



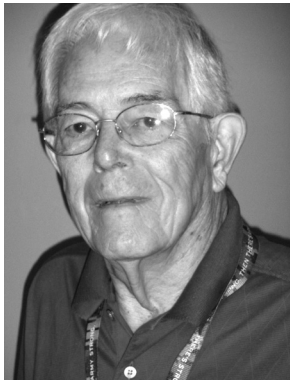
THE LIBERATOR™

VOL. 46 NO. 2

*Official Publication of the
14th Armored Division Association*

FALL/WINTER 2011

Greetings from our Association President



ELTON ROSS

Who is this new president? In short, I am an ASTPer receiving infantry basic at Ft. Benning, GA. In Aug. 1943, followed by one term at the University of Cincinnati, I arrived along with several thousand other ASTPers at Camp Campbell, KY in Feb. 1944 to bring the 14th up to battle strength. I was an assigned bow gunner on a light tank of Co. D 48th Tank Bn. I had the honor to lead the entire Combat Command, led by Col. Gillespie, into the Vosges Mountains after arriving at Epinal. Several days later, after arriving in Barr, France, our tank, along with about a dozen others, was hit with either German bazookas or 88mm anti-tank guns. After aiding the tank commander to get out, but being unsuccessful to rescue the gunner from the burning tank, I spent the next 45 days in the hospital recovering from
(Continued on page 3)

WE HAD A GRAND REUNION!

by Ann & Jess Chelette

Indianapolis welcomed us warmly for our second reunion! We remembered the Crowne Plaza and they remembered us! We enjoyed working at the registration table, where we were able to meet and talk with old friends and new guests!

Our Hospitality Room was well staffed by Auxiliary President Gayle Siewert and her ladies. The snacks were plentiful and the raffle prizes kept pouring in, until another table was needed! We sorely missed our Top Ticket Salesman, Fred Shattuck - it took both Joe Fitts and Verlyn Hofer to fill in and sell those raffle tickets!

We were unable to visit the Joint Forces Headquarters of the National Guard, and their Color Guard was not able to serve us this year, due to unforeseen activities at their facility. So, we turned our tour bus another direction and headed to the remarkable Eiteljorg Museum! The Eiteljorg contains one of the world's finest collections of Native American and Western Art and is one of only two such museums east of the Mississippi. The beautiful paintings, historical items, and outstanding collections amazed us all!

We returned for lunch again this year at the Indiana State Museum cafeteria, though some preferred the lovely tea room at the same site. After lunch, we headed three different directions! Some returned to the hotel, while two other groups continued to "play tourist".

The IMAX Theater at the Indiana

State Museum provided their first 3D movie experience for most who chose to attend "The Hubble". They had a unique look into the Hubble Space Telescope's legacy and its impact on the way we view the universe and ourselves. With the aid of 3D glasses, they were able to journey through distant galaxies and accompany space-walking astronauts.

A large contingent chose to tour the National Headquarters of the American Legion, a striking four-story building near the Indiana War Memorial Plaza. National Headquarters includes the office of the National Commander, their historical archives and library, art gallery, museum, and offices. All agreed that the tour was a wonderful experience, but the highlight was the presence of the American Legion National Commander, Wong of New Jersey, who had been elected during the 93rd National Convention in Minneapolis just two weeks earlier!

Our Early-Bird Dinner surely arrives early in the midwest for those from California! Our after-dinner speaker was John Carrigan of Springfield, IL, President of the WWII Illinois Veterans' Memorial Board of Directors. He told the story of his parents in World War II - his father was an enlisted GI and his mother, a German civilian prisoner of war and among those liberated by the 14th Armored Division! His mother's story was very moving, and was recorded for the WWII Classroom Project,

(Continued on page 3)

48th NATIONAL REUNION
Peoria, Illinois • September 2012

FROM THE LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT



GAYLE SIEWERT

Greetings from Red Wing, MN!

What a beautiful fall with warm temperatures and great leaf color!

A wonderful time was had by all with all the fun events that were planned at the reunion. It was so nice to have everything on one floor.

The hospitality room was a busy place with all the goodies and with the many items for raffle....only one thing missing, Fred! Hope you are doing well Fred.

Thank you to Joe Fitts for stepping up to be the number 1 raffle ticket seller, I applaud all of the rest who worked so hard. We had a wonderful turn out and sold enough tickets to purchase two Wii gaming systems and two controllers for the VA Medical Center of Fayetteville, AR. Our Past President Chuck Hurl will present the check when he goes there the next time.

Thank you to all the ladies that helped with the drawing. My congratulations to the auxiliary officers; they remain the same as last year. Doris was missed by all at the meeting and I hope all things are going well for her.

Many, many thanks to all who brought goodies and prizes for the raffle and hospitality room. Please don't forget the postage fund and changes of address.

Best wishes to all that have birthdays, anniversaries and sympathies to all who have lost loved ones.

My last thank you goes to my sister Gloria Boldt for attending the reunion and helping in many ways over the many years. My mom Frances Siewert sends her greetings to all and was sorry she was not able to attend the reunion.

Sincerely,
Gayle Siewert

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

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

★★★ LIBERATOR ★★★

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

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PLEASE FILL IN ALL BLANKS

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Husband's Name _____ Tel. No. _____

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from page 1)

burns of the hands and face, along with two blown infected eardrums from the concussion of the bazooka.

I arrived back to my unit at Niederbetchdorf Jan. 15 during Rittershofen-Hatten. Later during tank replacements and repair, new assignments and arrival of new personnel, I received a battlefield commission as a 2nd Lt. This was after the Barr episode. We experienced two more bazooka near misses. Finally, as we were about to enter Austria near Jettenbach on the Inn, Gen. Patton pulled up next to our tank (just he and his driver) to tell us that the war was over as of the next day, May 8 at 11 a.m. He told us how much he appreciated us serving with him. He then said he had to go and find others to thank. We just sat there until the next day at 11 a.m., May 8, 1945.

And now let us review some of the highlights that occurred during the recent reunion. The Chelettes are to be congratulated for the apparent ease in putting on all the activities. We were unaware of the many obstacles they had to overcome. We enjoyed museums,

American Legion headquarters, the zoo, White River gardens for the orchid lovers, and clever meal arrangements at noon - especially where we prepicked our meals at T.G.I.F. Although they had their problems with evening entertainment cancellations, they came through with flying colors. John Carrigan from Illinois, on Thursday night gave an interesting talk. His mother, a 12-year-old French girl conscripted to work in the German war machine deep into Bavaria, was freed by the 14th Armored Division. Later in Alsace, she met an American soldier, married him, and came to America to raise a family of six children. Quite a story.

On Friday night we were entertained with further enlightenment on the beginning of the Revolutionary War with aspects I was totally unaware of. The speaker represented an organization called AppleseedUSA which presents this program and a program which emphasizes target practice and the militia part. Then on Saturday night we witnessed the special honor flight to Washington, D.C. by a group of WW II veterans from west-central Illinois. On Saturday morning we honored the passing this past year of 43

veterans or their registered spouses. Then the announcement that \$450 was being donated to a veterans hospital in Arkansas from the raffle sales. Our thanks to the ladies and Joe Fitts.

The blow came after Saturday night's dinner with the announcement of Gus Hinrich's immediate resignation of the Directorship as well as the Association. This was later followed by Ann Lapo and Jim Lankford's resignation effective Oct. 1. We are in the process of making sure the treasurer's position is filled immediately on a temporary basis, until we can get the end result settled officially by the Board of Directors. The historian position will be filled in the future after exploring the position. Jim Lankford had total ownership of the website and anything else he had collected as he explained it to me. His was a volunteer position.

Of course, we can only hope that there will be some reconsideration of the recent resignations. Meanwhile Chuck Hurl as the past, Elton Ross as the present, and Stan Goldman as the future president will keep the organization going with the help of Ann and Jess Chelette and others.

— Elton Ross, Pres.

GRAND REUNION...

(Continued from page 1)

to be sent to The Library of Congress (250). A CD of Carrigan's words has been generously provided to the 14th Armored Division Association for our enjoyment at future reunions and to share as requested.

Friday morning our bus took us to the wonderful Indianapolis Zoo! We divided into groups touring the zoo and strolling through the adjacent White River Gardens. The Zoo Biomes cluster animals in groups inside exhibits with similar habitats. Orchids were on display in the conservatory, with gardens featuring a variety of gardens, water ponds, and benches for just relaxing among the lovely plants.

TGI Fridays was prepared for our lunch choices, though some tables were not first to be served! We enjoyed the time together, and then returned to the Zoo and Gardens, or headed back to the hotel. A Tea Party was held in the Hospitality Room that afternoon. Ann Chelette shared the history and

etiquette of such parties while guests enjoyed teas and cookies.

Dinner was again welcome, though our entertainment for Friday and Saturday had cancelled due to illness. Don McAllister arranged for the Indiana Director of Project Appleseed, to speak with us. Project Appleseed is an activity of The Revolutionary War Veterans Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, dedicated to teaching every American our shared heritage and history as well as traditional rifle marksmanship skills. He vividly portrayed the Battles of Lexington and Concord, confronting us with the danger, the fear, and the heartbreaking separations that arose out of the choices made on April 19th, 1775.

Our Saturday began with our Memorial Service, with words from Chaplain Burgess. The names of members who have left us during the past year were read as Gayle Siewert and Mary Ann Cotten placed poppies on the 14th Armored Division wreath. Partners Don McAllister, Mark Oester, Jess Chelette, Verlyn Remelein, and Jack Terry

were honored to serve as our Color Guard and Bugler.

Evan Hildebrand, a scout from Terre Haute, IN, and the great-nephew of veteran Stanley Goldman, was present with his troop and leaders to continue his planned activity toward becoming an Eagle Scout. His project is a display of the 14th Armored Division consisting of information and memorabilia to be placed in the CANDLES Holocaust Museum on Veteran's Day. Evan and his fellow scouts interviewed many veterans, filmed by a camera crew from a local TV station, for his display.

Afternoon activities were varied, with most pleased to relax with their reunion friends. Groups attended a beer tasting at the Sun King brewery, wine tasting and tour of Easley Winery, and shopping sites.

Saturday's banquet meal was fabulous! We ate at candlelit tables and once again enjoyed conversations with our table partners. Our banquet meeting was chaired by President Chuck

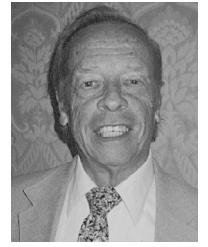
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THE CHAPLAIN'S COMMENTS

John A. Burgess

14th Armored Division Memorial Service Indianapolis, Indiana September 12, 2011



I do not know your thoughts as we gather to remember and honor our comrades and family members who have died this past year. They are called the greatest generation. I am amazed at the number of people who shake my hand when they learn I am a WWII veteran. There seems to be a growing respect for veterans of WWII. Also there is a desire among young people to know more about WWII. When talking with two Desert Storm veterans they said to me, "You are a hero." I said, "So are you." They replied, "Not like you. WWII veterans are real heroes."

I am approaching this memorial service differently. This year one of my close friends died. He was the Platoon Sergeant when I was assigned to his platoon. I almost immediately became permanently at his side. He gave me vital and important responsibilities.

We were in many dangerous situations. He was a soldier who possessed the characteristics that made the division an effective fighting machine. The most vital characteristic that molded the 14th was that although it was an excellent military division, they studied and learned in order to be better. Training exercises were treated as the real thing.

Combat made life more precious. When they came back they wished to achieve meaningful goals. They wanted their lives to count. A number of missionary organizations were organized to send the gospel to peo-

ple all over the world. One man who had been treated badly in a Japanese POW camp went back to the camp to express his forgiveness to them. The veterans returned to live successful, meaningful and effective lives. They influenced their families and the communities in which they lived. They laid a foundation for their children to live meaningful and pleasing lives.

Under the Cedar Rapids Iwo Jima statue is written "Our finest tribute to their valor will be the quality of our lives.

