

REPORT OF THE 14th ANNUAL REUNION
 OF THE
 612th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION ASSOCIATION
 HELD AT THE HOLLENDEN HOUSE
 EAST SIXTH AND SUPERIOR AVENUES
 CLEVELAND, OHIO
 FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY - AUGUST 4, 5, and 6, 1968.

Forty-five members and their wives and families attended and we had ninety at the Dinner Party on Saturday evening.

The following members attended:

Co.	Name	Family	City, Town - State
C	Bill Redifer	Son Howie	Youngstown, Ohio
A&B	Jewel Raulins		Memphis, Tenn.
C	Claude Uhles	Wife Dean	Donelson, Tenn.
B	Herb Maurltz	Wife Elfrida	Minneapolis, Minn.
B	Charles Armstrong	Wife Jessie and Mother-in-law Katherine Galoway	Lexington, Ky.
Hq	James Kemp		Atlanta, Ga.
Hq	Robert E. Reighard*	Wife Bea	E. Northport, L.I., N.Y.
Hq	Henry Chapman*		Bogota, N. J.
A	Clarence Reed	Wife Caroline, Son Robert, Daughters Jo & Kathy	Salem, Ill.
A	Casimer Hartwick	Wife Maxine	South Bend, Ind.
Hq	John Kelso	Wife Norma	Enterprise, Ala.
A	Jack Flanagan	Wife Gertrude	Glen Burnie, Md.
B	Dick Ramhoff	Wife Judy	Youngstown, Ohio
B	Anthony Burch	Wife Lillian, Son- in-law Dan Walker	Farmington, N. Mex.
B	Bill Vickers		Niagara Falls, N.Y.
B	James Boatright	Wife Alice	Whitesboro, Ga.
A	Phil Christine		Girard, Ohio
B	Bill Venetti	Wife Carmel	Youngstown, Ohio
Hq	Charles Darrow	Wife Peg	Washington, PA
Hq	Eldon Debro	Wife Evelyn	Chicago, Ill.
A	Dave Barto	Wife Alice, Sons David Lee & Michael Joseph, Daughter Debra Marie	Burgettstown, PA
C	Stanley Zabetakis	Wife Kay	Fairborn, O.
Hq	Joseph Robincheck*	Wife Helen	Warren, O.
B	Paul S. Huler*	Wife Ester	Dayton, Ohio
Hq	Stanley Lisowski	Wife Mary	Carnegie, Pa.
A	Willie Dinino	Wife Genevieve	Burgettstown, Pa.
B	Travis Phillips	Wife Tena	Houston, Texas

Co.	Name	Family	City, Town - State
A	Peter Maisano*	Wife Carmel	Cleveland, O.
A	Henry Smith	Wife Elsie, Daughter Reba	Ft. Pierce, Fla.
Rn	George Bishop	Wife Betty	Findlay, Ohio
B	Jack O'Brien	Wife Elva	Cleveland, O.
A	William Scott		Franklin, Tenn.
C	Bill Leininger	Wife Elnora	Mishawaka, Ind.
Hq	Dale Rodersmith*		North Canton, O.
Hq	Jim Shaver	Wife Mary	Elizabethtown, Ky.
B	Willie Spray	Wife Mary, Son Freddy, Daughter Linda	Nashville, Tenn.
A	David Grimm	Wife Virginia	Washington, Pa.
B	Jim Mazzochi		Ravenna, Ohio
B	Dante Filiponi		Slovan, Pa.
C	Al Marcucci		Burgettstown, Pa.
B	George Bloch*		Canton, Ohio
A	Prank Ross*		Euclid, Ohio
A	William J. Cavanaugh		Hubbard, Ohio.
C	Mike Stepanovich		Cleveland, O.
Hq	Emerson (Bud) Sotebeer	Wife & 2 children (Pardon me, Bud, I haven't got their names. Write me so I can put them in the May Newsletter.)	Elkhart, Ind.

*Attended First Reunion

The Company breakdown is as follows:

B	15 (Jewel Raulins says B)
A	12
Hq	11
C	6
RCN	1

So come on Dick King and the rest of "C" Co. – Also Sanford Johnson and Rcn.

The State Breakdown is:

Ohio ...16	Ala..... 1
Pa.7	N.Mex. 1
Tenn. ..4	Md..... 1
Ind.....3	N.J..... 1
Ga.2	Minn..... 1
N.Y. ...2	Tex. 1
Ky.2	Fla. 1
Ill.....2	TOTAL ... 45

With 15 states represented, and our hats are off to the members from Ohio, who really turned out, this was one of our best reunions with the members enjoying each other's companionship immensely. The spirit of good fellowship and warmth of meeting old friends and comrades was greatly evident.

This reunion was the second best attended since 1960 and shows that the spirit of the 612th is still strong and the reunions are very worthwhile with many members coming great distances and making a great effort to attend. The fellows from Ohio, Bill Redifer, Jack O'Brien and his wife Elva, and Dick Ramhoff and his wife Judy, deserve our warmest thanks for all their hard work.

We decided not to have a formal speaker and each member in turn spoke a few words, with everyone enjoying the good-natured joking and bantering.

We welcomed eight members to their first reunion and all remarked that they thoroughly enjoyed it.

We had another first this year, also, with the pictures of the members and their wives and families being photographed in color - and the pictures are great.

At our business meeting on Saturday afternoon, the members voted to have our 1968 reunion in Atlanta, Georgia. It will be on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, August 2, 3, & 4.

This will be the second reunion held in Atlanta the first being in 1959. "Red" Kemp is handling all arrangements, and has informed me that it will be held at the Dinkier- Plaza Motel (newly remodeled). I'll send reservation cards with the May Newsletter.

