



612th Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter June 2002

Francis C. Hayes
Association Chairman

George Karaphillis
Memorials & Flowers

Tena Phillips
Treasurer

Rick Pidsosny
Web Site
www.micrap.biz/612th-tdb

Susie Pidsosny
Newsletters &
Roster Data Base

Remembering

By Francis C. Hayes



I always knew that we belonged to a special outfit not just an ordinary one, but since having to do a lot of research to write the newsletters, I am even more sure that we were real special.

To begin with we were started and for a time we were commanded by a real gentleman and the finest soldier that it was my good fortune to know. Col. Heddon was a soldier of the old school, a dedicated officer, brought up and schooled in the Calvary with all of its background and traditions.

He was as straight as a string, all spit and polish and a stickler for discipline. A lot of things that were S.O.P. for him seemed foolish to all of us, but when things really got tough his point was proved with no doubts left.

The 612th showed in combat what they were made of and in spite of being dumped unknowingly into an impossible situation, we faced head on the largest concentration of German panzers ever assembled, staffed by young, cruel S S Troops and made them know we were there. A lot of good men were lost that day, but we handled ourselves well and with courage.

When we hit the beach we were attached to the 2nd Infantry Division. The 612th soon made themselves known and when we were detached for a particular job they always wanted us back. That in itself is proof enough of our quality and bravery.

Our work in the Brest Campaign was outstanding and according to all the war history of this campaign the gunners of the 612th had a record that was not surpassed by anyone and we are given credit for a lot of reasons for the ultimate victory and the quick capture of Brest.

It is my firm belief that had we stayed on the

high ground around St. Vith and stayed with the 2nd Infantry the Battle of the Bulge would be an entirely different story and would have had a very different ending.

Going over all of this brings back memories, good and bad, happy and sad, but memories of a proud outfit, memories we can all look back on with sadness but also with pride that we were there and the fact that we made a difference in our world today.

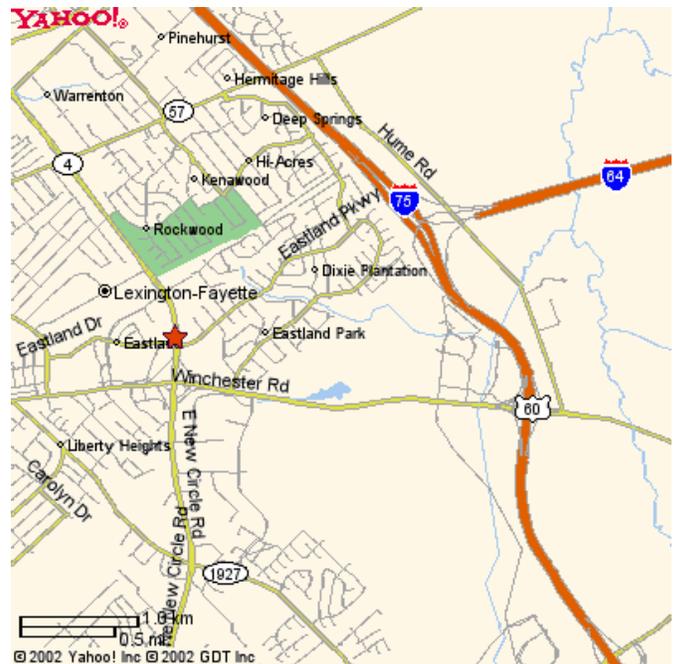
2002 REUNION

Aug. 7 - 11



In this Newsletter we want to go over some of the Reunion facts and figures and some of the things we plan to do.

The *Continental Inn of Lexington* is located at 801 E New Circle Rd, Lexington, KY 40505.



They do not have airport pickup service. In our case if you **call Ms. Deb Reddy, at 800-432-9388 ext. 1102** in advance of the reunion and give

her the arrival schedule of your flight, she will try to arrange a pickup.

We have discussed the possibility of a trip to local points of interest, but trips have not worked out for us before, so we do not plan to have one. If anyone wants to go they can make their own arrangements. I am sure the Continental Inn can give you the information you will need.

