



Friends Reunite in CO Springs, 2012!

We truly “lived it up” at the second annual NTPA re-union in Colorado Springs, one of the highest cities in the United States. At an altitude of 6035 feet, this city stands over one mile above sea level. Founded in 1871 and situated near the base of Pikes Peak in the Rockies, Colorado Springs provided Timberwolves, Pups, families, and friends the opportunity to experience its unique history and beauty over the 2012 Labor Day weekend. More importantly, it gave us all a chance to reconnect. The camaraderie was particularly evident Wednesday evening, as attendees reunited at the Foxhole. It hardly seemed possible that a year had passed that quickly. The room was alive with enthusiasm and excitement, and sometimes a little sadness.

After a brief Pups meeting on Thursday morning, it was time to board the buses and head to the Garden of the Gods. The more adventurous of us did some rock climbing that day, while others just watched in amazement. Hunger pangs then drove us to eat and drink at the Garden of the Gods Trading Post, followed by souvenir shopping there. The shop-a-thon continued in Old Colorado City, a quaint area just three miles west of Colorado Springs that’s known for its galleries, shops, and cafes. The grand finale of the day was a stop at the Veterans Memorial at City Park, where a Timberwolf memorial was particularly soul stirring.



Friday provided yet another exciting adventure as our group toured Fort Carson. The U.S. Army established Camp Carson to train and house troops involved in the WWII effort, and many Timberwolves were part of this process. The base has seen tremendous growth since that time, but many Vets still recall the days when they were young GIs in training at that facility. A visit to the museum at Fort Carson was first on the agenda, followed by a command overview briefing and a training overview. One particularly interesting aspect of the tour involved a model Iraqi village used for training purposes. But the most “full-filling” part of our day was a trip to the mess hall. As guests of the U.S. Army, we filled our plates and raised our glasses, dining alongside active-duty soldiers. It was quite an experience. The ladies enjoyed a delicious brunch, while the men gathered together to munch at the Gentlemen’s Canteen on Saturday, September 1st. Both groups then assembled in the hotel’s garden atrium to enjoy the Wynot Radio Theater group. They transported us back to the days of old-time radio and provided a very amusing performance. The General Meeting followed, highlighted by a PowerPoint presentation by some of our European friends.

Saturday night saw us stomping our feet and clapping our hands to the jazz music of the U.S. Air Force Academy Band Falconaires. The Beer Bust came next, with music provided by Sgt. Lou Walker of the Colorado National Guard, and was a very fun and social experience—as always.



Sunday morning was a solemn one. The traditional Memorial Service was held in a room with a breathtaking view of the mountains, and the music and color guard of the U.S. Army 4th Infantry Division Band. Fr. McCarty provided scripture and a sermon, while we sang songs such as “God Bless America” and “My Buddy,” and participated in the Candle Ceremony. The fallen are gone but never forgotten; they live forever in our hearts. Guest speaker Peggy Gouras added to the emotional experience, discussing her heartbreaking quest for her uncle, a WWII Vet. Later that day, we celebrated life itself, wining and dining at the banquet dinner, enjoying good music and good company yet again. It ended all too soon. On Monday, we came to breakfast to say farewell to our friends, and we were teary eyed but happy—sad because we had to say goodbye but happy for the experience of renewing friendships, of deepening bonds, of making more memories.



CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

“Finding Mabry”

Speech given for the 67th Timberwolves Reunion in Colorado Springs on September 2, 2012 during the memorial service by Peggy Mayfield Gouras.

This room is rich with stories. I have been extremely blessed to have had the opportunity to sit at your feet and listen to the stories of humble heroes who are unaware of their greatness. I am deeply grateful and humbled to have the opportunity to share my grandmother's story with you.

William Tecumseh Sherman said, “Like individuals, every army has a soul.” It is my deepest honor at this time to stand before you, the Timberwolves, part of that soul to honor the fallen, the missing and my uncle.

My father, a member of the Army Air Corp and B-17 gunner and radio operator, Sgt. John Hulvatus Mayfield died in 2004. He left behind a typewriter case filled with letters that told the story of his only brother, William Mabry Mayfield, known as Bill to his Timberwolf buddies and Mabry to the folks back home in Shreveport, Louisiana. Mabry or Bill served in the 414th regiment 104th infantry division Company E.

