



# THE LIBERATOR™

**VOL. 47 NO. 3**

*Official Publication of the  
14th Armored Division Association*

**SPRING 2013**

## Message from our Association President



**STAN GOLDMAN**

During our last reunion, while visiting my niece in Terre Haute, Indiana, I had the good fortune to meet two extraordinary people, Eva and Arthur Kor. I was 88 at the time and what Eva had to say to me dramatically changed my life.

Eva and her sister were twins experimented on by Dr. Mengele in Auschwitz. They were eight years old. In all there were 22 sets of twins used in these experiments.

Arthur, her husband, was also a prisoner at the age of eleven. His mother saved his life by forcing him to go with the men when they separated the women and children. He described himself as a skinny kid barely able to lift the ammunition boxes. He lifted them to avoid being killed.

Eva was liberated by the Russians

*(Continued on page 3)*

## 49th Reunion in Milwaukee!

by Ann & Jess Chelette

The plans are made! We will meet for the 49th Reunion of the 14th Armored Division on September 18 - 22, 2013, at Milwaukee's Best Western Plus Airport Hotel & Convention Center! Our hotel is across the street from the airport and less than 15 minutes from downtown Milwaukee, one of the most exciting cities in the Midwest!

"The Good Land" is what the Native Americans called this area on the shores of Lake Michigan, originally three separate towns that grew together to form Milwaukee in the mid 1800's. When the German immigrants began to arrive in the 1840s, they brought with them their passion for the art of beer brewing. And over the next 100 years this heritage made Milwaukee the world's leading beer producer. While it's no longer the city's major industry, its legacy is everywhere. A wave of Polish immigrants arrived soon after the Germans, and established Milwaukee's south side. Bringing their faith with them, they built many of the churches and steeples that shape the city's skyline. As Milwaukee grew into a manufacturing center other immigrant groups appeared, each giving rise to new neighborhoods.

The Best Western is eager to serve us! We'll lodge in rooms with either two queen beds or one king bed, all for the price of \$78 per night plus tax! A free hot breakfast buffet awaits us each morning from 6:00 - 10:00 am! The Airport Bar & Grille, a large sports bar in the hotel, provides food and beverages, large-screen TVs, and pool tables for relaxing! The

hotel has a large indoor pool, exercise facility, and jacuzzi. Our hospitality room and meeting rooms are wonderful areas to gather to visit with friends, enjoy entertainment, and conduct our meetings.

Again this year, you'll be met and assisted by the Partners - the children and grandchildren of our veterans who look forward each year to accompanying you and enjoying the reunion! Details of reunion activities will be included in the next *Liberator*!

Milwaukee offers many attractions, and we've selected some for planned tours as well as free time Saturday afternoon. We thank everyone who completed surveys at our last reunion in Peoria - your responses have guided us this year.

### Arrival and Departure

Once again, we (Partners) will assist you as you arrive and depart. Please note your flight information on the Registration Form. You may also phone the hotel when you land at the number noted on the Form. The hotel's free shuttle operates 24 hours a day, and will smoothly transfer you the short distance from the airport to the hotel. Partners will greet you and assist you with your luggage, with registering, and with moving on to your room. We will also help you with your luggage and check-out when you depart.

### Wednesday, September 18

Early arrivals can register, find opportunities to speak with others arriving,

*(Continued on page 3)*

**49th NATIONAL REUNION**  
**Milwaukee's Best Western Plus Airport Hotel - Sept. 18-22, 2013**

## FROM THE LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT



**GAYLE SIEWERT**

It's been a nice winter thus far, not too cold and the snow has been bearable. Spring will soon follow and then before you know it, reunion time will be here. I was thrilled to hear that it will be in Milwaukee.

The Auxiliary will still be hosting its raffle so please bring a gift if you are able. We will also take care of the hospitality room so we will be looking for donation snacks as well. The Auxiliary will furnish the soda. We had some wonderful cookies that Millie Burmeiste brought; we called them "Reunion Cookies," recipe attached.

The raffle money we raise this year will go to the Veterans' Hospital or home in the state of our Association President, Stan Goldman, who lives in New Jersey.

I am sending an article entitled "Meaning of Folding the Flag," which will appear elsewhere in *The Liberator*.

Many thanks go to Ann, Jess and partners for all their hard work on planning the reunion, and Verlyn for the work and time spent getting *The Liberator* out so we can enjoy reading it. Don't forget to send in your address changes and any postage donations to Ann and Jess Chelette.

Frances sends her greetings to all, and hopes everyone is doing well. My mother is doing fine and takes each day as it comes. Best wishes to all with birthdays and anniversaries this time of year, and we extend sympathies to those who have loved ones.

My sister Gloria and I look forward to seeing you all in Milwaukee in September.

See page 5 for the recipe for "Reunion Cookies" (Crisp Oatmeal Cookies)

(Continued on page 5)

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

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

## ★★★ LIBERATOR ★★★

Official Publication

14th Armored Division Association, Inc.  
Verlyn Hofer, Editor - Box 22, Lennox, SD 57039  
605-647-2280 • Fax: 605-647-2218 • e-mail: vmhofer@iw.net

### LIST OF OFFICERS

<i>National President</i> STANLEY GOLDMAN	<i>National Secretary</i> ANN CHELETTE	<i>National Judge Advocate</i> JOHN P. MEYER
<i>National Vice Presidents</i> FRED HARSHBERGER	<i>National Treasurer</i> JESS CHELETTE	<i>National Publicity</i> HAROLD KIEHNE
JOHN P. MEYER		<i>National Photographer</i> BIL I. BRFFER
<i>Immediate Past President</i> ELTON C. ROSS	<i>National Chaplain</i> JOHN A. BURGESS	<i>Executive Director Emeritus</i> HORST FROELICH 1926-2006
		<i>National Historian Emeritus</i> GEORGE ENGLAND, JR. 1914-2007

### LIST OF AUXILIARY OFFICERS

<i>National President</i> GAYLE SIEWERT	<i>National Secretary and Public Relations</i> ANNE WEBSTER	<i>Nomination Committee</i> MERTYCE MEYER
<i>National 1st Vice President</i> MARILYN BANEY	<i>National Treasurer</i> CHARLENE HEISE	EDITH BARTON See Historian info.
<i>National 2nd Vice President</i> MARY HOFER	<i>National Historian</i> EDITH BARTON	ROBERTA BROWN-HENNING

### 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

---

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*(Continued from page 1)*

and Arthur by the 500th Engineers. After the war the commander of the 500th arranged for Arthur to come to Terra Haute, Indiana, which was the commander's hometown.

They married and raised two children. Arthur attended Purdue University and became a pharmacist, and Eva sold real estate. They built a museum called Candles, which is dedicated to the Holocaust.

As many of you are aware, my great-nephew, Evan Hildebrand, did his Eagle Scout project featuring me and our Liberator Division, in an exhibit which is featured in this museum.

I urge all of you to try to get to see this exhibit which does us all proud.

Eva travels the world preaching the forgiving of Dr. Mengele. Her attitude is that to forgive is not to condone. Up until meeting her, my attitude was very anti-German. Hearing the language spoken was upsetting. I would not buy a German product, and had very negative feelings toward people who spent seven months trying to kill me. Of course, I never tried to voice these feelings to my children or anyone else. I remember the feeling of shock when, not long after 1945, Germany and Japan became among our strongest Allies.

Eva said to me, "you'll never get out from under slavery to Adolf Hitler

if you do not learn to forgive, to forgive is not to condone." These words had an incredible effect on me. I felt like a great weight had been lifted from my shoulders. The age of 88 is pretty late in life to have an epiphany but there it was.

If you plan to go to Terre Haute to the Candles Museum, call me

and I will try to arrange a meeting for you with Eva and Arthur. The museum sells a DVD called 'Forgiving Dr. Mengele.' It is very worthwhile.

Hope to see you at our reunion in September.

Stan Goldman  
2012-2013 President  
14th AD Association

---

## 49th Reunion in Milwaukee! *(continued from page 1)*

and select either the Lake City Restaurant & Lounge or the Aviator Sports Bar & Grille inside the hotel for your meals.

### Thursday, September 19

We again have a free hot breakfast buffet each morning in the Lake City Restaurant! One tour is available this morning for those interested. We will leave the Hotel at 10:00 am for a tour of Miller Park, home of the Milwaukee Brewers! Included in this wheelchair-accessible tour are the Visitor's Clubhouse, Bob Eucker's booth, the bullpen, and luxury suite level. This 75 minute guided tour covers over 1/2 mile of area within the ballpark. Lunch will follow, at your own expense, with return to the Hotel by 1:00 pm. Those remaining at the Hotel during the morning are invited to visit the Hospitality Room and lunch together, if they wish, in the Lake City Restaurant.

Thursday afternoon we'll show old Red Skelton Show videos and provide popcorn in the Hospitality Room at 1:30 pm. The annual 14th Armored Division Association Board Meeting will begin at 3:00 pm. Our Cash Bar will open at 5:30 pm, with dinner to follow at 6:00 pm.

### Friday, September 20

Following our complimentary hot breakfast buffet, those interested can participate in tours and lunch. We'll leave at 9:30 am for the Harley Davison Museum, which will have just concluded its 110th anniversary. Our one-hour guided tour will highlight the Harley-Davidson Journey galleries and provide a deeper insight of four young men who grew one of

the most recognizable companies in the world from their kitchen table, and will also highlight some of the most significant motorcycles in the collection. The Harley Davison Shop is open for your browsing or purchases. Walkers and wheelchairs are welcome.

Take a seat as we drive on to lunch, which is included in our outing. Following lunch, we'll take a short "dessert tour" of the Buddy Squirrel Candy and Nut Factory!. Buddy Squirrel, Wisconsin's largest retail nut, healthy snack mix, confectionary, and popcorn operation, creates all its own candy centers from scratch, including butter almond toffee, marshmallow, nougats, cremes, caramels, meltaways, cordials, and much more. Your 30-minute tour will include their state-of-the-art kitchens and popping and roasting rooms. You'll receive free samples and 20% off any gift shop purchases. We'll return to the Hotel before 2:00 pm.

Those remaining at the Hotel can enjoy the second annual Collections of Yesteryear in the Hospitality Room. Last year we enjoyed viewing and discussing a few items from personal collections including silver baby spoons, children's books, toy tractors, and old family photographs. You are invited to bring 3-5 items you have gathered or collected, for our display from Friday morning through Saturday afternoon. A special program is also scheduled for 3:30 pm - watch for more information! Our Cash Bar opens at 5:00 pm, with dinner to follow.

### Saturday, September 21

Our Memorial Service will take place at 9:00 am, with the Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary, and Partners Meetings to follow. Lunch can be enjoyed in the Hotel's Lake City Restaurant or the Airport Bar & Grille or elsewhere in the community. Information about lunch sites and afternoon tourist opportunities will be at our Registration Table. You may choose to relax during the afternoon or visit The Domes, three beehive-shaped glass domes housing a dessert full of succulents, cacti, and other dry climate growings, tropical plants and rain forest, and the Domes' annual mums display. Other attractions include shopping in the Historic Third Ward, where unique, contemporary and classic shops are adorned in historic facades; the Miller Brewery Visitor Center; a 30-minute train ride through the Jelly Belly Visitors Center with samples given; or any of the tour sites you may have missed on Thursday or Friday.

Our Banquet and installation of Association and Ladies Auxiliary officers begin at 6:00 pm, with the Cash Bar from 5:00 - 7:00 pm. Invite your family to join the many guests dining with us for this Reunion highlight!

### Sunday, September 22

Our Worship Service at 9:00 am concludes our Reunion, though many remain to lunch together. The Partners will again be ready to help you with your luggage and bring your car to the circle drive. Another wonderful Reunion to remember!



# 14th Armored Division TAPS

We have received requests in the past for additional information about those members who have passed away. The information noted below has been provided to us or found in our rosters.

• **William J. Matusik**, Unit unknown, died September 21, 2002, in Lewiston, NY; met and married his wife in the Philippines in late 1947; survived by children and grandchildren.

• **Elmer C. Hevland**, 19 INF A CO, died November 20, 2007, in Washington, OR, four years prior to the death of his wife Betty; Bronze Star recipient; Portland Fire Bureau lieutenant; survived by family including sons, grandchildren, great-grandchildren.

• **Robert Titler**, 136 ORD CO A, died March 16, 2008, in Cedar Rapids, IA; lifelong farmer; member of volunteer fire department; survived by wife Virginia, who died in 2012, and children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

• **Vaughn K. Hendricks**, 68 INF C CO, died November 7, 2008, at the home of his daughter in Upland, NE; burial in Ft. McPherson National Cemetery, Maxwell, NE.

• **George Kall**, 62 INF C CO, died March 29, 2010, in West Falmouth, MA.

• **Roy L. Hazle**, 68 INF B CO, died October 18, 2010, in Louisville, KY; Purple Heart recipient; member of VFW; survived by two daughters, grandchildren, great-grandchildren.

• **Robert Buhbe**, Unit Unknown, died July 29, 2011, in Seal Beach, CA; worked in a cosmetics manufacturing firm before being drafted into the Army and attending Officer Candidate School; served as a German interpreter during the War, retiring as Lt. Col.; worked for Standard Oil, major defense companies, and the LA Dept of Water and Power; artist, musician, and author, enjoyed travel and family during retirement; survived by children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

• **Lorraine E. Buss**, widow of Kenneth M Buss, died October 6, 2011, in Madison, WI; survived by four children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

• **Joseph Timkovich**, COMMAND CCA HQ, died March 3, 2012, in Schererville, IN; last of Timkovich Brothers to own and operate Indiana Harbor Shell Station; enjoyed attending reunions; survived by nieces and nephews.

• **Arthur M. Lukens**, 499 ARTY C BTY, died April 14, 2012 in Hampton, VA; sales representative until suffering a spinal injury in 1978; survived by four sons, children and grandchildren.

• **Lee Z. Mathison**, 500 ARTY A BTY; formerly of Eau Claire, WI, died May 14, 2012, in Dallas, TX; 1987 National President of 14th Armored Division Association; retired from National Presto Industries; adjunct industrial professor at U. of Wisconsin-Stout; survived briefly by wife Ruth, and daughter Kerry Moravec and family. (See obituary)

• **Ruth Mathison**, 500 ARTY A BTY, died May 28, 2012, in Dallas, TX; elementary teacher; member of DAR; survived by family including daughter Kerry Moravec and family.

• **Ervin L. Nissen**, 25 TANK SERV CO, died September 22, 2012, in Algona IA; used his welding skills from the 14th AD to work with his father in the blacksmith business in Humphrey, NE; later owned Nissen Machine & Welding; survived by 8 children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

• **Herbert M. (Herbie) Strauss**, 25 TANK SERV CO, died September 7, 2012, in Encinitas, CA; after the War, he joined an import / export business in Mexico, where he met his wife Ruth; returning to CA, he served

many years in SCORE, including as President; last worked as an ambassador at the San Diego Airport, wearing his 14th AD cap while driving a shuttle bus several days a week ; survived by daughter Ruth, and son James.

