

DIABLI



The Link for All Veterans, Spouses, Family and Friends of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association — February, 2011 - Vol. 7, Nr. 1

2012 Reunion

Our 2012 reunion will be held in El Paso, TX. We have been invited by the Roy P. Benavidez – Robert Patterson “All Airborne” Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association to hold our reunion in conjunction with their SUN CITY “ALL AIRBORNE” FIESTA VI. The Benevidex – Patterson Chapter holds a Fiesta every three years. Those of you who attended the 2009 508th Reunion will remember what a wonderful time we all had. They entertained us with various dancers from all the different areas of Mexico and had multiple activities for us to sign up for including a tour of the various area missions, a visit to Ft. Bliss, a visit to a local casino, and various other activities.

A registration form is included in this newsletter.

The 505th RCT Veterans Association and Family and Friends of the 505th RCT Association will be joining us again in 2012.

I look forward to seeing everyone there.

Don Jakeway Reunited with Man He Helped Save 68 Years Ago

On September 21, 1944, Sgt. Don “Jake” Jakeway of H Co. was leading a patrol in the den Huevel Woods in the Netherlands. The fighting was house to house. Two of the soldiers went to a house to get a blanket for a seriously wounded lieutenant. As they approached the house, they heard a teenage girl shouting “save our souls”. The girl was Rose Jakobs.

The Jakobs family were German Jews who spent twenty-five months hiding in a secret room the size of a two car garage. The family of six fled Germany when the persecution of Jews began. They went to the Netherlands where Mrs. Jakobs had family. When Jews in the Netherlands were being rounded up for transport to the concentration camps, Mr. Jakobs paid a Dutch farmer to hide the family. The room they hid in was located behind a haystack in the barn. For 25 months, the family slept on straw and ate the same thing every day. “We entered by a ladder to the haystack; then we climbed over the haystack and down through a trap door into the room,” Jakobs said. “We had oatmeal and water for breakfast and potatoes and onions for lunch and dinner. We had a basin and rag for

washing. No soap, no toothbrush, no toilet paper (we had newspaper) and no change of clothes.”



Photo by Doug Barber

On February 2, Rose's brother, Bert, who was ten years old at the time of his liberation, was reunited with Jake in Johnstown, Ohio thanks to the efforts of local business man and friend of Jake's, Mark Easton. The two men met for the first time at Port Columbus International Airport. It was an emotional reunion. They were overcome with happiness, Jake said. “To have met this man after all this time, you can't imagine the emotion I have in my heart,” he said. “I look at Don as my long lost friend and brother,” Bert said. “For me, it's a wonderful experience to be with him.”

The two men spent several days speaking at area schools delivering the message that freedom is not free, and that you can survive the toughest of times. As Jakobs said, “We must learn to forgive and respect each other for our differences.”

Bert relayed the story to the students of how on Sept 17, 1944, he looked out his window and saw American paratroopers jumping out of planes. As he watched the soldiers float to the ground, the 10-year old was filled with hope. After 25 months in hiding, his family might finally be safe from the Nazis. “First we saw the allied planes and then the black dots filling the sky. These were our liberators. There were more Germans than Americans, but the Americans fought like lions; each one was worth 10 Germans,” said Bert. The family hid in the cellar for the next few days while bombs exploded all around them.

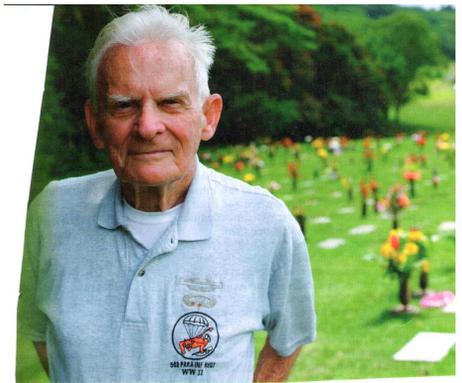
Four days later, the patrol led by Jake liberated the Jakobs family when 17 year old Rose Jakobs peered through a hole in the wall and spied two American soldiers with a stretcher. “Certain things in your life stay with you,” Bert told the students. “And Don and his men gave us back our freedom.”

“I was only a part of the patrol that moved through the area and helped get the family out and to a safe house in Berg en Dahl,” Jake said. But Bert said it was Jakeway leading the patrol that cleared the road and got them to safety. Sadly, Bert's older sister, Edith, was killed two weeks later by a German bomb as she volunteered at an American aid station.

In the 1980's a Dutch friend put Jake in touch with Edith, Bert's sister who was living in Israel. Edith had not forgotten Jakeway's name or what he and his men had done for her family. The two corresponded from 1986 until Edith's death last year. Bert knew his sister had corresponded with Jake, but the two had never met. He was shocked when he received a telephone call from Mark Easton inviting him to come to Ohio in honor of Jake's 89th birthday.

