

DIABLO



The Link for All Veterans, Spouses, Family And Friends Of The 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association – August, 2011 - Vol. 6, Nr. 2

2011 Reunion

For our 2011 reunion, we will be joining the Family and Friends of the 505th RCT Assn. and heading to Ft. Benning, GA. The dates will be October 12 – 16, 2011. Our reunion schedule has changed a bit. From what was shown in the previous Diablo. The revised schedule is below.

Wednesday, October 12 – Registration Day

Thursday, October 13:

-9:00 AM--Welcoming Breakfast;

-1:00 PM --Visit to the "Little White House" in Warm Springs, GA. where President Roosevelt used the hot springs medicinal properties to help manage polio. It is also where he was at the time of his death.

Friday, October 14:

-8:00 AM – Visit to Ft. Benning We will be attending the graduation of the latest class of paratroopers where our WWII veterans will pin the wings on the new paratroopers. We will also have an Airborne training demonstration.

-11:30 AM – We will head over to the officer's club for lunch..

-1:00 PM – A visit to the Infantry Museum

Saturday, October 15 – Veteran's forum and General Membership meeting. Banquet.. Col. Brian Mennes, commander of 4th BCT will be our speaker.

Sunday, October 16 – Departure

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By-laws Changes

For all Members of the F&F 508th PIR Association:

After the Oklahoma City Reunion last year, I was appointed Chairman of the By-laws Committee to review our current By-Laws dated August 11, 2007. I could not ask for a better committee which consisted of Bob Speers, Gene Garren, Bert Puckett, and Lou Gutierrez. In addition, the By-

Laws committee advisors were Attorney Adrian Falgione from South Carolina, and Bob Chisolm who I consider, along with Bob Speers, as experts on By-Laws.

Included with my introduction letter are 13 proposed Amendments as recommended by the committee. I doubt any of you have a copy of the Associations current By-Laws dated August 11, 2007, so if you have any questions on any of the 13 proposed Amendments before our reunion in Columbus, Georgia please feel free to call me.

At our upcoming reunion in October, in Columbus, Georgia you will have in your registration packet a copy of the new By-Laws dated October 2011 along with the 13 proposed amendments to the August 11, 2007 By-Laws which you will be voting on October 15, 2011 at the General Membership meeting.

It is my opinion the By-Laws committee did an "Outstanding" job in developing the new By-Laws dated October 2011. I truly believe the new proposed 13 Amendments will serve well the Board of Directors along with the General Membership.

Rock Merritt

Chairman, F and F's 508 PIR Association By-laws Committee

Telephone: 910-425-5818

E-mail: rock508pir@nc.rr.com

Recommended Changes to the F&F 508th PIR Association By-laws

1. Article III, Section 3.1. Change to read five and we added Board of Directors.
2. Article III, Section 3.1. Change to read from Board of Directors to Treasurer.
3. Article III, Section 3.4. Change to read General Members
4. Article III, Section 3.8. Change to read the majority of members present will be a quorum.
5. Article IV, Section(s) 4.2.and 4.3. are eliminated, and incorporated into Article V. Section 5.1.
6. Article IV, Section 4.10 eliminated "Election of Officers"

7. Article V, Section 5.1. Board of Directors number and qualification changed to read: The Board of Directors shall consist of a National Chairman, President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, with a vote, and the Clerk/Agent with a no vote

8. Article V, Section 5.3. Chairman of the Board Change to read: The duly elected President will be the Chairman of the Board

9. Article V, Section 5.4. Removed the Board of Directors "Authority" over the President who is the Executive Director, of the F and F's 508 PIR Association

10. Article V, Section 5.9. Added Secretary's duties

11. Article VI, Section 6.1. After 20 years the National Chairman's position will cease to exist. That position was an honorary position given to Dick O'Donnell for him being the founder of the Family and Friends 508 PIR Association

12. Article VII, Section 7.2 removals changed to read: may be removed for cause by a vote of the General Members.

13. Article X, Amendment to the By-Laws: Changed to read only the General Members can approve any changes to the By-Laws. Any member may recommend a change to the By-Laws, if he or she complies with Article X

Rock Merritt

Chairman, Family and Friends 508 PIR Association By-Laws Committee

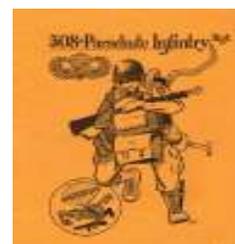
Ph. (910) 425-5818; Email:

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The First Reunion

By: Rob Palmer

The First Annual Reunion of what would become the 508th PIR Association was held in Chicago, IL.



