

NEWSLETTER



Ph: 412-653-1555 • 650 Old Clairton Road, Pleasant Hills • September 2016

American Legion • Post 712 • Pleasant Hills



Commander's Call

These past few months have been action packed to say the least! I will try to highlight the high points for you. Our Post meetings and Home Association meetings are beginning to crank it up a notch. We received many new ideas which are either in the works or are being considered for adoption. We are seeing many new volunteers coming forward to help us. We are grateful for the continuous support from our more consistent volunteers. Volunteers are extremely important to us. This is what keeps our post on the cutting edge.



On August 9, our Post had its Installation of Officers Ceremony. Congratulations to Gary Hartman, SAL President, John Dillion, Legion Riders President, and Mary Ann Marunich, President of the ALA, for being voted in for another year to lead the charge of their groups. This event was received with rave reviews. Our new District Commander, Brent Johnson, along with his staff as well as commanders and past commanders could not have been more appreciative of our hospitality and absolutely excellent dinner. Commander Johnson will play a vital part regarding supporting the Legions under his command. We plan to give him our total commitment and support. In my acceptance speech I said, "Our Legion is always spotless, every drink ordered comes with a smile, and no one ever receives a bad meal". Thank you to everyone that makes this possible. On August 13, our community celebrated Pleasant Hills Community Day. Our Legion Color Guard led the parade and our Legion Riders had a great showing as well. The Pleasant Hills Community has really demonstrated their support for our Legion. Mayor Robert Bootay, Council President Joe Esper, Police Chief Brian Finnerty, and the entire Community Day staff have received us with open arms. They allowed us to work the Community 50/50 Raffle Tent along with the selling of our Poppies. Now the exciting part, once the raffle and 50/50 closed, the Boro split the profits with us! What a bunch of fantastic people! There is much more exciting news to come from our partnership with the community so stay tuned.

Regarding our dining area at the Post, by the time you read this newsletter we hope to already have a state of the art high speed Internet Juke Box installed along with new legal machines. We have also renewed and reworked our contract with John Mooney, our

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LEGION OFFICERS 2016-2017

Commander
RICHARD J. WOJNAR

Sr. Vice Commander
FRANK CAPUTO

Jr. Vice Commander
CRAIG KERN

Adjutant
LINDA WOJNAR

Finance Officer
BILL MARTINIS

Service Officer
DON SMOLEY

Chaplin
EDWARD HLAD

Judge Advocate
NICHOLAS
D. KRAWEC ESQ.

Sgt-At-Arms
STAN TUMAS



Commander's Call continued from Page 1

amusement supplier. The summer months usually take a heavy toll on most Legions and we are no different. Our financial statements are showing we are back in the red. I have met with a well-established community organizer in our area. She is working with us to identify areas we should direct our efforts to offset some of our expenses. As we move to the next step, I will share the results of our findings. As I have stated in previous newsletters, I will look in every corner, underneath every rug, and will leave no stone unturned. We must identify funding streams to guide our financial statements back in the black.

Moving on to the bar area, the first change that was made was to make the bar more profitable. The bar free pour system has been replaced with the Berg System to dispense the amount of alcohol that should be poured into each drink. The Berg System is not new. It has been reactivated. It is a computer controlled system that dispenses a proportionate amount of alcohol which automatically enters the cost of the drink into the cash register. I will provide an update when I receive the first report.

Another focus at the bar was to conduct a detailed analysis of every bottle of alcohol in our inventory to track the cost of the bottle of alcohol along with the number of shots we should receive per bottle. We are doing as much belt tightening as we can regarding expenses, while at the same time we want to continue to offer our members a great value for their dollar.

On August 14, our Post Volunteer Appreciation Day went extremely well! The event was well attended by folks who have given vast amounts of time in order to make our Post vibrant. The highlight of the day was seeing our Legion Riders coming down the driveway, with a police escort, soaking wet, BUT ARRIVING SAFELY!! Their return from Shanksville is a great honor to our Post. Great job, Shirt!

While we are extremely pleased to know we are ahead of the pack regarding the addition of new members joining our Legion, yet I am deeply saddened to report that 21 of our Legion members since January 2016 are no longer with us. This is why it is so critical for us to honor our members each and every day. Keep in mind - life is short. It has many twists and turns. Never miss an opportunity to do or say something positive and meaningful today for someone or you may regret not doing so if there is no tomorrow.

