

# DIABLO



The Link for All Veterans, Active Duty, Spouses, Family and Friends of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association – April 2018

## 2017 REUNION

The 2017 Reunion took place in Fayetteville, NC from October 18 – 22. The reunion was a huge success with 80 registered attendees and 195 attending the Saturday night banquet. Veterans from all eras of 508 history attended including several active duty soldiers from both battalions. CSM (Ret.) Lou Gutierrez hosted the reunion and did a spectacular job.

Thursday morning LTC James Browning spoke at the Welcoming Breakfast about 2/508's recent deployment to Iraq. They returned to the U.S. shortly before our reunion. After breakfast, we visited the General Lee Museum in Dunn, NC. and had lunch there. Friday, we spent the day at Ft. Bragg where we enjoyed a parachute jump; ate lunch in the 1st BCT chow hall where they served 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cake; attended a dedication ceremony at 1/508 headquarters; and visited the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Museum. Friday night there was a soldier appreciation event. Saturday we visited the Airborne and Special Operations Museum where they gave all the Vietnam Veterans a special pin and thanked them for their service. We had several Vietnam veterans attending the reunion, but only two who served with 1/508 in Vietnam. The annual banquet was held Saturday night.



At Ft. Bragg for a parachute jump. SGM Steve Noonan and Maj. Adam Scher holding the 508 flag.



Vietnam Veteran, CSM (Ret) Claud "Bud" Dunn with active duty soldiers



Carol LaBounty, Manny Vider, Pat Laakso, and Rene Lamson

## OLD GRAND-DAD

In 1976, at the second 508th PIR reunion which took place in Chicago, IL, five I Co. Veterans chipped in \$2.00 each and purchased a bottle of Old Grand-Dad bourbon whiskey. The purchasers were:



Joe Petry Anderson, IL Died 13 January 1988 Age 63  
 Jack Rooney Punta Gorda, FL Died 27 March 1993 Age 70  
 Bill Chapman Santa Clara, CA Died 13 March 2003 Age 80  
 Chad Conway Lincolnton, NC Died 12 July 2011 Age 87  
 Bob Chisolm Anthony, NM Age 92

Each man signed the bottle and agreed that it would be opened by the last living member of the group. That man is Bob Chisolm.

During a visit to El Paso by Chris Harris and myself in September, 2017, Bob entrusted the bottle to us with the request that we open it at the annual Family and Friends of the 508th PIR reunion and drink a toast to the five men.



At the reunion on the afternoon of October 21, Chris Harris arranged a conference call with Bob Chisolm and members of the Benevidez-Patterson Chapter of the 82nd Abn Div Assn in El Paso. At the reunion, seated around a table were WWII veterans Rock Merritt, John Coates, Ralph King, Carl Porter, Ernie Lamson and George Shenkle. Veterans from every generation of the 508th, including active duty 508th soldiers, were there and proud to have taken part. Each man was given a shot of the Old Grand-Dad. Chris made the toast to the I Co. men.

We shared the remainder of the bottle with active duty soldiers after the banquet that evening. The looks on their faces as they took a shot of the Old Grand-dad was priceless, but upon learning the provenance of the bottle, every man was proud to partake.

After the reunion, in an email to Troy Palmer, Bob Chisolm wrote that each of the five men who purchased the bottle of Old Grand-Dad had at least one Purple Heart. He also wrote, "The first wounded in combat was Jack Rooney who stepped on a land mine in Normandy and lost a foot. You would never know he had only one foot if you ever saw him dancing at a reunion. He could really 'Jitterbug'.

Joe Petry was captured in Normandy, but escaped and rejoined I Co."

These brave men of I Co. did their part in freeing the world of tyranny and oppression. Their exploits are written in the annals of history. We honor and remember them.

Ellen Peters †

## 508<sup>th</sup> PIR Veterans, Paratroopers Mark 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*By Drew Brooks, Military Editor for the Fayetteville Observer – reprinted by permission*

Family, friends and veterans of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the historic unit this week in Fayetteville and on Fort Bragg. Scores of veterans have returned to the Home of the Airborne to mark the occasion and honor the regiment's service from World War II to present day.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth "Rock" Merritt, one of the original members of the regiment, said there may have been no closer unit on the battlefields of Europe. "I served in some good outfits, but the comradeship within this regiment couldn't be matched," he said. "We went through basic training together, we learned to jump together and we fought together." "That bond persists to this day," he added. A Silver Star recipient who jumped into France on D-Day and is one of Fort Bragg's most well-known veterans, Merritt said it was an amazing experience to once again be surrounded by soldiers and veterans of the regiment known simply as "Fury."

Veterans from across the United States and as far as Europe traveled to Fort Bragg for four days of reunion-related events, according to Chris Harris, vice president of the Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association. They represent veterans of every major American conflict since World War II, up to and including the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly 200 soldiers, veterans and their families are expected to attend a Saturday banquet that will close out the reunion.

On Friday, the group observed an airborne operations involving modern day members of the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, which belong to the 3rd and 2nd Brigade Combat Teams of the 82nd Airborne Division, respectively. John Coates, one of seven World War II veterans participating in the anniversary events, said his eyes aren't as good as they used to be, but even he could make out the parachutes. "I enjoyed it," Coates said. "The sky was so clear." Coates, of Ellicott City, Maryland, served with the regiment from 1944 to 1945. He joined the unit after D-Day, but jumped as part of Operation Market Garden and later fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He was one of several dozen veterans participating in various other events on Fort Bragg, including meeting with modern paratroopers to relate oral histories of the 82nd Airborne Division's past.

On Friday afternoon, many of those veterans paused at the 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment headquarters to honor two legendary World War II paratroopers. In a ceremony, officials dedicated the battalion conference room to 1st Sgt. Leonard A. Funk Jr, a Medal of Honor recipient who fought with the 508th during the war. They also dedicated the Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander's office to Capt. Gerard Ruddy, a paratrooper who was killed while serving with the 508th on D-Day.

Coates, who served with Funk and once borrowed his pistol, said the paratrooper was a fitting example for modern day soldiers. "He was humble, he was selfless, he was respected and he was first class," Coates said. "That's the best honor I can give the man."

Lt. Col. Robert McChrystal, commander of 1st Battalion, said the dedications were a key component of an ongoing effort to keep current paratroopers engaged in the unit's legacy. "These two men represent the greatest generation of Americans and the best the 508th has to offer," McChrystal said. He said both men would continue to inspire selfless leaders for generations to come. Soldiers with the battalion unveiled plaques that will note the contributions of the two soldiers.

Funk famously earned the nation's highest medal for valor in Belgium on Jan. 29, 1945. There, after some 80 German prisoners were freed by an enemy patrol, Funk unknowingly turned a corner and walked into the midst of the enemy. Outnumbered and ordered to surrender, Funk pretended to comply but as he unslung his machine gun, brought the muzzle into line and riddled a German officer holding him at gunpoint. Funk then turned his weapon on the rest of the Germans, firing and shouting for other Americans to come and seize the enemy's weapons. In the ensuing fight, 21 Germans were killed, many wounded and the rest were recaptured.

