

# DIABLO



Voice Of The Family And Friends Of The 508<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment Association- November 2006 - Vol. 1, Nr. 3

## Augusta Mini Reunion A Rousing success *New Association First Business Meeting Shows Way Forward*



### From The Jumpmaster

By Dick O'Donnell

We had more than forty members of HQ 1<sup>st</sup> and the new association join in to enjoy the camaraderie of old friends, spouses, family members and association friends.

We were blessed with a wide mix of people who represented the veterans of the 508<sup>th</sup> as well as their descendants. Folks came from as far west as Texas and as far north as Minneapolis. Winner of the "Traveled Furthest" award however certainly must go to Graham Lawson of Nottingham, England.

Our business meeting enabled everyone to review the proposed Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws that were accepted without change.

Two important roles were filled during the business meeting as well.

Ellen Peters, a well-known friend from Dallas where she is employed as a CPA, was accepted as the "Interim Treasurer." She will hold this post until the first annual meeting to be held in 2007 when the nominating committee will present a slate of directors and officers for election. Ellen can be reached by e-mail at [Treasurer@508PIR.org](mailto:Treasurer@508PIR.org).

We gratefully accepted Leland Burns who volunteered to take on the role of newsletter editor. No stranger to the keyboard, Leland co-authored the book "Jump Into The Valley" with his late father, Dwayne Burns.

Leland will need the support of all association members. Please remember to e-mail him any and all news that you may have that is related to our extended 508<sup>th</sup> family. Leland can be reached at [Editor@508thPIR.org](mailto:Editor@508thPIR.org). ➔

### From The Crewmember

By Leland Burns - editor

Editor!!!! I told Dick O'Donnell that I would discuss it with him. Then in a moment of weakness (read stupor) while I was still enjoying the bar in the C.P. Dick says to me "Now, when you get your first issue out..." To which I answered "OK" because I was in no condition to argue.

As editor I hope to use this space to deliver on-going information about the heroes of the 508<sup>th</sup>. It has been said many times that garbage in is garbage out. So this newsletter is only going to be as good as the information that I get from the Family and Friends of The 508<sup>th</sup> Members. But there ain't gonna be no garbage! Our subject matter is too good for that.

For this issue I feel compelled to introduce myself to the membership at large. As Dick mentions one column over my father was Dwayne Burns and the rumors of he and I writing a book are correct. As a matter of politeness however I will not be selling the book through this venue and will not mention it beyond this issue.

I was a member of the Air Force '75-79 serving briefly in a drum & bugle corps before training as an aircraft crew chief. (And why any crew chief ever got onboard with you guys bound for Normandy is beyond me.)

I never thought too much about WWII until I was given an overseas assignment to Germany. Everywhere I went - other than Germany - Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg - I had complete strangers walk up to me and thank me for being an American soldier.

That really makes you think and then realize the effect the WWII soldier had on mainland Europe.

Returning home I earned a college degree, worked a decade in the music industry, returned to school for a second degree and taught college for five years. For the past eight years I've been an engineer for Verizon Telecommunications.

Twice my father hosted mini reunions for his F-Company buddies and I was pleased to help him as he asked and met some really good guys. Regretfully, the only 508<sup>th</sup> reunion I made was the final to retire the colors.

Without question my interest in the 508<sup>th</sup> grew when dad showed me 86 hand-printed pages (dad was a draftsman) of war memories. I was college educated, a bit of a writer and dad asked if I could polish his words a bit. After about fifty research books, a thousand questions, and multiple rewrites I returned to dad a 300+ page manuscript. He loved it but it was full of mistakes and he had to correct me as he remembered it.

Cutting to the end game - the book is now a Military Book Club Editor's Choice Selection and is published by Casemate; the largest distributor of military books in the world. But telling you that is not what the editor will do here. It is just part of who I am. Happy to meet you.

