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508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association

Newsletter

Fall 2000 Issue 82

Seasons Greetings

2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 - THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS

The 26th Annual Reunion of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association held in Kansas City, Kansas voted on August 27, 2000 to accept the recommendation of the Retirement Advisory Committee (RAC) to retire the ASSOCIATION in the year 2004 at Camp Blanding, Florida.

Plans for our 30th and Final Reunion were immediately set in motion.
Activated at Camp Blanding, Florida, the 508 attracted men strong of body and steadfast of mind who volunteered to serve their country for the noblest of causes.
In 1942, we were put to the test in the initial phases of our training under the leadership of a cadre of officers and non-commissioned officers at Camp Blanding who were second to none.
We were put to the test again at Jump School, Fort Benning, Georgia. Many fell by the wayside, but those of us who were fit to the task went on to earn our coveted Parachute Wings which we would wear with pride for years to come.
Camp Mackall and Tennessee maneuvers toughened us and forged us into a team of spirited infantrymen who were airborne all the way! Our combat record in Normandy, Holland, Belgium, the Ardennes and the Rhineland brought fame and many deserved honors to the men and officers of our regiment.
It is fitting that we should retire in a BLAZE of GLORY at Camp Blanding in 2004!

A Donation Hooks You Up

Paratrooper _____ Wife _____

Check one: Member Associate Member

Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip _____ Phone
_____
Company _____ Rank / Rate _____
MOS _____
ASN _____ Dates Served

Make checks or money orders payable to 508th PIR:
Mail to: Ernie Lamson, 1135 Edgcumbe Road,
St. Paul, MN 55105-2831



Stars on our Parachute Wings, one for the D-day jump into Normandy, one for the combat jump into Holland proclaim the valor of the 508 Parachute Infantry Regiment to the world.
Wear your wings with pride to honor our fallen comrades.

508th P.I.R. Association of Officers

OFFICE	NAME	COMPANY	PHONE	ALT. REP	PHONE
Chairman	O.B. Hill	Hq 1st	(760) 325-5118		
President	Bob Spears	Hq 2nd	(918)-245-2539		
Vice President	Walter Silver	C Co HqHq			
Treasurer	Ernie Lamson	A Co	(651)-699-7366		
Secretary	Francis Lamoureux	G Co	(413)-583-2493		
Parliamentarian	Rock Merritt	Hq 1st	(910)-425-5818		
Trustee	Tony Yablonski	I Co	(410)-665-5867		
Trustee	Paul Hamblin	C Co	(770)-451-5015		
Storekeeper	Ernie Lamson	A Co	(651)-699-7366		
Company Rep	Bob White	A Co	(304)-727-3641	William F. Bauman	(618)-392-4710
Company Rep	Frank Novak	B Co	(440)-843-7923	R. Archambault	(406)-222-9711
Company Rep	Bill Traband	C Co	(610)-532-4609	John Coates	(410)-531-2475
Company Rep	Frank Haddy	D Co	(515)-357-4362	Walter Baker	(618)-452-3762
Company Rep	Fred Infanger	E Co	(631)-667-8081	Bob O'Connor	(503)-649-2394
Company Rep	Ted Lee	F Co	(307)-265-2277	Tom Toper	(907)-243-3227
Company Rep	Al Rosman	G Co	(250)-542-4714		
Company Rep	Harry Roll	H Co	(513)-922-0249	Warren Wilt	(316)-286-5469
Company Rep	Harold Botteon	I Co	(410)-288-5388		
Company Rep	George Stoeckert	Hq 1st	(703)-451-4629	Rock Merritt	(910)-425-5818
Company Rep	Chet Graham	Hq 2nd	(925)-937-6839	Louis M. Manion	(502)-447-8250
Company Rep	Lawrence Jeffers	Hq 3rd	(614)-667-6558	Jack Schlegel	(914)-688-5772
Company Rep	Harry Kennedy	HqHq	(650-349-1998	Bob Abraham	(405)-789-2264
Company Rep	Heimer Swanson	Ser Co	(507)-825-3762	Dave Kuony	(402)-553-5324

(If your phone number is incorrect, please send the corrected number to the editor)

The President's Letter

Another year has passed and another reunion has been enjoyed by all who attended our 26th Annual Reunion at the Doubletree Hotel in Overland Park, Kansas. Reports from various sources indicate a high degree of satisfaction throughout the membership.

