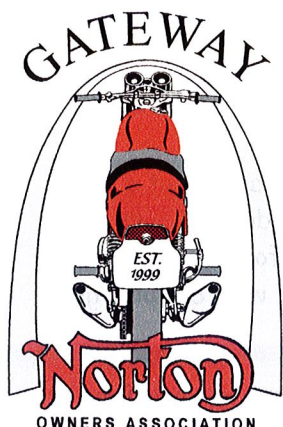


# Gateway Norton Owners News #51



**"To Promote the  
Use and Pride of  
Norton Motorcycle Ownership"**  
Compiled by Marty and Peggy Dupree  
July 2012



## KING'S COLUMN

It's been HOT, I don't have a lot of positive thoughts . . . last night my front brake decided to lock up and strand me alongside Highway 94. Steve Hurst was there to rescue me, he has been that "True Friend" for the last decade. Forgive me, but the last few times out have been a disaster or a "Near Miss."

Strike One: late May . . . a Sunday ride . . . hit from behind due to miscommunication.

Strike Two: late June . . . birthday party for some guy named "Moke" (I think I Moked years ago but did not inhale). A fellow rider forgot to turn on his tap after leaving a fuel stop, just about had me up his ass (your brake lights do not work when you run out of fuel). My life flashed whilst trying to negotiate semis, an on-ramp, merging traffic, and a motorcyclist in front of you doubling in size every second. As luck would have it, I survived the mess, swerving at the last second, going for the shoulder, puckering, gasping, cursing (me? Cursing?).

We rode on, getting to Mr. Moke's about noon or so. It was a shame about the folks at Moke's birthday party - none of them except me seemed to fit in. Most had tattoos and a Hardly Ableson attitude. I felt sorry for all of them. I tried to just "be" but just couldn't "be" there any longer. Flew home, 70 mph plus, didn't know whether to follow or lead as both seemed to be disastrous.

Strike Three: came last night when my front brake locked up again (last time August 09). I crashed badly. . . WTF? I will investigate and report if anyone gives a crap.

Motorcycling was once a hobby and passion, but has been a four letter word lately - JOB - Crash - Near Miss . . . I have been working on BMW motorcycles lately in this heat and would rather poke a throttle cable in my eye. I am looking forward to cooler times and the Fall Campout which is one of my favorite events. I have to think things will get better.

Clean your motorbike! You will easily see things it needs and if I ever have to work on it for you, I won't be so crabby.

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ONE OLD NORTON FROM MISSOURI  
ON  
THE RUN FOR THE WALL 2012  
by Kurt Baue

I'm from Missouri and I have an old Norton—a 1975 850 Commando. Mike French and I put a lot of work into it: new pistons, new ignition, new starter, new brakes, new chains... why didn't I just buy a new motorcycle? But where's the challenge in that? I wanted to ride my old Norton on the Run For The Wall 2012. I did it, too, with the help of my brother Fred (who drove my car with camping gear and a bike trailer for the return trip).

The Purpose of The Run For The Wall is to promote healing among all veterans and to work for the recovery of all POW-MIAs. It began with a small group of Vietnam vets in 1989 who decided to ride their motorcycles from L.A. to Washington, D.C. Today it is an annual event the week before Memorial Day and includes riders from many states, including a contingent from Australia, on both the Central and Southern Routes, picking up more along the way, and rising to almost 2,000 bikers by the time they reach "The Wall"—the Vietnam Memorial on the National Mall.

Fred came over the night before the trip to load the camping gear. He had written a new song called "Run For The Wall." He sang it to me, but I was too busy getting ready myself to sit and listen, so I gave him the obligatory, "Yeah, that's great."

We joined the RFTW Central Route at Wentzville, MO, on Monday, June 23, setting up camp early. Dennis Schneider and Scott Dowler came out to visit. Dennis and his wife, Marie, presented me with a custom RFTW tee-shirt they had made, and which many admired.

What a sight to behold as hundreds of Harleys came roaring in from I-70, riding in military formation, flags flying, and the whole community cheering and waving. This happened all along the route, people waving flags and saluting from highway overpasses, and in the towns where we stopped along the way.

