

DIABLO

The Link for All Veterans, Spouses, Family and Friends of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment
Published by *Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association* – June 2016

10th Anniversary Reunion

Join us for the 10th Anniversary Reunion of our *Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association*. The Reunion will take place in historic Charleston, SC from November 2 – 6, 2016.

The Board has set ambitious attendance goals for additional WWII participants, 508th Veterans from other generations, Active Duty 508th paratroopers from Ft. Bragg and, of course, Family and Friends, including our overseas members and supporters.

Communication and outreach efforts are underway. Any Veteran, family member, or friend of the 508th who needs special logistical or financial arrangements should contact the Reunion Committee, c/o Donna Palmer – donnapalmer1206@aol.com or (706) 284-3602.

Tentative Schedule of Events

Wednesday, Nov 2

- Arrival/Registration. C.P. will be open!
- “Optional” Harbor Dinner Cruise (additional \$56)

Thursday, Nov 3

- Welcoming Breakfast
- Patriots Point/Yorktown Tour – Visit to Medal Of Honor Museum aboard the Yorktown.
- Lunch – optional (additional fee)
- Fort Sumter Tour – Citadel Professor, Kyle Sinisi

Friday, Nov 4

- Citadel Cadet Tour (afternoon)
- Citadel Twilight Parade

Saturday, Nov 5

- Free Day – Reunion Committee organizing elective excursions (additional fee) that may include:
 - Hunley Museum
 - Historic Downtown Charleston
 - Tangers Outlet Mall
- Banquet

Your Association Needs YOU!

The Association’s Board of Directors is actively seeking Member volunteers to serve on various committees. As we expand membership and increase activities surrounding the Association’s mission to document and disseminate the history of all generations of 508th Paratroopers, having broader participation will help divide up committee work and generate fresh ideas.

Current Committees and their Chairpersons are shown below. Other committees are anticipated once we achieve momentum with these. Committee participation is a great way to actively support the Association.

Anyone interested in participating should immediately contact Chris Harris at +1 310 729 2745 or harris.chris.j@att.net. Chris will coordinate assignments to ensure balanced staffing of the various committees.

For more information on Committee charters and responsibilities, please visit the Association website at www.508PIR.org and click on the “Key Association Information” Logo.

The Board and Committee Chairpersons welcome new volunteers and express gratitude in advance to everyone who contributes time, energy and ideas to the Association.

COMMITTEE

Diablo
Reunion
Finance
Constitution & Bylaws
Awards

CHAIRPERSON

Troy Palmer
Donna Palmer
Chris Harris
Rock Merritt
Troy Palmer →

REGIMENTAL HISTORY

Reprinted May 22, 2016 *Fayetteville Observer* Article

508th Parachute Infantry Regiment has Complex History by Drew Brooks

All American Week is part reunion, part homecoming.

It brings veterans of all 82nd Airborne units, past and present, together for a week-long celebration of paratroopers.

For some of those veterans, however, their old units no longer exist. Or they have been folded into other commands.

Then there's the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, which has a complex history in and out of the 82nd Airborne, to say the least.

Formed as part of the build-up of the division during World War II, the 508th served in the division through Vietnam and Grenada.

But after those conflicts, the regiment's name and history made a tour of sorts with the Army around the globe.

The regiment became part of the 193rd Infantry Brigade in Panama and then part of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Italy.

That's where it served until 2006, when the unit's 1st and 2nd battalions were reflagged at Fort Bragg as part of the activation of the 4th Brigade Combat Team.

That brigade was short lived, lasting less than a decade, but it made a huge impact, earning the nickname "Deployment Brigade" for its near constant missions to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Today, the regiment is split between the 2nd and 3rd Brigade Combat Teams in the 82nd Airborne.

But a growing group of veterans like Chris Harris is doing all it can to keep the history together.

Harris is part of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association, a relatively young veterans group celebrating its 10th anniversary later this year.

