

DIABL



The Link for All Veterans, Spouses, Family and Friends of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association - April 2010 - Vol. 5, Nr. 1

2010 Reunion Slated for October 20 – 24

Join us in Oklahoma City as we are hosted by the WWII Airborne Demonstration Team



Reunion Update

The fourth annual Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Assn. reunion will be held in Oklahoma City from October 20 – October 24. The reunion coincides with the 68th Anniversary of the activation date of the regiment on October 20, 1942.

We will be hosted by the WWII Airborne Demonstration Team of Frederick, OK. The ADT have lots of fun things planned for us including a parachute jump and C-47 ride-alongs.

Floyd Haynes and His Orchestra will be playing for your dancing and listening entertainment at the banquet.

The reunion will also include a visit to the Oklahoma City National Memorial; a very moving tribute to the victims of the 1995 bombing there. Truly a “must see”. We will also visit the 45th Infantry Division Museum.

Other places of interest are the National Cowboy Museum and the Museum of Women Pilots. Historic Brick Town, Oklahoma City’s premier entertainment district, is a mere two blocks from our hotel. Attractions include many restaurants, canal rides, and more.

CSM Bert Puckett has graciously agreed to attend and be our speaker. Those of you who attended the 2008 Reunion at Ft. Bragg will remember what a wonderful job CSM Puckett did of hosting us and what a dynamic speaker he is.

Normandy Remembered

Paul Demciak of B Co. sent the following:

“I, Paul Demciak, was a member of the 1st Btn Pathfinder team. I jumped into Normandy the night of 5 June 44. I landed in the 101st area and after about twenty hours of combat, I was wounded and captured by the German SS troops along with several 501st PIR paratroopers. I was a POW for 3 months. We were force marched from Normandy to Toulouse in Southern France.

On 6 September, I and eight other G.I.s escaped to Naples, Italy with the help of English intelligence MI5, American OSS, and the French underground. We escaped in a Dakota C-47. I received 3 Purple Hearts and 2 Bronze Star Medals with a (V) device.”

In 2009, Paul was awarded the Legion of Honor with the rank of “Chevalier” by the French government for his part in the liberation of France. The Legion of Honor was created by Napoleon in 1802 and is the highest honor the French can bestow on a non-Frenchman. All Americans who fought in France are entitled to this honor.



Legion of Honor Medal

Paul has promised to send his autobiography of his war time experiences for posting on the website. Thank you, Paul.

We strongly encourage all veterans to send their personal accounts of their war time experiences to our webmaster, Dick O’Donnell, at: 760 Conestee Dr. West Melbourne, FL 32904-1812 or jumpmaster@508pir.org

Congratulations

The 508th Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Association recently named Family and Friends National Chairman, Dick O’Donnell, as their “first ever” honorary member. This is quite an honor and no one is more deserving of it than Dick. Congratulations, Dick.

The following article will appear in the next Paraglide issue on behalf of the 508th Airborne Chapter:

508 AIRBORNE CHAPTER



Congratulations to Dick O’Donnell for becoming our first ever 508th Airborne Chapter

Honorary Member effective 1 January 2010. Dick is the current Chairman and Webmaster for the Family and Friends of the 508 PIR Association. He and the Family and Friends organization are

great supporters of 508 paratroopers from all years, from the young and active to the very old and retired. Dick served in the U.S. Air Force from 1959 - 67 at many places including Japan, Pakistan and Thailand. He graduated from Northeastern University and retired as Director of Information Management Technology, Harris Corp, Melbourne, FL in 1998. Please make Dick welcome when you meet him.

➔

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MAIL BOX

My mother told me that although Dad received a Bronze Star, he also earned a Silver Star that was never received. In honor of him, and for her, I would like to know what direction I should take in researching this.

Thank you,
Jo-Ellen "Cody" Wahto Sontag
codysonntag2009@yahoo.com.
Daughter of Lt. Gordon Wahto and Joan Wahto.

Constantine Linardakis is looking for buddies he served with. He would also like to be contacted by former members of the first pathfinder class at Fort Bragg. Contact Constantine at: 4295 Webster Ave., Apt. 2C The Bronx, NY 10470 Telephone: (718) 324-9077 ➔

Checking In

Kenneth H. Hook writes: "Enlisted October 15, 1942 – Sent to Camp Blanding, Fl. to 508th – Discharged October 30, 1945 at Fort Benning, GA. Normandy jump – POW Camps 12A,

4B, and 3C." (daytonhook@att.net) ➔

Check it out!

