailing costs have risen considerably in recent years, and many members have purchased life memberships

and no longer pay a yearly membership fee. Thus, it is a case of diminishing returns. Even if every member paid a yearly membership fee, there might still be an annual deficit. Cost to print and send out *The Liberator* three times a year approximates \$9,000.

Hinrich explains that it certainly would help to ensure the continued publication of *The Liberator* if more members would make an annual donation to a "Liberator and Postage Fund." Many members have been generous in this regard through the years, and additional donors would be much appreciated.

A number of members, reports Gus, have responded with donations since this request was published in the winter issue of *The Liberator*.

## NEW MEMBERS ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

McCoy,\*\* Thomas T.  
 Kneeland,\*\* Daniel P. 68 AIB B Co  
 Kneeland,\*\* James P. 68 AIB B Co  
 West,\*\* Alan 94 CAV A Co  
 Lucas,\*\* Carol 48 Tank A Co  
 Johnson,\*\* Norene 19 AIB A Co  
 Hand, Bill 48 Tank  
 Fulmer,\*\* Kent 500 AFA B Co  
 Strunc,\*\* Jim Gentry  
 Paradise, Francis J. 19 AIB C Co  
 Huddleston,\*\* Carl 62 AIB A Co  
 Nelms,\*\* Mark S. 94 CAV  
 Townsend,\*\* Timothy H.  
 Townsend,\*\* Travis L.  
 Townsend,\*\* Troy J.  
 Townsend,\*\* Terry M.  
 Dahlin,\*\* Trisha L.  
 Hittner,\*\* Teresa M.  
 Townsend-Collier,\*\* Tanya R.

\* Wife of Member \*\*Son or Daughter of Member

## NEW LIFE MEMBERS ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Carolyn West, 94 CAV, A Co	Trisha L. Dahlin
Alan West, 94 CAV, A Co	Teresa M. Hittner
Kent Fulmer, 500 AFA, B Co	Tanya R. Twonsend-Collier
Jim Gentry Strunc	Troy J. Townsend
Timothy H. Townsend	Terry M. Townsend
Travis L. Townsend	

## DONATIONS ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Harvey Bray	Carolyn West	William Mallard
Dennis Johannes	John Sweeney	Robert Benjamin
John Hennen	Glenn Christensen	Emil Zynda
Stewart Hogue	John Kestler	John Kelly
Roth Holtz	Norene Johnson	Dick Horton
Martin Evans	Edward Crider	Fred Talbot

## SPECIAL DONATIONS ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

John Carr	Matt Sitnik	John Meyer
William Winston	Tom Berbera	Charles Deboer
Fredrick Kohloss	Maurice Keller	Roy Roberts
Bill Breer	Norma Townsend	Geroges Pfalsgraf
Charles Vredenburg	in memory of	John Arend
Jerry Williamson	Marvin Townsend	Francis O'Neil
Edwin Kosik		



## TAPS

Earle W. Nelson, 500 Service  
 Hugh Richens, 68th Service  
 Robert E. Fox, 48th A  
 Elmer Hevland, 19th A  
 Ralph Becker, 68th C  
 Clarence Rowden, 25th C  
 Ralph Kline, 94th HQ  
 Charles Nava, 25th HQ  
 Clifford Pickart, 125th HQ  
 Earl Owens, 19th B  
 James Bellah, 501st B  
 Dorothy Revler, Div. HQ  
 Wife of Richard  
 John Chatline, 48th C  
 Charles Zissis, 47th D  
 Everett Frost, 125th A  
 Myrven Tolson, 62nd C  
 Earl Nelson, 500th Service  
 Vincent H. Ippolito, 499th B  
 Elmer Hevland, 19th A  
 Doris Gregory,\*\* 62nd B



*NOTE: Information regarding the death of 14th AD comrades should be directed to Gus Hinrich, National Secretary, pro tem, for listing in the "Taps" column.*



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## A WARTIME ODYSSEY

*(Continued from page 3)*

been put in such a position as to cause him terrible pain almost constantly. He was no complainer, but when you see beads of sweat on a man's face and he grinds his teeth at night as he tries to sleep, you know he is having a bad time. Finally it got so bad that the doctors took Eddie back into the operating room and redid his cast, which really helped the situation for everyone concerned – especially Eddie.

Eddie, I remember, was a real physical hunk, even after having been confined to bed for many weeks. Once he got up on crutches and regained some of his strength, those big arm muscles bulged out as he spun around the ward showing off his skills on crutches. But I figured Eddie knew that his football days were over. There would be no more cheers from the crowd as he crossed the goal line for a touchdown.

But Eddie was happy and friendly to everyone. As the weeks went by while we all awaited shipping orders to go home aboard a hospital ship, another black patient was assigned to our ward. I don't think he was a surgical patient but had to have a bed to sleep in. Eddie sized the guy up right away and informed "us white boys" that it was okay for him to play cards with this newcomer but that we should stay away from him - he was a cheater and no good.

Earlier, when all of us were confined to bed, we got a real special treat one day. Everyone was served a malted milk – something none of us had enjoyed for months and months. It made for a festive atmosphere and some of the guys got fooling around, even in their bedridden state. Eddie and the guy to his right, John Lembke, began blowing malted milk at each other through their straws. Why, I have no idea, but they were laughing all the time. Eddie's black face was splattered and someone asked what that was on his face. He replied, "Them's blackheads, man." That had to be one of the most hilariously happy moments of my stay in the hospital.

I have heard from Eddie infrequently through the years and know that he has not always had an easy time of it.

He married and had two very attractive daughters but I think something happened to disrupt his marriage. He worked for the postal department for a number of years but his leg trouble forced him into early retirement. I know he was in and out of the hospital a lot and probably endured more than his fair share of pain through the years.

Regardless of what life dealt Eddie in later years, I will always remember him as that good looking, strong black fellow who suffered the consequences of war in silence, but found much to be happy about and wanted to be a friend to everyone. God bless the Eddies in this world.

### John Lembke

This short, little German fellow from Milwaukee was a story teller supreme. No, he wasn't from Germany originally but like so many from the Milwaukee area, his ancestors were from that beer-drinking country and his accent sort of revealed that. John, however, was not the military type and made no bones about his disdain for the army brass and regimentation. He had seen all of the war he wanted and just hoped to get back home and get a job that was as little like the army as possible.

But John had served with honor as a mortar squad leader. He had a few stripes on his sleeves but probably didn't really enjoy giving - or following - orders. He admitted that his outfit was always a little fouled up, and even thought the whole 12th Armored Division, of which he was a part, left much to be desired. After considerable combat, John was hit in the foot by a shell fragment, losing a considerable amount of skin from the top of one foot. He, too, had to have the old flap treatment but seemed to get through it in good fashion, not that he didn't have his problems.

John loved to tell stories, especially the one about how he and his squad somehow got separated from the rest of his company and nearly became casualties one cold winter night. It seems that John and his men were bringing up the tail end of a column which was to follow a canal to a certain point and then cross the canal on a lock. Apparently they got too far behind the squad in front of them and when that group

crossed the canal, John kept going straight ahead. When he got to the next lock he decided they had better cross over. Shortly he saw the outline of a soldier standing near a barrel, warming his hands over a small fire in the barrel. John walked up to him and asked, "Is this the tail end of B Company?" The man muttered something that John did not understand, so he asked the question again. This time the man became startled, as did John, for at the same moment they realized they were not in the same army.

What happened after that and the way John told it was what really made the story funny. John lowered his carbine but knew there was no cartridge in the firing chamber. In his haste to pump a shell into the chamber, John jammed the mechanism. All the time he was yelling at his men to advance to the rear. In the meantime, the German soldier fired his rifle five times while running in the opposite direction. Not one bullet found its mark and John and his men escaped unharmed... but embarrassed. Doing some fast backtracking, they did find their company but John probably didn't tell that story to his superiors.

John was kind of scrappy and mischievous, and for reasons unknown to me, he didn't particularly like the guy in the bed to his right. Howard Borrell was a good looking fellow who gave the impression that he thought he was God's gift to women, and perhaps this bugged John. One day they each had gotten hold of a leather belt (not government issue) and began to fight a duel with these belts from their seated position in bed. Like a couple of school boys who couldn't get along next to each other in the classroom, they had to be separated, Howard's bed being rolled across the aisle. Now they could look at each other but were out of range for any more combat.

A number of years after the war, John and his family visited me and my family in Lennox. Perhaps we didn't have a lot in common other than an unforgettable war experience in Ward 22, but that seemed to form a bond and we always kept in touch for a half century. He and his daughter called on us again in Lennox and we visited the Lembkes

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## A WARTIME ODYSSEY

*(Continued from page 7)*

in Milwaukee a couple times in later years. John, like many of us old soldiers who just wanted to get home, got a job as a silkscreen printer and held that job until his retirement.

John's foot injury evidently was not his main health concern. He fought a successful battle against cancer but succumbed to a heart attack a few years later. Being in Milwaukee to attend an army reunion, I got to spend most of one afternoon with John. Just the two of us sat in his car along the lakefront and talked about those days in England, how we "hated" Big Jane, but how she had gotten us on our feet. We also talked about how the years had so quickly slipped by and what our hopes were, although we both felt our cup was half full, not half empty.

I guess I learned from John that humor can be found anywhere, and if you're not able to laugh at yourself, it's going to be a long, miserable life. John had it figured out pretty well.

### Howard Borrell

Howard Borrell, the ladies' man, probably saw as much or more combat than most of us but somehow one got the feeling that he may not have learned much from the experience. Most of us were just very happy to be alive; Howard seemed to be looking for some excitement he didn't really need.

One of the rewards for getting healed up, so to speak, and being able to navigate on crutches, was to get a pass to go into town. However, the risks had to be weighed carefully, there always being that chance of reinjuring a grafted area which would delay recovery. Howard was told he was not healed up well enough to go out on pass, but every day he bugged the nurses and doctors to let him go to town. Finally he got his pass and he did just what he was told not to do. He got drunk, fell down and reinjured his leg.

Howard managed to get back to the hospital under his own power but because of the injury, he spent another couple weeks in bed and never did get another pass. He was a hard learner, so it is fair to say that if I learned anything from Howard, it was not to be impatient and to test common sense.

Years later, Howard called me on the phone. It was during the holidays and he was lonely. Looking for a sympathetic shoulder on which to cry, he related his unhappy life, having managed to lose his wife and probably a lot more in life. It was sad to hear from him.

### Chester Wagner

Chester Wagner, who occupied the bed just to the left of Kelly, was, perhaps the opposite of Howard. He was a gentleman in every sense of the word, being considerably older than most of us. His life was well ordered, as one could tell from talking to him. He was not married at the time but would take that step a few years later. Chet had been wounded in the leg while trying to repair some communication lines. He did not consider himself a hero, but I think he was decorated for his actions.

Like the rest of us, Chet had to have some grafting done so he had to be anesthetized. His nature was to be reserved and polite, so when he partially awoke, we didn't expect him, of all people, to look into the eyes of the nurse standing above him and say, "You sure are pretty." It was just out of character for Chet, and we all laughed about it to no end. And for days poor Chet was reminded of his breach in decorum when some wise guy would loudly remark to the nurse, "You sure are pretty." And, by golly, she was, as I remember her.

In his stoic manner, Chet never complained, maintaining his mature dignity in spite of us yahoos who enjoyed teasing one another. This carried over into his civilian life. He and his wife stopped and visited with us when they moved from Pennsylvania to California where Chet passed away a few years ago. They never had any children but seemed so very interested in our kids. Each Christmas his wife would write to tell us how much they enjoyed reading our Christmas letter and learning what our offspring were accomplishing.

From Chet I learned that a bit of dignity and grace is a good thing, and that a well ordered life, although not always exciting, also reaps some rewards. We still get that annual letter from his wife which serves to remind

me of someone I liked and respected those many years ago.

### Stig Danielson

Stig Danielson was probably the "old soldier" of the bunch that occupied Ward 22 during my stay there. He was not old so far as years were concerned but because of his many months of combat service as compared to some of us replacements who arrived overseas late in the war and then didn't last very long in the front lines. Stig was a veteran in every sense of the word.