The success of the reunion in a great measure can be attributed to the volunteer efforts of many of our members from "H" Company who helped make the reunion another memorable event. I take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to all those who assisted Warren and Charlene Wilt in bringing about the wonderful experience this year.

Our color guard certainly looked splendid with the shiny new helmets (thanks to OB) and again they did an excellent job under the direction of Rock Merritt.

Because of his health, George Stoeckert was unable to accept the nomination to become President this year resulting in my reelection to another term and Walter Silver was elected to replace George as Vice President. We will miss the excellent work of Zig Boroughs who has been our Secretary for the past several years; however, Francis Lamoureux was elected to fill that position and has enthusiastically undertaken the task of carrying on where Zig left off. Reliable Ernie Lamson was reelected to carry out the daunting job of Treasurer.

Thanks to Ernie we have an excellent location at the Airport Hilton in Tampa, Florida for our 27th Reunion next year. Our Newsletter will carry future details of plans for Tampa.

For personal reasons Hank Lefebvre felt that he was unable to continue as Parliamentarian. We shall miss Hank in that position. Hank has contributed a great deal of his time to the Association over the years. However, the position will be in able hands, as Rock Merritt has agreed to perform the task.

We welcome several new Associate Members to the Association, they are: Mark Claussner, Stan and Anita Sarten, and Jim McClure.

May you all celebrate a pleasant Thanksgiving and enjoy the Holiday Season.

God bless you all.

Bob Speers

October 5, 2000

UP-Date on Retirement of the Association

Norb Studelska, Chairman and "Rock" Merritt, Vice Chairman of the Retirement Advisory Committee (RAC) report successful completion of some of the 12 RAC Tasks. Task 2 chaired by Dr. John Hardie and his committee participated in the dedication of the Sergeant Leonard Funk Memorial at Camp Blanding on June 19, 1999. On the same day, DZ DIABLO was dedicated through the efforts of Bob Abraham.

Camp Blanding was chosen to be the permanent repository of the historical records, the colors and the memorabilia of the 508 Parachute Infantry Regiment Association 1942-1945.

The RAC Committee reports progress is being made on other Tasks, some of which are nearing completion.

One important Task has been assigned to the Company Reps, which involves the compilation of Company Albums to be archived in the Museum Library at Camp Blanding. These albums will serve as source materials for future historians.

RAC encourages participation by all companies in this worthy TASK.

Retirement plans do not come Easy!

The Hamblin Committee worked four years (1994-1998) to lay the foundation and the groundwork for the on-going Association retirement program.

Originally known as the "Future of the Association Committee" with Past President, Paul Hamblin as Chairman and with help from Bob Abraham, George Stoeckert, and Ed Ott (who died on Februaury 19, 1999) their four years of dedication and expertise gave rise to the present day Retirement Association Committee which continues their work.

Action at Kansas City, Kansas

The general membership voted to validate the retirement date of the Association on or about October 20, 2004.

The average age of members of the Association is 77. In 2004 the majority of members will be in their eighties.

As membership declines and attendance at Annual Reunions dips precipitously, the ability of the Association to carry on effectively will decrease.

At each successive Reunion of the 508, members will be asked to vote whether to retain the 2004 Retirement date or to amend it, in accordance with Article IX, Section 4 of the Association Constitution and Bylaws.

It is presumed that the YEAR 2004 date will continue to be voted each year until the Association formally retires in grand and dignified style at Camp Blanding, the birthplace of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

REGISTRATION FOR KANSAS CITY REUNION :

Attendance was 315, holding steady from last year in San Diego.