Harris said many of the association's members will be on hand for All American Week.

And their visit is more than just a walk down memory lane.

Harris said the association, which strives to preserve, honor and educate others on the regiment's history, is working to ensure all fallen 508th paratroopers are included on battalion memorials on Fort Bragg.

Meanwhile, he said the group was growing, up to about 550 members, and gathering a mix of veterans and active duty.

Harris said he hopes All American Week can be a stepping stone to more growth and a successful reunion later this year in Charleston, South Carolina.

For more information on the group or the upcoming reunion, go to 508pir.org.

Military editor Drew Brooks can be reached at brooksd@fayobserver.com or 486-3567. →

Association Launches Lifetime Member Program

*Supports Expanding Membership &
Additional Educational Initiatives*

In March, the Association’s Board of Directors enthusiastically approved important changes to the Membership dues structure.

Effective immediately, the Association has launched a Lifetime Member Program. This allows Members

to support and fund the Association's mission and activities with a more substantial up-front contribution. This special support is most welcomed and appreciated as the Association invests in expanding overall Membership and commits more resources to documenting and disseminating historical information surrounding the stories and achievements of generations of 508th Paratroopers.

The Lifetime Member Program includes three tiers as follows:

Sustaining Member	\$350
Patron	\$250
Supporter	\$150

Lifetime Members will be specially recognized, by category, on a separate Website page, in the *DLABLO* newsletter, and at special events such as Reunions.

If anyone has already paid annual dues and wants to upgrade, one only needs to remit the difference to what has been paid this year versus the amount of that Lifetime Membership Tier.

Meanwhile, the Board also approved increasing Annual Dues to \$20 per year (up from the current \$10 that has been in place for over ten years). Members who are currently late on paying their annual dues will be allowed to pay the old annual amount of \$10 through 30 June 2016—thereafter, annual Dues for 2016 will be \$20.

In advance, the Association thanks all those existing and new Members who will participate in the Lifetime Member Program. We are excited about the Association's future and we thank you for your leadership in funding key initiatives.

For more information on Association Membership and Dues Payments, please visit the Association website at www.508PIR.org and click on the "Key Association Information" Logo. If anyone has more specific questions surrounding Membership opportunities and payment of Lifetime or Annual Dues, please contact Ellen Peters-Treasurer, at Treasurer@508PIR.org or (214) 632-1360. ➔

Lifetime Member Update

Dick O'Donnell is the first Sustaining Member of the Association. Thanks for your leadership! ➔

Final Jumps

Richard DeVries of B Co. passed away January 6, 2016. Richard served in both WWII and Korea. He retired a Sergeant Major. Condolences can be sent to his family at:

3 Sumner Dr.
W. Stroudsborg, PA 18302-8972 ➔

OPERATION LONGHORN

The following article, written by Staff Writer Dave Love, is a reprint from the October 26, 2010 edition of the Lampasas Dispatch Record, now in its 111th year, and published semi-weekly by Hill Country Publishing Co. Inc., Lampasas, Texas.

Soldier Recalls 'Invasion' of Lampasas County

In the spring of 1952, as Cold War tensions heightened, Lampasas Countians' worst fears seemingly materialized, as "enemy troops" stormed the area, "captured" Lampasas and declared martial law.

The U.S. military simulation, dubbed "Operation Longhorn," was just a test, but paratrooper Tom Hershey and about 115,000 other soldiers made sure the several-week exercise felt as realistic—and as sobering—as possible.

En route to Roswell, NM last week, Hershey visited the county he last saw as a 19-year-old serving in the 82nd Airborne Division during Operation Longhorn.



One of the largest peacetime military exercises ever implemented in the United States, Operation Longhorn took place in March and April 1952, and cost an estimated

\$3.3 million, according to the Lampasas County Historical Commission book "Lampasas County: Its History and Its People."

