508 FORT KOBBE JUST CAUSE REUNION DEVILS DIGEST

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508 FORT KOBBE, PANAMA CZ AND OP JUST CAUSE REUNION

By Dennis Munden

The Red Devils of the 1st Battalion, 508th Airborne, 193rd Infantry Brigade, Fort Kobbe, Panama CZ held a battalion reunion June 10-12 in San Angelo, Texas. We called this gathering "Operation Texas 2016 Red Devil Reunion". There were approximately 40 Red Devils there, some brought family members making the total attendance about 65. Most members who attended the Operation Texas 2016 Red Devil Reunion had served with the Red Devils of the 1st Battalion, 508th Airborne, 193rd Infantry Brigade, during Operation Just Cause. This operation was the U.S. intervention in December 1989 to remove General Manuel Noriega from power, as well as protect US citizens and property, after years of high tensions between the government of Panama and the U.S. This reunion was the first battalion wide reunion held since 2000 when several members met in Washington DC to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers. Veterans of the individual companies of the battalion, HHC, A, B & C Companies have held smaller independent reunions over the years. Several members present at the Operation Texas 2016 Red Devil Reunion in San Angelo had not seen each other in 25 years, not since we served together in combat or in garrison at Fort Kobbe, Panama Canal Zone. Several people had travelled great distances to be present at the latest reunion. Friday the 10th of June featured an afternoon cookout and playtime at Goodfellows Air Force Base Recreation Center. Several members of our group enjoyed having breakfast together on Saturday morning. Saturday afternoon was dedicated to honoring Fort Kobbe Red Devils who had made the ultimate sacrifice during Operation Just Cause. Some family members were present during the dedication. SGT Michael DeBlois and PFC Vance Coates from…

…Charlie Company were lost in the early hours of the invasion. Charlie Company had been attached to a Mechanized Infantry unit for the attack. The memorial service was done by our Battalion Chaplain Blake Boatright. We also discussed future reunions, funds and donations for this event. It is the intent of the 1-508th Fort Kobbe Red Devils to establish a reoccurring reunion every two years. We would welcome Red Devils from other eras and locations. Anyone who might be interested can contact me at dmunden508@juno.com or 910-639-7093. Backup Point of Contact is Chris Petty whose, cell phone number is - 334-540-5278.



Operation Texas 2016 Red Devil Reunion at San Angelo



Amador damaged building our OJC target/objective

OV-1 MOHAWK -THE PLANE CONTINUED
BY MARK ECKENRODE

The wings were short, broad, corded and stubby, with leading edge slats and hydraulic flaps. The wings were also equipped with deicer boots. In addition, the wings had a pair of hydraulically operated ailerons for low-level speed control. The Mohawk had speed brakes to slow it down for short airfield landings or to rapidly decrease altitude. The wings contained pylons (strong points) for two external 150-gallon fuel tanks and mounting points for weapons and ordnance. Three hundred gallon wing tanks were used for ferrying purposes. The main self-sealing fuel cell was located directly behind the crew and with capacity of 297 gallons of JP-4 jet fuel. This gave a total fuel capacity of 597 gallons allowing the aircraft a flight time of approximately 5 hr 30 min and a range of about 1,011 mi.

The STOL capabilities allowed the Mohawk to take-off and clear a 50 ft obstacle in 1,000 ft and land in 950 ft more or less depending on the model. It could operate on grass fields or plowed ground. It had a design altitude of 30,000 ft with a speed of 308 MPH, with a single engine service ceiling of 13,000 ft. It had a cruising speed of 296 MPH at a cruising altitude of 25,000 ft. It had a maximum permissible dive speed is 450 MPH. It could a climb at the rate of 2,775 ft/min. Furthermore, it was fully aerobatic and was rated at plus 5g's and minus 1.5g's and could pull 7 g's without structural damage. It had a stall speed of 72 MPH and had a turning radius of 355 ft at 1.6g's. The preceding numbers can vary somewhat depending on Mohawk model...



Flight Line ASTA Platoon, 1st Air Cavalry Division, Phu Bai Combat Base RVN 1968. 3 OV-1 Mohawks (Authors Collection)

… The Mohawk had a tricycle landing gear that was hydraulically operated with a pneumatic back up. The front nose wheel retracted rearward and the main gear folding outward and up into the wing. It was equipped with a heavy duty struts and low-pressure tires for rough field operation. All flight controls; elevators, ailerons, and rudders were manually operated.

