



# THE LIBERATOR™

VOL. 49 NO. 1

Official Publication of the  
14th Armored Division Association

SUMMER 2014

## Message from our Association President



**Fred Harshberger**

### BATTLE YET UNSUNG

The Fighting Men of the 14th Armored Division in World War II

This is our book of our combat experiences in World War II, authored by Timothy J. O'Keeffe. I consider this book a labor of love; it is dedicated to the men of the 14th Armored Division who fought in France and Germany during World War II; especially dedicated to those men who gave their lives or were seriously wounded in the fighting.

General Douglas MacArthur, in his farewell address, said "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." Now we are old and soon will fade

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## Celebrate 50 Years in Milwaukee!

by Ann & Jess Chelette

Let's have a party! The 50th Reunion of the 14th Armored Division will be held September 18 - 21, 2014, at Milwaukee's Best Western Plus Airport Hotel & Convention Center! We're returning to the hotel with the friendliest staff in Milwaukee!

The Best Western is eager to serve us again this year! We'll lodge in rooms with either two queen beds or one king bed, and a free hot breakfast buffet is ready for us from 6:00 - 10:00 am each morning! Two restaurants - the Aviator Bar & Grille, a large sports bar in the hotel that provides food and beverages, large-screen TVs, and pool tables; and the Lake City Restaurant & Lounge. We have access to a large indoor pool, exercise facility, and jacuzzi. Our hospitality room will be a larger room near the pool and as always, a wonderful area to visit with friends. Once again you'll be met and assisted to your rooms by the Partners (children and grandchildren of our veterans), who look forward each year to accompanying you and enjoying the reunion. Free parking is available in the large front parking area, and we can park and retrieve your car for you!

Milwaukee offers many attractions, and we've selected a high-quality city tour as our one reunion outing! Because the bus can accommodate a small number of guests, we are offer-

ing the tour three times during reunion. Programs are also planned within the hotel during your days with us.

### Arrival and Departure

Once again, we (Partners) will assist you as you arrive and depart. Partners will greet you and assist you with your luggage, with registering, and with moving on to your room. Free parking is available in the front lot, and we are pleased to park and retrieve your vehicle for you at any time. We will also help you with your luggage and check-out when you depart.

Please note your round-trip flight information on the Registration Form. You may choose to phone the hotel at [414.769.2100](tel:414.769.2100) for shuttle service when you land at the airport. The hotel's free shuttle operates 24 hours a day, and will smoothly transfer you the short distance from the airport to the hotel.

A roster of all reunion guests will be posted on the bulletin board near 14th Armored Division registration, noting dates and times we are all arriving and departing.

### Registration

Hotel registration is directly in front of you as you enter the Best Western. Please let us know if you are at all unhappy with your room and a change

*(Continued on page 3)*

## 50th NATIONAL REUNION

Milwaukee's Best Western Plus Airport Hotel - Sept. 18-21, 2014

## FROM THE LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT



**GAYLE SIEWERT**

### GREETINGS FROM MINNESOTA!

What a cold and harsh winter and slow spring it's been. I'm just waiting for the warmer weather to arrive and before you know it our annual reunion will be here and we'll be returning to the great city of Milwaukee.

It's hard to believe this will be our Golden year - our 50th National Reunion. So many good things to look back and reflect upon. Places we've ventured to, things we have visited and seen, friends both old and new we have shared it all with, will live on in our memories.

My congratulations to our new President Fred Harshberger, the rest of the men officers, the ladies' officers that were willing to keep their positions and the new ones coming on board.

We will be meeting once again in Milwaukee Best Western Plus-Airport Hotel on September 17-21, 2014. Please check *The Liberator* for a list of events that will be going on during our stay. Jess and Ann Chelette, with the rest of the partners, all do a wonderful job on the planning and to help with the events during the reunion.

The hospitality room will be up and going once again so if you'd like to donate any gifts or snacks we would love to have your donations. Our raffle this year will go to the VA Hospital or to a choice of our president, Fred Harshberger. Once again, thank you to all who sold tickets and helped with the hospitality room.

I have one sad note to pass on, my mother, Frances Siewert passed away on November 10th, 2013 just after celebrating her 94th birthday. She always looked forward to attending the reunions and was always shared as a family vacation for us all. I think she has missed only a handful of all the reunions held.

Please don't forget donations for *The Liberator* postage fund. Any change of addresses can be sent to Jess and Ann Chelette and any news notes can be sent to Verlyn Hofer. All addresses are printed in *The Liberator*.

Thank you again for all you do. Have a wonderful summer and I will look forward to seeing you in Milwaukee.

- Gayle Siewert

*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> FRED HARSHBERGER	<i>National Secretary</i> ANN CHELETTE	<i>Website Contact Person and Acting Historian</i> ELTON C. ROSS
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<i>National Vice Presidents</i> LAWRENCE MILLER	<i>National Treasurer</i> JESS CHELETTE	<i>National Publicity</i> HAROLD KIEHNE
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ALBERT BURMIESTER	<i>National Chaplain</i> JOHN A. BURGESS	<i>Executive Director Emeritus</i> HORST FROELICH 1926-2006
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<i>Judge Advocate Emeritus</i> JOHN P. MEYER 1920-2013
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### PLEASE FILL IN ALL BLANKS

Enclosed is \$3.00. Please enroll me as a member of the 14th Armored Division Assn., Inc. Auxiliary.  
Check One of the following:     New Member     Renewal     Life Membership \$30.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## Milwaukee! Here We Come

(continued from page 1)

can be made.

Our registration will again be in the lobby to your right. We will provide you with your folder of reunion information, your name badge, and a bag of welcome treats.

### Wednesday, September 17

Early arrivals can register, meet and greet others arriving, and select either the Lake City Restaurant & Lounge or the Aviator Sports Bar & Grille inside the hotel for your meals.

### Thursday, September 18

Our free hot breakfast buffet begins this morning in the Lake City Restaurant! Our first bus tour of Milwaukee, this morning from 10 am - 1 pm, will accommodate 10 guests. If you wish to join this tour, please note it on your registration form. We will gather at the lobby door at 9:30, provide you with a sack lunch, drive you to the tour start, and return you to the Best Western at 1:30 pm. Read more about the tour and other reunion activities in Reunion Activities.

Those remaining at the Hotel during the morning are invited to visit the Hospitality Room and lunch in the popular Aviator Grille. Remember the sandwiches are large - share if you wish!

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 and entertainment to follow at 6:00 pm.

### Friday, September 19

Following our complimentary hot breakfast buffet, ten more guests interested in a Friday morning bus tour of Milwaukee will meet at the lobby door at 9:30 am.

Those remaining at the Hotel can enjoy our third annual Collections of Yesteryear in the Hospitality Room. Last year we enjoyed viewing and discussing a few items from personal collections including postcards, nativity scenes, Indy race cars, and salt & pepper shakers. Read about how you can participate in Reunion Activities.

A free walking tour of the Miller Brewery is offered in the afternoon. We'll gather at the lobby door at 2:30 pm to travel for this interesting tour and visit to the gift shop. Read more in Reunion Activities.

At 3:30 pm, gather in the Hospitality Room for the Red Skelton Show! We'll show his most popular TV episodes and enjoy popcorn while we laugh at his escapades!

Our Cash Bar opens at 5:00 pm, with dinner and entertainment to follow.

### Saturday, September 20

Our Memorial Service will take place at 9:00 am, with the Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary, and Partners Meetings to follow. Lunch is on your own in the Aviator Bar & Grille or elsewhere in the community. Information about lunch sites and afternoon tourist opportunities will be at our Registration Table.

If you're looking for something to do during the afternoon, check Reunion Activities. The Southside Cruisers Car Club will hold their Saturday car show several blocks from the Best Western! An afternoon tour of Milwaukee for 10 persons will depart from the front door at 1:30 pm. A Miller Brewery tour will leave at 2:30 pm. Shopping excursions, a visit to the Historic Third Ward, and time along the RiverWalk are all available. Check the Reunion Activities article.

Our 50th Reunion 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 and the entertainment to follow!

### Sunday, September 21

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! ■

## REUNION ACTIVITIES

### Bus Tour of Milwaukee

Our 3 hour Milwaukee tours include a ride past the stately mansions along Lake Michigan and numerous photo opportunities at the city's most beautiful landmarks. We'll stop several times for you to walk around if you wish and use the restroom. We'll take in the Milwaukee Art Museum, North Point Lighthouse, Miller Park, and much more. At the Clock Shadow Creamery, we'll taste cheese samples. The Lakefront Brewery will provide a beer or soft drink tasting and a pint glass to take home with you!

Tours are scheduled for 10 am on Thursday and Friday, and 1:30 pm on Saturday. The bus seats 10 - please mark your reunion reservation form with the time you prefer.

### Miller Brewery

The Miller Visitor Center provides a free indoor/outdoor guided walking tour of Miller Valley, home to over 155 years of brewing history. The tour begins with a video depicting Frederick Miller's historic arrival in Milwaukee and today's modern day brewing. We can view the packaging center, shipping and distribution warehouse, brew house, and the historic Miller Caves. Experience everything from Fredrick Miller's arrival in Milwaukee to the high-speed production lines used today.

Tours begin with a video depicting Frederick Miller's historic arrival in Milwaukee to the company's transition to modern day brewing. We'll see up-close views of our packaging center, shipping and distribution warehouse, brewhouse and the one-of-a-kind historic Miller Caves! The Bavarian-style Miller Inn serves ice-cold refreshing samples of their finest brews for those 21 and older. Soft drinks are available for guests under 21 or upon request.

Tours are available Friday and Saturday afternoons. Sign up at the 14th Armored Division registration table!

### Milwaukee Riverwalk

In the heart of downtown, the two-mile long RiverWalk winds along the Milwaukee River with access to some of the city's best restaurants, brewpubs, shops and waterfront nightlife. Eye-catching public art gives the

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# 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.

- Roger O. Austin, 125 ENG B CO, died October 9, 2009 at the age of 90, in Rochester, NY; architect of prominent local buildings, community war memorial, and buildings at the University of Rochester; wrote and published a memoir of his war service in France and Germany; survived by three children and their families (Note: daughter Michele Zuck is new LIFE member of the Association.)
- Hobart H. Matthews, 62 AIB B CO, died March 13, 2000, in Washington; fought in Normandy and France campaigns prior to joining the 14th Armored Division as a replacement; survived by extended family including Eric Matthews, new LIFE member of the association.
- Robert L. Smith, 19 INF A CO, died February 26, 2009, in West Redding, CT; survived by extended family.
- Albert Elgin, 500 ARTY A BTY, died March 17, 2010, at the age of 91, in Winchester, VA; survived by one son and his family.

- Joseph J. Dabuliewicz, 87, 19 INF A CO, died December 2, 2012, in Greenfield, MA; retired from management of Conant Ball Furniture makers; amateur photographer and well-read man who loved history, focusing on WWII history in his later years; survived by two children and their families.
- Bill Lay, 62 INF SERV CO, died December 27, 2012, at the age of 87, in Topeka KS; worked in the construction field retiring as Superintendent; survived by wife Carol, children, step-children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
- Paul Perlinger, 90, 499 ARTY SERV BTY, died January 17, 2013, in Littleton CO; survived by extended family.
- Joseph D. Horlacher, 62 INF B CO, died December 24, 2013, in Jamestown, NY; recipient of Bronze Star, American Campaign Medal, WW2 Victory Medal, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, and New York

- State Conspicuous Service Cross; survived by three children and their families.
- Ron Medhurst, 92, unit unknown, died March 22, 2014, in Springfield, MA; 28 year Association member; survived by three children and their families.
- Neil Webster, 89, 62 INF A CO, died May 1, 2014 (four days after the death of his younger brother) in Bellevue NE; Past President of 14th Armored Division Association; attended reunions and family gatherings with sons and their families.
- Charles DeBoer, 19 INF C CO, died June 25, 2014, at the age of 92, in Ripon, WI; faithful attendee of reunions with his wife Twila and children; preceded him in death, and daughter Charlotte and their families.

## The 14th Armored Division Store

As in the past, we have provided several 14th Armored Division items for sale during our reunion. Our stock is decreasing but we would like to hear your suggestions for items of interest to everyone. We make a little profit on each sale, which is returned to our treasury.

### 14 Armored Division Patches - NEW

Several requests have been received from veterans seeking 14th Armored Division patches. We have been able to purchase both original and exact copies of the patch worn by each veteran, and will have them available at the Registration Table for \$10 each. Preference will be given to veterans. A list will be on the table in order to provide a patch to each person seeking one. Patches will be mailed as we are able to acquire them.

### Black Hats

We have for sale a few black ball caps with the insignia on the hat. Hats are free to veterans and \$10 for all others. Hats are adjustable.

### White Shirts

White T-shirts, with printing on the front, are still available in sizes M, L, XL, for \$10 each. White polo shirts have a small insignia on the left and sell for \$15. Sizes L, XL are available.

### Pins

Several years ago we ordered a large shipment of the traditional 14th Armored Division pins - and we corrected the name in print to Liberators. Pins are free to veterans and may be purchased for \$10 by others.

### Mouse Pads

Last year's new items were mouse pads featuring the American Flag and "14th Armored Division Association, Inc." imprinted. Mouse pads are free to veterans and \$10 for all others.

