

CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

August 2012

Chartered: Nov. 1, 1985. Past Presidents: \*Nelson Oats, \*Harold Ballard, \*W. O. Mullin, \*Verle Oringderff, \*Harold Trammell, \*William Oakley, Frank Polenta, \*S. L. Baker, \*George Payne, \*Harry Steinert, & \*Al Clement. \*deceased. Current Officers: President-Mike Pixler, phone contact: 817-929-1557, First Vice President-Jim Rau, phone contact: 817-367-3343, Second Vice president-Pat Mann, phone: [info later], Secretary/Treasurer-Blanche Howerton, phone: 817-578-6542, Sergeant at Arms-Troy Jones, Chaplain-Rev. James Pixler, Kitchen Committee, Lillie Payne, Historian-Ruby Pixler, Reporter at Large & Newsletter Editor-Bill Stallings, phone contact: 972-255-7237.

Monthly Meeting is held on the second Saturday of each month from 10:30 AM to 1PM at the North Side Multipurpose Center, 1801 Harrington [North], Fort Worth, TX 76106. Dues are \$10 a person annually and are effective from Oct. to Oct.

Directions: Interstate Hwy 30 runs east & west. It accesses the downtown Fort Worth area from the south. Exit north on Henderson St. After a couple of miles it crosses a fork of the Trinity River and becomes State Hwy 199 which goes to Lake Worth, and the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. When you reach the traffic light at the intersection of 18th St. NW, turn right [east] and go up the hill four blocks to Homan St. Turn left [north], and go a block to the Y. Stay right and continue into the Center's rear parking lot. Our meeting room door with the CCC sign is to the right as you approach the building. Bring a friend & enjoy fun, fellowship & food. Sign the register for you may win the \$10 door prize.

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WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES : None this month.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Joe Kleinbrook, North Brock, IL, Aug. 1

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MINUTES OF MEETING OF CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123, ON SATURDAY, August 11, 2012. Weather: Clear : Temp. 86° : Attendance: 11.

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Pixler at 11:00 AM, followed by a welcome to the members attending. He shared a short story from "Talk about Town."

The pledges to the flags were led by 1st Vice President, Jim Rau.

Preident Pixler reminded membership of the purpose of the CCC Legacy.

The Invocation was given by Merle Timblin.

The membership was asked if they received the July newsletter via email or USPS. All in attendance had, a motion to accept the minutes from the July 2012 meeting was made by Pat Mann, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bill McKee, motion was passed.

The Financial Report was stated as: Previous balance - \$1237.04, deposit pending, \$72.00, projected new balance: \$1309.04 + \$15 for 2 placemats, and "pass the can." Motion to accept as stated by Bill McKee, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bill Stallings, motion was passed.

There were no anniversaries noted for August; one birthday, Joe Kleinbrook, 1 August. A report from the Call List Reps followed. Many members are not able to attend due to health reasons and/or previous scheduled events.

Old Business was next with a reminder to vote for directors at CCC Legacy Inc. by USPS or email; the CCC Legacy Gathering in Montana; and the chapter web-side: <http://ccclegacychapter123.webs.com>.

Under New Business: 2 pavers, 6X6, at \$150 each, to be purchased in honor of Al Clement and Curtis Greer. Motion for action made by Bill Stallings, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bill McKee, motion passed. President Pixler appointed Jim Rau to head this project.

As part of the program, members shared life stories during wartime and times of peace. The following was offered. Bill McKee shared the time he worked on the F-16 in the local area. Merle Timlin shared a time his outfit shot down 2 of our P-38s after they had strafed the convoy he was in with the proper ID Panels installed. Jim Rau shared a story that he read of a P-38 which would feather one engine and approach a flight of B-17s, only to open fire on them. The P-38, flown by an Italian, was finally shot down by gunners in the flight. Pat Mann shared the time a young supervisor walked into the post office saying, "look what I have." It was a live grenade. It was recognized as such and was removed out the back. Steve Porter shared he joined the U.S. Army in 1948 and stayed for 20 years, with an option to stay another 10, if he would.

Richard Crooks, who always has a story, shared the time he saw footprints to a locker he was watching on the graveyard shift during his time in the CCC. He removed the POL products in the locker, then hid inside and waited. When the culprit opened the locker, Richard jumped up and captured him, and the car that had brought him, left. Other stories of pointing a 5-inch gun at Franklin Roosevelt and sinking a sub in 1943 were related. You just have to be there to hear the history shared at these meetings. You are missing a lot.

Pass the Can was next with the drawing. Bill Stallings won the \$10 door prize. The ladies present prepared for the meal and Merle Timblin offered the blessing.

A motion to adjourn, by Merle Timblin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bill Stallings, meeting adjourned at 12:09 PM.