Editor's Note: The above was compiled from stories that appeared in The Columbus Dispatch, the Newark Advocate, NBC4.com, and This Week Community Newspaper. Special thanks to Mark Easton for relaying this wonderful story to me.

Zane Schlemmer Recognized by the American Legion Magazine



Zane Schlemmer of Hq Co, 2nd Btn, was recognized in the February issue of The American Legion Magazine for his volunteer work at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery on the island of Oahu. Zane is a staff volunteer at the cemetery's office and assists visitors in locating the graves of relatives, hands out information on burial eligibility, and answers telephone calls.

Drafted in 1942, Zane volunteered for the paratroops and made both combat jumps with the 508th and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Tech. Sgt. Schlemmer was an advanced observer for an 81

mm mortar squad in Normandy when he was seriously wounded by friendly fire on July 3, 1944. He was also wounded in Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge.

After the war, Zane returned home where he completed his college education. Receiving his degree, he obtained a job with a large company in finance. He stayed in the Army Reserve, but was certain his active duty days were over. To his shock and dismay, he was called back to active duty during the Korean War. With a wife and growing family, being recalled was a major disruption to his family and career. At the time he was comptroller for a Motorola unit that made electronic components for the nuclear weapons testing program. He spent the next year stateside serving in an ordnance division and was not happy about the detour his life had taken.

"I was so bitter by that time for being recalled that I wanted absolutely nothing to do with the military," Schlemmer recall. "I mean I was bitter about it for 30 years. And then I realized, 'hell, it's history, there's nothing I can do about it.'"

That's about when the 30th anniversary of D-Day was approaching in 1974, and he decided to return to Normandy. He found the apple orchard where he landed. He met several French villagers who were there when the 508th liberated the town of Picauville. They welcomed him with open arms and took him into their homes.

"Going back was the release for me," Schlemmer says. In the process, he felt a new sense of pride for what he and his fellow soldiers accomplished in 1944. That trip marked the beginning of a strong bond between Schlemmer and the people of Picauville, and with himself and his memories of service to his country.

Picauville has responded in kind. In 1977, residents placed a marker near the apple orchard where he landed, and renamed a street Rue Zane Schlemmer. Pierre Cotelte, a Picauville farmer, calls his collection of World War II memorabilia Museum Zane Schlemmer. And in 2009, Schlemmer received the Legion of Honor with the rank of chevalier from French President Nicolas Sarkozy for his role in liberating France. On that trip to Normandy, President Obama mentioned him by name in his remarks, and Schlemmer traveled by train to the battlefields with other D-Day veterans. They were accompanied by VA Secretary Eric Shinseki, a retired four-star general who formerly served as U.S Army chief of staff.

As important as his war experience was, Schlemmer's service to his country in more recent years could be considered just as important.

He and his late wife moved to Hawaii in the early 1970s. He became vice-president of a real-estate development company that boomed and then busted. In the process, he lost his home.

Schlemmer's business failure is a reminder that the greatest generation became great because it dealt with adversity with courage and conviction. In his case, in the postwar years, he not only lost his business and home, but two wives and a daughter. Any of these tragedies could have broken a lesser man. In Schlemmer's case, he looks back on his life and is grateful for all he's had. "I'm blessed," he says. "I'm truly blessed."

He began volunteering for military-related agencies in 2002, as a VA volunteer at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, on the opposite side of Oahu from his home. When that drive became more costly in 2008 as gasoline prices soared, he began volunteering closer to his home, at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery only a few minutes away by car. He puts in a full day, five days a week, working with the Cemetery Operations Manager Willie Hirokane and Cemetery Operations Assistant Margaret Okabayashi.

At a time when the state of Hawaii is dealing with drastic budget cuts, and for about a year put most workers on regular furlough, Schlemmer's full-time volunteer work is all the more valuable to the state's veterans community. He figures he's logged about 5,000 hours for the VA and cemetery, with more to come.

"I plan to work here as long as I can," he says. *The original article by Floyd K. Takenuchi appeared in the February issue of the American Legion Magazine.*

Diablo Editor
3630 Townsend Dr.
Dallas, TX 75229-3805
Phone: (214) 632-1360
E-mail: Editor@508PIR.org

Final Jumps

Calhoun, John
Condolences may be sent to the Calhoun family at 5102 S. Columbia Ave.; Tulsa, OK 74105-6621.

Gruic, George
Condolences may be sent to the Gruic family at 579 Koerber; Akron, OH 44314-1767

Maines, Boyd
Condolences may be sent to the Maines family at RT 6 Box 627A; Lenoir, NC

Matalavage, Alfred
Condolences may be sent to the Matalavage family at 2317 Fraser St.; Bay City, MI 48706-8633

Condolences



Tom Porcella, Jr.
Thomas W. Porcella, Jr., of Melbourne FL, passed away on February 8, 2012, after a long illness.