Ruddy, meanwhile, enlisted into the Army in 1933 and quickly rose through the ranks – at one point being promoted five times in three years. He volunteered to be one of the Army's first paratroopers and was later commissioned as an officer as the 508th prepared to enter World War II. On the night of June 5, 1944, hours before the D-Day invasion began, Ruddy gave an impassioned speech, according to officials. He said he'd rather "die than bury one of my own men." Ruddy was killed the next day by a German machine gunner.

Merritt said it was an honor to serve alongside both Funk and Ruddy, but he saved his biggest praise for today's paratroopers. "I think they are the best-led, best-educated and have the best-trained officers and [noncommissioned officers] our Army has ever produced," Merritt said. "With so much turmoil in the world today. We owe them so much for keeping us safe."



*Jim Strickland studies the Wall of Fallen Heroes at 1/508<sup>th</sup> Hq. Bldg*



*John Coates next to display honoring 1SG Funk and CPT. Ruddy*

*Photos by Raul F. Rubiera of the Fayetteville Observer†*

## 1 FURY CONTINUES ITS MISSION AS THE GLOBAL RESPONSE FORCE

This year's summer training cycle began, once again, at Fort Polk, Louisiana where the battalion staff conducted the Leader Training Program (LTP). At LTP our staff teamed up with an old friend and former 1-508 PIR BN CDR, COL (ret) Mike Kershaw. Coach Kershaw guided our team through a rigorous military decision making program that resulted in the publication of two training orders to prepare us for our upcoming rotation to JRTC. In addition to his expert mentorship, Coach Kershaw also donated incredible 1-508 PIR memorabilia from his time as our commander in Italy. With the help of Ellen Peters and SGM Noonan, we now have a BN library to showcase our heritage.

Upon our return to Fort Bragg, we conducted a full brigade, division, and installation deployment readiness exercise with a complete outload sequence into a week-long field training exercise to prepare us for JRTC. The battalion jumped into Sicily DZ and after five days of probing our defenses, we conducted an Air Assault into the enemy's rear area of operations on Holland DZ to culminate this training event.

At the end of September, 1Fury welcomed a partner company, M Coy, an airborne infantry company from Canada's 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Regiment. After integrated training in our local areas, we deployed together to JRTC 18-02 for a direct action training event that included a brigade live fire exercise and the first ever use of a newly constructed Avelino DZ at Fort Polk's Peason Ridge range facility. Our team provided the brigade main effort to close with and the destroy the enemy as 1Fury was tasked to seize three enemy held population centers as we fought, walking most of the way when our aviation task force was attacked by enemy air assets, from one end of the box to the other. At the final AAR, the OPFOR BN CDR recognized 1-508 PIR as the most lethal organization he has ever faced.

We were able to celebrate this JRTC success with a 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary jump as part of our annual reunion schedule. Joining the recently returned team of 2Fury, we were proud to present Rock Merritt and all of the WWII vets who joined us on Sicily DZ 20 October 2017 to commemorate our Regiment's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday! We were also honored to conduct an unveiling ceremony dedicating the HHC CDR's office to CPT Gerard Ruddy and the battalion conference room to 1SG Leonard Funk.

Additionally, we said farewell to our HHC commander who has been with the battalion for almost four years serving on the staff and as the Alpha company commander before his time in HHC. We are grateful for CPT Nate Roubicek and his entire family's service to the 1-508th. CPT Kent Gavin, the current A Co CDR will take over for HHC, while we welcome CPT Matt Krembel and his wife Anne as he assumed command of A/1-508 PIR on 08 December 2017.

The Battalion was able to enjoy some much needed time off for an extended Thanksgiving leave because we assume the duties of the GRB1 on 15 December. As the GRB 1, 1-508 PIR will remain on a two-hour recall for a no-notice deployment anywhere in the world throughout this holiday season and into the New Year.

### ALL THE WAY! FURY FROM THE SKY!

By MAJ Adam Scher, 1-508 PIR Executive Officer†

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## 2 FURY REPORT

LTC James Browning of 2 Fury can be seen on the highly acclaimed National Geographic series "Chain of Command". He is prominently featured in episodes two and three. I looked forward to seeing this series for months and wondered if I would see any sign of 2/508. I was not disappointed! In response to an email I sent him, LTC Browning, wrote, "Thank you - quite embarrassing but still honored to feature 2-508 PIR's legacy in combat. What the program will not show was the incredible efforts and utter destruction needed to unhinge ISIS. It was a trying deployment that required a herculean effort by our 2Fury Task Force. I'm glad the boys can hang their hat on this – they did something to rid the world of evil."

I highly recommend this documentary series to everyone. You can see it using the On Demand feature on your television or go to the website: [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com). In the search box type "Chain of Command" and all the episodes will come up. A really excellent look into how our leaders are fighting the Global War on Terror. ➔



*LTC Browning coordinating a strike on some bad guys*



*Iraqi Gen. Qassem Nazzal relates the story of a captured very young ISIS fighter.*

## EVERY SOLDIER HAS A STORY

And we want yours!! Do you have a story to tell of your service in the 508th? Combat or otherwise? If so, please send it to the Diablo editor at [Editor@508PIR.org](mailto:Editor@508PIR.org). Our goal is to one day have a story or article from each generation of 508th paratroopers in every issue of the Diablo newsletter.

### Fire .....

We walked back into Camp Eggers after being at the ANA Air corps Airfield, trying to come up with a technique to rappel out of a Soviet Mi-17 without killing someone. The day was a drizzly mess. Rain, in this country, turns an already colorless landscape into a deeper shade of khaki. The mud permeates everything; you can't seem to escape getting it on you wherever you go. The cold only makes the day that much drearier. I was thinking about my family in Greensboro this weekend at the reenactment of Guilford Courthouse, and it only made my mood a little darker for the fact that I couldn't be there.

I walked past my AF Senior Master Chief's desk and he said that the camp band, in which he played lead guitar, would be playing tonight at the clam shell by the AAFEE's Coffee house. He asked me if I would come out and support them. "Sure," I said. "Music might be just the thing I need tonight." He laughed and said, "Kabul starting to get you huh?" "No," I lied. "Just a crappy day."

I called my wife at about 1830 local, which is about 0900 EST. When she answered I could hear the fire popping in the background and could picture her alternately bending over the fire to turn bacon or stirring a big pan of scrambled eggs, all the while wiping the tears from the smoke out of her eyes, along with a loose strand of hair straying from under her cap. She passed the phone around the camp so I could talk to a few of the people that make up my very strange extended family. I savored hearing them talk about what was happening at the event, and how many vehicles got stuck in the mud while they set up camp. In the middle of talking to them, two had to run off to the Commanders' Meeting. So I talked to my wife a bit longer, and finally got off the phone and reflected on how much I missed all of them.