The story begins with this letter:

He wrote to his parents on February 22, 1944. “Of course I hate to leave the paradise at Fordham but all good things must come to an end as the Army Special Training Program is being cancelled. We are to get to the army ground forces...To tell you the truth, I am not sorry the program has folded. Put yourself in my place. Picture yourself in a nice warm building all day long eating good food, doing no manual labor, and merely studying during a war that is killing my friends and other men in my country. Now I don't say I have wanted to fight but I have wanted to do a little bit to help. I don't care to be a dead hero or a live one for that matter. Love, Mabry.”

Returning to Camp Carson in July of '44 after spending leave in Shreveport, he writes: “Dear Mom and Pop, the meals were great. Thanks for the car, Pop and the lifetime Schaeffer pen. I arrived in Colorado Springs at 6:30 and called our friend, Betty Blair. They have a swell home and invited me over for cocktails. General Terry Allen, our commanding officer will be there. I had a tough day of KP. I was so tired that I didn't want to carry the four pounds of coffee grounds out to the garbage so I dumped them down the drain. Of course it clogged but a broom handle came to the rescue. Mom, thanks for wearing my Timberwolf pin. Love, Mabry.”

The letter that would alter the course of their lives was written on October 10, 1944. It reads:

“Dear Son, Our weather is so cold I think I'll clean house today- poor old house has been neglected. Your letter of October 1st arrived yesterday. I will go fishing as my fingers are itching for my pole. Love, Mother.”

His father adds, “Hope you don't suffer too much with the cold--am sending something for your feet in the next box. Glad you enjoyed your weekly bath.” Love, Pop.”

The letter was returned about mid November of 1944 in the form of a V-mail with the word "Deceased" written on it with a line drawn through it. Above was written the word, "Missing". This was the first my grandparents heard that their son was missing.

As the campaigns were waging across Europe, my grandmother began waging her own campaign using the only weapon she had--letters. For the first time in his twenty years, his mother, my grandmother, Josephine Mabry Mayfield, had no idea where her boy was. She was determined to find her son.

The first response to her letters was from The White House in December of '44:

"The President is deeply conscious of the gallantry of our armed forces and he thoroughly understands the feeling of those whose loved ones have been reported missing in action. I know that he would want me to express his sincere hope that you will be sustained by the knowledge of your son's devoted service to a grateful nation. Sincerely, William Hassett, secretary to the President."

Ardis Neibuhr, a young woman writes:

*"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mayfield,
I met your son Bill or Mabry as you call him at a USO dance in Denver. He has told me a lot about you. He is really a grand fellow and I admire him very much. You can be very proud of him. I haven't heard from Bill in over two months and was wondering if something could have possibly happened? I would very much appreciate hearing from you.
Sincerely, Ardis Niebuhr."*

His brother John writes from Italy:

*"Dear Mom and Pop, I don't have to tell you how shocked I was to hear about Mabe. Would to God it was me instead of him. I feel so helpless over here. I wish there was something I could do besides pray but I guess that's all we can do for If God can't help us no one can.
I love you and Pop so much. Your faith has strengthened me.
Your loving son, John."*

Mabry's hometown buddies sent a shower of Christmas cards filled with hope and prayers. One read:

"I know he is in some POW camp and will be released before you know it."

His hometown buddy Jimmie Adams writes to Mabry:

"Tighten your belt, grit your teeth and come back--you are the finest of them all, fellow. Your parents are justly proud."

Timberwolf Bill Myers writes in February of '45 from somewhere in Germany:

"Dear Mrs. Mayfield, I just received your letter of January 16th. It was not quite a year ago that I met you at Fordham. In some ways it seems like yesterday in other ways it seems like so long ago. Your news was the first I heard of Mabry. I last saw him October 23rd in Belgium. I agree that it is a good sign that you have heard nothing from the war Department and it is quite possible that he is a POW in Germany. Mrs. Mayfield, I can in

all sincerity say that I've never known a boy for whom I have more respect and admiration than Mabry. As long as I have known him, I have never seen the fellow that didn't look up to him. I know several men in Mabry's company and will try to contact them as soon as possible. I am hoping and praying that one of these days Mabry and I will be together at Harvard. Sincerely, Bill Myers."

In February the War Department writes:

"We have found Mabry and he is a POW."

Letters of joy pour in:

"Thank God." "I knew he was alive." "Your boy is found."

