



# 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter May 2003

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## What's Happening

By Frances C. Hayes

The saying "Time and Tide waits for no man" is certainly very true. The fact that it is time to get out another newsletter is proof of that fact.

This newsletter is a kind of bring us up-to-date information letter to let you know how we have done the past few months.

I think we have been very lucky in the months following the Lexington Reunion. We have much to be thankful for. First, our losses by death have been very small and although we have many men who are ill, they all seem to be hanging on and for this, we are most thankful.

The organization is in good shape financially, you have all been most generous in your contributions and that alone makes things easier for us who are trying very hard to make it happen like it should. Whether we like it or not it takes a certain amount of money to operate our organization properly.

George is taking care of the Flower Fund in a wonderful way. This is one fund we don't like to use because it means another of our pals has passed on and this makes us feel sad because we have lost another dear friend to that "Heavenly Army" and therefore we pray this figure stays very low. The Flower Fund raffle was a huge success and we added money to the fund. At the present time the Flower Fund contains \$4,515.



Tena is doing a wonderful job with the general operating fund which pays for the newsletters, materials, postage and incidental expenses. Our up to date financial statement shows we have \$1,606 in the operating fund. We are most lucky to have Tena's great experience. Having worked so long with Jack she has so much going for her and is able to contribute so much to the

operation of the organization.

Lastly, but not *leastly* (a word that I invented) we are of all people most lucky to have Rick and Susie to edit and print our newsletters and keep up our website. Without their knowledge, expertise and dedication we would have to close shop. The production expense would be too great for our limited income to maintain. I want to continue to impress on you, the great and dedicated contribution they make to the organization each and every day. "Thank you people" and God Bless.

When I think of all your loyalty throughout the years I am humbled, amazed and grateful to have been associated with such a group of people. You may rest assured that you all are a very special breed and there ain't many around.

We hope to get out one more newsletter before August and we hope to have more personal news in it.

Francis C. Hayes



## ***“TELE- TALK”***

*with Francis C. Hayes*

I have continued calling people and in this newsletter will include some of the news about our friends that will be of interest to all of you.

- Had a call from Pearl Noland last week. They are doing fine for old folks. Was happy to hear from her and Rufus but her news really made my day. She and Rufus are coming to the Tarpon Reunion. Rufus is able to ride and someone will drive them. Several of the family plan to come also. We really look forward to seeing them again.
- Judy Ramhoff had a lot of snow, is doing fine and enjoys the newsletters, Bless you Judy.
- Foy Peavy is planning to be in Tarpon Springs. His wife has been ill, but he hopes to be able to attend. He hopes to find some information on Willard Webb, Susie’s father who was in his platoon.
- George Johnson, Toms River, NJ is doing okay and enjoys the newsletters very much.
- John O’Brien, Cleveland, OH was in the hospital when I talked to his wife, but was doing better. He enjoys any news about his friends.
- I finally got some up-to-date news on Herman McCollum. He is over his operation and doing fine. I talked to his wife as he was away on a doctor’s visit. She is unable to walk so he is able to help her a lot. Good luck Herman; our thoughts and prayers are always with you.
- Visited again with Geneva Smith in Chattanooga, TN. She enjoys the Reunions very much and is a regular attendant. Appreciates the newsletters and we want her to know we enjoy the “Moon Pies.”
- Talked to Floyd Snow’s wife. He is very ill and has to go to the hospital for Dialysis. Our prayers and thoughts are always with you.
- Fayne Haines was doing well, but his wife was ill. Their daughters are planning to bring them to Tarpon Springs. We will be looking for you all.
- Talked to Jack Penuel’s wife because his hearing is bad, so she was doing his phone talking. They are doing okay.
- Ben Hardy, Washington, GA enjoys the newsletters. He was asking about Albert Beane, who since has passed away.
- Talked to Ruby Jaycox (Floyd) we have many fond memories of both of them at past reunions, especially the boiled shrimp at Biloxi. Ruby is hoping to come to Tarpon Springs.
- Called Captain Groff, Fort Lauderdale, FL. Since he is from Florida he hopes to be in Tarpon Springs. Hope to see you Bill.
- Ed Winslow is getting along better. He got a good checkup from his doctor. His plans are to bring his family to Tarpon Springs. His daughters and grandsons are big reunion fans. Ed and Hawkins live close together and are able to talk on the phone a lot.
- Mike Papendick, Highland, IN called to report six (6) inches of snow and to say his walking has improved very much. He and Helen are hoping to be able to come to Tarpon Springs at Reunion time.
- Had a call from Devers Bryant, Newman, GA He was doing fine and he sounded like his old self on the phone. His wife has had some health problems and has retired.
- Mary Mitts, Tarpon Springs, called last week. She sounded real good and is looking forward to seeing you all in her hometown in August.
- Mike Koulianos, Tarpon Springs is very ill and when I called his son talked to me. I think his condition is fairly stable but pretty serious.

