

82nd ASSN CONVENTION RENO



DEVILS



DIGEST



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82nd CONVENTION RENO

By Ken Hamill

The 82nd Airborne Division Association annual convention took place in Reno, Nevada 3-6 August 2011. Three Cal-Nevada Chapter reps gave us directions at the Reno Airport upon landing. One greeter was Griz Hilpert, an Indian Shaman and very good friend of my deceased friend Gib Gibson. Griz gave the shamanism ceremony at Gib's sendoff to afterlife. The Silver Legacy was gorgeous and had all the amenities including a restaurant with quality food at a reasonable price. The hotel business center was operated by a great young lady Thes. Thes assured me that our awards would be received safely from UPS and she would help us ship anything out. The convention registration packet was provided quickly and courteously by the registration crew including our fine chapter member Aristeo Blanco. I did get lost in the casino that merges with two other hotel casinos. I thought I would have to go outside and catch a cab back to the Silver Legacy, but finally found my way. I hit the sack by 9:00 PM which was midnight back home. The parachute jump scheduled for Thursday morning was cancelled by the budget crunch. Bob Brady and I picked up our Chapter awards at the business center. The Wounded Warrior reception went well and ended with a free lunch for everyone thanks to the generosity of a local patriotic business owner and the fine efforts of convention host Fred Egenberger. The Chapter Officers Seminar was presented very well by President Bill Eberle. The follow up question and answer session by Executive Director Tijerina did not go well. I asked the question "Is it possible for chapters to proofread their Paraglide submissions over the internet?" Santiago got angry. Apparently he did not like me asking a question that reflects on his proof reading ability. The 508th Chapter Meeting on Thursday at 4:00 PM went well. A room was...

...requested by Aristeo Blanco for us and Fred Egenberger provided it – free. The Silver Legacy was generous. Bobby and Donna Henson volunteered to help. Bobby sold all 8 raffle tickets and Donna took notes and will prepare the minutes. Anita Lawrence took photos with both my camera and hers and she did a great job. We started with the invocation. SFC Reynolds held the National Colors during our Pledge of Allegiance. I asked everyone to introduce themselves starting with Allan Wood of G Co. 1942-46; then Ralph King of B Co., 508 PIR 1946. We also had 11 from the ARCT days, 1 who served in the Dom Rep, 3 from Vietnam, 4 unknown walk-ins, 5 from the active duty 508 PIR and a few wives in attendance. SGM Halbrook and CSM Sturdevant were introduced & both invited 508 vets to hang out in their hospitality room. CSM Sturdevant gave a good presentation about the 508 PIR and answered our questions for an additional half hour – well done. We presented \$250.00 to the 508 PIR for their Hospitality Room. The Dr. James A. Jackson Award for Magnificent Contributions to the 508 Airborne Chapter of the 82 Airborne Division Association was unveiled and explained to those present. Bob Brady accepted the award for Jim Jackson who could not attend for medical reasons. Dr. Jackson was finally recognized for his 2007 auction in Clarksville that generated money for our troops in Afghanistan. Al Vaitkus was the second member to receive the Dr. Jackson Award. Al was called forward and recognized for his major contribution to the Gold Star Family effort last May. The widow Combs and her two children were able to attend All American Week and the Memorial Ceremony for their hero, SSG Combs. Thank you 508 Members for making it possible. Al Vaitkus was the top contributor. The Dr. Jackson award plaque will be safe guarded at the Chairman's home. The award has 18 award plates, with the names Dr. Jackson and...

