

Hoover

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sion, and, as Emmett says, "We trained, and we trained. We got to know the Rodman Moors pretty well, and did lots of 20-mile hikes. But they fed us good - mutton and brussel sprouts mostly. Some guys hated the food but I didn't. I liked mutton. I must have, 'cause I went from 165 pounds to 198 in no time at all."

About his stay in the British Isles, besides the great fish and chips, and the pints of you-know-what, he remembers the barrage balloons everywhere. They were supposed to thwart German air attacks, but the G.I.'s joked about them and said they were the only things holding England up.

When it came time for Hoover's 29th Infantry Division to cross the English Channel, high tides forced the vessel back and they had to return the next morning. Emmett remembers the awesome sight: thousands upon thousands of ships. There were every kind and size, the largest amphibious force the world had ever seen, or ever would see. They were anchored 10 miles off the British coast while planes of two air forces dropped tons of bombs and heavy guns of two navies pounded Nazi defensive installations on the French coast of Normandy.

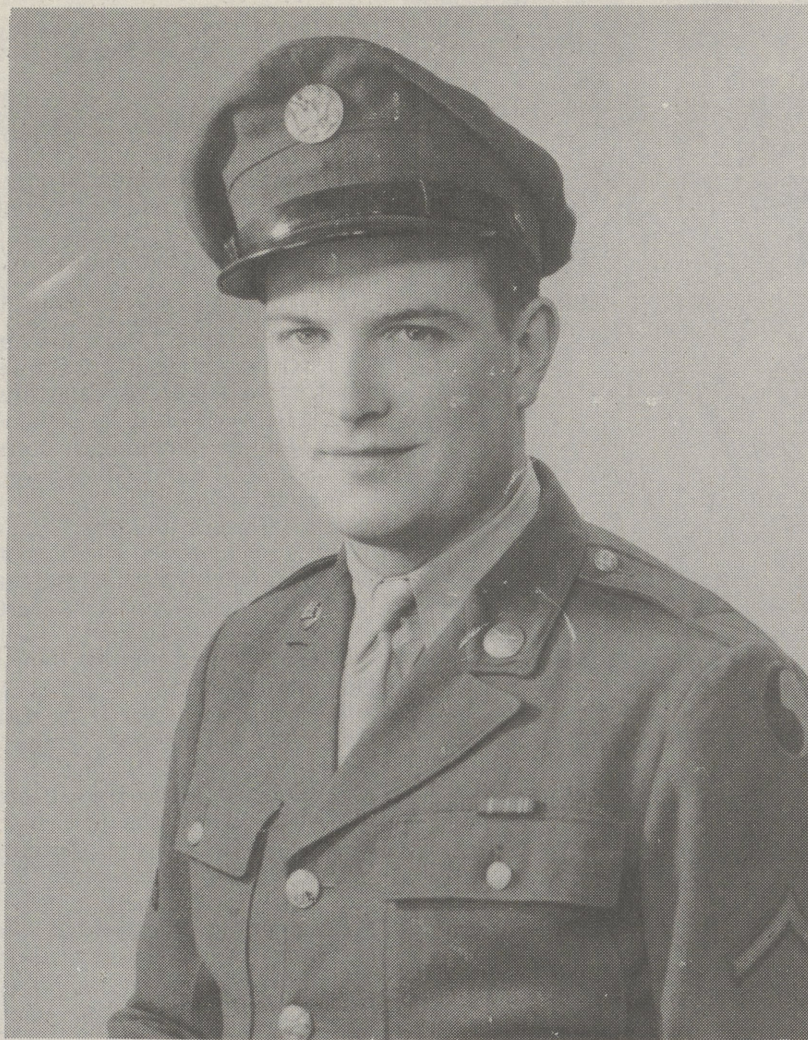
Soon, on June 6, the end of WWII began at dawn with 23,000 parachute and glider troops dropping inland, while 176,000 assault troops and their 20,000 vehicles stormed ashore over a 50-mile wide area — American, British and Canadian troops — all to be landed in German-held territory within a 48-hour period.

Many of the troops came ashore in LCVP's, an acronym meaning "Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel." These ungainly vessels had square bows which lowered for unloading when the LCVP hit the shore. Each carried only 32 men, and since it was too crowded for all to sit at once they took turns. If the ocean was rough — as it frequently was — the vehicle swamped easily with water the automatic pumps could not handle, so the men had to bail water out with their helmets.