Here are a few events I will report on next month. The Legion Picnic is on August 20 and we will have an August Poppy Sale. We usually do not sell poppies in August, but this poppy sale will be very special. For the first time, Kennywood Park has allowed us to sell the poppies inside Kennywood Park on First Responder Day. This sale has the potential to be a record breaking Poppy Sale event! We have, and will continue to have, many memorable moments and events throughout the year. On September 3, the WWII and Korean War Era Veterans' Dinner will be the absolute highlight event of our year. We have been getting phone calls, emails, and letters in my suggestion box regarding ideas and appreciations regarding the event. The grounds will be standing tall with banners hung in our veterans' honor. I recently spoke to PA Senator Guy Reschenthaler who stated he is looking forward to attending the dinner as our guest speaker. I will be seeking volunteers to help us honor our fellow soldiers. It is their shoulders that we proudly stand on today!

August has been extremely hot and muggy, but our volunteers keep plugging along in order to make our events extremely successful. I want to really express my thanks to each and every one of them. We cannot do it without you! I hope you had an enjoyable summer and look forward to seeing you again very soon.

As always, we support our troops.
Richard J. Wojnar

American Legion • Post 712 • Pleasant Hills

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WWII/ KOREAN WAR ERA VETERANS' DINNER

When: **Saturday, September 3, 2016**

Where: **Post 712**

Time: **4:00 PM**

Post 712 will pay for each of our WWII and KOREAN WAR ERA VETERANS who RSVP as soon as possible.

Guests who accompany our veterans are asked to pay \$5.00 for their meals made payable at the time of the event.

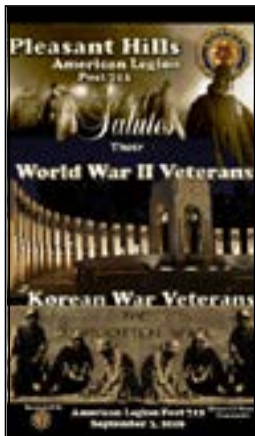
To RSVP, please call the Post Adjutant at 412-616-1834 or send an email to adjpost712@verizon.net. Advise the adjutant of the number of guests who will be attending the dinner.

We still have Legion members whose records are incomplete regarding war era served or military service branch in their records.

If you know you served in any of these war eras: Dec. 7, 1941 Dec. 31, 1946 (WWII ERA) or June 25, 1950-Jan -31, 1955 (KOREAN WAR ERA), you are invited to the dinner.

All we ask is that you RSVP as soon as possible.

Thank you for your service!



2017 Membership Information

From the Post 712 Adjutant

To avoid receiving late notices and reminders from National, you can pay your 2017 dues early by mail, online at <http://www.myLegion.org> or taking dues to the Post (bar area).

Please record your phone number on your dues renewal slip or on your check when you pay your dues. It's very important for us to have your most current information on file.

To date, 506 Legion members have paid their dues. This takes us to 60% of our members who have paid their 2017 dues so far. Please pay your dues as soon as possible so that we reach the target dates National has set for our post. **Thank you in advance!**



HOME ASSOCIATION OFFICERS 2016-2017

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Vice President
DAVE PETERSON

Secretary

Treasurer

Board Members

DAVE KRILL

JOHN DILLON

RICHARD J. WOJNAR

LES BRANCHEN

THAD WEIDMANN

FRANK CAPUTO

NICK KRAWEC, ESQ.

BOB STOODT

Caputo's Corner

from Frank Caputo, Sr. Vice Commander

- Post 712 is hosting a blood drive with the Central Blood Bank. **September 9th from 1 PM till 6 PM.** Please come out and support us in this worthwhile cause. The blood bank is the supplier for our VA Hospitals. They will be passing out a limited number of t-shirts to each one that donates while supplies last.
- CPR classes will resume the second Wednesday in September. We instruct in both adult and child CPR and also obstructed airway. Class size is limited to 15 and the cost is \$15.00 per person. Sign up at the bar or call the post to have your name added. Friends and family are invited to participate.
- The next time you are at the post stop over and take a look at the flag retirement pit. **Scout Brandon Hoebler** did his Eagle project and placed patio stone around it. He repaired the picnic table and removed 4 tree stumps. Thank you Brandon.

