

Charleston, South Carolina

November 2016

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State of South Carolina
Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the people of South Carolina, I am pleased to welcome the Family and Friends of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association to Charleston as you gather for your 10th Anniversary Reunion.

We are thrilled to host such a distinguished group of heroes and the Association members dedicated to preserving and communicating their history. By choosing a life of honor, duty, and sacrifice, Veteran and Active Duty 508th Paratroopers have been instrumental in America's efforts to defeat tyranny, secure liberty for people around the world, and preserve the freedoms we hold so dear. They continue to inspire young men and women through their choice of service above self, and their legacy will be a source of strength for generations to come.

Michael and I wish you all the best for a wonderful reunion. We hope you enjoy the warm hospitality, natural beauty, and cultural attractions of the Holy City and that you will visit again soon. God bless.

My very best,

Nikki R. Haley

NRH/ld

Welcome to the 10th Anniversary Reunion of the *Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association*!

I'd like to personally *Welcome* each of you to Charleston! It's an exciting time for the *Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association*, as we continue to grow and adapt to our ever-evolving membership. We are most proud of where we are today and where we are headed!

Our Association strives to Preserve, Honor and Educate others on the history and legacy of the 508th Paratroopers, and we are steadfastly committed to ***Preserving the Legacy*** of our 508th Veterans, past and present. Our Association Membership has truly come together as never before to honor *Our Paratroopers*. Such Paratroopers come from all walks of life, but they share several fundamental qualities; they possess courage, pride, determination, selflessness, dedication to duty and integrity – all attributes needed to serve a cause larger than one's self. They rose to a Nation's call because they wanted to protect a Nation which has given them, and all of us, so much.

A lot of effort has been made to ensure your trip to Charleston is an exciting, memorable and rewarding experience. Your presence here is a tribute to the enduring love, legacy and heartfelt admiration we all feel when we honor something greater than ourselves, and is just one small spark in the flame of pride that burns in the heart of a 508th Paratrooper!

Thank you so much for being here as we continue our quest of ***Preserving the Legacy***.

God bless your families and you, God bless our troops, and God bless America.

Fondly,

Donna Palmer
President



Schedule of Events

Wednesday, November 2

1:30 PM	Registration & Hospitality Suite Open
5:00 PM	Harbor Dinner Cruise - Optional

Thursday, November 3

8:30 AM	Welcome Breakfast
10:30 AM	Vans Depart for Patriots Point USS Yorktown Tour Medal of Honor Museum
12:30 PM	Lunch (on your own)
2:30 PM	Fort Sumter Tour

Friday, November 4

9:00 AM	Board of Directors Meeting
10:30 AM	General Membership Meeting
2:00 PM	Depart for The Citadel
2:30 PM	Citadel Cadet Tour
5:30 PM	Citadel Twilight Parade

Saturday, November 5

9:30 AM	Oral History Video Session
11:00 AM	Veterans Forum & Panel Discussion
12:30 PM	Afternoon Elective Excursions • Hunley Museum • Historic Downtown Charleston • Tanger Outlet Mall
7:00 PM	Banquet
10:00 PM	Raffle & Hospitality Room Socializing