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## BUSINESS SURVEY

At the recent Headquarters 1<sup>st</sup> mini-reunion the board members requested everyone attending to fill out a multiple-choice survey. 26 people responded. Here are the results.

### DUES: members were asked to indicate their preference on five related questions:

1. Veterans or their surviving widows should be exempt from paying dues
  - a. Vote Tally: (17 Agreed, 8 Disagreed, 1 Blank)
  - b. Result: Veterans and/or their widows are exempted from paying dues.
2. Dues should be assessed per household address, not per individual
  - a. Vote Tally: (18 Agreed, 5 Disagreed, 3 Blank)
  - b. Result: Association dues will be assessed on a per household basis.
3. All Association members should pay \$10 dues per year
  - a. Vote Tally: (18 Agreed, 5 Disagreed, 3 Blank)
  - b. Result: All non-exempt member households will pay \$10 dues per year
4. There should be no dues paid, the association should depend on voluntary donations
  - a. Vote Tally: (4 Agreed, 18 Disagreed, 4 Blank)
  - b. Result: The association will not run on donations alone.
5. Legacy honorary members should continue to be exempt from dues.
  - a. Vote Tally: (17 Agreed, 5 Disagreed, 4 Blank)
  - b. Result: Legacy honorary members

will be exempted from annual dues

### Diablo Newsletter Distribution:

1. Newsletter should be sent to active members only
  - a. Vote Tally: (9 Agreed, 14 Disagreed, 3 Blank)
2. Newsletter should be sent to all veterans, family and friends regardless of membership status.
  - a. Vote Tally: (21 Agreed, 5 Disagreed, None Blank)
3. Result of above two votes: Newsletter will be sent to all veterans, family and friends

### 2007 Reunion Venue Preferences:

1. Southeastern U.S. (11 Agreed, 6 Disagreed, 9 Blank)
2. Northeastern U. S. (5 Agreed, 8 Disagreed, 13 Blank)
3. Southwestern U.S. (14 Agreed, 3 Disagreed, 9 Blank)
4. North central U.S. (8 Agreed, 5 Disagreed, 13 Blank)
  - a. Result: Emphasis will be given to reunion sites in Southeastern and Southwestern U.S.

### Consideration of School Calendars When Scheduling Reunions:

1. July (12 Agreed, 6 Disagreed, 8 Blank)
1. August (13 Agreed, 5 Disagreed, 8 Blank)
2. October (5 Agreed, 10 Disagreed, 11 Blank)
  - a. Result: The months of July and August will be given preference in scheduling future reunions.

### Survey Lowdown:

Several items stand out in the survey. The first one being that dues are only going to be \$10 and there are no dues requested of veterans. This is going to mean we really need good, active sign-up by the "family and friends" types out there in order to keep funds in the bank account.

Second issue is related to the first – that all family/friends should continue

to receive the newsletter regardless of membership status. Our current mailing list is over 1450 people. Some of these may be duplicate addresses and will be combined. This results in us having to wonder how we pay for the mailing but we will figure it out somehow.

The latter two items have to do with future reunions. We WILL have a regimental reunion in 2007. †

## Newsletter Distribution

Since it has been decided that all Family and Friends shall receive the newsletter regardless of membership status, we need to be thinking of cutting distribution costs. Postage for each quarterly newsletter edition will be approximately \$550 unless costs can be held in check - and that doesn't include the cost of printing the items to be mailed.

Use of e-mail immediately comes to mind as a cost cutting mechanism. The newsletter can be attached in either Microsoft's Word or Adobe's PDF formats – or both.

As a consequence, an experimental mailing will be made to determine how up to date our e-mail address list is. If, by the time that you read this, you didn't get an experimental mailing, your e-mail address is one of those that are obsolete.

We suspect that many currently known e-mail addresses will fail and we will be forced to spend postage to reach those parties. Some copies, of course, will have to be posted to those who do not use e-mail.

