

325 Glider Infantry Association 82nd Airborne Division



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Summer 2012

Log on to 325gliderinfantry.org

Summer 2012



Remember Me?



George Fisanich, 1946

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

I'm starting the Chairman's Corner at the age of 85 but I won't finish it until I'm 86 years of age, not that it will be long, but tomorrow is my 86th birthday. I can't believe I'm pushing 90. THAT war was a long time ago but I remember it every day of my life and the friends I made because of it. I know all of you are having hot weather because it's been hot all over the country. This has been one HOT year. I have heard from so many of you and I want you to know I really appreciate it. Everybody I talk with I encourage them to call Wes. They all are glad to do so when I tell them he is having a little problem. I got a call tonight from my buddy, Fletcher Williams. Said he was getting along great and just happen to think of me and gave me a call. That call made my day. Fletch was one of the real lucky boys, he went all the way from North Africa to the end of the war and got back home. Got a call the other day from a Jeffrey Feldman; his mother was married to one of our boys that got killed in Holland. Her name at the time was Frances Heltzer.

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Why not share your WW II photographs? Send to Rick with story line.



Chairman's Corner, continued...

She was married to Charles Simon Helter who was in F Company at the time he was killed at Keikberg Woods near Groesbeck Sept. 30, 1944. Frances remarried about ten years later and had a son by the name of Jeffrey Feldman. Jeffrey called me and ask if there was some kind of certificate that he might get for his mother showing that Charles served in the 325th Glider Infantry. I told him we had just the thing, the Gliderman's Certificate. I made her one and mailed it and Jeff said she was thrilled to death to get it. I also sent her one of our medallions and later gave her a call, what a sweet and appreciative lady. If only she and Jeffrey could have known about our Association and could have attended one of our reunions years ago, they might have met one of the Company F boys that might have known Charles. What a story that would have made.

Speaking of Wes, I just got a call from Ruth and she said Wes was at a low point. I'll give her a call a little later and check on him hoping he is feeling better. I guess at our age we all have a low point once in a while. I received the book that just came out that Wes and his good friend, Jean Turner, wrote. I could hardly put it down once I started reading it. It's a great story of Wes's life in the military and how he and his brother worked together to develop a big time printing company. It's amazing how they were able to keep up with the demands of the large companies they were supplying. I just don't know how they did it without having a degree in that kind of work. Wes was "Big Time" in the printing business. How lucky we were to have him at reunion time when we needed signs and programs.

I just found out that we lost another good man that was at our last reunion, Harold Owens. He too, went over with the Division when they landed in Africa. He was an A Company man and went into Normandy and Holland by glider. Harold was 88 years old and he loved our outfit. I called his wife, Joan, and also his caretaker, Donna White. You remember Donna and her daughter came with Harold to our last reunion. France had just awarded Harold the Legion of Honors Medal. I know he was proud of that. We want to have his obituary in this issue if possible. This guy really had a remarkable memory. I think he made about all of our reunions. He was kind enough to go around and share his war stories with groups, which was

great. Too many people don't know that gliders were used in the war. If you ever have a chance to speak to a group about your military record, tell them about the use of gliders during the war, like I say, too many people never heard of the gliders.

If any of you guys knew a Albert D. Elkins who was in "C" Company please get in touch with Bob Bridge, some of the Elkins family would like to hear from you. Been nice talking and hearing from some of you. It's always good getting that phone call. I talk to Wes on a regular bases and try to keep in contact with Wilma. I called Clint Riddle, Jack Cimino, Charles Shockley, Tony Vallos, Mabeline Stahel, Harold Owens' family, a business call to George Fisanich, Rick Erny, Eugene Rogers (No Answer), Joe Colmer (Got Operator). Mike Berkut, Anita (Scott is getting a promotion-Lt. Col.) he still has time to play golf and use that bag he won), Fletcher Williams, Richard Weese, Leonard Weinstein (No Answer), Herbert Huebschen, Bob Bridge, and two or three more, I'm sure. I'm glad to report most of these are doing fine. I haven't had any luck in getting George Steward's new number - can someone help me with that? I am now 86 years of age and I'm sure you want to see and read what else is in this Tow Line report. So, make a call to one of your buddies and let's keep in touch.

Good luck and good health,

Jesse



Our condolences to their Families

Richard J. Coke, K Co, 325 GIR, passed away January 14, 2009. An All American member of the LTG James M Gavin Chapter of the 82nd AB Association, Richard served with K/325 from April, 1945 to August, 1946. He is survived by his 5 children.