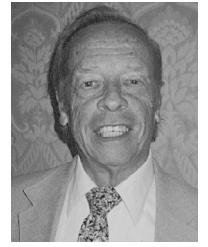




## THE CHAPLAIN'S COMMENTS

John A. Burgess

## THE BUMP IN THE ROAD



*Editor's Note: The following column by Chaplain Burgess first appeared in the 2004 Summer issue of The Liberator. During the ensuing ten years there certainly have been many bumps in the road for our ageing and diminishing membership but our chaplain's comments ring as true now as when first published.*

I enjoy spring! A larger quantity and an increasing variety of birds begin to appear at the bird feeder. The grass becomes green. Flowers and tree buds burst into a beautiful floral display. The ponds explode into a melodic symphony. For us in New England accompanying the enjoyable features of spring is the annoying emergence of potholes created by the thawing action of frozen roads.

There is an aspect of life similar to this. Life can be progressing gloriously with much that is pleasing, pleasurable, and profitable. Then one day we face a problem that threatens to interrupt or even end our contentment and confidence. Faced with uncertainty and difficulty confidence erodes. This situation disrupts peace of mind and the assurance of an untroubled life.

It certainly is true that affliction and hardship disrupt the even flow of life. Adversity is not welcomed because of the negative and unpleasant results expected from difficult situa-

tions. Facing and proceeding through a difficult period can be more tolerable if one seeks to profit from an adverse situation by becoming aware of the possible benefit or opportunity that often accompanies it.

A popular song of past years suggested, "Always look for the silver lining." My mother was diabetic. The testing of urine indicated the presence of excessive sugar. One day she discovered blood while testing her urine. An examination by her physician revealed the presence of a tumor in a kidney. As a young child I heard her say it was fortunate that she had diabetes as this enabled an early discovery of the tumor. At that young age I did not understand how she would feel that way, but in later years I have come to appreciate her thought. One appropriate illustration is found in the life of Joseph recorded in the Old Testament. It undoubtedly was a difficult time for Joseph when he was sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers. At that time Joseph must have been unable to see any good in what had been done to him. However, later when he had been elevated to a high position of authority in Egypt, he was able to bring his family into that land where they were saved from possible extinction by a famine. When he revealed

himself to his brothers who had mistreated him as they came to Egypt in search of food, he said, "You had intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (Genesis 50:20)

No matter how unpleasant your current physical condition, how meager the financial resources, or how dim the anticipated future, the person who honors God's word and will, can be assured that God cares and will provide. In Brokaw's An Album of Memories a young soldier who was a prisoner of war in Germany records the increase of faith he received as a result of his experience as a prisoner of war. (p.172) "Death has faced me many times in the past months, and by the grace of my Lord and Savior I am here today to write this letter. I always considered myself a good Christian until I was captured, and then I learned what a fool I had been and what it really means to have faith and the power of prayer."

One of our responsibilities is to pray for one another that as a difficult situation may arise God will grant faith to find peace, hope and assurance in His love and presence.

John A. Burgess  
National Chaplain

### Reunion Activities...

*(continued from page 3)*

RiverWalk the feel of an outdoor gallery and colorful, user-friendly directional signs elaborate on the city's history. Stroll just as far as you wish.

Sign up for this Saturday afternoon opportunity at our registration table!

### Historic Third Ward

Saturday afternoon, stroll through Milwaukee SoHo, a six-square-block revitalized warehouse district, home to the Milwaukee Public Market, art galleries, theaters, trendy boutiques, specialty stores, restaurants and brew-pubs.

Sign up for this afternoon outing at our registration table!

### Southside Cruisers Car Club Show

Saturday from 3:30 - 5:00 pm, stop by the Cruisers' show at the corner of Layton & Howell, just a few blocks from the Best Western! They'r at Georgie Porgy's, where you can get a snack and a drink.

### Red Skelton Returns!

Thursday afternoon join us at 3:00 pm in our Hospitality Room for the Red Skelton Show on TV! Popcorn will be served!

### Collections of Yesteryear

Everyone is invited to share something you've collected over the years! Bring 3-5 items from your collections and we'll set them up on tables in our Hospitality Room! We've enjoyed looking through the collections - pack yours this year and show up all!

### Game Time

Thursday morning and afternoon (and any other time you're interested!) we'll play games in the Hospitality Room! Mexican Train, Hand and Foot, and Rummikub are just a few that are available! Bring your favorite game, too, and we can visit while we play every day!

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# LAST GATHERING OF VET GROUP IS BITTERSWEET

by Verlyn Hofer

(Formerly published as weekly newspaper column)

For the past couple decades a relatively small group of 14th Armored Division veterans of World War II who resided in the western part of the country gathered each spring in the Laughlin, NV-Bullhead City, AZ area to renew friendships and share memories. Along with family members, the old boys found something invigorating about these annual gatherings so they kept coming back each year until the sands of time seemed to be running out.

We had always wanted to attend one of these spring gatherings down in the desert country but for some reason or other never made it until this past week. It was announced that this would be the last of such meetings so it was now or never. This writer and his better half knew we likely couldn't make the journey on our own because of the necessary air and land travel arrangements. But with son Bill accompanying us, all went well and we got to see a few very old and dear friends.

Yes, the number of attendees has steadily dwindled through the years so there were only three of us vets on hand, the other 11 attending family members and friends of the old 14th

Armored Division which performed so valiantly in the liberation of Europe seven decades ago. Through the years many of us vets had kept track of one another through our 14th AD Association and our publication, *The Liberator*. It had been most enjoyable meeting old buddies at annual national and regional reunions held in various parts of the country but most of those comrades were now gone or can no longer travel.

That, we suppose, is what seemed to make it imperative that we travel out to Nevada for this one last gathering there. Up until a few years ago we would drive over to La Crosse, WI each early summer for a Midwestern gathering of 14th AD vets, but like similar groups in the Northeastern and Southeastern states, the sands of time decreed that we disband. There will be at least one more national reunion but no one knows right now if that will be the last.

As we gathered for our evening meal last Wednesday evening, there was a feeling of sadness as the three old vets—Joe, Gus and Verlyn—sensed that this might well be the last time

that we, along with the others gathered with us, would meet at such an event. The tough sergeant we knew, who later was awarded a battlefield commission, could not prevent showing his emotions. Gruff as we may have thought him to be, Gus shed a few tears as did Joe and yours truly. It was the end of an era.

But the memories live on and it is with a grateful heart that we look back on these many years of association with our comrades of the "greatest generation." Those memories are riveting, calling to mind the young men who did not return home with us from the war, and the many who did but have since answered their final taps.

At this point we don't know if we will get to attend another 14th AD reunion, but we do have our memories and will do our best to stay in contact with the diminishing number of old comrades who helped give our life a dimension which no one else could have. It's been a long, and sometimes trying, journey but one we're glad we made.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from page 1)

away but our future generations may come to know our contribution in World War II by reading this book. Thank you, Tim O'Keeffe.

We Veterans are all part of what is now referred to as "The Greatest Generation." We were also survivors of the Great Depression, when times were hard and just about every one had to make do with little. It made us stronger and united us all in the common good of our country.

What we as a nation accomplished from Dec. 7th, 1941 to Aug. 14th, 1945; just 45 months, is a testimony to what we can accomplish when we are truly a United States of America.

During World War II every one sacrificed and did their part in the war effort. All kinds of rationing for the home folks and in the end we were

victorious. Since the end of World War II we've had Korea, Viet Nam, Iraq and Afghanistan, and not able to claim victory in any of them; not the fault of our military but of the politicians. The only ones to have sacrificed in these wars since World War II has been the military and their families.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt called it a day of infamy, and so it was. But I think it was a time of infamy in the manner of treatment some of our Viet Nam troops received when returning home; especially from some of our Hollywood elite and those who gave aid and comfort to the enemy. In World War II they could have been hung or given prison time.

In Iraq, after the surge, our military achieved a victory at a heavy price and now we see some of the towns there back in the hands of the enemy. Our troops did their part but the political

leaders of this country and the United Nations, with their lack of leadership, have failed us again.

Many of our troops in Afghanistan have been on multiple tours of duty and again because of politics and the lack of leadership have been cheated of victory.

In war, there is no substitute for victory. To send our troops into battle without supporting them 100% is wrong and should never be allowed.

Keep our troops in your prayers. They have given much and asked little in return. I look forward to the day they can all return home.

I am looking forward to our reunion in September and hope you can join with us in Milwaukee at that time. Please make a special effort to attend.

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## Recalls Ferocious Battle at Barr

by Lt. Col. Edwin Ferris - 48th Tank Bn.

*Editor's Note: The following is a letter that Lt. Col. Edwin Ferris, commander of the 48th Tank Bn., wrote to his family on the 60th anniversary of the Barr battle. Elton Ross remembers Barr well, his tank also being hit there by bazooka fire. Many men of the 48th may have wondered what-ever happened to their commander.*

I shall now relate what I can about the events leading up to Barr.

We had orders to advance toward Strasbourgh but were diverted many times to the South - all the while encountering road blocks defended by light infantry and always mined. It took the aid of Engineers to get through. Enemy bazookas also came into play and the Battalion sustained its first casualties.

A rest at Shirmeck at a former German Hospital Villages of Valiff and Obernai were en route to Barr - came to later 28 November. Reconnaissance reported "quiet". The outer edges confirmed this. We proceeded slowly into the city - matter of fact through the center of town (I recall City Hall as we passed). Movement was not obstructed until the exit of town, right opposite Bossert Maison! There was a road block that must have taken 2 days to construct. It required the howitzer platoon to break it down then; allowing passage for a single vehicle at a time.

The S-3 tank got through and radioed me that there was an A/T gun to the left. At the time our main gun (75mm) was oriented right. Before we could traverse left, the tank was hit by 2 rounds which penetrated the sponson armor and entered vehicle. I was standing, and the shot penetrated

my left leg. The other round cut Lt. Kaufman in the middle. The vehicle immediately caught fire. I gave command "evacuate," but could not move an inch. I was stuck. My gunner used his shoulder to push me up, and then actually pushed me over the side. (Small wonder I did not receive severe fractures due to the 8 to 9 foot drop.)

We found ourselves in a fenced yard, and all the while small arms fire coming at us (our side arms left in tank). Gunner (Sgt. Kiley) saw a basement window that appeared accessible. He pushed and pulled thereto and as luck would have it, there was a coal chute right to the ground level. A swift push and we were both rolling down the chute. Hardly a deep breath and we found the entire basement occupied by uniformed German soldiers. I bade "goodbye's" to Kiley, but then the enemy personnel pulled me further inside. They summoned an enemy medic who taped my wounds and offered oral antiseptic which I refused.

This ensued for ???hours, ??? days. The hostile personnel evacuated the house, and 2 very young teenagers, JJ. Bossert and brother, hauled me in a wagon to the village hospital. Many wounded, German, French and U.S. were being treated. They moved me to an upper floor where we could hear the mortar fire actually on both sides of the hospital. After the village was secured, our own 48th Tank medics took over and placed me in the medivac system. The rest is history that you are familiar with.

In retrospect, I can only relate and describe the very ferocity and intensity of the fighting that developed in Barr.

Like a beaten, bleeding and bloody fighter, the tank column fought its way into that boiling inferno on sheer nerve, inch by hellish inch.

On the entire retrospect, it begs the observation (even question) as we entered the outskirts of the village - where we were - at least one of the inhabitants - who were teenagers at the time but now in their 70's - to give our column some "hint" that the town was a fortified bastion beyond imagination. Indeed, that is what the final result proved.

The rest is history - DC, Walter Reed, active duty, retirement from Sandia Base - retired to DC and entered CIA. After Pat and Danny received orders to W. Germany, visits and auto tours through Black Forest and seeing village "Barr" on map. Small distance. Stop at Village café and questions re: outlay. Finding "Maison Bossert." (Was not acquainted with name). We, son, Pat and I, inspected home and a young man asked us "can I assist?". When our name was revealed, an invitation and an unspeakably described welcome ensued. (Some way my name prevailed!!) As the video tape describes - His Honor, the Mayor and Dr. Krieg were summoned. In a surprise - or shock - Msieur (Dr.) Krieg exclaimed "Vous etes mort."

This is all I can add.

In summary, the concept of the entire post-war years, is "Peace Now Reigns" and we are all thankful that our relationship has blossomed to the second and third generations - and that is the hope and prayer of ours that it will continue.

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## VETERAN NEWS

**Harold Kiehne** is still in demand to talk to school children about the depression years and WWII. We hope to see him at our reunion this year. Har-

**No current addresses** are available for the following Active members of the 14th Armored Division. Please contact Ann Chelette if you have addresses to share.

John Burgess  
Herbert Clarke  
Robert C. Potts

**Don Edlebeck** writes that he recently moved into assistant living and surely doesn't want to miss any copies of the Liberator. He is 94 years old and served in the 125th Engineer Battalion,



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# A Tribute to George G. Wygal, and other Unsung Heroes

by Roger James, C-48th Tanker

I never learned what the middle "G" in George G. Wygal's name stood for. But, that was just one of the many things I never learned about him. He didn't volunteer much personal information but then none of us did either. We were totally involved with more important things like preparing our tank for battle. We didn't think much about being wounded or dying, but we knew that when shells began to fly each of us had to do his job well or none of us would survive.

I am not sure when George G. Wygal joined our tank crew but we were already in France. He was our "BOG", meaning that he was an assistant driver and he manned a 30 calibre machine gun. George had not trained with us at Camp Campbell, KY. I doubt that he had ever fired a machine gun or driven a tank before he was stuck in our tank as the fifth member of the crew.