Perfect Attendance for all 26 Reunions:

O.B. Hill, Hq 1st
Jim Smith, Co. "B"
Bob White, Co. "A"
Broughton L. Hand, Co. "C"

CONGRATULATIONS !

O.B. Hill Awards were presented to:

Michael Wargo	***Hq 1st***
Louis Manion	***Hq 2nd***
Abe Oybkahn	***Co. D***
Odell Cannon	***Co. E***
Ted Lee	***Co. F***
Francis Lamoureux	***Co. G***
Ernie Glover	***Co. I***
James Smith	***Co. B***

Zig Bouroughs
P.O. Box 1131
Pickens, SC 29671
Phone: 864-979-9523

Sept. 15, 2000

To the 508th PIR Association:

Since you elected me to serve as your Secretary at the Atlanta Reunion in 1994, through the Kansas City Reunion in 2000, when you graciously accepted my resignation, the Association has been very supportive and encouraging to me. I am overwhelmed by the expressions of appreciation, which you have showered upon me, and I am pleased as punch with the beautiful plaque presented to me in Kansas city.

Serving as your Secretary, has broadened my friendships to include so many more delightful Red Devils. In addition, there are the many exciting connections established with others through the 508th, such as the second and third generations of your prodigy, and the friends in England, France, Belgium, Holland, and elsewhere which we Red Devils now include in our extended family. I treasure all of you as friends.

The Association has elected a capable and dedicated Secretary to replace me - Francis Lamoureux. However, Francis does need our help. Let Francis know when you have a change of address, and send him information for the Newsletter. With our help and support, Francis will be a super Secretary.

Best Airborne Friendships,

Zig



In the Footsteps of the 82nd Airborne Division

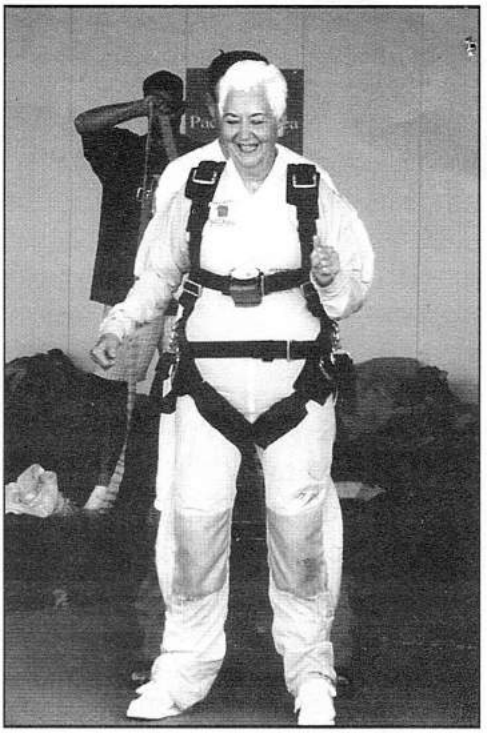
Emile Lacroix (left) and Zig Boroughs relax after 25 Km March from Werbomont, Belgium to commemorate the 54th Anniversary of the 508 PIR campaign in the Batttle of the Bulge.

Zig is seen presenting an autographed copy of the French edition of his book "Memories of a Soldier" to the C-47 Club Belgian Chapter of the 82nd. Emile Lacroix, who did the French translation, is also President of 82nd Jeep Club in Belgium and a good friend and Associate Member of the 508 PIR.

EDITOR'S NOTE: It has been my privilege to work with Zig for a few years. Our friendship has grown over time and I treasure every minute of it.

Ralph Zeigler Boroughs was brought up and educated in the finest Southern traditions . In his book the Devil's Tale, **Zig** has faithfully captured the spirit of the paratrooper and relates their stories "in their own words" The deeds and actions of the men of the 508 and their comrades are given flesh and blood by **Zig's** words and hence they are immortalized!

