

# HELPMATE BULLETIN

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

JUNE 18

2004

Issue 04-3

RONNIE'S MESSAGE CENTER JOHN B. SUMMERS, 5494 ABERDOUR LN. ST LOUIS, MO. 63129  
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**Greetings all,**

Well, I am back from my Florida jaunt, refreshed and ready to start this issue of the newsletter.

I got an E-mail from David Hawkins reminding me to put in the cost of the room at the Tahitian. The charge will be about \$45 plus tax for the rooms not facing the pool, and those rooms will be \$10.00 more (plus tax). Ray believes the charges are in this range, and he will get with the hotel people there, and I will let you know if it is not accurate. We are going to get a free breakfast with the deal, then we will get to use the dining area for a meeting area the rest of the day. Thanks for reminding me, Hawkie.

I received an E-mail from an inhabitant of Abergavenny a week or so ago. I will put it in this issue of the newsletter exactly as it came to me. It was sent by Llanover12, and the text follows.

Dear Dr. Summers,

My name is Richard Wilkinson from Llanover, South Wales. I have been researching the history of the Camp at Llanover and have previously contacted your colleagues and yourself in the search for information.

The village holds a fete every year and this years Fete will be on Saturday, 21st August, 2004.

We would like the Fete to be opened by a celebrity and wondered if you, or someone you might care to nominate, would consider opening the Fete.

I appreciate the vast distance involved and the expense. It also has to be said that this is only a small village Fete.

We would be grateful if you would consider our request and should you choose to revisit Llanover you would be very welcome.

**Many thanks.**

Richard Wilkinson (Llanover12@aol.com)  
TEL: 01873881072

I have a new locate for Alice Edwards. She is with friends, the Keen family, and her new locate is

bill.keen@att.net

This information was sent to me by Cena Keen. Alice had been quite ill earlier this year.

While I was gone, my daughter reported to me that Clair Schneider called to talk with me and I was absent. He sent regards, and told Nancy that he would contact me later. Thanks for the call, Clair. I am sorry to have missed it.

While I was down south I received word of the death of one of my brothers in Illinois. He was the last of our older group, and was 85 years old when he died. He had a malignancy of the intestine, and had been under care for this for several years. My 2 brothers joined me, and we drove up to Illinois for the viewing and the funeral. I got to meet several nephews whom I had seen only once or twice before. Although the visit was a sad occasion, it was good to see folks whom I had not seen for a long while. Brother Bob was the last of my father's first family, so we three who drove up are the last of the 13 kids who made up my family.

Now to recall some of the events on my Florida run.

I received a nice letter from Margaret Cody, one of our west coast brigade widows. She reminded me that her life was going well since the death of Charles, 2 years ago. Her general health has been good, and she just got news that one of her Maryland friends was moving into the area, and she will be able to visit her frequently. They have been good

friends for nearly 60 years. Nearly all of her former acquaintances have passed on, and it will be nice to have a good friend near.

She has become acquainted with a nice man in the vicinity. He has a great outlook on life, has a very good sense of humor, and they have been enjoying some welcome companionship since January.

Margaret sends greetings to all, and has added to our kitty fund, which is much appreciated.

Keep in touch Margaret. Join us once in a while when we have lunch together.

Norb Obecnny called me this week, and we solved no problems, but it was surely good to hear from that rascal. He gets around less than before, and wishes me to give his regards to all of the Helpmates he knows. Thanks for the call, Norb. Keep in touch. Keep the reunion in mind.

I had asked Ray to get the exact rates for the motel rooms in October. The poolside rooms will be \$53.10 (+ tax), and the outside rooms will be \$44.10 (+ tax).

I looked in on the website recently, and there have been 1136 people who have visited our website since it started. That makes for a very busy area, and I hope the good record continues. Thanks again, John Wasilewski, for your work in setting up, and maintaining, the site.

I received a nice letter, a picture, and a kitty donation from Bill and Ethel Mawhinney, from Washington, Pa. The picture was taken at the reunion in that city, probably in 1953. It was a very large group, taken in an Elks Lodge. I was able to locate few people there from our Medical Detachment, but few of the others, except Joe Mascha (I think). Ronnie is at the head table with Jerri and one child, and Elmer Siegel is in the foreground right with Annie and 2 children. Col Sanders was said to have been there, but I could not locate him.

The Mawhinneys have sold their large house after 54 years of living there, and have moved into a "bird sized nest" in Washington. They have a new address, which is:

Bill and Ethel Mary Mawhinney  
850 Beech St.  
Washington, PA 15301

They are in the midst of unpacking boxes, wondering where their important things have been

placed, and making do with whatever has been unpacked.

