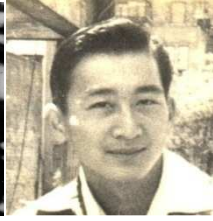


As time goes by, so silently, so eventfully & ultimately so eventually.



Age 3 -farm



Age 23 -College



Age 73 -Parade



Age 84 -Editor



17th Airborne Division's post-dissolution Newsletter

THUNDER MAIL CALL

(Greenwald Edition)

Bill Tom, Editor/Webmaster
154 Stanford Hts Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94127-2349

Email = kn6qd@arrL.net

This newsletter might be sent from thundermailcall@gmail.com

{Website URL = <<http://groups.google.com/group/17th-airborne-division>>},

Date: Greenwald - June 2008

'til the end of me

Please submit your letters, photos or biography for publication. This newsletter is not viable without inputs from you. Send all submissions to kn6qd@ARRL.net . If your name is listed as "Unknown", then my computer has not picked up your full name. You could correct that by submitting your correct name to me.

President Abraham Lincoln's creed (1860-1865) was that "All people are created equal and that all people are to live free". It was his doctrine that had permeated the American will to sacrifice our lives and fortune to free the oppressed. We were not the aggressor in either World Wars, or in any other war.

The last week of May is our annual Memorial Day remembrance of our departed comrades, either those who were KIA or had died of natural causes. We have such a day of remembrance because of our strong presence of military volunteers and draftees who are willing to sacrifice all they had to correct the wrongs of a few dictators in foreign countries. In the 20th Century (1901-2000), we had sacrificed the lives of over a million of our young men and women to regain freedom for others in the world. Yet, as a country, we have not gained an inch of territory, except for the hallowed grounds of cemetery plots to bury our war dead. We appreciate the dedications and remembrance by our friends who are grateful to have regained their lost freedom, and secured comfort for their future generations who now flourish in it.

HAROLD GREENWALD, 680-HQ, Association President in 2004. Our Airborne Troubadour.



Harold Greenwald, 680-HQ, with wife Verna

Harold B. Greenwald, 680-HQ, our Association President for the 2003-2004 term, was born on 3 March 1924 in Cleveland, OH, and was inducted into the army on 14 April 1943 at Camp Perry, OH to join the 680th Glider Field Artillery Battalion, Headquarters Battery at Camp Mackall, NC. After basic training, Hal was sent to Camp Forrest, TN, to participate in the Tennessee Maneuvers. Among his other duties, he was assigned as the mail clerk of the battalion. Hal departed Boston Port of Embarkation on 20 August 1944 to arrive in Liverpool, England on 28 August and stationed at Camp before flying across the English Channel to Reims, France on Christmas Day 1944. He served with the 17th Airborne until the war ended, when he was assigned to the 101st Airborne when the 17th was deactivated. He came home with the 82nd Airborne, participated in the Victory Parade in Berlin and then the Victory Parade in New York City on 6 January 1946.

After being discharged at Indiantown Gap, PA, on 16 Jan 1946, he attended Kent State University, earning his BS degree in Education with a major in instrumental music. He graduated from Ohio State University with a MA degree in 1954, with additional work at Bowling Green State University. He taught instrumental music in Ohio for 34 years before retiring in 1984. He and Verna have been married for since 1949 with three children and five grandchildren. After Verna retired from teaching English, they are devoting their free times to traveling.

Harold and Verna were our perennial troubadour sing-a-long entertainers at our reunions for many years. We all thank them for their expertise at the piano and vocal renditions of songs of yore to offset the perennial war stories retold years after years -- a definite enjoyment for our ladies and others of musical voice. Harold is also noted for his physical stamina of doing his never-failed 70 push-ups every day since his discharge from the army. That is over one million pushups since the war ended. That is real airborne stuff! They don't make troopers like that anymore.

MAIL CALL

16 Apr 08: **Jack Macauley**, 513-HQ2, email = <Nyp554jack@aol.com>. On Oct. 23, 2007 I reached the ripe old age of 90 years and had a party at the country club with 72 people in attendance. My Congressman presented me with a plaque which stated my time in the 17th Airborne Division and the New York City Police Department, and entered it into the Congressional Records. He spoke well of the 17th for which I was very pleased. At least Congress now knows who we were. Stay well, Jack Macauley.



REPLY: Jack, Congratulation for your years so well-lived. I wish you well as you walk the same trail of as my father-in-law, who became 100 years old on May 21st.

18 Apr 08: **Germain Fox, 194-D**, email = "PTrooperGERMAIN@aol.com"



Hello, Bill!, Just writing to say I had thought we were going to receive one more issue of "Thunder From Heaven" after the final reunion in Hampton...I never got one. Am I in error on this???

Please add my e-mail address for communications, info. etc.: I so enjoyed the Hampton reunion & appreciated all the work put into it & thanks, too, for the lovely photos!!

I have joined the American Airborne Assn. so

hope to stay involved on that end.

I hope this finds you in fine form & your family as well. We all enjoyed meeting them in VA. Regards & Airborne. All the Way! Germain Fox, 194-D.

REPLY: Thank you. We are all fine and keeping busy and happy in our own little ways.

20 Apr 08: **Pavel Bergmann**, Honorary-CZ, email = <bergmann.pavel@stc.cz> wrote: Hello Bill. Thank you for the Newsletter. Now I know more about 17th AB. Could we put some articles from your Newsletter to our website? Best Regards, Pavel.

REPLY: Of course, you may! The 17th Airborne is not well-known for the reason described in my second "Sprenger" newsletter. We need to broadcast our role in World War II to the world so that people will appreciate what we did to give them back their freedom. I had just now watched a TV show about Prague. What a wonderful city for me to visit some day.



NOTE: Pavel (Paul) is one of the visitors from The Czech Republic to our Final Reunion at Hampton, VA. In his re-enactor role wearing his medic's emblem, Pavel is a medic for his 513-F re-enactor group in the Czech Republic. I hesitated to tell him that, although not armed, the medics suffered a very high casualty rate in combat. We were trained to observe the Geneva Convention rule to spare the medics, but not so with our enemies, particularly the Japanese. Grenades, mortars, land mines, 88 artillery shells, bombs and snipers also had no such rules.

Roscoe Fox, roscoefox2001@yahoo.com, Thanks so much for your e-mails, I look forward to many more. I am James Flinchum's daughter, he passed away May 31, 2007, we miss him very much and mom is having it kind of rough, but she is doing ok again, THANKS!

28 Apr 08: **Rebecca Jakubowski**, <amish.quilts@verizon.net>



Hi Bill, Got the Thunder from Heaven news bulletin. Good Job! Nice articles! I never knew that the Somers took care of so many American graves. They sure are good people! We had snow here this morning and the weather is dreary and cold.