• **Louis J. Hoofard**, 125 ENG A CO, died October 6, 2012, in San Antonio, TX; twice received Purple Heart; retired CPA; interred at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery; survived by wife and children.

• **Paul N. Brown**, 94 CAV B TRP, died November 4, 2012, in Highland, CA; recipient of Bronze Star and Purple Heart; Theater manager for 25 years, then sign company salesman into his 80's; survived by wife of 64 years.

• **Robert G. Lakin**, 94 CAV D TRP, died November 29, 2012, under Hospice care in Hackettstown, NJ ; served as radio operator decoder in the War; recipient of two bronze stars; worked as electrical engineer for Westinghouse and traveled the globe as their International Marketing Manager; loved golf, jitterbug dancing with his wife Evelyn, fishing, and travel; left behind his best friend and fellow 'Liberator', Fred MacNamara, and son Brian and daughter Janette Sands, 10 Butternut Ct., Hackettstown, NJ 07840.

• **Lewis R. Williams**, 501 ARTY BTY B, died December 16, 2012, in Albany, OR; attorney, title examiner; life-long musician and choir director; survived by family including seven children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.





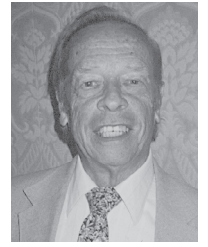
## THE CHAPLAIN'S COMMENTS

John A. Burgess

At the beginning of every year some people make resolutions they intend to keep all year. Some of these are not kept very long but are enjoyed for a while. I am going to suggest a resolution that we can keep together. My desire is to encourage people to read the Bible daily. There are many important truths and information vital to living a useful, successful and helpful life. There are many people who read the Bible early every morning before they go to the activities of the day. Evangelists, ministers, and Bible teachers often suggest that early believers read the gospel of John. I think Mark is the best portion of the Bible to be read by the beginning believer. Mark is clear in getting his message across. His many illustrations are common, easily understood and recognized. John is philosophical and more difficult to understand the deep meanings of the recorded events.

Mark has Jesus meet the physical and daily needs familiar to all of us.

## LEARNING THROUGH LIFE'S EXPERIENCES



Through these common experiences Mark explains many deep feelings and concerns of many of us. Identify these as needs as you read. Have you had needs related to these recorded in Mark's Gospel? We must apply the truth to our own lives.

When I was a student a group of us would meet each week and share our daily experiences. One of the students would take a teaching from Scripture and apply it to the experiences of his day. He would share his thoughts with us. His experiences made us desire to do the same.

Do you realize that you live in the presence of God every moment of ev-

ery day? God has truths He wishes us to learn and live by. God teaches many truths through our daily experiences. Mark shows how we can learn about God and the life of faith through the events of our lives. Mark has Jesus meet the physical needs common to all of us. Through these common experiences Mark explains many deep feelings and concerns of each of us. Identify the needs these events relate to our lives.

I suggest that we read Mark and apply the teaching to our lives through this column in the next issues of the LIBERATOR.

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:

MAIL:

TEL:

EMAIL:

## LADIES AUXILIARY

*(Continued from page 2)*

### REUNION COOKIES

1 lb. Shortening (part butter)

2 C Sugar

2 C Flour

1 Egg

1 tsp. Baking Soda

1/4 tsp Salt

5 C Quick Oatmeal

Cream shortening and sugar. Add whole egg and beat. Add flour, baking soda, salt and oatmeal. Mix well. Roll in ball and press on greased cookie sheet with fork dipped in cold water. Bake about 14 minutes or until done in 350 degree oven. Take off cookie sheet immediately. Sift powdered sugar over cookies when cool.

Have a wonderful spring and summer!

- Gayle Seiwert

## Veteran News

An update on **Ralph and Marilyn Jackson** was shared by their daughter Ann Jackson Drahos, who writes: "In November, Summit Pointe's evaluations of Ralph resulted in a 'voluntary discharge' due to his physical decline. Ralph's mobility is impaired and he requires assistance by two people to move from lift chair to wheel chair to bed. The priorities were to find a new facility that would allow them to remain together, and that would be closer to Ann's home. In early December, Ann organized and implemented a move to Heritage Nursing and Rehab Center in Cedar Rapids. Lyn's Alzheimer's is progressing as predicted. The 'words' are harder and harder to come by for her. But she still has memory of words to songs and

poems and memories from long ago. It is distressing to them to be so dependent and confined, but they are in a safe, secure, pleasant environment. And they can remain together. They treasure every piece of communication from their friends and family. All mail should be sent to Ann's address:

**John Murphy** telephoned to share the death of Major E. C. Smith. He lives alone since his wife died 8 years ago, and can see deer and vultures near his home. John has kept all the Liberators since 1970! He is 97 years old this month, and lives near his daughter at

# PAST PRESIDENT LEE MATHISON AND WIFE RUTH PASS AWAY SAME MONTH

Members of the 14th Armored Division Association are saddened to learn of the death of another of their past presidents and his wife. Lee Z. Mathison and wife Ruth passed away May 14 and 28, 2012, respectively. They were very active members of the Association and Auxiliary for many years.

Lee was president of the Association for the 1987 Reunion in Minneapolis. He also proudly assisted dear friend Frank Van Someren when Frank presided over the 1983 Reunion held at Telemark Lodge in Cable, Wisconsin. Lee and Ruth attended their first reunion in 1971 in St. Paul and went to as many as possible. She kept a pictorial scrapbook of 30 years of reunions. After their move from Wisconsin to Texas in 2000, they especially enjoyed the Dallas gathering that fall. One of their favorite recollections was attending the 14th Armored "Sentimental Journey" to Germany and France in the summer of 1984.



*The Mathisons in Washington, D.C.*

After his mother died, 13-year-old Lee Mathison obtained a special drivers license so he could drive his polio-afflicted father to work as a teacher and debate coach at Eau Claire High School. It was an early picture of what was to be many years of service to his family, community, country and God.

Lee was born November 24, 1922, in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Lee proudly served his country during World War II in Europe with the 14th Armored Division, 500th Arty, Hq. Bty. He returned after the war and graduated from the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire in 1946. At UWEC, Lee was voted prom king, and on January 3, 1947, he married his prom queen and love of his life, Ruth Baker. Lee worked for 38 years with National Presto Industries in sales and marketing, and upon retirement, he served for six years as an adjunct industrial professor at the University of Wisconsin - Stout, where he received the James R. Johnson Service Award.

Lee's servant heart was seen in the countless hours he spent dedicating his time to his community. He was Presi-

dent of the Board of Directors of L.E. Phillips Senior Center, and he and Ruth were founding members of United Cerebral Palsy of Western Wisconsin and were tireless volunteers at Beaver Creek Reserve. Lee was a member of Kiwanis, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, West Wisconsin Wood Carvers Guild, and Chippewa Valley Astronomical Society. Lee and Ruth were honored many times for their years of helping others.

Lee and Ruth moved to Texas to spend more time with their daughter and family. Both created memoirs for their grandchildren. Lee dictated an oral history of his recollections of World War II. In it he details his timeline. In the fall of 1942, as a college junior, Lee joined the Enlisted Reserve Corps. In February 1943 the ERC was called up and he reported to Fort Custer, Michigan for induction into the US Army on April 7th. After completion of basic training at Camp Callan in California, Lee entered the ASTP, Army Specialized Training Program. He was put on a troop train back to the Midwest and took pre-engineering classes, first at the University of Indiana and then the University of Cincinnati. In the spring of 1944 the Army reassigned most ASTPs to regular army units, Lee states in his oral history:

*"I ended up at what was then Camp Campbell, Kentucky, and joined the 14th Armored Division in the Headquarters Battery of the 500th Armored Artillery Battalion. Those of us who joined the 14th from ASTP were subject to a lot of kidding because we had all been in nice warm dormitories that winter, whereas the 14th AD had been out for a long extended period of maneuvers in Tennessee. We were known as the Quiz Kids. We came in as replacements and for the most part were all buck privates. We had a rather rugged spring and summer at Camp Campbell. While there, I was trained as a telephone wireman and became part of a crew consisting of Nick Williams, Eric Hoffman, and Cleatus Corley. On October 13, 1944, we boarded the USS Sea Robin at New York harbor. Fourteen days later after a zigzag route across the Atlantic we passed through the Straits of Gibraltar which to none of us looked anything at all like the Prudential trademark. We disembarked at Marseilles, France on October 28, 1944. And with all of our gear we marched to a staging area called Aix."*

Lee later recounts some of his harrowing experiences in the war, but he

took great joy in sharing his personal experience as one of the very proud Liberators:



*Lee in Germany after the war.*

*"On April 30, 1945, the 14th Armored Division liberated a huge (over 100,000) allied prisoner of war camp in the city of Moosburg, Germany. I went into the camp in my jeep and as soon as I got into the gates, the prisoners swarmed the jeep and I gave them just about everything I had that I could give them - cigarettes and candy and even some food. I went to the headquarters section in this camp for the American prisoners and asked if anyone there knew of a Tom Litchfield from my hometown. One young officer led me to him. Tom told me that Bob Fields and Frank Ristow from Eau Claire were also there. Bob had been a tail gunner and had also been shot down. Frank and I graduated together from Eau Claire Senior High in 1940. To make a long story short, in a manner of minutes, four Eau Claire High School classmates were together. At this point I had given everything I owned away to other prisoners, so I went back to our outfit and got a 10-in-1 Ration from the mess sergeant. A 10-in-1 Ration is one large carton that has enough food for 1 man for 10 days or 10 men for 1 day. I brought this back, and Tom, Frank, and Bob divided up the 10-in-1 Ration. It was interesting to watch this because three people were taking their share and there were ten of everything in there. When it came to the things like lifesavers, they split the tenth roll three ways. It was kind of an emotional thing to watch these three grown men being so excited over a box of food. Now this was a very memorable occasion."*

Lee and Ruth are survived by daughter Kerry (Randy) Moravec, and three grandchildren. They were preceded in death by their son, Thomas H. Mathison.  
barton Dri

---

# HISTORY OF THE MEDICAL DETACHMENT - 47th TANK BATTALION

## 14th Armored Division / France - Germany

by Joseph C. Aquilina

*Editor's Note: Although the following historical account is about one particular medical detachment, it is a recorded tribute to all those combat medics of the 14th Armored Division who served so valiantly. Many of us owe our lives to the quick work of those medics. This is the second and final installment of the article written by the late Joseph C. Aquilina.*

### PART II

The land beyond the Rhine; what was in it? Germany-Fortress Germany, conceived and constructed by a veritable madman who rimmed his land with an impregnable circle of concrete and steel, the Siegfried Line. A maze of cleverly concealed pillboxes, bunkers, and cunningly placed Dragon's Teeth; how were they to be breached?

Preparations for the momentous task were going on in and around the 47th. All the roads to and from Friedolsheim were filled with stores of ammo. Man and machine were made ready for the onslaught on Nazism.

On March 15, 1945, the unit was alerted to move out at a moment's notice. That notice came a few hours later.

The wheezing and coughing of a tank just starting up shattered the silence of the town. As it developed into a full-throated roar, many other tanks joined in the chorus of thundering motors - the very ground shook. They seemed like hounds, straining at the leash, eager to resume the chase. At 1500, the first tank moved out.

The direction was north, through Alsace. Each town passed through brought back memories, sometimes of disappointment, sometimes of triumph.

Rittershoffen and Hatten. There are places on the map for those towns, but on the land, they are just two large mounds of rubble - a ghastly monument to failure: Von Rundstedt's futile southern drive; but to the tankers of the 47th, a reminder of their comrades fallen there, and an added incentive to go on and complete the job they could no longer help us finish. The burnt-out 47th tanks still lay there, their silent guns pointing like fingers, the direction ... North.

The battle line of the so-called "inactive front" ... the Moder River... was crossed on March 17. The march continued up to Surbourg, where we halted awaiting further orders. March 19 we were committed to action as part of CCB and proceeded to Schliethal.

Schliethal was the last French town we stayed in. It was being subjected to a nuisance shelling that is characteristic of retreating Germans. One of these shells hit the CP of CCB - Medics hastened to the scene and quickly patched the men up. Staff Sergeant Frank DeStefano of Chicago, Illinois, T/3 Joseph Kapraun of Putnam, Illinois, and T/4 Joseph Aquilina of Buffalo, New York, were commended for their work by the Combat Commander, Colonel Gillespi, "Iron Mike."

March 22. Our objective was made known: it was Germersheim, one of the Reich bastions on the Rhine, and situated way behind the Siegfried.

The route of march was through Wissembourg, up along the Harz mountains and into the Palatinate plains. It was on this march that we saw what the Air Corps can do to an enemy column. The roads were littered with debris: there lay a part of that super-Wehrmacht, now just a repulsive refuse heap of man, horse and vehicle. It looked as though a giant hand wielding a huge scythe had descended upon the fleeing Nazis and chopped them to pieces. The smell of blood was heavy in the air. The road had taken on the appearance of a slaughterhouse. Death and destruction were everywhere. The viscera of men and animals lined the road. Each turn of the road, unfolded a new scene of incredible havoc. Out in the fields, starved horses, freed of their harnesses, stood as statues, stunned and shell-shocked. Here and there, wounded beasts were trying to get up; others, in the throes of death, would thrash around and then suddenly go limp with a final shudder, as sweet oblivion released them from their pain.

Contact was finally made at Rohrbach. That was where the Germans decided to make a stand, for it was well-protected with concrete bunkers and Dragon's Teeth. Innocent-looking

barns contained concrete, reinforced pillboxes and 88's.

Without much ado the battalion formed a semi-circle, poised and ready for the word to attack. It was late in the afternoon - the skies had that purple tinge that comes only in early spring. The battalion aid station was set up in a Gasthaus, half a kilometer away from Rohrbach. Everything was made ready for the incoming casualties; aid men were dispatched to support the tankers. They moved out and soon disappeared in the murky evening. The attack order came very shortly and immediately the tanks opened up. The thunder of guns was a constant roar, broken only by the sharp and incessant chatter of machine guns. Tracers seemed to cut the sky into pieces as they weaved their crazy courses through the air. For two hours the battle raged. All through the fight the radio kept blaring, "Move out! Attack! Move out!" This continued till midnight, and then the sounds of battle started to diminish. The returning fire weakened as the Boche chose to run. The Siegfried Line had been breached - the Dragon's Teeth had failed. The chase was on. Rohrbach proper was being assaulted.

It was here that Jim Gross and Joe Tillman proceeded into town to pick up a casualty who was lying in the midst of a fire-fight. Unmindful of the fact, these two intrepid aidmen proceeded. Mortar shells were bursting all around them. As they came into town, they were forced to dismount and crawl the rest of the way. All in vain, however, for the infantryman was dead.