As a combat engineer with the "Big Red 1" division, Stig had gone through several campaigns, starting in Africa, and then in Sicily before going back to England to become part of the invasion force which was to free Europe from Hitler. Stig had gone through these many battles practically untouched until that fateful day late in the war when his luck ran out. Stig rather enjoyed telling how and why it happened, blaming no one but himself.

Everything was moving fast, relates Stig, and he got to feel as though he was invincible. He was anxious to get the war over with and felt that nothing could stop him now. A German machine gun had his outfit pinned down so he decided to flank the gun position and "get 'em" from the rear. In his haste he failed to see a German to one side who apparently saw him, and opened up with a "burp" gun. Stig was hit in the head, a glancing shot just above the temple. It knocked him out cold and there was considerable bleeding. Eventually the machine gun was put out of action and his outfit moved on without him, thinking he was dead.

But Stig fooled them. He regained consciousness a couple hours later and staggered to the rear. He was not able to speak, however, because of nerve damage, and his one eye was strangely contorted.

By the time Stig got to Ward 22 he could speak okay but his "strange" eye made him somewhat self-conscious. Like most of us, Stig didn't particularly like Big Jane and he let her think that he could not speak. She would roust everyone out of bed early in the morning if they were able to get up. Most of us resented this trick of hers but would do nothing about it other than grumble

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## A WARTIME ODYSSEY

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about having to get up “in the middle of the night.” Stig, however, handled the situation differently. He would glare at her with his one good eye, say nothing, and resume his sleep. It was evident that she was scared of him and would do or say nothing more. Finally she discovered that he could speak, and we all had a good laugh – except Big Jane.

Stig, who was born in Sweden and immigrated to Pontiac, Michigan with his family as a young boy, could speak Swedish fluently. While in England before the invasion, he was asked by the OSS to go into Sweden disguised as a dock worker and, as such, relay information back to England regarding German shipping going in and out of this neutral nation. Stig refused, telling his superiors that if he was going to die for his country, it would be in uniform. He was courageous but not foolish, Stig explained.

After the war Stig returned to Michigan, got married, resumed his employment at a GM plant, and raised a family. In the late 60’s he, his wife and little daughter visited us in Lennox on their way home from a western vacation. At a relatively young age Stig died of a heart ailment so I never got to see him again, but his wife, with her second husband, did stop in and see us a number of years ago.

From Stig I learned that one can and should laugh at himself in the most dire of circumstances. Stig probably saw more of the war from a foxhole or a shell crater than 90 percent of us who called ourselves combat soldiers, but somehow he didn’t let it get to him. He apparently saw his assignment as his duty, and he done it well.

### **James A. Hamm**

Alabama Hamm, as we called him, was one of the youngest “boys” in the hospital ward and few could not help but feel sorry for him. He had sustained serious wounds to both a leg and a hand and was having a rough time of it when I first met him.

It wasn’t just his injuries that made one feel sorry for him, but he seemed so bewildered by his situation. It was obvious that he was not “a man of the

world” and probably had never been far from home until drafted into the Army. So when Big Jane would “pick on him,” as we perceived it, his buddies would speak up for him and tell her to back off. One day Big Jane decided it was time for Alabama to begin walking on crutches. It didn’t seem to make any difference to her that his right hand was injured, got him up beside the bed, placed the crutches under his arms and demanded that he walk. The poor guy took one step – or tried to – and passed out, falling onto the bed.

Big Jane did not increase her popularity that day with the other men on the ward, there being a hushed silence and glaring stares which conveyed a clear message to her. She must have gotten the message as it seemed she quit giving Hamm a bad time. From him I learned that there are those who suffer in silence who deserve the support of those who are in a position to speak up for them.

I did not stay in contact with Alabama Hamm, but somehow I always felt he got back to his native state and found the contentment of home which he longed for and rightly deserved.

### **Other Hospital Acquaintances**

The fellows in Ward 22 really did represent a cross-section of America, at least geographically speaking. In addition to the aforementioned, there were Richard Jurewicz from Albion, New York; John Larimi from Middlefield, Ohio; Clement Treat from Janesville, Wisconsin; Clair Lefever from Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Louis Volkman from Campbell Hill, Illinois; and Clifton McKinney from Princeton, West Virginia; as well as others I failed to get acquainted with during those months of confinement.

I will always remember McKinney because of a harrowing experience he survived which the rest of us on the ward witnessed. After having had his legs sewn together – just as many of us had experienced – he was rolled back into the ward before regaining consciousness. I suspect that the cast holding his legs in place was not fully dry. McKinney coughed real hard soon after being brought back to the ward and apparently this caused the stitches holding the graft in place to tear loose.

Poor Clifton began to bleed, but no

one was aware of what was happening. There was a tent-like contraption over his legs to hold the sheet up and away from his lower extremities, so hid from view was the blood-soaked mattress. Soon, McKinney turned as white as the sheet covering him and the fellow next to him recognized something was wrong. He called for help and “code blue” was activated pronto. Doctors, nurses, and ward attendants came running and got blood transfusions started within a few minutes, but it was a close call. McKinney had to be taken back into the operating room and patched up again. The irony of almost bleeding to death in a hospital bed after having survived what had happened to him on the battlefield did not escape any of us who watched in horror.

As we slowly recovered from our injuries and were able to get around better on crutches or in a wheelchair, spring weather beckoned the patients to spend more time outside. It was soon discovered that Ward 21, right next to our ward, was occupied by “disabled” Army nurses and WACS. These gals had been hospitalized for various ailments such as allergies and other “minor” disorders. So the men would wander over to the area just outside Ward 21 where the gals were relaxing outside, soaking up some sunshine. This made for lively conversations between the men and women patients which seemed to be welcomed by all parties.

I vividly recall Lt. Ann Forsythe, an Army nurse who was much my senior in both rank and years. I think she was amused by the audacity of this 19-year-old private in not hesitating for one moment to strike up a conversation with her. She was an attractive gal from Youngstown, Ohio whose address I had but never contacted after the war. However, I still have among some war souvenirs a pair of second lieutenant bars she gave me. Why, I never figured out, but perhaps because she had gotten promoted to first lieutenant and had no need of them.

Howard Borrell, naturally, fell in love immediately with a WAC by the name of Lillian Hight from Detroit who was a patient in Ward 21. She sure didn’t look ill to me in her dress uniform, the skirt of which must have been

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# 47th TANK TRACKS

Hey, it's the start of another good year (08) for those of us approaching or passing our mid-Eighties. In fact, any living year is a good one for those of us in that aging group. Anyway let's keep going and promoting our old 14 AD Association before we are forced to shut down.

I heard recently that two more of our comrades from the 47th made or will make the TAPS list on its next publication. First was Jack Stevens from old D Company. Jack was a tank crewman and was captured late in the war and made it back to the States after the war in Europe ended. He completed his education at the University of Kansas and established a very successful Engineering Business in Hutchinson, Kansas, which he operated until his recent death. Jack also had an older brother that served as an Officer in the Air Corps during WWII. Another passing was Charles Zissis of Kensington, Connecticut. Charles was a long-standing and contributing member of the Association.

We had communication with many of our members during the 07 holiday season.

Forrest and Jewell and his wife, Glendola, are still going in their assisted living complex in Green Bay, Wisconsin. They both sounded real good in a telephone conversation, and Frosty said he hoped to attend the National Association Reunion in Green Bay in 09. Of course, that would be great!

Tony and Alice Sorgent, along with their son, Michael, live by the river in Mayville, Wisconsin. I understand Alice is essentially bed-ridden and Tony's mobility is somewhat limited due to back problems.

Robert Shoenrock of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Robert has some health problems but handles them very well. He said he made the trip to LaCrosse last April, but the dates had been changed and he was the only one there. He said he was treated like royalty by the hotel staff and he plans to go there again in May 08, if the dates do not change again. Hey, that is some story, huh?

John and Kathleen Duncan of Trin-

idad, California. They are both doing well and are still doing some traveling.

Eugene Kral of Chicago - we talk often by phone and Gene still has some mobility problems. He is sort of on a list to have surgery done, if and when his other health issues are solved or reduced.

Charlotte Froelich of Cecil, Wisconsin. She still lives in the same apartment setting that she and Horst had occupied for the past several years. She has a daughter in Milwaukee and I understand they visit each other often. Of course, Charlotte is a very active and strong lady who continues to be a great asset to the Association.

Lettie Duffett of Lexington, Missouri, wife of S/Sgt Willie G. Duffett, who was killed in action during WWII. Lettie also lost an adult son (Robert) a few years past. She, too, is a very strong lady that has endured more than her share of tragedies in this lifetime. If I had the power, I would nominate her as the first lady of the Greatest Generation.

Dolores (Dee) Creller of Baldwinsville, New York, the daughter of Stu and Mae Wallace. She is a stalwart of the extended Wallace family and keeps in close touch with family occupants of the old Wallace property.

Carmen Franco of Bridgeport, Connecticut, a member of old Company D, is a retired postal worker and is doing well.

Harold Kiehne and wife, Joanne, of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, both are still kicking and Harold reports that his SS check was so small this year that he had to go to postcards for his Christmas message. That sounds like old Harold! Apparently they are both doing well.

Phyllis Klinger of New London, Wisconsin, the wife of Orville Klinger, who passed away few years past. Apparently she is doing well and now resides in nearby Hortonville.

Wilma Burnett of Gun Barrel City, Texas, wife of Lloyd Burnett, who past away several years past. I understand she is near a daughter in that area and is doing well.

George and Hilda Raymond of Haverhill, Massachusetts, are still in

their nice home in Haverhill. They have a son and daughter nearby and are doing very well. George says he is not getting the Liberator anymore?

Cindy Massis, of Binghamton, New York, daughter of the late John Healey. Actually Cindy was John's caretaker during his last days. She is another great lady and has great appreciation for the greatest generation.

Ron Mattes, of Chicago, a nephew of Elroy Hauser, who passed away a few years back. Ron was a sort of standby for Elroy during his last years since he lived nearby and they got along well.

Our travel plans for 08 include the Jacksonville (SE) Reunion in late January and the SW at Bullhead City, Arizona, in April. Unfortunately, we will not be able to go to LaCrosse in early May and it appears that conflicting events will prevent us from going to Kalamazoo in August. We do hope to see some of you during the year and if not, have a great year and keep the ball rolling for next year and don't forget the postage-Liberator fund for donations. As Gus recently said, we all need to step up our contribution to keep the Liberator in print and distribution.

JOE COTTEN

## COMING: A 14TH AD FLAG GIVEAWAY

The 14th AD Association's collection of parade-size (3 1/2 x 5 ft.) flags of the Division's major units (tank, artillery, infantry, engineers, etc.) is to be dispersed individually. These are not Army issue flags. They were designed, according to authentic rules of heraldry, manufactured and given to the Association many years ago. Until the 2006 national reunion these flags were annually displayed. However, their storage, transportation, and erection no longer is within our capacity. Bob McClarren will have details on application, etc., in the next issue of *The Liberator*. Except for shipping charges, if any, there will be no cost for the flags.

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## A WARTIME ODYSSEY

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about three inches higher than regulations allowed. Howard was back in a wheelchair because of his escapades while on crutches during that weekend pass. He so wanted Lillian to feel sorry for him – and love him – but he didn't manage to make much of an impression on her.

### Seeing a Bit of England

Spring in England was, indeed, beautiful. V-E Day had certainly brightened the spirits of the natives and this rubbed off on us patients. I recall the night of V-E Day when the British dug out the fireworks they had been saving for this great occasion. We lay there in our hospital beds and looked out the window in the direction of Bristol where the sky was bright with fireworks. It made us just a little homesick thinking of what might be going on back home to observe the big victory, but we also knew that the war in the Pacific raged on.

With the weather perfect and most of us able to get around on crutches, we were given the opportunity to take part in some "outside" activities planned for the patients by the Red Cross and the English people. This was great.