The operation featured the dropping of about 2,500 paratroopers, as well as staged "battles" between the "Aggressor Force"—led by troops from the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg, NC—and U.S. forces represented by several Army divisions from Fort Hood.

Participants also simulated an enemy takeover of Lampasas, complete with mock arrests of city officials and a mock suspension of religious and political freedoms. As training maneuvers continued, propaganda pamphlets encouraged Lampasas Countians to resist the aggressors until U.S. forces achieved victory, which they did near the completion of the exercises.

Hershey, originally of Gaithersburg, Md., did not see Lampasas during Operation Longhorn, as he worked primarily in the Lometa area near the site of the "Aggressor" troop landing. Nearly 20,000 spectators gathered in the western side of the county to watch the landing, according to the Lampasas County history book.

Although some aspects of the operation have faded in Hershey's mind, his jump—which, in hindsight, probably could have been delayed—remains a vivid memory.

About 18 men loaded into each C-47 airplane, Hershey recalled. Carrying radio gear, an M-1 rifle, a full fuel pack and three days' rations, the young soldier checked his parachute and jumped. Soon, though, he looked back and noticed nobody else who had been with him had jumped.

Wind speed had increased to about 15-20 knots—approximately 17-23 miles per hour—Hershey said. Paratroopers normally were not allowed to jump if the wind speed exceeded 8 knots, the former soldier said. As a result, many of Hershey's fellow service members delayed their jumps and landed later.

Those who had jumped encountered their first fight not with U.S. troops but with the weather. Hershey drifted far off his target toward a group of trees and had to climb the risers on his parachute and pull the cords to redirect himself toward a safe landing area in a ranch field. The young soldier hit the ground hard and nearly went airborne again.

"As soon as I stood up the wind inflated my chute and grabbed me," Hershey said.

Recalling his training, he tried to run in circles to let air out of his parachute. After three unsuccessful attempts, though, a gust threw Hershey into a fence.

He was among the fortunate ones. Hershey spied one man on top of a barn, two caught in trees and several with broken legs.

"They were scattered everywhere," he recalled.

A parachute malfunction killed one man, Hershey added. In total, 10 fatalities resulted from Operation Longhorn exercises, according to the county history volume.

During an equipment drop, the parachute holding a Jeep released too early, causing a hard collision for the vehicle, Hershey said.

"It probably bounced 50 feet," he recalled.

After the paratroopers landed, Hershey and many fellow "Aggressor" soldiers camped in tents for several weeks among pastures that had been removed of cattle. They exchanged rations and awaited their next move. Although Hershey did not serve in battle zones during World War II or the Korean War, buddies who had seen combat thought Operation Longhorn simulated the sights, sounds and stresses of battle fairly realistically, Hershey said.

He recalled that during Operation Longhorn his patrol sergeant, who Hershey said later received the Silver Star in connection with his service in Korea, captured 19 men and a tank from U.S. forces.

"I don't know how the heck he did it," Hershey said.

Although he enjoyed his recent return to Lampasas County, Hershey felt no urge to linger when Operation Longhorn ended. Not only had he camped outdoors for several weeks, but the memory of the seven-day ride from Fort Bragg in a covered two-and-a-half-ton Army cargo truck lingered unpleasantly. Packed 32 to a truck, the men of the

82nd Airborne had traveled for eight bumpy hours a day, sleeping in pastures at night, to get to Lampasas County.

When his company commander offered soldiers furlough at the end of the Texas maneuvers, Hershey did not hesitate.

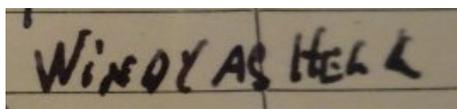
"I said, 'Give me 10 days,'" he recalled. "There was no way I was going to ride back in that truck."

Staying at an RV park, dining at area restaurants and visiting the Operation Longhorn historical marker at Lometa Regional Park, Hershey—now a resident of Homosassa, FL—enjoyed not only a smoother ride but a warmer welcome than the last time he visited Lampasas County. After all, even if only for training purposes, he had been the enemy.

