

DIABLO



The Link for All Veterans, Spouses, Family And Friends Of The 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association – June, 2011 - Vol. 6, Nr. 1

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 tentative schedule of events is as follows:

Wednesday, October 12 – Registration Day

Thursday, October 13 – 9:00 AM Welcoming Breakfast; 1:00 PM Visit to the new Infantry Museum – If you have not been, this museum is truly spectacular and not to be missed. Don't miss the "The Last 100 Yards".

Friday, October 14 – 9:00 AM – Visit to Ft. Benning. We have requested to see the final jump of that day's graduating class of paratroopers where our WWII veterans will pin the wings on the new paratroopers. We hope to enjoy a lunch at Ft. Benning's newest dining facility and observe and fire the infantry weapons at the firing range.

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

Diablo Editor

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508th Veteran Receives Overdue Recognition

World War II combat veteran, **ANGEL ROMERO**, was recently presented awards and decorations authorized for service during his military tenure.

On December 17, 2010 a ceremony was held at the Benavidez-Patterson "All Airborne" Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Assn., Inc., in El Paso, Texas. Romero was recognized by MG (Ret.) John B. Oblinger, former Commanding General of Ft. Bliss, TX.

Angel served with the "Red Devils" of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne

Division and is credited with two combat parachute jumps. His first jump was during Operation: "Neptune" (the Airborne phase of Operation: "Overlord") into Normandy, France on D-Day and as he continued on to Holland, Romero made his second jump during the Airborne phase of Operation: "Market-Garden". Romero saw additional combat duty in the Ardennes through his involvement in the "Battle of the Bulge" and also participated in the advance across Central Europe (Germany).

For his exploits Romero earned: The Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation, WWII Victory Medal, WWII Honorable Service Lapel Button, Combat Infantry Badge (1st Award), Parachutist Wings w/2 Bronze Combat Jump Stars and Bronze Arrowhead, Good Conduct Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal w/Bronze Star attachment and Arrowhead, and both the French and Belgian Fourragere. Aside from the military service awards, Angel was presented with an AIRBORNE HUMANITARIAN SERVICE AWARD, by the members of his chapter, for Meritorious and Exemplary Service in Support of International Freedom and World Peace.

The recognition ceremony concluded with a cake cutting ceremony, finger foods and an autograph and photo opportunity session.

JOHN CEBALLOS, M.S. CHAPTER CHAIRMAN



Searching For....

Gervais

I live in Belgium and I am the godfather of Sgt. Robert F. Gervais who died on February 12, 1945. I am seeking information about my godson.

Jean Luc Dumont– lorenalucie@hotmail.com
Rue de la station, 23; 4610 Beyne-Heasay; Belgium

Checking In

Sorry we are unable to attend any of the reunions now, but we still want to support the group. Miss seeing all our friends, but time marches on and takes its toll on us humans.

Keep the airborne spirit going!

Ray Crouse

Do you know about the AWON organization? (American WWII Orphans Network). I am a member and so glad to have found this wonderful organization that networks all of "us kids" who lost fathers in WWII. We are a unique group with a common bond of love and caring.

Judy Durkee – daughter of Pvt. Glenn Ward – KIA January 30, 1945.

I was in the first bunch of 508th members to reach Camp Blanding on October 19, 1942.

Member of C Co. Sgt. Funk was our leader.

Will be the big 90 on January 30, 2011. Lost my wife of 66 years on August 21, 2009.

Still in good health. I think?

Bob Nobles

I am interested in info about the 3/508 in Panama from '66-'68. I'm proud to be a member of this group of Airborne soldiers. I was proud to wear the awards given the 508th in WWII.

Danny Pulley

Mail Box

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many of you may remember me from a few years ago during the 2008 Reunion at Ft. Bragg. (I was CSM Bert Puckett's side kick). I am currently assigned to HHC, 508th PIR and trying to see if ya'll may be able to help us with some things.