He is survived by his mother, Mary Porcella, and four siblings, James and Leslie Porcella of Chesapeake, VA, John

Porcella of Mount Kisco NY, Christine Fleming of Minneapolis, MN and his twin sister Mary Lucere of Massapequa, NY. He is preceded in death by his father, Thomas W. Porcella, Sr.

Thomas was a man of great spirit. He grew up on Long Island, NY, where as a youngster he rode his bicycle great distances to visit relatives and the eastern beaches of Long Island. He especially loved visiting the green rolling hills and blue waters of the North Shore. He loved fast cars, motorcycles, and Pink Floyd. Thomas had a great respect and admiration for his Italian heritage and was a patriotic American. He could fix anything electrical or mechanical, and was often asked to repair what others thought impossible to fix.

In his declining months, Thomas was most grateful to his mother for her tireless loving care and support. The family wishes to thank the many doctors and nurses at Holmes Regional Hospital, too numerous to mention by name, but especially Dori at Carnegie Gardens, and his home nurse, Liz, who cared for him, and our whole family, with great patience and compassion. He found his final peace at William Childs Hospice House, a place of great comfort and solace to him and his loved ones. We wish to thank all their staff for the great dignity they offered us.

Donations may be made in Thomas' name to Daily Bread Inc. of Melbourne, 815 E. Fee Ave., Melbourne FL 32901.

A memorial gathering will be held at Beach Funeral Homes - West, Melbourne/Suntree, from 6-8pm with a memorial service to begin at 7pm on Friday, February 10, 2012.

Memories of Thomas may be shared on his memorial page at www.beachfuneralhome.com

Condolences may be sent to the Porcella family at 1696 PGA Blvd.; Melbourne, FL 32935-4452

Searching For Info.....

I am doing research on Lt. Col. Mayo S. Silvey. We have his dress jacket and want to use it in our exhibitions. I am in contact with his relatives, but they don't know much either.

What I do know is that Mayo Silvey ended the war as the Ordnance officer of the 82nd. Do you happen to know any veterans of HQ/82nd or the 782nd Co. who I may contact for information?

Thank you,
Frits Janssen
frits.janssen@planet.nl

I have seen a message on a military forum about a dog tag found in Normandy. The guy put the name and his ASN and....BINGO.....I can't tell if it's an original or a copy, but the name is Donald C. Misslitz ASN 37600523 - 508th PIR. On your website the spelling is MISELITZ.

This soldier did not die during the war and there is no information that he died after the war. Does somebody know this man??

Dominique Portier
paracsm@hotmail.com

Checking In

My dear friends,

Just a note to let you know that I am finally back in my own home again as of this weekend after spending 2 1/2 months between the hospital, rehab for physical therapy and my daughter's home with more therapy. I am still moving pretty slowly but getting stronger every day. My surgeon told me it would probably take 5 or 6 months before I would feel like new again but I think I will do that much sooner than he predicts.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to all of you who called me, sent e-mail get-well messages and also many beautiful get-well cards by snail mail. I treasure every one of those messages as well as those who sent them.

I make my next visit with my surgeon next week and hopefully he will allow me to drive again. You all know that I do not like to be confined and want to get moving again.

When I turned on my computer this morning (last time was the morning of November 20) I found over 2200 e-mails so there really is no way I am going to be able to read all of them and write answers so I will just say many thanks to all of you who sent e-mails to me.

I love you all.

Jan (Silver)

Dear Ellen,

I am still trying to get to one of the reunions, but I have been spending the summers in California and don't get back home in time to get with the group. Maybe this year.

Ray Mead

(Editor's Note: Ray, the 2012 reunion will be in El Paso this year. Hope to see you there.)

Dear Ellen,

You are a busy girl with the time and energy you give to keep a long time group's memories alive. I read your Diablo cover to cover. Sometimes with tears.

Thank you for a job well done. May you and yours have a wonderful 2012 and much more.

Sincerely,
Robert B. Newhart
4436 S. 12th St.
Terre Haute, IN 47802
(812) 299-3223

(Robert - thank you for your kind words, but there are others who do much more than I.)

Diablo Editor,

I have been reading of the reunion of the 505th and 508th and wish I could have been there. I think it was a great undertaking for Ellen Peters who I know from years past with my late husband - Tom Porcella. They were great friends! We attended many years. He is interred at the National Cemetery at Bushell (NW Fla). Please keep my name on your mailing list!

Thank you,

Mary (Molly) Porcella

(Editor's Note: Our deepest condolences on your recent loss.)

I think often of 508 PIR and D Co. - with pride.
Mrs. L.C. Tomlinson

Dear MGR,

Let's be fair and have a meeting on or near the west coast.