The town of Rohrbach fell that early morning. Though the fight was fast and furious, the casualties were light, and the battalion was ready to continue to Herxheim and to the objective. Germersheim was to be assaulted the same way as Rohrbach, a technique that was called the "Lann Specialty," and was to be used effectively in many operations.

Again the battalion formed for the assault, through the woods and into the city. There were no fixed battle

*(Continued on page 8)*

---

## Medical Detachment...

*(Continued from page 7)*

lines: each tank established its own front. Anti-tank shells seemed to come whizzing and screaming from all directions. The staccato rap of machine guns, burp guns, and rat pistols gave evidence of close in-fighting. In the midst of this seething imbroglio, the aid station was set up once more.

The road to Germersheim was through a wooded area. Mortars and 88's were hitting this road with devilish accuracy. It was in these woods that the aidmen T/5 Ray Palumbo and T/5 Wilbur Schulz, and Pfc's Joe Tillman, Frank Naso, Stan Shukis, and Jim Gross were sent to handle evacuation. They assembled at a crossroads, and no sooner did they get there than they had to take to the foxholes, for the Jerries had that part of the woods well targeted in.

Casualties started to come in. Each trip the ambulance-peeps made was through a field of artillery fire. This continued as the day wore on. Towards nightfall a change in the kind of casualties that arrived showed that the tide of battle had turned. The casualties were now German, and long lines of POWs trudged the roads leading from the city. Germersheim fell.

The aid station was set up early that morning in the town, which was declared cleared - except for the snipers that chose to fight it out. Their only avenue of escape, the bridge across the Rhine, had been blown.

Germersheim was a large, garrisoned town. The SS barracks, armories and warehouses were large, concrete, formidable structures, containing huge stores of supplies and equipment. Everywhere was evidence of hasty withdrawal of the crumbling Wehrmacht. Unfinished meals, automobiles half out of their garages, nurses still packing their bags - they too were overrun by the swift American advance. Germersheim was but one section of the Palatinate, but it showed that the vaunted German military machine was disintegrating, and that the final defeat of Germany was just a matter of time and perseverance.

That night was a sleepless one. The enemy artillery across the river threw in shells constantly. Our artillery set up an intensive counter-barrage in an

attempt to silence the enemy batteries and also to set up diversionary fire for the 45th Division, which was poised to cross the Rhine north of us that night... They did.

The following morning the battalion was relieved and we pulled out in a rain of artillery shells from across the Rhine. We came through unscathed, however, and the enemy's parting shots were in vain.

The division had been pulled back for regrouping. The 47th took over Kapellen. During the week's stay here, the medics built a dayroom that drew favorable comments from the rest of the battalion.

The morning of April 1st was a noisy one: the 14th and all its attached units were rolling through town. The 47th joined the march at dawn. The Rhine was crossed north of Worms that day, Easter Sunday, an uneventful journey but a tiresome one, 117 miles long. We halted at Klein Zimmern at 2000. That halt was just a pause, for the march was resumed at 0200 the following morning. The route was over mountains to Lohr on the Main, 75 more miles of stopping and starting, with a little excitement in the form of a strafing Messerschmitt.

The advance units hit Lohr late in the afternoon. The contact reported turned out to be a house-to-house battle, each house filled with snipers and bazookamen. The medics pushed ahead of the column and set up a forward aid station, manned by Sgts. DeStefano and Kapraun.

The aid station was set up in a firehouse on the square. The din of battle was tremendous. Night turned into day with a score of houses burning fiercely. The sounds of night were strange, the crackle of burning timbers, the sharp crack of an M1, the spine-chilling sound of a burp gun replaced the usual evening rustle.

The coming of day brought no let-up, as casualties kept streaming in, and mortars dropped in. One of the many that lit near the aid station knocked some medics down and killed a man from the recon across the street. Another hit an ambulance loaded with patients, who then had to be treated for additional wounds. The ambulance, sieved through with shrapnel, was useless. The interior of the aid station was being raked with shrapnel,

coming in through the many windows. Unheeding of that fact, Captain Eaton, Lt. Skeryanc, T/3 Melvin White of Des Moines, Iowa, Cpl John Cunningham of Miami, Texas, T/5 Philip Lascher of Pittsburgh, PA, and Pfc Kenward Meddows of Trenton, Illinois worked on. T/5 Lascher and Pfc Meddows persevered although, as drivers, they had not had any sleep for three days.

Late that afternoon, Pfc's Frank Naso of Brooklyn, New York, and Sanford Golden of Albany, New York, returned to the aid station after twenty hours of captivity. They had gone to pick up a wounded recon casualty - they went up a bit too far.

Lohr was cleared and the column kept moving and attacking. Sackenbach, Nautenbach, and Neuendorf were cleared in successive order. The forward aid station was set up in Nautenbach, in the only remaining building of the town. The rest were burning. At the bend of the river lay Gemunden. All through the day the town was being strafed and bombed by P-47's. Our rocket-launching tanks were being employed. A pall of smoke hung over the town. The battalion moved into the battered town on the morning of April 5. By noon the woods on each side had been cleared of snipers. The engineers were trying to put up a bridge. But, due to the heavy mortar fire, they were forced to withdraw.

The fires raged on all night and in the morning the entire town seemed to have gone up in smoke. The tankers pushed off again through rubble-lined streets, and soon the now-familiar sight of a destroyed German town was left behind under a thick mantle of smoke. Once the column had cleared the town, orders came down to proceed at the maximum speed possible. A rat-race was on. The objective was Hammelburg, which contained a large POW camp. Units converged on the camp from all sides; very little resistance was met and the tankers were soon battering down the gates of the lager. Capt. Eaton took over the hospital and administered treatment to the sick and wounded prisoners and quickly made arrangements for the evacuation of the critical cases. Among these was General Patton's son-in-law.

The battalion had a field day, and it gave them a great deal of pleasure to see the wild enthusiasm with which

*(Continued on page 9)*

---

## Medical Detachment...

*(Continued from page 8)*

the prisoners greeted their liberators. Many a 47th man went without smokes the next few days because he had given them to the ex-POW's.

April 7, 1945. The 47th took to the road. Our unit assumed the role of "commandoughs," on wheels. We had lost contact with our division CP, so swift was our advance. Our whereabouts were blacked-out. The Nazis were reeling from our lightning thrusts. Night and day the order was, "Move out! Push on! Faster! Faster!" The medics were treating casualties on the run. It was not unusual to carry casualties all night, until the morning brought a chance to find the means of evacuating them.

A recon peep of the 47th had turned over a 40-foot embankment. T/3 Kapraun, T/5 Szymanski, and Pfc John Miller of St. Louis, Missouri, crawled down and extricated the man from under the wreck. He was rushed to the ambulance for immediate treatment. All night long, Capt. Eaton and T/3 White stood by his side administering plasma, in spite of the fact that the column was moving under mortar fire in a total blackout. Through their untiring efforts the unconscious soldier's life was saved.

The succeeding weeks were a classic exposition of the tanker's basic law: fire and movement. Constantly we probed forward into Germany, seeking out and destroying resistance. The names of the towns quickly became a blur in our consciousness, and the engagements we had bore a startling similarity to each other. Until...

April 17th, 1945. Altenthann, Germany. When we arrived that early morning, everything was quiet. Our mission was to cut off the retreating Germans from bypassed Nuremberg, which was being assaulted by four other divisions. The men took advantage of the apparent lull to clean up themselves and their equipment. That sunny afternoon was spent in the long-unaccustomed ways of a lazy Sunday afternoon at home, taking pictures, lying on the grass, and catching up on some much-needed sleep.

The dawn of April 18 proved to be

a noisy one, for the Germans decided to counter-attack, in the typical manner of trapped SS troops. The unit was alerted to move out at a minute's notice. Every man was warned to man his weapon. Fire-fights broke out all around us. Dog Company was surrounded in its town. All hell seemed to have broken loose. The aid station, being on the outskirts of town, was in range of small-arms fire. Shells started to come in. They landed in the vicinity of the aid station. The woods that encircled the town were filled with fanatical SS men. It was through these woods that the medical men had to go, to pick up the wounded. Since each mission was suicidal, only volunteers were sent out. Typical of such runs was the one S/Sgt DeStefano and T/3 Kapraun made:

A Tank Destroyer man was hit by sniper fire. His TD could not back off out of the danger area without exposing itself to bazooka fire, nor could the men dismount due to sniper fire. So, the medics were called. The road to the TD, was under enemy observation, so the mortar platoon of Headquarters Company laid down a smoke screen. As the aid men neared the TD, all hell seemed to have been stirred up. Through a hail of lead and steel, the aid men reached the casualty, treated and finally evacuated him to the aid station.

So it went all day. Each call for help was in the same vein: "The tanks can't make it - send the Medics!" To this plea, volunteers such as T/5 Schulz, Pfc Stan Shukis of Brooklin, New York, Pfc Miller, T/4 Aquilina, and Pfc Tillman, went up on different missions to snatch the wounded from under the very noses of the SS.

That afternoon a 170mm shell came crashing through the gate of the aid station, bounced off the building and came to rest a foot outside the window... it was a dud. That was enough; the station was moved to another part of town.

The movement, however, brought no respite, for the shells were coming in as close as ever. The interior of the aid station was filled with flying glass, dust, fallen plaster and the smell of cordite. Through all this the station personnel kept on working, unmind-

ful of the explosions that rocked the building, or of the possibility of a direct hit.

The same night, a cordon of guards was thrown around the town. Both clerk and cook took their turns on guard. The shells kept coming in - so did the casualties. When the counter-attack did come, it was stopped cold by our artillery. The firing had subsided by dawn, but the numerous bodies of Germans on the outskirts of town showed how hard the SS tried.

Able Company of the 47th, which was attached to the 19th Armored Infantry Battalion, was also in action at that time. The attached medics with Able Company were T/5 Szymanski and Pfc Edbauer, who have an interesting story to tell: While returning to their column, they took the wrong road and found themselves in a German ambush. Bluffing it out, the two medics talked 12 krauts out of a machine-gun emplacement and piled them on the peep. They hastened back to their column with their 12 prisoners.

On the 21st of April, the battalion pulled out of Altenthann to resume the job of slashing at enemy lines. Task forces forged ahead in different directions, disrupting any attempt of the enemy to effect an orderly withdrawal. The general direction was south.

The next town we took was Kosching, without a fight. More slave laborers and POWs were liberated. The battalion took a breather while a bridge was built over the Danube. Not much time was given for reorganizing, though, for on the 28th of April, the 47th was committed as part of CCA. That same day we moved through Ingolstadt and across the Danube, and pushed on to clear the town of Mauern. There, 800 allied POW's were liberated. This was just a small sample of what was to come, for on the next day, which proved to be a banner day, the assault on Moosberg was done in short order, and many SS'ers were caught retreating, their bodies lining the road to Moosberg.

110,000 hearts were beating faster as our tanks approached the Moosberg stalag. To those boys, some of whom had been incarcerated for three years

*(Continued on page 10)*

---

## Medical Detachment...

(Continued from page 9)

or more, the sight of our tanks broke them down. Years of pent-up emotion were let out. The men raced up to the tanks and embraced them. Man met man with tears in their eyes and with arms outstretched. Pandemonium of joy reigned. Some seemed dazed by the good news. Others wandered aimlessly, at a loss as to what to do with their new-found freedom.

The first thing Capt. Eaton did was to check the hospital for facilities and supplies. The discrepancies were taken care of in short order. Most of the Allied POWs were in good shape.

May 1, 1945. The battalion reluctantly took to the road again. For three days and nights the battalion rolled deeper into the southern Reich, smashing retreating columns, groping in the dark, searching for roads. Most bridges were blown, and many a time the column took off across the fields,

through seemingly impassable terrain. The column was finally halted in Muhldorf - the bridge across the Inn had been blown. Muhldorf was an important town; it contained one of the largest powder factories in the Reich, and also a vast airfield. As in all cases, where there were factories, slave laborers were numerous. So it was with Muhldorf. Thousands of DPs - displaced persons - were jammed in rough shacks. The care of these people was the direct responsibility of the Battalion, and the medics were given the job of instituting the necessary sanitation measures. Without much ado, Capt. Eaton visited each lager and took care of the sick and had each one sprayed and thoroughly deloused.

The coming of V-E Day found the battalion firmly established in Muhldorf.

The history of the Medical Detachment has been unfolded; a history made indeed in "blood, sweat, and

tears." Many a man has come back to his unit, a walking testimony to the job done by this small organization. Small in numbers, yes, but in importance...? Ask anyone who has seen the medics in action.

Following is the list of Medical Detachment personnel who participated in the Campaign in France and Germany.

Captain William R. Eaton, 1st Lt. Joseph Skeryanc, S/Sgt Frank F. DeStefano, Tec 3 Melvin L. White, Tec 3 Joseph M. Kapraun, Tec 4 Joseph C. Aquilina, Cpl John I. Cunningham, Tec 5 Anthony V. Szymanski, Tec 5 Philip J. Lascher, Tec 5 Raymond J. Palumbo, Tec 5 Wilbur A. Schulz, Pfc Donald G. Edbauer, Pfc James B. Gross, Pfc Kenward F. Meddows, Pfc Joseph A. Tillman, Pfc George W. Lyberis, Pfc Noah A. Weaver, Pfc Frank Naso, Pfc Stanley P. Shukis, Pfc Richard J. Neudorfer, Pfc John H. Miller, Pfc Stanford M. Golden, Pvt Bernard Lawson.

---

## OLD TANKER SPEAKS HIS PIECE

Those who know Harold Kiehne know that the old 47th Tanker is not inclined to sit down and shut up when he feels he has something informative to say. So it came as no surprise when he reported giving an impromptu talk at a recent gathering of veterans and others at the University of Wisconsin/La Crosse, although Harold said he did surprise himself by his "outburst."

Harold reports that his daughter "came to me and said they were going to the free breakfast that the Freedom Flight was putting on at the University." There were 400-500 or more vets present along with 30 or 40 students who helped vets in wheel chairs, etc. Harold said he was glad he agreed as it was a good breakfast and the Army band from Ft. McCoy was there to provide a fine musical program.

Then there came time for speech-making with the university president and a couple of others from the college making appropriate remarks. But Harold noted that there were no military veterans or service personnel up on the speakers' platform and this bothered him that no vets were asked to speak. So as the program was ending,

Harold informed his daughter that he was going up on stage to speak. Over her objections, the old tank gunner did just that.

"So up I go," says Harold, "and sat down next to the university president." I said "I want to speak." He said, "who are you?" Harold, who was dressed in his suit jacket with the 14th AD pin, a flag and a few awards on it, informed that he was a World War II combat veteran and that he had something to say. Harold says he was sorta ignored so he got up and sat down next to the moderator, telling him the same thing. He, too, asked "who are you?" rather than asking what his name was. This added a little fuel to the fire, so far as Harold's determination to speak his piece.

