

# HELMATE BULLETIN

Issue 98-1

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

February

10

OF THE

284TH FIELD ARTILLERY BN WWII

1998

RONNIE'S MESSAGE CENTER 12658 ALSWELL LN. ST. LOUIS MO 63128 (314)843-3833  
[HLPMATE284@AOL.COM]

*Greetings, Helpmates. Happy New Year;*

Well, we are beginning another year - hopefully for the best. Last year was a bummer, for sure. I suspect that each of us has a set amount of trouble to endure in our life and mine was concentrated into 1997.

I received many greetings from the group and tried to acknowledge most of them. Some of the greetings included checks for the kitty, and for those exalted individuals, many, many thanks. Since my last report I had to have a service call on the copier, so the new donations will pay for that, just about. When they put new parts into a machine it seems as though you are repurchasing the thing, but I suppose that is the way the repair business works. Again, many thanks for the kind greetings, and for the words of comfort, which I received. It is appreciated - so much. And thanks again to those who sent in kitty donations. It is nice to be able to call for supplies or services, and know that you have ample funds handy.

Now for the cards received, and any news which was contained therein. These will be in no order, as I packed them into my luggage as best fit, not chronologically. Many of the Helpmates included donations to the kitty, and I am not going to specify these individuals, but will thank them as a group for their kind donations.

Joanne Koss [John] sends regards to all, and especial sympathy on Babe's loss - as she has recently gone through the same problem with the loss of John. I am going to assume that things go well with the Koss group, and I am sure that I echo the sentiments of those who served with John in hoping a healthy, happy New Year to them.

Fred Beltz sends greetings to all, and in a later communication he sent a clipping from

the local newspaper which went into some detail as to the extent of their services. This is a free service, and in 1996 they buried 234 veterans, donated 11,779 man hours of work, and 38,012 miles of driving in the course of their duties. Like the mail service, they work in heat, in snow, in the rain, wind, and on every day of the year. The cost of this service is recovered by the sale of books and calendars and the like. Blank ammo is furnished by County Veterans Affairs Dep't, as are the flags used. Thanks for your note, Fred. I hope you got your duplicate newsletter OK.

Fred got many cards from the Helpmates and was very happy to have heard from them.

Mary Ciccone sends greetings, and no news which generally means good news. Thanks much, Mary. Write when you get the chance.

Clair Schneider sent a note in which he declares that Christmas is mostly of the past, and his address book reminds him of this fact often. He calls the closest of his friends and relatives, visits those in the neighborhood, and lives by the following prayer;

PRAYER - SO FAR SO GOOD:

DEAR GOD: SO FAR TODAY I'VE DONE ALL RIGHT. I HAVEN'T GOSSIPED, HAVEN'T LOST MY TEMPER, HAVEN'T BEEN GREEDY, GRUMPY, NASTY, SELFISH OR OVER-INDULGENT. I AM VERY THANKFUL FOR THAT. BUT IN A FEW MINUTES, GOD, I'M GOING TO GET OUT OF BED, AND FROM THEN ON, I'M GOING TO NEED A LOT MORE HELP. AMEN!!!!

Been there, and done that!!!!

Thanks for the wishes, Clair, and thank



you for the telephone call which solved no immediate problem, and which increased your capital outlay for the charges.

I am sure you remember the huge male Babe cared so much for - "Poppy-Cat". He made the long trip last week, very easily, and without any obvious suffering. David was in the process of feeding him when he just keeled over, and went to cat heaven. I'm sure that is true, because he raised four kittens when the mother cat either left, or was killed. The last 2 of our outside cats are wild, and they will take care of themselves, I am sure.

Thanks for the greetings, and the call.

Al and Minnie DeMonaco sent greetings to all, and best wishes for 1998.

Al had given his son Tony the last newsletter to read to read. He noticed that I had an address on the net, and contacted me thru this medium. We didn't solve any world problems, but it was nice to talk with any of the loved ones connected with Helpmate members. At least, now Al knows that I am available for his input, and that is neat. He correctly observes that we had things not available to those before us, and this just represents progress.

Al and Min have just welcomed a 9th grandchild, Gino. Congrats.

Dick and RaeMarie Bozzo send greetings to all, and report that our help in Jeep Rafeld's address was invaluable. They had 2 meetings in the 2 weeks visit to New Smyrna Beach, and only 1 spot of rain. They relive old memories, and generally had a fine time with the visits. Did Jeep get you to the China Jade, Dick? He finds many reasons to visit that joint.