On one such occasion we were taken by bus to Bath where we toured the "resurrected" Roman baths or swimming pools which were 2,000 years old, we were told. We were also told that no one had gone swimming in the pool since the days of the Romans. This, of course, was accepted as a challenge by one GI in the group who minutes later just happened to slip on a step and fall into the pool. Strangely enough, he had time to set his camera down on a rock before he "fell" in. I suspect he one day told his children that he was the first guy to swim in the Roman baths in Bath, England since the time of the Romans.

On another outing we were guests at an English lawn party held at a large country estate. Those English people and their children treated us wonderfully, providing outdoor games we were able to participate in and feeding us an array of sweets which must have required all their sugar rations for a long period of time. I gained a great deal of respect for those English who

had persevered through those awful war years when for a time they stood alone. It was, too, easy to understand why the British servicemen were not real friendly toward the Americans. While they were off fighting and dying in the war all over the world, the millions of American servicemen stationed in England before the invasion of France were stealing their girlfriends (and wives in some cases).

### Going Home at Last

Ah, at last the great day arrived! Word came down that I, along with a couple of other fellows from our ward, would be on the next hospital ship headed back to the States. Some of those I had gotten to know had already shipped out but a few were left to bid us farewell on that warm day in late June as we prepared to leave Ward 22. I don't recall any fond farewells from Big Jane, but all the other staff members acted as though they would really miss us but were anxious for us to leave so they could also go home.

By this time I was wearing a walking cast which made it possible to get around without a crutch although I usually used one for balance purposes. After a short bus ride to Bristol, we boarded a train which took us to Southampton. Here we boarded the hospital ship "Westeria" which we immediately renamed the "Hysteria." Right where we entered the ship there was a scale so I stepped on it to weigh myself. Even with the cast on my leg, which must have weighed five pounds, the scale showed 115 pounds. And I had been eating well for a month or more, so it was hard to imagine just how thin I had gotten through this ordeal.

I do recall that the water was rough in the English Channel, but once we got out into the Atlantic a ways the surface was smooth as glass. It was a beautiful but slow trip home with a top speed of nine knots. This old converted Liberty ship sure wouldn't set any crossing records. To top it off, the engines failed completely on one occasion and we spent most of a day in the same location.

Accommodations were great – clean white sheets and all. And the food was also great, giving me an opportunity to gain a few pounds before reaching the States. It was a happy at-

mosphere for most, although we were informed that there were those aboard in very sad shape. We just didn't see them as they were in another part of the ship. Clement Treat from Ward 22 had an upper bunk across the room from me. One day I noticed, while he napped, that the porthole next to him was open. So I slipped outside to the passageway on the other side of the porthole and threw a glass of cold water on Clement. He didn't see who did it but he knew it was me, and I knew he would do something to get even.

Almost two weeks after leaving England we were just about to New York, but because New York harbor was overcrowded, the ship was directed to proceed to Charleston, South Carolina. Finally, after 15 days we sailed into the harbor there and anchored just inside the breakwater for the night. It was a beautiful evening and everyone able to get around was up on deck waving at the small boats filled with people who came out to welcome us home. They even serenaded us from their boats while motoring around the hospital ship.

So here was Treat's chance to get it back on me. He pointed to one side and said I should "look at that." I raised up off my seat to see what he was pointing at and he slipped his lit cigarette under me. When I sat down he had avenged his cold water bath. Those army pajamas didn't provide much insulation from the cigarette.

As soon as we were assigned a bed at Stark General Hospital in Charleston, we were told we could make a telephone call home. This had to be a high point of my time in the Army, to let my parents know that I was back in the good old USA. But my stay in Charleston was very short and soon I was on my way to the Army Hospital in Clinton, Iowa for some recuperation and treatment.

Everything was moving along fast, but not fast enough now that I was traveling in the direction of home. A year earlier on the 4th of July I had been traveling on a troop train headed for a training camp in South Carolina. Now this past 4th of July I had been traveling on a hospital ship headed for South Carolina. Soon I would be in Iowa, just

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## A WARTIME ODYSSEY (Continued from page 11)

a few hundred miles from home.

Upon arrival in Clinton, my walking cast was removed but I still had an open wound on that left leg where the flap graft had been applied. And the bone wasn't completely healed either, so I had to continue to use crutches and have dressings applied every day. A weekend pass to go home was out of the question until things healed up. Doggone it! But as soon as my parents learned I was in Clinton, my father made the railroad train ride across Iowa to visit me. Perhaps my mother had some fear of seeing me for the first time, not knowing just what my condition was, so she chose not to make the trip to Clinton.

After a couple of weeks, I was able to wrangle a weekend pass to go home. Traveling to a nearby town to catch the train that would carry me to within 20 miles of home, I discovered that there was a troop train on the siding which was destined for South Dakota. I asked the troop commander if I could hitch a ride on this train, thereby arriving

home several hours earlier than my scheduled train. I probably looked pretty pathetic and he just couldn't turn me down. The black Pullman porter made up a bed for me amongst this bunch of young air force officers who had just arrived back from overseas duty and were about to be discharged from the service. So I rode in style all the way back to Canton, South Dakota where I got off the train.

My buddy Bob Whealy, who had visited me in England, was not home on leave, so I called him and he drove over to Canton and picked me up. He delivered me to my parents' house early that morning before they were hardly awake. It was a glorious homecoming for a twenty-year-old who had long dreamed of such a moment. Of course Mamma cried and asked why I didn't tell them I was coming home that day. I suspect she would have baked a cake and had a houseful of relatives there to greet me had she known.

The weeks went by swiftly as I divided my time between Clinton, Lennox, and riding the train between the two points every weekend. But soon the Army shipped me off to Percy Jones

Convalescent Center at Ft. Custer, Michigan. There I would supposedly be rehabilitated and be given a medical discharge from the Army. But until that happened this soldier would enjoy just being alive and able to see the sights. A buddy and I would enjoy going to East Lansing to see Michigan State football games and "meet some girls" on that friendly campus. It was a simple task in those days to hitch hike from place to place and if you were a GI on crutches or with a cane, it was all the more easy to catch a ride.

Finally, early in November of 1945, my sojourn in the US Army came to an end. With discharge in hand, I took that last train ride home, now for more than just a weekend pass. It was truly great to be alive and looking ahead to things like college, employment, marriage and all those things one hardly dared to think or dream about when all around you were the uncertainties that went with getting caught up in a war.

Now there would be time to think, to dream and to plan. My wartime odyssey was over at last. ■

# THE BATTLE FOR SALEM STREET

By Ben R. Simms and Curtis D. Taylor

## Acknowledgment

This article first appeared in the Fall 2007 issue of *Army History* published by the US Army Center of Military History. I wish to thank Capt. Ben R. Simms, the lead author of the article, and Dr. Charles Hendricks, editor of *Army History*, for allowing us to use the article. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the men and women in uniform who so bravely and honorably serve our country.

– Jim Lankford  
National Historian

In October 2006, a reinforced American tank platoon from Company D, 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, supported by a platoon of Iraqi Army infantry, came into heavy contact with

a large, well-equipped Shia militia force while conducting a raid deep in the heart of a hostile city. The battle lasted over four hours and resulted in at least thirty militiamen being killed in action and in the complete destruction of one U.S. M1A2 Abrams tank. Miraculously, no American or Iraqi Army soldiers were hurt in the action. First and foremost, this battle showcased the bravery and versatility of the young American soldiers that populate our enlisted and noncommissioned officer ranks. Second, the M1A2 tank proved again to be an indispensable asset in urban warfare—particularly against a well-equipped enemy. Finally, this incident demonstrated, once more, the absolute importance of the combined arms team. This essay will summarize the action in those four hectic and confusing hours and offer lessons learned from the experience.



*Capt. Ben R. Simms, commanding officer, Company D, 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment*

## Situation

In late August 2006, a large force of Shia militia loosely affiliated with the Jaish al-Mahdi organization of Moqtada al-Sadr overran a platoon-size contingent of Iraqi Army soldiers in the city of Diwaniyah, the capital of Qadisiyah Province. With a population of about half a million, Diwaniyah lies

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## BATTLE FOR SALEM STREET

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about twenty kilometers east of Najaf in southern Iraq, and it has a history of involvement with radical, Shia-based insurgent groups. After overrunning the platoon, the insurgent leaders at the scene had their men gather seventeen Iraqi Army prisoners and publicly execute them in front of a large crowd of onlookers. After this event, the remaining Iraqi Army forces evacuated the city to the security of their nearby compound. This effectively left the Shia militia in control of the city.

Within hours of this incident, the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, based at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, eighty kilometers to the north in Babil Province, received a call to prepare to deploy to Diwaniyah to restore order and enable the Iraqi Army to regain control of the city center. The battalion, an element of the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, initially deployed two mechanized infantry company teams and one armor company team to Diwaniyah. When the American heavy armor arrived in Diwaniyah, the majority of the militia fled the city, and a combined U.S.-Iraqi task force was able to clear portions of it with virtually no resistance and temporarily regain control of the more hostile neighborhoods. The two infantry company teams redeployed immediately after the operation. The armor company, the battalion's Delta Company "Dragoons," remained in the city to support Iraqi Army operations designed to kill or capture the militia leaders responsible for the massacre of the Iraqi soldiers.

### **The Battle**

On the evening of 8 October 2006, the Dragoons received intelligence on the location of a prominent sheik accused of ordering the execution of the Iraqi soldiers. He was videotaped brandishing a handgun he had taken from the body of the commander of the captured Iraqi soldiers. A local Iraqi offered to lead Coalition forces to the house and positively identify the sheik.

The targeted sheik was located one block west of Salem Street (pronounced SAH-lem), a thoroughfare that ran through a well-known Jaish al-Mahdi

stronghold. The Iraqi source thought we could approach using a side street, thus avoiding the dangers of Salem Street altogether. The most recent aerial photography seemed to support this. The force package for the raid consisted of five M1A2 SEP tanks, which were operated by the company commander and members of the 2d Platoon of Delta Company, and three Iraqi Armored Up-Armored HMMWVs, operated by Iraqi Army personnel.

Urgent security concerns in the normal sector of the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, had forced the Army to redeploy all of the battalion's infantry platoons back to Kalsu. Up to this point, Iraqi Army infantry had fought well beside U.S. forces, and the battalion's officers believed that a mix of U.S. tanks and Iraqi infantry would provide the combined arms versatility that is absolutely essential in urban warfare. To further complicate matters, for security reasons the Iraqi source and an interpreter both needed to stay with U.S. forces, so they rode in the loader's position in two of the tanks. This reduced the combat effectiveness of those two tanks.

The combined raid force rolled out of the Iraqi Army compound shortly after midnight on 9 October and headed into the city. While the force moved along Jamhuri Street on its final approach to the turn to the target's house, all the lights in the city went out, shrouding the column in darkness. We were never able to determine whether the power failure was a planned reaction to our approach or an unintentional blackout, nor could we easily guess. Both types of power outage had occurred frequently in this area of operation and elsewhere in Iraq. Either way, the darkness was of little concern to us, and we continued forward without delay.

As the force approached the target, Sfc. Jonce Wright, who commanded the lead tank, observed that the planned route would not support the movement of tanks. The next best option was to use Salem Street to carry the tanks to the vicinity of the target, located less than 600 meters away. As Sergeant Wright's tank, D24, turned north onto Salem Street, it was immediately attacked by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fired

from around the corner of a building to its front. Sergeant Wright's crew immediately fired an M1028 canister round from the tank's 120-mm. main gun and charged into the enemy ambush. The RPG gunner leaned around the corner and fired a second time but again missed. While the crew of D24 reloaded the main gun, the tank commander returned fire with his .50-caliber, flex-mounted machine gun. As the tank crossed into the intersection where the enemy was last spotted, an RPG struck its right side, causing an enormous shower of sparks and flame. The main gun was already aimed over the side of the tank, down the alley, and the crew was able to observe the location of the RPG team as it fired. There were two RPG gunners taking cover behind a car parallel-parked on the right side of the road, and a third rifleman hid behind a van across the street. The tank's main gun returned fire, sending a high-explosive antitank (HEAT) round into the car. When the obscuration cleared, the tank's crew observed that the car was destroyed and resting on the bodies of the two RPG gunners. The man who had been behind the van was now lying dead in the street. Almost immediately, someone came out of a house and dragged his body away.

