SUPPORT CO. ASSN-ORLANDO DEVILS DIGEST

December 2011 www.red-devils.org Vol. 6 No. 4



Support Company 508 ARCT Association members pose in Orlando host hotel. L-R sitting: Henry Lenzer, Jim Lutes, Speedy Gonzales, Bill Ray & Bill Fernandez. Standing: Roland Font, Jerry Strickland, Jud Haverkost, Jim Heyward, Jim Grimes, Bob Capalbo, Bob Gee, Earl Christy, Delfo Ferrante, Al Vaitkus, Jim Strickland, Frank Cowdrey, Alex Elliott & Ken Hamill. Frank Gonzales missing from photo.

SUPPORT COMPANY REUNION

By Ken Hamill

Support Company 508th ARCT Association met in Orlando, FL 12-15 October 2011 at the Rosen Inn at Pointe Orlando. A nice bag of gifts was presented to each member including pens, pencils, military pins, association hat, and a T shirt with a 508 graphic depicted on the front for each person attending. Several Support Company people spent hours near the hotel registration desk reminiscing and enjoying each other's company. We ate in a steakhouse bar across the street that evening and it was tasty and fun. Thursday morning a Support Company meeting was held. Jim Strickland always does a great job conducting these things. It was decided that the next reunion would be held at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, AL in September 2012. Around 23 members took a trip to…

…Fantasy of Flight on Thursday to see the largest private collection of restored vintage aircraft in the world while some of us went to an Outlet Mall. The highlight of this year's gathering in my opinion was the boat tour with a lunch served aboard. We convoyed POV's to Sanford, FL where "Romance" was waiting to be boarded. It was nearly a one hour drive. It was my good fortune to have Al and Mirga Vaitkus ride with us. They are a very pleasant couple and I never met a more patriotic man than our Al Vaitkus. We toured the St. Johns River for about four hours. The St. Johns River is one of only a few rivers in the world that flow north. We saw beautiful scenery including a gator or two and had a wonderful and filling lunch served by nice people. The boat guide and speaker was a good comedian who shared interesting trivia with us. The trip was worth more than we paid...

…The banquet was held in the only private room there and it was too small, a total of 47 people attended. Nothing would spoil this night however. The food was buffet style and the tables were sent to the serving area in a manner that added to our peace and comfort. Association President Jim Strickland gave awards, presented Auxiliary & Honorary memberships and recognized several people. Jim Lutes was the Guest of Honor. Medical problems kept Jim away from the Support Company Reunion a few Times, so the association decided to have the 2011 reunion in Orlando, near Jim's home town of Ormond Beach, FL. Bill Fernandez, Jud Haverkost, Jim Lutes and Ken Hamill received awards for their contributions to Support Company. Al Vaitkus and COL Jim Heyward were recognized for their contributions to the 508 Chapter. Congratulations to Bill Fernandez and the planning committee for planning and conducting an excellent reunion. Hoooaaah!!!



Frank & Amber Gonzales
Thank you Frank and Amber for taking 459 photos at the reunion, then making two CD's of your photos and mailing a copy to every family that attended. Thank you also for helping our very popular Frank "Speedy" Gonzales and Freida Primm to attend our reunions.



The Group L-R. Sit or kneel: Jim Lutes, Brenda Esser, Darlene Massie, Freida Primm, Donna Green, Margaret Lenzer, Willie Mae Heyward, Lorraine Cowdrey, Paulette Grimes, Lillian Ferrante and Bill Fernandez. Standing: Nate & Jamie Wade, Jim Grimes, Sue Lutes, Jud & Sandra Haverkost, Bob Capalbo, Mirga & Al Vaitkus, Bill Ray, Henry Lenzer, Bill Fernandez, Earl Christy, Speedy Gonzales, Nelson Fernandez, Almeda Medlin, Jerry Strickland, Ken Hamill, Velda Font-Morris, Roland Font, Ikuko Elliott, Judy Francis, Alex Elliott, Delfo Ferrante, Jim Strickland, Jim Heyward, Rita Fernandez, Keith & Reece Fernandez.



