



RONNIE'S MESSAGE CENTER JOHN B. SUMMERS, 5494 ABERDOUR LN. ST LOUIS, MO. 63129  
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 284th FA BN WEBSITE: [HTTP://HOMETOWN.AOL.COM//FABN284/INDEX.HTML](http://HOMETOWN.AOL.COM//FABN284/INDEX.HTML)

Greetings, Helpmates. How go things?

Rita McCready called just as I was finishing the last issue, so saved this good news for this issue. Things are going well in New York, and I don't remember any really bad health news from her. We talked about the old days, about the older group of cadre which Gene was part of, and especially about Gerry Brennan. She had known the Brennans for a long time, and I told her that I usually heard from Gerry every 6 months or so, but had not heard for a long time. I have not gotten mail back, but did know that both the folks had heavy medical problems which required much care.

I had asked Rita if she thought she might join the reunion, since it is not unreasonably far from her, and she thought she might enjoy that, so we may see her.

Gene has been dead for 15 years, but she thinks about the old days very often.

Thank you so much for the call, Rita. Cheers up my day.

Margaret Stensberg called on the 16th. They have made a move in the recent past, and now live at:

2221 EVERGREEN LANE Apt H  
 WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI 54494-2190  
 Phone# (715)424-0326

She declared moving was a chore. So many choices as to what to keep, what to pitch, and what to give to cherished family. Gerry's wood working tools went to a grandson who enjoys working with wood, and many of the mementos were parceled out to those who would most appreciate them. I have been there, Mugs, and I know exactly what you mean. I have a son, John Jr., who took care of that for me. He put a 20 Cubic Yard dumpster on my driveway, filled it with stuff, dumped it, and put the same one back and nearly filled it again. I

heard one of the persons who was helping get the house ready for sale ask if he could have a certain item, and they had a ball with the "junk". Life goes on. Babe was a collector above all.

John Wasilewski e-mailed for some reunion facts, and I sent him a few things he asked about. He has already put the last Bulletin in the website, and I have just mailed it yesterday. He has done a terrific job with the material from our past history. I look over his dad's and Norb Obecnny's pictures often. If they reproduced well I would print some of them. Maybe Harry Hudson can give me some of the secret facts about how to get decent copy from source material.

I received a note and a kitty donation from Donald Haaning in the mail on the 17th. He did not say much, but I had heard that he was going to try to make the reunion to see his old buddies. He mentioned that he had read some books on WWII (Tom Brokaw's, and Andy Rooney's), and was starting on Patton's history, special emphasis on the Bulge. He is sure that it was over 50 years ago, but it seems like yesterday. Believe me, it wasn't. I also would recommend Chas. McDonalds books about WWII. He was a company comm. In an Infantry Division, I believe the 26th, and wrote several of the official records which I have in my collection. Hard to read, but factual.

Thanks for the dough, Don. It found a spot in which to land.

I received a very interesting letter from one of our widows, Lorene Althoff on the 24th. She took typing when she was in High School 75 years ago, and still does well with it. She lives alone, her only relatives are 2

second cousins, but they keep in touch with her pretty regularly. She enjoys catching bluegill fish, which she cooks for her cat, and puts out a small garden of lettuce, tomatoes, and green beans. She gets some veggies from our member Virgil Pugh, who puts out a large garden. She used to talk with Virgil's wife when she was living, but hasn't talked with Virgil much.

She remembers few of the names in the Bulletin, but does keep in touch with the Dearborns. She believes that Mrs. D. is quite ill, but they still call one another at times.

Lorene is 94 years old, and believes she is the oldest of all the Helpmate group. She is correct, as Gen Sanders is 92 now, will be 93 in November. I never hear from the General any more. I hope his life goes fine.

Lorene included a kitty donation which is much appreciated. Keep writing, Lorene. It gives me something to write in the newsletter, and don't get old.

John Wasilewski tells me via E-Mail that he has added something to the website. I checked it out, and found that he had put in some facts about our upcoming reunion. I have checked out the air connections, and the folks in Florida have a neat connection, and a very cheap flight. It limits the flights in a small way tho, the flight should terminate on Sept. 13. It is on Spirit Airlines, and the guys down there should look into it.