One miserably chilly evening at Epinal, where we were working on our tanks, a soldier ran up to tell us he had just heard Axes Sally's nightly radio broadcast. It was startling. Since leaving Camp Campbell, KY, we had taken every precaution to keep the movements of the 14th Armored Division secret. But, Sally seemed to know us as well as the back of her hand. She told us in perfect English that we would all die in Europe. She named our officers one by one. "Fifth Column" enemies had been watching us for a long time. That angered more than frightened us, but German ruses during the entire war were very dangerous, especially those in the dark of night.

One of their first canards cost two lead tanks and the life of an excellent officer, First Lt. Russell Watson, a Native American. An authoritative voice speaking excellent English had ordered, "Turn on your lights." I don't know that anyone obeyed but the order still haunts those of us who were trapped after dark on an elevated roadway. That was the first and the last attempt of Company C, 48th Tank Battalion to ever attempt to take a night objective where German guns were likely to be zeroed in. Such costly lessons taught

us to become cagey fighters. I learned after the war that Captain Wilson had expected to be called up on charges because he refused the direct order of a superior officer to make a night attack during the race across Germany. Fortunately nothing happened.

One night Wygal sat hunched over a table writing. Howard Harper, our driver asked him what he was doing. "Well," drawled George, "I'm writing to my parole officer. I was doing time for being a cattle rustler and he got me out of prison to join the Army." That barely surprised us because back in Kentucky the company had an unusually high number of paroled convicts. Most of them escaped going overseas by committing some senseless crime for which they were returned to jail. They were usually poor soldiers, and frequent embarrassments to Captain John D. Wilson. Company C drew so many convicts that we wondered if our captain had enemies somewhere in higher rank. Their bragging at night after lights out were hair raising and obscene beyond description. But, Wygal never uttered a cuss word in my presence and seemed pleased when each of us offered to add a line or two to his letter stating what a reliable soldier he had become. I don't remember that he ever wrote to anyone else so he may have been experiencing for the first time camaraderie like four of us shared. At Rittershoffen the fifth man, our platoon sergeant, opened the top hatch and ran to hide in a broom closet. He had been scared out of his wits for weeks and virtually worthless. Harper took command and turned over driving duties to Wygal who had to keep the motors running fast enough to charge the tank's batteries so that the turret could be traversed. He performed admirably. Our crew, by being aggressive, saved the crews of two knocked out tanks. But, that is another story.

After many skirmishes, which had given us confidence in our weapons and in one another, we had arrived at Rittershoffen as "bloodied" troops. Most of us had learned our most important lesson. Being aggressive is the safest

way to fight a war. The 14th Armored Division and other experienced troops fought and stopped Hitler's last desperate attempt to have his armies break out into the Alsatian Plain and recapture Paris. The battle that lasted almost a week was called by General Jacob Devers, the greatest defensive battle of the war. Green troops of an infantry division that shall remain unidentified fled leaving their guns and equipment in a rout that was disheartening to witness. Our perimeter defense evaporated and that gave us a forsaken feeling. We overcame any anxiety by firing constant barrage which kept the Germans pinned down and unable to follow up on their sudden opportunity.

Our non-com was replaced by Lieutenant Joseph Conard and we were ordered to move to the center of the village where all the streets converged at a large church. The enemy was just around the corner. The Lieutenant told me to watch the steeple of the church. I was directing my gun to that elevation when he was suddenly inspired to shout, "Hard right." What inspired him to do so will always be a mystery because we never got the opportunity to discuss it with him. Harper's response had been full throttle ahead. But before we completed the turn we were hit and our right track was blown off. My canon was still in a useless elevated position. Harper tried to maneuver back, but missing one track made that impossible. The next shell struck our front slope creating a bright red area about a foot in diameter. Fire broke out. The Lieutenant shouted, "Abandon tank." He jumped out and we never saw him again. I leaped for the hatch but my steel helmet struck the barrel of the 50 caliber machine gun, knocking me back to the turret floor. Our loader, Clarence Wilde, thinking I had been killed, started to climb over me but I recovered and shot past him. I jumped off the tank on the safest side and was joined by Wygal who was holding his chest. He was obviously wounded. "Let's get behind the church," I yelled, but once there we didn't know what to do. I looked in through a frameless window open-

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## Tribute to George Wygal

(Continued from page 8)

ing to see nothing except the walls. Not a pew or anything else remained. The church was an empty burned out shell. I had never seen anything so totally obliterated.

To lighten our anxiety an American voice called out "Come over here and you will be safe." Those were the most welcome words I had ever heard. There in a doorway were two infantry machine gunners with their tripod mounted weapon ready for action. We rushed to the safety they offered and I had my first chance to examine

Wygal's wound. It was awful and he was grinding his teeth in agony. He was dying. I gave him my finger to bite and he clamped down on it with all his waning strength. The projectile striking our front slope had driven the butt of his machine gun deep into his chest.

As soon as Wygal died I rushed to report all that had happened to Captain Wilson. Wilson ran back with me to where Wygal lay and confirmed his death. He made no comment about Lt. Conard. Both Harper and Clarence Wilde had escaped. Howard ran as hard as he could and jumped over a jeep to reach safety. He was chased

by German machine gun bullets that peppered the ground just behind him. I don't know how Clarence escaped.

I have written this in belated appreciation for the many brave soldiers like George G. Wygal who served bravely and died without fanfare or recognition. I don't even know where he is buried but I'm sure it is among the seas of crosses that identify fallen heroes. Who can view all those thousands of crosses without shedding tears? Yes, our liberties must be defended. They are worth more than their terrible costs.

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## 14th AD PAST PRESIDENT NEIL WEBSTER SUCCEUMBS TO ILLNESS

Again members of the 14th Armored Division Association mourn the loss of another of the organization's past presidents. After being hospitalized for a time and then being under hospice care, Neil Webster died on May 1, 2014 in Omaha, Nebraska.

Natives of that area, Neil and his wife Anne made their home in Bellevue, NE nearly their entire married life of almost 63 years.

Born October 13, 1924, Neil entered the Army a few months after graduating from high school in 1942. After basic and specialized training, he joined

Co. A of the 62nd AIB as one of the unit's earlier infantry replacements. Thus he served during most of the 14th AD's combat time in the European campaign.

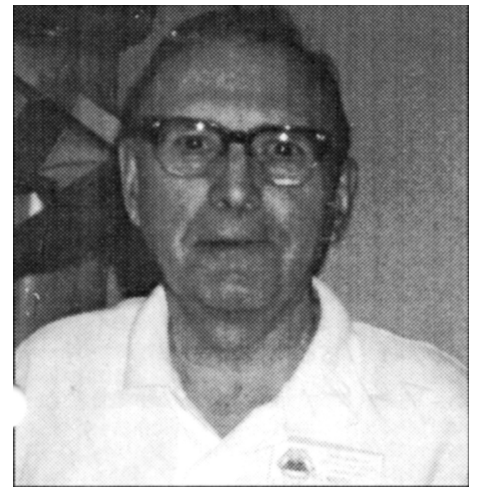
Although Neil survived the war without being injured, he did have some harrowing experiences and was recognized for his meritorious service, being awarded the Bronze Star Medal. He also received the French Legion of Honor Medal shortly before his death.

Upon returning home from the war, Neil worked mostly as a bookkeeper/accountant and office manager. He also kept books for a variety of small businesses for many years. He was an active member of his church for over 60 years, serving as finance officer of the congregation as well as an elder and usher.

Neil and Anne Webster attended their first 14th AD Association reunion in Minneapolis in 1987, and since had been active members of the organization. Neil served as National President in 1997 and was in charge of the reunion in Omaha that year. This was an especially trying period with the sudden death of National Treasurer Andy Tierno shortly before the reunion. With no one other than Andy being authorized to sign checks, Neil and others had to do some quick improvising but the reunion was deemed to be very enjoyable and successful.

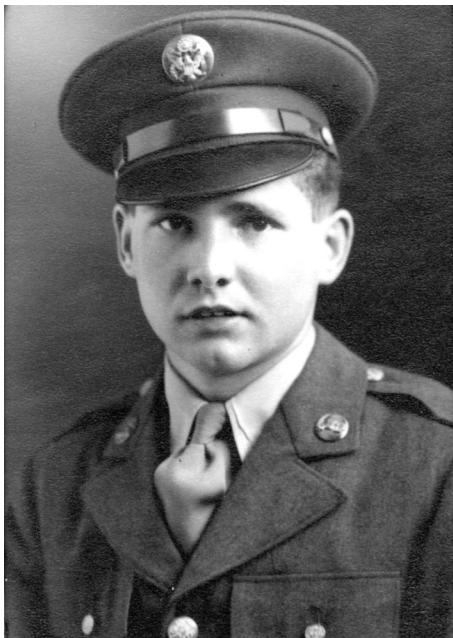
Funeral services were held on May

7, 2014 at First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue with interment in the Bellevue Cemetery. Memorials were designated to the church or the Alzheimer's Association.



**Picture of Neil at time he served as Association president.**

Survivors include Neil's wife, Anne; four sons and daughters-in-law: Robert and Sherryl, Richard and Suzanne, Roger and Julie, and Randy; five grandchildren and one great-grandchild; two sisters. Mr. Webster was preceded in death by his daughter, Carolyn.



**A very young Neil Webster before he went overseas to join the 14th AD.**

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# MY DAD: STAFF SERGEANT PAUL H. LANKFORD

of 3d Platoon, Company A, 19th Armored Infantry Battalion

By James Lankford

From the time I was old enough to understand a little about World War II I pestered my dad for stories and information about his experiences during the war. He loved telling humorous stories, so it was natural that he answered his young son's innumerable questions with funny, self-deprecating, or generally innocuous tales about his time in uniform. I never tired of hearing them repeated, and over time came to know them by heart. Later, after I had grown into a young man, he began to trust me with stories about the darker side of war that so often go unmentioned by combat veterans. Little by little I came to understand something of what he and his buddies had endured in battle.

My dad joined the 14th Armored Division in December 1942. In civilian life he worked as a supervisor at a Shell Oil Company refinery in far west Texas. True to form, the Army sent him to the infantry despite the fact it was struggling to locate men with his refinery and oil field experience to serve in the logistics side of things. Like so many others who found their skills seemingly misapplied, he shrugged his shoulders at the Army way of doing things, and settled in to learn his job as an infantry rifleman.

Already in his mid-20s and with some college under his belt, dad was quickly singled out by the Army to attend Officer's Candidate School. To the amazement and chagrin of his company commander, he elected to stay in the ranks as an enlisted man. Dad never explained his reasons for this decision, but from what little he said on the subject I came to believe it stemmed from a reluctance to shoulder the burden of making life and death decisions for the men under his command. It was a responsibility that he would find increasingly difficult to avoid as combat thinned the division's ranks.

At Camp Chaffee, dad quickly adjusted to the soldier's life, and found little difficulty with the regimen and rigors of infantry training. An avid

hunter and crack shot, he thoroughly enjoyed training and practicing with all types of infantry weapons ranging from the .45 caliber pistol to the 57mm antitank gun. He eventually earned a number of expert and marksman badges including those for pistol, 60mm mortar, M1 rifle, and 50 caliber machinegun. Despite having previously worked as a cowboy and oil field worker, dad soon found himself in the best physical condition of his life thanks to the Army's physical training program. By the time the division sailed for Europe, he felt he was ready "to whip his weight in wildcats."

Shortly after landing in the south of France, dad's battalion, the 19th AIB and the 68th AIB were ordered into defensive positions in the French Alps. There the armored infantrymen got their first taste of combat, and suffered their first killed and wounded of the war. After a week or so in the line, the two battalions were ordered to rejoin the rest of the division in northern Alsace.

They loaded their equipment onto trains, and boarded the dreaded forty and eight box cars (They could carry forty men cramped together or eight horses.) for the trip. Rather than be stuck in a cramped box car for several days, dad volunteered to guard a flat car carrying half-tracks. Occasionally, French men and women would approach the train when it was stopped, and attempt to climb onto the flat cars, presumably to get food, clothes, or something they could barter. They ignored his orders, barked in good old American, to get back. Finally, in desperation, he began yelling at them in the German he had learned from his mother whose family still spoke the language on a daily basis. The difference was night and day. Shocked, the French civilians followed his instructions without hesitation. They were accustomed to doing what they were told by German soldiers, and reacted with obedience even though an American was doing the ordering. Dad always laughed about this experience

saying the French knew Americans were pushovers and ignored them, but the sound of guttural German orders brought them to heel, so to speak, and in no uncertain terms.

Billeted in Alsatian homes among putative French civilians who spoke German, dad heard all sorts of remarks, some okay, but mostly negative, about the American soldiers now among them. This gave him the lasting impression that the people of northern Alsace were pro-German, especially as so many of their young men were in the German Army. For this reason he found it difficult to treat them as liberated civilians. One night after listening to a German speaking couple talking about how American were inferior soldiers, he lost his temper, and demanded to know, in German: "If the German soldiers are so much better, why are we here in your house, and not them?" The couple was stunned speechless.

Dad's answers to two of my questions, asked when I was a child, have stayed with me through the years. The first was; "Were you a hero?" After a brief pause he answered; "No, but I fought alongside some real heroes." Years later, after I was grown, I asked him about his answer, and he told me that to him the real heroes were those who never made it home. Among them was his best friend, Aubrey Finley, who died in a German ambush, but only after knocking out a machinegun nest that was killing and wounding his buddies.