End of Article

PS: Perusing the various articles published on Operation Longhorn, a couple assessments might be made:

- The exercise was as much a U.S. propaganda campaign as a military readiness training given the fake newspaper page and various brochures, flyers, posters and signs that were disseminated.
- Given that 1 paratrooper died and 232 were injured with 196 hospitalized, many questions remain regarding chain-of-command communication effectiveness and the decision to jump under such dangerous wind conditions (see Ray Younes', 519 QM Co 508th ARCT, hand-written jump log notes below).



THE FOURRAGERE

By Col. (Ret.) Keith Nightingale

Every soldier who serves in the 82d Airborne Division wears a fourragere. Very few really know why and even less fully understand. Let me explain.

As a brand new 2d Lieutenant in 1965, I arrived on Gruber Road to join B 2-505 of the 505 PIR. I knew it was a proud unit with a great history—one of the reasons I chose to go Airborne and join the Division. If I was to be Infantry, I wanted to be with the best. One of my first requirements was to visit the Supply Sergeant and get my basic equipment which included two uniform items, a blue infantry cord and the green and red braided fourragere awarded to the Division after Normandy. Both were wrapped in a simple plastic bag by the manufacturer. I dutifully went home and put them both on my Class A Green dress uniform—the fourragere on the left shoulder with the brass tip touching my jacket pocket.

After, I was introduced to the several Platoon Sergeants, all were WW II vets. Two were from the 82d and one was from the Wehrmacht. He joined the 82d when it was in Germany on a rotation. He had similar background compatriots in the Anti-Tank platoon sergeant and the Supply Sergeant—the man that had issued my equipment and was fastidious in filling out the forms and making me sign for the issued material. At the time I thought it how interesting that the previous foes were now all together in the same unit and all engaged in trying to teach me how to be an officer.

I thought nothing of this until the next Saturday when we had our usual half day inspection—everyone in Class A uniforms. I arrived on the company steps in my spit shined jump boots, polished brass and green leadership tabs. I had not done anything with the brass tip of the fourragere other than take it out of the wrapping. It still had a semi-shiny brass appearance through the factory protective coating and I thought nothing of it—just another part of a not very impressive uniform of an officer with less than six months' service.

Waiting inside were all the NCO's, getting ready to move to their respective elements in the billets. Immediately, as if rehearsed, the two WW II 82nd NCOs closed in on me at the door. One expertly unbuttoned my shoulder tab, removed the fourragere and passed it to the other NCO. He disappeared down the hall with my cord in hand while the other propelled me through the 1Sgt's door and told me to wait there. I was perplexed but obedient. They had been very solicitous of me and gone out of their way to educate me and insure I was a success in front of the troops. I knew something was amiss but I wasn't bright enough at the time to know what and too surprised to ask.

Shortly, both NCO's walked in the room. As I stood up, still somewhat confused, they both attached the fourragere to my left shoulder, straightened up the cord, "Airborne Sir. You are ready to go." Before I could say anything else, one looked at me and said. "Sir, Note the brass tip to our fourrageres. We earned this in Normandy and we know what it cost—a lot of men who can't be here in this formation. Every 82d vet in this division has a brass tip as shiny as it can be made. We know what it cost to get it and we want to make sure you look like you ought to command this outfit. Go out and bring the unit to Attention."

That Sunday I went home and did some research on the 82d at Normandy and its casualties. When the 82d returned to the UK in July, it calculated its losses.

Total Division strength in Normandy including the 325 and Sea Tail. 11,770

KIA	1,142
WIA	2,373
MIA/POW	840
SICK/EVACUATED	1,801
TOTAL CASUALTIES	6,156 or 72% of deployed.

This was a very expensive uniform item and deserved the best of care. The NCO's were insuring that both the cost and the symbolism remained well past their retirement.