Hometown buddy, Bill McElroy rejoices:

"Mabry is an example of perfection and finesse. I am so glad you found your boy." In March of '45 Jimmie Adams writes, "It is with the greatest of pleasures that I write 'Please Forward' on this letter. What were you trying to do scare everybody to death? When I found out I whooped a war whoop and did a little jig and nearly fell overboard. Take care of yourself. I'll see you in Shreveport before too long."

U.S. representative Overton Brooks writes:

"I have been in touch with the War Department. I will keep you informed."

Faithful Timberwolf, Bill Myers, replies from Germany on April 11, 1945:

"Hoping you have heard from the War Dept. Everyday tens of thousands of allied prisoners are being liberated. Yesterday we liberated 6,000 American and British soldiers. The Germans are giving up by the thousands everyday as they are trying to escape the Russians. We're resting up now after 180 consecutive days in contact with the enemy. I have been fortunate to be in the artillery. We have had it much better than the infantry. Sincerely, Bill."

In April of 45, my grandmother writes my future mother, Jean Freeman:

"Dear Jean, last Wednesday while I was working with the Red Cross at the bus station, I saw a soldier get off the bus with the wolf patch on his sleeve. I asked many questions. He was in the 104th. He was in the same engagement in Holland as Mabry. He belonged to the 413th Company E. He was wounded and sent home. I asked him to tell me frankly if I had any reason to hope. He said, "I did." Hope still held for her boy to come home.

On May 13th, General Terry Allen responded:

"I just received your letter of April 30th concerning Pvt. William Mabry Mayfield who was reported missing in action on November 7, 1944. I deeply appreciate your sorrow and want to assure you of my deepest sympathy. All of my soldiers are important to me and I shall make every effort to see that your desires for accurate and detailed information are completely fulfilled. I have referred your letter to our division chaplain who will make a thorough investigation. Sincerely, Terry Allen."

The next response came from the Supreme Allied Commander's Headquarters:

*"Dear Mrs. Mayfield,
Your letter of April 30th arrived. I am truly distressed to learn of your son. I am sending your letter to the proper authorities. Sincerely, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander."*

The War Department sent a letter that there had been a mistake. Her son was not a POW.

Timberwolf Bill Myers writes from Halle, Germany on May 31, 1945:

"I have been sitting here for some time trying to find the proper words with which to start this letter. It is the most difficult letter I have ever tried to write. I finally found Company E 414th infantry and talked to a few old men who were with Mabry in Holland and also to his platoon leader-- a first Lieutenant. I found your boy. He is in heaven. He was killed in action on November 7th, 1944. He suffered none as he didn't know what happened. The men were certain. There was no mistake. I don't know what to say other than to tell you that I have never known any man for whom I have had more respect or admiration other than your son. I will never be able to forget Mabry and all the ideals he represented.

It is very hard to fully realize the price we have paid and are paying in our country's manhood for our victories. We all hope and pray that it will not have been in vain. Sincerely, Bill Myers."

Brokenhearted and grieving, but still determined to find her boy and bring him home, my grandmother contacted the mayor of Maastricht, Holland. There had been an article in Life magazine about grave adoption in Holland led by the mayor's wife. She asked for him to pass her letter along to a family who might search for her son.

Not long after that, the Kieboon family answered:

"We are enclosing a picture of an unmarked grave at Son cemetery. My husband walked there and we think we may have found your boy. There was no wristwatch or mark on the clothing but we think it is your son. Thank you for the clothes for the children. People tell us they look as they did before the war. White flannel would be lovely to send as we can't get that post war. Sincerely, Josephine Kieboon."

My grandmother then wrote to Adjutant Major General Edward F. Witsell:

"Dear Sir, Again I must write you for information and help. With the aid of a young Dutch girl, I am endeavoring to locate the grave of my son William Mabry Mayfield. This young woman has visited Son Cemetery with her father who served forty years in the Dutch Army. The Captain at Son stated if they knew the location of my son's foxhole, they would be glad to dig in the place. Since our son was killed on November 7, 1944 near Moerdijk, the fighting was very fierce. Perhaps Mabry and his companion, Charles Juday are buried where they fell. I sent the x-rays of his teeth to Son. I believe they have been sent to Henri Chapell. Is there any way I can know the exact location of the

*foxholes these boys were in? Any way you can help us we will appreciate it very much. Thanking you, I remain Sincerely, Josephine Mabry Mayfield
P.S. There is an unknown soldier at Son Cemetery in Holland location X-3. Have you any information on this body that might help to identify it? It may be my son."*

Meanwhile the campaign of letters continued. She wrote to the Timberwolf Howl in December of 1946, asking for anyone who had information about her boy to please write to her, and she inquired as to why her son's name had been omitted from the list in the Timberwolf Tracks of those killed in action.