If you recently changed your e-mail address, please ensure that we can reach you by sending e-mail to [Jumpster@508PIR.org](mailto:Jumpster@508PIR.org), which will allow us to update our records. †

## Incorporation Completed

The "Family and Friends of The 508<sup>th</sup> PIR Association" has been incorporated as a 501(c)7 corporation in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

William Mone, an attorney in the law firm of Ropes & Gray, LLC has been our benefactor with tireless hours of research and adept legal footwork, all on a pro

bono basis. We all owe him a great debt of gratitude for his efforts.

Recognizing early on that a token of appreciation was due, Irv Shanley and his daughter Joan put together a suitable package – inside, a copy of William Lord's "History of the 508<sup>th</sup>, signed by the author on our behalf and also an official 508<sup>th</sup> Red Devil coffee mug. Our thanks to the Shanleys!

Bill intends to read the book from cover to cover and find a suitable place amongst his law books. Meanwhile the mug sits on his desk where he says it is "quite a conversation piece." ➔

### New Fiscal Year Dawns

Based on our newly adopted By-Laws, the association's fiscal year will run from November 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> – Happy New Year!

During our first business meeting in Orange Park, FL in October 2005 it was proposed that we collect an "Initiation Fee" of \$30 during calendar 2005.

The monies collected during the past fiscal year, coupled with some donations, were used to develop a reserve account. It is through the largess of those who contributed this "seed" money that we are able now to leap forward as a free-standing and self-sustaining organization.

We cannot, however, expect these funds alone to sustain us forever.

As a consequence, we agreed to collect \$10 annual membership dues on a "per household" basis.

With the advent of the new fiscal year, we now ask each of you to consider sending your personal check for your 2007 dues. The bank has agreed to permit checks to be payable to "F&F of the 508<sup>th</sup> PIR". Send checks to the Treasurer:

Ellen Peters  
3630 Townsend Dr.  
Dallas, TX 75229 ➔

### Route March

Fred Hoek (fred@hoek-bok.nl) of the Netherlands has announced the annual march in 2007 will follow the 508<sup>th</sup>'s route through the Ardennes. So, get your galoshes on and sign up. ➔

### Condolences

**FUNK, Gertrude Susa** - Gertrude E. Susa Funk, 91, formerly of McKeesport, died Sept. 18.

1<sup>st</sup> SGT Leonard A Funk's widow, Gertrude Funk, long time member and supporter of several chapters, passed last night (Monday 18 Sept.) peacefully. Arrangements were handled by Jaycox Jaworski Funeral Home, 2703 Oneil Blvd, McKeesport, Pa 15132 412 664 4489.

So far, arrangements are for one viewing Thursday 21 Sept. 2006 19:00-21:00; funeral Fr 10:30 Blessing at the funeral home, 11:00 Mass at St Pius IV in McKeesport, followed by interment at Braddock Catholic Cemetery, Braddock (Allegheny county) Pa.

Mike Troster, Chair of the 1<sup>st</sup> SGT Leonard A Funk Chapter, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne later wrote:

"We just returned from Gertrude Funk's funeral; there were as many paratroopers (thanks, Airborne) as family members in attendance. The list of troopers signing in for last night's viewing also was quite long. The family expressed their gratitude for what the chapter members did. (Thanks, Kirk) For those who asked about Mass cards: St Pius V, 2911 Versailles Ave, 15132-1919.

Thanks for all the expressions of sympathy. The Family was very grateful. Anyone who wishes to send flowers to the grave (or visit the grave) please contact me for directions.

Mike Troster  
1<sup>st</sup> SGT Leonard A Funk Chapter

**GEIB, John M. Sr.**

JOHN M. GIEB, age 87.  
Beloved husband of the late Louise (nee Coring); loving father of John M (Eadie), Donald and Mary Lou O'Neil (Brian); grandfather of Michael B. and Kori; great grandfather of Anthony; brother of William and the late Michael. W.W. II U.S. Army Veteran, VISITATION 2-4 AND 7-9 PM; SUNDAY In the chapel at Sunset Memorial Park, 6245 Columbia Rd., where funeral services will be held Monday, March 6 at 11 AM. Memorial

contributions may be made to Disabled American Veterans.

