

★ ★ ★  
★ 1998 ★

# *Re-Union Bulletin*

The 776th  
TANK DESTROYER BATTALION



**"The Vandals"**





## CAMPAIGNS



### TUNISIA

16th March '43 - 9th May '43



### NAPLES - FOGGIA

16th September '43 - 21st January '44



### ROME-ARNO

22nd January '44 - 9th September '44



### RHINELAND

30th October '44 - 21st March '45



### CENTRAL EUROPE

22nd March '45 - 8th May '45



## PRESIDENTIAL CITATION

"A" and "C" Companies - 63rd Division - Seigfried Action  
"A" Company - 2nd Battalion, 114th Infantry - Schalbach, France  
"C" Co., 1st Platoon - 1st Bn., 114th Inf. - Enchenburg, France



## UNIT MERITORIOUS SERVICE PLAQUE

Headquarters Company



## COMMENDATIONS

1st Armored Division  
34th Infantry Division  
2nd Division Infantry Moroccan  
Combat Command "B", 1st Armored Division  
85th Infantry Division  
91st Infantry Division  
5th United States Army





Dear Vandals,

I wish to thank all the committee members who put in so many hours of meeting time, idea collecting and assistance with the reunion. While we enjoyed our meetings we were ever mindful that we had a task at hand. Boy, did everyone pull through!

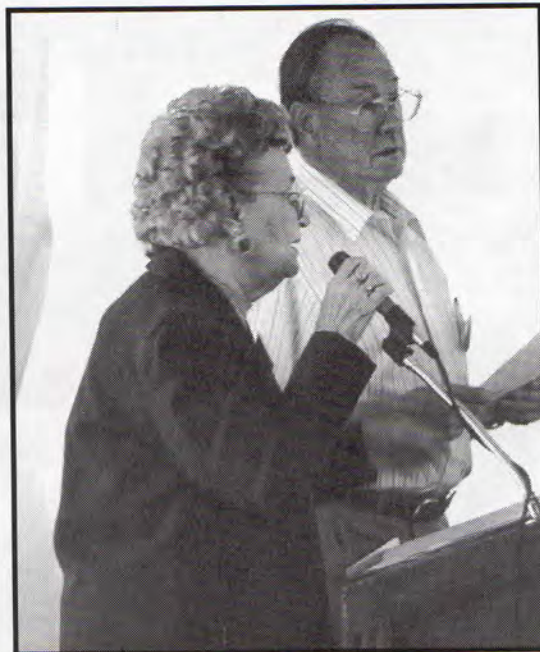
Committee members included: Val Thompson (vice-president), Marianne Brueggemann (reunion chair), Florienne and Madelyn Grundhoefer, Dan and Dorothy Laurila, Euphelia Michels, John and Doris Nicholls, (In Memory of Bea Dempsey).

A special thank you to Marianne—I don't know how we would have put this whole thing together without your expertise and experience. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

I'd also like to thank Deb Laursen and Karla Michels-Boyce for putting their computer talents to work and producing such wonderful programs and nametags. We had so many donations from so many different companies and individuals—we could not have done it without you! Thanks!!

It was so good to see so many old friends at the reunion. It was a really fun weekend. We missed the folks who couldn't make it, but we hope to see you in Texas.

*Walt Michels, President*



Marianne Brueggemann and Walt Michels

Dear Vandals:

I want to express publicly my grateful thanks and appreciation to my fantastic committee. Each and every one donated so much of their time and gave me so much help. The reunion was successful only because of these wonderful folks. In addition, we were given the gift of the time and talents of the Michels and Laurila children.

Wayne Michels donated all the McGlynn Bakery goodies for our Hospitality Room. Thank you, Wayne, for this very generous donation! Wayne's wife, Mary, beautifully decorated the McGlynn-donated "Welcome Vandals" cake. Thank you, Mary, for this amazing artwork! Karla Michels-Boyce designed and printed our nametags, donating all time and material. Thank you, Karla, for your special gift!

Deb (Laurila) Laursen designed and printed our registration, agenda and program—even processed the mailing. Thank you, Deb, for the time and talents you gave us!

Duane Laurila delivered and set up the beer kegs. In addition,

Wayne returned the tub and empty keg to the supplier. Thank you, Duane, for all your time and effort!

**Special Acknowledgement: Dorothy (Wadle) Brede** designed and donated the floral centerpiece for our registration table, and donated her dad's memorabilia mirror for a "Vandals Only" banquet drawing.

I now want to thank the committee for the recognition certificate given me at the banquet; and thanks to all of you for the unexpected collection I received. This appreciation "Thank You" overwhelmed me and touched me deeply.

