

HELMATE BULLETIN

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
OF THE
284TH F. A. BN. WWII

Issue 99-6

Nov. 12

1999

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Greetings, Helpmates,

By the time this reaches you the reunion at Branson is history. We were reported a wave of medical problems, travel conflicts, personal interferences, and other blocking mechanisms. But 29 did make it, and our news and world report follows.

ATTENDEES: Bill and Marion Hartley, Warren and Irene Ellis, Norbert and Marie Obecnny, George and Dorothy Ralcewich, David and Virginia Hawkins, Warren and Julia Shields, Jerri Polson, Clair Schneider, Harry and Ethel Karis, Jerry and Margaret Stensberg, Joe and Eileen Mascha, Irv and Ginnie Merrill, Mel and Betty Donaldson, John and Mrs. Ed Wasilewski, and John's aunt (Mrs. Lavora Pate), Tom Allen, and myself. This was just about our expected attendance, but I was hoping for more. There were 29 of us at the meeting Dinner.

All of the attendees had a delightful time. The weather was beautiful, and there was lots to do, and lots to see. The rooms were very good and the price of \$49.00 (plus tax) was the best available in the area. The countryside is a hilly, much forested region, and the views from about anywhere were spectacular. All in all we had superior accommodations, and fine amenities. I would not hesitate to meet here again.

And then there was shopping. 3 large shopping malls were available in the nearby region to cater to the needs of any peruser, shopper, or buyer. And they were used, but not to the detriment of the other available attractions.

There was one new 1st attender - Warren Shields and wife Julia. Warren had intended being at earlier reunions, just didn't make it. He sure was sorry to have Rigney absent, but he understood the situation there. We had hoped Maier might make it after all, but it did not happen. Next time.

All attended several of the excellent shows

available. The quality of the shows was excellent, and they were not too pricey.

Several of our folks came in on buses, and were not too happy about bus service. The Chicago group ended up with a casino heavy program, and got problems when they tried to join us. We learned a lot from the various modes of transportation, and will try to apply some changes at future meetings.

Dinner was for the 29 of us. We had choice of chicken and beef. Adequate. Old fashioned fresh green bean dish was like my grandmother used to make. Dessert was fresh apple cobbler, very tasty. The cook was a retired navy cook, and he said he was going to make enough for a crew of 40 - and he did.

Tom Allen came and visited with us. Made a good thing better with his presence. He knows how to get the best from the hosts, and he did just that.

Talked about plans for next year. Trying to get to the Knoxville area where the plane availability is better. We will meet on Thursday - Sunday instead of mid-week. This will be better for those coming on planes, and the prices of the rooms are a little less in most places. The price we got at Branson (\$49.00) will not be likely for next year. But we can try. I have a trip planned for late Oct. to the Tenn. area, and hope to get something going early. Then maybe we can get those who plan cruises, and such, to come to visit with us.

Stensbergs were in good health, and very happy with the arrangements at Branson. We got a chance to spend lots of the time visiting with them. Obecnny and Marie also came by bus, and had a long wait for connections in St. Louis, but were happy to be with us. The Hawkin's were with us a day later than usual, but again, we were very glad to see them.

They are heavy into the Elder Hostel programs, and are enjoying it greatly. Virginia was her usual bubbly body, and enjoyed the reunion much. John Wasilewski brought his mother, and his aunt, with him, and they fit into the group nicely. John had his trusty computer, scanner, printer, and programs with him, and made fine copies of the photographs folks had with them for our records. We hope to get more into this in the future. It is a fine medium. The Wasilewski's have relatives in the close area, and they came in to visit, and had some personal time with John and family.

Clair Schneider and Jerri Polson were in a little bit late, and had some trouble with the leader of their bus tour, because they split away from their plans to visit with us. They had been scheduled for an earlier trip, but when it did not fill, they were placed on a tour the following day. This tour had a different purpose. It was geared to the gambling end of the spectrum, so those on this bus were over-nighted at the Player's Island Casino at St. Louis. They arrived in Branson many hours later, and were taken to 2 of their promised shows before being registered at the hotel. Clair got hold of me and explained the above to me, and planned to join us the next day. This occurred, and we felt better, much better.

Back to the drawing board. I received a letter from Angie Boehm a week or so ago. She was not going to be at the reunion, but sends regards to all. She asked me to remove her name from the Newsletter mailing list, and will get news from Zimmers. I will remove her name from roster and mailing list. If she wishes to return, it will be done with a note from her.