The second question presented itself back when Jim Crow and segregation were still in full force in Texas where I grew up. I was still too young to have learned racism, especially as I was not exposed to it at home, and I was understandably confused by the Colored Only drinking fountains and bathrooms I saw everywhere (except my dad's business). One day some African Americans came into his place of business, and I innocently asked, "What is the difference between them and us?" He got down so we were

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## MY DAD: STAFF SERGEANT PAUL H. LANKFORD

*(Continued from page 10)*

eye to eye, put his hands on my shoulder, and said: "There is no difference. They bleed red blood just like you and me, and don't ever let anyone tell you different." He meant it. His business had separate bathrooms and separate drinking fountains, but he had removed the Colored Only signs after he took it over. He always treated people pretty much the same regardless of the color of their skin, and it was a valuable lesson for me as I grew up surrounded by racist attitudes and practices. Years later I discovered that during the desperate, bloody fighting in Hatten, my father had fought alongside men from one of the very few African American combat units. He knew from first-hand experience that they could fight as well as white men, and bleed the same color blood when hit by enemy fire.

By the time his company had fought its way into Hatten on 13 January, 1945, his platoon had lost its commanding officer, and several of its sergeants. It was so depleted that it was combined with another platoon that had suffered similar losses that day, and the two became a single, understrength platoon under one of the company's few remaining lieutenants. Dad became a squad leader at that time. This was a compromise of sorts because he was first offered another battlefield commission, but turned it down.

As the Battle of Hatten-Rittershofen evolved, the main German effort became focused against the defenders in Hatten. "Bloody Hatten" became a maelstrom of artillery, tank, and small arms fire as attacks and counterattacks raged in the form of general melees in which soldiers from both sides often fought for the control of single rooms. Gains for a day's fighting were gauged in individual houses, which were taken, lost, and retaken as the battle progressed. Bazookas blew holes in walls so Americans could move room to room and house to house. They threw 60mm mortar shells as hand grenades, and used captured German sub-machineguns for close in fight-

ing. It was the worst sort of fighting, and I never found a single veteran of Hatten who would describe his experiences there in any detail. Col. Hans von Luck, a regimental commander of the 21st Panzer Division, later became its commanding officer on the Eastern Front, said in his memoirs that on one occasion the Americans in Hatten defended their positions against attacks by German paratroopers and tanks using "guns, pistols, bazookas, and knives..."

In the mid-1970s dad mentioned that he would like to have a .45 automatic pistol like he used during the war. I gave him one for Christmas, and a few days later we went out to the country so he could shoot it. After firing the first clip, he paused and looked across the landscape and after a brief pause said; "One of these saved my life in Hatten." He refused to say anymore on the subject. Many years later, when I read Col. Von Luck's memoir, I came to understand just when and how a .45 automatic saved his life.

Late on 23 March 1945, Task Force Spokes, built around my father's company, was sent through a hole opened in the German Siegfried Line by elements of the 36th Infantry Division. Their mission was to move deep into enemy held territory and capture the last bridge standing across the Upper Rhine River located at Germersheim, Germany. The task force fought its way through demoralized, retreating German troops, and attacked the town. They were quickly repelled by an overwhelming number of German troops. The Americans withdrew and awaited the arrival of the entire combat command before renewing the attack. The next attack was eventually successful, despite the high number of casualties suffered by the men of the 19th AIB and 47th Tank Bn. As my dad's platoon advanced through the trees along the river, they came under very heavy artillery, mortar, and small arms fire from German positions on the high bank across the river. Just to his front an ammunition dump detonated with great force, and on the other side of the town he saw the bridge destroyed by explosives. The attack continued, and shortly afterwards, he

felt an enormous blow on his back, and was knocked to the ground. For a moment he had the bizarre thought that his buddy behind him had hit him with his rifle butt, before realizing he had been hit by German artillery. Covered in blood and bleeding profusely, he was still alert when his buddy pulled him into a shell hole and applied a battle dressing. Then, as Dad put it: "The next thing I knew was when I woke up in a hospital in England, two weeks later." For him the war was over, and after a few months in a Denver hospital he was released.

I learned a lot from my father, for which I will be eternally grateful. ■

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## Look What's Happening to Old Camp Chaffee

### Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine to be built at Chaffee Crossing

On Tuesday, February 18, 2014, the Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority (FCRA) board voted to convey 200 acres of real estate to the Fort Smith Regional Healthcare Foundation (FSRHF) for a proposed school of osteopathic medicine at Chaffee Crossing in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

This gift will change the economy of the Fort Smith region forever by creating high tech, high paying jobs as well as jobs that will be created through commercial, retail and service development near the college.

FCRA Executive Director Ivy Owen welcomed a crowd at the Janet Huckabee Arkansas River Valley Nature Center on Tuesday, February 18, 2014 to make the formal announcement of the \$58 million medical school. He was joined by FCRA board members, members of the FSRHF board and the Arkansas Osteopathic Medical Association, representatives of regional medical partners and local elected officials.

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## 62nd AIB Helps Administer "THE FINAL BLOW"

*Editor's Note: The following is from the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion history book written soon after the end of WWII in Europe. The authors are unknown. This excerpt is from Chapter III, entitled "The Final Blow." This final portion of "The Final Blow" chapter is a continuation from the portion appearing in the previous issue of **The Liberator**.*

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This aggressive fighting resembled the Vosges offensive and to the men who had joined the battalion after that particular phase it was a new experience. Resistance in most cases was not heavy and the columns progressed with not too much trouble. What was known as stiff resistance came only at sporadic intervals - a few defended villages, road blocks on which were concentrated artillery, blown bridges with artillery and sniper coverings, and occasional deliberate lines of defense. Weather conditions were better and did not appreciably affect the advance as had been the case in the Vosges Mountains. With the daily expectations of the war's end, the fighting was less nerve wracking in comparison to previous fighting. It seemed strange to be gaining twenty and thirty miles a day when a month before the winning or losing of that many feet a day was the difference between a major victory or a costly defeat. But the enemy was down, nearly out, and the final blow was being dealt.

The 3d of April, Captain Trammell was evacuated with hepatitis and Lt. Kosik assumed command of C Company. A and C Companies alternated as point companies in the march across Germany. B Company was held in CCR Reserve. On the 5th of April, B Company was given the mission of liberating allied PW's at Hammelsburg, 25 miles behind enemy lines. Many are the deeds performed by the men on this mission that will be remembered for time to come. The jump off came at 0800 after a heavy fight, the town of Morlesan was taken and cleared at 1500. Reorganizing was accomplished under heavy concentrations of artillery and mortar fire from the high ground to the front. Patrols removed bridge demolitions that night. The attack was continued the following morning. Resistance was overcome at 1100. Next resistance was encountered at Oberashenbach at 1200. Troops were dismounted after hard fighting the town was taken an hour later, snaring 45 SS men as prisoners.

Plans were formulated to continue the attack the final objective, Hammelsburg. The attack was made. 800 yards from the objective, a friendly column was sighted to the right - orders were received to halt the attack in place. Further orders pulled Company B back to Ashenbach to reorganize and revert to CCR reserve.

20 April, B Company was at Altenfelden at 1302 and received three counterattacks, the first at 1400 increasing in strength on each attack and each attack being repulsed with heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy. The Kraut then changed tactics and B Company was busy the next two days kicking him off the Autobahn.

On the 29th of April, B Company was resting comfortably in Furth when orders were received to assist, with the aid of CCR Rifle Company (Colored), the 68th AIB in the attack on Landshut. The town north of the RR being taken by the 68th, B Company on the left, CCR Rifle Company on the right, at 1100 attack from the right flank of the 68th. What with the terrain and blown bridges, the attack had to be made without the aid of tanks. With some of the bitterest fighting of the war, the town was taken house by house. The enemy utilizing to its fullest extent his artillery, mortar and direct fire with SP's and AT guns. Withering MG and rifle fire was encountered. At 1400 all of Landshut north of the Isar River was clear. Orders were received to prepare to be relieved by the 99th Infantry Division. Relief was effected at 1800." Company B again reverted to CCR reserve.

The seventh of April, the column was led by C Company who attacked and cleared Hunsbach and was then passed by A Company that spearheaded the attack on Gressthal, a village surrounded by high and open ground. Entering Gressthal, A Company dismounted and with the tanks of the 25th Tank Battalion on line across the field, giving supporting fire, the infantry advanced into the town. So intense was the fire from tanks, that many houses and barns were burning and the consequent heat and smoke were for the first half of the period the only detriment to the Americans. With the town cleared and prisoners on the way back, the company was reorganizing in preparation for further advancement when heavy artillery and mortar concentrations descended upon the town. So much a

surprise was the barrage that it caught the men unaware in the streets, as it did Major Richards and Major Higgins and Lt. Baldwin, who were wounded. Lt. Baldwin mortally. Five other men were wounded by this action and so frequent were the barrages that the column was forced to remain in Gressthal that night while friendly artillery gave counter-fire and eliminated the hostile elements. This halt also gave the artillery time to soften the defenses of the towns ahead, dejecting the morale of the enemy and easing the path of the Americans.

Among the prisoners taken in the towns along the route were some Germans who had fought the battles of Phillipsburg, Hatten and Rittershofen, members of both the Wehrmacht and SS. Their verbal fear of the 62d was to the Americans unsuspected praise; they referred to the battalion as "Sons of Hell," "American SS" and "Satan's Henchmen." These titles were based on the severity of the fighting performed by the battalion on the former engagements and rather than taking offense at them the men took pride that their accomplishments should be so appreciated by the enemy.

April 12th, A Company led the attack that carried the column to the Main River where it was halted by a blown bridge, though by the next day the 125th Engineers had repaired the bridge and the column advanced to Fernreuth, where the battalion remained to pick up prisoners from the town and surrounding woods. Two days later the battalion moved to Buchenbach, A Company leading and outposting Kaltenhall. C Company, 94th Cav Squadron Mecz, supported by Tanks fought off a counterattack on Creussen, an ancient fortress city well suited to the defense. At 1030 that morning of April 15th, a force of Jerry Infantry and tanks came rolling over an exposed ridge, toward the town. Tanks battled tanks, and Infantry fought Infantry. The air force was called in and gave excellent close support. That particular engagement cost the Germans 18 tanks and self-propelled guns and an undetermined number of Infantry.

The sixteenth, A Company sent the third platoon to outpost the Autobahn, where it spent the night in foxholes and captured over thirty prisoners. This temporary halt in the movement of the

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## THE FINAL BLOW

*(Continued from page 12)*

column did not place the battalion in reserve status as its task of policing the pockets of resistance was time-consuming and there was the ever present need for security, but it did give the men a breathing spell after so long a period of pushing. A Company was again in the lead, the eighteenth of April in the march to Wendelstein, where the battalion relieved the 106th Cavalry Group and covered that zone as protection for the flank of the 45th Division which was attacking Nuremberg. Again the battalion ran interference while another outfit carried the ball, a task without glory but one that is always vital to the success of an operation.

21 April at 0600, the battalion attacking to the south with C Company leading – meeting little resistance, Hilpstein, at 1000 was taken.

At 1200, A Company was ordered to assist the 25th Tankers' column in the vicinity of Allersburg, who were meeting stiff resistance. A Company made the attack with CCR Rifle Company (Colored). They will long remember the fighting there and the Krauts "Tiger" tanks.

The 23d of April, the attack was resumed and at 1600, C Company jumped off in the attack on Stauf, where the Germans were well emplaced and were placing heavy fire on the 47th Tankers column to the Battalion's right. In a well planned and surprise attack the Kraut was com-

pletely routed with heavy loss of personnel and C Company held the town at 1830. The 24th, the advance was halted temporarily, by blown bridges over the Altmohl River in the vicinity of Hirnstetten.

The attack on Ingolstadt a week later was halted by a series of blown bridges and artillery concentrations on the columns, but on the 26th, the battalion crossed the river from Hirnstetten and secured Mailing, while the 86th Infantry took Ingolstadt on the right. Ingolstadt, lying on the West bank of the Danube River, was policed the following day by the 62d which also began to establish military order to the city and prepared for a long stay. But the next day orders were changed and the battalion crossed the Danube on the engineers' pontoon bridge and proceeded to the assembly area at Aigsbach from where it was ordered to move to Moosburg and take charge of the town and the immense prisoner of war camp there. This, too was cut short as the following day the battalion, led by C Company, was committed to establish a bridgehead on the high ground across the Isar River. In spite of concentrations of artillery and mortar the ground was secured and ready for the 99th Infantry to pass through, which they did in face of little resistance.

On snowy May Day the battalion crossed, in vehicles, the pontoon bridge and swung to the south to continue the race across Bavaria, A Company leading and capturing Buch, Geisenhausen, Bergham, and Vilsbi-

burg, where it was halted because of blown bridges. Another prisoner of war camp was liberated at Vilsbiburg, this time all Americans who had been captured in the vicious fighting of December and January in the Ardennes. The next day the bridge was repaired and the column moved on, stopping at Ampfing, where it began its first rest since crossing the Rhine. In Ampfing was found a Jewish concentration camp where the many prisoners were found starving and freezing to death, so seriously ill that in spite of American medical aid many died daily even after liberation. There the men learned that the war ended.

The reaction to German's unconditional surrender was sober, each man having realized the grim tasks yet to be performed as he remembered his comrades who had fought for, but had not lived to see that end. The first phases of nerve-shattering fear and heart-breaking reality were over; the end of the European war was as though a door had been opened, revealing in another chamber the same horrors that had just been vanquished with great expense in the first room. But, too, it meant half the world's fears were gone, warmly elating to the men who had helped make that dream a fact.

