

DIABLO



Voice Of The Family And Friends Of The 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association- March 2006 - Vol. 1, Nr. 1

508TH FAMILY AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION FORMING

New Association Carries On In Footsteps Of Recently Retired Organization



From The Jumpmaster

By Dick O'Donnell

This inaugural edition of the *DIABLO* is but the first of many that will be published on a trimester basis.

The *DIABLO* is the voice of the "Family and Friends of The 508th PIR Association", which is being founded this year. Within its pages your inquiries, written memoirs and memorials will be regularly featured. News of general interest and information about the men of the 508th and their exploits from 1942 through 1945 will also be covered.

Some Background

More than 100 people filled out forms at the 30th, and final, reunion of the 508th PIR Association expressing interest in forming a follow-on organization. This edition is being mailed to over 1,400 people.

That effort pressed on and a few veterans and friends attended our business meeting held in Orange Park, FL in October 2005 (for more details see article at right).

During that session I was appointed as interim Chairman with the mission to appoint other board members and get the organization rolling.

Various items of business were voted upon, including the proposed Constitution and By-laws and the organization's name.

Good Intentions Foiled

However, since then we learned the voting process was nullified, as we had not yet incorporated. So, we shall re-address those items at our first annual reunion, as incorporation shall then be accomplished.

That reunion will be held, again in joint session with the HQ 1st and C Companies mini-reunion in Augusta, GA. You can read more about the event on the following page in Troy Palmer's "Hello to the 508th."

As you may know, the 508th's HQ 1st and C Companies hosted a "Mini Reunion" in Orange Park, Florida in October 2005.

Dubbed as the "First Anniversary Reunion", it fell on the date that marked the retirement of the 508th PIR Association (WW-II) just one year earlier.

Orange Park is quite close to Camp Blanding and we shared personal automobiles to travel to Camp Blanding where ceremonies were held at the 508th Memorial, the memorial for Medal of Honor winner Leonard A. Funk, Jr. and at DZ Diablo (although the 508th never jumped at Blanding it has been honored with the naming of this drop-zone nonetheless).

Following these ceremonies ample time was given to enable everyone to visit the Camp Blanding Museum, which features many 508th exhibits.

Special Meeting Included

On the last day of the reunion, a business meeting was held regarding the formation of a new association. This new organization has a genesis stemming from comments of numerous veterans and family members who felt that they would like to see something happen to carry on the spirit of the 508th PIR (WW-II) and the annual reunions so many of you enjoyed in past years.

The purpose of this new association will be to ensure that the memory and legacy of the 508th PIR is perpetuated and that the camaraderie of the 508th members and their families shall endure.

It is our sincere hope that many of the 508th PIR's veterans and family members will choose to sign up for membership and we encourage all recipients of the newsletter to pass this

information on within their extended family.

How To Join

We have included a registration form for your convenience within this newsletter. An initiation fee of \$30 per person was set for the first year of operation. Annual dues have yet to be determined and will be decided at the next annual meeting. These funds will be used to support the association newsletter and will also go towards various association operating expenses.

Membership will provide you with periodic editions of *Diablo* in which you may post queries and other 508th related materials. The newsletter, of course, will also provide details of the planned annual meetings and activities as they arise.

So, get out your pens and checkbooks and send in your registration form along with the initiation fee. Please note that until the association incorporation process is completed, checks must be made out in the name of Richard O'Donnell.

Keep The Newsletter Coming

This initial edition of *DIABLO* is a complimentary copy. Future editions will be mailed at least three times a year to our MEMBERSHIP ONLY – so be sure to complete the enclosed application and mail it in!

Diablo Interim Editor
760 Conestee Drive
West Melbourne, FL 32904-1812
Phone: (321) 727-1170
E-mail: Jumpmaster@508PIR.org

Hello 508th!

My name is Troy Palmer. My dad was a Machine Gun Section Leader with Hq. Co. 1st Battalion.

I first learned of the 508 PIR Association in 1995 when my parents returned from the 51st Celebration of D-Day. Before dad left for Europe he told all who would listen "I didn't leave anything there and have no reason to return!!" My mom knew better and he returned a changed man. For the first time I could remember, my dad had a calmness and pride in his wartime accomplishments.

