



612th Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Newsletter April 2009

Fayne Haynes
Association Chairman

Dianne Kelton
Treasurer /
Memorials & Flowers

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

Susie Pidsosny
Newsletters



56th Reunion

As I write this the snow is still falling in Michigan so obviously Mother Nature hasn't gotten the memo that "It's Spring, already"! And it looks like "Old Man Winter" doesn't want to give up without a fight so I'm very happy to turn my thoughts to our **56th Annual 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion Association Reunion** in sunny, hot **Murfreesboro, Tennessee**. After the winter we've had I promise no matter how hot it gets this year you won't hear any complaints from me!

Our reunion will take place from **Thursday, July 30th thru Sunday, August 2nd**. We will once again be gathering at **The Fairfield Inn and Suites** located at 175 Chaffin Place, Murfreesboro, TN. 37129. I spoke with Mike the sales manager at The Fairfield Inn and he has once again very kindly offered to keep our rates the same as for the past two years. Room rates for 2009 are **\$79.00 per night per room (plus tax)**. **This rate applies to all reservations made before July 8th**. 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 \$79.00 rate make sure you mention the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion Association when making your reservations.**

If you plan to arrive before Thursday, July 30th the hotel will extend the discounted rate to Wednesday, July 29th. For any dates prior to the 29th and after the 2nd the hotel cannot guarantee the discounted rates. You will need to ask when making your reservations. Rates for non-reunion days could be as high as \$110.00 per night.

Just a friendly reminder: **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 2009 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
Dianne and Jimmy Kelton
Steve and Judy Sanders
Candice and Matt Northcutt
Melissa and Tony Galligani
Chloe and Celina Northcutt

These fine folks always give 100% and put on an outstanding reunion. I can assure you; you will have a wonderful time. So if you're thinking about attending this year please make an extra effort and join us this summer in Murfreesboro. You'll be glad you did!

Our Flower Fund Raffle always takes place following our Saturday night banquet. Don't forget to bring your prizes to donate. The raffle is right up there with fellowship and food as one of the biggest highlights of our reunions.

One final reunion note: This will be the only newsletter prior to our reunion. Please keep this information handy to make your reservation.



Early Bird Award

Three Cheers to Pearl Noland! Pearl is so excited about returning to our reunion this year she made her room reservations in January! Way to go Pearl! We're just as anxious and excited to see you too!

Change of Address for Tena Phillips



In early November 2008 **Tena Phillips** moved into an assisted living facility. Tena's new address is:

Katherine "Tena" Phillips
c/o Champion Oaks
17705 Red Oaks Drive #60
Houston, Texas 77090
832-484-1894

Tena's probably the best thing that's happened to "Champion Oaks" in a long time. She's already setting things straight. At their Veteran's Day gathering this past November she got everyone involved and made sure they recited the Pledge of Allegiance and sang some patriotic songs.

Dues Are Due

At Tena's request **Dianne Kelton** has accepted the position as Association Treasurer and will now be handling the dues as well as the Flower Fund. Dues are \$5.00 annually and help cover the costs of printing and postage for our newsletters.

Dues may be mailed to:

Dianne Kelton
3745 Columbia Court
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37129-1206

Please, please, please . . . make your checks payable to Dianne Kelton. You can write "612th TDB" in the memo area. **The bank will not accept checks made payable to the 612th TDB.**

Since our last newsletter dues have been received from:

Henry and Betty Harkema
Anthony Cavataio

Because of the transition of our treasury this list is incomplete. We will do our best to update everything in our next newsletter.



VETERANS SYMBOLIZE OUR NATION'S STRENGTH

Dorothy Tomlinson passed along this wonderful article written by Rusty Fowler of the *Commercial Appeal*.

Dated Tuesday, November 11, 2008

"Old warriors from the Greatest Generation – many still full of energy – have an inspiring sense of duty and obligation".

"It has been said that a sign of our aging is when we begin reading obituaries. It must be true, as I scan them every day – not all of them, only the veterans whose death notices are indicated by the American flag.

In particular I am drawn to read about the passing of veterans in their late 70's and 80's, as these are without question the remaining old warriors from the Greatest Generation. For me it is something like an unspoken duty to read about their lives and what they accomplished despite being robbed of their youth in a hell that few of us can imagine.

