



# 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter December 2002

**Francis C. Hayes**  
Association Chairman

**George Karaphillis**  
Memorials & Flowers

**Tena Phillips**  
Treasurer

**Rick Pidsosny**  
Web Site  
[www.microrap.biz/612th-tdb](http://www.microrap.biz/612th-tdb)

**Susie Pidsosny**  
Newsletters &  
Roster Data Base

## Remembering

By Francis C. Hayes

In the last newsletter I said that we were able to put a man on the moon and build an orbiting habitable space station but could do nothing about turning back time and aging. The Christmas season is here once again, but the situation is still the same and perhaps that is best for when we are not able to look forward we are really finished.

I have always been a great Christmas person and a forward looker. My mother passed on when I was five and a half years old and until some years later when my father married my mother's sister, I went to live with my grandparents. I guess my love for Christmas really came from my sainted grandmother. We lived in the country six miles from the closest town. My grandfather was a country doctor and I have many fond memories of trips with him in his buggy. Remember there were no cars and to ride in that buggy drawn by a spirited Tennessee mare was a big event in my life.

We had some Christmas traditions that were a big part of our celebration. Our house was a two-story, parlor, seven bedrooms, dogtrot, a big dining room and kitchen. It was old fashioned with 12 feet ceilings and eight fireplaces.

We went to the woods and searched for a proper tree to cut for Christmas. It was put in the parlor and decorated with popcorn, strings of berries and what store bought decorations we could acquire. By today's standards I know that it must have been rather "tissy" but to me at that point in time it was just "beautiful".

Another one of our traditions was having



supper with the whole family on Christmas Eve. We always had a couple of gallons of oysters fixed any way you liked them. That is where I learned to love raw oysters.

After supper we always had our tree and family Christmas. This was such a happy time. Not many presents but lots of oranges, raisins, nuts and candy.

Everyone had his own stocking

hanging from the mantle and we looked forward to checking them.

Another tradition was the egnog on Christmas morning. My grandmother hated whiskey like a devil hates Holy Water and it wasn't around except on this occasion. I can see her now, sitting in her chair with this real large bowl in her lap, beating the eggs and mixing the egnog. What I remember is it was so stiff that you could turn your glass upside down and it would not run out.

We had an old-fashioned kitchen and a home comfort wood range with warmer and reservoir for hot water. That kitchen produced some fine food without the benefits of gadgets and electricity of modern day kitchens. Believe it or not the aroma of fresh roasted and ground coffee beans and all the trimmings are so firmly etched in my memory that the aroma still seems to be around.

Those were happy times and even 80 years later, in the present they are just as happy in memory as they were then in real life.

So much for my Christmas musings, hope that I have not bored you with my remembrances of the Christmas Seasons past. But if I have, please accept my sincere apologies.

All my Christmas times have not been happy ones. Christmas 1944 stands out above

the rest. I had been a German prisoner only a couple of weeks and was in the process of being taken to Hamminburgh. We were being transported in open cattle cars that had been used to transport coal. It doesn't take too much imagination to know how we looked and felt. No bath in 10 days, no clean clothes, in fact, not anything, including no food. To make things worse if this was possible, it was Christmas Eve and we stopped on a siding beside a German troop train. My car was opposite the car where the troops were having their meal. You had to look as long as our train was parked there.

Without a doubt this was the low point of all my Christmases and an experience forever embedded in my memory. In spite of these bad times we had much to be thankful for because many of our friends like Stegall, Hyde, Beatty, Johns and Thomas did not make it. When we recall these days they are always on our mind and we are forever grateful that the Good Lord gave us that second chance.

So much for the personal references and the sad times. Let us dwell on the happier side.

We have been of all people most blessed in the circumstances we find ourselves. We have been able to keep things going along without a lot of problems or changes. Our organization is going along well, and so far we are able to stay sound financially. I feel that the Good Father must have wanted us to carry on or he would not have sent us Rick & Susie to carry on our work. Without them we would have to close shop. I hope that you will give them a call or drop them a line. Tena and George are carrying on and keeping up that part of our work. So this Thanksgiving we have much to be thankful for.

