

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

November 17

2000

RONNIE'S MESSAGE CENTER JOHN B. SUMMERS, 5494 ABERDOUR LN. ST LOUIS, MO. 63129
INTERNET LOCATION HLPMATE284@AOL.COM TEL. (314)845-2086
284th FA BN WEBSITE: HTTP://HOMETOWN.AOL.COM//FABN284/INDEX.HTML

Greetings, Helpmates,

I got the last newsletter out pretty nearly when I wanted. I usually miss my deadline by a day or so, but this one was in good time, and that is always fine. Things can get hectic in a big way.

I am sending a file of the newsletter to John Wasilewski to include on our website. I am placing that internet address on the head box above, so that you can have it whenever you wish. I has many of the statistics there which were important to our unit.

I found out several things from the book which John Wasilewski gave me at the reunion. The book, "PAYBACK ARTILLERY" was written by one of the officers of the 283rd FA Bn., and gave a most complete history of that battalion. They had many of the same experiences which we enjoyed, they were unattached units, and they served with all of the armies in Europe, as well as many divisions, most of the Corps, and the rest. They were all along the American and British fronts, and including supporting the French units just south of our own actions. They were often the unit which gave the Division Artillery fire direction details, and all in all were kept very busy. They had no break for R&R, (sound familiar?), and spent some time ahead of the fighting forces in that area. They fired all sorts of missions, with all sorts of charges, and fuses, and the like, just as we did. Their shell production was over 45,000 rounds, nearly half of what we had pumped out. As I read the book, I wondered if the 282nd FA, and the 512th FA. were used as we were. Apparently they did their basic training at Rucker, with mostly Pennsylvania boys, fresh out of the civilian population. In any event, they are justly proud of the part they played in Europe, and I believe that the officer who wrote the book was

in touch with me many years ago, but I forget the area we discussed at that time. I send the newsletter to at least one member of the 283rd, and his name hit the pages often. He is a Pennsylvania man, and he tells me that he sees Abe Plotkin every once in a while. Small world!!! Robert Pensock is the 283rd veteran I have referred to, and I would invite him to give me any details he may have on our basic training units, the 282nd, and the 512th. I have seen their (283rd) website, and it is not exactly as we use, but is interesting. Check our website out, Robert. And say "hi" to our member, Abe.

I attended the 60th reunion of my High School class, and hardly knew a person there. I was amazed at how old the group seemed to be. Don't know why. It still was 1940 when we graduated.

From that reunion I drove Babe's sister and her sister's daughter to a town just north of Decatur, Ill. for a reunion of the Pellum side of the family. There were about 40 at that gathering, and it was good to see some of the outlaws that gathered. I was joined by several of my kids, and after picking at the chowder they all enjoy, I left for St. Louis to get together with a nephew and his daughter who had come up from New Orleans to look over the Washington U. and the St. Louis U. campuses. The great niece is a senior in High School, and is interested in attending Medical School. We were joined by the rest of my group who came back from the chowder, and had a leisurely dinner, and a short chat, and that was the end of my busy weekend.

Well, the copier quit working already. I had gotten some toner from the man from whom it was gotten, and after the cartridge was empty I got the signal that toner was needed, and I

started to change to a new supply. The inside of the machine was just loaded with the fine carbon which is used, and I couldn't get it to work. I had the man out, and he was amazed at the amount of loose toner, and was not surprised when he found that I had moved it from the other home. He suspected that the move shook a lot of the toner down, and gummed up the works. Anyhow, what goes around, comes around, and the toner is no exception.

Well, St. Louis is still one of the prime sports towns. The athletic goblins sure sprinkled a lot of happy dust lately. The Rams have confounded many of us, and are playing super good. And the baseball Cardinals are playing out of their skulls, and are skunking Atlanta at this time. Even with McGwire out, and our best catcher disabled, they are going crazy.

I got a letter from Jerri Polson on the 6th, and she wishes me to tell everyone "hi". She was not able to make the reunion, but hopes to make Ocean City next year. She is doing well, and other than getting a case of "shingles" is healthy. The shingles must be mild, because she says they do not hurt, or itch, and that is the rule with that form of chicken pox. Hang in there, Jerri.

And thank you so much for the kitty fodder you included in your letter. The kitty is just in the black, after the copier episode.