**IN MEMORY OF BEA DEMPSEY**, our committee member who died January 3, 1998.

I hope all had a memorable and fun reunion. See you in Texas next September.

*Marianne Brueggemann, Reunion Chair*

## 22nd 776th TANK DESTROYER BN. REUNION COMMITTEE

Dear Vandals:

All of us on the 1998 reunion committee were excited and happy that everyone had a great time at the reunion. We hope all the photos in this bulletin will preserve all the good memories and comradeship you experienced. We thoroughly enjoyed planning the reunion. In fact, we got so used to meeting every month and became such good friends that we formed a "Committee Reunion Club" and meet monthly at the Marriott Hotel.

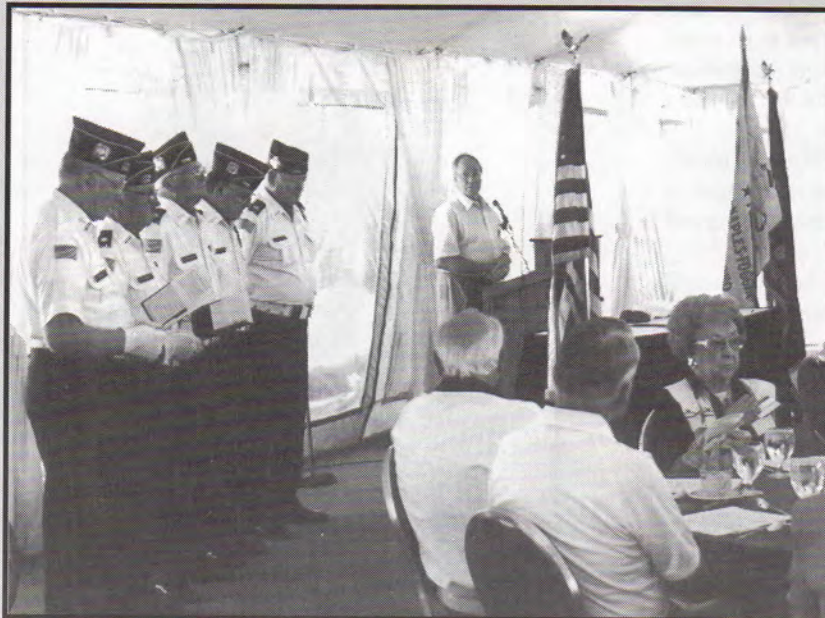
We're all looking forward to seeing you next year at Camp Hood, Texas. Until then, we wish you good health, good friends and happy times with your families.

*The 776th Reunion Committee*

Seated, left to right: Doris Nicholls, Madelyn Grundhoefer, Florienne Grundhoefer, Marianne Brueggemann. Standing, left to right: Val Thompson, John Nicholls, Dan Laurila, Dorothy Laurila, Phyll Michels, Walter Michels.







## '98 Reunion Scrapbook

Upper left: Everett McClay VFW Post 1296 presented the colors and gave the memorial service for deceased 776th members who died during September 1996-September 1998.

Middle left: Louis and Violet Barone and family.

Middle right: September 20, 1998. Walt Michels, President, calls 22nd 776th Tank Destroyer meeting to order.

Bottom: clockwise, l to r - Renee Laurila, Deb Laursen, Dorothy Laurila, Eileen and Lowell Hilton, Dan and Duane Laurila.







## '98 Reunion Scrapbook

Top Left: Counterclockwise, l to r - Ollie and Barney Brunton, Betty Liegl, Catherine DeHut, Al Liegl, Lyman DeHut, Elda and Lloyd Hegle.

Top Right: Henry Johnson, right, recalls Recon tales to Al Liegl, Headquarters.

Middle: Counterclockwise, l to r - Sybil Brown, Melvin and Lena Heere, Ken and Lil Backlund, Maureen Lunde, Norman Lunde, Doug Brown.

Bottom: Clockwise, l to r - Carrol and Maxine Torgerson, Esther and Jim Karas, Norma and Stan Schillerstrom.







Hdq. Co. Men: (Left to right) Chris Mostad, Lyman DeHut, Harold Carnahan, Stan Stiles, Albert Liegl.





Hdq. Ladies: (Left to right) Goldie Olson, Marianne Brueggemann, Betty Liegl, Catherine DeHut.





Recon. Co. Men: Seated (left to right) Henry Johnson, John Nicholls, Jim Karas, Walt Michels.





Recon. Co. Ladies: (Left to right) Doris Nicholls, Marcella Johnson, Esther Karas, Phyll Michels.