In January of 1947, she received this profound letter:

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mayfield,

Perhaps I can help you a little bit or at least ease your minds about your son, Bill who was one of my closest friends overseas and at Camp Carson. When I received my copy of the division history of The Timberwolf Tracks, I also wondered why your son's name was omitted from the killed in action list. Bill and I were in the same company but different platoons. On the night of November 7, 1944 our company was dug in the side of a dike about 500 yards from Moerdijk, Holland waiting for the opportunity to attack and drive the Germans from the south side of the Maas Estuary. That night they were harassing us with heavy concentration of artillery fire and one of those 88 mm shells got a direct hit on your son's foxhole. Charles Juday was in the foxhole with him. I'm sure they felt no pain. My foxhole was about 40 yards away. We were relieved about midnight by a Scottish regiment. Your son probably died about 10 p.m. on November 7th. I hope that I have helped you a little bit and everything I have told you is as correct as I know it.

Sincerely yours, Robert Spitler"

My grandmother sent a relative to Chicago to meet with Robert Spitler and ask if he would draw a map of the dike where Mabry was killed. She sent the map to the army.

The army filed this report:

"Having been told just where the location of Bro Aasched Dike was by the architectural engineer of the community of Moerdijk, I walked the length of the dike and both sides of it without finding any trace of what might have been a grave. Proceeding to another dike in the vicinity, I found a short distance from a pill box on the east side of the highway an isolated grave marked only by a board with the words "6 soldiers" written in German. Sincerely, Mr. L.W. Bladow, civilian investigator."

Timberwolf buddy, David Bossler wrote:

"I first met Bill at Camp Carson where I was feeling pretty down in the mouth being in an army camp after the pleasant life at Fordham. Bill was laughing and making fun of us for ending back up in the infantry. I thought to myself that kind of boy will make a good friend in fact one of the finest I have ever met.

Bill acquired the name Molly Mayfield – the Denver Post had an advice to the lovelorn column written by Molly Mayfield. Bill was elected the company's own, Molly Mayfield.

Another incident I recall was on one of those grueling marches in France. "It befell Bill to carry the platoon's cumbersome weapon, the bazooka, named because of its resemblance to Bob Burses musical instrument. Bill evidently decided that if bazooka it was called, bazooka it should be for it wasn't long before we heard all of the latest songs being sung through the bazooka."

I am so sorry for your loss. I loved your boy.

Sincerely, David Bossler."

Deeply moved by my grandmother's perseverance to leave no stone unturned to find Mabry and bring him home, I began to research the Timberwolves. I soon discovered through a website that the Timberwolves had reunions and take reunion trips. I opened the Timberwolf website and read a 2008 newspaper article in the Daily Herald which interviewed one of the Timberwolves who had served in Holland. The article read, "Yes, I remember being in Moerdijke Holland when my friend was killed. I remember his name to this day. His name was William Mayfield from Louisiana." The Timberwolf who was interviewed was Bob Spitler. This was the same Bob or Robert Spitler who had written to my grandmother 65 years ago and who had drawn the map of where my uncle had been killed. He had become a living link for my grandmother. I began my search to find Robert Spitler. I first found his son Glenn who told me that on a trip to Europe his father had taken the family to a dike in Moerdijk, Holland where he pointed out the place where his foxhole had been and then to the place where Mabry had been killed. I found Bob and just as he had been a living link for my grandmother 65 years ago, he became a living link for me as well.

I also found out on the Timberwolf website that in October there would be a Timberwolf Reunion in Europe. I called Mary Jamieson, who said the trip was closed but she would see what she could do. Mary made a way. So on October 15th my friend Betsey and I left for Europe to continue my grandmother's quest to find Mabry.