Meanwhile, at the intersection of Jamhuri and Salem Streets, the Iraqi Army platoon that had been following the lead section of tanks heard the firing, stopped, and refused to move forward. Since the street was not wide enough to allow a tank to pass the Iraqi HMMWVs, this cut the element in half and prevented the raid force from proceeding the limited remaining distance to the objective. The Iraqi lieutenant in charge was visibly shaken after seeing the lead tank ambushed by RPGs. He frantically claimed he had orders to return to his camp. After the company commander, Capt. Ben Simms, made several appeals and threats, the Iraqi lieutenant finally agreed to continue his advance toward the target. While Captain Simms was trying to negotiate with the lieutenant, a rifleman appeared to the left rear of his tank. First Lt. Andrew Merchant, who was following the commander's tank in D21,

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<u>CIRCLE PRICE</u> <u>OF EVENTS DESIRED</u> (Prices are per person.)	EVENT #1 THURSDAY AUGUST 28  GILMORE CAR MUSEUM AND PICNIC 9:00 AM	EVENT #2 THURSDAY AUGUST 28  EARLY BIRD DINNER 7:00 PM COCKTAILS 6:30 PM	EVENT #3 FRIDAY AUGUST 29  AIR MUSEUM BOX LUNCH	EVENT #4 SATURDAY AUGUST 30  COCKTAILS 6:00 PM BANQUET 7:00 PM	EVENT #5 SUNDAY AUGUST 31  BREAKFAST 7:00-9:00 AM	<b>MONEY TOTAL PER PERSON</b>
MAN'S FIRST NAME	\$30.00	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$14.00	\$
LADY'S FIRST NAME	\$30.00	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$14.00	\$
GUEST NAME	\$30.00	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$14.00	\$
GUEST NAME	\$30.00	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$14.00	\$
GUEST NAME	\$30.00	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$14.00	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$.	

### CHURCH SERVICE AFTER BREAKFAST

**Mail Reunion Reservation  
on or BEFORE Aug. 4 to:**

**★ REGISTER NOW ★**

LIBERATOR DONATION (Tax Deductible) \_\_\_\_\_

WEB SITE DONATION \_\_\_\_\_

ANNUAL DUES: July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 - \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Life Membership - \$50.00 \_\_\_\_\_

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(enclose check for this amount)      **GRAND TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

Did you **CIRCLE ALL** the events you desire to attend?

**Note:** Please wear badge to all events, spot checks will be conducted.

**NOTES:** Make checks payable to 14th Armored Division Assn.

**Please check applicable box \*\*\***

- I will be driving to the Reunion
- I will be flying to the Reunion
- Special diet - Mention at Registration Desk of 14th Arm'd Div.
- Need wheelchair for events #1 and #3
- Need wheelchair for entire convention
- I will play golf on Friday (coordinated by Chuck Hurl)

If you have a badge holder,  
please bring it and save money  
for your association.



# Accommodations at the Radisson Plaza Hotel and Suites

100 W. Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Phone: (269) 343-3333, Fax: (269) 381-1560

## Reunion - August 27-31, 2008

Complimentary transportation, airport to Radisson, Courtesy Phone #1

### DIRECTIONS

- From Interstate 94 (if you are coming from west): Take exit 76B, Westnedge Avenue North; it will change to Park Street. Stay on Park Street until you come to Michigan Avenue, and then turn right. Get into the left lane. The Radisson Plaza Hotel is located on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Rose Street.
- From Interstate 94 (if you are coming from east): Take the I-94 business loop into Kalamazoo. Turn left onto Rose Street. The Radisson Plaza Hotel is located on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Rose Street (to your left). The parking ramp will be across the street, on the right.
- From US 131: Take exit 38A (M-43/West Main) heading east. West Main will change to Michigan Avenue; the Radisson Plaza Hotel is located on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Rose Street.

### ELEGANT FACILITIES

- **Webster's** Four diamond Fine Dining Restaurant and Lounge is Radisson's Premier Showpiece. Webster's offers a variety of delectable steaks, chops and seafood prepared from an elegant copper and brass display kitchen.
- **Zazios** a modern Italian dining experience. This restaurant features a dining room of brilliant colors, large outdoor patio, Z-lounge, open show kitchen, and Chef's Table preparing live 5 course dinners daily.
- **Sol World Café** Come join us for breakfast or lunch at Sol World Café. Enjoy a buffet with made to order items daily for both breakfast and lunch or order from a wide selection of entrees. You are sure to enjoy this casual and friendly atmosphere.
- **Old Burdick's Bar and Grill** A fun sports bar and grill has something for everyone. This offers a relaxing spot to enjoy food and drink and features large screen tv's as well as comfortable casual dining.
- **Other Features:** Enjoy our three retail stores, Sofia Floral and Gifts, Rio Coffee Shop, and Sydney for upscale clothing, our full service health spa and pool, Idun Spa and Salon, and more...
- **Check in After 4 PM, Check out Before 12 PM**

### RESERVATIONS

- **Room reservations received after AUGUST 4, 2008 will be subject to availability and higher room rate.**
- To reserve your room, please call (269) 343-3333. You may fax this form to (269) 381-1560 or mail the perforated portion to hotel to the above address. Reservations must be guaranteed with deposit or major credit card.
- For suite prices & reservations call direct (269) 343-3333.
- To receive the group rate, you must identify yourself as a 14th Armored Division member when calling to make your reservation.
- Quoted rates are subject to state and local taxes (11%).

**GROUP NAME:** 14th Armored Division Association    **RES ID** 14THARM    **DATE:** 8/27/08-8/31/08

Please reserve: \_\_\_\_\_ Rooms for \_\_\_\_\_ # of people (Credit Card or Advance Deposit required)    (Non-Smoking Property)

Request room with: King Bed \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Double Beds \_\_\_\_\_ Rollaway \_\_\_\_\_ Handicapped \_\_\_\_\_

### Reservations must be received by August 4, 2008

Name:		<b>RATES:</b>	
Address:		Single: \$80	Double: \$80
City/State/ZIP:		Triple: \$80	Quad: \$80
Phone number: (    )		Plus state & local taxes, currently 11%	
Will arrive:	Day:	Date:	
Will depart:	Day:	Date:	
Type of Payment:	Credit Card	Check	Money Order
Credit card type, number and expiration:			
Signature of card holder:			

## BATTLE FOR SALEM STREET

*(Continued from page 13)*

identified the rifleman, engaged the attacker with his .50-caliber machine gun, and had his gunner engage with the tank's 7.62-mm. M240 coaxial machine gun, destroying a bus that the rifleman was using as cover and neutralizing the threat.

After the Iraqi Army platoon resumed movement, the lead section of tanks led the force to the target's house and set a cordon around the access routes to it. The Iraqi Army soldiers quickly entered the building and accomplished their mission. Within minutes they rejoined us and reported that they had captured the target and recovered the slain Iraqi officer's pistol. As the raid on the house began, an RPG team attacked the trail tank, D22, commanded by S. Sgt. Russell Chapman, from the same alley where D24 had destroyed the previous RPG team. The RPG round struck the tank in the side, detonating on a side skirt. The blast disabled the commander's optics and started a fire in the engine. Sergeant Chapman continued to fight in the tank using night-vision goggles, while his gunner immediately returned fire down the alley with a canister round. The RPG gunner was firing from around a corner approximately 150 meters away. Because of the obscuration created by the canister round, determining if it had any effect was impossible. Another RPG team fired from the end of the alley and missed. For several more minutes, Sergeant Chapman and his crew continued to exchange fire with individuals armed with RPGs at the end of the alley while the fire in his tank engine grew in intensity. After Sergeant Chapman realized that the fire was going to consume the engine, he ordered the evacuation of the tank. Seconds before the crew evacuated, the gunner, Sgt. Jason Carol, identified two men with an RPG at the end of the alley. He fired a final HEAT round dead on target and destroyed the RPG team, before abandoning the burning tank.

By this time the Iraqi Army soldiers had completed their raid and were back in their vehicles. Captain Simms asked the forward command post of the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, to provide immediate close

air support and additional armor support. S. Sgt. Jimmy Brown, commanding D23, meanwhile smashed his tank through a compound wall in order to quickly secure a key alleyway and protect the team's northern flank. At the same time, Lieutenant Merchant in D21 and Captain Simms in D66 moved back to the burning tank. Sergeant Chapman's last report was that his tank was on fire, had fired at an RPG team, and was being evacuated. As the two tanks approached, they could see Chapman's crew taking cover behind the tank and firing at a rooftop. The crewmen were pinned down near the burning tank by a rifleman on the roof above them. Sergeant Chapman's decision to stay until the last possible moment on the burning tank probably saved them by allowing them to destroy the RPG team. This way they were able to take cover from the rifleman instead of facing attackers from both directions. The two supporting tanks engaged the rifleman with fire from their coaxial M240 machine guns, while Chapman's crewmen fired at him with their personal weapons. The rifleman went down in a hail of M240 fire, and the raiding force did not receive any more fire from that rooftop the rest of the night.

With the rifleman gone, Sergeant Chapman's crew quickly split up among the four remaining tanks, which were disposed as follows: Sergeant Wright in D24 faced the north on Salem Street, Sergeant Brown in D23 secured the northeast alleyway, Captain Simms in D66 secured the southeast alleyway, and Lieutenant Merchant in D21 secured the burning tank to the south. Almost immediately Sergeant Brown observed an individual carrying a sniper rifle at the end of his alley. He fired his tank's .50-caliber machine gun and killed him. An RPG team appeared next and his gunner engaged it with a HEAT round. A second RPG gunner moved down Salem Street toward D24. Sergeant Wright engaged him with a canister round, destroying the insurgent and detonating the RPG round on his shoulder. Another RPG gunner tried to maneuver on D23, and Sergeant Brown destroyed him with .50-caliber fire from his tank commander's position. Several minutes later, yet another RPG team appeared, and D23

destroyed it with a multipurpose anti-tank (MPAT) round. Sergeant Brown then reported that his turret was partially disabled due to cold electrical wires that had wrapped around it as he smashed through the security wall. With the turret frozen in place, the crew continued to fight by pivot-steering the tank left and right.



*U.S. Army troops in M1A2 Abrams tank operate in Diwaniyah, Iraq, August 2006*

Because D22's crew had split up among the rest of the platoon, this contact took place while each of the tanks carried five men. With the exception of Sergeant Chapman, who displaced the Iraqi intelligence source from the loader's position in Sergeant Brown's tank, each of the dispersed American crew members, rifle in hand, had to share the loader's station with the loader of the tank he had selected, while the crew kept the tank in the fight. This greatly complicated the tasks of the loader, who had to maneuver in an already cramped space, hit a knee switch, select a round from the ready rack, and then pivot and maneuver the 50-pound main gun around into the breach. Once the main gun was loaded, the loader and the extra crewman both had to ensure that they were clear of the path of the gun's recoil in a space designed for one man. All this occurred while the tanks were in a quick-draw battle with RPG gunners and snipers. Having yielded his position to Sergeant Chapman, the Iraqi civilian who had identified the target voluntarily moved to the top of Sergeant Brown's tank. Because the turret was entangled with wires, he had to hang on to the armor on the top of the tank while the main gun fired round after round down the crowded

*(Continued on page 17)*

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## BATTLE FOR SALEM STREET

*(Continued from page 16)*

alleyways. To his credit, despite being terrified by the firefight and repeatedly jolted by the recoil of the main gun, the young Iraqi man never lost his composure. Approximately forty minutes into the battle, as Sergeant Brown was engaged in a toe-to-toe fight on the north end of Salem Street, a flight of two Air Force F-15s arrived on the scene and contacted the battalion's forward command post and ground elements on the command's frequency. Captain Simms assessed that the enemy was moving in two groups. The first group, at the north end of Salem Street, was trying to outflank Sergeants Brown and Wright to get into position for a clean RPG flank shot on either tank. The second group was moving along a street parallel to and east of Salem Street and attempting to seize the rooftops around the burning tank. Captain Simms requested repeated shows of force over Salem Street and 500 meters to the east. The flames from the burning tank were now reaching three stories high and were drawing the local chapter of the Mahdi militia like a magnet. The F-15s needed to provide a quick deterrent or the situation could soon escalate out of control. The enemy appeared to be coordinating the movement of the two groups in order to envelop the small force and cut off its line of communications. This was a level of enemy sophistication that the battalion was not used to seeing. Fortunately, the militia members had no appreciation of American night-vision systems or of the futility of seeking cover behind vehicles or walls. When they crouched behind a car or a wall, the tanks simply fired at and obliterated the obstruction. Still, the threat of envelopment was real and growing more serious with every minute.