– Chaplain John A. Burgess

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

Sadly, Harold Kiehne Announces Demise of Midwest Chapter in La Crosse

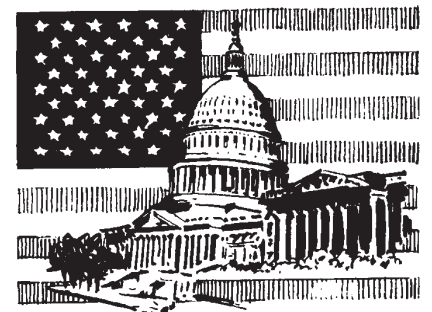
It was a long run and many veterans and their spouses enjoyed the annual spring meetings of the Midwest States Chapter held in La Crosse, Wisconsin for over three decades. However, with dwindling attendance due to the passing of many and difficulties of many others to travel, Harold Kiehne has announced that the meeting held in La Crosse in May of this year was the last such gathering.

In addition to Mr. Kiehne who organized the reunions for many years, those in attendance at the May gathering were: Mr. and Mrs. John Klobucar

ers of war in 1945. Gordon told of his harrowing experiences as a POW and his return to the USA.

Harold writes that "it's very difficult to believe that there will be no more reunions in La Crosse... that's a bummer. At first we started with over a hundred people; filled the motel up to the roof. We had many good gatherings - mostly telling stories of our associations, and gathering new members as time went on. I believe it began about 1973." Harold goes on to say that "I can't remember both of the men who started the Midwest Chapter here in La Crosse, but one I believe was Arnold Breitlow who lived just across the river from La Crosse and attended only six or eight reunions before becoming disabled and passed away." Harold continues, "I believe it was in the early 1980s when Fred Piper and I sort of took over and kept it going."

As Harold wrote this short review of the Midwest Chapter and its demise, he was contemplating attending the national reunion in Indianapolis and had hoped to see many of his old friends there. However, due to his wife's health problems and travel issues, he was unable to attend. He says that if any of "the old gang" drives through La Crosse on I-90 they should stop and give him a call at 608-785-1931 so they can get together for a short time to renew old friendship.



Gayle Siewert of Red Wing, Minnesota and her sister; and also visiting was Gordon Hoffman of La Crosse who served with the 14th Armored Division. Hoffman and Gayle Siewert's father, Bill, were together taken prison-

BOARD RESIGNATIONS



Executive Director Gus Hinrich made a surprise resignation on the last day of the Indianapolis Reunion. Hinrich has been a long time member of the 14th Armored Division Association and served as President, hosting the reunion in Spokane, Washington in 2002.

When Horst Froelich passed away there was a committee of past presidents, Harold Kiehne, Bob McClarren, Roy Roberts and Gus Hinrich appointed to go to Wisconsin to pick up all of the Division records that were in Froelich's home. At that time Gus Hinrich was appointed National Executive Director and National Secretary - Treasurer pro tem which was verified by the board at its next meeting.

Gus served as National Secretary - Treasurer in 2006, 2007 and in 2008. It was that year he had the suggestion that because of the ages of our members we should organize our children and let members of that group take over the Secretary and Treasurer's positions. In 2010 and 2011 Ann Lapo was the National Treasurer and Ann Chellette, the National Secretary. The system worked so well that at the recent board meeting Gus commented that he had nothing to do any more and he didn't know what was going on.

Gus Hinrich has served the 14th Armored Division well and his dedication has been appreciat-

ed. It is with regrets that his resignation as Executive Director comes at this time, when the organization is in its final years.

National Treasurer Ann Lapo, daughter of Gus Hinrich, also resigned this fall. Although she has served in this position for just three years, Ann is well known to veterans and their guests for her helpful presence at Reunion Registrations for some time. Ann has served us well as a gracious, efficient Treasurer, committed to the members of the 14th Armored Division.

XXXXXX

THANK YOU, GUS

As editor of *The Liberator* and a long-time friend, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Gus Hinrich for his long and devoted service to the 14th AD Association.

Gus first joined the Association in 1971 and tirelessly promoted the organization these past 40 years. Besides fulfilling his more recent offices, Gus served as president of the Association in 2002, and also as editor of *The Liberator* just prior to my tenure of duty in this position since 1995.

Like his service to the Association, Gus Hinrich's service during his military career was commendable. He served as a non-com with Co. A of the 62nd AIB through much of the 14th AD's European campaign, but received a battlefield commission during the latter part of the war. He was awarded the Purple Heart and other decorations.

As an Army Reserve officer, Gus was called back into active duty during the Korean War and served in Korea with a tank unit.

Well done, Gus. I, for one, will miss your sage advice and guiding hand.

Sincerely,
Verlyn Hofer

GRAND REUNION...

(Continued from page 3)

Hurl, who introduced the head table officers and special guests. Ladies' Auxiliary President Gayle Siewert presented Chuck with a check for \$450 from the Hospitality Room Raffle, to be contributed to the V.A. Hospital in Fayetteville, AR. Elton Ross was installed as the President of the 14th Armored Division Association Inc., and officers of the Association and Ladies Auxiliary were sworn into office. Following the meeting, Brian DeLoche, veteran and photojournalist from Beardstown, IL, narrated a moving slide show of an Honor Flight to Washington D.C.

Our Sunday morning Worship service was led by Chaplain John Burgess. Together we prayed, sang, 'Amazing Grace', and heard Chaplain Burgess' words to us as we were departing another reunion. We look forward to gathering again next September in Peoria, IL.

Other Reunion Highlights ...

- Being greeted by the same registration clerks!
- The staff applauding Harry Kemp playing the piano Tuesday evening!
- Having all meeting areas on the first floor ... though the trip to the Hospitality Room seemed to lengthen every day!
- Serving tea to veterans Joe Fitts, John Burgess, Karl Pauzar, and Verlyn Hofer at our tea party!
- Feeding apples to the elephants at the zoo!
- Seeing Roy Roberts served the largest strawberry shortcake in the world, in the lounge!
- Finding the food in The Landing Restaurant just as delicious and generous as before!
- Watching John and Laverne Klobucar actually get to eat their lunch on Friday!
- Seeing the beautiful lifelike paintings at the Eiteljorg Museum!
- Enjoying many of the same breakfast waitresses!
- Our chats with and without the microphone on our bus trips!
- Misspelling Russ Smith's name on the roster!
- Laughing at Fred Harshberger's funny war stories at our after-hours Partners' party!
- Hearing the 4th stanza of our National Anthem sung by Brian DeLoche!

CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center

CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center, located in Terre Haute, Indiana, is dedicated to the Mengele twins who survived the horrible experiments of Dr. Mengele.

Mission Statement: CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center strives for the elimination of hatred and prejudice from our world. CANDLES pursues this goal through education about the Holocaust and the power of forgiveness. Personal accounts, programs, activities, and the museum facilities and resources are used to educate students, teachers, and the general public.

The museum is open to the public Tuesday through Friday 10 am - 4 pm and Saturday 1 - 4 pm. Docents are on hand from 1 - 4 pm to answer questions and share their experiences: Tuesday and Thursday: Mickey Kor, a four-year survivor of Nazi ghettos and camps. Wednesday and Saturday: Eva Kor, founder of CANDLES and survivor of Dr. Josef Mengele's medical experiments on twins at Auschwitz. Friday: Walter Sommers, witness to the rise of Hitler and Kristallnacht. He escaped to the US with his family in 1939.

During our reunion this year, Evan Hildebrand and his fellow scouts from Terre Haute interviewed veterans regarding their experiences in the 14th Armored Division in preparation for building their display to be permanently placed in the Museum. The display consists of maps, memorabilia, videotaped interviews, and the 14th Armored Division flag, which has been loaned to them for a year, when the scouts hope to purchase a flag to remain permanently in the Museum.

For information about the museum, visit their website at <http://www.candleholocaustmuseum.org>



Nancy Harris and husband, Bill Justin, drove all the way from Hot Springs, AR to attend the reunion banquet dinner on Saturday, Sept. 17 and to visit with their "Liberator" friends. Nancy has diligently and faithfully helped put "The Liberator" together for over 20 years. The 14th AD Association is deeply indebted to her for her service and we sincerely thank her. Thanks to Bill also, for his helping hand and patience in meeting all those deadlines.



Thank you for helping me with my Boy Scout Eagle Project. The photo is of my Troop 24 completing a part of the exhibit of the 14th AD during WWII.

**Sincerely,
Evan Hildebrand**

NEW MEMBERS

David C. Collyer	68 AIB
Beth Davies Carpinello LIFE	68 Inf B Co
Sandra F. Cooper	25 Tank C Co
Joanne Sitnik Fontenot LIFE	62 AIB A Co
Robin Sitnik Fratianni LIFE	62 AIB A Co
Vernon Hagedorn	48 Tank B Co
Mark J. McNaney	47 Tank
Becky Wensink	62 INF C co
Steve Wirth	499 ARRY B Bty

“AIRBORNE” – A PERSPECTIVE ON OUR ARMY OF TODAY

The Great-Grandson of a 14th AD member gets his Airborne Jump Wings at Ft. Benning, June 2011.

BY: D. L. Higgins

Editor's Note: The following article was written by David Higgins, the son of Kenneth D. Higgins who served with the 158th Signal Company of the 14th AD. The subject of this article, Shane Higgins, is David's grandson and Kenneth's great-grandson. The article is basically a commentary on the combat soldier of today and the leadership that exists, which many old vets should find interesting. The author notes that during his trip to attend the graduation ceremonies, he and his party visited the National Infantry Museum and saw the 14th AD insignia displayed there along with that of every other division that participated in WWII. Mr. Higgins says "it is a terrific museum" and notes that Ft. Benning is now classified as the Army Museum Center of Excellence for Armor and Infantry, and the Armor school is now located at Benning.



DAVID & SHANE HIGGINS

I was excited when I got the call from our son in Utah, telling us that Shane, our oldest grandson would be entering Airborne training at Ft. Benning after he completed his Advanced Infantry course in mid May. He would have a week or so after his Infantry graduation before his class would start—a 3-week intensive course that tests the mind and physical endurance. He was hitting the class at the right time, fresh out of the Infantry school and a combined 16 weeks of physical fitness from Basic through

his Infantry School. Daily runs, intense obstacle courses, overnight bivouacs and 10 mile hikes with Ruck sacks had prepared him well. My excitement was somewhat dampened when I realized he was volunteering to jump out of perfectly good airplanes, a common joke among those of us that have been around the Army! The phone call provided me with a new opportunity, a chance to visit another Army post. Opportunities like that have been nonexistent at least since 1998.

From 1961 until my retirement I had spent my share of years in the Army, not only in the uniform for 3, but also as a Department of Army civilian for another 32. During those years I travelled many times to visit a wide range of Army posts, but Benning had never come up in connection with my communications system planning job. Places like the Pentagon, Forts Belvoir, Monroe, Sam Houston, Shafter, Heidelberg, Campbell, Lewis, McPherson, Leavenworth and Patch Barracks were visited frequently along with many US Army installations scattered throughout West Germany. I also worked at White Sands Missile Range until 1976 when I was appointed to a job as a battalion civilian communications specialist in Stuttgart.

Once I became aware of his training date and schedule I readied myself for a long flight from Tucson to Atlanta. From my trusty PC and the comfort of my easy chair arrangements were made for flight, rental car and motel that would put me in the Columbus Georgia area outside of Ft. Benning at the right time to witness his final week and his graduation. As I mentioned, 3 weeks of intense training, that was broken down into week long segments, those being ground week, tower week and finally jump week.

I arrived at the Atlanta Airport on Saturday afternoon with plenty of time to pick up my rental and make a dash for Columbus. Clearing those

TSA points in Tucson or any location at the airport is an interesting side note these days, luckily the Tucson location was easier to negotiate. I elected not to take a suitcase and went with the carryon bag along with my brief case. A wise decision these days with baggage charges and no free peanuts plus possible lost luggage! Heck, today's modern airline travel is a whole other story!

