

Dear Helpmate:

I was saying to Lew Coakes, yesterday, it was time for another Helpmate newsletter. Yesterday was actually Sunday September 28th when Jerri and I had joined Lew at the Aurora Moose Lodge celebrating the robing of a Pilgrim of the Moose. Lew and I are both Pilgrims so we were privileged to join in the happy event. Lew's health is not the best, but he is doing better. He has to contend with the effects of a stroke, but of more immediate concern is a sugar condition.....There was a "mini-reunion" of "C" Btry in August. Roy Roeser, Clair Schneider and Carol went from Illinois and were joined in Virginia by Dick and Sophie Houlihan from Michigan, Ray and Marge Crismond from Pennsylvania, John and Joan Nightingale from New York, Len and Midge Leggett from Ohio, Gerry and Margaret Stensberg from Wisconsin and of course Pappy and Shirley Dawson in Fredricksburg, Virginia. On their return, Clair and Roy gave Jerri and me a running account of the wonderful time, complete with gobs of pictures. Jerri and I were so sorry we couldn't have joined them, but it caught us at a bad time. Our business is in an expansion program and our sons needed us to sit in on negotiations and we like to feel needed, anyway. Ha! At any rate, the continuing desire of the 284th to get together is proof we really enjoy something special in our organization. Guess that feeling of unity made us one of the best darned battalions in the army. There are quite a few of you that receive our newsletters that have never participated in a reunion and to you I want to say something special. "At this stage in our lives the future is not the most certain thing and I want to urge each and every one of you to have second thoughts about missing a single chance to reunite with Helpmate". Some of you have written, "gee, Ronni, I just wouldn't know anyone, after all these years". Well, my answer has to be, "there is usually 20 to 25 members of each battery on hand and wouldn't it be great to spend 3 wonderful days with whom you went through so much"? .....Am hopeful all the medical Detachment will join us at St. Louis. Capt. Kittell has promised to make every effort to attend, in spite of the uncertain nature of his health. Dr. John Summers is chairman of the reunion and Elmer Siegel is close enough (quincy) to lend a hand. Al Demonaco has promised to come and a faint hint of his coming came from Dave Puckett. Am hoping Podolsky, Namel and Jarbo make it, too. Jarbo should have no excuse for he lives so close to St. Louis (Valles mines, Mo.). The three Medics not named are Feinour, Fiske and Wardenski who have all passed away.....In talking to Dr. Summers he tells me plans are under way and there is no lack of things to entertain us in St. Louis. Elmer Forcade has volunteered to work with Summers which will ease the burden and we shouldn't forget John's wife "Babe" who will carry her share. Before this bulletin is put in the mail, the exact date of the reunion will be announced so read on.....Anyone with magazine, newspaper or Veteran connections, please send in an announcement.....With all the good news also comes the bad. Pat Antile phoned this in. Remember Clarence Wilkinson, Baker Btry Agent, that singlehandedly invaded the Metz Forts? Clarence passed away July 7th, awaiting a heart transplant that failed to arrive in time. More recently, Elmer Hill lost his wife, Gino. Elmer called me and we had a good cry together.....Summing up our losses, over the years, we have lost 74 men since starting our reunions and the prospect of adding to our roster, at this late date, is pretty slim. It would help to locate recent drops from our mailing list. Where can we find: Thos. Callahan, Ernest Foust, Bill Mendza and Wm. Shelton? .....Had the treat, recently, of talking to Dr. Kittell and Dr. Summers, within a few minutes of each other. Summers had called me for Kittell's number so he could order a copy of his "I Was A Jewish Medic In Patton's 3rd Army". Kittell called me for he had failed to get Summer's address. Incidentally, if you haven't read Kittell's book, you can obtain one by calling him at 1-512-896-2370.....About the same time as the above episode, I talked to Elmer Siegel who is doing O.K., but wife Annie has emphysema problems.....Had a surprise visit, recently. Roy Fredrickson (B) and his wife dropped in at our Antioch store and caught me in. We had a good gabfest and of course won the war all over again. Roy is now

