



THE LIBERATOR™

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14th Armored Division Association*

WINTER 2009

Message from the President...



JAMES CRAIGMILE
President, 14th AD Association

Another great reunion time is rapidly approaching. Gus and the committee in charge are making arrangements in Indianapolis - a great site you will recall. It should be another rewarding time together to share the joys and pains of the year.

I hope most of us are still able to travel and to enjoy the fellowship of reunion.

Let me wish safe traveling and good health for the year.

See you in Indianapolis.

Thanks for Donations

Our sincere thanks to all who have and continue to make donations to the Liberator/Postage Fund. Without this support, it would be most difficult to continue this publication.

Gus Hinrich & Verlyn Hofer

Plans Underway for 46th Reunion: Younger Generation Assumes Duties

With the 2009 reunion at Green Bay now behind us, plans are being formulated for the gathering of the 14th AD Assoc. members in Indianapolis, Indiana next year.

However, it is felt that we should briefly pause before going into plans for 2010 to review the recent gathering of the Liberators. A sincere thanks from all who attended the 45th annual reunion is due Harold Kiehne, Charlotte Froelich and daughter, Association officers and others who helped to make the reunion an enjoyable event. Of the 122 people registered at the 2009 reunion, 44 were 14th AD veterans, the remainder being spouses, children, grandchildren and friends.

As in previous years, planned events for the reunion were well attended, especially considering the declining number able to attend in latter years. The river cruise, the early bird dinner, Packer Hall of Fame tour, tailgate party, memorial service and banquet were all well attended. Entertainment at these events was well received.

Efforts by the Ladies Auxiliary and Fred Shattuck again resulted in a very successful fund raiser for a gift to a VA hospital. Chaplain Burgess again conducted a Sunday morning worship service which was greatly appreciated by many.

At the annual business meeting
(Continued on page 3)



Seated left to right at the reunion registration table are Ann Chelette, Gus Hinrich and Ann Lapo.

46th NATIONAL REUNION
Indianapolis, Indiana • September 8-12, 2010

FROM THE LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT



GAYLE SIEWERT

Greetings to all from Minnesota!

What a wonderful 45th reunion we had in Green Bay! The hotel was wonderful and included everything we could possibly need. All the events were exciting with a lot of people attending, and such good weather.

The Ladies Auxiliary officers will stay the same for one more year; thank you to the nominating committee for doing such a good job.

Our raffle was a success with 140 gifts, and many, many lucky people. I hope you were one.

We raised approximately \$600.00 so we will be helping out the Clement J. Jablocki V.A. Medical Center in Milwaukee with new American and P.O.W. flags.

Many thanks to all that brought gifts, sold tickets and did the drawings.

The hospitality room was well attended by everyone with many good items to eat; a good time was had by all.

Plans are on for Indianapolis for next year and the year after, I know the planning committee will do a wonderful job. If they ask for help, please do not hesitate to lend a hand.

It was great to see Russell at the banquet. The food was great and entertainment equally grand.

Start making your plans for our reunion in Indianapolis, September 8-12; it will be here before we know it.

Congratulations to the new Association officers for the coming year. Thank you to the sons and daughters for all their help in making the reunion successful and for getting their parents to attend. Please do not forget the postage fund and any change of addresses too.

Best wishes to all who are having birthdays or anniversaries. My sympathies to all those who have lost loved ones.

Take care,

Gayle Siewert, Auxiliary President

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

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

★★★ LIBERATOR ★★★

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14th Armored Division Association, Inc.

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EDITH BARTON
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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. _____

Please make checks payable to: National Women's Auxiliary
of the 14th Armored Division Ass'n.

THANKS FROM PAST PRESIDENT RUSS BARTON

Another reunion has passed us by with many happy memories left to enjoy. I am so very thankful I could be there, if only for one day. It was great to see my friends again. I thank our son, Jerry and his wife Diane, and our daughter, Clela and her husband Gene Rueter, for all they did getting us to the reunion and caring for us.

I call this reunion the Reunion of Hard Knocks. Four years ago Horst and Charlotte Froelich and I and Edith met in Green Bay. We checked over the hotel and signed a contract. Then Horst left us to make reunions in the sky. Then I fell in our bathroom and broke a hip. Other problems came along and I am still in a care home in Beaver Dam.

Next Charlotte had open heart surgery and was laid up for some time. So the only one on her feet was Edith. To top all that, the hotel was sold to

new owners. Thankfully, Harold Kiehne stepped in, making several trips from LaCrosse to Green Bay to work out plans for the reunion. But even with all this happening, we had a great reunion.

There are so many who helped in various ways to make this so. I cannot remember each one of you by name, but you know who you are and all I can do is say "Thank you"! and God bless you all.

Love,
Russell Barton

P.S. The number of canes and wheelchairs have increased but that will not stop us.



Standing (l to r) are Diane and Jerry Barton, and Clela and Gene Rueter; seated are Russ and Edith Barton.

Join the Partners

by Ann Chelette

Meet the Partners! We're a growing group of descendants and relatives of our 14th Armored Division veterans - sons and daughters, nieces and nephews, grandchildren and more! Since 2007, we've been gathering at the Annual Reunions to discuss how we can support our veterans. It was great to see old friends and new ones

at our Green Bay reunion. We're working to help plan and conduct reunions and to take on any roles asked of us by the Board. Many thanks to those assisting with our 2010 Reunion in Indianapolis - we can always use another hand, opinion, and suggestion, though, so please chime in!

Over sixty Partners are now com-

municating, working together, supporting and enjoying the new friendships we've formed. We look forward to adding to our rolls and invite all relatives of Association veterans to

PLANS UNDERWAY FOR 46TH REUNION

(Continued from page 1)

held on Saturday, a very important decision was ratified with the body electing two "second generation" members to serve as officers of the organization. Ann Lapo, daughter of Gus Hinrich, was elected treasurer of the 14th AD Assoc., and Ann Chelette, daughter of Roy Roberts, was elected to serve as secretary. Gus Hinrich will continue as executive director of the Association, while James Craigmile was named president, and Chuck Hurl vice president.

As was previously decided, the president will no longer be primarily responsible for the planning of the annual reunion, this event to be under the direction of an appointed committee. Heading up that committee as co-

chairs are Ann and Jess Chelette. They have submitted the following information for publication in *The Liberator*.

* * * * *

Join us in Indianapolis next year! The 46th National Reunion of the 14th Armored Division Association will be held at the Crowne Plaza Indianapolis Airport Hotel on September 8-12, 2010. Mark those dates on your calendar! Registration information, entertainment details, meeting schedules, and more will be coming in the next *Liberator*.

The Crowne Plaza has many handicap accessible rooms, lobby areas to sit and talk, several restaurants, an indoor swimming pool, game room, and laundry, and a marvelous site for our Hospitality Room. Indianapolis features marvelous sites to tour, including

the famous Indianapolis Speedway, and we're also planning entertainment within the hotel for your comfortable, relaxed enjoyment. Travel to Indianapolis is made easier with complimentary airport shuttle or a pleasant fall drive - 70% of the United States is within an 8-hour drive of Indianapolis!

Your reunion chairmen are Jess and Ann Chelette (daughter of Roy Roberts), working with many of the new "Partners" group - sons, daughters, nieces and nephews, and a few grandchildren of 14th Armored Division Association veterans who have been meeting during annual reunions for the past few years. We invite all descendants and relatives of veterans to join us in planning and enjoying next year's reunion! Indianapolis is a great place to meet!

NEW MEMBERS ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

David Maples (Holly) 500th
 Grenville Thoron 19th B
 Robert Wollard 68th C
 Peggy Coleman**
 Justin Cooper (Carrie)**
 Michele A. Zuck**
 Elma Oberla**
 Edward Salzetti
 Marilyn Baney**
 Jess Chelette**

* Wife of Member **Son or Daughter of Member

NEW LIFE MEMBERS ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

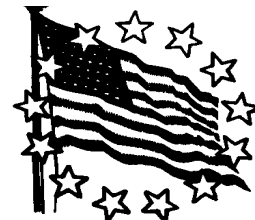
Robert Wollard Ralph Livoni Edward Salzetti

DONATIONS ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Ray Schmidt	Kenneth Hazelton	Frank Fulmer
John Arena	Ray Huning	Marjorie Van Someron
Iona Jeardow	Herman Meyer	Millie Crockett
Mae Mann	William Mallard	Lawrence Miller
Alex Naran	Donald Edlebeck	Lee Oster
Dorothy Schrock	Dorothy Schork	Elton Ross
Grenville Thoron	Carol Lukas	Frank Crockett
Elwanda Welch	Justin Cooper	John Klobucar
Allen Helton	Michele Zuck	John Burgess
Leanne Helton	Donald Runciman	Alroy Carlson
Arnold Blakeslee	Elma Oberla	Richard Stewart
Frances Siewert	Albert Elgin	James Kuszmaul
Doris Hall	Edward Salzetti	Chuck Hurl
Richard Hillenbrand	Roland Benoit	Joe Cotten
Irwin Baum	Samuel Glenn	Charlotte Froelich
Bennie Cardinale	Kenneth Higgins	Howard Boise
Robert Wiersema	William Fleming	Marilyn Baney
Esther Komadina	Fred Shattuck	
Myrna Mallison	Jack Harvey	

SPECIAL DONATIONS ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Charles Eder	Matt Sitnick	James Russell
Jim Lankford	Ralph Livoni	Phil Snoberger
Doris Hinrich	Edwin Kosik	Mary Williamson
David Maples	Bob McClaren	Forrest Jewell
Myrle Walters	John Meyer Sr.	Bill Breer
Elmer Burch	Joe Fitts	Jim Craigmile
Bill Samar	Neil Webster	Verlyn Hofer
Tom Boyd	Fred Harshberger	Ken Fulmer
Jesse Woolard	John Meyer	James Lankford



TAPS

Dudley Partrick, 500th HQ
 Paul Pryor, 48th B
 Robert Sturdivant, 499th B
 Charles Heath, 136th C
 Cliff McBride, 136th HQ
 Ted Chronowski, 48th C
 Elmuth Martalock, 136 HQ
 Burkett Sims, 62nd D
 Lawrence "Duke" Daluga, 47th A
 Doug D. Kraner, 62nd Med
 Garold Veale, 25th
 Harold Katchel, 500th Hq Bty.
 David DeBoer, 19th C
 Son of Charles and Twilah DeBoer
 Carlton W. Earl, 154th Sig. Co.
 William Sweeney, CCA-Hq.
 Anthony Mastrolembo, 125th Eng Hq
 Francis Schlies, 19th Co A

NOTE: Information regarding the death of 14th AD comrades should be directed to Ann Chelette, National Secretary, for listing in the "Taps" column.



THANKS FOR SERVICE, DONATION

It is noted that James Lankford, our Association historian, is also webmaster for the official 14th AD Association website, giving of his time performing both these tasks. Jim has generously foregone repayment of website expenses he has incurred of late, this constituting a considerable donation to the Association.

The officers and membership of the 14th Armored Division Association sincerely thank him for his many hours of service and his generous donation



THE CHAPLAIN'S COMMENTS

John A. Burgess

JEHOVAH SHAMMAH



The names of God identify divine characteristics that are vitally important to each of us. JEHOVAH SHAMMAH is the name I wish to consider. Translated it means The Lord is There. God is present to fulfill in our lives all the benefits His Names identify. This is a great theme that can be traced throughout the Old and New Testaments: The presence of Almighty God, actively at work in the believer's life, saving, protecting, providing, and preserving.

Ezekiel was a prophet to Israel during the Babylonian captivity. It was a difficult time for the Israelites. They had seen the city of Jerusalem and the temple of God plundered and wrecked. They were experiencing the difficulties of living in bondage in a foreign land. The hope they possessed that they would once again live in Jerusalem and worship at the temple easily dimmed. They had seen the presence of God leave the old temple because of their sinfulness and disobedience. As a message by which to revive their hope God gives Ezekiel a vision of a restored Jerusalem and a rebuilt temple where God's presence was once again a reality. In the midst of their difficult bondage God was there and He would restore them as He had promised.

THE LORD IS PRESENT: A wonderful truth that can strengthen our walk of faith. Consider this truth illustrated by past events. "No child of His is ever outside His thoughts, or can escape His presence. Wherever one of His people is, the LORD is There."

(Stevenson, THE TITLES OF THE TRIUNE GOD, p. 92) "Where can I flee from your presence?" (Ps. 139:7) The Bible and History testify to the reality of this truth. When Hagar, the servant of Sara, thought herself abandoned and alone in the wilderness, the angel of the Lord found her and ministered to her needs. Another name for God appears when Hagar called the place THE GOD WHO SEES ME. (Genesis 16:13)

Jacob, doubtless feeling very lonely as he goes to sleep on his first night away from home, has a dream where he sees angels descending and ascending a ladder stretched from earth to heaven. His response to this vision says: "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not." (Genesis 28:16) Many other instances amid all circumstance of life support the fact that God is with the one who trusted in Him: Jonah in the belly of a fish, Daniel in the Lion's den, the three men in the fiery furnace. Could go on as there are many more. Paul, the Apostle, rescued from prison by an angel.

