



HELPMATE BULLETIN

Issue 99- 2

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

OF THE

284TH F. A. BN. WWII

March 11

1999

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WE NEED HELP - NOW

GREETINGS, ALL,

How has the winter been treating you? I had the good fortune to move to Florida while 7 or 8 inches of the white stuff, covered with ice, put our fair city into limbo. I understand the area in which I live was spared some of this, because with the 3rd snowflake comes the salt truck, and the snowplows. I live in a hilly part of the city with oodles of judges, and doctors, and lawyers in the neighborhood, and we get good service. We pay good taxes, too.

My trip to Florida was not uneventful. The west side Brigade had their usual meeting at Brandon, with 9 people present. The Moinars, and the Cody's had medical appointments, and the Crismonds were also surrounded by medical problems. I could not reach the Lenker or the Ellis family, but the rest of us had a nice lunch, and re-won the war. The group included the Hartleys, the Ralcewiches, the Donaldsons, Moe Sweetgall, Jeep Rafeld, and myself. We met at the Spaghetti Grill in Brandon, not far from the Donaldson and the Ralcewich group.

Jeep Rafeld and I met at the China Jade one Monday of my stay in FI, and enjoyed the food and the company muchly. They do a fine job there. I wish it were closer to the rest of the group, as we could meet there. Jeep is doing well, and Gerry is also. He is going to try to make the next reunion, he tells me.

While there, I received the news from George Ralcewich that Ruth Williams had been in touch with him, and got the sad news of Dick Williams sudden death. He had been put into the hospital with a heart problem, and dropped dead while there. I received a letter from Ruth on my return home, and got this sad news. I

will place his memorial card in this issue later. Dick was in the middle of surgeries concerning his back problems, but also had some heart muscle involvement. I know I am expressing the sentiments of all of the Helpmate Group when I send our deepest condolences, and sincere sympathy to Ruth and the Williams family over their great loss. Dick was a truly faithful Helpmate, and attended many of the reunions with Ruth. We shall miss him greatly.

My good friends, the Don Diesel's spend the greater part of Jan., Feb., and March in central Florida. We met on one of the late Fridays at the umpire camp run by Harry Wendeistedt, a St. Louis native, I believe. One of the Nat. Lg. Umpires is Rich Reiker, also from St. Louis, and we (the Diesels & I) went to one of the training sessions there. Babe had met Rich when she came to the Ocean City reunion a few years back, and had been on the plane which was taking him to Philly to umpire a game.

Well, he had told me that one of the sessions would include "rhubarb" control, and this one was it. I heard words which were out of the dictionary years ago, and am surprised to learn that the lady candidates know them, too. In any event, it was surely interesting, and I have seen and heard arguments in the past, but none as spontaneous, or as severe, as those at that field. Rich told me that about 26 of last years candidates (out of 105) got placed in the minors last year. They will get a good watching, and will work their way into the majors finally.

My laptop computer died about this time. I

was unable to use it in the docking station, and I put it into the shop for exam and repair. I got the sad news that Compaq was no longer supporting the little guy, so my niece got the machine back, and I picked it up when I was returning to the west side of the archipelago. As she was transferring it to the trunk of the car I noticed that the thing looked different, and the crazy thing was fixed. It had become bound up somehow, and the problem became solved by all the exams. We plugged the thing into the outlet, and it worked like a charm. So much for the advanced technology currently present. But I was glad for me, and the machine.

Marge Crismond was put into the hospital in late Jan. with a persistent bronchitis. She had been coughing for a long time, and her doctor was uneasy, and put her in for evaluation. No severe problems were found, and she returned home.

Now the story becomes a little fuzzy, as I have only telephone knowledge of it. One AM, Marge was buzzing around the house (after she was released), and fainted, or slumped down to the floor. Ray was trying to help her, and he also became affected, developed chest pains and arm pains, and then he was placed in the hospital. They did the appropriate work-up, and he was released from the hospital with the belief that he had developed the problem when he was helping Marge. Either the anxiety of the episode which had hit Marge, or his sudden physical exertion in helping her, tipped the scales, and he became ill. In any event, he had been released, and the heart problem which I had expected, was not present. Thank heavens for our good buddy, Ray.

