



PANTHER PRESS

WWII TANK DESTROYER SOCIETY



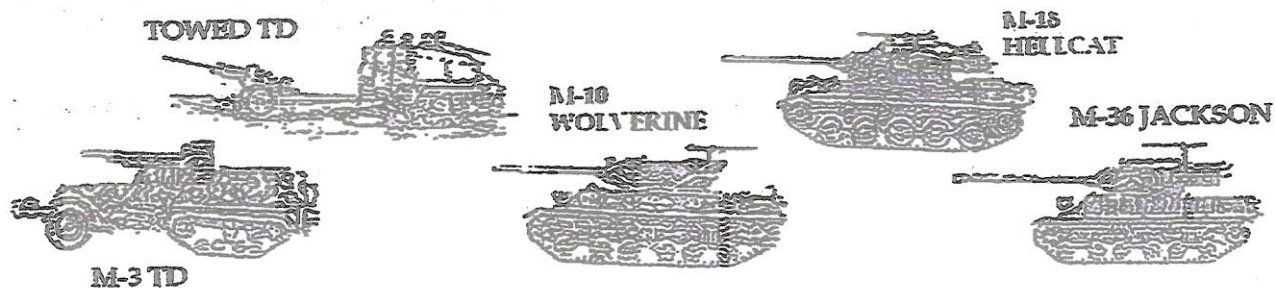
"ROLL TD's ROLL"

FALL 2007



7th Armored Division Veterans at Ospel Monument Dedication

From Left: William Boles (A/23 AIB), Calvin Boykin (Rcn/814 TD), Irvin Cash (A/77 Med), Edmund Burke (3/C/38 AIB), Robert Montgomery (1/A/38 AIB, 7AD Association President), Samuel Carrubba (AT/B/38 AIB), Niek Hendrix (Harry's son, who created the monument), Johannes Jansen (Rcn/23 AIB Dutch volunteer), Harry Hendrix (who wished to honor the men who liberated his home)





WORLD WAR II TANK DESTROYER SOCIETY

OFFICERS 2007 – 2009

Calvin C. Boykin	President
Bart Botta	1st Vice President
Bob French	Secretary/Treasurer
Bill Oettle	Vice President
Ken LeLacheur	Vice President/Editor
Dayton Edie	Vice President
Fredrick Wolff	Vice President
Pat Chase	Vice President / Co-Historian
Doris French	Office Manager
Harold Tetlie	Chaplain

COVER STORY

SEVENTH ARMORED DIVISION ASSOCIATION VICTORY TOUR

Some 32 former members of the 7th Armored Division and attached units, including the 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion, participated in the Victory Tour of Holland and Belgium 24-30 May 2007. A few family members also participated, including my sister, Jo Anne Boykin, we the only representatives of the 814th TD Battalion. My wife Rosemary was unable to travel this extensively.

This tour centered on the dedication of a monument on the Hendrix farm near Ospel, Holland, planned, financed, and erected by the Hendrix family and other citizens of the area, honoring some 48 armored infantrymen who had died during the battles of the Peel Marshes in October/November 1944 near Ospel. Their names are inscribed on the monument and the ceremony proved most moving, for several family members of those who had died were present. Neik Hendrix planned and organized the monument idea with the help of Wesley Johnston, whose late father served with the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion.

Our group, headquartered at Weert, toured much of the area around Liesel, Nederweert, Astin, and Meijel, where a fierce German attack was repelled by the 7th Armored. We visited the War Museum at Overloon, where the first fierce battle was fought. Our group participated in the Memorial Day Ceremony at the American Cemetery at Margraten, near Maastricht, Holland, where among numerous other groups, we laid a wreath commemorating those of our division who had fallen. Many Dutch citizens have adopted these graves, including one man whom I met, has been caring for the grave of a fallen member of the 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Our tour included two days in the Belgian Ardennes, organized and led by Hans Wijers, a Dutch artifact collector and Battle of the Bulge historian. We were met and entertained by the Mayor of St. Vith, site of the famous 7th Armored defensive battle of 17-23 December 1944, where we laid a wreath at his compound. At Vielsalm, where 7th Armored monuments are located, we received a welcome from the mayor prior to a wreath-laying ceremony, followed by the mayor's hosted dinner for us.

We visited Baugnez, the site of the infamous "Malmedy Massacre" of 17 December 1944, the second day of the Hitler's Last Gamble, where some 85 soldiers of Battery B 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion died. We also visited the U.S. Memorial at Wereth (Amel) Belgium, honoring the eleven African-American soldiers of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion of the 106th Infantry Division who were massacred there, also on the 17th. We laid 7th Armored wreaths at both of these massacre sites. We also visited and had lunch at Elsenborn Camp and visited the museum.