The life of Hudson Taylor clearly illustrates the presence of God in the life of faith. On the way to China, a strong current caused the ship to drift toward sunken reefs. There was no breeze to turn the ship around. The Captain despaired. Nothing could be done. Taylor said, "We haven't prayed. Let us all go to our cabins and pray." When Taylor came on deck after prayer he told the officer to set the sail. Disbelieving he did

and the breeze came.

Many instances demonstrating God's presence come from events in World War II. I could illustrate this from my personal experience. One that impressed me was of a woman, Darlene Rose, in a Japanese war camp. When given cereal one day she prayed for one banana. A guard came by and gave her 99.

I learned as a child this truth. No matter where I was nor the kind of situation I found myself in I was always in God's presence.. He knew my needs and could supply those needs. In combat I could proceed regardless of the danger for I walked with God. This truth still assists me in any and every event. The Lord never leaves nor forsakes those who believe in Him and seek to live in obedience to His instructions, commands and truths. As you experience these latter days of life TRUST IN THE LORD, HE IS THERE. ■

One of my goals as Chaplain is to contact the widows and families of 14th members who die. Therefore, I would appreciate having each one of you inform me when you know of a death. I would also like to hear of any who are in the hospital, nursing home or confined to their own homes. Some of you are already doing this and I wish to thank you. I can be reached at the following:

PAST PRESIDENT PARTRICK LAID TO REST JUNE 9, 2009



Edward Dudley Partrick, Jr. who served as president of the 14th Armored Division Association in 2008, died June 5, 2009 in his 88th year.

Although poor health limited his activities in recent years, he was able to attend the annual reunion in Kalamazoo last year and expressed his deep appreciation at that time for the honor of being named president of the organization.

Since Nov. 2007, he and his wife, Lou Partrick, were residents of the Heritage in Raleigh, NC. Prior to moving to Raleigh, he was a long-time resident of Wadesboro, NC.

Born in Wilmington, NC, Sept. 17, 1921, Dudley was the son of Edward Dudley Partrick, Sr. and Lucy Nolan Partrick. Dudley graduated Clinton High School and UNC Chapel Hill,

Class of '42. His studies were interrupted by his service in the Army in WWII. This experience forever changed his life and formed bonds of friendship and loyalty that lasted until his death. He served with honor in the 500th AAB of the 14th Armored Division - The Liberators - seeing action in France and Germany. He helped the Allied forces to break the Siegfried Line. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his service.

After the war, Dudley graduated (1945) from UNC-Chapel Hill and rose to management positions in Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, Davidson's (later Macy's) in Atlanta and Columbia, SC, and the First National Bank of Anson County (later Southern National and BBT), from which he retired as Executive Vice President. In his personal and professional life, he was a friend and mentor,

encouraging students to stay focused on their studies, providing capital to struggling farmers as well as successful businessmen. He was elected and served as a member of the Wadesboro Town Council and was proud to be a member of the Rotary Club for many years.

Dudley was just as passionate about his Catholic faith as he was his beloved Tarheels and fellow Army comrades.

Dudley is survived by his wife of 59 years, Louisa Hardison Partrick, two daughters, two grandchildren, and many other relatives and friends.

Funeral services were held at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Wadesboro on Tuesday, June 9, 2009.

Harold Kachel Dies

Word has been received that Harold Kachel, 87, who served with Hq. Bty. of the 500th AFA, passed away on September 13, 2009. Harold was an active member of the 14th Armored Division Association, being one of the founders of the Southwest Chapter of the Association which was organized about 17 years ago.

Attending the funeral in Albany, Oregon, was Scott Wheeler of Lebanon, Oregon, who served with 62-A. Scott reports that the funeral was conducted with full military honors and that a history of the 14th AD was presented by Harold's brothers. They also spoke of the display of the 14th in the museum in Washington, DC.

Harold Kachel was preceded in death by his wife but is survived by four children, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

David DeBoer Dies

David DeBoer, son of Charles and Twilah DeBoer, died on October 4, after having suffered a heart attack on September 23. He made many friends at the various 14th Armored Division reunions to which he had taken his parents. David was a willing helper at our most recent reunion in Green Bay. The DeBoer's address is: 530 N. Lockin St., Brandon, WI 53919-9781.

Veterans wrote a blank check to all Americans

This was sent to me by my cousin, a Korean War veteran and retired National Guardsman. We have been unable to find who authored it, so will have to call it anonymous.

"A veteran, whether on active duty, honorably discharged, retired or in the Reserves or National Guard, is someone who, at one point in his or her life, wrote a blank check made payable to the United States of America for any amount of "up to and including his or her life."

There has never been more truth than this in any Memorial Day statement. An awful lot of those checks were cashed.

THOMAS A. MOSLEY, U.S. Navy (retired)
Senior Chief Petty Officer
Bryan

Doug Kraner Succumbs to Long Illness

Barbara Kraner informs that her husband, Doug Kraner, passed away on September 16, 2009, after a long and painful struggle with bone cancer. His funeral, in Gobles, Michigan, was held on his 90th birthday, September 20. Barbara points out that "people celebrated his life, not his death." She also writes that "we both belong to the "Liberators" and truly enjoyed the meetings we were able to attend. Thank you, to



IMPRESSIONS, OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF AN ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY SERGEANT

By Technical Sergeant Kaleel C. Skeirik, Military Intelligence Section (S-2); 501st Armored Field Artillery Battalion, 14th Armored Division, U.S. Army - May 1942 - December 1945

Editor's Note: Kaleel (Kal) C. Skeirik has written a comprehensive memoir, relating in detail his experiences while serving in the Army during WWII. Most of his military service was with the 501st AFA Bn. of the 14th Armored Division. Space restrictions prevent us from reprinting the whole of this most interesting work by Mr. Skeirik, but we will publish some excerpts from his book in several installments. Included in this first installment will be the introduction and summary of his book, written by Mr. Skeirik. Following that will be the excerpt about the crossing of the Atlantic in convoy. We believe many 14th AD veterans can relate to Kal's observations and impressions of military service.

A little information about the author: Kaleel Skeirik lived in Nebraska in early childhood but moved to New York State in 1925. There he was educated before being drafted into the Army in May of 1942. He served in the ETO with the 14th Armored Division and was honorably discharged in December of 1945. Kal got in on the ground floor of the 14th, being selected as a member of the cadre when the new division was first formed. Kal's professional career was as an economist, conducting economic research studies and writing industrial reports while in the employ of the federal government from 1946 to 1982. Kal has been a lifetime member of the United Methodist Church, being involved in many activities and serving as a teacher for 20 years. He and his wife, Kathryn, have two children and three grandchildren. Those interested in reading the entire book of Mr. Skeirik might want to contact him. His address and other information is found at the end of the introduction and summary section of this installment.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

My memoirs of World War II begin with my induction into the armed

forces on May 6, 1942, and end with my honorable discharge on December 31, 1945. It expresses my personal experiences, observations, impressions and perceptions of Army life while training recruits on army bases in the United States and during combat activities overseas; and also describes the combat actions of the 7th Army, 14th Armored Division and 501st Armored Field Artillery Battalion in the European Theater. Specifically, I describe my training in Artillery and Gunnery, teaching and training recruits, my involvement in religious activities, maneuvers of the 14th Armored Division, transportation overseas, preparation for combat in France, combating the German Army in France and Germany, and my duties as a Military Intelligence Sergeant in the 501st Artillery Battalion. My memoirs also emphasize the significance and importance of the artillery in combat.

During the time our 14th Armored Division was in the European Theater, it was attached to the 7th Army for most of the time we fought the Germans. Only during the last two weeks prior to the end of the war was our division under the command of General Patton's 3rd Army.

After I had read the descriptions of the various battles of our 14th Armored Division and the 7th Army in the publications listed in the bibliography, plus my personal recollections of our 14th Armored Division battle activities, I determined that I would organize our combat activities into four separate phases of action. Phase one includes our division's first experience in combat when the division joined the 7th Army in Alsace, France and helped to drive the Germans out of Alsace, across the border to the Siegfried Line (December 1-31, 1944). Phase two includes the 7th Army's and 14th Armored Division's defensive battles against German forces that counter-attacked the 7th Army on January 1, 1945, in the Vosges Mountains in Alsace. (The Germans called this attack "Operation Nordwind.") (January 1 to

March 15, 1945). The third phase includes the 7th Army, with the 14th Armored taking the lead in attacking the Germans, on March 15, 1945, and driving them out of Alsace for a second time, then breaching the Siegfried Line and chasing them across the Rhine River (March 15-31, 1945). The fourth phase includes the 14th Armored Division's rapid advance into central and southern Germany. The Division was assigned the lead position on the 7th Army's left flank to begin attacking the Germans east of the city of Darmstadt, Germany. The 14th, with its three combat commands attacking in parallel columns, drove the Germans into central and then southern (or Bavaria) Germany. (April 1 to May 2, 1945.)

In phase two, even though the 7th Army knew that the Germans were planning to attack on or about January 1, 1945, they did not realize how massive this attack would be by a heavily reinforced German Army. Major assaults were made in five different locations on the 7th Army's Front Lines between January 1 and 8, 1945. In my memoirs I have referred to these five pronged attacks as thrusts.

The first and second thrusts began simultaneously on January 1, 1945, on the 7th Army's northern front: one at the Bitche Sector (in Alsace) which included an attack on the 14th Armored Division's Task Force Hudelson; the other was located 25 miles west of Bitche at the Bliese River Sector (in Lorraine); the third thrust began on the 7th Army's eastern front on January 6, when the German forces established a bridgehead on the western side of the Rhine River at the town of Gambshheim; the fourth thrust began on January 7, when the Germans attempted to break out of the Colmar Pocket (where Germans held French territory south of Strasbourg) to attack the southern flank of the 7th Army; the fifth thrust began on January 8, when the Germans attacked the two nearby towns of Hatten and Rittershoffen that were defended by the 14th Armored

(Continued on page 8)

IMPRESSIONS...

(Continued from page 7)

Division and a 7th Army infantry division. (These two towns were located about 20 miles north and west of the Gamsheim Bridgehead.) The German plan in these five thrusts was to trap and cut off most of the 7th Army forces from the rest of the allied armies located to the north of the 7th Army's position.

Because the 14th Armored Division had the mobility to move rapidly from one battle position to another, it was involved either directly or indirectly in each of the five thrusts. In the first thrust, Task Force Hudelson of the 14th faced a massive German attack in the Bitche Sector on January 1, 1945; in the second thrust, the Germans attacked at the Bliese River Sector during the same time they were attacking the Bitche Sector. Immediately, major elements of the 14th Armored moved to and secured all the key passes in the Vosges Mountains to form a defensive wall to prevent the German forces from moving south into the Saar River Valley, should the Germans successfully breach the 7th Army Front Lines at the Bitche and Bliese River Sectors; in the third thrust, elements of the Division replaced or reinforced other divisions of the 7th Army fighting the Germans at the Gamsheim Bridgehead; in the fourth thrust, elements of the 14th were located on the 7th Army's southern flank to support a possible German breakout from the Colmar Pocket south of Strasbourg, France; in the fifth thrust, the Division, along with the 79th infantry division, fought the German forces attacking the towns of Hatten and Rittershoffen.

When the German forces initially attacked the 7th Army on January 1, 1945 (First and Second Thrusts), it had been two weeks earlier that the Germans began their major assault driving the U.S. First Army backward and causing a major bulge in the allied lines. This attack was called the "Battle of the Bulge." In a similar situation, but on a much smaller scale, the German forces on January 1, 1945, were able to push the 7th Army front line back only several miles and then later on January 20, the 7th Army decided

for strategic reasons to voluntarily move its front line back several miles to a stronger defensive position. As a result of these two withdrawals and the aggressive defensive stand of the 7th Army in the five German assaults, the Battle in Alsace was referred to as the "Little Battle of the Bulge" or the "Other Battle of the Bulge."

It should be noted that I have found it necessary to repeat in the text some of the battles of the 7th Army. The reason for this is that I first describe the overall battles of the 7th Army and then when I describe the battles of the 501st Armored Field Artillery Battalion or the 14th Armored Division, I repeat the same battles fought by the 7th Army. In this way, I am able to show the relationships and contributions of the 14th Armored and the 501st Artillery to the overall battles of the 7th Army.

In describing the battles and combat activities of the various army units, I have tried to record each action accurately. However, if there are any errors or inaccuracies, I take full responsibility for them.

All the battles and combat actions I have described in the text are a consolidation of several sources or publications that are listed in the bibliography. Since I have commingled and incorporated several sources in each of the battles or combat activities, it would be difficult and confusing to attempt to single out each source. Also, I have not identified in the text the sources of the dates and locations of the firing positions of our 501st Artillery Battalion. This information was taken from the history of the 501st Artillery titled, *Mission Accomplished - Germany*.

My memoirs are based not only on my recollections, but also on notes that I wrote overseas, on memorabilia I collected overseas, on official military intelligence and other reports I received from the 14th Armored Division, and on books and news articles relating to World War II.

When I began to write my World War II memoirs, I discovered I only had a vague memory of the names of the men I worked or associated with. I have tried, to the best of my recollection, to identify by name the men I worked and associated with in our

501st Artillery Battalion and hope that I have identified them correctly. If some of them are incorrectly identified, I apologize.