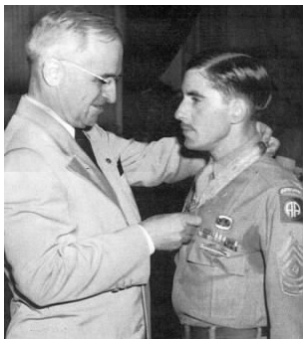
PRESERVING THE LEGACY

- 508th PIR Association -
- Family and Friends -
508
1942 - Present





MEDAL OF HONOR



5 September 1945. The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to First Sergeant Leonard A. Funk, Jr. (ASN: 33070198), United States Army, for gallant, intrepid actions against the enemy on 29 January 1944, while serving with Company C, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, in action at Hozheim, Belgium. After advancing 15 miles in a driving snowstorm, the American force prepared to attack through waist-deep drifts. The company executive officer became a casualty, and 1st Sergeant Funk immediately assumed his duties, forming headquarters soldiers into a combat unit for an assault in the face of direct artillery shelling and harassing fire from the right flank. Under his skillful and courageous leadership, this miscellaneous group and the 3d Platoon attacked 15 houses, cleared them, and took 30 prisoners without suffering a casualty. The fierce drive of Company C quickly overran Holzheim, netting some 80 prisoners, who were placed under a 4-man guard, all that could be spared, while the rest of the under-strength unit went about mopping up isolated points of resistance. An enemy patrol, by means of a ruse, succeeded in capturing the guards and freeing the prisoners, and had begun preparations to attack Company C from the rear when 1st Sergeant Funk walked around the building and into their midst. He was ordered to surrender by a German officer who pushed a machine pistol into his stomach. Although overwhelmingly outnumbered and facing almost certain death, 1st Sergeant Funk, pretending to comply with the order, began slowly to unsling his submachine gun from his shoulder and then, with lightning motion, brought the muzzle into line and riddled the German officer. He turned upon the other Germans, firing and shouting to the other Americans to seize the enemy's weapons. In the ensuing fight, 21 Germans were killed, many wounded, and the remainder captured. 1st Sergeant Funk's bold action and heroic disregard for his own safety were directly responsible for the recapture of a vastly superior enemy force, which, if allowed to remain free, could have taken the widespread units of Company C by surprise and endangered the entire attack plan.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

22 January 1945. The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting First Sergeant Leonard A. Funk, Jr. (ASN: 33070198), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy while serving with Company C, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, on 18 September 1944 in Holland. With great courage, intrepidity, and on his own initiative, Sergeant Funk led a three-men patrol against a German flak battery of three 20-mm guns which were firing on American gliders then circling to land. He drove off all enemy security around the guns and led an assault which killed approximately twenty members of the crews and inflicted other casualties. The flak guns were silenced before effective fire could be placed upon the aircraft, due to the courageous and heroic actions of Sergeant Funk. The courageous action of Sergeant Funk contributed, in large part, to the prompt seizure of his company objective, and assisted in driving the enemy from the landing zone. His initiative, outstanding bravery, and strong personal leadership, despite overwhelming enemy superiority in both numbers and firepower, enabled him to render a distinguished service in the destruction of enemy resistance. First Sergeant Funk’s intrepid actions, personal bravery and zealous devotion to duty exemplify the highest traditions of the Army of the United States and reflect great credit upon himself, the 82nd Airborne Division, and the United States Army.



Airborne Creed

I AM AN AIRBORNE TROOPER! A PARATROOPER!
I JUMP BY PARACHUTE FROM ANY PLANE IN FLIGHT.
I VOLUNTEERED TO DO IT, KNOWING WELL THE HAZARDS OF MY CHOICE.
I SERVE IN A MIGHTY AIRBORNE FORCE–FAMED FOR DEEDS IN WAR
–RENOWNED FOR READINESS IN PEACE. IT IS MY PLEDGE
TO UPHOLD ITS HONOR AND PRESTIGE IN ALL I AM–IN ALL I DO.
I AM AN ELITE TROOPER–A SKY TROOPER–A SHOCK TROOPER
–A SPEARHEAD TROOPER. I BLAZE THE WAY TO FAR-FLUNG GOALS
–BEHIND, BEFORE, ABOVE THE FOE'S FRONT LINE.
I KNOW THAT I MAY HAVE TO FIGHT WITHOUT SUPPORT
FOR DAYS ON END. THEREFORE, I KEEP MIND AND BODY ALWAYS FIT
TO DO MY PART IN ANY AIRBORNE TASK.
I AM SELF-RELIANT AND UNAFRAID. I SHOOT TRUE,
AND MARCH FAST AND FAR. I FIGHT HARD AND EXCEL
IN EVERY ART AND ARTIFICE OF WAR.
I NEVER FAIL A FELLOW TROOPER. I CHERISH AS A SACRED TRUST
THE LIVES OF MEN WITH WHOM I SERVE. LEADERS HAVE MY FULLEST
LOYALTY, AND THOSE I LEAD NEVER FIND ME LACKING.
I HAVE PRIDE IN THE AIRBORNE! I NEVER LET IT DOWN!
IN PEACE, I DO NOT SHRINK THE DULLEST OF DUTY NOT PROTEST
THE TOUGHEST TRAINING. MY WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT
ARE ALWAYS COMBAT READY. I AM NEAT OF DRESS
–MILITARY IN COURTESY–PROPER IN CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR.
IN BATTLE, I FEAR NO FOE'S ABILITY, NOR UNDER-ESTIMATE HIS PROWESS,
POWER AND GUILE. I FIGHT HIM WITH ALL MY MIGHT AND SKILLS
–EVER ALERT TO EVADE CAPTURE OR ESCAPE A TRAP.
I NEVER SURRENDER, THOUGH I BE THE LAST.
MY GOAL IN PEACE OR WAR IS TO SUCCEED IN ANY MISSION
OF THE DAY–OR DIE, IF NEEDS BE, IN THE TRY.
I BELONG TO A PROUD AND GLORIOUS TEAM–
THE AIRBORNE, THE ARMY, MY COUNTRY.
I AM ITS CHOSEN PRIDE TO FIGHT WHERE OTHERS MAY NOT GO
–TO SERVE THEM WELL UNTIL THE FINAL VICTORY.
I AM THE TROOPER OF THE SKY!
I AM MY NATION'S BEST! IN PEACE AND WAR I NEVER FAIL.
ANYWHERE, ANYTIME, IN ANYTHING–I AM AIRBORNE!