We are doing some revamping inside the Brigade Headquarters and wondered if any of you may have any good ideas for different prints to hang on the walls, or place in display cases, within the Regimental Headquarters. If you have any suggestions, copies of prints, donatable items or other ideas, please contact me at the below email address.

Thank you for your support.
SFC Rich Lovelady
4BCT Master Gunner
rich.lovelady@us.army.mil

Members! If you cannot respond by email send via the Diablo Editor and I will pass your information along. Include a phone number if you don't mind. Ed

Our son, a captain with the 173rd will be jumping into Nijmegen in a few weeks. He will carry his great uncle's Purple Heart. PFC Cecil Hines of B Co., 508th PIR was killed by a sniper on the Nijmegen DZ in 1944. Captain John Karcher recently completed his third combat tour – this one being in Afghanistan – the previous two in Iraq.
Don Karcher – Don.karcher@us.army.mil

Dear Veterans and 508 F&F,

I try to help a friend of mine, this man live at Stavelot and he is a 508PIR admirer. He has adopted a 508/D grave at Henri-Chapelle Belgium. Pvt John A Rhodes ASN 34827867 KIA on Jan 12, 1945. He try to find pictures, stories concerning this hero. If somebody have some news he can contact; paracsm@hotmail.com.

Thanks,
Sgt Dominique Potier – Belgium Army

The latest Batman film is to feature key scenes shot in Wollaton Park. Notices have been put in place warning visitors the park will be closed from June 25 to July 2 to allow filming for the Hollywood blockbuster to take place.

The armed forces weekend 25-26 June has been transferred from Wollaton Park to Nottingham Castle so filming can take place.
Graham Lawson – Nottingham, England

Do You Remember?

Last April, a dummy was discovered hidden in a very small room at Wollaton Park. It was left behind by the 508th. He has been named "Buddy"; is 3 ft tall, and weighs around 20 pounds. His head, helmet, and boots are made of plaster and the rest is of wood and cloth. He also has webbing attached.



The folks at Wollaton Park would like any info on Buddy, so if you remember him, please contact **Graham Lawson** at thedudeinnottz@sky.com or the Editor.

At the dedication of the 508th Memorial at Wollaton Park, last June, a woman gave a First Aid kit to Graham Lawson. She said a 508th trooper had given her the kit when she was visiting Wollaton Park back in 1944. The interior labels it as a 24 Unit kit. Below are two photos of the kit:



Final Jumps

Greene

I am writing to inform you that John Montgomery Greene died on May 10, 2009. He was always proud of his years with the 508th and always read the Diablo.
 Rosemary T. Greene

Condolences can be sent to the Greene family at 1342 SE 15th St.; Ocala, FL 34471-4542.

Kersh

John D. Kersh, Sr. passed away November 10, 2010. He was a decorated veteran of the 508th PIR. John was captured by the Germans in Normandy and later escaped with the help of the French underground.

Condolences can be sent to: 707 Torrence Dr.; Gastonia, NC 28054

Mortensen

My husband, Martin Mortensen, passed away October 8, 2010. He was proud of the fact that he was in the first class of paratroopers at Ft. Benning in 1940. He was 91 and very proud of his military service, especially in the 508th PIR.
 Estella Mortensen

Condolences can be sent to 205 Hamilton, ST.; Rising City, NE 68658-3824

Pollock

William E. Pollock passed away February 16. William took basic training at Camp Blanding, FL;

parachute training at Ft. Benning, GA and advanced infantry training at Camp McCall, NC. At the end of 1943 he was shipped overseas and landed at Belfast, Northern Ireland where he stayed for three months; then was shipped to England. It was noted that in one day he had breakfast in Northern Ireland, lunch in Scotland and dinner in England. William participated in all 508th campaigns. He was wounded in Normandy, Holland, and the Ardennes.