In 1996, my parents (Mom) hosted the HQ 1st Mini Reunion. It was at that reunion, I met many wonderful people, which enabled me to better understand events that shaped my fathers life. My Dad passed away November 5, 1998. Learning about my dad's history through his 508 brothers has made me feel closer to him now more than ever.

I have attended as many reunions as possible. In 2003, my wife and I (mostly, my wife) hosted another Mini Reunion for Hq 1st. My first regimental reunion was the final. It was bitter sweet and I was sad to see it end.

In 2005, George Stoeckert hosted a Mini Reunion in Orange Park, Fl. It was there that Kenneth "Hard Rock" Merritt asked me to host an Hq 1st and C Company Reunion in 2006. Those of you who know "Rock", know you don't refuse the Command Sergeant Major, especially with a tearful plea stating, "as long as two of us can get together, I will be one".

I am planning our reunion around October 20th, 2006 in beautiful Augusta, Ga. It would be beyond extraordinary to have the remaining 508th "heroes" and families attend. Augusta has ALWAYS been a strong and avid supporter of our military, our veterans and their families. Augusta has many things to offer, The National Golf Hall of Fame, The Augusta National Golf Course, The National Science Center, beautiful Antebellum homes along the peaceful Savannah River, and many other opportunities, MOST OF ALL your 508th BROTHERS AND FRIENDS!

Please contact me as soon as possible if you will be able to attend!

Specific reunion information will be immediately forthcoming pending your response! Please join OUR family in October to celebrate the lives of the heroes still with us and for the heroes who have gone on before them!

Thanks in advance for your support!

Fondly~

Troy Palmer

1206 River Lane

Evans, GA 30809

Email: palmertroyalm@aol.com

Home phone (706) 855-1453

Status of Incorporation

After discussing the association needs with three laws firms spread out in the states of Florida, South Carolina, and Massachusetts, we have been fortunate to acquire the pro-bono services of attorney William Mone. Mr. Mone works within the law firm of Ropes & Gray LLP in Boston, MA.

We should also take this opportunity to thank Joan Shanley (daughter of Irv Shanley, HQ 2nd) for her efforts in recruiting Mr. Mone.

At this time, we are well on the way to filing incorporation papers within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. †

Webmaster Wish List

We hope that all 508th veterans and family members are enjoying the 508th PIR website which can be viewed at www.508PIR.org. Daily "hit" counts tell us that many of you are regular visitors.

The web site has just enjoyed its third birthday and continues to expand on an almost daily basis. Site visitations average nearly 1,000 per month and the rate continues to increase as more people, worldwide, become aware of its presence and content.

Continued growth, however, is very much dependent upon the availability of relevant photos, document images and pertinent text. If you have not as yet shared photos and documents in your personal collection, we urge you to do so.

All these materials must be converted to digital format through the use of a document scanner.

If you do not have the means to scan your photos and documents, please consider mailing them to the site's Webmaster (AKA "Jumpmaster"). We provide free scanning services and

typically are able to mail the materials back within 48 hours of receipt.

Many veterans and family members have already shared their materials and in some cases have entrusted us with entire photo albums. All have been returned undamaged to their owners. (Note: scanning of albums necessarily takes longer). Return mailing is done at our own expense.

Specific Wish List

▪ **CAMP MACKALL COMPANY PHOTOS** - These are single page montages of thumbnail sized photos of all individuals in each company. Those listed below are needed:

- ⇒ Regimental HQ
- ⇒ HQ & HQ Company
- ⇒ Company B
- ⇒ Company C
- ⇒ HQ 2
- ⇒ Company E
- ⇒ Company F
- ⇒ HQ 3
- ⇒ Company G
- ⇒ Company I
- ⇒ Service Company

Of course, any and all photos of veterans and their buddies are always welcomed. Again, if you cannot scan them to send via e-mail, we can do it for you if they are mailed to us.