The Bozzos just finished annual checkups, and got good news. Rae Marie is still in remission, but becomes very exhausted on exertion. She believes that this is a side effect of one of the medicines she takes.

Dick tells me that his cardiologist has a son in the St. Louis area who practices endocrinology. I do not know the Doctor he names, but I will try to call and give him Dick's high opinion of his dad.

George and Dorothy Ralcewich send all good tidings to all, and hope all have a happy, healthy 1998. I will be seeing those good Helpmates soon. Thanks for the good wishes.

Millie and Bill Stepanek write that they surely enjoyed Springfield, and hope to make the next one. They went to Decatur and Clinton to visit Millie's relatives on their way home. He surely missed seeing Barlog and Shick at this reunion. Maybe next one, Bill.

Jerri Polson also writes to say she was very pleased with Springfield, and that she will enjoy Florida next year. Things go well in Antioch, and Jerri wishes all good things to all Helpmates.

Martha Ellis sends best wishes to all of the group, and wrote some encouraging words concerning Babe's death, having gone through the same ordeal just over a year ago. I am sure that I will drop by to see Martha before I leave the area. She writes that things are going well at this time, and enjoys the companionship of her family, and several of the Helpmate group.

Dick and Ruth Williams send regards, and wish all a healthy 1998. We have been on the phone recently, and Dick seems to be handling the back problems in better shape than in the past.

Son David tells me via the internet that Dick's Bulletin arrived in terrible shape, and he should be getting another one soon.

Dick's card had a very professional pen and ink drawing of the Reim's Cathedral and I shall reproduce it in this issue. It was on permanent National exhibition for 2 years. He also has one of Notre Dame which remains on permanent exhibit.

Thanks for the card, and for the call.

David and Virginia Hawkins sent seasons greetings, and the thought that if my property in Florida was too bothersome, I might try a move to Texas. Not too illogical, David. See you in Holiday, Fl.

There are several things to report about the card I received from Bud and Jean De-Feo. First, they wish all of the group the



best for the season, and the second, to wish that I had put a stamp on the card they were to receive from me. Sure enough, "returned for postage" in red letters stared at me on their card. I talked with him by phone to apologize, and he was not a bit surprised. He allowed that such behavior is par in some situations, and I am very grateful for his understanding. All is well with Bud and Jean, and they will be going south in February, visiting relatives, and cruising in the Caribbean.

I am going to try to leave his stampless greeting with Crismond, if I remember it.

The Pat Entiles send greetings to all, and wish the best of the season, and of 1998 to all. It is nice to hear from good Helpmates, folks.

Joe and Alice Molnar are settled in Sebring for the winter. They missed the reunion, but do not intend missing Holiday. They have not been on any building jobs in the near past, as they doubt the safety of the drinking water in Brazil and Panama. Joe plays golf quite a lot, he tells me, and is addicted to walking for exercise. Sounds like the same thing to me.

Charlie and Ruth Zimmer also send the best to all. In October, Chas. had a knee replacement, and is recuperating nicely. He and Ruth intend "breaking out" of the home confinement in January, when they are going to take a Hawaiian cruise. Ruth is going to be better about sending me news, she tells me. Appreciate that.

Bill and Ginger Shick missed the reunion when Bill got pneumonia, and spent more time in the hospital than he wished. He is just now beginning to feel OK. Then Ginger came down with the "shingles". What a bummer. I hope you don't get some of the lousy luck some of those with shingles get. The lesions don't heal as rapidly, and they are quite aggravating and painful. Please let us know how you do. And this past year I did it again. I had badges already made up for you both - and I really expected to see you, even up to the last minute.

Joe Kocsis and family hopes that 1998 is some better for the whole group. I am plan-

ning to call Joe while I am in Florida. He was able to visit the west coast group on several occasions in the past. Thanks for the good wishes.

Bob and Sumiko Rosen also send regards to all. Bob especially wants to let the group from "B" Battery know what a great time he had with them at Springfield.

Bob is working hard now, helping the kids get out of the Christmas rush, but he is going to try to be loose in Feb. for a cruise, and some tennis and time in the Caribbean. Have a great time, folks. Great hearing from you.

Marge and Ray Crismond send greetings to all, and hope to see me in the near future. Ray is going to start getting things pulled together for the reunion in October.

Thanks for the greetings Ray. See you soon.