After a while the moderator gave Harold the okay and Harold goes up to the mike. The first thing he said was "I'm Harold Kiehne from La Crosse and I was a World War II soldier in an armored division, serving as a gunner in a Sherman tank." Harold says that from there on he can't remember what he said but is sure it was about being a WWII veteran like many others present.

"By this time," says Harold, "I was cooling off a bit. When I finished, I go off the platform and people really clapped as I left - that felt good. I must have said something good." Harold reported that many shook his hand and thanked him as he walked back to his seat. But what meant the most to him was that "even my daughter said the same - then I knew I did a good job."

After the program, Harold made his acquaintance with the commanding officer of Ft. McCoy. He says this colonel had a chest full of medals and really impressed him with his friendliness and knowledge. Harold says he hopes to visit Ft. McCoy before long and see if he can line up the colonel to speak at some event.

On other occasions, Harold has spoken to students at area high schools about the Great Depression and World War II. Seems we have a budding public speaker in our midst, although it's been a long time coming. Maybe Harold will have some words of wisdom for us in Milwaukee in September. Let's hope we can all get there.

## Frank "Buster" Crockett Skydives on 90th Birthday

Frank E. "Buster" Crockett, 14th Armored Division, 68th AIB, Company B, decided that on his 90th birthday he wanted to go skydiving. On October 6th, 2012 the event took place at Skydiving Kentucky, located in Elizabethtown, KY. Buster, whose birthday was on October 3rd, had always wanted to sky dive. He tried to enroll in the 82nd Airborne upon entering the Army during World War II on December 5, 1942. Because of a clerical error, he missed his opportunity and was assigned to the 14th Armored Division, "The Liberators," and fought in the European Theatre.

The plane took Frank's group to 10,000 ft. Then they free-fell to 5,000 ft. before pulling the rip cord. Larry, who was tandemed to Buster, showed him the Ohio River and Fort Knox while in the air. They took a spin and Larry asked if he wanted to spin again? Buster said "Of course I do"! When Buster landed he was asked how it was. He said "It wasn't as scary as I thought it

would be, it was fun."

Buster's son-in-law, Jim Weatherholt, said he didn't want Buster to have all the fun, so he jumped at the same time.

Buster wanted to go parasailing on his 85th birthday so his family took him to Destin, Florida, and after parasailing he announced he wanted to skydive on his 90th birthday.

On July 4th, 2012 Buster was Grand Marshal of the Pekin 4th of July Parade in Pekin, Indiana, Buster's home town. Pekin's parade is known as the "Longest Consecutive 4th of July Parade" in the United States. Having lived in Pekin since 1957 and being the town barber for 50 years, Buster is a well known icon in Washington County.

The governor of Indiana, Mitch Daniels, rode his Harley Davidson in the parade behind Buster. Governor Daniels was Associate Grand Marshal and said he was honored to ride behind a World War II Veteran.



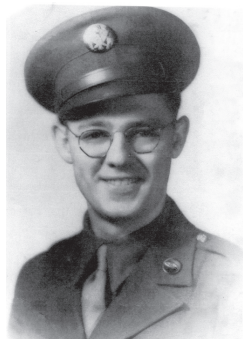
Buster Crockett skydiving on 90th birthday.



Buster enjoyed being the 4th of July parade grand marshal.

## 14th AD VET AWARDED FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR

*Editor's Note: The following is the news release published prior to the presentation of the award this past December 11. Following the story is a letter from Elton Ross explaining the procedure followed to attain this award for Mr. Myers.*



**T/Sgt. John P. Myers**, third Mississippi 14th Arm'd Div. Hq. WWII Veteran to receive the Legion of Honor from the French Government, will be honored at a reception at the Veterans' Memorial Museum on Hillcrest Drive in Laurel at 11:00 a.m. on December 11, 2012.

After a welcome by the Honorable Melvin Mack, Mayor of Laurel, and remarks by State Senator Chris McDaniel, the Honorary Consul of

John Patrick "Pat" Myers, a native of Laurel, Mississippi, and a veteran of WWII who served with the 14th Armored Division in France, 1944-45, and the



**Left to Right: Melvin Mack, Mayor City of Laurel, MS; Mrs. Keltoum Rowland, Honorary Vice French Consul to MS; Mrs. Mary Ann Myers; T/Sgt John Patrick Myers; Chris McDaniel, State Senator, Jones/Forrest Counties**

France, Mississippi, Madam Keltoum Rowland, will acknowledge Mr. Myers' distinction as a Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor.

Established by Napoleon Bonaparte, First consul of the Consulat, May 19, 1802, The National Order of the

Legion of Honor is the highest decoration in France.

While membership in the Legion is officially restricted to French nationals, those Foreign nationals who have served France or the ideals it upholds,

*Continued on page 12*

## LEGION OF HONOR

(Continued from page 11)

may receive a distinction of the Legion. For a US military veteran to be eligible to receive the Legion of Honor, he/she has to fit strict qualification criteria and must have fought in at least one of the 4 main campaigns of the Liberation of France: Normandy, Provence, Ardennes or Northern France.

After a year spent training in the US, the 14th was assigned to the European Theatre of Operations and landed at Marseilles, France, on October 29th, 1944. Within 2 weeks elements of the Division were involved in combat, maintaining defensive positions at Nice along the Franco-Italian frontier.

On the 9th of January 1945 the Germans began "Operation Nordwind" the last major offensive of the war, (The Battle of the Bulge) and almost succeeded in breaking the American 7th Army's lines. In eleven days of hard fighting, elements of the 14th Armored Division stopped the breakthrough of the XXXIX Panzer Corps at Hatten-Rittershoffen, restoring the defensive line at the two villages giving the 7th Army time to withdraw to newly prepared defensive lines on the Moder River.

In 167 days of combat, personnel of the 14th Armored Division liberated or captured 1,000 cities, towns and villages, captured nearly 64,000 German soldiers and airmen, liberated 200,000 Allied Prisoners of War and freed 250,000 Jews and other "Displaced Persons" from German captivity.

For his service, Mr. Myers was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, American Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, European Theatre of Operations Medal, the Central Europe Campaign Medal and the WWII Victory Medal.

Created by a committed group of veterans in Laurel and Jones County, who contributed many hours of their personal time to designing, raising funds, and overseeing construction of the facility, the Veterans' Memorial Museum opened Memorial Day, 2005, and has attracted thousands of visitors over the years since.

The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and admission is free.

For more information contact:  
LTC (Ret) John C. Cox, MSSG

### JOHN P. MYERS HONORED

Dear Verlyn:

Enclosed is the news release announcing the presentation of the French Legion of Honor (Chevalier) to T/Sgt John Patrick Myers, a former member of the 14th Arm'd Div Hdqrs and a member of our Assn since 1972, by the Honorary Consul of France to Mississippi Madam Keltoum Rowland, an instructor of French at the Univ. of Southern Mississippi. I have also included an army photograph of T/Sgt Myers and also a group photograph taken at the presentation.

This was not an easy path to be approved for this honor, which goes back to Napoleon Bonaparte's time. Our division commander Mag. Gen. Albert C. Smith received the award during or shortly after WWII. On 11/14/11, I was contacted by LTC (ret'd) John C. Cox, a former Viet-Nam veteran and a friend of T/Sgt Myers, who was helping T/Sgt Myers fill out the paper work for applying to the French Consulate in Atlanta, GA. to be considered for the French Legion of Honor (Chevalier) honor. LTC (ret'd) Cox was seeking permission to use some of our web-site information in filling out the application for T/Sgt Myers along with other specified documents that give time frames and locations to be considered to be eligible for the honor. A Word to the Wise, all consulates do not follow the same format, except, it can not be given out posthumously. Finally 7/20/12, eight months later, T/Sgt Myers received word that he had been approved for receiving the honor. Now, they wanted to present it in Atlanta with other recipients with much fanfare. But T/Sgt Myers was unable to go to Atlanta due to health reasons and the French Legion of Honor (Chevalier) had to be given out by a qualified French citizen. Finally in November 2012, they received word that the French instructor at the Univ. of Southern Mississippi, a French citizen, Madam Keltoum Rowland was now an

Honorary French Consul for Mississippi. She could therefore make the presentation of the award. LTC (ret'd) Cox then proceeded to set up the presentation and celebration which occurred the 11th of December 2012; 13 months after the submission of T/Sgt Myers application. A big thank you certainly goes to LTC (ret'd) John C Cox for all the help he gave T/Sgt Myers and his relentless pursuit to see this to the end.

In conclusion, I want to point out, there are 10 consulates handling our 50 states and our territories. And, they do not follow the same rules. For instance, Miami has a 3-page form to fill out in detail with supporting documents and asked for documents. Others have no forms but do require certain required documents and information to verify you qualify for consideration for the honor. I worked up my application using the Miami format Bob McClarren gave me and Chicago said they did not follow Miami's form. I had 60 some pages I had filled out using Miami's format so I sent it to Chicago anyway and told them they could pick and choose. I had all the information because I had to reconstruct my military records for the Veterans Administration because the original records were destroyed in a warehouse fire in St. Louis.

Sincerely,  
Elton C. Ross  
2011-2012 President  
14th Arm'd Div Assn

### DONATIONS ★★★★★

Allen & Leanne Helton  
Albert Burmeister  
Frank Crockett  
Herman Fiedler  
Fred Harshberger  
Raymond Huning  
James Komadina  
Fred MacNamara...  
in memory of  
Robert G. Lakin  
Richard Marriott  
Roy Roberts  
Carol Weatherholt

## **AM I WORTH DYING FOR?**

*EDITOR'S NOTE:* The following was written and delivered several years ago by the editor of *The Liberator* at a Veterans' Day program, sponsored by the Middle School students of his community. Participating in the program each year, with musical renditions and essays, are approximately 200 students. Their dedication and work in presenting this program lifts the hearts of the many veterans in attendance.

Veterans, Students, Teachers  
and Friends,

It is a privilege to observe this Veterans Day with you and I thank and commend you students, teachers and advisors who have made this program possible these past few years.

A few years ago a very dramatic and telling movie was produced by Steven Spielberg and starred in by Tom Hanks. It was entitled "Saving Private Ryan." Perhaps none of you youngsters saw that movie but some of the adults here have, and can relate to the story.

Pvt. Ryan was one of three brothers serving in the armed forces during World War II. Soon after D-Day, the invasion of France by Allied forces, it was learned by officials that two of the three brothers had been killed in action, leaving Pvt. Ryan the only surviving son of his widowed mother. As the only surviving son, the law decreed that he should be sent home.

However, this order to send him home was complicated by the fact that his Army unit was cut off from the main American forces by enemy troops. None the less, a group of soldiers, led by a captain, played by Tom Hanks, were given the assignment to find Pvt. Ryan and bring him to safety.

This they did, but not without great sacrifice. Several died in fulfilling their mission of saving Pvt. Ryan, but Pvt. Ryan did return home safely to his mother.

The movie fast forwards to the latter years of Pvt. Ryan's life. Through the years he may have, at times, for-

gotten about the great sacrifice made by others that made possible his long life and for him to live in freedom. But as he stood at the graves of some of those fallen heroes, he remembered all too well what had been done on his behalf. He then asked the question that each of us should ask this Veterans Day, and on many other occasions. The question is: "Have I lived a life that was worth dying for?"

We can best honor those who sacrificed for us by serving well our God, country and fellow beings. It is wonderful that you youngsters honor us veterans with this program, but more important is how you live a life of service to God and Country.

Yes, students, you best honor those who sacrificed for you by practicing good citizenship which includes loyalty to your country, your family and friends. We hear much about self-esteem these days, which should be the result of a life well lived. But perhaps more emphasis should be put on self-respect and respect for others and what they have done for us. This might include our parents, other family members, teachers and friends.

We all forget, at times, about those who sacrificed to make our lives, as free people, abundantly better than what most people in this world will ever experience. But for some, memories serve to remind of this. May I read a letter written by a veteran who finds it difficult to forget his benefactors? It is entitled "A Letter To My Buddy." It reads as follows:

Dear Randy,

It's Veterans Day again, and as has been the case on so many previous Memorial Days and Veterans Days these past 63 years, I am thinking of you today. Memories of those few short months that we were Army buddies flash before my closed eyes and it really doesn't seem so long ago that we shared those precious moments of our youth which were in almost constant danger of being stolen away.

Although you were from the southern part of the country and I was from us north, we discovered we had

much in common. We both had parents and family who loved us very much. Our mutual goal was to survive the war we did not relish and return home. I remember well how neither of us claimed to be a gung-ho soldier but considered it our duty to perform those tasks we were assigned. Sure, we were scared sometimes, but we somehow knew that country, duty, honor were important. And loyalty to one another was so very important; of this we were sure.

Because you were from the South and had the same last name as that great Confederate general, all the guys called you Stonewall. I don't know if the famous general was a good story teller but I recall with delight the way you would tell some silly little stories. Just listening to that Carolina drawl and watching you laugh at your own jokes evoked laughter from everyone in your midst.

Of course, all our shared experiences were not funny but most were tolerable. Sea voyages, riding in box-cars in the dead of winter, standing outpost duty and trying to keep our feet warm those cold nights in Alsace, manning roadblocks and foxholes, and going on night patrols were all part of a war we did not fully understand. But we took it in stride, somehow knowing that there would be an even more challenging moment just ahead.

Then there was the big push and our company jumped off with the rest of the battalion to punch a hole in the Siegfried Line. There we were, you and I, assigned to watch for an expected German counterattack. I remember well standing close to you as we peered from the large portal of the bunker we occupied with other members of our squad. And I remember so well the sound of that in-coming shell which was about to explode very close to where we were standing.

In that split second before the explosion, you jumped in one direction and I in another. Forever frozen in time and in my memory is that mo-

*(Continued on page 16)*

# REUNION RESERVATION - 14TH ARMORED DIVISION ASSOCIATION

49TH ANNUAL REUNION - PEORIA, ILLINOIS - Sept. 18-22, 2013

Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ BN \_\_\_\_\_ BTRY, CO, TRP \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Reg. \_\_\_\_\_

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

**CIRCLE PRICE  
OF EVENTS  
YOU WANT  
TO ATTEND**

(PRICES ARE  
PER PERSON)

EVENT #1 THURSDAY Sept 19	EVENT #2 THURSDAY Sept 19	EVENT #3 FRIDAY Sept 20	EVENT #4 FRIDAY Sept 20	EVENT #5 SATURDAY Sept 21
Ball Park Tour (Own lunch)	CASH BAR 5:30 pm	HD & Candy Tours + Lunch	CASH BAR 5:00 pm	CASH BAR 5:00 pm
10:00 am - 1:00 pm	DINNER 6:00 pm	9:30 am - 1:30 pm	DINNER 6:00 pm	BANQUET 6:00 pm

MAN'S FIRST NAME	\$15.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	VETS FREE \$35.00
LADY'S FIRST NAME	\$15.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$35.00
GUEST NAME	\$15.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$35.00
GUEST NAME	\$15.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$35.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>

**FREE** Hot Breakfast Buffet Daily ~

Mail Reunion Reservation

on or **BEFORE August 18** to:

**LIBERATOR DONATION** (Tax deductible) \_\_\_\_\_

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

**ANNUAL DUES** July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014 **\$10.00** \_\_\_\_\_

**LIFE MEMBERSHIP** **\$ 50.00** \_\_\_\_\_

*ALL VETS ARE ALREADY LIFE MEMBERS*

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

**REGISTER NOW**

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

Please check applicable boxes below and add information requested.