After a fairly short time of feeling sorry for myself, I went to the chow hall to get whatever slop was being served. The fact that they were serving corned beef and cabbage reminded me that it was St. Patrick's Day. St. Patrick's Day and Guilford Courthouse in one weekend, and me in Kabul. Great. Nothing like slapping myself back down the rabbit hole of "poor little me" and making myself hate the day even worse.

Music is what I needed. So, down to the other side of camp I walked. The drizzle lightened up to nothing and I actually could see a star or two. I could already hear the band warming up when I rounded the corner toward the "Clamshell."

The "clamshell" is a large frame tent that can be used as a small hanger or a motor pool garage. In this case, it is used as a meeting place, a conference room and a chapel on Sunday. Tonight it is a concert hall for "Commander Solo and the FUBAR fighters."

The band was playing its first song as I walked around the corner. The version of the Rolling Stones "Satisfaction" was recognizable, at least. I walked into the coffee shop across the street and bought a medium coffee. I then went in to the open end of the clam shell to lift my spirits with a little music. Since the lead Guitar works for me I pulled out my camera and took a few shoots for him and even tried out the video feature.

Then I walked out side to throw my coffee cup away. There was a fire. I guess one of the contractors in camp had made it. It was built in a large, square, iron brazier that could fit an entire wood packing pallet at once. Around the fire was a ring of people in various uniforms. Army, Marines, Navy and Air Force mingled in with civilian contractors in civilian clothes. Everyone was drinking free non-alcoholic "Beck's" beer. Now, I really am no fan of "Beck's," and I am really not a fan of non-alcoholic beer. But it was BEER. And there was a fire. The two just seemed to go together, at least in my mind. So I grabbed one and sat down in one of the old rusty patio chairs that probably was shipped here by the Russians, and stared into the roaring fire.

I sat listening to the music. The band was playing Clapton, "I feel wonderful tonight."

I sat thinking about all the fires I had known, and why I was drawn to this one. The feeling of staring into the fire suddenly made me feel safe and comfortable. The first fire I remember being like this was when I was very small. An ice storm hit Columbia and the power shut down. The inside of the house was like an ice box. I remember standing at the sliding glass door in our living room wondering why Momma wouldn't let me play in the snow. Well, I know now it was because it was sleet. I remember watching her split a few pieces of wood in the ice while I entertained my brother and sister. Then the fire, the glorious fire that warmed the whole room. The three of us slept in the den that night on the floor next to it. I remember it as great adventure: Camping In The Den.

The band played "867-5309."

Then there was the fire that I wasn't supposed to have. I was in Ranger School in Florida Phase. We had been walking all night, which was pretty normal for Ranger school. The Ranger Instructors were as tired as we were, and maybe almost as frustrated. My Ranger Buddy and I were soaked to the bone and it was a nice, balmy 45 degrees. I suggested that we start a fire and maybe we could at least have a dry pair of socks and maybe a t-shirt. He was shocked at the suggestion and told me that if I got caught, "You are on your own." I thought about it long and hard - for about 30 seconds. Then I pulled out my Army Issue E-tool and started digging. The hole was as wide as the blade and as deep as the e-tool. I made two chimneys for air, then piled as much dry wood as I could break off in the bottom and lit it with torn-up MRE boxes. I took pine straw and covered the chimneys up to try to disperse the smoke. Once I got it started, I sat with my legs crossed Indian style and wrapped my poncho around me to cover it up and not let any of the heat or light out. In 30 minutes I was dry and warm. The only problem I had was trying to stay awake. I can still hear the RI talking to his partner. "Do you smell smoke?" and walking around the patrol base trying to find the source.

As I looked around the fire, what struck me the most was the faces. Everyone was smiling and laughing, and in the dark you couldn't tell that the beer was non-alcoholic. That took me to the thousands of reenactments, in a thousand different camps. The images that rolled through my head were overwhelming.

The smell of wool impregnated with smoke.

The sound of bacon frying and popping.

The loud, stern voices of any number of women, running me away from the "kitchen."

"It'll be ready when it's ready!"

Faces long past, and present, laughing and telling jokes.

Filling a beer mug and drinking deeply. Then doing it again and again.

Lessons taught and learned that a classroom couldn't hold.

Your body warm on one side freezing on another.

Cider and spiced rum heated with a red hot poker.

Pat's really silly, white, Rabbit fur hat. "The white side is so people don't trip over me when I pass out in the company street."

The band started in on "Sweet home Alabama" and I thought to myself, "Now, that's just not fair." But the images kept flooding over me.

Walking from fire to fire, camp to camp on a Friday and being welcomed as a long absent family member.

The sound of fifes and drums in the distance, the low thrumming of a guitar.

A burst of involuntary laughter in the fire light, sincere in its origin.

The taste of hard liquor for the first time, stolen while I thought no one was looking.

The vision of bodies wrapped in blankets, rolled up as close to the fire as possible on a blistering cold night.

The band was playing "Pretty Woman." More Van Halen than Roy Orbison, but not bad. The rain started again. A slow drizzle, but I didn't really care. It made more memories flow over me.

The smoke from many fires, on a damp cool morning, hanging close to the ground.

Gathering the courage to jump out of my blankets and run to fire. But looking out of the tent to make sure it was roaring first.

The picture of my little sister trying to thaw out her frozen hair while standing in the freezing rain and sleet in Annapolis.

Either of my sons on my lap, passed out from exhaustion after a day of assaulting the hay bale fort with the other children of our strange hobby, 500 times that day.

Tears of joy.

Tears of grief.

Soul-cleansing stories of pain and suffering, in war time. Side-splitting stories of military life that only the ones that have done it really "get."

Wedding proposals.

Drunks falling into the fire.

"SHUT UP AND GO TO BED!!!"

I looked and smiled as Sgt Stokes walked up to me. He is a good kid, a paratrooper from the 82nd that was in my BN. last time we were here. "What's up, SGM?" I smile up at him. "Not much, bud. How're you doin' tonight?" "You know SGM, living the dream." "Yep," I said, "it is hard to believe we get paid for this shit sometimes, huh?" He looked at me funny. "SGM, you got something in your eye?" "No man it's just the smoke. It makes my eyes water like that all the time. I am just enjoying the music and staring at the fire. You want one of these make-believe beers?" "No," he said, "I am gonna get out of the rain." I looked around and realized I was the only one left sitting there. The fire was being slowly smothered by the soft drizzle of rain. I was wet, again. I stood up and drained the dregs of the really nasty, wanna-be beer and said, "Well bud, you have a good night. I will see ya tomorrow." Then gave him my best, happy, shit-eating grin. He gave me the cursory, "Roger SGM, take it easy." I looked back at him and said, "Shit bud, it don't get no easier than this."

