

# 20th Combat Engineer Association of World War II



\*\*\*\*\*

January 2013

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Lost But Not Forgotten**

### **Robert Vincent Jarratt (1920-2012)**

**Robert Vincent Jarratt (H&S/20th)** died July 5, 2012, at the Maybelle Carter Retirement Center in Madison, Tennessee. He joined the 20th Engineer Combat Battalion in England and participated in the D-Day invasion on Omaha Beach, Normandy. After the war, he served as vice president of Braid Electric Company of Madison. He was preceded in death by his wife, **Gracie Fay Stroud Jarratt**, who had arranged for seven World War II veterans from Tennessee to be recognized by **Governor Ned Ray McWherter** as outstanding Tennesseans. Funeral services were held in the Connell Memorial United Methodist Church of which he was a long-time member, and interred at the Middle Tennessee Veterans Cemetery.

### **Albert Biggiani (1920-2012)**

**Albert Biggiani (H&S/20th)** died July 23, 2012, from a cerebral hemorrhage. He was born April 5, 1920 and served two-and-a-half-years with the 20th Combat Engineers from North Africa to Czechoslovakia. He was also a member of the 20th Band where he played both the saxophone and clarinet. He described his experiences in the Hurtgen Forest where a shell exploded high in the tree tops. He and his buddies ran for their fox holes only to find them filled to the brim with water. He later learned that the shell was 'friendly fire' from American artillery. After the war, he became a printer and eventually served as foreman for Song Printing in Syosset, New York, serving until he retired. He joined the 20th association in 1958 when he announced that his wife, Mary, gave birth to Albert Jr. on July 15, 1958. Father Albert was interred at St. Charles Cemetery. His widow, Mary, who provided much of this information, resides at 18 Lorraine Street, Syosset, New York, 11791.

## **Readers Tell Us Why The Wavy Arrow Is Important**

In the last issue, we had to write, "If we don't receive more contributions, we will have to discontinue the publication of the *Wavy Arrow*." **The response was amazing!** As you can see on page 4, we have received 18 individual contributions for a total of \$986.00. This is enough money to keep us publishing and mailing the *Wavy Arrow* for well over a year. But even more impressive are the reasons these widows, daughters, sons, friends, and living veterans feel that this newsletter is part of their life. See pages 3-4 to understand why the *Wavy Arrow* is so important to many of our readers.

## Light of Our Lives

By Mary Jo Caputo-Giancola  
(A Dear Friend and Devoted Fan of Poppy)

On January 31, 2013, Louis Ferraro (B/20th), a.k.a. Poppy, will be 94 years young. At the age of 19, Louie entered the U.S. Army and became immersed as thousands of his day in the fight for "humanity." As fate would have it, Louie was assigned to Company B of the 20th Combat Engineers. In this position he achieved the rank of Sergeant. The events that he experienced in this situation molded him into a man of determination and a positive role model.

Poppy, like all of the men who served in the 20th Combat Engineers are iron men. Louie's resolve, positive attitude, and commitment to family and friends are the core of his existence. He has an ability to convey to all of us the remarkable will and strength he and his comrades displayed. Poppy frequently shares his World War II experiences with three generations of family and friends. Even at his extraordinary healthy age, Poppy recalls every detail of his company's movement, people involved, and specific events. We all agree that his memory is better than any DVD.

We are all blessed to have had all of the men and women who served in World War II. They secured our very existence. These soldiers of the past turned the lights on for our future. Poppy Louie is truly the light of our lives. We want to give him a big shout of thanks. To all of the honored veterans of the past, the Ferraro family and friends feel that "thank you" is not enough. God bless all of our Veterans, past and present, and God Bless America.

### How Was Tommie Ray Philips Wounded?

Chris A. Phillips (Son of Tommie Ray Philips, H&S/20th) asks, "Was my father wounded on November 4, 1944, in the Hurtgen Forest by artillery fire, mortars, or hand grenades?" We have been able to tell Chris that according to *Three Battles: Aranville, Altuzzo, and Schmidt* by Charles B. MacDonald and Sidney T. Mathews, Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1952, pages 309-311, that on November 4, 1944, all Companies of the 20th Combat Engineer Battalion were working on "the switch-back curves on the Kall Trail to permit U.S. tanks to move along the trail without sliding off. **Enemy artillery fire constantly harassed the 20th Engineers.**" On November 4th, ten 20th Engineers, including Tommy Rae Phillips, were wounded by the artillery fire as they were working on the Kall Trail.