I have included over 60 illustrations in my memoirs that show many of the military activities and events involved in my experiences. These illustrations are located at the end of the text as attachments. Four of the illustrations in the text are maps that I used during the war in my intelligence work. They were published by the War Office for the military personnel fighting the German Army in Europe. I also have included four additional "maps" or diagram maps in the text. These four diagram/maps were taken from the publication *The History of the 14th Armored Division*.

My principal reason for writing this memoir was to provide my children and grandchildren with a record of my war experiences and my personal views about various aspects of the war. As I began to recall and write about my personal experiences, I decided that it would be more meaningful to relate my experiences to combat actions of our artillery battalion and the 14th Armored Division, and also to show the importance of the artillery in combat.

I plan to send a copy of my memoirs to each of the following organizations: U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor, Fort Knox, Kentucky; and the 14th Armored Division Association.

Kaleel C. Skeirik

★★★★★

Crossing the Atlantic Ocean in Convoy

Embarkation. After we arrived at Camp Shanks, we had to remove our shoulder patches and went into strict censorship. We were issued passes to go into New York City, but were told that we were to keep strictly silent on our present and future movements, and on any other activity of the 14th

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IMPRESSIONS...

(Continued from page 8)

Division. While in the city I tried to call long distance to say hello to my parents in Binghamton, New York, and was disappointed because I was unable to contact them. I had an aunt who lived in Brooklyn and was able to talk to her on the phone. I asked her to call my parents later and let them know I was in New York City for a short period of time and that I would write a letter to them. After the war ended and I had returned home, my parents said they had guessed that I was on my way overseas to Europe.

On October 13, we left Camp Shanks for a one half hour ride to a terminal in Weehawken, New Jersey. At Weehawken we took a ferry to Staten Island where our loading docks were located. Our 501st Artillery men sat on the dock for hours, jammed together, as troops ahead of us slowly boarded the ship. Each of us carried our personal items and other pertinent equipment in our backpacks. We also had our duffle bags which we would store in the hold of the ship.

The ship I boarded was a small ship which had been recently built. This would be its maiden voyage. It was called "Sea Robin" and all of the 14th Armored Artillery Battalions were to board this ship. (Attachment No's. 27-A and 27-B) The other soldiers of the 14th Armored went aboard three other ships: Santa Rosa, a cruise ship; a German liner; and the General T. James Parker, formerly the Liner Panama. All these ships obviously were much larger than our small Sea Robin. In rough seas our small ship would be bounced around more than these larger liners. By the end of the day, over 10,000 soldiers of our Division had loaded onto these four ships.

Sailing to Marseilles, France. We set sail the next day with a light fog on October 14, 1944. After we had pulled out into the harbor, I went to the rear (stern) of the ship and could just barely see through the fog the Statue of Liberty located some distance behind us. As the ship moved away from the city towards the sea, it seemed that "Lady Liberty" with her stretched arm (holding the torch) high into the sky was waving goodbye to me. I felt a lump in

my throat and a loneliness as the statue began to fade away; I wondered if I would see this symbol of liberty and freedom again.

Just before the ships began to move out into open water we were told to go below deck, but we would be able to return to the deck once the ship was well away from the shoreline. I never learned the reason for this order. However, we later came on deck and I could just see the coastline. Also, I was amazed by the sight of the many ships spread out around our ship. They stretched out as far as the eye could see. The next day I saw only a few ships way out in the distance. On the third day I did not see any ships. Our convoy was escorted by Navy Destroyers. I saw only one Navy destroyer in the distance on the first day. The destroyers patrolled around the outside of our convoy as we sailed across the ocean. In addition to our troop ships, there were fourteen assorted freighters and a number of liberty ships; each carrying battle equipment, including our artillery guns. Our convoy did not carry Army trucks, jeeps, half-tracks or light tanks. These vehicles would be picked up in Europe.

Our bunks were stacked four or five deep in the hold of the ship. I had a top bunk, which I soon found was a desirable location. Not only could I get to it easily, I also had a light bulb above my bunk so that I was able to read while lying on my bed. Another reason why I liked my bunk was that during the first several days and later during heavy seas, a high percentage of the men got seasick and vomited in the hold. Even though I could not avoid the unpleasant odors that permeated the hold, the air seemed better at my bunk than in the lower levels of the hold.

I did not get seasick and made a special effort to eat my meals. It worked for me and I enjoyed going out on deck to watch the waves and swells of the ocean, as well as the white bubbling foam of the spreading wake behind the ship. In rough weather it was difficult to eat in the mess hall. I would place my food tray on a narrow shelf-like counter built against the wall or on a narrow table that was bolted to the floor in the center of the room. As

the ship pitched upward and downward my tray could slide away from me if I did not hold on to it. I learned to drink my coffee later when I could hold the cup with both hands. Not many GIs ate their food during heavy storms and high seas.

The food on the ship was not appetizing or tasty. For breakfast the scrambled eggs, made from dehydrated eggs, were coarse and tasteless, as well as being cold. The toast also was cold and not very well toasted. The juice and coffee was passable. Because our mess hall was small, breakfast was served for five hours. I do not remember what kind of food was served for dinner (only two meals were served each day). However, the *History of the 14th Armored Division* stated that for the dinner meal "lots of boiled potatoes and boiled frankfurters were served." No wonder I could not remember what food I ate for dinner. During the first few days I supplemented my meals by purchasing peanuts, candy and peanut butter crackers at the ship's PX, but these snacks quickly sold out.

The ship provided various types of entertainment, band concerts and movies. For some soldiers, however, their form of entertainment was gambling - using dice. Others liked to gamble with cards. The interesting thing about these men was they did not appear to get seasick. Those using dice usually played in the latrine or locker rooms. Another interesting thing was that it appeared only one or two men seemed to win most of the time. Rumors were that these winners were professional-like gamblers, yet this did not seem to bother the other GIs who gambled with them.

The water in the showers was cold and salty from the ocean. I believe, if my memory is correct, the boat had a small capacity desalinization plant only for kitchen use and sinks. If I am not correct on this, then the ship had storage tanks for its potable water. I tried using the showers with the salt water, but soon changed to taking an abbreviated (or Scotch) bath at the sink which had clear water.

We were required to wear our life preservers all the time. We had boat drills every day - a necessary but bor-

(Continued on page 10)

IMPRESSIONS...

(Continued from page 9)

ing exercise. Blackouts obviously were enforced at night. The men were not permitted to light and smoke cigarettes on deck after the sun set.

I spent much of my time reading, writing letters and just hanging out with my friends or having bull sessions. I also went to the movies and listened to the band concerts. I also enjoyed standing out on deck for long periods of time watching the ocean stretch into the far distance; watching the sea water flow by the ship; and in heavy seas watch our ship rise up and then dive down into the waves or swells. At night I would look down from the deck railing and watch the phosphorescence water bubble up in the ship's wake.

Several days after we set sail, we ran into a severe storm that lasted for several days – rain, heavy seas, wind and giant swells. Our small boat was pounded by the waves and high swells. The ship would slide down a swell and into a deep trough and then the bow would rise up to meet the next swell. Our ship would not only roll up and down but also rock sideways. As the ship rose up over or actually into the swell it would shudder and plunge down into the next trough. As the boat rose up into the swell, tons of sea water would pour over the decks. No one was allowed on deck during heavy seas. Once, I decided to just peek out the door onto the deck during the height of the storm, and when I did a sudden wave washed over the deck saturating me with salt water. I quickly closed the door and did not try again to look out on the deck until the storm subsided. During this storm we heard that one of the other ships in our convoy lost one of its anchors due to the heavy waves pounding the ship.

The following paragraphs are quoted (with some editing) from my personal written observations and perceptions the second day our ship left New York City. These quotes will include some duplications, but they represent my thoughts and feelings at that time.

This is the 2nd day out and already it seems like ages since we left Camp Campbell, Kentucky. We set sail yesterday afternoon – the weather was great, the sky now was clear

after a foggy morning. As I stood out on deck, I could see our convoy stretched out in all directions – troop ships, freighters, many types of other ships, big and small, and a battle ship in the far distance.

Yesterday we were allowed on deck about 40 minutes after we sailed out of the New York Lower Bay area. We could see in the distance, land that stretched out on either side of us. On the port side I was just able to identify the framework of a roller coaster, presumably at an amusement park on the beach. I stayed on deck until darkness overtook us and by this time we were well out at sea beyond the sight of land – a lonesome feeling. After dark and after eating, I came on deck again and I was surprised to see that the lights of all the ships around us were still shining brightly. Apparently black-out would be enforced later. At the same time, I witnessed another light that flashed and streaked across the distant northern skies – I recognized it as the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) because I used to see it occasionally when I lived in upstate New York. It shot flickery beams of light across the sky, as if celebrating our departure.

By now, we were well out into the Atlantic Ocean and the boat rocked with the gentle swells. Many men on our small ship became seasick as it tossed to and fro, side to side, in easy gentle sways. I noticed for the first time many GIs on deck getting sick, leaning over the railing and getting rid of their dinners. Below deck it was difficult to find a vacant toilet in the latrines.

I wondered if the GIs on the larger troop ships became sick since the rolling and rocking would not be so pronounced as on our small ship. The third day out at sea was calm and most men overcame their seasickness.

This was the maiden voyage of our boat, and I learned that it was a sturdily built ship of exceptional construction. I understand that this boat had some very modern improvements, making it superior to older boats and that it had unusual protective features.

My location or temporary home in the hold of this boat was Hatch No. 3. It was here I had my bunk. This hatch had mostly 4 tiers plus a few with 5 tiers. It appeared crowded as I looked down from my bunk, which was on the top of one of the 5 tiers. I

was fortunate to have an electric light bulb just above my bunk hanging from the ceiling and was able to read at night.

Our bunks appeared crowded, but were well spaced so that the men found room to store their equipment. Within 24 hours the men in our hatch appeared to have adjusted to their new surroundings and made themselves as comfortable as was possible under such circumstances.

It's now 9:30 a.m. Sunday morning. I found out that church service and communion would be held at 11:00 a.m. I will be there.

Our chow is plentiful, but only fair. We have only two meals a day with breakfast open for 5 hours. Only 2 meals a day! I guess that is because there are too many men to feed three meals a day in a small dining room. We have narrow bench-like tables that we stand in front of to eat our food. The troops are fed in shifts for the evening meal.

Another interesting observation is how the men can quickly adapt to their new surroundings. They soon started talking like sailors and learned some of the ship's nomenclature: top sides, port, aft, fo'ard, fo'castle, starboard, hold and hatch.

One of the first orders we received was the requirement to wear life jackets at all times. It was cumbersome to carry it on our bodies all the time, but I knew it was a necessary precaution in case our ship was in danger of sinking.

After ten days of sailing, we were finally told our destination would be Marseilles, France. Most of us were surprised because we thought it would be at one of the cleared ports in northwestern France. After twelve days of sailing, on October 26, I saw the coasts of Spain and northern Africa, and that same day our ship passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and into the calmer waters of the Mediterranean Sea. I, and other GIs, were glad and relieved to see land again. I was impressed with the formidable size of the Rock of Gibraltar and was reminded of the insurance company – Prudential Life Insurance – that used this rock as its symbol. I could also see a series of white objects on the distant coast of Africa and was told this was the city of Tangier. ■

To Be Continued next issue.

47th TANK TRACKS

Well, Green Bay turned out to be a great place for our reunion. We were impressed by the City in general and the people in particular. Of course, members of the Association that selected the site and arranged and coordinated the programs deserve a special thanks from all of those who attended. I will mention some names and apologize if I miss any vital players. First, Gus Hinrich, Harold Kiehne, Charlotte Froelich, and her daughter, Charlene, and the Barton family. Other major players include: Ann Lapo, Ann Chelette, and the Auxiliary President, Gayle Siewert. Certainly, all came together along with numerous volunteers to put on another top notch reunion.

The old 47th Tank Battalion was well represented by Harold and Joanne

Kiehne, Roy and Christine Roberts and members of his family, Eugene Kral, Charlotte Froelich and daughter, Charlene, Joe and Mary Ann Cotten, and Forrest (Frosty) Jewell along with his daughter, Suzanne. Frosty is one of our oldest members (90's) and it was great seeing him looking so well. He has some health problems (don't we all), but appears to be holding his own and it was a pleasure and honor to be seated at his table along with other 47th members. It was also good to see Eugene Kral on his feet again following successful hip replacement, and Charlotte Froelich looks great again after heart surgery.

As reported earlier in the *Liberator*, the management level of the Association is shifting to two young ladies. Ann Lapo, daughter of Gus Hinrich,

is the Treasurer and Ann Chelette, daughter of Roy Roberts, will handle the Administrative (Secretarial) duties. There will still be an elected President but with less detailed responsibilities. Gus Hinrich will continue as CEO and that is a good thing. We look forward with confidence to the new line-up and future visits to Indianapolis.

As you will see from the attendance roster elsewhere in this *Liberator*, there were members present from wide sections of the country. The old Northeast was well represented, as were the Midwest, Southeast, and West Coast Chapters. Let's keep this thing going by attending the reunions and by supporting the *Liberator* fund.

– Joe Cotten

REUNION IS MERE SHADOW OF ONCE FORMIDABLE FORCE

Editor's Note: This article, written by Verlyn Hofer, appeared first in the writer's weekly newspaper column in the Lennox (SD) Independent.

Well, we did it again, but we have a hunch that repeat performances may be very limited.