Burghausen, after Ampfing and Offenstetten, is at this writing the place in which the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion carries on its present commission, that of preserving the peace in which it revels. ■

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## History of the Machine Gun Platoon, 62nd Armored Infantry 14th Armored Division

By Arthur P. Roehrl

Headquarters Company of the 62nd which, included the Machine Gun Platoon and the Mortar Platoon, and Company C of the 62nd were stationed in Bannstein, France in December, 1944. Company C was on the left, Machine Gun Platoon in the middle and the Mortar Platoon on the right. Other units to the left or right of the Machine Gun Platoon were unknown. A potential attack by the German Forces was expected and thus forward units were set up. After further review the forward positions of the Machine Gun Platoon were pulled back to a tighter defensive position. Trip flares were left to give us a warning.

Then it was a matter of waiting. New Years Day was the expected attack day but exact time not known. The attack came somewhere before or after midnight and all manpower was utilized to stop the attack. Which unit was the point of the attack is unknown. All manpower as planned proceeded to the front lines.

I had just come off my shift and was getting into my sleeping bag when the attack came. Quickly the boots were put back on, coat and helmet put on and out the door as help was needed immediately. Wally Balash was there and so was A.T. Thompson. I took over the gun and started firing. Our posi-

tion had been noted by our attackers and a determined effort was made to wipe us out. Incoming and outgoing fire was heavy. The gun got hot and so headspace had to be adjusted often. A machine gun that won't fire is a useless thing. A burst of enemy machinegun fire hit inches from me and sprayed sand into my eyes. Down I went to clean out my eyes. When asked by Wally if I had been hit, I advised in the negative but noted my grenade was not on my belt. Unknowingly the enemy did a great favor as Wally found it with the pin half out. He pulled the pin and threw the grenade towards the enemy.

*(Continued on page 16)*

# REUNION RESERVATION - 14TH ARMORED DIVISION ASSOCIATION

50TH ANNUAL REUNION – MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN - Sept. 18-21, 2014

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

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

	EVENT #1 THURSDAY Sept 18	EVENT #2 THURSDAY Sept 18	EVENT #3 FRIDAY Sept 19	EVENT #4 FRIDAY Sept 19	EVENT #5 FRIDAY Sept 19	EVENT #6 SATURDAY Sept 20	EVENT #7 SATURDAY Sept 20
<b>CIRCLE PRICE OF EVENTS CHOSEN</b>	City Bus Tour for 10  10:00 am - 1:00 pm	CASH BAR 5:30 pm  DINNER 6:00 pm	City Bus Tour for 10  10:00 am - 1:00 pm	Lunch Buffet  11:30 am - 12:30 pm	CASH BAR 5:00 pm  DINNER 6:00 pm	City Bus Tour for 10  1:30 - 4:30 pm	CASH BAR 5:00 pm  BANQUET 6:00 pm <i>VETS FREE !</i>
MAN'S NAME	\$40	\$30	\$40	\$16	\$30	\$40	<i>Chicken \$36 or Steak</i>
LADY'S NAME	\$40	\$30	\$40	\$16	\$30	\$40	<i>Chicken \$36 or Steak</i>
GUEST NAME	\$40	\$30	\$40	\$16	\$30	\$40	<i>Chicken \$36 or Steak</i>
GUEST NAME	\$40	\$30	\$40	\$16	\$30	\$40	<i>Chicken \$36 or Steak</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>

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Reservations MUST be received by August 28, 2014

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# RECOLLECTIONS OF MY MILITARY SERVICE IN WWII

by L. T. Lakey

*Editor's Note: L. T. (Pete) Lakey has done a remarkable job of compiling and publishing recollections (and pictures) of his military service in WWII. We are privileged to reprint many of these writings and pictures in the next few issues of The Liberator. Of special note is the exact timeline of Pete's recorded experiences and the wealth of information regarding the many locations included in his writings. May 14th AD veterans have memories similar to those of Pete Lakey and will likely enjoy "comparing notes" in their memory banks with the experiences related here by the author.*

## FOREWORD

This write-up was started as a chronology of my activities in Europe during World War II that would help me identify sites during a planned tour in May 1995 of the 14th Armored Divi-

sion route in WWII.

During my service in Europe in 1944-45, I was not permitted to write about any of our locations nor the fighting that went on; furthermore, as an enlisted man, I was never told where I was nor given any maps. However, in recent years, I have picked up numerous books and pamphlets that provided details of the battles. The original chronology prepared for the 1995 tour has been expanded to include photos from my files and the published reference material.

An update allowed me to add more recollections to the draft, particularly on the fighting at Gemunden and Steinfeld.

The 1995 tour brought me into contact with many members of the 62nd

AIB of the 14th Armored Division who were able to provide more information that has been included. These members are Howard Boise (C Company), James Booth (A Company), Verlyn Hofer (A Company), Daniel Iannella (A Company), John Stenger (C Company, 84th Medical), and Neil Webster (A Company).

In reflecting on my military service, I notice my feelings have changed since beginning this write-up. After the war, I had put the service behind me, other than harboring some cynicism about people in leadership positions, particularly if they are arrogant as I find is the case with many politicians and military people. My return to school, marriage and employment in

*Continued on page 19*

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## FOG OF WAR...

*(Continued from page 17)*

(a captain) by a 'runner' who checked back and forth from the Captain quite often. The runner also delivered the mail, news, rumors and gossip. If the Platoon Leader Lt. had to contact the Captain otherwise, he went himself or sent somebody. There was one jeep per battalion, for the battalion commander. He could ride back and forth between companies and battalions. The next company or battalion might be several miles away. So often the riflemen in one unit didn't know exactly what the one next to it was doing, or even where it was. The 70-lb backpack battalion radio was FM, and the company radio was AM, so a company could only talk to the next company if it was close enough. Telephone wire was the other communication means.

Our Company A patrol was sent to a village between Co A and Co B at night to see if Germans were still there. Just as the lead soldier peeked around the corner of a building, he was face-to-face with another group of soldiers. Because the Germans had recently dressed in US uniforms to get through US lines, they both were very suspicious. They argued about who would give the first half of the password, and would give the last half. Each reasoned the other, if German, could have heard the first half earlier while approaching

a US position and being challenged, then leaving.

After 5 or 10 minutes, both groups decided since most of them could speak English, and sounded American, they must be American. The one patrol identified itself as Co A and the other as Co B patrols and they each went back the way they came.

### Fog of War – The Challenge

The challenge as in "Halt, who goes there?"

The 'Battle of the Bulge,' which you may have heard of, had already stopped the German advance at our company village. Our regiment of 3 rifle battalions was in reserve status getting replacements after the battle of Hurtgen Forest in November '44, and the 'Battle of the Bulge' in Dec '44. The other two regiments may have been in the active front lines, I didn't hear any scuttlebutt about them. The 'old soldiers' (those left from Hurtgen Forest and the Battle of the Bulge) were very anxious when we replacements arrived, because they were at such low strength of about 15%. Plus the reports of Germans disguised in US uniforms.

With three rifle platoons and one weapons platoon to a company, one rifle platoon and the weapons platoon guarded the company village, one platoon was on outpost duty, and one platoon tried to sleep after coming off outpost or patrol duty. No window glass

remained intact, but buildings cut the wind.

The company had one truck, the kitchen truck which had to be kept hidden in a barn to prevent drawing artillery fire. Artillery firing at a vehicle was cost-efficient, but artillery firing at riflemen was not unless they were tightly grouped or in attack.

Most villages were "T-shaped" with 3 roads to guard against rapid attack. Our squad had first guarded against attack down one end of the "T", and another day we were guarding near a different end of the "T", but not the last building. I was posted facing the road in a second story window, and ordered to challenge without exception anybody passing by.

Because the Battle of the Bulge was still active a little further north, another possible attack was perceived. So, at last the challenge! A soldier was going by toward the last building at the end of the village, and he could have been a disguised-in-US-uniform one-man enemy patrol. I challenged him! All I got was the usual GI EXPLETIVE! And the soldier continued on without even looking up. He didn't sound like anybody I knew, but sounded GI (government issue) and was coming from the center of the village, so I did nothing, not even reporting to my squad leader. That was at least my 4th chance to shoot a US soldier that I didn't.

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# THE FOG OF WAR

By PFC Loren "Slim" Herton, 22nd Inf. Regt, 4th Inf. Div.

*Editor's Note: Although Slim Herton was not a member of a 14th AD infantry unit, some of his experiences were not unlike those of the 19th, 62nd and 68th AIB. Those who joined an infantry unit as a replacement can surely appreciate and empathize with the author's fears and frustrations. Slim was later wounded in action and spent considerable time in an Army hospital before returning home. He passed away in Seattle where he lived in more recent years.*

## Fog of War: Best Communication Experience.

*A little humor and a little empathy felt while on outpost duty about a week after I got to my unit as a rifleman replacement.*

It was my platoon's turn to man an outpost about a mile from the village our company was stationed in. It was at the top of a 20-ft-high cliff overlooking a railroad about 300 yds. below. Between the cliff and the railroad was a thin stand of tall fir trees and a large boulder about 50 ft. above the railroad track. About a half mile of open field below the railroad track led to the river. We went there at dusk to be less likely to be observed.

My squad of about 7, plus a light machine gun from the weapons platoon, occupied the outpost at the top of a 50-ft. long ravine. The ravine led down to the top of the cliff from the higher open field we came across to help there. The light machine gun covered that open field behind us against surprise attack from the rear.

Three soldiers at a time, from the outpost group, were sent down an adjacent ravine which had enough of a rock pile at the cliff edge, it could be walked down. The trail was to the edge of the cliff, turn left to the walking ravine rock pile, and go down to the observation point (OP).

As we three started to the edge of our ravine, the soldier from NY City who didn't seem at home in the dark, slipped on the icy trail and was headed over the cliff. I grabbed him by the foot to stop him. His helmet went clanging down the cliff! So we all got a laugh then! Some quiet! That was the humor moment.

One soldier would stand guard at the top of the railroad track with the BAR (Browning automatic rifle). The other 2 would sleep behind the large boulder if they could, and listen to the phone.

Periodically, the Germans on the other side of the river would fire tracers into the air from automatic weapons. We figured they were trying to give their superiors the impression they were doing good in a firefight. A little chuckle from that observation. Everyone tried to be as quiet as possible.

We had a sound-power phone at the observation point above the railroad track. The sound of your voice furnishes the power to hear for a short distance, a glorified "string phone" you could call it. It was connected to the outpost at the top of the cliff. The outpost was connected to the company in the village by battery phone. It was all hooked into the battalion network.

While I was on the phone behind the boulder we heard a firefight going on far to our right. I heard another unit officer report to his superior. He said he was pinned down by machine gun fire in the orchard outside the village they were patrolling or attacking, and could he retreat out of there. He apparently got the OK, although I didn't hear it.

The firing stopped except for one lone US rifle we could recognize from the sound. I visualized the lead soldier, too close to the village without being able to retreat. Too far to risk retreating under machine gun fire, too close to take the village alone, firing until he ran out of ammunition. The firing stopped about 20 minutes later. Although I didn't know what actually happened, my emotion was a terribly lonesome feeling (empathy) for the possible situation of an individual soldier. Still brings a few tears and chokes me up to write and think about it. And it is all just imagination of what happened.

The idea of the observation post at the railroad was to surprise any German patrol walking along the railroad track. Because the Germans were short-handed on the Western Front compared

to the Russian Front in January 1945, they often employed one-man patrols. That way, if he was killed, taken prisoner, or surrendered, they only lost one soldier. So on my turn with the BAR just above the railroad, it was my turn to start the action if a figure showed up in the moonlight on the track. In front of our company area, a figure could be assumed hostile.

Then guess what happened about an hour after the firing stopped to our right. It was fortunate I had heard the phone conversation during the firing to our right, so it gave me a mental picture of what was going on. All of a sudden out of the moonlight and snow, about 50-100 soldiers were coming at me along the track from the right. They were silent, and about 100-ft. to the right, they turned up the bank into the trees beside us. My group of three said nothing, did nothing, and they went on up. Apparently it was Company B whose officer must have known where the border between the company areas of responsibility was.

About a month later when in another town, we had ordnance inspection. Our usual squad BAR rifleman reported the BAR we had used would not fire automatically because it had a broken spring which fed cartridges from the magazine.

I often think my biggest contribution was that I didn't shoot at any US soldiers, at least! It was the third time in my first week that I could have, and the fourth occurred a few days later.

## Fog of War - Night Patrol

I got this story second hand about a week after I joined my unit. Maybe you have heard the phrase 'fog of war' referring to the confusing. In WWII there was one AM-D-battery-powered walkie-talkie per company; our company was about 100 men after our 80 replacements arrived. (Full company was supposed to be 163 men.) The handheld (2-4 lb) walkie-talkie was supposed to be good for a mile, but in the cold and if used a little, it didn't work that far. Each platoon kept in touch with the company commander

*(Continued on page 18)*

## HISTORY OF MACHINE GUN PLATOON...

(Continued from page 13)

We did note the firing of a machine gun from one spot, moving to another spot and coming back to the first spot. We zeroed in on the first spot and when he started firing we returned fire. Firing stopped.

Time stood still. You are too busy to wonder if it is cold, if you are hungry, or want a slug of water, etc. Night turned into day but we were so busy it was not noticed.

Cpl Don Ferguson came and advised we would have to pull back and take up another position. I was first to move to a berm to my right and Wally and I stayed there to cover the withdrawal of the other gun on our left. This was then done and we moved.