Airborne All the Way! – Ellen Peters



IN MEMORY OF
GERARD A. RUDDY

(shown here as SSgt, 501st PIR)

One of America's First Paratroopers

501st Paratroop Bn. in 1940-1941
503rd Bn. in 1942
504th and 502nd Bn.s in 1942, commissioned before joining the 508th PIR

KIA Normandy, France, 6 June 1944
As Captain and Commander of Hq 1st, 508th PIR

Rest in Peace

Dennis Ruddy (nephew)
Dick O'Donnell (cousin)

















In Memory of CPL STEVEN R. KOCH, D Co, 1-508th, 4th BCT

KIA March 3, 2008 in the Sabari District of Afghanistan
Operation Enduring Freedom

Ellen Peters

THE
BENAVIDEZ-PATTERSON "ALL AIRBORNE" CHAPTER





SALUTES THE...

FAMILY & FRIENDS OF THE 508TH P.I.R.

AND THE



FAMILY & FRIENDS OF THE 505TH R.C.T.

AND WISHES THEM ALL,
AN EXCITING, FUN FILLED, FANTASTIC,

10TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION!

The Hamilton Family

In Remembrance of



Edwin Hamilton
82nd Airborne, 508th PIR
H-Company



Love & Miss You Grandpa! Airborne All the Way!

Wanda, Bill, LaNell, Heather, Rachel, Alex & Amanda

Remembering Our Heroes

MAJOR WALTER HENRY SILVER
(1917-2002)

Normandy · Holland · Ardennes

50-Year Career with Standard Oil of Louisiana (Today's Exxon-Mobil)















A Big Salute to Veterans, Active Duty and the Association!

Jan Silver, Daughter Karen Holton, and Granddaughters Karie and Melanie



ROBERT E. CHISOLM

Charter Member
Benavidez-Patterson "All Airborne" Chapter
El Paso, Texas









WORLD WAR II - KOREA - VIETNAM

CONGRATULATIONS...

