



Major Duke Boswell Ret.

WWII hero celebrates D-Day at Normandy



Here is one article about Duke Boswell I saw online in the local Colorado Springs paper. He is still sleeping in after a final night of celebrating with the active duty AIRBORNE troops at the world famous STOP BAR. It has been a very busy 4 days- more later after we return from Paris tomorrow. Continuing the Mission-Charlie Mike.

Barry OShea

505th RCT WWII UNITS

****505 PIR * 456PFA * B-307ENG * 307MEDICS * 80AA****

One thing kept Boswell going and has spurred his return to France in 2004 and on Saturday: the grateful people his unit sacrificed to liberate.

Then and now, the people of France treat Boswell and other D-Day veterans as heroes.

"If we hadn't been there, they would have been out of luck," Boswell said.

Boswell went on from Sainte-Mère-Église to jump into Holland. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He was out of the Army briefly after the war, but was soon back in uniform, this time as an officer.

But that lieutenant's bar wasn't as lucky as his sergeant's stripes.

He was seriously wounded by mortar fire in the early days of the Korean War.

The mortar wounds took Boswell out of combat jobs, but not out of the Army. He retired from Fort Carson as a major in 1963 before starting a new life as a D-11 school teacher.

While his group will go down in history as the "Greatest Generation," Boswell says the young people in uniform today are no different than the soldiers who drifted through gunfire into Sainte-Mère-Église. "I know they feel the same way we did," he said.



June 6, 2009 - 7:28 PM

TOM ROEDER

The Gazette

Henry "Duke" Boswell planned to drive to Normandy this time.

Sixty-five years after the Colorado Springs Army retiree jumped from the door of a C-47 transport and floated to the village of Sainte-Mère-Église, Boswell was back in France Saturday to mark the anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

Another big difference for Boswell: This time his presence was welcomed.

"They were shooting at us as we were coming down," he remembered of his first trip to the city as part of an early morning wave of paratroopers that landed hours before the massive amphibious assault at Normandy.

The bad luck of Boswell's unit has gone down in history.

The official records of the 3rd Battalion of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment include his account.

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"There was a fire in a building, and all the German soldiers in the town had come back out to guard the bucket brigade," he said.

The job of the parachutists was to pin down Germans who would otherwise be sent to the allied beachhead and to seize key villages and road junctions to speed invasion forces.

It was the kind of job Boswell was accustomed to. The then-staff sergeant had jumped into combat on the island of Sicily and Salerno, Italy.

At Normandy he was assigned as a radioman, adding to the already heavy burden of rations, ammunition and weapons carried by paratroopers. The trim, 150-pound soldier was packing a 40-pound SCR-300 backpack radio, making his total burden equal his weight.

"They had to help me onto the plane," he recalled.

Boswell joined the Army in 1940, as war raged in Europe prior to America's entry and tensions in the Pacific soared toward the Pearl Harbor attack.

"The basic reason that most of the people I knew were in the Army was because they wanted to protect the people at home," Boswell said. "We didn't want the war to come to our shores, so we were willing to do whatever we have to do."

That included eyeball-to-eyeball combat. While Boswell suffered no serious injuries during the war, his unit suffered mightily.

"We started out with 146 men," he said. "When the war ended there were 13 left who hadn't been killed or wounded."

> > MAURICE RENAUD SPEECH IN HONOR OF
ROBERT MURPHY AND DON LASSEN

> > MONT ST. MICHEL, FRANCE

> > JUNE 4, 2009

> >

> > Dear Friends of the American Airborne Veterans,

> >

> > Exactly one year ago, we gathered in this extraordinary setting at the beautiful Mont St. Michel to honor with the medal of the French Senate, one of the true heroes of our liberation; Mr. Bob Murphy.

> > In spite of terminal cancer, he made a point of attending this ceremony with the same courage as when; at only seventeen years old, he volunteered with the paratroopers in 1943.

> > On D-Day, serving with the 505th Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division as a pathfinder, he landed one hour before his fellow airborne troopers, near Sainte Mere Eglise. His mission was to outline the drop zone.

> > Then he participated in the terrible battle at La Fiere Bridge which; was quoted as "the bloodiest small battle of the second World War." Suffering very heavy losses, his superior asked for authorization to withdraw; the officer in charge replied, without hesitation, "hold the position, there is No Better Place To Die."

> > No Better Place To Die later became the title of Bob's book. Wounded, Bob Murphy was shipped back to England and kept going with the 82nd until the end of the War. Amongst other decorations, he was honored in France with the Legion d'Honneur.

