

John Hackney III

From: KDIBUC [kdibuc@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2009 12:27 PM
To: - CARENTAN HISTORIC CENTER
Cc: perry; jjones@barton.edu; n.stewart@libertysurf.fr; boykinappraisals@coastalnet.com; boykinja@yahoo.com; John Hackney III
Subject: Re: Donation of \$1,000.00 for Dead Man's corner Museum

Michel (at Dead Mans Corner Museum)

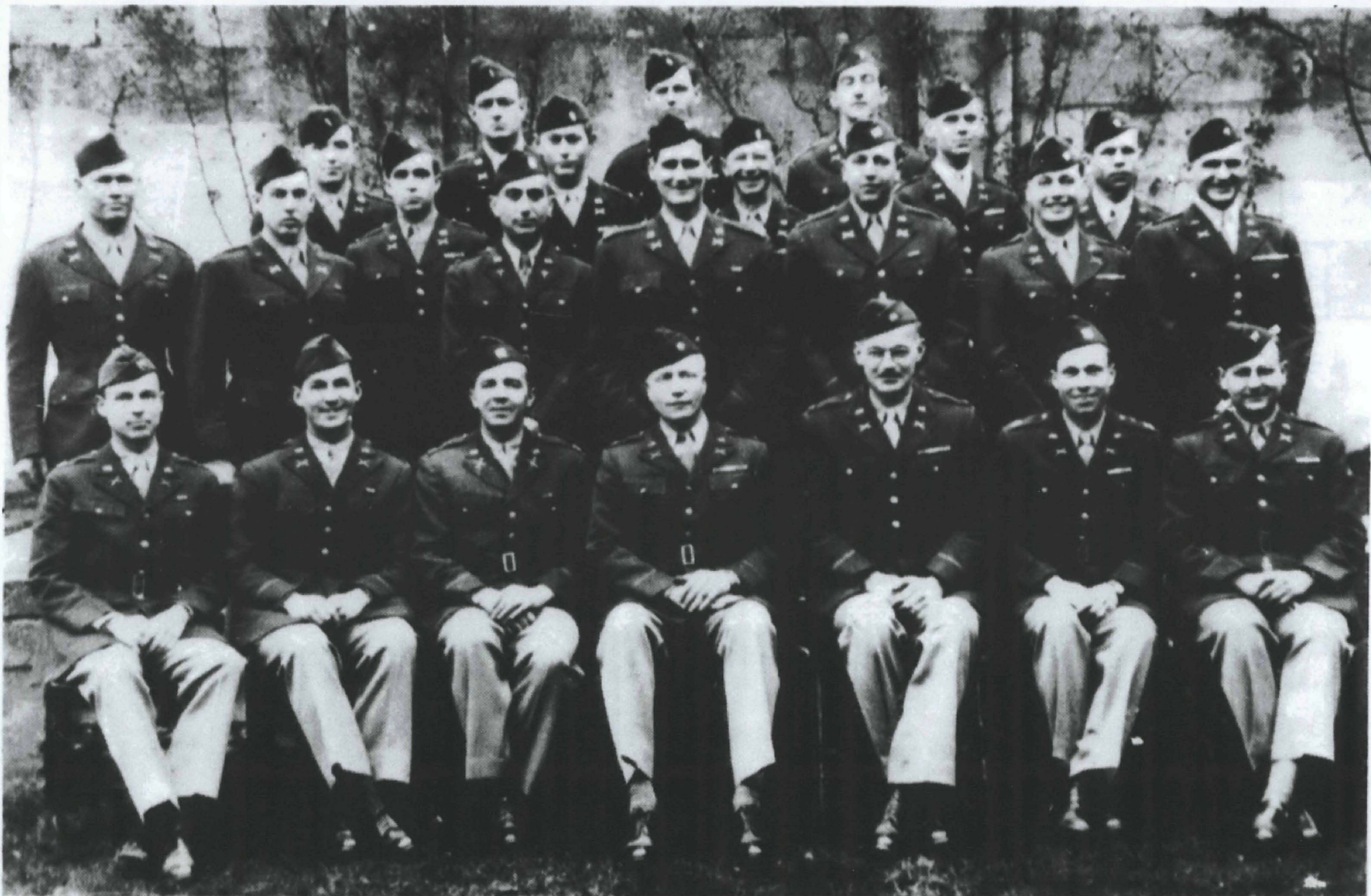
I just got off the phone with Charles Placidi, the corporal who was in the foxhole with Lt. Jack O. Riley when Jack was killed. We talked for 1 1/2 hours about his war time experiences. Charlie, after about 30 minutes he asked me to call him Charlie (and I told him to call me K. D.) lives by himself (his wife has died) and his only family lives in Nashville, Tennessee, and he was anxious to talk with me. He is 89 years old, plays golf three times a week, drives himself, and has amazing memory of what happened during the campaign at Normandy. Someone should visit him and get his entire story before he is 100 years old. He says he is going to live to 100 at least! He said he was going out to plant some tomatoes when we got off the phone, but he had plenty of time for me.

