



HELPMATE BULLETIN

December

29

2006

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Greetings, all, Happy holidays,

A lot of ice and snow has decorated the landscape here in St. Louis. I am writing on Dec. 1 and this is the first taste of our winter so far. It has snowed and sleeted about 3 inches worth where I live, and I do not do well in slick surroundings. So I stay in.

I received a nice note and donation from our band master of old, Leonard Leviton. He generally sends little news, but thanks me for adding Fred Beltz's address in the last issue. He admits that his band leading days are over. His hands don't have 10 fingers, anymore, they are the owners of 10 thumbs.

Thanks for the note, Leonard, and for the donation. Keep sending news, but the kitty is fairly healthy now.

In mid October I made a trip to a small town in Colorado called Nederland. It was a quaint spot, whose main claim to fame was one of the huge digging machines used in constructing the Panama Canal. It is set up in it's own little park, and on the day I came there, it was working. Not digging, just moving it's crane and shovel. The place has employed my nephew as it's business manager, and he and his daughters were holding the annual CHOWDER there this year. I had to travel to Dallas on the plane, and take another flight to Denver. After a very long walk to the connecting gate, I sat down and was glad that I didn't have to use this facility very often. It is huge. They have a connecting shuttle facility, but I had only to travel from gate 11 to gate 19 in the same building, and I thought my weary lets could do this. But it was far.

Back to Nederland. It is set up at the base of some very high mountains. In Denver, if you look east, you see no mountains. But if you turn

around, the Rockies are suddenly in your vision. Well, I set up in Boulder, CO, for the night, and started over the road to Nederland. The road does not have a level 200 yards on it, and about every 100 yards comes a single or double sharp hairpin curve. The mountain is just yards away, and the people take these roads at a high rate of speed. There were some slow spots where you could stay right, and let people pass. I spent the afternoon at the chowder area, stirring the huge cauldron of the delightful soup. (NOT)!!!

When it got suddenly dark, I realized I had to make this 17 mile trip back to my bed and rest. Now this was next to ugly. The road back to Boulder was the same one, but now the cars following you at their speed were so handicapped by my slower car, and their lights would flash, and I looked for a place to pull over and let the crazy fools go past. Each mile was an eternity, and I finally got back to the motel, and safety, after numerous verbal and manual expressions of amateur mountain driving.

The next AM I checked out of that spot, and was going to check into anywhere at all in Nederland. Again NOT. There were 2 hotels in the place, and all were booked up by my other relatives who were attending the party. Babe's cousins had come in from San Diego, and from Kauai, Hawaii, and other less distant areas, and there were no rooms at the inns. But I had a bit of luck, and bunked in at the home of the city administrator, and saved my dough, and my sanity, in not having to drive back to Boulder again.

Next AM I took the road back to Boulder, then to Denver, and flew home, again thru Dallas. Quaint town, but not for oldsters.

I had a nice call from Ann Forester, Gen. Sanders' daughter in October. She had called to keep contacted, and we chatted about so many things. In the end she told me that her Dad's headstone had our errant cannon shot on it, and emphasized how much he had thought of his association with the battalion. As we chatted she told me that the huge firing area at the Fort possibly would be named after Gen Sanders. That would be a great honor, and she had hopes that this would happen. All goes well with Ann, and all of the Sanders' were doing well. Keep in touch. Really appreciated the call, Ann.

She reminded me that much material on the 284th could be located on the internet. I checked it out, and this is true.

Got a depressing call from Al Pavlick on the 11th of October. His wife, Jackie, had died some 4 or 5 months earlier. She had had some surgery for a chronic condition, and didn't do well thereafter. I was sorry to hear this, and passed on to him the condolences of all of the group.

Al is under care for medical problems, but is doing well at this time. He wished me to extend his greetings to the group. Call often, Al. But no more bad news.

Later in October I received a letter and a donation from Jim and Mildred Carney, Bob Rosen's "neighbor". Jim, as you may know, is the baby of the group and is a few days younger than Bob Rosen. Bob has the bottle, but Jim has the honor.

Mildred and Jim had a 2 day visit in Atlantic City, and they shared my record of losing at the gaming game. Jim put the dough in the machines, but Mildred got all that came out. So they didn't go home broke. Just poorer.

And the next adventure was a family reunion in Delaware. To get there you make a 2.5 hour trip on a ferry boat, and this particular one was a rough one. They had lots of big waves, and rocking decks, but made it without serious incident.

The Carneys are to be in the Fort Myers area this winter, and hope to avoid the cold and the lousy weather of the North.

Thanks for the Carneys. Keep in touch.