> > Back to Boston, Bob became a brilliant lawyer. However, his attachment to Normandy and in particular, to Sainte Mere Eglise, made him come back every year from 1963 until 2008.

> > Bob initiated the commemorative jumps and became a true idol every D-Day in Sainte Mere Eglise. He was also extremely helpful in the arrival of the C-47 plane donated to the Airborne Museum.

> > In spite of several family tragic events, Bob always succeeded to preserve an indefatigable optimism and courage.

> > Displaying similar optimism and courage, his friend, Don Lassen, who was from a poor family in Chicago, volunteered also in 1943 with the paratroopers. With the 505th Regiment, he took part in the liberation of Sainte Mere Eglise, then proceeded to the Battles in Holland and in the Bulge.

> > Back to civilian life, Don became the Founding Editor of the liaison publication for Airborne Veterans - The Static Line. Don was also the first to organize massive returns of veterans to Sainte Mere Eglise with the active collaboration of the volunteers of the AVA (Friends of the American Veterans), an association founded in the 1960's by my mother, Simone Renaud.

> > Bob Murphy and Don Lassen, two great examples of our liberators; they left us not long ago along with Colonel Bob Piper, Bill Tucker, and many others of their comrades in combat.

> > Their memory will always be with us, our duty is to remember them.. always remember that we owe them our freedom.

> > May the Archangel St. Michel, their protector, carry on his wings our departed friends to the paradise of the paratroopers.

> > God bless the American Airborne soldiers Thank you.

> > Maurice Renaud

Hello everyone. I am sure that your trip to Normandy was wonderful as was mine. Also for those of you that I missed seeing please accept my regrets. While I may not have had the opportunity to see you, you were in my thoughts.

I arrived home safe and sound on Saturday 13 June. Special thoughts also for all our great veterans of D-Day and WW-II who were present or otherwise on June 6.

Also great job to Leland Burns who jumped with the Liberty Jump Team and of course to the team as well.

Please keep Colonel Gordon Smith of the 507 PIR who took ill while in Normandy and to Chris Heisler of the 507 who was unable to attend due to health issues.

Finally my best to the people of Normandy who never fail to treat us as family while in Normandy.

It was a very great honor to have been able to attend the 65th Anniversary of D-Day.

Best always and God Bless. Gene Garren

I recently returned home from the trip of a lifetime.

It was to the Airborne Festival in Sainte Mere Eglise, Normandy, France, to mark the 65th Anniversary of D-Day invasion during World War II on June 6, 1944.

The special significance for me was that during D-Day my dad, Robert H. Dumke and his brother, Leonard C. Dumke, were members of the US Army's 82nd Airborne Division. They parachuted in before the invasion of the Normandy beaches as liberators of the French people.

Their job, along with their brother soldiers in the 82nd and 101st Airborne, was to take and hold the area near Sainte Mere Eglise so that the German Army could not advance troops and equipment to push our Allied troops back into the ocean.

Against terrible odds and the great loss of life, this goal was accomplished. They jumped into enemy fire, landed in the dark with weapons and equipment which weighed as much as they did and fought the enemy where they found him.

Many people have seen the "The Longest Day" -- the epic movie about the invasion with its all-star cast including John Wayne.

One of the most memorable real life incidents was the soldier played by Red Buttons whose parachute snagged on the steeple of a church in Sainte Mere Eglise.

He hung helplessly, pretending to be dead, but witnessing the death of other paratroopers shot by German soldiers.

That soldier, John Marvin Steele from Metropolis, Ill, was a friend of my Dad's. Later, when Dad organized a chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association in Ottawa, IL he named it the John Steele Chapter in honor of his friend.

Another friend of my Dad's was Leonard "Big Joe" Skolek of Ottawa. He returned to Normandy in 1969 at the same time as Dad and Mom for the 25th anniversary of D-Day.

While there, Leonard learned from his buddies he was supposed to receive a Bronze Star medal for valor. When he came home he wrote many letters and finally did receive the award. The Times newspaper wrote an article about him which was read on the Internet by Jean-Marie Lemoigne, who had been studying the battles of the 82nd Airborne near his home. He wrote a letter to Leonard which Leonard shared with me. I made contact with Jean-Marie and became friends while documenting Leonard's story.

One night I came home and there was a message on my answer machine from Michael Steele, of Texas.

"Katie, I think your Dad and my Uncle John Marvin were friends during WWII. Please call me."