TRIVIA QUESTION Submitted by Craig Kern

On Legion uniforms which sleeve do you attach the American flag? Which direction does the flag face? Answer on Page 6.

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SAL OFFICERS
2016-2017

Commander
GARY HARTMAN

Sr. Vice Commander
DON W. GOULDER

Jr. Vice Commander
DON J. GOULDER

Adjutant
JAMES CHRISTOFEL

Finance Officer
RICHARD HARTMAN

Chaplin
AL DANKO

Son's of the Legion,

The SAL will be cooking for the Steelers games that start at 1:00pm and 4:25pm. The first game is **September 18th against Cincinnati**. This game will be starting at 1:00pm and dinner will be served at half-time. **Menu: Ham, Scalloped Potatoes, Vegetable, Salad, Hot Pineapple Dessert**

The second game is on **September 25th against Philadelphia**. This game starts at 4:25pm, which means we will be serving dinner at 3:30pm. **Menu: Pork Chops, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable, Salad, Desserts**

September 14th will be the Posts first BINGO of the fall season. The bingos will be every Wednesday and there will be various callers.

Please renew your membership if you didn't renew at the picnic.

Next SAL meeting is September 29th at 7:00pm

Thank you,
Gary C. Hartman
Commander of the SAL



ALA OFFICERS
2016-2017

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1st Vice President
DONNA McCRUMB

2nd Vice President
VICKY GOLDEN

Secretary
LEIGH ANNE CASTANET

Treasurer
ANNE GIOVANNITTI

Chaplain
BARBARA TERIHAY

Sgt-At-Arms
ROSE BREEN

Sgt-At-Arms
DONNA ROTTMAN

Sgt-At-Arms
PAT O'TOOLE

Auxiliary Corner,

Thank you to the volunteers for helping with all the programs that we had. We have quite a few more coming up. On **September 3rd**, the post is honoring World War Two and Korean veterans and help is needed. Please give a few hours of your time to show how much we appreciate what they gave to this country. We will be selling poppies on **September 9th** so please sign up for that. Our annual Flea Market is on **September 24th**. We need help in setting up on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd. Please start cleaning out your garages and basements. No clothing or furniture. Put everything in the basement of the post. Let's make this our best Flea Market yet.

God bless and protect our troops.
Mary Ann Marunich, ALA President

CONGRATULATIONS to MaryAnn Marunich !
At the recent ALA State Convention held in Harrisburg,
she was elected **ALA PA State Historian for 2016-2017.**



American Legion Riders,

Greetings Riders: Wow. It's been a busy month. Special thanks to **Chaplain Mark Smith** and his better half, **Pat Smith**, who hosted the Riders on July 23rd for a ride to the Foxburg Winery. We started the day at Smitty's house with a light breakfast followed by a country ride to the Winery for lunch and, well ... wine. It was a fun day and we loaded up on local wines and chocolates. Thank you Mark and Pat.

Post 712 requested the **Riders** participate in the Pleasant Hills Community Day Parade on August 13th, which we were glad to do. The Riders turned out with about 16 bikes to the delight of the kids (and a few adults) along the parade route. **Thank you Riders for supporting Post 712.**

On August 14th, the **Riders** rode to benefit the Pittsburgh Fisher House. We would like to thank the staff for a great after-ride Party. Special thanks to **Manager Lisa Deiley** and **Chef Leah Speicher** whose efforts ensured a fun and well-fed time was had by all. Also, the Riders would like to thank the **Donegal American Legion Post 941** for their donation of \$500 to the Riders. We logged about 170 miles, some of them very wet miles; and laid a wreath at the **Flight 93 National Memorial Park** in honor of the **First Fighters** who fought back on that fateful day. The Ride and the Party were a great success with record numbers of bikes registered, a record number of donations and I am happy to say, we will have a record donation to support the Fisher House. It was a great day!!!

The Riders want to thank others who supported the after-ride Party in a big way. **Chris Bodner**, **Secretary Susan Dillon** and **Treasurer Beverly Weikel** took care of all the arraignments, tickets, auction baskets, floorplan and hundreds of details to ensure the party was an impressive event. **Sergeant-at-Arms Ed Harmon** donated his Legion Riders decorative board to the Post for a touch of ambiance and **Ted Rack of Rack Signs** for donating the signage we used at the Post. And we sincerely appreciate Rider **Paul Weinheimer** for arranging for a donation of beer! You guys rock!!!