Our prayers are that the Christmas season will be a happy and joyous one for everyone. We are pleased that we can go into the New Year without the uncertainties of a year ago. Our organization is doing fine. The reunion is planned and taken care of for another year, so we don't have to deal with this uncertainty as we did last year.

I am trying to continue with the TeleTalk and hope that by the spring newsletter this will show some results.

Please remember to send back your

information card so we can bring our roster up-to-date. This makes it so much easier to keep in touch.

This will conclude our newsletters until the spring of 2003 at which time we will try to get out a letter and bring you up-to-date on everything.

Our wish to you is for a Happy and Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

For our country, may the threat of war be averted.

For me personally, I want to thank you all for my part in getting out the newsletters. It has truly been a pleasure and a privilege to be in contact with many of you again.

Thank you again, Merry Christmas and God Bless.

*Frances C. Hayes*

## **In Our Memories**

- † Helen Patrick – widow of Clint Patrick of Covington, GA
- † Albert Beane of Chancellor, AL.

Our prayers and thoughts are with the families of all of our departed friends. Also, please keep in your prayers those 612<sup>th</sup> members and their families who are ill.

Visit the web site for other remembrances and memorials.

## **Thinking of You**

We recently received a letter from Karen Davis. Karen's mother is Myra Malkowski. Myra recently suffered a stroke and has entered a nursing facility. Myra does not comprehend written materials, never the less we urge all 612<sup>th</sup> association members to remember Myra by sending a *thinking-of-you* note to her in care of her daughter at the following address.

Myra Malkowski  
% Karen Davis  
10318 Grenadier Way  
San Antonia, TX 78217-3915

Also please keep in your prayers Iris Morris' grandson. He has a tumor around his spinal cord and will have surgery soon.



## **“TELE-TALK”**

*with Francis C. Hayes*

- Talked to Julia Blakeney, daughter of Tom and Betsy Didlake, both have had strokes and are in assisted living. She is unable to do much, but Tom does much better. His phone number is 662-323-0018 and the address is:

Tom Didlake  
Cantrell Personal Care  
1279 Highway 12W  
Starkville, MS 39759

Let him hear from you. I am sure he would appreciate it.

- Ed Winslow called this week. He is doing well and is planning to be in Tarpon Springs with his daughter and grandchildren.
- Visited with Ben Hardy last week. He shared some information about Capt. Kennedy, which I did not know. It is just amazing what comes up during these phone talks.
- Ruby Anfenson reads and enjoys the newsletters. She thanked me for letting her know about Albert Beane passing. She and her husband were close friends of the Beanes and kept in touch.
- Verona Karaphillis is having a lot of trouble with her walking and is in a wheel chair. She say’s “come to Tarpon Springs. I can direct things from my chair.”
- Ruth and Talmadge Riley are fine and appreciate the free publicity in the last newsletter.
- The Hawkin’s family have recovered from the wreck that they had recently. Jeannie got the worst injuries, but she is recovering fine.



## Ladies Corner

By Susie Pidsosny

Jannie Pettis was kind enough to pass along her Cheesy Potato Casserole recipe. ENJOY!

### **Cheesy Potato Casserole**

- 8-12 large potatoes or 3 lbs. Hash browns
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped (minced) onion
- 1 tbsp. butter or margarine
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 pint sour cream
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. Pepper

Cut potatoes into small cubes and boil. Melt butter in large saucepan and sauté onion. Blend in soups, sour cream, 1-1/2 cups of cheese, salt and pepper until cheese melts. Put cooked potatoes in casserole dish, pour soup mixture over it and mix. Add rest of cheese to top and bake at 350 degrees for approximately 45 minutes.

### **Special Thank You**

A special thank you to Miss Cyndi Elmore for all of her help with the newsletter. She types then forwards Francis’ notes to us by email. This certainly makes our job easier.

We wish you all a  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS**  
and a  
Happy New Year

