

DIABLO



The Link for All 508th Veterans & Active Duty and Family & Friends
Published by the *Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association* – January 2021

Columbus OH Reunion Scheduled for 23-27 June 2021

Call for Immediate Registration & Hotel Booking!

The Association is teaming up with the Central Ohio All-Airborne Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association to move forward with our 2021 reunion.

We will gather at the Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center in Columbus OH to provide great opportunities for Paratrooper Veterans and their families & friends to renew friendships and forge new bonds. You can be certain that in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, all necessary precautions will be taken. By then, we should all have had our two vaccine shots.

Andrew Ritter, Chairperson of the Central Ohio All-Airborne Chapter, a proud Veteran of C Company 1st Battalion 508th PIR, and a new member of the Board of Directors of the 82nd Airborne Division Association, is the 2021 Reunion Committee Chairperson. Andrew is seeking volunteers for his Reunion Committee, so if you can help, please email him ASAP at ritterandrew21@yahoo.com. We thank Andrew for all his work over the last few weeks to screen venues, get an event contract in place, and set a Preliminary Schedule of Events (please see other related pages in this newsletter). Let's get a strong Reunion Committee team in place to help Andrew pull off what promises to be a great Ohio Reunion event!

MISSION CRITICAL

Unlike past years, we cannot have attendees register at the last minute. We need commitments from folks no later than **28 February 2021** to ensure enough attendance to meet our contractual numbers with the hotel. To be clear, the Association faces financial penalties for cancelling its Contract with increasing financial exposure starting 31 January, higher penalties starting on 28 February and so forth. **To this end, we need everyone to make a commitment right away: Go to <http://www.508pir.org/> to Register on-line or to print your Registration Form for mail-in. Then Reserve your Hotel Room at <http://www.nwhotelandconferencecenter.com/> or by calling (614) 880-4300. IF WE DO NOT GENERATE ENOUGH COMMITTED RESERVATIONS, THE REUNION WILL NECESSARILY HAVE TO BE CANCELLED!**

Again, we must get early confirmation from everyone regarding your confidence to gather in late June 2021 and your availability and ability to join what promises to be a special Reunion. So **please read the other Reunion-related pages in this newsletter and act now!**

Thank you and we look forward to connecting in person in Columbus! ➔

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508th All-Era & All-Airborne REUNION



★ COLUMBUS, OHIO ★

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23 – SUNDAY, JUNE 27

For details and registration, visit www.508PIR.org

2021 508TH ALL-ERA & ALL-AIRBORNE REUNION
Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association
Central Ohio All Airborne Chapter – 82nd Airborne Division Association
 Columbus, OH

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, 23 June	2:00 PM	Arrival and Registration Opens	
	4:00 PM	Hospitality Suite Opens	
	5:00 PM – 6:30 PM	Board of Directors Meeting – FF 508th PIR (Including Reunion Committee)	
Thursday, 24 June	6:30 AM – 8:15 AM	Hot Buffet Breakfast – Hotel Restaurant	
	8:15 AM – 10:00 AM	Formal Welcome Program w/ Guest Speaker, Events Briefing & Sign-Up for Friday/Saturday	
	10:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Annual Membership Meeting – FF 508th PIR	
	12:00 PM – 1:30 PM	Lunch – Flex Time	
	1:45 PM – 4:45 PM	Visit to Motts Military Museum	
	5:00 PM	Hospitality Suite Open	
Friday, 25 June	6:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Hot Buffet Breakfast – Hotel Restaurant	
	9:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Presentations and Q&A/Oral Histories & Videos	
	9:30 AM – 1:30 PM	Alternative: Visit to Easton Town Center	
	12:30 PM – 1:30 PM	Buffet Lunch w/ Guest Speaker	
	2:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Visit to German Village, Dinner – Flex Time	
	5:00 PM	Hospitality Suite Open	
Saturday, 26 June	7:00 AM – 10:00 AM	Hot Buffet Breakfast – Hotel Restaurant	
	9:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Open Day	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to Museum of the United States Air Force, Dayton OH Wright-Patterson AFB (leave at 9:00 AM) • Visit to National Veterans Memorial and Museum, Columbus OH (leave at 10:00 AM) • Visit to Ohio Fallen Heroes Memorial, Sunbury OH (leave at 10:00 AM) • Other Options (Planning in Progress) 	
	12:00 PM	Hospitality Suite Open	
	6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Cocktail Hour	
	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Formal Banquet & Program w/ Guest Speaker	
	9:00 PM – 11:45 PM	Socializing and Raffles	
	1:30 AM Sunday	Hospitality Suite Closes	
	Sunday, 27 June	7:00 AM – 10:00 AM	Hot Buffet Breakfast – Hotel Restaurant
		9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	Follow-Up Board Meeting – FF 508th PIR (Including Reunion Committee)

