

Hightstown



East Windsor

# *Historical Society News*

Summer 2024

## World War II Recollections

*Continued from Spring 2024*

by Cappy Stults

No sooner had we mailed out the Spring 2024 newsletter edition that included the World War II recollections, we coincidentally received a website request from Michael Geraty, Indiana. Here is his inquiry:

Good morning, George Dubell wrote a book about his World War II experience. I wonder if you know how/where I could get a copy. Please and thanks. My father, James D. Geraty was also a Timberwolf. He was in the Cavalry Recon Troop (Mechanized). Like many veterans, he didn't like to talk about his involvement.

I was quite surprised by his inquiry about a book written by George Dubell. I had never heard of it. I knew he was in World War II and only at his funeral had I heard mention of what I thought was his PTSD issues from the War. Not for this reason but also coincidentally I visited member Bob Sprout after his recent birthday. He was a good friend of George's. I asked if he recalled anything about George's World War II service and if the issues I had read about in his "book" were just physical, not mental, as you will read about here. Bob related he believed they were purely physical but quite severe.

I had known Mr. Dubell, later George to me, all of my life. He was very close to our family, and he worked at the Hightstown Savings & Loan in our building for numerous years. He also lived adjacent to our houses on South Main and Taylor Avenue. George's father worked for the Rug Company and likely made parachutes during the war. His grandfather, Joseph, was an engineer on the UT Railroad. You may have seen pictures of him with the train engine. His wife, Margaret/Peg, was from Cranbury, and her brother William Hoffman was killed in World War II. George was also very active in The Historical Society and served as its Treasurer for many years.

George J. Dubell  
Served in the  
104th Infantry  
Division,  
served in Europe  
'44-'45  
Awarded  
Bronze Star,  
Purple Heart



I mention the above because in all of the years of knowing George seeing him nearly daily and working with him on various town activities, I had never heard that he was a "Timberwolf" or about any of his World War II experiences. As mentioned in the last newsletter, this subject avoidance seems typical for those who were in the most dangerous situations in World War II.

Upon further research, including some recollections from Kathy and Bob Patten, I was able to find his "book". I was surprised to find that the book is resident at The International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review. The links are at the end of this article.

I excerpt from his writings as follows. I took license to make some minor changes and truncated the stories to fit herein as many of the facts as possible. I encourage the reading of his entire story. It is very compelling. His exact words are in italics.

**Niagara University and the A.S.T.P (after "Greetings" from the President summer of 1943)**

(cont. pg 3)

# President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

Thank you all who have paid their dues and for those who added a little extra. We have paid off the cost of the addition and now are just working to complete the reorganization and accession record in Past Perfect. Just a FYI. Past Perfect, our records/archive database, costs us \$870 annually. That is 44 members at \$20 dues! Although we have over 230 members, the majority are "life members" who paid \$200 or more many years ago, so we do not realize any annual income from them.

We also brought in a large amount of income from the house tours every other year. These did not take place during the pandemic and although we did a few "virtual tours", these were free. Additionally, our annual meetings added net income, but the rising cost of food venues has made them only break even or even a subsidized event. SO, take a look at our online store and consider purchasing something for you or as a gift. Many of these items are from inventory so they are 100% profit except for delivery cost. Contact me or Greg Ciano via our email if there are any questions about these or other items.

As mentioned in my previous message, overdue repairs are imminent. The first estimate is for our 4 chimneys which is for \$10,000. I suspect the carpentry work will be as much. We will keep you posted.

We continue to welcome new or revived volunteers. Now that the museums are open the first Sunday every month from 1-3, docents are needed. You don't need to really know much about the museum and the items as they are well labeled and there are docent guides. Most visitors prefer to view rather than be lectured anyway. Let us know if you are interested. Grounds volunteers are welcome as well.

Greg Ciano has done another great job with the Children's Theater. The short film will premiere in the Freight Station on Saturday, May 18 with the times to be announced.

For those who have not paid their dues, we accept payment by check



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The House is open to tour the first Sunday of each month from 1 - 3 pm.

and also via qGiv which is accessible on our website: [www.hewhs.com](http://www.hewhs.com). Donations can be made both ways as well. Thank you all for your always encouraging comments. Look for information regarding the date and venue for our annual meeting this Fall. Be well and thank you all.