But as I left the fire, I couldn't help but think what an awesome bed of coals that would be in the morning to cook on. I resisted the urge to bank them so they would last through the night.

I walked back to my room with the stark reality of being back in Afghanistan smacking me full in the face, shaking me out of the dreams I had been living while awake. But I was smiling.

A good fire will do that, it will make you smile.

**Bert Puckett** →

## **The Harry Kennedy Story**

(Or "Tunder" he Said, and My Adrenaline Overflowed)

This is a true story of a naive, brave, young man. My favorite story of WWII.

Harry was born Hahns Kahn in Germany in 1924. His parents were Jewish. For reasons I do not know he was placed in an orphanage at a very young age. He was then adopted by German Jewish parents. Harry never knew his real parents. His adoptive father was a successful business man owning some type of an importing business headquartered in Switzerland.

Harry's early childhood was normal and happy until Hitler started his hate campaign against Jews. Jumping forward to Nov. 9, 1938, the date of Kristallnacht (Crystal Night): so called because Germans went on a rampage of ransacking Jewish homes, businesses, synagogues, and other Jewish institutions, filling the streets with the broken fine Jewish crystal and glassware. Other valuable possessions including books, art works, fine furniture, etc. were smashed and burned.

Harry's father was astute enough to see the war on Judaism was increasing. He made plans to smuggle Harry out of Germany before it was too late. He had distance relatives in the United States who agreed to accept Harry. Through his contacts in the import business he arranged to smuggle Harry through Switzerland and Italy to a ship bound for New York. At this time Harry was about 15 years old. The father went to his headquarters in Switzerland and summoned his wife and

Harry to join him. The father still had his papers to travel unrestricted. When Harry and his mother arrived at the Swiss border on the train, his mother was arrested by the German guards. Harry never saw her again. Presumably she was a victim of the holocaust. For some unknown reason Harry was allowed to continue. His father met him and had him transported to Italy, the ship and on to New York.

Harry was met in New York by his new family and immediately placed in school. He had an agile mind and very quickly picked up the English language. He did have a heavy German accent. He successfully completed high school and joined the army. He volunteered for the paratroopers and joined us at Camp McCall, North Carolina in August, 1942. Because of his command of the German language he was put in the Regimental intelligence section to act as an interpreter. When Harry joined the army, his name was changed from Hans Kahn to Harry Kennedy in case he should be captured by the enemy. His dog tags bore the name Kennedy.

We were engrossed with Harry because of his background. He was shy and somewhat aloof. We tried very hard to make him feel accepted but were unsuccessful. He refused to go out with us to get drunk and chase girls like most GI's. We invited him many times but to no avail. We thought that rather strange. Now that I have matured some I see he wasn't all wrong.

Harry did have a girlfriend he had met in New York. He called her "Teddy Bear." They corresponded frequently. He adored her. He had no problem showing his love and discussing her attributes with us. All was well until about two months before we left to go overseas. Harry received a "dear John" letter. Teddy Bear had met someone else and thought it best that she and Harry break it off. Harry was devastated. I thought he was going into shock. He cried a lot. I became very dubious that he was suitable for combat. I felt uncomfortable depending on him in a hostile situation. After all, mature males don't come apart when jilted by a girlfriend. Soldiers don't cry, particularly hardened Paratroopers. I could be wrong, and as it turned out I was.

As time went on, Harry began to recover. When we went to New York to the port of embarkation in December, 1942, he seemed to accept the situation. You know the old adage: time heals all wounds. He still refused to go out with us in the big city for one last fling before we left the country.

After a short stopover in North Ireland for two months, we moved to Nottingham, England. By then Harry was becoming a real American GI. He started going to the English Pubs with us and enjoying the companionship of the English girls. Except for his accent you would think he was a natural born American soldier.

Moving forward to D-Day. The entire Regimental S-2 Section was in the same plane. We took off about 10:00 PM, June 5, flew several hours to rendezvous with other planes of the Regiment, and then headed to the continent. As we crossed the shoreline of Normandy we met intense anti-aircraft fire. Although we were flying low and slow, the Germans could not see us because of the low cloud cover. They were firing at the sound of the engines. The pilots could see the tracers coming up and had to fly around them to prevent being shot down. In maneuvering to avoid the anti-aircraft fire the planes wandered off course and when we jumped, we missed the drop zone. Both the 101st and 82<sup>nd</sup> Divisions were strewn all over the Normandy peninsular. When I landed, about 2:30 AM, I was shaking so hard that I could not unbuckle my parachute harness. I cut myself loose with the knife strapped to my boot. It turned out that is the way most of the troopers freed themselves.

After freeing myself from the chute, I rearranged my gear to carry it comfortably, and started looking for other members in my plane. It was impossible to see or recognize anyone because of the darkness. There was no light to reflect off the cloud cover to allow any vision. I wandered around until I heard a noise. I gave the password which was "flash". The countersign was "thunder". Thunder was selected because the Germans can't say "th". The reply to my challenge came back a resounding "Tunder". If the adrenaline wasn't high enough, it was now enough to take the top of my head off. After a short pause that seemed like hours, I realized there was no way the Germans could know our password and countersign, because they were given to us as we boarded the plane. I meekly asked, "Is that you Harry?" The reply was a beautiful German accented "Yah". Harry and I joined up and started searching for others in our plane. By daybreak fifteen of the eighteen total in our plane had assembled. We then started our mission of winning WWII.

Since this is a story about Harry, I am going to fast forward from the Normandy Campaign to Market Garden, the jump into Holland. Suffice it to say Harry was an extremely valuable asset to us in Normandy with his skills of interrogating prisoners. I never went on a patrol with Harry in Normandy, so I still had no indication of how he would react in a tight situation. In Holland I finally got my chance to see what he was made of. After the initial jump, the Market Garden operation soon turned into a static hold and defend situation. This was the condition where our S-2 Section was most active. We had many opportunities to infiltrate the German lines at night to search out information on gun emplacements, troop numbers and location, tanks, etc. Finally, on one cold, misty night Harry and I were assigned to the same patrol. There was a third member whose name I don't recall. We slipped through the lines undetected and spent several hours but found nothing. On

the way back, we were not so lucky. We ran into a German outpost and were challenged with a stern "HALT". We immediately fell to the ground to become less of a target. My first thought was now what do we do. Harry immediately got up, walked right up to the sentry and said something like this in his perfect German: "Hey my name is Hans. My companions and I have been out on patrol for several hours and are returning to our headquarters to report what we found. My company commander forgot to give me the password, so I don't know it. After exchanging a few words, the sentry passed us through. Being a foggy night with no light reflecting from the clouds the sentry could not see our uniforms so had to go on what he heard; a reasonable request in perfect German.