Jerry Strickland & Earl Christy



Bill Ray & Jim Strickland



Frank & Lorraine Cowdrey



Bill Fernandez & Roland Font



Jud & Sandra Haverkost



Bob Capalbo & Alex Elliott



Judy Francis & Almeda Medlin



Ikuko Elliott & Henry Lenzer



Jim & Wilie Mae Heyward



Henry & Margaret Lenzer



Bob Gee & Frank Gonzales Jr.



Frank & Amber Gonzales



Sue & Jim Lutes



Jim & Paulette Grimes



Jim Strickland conducting meeting



Nelson & Bill Fernandez at meeting



Mirga & Al Vaitkus



Delfo Ferrante



Frank “Speedy” Gonzales



Henry Lenzer



Roland Font & Bll Ray



Roland Font



Jim Strickland, Henry & Margaret Lenzer



Jerry Strickland, Earl Christy & Bob Capalbo



Almeda Medlin, Lillian Ferrante & Paulette Grimes



Keith & Reece Fernandez, Judy Francis & Jud Haverkost

e



Sandra Haverkost, Almeda Medlin , Lillian Ferranti, Paulette Grimes & Lorraine Cowdrey



Jim & Willie Mae Heyward



Frank & Lorraine Cowdrey



Bob Gee & Delfo Ferranti



Bill Ray, Roland Font & Velda Font-Morris



Lillian Ferranti, Jim & Paulette Grimes & Lorraine Cowdrey



Earl Christy & Jerry Strickland



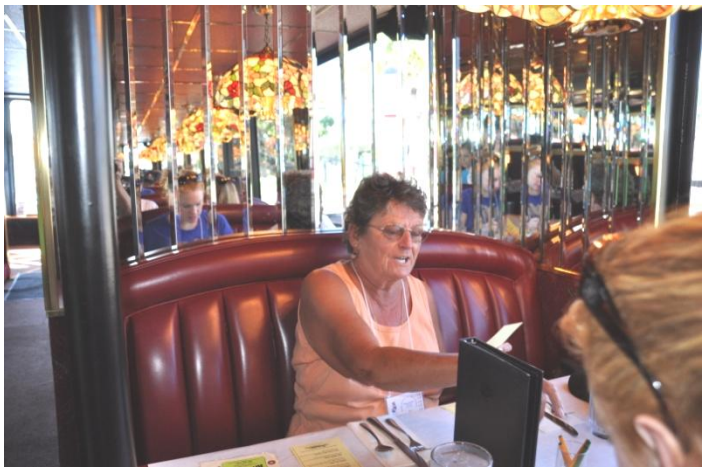
Al & Mirga Vaitkus



Speedy Gonzales, Freida Primm & Frank Gonzales Jr



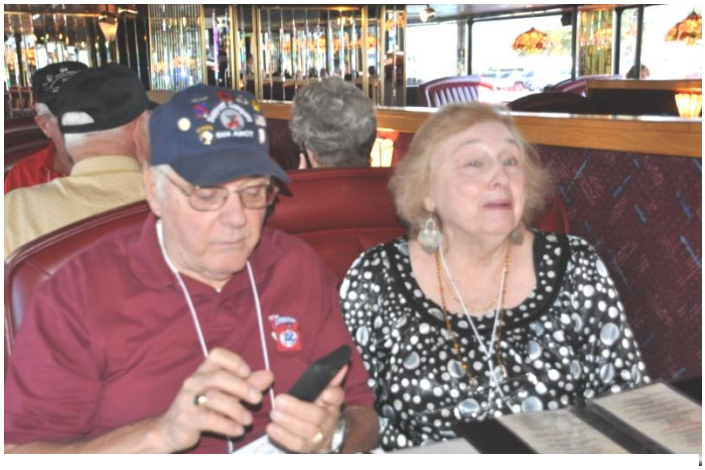
Jim & Willie Mae Heyward, Amber Gonzales