Using the burning tank as a reference point, the pilots began to report what they were seeing directly onto the command net. The enemy was approaching from the northeast and lining up along a road that roughly paralleled Salem Street 300 meters to our east. After several low, ear-shattering passes from the F-15s, the enemy started to grow more disorganized and less reluctant to charge down the alleyways. On several occasions, the

pilots identified hostile movement on the rooftops around the burning tank. They immediately illuminated the enemy positions with a directed infrared beam that the tank commanders picked up with their night-vision goggles.

Back at the battalion forward command post, the primary concern was how to prevent the encirclement of the force and how to protect the long line of communications back to the compound. Clearly, the enemy's most logical course of action would be to lay deadly roadside bombs along our approach routes in order to cut us off from any relief. To prevent this, a quick reaction force of four tanks from the battalion's Company C rapidly closed the distance to the burning tank and established a strongpoint at the intersection of Salem and Jamhuri Streets. This intersection gave the relief platoon a wide field of view in four directions and allowed it to defeat any attempt to emplace explosives on either route. As soon as the relief force arrived at the intersection, it came into contact with an RPG team from a nearby alley. The soldiers opened fire immediately with a canister round. The F-15s reported men on the rooftops immediately above the tanks. Unable to see the attackers above them because of the angle, the crews opened fire with their .50-caliber machine guns, aiming for the bottom of the bright infrared light beams coming down from the aircraft. Men scattered off the roofs as the armor-piercing rounds entered the buildings near their top floors and burst through the ceilings.

While the relief force fought off the enemy attack, D66's crew spotted an RPG team trying to move down the alleyway that it was securing. A small pack of dogs and several startled birds betrayed the presence of the enemy team before it rounded the corner. This cued Captain Simms to take aim down the alley. He had a good defilade position from which he could look down the alley from the tank commander's cupola and cover it with his tank's .50-caliber machine gun, while his gunner secured the school and large wall to his north. Captain Simms fired at the RPG team members as they rounded the corner and saw flashes from the armor-piercing incendiary rounds in their

midst and on the wall next to them. When Simms stopped firing, the enemy had moved back north. Also during this time, another RPG gunner appeared from the north on Salem Street. He fired at Sergeant Wright from around a corner but missed. Wright returned fire with a HEAT round, destroying the RPG gunner. Due to the lack of gaps between the adjacent townhouse-like residences that lined the alleys, those alleys offered the enemy almost no concealment or cover from our weapons. Further, the varied heights of the buildings prevented the enemy from simply moving from rooftop to rooftop to envelop the tanks. With Sergeant Wright securing the northern flank on Salem Street and the relief force holding Jamhuri Street to the south, we had 'refused right' and 'refused left' to the enemy on the blocks east of Salem Street. We were effectively in a stand-off. The enemy fighters could not enter any of the alleyways that led to Salem Street nor could they envelop us. We could not get at them in the parallel street to the east of Salem because of the RPG threat and the necessity to secure the burning wreckage of D22.

About this time the F-15 flight lead reported that he was leaving the net to conduct a tanker refuel. This was the last we heard from our close air support, although the flight stayed in the air for several more hours. Before the aircraft returned from the tanker stop, Air Force ground control directed the flight to talk only on high-frequency radios and only to the nearest Air Force ground control team eighty kilometers north at Forward Operating Base Kalsu. For the troops of the battalion on the ground to communicate with the pilots, they had to contact the battalion's forward command post, which would relay their messages through an online chat system to the ground control team at Kalsu that would finally pass the message to the aircrew. This effectively ended the crew's close coordination with the troops in contact and eliminated the superior situational awareness the airmen had provided to the ground tactical commander.

Just after Sergeant Wright's engagement, a second relief force led by Maj. Curtis Taylor, the battalion opera-

*(Continued on page 18)*

## BATTLE FOR SALEM STREET

(Continued from page 16)

tions officer, arrived with one tank, one M88 recovery vehicle, and a company of Iraqi Army soldiers. The Iraqi company immediately established a screen along Jamhuri Street to secure the exit route. The tank, HQ63, and the M88 moved toward the burning wreckage that was once Sergeant Chapman's tank. The small engine fire had grown to consume the entire vehicle. Flames reached high above the buildings, and the heat could be felt at 100 meters. Small puddles of molten aluminum were beginning to form at the base of the tank as the tracks and road wheels melted into the asphalt.

Two Apache helicopters also arrived at the scene at the same time as the Iraqi company. As the gunships made their first pass, the members of another RPG team attempted to maneuver down Sergeant Brown's alley to the northeast. Brown could see their RPG poking up into the air as they moved behind a low wall. He destroyed the wall and the RPG team with a HEAT round. Once the Apaches spotted the friendly tanks, they immediately reported dismounts on the street to the east. Captain Simms confirmed that there were no friendly dismounts. The Apaches reported taking enemy fire and requested clearance to engage. Major Taylor cleared the fire, and the Apaches began a series of gun runs down the long street parallel to Salem, catching the enemy in enfilade. The pilots reported two to four enemy dismounts killed. The fire from the helicopters pushed the members of another RPG team into Sergeant Brown's alley, and he destroyed them with a HEAT round. As attack aviation continued to search for targets, Sergeant Brown identified another group of armed individuals. He engaged them with an MPAT round but was unable to determine the effect. Attack aviation identified a final RPG team and destroyed it with 30-mm. cannons. This was the last contact with the enemy. The attack aviation proved to be the ideal weapon at the perfect time. Unable to move against the tanks, the enemy was pinned down in the parallel street. When the Apaches spotted them

hiding along the street, the enemy fighters ran out of options. Most of the survivors slipped into the nearest house and blended in with the local civilians. The engagement had lasted four hours from first to last contact. Throughout the night, a steady stream of unarmed people policed up the enemy remains, but the raiding force made no effort to interfere.

Near sunrise, the tank had burned down enough for the local Iraqi fire department to extinguish the flames. We positioned our vehicles around the damaged tank to provide better security from the crowds that started forming right at sunrise, while members of the Iraqi company began to search the surrounding neighborhoods. They found a rocket at the school on Salem Street and took eight detainees. We owned the center of Mahdi-controlled territory for a total of fourteen hours as we continued our efforts to recover the destroyed tank with a complex ballet of cranes and heavy equipment trailers.

Throughout the day large crowds gathered on all sides of the perimeter we established around the recovery operation. The crowds would get as close as we would let them. Children would run to within fifty meters of the tank and throw rocks at the men and equipment involved in the recovery mission. The rocks were no more than a nuisance, but on two separate occasions grenades emerged from behind the crowd of children and detonated in front of us. One of these grenades slightly wounded Captain Simms's interpreter in the arm. On a third occasion, a sniper hiding in or near a crowd fired a round that hit a telephone pole near the recovery work. As dangerous and frustrating as this was, the soldiers never lost their composure, and no civilians were injured. By midafternoon we had lifted the derelict tank onto the back of a trailer and were on our way back to Camp Echo on the south side of Diwaniyah.

### Lessons Learned

The four-hour battle for Salem Street reconfirmed the value of the M1A2 tank as an indispensable weapon on the urban battlefield. In the chaotic first minutes of the attack, the tanks became fortresses from which

we could dominate the battlefield. The prior night we had actually considered executing the raid with HMMWVs in order to improve our chances of surprise. The result would have been disastrous.

Even at night, the .50-caliber, flex-mounted machine gun proved to be a very versatile and effective weapon that enabled commanders to protect their tanks from envelopment while their gunners scanned for targets. It was also a highly effective defense against the enemy on the rooftops above the tanks, and its superior ability to penetrate the masonry and medium constructions typical of Iraqi urban areas was extremely useful. API (armor-piercing incendiary) and API-T (armor-piercing incendiary-tracer) ammunition facilitate the use of the flex .50 by providing a readily observable flash on impact, especially in low light conditions.

The HEAT, MPAT, and canister rounds all proved valuable in denying the enemy virtually any cover from direct fire. Unlike the laser-tag battlefield of training exercises, here, if an enemy force sought cover behind a wall or a



*An M1A2 SEP tank operated by Company D, 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment on a mission in Diwaniyah, Iraq, August 2006*

vehicle, the tanks simply destroyed the cover and eliminated the threat.

Armor in the city must have the support of effective, well-trained infantry. Delta Company had an attached platoon of infantry but had redeployed it a few days earlier to address urgent needs in another sector. This left us completely dependent on Iraqi Army infantry support. While we had seen incredible heroism only days before from the Iraqi battalion that was sup-

(Continued on page 26)



# MAIL CALL

## RECALLS HOSPITAL

### EXPERIENCES

My WWII records indicate that I was wounded in action 21 March 1945, in the Siegfried Line at Steinfeld, Germany. I was sent to a 7th Army Evacuation Hospital and the last thing I remember before I was put to sleep with Sodium Pentathol was seeing 50 teams of surgeons and nurses operating on 50 soldiers in a huge operating room 100 yards long and 50 yards wide. On the table next to me was a soldier with half of his face gone. The next morning I was loaded on a train and sent to the 36th Army General Hospital at Dijon, France. There a hole was drilled through my left ankle and a Kirschner pin inserted through the hole and I was placed in traction for 3 months. Gangrene developed and my fever soared to 105 degrees. My surgeon gave me massive doses of Penicillin and my temperature slowly returned to normal. While lying in traction the Armed Forces Radio Network entertained the soldiers in my ward with music and news.

Sometime in April 1945, it was announced that Roosevelt had died at Warm Springs, GA. Then on May 9, 1945, it was announced that the Germans had surrendered and the war in the European Theatre of Operations was over. On June 1st, 1945, I was sent by train through Paris to Cherbourg. At Cherbourg I received orders which read that I would be evacuated to Charleston, S.C. Naval Base on board the USS Ernestine Keranda, a new hospital ship named for a nurse who had distinguished herself in the Pacific Theatre of Operations. On June 3, 1945, we sailed from Cherbourg with a ship full of wounded men.

We crossed the English Channel and could see the White Cliffs of Dover and the southern coast of England. About half way across the Atlantic one

of the Navy men on board told me that he had heard some of the wounded men from the 68th Inf Bn tell him that I was a piano player. He said he had been a vocalist with the Artie Shaw Orchestra. He said there was a piano on board and we could move it out on deck that evening and serenade the nurses on board. I told him "go for it!" It was the middle of June and the mid-Atlantic weather was perfect with a full moon. These are some of the songs that I played and the Navy man sang as the nurses lined the upper deck on the fan tail. "Begin the Beguine," "Stardust," "Laura," "Sentimental Journey," "All the Things You Are."

On June 17, 1945, the Ernestine Keranda sailed into the harbor of the Cooper River Naval Base at Charleston, South Carolina. We were the first ship loaded with wounded men from the European Theatre of Operations to return to the United States since the war in Europe ended May 8, 1945. What a reception! Navy bands playing, ships passing with sailors in dress whites saluting us, Navy fire hoses shooting streams of water high in the air. There wasn't a dry eye among the wounded soldiers on board the USS Ernestine Keranda.

