

Hightstown



East Windsor

Historical Society News

Spring 2024

World War 2 Veterans: Biographies

by Cappy Stults



Many of you knew longtime member Russ Beaulieu who passed away in December 2022. He was brought up in Hightstown in the area between Rogers Ave and Academy Street. After graduating from Hightstown High School in 1947 where he played soccer and basketball, he attended Perkinson Junior College in Gulfport, Mississippi, and then received a full scholarship to the University of Mississippi. He graduated with honors in 1953. He taught history at Hightstown High for 41 years, held other positions in the high school, and coached soccer for 9 years, winning 8 state titles.

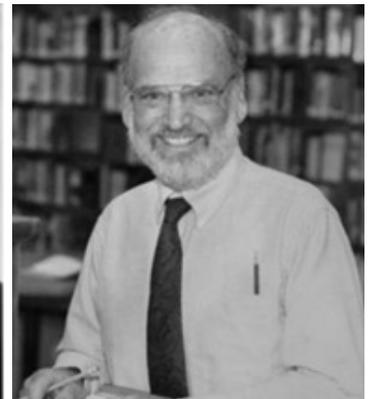
Later in life he joined the Masons and worked on a project compiling WWII stories from local veterans. Russ was a good friend and mentor. Although I never had him as a teacher, we spoke often when I was a teen and an adult. Russ passed away in the house he and his wife Barbara built in Plainsboro Township and raised their daughter there. Russ and his brother actually built it with their own hands. Russ was 93. Their daughter, Amy Mansue, is President and CEO of Inspira Health, in South Jersey. She delivered to me Russ' WWII file and some other notes. They will be in the Society library but with D-Day being 80 years ago this June, I thought it appropriate to share bits of these veteran's stories. I know there are many others,

but these are what Russ had. I will also include some pictures that may not have stories with them. I hope to include others in future issues.

Now to the WWII stories, in no particular order (and with some abridging and edits), and first with a picture of Russ' brother, John "Massie" Beaulieu, who helped Russ build his and Barbara's house in Plainsboro.



John Beaulieu



Russ Beaulieu

Russ' file had about a dozen bios submitted by WWII vets. Included in this issue are a couple of others as well. I welcome submissions from our readers of bios and stories handed down and by chance anything from a vet him or herself. Excuse me for including my
(cont. pg 3)

President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

First, thanks to all who have sent in their dues and also to those who added or sent separate donations. It will come in handy as the paint is peeling and some of the old boards on the freight station and decks are rotting. Hard to believe that much of that work is now over 30 years old! If we don't tend to the old boards soon, there will be additional damage. Anything you can do to help would be appreciated.

The Museum and Library Committee have been hard at work. The Ely House and Freight Station look great and there are some newly displayed items to see. The library is shaping up but the task is quite large. It seems that no sooner does one donated box of materials get organized, than another is donated. It is great but a daunting task. Volunteers are welcome. Reach out to me or a committee member and we will put you to work. Thank you Sue Dilger, Shirley Olsen and Cookie Cummings.

This issue is mostly dedicated to WWII veterans as we remember D-Day and the eventual V-E and V-J days. You will read some of the stories from the vets themselves. We plan to add more pictures in the next issues. We would love to hear any stories or writings that were passed to you from area family members who served. There were many.

Bev Mann and her "Open House" committee have been open from 1-3 every first Sunday of the month and will continue to do so. This is in response to requests from members of the community. Although not set yet, there will be more walking tours this year. Look for the announcements. Numbers need to be limited for safety and presentation purposes.

Among his many other tasks, Greg Ciano has opened a Society store. Check the items out on our website.

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by Cappy Stults

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For those who have not paid their dues, we accept payment by check and also via qGiv which is accessible on our website: www.hewhs.com. Donations can be made both ways as well. Thank you all for your always encouraging comments. Here is to an even better 2024 for you and all of us.