I checked into the motel at Columbus and sent a quick text to Shane. Luckily, he was in down time as it was Saturday evening, and we quickly arranged to meet on Benning in a couple of hours. A quick stop at the main gate's visitor desk with proper id and car papers got a one week long visitors pass that would allow me to enter and exit during the week without difficulty, only proof of picture id was required as you entered through the gates at the fort. During the week the fort security personnel would drop the car pass from the check in procedures and allow for entrance onto the post with picture id only. The attack of 9-11 has caused tighter security procedures at all government facilities and especially at Department of Defense installations. Before you enter the actual Fort and go through the main gate you pass the impressive Army Infantry Museum on the right hand side of Ft. Benning Boulevard. Dedicated in 2008 the museum presents the illustrious history of the army infantry soldier from WWI to the present. The use of visual and audio technology is abundant and impressive along with a full kiosk dedicated to the Medal of Honor winners as well as every division patch that fought in WWII. Equipment, weaponry and battlefield scenarios are part of a vivid presentation that you don't want to miss if you are in the Benning area. Immediately to the south of the museum are the Infantry parade grounds

(Continued on page 9)

AIRBORNE...

(Continued from page 8)

and a wooden barracks mock up that represents WWII housing facilities for the soldier of that era. At the parade grounds weekly ceremonies are held for the graduates of the Infantry School and the awarding of the coveted Blue Cord for the right shoulder. Recently, Ft. Benning's mission has been expanded to include the Maneuver Center of Excellence for both Armor and Infantry, a change brought about by realignments and consolidation for cost and operational effectiveness. I met Shane near the Eubanks training complex, adjacent to his barracks area. He hadn't seen any family faces except his girl friend, Aubrey, since leaving for basic in February. It had been a long 4 months. The fort had plenty of eating out facilities and there was a constant stream of the young trainees from the billeting areas to the fast food joints that are now common place on Army installations. Burger King, Subway, Pizza and McDonald's are spread across the massive installation as well as a nice Mexican restaurant that was frequented during the week. There is not the emphasis on drinking that there was when I was in and which was curtailed in the late 70's and early 80's. Officers and enlisted clubs have seen a steady decline in activity at Army installations. They have rebranded these facilities for a broader family and community based activity center. It took some time but they finally figured out that alcohol was an impediment to maintaining a ready state and it created more problems than it solved.

The complex is organized on a concentric basis all confined within a square city block with all the Airborne Training facilities to include Towers, Aircraft Mock Ups, Static Line training and of course the ever present physical training area. It kind of resembles the playground at the elementary school only it is where soldiers go to prepare for future assignments! The 250 ft towers were the most impressive structure in the complex where the tower week training lifts the trainees 250ft up on a parachute and then

releases them to the ground for their first experience with ground contact from a height. The towers are visible from most anywhere on the fort and are a constant reminder of the seriousness of the post, training paratroopers since the early 1940's, and of the many brave men and women who have successfully completed the rigorous school. The field was bordered on the south by the Airborne Walk, a grand memorial where each airborne combat drop is indicated by a separate concrete pillar denoting each of the jumps along with the participating units and the number of paratroopers that were involved in each of the battles.

Shane had a weekend pass so he spent the weekend at the motel pool in his leisure time. Sunday morning we took a tour through the Infantry Museum and then went on post to get some idea where the Fryar Drop Zone was located as that is where they would start their jump week on Monday. We had to enlist some help from a local security person and he took us out to the Lawson Army Airfield where the paratroopers would rig up and stage to the aircraft the next day. The drop zone was about 5 miles southwest of the airfield and we took a run out to the area so I knew the next day where I was going and how to get there. It actually is in Alabama and not on the Ft. Benning installation and you have to exit the post to drive to the drop zone. Before the week was out I would learn the way. Shane would get out there on an airplane!

During jump week the future paratrooper's day began at 4:00 A.M. with formation and then a short two mile run to the airfield where they would undergo an intense rigging session, placed in their assigned groups and jump sequence. Shane, along with 500 other paratroopers to be, was rigged and ready, but high winds in the drop zone allowed the completion of only 160 jumps. Once rigged then the paratroopers were not allowed to move, to touch their gear or to relieve themselves. It was a difficult time. Disappointment ruined the day as expectations were not met and the long wait for the coveted first jump would continue. The week would be charac-

terized by the high winds especially in the afternoon. Delays were dealt with and an alternate schedule was implemented in order to get in the mandatory 5 jumps. Double jumps on Wednesday and Thursday were scheduled for most of the paratroopers to be. The drop zone was open for visitors and especially for those making trips to see the jumps and then to participate in the graduation ceremonies at the end of the week. The training cadre, when not rushed with last minute details and imperatives, were cordial and informative. "Sgt Airborne" was what they were called throughout the class when they were addressed by the airborne trainees. They were readily recognized by the black hats that they wore so they were referred to as the "Black Hats", all of them experienced and professional with many jumps to qualify them for the teaching assignment. Safety with pre positioned ambulances and medical care along with an organized efficiency were the rules of the day. The well being of the paratroopers captured the full attention of the cadre and leadership.

For the men and women of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion of the 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment anticipation was high. What jumps didn't occur on Monday were set for Tuesday and Shane got his first one in on Tuesday along with some 340 others. There were more than just a handful of female jumpers, a testament to how far the Army has come in equality. I watched them from the visitor area where we were allowed but not too close to the bustling activity. They would jog in from the drop zone along with their male counterparts while handling the same gear that all were issued. Landing in the drop zone was only the start of the jump routine and probably the easiest. Once they landed they had to gather up their chutes, pack them in a bag. All the time keeping their reserve chute safe and uncompromised, then double time back to the assembly area. They were met with a professional photographer to get that "First Jump" picture for the family. I took as much video and still shots that I could, but it was surprising how I had a difficult

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AIRBORNE...

(Continued from page 9)

time picking Shane out of the group as I had no knowledge of when he was to jump. We worked out a signal system for the first jump on Wednesday; luckily I caught him jogging in with his jump mates and caught most of it on video. The day would be rushed requiring a quick turnaround for a second jump but we were allowed some time to get a picture after his 3rd jump on Wednesday afternoon. Shane's platoon sergeant who was responsible for accounting, every one of the jumpers had to check in after their jump, stow their gear and then they may have some family time prior to riding the bus back to the airfield for any follow on jumps. They had fallen behind their planned schedule so the hurry up and wait mode came into play. The early morning hours were beautiful at the drop zone, calm air and blue sky marked most of the early jumps. It was impressive to see the USAF C-17 cargo jet along with a C-130 make several consecutive runs over the drop zone and release their cargo as parachutes blossomed and slowly fell to the earth. After Wednesday they would only have one aircraft, the C-130, to complete the required drops on Thursday. Scheduling issues with the C-17 diverted it to a higher priority mission.

By Thursday Charlie Company was up against the wall, behind schedule and contemplating jumps on Friday that would require conducting graduation at the drop zone as an alternative. They got several jumps in prior to noon and Shane completed his 4th jump, one more to go. The fourth jump was a combat gear jump where they were loaded with mock equipment and weight to simulate battle jump conditions. As luck would have

it they went into a mission hold status due to high winds and a storm moving through the area. The C-130 returned back to the tarmac at the airfield and set there unloaded. Rigged and ready to go the remaining paratroopers waited for the weather to lift, a hurdle that has followed the paratrooper since the 1940's. I made a quick trip to Columbus to meet Shane's Uncle Perry and his two cousins who had driven down from Tennessee to attend the graduation. Upon our return and driving by the airfield, it was obvious they had resumed the mission and the C-130 was on station at the drop zone. A bus was loaded and returning to the post from the drop zone and Shane had completed his 5th jump, he would graduate along with some 480 other members of his training company. The training class had begun with more than 500 candidates. Shane's cousins and uncle witnessed several drops at Fryar Field and quickly appreciated the rigors of the training and perseverance that was demonstrated. There had been more than 2500 jumps during the week and only a handful of injuries, none serious, except for a compound fracture of the leg, landing with the feet and knees together is imperative to a safe jump.

The graduation, conducted at Eubanks Field, was held in typical military style, organized and efficient. The Silver Wings jumped into the grand stand area as a prelude to the ceremony, each of the 5 experts timing and controlling their descent from the helicopter to land as announced, one by one. Charlie Company assembled in an adjacent area and marched in to the cadence of "Airborne" to receive their jump wings. The bleachers were full of family, friends, former paratroopers and honorees from the fabled 25th Infantry Division. The company com-

mander spoke to the audience and to the new paratroopers. Thousands had walked the path before them and he talked about the personal accomplishments of each of the graduates and their lifetime membership in an elite corps. The newest members of the Airborne were from all branches of the service and from many foreign countries. Former paratroopers were called forward to pin the newly earned wings on sons, daughters and even grandchildren. The audience was called upon to participate in the final phase of the pinning where parents, relatives, friends and grandparents were brought forward to participate in the pinning. The formation opened ranks so that the spectators could come participate. At that time I was honored to pin Shane's wings on his chest. The graduation marked a great accomplishment for each and every one of them. My grandson and two of his buddies that he has been with since basic training were filled with quiet confidence. Now they are in training waiting for the Ranger Analysis and Selection Program (RASP) to start. I know they will go far with the attitude and character that I witnessed while I was there.

During the week I had the opportunity to meet several of the paratroopers, their leadership at all levels including cadre, company and battalion level senior noncommissioned and commissioned officers. To a person, including both genders, they were all professional and loaded with pride for what they do. The American soldier of today has earned the respect and appreciation of the country to which they have committed to serve. The next time you see one be sure to thank them for their unselfish service, I know I will. ■

NATIONAL TREASURER, JESS CHELETTE

With supporting votes of his Board, President Elton Ross has appointed Jess Chelette as National Treasurer. You've met Jess at the past several Reunions! The husband of National Secretary Ann Chelette, he was assisting veterans, enjoying tours with you, meeting with Partners, and working beside her

throughout every day. Jess is retired from positions in management engineering and small business management and ownership. He spends his hours now working on their farm and managing their four labs!

Together, Jess and Ann have the

gmail.com. The phone numbers listed in the Officers Roster are their personal cell numbers; you are welcome to call either number for Jess or Ann. With their shared farm address, simply writing 'Chelette' will bring your information to them both.

ANOTHER INTERESTING STORY FROM BOB QUINN'S "MY BEST TRIP"

Editor's Note: Dr. Robert Quinn, who died this past July, lived a very full and useful life as a physician and was able to tell of his life in a very interesting way through his autobiography entitled "My Best Trip." Bob Quinn served in a machine gun squad of Co. C, 68th AIB. The following is a chapter from his book which he simply entitled "\$359" but it is more about people in his life than money.

\$359

Just after the shooting stopped in Germany, one of my buddies stole \$359 from me. I'll change his name – but everything else is exact.

Ross Collins and I came in as replacements after the heavy combat losses suffered by the 14th Armored Division and were assigned to the machine-gun squad. Ross was from Montgomery, Alabama and was outspoken about racial prejudices typical of the South at that time. He bragged about his membership in the Ku Klux Klan. He hated "niggers" and made fun of them and bragged about the whippings and beatings when he worked for the Highway Patrol in Alabama. His job had kept him out of the draft for several years, but eventually he was called up and became one of the replacements. Everyone had a nickname in our squad. At first, they started calling him "Rossie," then it became "Rosie."

The attrition rate of machine-gunners in combat was rapid. Within six weeks, everyone over me was killed or wounded and I was gradually "promoted" to the number one position. I was only 18 and Rosie was about seven or eight years older, but the sergeant assigned me to the number one position without explaining his reasons.

Rosie was difficult to work with. He drank heavily and complained about everything. Many times I found myself alone in a fox hole or in an outpost where the job called for two men. Rosie claimed that he must have gotten lost or perhaps he misunderstood directions. A combat machine-gun

squad is a very close knit group of five people. We ate together, slept together, were with each other night and day. We made adjustments for each other's personality problems just to get along. It was a necessity of war.

