

PRESERVING THE LEGACY

REUNION - FAYETTEVILLE, NC

OCTOBER 16-20 • 2019

HONORING:

75TH ANNIVERARY
World War II Combat

30TH ANNIVERSARY
Operation Just Cause
Panama

50/50 CASH PRIZE RAFFLE

$5 PER TICKET

GREAT ODDS – Each Ticket has a 1 in 2000 Chance to Win $5000*

NO NEED TO BE PRESENT – drawing to be held on October 19

**Assumes the Association achieves its goal of selling 2000 tickets, which cannot be guaranteed.*

Buy Tickets Online at 508PIR.org/reunion/reunion_01.htm

NORMANDY • HOLLAND • BELGIUM • JAPAN • DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
VIETNAM • GRENADA • PANAMA • IRAQ • AFGHANISTAN

The Family and Friends of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

Dedicated to Honoring, Preserving and Communicating the History of All Eras of 508th Paratroopers.

508PIR.org

F&F 508th PIR All-Era Reunion
Registration Form
Fayetteville, NC

October 16 – October 20, 2019

Registration Fee (per Person)
Members & Active Duty: $135.00 Under 18: $50.00 Non-Members: $175.00

Name _____ Address _____City_____St.____ Zip _____ E-Mail _____Tel: (cell)_____ Unit:_____ Guest(s) Name_____

$135 Members/Active Duty - #Adults_____x $135 =$_____

$50 Children under 18 - # Children _____x $50 =$_____

$175 Non-Members - #Adults_____ x $175 =$_____

Donations to Help with General Expenses =$_____

Total $_____

IMPORTANT: Include the following on a separate page – Full Legal Name, Address, DOB, Driver's License Number, State of Issue. Please indicate if using a Military ID. This information is required for entry to military installations. All personal information safeguarded by the Association. Thanks.

Hotel Reservation Instructions

Please reserve your hotel room(s) at the **Ramada Plaza Fayetteville / Fort Bragg**, 1707 A Owen Drive, Fayetteville NC 28304. **Call +1 910-323-0111**. Be sure to Reference **Reunion Group 508PIR** for the **attractive group rate of $96.05 per night (13% tax and hot buffet breakfast included)** for 2 Queen Beds or 1 King Bed. Reservations must be made by **September 30, 2019** for this special rate. The hotel has a limited number of handicapped accessible rooms—please book early. Also, On-Line Booking Link off the Association's website at http://www.508pir.org/reunion/reunion_01.htm.

REUNION REGISTRATION FEES WILL BE REFUNDED IN FULL IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, BUT YOU MUST CANCEL YOUR HOTEL ROOM AT LEAST 72 HOURS IN ADVANCE TO AVOID ANY 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, 13 Eastern Ave, So. Deerfield, MA 01373

Checks or Money Orders should be made payable to: "F&F 508th PIR Assoc"







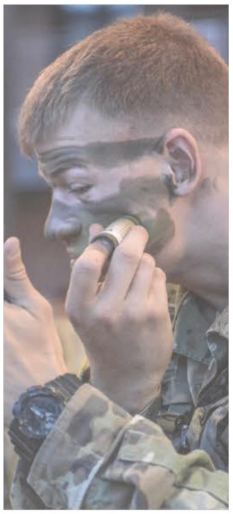
2019 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Join the one Association dedicated to Honoring, Preserving and Communicating the History of all Eras of 508th Paratroopers.

508th PIR Association - Family and Friends

508

1942 - Present







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DIABL

The Link for All Veterans and Active Duty & Family and Friends of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment
Published by *Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association* – August 2019

Don't Miss this Year's All Era-Reunion in Fayetteville, NC

We're gathering once again in Fayetteville/Fort Bragg, especially commemorating the 75th Anniversary of WWII combat operations and the 30th Anniversary of Operation Just Cause/Panama. The legacy of the 508th is unmatched, so we encourage all eras of 508th Paratroopers and their families and friends to join us.