As you may remember, the Crismonds and I play a game called Mhing, a card game based on the tile game Mah Jongg. Well, my son John knew that I was looking for a deck of the cards, and found one, and gave it to me for Xmas. I gave the game to Marge and Ray, because that is that only place we play, as it is some hard to learn. Anyhow, now the 3rd deck of Mhing cards are in Holiday, and our fun with the game will continue. I have since found another source for the game, and I will let Ray know.

Now for the fun part. I was eating breakfast in New Smyrna Beach at a local eatery when I

had the unusual experience of feeling the right side of my body become paralyzed. It was a very peculiar, and ultra scary, feeling, and one which I hope never to have repeated. The waitress saw me slumping over, and asked me if all was OK. I told her that I believed I was in the midst of a stroke, and she asked what she should do. Well, my next action was to fall out of the chair, and that dictated her reaction. 911 was there in a minute or so, and I was put into the hospital ER for evaluation and care. I was completely paralyzed on the right side, and my speech was erratic, and believe me, so was my thinking. In any event, I reached one of the ladies whose former husband was an MD, and he came to the ER to try to steer the problem for me. By the time he arrived, I had been assigned to another internist, but he told me that he thought I would be OK in a few hours. And so I was. My faculties returned in 2 or 3 hours, and I was right back in the world again.

That didn't prevent them from putting me in an MRI tube for about 2 hours, or from doing about \$5200 worth of tests and evaluations on me, but I left the hospital the next day, drove my trusty Olds back to the Condo, and was a new man. Believe me, that was scary. I could not get that hand to cut those pancakes, not for anything. But that was last lifetime. All is well that ends well, or so Shakespeare said.

Got back home in early Feb. to the news that Joe Kocsis died on Jan. 26, after a long stay in a Hospice Center in Bradenton. He had been battling lung cancer for some time, and lost the battle rather suddenly. Arlene tells me that he will be cremated, and his ashes placed in the Veteran's Cemetery in St. Petersburg, Fl.

Again, I know that the group joins me in the sending of our sympathy to the Kocsis family, and we are saddened yet again by the loss of one of our fine members. I will send a small token representing a memorial from our members to Mrs. Kocsis.

Several members have been lost to the mail process. Joseph Bernatowicz's newsletter was returned, "Attempted - not known". If any of the members know where Joe may be found I would appreciate hearing from them.

And George Ford is "Temporarily Away" from his home in NC. I will hold this issue, and will try again next issue at the same address. I would recommend that anyone changing home location notify me by phone or E-Mail, or by letter. It makes it possible to find you, and to send the newsletter to your present locate.

Back home the weather has been lovely. It is warm, too warm for February, and I know we will pay for it in some way. Mother Nature has a keen sense of justice, and if we get one break, she will then give us another one, like an arm or something.

I received a letter from the Bill Nelson family. Bill had a stroke Dec. 2, last, and has been quite ill since. He developed pneumonia on 2 occasions when food went into his lungs while eating. He required a feeding tube into his stomach thru which he was being fed. He is at this time in the Veteran's Home in LaSalle, Ill. in a skilled unit. He is making progress, and the indwelling catheter has been removed. He is more comfortable, and this week he will do the "cookie test" to see whether or not he is able to eat normally. He is not able to walk at this time, but will start with therapy for this problem.

Bill's cousin had been in touch with myself and John Wasilewski concerning facts about the 284th. I hope the chapter about Bill will be shared with us, altho I feel sure that it will.

Thanks, Bill and Millie, for the news. Good luck on your recuperation, Bill, and hang in there.

I received a letter from the Eddie Walker family, just to let us know that they are in good health, and that Ed turned 75 without too many groans. He retired several years ago from his day job, and is now driving a truck on a part time basis, hauling rock. Their 5 children are grown, so now all they have is the usual adult problems, and the other kid things with the grandchildren.

They got an 18" snow a while earlier, and this nearly incapacitated the community, and they expect more bad weather at the present time. I missed all of the good stuff when I went to Fl., and didn't miss it a bit.