Jack and he and two others were forward observers who were out in front of the 101 infantry lines calling back positions of German troops and artillery. They encountered some shelling and they jumped into a German foxhole about 100 feet off to the left side of the road going between Saint-Come-du-Mont and Carentan. Charlie said it was a long, straight road with very little cover so the 4 foot deep fox holes were excellent to have available. There was a hedgerow just behind the foxhole and between them and the German position which was several hundred yards away toward Carentan. Remember, the Germans had build the foxholes over years to prepare for a possible assault and they had hedgerows behind themselves for retreat and cover purposes.

Anyhow, they jumped into the foxhole and got settled for a moment of quiet and Jack offered Charlie a cigarette and said to Charlie, "Charlie...you got a light?" Charlie put it in his mouth and said, "yes, sir" and lit Jack's cigarette first. Immediately there was an explosion. Not a whining noise as artillery shells would have made, just silence until it hit. It had to be a mortar Charlie said. The Germans must have seen their position and wanted to eliminate the forward observers to keep them from radioing their position back to the American 907th field artillery.

Charlie felt a tinge in his shoulder and arm. He had been hit by shell fragments! He looked over to Jack who had slumped down into the foxhole. He noticed that the cigarette was still in his lips. "Are you okay, Leutenant," he said! He grabbed Jack's shoulder and noticed the back of his neck and hair was very bloody. Jack did not answer. "It must have been a large piece, because it was buried in his body and he died instantly." Charlie could not call for medical help, there were no medics within half a mile or so. The other two soldiers who were with them, Sgt. Colley, and Pvt. Wentworth, stayed on with the radio to call in more artillery on the German positions. Charlie tried to revive Jack for several minutes until Sgt. Colley told him to make his way back to our lines, give them information, and get medical help for himself. He said he hated to leave Jack, who he had become very fond of, but he knew that nothing could be done for him. He eased his way into a ditch and made his way low and slowly back to a medic station over the next two hours. A doctor there sent Charlie back to England to get repaired since he had some potential infection problems.

Charlie, as I said, liked Jack Riley. I could tell from his voice over the phone and he said, "Jack was one of the 'good ol' boy' officers." "I really liked him after knowing him somewhat all during training for a year or so." They talked about baseball and the South and getting back a lot apparently. He wanted to know about Jack's family and I told him the entire Wilson story up to date. "I knew he was married, but I guess I forgot about his daughter...or maybe he never mentioned it because we were pretty busy in the few days Jack and I were over here right together. Most officers didn't talk with enlisted men, but Jack was different. I just knew he came from good 'ol working class people."



SACK Riley - 2nd Row - 3rd From Left

"Jack probably saved my life." His being between me and the Germans "knocked most of the shell fragments off of me." (Meaning the fragments hit Jack and shielded himself.) "Yeah...for sure...Jack Riley saved my life. A lot of that happens in war. But we lost a good one in Jack."

Well, we talked about a lot more, but that was the gist of it. I can tell you more later and I am sure I will talk to Charlie a lot from now on. Besides, he needs to visit North Carolina, Ft. Bragg where he jumped, and Pinehurst where he has always wanted to play golf. He said, "I always wanted to visit Jack Riley's people in North Carolina. But when I left West Virginia and came to Detroit and got a job in the Fleetwood plant here, I just never went back. I wish I had." Maybe he will get the chance.

K. D. Kennedy, Jr.

In a message dated 03/17/09 06:57:18 Eastern Daylight Time, carentan.101@orange.fr writes:

Dear K. D.

Sorry for the late answer. I have been traveling to the US to visit several archives and I am just back. We have received your check, again thank you very much..

Attached is a picture of the 907 Battalion Staff taken prior to D-Day. Lt. Jack Riley stands on the second row, 3rd man.

As I mentioned I haven't had correspondence with Cpl Placidi for a few years now and I don't know if he is still alive or at the same location. Our last info was

Charles A. Placidi
9773 Monroe
Taylor, MI 48180
(313) 291-1722

Please keep me updated on Placidi.

A notice will be placed on the museum website by the end of the week.

Cpl. Placidi's helmet doesn't show any damage since he landed in the swamps which were part of the flooded low ground in between Saint-Come-du-Mont and Carentan and lost his helmet.

Best regards,

Michel

> Message du 16/03/09 21:07

> De : "KDIBUC"

> A : carentan.101@orange.fr

> Copie à :

> Objet : Fwd: Donation of \$1,000.00 for Dead Man's corner Museum

>

>

Dear Michel or other historian or manager at DMC Museum:

Nigel Stewart, Normandy Historical Tour Guide, may come by to visit you about this matter attached.

You have been writing to me. I made a donation to DMC Museum. Have you received it?

