



612th Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter

April 2008

Fayne Haynes
Association Chairman

Tena Phillips
Treasurer /
Memorials & Flowers

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

Susie Pidsosny
Newsletters



55th Reunion

Believe it or not . . . in just a few short months our members will be gathering once again for our annual reunion. Fresh on the heels of an outstanding 2007 reunion held in Murfreesboro, Tennessee we will once again be returning to this lovely city in middle Tennessee to celebrate our 55th year of friendship and fellowship. The dates for this year's reunion are Thursday, July 31st through Sunday, August 3rd. Our association and reunion chairman **Fayne Haynes** (B Company) has confirmed these dates with the Fairfield Inn & Suites, 175 Chaffin Place, Murfreesboro, TN 37129. They have graciously offered us the same rates as 2007.

Room rates for 2008 are \$79.00 per night per room (plus tax). This rate applies to all reservations made **before July 10th**. After this date, the \$79.00 rate cannot 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, July 31st the hotel will extend the discounted rate to Wednesday, July 30th. For any dates prior to the 30th and after the 3rd 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.

Our 2008 reunion hosts are:

- Fayne and Beatrice Haynes
- Janice and Jim Bellamy
- Anita and Randy Stanley
- Don and Eileen Haynes
- Melvin Haynes
- Avery and Sara Sanders
- Jimmy and Dianne Kelton
- Matt and Candice Northcutt
- Chloe and Celena Northcutt

As always, don't forget your gifts for the Flower Fund raffle. It's always a highlight of our Saturday night banquet.

We hope you'll make plans now to join us this year in Murfreesboro!

Please note; this will be the only newsletter prior to our reunion. Please keep this information handy to make your reservations.

Quilt Update

Iris Morris plans to arrive early to add those previously omitted names to our 612th quilt. As of now, that list includes the following names:

- George Gaut
- Kyler B. Smith
- Jesse Weaver
- John W. Sowers Jr.
- Thomas W. Campbell
- Henry Harkema

If you know of a name we are missing PLEASE let **Iris** or **Susie** know a.s.a.p.

At our 2007 reunion I took some photos of our beautiful quilt to send to a few of our newer members that have never attended a reunion and never had the opportunity to see their loved ones names on the quilt. I just wanted to print a couple of responses so that **Iris Morris** knows just how much all of her hard work and

dedication in making our quilt means to our members and their families.

The first reply is from **Dee-El Dawe** the great grand niece of **Edward C. Dawe**.

"Thank you so very much for the wonderful photos! WOW! What an awesome quilt! Iris Morris is a very talented quilter. What a treasure and we are so honored that Edward Dawe's name is on it!"

I will be sure to share the pictures with other family members. I think they will enjoy them as much as I.

Thank you so much for sharing with me. I really can't tell you how much this means to me and my family. It makes it much more special because Edward was a quiet unassuming man. He was very shy. I am so tickled!"

I also mailed photos to **Juliana Flynn** the niece of Company B Medic **Michael J. Kardos** who was killed overseas. **Juliana** wrote:

"How very kind and thoughtful of you! I am so pleased with the photos. When I opened your mailer the contents overwhelmed me. It gave me warm feelings knowing his memory lives on. Mrs. Morris is a very special lady to put all that time and love into such a beautiful 'masterpiece'. With deep appreciation I thank you – in bunches!"

P.S. I'm also sending Iris Morris a thank you. It's the least I could do to show my sincere appreciation for the beautifully crafted quilt."

TIDINGS FROM TENA



I just wanted to let you all know that I had a super 85th Surprise Party on Saturday, March 22nd. My daughter, grandchildren and four great grandchildren did it up great. Over 80 relatives, Godchildren and friends were there. **Judy Ramhoff** sent Vivian Kay a beautiful flower arrangement – so my 612th family was represented as the flowers were in a 612th TDB cup right next to the cake.

On Easter Sunday (my actual birthday), March 23rd the kids went with me to church. I

had a great day. The kids checked the internet and found that 95 years ago March 23rd fell on Easter Sunday and it won't fall on Easter Sunday again for 237 years.

I want to say Thank you to **George "Dick" Gaut** for sending me the photos, tapes and other memorabilia from his time in the service. It was deeply appreciated.

Izzy Kemp wrote to say that she enjoyed the last newsletter.

Hazel Scott writes that she is doing well and looks forward to seeing everyone in Murfreesboro.

Thanks to one and all for the lovely cards and letters. I'm doing well although some times it seems I spend more time at M.D. Anderson then at home.

I can't wait to see you in Murfreesboro.