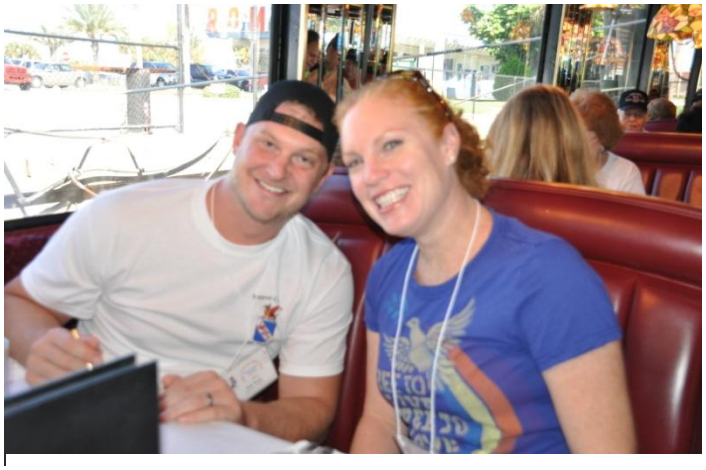
Judy Francis



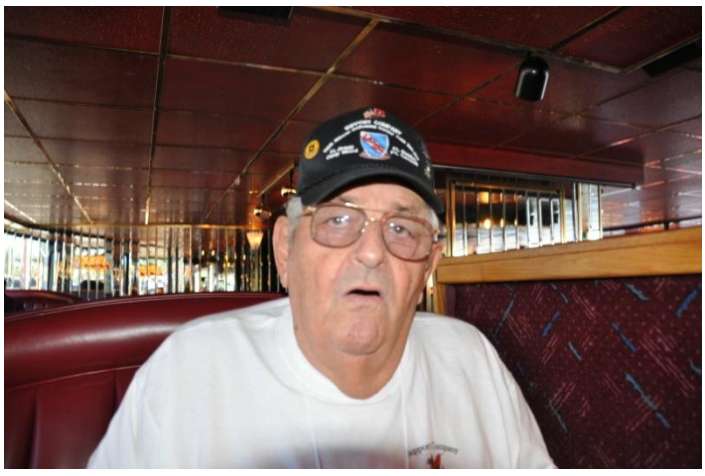
Sue & Jim Lutes



Delfo & Lillian Ferrante



Nate & Jamie Wade



Bob Capalbo



Brenda, Mackenzie and Baby Tally Esser



The St. Johns River flows north



Ladies pose on prow of boat “Romance”



St. Johns River Cruise



Nelson Fernandez & Earl Christy relaxing



St. Johns River Cruise



St. Johns River Cruise



Al & Mirga Vaitkus



Bob Gee & Jerry Strickland



Jim & Paulette Grimes



Donna Green & Bob Capalbo

n



Donna Green & Darlene Massie



Margaret & Henry Lenzer



Speedy Gonzales & Freida Primm



Sandra & Jud Haverkost



The Lutes Family at end of table



Jamie Wade, Grandpa Lutes & Baby Tally



Nate Wade & Sue Lutes



Almeda Medlin & Ken Hamill



Support Company, 508 ARCT Association members pose on prow of boat "Romance" on the St. Johns River near Orlando. L-R sitting: Jim Strickland, Speedy Gonzales, Bill Ray, Bill Fernandez, Jud Haverkost. Standing: Frank Gonzales Jr, Ken Hamill, Bob Capalbo, Delfo Ferrante, Alex Elliott, Jim Heyward, Roland Font, Jim Grimes, Earl Christy, Bob Gee & Al Vaitkus. Frank Cowdry, Jim Lutes, Henry Lenzer and Jerry Strickland are missing from this photo.



Lillian & Delfo Ferrante



Bill Ray & Judy Francis



Support Company Ladies. Sitting L-R: Freida Primm, Margaret Lenzer, Willie Mae Heyward, Paulette Grimes, Lorraine Cowdrey, Lillian Ferrante. Standing: Darlene Massie, Mirga Vaitkus, Jamie Wade, Donna Green, Reece Fernandez, Rita Fernandez, Sandra Haverkost, Sue Lutes, Almeda Medlin, Judy Francis, Ikuko Elliott, Velda Font-Morris, Brenda Esser & Amber Gonzales.