I had gradually accumulated a wallet stuffed with money because I always seemed to be in places where souvenirs were found. Over a period of four or five months I had collected 19 pistols, highly prized as souvenirs. Because I could carry only a few, I sold the extras to tankers who were especially hungry souvenir buyers. I did not smoke or drink and everyone wanted to buy my beer and cigarette rations.

Every soldier had a deck of cards in his knapsack and continuous poker games went on night after night when we were out of the battle lines. I had grown up with pinochle, bridge, hearts and a dozen different card games and had acquired a natural card sense. If I played, I usually won. That added to the growing contents of my wallet.

Our currency wasn't in dollars. When we arrived in France, our American dollars were taken from us and we were issued Occupation French Francs, then Occupation Deutsche-marks to use as money. But I hid two American five-dollar bills in the bottom of my wallet. This was a souvenir of "back home" which I rarely showed to anyone. My Occupation Deutsche-marks gradually increased until I had the equivalent of \$359.

I made no secret of my money. Men we trusted with our lives, we trusted in all other matters. After the war ended, however, the situation gradually changed. We weren't as close as we had been during combat. There was not the hard discipline and sharing interdependence for everything that we had in battle. We wandered around the country, formed friends in other units and some bonds gradually relaxed.

We were stationed on the Inn River in Kraiburg near Munich. One morning I discovered my wallet was missing. I had placed it on the chair

when I went to bed the night before. I searched the room, the bed and my backpack but the wallet couldn't be found. Everyone was certain I had left it some place and it would turn up. No one had brought German girlfriends into the house. Word spread about the missing money and everyone began to notice things and pay attention to each other's affluence.

Three days after the money disappeared, a friend told me that Rosie had shown up in a nearby village and lost over \$300. Everyone noticed it because he had lost all of his money a few days before and was broke. They felt that I should be aware that Rosie had suddenly acquired a lot of money and had lost it in one evening.

I had reported my loss to my commanding officer so I went to him with the information and brought the witness who had seen Rosie losing heavily. Rosie was called in to the office to explain his sudden riches. He claimed he had won the money in an earlier gambling session, but couldn't remember where the game had been. The captain felt we needed more proof.

Rosie mailed a letter home the day after I found my money gone. In a combat unit, all letters were censored by an officer. The captain pulled the letter out and insisted that Rosie open it in our presence. Rosie was reluctant, but he had no choice. When he opened the letter, I immediately recognized the two five-dollar bills which I had been carrying in my wallet. Rosie had written a letter to his wife explaining that he had won the 10 dollars in a poker game so he was mailing them home to her.

He had no explanation for the possession of the two bills. The captain asked if my name was written on the money or if I knew the serial numbers, but of course I did not. However, everyone in the room knew who had taken my \$359.

The war had just ended. None of the officers wanted further problems and the captain was reluctant to press

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\$359...

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charges. He asked for legal advice from battalion headquarters and the recommendation was not to prosecute. Rosie was transferred out of our division with orders never to return to Kraiburg.

I never saw Rosie again. There was no way I was ever going to recover my money and had to kiss it goodbye. I was still only 18 years old and it was the most money I had ever owned and I had dreamed of using it for a college education.

I continued my dream of going to school. Because of the GI Bill, I was able to go to Stanford University, then to medical school at Cornell. Eventually, I settled in Hollister, California. I tried to forget the \$359 but at times I had the urge to go to Montgomery to confront Ross Collins. However, I realized my anger might get me into more trouble than I could handle.

Twenty-five years passed. One day in 1970 I received a letter from Alabama:

Dear Bob Quinn:

I don't know if you are the person I am looking for or not. I contacted the 14th Armored Division because I wanted to find you. The only thing I could remember was that I had a wartime buddy in the 68th Armored Infantry Battalion, C Company in a machine-gun squad with me. His last name was Quinn and he was from Salt Lake City. Yours was the only name they could come up with.

I am now doing the Lord's work. I am a Born Again Christian and want to repay all of my old debts. I remembered that I borrowed some money from you when we were in Germany but I can't recall how much it was. Please give me information about yourself so that I can be certain you are the person I borrowed the money from.

If you can tell me what the exact amount was, I will try to repay you.

Please write to me at this address.

In the Lord's Name,

Ross Collins

P.S. Everyone calls me R.C.

I responded:

Dear Ross Collins: (We used to call you Rosie).

Yes, I remember you very well.

You borrowed some money when we were in Kraiburg, Germany about the 25th of May in 1945. You and I were in the same machine-gun squad. Our platoon sergeant was named Rango and our squad sergeant was named Ward. Our half-track driver was named Stankiewitz. Soon after we started our offensive in France toward Germany I was made the number one gunner and you assisted me. We fought together to crack the Siegfried Line at Schaidt, Germany. There you used a pound of coffee to buy a bottle of cognac from an old lady. You set it on top of the stove and when our house was hit by a mortar shell, the bottle was knocked off and broke. You became furious at the time and made the lady give you back the pound of coffee. I can remind you of a thousand things we did. Do you remember me now?

The amount that you borrowed was \$359.00.

I was surprised to hear from you again. It is wonderful that you want to do the Lord's work. I am very happy that you remembered me and want to repay the debt.

Sincerely yours,
Bob Quinn

Two weeks later I received a special delivery letter:

Dear Bob Quinn:

Yes, you convinced me that you are the man that I borrowed the money from. Enclosed is a money order for \$359.00.

I am going to make a special request. Please do not write and thank me for the money. I would appreciate it if you did not contact me again. My wife does not know that I am paying my old debts and I don't want her to find out.

If you write to me, she may see the letter. I am using a money order instead of a check because I want this to be the end of our communication.

May the Lord be with you and protect you,
R.C.

I was very surprised to see the letter. I wanted to frame the money order and hang it on the wall, but that would not get my money back. I took it to the bank to see if it was good. I suddenly felt a raw spot in my gut had healed when I held the cash in my hand.

I was not concerned about the change of value of the dollar or interest that might have accrued over the years. I was glad just to have my money back. I could finally forget the \$359.

In 1978 I received another communication from Montgomery, Alabama: Dear Mr. Quinn:

R.C. is no longer with us. He had a heart attack and died about two months ago. I was going through some of his papers and found that you had been a war time buddy of his and that you and he kept in touch after the war was over. He must have liked you very much. Your name was among a list of his very dearest friends so I wanted to write and let you know about his death.

He was truly a very Christian man with a strong faith and belief in God. I am sure he has been chosen to serve God in the next world.

Since you are one of his close war-time buddies. I know that you would want to know what happened to him.

May the Lord bless and protect you,

Mrs. Ross Collins

NEW VETERAN'S BENEFITS!

By Ann & Jess Chelette

All 14th AD Veterans are Life Members!

The 14th Armored Division Association, Inc. Board of Directors unanimously voted to provide Life Membership to all 14th AD veterans at their September 15, 2011 meeting at the Indianapolis Crowne Plaza. Annual dues will no longer be required of a veteran. All roster information is being updated, and the change will be noted on your Liberator mailing label.

All Veterans will receive LIBERATORS pins!

Pins bearing the correct spelling of 'Liberators' were acquired for sale and distribution at our Indianapolis Reunion. Veterans received a free pin, and all others purchased them for \$5. We will be mailing pins to all veterans not attending the reunion beginning this month. Watch for yours in the mail!

OVERSEAS VOYAGE AND INVASION OF 14th AD

By Timothy O'Keeffe

Editor's Note: This is the second and final installment of the unpublished chapter of Timothy O'Keeffe's book, "Battle Yet Unsung." This chapter deals mainly with the ocean voyage from New York to Marseilles, France.

"During the trip there were two feedings a day. We formed a chow line when it was our outfit's time to eat, passed a line of cook's helpers or KPs detailed from the pool of GIs aboard, who dished out a serving of whatever dehydrated or canned 'stuff' was before them. We then took the food to an open space at a high table where we were standing and consumed a 'memorable' meal. The food at this standee meal, served in the bare dining room of the former cruise ship, was 'memorable' only because it was so unpalatable – I remember weevils in the oatmeal and green tinged wieners in the sauerkraut. In the early days there was a heavy run on the PX supplies. Understandably, they were soon depleted."

"For sanitary purposes we had only cold seawater. In this regard, one ingenious GI who wanted to clean up his *mal de mare* (ed) soiled clothing, wrapped it in a bundle, tied a rope around it, tied the other end to the railing, and then threw the bundle in the ship's wake. *Voilà!* In 30 minutes he had a washing machine clean uniform."

"Smoking was permitted only on deck, and only during daylight hours, when the "Smoking Lamp" was lit."

"Entertainment? Day long, night long card and dice games were being played from embarkation to disembarkation. Donated books from the Merchant Marines' Seaman's Library and giveaway, special Armed Services Edition pocketbooks—they fit nicely in those ever so tight fatigue pants pockets—were dispensed from a library in a preempted deck steward's locker. Commercial movies frequently were shown. Those on the Lejeune had concerts by the Division Band, which

was carried on that trooper (especially enjoyed by Pvt. Harry Kemp of B-68, who played the piano on some occasions himself, invited by the band to join in). Those on the Santa Rosa had a strolling pickup pop band, and impromptu music was reported on the other ships. It was impossible not to watch the endless and ever changing sea in its quite different rhythms and complexions: the nightly fluorescent display in the ship's wake, an occasional flying fish, and sea birds on October 24th and 25th, welcome harbingers of imminent landfall."

"When we awoke on the morning of October 26th—our thirteenth day at sea—we could see two little humps of land on the horizon. As we moved closer and the 'hump' on the left clearly was standing higher than the other, we realized we were seeing Gibraltar on the left and Tangier, Morocco on the right. The bright sunshine, warm weather, colorful landscape and exotic scenery close at hand on both sides of the ships—what an introduction to the Old World!"

"But then, as the day progressed, the weather and seascape changed. High winds, heavy clouds, yellow-green sea replaced the idyllic welcoming scene with a storm to write home about. All the ships pitched badly, with their prows burying into the waves, the stems and propellers ran fast, making a whirring and most threatening sound. Those who had been seasick before had a second chance, and some newcomers to the ailment suffered for the first time. The violent storm passed with its unpleasant memories happily behind, and on the morning of October 29th we entered port. Although there was no official pronouncement, the French flags and the name of the home port on the sterns of fishing boats gave us a quick identification – Marseilles, France."

"The scene demonstrated the destruction of years of war. Under a number of barrage balloons, past a cluster of sunken ships, and in the sight of other considerable war damage, our ship, the Santa Rosa, docked

at the hull of one of the sunken ships. The city had been liberated, after a significant fight, only two months (62 days to be exact) before we arrived. With our gangplank dropped to that hulk and with our duffel bags again hoisted to our shoulders, we disembarked. A sea voyage of sixteen days was over. We had a couple of dockside G.I. welcomers. Wearing the shoulder patches of the 100th Infantry Division, they greeted us with the sour anthem, "You'll be sorry." It turns out that the division had arrived only nine days before us."

"Off the ship and still carrying our duffel bags, we hiked about eight miles due north up the Marseilles-Aix-en-Provence highway to our camp site at the Delta Base Bivouac Area. Our battalion's (the 25th Tank Battalion) location was La Malle, where we stayed until we moved north to combat on November 6th."

Other units in the division, like McClarren's, sailed in the convoy and experienced the same discomforts, including Bob Davies. He was stationed in a bunk on the forward starboard side, opposite a bulkhead, outside of which was the anchor, next to his head when he tried to sleep. Clang, clang, clang sounded as the ship hit the swells. Roger James, in C Company of the 48th Tank Battalion, chronicled the misery, "As we traversed the storm tossed Atlantic there were occasional submarine alerts followed by anxious moments. We were never out of our life preservers and we made sure the little flashlights attached to them had fresh batteries. The ocean was so rough I wondered how any submarine could launch a successful attack..."