Harry Kemp

### CAN ANYONE HELP BOB?

Verlyn,

I'm writing my memoirs - and did have a copy of a speech - printed from *The Liberator* - I'm fairly sure.

It was a speech given by Orsini (last name, all I have) to a group of airmen, former POWs like myself. It was a speech relative to the liberation of Moosburg in 1945 - but carried many statistics relative to the overall accomplishments of the 14th AD - in addition to the number and types of prisoners held at Moosburg, such as 27 Russian

Generals.

Orsini, a member of the 47th Tank Bn. at the time, later became a Deputy Undersecretary of the Army, I think.

This speech may have been delivered and carried in *The Liberator* around the 1986 year. If you can help me with a copy of this speech by email or otherwise, I would appreciate it very much indeed.

Robert (Bob) Buntin  
Co. C, 62nd AIB, 14 AD

### VA VERY APPRECIATIVE

Dear Verlyn:

The Ladies Auxiliary, of which my wife, Mert, is an officer, as you will note from the enclosed letter, presented the \$700 check from the 14th Armored Auxiliary on October 4th. Enclosed is a picture of the presentation given to Jean Filicsky, Assistant to Bob Robinson, Chief, Voluntary 7 Recreation Therapy Service at the Veterans Hospital.

As you know, the \$700 comes from the raffle held each year of items brought by the members and their spouses to the reunion and donated to be won by one particular raffle ticket.

I accompanied Mert to the VA when she made the presentation. They were very grateful and appreciative of the efforts of the Auxiliary and it was a pleasant experience. Mert did a great job and everyone seemed to enjoy the presentation. Thought you might want to use a picture and the letter in the *Liberator*.

Hope all is well with you and your great wife. We are fine and plan to be in Kalamazoo in 2008.

Best Always  
John P. Meyer

e

(Note: see letter & photo on page 4)



## MAIL CALL... Continued

### LETTER OF THANKS SENT TO LADIES AUXILIARY

Dear Mrs. Barton:

Thank you! Your donation from the 14th Armored Division Auxiliary will help veterans at VA Illiana Health Care System in many ways. I am enclosing Field Service Receipt #14986833 for your records along with a photo of Mrs. John Meyer presenting the donation.

Your contribution of \$700.00 was deposited in the **CF-2208 Nursing Home Care Unit Fund** and will be used to purchase something for "culture change" for the nursing home to help the unit look more "homelike." Certainly veterans will benefit as a result of the kindness you have shown to them through the generous donation.

Again, thank you for thinking of our veterans in this very special way.

Sincerely yours,

Bob Robinson

Chief, Voluntary & Recreation  
Therapy Service

### SIGNS UP NEW MEMBERS

Dear Sir,

I called a few days ago about having my children become members of the 14th Armored Division Association, in memory of their grandfather, Marvin M. Townsend. We know he was discharged as T-5 with the 14th Armored Div. (B) Btry. 500th A.F.A. in Oct. of 1945, after serving since enlistment on Dec. 15, 1942.

I have listed their names and addresses on the next page and have included the Life Membership fee for each. I have also included my husband's name in his father's honor, and his lifetime membership fee.

We had also discussed the high cost of the postage for the Association. You had said you were going to start a Memorial Fund to help with future cost. Let me be one of the first to help with this memorial in my father-in-law's name (Marvin M. Townsend) by enclosing a check for \$150.00. Thank

you for helping us keep Dad's memory alive and the duty of serving his country.

Thank you for your past service, and your continued service with the Association. It is much appreciated by all of the family.

Thank you,

Norma Townsend

### "PRETEND YOU'RE HAPPY WHEN YOU'RE BLUE"

Dear Verlyn:

Having recently reached the figure "88" I'm old enough to forget, and like so many of us ol' soldiers who are "loosing it" and our memory is failing us, I still can recall Nat King Cole's song "Pretend You're Happy When You're Blue." I recall those days when we were young and foolish, and before we were exposed to that German "88" which was so deadly effective against us in our march across France and Germany.

However, since our combat experiences in Hatten Alsace-Lorraine, I, like many of my old army buddies, suffer a hearing loss, which makes watching the boob tube unrewarding – so we, who can still see well enough to read, spend a lot of time reading current publications. I would like to call your attention to a book which although it is a novel, is based on a "German soldier's" experience against the Russians. This book does an outstanding job of stripping war of any glamour, and exposes the sheer physical horror of war as we lived it in Hatten/Rittershoffen. This book "The Stalin Front" by Gert Ledig and translated from German by Michael Hoffman, is I believe, a classic.

If you want to trigger the computer in our head to print out some of these actions you were a part of, this book will do it. The words are good, the descriptions are vivid and it is a novel

based on facts.

Also, along the same vein, another book that is a good read, was written by the nationally known author who recently died, Kurt Vonnegut, called "Slaughter-House-Five." This is the fictional tale based on the actual stressful experiences of a POW, of the Germans in Dresden when the British Air Force incinerated the whole city, and created the largest fire storm in the history of WWII. It killed untold thousands of civilians who were thought to be manufacturing ball-bearings so vital in the production of the aircraft and vehicles in winning the war against us and our allies. So much for the yesterdays, but only recently another famous movie actress, Deborah Kerr, left us, but I'd like to see Burt Lancaster kiss Deborah again – the tow of them lying on the sandy beach, gentle waves washing over them, etc., etc., in "From Here to Eternity."

Memories – on that train, going home in my army uniform, and hearing Doris Day singing "I'm Gonna Take A Sentimental Journey"... and that classic Turner movie with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, where they do the goodbye scene from "Casablanca," or with Hoky Carmichael teasing the piano keys in that scene in the bar with Bogey and the sexy cigarette smoking with Lauren Bacall.

My primary care doctor who's been my advisor now for several years at the V.A. Hospital, reminded me that I should be thankful I was able to find my way to his office and not to be too worried about my deteriorating memory loss – it's part of the trade off in growing old. However, best we keep in mind Deepak (Chopra) words of wisdom – "youth is not a time of life, it is a state of mind."

In closing, you may be able to use some of this to fill in your next publication (Past President Roy Robert's suggestion).

Yours truly,

Robert J. Straba



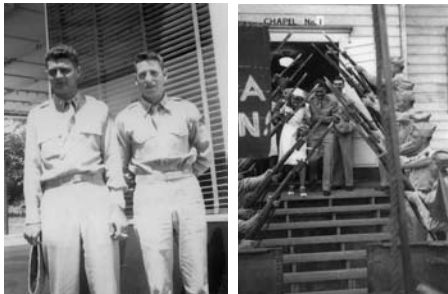
# MORE MAIL CALL



Mary Bell (the bride's sister), Jean Duncan (the bride) Richard Good (groom) and Dan Iannella



The Wedding "Limo" - WWII Style



Richard Good and Dan Iannella

Richard Good and Jeanne Duncan: A Wartime Wedding

## WWII WEDDING RECALLED; DAUGHTER SEEKS FATHER'S FRIENDS

Dear Verlyn:

I received a telephone call from Gary Krahenbuhl\* a while back who was looking for some background on Lt. Richard Good of A-62. Good was killed early on in the fighting while leading his platoon through the road-blocks in the Vosges Mountains. Gary married Good's daughter, Richey Jane Good, who was born after Good was killed.

I didn't know Good very well as I was in the 3rd Platoon while he was in the 1st Platoon. I gave Gary what I knew and also gave him a write up on the war which provided a time line for all the A-62 activities. I just received a thank you note from Gary along with pictures of Good's wedding the summer of 1944 at Camp Campbell. Captain Iannella was Good's best man.

I thought the pictures would be found interesting by many of our members and appropriate for inclusion in the LIBERATOR. Both Richey Jane and Gary are interested in contacting men who knew Lt. Good personally in

1944.

Pete Lakev

## STILL WEARING UNIFORM

Dear Verlyn,

You may be surprised to hear from me. I noticed in the summer edition of the LIBERATOR it is time to submit information for the winter copy of the magazine.

I served as chaplain for the 14th Armored Association for four years before having a health problem and turning it over to our present chaplain, John Burgess. He is doing a fine job. I am very busy serving as chaplain of and responsible for our American Legion Honor Guard. I helped organize this Honor Guard in 1989. We wear class A military uniforms. We have a firing squad using World War II M1 rifles, flag detail and bugler. We have buried seventeen of our own men who served on the Honor Guard and have rendered over nineteen hundred military funeral services for veterans.

I am military retired. I joined the 14th at Camp Campbell, Kentucky. I was in Company C 68th A.I.B. until

Germany surrendered May 08, 1945. I later served with the 45th and 2nd Infantry Divisions and spent 4 years with the USAF during the Korean conflict. In 1953, I returned to Rittershoffen, Hatton and several other places where I was involved in combat with the 14th.

In 1961-62 I was at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas with the 100th Division. We taught four cycles of basic training to men who later served in Vietnam. I came off active duty in August 1962 and enrolled in a Baptist Bible College where I graduated in 1965. I remained in the active reserve while pastoring churches for several years. I am now a retired minister and have served with this Honor Guard for 18 years. Each time I present the flag and look into the eyes of the bereaved I can see their broken heart. I've heard TAPS hundreds of times and feel sadness each time.

I am now 82 years of age and getting tired. I didn't dream that I'd still be wearing a Class A uniform at my age. There aren't many World War II veterans left but I truly appreciate each one. I thoroughly enjoy each edition of the LIBERATOR and especially the individual war experiences.

Sincerely,  
Clifford E. Hansford  
U.S. Army Retired

## STILL READS LIBERATOR

Mr. Hinrich,

I received the LIBERATOR yesterday. I have already read it. I do enjoy it. I miss the reunion so much, but can't travel alone, so the LIBERATOR keeps me informed so much.

Sincerely,  
Frances Tierno



## ORDERS BOOK FOR MOTHER

Dear Mr. Hinrich,

I would like to order a 14th Armored Division history book and have enclosed my check in the amount of \$45.00 per the note in the most recent *Liberator* magazine newsletter.

You can forward the book to the address listed above.

My father served in World War II as a member of the 14th Armored Division and thought this would be a great Christmas gift for my mother who survives him.

Thank you for this service and wishing you a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy, Holy and Prosperous New Year.

Sincerely Yours,  
Alan Jania

## NOTES A LIFE WELL LIVED

Dear Verlyn:

Another member of Company C, 48th Tank Battalion has died. He had a very long obituary in the newspaper but I extracted what you see below.

Former YMCA Executive and Merriam City Councilman, John K. Chatlain died October 20, 2007, after a short illness. He was 92 years of age.

John received a battlefield commission as second Lieutenant while serving in CO "C" 48th Tank Battalion. He treasured scrapbooks of his war experiences. Displayed on a table at his funeral were memorabilia including his helmet with a bullet hole in it. A sniper's bullet had entered the helmet, injured John, run around the inside and dropped out. That was during the march through Germany. He was in rehabilitation for one year.

One of John's responsibilities was commanding the "Blade" mounted to the front of his tank used to knock down road blocks. Rocket racks were mounted above his turret. He said that he always fired the rockets from inside the buttoned up tank "Because you never knew where they were going to go."

John is survived by two daughters, Joy Whittington, and Jane Henry and several grandchildren and great grandchildren. His wife, Josephine, preceded

him in death. They had been married 67 years.

The facts of John's life show a man of discipline and compassion devoted to service and leadership. In honor of his service to the city of Merriam, KS, a park was named for him. He was a councilman for 32 years. He took many responsibilities in and was chairman of various committees of St. Mark's United Methodist Church.

Roger James

## IMPRESSED WITH YOUNG OFFICER

Dear Verlyn,

During the 2nd 14th Arm'd Div. reunion held in Cedar Rapids, IA, Dick and Lil Hillenbrand, Bernie and Enid Rudd, and Elton and Marge Ross, all of the Co D 48th Tk Bn, were socializing in the gazebo of the dining room. A young man came up and wondered if he could talk to us WWII vets. With a yes, he went and returned with his fiance (to be married the following May). After a little conversation with him, he said he was working on a masters degree in Public Health at the University of Iowa. He then showed us his I.D. as a Major in the Army Special Forces. More remarkable, even though in his late 30's, he had 20 yrs in the service (Navy at 17 and Bachelors and ROTC with military scholarship).