...Al Vaitkus added to the first two plates. A smaller plaque printed with Al Vaitkus name was presented to him. The smaller plaque for Dr. Jackson was sent to him by UPS. A few group photos were taken in the Legacy Salon after our meeting. Most of us visited the main hospitality room (HR) or one of the unit hospitality rooms on the 33rd floor. I think the 508 PIR had the best HR. CSM Sturdevant and SGM Halbrook had extended an invitation for veteran Red Devils to visit their hospitality room prior to the convention. They emphasized that their hospitality room was there for all of us at Thursday's meeting. It was a great place and we were always made to feel comfortable. I ate breakfast there twice and their cook made great scrambled eggs. The Delegates Meeting on Friday morning included free coffee & pastries. We delegates were invited to observe the Directors Meeting that followed. President Bill Eberle conducted the meeting in a business-like and orderly fashion. The money crunch and its negative impact on association investments were discussed. Indianapolis was selected as the host site of the 2013 convention. A number of our members visited the 508 HR and took along 508 photos and mementoes' from their era. SGM Halbrook was very pleased with the quality and number of items he was shown. Some items were presented to the 508 PIR for display in their Headquarters Building. They plan to have an impressive array of old things to put on display. They brought a few old photos from Fort Bragg to display in their HR. The photos were all framed and excellent quality. If our membership has photo copies or other items you would like to give to the 508 PIR, I suggest you coordinate with SGM William B. Halbrook at; William.halbrook@us.army.mil or halbrookwilliam@yahoo.com ; telephone #910.973.0238; Home Address: 10 Wingate Place, Columbia, SC 29229. The Memorial Luncheon was very well done. The invocation; the Color Guard; a candle lighting ceremony; a missing man table was set up in a formal fashion and the Directors wore blazer outfits. The food was terrific and the majority of us wore casual clothing. A very nice social event. Bob Brady...

... and several others took the Virginia City tour that afternoon. On Saturday morning several dozen members attended the General Membership Meeting. Awards were presented to Chapters and Individuals. We took a lot of photos. Our Al Vaitkus was called forward to receive the President's Award for his generosity with the Gold Star Family. This award was recommended to me by President Bill Eberle. It was a very nice gesture Bill, thank you. Dr. James A. Jackson was called forward to receive the President's Award for his hard work and generosity with the 2007 auction to benefit our 508 troopers in Afghanistan. Bob Brady, a fellow member of B Company, 508 ARCT and friend of Dr. Jackson received the President's Award for our Dr. Jim Jackson. Our 508 Chapter received a membership award and Bob Brady received that also, since I was trying to take pictures. Thank you Bob Brady for your assistance. I did meet Allan Wood and C-47 Club President Ed Lapotsky at the 82nd Jersey Photo take. They both spoke German and got along fine. The National Airborne Heritage Banquet on Saturday night went very well. The pomp and ceremony with most men wearing blazer outfits and the ladies in finery was excellent. The 82nd Chorus entertained us. The meal was again top of the line. CSM Sturdevant asked that we donate to the National Association Wounded Warrior effort together. Anything that can bring the 508 PIR and 508 Chapter closer together is good, so I provided an additional \$258 to add to the original \$250 donated to the 508 PIR. Our \$508 was presented as part of the total 508 Airborne joint Wounded Warrior effort by CSM Sturdevant at the Saturday Banquet. The association hospitality room on Friday and Saturday nights had music and dancing. I believe the 2011 National Convention of the 82nd Airborne Division Association in Reno, Nevada was the best reunion I ever attended. I caught the red eye flight home Sunday night. I would like to thank Aristeo Blanco; Bob Brady; Bobby and Donna Henson, Anita Lawrence and Al Vaitkus for your help at the Reno Convention and our 508th Chapter Meeting. The photos most of you sent have been a great help in putting this August 2011 Devils Digest together. Hooaah !!!