The "Windy City" was seen to be a central point accommodating flights from all major airlines and from anywhere in the U.S. In fact, at that time, it was the largest and busiest airport in the nation. The Marriott hotel, easily accessible from

the terminal area was chosen as the venue. In fact, the reunion was such a success that the 2nd reunion was held a year later in that same hotel. After that, the venues moved about the country, which not only enabled some veterans to travel shorter distances, it also gave their comrades a chance to see parts of the nation that they had never before visited.

Thanks to a year of dedicated effort by O.B. Hill, 227 men of the 508th had been located and 133 of them attended this first get-together.

No one knew it then but this was the beginning of a tradition that would last for thirty years. The search for other men of the 508th continued and reached its zenith of 1,415 in 1995. The annual conclaves would not end until the Association chose to "Retire With Dignity" on October 19, 2004 when it stood down at Camp Blanding, Florida almost exactly 62 years after the regiment had been formed there.

The legacy lives on in the Family and Friends of the 508th PIR. Join us at our October reunion and help keep these wonderful gatherings as a vibrant part of our organization.

Pvt. John A Daum

By: Mary Kay

Seeing row after row of crosses and Stars of David at the American Cemetery in Normandy, it's hard to hear the individual voices of the men who lost their lives while fighting to liberate France from Nazi Germany. There are thousands of dead soldiers, each with his own story. Here's the tale of one of them, Private John A. Daum, a paratrooper from a small town in Wisconsin.

According to the testimony written by John's nephew, John worked for a farmer at the Weinbrenner Shoe Factory in Marshfield, Wisconsin before enlisting. After completing his basic training at Camp Robinson, Arkansas, he joined the paratroopers. Letters home told of the daily five to ten mile runs and how he was taught to pack his parachute, to jump from towers and finally from a plane. In a letter to his father, John proudly mentioned that even though it was "really hot and a lot of soldiers were getting sick" that the "Daum blood kept him going."

John received his wings on October 2, 1943 and joined the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne at Camp Mackall. From there he traveled to



Northern Ireland and then to Nottingham, England, where he said that there wasn't much to do except train and go to town. Fortunately, the young man from Wisconsin found the girls from England to be "nice". In the last letter to his family, John thanked them for the candy that they had sent and asked them to send socks. He told them not to worry and that he hoped to return to Wisconsin in a year. John never did return home. He was killed in battle at the age of 20.

John A. Daum was just a regular guy. So, why did I pick him out of the 9,387 people who are buried at the American Cemetery? I didn't. But since I found myself fighting back tears when our tour guide read the following letter that a visitor left by John's grave in 2007, I wanted to learn more about one soldier, who just happened to be John, as a way of honoring all of the men and women who lost their lives during World War II.

Le 1 November 2007

Dear John,

We don't know each other, we know nothing of each other's lives and even so, I feel I owe you so much. I know nothing of you or so little.

I don't know what were your tastes, your hobbies, your favorite music or if you had a girlfriend back home. I don't know what you loved in life, your too short life.

John, you've been buried here for over 60 years, in this land of France that saw your last days. These last days where you fought for the liberation of a country, a whole continent and a civilization. When I found your picture, I started thinking a lot about you, your face, your pink cheeks, almost the face of a child. Your smile tells me you must have been mischievous, cheerful and full of life.

Then I felt a deep sorrow because I know that on that day of June 6 th, 1944, when you jumped into the cold black night on the Normandy beach, you must have been terrified. Terrified before the unknown, terrified at the thought of never seeing your family again, of losing your army companions, of being alone, of death itself. Nevertheless, you survived that historic night and fought for two long days, before you fell on June 8 th.