I got an E-mail from David Hawkins as to the website. I had sent a general note that the spot was ready for viewing, and he enjoyed it a lot. He and Virginia are going to start down to Texas about the middle of October, stopping for a short time at a high school reunion, and then continuing on to Weslaco. They are planning making the next reunion, and they are certainly hopeful at this time. Health is good, spirits are high, all's well with the world.

I was steered by John Wasilewski to visit the Holocaust Memorial Center website, and an article features a former soldier, L. Greenhut. He states that he was a member of our 284th FA Bn, but I have no memory of the name. Can anyone out there enlighten me? We should have gotten him into the Helpmate group, so give me some help out there. I would suspect that Abe Plotkin would know of this soldier. Abe has been very active in the

work of the Holocaust people. I hesitate to make contact without a little more knowledge of this man. HELP!!!!

The Cardinals are going to get a pounding at the hands of the New York Mets if they don't do a better job. They are fine as long as they are winning, but when the chips start to fall, so do the chins. One of our rookie pitchers threw 5 wild pitches in 1 inning. Set a record which will not be broken, until he pitches again.

Had an unusual event occur this mailing. I have not gotten back a damaged Bulletin for several years until yesterday. Have no idea who it was labeled for, but if someone missed the last issue, drop me a line, and I will replace it. I used to have that occur every mailing or so, but not recently.

On the 14th I received another note from Dave Hawkins by "snail mail". He repeated the kind words about our website, and gave a bit of his upcoming moves, then to hit his winter spot in Texas. Dave enclosed a kitty donation, which was most appreciated.

Dave also states that those who are on the net could get the newsletter by E-mail, but I am sure that some of the group would not be able to get the formats right, and perhaps could not print it accurately, so I will probably do both. I will have John Wasilewski put the current newsletter on the website, but still will mail them out. I have some trouble getting the extensions of the files correctly, and I have several means of putting the file to a printer. We will hope, Dave, but for the time being, I will both publish it, and E-mail it. Thanks so much for your note, and for the donation to Ms. Kitty. Dave, there is a listing of all the E-mail addresses in the website, I think. If not, I may be able to give the data to John. Good show.

I have been asked by various people on the internet for possible locations of units in which the ancestors of the interested parties served. I have little help to give these persons, but John Wasilewski has been a lot of help, and Frank Armstrong (the member of the 283rd mentioned above) has also been able to get some of the people some help. The internet is a fabulous force, folks. Learn more about it.

I am getting ready to travel to Calif. next week. I have tried to reach Mrs. Grogan in San

Diego, but after 3 tries I was disappointed. I am going to the San Diego area to see a niece, and I will try harder, and hopefully may get lucky. I also have been in touch with Irv Merrill and he thinks we may be able to sneak in a lunch or something as I leave San Francisco the next week. I am not anxious to try out the Ca traffic, but there is no way around it, I guess. Will be careful, and stay in the right lane most of the time. I will report more on my return, unless reportable news reaches the Message Center earlier.

Finished my trip, and other than falling down a step or two at a niece's home, I survived. I am still cautious out there. I know the people in that area think nothing of going 85 or 90 MPH on the freeway.

While I was down in San Diego, I tried reaching Irene Grogan, one of our widows. I used the phone # on the roster, but got no answer, so my niece called the operator, and Irene had registered an unlisted phone #, so I couldn't reach her. I was only there several hours, and my friend and I wandered back to Riverside after my nephew fixed a light lunch. He was the California #1 rib barbecue winner a year or two ago. Still does OK.

On Sunday, Oct. 29, I drove up to San Francisco to visit my other niece in San Rafael. I was in that city (SF) for 2 hours trying to find the Golden Gate Bridge. I got help, or I thought I was, several times, and nothing even like the towers of the bridge were in sight. I finally got an officer, and he told me how to get there, and I finally got to San Rafael where I had another rough time finding their home. But I made it fine, or would have, if I hadn't fallen on their steps. But other than a scratched noggin, and dented pride, I visited my relatives and had a nice visit. They took me to the area of the motel I used in Blasingame, and I called Irv Merrill to arrange a visit the next AM.

Irv and Ginnie are doing well. They are getting ready to make a move to a facility which is set up for older citizens, and they think they will be happy in that facility. Both have been healthy, and other than the usual older folks complaints, are doing well. I got Irv to light up his computer, and fixed our website on his bookmark list, and he enjoyed seeing the work

John Wasilewski put into that project.