A gracious meal followed, enjoyed by the CCC Legacy Chapter 123 family.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Mike Pixler, President, CCC Legacy Chapter 123

## **THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER 8-11-2012**

### **The Subject for This Corner is: What did they do?**

What did who do? The women that became the wives of the CCC Boys, **that's who**. During their time in the CCC, the boys were not married. It was not part of what they were doing. The boys signed on to help their families at home. You know they made one dollar a day, thirty dollars a month, with twenty five being sent home to support their families. During that time, one could get along with just five dollars a month. A honest day's work for an honest day's pay. **Might not have been much but people of today could learn a lot from them**

**What about the women. First you must understand I have no idea what I'm talking about, being a man, you know. What I share here is second hand, at best, heard from some of the women, wives, daughters, and girlfriends of the boys that I have met in the CCC Legacy:**

**Such things include, we saved tin foil. I'm not sure what "they" did with it, but I remember we saved it at school, when we went to school. My brother was in the CCC. Somewhere in Oregon, I think. I remember money arriving from him, I don't remember how or in what form the money arrived; my dad took care of that. But, when it arrived we would make a trip into town for a few groceries and needed supplies. I do remember without it, I would not be here. We just did not have anything, period.**

**We girls did what we could and what we had to do to get along. I remember when the war started, the boys left again. As time went by, we kept the United States of America alive and well, until the boys came home. That's when, as I recall; many of we girls married the CCC boys. Even though they were back from the Army, Navy, Marines, etc. and never forget the American Merchant Marine, they were CCC boys first. That was before the war. Anyway, as we married, and began our lives as a couple, the boys would work, both at their jobs and at home, and we would keep the house and perform the duties to keep the house together. We would support our boys any way we had to or could. That's what we did, took care of the boys. I guess that's why anniversaries of the women and the CCC boys lasted, or have lasted forty, fifty, sixty, and I have heard 71 years of marriage - my they were young.**

**Anyway, thank you to the women for what they did and who cared for the CCC boys. We're all better off because you did.**

**Hope to see you at the 14 September meeting. When our members are not there, they are surely missed. The chapter will have a room available in Montana. Let me know if you would like to share. Don't forget to vote for directors for CCC Legacy Inc. either by mail or call me with your vote. Deadline/postmark is 10 September. It's a family thing.**

Yours in Service,

Mike Pixler, President, CCC Legacy Chapter 123

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### **A REPEAT REMINDER**

**If you receive the "CCC Legacy Journal," you have until Sep. 10, 2012, to mail in your ballot for the Board of Directors for National. It's on page 15 of the last issue, or email your vote to Pres. Mike Pixler at [RUAVET@aol.com](mailto:RUAVET@aol.com) or call him at 817-929-1557, and he will see that your vote gets recorded.**

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## REPORT ON MEMBERS

Norbert Gebhard had recent surgery due to his bladder cancer, and his wife, Betty, tells us he is doing OK, able to take walks outside, has a good appetite, and has no pain.

We finally got to talk with Lillie Payne and found that she is now back at home again. She was in a nursing facility in Denton but had to leave. She is having a tough time of it, and her son and grand-daughter come and help as they can. She would like to hear from her friends. Her address is 2608 Denison, Denton, TX 76201.

Our Poet Laureate, Jack Bragg, is not well. Lillie Payne tells us he is having real trouble getting around. He is now staying with his son and family in Carrollton. We will try to have the address soon.

We have just visited with long-time members Jim Lyde and Marga. Jim is 95 now and Marga is 97. They had their 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary in May. Jim has been in a nursing facility for over a month now with symptoms of pneumonia, and is showing good improvement. Their grandson, Trey, is a big help to them. Jim has led a very interesting life, and we enjoyed talking with him. Jim would also appreciate hearing from you. His address is Signature Pointe on the Lake, 14655 Preston Rd., Room #443, Dallas, TX 75254.

We missed Larkin Dilbeck and daughter, Larka, this last meeting. We found that they have been on a two-week Alaska cruise. That's a poor excuse for missing one of our meetings! Ha.

Fay Clement stays close to home most of the time now, spending time with grand-children when she is able.

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### **Curtis Greer Continues His Own Story – In His Own Words.** {with thanks to Dennis Greer }

I was shipped out on cadre [ a core or nucleus of a group] in the summer of 1942 from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division [Indian Head] stationed at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas, to help form a new division – the 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division [Ozarks] at Camp Maxey, located at Paris, Texas. We were delayed for about one month at Camp Swift, Bastrop, Texas, near Austin in order to receive additional supplies and training. The 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was also stationed there at the time. Major Nardone was our Regimental Surgeon at that time. Later, and through the war, Captain Kenneth K. Keown held that position.