How wrong I had been about this naive, crybaby soldier. This was a brave, quick thinking, young man of whom everyone would be proud to know and have as a friend. To this day I am indebted to him for at least saving my life or preventing my being captured; at least from being in a fire fight from which who knows what the outcome would be.

After Holland we went to France to regroup and then to the Bulge. By now Harry was one of us; a typical American GI getting into mischief and taking and enjoying any opportunity that presented itself.

When the war ended, the Regimental Commander, Col. Mendez, arranged for Harry to go to Switzerland to visit his father. Needless to say Harry was a favorite of Col. Mendez.

After the war Harry was assigned to a secret project of the U.S. Government. He was sworn to secrecy and would not tell what his mission was. Those of us who served with him speculate it was with the CIA in the search for war criminals. Harry joined the old Dept. of HEW (Health, Education, & Welfare.) He rose to a relative high position before retiring.

The last time I saw Harry was at a 508th regimental reunion in Florida in 2004. My wife and I ate dinner with him and his family at the reunion banquet. I asked him if he could say thunder yet. He replied resoundingly, "Sure: Tunder". We all had a great laugh.

Harry died in 2010 at the age of 85.

### **Jody Lander**

P.S. As I wrote this, remembering my earlier statement that hardened Paratroopers don't cry. Guess what: this one did.

*(Editor's Note: So did the editor, Jody. Harry was a special man and is missed by all who knew him.)* †

## **CALL FOR DUES**

Dues were due January 1. To keep your membership current, kindly remit your yearly dues of \$20.00 per household. Multiple years may be paid in advance and donations are gratefully accepted. Lifetime Memberships may be purchased in the following tiers:

Sustaining Membership - \$350.00; Patron - \$250.00; Supporter - \$150.00

Remit payment to: F&F 508th PIR

c/o Chris Harris

350 11th Ave.

Unit 431

San Diego, CA 92101-7476

Payments may also be made with PayPal to Treasurer@508pir.org †

## **CONGRATULATIONS**

An All American Hall of Fame has been created. A selection of senior leaders within the division has selected 20 legendary figures from the division's 101-year history for enshrinement. One of those chosen is our own Rock Merritt. The ceremony will take place during All American week. 1st Sgt. Leonard Funk will also be inducted. Congratulations, Rock. A well deserved honor. †

## **2018 REUNION**

The 2018 Reunion will take place in Fort Walton Beach, FL (Airport code VPS) from October 31 to November 4 and will be hosted by Charmaine and Barry Deere. Potential activities may include visits to the 6th Ranger Training Bn.; 7th Special Forces Group; Air Force Armament Museum; NAS Pensacola Naval Aviation Museum; Wall South Military Park Pensacola; and of course, we hope to schedule a half a day at the beach!

## THE GOLDEN BRIGADE MARKS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF VIETNAM DEPLOYMENT

By Drew Brooks Military editor reposted from Military.com

Claud Dunn was dressed in his best sharkskin suit as he and a friend left their Fort Bragg barracks on Feb. 12, 1968. Dunn, then a sergeant in the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, was looking to head into Fayetteville, buy drinks and find a good time at establishments with names like Dew Drop Inn, the Parachute Bar or the Brass Whale. "We were going down to party," recalled Dunn, now a retired command sergeant major. But Dunn's fun would have to wait. Because on that day, 50 years ago, the Army had other plans for him and more than 3,500 other Fort Bragg paratroopers.

For the entirety of the Vietnam War to that point, the 82nd Airborne Division had been left on the sidelines, held in a strategic reserve on the strength of its unique ability to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice. Days earlier, on Jan. 30, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces had launched the Tet Offensive, with tens of thousands of troops streaming south in a surprise attack that was the largest military campaign of the war at that point. U.S. troops and their allies in the Republic of Vietnam were surprised. They needed help in pushing back the offensive and reclaiming territory the enemy had claimed. Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commanding general of U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam, requested that additional combat forces be immediately deployed. At the same time, he asked that those forces be paratroopers. With few options and after much debate, the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division was selected for the mission.

The unit, led by then-Col. Alexander R. Bolling Jr., was alerted at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 12, 1968. It was not known at the time, but the brigade would spend the next 22 months in Vietnam. It would lose more than 220 paratroopers to enemy action. Many more would be wounded. But the losses would pale in comparison to the damage the brigade wrought on enemy forces, more than 1,000 of whom were killed in the first 10 months of the deployment.

Dunn and his friend heard the news of the pending deployment from an unexpected source, as they stepped out for their night on the town. "We started to go out the front door and we ran into the biggest (military policeman) I had ever seen, sitting there with their M16s," Dunn said. "They said, 'You guys aren't going anywhere. You've been alerted.'" Dunn, who had been at Fort Bragg for about eight or nine months, returned to the barracks and began to pack.

In early 1968, being alerted for a mission was nothing new for 3rd Brigade. Over the last several years, the brigade had participated in numerous missions on short notice, including the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 and domestic missions. Its success in those operations had earned it the moniker "Golden Brigade" – so-named because "everything the brigade touched was 'golden.'"

In the previous year alone, the soldiers had been called on often by Army leaders.

In April 1967, troops parachuted onto Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, for a joint military exercise.

In July, it deployed on six hours' notice to Detroit to assist local authorities in quelling civil disturbances in that city. That fall, the brigade was tasked with conducting Brass Strike I, a major firepower and mobility demonstration for thousands of military and civilian dignitaries and students.

Even in the new year, the 3rd Brigade had plenty on its plate. On Jan. 22, the brigade conducted an airborne assault in Florida as part of another joint exercise. And after North Korean forces seized the U.S.S. Pueblo on Jan. 23, soldiers were told to prepare for an airborne assault to rescue the U.S. Navy ship and her 82 crew members. That mission never took place.

But the alert on Feb. 12 wasn't like the others. This time, it was not a training exercise. And as time quickly ticked by, soldiers began to realize the mission wouldn't be called off. They were going to deploy, although officials were mum on where.

Rich O'Hare, then a private, said paratroopers watched the news of the Tet Offensive closely. "When they opened the warehouses and started issuing us jungle fatigues, jungle boots and brand new M16s, we pretty much figured that was it," he said. O'Hare, then a young soldier with no combat experience, was a rare find in the brigade. While the 82nd Airborne Division itself had not served in Vietnam, its paratroopers, for the most part, were seasoned veterans. According to an official history of the 3rd Brigade's deployment, approximately 80 percent of its soldiers had served at least one tour in Vietnam. "The entire 82nd was filled with Vietnam veterans," O'Hare said. "It was the only combat ready division left in the states. And it was the place where a lot of guys were going when they came back from Vietnam."

