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October 19, 2004
We say, "Farewell" at Blanding.



508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association

END of Year - 2004

Newsletter

FINAL Issue 95



President Rock Merritt opens ceremony.
October 19, 2004
Camp Blanding

This Final Issue of the Newsletter brings to a close the activities of one of the finest Airborne Associations of the past thirty years.

We thank all of you who attended our Final Reunion. Your devotion to your 508 comrades has been richly rewarded by the friendships which you have made.
WE HOPE YOU WILL KEEP UP THESE FRIENDSHIPS.

Your Board of Directors will continue to serve you EX-OFFICIO. We welcome your calls. The 508 column in the Static line and our 508 web-site will keep you posted on mini-reunions throughout the year.

The History of the 508 is an on-going project.
LOG on to our web-site. You will find hundreds of pages of personal stories covering the 508's participation in WWII.
Never before published material is popping up weekly.
See page 5 for more details.

Reunion Summary for 508th P.I.R. Association

Year	PRESIDENT	ON ROSTER	LOCATION	CHAIRMAN	ATTENDANCE
1975	O.B. Hill	227	Chicago, IL	O.B. Hill	133
1976	O.B. Hill	385	Chicago, IL	O.B. Hill	176
1977	David E. Thomas	503	Fayetteville, NC	Jim Smith/Kenneth Merrtt	358
1978	Jack Schlegel	589	Denver, CO	Tom Huen	265
1979	Hank LeFebvre	654	San Antonio, TX	Dave Thomas	322
1980	Kenneth Merritt	788	Indianapolis, IN	Joe Petry	337
1981	Robert Chisolm	837	Daytona Beach, FL	Mike Wargo	385
1982	Fran Mahan	894	Fayetteville, NC	Jim Smith	627
1983	John Boone	963	Portland, OR	Andy Sklivis/John Boone	322
1984	John Hardie	1031	Omaha, NE	Tom Huen	370
1985	James Able	1094	Los Angeles, CA	O.B. Hill	452
1986	Okey Mills	1137	Dayton, OH	Clyde Perdue	596
1987	Edward Montgomery	1215	El Paso, TX	Bob Chisolm	489
1988	Joseph Watson	1268	Charleston, SC	Jim Smith/Grady Murray	621
1989	Darrell Glass	1325	Portland, OR	Darrell Glass	446
1990	Chet Graham	1352	Minneapolis, MN	Ernie Lamson	481
1991	Ed Ott	1363	Sacramento, CA	David Nagle	417
1992	Ernie Lamson	1377	Norfolk, VA	Jim Smith	561
1993	Darrell Glass	1397	New Orleans, LA	Warren Zuelke	392
1994	Paul Hamblin	1407	Atlanta, GA	Paul Hamblin	491
1995	Kenneth Merritt	1415	Cody, WY	Ted Lee	443
1996	Kenneth Merritt	1381	St. Louis, MO	O.B. Hill/Ernie Lamson	430
1997	Norbert Studelska	1308	Minneapolis, MN	Ernie Lamson	301
1998	Norbert Studelska	1294	Nashville, TN	Bill & Betty Clark	420
1999	Norbert Studelska	1275	San Diego, CA	O.B. Hill	300
2000	Robert Speers	1266	Kansas City, MO	Warren Wilt	307
2001	Robert Speers	1270	Tampa, FL	Ernie Lamson/O.B. Hill	360
2002	Robert Speers	1230	Laughlin, NV	Ernie Lamson I	320
2003	Kenneth Merritt	1130	Fort Mitchell, KY	Ernie Lamson	382
2004	Kenneth Merritt	1120	Gainesville, FL	Ernie Lamson	600

Chairman was O.B. Hill from 1975-2002
Treasurer was Jim Smith from 1975-1994
Treasurer has been Ernie Lamson since 1995
Secretary was John Hardie in 1975
Secretary was Jim Allardyce from 1976-1994
Secretary has been Zig Boroughs from 1995-2000
Secretary has been Francis Lamoureux since 2000

Membership Data for Last Five Years

Year	508 Vets	Associates	Friends
2000	924	253	89
2001	948	256	66
2002	872	286	85
2003	704	409	17
2004	678	430	12

****

The above statistics tell only part of the story of the 508's impact.

Many of our members. thanks to Don Lassen's Static Line Tours, have gone back to England, Normandy, Holland and Belgium over the years. In every one of these countries there are monuments to celebrate and memorialize our deeds.