Charles Eder (unit not identified) wrote a letter to his wife Beatrice: "These have been pretty sad days for me. No, I haven't gotten seasick yet but the constant rolling of the ship is enough to make one's head ache and stomach feel awfully funny. Our quarters are quite cramped... We sleep in cots that are stacked four high. I sleep on top. It's a climb to get to bed. There

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**14th Armored Division "Liberators"
47th Annual Reunion
September 14-18, 2011 Indianapolis, Indiana**



Front row from left: Eugene Kral, Richard Stewart, F. Gregg Ney, Harry Kemp, Thomas Boyd, Larry Miller, Charles DeBoer; Second row standing: Joe Cotten, Russell Smith, John Klobucar, Roy Roberts, Fred Harshberger, Gus Hinrich, Chuck Hurl, Neil Webster, Merlin McAllister, John Burgess; Third row standing: Phil Snowberger, Elton Ross, Bob McClarren, Joe Fitts, Verlyn Hofer. Not pictured: Stanley Goldman and Karl Pauzer.



Fang Wong, National Commander of The American Legion, is shown here seated at his desk as he visits with veterans of the 14th AD. Pictured, left to right, with Mr. Wong are: Richard Stewart, Melin McAllister, Verlyn Hofer, Russ Smith and John Burgess. The Commander gave each visitor a souvenir pin.



Merlin McAllister also had his picture taken with these neatly dressed Legionnaires at American Legion National Headquarters but couldn't strike up a conversation with them (manikins).



Chaplain John Burgess had his picture taken with another famous John (Pershing) at the American Legion National Headquarters.



Mary Ann Cotten and Charlotte Froelich look over the zoo map before visiting some of the exhibits.



Mary Hofer, pictured here, and many others enjoyed visiting the White River Gardens.



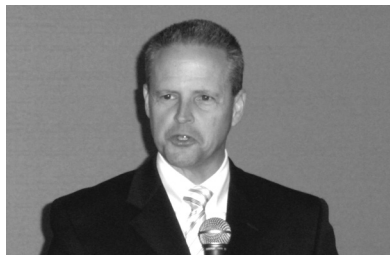
That heavy glass barrier at the Indianapolis Zoo makes it possible for youngsters to get an eye-to-eye look at this tiger.



Roy Roberts enjoyed the elephant exhibit once he got there. "Too long a walk," said Roy.



Gayle Siewert and Mary Ann Cotten place poppies on the memorial wreath as Ann Chelette reads the names of those who have left us this past year.



John Carrigan telling about how the 14th AD Liberators rescued his mother from the Nazis in 1945.



Harry Kemp (seated) meets in the hotel lobby with old comrades (l to r) Russ Smith, Bob McClarren and John Burgess.



Chuck Hurl, at right, administers the oath of office to our new president, Elton Ross.



Richard Stewart, right, was again able to attend the annual reunion, thanks to his good friend and traveling companion Herb Newsome, shown here with Richard.



Getting ready to board the bus for the Friday tour.

OVERSEAS VOYAGE...

Continued from page 13

isn't a whole lot to do either. I sleep anywhere from 10-14 hours per day. Four hours are taken up in eating. It takes that long standing in line. We get two meals per day and they are nothing to brag about. The only job I have is helping clean the latrine each morning and that takes about 10 minutes."

Life was cheap on board, with cigarettes at five cents a pack and candy at half-price. Nevertheless, the smell below decks could be deplorable, for at night hatches were closed in case of a submarine attack. Smells of diesel fuel, vomit, and sweat were intermingled with miasmatic odors. The GI helmet has been known as a receptacle to provide water for shaving and washing, as a cooking pot, and as a latrine when soldiers under heavy fire in foxholes were trapped. During rough sea voyages, it could also be used as a portable vomitorium. All in all, the helmet provides an insight into how dirty life was for an infantryman no matter where he was.

It might be thought that when the troopships sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar and the soldiers had a glimpse of the famous Rock – still a fortress for the British – the waters of a placid blue Mediterranean would guarantee stomachs able to hold down food. But there was no such guarantee. Clifford E. Hansford, of C Company, the 68th AIB, outlined what happened on the trip abroad after the train ride to New York City"

"We then moved on to the "Lejeune" for over two weeks at sea. We encountered a terrible storm on the Mediterranean Sea. Scores of our number had severe sea sickness."

Hansford met a neighbor, who lived on a Kentucky farm, and they both enjoyed conversations on deck for the rest of the voyage. He never saw the man again.

A different ship carried the armored artillery battalions (499th, 500th, and 501st), and Pfc. Jim Craig-mile of B Battery of the 499th wrote about the change in the weather:

"After entering the Mediterranean steaming under Gibraltar on a beautiful sunny October day, we en-

countered a fierce storm that night which threw the S.S. Robin Jones from heights to depths only a few had experienced. It ended a day later, and we sailed into port. It was good to be on dry land."

On a different ship, Roger James continued the description of his odyssey as a tanker from C Company of the 48th Tank Battalion (the 25th and the 47th were the other tank battalions in the division). In probably the same storm,

"As we approached the Gates of Gibraltar we passed through an even more terrible storm. I was amazed and thrilled to stand on the fantail of our converted liner as it sunk into a depression. Incredible as it seems, I could look up 60 or more feet to the tops of the waves. We were in a large convoy and when our ship was on the peak of a wave ships half a mile away would be at the bottom of their wave. Sometimes ten minutes passed before a neighboring ship would pop into view. By this time we had all gotten our sea legs so there wasn't much seasickness. I was sure that if I got a chance to tell anyone about those giant swells I would not be believed."

When the ships arrived in Marseilles, they were greeted by the sights and sounds of a great harbor port in the midst of war. For most soldiers debarking the weather was bright and sunny, but their view of the refreshing sky was marred by barrage balloons hanging their cables down to their anchors to keep off attacking aircraft. To make matters worse, the Germans, as they had done at Cherbourg, destroyed the port facilities, dynamiting docks and cranes, sinking ships at strategic places, and leaving behind their deadly calling cards, mines and booby traps. It would be the task of squads of engineers from the 125th Armored Engineer Battalion, later, to remove such menaces as the Division moved into battle. Roger James noted that "Marseilles harbor was a wreck," but the navy's engineers had secured a path for the troopships and freighters to unload their cargo of men and material. An armored division has a massive tonnage of vehicles, guns, and equipment to unload, but all this was performed without incident.

The History of the 68th AIB records that the battalion landed on 29 October and began their "trek to the staging area":

"Our first impression of this foreign country was one of amazement, as hundreds of French urchins clustered about us, screaming for 'cigarettes for papa', and 'bon-bons' for themselves. Innocent and helpful, we gave until our pockets were empty. The entire battalion (of almost 700 men), a long brown line of staggering humanity, wound in dizzying circles through the town, and about the hill on which we nestled."

The battalion, like their mates in the other battalions, would have to walk up a steep hill for about eight miles in order to set up a bivouac area. The march was with full packs, a condition which normally would not have been a problem for recently trained soldiers. However, the fifteen days spent upon the water, had gotten most of the men into soft shape, and their muscles and their tendons, stretched to the extreme uphill, suffered for the exertion. The battalion, in the vicinity of Aix-en-Provence, in peacetime a tourist destination, had to contend with pouring rain and the difficulty of erecting tents and protecting gear in a most unfavorable set of circumstances. There was much cussing and complaining.

All of the men in all the units had to prepare the equipment of modern war for battle, which included cleaning guns, vehicles, and equipment of the cosmoline, which protected them from rust and deterioration. The armored infantry had to clean their half-tracks and jeeps (called "peeps" by some armored men) as well as their guns and mortars. For the men in C Company of the 48th TB, there was the task of cleaning and preparing their tanks and guns, for the Tank Destroyer units their vehicles and guns, for the artillery men their guns and equipment, and so on. Once everything was ready, all the guns had to be test fired and calibrated for accuracy.

All of this work had to be conducted in weather that was getting increasingly cold. The winter was to be the coldest on record in Europe for

(Continued on page 17)

OVERSEAS VOYAGE...

Continued from page 16

one hundred years, and the US Army was straining to procure and deliver the clothing and gear that the fighting men needed to keep from freezing and taken off the line because of trench-foot or frostbite as the temperature dropped. Spending their days boiling and heating off the stubborn waxy cosmolene during the day and trying to sleep warm at night, the GIs had all they could do to work efficiently and to get the rest needed to begin their fight with the enemy. Jim Craigmile remembers how cold it could get, even in early November:

"We slept in pup tents with army blankets spread on the cold wet ground. Soon the race was on to find something to put on the ground under the blankets. Newspapers were the best insulation, but they were hard to find. The nights spent there were among the worst I experienced, much worse than sleeping sitting in a cold tracks."

The other unexpected experience was the welcome from Axis Sally, who informed the green soldiers that "we would all die there." It was somewhat unnerving after all the emphasis on security, including not sewing on di-

vision patches until after they had settled into the bivouac area. The men were puzzled and frustrated that their whereabouts were no secret at all. Roger James wondered about spies and leaks and remembered the wartime slogan (now taken facetiously) that "Loose lips sink ships." The Germans had been in France for four years and still had a network of spies, including those Frenchmen sympathetic to the collaborationist government of Pierre Laval. They had the same in Italy, right next door to the east. When the war was over, GIs would find that they seemed to have more in common with the Germans than with the French. At least in southern France they did not encounter the hostility that the divisions moving inland encountered from the Norman farmers. Of course, the errant bombs on 6 June, 1944, over their fields, killing livestock and tearing up their fields weren't appreciated. Normandy had seen too many wars, going back to the army camped out in 1066 before its invasion of England and continuing through The Hundred Years' War, when English armies returned France the favor. The term "Band of Brothers" was coined by the partially imagined Henry V to honor the ragtag army he was leading against the envied chivalric warriors

of France. Stephen Ambrose would pluck it from Shakespeare's play to depict the men of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Marseilles, like Toulon, the other great French port on the Mediterranean, was situated in Provence, and area known for the passage of armies since the Crusades. Knights and squires in the Middle Ages would not only fight in Europe and North Africa but also sing or write romantic ballads to gain the favor of their fair lady. In the less technological warfare of the medieval period, all the gear a knight and his squire would need, swords, lances, shields, coats of armor, etc. could be carried on two horses. In 1944 modern armies carried with them, by ship and by vehicle, an enormous amount of material. The Fourteenth Armored Division (and the 12th Armored Division, to arrive later) would need all the machinery and ammunition to contend with the German Army Group G, composed of the First and Nineteenth Armies. The Germans had been summarily beaten from the coast and up the Rhone Valley by Seventh Army after the start of Operation Anvil (later changed to Dragoon) on 15 August, but they were still a formidable fighting force. ■

THANK YOU, JIM

Association website.

When George England resigned his position in 2006, Jim Lankford was named National Historian and Col. England was designated National Historian Emeritus. George England died in February 2007.

Jim Lankford continued to serve as historian until recently, submitting his resignation soon after the national reunion in September. His devoted service during this past decade has not gone unnoticed, he having provided a storehouse of facts and figures for countless people seeking information about loved ones who served with the 14th AD. Also, many appreciated the informa-

tion made available to them on the 14th AD Assoc. website maintained by Mr. Lankford.

Jim Lankford was also a regular contributor of interesting articles to *The Liberator* and his writings will be missed by the editor and many readers.

To Jim Lankford, on behalf of the 14th Armored Division Association, we wish to express our most sincere thanks for his long and devoted service. We wish him well in all his future endeavors.

Verlyn Hofer
Editor--*The Liberator*

Members of the 14th Armored Division and all those interested in the accurate accounting and recording of military history pertaining to the 14th AD are in debt to Jim Lankford.

During the past decade, Jim contributed mightily to the Association, first as Deputy National Historian and then as National Historian of the organization. Beginning in 2001, Jim served as deputy historian under George England, long-time National Historian. As age and health issues limited Col. England's activities, Jim assumed increasing responsibilities. Because of his expertise in computer technology, Jim was able to set up and maintain an

14th Armored Division Association, Inc.