Condolences can be sent to the family at: 29739 Palermo St.; Barstow, CA 92311-1764

Smith

James W. Smith passed away March 5. James proudly served his country in the U.S. Army during WWII, the Korean Conflict, and in Vietnam. He was 1st Sgt. of B Co., 508th during WWII and retired as a W-4 Warrant Officer. In his 30 years of service, Jim received numerous awards and decorations. He received: three Bronze Stars, a Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, multiple Good Conduct Medals, two National Defense Service Medals, the European-African Campaign Medal with four battle stars and one arrowhead, the Army Occupation Medal – Germany, American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Republic of Korea War Service medal, United Nations Service Medal Korea, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal with campaign stars, two Army Presidential Unit Citations, the Korean Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation, World War II Glider Badge, Master Parachutist Badge with two stars, Combat Infantryman's Badge with one star, Expert Marksman, Honorable Service Lapel button, and the Infantry Blue Cord. He was also awarded the French Fourragere for the parachute invasion of Normandy, the Belgian Fourragere combat service in the Battle of the Bulge and the Netherland Citation. Rock Merritt gave the eulogy and the 508th at Ft. Bragg did all the Military Honors. The 82nd Airborne Division Band furnished the bugler.

Condolences can be sent to: 156 Boone Ave.; Gray, TN 37615.

Wilson

Ray G. Wilson made his final jump on May 20 after being in poor health for an extended time. He was 87 years old. Karen Holton, daughter of Jan and Walt Silver, writes "I met Ray on the D-Day 65th Anniversary trip to Normandy. He was one of my favorite people and always kept us on our toes and laughing."

Condolences can be sent to his daughter, Cynthia Carruth at: Windwood Cove; Jackson, TN 38305.

Yardley

Richard K. Yardley passed away December 30,

2010. Richard served in the regiment from inception of the unit through Eisenhower's Honor Guard period.

Condolences can be sent to the family at: 619 Wodduck Ln., Georgetown, KY 40324-9252

Condolences

Hamblin

The heavenly bell tolled for Sylvia Hamblin on Thursday, June 9. With peace and pleasure she entered the long sleep knowing she will spend the rest of eternity with beloved husband, Col. Paul W. Hamblin, in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Condolences can be sent to the family at: 756 Gherty Lane; Hudson, WI 54016 Tel: 715-386-9724; email: Kittyhamblin@baldwin-telecom.net

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
Tel: 575-874-1004

Gene Garren, Genegarren@aol.com; 828-682-6650
Luis Gutierrez, lgutierrez@nc.rr.com; 910-423-5056
Rock Merritt, rock508pir@nc.rr.com; 910-425-5818
Bob Spears, bosprs@aol.com; 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 ↗

Fury Brigade Update

Fort Bragg, NC – "Get After It!" The unofficial slogan of 4th Brigade Combat team, 82nd Airborne

Division is heard throughout the brigade as Fury Brigade Paratroopers jump into their intensive training cycle.

Following a twelve month deployment to Afghanistan, the 4th BCT took a well deserved break and began maintenance and reset on equipment that had been deployed or left behind. All of the battalion and brigade planners also diligently planned a comprehensive training plan that is beginning to unfold.

"We must look at both building our team of teams and ensuring comprehensive Soldier fitness," said Col. Brian Mennes, commander of 4th BCT. "The wellness of our Paratroopers and their families is imperative to the success of the unit as a whole."

Fury brigade is taking numerous steps to ensure that wellness including developing systems to keep Paratroopers healthy and assist those that are recuperating from injuries.

"The fury athlete warrior concept is a holistic, comprehensive approach to fitness, nutrition, reconditioning and wellness," said Capt. Samuel C. Perlik, the brigade current operations officer.

Events for family members include Strong Bonds retreats aimed at strengthening marriages and families, Perlik added.

All the programs developed for comprehensive soldier fitness are aimed at developing individuals so that the team is as strong as possible.

Beginning March 26, the brigade officially entered Intensive Training Cycle 1 that will involve a myriad of training events at all levels from squad to battalion. The training will include a Brigade Digital Exercise; Battalion Tactical Operating Center Exercises; Company and Platoon Level Squad Tactical Exercises; and numerous jumps, drops, and ranges. All of these events will help the unit get "Back to Basics", a primary focus of the Division Commander, Maj. Gen. Jim Huggins.