On May 8, 2005 in Portstewart, Northern Ireland, a monument will be unveiled to pay tribute to the 508. This has been accomplished through the generous efforts of John McCann, who has proved to be a true friend of the 508 and it's role in the liberation of Europe. The inscription on the stone monument will read:

Dedicated to the Men/ of the/ 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment/ 82nd Airborne Division/ United States Army/ STATIONED IN "CAMP CROMORE"/ 9th January – 11th March 1944/ WWII Campaigns/ NORMANDY/ HOLLAND/ BELGIUM.

A delegation from the 82nd Airborne, including men from the 505, the 507, the 325, the 508 and 82nd Hq have been invited. The 508 monument will be unveiled by former 508 PIRA Secretary, Francis M. Lamoureux.

President's Report :

With a sad heart, I write this last message as President of our Association.
My wife, Sally, passed away July 11, 2004. She enjoyed attending our reunions. She was always at my side. We wanted to celebrate the retirement of our association with all of you at Camp Blanding, Florida on Tuesday, October 19, 2004.

At each reunion we have honored the memory of our 508 comrades who gave their lives heroically on the battlefields of Normandy, Holland, the Ardennes and the Rhineland. On October 18, 2004 at our 30th reunion in Gainesville, Florida, we gathered for the last time at our Memorial Breakfast to pay tribute to our fallen comrades and to remember those who have passed away since our last reunion

Just 30 years ago, when he visited the Normandy Cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach with Bill Goudy, O.B. Hill resolved to keep alive the memory of the 508. He organized the first reunion which was held July 4, 1975 in Chicago, Illinois. There were 133 members and guests in attendance. O.B. was unanimously elected President of the 508 Association.

We can never repay O.B. Hill and his wife, Margaret for their devotion to the newly formed 508 Association.
They gave generously of their time, effort, and financial support, as well as their zeal and spirit to make the 508 Association, at the regimental level, one of the best known and best managed Airborne Associations in the United States.
We were saddened when O.B. passed away on June 10, 2002. We are grateful that O.B. lived to see his dream come true.
I thank Ernie Lamson for the terrific job he did coordinating the reunion with Managers at 5 different hotels and City and County officials. That explains Ernie's surprise gift of a SKATE BOARD to help him make his rounds.

I thank Bob Speers for working with me to finalize plans for our Retirement Ceremony. I thank Major Greg Parsons and the Staff at Camp Blanding for hosting the event with dignity and respect.

Our farewell banquet, Wednesday, October 20, 2004 was dedicated to the memory of our founder, O.B. Hill. We have had a wonderful 30 years renewing old friendships and honoring our fallen comrades.

I thank you for electing me to serve as your President. Together with the Board of Directors, we thank you for your trust in us. With your support, we have retired our Association with honor and dignity.

God bless the 508th Association, the Greatest of the Greatest Generation, and God bless our fighting men and women around the world.

Airborne All the Way,
Rock Merritt

****



In Loving Memory of
Sally Merritt

Memorial Donations

Ellen Peters, (AM, HqHq) in memory of Worster "Pappy" Morgan, (HqHq).
Rutherford Hamilton, (I, Co.) and his wife, Mary Sue – donation in memory of Roland Rogers, (I, Co.) and in memory of F.H. Dillon, Captain, CO of "I" company
Mrs. Pat Ott, (AM, Hq 2nd) – donation in memory of her husband, Ed Ott, (Hq 2nd)
Pat Segovia, (H, Co.) donation in memory of Ralph P. Oseko, (H, Co.)
Bob Satterly, (C Co.) donation dedicated to men of company "C". Bob served with the 508 from 1944 until 1946. A new member, he continued in the military and retired a s a Major..
Paul Sands, (Hq 2nd) a donation "to perpetuate the 508" dedicated to the men of Hq 2nd who did not return.. ***They will be remembered as "Forever Young."***
Edward J. Reeves, (B Co.) a donation in memory of Harry Rhodus (B Co.)
Clemon C. Crain, (D Co.) a donation in memory of John Agee, (D Co.)
Harry J. Kennedy, (Hq&Hq) donation, dated June 6, 2004, in memory of Worster M. Morgan, (Hq&Hq).

The Board of Directors of the 508 PIR Association say, "Thank you for your generous donations."