At sign up a lady gave me some stickers and said, "Put this one on the right side of your fairing and the other on the left."

I said, "I don't have a fairing."

She said, "Well, put them on your windshield."

I said, "I don't have a windshield."

She said, "What kind of motorcycle do you have?"

"A Norton."

"A what?"

"Norton. N-O-R-T-O-N."



"Never heard of it. Well, just put the stickers on your mirrors." I shook my head and did as she asked.

The VFW Post 5327 in Wentzville served us a fine dinner that evening, plus breakfast the next day. Later on, Fred got out his guitar and played his song to some guys camped out next to us. Response: ho-hum.

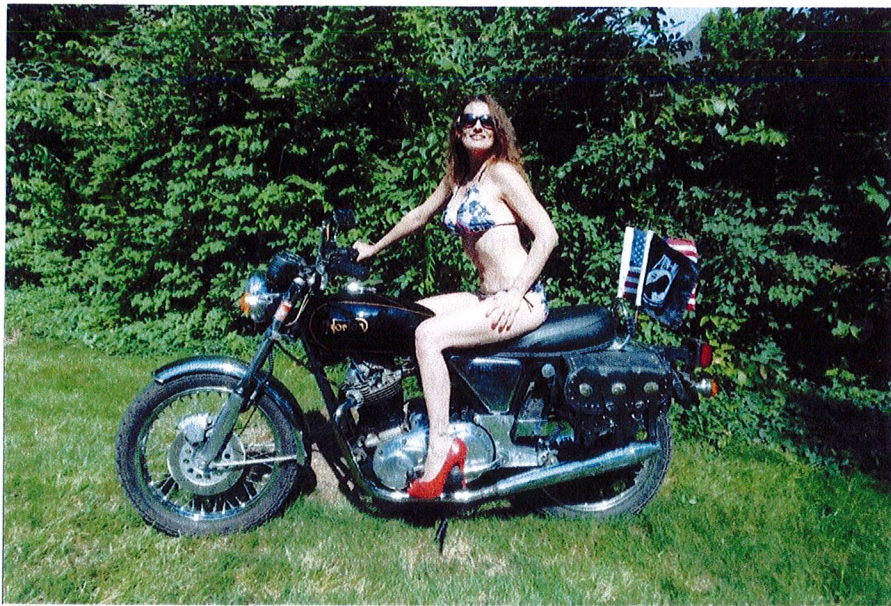
Tuesday, June 24, we got down to business. We left Wentzville with 592 motorcycles... plus one old Norton from Missouri.

There was a mandatory riders' meeting at 7:30 a.m. that day and every day, for new riders were joining at every stop. Each bike was assigned to a platoon. I was in Platoon 4. This was not a fun ride. The leaders kept emphasizing: "This is not a party, it's a Mission." They stressed discipline. "Bring your A-game on this ride," they said. Believe me, riding hundreds of miles in close formation is no picnic. You could not enjoy the scenery. You had to keep a sharp eye on the guy in front and the guy to the side of you. And the Road Guards and Platoon Leaders had a system of hand signals for "right turn," "left turn," "close up," "side by side," "staggered," "single file," etc.

At 8:00 we revved up, and a police escort took us to the Wentzville Vietnam Memorial—the first in the USA. Then the police closed down Highways 70 and 270 and escorted us to the VA Hospital at Jefferson Barracks, where we visited patients. I had brought along some pictures of my old Norton to give away. I would come up to a patient and say, "Would you like to have a picture of my motorcycle?"

"Oh, OK." (About like the response to my brother's song.)

Then I'd hand them the picture and watch their eyes light up when they saw the pretty young girl in a bikini perched on the bike! The biggest smile came from a man in hospice who only had days to live.



Kurt's Norton making this girl look good . . . or vice versa.





This man really liked Kurt's "bike" photo.

