



## 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter November 2008

**Fayne Haynes**  
Association Chairman

**Tena Phillips**  
Treasurer /  
Memorials & Flowers

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

**Susie Pidsosny**  
Newsletters

Well we hope you all did not think that Rick and I had forgotten you! As with most things; while trying to get this newsletter out – day-to-day life seemed to get in the way! But better late than never and we're thrilled to share the news with our 612<sup>th</sup> family that Rick's Aunt Olga is making a remarkable recovery from the debilitating stroke she suffered in May and the subsequent falls which resulted in a broken hip and wrist. We honestly never thought this would happen but she has been able to return to her home and is managing well with in-home care and therapy. Miracles do happen! We wish to thank you for all of your kind thoughts and prayers. God certainly heard them.



## 55th Reunion

### WRAP-UP

Because we were unable to attend this year's reunion we've had to rely on fellow members to help us fill in the blanks as to the events that took place this year. Special thanks to **Tena Phillips** and **Dorothy Tomlinson**. Without their input, this newsletter would be very short indeed. Thanks also to **Dorothy Tomlinson** and **Fayne Haynes** for the photos they sent (many are included in this newsletter).

**Dorothy Tomlinson** shared this news: *"Our reunion went off real well. Including **Fayne Haynes** there were 6 vets in attendance this year; **Earl Sain**, **Donn Fischer**, **Avery Sanders**, **Talmadge Riley** and **Jesse Weaver**. **Bill Hawkins** had planned to come but he called Fayne Thursday afternoon and said Earline had to go to the doctor suddenly and he was afraid to leave. **Jewel Raulins** also called and cancelled because he said he just wasn't up to making the trip.*

As usual, **Janice Bellamy** and **Dianne Kelton** did a fantastic job putting it together. At the

*business meeting it was decided we would meet again next year - Dianne said she would take on the major job of planning, etc and Janice said she would be glad to help. Of course, we are all hoping to be here and well enough to attend next year. Everyone asked about you and Rick and said how much they missed y'all.*

*Tena said she was going to send you the details of the weekend and I'm sure she will cover it real good. **Geneva Smith** came and brought two boxes of Moon Pies as usual. Several of the ladies brought other desserts - homemade brownies, cakes and other goodies. For the Friday night indoor picnic **Jim Bellamy** barbecued pork and made delicious baked beans, slaw and there was homemade potato salad and other salads, etc left from lunch for anyone who wanted more than the barbecue. It was really very good. The Saturday night dinner was catered by Miller's Grocery (the same place that catered last year's dinner) and it, too, was very good. On Friday night after the barbecue picnic we played bingo and it was lots of fun. Oh yes, the Saturday night dinner was paid for out of the treasury and Fayne said it would also be done that way next year.*



*The local paper sent a photographer out for pictures and printed one of **Iris Morris** embroidering the new names on the quilt. They also interviewed Fayne the day before but didn't include it with the picture. He thought the interview might*

be in Sunday's paper - anyhow he is supposed to send you the pictures and story. He also said he would send you some pictures of the reunion.

**Dianne Kelton** made a lovely scrapbook of group pictures and other things from way back (as far back as she could find). It was huge and so well done. She was going to put it on the raffle table to be raffled off Saturday night but when she and **Glyn Sain** were talking about it Glyn just couldn't stand to think just anyone might get it - such as someone who would have no interest in having it - so she and Dianne came up with the idea to make a special drawing of just the veterans who were there and the widows of veterans who had passed on. I think there were just 16 names and **Pearl Noland's** name was drawn. She was so thrilled to have it and we were happy for her."



(L-R) Pearl Noland, Gaile Phillips & Jennifer Noland-Edgeworth

## TIDINGS FROM TENA



Tena did indeed share details of the reunion with me. She wrote "Glenda and I arrived on July 30<sup>th</sup>. We were greeted by **Fayne Haynes** and his daughter **Janice Bellamy** - working in the hospitality room. Later in the evening **Mary Ann Wesoly** joined us. She said she had arrived on July 28<sup>th</sup>.