Sue and Jim Lutes



Jim & Willie Mae Heyward

SUPPORT COMPANY, 508 ARCT ASSOCIATION

CONGRATULATIONS FOR A GREAT REUNION



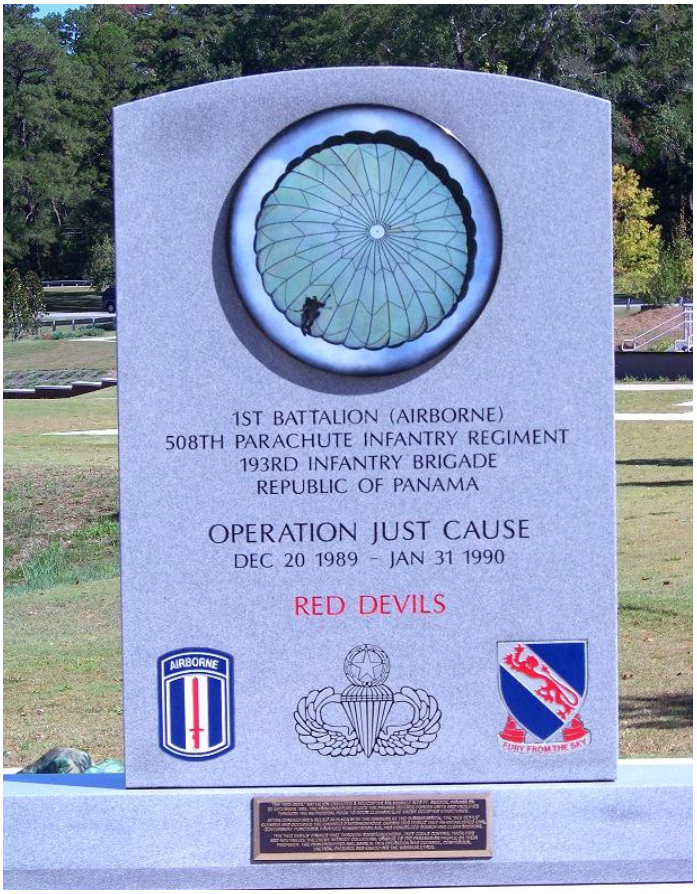
Members of First Battalion, 508th Airborne during Operation Just Cause gathering at Fort Benning, GA on 14 October 2011 to dedicate their new monument. Photos provided by Alan R. Bowser

1-508 OPERATION JUST CAUSE VETS DEDICATE MONUMENT AT BENNING

1-508 Airborne was garrisoned at Fort Kobbe, Panama Canal Zone, was first ready alert force for USARSO and fought in Operation Just Cause. A group of these Red Devils gathered at Fort Benning, Georgia on 14 October 2011 to dedicate the Operation Just Cause memorial depicted in the right column.



L-R: CSM (Ret) Russell Beard and COL (Ret) Ray Fitgerald prepare to unveil the monument



1-508 Airborne, Operation Just Cause Monument dedicated at Fort Benning, GA

MEMORIES OF A PARATROOPER #4

By Bill Chance HQ3, 508 ARCT 1953-55

[Editor's 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]

This was really a quiet time with the two of us pulling duty, making the parachute jumps as scheduled, usually serving as jumpmasters. There was one other part of this period I think we really pulled a fast one. The 11th had a Division Commander, Wayne C. Smith, who may have been the most unpopular general in American history. I know he was with Jack, who likened him to a warthog (there really was a certain likeness). Smith imposed a requirement that on each pay day (end of the month) there would be a division parade in full-field gear, at the end of which the troops would march to their designated areas, set up pup tents, and lay out their field gear for a full field inspection, and then at the end of which if they passed, and after they stowed their gear, the troops could be released to go in to town and splurge. Prior to this, pay days had been days off -- after you collected your pay, you could go to town, go ahead with any leave plans, etc. Participation in the new monthly drill was mandatory for all, except for three people. These were the individuals assigned to lay out the drill field. This was done with a survey instrument and little markers placed in the ground the night before the parade by an officer and two noncoms (the Recon Sergeants) from the 127th. The latter two were Jack and me; Month after month we pulled this off. We were excused from the parade because we had to get up early and check the layout before the units arrived (troops had been known to go in after midnight and re-arrange the markers -- it really was an unpopular event). Actually, Jack and I rode this horse and avoided these parades until they finally were eliminated. Meanwhile, the 11th was ordered to prepare for movement to Germany. This was during the summer of 1955. Jack and I were really short-timers at this point and were subjected to the same pressure to re-enlist as before, which we resisted with the same resolve as before. With new troops coming in, we were pretty…