Bob Brady receives Dr. James A. Jackson Award at the 508 meeting for Jim Jackson who was ill



Al & Mirga Vaitkus display the Dr. James A. Jackson Award received at the 508 meeting



Association President Bill Eberle presents the President's Award to Dr. Jim Jackson through his stand-in Bob Brady



Association President Bill Eberle presents Al Vaitkus with Presidents Award at General Membership Meeting



Allan & Flo Wood of Spokane, WA at the Heritage Dinner. Allan was the 508 Chapter's oldest member present at the Reno Convention



CSM Mark Sturdevant presents a check representing the 508 PIR and 508 Chapter to Association President Bill Eberle



Men of the 508th at the Reno Meeting. L-R Standing: CSM Sturdevant, Cliff Hodge, Bob Rydbeck, Allan Wood, Bob Brady, Doc Diephuis, John Friscia, Bob Hagans, Bobby Henson, SGM Halbrook. Kneeling: Al Vaitkus, Aristeo Blanco, Bill Lawrence, Tony Robles, Luis Navarro & Ken Hamill. Photo by Blanco



Bill & Anita Lawrence



Aristeo & Eileen Blanco



Bobby & Donna Henson



CSM receives 5 May 1952 photo from Luis Navarro



Memorial Luncheon table for Missing Soldier



The 82nd Chorus entertained us



Standing left Al & Mirga Vaitkus, right Bob Brady



Dave Foy, Sue Federinko & Rich Becker



Al & Mirga Vaitkus



Flo & Allan Wood & Ed Lapotsky



Awards Ray Willard & Bill Eberle



Jim Cittadino & Bill Eberle



Fred Egenberger & Bill Eberle



Bob Rydbeck & Bill Eberle



George Zablocki & Bill Eberle



Nero Tucker & Bill Eberle



Allan Wood at the 508 Chapter Meeting



The Dr. James A. Jackson Award Plaque



Ralph King at the 508 Chapter Meeting



Bobby Henson selling our raffle tickets



Luis Navarro & Tony Robles



The 508 Chapter Meeting in session



Delegates were allowed to observe Directors Meeting



Delmar Shaw & Lloyd Peck



Donna Henson & Eileen Blanco



Wilfredo Rivera & Joe Perez Ortiz



Aristeo Blanco & Bobby Henson



Judy & Mel Greene



Sally & Patrick Roberts



Marlie Byrd & Jim Wirf



Aristeo Blanco, Ken Hamill & Bobby Henson



Frank & Roberta Hill



Irene & Ray Fary



Joe Tolley & Allen Schoppe



Vince Kimberland & Ray Willard



Matt Wojtaszek & Chris Mazik



Hank & Marge Mazik



Nero & Carol Tucker



Jackie Stern & Susan Pratt



Jeff Leep & Fred Egenberger



Ed Herlihy, Don Van Alstyne & Rusty Wolfe



Luke Snyder & Cameron Opsahl



Benjamin Japha & Jose J. Lopez



Jose J. Lopez & Hunter Holt



Mary & Roland Smith



Fred Daniels & Mary Smith



Martha & David Jaurequi



Helga Kuhnke



Bob Brady



Bernie & Ralph King



Jim Cittadino & Leo Hobson



Steve Leonard at General Membership Meeting



Bob Brady & George Zablocki