Ed really enjoys the newsletter, and would like to see the guys, but the Walkers are on a

limited budget, and they don't travel much. He has the dream of attending a reunion, but such is not likely, momma says.

Thanks a lot for the letter, folks, and don't wait so long to write again. We will try to have a reunion closer to you in the future, and you may be able to join us at that time.

Ruth Williams sends a memorial card from Richard's funeral service, and news of his last illness. His heart had become unstable, and he was in the process of evaluation when he just dropped dead. He had suffered 2 "attacks" while in the institution, and while they were preparing some test or other, his heart stopped. Ruth has adjusted nicely to the event, and says that he would have been unable to withstand back surgery, his really persistent and painful problem. In spite of his very poor cardiac output he had maintained the hope that back surgery was the next step on his road to recovery. He was a good fighter, but death awaits us all. He died Jan. 11.

Ruth tells me that Dick really looked forward to getting the newsletter, and she wishes to be left on the roster as Dick's representative.

Thank you so much for the letter, Ruth. You are in our minds and hearts.

I am having a really tough time managing my Helpmate Kitty account. I come up with some odd charges which I have included in my personal things, but which should have been put in the Helpmate stuff. My accountant tells me to keep separate books, chiefly because he is the one who has to help straighten things out. But basically, I have just under \$580 in the good old kitty, and I know my only big draw will be a bunch of toner, and a flashing wrench type visit, in the near future. That will still leave \$300 in the pot, and that will be good for most of the year to reunion time. You guys spoil me, really. But it does keep things in focus.

I am writing this Saturday, Feb. 13, and I just got a call from George Ralcewich. He has been in touch with Marge Crismond, and Ray is to be hospitalized for some cardiac work early next week. As I understand it, he will have one vessel bypassed, and some more of the arteries ballooned. I may be wrong about this, but I will correct it later if I am incomplete. George

and Dorothy are comfortable, temp in the 60's, and blue skies. Later on this.

And John Wasilewski E-mailed me that he has finished some more of his dad's pictures, and they are on their way to me. I will continue to publish representative photos if I have John give me permission to do so.

John's dad and Virgil Pugh were constant buddies during our wartime years, and the 2 of them are making plans to meet somewhere in mid-Illinois in the future. If I can do so, I will join them, and we will have a mini in the middle west. That will be a first, but a good beginning.

A few days ago I received an E-mail note from the daughter of Carl Maltese. She tells me that Carl died in March, 1996 after a long siege of suffering with asbestosis, a chronic lung disease. She had neglected notifying me, and thanked me for sending the newsletter which he enjoyed a lot. Carl was 81 at the time of his death, and his greatest complaint was his loss of the golf game which he enjoyed so much.

The Maltese's had 2 daughters, 5 grandchildren, and a great grandchild on the way. She is sorry not to have let us know of his passing. We always heard Carl's name at our reunions, and his loss will be noticed by us.

Under my mail accumulation I came across a nice letter from Bea Beck, Miami widow of Bob. She went to Tampa around the holiday to visit a daughter and her family, and had a great time. On the way home they stopped in Sebring, and there she made a call to Joe Molnar, who had fond memories of Bob, and many fine thoughts of him.

Bea has a chore ahead of her. She will have her carotid arteries studied, and after that will do whatever the vascular surgeon decides. She wants very much to be able to catch that "great big one" next summer when she goes fishing there. The cardiologist got an anxious look in his eye, and told her "Yes, Bee, I know!". Doctors seem to enjoy fishing, too.

Thanks for the letter, Bea, (or Bee).

In the mail today I received answers to my condolences letters to the Kocsis and Williams widows. They thank our group for the memorial check, and for the letter of sympathy sent to the relatives of our recently deceased members. Ruth Williams tells me that her daughter

decided to seek medical attention for her ailing and aching knees, and had arthroscopic surgery. She left Colorado feeling better, and hoping for long relief from knee problems. Ruth was glad for the company so soon after Dick's passing, and now will have to get used to the absence of the loved one lately departed when Diane leaves.

