

DIABLA



The Link for All Veterans, Spouses, Family and Friends of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association — March, 2015 - Vol. 11, Nr. 2

WEATHER AND WARRIORS

By
Col. (Ret.) Keith Nightingale



02/19/16

Last week and still hanging is a fierce round of winter storms we have to endure. We put on extra clothing, stoke the fire and thermostat and wait for the first harbingers of spring. Yet on our faraway places where we have chosen to place our citizens, there is not always a thermostat, extra clothes or even a fire. This is a Grunt who is just enduring that which he cannot control. He is every Army or Marine Infantryman who has ever served. Specifically, this is an Infantryman of the 99th Division at Elsenborne Ridge at the height of the Bulge. But he could represent every predecessor and successor spanning Valley Forge, Chosin or the fierce heights and barren hills of Afghanistan. In these locations, the slightest ability to manage the hard enervating cold to an exposed skin or position was welcome manna and a tribute to endurance and service on our behalf.



The other is an image of a Glider Infantryman near Trois Ponts, Belgium also during the Bulge. His uniform is less than neat but his attitude is beyond

question. He will battle not only the enemy but that part of his body that cries for relief - he will win both encounters because that is what he and his companions always do. The Bulge was fought in one of the coldest winters on record for Europe. Survival in such conditions required a degree of endurance we could not imagine in the comfort of our homes and minor irritations.

Cold has a quality all of its own. It forces the most primordial aspects of our corpus to rise and fight the constant assault on our sensibilities. It reduces the body to minimal movements and hard at that. Mouths stiffen more than any Botox could effect. The eyes tear and the ingested breath comes hard and brutal. Each intake is a piercing knife to the lungs and esophagus. Too much unprotected ingestion and the lungs freeze - death follows in a quiet peaceful sleep. A slumber that must be fought off constantly despite its seemingly attractive gift. Here leadership must be of the highest order for simple sustainment and survival.

The senses are suppressed and the body takes on a state of minimally suspended animation as it fights to hibernate where the owner cannot. To ask people not only to endure but to perform at a high level is a task of Sisyphean dimensions. Yet, our Infantry does that as a matter of course as these images demonstrate. These are not contrived publicity shots to show the Home Front - they are real people who did real work and accomplished for us that which we could not accomplish for ourselves but required of them.

Korea was a crucible of cold that was matched only by the snowbound Bulge combatants. A stationary location was very ephemeral as a withdrawal can only be made by moving. Whatever warmth was granted was primarily by body temperature in heavily layered clothing which doubled the challenge by creating sweat that froze with every short halt and night position. Moreover, the effect of that deep cold had to be set aside so the Infantry could effectively maneuver and extricate its units from a dire circumstance. They utilized all the training and competency they had learned in the sweat and heat of the Southern training centers from which they had so recently emerged. Napalm had moments of undocumented favor for those close to the immediate fray.

Cold affects the machinery of life as it does mechanical items. Gasoline freezes, lubrication turns solid and engine life is impossible to re-ignite. The blood and lubricating fluids of the body do likewise. The most elementary of bodily functions are halted requiring the most drastic action by small unit

NCO's to force function where it would otherwise recede to inactivity. It is the cost of doing business where business ought not to be done but must for the survival of the unit engaged. Cold requires a degree of leadership at all levels that is unsurpassed by any combat condition.

Weapons and other things mechanical do not perform well in deep cold. Parts freeze and demand unusual care to the point of neglect for any lubricating medium if they are to serve their intended purpose. Maintaining a functioning weapon becomes a short list on Maslow's hierarchy of need. The demands of leadership and small unit skills and supervision are tested well beyond what is taught at Service schools. Immersion is a reality that forces near instantaneous competency upon a chain of command.

Artillery that fires in subzero temperature immediately enshrouds itself with a hanging ice fog as impenetrable as the smoke that must have hung over Gettysburg on Day Three. Steps and solutions must be invented that Ft Sill has never codified.

In remote high altitude positions in the Afghan border area, soldiers and Marines laden with kit, battle a daily conflict between the heat of day and the chill of night. The altitude creates a crystal clear venue for the effect of both conditions of temperature. Sweat is measured in quarts during the day but immediately replaced by ice at night. Eyes tear from both the relentless sun and its counterpoint, the freezing wind coursing down the higher ridges. Lips crack as a slate of ice into dozens of epidermal ridges that constantly bleed and suppurate that cannot be relieved by the best of balms. Regardless, the animal instincts of survival must constantly be re-stocked for the salvation of the unit. Others in that same environment, injured by generations of exposure.