My gun was then set up in front of the station. Movement of German soldiers was noted and thus firing commenced. Direction of the German soldiers was towards the Platoon Headquarters which was at a diagonal of my position. Firing from the windows of the station continued. I never noted whereabouts of Wally Balash but I never ran out of ammunition. Sometime later I turned to see who was firing from the window. I noted a German rifle grenade hit the concrete sill of the window. It was a dud as it did not explode but fell and lay beside me. I continued firing.

Something hit me. Logically another rifle grenade had exploded. The next thing I knew I was laying on my back. I managed to get into the building. There Don Ferguson was responsible for getting me to First Aid Station as he helped me into a Peep driven by Peter Blom. When I woke up I was in the 23rd General Hospital, Vittel, France. Thirty plus days I was back with the Machine Gun Platoon and found out only 11 of the 44 members of the platoon were there. I was the only one who ever came back. What happened to the other 32 - captured, wounded, missing in action.

On May 11, 1945, the following CITATION was issued by A.G. Smith, Major General, USA Commanding, Headquarters, 14th Armored Division:

"By direction of the President, under the provisions of Army Regulation 600-45, 22 September 1943 as amended, the Bronze Star was awarded to the following named enlisted man per General Orders No. 42, this Headquarters,

### CITATION:

"ARTHUR P ROEHL, 17 144 867, Private First Class, Headquarters Company, Armored Infantry Battalion, 14 Armored Division. For meritorious achievement near Bannstein, France on 1 January 1945. Private Roehrl steadfastly and courageously remained at his machine gun post covering a withdrawal in the face of a fierce counter-attack by enemy troops, despite small arms, mortar and artillery fire even though he was exposed to the enemy. Because of his unyielding devotion to duty, he prevented his section from being cut off, allowed cover for withdrawing friendly troops and continued to exact a heavy toll from the enemy until he was wounded."

Under other General Orders, Don Ferguson, John Gleason, Walter Balash, A.T. Johnson, Robert Calva and all the others or most of the others also received the Bronze Star Medal. (All general orders have the same format as above and the detail as furnished.)

Upon my discharge from the hospital I was asked where I desired to be assigned and I chose coming back to all my friends in the Machine Gun Platoon. Thus I came back about February 5, 1945 and was warmly welcomed. Replacements had been received and promotions awarded to those left behind. I was back as Machine Gunner Number One and was still assigned to Sgt. Don Ferguson.

I insisted in having a photograph of the 11 men who were still there and thus the photograph follows. Also there is a photograph of me and others which was taken in Burghausen, Germany, the site of our barracks immediately after the war was ended.

After I returned to the States and was discharged I maintained friendship with Don Ferguson. I returned to St. Thomas College and upon graduation in 1949 I applied for and received an appointment as a Special Agent with the FBI. In 1951, I was assigned to the FBI Office in New York City. One day I received a call from Don Ferguson advising he was going to visit Leroy Miller in Syracuse, NY. He asked if I would join them. I did visit them and thus a photograph was taken which has become part of this narrative.



Photograph taken in February 1945 when the 62nd Armored Battalion was in rest area. Identity of the 11 members of Machine Gun Platoon left after the battle of Bannstein: Front row left to right: Sgt. Andrew A. Golic, Centerville, Iowa, S/Sgt Donald E. Ferguson, Friend, Nebraska, S/Sgt Leroy Miller, Syracuse, New York, PFC Richard B. Babcock, Battle Creek, Michigan; Second row left to right: T/Sgt John J. Gleason, Los Angeles, California, T5 Charles Johnson, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, T5 Arvil T. Johnson, Nacogdoches, Texas, PFC Walter Balash, Auburn, New York; Third row left to right: Cpl Lester W. Swengel, Seymour, Indiana, PFC Roberto Calva, St. Paul, Minnesota, PFC Walter G. Patton, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



Photograph taken in May 1945 in Burghausen, Germany. First row: PFC Arthur P. Roehrl, Melrose, Minnesota; Second row left to right: PFC Anthony L. Mayhew, Jr., Washington, DC, S/Sgt Donald E. Ferguson, Friend, Nebraska; Third row left to right: Cpl Alfred Gerber, Oak Park, Illinois, T5 Charles Johnson, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, T/Sgt Jon J. Gleason, Los Angeles, California.



Photograph taken about 1952 in home of Leroy Miller, Syracuse, NY. Left to right: Leroy Miller, Syracuse, New York, Arthur P. Roehrl, New York, New York, Donald E. Ferguson, Friend, Nebraska.

## RECOLLECTIONS...

(Continued from page 18)

challenging jobs through my working career literally wiped out any memories of the wartime years. It was only after starting preparations for our 1995 tour that memories of those years began to fall into place.

After going through the records for this write-up, I began to feel somewhat humble, wondering why I, out of the 250+ men in my company, had been spared the fate of the 42 who died and the 78 who were wounded in Europe. It certainly wasn't bravery; I was a scared kid through all of it. I can only hope that my contribution to society has been sufficient to somewhat make up what those men would have brought to us had they come through unscathed. Captain Iannella expressed the same feelings in his 1995 Christmas card which follows:

Dear "Lakey:"

*Holiday Greetings and Best wishes for a healthy, comfortable, successful, happy year. The holiday season, a beautiful time to remember those we love and respect, recall how they enriched our lives. I remember you as an outstanding young man and fine soldier.*

*The highlight for me this year, was being with you and Dr. Booth at Hatten. I am so proud of you, your accomplishments - a nice feeling.*

*Last July I visited the graves of Sgts. Woertendyke and Bachman, two of our finest. Have been at the gravesites of all "A Co" men buried overseas, 27. On behalf of "A Co." expressed our sorrow and gratitude. They were so young - courageous - they missed so much. It still hurts. How many of them could have been Lakey's, Booth's, Scott's, Hinrich's, Gen. Rooke's, Pazaris?*

*Hope all is well, my best always.*

*Sincerely, and with appreciation*

*Dan Iannella*

The Christmas card was received from Captain Dan Iannella in December 1995. Iannella was Captain of A Company, 62nd AIB, from the time of my assignment with the unit in February 1944 until his being wounded and captured near Hatten, France in January 1945. I had not seen him since then until our meeting on the 1995 tour.

### PRE-SERVICE ACTIVITIES

(December 1941-July 1943)

07 Dec 1941 - War declared upon Japan and Germany. I heard the news at 313 South Fifth in Bozeman, MT. This was the boarding house where I

was rooming during my first year in college at Bozeman.

30 Jun 1942 - Registered for the draft. I wanted to enlist in the Air Force, hoping to be a navigator, but my Dad talked me out of it, urging me to stay in school.

Sept. 1942 - There being a shortage of farm hands, students were offered an opportunity to work in the sugar beet fields near Fairview, Montana. Montana State College at Bozeman supplied a couple hundred, among them myself. We traveled by train and spent two weeks in the fields but I'm not sure we paid our way.

12 Dec 1942 - Classified 2-A (student deferment).

08 Jan 1943 - Reclassified 1-A.

13 Jul 1943 - Went to Butte, MT by train with a group of about fifty for induction into service. Returned to Missoula for 3-week furlough.

04 Aug 1943 - Took train from Missoula to Ft. Douglas, Utah where my active service began.

### BASIC TRAINING

(August 1943 - November 1943)

10 Aug 1943 - Left Ft. Douglas by train with seven others, traveling through Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama and Georgia. First time I had been out of the Montana, North Dakota, Idaho and Washington area. The further south we got, the hotter it was. I remember being off the train in St. Louis and noting that the shirts and blouses worn by everyone there were soaked with sweat.

Another incident I remember is being seated in a coach reserved for blacks because the train was nearly full. There were no problems but the eight of us got a lot of derision from the blacks.

15 Aug 1943 - Arrived at Ft. Benning, GA and assigned to 15th Company, 4th Battalion, 4th Training Regiment, ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) located in the Harmony Church area of Ft. Benning.

Basic training consisted mainly of physical conditioning (calisthenics, hikes, obstacle courses) and courses on military lore (organization, combat, health, etc.). The heat was so bad we had to take salt pills with the result that my fatigues would be rigid with salt if I didn't wash them before going to bed.

Not being a top athlete, I had trouble with the calisthenics like the chinning and pushups we were faced with. However, I was able to stay with the best on endurance exercises (Indian heritage?). The few leaves we were giv-

en allowed us to go into town where our time was spent mainly on theater shows or at the Red Cross lounge.



*A friend, Wayne Dean and Pete (right) on leave in Columbus, Georgia - October 1943.*

At Benning, I got an early education on the roles of officers, and enlisted men. Through newsletters from Bozeman, I had learned that several classmates from Bozeman were enrolled in Officers Candidate School (OCS) nearby. As juniors in ROTC, they had qualified as officer material. On an afternoon off, I visited the OCS area but was turned back by an officer who made it plain that the area was off limits to enlisted visitors.

### ARMY SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAM (ASTP)

(December 1943 - February 1944)

24 Nov 1943 - Transferred to ASTP studies in civil engineering at the University of Cincinnati. Address was Co C, Section 4, 1555th SU University of Cincinnati, 21, Ohio.

Life at Cincinnati was soft. Having had two years of college. I didn't have to study hard and was excused from evening studies. This gave me chances to see many of the "big bands" like Tommy Dorsey and Kay Keyser providing entertainment in downtown Cincinnati.

02 Jan 1944 - Promoted to Private First Class.



*Some of the ASTP students who were doing their "book learning" at the University of Cincinnati. Pete Lake was among this group.*

*Continued on page 20*

## Rev. Pfalzgraf writes about Des Alsaciens en GI's

Dear Veterans, Liberators and friends,

I can remember that as a boy who had not reached entirely his eight years on the 6th June 1944, my grandfather, listening to the radio, could tell me that American and allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy. Since then I went twice to Normandy, the first time with my wife, Liliane, and our two children, Anne-Mary and Christian, to show them the beaches and monuments recalling the D-Day. The second time I was visiting as a pastor the military graveyards with other persons.



The photo above is taken out of the DNA, (les Dernières Nouvelles d'ALSACE), the Alsatian Newspaper giving each day the latest news and informations in the world, in France and in our whole region. What you can see on the picture are some of around twenty men from Alsace on the way to Normandy at the beginning of this

month. They belong to the "Military Vehicles Conservation Group EAST (the president is Bernard Rost) and to the the US Army Group of Alsace (the president is Jacky Becht of Huttenheim). It took them 3 days to drive to the Camp of Isigny in Normandy with 10 jeeps, Dodges, GMC and a Harley-Davidson. They took with them American military tents of the same period. The Camp of Isigny looked like a camp of the US Army. Italians, Belgians, citizens of Bordaux, from Great Britain, etc. were clothed "olive drab". Many nationalities payed tribute to the multitude of liberators who courageously landed by wearing "kaki sauce rooswelt clothes". A little group of American Veterans who landed in June 1944 came again and got in touch with a few still living older French persons there. They were so happy to meet again 70 years later!

The Alsatian groups intend to renew their visit to the landing beaches every 5 years and for this the younger ones are to take two weeks off and as much for the preparations. Their wish is to show to the population what the dear and courageous liberators looked like in Normandy and in the numerous regions they went across to bring liberation and help to the population and not at last to the population of Alsace some 5 months later. We in Alsace had the pleasure to be liberated at our turn. We remember the courage and help

which we got from the 14th Armored Division coming from Pfaffenhoffen and the tanks, on whose leading one was Robert McClarren, to deliver the area up to Rittershoffern and Hatten. And I must say the same of other military groups working together with the same love, courage and great bravery. Of course we discover more and more that the older generation who met our liberators in Alsace and liked to welcome warmly those who came to see us is decreasing from year to year.

But as told here above, the love and admiration is going on in other forms in Alsace, in clubs and in museums as in Hatten, etc. Our liberators and friends are not forgotten.

We hope you'll have a blessed, cheering up and wonderful reunion in September. My greetings go to you all, to those I had the chance to meet and to all the others. I limit myself in mentioning the chaplain John Burgess, Fred Harsberger and John Meyer. I truly enjoy receiving and reading The LIBERATOR, a mine of memorable testimonies.

With our best wishes of blessings for you all, dear friends. We are full of admiration for all you have done and are doing and not the least for the wonderful Ladies who do so much.

Rev. Georges Pfalzgraf, Liliane and friends

### RECOLLECTIONS...

(Continued from page 19)

05 Feb 1944 - ASTP detachment at Cincinnati was called in to the school auditorium and informed by the commanding officer that because of the need for replacements in Europe, we would be assigned to combat units as replacements.

#### 14TH ARMORED DIVISION TRAINING IN THE STATES (March 1944 - August 1944)

15 Feb 1944 - Transferred to the 14th Armored Division at Camp Campbell, Kentucky and assigned to the Machine Gun Squad, 3rd Platoon, Company A, 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion (62nd AIB).

Each company had about 200+ men, organized into three platoons and a headquarters group. Each platoon represented about 65 men when fully staffed and included three rifle squads,

a light machine gun squad and a mortar squad. Each squad had twelve men and their own half track. I was assigned as the lead gunner for one of the two machine guns in my squad. We also carried a "bazooka" for defense against tanks. The following picture of the Second Platoon Light Machine Gun Squad



shows our equipment.