Comment: Flory is the queen of all our adopters. Joe is the King and Lilly is their lovely princess. We are very grateful for all that they are doing for us.

Dear Uncle Bill, from **Michelle Stahlman**:

I just wanted to let you know how impressed I was with the final Thunder From Heaven.



It was very touching to see an entire page dedicated to my mother. Thank you so much for your kindness. My Dad was so proud and pleased! We all continue to miss Mom terribly. Sometimes I think I can hardly bear to go on without her, but then I remember that she is up in Heaven with Jesus. The reason I know this, is because she asked Him into her heart to be her Lord and Savior.

My brother Warner Johnson

I have been so fortunate in my life. I have had the most caring loving parents anyone could ever wish for. My Dad is trying to keep himself busy, and has been doing a lot of yard work and other assorted tasks around the house. He definitely has his times of sadness and grief though. It has been hard to see Mom's flowers come up and not have her here with us to enjoy them. But..... then I remember, she is in Heaven, where the most gorgeous of all flowers are in full bloom for all of eternity. Isn't that a wonderful thought? Actually, it's more than just a thought, it's a promise.

Please give my best to Linda, it would be wonderful to see you both again! You truly are like family to all of us here in Jamestown. Love, Michelle

NOTE: Michelle is my niece by fact that her dad, Warner Johnson, 194-AT and I became brothers by mutual adoption when we each lost a brother.

29 Apr 08: **AJFEDENTZ**, <AJFEDENTZ@aol.com>

Tom, Ed is doing better and I do hope your health has improved clotting. My e-mail listing is that of my daughter in New Jersey. It was prior to our getting a computersomeyearsago. My address is as follows, ajfedentz@aol.com.

We live in Sanibel, FL and would like to receive your new version of T from H with the latest news. It is great that you are doing this service for the 17th AB. I had a nice long talk with Frank Dillon at Hampton and he wasn't in very good shape. We shared a foxhole or two in Co. C, the first part of our time in the Bulge before he was sent to Co. B. He had told me that he was a jumper in the Forest Service out in the West prior to the Army. On the way up to Belgium in Dec 1944 in a town in France he had us (his platoon of Co. C) out in three inches of snow. He had us stripped to the waist doing calisthenics. The Frenchmen walking by thought we were nuts. Frank was just trying to keep us in shape. It probably helped some of us to make it thru. Thanks again for your past "Mail Calls". FranklinE.Dentz, 194th, Co.C

29 Apr 08: From: **Cenda Brzyk**, Honorary-CZ, 17th AIRBORNE
<17airborne@seznam.cz>



Dear Bill, Our club ordered by 63rd anniversary by Operation Varsity re-enacting illustration for public. I send you photos from this action. I wish you and all your family valid health. Please sorry for the Saturday's phone early morning. *(Cenda called me at 4 PM his time but it was 7 AM for me. It was OK-- I had to get up to answer the phone anyway).* Many greetings from Prague send Pavel

Stehno. www.17th-airborne.eu



The Czech Republic 513-F re-enactors in Operation Varsity at Wesel 2008.

29 Apr 08: **Pierre Ackermans** <pierre.ackermans@hetnet.nl>

Dear friends, Joe Quade, Ed Siergiej, Bill Tom, I hope you are doing well. Thank you very much for sending the Thunder From Heaven last Bulletin. I directly started reading the interesting news and stories.

It is very appreciated you paid full attention to the Overseas Dutch 17th ABN Farewell remembrances. This last TFH edition must be very emotional for all of your veteran-friends. It closes a very friendly period. By this fact, Mr Joe Quade's work for the T.F.H Bulletins ended, but afterwards you can look with much satisfaction to built up such high qualified informative bulletin. I understand you are willing to keep contact between the American and Also Mr Edward Siergiej's work can be overlooked with great satisfaction and appreciation. I am still thankful he invited me as a honorary member of the 17th Airborne Association.

Mr Bill Tom did already a lot of informative work in his TFH- Mail Call-Chapter to connect all members together. I am happy to learn you are willing and hope you are able, for a very long time, to write the Newsletter Thunder Mail Call. I looked with great interest to the first mails and would like to thank you very much for the editions 1 and 2 which I received in meantime. Congratulations.

For all of you a cordial thank you for concerning in the overseas members. Sincerely, Pierre Ackermans

29 Apr 08: **Collin & Ian Dewey** <colin@thunder-from-heaven.fsnet.co.uk>

Subject: Re: 17th Airborne post-dissolution Newsletter--#2

To: Bill K Tom <thundermailcall@gmail.com>

Dear Bill,

Thank you for the email edition of the Mail call. You do a good job, so please accept our thanks, and admiration. You can count on us to represent you guys over here in England. We shall of course be doing events over here through the Summer.

Our new web site is up and running now on www.thundefromheaven.co.uk It has on it many pictures of us doing scenes of your 17th Airborne. Your comments would be much appreciated. Our very best Airborne regards, Colin and Ian Dewey

Real Desmerets: I received the last thunder from heaven (damage that it is finished) but you make a big job with the Newsletter, I hope to still receive many Newsletter of you. Again Bill, congratulation for your job that you make for us. Now in French, merci beaucoup Bill. Take care. Say "hello" to Linda and your family. God bless you all. Airborne All the Way. Réal, Belgian Bomb Disposal EOD – IED, A proud Honorary member of the 17th Airborne Division Association

29 Apr 08: **MELVIN LAGOON** <mellagoon@q.com> Bill, thanks for the great work you sent, I sent it to all my kids & friends. You put it just like it was, Thanks again, Mel Lagoon

30 Apr 08: From: **Ken & Joan Eddy** keneddy@earthlink.net Thank you!!! I really think we need people in Europe to stand up for all those who did good for their countries instead of the brainwashing they get from the Marx's people who believed what Khrushchev said about our country and its fate.

I am in awe of the hard work you have put into the site; it shows all the "caring" you have for the newsletters and the MEN it is about! You have a great gift of presentation, I really enjoy reading.