(Taps, continued, on Page 3)



Taps, continued...

Lynn J. Curry, F Co, 325 GIR passed away June 24, 2009. A member of the Acadiana Chapter of the 82nd AB Association, Lynn served from February, 1944 to June 1946. He is survived by his wife Lila.

James H. England, A Co, 325 GIR passed away June 8, 2008. A Charter member of the Don Lassen Atlanta Chapter of the 82nd AB Association, James served with A/1-325 from June, 1944 to September, 1945. He is survived by his wife Bobbie and 1 child.

Arthur L. Groscup, SVC Co, 325 GIR passed away October 13, 2010. A Charter member of the West Virginia All Airborne Chapter of the 82nd AB Association, Arthur served with SVC/325 from March, 1942 to October, 1946. He is survived by his 3 children.

James L. Keeley, G Co, 325 GIR passed away January 4, 2012. A member of the North Central Florida Chapter of the 82nd AB Association, James served with G/325 & 505 PIR from November, 1946 to May, 1946. He is survived by his wife Joan and five children.

Lester W. Schwarm, H Co, 325 GIR passed away January 15, 2012. A Charter and All American member of the Badger State Chapter of the 82nd AB Association, Les served with H/325 from December, 1942 to January, 1947. He is survived by his wife Faye and 4 children.

Wilbur Shafer, MED DET, 325 GIR passed away March 8, 2010. A Charter member of the Gen. M. B. Ridgeway Chapter of the 82nd AB Association, Wilbur served with MED DET/325 from March, 1942 to September, 1945. He is survived by his wife Olive and 1 child.

Editor's Note: The following obituary came via email from our friend in Holland Jan Bos:

Sunday July 15

Dear friends,

Perhaps you know Father Gerard Thuring, the priest in Groesbeek-Breedeweg in Holland. Father Thuring died in his sleep Wednesday, July 11. He was 79 years old.

Father Thuring was the chairman of the Groesbeek Airborne Friends and chairman of the Historical Section of the National

Liberation Museum 1944-1945. He met many veterans over the years and was instrument in many publications about the 82nd Airborne Division and Troop Carrier Groups during World War Two. In September of 2002 Father Thuring visited the United States and attended a reunion of the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment, who hosted him as a guest of honor after Father Thuring was instrumental in creating the "Roll of Honor" of all 325 infantrymen who died in the service of their country.

Father Thuring became seriously ill two years ago with massive internal bleeding. He was rushed to the hospital and survived, only to pass away this year.

He was buried the following Saturday, July 21, in the churchyard of his church in Groesbeek-Breedeweg - he will be missed.

Jan Bos
Nijmegen, Holland

★ ★

If you hear of any other fellow 325 vets or spouses who have passed, please pass whatever information you have along so we can keep our membership updated. Thank you!

★ ★

Book Review

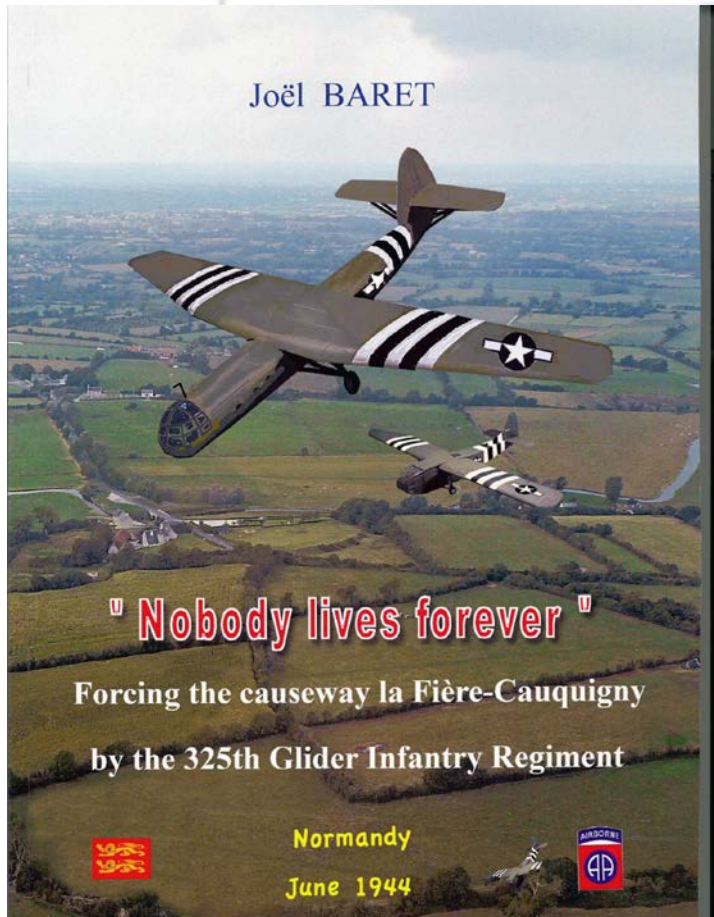
Your Editor was very pleased to receive a new book in the mail just the other week all the way from France. Our friend Joel Baret has written a book on the storming of the la Fiere-Cauquigny causeway titled "Nobody Lives Forever." Drawing from first-hand accounts of the action from 325 veterans, including the late Wayne Pierce, Bud Olson, Lee Travelstead, Mike Berkut and Clinton Riddle, the book is a rare accounting of the actions around that causeway that ultimately resulted in the posthumous awarding of the Medal of Honor to the only 82nd Airborne member to be so honored, Charles DeGlopper of C Co. 325th GIR.