Ann Chelette, National Secretary

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD - SEPTEMBER 15, 2011

The annual meeting of the 14th Armored Division Association, Inc. Board of Directors was held on Thursday, September 15, 2011, at the Crowne Plaza International Airport Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana. Executive Director Gus Hinrich opened the meeting at 3:00 pm, and Chaplain John Burgess offered prayer.

Members Present: Executive Director Gus Hinrich, President Charles Hurl, Treasurer Ann Lapo, Secretary Ann Chelette, Historian Jim Lankford, Liberator Editor Verlyn Hofer, Chaplain John Burgess, and Past Presidents Joe Fitts, Neil Webster, Bob McClarren, Roy Roberts.

The minutes of the September 2010 Board Meeting were accepted as submitted to the Liberator by Ann Chelette. Attempts will be made to acquire additional contact information (phone numbers and email addresses) from all members.

The treasurer's report was provided by Ann Lapo. The Board discussed future disposition of Association funds, with the following steps taken at this time:

- All Veterans become Life Members, with no further dues required from them.
- All dues paid cover the current year, eliminating concerns regarding past due accounts and moving members to the Inactive Roster.
- Further thought will be given to subsidizing future Reunion attendance, dependent

upon financial regulations.

The name of Stanley Goldman was presented and accepted as the incoming First Vice President. The Board affirmed their prior decision to continue reunions as long as there was attendance and an event planner was available. Next year's reunion is to be held in Green Bay, although some dissention has been heard. After discussion, Gus Hinrich said he would allow another vote at the upcoming Business Meeting.

Appreciation and support were extended to Verlyn Hofer for his continued excellence in editing the Liberator. Historian Jim Lankford will acquire her complete collection of Liberator issues from Edith Barton to become part of a collection of Military History. The Board voted to provide shipping expenses.

Lankford joined the American WWII Historian Consortium, an influential organization for saving documents and supporting websites being archived in perpetuity. Morning reports and mortuary reports from US Army during WWII are in danger of being lost, as they have been designated by National Archives as not being historical documents. Because original silver copies were improperly stored, most have been lost. The Board voted to authorize Jim to take any action needed to preserve records.

Lankford also serves as webmaster of the 14th Armored

Division Association, Inc. website, www.14tharmoreddivision.org. He reported 9,848 discreet website hits in August, from around the world. Since its origination, the website has been accessed approximately 85,000 times. Lankford asked that we encourage and enable the families and children of Association members to pursue the website and its advocacy. The Board asked that he contribute a regular column in Liberator regarding the website. Upon hearing that Lankford had been personally paying website fees, the Board expressed their appreciation of this generous donation.

Chaplain John Burgess asked that a plan be in place should he be absent at any time. His duties include planning and conducting the annual Reunion Memorial Service and Worship Service, contacting veterans' widows as possible, writing "The Chaplain's Comments" for each issue of the Liberator, and providing spiritual support and counsel as requested. The Board will seek a Partner who could assist and become familiar with the Chaplain's responsibilities.

Joe Fitts continues selling decals and bumper stickers to fund his communication with the Western States Chapter, though some supplies have been depleted. A copy of Association By-Laws will be obtained from John Meyer, Judge Advocate.

14th Armored Division Association, Inc.

Minutes of Veteran's Meeting

September 17, 2011 - Indianapolis, Indiana

The annual meeting of the Veterans of the 14th Armored Division Association, Inc. was held on Saturday, September 17, 2011, at 10:30 am. Those in attendance: Chuck Hurl, President, Eugene Kral, Joe Cotten, Charles Stewart, Roy Roberts, Elton Ross, Phil Snoberger, Harry Kemp, Lawrence Miller, Merlin McAllister, Russell Smith, Stanley Goldman, Tom Boyd, John Klokubar, Gregg Ney, Neil Webster, Joe Fitts, Verlyn Hofer, John Burgess, Fred Harshberger, Bob McClarren, Charles DeBoer, Karl Pauzar, and Ann Chelette, Secretary. Executive Director Gus Hinrich and Treasurer Ann Lapo were unable to attend.

The meeting was called to order by Chuck Hurl. McClarran moved and Fitts seconded approval of minutes of the September 9, 2010 Board Meeting as published in the Liberator. Minutes of the recent September 15, 2011 Board Meeting were read.

Hurl forwarded to the group

Hinrich's intention that Reunion sites be discussed, with 2012 remaining in Green Bay as voted in 2010, and that Peoria, IL be considered for 2013. Open discussion by the group took place for some time, with many voicing support of the Green Bay site as voted upon last year, and many objecting to that site for various reasons. Concern was expressed about Hinrich's unavoidable absence. It was learned that although there was an offer to assist with the Reunion in Green Bay, no Partner or Veteran had agreed to chair that Reunion site. In accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, confirmed by McClarren and Chelette, the motion was moved by McClarren and seconded by Roberts to rescind the prior group's vote to meet in Green Bay in 2012, and to instead meet in Peoria, IL or another central location suitable to the Partners who would chair and support that Reunion. Support for this action was expressed. The motion

passed with the majority voting yes, no nay votes, and some abstentions.

There was consensus to no longer vote on Reunion sites two years early, as the smaller group of veterans prefer to plan for one year at a time. Hofer reported that the yearly expense of publishing and mailing the Liberator was now \$2500. He received the thanks of all for his work as Editor. Goldman reminded the group that Boy Scouts from Terre Haute, IN, led by his great-nephew, were prepared to conduct interviews of veterans following the meeting.

Hurl announced that the Board wished to present Stanley Goldman as Senior Vice President. The vote, moved by McClarren and seconded by Fitts, passed unanimously, with all greatly appreciative of Goldman's acceptance.

Roberts moved and Hofer seconded adjournment.



Veterans gathered following presentation by John Carrigan. Front: Elton Ross, Karl Pauzar. Standing, from left: Stanley Goldman, Verlyn Hofer, Chuck Hurl, Neil Webster, Russell Smith, John Burgess, Phil Snoberger, Charles Stewart, John Carrigan, Roy Roberts, Joe Fitts, Merlin McAllister, Fred Harshberger, Bob McClarren, John Klokubar, Gus Hinrich.



President Chuck Hurl presenting a 'Liberators' pin to John Carrigan.



What pilots see when landing at Offutt Air Force Base...

Here's the view from the flight pattern into Offutt Air Force Base (Bellevue, NE, just south of Omaha). This is what our servicemen see when landing at Offutt AFB. Hat tip to the Bellevue farmer who made it happen!

It tells them that we do care and that we do support them.

The farmer does this with his tractor. He uses GPS to get the letters readable. He has done this every fall for several years now.

WAY BACK THEN...

Phil Snoberger provided some of the pictures reproduced here. They may revive memories for some of our readers.



Capt. Hunsicker, 68th AIB communications officer (at right), is pictured here with T/Sgt. Bloomfield, 68th wire section chief, who, by all accounts, was a terrific leader.



This picture of the gate at the Moosburg POW camp was likely taken after the liberation of the camp. Picture was furnished by Gayle Siewert whose late father, Bill Siewert, was a POW at Moosburg and was liberated by his buddies of the 14th AD.



Anyone recognize these GI's? They were Russ Smith's squad (A-19) in Germany in 1945. First man in line is Bob Smith, but none of the others were identified.



This picture, taken after the war, features a rose among four thorns. From left to right are Jim Smith, Phil Snoberger, Margaurite (Mrs. Elton) Ross, Elton Ross and Kenney Baugh. All four men entered ASTP together, all were assigned to the 14th AD (but different units) and all attended Purdue University after the war and roomed together.



A BIT OF GI HUMOR...

Bill Armand, who served in the I & R Platoon of Hdq. Co., 68th AIB, provided this bit of GI humor picturing caricatures of members of his unit. Bill is the good looking one shown top left. The artist apparently knew his subjects well.



Bill Stuckert, Phil's best pal in C-68, 3rd platoon, was killed at Rittershoffen.



14th ARMORED DIVISION ASSN., INC. REUNION ATTENDANCE

Marilyn Baney
Nancy Bechen
Gloria Boldt
Thomas Boyd
John & Roberta Burgess
Jess & Ann Chelette
Joe & Mary Ann Cotten
Johnathan Custead
Roberts & Karen Daustead
Charles & Twilah DeBoer
Bruce & Kathleen DeBoer
Joe Fitts
Charlotte Froelich
Stanley Goldman
Fred Harshberger
Jack & Terry Harvey
Gus & Doris Hinrich
Gus Hinrich III
Verlyn & Mary Hofer
Chuck & Betty Hurl
Scott Hurl
Bob Hurl
John & Laverne Klobucar
Harry Kemp

Eugene Kral
Ann Lapo
Merlin & Sylvia McAllister
Don & Karen McAllister
Bob McClarren
Carol Lynn
Lawrence Miller
Herb Newsome
F. Gregg Ney
Mark & Tammy Oester
Karl & Jean Pauzar
Bill & Cindy Puntty
Verlyn & Charlotte Rebelein
Kristin Rebelein
Roy & Christine Roberts
Elton & Marge Ross
Gayle Siewart
Russ Smith
Philip & Janet Snoberger
Rob & Rene Spoon
Richard Stewart
Ken & Jeanette Vrtis
Neil & Anne Webster
Nancy Harris & Bill Justin

THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF
THE 14TH ARMORED DIVISION
"THE HOME OF
THE LIBERATORS"
www.14tharmoreddivision.org

If you've not yet had the opportunity to visit our official website, plan to do so today, whether in your home, in the home of a friend or relative, or at your local library!

The home page is simple but dramatic, expressing the dignity and honor of the Liberators. After entering the website with just a click on the large photograph, you read, "During the darkest days of WWII, it was the people of our great nation – the mechanics, clerks, farmers, industrialists, lawyers, bankers, teachers, doctors, students – these and millions like them who answered the call to defend the American way of life. Among them were the men of the 14th Armored Division. This site is dedicated to them."

A large number of links on the left side of the screen will move you quickly to various topics: Combat History, Chronology, Casualties, Order of Battle, Command and Staff Officers, Division Nickname: "LIBERATORS", Medal of Honor Recipient Pfc. George B. Turner, House Resolution 1483, Recommended Readings, Campaign for a National Museum of the Army, Links to Relevant Sites, Association Membership Criteria and Contact Information.

Former webmaster Jim Lankford worked diligently to assure accuracy and to uphold the integrity of the Association and its members. Contact President Elton Ross or Secretary Ann Chelette (contact information noted inside cover of The Liberator) for information you are unable to access.

This website is the property of the 14th Armored Division Association. All rights are reserved and its contents may not be replicated without the express permission of the Association. With the resignation of Jim Lankford as webmaster, President Elton Ross has assumed management. Anyone experienced and interested in serving as webmaster should contact Ross at his email, emross50@att.net.

Is this even a footnote in history?

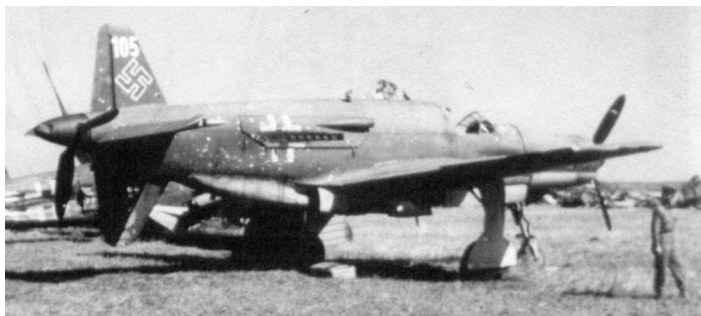
Published in March 1944

EX-WAR PRISONERS BASED AT ODESSA

10,000 American, French and British Nationals Wait Repatriation

Moscow, March 11 – (AP) - Nearly 10,000 American, British and French ex-prisoners of the Germans are awaiting repatriation at Odessa, Pravda said today, reporting that 3413 sailed for home last week.