I wonder how were the last moments of your life, with who you were. From the bottom of my heart, I hope that you were not alone. Because I know that your comrade-in-arms

must have done everything to protect you, reassure you and comfort you.

I read the letters that were addressed to your parents when you passed away and realized that you were very much appreciated by your army companions.

Before I leave John, I would like to tell you how much I am aware that your ultimate sacrifice and the one of thousands of men like you has allowed me and all of us, to live in a land of freedom and peace.



For all of this, I am sincerely grateful. So, I promise you that every time I will travel to Normandy, I will come visit you to honor your memory. I will lay my hand on your white cross, so that you are not alone in the dark anymore. I will keep your memory alive in my heart and I will never forget what you have done for me, for our liberty, for all of us.

Yvan Leriche – Sainte-Symphorien, Belgium

Searching For....

Does anyone have any information on a 1963 jump at Sicily Drop Zone at Ft. Bragg, NC where a C-130 lost altitude and hit some jumpers as they were coming down? If so, please contact:

Bobby Hosmer – 843-408-3349

Checking In

Hello everyone,

I'm 87 years old. Still hanging in there. A.A.T.W.

Nick Pavone

Physically Harry is doing okay. But from his stroke he had 10 years ago, he has short term memory and he thinks he is home on medical leave from his injuries waiting for his orders. We love getting the Diablo news.

Iola and Harry Muhme

In December of 1944, a Junker 88 flew over our position in Rencheaux, Belgium. Paratroopers jumped and descended upon us. We shot at them like crazy one guy had one land in his foxhole and he killed it. It turned out that they were straw-filled dummies--- maybe we were the dummies--we could have

easily brought down the airplane if we had shot at it instead of the dummies.

Ed Wheelock – aewhee@cox.net

I made the Market Garden combat jump in Nijmegen, Holland. September 1944.

Alan G. Wood - ageow@comcast.net

Mail Box

I am an original member of HHC, 1/50th that went to Nam with the 3rd Bde 82nd ABN Div on 14 Feb 1968.

Philip Cronin - pipo5146@aol.com

Note: Mr. Cronin also served in 1st Bn ABN, 12th Cav, 1 Cav Div.

My father, Mabry Davis served with the 508th, reporting to the unit in July of 1944. He was a Medic, probably with the Medical Company. I have a WD 53 showing him to be a temporary Staff Sergeant in Sep 1945. He was KIA in 1951 while serving with the 186th. Robert Davis, , MSG USA RET
rdavis53@hotmail.com

I was in 3rd platoon weapons squad from 83-86. Went to the Sinai Desert in 85 with MFO. If you served with me, shoot me an email and give me a SITREP.
[Chris Marquardt - c.marquardt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Chris.Marquardt@sbcglobal.net)

My son is serving now in the 508. To say the least we are proud.

Mark McVicar – dmcvicar@q.com

I served with C, 1/508 PIR during the Tet offensive, Vietnam 1968. Would like to hear from others in my unit.

Wayne Smith

Wsmith@scottcompanies.com

Final Jumps

Bolton

My father, Donald Bolton, passed away on January 10, 2011 at the age of 86. He remained active, living in his own home, and conducting all his own affairs until his death. He served in the headquarters company of the third battalion of the 508 in Communications. He had learned "code" prior to being shipped to Europe in August 1944. Among other experiences, he served as an honor guard and saw Presidents Truman and Eisenhower and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. I know

that he attended reunions of your organization and enjoyed receiving your newsletter.

Sincerely,

Sharon Johnson

Condolences can be sent to the family at: 17320 SW 89th Ct.; Palmetto Bay, FL 33157

Carson

My father, Thomas Edgar Carson, Jr. passed away on Tuesday, July 12, 2011, in Gastonia, North Carolina. He was 89 years old. Tommy was in the 508thPIR HQ2. Tommy leaves behind his wife of 66 years, Helen Carson, his two daughters, Barbara and Libby and their husbands, three granddaughters, one grandson, and four great granddaughters. He is also survived by one brother, Whitelaw Carson, who served as a Marine in WWII in the Pacific, and also in Vietnam. Tommy participated in the Normandy invasion on D Day and in Holland for Operation Market Garden. He received serious injuries there that ended his time in the war zone. He finished his recovery time stateside and was discharged in 1945. Tommy was proud of his participation in the 508th PIR and was able to be at the very special reunion at Camp Blanding, Florida with his wife, daughters, and sons-in-law.