*Machine Gun Squad, Second Platoon, Company A, 62nd AIB at Camp Campbell, Kentucky: (L to R) Sgt. Gordon L. Hanson, Pfc John Tarnoski (missing in action), Pfc Raymond D. Main (killed at Hatten), Sgt. Robert E. McCorkel, S/Sgt. Clyde E.*

*Woertendyke (killed in Vosges Mtns.), Pfc Chester J. Geno (wounded at Hatten), Pfc Achilles R. Mandia, Pfc Ward W. Wubbels (killed at Hatten), Pfc Raymond Justice, Pfc William B. Guerrant (killed at Hatten).*

Being assigned to an "armored" unit carried with it a sense of pride as it was preferred to being assigned to a regular infantry unit. However, as I was to learn later, the "armor" didn't provide much protection. We rode in "half tracks" which resembled a grain or coal truck covered with 3/8" steel plate. Instead of rear wheels, the vehicle had crawler tracks, hence the name "half track." The squad sat on bench-type seats in the back, while the driver and squad leader were up front with the squad leader usually in a standing position inside a large metal ring on which a 50-caliber machine gun was mounted. Two 30-caliber machine guns were mounted on pivots, one on each side of the back of the vehicle.

(Continued on page 21)

## Western States Chapter Holds Final Reunion

As previously announced by Joe Fitz, the final gathering of the 14th Armored Division Association Western States Chapter was held on April 8 and 9, 2014, in Bullhead City, Arizona.

Again Joe Fitz was the official host, having made the plans for the group to meet and eat together at the Casa Serrano Restaurant. The diminishing number of veterans able to attend the annual gathering prompted the decision to make this the last meeting of the Western States group.

In the group of 14 people who attended the event, there were just three men who served with the 14th AD during WWII, they being Joe Fitz of 136-C, and Gus Hinrich and Verlyn Hofer of 62-A. Others in attendance were Doris Hinrich, Mary Hofer, Bill Hofer, Marguerite Jungles, Susan Tucker, Jim and Taeko Lankford who represented 19-C, as well as Mike and Teresa Gail McAfee, Joanne Smith Mello and Bruce

Mello, all of whom represented 48-C.



**The three 14 AD vets at gathering: Joe Fitz, Gus Hinrich and Verlyn Hofer.**

Most of those in attendance stayed at a hotel in Laughlin, Nevada, just across the river from Bullhead City. The group also gathered for an enjoyable breakfast together at the hotel on Wednesday morning, April 9. It was evident that the warm weather was appreciated by those from cooler climates.

Saying goodbye Wednesday evening of the gathering was bittersweet

for attendees, knowing that this was likely the last time many of them would see one another. All expressed their thanks to Joe Fitz for making possible these gatherings for a number of years, and for the many wonderful memories shared over the years. All were encouraged to attend the national reunion to be held in Milwaukee in September.



**Dining room at Western States last gathering was all decked out with festive balloons.**

## RECOLLECTIONS...

*(Continued from page 20)*

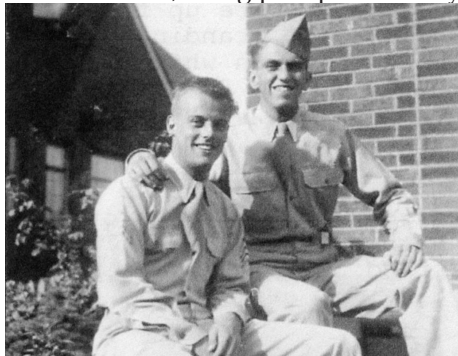
The half track was used mainly to move us up to the front, after which we rode on the tanks or walked as any other infantryman would. We also learned that the person standing in the machine gun ring-mount up front made an ideal target for snipers.

Training at Camp Campbell was aimed at merging us with the old line cadre, improving our physical condition and familiarizing us with firearms. I particularly liked the latter and scored as "expert" with the rifle, carbine, 50 caliber machine gun, 30 caliber light machine gun and thompson sub-machine gun.

At this time, my squad was led by S/Sgt James Hatch from Lake City, AR and he was backed up by Sgt Hugh Batchelder from Laconia, NH. Other members included the driver, Steve Pachula of Attica, NY, William Dahlman of Cincinnati, OH, James Shaw of Cartersville, GA, Harlis Williams of Leonard, TX, Charles Guinta of Rochester, NY, Harry Howland of Coldwater, KS, Olaf Hafstad of Kerkhoven, MN, James Booth of Mathison, MS, and George Ward of Glendale, CA. Batchelder was killed, Hatch and Dahlman were wounded and Shaw received a battlefield commission in France.

19 Feb 1944 - Grandmother Thompson passed away in Missoula. Notified by letter from Dad.

08 May 1944 - Left for home on leave via train, using pass provided by



Dad, *Our Assistant Squad Leader, Hugh V. Batchelder (killed at Phillipsbourg) and friend, Robert H. Birney (wounded at Hatten).*

*May 14, 1944 Pete on leave at St. Ignatius, Montana.*

01 June 1944 - Returned to Camp Campbell from home leave.

By this time we were becoming a pretty harmonious group, working



and having fun together. I can remember the man working the machine gun with me, Bill Dahlman of Cincinnati, Ohio, going into town with a group who had set him up with a local girl working the street. Anyway, they somehow were able to watch the activity and he bore the brunt of our kidding for many weeks. Bill was wounded near Souz, France in December 1944.

The lead gunner on the other machine gun in my squad was Harlis Williams who made the mistake of telling us about being picked up by a constable for stealing chickens from a farmer's coop. From that time on, he was our "chicken thief." I was often referred to as the "Mountain Man" or the "shepherd" from Montana.

### ENROUTE TO THE FRONT

(October 1944 - November 1944)

08 Oct 1944 - Left Camp Campbell for Camp Shanks, NY, our staging area for departure to Europe. I recall only one incident from Camp Shanks. Some of our troops got into a fight with POW's working the mess halls and evidently worked them over. The next day, all of us were called out on the parade ground while the POW's were allowed to inspect us to see if they could identify the individuals who worked them over. Don't know if they identi-

*(Continued on page 22)*

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# THE "GREATER MEANING" OF MEMORIAL DAY

By National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger

The American Legion, May 1, 2014

Ronald Reagan stood at an outdoor lectern in Normandy, France, on June 6, 1984, and delivered one of the most memorable speeches of his presidency. "Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there. These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war."

Many of those heroes lay beneath the crosses of the Normandy American Cemetery, others at Arlington, or in their hometowns. Millions more survived the war and raised their families under the peace and freedom they and their fallen comrades fought so hard to achieve.

Following the D-Day landings 70 years ago, thousands made the supreme sacrifice for our freedom. One was Pvt. Joe Gandara of Santa Monica, Calif., who voluntarily advanced alone and destroyed three enemy machine guns before he was fatally wounded on June 9, 1944, in Amfreville, France. He was 20. The young paratrooper

was denied the opportunity to raise a family in the free world he helped ensure. On March 18, 2014, Gandara's 69-year-old niece received the Medal of Honor from President Obama on his behalf.

It was a ceremony I will never forget. Gandara and 23 other Army veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam were at long last recognized for heroic actions that cost many of them their lives, but forever earned their place in history as recipients of the nation's highest military award. And those who died fighting are forever young in the memories of loved ones.

This is why Memorial Day is so important. We don't just honor those who participated in the most hellacious firefights. We honor the more than 1 million men and women who lost their lives defending America in wars from the Revolution to the global war on terrorism – people like Marine Sgt. William Stacey, who was on his fourth deployment to Afghanistan when he was killed by an IED blast while walking patrol in Helmand province on Jan. 23, 2012. Like many who go to war, Stacey left a letter be-

hind to be read "just in case" something happened to him:

*My death did not change the world. It may be tough for you to justify its meaning at all. But there is a greater meaning to it. Perhaps I did not change the world. But there will be a child who will live because men left the security they enjoyed in their home country to come to his. And this child will learn in the new schools that have been built. He will walk his streets not worried about whether or not his leader's henchmen are going to come and kidnap him. He will grow into a fine man who will pursue every opportunity his heart could desire. He will have the gift of freedom, which I have enjoyed for so long. If my life buys the safety of a child who will one day change this world, then I know that it was all worth it.*

Like all who fell fighting in the primes of their lives, Stacey is also forever young, to be remembered this Memorial Day and many to come for bestowing on all of us the gift of freedom.

REPRINTED FROM: <http://www.legion.org/magazine/221050/'greater-meaning'-memorial-day> (Featured in [The American Legion Magazine](#)).

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## RECOLLECTIONS...

(Continued from page 21)

fied anyone.

14 Oct 1944 - Sailed from New York aboard the USS Le Jeune, formerly the German liner "Windhuk." About 5,000 of us, comprising three armored infantry battalions, were on board. Other than being irked by the "chicken" provided by the officers, I experienced no problems like sea sickness aboard ship. One particular "chicken" incident still remains in my mind. I was walking back to my bunk when a Navy officer told me, "You look like a good butt snipe. Pick up that cigarette." (a butt had been left under one of the bunks). Being a non-smoker, I was burning!

23 Oct 1944 - My 21st birthday! Sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar. Shortly after that we saw the coast of Africa. the Mediterranean was calm, the skies were blue and the white coast line looked beautiful.

28 Oct 1944 - Debarked at Marseille, France. Hiked several miles to the outskirts and bivouacked on the hills out-

side of Marseille. Armored equipment from the 1st Armored Division in Africa was brought in for our use.

Had a one-day leave into town but can't remember much about it except that the group I was with spent their time looking for bars and "girlie shows."

11 Nov 1944 - Broke camp and loaded into 40 and 8 boxcars for the trip north using rail transportation. Half tracks and tanks were carried on flatcars.

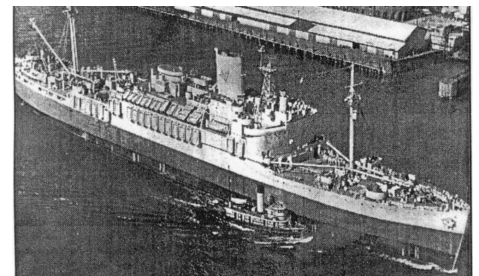
15 Nov 1944 - Unloaded at Portieux-la-Verrerie after passing through Avignon, Dijon and Epinal.

20 Nov 1944 - Combat Command A (CCA), which included the 48th Tank Battalion plus A Company of the 62nd AIB, started for St. Remy as part of the VI Corps.

21 Nov 1944 - Redirected toward Grand Fontaine and Schirmeck going through Baccarat, Blamont, Cirey, and St. Quirin. The country is mountainous and heavily forested, reminiscent of western Montana.

**"Love Boat" Picture Should Bring Back Memories**

Attention...men of the 19th, 62nd, and 68th infantry battalions, along with the division band members... here is a little memorabilia for you. Remember the little cruise you fellows took to France back in October of 1944? Remember how seasick some of you guys got and what a fun trip



it was? Well here is a picture of your LOVE BOAT, formerly known as the German liner "Windhuk." After it was captured it was re-commissioned as the "LeJeune" and it was so named when we started out on our little journey. The ship is now designated only as AP74. This picture of the "LeJeune" was submitted to the Liberator and dedicated to the infantry battalions with the compliments of two members of the 68th AIB, Joe Rountree and Art Gustus.

**To be continued in next issue of The**



# MAIL CALL

## WORD RECEIVED FROM BILL BREER

A number of the 14th AD Assoc. members have wondered about Bill Breer, noting that they had not heard from or about him lately, and that he had not attended more recent reunions. Bill did phone fairly recently, informing that he continues to recover from a motorcycle accident and is now living at a care facility. However, his wife continues to reside at their resi-

The following letter was received from Rev. Georges Pfalzgraf concerning Bill Breer. Because Rev. Pfalzgraf no longer saw Bill's name listed as an officer of the Association, he, too, assumed something was amiss.

Dear Verlyn,

About Bill Breer: Bill was a veteran whom I met the most number of times in Rittershoffen and Hatten, Alsace, and whom I certainly got to know the best.

Faithfully he wrote to me every year a wonderful Christmas card far more beautiful than the ones I could find in Alsace. Then I fell very ill, so much that I could not keep up to answer his cards. After a lot of years I felt better and better and I decided to send him a Christmas card in December. Then I was surprised to no longer find his name and address listed in *The Liberator*. I wondered if I had acted too late.

Bill Breer remains deeply in my thankful mind for all he has done and for the kindnesses shown me. Perhaps we can reestablish contact.

Georges Pfalzgraf

## 14TH AD WAS ASSIGNED TO PATTON

Dear Verlyn,

I am enclosing a few lines about the 14th Armored and the fact they were attached to Patton's 3rd Army while freeing POWs from Stalag V11A on April 29, 1945. Maybe you are aware of this fact but it is all news to me. Picked it up while browsing with my computer. Wonder how many other untold stories are out there.

Thanks for all your good efforts,  
John E. Hennen

x x x

The following is just a small portion of what can be found on the Internet regarding the freeing of POWs at end of WWII in Europe.

"On the morning of April 29, 1945, elements of the 14th Armored Division of Patton's 3rd Army attacked the SS troops guarding Stalag VIIA. Prisoners scrambled for safety. Some hugged the ground or crawled into open concrete incinerators. Bullets flew seemingly haphazardly. Finally, the American task force broke through, and the first tank entered, taking the barbed wire fence with it. The prisoners went wild. They climbed on the tanks in such numbers as to almost smother them. Pandemonium reigned. They were free!"

Two days later, General Patton arrived in his jeep, garbed in his usual uniform with four stars on everything including his ivory handled pistols. He was a sight to behold. The prisoners cheered and cheered. The Longest Mission was finally over!