A number of performance records were held by the OV-1 Mohawk in its weight class. An OV-1Mohawk took off and climbed to 9,842 ft in 3 min, 41 sec and to 19,685 ft in 9 min, 9 sec. While another flew a closed course of 100 KM (62+ mi) in 12 min, 48 sec with an average speed of 292 MPH. In 1971 an OV-1 climbed to a peak altitude of 39,880 ft and sustained flight at 36,352 ft. The crew pre-breathed pure oxygen to prevent decompression sickness at high altitude. For operations above 10,000 ft oxygen tanks were onboard.

As a day/night all weather aircraft it was rated for both Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and Instrument Flight Rules (IFR). It was equipped with a full complement of radios to include FM, HF, VHF, and UHF. Communication between the pilot and observer was conducted via an intercom. The radios and autopilot are strategically positioned between the pilot and observer. It was equipped with an AN/ASN-76 Gyrocompass, an ARN-30E VOR, AR844/ARN-58 Marker Beacon and Glideslope Receiver, an AN/APX-72 Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) Transponder, an AN/ARN-52 Tactical Air Navigation (TACAN) System, an AN/APN -22 Radar Altimeter, an… AN/ASW-12 Universal Flight Control System. an AN/ARN 59 Automatic Direction Finder (ADF), and an APN-129 Doppler Navigation System. All Mohawks can be equipped with an AN/ADR-6 Radiation Detector with a radiation alarm in the cockpit to alert the crew to dangerous levels of radiation in a nuclear environment.

Next: The OV-1 Mohawk-The Models.

Initially the Mohawks were produced in basically four varieties; OV-1A, OV-1B and OV-1C. and OV-1D and there were variants…

…The OV-1A was the first Mohawk model to roll off the production line and delivered to the Army in February 1961. The OV-1A was meant for visual and photographic reconnaissance. Eleven Mohawks were sent to the 7th Army in Germany, as it was a time of contention in Europe as the Berlin Crisis was unfolding. In February 1962, two were sent to Ft Greely Alaska for cold weather testing. It was fitted with snow skis, which operated successfully although never used operationally. For Arctic operations a floatation device was developed for the Mohawk, as an ejection would be fatal to the crew in the frigid Arctic waters. The Arctic tests proved to have a near perfect mission availability rate even to minus 50 degrees below zero. Six OV-1A's deployed to Vietnam in July 1962 with the 23rd Special Warfare Aviation Detachment (SWAD) providing surveillance support for the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN).

The OV-1A was equipped with the KA-60 photographic reconnaissance system that consisted of a KA-30 fully automatic aerial camera mounted in the belly of the aircraft that could be controlled by the observer from the cockpit. It was capable of taking pictures directly below the aircraft or at 15 and 30 degrees right or left oblique photos from the aircraft allowing horizon-to-horizon coverage. The aircraft altitude and speed could be entered into the system that would adjust the shutter speed of the camera allowing a 60 percent overlap of imagery from frame to frame. This allowed the military intelligence imagery analysts to view the imagery in stereo giving the photos depth.

In addition to the KA-30 camera system a KA-60 70 mm panoramic camera was mounted in the nose allowing forward coverage of the Mohawks flight path with a 180-degree horizon-to-horizon field of view. For nighttime photographic missions a flair pod dispenser was mounted on top of each wing at the root where the wing meets the fuselage. The two pods each contained 52 flairs, for a total of 104 flairs, which were automatically timed by the camera for perfect exposures. This flair system proved to be problematic and was later replaced by a…

… LS-59 electronic strobe pod.