Fifty-three people attended the Saturday night banquet although the total reunion attendance was 54 (**Dean Uhles** was there on Friday only).

**Iris Morris, Glenda Millar, Hazel Scott** and myself presented roses on behalf of the association to our faithful workers in the hospitality room; **Janice Bellamy, Dianne Kelton, Mary Ann Wesoly** and **Anita Stanley**. As always they did such a beautiful job which we all appreciate so very much!



(L-R) Dianne Kelton, Tena Phillips, MaryAnn Wesoly, Janice Bellamy & Anita Stanley

Everybody that won prizes in the raffle were well pleased with their gifts. Glenda and I handled the drawing and Janice, Dianne, Mary Ann, Anita and little Chloe helped pass out prizes.



Chloe Northcutt

*Jim Bellamy was a great helper. He barbecued on Friday with all the trimmings. Many other ladies helped as they have in past years.*

*We had a great reunion! Thank you all!"*

Members in attendance: (Veterans names are in bold print)

### Company A

**Jesse Weaver** and wife Hazel along with daughters Mary Hartman & Patricia Armstrong  
Hazel Scott  
Mary Ann Wesoly

### Company B

**Faynes Haynes** and wife Beatrice  
Son Don Haynes and wife Eileen  
Daughter Janice Bellamy and husband Jim and Granddaughter Julie Bellamy  
Daughter Anita Stanley  
Howard Haynes  
Nicky and Gerald Haynes  
Friends: Joey, Jeff and Abbi  
**Talmadge Riley** and wife Ruth  
Son: Ronnie and wife Diane Riley  
**Earl Sain** and wife Glyn  
Dorothy Tomlinson  
Pearl Noland and daughters Nancy Ewing and Gaile Phillips  
Granddaughter: Jennifer Noland-Edgeworth  
Iris Morris  
Greta Childs  
Flo Lefton  
Carolyn VerHoven  
Tena Phillips  
Glenda Millar

### Company C

**Avery Sanders** and wife Sara  
Daughter: Dianne and husband Jim Kelton  
Granddaughter: Candice and husband Matt Northcutt, Great-Granddaughters: Chloe and Celina Northcutt  
Son: Steve and wife Judy Sanders  
Melissa, Tony and Tyler Gallonic  
Dean Uhles

### Headquarters

Geneva Smith

## RECON

### Donn Fischer

*"Pearl Noland asked me to send this photo of five generations of the Rufus Noland family.*



*I'm also enclosing a photo of me surrounded by my family at my 85<sup>th</sup> birthday party."*



## Dues Are Due

The following members have sent in dues since our reunion.

Juliana Flynn  
Elnora and Bill Leininger  
Robert Wesoly  
Judy Ramhoff  
Carson Spencer  
William Groff

Our current bank balance is: \$2,269.60

If you have not 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 rising costs of printing and postage for our newsletters.

## Passings

The most difficult part of working on our newsletters is when I have to inform members of the passing of our veterans and their family members. Sadly this issue is no different.

Just prior to our reunion I received the following e-mail from Kay Zabetakis [kayz@mindspring.com](mailto:kayz@mindspring.com).

*"I am writing you this letter to inform you that Stan has passed away. Please keep him in your prayers and memories. Attached is his obituary."*

 **Stanley George Zabetakis**, 86, peacefully passed in his sleep on July 15, 2008 at his home. In 1922 he was born to George and Stella Zabetakis, a coal miner's family, who had immigrated from Greece to Burgettstown, PA..