…superfluous with little to do while we awaited our discharge dates. Jack's arrived in September. I remember he was so eager to get home he bought a ticket for a flight to Wilmington. Not many people could afford to fly commercially in those days, so this was unusual, but at this point a train for him was just too slow. I had a few beers with him in the PX the night before he left. This was the last I would see of him until 1959, when we visited that summer.

As I look this over it seems to be organized more around our circumstances than the things we actually did. We did have a lot of fun, in Columbus, Georgia, Phenix City, Alabama (an especially interesting place), Nashville, Clarksville, Hopkinsville, and others. Much of what we did was pretty innocent. We drank some but usually beer and rarely to excess. We really liked to go into town and have hamburgers, milkshakes, and maybe take in a movie. We did the Grand 'Ol Opry, and spent a lot of time swimming at Lake Penneyrile in Kentucky during the summer. But although we were fierce paratroopers, we really were not that much different from others our age going to college or working at home. There were fights and rough-housing, but people did not get hurt, at least not that often, and at least not that bad. There also was not a lot of carrying on with women. Most of the people in our unit had girls back home. There were a lot of pictures of girl friends on shelves in the barracks. I know Jack had a picture of your Mom on the table in our room, and he talked about her a lot. I knew, for example, that she was in nursing school at the time. He also talked about his Dad a lot, often about their experiences in the painting business. We were lucky, that the Dienbienphu jump was canceled, that Germany and Berlin did not blow up, that the Korean War ended. So in that sense it was pretty tame duty, but I think we all were marked by the experience. **TO BE CONTINUED**

Winter Weekend Getaway, 24-26 Feb, 2012 Hilton Head Marriott Resort & Spa, rooms from $100. Reservations 888.511.5086. Hosted by Ben Vandervoort Chapter. Send name, address & $75 per head to Bill Eberle, 22 Big Woods Drive, Hilton Head Island, SC 29926-2665. For information or transportation call 843.682.4171.

VETERANS DAYS

By Ken Hamill

I drove to the Hampton Inn, Alexandria, VA. arriving midafternoon on Tuesday, 8 November. The hotel said I had made the reservation through Expedia, but I made it over the phone thinking it was Hampton Inn I was talking to. The reservation clerk was willing to charge me the special rate of $144 per night, but the first night had already been paid ($213), so I stuck with my plan to stay one night in Alexandria, stay with the 82nd group through Wednesday and then return home. Beware of Expedia. The Hampton Inn breakfast area would be used as our hospitality room and an adjoining room served as the sales, bar and food serving room. The bar was open Tuesday afternoon and drinks were free. Food would be provided by the 82nd Association and served to us on all days except the first day. I took a few photos and spoke to most of the people there. Paul De Vries asked me if I would like to be one of the four 82nd Association members to present the wreath at the tomb of the unknowns on 9 November. I declined because I needed to photograph the event. I went out to eat about 6:00 PM and returned to my room to get my clothes, bags and cameras ready for early morning check out. On Wednesday we gathered in the rear parking lot at 8:45 AM. I picked up our wreath and loaded it into my car trunk. We drove convoy style to Arlington National Cemetery. A snafu delayed us, because the chain of command did not get the word. Paul De Vries had to go see the National Cemetery senior person on the job. We were allowed to enter but the delay caused us to miss our scheduled tomb of the unknown's presentation from the 82nd association. I had placed our 508 wreath next to our 508 PIR Memorial. The decision was made that we would start our normal presentation of wreaths and return for the 12:30 re-scheduled tomb presentation. We walked to the nearby 508 PIR Memorial. The 3 dozen entourage members stood on the walkway adjacent to our wreath while I spoke. I gave a six minute pitch about the history of our Regiment, and with the help of President Bill Eberle removed the… … cover from the wreath and asked everyone to join us as the 82nd Color Guard rendered honors and Taps was played by a 82 paratrooper. The second wreath and honors rendered were at the grave of 1SG Leonard Funt, the 508 Medal of Honor recipient. The spokesman there was Mike Lester of the Funt Chapter. The standard procedure became – a spokesman talks about the unit or person being honored; a wreath is uncovered, the 82nd Color Guard renders honors; then taps is played. We continued and honored the 82nd Airborne Division memorial with Bill Ridley handling the spokesman duties.

