508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association



NEWS LETTER
NOVEMBER 1977
ISSUE 3

FAYETTEVILLE REUNION BEST EVER ! ! !

What a reunion ! What a good time ! What companionship !
Jim Smith and the Fayetteville gang went all out to make this assembly unforgetable. Everyone was met at the airport by an ex 508er. Marv Risnes G Co. and Fran Mahan I Co.exuded southern 508th hospitality "all the way " til all hours. They had laid on an army bus for this purpose. The driver was so impressed by our spirit of comradeship that he said he would drive all night til the last plane was in.

The Bourdeaux was very adequate. The rooms were clean and comfortable. The food was delicious. There was plenty of room for anything.

How about the military? Rocky Merritt has the connections. We had 9 army buses each day to take us all to Bragg and Mackall. That was with 2 sheriffs cars and an MP car for escort. Flashing lights, sirens and all. The 82nd museum is very well done. It brought back a lot of memories. The equipment and weapons displays in the barracks area fascinated everyone. How many times did you hear someone say,"if we only had this back in 44 and 45".

We dined at noon in the mess hall. Did you ever have a steak in an army mess hall? Most of us did that day, but there was chicken etc, too.

The trip out to DZ Sicily was rainy and we thought the drop was off. The army said it was on and it was. They demonstrated marginal weather equipment for us. The men and heavy equipment literally rained down through the clouds. The assistant division commander jumped and gave us a little speech after being jeeped to the stands. There were quite a few buttons popping when he told us that we had set the standards for todays paratrooper.

The trip to Mackall was made on a brighter,shiny day. We toured the Special Forces area and had a pork and chicken Bar-B Que at lake side. We passed Scottys on the way back to town. There was some reminiscing about how the M P's used to clear it by throwing a smoke grenade through the window.

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The dinner dance brought out the brass from Bragg. They were our guests. We had a splendid, 508th Color Guard post the colors. The 82nd Chorus entertained and brought the house down. Mickey Nichols of B. Co was seen double timing to a two step at the end of their column as they exited. Roy Lindquist our regimental commander gave the keynote address. He recalled the forming of the Regiment. Its training. It's days of action. How in post war years in Germany a German parachute battalion commander had told him that he had faced the 508th at Nijmegen and had never faced better and tougher troops before. He recalled our youth, glory and pride. A lot of late comers showed for this event and they were joyously welcomed.

The memorial luncheon on Sunday saw everyone gathered for the last time this year. The colors were posted, the memorial candles were lit to the roll of a drum, and taps were sounded. There wasn't a dry eye in the room.

Father (Col) Ketchersid, 18th Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg Chaplain delivered the eulogy. He spoke of and praised those who did not return home. To quote only one sentence. "Our way of life, our national heritage, is possible only because those whom we honor today, and others like them, were willing to give of themselves." It was a moving address and one to be remembered for a long time.

After luncheon was served, O B made announcements and read some telegrams and cards. Bud Warnecke then ordered the Color Guard to retire the Colors and declared the reunion adjourned.

Thank you Jim Smith and all you other Fayetteville 508ers for an unforgetable experience.

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SIGHTINGS AND SUCH

Len Funk, C. Co made the reunion. No one was more happy than our CMH winner. He even sat at the head table!

Fran Pletsch, E.Co, must have been in the elevator with me a dozen times. He's a real goer!

Saw Ed Wodowski, A Co, with a bottle of clear. He must have a connection in the hills somewhere.

Had a nice quick visit with Jim Able, D Co, and his wife while in the chow line. He attended a family reunion in Tennessee and then came on to Fayetteville.

Neal Beaver, H and Hq3rd, attended from Grand Marais, Mich. on Lake Superior. He says its cold up there already.

Tom Shanley, Hq 2nd, jogged every morning and looks great.

Zeke Zuccala, Med 3rd & C, was an unofficial greeter. When I saw him, he was the friendliest man at the OP.

John Klein, B Co, showed. He has 10 years in Special forces with 2 turns in Nam behind him.

Bob Richards, A Co, showed with his wife and young son. His 10-12 year old son ate up the color guard and 82nd chorus performances. Bob says we should consider his Johns Island, S.C. tourist area for a convention. Plenty of accommodations and nice weather. He and Mary raise quarter horses.