Hooah,
Top



*PS . . . **Chris Bodner** has once again obtained a block of tickets for the Pirates game. This game is against the Cincinnati Reds on Thursday, September 8, 2016. The game starts at 1900 hours and it is a fireworks night to add to the enjoyment. This will be the Bucco's last fireworks night this year!*

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JOHN DILLON
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LLOYD RAY
- Chaplain
MARK SMITH
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- Deputy Treasurer
BILL WEIKEL
- Sr. Sergeant-at-Arms
TOM BODNER
- Sergeant-at-Arms
ED HARMON
- Sr. Road Captain
DAN OELER
- Road Captains
KEN LANCASTER
BOB STEFANIC
DAN TILLERY

September 2016

Sunday

Monday


Tuesday

Pizza Toppings . . .
banana peppers
pepperoni
onions & sausage

**SEPTEMBER 24
FAMILY FEUD 8:00
PLEASE LET THE
BARTENDER KNOW
IF YOU WANT TO
PLAY**

TRIVIA QUESTION ANSWER

Each Legion decides which sleeve to sew on the American flag patch. Post 712 wears their flag on the right sleeve. Regardless which sleeve the flag is to be sewn, the most important piece of information is to assure the stars face forward so that the flag has the appearance of flying.




Check us out . . .
See what is new
everyday. . .
-on-
The web site:
alpost712pa.org

-on-
Facebook:
[AmericanLegion.
Postsevenonetwo](http://AmericanLegion.Postsevenonetwo)

• • •
Web Master
THAD WEIDMANN

Newsletter Design
DONNA ROTTMAN

**THE ABSOLUTE
DEADLINE FOR
ARTICLES IS THE
20TH OF EACH
MONTH**

<p>FREE POOL & JUKE BOX 4 - 8</p>  <p>4</p>	<p>LABOR DAY</p>  <p>5</p>	<p>POST MEETING 7:00</p>  <p>6</p>
<p>FREE POOL & JUKE BOX 4 - 8 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE</p> <p>11</p>	<p>HOME ASSOCIATION MEETING 7:00</p>  <p>12</p>	<p>WE HAVE PIZZA</p>  <p>13</p>
<p>Steelers GAME AT 1:00 FOOD AT HALFTIME FREE POOL & JUKE BOX AFTER THE GAME</p> <p>18</p>	<p>WE HAVE WI FI</p>  <p>19</p>	<p>BOWLING STARTS</p>  <p>20</p>
<p>Steelers GAME AT 4:25 FOOD AT 3:30 FREE POOL & JUKE BOX AFTER THE GAME</p> <p>25</p>	<p>ALA MEETING 7:00</p>  <p>26</p>	<p>FREE POPCORN</p>  <p>27</p>

September 2016

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

<p>Beginning this month...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14th BINGO • 15th CORNHOLE • 20th BOWLING 	<p>KITCHEN GIFT CERTIFICATES</p>  <p>1</p>	<p>DINNER SPECIAL RUBEN & RACHAEL SANDWICHES</p> <p>2</p>	<p>WORLD WAR II & KOREAN VETERAN'S DINNER @ 4:00</p> <p>NO POOL</p> <p>3</p>
 <p>RIDERS MEETING 7:00</p> <p>7</p>	 <p>TRY A MOSCOW MULE</p> <p>8</p>	<p>BLOOD DRIVE</p> <p>DINNER SPECIAL STUFFED PORK LOIN</p> <p>9</p>	<p>FREE POOL 4 - 8</p> <p>FREE JUKE BOX untill CLOSE</p>  <p>10</p>
 <p>HOT SAUSAGE</p> <p>14</p>	 <p>BEGINS AT 6:30</p> <p>15</p>	<p>POW/MIA CEREMONY</p> <p>DINNER SPECIAL CRAB CAKES</p> <p>16</p>	<p>BUS TRIP TO NEMACOLN</p> <p>FREE POOL 4 - 8</p> <p>FREE JUKE BOX 4 TIL CLOSE</p> <p>17</p>
 <p>BBQ</p> <p>21</p>	 <p>TRY A CONEY ISLAND</p> <p>22</p>	<p>DINNER SPECIAL CHICKEN CORDON BLUE</p> <p>23</p>	<p>ALA FLEA MARKET</p> <p>FAMILY FEUD 8:00</p> <p>PLEASE LET THE BARTNDER KNOW IF YOU WANT TO PLAY</p> <p>24</p>
 <p>MEAT BALLS</p> <p>28</p>	 <p>SONS MEETING 7:00</p>  <p>29</p>	<p>DINNER SPECIAL SHRIMP STUFFED WITH CRABMEAT</p> <p>30</p>	<p>Friday Dinners 4:00 - 8:00</p> <p>Smoking OPEN to the Public</p>