Bea Beck sent a belated condolence card with cheering words. She lost Bob a while ago, but knows how empty things seem at first. She reassures me that things will get better, and I know she must be right.

Bea is going to Tampa in December to see her daughter, and later on will go to Sebring for other relatives visiting. She is going to call Joe and Alice Molnar while in Sebring, as she hasn't seen them in many years.

Thanks for the kind words, Bea. How is your floor waxing doing? Just call.

Betty and Mel Donaldson send greetings to all. Mel had his right eye operated upon, and things didn't turn out as expected. He had to be referred to a retina specialist for a repeat job, but things go well now. Seems like you read that before in this issue. Hope my right eye turns out OK, too. I will say that it is better than before surgery.

Donaldsons are going to leave for Florida sometime after Jan. 1. I will surely see them at that time.

Millie and Paul Martin send greetings to the group. No news in the card, so I will hope that things go well in the Zephyrhills area. Thanks, folks. May see you down there.

Norb and Marie Obecnny send greetings,



and a picture of their first condo. It is a log cabin which is being completed, Let me know if you need rentals, folks. I think you will need some outdoorsy family to take over the lease on that one.

Glenn and Jessie Bennett send kind words and seasons greetings. He thanks me for working with the newsletter, as he always looks forward to receiving it. I am glad you enjoy it, Glenn. I enjoy putting it out.

Eunice Tibbott sends greetings, and will spend the holidays surrounded by family. She will have grandchildren galore about, some expecting Santa, others world wise, and into shopping.

She knows that this first Xmas will be a chore, but hopefully friends and family will help make up the loss, and things will be better in the future. Thanks for your support, Eunice. I know you've been there.

She is going to be down here in Florida in January, so I hope some of you may see her on her visit.

Gerry Brennan sent a letter earlier with condolence messages, and also sent a card wishing all Helpmates a fine Xmas season, and a happy, healthy 1998. Thanks for the greetings, folks. Be healthy. And keep remembering me in your prayers.

I received a set of well wishes and Xmas greetings from Gerry and Mugs Stensberg. They hope that close family ties, and good friends will close up the void which is sure to be in place this year. I agree, and I sure do appreciate the family support which has been super, and I know that time and life experience will help lessen out loss.

And the second card is a membership for Babe in the Franciscan Mission Assoc. which will conduct a novena starting Xmas day, and thruout the year. Thank you so much for remembering her in this manner.

Cliff Cosler (Flora) sent a group of pictures from the reunion. He enjoyed the party greatly, and is still enjoying it. He is putting pennies in the album which I made available to all. Be sure to get the right ones in the right holes.

Thanks for the greetings, and the pix. I

still have some papers from you which I will try to get into a future newsletter.

Bill and Marion Hartley sent greetings to all, and tell me to say lots of prayers this year. Marion tells me that there is nothing new in Dade City, and hopes to see me in January. It will happen, Marion.

Moe Sweetgall and Janet send regards for a happy holiday season, and for 1998. I know we will see them in Florida. Hope to get some of my money back in our very expensive rummy games.

Harry and Pat Dannemann send seasons greetings, and news that the entire middle section of his Newsletter was missing. Just the address page was sent to him.

I sent another copy to Harry, and since then I have had 6 or 7 other Helpmates with the same exact story, and I have been able to get all but 1 sent to those denied souls.

Harry missed the reunion since he was in a plaster cast or in therapy for a severely painful muscle problem in his leg. He was treated vigorously, but still has some problems with the leg. Hang in there.

Thanks for the card, Harry and Pat. See you in Florida next October.

Jeep and Jerry Rafeld sent greetings to all, and the news which I have written earlier concerning their meeting with Dick Bozzo and Rae Marie. They did a double visit - home and home - and had a lovely time. Jeep wrote that his newsletter arrived in the same condition I have described earlier, so I will re-send him one when I get home.

I trust I have not forgotten anyone this year. The greetings were so pleasant, and so meaningful, and I cannot thank you enough for your loving concern. It will be remembered.

Now, to get caught up on the news. I have noted in several places that the newsletter was badly handled by the post office. At least 7 or 8 of them were damaged, and were remailed. I am sure that the Christmas rush was the culprit, and the machines were geared up to handle the enlarged load, so killed the weak ones. I have tried to replace those which were



lost, but write and ask if I missed you.