The reality of liberation was a very emotional experience for the tens of thousands of men in POW camps throughout Germany. Many had had a dreadful experience in the last four months of the war as they were marched or transported as far as pos-

sible from advancing Allied forces. In the case of the thousands of former POWs at Moosburg, liberation also brought frustration and disappointment. Initially all support of the camp stopped. The Germans who ran the camp had all been taken off to prison camp and there was a serious delay before a U.S. Army support battalion was pulled out of the line to provide all necessary support for the camp. Next, the hundreds of French prisoners packed up and were flown out. General Charles de Gaulle had obtained first priority for their return from General Dwight Eisenhower. The Americans waited and, against the orders of their keepers, many quietly departed and hitched a ride to Paris. Eventually all American former POWs were moved out to nearby German airfields and transported by C-47 aircraft to the vast but now empty Combat Personnel Replacement Depots on the French Channel Coast.

## THANKS COMRADES AND FRIENDS

Elton Ross, Liz Mannebach, Verlyn Hofer, John Myers, Robert McClarren, John Cox, plus Dr. James Townsend Ed.E, and Rev. James Spainhower whom I gave as references, and several others.

Dear Friends:

My appreciation for your help and encouragement in applying for the French Legion of Honor makes me thankful for friends and helpers like you. I am pleased to inform you that my application has been approved and that I am recognized as a Knight of France. A really beautiful medal and supporting letters are due to arrive in late February. I can hardly wait. Of course knighthood is not acknowledged in America. This is recognition of a desperate battle lasting several days at Rittershoffen, France 70 years ago. Our company lost 13 of its 15

(Continued next page)



## MORE MAIL CALL

(Continued from page 23)

tanks and many good men. I am now 90 and one of the conditions is that the recipient must be alive, so I am being very careful.

I humbly accept the award. It honors also my fellow tankers and supporting infantry men who did not survive. Thank you, thank you.

Roger F. James

### RECALLS WAR, LIBERATION

Dear friend Verlyn,

By reading your note and the article in your local newspaper about you being awarded the French Legion of Honor medal, I am highly delighted. As an Alsatian who, with his family, suffered during the Nazi occupation, I feel myself honored with you for all you did as a veteran, and with all those who did their best to liberate us from the Nazi yoke.

My mother and my brother Gerard were about to be shot because of the anger of the Nazi military police, and, as a result, my father was taken to Germany where he had a terrible accident. He came back after the war, with a crushed head, and was never more the same. He could no longer do what other fathers do for their family and their children. He died at only 57.

Thank you for what you did and go on to do for *The Liberator* and for your local newspaper and surrounding population. Who could better say what the French Ambassador François Delattre wrote in his letter to you? "The award is a sign of France's infinite gratitude and appreciation for your personal and precious contribution to the United States' decisive role in the liberation of our country during World War II.

In short, we rejoice with you and yours and I'll do my best to communicate the article around me and especially to persons who know of you.

With great joy, yours faithfully,

Georges Pfalzgraf and family

### SENDS NOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS

Dear Mr. Hofer,

The minister George Pfalzgraf told me about your nomination at the rank of Chevalier of the National Order of the Legion of Honor.

As honorary Mayor of Rittershoffen, I would like to deeply congratulate you for this great and well-deserved honour.

This nomination is an acknowledgment of all your work and commitment, as a young soldier, in our region and country's liberation. The population will forever be extremely grateful to you.

Manfred Rott

Honorary Mayor of Rittershoffen

### REPLACEMENTS WERE IN HIGH DEMAND

Verlyn,

I share your interest in the severe shortages of infantry replacements. They were absolutely desperate for "bodies" before the German offensives in the Ardennes and Alsace, during which the situation quickly became critical. One small example of how many infantrymen were being lost is found in Company A of the 19th AIB. During the attack into Hatten on January 13 the 1st and 3rd Platoons lost so many officers and men that they had to be combined into a single, understrength platoon. That sort of thing was happening all across the front. The 12th AD lost an entire battalion of armored infantry and along with a battalion of tanks. The 45th Infantry Division lost an entire battalion as well. Of course the losses were greater up in the Bulge. At that point the pool of available infantry replacements system was essentially depleted. Eisenhower was so concerned that he asked Gen. Marshall to see if the Navy could spare 100,000 Marines. This in itself was a pretty wild request since the Marine Corps was many times smaller than the US Army.

The call for African American volunteers as infantry replacements during a time when Jim Crow reigned supreme was perhaps the greatest indication of just how desperate Eisenhower was for men.

John and Laverne Klobachar were in town yesterday. I took them to dinner last night. We had a very nice visit. It appears from our conversation that John was in my father's squad although he could not remember him. That makes sense in a way because my father once told me he made no effort to get to know the replacements because it was too hard on him to lose men he knew well. He would learn their names so he could direct them, but otherwise did not have much to do with them. I think he spent his off duty time with men he trained with in the US.

Best Regards,

Jim Lankford

### LOOKING FOR PATCH ON CAP

Dear Verlyn,

I am a member of the 14th Armored Division, 84 Medical Battalion, Company A, and am enclosing a donation of \$50 for postage for the *Liberator*. I will be 93 years old on Feb. 4th. The patch that I have on my cap is beginning to fray from the constant transferring it from one hat to the other as the seasons change. I would like to buy a 14th Armored patch and a 14th Armored pin but I don't know where to buy them. I would appreciate it if you could tell me where or send me the 14th Armored patch and 14th Armored pin and I will reimburse you. The patch I have has a white background, black lettering, green bound, with red, yellow & blue pyramid.

Thanks for *Liberator*,

Bill Samar

NOTE: Bill's request was forwarded on to our Association secretary. Can anyone else help?



**Letters to the Editor:**

I am sending a check in memory of my father Douglas Rodgers. He was in the 68th Headquarters. We attended the reunion with him and my mother for many years. She continued to get the Liberator and read it faithfully up till this year. She passed away July 5th, 2013. Please quit sending it to her and use the money to send it to someone else. I am so glad you are still able to send it out twice a year. My parents always enjoyed the reunion so much and we always looked forward to it.

Thank you,  
Pat Rodgers Starks

**POSTAGE FUND DONATION**

Here is \$50 for the Postage Fund "Liberator Challenge". I Enjoy the Liberator very much and a chance to talk to my dad, Kenneth D. Higgins, about his memories. Future issues may be emailed to me.

David Higgins

**LIBERATOR FUND**

Jess,  
Enclosed a check for \$500 for the Liberator Fund which closes out the Western State Chapter account. We had a good final gathering in Laughlin / Bullhead City and 14 persons attended, three being veterans - Verlyn, Gus, and myself. Yours truly,

Joe Fitts

**POSTAGE FUND DONATION**

Dear Ann & Jess,  
Thank you for keeping the Liberator alive. Enclosed is a check for \$50 to help with the postage. I was in the 84th medical battalion part of the 14th Armored Division. My wife and I attended 21 of the reunions up until Albecurque NM, when we could no longer travel any more. She passed away

March 19, 2006. I live alone and doing okay except that it takes me a lot longer to get around, but at 92 I am very thankful. Keep up the good work.

Ralph Drafall

**RESEARCH APPRECIATED**

Hello, Ann,

Elton Ross has been more than helpful in my research of my grandfather's WWII service history. My grandfather, Chester West, was in the 14th Armored Division, 501st AFA Battery A. Please accept this donation.

Regards,  
Eric Nordstrom

**HOLIDAY WISHES**

Ann,

I am wishing you and your family the best over the holidays and everyone who helps to make the Liberator. Well, Ann, we are all getting older and January 16, 2014, I'll be 98, with the good Lord's help. Some days I feel good, and then some days not so good. But I guess it's all up to the good Lord. So I will just thank him for one day. God bless all of you.

Just an old soldier still around,  
John Murphy

**Great Truths that Adults Have Learned:**

- 1) Raising teenagers is like nailing Jello to a tree.
- 2) Wrinkles don't hurt.
- 3) Families are like fudge... mostly sweet, with a few nuts.
- 4) Today's might oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.
- 5) Laughing is good exercise. It's like jogging on the inside.
- 6) Middle age is when you choose your cereal for the fiber, not the toy.

**DONATIONS ★★★★★**

Many readers - the majority are veterans! - accepted our Challenges to contribute to the Liberator! We hope more readers will also be able to do so as they are able. The Liberator must continue to be published and sent to all members!

**With sincere thanks to -**

- Harold Kiehne
- Bennie Cardinale
- Adolf Kotschi
- Ralph Drafall
- John Murphy
- Robert McKeague
- Russell Smith
- William P. Samar
- Elizabeth Mitchell
- Eric Matthews
- David Higgins
- Melanie Reuler-Finn

**With great appreciation to -**

- Matt Sitnik
- Charles Guy Kohl
- Paul Pauzer
- Joseph Fiske
- Laurence Lakey
- Eric Nordstrom
- John Arena
- Fred Harshberger

**With lasting gratitude to -**

Robert McClarren

**In memory of -**

Douglas Rodgers,  
by Patricia Rodgers Stark  
John P. Meyer, by Fred Harshberger

**Great Truths About Growing Old**

- 1) Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- 2) You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.
- 3) Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.
- 4) Widsom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.





## Membership Renewal Notice

### MAIL TO:

\_\_\_\_ Enclosed ANNUAL DUES \$10.00  
\_\_\_\_ Payable for Membership July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015  
**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 \_\_\_\_\_

## The Back Nine... Sound Familiar?

You know... time has a way of moving quickly and catching you unaware of the passing years. It seems just yesterday that I was young, just married and embarking on my new life with my mate. Yet in a way, it seems like eons ago, and I wonder where all the years went. I know that I lived them all. I have glimpses of how it was back then and of all my hopes and dreams.

But, here it is... the "back nine" of my life and it catches me by surprise. How did I get here so fast? Where did the years go and where did my youth go?

I remember well seeing older people through the years and thinking that those older people were years away from me and that "I was only on the first hole" and the "back nine" was so far off that I could not fathom it or imagine fully what it would be like.

But, here it is... my friends are retired and getting gray... they move

slower and I see an older person now. Some are in better and some worse shape than me... but, I see the great change... Not like the ones that I remember who were young and vibrant, but, like me, their age is beginning to show and we are now those older folks that we used to see and never thought we'd become.

Each day now, I find that just getting a shower is a real target for the day! And taking a nap is not a treat anymore... it's mandatory! Cause if I don't on my own free will... I just fall asleep where I sit!

And so... now I enter into this new season of my life unprepared for all the aches and pains and the loss of strength and ability to go and do things that I wish I had done but never did! But, at least I know, that though I'm on the "back nine", and I'm not sure how long it will last... this I know, that when it's over on this earth, it's over. A new ad-

venture will begin! Yes, I have regrets. There are things I wish I hadn't done, things I should have done, but indeed, there are many things I'm happy to have done. It's all in a lifetime.

So, if you're not on the "back nine" yet, let me remind you, that it will be here faster than you think. So whatever you would like to accomplish in your life please do it quickly! Don't put things off too long! Life goes by quickly. So, do what you can today, as you can never be sure whether you're on the "back nine" or not. You have no promise that you will see all the seasons of your life...so, life for today and say all the things that you want your loved ones to remember... and hope that they appreciate and love you for all the things that you have done for them in all the years past.

"Life" is a gift to you. The way you

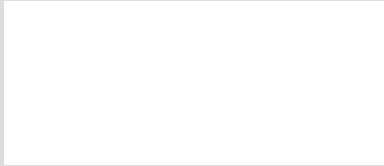
*(Continued on page 28)*

**NOTICE:  
LIBERATOR ISSUE DATES!  
JULY - NOVEMBER**

Information **MUST** be submitted  
**SIX WEEKS** before issue!

ALL INFORMATION SHOULD BE TYPED.

Send all information to:  
**VERLYN HOFER**



**NEXT DEADLINE IS**

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**

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**PAID**  
HOT SPRINGS, AR  
PERMIT NO. 40

**THE BACK NINE...**

*(continued from page 27)*

live your life is your gift to those who come after. Make it a fantastic one. Live it well! Enjoy today! Do something fun! Be Happy! Have a great day! Remember "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver. Live happy in 2014!

Lastly, consider this: Your kids are becoming you... but your grandchildren are perfect! Going out is good. Coming home is better! You forget names... but it's OK because other people forgot they even knew you! You realize you're never going to be really good at anything, especially golf.

The things that you used to care to do, you no longer care to do, but you really do care that you don't care to do them anymore. You sleep better on a lounge chair with the TV blaring than in bed. It's called "pre-sleep." You miss the days when everything worked with just an "ON" and "OFF" switch. You tend to use more 4 letter words... "what?"... "when?" ??? Now that you can afford expensive jewelry, it's not safe to wear it anywhere. You notice everything they sell in stores is "sleeveless"?!!! What used to be freckles are now liver spots. Everybody

whispers. You have 3 sizes of clothes in your closet... 2 of which you will never wear. - But Old is good in some things: Old Songs, Old Movies, and best of all, OLD FRIENDS!!

Stay well, "Old Friend!"  
Today is the oldest you've ever been, yet the youngest you'll ever be, so enjoy this day while it lasts.

*"When we get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, we shall become as corrupt as Europe."*

- Thomas Jefferson

*"The democracy will cease to exist when you take away from those who are willing to work and give to those who would not."*

- Thomas Jefferson

*"It is incumbent on every generation to pay its own debts as it goes. A principle which if acted on would save one-half the wars of the world."*

- Thomas Jefferson

*"I predict future happiness for Americans if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them."*

- Thomas Jefferson

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



**Lawrence "Larry" Miller**



**Albert Burmiester**

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