Cappy Stults, President.  
609.712.1811 | [cstults@gmail.com](mailto:cstults@gmail.com)

Inside the Ely House.  
Come tour!

## World War 2 Recollections (cont.)

Basic training was over and now I was being sent to Niagara University located in Niagara Falls, NY. It was here that I would participate in the Army Specialized Training Program better known as A.S.T.P.. I knew very little about this program except that it was to give us accelerated college education in special fields. The aptitude tests we had taken during basic training indicated which we were best suited for and which the army had special needs for. I had never heard of Niagara University and had no inkling of where Niagara Falls was in the state. I had heard of Niagara Falls before but only in reference to honeymoons and the place where some adventurers tried to go over falls in a barrel.

I, with 29 others from our basic training company, had shipped out of Fort Benning (Ed: Georgia) on January 1, 1944. After arriving at Niagara University, I wrote home to tell Mom and Dad where I was. My letter dated 1/04/44 follows (Ed: excerpts follow):

*I have been shipped at last and am now stationed at Niagara University. Our group left Fort Benning on January 1st at about 11:30 am. We hiked five miles to the train station. It was one hike that no one minded taking. The train was an eight-car troop train and each car held groups of men who were going to the same school. The train broke up at Cincinnati where each car going to the same school was coupled to a different train that was to take it to the city in which their assigned college or university was located. We got into Niagara about 9 am on January 3rd and were bussed to the university which is about 3 miles from the city of Niagara Falls. The university is small but the buildings are swell. Our living quarters could not be better. It is sure good to be north again (Ed: after being in Georgia for basic training). On December 31st there was a shipment of 82 men from Benning going to Princeton but it was not in the books for me to go there.*

*I had five roommates and we all became friends. We did not know it at the time but eventually all of us would be sent to the 104th Infantry Division at Camp Carson located at Colorado Springs, Colorado, where we would be separated. Three of my roommates did not survive the war. At this time of our training none of us were worried about the future except that we might flunk out of the program. We were having a good time at the university and it sure did not seem that we were in the Army. Three of us remain friends to this day.*

*Our subjects were Algebra, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, Trigonometry, History, English, Military Science and Physical Training. We had lots of homework and studied until lights out at 11PM. We were free on Sundays and could have passes to go anywhere within 100 miles. We went to Buffalo several times to see big bands and basketball games. We were to study at Niagara for nine months then be transferred to another school for nine months of advanced study. At the end of this time we would graduate and be commissioned as second lieutenants.*

*I forgot how it came about but on January 6, 1944, I was given a weekend pass good to travel anywhere within 50 miles. Since I had not been home since going into the army, I decided to take a chance and go home even though it was 500 miles away. The trip to NYC took about 5 hours. Nobody looked at my pass. If they had I could be charged with being AWOL. From Grand Central Station I went over to Penn Station and took the train to Princeton Jct., and from there hitchhiked to Hightstown arriving unannounced Friday morning. What a surprise for everyone. It was great to be home. I think all of my relatives came by to see me. The best part was that I got to see my girlfriend Peg Hoffman on Friday and Saturday night. It confirmed that I was in love with her. Sunday Mom and Dad took me to Princeton Jct for my return trip to Niagara.*

### Camp Carson Colorado

*The last week in March we took our last exams. They were four hours long. We all passed. On March 26th, 1944, Sunday, we were loaded on trains and shipped out of Niagara but we did not know to where. We found out that the ASTP program had been terminated and we were going to a new base which would be an infantry unit. After two days on the train we arrived at Colorado Springs, Colorado, before going another 10 miles to Camp Carson where I stayed for the next six months. This was quite different from Niagara as the days started with calisthenics followed by a hike of 2 or 3 miles. We found we were often out of breath due to the 5,000-foot altitude. Most of our training was at night as if we went into combat, that is when we would be fighting. We were told we would soon adjust to the new conditions and we did. We were soon doing strenuous calisthenics and taking five to ten mile hikes. Just before our basic training was completed, we were told that there was going to be a lecture and demonstration on the 30 caliber light machine gun including the disassembly and*

reassembly of the gun and we could attend. Jerry Wells, my new friend, and I decided we would do it. After the demonstration we were asked to duplicate the procedure. I was always pretty good at taking things apart, so I was able to do what the instructor was showing us. A few days later Jerry and I were assigned to the 4th platoon in the machine gun section. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd platoons were rifle platoons, and the 4th was a weapons platoon (Ed: This included machine gunners and mortar). We were integrated into "G" company.