1977 Reunion Attendance

H+H-10		Hq2nd -	4
Sv Co-5		D -	6
Med Det-	9	E -	13
Hq1st-	25	F -	8
A -	23	Hq 3rd-	7
B -	26	G -	11
C -	31	H -	10
		I -	8
Total WWII 508ers =			196

The official total for the reunion was 350. Many men brought their wives, and some had children of quite a wide age spread. A few of our members had sons in the Division and they attended the dinner dance. The unofficial counts are slightly higher because some people came in quite late the last day, after the talley had been made.

1978 New-Old Officers Elected

At the request of the membership at the regular business meeting, the present officers were retained for another year. There were some minor shifting of titles which led to the following arrangement:

Chairman----O.B. Hill
President---Jack Schlegal
Vice. Pres.-Dave Thomas
Treasurer---Jim Smith
Secretary---Jim Allardyce

Everyone was reminded by O.B. to think seriously about candidates for next year so that we may get some movement of new blood and ideas into these offices.

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DENVER AND EUROPE 1978
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Denver 1978 Reunion Site

Denver was selected as the 1978 reunion site by the vote of the membership. Also contending was New York City and the idea of mini-reunions throughout the U.S.

Denver was overwhelmingly approved. The dates are tentatively set for Sept 1-4. The details are being worked out by Denver and LA committees. The next news letter will have complete information.

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Chef Du Pont

The project is well underway. The financing is more than adequate thanks to Rich Zalmanowski, C Co.

Dave Thomas reports that the Memorial Park is to be the size of a football field. It is located on the Merderet River, across the road from the present Memorial Column. It will have a parking area, with a walkway to the river. The bank of the river will be paved for fishing. There will be a covered picnic area, rest rooms and a childrens play area. Landscaping with grass, trees, and shrubs will be completed in Nov. '77. Dedication will be June 4, 1978

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1978 European Trip And Chef Du Pont Memorial Dedication

This trip will put us in Chef Du Pont on June 4 and St. Mere Eglise on June 6. The tour committee is working with various travel and airline companies on an itinerary that would include Nottingham, Chef Du Pont, St. Mere Eglise, Nijmegen, Basse Bodeux and Vielsam. These places are a bit off the general tour routes so our planning is taking some extra time.

We will put out a special flyer with all the details of the tour as soon as the plans are complete.

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More Reunion Sightings

Joe Metar, G Co, was there with his new bride. Dorothy is sure a lot prettier than you Joe.

Rose Mahan, Dot Smith, Nan Wodowski, Sally Merritt, and Anne Allardyce did yeoman service at the registration desks. Lucky guys to have wives like that. Thanks girls.

How about Jim Mooney's son, I Co. He pushed his Dad all over in that wheelchair. Everyone was fascinated by such devotion. You're both good men.

The Deacon was here again. Don Pearsall, E. Co, garbed himself in WW II uniform and wowed everyone.

Ed Boccafolgi, B Co had wine for his gang at the dinner dance. When you have Transamerica Wine Co. for your own, What else.

Len Sacharoff, Hq 3rd, was asking about Aronis, B Co. He helped you out of a tight spot once Greek.

Henry Luhrman, Hq 1st, was wheeling all over the place. Who had more fun?

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Static Line

Subscribe to Static Line-the "Lifeline" of the Airborne. Its a great monthly paper put out by professionals. It carries all airborne news and includeds 508th news from O.B. Hill every month. It costs only $12.00 a year.

Write-Static Line
Box 87518
College Park, Ga.30337

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Gus Leegsma wants his friends to know he is in U.S.A. for six months. His adiress is 23 Centershore Rd.(25A),Centerport,L.I. N.Y. 11721

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Early Bird Dues

A great number of the guys at the reunion paid their 1978 dues on the spot. Anyone else so inclined can do so by sending $5.00 - or more- to our treasurer

Jim Smith, 1403 Valencia Drive
Fayetteville, N.C. 28303

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Try the Burris Method

Ralph Burris has a good idea for finding those missing from our roster. He is making an organizational chart of F Co as he recalls it. This is down into platoon and squad detail. He will fill in the names of everyone he can remember in their proper places. The chart will then be circulated to all the F Co men on our mailing list for them to add names they can remember. The idea is that one name recalls another. Good thinking Ralph and good luck.

* * * *

Our Roster Grows

July 1975---- 220 men
July 1976---- 400 men
Sept.1977---- 520 men

If you have addresses,send them to me. Include your old buddies in the action.

I have copies of the address master listing as of July 15,1977. Anyone wanting a copy let me know.

Jim Allardyce

Jim Allardyce
Secretary
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