Please see the attached preliminary Schedule of Events for the All-Era Reunion. For the latest updates on the Schedule and to Register, go to http://www.508pir.org/reunion/reunion_01.htm. We're doing things a bit differently this year, including the following:

- Your Registration fee now covers a Friday evening "Active Duty Appreciation" event where there will be buffet food and an open bar.
- We have special options for "free time" on Saturday, including Tandem Jumping, Wind Tunnel Skydiving, and M1 Rifle Range Firing. These special events will cost extra. If you are interested in any of these events, please email Chris Harris at harris.chris.j@att.net or call/text him at (310) 729-2745 so that the Association can negotiate prices and come back to interested participants with the lowest possible cost prices.
- We have launched our 50/50 Cash Prize Raffle with the goal of selling 2000 $5 Tickets for a 50% winner share of $5000. We really need everyone's participation. The odds of winning are way better than any typical lottery, and the proceeds help us pay for our expanded Reunion offering and our efforts to expand the website. Thanks in advance for your support.

Hoping to see a big turnout in Fayetteville. A great opportunity to "Preserve the Legacy"! Please book now to allow for better planning.

The $100 Bill

Letter from Deborah Massey to Ellen Peters

When I first contacted you about something, I didn't exactly know what to do or what to say – so I am going to lay out this and perhaps it will make sense.

Back in 1946, my father (CWO-4 Joe C. Andrew) was on leave and had gone to his hometown of Miami, Oklahoma. He was walking down the sidewalk when he spotted a vehicle parked and there were four people in the car. He took notice right away of one particular person in the back of the car- went to the car and stuck his head in the open window of the back seat and said to the woman sitting there, "My name is Joe C. Andrew and I'm going to marry you." That woman was my Mom (Betty Lou) and sure enough they were married in January of 1947 with Sgt. Rock Merritt being my father's best man.

But I digress. Prior to the wedding, Dad borrowed money from a friend in the 508th PIR to be able to get married. Dad knew who this person was (it wasn't Rock) and promised he would pay him back. Years passed and Dad was unable to locate this person who had been so generous as to lend him his hard-earned money. Dad knew his name but could not locate him. Dad always kept a $100.00 bill in his wallet to be able to repay this person. I never knew who this person was, and Dad felt guilty that he could not find him to return his money and give him his thanks once again.

Dad died in 2008 with the $100.00 bill in his wallet and my Mom took that money and placed it in her wallet as a reminder and memento. I found the money in Moms wallet when I was organizing her personal items after she died in 2014 and I placed the $100.00 bill in my wallet for safe keeping. I never told anyone I had it- not even my brothers or husband. I just took up the torch for my parents. Now it is time to relinquish the torch and what better way to do so than the 75th Anniversary of the 508th PIR. There aren't that many WWII Vets alive, but for those who are, this small contribution is for you to enjoy. It's given in love, thanks and memory of my father.

We Won't Forget the American Heroes of Tent City, Wollaton

By Andy Smart

Graham Lawson was born many years after the end of the Second World War but the legacy of those dark days has become a major part of his life.

The bus driver from **Bulwell** has devoted much of his time over the past two decades to preserving wartime memories that became part of Nottingham's history.

And over the bank holiday weekend, Graham and members of the Jump 44 Living History Group, were reviving those memories in the shadow of Wollaton Hall, where, 75 years ago, more than 2,000 young Americans were camped as they prepared for the historic D-Day invasion of Normandy.

Enthusiasts from as far away as Liverpool and Leicester gathered in the park, bringing their authentic uniforms, equipment, jeeps and military vehicles to commemorate the anniversary of the build-up for Operation Overlord.

The 508th, part of the legendary 82nd Airborne Division, sent 2,056 parachutists into Normandy. The Red Devils suffered 1,061 casualties including 307 killed in action.

"It needs to be remembered," said Graham, 68. "The Americans in **Wollaton Park** is a very, very small part of Wollaton's history but it needs to be told. It could easily have been forgotten about. Until we came along with the re-enactments, people knew very little, only the older generation, but now we get lots of interested visitors of all ages."
For Graham the passion for the exploits of the 508th all began on a battlefield tour of Normandy in 1999 and a visit to the D-Day museum in the town of Sainte-Mère-Église, one of the first communities to be liberated by the Americans.



"I was talking about Nottingham," he recalls, "when this big guy next to me says, 'Are you from Notting-ham'? When I said 'yes', he told me he was based at Wollaton Park during the war.

"I learned his name was Harry Hudek – the tallest soldier in the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment."