I would guess the population of Paris, Texas, in 1942 was around 26,000. The GIs training there numbered about 55,000; so you can understand the chances of me meeting my future wife and lifetime companion weren't that great. But it happened.

I was engaged to Donna Jean King at that time. She was the sister of my best friend, U.J. King and lived at Sudan, Texas, northwest of Lubbock. She later joined the WACs and served during World War II. After I met LaVaughn, I knew she was the one who was meant to be my wife and that Donna Jean and I didn't really match up, so I broke off our engagement. I understand that she later married a New York City detective.

My First Sergeant, Warren H. "PeeWee" Belcher was a neighbor of the Dennis family. He and his wife, Dorothy, were authorized to reside "off post." The street designation has changed now, but back then I believe it was SW 25<sup>th</sup> Street. J.W. "Wes" Dennis and wife, Minnie; along with their children, LaVaughn, Orville, Melvin, and Peggy, lived next door. Wes was employed by the Corps of Engineers, which built nice things like obstacle courses for the soldiers to train on. He had previously helped build Shepherd Air Base at Wichita Falls, Texas. Anyhow, "PeeWee" invited my friend Dale Banks and me out for dinner and a home cooked meal one night and

LaVaughn and her friend Virginia Smith too. The minute that LaVaughn opened the screen door and invited us in that evening it was love at first sight. I have always admitted and believed that. I even helped her do the dishes that night. In later years I joked that I never helped with the dishes after that. It wasn't true though, and I did help with dishes and housework many, many times during our marriage and I do believe a husband should do these chores; especially when his wife works outside the home. LaVaughn had another friend named Virginia Helms who lived on the corner. She wasn't present at the dinner that night but was later introduced to our medical section Sergeant William A. "Bill" Purvis [the bravest man I ever knew] and would you believe they fell in love, got married, became our life-long friends, had two boys and one girl; and after the war they built their home in Paris, Texas, where Bill was employed as a postman. I guess you could say that the Medical Detachment, 406<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, claimed that block of SW 25<sup>th</sup> in Paris, Texas. Others who lived there loved us and provided for our needs as so many people did, especially during the war years.

In the fall of 1943 our 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division was designated to participate in the huge Louisiana maneuvers. This training exercise was old hat for we had been through that in the fall of 1941 with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. We left Camp Maxey and were replaced by the 99<sup>th</sup> Division [Checkerboard]. After the training exercises, we were ordered to Camp Swift again. The 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division had vacated that camp. I got a Christmas leave and went to Fort Worth to see my mother, then on to Paris to see LaVaughn. Her parents let her return to Fort Worth with me to meet my folks. As I remember it, New Years Eve was on a Saturday. I had heard that it was easy to get married at the Parker County courthouse at Weatherford, so LaVaughn and I decided to give it a try. We borrowed my brother-in-law's car, a 1937 Ford, and trusted it to get us the 30 miles over there and back. The tires were paper-thin and gasoline was rationed. John Grace and my sister, Pauline, were really good to us. We got our blood work done at the old Medical Arts Building in Fort Worth and headed west, arriving just before closing time. Judge Banks married us. He told LaVaughn [after she fibbed about her age] that she looked like a girl who wouldn't tell a story about anything except her age. Actually she was 15 years and 9 months old and I was 20 years and 2 months old. My brother Robert [Bob] was a witness. On the way home we blew out a tire but were fortunate to have a spare. I recall that brother Bob placed it upright beside a barb wire fence along side old Highway 80. John and Pauline lived at 3706 South Henderson at the time and that's where we spent our honeymoon night, sleeping on the living room floor on a pallet. We returned to Paris the next day, and I remember going through Dallas on the bus and Randolph Field was playing before a large crowd in the annual Cotton Bowl game. I also remember an old man who got on the bus at Cooper and sold delicious ham sandwiches for fifteen cents. We decided to keep our marriage a secret for the time being, and I returned to Camp Swift.

Meanwhile Bill and Virginia Purvis had married and rented a room in a private home on 11<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin which is just south of the Texas State Capitol building. Virginia learned there was another room available in the same block so she wrote LaVaughn explaining the situation and encouraging her to tell her parents she was married and come on down to Austin because indications were that we would be shipping out overseas before too long. LaVaughn left the letter on her dresser after reading it, and later her dad, Wes, happened to read it too! I understand he became very upset and kept asking her, "Baby, why did you do it?" He also threatened to have me court-martialed and probably could have done so, for she was under age and I think he knew a General or two; but he didn't, and they let her come on down to Austin. After the war and in later years Pa-Pa became my best friend and I loved him dearly and he was like a father to me. I think he was disappointed that I never became the hunter or fisherman that he hoped I would be, but I always enjoyed visiting them in Louisiana and

trying. Also, Minnie and I were probably even closer, and she played the mother role in my life after my own Mom passed away. We had many good times together and have lots of good memories of our association.