Stationed in Europe during World War II, he became a tank destroyer battalion unit commander, and received a Good Conduct medal, EAMET medal,

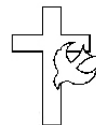
Victory medal, as well as a battlefield commission to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. In 1945 he married his high school sweetheart, Kay Vorinakis, eventually celebrating 63 years of marriage. He attended the University of Pittsburgh and received Electrical Engineering and Physics Degrees. To further his career with the Federal Government he moved his family from Pennsylvania to Ohio where he completed his 32 years of government service by joining the Air Force Reserves and working at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. He lectured and

became published for his expertise in intelligence radars. He was also active in Professional organizations such as the IEEE. Because of his leadership ability, he rose to become the Branch Manager of the Foreign Technology Division, a group of over 100 technology employees. In addition to being elected president of the Beaver Creek Association, his community leadership was evidenced in his coaching of baseball, basketball, and assisting with the boy scouts. His sports of choice were softball and tennis, in which he excelled and enjoyed, playing into his 80's. Stan eventually retired from the federal government and the reserves as a Lt. Colonel, but not before being awarded the title, "Federal Employee of the Year". Stan always wanted to live in Florida and in 1980 moved with his wife to join their children there, and began accommodating visitors from the North on a regular basis.

Stan was preceded to the great beyond by three (3) brothers, John, Emanuel, and Mike.

Stan is survived by his wife, Kay, three sons - Stan Jr., Mike, Champ, and seven (7) grandchildren (Alexis, Emily, Katee, George, Mike, Nick, and Zack), as well as many nephews and nieces. Stan also leaves behind siblings: Steve, Liberty, Kathryn and Nick.

### LEO LEMKE



The family of **Leo Lemke** sent a brief note dated June 15, 2008 stating that Leo had passed away. Regrettably, no other information was included.

### HELEN RENNARD



On April 30, 2008 we received the following e-mail from Karen Sutherland the daughter of L.T. and Helen Rennard.

*"I have received the April 2008 newsletter from my Mother's belongings and wanted to let the 612<sup>th</sup> family know of her passing. My Mother is Helen Rennard and my Dad was L.T. Rennard, "C" Company. My Mom and Dad were hosts for the Baltimore reunion with Jack and Gert Flanagan. Over the years my family, 3 children, who grew up in the 612<sup>th</sup> family, and later their wives and babies, have attended many wonderful reunions of the 612<sup>th</sup>. We thank everyone for welcoming us with open arms."*

*Mom passed away on March 2, 2008 after many years of battling recurring cancer. She had a wonderful cruise with us in October 2007 and enjoyed Christmas holiday's in Atlanta with her 3 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. She passed peacefully, without pain and was ready to be with my Dad.*

*My family will have many fond memories of the reunions of the 612<sup>th</sup> and will continue to keep all of you and yours in our prayers. Best regards to all of you and have a great reunion in Tennessee."*

I was able to locate Helen's obituary on-line.

**Helen LaVerne Rennard**, 84, wife of the late LeMoyné T. Rennard, died Sunday, March 2, 2008 at Grand Strand Regional Medical Center.

She was born October 9, 1923 in Wheeling, West Virginia, the daughter of the late Errett C. and Doretta J. Hill Mooney.

Mrs. Rennard was retired from AT&T. She was a member of First United Methodist Church.

Survivors include one daughter, Karen Sutherland of St. Augustine, Fla.; three grandchildren, Patrick and Brian Sutherland and Jaclyn Thompson; and eight great-grandchildren.

Graveside services will be held 1 p.m. Tuesday, March 4, 2008, at Southeastern Memorial Gardens with the Rev. Ken Timmerman officiating. The family will receive friends from 5 until 7 p.m. Monday, March 3, 2008, at McMillan-Small Funeral Home.

McMillan-Small Funeral Home is serving the family. Please sign an online guest book at [www.msfn.net](http://www.msfn.net) or [MyrtleBeachOnline.com](http://MyrtleBeachOnline.com).

Memorials may be made to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, 5005 LBJ Freeway, Suite 250, Dallas, TX 75244.



### **MAXINE HARTWICK**

On Monday, April 21, 2008 Elnora Leininger was kind enough to notify us of the passing of Maxine Hartwick. I was able to find Maxine's obituary on-line at: [www.sjfh.net](http://www.sjfh.net).