Bob Murill, then a second lieutenant, was the brigade's supply officer in early 1968. When the unit was preparing to jump into North Korea, he ordered the cold weather gear they believed they would need for the mission. And a few weeks later, he was returning that gear for something more suitable for the jungles of Vietnam. "I sent all that stuff back and got some tropical gear," he said. Murill said Vietnam was an open secret for the brigade. "There was no question in anybody's mind that was exactly where we were going," he said. "But we didn't get the actual orders until we were on the plane and outside the continental U.S." Murill was on that plane, just days after the brigade was alerted for the mission, he said. After leaving the U.S., the orders were

pulled from a crisp envelope and read aloud. Murill said deploying the brigade on short notice was no easy task. Planning that would have taken months for any other unit had to be completed in a matter of hours.

Maj. Gen. Richard J. Seitz, then commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division, facilitated the quick turn around by directing that every asset within the division be used to assist the brigade. One of the first steps, according to officials, was to fill the brigade itself. Before being alerted, 3rd Brigade was only at 60 percent of its manning. The 82nd Airborne Division pulled soldiers from the 1st and 2nd Brigades to fill out the unit. Within days, military vehicles were clogging roads between Fort Bragg and what was then Pope Air Force Base.

The first troops left Fort Bragg on Valentine's Day, but most flew out several days later, on Feb. 17. Before they left, President Lyndon B. Johnson paid a special visit to Pope Air Force Base. In short remarks to the deploying soldiers, Johnson spoke of his high regard for the competence and preparedness of the 82nd Airborne Division. And he extended his best wishes for the months ahead. At the end of his speech, more than 3,600 paratroopers shouted "All the way, sir!" Johnson responded with his own shout, "Airborne!"

Moving the entire 3rd Brigade and its equipment to Vietnam required more than 155 C-141 flights and six C-133 cargo carriers, officials said. The move was so swift that it caught American officials in Vietnam off guard. When the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division landed at Chu Lai Air Base at 11 a.m. on Feb. 15, officials said installation leaders had to scramble to find a place to put all the soldiers and equipment. "They didn't know we were coming," Murill said. "They said, 'The best we can do is put you in this field over here and get you some tents.'"

At Chu Lai, the 3rd Brigade began to organize itself. But it wasn't long for the outpost. Soon, the brigade headed north to the area around Hue, Phu Bai and Da Nang. There, the paratroopers worked closely with the 101st Airborne Division. It was the first time the two units had worked together in combat operations since they spearheaded the D-Day invasion in Normandy during World War II.

The deployment of the brigade was rapid. And the paratroopers were soon thrust into combat as some of the most northern forces in South Vietnam. On Feb. 18, less than a week after it was alerted to deploy, the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment deployed to a fire base to begin operations. The rest of the brigade headed further north, where it protected supply lines and existing bases and rooted out North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces who were preparing for another "Tet-like" attack. Later, some of those same soldiers were tasked to move south and defend the city of Saigon.

Deploying from Fort Bragg to the jungles of Vietnam more than 10,000 miles away was a dizzying experience, said O'Hare, who now leads the Golden Brigade Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association. "Everything was a blur," he said. "They were moving us so fast." In Vietnam, O'Hare said, the weather was hot and wet. The roads were treacherous, filled with man-made booby traps and nature's own dangers – steep drop offs, dangerous switchbacks and periodic wash-outs. In the early days, with the American and South Vietnamese troops still spread thin from the Tet offensive, O'Hare said it was difficult to get any supplies other than ammunition. "I thought I was going to starve to death up there," he said. "And our uniforms were rotting off." "The conditions were, for lack of a better word, absolutely horrible," he added. "It was abysmal. Horrible weather, leeches, snakes. Then you put the enemy on top of it all."

The brigade lost its first soldier, Staff Sgt. Joe Rodriguez, to a booby trap in the early days of the deployment. Its temporary home in Vietnam, Camp Rodriguez, was named in his honor.

The Golden Brigade wasted no time making an impact in Vietnam. In addition to providing security, paratroopers formed hunter-killer teams to patrol at night, cleared roads of landmines each morning and set a schedule of aggressive patrols that included setting ambushes for enemy troops. "It was a constant stream of activity," O'Hare said. And for the paratroopers, there were no true safe havens. Patrick "Paddy" Barry, a combat engineer with 3rd Brigade, recalled that his base was constantly harassed by enemy mortars. In May 1968, the outpost was the target of a coordinated attack that began as Barry and others sat down to watch a movie on a makeshift screen. "As we're watching, you look up at the screen and you see all these green enemy tracers coming through," he recalled. "Then come (North Vietnamese troops) throwing satchel charges and firing machine guns." "Everyone was running for cover," Barry said. "There was a tremendous amount of mortar and rocket fire." Once the attackers were beaten back, he said, more than 50 enemy fighters were found killed within the wire. Barry said the fierce fighting was to be expected. The nation had called 9-1-1. And 3rd Brigade was sent in response. "We're the 82nd Airborne," he said. "We're not going to play tidlywinks. We're going over there to arrange a meeting between the enemy and his maker."

In early 1968, 3rd Brigade was serving as the division's ready force, able to deploy on short notice to anywhere in the world. The decision to send the brigade to Vietnam was not made lightly. Westmoreland, then the top American general in Vietnam, had specifically requested the 8<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division when he sought additional troops in early 1968. A paratrooper himself, Westmoreland had commanded the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Fort Bragg and had served as chief of staff for the 82nd Airborne

Division. From 1963 to 1964, he was commanding general of the 18th Airborne Corps. But in the days before the brigade was alerted, President Johnson's top advisors were telling him not to send the 82nd Airborne Division. They worried that such a move would remove their strategic reserve force. Then, as today, officials felt that having the 82nd Airborne Division ready to deploy was an important deterrent to threats around the globe.

Fifty years later, and the 3rd Brigade again has that mission as part of what's now known as the Global Response Force. "In 1968, the Golden Brigade was given only fourteen days to deploy from Fort Bragg to South Vietnam," said Col. Gregory Beaudoin, the current commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. "Their ability to deploy thousands of All Americans to Chu Lai is a historical testament to the division's commitment to readiness." Beaudoin said the brigade conducts tough, rigorous training "in the most realistic environment possible" to stay ready for missions today. "Golden Brigade veterans and their stories are an integral part of the history and heritage of the 82nd Airborne Division," the colonel said. "Fifty years ago, they deployed from Fort Bragg to fight a determined enemy in the jungles of Vietnam and did so with valor and courage. The legacy of the Panther paratrooper is emboldened by these great All Americans and we stand in the shadow of their accomplishments."

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Golden Brigade's Vietnam deployment, veterans are planning events during this year's All American Week at Fort Bragg in May and a large reunion at West Point, New York, in June. Hundreds are expected to attend the event in New York. It will be a celebration unlike anything the soldiers received as they returned home from Vietnam, O'Hare said. Then, many were mistreated by members of the public. They were shunned by veterans groups. In response, O'Hare said, the men grew closer, further tightening the bonds of combat. "These guys are some of the most wonderful people in the whole wide world," he said. "They may appear a little rough around the edges, but the love is so strong they'll do anything for you." Murill chokes up as he talks about the friendships formed in Vietnam. "They're outstanding," he said. "When you think about what those soldiers were asked to do...I'm proud of every one of them."