We rented that room in a private home on 11<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin. I would get up early and catch the trailer bus to Camp Swift with Bill Purvis, and LaVaughn would walk to the only high school in town at the time, Austin High, which was near the Capitol. Regarding Austin, my mother and father lived there when they were first married; LaVaughn and I lived there also after we were married, as our two older children and their spouses, and now one of our grandsons and his wife. To say we're a little bit burnt orange at our house is putting it mildly.

D-Day in Europe was on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944. This is when the great Allied Forces landed on the beaches of Normandy which were strongly defended by some of Hitler's best troops. This was the beginning of the end for them. Later I got to tour those German defenses [pillboxes and gun emplacements] and understand why our casualty rate was high. After riding the bus from Austin to camp the morning of June 6<sup>th</sup>, I awoke the troops in the barracks and told them of the good news we had all been waiting to hear. Let's get over there, get the war over, and return home to normal. That was the attitude of the troops, and the entire country for that matter.

About a month later our outfit was ready to ship out to Fort Dix, New Jersey, Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and the New York Port of Embarkation. Bill and I went ahead to Ft. Dix on the coal burning, cinder producing, non-air conditioned train of those days to White Horse, just outside Trenton, New Jersey. We knew we would be there only a short time, however we were able to rent two upstairs rooms from a Mrs. Coffee, who owned a beautiful home and whose husband was already in France. On some weekends she was not home and we were allowed to use the kitchen, the waffles were great! Before the girls arrived, a transportation strike took place in nearby Philadelphia and workers were unable to get to their defense plant jobs, which hindered the war effort. Orders came down on a Sunday morning for our division to go to Philadelphia and get the transportation going again. We hit there about noon and put a soldier with a full load of ammunition on each and every streetcar, bus, subway car, and elevated train car that the Transit Company owned. By sundown all transportation was up and running and the strike was over. We stayed in place about 10 days. Sometimes it takes force to get the job done.

When we left Ft. Dix for Camp Kilmer and the New York Port of Embarkation, it was a very emotional period in my life; however we were all in the same situation. I have always dreaded separations and good-byes. Perhaps this is from coming from a broken home at the early age of eleven. I can remember crying that morning as Bill and I left our young brides and rode the taxi to camp knowing we wouldn't return. I do remember stating that "I'll be back," and by the grace of God I was able to do so, about 13 months later.

After leaving port, a 14 day boat ride in convoy dodging German subs would follow. Our division was the very first to land directly at Cherbourg, France, without stopping in England. The farmers in the Normandy area of France didn't use fences to mark the boundaries of their property, but utilized hedgerows to accomplish this purpose. These had been planted years and years ago and were obstacles to the fighting that took place there, especially tank warfare, which just did not mix with hedgerows. However, just before we arrived, General Patton's Third Army tanks had broken out of the St. Lo pocket, and he had started a dash across France; but the re-supply of gasoline was a major problem. We took up positions in the hedgerows and bivouacked there in what we called "D" area. Every man who could drive a truck was pulled out of our division and assigned to the "Red Ball Express." Thousands and thousands of 5 gallon gasoline cans were filled and stacked high in the beds of 2 ½ ton trucks in a valiant effort to catch Patton's tanks, but it just wasn't enough; a good try, but it failed. The distance was too great, the traffic on the narrow roads too congested, and you can't replace the volume of tanker trucks with 5 gallon gasoline cans. If it had been successful, the war would have been over much sooner.

Once you got Jerry on the run, he couldn't stop and set up his "88" guns and counter attack. This was General Patton's method of operation and most GIs agreed with him. Our Red Ball Express was recalled; our troops were assigned to "40 or 8" boxcars [forty men or 8 mules]; and pulled by the French trains to the front. In our boxcar we scrounged up some decking and built a platform half way up on both sides of the center door and if we stooped and bent over, it gave us twice as much room. We were careful not to cover up the graffiti on the wall that announced "Kilroy was here!" This guy had been in every bathroom and latrine I had ever used in the States or Europe. Guys in the Southwest Pacific said the same thing. If we had a division of troops made up like him, the war would have been over in nothing flat. A favorite collector's item of World War II was a hill billy Daisy Mae type bare-footed maiden, very pregnant and a caption at the bottom reading, "Kilroy Was Here!"

*{Stay Tuned for More of Curtis' Story}*

The Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy is a non-profit organization dedicated to research, preservation, and education to promote better understanding of the CCC and its continuing contribution to American life and culture. "I propose to create a Civilian Conservation Corps to be used in simple work, more important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work."

--FDR, 1933

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