To travel with the Timberwolves and trace the steps of my uncle was an amazing experience and an honor for which I shall forever be grateful. As we traveled through Europe I had the privilege of observing first hand the depth of respect and gratitude that the Belgian and the Dutch people have for our vets and for our country. I began to get a vague understanding of the heroism and courage, as well as sacrifice of our boys and of their families. It was deeply moving to be an observer of the liberators who with great courage moved through Europe as beacons of light in the darkness of oppression. The cost was dangerously high.

We were to visit Henri Chapelle, the cemetery in Belgium and then were scheduled to visit Margraten Cemetery. At either of these cemeteries, I had hoped to find Mabry or evidence that he had been there. We first stopped at Henri Chapelle Cemetery. The Dutch and Belgian Friends of the Timberwolves met us there.

I had the privilege of meeting Ronald Van Beek of the Dutch Friends of the Timberwolves who had been so helpful in providing information about my uncle. At Henri Chapelle, I searched for my uncle to no avail. The Dutch and Belgian Friends laid a wreath and honored our vets. After touring the cemetery, we boarded the bus. Since I had not found any evidence of Mabry, I had hoped we would find him at Margraten. Due to scheduling, we were told we would be unable to

visit Margraten. I had come all this way and was only about 20 minutes from Margraten but the bus would be heading back to Brussels. I began to board the bus with a heavy heart when Mary Jamieson again made a way for me. She said, "You see those two guys over there? Their names are Vincent and David. They are going to take you and Betsy to Margraten Cemetery, and then they will drive you back to your hotel in Brussels 2 hours away." That morning Betsy and I had prayed that if possible could the Lord make a way for this to be the day after all of these years that my uncle could be found. Through Vincent de Saadeleer and David Mylaert I was going to Margraten after all and just might find Mabry.

However, as I was folding my legs into Vincent's Mini Cooper car, I remembered the words of my mother warning me to never ever under any circumstances to get in the car with strangers. These were definitely strangers, and I was in a strange land unable to even speak the language.

I thought, "Well maybe they will take me to Margraten on the way." And go by Margraten they did. As the sun was setting on a crisp and beautiful October afternoon in the rolling Holland countryside, we arrived at Margraten. The gates to Margraten Cemetery were magnificent and they were locked. The cemetery had closed for the day. Even though I was wearing a dress, the thought of scaling the fence did occur to me. However, it would not be necessary as I looked behind and saw Ronald Van Beek and the Friends of the Timberwolves who had formed an entourage to accompany us to find Mabry. Words cannot express what I felt at that moment. Ronald also knew the combination on the gate to call the American caretaker of the cemetery who came out and said that he could only open the gates after hours for a blood relative. I was so grateful. The gates opened and we entered. I was one step closer to finding Mabry. We were escorted to The Wall of the Missing where over 1700 names of the missing were written. These names represented not only our boys but also their grieving families, the mothers who never stopped looking for their sons and for the rest of their lives believed that they just might walk in the door at any moment. And then we found Mabry.

Written on the Wall of the Missing were the words, "William M. Mayfield of Louisiana Private 414 infantry 104 division Louisiana." There are no words for that moment. I could only think of my grandmother. After all these years, her boy had been found. I had brought a picture of my grandmother with Mabry. I had wanted to hold the picture next to Mabry's name, as sort of a symbolic gesture of a reunion, of a mother finally finding her son. There was only one problem. My uncle's name was written at the top of the wall. It was about 10 feet off the ground. Again, Vincent and David came to the rescue. Vincent climbed on David's shoulders and tenderly and carefully held my grandmother's picture next to her boy's name. I could only thank God. My prayers had been answered. We also found the name of Charles Juday, the red-haired guy from Indiana who had been killed in the foxhole with my uncle. He was an only child. He wouldn't have a niece looking for him. True to their promise, Vincent and David drove us back to our hotel in Belgium, a two hour drive from Margraten and then they drove back to Holland, two hours away where they would spend the night. Vincent wouldn't take a penny for gasoline or his time and gasoline in Belgium cost a lot more than in America. I am so grateful for Vincent, David and Mary.

Not only was I moved deeply by the reunion and the kindness of strangers, but also by the adoption of the graves of our boys by the people of Belgium and Holland. On Liberation Day as

well as other holidays, our boys are remembered. I noticed a grave with golden letters on the marker. It was explained to me that this person had been killed on one of the beaches at Normandy. The grave adopter had gone to the beach and brought some of the sand back and spread it into the letters of the soldier's name. It glistened in the sun like gold.