"C" Co. Men: Seated (left to right) Theodor Bodling, Russell Braden, Louis Barone. Standing (left to right) Leo Maynard, Orville Polzin.





"C" Co. Ladies: Seated(left to right) Amelia Braden, Ruth Polzin, Eunice Bodling. Standing (left to right) violet Barone, Joan Maynard.





"B" Co. Men: Seated (left to right) Harold Gall, Lloyd Hegle, Stan Schillerstrom, Barney Brunton, Don Anderson, Val Thompson. Standing (left to right) Leland Eilliot, Dan Laurila, Chet Vosburg, Lowell Hilton, Merlin Park. Absent, Harold Bartley.





"B" Co. Ladies: Seated (left to right) Ollie Brunton, Minnie Gall, Dorothy Laurila, Florienne Grundhoefer, Phyllis Anderson. Standing (left to right) Gladys Park, Madelyn Grundhoefer, Elda Hegle, Eileen Hilton, Norma Schillerstrom, Jean Elliott.





"A" Co. Men: Seated (left to right) Ray Davis, Norvin Black, Melvin Heere. Standing (left to right) Douglas Brown, Ken Backlund, Norman Lunde, Paul Sundberg.





"A" Co. Ladies: Seated (left to right) Sybil Brown, Eddie Sundberg. Standing (left to right) Lillian Backlund, Dorothy (Wadle) Brede, Lena Heere.





## '98 Reunion Scrapbook

Top: clockwise, l to r - Marcella and Henry Johnson, Walt and Phyll Michels, Phyllis Michels, Karla Michels-Boyce.

Middle: Counterclockwise, l to r - Paul and Eddie Sundberg, Marianne Brueggemann, Dorothy (Wadle) Brede, Dan Cannon.

Bottom: Clockwise, l to r - Val Thompson, John and Doris Nicholls, Madelyn Grundhoefer, Florienne Grundhoefer, Ed Hunley.





## 776th TANK DESTROYER BATTALION MINUTES OF 1998 REUNION

President Walt Michels opened our meeting. The Everett McClay Post 1296 did the Memorial Service for our deceased members since the 1996 Reunion.

Our reunion chairman asked if we would approve a constitution so they did not have to pay a Minnesota State Sales Tax for things purchased for our Reunion. It was approved.

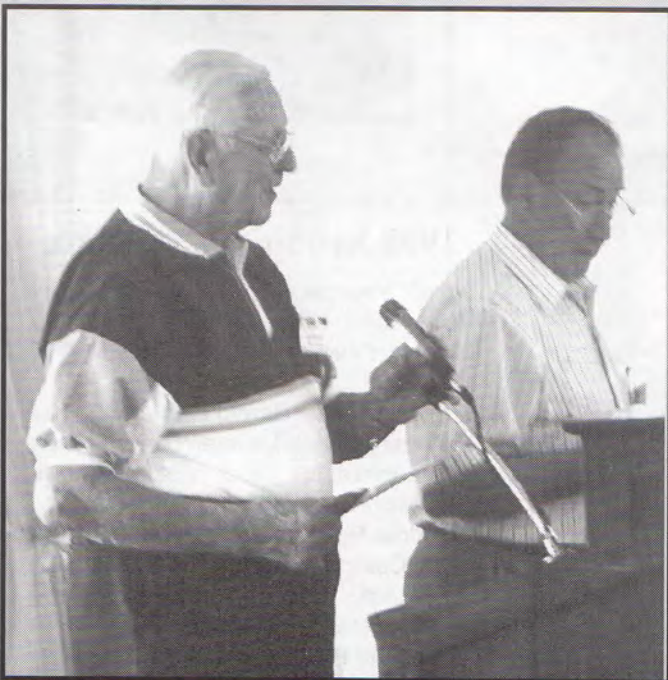
Question was where to hold the next Reunion. Ken Backlund read a letter from a Colonel at Ft. Hood, Texas inviting us, the 776th Tank Destroyers, to Ft. Hood and the city of Killeen, Texas for a reunion. Leo Maynard moved we accept the invitation. Seconded and approved. Discussion was held as to date. It was decided that since so many are getting older that we have a reunion in 1999, September if it is agreeable with Ft. Hood.

Ken Backlund will contact the Colonel at the Fort and you will be hearing from our Reunion Chairman, Ken Backlund, when plans are made and date set.

As time was flying by and the photographer was here to take the Company pictures, the meeting was adjourned.

Since the meeting adjourned suddenly for picture-taking, and no election of officers was held, we will have the same officers for next year, President - Walter Michels; Vice President - Lavall Thompson; and Secretary - Betty Liegl.