- Had a nice note from Isabel Kemp. I must have a bad number because no one ever answered the phone. She has had a lot of sadness in her and the Colonel's family in the past year. Drop me a line with your correct phone number and I will give you a call.
- Verona Karaphillis pretty much stays in her wheel chair because of falling. She says she can handle the reunion from her wheel chair so we must all come and see for ourselves.

Everyone very kindly said they enjoyed the newsletters and expressed a desire to attend a reunion, but age and health conditions control this. For us who can attend we feel extremely blessed and our thoughts and prayers are always with you.

Tena reports that since the last reunion in August 2002 we have received dues and notes from the following:

Fares & Ann Cordova  
 Melvin Barr  
 Anthony Cavatio  
 Ansal Dreggors  
 Ben Hardy  
 George W. Johnson, Jr.  
 Albert & Margaret Hlibok  
 Ruby Jaycox  
 Isabella Kemp  
 Monty & Anne Laster  
 Herman & Evelyn McCollum  
 Mary Mitts  
 Robert & Arline Noonan  
 Charlie & Jamie Pettis  
 Edna Showalter  
 Kenneth & Gloria Webber



50<sup>th</sup>  
 Reunion

This year we will be celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion. It will be held in Tarpon Springs, FL at the Holiday Inn. 38724 Hwy 19 North from July 30<sup>th</sup> through August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003.

We have had the Reunion here before and the accommodations are excellent. We have a spacious and convenient Hospitality Room, restaurant and pool.

The room rate is \$64.00 plus tax. This is for a room with two (2) double beds or King size. You may call toll free at 1-800-465-4329 for your reservations. Be sure when you make your reservation to mention 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion Reunion in order to get the special rate. The cut off date for reservations is July 14. **Rates will go up sharply after July 14.**

If you have never attended a reunion in Tarpon Springs you are in for a real treat. George and Verona Karaphillis really pull out all the stops and put on a great show. The accommodations are fine and convenient. There is wonderful ethnic Greek atmosphere and the hospitality is genuine. The hotel is located close to restaurants and is accessible to St. Nicholas Cathedral, the sponge docks, real Greek shops, bakeries, cafes and restaurants.

We look forward to seeing you **July 30<sup>th</sup> through August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003** for our 50<sup>th</sup>. Let's make it a real whopper.

**Don't forget that the cut-off date for reservations at this terrific price is July 14<sup>th</sup>.**

## Can You Help?

Does anyone have a contact name or address for Fort Hood? We are trying to make arrangements to have our beautiful 612th quilt donated there or to an appropriate army museum at a later date. We would like to make plans for this so that Iris may stitch the information onto the back of the quilt. If you have any information please contact Susie.

Also Iris has made a graph of the quilt to make it easier to locate the names of our loved ones. We will have copies of the graph at this year's reunion and will have a framed copy that will remain with the quilt. Since our last reunion Iris has added three names to the quilt. They are Willard Webb, Barney Wesoly and Aaron Carter.

We have not had much luck in our efforts to establish a “complete” roster of our men that served in the 612th. Most of the names we have listed are members that have attended one or more reunions throughout the years. We are still hoping to find the names of all of our men so that we can have a complete record of those that served. Again, if you have any information please send it along to Susie.