Family & Friends of the
508th Parachute Infantry Regiment



and



Family & Friends of the
505th Regimental Combat Team

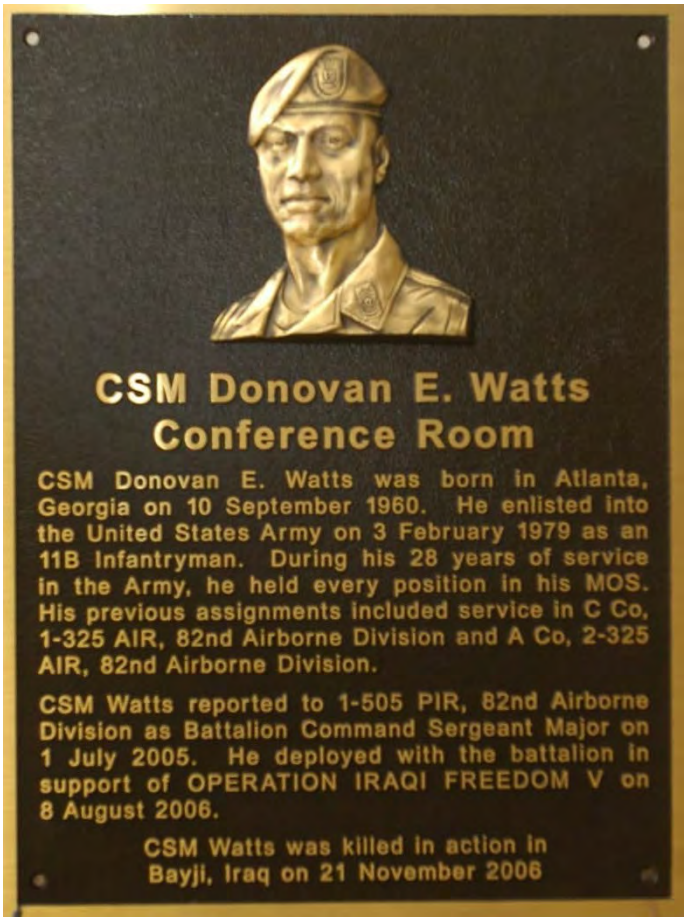
ON YOUR 10th ANNIVERSARY REUNION!

AIRBORNE



ALL THE WAY!

In Memory of CSM DONOVAN E. WATTS









Ellen Peters

Saluting Our Heroes

CSM (Ret) KENNETH "ROCK" MERRITT

Normandy · Holland · Ardennes

U.S. ARMY
1942-1977

















"Think of…Rock Merritt, who saw a recruitment poster asking him if he was man enough to be a paratrooper so he signed up on the spot. That decision landed him here on D-Day with the 508th Regiment, the unit that would suffer heavy casualties. Seventy years later, it's said that all across Fort Bragg, they know Rock. Not just for his exploits on D-Day or his thirty-five years in the Army, but because ninety-one-year-old Rock Merritt still spends his time speaking to the young men and women of today's Army. And still bleeds olive drab green for his 82nd Airborne."

U.S. President Barak Obama – Normandy American Cemetery, 06 June 2014

Rock's Children: Kenny, Jerry and Dianna

Remembering Our Heroes

“Greater love hath no man than he who lays down his life for his friends.”





La Heroullerie Normandy D-Day Bed and Breakfast

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www.dday-experiencebedandbreakfast.com

Dale Booth Normandy Tours

www.dboothnormandytours.com



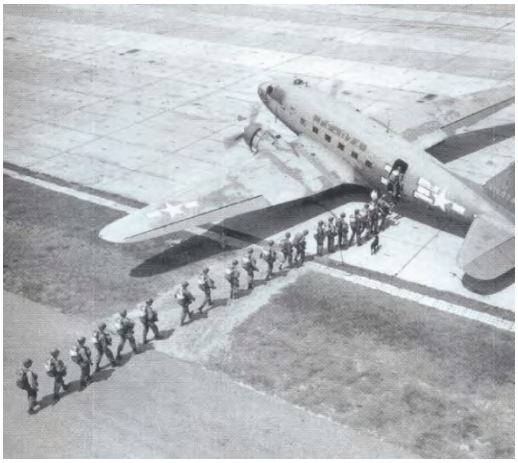






Saluting All Generations of 508th Paratroopers!







World War II

Korea Era

NATO Support

Dominican Republic

Grenada

Panama

Vietnam

Iraq

Afghanistan









Preserving the Legacy

THANK YOU LIFETIME MEMBERS!

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Lois and Bill Andrews · Robert E. Chisolm · Charmaine and Barry Deere · Monica and Jim Farrell
Gene Garren · LaNell and Bill Hamilton · Brodie Hand · Chris Harris · CPT Paul Kearney
CSM Wayne Lawrence · Dr. Alex Mitchell · Michael Mitchell · Tsugi and Dick O'Donnell
Donna and Troy Palmer · Jill and LTC Justin Reese · Alyson and MAJ Andrew Rhodes
Ellen Peters · Alicia and CPT Nathan Roubicek · MAJ Adam Scher · SFC Douglas Schuler
Jan Silver · Bob Speers · Norb Studelska · Charlyne and Warren Wilt