Much later, well after my own retirement, Maurice Renaud, the youngest son of the wartime Mayor of St Mere Eglise took me aside during the 67th Anniversary and showed me a yellowed typewritten page he had found in his father's materials. It was a letter from the Mayor, his father, to Gen DeGaulle in September of 1944. I reproduce it below.

September 1944 Letter from the Mayor of Sainte Mere Eglise, Mr Alexandre Renaud, to Monsieur le Commissaire du Gouvernement du General de Gaulle (English Translation by Maurice Renaud)

Subject: Request for a French 'Citation' for the 2 US Airborne Sainte Mere Eglise on June 6th 1944.

Monsieur le Commissaire,

Monday June 5th, around 23h30, in the thundering noise of large aircraft flying at low altitude, in the light of a house fire, the American paratroopers landed in Sainte Mere Eglise.

They were the first allied troops to set a foot on the soil of our enslaved country. They mainly belonged to 2 battalions, the 2nd and the 3rd of the 505th P.I.R. of the 82nd and under the command of Lt Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort and Lt Col C. Krause.

Upon their landing, they were machine gunned by a group of flak soldiers who camped in a park located near the city square. At dawn these flak soldiers, under the command of Koller Staicht, were pushed out of the town and settled in the village of Fauville, south of Sainte Mere Eglise.

The first night these 2 battalions suffered heavy casualties. Then it became even worse. Distant from Utah beach by more than 8 kilometers, they were completely surrounded by German units. To the south in Fauville, to the north in Neuville au plain with 2 battalions of the 91 airlanding Division well equipped with cannons and tanks, to the east, in direction of the sea, by 2 companies of fanatical Georgians who will fight to the last man. These 2 battalions succeeded resisted alone with their guns, 2 heavy machine guns and 2 small cannons later delivered by gliders.

These American paratroopers (I was able to observe them closely during the battle) were very quiet and self controlled as if they were doing maneuvers. They walked quietly close to the walls of the houses, smoking or chewing their gum under the constant shelling of German guns located in Aazeville and Saint Martin de Varreville

In the evening of June 6th, from the ditch where I took refuge with my family, I sensed that the front line was getting closer to us. The 2 German battalions and the troops of Captain Keller attacked. All the night of June 6th the battle was

ferocious. The Germans got very close to the northern entrance of the town. The paratroopers were fighting with their knives. One paratrooper I talked to told me, "We will attack. Reinforcements from the sea will get here around 06h00. Everything is ok". That was not to happen. This same evening, they were still waiting for the reinforcements from Utah Beach. One soldier told me 'There is some delay. The sea is very rough' and as the women were crying and saying 'please don't abandon us,' he replied with a large smile, 'we never give up, we will rather die here.'

A witness told me that he saw some paratroopers riding horses at full speed to rush to the defense of a threatened part of the town. After the battle several horses were dead in the center of the town. Before the troops arrived from the sea, the paratroopers were running out of ammunition. They told me, 'we can only use our guns when we are very close to the target and we cannot waste ammunition. After that, our only defense will be bayonets and knives.'

48 hours after their landing the airborne men had achieved a fantastic success. Those 2 airborne battalions had destroyed the German troops: in the north 2 battalions, in the south one battalion and one flak group, in the east 2 companies of Georgians who fought to the death sheltered in the castle of Beuzeville au Plain. They also destroyed eight tanks.

The paratroopers suffered very heavy casualties. During all that time, the battalion medic, Captain Lyle B. Putman, was taking care of our civilian wounded as if they were American soldiers.

So I am asking you, Monsieur le Commissaire du Gouvernement, if it would be possible to solicit General de Gaulle, who knows what bravery means, to give to these tough soldiers who were the first to have defeated the Germans on French soil, a citation which gives them the right to wear on their uniform the French Fourragère.

I believe that their sacrifice will feel lighter to them if they get the right to put on their regimental flag this sign of the French gratitude.