- I will be driving to the Reunion, arriving: date \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_
- I will be flying to the Reunion, arriving: date \_\_\_\_\_ flight # \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_
- Special diets: \_\_\_\_\_
- I need wheelchair at Reunion
- I need handicap-accessible hotel room

---

**Accommodations - *Best Western Plus Airport Hotel-Convention Center***

5105 S. Howell Avenue - Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207

Reservations Phone: 877.461.8547

Hotel Phone: 414.769.2100

www.bestwesternmilwaukee.com

**49th National Reunion - September 18 - 22, 2013**

**Complimentary shuttle transportation from airport.**

**DRIVING DIRECTIONS**

**FROM THE WEST AND NORTH, Rts 94, 43, 41 / 100:**

- From Rt 43 N; exit #9 toward Airport; exit #316 onto West Layton Ave; right onto South Howell; Hotel is .5 mile on right.
- From Rt 94 N; exit #318 toward Airport; exit # 316 onto West Layton Ave; right onto South Howell Street; Hotel is .5 mile on right.
- From Rt 94 E; exit #305 A onto Rt 894 E; exit #9 toward Airport; exit #316 onto West Layton Ave; right onto South Howell; Hotel is .5 mile on right.
- From Rt 43 S: exit # 314 B turning right onto West Howard; right onto South Howell; Hotel is 1.5 miles on right.

**14th ARMORED DIVISION 'PARTNERS'** will again meet you in the hotel drive, to assist you with your luggage, park your car in the attached garage and return to you your keys and parking location.

**OUR REUNION FACILITY**

*Best Western Plus Airport Hotel & Conference Center* offers sizeable rooms high-speed Internet access, cable satellite television, a microwave, a refrigerator, room service and much more. We will again enjoy a complimentary hot breakfast buffet! Also available are the Lake City Restaurant & Lounge, the Aviator Sports Bar & Grille, a heated indoor pool and hot tub, 24-hour exercise facility, free parking, business center and game room.

**CALL 877.461.8847 FOR RESERVATIONS**

**Room Reservations** received **AFTER AUGUST 18** may be subject to availability and higher rate.

**GROUP NAME: 14th Armored Division Association**

**DATES: September 18-22, 2013**

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

Request room with: King Bed \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Queen Beds \_\_\_\_\_ (All rooms are \$78.00 + 13% local taxes )

**Reservations MUST be received by August 18, 2013**

---

## VETERANS DAY MESSAGE

*(Continued from page 13)*

ment after the dust settled when you were lying face down on the floor of that bunker... and you weren't moving. No one wanted to believe it, but a small shell fragment had hit you in the back, and I had lost my closest buddy.

That moment the reality of war became loud and clear to me, never to be forgotten, although so many years have since passed. Also never to be forgotten (and for this I want to apologize to you, Randy) is the harsh memory of not even having - or taking - the time to properly say goodbye to you on that chilly March day in 1945. We, your buddies, just cowered in fear, hoping the next shell didn't get us.

In remembering you, Randy, I remember a war which was not of your doing or liking, but when your country called, you answered that call to duty. I don't know if you ever fired a shot in

anger - it makes little difference. What was and is important is that you were loyal to your country and your buddies, and being so, you made the supreme sacrifice.

So many times I have asked, "why you and not me?" Why did I escape from that inferno of terror in that German village in spite of injuries sustained there? Why was I, and not you, granted these many years of blessings of wife, children and grandchildren? As I ponder these questions there are few clear answers revealed to me but through faith (which we shared) I am assured that some day I will be given these answers in the presence of the Lord with you.

Oh yes, Randy, I want you to know that I did get to North Carolina once to visit briefly with your parents and sisters. They showed me where you rest in peace near the local church.

Well, old buddy, I just want you to know I am thinking of you this Vet-

erans Day. But I guess I shouldn't say "old buddy" for to me you are forever young - just as we were when, as a couple of 19-year-old GIs, we were thrown together for a short time and found that we had much in common. Today I will salute and remember you—I promise.

Your Buddy

Yes, Randy was my buddy.

I would like to close with the short prayer given to Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of our World War II president, by a man who was an espionage officer, and whose job it was to send men and women into harms way daily to spy on the Nazis. Many of these spies were captured, tortured and killed. Mrs. Roosevelt carried this prayer in her purse throughout the war, and perhaps all her days.

Dear Lord, Lest I continue my complacent way, help me to remember somewhere out there a man died for me today. As long as there be war, I then must ask and answer, am I worth dying for?

---

## A humble history lesson for all of us!

**Have you ever wondered what happened to the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence?**

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors, and tortured before they died.

Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons serving in the Revolutionary Army; another had two sons captured.

Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the Revolutionary War.

They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

What kind of men were they?

Twenty-four were lawyers and jurist. Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners; men of means, well educated, but they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured. Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and died in rags.

Thomas McKeam was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers looted the properties of Dillery, Hall, Cylmer, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr., noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. He quietly urged General George Washington to open fire. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt..

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his gristmill were laid to waste. For

more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished.

So, take a few minutes while enjoying your 4th of July holiday and silently thank these patriots. It's not much to ask for the price they paid.

Remember: Freedom is never free!

I hope you will show your support by passing this on to as many people as you can, please. It's time we get the word out that patriotism is NOT a sin, and the Fourth of July has more to it than beer, picnics, and baseball games.



**German Junker transport plane that resembled the old Ford Tri-Motor. Photo furnished by Alan West, son of Hugh West, A-94.**



The 14th Armored Division Association, Inc.  
"LIBERATORS"

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

PLEASE PRINT AS CAREFULLY AS POSSIBLE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONES HOME \_\_\_\_\_ CELL \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a 14 A.D. VETERAN? \_\_\_\_\_ RELATIONSHIP TO VETERAN \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF VETERAN TO WHOM YOU ARE RELATED \_\_\_\_\_

UNIT INFORMATION: BATTALION \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_ PLATOON \_\_\_\_\_ TROOP \_\_\_\_\_

ENCLOSED: ANNUAL DUES (\$10.00) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (July 1 - June 30)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP (\$50.00) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (14th A.D. Veterans receive free LIFE memberships)

POSTAGE DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_

WEBSITE DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (www.14tharmoreddivision.org)

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO 14TH ARMORED DIVISION)

MAIL TO: Ann Chelette

## OF LICE AND FLEAS AND STALAG XIIA

*Editor's Note: In his autobiography, "I Walk Through the Valley," the late Bruce Zorns describes in detail the ordeal he and others experienced as prisoners of war. As a member of Co. A, 62nd AIB, he was wounded and then captured by the Germans during the battle at Hatten/Rittershoffen. The following are excerpts from the chapter in Zorns' book entitled "Of Lice and Fleas and Stalag XIIA."*

Wham!

I nearly jumped out of my skin. The sound was so loud – and it sounded like an artillery shell exploding. I cautiously looked around to see what was going on. There were two Germans corpsmen – they had very boisterously kicked the swinging, double doors open and these had hit the wall, sounding like an artillery shell exploding. They laid their stretcher on a nearby table, loaded me onto it and carried it to a conventional-looking ambulance. When they shoved me in, I noticed three stretchers had already been loaded. I was loaded on the bottom with another – there were two on the row above. I didn't know where we were going and from the inside of this contraption I couldn't tell either. I thought we would be going over the Autobahn but as slow as we were moving, I didn't know for sure. We were moving mighty slow to be traveling over a super highway.

We had been traveling less than an hour when we stopped. I heard both corpsmen get out and immediately something very heavy was hitting the ambulance. I called out to my traveling companions:

"What the hell's going on?"

"They are loading logs."

"Is this ambulance powered by a steam engine?" I asked my companion on the left.

"No, it's internal combustion."

"Don't give me that s.... I know you can't run logs through a carburetor into a cylinder and have a spark explode them."

"Any ass knows that, smarty. These are green pine logs and they are thrown into a little furnace-like contraption that trails behind the ambulance. The gases that are given off are run through coils and this gas comes out – methane gas, a very high quality gas, and this is what is injected into the carburetor. It works. This ambulance won't run very fast. But fast enough, I guess.

"And so the Krauts run their ambulances on pine trees. Very, very interesting. What do they call these things?" I asked my companion next to me.

"I don't know. I haven't heard them called anything."

"Then let's call them our 'woodchippers.'"

"That suits me. We are now riding in a 'woodchipper.'"

"I'm Private Bruce Zorns, Seventh Army, General Alexander Patch," I introduced myself.

"I'm First Sergeant Charles M. Holmes,

Third Army, General George S. Patton - Old Blood and Guts, he's called."

"The Third and Seventh Armies have been crossing paths all the way across France. We landed on the shores of the Mediterranean and came north across France. The Third Army joined the invasion forces and helped them break out of the Normandy hedgerow. Patton drove his army hard – gaining up to forty miles a day. I ran into your General one day not long ago – a few days before Christmas."

"Where was that?"

"It was during the Third Army's attack on Strasbourg. I was on a hill about five miles south of the city. I could see the fighting and hear the loud noises of this vicious battle. I was pulling guard duty on a two-rut dirt road that ran into Strasbourg. My orders were not to let anyone pass who could not give the password, 'Yellow Bird.' This order was passed down from General Patton himself. The city was under siege and he didn't want anyone going down this road and running into the fierce fighting taking place."

"I remember that battle. It was hell. We lost a lot of men."

"There was not anything going on in this area of the hill so I walked back and forth across the road. There must have been a very deadly battle there not many hours earlier; there were a lot of dead Germans lying around and they had not begun to bloat as yet. I came across a young soldier who was wearing something I wanted for a long time. Some of the fellows in my company had picked some up from dead enemy in the field. Everyone wanted one as a souvenir."

"Bet it was one of their P-38 pistols – a beautiful little gun. They fire 9mm shells. I think we named them P-38. I don't know why. They are not a .38-caliber."

"This was the prettiest one I had run across. The blue steel of the gun did shine as bright as a mirror. The holster, belt, and shoulder strap were out of the very best leather. I could tell he had worked very hard to keep it shined. He had finally polished it to a satin-sheen finish. He wasn't going to use it anymore, so I took it off him and put it on. It fit me to a T. I didn't have to change a single buckle. On, I was proud of it! This was something I would take home as a souvenir."

"Those are mighty attractive little guns. I never did get one. Do you still have yours?" Sergeant Holmes asked.

"No, thanks to your General."

"How's that?"

"I was telling you about my being on guard duty and watching the battle of Strasbourg. Well, after I found my little gun I saw a cloud of dust down the two-rutted road. Whatever was raising the dust was a long way off. Just the same, I kept my eye on it, and as it got nearer I could tell it was

moving very fast. Finally I could make out the outline of a Jeep. I thought to myself: "That's some drunk GI. He won't know the password and I'll have to shoot him, and I'm not in the killing mood today."

"Did you have to kill him?"

"No, Sergeant, I was worrying about nothing. When it got close I could see flags waving from all fenders. I thought: "My God, I've got me some top brass; I had better get on the ball and shape up – top brass indeed! I could make out four stars on the flags and four stars on the license plates."

Charles asked me: "Didn't the thought of having to stop a Four Star General and ask him for the password frighten you?"

"It scared the s\_\_\_ out of me. I felt as out of place as a whore in church. I wanted to find a place to hide where he couldn't see me."

"Well, what did you do?"

"Charles, I got out in the middle of the road and stood at attention – present arms. I thought that damn driver of his was going to run over me before he got that four star Jeep stopped. He missed me by about six inches. I did a right shoulder arms, walked back to the General, saluted with present arms, and said: "Sorry to stop you, sir, but these are your orders. Give me the password."

"What did he do? the sergeant asked.

"He leaned forward in his seat and replied: 'Yellow bird.'

"I said to him: 'You may pass, sir,' and I saluted him with present arms, did a right shoulder arms, did a smart about-face, and walked away. I didn't get very far before I heard the rather high-pitched voice of the General yelling: 'Hey, you s-o-b!'

"I turned and asked him: 'Sir, to whom are you talking?'

"Very savagely he replied: 'I'm talking to you, Private. Get your butt over here on the double.'

"On the double I got my butt over to the four star Jeep and again saluted him with present arms. He waved his finger at me and asked: 'Private, don't you know my orders?'

"Sergeant, I answered him: 'No, sir. I'm not in your Army. I'm in the Seventh Army under the command of General Patch. I was ordered to pull this duty by my company commander, Captain Ianella, who told me what the duty was and that was all. I did my best to carry out these orders. I'm sorry, sir, if I have goofed.'

"He proceeded to set me straight. 'You are in territory assigned to the Third Army by General Omar Bradley, Commander of the Twelfth Army Group. I'm Commanding General of the Third Army and I outrank General Patch. You are under my command! The order I am referring to forbids Allied troops from carrying enemy weapons. When these are fired, the sounds they make are different from the sounds of our weapons and this causes confusion among our

*Continued on page 19*

## OF LICE AND FLEAS

(Continued from page 18)

troops. Private, hand me that enemy weapon you are wearing."

"I unbuckled my beautiful trophy and handed it to him. When he stood up to take it, I noticed a pearl-handled .45-caliber revolver hanging from each hip. I wondered just how much confusion would be created if he fired those weapons. I kept these thoughts to myself and didn't bother the General with them. I saluted him with present arms and turned and walked away.

"His driver gunned the Jeep, but stopped just as quickly. Again, I heard the high-pitched voice of the General and wondered: 'Now what in the hell does this old s-o-b want.' I turned, stood at attention, saluted with present arms. The General said: 'Soldier, you carried out your orders in a precise military manner. I commend you. Carry on.'"

"Zorns, you should have had a motion picture – with sound – made of this incident. Nobody is going to believe you when you tell this story. Very few men in this war have ever been given any complimentary remarks by old B and G."

"I was so stunned I just stood there with my mouth wide open. I didn't even finish my salute. This then, is the story of why I don't have a P-38 gun. Charles, who are those Joes above us?"

"I don't know. They were loaded before I was. They haven't said a word since I've been aboard. They are either under the influence of an anesthetic or they are dead and being hauled away from some hospital. If they come to I guess we will hear them."