When we went to Moerdijk, Holland, the place where my uncle had been killed, I grabbed a handful of soil. When I returned from Europe, my brother John and I visited the family plot at the cemetery in Shreveport, Louisiana. It was the same plot where my grandmother had taken me as a little girl to help her "tend" the graves. I remember asking her about my uncle's marker, which had the words, "Resting place known only to God" written on it. She explained to me that she thought Mabry was in the tomb for the Unknown Soldier in Washington. My brother and I placed yellow roses, our grandmother's favorite on her grave. We put purple pansies on our dad's grave, and we laid a wreath on Mabry's grave with an American flag and white flowers. I said a silent prayer of thanksgiving for my uncle, his sacrifice, for my grandmother and the legacy of the journey made richer because of the kindness of strangers. We then took the soil from Moerdijk and sprinkled it into the letters that read "William Mabry Mayfield." **Mabry had become part of the soil of the land he had helped to free.**

The soil of Moerdijk is not golden like the sands of the beaches of Normandy, but it is dark and rich, with the sacrifice of promising young men who gave their all in a strange land to bring the light of freedom into the darkness of oppression and who would never return home. My brother and I looked at each other and realized that this day would have been our father's 90th birthday. It was November 7th. We then took a deep breath and realized it was also the 67th anniversary of our uncle's death. After all these years, we had done our best to find our grandmother's boy and bring him home to the day exactly 67 years later.

The campaign of letters ends with this. I wrote to Ronald Van Beek of the Dutch Timberwolf friends in Holland and thanked him for all his help in finding Mabry.

He replied:

"Dear Peggy, It was my deep honor to accompany you to Margraten Cemetery to find your uncle. What your uncle did for my parents and grandparents was more that we can ever repay you. He gave his life for our freedom so that my kids and I can grow up in peace and do what we want. It was my deep honor."

Timberwolves, this indeed has been my honor. Thank you.

I would like to add my deepest gratitude for Mary Jamieson, Vincent De Saadleer, and David Mylaert who all helped make the journey successful and made it possible to complete my grandmother's quest to find Mabry and bring him home.

Peggy Mayfield Mouras

The following was the speech given by our friends from across the sea, Vincent de Saedeleer and Ben De Staercke of Belgium and Ester Einhuizen of Holland.

Dear Veterans, Pups and friends.

My name is Vincent De Saedeleer and I live in Belgium.

It is a real honor for me to you speak and tell you about what we do in Europe, to remember the 104th ID. When I was 19 years old; I started re-enacting the life of an US Soldier during the period of 1940-1945. In 2009 I started my own re-enactment group together with my best Friend David Muylaert. In our pursuit to portray a American Division, we came across the actions of the 104th ID. Your story's was so inspiring for us, we kept on looking for more information.

Our group has grown to 10 people who are really interested in the Timberwolves. We try to keep the memory alive by explaining as much as we can about you. How you lived trough the war, what actions you saw and so on.

Going on this journey has been a real experience for me, Ben and Esther. Unfortunately, not everybody was able to go on the journey, but to let them be a part of this reunion, I started to interview a couple of them and here are some messages of the Belgian Timberwolf Friends.

Another group that probably everyone knows, Is the foundation "Friends of the Timberwolves". These Dutch people have been in contact with the Timberwolves for so many years and have done a lot to remember what the soldiers did. Whenever a veteran or their family is coming over, they are most gratefull to help them retrace their steps in Holland.

Here is a message from Peet van Oers, who is the President of the Foundation.

The foundation also re-enacts a lot, and ofcourse the 104th ID. On re-enactment events, they try to be as good as can be. Using their GMC Compressor truck and showing the visitors how it works. Henk has his own field kitchen and make's a lot of good food (if you like his cooking of course), Arjan takes a lot of artifacts with him and shows what towns and places you all liberated, these are just some examples what they do.

Here is a message from some people of the foundation.

In 2002, The Friends opened their museum officialy and are now a official national world war 2 museum in Holland. They have wonderfull displays and have a great collection that where donated and privately where purchased.

As you all know, there are a lot of Dutch people who also remember what the 104th ID did in the 2nd World War. One of these people are the Oostvogels Brothers.

Here's a message from Bart Oostvogels to you all.