We are, of course, referring to our recent attendance at the annual reunion of World War II veterans of the 14th Armored Division. This year's reunion--the 45th such gathering--was held in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

As you may have suspected, the number of old WWII vets attending this and like reunions is fewer each year. The "greatest generation's" numbers are declining at a rapid pace and many of the good old boys still with us just can't travel anymore.

The fragility of our organization is recognized by those of us who are still able to attend the reunions but no one really wants to admit that we may have to bring down the curtain soon. The relatively few who now attend feel they are representing their many comrades-in-arms of so many years ago. Those friends and comrades of our youth, especially those who gave their all, are forever in our thoughts and hearts.

We may have heard some of those war stories more than once over the years, but it is good to hear the names of people and places that helped shape one's life under tenuous circumstances so many years ago. In retrospect, it seems to be quite an accomplishment just to have made it to this point in life.

That has to be what keeps groups like ours going. There may not be a practical or even a logical reason for continuing such an association but those relationships forged in hardship and nurtured in comradeship somehow are difficult to relinquish.

One knows he and fellow members of our organization are getting a long way down the trail when the president of the group attends the reunion in a wheelchair, and it is announced that the fellow who filled that office last year passed on this past winter.

Be that as it may, the desire to keep the 14th Armored Division Association going just a while longer lives on. The children of some of the old vets have stepped forward to perform some of the official duties of the organization and carry out the plans for the next reunion. So the word is that

we will have at least one and possibly two more annual reunions. These are to be held in Indianapolis, in September as usual.

At our age we may hesitate making long-range plans. But when we consider the fact that we are among the younger vets of our organization, how do we dare not look forward to one more gathering of what is left of a once formidable fighting force? Quitting wasn't an option for us in those earlier days of struggle and probably isn't now.

Yes, we did have an enjoyable time in Green Bay although we did not partake of the football frenzy featuring the Packers and the Bears on Sunday night. Green Bay, no doubt, has more to offer than just football, possibly being the oldest white settlement in Wisconsin.

A fringe benefit of attending reunions these past years is that we got to see places and attractions that we otherwise would have missed. Never been to Indianapolis, so we are hoping to make it there next year.



God Bless
AMERICA

THE FUEHRER WAS WATCHING: ADOLPH HITLER'S ORDERS FOR OPERATION NORDWIND

by Jim Lankford
National Historian

In November 1944, Adolph Hitler authorized a second counter-offensive to follow hard on the heels of the major attack in the Ardennes. Although by late December, Hitler and his senior officers realized the German counter offensive in the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge) might not reach its objectives, the second attack, code named Operation Nordwind, was ordered to proceed against the badly overstretched and under strength US Seventh Army. Thus, Operation Nordwind, the last major German offensive of the war, was scheduled to begin on New Year's Eve. On the evening of 28 December, at his military headquarters at Adlerhorst, Germany, the Fuehrer addressed the division, corps and army commanders responsible for carrying out Operation Nordwind along with General von Rundstedt, General Keitel, General Jodl, General Blaskowitz, Heinrich Himmler, and Martin Bormann. While issuing his personal orders regarding Operation Nordwind, Hitler took great pains to make certain his generals understood its purpose.

"The Fuehrer: So this second attack has one clear aim: the destruction of enemy forces. This is not about questions of prestige. It's not about gaining territory. It's only about destroying enemy forces wherever we find them. It's also not about freeing all of Alsace in this manner.... It's much more important, as I said before, to destroy the human forces."

After the American Seventh Army was destroyed, Hitler told them, another offensive, Operation Zahnarst, would be launched by Army Group Oberrhein, under the command of Heinrich Himmler, leader of the SS. The planned attack would be made

into the rear of Third Army, which at the time was fighting in the Bulge. Taken from behind, Third Army might also be destroyed.

Operation Nordwind was to be carried out by German Army Group G under the able leadership of General Johannes Blaskowitz. Some of the combat units under his control were badly under strength, but Hitler personally made certain that the 21st Panzer and 25th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, organized as part of the XXXIX Panzer Corps, were made as strong as possible. On 29 December, Hitler met with General Wolfgang Thomale, General Inspector of Tank Troops, to make sure that additional armored units over and above those needed to replenish the 21st Panzer and 25th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, would be made available following the initial attacks on New Year's Eve. Among these were six formidable Tiger tanks carrying the deadly 88mm gun, and two companies of "Hunter-Tigers" (Jagd-Tiger) equipped with the powerful 128mm gun. In addition, Hitler ordered two companies of flame-throwing tanks into the offensive. Thus, Hitler upped the ante, so to speak, and at Hatten and Rittershoffen, the men of the 14th Armored Division would face elements of these powerful armored units.

The first attacks came on New Year's eve in the Northern Vosges Mountains of eastern Lorraine, and elements of the 14th Armored Division were there to help stop them. With his attack stymied in the mountains, Hitler decided to launch his main effort against the center of VI Corps at the small villages of Hatten and Rittershoffen. On 9 January 1945 Hitler was given the following information during his Evening Situation Report.

"The 25th Panzer Grenadier

Division broke through the Maginot Line at noon and advanced to the area of the railway station 500 meters west of Hatten. The 21st Panzer Division took Hatten and pushed the enemy back toward the west. In the afternoon, both divisions met a stronger antitank barrage here, east of Rittershoffen. The divisions are regrouping now, and will continue the attack tonight at 2am...."

The 21st Panzer and 25th Panzer Grenadier Divisions renewed their attacks at Hatten and Rittershoffen along with the other units of the XXXIX Panzer Corps, but as history records, they ran into the 14th Armored Division's Combat Command A, and their advance ground to a halt. Hitler ordered in reinforcements, and the battle escalated. A few days later CCA was joined by CCB, and the following day, CCR came into the fray. Hitler ordered General Blaskowitz to send in the veteran 20th Regiment, 7th Parachute Division, and a regiment of the 47th Volksgrenadier Division, along with other reinforcements. The battle became a grim, bloody slugging match, but the men of the 14th Armored Division held their ground against everything Hitler could throw at them. The division did not withdraw until ordered to do so by Lieutenant General Alexander Patch, commander of Seventh Army. By that time, the rest of Seventh Army's VI Corps had withdrawn to relative safety behind the new defensive line along the south bank of the Moder River. ■

Note: Quotes are from Hitler and His Generals: Military Conferences 1942-1945, edited by Helmut Heiber and David Glanz, and are taken from the original stenographic record of those conferences.

Duties Beyond Soldiering

by Harold Kiehne, A-47th

After returning to the Company from the hospital, Capt. Moran put me in charge of interviewing German, Polish and Czech people left over from the war in a foreign country. Most of these people did not want to go back to their original countries for fear of retribution because they worked for the Nazi cause. Most of these people spoke a mixture of Low German, mixed with their own language. This made it difficult for me to understand all of it.

So I met the one person who could help - Caya Thousander, an English lady, supposedly caught in Germany by the war and couldn't get back to England with her elderly mother. Apparently she and her mother came to Germany to visit her sister who was married to a German Colonel and lived in a sort of small castle outside of Neunacht St. Vith where we were stationed. Caya understood the German dialects very well so I put her to work with me three hours a day, four days a week. No pay, but she needed things we had for food. I knew our mess sergeant so we got along great.

George Campbell and I taught her how to make pies as they did have apples. I don't know where she got them and didn't ask either. When George and I would visit her at the castle on weekends - Saturdays or Sundays. Never met the Colonel; I guess they didn't know where he was. Apparently her sister was well off, how - I could care less.



"My" car in Neunacht St. Vith, Germany, the summer of 1945. Yes, a BMW.

Caya was about 40-45 years old and well educated. I guess she was

married to an Englishman who apparently was killed in the war. I didn't question anything further. Caya had a BMW convertible - now, I don't know if it was hers or her sister's but regardless, I was made aware of it. If I could get gas, etc. for it (our tanks held 90 gallons) naturally we saw to it to always have an extra can (and a good mechanic) on hand in case we moved the tanks. They burned a gallon a mile... 500 H.P. Ford engines.

During and in the meantime, either George or I were made aware of a four cylinder horizontal opposed direct drive motorcycle. No battery - couldn't find one. German mechanic couldn't find one either - so he rigged it up - so foot cranking it, it would run but not at idle. He told us how to keep it running. No lights at idle (it quit) but you had to keep it running at half speed.

Oh yeah, our Sgt. Bauder was in charge of the 20 prisoners. We had to keep our rooms and quarters clean, and do K.P. duties.



Motorcycle that George and I liberated from under a haystack in Sept. or Oct. of 1945.

We came across the motorcycle from a young man who told us where it was in a small town. Naturally, we borrowed Sgt. Bauder's police van (a German one), went into the town with four GIs with the announcement that we were going to conduct a search and investigation for hidden weapons. We considered German whiskey and wine a weapon and lo and behold, searching the barn under the hay, there appears this German Army motorcycle. George and I were completely baffled by this find and decided the only way

to solve the situation was to load up the motorcycle into the police van. As we didn't find any other weapons, this was good enough, and we thanked the young man (12-13) who made us aware of it when we got back to Neunacht, plus whatever as a reward.

So George and I had good transportation during our three months at Neunacht St. Vith and I believe once we moved to another town to prepare us to be shipped home or the Pacific (as to our point system) we decided to go back and get the motorcycle. We borrowed a 6x6 from the motorpool and we picked up the motorcycle but as we loaded it I told George to keep pushing - till we got it on board. Then we tried to explain to a 2nd Lt. what we were doing. Naturally, we didn't want to lie so we told him it was going to Battalion Headquarters as salvage, and took off fast. I've often wondered if the lieutenant believed us or just knew it was going out of his jurisdiction.

Anyway, we had new areas to check out for a short period of time. Don't know what happened to the motorcycle. We were on our way home after a boring 3-4 months of occupation duty.

Oh yes, I forgot, in the new town George, Cliff (he was the maintenance sgt.) and myself roomed together in a hotel. We needed wine for a party so Cliff and I got a 6x6 w/driver and went to the wine area - I don't know if this was with the blessing of our captain (if we had one) or not, but we got the wine, took it to a tavern and announced a party that night. Wow - when the three of us got back to our room we went to bed. The next morning, a Sunday, we were awakened by the 1st Sgt. He was gonna court martial us, etc. Our phone was hanging by the wire out our window. Somebody had gone through our room looking for, I guess, money or something. We didn't discover that our room had been vandalized during the party and we were too tired after the party to notice it. The First Sgt. excused us. He was at the party, too.

2009 Reunion Pictures



Neil Webster (left) and Roy Roberts seemingly were having a serious conversation while waiting to board the Foxy Lady.



The Foxy Lady cruise of the Fox River was enjoyed by about 60 reunion attendees. Food was good, too.



Harry Kemp and Bob McClarren looked at the championship trophies but held out little hope of being enshrined into the Packers Hall of Fame.

Attending the 2009 reunion was Lyle Freiberg, on the left (pictured with Harold Kiehne) the son of the late Norman Freiberg, wore the uniform his father wore while serving with Co. A, 25th Tankers.



The "Yachting Class" of the 14th AD Assoc. ready for a leisurely cruise down the river.



Harry Kemp presents a plaque to Verlyn Hofer in appreciation for The Liberator editor's efforts these past 15 years. At the left, President Russ Barton looks on.



They even opened the bridge to let the Foxy Lady through.



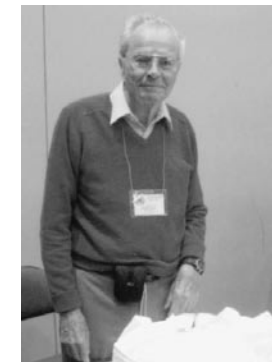
The Lambeau Field Atrium was explored by many of the reunion attendees but no one was admitted to the stadium because of a practice session there.



Seems we always end up on a bus at our 14th AD reunions.



Look close and perhaps you can see John Meyer and Jim Craigmile playing football with the mannequins at the Packers Hall of Fame.



Bill Breer, as usual, was on the job, offering DVDs of past events to all who wish to purchase them. Anyone interested in these DVDs should contact Bill. His phone number is 248-626-4869.



Members of the "Latest Edition" of Shawano, Wisconsin sang many old favorites for those attending the Saturday evening banquet.



The police department color guard of the City of Green Bay did a fine job at the memorial service.



Father and son, Frank and Kent Fulmer, enjoyed attending the reunion together. Many of the younger generations were in attendance.



Outgoing president Russ Barton (seated) administers the oath of office to our new president, Jim Craigmile.

2009 Reunion Pictures



Gayle Siewart and Mary Hofer attach poppies to the memorial wreath as the names of recently departed comrades and friends are read by Gus Hinrich.



A group of Green Bay middle school students and their teacher provided some outstanding instrumental and vocal musical entertainment at the Friday evening event.



Arriving in a wheelchair being pushed by his son, Jerry, Russ Barton is welcomed by old friends Bob McClarren (in cap) and Gus Hinrich.



President Gayle Siewart, Secretary Anne Webster, and Treasurer Charlotte Froelich hard at work preparing for the annual Ladies Auxiliary business meeting.



Fred Shattuck is front center as reunion attendees wait for the Memorial Service to begin.



Contrary to what the sign above them indicates, Joe Fitts and Harold Kiehne (with wife Joanne) were not inducted into the Packers Hall of Fame.