Last Wednesday and Thursday 969 U.S. soldiers and 227 officers left the Russian Black Sea port in steamers which also carried 1391 Britons and 826 French nationals. At present there are 2000 U.S. soldier and 250 officers in Odessa, which has been turned into a transit camp for Allied nationals liberated in Western Poland and Eastern Germany by the Red Army. The center's population also includes 2200 British officers and men as well as 5000 French soldiers and civilians, including women and children. There is a continual stream of new Allied arrivals by train and plane, Pravda said.



Does anyone remember seeing this unusual German plane after the war near Munich?



MAIL CALL

THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

I pondered and did some real soul searching all the way home from the reunion about Fateful Saturday 17 September, 2011, when our comrade Gus Hinrich resigned in totality from the 14th Armored Division Association because of actions taken at the members' meeting on Saturday in his necessary absence, and also recalling some of the comments at the meeting. I thought of the verse from 1 Corinthians 13:11 in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways."

Also consider, if the lowest ranked soldier to receive a battlefield commission, Lt. Harry Kemp, had not led his platoon through the Siegfried Line after receiving assurances that the dragons teeth were going to be blown by the 125th Engineers, and that our comrade John Meyer's artillery was going to lay down a lot of smoke in March 1945, but rather took the attitude that we were there in December 1944 before the Battle of the Bulge (we've been there and done that); we might still be on the west side of the Siegfried Line. So many times one has to exaggerate the example to try to get a point across. As a side comment, Harry received a shattered knee in this operation and as a result it was a USA bound wound and he was to meet his future wife.

I think I am correct in that the real purpose of the annual gathering of the 14th Armored Division Association is for reunion purposes and to remember and honor those comrades and registered family members who have passed away the previous year. The place and the entertainment is not the priority subject, not that they don't

have a place in the reunion. So let us think clearly about the future. Let us go forth with an open adult mind and not act like children. Let us enjoy our reunion with our comrades. That is the ice cream. The place and the entertainment is the chocolate syrup with the cherry on top.

And finally, Gus, won't you reconsider your decision. We need you. You are what held this organization together, with continuity, since you took over from our comrade Horst Froelich upon his illness and death.

Elton C. Ross,
President 2011-2012

WRITES FROM ALSACE

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hofer, dear friends,

In the last months, we had very fluctuant weather, heatwaves and also cold days, storms and floods and even forest fires in some areas. I had the feeling by watching television, that you in the States had even larger and more extensive problems: floods and fires, storms, hurricanes, tornados and whirlwinds like "Irene" recently which was quite the contrary of what the Greek word means: "peace" or welfare! We were saddened when we saw the harmful effects of those catastrophies.

In these days, we remember what happened 10 years ago. In Strasbourg, doing some researches in libraries, I went in the midst of the afternoon of September 11th to see my mother (Emilie) in the nursing home (in the West of Strasbourg). I was horrified by what I saw in the hallway on the screen of the television: both Twin Towers were in flames. I was so shattered that I could hardly speak... and as I had first planned ahead to fly to a congress in San Francisco and by the way to attend the reunion to which you had kindly invited me; I would

have taken the airplane at noon nearby, if my health would have been better. What I saw and heard was for me a disillusion about humanity: I was so shocked that I got the felling that we had come to an absolute evil and to the loss of all basic human and moral principles, instead of love and respect for other persons.

I discovered absolute hatred and a diabolic will to destroy, to kill and murder! In my mind came up the biblical word (I quote from memory, though I have not yet found the reference): Take away the evil from thy midst. Can we here apply the "Law" of the Gospel and what we are told to do in the light of God? There is indeed nothing more to do to such fools and oddballs than to do to them what they so badly do! In my mind is the word of Jesus to Peter: "Those who take the sword, will perish with the sword." (Math. 26:52 & Rev. 13:10) "he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." (Nevertheless the following verse is pointing to "the patience and the faith of the saints). God help us and give to all leaders the subtle and skillful wisdom of Abraham who "drew near" and "stood yet before the Lord" and said "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" (Genesis 18: 18-23).

As Christians, we have to be like "our father Abraham" and to struggle with God in our prayers, not only for us, but also for the whole world. It is not an easy task, but the most noble one and an important part of our calling from above. We have to stand before the Most High and to struggle against the evil and the abominable ideologies with their horrible terrors.

In the article by Jim Lankford, STRAY ROUNDS (Spring 2011-p7) I thankfully discovered the inscription written in French and English in the Minster of Strasbourg: The People

(Continued on page 23)



MAIL CALL... Continued

of ALSACE remember "1944-45 IN MEMORY OF THE AMERICAN OFFICERS, NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS WHO GAVE THEIR LIFE TO FREE ALSACE"

On one of my next opportunities I must go and see with my own eyes this inscription to which referred the young Spaniard Jabier Tome. In the army of the French general Leclerc who was allowed to liberate Paris and Strasbourg, there were many Spaniards of whom I met one who is still living. The inscription is a kind of song which we Alsations can never sing enough in appreciation of what has been done by the American people and Army for us in Alsace. Thanks to Jim! And thanks to Verlyn, the editor.

I hope that you and all those who have the chance to join the Reunion in Indianapolis, with much entertainment under the leading of President Chuck Hurl and the Executive Director Gus Hinrich. In my mind remain so many veterans and other persons who came with them in the past. A special greeting to Robert McClarren whom I met 3 years ago and to many others.

With our best greetings
and wishes,
Georges and Liliane Pfalzgraf

GOOD MEMORIES OF FATHER

Dear 14th Armored Division,

I am writing to regretfully inform you of my father's passing.

Karl Werner Wirth, age 91, of Richmond, UT, passed away Tuesday, September 6, 2011, in Logan, UT. He was born June 27, 1920, in Koblenz, Germany. Karl fought with the 14th Armored Division, 499th Armored Field Artillery, Battery B.

He had fond memories of the men he served with. Fortunately for our family, we were able to video record him telling the stories of the time he served in the military. One particular story we remember must be prefaced

with the fact that my father spoke fluent German. Toward the end of the war, as the 14th Armored Division was called on to handle surrendering prisoners, my father was frequently asked to help translate. One German soldier was shocked at his proficiency with the German language, and struck up a conversation. In the course of the conversation the German soldier asked who my father fought with, and where they had fought. My father explained he was with the 14th Armored Division, and told him the battles in which they had fought. The German soldier then told my father, "I know your group. I fought against you. You guys were good. No, you guys were the best!"

In his latter years my father especially enjoyed reading the stories in "The Liberator." Thank you to all those who contribute to this publication. Also, we were interested in finding out if there is anyone else from the 499th B Battery around, who may have stories about or pictures of my father from the war. If so, they may feel free to contact us.

Regards,
Paul & Heather Wirth

HAD HOPED TO ATTEND REUNION

Dear Verlyn,

Thanks for the Liberator, I sure enjoy reading it. I will try to get to the Reunion one afternoon. I will try to get my grandson to bring me. He is not working now. He is a carpenter and has been out of work for sometime now. I drive yet but don't know if I can make the trip by myself. I'm 89 years old. Have had some health problems, mostly with my bones. Have had 2 hip replacements and back problems. I have to walk with a walker. I live in Southeastern Indiana, about a 2 hour

drive to Indianapolis.

I was in C Company, 19 AIB. I joined them in early April 1945. Then about early July was transferred to the 20th A.D., came home with them for 30 days. We were in route to Japan. The war ended about a week after we got home. I then went to California and got discharged 4/1/46.

About 1950 I received a book of the History of C Company, 19 AIB. It got lost a few years later when we were remodeling our house. I was thinking if they still had any books, I would like to purchase one.

Louis Brandt

DONATION FOR THE LIBERATOR

Dear Verlyn,

This morning at 0900 my 'HOSPICE' nurse arrived to replenish my pill supply and take my vital signs. She stopped at the Sandia Casino, which is on the way to her first scheduled patient visit - Me.

We have an agreement to exchange humorous stories - the kind you can't tell at church picnics, but are acceptable among us ole' soldiers and nurses.

While she is hooking up her heart pressure gear, I'm telling her that I'd received the summer issue of "The Liberator" and the need for printing expenses - which are tax deductible when used for the Postage fund! She said: "I put one quarter into a one armed bandit on a quick stop at the Casino - (where free reg. coffee is - just help yourself) and \$100.00 in quarters spit out. I want to donate it to a worthy cause."

Bob Straba
Pfc "C" Company, 19th AIB

Editor's Note: Thank you, Bob, and that wonderful nurse of your's for helping to support the publication of "The Liberator".



MAIL CALL . . . Continued

NOTES DEATH OF HUGH WEST

Dear Verlyn,

Hugh West passed away on 22 July 2011. As you may recall Hugh served in A-94. He was also the National Historian for several years prior to Col. England assuming that position. It was Hugh who first established the Association's relationship with the US Army Military History Institute (USAMHI) at Carlisle Barracks, and began the process of donating 14th AD related materials to that institution. It would, I think, be appropriate to mention Hugh's diligence as National Historian in preserving the history of the division in *The Liberator*.

Note: After relocating to a new facility several years ago USAMHI gave way to a newly created organization known as the US Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC).

Best Regards,
Jim Lankford

WHAT TO DO WITH "INFORMAL HISTORY"?

To Whom It May Concern,

I was recently doing research on the 14th Armored Division, with which my father served, when I came upon a new book, "Battle Yet Unsung" by Timothy O'Keefe. With further perusal, I discovered an incorrect entry which appears in chapter one and which is also incorrectly footnoted. I then found at your website the book review by James Lankford for this text which validated my concern. (My hope is that Mr. Lankford might read this).

My father served in the 68th A.I.B. Medical Detachment. Among his belongings was an informal history of the 68th A.I.B. Medical Detachment. A few years ago, I was able to visit with a veteran who had served with my dad. At that time, I gave him a copy of this informal history, as he had never seen it. (I still have the original

in my possession.) I cannot say what transpired and I mean no disrespect, but the author of "Battle Yet Unsung" credits this veteran with the writing of this pamphlet. I know this to be untrue. My father happens to be mentioned in the descriptive narrative that Mr. O'Keefe quotes... however, he is also misidentified... I will contact the author directly regarding this.

I am writing to ask you where the original "informal history" would be best appreciated. And, at some time, I would like to donate the original to the most appropriate venue.

Thank you for your response to my inquiry.

Most Sincerely,
Barbara A. Mangini

et

LOOKS FORWARD TO READING

THE LIBERATOR

Dear Mr. Hofer,

Some time ago I received a communication from a member of the 14th Armored Division Association by the name of Herman Fiedler. He served with my father, Gray Thoron, in "B" Company of the 19th AIB in the ETO in '44-45. He wrote to me to inquire whether I was this person or a relative. (He got my name from the 'New Member' list published in *The Liberator*.) I had every intention of responding. Unfortunately, I misplaced the envelope not too long afterwards and it has so far not come to light. Thus, I was unable to contact him back.

I was pleasantly surprised to find that Mr. Fiedler wrote about his experiences with the 19th A.I.B. for the Spring 2011 issue of *The Liberator*. I read his article with deep interest. I was wondering if you would be so good as to complete the address on the enclosed envelope and post the same to Mr. Fiedler. The postage should be adequate for this purpose. If this is not the case, I also enclose a small donation for the purpose, and to assist you

in the production of a future issue of *The Liberator*. I thank you very much in advance.

I look forward to receiving the next issue and future issues of *The Liberator*. Reading about the experiences of those who were there, my father's comrades-in-arms, makes me feel closer to him and all he went through and generally the events of that time. My father, who resides in upstate NY and turns 95 in a few days, is not in the best of health. He lost the capacity for speech some time ago and so is no longer able to share his memories of his military service. He rarely did anyway. *The Liberator* helps me to fill the gaps in my knowledge.