Bob Miller & Lloyd Rahlf



Charlie Wagner – National sales



Ken Hamill, Allan Wood & Ed Lapotsky



Sandy Wagner – National Sales



Sharon & Bert Schmitz



Shirley & Jim Suchland



Wheeler & Tina Small



Ken Hamill & Bob Brady



Tom & Pearl Ingram



Helga & Bill Kuhnke



Ted Boatright & Wilfredo Rivera



Willie & Joe Steed



Kathy & Duane Williams & Patti Golden



George & Mary Anne Zablocki



Sandy & Charlie Wagner



Patrick Whiletree, Sue Federinko & Andrew Bodwin



Jo & Dave Foy



Judy & Mel Greene



Sandy & Andy Anderson



Dakota McCord, Judy & Mel Greene



The 82nd Chorus



Pam Knowles, Barbara Eberle & Jeane Tijerina



Rich Becker, Max & Tom Northrop



SFC Dale Schrull & SSG Clyde Hardin



Bob & Bonnie Shrader



Aristeo & Eileen Blanco



Louis Sartorio & Barbara Rothstein



LTC Sartorio, Aristeo Blanco & CSM Sturdevant



Henson's, Blanco's & Sartorio's



Marge Morris & Linda Commiciotto



Helga & Bill Kuhnke



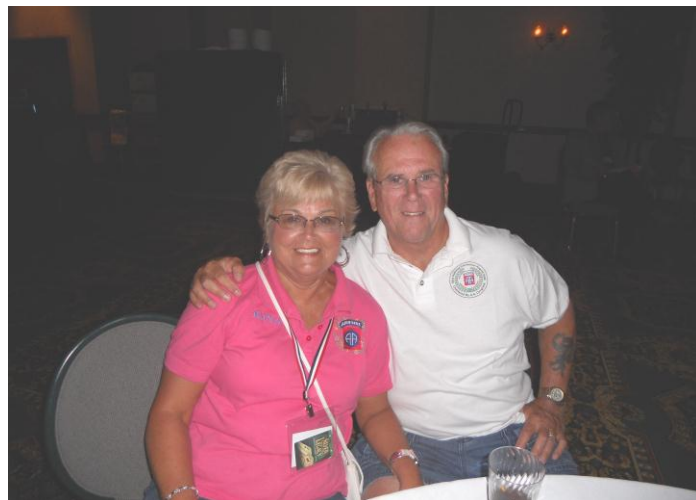
Frank Commiciotto & Frank Morris



Jo Foy & Edna Schroeder



Marie & Dan Hall



Edna & Harold Schroeder

A Chapter Hooaaah to Richard E. Grasso of Daleville, AL & E Co, 508 ARCT 1955-56. Richard sent the Sports Section of the Wednesday, July 18, 1956 San Francisco Call-Bulletin. The whole page depicts a photo of the ship General William A. Mitchell that unloaded 240 Army dependents at Fort Mason, plus 1846 members of the 508th Airborne Regimental Combat Team at Oakland Army Base. My wife Yasuko san and I may have been on this ship.



MSTS Ship General William A. Mitchell in Port

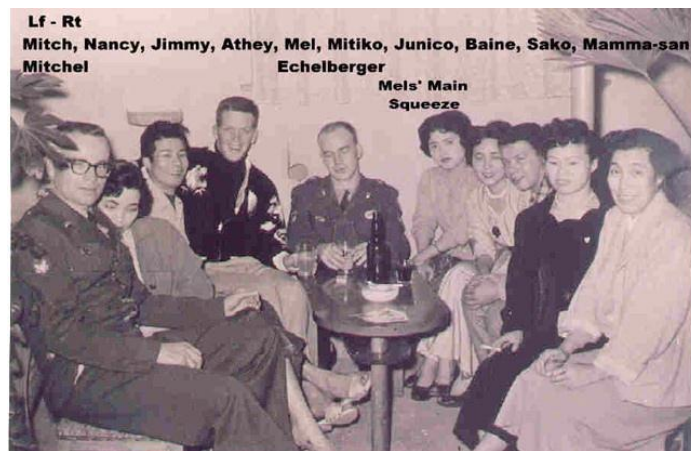
I spoke to **James T. Giltner** of B Company, 508 ARCT 1951-52 and Harker Heights, TX. James father was a Haole from the States and his Mom was Hawaiian. James was brought up in Honolulu and on the Island of Hawaii. He worked as a cowboy on the Kahua Ranch on the Big Island. James retired as a SGM in 1982, worked at Fort Hood for a couple of years, then became a Juvenile Detention Officer 1984-88. He played a lot of golf. Recently had a serious bout of pancreatic cancer that has disappeared after taking radiation and cancer pills. We are pulling for you Sergeant Major !!! Airborne !!!

I spoke to **Allen "Jack" Watson** of Eufaula, OK and Service Company 508 ARCT 1955-56. Jack started out driving a truck, then became a dispatcher and ended up running the gas station at Camp Chick, Beppu, Japan. He remembers 1SG Campbell, CPT Beck and having a good messhall. Jack returned to the States on the USS Anderson. He and Gary Lindsley hitch hiked from San Francisco to home and then to Fort Campbell. Jack taught Junior and Senior High School retiring in 1991.