Dick Gardner

**United States Army WWII
63rd Infantry Regiment
6th Division • 1st Army**

Dick Gardner served first as a Rifleman, then as a Cryptographer in the United States Army Infantry.

An Unlikely Meeting

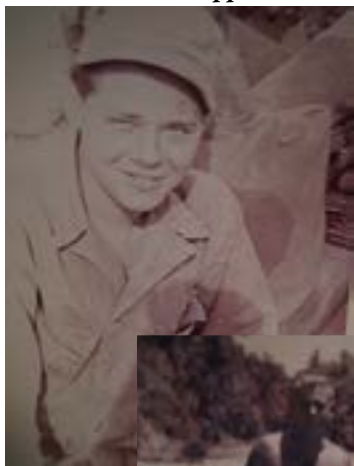
I was stationed on Luzon in the Philippine Islands. Some of us had walkie-talkies, which we used to converse back and forth. It was good within about a mile. While listening I heard someone calling a Sergeant Gardner. I was a PFC. at the time and it just struck me. Who do I know that's a Sergeant Gardner out here? I took off and went from unit to unit. Actually I was AWOL doing that. I was a PFC., got busted back to a private. I wasn't supposed to leave my unit. I found a first sergeant, at one of the nearby camps. And he said, "Hey Ernie, there's a kid here looking for you." And out walks Ernest Wardell Gardner, my dad. Prior to us meeting, I was probably about 10 or 11 years old when we last saw each other before our reunion. So he saw me as a child and then as a young soldier. But it didn't take much to recognize each other. It was a very strange feeling. And the guys in the unit I guess, if their jaws could have dropped, I don't think they had ever seen anything like that. And whenever I talk about this with anybody, they say, "You got to be kidding." And I say, no. This is an incredible thing. What are the chances with thousands and thousands of men of us meeting each other? But things like that do happen. Rarely, but they do happen. It was unusual. When he walked out, there was no denying each other. That was -- I would call it instantaneous. But I don't think either one of us probably thought of our disconnection prior to this. We spent the day together. Which, a day under those circumstances could be a long time. So whatever time we had, we made the most of that. I think that was probably the closest we've ever been and it was definitely worth getting busted. I think we both realized if this forthcoming invasion of Japan ever happened, we would have both been gone. (They military estimate was US Forces would have suffered over 1 million loses if an invasion occurred). I know that we would have had no chance whatsoever of

returning. When I returned home we still weren't close, but that was the magic moment, a magic day I'll always remember.

Growing Up Disconnected

My mom's dad (with my mom) raised one of my sisters and myself. The family had split up. They were married so young, there were three kids involved. I was the first and then the two girls. My mom never remarried. He did and had a second family. So we only saw each other intermittently. Yeah the day was very meaningful. And you would think after an event like this that, oh, wow, everything is going to come right back together. Even when we were all back home again. We still didn't -- that moment didn't return. We might see each other on occasion. But nothing, it didn't bring you into this wonderful thing that you would find in the movies. Unfortunately, he and my mother were like gasoline and matches. They could not be together. It was explosive. The grandfather that raised me, I worshipped because I didn't have a father close to me. He was in his 60s when he took my mom and one of my sisters and I in. He died when I was 25, and I was crushed. I think I was hurt more -- and that's a strange thing to say maybe -- I was crushed more with my granddad, which was my mom's father, than when I heard of my father's death. But that one day with my real Dad, not knowing if this would be our last, was very special. And sometime I ask why, with all the combat that he went through,

Dick Gardner Philippine Islands



Ernie Gardner Philippine Islands

in three theatres -- Africa, Europe, then the Pacific -- did he end up on Luzon. In all his service, he never got a scratch. One story he told me -- there was a typhoon that they got caught in on one of the islands, and he tied himself to a tree. That's the only way they survived being washed away. I mean, he had some fantastic stories, too, which I didn't get to hear too many of them. But I remember him telling me about that one. He would have been washed out to sea, but he had the presence of mind to lash himself to a tree, which stayed there.