Yes, I would like to find Cpl. Placidi's whereabouts in the USA such that we can talk to him about that day when Lt. Jack O. Riley died.

Thank you,
K. D. Kennedy, Jr.

A Good Credit Score is 700 or Above. See yours in just 2 easy steps!

>

> Orange vous informe que cet e-mail a été contrôlé par l'anti-virus mail.
> Aucun virus connu à ce jour par nos services n'a été détecté.

>

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> [Fwd: Donation of \$1,000.00 for Dead Man's corner Museum (12.6 Ko)]

Paratrooper
2, village de l'amont
50500 Saint-Côme-du-Mont
Tél: 02.33.42.00.42
Fax: 02.33.42.13.51
www.paratrooper..fr
www.paratrooper-museum.org

The Average US Credit Score is 692. See yours in just 2 easy steps!

A hero still among us

By Janelle Clevinger | Daily Times Staff Writer

He may have died in France June 10, 1944, during World War II Normandy campaign, but Lt. Jack O. Riley is still very much among us.

A story titled "Barton travelers touch history: 'Band of Brothers' tour group makes local connection," which ran in the March 14 Wilson Daily Times, rekindled memories of the Wilson man and brought new information about him to light.

The article was about a Barton College trip to England, France and Germany in February. The trip included Barton students, professors and interested residents of Wilson and beyond and followed the footsteps of Easy Company, 506th Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division, U.S. Army, during World War II.

It quickly became clear that the story of the trip would focus on Riley, his death and sacrifice, and the reading of a letter at Riley's gravesite by K.D. Kennedy Jr., formerly of Wilson and husband of Riley's niece, Sara Lynn Riley Kennedy.

The letter, written by Riley's childhood pal Doug Hackney, had been sent to his future wife, Louise Wiggins, after Doug visited his friend's grave, two months after his death. Kennedy choked up as he read the letter aloud to the Barton group standing around Riley's grave. Hackney wrote of his friend's gravesite and the horrors of war.

"When that letter was read it brought a cohesiveness to the whole trip," said John Hackney III, who originally sent the story idea and photographs to the newspaper. "I knew that if there was a story in here, it would be one of a Wilson soldier who served his country and made the ultimate sacrifice."

I interviewed tour participants Perry Morrison Jr., Barton professor Joe Jones III and John Hackney for the story and consulted the Internet in order to fill in some historical and geographical gaps in the story.

The story was published, and suddenly Jack Riley seemed to be alive again.

First, I received an e-mail from Kennedy, informing me that the soldier who was in the foxhole with Riley at the time of Riley's death was alive and well, and he was going to try to contact him. A subsequent e-mail gave details of Kennedy's conversation with that soldier, Charles Placidi, 89, who lives in Michigan.

"We talked for about 1 1/2 hours about his war experiences," Kennedy said. "He and Jack were forward observers who were in front of the 101 infantry lines calling back the position of the German troops. They encountered some shelling and jumped into a German foxhole."

Placidi recounted that they stopped for a moment of silence, and Riley offered Placidi a cigarette.

"Charlie SLps you got a light?" Riley asked. Placidi lit his cigarette first and said, "Yes, sir," and lit Riley's cigarette. Suddenly, a German mortar exploded behind Riley.

Placidi had been hit in the arm with mortar fragments. He looked at Riley who had slumped down into the foxhole. "Are you OK, lieutenant?" Placidi asked.

"He grabbed Jack's shoulder and noticed the back of his neck and hair was very bloody," Kennedy wrote. "Jack didn't answer. It must have been a large piece (that hit him) and he died instantly. Charlie tried to revive Jack for several minutes, but the sergeant told him to make his way back to (the Allied) lines. He said he hated to leave Jack, who he had become very fond of, but he knew that nothing could be done for him."

"Jack probably saved my live," Placidi told Kennedy. "Yeah, for sure Jack Riley saved my life. A lot of that happens in war. But we lost a good one in Jack."

Then, out of the blue, I received an e-mail from Jack Riley's daughter, Judy Riley Matock.

"I was very interested in the article because I am the daughter of Jack Riley," she wrote. "I never saw my father since I was born on May 6, 1944, and he was already in England waiting for the invasion when I was born. I did not know much about him. By the time I was old enough to learn much, my mother had remarried and did not want to talk about him. When I would visit family in Wilson, we would talk about current things, not things in the past."

A few days later, I received an e-mail from Jack Riley's granddaughter, Robin Matlock, taking the experience one step further.

"It's hard for us to articulate exactly what your article and especially K.D.'s research has meant to us," Matlock wrote. "I know that I've always had a great curiosity about him (Riley) and a connection to him since he is a part of me and I've always wanted to know more."

"He's also served as a personal inspiration for me. I've always somehow known that he died a hero, in the most honest and non-flashy personification of that word. Learning more about the man that was worthy of my grandmother (who was an incredible inspiration to me as well), has meant more than I think I can express. The timing of your article is also very special to me. SLps I'm getting married in about a month and a half and as I prepare for a new life myself, the life that he and my grandmother briefly shared has been very close in my mind."