I just got word that one of my younger brothers is very ill, and is in danger of dying in the near future. He suffered a severe stroke about 4 weeks ago, and it has left him with significant problems. He seemed to get a little better at first, but had a severe reaction to one of his meds, and he has not been the same since. He has diabetes, has had for years, but has been under fair control to my belief. I think that I will travel down to see if I may be of any help. I am more mobile than any of my family, and can take the time to do the little things which mean much in this kind of situation. I will also try to get over to the west coast, just to devil them a little. I am going to call his family, and try to see if my facts are correct. Then I will decide.

He is some improved overnight, and is be-

ginning to eat a little. He had a tube inserted to give him fluid and nutriments, and had stopped eating on his own, probably because of the difficulty keeping the tube and the food down at the same time. I will follow my original plans, and shoot down to FI in mid-May.

And I got a real shock yesterday (24th). One of the closest Helpmates called me from Wood River, Il., yesterday. It is just across the river, and I so rarely hear from any of them, that it is a shame we don't get together. In any event, I have had his wrong Zip Code for years, and he has gotten the bulletin. In any event, Howard Wigger still lives in Wood River, Il. But the zip-code is not 62040, but is 62095-3320. His phone # is correct (618)254-8009. He is 84, and didn't say much was wrong with his health. It was good to hear from Howard. Surprise me often. He has been in touch with Edna Forcade in the past, and his belief was that he reached her at her home listed in the roster, but she has not gotten the last 2 newsletters. He is going to give me a bit of help, and maybe find out where Edna is.

Thanks for the call, Howard. Later.

Just got an E-mail from Ray Crismond, and he has gotten the bulletin. Seems early for FI but that is good. It is always 2 weeks there, and not unusually even more.

Ray has already registered at the Taj, and hopes to join a big crowd there. I was looking up fares to A.C. and they have a super low fare at Tampa for a non-stop to A.C. for under 200 bucks. That was on Spirit Airlines, so if any of you live anywhere near a Spirit outlet, look it up. Believe me, it will not be that low.

I registered at the Taj, and they wouldn't give me the 10th, because that is usually when I get to the reunions, the day before. I will drive to A.C., and will take my supplies, my computer, and my money belt. When I registered, all they had on the books was Ray, which I already knew, so we know that at least 2 of us will be there.

Bud DeFeo just sent me an E-mail letting me know that he will arrange for the day before room, and will try to do the same for Ray. Ray also usually shows up the day before, and will probably do this time, because their roots are in the NJ, PA area.

I have an address change on Betty Marshall .  
She has moved from:

2232 32nd St.      TO      2242 32nd St  
Rock Island, IL      61201

We haven't heard from you for a while, Betty. How about a note concerning summer plans, health, etc. You could also try your luck at our reunion in Atlantic City in Sept. Some of the other widows will be there, hoping to kill the slots.

And I got a note from Jerri Polson about the reunion. She does not have a ride, but I will tell you, Jerri, the air fare on Spirit Airlines will curl your hair. It is higher than Tampa's, but it is surely low. The bad part is the arrival time. It is not far from midnight, if I read the schedule correctly.

And thank you so much for the kitty donation. It has been shaky, as you well remember, but survivable.

Work on the problem, Jerri. We are used to having you at our yearly function.

By the way, John Wasilewski has corrected the phone no, for the Taj Mahal. He also plans putting a little more dope there about the reunion.

I am off to Florida. My errant accounts in New Port Richey keep me flying.

I have just finished my business in New Port Richey, and it went smoothly. Now if my mortgagee will just continue her regular payments, I may not have to make quick trips down here, but then I wouldn't get to see the members of our West Coast Brigade. I had an afternoon of fun and food with Ray Crismond [Marge went to Bingo], and then crashed for the night. Next day we all played cards in the AM, ate an early dinner, and played more cards. Marge won all but the last game, but she always does. Ray and Marge are doing well, and no doctor's appointments in the near future. I went back to my brother's house, and he and I met still another brother to go visit our ill brother, who just had a significant stroke, and is having a lot of trouble with the medications prescribed. He was really out of it when we saw him, and he did not know any of us, or really anything at all. I hated to see him in such dire straights, but we all have this to worry about, potentially. We stayed for a visit with the nephews, but went

on our way, me to New Smyrna Beach, and the other brothers to their homes.