As the daily training progressed, our performance improved. We got stronger and our endurance increased significantly but it never seemed to satisfy General Allen. I was so impressed with Colorado I thought I might relocate there after the war. Rumors began to circulate that all who had not had furlough would soon be allowed to put their name on the request list. Further rumors were that after the furloughs, the 104th Division was going to be shipped out of the country. Furloughs were for 17 days, including travel. On May 22nd, I went to the train station in Colorado Springs, bought my ticket, and waited for the train along with 1,000 others guys going on furlough. Two other guys were going east with me. One to Philadelphia and one to Newark. I reached Princeton Jct in early morning May 24th and hitchhiked to Hightstown. I again was not able to tell anyone I was coming so it was a surprise to all. I was with Peg every day and visited my dad in the hospital who was recovering from an operation that nobody told me about to save me the worry. I went to the High School every day, walked the halls, and had lunch with Peg.

### **Furlough and the Prom**

Peg was a senior and in the early part of June there is always the Senior Prom. I had no way of telling Peg that I was coming home so she had accepted an invitation from another boy in her class. One of my two best friends suggested to Peg's prom date that it would be a fine gesture if he would release Peg from her acceptance of his invitation. He generously agreed that it was the right thing to do, and he told Peg she was free to go with me. I wore my dress uniform, and she was in a beautiful evening gown and was by far the most beautiful girl at the prom. On June 5th I took the train out of Trenton and arrived at Camp Carson on June 7th, the day after D-Day. I learned of the invasion when my train stopped in Ohio.

### **Camp Kilmer, NJ**

Back at camp our training turned to using live ammunition and throwing hand grenades. In early August the rumors of us leaving Camp Carson increased dramatically. The division received orders that we would be moving by rail to Camp Kilmer, New Brunswick, NJ, on August 15th, 1944. Training was over. We were now getting ready for the big event. We

were headed to Europe. I don't remember much of Kilmer except we would listen to "The Make Believe Ballroom", a program of big band music, on a NYC radio station. My favorite orchestra was Tommy Dorsey with Frank Sinatra as his vocalist. Other favorites were Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Count Bassie, Jimmy Dorsey, Harry James and many others. The music was called "swing". It was happy music.

Kilmer was only 15 miles from NYC and 15 miles in the other direction from Hightstown. I had written home that I was at a new camp closer to home but could not tell them where, but I was able to tell them that I was listening to "The Make Believe Ballroom". I also wrote to my dad who worked at the Raritan Arsenal near New Brunswick, to look closely at all soldiers hitchhiking when he drove home from work as he might recognize one. Peg had written that she and several girls from Cranbury had taken summer jobs at Ocean Grove, adjacent to Asbury Park. Fortunately, my best friend, Robert Byrne, who lived with his parents on a farm outside of Hightstown, had a motorcycle and after I contacted him he agreed to take me to Grove Hall sitting behind him on the motorcycle. I got to see Peg and Robert got me back to Hightstown in record time to see Mom and Dad, who took me back to Camp Kilmer. I never had a better friend than Robert Byrne; he was like a brother to me.