Phil Cronin and CSM (Ret.) Claud "Bud" Dunn of the Golden Brigade's 1/508 at the 2017 F&F Reunion†

## HELP WANTED

Web site assistance with the following skills:

- 1 - Transcription assistants. From existing records to Word or Excel (or Open Systems equivalent applications). Accuracy imperative. Will provide master formats for input in either application environment.
- 2 - HTML experience for creation of new pages to include in existing website to record various types of facts. Raw data and web page templates available.
- 3 - Access Database design. Experienced person to extend existing design should be a motivated self-starter. Will collaborate regarding design requirements; provide sample inputs and assistance in testing results.

Contact Dick O'Donnell at [Jumpmaster@508pir.org](mailto:Jumpmaster@508pir.org) or 321-759-6174†

## Grave Adoption Program at Netherlands American Cemetery Receives Special Designation



*Locals place flowers and visit the graves of fallen American servicemen as part of the adopt-a-grave program, after the annual Liberation Concert held at Netherlands American Cemetery, in Margraten, Netherlands on September 4, 2016. (Photo by Warrick Paige/ABMC)*

**Monday, December 4, 2017**

At the Netherlands American Cemetery, the [Foundation for Adopting Graves at the American Cemetery Margraten](#) (link is external) and its long-standing grave adoption program received an important designation this year from the government of the Netherlands. The program is now recognized as part of the Dutch National Inventory of Immaterial Cultural Inheritance. This program began in the Netherlands when the government ratified the UNESCO Convention

for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2012. As the name implies, the program aims to protect elements of culture that are not physical and tangible.

“The adoption of American war graves in Margraten is a cultural inheritance raised from respect and gratitude for the American liberators during WWII,” stated the Dutch National Centre for Immaterial Inheritance in its recognition of the program. “It also achieves awareness of the vulnerability of our society.”

The grave adoption program began informally at the cemetery at the end of World War II. Beginning around Memorial Day 1945, local Dutch citizens near Margraten began bringing flowers to graves at the cemetery to honor the American sacrifice. In the decades since, the program has formalized with every headstone and name on the Wall of the Missing having been adopted. The grave adoption program has become woven into the fabric of life in the Limburg region of the southern Netherlands.

“The adoption of U.S. war graves and the U.S. cemetery itself makes people think of the enormous sacrifice that has been made for our freedom—the lives of tens of thousands of young Americans,” reflected Tom Hermes, president of the [Foundation for Adopting Graves at the American Cemetery Margraten](#) (link is external), which officially runs the program. “Adoption also connects with American next of kin and families and often leads to long standing ties of friendship.”

American families take great solace in knowing that someone from the local community cares about the sacrifice of their relative. The person who has adopted the grave often places flowers multiple times a year, and usually tries to research the person—wanting to learn about who they were. These adopters don’t physically care for the gravesite; rather they “adopt” the memory of that person into their own family, keeping their legacy alive in the Netherlands.

*Editor’s Note: The above article appeared in the December ABMC magazine and was submitted by Chris Harris. †*

### SEARCHING FOR...

An active duty 82nd Abn soldier is looking for information on his grandfather, PFC Dewey Allen Jones, Jr. Who served in the 508th during WWII. According to the 508th website, “...he was transferred to Service Company from the Hq. 82 nd AB Division Replacement Depot in Leicester, England on 18 September 1944. Pvt. Jones was reassigned to Company F on 22 November and thus was in position to go into combat for the Battle of the Bulge.” His grandson writes, “I’m hopeful that there may be some roll sheets or mission logs that can tell me places he went to so my family can go visit someday. Thanks very much!”

**CW2 Devan G. Williams**  
**Maintenance Platoon Leader**  
**D Co. 82nd Aviation Regiment**  
**Cell: 469-688-4646**  
**Email: [devane.g.williams.mil@mail.mil](mailto:devane.g.williams.mil@mail.mil) †**

Hello. I just started researching my great uncle Vernon Thomas 1st lieutenant. I would love to find more pictures and more about him if possible. Here is what I know so far. If you have any pictures or information I would appreciate it. Thank you.

He quickly volunteered for parachutist duty and after completing the requisite 5 jumps from an aircraft in flight, Vernon was debarred as a qualified parachutist on January 5, 1943. He was assigned to Company F, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment. He rose quickly in rank, a year after earning his parachutist badge he was appointed to the rank of Staff Sergeant. His leadership skills were noted and in August 1944 he was discharged to accept a commission as a Second Lieutenant. As was traditional for a

newly commissioned officer, he was transferred to a different element of the regiment - Company H. Vernon continued to advance quickly.

By December 1944 when the 508th was engaged in the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium, he had attained the rank of First Lieutenant and was acting as a Platoon Leader. He was captured and escaped to find his men and fight for the last time.

1st Lt Vernon Thomas was initially listed as MIA (missing in action) on December 24 1944. On January 16, 1945 that status was changed to read as KIA (killed in action) on January 12, 1945. It was not until March 1945 that investigation into the circumstance of his death enabled pinpointing December 25 1944 as having been the actual date of his death.

Lieutenant Thomas' decorations include the Bronze Star Medal; heroic achievement, heroic service.

**Keith Thomas**

[Illusion581@gmail.com](mailto:Illusion581@gmail.com) †

## FINAL JUMPS

Kindly submit information of final jumps to [Editor@508PIR.org](mailto:Editor@508PIR.org). Please include: name, company, years served in the 508<sup>th</sup> if available, and address where to send condolences if available.

### **Boroughs, Ralph (Zig)**



Ralph "Zig" Zeigler Boroughs, of Pickens, passed away Friday September 15, 2017, at Cannon Memorial Hospital, with his wife Mary Jennings Boroughs (nee Dougherty) at his side. He was born June 22, 1923, the son of Ralph Waldo Boroughs, of Pickens, and Zoe Boroughs (nee Zeigler) of Orangeburg County, SC. Zig was raised in Pickens. He attended Columbia Bible College and the Citadel. In WWII he served with the U.S. Army's 508th Paratrooper Regiment, 82nd Airborne, in Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge. After the war he served as a public school teacher and administrator in upstate South Carolina, a Baptist minister in upstate New York, and a professor at Lander University. He earned an A.B. from Furman University, a B.D. from New Orleans Theological Seminary, a M.Ed. from Clemson University, and a doctorate from the University of Georgia. Zig was a "people person" who loved to visit and tell stories, but would also listen to and remember other's stories. In 1987 Zig published his first book, "A Private's Eye View of World War II", containing mostly personal recollections from the War years. Later he gathered stories from other members of his unit, and published their stories in two volumes: "The Devil's Tale, stories of the 508th Red Devils" (1992) and "The 508th Connection" (2004). Although he was proud of his military service, and loved his fellow soldiers, he was not one to glorify war. He often said "war is Hell". Zig loved God and his church. He prayed often for others, and loved singing, both hymns and secular music. He was an avid gardener and bird watcher. He also loved Pickens, its people and the hills around it. He had a special place in his heart for Table Rock.