My brother Dale, who lives in Sebring, told me that he believed our Helpmate member, Joe Molnar, had died. On closer questioning he thought the one who died was in his 60's, and our Joe is much older than that. He is going to let me know more later, but I suspect it will be another name, or one of the Molnar relatives of our beloved Joe. More on this later.

I still have been unable to reach George and Dorothy Ralcewich. They have relatives in Ca. and they have few people to help in case of any emergency. Dorothy's sister, the one in Ca, has had health problems, and they had been out to visit with this person, and the Ralcewiches had been made aware of her significant health problems. I suspect that they were called out to help with this, but do not know. I will be back in Auburndale on Sunday, and I can pursue this development more easily.

Well, I just got word that my brother Paul passed away Saturday afternoon, 5/19/01. He was in severe distress when I saw him Thursday, and I knew there was no logical hope for his survival, but one always knows that medical miracles do happen. But not for brother Paul. He quietly passed on after a day of some increasing respiratory distress, and went to sleep, and quietly died. I have seen too many of the hard deaths in my time, and I always hope that all passings will be painless, swift, and easy. It is not always that simple, tho.

I just got back from a quick trip to the west coast, and finished my work there, I think. I had gotten an E-mail from Ray Crismond that they had suffered a tragedy. Marge's brother had brought family down to visit Disney World, and had gone to Holiday to visit Marge and Ray while the family basked in the monotony which surrounds a re-visit to the theme parks. On his way back to pick them up to return to NJ, his auto was struck by a tour bus, and he was very seriously injured in the accident. He is currently in a hospital in Orlando, comatose, and in critical condition. Marge and Ray were going to Orlando to check in, but were told that he was going to be air-lifted to NJ, so they did not go to Orlando. Ray in the meantime had told me that he was going to be gone all day Thurs., and that

he and Marge were not available at that time. I did not check in with him yesterday, and when I called this AM before I came home, he told me that the airlift had been cancelled, and that he was being prepared further for that event. He suspected, and I agreed, that they were not going to be happy campers, so I put off seeing them this trip. So I headed back to my apartment at Gene's home, and here I am. Ray will keep me posted.

Jeep Rafeld and I had our usual lunch at China Jade this week. We met for the usual talk and eat session, as usual, and I found that Jeep has developed some macular degeneration in his eye, and he does not see as well as before. Gerry drove him over to the café, and I had a nice visit with both of them after the lunch.

Other than the eye problem, Jeep says he is doing well. We will be back at the Jade again.

While I was in the area I placed a call for Paul Martin, and I got a peculiar series of sounds, and I thought I was on an answering unit, so I left a message, and hope it was Paul's unit. I had trouble getting him last trip, but did finally catch him at home, and spoke briefly with him. Let me know if I got you, Paul. They are juggling area codes down there so badly that it is difficult keeping up with them.

I am back in St. Louis again, and glad to be on natural turf again. My first chore is to get my E-mail straightened out, and reply to urgent ones. That didn't take long, and one from Ray C. tells me that he has been in contact with the Ralcewiches, and that they have gotten back to Riverview. I will hear from them, I am sure, and I fear that some tragedy has befallen Dorothy's sister.

I am going to contact Bud DeFeo to see who has registered at the hotel before I close this issue.

I just finished talking with George Ralcewich, and just as I expected, he has been in the state of California for the past 2 months with Dorothy's sister. She has not been well medically, and since she had no one to help her, they decided that either George and Dorothy would have to move to Ca., or sis would have to move east, it made more sense

to live where things were more reasonable, and there was some other family members in the area. So they closed the Ca spot, took their time, and moved the sister back to good old Florida. She has been located in a nicely situated extended care facility, and one which is affordable and rather new. That move is to happen this coming week, and that will certainly help this problems solution.

Dorothy is doing well, and her medical problems are improving. They hope to get to Atlantic City, but George tells me that Dorothy does not relish flying, and I understand that. Several other west coast delegates have gotten the trip on Spirit Airlines, and that beats the devil out of driving for 2 days to get to AC. We want to see them there, tho, however they get there.