About three weeks ago, on October 21, I recognized the picture of one of those old warriors, who went by the name of Red Miller from Moscow in West Tennessee. I talked with him once a year for the past several years when I went to buy firewood and even as late as the fall of 2007 he would help me load it. He must have been about 85 at the time.

It wasn't necessary to go all the way to Moscow to get my firewood, but over the years I had developed a great deal of respect for this gentleman and enjoyed our conversations and his amiable personality.

Mr. Miller would talk your ear off while he helped you load. Some years our conversation would get into the subject of World War II. I think he saw some of the worst of it, but he discussed it in a matter-of-fact way with no complaint and no claim of credit due for his sacrifice. One year I took my father-in-law (also a World War II veteran) with

me to get wood. That year Mr. Miller did not help me; neither did my father-in-law. They talked while I worked. They talked about the war and where they were and things they remembered. I wish I could have captured that day on video or audio tape.

Last month, like the years before, I called Mrs. Miller to tell her I was coming to get some wood. She told me Mr. Miller was in the hospital but someone would be at the house. I had the pleasure of meeting his daughter and she told me about her father's illness. My wife and I loaded our wood – still the best you could buy, split and neatly stacked like Mr. Miller always did it.

Seeing the obituary for Mr. Miller – whose given name I learned was J.D. Miller, and who had received two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star for his military service – a couple of weeks later moved me to write this piece.

These old soldiers, once young and brave, are passing away from us rapidly. Their spirit and strong sense of duty and obligation are uplifting reminders to me, and I hope to you, regarding our strength as a people and our ability to endure and eventually overcome the worst adversity for the sake of our liberty and freedom.

Today, on Veterans Day (and every day), I hope you will join me in remembering the debt we all owe to the spirit of Mr. Miller and all his comrades in arms, past and present.

Passings



Ansel N. Dreggors

William "Bill" Hawkins called on November 20th to share the news that **Ansel Dreggors** had passed away in August. The only information I could find was an on-line posting from the Daytona Beach News-Journal dated 8/17/2008.

"Ansel N. Dreggors, 88, Astor, a retired troubleshooter for Florida Power and Light, died Tuesday". If anyone has additional information, I would appreciate hearing from you.



Edward G. Winslow

Edward G. Winslow 91, of Bartlett, died December 25, 2008. He was a WWII veteran serving in the 612th Tank Destroyer



Battalion. He was retired from Memphis Light Gas and Water. Mr. Winslow was the widower of the late, Lucille Kirby Winslow. He is survived by two daughters,

Sandra K. "Sandy" Winslow, Sherrill Winslow Swaim and her husband, Jim, all of Bartlett; a brother, Russell Winslow; a sister, Elaine Travers, both of Jackson, TN; and two grandsons, James Edward "Jay" Swaim and Kirby Winslow Swaim. A public visitation was held from 4:30 – 7 p.m. Monday, December 29th at Forest Hill East Funeral Home. The funeral service was private. The family requests any memorials be sent to Harwood Center, Madonna Learning Center or King's Daughters and Sons Home. Forest Hill East Funeral Home (901) 382-1000

Notes of condolence may be sent to the family in care of Sandy Winslow c/o 6858 Tiffany Oaks Cove, Bartlett, TN 38135



James Frank Boatright

Mr. James "Frank" Boatright, age 92, of Main Street, Whitesburg, Georgia passed away Sunday, January 4, 2009. He was born May 13, 1916 in Carroll County, Georgia the son of the late Ida Pearl Bachelor Boatright and James Grover Boatright. Mr. Boatright was a retired employee of Nova Products, was an avid gardener and enjoyed wood working. He served his country with distinction in the U.S. Army during WWII as