At the final meeting of the Board it was voted to allot the following funds:

1. **To Static Line: $500 for 508 page. and $250 for "508 Man of the Year"**
2. **To Bill Nation $300 to defray expenses for Static Line column.**
3. **To Richard J. O'Donnell $5000 to maintain our 508 web-site : www.508pir.org**

NOTE: The $5000 donation for web-site was from a $6,196.00 grant to the 508 from Alachua County. (NOT Association Funds). Thanks to Nancy Fischer and Ernie Lamson who worked on the grant.

4. **To John McCann $350 for Monument to the 508 to be erected at CROMORE ESTATES in Portstewart, Northern Ireland. *(For details see our web-site,)***

5. **To Camp Blanding Museum & Historical Associates $3,500 for care & maintenance of the 508 Memorial Park and our memorabilia in the Museum.**

From our Treasurer, Ernie Lamson :

As Chairman of our 30th & FINAL Reunion, I call to your attention the valuable contributions of the many organizations in the Gainesville area who contributed to the success of our most memorable reunion.
I have written letters of thanks on behalf of the 508 PIRA to all.
A good starting place is to recognize the Staff of the ALACHUA COUNTY Visitors and Convention Bureau in Gainesville, most especially, Chairman Roland Loog and Nancy Fischer, Director of Sales.
Thanks also to Mike Byerly, CHAIR, Board of County Commissioners of ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA and his staff.
Thanks to Pegeen Hanrahan, Mayor of the City of Gainesville.
Thanks to Jim LynchVeterans Service Officer for Alachua County.
Thanks to Captain Bill Pokorny, University of Florida, Navy ROTC for his young cadets, smartly dressed in their Navy whites. They saluted us as we boarded the busses for Blanding. WE THANK YOU!
Thanks to Chief Stephen M. Oelrich, Alachua County Sherriff for providing a motorcycle escort to get our ten busses to Camp Blanding on time.
Thanks to Jeff Logan, Transit Director for providing busses to shuttle us from the Airport to our Hotels.
Thanks to John Gebhardt, Santa Fe Community College who provided a group of young veterans to work on our NAME TAGS and offer other support.
THANKS to Peter Pappas of the Paramount Plaza for making our stay so enjoyable. His staff (especially Shannon Head) Jason, Harry, Holly, Shawn, Victor, Jim and the front desk helped us beyond compare.
NEVER has the 508 received such widespread cooperation and support at a reunion. The Town was with us all the way.
WE also thank our faithful crew of 508 volunteers, especially my wife Charlene, Harry and Ruby Roll and Lawrence & Shirley Jeffers. You have been GREAT!

Ernie Lamson

Norb Studelska, Vice President **read the RESOLUTION to retire the 508 PIRA at Camp Blanding, October 19, 2004. It is reproduced on page 8 of this Newsletter At the Memorial Breakfast VP Norb received a plaque of appreciation from the men of "D" company, his company. Congratulations Norb!**

Awarded at O.B.'s Memorial Banquet

508 Man of the Year 2004 goes to Zig Boroughs, (HqHq) for his contributions as Association Secretary and Historian.

The plaque presented by Don Lassen to Zig is one of the Annual Airborne Static Line Awards given out each April in Atlanta, Georgia.

Our congratulations to comrade Boroughs for his richly deserved honor.

Awards were also presented to : Association President, Rock Merritt Treasurer, Ernie Lamson, and Secretary Francis M. Lamoureux in recognition of their service on the Board of Directors.

Associate Member Joe D. Hill addressed the Banquet, expressing THANKS to the 508 on behalf of his family for all previous honors accorded to his father, O.B. Hill, as Founder of the 508 PIRA.

Ralph Ziegler ("Zig") Boroughs' third book, "The 508th Connection" garnered cheers at the reunion..
***From Dr. James Pence, retired Professor, University of North Carolina:* " Reader connections abound:**
" We connect with officers and NCO's who truly lead.. We connect with the people of France, Belgium and Holland who risk their lives to save the lives of paratroopers of the 508. We connect with 508 troopers as they kneel to share Holy Communion with German POW's in fields behind the hedgerows of Normandy.."
Zig's book is a "must have" for your Library!

For copies of "The 508 Connection" Write to Zig at:
Ralph Z. Boroughs, P.O. Box 1131, Pickens, SC 29671 or call : (854) 878-9523
The book is available in hard or soft cover.