The Mohawk's main purpose was to find targets. As such, it would need the means to mark those targets with smoke or white phosphorus rockets and a method to suppress enemy ground fire. The OV-1A was then equipped with either XM-157 seven shot or XM-159 nineteen shot 2.75" Folding Fin Aerial Rockets (FFAR's) pods and a pair Browning XM14 (SUU)-12 .50 caliber pods (each containing 750 rounds). The 2.75" rocket pods, .50 caliber pods, and four shot LAU-10A 5" Zuni rocket pods were mounted on pylons under each wing, plus a MK 20 gunsight was installed inside the cockpit. Additionally, it was capable of carrying MK 81 250 lb bombs, MK 82 500 lb bombs, MK 83 1,000 lb bombs, and MK 79 1,000 lb napalm tanks. The general-purpose ordinance was not used in combat or in typical pilot training. A M4A supply container that could be air dropped with ammo, rations, and supplies was also available and used. When an OV-1A was equipped with armaments or ordnance it was designated as a JOV-1A. Between 1960 and 1965 64 OV-1A's were produced. An unknown OV-1A's were converted to JOV-1A's

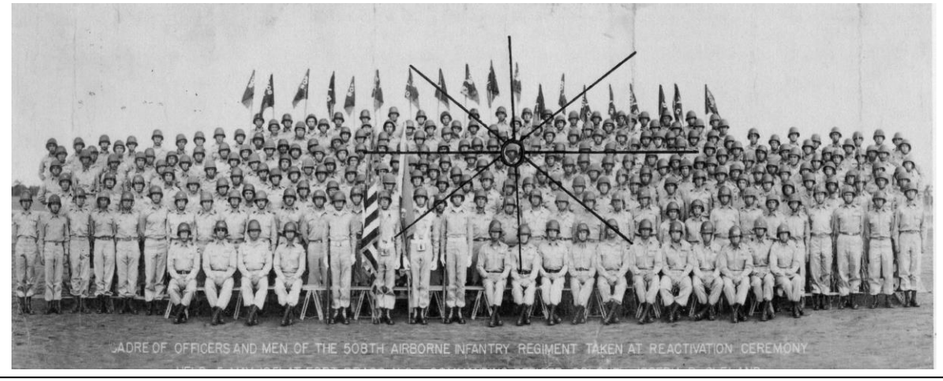


Hawk 22, an OV-1C, ASTA Platoon 1st Air Cavalry Division heading to the Co Roc Mountains in Laos west of Khe Sahn Combat Base in 1968 during the siege. Its mission was to find the NVA 152 mm Howitzers that were shelling Khe Sahn (Author's Collection)

TO BE CONTINUED



HARD COPY OF PHOTO ABOVE SENT BY LUIS A. NAVARRO OF KING COMPANY, 3-508 ARCT 1951-53 AND GUADALUPE, CALIFORNIA. PHOTO CAPTION READS: CADRE OF OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 508TH AIRBORNE INFANTRY REGIMENT TAKEN AT REACTIVATION CEREMONY HELD 5 MAY 1951 AT FORT BRAGG, N.C. COMMANDING OFFICER COLONEL JOSEPH P. CLELAND. IF YOU ARE DEPICTED IN THIS PHOTO, PLEASE INFORM THE EDITOR. LUIS NAVAARRO MADE HIS 205TH PARACHUTE JUMP ON 21 JUNE 2016 TO CELEBRATE HIS 87TH BIRTHDAY. LUIS NAVARRO'S PHOTO IS CIRCLED IN THE CENTER OF THE PIE SHAPED MARKINGS IN THE PHOTO BELOW LEFT AND MAGNIFIED IN THE POTO BELOW RIGHT. THANK YOU LUIS !!!







508 AIRBORNE CHAPTER CHAIRMAN
Ken Hamill
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Columbus, GA 31904-5034
Telephone: 706.327.3207
E: khamill@knology.net

TAPS - 508th PARATROOPERS RECENTLY DECEASED

James R. Fitzsimmons	Paris, Tennessee	
Med Co. 508 ARCT 1951-54	2 Sep 2015	
Richard W. Knapp	West Redding, CT	
L Co. 3-508 ARCT 1951-52	17 Jun 2016	

Statistics

Annual Members……..23
Affiliate Members…….14
All Americans.....296

September 2016 Treasurers Report

Newsletter expenses Sep 2016:	**$281.97**
Chapter Account 31 Aug 2016:	**$2381.55**

Joe Dantonio of E Company, 508 ARCT 1951-54 and St Petersburg, Florida sent a note pertaining to the Operation Longhorn Jump. Joe said in defense of the Commanader who made he decision to jump, had it been Joe's decision, they would have jumped. The jump was too big and they were too tough to call it off. They were the best the Army had.