Arrangements by DOSTAL FUNERAL SERVICE.

**RITCHOTTE, George Roland**  
Ritchotte, 84, passed away on Sunday, September 17, 2006 in Orange Park, FL. Mr. Ritchotte was born on November 11, 1921 in West Warwick, RI. He served his country in the U.S. Army during World War II with the 82nd Airborne Division. He retired from Civil Service at NARF-NAS Jacksonville after 22 years service. George was a charter member and first commander of the DAV, Orange Park Chapter 38.

He was predeceased by his parents, George and Phidora Ritchotte, his son, Donald Ritchotte, brother, Rudolphe Ritchotte and sister, Claire Gendron. Survivors include his loving wife of 60 years, Helen Ritchotte; children, Charles Ritchotte (Lucille)-Coventry, RI, Robert Ritchotte (Nancy) Milledgeville, GA, Ann Marie Phillips (Alan) and Paul Ritchotte (Cindy) both of Orange Park, FL; sister, Lorraine Poncin-Menifee, CA; 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Friday, September 22, 2006, 11:00 AM at St. Luke's Catholic Church, 1606 Blanding Blvd., Middleburg, FL with Fr. Donal Sullivan, Celebrant. Family and friends will visit at JACKSONVILLE MEMORY GARDENS FUNERAL HOME, 111 Blanding Blvd., Orange Park, FL on Thursday, September 21, 2006 from 6 until 8 PM  
(Published in the Florida Times-Union on 9/19/2006).

**GOUDY, William (Bill)**

Dear Folks; Our beloved comrade William (Bill) Goudy (Hq1, 508th PIR WW II) died today 11/04/06. Bill died of Pneumonia. Please send prayers and condolences to Mabel Goudy and her faintly at 410 Bukey Avenue, Williamstown, WV 26187-1312. Thanks. George Stoeckert

**PETERSON,**

Laverne Peterson, F Company  
recently lost his wife. ➔

**Searching For ...****SSgt Richard Howell**

My dad was SSgt Richard R. Howell (Dick Howell). He was assigned to the Regimental HQ Co, 508th while the regiment went thru training in the states before deployment to Europe. Upon deployment he was assigned as a section sergeant to the 101st's naval gunfire support detachment and was attached to the 501st for the Normandy drop.

Apparently as the battle moved inland the airborne divisions decided they did not need naval gunfire detachments and they were all reassigned to the Pacific. My dad ended up in the 674 GFAB of the 11th Airborne in the Philippines.

In his scrapbook he had a lot of stuff from his time with the 508th and so I thought I would forward it to you.

I live up in Alaska. I am a retired army LTC and my interest was sparked by the Band of Brothers series.

I would be interested if there are any folks in your association that remember my dad. While he was alive he didn't talk much about his wartime experiences. I would just like to get information about his time in the army.

Thanks,

Russ Howell (anrbh@uaa.alaska.edu)

**Capt. Paul Kolisch**

Thanks for the newsletter; it is a great start for the new organization! I was wondering if you could put a notice in the next newsletter asking for anyone who served with CPT Paul Kolisch to contact me (email is fine). He was a doctor, jumped in with the 82nd on D-Day, was ordered to surrender to the Germans with wounded members of his outfit, was wounded himself when he tried to help an American officer, and was a POW. He was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

Thanks again!

Dana Madison ([madison@clarion.edu](mailto:madison@clarion.edu))

**Steve Mauro**

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

From: Carl Mauro Jr.

[carl.square1@verizon.net](mailto:carl.square1@verizon.net) ➔

**Get Well****TOM BENO,**

Tom Beno has suffered a massive heart attack and is recuperating in a nursing home.

No address given at this time. ➔

**The Diablo**

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