Dad had once given an interview to the newspaper in Metropolis about John Steele and the 82nd Airborne. I happened to walk in, and Dad being hard of hearing handed me the phone to help. The newspaper later passed my contact information to Michael, and we became friends. Both Dad and John Steele had been members within the 82nd Airborne of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Michael introduced me to the Family and Friends of the 505th, which I quickly joined.

For the past three years, Jean-Marie Lemoigne, Michael Steele and the members of Family and Friends of the 505 have exchanged pictures of our loved ones and learned a lot about what they did and the sacrifices they made for freedom.

Growing up I did not fully comprehend what walking legends I was surrounded by. I thought everyone had a paratrooper for a Dad, I guess because many of his friends were paratroopers.

After my Dad passed away in 2001, I began to read everything I could get my hands on about his unit and WWII. I had all these bits of stories bouncing around in my head that I had to get into a semblance of order to reconcile it for myself.

Of course, I thought it would be wonderful to go and see where Dad had been to understand the stories he told me. When the 65th Anniversary of D-Day approached I was invited by Jean-Marie Lemoigne to visit and stay with his family. It nagged at me. I was concerned about traveling to France when I did not speak the language. I would be going alone on a nine-hour flight to stay with people I had only e-mailed and spoke with on the phone.

But, about two weeks out I decided to go and bought my plane ticket.

I felt I owed it to my Dad, my Uncle Leonard, and Leonard Skolek. I knew there would be other Airborne family there.

At the last minute, 82nd D-Day veterans Henry "Duke" Boswell, put out an SOS to Family and Friends of the 505. He had decided to come for the celebration and needed a place to stay. My family in France asked me if it was OK for him to stay with us. I knew Duke well and said I would sleep on the floor if they needed me to so that Duke would have a place.

The people of Sainte Mere Eglise Normandie France could not be better. There was an American flag on every house. And every place you looked there was the "All American" "AA" symbol of the 82nd. I was able to see many battle locations and the famous hedgerows, which caused our troopers so much trouble. I felt completely at home and with family.

While I was there, I attended many ceremonies which honored our great men and women, remembering the thousands who had given their life for freedom. I also met up with "all grown up" Army Ranger Jesse Navarro of Ottawa, IL who I remember taking to the zoo with my kids. His parents are Rick and Tina Navarro, and Carla Thompson. We had a nice dinner at the home of my host with Jesse and two of his friends, which is a tradition for the town people every year.

On June 6, at 1:30 in the morning, our group went to the famous Stop Bar and bought a beer. Then we walked over to the church in the town square where John Steele had hung that fateful day. We knelt on the steps of the church and said a prayer for my Dad, Uncle Leonard, John Steele, Leonard Skolek, and all of the men who had gone before them.

Then we toasted our beloved paratroopers with a beer and pledged there must be beer in heaven!

The next day, active duty troops from today's 82 Airborne and paratroopers from other countries did an exhibition jump about 3 miles outside of Sainte Mere Eglise. Many of these paratroopers carried photos of my Dad, my Uncle Leonard, and Leonard Skolek which I had given them. After a ceremony at Iron Mike, a statue dedicated to the American Paratrooper, they marched into town.

In each year prior, the veterans where invited to walk in the parade. This year, many simply could not make the walk. Proudly, I, along with his son Jamie Boswell, was able to escort 85-year-old "Duke" Boswell, a veteran of four combat jump veteran and recipient of the French Legion of Honor, in this parade.

We stepped off with the American flag in front of us and the 82nd Airborne behind us. Normally, Duke would be in a wheel chair due to injuries he received in Korea. But he wanted to walk, and I was proud to honor my father by walking by at his side.

As we walked, the crowds of French people cheered, blew kisses at us and flashed photographs. I had tears of joy, running down my face the whole way, and a smile as big as I could get.

I knew it would be hard for Duke to finish, and I asked him how he was doing. He said he was starting to feel it but he wanted to keep going. I said in my best jump master voice "You are doing fine trooper, almost there!" and he walked a little taller, completing the parade.

After the parade an active duty paratrooper came up to me and said "What an experience, I was doing everything I could to hold back the tears".

I gave him a big hug.

We had a wonderful dinner at the Sainte Mere Eglise open market provided by the town people, much fine wine was consumed. My old WWII paratrooper friends where like rock stars, graciously autographing everything from books to apparel for anyone who asked. Some of the paratroopers who had jumped with my photographs came and found me. They said it had been their honor to jump the photos, and that they would carry the photos with them on many more jumps in the future.

Of course, during all the proceedings, the soldier who was with me in memory was my Dad.

