



HELPMATE BULLETIN

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Official Newsletter
of the
284th F. A. Bn. WWII

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Greetings, one and all,

Well, we are just about to meet for our 2003 reunion, hopefully not our last one. The number who could make it has dwindled year by year, and that is expected. But many of the regulars have been unable to attend, mostly because of health considerations. But we will meet, and I would guess that we will again win the war.

I received a morning call from friend Clair Schneider earlier this month, and it was really good to hear his voice. We talked about everything worth while, I think, as is the usual thing with Clair. He got himself another car, and retired his Cadillac to family, I believe.

Clair and Carol are in good medical condition, and remain caring for the usual aging jobbies. He has a garden which he usually plants for the local wild life, but had been getting some delicious things from it lately.

His family is doing OK at this time, and he has no current plans for any trips, even to our New Orleans reunion. That's a BOO, Clair. You should try to catch us there.

I also got a call from Ann Forester, Gen Sanders' daughter. She told me that her mother died from general infirmities, and that The General is holding up well from the tragedy. His hearing is very poor, and he may try fixing that up some in the future. His general health is good at this time.

Ann called later to ask if our "logo" were copyrighted, and I told her that our photos were, but did not believe the logo is. He wishes to use it at the cemetery at Beat's grave. I told her that I would have no objection, and we would be glad for him to use it for this reason.

Went to a wedding last Saturday, and at the reception we had to park on a small "wavy" hill, and I was opening the door to get into son Dan's SUV, and the very heavy door flew open, and hit my unsuspecting shin. It left me with a

large bruise on the leg, a sprained ankle, sore shin, and an avulsion fracture at the tip of the fibula. All in all I am stoved up something fierce. I had planned going to the Lake of the Ozarks with high school friends, and that has been delayed for a few weeks. My grand daughter is an x-ray tech, and she pictured it for me a week later, and it is still sore as can be.

I am in the process of printing up the booklets for the reunion. I always try to vary them from year to year, but I will duplicate several of them this year on purpose. I hope that the up to date roster is accurate. I found several mistakes last year. People do not let me know when changes occur.

One of Elmer Siegel's daughters died in the recent past. I am in touch with a granddaughter, but have not heard any details. She was just going to work when I sent an E-mail. She may write me back.

And Elmer Trent's bulletin was returned as undeliverable as addressed. Is any one in touch with Elmer? If so, please have him get me his correct address, so that I can keep him on the roster.

Bette Barlog sent a thank you note for the memorial and sympathy note I sent. Thank you for letting us know.

I got a short note from Len Leviton and a check for Miss Kitty. Realize you don't get far from home lately, but we sure would like to see you again.

And bad news from Bob Rosen. As you oldsters know we build our lives around our doctor appointments, and his plans for us. Well, Bob was assigned Oct 14 as the day his eye was to get worked on, and that cut him off the list as of last week. Sometimes these things

can be altered, but rarely. Bob sends his regrets to all, and enclosed a check for Miss Kitty too. Thanks for the note and for the kitty litter. Next year, for sure.

Received news from Pat Maier's daughter that their group will be with us without fail. I am sure glad to hear that. Pat was so well received 2 years ago, and I know he will be at this reunion.

I received a call from Jerri Polson, and it will be nearly impossible for her to make out meeting. She is still active in her business, is very into Moose work, and in general good health. She wishes me to convey her best regards to all the Helpmates. Thanks for the call Jerri. Stay well.

My poor injured leg still hurts me a lot, and my foot stays rather swollen yet. The draining is very slight, and a visit to the doctor made it certain that I could make the trip to NO.

Got a call from Patricia Entile. She is doing well, but misses Pat terribly. She tries to keep busy, and tells me that circumstances prevent her attending the reunion, but wishes me to give her best regards to all there. She will try to keep in touch with Helpmate friends, and will do what she can to keep active.

Got a call from Hawkins with details about the reunion, most of which have already been discussed earlier. His son and wife will be at our reunion.

Hear from my friend Jim Dale regularly. He is still promoting the WWII Memorial Remembrance project at home and abroad. He knew many of the inhabitants from our town, as he worked for 3 or 4 years at a local pharmacy. His enthusiasm is sort of contagious, tho.

