



# OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE 284TH E. A. BN. WWII

AUG. 3

1999

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## Greetings, Helpmates,

Had lots of trouble with the last issue. I think I gave you the basic facts, but I wasn't a happy camper when I got the eye problem. I suspect that what I got is much like Al Grisham developed. Hope he is doing well.

I went to the Lake of the Ozark with many of the family on Memorial Day weekend. There were 11 of us down there, and with food for 27. I do not do well when food is plentiful - I always try to make the food, and the feeders, come out even. Can't be done, so I ended up with a full belly the entire time. The lake was crowded, as is the usual thing holiday-times, so the water was choppy, and the lake users crazy. Saw a few near misses, but luckily, everyone seemed to be very wary of what the other guy was going to do, so nothing bad happened. The weather was lovely, and I am glad to have been there.

Got home late Monday PM, and received a call from Gen. Sanders. I clued him in on my choice for the reunion, and he became instantly interested. He and Beat have some far back relations with some people who run a business there, and Beat will push him to be there. Things go fairly well with the Sanders', and in general health is good. He finally has an M.D. who pleases him, so he will do OK. He did not mention his project for which a roster was needed, and I didn't push it. He did use the roster to call Irv Merrill, which I will get to later.

Got a call from George Ralcewich on 2nd, and I thought it was the General calling back. After I got the right connections, I had a very enjoyable call with George and Dorothy. George is having a bad golf week, but thinks it will get better. Health is fine at this time, and he and Dorothy will be coming to the reunion in Sept. They are looking forward to my visiting in Florida, so I think I will make up some excuse,

and go down sometime soon.

Not much else new in the Ralcewich domicile, so promised to try to make a trip down.

Called Crismond on the 2nd. He and Marge doing well at present, and are planning making the trip in Sept. Found out that Moe Sweetgall was recently operated upon - had some carotid surgery done. He is doing well after the heart work done not long ago. Ray tells me that he is going to try to work with some of the folks down there to fly to St. Louis, then rent an auto for the Branson deal.

I had 3 returned Helpmate Bulletins so far this mailing. Ruth Garnett - "Forwarding order expired", Mrs. Betty Barrett, daughter of one of our deceased members has moved, and Leonard Leggett has a new address:

4148 Harvey Dr. # 81

Wooster, Ohio 44691-9654

I have forwarded his bulletin to that address.

Richard Rizzio called on the 5th, and plans attending the reunion. He left our Bn. and joined another unit, but is with us in spirit. He missed the death of Clarence Axtell, and was glad to have learned of it from the bulletin. He just lived several blocks away from Clarence, and got to speak with him often. I assured him that he would be a welcome addition to our reunion, and I believe he will make it there.

On the 6th, I got an E-Mail from Irv Merrill. He had been away when the General called him, but they got together soon after. Irv will be at reunion to visit with us, and I am glad that he will be able to make it.

On Monday (7th) I received a letter and newspaper article from Virgil Pugh. As I mentioned earlier in the last bulletin, John Waislewski and I met at West Frankfort and visited with Virgil and his family. Virgil and John went over 7 million photos which they had, and Virgil recalled old stories and incidents which



delighted John greatly. We had a good time re-winning the war, and it came out just fine. I learned a few things which only Virgil could help with, because he knew Ed Wasilewski so well during the wartime days. A newspaper writer was there, and she put an article in the local paper about Ed Wasilewski's son, a Chicago judge, and John's interest in the activities of his dad in WWII. It was nicely written, was mostly accurate, and I will include it later if space is available.

We enjoyed a delightful lunch with Virgil's family, and I traveled home late in the day, and John W. stayed overnight and returned to Chicago the next day. I received a letter from Virgil a day or so later with his thanks, and the article mentioned above.

On the 11th I received a letter from Irv Merrill which enclosed a check for the kitty, and nothing else. Come on, Irv, there is surely something we would like to know about your doings. But we will corner you at the reunion and work things out. Thanks much for the donation. It can be used.

This is true. I had to put a \$500.00 deposit down at our reunion hotel. I have never had to do that before, but I understand that this is the way a resort area guarantees the expected attendance at their location. I do not believe we will be penalized for the rooms we expect, but if they make a draw on the deposit, our kitty is hurting badly. I hope we get 30 or so of the Helpmates there, and I will not be surprised if that happens. As it is, there are 23 reserved rooms at this time.