Pfc. Hoover had been transferred just before D-Day to an anti-tank company but landed without incident and began the first of an 11-month combat tour. He was wounded, but not seriously, by shrapnel during a German counterattack on the base of the Cherbourg peninsula. Hitler ordered his troops to take Avranches to blunt the Allied breakout, but their attack failed.

Emmett Hoover blames the eventual German loss entirely on Adolf Hitler, and he probably is right. Emmett says, "Hitler was not a military man, and, worse, he wouldn't take his generals' advice."

As for the German soldiers themselves, while he has high regard for their combat skills, he thought they folded under pressure and "chickened out" of any responsibility for their actions. Emmett laughs when he recalls



Pfc. EMMETT HOOVER



EMMETT HOOVER
In front of his Troxell Switch Road home. He did the stone work himself.

that, "Among the German prisoners, there were never any riflemen or machine gunners. They would admit only to being Polish, or else bicycle mechanics!"

At war's end a "point system" was developed, using time in service, in combat, age, etc. as criteria for sending the highest point soldiers home first. Emmett, with 74 points, was transferred to the 69th Division for the trip back to

D-Day

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didn't know what D-Day was, in contrast to Paul Malak, 27, who rattled off the Allies' three landing sites in Normandy.

One person said that it had something to do with Pearl Harbor.

"Oh, that's easy. It's the 50th anniversary of the invasion of Europe," said Sheldon Carey, 67.

He was one of the first two Meyers High School students to be drafted before he finished his senior year.

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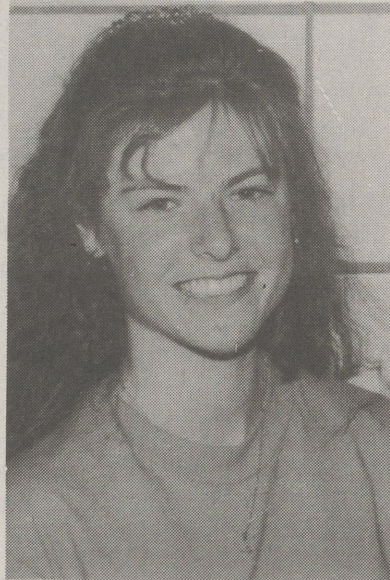
took me out of school in 1945. Some other guys whom I knew

quit as soon as they were old enough to serve, enlisted and returned to finish high school at the end of the war."

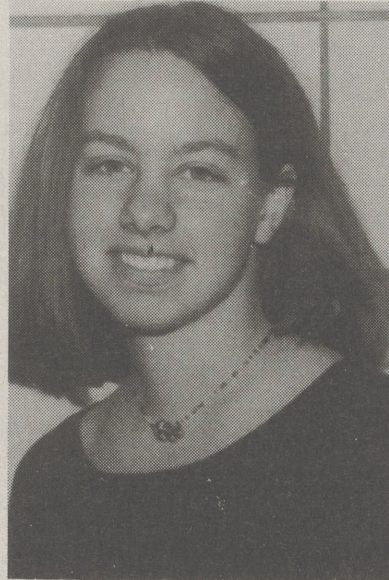
"That's the 50th anniversary of the invasion of Europe. I'm a World War II buff," said Walter Chappell, 51.

Ken Spencer, 56, knew immediately that this year is the 50th anniversary of the Allied landing at Normandy. He served 20 years in Vietnam and Germany with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers before retiring in 1980.

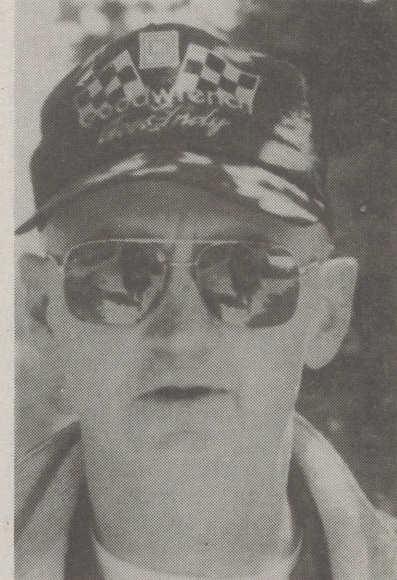
"My dad talks about it sometimes," said Jennifer Smith, whose father is a Vietnam veteran.