▪ **OFFICIAL ORDERS**

⇒ **General Orders** – we need to acquire missing order sets, as follows:

- GO-14 (1943)
- GO-24 (1943)
- GO-46 (1943)
- GO 50, Pgs 3 thru 12 (1944)
- GO-04 (1945)
- GO-05 (1945)
- GO-06 (1945)
- GO-18 (1945)
- GO-19 (1945)
- GO-21 (1945)
- GO-25, Pg 5 (1945)
- GO-36 (1945)
- GO-38 (1945)
- GO-55 (1945)
- GO-60 (1945)
- GO-01 through 22 (1946)
- GO-33 (1946)
- GO-33 (1946)

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**FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE 508TH PIR ASSOCIATION
REGISTRATION FORM**

MR. / MRS. / MS. FIRST NAME: _____ INITIAL: _____

LAST NAME: _____

ADDRESS 1: _____

ADDRESS 2: _____

CITY: _____

STATE/PROVINCE: _____

ZIP / POSTAL CODE: _____

NATION (IF NOT USA): _____

HOME TELEPHONE: _____

WORK OR CELL PHONE: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

I AM A 508TH VETERAN OF COMPANY _____

I AM RELATED TO A 508TH VETERAN
(NAME AND COMPANY) _____

I AM A FRIEND OF THE 508TH AND WOULD LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED FOR MEMBERSHIP

PLEASE REMIT INITIATION FEE OF \$30.00 (USD) FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP. PAYMENT MAY BE MADE VIA PERSONAL CHECK (U.S. ONLY), MONEY ORDER OR INTERNATIONAL POSTAL ORDER, MADE OUT TO THE ORDER OF RICHARD J. O'DONNELL.

SEND COMPLETED FORM AND PAYMENT TO:

RICHARD J. O'DONNELL

INTERIM CHAIRMAN,

FAMILY OF 508TH PIR ASSOCIATION

760 CONESTEE DRIVE

WEST MELBOURNE, FLORIDA 32904-1812, USA

QUESTIONS? CALL ME AT (321) 727-1170 OR VIA E-MAIL AT JUMPMaster@508PIR.ORG

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- ⇒ **Special Orders** - All
- ⇒ **Company Orders** - All
- ⇒ **Morning Reports** - All

If you can loan any of the above "Wish List" items, it would be greatly appreciated. E-mail them as scanned attachments to Jumpmaster@508PIR.org or send them by post to:

Richard O'Donnell
760 Conestee Dr.
West Melbourne, FL 32904

Searching For ...

Mrs. Della (Cornwall) Pederson of Yakima, WA is searching for some 508ers that served with her first husband, Earl Cornwall (now deceased). Those men she is attempting to contact are: Tec/4 John Burns, Tec/5 Thomas Casey, Sgt. Frank Dasch, Pvt. Patrick Farrell, Tec/5 Harry Gerheim, MSgt Keating Lindale, Cpl Elmer Martell, Tec/5 John Smith and Tec/5 Tage Swanson, Tec/5 Jack (NMI) Warner.

Tage Swanson is now deceased but Della would like to hear from members

of his family. If you have contact information for any of these men, please contact at 221 N. 40th St., Apt. 202, Yakima, WA 98908, telephone (509) 966-7980 or E-mail her at dpederson8908@charter.net

Calling All Volunteers

Many of you have already asked, "What can I do to help?"

There is a great need for people who want to assist the endeavors of the Interim Board as it moves forward to the creation of the incorporated organization and its life thereafter. Interim Board members include Dick O'Donnell (Chair), Joe Hill, Troy Palmer, Lois (Goudy) Andrews, and Jan Silver.

Remember - the association will go nowhere without the energies of some key people that will make it all happen. **Your association** needs the following positions to be filled:

- Nomination Committee - Members to develop and recommend nominees for the positions of:

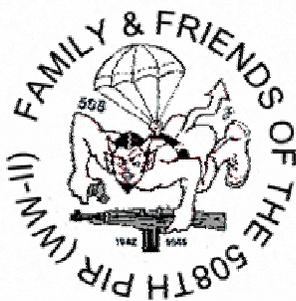
- President
- Vice-president
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Self nominations are also accepted
- Newsletter Editor
- Other committee positions yet to be determined.

There will also be a recurring need for members to act as reunion hosts. Annual reunion venues will be set in localities around the nation in order to make them more accessible to some members who might not otherwise be able to attend.

So, put your thinking caps on and raise your hand for any of the tasks above as well as things that might not yet be on the list.

We need **you!**

~ Next Edition ~
~ June 2006 ~



The Diablo

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PLACE PROPER
POSTAGE
HERE FOR
MAIL DELIVERY