Cappy Stults, President.
609.712.1811 | cstults@gmail.com

Auditions Are Coming Up

For Our 6th Annual Student's Production

- When: Saturday, March 30 from 2-4 pm.
- Where: Historical Society HQ – 164 North Main Street, Hightstown.
- For 3rd through 12th grade

More information and audition script at our website hewhs.com

This year's show will be about the life of Ethel McKnight. You can see last year's show about Grace Norton Rogers on our website.



WWII Bios (cont.)

family members but they had been sent directly to Russ and are part of the WWII history.

After recently watching the movie *Oppenheimer*, I was reminded of the length of time many of these veterans had served. Current attitudes are mixed regarding the use of the atomic bomb, twice, against Japan. But it is clear from these stories, and others, that those who were serving in WWII believed it indeed ended the war and saved tens of thousands of lives, or more. Few WWII vets regret Truman's decision to use the bomb. I highly recommend *Oppenheimer*. I believe it is quite accurate and a good lesson for those not aware of what it was like in the 1930s and 1940s war years. It is worth noting that some of the filming was done on the Princeton campus and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

Proctor Ely

(father of Society member Linda Ely Mansmann).



Proctor Ely

I was an original member of the 30th Signal Heavy Construction Battalion. I was a volunteer at age 18. Upon completion of basic training (US Army Signal Corp training was in Sea Girt), I went to Fort

Monmouth. I was trained as a telephone lineman and trouble shooter. From there I was sent to Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Camp Atterbury was another new camp. I was a cadreman for the 30th Signal Battalion (Ed: cadreman probably meant teacher/instructor).

The following is a history of the 30th Signal Heavy Construction Battalion to the best of my ability.

The 30th Signal Heavy Construction Battalion was activated at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, 17 August 1942. It was commanded by LTC Banks (Graduate of US Military Academy). It consisted of Headquarters Company, two line companies – A and B and approximate personnel – 600-700. It might also be of interest to you that the 31st Heavy Signal Construction Battalion was our neighbor at Camp Atterbury. Along with one regiment of the 92nd Division (Black Buffalos) who sometime later caught up with us in Northern Italy. Also Camp Atterbury, Indiana at that time was home of the 83rd Infantry Division. Plus other service units. We heard at a later date that our sister battalion, the 31st, was torpedoed on a troop ship in the Mediterranean at a tremendous loss of life. I have often wondered and hoped that this was a false rumor. The 30th landed in the North Africa theater at Casablanca, 13 May 1943 and made extensive repairs to open wire construction from Robat, Fez, Meknes to Oujoa (Ed: Morocco). Thereupon rehabilitating entire French circuits from Tunis to the Libyan border. The battalion was under the command of LTC Appleton. (COL Banks was above age limit for overseas duty). Upon the surrender of all AXIS Forces in North Africa, we then sailed for the invasion of Italy. Arrived in Salerno per LST, 30 Sept 1943 (Ed.-LST was Landing Ship,Tank). Reconstructed and rehabilitated open wire pole line construction from Salerno to San Patro (just south of Casino). At that time working with the 10th British Corps, II American Corps and the American 5th Army. Also forgot to mention being attached to British 8th Army in Tunisia. Returned to the Naples area. B Company, working in Peninsular Base section. "A" Company had units in Anzio. Upon breakthrough to Rome, the battalion reunited.

Followed 5th Army through campaigns as far North as Verona (Appines and PO Valley). Therefore, at the surrender of all German forces in Italy, battalion withdrew back to Leghorn. At this time a crest and shoulder tab were made up and approved to be worn by our Battalion. Shortly after this I left the battalion on a point basis to return to home (November (1945). I believe LTC Appleton also left the battalion and a MAJ Grossenfinger became CO. From then on I never knew the outcome of the 30th Signal Heavy Construction Battalion. I often wondered where and when it was deactivated.

I might say we often worked under combat conditions; land mines, artillery fire and severe air raids (Naples area) and straff-

ing in the Naples area early part of the war. We received four campaign battle stars and the Meritorious Service Award. We suffered numerous casualties. Two of my personal friends never returned due to "teller land mines" of Northern Italy.