The General called me some time back to get an address of our other Sanders. He had gotten a communication which he did not recognize, and thought it may have been sent to him in error. Well, I gave him the other address, and he thanked me, and 5 minutes later he was back on the line with news that the communication was intended for him, and it was one of his relatives whose phone number I was able to get with my computer.

In any event, I told him that I was going to be in Florida for a while, and he asked me to call his granddaughter, who lives in the Cocoa Beach area. I have not gotten that done as yet, but I shall certainly try. He still promises me some fodder for my newsletter, and I suspect that he will do so.

Clair Schneider called me just after Xmas and we spent a bunch of his money just gabbing. He has gotten another cat, and believes that it will rule the cat roost at his home. He is visiting his kids, etc., at this time of year, and suspects that he will be in this same state of action in the future.

Got down into Florida on Jan. 1, and was greeted by a cool snap, naturally. Now, cool down here is 50, and cold is 40. A dip in the thermometer to 40- is cause for alarm. I told my brother that I usually bring on some change, even though it may not be good.

I called Ray Crismond, and Marge is in the middle of severe flu symptoms, and was to go to the MD the next day. Marge is just 4 seconds bigger than a minute, and on this infection, she was really floored. I am going to have to go over to New Port Richey to finish more business there, but I will not get to see the Crismonds on this trip. I gave George and Dorothy Ralcewich the same message, and hope to see them later in the trip.

Will wonders never cease?? I am lying in bed here in Holiday Florida, nearly finished with my real estate problem. The lady I use for my transactions must have decided to get something done right, and in 5 minutes I had completed the necessary paper work, and will be ready for final signing in the late

morning tomorrow. I couldn't believe the very rapid pace that this transaction took. I am so used to foot dragging, and the like, or what is worse, half-done projects which have to be cleaned up later.

I knew that Marge Crismond was under the weather with the local "flu", but I was hoping that she might have a meal while I was in the neighborhood, but Ray put his foot down, and protected her from foreign contamination. We will be able to get together later, when she feels better. I knew that we would not be visiting, so I will call later, and we can arrange a meeting of the West Coast Brigade. Hang in there, Marge. You just get well.

Started back to New Smyrna Beach, and the car stopped working. This was on Friday night, and no work ever gets done on week-ends, and I over weekended in Auburndale. I picked up my car Monday AM, and met Jeep Rafeld for a luncheon at the China Jade, and then I came over to the east coast. In the meantime, George and Dorothy had been calling me on the east side, got no answer, and immediately thought the worst may have happened, but I called them from brother Gene's house, and alleviated their worries. I am going to try to get back over to the west side later in this week, and visit my brother in law, and the west side buddies before I go back to refrigeration.

The West Coast Brigade met in Brandon on Friday, Jan. 23, about 1 PM. There were storm warnings in the entire area, and many of those who intended attending did not make it. The rain was torrential, and the wind very strong. I had gone over to get Jeep Rafeld, and we tooled over Hwy 60 to the location, then could not find where the group was to meet. Finally got on the ball, and found the spot. Joe Molnar, Marge and Ray Crismond, Jeep Rafeld, George and Dorothy Ralcewich, and yours truly were all who could get there. Pete Taylor, Joe Kocsis, the Hartleys, Paul Martin, Charles Cody, Moe Sweetgall, Warren Ellis - all had expressed that they would try to make it. but they just couldn't. After the meal, and



Mel Donaldson got down to Florida later than he usually does, but had to return to Michigan because his daughter was having surgery shortly after they arrived in Florida. They will be returning shortly, but I did not get to see them at all. I called Martha Ellis in Lakeland, and also made repeated calls to invite Les Lenker to the lunch. No answer, and no message request, so we had to go without Les and Alzene. Next time.

While visiting George Ralcewich he had asked me if we had the locate on Margaret McCready, widow of Gene. I did not have, so here is her current address:

Ms. Margaret R. McCready  
28 Nimitz St.  
Huntington, NY 11743-6140

If any of you remember this family, drop a line.

I had a nice visit with George and Dorothy, and lost my share of dimes in our card games. But we had a nice time, and we will have to do this thing again.

After I returned to Auburndale, I called Jeep to see if we could get a return visit to the China Jade. Gerry gets the use of the car on Friday PM, (the girls will know what I mean by that), so I picked Jeep up, and we hit the eating spot - the better to raise my blood sugar. We had a leisurely lunch, then returned to Jeep's abode, and worked on his computer for the next 3 hours. It had been somewhat erased in one fashion or another, but we got it perking after a while, all except the modem part, and that will be OK when Jeep gets the proper disks with which to install the modem. I am looking forward to his notification that he has that in good shape. His grandson, (USAF - Flies the A-10) gave him the machine, and he is well on his way to mastering the beast. In any event, he will also be on the net, so look for his locate, when I learn of it.