LETTER FROM S.S. "BUD" ASH; ;
"Thanks to all my friends in the 508. You cleaned me out of items in Gainesville. Check my ad in the Static Line for what's available. AIRRBONE!"

Dick O'Donnell and his wife Tsugi brighten up the Banquet Hall

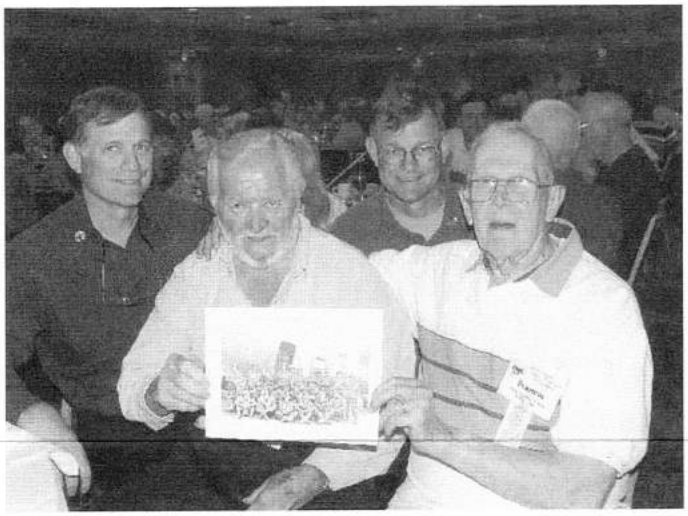


Richard J. O'Donnell (AM, Hq 1st) is a cousin of Captain Ruddy, (Hq 1st).
He attended his first 508 reunion at Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, and made a big impression at our business meeting with his demonstartion of the 508 website which he designed. Check his complete coverage of the 508 retirement ceremony, including photos and documents on the internet at:
www.508pir.org

The latest entry to the website is over 200 pages from the company album for Headquarters Company 1st Battalion, It is the work of company rep, George I. Stoeckert, entitled , "The Greatest of the Greatest Generation" The Album is not for sale, but all 216 pages are accessible on the above website at no cost. (It cannot be reproduced for sale – that's a NO! NO! – Scout's Honor.) The entries cover stories of men of Hq 1st dating from 1942. Chronologically it follows 508 history through its combat missions, the founding of the 508 PIR Association and its 30 reunions up to the Retirement Ceremony on October 19, 2004. George Stoeckert's work is a great tribute to the men of Hq 1st. Thanks!
George may be reached at:
6153 Roxbury Ave., Springfield, VA 22152-1625
By e-mail: GIS757@aol.com
Tel, (703) -451-4629
George has been named "508 Man of the Year for 2005 . He gets the Award in Atlanta fom Don Lassen.(*At the Static Line Airborne Awards in April)*

REUNION HIGHLIGHTS

First reunion: Gene Williams and Jack Williams, twin sons of Lt. Gene Williams (Hq 3rd) attended with their mother, Mary Lear, who lives in Gainesville. The twins were born June 8, 1944 in Mobile, Alabama – just two days after their father jumped into Normandy on D-day. Lt. Williams was officer in charge of the 3rd Battalion Pathfinder Team. He was killed June 20, 1944, at Prétot. Hours later, a telegram arrived to inform him of the birth of his twin sons.



Seated(Rear-Left), Gene Williams and (Right) Jack Williams. Seated in foreground, holding photo of 3rd Bn Pathfinder Team, John Sternesky, (I Co.) and Francis Lamoureux, (G Co.) They jumped into Normandy on D-Day with Lt. Gene Williams from Plane #18.

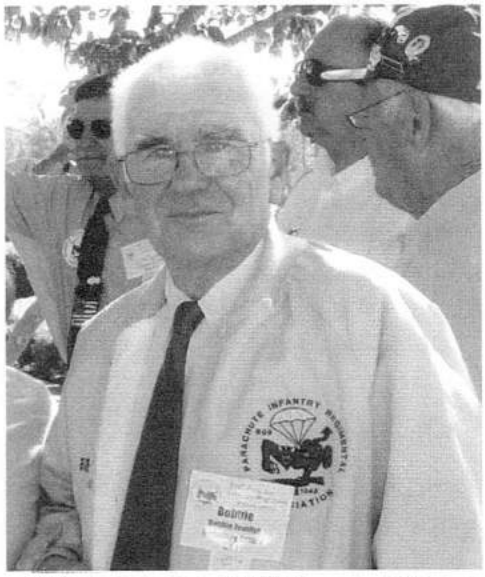
Only nine men in the 18-man stick assembled on the DZ, including Lt. Williams and Lamoureux, and Sternesky as well as Sgt. Barbiaux and Fayette O. Richardson, Eric Stott and Warren Jeffers.