Thank you for your nice letter, Ruth. If we can be of any help, please call on us.

And Arlene made a donation to the hospice which Joe recently occupied for the memorial sent. Thank you for your letter, Arlene.

John Wasilewski sent me some more of his dad's pictures. These have no identification of the subject, and I am afraid I do not know some of them. I will publish one or two each newsletter, and will invite the group to let us know just who is decorating the newsletter.

John also sent the full story on the Havel who was supposed to be in our battalion when he was KIA. He was killed Dec. 29 in Belgium, and at that time was a Pvt. In the 26th Division. I am sure that he was one of the members of our unit who was removed by the draft when all units lost some of their men to replenish the combat units. It was interesting wading thru the volume which one soldier generates, but he was brought back in 1949 and buried in a cemetery in No. III. Thanks for all of your expense and trouble John. I already feel as though you are one of us.

John has asked me if an internet site for the 284th would be enjoyed. I think it could, if we wanted to set it up. There are getting to be more and more of us with net capabilities. I have never been in a project where this has been done, but I will try to help if I can.

Rec'd a letter from Clair Schneider earlier this month. He recommends an interesting diary which was written by a Victor Klemperer titled "I Will Bear Witness". Clair thinks that the Nazis must have been sorry to have left him alive, and he told all he knew about them. Another book will be printed later this year about years 1941-45. Clair thinks we should have a book section, and I know just who to put in charge of it. I brought back from Europe several books which were given to us

by the mayor of APACH when we were there. Bergeron gave him a Helpmate Cap, and rec'd the books in return.

And in the next sentence he wonders what I think about Y2K. I think it is overblown, all the new software has taken this into account, and I suspect that all of the banks, big stores, and utility companies have already had the problem addressed. I am sure that the old software will not cross the dreaded century date line, but the rest is a great deal overblown, and I suspect little will occur, other than our getting a day older.

Clair tells me that he knows the designer, builder, and installer of the world's largest 2 post hydraulic press. This is within 50 miles of Pittsburgh, and he has an open invitation to see the machine in operation. I suspect that if there are no casinos in the area, you might have a group who would understand, and would like to join you in viewing the rascal. You work on the logistics, and if Pittsburgh will be the reunion locale, we might just have a go at the object.

Now I am puzzled by the next part of the letter. He asks, "What's with the ""Jeremiah O'Brien story"" which Irv Merrill did such a good job on". 2-8-99 I have a copy of press release enclosed. But there was no press release copy so I am sort of lost, Clair. This can be cleared up in a second if you will just send me the copy. As far as I know it has returned to S.F. after it's trip to Normandy on the 50th Anniversary. Of D-Day.

Thanks so much for the news, Clair. More on the huge press later.

I am going to try to get to Pittsburgh to look over a couple of motels whose room rate is not so steep as to prevent some of the members from participating. I made many phone calls at the time I was in Florida, and asked them to put their bids on paper, so that they could be studied. I have called Harry Podolsky, and he is somewhat home-bound, but will help with the local contacts which he can do by phone, then we can go around to see the various units and make a final decision. I also want to call our other medic in the area, Al DeMonaco, but he lives in West Pittsburgh, and this is about 45 or so miles north of Pittsburgh. I had always

thought this was a west side suburb of the big town, but when Babe and I visited there 2 years ago, I got the rude awakening. But I know Al will help if he can. Some of the bids at Pittsburgh went as high as 126 bucks, and with 14% tax added. This will happen late next week, or week after next, God willing.

I received a note from Helen Cubler with news that his address is different than that on the roster. Their home address is:

**129 TURKEY HILL
WESTVILLE, NJ 08093**

Walt had a stroke about 10 years ago, and this left him locked in a wheel chair, and those kinds of assists. He walks with a cane now, but they travel very little.

Walter remembers a few names from our little newsletter, but not nearly as well as he did a few years back. Helen enjoys the newsletter more than Walter, she says.

A check for the kitty was enclosed, for which much thanks is given. Thanks for the letter, Helen. Remember us all to Walt.

