



612th Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter May 2007

Fayne Haynes
Association Chairman

Tena Phillips
Treasurer /
Memorials & Flowers

Rick Pidosny
Web Site & Roster Data Base
www.microrap.biz/612th-tdb

Susie Pidosny
Newsletters



54th Reunion Coming Soon

It is hard to believe but in just a few short months we will all be gathering in the beautiful city of Murfreesboro, Tennessee for our **54th Reunion**. Most of you are probably just like me and are trying to figure out where the days have gone? One moment we were wondering if winter would ever end and the next minute summer is peeking around the corner.



I know our **Reunion Committee** has been hard at work. After the outstanding job the **Haynes Family** did during our first visit to Murfreesboro in 2005 we are all pretty spoiled. But I know that **Fayne and Beatrice** as well as daughters **Janice Bellamy** and **Anita Stanley** are up to the challenge and we're looking forward to another dose of their generous Southern hospitality. **Mary Ann Wesoly** has also been keeping busy with decorating plans for our



Fayne & Beatrice
Haynes

Friday evening get together as well as the Saturday night banquet.

On behalf of the **Reunion Committee** I'd like to encourage you to join us this year in Murfreesboro. The dates for this year's reunion are **Thursday, Friday and Saturday August 2, 3 and 4**. We will once again be staying at the **Fairfield Inn and Suites**, 175 Chaffin Place, Murfreesboro, TN 37129. A complete listing of

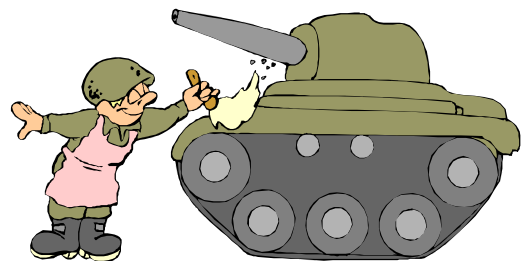
phone numbers, driving directions and other information about the hotel is included on the **Fairfield Inn fact sheet provided on the last page of this newsletter**. Rates are **\$79.00 per night per room (plus tax)**. This rate applies to all reservations made **before July 12th**. After this date the \$79.00 rate can not be guaranteed. To make your reservation please **call the Fairfield Inn directly at 615-849-1150**. There is also a **toll free number 1-800-228-2800**. To guarantee the discounted rate make sure you mention the 612th TDB Association when making your reservation.

For those folks arriving prior to Thursday, August 2nd the hotel will extend the discounted rate to Wednesday, August 1st. For any dates prior to the 1st and after the 4th the hotel can not guarantee the discounted rates. You need to ask when making your reservations. Rates for non-reunion days could be \$104. per night.

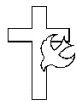
Please note: **the Fairfield Inn and Suites is a Smoke-Free hotel. All rooms are non-smoking**. If you smoke in your room there is a \$250 fee/fine.

Don't forget to bring your donated "goodies" for the **Flower Fund Raffle!** As always our Flower Fund Raffle will take place following our Saturday night banquet.

We look forward to seeing you all in Murfreesboro!



Passings



Our deepest sympathies go out to the **Coone boys, Tommy, Mark and Danny** on the loss of their beloved mother **Mary Coone** on March 3rd, 2007. Mary was the widow of **William Coone** (Company C and Recon).

I received the following e-mail from Tommy. I think the tribute he wrote to his mother is better than any words I could say.

"My mother, Mary Coone, just died tonight. She was married to William Coone, who was in Company C and Recon. Mark, Danny and I are members of the 612th reunion and Ma attended once and always wanted to attend more but was too ill.

I've lived with Ma these last ten years. This is hitting me extremely hard. I'm not very rational so if I babble I apologize. Our Address is the same as registered in the newsletter (that she loved to read)

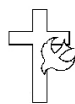
No idea when she will be buried. We go this morning to the funeral home to make arrangements but it will be quick I'm sure. It will be at Taylor's Funeral Home in Dickson, Tennessee.

She did not attend but one reunion but I'd have not been able to attend any without her support and encouragement. She really was a very special person. I know every son says it about their mother but I can say that I never met anyone who didn't like her. She was a person that being good, kind and nice came naturally to her.

Thank you so much for your reply.....So many of the 612th family have passed since I first joined.....it always saddens me...now the widow of William Coone joins the ranks of the departed."