After one more pass to go home and a visit to Grove Hall, we were advised there would be no more passes. The division history of



*“Timberwolf Tracks” records the following on page 35:*

*The entire division assembled at an open amphitheater on August 24 for final religious ceremonies in the United States. During this solemn hour the Division chaplains asked Almighty God for His blessing and guidance of our gallant men. On August 25th and 26th, the Division filed in coaches at Camp Kilmer and rode to New York harbor. Marching into ferry boats, the men, heavily loaded with gear, rode silently to the piers. By morning, August 27th, all troops were loaded. At noon on this bright Sunday, the ships slipped away from the docks and the Timberwolves were on their way. For many of our men it was farewell to a beloved homeland. Fifty-six ships made up the convoy, including troop transports, freighters, battered tankers, aircraft carriers and destroyer escorts.*

*It was difficult for me to realize that I might actually be fighting the enemy in the near future. In my mind I still thought that that would never happen to me.*

### **My First Boat Trip**

*It is difficult to visualize how many men were on the ships that day. I would estimate 8,000-9,000 men were on my ship, the USS George Washington. The remainder were aboard the USS LEJEUNE, the USAT CRISTOBAL and the SS OCEAN MAIL. When we went into a large area down four levels on the ship, there were rows after rows of bunks two feet wide and six feet long. They were stacked in layers of five with about two feet between each bunk. The first bunk was nearly on the floor and the top bunk almost touched the ceiling. We were confined there for quite awhile until an announcement was made that we were underway and would soon be passing the Statue of Liberty. We all climbed up the stairs to see the great statue. All decks were full with men and people on the shore and in the buildings were cheering and waving to us. It was an exciting time.*

*Then it was time to return to our quarters. My friends and I of the 4th platoon decided to stay on deck until we were told we could not. We found an area on the deck and made it our home for the entire trip to Europe.*

### **France and Belgium**

*Land was sighted on September 6th. The site that greeted us was total destruction. Sunken ships, destroyed docks and burned out buildings were everywhere. The Germans had destroyed the harbor completely. We had to anchor a distance from the shore. We stepped on land September 7th; 11 days to get to this point and just 94 days after D-Day, June 6, 1944. Our convoy was the largest to cross the Atlantic and the first to sail directly from the US to France. Prior to this all convoys terminated in England. We were now in France and the fighting was not far away.*

*It felt good to be on land again. The boat trip had been exciting for me, especially in the beginning, because I had never been on an ocean liner before and had never been out of sight of land.; however, after 10 days of inactivity, my buddies and I got bored. The toughest part of the trip was not being able to receive mail. Now that we were on land once again, we were all looking forward to mail call.*

*My first memory on land was one of looking towards the head of our long convoy as we were going down a long hill. I could see the men in the trucks ahead of us, some seated and some standing, looking at the countryside as I was. The emotion it created in me was a strong one because after 60 years, I still can see our convoy going up that gravel road.*

*The second memory that I have of that ride was of seeing the small groups of people, men, women and children standing on the side of the road waving to us as we passed by. We were happy to see them and as we passed by we began to throw them small packs of cigarettes, chewing gum, and bars of candy that we all had stocked up on while on the ship. It made me feel good to see those people run onto the road to pick up the things that we had thrown to them; that is until I saw them fighting each other for them. I stopped throwing things to the people after that.*

*We were now at the initial staging area. Jerry Wells and I had been buddies since meeting at Camp Carson so we decided to go together and assemble our tent. All of us were carrying full field packs and in the pack we carried just about everything that we would need to survive in the field. The army tried very hard to keep our spirits up. One day the Red Cross brought us coffee and doughnuts that girls served us from a mobile unit. They also gave us cigarettes and candy. It was great to see and talk to American girls. We went to a USO show and also to make things more interesting, we had competitive sports between the platoons of our company. We played touch football, baseball and pitched horse shoes. I thought I was pretty good at horse shoes until I played against some of my friends. I was quickly eliminated. We had very little*

contact with the French civilians. What we saw were mainly very old men and children. We never saw teenagers or young adults. The reason for this should have been obvious to me and eventually was. France had been at war with Germany since 1940. They had been occupied since 1941. They had not regained their freedom until after the allied invasion on June 6, 1944. During those years a whole generation of young men and women were killed or sent to Germany for forced labor. The whole time I was in France I don't remember seeing any of the local people who did not look tired, dirty and bent over.