Well, I am back from the reunion, and will finish this as I usually do. I had hoped to get it out before the reunion, but circumstances kept that from happening.

A few more of our group got to New Orleans than were expected. The Hawkins' got on board on Sunday afternoon, as did George and Dorothy Ralcewich. Greg and Marsha Hawkins, son and daughter-in-law of David and Virginia, arrived on schedule. I arrived on Monday as did Bill and Marion Hartley, George and Pam Ford, Irv and Ginnie Merrill, Bud and

Jean DeFeo (came after all), Mel and Betty Donaldson, Ray and Marge Crismond, Warren and Irene Ellis, and Pat and Ruth Maier and daughter Deb Gribskov. Later several of Mel and Betty Donaldson's family came down and visited with the group.

General news developed from many areas. George Ford tells me that his wife died about 2 years ago, which explained why I could not reach him in Florida. I just know that I gave his new partner Pam a badge with Annie on it, as I had no idea that Mrs. Ford had died. But I hope I might be forgiven, because I do lots of Senior Moment foolishness.

The Maier's are doing well. They enjoy the climate and scenery of their northwest US home, and will stay there close to family as long as they live. They have not made the visit with Smitty, yet, but it is in the works. Health has been tolerably good, and hopes are that it will stay that way.

Deb Gribskov's husband had thought to come along, but his business needs were more pressing than his wanderlust hopes. He is a glass blower, and does it the old fashioned way generally.

Irv and Ginny Merrill are pleasantly settled in their new California neighborhood. They get plenty of exercise, good weather, and beautiful scenery, and are happy with their new move.

Ray and Marge Crismond are doing well at this time. Marge is still thinner than a rail, but I think that is what you get from her. I keep trying to fatten her up, but it doesn't help. Ray is hot on the trail of his ancestors, and I marvel at the material he digs out of odd places on his computer. He tried to teach me some of the finer points of searching, but I am too old a dog to learn new tricks.

Warren Ellis had surgery on a shoulder about a year ago, and his recovery still is not the best. He misses his golf outings, and is not likely to get into the game in the real near future. Irene seems to be doing fine, but I did not get to talk with her much. They are already in Venice Florida for the winter, and drove up to the reunion from there, I believe.

John and Patti Wasilewski made the reunion, fortunately. He had some help from his family in caring for his mother, who is in great

trouble with Alzheimer's, and they seemed to have a great time there. It was a very great pleasure to meet Patti, and I thanked her much for the wonderful gift of allowing him to do so much for our group. They flew down, and he was greatly missed on the computer, as he can make the crazy machine talk. Patti has always been John's "phantom wife", and it was good of her to show up.

Bill and Marion Hartley are doing well. Bill is feared to be slipping into an Alzheimer's type condition, but he really did make a good trip better. Marion watches him closely, and we all were surprised when he found about 2 bucks in the chairs and sofas of the huge atrium at the meeting hotel. Bill always catches the ear of the people around and boasts of the activities we all know the 284th accomplished in wartime.

George and Dorothy Ralcewich surprised me by both showing up. The hotel, and Hawkie, gave me the list with only 1 Ralcewich coming, so I had to make a badge for Dorothy at the reunion. Dorothy had surgery for an ailing thyroid gland, and I feared she may have had some complications from that. George is still George. Enough said. He is in good health, plays his rounds of golf, and does errands for family members who cannot do for themselves.

Bud and Jean DeFeo were there in full force. A bit of surgery on one of them was supposed to keep them away, but something happened, and they happily showed up. It is always good to have these nice people with us when we reunite.

Virginia and Dave Hawkins were there on Sunday, and set up the meeting room with snacks, drinks, and the like. Their son, Greg, from Kenosha, and his wife occupied the other room in our reunion suite.

And I made up the last member of Helpmate at the reunion. I don't need to tell you anything new, because often that is the only thing I get to write in the newsletter.

The second day of the reunion was taken up with a bus tour of the essential sights of the city and a general explanation of the different kinds of buildings in the area. We stopped at the big cemetery of the town, and were made aware of the need for above ground burials, common

there, and the reuse of the spaces as time goes on. Many of the gravesites are rented for the deceased for 1 year and 1 day, then the bony remains of the deceased are pushed into a common repository, and another body is put into that space. The temperatures in these sites get very high, probably near 350 degrees, so there is little remaining after a year. We did a little through the French Quarter, and returned to the hotel. Very quaint. Homes were beautiful, and the streets were very hard to drive around. Many one ways always seemed to go the wrong way. I got really lost on one of my driving chores, and it took Crismond a long time to get us back to our hotel.