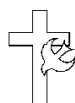
Tommy

Tena sent a card and a memorial donation to the **Coone Family** on behalf of the 612th TDB.



We also had news from Ruth Riley that **Ruth Townsend of St. Petersburg, Florida, the widow of C.W. "Bill" Townsend** (Company B) has passed away. Ruth Riley spoke with the Townsend's daughter Judy and learned that Mrs. Townsend had succumbed to cancer on May 2nd 2007. Funeral services were scheduled for May 8th.

Included with the mail that **Tena** forwards to me for the newsletter was an obituary for **Mr. Melvin Barr**. We had previously mentioned Mr. Barr's passing in the November 2006 newsletter. His nephew, **Mr. Jimmie Barr** of Bonham, Texas was kind enough to pass along the following information:



Funeral services for **Melvin H. Barr**, age 83 of Leonard, were held at 2 pm Saturday, August 5, at the Taylor Funeral Home Chapel in Leonard with Charles Wrenn officiating. Burial followed in the Leonard Cemetery. He died Wednesday, August 2, 2006 at the Clyde Cooper Texas State Veteran's Home in Bonham.

He was born February 28, 1923 in Wolfe City, the son of John F. Barr and Mary Teague Barr. He was a member of the First Baptist Church and served in World War II. He was a cattle trader and a butcher. He married Lenora Martin on May 19, 1984 in Leonard. She preceded him in death. He is survived by a sister-in-law, two step granddaughters and numerous nephews and nieces.

Visitation was held Friday, August 4th from 6pm to 8 pm. Taylor Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of our recently departed members. May God's love comfort you during this difficult time.

*"Sad soul, take comfort, nor forget
That sunrise never failed us yet."*

Celia Thaxter

**Dues
Are
Due**



Since the November newsletter I have received dues from the following members:

William Groff
Robert and Beatrice Reighard
Ruth M. Hays
Juliana Flynn
Ruth Townsend
Dorris and Florence Kelley
Hazel Scott
Fares Cordova
Bill and Earline Hawkins
Henry and Betty Harkema
Charles and Nancy Huttoe
Talmadge and Ruth Riley

If you have not yet paid your dues please send a check to:

**Katherine "Tena" Phillips
11606 O'Donnell Drive
Houston, Texas 77076-1008**

Dues are \$5.00 annually and help cover the costs of printing and postage for our newsletters.

Our current balance for the Flower Fund and Dues (as of April 2, 2006) is \$5430.18

Tidings from Tena



Before I get started with sharing news from our members I want to say **Thank You to my 612th family** for all your prayers and thoughtful get well cards plus the many telephone calls. The Dear Lord has really blessed me and I hope to see you all in August at Murfreesboro with my dear friend **Glenda**. Oh yes, **Glenda joined us as a "Grandma" on November 25th 2006. Her daughter Amy had a baby girl – her name is Emerald.**

*(A side note from Susie - Our dear **Tena** has had a difficult time of it since last year's reunion in Tarpon Springs, Florida. She has been in and out of the hospital several times and had a stint in Rehab. Thankfully, she is regaining her strength and despite a painful outbreak of shingles, she and Glenda are looking forward to joining us all in Murfreesboro. **Please keep Tena in your prayers – she does so much for our association - the 612th would be lost without her!**)*

Now back to Tena's Tidings:

Fayne Haynes called to say that everything is set up at the Fairfield Inn and Suites and that he and his family are looking forward to the reunion.

Juliana Flynn, (South Amboy, N.J.) wrote: 'As usual the current newsletter is filled with all kinds of news and updates. I appreciate receiving every copy, it reinforces my feelings of all the sacrifices the men of the 612th made for folks like me.'

(The late) **Ruth Townsend** sent me a nice long note last November that I'd like to share. "Dear Tena, Just received the latest newsletter and roster and want to thank you and all the others who keep the 612th alive! Those who remember Bill (C. W.) will recall he was a very quiet, hard working, unassuming person. He always looked forward to the reunion being in Tarpon Springs when his work schedule allowed him (us) to attend. He enjoyed so much seeing his "war buddies" and renewing friendships. We (or rather I) never got to really get to know very many of the men and their wives but still feel a bond with them and recall the happy hours Bill enjoyed at reunions. Again, my thanks to all of you whose efforts we do enjoy.