Honorary F&F member, Jan Bos, says check out the new documentary on Operation Market Garden at the link: www.theamericansonhellshighway.com. Jan is featured in the film.

Combat Reels has produced some DVDs of raw combat footage specific to the 82nd Airborne in WWII. The footage was taken by the U.S. Army Signal Corps Photographers. 508th PIR men have been identified in the footage. The producers have asked to be notified if they can identify and soldiers in the footage. Place your order at: www.CombatReels.com. ➔

Condolences

Grieshammer

Larry Grieshammer's wife of 64 years, Mary, passed away from Alzheimer's disease on October 23, 2009. Larry writes, "She was a wonderful wife and mother." Condolences can be sent to Larry at: Larry Grieshammer, 1982 Idlehurst Dr., Euclid, OH 44117-1852

Fairman

Shirley Fairman, wife of George Fairman III (Hq 2) died on April 17. She had been in a coma for the past few years.

Condolences can be sent to the family at 9559 E. Guess St, Rosemead, CA 91770-2104.

George is under care himself and can be reached at 626-451-9896. George Jr. advises that his father is usually in his room other than during meal times. ➔

Call For Dues !

Dues for the new fiscal year of Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Assn. were due on **November 1 2009**.

Dues are \$10.00 per year per household. WWII veterans, widows of WWII veterans and Honorary Members are not required to pay dues. 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. If you have not yet paid your dues, please do so.

Please send dues to:

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

Final Jumps

Gladstone

Fred Gladstone, I Co, passed away January 8, 2010. He parachuted into Normandy and was wounded on July 4, 1944. He recovered in England, and rejoined his company and fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

Fred spent over 50 years in ministry including children's Bible summer camps throughout the U.S., Alaska, and Canada. Fred spoke often of his time in the military and the men with whom he served. His experiences had an impact on him throughout his life. Condolences can be sent to his widow to whom he was married for 56 years:

Mrs. Mattie Gladstone
P.O. Box 712
Darien, GA 31305

Richardson

Fayette Richardson of H Co. passed away peacefully in his sleep March 26. Condolences can be sent to his family at:

498 11th St.; Apt. 4
Brooklyn, NY 11215-4325

Shields

Robert Shields of Hq 1st, passed away January 17, 2010. Condolences can be sent to his family at:

25 Polhemus St.
Tappen, NY 10983-1722 ➔

Searching For ...

Members! If you cannot respond by email to either of the descendants below, then send via the

Diablo Editor and I will pass your information along. Include a phone number if you don't mind. Ed

Girard, Charles J.

Information on PVT Charles J. Girard would be greatly appreciated. Please contact John Jaskevich at quard1952@yahoo.com.

Johnson, Clifford E.

Sir: Was searching for info about my uncle, Clifford E. Johnson. Pvt. HQ1 6-6-44 Normandy, found his name on the Roll of Honor 508 PIR. Great website and thank you for my freedom. Mike Kelley Viet Nam 68/69.
mikelkl@yahoo.com †

Get Well Soon

Barrett, Walter

Walter Barrett is recovering nicely from hip replacement surgery. Get well soon wishes can be sent to Walter at:

Walter Barrett
2841 Wesleyan Lane
Winston Salem, NC 27106-5847

Glass, Darrell

Darrell is recovering from yet another back surgery. Please keep Darrell in your prayers for a successful surgery. Cards can be sent to Darrell at:

Darrell Glass
1609 Mimosa Pl.
Fullerton, CA 92835-2112

Lamoureux, Francis

Francis Lamoureux is recovering from a stroke suffered on December 24 and later an operation to remove a blood clot in his leg. He is doing well and recently celebrated his 90th birthday. Well wishes can be sent to Francis at:

Francis Lamoureux
50 Benton Dr., Apt. 219
East Longmeadow, MA 01028-2741
Tel. No. (413)-525-4404.

Price, Kathy

Kathy Price of Nottingham, England has had several health issues lately and has

been in the hospital several times. Many of you will remember Kathy from our 2008 Reunion at Ft. Bragg. In a recent letter Kathy sent her "best wishes and love to all the lovely people who made me so welcome at the reunion. God bless you all."