It is so good to see old pics as I would like to ID the people in my dad's 100 neg/and prints. I even found a few names for the bridges and bombed out towns he has pics of. Sincerely, Joan Eddy

30 Apr 08: **Don & Mickey Banta** outerdrive@msn.com Dear Bill, Col. Del forwarded the latest Mail Call to me and I found the piece on German warnings about Operation Varsity particularly fascinating. Our C-46 was hit by flak going in, but we all got out before it went down (my buddy, Sgt. Rudy Devich, was the last man out and he saw the plane going down on fire) I never knew what happened to the crew, but I distinctly remember one member-perhaps the the Crew Chief- huddled against the forward cabin wall in a flak helmet. As mentioned in the piece, we jumped very low, and I recall hitting the ground in a farm field amid incoming British Horsas seconds after my opening shock. I set about getting some wire rolls out of an equipment bundle when we experienced small arms fire we thought was coming from a nearby barn. We gave suppressing return fire and Rudy ran zig-zagging over to the barn and tossed in a grenade. The fire stopped and we went on our way with my wire to assembly. Having been shot down distant from our appointed DZ, we had a hike to join the Section. We were very lucky because we had no casualties. Please put me on the mailing list for future Mail Calls. With sincere thanks for all your dedicated work for the 17th, Don Banta, 513 HQ (Wire Section)

30 Apr 08: From: **Denise Griffith** dgriff@goeaston.net Subject: Edwin R. Jefferson Easton Maryland. Dear Bill Tom at Thunder mail call, I am writing this for my father, Edwin R. Jefferson, 513-H, and so he can keep in touch with events and news with the 17th Airborne. I will print out messages to him as I receive them. He said to tell you hi! And hope all is well. My email is dgriff@goeaston.net . My name is Denise Jefferson Griffith, the daughter of Eddie. We talk about World War 11 all of the time.

1 May 08: From: **Erwin Flohr**, e.flohr@kpnplanet.nl, Dear Mister Tom, I was so happy to hear from you again and I was glad that you are still around when I read that you had a serious health issue. I received the last Thunder From Heaven too and it was great to read it. There is so much interesting to read. The same counts for your Thunder Mail Call. It's very good to see that there is still interest in the 17th Airborne



Bob Patterson t, 513-E, Dear Bill, Your Thunder From Heaven was great, keep up the good work. For the record: Yesterday, May 1st, '08, Bill Preston , 513th,E. Co., 1st plt.,

passed away peacefully in his sleep. He was at the reunion but since then, had a heart attack in Nov. and a broken hip in Feb. and never fully recovered. He was one great guy, always thinking of others and ready with a joke. He lived his entire life in Frostburg Md. , long time Council member and mayor and for fifty years an active Santa Claus. His wife, two daughters and their families remain in Frostburg. Bob Patterson

3 May 08: From: **Keith Williams**, email = k.williams1937@btinternet.com
Subj: Your recent loss of personnel. The President, Chairman, Committee, and Members of Newbury Royal British Legion wish you to pass our condolences to the relatives of your recently departed comrades.

Yours Faithfully, Keith Williams (Branch Secretary)

REPLY: Mr. Williams, the email address you listed is not accurate

I sent replies to you several times. Each was returned as not acceptable.

I thank you for your fine thoughtful message.

During the night of 23 March 1945, the U.S. 9th army engineers built a pontoon bridge across the Rhine River, dedicated to bringing the wounded airborne troopers back to the many Army Surgical Units, MASH hospitals and Evacuation Hospitals set up on the



west side of the Rhine. Unfortunately, General Montgomery commandeered that medical bridge to push his army across the Rhine. So, for three days, the wounded 17th Airborne troopers were stranded on the east side of the Rhine, unable to be brought over for surgical intervention. When the bridge was finally turned over to the medics, suddenly, there

were many hundreds of wounded troopers to overwhelm every medical facilities. The main hospital for multiple-services was the 113th Evacuation Hospital located at Viersen, which treated the severely wounded, especially the airborne troopers who were also suffering from infectious hepatitis. I took the photo to show the ambulance approach to the large 113th Evacuation Hospital so that our wounded troopers could know where they had been. The tent was the Triage area where wounds were diagnosed and classified to avoid carrying them up and down stairways.

WANT ADS

3 Jun 08: **Rianne Prevoo** <r_prevoo@hotmail.com>

Dear Sir, my name is Rianne Prevoo, I come from a little village called Margraten in The Netherlands. Since a few months I adopted the grave of a soldier who died during WWII and is buried at the American Cemetery in my hometown, Margraten. His name was **Paul J. Scott** and he was a member of the 513th PIR, 17th Airborne Division. He died on March 24, 1945. I would like to find more information about him, his personal history or about the 513th PIR/17th AB Div, so I know who Paul J. Scott was, besides a man who gave his life for our freedom. Many thanks in advance! Best regards, Rianne

2 Apr 08: From: <simon@lerenfort.fsnet.co.uk>

Dear Bill, I have a request which you may like to place in the next newsletter for me.

I am seeking information or personal knowledge regarding a Medic who was killed on June 11th 1944, during the battle for the village of Graignes, France. The Medic was named Jesus Casas and he was in the 507th PIR, part of 82nd Airborne Division at that time of course.

It is my suspicion that he was probably murdered by members of the 17th SS Division who attacked the village on the 11th and eventually took it, despite the brave paratroopers inflicting numerous casualties among them.

If, through your newsletter I might be able to obtain a picture of Jesus Casas it would be greatly appreciated.

Needless to say in these times of email etc I am happy to be sent scans of any pictures that might surface. They can be sent to me at this email address, please put "Jesus Casas KIA" in the subject header. With Best Wishes, Simon

Hello everybody, I need your help.

NOTE: Simon, we need your surname.

Xavier van Daele writes:

I examine this parachutist to put him in the honor on my website: [www.usairborne.be.](http://www.usairborne.be/) / x_va@hotmail.com

If anybody knows him, or the family? I also look for a photo of him? And a photo of its last house? Frederick Kozlowski was born on September 16th, 1923 and died during Operation VARSITY March 24th, 1945.

He entered in the army on March 30th, 1943 to Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. He was a Private First Class member of the Company C of the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 17th Airborne.

Frederick Kozlowski also participated in the campaign 'Battle of the Bulge', he was hurt at the moment or the 17th Airborne lost most man.

It seems that he was killed during his jump in Operation VARSITY near Kamnankelm, Germany. His body rests in the American cemetery of Magraten, Holland. He was 21-year-old.

Can anybody help me? Thank you very much!! A big hello of Belgium!

Very very thank you Bill! Friendly. Xavier Van Daele

NOTE: Xavier is a Belgian who is trying to develop a Website about the 17th Airborne in his French language. He is making a valiant effort to communicate with us by using a computer-assisted English translator that is a bit too literal. I have made some correction to his writing to make it more understandable. I believe he is trying to get more biographical data for Fred kozlowski for his website. If you 513-C guys knew of Kozlowski, please respond to his request for information. His address is: X-va@hotmail.com

On Sat, May 3, 2008 at 7:55 AM, **Lisa W Pratt** <wprtt@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you for sending the newsletter. I have a question I hope you can answer. I noticed that there is a Donald G. Pratt (SGT) buried at the Margraten Cemetery. Do you have any information about this fellow?

