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# HELPMATE BULLETIN

Official Newsletter  
of the  
284th F. A. Bn. WWII  
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## ISSUE 05-1

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Hello, good friends,

Well, we are well into another year. We had our good days, and our bad days in 2004, so let us just hope for a healthy, happy 2005.

As you know, I spent all of January in Florida doing some necessary legal work, and then some essential work on the kids condo after several hurricanes visited the area. They had absolutely gutted the place, and had removed every object for storage except the kitchen appliances. They removed all the carpets and tossed them, and had recommended removing and replacing the air conditioner—heater completely. That had been done by the time I got there, and the new carpets had been laid in all the rooms. I had gone down with son John and his wife, and we did many little things before they packed all the “stuff” which had been stored. All the furniture had been trashed, much of the wallboard had been replaced, and the entire unit had been repainted as they had been instructed. We had to rearrange the new furniture as it was brought in, and unpack all that had been “packed out” by the salvage company. Their prices were so high that my daughter in law fired them, and got a local contractor to do what was needed to get back to original condition. But to make a long story shorter, I went over to the west coast to handle my mortgaged property with a local legal-eagle.

After the legal work, I visited a lot with Ray and Marge Crismond, having meals with them, and getting myself thoroughly trounced in card games. I went to a bingo at the local Polish Club, and again lost my usual 12 pounds—my posterior.

I left Holiday and went over to Riverview, and had a nice afternoon with the Ralcewiches. We had lunch, then just visited several hours. George packed me some of his back yard grapefruit, and I went back to my brother's house.

On Tuesday of the next week I went back to the condo to supervise

some more of the work which was being done, and just hung out. There were beds in the unit, so I did not have to bunk on the rubber mattresses which my son had brought down. Things went well, and on Saturday of that week I hopped into my little old Sable, and drove over to the west coast for a lunch date with the West Coast Brigade.

We met at a local Cracker Barrel, and Ray and Marge Crismond, George and Dorothy Ralcewich, Mel and Betty Donaldson, Marion Hartley, joined me for a leisurely meal. We lingered there for an hour or two winning the war. The Donaldson's are currently enjoying good health status, and their family is doing well. Dorothy Ralcewich is still fighting her diabetes condition, and still has an occasional squeaky voice after her thyroid removal. Ray has had another episode of his excitability problem, and had to consult his MD to get it handled. Marion is looking for a smaller place in the Court in which she lives, and otherwise is doing well. The mini broke up with promises to keep in touch.

I returned to the frigid north just before my 82nd birthday, and was sort of glad to have my next sleep in my own bed. Visiting is such a nice diversion, but it is not home.

I have several deaths to report. Late in December I got a notice that Norbert Obecny had died. I received a note from Marie, his wife, and she did not mention anything about the problems he had had. I got a phone call from Norb before I left for Florida, and he didn't mention any significant health problems he was having. We have several good pictures of Norb and "MARIE", a HQ jeep which he "owned and operated. Norb attended many of our reunions, and will be missed.

And , of course, I had mentioned in the last newsletter that Bud DeFeo had passed on in early December. He had been expected to be at our last reunion, but he had been hospitalized before that, and he died from lung cancer which was quite severe for some time. Bud had been transferred away from us as cadre for a new battalion, but he still kept us as his favorite unit. He and Jean were well known by many of us, and Bud will be missed greatly by our group.

I received several notes from the group, and many of them included litter for Miss Kitty. I want to thank all of you for your generous donations, and it puts the kitty in the black again. I have decided to decrease the number of newsletters because of the considerable expense, and the lack of news, but I may change my mind if your generosity and letters increase. I really do need something to write about, though, so keep sending news. Everyone is interested in the welfare of all the group.

Several Bulletins were returned. Andy Graff's had no message except that the mail was not deliverable as addressed. If anyone is in touch with Andy, help me get a new address. But the return of Leonard Hastings' gave his new address, and it is:

70 Lincoln Ave.  
Holden, MA 01520

I will keep him on our roster at this new address. I will also send him

another Bulletin.

I also had a note and new address for Martha Ellis. It is:

6550 N. Socrum Loop Rd. RM 115

Lakeland, FL 33809

Phone— (863)853-6314

Thank you for the change, Martha. I had been by your home several times in the past, but did not know of your change. I enjoyed your Ode to December, and doubt that you need much aid in your new assisted living quarters.

And at last I have an address for Mary Brown from Bob Rosen. Her address is:

215 W. Sam J. Stone Ave.

Peoria, IL 61605

Bob writes that he is waiting for his regular vacation in the Caribbean. His note was very short, because he doesn't do much. He has been working less with his company, and is beginning to enjoy the carefree existence he now endures. Sumiko will be making a trip to Japan soon to spend some time with her relatives there.