Harry Lee Reisenleiter, (B) married his wartime sweetheart, **Maxine** in 1946. He had jumped into Normandy on D-Day with the 508 PIR. He was a 50 year member of the American Legion. He often put on his jump jacket and paratrooper pants and boots and spoke at local schools on the history of WWII. Maxine told Harry that she would like to make a parachute jump. Harry said he'd enjoy it, too, especially since this time no one would be shooting at him. They never did it before Harry died in December 1998. Maxine often thought about making the jump. On Sunday, September 10 , 2000 she made the jump in Sullivan, Missouri – 60 miles from St.Louis. Her son and daughter along with friends and relatives were there to watch. "I'm celebrating his 78th birthday", she said, "It's my way of remembering. I'm glad I did it."
From William Windom Co B



Maxine Reisenleiter (AM) B
Suits up for her first JUMP!



16747 Rickenbacker Cir
Riverside, CA 92518
Oct. 7,2000

Robert Speers, President
508th P.I.R.
3109 Nassau
Sand Springs OK. 74063-2905

Dear Bob:

I want to thank you and others responsible for that plaque making me the the Honorary Regimental Commander of the 508th P.I.R.

I appreciate the honor bestowed on me. The time I spent with the 508th was the the high point of my Army Career.

Sincerely,
Tom Shanley

c.c. OB Hill
C.C Chet Graham

Thomas J.B. Shanley, West Point, 1939 activated the 2nd battalion of the 508 PIR at Camp Blanding , Florida in October, 1942.

He led the 2nd Bn in Normandy, Holland and the Ardennes. After the war he continued to serve his country in a distinguished military carrier.

On the Normandy drop only 2 companies assembled under his command on the DZ set up by 3rd Bn Pathfinder Team under **Lt. Gene Williams.**

Outnumbered by a German Battalion, Tom Shanley recovered his wounded and set up defensive positions on Hill 30. There, his men fought enemy attacks for two days with dwindling ammunition and medical supplies.

Colonel Shanley's defiant stand on Hill 30 with his men has been credited by historians as a major reason for the success of the American Airborne effort in Normandy

Luciano Aguirre (Hq, 3rd Bn)
Died recently. He is survived by his wife, Mary. Her address is :72 North Napa Dr., Petaluma, CA 94954

Matthew Lipp, (Fusco") HqHq died on September 11, 2000.Letter from his son, Jack to **Harry Hudec.** Harry used to visit Matt in Chester, PA. Matt had become totally blind. He enjoyed his visits with Hudec, whom he called "**Big Stoop**".

Sal Valenti, drummer in the 508 dance band from Camp Blanding to Nottingham passed away in September 1999. **Webb Dawner** (Band) received news from MS Harriet Hecker, a lifetime-friend of Sal Her address is: 8113 N.W. 58th St, Tamarac, FL 33321

Mrs. Dolores Fields, wife of John T. Fields, D and Service Co. died September 29, 1999, a few weeks after their 51st wedding anniversary. (Letter to **ZIG** from Jack Fields.)

George Stoeckert, our retired VP was hospitalized for a short period. He is now resting comfortably at home. (E-mail from his daughter, Amy, and phone call from **Warren Brown.) Send George a card at:** 6153 Roxbury Ave., Springfield, VA 22152.

NEW MEMBERS:
J.T. Prestigacomo (Hq, 2nd Bn)
2133 Peabody Lane, Louisville, KY 40218.
(First reunion Kansas City)

More new members and Associate Members will be listed in the **Winter Newsletter.**
(They are entered in our DATABASE)

We continue to receive INQUIRIES. Some of these will appear in future Newsletters.
Many sons and daughters are seeking information about their father's service, or are trying to locate one of his comrades. They are asking for your help. They appreciate it when we respond.