I felt as though Jack Riley had reached out and touched me. I couldn't imagine how the people on the Barton trip felt, standing beside his grave.

"This trip and it's aftermath have proven to be one of the most rewarding experiences of my life," Morrison told me recently. "It has given me a great deal of joy to conceive this trip and see it come to fruition. However, never in my wildest dreams could I have anticipated the subsequent chapters involving Jack Riley, with K.D. Kennedy's efforts to locate his foxhole mate and his daughter notifying the newspaper, both sixty years after Lt. Riley's death in Normandy."

Johnny Hackney said that the trip, and the subsequent contact with Charlie Placidi and Riley's descendents, boiled down to this for him: "When you read or hear, 'You need to honor our servicemen' and 'Don't ever forget those who served our country,' this is what it means. If you have the chance to honor them, you need to do that."

Another e-mail from Riley's daughter arrived in my "In" box Monday.

"My daughter Robin and I have appreciated learning so much more about what happened," Matlock wrote. "Sara Lynn also said that none of our parents' generation had ever shared anything with her either. Our cousin Bob Riley, Sara Lynn's brother, was the only one of our generation who actually knew him. He remembers that my father was the only uncle who would go out and play with him."

"My mother died in December, so I cannot go back to ask her questions," she continued. "She was always one to deal with her grief privately and did not like to talk about the past."

Morrison recently thanked me for the work I had done putting this story together. I told him that I didn't think it was "my" work anymore.

I believe Lt. Jack O. Riley had a hand in putting together these stories and these experiences. And even though he died for our country 65 years ago in a foxhole in France, he is most certainly still with us.

ON THE MAP runs on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. If you have a story that you want to share, e-mail jclevinger@wilsontimes.com or call 265-7811. If you have an event that you would like to enter on our community calendar, go to www.wilsontimes.com and click on the link for submitting information to the calendar.

Normandy... Jack Riley

Young American spirits rise,
Through furious waves, o'er bloody cries,
Above bomb blasts and Mother's sighs,
Soaring past, tearstained good-byes.

On sacred cliffs called 'Omaha',
Where free men clung on by a claw.
On a blood-stained beach, named 'Utah',
Where freedom marched on...in the raw.

We won despite a Mad Man's dream,
A Furher full of puss and scheme.
Our Yanks and Scots fought on supreme,
Our Brits and French deserved esteem!

Ninety-Eight Hundred in their grave,
Marble Crosses salute these brave.
Taps and tears at *Their* graveside,
Flags and flowers our grief to hide.

Our own Jack Riley lying there,
With broken body, mangled hair.
A family's son who paid full price,
War's random lot t'ward man and mice.

We *so* revere his ardent goals,
Abandoned life to save our souls.
His Glider, a redeemer's call,
Admonished evil for us all.

Remember him as decades come,
Trill his trumpet! Pound his drum!
Jack is a hero, mark it down,
A martyr on this hallowed mound.

Our Young American's spirit rose,
O'er furious waves, past death's pale hose,
Above bomb blasts, Mom's silent pose,
Here finding, gently, sweet repose.

K. D. Kennedy, Jr.

(6-11-00)

56 years, to the day, after
1st Lt. JACK O. RILEY gave
his life, for his country.

Concerning Jack Riley's Death ... "D" DAY + 5 at UTAH BEACH
(by Sara Lynn Kennedy)

Monday, 7 August

To: Louise Higgins From: Doug Hackney,
her future husband (Wilson NC)

Dearest Louise,

Still no mail in today it has slowed down but imagine we will finally get a big batch in as we did about a week ago. How long does it take my letters to reach you? was wondering if there was much difference in sending them from here than from England.

I took a trip today and found Jack Riley's grave, started to write to Mrs. Riley, but changed my mind as I don't know exactly what is best to say or not to say. Any way, I'm giving you the details and you can tell them what you think they would like to know. He was killed the 10th of June and was buried on the 11th, his grave is well marked and is in an American cemetery on a high hill overlooking a valley, as yet I cannot disclose the location but if later I find it is permissible I'll let you know. The First Sergeant took the trip with me as he was looking for the grave of a friend of his - we visited five cemeteries and there is just something about going to them that gets you. Maybe it would help if the folks back home had a look to really see what a price American boys are having to pay for this war. You can walk down the rows and see the graves of men from almost every State in the Union, none of them wanted to die honey - just as Jack, they all had everything to live for and now they're all lying dead in a foreign country thousand of miles from home so that all of you wouldn't have to go through what the people of these countries were subjected to. If people could just stand there and watch more and more dead being brought in every day then maybe they would realize what a hellish business war is - maybe their petty squabbings wouldn't seem so important then. It's hard to realize that there is a war on - that men are dying every day when you're sitting back home where everything is peaceful it only comes home to the people that have loved ones over here - It's no fun honey

only hell the destruction and chaos that war brings is indescribable. Maybe someday people will learn how futile war is but I doubt it. Jack and all the other dead soldiers were given a good burial - the graves are laid out in straight, neat rows and are built up on top into square mounds and a white cross stands at the head of each with a placque on the cross giving the name and date of death, everyday the French that live close around put flowers on the graves and grass has been planted all over the plots. It seems strange to be standing by his grave when only a few months ago we were at a show together. It's a rotten war honey and the sooner it's over the better. If there is anything that Mrs. Riley would like to know or want me to find out then let me know and I'll try.