My sister Jo Anne and I arrived in Maastricht two days before the tour began and we visited friends of mine there, whom I met and got to know well during one of the 7th Armored's (and the 814th's) few breaks during the war. My friend, Theo Vromans, as public relations officer with the City of Maastricht, was interviewed on the ABC Good Morning America TV show held in Maastricht, broadcast on 16 May 1989. The liberation of Maastricht figured large in the interview of Theo and Victor Salem, a former Captain with the 30th Infantry Division, which had liberated the city on 14 September 1944. When Charles Gibson, the interviewer, asked Theo if he still had American friends from those days of World War II, Theo quickly responded: "Calvin Boykin and his wife Rosemary—College Station, Texas—814th Tank Destroyer Battalion!" Had our TD Society's Colonel Bob French been watching, his reflex reaction would have been: "Roll TD's!—Roll!"

-----Calvin C. Boykin, Jr.,
814th TD Battalion

BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION, TX
EAGLE

Sunday, June 10, 2007

Region

theeagle.com

LETTERS

Remembering

Yes, the numbers of World War II veterans are thinning and their steps are slowing, but there are still a few who work every day, still writing their histories, still telling their stories, still reliving those moments. My father, Calvin C. Boykin Jr., is one of them. He just returned from a 7th Armored Division tour of Holland and Belgium. He and his comrades retraced their steps, reminisced and placed wreaths at several battle sites.

The young man who arranged this tour has been corresponding with my dad for 10 years. My dad also visited a dear friend in Maastricht, Netherlands. They met when his 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion liberated the city of Maastricht. Our families have remained friends and corresponded through the years.

It never ceases to amaze me how the next generation of European families maintains respect and tenderness toward the American soldiers and their families. I had a

casual conversation with a young Dutchman in a Tokyo airport one time. The conversation drifted to World War II when I mentioned our friends in Maastricht. He was so gracious when he thanked me for our American soldiers during World War II. The stories of our American soldiers are continuing to be told to the next generations of European children. This is a legacy that we need to continue here as well. Thank you for remembering.

ANNE BOYKIN
College Station

1
J
f
1
ti

Ken - I should note that it was the 30th Infantry Division that liberated Maastricht on 14 Sept. 1944. At least Anne didn't claim that the 814th won the war -
Pal

Looking Up to Glen Cooper

I am somewhat of a packrat, as I like to save different things and that includes different articles in the newspapers that I feel might be even more interesting to me and some other people at a later date. I have a small library of books which I like, mostly of World War II history, philosophy, theology, and quite a few on building construction. Fiction holds very little interest to me. I have some copies of newspapers when the Minnesota Twins won the World Series and the 1986 ice palace, which I worked on and I believe that some of my kids will enjoy looking at these in years to come, but every now and then my wife gets after me to go through my collection and throw some things that may have outlived their usefulness, and that is what happened just recently.

In 1986 Milaca celebrated its centennial. It was a wonderful affair that included all class reunions. One of the many things they did was to publish a special edition of the school paper, the Milachi. In the paper were articles that they thought might be of special interest taken from various papers that were issued over the years since the first paper was printed in 1919. I found the whole paper interesting and, of course, there were many articles that I liked better than others, but there was one that really got my attention. It was from a Milachi dated January 1932. The title was "Garvey, Cooper Make a Comparison in Height." One of the most interesting comparisons between two individuals in high school is the striking resemblance in the height of Emmett Garvey, senior and Glen Cooper, midget freshman. Emmett, who boasts the lofty height of 6'2" has to look way down to recognize Glen, who is 4'2". Upon entering high school, Glen, who is undoubtedly the shortest student ever to enroll here, was surprised to hear a sophomore tell him the way to the first grade room.

My brother, Glen, who was 8 years older than me, started high school a few years later. He and Glen Cooper, along with his brother, Mark, became very close friends and they were that for all of their lives.

Those were the days of the Great Depression and to find work that paid almost anything was very hard. Besides the lack of opportunity to work, it was very hot and dry for a number of summers in a row, so the yield from crops was very low.

The Cooper boys spent quite a bit of time at our place which may have been because we had more. Their father had left their mother to care for 9 children all alone. There were 10 kids in our family, but I believe there was more food to eat in our house.