From the Timberwolf Tracks:

*The division, less the 415th infantry and 1st battalion, 414th infantry moved by foot and motor from the vicinity of Valognes to its new bivouac area in the vicinity of Barneyville Sur Mer on 26 September. The Seagull and Mountaineer infantry made one of the longest marches in their history, a distance of 30 miles. From there we overlooked the English Channel and the Jersey Islands ten miles out to sea. Upon the Jersey Islands was located a strong German Garrison, which in the past had conducted raids on the shores of France. The war was definitely coming closer to the Timberwolves.*

*One day my friend, Jerry Wells, was instructed to pack his gear and report to our company commander. He packed up and went to company headquarters and that was the last I ever saw of him. Sometime toward the end of September, I got a chance to go into the city of Cherbourg. I don't know what I expected to see, but I was very disappointed. I wrote home:*

*It is a big city but does not compare with our cities. None of the buildings are over 3 stories high and they are absolutely without any shape except for being square. Sidewalks are narrow and curbs only a few inches high. Everybody gets splashed by passing vehicles. Everything is just bare, no porches, no window displays or anything we are familiar with. Public relief stations only cover half the body. The best I can describe what I have seen is to say that they are 150 years behind the times. I am really disappointed.*

A lot of description of the remaining days in France you can read in the links.

### **Belgium, George writes home as follows:**

*A lot has happened to me since I last wrote to you. I am somewhere in Belgium but can't tell you where. I've seen towns totally destroyed by artillery and bombing. By far the worst that I have seen. Many are trying to rebuild but most have just left. That is what I would do. Towns are blacked out at night and nobody is on the streets. Belgium is really different. It is more industrialized. People are so much cleaner and the buildings almost knocked me over. They are made out of expensive brick with big sweeping windows and most modern design. In many towns they are flying American flags. There are pictures*

*of Roosevelt all over the place. These people are really glad to see us and it is a treat and a thrill to be received the way we were.*

### **Holland and the Beginning of Combat**

*On the afternoon of October 24th, the 414th Regiment moved into the line. We marched in columns of twos up a dirt road through a lightly wooded area. We began to hear the explosions of artillery shells. We came out of the wooded area near Wuestwezel, Belgium, to a flat field that had no cover. We occupied previously dug fox holes. I remember looking across the flat field and there was a farmer with his team of oxen plowing his field. We did not know where the Germans were but they were not far away. We shared fox holes and were told to stay there but remain alert. My buddy Bill Hura and I took 2 hour shifts sleeping. There is no darkness that compares to the night when the only light is the moon or from a burning building in the distance. We were told to stay in our foxholes so we wouldn't get shot by our own troops. I don't remember any casualties from our first night.*

*When we were moving out, we mostly crawled. A good distance through piles of cow manure. Back in fox holes, the German flares hung in the air over us. They were as bright as sunlight. Firing continued and I tried to press myself into the earth. None of us moved and we did not know what to do as firing continued for hours. I lay there praying to God, afraid to move and not knowing what to do. I guess I fell asleep. Others said we likely all did for about an hour. We all seemed to wake up at the same time and jumped up and began running to the rear away from the machine gun fire. Amazingly the firing stopped. The next morning October 26th, men began to assemble. The night had been a disaster. "G" company had taken many casualties. Lt. Sommerville, our company commander, and Lt. Balk had been killed. Several others were killed or wounded. Some had been taken prisoner. We experienced the horror of war and were changed forever by that night.*

*Fear now became part of my life whenever I was in combat. One of the men killed was Edmund Wielgosh. While at Camp Carson he would take K.P. for us if we paid him 5 dollars. He wanted the money for his wife. He told us that he would not make it home from the war and wanted his wife to have as much money as possible.*

*Ed Planinc had been killed by a sniper in a farm house. Remembering that, the next day some of our men entered another house and barn to scout it out. I don't like to admit it, but after only two days of combat we were losing our sense of right and wrong and were rapidly succumbing to the brutalities of war. We were scared, mad, and wanted to get even. The easiest way of making sure that there were no Germans in the farm house was to burn it down, which is what was done.*

*On November 3rd, I turned 20. For many days we continued to move forward while fighting off the enemy and being shelled with artillery and sometimes strafed by planes. (Ed: George recounts many engagements over the next many days until they were relieved in the middle of the night by British soldiers). The next day trucks arrived and we were driven out of Holland and to Aachen, Germany. We left many men behind us in those fields (Ed: dead). We were happy to leave Holland but did not realize our toughest combat was still ahead of us.*