part of the tank corp. serving in the European Theatre. Besides his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Alice Duke Boatright; brother W.C. Boatright (who was a casualty in WWII) and sisters, Velma Crawford and Marie Sailors. Survivors include daughters and sons in law, Elaine and John W. Sauls of Villa Rica, GA., and Tanya and Ed Bradberry of Franklin, GA.; sister and brother in law, Lucille and Render Dyer of Carrollton, GA.; brother and sister in law, Cecil and Sybil Boatright of Whitesburg, GA.; grandchildren, Eric and Debbie Sauls, Nathan and Jane Sauls, Curt Sauls, Chuck and Ginger Harper, Chad and Kim Harper and Keri and Chris Denney; also 13 great grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted on Thursday, January 8, 2009 at 2 pm from Martin and Hightower Heritage Chapel with Bro. Jimmy Henry officiating. Music was provided by Wayne Harris. Pallbearers were Chuck Harper, Chad Harper, Chris Denney, Eric Sauls, Nathan Sauls and Curt Sauls. Interment followed in Carroll Memory Gardens. The family received friends at the funeral home on Wednesday from 5 until 8 pm. Messages of condolence may be sent to the family at www.martin-hightower.com. Martin And Hightower Heritage Chapel of Carrollton had charge of the arrangements.

Condolences to Mr. Boatright's family may be sent in care of his daughter Elaine Sauls, 554 Susan Drive, Villa Rica GA 30180



Frances Bertrand

EUNICE – A Celebration of Life was held at St. Anthony Catholic Church on Sunday, November 23, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. for Frances Miller Bertrand, 82, who passed away on Friday, November 21, 2008 at the Rosewood Nursing Center in Lake Charles. Rite of Committal followed in the St. Paul Mausoleum with Father Tom Voorhies officiating.



Mrs. Bertrand was a Catholic Daughter for 50 years and also worked at the Eunice Supperette for 40 years. A loving mother, sister,

grandmother, great-grandmother and friend, Frances is survived by her son Frank Bertrand, Jr. and wife Joni of Spring, Texas; two daughters, Paula Barras and husband Mike of New Caney, Texas and Kathy Drewry of Lake Charles; two sisters, Curtis Bundick of Eunice and Jane Perron of Lake Charles; four grandchildren, Kelly Bertrand, Brice Drewry, Elisha Privat, Jessica Bertrand; four great-grandchildren, Mason Drewry, Dylan Bertrand, Cassidy Dunaway and Lyla Privat; 2 step-great-grandchildren, Kylie and Calton Walker. She will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank Bertrand, Sr.; her parents, Gilbert and Estell Romain Miller.

Visiting hours were observed on Saturday, November 22, 2008 at Ardoin's Funeral Home in Eunice from 11:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. and again on Sunday, November 23, 2008 from 8:00 a.m. until time of services. A rosary was recited at 7:00 p.m. Saturday evening.

Condolences may be sent to her family in care of her son Frances Bertrand, Jr., 23481 Leftergate, Spring, Texas 77373



Geneva Smith

(Our Beloved "Moon Pie Lady")

Amy Wilcox, Geneva's niece was kind enough to notify me of Geneva's passing. Amy wrote: *"I received the 612th newsletter today and wanted to let you know that Geneva passed away November 3. It made me smile to read that she brought Moon Pies to the reunion. She so enjoyed going to your reunions each year and the many friends she had over the years."*



The following obituary is reprinted from "The Chattanooga".

Geneva Bright Smith, retired executive secretary and sales coordinator at Chattanooga Bakery, Inc., died on Monday, November 3, 2008, at a local nursing home. She was 80.

A native of Calhoun, Ga., she graduated from Sonoraville High School and McKenzie College. She also attended night classes at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Mrs. Smith was executive secretary to the chairman & CEO, president and executive vice president; sales coordinator working with two sales managers and 46 brokers throughout the United States.

Prior to her employment at Chattanooga Bakery, Inc., she was with The Chattanooga Gas Company for 19 years and Coca-Cola Bottling Co. (Thomas) for eight years.

Long active in the secretarial profession, she was a member of Professional Secretaries International, served two terms as president of the local chapter and as president of the Tennessee Division. She was recognized as "Secretary of the Year" in 1963.

She was a charter member of Executive Women International and served on the board of the local chapter for three years. She was a member of the Murray Hills Estates Community Club and served as their president for two years. She also served on the Board of United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chattanooga (now Signal Center) for several years and did volunteer work for the American Red Cross as Grey Lady at Memorial Hospital.