Since then, we have kept in casual contact. I recently received on 10 Nov. the enclosed email on how he plans to celebrate his 40th birthday. Note in this email he does not say where he is, but he is going to run 5 eight-mile laps as a donation project to The Patriot Riders group.

I made a donation, sending him the verification number. He sent the 22 Nov. 07 email to me. With his eternal praise for us WWII vets and our service. You might consider this worthy of LIBERATOR publication. Please note it is signed Major Aaron Termain-Afghanistan.

Feel free to edit as you see fit.

Needless to say Dick, Bernie, and I were all impressed with him and the evening we spent together. It's good to know we have real professionals leading our boys in the hinterlands.

With best regards,  
Elton C. Ross,  
Co. D. 48th Tk. Bn.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Major Tremain's Thank You

Sir,

Thanks so much for your support. It

is great to hear from you. Sorry it takes me a while to get back to folks. Even though we have all the modern comforts of home - somewhat - there's still a line in front of the phones and the computers.

I think of you and your comrades often and know that I was extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to meet you in Cedar Rapids. It was truly an honor on my part to be in the company of true American heroes. I speak of you often to the guys that I'm deployed with. I have left a copy of the history of your unit that you gave me in our library that we have over here. And on every deployment someone always asks the question, 'What would they think of us today?' They being you and your fellow soldiers. But the real question that we are asking ourselves is do we measure up? Would the veterans such as yourself allow us in your company? Would we be seen as equals?

It's hard to say for us. I'm sitting in a heated and air-conditioned hut with a satellite TV, phone, and computer hooked up to the Internet. We have at our disposal the most modern equipment ever fielded. Equipment that makes us more lethal, keeps us warm and dry, allows us to talk to whoever we need to, and tells us exactly where we are on the earth. And then we are reminded of the iron sighted M1 Garand, the wool and cotton cold weather gear, and the lack of communication equipment, etc. and still you and your comrades overcame and were victorious. We start whining when we can't get AAA batteries. And we're only over here for anywhere from 5 - 15 months. Your deployment orders said duration plus 6 months. Now that is true national resolve. I'm not certain we could do something like that today.

Certainly there are moments of intense action from time to time but nothing of the long drawn and hard fought battles that you and your crew encountered. And everyday I'm over here I meet individuals who I know I would have found standing in your ranks if I could go back in time. But we all still feel that there was something unique and perhaps intangible about your generation. And that's why we ask the question - What would they think of us today?

We hope you and your comrades can look upon us proudly. We stand in your enormous shadow.

My training is coming along - I've got about another three weeks and then I'm going to do the 40 miler. I had to lay up a bit and let my left foot heal. I've got 4 buddies over here that are going to run

*(Continued on page 23)*



(Continued from page 22)

a lap each with me. So I'll have one that's on my own. I'll post the pictures of each lap after I get them done. I think after this I may actually try a marathon. I'm only doing 5 x 8 mile laps in a 24 hour period. I don't think that I could go 40 all at once. And you're right - it will only get harder. Now I've only got 11 months to figure out and train for what I'm going to do next November. I'm pretty far along so far towards reaching my \$4000 goal. I'm impressed that your daughter was able to raise that much money for the children's hospital. I think that I may have to do more research and coordinate my efforts better next year. A buddy of mine over here was the one who gave me the idea about linking this to a fund raiser. He's been doing it for a few years now. Wished I had thought of it earlier.

I hope you're doing well despite your last trip to the hospital. It still amazes me that despite getting a defibrillator and having a punctured lung that you would still say that was easier than your time in the Army Hospital. Again, another display of that core hardness that you all embody.

I would really like to send you a flag flown over here. Please send me your mailing address. You definitely deserve it. And thank you again for supporting me and helping out The Patriot Guard Riders.

Sincerely,  
Aaron Termain  
Maj, USA - Afghanistan

\*\*\*\*\*

#### TERMAIN'S SECOND LETTER

Hello Everyone,

As many of you know I will turn 40 this month and know I was planning on doing something memorable (a birthday challenge) like running 40 miles over a 24 hour period on 11 Nov 07. Well, that isn't going to happen tomorrow because I managed to injure my foot and had to take about 3 weeks off from running. I'm all healed up now but I'm going to have to roll my 40 miler 1 month to the right and make this attempt on 11 Dec 07. My plan is to run five 8 mile laps within a 24 hour period. I was up to three laps in a

day before I hurt my foot so I'm pretty confident that I'll be able to do it in a month.

In August I contacted many of you for a similar event that a team mate of mine sponsored and I participated in. He linked his Birthday Challenge ([www.birthdaychallenge.com](http://www.birthdaychallenge.com)) to the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. With your support he was able to raise over \$3500 for this valuable organization.

I would like to ask you all again for your support in my Birthday Challenge efforts to raise funds for another deserving and honorable group of volunteers, **The Patriot Guard Riders (PGR)**. The Patriot Guard Riders ([www.patriotguard.org](http://www.patriotguard.org)) established themselves as a non-profit (501c3) service organization whose mission is to preserve the dignity and respect at the services held for those who have fallen in combat. Their mission statement:

1. Show our sincere respect for our fallen heroes, their families, and their communities.

2. Shield the mourning family and their friends from interruptions created by any protestor or group of protestors.

I'm sure you've all seen the news about the cancerous group of individuals who choose to protest and disrupt the services held for **Your** soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen who bravely and honorably served this nation and made the ultimate sacrifice. These offensive demonstrations inflict further pain and suffering upon families who are already devastated by the unbearable loss of a loved one.

I ask that you all follow the link above and read a little bit about what this incredible organization has been doing for all of us. In addition to their support at funeral services, the PGR have established a scholarship fund to help the children of fallen warriors attend college. (<http://www.patriotguard.org/FallenWarriorScholarship/tabid/236/Default.aspx>).

If you choose to make a donation, please click on the donate block on the left hand side of the screen. Your donation will be accepted through the secure Pay Pal system.

I won't be able to track the total amount raised but my goal is (you guessed it) \$4000. In the spirit of the Birthday Challenge I would like to request donations of \$40 but I will be grateful for a donation of any amount. I would also like to send a personal thank you to each of you who donate so please email me once you have made a donation. I will

understand if you choose to remain anonymous. As a further incentive, I will send the top donor (if you are willing to identify yourself) an American flag that was flown over the forward operating base where I am currently located. This flag will come with a certificate of authenticity signed by me and my commander.

Please feel free to forward this message on to anyone who you think might be interested in supporting my efforts.

In closing, I'd like to thank you all in advance for your support for me and the Patriot Guard Riders.

Sincerely,  
Aaron

#### REMEMBERS ARMY DEPOT WELL

Dear Verlyn,

Please place my memories of the Miesau Army Depot in a future issue of the *Liberator*. Best wishes, Harry Kemp B-68.

For logistic purposes the United States Miesau Army Depot is located near Ramstein USAF base in the Kaizerlautern/Sweibruken Rhine Main confluence in Germany. My first tour of duty in Germany was with the 14th Armored Division in WWII circa 1944-45. My second tour of duty in Germany was at the U.S. Army Education Center 1st Infantry Division Goepingen circa 1984. My third tour of duty in Germany was at the US Army Education Center Miesau circa 1987.

With easy access to the autobahn, I would frequently visit Worms and Mannheim and Heidelberg. Upon crossing the Rhine at Worms my thoughts would drift back to April 1, 1945 (Easter Sunday) and I would see in my mind's eye the 14th Armored Division crossing the Rhine. Many times when I would see an elderly German man on my 2nd and 3rd tour in Deutschland I would say to him: Entschuldigen Zie bitte, mein Herr, vielleicht weren Zie in der Zweiti Welt Krieg? He would answer: "Ja, und Du?"

(Translation) "Excuse me please, Sir, perhaps were you in the second World War?" When he answered: "Yes, and you?"

I would then invite him to have a beer with me. I made many new friends that way...

I will close this by saying: Froelich Weinachten (Merry Christmas).

Harry Kemp  
[hk207@webtv.net](mailto:hk207@webtv.net)



Dear Gus,

In honor of my father, the late John R. Williams, a 14 AD vet, please send me a copy of the History of the 14th Armored Division. I look forward to learning what my father and all of you went through during the war. Please ship to address below. Thanks.

Donald Williams

**STILL ENJOYS LIBERATOR**

To Horst Froelich  
Dear Sir,

Sorry I can't write too good any more. And sure can't type at all.

My health isn't too good. I haven't had a *Liberator* since Summer of 2006.

I'm a Lifetime member of the Auxiliary. Guess I still have to pay dues, in order to receive it. Money is hard to come by, since I don't get any of my husband's (Harry C. Johnson, 19th AIB Co A) disability, he had drawn since he came out of the service.

He loved the men of the 14th. Enclosed is a check for dues and postage.

Norene Johnson

**ORDERS HISTORY BOOK**

Gus,

I just received my 14th Armored Division *The Liberator* publication today and I see your ad on the 14th Armored Division History Book for \$45.00. I have been wanting one since I joined the Association. I was with F Troop, 94th Ave.

Thank you,  
Lorenzo G. Martinez

**APPRECIATES EFFORTS**

Gus,

I received my copy of *The Liberator* yesterday and saw there is a need to add to the postage fund. Hence the enclosed check.

I served in HQ Co. 125th Armored Engineer Battalion. Although it was a long time ago, I have many memories

of some fine soldiers, and a fine unit.

Thanks for your effort in keeping the Association alive.

Fred Kohloss

**Dear Gus,**

This check is to cover the second book we received. We are going to donate the extra book to the Parkersburg, WV Veterans Museum. They are delighted to receive it.

Thank you so very much.

Peg (Allison) Grove  
Sister of Robert Allison, who was killed in France.

**KEEPS UP WITH 14TH AD NEWS**

Dear Gus,

As a proud old member of the 500th AFA, Service Battery, I would really like to receive a copy of the 14th Armored Division History Book.

I've enclosed my check for \$45.00.

In addition, I have never had the opportunity to attend one of the reunions. Living on Long Island, New York, the distance and family commitments have not made it possible.

I anxiously look forward to receiving and reading every issue of the *Liberator*. It keeps me in touch with what is going on with the Division.

If necessary to cut costs, the publication might consider cutting back from 3 to 2 issues a year.

I know it's not much, but I've enclosed another check to be added to the Postage Fund.

Happy Holidays, to you and the rest of the boys that keep the presses running.

Sincerely  
Tom Barbera

**HAS BROTHER'S MEMORABILIA**

Dear Sir,

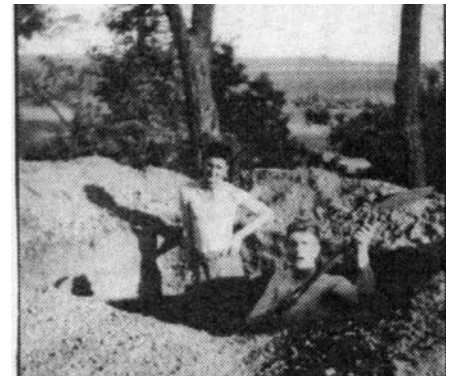
I am sorry to inform you of the passing of my brother, Cpl. Robert E. Fox, 1st platoon, A Company, 48th Tank Battalion, 14th Armored Division on October 16, 2007. He was a tank driver and wounded at Barr, France, in November 1944.

He died from complications of emphysema and pneumonia at age 85. Another one of the "Greatest Generation" gone.

I have enclosed a picture of him you might like to print in the *Liberator*. A Fox digging his own "fox hole."

My brother entrusted me with all him memorabilia and lots of pictures. If there are any of his buddies or next of kin from A Company interested, I would be glad to hear from them. My address is below.

Sincerely,  
Carol Fox Lukas



Bob Fox and Larry Miller of A-48 TK BN. digging a six by six somewhere in Germany. Truly a "Fox" hole. Germany 1945.