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retired with time to join us at St. Louis. Among many others whose names escape me now, Roy inquired about Ruschmeyer, Henry Ceci, Andy Graff, Frank Fulton, Bill Groan and Joe Molnar most of whom will be at the reunion.....Haven't talked to General Sanders recently, but will as soon as plans are a little further along. Surely hope the General can fit the reunion into his schedule for he does add something special to the occasion.....While thinking of the officers in the battalion and I'll probably miss someone, I hope we see Lee Conway, Leo Bergeron, Howard Ellis, Harry Goodman, Walter McFadden, Irving Merrill, Leo Murphy, Harvey Osborne, Gerry Ruschmeyer, Al Scoville, Bill Shick, Andy Sontag, Dick Williams and Frank Wright. I see I missed John Koss and I wonder what ever happened to Major Williams, Lt. Goodman and Lt. Knazovich? Now, who did I miss?.....Have been in contact with Al Grimm several time and learn he is working on some kind of memorial in tribute to our members that have passed on. He promises to reveal his work at the reunion. Al tells me Leslie and Doris Smith stopped by, on their way to So. Dakota. Les has lost part of a lung, but is doing fine. Al's Louise is just out of the hospital, with her diabetes, but is doing O.K.....Roeser learned that Gumprecht had passed away. We've put his wife Joyce on the roster; she lives in Crystal Lake, Il. and works at Ace Hardware there.....Bud DeFeo is tickled to be back in touch with helpmate. He separated from us and joined the 274th Armored Artillery sailing for England in our same convoy (USS John Erickson). Like the 284th, the 274th was also XX Corps and traveled across France along our same path. Memory dims, but he remembers well Dawes, Lembo, Hawkins, Prince, Fitzgerald and of course Shick. Fitzgerald was also transferred to the 274th. DeFeo ran into big Jerry Corrigan, in the hospital at Atlantic City (1945). As I recall, Corrigan suffered a concussion at Hamm and was lost to us. Capt. Kittell and our medical crew will remember what a time we had handling this big fellow, in the cramped quarters, in the little house in Hamm. Does anyone know if Corrigan recovered from the wheel chair condition he was in at the hospital? DeFeo sent in a map of the path covered by the 274th and the account reads almost like that of the 284th, but their firing fell a little short of ours. We fired something like 98 thousand rounds of 105 mm and they 88641. Two busy outfits! DeFeo will be at St. Louis, to renew old friendships.....Seton Ijams sent in \$10 and a change of address. He's retired now and residing at Spears House RFD #1, Bx. 168 B, Bowdoinham, Me. If you happen up that way, stop by and say hello.....Fred Beltz anxious for the St. Louis reunion so he can give his new car a workout. Hopes to get together with the Smith twins for the trip. Fred sends greetings to you all, along with a bit of memorabilia--a matchbook inscribed "U.S. Army, Camp Rucker Alabama". .....Roy Roeser is going it alone since his wife Eileen first suffered a broken hip followed 2 weeks later by 2 secessive strokes from which she failed to respond. Roy says, "my life now takes another fork in the road". How true, how true!.....Richard Houlihan has moved into a smaller place--new address is 10590 Orion, Rockford, Mi. 49341. Dick and Sophie enjoyed the mini "C" reunion in Virginia and have already planned to join us at St. Louis.....Such a nice letter from Jean and Joe Digerolamo in which they explain the many obstacles preventing their attending past reunions, but the way is clearer now so we can count on seeing them at St. Louis. They have 3 children, a 33 retarded boy born at the very time we reuned at Vandalia, a married daughter with 2 children and a 20 year old girl engaged to be married. Joe and one of our Medics, Darrell Hamel, were such close friends in the service it would seem such an ideal time to renew an old friendship. Darrell, please take note! The Digerolamos have a new address, 115 S. Main, Wood River, Il. 62095.....Grace Whitney writes belatedly that the Lord called Sheryl home Dec. 10th, 1985. She is carrying on, with the help of two sons, Thomas and Rodney, and a daughter, Linda.....Jim Carney has a new address, #5 Riddlewood Dr.,

Media, Pa. 19063.....A bit of trivia by way of Clair Schneider. "When I works I works hard. When I rests I rest easy and when I sits I just falls asleep".....And, someone asked me and I can't remember who it was, what man's father came on board the Dominion Monarch just before we sailed? Anyone know?.....Dorothy and George Ralcewich had a grand tour of England. They spent an entire week in London, after traveling the countryside. They found the scenery beautiful and towns Cardiff and Abergavenny had grown unbelievably. Their message ended, "see you in St. Louis"!.....Nice note from Lenny Olson and a picture, too. Lenny looks so good and seems to have surmounted the handicap of a right side stroke. What a treat it would be to have Lenny at the reunion!.....The Fughs are so thankful their daughter and family escaped a terrible fate. Following is the actual newspaper report of the incident which should be warning to us all, as we go traveling. From the Southern Illinoian:

# Blue-light bandit hits area family

By Cathy A. Monroe  
Of the Southern Illinoian

Robert K. York of West Frankfort and his 15-year-old son were asleep early Sunday morning when his wife, Mary Jane, pulled off Interstate 24 about 10 miles north of Nashville, Tenn., at the insistence of a car with flashing blue lights.