### **Combat on German Soil Aachen to Duren**

*It was now November 7th and winter weather had started and it was getting cold. We were in a residential area and we started to occupy residences. Quite a change from foxholes. We were a little confused on how we should treat someone else's home and we tried to not do much damage. Near the middle of the month we had been ordered to move out. When walking the next day we spotted Germans. Suddenly above us were a squadron of P47 fighters called Thunderbolts. They did not waste any time and began to dive to strafe targets in front of us. Later the Germans started to shell us. We had two German prisoners*

*and thinking if the Germans saw their own men, they would stop shelling. We regretfully made the prisoners get out of the foxhole and stand where the shelling was landing. It did not stop. At that point several of us relented and waved to the prisoners to come back to the foxholes. They dove back in. The humane feeling saved us from being barbarians. Never again did I see an inhuman act committed against the enemy by any of my buddies or anyone else in our company.*

*We continued to advance for many days while under heavy artillery fire. I prayed a lot, mostly the 23rd Psalm. By this time it was so cold we all wore all of our clothing. Sleet and snow kept us wet and cold. There was a lot of frostbite and some amputations. A few days later Lt Marty Meyer became the leader of our 4th platoon. He knew most of us from Camp Carson. He had a bottle of whiskey. A ration officers received periodically. He handed out glasses and poured us each a good size drink. We drank it and then threw the glasses against the wall like schoolboys. It was the first drink I ever had.*

### **Duren – My last days of Combat**

*By now we were with tanks and were walking behind them or riding on them. There were many haystacks in the field and we did not know if Germans were in or behind them. We set the stacks on fire. Little did I know that this would be my last night of shooting in World War II. Suddenly, and without any warning what-so-ever, I was enveloped by a brilliant white light and the sound of a very loud explosion. I thought, "that was really close" and "how did I avoid being hit". I did not feel any pain. I wanted to get further back so I started to crawl. It was when I tried to pull my left leg that I realized I had been hit. I felt warm blood running down my chest and then knew I had been hit in multiple places. I really did not feel any pain. I don't remember much but I know my buddies attended to me by sprinkling sulfa powder from our kits on the wounds and probably gave me a shot of morphine. In a short time an ambulance drove up and they loaded me in. All that I had was left behind. Only later back in the states did I find out that one of my buddies Bil Hura had been killed by the same shrapnel from the same shell that hit me. He died in the arms of our other buddy, Joe Lynch.*

*I remember snapping at one of the doctors that all of the information he was asking me was on my dog tags. The other doctor asked me to starting counting backwards from ten. That is all I remember of those minutes on the table. Sodium Pentothal was a wonderful anesthetic. It was a blessing to all of us who had to undergo surgery very quickly. I will remember this day forever: Monday, February 26, 1945. I was 20 years old.*

### **Hospitals and Recuperation**

*I don't know how long it was after I was operated on before I regained consciousness, but when I did, I noticed that the lower part of my body was in a plaster cast. The cast started just under my rib*

cage and continued down my left leg ending at my foot with only my toes visible. The right side of the cast continued down my right leg and ended at my right knee. In addition there was a bandage taped to the left side of my chest and a tube taped to my nose that was connected to an oxygen tank. I later learned that my injuries were caused by shrapnel with one piece piercing my leg just above the knee, breaking my femur; one piece had struck me in the chest, passing through my third rib; one piece had lodged in my left elbow (that piece is still there); and other tiny pieces had penetrated the skin on my right arm and in my back. These pieces eventually worked their way out of my skin, and were of no consequence.

On March 10th, 1945, my journey started that would eventually bring me back to the United States, for on that day I was transported by ambulance to an evacuation hospital in Aachen, Germany. There my cot was placed on the floor with many other men. We were there in the semi-dark for hours. Then in the distance I heard music playing. I don't remember what it was except it was beautiful. Tears starting to flow down my cheeks. It was such a comfort, I was overcome and I cried. On March 11 I was transported to another hospital in Belgium, and on the 12th I was evacuated by airplane (a C47, military version of a DC3) to England. This was my first plane ride. After landing I was transported to a general hospital in Taunton, England, southwest of London, for the next several months. They removed the cast which felt great. I also got a sponge bath which was wonderful. I was given a sedative and told that I was going to be put in traction. I did not know what that meant but I soon found out. (Ed: I will leave out George's details of them drilling in his legs, etc.. You can read them in the links provided at the end of this article).