That chance encounter had a profound effect on Graham's life. "That piqued my interest and I realised there was a lot more to the story of the Americans who came to Nottingham."

Over the past 20 years, Graham has been researching the lives of the GIs who "invaded" Nottingham before shipping out to fight the Nazis.

He has amassed a huge collection of photographs, documents and memorabilia, made lasting friendships with veterans and their families and helped the old soldiers visit places from their past from Tent City in Nottingham to the battlefields of Europe.

"I suppose, over the years, I have organised visits for 30 to 40 veterans. We make arrangements to take them to Normandy, to Belgium where they fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and to visit Arnhem in Holland.

"They were just young boys, farm boys, working kids; they came from schools, hospitals, colleges… we had 18 Native Americans here.

"When they arrived, it was pitch black and as daylight broke, they saw the hall and thought it was Nottingham Castle. They were really excited to be here; just young boys who travelled thousands of miles to come to a foreign land.

"Walter Barrett, of B Company, summed it up when he said that if it hadn't been for the war, he would never have visited England and then Europe."



The GIs made quite an impact during the weeks they were camped on the edge of the city. "People were initially hostile to the Americans but eventually they took to them very well, especially the girls … there were a lot of marriages made while they were here," said Graham.

Nottingham writer Joan Wallace was just a young girl when the 508th were here in **1944** but has her own vivid memories: "Brave men of the 508th, heroically sacrificing their lives for us. The kindly pub landlords, little girls peeping excitedly out of bedroom windows, innocent babies fast asleep in their prams. They protected us all."

Graham Lawson fervently believes that the contribution of the 508th to Nottingham life, and to the outcome of the war, should not be forgotten. To that end he also played a part in establishing a permanent memorial in the grounds of Wollaton Park.

“Phil Kirk, from the Nottingham Probation Service, and his volunteers built the memorial. We brought sand from Omaha and Utah, the invasion beaches in Normandy, and soil from Hill 30, where the 508th were surrounded,” he said.

To recognize his efforts, Graham has twice been a guest of the 508th Regimental Association at its annual reunions. The first was in Jacksonville, Florida, and the second in Augusta, Georgia.

“I was very worried about how they would take to me but apparently the attendance increased by 20 percent because someone from Nottingham was going to be there,” he said.

And it has all led to him becoming an honorary member of the regimental association.

“I think there are only four of us. It came out of the blue. It is quite an honour.”

Today, fewer than 100 of the veterans survive, all of them too old to make another trip to Nottingham, but Graham still hosts the families of those who left Wollaton Park to fight. And he says that as long as they want to keep coming, he will be here to welcome them.

“I was going to retire from this next year… but I think I will keep going. There is a new generation to educate.” ✈

Air Mobility and Command Museum

By Ellen Peters

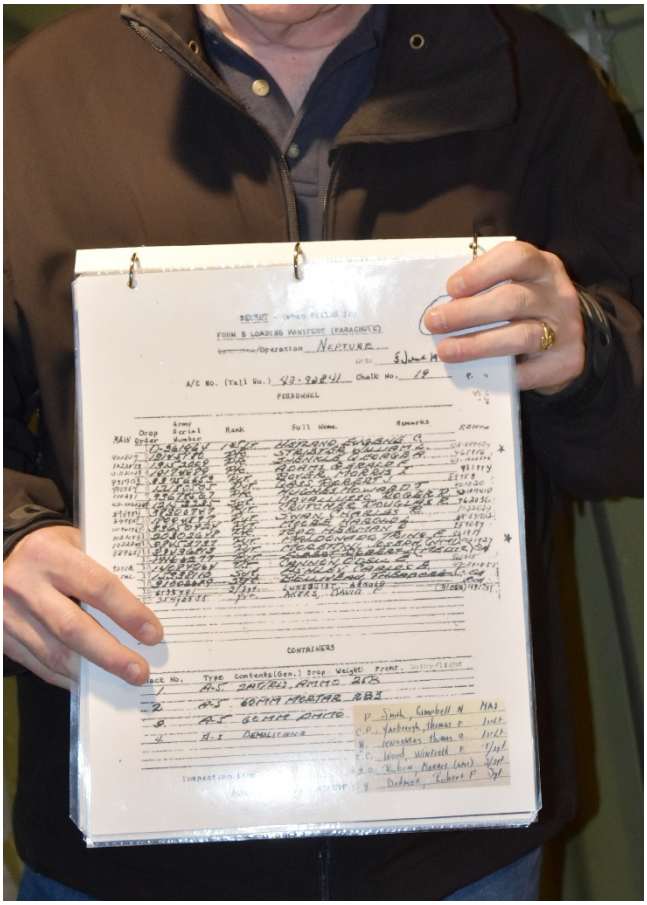
On May 3 – 4, the Air Mobility and Command Museum in Dover, Delaware celebrated the 75th Anniversary of D-Day by hosting 508 E Co. veterans, George Shenkle and Joe Morettini. The plane they jumped from on D-Day, The Turf and Sport Special is permanently housed in the museum. George and Joe were on hand to talk about their experiences and sign autographs. Why did the museum celebrate this important anniversary so early? Because both George and Joe attended the D-Day festivities in Normandy, France.