On the 12th, I received a letter from "Mugs" Stensberg with news that things are going OK in Wisconsin. She has developed some degree of macular degeneration of an eye, and is not in full control of vision, but nothing else about the condition was included. Gerry is doing fine, and sends regards to all. A kitty donation was included, so that elated me somewhat. But you guys always support the newsletter. I sure appreciate that. Thanks for the news, Stensbergs. Hope to see you in Branson. I have heard from Cliff Cosler that you man appreciate a ride to the reunion. I will put the word out, and we may be able to find someone who can give you a lift.

Not a thing in the mail recently. Got an E-mail from Herb Smith. Sent one to all of the Helpmates with net addresses of all the men I know.

In the last newsletter I had reported that George Ford was among the missing. Well, I decided to send another mailing to him, and he was back in N.C. and in a letter to me he tells me where he is wintering. Believe it or not, it is within 5 or 6 miles from where I stay down in Florida (as the crow flies), and he lives real near to Babe's favorite building, the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse.

George spent a week at the Jacksonville Mayo Clinic having a large kidney stone removed (tennis-ball size), but is doing fine at this time. We certainly will get together next winter, as I spend all of January down there, and may even go down in December this year.

George sends a check for the kitty, and many thanks for this. His winter address is:

Lighthouse Shores Townhomes  
4746 S. Atlantic Ave., Apt 3  
Daytona Beach, Fl 32127

Cliff and Flora Cosler sent letter and donation. Going to make reunion if at all possible. Have been in touch with Stensberg, and they may need a ride if anyone in that area is going. Called Clair Schneider on the 21st. He is going to meeting with Jerri and Dave Hawkins re bus trip to Branson later in year. He will call me details. Going to visit the Bush's in Kennebunkport Me for a few days this summer. Son has rented a lodge there for a month. All goes well with C. Still water in Lake Superior, he thinks.

In a later call, Clair has met with a bus service which has connections with Branson, and he may choose to go to Branson with that tour. It will leave his area on Wed. (15th), stay overnight in Rolla Mo., and arrive in Branson on Thursday. That will be in time for our meal, but will miss much of the reunion. They are scheduled to stay in another hotel, but Clair is going to do some work to try to change that. He has contacted the Stensberg's, and they are going to consider going that route, also, as is Jerri Polson, possibly Dave Hawkins, and Obecnay. He is going to get back with me early next week after he does some diplomatic work with the company.



Received a call from Irv Merrill about the 28 June. He has made arrangements to come to reunion. His plans include seeing other members of his family, but he will be sure to see us on this trip. I am always glad to have some of the officers in our group join us. Most of our regulars are the enlisted men of the outfit.

On July 1 I got a call from General Sanders. He may not get to come to reunion and wanted to let us know soon. Beat has been ill, and just got out of the hospital after short stay. I did not get the problem from the general, but he was not too optimistic. He reminds me that he is in his 90's, which I knew. But we will miss him if he is unable to come. It is not definite as yet, and he will be in touch.

Janet Klineman sent an E-mail. The Sarasota Group got together for an Italian meal in Sarasota. Janet was showing George how to E-mail, but Geo taught them how to win dough at cards. George always wins, and acts as though we owe him our money. One of these times. I want to thank you for your contact. Will be down there one of these days.

Clair Schneider called me early this week to tell me that the group got a break, and are going to get a tour bus to Branson on the 12th, to get to Branson on the 14th. He has the group I mentioned earlier in with him, so we will have them down for 2 more days that originally had been scheduled. I am glad, because we enjoy the Chicago bunch, even though they will not be staying in our hotel. I think that there may be several more coming in that bus, but even Clair did not know for sure. The more the merrier.

Received an E-mail from Irv. Merrill, and his plans for the reunion are completed. He will be in on the afternoon of the 13th, and will leave on Friday AM. I am glad that he is going to be in attendance. We need some of the officers at the reunion.

Bud DeFeo also sends an occasional joke, or greeting from his sources. They are usually in musical form, but entertaining. Keep it up, Bud. I need that.

And Mel Donaldson has contributed several of the warnings about viruses. Always good to hear from the Donaldsons.

I had hoped that the hotel would keep me informed as to registrants, but that has not been

the case. I have most of the physical plant in my memory banks, but the little things which need attention have been neglected. Hope it is not missing when the reunion starts. I hope we get a good number of Helpmates, and that they have an especially good time. There's lots to do there.