**Maxine E. Hartwick**, 88, passed away at 12:35am on Monday, April 21, 2008 in Memorial Hospital.



Maxine was born on March 11, 1920 in South Bend to the late Harry and Gladys (Trittipo) Standfield. She was also preceded in death by sisters, Dorothy and Josephine; and brothers, Orville and Harry. On January 10, 1948, Maxine married Casimer Hartwick who passed away in August of 1996.

Maxine is survived by her son; Bruce (Ruth) Hartwick of Olathe, Kansas along with daughters, Christine (William) Colson of Niles, MI, and Kathleen (George) Brooks of South Bend; grandchildren, Brian Colson, Cory Fortson, Kacie (Mark) Kaufman, and Bruce James Hartwick; step-grandchildren, Michele Terhorst, Becky Mullins, and Kristy Brooks; and 8 great-grandchildren.

Maxine worked for Business Systems as a book keeper. She was 85 years old when she retired from RGIS Inventory. She was a parishioner at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church where she belonged to the Rosary Society. She attended Notre Dame Football games for over 50 years.

Visitation will be from 4pm to 8pm on Tuesday, April 22 in ST. JOSEPH FUNERAL HOME, 824 S. Mayflower Rd. A Funeral Liturgy will be celebrated at 11:00am on Wednesday, April 23, 2008 in the Funeral Home. Cremation will take place with burial in Highland Cemetery at a later date.

Memorial Contributions may be made to Breast Cancer Awareness or the American Diabetes Association. For those who are unable to attend the Funeral Liturgy, condolences for the family may be made at [www.sjfh.net](http://www.sjfh.net).

Elnora forwarded the address of Maxine's daughter. Condolences may be sent to her family in care of her daughter Mrs. William Colson, 2949 Redfield Road, Niles, MI. 49120, 269-663-6099"

Tena has sent memorial donations to the families or their designated charities on behalf of the 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion Association.

Please keep our departed members and their families in your thoughts and prayers.



SUSIE'S SNIPETS

We have included an updated membership roster with your newsletter.

We would like to Welcome the following members to our 612<sup>th</sup> family:

Gaile Phillips  
Jennifer Noland-Edgeworth  
Patricia Armstrong  
Kevin Stephens

Gaile is the daughter of Pearl and the late Rufus Noland, Jennifer is their granddaughter. Patricia is the daughter of Jesse and Hazel Weaver.

Iris Morris wrote a note after returning home from the reunion. *"Hi Susie and Rick, So sorry to hear about Rick's aunt and I know how you feel. Sometimes we have to put our things on hold for the ones we love.*

*We did miss you and thought of you daily. My friends came with me again. We lost one and gained my sister-in-law Greta, who was married to my brother who died in 2007.*

*I had been having knee problems and so surgery was performed this morning and I am getting along just fine. I am having no pain and I can walk on it, but have to take it easy for a week.*

*I did have a funny incident to share from the reunion. Carolyn, Flo, Greta and I were getting into the elevator with the luggage cart and we were all yakking and I kept hearing a man's voice and couldn't figure out what was being said. Then the elevator stopped and it got quieter as we were exiting and I could hear a man asking "Can I help you"? It dawned on me that my rear had been pushing the help button and we all went to laughing! I said "I'm sorry but my rear pushed the help button and he said okay and started laughing.*

*We did have a wonderful time and the Haynes Family outdid themselves again and so did the Sanders Family who helped. Mary Ann also. I Pray that everything goes well with your family. The 612<sup>th</sup> family loves you both. Love Iris"*

In September I received a nice note from Hazel and Jesse Weaver. Hazel wrote: *"We went to the 612<sup>th</sup> Reunion and really enjoyed it. We were not sure if we would be able to go due to Jesse's fall in February. He broke his hip, had surgery and later was in the hospital two times with pneumonia. We sure were sorry that you could not be there but hope and pray all is well now."* **Thank you both for your kind thoughts! I'm thrilled to say that everything is great!**

Just prior to our reunion I received the following e-mail from Don Smart.