Ruth Hays (Oakley, KS) wrote to say she always enjoys the newsletters and that **Lloyd** always enjoyed the reunions. She was saddened to read of the passing of so many old friends. Ruth has decided to move off the farm and after some remodeling is completed will be moving into a home she bought. (Her new address is listed in the Roster Updates section).

During the holidays I had a card and note from **Bill Hawkins** (Munford, TN). Bill says he is chief cook, laundry man, housekeeper and errand boy for **Earline** and daughter **Jeannie**. Sadly he reports that **Earline** continues to go down hill after her fall earlier in 2006. Bill wrote "it looks like for the Hawkins Family our reunions are over with" and that he sure misses seeing everyone.

Edna Showalter (Muncie, IN) dropped me a note during the holidays. Edna wrote that she was sorry to hear I had been in the hospital. She was also sorry to read in the newsletter that so many of our members had passed away. "I think of so many I came acquainted to and so grateful to have known them. We had fun - didn't we?"

Don Smart (Hico, TX) sent along a newsy letter. He and **Clara** are planning to attend our reunion in Murfreesboro. In January 2006 Clara had both knees replaced. Don reports that their children Steve, Cindy and Ron all showed up to help out during mom's convalescence. He said that the healing process was slow and tedious but that Clara now walks with the bounce of a 25 year old. Clara got to try out her new knees in September when she and Don took a 14 day trip to Northern Italy.

Hazel Scott (Franklin, TN) was pleased to receive our last newsletter. She says she is always glad to read about what is going on with the members. She wrote that she was just broken hearted to read of the passing of **Clara Harding**.

I had a sweet Get Well card from **Isabella Kemp** (Lawrenceville, GA). Izzy told me to "*Do your rehab, eat your veggies, think good thoughts and be "up and at em" real soon!*" In another note Izzy reminisced about old times saying "*The 612th is dwindling down to just a few – but the spirit is still there. 62 years is a long time and I'm sure none of us gave a thought what was in store for us, where we would be and what we would be doing. Wars bring many changes – changing lives and destinies and not always for the better. Wonder what our guys would think of the world situation now if they were in a group talking?*"

Roster Updates



New addresses:

Ruth Hays
603 S. Hudson Street
Oakley, Kansas 67748

William "Bill" Hawkins
174 Joe Joyner Road
Munford, Tennessee 38058

Dee-El Dawe
46253 Fourth Homestead Rd.
Burwell, NE 68823



SUSIE'S
SNIPPETS

Hi All!

Sorry for the delay in getting this newsletter out. Life has a funny way of getting in the way of our plans! Things are finally beginning to settle down and Rick and I are looking forward to seeing you all in Murfreesboro!

I had a nice note from **Dean Uhles**. She's hoping to make it to the reunion this year. She's afraid to drive by herself (she's close enough that perhaps some of you folks in Tennessee or someone on the way by could stop and pick her up?)

Dean's had a rough go of it since last August. She underwent a test for her heart and it caused her to have a heart attack. Saying they couldn't do anymore for her the doctors sent her home to die. They wanted to send in Hospice care but Dean told the doctors she didn't think she was ready for that. She came home from the CCU and stayed by herself. She had nurses come in 2 days a week for several weeks. Dean credits the Good Lord, will power and lots of prayers (plus the fact that she taught water aroebics for 13 years) for the reason she is alive today. **Dean** we wish you

all the best and will keep you in our prayers. We look forward to seeing you in Murfreesboro.

For our members that have e-mail access I had sent out a request asking if anyone had news to share for this addition of our newsletter. I was very pleased to receive the following from **Michael Verrengia**, Michaelv1249@aol.com. Michael is the son-in-law of **Lt. Henry Harkema** (Paramount, CA).

Michael wrote:

Susie,

I should have sent this last August, but didn't get around to it. In August, LT. Henry Harkema celebrated his 95th birthday, and his family pulled out all the stops to make it memorable. First, we made it a 1940's theme party and encouraged everyone to wear period clothing. We had a photo area, complete with life-size Betty Grable pin-ups! There were forty's dresses and men's clothing galore, but what made it special, was that we also celebrated "The Fighting Harkema Brothers".



Henry and four of his brothers all served during the war, and all returned safe without a scratch.

Henry - 612th TDB in Europe

Roy - Combat Engineers in Europe

Joe - Army Air Force in the CBI Theater

Kenny - Signal Corp

Lloyd - Infantry in Philippines training for the invasion of Japan, finished in Korean occupation

All the brothers received a WWII proclamation from President Bush, and Henry also received birthday greetings from the President and his congresswoman Linda Sanchez. The Long Beach Press-Telegram newspaper was on hand for photos, and ran a story about the party. Sadly, none of the brothers ever heard a word from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's office, whom we also notified.