PATRONS

Barbara Asher · Chris Brown · Susan and Lars de Heus · Valorie and CAPT (USN) Shane Harris
Linda and Randy Lewellen · Cecilia and Patrick Russell · Joan Shanley · Linda and Tom Stumpner

SUPPORTERS

Suzanne and Charles Butler · Francis B. Call · Sam Clark · Charlene Confrey
Annie and CPT Kyle Frazer · Nancy Gooding · Karen Holton · Patricia Laakso · Eddy Lamberty
Emmanuel Lepoittevin · Kenneth "Rock" Merritt · Julia Morris · Charlie Ortega
Carl Porter · Dominique Potier · Joe Schwann · Peggy and Ray Younes

PRESERVING THE LEGACY

508th PIR Riggers

Prior to D-Day Normandy Jump



Standing: CWO Roy Barger, Tech Sgt John Kersh (POW), Cecil Neal (POW), T K "Det" Detwiler, Albert "Snapper" Pirtle, Edward "Pony" DuPont (POW & WIA), Elmer Martell (POW), Donald Hansen (WIA), Howard "Randy" Ranbauer (KIA), Lawrence "Larry" Snovak (KIA), Harry Gerheim, Robert "Bob" Watts (POW & WIA), and 1st Sgt Lindale "Button Nose" Keating (POW).

Kneeling: Tech Sgt Henry "Hank" Schillinger (POW), James "Jimmy" Hall (KIA), Carl H Porter (POW & WIA), Thomas "Tommy" Cross (KIA), Earl Cornwall, and Frank "Dutch" Dasch (POW & WIA).

Note: Pat Farrel jumped but was not in this photo. Only 3 of 10 POWs remained captured to the end of the War.

http://www.508pir.org/voices/p/porter_ch.htm for the Escape Stories of Schillinger, Watts and Porter.

http://508pir.org/voices/k/kersh_jd.htm for John Kersh's Escape Story.

http://508pir.org/voices/m/martell_ee.htm for Elmer Martell's POW Story.

508th PIR Normandy Riggers

The twenty 508th PIR Riggers who jumped into Normandy, France, in the early morning hours of D-Day, June 6, 1944, may well have been a microcosm of the chaos that briefly ensued when the 82nd and 101st Airborne troops were scattered widely (and wildly) over the Cotentin Peninsula. The drop also demonstrated the resilience, ingenuity and courage of the American Paratrooper - ***traits properly attributed to our airborne brethren to this day.***

When the two C-47s, carrying 20 Riggers and 16 other Paratroopers, dropped our Sticks, we were north of Valognes, roughly 20 miles from the intended Drop Zone. Worse still, according to Phil Nordyke in his book "Put Us Down In Hell", we landed "…almost on top of the headquarters of Battalion 1, Grenadier Regiment 1058, 91st Luftlande Division of Le Haut Gelay". I can personally attest to the German presence because, after disengaging from a tree landing, I was met by a harsh "Hande Hoch" and a rifle and two burp guns pointed at my belly.

It is a testament to the courage and ingenuity of the American Troopers that, of those captured (some not yet out of their parachute harnesses), two were wounded, two made a daring escape, and three engineered a breakout so that a group of 13 paratroopers and 4 glidermen could turn the tables on their captors. We then marched the Germans to Utah Beach thanks to the 4th Division's successful penetration and establishment of a presence on/at the beach. Two more days and nights, two more German prisoners, a large can of stewed tomatoes, and an uncertain scrabble through a dangerous countryside, and we finally found "our guys" near Chef du Pont. We weren't "home free" by any means...but we were home as far as we were concerned.

Thanks to All Veterans, Active Duty and the Association!

Carl H. Porter and Family

In Memory of Pvt John Daum, Co B





Gayle Kronberger
Tom Stumpner

PVT MARTIN J. TEAHAN - KIA JUNE 23, 1944
72 Years Later His Rifle was Found



French Colonel Patrick Collet (Left) contacted the Farrell family and generously offered to return the rifle to Martin's nephew, Jim Farrell, during a June 2016 D-Day ceremony in Normandy.



Jim and Monica Farrell, HollyAnne and General Mark A. Milley at Martin Teahan's gravesite at the Normandy American Cemetery.

Thank You, General Milley, for Bringing it Home!