We were rolling along on I-64, making good time, when just at the Illinois 159 overpass at Fairview Heights, everything came to a screeching halt. There had been a serious traffic accident. Some driver in a private vehicle had rammed into a slow-moving highway painter's truck, killing two people. Cops, EMTs, helicopters, the works. Finally our Central Route Co-ordinator got us re-routed, but only after a two-hour delay.

We rode to Evansville, Indiana, for fuel. This was quite an operation as we had hundreds of motorcycles to fill up. At each pump were two members of the Fuel Crew: one to hand you the hose and one to collect your money. The amount was always rounded up to the next dollar, with the excess money going to the "Sag Wagons" which helped transport disabled bikes and sick or injured riders. At my first stop the man said, "\$8.00, please." I had forgotten to bring small bills like they said so I dug out a twenty. He took it and smiled, saying, "Thank you very much. Next, please!" I had to move on.

Since my Norton has a small gas tank and no fuel gauge, I was always worried about running out of gas. But at one fueling stop, there were so many of us that the gas station ran out of gas! Fuel stops were frequent, so that was never a problem.

But I did encounter a serious problem, though. At the fuel stop in Evansville after I gassed up nothing happened when I turned on the ignition. I pushed the bike over to the Sag Wagons to check the fuse. It was OK. Then the wiring. Everything scanned OK. One of the Sag Men had a volt meter. Battery voltage was fine. Then someone said he had had a BSA on which the ignition switch went bad, maybe I should check that. Not having the tools to unbolt it I just broke it off, unplugged the wires, jumped them with my pocket knife, found the ignition wires, cut the terminals off, stripped the wires, twisted them together, taped the whole mess up with duct tape and electrical tape, and was back in my platoon by the time we were ready to pull out.



The bike ran fine the rest of the way into Corydon, IN, our destination for the night—three hours late and me with a serious problem with my bike. My brother Fred already had the tent set up, but I was in a panic. No time for the catfish dinner. Got to find the motorcycle shop. Tear through town. No shop. Out of business. Auto Zone! Zoom, zoom. They'd just closed. Yikes! Now big brother put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Kurt, you're wound up tighter than a two-dollar alarm clock. Take a deep breath. OK. Now, give me the keys."

We got to Wal-mart in time, where I got terminals, a toggle switch, a soldering iron, more tape, and then Fred and I went to a nice Mexican restaurant for a leisurely meal. Back at camp, a fellow named Merlin, who was riding a big Harley with a home-made teardrop trailer, looked it over and loaned me some tools. Knowing the situation was well in hand, I turned in for a good night's sleep while Fred sang his song to Merlin and got a bit of a positive response. Next morning, with good light and help from Merlin, I did a proper jury rig and checked my charging system.

Next day, Wed., May 23, we left Corydon, Indiana, with 656 motorcycles... plus one old Norton from Missouri.

We stopped at the VA Medical Center in Corydon, where again I distributed my racy (not racing) motorcycle pictures. These were such a hit that an orderly grabbed me and hauled me around fast from room to room as he saw how uplifting it was for the veterans in the hospital. Also uplifting were some copies of the Armed Forces Devotional Book that Fred, a retired minister, had been given from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis. I was able to give away a number of these and they were very well received and deeply appreciated.

Next stop was Frankfort, the capitol of Kentucky. A crack motorcycle cop team called the Blue Knights escorted us to the Vietnam Memorial there. At the Mt. Sterling fuel stop, lunch was provided by American Legion Post 22.

Our stop for the night was Hurricane, West Virginia. Did we have a surprise waiting for us there. A police escort picked us up as we approached town. Then, to our amazement, here came an old Huey helicopter someone had refurbished, and in addition to the police we had a helicopter escort. Seemed like the whole town turned out to greet us. We were staying at a large water park recreation area, so there was plenty of room for everything: *two* marching bands, a huge American flag hung from two hook-and-ladder trucks, a drum-and-bagpipe corps, a flyover by a C-130, speeches by the mayor, Presentation of the Colors by an ROTC honor guard, and the Pledge of Allegiance, and perhaps most moving of all, the re-folding and re-presentation of the casket pall flag (which had not been properly folded at the funeral) to a young man whose father had served in the Korean War. A wonderful dinner (and breakfast next day) were provided by local groups.