Clarence T. McCluskey of L Company, 3-508 ARCT 1951-52 and Oxford, CT reported the loss of Richard Knapp. He reminded me that four friends joined the Army on 17 January 1951, took basic at Fort Bragg, NC and were assigned to L Company, 508 ARCT at Sand Hill, Fort Benning, GA. They were Augie Fernandes, Richard Knapp, Mac McCluskey and Bob Smith. Clarence McCluskey later served in the 7th Infantry Division at Pork Chop Hill, Korea under the leadership of his Platoon Leader and our late Chairman Jack Damron.

Bill Coulter of L Company, 508 ARCT 1951-53 and Delray Beach, Florida responded to the Richard Bob Knapp sympathy message sent to the membership. Bill remembered Bob Knapp from Sand Hill, Fort Benning, Georgia.

Eugene F. Leonard of H&H Company, 508 ARCT 1952-53 and Port Orange, Florida sent a lot of documents and photo's that describe his Airborne Ranger experiences in the Army. The Airborne School and Jump photos may be used in future publications of our Devils Digest. Thank you Gene for donating these historical items.

Thank you **Ray Younes** of the 519th QM Company, 508 ARCT 1951-52 and Oxnard, CA for donating to our Chapter Treasury. Ray also sent information about the USS Liberty that had 172 sailors injured and 34 KIA in 1967. See their website at: **honorlibertyvets.org**.

Thank you **Cary G. Peel** of D Company, 508 ARCT 1953-56 and Calhoun, LA for donating to our Chapter Treasury. Cary remained with D Co. 506 Airborne Battle Group, 101st Airborne Division when we reformed the Screaming Eagles. Cary remembered his First Sergeant, Bull Gergan who later became CSM of the Infantry School, Fort Benning.

Warren R. Wilkins received a Bronze Star medal for his Korean War Service from Congressman Lee Zeldin (R, NY-1), member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. Mr. Wilkins currently resides in Berkshire Nursing Center, was previously denied veteran status by the Department of Veterans Affairs after his military records were accidentally destroyed in a fire. Congressman Zeldin helped reinstate Wilkins military status via the efforts of his military affairs officer, Mr. Cleveland Johnson, The ceremony took place on Sunday, August 21, 2016 at the Berkshire Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, 10 Berkshire Road, West Babylon, NY 11704. We learned of this ceremony after it happened. Too bad, because Fred Gilliam, our 508 Life Member, who had been involved in the search for Wilkins and lives nearby, might have attended the ceremony had he known about it.

We can **forget about receiving future rebates**. Executive Director Bill Bauer stated at the 82d reunion "Rebates would not be reinstated even if he had a million dollars in the treasury". Crude & Rude !!! Tough times will continue for our chapter. Our Devils Digest & Website may have to end 9 October 2017 when I retire at age 85.

A PARATROOPERS MEMORIES #13

By Ed Slocum of HQ3-508 ARCT 1955-56

All American member Edward A. Slocum of Headquarters Company, 3-508 ARCT 1955-56 and Sumter, SC has written his life story. The book is titled – Searching for the Yellow Brook Road. Ed would like feedback from us. If you spot an error, pass it on back, so Ed can fix it. Article #13 starts now. Remembering a childhood book called Uncle Remus, where Brer rabbit after being caught in the garden, begged Uncle Remus not too punish him by throwing him in the briar patch. Uncle Remus threw a delighted Brer rabbit in the briar patch where he got away. Just like Brer rabbit, I missed bed check and the company commander doubling as uncle Remus threw two of us in the briar patch. As punishment, he sent us to the infantry and I got away. The Airborne Infantry aka: the Briar Patch . We were assigned to Headquarters Company, Third Battalion at Camp Chickamauga, Kyushu Island, Japan. Headquarters Company was grossly under strength and the company commander gave the two of us a choice of assignments. My fellow culprit picked the communications platoon, whereas I joined the Pioneer and Ammunition Platoon to become an apprentice demolition specialist. I must say, that I was in my element. I was finally doing what I joined the Army to do, serve as an airborne infantry soldier. I was glad to be there.