I arrived on May 3 and toured the museum with Family and Friends member, Col. (Ret.) Bob Leicht. Bob is a volunteer at the museum and is very involved in all their activities. He was instrumental in obtaining the Surf and Turf Special for the museum and has spent years restoring it to exactly how it was on D-Day. He showed me pictures of how it looked upon arrival and the various stages of restoration. He also took me (and some others) through the plane and explained the various aspects of the plane. I had my picture taken with Bob where I am sitting in the same spot George Shenkle sat on D-Day.





On May 4, George and Joe arrived. The museum had several speakers including Col. Bob Leicht who discussed the role of the paratroopers on D-Day from both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. They also discussed the role the C-47s played in dropping the paratroopers in Normandy. Then they had a panel discussion with George and Joe where the two men discussed their D-Day activities.

Another D-Day C-47, the "That's All Brother" flew to the museum and gave a ride to George and Joe between their morning and afternoon breaks. The plane was on its way to England to participate in the cross channel drop of re-enactor paratroopers.





It was a fantastic weekend filled with history. It was wonderful to see other Family and Friends members there as well. In addition to Bob Leicht, who lives there, Liz Coble was in attendance as was Nancy and Jim Gooding. I have not seen Nancy in years, and it did my heart good to see her again. If any of our members ever get the chance to visit this museum, I highly recommend it. It is amazing all the various aircraft they have. And you get to go on them! ✈

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. ✈

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Mailbox

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you through Mr. Dick O'Donnell to thank you personally for your service during World war 2. I have a home at Portstewart Co. Londonderry where your Regiment was billeted in 1944 prior to your deployment. There is a small memorial to your regiment on our war memorial in the town and to me it is fitting that you and your comrades are remembered forever by us here in Northern Ireland.

I can only imagine how trying it must have been for you boys travelling over the ocean with the threat of U-Boats and Air attack back in winter of 43/44 coming to a strange land not knowing what to expect. I hope you got a very warm welcome, from the girls no doubt but hopefully from all. I am sure the fear of the unknown tested each and every one of you but being Airborne troops, you were the elite of the military.

I think of your friends and comrades who didn't come back and how much that must impact on you till this day. I too served in the military and lost friends in the conflict here in Northern Ireland, so I have some small understanding of what you went through.

My mother lost two cousins in the war. Ft Sergeant Norman Burton USAAF killed in air operations over Europe and his brother Fl Sergeant Robert Burton RCAF. Their two surviving brother and sister still live in the States and when I visited Kate and Jim last year you could still see the sadness and pride in their eyes when they talked about them.

I hope you don't mind me writing to you through your association and in closing I wish you peace and happiness and once again thank you so much for your service to us all.

Yours in service

Barry Graham.

Brg1000@hotmail.com

Shamokin Pastor Pays Tribute to Fallen Chaplain during D-Day Services

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Father Martin Kobos, OFM Conv., was among the thousands of people in Normandy, France, in early June to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day and remember the men who gave their lives to liberate Western Europe from Nazi Germany in 1944.

The pastor of Mother Cabrini Parish in Shamokin is not a World War II veteran, but his solemn visit to France still carried symbolic weight: to honor the life, service and sacrifice of a fellow Conventual Franciscan, Father Ignatius Maternowski.