Aside from an occasional reference in various books on Normandy, the only other book to deal exclusively with this pivotal but forgotten battle is the late Bob Murphy's "No Better Place to Die." As one can discern from the title of both books, the fighting around and over the causeway was intense and bitter – the majority of the casualties suffered by the 325th occurred in this area. "Nobody Lives Forever" is written from the viewpoint of the glider troops.

(Review, continued Page 4)

Review, continued...

What separates the two books is their frame of reference – “No Better Place to Die” was written primarily from the viewpoint of the paratroopers whereas “Nobody lives forever” is from the viewpoint of the glider troops.



The title is a quote directly from MG James Gavin when he ordered elements of the 82nd AB to charge the causeway. It was vitally important for the 82nd AB to seize and hold the causeway as it was one of the few major roads in the marshy area that the Germans could use to mount a counter-attack against the invading Allied forces. The Germans knew it, the U.S. knew it, and both sides fought accordingly. In the opinion of your Editor, MG Gavin never gave the 325th the recognition it deserved for its part in the battle.

Joel was able to tour the causeway and surrounding area with both Wayne and Bud in 2007 and the book focuses primarily on their memories of the battle, however Joel also brings in accounts from some paratroopers and also from a German soldier who also fought there. In addition to the accounts of the 4 days of fighting the book has numerous maps and a treasure trove of original photographs of the officers of the 325th and other veterans who participated in the battle.

If you would like a copy of the book for your own you may contact Joel at:

Joel Baret
3 rue de l'Eglise
21350 Marcilly & Dracy
France

Joel.baret@sfr.fr

The cost is 22 euros (about \$27.20) plus shipping which is: 11 euros (\$13.60) for one copy and 17 euros (\$21) for 2 copies. Payment only by Pypal, ID count is: joel.baret@sfr.fr It's possible to ask for a personal dedication.



Letters

The following letter was sent to your Editor from our good friend Clinton Riddle back in June:

Dear Richard,

I trust everything is going well with you. It has been beautiful over the week-end in Tennessee.

I have a favor to ask you – when you have room or space in the Tow Line would you please print my email address? I signed-up on the internet for the first time a few days ago. I guess you are wondering why I am not using it instead of writing you a letter, well it is all new to me and I am learning to use it – I am going to learn how to work it or die trying. I have written a few of the fellows and have received a few answers.

Since I am one of the older guys, I served in French Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia in North Africa, made the invasion of Sicily, the invasion of Italy, served in Ireland and England, crash-landed in a British Horsa glider in Normandy (we fought for 33 days and nights without relief before returning to England – I think out of the 155 men going into Normandy in B Co only 38 were able to return to England and now there are only about 3 or 4 of us left.) I crash-landed in Holland acting as a co-pilot in an American CG-4A Waco glider on September 23, 1944 and fought until the end of November. Then I moved to Sissone, France remaining there until the breakthrough – we were the first troops to reach Bastogne on December 18th and fought until February, 1945. I was overseas 30 months.

(Letters, continued Page 5)

You can help improve our newsletter by participating!

Letters, continued...

If you ever want to know anything about B Co and I know the answer I will be glad to share the information with you – I kept a day by day diary.

