

Army veteran recalls experiences of Normandy landing in WWII

By Mary Kay Gominger
& Wilfred "Mac" McCarty

He still has a copy of the telegram that his parents received in the fall of 1944 from the Adjutant General of the Army, notifying them that their son, Charles N. Chambers, was Missing in Action. Charlie also keeps a copy of the next telegram they received, dated a few weeks later, regretfully informing them that their "Missing in Action" son was also slightly wounded. They serve as a reminder that he was one of the lucky ones. He came home after the war...when so many of his comrades did not.

Eighty-three year old resident Charlie Chambers was with the 8th Infantry Division that landed on Utah Beach Normandy on July 6, 1944. His unit was quickly engaged in fierce battles with the Germans. He took a small measure of comfort in hearing that some of the German mortar shells were duds. Then the platoon sergeant next to him was hit. That's when the chaos broke out. He quickly searched for the medic, but the medic had been hit also. The medic was able to talk Charlie through some first aid until he was hit. Two of his fingers dangled from his left hand, he experienced a flash of pain and was captured by a German paratrooper. He was marched to a bombed out German hospital in Brest and for the next three weeks, was held as a prisoner of war.

While there, two German doc-

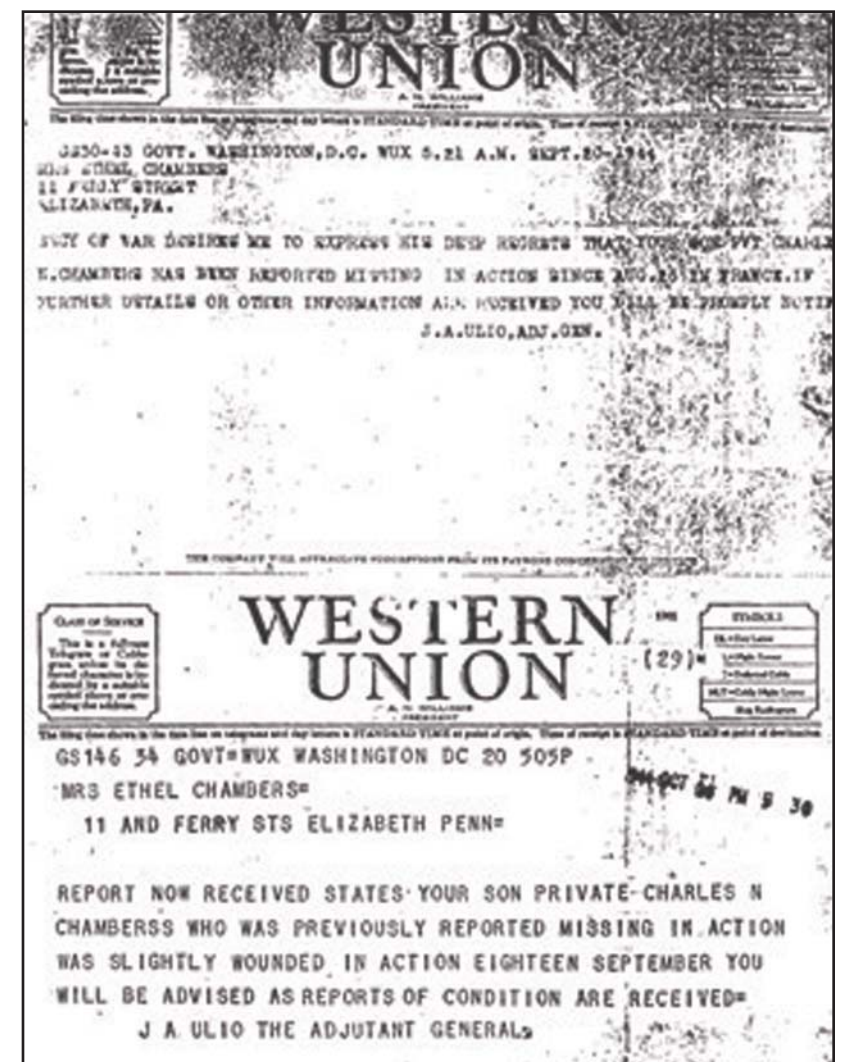
tors operated on Charlie's hand. He lost a third finger in the surgery.

Charlie remained at the hospital for a week, was transferred to another location for a week and then again by boat to a French village on the other side of the bay that was being used as a hospital with Red Cross signs on the roofs. While in the boat, Charlie saw an American reconnaissance plane fly overhead. He was told to remove his American GI helmet. One week later, Charlie was rescued when American troops retook Brest. He told a soldier where other American GIs were being held. He also told him he was hungry. The soldier went to his jeep and brought Charlie a case of K-rations.