I also got word from a sister of Iris Croan that Iris had died in April of complications of myasthenia gravis. Iris enjoyed the newsletter very much, and read it religiously. I have taken her name off our roster, and the mailing list.

Bill Street called on the 20th. Emphysema (bad) kept him from coming to the reunion, and will continue to keep him from travel. He asked about Andy Graff, and I gave him what was reportable, but was unable to give his

phone #. Andy's mail has never been returned, so I assume his address is accurate. Bill will call if possible and he will send me the phone #, and any address change which I do not have. I gave him a thumbnail sketch of the reunion, and he was glad to hear that all went well there. Thanks for the call Bill. I will send you news via the internet when possible.

I have received the newsletter of Paul Martin from the last issue. His new address is:

694 Green Valley Dr. Apt. D-8

PALM HARBOR, FL. 34683-5158

I had heard at the reunion that Paul was moving, but did not receive his new address until now.

Earlier last week I traveled to So. California to visit relatives, and my high school French teacher. One of my nieces husband is a BBQ enthusiast, and has a yearly feast at which he cooks a whole pig, a lamb, 2 turkeys, 4 chickens, a bunch of brisket, chicken wings, and all sorts of bratwurst, etc. His group, "3 Men with nothing better to do" turned out to be the California state rib cookers a year or so ago, and he has the barbecue equipment to prove it. He has 3 or 4 big cookers, numerous small ones, and 2 cabinets of cooking tools, gas containers, cookbooks, and that sort of thing. It was a very pleasant day, but I had enough food to last a year.

My friend, Ms. Dorothea Berry, who really was my French 1 and 2 teacher in high school, then went with me on a tour of San Diego, and we saw the high points of that joint. Several of the places were fog-enveloped, but needed to be seen by any mid-westerner.

Man, those California drivers do go fast. I hit the limit, and sat there, and watched the cars go by me 15 or 20 miles per hour faster than my Mitsubishi was tooling. I heard later that the real speed limit is the usual and customary speed, but that was way over my limit.

On arriving home one of my long standing friends met me at the airport, and we took off for the Lake of the Ozarks home I have. It is in fact really the kids now, but I still have squatters rights, and use them. We were there while the wife of my driver, Joan, (who is a minister, and whom I call Pope Joan) attended a church function, while we ate ice cream, and got fat.

We were there for the remainder of last week, and returned on Friday evening, tired and sleepy.

I went over to my hometown, Olney, IL, over the week-end. Babe's family was having a big reunion, and we always try to make it. There were over 40 people there, and had the pleasure of meeting several new relatives, including my brother-in-laws new wife. It was good for the kids to get to know the family branches, but I was old stuff to the group. They made a big pot of Illinois chowder, and it tasted just as bland as I had remembered, and I filled up on the fried chicken I had brought for the non-chowder folks. All in all it was a pleasant day, and I will return for the next one next year.

On the same trip I made a run over to Lawrenceville, IL to see my brother, who resides in an extended care facility. He is 88, and is in that facility of his own choice. He had taken care of the ailments in the place when he was in practice, and many of those there were known to him. He bragged about the care he felt he was getting, and for that I was very well pleased.

Now I am ready to start back to Florida. The annual meeting of the Condo is on Oct. 16th this year, and I want to go there to see what junk I can disturb. I have just sold one of the units there, and need to see who bought it.

That didn't take long, did it? I am more knowledgeable than when the last paragraph was written. You see, I met a horrible lady since then, and her name was Irene. The meeting of the Condo Assoc. did not go well at all. We were on the 12th floor of the building, in our common play room, card room, and meeting room when Irene came upon us. The wind was ferocious. It rattled all the windows, shook the doors, threw any bird (who was silly enough to be exposed) into our glassworks, and was otherwise being very obnoxious. The penthouse must be well built, because the hour or two we were meeting produced no noticeable leaks, so I was not prepared to find water in my master bedroom when we broke out of the meeting. The wind was tolerable on the back of the bldg., but was terrible at the sides and on the front. I had to make my way cautiously to the office of the condo to pay some money I owed,

and I told the manager that I was getting water through the front window panes. He was going to join me with a wet-dry vacuum, and got over to the big building, but as soon as I picked my feet up to run after him, I felt myself going sideways and then down. I was pushed by the heavy wind into the parking lot, and ended up with my head jammed into the rear wheel well of a SUV parked there. My head was in front of the rear tire, and inside the front of the wheel well hardware, glasses off, hurting some, and surely much wiser concerning hurricanes. I got out of the predicament with the help of two lads who saw me go down, and they found my glasses, one lens of which was jolted out of the frames, and I finally got inside the building, still alive.