Walter Silver and George Stoeckert took part in Veteran's Day ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery. They placed wreaths with the Red Devil logos at the 508th Monument and at 1st Sergeant Leonard Funk's grave.

At the **Tomb of the Unknown** our 508 Vice President, **Walter Silver** placed a wreath with Secretary of the Army, Louis Caldera and officers of the 82nd Abn Div Assn.

In his remarks, **Walter Silver** emphasized thatwe honored all the men of the 508, living and deceased, who served so bravely in the regiment. A large receptive audience honoring our comrades reflected great credit upon the 508th PIR.

Our thanks to **AM Frank Varelli** and his wife **Louise** for their excellent help and support.

From O.B. Hill: The following sites are under study for the 2002 Reunion. Laughlin, Nevada; Cincinnati, Ohio; Atlanta, Georgia and Chicago, Illinois. More in the Winter Newsletter.

Give your input to your Company Reps and to your Association officers.

Address changes:
Gene Garren, Route 6, Box 676, BURNSVILLE, NC 28714

ZIG Boroughs has returned to his roots in Pickens, SC. His new address (in case you didn't notice.) : P.O. Box 1131, Pickens, SC 29671. Phone: 864-979-9523.

Zig begins radiation treatments December 1. Physically he's feeling fine. He's busy working on his new project – **The 508 Connection.** This will be a new book with new material connecting past and present 508 troopers and their families. Contact Zig if you have a connection. He'll be grateful to you. More to follow next time.

508th P.I.R. ASSOCIATION
27th Annual Reunion
Hilton Hotel
Tampa, Florida
August 30 - September 2, 2001

NAME: Mr._____ Wife:_____ Company:_____

ADDRESS:_____ TELEPHONE:_____

CITY:_____ STATE:_____ ZIP_____

I WILL HAVE _____ GUESTS AND THE NAMES FOR THEIR TAGS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1._____ 2._____ 3._____ 4._____

The fee per person is $65.00.
ENCLOSED IS: $_____ REGISTRATION FEE FOR _____ PEOPLE.
Send the whole page in with your reservation.

*****SEND THE WHOLE PAGE WITH YOUR REGISTRATION*****

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Registration (Wednesday)	8/29	
Golf (Thursday)	8 A.M. 8/30	
Company Rep Meeting (Thurs)	4 P.M. 8/30	
Memorial Breakfast (Friday)	9 A.M. 8/31	
Pictures (Friday)	11 A.M. 8/31	
Business Meeting (Saturday)	9 A.M. 9/1	
Banquet (Saturday)	7 P.M. 9/1	
Farewell Breakfast (Sunday)	9 A.M. 9/2	

❑ King-size Bed
❑ 2 Double Beds
❑ Non-Smoking Room

Arrival date will be _____
At _____ M.
Checkout date will be _____

Please make all checks or money orders payable to: 508th P.I.R. Association. Send this pre-registration form with the hotel reservation information and your check or money order to: **Ernie Lamson, 1135 Edgcumbe Rd., St. Paul, Minnesota 55105.**

Special Note:
No money is required at this time. When the hotel confirms your registration, they will expect a down payment of $62.00, only if you will arrive after 6 P.M.. Payment, if necessary, can be made by credit card, check, or money order to: **Hilton Hotel, 2225 North Lois Ave. Tampa, FL 33607 (813) 877-6688.**
Please Note: If you want to set up a room for a Company CP, contact Ernie Lamson.

PLEASE INDICATE HOW YOU CAN HELP AT THE REUNION

❑ Registration Desk ❑ Regimental CP ❑ Table Decorations

Please indicate here if you will require a wheelchair: ❑ YES
I will require a refrigerator for insulin. ❑ YES

SPECIAL NOTE: Pre-registration stops 3 weeks before the REUNION. After that, we'll register you at our in the hotel in Tampa. **MAKE ALL CHANGES OR CANCELLATIONS THROUGH ERNIE LAMSON TO AVOID CONFUSION AND FALSE BILLINGS.**