Dues Are Due

Dues received since the October 2007 newsletter:

- Janice Bellamy
- Hazel Scott
- Doris R. Kelley
- George R. (Dick) Gaut
- Bill Hawkins
- Isabel Kemp
- John and Carolyn Sowers
- Henry and Betty Harkema

Our current bank balance is \$3,553.45

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.



Passings



Charlie Pettis of A Company died from congestive heart failure on January 24th, 2007 at the age of 83.

Charlie was married to Annie for 61 years and the proud father of 7 boys and 1 girl.



Robert Gadaletta of B Company passed away in March, 2002. Bob's grandson Michael Malone found us on the internet and recently contacted Tena with news of his grandfather's passing.



Last November the daughter of **T.J. Twardowski** left a phone message that her father had passed away on September 15, 2004. No other information was available.

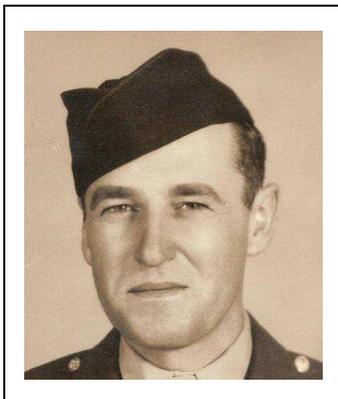


Ralph Smith's newsletter was returned marked "deceased". No other information was available.



Michael M. Papendick "Mike" of B Company, age 93, of Highland IN passed away on Wednesday, April 9, 2008

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Helen Papendick (nee Opolski) 2 children Chuck (Cathey) Papendick, Pat Kaleta. 5 grandchildren;



Keith Papendick, Janet (Bryon) Goff, Nick Kaleta, Nathan Kaleta and Jason Kaleta. 5 brothers; Helmuth (late Pearl) Papendick, Hebert (Joyce) Papendick, Robert (Ruby) Papendick, Norman (late Marilyn) Papendick, Arnold Papendick, Linda Papendick. 2 Sisters; Ella (Lawrence) Koepp and Lena (late Ray) McQuiston, many Nieces and Nephews.

Funeral Services were held on Saturday, April 12, 2008, 10 a.m. from the Fagen-Miller Funeral Home 2828 Highway Ave. Highland IN with Rev Eric Kleinschmidt officiating. Interment with full military honors at Calumet Park Cemetery, Merrillville IN. Friends and relatives may meet with the family on Friday at the funeral home from 3-7 pm

Mike was a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church Highland IN. Retired in 1976 from Youngstown Sheet and Tube in East Chicago IN. WWII Army veteran serving in the 612th tank destroyer battalion, also a POW in Germany. He was a purple heart recipient. Over 50 year member of the American Legion post 232 who will hold services at the funeral home at 6 p.m.. Mike was an avid bowler. Family requests donations to the American Legion Post 232 in Mike's name.

Please keep the families of our departed soldiers in your thoughts and prayers.

Tena has mailed a memorial check on behalf of the 612th TDB Association to each family.



SUSIE'S SNIPETS

Mary Ann Wesoly e-mailed the following. "Mom and I went to a performance in Manchester, NH that was very nice and thought I would let you know so others in the 612th family could be on the look out for it. It's free so they would only need to call for tickets. It was The United States Air Force Band, The Concert Band and The Singing Sergeants on Tour. They come from Washington, D.C. Ours was classical and most of the songs they sung were from operas. It was about 2 hours long and was very nice.

On the performance schedule it lists where the members are from etc., and other info such as to sponsor a concert contact Director of Tours, 201 McChord St., Bolling Air Force Base, Wash. D.C. 202-767-7917 or visit USAFBand.af.mil and choose contactus/operations and scheduling. The site might list

other tours in other parts of the USA. I know its not Army but it was very good."

Last October I had a note from **Hazel** and **Jesse Weaver** (A Company). **Hazel** wrote that they both enjoyed the last newsletter with the calendar and roster. *"It was a joy to meet you and everyone else. We are looking forward to next year"*. **Hazel** had a complete left knee replacement on October 2nd. She said she had a very rough time, *"but thank the Good Lord I'm still living and believing things will get better"*.

(**Hazel and Jesse**, we loved getting the chance to meet you and your daughter last year and we look forward to seeing you again this year).