She was a member of St. John United Methodist Church and the Joy Class.

She was the widow of Raymond A. (Jack) Smith, the daughter of the late James F. and Doshia Hall Bright of Calhoun, Ga., and the sister of the late Jo (Mrs. John C.) Rasmussen of Chattanooga.

She is survived by her three nieces and two nephews, two great-nieces and five great-nephews, one great-great-niece.

Funeral services were held for Geneva at noon on Thursday at the North Chapel with Rev. Sherry Boles officiating. Burial followed in National Cemetery.

The family received friends from 4-8 p.m. on Wednesday and 11 a.m.-12 p.m. on Thursday at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. John United Methodist Church or Hospice of Chattanooga.

Arrangements were by the North Chapel of Chattanooga Funeral Home, Crematory and Florist.

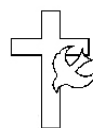
Memorial donations in Geneva's memory may be made to:

Hospice of Chattanooga
4411 Oakwood Drive
P.O. Box 19269
Chattanooga, TN 37416

or

St. John United Methodist Church
3921 Murray Hills Dr.
Chattanooga, TN 37416

Condolences to the family may be sent in care of Amy Wilcox, 9116 Demery Ct., Brentwood, TN 37027



Alan Fischer

Alan, the son of 612th veteran Donn Fischer, ReCon Company succumbed to a brain tumor on August 23, 2008. Mary Ann Wesoly was kind enough to forward a letter that Donn had sent out at Christmas. Donn's own words say it best so I would like to share them here.

"Now I must write the bad news. My son, Alan, called me from the Middle East where he was Project Manager for constructing and getting refineries online. He said he wasn't feeling good, so I suggested that he come home and we would see some doctors and specialist over here. I took him around to a group of specialist who were referred by one another. After three MRI's, two CAT scans and a bone density study, the biopsy stated cancer of the brain. I visited with the lead doctor and asked for a time window. He said two months! Well, he came within two days of the two months projection that he had stated earlier. I took Alan for radiation treatments and no more. He was not in a lot of pain and did not complain. We made him comfortable here in the kitchen in one of those hospital beds with adjustment features. From day to day I could see him going downhill. I had a night nurse for him. Alan and I talked and we watched TV here in the kitchen. I must tell you of the wonderful family support I received and that so many of our friends

were so supportive and helpful in many ways. I will never forget them and their kind deeds. Some of Alan's fraternity brothers from all over the country came to see him before the last days. It's a bit difficult to write this letter tonight since he passed away August 23rd. An adult friend told me "It's always a sad time to lose a family member, but really hard for a father to lose a son".

Don – we are so sorry for your loss. Letters of condolence may be sent to Donn Fischer, 2521 Canterbury Court, Carrollton, Texas 75006

Our love and prayers go out to the families and friends of our dearly departed. May God's grace help comfort you and make this difficult time in your lives a little easier.



January Ice Storm in Kentucky

Dennis Riley sent this photo of the January Ice Storm that swept across Kentucky.



Dennis wrote, "We are all doing pretty good because we have wood stoves and we have generators. We forget how good we had it. Life is good because we are all still alive. Mom and Dad are doing fine."

Remembering Aprons



(Mary Ann Wesoly asked me to share this with everyone. I bet it will bring back some fond memories.)

The principal use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath. Because she only had a few, it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and they used less material, but along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids.

And when the weather was cold, grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove.

Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls.

In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes.

Roster Updates



Dee-El Dawes e-mail address has changed to dawezoo@nctc.net

Tena's new address is:

Katherine "Tena" Phillips
c/o Champion Oaks
17705 Red Oaks Drive #60
Houston, Texas 77090
832-484-1894



SUSIE'S SNIPETS

Congratulations!

Our dear 612th friend **Glenda Millar** was inducted into the Austin National Bowling Hall of Fame on January 31st. **Tena Phillips** and her daughter were on hand to cheer as Glenda received this great honor.