Surprisingly, Charlie recalls, is that one day when he



On June 24, 2003, the U.S. Postal Service issued the Purple Heart postage stamp. Charlie Chambers is second from the left.



was a POW, he was given French Francs printed by the Germans, equivalent to pay for his rank as a private.

Charlie was sent to England for further operations and eventually returned to the U.S. on the Queen Mary. The war ended, he healed. In 1947, he reenlisted in the Army under a combat disabled program and served until 1966. He retired as a Master Sergeant and even returned to Germany during the Berlin airlift and was in Korea as well.

Charlie read about the Soldiers' Home in the Army Echoes magazine. He has lived at the AFRH-W for 21 years. He enjoys spending time on the computer, sending and receiving emails, and much deserved rest and relaxation.

PALs Orientation a 'Woof of a Time'

By Amanda Jensema

Each month the PAL's (People Animals Love) organization comes to the LaGarde King Health Center Recreation area for an orientation. During the orientation new dogs and owners learn about the PAL's organization and what would be expected of their pet. The orientation itself lasts 30-45 minutes and then afterwards the residents can visit with them. About 10-25 dogs are signed up for the orientation.

In order for a dog to receive a PAL certification, they must go through orientation, then have two successful visits at facilities they participate with. Once they complete this they become PAL certified.

During the visits the dogs bring so

much joy to the residents. You can see it in their faces, how they brighten up and get a glow. On one particular visit there was a dog who had been in an accident and lost one of his front legs. He was a hit with residents especially

since some of our residents here can relate to him.

All together the residents truly enjoy when the PAL group comes and visits. It's a treat for them, the dogs, and even the owners!



Harry Casino enjoys petting a dog during one of the PALs (People Animals Love) visit that was held recently at King Health Center.

KHC Summer Cookout

By Steven Briefs

Supervisor of Recreational Therapy

On Wednesday, July 1st residents in LaGarde KHC enjoyed a real summer treat, grilled rib-eyed steaks! Bill Striegel was our chef and provided delicious loaded bake potatoes, baked beans, deviled eggs, garlic bread, fruit salad and wonderful strawberry shortcake. Wow! What a great way to start off the summer season. We played a variety of music that celebrated our country and all our staff pitched in to make sure our residents had a good time.



KHC residents enjoy the summer cookout prepared by chef Bill Striegel on July 1. The cookout had steaks, loaded baked potatoes and all the trimmings.

Bowling News

By Ed Crump

Bowling scores have been on the rise over the past two months. One of the hottest bowlers has been Buron Noel who during May and June averaged a whopping 173 for 21 games and that included 15 games of 170 or better. He had his highest series ever in the shootout when he rolled a 562 on May 7 beating his previous high series of 540, which he did in August of last year. He won his second Bowler of the Month honors in May. Only Charlie Gammon besides Mr. Noel has finished in the top four on four consecutive weeks.

John Glover won his third Bowler of the Month award in June which ties him with Gene Allison for the most Bowler of the Year honors. He became only the fourth bowler to finish in first place in back to back weeks joining Steve Kostick, Gene Allison and Charlie Gammon in that select group. John currently carries a 151 average thru the month of June which is his highest average he's ever had in the shootout.

Ralph Wineland continues to lengthen his lead for Bowler of the Year honors. He currently has 54 points thru the month of June while Charlie Gammon sits in second place with 40 points.

When it comes to consistent bowling nobody does it better than Smokey Prussman. Over the past 39 games he's had nine different series of 500 or better out of a possible 13 in which he's averaged 180 over this period.

For an example Phyllis Bradford finished second one week which is her highest finish ever in the shootout and that day she rolled her highest series with a 413. She only had a 118 average when she started the day with an 82 pin handicap per game. Smokey Prussman would have to bowl a 594 series to beat her and that's not exactly easy to do. Willa Farrell had her best game of 187 as well as her best series with a 460. Henri Gibson had his first 500 series with a 504 while Jerry Luger had his highest game in the shootout with a 233 game.

Helen Noel is another one who has made great improvements over the past two months now that she's found a ball that feels comfortable to her. Over the past two months

she's averaged 121 to raise her average to 115. She had her highest game with a 157 and highest series of 404 which she had on two different occasions. I look for her to improve even more in the coming months.

Clarence Peterson had his highest game in the shootout with a 167 and highest series with a 437. He finished first once and fourth once over the past two months. He currently carries a 134 average thru June, the

highest average he's ever had in the shootout. He's been around 120 prior to that.

Mimi Rivkin had a second and third place finish during June where she averaged 163 and 15 now averaging 150 overall. She's bowling more now than she was.

The GEICO tournament was held earlier this month and the final standings will be published in next months' column.



Clarence Peterson (center) listens as Smokey Prussman gives him encouragement during the GEICO tournament held this month.