Bill had some heart problems several years ago, and this was resolved. He then developed colon cancer, and this was also tackled with surgery, and follow-up chemotherapy. That was 4 years ago, and the chemo was so very rough on him that his doctor stopped this phase of the treatment. He soon will have his regular checkup, and they hope for a negative report. Negative, meaning "no cancer".

As I mentioned, I recognized only a few of the members at the reunion in the picture. I am going to take it to the reunion in Florida, and get some opinions from the group there.

Bill and Ethel send a donation for Miss Kitty, and this is much appreciated.

Do keep in touch. I appreciate your notes.

George and Dorothy Ralcewich sent greetings to all, and also donated some green for the kitty fund. I had visited with them on my trip to the south, and let them beat me badly in our usual card games.

Things are going well in Riverview, FL. The general health has been good, and George is keeping in good shape with the Veteran's Clinic in Tampa. The legal work he was given to do when Dorothy's sister died is being done in an organized way, and possibly George will get that chore under control in his usual methodic way.

George tells me that our friends, the Donaldsons, may not be wintering in their area in the future. That is not good news, because they were a pleasant part of our west coast battery for these many years. I received the invite to continue visiting them on my trips to the south. It was good to hear from them.

I received a note from David Hawkins and he reminded me that I had not mentioned the cost of our reunion rooms. I have remedied that earlier in the newsletter, and I promise to forget it again, Dave. He sent me several pages from the VFW paper which detailed the way to enter one's self in the upcoming WWII Memorial listings. It is what I had put into the newsletter last issue, and I would surely encourage all of our group to get entered. It is free, using their toll-free number, and the process is very simple. Putting a photo in the

record costs \$10, but surely improves the entry. **DO IT!!!!** David put his name in the Register, but I can't find it yet. It takes a while.

David and Virginia are going to Wisconsin in mid-May for a visit. They will no longer use that address—just the Texas one.

Thanks for the nudge, David. Hi to V.

Well, there is some terrible news to relate. I am told that our favorite reunion attendee has joined the great number of deceased vets. Bill Hartley has died suddenly in Florida, and I know none of the particulars. I have just put in a call to George Ralcewich, because he knows everything, for sure. Will get back to this later.

Now I have to report on my own goof. I was at the medical conference at the hospital I was a staff member. It was raining like lots, and I thought that I was going to have to hurry, or get super wet. Well I guess I did both. I next found myself on the ground, soaking wet, and hurting a whole lot.

They wheeled me into the emergency room, and wouldn't let me drive my car to the ER, called my daughter to pick me up, and she drove me to another hospital where I was found to have a fractured pelvis. Broke the entire bottom off one of the bones, and the line extended up the back of the bone, and got a bit of another bone. It did not get into the socket, however, so I got that good news. But it was so tender that I had to remain in the place for 14 days, took oodles of hours of PT and OT, and finally got to come home. I have been home for 2 days, and have been doing great. The kids bother me by staying here all night, and fussing over me as if I were a baby. I have more visits with several doctors in 2 or 3 weeks, but that will be the end of this little adventure, believe me.

I got a call from George Ralcewich this afternoon (11th). He and Dorothy had just gotten back from the funeral of Bill Hartley. He died last week, and apparently had a delightful day just before. He talked with some folks about the war, and seemed his old self to Marian. Died peacefully that night. Good way to go, but hard on the family. George thinks Marion is doing well. She is a trooper. I will place material given to me about the funeral later in the issue.

I got a call from Clair Schneider today, and

we had a long discussion about Bill Hartley. Clair was so surprised at the suddenness of the end, and so was I. But it still is a wonderful way to go. Hard on the family, but wonderful for the victim.

Things go well with Clair. Tells me that his son is fighting with the government about this and that, but who isn't. He didn't say a thing about going to the reunion, but I hope he does try to make it.

Tells me that another son is buying a Church in the town in which he lives. Now that is a chore. His denomination has allowed same sex marriages, and it has produced a decided schism in their denomination, and he is on the other side. So he got a church which was available, and will go on from there. A few days later I got a package from him with many of the particulars about the things we spoke of on the phone Good old Clair.

I am going to put into this issue another run of the WWII Memorial thing, and will include a sheet on how to enter yourself, and a picture, if desired, into their roster. It is such a simple procedure that anyone can do it, and really, should do it. Even those who did not serve in the armed forces, but stayed at home for farm work, factory labor, or allied causes may enter their names. It can easily be seen by logging onto [www.wwiimemorial.com](http://www.wwiimemorial.com) and look over the website.