Next came the General Robinson grave by James Jackson; followed at the General Ridgway grave by Ben Beekman and the 555 PIB by James Jackson. At 12:30 we gathered at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers spectator area. Four members of the 82nd Association marched down the steps and out near the tomb. A Sergeant guided our 82nd reps Bill Eberle, Dickie Keaton, Mike Lester and Brent Gulick while a beautiful large wreath was formerly presented at the tomb. Then a bugler from the United States Army Band finalized the ceremony by playing taps. Honors were then rendered at the final 3 sites for the day. Herb Shapiro spoke at the 11th Airborne Division monument; the 551 PIB spokesman was COL Doug Dillard a survivor of the WWII 551 and COL Paul DeVries handled the 504 PIR. We finished at 2:00 PM. The rest of the 82 entourage returned to the Hampton Inn for a late lunch. I set my GPS on Crossroads Inn and headed for Quantico.



Ken Hamill & Bill Eberle at the 508 Memorial



Jo Foy & Francine Noyon



Bill & Barbara Eberle



Francine Noyon & Skip McGrath



Ken & Rita Leggett



Mark Mest & Bill Ridley



Rusty Wolf, Dave Foy & Bill Eberle



Charlie & Louise Graham



Bartenders Ken Leggett & Karen Mest



Diana Tubbs & Paul De Vries



Sandy & Charlie Graham



Dickie & Judy Keaton



James Kiser & Bob Farver



Sue Federinko & Dick Yates



Gordon Sumner & Dave Foy



Ida Anderson, Bob Farver & James Kiser



Ogie Sniedze



Rich Becker, Paul De Vries, Philip Handscomb & Bill Eberle



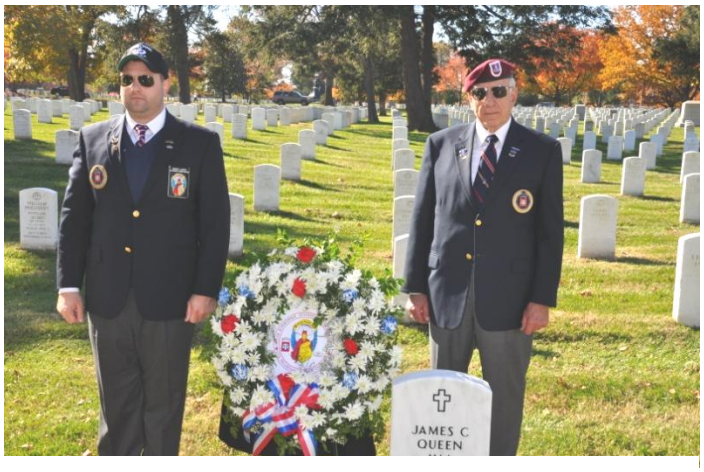
Mike Lester & Bill Eberle at the Leonard Funk gravesite



James Jackson spoke at the General Robinson grave



Bill Ridley spoke at the 82nd Abn Div Memorial



Mike Lester & Ogie Sneidze at J. Queen gravesite



Ben Beekman speaks at General Ridgway gravesite



82nd Contingent Mike Lester, Brent Gulick, Dickie Keaton & Bill Eberle salute at the tomb.