The *Hospitality Room* will be located in the same place as at the last reunion. We will operate in the same manner as always. We will have an ample stock of cold cuts, cheese, chips and things to make sandwiches and snacks. There will also be an ample stock of drinks (non-alcoholic) to please everyone. We are hoping that the tomato dealer will set us up again this year. Anyone who wants to bring any special goodies is welcome to do so. **The Hospitality Room will be open Wednesday afternoon August 7, ready for business.**

Remember the raffle for the flower fund, and bring us anything you would like to put in the raffle pot. That income does much to carry on the Flower Fund. George Karaphillis is handling its administration real fine, and we thank him for his dedication.

The reunion this year will be hosted by Bill and Earline Hawkins and Claude and Jane Shaw. If they need any help, Rick and Susie Pidsosny, Tena Phillips, Ouida and Jewel Raulins and I are available. They have everything under control, and are planning an enjoyable reunion for everyone. We are very grateful for their fine work and dedication.

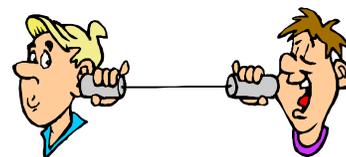
Ms. Deb Reddy has been most helpful and we thank her very much for her great help in making the arrangements.

If you have any questions about this year's reunion Bill Hawkins can be reached by phone at 901-837-1790 or by e-mail at Greatgrannyhawk@cs.com.



Francis C. Hayes W. T. "Bill" Hawkins
Assoc. Chairman Reunion Host

Keepin' in Touch



- ◆ We have talked at length with Gert Flanagan and it is her decision that it is best for her that she not attend this year. We will miss her greatly but her decision is that it would be just a bit too much for her at this time. We will greatly miss her but we know her reasons and respect her decision. The good Lord willing we will look forward to next year and her attendance.
- ◆ We have been in touch with Mary Anne Wesoly, the daughter of Barney Wesoly of "A" Company. He passed away unexpectedly before we had a chance to talk, but his daughter has given us some information. He remembered Sgt. Parrish well and some of you "A" Company people may recall him. If so let us hear. He designed the cover page for the 612th Battalion History. I am sure that most of us have one around but if you have misplaced your copy, Ms. Mary Anne will see that you get another one.
- ◆ Another good friend and a regular reunion attendant, Emma Jean Willis passed away recently. I put in a call for her last month, but she was not home. The last time we talked she was planning to come to Lexington. May God Bless you Emma Jean, we will miss you very much. If you would like to send a note of condolence to her son Paul Willis his address is 461 Bristol Way, Cary, IL 60013.
- ◆ Ouida Raulins tells me that she is still farming her backyard plantation and operating her food-canning factory. She is very successful with both enterprises except one small item. She is unable to get Jewel's hand to grip a hoe handle. He is very adapt at gripping golf clubs, but his hands just won't function on a hoe handle. Good luck Ouida, but don't expect too much improvement.



- ◆ When you go back to another time you think of Rufus and Pearl Noland, who were regular attendants. Pearl we can still taste that good cake and those trips to Denny's for breakfast.
- ◆ Also, Frank Bertrand and his wife. Those Cajun roasts were the biggest and best that I ever had the pleasure of eating. My Cajun friends I bet you can still do it.
- ◆ I hope the Sheriff, Verble Wheeler can come and bring all his deputies, remember you were in Lexington last time.
- ◆ Haynes, Elmer F. – present, that answer to roll call is what we expect from you. It would be tough to pull K. P. at a reunion.
- ◆ You Florida folks: Lauderdale, Dreggors, Huttoe, Karaphillis, Charlie Pettis, Townsend, Zabetakis, Mary Mitts and all the rest we need you. See you in Lexington.
- ◆ Geneva, my moon pie friend, hope to see you also in Lexington.
- ◆ Although Mauritz is no longer with us, I hope the Leingers and the Lemkes will keep your date with the 612th. We need you very much. You know they talk about “the long gray line,” well it has gotten shorter, thinner and more feeble. We want you all to be sure to come.
- ◆ Called Barto today and his news made my day. After all that skin trouble he had including specialists and the whole ball of wax, a local doctor cleared up all his troubles with a series of B12 shots. He is doing fine and hope they can come to Lexington.
- ◆ Tena had a note from Carol Filipponi saying she would be out of the country on a trip at the time of the reunion. Have a good time, we will miss you.
- ◆ Speaking of Tena we would like to congratulate her on the birth of her first great-grandchild. Jackson Eugene Thetford was born May 9th weighing 6 lb 4 oz. Proud parents are Travis and Sarah Thetford.
- ◆ Talked to Darretta, he is doing fine and hopes to come to Lexington, we will expect you. God Bless Hartwin Magnuson from Manor, Texas, let us hear from him. They are having a bad drought, but he starts harvesting his wheat tomorrow. He is still hoping to come to Lexington this time.
- ◆ Judy Ramhoff, Youngstown, Ohio says she will be in Lexington for sure. We look forward to seeing you Judy.
- ◆ Hope to see Iona Nix and the girls and looking forward to having them.
- ◆ Charlie L. Pettis has a new address. His new address is 2605 Hwy 173, Bonifay, FL 32425. His new phone number is 180-547-4336.
- ◆ We have probably missed someone and if so, please excuse us. Before our next letter, let us hear from you and we guarantee you, that you will see your name in the paper.