I have attached two pictures that you might be able to use (I hope!). One is Henry, with Betty Grable, and the other is from the invitations that we sent out, showing the brothers in their uniforms. All of the invitation work was done at home, with Henry's granddaughter Chrystal (my daughter) doing all the artwork and Power Point presentation for the party.

*Thank you very much,
Michael Verrengia
(Henry's son-in-law)*

Thank You Michael for sharing the photos. It looks like a great time was had by all!

I also had this e-mail from Dee-El Dawe
Susie,

Did the 612th TDB use half tracks?

We did stop by a WWII Museum & Library in Greenwood, Nebraska. It was packed full of stuff. They definitely needed more space.

My son Zach got third place at the State Wrestling meet on April 7th. He is 12 and we are so proud of him.

We did get a new 911 address:

*Dee-El Dawe
46253 Fourth Homestead Rd.
Burwell, NE 68823*

Thank you for keeping us informed!

Dee-El Dawe

Rick is always updating our 612th TDB webpage. Check it out at www.microrap.biz/612th-tdb

In addition to sharing the story of the 612th with the world our website is a great link for sharing and receiving information from historians as well as a great tool for finding “lost” members.

During the past several months I have received several interesting e-mails that I would like to share with our members.

*Sent: Monday, March 19, 2007 6:53 PM
Subject: 612th TDB Website*

Susie

Since the soldiers of the 612th TD Battalion fought gallantly against the Kampfgruppe Peiper during the Battle of the Bulge, they may wish to look at the following website. It covers the opening of a new museum next to the site of the Malmedy Massacre.

<http://www.tours-international.co.uk/Tours/Malmedy+Massacre+Tours>

*Regards
Will Cavanagh
Krinkelt@aol.com*

*Sent: Saturday, March 24, 2007 8:43 AM
Subject: Honsfeld, 17th Dec.1944*

Dear Ms. Susie Pidsosny,

First, before I turn to my request, please let me introduce myself:

My name is Mike Smeets. I am a 36-year-old historical researcher from Landgraaf, The Netherlands. I am married and have a little son of 5 years old.

For many, many years now I have been studying the exploits of the German Battlegroup Peiper and its US adversaries during the Battle of the Bulge 1944. Over the years, I have been able to contact several German and US veterans who helped me reconstruct the events as they happened so many years ago. I am also in contact with several well known authors such as Michael Reynolds and Danny S. Parker, who display their vast knowledge in this field everytime I need their assistance. As I am living very near to the beautiful Ardennes, I have visited the actual battlefields numerous times already.

Now turning to my request: during the Bulge your proud unit – 612th TD located at the little Belgian village of Honsfeld – was overrun by the German offensive on December 17th 1944.

Some men however put up resistance and this caused the German SS and Paratroopers severe losses however, US losses in men and material were higher. In addition, some German SS-men were also responsible for murdering members of your unit in cold blood after the fighting was over.

Dear Ms. Pidsosny, would it be possible to receive your Association’s help regarding information about these brutal killings that occurred on this fateful day in December 1944? In addition, would some of the 612th veterans be willing to share their experiences with me about what happened to them, now 62 years ago? (Last week I already wrote a letter to Mr. Fayne Haynes - Association Chairman 612th TD Association.)

It would be a great honor and privilege if you would answer my request and receive the help of some of the men who were actually there!

Thank you very much in advance and wishing you and yours all the best from Landgraaf/The Netherlands

With highest regards,

*Mike Smeets
Akkerwinde 27
6374 RD Landgraaf
THE NETHERLANDS
e.mail: mwhp.smeets1@kpnplanet.nl
mwhp.smeets@hotmail.com*

I have responded to Mike Smeets's e-mail. Mike is going to prepare a questionnaire for us to use at our August reunion. In the mean time I know he would love to hear from our veterans. If you don't have access to the internet or e-mail you can call me at anytime (Susie Pidsosny 734-516-6906) and I will gladly forward your information on to Mike Smeets. I plan to include the questionnaire in the fall newsletter as I know so many of our members are no longer able to attend our reunions.