Condolences can be sent to Mary at:  
212 West Main St.  
Pickens, SC 29671

*(Editor's Note: Zig was well loved and will be missed by all who knew him. Some of my fondest memories are of spending time with Zig at 508 th reunions and talking to him on the telephone for hours!) †*

### **Janish, Kenneth**

Kenneth F. Janish, Life time member of the 82nd Airborne, 508 PIR, F, passed away January 12, 2018, in the New York State Veterans Home, in Batavia, New York, 6:15PM. Widow of Evelyn M. Janish, beloved Father of Evelyn L. Janish and Mary K. Towles. Past Co-Chairman of the Niagara Frontier Chapter of the 82nd Airborne. Recipient of the O B Hill Award. World War II Veteran who fought in the battles of D-Day, Nijmegen, and the Battle of the Bulge.

My sister and I already miss him, but we know he is with Mom, his brother Robert Janish, also a lifetime member of the 82nd Airborne, and my Husband, Dale Madison.

-- **Ev Janish C 716.220.5909**

Condolences may be sent to Ev at:  
142 Wedgewood Dr.  
Williamsville, NY 14221 †

## CONDOLENCES

### Lamson, Gail

Gail Lamson passed away suddenly on January 29. She was preceded in death by her mother, Charlene; brother, Kevin; and nephew, Aaron. She is survived by son, Joseph; father, Ernest; sister, Renee; also aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and many friends.

Condolences can be sent to Ernie at:  
1600 Arundel St. #205  
St. Paul, MN 55117 →

### Price, Kathy

Family and Friends member, Graham Lawson of Nottingham, England reports that Kathy Price passed away February 16. Kathy was a young teenage girl during the war and worked at the Middleton café in Nottingham as a waitress. She well remembered serving the 508th troopers coming to her café and spoke of what big tippers they were! She often told the story of her first interaction with an American G.I. The young man left her a very large tip. Thinking he had made a mistake, she tried to give it back to him, but he wouldn't hear of it.



I met Kathy in 2008 when I accompanied 508th veteran, Jimmy Wynne, to England and France. Those who attended the 2008 Reunion at Ft. Bragg will remember Kathy attending. She was a big hit with everyone, but especially the WWII veterans. I still have the piece of Nottingham lace she gave me.

The photo is of Allan Gillies, Jimmy Wynne, Kathy Price and Graham Lawson at Wollaton Park. During the war Allan's mother did laundry for the 508 th soldiers

and Allan would make the pickups and deliveries. →

## NEW FAMILY & FRIENDS LIFETIME MEMBERS

### Sustaining Members:

Aristeo Blanco – 508th RCT 1951 – Transferred from 508<sup>th</sup> Airborne Chapter

Paul Galloway - HHC 1/508 Ft. Kobbe Panama 1990 – 1993

Clifton Hodge – Hq. Division Artillery – 1955-1956 – Transferred from 508th Airborne Chapter

Meg and Michael Kelvington – Michael served B Co., 1-508 PIR, 4<sup>th</sup> BCT 2011 to 2013; Meg also served in Hq & Hq Co. 4<sup>th</sup> BCT

CSM (Ret) Donald McAlister – CSM 2-508 PIR 1992 to 2017

John “jack” D. McHugh II – Served in A Co. – 508<sup>th</sup> 1966-1968

James Strickland – Support Company – 508<sup>th</sup> ARCT 1953 - 1954

### Patrons:

Carl Porter of Service Co. upgraded to Patron level.

Thulai van Maanen – 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt in Dutch army. – she writes: I am Thulai van Maanen, 1SGT in the Dutch army and frequent guide of military groups to Normandy. I research the actions of the 82nd and its regiments as a hobby and for my work in the military ( I develop battlefield tours for example)

I adopted several 82nd graves on the Normandy cemetery, of which one is most likely a 508 paratrooper (not indentified yet). Because of this I am involved in MIA research and currently talking to local authorities. Next to that, I often pay a visit to the graves of 82nd and 508 boys on behalf of relatives. Since a couple of months I decided to make stone rubs with Oil Crayons for the families and send it to them. My recent project was a movie we made in remembrance of Pvt Teahan who died in Normandy <https://youtu.be/632gL1dENfo> ) my next project will be filming the footsteps of the 508 at Devils hill in September 1944.

The father of my daughter was a Dutch paratrooper who died while serving 6 years ago. A friend of mine, a Dutch paratrooper, served with 1st Bn 508 PIR in Afghanistan in 2007 and was severely wounded in action while fighting side by side with his 508 brothers.

### Supporters:

Thomas Bodine – Served in 3/508 1962 to 1965

James Christy – Served in Support Co. 508<sup>th</sup> ARCT 1953-1954

Paul Henry – Served in C Co. – 1/508 76-79

Duane and Elizabeth MacLeod – Served in H&H Co. 508 ARCT – Aug 1952 to Aug 1958

Paul Ott – 320th Field Artillery Bn – 1953 to 1955 – Transferred from 508th Airborne Chapter

Rob Palmer – Grandson of Laurence Palmer – 1/508

Anthony “Tony” Peralta – 1st Bn Co. D – 508th RCT 1952-1955 – Transferred from 508th Airborne Chapter

Leonard Perttu – Served in the 508 ARCT 1954-1956

Fr. Stephen Turner – Served in 1/508 Panama – 88-91 and 1/508 Vicenza 96-97

Kaye Weninger – President of Operation Democracy†

## Mailbox

Greetings all, I served in 1/508 from 88-91 (FT Kobbe, Panama), and went to 1/508 ABCT in Vicenza, Italy in the mid-nineties. I am now a clergy man and am working with another Paratrooper priest on a PTSD Healing Pilgrimage from 14-30 SEP 2018. We will be walking, of course there will be a hump, from Astorgas to Santiago, Spain.

Are you interested in going? If so, then contact us, myself or Steven Rindahl, via the FB group Warriors on the Way:

<https://www.facebook.com/WarriorsOnTheWay/>

Do you want to support us? Well the most important way is through Prayer, but should you be able to assist financially here is the link to the organization that is helping us with the fundraising (there is a pull-down menu, where you can select us, Warriors on the Way):

<https://ssamericanmemorialfoundation.cloverdonations.com/ss-american-memorial-foundation/>

Our goal is for Transportation, Lodging, and most equipment, (other than your personal clothing) to be paid for.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Fr. Stephen Turner†



### The Diablo

3630 Townsend Dr.  
Dallas, TX 75229-3805