

DIABLO



Voice Of The Family And Friends Of The 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association- February 2007 - Vol. 2, Nr. 1

Friends and Family Reunion Set For Birmingham

New Association's First Regimental Wide Gathering



From The Jumpmaster

By Dick O'Donnell

The 508th web site continues to be a popular Internet "LZ" for numerous people within the U.S. and in various European nations as well. You may have noted that the visitation counter has increased by more than 10,000 since our reunion meeting last October.

We are frequently the recipient of e-mail from people seeking additional information about the 508th and its men and it is our privilege to assist them in whatever manner that we can. Most gratifying is the increasing occasions of contacts by family members previously unknown to us. As a result, our newsletter distribution list has swelled to more than 1,300 individuals.

An enclosure to this newsletter details the Association's first annual Reunion that will be held in Birmingham, Alabama in August 2007. We hope that you will take advantage of this event to meet with veterans, families and friends of the 508th.

We are already thinking about future reunions and have nailed down a spot in the Sun City Fiesta to be held in El Paso, Texas in July 2009.

But first, we need to determine where the 2008 reunion will be held and it is not too early to volunteer to host the 2008 reunion in your home city. †

Diablo Editor
336 S. Pearson Lane
Keller, TX 76034

Phone: (817) 337-7492

E-mail: Editor@508PIR.org

From The Crewmember

By Leland Burns - editor

I continue to meet new wonderful people with ties to the 508th. And now I have three more favorites on my ever growing list of airborne heroes. The saga of 1st Lt. Roy Murray's team came to my light recently when I was able to meet his daughter Pam in Augusta this past fall.

D-day+2 on Hill 30 Colonel Shanley was in dire need for blood plasma. Captain Adams of the 1st Battaalion with 50 to 70 men, holding ground south of the hill and boxed in near the river, had 12 units.

There were several guys who volunteered but Captain Adams selected Roy Murray of the 3rd Battalion to lead the team. Two men were chosen to go with him. They were Corporal James Green, also from the 3rd, and PFC Frank Circelli of 1st Battalion.

At dark the three volunteers had the plasma strapped down and headed off through a flooded area. Slipping past the first Germans was easy (by comparison) and the team of three made progress by moving up through the flood waters. Then when trying to leave the river and move into the orchard around Hill 30 they came under heavy enemy fire. They withdrew with thoughts of moving left and trying again. Jerries however must have seen them reenter the swampy area and moved in.

Moving forward again they found a small hole and managed to get close enough to see an American outpost on Hill 30. Progress form here however was impeded. Attempts to move up

further exposed them to open fire. Making matters worse the German fire had the American outpost on edge and they started firing in that direction at anything that moved. Even a "run for it" approach was out of the question.

Holding tight to the current position wasn't an option either. By now German and American riflemen were firing at each other and the plasma team was in the middle. They started to withdraw on the run and while looking for some opening somewhere Lieutenant Roy Murray was shot dead. Seconds later Frank Circelli was hit several times in the arm and then took devastating shots into his lower jaw and neck. He and James Green both reached the river but had become separated.

Green was seen by a German and had a potato masher tossed at him. It exploded in the water beside him and knocked him into a concussion. Dazed and no longer able to realize his whereabouts he managed to move out of the river and into a thicket. It took several days to recover his senses.

Circelli managed to find his way back to Captain Adams and although talking was difficult shared that his lieutenant had been killed. Ken "Rock" Merritt recalls that Circelli looked like walking death. A few days later Circelli was surprising more than a few by staying alive. Rock Merritt went to see him and Circelli asked, "When the hell are we getting out of here?"

Rock wanted to offer his friend some encouraging words and looked away to think of some. He saw it just as he heard it. In the distance an American tank came up the road bearing the

markings of the Texas-Oklahoma Division.

“Right now Frank, we’re getting out now.” ➔

MAIL BOX

Dick,

Could you please add these updates about Wollaton Park to the DIABLO?

I had a meeting with the Wollaton Park management team on January 7, 2007. I have now handed over half of my collection with the other half to follow on Easter. Wollaton Park was extremely excited and grateful. They expressed thanks to the 508th P.I.R. for their kindly contributions.

I would like to thank the following people for their inspiration in helping me to re-develop the 508th Museum at Wollaton Park: Walter & Gloria Barrett, Tom & Molly Porcella, Ellen Peters, Dave & Sharon Pike.

My good friends Jimmy Wynne will be staying with Linda and me for 2 weeks in June. Hopefully he will be the first WWII Paratrooper to see the museum’s new look.

Once again – thanks – and I hope to see each of you soon.

Graham Lawson

Ellen,

Colonel MacNeil invited me to be the guest of honor at Fort Dix, New Jersey. They have this dinner once a year for non-commission officers and high ranking officers. They drink a toast to all the wars we were in. At the head table were full colonels and generals and little ol’ me – a private. To me it was an honor to be there.

Col. MacNeil arranged the parachute drop in Normandy every year. His first trip to Normandy was in 1984. I have been visiting Normandy since 1969 and along the way I met the colonel. Every year in Normandy the colonel wanted me to speak to the troops about the battle of Normandy. They have an enormous amount of respect for Normandy vets. Some times I feel like I’m on “show and tell”. The young

troopers are in awe to meet a Normandy vet.