I am trying to hold out so that I may report to you what motel we will use for our reunion. I did not realize several things for this long distance try. I did not know that the middle of the week is rush time for the central hotels, and I did not know that the rates would be as high as they seem to be. I am going to suggest week-end reunions for the future. The rates are some less, and the businesses are less in demand at that time. Live and learn, I guess.

My nephew came into town today for a spot in which to park his car while he is temporarily in charge of a teaching position in the British West Indies. He is a foreign medical graduate, and they have some problems getting a license to practice medicine in the states. So he is going to try to get into missionary medicine, and will practice in the Caribbean. He has been some unhappy not being able to do his thing, and I can understand that, but that's the way the cookie crumbles. I think he will be happier, and at least feel productive.

My plan for the rest of this issue is to put in a paragraph about the motel which I can find for our upcoming reunion, several of the war-time pictures from John Wasilewski, and the memorial card from Dick Williams' funeral. I

do not think that I will be disappointed concerning the motel, but I do *know* that it will be more expensive than previously, but that is the trend in housing anywhere – always upward, and onward. Sorry, but inevitable. I have 2 of the motels which are just at the \$50 range, plus tax, of course, and I believe that will be the lowest I will be able to scrounge up. They have already hinted that I will have to put up a healthy deposit, something which I have never had to do before. More later, as I get this finalized.

*In Memory of
Richard B. Williams*

Born

*March 5, 1917
Colorado Springs, Colorado*

Entered Into Rest

*January 11, 1999
Denver, Colorado*

Memorial Service

*Crown Hill Chapel
Friday, January 15, 1999 at 1:00 PM*

Officiant

*Dr. Marjorie Staum
Mile Hi Church of Religious Science*

Music

*Rhonda Gallagher, Organist and Soloist
"How Great Thou Art"
"The Lord's Prayer"
"Amazing Grace"*

Service will conclude in the chapel

This is the memorial sheet which was published for Richard B. Williams: We will miss Dick Williams.

This is the space I had reserved to let you know that we were going to reunite in Pittsburgh this September. It just isn't so, folks, and I will tell you why. Al DeMonaco and I went all over the west side of the city, down as far as Monroeville, and up as far as Cranberry. We even went to New Castle, as Al knew that area well, having lived there all his life. I was told by

most of the managers told us that the weekends were most used for reunions, and the days were used by business patrons. This makes sense, but we have been meeting in the middle of the week.

To make a long story short, WE NEED HELP – NOW. If there are any suggestions, make them fast, otherwise I am going to try to get the Dayton, Ohio area, or go back to the same motel we had in 1997 in Springfield, IL. My phone # is on the first sheet of the Bulletin and I surely would like your input.

Received a letter and a kitty donation from the Richard Bozzo family. Rae Marie had eye surgery on the 5th of Feb., and had a good result. She went back to her surgeon a week later, and got her prescription, and talked about the surgery to her other eye. Then she had to see her general surgeon, because the mammogram routine film showed some lesion which disturbed the M.D. She had a biopsy, and it turned out fine. Great news. The Bozzo family has a history of malignancy, so it pays to take care.

Things in general are going good at this time, and I hope things stay the same.

Thanks for the letter, and thanks for the kitty donation.