I am most happy and thankful to let all 612th members know that Col. Hedden is feeling much better at present and is making plans to attend the Atlanta reunion. He wanted to attend the Cleveland reunion very much but was very ill and was forced to forget it. However, Saturday morning he called me from his home in Dahlonga, Ga. and had me give him a full report on everything and closed by wishing us all the best. I know I am speaking for the whole group when I wish him our most heartfelt good wishes, and God's blessing and convey to him our fondest hopes of seeing him in Aug. in Atlanta.

Since the prime reason for having the reunions is to enable the members to get together now and then and renew old friendships from years ago, it is most heart-warming to see old friends and buddies' meet again.

On Saturday evening at the Dinner, there was not any predetermined seating arrangement and as fate would have it, out of ninety people seated at thirteen tables, Herb Mauritz was seated next to Dante Filippini. Now it just happened that although Dante had attended three previous reunions and Herb six, they had not been at one at the same time. Naturally, talk led to different times, places and things - all the way back to the fight for Brest in August, 1944. Dante was a Medic with "B" Co. and Herb was a Gun Sgt. in the same Co., and his section was engaged in direct fire on a railroad station, and were pinned down by German fire.

Dante was in a hole when he heard the cry of "Medic, Medic." He ran back about 100 yards and found a GI being attended by two Infantry Medics. He was badly wounded about the face and head and was quickly carried back to an Aid Station. Dante saw that it was Herb before he was taken back. Because of the severity of the wounds, Dante at the time thought that Herb didn't have much chance of surviving, and went back to his job. Herb was in very bad condition, nearly choking on his own blood a couple of times, was unconscious a lot of the time and was really close to death, with the side of his face completely shot away, jaw smashed and mouth lacerated.

After many months of recuperation and repair work, many skin grafts., with his face being rebuilt by a plastic surgeon, many operations and months of pain, Herb came through, showing an unconquerable spirit or in plain words - Guts.”

In 1961, Herb and his wonderful wife Elfrida were able to start attending our reunions and haven't missed one since - Louisville, St. Louis, Richmond, Clearwater, Dallas and Cleveland — and God willing, I know they will be In Atlanta this August. These locations are mostly great distances from their home in Minneapolis, Minn.

Anyway, back to the Dinner on Saturday night small talk between Dante and Herb to the day at Brest when Herb was hit. (Incidentally, it was a German sniper in the steeple of the railroad station under fire who shot Herb. Herb learned this from other B Co. men at the reunions.) Then It slowly dawned on Dante who Herb was and that this was the first time he had seen Herb since the day he had been wounded over 23 years ago. Most needless to say, this meeting was warm and touching.

And, once again, the reason for having the reunions was demonstrated so vividly.

I am having new updated rosters printed and will send you one, as well as your 612th membership card, just write me and send your \$1.⁰⁰ to help defray postage and printing.

612th Notes:

Red Kemp's son Bruce performed in the backfield very ably for the Georgia Bulldogs in 1967, and is looking forward to another great year in 1968.

Clarence Reed with his wife, son, and two daughters, and Dave “Duffy” Barto with his wife, two sons and a daughter, found the Cleveland reunion most enjoyable. They both had the largest families there. Dante Filipponi has told me that he and Bill Venetti, Jim Mazzochi, and Al Marcucci will be heading south to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, to get in some rounds of golf and enjoy the beach this month.

Speaking of golf, I am planning to take it up seriously and hope to be able to take on Jewel Raulins, Red Kemp, George Karaphillis, Sanford Johnson and the rest of the golfers in the 612th at Atlanta.

Received a nice letter and a sizable contribution from Carl Kotilinek away up In Maple Lake, Minnesota. Carl is trying to make it to one of the reunions and we hope he can make Atlanta.

John Kelso and his wife Norma enjoyed the Cleveland Reunion greatly and showed us photos of their beauty contest winner daughter -- a real Southern Belle, John and Norma, and thanks for all those Alabama peanuts.

When the members heard about Atlanta coming up, they mentioned that they sure would like to have a few wee drops of that good ole Georgia “White Lightning” available at the Reunion. — Do you hear us - ‘Georgia Boy” John Latham of Lythia Springs, Georgia??

Among those attending their first reunion were Bob Reighard of East Northport, L.I., N.Y., and Henry Chapman of Bogota, N.J. along with Eldon Debro of Chicago, Ill., John Kelso of Enterprise, Ala. - Joe Robincheck of Warren, Ohio and Charley Derrow of Washington, Pa. These members were all in Hq. Co. and they sure had a lot to go over and gab about.

Doc Brennan couldn't make it, but he called me and said he sure hopes to get to Atlanta, and we will look forward to seeing him there.

Jewel Raulins made his 14th straight reunion (all of them) and everyone was happy to see and reminisce with "Old Faithful."

Received a nice letter and contribution from Emma Jean Willis at Cleveland, for which we say many thanks, Emma Jean, and hope to see you in Atlanta.

We also received a wire from Pat Myers wishing the Association best of luck at the Reunion. Thank you, Pat.

Also received a telegram from Red Turpin of Clovis, New Mexico. He expressed regrets because he couldn't make it, but illness kept him home. Hope to see you in Atlanta, Red, and the Mrs. - we sure had a great time in Dallas - right?

Well, that's about all for now, fellows. I'll follow with another Newsletter in May; in the meantime, if you have any thing at all you would like published in the Newsletter, send it along and I'll take care of it.

Best regards to all,

Jack Flanagan, Secretary