Being on detached service for long periods of time, I never really knew the casualty figures back at the battalion. During that period of time which I served overseas (2 ½ years), we placed 9000 wire miles of copper wire, plus all the other work of constructing communications between Division, Corps and Army.

In a later note to Russ, Proctor shared the following:

I want to share with you a particular story I will never forget. It happened on July 18, 1945. My buddy and I asked for a one day pass to go swimming in the Mediterranean Sea. We were located in Northern Italy. After the swim we planned to go to the Red Cross Club in the village of Viarregio for refreshment and possible transportation back to our unit. At approximately 1:30 pm we finished our swim and started to leave the club. Cries for help came from the ocean. One of our soldiers was caught in a rip tide. I jumped in to save him. Once out of the water, we shook hands. He thanked me and my buddy and I headed for the Red Cross Club. All of a sudden when we were 75 yards from the Club, there was a huge explosion.

The remainder of this story is from a Star-Ledger article on April 18, 1994. It appears Proctor did not know much more about the explosion but it was massive. He and his buddy were knocked from their feet many miles from the blast. Blood ran from their noses and ears. They were so stunned that they could not recall how they got back to their unit, 25 miles away. A few days later he was shipped back to the US unaware of the cause of the explosion. The explosion became classified and was not declassified until 1992, 47 years later. Proctor had sought a minor disability claim from the Veteran's Administration without success. When searching the National Archives he located a cablegram sent from Naples on July 22, 1945, to the American Red Cross National Headquarters in Washington, D.C.. It told of the destruction of the enlisted men's club serving the 92d Division in Viareggio on July 18, by an explosion of mines stored in a nearby building, killing 36 and injuring 60. It appears that the Red Cross had reported to the military officials the presence of these mines which had been stored by the Italians in a large Villa and its gardens near the Red Cross center, but no action had been taken. The Counter Intelligence Corps did an investigation. It revealed that over 200 rifle grenades, 30 booby trap mines, 10 large artillery shells, and 1 ton of TNT were on the premises.

It appears that a small fire was seen by a guard who ran to the center to warn those there of the fire which was near the explosives. Testimony indicated that unextinguished cigarettes were

often discarded outside of the windows of the club and soldiers were warned not to do so.

Among the dead were 25 American soldiers of the all-black 92nd Infantry Division known as the "Black Buffalo Division". Proctor returned to the States with a damaged ear drum. He became employed by New Jersey Bell and retired in 1978. After many years of waiting and denial from the VA, Proctor made his second appeal after finding these records that had been classified for 50 years. He was awarded his disability.

If Proctor and his buddy had not spent those many extra minutes saving their fellow soldier who was caught in the riptide, they most likely would have been in the Club when the explosion occurred and would have been severely injured, or worse.

David Turp



David Turp

I considered myself very fortunate during WWII. Through the Navy I received my college education, travelled extensively in the Pacific, and although I did not have any direct involvement in action, there was one casualty aboard my ship during my 3 ½ years in the Navy. I had not received

my draft notice and had not yet graduated from high school when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor (Ed: December 7, 1941). As the country was in need of Naval officers, I chose to apply to the University of Virginia in the Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) and was accepted in the fall of 1942. I graduated in the class of 1945 receiving my commission as Ensign on June 25, 1945. I was assigned to destroyer duty on the USS Blue DD744 (Ed: named after Lieut Comm John S. Blue and launched in Nov 1943), a well decorated ship which had seen extensive action in the Pacific. Before picking up my ship, I was assigned to DD Officers Training for damage control and fire fighting in Norfolk, Va.. From there I was sent to San Francisco and arrived as Admiral Bill Halsey and the Third Fleet returned to the Pacific. I boarded the ship with 13 other green ensigns. I was assigned as Asst 1st Lieut in charge of the seamen who maintained the ship by cleaning, painting and repairing. They also handled the embarking of the smaller boats from ship to shore and return. The USS Blue then left for Bremerton Ship Yard in Washington State for repairs. While the ship was being repaired I attended gunnery school at Pacific Beach (20 + 40s).