On April 8th I got a big surprise. A Red Cross worker told me that I was going to have a visitor and that his name was Corporal Uriah Dubell. He was my father's brother. He was a radio operator and was stationed north of London. It was great to see him. When they transferred me again on May 1st, Uncle "Lodge" (we called him) climbed into the back of the ambulance and travelled with me. The war news was good. My division, the 104th Infantry Division, had crossed the Remagen Bridge on March 24th and began riding on the backs of tanks. When the war ended they were 60 miles from Berlin. I have always regretted not being with my buddies at the end of the war.

The reports of the discovery of the concentration camps shocked all of us. Reports that Hitler had committed suicide and on May 7th, Peg's birthday, it was announced that the war in Europe was over. I was transported back to the US on May 11th, having been put back in a cast to protect the healing. I was put in Halloran General Hospital on Staten Island, only 40 miles from Hightstown and Cranbury. How lucky could I get.

When writing to my buddies I had found out that many in my platoon had been killed, a number by the same shell that had wounded me. After daily physical therapy, I became ambulatory and was

given weekend passes to visit home, and Peg. We double dated with my best friend Robert Byrne. They were very happy days for me.

One day in March, 1946, I was told to report to the doctor's office. I was told I had met all of the goals but he asked many questions, I assume to check my mental condition. He advised he was going to recommend my discharge. I was happy but apprehensive about making my own way in the world outside of the army. The army had taken complete care of me for over two years now. A new life awaited me.

I trust you found George's story as absorbing as I did. This article was just the highlights. I highly recommend that you read the entire story in the links. I have three times. Thank you, George, and all of your buddies who saved the world for us! George passed on January 9, 2018, at age 93. 

<https://journals.radford.edu/index.php/IJRLR/article/view/172>

<https://journals.radford.edu/index.php/IJRLR/article/view/179>

<https://journals.radford.edu/index.php/IJRLR/article/view/144>

<https://journals.radford.edu/index.php/IJRLR/article/view/221>

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## Rue Store Memories

by Cappy Stults

For those of us who went to the Walter C. Black School and the Hightstown High School when it was still on Stockton Street, one of our favorite places was Mrs. Rue's store, 369 Stockton Street, on the north-east corner of Joseph Street. Although it was referred to as a "store", it was really nothing more than an enclosed porch with some cases, a freezer box, and shelving to hold mostly candy and cigarettes. She also carried small supplies of cooking needs in case a homemaker ran out around dinner time.

Mary Janes, Sugar Daddy, Turkish Taffy, Tootsie Rolls, Smarties, Oh Henry's, Orange Marshmallows that looked like peanuts, Black Jack Chewing Gum, Juicy Fruit gum,

those little wax Nip bottles filled with colored sugar water, gummy bears, Jaw Busters, Dum Dums, Fireballs, Pixy Stix, SweeTarts, Ribbon Candy, Candy Cigarettes, Baby Ruth, Butterfingers; I am sure you can think of many more.



Mrs. Rue in her store - 1953

Back then we could go home for lunch. Most walked or parents picked us up. My grandparents lived 5 houses west of Walter C. Black so I went there often. They generally also gave me a nickel or some pennies and I would stop at Mrs. Rue's before going back into the school. Her house/store was only 20-30 feet away from the school entrance door.



Rue Store today. WCB Elementary in the background.

I'm sorry to say I never knew her first name or even her husband's name. Not sure if the same Rue that owned the store downtown in the early to mid-1900s. If anyone knows the answers to these two questions, please let me know. 



## A Farmer's Wisdom

I knew an old farmer  
Who lived on a hill.  
I remember him fondly,  
And think of him still.

An Italian immigrant and World War I vet,  
He was a gentle soul who's hard to forget.  
He taught me skills to share what he knew,  
And offered me some of whatever he grew.