The last bulletin of Warren Lunsford was returned without a note or reason for return. If anyone out there knows where I can reach him, I would appreciate it.

Made my usual fall return to Florida. I stayed at the condo for 4 or 5 days, then went to my brother's in Auburndale. Had to go to the west coast, as usual, for my legal exercise and did finally get to sign some paper needed to start again the process.

I met the Crismonds while I was there, and had a few games of Mhing with them, and had a meal or so while there. They are in generally good shape, and altho Ray has quit calling the Bingo games regularly, they keep up with the social game there.

I took a ride on the gambling boat out of New Port Richey, and did my usual mild losing a few bucks there. The weather was lousy, and the rocking boat did little to improve my demeanor. Reminded me greatly of the trip from Marseilles France to New York in 1945.

Then went to see the Ralcewich family in Riverview. We rode up to the Hard Rock Casino, an Indian casino, in Tampa. No luck there, but not a big loser. After that, we had lunch in the local area, and played cards all afternoon.

I parked in with them for the night, then the next day, we repeated our gambling ways, and with generally the same result. Marge was the winner that time, and I am glad.

The Ralcewiches are doing well. George has had a very slow blood loss from somewhere, and it has never been located. He takes medicine for the condition, and has it under close observation at the VA facility in the area.

Went back to Gene's and met another brother, Dale, for lunch on Saturday. Loafed over the weekend, then went back to the East Coast, and back to St. Louis the following Tuesday.

Have resumed a bit my long ago interest in a coin collection (accumulation). I was active in it in the 60's and 70's, but then had to give it up greatly for the active practice I kept. I bought a book or two on recent issues, and on coin grading, and spend a little time now with the coins which I have accumulated. I would

welcome being able to buy any odd coins which anyone might have, and which are just laying around, collecting dust.

Got a "care package" from Clair Schneider in early November. It had printouts from several of his pet gripes, environment wise, and also a CD of the Dog Whisperer. Now Babe and he would be able to talk for hours about this, but the CD was interesting, and made a lot of sense.

We had talked in a previous phone session of this television subject, but I had never watched a full program. Now I rarely see anything about it.

On October 27th I received a call from John Wasilewski with news that Marie Obecny, widow of Norbert, had died. Pulled up the obit from the Chicago Tribune, and noted that Marie had died on the 26th, and was buried on the 29th. Norb had died quite recently, and they were very active in our affairs. We are slowly disappearing, ever so slowly. She was 89 years old.

I received a call on Dec. 5 from Herb Smith with the news of brother Harvey on Nov. 27. As I had mentioned in the last newsletter, Harvey was under close medical care since his last visit to the VA facility. He had known of a cancer in the lung, but when he died the cancer had spread, and in addition Herb mentioned that he had diabetes, and some other medical problems, also. It is always sad when one of our group passes away, but Harvey and Ann kept in close touch with the group, and were commonly present at our gatherings. We always hate to lose one of our group, but death, and taxes, are a common event for all of us.

I received a call from Charlie Zimmer on the 15th. He told me that Ruth had to have back surgery a few months ago, and is still not as well as she hopes to get. He is under medical care for his problems, but is doing well as can be expected. The family is fine, and they are hoping to have a nice holiday this year. He wishes all well, and I was sure glad to hear from him after a long absence. Call often, Charlie.

George and Dorothy Ralcewich called before Xmas to touch base, and get my plans for the trip down in January. They are doing fine, and I know that we will get together several times while I am down. They are not sure about when

the Donaldsons will be down.

I received a call from Clair Schneider in mid-December with a request for an up to date roster. I sent this via E-mail, but they could not open the file. So I sent it again, and heard not a word about it until the 19th, when Clair called to report that he had the new roster. I am told that there are still 59 members alive as listed. There may be others who are not living, and I was not notified. So nearly 10% of our group survives.

We chatted about everything in general, but nothing in particular. Wishes me to give all the group greetings from the Schneider clan.

The Greetings began coming in just after Thanksgiving. Unlike other years, most of the cards sent greetings, but not many included any news. I have tried to keep all those received, but may have misplaced one or so, so forgive any omissions, and blame it on my age.

The greetings are starting to come in. Ms. Mary Ciccone sent the first, and wishes all a good holiday, and coming year. She has a small address change which I will note here:

Jorden St. Box 174
South Heights, PA 15081

As is my usual custom, I will not remark on the donations I receive. The kitty is in generally good shape, but some folks send additions, and so as not to forget any donations, I just leave that notation off, and assume that all were the benefactors. I thank sincerely all those who were kind enough to remember the kitty expenses.

George and Dorothy Ralcewich send greetings to all. Things go well at their house, and I received orders to get myself down there. Am working on that.