**SOUTH WESTERN REMINDER**

Liberators,

A NEW YEAR! I hope you had a wonderful Holiday Season!

My move to a condo in San Diego is proving to be the right move. No outside maintenance, new construction and less area to keep up.

I'll soon be making the arrangements for our annual get-together at our usual restaurant in Mohave Valley, AZ, and staying in Laughlin, NV.

Several new members are on the roster with several sons and daughters expected to attend. The national reunion saw the kids taking an interest and I hope more of them will attend our Southwest (West coast) gathering.

Gus Hinrich has taken on a big load doing several of the national offices. Be sure to let him know of any taps and new members you locate.

We'll be meeting the second week in April on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, April 8, 9, & 10, 2008. Mark your calendars!

As ever,  
Joe Fitts

136th Ord. C Co



## SON EXPRESSED APPRECIATION

Dear Verlyn:

I was asked to pass the following letter along to you for inclusion in an upcoming issue of *The Liberator*. It's author, Richard Weiss, is the son of Pfc. John James Weiss who served in D Company, 25th Tank Battalion. John passed away in 1965 when Richard was only 17 years old, and shortly afterward his son joined the Marines and served in Viet Nam. Best Regards, Jim (Lankford)

Dear Jim:

In our basement is a foot locker type box containing records and memorabilia from my father's service time in the Army. I have not opened it in years, thus I do not know if there is a copy of the History of the 25th Tank Battalion? However, I do remember there is a book about the 14th Armor Division.

Someday, I will get around to sorting my father's and my own military memorabilia and records' footlockers, so as to cause organization for any future family member generations that may desire to explore such.

I will have to gather additional information from my father's footlocker so as to afford supporting documentation information towards the membership application.

For your information - Westfield, NY, is located in the western most county in NY state, its name is Chautauqua. I live 30 miles south from where I grew up in Westfield, in a community named Jamestown, which is located at exit 12 of 186.

I am a life member of these local veterans organizations: VVA, AmVETS, DVA, VFW, USMC Fellowship Association, and yearly dues paying member of the American Legion (Life membership in the AM is a real big bucks cost factor).

Thank you once again for being the high performance type of historian that the 14th Armor Division Association can be very duly proud to have as a member of its executive staff. I was duly impressed how you immediately took on the task of acquiring the answer to the inquiry concerning my father's military service information. I also appreciated the information you included in order to provide me knowledge concerning light tanks and their assigned combat duties and tasks, which they performed during their time while station in Germany.

Jim you wrote - Don't hesitate to let

me know if I can be of any further assistance. This is my request that you please present this e-mail's message content in the next *The Liberator* newsletter so as to acknowledge and recognize both the LIBERATORS executive board members, as well as the other active 14th Armor Division Association members. In order to afford to them each and everyone a **Helliously Huge THANK YOU** from me for their combined efforts during their WWII combat experiences. Which they each and every one extended in order to maintain, and continue till this day; the precious freedoms that we American citizens still are able to both share and enjoy due to those brave heroes collective actions and efforts. During what I hope will be the last major combat endeavor on a worldwide scale that the United States of American will have ever to be involved in.

I am indeed extremely proud to be able to state that my father, John James Weiss, was among the membership of American heroes who served with the 14th Armor Division during WWII.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard A. Weiss - USMC,  
Corporal of Marines  
MOS 0331 machine gunner  
Suicide Charley Company,  
1st Bn. 7th Marines  
Vietnam Combat Service  
Aug. 1968-Mar. 1969

## SHARES WIFE'S POETRY

Dear Verlyn:

I dreamed death came the other night  
and heaven's gate swung wide

With kindly grace an angel came and  
ushered me inside.

And there to my astonishment stood  
soldiers I'd known on earth

Some I'd judged and called 'unfit'  
and some of 'little worth.'

Indignant words rose to my lips but  
never were set free.

For every face showed studded surprise.  
No one expected me.

My dear wife Marge, who passed away only a couple of years ago, wrote a number of poems which she used to entertain her nurse friends with at their annual reunions in Saginaw, Michigan. She used the above poem which I borrowed, substituting 'soldiers' for her 'nurses.' She was part of the 1941 graduating class at St. Mary's School of Nursing which we attended many times because that's where we were born and raised as Michaganders, and where our kinfolk are all buried.

Yours truly,  
Bob Straba, Co "C" 19th AIB

## LOTS OF CHANGES SINCE 1944

Dear Verlyn,

WWII - 1944 - Marseille - 2007

I subscribe to the Smithsonian Magazine. Guess what?? An article entitled "Marseille's Melting Pot" - article entitled "Marseille's Ethnic Bouillabaisse" - first of all I couldn't pronounce it, but fortunately I have a Webster's Dictionary at my elbow. It means "Boui-la-baisse" a highly seasoned fish stew." Well, this is 63 years later - didn't have that in 1944.

Marseille is now renowned as the most diverse city in Europe. The old port has shed its seedy image and now some view it as a laboratory of the continent's future. Wow - all I remember is the upside down ships still shedding steam as they were just turned upside down, and lots of mud.

Now the same harbor has 8-10 Tory buildings right up to the water line - and the harbor full of sailing vessels (private, of course). I imagine the sewer system is also underground - wasn't when we landed. They say there are 2 million people in Marseille now. Guess they had to change the sewer system.

Cruise ships bring in 460,000 tourists a year. Hope they didn't have to walk in mud or sleep in pup tents while sliding down the muddy trails, mess kit in hand.

They also have beautiful boutiques to shop in and as they say "It's a melting pot of civilization." Yes, I think we recognized that when we landed in 1944.

Also the population was reduced when we landed - they had 3 hanging from a tree. I guess the locals did a better job than we would've done.

Also, in the same publication of the Smithsonian is an article about the Invasion on D Day, June 6, 1944. So I guess the magazine would be of interest to us in the 14th - it was to me. I've read both articles twice.

It is just hard for me to realize the undertaking of WWII compared to our present day occupations of a few divisions at a time. Don't forget, we were also in Africa and Italy on D Day. Italy was no easy thing either. There was no place to hide on those flat plains. The magnitude of WWII is overwhelming even 63 years later.

Harold H. Kiehne

## BATTLE FOR SALEM STREET

(Continued from page 16)

porting us, such heroism was absent on that particular morning from the Iraqi platoon that joined the raiding force. This is not an indictment of the Iraqi Army but a reminder that a unit is only as brave as its commanding officer. In this case, the young Iraqi lieutenant was not up to the challenge.

The close air support and close combat attack provided by the Air Force and the Apache gunships were indispensable. The F-15s first seized the initiative from the enemy by intimidating and disorganizing his movement, while providing real-time situational awareness to the ground commander. The Apaches then ended the fight with a vertical envelopment after the enemy had been pinned down by heavy armor. By expanding American force projection into a three-dimensional package, the aircraft protected the tanks at the bottom of a deadly urban canyon and denied the enemy the ability to use the rooftops to gain a positional advantage. The aircraft's bird's-eye view was absolutely critical in an urban environment where the ground element's ability to acquire and kill was limited block by block. The use by the Air Force crews of infrared designators (known as Sparkle) instantly allowed the tankers to fix their sights on enemy movements and destroy them. The decision to force the aircrews to communicate through a ground control team eighty kilometers from the battlefield was unfortunate. Air Force pilots should never release ordnance without approval from trained personnel on the ground, but when their aircraft are serving in a reconnaissance and target-designation role, the pilots' communication requirements should be relaxed to simplify and accelerate coordination.

The show of force by the F-15s and the gun runs from the Apaches provided an immense psychological advantage to our troops. The insurgents saw that we were capable of dominating the contested streets until every soldier and every piece of hardware was safely out of harm's way. The application of airpower must also have been an absolute shock to the enemy, who suddenly had to worry about at-

tacks, detection, and designation from overhead, especially once the Apaches began to fire into the alleys.

Finally and most important, the outcome of this action was decided largely by the ingenuity and bravery of the two junior tank commanders on the scene. Sergeant Chapman and his crew fought from his burning tank for almost fifteen minutes and then safely abandoned it under fire. Despite enemy attack from nearby rooftops, he moved his crew to safety and then continued the fight as the loader of another tank that was also in heavy contact. His decision to continue the fight from his burning tank undoubtedly protected his crew members, as it enabled them to destroy the RPG team that would have tried to kill them after they dismounted. Further, it prevented the crew from being caught in a crossfire between the RPG team and the rooftop sniper that engaged the soldiers as they exited the tank. Sergeant Chapman's actions and leadership brought the crew of D22 unscathed through extreme peril.

Sergeant Brown's decision to aggressively seize the key northeastern alley and his subsequent efforts in close combat with the enemy to retain it most likely saved the unit from being overrun. Sergeant Brown and his crew proved absolutely fearless in the face of wave after wave of enemy attack. Since his turret was partially locked due to power lines, Sergeant Brown was forced to keep his tank out of cover in the middle of the alley or risk being unable to react to enemy dismounts advancing on the company's position. Despite this, he fought on, aiming his main gun by pivot-steering and suppressing or destroying the enemy with his .50-caliber machine gun and his loader's M240. His tank single-handedly defended the alleyway that proved to be the enemy's most heavily used avenue of approach. He also initially fought the attackers with an Iraqi civilian, our local guide, riding in his loader's hatch. Once Sergeant Chapman climbed aboard, he continued the fight with a disabled turret and a civilian on the top of the tank whose identity and safety had to be fiercely protected. For the duration of the fight, Sergeant Brown and his crew were seemingly immune to defeat, fear, and enemy fire.

Despite the millions of dollars worth of advanced technology we brought to Salem Street that morning, the talent and skill of our noncommissioned officers decided the outcome of the fight. This is a valuable lesson. An investment in the training and care of our noncommissioned officers and junior leaders will always produce greater results in the long run than a comparable investment in technology. After all, wars are ultimately won by people, not machines. The battle of Salem Street is a powerful reminder that the resourcefulness and courage of the American soldier remains our Army's greatest asset.

### The Authors

Capt. Ben R. Simms is an assistant professor of military science at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. An armor officer, he graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1998. Simms served in Kosovo from December 2000 to May 2001 and in Iraq from March 2003 to March 2004 and November 2005 to November 2006. Maj. Curtis D. Taylor is the assistant operations officer of the 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, at Fort Hood, Texas. Also an armor officer, he graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1994. He served in Korea from October 2000 to December 2001, in Afghanistan from November 2003 to May 2004, and in Iraq from November 2005 to November 2006.

### Humor for Lexophiles

#### (Lover of Words)

1. I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.
2. Police were called to a day care where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
3. Did you hear about the guy whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now.
4. The butcher backed up into the meat grinder and got a little behind in his work.
5. To write with a broken pencil is pointless.
6. When fish are in schools they sometimes take debate.
7. The short fortune teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.



**14th AD CHAPTER ORGANIZERS, UPCOMING REUNIONS**

**SOUTH EASTERN STATES CHAPTER**

PHIL SNOBERGER, President      THE COMFORT INN  
OFF A      OCEANFRONT

**SOUTH WESTERN STATES CHAPTER**

DANIEL (JOE) FITTS and ROBERT K. LONG, Organizers

**MID WEST STATES CHAPTER**

HAROLD KIEHNE      DAYS INN - French Island

**COMING NATIONAL REUNIONS**



**Russell Barton**  
**2009**  
Sept. 9-13  
Green Bay, WI


**James Craigmile**  
**2010**  
Columbia, MO  
Dates pending



<http://14tharmoreddivision.org>

Check out the website:  
<http://14tharmoreddivision.org>

**NOTICE:**  
**LIBERATOR ISSUE DATES!**  
**MARCH - JULY - NOVEMBER**  
 Information **MUST** be submitted  
**SIX WEEKS** before issue!  
 ALL INFORMATION SHOULD BE TYPED.  
 Send all information to:  
**VERLYN HOFER**



PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL FOR EXPIRATION DATE  
 All changes of address should be sent to Gus Hinrich, Sec.

14th ARMORED DIVISION ASSN., INC.  
GUS HINRICH, SECRETARY

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