"What's your injury, Sergeant?"

"I was leading my platoon in retreat out of a little town the Germans wanted more than we. When we captured it we cleaned out all the land mines, we thought – except one. That was the one we left for me. I didn't have any trouble finding it; in fact, I stepped right in the middle of it the first try. It blew off my left leg."

"Above or below the knee?"

"Above, it's an AK."

"Well, between the two of us we left a pair of legs in France. I wonder what they do with them – bury, burn, or just throw them in the trash. I would like to know where that missing part of me is. I might want to come back and pay my respects."

The ambulance stopped and we could hear them throwing logs into the trailer. I made this observation: "Logs for the engine of woodchipper."

"Private, what are your injuries?"

"A German 88mm shell broke above me and crushed my right ankle. A German doctor amputated the leg yesterday."

I told Charles about my lying in the open field after I was wounded and watching and hearing the SS troops flip over the frozen dead and either run their bayonets through their chests or bash in their heads with the butts of their rifles. I told him about me being next, about my feeling the booted

foot under my stomach, feeling the lessening of the tension, listening to their excited conversation, and listening to the crunch of the frozen snow as they took off in the direction of their lines. I told him all the story up to my surrender.

"Charles, when I decided to surrender, my main concern was that the Wehrmacht and SS troops would kill me and not bother to take me prisoner. I was never so surprised, and happily so, as when that shoddy, poorly trained German came and tried to pick me up, dropped me back in the snow, left, and returned with a buddy and a wooden wheelbarrow."

"Bruce, you were lucky or someone was watching over you."

"Yes, He was really watching over me."

Charles told this story:

"Hitler conceived of this massive German counterattack himself and had it executed against the advice of most of his top generals. It was to be a surprise thrust that sent Panzer divisions through Belgium's Ardennes Forest. This onslaught began on 16 December 1944. After the German's initial success, British armies under the command of General Montgomery attacked from the north and American armies under command of General Bradley attacked from the south. This put a hard squeeze on the Germans.

"General Patton and many of his men were pulled out of our southern lines and so were many officers and enlisted men of the Seventh Army. Bruce, this left our southern line as thin as tissue paper and the Nazis let us have it. I don't know at this time how the Battle of the Bulge came out.

"I do know our high command was shaken out of its complacency by the viciousness with which the enemy could strike in its death struggle.

"Just a few days ago, about the time you were in the field wounded, all the Wehrmacht and SS troops were ordered to join German forces fighting in the Battle of the Bulge. That's where the two SS men who were about to execute you went. Their places were filled with men from the bottom of the barrel – green, very young, untrained soldiers. Your German s-o-b and his buddy who hauled you to the aid station in the Maginot Line were some of these greenhorns. They had not been in training long enough to lose their compassion.

"I got all this information a few days ago when I was in Third Army headquarters. Someday we will find out how the Battle of the Bulge came out."

They stopped again for logs for the engine of woodchipper.

"These Joes above us must be dead ones being hauled off," I said. I wondered if the Nazis would notify American headquarters of their deaths or if some mother would forever wonder about her son – reported MIA – and day after day return from the post office in bitter anguish because there was no expected letter from the War Department

telling that her son had been returned to control of the American Army. The Germans paid little attention to such details.

"Sergeant, what will they do with these bodies?"

"Take them somewhere and burn them. They are very good at this. You know they are not going to the trouble of burying them," he replied.

"Sergeant, they are turning this thing to the right off the highway. Feel how rough it is? Now they are stopping. I wonder where we are. Going by the time we have been traveling, we are deep into Germany."

We heard the corpsmen as they opened their door and climbed out of the cab. They opened the doors to the ambulance and the brilliant, mid-morning, winter sunlight of Germany poured in. We saw the two corpsmen standing off to the side in the snow looking bored with it all but making no move to unload us.

Soon two GIs came out of the building where we had stopped. They were thin and pale and looked dejected. They walked to the door of the ambulance; they didn't say anything but looked in, and the expressions on their faces painted a clear picture of what they were thinking: "We are cold, hungry, and weak from starvation. We doubt we can carry you fat cats in. You look stronger than we are." They greeted us with an uncivilized expression and a single word: "Hi."

We got the feeling they were resentful of our coming to this camp – it had caused them to have to exert themselves.

Sergeant Holmes asked them: "Where are we?"

"This is a prisoner of war camp. It's a stinking, filthy, lice-and-flea infested hell-hole where you will be warehoused until you starve to death, freeze to death, or the lice and fleas suck all the blood out of you. It was an insane asylum before it was turned into a prisoner-of-war death trap. The bunks have mattresses of burlap stuffed with straw that house myriad lice and fleas that are happy to have a new body with a fresh supply of blood. There are no sheets. You are issued one thin blanket. The food? There is very little of it. For breakfast there is one thin slice of dark bread, made mostly from sawdust with one cup of ersatz coffee, made mostly of roasted sawdust and barley. There is another slice of the dark sawdust bread with a small bowl of thin potato-peel soup, rotten spots and all, for dinner. You are served the same diet, day after day, eternity after eternity. Medical facilities are non-existent.

"Enough of the doom and gloom. What is the name of this prison?" asked Sergeant Holmes.

"Stalag XIIA."

"Where is it located?"

"In Heppenheim, in the Black Forest of Germany. It is on the Autobahn between Mannheim and Frankfurt.

The prison commandant came out of the building and walked over to the am-

(Continued on page 20)

## OF LICE AND FLEAS

(Continued from page 19)

bulance. The two starving GIs introduced him.

"This is Major Zeigler."

Major Zeigler looked us over, turned to the two GIs, and told them: "These two will have to be bathed before I admit them. They look filthy. American troops never pay much attention to making a sharp, clean, military appearance. They never shine their boots or wear fresh uniforms. Take this one first," and he pointed to me.

"Why in the hell does he want us to give you a bath and then put you on a filthy, lice-and-flea laden mattress? That's Ziggy for you. Ziggy is what we call Major Zeigler. Kinda fits him, doesn't it? Well, we have our orders; let's get moving," and the two GIs began unloading me from the ambulance.

With all the strength they could muster, they pulled my stretcher out of the ambulance and carried me up the stairs, moaning and groaning every step of the way. I began to believe these men were not putting on, but they were sick and weak from malnutrition. They took me into a room that had a bathtub – nothing else. With some help from them, I managed to get out of my dirty clothes. They turned on the faucets and began to draw water for my bath.

"Make it warm. I'm cold," I requested.

"Funny, funny man. There is not a bit of heat in this building anywhere and hasn't been for years. The water is near the freezing point. That's the best we can do. OK, in you go. I'll hold your leg so it won't get in the water."

"Damn! Damn! This water's cold. Damn it! Get me out of here."

"Let's wash you off a little. OK, now we will take you out and dry you," and one of them went to a corner of the room and brought the most filthy, dirty towel I have ever seen.

"Don't use that nasty towel on me," I yelled at them.

"Be quiet; you're no better than the rest of us, and we all used it. This is the only towel in this camp."

"This bathing farce must be part of the torture they have programmed for us. I can't think of any other reason for going through this ritual. Am I going to put on the same dirty, filthy, stinking clothes I took off? I've been wearing them since we left Oberseeback on Christmas Eve. They've been through all my fighting – my dip in the ice-covered river on New Year's Eve, my lying in the cold after I was wounded, my capture, my amputation, my trip here. by the way, I don't have any boots. The doctor in the aid station in the Maginot Line cut mine off. I've gone barefooted since then. Come to think of it, until I can walk again and am fitted with a prosthesis, I don't need but one – the left one."

"Surely you don't think they are going to issue you pajamas, robe, and house

shoes. We are putting back on you the dirty, torn uniform we took off you. You will not be going to any social functions where you are registered here. You will wear these until you get out of here. Here we go. We have got to find the ward and bunk you are assigned," and they picked up my stretcher and carried me out into the hallway.

They put the stretcher down and one of them took off down the hallway to the office to find out where to take me.

"You're on the second floor."

They carried my stretcher up the stairs and at the top did a sharp left turn into my new home. This ward had twelve homemade, wooden bunks. All but three were occupied. These were all together, down the wall from the door we entered at the opposite end. I was placed on the center bunk – just laid out on the burlap mattress.

"Well, here you are. Your new hotel room. Someone from the staff will bring you your thin blanket. Spread it over you; cover up, and get acquainted with your myriad of new friends. Don't get in any hurry; you will have plenty of time to get acquainted with each and every one of them. I imagine they are moving in to explore this new body and get a taste of some new blood. Well, this is all we can do for you. Gotta go get the other occupant of the ambulance. He's assigned to the bunk on your right. Have a good day!"

And they left me to go get Sergeant Holmes. I bet he'd raise holy hell when they took him through the routine I had just finished. He would be next to me – I'd get to find out before long. Some of my friends dropped in; they began to sample my blood. When they punctured my skin getting to my blood, it stung like hell and then began to itch. And so began my itching, bitching, endless days of scratching at Stalag XIII.

I was so cold; the temperature in my ward was about freezing. I hadn't been warm since before Christmas. That stupid cold bath made me colder. Here I was lying on my bunk in a room that was not heated, the temperature was near freezing. I was in my old dirty uniform on a burlap mattress stuffed with straw inhabited by lice and fleas that had come out and were eating on me. I had never been so miserable. When I thought of the endless days of torture ahead of me, I asked myself: "Can this be what you deserve? Is this the glory of fighting for your country? Maybe I should have been a draft dodger and stayed out of this war."

Then I thought: "Yet, if I had to do it over, I'd do the same thing all over again."

"These damn Germans!" raved Sergeant Holmes as the two starving GIs brought him to his bunk. "They are not complying with the terms of the Geneva Convention. They should be treating us the same way they treat their own troops."

Then I told the sergeant what the fly-boy officer had told me about what Winston Churchill had written of his experience as a POW in the Boer War.

"Maybe we do owe our lives to their

humanity. I still don't like the way the damn s-o-b's are treating their prisoners."

"What are you going to do about it, Sergeant?"

"Possess my soul with patience," he responded in a disgruntled voice.

A short time later, the two GIs carried in someone else and put him in the third bunk – the one in the corner.

"Who's that?" asked Holmes.

"The name we were given is Moore – Marvin Moore. He was out cold when they brought him here, and he hasn't come to yet. We couldn't give him a bath. His entire torso is in a cast – just his head and feet sticking out. His right arm is in a cast. There is a brace from the torso cast to the arm cast that holds his arm away from his body at about a 45-degree angle. His right hand is not in the cast. He can have some use of it. He's in one hell of a shape – doubt he will make it. The lice and fleas will run him crazy. He doesn't look to be over eighteen years old. You guys watch him, and when he begins to come to, call a nurse."

"Oh, we have nurses?" I asked.

"Only for the very worst cases. You call them by yelling: 'Fraulein.' Their station is not very far down the hall. They know when they have a patient in a certain ward. So long – we are going to leave it with you," and they took their stretcher and left.

We both looked at Marvin and shook our heads. He looked so uncomfortable. He could only lie in one position – on his left side with his right arm sticking up. I asked: "Sergeant, won't the fleas and lice get in that cast and give him fits? He can't scratch or do anything except lie there and bear it along with the pains of his wounds. Poor guy, I feel so sorry for him I don't know what to do."

"He's got a hard row to hoe, and he's so young. I think it's a crime for our government, or any government, to draft men this young. They haven't had a chance to do any living. Why don't they go on up and draft men a few years older than they are drafting now? Private, I think it's a hell of a note to tell a young man like Marvin he's old enough to carry a gun, fight, kill, and be killed, but he's not old enough to vote or buy a bottle of beer. I want to tell you, and anyone else listening, these young kids are getting screwed. I don't like it, and I don't care who knows it. Older men start wars and want the young to fight them. Maybe there wouldn't be as many wars if those that started them fought them," said the Sergeant as he did his editorializing for the day.

Marvin began to stir a little and uttered continuous moans.

"I think we should call the nurse," I said.

"I think it's time. Call one," the sergeant answered.

"Fraulein," I called. Nothing happened so I called again, this time louder. "Fraulein!"

In just a short time a nurse popped in.

(Continued on page 21)

## OF LICE AND FLEAS

(Continued from page 19)

She went straight to Marvin's bunk and began checking him. As she turned to leave she shook her head in doubt, looked at me and said: "If his pain seems to be getting worse, call me and I'll come give him a shot."

The blanket man finally came around with his cartload of blankets. He very carefully dealt one to Charles, and with the same care dealt me one. We had been told they would be thin and thin they were – but better than nothing. He pulled his cart over to Marvin's bunk, selected a blanket, threw it over Marvin and stepped back and looked. It didn't fit. With Marvin's right arm sticking up in the air, the blanket covered less than half of him – there was an awful lot of fresh air circulating over much of Marvin's torso. He turned the blanket first one way, then the other, but it wouldn't cover. I called and asked him to bring the blanket to me. I showed him how to cut it so it would lie flat over Marvin. He then took his cart and rolled it out.

By this time it was getting close to dinner and sure enough, in just a little while, the man with the dinner cart came around with the evening meal. To those he was serving the first time, he gave a beat-up tin cup with a matching tin plate. He served the slice of bread on the plate and ladled out enough soup to fill the bowl half full. The bread should have had a label "Tree-Top" bread. It seemed to have been made mostly of pine tree sawdust as a filler mixed with milled, roasted barley for nutrition and flavor. In time we became so hungry we developed a craving for this dark sawdust bread and looked forward to mealtime.

The coffee was ersatz also. It was made mostly from ground roasted barley. It too, in time, became tasty. Little imagination was used in the preparation of the potato-peeling soup. The peelings from potatoes served to German troops were put in a very large vat – water was added – the amount depended on the number of POWs to be fed. Nothing else was added. It was served after cooking to POWs – dirt, rotten spots, and all. We even got to liking this concoction, which came close to being garbage.

After dinner, preparation for "lights out" began. This consisted mainly of the medical aid man coming around and giving everyone some pain-relief medicine. At each bunk he stopped, filled the tin cup he was using with water, and with a dropper very carefully put two drops of medication into the cup of water. This caused the water to turn cloudy. Someone asked the aid what the medication was.

"Opium in saturated solution," the aid man replied.

I didn't know what it was, but it didn't seem the two drops of opium in saturated solution improved the pain-relieving ability of my cup of water any.

And so endless number of cold, restless, miserable, itching, scratching nights began.

The silence was broken almost continually by the moaning of the badly wounded men. Marvin did his part of the loud moaning, but no one could blame him. We could all take comfort in the fact that Marvin was the most seriously wounded in the ward. Poor little fellow. It was a struggle for him to stay alive, and being alive had almost unbearable miseries. He would have been uncomfortable if his cast was his only problem, but the cast created other problems – it became a haven for hundreds of blood-sucking lice and fleas. He could not scratch them. He could just lie there and bear his misery and issue out cries of moaning. He had heard us calling his nurse, so he tried it.