Capt. Maternowski, Catholic chaplain of the 82nd Airborne's 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, was the only U.S. military chaplain killed on D-Day, June 6, 1944. On June 8 of this year, the town of Gueutteville, France, honored him with a memorial service attended by delegates from the United States and France.

Father Kobos was among the speakers at the ceremony, representing the Minister Provincial of the Conventual Franciscans, who was attending the order's General Chapter in Rome. Father Kobos was joined by Dr. John Dabrowski, representing the WWII Military Chaplains Foundation and its founder, Father Robert Berger, a retired colonel from the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps and a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg.

During the ceremony, Father Kobos presented a Congressional citation on Father Maternowski's sacrifice, an American flag, and the flag of the 508th regiment to Daniel Briard, president of the U.S.-Normandy Memory and Gratitude Association.

"He had to brush away tears when I made the presentation, with the whole notion of symbolic gifts," Father Kobos said. "The people of the region are tremendously grateful for the sacrifice of the Allied Soldiers, and Father Maternowski is well honored here."

Dr. Dabrowski, in his remarks, said "The lot of the U.S. soldier was equally the fate of his chaplain. Both endured the same perils in combat, the same long stretches of boredom, and the same homesickness. The chaplains traveled over battlefields under fire. They did so for two reasons: it was their duty; and they were genuinely and sincerely concerned for the safety of their flock: the American GI."



COURTESY OF JOE HAMILTON

Father Martin Kobos, OFM Conv., blesses graves at the Normandy American Cemetery, the final resting place of more than 9,000 Americans who gave their lives in World War II.

Life for Liberty

On June 6, 1944, some 150,000 Allied Troops invaded Normandy in Operation Overlord. Paratroopers descended inland to deflect German troops from the swarm of soldiers storming the beach.

Upon landing in Normandy, Father Maternowski came upon a number of wounded paratroopers whose glider had crashed. He and a medic brought them to a café/grocery store that had been converted into a small aid station.

Realizing the troops required more extensive medical care than what the small station provided, Father Maternowski entered German territory to propose a combined aid station in a house the Germans had overtaken in Gueutteville. A German medic accompanied the chaplain to assess the situation in Allied territory, and agreed to the proposal. The two returned to the German-occupied medical station for preparations. As Father Maternowski began his walk back to the wounded Allied troops, he was shot and killed by a German sniper.

Father Maternowski's body remained on the road in Gueutteville for several days until American soldiers from the 90th Infantry Division recovered him. His body was buried on Utah Beach, and several years later was reinterred at the Conventual Franciscan Friar Cemetery in South Hadley, Mass.

The Franciscan Friars Conventual of Our Lady of the Angels Province and the WWII Chaplains Memorial Foundation have begun promotion of Father Maternowski's cause for canonization.



This marble monument in Gueutteville, France, depicts Father Ignatius Maternowski administering last rites.

Keeping the Memory Alive

In Gueutteville in early June, Father Kobos celebrated Mass in memory of Father Maternowski, who is memorialized in the small town with a monument depicting the chaplain administering last rites.