REPLY: Lisa: I do not have any information about Donald Pratt. Perhaps, others in our group could help you. I will put your message in our newsletter. Someone might know something. We do not have a Donald Pratt in our Division roster. He could have been a replacement. Since he was killed in combat, only the Army would have his record.

11 May 08: A message from **Steve Wright**

email = marfleetwright@tiscali.co.uk> wrote: Hi, Bill, If you have not already had this request, please put in one for any 466th PFAB members, who knew Walter B Westphal, to contact me. His grand-daughter is hoping to get some stories about him. Thanks, **Steve Wright**

REPLY: Steve: The only information I have for Westphal is that he was a member of the 17th Airborne Association, but he had dropped his membership. His listed address is 30 Amory Street, Pearl River, New York 10965. He was not listed in the original members list of the 17th, so it could be that he was transferred into the division as a replacement. New replacements were usually not well known by the regular members.

I will list your message in the next TMC coming out in two weeks.

COMMENT: If any of you know anything about Walter Westphal, please contact Steve Wright at his email address or to me at my listed address at the header.

MORE NEWS

6 May 08: **Tony Marincola** celebrates his 90th Birthday.



"Enjoying our cruise to Mexico last week having a ball. The show girl was OKed by Genevieve."

Tony

Note: Most guys go out to play golf, watch baseball games or stay home to watch TV. Gosh, I thought that was Genevieve herself!



Tony at Memorial Day Service, 2008.

12 May 08: **Gloria Zernich** gloriaze@verizon.net Thank you so much, Tom. I will save the "Thunder Mail Call # 2. Milas read it from cover to cover. I read it also, but



not as much as he did and still does. Right after we came home to Sewickley from the last reunion at Hampton, Milas got extremely ill in the wee hours of the morning. He was shaking violently and had hard time breathing. We called 911 and an ambulance took him to the nearest hospital which is very near our home. After a long, long wait in the emergency room waiting area, we were told he had pneumonia in almost all his left lung, had respiratory failure and sepsis. We

were told he needed to be intubated and asked if he would want that. Of course, we said "do it". After he was ready, they took him to the critical care unit where he made a slow recovery for three days. They removed the tube, and then transferred him to the intensive care unit. He was in the hospital 6 days in all. He came home and slowly regained his normal breathing and strength. Thank God. We read about your illness and are happy to hear you are well now.

We both are sure he caught the "Bug" on the way home in the plane. That was the second time he got pneumonia after riding in a plane. The first time was on the way home from another 17th Airborne reunion, only that time I got pneumonia also. However the first time, it was not as serious as the form he got after this last reunion. I asked him, "What did you do when you rode in the planes when you were in the Airborne? He never got sick, he said. I guess when a person gets older; those "bugs" have a better target than when we were young. Gloria and Milas Zernich.

COMMENT: I hate to break this to you. In our world, ¼ of the people do not use toilet papers. Some cultures use their left hand to eat with; the right hand is for something else. This might be why some ancient cultures always bow to each other instead of shaking hands. Toilet papers replaced the right hand after the Chinese invented paper. But, for many, paper is too valuable a commodity for the bathroom. This is why International Airports all have automatic flush and no entry or exit doors and doorknobs to prevent spread of infections.

My Berlin Encounter, by the editor

It was VE-Day in Europe. Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945, but the guns fell silent 11 AM on May 8th in America. I was then assigned to Operation Eclipse, with the goal of attacking Berlin with airborne troops in connection with the powerful million-strong U.S. 9th Army, in a mass crossing of the Elbe River, about 50 miles from Berlin. In my recall, elements of our 9th Army was recalled when it was within 25 miles of Berlin when Operation Eclipse was cancelled to let the Russian do it.

President Roosevelt had died on 12 April 1945, and our new leader, President Harry Truman became our new Commander-in-Chief. In my research on that phase of our political dilemma of that time was that Truman had met with Roosevelt only four times

during the four years of World War II. He was not aware that we had the atom bomb until one was detonated in New Mexico during the Potsdam Conference! However, Joseph Stalin appeared to have known about our progress in developing the A-bombs that ended World War II, and, yet, our President did not. Truman sat there, stunned, but Joe had a sly grin – He knew his agents will steal the plans to the A-Bomb, and they did. Amazing, wasn't it?

Such was the climate during Operation Eclipse. It was believed that Roosevelt had promised Joe Stalin the prize of capturing Berlin. So, Operation Eclipse was cancelled, much to the delight of so many of us. General Bradley had calculated that we would have to lose 100,000 to 300,000 men to take Berlin. So, the Russian took that actual loss.

The Russians sealed Berlin for two months while they moved anything of value back to Russia. I entered Berlin on July 4, 1945. The 82nd Airborne and 11th Armored Divisions were scheduled to move into West Berlin once the boundaries of the division of Berlin was finalized at the Potsdam Conference. Meanwhile, the medics had to enter Berlin first to set up the 113th Evacuation Hospital on Wielskistrasse in Zehlendorf because it was believed that the Russians would resist the entry of American combat troops. Our government also required us to have a medical facility available wherever the president traveled. Indeed, I was one of the several medics who had helped to set up the VIP Ward (Very Important Person) should Truman need medical care during the Potsdam Conference.

One of my close buddies was a Private Dick Winter (not the Colonel Dick Winter of Band of Brothers fame). I was absolutely innocent of political matters during the war. All I knew was that Russia was an ally. However, Winter appeared to be a socialist, and he was telling me things I could not agree with. He had even stolen a motorcycle and had driven it into Poland from Berlin before he was caught and returned to the American Zone.

One day, he asked me to accompany him to visit the local Communist Headquarter in East Berlin. There was no Wall or Checkpoint Charley then and we were free to roam everywhere in Berlin. We were in front of the German Communist Headquarters taking photos when a Russian officer came out to question me about my status in the U.S. Army. He had initially thought that I was one of his Siberian or Mongolian troops that were used to attack and later garrison the city. I had the impression that the Russians were afraid of their troops defecting to our side. After viewing my medical ID card, he was satisfied I was not one of his soldiers.

Surprisingly, he spoke very good English and confided in me that Russia would someday take over the United States. I told him there is no way that Russia could ever win a war with us. He said very precisely that they are not to have a war with us. They rattle their swords in a cold war, and our leaders responded by building more weapons instead spending money to fund our college students. But the Russians quietly financed the education of socialist-leaning young American students who could someday become doctors, lawyers, politicians, and judges or anyone with some leadership quality to someday turn the American ideals completely up-side-down to the corruption of our institutions. In time, the socialistic students became highly educated

while our average students flipped hamburgers at MacDonalds to survive. The American dream would then corrode from within.

Thinking back to what the Russian officer had said, I sincerely believe that the Russians have succeeded in doing that to our universities and education system. Innocent malleable minds can be molded and twisted so easily for the politically innocent.