Ed: I believe Dave was referring to the ship's cannon barrel gauges of 20mm and 40mm.

We then left for the Pacific - Hawaii, Guam, Saipan, Tinian Wake and many other war-torn islands, the Philippines and finally in Shanghai, China on May 18, 1946. In Shanghai I reported to the commanding officer of the USS Gen Breckinridge AP176 (Ed: a troopship), and was transported to the US. I received my Honorable Discharge release from active duty on June 10, 1946.

Charles S. Stults, Jr

Dec 1, 1942, 1st semester Bucknell U. – Army and US Army Air Force came on campus to recruit. After 3 days of testing, last thing a physical – eye test showed sight

red/green color blind, which would keep me out of flight school. On Dec 7, 1942, enlisted in the Army. Finished 1st semester, was called to Ft. Dix in Feb 1943, shipped to Camp Gordon, GA, to the 294 Combat Engineers for basic training. Made squad leader, Cpl, Sgt, S/Sgt. After that basic maneuvers in Tenn, Calif and Ariz desert. In the desert my platoon Lt. and myself had a little difference of opinion with the Company Commander and Battalion Commander – I'm back to a private. My Lt asked for a transfer and asked me to go with him to train a new Combat Engineers Bn 287th. This new outfit was a little different from my original – we were mostly high school grads or out of college, like myself. The new guys I had to train were mostly older draftees or old regular army pre-WWII. Several of them came out of Ft Leavenworth Army Prison. Good experience for a 19 year old! It was a little tough getting respect out of an old man who has been an Army private for 10 years or a 30 year old draftee from a good job. Also, a few young guys that the draft board had just managed to locate. Also in this mix were a couple of officers, T Sgts., 1st Sgts just being transferred to AAA balloon outfits on the west coast.

Ed: AAA I believe was Army Anti-Aircraft.

However we did manage to get a good outfit together in a short period of time. Early on, I and several others put in for Officers' Candidate School, but they felt that they needed good NCOs in Combat Engineers more than they needed officers. I received my approval just before I was to leave Camp Rucker, Ala for overseas. At that point, I said "Thanks, but no thanks." The 287th landed in France after the invasion and were quickly sent to England to learn about the "Bailey Bridge" and the newer land mines that the Germans had been using.

Ed: they were prefabricated portable truss bridges)

Our expertise was to build and blow up bridges, lay mines or remove mine fields, as well as to be out front to remove any problems for advancing troops. I remember Dad (Charlie) telling me that he would help Grandpop Black-Walter C Black-on the



Charles S. Stults, Jr.

nurse using explosives to remove old stumps.

On Christmas Eve 1944, we were quickly shipped out of England and on our way to the Bulge. Crossing the English Channel, with a bright moon, in a slow LST when ships were being torpedoed was not a pleasant boat ride. After landing in France, our orders were changed and we went to St. Lazaire and our battalion relieved a division going to the Bulge. Our main responsibility was to continue the encirclement of the Germans around the St. Lazaire submarine pens. As one of the ranking NCOs in our company, I went up to the lines with Division troops for two days and out on their patrols to locate the enemy lines. The second day was the first time I came under fire – not considering V bombs in England – and I learned a very valuable lesson.

We were in an area between our lines and the Germans. As we went thru one opening in a hedgerow, we saw a couple sawing wood outside a cabin. The leader of the patrol waived us up and we were going to tell the couple to move out of the area. As the whole patrol was thru the hedgerow and moving thru the trees to the cabin, the sawyers went inside and immediately two machine guns opened fire on us. Fortunately, no one was hit and we moved out very quickly back to our own lines. I learned to not trust anything you see in a combat situation. The unknowing people who now are saying, “ban the mines”, have never had to defend an area with a hundred men that should have had a thousand. We did! I was deactivating an anti-personnel mine and was just putting the pin in when an enemy weapons carrier hit a landmine about 75 yards from me. It’s a good thing I had O.D. pants on!