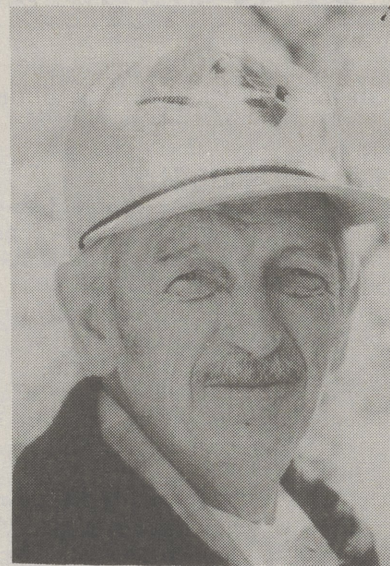
KATHLEEN KRENCH



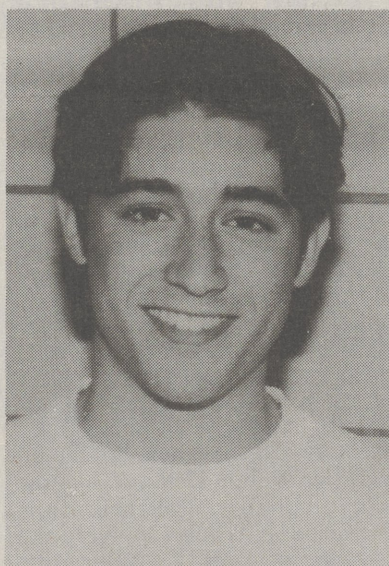
BETH DELESCAVAGE



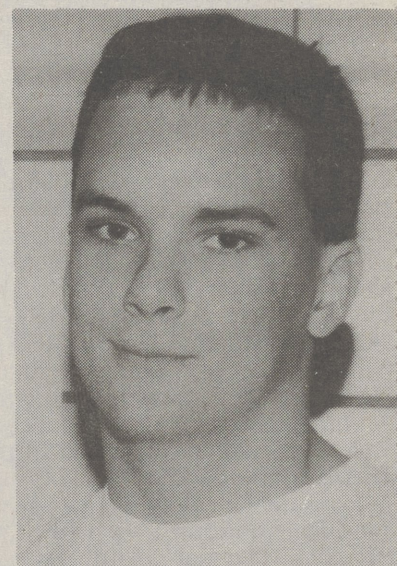
WALTER CHAPPELL



KEN SPENCER, SR.



STEVE LIEBERMAN



PAT SCOBLE

the United States. He was sent to Camp Kilmer in New Jersey, given a month off, then brought back for mustering out on September 28, 1945, a date which rolls readily off his tongue!

Plain Mr. Hoover married within a year (his wife died 10 years ago) and completed his house and began his family. Emmett's handiwork — he is a stone mason — can be seen in many places. His structures are distinctive, using white concrete to outline various sizes of irregular-shaped stone. In back of his home on Troxell Switch Road is an open-air pavilion (some would call it "gazebo") which is identical to one he built for newspaper magnate Harrison Smith in Mossville.

Emmett Hoover's business was transferred to a son but he keeps busy nevertheless. Capping a long fieldstone wall is the next project, even though Emmett laughs about not being able to shoulder a bag of cement quite as nimbly as years ago. (And as for "suds," Emmett snickers and says, "Two will just about do it these days!")

Reflecting back 50 years ago, Emmett Hoover remembers that out of 185 men in his company only 60 returned home. The rest were all replacements, so although sometimes he used to regret that such a large chunk of his life was literally taken from him, he also knows he was lucky to return.

But, he says, "Where did the time go?"



SHELDON GRAY

Summer tutoring available at Mercy Institute

The Mercy Institute of Educational Development (MIED), at the Mercy Center on the campus of College Misericordia, Dallas, will offer summer tutoring to area students during July.

Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy the program offers one-on-one instruction in diagnostic testing, reading, math, language, arts, creative writing, development of correct study habits and organizational skills, challenges for the academically gifted, and programs designed to meet individual needs.

Classes will be held Monday through Friday on a one-on-one basis. For further information, contact Sr. Ann Patrice at 675-7407 or 675-7461.

L-L budget work session June 1

The Board of School Directors of the Lake-Lehman School District will hold a budget work session June 1, at 7:30 a.m. in the multi-purpose room of the Lake-Noxen Elementary Building.

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