Good food and conversation made all events enjoyable.



AN AMERICAN HERO



Howard "Smiley" Johnson played for the Green Bay Packers during the 1940 and 1941 seasons. He died in Feb. 1945 in World War II. Smiley is the only Packer who died while fighting for his country.

Minutes of Executive Board Meeting - 14th Armored Division Association September 10, 2009 - Green Bay, Wisconsin

At 3 p.m., Gus Hinrich, National Executive Director, called the meeting to order. Present were 11 members and 2 guests (Ann and Jess Chelette).

Present were Gus Hinrich, Bob McClarren, Jim Craigmile, Joe Fitts, Neil Webster, John P. Meyer, Chuck Hurl, Roy Roberts, Verlyn Hofer, John A. Burgess, Harold H. Kiehne, and two guests.

The Chairman appointed Bob McClarren, Secretary pro tem.

Gus Hinrich moved that the minutes of the 2008 Executive Committee be approved as published. The motion was duly seconded, and on a voice vote was passed.

Gus Hinrich, as National Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's report. This year's total was \$31,283.35. Last year's total was \$32,330.46. The loss was \$1047.11. The details follow below.

	<u>June 30, 2008</u>	<u>June 30, 2009</u>
Life Acct.	\$25,294.25	\$25,000.00
Check Acct.	7,019.92	6283.35
Petty Cash	<u>16.25</u>	<u>15.26</u>
TOTAL	\$32,330.46	\$31,283.35

Bob McClarren moved the acceptance of the report. The motion was duly seconded, and on a voice vote was passed.

Following the vote the Chairman emphasized the importance of the significant contributions by members.

Gus Hinrich reported the receipt of requests for contributions from the Army Historical Foundation, and the 5th Armored Division (on behalf of the Armor Museum at Ft. Benning), and the National Holocaust Museum. After a brief discussion, the consensus was that no action be taken.

The Chairman called the attention of the Association's members to the cost to the Association when changes of address are not made to him, as each return is charged for by the Postal Service. That unnecessary cost is quite significant.

Gus Hinrich indicated that he found it increasingly difficult for him to effectively discharge all of the duties required. He would need additional help if he were to continue in his offices. Accordingly, he asked the Association to authorize his appointment of a secretary and a treasurer. Further, if these appointments were approved, Ann Lapo (his daughter and long-time reunion registration handler) and Ann Chelette (Roy Roberts' daughter, much involved in previous as well as forthcoming reunion arrangements) would,

respectively, fill those positions. In response to the question of the legality of such actions under the Association's Constitution and Bylaws, John Meyer, the Association's Judge Advocate, indicated that such action would not violate any Constitution or Bylaws provision. Following a brief discussion, Gus Hinrich then moved that this action be approved, and be presented to the forthcoming Annual Meeting for its action. The motion was duly seconded, and by a voice vote was passed.

Gus Hinrich introduced Ann Chelette, whom he had appointed as Chairman of the committee of "sons and daughters" to investigate Indianapolis as the Association's Reunion site for 2010 and 2011. She responded with a detailed report, including hand-outs, and recommended that the Indianapolis Crown Plaza be the hotel of choice. Following discussion, Gus Hinrich moved that the Reunion Committee's recommendations be approved. The motion was duly seconded, and on a voice vote was passed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Robert R. McClarren,
Secretary pro tem

Minutes of 2009 Annual Meeting - 14th Armored Division Association September 10, 2009 - Green Bay, Wisconsin

At 10:15 a.m., Gus Hinrich, National Executive Director, called the meeting to order, and recognized Russell Barton, National President, who welcomed the members of the 45th National Reunion. A head count of the meetings attendees was taken: 34 were present.

Gus Hinrich gave the Treasurer's Report. The year's end balance was \$31,283.35, a loss of \$1,047.11 from last year. The report will be filed with the minutes.

The Chairman recognized Verlyn Hofer, Editor of *The Liberator*. He expressed his appreciation to the members for their support and contributions, and encouraged the submission to the Editor of items for publication, as these are vital to the magazine. Further he indicated that cash donations were vital to *The Liberator's* continued publication.

The Chairman requested Verlyn to remain standing, and recognized Harry Kemp. On behalf of the members he presented a plaque honoring Verlyn Hofer's distinguished editorial service and for his significant role in the perpetuation of the Association.

The Chairman called for the Secretary's report of the Executive Committee, but it was not available, still being in preparation.

The Chairman reported that Ann Chelette, Chair of the "sons and daughters" committee to investigate and recommend future reunion sites, had reported to the Executive Committee. The recommendation was to meet at the Crown Plaza at Indianapolis, for 2010 and 2011. The Executive Committee had accepted the recommendation and forwards it to the membership for approval. Joe Fitts moved the acceptance of the recommendation. The

motion was duly seconded, and on a voice vote, was approved.

Gus Hinrich indicated that he found it increasingly difficult to keep up with the management of the Association. The Executive Committee had approved his request to appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer from among the "sons and daughters", and now recommended such approval by the membership. Fred Shattuck so moved. Duly seconded, on a voice vote, the motion was passed.

The Chairman announced that Jim Langford, National Historian, had paid the annual fee for the Division Association's web site, as a donation. The Association expressed its thanks to him.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Robert R. McClarren
Secretary pro tem

Perhaps Nellis Should Have Stayed With the 14th AD

Editor's Note: The following article in "Reminisce" magazine was noted by both Bob McClarren and Joe Fitts, and prompted the letter to Bob McClarren re-printed herein.

Masters of Disguise

WHILE STATIONED at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas, in the spring of 1943, I was part of a convoy of vehicles from the 14th Armored Division out on the back roads near the camp.

As part of the exercise, once the air-raid siren sounded, we were to get off the road as soon as possible and camouflage our vehicle within 10 to 15 minutes.

When the alarm sounded, the soldier driving our jeep noticed an open garage near the road and immediately stopped, backed in and closed the door.

When the all-clear signal was sounded, he carefully pulled out from the garage, drove down the road a little way and then stopped to await the inspection officers. When they arrived, they remarked, "You guys sure did a marvelous job of camouflaging that jeep. We couldn't find it anywhere."

To this day, I still chuckle over the episode.

Socrates Nellis

Dear Robert,

Received your letter of 8/8/09. Thanks for showing so much interest in my "Reminisce" article about an actual happening while I was in the 14th Armored Division.

Sadly to say, I was in the 14th for only Basic Training and some advanced training. While there, I took an exam for the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) and subsequently went to the ASTP program at McNeese College in Lake Charles, LA. ASTP was supposed to be an 18 month course (equivalent to a 4-year college course); however, after approximately nine months the Army disbanded all ASTP programs except the doctor and dentist aspect.

We were all shipped to an Infantry Division (99th Infantry) for basic training and some advanced training and then was shipped overseas. We had boys from almost every branch of service that ended up as Buck Privates in the Infantry - (Boys from several branches of service). Some were so mad that they wrote their congressman, etc. but to no avail and overseas they went.

Anyway, to make a long story shorter, on the way to the front lines, our company was pulled entirely away from the main 99th and we went into the Ardennes, covering territory

that should have been covered by half a division, at least.

Later, when the Germans attacked and started the "Battle of the Bulge," we were overwhelmed with many killed, injured and some taken prisoner, including myself. Later, I got out of the main prisoner of war stalag and got in a working commando, which was much healthier.

Later, in the spring of 1945, I was liberated near Rostock in a brief battle between the Germans and the Russians while trying to cross by ferry on the Wesermonde River.

After several days of traveling by foot and staying in barns, etc., we finally reached the British Army and were then flown to an American hospital near London.

This is a brief history of some of my Army time. In the winter of 1999, I did sit down and write a more detailed history, mostly from memory.

In June, a fellow from the 14th Armored, Joe Fitts, wrote me and I sent him my 1999 recap in about 18 pages of typewritten data, etc.

Socrates Nellis

Forty Days of Frozen Hell

by V. A. Curry - 285th Combat Engineers

Sixty five years ago, in The Ardennes' fog-frozen maze,
Hell literally froze over the forty miserable days.
Forty days, unforgotten by some of us, ever since,
The Germans had put a "bulge" in our line of defense.

Yes, forty days of hell, 12/16/44 thru 1/25/45,
All who survived are very fortunate to be alive.
The fighting was furious, both sides doing their best,
Shrapnel and bullets flying, like a disturbed hornet nest.

Back then, in a foxhole, in water up to your knees,
You had no thermometer to measure the degrees.
If you weren't brought down by the flying metal,
Old Jack Frost was there to test your mettle.

Incidentally, if the ice breaks when you drop into the hole,
You may assume that the water is very close to ice cold,

They said, "make no noise is the way it has to be,"
The enemy has listening devices to find both you and me.

I couldn't bail out the water, I stood in it 'til almost dawn,
When they dragged me out of that hole, I was almost gone.
With the help of a local family, who kept me out of the cold,
I survived and a day or so later, I was in another foxhole.

The latter part of January, we broke thru their line,
They headed toward home with us right on their behind.
They made a last stand at the Rhine River on their way,
Shortly afterward they surrendered on the eighth of May.

Yes, my outfit, the 285th Combat Engineers,
Found itself in the Bulge Melee, all the way up to our ears.
From the last twenty days of the forty day freeze,
We were on the front line until the end of hostilities.

A DISTRAUGHT WOMAN... AND GOOD FRIED EGGS

By Verlyn Hofer

It is, indeed, strange how certain days and events in one's life become imbedded in the old memory bank, never to be forgotten. Some of these events may not have been traumatic, nor of much importance at the time, but they became memorable for unexplainable reasons.

Such is our recollection of a few hours spent in a German village just prior to the battle for Steinfeld in March of 1945. It was March 19th, to be exact, and units of the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion arrived, via their vehicles, to the vicinity of Buhl, Ashbach and Leiterswiller, thinking the night would be spent there.

Which of these villages Co A was to occupy, I do not know, but here we were in a war-torn town which had experienced more than a few artillery hits. Some houses were roofless but our squad was told to move into a partially destroyed home with a German family that consisted of an older couple, their daughter and her infant child.

Pa and Ma, I believe, were pragmatists, knowing the war was lost and that they had better try to make the best of it with these American invaders (or liberators). They were quite civil but the daughter was another story. She made no pretense of her disdain for us.

Poor Pa felt compelled to explain his daughter's behavior, telling us in broken English and German that her husband was in the German army on the Russian front, and they had not heard from him in months. So here was a young mother, most likely a widow, seeing their home partially destroyed and now being occupied by enemy forces.

Later as I recalled this day in my brief military career, I could not help but wonder how I or my family would have reacted to such an invasion of our home. It was not difficult to forgive that young woman for her rudeness and hostile attitude. Her future did not look very promising at that moment.

We had expected to spend the night in this house but our orders were changed and we spent only a few hours in this village before heading for Steinfeld and a three-day battle. But it was time well spent. Scotty, our halftrack driver, kept a large can of ground coffee in the vehicle. I looked upon this coffee as an excellent trading commodity... which it proved to be.

Hearing some chickens clucking not far away, I set out armed with a canteen cup full of coffee grounds. For this I was able to procure 12 chicken eggs and one goose egg. Taking my loot back to our assigned house, our squad used the German family's stove and frying pan to prepare a meal of fried eggs. That would be the last fried eggs I would eat for a long time.

What happened in the next few days would be much more exciting and traumatic but for some reason I remember just as well that distraught-young German woman... and those good fried eggs.

Photographs of the 25th Tank Battalion

Jim Lankford, National Historian

Copies of the following photographs appear in the division history, but they are of poor print quality and without captions, rendering less useful than they might otherwise be. Recently, Mr. Dave Kerr, an independent researcher, came across the original photographs while conducting research at the National Archives. He thoughtfully contacted me via the 14th Armored Division website with an offer to provide high-resolution copies of these photographs along with the missing captions. I wish to thank Mr. Kerr for his generosity. Using the captions as a starting point, I was able to add some background information.

An M4 Sherman tank (75mm gun) of the 25th Tank Battalion in the town of Oberhoffen, France, several kilometers east of Hagenau. The photograph was taken on 6 February 1945 following several days of heavy fighting to eliminate a German bridgehead across the Moder River. The 14th Armored Division's Combat Command B was attached to the 36th Infantry Division during this battle, but roughly three-

quarters of the town was retaken by the 25th Tank and 68th AIB supported by Troop B, 94th Cavalry Squadron, Company B, 125th Armored Engineers, and the 501st Armored Field Artillery.



M4 Sherman tanks (76mm gun) of Lieutenant William H. Kekar's 2nd Platoon, Company C, 25th Tank Battalion (Note: battalion and company markings on tank barrel.) preparing to practice firing as artillery in the vicinity of Huttendorf, France on 11 February 1945. (Huttendorf is about 10 kilome-

ters west of Hagenau.) During the second half of February, the 2nd Platoon fired two artillery missions across the Moder River into the enemy-held town of Kindwiller. Tanks were sometimes used as supporting artillery to reinforce the fires of division and corps artillery battalions. Their targets were usually over the horizon. These complicated missions, known to artillerymen as indirect fire, required precise calculations for azimuth (direction) and range (elevation). Although tank crews received training in indirect fire while in the US, actual missions in combat were fired under the control of the artillery fire direction centers.