2021 508TH ALL-ERA & ALL-AIRBORNE REUNION
Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association
Central Ohio All Airborne Chapter – 82nd Airborne Division Association
Columbus, OH

VENUES & THINGS TO DO

Shopping

Easton Town Center (major indoor/outdoor shopping & dining complex)
Polaris Fashion Place

Craft Breweries & Neighborhoods

Olentangy River Brewing Company
Nocterra Brewing Company
Short North Arts District (galleries, specialty shops, pubs, nightclubs, cafes)
German Village (Schmidt's Sausage House, galleries, specialty shops, near Brewery District)

Family Fun & Education

Highbanks Metro Park and Nature Center
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium / Zoombezi Water Park
Center of Science and Industry (COSI)
Topgolf/IKEA
Ohio State Stadium Tour

Military Museums & Memorials

Motts Military Museum
Museum of the United States Air Force (Wright-Patterson AFB)
National Veterans Memorial and Museum
Ohio Fallen Heroes Memorial



508TH ALL-ERA & ALL-AIRBORNE REUNION Columbus, OH



June 23 – June 27, 2021

Registration Fee (per Person)
Adults: \$150.00 Under 18: \$50.00

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ St. _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____ Tel: (cell) _____ Unit: _____

Guest(s) Name(s) _____

\$150 Adults _____ x \$150 = \$ _____

\$50 Children under 18 _____ x \$50 = \$ _____

Donation to Help with General Expenses (**THANK YOU!**) = \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Hotel Reservation Instructions

Please reserve your hotel room(s) at the **Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center**, 100 Green Meadows Drive South, Lewis Center, OH 43035. **Call +1 614-880-4300 or Book On-Line at www.nwhotelandconferencecenter.com**. Be sure to Reference **Reunion Group XXXXXX** for the attractive group rate of **\$149.64 (King Bed Room) / \$161.24 (2 Double Bed Room) / \$172.84 (King or 2 Double Bed Parlor Room) per night, tax & hot breakfast included**. Reservations must be made by **April 24, 2021** for this special rate. Please book early. The hotel also has a limited number of handicapped accessible rooms.

UNLIKE IN PRIOR YEARS, REUNION REGISTRATION FEES WILL NOT BE REFUNDED IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, GIVEN THE IMPACT YOUR NON-ATTENDANCE WILL HAVE ON OUR HOTEL CONTRACT. YOU CAN CANCEL YOUR HOTEL ROOM AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF YOUR ARRIVAL DATE TO AVOID ANY ROOM CHARGES.

Pay On-Line (Credit Card & PayPal) at http://www.508pir.org/reunion/reunion_04.htm and Email Form to: Treasurer@508PIR.org

or

Please Mail Registration Form & Fee to:

Chris Harris – Treasurer, 68B N Main St, So. Deerfield, MA 01373

Checks should be made payable to:

“F&F 508th PIR Assoc”

1Fury Awards 2020 Rock Merritt Squad Leader of the Year

On January 8, a cadre of 1st Battalion 508th PIR visited Rock Merritt to introduce the 2020 Rock Merritt Squad Leader of the Year finalists and award recipient.

As a reminder, the *Rock Merritt Squad Leader of the Year Award* was established by the *Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association* on Rock's 95th Birthday to honor his distinguished 35-year Army career. This special award is presented to a 508th Paratrooper who demonstrates outstanding leadership performance and potential.

Rock presented Army Achievement Medals to 2nd place SSG Steven Ludwig and 3rd place SGT Christopher Wilber. He presented an Army Commendation Medal to Squad Leader of the Year SSG Colin Davis. 1Fury CSM James Bradshaw presented Rock with an inscribed 1918 trench knife that was issued as a jump knife during World War II.