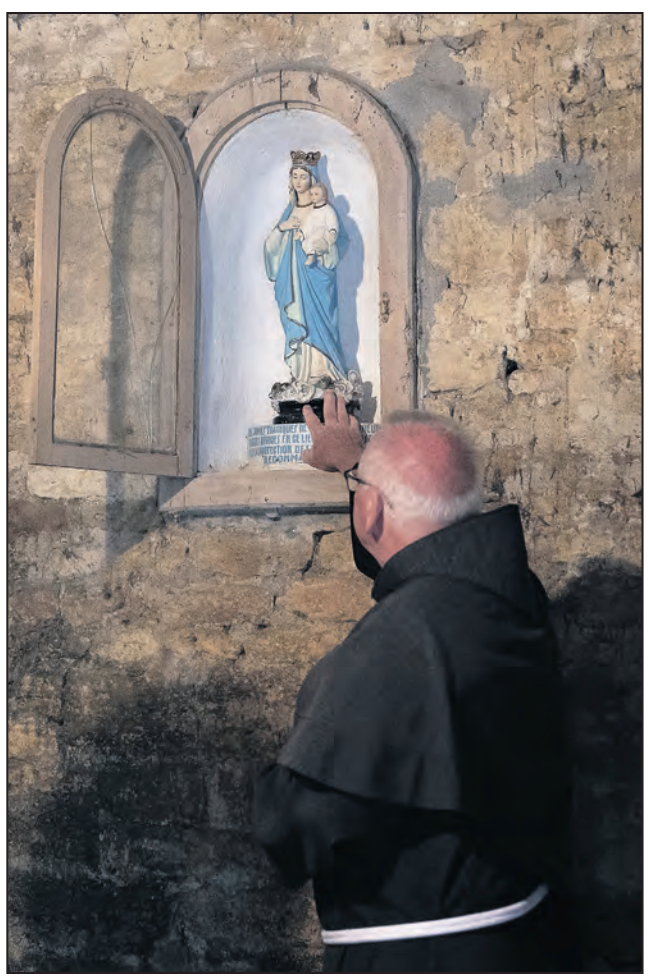
The house that had been overtaken as the German medical station Father Maternowski proposed for combined aid is still standing. In 1948, the family, whose descendants still live there, created a shrine to the Blessed Mother. Father Kobos visited the home and blessed the shrine. He also met Louis Marion, who, at age 17, witnessed Father Maternowski's death.

"From this experience in Normandy and in Gueutteville, walking where Father Maternowski walked, he has become more real to me," Father Kobos said. "I can claim that I have a brother who came in on D-Day and sacrificed his life for liberty."

"His story is taking on a life of its own. The U.S. military is interested in his story. The Franciscans have an interest because he is a brother priest. The people of Normandy continue to pay respect to him. Each one of these groups have a hand in keeping his memory alive," he said.

"France gave the United States the Statue of Liberty in 1886, representing freedom and fraternity. Fifty-eight years later, we returned a gift to France, in the treasure of our youth," Father Kobos said. "Father Maternowski was one of those who carried the torch of liberty back to the French people, bringing light to their land darkened by war."

(*Read more about Father Maternowski at /www.olaprovince.org/2018/09/26/in-memoriam-fr-ignatius-maternowski/. Learn about the WWII Military Chaplains Foundation at www.wwiichaplains.com*.)

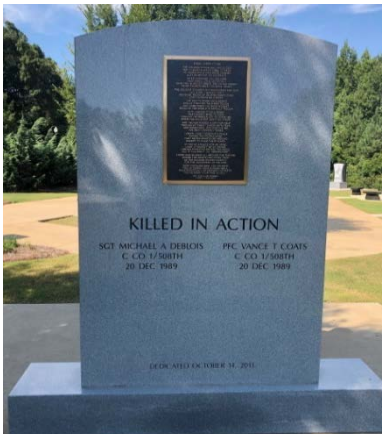


Father Martin Kobos, OFM Conv., blesses a Marian shrine built into the walls of a home that once served as a medical station for German soldiers. Father Ignatius Maternowski hoped this site could be a place to treat Allied and German soldiers.

PRESERVING THE LEGACY







Dave Crance, Operation Just Cause/Fort Kobbe Panama 508th Veteran, and his wife, Suman, visited Fort Benning earlier this summer with their children, Dev and Nirvanna. Their children's Great Grandfather James Walter Young landed on Normandy on D-Day with the 29th Infantry Division. And we remember that two 508th Paratroopers died in the Panama action—SGT Michael A Deblois and PFC Vance T Coats.







All American Week at Fort Bragg during May 2019. Bob Chisolm was the third original 508th Paratrooper inducted into the 82nd Airborne Division All American Hall of Fame (only 37 inducted so far). Golden Brigade 508th Veterans Phil Cronin (left) and Bud Dunn (right) were welcomed by 2Fury Command LTC Hilderbrand and his wife Sally (center left) and CSM Bohannon and his wife Bridget (center right). Rock Merritt and Bob Chisolm with today's 508th Paratroopers after the Division Review.





75th Anniversary of D-Day Commemoration in El Paso, TX. Bob Chisolm and Rock Merritt were joined by local dignitaries to unveil a new Chisolm monument in the LTC Robert E Chisolm Park. Rock Merritt captures the attention of young soldiers at the Benavidez-Patterson All-Airborne Chapter House.

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



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Gray

The Diablo
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