Ed: I think by O.D. he means “olive drab”.

After St Lazaire, we became the Combat Engineers for Lucky Forward (3rd Army Hdqtrs) under General George Patton. Believe three quarters of what you see and one-half of what you hear and nothing of what you read – Old “Blood and Guts” was my man! I say this even though he stole my horse. (Ed: Patton’s nickname). It was our responsibility to demine and make sure Patton’s forward headquarters at Bad Tolz, Germany (Lucky Forward) was secure. This was a beautiful campus in the Bavarian Alps, which was once the training headquarters for Hitler’s SS troops. In these days, any college in the US A would love to have such a campus. We had to check and clear all the buildings and grounds as well as take care of all of the D.P.s who were held there.

Ed: D.P.s were displaced persons.

This place had had three very large stables connected at one end was a large enclosed riding ring as large as a polo field. One of my sergeants and myself checked out these stables and decided that we could supervise the prisoners, who were cleaning up the

campus, on horseback as well as on foot. Luke picked a big black stallion, and I got a big white Arabian. This worked fine until about a week later. General Patton shows up and said that he liked the looks of my horse. I told, or suggested, that there were a lot of nicer ones down at the stable, and he suggested that I get one of those because he liked mine.

Before this happened I had another short discussion with the General. We were advancing through Frankfurt and the retreating Germans were blowing up all the bridges over the Mainz River. We quickly threw up a bridge that would carry trucks and soldiers over this steep, concrete banked river. Patton needed a bridge that would hold his tank retrievers loaded with tanks within 36 hours. Our Company Captain gave my platoon this job. He asked where would get the material. I said we’d knock down a couple of the nearby buildings. He said we could not do that as we were not to damage property. I asked him what the hell was the Air Force doing? He got upset and left and we knocked down buildings and got the job done in 31 hours even though we had to keep turning off and on the electric generators all night long when the bombers were flying over. Patton came and thanked us for getting the job done. He remember that several months later when he took my horse. Later I saw a newsreel of a victory parade and there was George riding my horse. Even though we had the longest time on the front lines without relief than any outfit in the E.T.O., we only lost one man in combat. We lost two officers trying to demonstrate how to deactivate a mine. They did not learn too well.

This is my father and although I heard briefly about the horse and how much he respected Patton, he made very few comments about the war years to me. His brother and cousins who served never talked about WWII in my presence.

Warren “Pete” Field



Warren “Pete” Field

During my days in the service I considered myself very lucky because I was doing something that I had always dreamed of – Uncle Sam gave me an airplane and said, “go fly it” and that’s what I did. My overseas experience turned out to be somewhat of a travelogue because I covered much of this world. I hit 3 continents, stepped foot in 19 different countries, flew over an additional 10 countries, have seen some wonders of the world- The Pyramids, The Great Wall, The Taj Mahal, many Pagodas in Burma, The Forbidden City in the City of Peking. While flying back and forth across northern India there was something that just didn’t seem right. Here you are flying along at 20-22 thousand feet and you look over your shoulder and you have to look up at mountain peaks – just didn’t seem right – we were more accustomed to looking down on things. But what a magnificent sight that was – what a rugged mountain range.

My first 10 months were spent in India in the Province of Assam, just north of Burma. I was flying a single engine fighter aircraft – P-51 Mustang – and our primary missions were to support British ground troops and Merrill’s Marauders that were

fighting in the jungles of North Burma – our missions were about 85% dive bombing – what we sweated out most wasn’t the Japanese Zero – it was what we were flying over – the jungle. I have always described the jungle, say at 10-15 thousand feet, that looks like a head of a cauliflower – it seems that tight. As an example, on the way home one day a fellow pilot said he had a problem and was going to bail out of his plane. At the time they were building a road through the jungle from India to Burma to meet up with the Old Burma Road. They told him to try to jump as close to that road as you can and we estimated that where his chute went into the trees it was a good mile or mile and a half from the road. When he got back he said the canopy was so thick that he spent his first night in the top of the trees. Next day down to the ground and started to walk. It took him 7 days to go about a mile to get to that road. We were always briefed about survival in the jungle. #1 eat what the monkey eats and then eat the monkey. He said he could never catch a monkey.