Will have to close now sweetheart but will write longer tomorrow. Just remember I Love you very much and am always thinking of you and miss you more than I could ever begin to tell you.

All my love,
Doug



Subj: **Jack Riley's unit in WWII (give to your family)**
Date: 7/4/2006 10:04:49 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: KDIBUC
To: KDIBUC, Saralele
CC: TomRileyESCO@nc.rr.com

The 907th Glider Field Artillery Battalion Unit History

The 307th Ammunition Train was constituted on 5 August 1917 as part of the National Army at Camp Gordon, near Atlanta, Georgia and assigned to the 82nd Infantry Division. The unit saw extensive action in World War I during the Lorraine Campaign and the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne Offensives. It was demobilized 18-23 May 1919 at Camp Upton, New York then reconstituted 24 June 1921 in the Organized Reserves and assigned to the 82d Infantry Division.

In January 1942 the 307th Ammunition Train was redesignated the 907th Glider Field Artillery Battalion then reactivated 2 months later on 25 March, 1942 at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana under the command of Lt Col Clarence F. Nelson who would lead the battalion until its deactivation after World War II.

World War II

After intensive training at Camp Claiborne, LA the 907th Glider Field Artillery Battalion (GFAB), now an element of the 101st Airborne Division, began moving to staging areas on 22 August 1943 at Camp Shanks, New York with the rest of the division for overseas deployment. On 4 Sept the 907th set sail for England aboard the SS Strathnaver and arrived at Liverpool, England on 18 Oct. After moving inland the 907th eventually set up encampment at Benham Valence near Newbury and adopted the unit code name of Kite. The battalion participated in Exercise Tiger which was staged during the week of April 23-30, 1944 as a rehearsal of the opening phase of the Utah Beach landings under VII Corps auspices.