Private Winter and I had had serious discussions later about his socialistic views. I mentioned that Stalin was a socialist, so were Mussolini and Hitler, Yet, once they got into power, they all became extremely tyrannical --- Including Mao and Castro. Those tyrants had killed off over 60 millions of their own citizens when they assumed power. I figured the extremes of socialism is Communism and Facism.

After we had returned home, Dick came all the way from Connecticut to California to visit with me for several days before he vanished. I have visions that he might have defected to some communist country, not to realize too late that his radical socialistic dream would have put him behind bars in some far-away place. Most of our students who had swallowed that socialist dream might someday be this same dilemma.

NOTE: Perhaps that was the reason for our young hoodlums to attack and beat up all uniformed military personnel in San Francisco, which declared itself to be a sanctuary for all dissidents or any anti-American groups. It might have been the reason why our military closed all military bases in the San Francisco area. That included the Coast Guard, the Presidio, all army, navy and air force facilities.

COMMENT: To show you how the Russians have succeeded. The following is about our House Speaker Nancy Pelosi from San Francisco.

Nancy Pelosi wants a Windfall Tax on Retirement Income. In other words tax what you have made by investing toward your retirement. She wants to put a Windfall Tax on all stock market profits (including Retirement fund, 401K and Mutual Funds! This is true to help the 12 Million Illegal Immigrants and other unemployed minorities!

She quotes... 'We need to work toward the goal of equalizing income, (didn't Karl Marx say something like this) in our country and at the same time limiting the amount the rich can invest.

When asked how these new tax dollars would be spent, she replied: 'We need to raise the standard of living of our poor, unemployed and minorities. For example, we have an estimated 12 million illegal immigrants in our country who need our help along with millions of unemployed minorities. Stock market windfall profits taxes could go a long way to guarantee these people the standard of living they would like to have as 'Americans'.' (Read that quote again and again and let it sink in.) Reduce your retirement; give it to others who have not worked as you have for it.

Guess what? Pelosi is up for re-election in November. It was said that Cindy Sheehan, the anti-war activist, might run against her! God, please help us all!! More agonizing is the fact that Speaker of the House is the second in line to replace the office of the presidency.

28 May 08: **Cenda Brzek**, from the Czech Republic. We've found recently an interesting photo on E-bay and we decided to buy it. It is for sure some of the 17th Airborne Division Companies, but nowhere is a sign or marking. So we send it to You, maybe You or someone from Your buddies will remember someone or recognize himself. The photo is too large, so You will become a second e-mail with the other half.

And my other question is about the Airborne meeting on the 7th of September in Massachusetts. There should appear all outfits as the 101st, 82nd and 17th Airborne Divisions? We talked with Sid Laufer, Frank Munafo and Tom Connolly and they would like to go there, so we are planning to appear there also. Do You know more about this reunion? Please let us know if You do. Thank You in advance for any info, Cenda Brzek.

REPLY: Cenda, Ed Siergiej said "I note that the Static Line lists an ALL AIRBORNE UNITS REUNION for Sept. 7, 2008. Location: Onset, Massachusetts. There are two contacts listed for information: Steve Batiste (508)291-1649 & Peter Howlett (508)700-5686. Massachusetts is over 5,000 kilometers from me, Cenda. It would be like you flying non-stop round-trip from Brussels to Moscow and return.

1 Jun 08: **Ken Kasse:** abnalltheway@webtv.net, I will be away until after June 10th. I will be in Normandy till the 10th of June. Jump on June the 6th, I hope. Thanks, Airborne Ken.

7 May 08: **Phyllis Consul (Sal Consul 193),** Hi Tom,



Thanks for remembering me in the Mail Call. You have done a fantastic job and I will appreciate anything you do to keep us informed. I know it is a lot of work. It brings tears to my eyes when I think about all of the good friends and good times that my Sal and I made during the reunion gatherings. I MISS THEM!!! It is sad to read about the ones that are going on before us. Bob Greenstrand always called to check on me and his favorite saying when I asked him how they were doing was "WE ARE

ABOVE GROUND" He always made me laugh with his funny sayings. It is people like you, Siergiej, Quade and so many others that made all of this possible. A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU! Please keep me on the list. You have my e-mail. By the way, when do we have the Italian dinner!!! My regards to Linda. Regards, Phyllis Consul (Sal 193rd)

REPLY: Phyllis, You cook, we eat. First, let me see how much gas I have in my car. We visited Angels Camp last weekend, and I am attaching a photo of Angels Camp that would amuse you. The red long-john was mine! Not to be gruesome, Bob Greenstrand is still above ground. He was cremated and will be buried only when Dorothy is buried in Daly City where Bob was Fire Chief.



Xavier van Daele submitted a photo of his "paper hanging" cat, reincarnated from 1945. I think he should name it, "Der Fuhrer".

19 May 08: **Jean Arnold, the Lady of Maddesley**, wrote the following letter to Joe Quade: Hello Joe, This is to let you know that I am not well enough to attend Coton to lay the wreath, but Tina Foord has kindly agreed to lay it for me. My illness has been long and drawn out, but I am recovering now. I hope to attend next year. I hope you and your family are keeping well. Thanks for the TFH magazine. 60 years is a very long time. I wish all the members well for the future. Jean Arnold.

Comment: Jean Arnold has been a very good friend of the 17th for many years. She has placed a wreath on the 17th graves in the Cambridge, England, and U.S. Cemetery for many years. Would you please add her to your emailing list? /Joe Q.

REPLY: Joe, I have already sent her the first two issues of TMC. /bt



21 May 08: **Xavier van Daele**, Honorary-be, is translating our Website data into French. He is doing that to ensure that the many Belgians and French speaking people will learn more about the contribution of the 17th Airborne troopers who saved them from speaking German, or perhaps Russian (with respect the cold war). Most of important of all, to let them know that freedom is a very valuable commodity and all could have been lost in 1945.

NOTE: I commend Xavier for his devotion to our cause. There is no website written in French about the 17th and he is bent on changing that. I forgot to tell him that our eventual Website will have about 20 Chapters and will also include all the issues of "Thunder Mail Call" yet to come. Xavier, your English would be perfect by the time you finish converting the Website.

OBITUARY

4 Jun 08: A belated report, **Norman M. York**, a Captain, in **194-HQ**, passed away in May 2001.

23 Apr 08: **Matthew R. Mills** <mr mills@uark.edu>

Mr. Tom, It is with great sadness I received my last copy of the Thunder From Heaven newsletter today. I always looked forward to this great publication. The troopers who served in the 17th are definitely some of the most courageous men to ever serve. I would appreciate it if you could add me to your email list so I could continue to receive news about the Division my Grandfather served so proudly with during WWII.