I spent my last 9 months in China first to protect B-29s when they were there, but they didn’t last too long before they were moved to the Pacific. We were moved further north to a place called Sian.

Ed: Xi’an.

If I had to pick a spot to go back to it would be China and our base there in Sian. Maybe you remember reading where they unearthed all these terra cotta soldiers and horses from whatever dynasty thousands of years ago. Well that was at Sian. Also, at Sian centuries ago – Sian was the beginning of that Silk Road in Marco Polo’s time. When flying around North China, it was always there. The Wall and on a clear day you could see far to the west and that wall just seemed to disappear in places; and that was nothing more than the sands of the Gobi Desert. Which over the centuries had just buried the Wall in places. Finally back to India and 3 days after I left India I was walking down South Main Street, in Hightstown, July 4, 1945. I would have to say for all the places I’ve been and for all the things I’ve seen how fortunate you are to live in a country like the good ole U.S. of A.

John Sprout

My time in the service in WWII was interesting and educating but hardly spectacular or heroic. In my freshman year at college I volunteered for the navy and was fortunate to have been accepted in their V-12 (officer’s training) Program. I was sent to Yale U as an apprentice seaman. This was 1943. In 1944 after my junior year, I was ordered to Midshipman’s School where, after three months, I received a commission. At this point I was assigned to a heavy cruiser still being built in Quincy, Mass. As a member of the pre-commissioning detail, in Newport, RI, my first job was as legal officer for our ship, The USS Columbus (CA74). After our



John Sprout

shakedown cruise my job involved running the radio department and duties including coding, decoding and routing messages. I became the Radio Division Officer when our ship went to the Pacific at the close of the war. We never saw any action, but we did occupation duty in Japan and Tsingtao and Shanghai, China.

As a communications officer I had been involved in writing many of the communications plans for our ship's missions, and our ship was scheduled to be a Flagship in one of the task forces invading Japan. I had access to casualty estimates for our particular part of the invasion, and I am most thankful that the atom bomb ended it all. When we were on duty in Japan, we saw the horrible effects of the bomb and they were sobering. Yet I think that in the long run the bombs saved many lives on both sides. In 1946 the Columbus returned to Long Beach, CA and by then I had "enough points" to be released from active duty.

Editor: "Points" were mentioned in a few bios. 1 point was given for each month in the service, an additional point for overseas service and each battle star or decoration earned 5 points and 12 points for each dependent child. 85 points got you home.

Walter Black Stults

Sgt US ARMY Air Force

Accepted in Army Enlisted Reserve Corps August 1942. Called to active duty Army Air Force February 1943. Trained as Meteorologist at Brown University, February – August 1943. Massachusetts Institute of Technology August 1943-June 1944. Shipped overseas to South Pacific June 1944. Served as Cryptographer in Brisbane, Australia, Nadzab, New Guinea, Hollandia, New Guinea, Biak, New Guinea, Clark Field, Philippines. Returned to U.S. 1946. Discharged as Sergeant, USAAF at Ft Dix, January 1946.