Amis des **V**étérans **A**méricains
– Friends of American Veterans –
www.avanormandy.org

This French association is one of the oldest thriving of its kind founded by Mme Simone Renaud, wife of wartime mayor, Alexander Renaud.

Honoring and Hosting our American Liberators Yesterday, Today and Always We Will Never Forget !

Hosting and helping veterans returning to the Normandy battle sites has always been a priority for the Association. Veterans and families of American WWII soldiers returning to the area feel at home in Sainte-Mère-Eglise thanks to the gratitude and warmth displayed by local residents.

Throughout the years, the AVA also pays tribute to our heroes with numerous ceremonies, plaques and monuments. In the 1970s, the AVA Association created what has now become the historical memorial site for paratroopers at La Fière. Monuments and plaques honor the regiments and soldiers of the 82nd Airborne. La Fière also hosts the commemorative military parachute jump and its official ceremony every year during the D-Day commemorations.



La Fière Memorial Site with its emblematic Iron Mike statue.



82nd & 101st ABN Memorial Service in the Sainte-Mère-Eglise historical church.



Yellow Parachute Tribute at La Fiere for the 72nd Anniversary and the passing of the Tour de France.

The AVA is also about promoting and continuing the French-American friendship that is so strong between the people of Normandy and the US. The Liberty Banquet, with a large international attendance, is one of these events which celebrates and honors this friendship.



The Liberty Banquet with over 900 international guests.



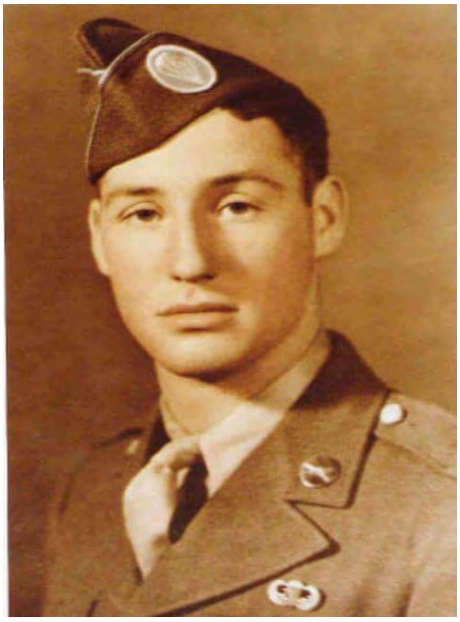
The Allied Paratrooper Monument at the Sainte-Mère-Eglise town square. Inaugurated for the 70th D-Day Anniversary.

Interested in joining or learning more about our Association ?
Please visit **www.avanormandy.org**

SSG James “Buck” Hutto

508 PIR, Co I (1942-1945)

Normandy · Holland · Belgium





We Love You, Papaw!

The Hutto Family

THANK YOU WWII VETS

for accepting your

"Rendezvous with Destiny"

JOHN CEBALLOS

HHC, 2D BDE, 101st Airborne Division

AIRBORNE MUSEUM
SAINTE MÈRE ÉGLISE



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www.airborne-museum.org

Normandy Memorial Brick Program

FOR VETERANS OF THE WWII EUROPEAN CAMPAIGN

Bricks will be permanently installed at the Airborne Museum to form the WWII Veteran Memorial Walkway.

To purchase a Brick, please visit www.airborne-museum.org

The Reagan Legacy Foundation

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

REAGAN LEGACY FOUNDATION



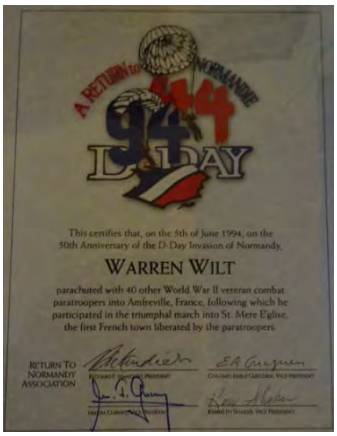
Saluting Our Heroes

WARREN WILT – 508th PIR Co H

Normandy · Ardennes









1st Lt. Russell C. Wilde and H Co. men take a break in Carquebut le Port, France. Other men are (left to right?) Ray Brown, Warren S. McDonald, Lewis W. Latimer, Lee Atherton, Don Jakeway, Alfred J. "Fred" Lavesque and Warren Wilt (far left)















Brad, Penny, Erica, and Zachary Wilt

In Loving Memory of Our Dad & Hero

Larry Palmer

Headquarters Company 1st Battalion
Light Machine Gun Section

Normandy, Holland, Ardennes



Thank You

Family & Friends of the 508th PIR Association
for Preserving the Legacy!