I got all the towels in the place, and started putting them around the bedroom windows, and felt that I was doing all that I could. For the next 4 or 5 hours I kept changing the towels, putting them in the washer and spinning out the excess water, then drying them, and re-using the dry ones. I felt that I had done a good job, but even so, when the damage control folks came by on Monday, they pulled up the carpet, cut away about 1/2 of the padding, and put a drying heater-fan under the rug, and started the thing.

I knew that I had broken my left thumb, had bruised about every place else, and had contusions and abrasions on my face, head, legs and knees, and my back hurt when I made any movements at all.

I went back over to my brothers home, and waited until my plane beckoned me back to St. Louis.

Now to get back to what else I did in FL. I had gone to New Port Richie on the Saturday of the week I went down. I made some change in the way my mortgages are being collected, and made sure that things went well there. Of course, one of the folks remains constantly tardy in paying, and I suppose I will have that one back in my bailiwick in the future. I went to Ray and Marge's house, and we did some eating, played some Mhing, and otherwise visited for 2 days. Ray was brought up to date about the reunion, and was sorry that he had not been able to go.

The next day I went back to brother's house, and on Monday, Jeep Rafeld and I had a lunch at the China Jade eatery, loved it. We visited for a couple of hours, and he believed he could make a reunion in Zephyrhills.

On Tuesday of that week I drove my trusty Oldsmobile down to Cape Coral and picked up Bud and Jean DeFeo who were visiting Bud's brother there. We then drove over to Sanibel Island, and met my friend Art Dippel, who was house sitting for his daughter while the family went on a cruise. We spent the afternoon at my usual diversion, eating, and visited for several hours. Found our way back to Bud's hotel with his brother, and went back to brother Gene's house.

On Thursday afternoon we met at our usual spot, and the Ralcewiches, the Hartleys, the Crismonds, Jeep and I were in attendance. We won the war again, and visited for a long time there. Marge has been under the weather for a while, and was in the hospital for a few days recently. She has gained a few pounds, and believes it has improved her general health. The Ralcewiches are doing well, and say "Hi" to all the group. Not much else to report from that meeting.

I went from the Zephyrhills spot north to Hwy 50, and over to the condo area for the annual meeting on Sat. I have already reported the junk that happened there. YUK!!!!

When I got home, I had a note from Warren Shields, thanking us for the splendid reunion and relating how meaningful it was to them, even though small. I had made my copy of the "Helpmate Ready" booklet available so that he could copy it, and he returned that to me. He is going to try to keep up with the reunions in the future, and he is certainly welcome.

There were several returned bulletins in the mailbox:

Betty Marshall now lives at:

2232 32nd St.,
Rock Island, IL 61201-5010

Now about my recent trip to the Knoxville area:

Drove over to the area, and registered with the Blount County Visitors folks, and got into the assigned hotel. Had about an hour of freedom, and was taken to an orientation meeting,

where the organizers were very knowledgeable, and had planned the various attractions quite well. We had one day which was quite long, and there was some added walking to that segment, but in all, that area is very attractive, quite proud of their heritage, and well worth seeing. Our advancing age would be the only prohibition in that area.

We had breakfast each day at one of the hotels cooperating with the tours. The first full day we went into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and drove entirely around one of the natural beauties, Cades Cove. There were so many ancient artifacts there, and the entire excursion was well worth the time. There was some extra walking, tho, and in East Tennessee there is no level ground, it is all up or down, mostly up. A Park Ranger met the group and gave a little history of the area, then we took the 11 mile tour at leisure.

We had lunch at a local eatery, and the ladies went shopping at a local mall, and the men toured the local Little River Railroad Museum, and a local store which made musical instruments used in the area (dulcimers). We picked up the ladies, and went back to our hotels, and were picked up for the evening meal - held at the air-base (Knoxville's Airport). We were taken aboard one of the refueling planes of the group, and enjoyed seeing how the planes did their thing at refueling times. We had dinner at the Armed Forces Club, then went to the hotel for the night.

On Thursday, we went to a local exhibit, the Sam Houston School, a primitive schoolhouse where Sam Houston was teacher to some of the locals. This included some of Sam Houston's early history, and many of the objects on view were actually used at this school. Not much of the actual school remained, but it had been equipped exactly as it would have been at the time it was in use.