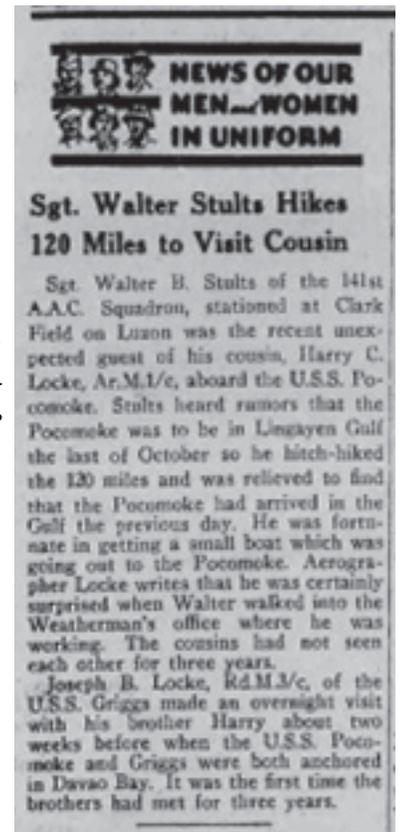
I guess I was fortunate compared to so many others who served in the War. I spent about half my time learning how to be a weatherman in not-too-distant universities. Then, during the



Walter Black Stults

second 18 months, I worked as a code man in the South Pacific. In the summer of 1945, all U.S. forces in the Pacific were preparing to invade the Japanese home islands and that was a scary prospect.

When V-J Day came without the need for an invasion, jubilation reigned. The only souvenir I brought home was a case of malaria which gradually worked its way out of my body over the next few years.



Ernest J. Thompson, Jr.

Russ' file did not have a bio from Ernie. But in 2006, the Windsor-Hights Herald writ-



Ernest J. Thompson, Jr.

Er Dick Brinster, interviewed him when Horace “Doc” Embley’s pictures were given to the library.

Ernie was a Bronze Star winner who says he and his World War II companions prefer to recall the lighter moments of their service time rather than the grim ones. It should be noted that the Bronze Star is awarded for heroic or meritorious service in a combat zone. Drafted after his first semester at Bucknell University in 1943, Ernie recalls the initial lesson he learned from a sergeant about complaining in boot camp.

We were standing in line and I turned to the guy next to me and said, “We’re in deep trouble, and the sergeant yelled “WHAT”? Ernie knew then that his life had changed. Little did he know how much it would. Eventually he fought in the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. It was Hitler’s offensive and is recorded as being the largest and bloodiest of the war, lasting for over a month, in the winter! “That was an experience you’d never forget. Cold, snow. I didn’t take a shower for 3 months. You hardly had a chance to brush your teeth – if you even had a toothbrush.” Ernie was a sergeant and squad leader with the 75th Infantry Division.

At the time of the interview in 2006, Ernie was 83 years old. He had retired from Transamerica DeLaval and lived in Hightstown his entire life. He served on town council and was active in the Baptist Church and Masonic Lodge.

You may be interested in the fact that Dave Turp, Charlie Stults, Pete Field, John Sprout, Walter Stults, and Ernie Tompson were all brought up on South and South Main Streets. They were great friends and later all played on the “Southenders Softball” team in town. Thus the name, “Southenders”. Future issues will have other veterans’ pictures and hopefully, some readers can share some additional stories.

Many of the pictures were taken from Embley’s collection which Curtis Crowell put in a great power point back in 2006. It is about 38 minutes and fun to watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fyIKcyKe9c> or at this QR code.



Great job Curtis.

George F. Dennis

It was reported in the October 5, 1944, Hightstown Gazette, headline, Gazette Managing Editor Is Missing in Action in France. There follows the article under the headline:



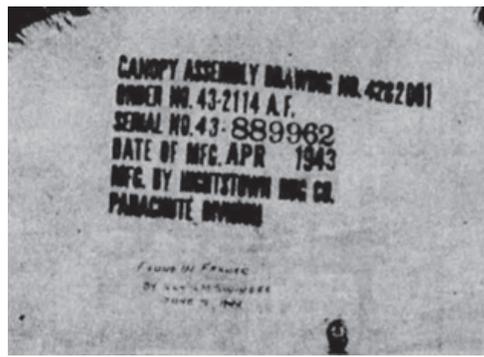
George F. Dennis

Private First Class George Foster Dennis was reported missing in action in Southern France since September 10 in a telegram received Saturday evening from the War Department by his wife, Mrs. Helen Storms Dennis. He is son of Mr. & Mrs. George P. Dennis. He would have been 24 years old on November 24. Private Dennis was inducted into the service at Fort Dix on August 24, 1943; received basic training at Fort McClellan.