14th ARMORED DIVISION 2009 National Reunion Attendees

Unknown

Lucy Schlies
Randy Schlies
Grace VanSomeran
Marjorie VanSomeran
Carol Kaser
Pat Kaser

125th ENG HQ

Diane Barton
Jerry Barton
Edith Barton
Russell Barton
Mary Williamson

136 ORD C

Joe Fitts
Herman Meyer
Mary Meyer

19 AIB A, C & HQ

Dick Monroe
Ardis Perry
Lloyd E. Perry
Marilyn Baney
John Burgess
Roberta Burgess
John Klobucar
LaVerne Klobucar
Gary Wruck
Howard Wruck
Bruce DeBoer
Charles DeBoer
Twilah DeBoer
David DeBoer
Charlotte Rebelein
Dorothy Miller
Lawrence Miller
Robert Straba
Elaine Monroe
Russell Perry
Jeffery Willey
George M. Pease
Margaret Pease
Marsha Pease
Jake Sartz

25 TANK A, B & D

Casey Freiberg
Lyle Freiberg
Betty Hurl
Charles (Chuck) Hurl
Robert McClarren
Carol Lynn Wilson

47 TANK A, C & D

Forrest Jewell
Dennis Schatt
Suzanne Schatt
Harold Kiehne
Joanne Kiehne
Christine Roberts
Roy Roberts
Ann Chelette
Jess Chelette
Eugene Kral
Mary Ann Cotton
R.D. (Joe) Cotton
Charlotte Froelich
Charlene Heise

48 TANK D

Al Burmeister
Millie Burmeister
Margaret Glover
Robert Glover
Elton Ross
Marge Ross

499 AFA

Jim Craigmile

500 AFA B & HQ

Cleo VanDyke
Pat VanDyke
Franklin Fulmer
Kent Fulmer
Fred Shattuck

501 AFA B & HQ

John Meyer
Mertyce Meyer
Rob Meyer

62 AIB A, B, C, HQ & MEDICS

Larry Erickson
Stanley Goldman
Doris Hinrich
Gus Hinrich
Mary Hofer
Verlyn Hofer
Anne Webster
Neil Webster
Becky Wensink
Dave Wensink
Emily Wensink
Sam Wensink
Zack Wensink

62 AIB (continued)

Ann (Hinrich) Lapo
Alroy Carlson
Josephine Carlson
Frances Siewert
Gayle Siewert
Richard T. Stewart
Gloria Boldt
Barbara Flanagan
Diedre Flanagan
Connor Flanagan
Sean Flanagan
Michael Flanagan
Nancy Bechen
Phil Bechen
Fred Harshberger
Jack Harvey
Terry Harvey
Anne Oester
Lee Oester
Howard Boise
Ida Boise

68 AIB B & HQ

Frank E. Crockett
Frank R. Crockett
Millie Crockett
Harry Kemp
Lynn Manship
Mark Manship
Janet Snoberger
Philip Snoberger

94 CAV E

William Breer

CCA HQ

James Russell

GUEST

Herb Newsome
Clela Rueter
Gene Rueter

A Memorial Service

You're invited. We're hearing a lot today about big splashy memorial services. I want a nationwide memorial service for Darrell "Shifty" Powers. Shifty volunteered for the airborne in WWII and served with Easy Company of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, part of the 101st Airborne Infantry. If you've seen Band of Brothers on HBO or the History Channel, you know Shifty. His character appears in all 10 episodes, and Shifty himself is interviewed in several of them. I met Shifty in the Philadelphia airport several years ago. I didn't know who he was at the time. I just saw an elderly gentleman having trouble reading his ticket. I offered to help, assured him that he was at the right gate, and noticed the "Screaming Eagle", the symbol of the 101st Airborne, on his hat. Making conversation, I asked him if he'd been in the 101st Airborne or if his son was serving. He said quietly that he had been in the 101st. I thanked him for his service, then asked him when he served, and how many jumps he made. Quietly and humbly, he said "Well, I guess I signed up in 1941 or so, and was in until sometime in 1945 . . ." at which point my heart skipped. At that point, again, very humbly, he said "I made the 5 training jumps at Toccoa, and then jumped into Normandy . . . do you know where Normandy is?" At this point my heart stopped. I told him yes, I know exactly where Normandy was, and I know what D-Day was. At that point he said "I also made a second jump into Holland, into Arnhem." I was standing with a genuine war hero . . . and then I realized that it was June, just after the anniversary of D-Day. I asked Shifty if he was on his way back from France, and he said "Yes. And it's real sad because these days so few of the guys are left, and those that are, lots of them can't make the trip." My heart was in my throat and I didn't know what to say. I helped Shifty get onto the plane and then realized he was back in Coach, while I was in First Class. I sent the flight attendant back to get him and said that I wanted to switch seats. When Shifty came forward, I got up out of the seat and told him I wanted him to have it, that I'd take his in coach. He said "No, son, you enjoy that seat. Just knowing that there are still some who remember what we did and still care is enough to make an old man very happy." His eyes were filling up as he said it. And mine are brimming up now as I write this. Shifty died on June 17 after fighting cancer. There was no parade. No big event in Staples Center. No wall to wall back to back 24x7 news coverage. No weeping fans on television. And that's not right. Let's give Shifty his own Memorial Service, in our own quiet way. Rest in peace, Shifty. "A nation without heroes is nothing." (Roberto Clemente)

My Dad: A GI in World War II

by Alaska State Representative Vic Kohring

Released: November 11, 2005

"Sixty years ago my father was a cannoneer in the 14th Armored Division in World War II, the world's most cataclysmic war. As with thousands of GI's, he plowed his way across France and Germany from 1944- 45. Since he's modest, I had to ask what he saw "over there." This is his story."

– Rep. Kohring

Born in Canada in 1921 to German parents, Heinz Herbert Kohring grew up in Chicago. Dad volunteered for the Army Air Force in 1942. The written and physical tests were easy. But when asked if he had difficulty sleeping, he said no but once walked in his sleep. He was bounced on his ear.

The Army drafted him in December 1942. He was sent to Fort Sheridan, Ill. And then to Camp Chaffee, Ark., hearing rumors Southerners were unaware the Civil War was over. The Army had difficulty finding size 15 boots for Dad. Until then he had to walk around in several pairs of Army OD socks held up by tape. He was assigned to Battery A of the 501st Armored Field Artillery Battalion, 14th Armored Division and trained as a gunner on an M-7 self-propelled gun.

The M-7 was a 26-ton monster, 105 mm howitzer on tracks complete with a .50-caliber machine gun turret. It was nicknamed the "Priest" because the turret looked like a priest's pulpit. It would shoot a 30-pound shell 10 miles. Dad remained a cannoneer for all of WWII.

After months of advanced training at Murfreesboro, Tenn., the 501st set off for Europe. Dad boarded the SS Jonathan Trumbull on Friday the 13th, October 1944. He never saw New York City but caught a glimpse of the Statue of Liberty appearing an inch high in the distance.

For two weeks, his convoy sailed east, past the Rock of Gibraltar, into the Mediterranean Sea and to the Port of Marseilles. The Trumbull anchored by a sunken ship, laid down a gangplank and the troops disembarked.

After hiking 10 miles to their biv-

ouac, they stopped to clean the cosmoline from their weapons and board trains for the front, 400 miles north of Marseilles.

Between November 1944 and May 1945 the 14th fought the Germans across Alsatia, into Germany and east to the Inn River close to the Austrian border. Dad's division liberated over 110,000 prisoners. They were busy processing German prisoners when the war in Europe concluded 8 May 1945.

My father told me he never actually saw the enemy during the battles. His howitzer lobbed shells 10 miles so only the forward observer could see what happened. As his battery moved forward they would see the results of their work, a swath of destroyed buildings, enemy tanks, dead Germans.

When the Germans surrendered, Dad's division became an Army of occupation. He then volunteered for the Pacific. While waiting for orders at one camp, he was offered a free pass to visit Paris if he cleaned kitchen stoves. He cleaned them but didn't get the pass. He then acquired a blank pass through a friend, filled it out himself and hitchhiked to Paris.

Months later, he was ordered back to the U.S. and then on to the Pacific. Dad boarded another troop ship, saw the White Cliffs of Dover and sailed into the Atlantic. Halfway across, word came that the Japanese surrendered. The troops on his ship were to be discharged.

The ship docked in Boston. During the debarking process, before he could board the train for Camp Chaffee, he was questioned by a woman at a desk who asked everyone if they brought pornographic material back from Europe. Dad told her, "No, lady. I don't even have a pornograph!"

He was discharged on Nov. 30, 1945. He had been in the Army since December 1942, one month short of

three years. Dad helped liberate a continent, won battle stars and theater ribbons. He was never wounded.

I asked him why he volunteered for the Pacific. He told me he wanted to help end the war as soon as possible. Had he ever met famous officers like Ike or Monty? No, but he saw Patton once, who scowled at him when his M-7 almost slid into Patton's vehicle while rounding a curve on a slippery road.

Dad married a young woman named Dolores Marshin in 1950. Our family, by then numbering six, came to Alaska in 1963 and made a home in Chugiak. Dad didn't talk much about "his" war.

He stated clearly, "The U.S. should stay out of other nations' business and keep our troops at home." When my time came to join the armed forces in 1986, I tried to join the Air Force. They turned me down because of lumbar disc disease. My Dad told me at the time, "Don't worry son, if it's necessary, I'll go to war for you if that will help."

I'm sure he meant it because he never lies. Audie Murphy got all the medals but my Dad is my hero. ■

*Heinz Kohring, May 1944
Kentucky Maneuvers*



WORLD WAR II through the eyes of the Cape Fear

Interview of Aaron May
OCTOBER 2, 2001

Our session is being held at the University of North Carolina library. We're going to be interviewing Mr. Aaron May. My name is Paul Zarbock. I'm a part-time staff member with UNCW.

INTERVIEWER: Mr. May, tell us a story. Tell us your story.

MAY: Well I was inducted at Fort Bragg on March 4, 1942 and we were shipped to Camp Chaffee in Arkansas and that's where I had my basic training. After the basic training was over, we were sent to the 14th Army Division, the 68th Army Infantry Battalion. I was allowed to go into Fort Smith for the first time which was just about 12 miles away from Camp Chaffee and I went to the USO dance the first time I was there and I met my, who was to be my wife, Norma Eisen, there. She later became my wife on February 8, 1944.

During the time I was at Camp Chaffee, I rose from private to a staff sergeant. On the 4th of November 1943, I was let out, separated from the Army as an enlisted man and sworn in as a warrant officer. Norma accompanied me to Camp Lee, Virginia, where I took officer training and at the end of that period, the 14th Army Division was sent on maneuvers in Kentucky and Tennessee.

I'll always remember that that's where I learned how I was supposed to lead a convoy at night in the pitch dark with no lights on. On October 4, 1944, we left the States on the Queen Mary II to Marseilles. The 14th Army Division left to go up through Germany, but somehow they let the 68th Army Infantry stay in Cannes, France, but I would like to say that during the trip over on the Queen Mary II, one thing that stuck out in my mind, it was a Marine standing in every compartment.

The ship was divided into compartments for battalions and companies and I asked the Marine how come we have a Marine with a gun standing at the entrance. His explanation was that if the ship was torpedoed, he was there to see that the lines didn't break ranks, the soldiers didn't break ranks and he had the authority to shoot any soldier that tried to disrupt the lines that were going in, that they had to wait for the call to leave when they were supposed to and if anybody got too excited and tried to leave, that was his job, to shoot them and that's something that I'll always remember.

But luckily that never occurred. We weren't torpedoed and we did go to Marseilles. We went above the battalion in the mountains where the French Italian border met. They were afraid that Germans could

sneak in the back way around Monte Carlo and through that area and so we stayed there about three weeks. I led a convoy back from where we were about 30 miles up into Cannes to pick up supplies and twice a German airplane tried to hit the convoy, but they never did.

So after that, they decided that the Germans weren't going to come in that particular area so we left to join our troops because after we got to our troops and during the march up through Germany, we had the heaviest fighting in Alsace Lorraine section and in the Haguenau Forest right after the Alsace Lorraine section.

I remember once, it always stuck with me, one of the shells hit one of our tanks during the height of the battle in the Haguenau Forest, hit the tank and of course everybody in it was killed. They asked my fellow officer, his specialty was to take care of tanks. My specialty as warrant officer was to lead the convoys to get ammunition and to take bodies back to the rear. After that tank was hit by the Germans, the captain my friend, he said "We don't want the Germans to have control of that tank. Would you get a tank retriever and go up and retrieve that tank"?

He went up to retrieve the tank and when he got close to it, the Germans, who had zeroed in on the first tank, zeroed in on him. It was a direct hit. The shell went through the tank and he lost his life inside. It was a terrible death. That's just one episode of the war that I remember and I fear his vitals were in the right before the Haguenau Forest and the Alsace Lorraine area.

Now if I may, I'd like to get back to what I've been teaching in the schools and this pertains mostly to after the war and then if I have time, I can get back to the war. But I'd like to say they called the 14th division the liberators and I'll explain that later on too. My primary role in the war was to lead a group of men. I had five trucks. They went with supplies and ammunition and when necessary, to carry dead bodies back to the rear.

More than once a convoy was the object of German planes and enemy sniper fire or spray. However, today I want to focus on my experiences in the release of prisoners at the Dachau concentration camp. The Dachau was located 20 miles north of Munich and there is more than one entrance and an exit of course.