Ginnie fixed a light lunch, and we partook, and I took off for the airport, and came back to a civilized region of this nation.

Today (1st) I got a call from Harry Karis, our Springfield, Il Helpmate, and he gave me the news that his wife, Ethel, had died on the 23rd of last month. She has been having trouble with carcinoma of the lung, but after a lot of surgery, had thought that the problem was licked. This was far from the fact, tho, and after the various ups and downs expected with that condition, she died, fortunately without much pain. She was buried in the Springfield Veteran's Cemetery. Harry seems fine at this time, and thankfully is holding his own. There is little else that a person can do. I have extended to him the sincerest condolences and deepest sympathy from our group, and he will keep in touch with us as time goes on. He told me that Ethel was in good spirits recently, and even considered the reunion trip as a possibility. 'Twas not to be, tho. Hang in there Harry. We are behind you.

I received an E-mail from a lady, Kelly Gumm, in Pontiac, Il who is the great great niece of one of our deceased members, Clarence N. Tammen. He and his brother were in the service, and died just 2 or 3 days apart in 1945. Kelly Gumm tells me that he died of diphtheria on April 22, 1945. I believe that he was in "A" Battery, but do not know. If any of you knew Clarence at all, Kelly would like to communicate with you, as she is doing a bit of research on Clarence, and his brother, John. She did not tell me John's unit, but I do know that when our small group of Helpmates were in France, we went to the grave sites of all the 284th members buried there, and Clarence's grave was one we visited.

Kelly can be reached at:

KELLY GUMM
900 CIMMERON DR.
PONTIAC, IL 61764

Her phone # is (815)842-2470, and her E-mail address is gumbys@davesworld.net

I know we had some cases of diphtheria at that time, but I have long forgotten just who was involved.

Can you help Kelly????

I got a phone call from George Ralcewich on

the 2nd, and he wondered just when I was going to show up down there? I told him my plans were to be down late this month, or early next, and that I would be in their hair for nearly 2 months. Things go well down there, and George tells me that he and Dorothy are having to get a new HMO, as their present one is going out of the business. Bummer.

Not much else from Florida, but I will see all very shortly.

I wish that some of you would send me some good stuff to write about. Most of what I can pass on has been baddish lately, and I don't like to report that news. Of course, we are on the way to make some lucky the owner of our final bottle. Probably will not have the strength to take off the cap, or will have forgotten what is in the bottle. I am going to put the letter from the WWII Documentary on the last page, and if I get anything interesting, I will add that, too.

And I have some news for Kelly Gumm about her uncle, Clarence Tammen. On page 131 of Capt. Kittell's book, "*I WAS HELPMATE 12*", the narrative tells of our move out of the Eisenberg area, that one of "A" battery's men came to the area in which the medical jeep was halted, and the man had a sore throat. The Captain had none of his equipment out, so he gave the soldier a sulfa pill (about all we had at that time), and asked to see his sore throat when we finished that move. He saw the soldier early the next morning, and found that he had the possibility of diphtheria, and he was sent back to the medical facilities as a possible infectious case. He did have the terribly severe disease, and he was dead later on that day. Seven men in "A" battery had sore throats on exam, and 2 of these did have early diphtheria, and they were treated as such. Now no names were put into the narrative, but the move dates were about April 22, and that is the day that Clarence died. I only remembered that we had a possible case of diphtheria, and that we saw all of the men in "A" for evidence of the disease.

I haven't heard from Irv Merrill as to the outcome of his opening John Wasilewski's CD. I had a chance to talk with another Apple user at our computer club's monthly meeting, and he thought there would be a way to open most

of the available programming. But Irv is in the midst of a move, and he may not be available to his machine for a while. I surely hope that it will be able to be done. I think that he will enjoy the photographs on the CD.

I am going to try to get the newsletter out by the middle of this coming week. I want to get out a last one just before the upcoming holidays, but my eyes may be larger than my stomach. I am getting absolutely no news from our group, and I have run out of junk to pass on, just to take up space. One suggestion would be to publish about 4 issues a year, and waive the fact that little of the print would be really news. I may have to try this, because I sure hate to have to print trivia, when facts of the life and times of our membership would be more to the point. Much of what I get lately is not current, tho. Even the deaths often are reported long after the fact.