Minutes later, the Yorks were robbed of \$2,500 of their Florida vacation money and were left shaking from a shotgun blast in the dashboard of their 1985 Torino.

"You aren't really scared when it's happening," said Richard York, 15, whose pocket money provided the family's only means of financing the hurried return trip to Southern Illinois. "It's only when it's over and you realize what could have happened to you."

The Yorks were victims of a gun-point scam that's been enacted at least five times since June 6 on the interstates feeding Nashville, a popular tourist spot and pass-through point for vacationers from Southern Illinois.

"Everything's been the same each time," said Bill Stroud, a detective in the armed robbery divi-

sion of Nashville's Metropolitan Police Department. Each robbery has taken place on a lonely stretch of interstate between midnight and 4 a.m., and each has involved a young black man driving a dated white or beige mid-sized car carrying flashing blue lights in its grill.

The blue-light bandit seems to prey on tourists, Stroud said. Only two of his victims have been from the Nashville area.

In each incident, he has threatened his victims with a gun. However, he has been reported as firing it only twice, first into a tire to disable one victim and then into the Yorks' dashboard.

"He could very easily have killed all of us," Robert York, 40, said.

"There are so many people from here that go through Nashville," he added. "I just want to tell them, 'For God's sake, don't stop. Go to a gas station before you pull over.'"

Nashville police cars are equipped with blue rather than red lights, and undercover officers often drive cars with lights hidden in the grillwork, Stroud said.

"Honestly, if you see blue lights, you've got to pull over," he said,



Photo by STEPHEN KENNEDY

Victims: Mary Jane and Robert York of West Frankfort

"but I'd make sure it was a well-lighted area so you can tell if it's a police car."

Moreover, Stroud said, most police will tip off motorists who decline to stop for a flashing blue light by turning on their sirens.

*Southern Illinoian July 8 ( Tues. ) 1986*

We're thankful, just as the Fughs are, that the episode didn't end in tragedy. We'll likely get more of the story at the reunion.....A card from Mel and Betty Donaldson, from Alaska, having the time of their lives seeing bears, caribou, fox, whales, otters, along with beautiful scenery. What a thrill it must be, to throw back 40 and 50 pound fish (salmon) because you can keep but two. We'll see these two at St. Louis. ....Another lost sheep has returned to the fold, in the name of John Flanagan. Welcome back, John! Hope to see you in St. Louis.....We hear from Bob and Helen Mielke occasionally. They use our vitamins and need to replenish their supply, from time to time. They have a new grandson, to fuss over, when they're not fishing from their cottage on the Flambeau Flowage. Hope to get up to see them sometime, particularly when the fish are biting.....Doris and Leslie (Smitty) Smith are anxious for reunion time. They missed the last one, because of Smitty's lung operation, but things are alright now.....A long, long letter from Paul