In their coming battles, these paratroopers will fight with even more bravery, proud to be the airborne troops which France has distinguished as 'bravest among the braves'

Signed: Mr. Alexandre Renaud

To this point, I had no idea as to the origin of the Fourragère but here it was. General de Gaulle approved and the citation with Fourragère was granted to the 82d. This was not a request made on emotion or to curry favor. The Mayor had a skilled experienced eye and judgment for combat worthiness. He was a WW I veteran of the Battles of Verdun, Ypres and Chemin Des Dames and other engagements. He commanded a machine gun platoon and finished the war as a prisoner of the Germans. His narrative above was written with a

war-weathered eye which makes it all the more noteworthy. At the time the letter was written, Ste. Mere Eglise had the largest military cemetery in the world with more than 35,000 soldiers interred. It was not until 1948 that the bodies were re-interred either at Omaha Beach or sent home to families.

Of note is that the Mayor's wife sent hundreds of photographs of individual graves to grieving families. She accompanied each with a personal letter written on an ancient typewriter at the kitchen table. One of Maurice's earliest memories is that of his mother bent over the table at night, often with a candle, two finger typing the letters. While the electrical infrastructure of Normandy had to be replaced, the spirit of its people always burned brightly.

All this and much more was and is reflected by the brass tip of the fourragere. Today, it hangs on my uniform in the closet with the tip wrapped in cotton and sealed in plastic. It will be displayed once more the last time it will ever be worn. ➔

AFGHANISTAN - SPRING 2014

The following is a reprint of an article by Drew Brooks in the Saturday, 19 April 2014 edition of the Fayetteville Observer. Brooks is currently Military Editor at the Fayetteville Observer.

508th PIR Kept Focus on Mission as Deactivation Loomed for 4th BCT

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan — They call it the "deployment brigade."

Of all Army brigades, it is hard to imagine any have spent a larger share of their existence in Afghanistan than the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. Created in 2006 during Army restructuring, the 4th Brigade was first called to action less than a year later when it deployed to eastern Afghanistan. Since then, almost like clockwork, the brigade's battalions have served in Operation Enduring Freedom, totaling nearly three years, four months and counting in Afghanistan.

Most recently, the 4th Brigade sent parts of two battalions — the 1st and 2nd of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment — to Afghanistan in late 2013 and early this year. Already, those battalions have been moved out of the 4th Brigade, which is set to be deactivated this summer as part of another round of restructuring. When the soldiers return to Fort Bragg, they will find themselves in the 3rd Brigade Combat Team and 2nd Brigade Combat Team, respectively.

In Afghanistan, soldiers of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment have largely been insulated by those moves. Their commanders have not changed, nor have their links to home. Many of the soldiers still identify by their old brigade and take pride in the number of times the unit has been called on to serve in Afghanistan. And, because of the relatively short life span of 4th Brigade, a small number of the

soldiers now deployed have witnessed all of the unit's history overseas.

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Wrenn, a nearly 13-year veteran from Landrum, S.C., said he is proud to be among the few to have deployed each time 4th Brigade — known as Fury Brigade — has been called to duty. Wrenn joined 4th Brigade in February 2007. At the time, he was a specialist with one deployment to Iraq on his resume. He did not stay at Fort Bragg long, though, as he soon traveled to meet with the brigade, which already was in eastern Afghanistan. Two years later, Wrenn and the brigade again deployed. Then-Sgt. Wrenn served from August 2009 to August 2010 in Herat in western Afghanistan. In 2012, he and the rest of the brigade served the better part of eight months outside Kandahar, fighting the Taliban in the birthplace of their founder, Mullah Omar.

After the third deployment, Wrenn said, there was a small group of soldiers who had deployed every time, but that group has largely moved on. Now, Wrenn doesn't know of any other soldiers who have served in each of the 4th Brigade's deployments. He could have missed the latest deployment. But plans for him to move to a new unit were abandoned when he was promoted to sergeant first class. "I've been here a while," said Wrenn, who is assistant operations sergeant for the Camp Phoenix-based battalion. "And I've gotten a lot of good experience. I grew up in this brigade."