In addition, it is also with a heavy heart that I must tell you my Grandfather Afton (Ed) Spurlock, SSgt. 513 A, passed away on August 31, 2007. To his last day he was proud to have served with and led the brave men of the 17th. Please pass this information along to anyone who might want to know.

Thanks again and I look forward to hearing from you. Lt. Matt Mills, University of Arkansas Police Department, 155 S. Razorback Road, Fayetteville, AR 72701

31 Mar 08: **Benjamin H. Wilson (193-A)**, passed away on 31 March 2008. Following his service in World War II, Ben went to his career field as a "Tool and Die Maker" that he started in 1939. He retired in 1983 and was able to spend several years with his "Family" and enjoying his major hobbies of "Reading, Solving Puzzles and Traveling". He joined our Association as a Life Member in 1994. The cause of He was born Feb. 7, 1916, in Auburn, the son of Benjamin and Helen Vaughan Wilson. He married Kathryn Lucht on July 17, 1943, in Springfield. Ben was a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving during World War II, and was at Normandy on D-Day. Surviving are his wife, Kathryn Lucht Wilson of Springfield; a son, Nick (wife, Marcia) Wilson of Clearwater, Fla.; two daughters, Rebecca (husband, Steven) Jones of New Berlin and Cynthia (husband, Donald) Martin of Springfield; and nine grandchildren.



01 May 08: **T. William "Bill" Preston (513-E)** age 83, Born in Frostburg on March 31, 1925, and passed away on April 30, 2008. He was preceded in death by two wives, Helen Smith and Elizabeth "Betty" James.



Bill Preston was the Mayor of Fristburg and had served in many capacities to help his community. He was retired as a route salesman with Snap-On Tools, and was ordained in 1982 and had ministered to the Church of the Brethren congregations in Romney and Frostburg. Bill was a paratrooper in the U.S. Army's 17th Airborne Div., Co. 513E, and he served in World War II and the Korean War.

Mr. Preston was a deacon and member of the Frostburg Church of the Brethren, member of the Farrady Post 24 American Legion, Mountain Lodge 99 A.F. & A.M. and the Order of the Eastern Star. Bill was also an honorary Frostburg fireman.

Bill was well known in the Frostburg area as "Santa Clause." He portrayed this character for 56 years and made personal visits to many homes each holiday season. He is survived by two daughters, Gail McKenzie and husband Dale, of Frostburg, and Renee Sirk and husband Donald, of Mechanicsville and many relatives.

Mr. Albin O. Larson, Co E, 193rd GIR passed away on 7 April 2007.

Following his service in World War II, **Mr. Larson** was employed by the Mando/Boise Cascade Paper Company. He retired as an "Oiler" in the Chip Processing Plant in 1985. In 1965, Albin and his wife, Leona, felt the call to return to their farming roots, so they made the big move from town to their Roger's Corner property, building a new farm from the ground up. There they had many happy years at "THE FARM" as the family calls it. The farm was a busy place with kids, grandkids and neighbor kids playing with the horses, chickens and cows. Whoever stopped out to visit, whether it was to buy farm fresh eggs or hay, they would be serenaded by Albin on his accordion and of course to eat some of Leona's warm cookies fresh out of the oven.

Mr. Larson joined our Association in 1984 and attended several reunions. He was an Alzheimer's Victim. The cause of death was complications from a stroke at the age of 86.

22 May 08: **Eric Molnar** wrote: Dear Sirs, I am writing to inform you of the death of my father, former trooper **William Francis Molnar**, Ser # 32 745 102, PFC Company "B" 515th Parachute Infantry. He passed away on May 2nd 2008 at age 84 and only 15 days later his wife Pearl E. Molnar passed away on May 17th 2008. On his original honorable discharge papers it says Company "B" 515th Parachute Infantry. I am not sure if there was a 515th and the reason I ask is because on all of his "Thunder From Heaven" issues on his address label it says 513 B. Maybe it was just a typographical error on his discharge papers. The reason I am writing is to see if I might be able to get some type of a history of his service, not just his service records but what battles if any he fought in or anything that might help me know anything that happened during his service. Maybe also now that he has passed have his name placed on some type of memorial. Or find out of some 17th Airborne publication that may have him listed in it so that I may purchase it for me and my siblings. I appreciate your assistance in this matter. Eric P. Molnar

William Francis Molnar , 84, Norfolk, passed away on May 2, 2008. He was survived by his wife, Pearl Molnar, who joined him into eternity on May 17, 2008. He was predeceased by a granddaughter, Racheal Ceurvost; three brothers, Steven, Andy, and Joseph Molnar and two sisters, Emma Papp and Mary Bregg.



Born in Norfolk on December 6, 1923, son of John and Mogdola Stutz Molnar, he married Pearl Papp on October 24, 1950. He was a Masonry Foreman for Alcoa in Massena for 43 years, retiring in 1985. He was an Army WW II Veteran where he served in the 17th Airborne Division in the Battle of the Bulge.

His wife, **Pearl E. Molnar**, 80, Norfolk. Having passed away only 15 days after her husband. She was pre-deceased by her husband on May 2, 2008 and a grandchild Rachael Ceurvorst. Born in Norfolk on September 13, 1927, she was the daughter of Julius and Ethel Nagy Papp Sr. She worked as a secretary at the Pentagon in Washington in her earlier years. She married William F. Molnar on October 24, 1950. He passed away on May 2, 2008.



HEALTH WARNINGS

A miracle drug came on the market as "**Exubera**", an insulin product that can deliver insulin through your lungs by inhalation; thus avoiding the dreaded chore of injecting it with a syringe and needle. Unfortunately, the clinical trials of this drug had shown a significant number of patients developing lung cancers. These incidences appeared to be related to the patient who are smoking, or had been a smoker. The FDA required the manufacturer to add a "Do not smoke

warning when using Excubera” on the label, but had not withdrawn the drug from distribution. It is recommended that, if you are using Exubera, to consult with your physician before continuing to use it.

Another inhalation drug by name of “**Spiriva**” to treat COPD, pulmonary diseases and emphysema had developed strokes in a significant number of patients with no problem in patients using a placebo drug. It was suggested that the patient to consult with his physician before continuing treatment with it.

More News.