I had better stop this issue and get it in the mail. It will appear on the website when I send it to John W., and he may even scan the WWII Memorial part. He is expert at this. We cannot thank him enough for his outstanding addition to our group even in the face of his extraordinary family problems. He is a Prince.

Again, take care of yourselves, stay healthy and do NOT GROW OLD.

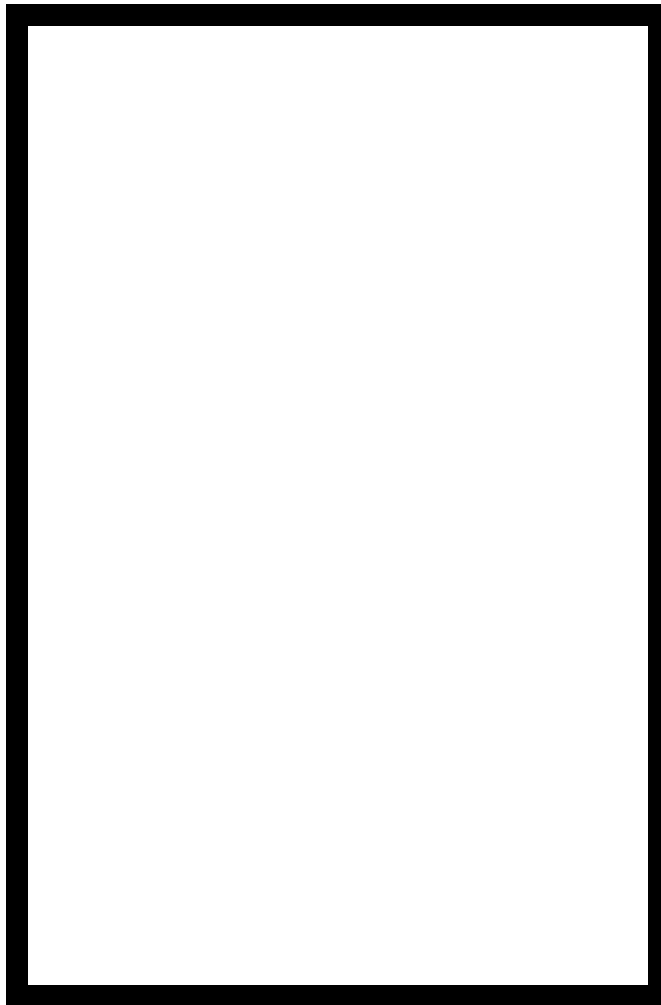
As ever,

JBS

William (Bill) Hartley, one of our most regular members died in a nursing center on 5/28/04. He had been under medical care for the past year, and was apparently doing well until his sudden death on that day.

He and Marian were at nearly all of our reunions, even in New Orleans, and his support of Helpmate was never questioned. Marion intends continuing her connection with our group, for which we are quite glad.

On the date of his death, he was giving the good word about our battalion to anyone who would listen. Bill will be missed.



**TAHITIAN RESORT**  
**2337 U. S. 19**  
**HOLIDAY FL 34691**  
**284th FIELD ARTILLERY BN. (HELPMATE)**  
**PHONE 1 - 727 - 937- 4121**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ST:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ARRIVING:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DEPARTING** \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment by:** Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Pool Side Room** \_\_\_\_\_

**Room type:** Double Queen \_\_\_\_\_ King \_\_\_\_\_ Single \_\_\_\_\_

I received a communication in the mail this PM which I thought best to add to this issue, as I have a blank page, and it can be easily worked out. It was in the form of an E-mail message, and I will place it here exactly as it came to me.

**Subj: Grandson of former member**  
**Date: 6/22/2004 8:21 PM Central DST**  
**From: SP330MV**  
**To: HLPMATE284**

Hello. My name is Dominick Russo and I am the grandson of Bennie P. Russo, a member of Battery B/ 284th. He passed away in June of 1965, five years before my birth. I have been seeking information about his unit and it's actions. I have in my possession a few pictures and souvenirs that he brought home. Little is known of his service, as he rarely talked of it. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

E-Mail: SP330mv@aol.com

I have sent a reply to him, and told him our website, its contents, etc. I also gave him the name of John Wasilewski, who is a superman in these matters. He will have available all of the battery listings in our roster on the internet, but I am putting this out for any of our members who may remember this Helpmate I do not have his name, address or any other facts, but if you can help, write to me and I will see that your info gets prompt attention, if at all possible.

So many instances such as this are beginning to surface. Please consider writing up the simple facts of your service for your survivors, and make a copy of HELPMATE READY at their fingertips.

Thank you all for any help you can give this grandson of Bennie Russo.

JBS