According to the 82nd Airborne Division, the 4th Brigade Combat Team will case its colors in a ceremony May 15 on Fort Bragg. The brigade commander, Col. Timothy Watson, said the brigade has made significant contributions in its short history with the 82nd Airborne Division. He praised the 1st and 2nd battalions for continuing that tradition. "Throughout these last eight years, the (brigade) has performed exemplary in combat and sacrificed much on behalf of our nation," Watson said. "While we're saddened that 4th BCT's time is nearing its end, the legacy of the (brigade) and the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment lives on in those paratroopers who remain in 1st and 2nd battalions, 508th PIR, and those 4th BCT troopers who have departed to serve in other units across the Army."

Wrenn and other 4th Brigade veterans will miss the ceremony and said leaving the brigade is bittersweet. Already, the soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Division can see progress. Unlike previous deployments where they were constantly patrolling and looking for fights, the Afghan national security forces are now in the lead. Instead of fighting, the soldiers are filling other roles, such as moving advisers and trainers around the battlefield and protecting forces from insider attacks. Wrenn said he wants the progress to continue. Ultimately, he said, he hopes the U.S. is seen not as invaders but nation builders. "I've got a son. I really don't want my child to ever have to come over here," he said.

About 4th Brigade Combat Team

Created in 2006, the brigade's lineage dates to World War II. The 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment joined the fight in World War II in 1944 in England and later participated in Operation Overlord on June 6, 1944, jumping into Normandy, France. The regiment captured and secured the town of Sainte-Mere-Eglise and established a defense line north from Neuville-au-Plain to Beuzeville-au-Plain. The 508th fought German forces until it was relieved July 7, 1944.

Later in 1944, the regiment participated in Operation Market Garden in Holland and seized the Waal River Bridge in the Groesbeek-Nijmegen area.

After the war, the 508th was split between 1st and 3rd brigades and served in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and in 1966 as part of Operation Powerpack.

The 2nd Battalion, 508th PIR went to Vietnam with its brigade in response to the Tet Offensive and earned the Presidential Unit Citation after seeing heavy fighting in Hue and Saigon.

The regiment next deployed in 1989, when the 1st Battalion participated in Operation Just Case in Panama.

As part of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, the battalion participated in the largest combat airborne operation since World War II when its paratroopers jumped into northern Iraq in 2003.

On June 14, 2006, the regiment became the core of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. Seven months later, it deployed to Afghanistan for 15 months.

Other deployments to Afghanistan were in August 2009, when paratroopers mentored more than 44,000 Afghan security forces as part of the first advise-and-assist brigade in Afghanistan, and in February 2012, when the brigade battled the insurgency in a Taliban stronghold as part of Operation Righteous Endeavor.

The most recent deployments, slated for nine months, began late last year.

Fayetteville Observer - 19 April 2014 ➔

Thank You!

Many thanks to veteran, Bill Knapp for your very kind and generous donation to our Association. ➔

1Fury Update

It's been a rewarding year for 1-508 PIR.

As the Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division, MG Richard Clarke, has stated on multiple occasions, 1-508 PIR is the best trained battalion in the division.

This training goes all the way back to early 2015. Whether it was jumping into Texas as part of JADE HELM, executing company live fire exercises on OP-13 here at Fort Bragg, or being the decisive operation for 1st Brigade Combat Team during a Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation in November 2015, 1-508 PIR has continued to make ourselves ready to deploy anywhere in the world on a moment's notice.

We've spent 2016 so far building further on our reputation. January consisted of Expert Infantryman Badge testing, followed quickly by a battalion airfield seizure and follow-on attack on Superbowl Sunday here at Fort Bragg. A month later, we found ourselves in the swamps of Camp Lejeune, NC, executing drop zone platoon live fire exercises. A month later, 1-508 PIR was climbing mountains in the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, CA, executing combined arms company live fire exercises - proofing a concept for our division of conducting training between rotations.