In late October I heard from **Dee-El Dawe**

Dear Susie,

It is with great sadness that I have to tell you that my husband David lost his Grandfather Earl Lombard on October 28th, 2007. Grandpa Earl, like the 612th TDB members was a WWII Veteran (Army). I just wanted to encourage the surviving members of the 612th TDB to share their experiences during WWII with family and friends. We are losing 1,000 WWII members every day...we must keep their history alive. The story must be told. Please let your grandchildren know what you went through during the war. Dee-El

Just recently Michael Verrengia, EM-3, USCG 69-73 wrote *"My father-in-law, Lt. Henry Harkema (XO - C Co.), will be 96 this year. He just lost his Brother Joe (USAAF, CBI) in February, so he is down in the dumps. But my family and I thank "The Greatest Generation" every day for their giving and sacrifices. There is a web site, with a musical/video tribute to veterans, called "Before You Go" that is a must see. It is at www.managedmusic.com (Or put 'before you go' into Google)"*

Our sympathies to the **Dawe and Harkema Families** for their loss.

Thanks to everyone that took the time to e-mail or call with information for this

newsletter. With our members scattered all over the country it's hard to keep in touch with everyone. We enjoy hearing from you and our newsletter is the easiest way to share your news with our fellow members. We'd love to hear from you! Please contact me (Susie) at: mouseketeer@microrap.biz or my home address: 42159 Briarcliff Court, Canton, MI 48187 or give me a call at 734-516-6906. Our next newsletter will be coming your way in mid to late October 2008.



Please keep in your prayers

Dianne Kelton wanted to let us know that her mom **Sara Sanders** is scheduled for total hip replacement April 21. So please say an extra little prayer for her.

Please keep in your thoughts those members who were always mainstays at our reunions but due to illness or inability to travel have been unable to gather together with us these past few years:

Mrs. Frances Bertrand
James F. Boatright
Gert Flanagan
Amelia Harding
Maxine Hartwick
William "Bill" and Earline Hawkins
George and Verona Karaphillis
Isabel "Izzy" Kemp
Bill and Elnora Leininger
Edna Showalter
Haze O. Wilbanks
Imogene Williams

Even though we can't be together you are always in our hearts. We love you and miss you all! May God Bless you and keep you until we meet again.



Can you help a young baseball fan?

I have a young friend that is hoping to collect a schedule from every major league baseball team. Since we have members all over the country I promised him I would include his request in this newsletter. If you could possibly

pick up one of those free pocket size baseball schedules that seem to be at gas stations or convenience stores everywhere I know he would appreciate it very much. Please mail them to: **Ari Brown. His address is: 665 Indian Hill Road, Deerfield, Illinois 60015** Ari and I appreciate your help!

Roster Updates



Please add:

Michael Malone
903 North Stream Parkway
Pt. Pleasant, N.J. 08742
1-732-610-8712
Co. B

New e-mail address for **Mary Ann Wesoly** is mawesoly@tds.net

E-mail address for Dee-El Dawe is dawezoo@carrollweb.com

E-mail address for Mary Hartman is mary.hartman@recall.com

E-mail address for Henry and Betty Harkema is bhharkema@aol.com

On the last roster I printed the incorrect e-mail address for Don Smart. The correct address is dsmart@htcomp.net



A Very Silent Room

When in England at a fairly large conference, Colin Powell was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if our plans for Iraq were just an example of empire building by George Bush.

He answered by saying, *“Over the years, the United States has sent many of its fine young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders. The only amount of land we have ever asked for in return is enough to bury those that did not return.”*

It became very silent in the room.

A U.S. Navy Admiral was attending a conference that included Admirals from the U.S., English, Canadian, Australian and French Navy's. At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large group of officers that included personnel from most of those countries. Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks but a French admiral suddenly complained that, *“whereas Europeans learn many languages, Americans learn only English”*.

He then asked, *“Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?”*

Without hesitating, the American Admiral replied, *“Maybe it's because the Brits, Canadians, Aussies and Americans arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German.”*

You could have heard a pin drop.



Taking A Cruise Down Memory Lane

Here's a little trip down memory lane for our veterans. I found an old copy of the **Bienville “Bilgewater – Bugle”** dated Sunday, November 25, 1945. (The **SS Bienville** was the ship that many of our soldiers came home from the war on.)

ABOARD SS BIENVILLE

In the news:

Post-War Automobile - San Diego, California Plans are being made for the manufacture of a midget plastic automobile called the "BOBBIE CAR". The small vehicle will average 50 miles per gallon and present plans call for a \$500 to \$600 price range.

BEINVILLE BOXSCORE As of Noon Sunday.

DISTANCE LAST 24 HOURS	307 Miles
AVERAGE SPEED	- 12.79 Knots
LATITUDE	42 Deg. 35 Min. N
LONGITUDE	39 Deg. 37 Min. W.
TOTAL DISTANCE TRAVELED	231 Miles

SUNDAY EVENING'S MOVIES

"Follow The Boys" for EM of Compartment 3 in EM mess hall, 2030 hours.