If you could print my email address I thought it might help me get in touch with some of the guys I once knew. Since my wife passed away and I live alone it would help to pass the time away to get in contact with some of them.

Thank you for your time reading this and I wish you the very best in your work. I enjoy the Tow Line – you are doing a good job.

Sincerely,
Clinton E. Riddle



Editor's Note: Clinton's friends may reach him at:

Clinton Riddle
711 Johnson St
Sweetwater, TN 37874-3113
Phone (423) 337-7154
Email – Clinton.riddle325@yahoo.com

I did email Clinton right away to wish him well and to mark the 68th anniversary of his landing in Normandy. I did take the opportunity to ask him about that and he quickly responded with the following memory of his experience in Normandy.

Rick,
After cutting loose from the tow plane the Pilot selected a small plot of ground before us to bring in the Glider. It was surrounded with hedge and trees. We cut the top out of a tree with the left wing as we went in. The Glider hit hard bounced 3 or 4 times and came to a stop. At 6:50 A.M. I stepped from the Glider carrying a Field 300 Radio with a broken antenna. I was down on my knees taking an antenna off of a Wakie-Talkie and attached it to the big radio, it worked and it was the only way of communicating until I obtain another radio for the company. In the meantime a reporter came along while I was down on my knees and took a picture. Two German planes came over strafing. From there I fought for 33 days and nights without relief. The first night I became separated from my unit and slept part of the night in a gully in a briar patch.

Thank you for responding so quick and thanks a million for printing my E-Mail address, you don't have to print all that I wrote, just the E-mail was what I was interested in

hoping I could contact some of the fellows. I call Jessie, Weese, Mrs. Pierce, Wesley, Bridge, and a few others along from time to time. I am in the process of getting a copy write on the Diary and having a few copies made. So many have wanted it, I thought it was time to let it go, because according to the law of average, I'll not be around here much longer. Don't get me wrong, I still feel good and can do about anything I want to do (including topping and trimming my shade trees in the Fall). It will be something to still be around after I am gone. I was at a meeting a few weeks ago a dear lady came around and said, "How did you get here?" I said, "I drove my pick-up." "You mean you are still driving." "Yes, that little Chev. S10 won't do 100 miles, it has an automatic cut out, but it will do 99." Her eyes got real big! Would you happen to have Joe Colmer's Telephone number, Jessie gave me a number, but it won't work 309 752 9560. Thanks again, it was so good to hear from you, write anytime. I'm up and out! Clint



The following change of address notice comes from Don Lanham:

Dear Comrade Erny,

I was with D Company, 325, from Scruptoft, to the Elbe and later in the Occupation of Berlin. My first combat was in Holland, then the Bulge and on into Germany. My wife and I are now living in a retirement home, living with our old age aches and pains. We have 3 children and six grandchildren.

I want to give you our change of address which is:

800 S. 15th St., Apt. 5205, Sebring, Ohio 44672

Let's Go!
Don Lanham



Our next letter comes from Herb Huebschen who remembered his old friend Robert Hunker on the front of the Spring Tow Line:

Hi Rick,

After seeing the photo of Bob Hunker on the front page of the Spring 2012 Tow Line, I said to myself, "Hey wait a minute, I think I have a couple more photos of Bob and myself", so I did find them and here they are!!