*Susie,*

*Well it's time for the reunion again. Clara and I are really sad that we will not be able to attend this year. We are in process of getting ready for a tour of France. Part of the tour will be the Normandy beaches. Am really looking forward to that.*

*I know that this may be the last reunion if the number of 612 veterans continues to decline. I have always enjoyed the comradeship of those great men and heartbroken when one that I have talked to and/or interviewed passes on. This is the story of the veterans associations all over America. The passing parade just keeps on going.*

*A few weeks ago I received an email from a friend about the origin of the song "TAPs". It made a great story but looked a little too good to be true. I set out to research the origin of the real song and found out there are several versions of just how the song started and who wrote it. I finally tracked down the historical version and summarized the story in the attachment.*

*I thought the men of the 612 might be interested in this tidbit of history especially if they decide this is the last time they will meet in a reunion.*

*Have a great time, tell everyone hello for Clara and I.*

*Best Regards, Don Smart*

*“Don, we hope you and Clara had a wonderful trip to Europe. I hope you came back with lots of information about Normandy to share with our members. At the 2008 reunion the members voted to return to Murfreesboro next year; so we’ve all got another chance to get together! Thanks for sharing the origin of Taps. I’m delighted to share it with our members.”*

**Bill Groff** sent me a little note to say “Thanks for the news! Did you know that A Company got the Presidential Unit Citation for ? action? **Yes! I did know that. But just in case others may not be aware; here’s a little recap from a very proud daughter of a Veteran of A Company.** ☺



### Presidential Unit Citation

During the period of 12<sup>th</sup> December 1944 to 29<sup>th</sup> December 1944 in the vicinity of Hofen, Germany, Company ‘A’, 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion distinguished itself by exhibiting outstanding courage and superior heroism in the presence of the enemy. The officers and men of Company “A”, 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion, by spirited and outstanding aggressiveness, were successful in preventing a breakthrough by the enemy in the sector occupied by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 395<sup>th</sup> infantry Regiment. During the entire action the personnel of Company A”, 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion were employed in the role of infantry, one for which they were not trained nor to which assigned, fighting with the courage and spirit of infantrymen and being responsible for the capture of many enemy personnel and enemy materiel as well as the killing of numerous Germans. Their outstanding courage, bravery and discipline exhibited to all that this was a superior fighting unit and was instrumental in resisting the northern arm of the German Pincer aimed for Eupen, Belgium through Monschau, Germany. Had the enemy offensive successfully overrun the positions of Company “A” 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion, the entire northern flank of the First United States Army would have been endangered, and the major supply depots in the vicinity of Eupen and Verviers threatened.

*Criteria: The Presidential Unit Citation is awarded to units of the Armed Forces of the*

*United States and co-belligerent nations for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy occurring on or after 7 December 1941. The unit must display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions as to set it apart and above other units participating in the same campaign. The degree of heroism required is the same as that which would warrant award of a Distinguished Service Cross to an individual. Extended periods of combat duty or participation in a large number of operational missions, either ground or air is not sufficient. This award will normally be earned by units that have participated in single or successive actions covering relatively brief time spans. It is not reasonable to presume that entire units can sustain Distinguished Service Cross performance for extended time periods except under the most unusual circumstances. Only on rare occasions will a unit larger than battalion qualify for award of this decoration.*



### Seeking Information on John W. Stephens

*“I was wondering if you may be able to help me locate information about my late Grandfather, John W. Stephens?”*

*From what I can tell, I believe that he was part of the 612 TDB Co B. The only actual information that I have is his enlistment and POW information that I found on line from the National Archives (that's where I found his "parent unit number" listed as 0612). Some first hand info from my Grandmother who said he was part of a tank destroyer battalion - drove a Patton tank - and was captured in Belgium just before Christmas and taken to a P.O.W. camp. After the war he was released, came home to PA then went back into service in Korea as an army cook. That's about all I know. He died before I was born back in the early to mid 60's Hoping you can help put me in touch with others who might be able to help me find out more. Thanks for taking the time to read this”.*

*Regards, Kevin Stephens*

*Here is my contact information for your newsletter:*

Kevin C Stephens  
1050 Cherimoya Street  
York, PA - 17404  
Telephone: 717-764-2208

## **Battle of the Bulge Association**

Just after our last newsletter was mailed out we heard from John D. Bowen, Secretary – Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Inc.