Tomb of the Unknowns Guard and U.S. Army Band Bugler at 82nd Association Ceremony



Ken Hamill reads at the 508 PIR Memorial



Herb Shapiro speaks at the 11th Abn Div Memorial



Paul De Vries speaks at the 504 PIR Memorial



Doug Dillard speaks at the 551 PIB Memorial



The Color Guard was led by CSM Love and SFC Freeman



Color Guard Members L-R: SGT Dorvil, SGT Gunn, SGT Coleman, SPC Gross & SPC Smith

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
508 AIRBORNE CHAPTER



CHAIRMAN
Ken Hamill
2207 Coventry Drive
Columbus, GA 31904-5034
Telephone: 706.327.3207
E: khamill@knology.net

TAPS - 508th PARATROOPERS RECENTLY DECEASED

Clarence J. Casteel, AAM, Bowie, MD
519 Eng, 508 ARCT 1951-54, 4 Nov 2010
William H. Fletcher, AAM, Central PA Chapter
508 Airborne, 26 May 2011
Glenn M. Peters Jr, AAM, F. Brown Chapter
3-508 Abn Panama 1960's, 26 May 2011
Guy E. Tenney, AAM, Winchendon, MA
M Company, 508 ARCT 1951-52, 5 Feb 2011
Amphers J. Welch, AAM, F. Brown Chapter
B Co. 1-508, 82nd Abn Div 1970's, 19 Jun 2011

NEW ALL AMERICAN LIFE MEMBERS

Paul G. Ayotte, Winona, MN
HHC&C Co 1-508, 82 Abn Div Aug 81-Oct 83
James O. Heyward, Huntsville, Al
Support Company, 508 ARCT 1954-56
Gary D. Richter, Sheboygan, WI
C Co, 3-508 Abn Panama 1966-68
Allen D. "Jack" Watson, Eufaula, OK
Service Co, 508 ARCT 1955-56

Annual Members …12
Affiliate Members…10
All Americans……..307
Total Members……329

Annual Members with expired memberships are asked to send their dues to me: Ken Hamill, 2207 Coventry Drive, Columbus, GA 31904. All American Membership will cost $100.00 if you are 50 years of age or older. It looks like approximately 60 of you old time members forgot to renew your memberships.

December 2011 Treasurers Report

A reminder that our treasurer Frank Seif had to step down and I took his place. I opened a 508 Airborne Chapter checking account on 26 August 2011 with a $100.00 deposit of my money at the Columbus Bank & Trust. The M&I Bank of Arizona sent all funds to CB&T – a total of $8211.11 was deposited in our checking account on 6 Sep 2011, minus a $15 wiring charge left us with $8296.00. Frank paid me the $770.88 for Reno expenses, but that check processed and arrived in Arizona after our account there was closed, so I had to send a personal check of $770 to repay M&I Bank for our overdrawn account. Frank sent me a receipt showing M&I Bank received $768.88. Our Oct 2011 statement shows $398 received and Debits to National of $363 for a current balance of $8331.11. However, the Chapter owes me $1181.83 as follows: $100 to open account; $770 to M&I Bank; plus $91.83 September printing; $220 stamps; $30.87 envelopes & $2.56 for USPS mailings.

Chapter actual funds at this time: $7249.28

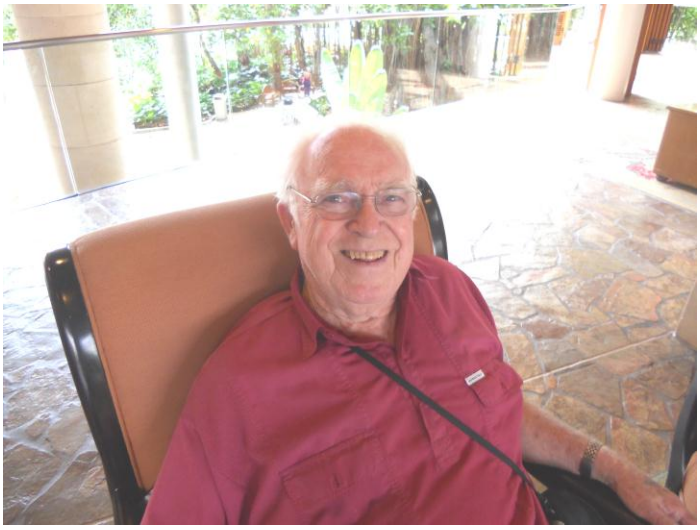
I need one or two volunteers to help me keep track of our money. I can send copies of receipts and expenditures to you via email and we will develop accounting procedures.