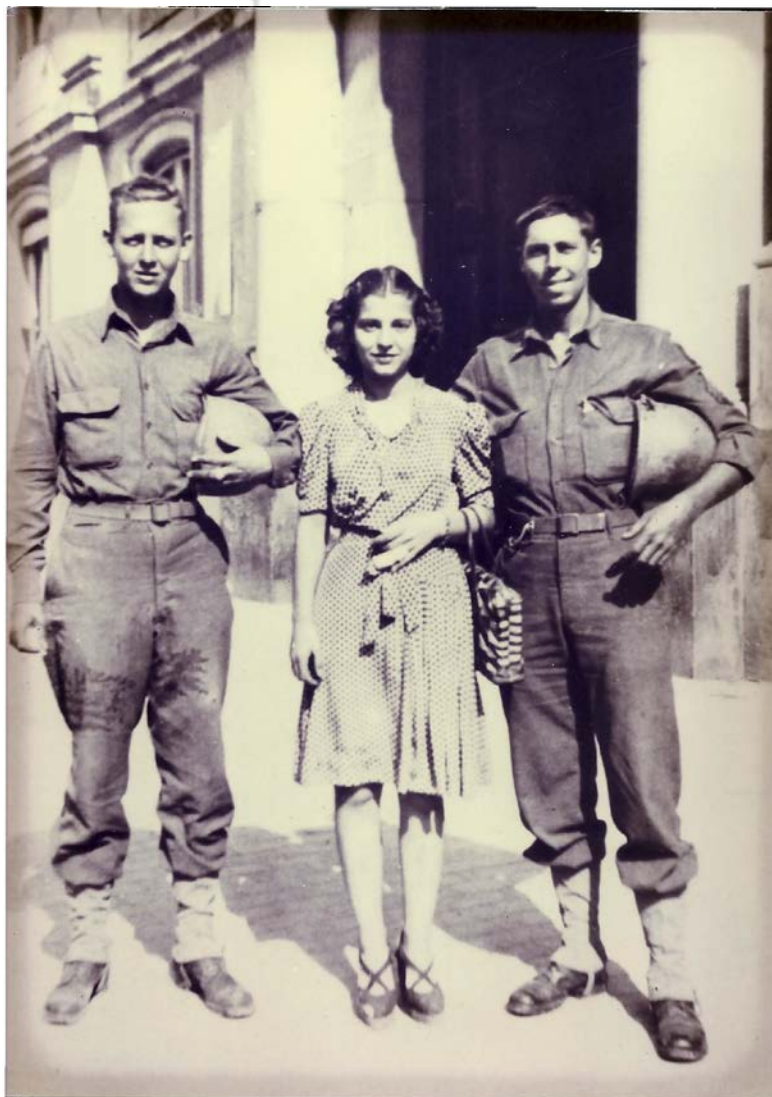
(Letters, continued Page 6)

We *really* need your input!

Letters, continued...

I was a Communication Sergeant, and Bob was in my radio and wire Section (Headquarter and Headquarters Company, 325 Glider Infantry, 82nd Airborne.

The photos were taken by some Italian citizen just as we entered Naples, Italy. The demure young lady happened to be standing nearby, so we asked her to be in the picture with us. This would be September of 1943. Her name was Angelina, and some men of my Company had her do their laundry while in Naples. As I recall, we had about six weeks of R&R in Naples before boarding ship for Ireland. We had to board ship via a rope ladder slung over the side of the ship. Not easy. I haven't seen Hunker since WWII.



Bob, Angelina & Herb – 1943 – Whatever happened to her after the war?

I'm intrigued by the Adam Berry project for Memorials at Scraptoft and the 504th at Evington. I have pleasant memories of Scraptoft, primarily sentimental, because it was in Leicester that I met my future wife, Iris. I hope that Adam Berry is successful with his projects.....I have already made two donations to the fund. His web site is www.allamericanmemorials.co.uk

I hope that you and your family are doing very well. Kindest regards, Herb Huebschen

PS.....If you wish to use any part of this, it's OK. Please let me know if you got the Hunker pictures.

Editor's Note: As you can see I did indeed receive the photos – Thanks Herb!

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Speaking of Adam, he kindly forwarded the following letter to me:

Dear Adam Berry,

I read your letter in the 325th Glider Infantry Association newsletter **The Glider Towline** where you describe your efforts to create a memorial to the 82nd Airborne, 325th Glider Infantry Division in the village of Scraptoft (and hopefully at some later time another in honor the 507th Paratrooper Infantry Regiment at Tollerton Hall.)

My father Lt. Colonel Edwin Joseph Ostberg served in both the 325th and the 507th, first as Commanding Officer of the First Battalion of the 507th PIR and later as the Commanding Officer of the Second Battalion of the 325th GIR. He was killed in action during the final days of Battle of the Bulge.

One often hears stories of how men and their families returning to Normandy for the yearly anniversary celebrations are still embraced by the people of the villages which they liberated during the war. The men of the 325th GIR and the 507th PIR mean no less to the people of Leicestershire area. I know personally because of my own experience which I would like to share with you:

My husband's family lived in Newtown Linford, just across the street from Bradgate Park for many years.

(Letters, continued Page 7)

Letters, continued...

One day my mother happened to mention to me that she thought my father had known a Dr. Carney during the war who lived somewhere in that vicinity.

On my next holiday visit with my in-laws, I took a chance and looked up Dr. Carney's name in the telephone directory; and to my amazement he was still living near Leicester. I telephoned his home and explained who I was. I asked Mrs. Carney if by chance she and her husband might remember my father. "Oh, yes!" she said. She then insisted that my husband and I join her and the doctor for lunch at their house the next afternoon. Dr. Carney made a special trip home from the hospital in the middle of the day just to meet me.