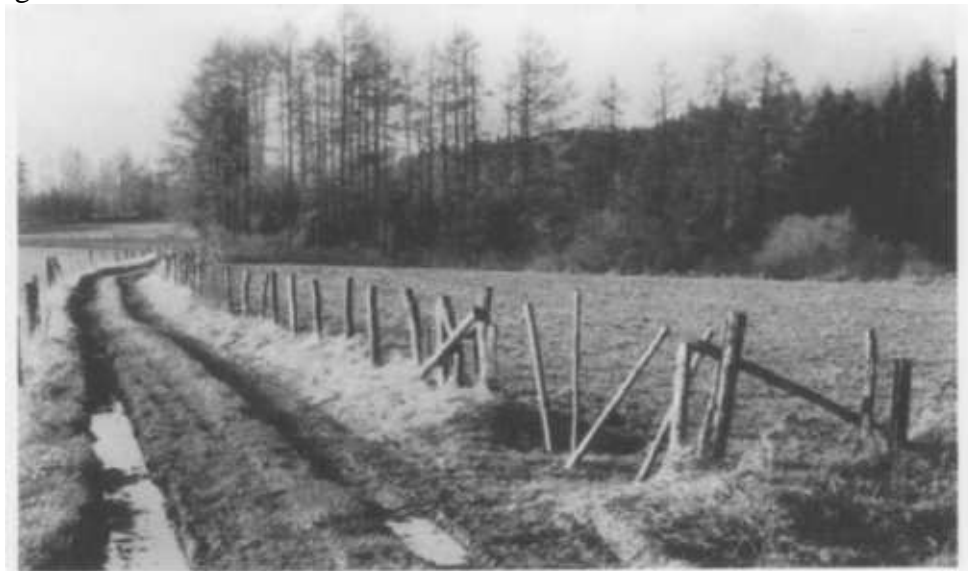
A belated note from **Jimmy Taylor, 680-A**, about his participation in burning the effigy of



Charles E. Wilson, the Secretary of Defense, in 1958. Through a short-sighted decision by Wilson that had transferred our missile program to the Navy with a provision that limited the rocket range to only 200 miles while we were in a cold war with Russia. Russia eventually launched the Sputnik into space, causing us to lose the race for space. That caused our missile program to be quickly restored to the army to finally get us into space. In celebration, thereof, a Huntsville seamstress made an effigy of Wilson and the people, headed by Jimmy Taylor, burned it in their town Square. This was their assessment of this inept political appointee who actually headed our cold war efforts against Russia in the 1950's.

We can depend on trooper Jimmy Taylor to do what had to be done – in war and in peace.

Battle of the Bulge. On January 7, 1945, this was the killing field for our 193rd Glider Infantry troopers. This was where the 193rd lost many of its men. As I gaze upon this landscape, I could almost see our guys trudging ankle-deep in snow, under orders from General Patton to attack a German unit, not knowing that the German unit was a Panzer tank unit. I can picture my MIT classmate, Duane Waldo having suffered his fatal wound here. It was airborne riflemen fighting against tanks.



The Ardennes field where the 193rd Regiment was committed to battle.

Memorial Day, 2008, in Europe:



Some pictures of the Memorial Day taken today in the ARDENNES AMERICAN CEMETERY AND MEMORIAL BELGIUM. It was a great ceremony of memory, and many emotions when the children of the Communal school of Rocheux sang the American National Anthem. Never will we forget.

Marianne and Réal Desmarets, BELGIUM, Honorary member of the 17th Airborne Division Association.

MEMORIAL DAY COMMEMORATION AT MARGRATEN, 2008.

Hello all dear friends, Today we attended the Memorial at the Margraten cemetery again. The whole week long the weather forecast was saying about rain. But fortunately it was a nice sunny day. Sincerely, **Lilly, Flory and Joe Somers**



"Red roses for every one on my list"



Rain was anticipated, but umbrellas were useful in the hot sun; Flowers waiting to be placed. Children also took part in the ceremony.



Flory at Margraten; Wreaths for the 17th Airborne Division; A Dutch lady with one of the veterans



Veterans of the 104th Infantry; Wreath waiting for placement; Flory at the grave of Mr. Utecht. His body was found 50 years after the war. His grave is on the very end of the cemetery, but he is very popular as you can see by the many flowers. (We had a Herbert W. Utecht (466 Parachute Field Artillery) in the 17th).

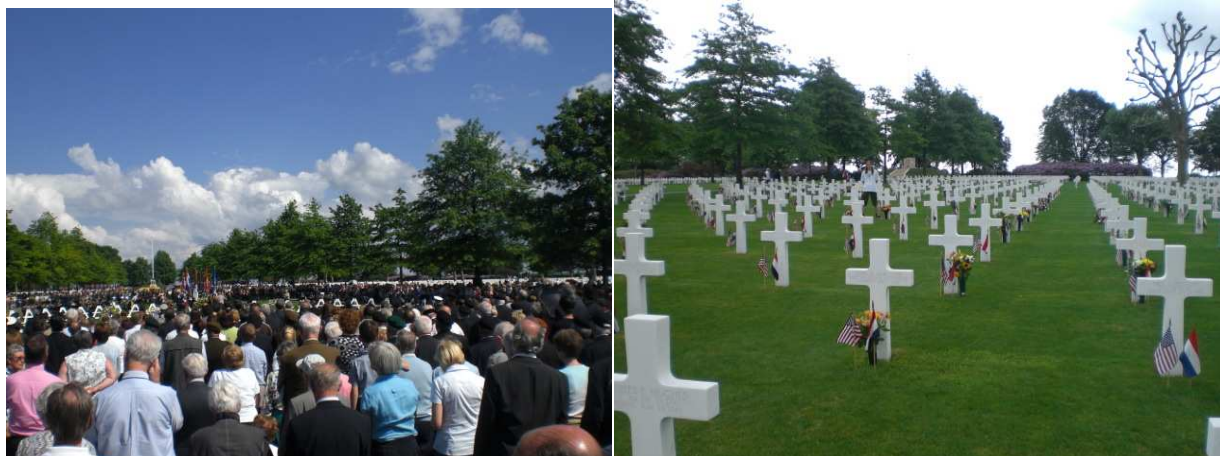
26May 08: **Wesley Haex**: Hi mr. Tom, I send you some photo's from Memorial Day 25 May 2008. It was a wonderful, very hot and busy day. Regards, Wes



Wesley with his adopted site of Captain McGee, MD; Fly over of “Missing Man” formation.



The massive crowds at the Margraten Cemetery Memorial.



A sea of gracious people to remember our sacrifices on the field of battle; Wesley Haex amidst the sea of crosses that marked our fallen. (Please identify the “arrow object” behind Wesley –was it an apparition?)

15 May 08: **John Smeets** writes, Dear all, As you all probably know, I've adopted graves on the American Cemetery at Margraten. One of these graves is the grave of William F. Davis.