One day when Glen and Mark were at our place, a litter of pigs had just been born. Sometimes, some little pigs would have small black teeth and they would be very sharp, which would be very painful to the mother sow, so she would push them away. If they could not get enough of their mother's milk, they would not grow as they should and may even die. The solution was to catch each little pig and check his teeth. If there were any sharp, black teeth, take a plier and break off those sharp points.

Later that same day we were sitting around the big dining room table, eating our noon meal, we called it dinner. I was sitting next to Mark. I was about ten years old at that time and probably curious about a lot of things. I said to Mark, "How come you are younger than Glen but you are bigger?" I can still remember the grin on his face when he answered, "I think he had black teeth." I think we laughed all of our lives when that story was retold. But the Cooper boys liked our family and our family felt the same way about them. Years later when they were married,

Mark named their first daughter, Laura, after our mother. Glen never got very big but he did grow to be 5'5".

Time moves on and in 1943 the Allies are fighting the Germans and Italians in the desert of North Africa. There is an article in the Minneapolis paper. It was written by the famous war correspondent, Ernie Pyle, who also wrote the book, There are no Atheists in Foxholes, before his death while covering the invasion of Okinawa. The article said, "On the road to Gafsa, I came across Sgt. Glen Cooper from Milaca, Minnesota, smoking a rare cigarette, while waiting to move his self-propelled gun forward."

Glen had come a long way since somebody wrote of him as a midget freshman to the sergeant crew commander on a M-10 tank destroyer with the 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion with a four-man crew under him. The M-10 was a full track vehicle with a 50-caliber machine gun and a 3" gun, which was very effective against enemy tanks.

The Germans were finally forced out of Africa and the war moved on into Italy. Somewhere during this time, Glen was wounded and sent to a hospital in England, where he met Nell, a girl who would become his wife.

The 899th T. D.'s was brought back to England to get ready for D-Day invasion of Europe on June 6, 1944. They landed on Utah Beach and went on across France, Belgium, and Germany until V-E Day in May of 1945.

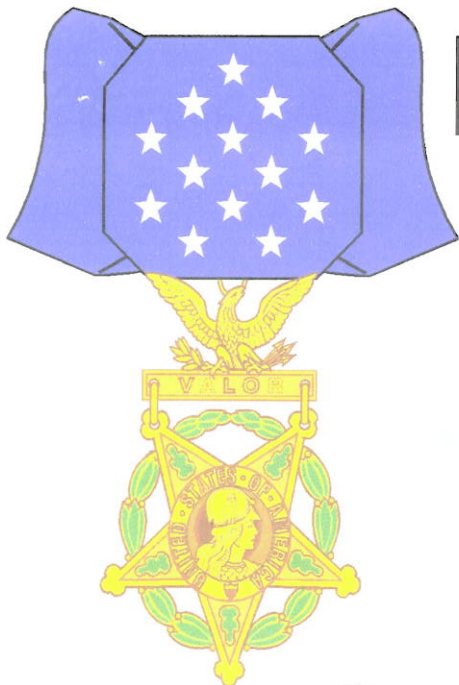
I was home on furlough when out to our place came Glen Cooper. He is not a sergeant anymore. He has bars on his shoulders. He is now a lieutenant. He received a battlefield commission. Those kinds of commissions were given only to enlisted men who showed exceptional leadership abilities. The 899th had six campaign credits, usually referred to as battle stars plus the amphibious landing in Normandy by way of Utah Beach. The company Glen was in had a Presidential Unit Citation. He had two Purple Hearts, which stand for wounded in combat and I believe he had a bronze star or more and I believe he would not have received a battlefield commission without them. All this seems pretty impressive for a boy said to be the smallest boy to enter Milaca High School.

Time moves on and we are all getting older and I went to Dr. Bye to get my eyes tested. The result was that I needed new glasses. He sent the figures to the company that made the glasses for him. Some time later I got my new glasses and there is a note with them. I don't remember the exact words but it was something like, "Hi, Bud. I hope these new glasses work well for you." It was signed, Glen Cooper.

As the years went by, Glen and Nell had three boys and a girl. They moved from Bemidji to Grand Forks, North Dakota, and became the owner of a very successful company. So I think that we can look up to the smallest boy to enter Milaca High School.

Bud Helmen

Elmer (Bud) Helmen joined Company C of the 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion as a replacement in February of 1945. He graduated from Milaca High School in 1944.



The Nation's Highest Military Award

The Medal of Honor

The Bravest of the Brave

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
IN THE NAME OF THE
CONGRESS TAKES PLEASURE IN
PRESENTING THE MEDAL OF HONOR TO**

Sgt. Arthur O. Beyer

Rank and organization: Corporal, U.S. Army, Company C, 603d Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Place and date: Near Arloncourt, Belgium, 15th January 1945.