There are limits to what can be done to ameliorate these circumstances. Clothing sufficient to ward off true cold hinders movement and agility - a tradeoff must be achieved or more important capabilities are lost. Hot food and drink is more of a vision than a reality in the most exposed locations. MRE packets, as medic plasma bottles, are carefully stored under ampits or buried pockets-to be extracted when required or desired. The result is marginal but sufficient for the basic needs. Cold compounds the effect of a wound - the body rebels against the sudden destruction of flesh and pools its blood, the gasoline of life, into an act of hibernation that must be neutralized if life is to re-emerge. This is a challenge heat does not bring.

These images are not of supermen or highly qualified personnel. They are of average origin, training and competency. Yet they have risen above their circumstances by necessity to perform where performance is on the side of miraculous. They have risen above the human norm because they had no choice. They are Infantry doing what Infantry must do. When we go to the wall in a house and turn the dial to further displace our version of cold, we should reflect on those that work on our behalf that have no walls or instruments beyond their exposed clothing and personal dedication to the task at hand.

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Update on 2Fury – 2nd 508th PIR

By
2LT Michael Shannon

The Paratroopers of the 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment remain steadfast in their mission to uphold the storied legacy of their Regiment.

The first quarter of Fiscal Year 2016 proved to be a busy one for the Paratroopers of 2FURY. In early November 2015 the Battalion loaded seven Air Force C-17 Globemaster III Aircraft, traveled across the Atlantic Ocean to Zaragoza, Spain, and executed a Joint Forcible Entry on a foreign drop zone. 2FURY's Airborne Assault was the capstone exercise of Operation Trident Juncture, the largest NATO military exercise since the end of the Cold War.

In early December, members of 2FURY returned from the Cambrian Patrol Competition, an international military patrolling competition held annually in the unforgiving terrain of Southern Wales. Led by 1LT Craig Penley and representing the entire 82nd Airborne Division, 2FURY's team came out on top and returned to the United States with gold medals.

Before enjoying some well-earned Christmas leave, 2FURY once again proved it is the most physically fit and mobile Battalion within the 82nd Airborne Division. 2FURY Paratroopers executed a 25-mile foot march, bearing heavy loads and braving cold Fort Bragg winds. Paratroopers exhibited unprecedented levels of resiliency, mental toughness and physical fitness.

To celebrate its accomplishments and lineage, 2FURY hosted its annual dining in late December. 2FURY was honored to have hosted CSM (R) Rock Merritt as the events keynote speaker.

The Battalion returned from Christmas leave, executed Squad and Platoon level live-fire

operations, and continues to be immersed in an intense training cycle.

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

Airborne! All The Way! Fury From The Sky! ✈

Final Jumps

Botteon, Harold

Harold Botteon of I Co. served his country in WWII in the 82nd Airborne Paratrooper division of the US Army. He jumped in D-day at Normandy. Later he joined military Intelligence and served in the Korean and Vietnam wars. After retirement from the Army he went into business with his older brother opening a neighborhood pub in Baltimore, MD. He continued to return to Europe for Army reunions, sometimes taking his son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter with him. He loved animals, people and was a kind and generous man. He is remembered by many people who met and loved him, as a person who loved life to its fullest and was always telling a joke and being cheerful to all he met. He died peacefully with family around him, as was his wish, at Community Hospital of Monterey. He is survived by his son, Dennis, daughter-in-law, Cathy, his brother, Herman and great granddaughters, Isabella and Liliana.

We love you and WE WILL MISS YOU DAD....
"Keep your head in the clouds, but your feet on the ground." ✈

Call, William John

William John Call (Hq. & Hq. Co.) of Saginaw, Michigan, passed away on Friday, August 7, 2015 at Saginaw Senior Care and Rehab Center. He was 92 years old. He was born on September 16, 1922 in Upper Jay, New York to Frank B. and Anna (Downs) Call. He married the love of his life, Eleanor T. Haight on May 16, 1942; she preceded him in death on October 24, 1980. Bill graduated from St. Andrew's High School with the Class of 1941. He then served his country as a United States Army Paratrooper in World War II, 1942. He was a member of the 508 Parachute Infantry of the 82nd Airborne Division. He made two combat jumps in Normandy and Holland; he fought in the Battle of Bulge and was seriously wounded on January 7, 1944. He would then receive a Battlefield Commission in Normandy, 2nd Lieutenant; as a 2nd Lt, Bill would become a POW. Later he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant in Holland. He received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medals. Further, he was in General Eisenhower's Honor Guard. Bill was honorably discharged in 1945. His life has been written about numerous times; the last and most detail published account is titled, "Put Us Down in Hell" by Phil Nordyke. He was employed by the RP Lewis Company for 5 years, he was co-owner of Reliable Printing Company, Saginaw MI, after the sale of the company, he worked for Bastian Brothers