I spoke to **Leonard Lee Perttu** of Virginia, MN and Easy Company, 508 ARCT 1954-56. Lee attended Michigan State and earned an Industrial Engineering degree. He worked for LTV Steel, mining taconite. He helped design faster, safer and more economical methods of mining. They increased the size of trucks & shovels and streamlined the work force. He retired in 1996 and loves to fish for Walleye and tows his own boat. He and his wife have travelled extensively thru the south, southwest and west in winter. They have travelled to Canada and Alaska in summertime. Leonard remembered Ron "Jack" Thunborg of Easy Company 508th who died in 1965 at the age of 30.

I spoke to **Clarence T. "Mac" McCluskey** of Oxford, CT and Love Company, 508 ARCT 1951-52. Mac has had some medical problems that kept him away from All American Week in recent years. He is doing well at present and looks forward to visiting Fort Bragg again. Mac is also looking for a 508 hat.

Mel Echelberger of Gold Beach, OR and Med. Co. 508 ARCT 1955-56 sent this photo taken in Beppu, Japan after hearing that his friend Mitch Mitchell had passed away on 26 July 2011.



Oriental Bar Beppu L-R: Mitch, Nancy, Jimmy, Athey, Mel, Mitiko, Junico, Baine, Sako and MamaSan

Ed Geilfuss of Allison Park, PA, near Pittsburgh and How Company, 508 ARCT 1955-56 bought one of our remaining sweatshirts and made a nice donation to our Chapter Treasury. Thank you Ed and enjoy the 508 Chapter sweatshirt.

MEMORIES OF A PARATROOPER #3

By Bill Chance HQ3, 508 ARCT 1953-55

[Editors Note: An obit notice led to an exchange of letters between Bill Chance and the daughter of HQ3, 508 ARCT 53-55 friend Jack Davidson]

There is more to the story, but the injury required a full leg cast for several weeks, during which I spent a considerable amount of time being dragged around the barracks by my cast by my friends, going to the hospital for replacement crutches or a new cast when they had broken mine, and hobbling from pine tree to pine tree when they had thrown the crutches into the woods, sometimes never to be seen again. The most memorable event I recall in that regard was one Sunday morning when I awoke hanging upside down from the barracks' ceiling after Jack, Murph, and a couple of others had tied a jump rope around my cast, dragged me from my bunk, threw the rope over one of the beams that ran down the barracks, and left me hanging head down as they left for breakfast. Because of all of this I needed to have the cast redone an inordinate number of times, in a couple of cases it seems before the plaster had fully cured. This was all in typical Army fun, but I am surprised I do not stumble around with a pronounced limp. Early in 1954, our unit was transferred to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. By this time all three of us were sergeants and Jack and I shared a room in the barracks, which we were in charge of. I seem to remember that Murphy was responsible for the next building over. The Korean War had ended (Summer of 1953), but the French were having a lot of trouble in Indo-China. The 508 was one of the "first responder" units, and things always were a little uncertain. The battle at Dienbienphu, which sort of spelled the end for the French, was a crucial one. The Company was placed on alert and the troops were told to stay close to the base during this period. It was our understanding that if the President approved it (Eisenhower), we would be flown directly into that battle zone and would jump in (which was the only way in at the time). Fortunately for us he did not approve it, and we returned to our routine -- mostly training and parachuting. I believe each of us went to Leadership and...