With the performance of our stellar Paratroopers and the amazing support of our Families, 1-508 PIR will only continue to get more lethal, more decisive, and more adaptable.

In the months ahead, we'll execute a brigade-sized field training exercise, countless more airborne operations, and deploy back to the JRTC at Fort Polk, LA, in August. From there, we'll stand ready and willing to answer the nation's call to jump tonight, fight and win anywhere in the world.

ALL THE WAY! FURY FROM THE SKY!

By MAJ Dru Rhodes, 1-508 PIR Operations Officer ➔

2Fury Update

The Paratroopers of the 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment spent the last few months on Red Cycle. Though this period typically consists of details and taskings, it didn't stop the battalion from conducting some great training.

Since last winter's jump into Zaragoza, Spain, the latest battalion event took place the first week of May. The battalion conducted a Joint Forcible Entry (JFE) exercise into Camp Bullis, Texas. The Paratroopers of 2FURY quickly secured the drop zone, and moved onto their follow on objectives. This type of exercise is integral to the mission of the 82nd Airborne Division to quickly seize footholds for follow-on forces.

After returning from Texas, the battalion said goodbye to one company commander while welcoming another. CPT Matt Fleming handed over the guidon of Dread Company to CPT John C. Austin. Capt. Austin served as the battalion S4 after coming from 4th Ranger Training Battalion, Fort Benning, GA. Capt. Fleming will be headed down to Fort Benning, where he will serve as a Small Group Instructor (SGI) at the Maneuver Captain's Career Course (MCCC).

The battalion also said goodbye to two of its field grade officers. MAJ Eric Schnabel, who served as the Battalion Executive Officer, and MAJ Andy Harris, who served as the Battalion Operations Officer. They were both recognized during an informal dinner for their dedication and loyalty to 2FURY.

Recently the battalion conducted Operation Clean Sweep on Fort Bragg. Clean Sweep consisted of meticulous attention to detail as we landscaped, improved and updated the battalion's footprint in preparation for the yearly division celebration known as All-American Week.

During All-American Week, May 23rd to May 26th, the battalion will participate in many division wide events to include a Division run, the Division Memorial Ceremony, Regimental Induction Ceremony, as well as many soldier skill and sport competitions. The week will culminate with a division jump onto Sicily Drop Zone and a division review, which will include a demonstration showcasing the capabilities of the 82nd Airborne Division.

The Paratroopers of the 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment remain ready to answer our Nation's call!

AIRBORNE! ALL THE WAY! LET'S GO!
FURY FROM THE SKY!

By 1LT Davor Dujmovic ➔

Congratulations!

Congratulations to French member, Valerie Cardin. On June 2, Valerie was presented with the Legion of Merit by the French government in recognition of her dedicated work with American veterans. The ceremony took place in Portbail at the school where Valerie works and during a veteran/student panel discussion that Valerie organizes every year. The Association is proud of Valerie for this well-deserved honor. ➔



Check it Out!

February 2017 will mark the 35th Anniversary of Emile Lacroix's "In the Footsteps of the 82nd Airborne Division" March. Every year, Emile selects one of the regiments of the 82nd Abn Div and conducts a march through their actual WWII battlefield areas. Emile has selected the 508th PIR as the regiment for his 2017 march. The march will

most likely take place on Saturday, February 18. Active duty soldiers come from Germany to take part in the march and a group of re-enactors participate in the march carrying WWII weapons. They set up positions in small villages along the march route which gives it an air of authenticity. Wreaths are laid at various monuments and there is

a lovely banquet at the end of the march. Anyone interested in attending or participating in the march, please contact Ellen Peters at (214) 632-1360 or ceptx@sbcglobal.net. ➔

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