Now the RFTW participants are all 100% loyal, patriotic Americans, many of them Vietnam combat veterans. But you never saw a more colorful group of men in your life in terms of grooming (wild, long hair and beards), attire (full biker regalia, including black leather vests covered with patches and pins), and transportation (huge ornate custom Harleys, many with trailers, even three-wheelers (two in back and one in front or one in back and two in front), not to mention the Honda Gold Wings and space-age BMWs.

The most colorful man of all was a guy from Hawaii named "Patopato" (Spanish for "duck") who was the MC for the daily auction. This took place every morning before the rider's meeting. Patopato was

raffling off items to raise money for the elementary school in Rainelle, WV, a poor town that had really rolled out the red carpet for the vets on the first RFTW in 1989. Over the years, RFTW has helped buy computers and educational supplies for this poor school.

Well, at Hurricane, Fred set up camp early. A nearby couple stopped by to visit. Fred decided to try his new song on them one last time before giving up. The lady liked the song a lot, and said she would talk to the RFTW co-ordinator to have Fred sing it at the morning meeting. This she did. Fred talked to him, too, but the man gave him the brush-off: "Well, we have full agenda, but maybe."

Next morning Fred grabbed his guitar and went over to the stage area early, while the auction was still going on. Mr. Patopato saw him stroll by and said, "It looks like we're going to have a little music." So Fred just walked up on stage and got out his guitar. He sang the song as people began to gather for the morning meeting. He could tell that people were "getting it," as it was a song about the whole Vietnam experience, and some were even singing along on the refrain. That finished, Fred put his guitar away, then went back up to the MC and gave him a copy of the lyric sheet, just as a courtesy. To Fred's surprise, Patopato immediately began to auction off the song sheet: "What am I bid for the lyric sheet to this song we just heard?"

"A hundred dollars!" someone shouted out.

"A hundred and fifty" yelled another.

"Two hundred!"

And so it went, back and forth. Finally the bidding stopped at SIX HUNDRED DOLLARS. The man said later he'd have given a thousand but that was all he had on him. Then Patopato said, "Who wants to hear that song again?" Now the crowd was up to 400 or so, and everybody yelled, "Yes!" So Fred sang it again, and this time he could really tell that the words were sinking in as tough old combat vets teared up during the verses, but then really sang out on the refrain: "We are making the Run For The Wall." Afterwards, a steady stream of people came up to Fred and thanked him for giving them such a meaningful song, that captured their experience so well, and helped them heal. Fred said that connecting with the vets so closely through the song was a healing experience for him as well.

Many also requested copies (a CD is available; email Fred Baue at [fbaue@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fbaue@sbcglobal.net)).

As for my worrisome motorcycle, a Christian chaplain that was going through the campsite that evening stopped and asked if anybody wanted their bike blessed. I immediately jumped up and hollered, "YES!!!" I put my hands on the motorcycle to pray, and when I peeked, I saw that five people, including the chaplain, laid hands on my bike and prayed for it. And you know, it ran perfect the whole rest of the way. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!

Next day, Thursday, May 24, we left Hurricane with 727 motorcycles... plus one old Norton from Missouri.

Our first stop was at the golden-domed state capitol of West Virginia, where the governor himself, The Hon. Earl Tomblin, welcomed us and gave a brief talk. From there it was through the mountains single file on WV Highway 60, with ups and downs, 8% grades, and hairpin turns. Fun, fun, fun! The little town of Rainelle opened their arms to us and gave us a great reception, including a slaw-dog



lunch with homemade desserts in the school cafeteria. They let the kids out for the day, and it was quite a sight seeing these big, rough-tough bikers being mobbed by happy little children. Here we had our first sprinkle of rain, but it never became a soaker.

We camped overnight at the State Fair Grounds in Lewisburg, WV. There we had a long, enjoyable afternoon and evening as we set up chairs in front of our tent with snacks and a "little brown jug" to pass around, along with the guitar. Camped next to us were Joe van Leeth and his sister Lita from Zanesville, Ohio. She played the guitar and sang "real purty." She and Fred worked up a harmony version of his "Run For The Wall" song, and sang it at the morning meeting next day.