Entered service at: St. Ansgar, Iowa.

Born: 20th May 1909, Rock township, Mitchell County, Iowa.

G.O. No.: 73, 30th August 1945.

CITATION:

He displayed conspicuous gallantry in action. His platoon, in which he was a Tank Destroyer gunner, was held up by antitank, machinegun and rifle fire from enemy troops dug in along a ridge about 200 yards to the front. Noting a machinegun position in this defense line, he fired upon it with his 76-mm gun killing 1 man and silencing the weapon. He dismounted from his vehicle and under direct enemy observation. Crossed open ground to capture the 2 remaining members of the crew. Another machinegun, about 250 yards to the left, continued to fire on him. Though withering fire, he advanced on the position throwing a grenade into the emplacement, he killed 1 crewmember and again captured the 2 survivors. He was subjected to concentrated small arms fire but with great bravery, he worked his way a quarter mile along the ridge, attacking hostile soldiers in their foxholes with his carbine and grenades. When he had completed his self-imposed mission against powerful German forces, he had destroyed 2 machinegun positions, killed 8 of the enemy and captured 18 prisoners, including 2 bazooka teams. Cpl. Beyer's intrepid action and unflinching determination to close with and destroy the enemy eliminated the German defense line and enabled his task force to gain its objective.

MAIL CALL

As you can see there is **NO MAIL!** Please write in and give us some news to print. Anything you feel should be published. We look forward to receiving your mail.

PLEASE SEND ALL MAIL TO:

Ken LeLacheur

35 Gibson Rd

Milford, CT 06461-2117

Thank you,

Ken LeLacheur

Editor and Publisher

THE EDITORS VIEW

As you know the last news letter was supposed to be the final issue. President Boykin has asked me to keep it up so I will continue as long as I am able. I would really appreciate all of your help with any feedback and news as to what is happening with our members whether it be awards, sickness or death's. Let's all help keep this new letter alive.

Elections are now over. We received a total of 64 ballots and the complete slate was re-elected. You may notice that a few names are missing. Those missing have passed away. Thanks to all of you that took the time to vote.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO:

Ken LeLacheur
35 Gibson Rd
Milford, CT 06461-2117

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Bud Helman of the 609th T.D. He sent the interesting article about Glen Cooper. Thanks Bud.

Rudy Cooper of the 805th T.D. He sent us a copy of his book, Seeds Of Endurance. It is a powerful and amazing autobiography about his time in Africa and Italy. It is truly written by a great soldier.

To buy his book, send a check or M.O. for \$22.50 to

Rose Wilkinson
8327 East Balfour Drive
Tucson, AZ 85710

\$20 for the book
\$2.50 for postage



Col. Bob French with Ken LeLacheur in Dadeville Alabama, April 2007.

THINGS TO SEE:

When in New England, be sure to visit the Military Museum of Southern New England.

Exit 3 off Rt 7. Take your first right off the exit then a right onto Park Ave. Museum is about 1/2 mile on the left.

Please visit their website at:
www.usmilitarymuseum.org



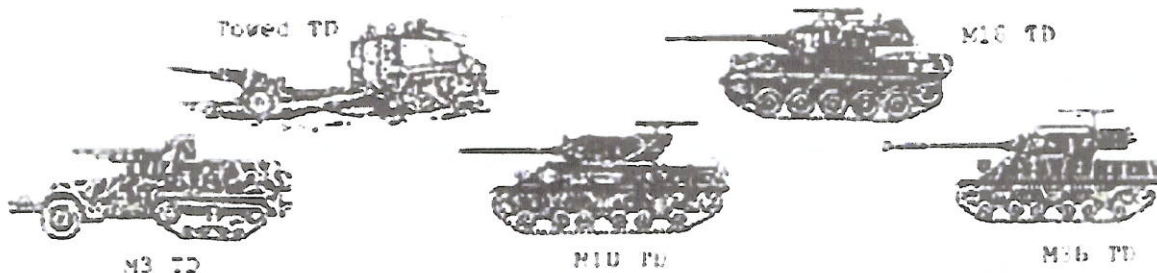
PANTHER PRESS

WWII TANK DESTROYER SOCIETY



"ROLL TD'S ROLL"

FALL 2007



WWII Tank Destroyer Society
Ken Lelachur V.P.
35 Gibson Road
Milford CT 06461-2117