On Wednesday evening we had a group dinner in the hotel. They made barbecue, salads, etc. and it was very appetizing. At this meal we had a short meeting and decided to have next year's celebration in the Florida area, in October. The west coast brigade will be planning this event. We have always had good luck with the Florida meetings, and Ray thinks that October will be a little cooler, fewer snowbirds and probably better room rates at that time. In addition, some of the ones from up north may be making their yearly trek to Florida to enjoy the warm weather there,

We visited the rather new D-Day Museum in the city. This was sponsored by noted historian Ambrose, and began as a tribute to the famous Higgins boats, manufactured in N.O., and rightfully credited with helping winning the D-Day invasion. They had a reproduction of the famous boat, but in addition had a very precise depiction of the hour by hour events which developed on that day. Many war related artifacts were on display, and they were skillfully displayed and explained.

Another part of the Museum was dedicated to the war in the Pacific, and those of us who were not in that area learned much of the way their actions were handled. They are in the early stage of development, and they asked that those of us who were in a position to ask military men who may have authentic artifacts to donate them to their facility for future display. The trip to this museum was truly exciting, and I would recommend it to anyone who is going to New Orleans.

On Thursday evening we were bussed to the Mississippi, and loaded onto a river boat for a great ride up the river, and a Southern Meal. They had a Jazz Combo aboard, and they did their job well, playing New Orleans music, and did many songs requested by the passengers. I really enjoyed hearing this small group put on such a neat program. But we were all in the mood, I guess. Several of the group stayed in the area for a gambling session, but the rest of us vegetated, and hit the sheets after a busy day. The next morning many had already left when I got down for breakfast, then after lots of chatter, hand shaking, and etc. we went on our various ways toward home.

I had driven down from St. Louis, but on the way home, I drove over to Vicksburg to meet with a Chiropractor who went to school in Chicago at the same time I was in medical school. Our wanderings allowed few get together in all the years between, so he met me in Vicksburg at the local Ameristar Casino. We (his wife, the doctor, and me) did our best to add to the success of the casino, but it was nice to see old friends again. His daughter had died just a month or so previously from leukemia, and he himself is in the middle of the same disease dilemma, and shortly will have to start another series of chemotherapy treatments. His wife, Cleo, has a chronic bronchial problem, still smokes whenever she wants, and at present she is recovering from a pulmonary infection of some kind. I was very glad to see them both, because we had had so very many lean weeks together when we were in school.

After those 2 days, I joined my small poker club group in the casinos of Tunica, MS. The scenery was different there, but the results were not. I rendered unto Caesar many of my remaining bucks, but enjoyed the company of the group. There were several nice winnings in the members there, but not me. I am convinced that I am not destined to be any kind of winner at any casino.

I left the bunch after breakfast, and got home just about the same time that they were riding back on the charters they were riding with.

We had really no place or time for a regular meeting of the group, but all in all, the reunion

was a great success, and everyone had a good time, and a pleasant visit. Let's try to make Florida even a bigger reunion, next year.

The small signup fee was adequate for the expenses of the reunion, and Hawkie gave the balance of his collection for the Kitty. Miss K. thanks you all for the donation.

My poor injured leg is still sore and injured. It is beginning to look as though it will close over, but it is in no hurry. I have added a little lasix to my medicines, to draw out some added fluid, and maybe decrease the tightness in the poor old thing.

I had better get this closed for now. It is far behind my hoped mailing, but things just seem to go slower, and get more complications, when age creeps in.

My personal thanks to the Hawkins' for their excellent program, and hard work. I know the group attending echo this thankful endeavor, and will help make Ray and Marge Crismond's effort next year another grand success.

Take care of yourselves, forgive any mistakes I may have made, and keep in touch. Do write something for the newsletter at times. It is very difficult to manufacture news.

As ever

JBS

I haven't heard from Mel about the group of his family who showed up at New Orleans the last day of our reunion. I will report later, unless I hear from Mel soon.

JBS