Little Merlin with his tiny teardrop trailer also camped nearby, and stopped by for a visit. At one point he asked if Fred had a vest. He didn't. Merlin went back to his trailer, scrounged around, and came back with a very nice black suede vest that someone had given to him. He gave it to Fred, who said, "As an ordained minister, I have to say that this is a very great honor. For this is the second time in my life that I have been 'vested'"... at which everyone rolled their eyes, groaned, and laughed.

Next day, Friday, June 25, we left Lewisburg with 832 motorcycles... plus one old Norton from Missouri.

On to Front Royal, Virginia, where lunch was provided by the Mike Dodson Jr. and Sr. Tree of Life Ministries of Lynchburg, VA. Again Fred drove ahead, and was fortunate to get us a room in the Holiday Inn, where most of the bikers were staying. We rolled in to D.C. about 4:00 p.m. hot, dirty, and tired. After four days of camping out, a real bed and a hot shower never felt so good.

I was fortunate to get one of the coveted passes to Arlington National Cemetery. RFTW is the only group allowed to ride motorcycles into this hallowed ground where our fallen military men and women are interred. Only 400 bikes were permitted, out of the 2,000+ from the Central and Southern routes. We were strictly admonished to keep our mufflers damped down low.

Fred rode with me on the back of the Norton, scared to death and clinging to me for dear life like a monkey on its mother's back. Once inside, we filed in silence to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, where our leaders were privileged to lay a wreath in honor of our fallen comrades. The changing of the guard was a truly awe-inspiring ceremony, carried out with the best military precision. Legend has it that when a hurricane blew through Washington, the Guard was given permission to stay inside until the storm passed. They refused, and kept vigil through the rain and gale-force winds. Remember, wherever you are and whenever you look at your watch, day or night, 24/7, that honor guard is keeping watch over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as a sacred duty to God and country.

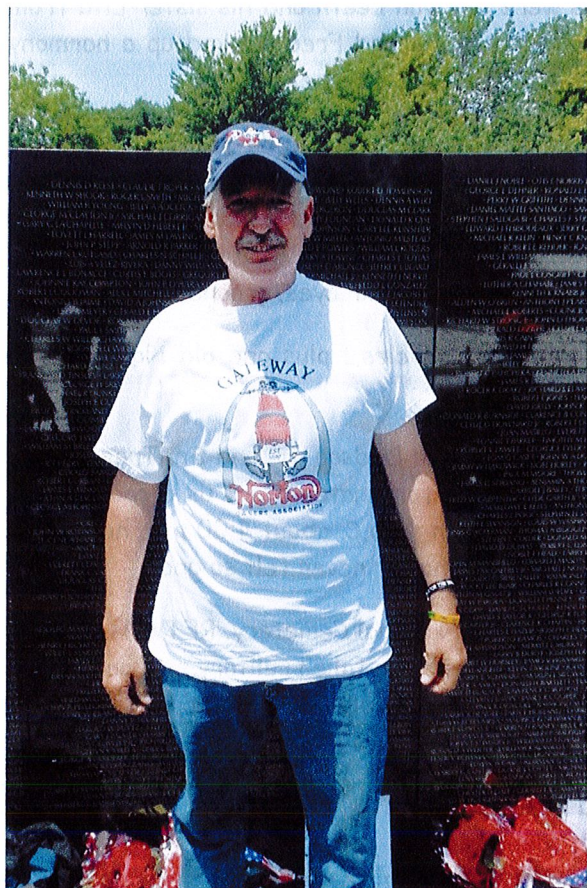
From Arlington we rode to the National Mall and visited the Lincoln Memorial. Then we sat down on the steps in the broiling sun for a group photo. At least most of us did. There was a big Memorial Day Festival on the Mall, and some of the boys had found the beer tent. They kept wandering in and out of the picture. Who knows what the final shot will look like. It was quite an experience to be on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and look straight down The Mall, where in the middle distance was the Washington Monument, and in the far distance the U.S. Capitol.