Beyond the standard training to hone in on its traditional Airborne skills, the unit will remain poised for Counterinsurgency Operations by exploring a host of innovative training opportunities. More than 62 Paratroopers are attending a 16-week course to learn Dari, one of the primary languages spoken in Afghanistan. The course also delves into cultural aspects of tribes in Afghanistan. This is the first time the course, taught by instructors from the Defense Language Institute of Monterey, Calif., is being taught at Ft. Bragg.

Another new training method is called Tactical Approach to Practical Shooting or TAPS.

"It's outcome based training," said Perlik. "It is more realistic and based on the attributes required in combat."

TAPS is a train-the-trainer program taught by retired Sergeant Major Patrick McNamara. It uses marksmanship as a vehicle to reach a more realistic way of reacting in combat situations, he said.

The brigade is continuously taking its training beyond the basics by pushing for tougher standards in all areas.

For example, most Paratroopers are trained as combat lifesavers and possess basic first aid skills. In order to increase the ability to react to battlefield situations, Paratroopers are being trained as emergency medical technicians and will be fully qualified to take the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technician Exam, said Perlik. Not only does this training add to their ability on the battlefield, but it gives Paratroopers additional skills that will last beyond their service.

Through May and June, Fury Brigade will continue to build its teams as new Paratroopers arrive. The BCT experienced a 50% turnover as part of the deployment cycle, meaning new Paratroopers and new leaders are finding their way and integrating into the fury brigade.

"Good teams don't materialize from checking the block," said Mennes. "As we move into collective skills training we must continue to emphasize the time spent with young leaders, teams and squads to demonstrate the outcome for each training task."

A second Intensive Training Cycle will complete the quarter in June. The unit will then move into another well deserved break in July that will be followed by more training at the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, Calif. for Fury Brigade's mission readiness exercise.

"I am tremendously satisfied with the progress and training within our brigade," said Mennes. "Our men and women continue to amaze me in all that they do. We will continue investing in the leadership development of our young Team and Squad leaders."

Special thanks to Michelle Baldanza, PAO, 4BCT, 82 ABN DIV for forwarding the above.

Mother of Normandy

It is rare that ones achievements are widely celebrated within their lifetime. This cannot be said for the 508th PIR, who have been the object of much adoration throughout their lives, and rightly so. With fear and trepidation but an abounding

sense of duty they came to the assistance of the people of France. In 1946, the wife of Saint-Mere-Eglise's mayor, Simone Renaud, wrote a wonderful poem entitled "To The 82nd Airborne Division" commemorating the bravery of the 508th. Mrs. Renaud completed her poem in June of 1946, almost a full year after the war had ended, the memory of that tumultuous time still fresh in her mind. Mrs. Renaud was also the focus of a book written by Jeff Stoffer called "Mother of Normandy: The Story of Simone Renaud."

The poem has within it two small lines that strike an emotional chord and tell quite a bit about the young men of the 508th. "And when, so calm and laughing, they would say: 'Everything is O.K.' / A wave of Hope surged again in our anxious hearts/ During the fierce fight." These few lines speak to the awesome ability of the 508th. Not only were they a competent and powerful force but their humanity and compassion for those Europeans whose lives were being destroyed by Nazi Germany. The fighting was fierce, the French town's people greatly

fearful of the possible outcomes and the young American soldiers laughing through the chaotic fight, calmly abating their fears with the simple words "Everything is O.K."

The most appealing perspective of this short line is that in the moment, while fighting for their lives, the American paratroopers portrayed an atmosphere of strength and confidence. No personal anxieties or worries on the part of the paratroopers are felt in this statement. To the French people, who saw only death and destruction on the horizon, the men of the 508th stood steadfast against the onslaught calmly saying "Everything is O.K."

Rob Palmer

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. A new facility on the web site (www.508pir.org) enables payment and donations using your credit card through PayPal. Enter the email address of treasurer@508PIR.org.

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

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