Left to Fate

We were headed to the Philippine Islands. It was on the island of Luzon, one of the bigger Philippine Islands, probably the biggest. Manila, the capital was also on Luzon. On the way over we were scheduled

to be part of one of the forces that would be going in, probably under fire. Although there would be several attempts to be made to go in -- the Japanese had over 100,000 troops, so that was pretty heavily fortified and they had control of the island. When our ship broke down, the convoy left us completely alone. I still remember watching the convoy disappear over the horizon. We put into a small uninhabited island and made temporary repairs first, and then put in to what was, I believe, part of the northern chain of Hawaii. That's a string of islands. Nothing like what you would see today. But we made a little more permanent repairs and moved on. We were halfway across the Pacific and made the rest of the trip by ourselves. Not at, I'm sure, full speed. We were kind of crippled at the time and that was a very weird sensation. We were completely alone and we had ammunition on board, so we would have been one giant firecracker had a submarine found us. When we realized all of this, it was not only disturbing but also extremely frightening to most of us who were either in our early 20s or in our teens at that point. I would say that most of the folks on board, including probably the naval personnel were pretty uptight over that, too. I think, as a teenager at that point, we certainly realized that we were not boys anymore. A lot of us started writing our good-byes to our family members. Had we been torpedoed, all of that would have been gone anyway. At 18 years of age, that was a pretty scary feeling.

By the time we got to the Philippines, the convoy's personnel were already engaged since we were late coming in. We became sort of a replacement group for the force that was ahead of us. We would have been part of the invasion group had we not broken down.

His Father's History

My father was in the service at that point. He was regular army. He went in the late '30s, before World War II. He started out with a tank unit and went to Africa. Developed a number of problems. Those tanks weren't the most comfortable thing in the world. And he had to get out of that. He was a driver for a while. He was there during the time of Rommel, the German General known as the Desert Fox. Luckily, he got out of that situation. From there, they went to Europe, I believe Italy. He was in a heavy weapons platoon. And he spent quite some time I believe in Italy, mostly. The Germans had that country very well covered and fortified. From there, he transferred to the Pacific. He was doing some island hopping before his group came to the Philippines. And one of my stories will mention why they were there. We were getting ready to invade Japan. So they needed all the men they could muster. And he should have been sent home.

Reflections

As I think back about being caught in the middle of the ocean, hoping to God that we wouldn't get sunk. Not even -- that would have been horrible, because we wouldn't have

even gotten there. To be lost like that. And I'm sure that's happened so many times. In two years, I lived almost a lifetime. Seemed like it. As I mentioned before as a teenager, to live and experience these things was unreal. I was a kid that never went more than 50 miles away from home. And suddenly you were halfway around the world having trouble even trying to get there. Yeah, it was interesting, and it was scary. It was profound and unbelievable. When I had mentioned this to some of my friends, even this fellow soldier that I was assigned to, that was so well-decorated, I heard him say to somebody, "Hey, he met his father over here." That, to him was pretty fantastic -- here's this guy with a chest full of medals and he thinks, "Wow, what an experience." Something so simple but so unusual, can have such a great impact. As an old guy in reflecting back on some of these things, I'm a history student by nature. I had a double major in college. Either I was going to be a history teacher or go into the business world. And in reflection now, I think, wow, I think I might have missed the boat. I enjoy people and over the years my work has been very rewarding. But history is so important. It's terribly meaningful. What I told my granddaughter when she wrote this piece on The Philippine Liberation Medal, she asked, "What was the biggest feeling that you got as a young soldier in the Philippines?" "It was freeing people from a horrible enemy," I told her. And the atrocities there were unbelievable. As the Japanese