I think that I have covered all that I had intended for this issue. There is no, repeat NO, news to report, and I want to put several of the things I retrieved on the trip to Branson in this and the next issue. The print will probably be small, but it will help some of you decide what you want to do in the few days there.

Started to copy some of the stuff, and my machine is rebelling. A flashing wrench hits the display, telling you it is time for another \$75 draw on the poor kitty. Such is life!!!

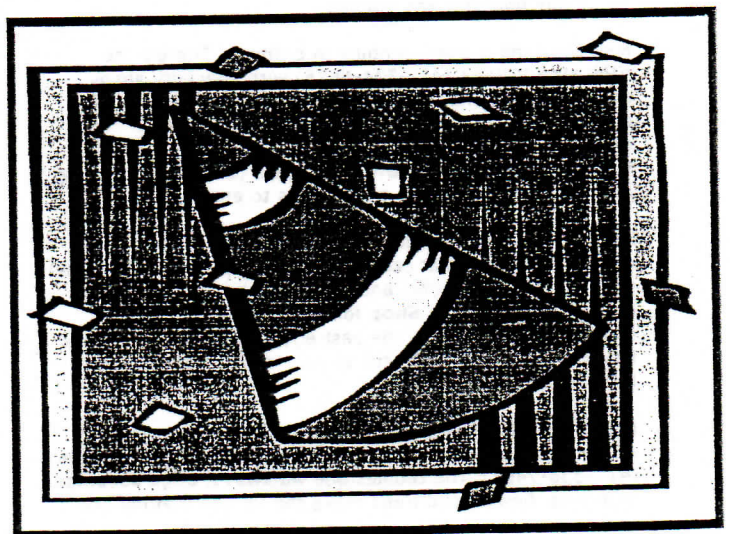
I received an article from Herb Smith which he had written for his family. He had kept a small diary while we were in the LaLobe and the St. Catherine's Farm areas. It is quite neat and well written. I will take it with me to the reunion, and share it with the group. There are some very nice pictures in the article, and I know those involved will get lots of memories from seeing the text.

Smitty also sends a donation for Miss Kitty which is most appreciated.

That's it for this issue. Another one before the reunion will be sent.

As ever,

JB





# Shopper's Paradise

The only disappointing thing about shopping in Branson is that you'll probably run out of vacation time before you run out of shopping choices. This, however, just might cheer you up: Most of Branson's myriad specialty shops and shopping centers, strip malls and outlet malls are open for you *all year long*. The shopping in Branson never stops. You can come back again...and again, and again.

We could write an entire book about shopping in Branson, but most of the fun is getting to discover favorites all on your own. Here's a quick look to get you started—and we'll see you at the checkout counter.

## Historic Downtown Branson

The Downtown shopping area only covers 4 square blocks, but it's packed with antique shops, boutiques, candy stores, gift shops and some of Branson's best restaurants. You'll delight in browsing fine needleworks and patterns in **Aux-Arcs Frames & Creative Pastimes** (a.k.a. "cross stitcher's heaven"), and the Victorian-themed furniture, prints and florals of **Patricia's Victorian House**, located in the old bank building.

Don't miss the home cooking of restaurants like the **Branson Cafe** (open since 1910) and **The Farmhouse**.

Stop for a snack at **Mountain Man Fruit & Nut Company** (free samples!). Gourmet dining is available, too, at **The Candlestick Inn** and **Dimitri's**.

There're also the 50,000 wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling novelty items at **Dick's Old Time 5 & 10**. Find handcrafted quilts and gifts at **Brier Rose**, and you can even see candy and fudge being made fresh daily at **The Fudge Shop**.

We've only touched the surface of the unique shops you can find Downtown. Don't be afraid to step inside and see what you can find—from jewelry and clothing to collectibles and holiday items.

## Specialty Shopping

Moving from Downtown out to the Strip, you'll find many, many more souvenir, craft and specialty stores than we can possibly name here, but let's touch on a few.

**Quilts & Quilts** and **Bob Evans General Store** are stocked with gifts and crafts for every taste. Good discounts on fabrics, towels, clothing and housewares can be found at **Carolina Mills**, Branson's first factory outlet. **Dickens Gift Shop** carries everything from souvenir keychains to collectible figurines and statues.