Send Letters, Articles, Photographs, Obituaries, and other News Items for inclusion in future issues of the *Wavy Arrow* to editor George Griffenhagen, 12226 Cathedral Drive, Woodbridge, Virginia 22191-2232. His telephone number is 1-703-966-1739, and his e-mail address is <[gbriffenhagen@gmail.com](mailto:gbriffenhagen@gmail.com)>.

## Comments From Contributors

**Jennifer Auld (Daughter of John G. Auld, Executive Officer of the 1340th Combat Engineer Battalion, and Maribel Dorton Auld, Nurse with the U.S. Army Auxiliary Surgical Group in North Africa and Europe who met on the Dutch operated USAT *Sloterdyke* travelling from Sicily to Scotland in November 1943. They finally found time to get married February 2, 1945, in Sart le Spa, Belgium, during World War II.) Jennifer writes, "I enjoy reading the *Wavy Arrow* because it has given me a chance to learn about the 20th Engineers during World War II. My father rarely talked about the war except when his 'Army Buddies' came for a visit. Unfortunately, I was just too young to appreciate all these 'war stories,' and, now, both my parents are gone and I can't pick their brains about their war experiences. Thankfully the *Wavy Arrow* has helped me learn more about the history of the 20th Engineers and the people who were part of that history. I would hate to stop receiving the *Wavy Arrow*, so I am sending a small contribution that I hope will keep it coming for many more years."**

**Anna M. Russ (Widow of Peter Russ, C/1340th) writes, "The world seems to be moving so fast these days, and the veterans of World War II seem to be dying even faster. It is eight months today since Peter passed on to his new life. I am very lonesome without him. However, I am very grateful having caring children and grandchildren that see to my every need. Then I worried about the dreadful Hurricane Sandy. Thank God, there was no damage to our home. I do hope the *Wavy Arrow* will continue as long as your health permits. We have been able to learn information about the 20th Engineers that would never be known if you did not publish them in the *Wavy Arrow*. I am enclosing a contribution in memory of Peter Russ who always looked forward to receiving each issue."**

**Irene Homa (Widow of John Homa, H&S/1340th) writes, "Most of us are struggling to keep a roof over our heads, and we don't know what's ahead, but I feel we have to help. You have done a terrific job keeping the *Wavy Arrow* going, and as long as you are able, we should all do our part."**

**Rose Marciano (Widow of Santino "Smokey" Marciano, B/1340th) writes, "I really enjoy reading each issue of the *Wavy Arrow*. Each issue describes events that I recall Smokey telling me about. I wish he was here to read it himself. Enclosed is a contribution so that you can keep publishing the *Wavy Arrow*."**

**Kathy McDonnell (Daughter of Bernard P. McDonnell (20th Regimental Adjutant) writes, "Thank you once again for continuing to publish the *Wavy Arrow*. My dad thoroughly enjoys reading each issue. Please accept the enclosed contribution to help you keep it going. My dad has a new address. It is 13785 Bean Court, #1. Oregon City, OR 97045."**

**George N. Spivey, Susan Spivey Cohen, and Janet Spivey Shaw (Son and Daughters of George Spivey, A/20th) jointly write, "Our father was very proud of the part he played in World War II. The 20th Combat Engineers was a group of men very dear to his heart. We attended many 20th Reunions with our parents and have great memories of them all. Please use this donation to help continue the *Wavy Arrow*."**

**Connie Datsko (Daughter of Benjamin Cazara, B/1340th) writes, "I was glad to attend the 20th Final Reunion with my mom and dad. It was a wonderful and meaningful experience for each of us. Thank you for all you do. Please accept the enclosed check from my mom, Peggy Cazara, to cover publication costs of the *Wavy Arrow*."**