The Palmer Family

WE WILL NEVER FORGET

James Allen Childs
508th PIR Co C
1913-1944



Normandy Jump
Holland Jump
KIA 18 September 1944
Bronze Star / Purple Heart

Lewis Hart Childs
517th PIR Reg HQ
1915-1963



Italy June/July 1944
Southern France Jump
Ardennes and Germany
Bronze Star / Purple Heart







508th PIR Monument
Groesbeek, Holland
DZ/LZ T - Wylerbaan
Operation Market Garden



517th PIR Monument
Manhay, Belgium
"Battle of the Bulge"



Saluting and Thanking the Association, 508th Veterans & Active Duty 508th

The Alice Childs Harris Family

National Liberation Museum

1944 - 1945

Live through the pre-WWII period. Experience the occupation. Celebrate the liberation. Witness the rebuilding of the Netherlands & Europe post-war.

- Operation Market Garden Model
- Air-Raid Shelter and Liberation Street
- Waal River Crossing Diorama



- Operation Veritable: Rhineland Offensive
- Honorary Dome with Roll of Honor
- Wall of Human Rights









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Saluting Our Heroes

DON JAKEWAY – 508th PIR Co H

Normandy · Holland · Ardennes













The Jakeway Family

The Family and Friends of the 508th PIR Association wish to thank the following **Ropes & Gray** attorneys for their assistance:

- **Bill Mone**
- **Jessica Alfano**
- **Courtney Gesualdi**
- **Robert Lazar**
- **Denise Sohn**

ROPES & GRAY

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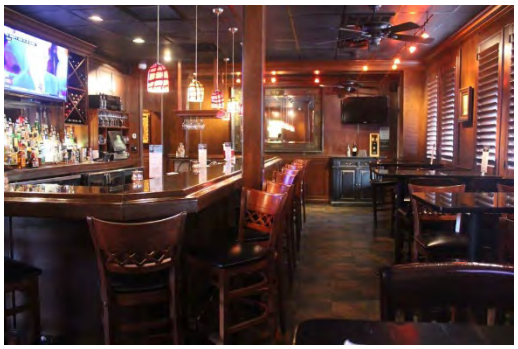
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Honoring and Welcoming Veterans and Active Duty!

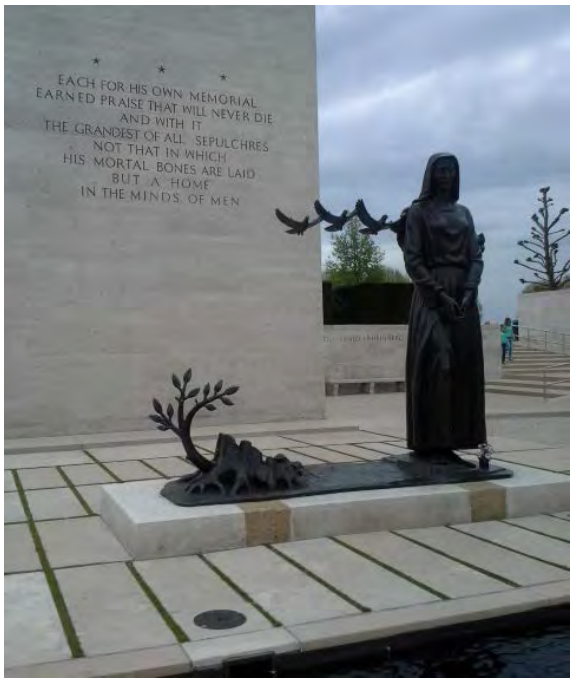
We Never Forget our American Liberators and Friends











Foundation for Adopting Graves
American Cemetery Margraten
PO Box 22
6269 ZG Margraten
The Netherlands

www.adoptiegraven-margraten.nl


PRESERVING THE LEGACY
82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION
UNITED STATES ARMY
AIRBORNE
AA