We ate the most wonderful poached salmon as we talked for over an hour about my father. It was a tremendous experience for me to speak with someone who had actually known my father during the war as I was only three years old at the time of his death.

Dr. Carney told me how my father had come over every Sunday afternoon for dinner, and how and he could still remember watching my father running around in the back garden playing ball with his children during those much needed "time outs" from the war. He told me that he and his wife were devastated when they received news that my father had been killed.

After lunch, Dr. Carney had to return to the hospital, and so my husband and I said our goodbyes. The next day, I telephoned Mrs. Carney to thank her for the opportunity of getting to meet them both. It was then that she confided to me that on the way back to the hospital her husband had had to pull over to the side of the road in order to have a good cry before he could pull himself together to return to work.

At the time, I felt that perhaps I had no right to cause people to remember such heart breaking events from the past; but now these many years later I realize that the war and the memories retained by the people of Leicestershire, the friendships they made with soldiers; friendships made, sustained through the years, and sadly, as in my father's case, lost, will always be a part of who they are, and will

live on not only for them and their children, but as a legacy for untold generations to come.

I believe strongly in what you are doing. Please keep me informed of your progress. I am putting a donation in the mail to you today. I hope to bring you just a little bit closer to your goal. I am sure that there are many other soldiers and their families who feel as I do, and will choose to contact you likewise.

With greatest respect for you, and for your efforts,

Betsy Durkin Matthes
(Daughter of Lt. Col Edwin Joseph Ostberg)

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Our last letter was sent to us courtesy of Lee Travelstead:

Dear Lee Travelstead,

In the spring issue of the Glider Tow Line I read that you were asking for veterans of the Normandy Invasion – you can add my name.

I had better clarify my name: I was a S/Sgt under the name of August S. Sciuchetti. After the war I had my name changed to Bud C. Olson. I was a member of the 3rd Bn 325 Glider Infantry. I served under Col. Carrol, Major Moore, Major Gardner and Col. Leahy. I was an intelligence Sgt and Sgt. Major of the 3rd Bn. I served in Normandy, Holland, Battle of the Bulge and crossing the Seigfried Line and into Berlin... just memories now.

In 2007 I was given a free trip back to Normandy where a documentary was filmed and I was one of six veterans who participated in it.

I am 90 years old now and if you would like I would be honored to become friends again. I knew you very well back then.

Sincerely,
Bud C. Olson
T/Sgt 3rd Bn, 325 Glider Inf.
Box 572
Choteau, Montana 59422

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Editor's Note: In addition to adding Bud Olson to our growing list of Normandy veterans I also received a delightful telephone call from Lore Ens Dorf, wife of Herb Ens Dorf.

(Letters, continued Page 8)

Have you called an old Army buddy today?

She wanted me to know that Herb had recently celebrated his 90th birthday and was with F Co when he landed in Normandy. I asked if he remembered my dear friend Joe Gault and she told me that he remembered his old Co commander very well and had been able to meet up at a past reunion. Noticing her slight accent I inquired and Lore confirmed that she had met Herb in Manheim, Germany at the end of the war. They eventually married and she moved to the United States – they have been together for 64 years! They have 2 daughters, 1 son, 4 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild on the way! Needless to say it was wonderful to hear from her.

So now we have the following list of 325 veterans of the Normandy Invasion: Clinton Riddle, Herb Heubsen, Louis Strandberg, Joe Colmer, Harold Owens, Paul Pearson, Delbert Humpston, Lee Travelstead, Raymond Nelson, Bud Olsen and Herb Ens Dorf. If there is anyone we have left out please contact your Editor and let me know!



And speaking of Normandy and since Herb brought up his project, we'll end our 'Letters' with a quick note from Adam Berry in the UK:

Hi Rick,

Aside from the memorial project I am currently writing a book about the 82nd Airborne Division's time in the UK and wondered if you had a list of mailing addresses of surviving veterans so I might write them letters to inform them of the project as well as ask a few questions about the camp.

Regards, Adam

If no one has any objections I will forward Adam a list of our Normandy vets and their addresses. Is there anyone else out there that might not have been in Normandy but still remembers the camp around Leicestershire? If so let me know!