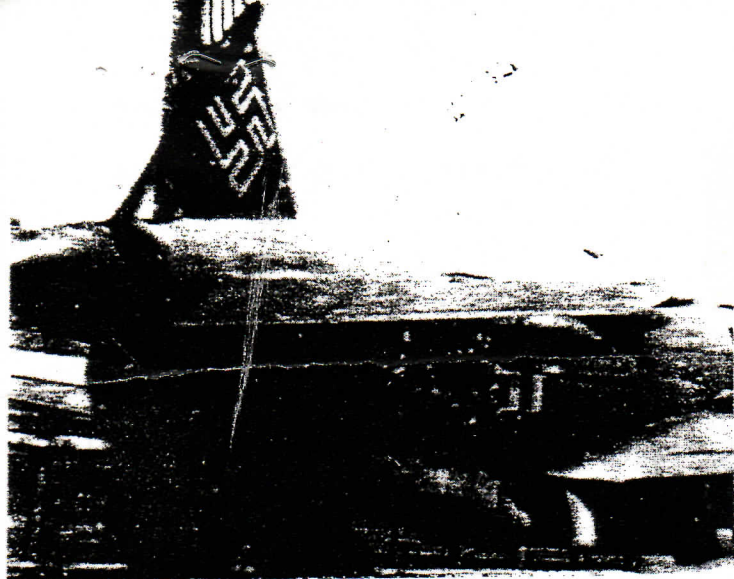
I have talked with several of the Helpmates and they think that Branson would be a livable choice for Sept. I tend to agree, so I am going through with my trip to Branson, as I feel this is a good choice location for our reunion. As many of you know, my next door neighbor is in the travel business, and he will help me get a decent deal, if it can be done. Later on this.

I talked with Ray Crismond just before I put the last pictures on the last page, and he had one vessel ballooned, and another one tried, but not successfully opened. He feels great, and wants me to get down for a meal at the Greek restaurant there. Just may do it.

That's all for now, Helpmates. Stay healthy, and give me your ideas for a splendid reunion in September.

AS EVER,

JB



THE 2 ENDED PLANE AT MUNICH AIRPORT. RIGHT PHOTO SHOWS MEDICS ELMER SIEGEL IN FRONT OF WING, AND SAM KEURJIAN ON WING (LEFT). OTHERS NOT KNOWN BY ME.



284TH ON THE WAY HOME. DANNY DAUGHERTY AND ??? ON LEFT PHOTO, AND ED WASILEWSKI ON RIGHT



CAN YOU PUT A NAME ON THESE 6 SOLDIERS??



Address Correction Requested

Rated Airtel, Request Prompt Delivery

JOHN A. WASILEWSKI
7534 W. POTTAWATOMI DR.
PALOS HEIGHTS IL 60463-2028

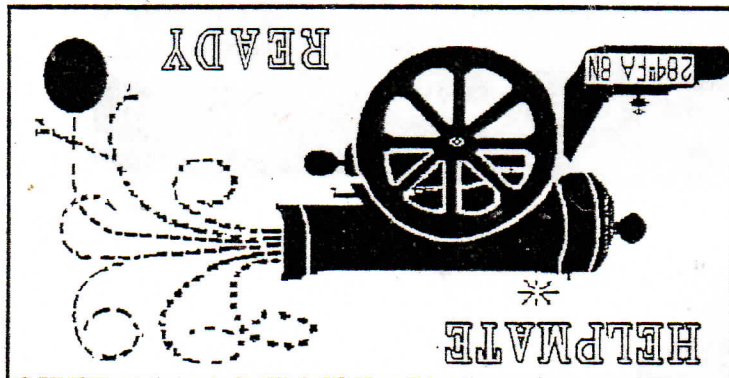
SEPT. 14-17

UNDECIDED

1999 REUNION

284TH F. A. BN. WWII

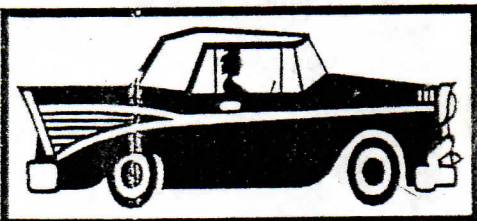
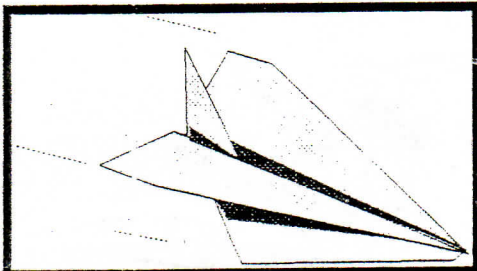
"HELPMATE"



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BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
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FENTON, MO.
PERMIT # 135

1999 REUNION
UNDECIDED LOCATION
SEPT. 14-17, 1999



HAPPY SPRING
HELPMATE
READY
HOLIDAYS

ISSUE 99-2