From there we went into Knoxville, and were taken aboard the paddle wheeled riverboat which travels the local river. We had a pleasant lunch aboard during the cruise, and then went to Oak Ridge, where the 1st atomic pile was put into being. The lecturer was very interesting, and he explained all the facts which he knew about the project. He gave us

the salient facts, much of the history of the scientists involved, and ended by thanking all the veterans, and their spouses, for having done the splendid job of making the world again safe for our kind of life.

We went into the city of Oak Ridge at this time to visit the Museum of Science and Energy located there. It had much of the Atomic Energy story as well, but also had numerous exhibits which were of general interest to those who had scientific backgrounds.

Our next stop was the Museum of Appalachia. This huge 65 acre exhibit was the result of lifelong collection by a local citizen who began his work with a single log building, 2 acres of ground, and a desire to preserve for all time the materials and the practices of these proud people. His property now includes dozens of authentic log structures, a huge display barn, extensive displays of all the crafts, antiques, and memorabilia from those primitive days. His displays range from coffins to home remedies, which probably filled many coffins. It was a most interesting few hours, and I am sure that days could be spent in looking through his great accumulations.

Our dinner that evening was at the gift shop and restaurant at the museum, and included authentic corn bread, pulled pork barbecue, and pecan pie. Several hours of "hillbilly" music, performed by the owner and other locals were enjoyed by our group. A most enjoyable day, to be sure.

The next morning we were taken over the most rickety, dilapidated, stone bridge at one of the early mill houses on the ever-present Little River. Biscuits and sausage gravy, sausage, bacon, juices, and more were consumed at the breakfast table. More history of the structure we were visiting, and more sales pitch finished the tour. We were taken back to our hotels, and departed therefrom for our various homes.

The prices at most of these places were in terms of a complete package, and amounted to about 65 - 70 dollars per day per room. I did not inquire as to the possibility of negotiations, but I will do so through my friend, Tom Allen, in the near future. I wanted to see what was available, and at what cost.

I have had absolutely no news for the past

week or so. Had a howdy from the Maiers some days ago, but nothing else. I am going to Florida in a few days, and I will take copies of the newsletter with me, because they get the mail a week or so after the rest of the group is so dealt with. I doubt that I will be lucky enough to get to the West Coast much, but I may be lucky and have the repairs finished at the Condo. Will see. May be surprised.

I would appreciate your input as to the next reunion. I will continue looking into Appalachia, and will try to find out how much it costs to get bus transportation as we had on the Fam trip. Most of the things which we were bussed to could well be done in convoy, and I really do think some of the things would be prohibited by some of the group because of the exercise required. We have lots of time.

By the way, of the 14 of the planners we had there, 7 had been to Branson, and 2 more were going there in the next year or two. 3 had been there more than once. All enjoyed the experience greatly.

I received a letter from Irv & Ginny Merrill on the 4th. He was so glad that they had been able to attend the reunion. He wrote to the General to tell him how he was sorry not to have seen he and Beat, but was glad that he had somehow been a shaper of the character of his men to allow such a splendid state of togetherness which exists, and which he has seen in no other group.

He also wondered what might happen to our great unit, should I be unable to carry on the continuing chores of the newsletter, and the planning of our reunions. He thinks that I should have a man in training for this exigency. Do you know something which I don't Irv?

Thanks for the kudos, Irv. I would welcome any help which an interested Helpmate feels he can give. Let me hear from you.

I will report on a nice note I received from Margaret Nightingale - (yes, that is her legal name now) - in the next issue. She has made a few changes in her life, and I need more room than is available.

That's all, Folk. Take care, and write.

As Ever JB

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Address Correction Requested

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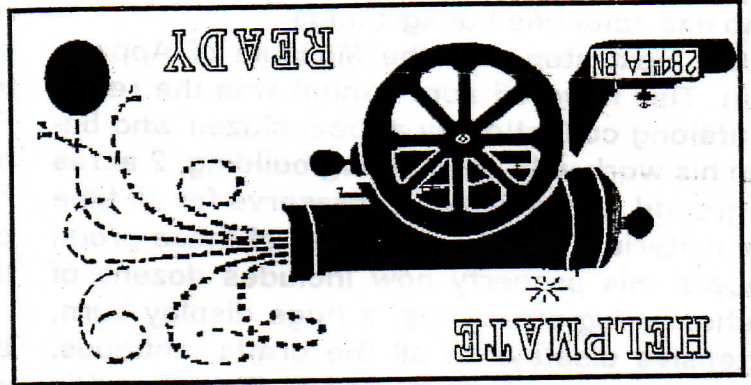
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LATE SUMMER

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