Iris Morris had knee replacement surgery on November 20th. She says she is getting along pretty good now although she is having a little bit of a problem with it. There is a nerve in the back of her knee that has spasms every once in awhile. She and the girls are planning on going to Tennessee. She writes that *"they're looking forward to seeing everyone that makes it there."*

Henry Harkema (Company C) was recently named "Citizen of the Year" in Paramount, California. It was a wonderful surprise with quite a lot of publicity. His wife Betty wrote that *"He will be 98 years old in August. Age is more than a number to him and he still drives a car but not on the freeways."* (I hope to have a more detailed report on this honor awarded to Henry in our next newsletter).

Last September I had an e-mail from William and Ginny Ward seeking information on their grandfather **Bobbie Lee Jones** of Company B.

In my rush to get the fall 2008 newsletter out I accidentally omitted their request.

*"Ginny is my wife and my name is William Earl Ward and my grandfather's name is **Bobbie Lee Jones**, army serial # 34501753 he was inducted on 22dec1942 at Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. He was in Company B of the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion and his job was driver of a half track 734. I am attaching a copy of his discharge papers. He was wounded by a mortar hitting a jeep he was driving. Two other soldiers' were in the jeep and my grandfather said he believed they were both killed. Please include an article in your next newsletter asking anyone with information about our grandfather to contact me. Thank you for your help."* **William Ward, 1065 Baudy James Rd. Cedar Grove, Tennessee 38321 731-968-3273. e-mail address is: ginnyford@onemain.com**

The news from **Janet and Dick Gaut** last December was a bit disturbing. *"Dick was working on the ceiling in the hall, and fell backward into the small bedroom hitting an object on the floor. He fractured two of his vertebra (L3 & L5). He then had a reaction to his pain medication, which caused considerable problems, and he did spend some time in the V.A. hospital (2 days). The V.A. found out that much of his problem (with dehydration) was caused by the fact that he has low blood sodium, and that in trying to wash the medication out of his system, it caused dehydration. He is doing well now. But, needless to say, we have been tied up with trying to get him back on his feet."*



**Ouida
and
Jewel
Raulins**

I had a message on my cell phone this afternoon (April 9) from **Isabel "Izzy" Kemp**. Mrs. Kemp had been trying to get in touch with Ouida and Jewel for sometime and today she received a call from Ouida's daughter-in-law, Sherry Smith informing her that Ouida and Jewel were both in a nursing home. Izzy left me Sherry's phone number

and I was able to reach her at the nursing home. I found out that Ouida suffered a stroke on October 23rd and is completely paralyzed on her left side; Jewel has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and Sherry says he is in his own little world. Sherry and her husband Jim (Ouida's son) live in Wyoming but have been spending as much time as possible in Meridian. If there is any type of blessing to be found in a situation like this it is that they are both still together, sharing a room at the nursing home. Cards and letters may be sent to **Ouida and Jewel Raulins, Room N-19 c/o The Beverly Living Center, 4728 Hwy. 39N, Meridian, Mississippi 39301**. Please keep Jewel, Ouida, Sherry and Jim in your thoughts and prayers.

I called Mrs. Kemp back to let her know that I had received her message and to tell her that I had spoken with Sherry. She said she was just devastated to hear the news about Ouida and Jewel. After calling and writing for some time she couldn't understand why she hadn't heard back from them. We had a nice talk and she reminisced about first meeting Ouida when Jewel brought her to one of the 612th reunions not too long after Ouida and Jewel were married. She said she and Ouida just hit it off and were dear friends from that first meeting on. And of course our conversation turned to another dear friend, **Tena Phillips**. She was greatly relieved to hear that Tena was doing well and I made sure she had Tena's new phone number.



NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL REGISTRY

I've set myself a goal this year to list every member of the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion Association with the National World War II Memorial Registry. It is their right and their honor to be listed and recognized for the great sacrifices they made during WWII. In trying to compile a master list I've found that so many names of our 612th veterans have been lost or forgotten over the years. I've been scouring through a few old newsletters that I have from Jack Flanagan and I have had some success in finding additional names of our veterans to add to my roster. If you have any

older newsletters or any information on members of the 612th living or deceased I BEG YOU to share it with me.

While I can register a veteran by name only it would help if I have any or all of the following information; Full name, hometown, rank, company, brief history of service (battles fought in, POW, awards and commendations). There is a registration form included with this newsletter.