Received a note from our "Old Band Leader" Leonard Leviton. He tells me that his hand writing goes one way, and hand goes another way. I am going to suppose that he is in good shape, but Leonard never writes much. Thank you so much for the note, Leonard. I surely do remember you as our bandleader.

News from Mildred and Jim Carney came to report that Jim was in the hospital for over 3 weeks, some of which was in a coma having full life support. Mildred tells me that someone above was watching and helping, and now Jim is chomping at the bit for the trip to Florida in February. He will have his last MD visit at that time, and then down they go. I know that several of the West Coast Brigade are anxiously awaiting your invasion. Just stay healthy.

Thanks a lot for your generous donations to Miss Kitty. It certainly helps to have an extra bit of change to buy paper, stamps, and now the extra ink which has become rather expensive.

I received a Holiday Greeting which had been returned for a correct address from Bill and Millie Stepanek. Not much news, except to let me know that he had not noticed my new address on the newsletter, and it had to be resent to my new digs. It is on the front page of each issue, along with my phone number, and the battalion website.

Bill had a lump removed from his chest which turned out to be benign, and that was good news for them. Millie has had some retinal eye problems which will need attention soon. He wonders what body part will fall off next. But his kids are doing fine, and that makes everything OK. Remember Don't Get Old.

The weather has been decent since I came back north. We have gotten just a little snow, some extra rain, but the temperature has been decent in our area.

Son John's father in law died this week. His mother-in-law died late last year, and his wife's aunt was found dead 2 or 3 months ago, and they are wondering who will be next. I have gotten to know Linda's family better since all the bad luck has hit them. We had a family gathering after the funeral, and saw even more of the family. Funerals and Weddings are the crossroads of our lives as we age.

I hope that some of you have registered your name with the National Memorial. It is so easy, and will make a connection with your war history for your family and friends. I have searched the lists for many of the Helpmates, and have found a few. There should be more. Do it!!!!

Our weather has been nicer for the past few days. It is supposed to get cooler, but not below zero. Suits me.

I saw Ruth Williams on the internet 2 or 3 days ago. She burns the midnight oil on the machine, at times. I wake up, can't go back to sleep, and then get on the computer until I feel sleepy enough to get some more shuteye. Of course, Ray hits the keys sort of often, and Shirl sits on my screen, too. And today, I saw the Colonel's daughter on my buddy list. I have not heard from her for a while. I will keep watching, so keep computing.

Son John has gone to Florida with some of his golfing buddies for a week. They find a spot near lots of golf courses, then go crazy. I believe John plays well, but he keeps his second job. He and Linda expect to spend a lot of time in Florida when they retire. He is shooting for 3 or 4 years, I believe, and will probably make it. He drives for UPS, and they never leave their job with that firm. Hw messes around in the union, somehow, and seems to enjoy it.

And John and Linda will be grandparents in the fall of this year. They are pleased quite a lot by this turn of events. They will do well with the job. They both like kids. And it will be nice to get some more members in the group.

I received a note from Lester Lenker. He is doing well in Millie's absence, but he has not learned to cook. He has become quite attached to his best friend, his cat. He did not want to offend his kitty, Buffy, but he sent a donation which he does not wish to call kitty litter. He is quite close to his cat, who is 11 years old, and notices everything.

He goes in for his physical today (3rd), and hopes they find nothing significant to gripe at him about. He is feeling good, and hopes this stays the same.

Thanks for the donation, and for the news. I need to hear from more of the group, so that I can write more news for the group.

John Wasilewski asked me recently if I thought that a mini reunion in the Chicago area might float. I really believe that it would, because there are several Helpmates in the area, and it would be nice to see them again. Even if we could get 6 or 7 members together for a few days it would be worth it. Let me hear from the guys in the area, and we might try one in the area just north of Chicago. It has been a while since that area

has been hit by the war. Let me hear from you.

I think that that about uses up all the news that has been sent for this issue. Stay healthy and keep in touch. Until next time, then.

I just got a call from "Mugs" Stensberg, and she tells me that she and Gerry are moving back to Nekoosa. Gerry and she have been having trouble in small ways, and they have decided to go back to Nekoosa and stay in an assisted living establishment, just for a safer existence. They basically can do almost all that they require, but it is becoming more difficult, and this opportunity opened up, and they are taking advantage of it. Their new address and phone #:

145 N. Cedar Apt. 203  
Nekoosa, WI 54457  
(715)886-5779

Fondly,

JBS