Sent: Monday, January 29, 2007 2:25 PM
Subject: 612 TD Battalion in Honsfeld, Belgium

Dear Susie Pidsosny,

I am a writer working for twelve years on a history of Battle Group Peiper in the Battle of the Bulge. In 1995-1996, courtesy of Jack Flanagan, I have corresponded and interviewed many members of the 612th TD Battalion who are no longer living: Devers Bryant, Ralph LeBlanc, Francis Hayes, George Block and others.

I also interviewed Elmer Haynes and W.T. Hawkins, who I understand are still with us. In the last few weeks, I have been finally writing the story of Honsfeld and want to get it right. From what I understand, there may have been THREE separate groups in three houses who attempted to surrender under a white flag and were fired upon: One under Lt. Grandy, another under Lt. Baysek and still another under Lt. Chandler.

However, I want to make sure that I have this correct.

It would also be useful to know who of the many members of 612th TD Battalion mentioned in my write up, were in the same gun crews or in the same building with the men listed above. Is there a member roster for Company B for the Battalion in December 1944?

There is one other very important question: I understand that T/5 Michael Kardos, listed as missing in action for sixty years, was found to have died in Stadkyll, Germany on 29 December 1944. It is very important that I find out more about this episode so that I might get this correct in my book. Do we know how Mr. Kardos died or anything else about his death?

My book, At the Crossroads: Joachim Peiper and the Malmedy Massacre - will be published in 2008 by DaCapo Press. This has taken me a very long time, but I hope I am not too late to get the story told properly.

I very much appreciate any and all assistance.

*Sincerely Yours,
Danny S. Parker
139 West Leon Ln
Cocoa, FL 32931
321-783-8181*

I sent Danny, Don Smart's e-mail address. The following is an update from Danny.

Sent: Thursday, April 19, 2007 5:45 PM
Subject: Re: 612th TDB newsletter

Susie,

I did just get a package from Don Smart just this week. (Thanks Don).

My chapter dealing with Honsfeld and the 612th is in draft form and is subject to revision as I learn more. Anyone interested can get a copy from me as an Adobe Acrobat file which they can read. I attach the draft file ("Kampfgruppe_Peiper.pdf").

Relative to my book on Jochen Peiper, it will be published in late 2008 by DaCapo Press and will tell the story of the 612th at Honsfeld for the first time in a book. The book is described here and it

would be just fine to include it in your newsletter. You can excerpt whatever you like from the description on the web.

<http://www.dannysparker.com/modules/wfsection/article.php?articleid=9>

Following is the web article.

S.S. colonel Jochen Peiper was one of the most controversial figures of the Second World War. Handsome, intelligent, and impetuous, he volunteered for the Waffen S.S. at an early age and dedicated his life to the Nazi cause. Peiper was Heinrich Himmler's ever-present personal adjutant in the early years of the war, and once on the fighting from with the Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, he became known for a flamboyant and brutal style of warfare.

After the war, Peiper became the central subject in the bitterly disputed Malmédy war crimes trial, where he was condemned to death but ultimately released due to the efforts of Senator Joseph McCarthy and an Atlanta attorney Willis M. Everett, Jr. After moving to eastern France in 1972, he was harassed by the French Communists and died in a gun battle at his home on July 14, 1976—Bastille Day. His assassins were never identified.

In A Deadly Past, historian Danny Parker highlights the fascinating characters and personalities of Peiper's story and asks such questions as how an intelligent, cultured, and capable man could decide to embrace malevolence? Through rich narrative and extensive interviews with German veterans, Belgian, Italian and French civilians, and participants in the trial at Malmédy, A Deadly Past helps us to fathom the world of Hitler's Third Reich, a morally inverted world in which cruelty was good and kindness belied fatal weakness.

*Winter 2008 • History • 1000 pages
North American Rights: Da Capo Press
First Serial, Translation, Audio & Performance
Rights: Curtis Brown, Ltd.*

Also, please note that I am leading a tour of the

Ardenne in December 2007 in which we will visit Honsfeld and see where it all happened. I would appreciate any mention in your newsletter. Details here:

<http://www.tours-international.co.uk/Tours/Military+Tours/Malmédy+Massacre+Tours>

*Regards,
Danny Parker*

Special Thanks to Don Smart

On behalf of the 612th TDB I want to give a shout out and a GREAT BIG THANK YOU to **Don Smart** for all of his help in sharing the history of the 612th with us and others. Don is our “go-to” man when it comes to historical accuracy and information. Thanks a lot Don!