Robbie Robinson

Mail Box

I took part in the last jump the 508th made near Frankfurt, Germany, 1946. I jumped out of the airplane and the first thing I remember is that I was flat on my back in the middle of another parachute. I looked up to see no parachute above me. I heard the guy below me, "You S.O.B., get off my chute!" I got up to walk to the edge of the other person's parachute, it wasn't easy walking as the chute went down on each step. As I reached almost

to the edge my feet went through the cords of the other chute. Boy, did I drop fast past the other guy! Then I got pulled back up when my chute opened part way. I had been too close to the ground for I heard someone yell, "Hang on!" Then I heard someone ask, "Are you hurt?" After that I don't remember too much. I don't think the other guy was hurt or that he picked up his chute since they were so tangled up together. It is most likely that I can't find the other paratrooper now, but I would like to.

I wonder if anyone ever wrote a book on these things. I am sure that this would have happened to others and I hope they turned out as well as mine. I would appreciate it very much if I heard from you. I will give you my phone number [608-754-9105] but I don't hear the best on the phone.

Yours Truly,

Harry Hauri
6306 W. Lowry Rd.
Janesville, WI 53548-9254

[Note: if you know of similar experiences, or just want to get in touch with Harry, please do so. Writing may be the better choice rather than using the telephone, however.]

During the Normandy jump on June 6, 1944, my husband (who is now 88 and still remembers), Lawrence, came down somewhere in Normandy. The plane he jumped from was at 2,300 ft and going up when he jumped. He was completely lost. He joined up with 5 or 6 other troopers - some from the 101st, and they began walking to find out where. They were approached by a young woman who spoke very good English with two older people who spoke only French. They were advised they were trapped and told the young woman and the old couple and were led to an old stone house large with a huge hay stack in the yard. One of the troopers was wounded. No names were exchanged. They were kept in the basement until guided by the young woman. They were brought to a railroad track and told to follow it north. Ultimately, they were united with their unit near Chef du Pont. For years we have been trying to find if any of those troopers can be identified or if they are alive. The maps we have seen show an area around Carquebut, but Lawrence believes he was about 15 miles from his DZ, perhaps more. In 1994, we tried to locate the farm or something we could identify. We couldn't. Could you use your resources to see if we can locate some information? The incident was interesting enough that some of the others involved would have commented.

Shirley Jeffers
sjeffersloki@windstream.net

Call to Duty

The Nominating Committee is presently in the process of considering nominees for office during the next year (2013). Members of the F&F 508 are urged to make confidential recommendations for nominations to members of the Committee. Officers to be considered are: President, vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Members of the nomination Committee are:

Bob Spears: bosprs@aol.com;
Ph: 565-575-3011

Bob Chisolm: rchisolm01@elp.rr.com;
Ph: 575-874-1004

Rock Merritt, rock508pir@nc.rr.com;
Ph: 910-425-5818

Gene Garren: Genegarren@aol.com;
Ph: 828-682-6650

Luis Gutierrez: lgutierrez@nc.rr.com;
Ph: 910-423-5056

Notices

Copies of the Third Anniversary book are for sale. They are excellent quality, spiral bound

reproductions. Price is \$15.00 plus \$5.00 shipping for a total of \$20.00. Books can be ordered from the website: www.508pir.org or direct from Dick O'Donnell at: (321) 727-1170; 760 Conestee Rd.; West Melbourne, FL 32904-1812. Email: Jumpmaster@508pir.org

Phil Nordyke, author of multiple military books, is now focusing on the development of a new work exclusively about the 508th PIR - its history and its men in WWII. Phil wants to include as many of the men as possible and welcomes input from all veterans and their family. He plans to have the final work published in a year or less so time is of the essence!

Nordyke invites you to contact him via e-mail at philnordyke@tx.rr.com - If e-mail is not available to you, call him at (972) 562-2677 between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. (EST). He cautions that the submission of materials should be copies only as the loss of irreplaceable originals in the mail would be tragic to all parties.

So, dig into the musty old shoeboxes or trunks and get out your documents and photos, send an e-mail to Phil and help preserve the memory of the 508th and its achievements

The 505th's Panther newsletter is available at www.505rct.org.

Call for Dues!

Dues for the new fiscal year of Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Assn. were due beginning **November 1**.

Dues are \$10.00 per year per household. Multiple years may be paid if desired and donations are gratefully accepted. **Please send dues to:**

F&F508PIR Assn.
3630 Townsend Dr.
Dallas, TX 75229-3805

Changes of Address

Please forward change of email addresses to treasurer@508PIR.org and change of postal addresses to Ellen Peters; 3630 Townsend Dr.; Dallas, TX 75229-3805



The Diablo

3630 Townsend Dr.
Dallas, TX 75229-3805