Hoping to See You

It has been a pleasure to try to put together these newsletters during the past months. We realize that we may have missed something but our source of information was not perfect. Our goal has been to try to give you some things of interest and information rather than correct formal letters.

You must realize that this all started December 31, 1942 and that 60 years and part of a new century have passed. Many of our friends have gone on and for those of us who are still here; we should consider ourselves most fortunate to have lived in the greatest era of change that this world has ever known.

We are fortunate also to have known and associate with such a fine group of people as the 612th friends. It doesn't take a genius to realize that our time is getting shorter. When you consider if you are going to attend this year or not remember that when you say, “I will wait and go next year.” It doesn't mean as much as it once did. It is not my intentions to be sad or get out the crying towel, but to make you think that the odds get less each year. I can't describe the feeling you will have if you ever attended a reunion. My language or knowledge is just not that good but you may take my word, it is something you just don't want to miss. Think about it real hard and come on down to the **612th Reunion in Lexington, Kentucky at the Continental Inn, August 7-11, 2002.**

God Bless,
Frances C. Hayes

Preserving Wartime Memories

AARP asks vets, civilians to share their experiences.

By ROBERTA YARED

The newly launched Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress is looking for people to share their wartime memories, whether they were in the military or a home-front civilian.

Congress created the Veterans History Project by an overwhelming vote in 2000 to preserve the accounts of men and women involved in World War I, World War II and the Korean, Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars.

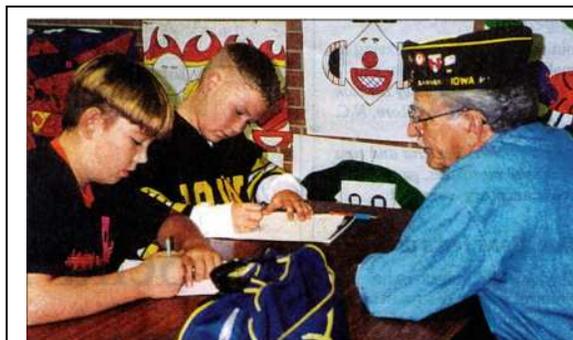
The project was spurred by Sens. Max Cleland, D-Ga., and by Chuck Hagel, D-Neb.—both Vietnam vets— and Reps. Ron Kind, D-Wis., Steny Hoyer, D-Md. and WWII veteran Amo Houghton, R-N.Y.

AARP, a major sponsor of this new project, is working with the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress to create a national archive of experiences and documents for future generations.

“Now, more than ever, traits such as endurance, courage, loyalty need to abide,” AARP President Tess Canja noted at the Library of Congress kickoff in November. “Especially crucial today ... the Veterans History Project will heighten regard for these traits that are so essential in surviving difficult times.”

AARP has pledged \$1 million a year for three years, asking its members who have lived through the wars of the 20th century to participate in this important project.

The goal is to establish a comprehensive collection at the Library of Congress and on its website as well as at other historical and veterans organizations around the country.



Students Aaron Palmer and Eddy Albrecht interview veteran Jim Cunningham in Sioux Falls, Iowa, setting down an account of his wartime memories.

How you can participate

THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER at the Library of Congress is seeking audio and video recordings, letters, diaries, photographs, maps, home movies, drawings—anything that helps you tell your story.

The center offers advice and sample questions to students and family members who wish to interview veterans for oral histories.

For a project kit, applications and more detailed information on ways to participate:

Write to the Veterans History Project, Library of Congress/American Folklife Center, 101 Independence Ave. SE, Washington DC 20540-4615. Or call toll free and leave a message at (888) 371-5848 or go online to www.loc.gov/folklife/vets.