Printers, Freeland as a salesman and he retired in 1990. He was a member of St. Andrew's Catholic Church for many years and currently a member of St. Dominic Catholic Church – St. Stephen's Site. He was past president of the Saginaw Downtown Lions Club and also past president of Big Brother's of Saginaw. He was a long standing member of the Saginaw YMCA, a member of the DAV, and the VFW in Saginaw. In his spare time, he was an avid reader; further, he enjoyed having fun, completing word find puzzles, telling jokes, and playing cards.

Condolences can be sent to his son, Francis Call at: 1631 S. Armstrong St.

Kokomo, IN 46902-2035 ✈

Condolences

Haas, Dorothy

Dorothy (Dottie) Jean Haas (88) passed away peacefully of cancer on December 28th in the arms of her elder son, Bob. Dorothy was born to Thomas and Mary Krenek in Berwyn (Chicago), Illinois, on May 3rd, 1927. She was of 1st and 2nd generation of Czech heritage. Having graduated from J. Sterling Morton High School in 1945, she attended Morton Jr. College for one year; transferred to Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, where she became a member of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority; graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Education in June, 1949. A roommate at Miami University introduced her to Donald Haas, a nuclear physicist, who worked in Miamisburg. They were married in July, 1949 and moved to North Canton when Don's job took him to Goodyear Aircraft. She spent four years teaching at the Akron Local High School and Greensburg High School in the Dayton and Akron areas, before she took time off to start a family. In 1959 she moved to Forest Park, (Cincinnati) Ohio. After hearing JFK's appeal for teachers, she joined the Finneytown High School staff in 1968 and spent the next 28.5 years teaching math with 11 years as department chair. She served as the National Honor Society advisor and joined the Finneytown Education Association and served as its President for many years. She retired from teaching in 1996. Since retirement she remained active and compassionately involved with civic and educational issues. She was a member of Finneytown Foundation, Ohio Education Association, National Education Association, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Hamilton County Retired Teachers, Finneytown Retired Teachers Association, Greenhills American Legion Auxiliary, Forest Park Women's Club and the ZTA (Zeta Tau Alpha) alumni group. She worked as a judge at the polls, volunteer for Meals on Wheels, and actively worked on school levy issues. She also worked at H&R Block as a certified tax preparer and was a mentor to Miami students through an OEAR program. She was a member of the Northminster Presbyterian Church. In 2011 Dorothy was inducted into Finneytown High School Hall of Fame. (Pictured) She enjoyed cooking, baking, and working in her

garden and yard. She loved and enjoyed teaching mathematics and hoped that her enthusiasm and interest in math would be reflected in her students. She felt that knowledge of math is the key to open the door to a field of opportunities. She is survived by Donald, her husband of 66.5 years, her sons, Robert (Steve) and Tom (Karen); sisters Irene Broyles and Evelyn Fergle; grandchildren Becky and Andy; and many nieces and nephews.

Condolences can be sent to her husband, Donald Haas at:
11230 Hanover Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45240-3020 →

Mahan, Rose

Mrs. Rose Pauline Mahan, 94, devoted army wife, loving mother, grandmother and precious friend passed away at home Tuesday December 8, 2015. She was preceded in death by her husband Lt. Col. Francis L. Mahan. She is survived by Alice Wessner of Raleigh, NC; Judy Carmichael and husband Ron of Southport, NC; and Michael Mahan and wife Cindy of Winston Salem, NC. Her grandchildren are Eric and Sarah Wessner, and Brian and John Mahan.

Rose was born in Syracuse, NY on June 30, 1921. In 1946 she married and embarked on her life's adventure. Over the next twenty years she called four European and three stateside cities home. For forty nine years she lived and loved in Fayetteville with Fran, family, and her friends.

Rose was a member of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Fayetteville, a volunteer at High Smith Rainey and Cape Fear Valley Hospitals, and a Fayetteville Care Clinic volunteer.

Condolences can be sent to:
Mike Mahan at:
466 S. Hawthorne Rd.
Winston-Salem, NC 27103 →

Searching for.....

1-21-16

Dear 508 PIR member,

I am the widow of James Elbert Able. Could you please help me get a list of James' medals, ribbons and military awards? I want to order them for a shadow box.