Yesterday the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs mentioned William Davis and me and talked about a picture of my daughter Janne at Davis' cross. I was touched and honored. In his speech, he started with the following statement: *“I stand here filled with great respect and gratitude, as we commemorate the American servicemen who gave their lives for our freedom. I know Margraten well - in fact I know it very well. When I was a boy, growing up in Maastricht, my father often brought us - his three young sons - to this place. My father was the son of a Buchenwald prisoner, who was*

forced to go into hiding himself during the War - so he knew first-hand what it felt like to live under oppression, without freedom, and in constant fear. When the Netherlands was liberated, he was eternally grateful. And he impressed his gratitude on his children. He taught us that liberty cannot be taken for granted. That it had been bitterly fought for. And that it had come at a great cost - with the loss of many young lives. To me, Margraten is a lesson about life. It symbolises the fact that good is stronger than evil, that what is wrong can be made right. By willpower, by devotion, by sacrifice. Who I am today is partly because of Margraten - and that is why I feel truly honoured to be speaking here today.

27 May 08: **Pierre Ackermans**, Another impression from “The Day After “Memorial Day 2008. Among the row of wreaths a special one of the 17th ABN.

As mentioned earlier, a group of 10 basic members of the Dutch 17th ABN Ass'n arranged a wreath laying on Memorial Day 2008 in continuation of the Varsity and the Farewell commemoration to honour the buried troopers of the 17th Airborne.

With warm greetings, Pierre Ackermans.



COMMENT: We send thanks to all who had attended the commemorations of Memorial Day at Margraten. I suspected that others around the world had also gave thanks for having regained their freedom.

MEMORIAL DAY at my home on the hill.



A huge flag hangs high from my deck.

San Bruno National Cemetery, the largest in the U.S., filled to capacity with 140,000 burials.



Ernie Kim's (513-H) cremains are buried in the sloping grounds of the flag mound; Medal of Honor Stuart Stryker (513-E) is buried under the shade of a big tree, with special gold engravings on his granite marker. (Florals by rf).
On Memorial Day, there was a one-way, no parking, traffic jam, inside the cemetery grounds, limiting my access.

My granddaughter, Shellie, helped me to blow out some of my 84th year candles at Jackie's home (*She was the photographer at our Final Reunion*). Jackie barbequed my birthday wish of a Porterhouse T-bone steak, cooked rare. At 84, I have passed my point of no return. Damn the cholesterols -- full speed ahead! It's OK, both Linda & Jackie are nurses,

It was said that I was born a double Gemini, complicated by fact that I was also born in the year of the Rat as my astrological sign of the Chinese Lunar Calendar. Since East met West, I became a 'Gemini Rat', the worse kind of rodent!

After consuming 2 pounds of Porterhouse steak, I went for a long 3-mile walk with my family that brought back memories of the 25-mile hikes in army basic training, now 65 years in the distant past.

The 17th Airborne Board of directors has purchased the latest model of Hewlett-Packard



desktop computer with a 750 G-bytes hard-drive, 4-Gig memory and a 22-inch monitor screen for me to encourage the publishing of newsletters. As soon as I learn how to manipulate this fantastic computer, life will be made easier. I thank the Board of Directors for their wisdom to ensure these timely publications. This computer will also be used to maintain the **17th Airborne Division Website**. This Website will be our only continuing connection into the future as we all slowly age into eternity some sad

dreary day. The future generations will get to know us.

COMMENT: This photo shows my work area, compacted by three printers, three high power HAM radio transceivers, a large electric magnifying lens, a TV, A DVD-copier, a paratrooper doll hanging from the ceiling (upper right corner), a telephone, a toy dog on top of my computer, piles of photos and reference papers and notes, a tea cup and a coffee cup, a 'mouse', a camera, the new computer, and a scanner, miles of electrical wires and the all- important external data backup drive. Plus a voltage protector device to prevent voltage spikes during electrical outages or lightning. My actual work space is a little over one square foot, the size of my keyboard.

1 Jun 08: Message for **Joe Quade from Adolph Martinez**: Dear Joe: The work you have done over these many years in keeping the 17th alive and informed, has truly been outstanding. Blanche and I hope that you and yours will keep in good health. The final edition of TFH is outstanding. Our family was 13 strong at Hampton. My foxhole buddy, Beryl Grey (deceased) was represented by his wife, Fern, and 4 members of their family. We had a wonderful time.

NOTE: I remembered meeting Adolph and his son, Mike, on a bus going on a reunion tour. Adolph told me that he was captured by the Germans, and the Germans did not know what to do with him because Adolph by any other way of spelling is very close to their boss, Adolf (Hitler).

4 Jun 08: John Kaminski, <jkam451@wideopenwest.com> wrote: On Friday, May 2, 2008 I had the opportunity to speak to four World History classes at Beachwood High School in Beachwood, OH. I spoke to them about my experiences serving with the 17th Airborne in World War II. Their teacher, Ms Karissa Piper, invited me to speak to her classes after hearing about me from my son John who is a math teacher at the school. Ms Piper and most of her students, who are ninth graders, had never had the chance to speak with a World War II veteran.

The students had a lot of questions about being in combat as they had never spoken to a combat veteran. They wanted to know what weapons we used, what kind of food we ate, and how we slept. Most of them had never heard of a foxhole before! I also told

them that anyone who says they were not scared in combat is the world's biggest liar. The students were also interested what I thought about the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan. I explained to them that I was on a ship headed towards Japan when the



bombs were dropped. I described the feeling we got from hearing about the bombs and knowing that we would not have to invade Japan. I told them that it felt like what they feel when they get a very expensive present for their birthday or for Christmas.

I illustrated my talk with pictures from our training, from the Battle of the Bulge, from Operation Varsity and from our reunion. The students thought it was very "cool" that I still keep in touch with other soldiers from my unit. I also brought in a model of the Waco Glider I flew in and the 75 mm howitzer that we used in the 680B Battery. A few souvenirs I showed them included German medals, part of Nazi flag, silk from a parachute, and my ID band from the Bulge.

The students were very interested in my talk and remained quiet and attentive throughout the whole talk. Each class sent me a thank you card. I hope to be able to go again next year to Beachwood High and share the story of the 17th Airborne with a new group of students

COMMENT: John, we are proud of what you have done. We are certain that Sophie would have been too. I used to march in parades with the 11th Airborne group. At the end of the march, two boys came up to me to ask, "How many did you kill in the war?" I said I was a medic, I was not supposed to kill. The other boy said, "Let's go, this guy didn't kill nobody."

THANKS FOR FORWARDING THIS NEWSLETTER TO YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS.

NOTE: I have spent many days and evenings restoring and uploading data onto our Website. It was intended to be informative only, and it was not professionally created.

There remains some more refining to restore the damage done to it during my computer crash.

The data is there, but the Biography reference page notations are no longer accurate since

I had to move data around.

Our Website URL = <<http://groups.google.com/group/17th-airborne-division>>,