Mr. Bowen wrote: *“I am the historian and secretary of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Association as well as a researcher at the National Archives.*

*I have received a request from Belgium indicating that the people of Honsfeld (East Belgium) want to commemorate the terrible events of early morning of 17<sup>th</sup> December 44. In front of the water trough, in the center of the village, a few GI's were massacred by members of the Waffen-SS.*

*The people of Honsfeld with help of the Communal Authorities will erect a US Memorial (bronze tablet) at that place with the names and ranks of the US soldiers. The only information they have is that these men were members of either the 801<sup>st</sup> or 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion (maybe parts of the 99<sup>th</sup> Inf. Div).*

*Some preliminary research that I have done seems to indicate that the most likely unit would be your 612<sup>th</sup> TD Bn. In order to narrow my search in the Archives I thought my best bet would be to contact your association on the basis that this atrocity may be known to your organization and you might know the individuals who were killed in this incident. Would these men have been part of Company B?*

*Any information that you could provide would be appreciated.*

*All the best, John [johndbowen@earthlink.net](mailto:johndbowen@earthlink.net)*

**Since Don Smart is our resident historian we forwarded Mr. Bowen's letter to him as well as to several other of our veterans. If you have any information to share please contact Don Smart or John Bowen.**



## **DICK GAUT REMEMBERS . . .**

In our April newsletter we printed an article from Dick Gaut. Dick has been kind enough to send us a treasure trove of stories, photos and remembrances from his service in WW II as a Gun Commander with C Company. So we're going to make a special section for Dick's remembrances and share one or more with you in each newsletter.



Picture booth photo during training at Camp Hood, Texas (L-R) Sgt. Dick Gaut and Fletcher Bass, C Co.

*Our unit left New York on the Ile de France ship, going to Scotland in 6 days (April 5, 1944). The ship had 12,000 or so troops aboard, as I remember. We outran the German subs, landing in Scotland, then went by train to outside of Bristol, England. We were bombed 4 or 5 times while still in England. On the night of June 16, 1944, we went across the English Channel, arriving off of Omaha Beach about 4 o'clock in the afternoon of June 17, 1944. We traveled across on a very small landing*



*craft that held four half-tracks and one jeep, plus four 3" anti-tank guns. We drove the vehicles off the landing craft exit ramp into 3 to 4 ft. of water so that the landing craft could depart back to England. Due to very high tides, the landing craft had to depart very quickly or be grounded on the beach.*

*As we drove off the landing craft, the water was deeper than 3 to 4 ft., and our anti-tank gun and half-track stalled. We were stranded 100 or so yards offshore – standing in waist deep water the half-track, and could not move, with the water tide coming in. The other three half-tracks were okay, and drove through the water onto the beach. A little later, a special D9 CAT with boon came out to drag us ashore. The beach was still at times being shelled by German artillery. The CAT drug us up the huge cliff at Omaha Beach, back of a huge German pillbox –also a huge German Tiger tank which had been knocked out in the first part of the invasion. Because we had drowned out electrically, the half-track could not move. During the night, we had to crawl under the half-track during a low-level bombing raid by 12 or so light German bombers. Our anti-aircraft units were so thick protecting the beach when they shot at the Germans we had to crawl under our vehicles for protection from falling shrapnel. Our anti aircraft shot down 8 to 10 of the German bombers. The bombers had made five or six more passes over us dropping bombs. With all of the explosions taking place – bombs falling, anti-aircraft gun firing – it was a wild welcoming party for us to receive. We survived, and the next morning we moved up to the front lines, to where the war really began for us.*