I would really appreciate it if you could take a moment or two and go through any old paperwork you might have. Maybe you'll come across a name or two that you can share with me and help me make certain that ALL of our veterans are honored. Thank you!

Spotlight on Our Veterans



**Anthony
Cavataio**



This past January in addition to receiving a very generous check for past and present dues (and more) I received a very nice letter from one of our veterans, **Mr. Anthony Cavataio**.

It just brought home to me how many of our 612th veterans I've never had the privilege of meeting or the honor of getting to know. All of our beloved vets have a story to tell and I'd like to add a new column in each of our newsletters "spotlighting" one of our veterans.

Mr. Cavataio and I have corresponded with one another over the past several months and since he was the inspiration for this new column I'm pleased to begin with his story.

"My name is Anthony Cavataio. I receive the Association newsletter and I decided to write and tell you a little bit about myself. I was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey for training. I believe I belonged to Company C. During World War II, I was a private in the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion. I was sent to Belgium and France and I was there for the Battle of the Bulge. I can still remember how the night sky was lit up like fireworks the day we landed on Omaha Beach.

I received two citations from my Commanding Officer dated 17 June 1946; honoring me to wear the "Belgian Fourragere".

After the war, I returned to my hometown of Brooklyn, New York and lived with my parents, sister and brother. We owned and operated a small family business, a local grocery/delicatessen in our community, which my brother and I continued in the years after my parents' death.

As the years passed by, I gave up the business and retired. I traveled with friends back and forth to Florida for many years. Although I no longer travel out of state, I continue to be surrounded by good friends, who help maintain my well-being.

I just reached my 90th birthday this past June. I live alone and take care of myself; I cook and clean for myself, I drive locally and I pay my own bills and do my own banking. I also take care of my pet cat, Vinny.

Thank you for all of your work with the Association. I am happy to see that so many of you are doing well."

If you would like to be "spotlighted" in our next newsletter please call or write me at: Susie Pidosny, 42159 Briarcliff Court, Canton, Michigan 48187; 734-516-6906 or e-mail me at mouseketeer@microrap.biz



DICK GAUT REMEMBERS . . .

"Liege, Belgium, has a special meaning to me. On December 23, 1944 (I am not sure about the exact date), we had spent 3 or 4 hours after dark trying to inch our way into a small town down below Elsenborn Ridge. We traveled (just my crew with one half-track and towed gun) with the infantry walking along beside us toward a small village. It was a rough night, and a lot of German artillery and rockets were being fired in the area at different targets. We finally got into the village, and the infantry went on through and took up a position outside the village. We sat our anti-tank gun up next to one of the houses in the village looking down the main road. It was so dark, we could see very little down that road. We entered the house, where we found a G.I. who was dead and lying on the kitchen table. The infantry was engaged in small arms fire and some mortars around the village. We were prepared for the worst. Then, after two hours of waiting, they gave the order to pull out along with the infantry. At a mile or two and hour, it took us until about 3:00 a.m. to get back up on – I assume – Elsenborn Ridge. Since the Battle of the Bulge had started on the night of the 15th of December, really, and the morning of the 16th, we had been on a constant move, with very little to eat, little or no sleep, and extreme cold, through all the mud and slush. We got to the Ridge, and I told my crew to get out and dig in (foxholes). That was the high ground we were taking position on. There was still only the one gun and the infantry. All of my crew (9 crew members) collapsed and went to sleep on and in the half-track. I told them again to get out of the half-track and dig in, and began digging my own foxhole. It was so dark I had to feel the ground with my hand to determine how much earth I had taken out of my intended foxhole. The ground was very hard and frozen. Finally, after an hour or hour and one-half, I had dug enough hole to get my body in, but not my legs and feet. Lo and behold, one German tank shell barely cleared the hill and hit a little rise behind us, with a loud explosion. You never heard so many people jump out of that half-track and start digging foxholes!! It was about daylight before they got their holes ready to get into. At that point, they moved us up on the crest of the hill for a gun position (right after they got their holes dug - - moving us away from those holes). We never heard another shot fired from that tank. After