Bart en Teun started researching about the 104th ID in 1995, they have their own collection about Timberwolf artifacts that where donated by veterans or privately where purchased. On Memorial day in 2012, they had the honor to lay down a wreath in honor of the fallen Timberwolf soldiers at Margraten cemetery.

I will now give the word to Ben De Staercke.

Hello, my name is Ben and I live in Belgium.

I would like to tell you about the main American military cemeteries located in the Low Countries. There are 3 of them Margraten, as Vincent already mentioned is the American military cemetery located in the Netherlands. A lot of Timberwolves who lost their lives in Holland and Germany are buried there. The other two, Henri-Chapelle and Ardennes (Neuville-en-Condroz) are both in Belgium.

It's on these three cemeteries that we, the Dutch and Belgian friends of the Timberwolves, have adopted several graves of fallen Timberwolves. By adopted a war grave, we show our appreciation for a person who gave his life for freedom and we also want to keep his memory, his story alive.

I myself have adopted three Timberwolves graves, all from the 415th IR. And I would like to tell you of one of the three soldiers story. The soldiers name is Pfc Jarrell M. Bryant. Jarrell was born on the 27th of May 1919, in Enola ,Faulkner County, Arkansas. After finishing studys at the Arkansas State Teachers College, he became a welder before being drafted into the US Army on 27th of april 1944. After training he was assigned to E-company of the 415th IR, 104th ID. He was KIA on 23th February 1945 when he was serving his country on the banks of the Roer river in Merken, Germany. He came to the aid of a wounded comrade , hereby exposing himself to German machine gun fire that would unfortunately kill him. He left behind a wife and a 5 year old son. His story is only one of the so many stories of young americans who gave their lives for freedom. They gave their today for our tomorow.

I will now give the word to Esther.

Good afternoon everyone, my name is Esther and in the next few minutes I would like to tell you about how I became involved with the Timberwolves, or to use Bob's words, how I became a Timberwolf groupie. I will also tell you about our committee and what we do. I first became interested in the Second WW when I heard my Grandmother's stories about the war. She lived with her parents in Rotterdam and they lost their home when the city was bombed by Germany at the beginning of the war. Later, I went to college in Wageningen, also known as the city of liberation, because that is where the German forces in the Netherlands surrendered on May 5, 1945. That is why May 5 is the National Liberation Day in the Netherlands. Traditionally, Liberation Day in the Netherlands starts at midnight by lighting the fire of freedom. People from all over the Netherlands come to Wageningen to take that fire back to their hometown. For me, the highlight of Liberation Day was the parade of veterans they used to have every year. Veterans from different countries would walk through Wageningen in a big parade. People would clap and cheer and you could tell that that meant a lot to those veterans. Experiencing Liberation Day in Wageningen has made me realize how important it is to keep remembering. That is why I joined the Remembrance Committee in Standdaarbuiten when I moved back home. The president of that committee, Toine Vermunt, would like to say a few words to you now.

(Toine's remarks are not available)

May 4, the day before we celebrate our freedom, is our National Remembrance Day. Our committee organizes the Remembrance Day ceremony in Standdaarbuiten. This year we had some very special guests, Jim and Maria Hooper. Jim's uncle, Harold Hooper, was killed during the liberation of Standdaarbuiten.

Toine already told you about this, but every year we visit our local school. Toine teaches the children in 5th and 6th grade about the war and how we were liberated by the Timberwolves. We also take

the children to the museum in Achtmaal. Next year we hope to be able to take the children on a little battlefield tour.

Last, but not least, our committee also welcomes Timberwolves and their friends and family to Standdaarbuiten and take them on a Tour of the Dikes.

These are the things we do to pass the history of the Timberwolves on. In Belgium and the Netherlands we also have several monuments that honor the Timberwolves: in Oudenbosch, Standdaarbuiten, Zundert, Rijsbergen en Wuustwezel.

I would like to thank the Pups Association for giving us the opportunity to speak to you today and I hope that you know a bit more about what we do back home. Joining the Remembrance committee two years ago was the best decision I ever made, because of that, I have met a group of very special people. Being here at these reunions is like being home away from home.

I speak for all three of us when I say that it is an absolute privilege and an honor to be here at this Reunion. All the Friends of the Timberwolves are proud to be part of this Timberwolf family.

In conclusion I would like to thank you Timberwolves for what you did for our countries. We will make sure that the history of the Timberwolves will continue to be told. We will always remember!