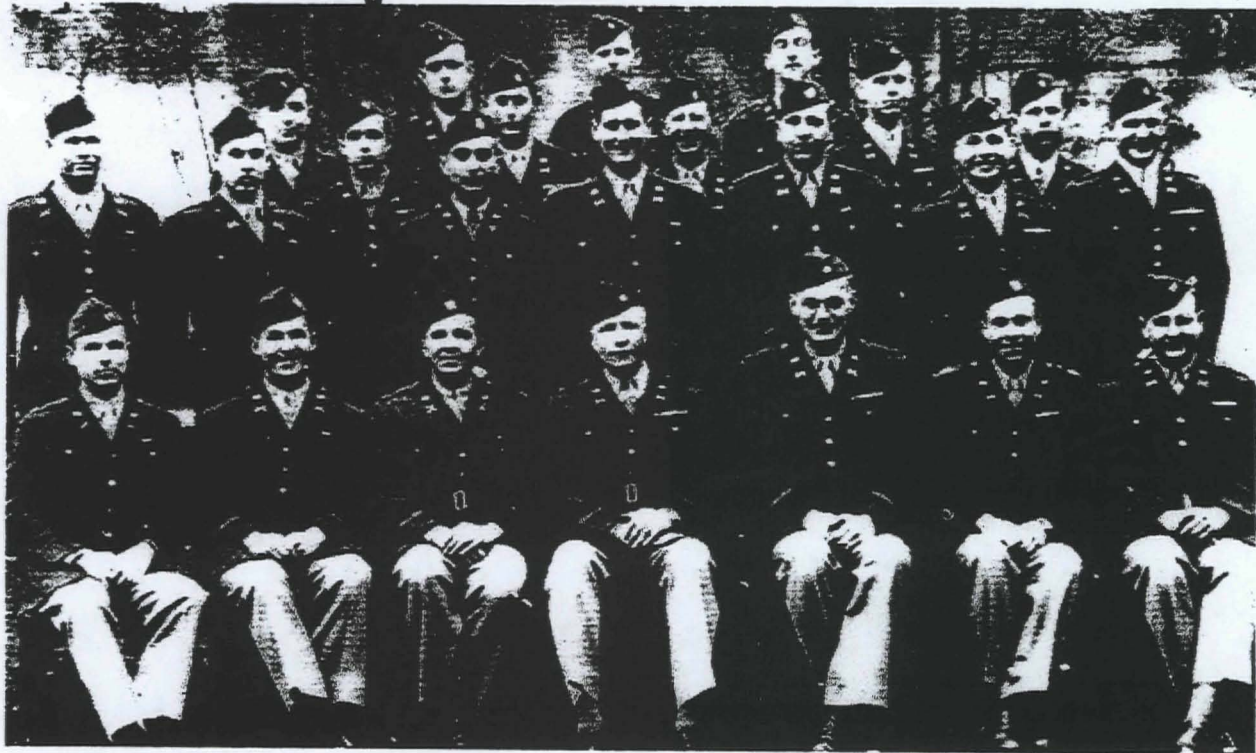
Normandy - D-Day

The 907th Glider Field Artillery Battalion with a group of the 321st GFAB were aboard the Susan B Anthony which struck a mine and sank off Omaha Beach. The artillery troopers managed to get ashore without loss of life however, they had to wait until June 9th for the guns and vehicles to be off-loaded. A small echelon of the 907th GFAB consisting of an officer and 3 enlisted men did parachute onto the DZ on D-Day however, the main body of the battalion arrived seaborne.



(^^ Click Picture to Enlarge ^^)

(picture above right: Officers of the 907th GFAB in England prior to D-Day. They are (left to right)
Seated: Capt Frank Platt, Capt Robert McCrary, Maj William Pasley, Lt Col Clarence Nelson, Maj Roland White, Maj Fred Jones and Capt John Bergsma; 2nd Row: Lt Robert Keech, Capt Gerald McGlone, Lt Jack Riley, Capt Herbert Jacobs, Capt Orin South, Capt James Morford, Capt Lowell Bigelow and Lt Wayne Justinsen; 3rd Row: Lt Ralph Wynbrandt, Lt Charles Sprull, Lt Stanley Walkuw, Lt Clarence Ingersoll and Lt Edwin Blake; 4th Row: WOJG Robert Karow, Lt Walter Wood and Lt James Henderson.)•



03103/09

Betty Ray -

Put this with the
Jack Riley history

John Hackney III

From: - CARENTAN HISTORIC CENTER [carentan.101@orange.fr]
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2009 12:04 PM
To: KDIBUC
Subject: re: Donation of \$1,000.00 for Dead Man's corner Museum

Dear Sir,

Firstly, on behalf of the Carentan Historical Foundation, I would like to thank you for your generous donation. Be assure we will make good use of it in honor and respect of the US WWII veterans.

June 10, 6:00 in the morning, Lt. Riley, was met by Sgt. Colley, Cpl. Placidi, and Pvt. Wentworth on the outskirts of St Come-du-Mont. (This is at Dead Man's Corner, the location where the museum is today). They had been assigned to work with the 502nd and at 9:00, and were advancing along the main road to Carentan (Purple Heart Lane) when German mortar fire forced them to take cover. The 907th team quickly dove into a tank emplacement built by the Germans. Lt. Riley was sitting with his back towards Carentan, and Cpl. Placidi was sitting directly across him when an incoming mortar shell landed in the hedgerow right above. The exploding fragments killed lieutenant Riley instantly and seriously wounded Cpl. Placidi.

We have Cpl. Placidi's helmet in the museum collection and we have been in contact with him a couple of years ago. I don't know if he is still around today but I could find out if you are interested.

Best regards,

Michel

DMC Museum
 2, village de l'amont
 50500 Saint-Côme-du-Mont
 Tél: 02.33.42.00.42
 Fax: 02.33.42.13.51

> Message du 01/03/09 20:48
 > De : "KDIBUC"
 > A : carentan.101@orange.fr
 > Copie à :
 > Objet : Donation of \$1,000.00 for Dead Man's corner Museum
 >
 >

Sirs:

My wife and I are honoring 1/Lt Jack O. Riley, her uncle who she never knew, who died on June 11th from wounds received on the 10th, we believe. The 907th FAB was artillery support of the 101st Airborne/502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment near St. Come-du-Mont. He was one of many brave young men who gave their lives in order for us to be free. Thank goodness for them!

I would be interested in any information that you have about Jack or his unit. If you have any information about how we could get in touch with any of those who were with him during the assault, that would be very appreciated.

Thanks for the work you are doing. I am mailing our check to you today.

K. D. Kennedy, Jr.
 (919-369-1429, Raleigh, NC, USA)

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www.paratrooper.fr
www.paratrooper-museum.org

Saturday
March 14, 2009

The Wilson
Daily Times

Lifestyle Editor: Lisa Boykin Batts

252-265-7810

lisa@wilsontimes.com

LIFE | FEATURE

The pluck of the Irish

Twenty years ago my niece, Terrie, married an Englishman, Jeremy. The couple settled in Ireland and setup a business raising and training horses for fox hunting. Both of them have been addicted to the gentle beasts since childhood, so they combined a hobby — riding and enjoying the hunt — with a profession.