They presented me with a photo of “The Human Liberty Bell” - 25000 officers and men at Camp Dix, New Jersey.

They were dressed as soldiers in the uniform of 1918. The gift was from the soldiers and civilians of Fort Dix.

Tom Porcella

Thomasmlb@aol.com

(editors note: Liz Farrell forwarded some photos around of Tom Porcella being honored at Fort Dix. This letter to Ellen Peters was an explanation of the photos.)

Jumpmaster 508 PIR

I am most grateful for you continuing to maintain the Diablo publication. I was a latecomer to the 508, joining in England just before the Holland jump. In fact the day we were to start jumping we instead watched the C47’s fly to Holland. I finally caught up with the regiment in Belgium when the Nottingham base camp was closed and everyone went to the Bulge.

As I read some of the recollections in the Aug. issue I thought I could supply a few dates and events. We arrived back at Sisson from Belgium the end of Feb. ’45. I was in the Service Co. Motor Pool, and was assigned to drive for Major Medusky. The tragic training jump, which I didn’t make as I had just finished jump school in Sept., was in March while we were in Sisson. A plane lost an engine (or prop.) and nosed down through the stick that had just jumped from the plane in front. I don’t know if Marlene Dietrich was watching that jump, I do know she was there about that time, I have a picture of she and her friend standing with me in the chow line, and she did stay for lunch with us.

On April 4th we went to the Airports for the proposed jump on the POW time was on May 7th. One of my duties as Maj. Meduskys’ driver was to pick up the daily regimental messages from the teletype office at the airport headquarters. On May 7th the men I was friendly with at the office showed me a copy of the official message announcing the signing in Rheims of the German surrender at 02:41. I returned to our camp and told everyone the news. THE WAR WAS OVER, AND NO ONE BELIEVED ME! It was while

we were still in Chartres that the announcement of our appointment as Eisenhowers’ Honor Guard was made.

Some of us who were eligible to return by the end of ’45 were transferred to the 101st, which was to return, possibly for the Victory Parade. As we know the plans changed and we were reassigned to the 82nd (the 504), to return and participate in the New York parade. What a reception, the cab drivers wouldn’t take our money!

As I said at the start, I was a late comer, and being assigned to the motor pool didn’t get to know and be close to a lot of the guys, but obviously I’m proud to have been, and be a part of the 508 family. Thanks for the memories.

Marv Silver

Service Co., 508 PIR

Sept. ’44 to Jan. ’46

1742 Ridge Point Loop

Santa Fe, NM 87506

Phone # 505-820-9949

Fax # 505-988-7330

Dear Sir!!!

I was away from home for a week and found the November Diablo Newsletter in my computer!! I appreciate your consideration greatly and thank you for your kind intention sending it to me! I am sorry I was unable to make the Augusta reunion but will try to make it next year!!! It was an honor and a big privilege to escort Pam Murray on her father's footsteps in Normandy and to meet my close pal Ernie and Charlene Lamson in St Paul last month. Proud to be part of the 508 family, the very best to you from Normandy.

Bobby

Bobby.feuillye@wanadoo.fr ➔

Incorporation Info

The “Family and Friends of The 508th PIR Association” is incorporated as a 501(c)7 corporation in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

William Mone, Attorney

Ropes & Gray, LLC. ➔

Newsletter Distribution

All Family and Friends on file receive the newsletter regardless of membership status. Postage for each quarterly newsletter edition is approximately \$500 and that doesn't include the cost of printing the items to be mailed. Membership is free, donations are welcome.

Use of e-mail is an effective cost cutting mechanism. The newsletter can be attached in either Microsoft's Word or Adobe's PDF formats – or both.

If you prefer to receive The Diablo via e-mail please drop a line to jumpmaster@508PIR.org.

Hard copies will continue to be delivered to physical addresses as long as they remain active. If you are reading this by way of email – Thank you.

Condolences

Longiotti, Leona

Leona, formerly of Meadville, PA., wife of Frank Longiotti, Co. C, died December 3rd 2006.



Born May 1, 1925, in Blair, Ohio, she was a daughter of Carl Horn and Mabel Bussard Horn. On July 2, 1949, she married Frank Longiotti. She had been employed at Meadville Laundry, Keystone View, Viscose Talon, GTI and DIC Tool. She was of the Lutheran faith and served as a volunteer at Crawford County Care Center and a member of its auxiliary. She was also a candy striper for Meadville Hospital during World War II. She enjoyed bingo, garage sales and bowling. In

addition to her husband of 57 years, survivors include two sons, three grandchildren, three great-grandchildren; and lots of nieces and nephews.

Robinson

Philip "Robbie" Robinson would like it to be reported that his wife passed away on 02/07/99. She was from Heidelberg, Germany. The two were married 45 years.

Searching For ...