Operation America

In our last newsletter I had printed information regarding Operation America. The following is a biographical release of the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion's own **Rainer Griswold**. Special thanks to Warren Shanks McEachern for allowing this article to be re-printed in our newsletter.

Operation America Biographical Release #2
Rainer Griswold
Private First Class, U.S. Army
34 586 265
World War 2

Cerisy Forest, in France, is a long way from the small Coffee County farm where Rainer Griswold was born in Tennille, Alabama.

Yet it was here, that PFC. Griswold along with the rest of his unit the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion first met the German Army in battle. Rainer's journey to combat began on December 18, 1942, when he was inducted into the Army at Fort McClellan, Alabama. Assigned to the Field Artillery, and given serial number 34 586 265, he received intensive training as a Light Machine Gunner. As a member of a machine gun crew, he was responsible for the cleaning, care and accurate firing of his weapon. His training

included making estimates on distances to targets as well as the use of terrain for concealment. He was indoctrinated in the realities of war through the use of "live" fire exercises which taught him to estimate elevation, and how to provide covering fire for cannons.

Like most of his generation, Rainer Griswold found military service an experience completely alien to his civilian life. From 1936 to 1942, he assisted his father in the operation of their 500-acre Coffee County farm. He helped cultivate cotton, peanuts, and vegetables. Married to the former Norma Dismukes his childhood sweetheart, Rainer was a typical young Alabama farmer separated from the farm and family he loved by a world gone mad with war. His separation from Norma was a blow that weighed heavy on his heart. Together, they endured the horror of the Second World War, together, and apart from, each other. Whilst Rainer was away in Europe, both his wife, and family, worked to produce much needed vegetables and livestock for the war effort. A lively correspondence was maintained via the Army's V-mail program by the two "love birds."

The Cerisy engagement was followed by intense combat at the famous Normandy breakout at Vire. Supporting allied armies in the capture of Brest, Griswold's battalion was diverted to Belgium to support operations against the infamous Siegfried line. This put the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion in a strategic position to foil German intentions during the Battle of the Bulge. At the Bulge, it was so cold, the 612th's 3 inch cannons froze to the ground creating a line the Germans would never pass. The fighting was so fierce, and the contribution of the 612th so significant, select companies were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and the Outstanding Unit Citation. The King of Belgium bestowed upon the Battalion the coveted Kingdom of Belgium Fouragere. On December 29, 1944, the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion was equipped with the new self propelled M-18 tank destroyers. This allowed the Battalion to join in the historic attack in the Monschau Forest bringing the Allies within sight of Germany. Crossing the Rhine River with his unit, PFC.

Griswold participated in the dash through central Germany which terminated in the city of Leipzig on May 8, 1945. Ending his arduous combat service in World War 2, with occupation duty, Rainer Griswold returned to the United States on November 29, 1945.

Rainer Griswold was one of a very few soldiers to participate in five major campaigns following the invasion of Normandy. These were recognized by a silver service star to his European Theater service medal. Records of the U.S. Army list him as participating in the following events.

1. Normandy Campaign (War Department General Orders #33)
2. Northern France Campaign (War Department General Orders #46)
3. Ardennes Campaign (War Department General Orders #40)
4. Rhineland Campaign (War Department General Orders #40)
5. Central Europe Campaign (War Department General Orders #46)

On December 5, 1945, Rainer Griswold was Honorably Discharged from the U.S. Army at Fort McPherson, Georgia. For his service he received the following awards:

1. Army Good Conduct Medal
2. European African Middle Eastern Service Medal with 1 silver star
3. American Campaign Medal
4. Army of Occupation Medal with Germany clasp
5. World War 2 Victory Medal
6. Honorable Service Lapel Pin
7. Expert Marksman Badge with Machine Gun Bar
8. Marksman Badge with carbine Bar
9. Kingdom of Belgium Fouragere

Rainer Griswold returned to his Coffee County farm and family. Here he received a personal commendation from President Harry S. Truman. "To you who answered the call of your country, and served in its Armed Forces to bring about the total defeat of the enemy, I extend the heartfelt thanks of a grateful Nation. As one of

the Nation's finest, you undertook the most severe task one can be called upon to perform. Because you demonstrated the fortitude, resourcefulness, and calm judgment, necessary to carry out that task, we now look to you for leadership, and example in further exalting our country in peace." At home he farmed on shares for his father until his death on June 20, 1970. He is buried alongside his beloved Norma in New Hope Cemetery, scant yards from his rural farm. The final tribute to Rainer came from the President of the United States, "The United States of America honors the memory of Rainer Griswold. This recognition is presented on behalf of a grateful nation in recognition of devoted and selfless consecration to the service of our country in the Armed Forces of the United States." It is said that he lost his smile following his return from the war, and Norma's untimely death, on January 8, 1961. Whatever the explanation for this is, its answer might be found in the line of cannons that was never crossed at the Battle of the Bulge.