SUBMISSIONS

Our first submission is an article sent-in by Jack Cimino and written by none other than his son Jerry:

The Greatest Generation and The Beat Generation

By Jerry Cimino

As the Founder of The Beat Museum in San Francisco, I am often asked by tourists and scholars alike, "Why did you start The Beat Museum?" Specifically, why was I drawn to this group of nonconformists who never set out to change the world but who did so anyway because they followed their own individual passions? The Beat Generation, if you're unaware, was a group of literary and artistic intellectuals in postwar America whose themes could broadly be seen as Tolerance, Compassion and Inclusiveness of others. They influenced everyone from Bob Dylan and The Beatles to Hunter. S. Thompson and Johnny Depp.

And the answer comes from my own upbringing. I'm a baby-boomer and my parents are both members of The Greatest Generation. My father was born in 1926, the same year as Allen Ginsberg and Neal Cassady. And I grew up hearing very few stories of my father's youth and his war experiences. Like many of the men he served with during World War II my father came back from Europe in 1946 and all he wanted to do was resume a "normal" life -- settle down, get a good job, get married, have a couple of kids and a house in the suburbs. And like so many of the men of that era my father never really spoke much about his time at war. I had to pull the information out of him and, even then, the pulling was slim.

I'd find things around the house once in a while as I got older. I actually found a German Luger -- the barrel was packed with mud if you can imagine -- my parents not wanting a gun in the house (not even a war souvenir) afraid one of us kids would accidentally discharge it. I found a Nazi flag, medals, German coins. And then there were my father's own relics: his paratrooper's wings, Airborne patches and a Bronze Star along with snapshots and other souvenirs of the war.

But dad didn't really tell me a whole lot about his time during World War II.

(Submissions, continued Page 9)

Submissions, continued

He told me how he was eighteen-years-old, in combat for the first time during the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium in January, 1945 when a German machine gun opened up on their unit and they all hit the ground. Ice chips kicked up all around them and some of the guys started yelling for a Medic. They thought they'd been shot in the face when they felt the sting of the ice and the dripping of the water. And the old timers came up to them laughing, saying, "You Replacements. What are we gonna do with you. It's ice, you're not hurt."



Jack R. Cimino, 82nd Airborne 1944

Another story dad told occurred after the Battle of the Bulge when they were marching on Berlin. At one point he and another soldier were ordered to go in to inspect a bombed out bunker, something they'd been doing for days. After finding nothing the two came walking out to discover their buddies in the unit cheering in their direction. My father said, "I turned around and saw a bunch of German soldiers walking out of that damn bunker behind us with their hands on their heads. They'd been waiting in hiding to be sure they were going to

surrender to American soldiers and not the Russians. We didn't even know they were there."

We kids all laughed. Dad always told us war stories that made us laugh as opposed to stories that would have scared us. He never told us about Wöbbelin, the SS Concentration Camp he and the 82nd Airborne liberated in May, 1945. Years later when I was an adult I asked him, "What did it feel like when those German soldiers marched out behind you?" "It scared the hell out of me," he said. "If it'd been a week earlier and they hadn't been so anxious to surrender any one of those bastards could have shot me dead."

As you might imagine, compared to many people, I had an idyllic childhood and our family lived the American Dream of what everyone aspired to at that time. My father was the man in the grey flannel suit and my mother was the original liberated woman working outside the home and raising two children in the 1950s and 1960s.



Jack and Lorraine Cimino early 1950s

(Submissions, continued Page 10)

Submissions, continued...

Today my father lives in retirement in Florida at the age of 85, still married to my mother sixty plus years later. They were born at the same time and lived through the same events as the original members of The Beat Generation. I wanted to know why the Beats took the nonconformist route and my parents the alternate "safe" course that most people took.

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We continue our series on Lew Strandberg's story of his World War II service:

**WORLD WAR II
MY LIFE IN THE SERVICE**
By Lew Strandburg



Jack Cimino's Scrapbook for the War

Jack Kerouac, ever the observer, had to write about what he saw. Allen Ginsberg needed to shout from the rooftops about his world and his friends. William S. Burroughs suffered through his demons and wrote to exorcise them. And Neal Cassady had to march to his own drummer regardless of the consequences.

And what I discovered is sometimes heroes don't write books or have books written about them. Some heroes don't change a generation or a culture or the course of a civilization. Sometimes they just go about their business and lead quiet lives. And they suffer their moments and they live their times of glory, none of which are ever celebrated in story or song. And the only people they influence are those who are closest to them.