Jane
Wood

Daily Times Columnist

Soon Terrie added riding lessons to their livelihood, and Jeremy became master of the hounds for the area. They raised sheep as well. Their lovely farm house sits on a hill with gently rolling pastures, the shade of emeralds, surrounding it.

Their firstborn, Neville, was mounted on a seasoned pony before he could walk — attended at the saddle by his parents, of course. He was also pulled along in a little red wagon to visit the sheep in the pasture and became acquainted with the sheepdogs that were pets as well.

At age 2, Neville was presented with a kitten — another addition to the menagerie on the farm. Before placing Kitten in the little guy's hands, Terrie, always the cautious, caring mom, said, "Hold him real easy, Neville. Don't squeeze, remember he's just a baby. You must be careful so he doesn't cry."

Having been exposed to more critters than most children his age, Neville nodded his towhead vigorously and murmured, "Tuigum... tuigum, tuigum," as he reached for his new pet.

Figuring the word was baby babble Terrie smiled. Then she asked Neville what he would like to name the kitty. "Tuigum," repeated Neville, "Tuigum!"

Terrie shrugged. "Well, then, Tuigum it is."

When Neville's nanny arrived, the lively lass was introduced to Kitten. Terrie indicated that young Neville had been well versed in the proper handling of the little ball of fur but that Nanny should remind him frequently, as it would be in the best interest of child and cat. Terrie also stated that Neville himself had chosen the name. "Oh, good, good," Nanny blurted in her crisp Irish brogue. "Wha's the wee lad decided on?"

"Tuigum!" chirped Terrie. "Aye," Nanny drawled, "'Tis a good Irish word."

Terrie was stunned. How could her 2-year-old know any of the Irish language? She asked Nanny if she had been speaking Irish to Neville. "Oh, no indeed! With an American mother and English father, little Neville will have a'nuff o' a time of it speaking as 'tis."

"Well, how did he come up with that word?" Nanny's eyes began to twinkle. Terrie continued, "And what does Tuigum mean anyway?"

In the gentle manner of a culture that believes in leprechauns and fairies and all things magic in the universe, Nanny answered, "It means — I understand."

Not trusting
Leprechauns
Fairies
or Magic
is
undeniably
tragic



All photos contributed by John Hackney III

Sara Lynn Kennedy of Raleigh kneels beside the grave of her uncle, Jack Riley of Wilson, at Normandy American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, France. A group of Barton students, professors and interested individuals toured sites in England, France and Germany during January's "Band of Brothers" tour.

'Band of Brothers' tour group makes local connection

By Janelle Clevinger
Daily Times Staff Writer

Local attorney Perry Morrison Jr. had already taken three trips abroad with Barton College's "Travel to Learn. Learn to Travel" program but was still searching for "the" trip that would really pique his interest.

Joe Frank Jones III, professor of philosophy and religion and director of international study at Barton and organizer of the trips, challenged Morrison to come up with a travel itinerary that he thought would be ideal. Two weeks later, Morrison submitted the itinerary that would ultimately become the Barton-sponsored "Band of Brothers" trip to England, Germany and France in January.

"Band of Brothers" is a book written by Stephen E. Ambrose that was later made into a television miniseries by HBO. The book and movie chronicled the missions of Easy Company, 506th Regiment of the 101st

Airborne Division, U.S. Army, during World War II.

From Jan. 3 to 13, a group of 45 students, professors and interested individuals toured sites that took center stage in the final battles of WWII, including Omaha Beach, site of the D-Day invasion by Allied forces, and areas in Luxembourg associated with the Battle of the Bulge, the last major Nazi offensive against the Allies.

"It was a wonderful experience, and I had a fabulous time," said Morrison, who had helped teach a military geography course also based on the "Band of

Dearest Louise,

Still no mail in today it has slowed down but imagine we will finally get a big batch in as we did about a week ago. How long does it take my letters to reach you? was wondering if there was much difference in sending them from here than from England.