I have had several of the family of Helpmate members ask for some info. Jack Newell's daughter, Diane, has requested some info about his service, and I gave her the usual referrals which gives some extra help. She wished to be placed on the mailing list to get our bulletin, and that is being done. If any of the group might have some especially fine memories concerning Jack's service, I am sure she would like to be in touch. She is on the internet, and her address there is:

[bgmac@alltel.net](mailto:bgmac@alltel.net)

And her home address is:

Diane Mack  
5011 So. 128th St.  
Omaha, NE 68137

I had tried sending her a huge file, 6.9 megs of data, and I think the file got stuck in my computer somehow, because it has not acted the same since I tried. I think I will have to use snail mail to get her the CD.

The other request is a little different. One of the family of another Helpmate is trying to get facts about his brother-in-law to make him up a shadow box with his medals, awards, and other data which is not available to him. So he is trying to start with us, and work from there. I gave him the internet locate, and he has gotten much from that, and I will have the nice lady above send him our precious CD when she finishes with it. I will start with that, and hope he can find enough

from the Army Records center to carry him further.

I am going to try to get the registration list from Bud before I mail this. And as usual, Bud is on the ball. So far, 7 people are registered there. Bud DeFeo, Charles Zimmer, Bill Hartley, Ray Crismond, James Carney, David Hawkins, and myself. Bud emphasizes that you must tell them that you are in the 284th FA Reunion Group, and the phone # there is (800)825-8888.

At every reunion I hear so many of the group talking about James Carney that I feel I should know the "baby" of our group. It sure will be good to see him, and his neighbor, Bob Rosen. Bob has our "tontine bottle", I think. No, I am sure of this. Bob seldom drinks.

Bud had lunch with Dave and Virginia Hawkins last week. They are in Pennsylvania visiting their son and family.

Thanks, Bud. I will try to keep in touch with the lady you recommended.

I received another request for information from a member of family of a soldier in the 3rd Army, not even connected with the 20th Corps. I don't know how they get my name, but I am glad to try to help them, if I can. I referred this man to John Wasilewski, because he has perfected the means to get remote info. I am sure glad that he is so helpful, and I hope I do not wear out our welcome with this nice man.

And an E-mail from Ray Crismond with news that Marge's brother is beginning to come out of the coma, and he may be in good enough condition to withstand a Medi-vac back to N.J. As I told Ray, the body is a fiercely efficient machine, and if you don't break it apart, it will do its part in healing itself.

I think I will put a few of the reunion facts below, and close this issue for this time. I will get one more issue out before reunion, and still have time to do my usual reunion booklet.

Bud DeFeo just called and we went over some of the stuff which I am putting below. He tells me that he has not heard about a meeting room, but that there are numerous lounges available for that use. I agree, and he is going to plan having the regular buffet for our last dinner, and I think this is a good idea. Parking will be \$2.00 per day, plus valet tips Bud tells me.

Take care of yourselves, and do not get old!!!

As ever, JBS

2001 REUNION  
TAJ MAHAL CASINO  
ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.  
SEPTEMBER 11 - 14

MAKE RESERVATIONS WITH THE HOTEL. BE SURE YOU TELL THEM THAT YOU ARE WITH THE 284TH FA BN GROUP. PHONE # IS 1-800-825-8888

ROOM RATE WILL BE \$35.00 PLUS TAX, PLUS ANY OTHER USUAL CHARGES

ALL OF THE REGULARS WILL BE THERE. A FEW OCCASIONAL ATTENDEES ARE EXPECTED, AND I THINK WE MAY HAVE SOME NEW FACES THERE, HAPPILY.

LET'S MAKE THIS ONE OF THE BEST EVER EVENTS. FEWER AND FEWER OF US WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE KEEPING UP WITH THE BLISTERING PACE WHICH THE YOUNG ONES ARE SETTING.

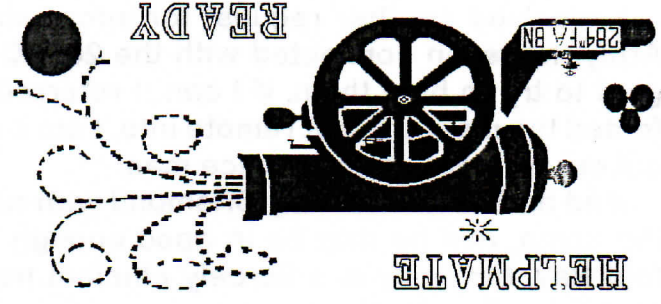
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# TAJ MAHAL



## MARK THESE DATES

SEPT 2001						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

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