Congratulations to SSG Davis, our newest Supporter Lifetime Member by virtue of earning his Squad Leader of the Year Award!



Rock with (L-R) SSG Ludwig, SSG Davis & SGT Wilber



CSM Bradshaw Gifts a 1918 Trench Knife to Rock



1Fury during Intense Training – Factored into SLOY Award

Veterans Day Wreath Presentation at Arlington National Cemetery

COL Reuben H Tucker Chapter and the Washington DC Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association spearheaded this year's Veterans Day commemoration at Arlington National Cemetery and the Washington Mall monuments, even though they reduced the number of presentations due to COVID-19. Below is the message read for the wreath that was placed at the 508th Memorial.

"From the hedgerows of Normandy, to the forests of Eastern Holland, to the freezing snows of the Ardennes, to the jungles of Vietnam, and to the deserts of Iraq and mountains of Afghanistan, the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment has been front and center in defending freedom for America and the World.

Today, we commemorate eight decades of courageous 508th service and sacrifice, and we are especially mindful of current 2Fury Paratroopers serving in Iraq. From All-American Hall of Famers 1SGT Leonard Funk, CSM (Ret) Rock Merritt and LTC (Ret) Bob Chisolm to today's Active Duty 508th heroes, we salute the extraordinary 508th Legacy.

France. Holland. Belgium. Germany. Japan. Dominican Republic. Grenada. Panama. Bosnia. Iraq. Afghanistan. We will forever Honor, Preserve and Communicate the History of all Eras of 508th Paratroopers.

Fury from the Sky! " ➔



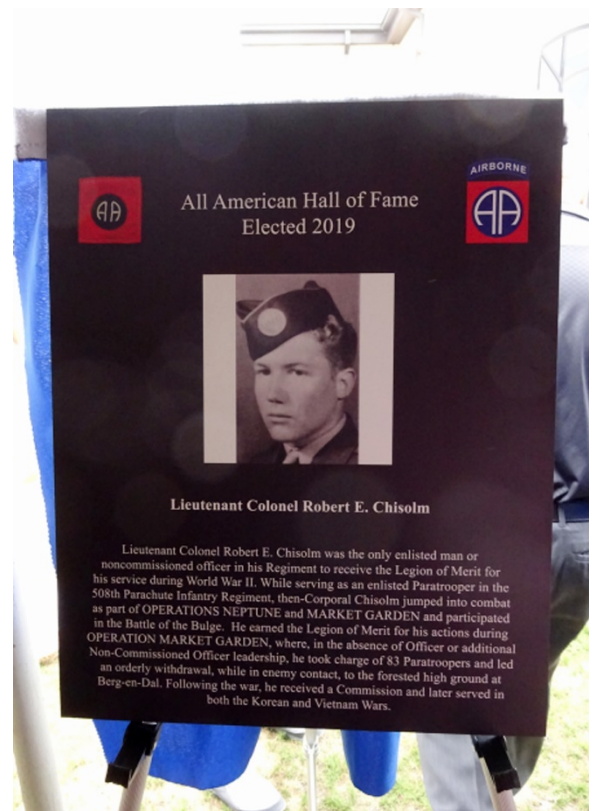
(Left) Steve Clark, Washington DC Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association who served in the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment and Stephen Couchman, Chairman of the COL Reuben H Tucker Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association.

Association Renames "Person of the Year" Award as the "Bob Chisolm Person of the Year" Award

The Association Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of the Chairperson of the Awards Committee, has voted unanimously to rename the award that recognizes extraordinary contributions to the *Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association* as the "Bob Chisolm Person of the Year". For decades, LTC (Ret) Robert E. "Bob" Chisolm has been a champion of the original 508th PIR Association and our successor Association, serving in officer and committee roles, loyally attending annual reunions, and providing critical guidance and support.

An original World War II Paratrooper with the 508th PIR, Bob Chisolm made combat jumps into Normandy on D-Day and into Holland during Operation Market Garden, then fought courageously in the Battle of the Bulge. He was wounded in all three actions and evacuated from both France and Belgium. As a Corporal, he was awarded the Legion of Merit for inspiring performance of duty in Holland. In a 29-year distinguished Army career, he led in combat in both Korea and Vietnam, becoming one of 324 soldiers to earn three Combat Infantry Badges. Later, Bob pursued a successful business career and then dedicated himself to veterans' organizations including his beloved Benavidez-Patterson Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association, cementing his legacy through scholarship programs at the Chapter and at the University of Texas El Paso.