retreated, they took men, women, and children out, shot them in the streets, left them lying there. They didn't have to do that. Just get out of there and go. These are horrible things for anyone to see. But to be part of freeing these people, even though my part was so tiny and insignificant, was a wonderful feeling. But if you think about it, myself, multiplied by thousands and thousands of other young men, things were accomplished. And to me, that medal was the finest one. That meant a great deal to me. And I only got that about six or seven years ago when one of our local congressmen knocked on the door one night around dinnertime. There was this young man with a suit on, a tie. He said, "I think I have something you want." And I said, "What do you mean?" He gave me this little box. And it was this medal. He says, "It's a little late. But -- I'm sure it will be meaningful for you." And indeed it was. A little late, yeah, 50 some years later. But this has happened to a lot of fellows. And nothing I received was personal. It was all part of the unit I was in. Everything I got, they got. And some fellows who were personally decorated, of course they earned and deserved every bit of that. I was just part of the big machine. Everybody had to do his or her part. But you felt a certain pride inside that you had offered something. And that was important to me.

Epilog

Someone once said 'The Past is Prologue'. This unprecedented meeting of my father and I on Luzon, Philippine Islands in 1945 was really the start of a 'new beginning' for it brought forth new thoughts of this event of over 60 years past. When I went to Washington D.C. with a large group of Pennsylvania WWII Veterans, I was truly overwhelmed by that day. Even thinking about it puts a lump in my throat. Many thought and distant memories came forth in my mind. Our trip leader and friend, Dan Cavanaugh (whose passion is to tell our stories of that fantastic period of the men and women who were there) created a brand new and exciting interest in my memory bank.

I thought so many times, why and how did the chance meeting take place half a world away and with a war going on! At age 18, I experienced an almost impossible meeting. By investigating some old family records and documents, I conclude this 'chance meeting' was really 'predestined' to take place.

My reason is as follows:

- My father's oldest and only brother was killed in battle in France in 1918 (WWI). As an army infantryman, he attempt to 'take out' a German machine gun emplacement, but he took a bullet through his heart and died instantly. This information was requested of the US War Department by his dad (my grandfather). My uncle still rests in France. His name : Richard A Gardner.

Fast forward to 1945 WWII Philippine Islands.

-A young soldier hear the words 'Sergeant Gardner' on a 'walkie talkie'. He quickly takes off (without permission) to find this man. After inquiring at army unit after army unit this 18 year old Army Infantryman comes face to face with this Sergeant Gardner who is actually his own father. Approximately 10 years has gone by since one has see the other - neither on knowing where the other was. An embrace and hardly very many words this virtually incredible reunion takes place. This young soldier's name: Richard A. Gardner. Exactly the same name as his uncle, Richard

A. Gardner. Both army, both infantry, both family. There are those who consider this merely a 'coincidence'. I believe it to be much more than that. Even 'small miracle' happen. My father served in Africa, Europe, and the Islands of the Pacific. I believe he wanted to be as good and as brave a soldier as his brother was. I truly believe he achieved that goal. I am honored and proud to be a part of this family in two different time periods and two different wars, who put our country before themselves.

Richard A. Gardner

Uncle Dick



Thanks for your service.

BLOOD DRIVE

American Legion Post 712-Pleasant Hills

Please consider donating blood on September 9 from 1:00-6:00 PM. Participating donors at this drive receive a limited edition patriotic t-shirt, while supplies last! For each blood donation made, \$1 will be given to the Veterans. To schedule an appointment, visit central-bloodbank.org, click Make an Appointment and search with group code C0180029. See or contact Frank Caputo, Sr. Vice Commander, at the Legion or contact Terri at Central Blood Bank at 412-354-8846 or tward@itxm.org with your preferred time to donate.

Appointments are preferred, but walk-ins are also welcome. To prepare for your donation, you should eat well, drink a lot of liquids, and bring ID. Donors must be at least 17 years of age. A Central Blood Bank or military ID, driver's license, passport, employee or student ID with your photo and full name are all approved forms of ID. Birth certificates along with a photo ID that includes the donor's full name will also be accepted. The blood is donated for veterans as well as the public in need of transfusions. Please join us on September 9. Our Veterans appreciate your support!



TAPS



GEORGE SOMMER
MORTON PARKER
CHARLES R. MCORMICK
DELBERT WISE