Returned to St. Louis early Saturday AM after spending the entire month of January in sunny (?) Florida. Was sorry to leave, but needed to get back to the refrigerator so that I could get some needed work done.

And I came back to about 2 tons of mail.

Some of it was Helpmate related, and not at all good news. I received news that Irv Becker had died last March of leukemia. He had been doing well, but had written that he had the condition, but was doing well at that time. In any event, I hope that he was not in great suffering, and I am glad that I got to know Irv and Elsie on our overseas trip. I am going to write our condolences to Mrs. Becker, and tell her how much Babe got to know and admire Irv on the trip.

Elsie sent a check to honor Babe for which many thanks are given.

Norbert Obecny had called in my absence, and reported that his Helpmate had been delivered as the address sheet only. And Rose Schmidt also reported the exzct same problem. I have sent extra copies to those I know were slighted, and if any more are not replaced, please call. In all now, there were about 11 or 12 damaged in the Xmas rush. Automation!!!!

I received a birthday card from George and Dorothy Ralcewich on the 3rd, and was glad to get it. The kids took me out for dinner on that great day, and it was good to get all of them together for a change. David was under the weather, but he ate a bucket full, his usual quota.

It's about time for a few more birthdays.

### **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

02	LLOYD LAGE	73
03	JOHN SUMMERS	75
08	EDGAR ROE	78
11	STAN CHMURA	75
11	TONY LEMBO	75
13	BUD DeFEO	73
13	BILL STEPANEK	73
14	ROBERT MIELKE	78
14	HARRY PODOLSKY	79
15	TONY KUBASEK	74
23	AL DeMONACO	79
23	BILL HARTLEY	73

### **MARCH BIRTHDAYS**

02	WARREN ELLIS	78
02	GEORGE FORD	75
05	RICHARD WILLIAMS	81
07	NORBERT OBEENY	80



## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

08	ALBERT WIGGER	82
13	LEONARD LEGGETT	80
13	WILFRED NELSON	73
20	PATRICK ENTILE	74
22	LESTER LENKER	73

## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

07	DONALD DAWES	73
12	GILBERT MITCHELL	86
19	RAY CRISMOND	73
19	MATTHEW KRUCHTEN	73
23	AL GRISHAM	75
23	GEORGE RALCEWICH	73
25	JACK NEWELL	74

These Helpmates are to be congratulated. They have survived another year, and we hope they have many more birthdays.

This newsletter is getting longer than I usually have, but I wanted to get as much of the greeting news in the bulletin as possible. I hope that some of you who are on the internet will pop me a note now and again. I have been unable to raise Gen. Sanders, and I suspect there is a .net or a .com on his address which is missing. MY INTERNET ADDRESS IS HLPMATE284@AOL.COM and I am going to put it on the letterhead of the Bulletin each time. I have already heard from Al DeMonaco's son, John Nightingale's daughter, Irv Merrill, H.Smith, and I know that Jeep Rafeld has an address, but no modem, and Gen. Sanders, as I mentioned. It is so easy to get done, and although much of the correspondence is small talk, it is talk.

How about a nice clean joke which came across the net from my niece.

It seems that Jimmy Joe recently bought a very expensive parrot, and he was going to make the creature the talk of the town. Well, it was talk, OK, but not town talk. The bird was very talented with language, but if it weren't swear words, it was rude, vulgar, or unappetizing ones. This went on for weeks despite anything that JJ did, and it seemed to him that the bird was getting worse.

He got advice from a bird psychologist,

from local bird owners, from cousin Sue, and from anyone who would talk to him about the problem. Nothing worked.

After a very exasperating experience he got a soda straw, and tapped his head with the terrible weapon, all the while raising his voice in shaming the bird. This infuriated JJ, and he was without a clue as to what to do. In desperation, he opened the freezer of his refrigerator, and planted the bird on the cold shelf. That really got the bird going, and he raised everything but the roof, using more swear words than ever, and loudly blasting JJ for his actions. After a minute or so the swearing stopped, and absolute quiet saturated the kitchen. This worried JJ a lot, and he thought he had done the bird in.