INTERVIEWER: Excuse me, for the use of the camera, tell me the name of the town again where the concentration camp was.

MAY: Well close to Munich, 20 miles away from Munich. The name of the concentration camp was Dachau. As I said there

had been one entrance and exit because several units, they went in one exit and other units went in another exit and that's why I want to bring out the fact that there was more than one exit. There was no resistance when we went by from the German guards. Some of the guards had already been killed and some of the guards had fled before we arrived.

Now orders came down. There were detailed instructions. For example, you were to be careful not to overfeed any prisoners as they had not adjusted to their shrunken stomachs and they would have to adjust gradually to a normal diet. We were allowed to give them a bit of chocolate, a spoonful of food and that was all that we were supposed to give them at one time. I remember watching old men at the gate just peering outside and some were afraid and some turned back. However I saw one man walk across the road to a dilapidated old parking lot. He emptied about 20 gas cans until he had enough gas to get an old car started and off he went.

Of course, all the men and women were elated that the gates were open and at last they had their freedom. I remember what I thought was the most important of the act of war memories. It came from General Eisenhower. He wanted to make sure that every German knew first hand of the atrocities committed by their people and of course we tried to carry out his orders.

I watched over Germans, mostly women, dig up the massive graves where the human bones and bodies were buried and I'm sure some of you or maybe most of you have seen photos of these graves or the graves yourselves. I asked a German woman, "Who is to be blamed for this?" She responded, "The Jews. They started the war". But what went on inside the camp, they manufactured candles, she replied. I asked again, "Do you think Hitler would have known about the atrocities inside the camp?" She answered smiling, "Of course not, maybe a small officer or a general, but our Fuhrer would never do such a thing. They were all lies of course". And I ordered her, "Lady, you go back to the end of the line and you march through again and see the bones again and you keep doing that until you can wipe that smile off your face".

Yes, there was some remorse from other women to some degree. In my opinion, they were still more afraid of the SS troops than they were of the Americans. I remember another incident with a German woman. She spoke English perfectly. She complained to me of a Polish soldier stealing her clothes. I asked her if she believed any German crimes were committed. She answered no,

(Continued on page 22)

WORLD WAR II...

(Continued from page 21)

but I told her, "Look down the street, you can see for yourself men who were once 6' tall, proud of their country and proud of themselves. Now they're starved and weighed 40-50 pounds." "Well that may be true", she responded, "but they started the war" and that was the stock answer from most all the Germans at that time.

They still weren't willing to come out in the open and say that the Germans and Hitler started the war. I remember busting into German homes and finding Red Cross boxes. They were supposed to have been given to American POW's. The boxes contained powdered milk, salmon, coffee, liver paste, salt, sugar, cocoa, meatloaf and miscellaneous items.

In the final days of the war, Germany was running out of money. The SS troops were determined that they would do their best to finish off what they had started to all the Jews and other minorities. They didn't want to pay for the bullets. They didn't have any money. The camps weren't running at that time. So they lined the Jews up and the only weapon they had was swords like this and of course this sword is one of the original swords that they used.

They would shoot the Jews in the back and then push them in the ditches. It was on the first of May 1945 the G3 war news broadcast, "Last night, the 14th Armor Division of the 7th Army released 110,000 POWs at Mooseburg yesterday. And that's why, I said in the beginning, they called the 14th Armor Division the liberators.

There were other 7th Army troops, of course, released 30 to 40,000 prisoners from Dachau, the notorious Nazi concentration camp.

INTERVIEWER: I'm sorry, what was the name of that other concentration camp?

MAY: Dachau. D-A-C-H-A-U. Munich was entered yesterday and BBC news reported it was completely occupied. And that was the end of the German war at that time. Now we had orders to switch from the 14th Armor Division to the Thunderbird Division. We had to take off our patches and put on the Thunderbird patches. They gave us a 30 day leave in the States and then we were going to the South Pacific.

While we were in the loading zone is when President Truman dropped the bomb so when we got to the States, the orders were changed around and we didn't have to go and that's why I think 100% or 99% of the soldiers fighting in Germany were glad about the bomb that was dropped because in a way they might have killed

more of the enemy, but in another way, it saved a whole lot more American lives. So we didn't have to go to the South Pacific.

We went back to the States on the Aquatania and I'll always remember that I was walking down the gangplank. They had a band that was playing "The Bells are Ringing for Me and My Gal". We were sent to Brownwood, Texas, to wait further orders and at that time they had started letting people out of the Army in a rotation sort of thing. It was according to what your number was as to how fast you were rotated.

After Brownwood, my wife came up to meet me and I stayed in Texas for a couple of weeks and we bought a second hand car to drive back to Wilmington, North Carolina, and I had to be discharged at Fort Bragg. We had about five flats on the way from Texas. The engine caught on fire one morning, but we finally made it back out to Wilmington and I finally went to Fort Bragg for my discharge.

INTERVIEWER: Who fixed those flat tires?

MAY: Well at that time I was young and I could fix them and one time, like I said, the engine caught on fire and my wife said that I better get some sand and pour it on which we did and put out the fire. The last puncture I had was right outside the Cape Fear River before we got into Wilmington and of course as soon as we got into Wilmington, I disposed of the car. Before we did that, we thought it would be a good idea to go buy a car. At that time, they had little cabins on the road and the one we stopped at one night was called Cabin in the Pines. It was a lot of fun and when you're that young, you can stand all that excitement.

Now while I was in the Army, I wrote a lot of letters to my wife and when I got back, I divided them between my children, but I did write some of them down. Like December 15th, I wrote, "We cannot relate the names of towns until 14 days after we have been through".

INTERVIEWER: What year is this?

MAY: Well I've got down here, these letters are dated from December '44 til June '45. One of the envelopes...The rule is you couldn't write the name of a town until two weeks after you'd gone through. "We were on the front lines and giving Jerry hell as you read in your papers. I got a hair cut today, first one since I left Marseilles. An old woman gave it to me with an old pair of scissors and a hairbrush with just a few bristles left. Well she didn't do a bad job. This is in the Alsace Lorraine area. We're treated like liberators by most of the people. They offer you a drink and in the morning, they keep you warm. In the Al-

sace section, it switches from Germany to France and back to France to Germany and if Germany was in command, they were all Germans and when the French was in command, they were all French."

"These people when we were there, of course, had been nice and gave us a drink. We took over all the houses. We didn't sleep outside. They gave us straw slippers in one town we went through. Most wear wooden shoes and take them off before entering the house. The houses are connected to the barns and sometimes it's hard to tell the difference. The people of Alsace Lorraine are hard workers and stack their cellars full of food."

"It depended on which army was advancing of what nationality they really were. There was a rumor that we liberated General Patton's son-in-law. Whether it was true or not, I couldn't confirm. Some of the Germans are Nazis. Some claim to be not. When Germany actually saved some of our men when they were walking into a trap and I have seen the prison camps only from the gates. I never went inside because we didn't have time at that time to go through them."

"People of every conquered nation are on the road walking to and from to get to their homes. No matter how many miles they had to walk to get home, they would. When we took over a town, the Germans are not allowed to stay in the same house we were and we are not allowed to talk to them. Most of them are frightened at first, but take heart when they see how soft-hearted the Americans are. At that time even then, they are more afraid of the SS troops than they are of the American soldiers."

On the 3rd of May, I wrote, "We are now in the 3rd Army because before we were in the 7th Army. At this time, I got a glimpse of Patton, but still think Patch is a great general. I can't tell you where we are, but I feel like I've been through Germany and back again. There was a rumor yesterday that we liberated 28,000 prisoners including 43 Russian generals and some of our own men and we also liberated 250 bottles of champagne."

"One of the Germans we caught turned out to be an SS trooper. He said he hadn't seen his wife in so many years and he was just 10 miles from home. However we never let him out. We captured him and kept him until the end of the war."

On April 17th which was sometimes I've got these dates a little mixed up, "We have been driving day and night, lucky to get two hours sleep and eat when we can. We've captured all types of equipment, freed all kinds of people, captured hundreds of prisoners. It sounds good in

(Continued on page 23)

WORLD WAR II...

(Continued from page 22)

the papers, but over here, it's no fun and no rest. The only people with any fight left are the SS troops. The Germans say that they were more relieved to see us than the SS. Even the regular German soldiers seem to be relieved and they were taking off their suits and trying to return home as civilians. The people feel like we have liberated them too instead of conquering them. It seems that what's left to fight mainly is the SS troops."

On April 25th, "A Russian soldier came up to me and said he was an officer that had just been liberated. He asked for a rifle and the chance to go to the front with us. Actually I couldn't do that, but I told him that he could come with us, but we couldn't give him a rifle. He did come with us and did the work of loading and unloading the trucks. He said that all he wanted was clothes and food when we gave it to him. Anything with a patch on really brought a smile to his face."

"The Army issued each officer a quart of whiskey today. Several of the fellows were sitting with me in the house that some Nazi just vacated and shells started to land all around us, but we said 'the hell with the shells, bring out the whiskey' which he did. I was a little tight and a whole lot scared. You have been reading the news. There is a quiet soldier sitting next to me. They surrender so fast, it's hard to keep track of them. They walk along the road with their hands up, but we're too busy to even pick them up. However, the fighting is not over yet. The SS troopers do not give up. They still do a lot of damage before being shot. We've advanced several days without sleep. We have liberated clothes, rations and so forth. Half the time, I didn't even know where we were."

"The German soldiers were well-equipped. The propaganda saying the Germans wearing paper clothes is all bunk. They all had new clothes. Most of the time, most of the ones liberated were in a mansion where Hitler's officers and wives were kept and the officers were still there."

I think that covers most of the war. I did write a few more letters. When I got home, I took, I had three sons and I took all the medals and different things I had and divided them between the three boys with the exception of this sword because I couldn't divide that. Now if there are any questions, you go ahead.

INTERVIEWER: Just for the sake of historical accuracy, you said that you were, you left the Armored Infantry and went to the Thunderbird Division, is that correct?

MAY: That was after the war.

INTERVIEWER: Now wasn't that the 45th Infantry Division?

MAY: Well I think so. The Thunderbird was a nickname, wasn't it?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, yes.

MAY: That was the same division that had started out in Africa I believe, fighting in Africa and one of the most famous divisions and they were under General Patton and the 14th Armored Division was always under General Patch, the 7th Army. We were actually in the 7th Army. The 45th, the Thunderbirds, were in the 3rd Army and that's...of course, we didn't join them until after the war was over so when I got home, I actually had Patton's uniform from the 3rd Army, but we actually didn't do any fighting for him or aligned to him in any way except for the fact that we were to go to the South Pacific.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember specifically where you were at the time of V-E Day, when it was announced? Were you in Munich?

MAY: Yes, we were very close to Munich. Like I say, we got the news on the London BBC and that's when they told us that the war was over and we got most of our information from the BBC and we were surprised to hear that the BBC had mentioned the 14th Armored Division in liberating the American soldiers at Moosburg, and that's when the war ended, but we didn't, of course, immediately come back. As best I can remember, we might have stayed in Germany approximately three weeks. I know where I was when the bomb was dropped because we were in a loading zone waiting to be shipped back to the States.

INTERVIEWER: Where was that loading zone?

MAY: It was in Germany, no it couldn't have been in Germany. I forget exactly where that loading zone was, but I think at that time even then, Marseilles was a loading zone. That's where when we arrived... and I know we were...I know the Aquetania ship. I'm sure we left from Germany, but I can't remember the port, the German port right now.

INTERVIEWER: Was the countryside smashed, broken and burned?

MAY: Well during the war, one thing I observed when we drove along in our tanks, we saw so many French tanks that they had been trying to get into fighting position. It was amazing. I know the U.S. Army, if they could possibly save a tank, they would save it, but it just seemed like the French Army left all their equipment along the side of the road and that was one observation that I made during the war. I know, of course, you all remember the famous words by the general when he said "Nuts" while the heaviest fighting was going on. It wasn't exactly

where we were. He was a lot more northern and we were further south, the Haguenau Forest was south.

I remember the time there was a heavy snow and we stayed at one place for two weeks and that was the heaviest battle, but I won't try to compare it with what he went through at the southern end because he blocked the Germans in the south and we did our part in the north, northern part.

INTERVIEWER: Mr. May, take a look right into the camera and you're going to be talking now to your grandchildren, maybe your great-grandchildren and as I said to you off camera, you will never be a day older than you are today. The video tape will make sure that you're always this age. Please tell your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren what did all that terrible war teach you and what would you tell them about war?

MAY: Well I'd like to tell my grandchildren that that war, of course, was a horrible war, but I feel like it's something that our country and all the other countries had to take part in. I think they never had a war again that had the same meaning and the same feeling that other wars have had because we were actually fighting in the long run for England's independence, France had already lost her independence and if we let the Germans take over England, they would eventually somehow taken over this country. It was my personal feeling that Germany had to be stopped. They tried to do it in World War I and they couldn't succeed and of course World War II was a lot more heinous war. More people got killed, but it had to be done.

But in the future, I'd like to tell people if a country does not threaten, the best thing a country can do is to learn how to protect themselves and how to show vigilance in case anything should happen. But I don't think, I want you to remember all these smaller wars that came about, but the biggest war that we've had, was of course during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's time and we had a terrible depression at that time.