"Fur-line," he called in a very low, weak voice. We thought his effort was great considering it was the first time he had said anything since he came to this camp. I said to him: "Marvin, a German nurse is called 'Fraulein,' not 'Fur-line.'"

"I can't say what you call them; beside I like 'Fur-line' better. Oh fur-line, I need some help."

His voice was so weak the nurse could not hear him, so I called for him: "Fraulein."

She popped into the room in just a short time. After examining him, she gave him a shot that knocked him out. She kept him knocked out for the next three days.

On the third day of my internment the medical aid man – the same one who'd served the opium drops two nights before – came around with his cart and told me he had orders to change the bandage on my leg. He uncovered me and began to unwind the paper bandages.

"Ouch!" I yelled when he got down to where the blood had dried on the bandage.

"Don't you have any hydrogen peroxide you can use to soften the dried blood so the bandages can be removed without hurting?"

"No, we don't have any. I'll be extra careful and not hurt you."

When we continued to unwind the bandages, I felt the sharpest pain I had ever felt. I let out a scream that could be heard all over camp.

"Don't touch that bandage again you damn French s-o-b. Get away from here."

The French s-o-b backed off, but quickly came at me saying: "I have orders to change your bandage."

"Stay away from me, you phony. You are not a qualified aid man. You are just a French POW pretending to be one. Now, get the hell out of here before I call the commandant."

I didn't have to call him – in he popped. He shoved the French aid man away and took a good look at what the Frenchman was trying to do. The he called Marvin's nurse and had her take over. She spoke English and talked constantly. She told us Ziggy had heard my screams from way down in his office and had come running to see what was going on. She said he had not heard a scream that loud or that agonizing in his

life, and he had not trusted the Frenchman since he first applied for the job – but he was all that was available. POWs wanted these jobs. They got more freedom – a trip to town now and then. Ziggy stayed around until the nurse got started. Then he got the Frenchman by the arm and led him out.

Marvin woke up during all this commotion and heard his nurse. He called her, and she went to his bunk and asked him what he needed.

"Fur-line, I'm hungry. I want some of my mother's cheesecake. She makes the best cheesecake you ever tasted."

"I'm sorry, Marvin, but I don't have any way to get you a piece at this time."

"My mother is the best cook anywhere in the world. She can cook anything, and it turns out delicious. She cooks the best beef pot roast – the brown gravy is delicious. She can really do fired chicken good. She excels in her pork chops and cream gravy. Even now I can smell her pork chops cooking. She always has hot biscuits with them. I love to put cream gravy over the hot biscuits."

Charles looked at me. His tongue was hanging out with saliva dripping off. He leaned over to me and whispered, "That kid is making me so hungry I can hardly stand it. Everything he describes that his mother cooks sounds delicious to me. Can we get him to shut up before I die of starvation?"

"Charles, I don't think we should say anything to him to make him not want to talk about his mother's cooking. The poor little fellow doesn't have much else to talk about. I think we should talk with him about all the good things his mother cooks. It will make us more hungry, but I think we can take it."

"OK. You're right. We won't say anything to him to discourage him from talking. When his nurse leaves we'll talk to him about all the goodies his mother cooks."

When the nurse left, her tongue was hanging out with saliva dripping off. Charles remarked: "I bet she has never tasted anything like the food his mother cooks."

The endless days of misery, monotony, hunger, cold to a point of numbness, itching, scratching, bitching, wondering what the next day would bring, thinking constantly of Ginny and Thomas Bruce and whether the War Department had notified them I was missing in action, speculating on how Ginny would react to this news, afraid she would think I was dead and marry someone else and wishing I could write her, continued to roll over, one day after the other, with the following day bringing only what the previous day had produced and leaving each of us more and more depressed and feeling like we had reached a place of no return. ■

Continued in the next issue of *The Liberator*.



---

# A Veteran and Survivor's Story

## One You Won't Soon Forget

**From the College of the Ozarks  
"The Ozark Visitor"  
By Alexis Schields**

I was fortunate enough to be selected for the College's 11th Patriotic Education Travel Tour. Though the school has sent numerous other students on Patriotic Education Travel, the trip I participated in was different. For the first time, not only did WWII Veterans accompany students, Holocaust survivors did as well. This unique tour brought admiration and intrigue, not only from the States, but also from the international community. While each Veteran or Survivor's story was truly amazing, to me none was more touching than the story of WWII Veteran Liberator Mason "Mickey" Dorsey and Holocaust survivor Gershon Ron's unique connection.



**Mickey Dorsey and Gershon Ron.**

*"If you save one life, you save the world." - Jewish saying*

Mason Dorsey or "Mickey" was a sergeant in General George Patton's Third Army in the 71st Infantry Division as part of the 71st Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop. He commanded an M-8 armored car, dubbed "The Four Rebels," because each member on the armored car was from a southern state. A recon troop is known as the "eyes and ears" of all military units. His unit was consistently behind enemy lines, yet even the toughest of times could not prepare Mickey for what his eyes would see on May 4, 1945. After exchanging fire with a Ger-

man convoy on May 3, Mickey's troop continued past the destroyed convoy the next day and went down a road that was heavily forested. His troop then discovered an opening in the forest that led to an open area. There they observed people behind a seven-foot-high fence. Machine gunner Bill Parks shot the lock on the gate open and as Mickey explains, "immediately throngs of people surrounded us - kissing us, hugging us, holding onto our legs and feet. We had no idea who these people were, what they wanted, or really, what was going on."

Gershon Ron grew up in Czechoslovakia before attending school in Budapest, Hungary. In 1944, when German forces occupied Budapest, he was forced to quit school and was sent to a concentration camp. Over the next year, Gershon spent time in concentration camps such as Auschwitz, Muthausen, and Guns kirchen. The day before American forces liberated Guns kirchen camp, he and two other prisoners heard that the German guards had left their post. The three of them ventured to the gate and found the rumor true. "They were right," he told me. "The guards were gone. We didn't go back to the barracks. The three of us took off in the direction of the explosions." The explosions they heard were of those from Mickey's troop. Mickey and Gershon never met during the liberation, but each day, Gershon is thankful for Mickey and his unit.

College of the Ozarks students witnessed Mickey and Gershon embrace for the first time in the Munich airport. "I don't think we said anything to each other; we only hugged each other - there was no need for words," Gershon said. "I lost my brother when I was 15, and I found one 67 years later in the same place where I lost mine."

"Our meeting and the subsequent embrace touched me very deeply - almost to the point of tears," Mickey said. "They (Jewish prisoners) were dying at the rate of 250 per day, and if we had been five days later, no one would have been alive."

At Mauthausen concentration camp, we had a special tour guide as well as a camera crew from the camp film our day. The guides at Mauthausen had never seen a group of both survivors and liberators together in the same tour. Mickey Dorsey and Gershon Ron were never shy to speak of their past and how it was fate for their paths to cross. Now they are "brothers."

"Now we call each other brother," Gershon said. "He calls me Gabi just the way my mother used to. It took 67 years to see each other face-to-face; it was worthwhile waiting. How do you describe a meeting, of a savior and a saved, at their advanced age, to prove that evil can be defeated."



**Mickey Dorsey walks with CofO students Ashton Phillips (L) and Alexis Schields.**



---

### NEW MEMBERS★★★

Robert Holt - 48 Tank A Co.

James Komadina - Life  
Son of George A. Komadina  
25 Tank Service



# MAIL CALL

## **HEY! LOOKIE HERE! GET THEM WHILE THEY LAST**

I'm talking about *The Liberator*. You know there are a lot of the 14th Armored Veterans who are gone now. Many were men who regularly sent in their dues and a little extra donation for *The Liberator*. This isn't happening now and publishing *The Liberator* each time is going a little in the red. If you are like me, you are getting too old to spend your money for anything else, and we don't have to pay dues any more, so let us send in a contribution to keep *The Liberator* going for another few years.

We aren't too old yet, we had more veterans at the Peoria Reunion than we had at the previous reunion in Indianapolis. I know you all enjoy reading *The Liberator*, so it is time for a gift of \$50, \$100, \$200, or \$500, or whatever you think all of the past issues have been worth to you.

Send in an article to be printed in *The Liberator* if you can, that would be welcome also.

Roy Roberts, A-47

## **ADVISES ABOUT 14TH RECORDS**

Verlyn,

Thank you for sending the copy of *The Liberator*. The wife and I were happy to receive your Christmas Greetings, and enjoyed reading how you and Mary were staying busy and getting along. People really do appreciate the work you do on *The Liberator*, and although I am no longer part of the Association, I am especially thankful for the work you continue to do so well.

I see my name came up in the Board of Directors meeting. Since no one has contacted me regarding the

best place to donate division records, I will provide the information to you knowing you will pass it along. The association has long been donating its records to the US Army Heritage and Education Center (aka US Army Military History Institute) at Carlisle Barracks, PA. The contact information is: 950 Soldiers Drive, Carlisle, PA 17013. Telephone, 717-245-3972. Web-site: <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/AHEC/index.cfm> This is the only facility where we've been donating records and artifacts since Hugh West was National Historian.

Please accept my best wishes and have a wonderful holiday season.

Jim Lankford

## **WRITES OF COMMON GOAL**

Dear Liberators,

Today I got a New Year's card with a small letter entitled: "Never Again Such A Nightmare!" Here is a translation (and some notes added) by myself below. This letter, written by the Mayor of Hatten, François Fenninger, reminds me of the message of Stan Goldman, this year's President of the 49th National Reunion in Milwaukee, asking all combat veterans to join him in the battle for peace. We, as higher cultured citizens and mainly Christians, cannot stick to the law of the talion: eye for eye and tooth for tooth. Of course we can't forget the past horrors, but we can try to reach a higher level of behaving which is strongly taught in the Bible and the Gospel. Well-thinking people are becoming aware more and more of this new step we are to take, wherever we are living in the world. Of course we cannot forget the past evils, but we can be rendered able to look higher and thus even able to forgive by renewing our mind and letting us be renewed.

Here is this letter which is showing that we are not alone to think better and higher with a new mind. Past

opponents are trying to join us in their conscience, in their feeling and their mind:

NEVER AGAIN SUCH A NIGHTMARE!

On the occasion of the National Day of Mourning (Volkstrauertag) in Germany (2012.12.11) a delegation from Germany, led by the son of a former officer of WWII, Hans Ulrich Schwartz from Rutesheim near Stuttgart, came together to France before the French and American monument between Hatten and Rittershoffen. Both mayors of Hatten (François Fenninger) and Rittershoffen (Daniel Pflug) received them before the monument on which an American tank is pursuing or driving out a German tank. With Hans Ulrich Schwartz came Anton Zapf, a teenager present at the battle of 1945, and eight others, namely: Walter Reuter, Kurt Walschburger, Barba This, Edith Trauth, Ute Brecht, Anneliese Rodel, M. Ollmann. They have come a long way to remember tragedies, lost comrades and family members who died during the war and to recall the past that never more such a nightmare happens again!

Hatten-Rittershoffen are the two little towns where the American 14th AD stopped, heroically during 10 days, the advance of their opponents. The 14th AD was helped by the 315th Regiment of the 79th Infantry Division. How many gave their life there and elsewhere, because of a foolish ideology unworthy of our culture? Who is able to understand it!? A spray of flowers was laid before the monument and bunches of flowers; candles were lightened and after a long moment of meditation and a common meal, all went to the Abri museum in the West of Hatten which allowed all to become deeper and better acquainted with history.

Mayor François Fenninger, of Hatten, translated (with notes) by Rev. G. Pfalzgraf, Commune de Hatten, BP

(Continued next page)



## MORE MAIL CALL

### RECALLS CLOSE KNIT GROUP

With the election of Fred Harshberger as Co-Vice President article in the Fall-Winter 2012 edition of *The Liberator*, brought back memories as I knew Fred. He would certainly remember the replacement. I also knew Lee Oester and John Hepler.

Headquarters Company of the 62nd AIB was a good company and before we left the States we knew everybody. I, too, was in ASTP and was transferred to the 14th where I was assigned to the Machine Gun Platoon and immediately made gunner #1. Maybe I was it, as no one wanted the position. Whatever, we were a close knit group. The oldest man in the company was 'POP': he was 45.

X X X X

### **Front Line - Guard Duty Incident**

The year was 1945, the place was somewhere in Alsace, France. The weather had moderated, and a section of the Machine Gun Platoon, Headquarters Company, 62nd Infantry Battalion was set up in a guard forward position. Was this the front line – we did not know for sure. We were never advised where we were or what the plan was as what you don't know you cannot tell.

It was broad daylight, two of our 30 caliber water cooled heavy duty machine guns were set up in a very proper and good gun emplacement. My recollection there must have been at least eight men. Each emplacement had a gunner, assistant gunner, ammunition carrier and bazooka man.

I was senior gunner number one, as I had come over with the division when we sailed to Marseilles, France. I was wounded at Bannstein, France on January 1, 1945 and rejoined the Company shortly after February 1st. None of our sergeants or corporals were there at that moment so I took charge as we had many replacements after having lost two-thirds of the platoon in Bannstein.

Suddenly we heard a noise such as a tank coming through the woods at

our left. Was the tank accompanied by enemy soldiers? It was too late to leave. We hid ourselves in the emplacements as we had no alternative. Our only useful weapon against a tank was the bazooka so the bazookas were loaded and ready for use if the enemy discovered us. We hoped the tank would bypass us.

As the tank came closer I noted markings indicating that it was a US tank. However, the bogey wheels looked like a German tank. We had not seen any US tanks with this type of bogey wheels. Also none of our tanks - the Sherman - was known to be in the area. The tank was coming closer and would be bypassing us on our left if we were not discovered. Everybody was as ready as possible as running out of the area was not feasible. If an attack was made by the tank, the bazookas were to be used. The engine of the tank was considered the most vulnerable and this was to be the target of the bazookas.

The tank came closer and closer and it looked like they had not discovered us. The tank was to our immediate left. I took a peek. The hatch was open and the person standing was wearing a US helmet. I then recognized Lt. Gold. I yelled "Goldie," (his nickname to some of us) to let him know he was in friendly territory. He was startled, then recognized me. He stopped the tank and we had a "chit chat." He informed us the Assault Gun Platoon tank had been replaced by the new version with more firepower. They were taking a familiarization tour regarding the handling of the tank and he was not aware of being ahead of the front line. Of course we told him we had not been advised of the replacement and were prepared to do anything necessary if he was the enemy. Everybody had a great sense of relief.

PFC Arthur P. Roehrl, Machine Gun Platoon, Headquarters 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion, 14th Armored Division.