He quickly opened the door, and the bird stepped out on his arm, looked up sweetly, and stated "I am a changed parrot. I know that I have been terrible, but that is in the past. I will never be a problem again."

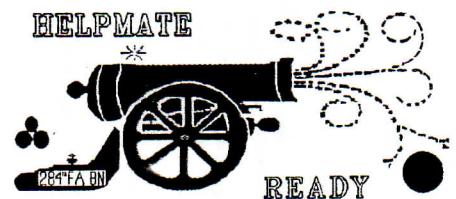
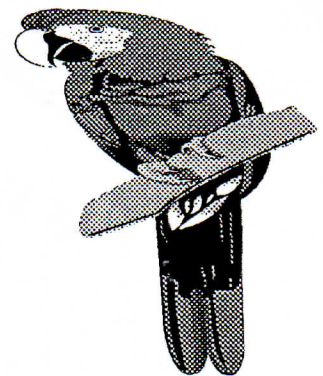
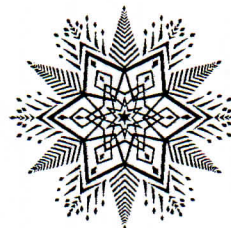
"And by the way, what did that chicken in there do?"

That should do it for this issue. Please do not be offended if I have left out anyone. I try to get it all in, but it sometimes doesn't happen.

Until next time, stay healthy.

As ever

JB



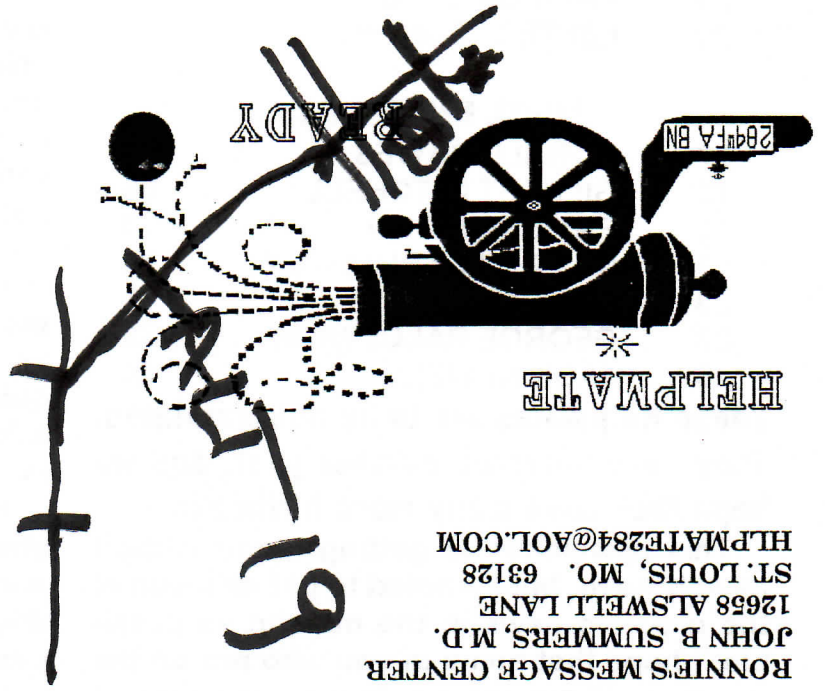


Address Correction Requested

Dated Material, Request Prompt Delivery

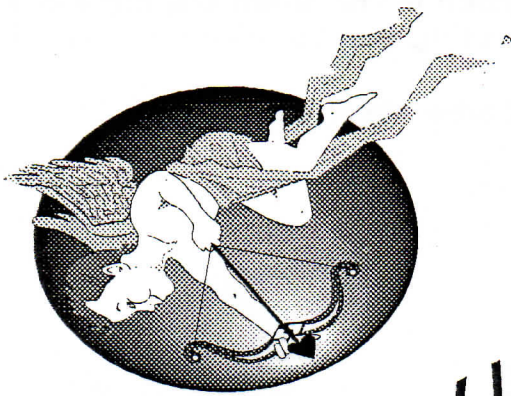
1998 REUNION  
HOLIDAY, FL  
EARLY OCTOBER

HELPMATE  
284th FA Bn WW II



RONNIE'S MESSAGE CENTER  
JOHN B. SUMMERS, M.D.  
12658 ALSWELL LANE  
ST. LOUIS, MO. 63128  
HELPMATE284@AOL.COM

BULK RATE  
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# HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY



ISSUE 98-1