Sgt Jack M Chambers

Dear Sirs,

My wife was a cousin to Sgt. Jack M. Chambers, 508 Parachute INF, 82 Airborne Division, WW II, born 28 May 1922 WV, d. 5 July 1944. Buried: Rece Cemetery, Milton, WV. Does anyone know how he died?

Thank you,

Prentice D. Eubanks

email; prentice.eubanks@sbcglobal.net

Steve Mauro

Trying to find any information on my uncle, Steve Mauro, from Rochester, NY. who was in the 508 in WW II. I know he received a silver star in Normandy and was involved in Market Garden where he briefly spoke with his brother (my father) over a field phone. My father, Lt. Carl Mauro, was in Co. E, 504. I hope to learn which company of the 508th he was in so I can obtain after-action reports

From: Carl Mauro Jr.

carl.square1@verizon.net

PFC Troy Mitchell

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

I am the nephew of Troy Mitchell, 508th Par. Unfortunately, I have very little history on my uncle, other than he was involved in the initial jump into Normandy. It appears by his V-Mail that he was wounded during the initial operation. I do not know if he continued with the 508th after his recovery. As a young child, I remember the rest of the family talked of him being an alcoholic and "not right" after his return. He died, with the family feeling he was an

embarrassment and social outcast. He now lies in an unmarked grave.

I did not ever feel that way. He was always kind to me, and did mention that he was wounded in action in Europe. He died before I reached the age of understanding. I know now that he saw action and suffered body and mental injuries. Back then, we just did not care for our men with such disorders.

I am now trying to find out anything I can to restore his dignity and to tell the true story to the remaining family members. The only thing I have is his V-Mails (4). I've looked on the 508th sight but never found a picture or name. Do you have any suggestions on how to proceed with this research.

Honor and Respect, Britt Mitchell
guitarpilot@hotmail.com

Pvt. Raul L. Ortega

Hello, my great-uncle was Pvt. Raul L. Ortega, Co. E, 508th PIR, killed in action during Market Garden near Bommel, Holland on 11/8/44. Raul was a replacement after D-Day, joining the 508th in England. I'm asking if anyone knew my uncle, it would be very appreciated that you contact us at f9f9@aol.com. Thank you very much.

Joe Aguirre

f9f9@aol.com

Tony Pacheco

(Letter from Canon City Colorado.)

I would like to hear from anyone in E Co. who knew Tony Pacheco. Tony jumped in Normandy and Holland and was wounded in the Bulge.

Charles Garcia

garcia3947@aol.com

2nd LT William S. Scudder

Dear Sirs:

It has taken me over 42 years to write this letter to you. You see, the man listed above, 2nd Lt. William S. Scudder, killed in action, Normandy, France, July 3rd, 1944 is my grandfather. My grandmother was pregnant with my father when she received the news that her husband had been killed. Unfortunately, my father never had the

chance to meet his father, and all my family has is a few newspaper clippings, his Purple Heart and precious few other mementos to recall the life of a husband and father and for me a grandfather I never knew. The obituary tells the story that his company came under enemy fire and retreated to a safer location, then, under the cover of darkness, my grandfather organized a group of volunteers to return to the field of battle and recover the dead and wounded. The story goes on to say that during this rescue and recovery mission that my grandfather was killed by sniper fire.

Every kid wants to grow up thinking that their relative who died in combat was a hero, but after 42 years of my life I just want to know what happened to the man who is my father's father. Any assistance you could provide would be gratefully appreciated.

Sincerely,
William Blaine Scudder, Jr.
Knight2King3@aol.com

PFC Harold Francis Taylor



The Diablo
336 S. Pearson Lane
Keller, TX 76034

I'm looking for information that is related to paratrooper Harold Francis Taylor, 508th. He died on 19th Sept. 1944, Market Garden, Wylterbaan at Groesbeek, buried at Margraten, The Netherlands. We found his signed coffee cup.

Paul Geutjes
Please contact me at
paulgeutjes@hotmail.com.

PFC Julius Veriest

Dear Sirs,

I am doing research on my father, PFC Julius Verniest. I came across your website from a Google search and learned my father served in the 508th and earned numerous medals including the Purple Heart and Combat Infantry badge. Unfortunately, my father is now deceased and has been since 1986. Since then I graduated from SJSU in 1990 and earned a Commission in the US Navy and am now a CDR serving in VP-30, the P-3 Fleet Replacement Squadron. Your website has helped me learn more about my father's military service than he ever talked about when I was a child growing up and for that, I thank you. Father did jump in Normandy,

but that's about all he disclosed as I was growing up. I later learned from one of my Uncles, he made the march from France, all the way into Germany and was shot. Any additional info you could provide or anyone of your unit members who may have known my father would be appreciated. I'd love to hear, as we say in the Navy, a Sea story or two. Thank you for your service!

V/r,
CDR John W. Verniest
U.S. NAVY
jcverniest@comcast.net

Get Well

Smith, James

A note was sent by Jim Smith explaining he missed the Augusta reunion due to health reasons. He had a Carotid operation and had a pace maker put in and is now doing great. Jim added he does not surf the web and thus it is expected he does not have e-mail. You can write him at –

1403 Valencia Dr.
Fayetteville, NC