Arrived in Africa in February 1944; in Italy in March and in Southern France on D-Day August 15. Private Dennis, an infantryman, was with the 45th “Thunderbird” Division of the Seventh Army, now in Southern France. He was attached to the staff section as a field or combat correspondent. George had graduated magna cum laude from Syracuse University.

Hightstown Rug Company, Parachute Division

There are many stories about the Home Front during WWII. Everybody seemed to pitch in one way or another. Hightstown Rug Company, and the Native Lace Works on Monmouth Street, totally converted their operations to manufacture parachutes. There was such a need for labor they even hired high school



Hightstown Rug Company advert looking for women and girls, and a portion of a parachute showing it was manufactured in Hightstown.

girls. During the War, a number of local soldiers found and sent home pieces of parachutes they had found in the fields and forests of Europe. One such piece is below and we have others in the Historical Society. Additionally, the Farm Fresh Canning Company converted from canning vegetables and fruits to canning water for the GIs.

Due to shortages, commodities were “rationed”. Coal, Oil, gasoline, sugar, butter and many other items. “Ration Books” were handed out to families and inside were sheets of small pieces of paper with many “stamps”. A stamp or stamps were ripped out when buying the products.



Left: Article from May 18, 1944 describing how a local resident used a Hightstown Rug Company parachute during the war.

Above: Cover of a ration book.

Monmouth Battlefield Lecture Series



Monmouth Battlefield hosts a monthly lecture series on the second Sunday of the month from 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm. The lectures are open to the public and are free. Here’s the list for the rest of 2024.

- **March 10:** *The Real Molly Pitcher*
- **April 14:** *George Washington’s Sense of Humor*
- **May 12:** *British Commanders and Leadership at Monmouth*
- **June 9:** *General Charles Lee at Monmouth: Hero, Scapegoat, or Scoundrel?*
- **July 14:** *Camp Vredenburg: The Civil War Training Camp near Freehold, and its Regiments*
- **August 11:** *Biggest Mistakes at the Battle of Monmouth*
- **September 8:** *The Were Everywhere: Generals Anthony Wayne and the Marquis de Lafayette at Monmouth*
- **October 13:** *Washington’s Staff Officers at Monmouth: The Big Wigs and the Little Wags*
- **November 10:** *Unsung Heroes at the Battle of Monmouth*
- **December 8:** *Newest Plans and Doings at Monmouth Battlefield State Park*

Lectures are held at:
 Monmouth Battlefield State Park
 Visitor’s Center
 20 Route 33
 Manalapan, NJ 07726
 732-462-9616

Be sure to follow them on Facebook.

Hightstown East Windsor Historical Society

Founded 1971 to educate while preserving for future generations, our people and our community's history.



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cookcummings@yahoo.com

Committee Chairs

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609-448-9490
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Robert Craig
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Eileen Couturier
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Building Committee

Curtis Crowell, Christian Kirkpatrick, Shirley Olsen, Robert Szychowski

Society Trustees

Curtis Crowell, Nancy Laudemberger, Bonnie Lou Field, Irene Schubert, Bev Mann and Gary Grubb
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Membership Application

Support us this year at the following rates:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual\$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family.....\$25 |
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Where did you hear about membership?

Please mail the completed application along with a check made payable to:

HEW Historical Society

Membership Committee
164 North Main Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520

Thank you for your donation!



Or pay online by clicking "Become a Member Today" on our website: hewhs.com or scan this QR code.

- I would not like to be part of the New Member Spotlight.

Volunteer Opportunities

I would like to volunteer to help out with the following committee(s):

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Property & Grounds | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Docent |



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