The war really brought people out of the depression, but at that time, it made women go to work and it made all the men that couldn't fight go to work and it brought people together just as today these events that are happening brought people together.

I wouldn't tell anybody to want to go to a war. It's not fun. It's not easy. It's dangerous; however, if you have a war to protect your own country, then you have to do it, but if you have a war to try to settle an argument in a far off land, like the Vietnam War, you have to do a lot of thinking about whether this is really necessary. Our war was necessary. That's what I want to tell them. ■



MAIL CALL

DISTINGUISHED RETIRED VETERANS OF THE U.S. ARMY 14TH ARMORED DIVISION:

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you and your families to Green Bay, Wisconsin, for the 2009 U.S. 14th Armored Division Association Reunion at the KI Center. We are glad to have you here to enjoy all the great things Green Bay has to offer, and we are honored by your service to our great country.

While you're here, please enjoy some of Green Bay's finest family-friendly attractions: Lambeau Field and the Packers Hall of Fame, the Green Bay Botanical Gardens, Bay Beach Amusement Park, and many unique shopping and dining options. We offer over seventy parks and countless arts and entertainment possibilities, and I hope you will find time to explore Green Bay.

Green Bay is excited and proud to be your host for the 2009 14th Armored Division Reunion. Thank you for your sacrifice and service in defense of our freedom as liberators and true heroes during World War II, thank you for joining us for the week's activities, and I wish you a happy, productive and memorable stay here in Green Bay.

Sincerely,
Jim Schmitt
Mayor of Green Bay

SON REMEMBERS ARMY CONNECTIONS

Dear Mr. Hinrich,

Enclosed is check for Kenneth's annual dues plus a bit for postage.

We both enjoy the magazine and were so pleased to see our son David's article about 154th Sig. Co. in last issue of *Liberator*.

He remembers some of our stays at Ft. Smith, Arkansas and Camp Campbell, and the years after the war when we visited Ken's army buddies

and they visited us in Villisca, Iowa.

One buddy we've not located is John E. Walker of Hilliards, Ohio. We'd so appreciate an address for him.

Thanks for all you do.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kenneth (Audrea) Higgins

RENEWS LIBERATOR SUBSCRIPTION

Dear Gus,

I am enclosing the \$10.00 dues for Francis so I can get the *Liberator*. I like reading all the news. Francis Schlies died May 4th, 2009 in Kewaunee Health Care Center, Emerald Shores Assisted Living. He is buried in Fort Howard Memorial Park, 1350 N. Military Ave., Green Bay, Wisconsin.

I plan on coming to the reunion. Will register later.

Lucy I. Schlies

CONTINUES TO READ LIBERATOR

Dear Mr. Hinrich,

I believe my annual dues are due. So I enclose \$10.00 for that and \$5.00 for the postage fund. My husband was Roger C. Mattison of Co. C, 68 AIB, 14th Armored Division. We attended several of the reunions together.

Myrna R. Mattison

INFORMS OF DEATH

Dear Mr. Hinrich,

I am informing you of the death of my husband on April 26, 2009, Anthony Mastrolembo.

He was a World War II Veteran with the 14th Armored Division in Central Europe and Rhineland.

Please list in the "Taps" column in

The Liberator.

Thank you,

Mary Mastrolembo

LIBERATOR IS "PICKER UPPER"

Dear Gus,

September is Reunion month, beginning of dove season thru Oct., followed by deer season November and December. I am sorry to say all three have had to be put on hold the last few years.

The Liberator in November after the reunion is a "picker upper."

Use the enclosed check wherever you need it.

Have a great reunion. I'll be thinking of you all.

Elmer Burch

Co C, 48th Tank Bn

REMINDS OF DAD'S HARDSHIPS

Hi Gus and Verlyn,

Enclosed another small donation for your postage fund.

Your latest *Liberator*, the story on page 22 on "How The Nazis Killed," the article brought back memories to my son-in-law, how his dad, Frank J. Fratianny's B-24 bomber was shot down on 9/12/44 and was taken prisoner. After my son-in-law, Frank Jr., read the story, he told me that his dad told him about all the hardships he went thru like told in the story. A real tear jerker for him. Great article.

Keep up the great work!

Matt Sitnik

62nd Bn



MAIL CALL... Continued

REMINDING OF TIMES WITH 14TH AD

Dear Gus,

How I look forward to receiving *The Liberator* and reliving all the memories of my time with the 14th Armored Division in the 84th Medical Bn. Co. A., especially the time spent with my singing buddy Pat De Fusco.

Please use the enclosed \$100.00 donation for postage to keep *The Liberator* coming.

(PS. Forever)

Bill Samar

SORRY HE COULDN'T ATTEND

Dear Verlyn,

Sorry I was unable to attend the 2009 reunion. Enclosed check to be used as you see fit.

Sincerely,

Charles Eder

IN GOOD SHAPE AGAIN

Dear Gus,

Just received your note and I checked last year's reunion receipt and saw that the year starts June 30. I checked with Harold Kiehne and he said he had received his copy. That's when the misunderstanding came about.

This was earlier this summer and then I was hospitalized for some health problems. At first part of June I ended up at the VA for a heart valve replacement. I guess some things slipped my mind. I made a copy of my receipt and sent it here, so it was my mistake.

I just got home and in good shape now. This is for this year's dues for now and some extra for mailings.

See you at the reunion at Green Bay.

John & LaVerne Klobucar

LOOKS FORWARD TO LIBERATOR

Keep up the good work. I continue to look forward to *The Liberator*. Have been wheelchair-bound for past 10 years and also on oxygen - but we keep going.

Regards,

Bill Fleming

B Company, 19th

COMMENDS THOSE WHO SERVE US

During our war years, when death or disability made it impossible to do a man's job, someone else stepped in as a substitute. Of course, the substitute was usually ordered to do so. In our Association no one gets ordered to do so, but we always seem to have great volunteers.

To name just a few: Gus Hinrich, Charlotte Froelich, Ogden Jones and Harold Kiehne. All the volunteers deserve our recognition and our thanks. We also have others on our staff, who get their jobs done in a superior manner. All of us recognize Verlyn and the great way he has kept *The Liberator* going in such a splendid manner.

I would like to say a few words about two men I recruited (it required little persuasion on my part) to be our Judge Advocate and our Chaplain. They have both done fine jobs and when one knows of their qualifications, this is not surprising.

I first met John Meyer when he was the Forward Observer assigned to get artillery support for our infantry company. I was impressed with his intelligence and courage, his concern about our men and his drive to get the needed support. I thought highly enough of him as a soldier to select him along with fine infantry lieutenants Mike Auer, Bob Lingle and Bob Donovan to serve with us in the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion, after the war, when I had authority to select any lieutenants I wanted from the 14th Armored Division. John never

disappointed me as a soldier.

After the war he finished Law School at Notre Dame; was soon elected to the Illinois State Senate, practiced law in both Danville, Illinois and Chicago and subsequently became a judge. I was proud to suggest his name to our Association, where his good judgment and common sense has been often displayed.

John Burgess, our Chaplain, was the smallest and youngest man in the platoon which I was lucky enough to command when we went overseas. He proved to be courageous and intelligent and of course, got no special favors because of his size or his youth.

After the war, John had a splendid education. He received an AB in Theology from Gordon College, a Master of Divinity from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, a Master of Education from Boston University and a Doctor of Education from Harvard University of Graduate Education.

He has played both piano and organ for churches and evangelists and was a member of a male quartet which performed concerts and radio programs throughout New England for two years. He served as a pastor at two churches and was a Teaching Fellow supervising student teachers in the Master of Education program while attending Harvard.

John is a thoughtful, helpful and versatile Chaplain with a broad experience.

Jack R. DeWitt

HELPS WITH DONATION

Dear Gus,

I am enclosing my 2009 postage donation. You and your helpers are doing a great job keeping the Association going. Wish you were closer to my area.

Respectfully,



MORE MAIL CALL

RECOVERS FROM SERIOUS ILLNESS

Very dear Robert (McClarren),

These days, exactly on the 3rd of October last year, we had the great joy of having your visit, to seeing us in Alsace--in Gumbrechtshoffen, Rittershoffen and Hatten. It was a marvelous day to have with you so many years after the war, Mr. McClarren. It's only today that I can write a few words to tell you that we have not forgotten you.

I read with very much interest your very good article published by our beloved friend Verlyn Hofer, editor of *The Liberator*. May I just point to a small confusion: Under the photo, a few steps from the Restaurant Muller, this is a view of the railway station of Niederbronn, and not "Niedermodern" as stated. (Rev. Pfalzgraf went on to name other people of the Rittersshaffen/Hatten area who Bob McClarren met, some of whom were on hand to receive American veterans on special occasions in the years 1980-95. Bob's account of his visit to Alsace appeared in this past summer's issue of *The Liberator*.)

I fell seriously ill in December last year and had to spend half a year in the hospitals of Strasburg and Hagenau. Therefore you didn't hear from me earlier. I have now mostly recovered, thanks to God and the help of my wife, our children, and friends who were praying for me. I had very great help from my wife, Liliane, who visited me every day.

I'll send a copy of these few words to Verlyn. I send you, dear Robert, my best greetings and wishes; and to your son, and your cousin Carol Lynn who so greatly helped you to come again to Alsace.

With our best thoughts,
Georges and Liliane Pfalzgraf
and son Christian

P.S. Our daughter Anne-Mary got married on July 4th this year in Strasburg. She is a teacher for children in Hagenau.

Rev. Pfalzgraf's address is:

LIBERATORS INVITED TO DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

To whom it may concern,

My name is Shelby Queen, and I am a Special Event coordinator at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. This year is the 65th anniversary of the Liberation of the concentration camps during World War II. At the Museum we hold an annual Days of Remembrance in which a specific topic is chosen to focus on for remembrance, education and scholarly focus. This year we are focusing on the role Liberators played in the liberation of the concentration camps. We would like to invite as many Liberators as possible, and have an active Liberator list. However, the list itself was created over 6 years ago and many of the addresses are no longer viable. I am well aware that many Liberators are not in the best of health, but we would still like the opportunity to recognize their heroism and contributions by sending them an invitation to our Days of Remembrance Ceremony next April in the Capitol Rotunda.

We are focusing on the actual liberating Army units and not the men and women who were stationed in the Pacific or other regions around the world. The Liberating units are the US Army 1st, 2nd, 4th, 8th, 26th, 29th, 36th, 42nd, 45th, 63rd, 65th, 71st, 80th, 83rd, 84th, 86th, 89th, 90th, 95th, 99th, 103rd, 104th Infantry, the 3rd, 4th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th, 20th armored Divisions, and the 82nd and 101st Airborne. I realize that you may not be the correct person to contact to acquire this information, but I felt as if it was a good place to begin my inquiry. Please forward this to the correct point person and give them my contact information as well if you are not the correct outlet to seek a cur-

rent address listing for for World War II Liberators. Please feel free to contact the main number of the Museum to check the validity of my person and request, 202-488-0400, and ask for me or use my extension - ex. 332. Also this information would not be shared with any other entity and would remain internal for use during Days of Remembrance only.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Shelby Queen,
Special Event Coordinator at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

BUMPER STICKERS, DECALS AVAILABLE

Verlyn,

Enclosed is a photo of the 3 bumper stickers I have and the inside window decal. I've added "Grandad" after requests.

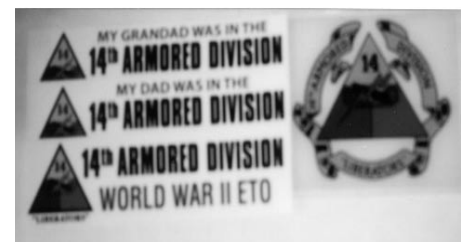
Western States Chapter of 14th Armored Division Association PX has three (3) bumper stickers selling at \$3.00 each. Notice veterans, "Dad served" and now "Grandad served."

The decal, for inside the window of the car can also be used inside the front door glass or front window at home. Sells for \$5.00 each.

Hopetully you can get another notice in *The Liberator*.

Thanks!

As ever, Joe Fitts



14th AD CHAPTER ORGANIZERS, UPCOMING REUNIONS

SOUTH EASTERN STATES CHAPTER

BOB McCLARREN and
PHIL SNOBERGER, Co-Chairs HAMPTON INN SOUTH OF

WESTERN STATES CHAPTER

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

MID WEST STATES CHAPTER

HAROLD KIEHNE DAYS INN - French Island

<http://www.14tharmoreddivision.org>

COMING NATIONAL REUNIONS

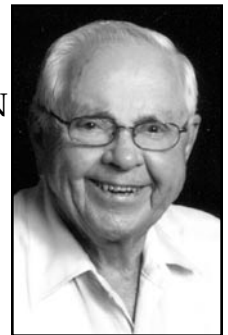


James
Craigmile
2010
Indianapolis, IN
Sept. 8-12

Reunion arrangements will be handled by a committee.

Chuck Hurl
2011

Indianapolis, IN
Dates pending



Check out the website:
www.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

**NEXT DEADLINE IS
JANUARY 15, 2010**

PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS
LABEL FOR EXPIRATION DATE

All changes of address should be
sent to Ann Chelette, Nat'l Sec.

14th ARMORED DIVISION ASSN., INC.

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