we moved upon the crest to the gun position, they sent a new green replacement to replace one of our crew members. It was dreary - - we were socked in - - the clouds were down on us, extremely cold. As I stood beside him on the vehicle track, taking out some food and supplies, we both stepped down to the ground and a loud explosion took place within a foot of me. I looked around and the man had shot his foot with his carbine. He'd only been on the front for 20 minutes. Well, as the day went by, I began to come down with chills and what seemed to be a fever, and shaking with it (exposure, malnutrition and low blood sugar). They relieved me of duty and sent me back to a medical tent behind the lines, where they transferred me back to (I think) the 15th or 18th General Hospital which was located on the outskirts of Liege. The hospital was alongside the main highway there and right where the highway made a slight bend. The hospital was a tent hospital. The skies cleared a good bit, and the German fighter planes began to strafe Patton's troops (tanks and trucks) going along that highway, and shot down quite a few of our fighter planes who were trying to defend Patton's group. Patton was rushing to the front lines and the Germans were trying to knock out as many tanks and trucks as they could. This happened about four or five days after I got there. The hospital had three rows of beds in these long, long tents - - one in the center, and one along each side. It was so cold that we got out of bed and stood by little coal stoves in the center of the tent. There were four or five of us patients standing around one of the stoves. Several of them were bending down to get closer to the heat from the stove. A German fighter plane was strafing the road alongside the hospital, and it lined up perfectly with the tent we were in. His pass that he made shot up all the beds on each side of the tent in a split second. At the time, he also dropped some anti-personnel mines. One went through the top of the tent and passed within a foot of my head, hitting the stove, blowing it into a thousand pieces right in our faces. Every man there was wounded, except me, and several of them later died. The tent was filled with smoke. A little nurse came through, and I was stunned from the explosion and staggering around in the smoke. She threw a body block on me and knocked me down under one of the beds on the side of the tent. By chance, everyone was around the stoves in the center of the tent. If we had been in bed, we would have all died from the gunfire from the German plane. Finally, four or five days went by, and they put me on a transport back to the front lines. Upon arriving at the front lines, I found out they had given us the new, fast M-18 tank

destroyers to replace our towed gun. At that point, I was then a Tank Commander of a 5-man tank crew. We used these tanks to cross the Rhine River, go to Berlin with Patton, and then in to Czechoslovakia, where the war ended."

A Different Drug Problem . . .

(Dennis Riley passed along the following e-mail. You might have seen it before but I think it's worth repeating). ☺

"The other day, someone at a store in our town read that a Methamphetamine lab had been found in an old farmhouse in the adjoining county and he asked me a rhetorical question, "Why didn't we have a drug problem when you and I were growing up?"



I replied, "I had a drug problem when I was young. I was drug to church on Sunday morning. I was drug to church for weddings and funerals. I was drug to family reunions and community socials no matter the weather.

I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults. I was also drug to the woodshed when I disobeyed my parents, told a lie, brought home a bad report card, did not speak with respect, spoke ill of the teacher or the preacher, or if I didn't put forth my best effort in everything that was asked of me.

I was drug to the kitchen sink to have my mouth washed out with soap if I uttered a profanity. I was drug out to pull weeds in mom's garden and flower beds and cockleburs out of dad's fields. I was drug to homes of family, friends and neighbors to help out some poor soul who had no one to mow the yard, repair the clothesline, or chop some firewood, and, if my mother had ever known that I took a single dime as a tip for this kindness, she would have drug me back to the woodshed.

Those drugs are still in my veins and they affect my behavior in everything I do, say, or think. They are stronger than cocaine, crack, or heroin; and, if today's children had this kind of drug problem, America would be a better place. God Bless the parents who drugged us."

Five Tornadoes Touch Down In Murfreesboro, TN on Good Friday

It was a devastating Good Friday in Murfreesboro, Tennessee with over 200 homes destroyed, 2 reported deaths and hundreds of injuries. I was able to get through to **Fayne Haynes**, our Association Chairman and lifelong Murfreesboro resident on Saturday morning and I'm happy to report that he and his family are all safe and well. I'm still waiting and hoping to hear back from the Sanders and Kelton Families. Please keep our 612th members and all of the other good folks in Murfreesboro in your prayers.