And they're heroes just the same.

Editor's Note: What an wonderful story that could only be written by a son. Jerry was also kind enough to send me the accompanying photos with this article, including Jack's Company photograph that I'm saving for a future Tow Line. Thank you so much Jerry!

THE TRIP TO ENGLAND

The Strathnaver was a prewar English luxury liner and not equipped to handle and bunk a whole Division. The officers and a Company of WACs (Women's Army Corps) that crossed with us got the staterooms while we, the enlisted men, got the holds, mess halls and the open decks. I selected a spot on the deck, spread out my blanket and settled down for a cat-nap before the ship sailed. At 0900 September 5th the tugs towed us out into the open river and we sailed out to sea waving "good-bye" to the Statue of Liberty as we passed her. The first two days the sea was calm as Lake Chautauqua and reminded me of trips on the SS City of Jamestown as it plied the familiar waters on its way to Bemus Point, Chautauqua and Mayville. However, on the third day the sea began to kick up and the old Strathnaver began to roll. Mess facilities for the enlisted men were extremely poor. Being an English ship they had their own system and rations... mostly kidney stew. Almost everyone lived on cakes and cookies bought from the P.X. on board as most of us couldn't stomach the English fare that was dished out daily in the below decks mess hall.



The Strathnaver in better days.

(Submissions, continued Page 11)

We hope you have a great Fall!

Submissions, continued...

About the fourth or fifth day at sea the Strathnaver developed engine trouble and had to drop out of the convoy and head back to St. Johns, Newfoundland for repairs. Although we were docked at St. Johns for almost 3 weeks we were not allowed to leave the ship except for the daily 10 mile constitutional hike. Once a week we hiked by Companies to Fort Pepperel for a shower and good chow. The city of St. Johns was strictly "OFF LIMITS" for all personnel. Fort Pepperel is one of the nicest Army camps I have ever seen. Each barracks houses an entire Company, has polished hardwood floors, its own mess hall with kitchens equipped with every modern convenience and a recreation room. Every day a certain number of men from each Company would be allowed to go to Pepperel to spend a day and a night. That was real luxury. I guess every man got to go to Pepperel at least once a week.

Finally the Strathnaver's engines were repaired and we put out to sea. We didn't get very far, however, before the ship broke down again so they dumped the garbage that had accumulated and turned back to St. Johns. We did this on three different occasions and each time had to turn back. By this time we were told there was a pack of German submarines waiting for us if we tried it again. Unable to make satisfactory repairs another ship, the John Erickson, was brought in and we were transferred aboard. The John Erickson was an American troop carrier that had started off on the same convoy as the Strathnaver, crossed to England, and was on its return to New York for another load. Conditions were greatly improved on the American vessel. We all got bunks and the chow was typical G.I. chow (not kidney pie)! As the ship's supplies were almost exhausted we had to put back to Halifax to restock stores. After a couple of days we put out to sea, joined another convoy and headed for Liverpool, England. Our crossing counting our stop-over at St. Johns took 42 days and as we were in the American Theater of War for a minimum of 30 days, the Division was awarded the American Theater ribbon.

TRAINING IN ENGLAND

At Liverpool we immediately debarked and loaded onto a waiting troop train that took us to Reading, Berkshire. We of the 401st Glider Infantry were quartered at Brock Barracks, a British Regimental Post, within the city of Reading surrounded on three sides by two story row houses. (I mention the row houses because by becoming

acquainted with our civilian neighbors behind our hut, we could sneak in through their house if we overstayed our trips to the pubs and not have to enter by the main gate.) The barracks were the typical British quarters; double-decker wooden bunks with wire "springs" and a mattress shaped like an ironing board. I never did figure out whether one was supposed to sleep with one's head at the narrow end or the wide end of the mattress. We were told that a good British soldier sleeps at the "attention position, therefore, the head is at the narrow end. Most of us made up our bunks in the reverse position – head at the wide end.



Brock Barracks is still a British Army Post – this is the Keep.



Editor's Note: In our next issue we'll continue Lew's story. Also we'll have a submission from the nephew of Capt. James White, who served with Lew in the 3rd Bn, 325. So please keep sending in those submissions and as always - THANKS FOR READING!

Keep in touch over the Holidays – through the Tow Line!!



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Aerial reconnaissance photograph of the la Fiere-Cauquigny Causeway taken during the war. See book review on pages3-4,