Cards can be sent to Kathy at:

11, Plungar Close
Nottingham, Nottinghamshire
NG8 3FW England

Rogers, Tony

Honorary Member, Tony Rogers has been ill and recently spent eight days in the hospital. Cards can be sent to Tony at:

Tony Rogers
17 Ebbens Rd.
Hemel Hempstead
Herts HP3 9QR England
Tony1suffolk@bopenworld.com †

Message from the President

I was introduced to the 508PIR Association in 1994. My Mom and Dad were hosting a Headquarters Company, C Company mini-reunion. I had recently learned of my dad's participation in the 508 and was very interested in learning more. I attended a couple of mini reunions until dad's death in 1998. After that, my family came together, I have five sisters and one brother, and we would accompany mom to subsequent reunions.

In 2004, I attended my first regimental reunion, the retirement ceremony of the 508PIR Association. It was a life changing experience. My journey had just begun but was seemingly ending. About six months later, I received an e-mail from George Stoeckert, stating he was planning a mini-reunion in Orange Park, Florida, October 2005.

At this reunion, I met Dick O'Donnell and learned of his idea to form the Family and Friends of the 508PIR Association. His idea was met with; I will put it nicely, "mixed reviews".

Another idea was proposed at this time which was questioned, especially by me, the idea to have a celebration honoring the activation of the 508 and including all era's of the regiment. These factors shaped my involvement with the 508 PIR.

The retirement of the 508 PIR Association was an incredible event. It was run perfectly and attendance was unmatched. I met a multitude of wonderful people, many I had read about in books on the 508 and had a great time but could not stop thinking; I did not want this to end. My reunion ended with my friend Joe Bressler and me sharing a beer sitting on the back of his car reminiscing about my dad and the day's events. It was a long, lonely, somber drive home. I was unable to cope with the fact that I may never have a chance to see these people again. The 508 PIR Association meant so much to my Mom, Dad and me and its role in my life was changing.

In Orange Park, Florida, 2005, I met Dick O'Donnell, webmaster of www.508PIR.org website. Dick proposed the formation of a new 508 PIR Association. He was met with strong criticism and I was unsure if I should get involved but I knew I wanted reunions to continue. I polled attendee's and received many different views. A couple of conversations solidified my choice to get involved. I attended a couple of planning meetings with Dick and others to get a new association off the ground. I hosted the first Family and Friends of the 508 PIR Association reunions in Augusta, Georgia 2006. I had gone from trying to find out more about my dad to falling in love with the 508 family. I was now hooked.

In 2008, at the third annual Family and Friends of the 508PIR reunion, in Fayetteville North Carolina, The idea of having all generations of the 508 celebrating the activation of the regiment came to fruition. During the reunion, our by-laws were amended to allow all generations of the 508 into our association. At first, I was not for this

change. I got involved with the 508 because of my dad and remained a part because of the friendships made with the friends and families of the WWII veterans. This changed on a trip to the 82nd Airborne museum.

My wife and I, along with a couple of young 508 soldiers were watching a video showing pictures of soldiers lost in battle and I saw the reaction of a couple of the soldiers, one in particular. I was moved beyond words; the look and actions of this young man stirred my soul and I realized how important the 508PIR association had been for my dad. I knew it was important to continue and include all 508 veterans. The 508PIR association transformed the life of my dad. He changed from a battle hardened man, running from the demons of war to a proud, happy, patriotic, paratrooper. He died at peace, proud of his participation in WWII and even prouder of the men he served with.

I am very proud to be the president of the Family and Friends of the 508 PIR Association and although I feel unworthy to have such an important job; I will be a

member for life. I have seen many people come to reunions, as I once did, on a journey to find out more about a friend or family member, only to fall off after a couple of years.

My journey took a much unexpected path. I have learned a lot about my dad and myself and I am very proud of lessons learned. More importantly I have made some lifelong friends. We are all connected by a common goal, to honor the 508 PIR.

I am proud of our association and how we have embraced other generations of the regiment. I am glad some of these veterans have become a part of our beloved association and are attending reunions. I hope that some of you feel as strongly as I do and will help us to continue in perpetuity.

God bless,
Troy Palmer



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.

Normandy Interviews

Bill Nation was recently contacted by NBC who are interested in interviewing veterans attending the D-Day celebrations this coming June.

If you will be there, please contact Bill at billnation508@mac.com. If you are not an e-mail user, call Dick O'Donnell at 321-759-6174 and he will pass the word along.



The Diablo

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