It was the 1960s and I was a teen.  
There was a whole world I hadn't seen.  
But he'd lived his lifetime thinking anew  
About war, shrapnel wounds, and making do.

I delivered his newspaper five days per week.  
But rare was the day that we didn't speak.  
Daily the paper gave its solemn post  
Of the Vietnam War and its tragic cost.  
He'd shake his head and say with disdain  
How wrong it was and further explain:

*No one who has ever been to war  
And seen the horror, destruction, and death  
Would believe there isn't a better way  
To resolve nations' differences.  
War is not diplomacy by other means.  
It's disrespect for human beings.  
Seeing others who are different only as threats,  
Begets violence and eye for an eye,  
Until all involved have bloody hands  
For which they accuse the other side.  
Defense is necessary and law must be enforced.  
Tyrants must be stopped with force of course.  
But if you think there are winners in war,  
You don't understand the deplorable loss.*



The Farmer at farm on Windsor Perrineville Road next to HEWBYL ball fields.

Gone is the farmer, Lewis Bellardo, but his thoughts remain  
Untarnished, unchanged and no less germane.  
Imagine the world where war's resources  
Are applied to meet civilian needs and uses.

We don't need more veterans, guns, or bombs.  
We need more peaches, apples, pears, and plums.  
And folks trained to get the most from their farms,  
Supplying food and bread for hungry open arms.

Use wood to make tables, chairs, and benches.  
Not crates for munitions and walls of trenches.  
Wouldn't we all be better off with more art, wine, and bread,  
And folks working out differences over meals instead?

I knew an old farmer  
who lived on a hill.  
I remember his wisdom,  
And its relevance still. 

Richard Craig  
Millsboro, DE

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## Hill Kristal Returns

by Gregory Ciano

I wrote an article for the Winter 2022 newsletter about the owner of the infamous Manhattan club, CBGB, being raised in Hightstown and East Windsor. His name was Hilly Kristal. Recently, I was in contact with his daughter Lisa.

A quick refresher.

Hillel "Hilly" Kristal's parents moved here from New York City as part of the Jewish farming community movement in 1932 when Hilly was six months old. Hilly grew up on his parents' chicken farm, which is now K&S Sunshine Farms, across from the East Windsor Cemetery on Windsor Perrineville Road.

Despite leaving home at fifteen, he ran away actually, Hilly moved back to Hightstown with his wife, daughter, and son. They all lived here for two years in the early 1960s.



Hilly on the left with his two cousins, Danny & Seyom Brown

This brings us to 2024.

Back in March Hilly's daughter Lisa contacted the society through our email. She

mentioned that Huldah Ely (whose house is currently our headquarters) was her second-grade teacher, her father's third-grade teacher, and a friend of her grandmother. Lisa would visit Huldah (or Miss Ely as Lisa refers to her) at her home in her younger years.

In her email, Lisa mentioned that she and her daughter had just driven through town and noticed the Ely House was now home to the Historical Society, and could she schedule a time to tour it and show her daughter the house. She didn't mention her dad except to say that Huldah was her father's third-grade teacher, but I knew immediately that she was the daughter of this well-known individual when she signed her email "Lisa Kristal Burgman."

I responded to her email telling her that I would be happy to show her the house, and how I had written an article about her dad and her grandparents. After some back and forth in the email, we decided to talk on the phone where we spoke for an hour. She revealed how she has fond memories of visiting her grandparents' farm until her grandfather passed away and her grandmother moved to Florida in the mid-1970s.



Hilly with Paul Simon at CBGB in 1977.

After a few more emails we decided on May 19 for the tour. She plans on bringing family photo albums and her collection of Hightstown postcards that she's purchased off eBay over the years so plan on a follow-up to this article in the next newsletter.

## 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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## Membership Application

*Support us this year at the following rates:*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual .....\$20         | <input type="checkbox"/> Family.....\$25         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Booster .....\$40            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining.....\$50     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life (Individual) .....\$200 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life (Family).....\$275 |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Where did you hear about membership?

\_\_\_\_\_  
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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](http://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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