## Notes from Susie

Rick and I are really excited to be sending you all the latest information about the 50th reunion. It will be here before we know it and we are so anxious to see all of our dear friends in the 612th. We have one more newsletter that will be going out prior to the reunion. If you are planning to attend we would love to hear from you. Maybe you have a memory of a past reunion you would like to share with us. For those of you who cannot make it this year due to ill health or other reasons, we would love to hear from you as well. And don't forget, while you may not be there in person you will be there in our hearts.

I know that George and Verona and there family are busily making plans to welcome us all back to Tarpon Springs. I think George runs the unofficial Tarpon Springs hospitality center. He is so proud of his community (and they are proud of him!). I don't know what he enjoys more, showing the 612th association all around Tarpon Springs, or introducing Tarpon Springs to his 612th family. As Francis said, “If you've never been to Tarpon Springs before you are in for a real treat!” A word of warning! Wear loose clothing. There are more delicious Greek bakeries, restaurants and cafes in Tarpon Springs then in all of the Greek Isles combined (well, not really, but there are a lot!) When you're done eating you can hit the souvenir shops, take a ride on a sponge boat, visit the lovely parks (where there is a beautiful memorial to the 612th TDB) and most breathtaking of all, a tour of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Just imagine, enjoying all of that while in the company of dear friends you've known for over 50 years. Life doesn't get much better! Sure hope to see you there.

## History in the Making

When he steps through the door of the Holiday Inn on July 30, 2003 Jewel Raulins will be the only member of the 612th to have attended all 50 of our reunions. So Jewel and Ouida, let us know what time you are arriving and we will all be there to greet you!

## Special Thank You

In Honor of the men and women who died for our Freedom. We Salute their Bravery!

*The ones that we've lost  
Still go with us in spirit  
We Will Remember Them*

*In the face of family  
Their presence still lingers  
We Will Remember Them*

*In the dreams they once nurtured  
They still shape our future  
We Will Remember Them*

*In the hearts that embrace them  
They live on forever  
We Will Remember Them*

*At daybreak and nightfall  
As long as there's memory  
We Will Remember Them*

Memorial Day – May 26th, 2003

## Catching Up

Tena was pleased to get a call from Thelma Slayton. Thelma is the widow of Harold “Sonny” Slayton of Company B. They had a lot of catching up to do after 22 years. The last time they were together was at Sonny's funeral. If you would like to get in touch with Thelma her address is:

Thelma Slayton  
HC8 Box 811  
Beesville, Texas 78102  
361-358-1888

## ***SPEAKING OF TENA***

Tena was hospitalized in April. She had a rough couple of weeks but she told me to make sure and let everyone know she is much better now and she will see us all in Tarpon Springs.

Susie

### *Anniversary Wishes*



Congratulations to Frank and Frances Bertrand on the celebration of their 59th wedding anniversary. Frank and Frances were married on February 19, 1944 and were recently honored with a party thrown by their family. Frank Jr. wrote

that his father has always been very proud of belonging to such a fine group as the 612th. He said that his dad was especially proud of several gifts he received that included the 612th logo (shown in the picture below).

Our best wishes go out to Frank and Frances!  
God Bless You Both!



## **"Old Geezers" Are Easy To Spot**

(I received the following story from an e-mail friend. I thought it was terrific and wanted to share it with you all. Hope you enjoy it as much as I did.)

At sporting events, during the playing of the National Anthem, Old Geezers hold their caps over their hearts and sing without embarrassment. They know the words and believe in them. Old Geezers remember World War I, the Depression, World War II, Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Normandy and Hitler. They remember the Atomic Age, the Korean War, The Cold War, the Jet Age and the Moon Landing, not to mention Vietnam.

If you bump into an Old Geezer on the sidewalk, he will apologize. If you pass an Old Geezer on the street, he will nod or tip his cap to a lady. Old Geezers trust strangers and are courtly to women. Old Geezers hold the door for the next person and always, when walking, make certain the lady is on the inside for protection.

Old Geezers get embarrassed if someone curses in front of women and children and they don't like any filth on TV or in movies. Old Geezers have moral courage. They seldom brag unless it's about their grandchildren.

It's the Old Geezers who know our great country is protected, not by politicians or police, but by the young men and women in the military serving their country.

This country needs Old Geezers with their decent values. We need them now more than ever.

Thank God for Old Geezers!

Pass this on to all the Old Geezers you know.