"Lost in the Harem" with Abbott and Costello for all officers in officers mess hall, 1830 hours

WOLVERINES TOP OHIO, 7-3

Ann Arbor, Michigan A crowd of more than 85,000 fans shivered through a northwestern blizzard to watch Michigan take a 7-3 victory over the Ohio State Buckeyes Saturday afternoon. Ohio took the lead in the third frame by virtue of a 17-yard field goal. The Wolverines marched 45 yards to the winning touchdown in the fourth quarter.

NO LACK OF AVAILABLE SHIPPING SPACE FOR ETO TROOPS IN DECEMBER

New York There will be no dearth of available shipping space next month to return American serviceman home from Europe, according to Captain Granville Conway, deputy war shipping administrator.

In fact, Conway said, the movement of troops from the European and Mediterranean areas has progressed so rapidly that American ships have 34,000 more berths available than there are troops to return home in December. He also said that the WSA now operates 551 vessels, capable of carrying 584,908 troops and that because of an expected surplus of vessels in the Atlantic, 50 victory ships were scheduled to be transferred to the Pacific.



Hold at All Cost

Congratulations to our very own **Don Smart** of Hico, Texas. Don recently had the story of Company A "Hold at All Cost" published in Military Magazine. Don has very generously allowed us to include Part I of his article in this newsletter (see attached). Part II will be included in our Fall 2008 newsletter.



**Thank you
Dick Gaut!**

In early November I received a packet of WWII memorabilia from **George R. (Dick) Gaut** (C Company). **Mr. Gaut** was kind enough to share with me photos, audio tapes, (that he made for the D-Day Museum in New Orleans) as well as written accounts of his and his crew's experiences during the war. **Mr. Gaut, I can't thank you enough** for taking the time to gather all of this valuable information together and for sending it to me. **I'm really hoping that you and your wife will be able to join us this year at our reunion in Murfreesboro!**

With each upcoming newsletter I'd like to share with our members some of **Dick's** recollections and memories.

The following is **Dick's** response to an article in the April 2005 VFW magazine, "Last American KIA in WWII Europe".

My outfit was sent on May 8th, AFTER the war was declared over, to confront the 11th German Panzer Division, who had sworn not to give up, but to die fighting. Charles Havlat was killed by that German unit we were sent after. I was a Sergeant, Tank Commander, of the 612th Tank Destroyer Btn. As of May 8, 1945, we had been in combat for 11 months since landing on Omaha Beach in Normandy on June 17, 1944 (age 19). We had gone through all five European campaigns, including the Battle of the Bulge, when we were given tanks in place of our towed guns, and then we were part of Patton's spearhead advance across the Rhine River, across Germany to the Elbe River outside of Berlin – only to be ordered stopped, letting the Russians come in and take over. We then turned and went to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia.

We were in Pilsen on May 8, 1945, when the European war was declared over (age 20 at end of war). Opps!! Almost over!! We were notified that the German 11th Panzer Division was "holed up" in the mountains between Pilsen and Prague, and that they had vowed to die

fighting to the last man rather than give up. We were called out from our apartments on a main street in Pilsen where we were guarding a hospital full of German prisoners. We jumped into our tanks, which were still parked on the sidewalks on the street, to take over our new assignment – take the 11th German Panzer Division – one way or another. Well, we thought, after a year in combat and not getting killed, we might be killed even after the war was officially over.

We got into position, to keep the Germans in their “holed up” mountain location. We waited – and waited, three days and nights. They then sent word they wanted to give up, and not die fighting. The Germans said they would come in to a small village at midnight. No lights were to be on in the village; total darkness was a must. We waited defensively, in pitch black darkness, waiting with our guns cocked and ready for a trick.

We could hear the trucks moving down the mountain road, coming our way. The trucks rolled to a stop. One by one, the German soldiers began stepping down out of their trucks. We handled each soldier when he stepped down, in the complete darkness, to see if any had weapons. They did not.

Finally our job was over, and the surrender was complete. WWII European Theater was finally over – for us, too.

Nothing is ever written about this incident that took place AFTER the cease fire was official, and it is a very little known fact that is never mentioned. It is important that history remember ALL the facts of what took place. There are so many unwritten stories that all of us have to tell. We still have sadness of heart for those of us who had to give their lives so that we could all live in freedom in this country.