From the Lincoln Memorial it was only a short walk to the Vietnam Memorial, "The Wall," for the presentation of a plaque and the declaration of "Mission Accomplished." The Memorial Day crowds at The Wall were huge. As a result, I did not have time to look up names. I did leave a memento—a list



of the names of the twenty-five men in my unit who were killed during my year in Nam, along with the date and cause of death.

One thing though. Fred and I were in the Army at the same time. I went to Vietnam and he stayed stateside. At The Wall, Fred put his arm around me and said in a choked-up voice, "Welcome Home, Kurt. I'm glad your name is not on that Wall."



After that the group began to disperse. As we walked back to find our motorcycle, we stopped for a minute to listen to the "Lieutenant Dan Band," led by actor Gary Sinese, who played "Lt Dan" opposite Tom Hanks in the movie, "Forrest Gump." Sinese is a patriotic American, and often performs free of charge for the troops, like Bob Hope did during WWII. Fred managed to give a copy of his song to one of the backstage people. Something may come of it, you never know.

Now it was back to the hotel to check out, repack the gear, load up the bike, and head home—an 800 mile trip. We made 200 miles the first day, and 600 the second, arriving on, Sunday, May 27. That gave me Monday to rest up before going back to work on Tuesday. We talked about our experience all the way back home. It affected us in different ways, but was, as predicted, a life-changing experience. I'm glad we went.

Will we go again next year? Ask me later. My butt's still sore.

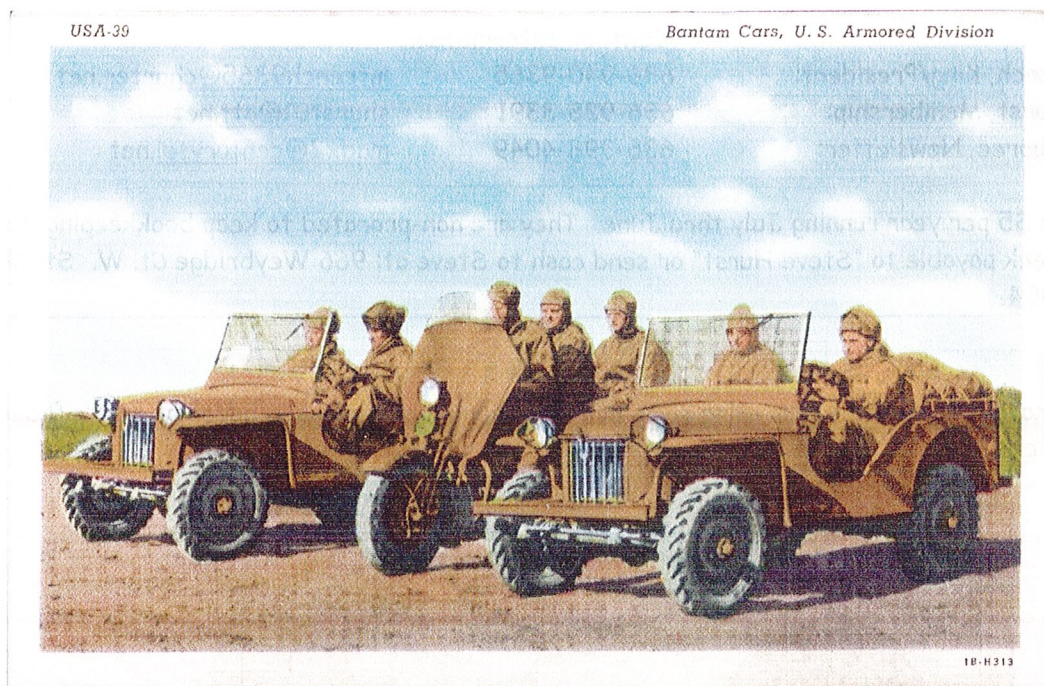
Meanwhile, back in D.C. that same Sunday, many of the RFTW riders joined bikers from all over for the Rolling Thunder Motorcycle Event, whose purpose is to raise awareness and recovery of POW/MIAs from all wars. This starts at the Pentagon and goes all around our nation's capitol. For 2012, Rolling Thunder included over 300,000 motorcycles... minus one old Norton from Missouri.