...Jumpmaster schools during this period. Late in 1954, the 508 received word that it would be reconstituted (brought to full strength) and transferred to Japan. By this time, all three of us were 'short-timers,' with less than a year of service remaining. Although they tried ardently to get us to re-enlist, we at least as ardently declined. Partly for this, and partly because we three and two other sergeants were, for all intents and purposes, running the under-strength unit (we had no First Sergeant, the company commander was never around much and I think there were no junior officers), when the rebuilding process started, a new First Sergeant arrived, and our little group was disbanded. This was early in 1955. All of us except one (Webb) were sent to different units in the 11th Airborne Division, which also was stationed at Fort Campbell. I was ordered to the 503 Airborne Infantry; Murphy was sent to the 188th Airborne Infantry, and Jack was sent to the 127th Airborne Engineer Battalion. Webb was sent to Iran, and Seward, the fifth, went to the 511th AIR. All of us except Webb continued on jump status, but our little group was broken up. We all said we would stay in touch, but that is really not the way things work. When I checked into the 503rd I learned the regiment was in Alaska on maneuvers and would be gone for a few more weeks. There was nothing to do except kill time until it got back, so Jack and I conspired to get me transferred to the 127th. They say that noncoms run the Army, and there is some truth to that. We knew a guy who was in Division Personnel and paid him a visit. He told us that if Jack's CO in the 127th would provide a letter of acceptance, he would cut the transfer orders. All of this was done over the course of a couple of days completely outside of formal channels. I joined Jack in the 127th, where the two of us served as Recon Sergeants in the battalion intelligence section. This was pretty easy duty, and we spent most of our time getting our security clearances and reading all the material stored in the battalion safe (most of which was confidential material on the Soviet army, which we felt might be better used if taken out of the safe and made available for the troops to read, on the premise that the Soviets already knew all that was in there).

TO BE CONTINUED

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 508 AIRBORNE CHAPTER



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CHAIRMAN

Our treasurer Frank Seif is stepping down. Frank has been a great volunteer; please thank him for his time, effort and expertise. His contact information is shown below. Read about Frank on the last page of this Devils Digest.



Frank Seif
PO Box 1462
Sun City, AZ 85372-1462
Telephone: 623.875.9016
E-Mail: fes508@cox.net

TREASURER

TAPS - 508th PARATROOPERS RECENTLY DECEASED

Banas, Walter A. AAM East Point, GA
King Co. 508 ARCT 51-55, 9 Jan 2011
Edward W. Boutcher, Centerville, MD
598 Eng. Co. 508 ARCT 51-54, 17 Dec 2010
Clark, Elbert W. LTG James Gavin Chapter
HHC 3-508 PIR WWII, 25 Mar 2011
Goff, John AAM Missouri City, TX
Medical Co. 508 ARCT 51-52, 13 May 2011
Hathaway, David P. AAM Akron, OH
Dog Co. 508 ARCT 51-53, 3 Jul 2011
Janisch, Francis J. Eufaula, OK
Med Co. 508 ARCT 55-56, 16 Jun 2011
Mitchell, Maurice E. AAM Concord, CA
Med Co. 508 ARCT 1951-53, 26 Jul 2011

NEW MEMBERS

Arthur L. Brogden III, Niles, Ohio
B Company, 1-508, 82 Abn Div 1978-84

NEW ALL AMERICAN LIFE MEMBERS

Vincent H. Gomez, Mobile, Alabama
B Company, 3-508 Abn Ft Kobbe, CZ 1962-65



Annual Members ...40
Affiliate Members...14
All Americans.....305
Total Members..359

June 2011 Treasurers Report

Expenses.....\$1306.19
Ending Balance Checking.....\$3224.60
Ending Balance CD..... \$6096.31
Ending Balance\$9320.91
I spent \$770.88 in Reno for awards, freight & mail & photo copies; \$508 wounded warrior fund. Our treasurer sent \$650 to WW fund bringing our checking down by \$1420.88.