**Sally Brown at 330 South S Street, Livermore, CA 94550-4249**, was only 14 years old when the 20th Combat Engineer Regiment spent eight weeks at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, before they embarked overseas. Off-duty soldiers on their way to a bus trudged past their house on School Street in Piscataway Township, New Jersey. Sally Brown's father was sitting under the willow tree listening to Gabriel Heater's radio news broadcast, and invited them over so that Sally's mother could make coffee for them. For a longtime Sally attempted to maintain contact with some of the 20th Engineers she met but soon lost contact with all of them. Sally Brown now writes, "You may recall that I had been trying to locate information about **Philip Ortega** because I have a photo of Phil and his buddy **Danny Senter** taken at our home. Information in the *Wavy Arrow* revealed that Phil had been wounded in North Africa on May 17, 1943, and wounded again in the Hurtgen Forest on November 9, 1944. An additional internet search showed that Phil died in January 1988 in Jefferson, Louisiana. In an effort to find a relative so that I could send them a copy of my photograph, my computer-wise daughter-in-law located Phil's son and I was able to send him the photo of his father. I also think of **Johnny Whitfield, Homer Pruett, Jimmy Smith, and Harold Stubbs**. They would play their guitars and sing under the willow

tree at our home, and they asked me to sing with them. I am now 85 years old and feel so blessed to be able to send a contribution for the *Wavy Arrow* to publish stories about those who gave so much for the rest of us."

**Nannie Morrow (Widow of Rupert Morrow, A/20th)** writes, "I realize that lots of people have lost interest in the history of World War II, but thanks to the *Wavy Arrow* we continue to get information about the 20th Combat Engineers and the many things they did to make this a safer world. My beloved **Rupert** always enjoyed the Reunions and even after he died in 1973, I was able to attend the 2004 final Reunion with our son **Rick Morrow**, our daughter-in-law **Brenda Morrow**, my sister **Libby Weitzman**, and two of our grandsons. Please accept the enclosed contribution to support the *Wavy Arrow*."

**Mary Biggiani (Widow of Albert Biggiani, H&S/20th)** writes. "Albert and I attended many reunions until the last one in 2004. We were sorry when the reunions ended. The reunions were just great while they lasted because **Albert** always enjoyed seeing everyone. Those Reunions insured a lasting bond with all the Veterans of the 20th Engineers. I hope that the *Wavy Arrow* will keep on forever because we always learn something new in each issue."

## **Wavy Arrow Contributions**

<b>Jennifer Auld (Daughter of John &amp; Maribel Auld)</b> .....	\$25.00
<b>Mary Biggiani (Widow of Albert Biggiani, H&amp;S/20th)</b> .....	\$25.00
<b>Sally Brown (Livermore, California)</b> .....	\$100.00
<b>Mary Jo Caputo-Giancola (Friend of Louis Ferraro, A/20th)</b> .....	\$25.00
<b>Peggy Cazara (Widow of Benjamin Cazara, B/1340th)</b> .....	\$25.00
<b>Sidney T. Cousans, Jr. (C/1340th)</b> .....	\$50.00
<b>Edmund K. Daley, Jr. (Son of 20th Commanding Officer)</b> .....	\$100.00
<b>Maryellen Eichelbaum (Daughter of Joseph Szvetitz, C/1340)</b> .....	\$36.00
<b>Patrick D. Evans (Son of Owen Evans, B/20th)</b> .....	\$100.00
<b>Irene Homa (Widow of John Homa, H&amp;S/1340th)</b> .....	\$25.00
<b>Michael Langheim (Son of Vernie Langheim, B/1340th)</b> .....	\$50.00
<b>Rose Marciano (Widow of Santino "Smokey" Marciano, B/1340th)</b> .....	\$50.00
<b>Bernard P. McDonnell (20th Regimental Adjutant)</b> .....	\$50.00
<b>Nan Morrow (Widow of Rupert Morrow, A/20th)</b> .....	\$100.00
<b>Chris A. Phillips (Son of Tommie Ray Philips, H&amp;S/20th)</b> .....	\$25.00
<b>Janet K. Reis (Daughter of Francis P. Knoll, A/20th)</b> .....	\$50.00
<b>Anna M. Russ (Widow of Peter Russ, C/1340th)</b> .....	\$50.00
<b>Three Children of George Spivey, A/20th</b> .....	\$100.00