(Fred Baue helped with this article.)

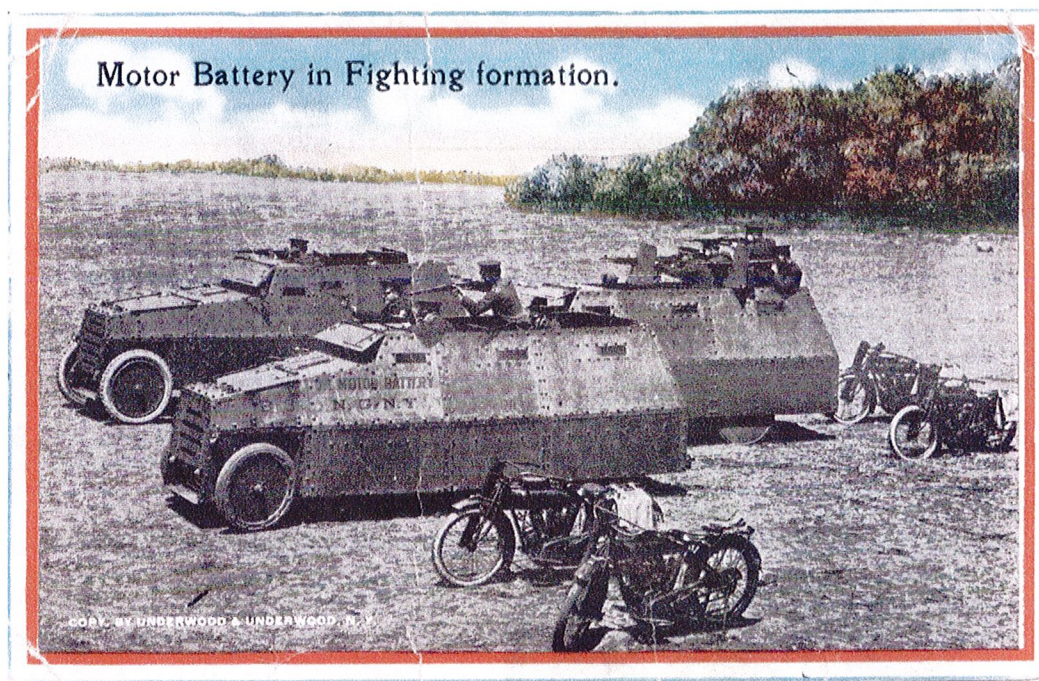
**EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** I decided to print Kurt's article in its entirety instead of breaking it up in installments. Next week I will be emailing Fred's lyrics to everyone.

We will have the next issue out in about two months, which will include an article from a new member, a trip to a rally, and other things. Please get your submissions to me as soon as possible.





World War II postcard



I really like this postcard because it is postally used, stamped May 10, 1918.

Written in fountain pen, addressed to a Miss Anna Staeps:

*Oh, for a ham and rye and a Mandel-krantz. Seems like years since I ate at Martini's. Hope nobody has swiped my place at the table. Best of all good things to you.*

*Priv. Walter Cohen, Co. 5 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn., 160 Depot Brig., Camp Custer. Mich.*

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Mike French, King/President:  
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Dues are \$5 per year running July thru June. They are non-prorated to keep bookkeeping simple. Make check payable to "Steve Hurst" or send cash to Steve at: 966 Weybridge Ct. W. St. Charles, MO 63304.

Since I have space to fill, I am using some military-themed postcards in honor of Kurt's Ride for the Wall article.



Top card from Belgium, bottom card is U.N. Emergency Force from Brazil being rushed to the Suez Canal to force a ceasefire in a full scale shooting war that broke out between Egypt and Israel.

The U.N. hand cancel is dated October 24, 1957 (United Nations Day)