Tommy died after a three week struggle with bilateral pneumonia. He died with dignity and grace and accepted the fact that God was calling him home. He considered the time between his injuries in Holland in 1944 and his death this week to be God's gift of grace. He was a brave soldier on both battlefields. Condolences can be sent to the family at: 1940 Wexford Ct.; Gastonia, NC 28054.

Kennedy

I was recently informed that Harry Kennedy of Hq & Hq Co. passed away November 6, 2009. Condolences may be sent to Harry's family at: 350 Trysail Ct.; Foster City, CA 94404-3013

Oldemeyer

David Oldemeyer passed on May 25, 2011 in Pipestone, MN. Sympathy cards can be sent to the family c/o John Oldemeyer, 1610 160th Avenue, Holland, MN 56139-4724

Thomas

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of 1st Sgt. Ralph H. Thomas. He

was 92 and was attached to E Co., 2nd BN 508th PIR during WW2.

Marc Baker – mbak1045@gmail.com

Condolences may be sent to the Thomas family at: 6409 Pinehaven Rd.

Oakland, CA 94611

Condolences

Guess I had better let you know what's going on with Sandy. She passed away on Friday 6-24-11 at 4:03 pm. We had the Memorial on the 30th and her ashes are going to be put to rest on the 16th of September in Casper Wyoming as which time we will have another Memorial for her family and a lot of her friends. I have had a lot of support from my Church and her Sisters and her sons so the transition for me has not really been too hard. Love Bill K. Thank you for thinking of me with the neat card. Keep the e-mails coming I really enjoy them. **Love again Bill Knapp – B70SNAPP@aol.com**

Condolences may be sent to Bill at:

4830 Luxor Way, Apt. 1260

Las Vegas, NV 69115-0710

Call to Duty

Would you like to be considered as a nominee for an officer's position in our Association? If so, please send in a short resume to one of the below listed members of the Nominating Committee. Resume should include name, address, phone number, Email address, educational background, prior experience as member of an organization and a statement that you are willing to have your name placed in consideration for nomination and if elected you would be willing to serve a full term. Also, if you are presently serving or have served as an officer of the Association please so indicate. Positions to be filled are President, Vice-President, Clerk, Secretary and Treasurer. (All nominees for the position of Clerk must be residents of the state of Massachusetts.) You may also recommend another member of the Association as a nominee by submitting their name to the Nominating Committee. All currently serving members are eligible for consideration. Members of the Nominating Committee are:

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

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

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

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

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

Any questions relative to the nomination and election of officers may be directed to Bob Chisolm at the above Email address or by mail to 7 Cielo Lindo; Anthony, NM 88021 †

Quotable Quotes

General James M. Gavin on LTC J.B. Shanley: "Col. Shanley is an Irish Boxer with the mind of a nuclear physicist."
Submitted by Thad Russell

The Brotherhood

"I now know why men who have been in the military yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed, who suffered and were stripped of their humanity.

I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades...such good men."

Author unknown – submitted by Joe Schwan

Thank you

I received the below thank you note from the family of SSG Casey Coombs. Your generous donations allowed the family of SSG Coombs to attend All American Week at Ft. Bragg last May where he was honored in a

special Memorial Service along with other KIAs in the War on Terror. The note reads as follows:

"We have been so very Blessed by all the generosity, thoughts, and Prayers that have been sent our way. Thank you so much for helping our family get to this Memorial Service at Fort Bragg for All American Week, to Honor our Hero and Daddy, Casey D. Combs

God Bless,

The Combs Family – Amber, Trenton, Hallie

Call For Dues!

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

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

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

Changes of Address

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



The Diablo

3630 Townsend Dr.
Dallas, TX 75229-3805