It was Sternesky's first 508 reunion.and the first time that he had met with Lamoureux since 1945. ***The Williams twins were regaled by stories from "Sterno" and "Lamo" about combat experiences with their father on Hill 30.***

The twins emulated their father. Both saw combat, as paratroopers, in Vietnam. Gene and Jack are Associate Members assigned to Hq Co. 3rd Battalion.

Visitor from France

Jean Baptiste Feuillye, (better-known as Bobbie) made a hit at the reunion



60 years ago, Bobbie, age 13, was home alone in Fresville about one mile from *Ste. Mère-Église* – first town liberated in Normandy by the 82nd Airborne on D-Day. His folks had gone out to work in the fields . They were not yet aware that the invasion had started. In the following months he made friends with paratroopers and GI's. *They adopted Bobbie as a mascot.*

After the war he worked at the American Cemetery above Omaha Beach, spending many hours tending the graves of American soldiers.

In 1994, Bobbie met O.B. Hill in Normandy and they became close friends.

Over the years, Bobbie led many Normandy tours for the 508 . This year, he attended his first 508 reunion to honor us for liberating France.

At our O.B. Hill Memorial Banquet, Bobbie read "A Message from Normandy" in which he pays tribute to all the American soldiers who rest in peace in the cemetery at Omaha Beach. *"The people of Normandy will never forget them", says Bobbie, "we are eternally indebted to them for their sacrifice."*

FLASH !: **Tom Toper (F Co.) now resides at a new address: Anchorage Pioneers Home, 923 W. 11th St., Rm 339, Anchorage. AK 995501.**

(From Norb Studelska who reports that Tom had quintuple bypass surgery.) We missed him & his smoked salmon in October.

EDITOR' s NOTE: Please write to him.

Taps

Day is done, gone the sun from the lake,
from the hills, from the sky.
All is well, safely rest. God is nigh

Sally H. Merritt, (Hq 1st) died July 11, 2004 in her home. *Sally was the beloved wife of our 508 PIR Association President, Kenneth J. "Rock" Merritt.* She is survived by her husband, Ken, a daughter, Dianna Pflueger of Spavionaw, Oklahoma; two sons, Kenneth G. Merritt of Fayetteville and Gerald J. Merritt of Lincoln, Nebraska; six sisters; two brothers; six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to St. Matthews United Methodist Church, 202 Hope Mills Road, Fayetteville, NC 28304; or to Cape Fear Valley Hospice, 3418 Village Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28304.
Send condolences to Kenneth J. "Rock" Merritt.
1517 Atwick Dr., Fayetteville, NC 28304

Edna Chitwood (AM, Hq 1st) Died August 1, 2004. Edna was a cherished friend of Headquarters Company, 1st Battallion
Send condolences to her husband:
Leland Chitwood, 3607 Stembridge Ct., Wilmington, NC 28409-2844

Ed Blaney, (Hq 1st) died July 10, 2004 at age 89 in Sebring, Florida.
His daughter, Shirley Jarvis, writes that he was proud to have served with the 508th Parachute Infanrtry Regiment in WWII, and that he had fond memories of past reunions..He made the D-Day jump with the 508 into Normandy where he was captured.. He was held a Prisoner of War in Germany for 11 months.
After the war he worked as a Tire Builder for Uniroyal in Detroit, Michigan. He was active in the D.A.V. and the Ex-POW Association. He is survived by his wife, Mamie his daughter, Shirley, a son, David, one brother Robert, a sister, Betty Mayfield as well as 7 grandichildren and 13 great-grandchildren.
Send condolences to: Mrs. Edgar J. Blaney, 107 Parkview, Sebring, FL 33870

Jim Jackman, (F Co.) died last year. Phone call from his wife Patricia to Ernie Lamson.;
Mrs. Patriia Jackman, P.O. Box 637, Westport, WA 98595

Harold L. Greene, (C Co.) died October 30, 2002. (Letter was received August 5, 2004 from a friend who wrote:"Mr. Greene was a super good neighbor to us for 25 years. As a veteran of the 101st we had some great things in common. **His grandson Lloyd Caldwell** was very proud of Harold's military record as a paratrooper.") Send condolences to:
Lloyd Caldwell, 11930 City View St. Dalton, GA 30720