I do have a question that maybe you could help me with and direct me to the appropriate department. I understand there is a VHS and DVD put out on the campaign in Alsace. Is this still available and if so who do I apply to for a copy? I'd prefer the video since I don't own a DVD player. But I will take a copy of either.

Thank you again, and good luck with *The Liberator*.

Sincerely yours,
Grenville Thoron

NOTES PASSING OF FRIEND

Dear Verlyn,

Enclosed is the obituary of Ken Clapper of the 47th Tank Battalion of our 14th Armored Division.

He was a great guy and the men he commanded told me time and time again how brave he was and how much they respected him. I am sure you will have an article in a future issue of *The Liberator* concerning him.

Also enclosed is a small memorial to the 14th in Ken's honor.

Best wishes,
John Meyer

(Continued on page 25)



MAIL CALL... Continued

APPRECIATES THE LIBERATOR

Verlyn,

Just to thank you for the excerpts from "Love and War" and to tell you how much I enjoy the other articles and information you provide us. I wonder how much longer the Association will exist as well as how much longer we can expect to receive *The Liberator*. Again, many thanks.

Sincerely,
Bob Buntin

TELLS OF LIFE'S CHANGES

Editor's Note: Because of health issues, Bob Straba has moved about 155 miles north from his home in Albuquerque to the community of Elephant butte, NM. He continues to be very observant and can always find something interesting to write about.

Dear Editor Verlyn,

Due to the big changes taking place about 30 miles south of this small house I am staying at, my fishing is limited. And two small towns are being invaded by the super rich from all over the world to check out "Spaceport America." It's huddled in the middle of nowhere. More than 400 people have already put down a deposit to reserve a seat, and, if all goes well, several hundred civilian astronauts will be blasted just inside the edge of space, 68 miles high.

They will gaze out at Planet Earth and enjoy weightlessness before gliding back to the runway and us poor people. The cost of a ticket is \$200,000. Virgin Galactive, the major contractor, plans to put in its own luxury resort out in the desert to keep its civilian astronauts sequestered during the three days of training and testing that will lead up to the space flight.

So much for how my life is subject to our changing times.

Since I was advised to get my "things" in order, the medical experts gave me three to six months. And I'm still enjoying New Mexico's Manana Syndrome. People aren't as stressed

out here, which is great, having no problem showing up for work on Friday at lunch time instead of on Tuesday when you planned to have that project completed.

Although my hearing loss is a real pain, in that I can't communicate on the regular telephone and my cell phone. I'm stubborn and refuse to learn how to cope with all these modern electronics. I had a computer in my house in Albuquerque several years ago but was unable to follow complex procedures to get it to work. I'm told now it's a piece of cake to use - but I don't care. I'll continue to communicate with pen and ink on notebook paper. I also realize the aging process affects your mind, and that's my most noticeable handicap - memory loss. I wear glasses and have a habit of taking them off and spending time finding them. Yes, I know you will suggest a back-up pair. Dementia is part of my condition.

I detest braggarts and name-droppers but to make a point of keeping a low profile, last November 11, 2010, I was by chance picked to talk to Susana Martinez at the Albuquerque VA hospital. I had been taking various intrusive time tests that day since 0800 and it was now about 4 p.m. I was tired and hungry and waiting for my daughter Rose to pick me up. This attractive hispanic Republican to-be Governor was on her way out of the hospital with her entourage. The local and national news media had already left with all their cameras and equipment. I was in a wheelchair half hidden by the information booth. She stopped and walked right up to me and said, as she got down on one knee and looked at me with those beautiful eyes and a big smile: "What war were you in?" I was almost speechless but I blurted out, "I'm sorry, but I didn't vote for you." The staff, including her husband, were introduced to me. He's a big powerfully built man who has been in police work for 30 years. He was wearing a dressy western cowboy

suit and a big white Stetson hat. I had made all these people laugh - which I did not intend to do. She turned and called the director of the hospital up and said "I would like to have you and Bob on a special committee to keep me informed on Veterans Affairs."

I don't recall what I replied, but then she said, "You are invited to my inauguration celebration in Santa Fe on January 1, 2011." I thanked her and was trying to remember what I had said about the current mismanagement by the Richardson administration. She said, "I'm going to make some big changes in the Santa Fe Round House (capitol)."

Now it's months later and I must confess that I've done nothing. My energy level is low and I realize my hearing loss would make attending a meeting in Santa Fe not practical. And how would I get there? I don't drive anymore.

You can maybe use some of this stuff on the spaceport here in the process of being built. Housing and land costs have gone up in this area. I've had friends in Florida and Michigan ask me what's all this talk about the ride of a lifetime? Who knows what the future holds? Beginning next year, if the spaceport meets its schedules, we will see it in the news and with TV coverage.

Yours truly,
Bob Straba

JUST TO SET THE RECORD

STRAIGHT

Dear Verlyn,

I thought that with war's end, the gremlins, like our enemy, disappeared. I see that they have re-appeared in the "Overseas Voyage..." article in the summer 2011 edition of *"The Liberator"*. For the record, here's the correction of the gremlin's errors:

The 14th Armored Division maneuver
(Continued on page 26)



MORE MAIL CALL

vered in the "Middle Tennessee Maneuver Area" (officially the second Army No. 4 Tennessee Maneuver) not the Louisiana Maneuver area. To some it may have seemed like Louisiana, but in fact it was southeast of Nashville, TN, some 600 miles northeast of the Louisiana area.

The date of the ferry ride to Staten Island, NY, from Weehawken, NJ, was October 13, not November 13 (1944).

The Division's light tanks, at least those of D Co., 25th Tk Bn (and my queries of other light tankers confirm the fact) were not shipped in our convoy. They were left behind at Camp Campbell. On arrival at Marseille we received light tanks that had been left from the North African campaign.

Sincerely,
Bob McClarren

WANTS TO CORRECT MISUNDERSTANDING

Dear Members of the Association:

In a recent letter addressed to the members of the Board of Directors, Elton Ross wrote that I paid for the Association website out of my own pocket because Horst Froelich and Gus Hinrich refused to pay for it. Although I am certain this is an honest misunderstanding on Elton's part, it is incorrect, and begs correction. Horst and Gus are two of the most honorable and honest men it has been my pleasure to know. They are not given to this type of "skullduggery," as my good friend Col. George England (C.O., 94th Cavalry) would have called it, and are wholly incapable of going back on their commitments to me or the Association. Both men were always willing to reimburse me for various and sundry website expenses, and according to my files did so on several occasions. However, the vast majority of the expenses were hap-

PAGE 26 – FALL/WINTER

pily, if quietly, paid by my lovely wife Taeko and I, as sincere donations for benefit of the Association and out of respect for its veterans.

In closing I can say with confidence that it has been a genuine honor serving the Association, and a rare privilege to have earned the trust and friendship of men like Horst Froelich, Gus Hinrich, Verlyn Hofer, Jack DeWitt, Joe Fitts, Harold Kiehne, George England, and those other members of what I call the "Old Guard" who unflinchingly exhibit a certain nobleness of character and a genuine, selfless concern for what is best for the Association.

Sincerely,
Jim Lankford
Former National Historian
and Website Editor

IT WAS A DRUG STORE

Verlyn,

Page 16 of *The Liberator* shows a shell exploding in front of peep of the 62nd AIB.

The word 'Drogerie' means Drug Store. I speak German and am 100% German.

Of course, I preferred liberating "German Officers' Clubs." This "merchandise" was very useful, too, however, when the half track was full we had to give a lot to the walking infantry. They also appreciated the merchandise very much.

Art Roehrl
Machine Gun Platoon
Headquarters Company
62nd Armored Infantry Battalion

YES, A DRUG STORE

Greetings,

In the latest *Liberator*, page 16, last photo, you asked if anyone knew what "drogerie" means. Drogerie is similar to what we would call a drug store. I hope this helps.

Regards,
William Brockway, Jr.
Son of William Brockway,
Co. A, 125th Engineer Battalion
14th Armored Division

REMEMBER THE HUMOR

The 14th Armored Division loaded on trains at Camp Campbell, Kentucky, en route to Camp Shanks, New York. While there we got overseas shots in the arm and signed up for \$10,000 life insurance. Then we loaded on trains again dressed in full field winter uniforms with weapons and steel helmets.

We loaded on ferries at the Hudson River that carried us to Staten Island where we embarked for Marseilles, France aboard the Lejeune and the Santa Rosa and other ships.

The infantry battalions were on the Lejeune, along with the division band and HHD of the 14th. I think the tank battalions were on the Santa Rosa. I don't know what ship the artillery and other battalions were on.

The band performed on deck every day for our entertainment and one of the songs they did was the song "When They Begin the Beguine." The vocalist singing the song changed the words to "When I begin to clean the latrine" ... It was very funny.

When we approached the Straits of Gibraltar and entered the Mediterranean Sea we could see Spain on our left and Africa on our right.

If you remember any of this please send me an e-mail. My address is: htk207@webtv.net.

Harry Kemp
C Company
68th Armd Inf Bn

PS: When we landed at Marseilles we had to march 10 miles up hill to our bivouac area where we pitched tents for the night.

Continued on page 27)

Membership Renewal Notice

MAIL TO: ANN CHELETTE, National Secretary
JESS CHELETTE, National Treasurer

____ Enclosed ANNUAL DUES \$10.00
____ Payable for Membership July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012
Note: ALL 14th AD VETERANS HAVE BECOME LIFE MEMBERS
____ Enclosed is \$10.00 for enrollment / dues of my:

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Daughter _____

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TAPS NOTIFICATION

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

Name _____

Unit _____

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State _____ Zip _____

Survivor _____

Phone _____

Information _____

Send to ANN CHELETTE,
National Secretary

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MAIL CALL (Continued)

OBITUARY FOR KENNETH CLAPPER Submitted by John Meyer

As announced in the Taps column of the summer issue of *The Liberator*, Kenneth Clapper, 90, died on May 15, 2011.

Serving with the 14th Armored Division during WWII, Ken Clapper was a platoon leader in Co. D, 47th Tank Battalion. He was highly respected by the men he commanded and was decorated for his courage and bravery. He was recalled to active duty in the Army in 1951 during the Korean War, serving as a member of the

Judge Advocate General Corps. He was a member of the 14th AD Assoc., the American Legion and the Korean War Veterans.

Upon coming home from WWII, Ken completed his formal education, becoming an attorney in 1950. He served as an assistant attorney general for the state of Illinois, and thereafter practiced law with two of his sons. He retired in 1985.

Mr. Clapper was preceded in death by his first wife, Evelyn, and his second wife, Josie. He is survived by three sons and their wives, and four grandchildren.

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

NOTICE

**LIBERATOR ISSUE DATES!
MARCH - JULY - NOVEMBER**

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

ALL INFORMATION SHOULD BE TYPED.

Send all information to:
VERLYN HOFER

**NEXT DEADLINE IS
JANUARY 15, 2012**

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JANUARY 15, 2012

PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS
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STAN GOLDMAN

STAN GOLDMAN - National Vice President

Elected at the recent national reunion, Stanley "Stan" Goldman is the new National Vice President of the 14th Armored Division Association. Stan served with Co. A of the 62nd AIB and through the years has stayed in contact with old Army buddies, attending several national reunions. As no decisions have been made as yet regarding a 2013 reunion, Stan does not know where he might host the event, but he invites all members and their family members to attend if possible when the time comes. His address is: NJ 07470-2446, and his phone number

SOUTH EASTERN STATES CHAPTER

BOB McCLARREN and
PHIL SNOBERGER, Co-Chairs **HAMPTON INN & SUITES**

WESTERN STATES CHAPTER

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

CASA SERRANO RESTAURANT

**All 14 AD Veterans
will receive
LIBERATORS pins!**

Pins bearing the correct spelling of 'Liberators' were acquired for sale and distribution at our Indianapolis Reunion. Veterans received a free pin, and all others purchased them for \$5. We will be mailing pins to all veterans not attending the reunion beginning this month. Watch for yours in the mail!

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