As I said earlier, I am going to print up a letter I received from a Laina Costanza concerning memories of selected WWII veterans. I will leave it up to you to report to the producers directly, if you would care to participate. I have little to add to the very dramatic stories which many of the veterans can offer. I lead a very sheltered life, and was not very nervous in the service.

Just talked with Bud DeFeo, and he is trying to get things moving for next year. The dates he is working toward is September 13-16, and the location is not able to be determined as yet, but he is getting bids again from the place we stayed in the last 2 times, the IMPALA Motel. His niece is going to try to have him stay in the Taj Mahal and is going to try get us some rate perks at that spot. He is not too sure that she will be able to swing it, but that is what is in the works.

Jean is fine, and things go well for the DeFeo's as of this writing. Keep working, Bud. I think a trip to the Taj Mahal would be super for our reunion.

I think I will close with that bit of philosophy. I will be in Florida for 3 or 4 weeks, and will try to get out 1 more issue this year.

Meanwhile, take care of yourselves, and stay healthy.

AS EVER

JB

Subj: World War II Documentary
Date: 5/30/00
From: Worldwar2doc
To: HLPMATE284

Dear Dr. Summers:

Hi. I am a producer working on a documentary on the World War II Veterans who are surviving at this time. We are traveling to each state of this country and are interviewing veterans and capturing video taped interviews of their war stories as well as their feelings on the world today or any advice they have for future generations. This documentary is called "Restoring the Spirit of Patriotism."

We are contacting veterans all over the United States—but we are finding that we are not able to get information in every state on World War II veterans unless we have specific information. We have to have names, dates of enlistment...etc. So now we are contacting Veterans through websites.

Would this project be of interest to you or individuals who served during World War II? We would be honored to speak with you about this project and would be grateful for any help in contacting veterans of World War II.

Please contact us by replying to this email if you or any other veterans would be interested in being interviewed for this project. Also we have project summaries for this documentary that we have written to get grant funds for this project. Let me know if you would be interested in reading this information.

Sincerely,

Laina Costanza
Producer

This is the letter which I received from the producer of this project. I had placed it in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and it was not discovered for several months. I sent the producer an Email, at the address shown, and it has not been answered at this time. I checked and was not given a "wrong address" message, or "undeliverable", so I assumed it was delivered.

Many of these inquiries are genuine, and important, but others are really just a way to get contacts for sales, and the like. I have done nothing else with this letter, and the only way to reach these people would be through the internet, so if you have an interest, contact the message center, or someone who is web connected, and we may be able to get your interest relayed to the right people.

Thanks for any action you take in this manner.

JBS

Received my first Xmas Greeting today. Mary Ciccone sends greetings, and a very welcome Kitty Donation. Great way to start the holiday season. Thanks, Mary. The best to you and yours for the upcoming holidays, and thanks so much for the loot.
JBS

Another PS, My transmissions to Pat Maier's daughter, to Al DeMonaco's son, and to Clair Schneider's Carole all have been returned. If the above would E-mail me the correct locates I would appreciate same.

Thank you all.
JBS

Address Correction Requested

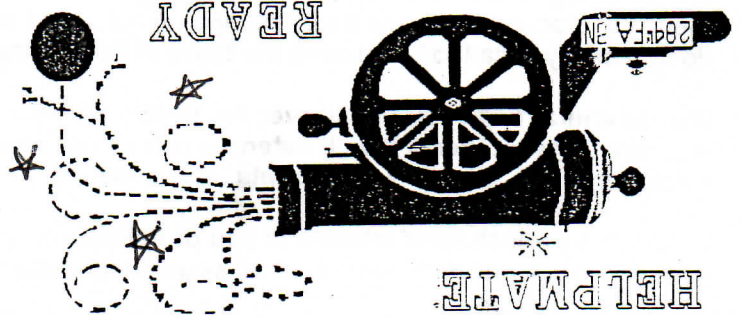
Dated Material, Request Prompt Delivery

JOHN A. WASILEWSKI
7534 W. POTTAWATOMI DR.
PALOS HEIGHTS IL 60463-2028

2001 REUNION
OCEAN CITY, N.J.
SEPTEMBER 13-16

284TH FA BN WW II

"HELPMATE"



RONNIE'S MESSAGE CENTER
JOHN B. SUMMERS, M.D.
5494 ABERDUR LN
ST. LOUIS, MO 63129

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FENTON, MO.



Issue 00-6