This biography was prepared using information from the following sources.

1. Rainer Griswold's Honorable Discharge Certificate. (WD 53-55)
2. National Archives and Records Administration.
3. United States Army, Center for Military History.
4. Mr. Kai Lindfors (Finland).
5. Mr. Copeland Griswold (United States).
6. 612th Tank Destroyer Association.
7. Alabama Department of Veteran Affairs
8. Alabama Department of Transportation

Reviewed and approved for release by
Warren Shanks McEachern
Operation America
3870 County Road 29
Alberta, Alabama, 36720-2837



*Wishing Memorial Day
Blessing's
To One and All.*

The Ones That We've Lost
Still Go With Us In Spirit
We Will Remember Them

In The Faces Of Families
Their Presence Still Lingers
We Will Remember Them

In The Dreams They Once Nurtured
They Still Shape Our Futures
We Will Remember Them

In The Hearts That Embrace Them
Forever
We Will Remember Them

At Daybreak And Nightfall
For As Long As There Is Memory
We Will Remember Them



If anyone is interested the Medals of America catalog has 612th TDB patches for sale. The patches are \$6. each plus s/h. Patches can be ordered at: 1-800-308-0849.

The order number is: **P101 Destroyer Forces patch**. You can also check out their website at www.usmedals.com

Their postal address is:

Medals of America
114 Southchase Blvd.
Fountain Inn, S.C. 29644



Fairfield Inn & Suites Murfreesboro

175 Chaffin Pl

Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37129 USA

Phone: 1-615-849-1150

Fax: 1-615-849-8585

call 1-800-228-2800 to make your reunion reservations

Directions

From Airport

Nashville - BNA

- Hotel direction: 30.0 mi SE
- Driving directions: Take I-40 towards Nashville. Merge left onto I-24 to Murfreesboro. Go 25 miles to exit 78b. The ramp will loop over I-24. At the light, turn right onto Chaffin Place. The hotel is located 500 yards on the left.

Arrival Information

Check-In and Checkout

- 3:00 PM; 11:00 AM
- Checkout

Parking

- Complimentary on-site parking

Pet Policy

- Pets not allowed

Hotel Details

- 4 floors, 69 rooms

Accessibility

- Service animals allowed for persons with disabilities

Guest Room Information (may vary by room type)

General Room Amenities

- Air conditioning
- Alarm clock
- Coffee maker/tea service
- Crib
- Individual climate control
- Iron and ironing board
- Pillows: foam
- Pull-out sofa bed
- Rollaway bed

Bathroom Amenities

- Bathroom amenities
- Hair dryer

Room Entertainment

- Cable channel: CNN
- Cable channel: ESPN
- Cable channel: HBO
- Cable/satellite TV
- Color TV
- Movies/videos, pay-per-view

Business Amenities

- Phone feature: speakerphone
- Phone feature: voice mail
- Two-line phone

Services

Complimentary Services

- Coffee in lobby
- Coffee/tea in-room
- Continental breakfast
- Newspaper delivered to room
- Newspaper in lobby
- Phone calls: local
- Phone calls: toll-free

Guest Services

- Full-service business center
- Safe deposit boxes, front desk

Recreation

Swimming

- On Property
- Pool, heated
- Jacuzzi
- Whirlpool

Activities

- Jet-skiing (15 mi)
- Jogging/fitness trail (1 mi)
- Miniature golf (1 mi)
- Tennis (1 mi)
- Water-skiing (15 mi)

Golf

- Indian Hills (5 mi)
- Old Fort Golf Course (1 mi)

Attractions & Landmarks

- Calsonic
- Calsonic Horse Arena
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Tennessee Miller Coliseum
- Nashville Superspeedway
- Oaklands Mansion
- Sam Davis Home
- Stones River Battlefield
- Big Springs Clay Target Sports