Frank "Speck" Haddy, (D Co.) died July 2, 2004.
Frank was on the planning committee for many 508 reunions and served as company rep for D company. He made the Normandy jump as a Pathfinder with the 2nd Battalion of the 508.
On July 3, 1944 he was wounded in both legs.
He was evacuated to England for recovery and rejoined D-Company in time for the jump into Holland on September 17, 1944.
He is survived by his wife, Lorene, one daughter and a son, Michael, four grandchildren, ten step-grandchildren and one step great-granddaughter..
(Reported by Harold Roy.) Send condolences to his wife:
Lorene Haddy, 111 5th Ave. N. Clear Lake, IA 50428-4132

Jim Yarborugh, (Service Co.) died June 21, 2004). Send condolences to his wife:
Mrs. Norma Yarborough, 1800 East Teri Lane, Chino Valley, AZ 86323

David Nagle, (E, Co.) died July 16, 2004 after a long illness. David was Chairman of our 17th 508 Reunion held in Sacramento, California in 1991. David served as Vice President of the 508 PIR Association. Send condolences to his wife **Elizabeth: 525 Norlee St., Sebastopol, CA 95472**

William Vessels (Service Co.) died August 9, 2004). Condolences to: **Mary Lou Cardonna, 11 Virginia Ave., Jeffersonville, IN 47130**

Richard Durkee, (C company) died September 14, 2004.(Rec'd From Pat Casanova.,E Co.) No obituary notice .

Stan Watsick, (D Co.) died January 20, 2004. Condolences to : **Mrs. Virgil Watsick, 300 8th Ave. N.E. , Minneapolis, MN 55413**

508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association
1942-1945

Resolution

WHEREAS: The 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, comprised of volunteers from the Forty-Eight States, was activated October 20, 1942 at Camp Blanding, Florida; and after basic training at Camp Blanding and parachutist qualification at Fort Benning, Georgia, and tactical unit training in Camp Mackall, North Carolina, Ireland, and England, the Regiment, attached to the 82nd Airborne Division, parachuted into Normandy, France on D-Day, June 6, 1944 as the vanguard of the sea-borne forces. After accomplishing all of its missions, the Regiment returned to Nottingham, England for replacements and equipment; and

WHEREAS: On September 17, 1944, the reconstituted Regiment parachuted into Nijmegen, Holland as part of the force committed to liberating the Netherlands; and on December 18, 1944 the Regiment was rushed to Werbomont, Belgium to help defeat the last major German offensive, and fought heroically in the Rhineland, Ardennes, and Central Europe campaigns; and

WHEREAS: On April 4, 1945, the Regiment was detached from the 82nd Airborne Division and came under control of the First Allied Airborne Army; it moved immediately to airfields prepared to parachute on prisoner-of-war camps to liberate prisoners. Upon cessation of hostilities, having sustained 2670 battle casualties, won five unit decorations for heroic actions, and individual members of the Regiment having earned every decoration authorized by the United States Government, and decorations from the governments of Belgium, France, Great Britain and the Netherlands, and having been chosen as the Honor Guard for General Dwight D. Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters; the Regiment, on June 8, 1945, moved to Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany; and

WHEREAS: On November 24, 1946, after four years, one month and four days of outstanding service, the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment was deactivated at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS: On July 6, 1975, in Chicago, Illinois, veterans of the Regiment created the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association, 1942-1945 to affirm and renew the friendships shared during World War II, and perpetuate the memory of all who served in the Regiment; and

WHEREAS: On August 6, 2002, the General Membership having determined the Association can no longer function effectively, because of aging, resolved to on October 20, 2004 transfer Association assets and memorabilia to the Camp Blanding Museum and Historical Associates, Inc., Starke, Florida for safeguarding and display in the Camp Blanding Museum; and formally retire the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association, 1942-1945.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Kenneth J. Merritt, President of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association, 1942-1945, do hereby in accordance with this Resolution, as approved by the General Membership, officially transfer Association assets and memorabilia to the Camp Blanding Museum and Historical Associates, Inc., Starke, Florida effective October 19, 2004.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association, 1942-1945 to be affixed this October 19, in the year of Our Lord two thousand and four.

Kenneth J. (Rock) Merritt
President