Camp Chickamauga was located on the southernmost island of Kyushu, Japan. The city of Beppu was located on the northern side of Kyushu on an inland sea or bay. The harbor was named Beppu Bay. I would imagine the city had a population of around 50,000 people in 1955. The Second World War had been over for 10 years and the country was returning to normal. It lacked the hustle and bustle of large cities like Tokyo. Beppu was primarily a resort city. Because of the many hot volcanic springs,

Japanese tourists came to bathe in the mineral waters. The country was in transition from a rural lifestyle to the industrial powerhouse that they became. The Japanese culture was entirely different than ours and even though they had suffered greatly during the war, they treated us with respect and kindness…

…I particularly remember a middle-aged lady who owned a bar catering to military personnel. We called her Nana. She saw something in me and believed that I might appreciate the Japanese theater. Several times we attended the kabuki theater. These were primarily moral passion plays. Even though I could not understand the language I could follow the storyline on the stage. The play was set in a bygone era and always had a damsel in distress, a wicked adversary in black clothing, and a white knight who came to save her. After an appropriate mock sword fight, right prevailed and evil was vanquished. The storyline was very similar to what we experience in our culture. To me, this was another example that the human race has more in common than we have differences. Sharpening My Warrior Skills. I refreshed my skills as an infantry soldier and learned new skills. I learned to use explosives, to lay minefields, concertina wire obstacles, road blocks, and to drive the unit vehicles. I fired weapons and carried my rifle at all times.

Each new day in a paratroop command begins with a one hour physical training session. The Army used a PT program known as the daily dozen which consisted of push-ups, pull-ups, squat thrusts, and other tortures I don't remember. After a rigorous 20 minutes, most units did a five mile run. We also, from time to time used a climbing rope strung from the tops of two pine trees to climb hand over hand up 30 feet. This developed upper body strength. Our Battalion Commander was a veteran of two wars and he knew what it takes to win. LTC Patrick Ward mandated long road marches carrying full field equipment and individual weapons. Twenty miles through the mountains will build muscle and make you tough. We were in great physical shape.

We also spent a lot of time in the field. We set up a base camp with hex-tents which were heated with gasoline burning Yukon-Stoves. That and a down filled sleeping bag made it almost comfortable. Tactical operations were spent on Mori Mountain in the snow.

TO BE CONTINUED

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 YEAR 2017 $25.00 + Wounded warrior_____ Ed Fund_____ Total Sent_____

____LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP ($250.00 FOR 49 YEARS AND UNDER OR $175.00 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

82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

The 68th National Convention of the 82nd Airborne Division Association was held in Louisville, KY 10-13 August 2016. National Director Joe Steen demonstrated his organizational skills and the Kentucky Chapter did a marvelous job of hosting the event at the beautiful Crown Plaza Hotel. The reunion registration group was very efficient. We arrived on Wednesday and spent several hours visiting with old and new friends in the hospitality room. Great food, beverages and courteous service were provided by the wonderful hospitality room volunteers. On Thursday morning we took the hotel shuttle downtown for some sightseeing. Louisville ranks 30th in population of all cities in the USA. There was a lot to see, most notable was the University of Louisville campus and athletic fields; the historic district; Churchhill Downs were they run the Kentucky Derby and the ferry boat pier on the Ohio River that divides Kentucky and Indiana. The trolley bus tour guide was excellent and delivered large amounts of trivia in a humorous and entertaining way. The airborne sales rooms seemed to stay busy. There was a chapter officer's class. The two hour delegates meeting was conducted very well. The delegates were invited to observe the National Director's Meeting, but could not speak. The General Membership Meeting voted for future Directors and that went well. The Ladies Brunch on Saturday was popular, the ladies were entertained by the 82nd Chorus. The Memorial Dinner on Friday passed quickly and featured very good food. The Airborne Banquet on Saturday also had good food and a number of awards presentations. Allen Schoppe has worked very hard during his tenure as National President, but, economic problems remain a factor with our association. Allen and Vicki Schoppe travelled to several association events at their own expense and represented our association very well indeed. The new National President was announced at the Airborne Banquet and Ed Herlihy may have had tears in his eyes when he accepted the gavel. Ed Herlihy is a friend of our Alex Elliott; they both belong to the Hartford, CT Chapter. I took lots of photos and sent 702 pictures to Neil Parkin, the expert digital volunteer for our association. Members and friends, who use facebook, can find our convention photos posted there by Neil. Neil Parkin is a veteran of the English Parachute Regiment and has an excellent website at paratrooperdz.com