Jeep and Gerry Rafeld are doing fine, and wish all a happy season. Will contact Jeep when I go down next month.

Dick and Rae Marie Bozzo wish all a good holiday season, and a good 2007. Dick mentions that Rae is battling early glaucoma, and is having some trouble walking. Keep the E-mails coming, Dick, and have a good year 2007.

Ray and Marge Crismond are battling health problems, and hopefully winning. Will see them when I get down for my winter visit to the

south.

Clara Chmura sends regards, and I suspect things go well up on the lake. Stay well.

Bob Rosen also wishes a happy holiday and new year. He is helping the business more, with all the promised holiday orders needing attention. Will be going to the Caribbean in early winter, as Sumiko makes her trip to Japan to see her folks there. Keep reading, Bob, as I have some news of Lloyd Lage from another source.

Pat and Steve Entile send greetings. She has news that Lage is in the west, and will not return to Illinois until spring. She has friends in Florida, and hopes sometime to make it to one of our mini reunions there.

Marion Hartley sends her best greetings to all, and tells me she misses Bill much. But the grandkids do their best to keep her busy.

She tells me that Don Dawes died last January. She met his widow at a local mall. Thanks for passing on the news, Marion.

Why don't you let the Crismonds or the Ralcewiches know when you might be down in Florida, and we could possibly plan a mini around your visit. Couldn't hurt.

Margaret Stensberg also misses Jerry, as could be expected. She gets together on the phone with Clair Schneider, and gets the latest from him.

And the Hawkins' send best regards. They have had their usual travel year, and gambling wins and losses, and all goes well at this time. They have family in Florida now, and think that they also may try to make a mini. Let me know where Doug has located. May be near us.

Millie Nelson tells me that she has oodles of family at this time. Great Grandchildren, and new marriages all over the place. She made 2 trips to Michigan this year, enjoyed more family gatherings.

She put her house up for sale, but could not find a place for herself, so she put that off until spring. She tells me that Bill had a scrapbook of war stories, and I would surely like to try to find a way to get some of the material. Will try to find a way, Millie. Don't lose it.

Florence Podolsky sends her best greetings. As mentioned earlier in the year, her Harry died after some long illness. Harry was a steady medic during the war, and I am sure that he did

the same for pharmacy.

Irv and Ginnie Merrill sent a newsy note with their greetings. The family made several cruises to the Caribbean this year. They will have a family reunion soon to renew family ties, and to celebrate Irv's 88th birthday on 1/1/07. They have secured a couple of houses in the area to hold the crowd who will attend.

Bee Beck sends greetings, and wishes all a great 2007. She had vascular surgery 23 years ago, and now finds that she has significant new blockage in the carotid artery. Feels lucky that she got that much time out of the earlier job.

She got a card from Bob Rosen, and remembers fondly her late husband's wish to see Bob Rosen again.

Will place all the notes up to the time I mail this issue.

John Wasilewski sent me an E-mail with a locate for Harvey Smith's obit. I will place that, and any other bits of info before I close. His greeting was received just before Xmas, and is much appreciated.

Lois Weary wishes all well, and is pleased to report that she has been lucky to remain in good general health.

Christmas day was on time, but was a dull but mild day. We had been promised some rain, but it didn't bother much.

The kids each had their celebrations with their families in the morning, and then we had our big family gathering in the early afternoon. Of course, the kids were all lit up, and it was a noisy group who broke bread in the middle of the day.

Years ago, Babe had small wooden figures made, and named them for the kids. Each Xmas she would hang them on the tree, putting one on upside down. This had become a tradition for the kids, and it has become a ritual to hide Danny's figure in the room, but off the tree. You could see Danny looking everywhere for his green replica, but didn't advertise anything. Well when the conversation slowed down, all the kids asked Danny if he had located his body. He walked over to a wreath hanging on the wall, and picked out the little green man. Of course, all were upset since he had found it, but Dan was all grins—he always seems to find his guy.

We had the usual family gossip session, of course, and then ate too much, of course. My daughter makes the best Waldorf Salad, and the best potato salad since Babe, and I filled my entire body with both.

All good things do come to an end, so the present opening began, and of course, it was overdone. Every kid got at least one of everything, The wrappings were gathered, and the folks readied themselves for a departure.

And so must I. I sincerely hope that I have not forgotten anyone's greeting. But I will have, and I will report on any late ones I receive next week in the next issue.

Now all of you stay healthy, You northerners stay warm, and the southern group must stop griping when the temperature hits 50.

I will catch the West Coast Brigade in January, and I will wish all of the group a superior 2007.

As ever,

JBS