CHAIRMAN'S REFLECTIONS

I have represented the 508 Chapter at the Arlington Veterans Day ceremonies several times. It is always a moving and heartfelt experience. You aging vets out there should consider volunteering next year. You give a 3-5 minute talk, uncover the floral wreath and enjoy the moment. I have a laminated outline to read that I can send you to help get you through any memory lapses. The Hampton Inn will cost you $144 per night, but you will take home lifelong memories.

Kentucky All Airborne Days
13 – 15 April 2012
Contact Joe Steen 502.937.8234 or kyairbornechapter@yahoo.com

I attended the 25th Infantry Division Reunion in Honolulu during October 2011 and stayed at the beautiful Hale Koa Military Hotel. I met an old Red Devil there – **Norman E. Allen** of HHC, 508 PIR 1945-46 and Newport News, VA. He served in the 81mm Mortar Platoon and with the Honor Guard while in Frankfurt. He returned to Camp Kilmer, NJ by ship with the regiment when the 508 PIR stood down in 1946. He next served with the 325 AIR including a lot of riot control work in preparation for the West Virginia Coal Miner strike. He later served in Trieste, Italy.



Hawaii - Norman E. Allen of HHC 508 PIR 1945-46



82nd Association members ready for the St. Louis Veterans Day Parade L-R: Jim Cittadino, Lou Sandborn, Jim Moore, Bob Laux and Bob Beller

I Heard from Allen "Jack" Watson of Service Co. 508 ARCT 1955-56 and 114 Belt Street, Eufaula, OK 74432-2649. Jack would love to hear from fellow members of Drivers Platoon, Service Company, 508 ARCT Feb 55 – Aug 56.

I spoke to Walt Ducharme of HQ Battery, 320th AFA, 508 ARCT 1955-56 and Hubbardston, MA. Walt had attended all reunions since 1987, but a heart problem kept him away from Clarksville this year. He takes medication to control his atrial fibrillation, low energy and leg swelling. Walt's wife Joan and family are doing well. Walt stays in contact with Rodger & Leone Jacobson, Sue Montoya and Hank Groat who recently lost his wife Mary Lou. He would like to visit his daughters in Virginia and Florida when well and maybe Hank Groat in Virginia while travelling through. Walt told me that 3 NCO's out of the 18 assigned to HQ Battery, 320th during his era are still living – Walt, Ray Calvez and Ed Klimek.

I spoke to Dr. Jim Jackson of B Company, 508 ARCT 1955-56 and Wichita, KS. Jim is recovering well. Dr. Jackson had some radiation treatments for a benign tumor of the skull. The last 3 MRI's showed no change. The reason he did not get to go to Reno was that he was suspected of having a heart attack at that time and spent three days and nights in a hospital with a heart cath and various other tests. All tests were normal, but he had to take medications. He is under the treatment of three different Doctors and is maintaining the status quo. He and Maria hope to attend the next 82nd Association Convention in Pittsburgh, PA in August 2012.

I spoke to James J. Lammle of Medical Company, 508 ARCT 1955-56. He was working on his Van and raking leaves. Jim had a knee replaced last January, can now play golf but no jumping. His wife Cathy and family are well. He said fellow medics Jack Harkins of the Chicago area is well; Ray Fitch of upstate New York is still trucking and well; Mel Echelberger of Gold Beach, Oregon had knee problems and had to quit golf. Jim and Cathy retired from California in 1998 and returned to Eagle, near Boise, Idaho.

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 _____ $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 Chapter All American Member James Moore drives his automobile decorated in Airborne fashion during the St. Louis Veterans Day Parade on 5 November 2011