SOON TO BE GONE BY A MILITARY DOCTOR

Henry and Betty Harkema (C Company), sent the following e-mail to share with their fellow 612th members. This should be required reading in every school and college in our country. This Captain, an Army doctor,

deserves a medal himself for putting this together. If you choose not to pass it on, fine, but I think you will want to, after you read it.

I am a doctor specializing in the Emergency Departments of the only two military Level One-Trauma Centers, both in San Antonio, TX and they care for civilian Emergencies as well as military personnel. San Antonio has the largest military retiree population in the world living here. As a military doctor, I work long hours and the pay is less than glamorous. One tends to become jaded by the long hours, lack of sleep, food, family contact and the endless parade of human suffering passing before you. The arrival of another ambulance does not mean more pay, only more work. Most often, it is a victim from a motor vehicle crash.

Often it is a person of dubious character who has been shot or stabbed. With our large military retiree population, it is often a nursing home patient. Even with my enlisted service and minimal combat experience in Panama, I have caught myself groaning when the ambulance brought in yet another sick, elderly person from one of the local retirement centers that cater to military retirees. I had not stopped to think of what citizens of this age group represented.

I saw 'Saving Private Ryan.' I was touched deeply. Not so much by the carnage, but by the sacrifices of so many. I was touched most by the scene of the elderly survivor at the graveside, asking his wife if he'd been a good man. I realized that I had seen these same men and women coming through my Emergency Department and had not realized what magnificent sacrifices they had made. The things they did for me and everyone else that has lived on this planet since the end of that conflict are priceless. Situation permitting, I now try to ask my patients about their experiences. They would never bring up the subject without the inquiry. I have been privileged to an amazing array of experiences, recounted in the brief minutes allowed in an Emergency Department encounter. These experiences have revealed the incredible individuals I have had the honor of serving in a

medical capacity, many on their "last mission" to the hospital.

There was a frail, elderly woman who reassured my young enlisted medic, trying to start an IV line in her arm. She remained calm and poised, despite her illness and the multiple needle-sticks into her fragile veins. She was what we call a 'hard stick.' As the medic made another attempt, I noticed a number tattooed across her forearm. I touched it with one finger and looked into her eyes. She simply said, 'Auschwitz.' Many of later generations would have loudly and openly berated the young medic in his many attempts. How different was the response from this person who'd seen unspeakable suffering.

Also, there was this long retired Colonel, who as a young officer had parachuted from his burning plane over a Pacific Island held by the Japanese. Now an octogenarian, he had a minor cut on his head from a fall at his home where he lived alone. His CT scan and suturing had been delayed until after midnight by the usual parade of high priority ambulance patients. Still spry for his age, he asked to use the phone to call a taxi, to take him home, he then realized his ambulance had brought him without his wallet. He asked if he could use the phone to make a long distance call to his daughter who lived 7 miles away. With great pride we told him that he could not, as he'd done enough for his country and the least we could do was get him a taxi home, even if we had to pay for it ourselves. My only regret was that my shift wouldn't end for several hours, and I couldn't drive him myself.

I was there the night M/Sgt. Roy Benavidez came through the Emergency Department for the last time. He was very sick. I was not the doctor taking care of him, but I walked to his bedside and took his hand. I said nothing. He was so sick he didn't know I was there. I'd read his Congressional Medal of Honor citation and wanted to shake his hand. He died a few days later.

The survivor of the Bataan Death March,

The gentleman who served with Merrill's Marauders,

The survivor of Omaha Beach,

The 101 year old World War I veteran.

The former POW held in frozen North Korea,

The former Special Forces medic - now with non-operable liver cancer,

The former Viet Nam Corps Commander.

I remember these citizens.

I may still groan when yet another ambulance comes in, but now I am much more aware of what an honor it is to serve these particular men and women.

I have seen a Congress who would turn their back on these individuals who've sacrificed so much to protect our liberty. I see later generations that seem to be totally engrossed in abusing these same liberties, won with such sacrifice.

It has become my personal endeavor to make the nurses and young enlisted medics aware of these amazing individuals when I encounter them in our Emergency Dept. Their response to these particular citizens has made me think that perhaps all is not lost in the next generation.

My experiences have solidified my belief that we are losing an incredible generation, and this nation knows not what it is losing. Our uncaring government and ungrateful civilian populace should all take note. We should all remember that we must 'Earn this.'

Written By

CPT. Stephen R. Ellison, M.D.

US Army

**If it weren't for the United States military,
there'd be NO United States of America.**

**Thank you to all of our Vets and to our young
men and women who are currently serving
our country. We support you, pray for you
and love you!**

Until we meet again - God Bless You All!

We hope to see you in Murfreesboro.