

Tracing Pasts: Web site helps find World War II veterans

January 30, 2009 01:50:00 PM

Genealogist Linda Pazics Kleback formerly was a researcher at the Bay County Public Library. She now lives in Maryland. For an archive of her columns, go

to <http://www.newsherald.com/search/?q=Kleback&fistype=site&x=46&y=15>

Many of us are researching the military personnel who fought in World War II. Hopefully you have asked your living veterans to tell you about their service. Some of these men and women have hesitated to tell their stories in the past, but as they have gotten older and gotten some distance from what was a defining period in their lives, they may share their memories more easily.

We also are seeing new tools being introduced that help us to research our veterans. One of my chief areas of interest is the Normandy invasion. My great uncle John Raymond Shaw died in France from wounds he received on D-Day. A new item on the Web site of the American Battle Monuments Commission at www.abmc.gov/home.php is extremely helpful in researching the invasion.

According to the Web site, "The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) was established by Congress in 1923 to commemorate the service, achievements, and sacrifice of U.S. armed forces where they have served overseas since 1917, and within the U.S. when directed by public law." The new Normandy component is a great addition.

The Normandy Campaign: The Advance Inland tells the story of the battles with pictures, videos and interactive maps. The application is beautifully done and clearly illustrates the progress of the invasion. There is information on individual divisions and battles. If you are researching someone who was part of the Normandy Invasion, you'll enjoy spending some time here.

The American Battle Monuments Commission site also includes burial information for soldiers who died abroad and were buried in cemeteries there from World War I, World War II, the Korean War and some other conflicts. The lists do not include any soldiers whose remains were brought back to the United States and buried here. If you have been unable to locate a veteran's burial in the U.S., you might find them in these lists. Maps are provided that can help you locate the resting place of your soldier.

If you do find a relative in the ABMC lists, there are services provided that you might like to use. You can find information on these at <http://www.abmc.gov/services/index.php>. The Andrews Project is particularly interesting since it "provides friends and relatives of those interred in its cemeteries or memorialized on its Tablets of the Missing with color lithographs of the cemetery or memorial on which is mounted a photograph of the headstone or commemorative inscription". Visit the Web site for more information.