Expired Memberships

You 40 Annual Members with expired memberships are asked to send your dues to me, Ken Hamill, 2207 Coventry Drive, Columbus, GA 31904. Why stay an annual member at \$20.00 per year? All American Membership will cost \$100.00 if you are 50 years of age or older

I spoke to Roger and Leone Jacobson about the 320th Airborne Field Artillery Association. We old timer 320th and 508th veterans were missed. Approximately 1000 paid members belong to the 320th Assn. The majority of their members served in Vietnam or with the Berlin Redlegs and they wanted to change their reunion dates to coincide with the Week of the Eagles. Only 72 people attended the Riverside Inn gathering, mostly Berlin Red-legs. The group went to Fort Campbell, ate in a 320th FA Mess hall and toured the area. Louie Botto passed away, but his widow and her sister attended the reunion. Sue Montoya visited, but knew only a few people. Nathan and Dorothy Griffiths of Clarksville were the only other old timers to attend the Week of the Eagles along with the Jacobsons. Sad also to say the Tennessee - Kentucky 101st Abn Div Assn Clubhouse was sold. The bright and successful Garland Wright came down with Alzheimer's disease and lives in a Clarksville Rest Home.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 508 CHAPTER, 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.

FORMAL NAME (No Nicknames) _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

STREET _____ CITY _____ STATE _____

9-DIGIT Zip _____ ASN _____ (or) SSAN (Last 4) _____

MARITAL STATUS _____ SPOUSE'S NAME _____ NUMBER OF CHILDREN _____

OCCUPATION _____ HOME #: (____) _____ CELL #: (____) _____

EMAIL _____ SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

____ ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FOR YR 2011 \$20.00 OR ____ \$21.00 (= \$1.00 DONATION TO ED FUND)

____ LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP (\$150.00 FOR 49 YEARS AND UNDER OR \$100.00 FOR 50 YEARS +) \$ _____

____ ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY, RESERVE, NAT. GD – Current Rank and Date of Rank: _____

____ RETIRED MILITARY – Retired Rank and Date Departed Active Military Service _____

____ MILITARY VETERAN – Rank and Date Departed Military Service _____

508 UNIT: Co. ____; Bn ____; Location _____ FROM MO/YR _____ TO MO/YR _____

Combat Tour Location: _____ FROM MO/YR _____ TO MO/YR _____

NEW MEMBERS MUST INCLUDE PROOF OF AIRBORNE QUALIFICATION

MAIL TO: KEN HAMILL; 2207 Coventry Drive; Columbus, GA 31904-5034

508 TREASURER STEPPING DOWN

Woe is me. Our great treasurer and Certified Public Accountant, Frank Seif must give up the job. Frank is extremely busy and can no longer be distracted by Chapter duties. Frank's wife is ill and has suffered injuries and surgery. They are currently living a tough existence. Frank is double checking the Chapter checking and savings accounts and will have his bank forward all Chapter Funds to my bank ASAP. The turnover is expected to be complete by 1 October. Items mailed to the Sun City, AZ Post Office Box will automatically be forwarded to my home address. Frank is concerned for one member whose membership was not renewed, but his check was deposited and his name forgotten. We can all understand how that can happen. When your wife is a danger to herself and other demands cause a frenzy, we old timers can lose track of things. If you sent a check to Frank within the past few months and have not received your new membership card, please let me know and we'll fix it. Frank...

...Seif became treasurer when hurricane Charlie destroyed Jack Damron's home and Bob Murray became the Chapter Chair again. Frank volunteered to become Chapter Chairman in 2007 when a chairman resigned or dropped the job and there was fear that the 508 Chapter could flounder and fail. Great job Frank !!! Frank's comment follows: I have been proud to provide a small service to one of the greatest Airborne units in which I had the good fortune to serve in my youth. I remember those days from 56 years ago as if they were yesterday! Would that all our young people would have the benefit of the training, discipline, unit cohesion, and sense of accomplishment I had at 19-22 years old! It served me well as CEO of several companies later in life, AIRBORNE, ALWAYS!"-

Our 508 Chapter donations to the 82nd Abn Div Assn Wounded Warrior fund for the year 2011 are \$1158.00. Our treasurer sent a check for \$650.00 in July. I gave \$508 in Reno to be added to the 508 PIR donation.