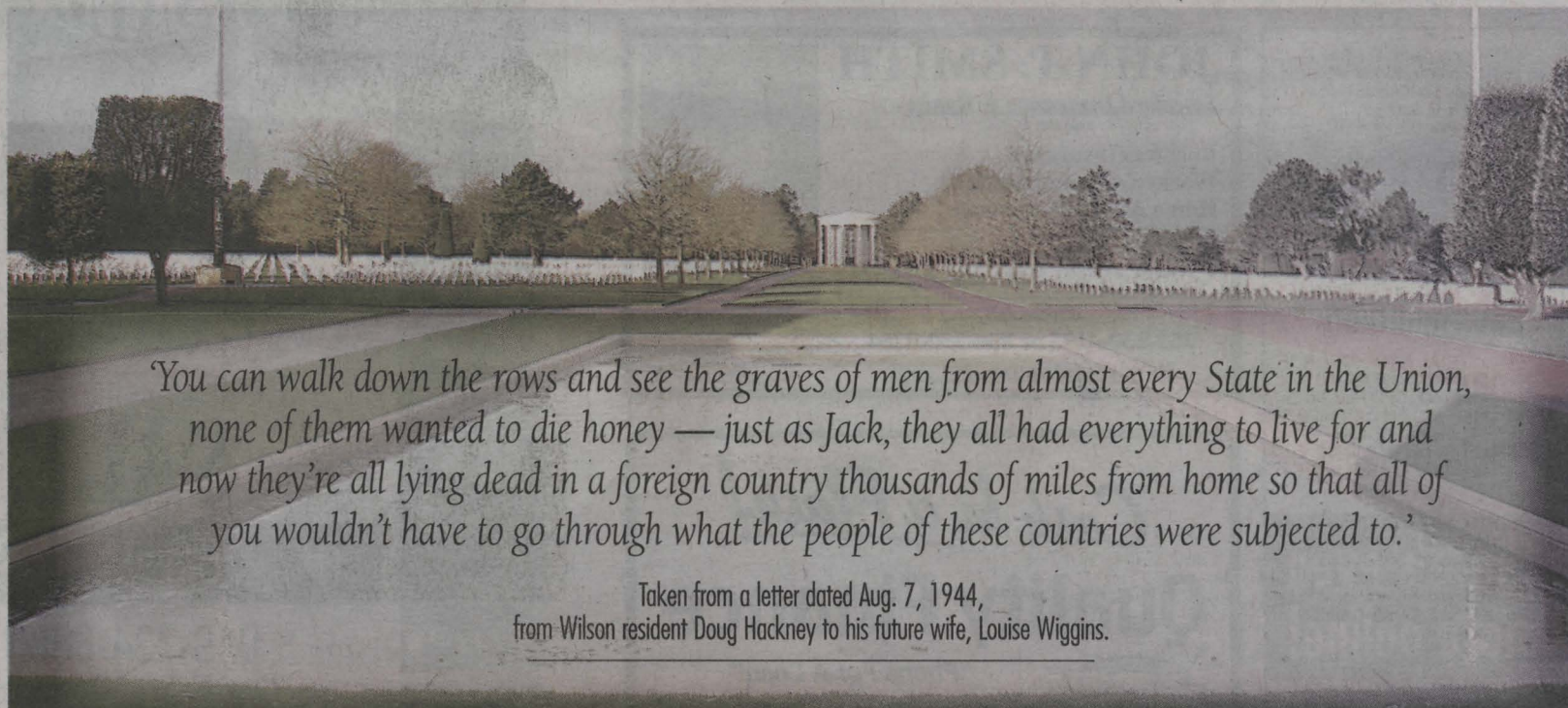
I took a trip today and found Jack Riley's grave, started to write to Mrs. Riley, but changed my mind as I don't know exactly what is best to say or not to say. Any way, I'm giving you the details and you can tell them what you think they would like to know. He was killed the 10th of June and was buried on the 11th, his grave is well marked and is in an American cemetery on a high hill overlooking a valley, as yet I cannot disclose the location but if later I find it is permissible I'll let you know. The First Sergeant took the trip with me as he was looking for the grave of a friend of his - we visited five cemeteries and there is just something about going to them that gets you. Maybe it would help if the folks back home had a look to really see what a price American boys are having to pay for this war. You can walk down the rows and see the graves of men from almost every State in the Union, none of them wanted to die honey - just as Jack, they all had everything to live for and now they're all lying dead in a foreign country thousands of miles from home so that all of you wouldn't have to go through what the people of these countries were subjected to. If people could just stand there and watch more and more dead being brought in every day then maybe they would realize what a hellish business war is - maybe their petty squabbles wouldn't seem so important then. It's hard to realize that there is a war on - that men are dying every day when you're sitting back home where everything is peaceful it only comes home to the people that have loved ones over here - It's no fun honey

only hell the destruction and chaos that war brings is indescribable. Maybe someday people will learn how futile war is but I doubt it. Jack and all the other dead soldiers were given a good burial - the graves are laid out in straight, neat rows and are built up on top into square mounds and a white cross stands at the head of each with a plaque on the cross giving the name and date of death, everyday the French that live close around put flowers on the graves and grass has been planted all over the plots. It seems strange to be standing by his grave when only a few months ago we were at a show together. It's a rotten war honey and the sooner it's over the better. If there is anything that Mrs. Riley would like to know or want me to find out then let me know and I'll try.

Will have to close now sweetheart but will write longer tomorrow. Just remember I love you very much and am always thinking of you and miss you more than I could ever begin to tell you.

All my love,
Doug

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Taken from a letter dated Aug. 7, 1944,
from Wilson resident Doug Hackney to his future wife, Louise Wiggins.

The Normandy American Cemetery is the location of Wilson soldier Jack Riley's grave. Riley lost his life during the Normandy campaign in WWII. The cemetery chapel is seen in the distance. Omaha Beach and the English Channel are to the left of this scene.