Bob Chisolm, now age 95, was inducted into the 82nd Airborne Division All-American Hall of Fame in 2019, joining his WWII comrades CSM (Ret) Rock Merritt and 1SGT Leonard A. Funk, among only 49 now in the Hall of Fame from the hundreds of thousands of All Americans who have served since 1917. †



Visits With Rock



2Fury Visits with Rock on 29 December 2020



Chris, Rock and Dianna have a socially distanced dinner on a recent visit †

Final Jumps



Joseph Morettini, age 96, of Erie, passed away on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at St. Vincent Medical Center.

He was born on July 29, 1924, to the late Gabriel and Claudia (née Tamarise) Morettini in Lima, Peru; the second oldest of ten children. He arrived in Erie at the age of three months.

In 1943, Joseph was drafted into the United States Army during WWII and was assigned to E Company, 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment. He fought in most major European campaigns in which the 82nd Airborne participated, including Normandy, Holland, Rhineland, Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge) and Central Europe, completing two combat jumps. He also served in Eisenhower's Honor Guard. He earned the French Legion of Honor, French Croix de Guerre, Bronze Star Medal for Valor, World War II Victory Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Good Conduct Medal, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with four Bronze Stars, Occupational Medal, and 508th Presidential Unit Citation.

After a courageous run with the Army, Joseph returned to Erie and worked as a machinist at Zurn Industries for many years.

Joseph was an avid fisherman and enjoyed the outdoors. He was also an accomplished wine maker. He loved spending time with his family and will be greatly missed by all.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Sophie "Sally" Morettini (née Oprzondek); daughter, Eva Rogers; son, John J. Morettini; and his siblings, Louis Morettini, Judy Noonan, Inez Gonda, Helen Hair and Dulio Morettini.

He is survived by a son, Anthony J. Morettini and his wife Catherine; siblings, Eva Porter, Shirley Warren, Claudia Morettini and Gabriel Morettini; eight grandchildren, Lisa Haering, Rebecca Brothers, Dean Rogers, Eric Rogers, John G. Morettini, Casie Morettini, Christine Morettini and Joseph G. Morettini; 14 great-grandchildren and six great-great grandchildren. †



Publication Funding Help

The manuscript for the upcoming publication: **"COLONEL BOB" AND THE TROOPERS OF BENAVIDEZ-PATTERSON** has been submitted to the publisher.

I am a few hundred dollars short of being able to pay off the publisher so any donations possible, would be greatly appreciated. Those interested in providing donations may **CLICK** on the below listed **LINK** to access the **GOFUNDME** Site in support of this effort!

I'm sure that some editing and a few minor adjustments will be required but we are looking forward to having the book available sometime early in 2021.

I would like to thank everyone for their encouragement and support throughout this effort!

Respectfully,

JOHN CEBALLOS, A.A., B.A., M.S.
AUTHOR

Donations can be made at: <https://gf.me/u/yip84p>

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. Our goal is to one day have a story or article from each generation of 508th paratroopers in every issue of the Diablo newsletter. ➔

"Fury From The Sky" Normandy Hill 30 James Dietz Prints Available

James Dietz prints of "Fury From The Sky" are still available!

Following the Airborne Assault on D-Day, Paratroopers of the 508th PIR seize Hill 30 and defend against relentless German counterattacks between Merderet and Douve Rivers.

Limited-Edition Prints signed by CSM (Ret) Rock Merritt and LTC (Ret) Bob Chisolm, both Veterans of all three 508th WWII combat operations 75 years ago and both are All American Hall Of Fame inductees.



Specially priced at \$95.00, shipping included if delivered to U.S. mailing address!

Prints can be purchased on our website at the link below! ➔

http://www.508pir.org/f and f/qtrmstr_01.htm

THE PX IS OPEN

Hats are \$26.95 and Shirts are \$35.00. Prices include \$5.00 Shipping and Handling. Shirts are available in Blue, Red, Black and Gray. To purchase a shirt, visit the website at www.508pir.org or contact Chris Harris at harris.chris.j@att.net or (310) 729-2745.



Royal Blue



Red



Black



Gray



The Diablo

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