Thank you,

Jean Able

305 Scenic Oak Ln.
Waco, TX 76712-2527

(Editor's Note: Does anyone know how we go about getting this information? I am happy to compile the list and send it to her.)

→

Mailbox

12-29-15

Hi,

I just completed reading the December, 2015 issue of the Diablo. Thanks for including Rock's neat speech – everything that he does is perfection to its highest level. The rest of the issue was also good reading.

I hope to make the 2016 reunion in Charleston. At my age, I don't wish to make any extended trips without a family member – things do happen you know.

Best wishes to the 508th Family and Friends
Norb Studelska – D Co.

(Editor's Note: I couldn't agree more with your comments on Rock. As to the reunion – you know I will be calling you!) →

12-31-15

Dear Ellen,

I am a current member of the 508 F&F.

I would like to sign up a new member. A check is enclosed to pay his first year dues. Please add the name Baxter "Sam" Clark to the roster.

Baxter's father was:

Pvt. Baxter Samuel Clark

3rd Bn. Co. I

508th P.I.R.
during WWII.

I would appreciate it if you would sign him up and please send him a copy of the Dec. 2015 Diablo newsletter.

He is not aware that I am signing him up – it is a gift.

I enjoyed the latest (Dec.) issue and Rock's speech. Hope you have a Happy New Year

Best wishes,

Charles V. Butler – I Co.

(Editor's Note: As requested, I sent the December Diablo to Mr. Clark.) →

Check it Out!

In December, Rock Merritt was invited to speak to the 82nd Airborne's 3rd Brigade. He delivered the same speech we enjoyed at the Welcoming Breakfast at our last reunion. Upon conclusion of his speech, he was greeted with a twelve minute standing ovation and presented with a bronze Panther. Well done, Rock!



Check out the Amis des Vétérans Américains (Friends of American Veterans) website at

www.avanormandy.org. The AVA is the oldest association in France. It was founded in 1945 by Mme Simone Renaud, wife of the war time mayor of St. Mere Eglise. Her youngest son, Maurice, is the current president and doing a spectacular job.

The AVA organizes ceremonies that take place during the annual D-Day commemorations as well as the annual Liberty Banquet in St. Mere Eglise.

They also erect memorials in St. Mere Eglise and La Fiere, most recently having completed the Allied Airborne Memorial in the town square and a memorial plaque which was mounted on one side of the base of the Iron Mike statue at La Fiere and dedicated to all units of the 82nd Airborne Division who fought and died holding the La Fiere Bridgehead.

Maurice informs me that that the AVA has recently joined forces with the American Legion to ensure that the battlefield of La Fiere will forever remain as it is today and the two organizations will share responsibility for the maintenance of the area.

If you are interested in joining this prestigious association or just making a donation you can do so on the website. On the left hand side of the screen, you will see various links; scroll down until you see the caption "Join/Donate". →

Normandy, 2016

The evening of June 5, Dorothea de La Houssaye is hosting a BBQ at Chateau de Bernaville (site of German General Wilhelm Falley's war time headquarters) beginning between 5:00 – 5:30 pm following the jump at La Fiere and Iron Mike ceremony honoring American and British veterans. They Navy band will be performing. I have been asked to coordinate the attendance of American veterans.

The evening of June 7, General Electric is having a dinner at the 5 star resort of Chateau La Cheneviere at Port-en-Bessin and would like to invite WWII veterans to attend.

Any veterans who plan to visit Normandy this year and would like to attend either or both of these events, kindly contact me at: ceptx@sbcglobal.net or 214-632-1360. →

2016 REUNION

The 2016 Reunion will take place in Charleston, SC with the tentative dates of November 2 – 6. More details will be on the website and in the next Diablo.

For Sale

The Family and Friends commissary is open for business and look what we have for sale:

Family and Friends shirts are \$30.00 each. Sizes are available in Small, Medium, Large, X-Large and 2XL.



Close up of shirt logo:



Family and Friends hats are \$20.00 each.



Those interested in purchasing a shirt or hat, kindly contact: **Ellen Peters**

**3630 Townsend Dr.
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(214) 632-1360
treasurer@508pir.org**

NOTICES

Call for Dues!

Dues for the new fiscal year of Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Assn. are due 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 and donations to:**

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

Changes of Address

Please forward change of email addresses and/or postal addresses to:

**Ellen Peters
3630 Townsend Dr.
Dallas, TX 75229-3805
treasurer@508PIR.org
(214) 632-1360**



The Diablo

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