*We went to France on D-Day + 11 days (June 17, 1994), and I was in combat the entire European Campaign. The war was declared over on May 8, 1945 – but, the war was not over for my armored company unit. We were in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia that day. On that day, we were notified that the Eleventh German Panzer Division was at that time located between Pilsen and Prague in the mountains, and that they would not surrender – they would die fighting before surrendering. Well, we moved out on May 8, 1945, to a location near the Eleventh German Panzer Division in the mountains, and waited. On the third day, they decided to surrender rather than fight and die. They came in trucks, complete darkness, at midnight –*

*and we helped them down from the trucks with no problem – thank God!*

*Then, the war in Europe was over for us – May 11, 1945.*

## **VETERANS DAY TRIBUTES**

*To: 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion*

*Today being Veterans Day I was searching the internet to find information on my father's WWII unit and came across your website. My father T/Sgt John H. Kelsoe was a member of the 612<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion of what company I am not sure. He is listed as receiving the Bronze Star on your website which was passed down to me along with his other medals and I still have framed on my wall today. As a young boy I remember attending one or two of your reunions with my parents and years later as an adult I realize just what an impact the 612<sup>th</sup> had in our nations history.*

*Although my father died at an early age in 1970 and having the same name, I have received contacts from members of the 612<sup>th</sup> over the years trying to reach my father. I write to you in hopes that you will disseminate this information to members of the 612<sup>th</sup> who might remember my father from so many years ago. Although my father died years ago, let them know if he were still here he would love to see his friends of the 612<sup>th</sup> again and that they are still honored today by his son.*

*John Kelsoe, Enterprise, Alabama*

**Thank you John for this lovely tribute to our veterans!**

## **WHAT IS A VETERAN?**

A 'Veteran' -- whether active duty, discharged, retired, or reserve -- is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America,' for an amount of 'up to, and including his life.'

That is honor, and there are way too many people in this country today, who no longer understand that fact.

Thank you and God bless you to all Veterans!

## “Hold at All Costs”

In our April newsletter we included Part 1 of “*Hold at All Costs*” an article written by association member **Don Smart** that was published in Military Magazine. Part 2 is included with this newsletter.



## 56<sup>th</sup> Reunion

Mark your calendars for our 2009 reunion. Our 56<sup>th</sup> Reunion will be held at the Fairfield Inn in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, July 30<sup>th</sup> thru August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009. Look for details in our April 2009 newsletter.



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Earl and Glyn Sain were kind enough to pass this information along to me.

“Where would this country, or the world for that matter, be without the dedication and services of those young men and women we call American veterans? Throughout history, our nation has turned to our military to protect others so that we may enjoy the freedoms that we cherish today. These brave men and women were not making decisions about right or wrong; they were following orders and doing what they were told. We owe so much to these veterans whose sacrifices can not be captured in a few words, many paying the ultimate sacrifice for their country, many carrying scars that will remain for the rest of their lives.

Honor Flight is a non profit organization created solely to honor America’s veterans for all of their sacrifices. We fly our heroes to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect at **their** memorial. Top

priority is given to the senior veterans – WWII survivors along with those other veterans that may be terminally ill.

Honor Flight, Inc. recognizes American veterans for their sacrifices and achievements by flying you to Washington, D.C. to see **YOUR** memorial at **no cost**.

In order for Honor Flight, Inc to achieve this goal, guardians fly with the veterans on every flight providing assistance and helping veterans have a **safe**, memorable and rewarding experience.

For what you and your comrades have given to us, please consider this a small token of appreciation from all of us at **Honor Flight, Inc.**

For further information, please contact us at 937-521-2400 or via e-mail at [veteran-application@Honorflight.org](mailto:veteran-application@Honorflight.org) or at:

Honor Flight, Inc.  
ATTN: Veteran Application  
300 E. Auburn Avenue  
Springfield, OH 45505-4703

Our website is [www.honorflight.org](http://www.honorflight.org)

Please note! [www.honorflight.com](http://www.honorflight.com) and [www.honorflights.com](http://www.honorflights.com) are **not** associated with Honor Flight, Inc. Their listed links are to companies that charge a fee for flights to visit the WWII Memorial. The flights and tours that we provide WWII and terminally ill vets are absolutely **free**.”