and Angie Boehm, from their home in Hobson, Tx. Can't cover their whole tour, but suffice it to say it covered 5000 miles from Tulsa to St. Louis, Indianapolis to Belle Isle, the Ford Museum, Niagara Falls and on to Ottawa and Montreal, Portland Me., N.Y. City and the Statue of Liberty, then Washington and on home. Angie and Paul, what a beautiful trip!... ..Attempted to call Al Grimm, a couple of days ago and found his phone had been disconnected. Don't know what to think and hope my fears are unfounded. Have written him so hope word comes from him quickly..... A last minute address change for Anthony Lembo, 2025 Yorktown Blvd., Toms River, N.J. 08753. Tony and Dee had such a good time at Williamsport, they wouldn't think of passing up St. Louis. Tony retired last February and says how good it is to just do nothing. Of course a little golf, a little fishing doesn't come under the heading of work. Tony and Dee have 3 children and 5 grandchildren. Their last boy is getting married, he's the one who served on the Navy Ship Nimitz for 4 years. ....Received a sample copy of a new magazine available appropriately named "WORLD WAR II" published by Empire Press 105 Loudoun St. S.W., Leesburg, Va. 22075 (\$2.95). Very interesting and a first class publication. Should be available on the newstand.....With each card or letter comes the question as to my health. Am happy to report that I seem to be doing real well. With all the supplements I take sometimes I think I'll probably turn into a tablet, but all kidding aside I was diagnosed as having Cryoglobulinemia. Frankly, I have but one of the main symptoms, numb hands and feet so I can't accept the diagnosis and I've learned to live with the handicap. I've got to keep moving good, in order to keep up with Jerri my child bride.....Happy to bring this bulletin to a close, with the announcement that our 1987 Reunion at St. Louis will be held on the 11th, 12th and 13th of September. The motel or hotel headquarters will be announced later. Dr. John Summers and his wife "Babe" will organize the affair and they promise a busy and enjoyable three days. They encourage everyone to check in on the 10th, so not a minute of the activities is missed. When the time comes to make reservations, full instructions will come to you via newsletter. If need be, Dr. Summers can be reached at 1-314-843-3833. In the meantime, get busy and spread the word.

MERRY CHRISTMAS to each and everyone of you and may GOD treat you kindly.

*Ronni & Jerri*  
Ronni and Jerri Colson

*Keep the cards and letters  
coming so we have news  
to print.*

*SORRY FOR THE LOUSY JOB OF DUPLICATING -  
MY STENCIL CUTTER ACTED UP AND NO TIME  
FOR REPAIR. - Ronni*

# LEST ANYONE EVER FORGET "HELPMATE'S" CONTRIBUTION!

HEADQUARTERS 5th INFANTRY DIVISION ARTILLERY

APO #5, U.S. Army

19 October 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Lt. Col. Horace L. Sanders, Commanding 284th Field Artillery Battalion. (Thru Military Channels.)

1. 284th Field Artillery Bn (Light, 105 mm HOW) was attached to 5th Infantry Division Artillery on 25 Aug. 1944, detached on 27 Aug. 1944 and reattached on 30 Aug. 1944.

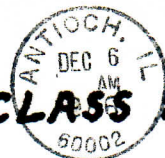
2. The period during which the battalion has been attached has included the actions at MONTEREAU and NOGENT, the passage of the Rivers SEINE and MARNE, the liberation of Reims, the actions in the vicinity of the FORET de ARGONNE and of VERDUN, the liberation of VERDUN, the passage of the River Meuse, the advance to the vicinity of the fortress of METZ and the <sup>action</sup> about that fortress, including the passage of the River MOSELLE, the establishment and maintenance of a bridgehead east of that river and the attacks upon the FORTIFIED GROUP DRIANT.

3. Throughout all the period noted, the conduct of the 284th F A Bn has been exemplary and its military performance of the highest order. Delivery of fire by the battalion has met every requirement and I have had several occasions to congratulate both you and your command.

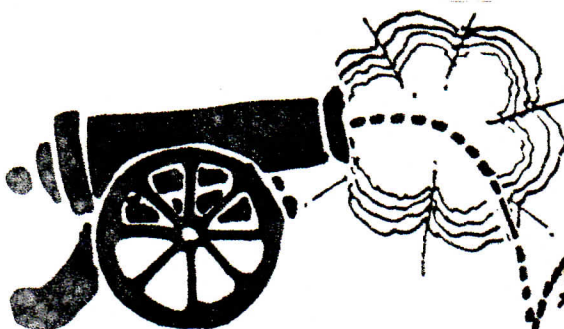
4. It is desired to commend both you and your battalion for the fine and soldierly performance and to express the hope that you may soon again be attached to this command.

S/ H. C. Vanderveer  
T/ H. C. VANDERVEER  
Brigadier General, U. S. Army  
Commanding

HCV/wm



FIRST CLASS MAIL



"HELPMATE"  
284th FA BN WORLD WAR II



MESSAGE CENTER  
RONNI POLSON  
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Antioch, IL 60002

CHRISTMAS 1986

TO

Moses Sweetgall (Hq)  
79 Glenwood Blvd.  
Hudson, N.Y. 12534

HELPMATE'S  
20TH REUNION  
ST. LOUIS

SEPT. 11TH, 12TH & 13TH  
1987