*Betty Liegl, Secretary*



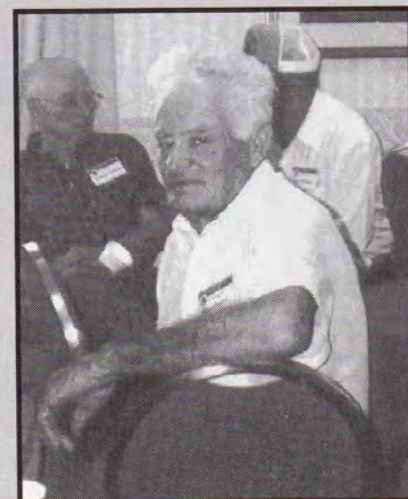
### '98 Reunion Scrapbook

Top Left: Karla Michels-Boyce, Phyll Michels, Marianne Brueggemann and Dan Laurila make sure all registration coolers are filled.

Top Right: Harold Gall, Norvin Black, Harold Carnahan and Minnie Gall play pinochle.

Bottom Left: Ken Backlund, Chairman 1999 776th T.D. Bn. Reunion, and Walt Michels, 1998 President.





## 1998 Reunion Scrapbook

Top: Vandals welcomed to Hospitality Room with cake decorated by Mary Michels, daughter-in-law of Walt & Phyll Michels.

Middle: Left - Harold Carnahan, Paul Sundberg & Deb Laursen play cribbage with a makeshift paper cribbage board. (Deb won!)

Middle Right - Harold Bartley, absent when Company B picture was taken.

Bottom: Madelyn and Florienne Grundhoefer, Eddie Sundberg, Lena Heere and Betty Liegl.



## **IN FLANDERS FIELDS - by John McCrae**

The Author and the Poem - It was Spring 1915. In front-line First Aid Station, dug into a Belgian hillside. John McCrae (1872-1918), a doctor in the Canadian Army, worked tirelessly, dressing wounds and comforting the dying. The battle - one of the bitterest of World War I - had raged for over three weeks. The number of casualties mounted steadily. Day after day, from the hillside dugout, John McCrae looked out on Flanders Fields - on the row upon row of white crosses. Each day they stretched farther toward the horizon. "Have we been sacrificed in vain!" the dead seemed to ask. "You, the living, must continue the struggle for freedom and justice." That was the message which Flanders Fields had for John McCrae. And the message inspired these verses, which have become one of the immortal poems of World War I.

**In Flanders Fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row.  
That mark our places; and in the sky  
The Larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce hear amid the guns below.**

**Take up our quarrel with the foe!  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high!  
If ye break faith with us who die,  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders Fields.**

**We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow  
Loved and were loved; and now we lay  
In Flanders Fields.**

### **IN MEMORIAM**

PFC Ardine M. Harstad  
PFC Nils Eidsness  
T-5 Lloyd Holland  
Sgt. Robert F. Jones  
S-Sgt. James G. Newman  
1st Lt. Edward S. Kafka  
Pvt. Robert H. Burns  
T-5 Kurt Wasel  
S-Sgt. Doyle D. Grimm  
T-5 Harold H. Stickel  
Sgt. Millard E. Stigen  
Sgt. Raymond E. Larson  
S-Sgt. Harold T. Brown  
T-5 Jesse L. Anderson  
1st Lt. John P. Hughes

Cpl. Donald F. Ramhorst  
PFC Norman Togstad  
Pvt. William R. Hanson  
T-4 Albert Colaiani  
Pvt. Carl A. Applequist  
S-Sgt. Oscar E. Lystad  
T-5 Gustave Hager  
Sgt. Harold F. Mooney  
Cpl. Henry G. Popp  
Sgt. Ernest E. Parris  
2nd Lt. John B. Haywood  
Sgt. Sigval M. Carlson  
Sgt. Francis M. Zerr  
T-5 Norman C. Dutoit  
Pvt. Dale H. Ellingson

PFC Woodrow Milligan  
Pvt. Edward P. Paddock  
Capt. Paul R. Brunt  
Sgt. Arthur Mygland  
1st Lt. Harold O. Weisweiver  
Cpl. Clarence A. Larsen  
Pvt. Ferdinand J. Schmidt  
T-5 Arnold E. Freeland  
S-Sgt. Eric A. Antonson  
Sgt. Robert C. Elihaj  
Cpl. Stanley E. Hams  
S-Sgt. Alvin K. Waggoner  
Sgt. Arthur B. Rossland  
PFC Henry O. Stenberg