Mall shopping is mind-bending in Branson. There's the **Victorian Village** (417-334-6625) with specialty shops offering everything from teddy bears and Victorian decorations to furniture and sports and entertainer memorabilia. **The Market Place Mall** next to the Welk Resort contains an assortment of shops carrying everything from dolls to furniture to good things to eat.

At the **Branson Mall** (800-434-5412) you're entertained with free live music at center court while you shop an array of visitor oriented stores and kiosks. A popular stop is the **Ernest Tubb Record Shop** for hard to find musical recordings. Anchored to the east end of the mall, you'll find Branson's onlv Wal-Mart, full of everyday items you may have forgotten to bring.

Encounter 28 of Branson's finest shops and eateries in an atmosphere unlike any other in town at **The Grand Village** (417-336-7467). The cobblestone walkways, brick buildings, fountains, flowers and trees make the Village inviting and

relaxing. New stores in 1999 include the newly expanded **Kringles Village Shop** (Missouri's largest Christmas store), **Ty Beanie Babies Shop**, **Thomas Kinkadee at Reflections Art Gallery**, **Heritage Lace Showcase Shop**, **Bethany's Doll Room** at **Abbey Rose**, **Ladies Accessories Shop** at **Katherine's Jewelry** and **Singing Sensations Recording Studio**. From dolls to decorative blown glass, fun fashions to books and toys, there's something for children, parents and even grandparents. Eateries include **The Hard Luck Diner**, with singing servers, and the **Village Cafe**, with outdoor seating and a European flair to the food.

Another mall, **Ozarks Discovery IMAX Entertainment Complex** (800-419-4832) boasts specialty and gift shops, **McFarlain's Bakery and Pie Shop**, a giant-screen theater and the new **Remember When Theatre**.

Then there's the **Grand Country Square** (formerly the **76 Mall Complex**, 800-828-9068) with activities to keep you and your family busy for many hours. Find 35,000 square feet of shopping, 5 daily music shows at the **76 Music Hall**, homemade fudge in the expanded **Market**, **The Grand Country Buffet**, a video arcade and the area's only indoor mini-golf.

For even more quality arts and crafts visit **The Apple Tree Mall**, with over 400 craft stores under one roof, or **The Engler Block** where you can watch demonstrating artisans and craftsmen. There are also numerous gift and craft galleries inside **The Shepherd of the Hills** and **Silver Dollar City**.

## Outlet Malls

If your idea of a "Shopper's Paradise" includes a sale that never ends, brand-name merchandise and savings of 25-65% off retail prices, then Branson's three outlet malls are the place for you.

**Factory Merchants Branson** (417-335-6686), with its famous red roof and red towers, is open all year and has over 90 famous brand-name outlets. Here are some: **Carter's Childrenswear**, **Etienne Aigner**, **L'eggs/Hanes/Bali**, **Full Size Fashions**, **Toys Unlimited**, **Hush Puppies**, **Book Warehouse**, **Boot Factory**, **Lenox**, **Casual Corner**, **Eddie Bauer**, **Black & Decker**, **Jockey** and **Nautica**. The Factory Merchants' fifteen two-story buildings are next to **White Water** on the Strip.

**Tanger Factory Outlet Center** (417-337-9327, 800-4-TANGER) is home to stores like **Ann Taylor Loft**, **Big Dog Sportswear**, **Coach**, **Disney**, **Gap**, **J. Crew**, **Liz Claiborne**, **Nine West**, **Polo Ralph Lauren**, **Tommy Hilfiger** and more. Tanger is located on highway 76 across from the **Andy Williams Theatre**. It's a one-story center and is open all year.

The opening of the **Factory Shoppes at Branson Meadows** (417-339-2580, 800-SHOP-USA) in September 1995 boosted Branson to No. 3 on the list of major outlet shopping destinations in the country. Shop over 40 outlets including the offerings of **Spiegel**, **JT Webb**, **BonWorth**, **VF Factory Outlet**, **Big & Tall**, **Paper Factory**, **Bugle Boy**, **Bostonian Shoe**, **Farberware**, **Westpoint Stevens**, **Duck Head**, **Santa Surplus**, **Sunbeam**, **Easy Spirit**, **RUE 21**, **Totes**, **T-Shirts Plus**, **Foosies Book Outlet** and more. Get there taking highway 65 to highway 248 or highway 76 to **Shepherd of the Hills Expressway**.

As we said, this was by no means a comprehensive directory of all the places to shop in Branson. Now, have a wonderful time discovering these stores and many more.

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