### WRITES FROM KENTUCKY; APPRECIATES LIBERATOR

Dear Verlyn and Mary,

Thought I should check in and let you know I'm doing OK. My daughter is a good cook, nurse, bookkeeper and chauffeur. They set me up with a laptop so I can play games from dusk to dawn – I mean dawn to dusk. I checked out "facebook" for the 14th AD. It's the most complete history I've read.

I thoroughly enjoy reading *the Liberator*. I can relate to the story of the "red hen," only we fared better - fresh eggs out of the coop; fresh vegetables and potatoes out of the cellar; fresh smoked ham and bacon hanging in the flue of the cook stove.

The first Thanksgiving we ate canned turkey. The rear echelon had to eat all of it as our tankers were too busy in battle at Barr. The turkey was really good.

For Christmas dinner we ate home-cooked tame rabbit. A French lady took us in and the meal was okay.

I want to comment on the four Obermeyer brothers joining our organization (summer issue). I thought it quite unique to have four of one family as new members. By the way, the Partners are doing a great job. I was a charter member of the 14th and sure glad the association continues on.

I knew Joe Obermeyer, father of our new members. He was returned from North Africa with a leg wound. He was assigned to B Co. of the 48th Tankers as a maintenance sergeant. He later received a battlefield commission as a 2nd Lt.

My story is: There were 13 of us in cabin 13. We did have portholes for fresh air. We loaded on the Santa Rosa troop ship on October 13. Our shipping number was 51421 - adds up to 13.

I learned a lesson in security. I said to Joe O. that some kid was saying German submarines were ready to attack us. He jumped off his bunk, and sober as could be, he chewed me out. He said if you ever saw men trample each

*Continued on page 25*



## MAIL CALL . . . Continued

other, you wouldn't talk like that. He knew what war was. "A loose lip can sink a ship." That's how I remember Joe Obermeyer. His name was in Taps a few years ago. Anyway, it's great to have four new members.

I received a Master of Arts degree from Cumberland University in recognition of our maneuvering there, as per *The Liberator*.

Keep up the good work. I, like others, appreciate it so much.

Sincerely,

Joe Prochaska, B-48

### GREETINGS FROM ALSACE

Dear Verlyn, Mary and family,  
and dear friends,

Christmas is near and we are able to rejoice, although we are deeply affected by what happened at a school in Connecticut. We feel ourselves sad with those who are sad, especially about the loss of a child or a dear person. We are aware of the problems, even all over the world, which result through storms, floods (as recently in New York and elsewhere), earthquakes and other disasters. Our world is full of diverse evils and we remember the words said to Cain (Gen. 4,7): Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it. The eternal Creator has created all the laws we use in our knowledge and sciences. But in the midst of our evils He remains on our side: has He not instituted the Covenant with father Abraham (Gen. 15/17)?

Christmas, the birth of the only Son of God (the faithful and just One) is the greatest testimony that God is concerned with us and has through him extended his Covenant to all nations. Through him further He is not against us, but remains with us, because, as the apostle Peter said: God has made the same Jesus whom you crucified the Lord and Christ (Acts 2,36): therefore he assembles us every 8th day around him to sanctify us and

prepare our future and our new spiritual being (John 21, 1.19-29).

This year I remained mostly at home and rarely attended meetings. I am still dependant on Liliane; she drives our car and is my assistant for my medicine. Nevertheless, we went three days to Bavaria and a week to pay a visit to my sister and to her daughter Sarah and Richard who are living near Vienne South of Lyon.

Thirty-five years ago, Liliane and I visited Vienne, well known for the famous Roman remains of the first century: the portico of the forum, the temple of August and Livia, the roman theatre. In the third century Vienne was the main Christian town of Gallia. Meanwhile in 1968 they began many excavations and could find an amount of very important and interesting discoveries on both riversides. Streets, sidewalks and pavements were freed and a large museum was opened in 1996. It is worth a visit. Next to Rome, it was one of the most important centres in the 1st century.

It seems not impossible to me that Pontius Pilate visited the area during the year when he was sent to Rome, after he gave order to kill Samaritains (to please jews?) near the mount Garizim. The main legate of Rome being Vitellius, in Syria, a complaint was lodged against Pilate: he was sent to the emperor Tiberius. Strange is the fact that Pilatus spent nearly a whole year on a long journey before arriving to Rome, and when he came there Tiberius had died. Thus he remained destituted and the complaint was not followed up. Where was he and what did he do all this time? Was he tired with the problems he had in Judea and Samaria and was he on journey to find a new task somewhere else with the intention to ask it from the emperor? It could be unofficially Pilate was in Vienna, because the highest mountain in the area is named Pilatus! That seems to me an important point that he had come there in the year 36 or later, but unofficially, as a private person. From

the house of my niece Sarah, I see this mount in the distance.

Why this talk of Vienne? Vienne was on the way of the American troops from Marseilles to Northern Alsace, but the liberators at that time could not free themselves for tourism. They had a quite different and most highly urgent task in view. As it could be that relatives would like to follow parts of the way done by the veterans and to see what it was like, but in an entirely different context. I just liked to point to Vienne out of my own experience and my interest to a person quoted in the Gospels and in the Creed.

I was very assiduous the whole year in research and studies. I could find quite a lot of results, but up to now I could not yet finish my task completely.

I thank my American friends for *the Liberator*, the official publication of the 14th Armored Division Association. I read it always with great interest and find myself greatly indebted. Not the least, I read the chaplain's comments. I find always a great variety of articles which help me to learn more and to keep up my English and my relations to the States.

Our son, Christian, has to go in January again to Australia to help there technically in Melbourne for the Open Tennis Tournament. Our daughter, Anne-Marie, and her husband, Julien, along with their lovely little Aimy (two years old) also send greetings. With our best greeting for Christmas and best wishes for you and yours in the coming year, we remain,

Faithfully yours,

Georges and Liliane Pflazgraf

### CORRECTION



## MAIL CALL... Continued

### RECALLS TOUGH TIMES

Dear Verlyn,

I like this Christmas card that says "Peace on Earth" - but when? Perhaps we'll never see it.

I keep looking back, thinking of 1930-1940. Later my friend in Phoenix always said, "We need a good depression to get people back to a good life." He said that he and his family lived in the city dump, in a tent, for two years. He would walk in a circle one mile to school so the kids didn't know where he lived. After two years, his dad and mom and three kids rented a small farm and house for part of the vegetable crop they produced on the property. So that's why he stayed in the vegetable business all his life.

Christmas is fast approaching. The family even put up a small Christmas tree to get into the spirit of the season.

Merry Christmas.

Harold Kiehne A-47

### RELATES INTERESTING WWII STORY

Dear Verlyn,

I am writing my obituary and recovering from a few days in the VA hospital here in Albuquerque. My hospice nurse advised me to ignore the bad results of my tests. So I continue to have a positive outlook.

I've just become a friend of a Polish vet who is my age of 92 and is a recent patient in this rest home. His story of WWII is worth telling. Keep in mind that I am almost completely deaf. I read lips and use a note pad to write words to enhance our ability to understand each other.

His name is Boris and is a native of Warsaw, Poland. His whole family - mom, dad and three older sisters - were victims of the Nazi holocaust before he ended up a soldier. The fact that he was a heavy truck driver saved his life. However, Hitler's last try to reach

Warsaw caused Boris to be a POW of the Russian army and was trained to be a tank commander. Boris met his first American soldier in Berlin at the time Germany gave up.

That record below zero weather, fog and blizzards forced the German armor to stall along icy roads where they were easy targets for the Russians. In a battle, Boris was captured and luckily was part of a prisoner trade, and was later picked by some religious group to be sent to Pennsylvania where he worked in the coal mines. Later he headed for the Great Lakes area where he found a job in manufacturing and was able to pick up some English and attend night school.

He, like me, is not proud of all the destruction of people and property witnessed in the war. He tells of the strange habit of eating with a spoon by our GIs, and who were unable to drink vodka in the amount his tankers could and still be able to dance. He told war stories much like mine, how you lost all sense of money and became a simple dumb head in trying to find a happy life after so much stress and suffering.

Boris is now thankful to still be alive but can't understand why we are still at war in the Middle East after ten years and no end in sight. Greed and corruption is at all levels of our government, it seems. I still live in hope.

- Bob Straba, C-19

### HAS NEW ADDRESS

Phil Snoberger reports that he has a new address, he and his wife having recently moved into their assisted living duplex in Naples, Florida. Phil comments that moving is a slow process since they have an accumulation of "stuff" that has to be reduced by 60 percent. Even though storage is a problem, they are pleased with their new quarters and Phil thinks the food is outstanding. Their new address is:

### CADETS EXPRESS THANKS

(Note: The Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps from Richwoods High School in Peoria participated in our 2012 Annual Reunion in Peoria, IL. JROTC cadets very ably provided the Color Guard for our Saturday Memorial Service. At our request, they also provided a demonstration of their remarkable sharpshmanship skills. The 14th Armored Division Association extended a monetary contribution to their training program in appreciation for their participation. The following letter expresses their gratitude.)

Dear family and friends,

We, the cadets of Richwoods' Marine Corps JROTC program are thankful for your generous contribution. We greatly benefit from your support, and use donations to expand our program so that it can have a greater impact on the youth in our community, and help them grow as involved and responsible members of the community. These donations help provide opportunities for each cadet to explore their individual potential and develop themselves as leaders which relies on the continuation of our Corps and its support. Every donation, regardless of size, is greatly appreciated and put to use in all JROTC events such as to the Birthday Ball, Leadership Camps, and competitive teams. All of these activities bring cadets and their families together. On behalf of all of the cadets, please accept our deepest gratitude for your donations.

We wish to offer you and your family our warmest regards during this year's holiday season.

God Bless & Semper Fidelis  
Richwoods High School MCJROTC



## Membership Renewal Notice

### MAIL TO:

\_\_\_\_ Enclosed ANNUAL DUES \$10.00  
\_\_\_\_ Payable for Membership July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012  
**Note: ALL 14th AD VETERANS HAVE BECOME LIFE MEMBERS**  
\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is \$10.00 for enrollment / dues of my:  
    Son \_\_\_\_\_  
    Daughter \_\_\_\_\_  
    Grandchild \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Life Membership \$50.00  
\_\_\_\_ Postage Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Memorial \_\_\_\_\_  
New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ Bn \_\_\_\_\_ Co. \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

### Donations Appreciated

Without the generous support of many donors, it would be most difficult to continue the publication of **The Liberator**. Thank you.

*Liberator & Association Staff*

## WHAT ...YOU'RE MOVING!



### ADDRESS CHANGE

**PLEASE** help us eliminate delays by advising us promptly of any change in your contact information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street & No. \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### TAPS NOTIFICATION

**PLEASE** share any information you have about the deaths of 14th Armored Division members.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Unit \_\_\_\_\_  
Street & No. \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Survivor \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Information \_\_\_\_\_

## From a Romanian Newspaper

*We rarely get a chance to see another country's editorial about the USA. Read this excerpt from a Romanian newspaper... The article was written by Mr. Cornel Nistorescu and published under the title 'C'ntarea Americii, meaning ('Ode to America') in the Romanian newspaper Evenimentulzileu 'The Daily Event' or 'News of the Day'.*

### AN ODE TO AMERICA

Why are Americans so united? They would not resemble one another even if you painted them all one color! They speak all the languages of the world and form an astonishing mixture of civilizations and religious beliefs.

On 9/11, the American tragedy turned three hundred million people into a hand put on the heart. Nobody rushed to accuse the White House, the

Army, or the Secret Service that they are only a bunch of losers. Nobody rushed to empty their bank accounts. Nobody rushed out onto the streets nearby to gape about. Instead the Americans volunteered to donate blood and to give a helping hand.


After the first moments of panic, they raised their flag over the smoking ruins, putting on T-shirts, caps and ties in the colors of the national flag. They placed flags on buildings and cars as if in every place and on every car a government official or the president was passing. On every occasion, they started singing: 'God Bless America!'

I watched the live broadcast and rerun after rerun for hours listening to the story of the guy who went down one hundred floors with a woman in a wheelchair without knowing who she was, or of the Californian hockey player, who gave his life fighting the

terrorists and prevented the plane from hitting a target that could have killed other hundreds or thousands of people.

How on earth were they able to respond united as one human being? Imperceptibly, with every word and musical note, the memory of some turned into a modern myth of tragic heroes. And with every phone call, millions and millions of dollars were put into collection aimed at rewarding not a man or a family, but a spirit, which no money can buy. What on earth unites the Americans in such a way? Their land? Their history? Their economic power? Money? I tried for hours to find an answer, humming songs and murmuring phrases with the risk of sounding commonplace, I thought things over, I reached but only one conclusion... Only FREEDOM can work such miracles.

**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**  
**MAY15, 2013**  
 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.**  
  
**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

NON PROFIT  
 ORGANIZATION  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 HOT SPRINGS, AR  
 PERMIT NO. 40

**Co-Vice Presidents Elected for 2014!**

**14th Armored Division Assoc.  
 Vice Presidents**

The 14th Armored Division Association elected two co-Vice Presidents to chair our 50th Reunion in 2014! Fred Harshberger, featured in the Fall 2012 Liberator, and John Meyer graciously accepted the honor of serving. In this Liberator we will share John Meyer's story.

John Meyer is humble about his background, but agreed to share a few of his experiences with us. He was president of a minor league baseball team, served in the Illinois House of Representatives and Senate, was Judge of a Circuit Court, and a U.S. Delegate to the United Nations Conference on Narcotic Drugs in Geneva, Switzerland, and owned and raced thoroughbreds horses.

John is most proud of the Liberators and his role among his comrades. With only one semester remaining before attaining his law degree, he was drafted and unable to acquire the deferment his friends (a farmer, an undertaker, and veterinary student) received! When he left for Camp Grant, his father, the city mayor, gave each inductee a black eightball keychain and a St. Christo-

pher medal to counteract the eightball! His basic training concluding at Fort Bragg, NC, he was selected for Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, OK, much to his dismay. School behind him, he was assigned to the 501st AFA Battalion of the 14th Armored Division recently formed and in training at Fort Chaffee, AR - in the Service Battery, again to his dismay. He struggled and adjusted, thanks to the mechanical expertise of the Sergeants, Corporals, T5's, and Privates that made up the personnel. As the Battalion Survey Officer, he was transferred to Headquarters Battery and later to B Battery. In New York, they boarded a troop transport named the "Sea Robin", renamed later by the troops as the "Blind Robin", "Bouncing Robin", and "The gol-darned smelly rocking tub", that finally landed at Marseilles, France.

John and his wife Mertyce reside in Danville, IL, and have enjoyed the annual reunions with their opportunities to visit with and support the veterans and their ladies.



**Fred Harshberger**



**John Meyer**

**WESTERN STATES CHAPTER**  
**DANIEL (JOE) FITTS** CASA SERRANO RESTAURANT  
 Bullhead City, AZ and Laughlin, NV  
 April 9 & 10, 2013

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