I miss every moment I ever had with my Dad. I am sure he knows I miss him. Sometimes he sends me a sign. He knows I listened to his many lessons. Especially, the one about how you can do anything you set your mind to do.

No, I am not a paratrooper. But I am a paratrooper's daughter who grew up Airborne! All the Way!

Katie Dumke Troccoli
815-228-2058 Mobile

Dear Ellen, I am making a reply to the story that came out by Bob Burns , our president. I have often wondered why that wiping out of the German Battalion was never mentioned and some of the other action by our Lieutenants, I want to thank him for his outstanding story , well written. I once asked my Lieutenant James Coyle how come we were so lucky in wiping out that Battalion of Germans with so few men, His answer, They were about ready to attack us and we beat them to it. they were gathered in close formation in a cart path with a row of trees and brush on both sides, this lane extended for some distance. I was lucky When we fought that Battalion of Germans I was brought a good supply of mortar ammunition by Tony Demy, saying ,here is some more shells for you. I could never have done the job I did with out them, My own men brought theirs to me and with it I was able to do a good job, some tried to escape the shelling by different ways and I would bring the mortar to bear on them. I can still see them trying to get away, running into each other, just a mass confusion. Ammunition gone I used my Tommy gun. By this time I had moved well into the German side and found myself among them as they were trying to give up it was one mass confusion. There were no leadership. The many we took prisoners, and the day before , the invasion day they were doing their best to kill us. I could never understand why so little was written about this action. And we had so few men, Our other Companies two Platoons were dropped elsewhere. I was given the record of being the best 60 mm mortar man in the division. I felt in control of this weapon and could make it do what I wanted, I had no dispute in that record for I did feel I could handle it.

We were given tests now and again and I always made expert, done in seconds. When I was wounded, my first Gunner took over, John Peruzzi and did a good job, he carried the Squad into the budge and what a fine job E Company did. I am proud of them. Not only E Company but the rest of the 505th and other outfits I always feel sorry I could not have been with them in the last days of the war. My last day were Holland where I jump mastered our plane into Holland and brought Lieutenant James Coyle's machine gun crews to him. He was a happy man to have his full Platoon back with him again. An 88 German shell ended my combat days. It is nice to read to day what a wonderful part the 505th played in World War Two. I am proud to have been part of it . I am at this time in life 98 years old God has been good to me. John Peruzzi has written a book and will be out soon, Why Me. I too wrote my story taking me three and a half years when my mind was still fresh , Time Out For Combat. It was my son, Junior that see to it was published. There are few around today of old E company. Lieutenant Bill Meddaugh, Turk Seeley, John Perozzi, and a few others including me. I know as time goes by more names will come to me. Thanks again for brining up some of the action we had when we all wondered , Was the Invasion a success, as I saw it the first night I never thought I would see day light again. My thoughts. How many can I take with me, I imagined a pile of them I had accounted for. They were there in numbers on the other side of a hedge row. With my mortar Squad on the other side , they didn't come through. With their yelling and holloring they tried to scare us away. They finally with drew and left us to their 88s and mortar fire , but mornig did come. Staff Sgt. Otis L Sampson Retired, E Company 505th 82nd Airborne. I married a girl from Whales that I met when I was wounded in Normandy and sent to Wales to patch me up. We have been married for 61 years, she has made me a good wife. We have been in this desert for many years and have seen it grow up from sand dunes to housings. The high mountains surrounds us.

Otis Sampson 98 yrs young

From: Deryk Wills
To: Don McKeage editor of the Panther.

Caption.

Daryle Whitfield a veteran of F Company, 505, holds the wreath he laid on the 505th Memorial Stone in the center of Quorn, Leicestershire in the memory of all the 505th men who died in WW2. Just in the background can be seen the White Horse Pub, the old 1944 watering hole for the 505. Daryle was on the Static Line tour that visited the village and campsite on 9th June after their visit to Normandy. With him on the tour was Barbara Gavin Fauntleroy, Donald Rutter, a 505 veteran and Annette Purcell, the editor of the Static Line. They were shown around by Deryk Wills and Rob Burrow, son of Roy Burrow of C Company who is a resident of Loughborough.



Taps

Arthur De Filippo	D Co	4-23-08
Stanley Kotlarz	D Co	1- -09

Our Condolences to the families and Friends of our Departed. May they rest in peace.

Many of our good comrades are suffering from many ailments. We offer you a Ray of sunshine; get well soon.

Please send all death notices to Don McKeage 973 Gladys St. SW Derby Lake Stantoon, Mi. 48888-9122

Subject: Howard Manoian

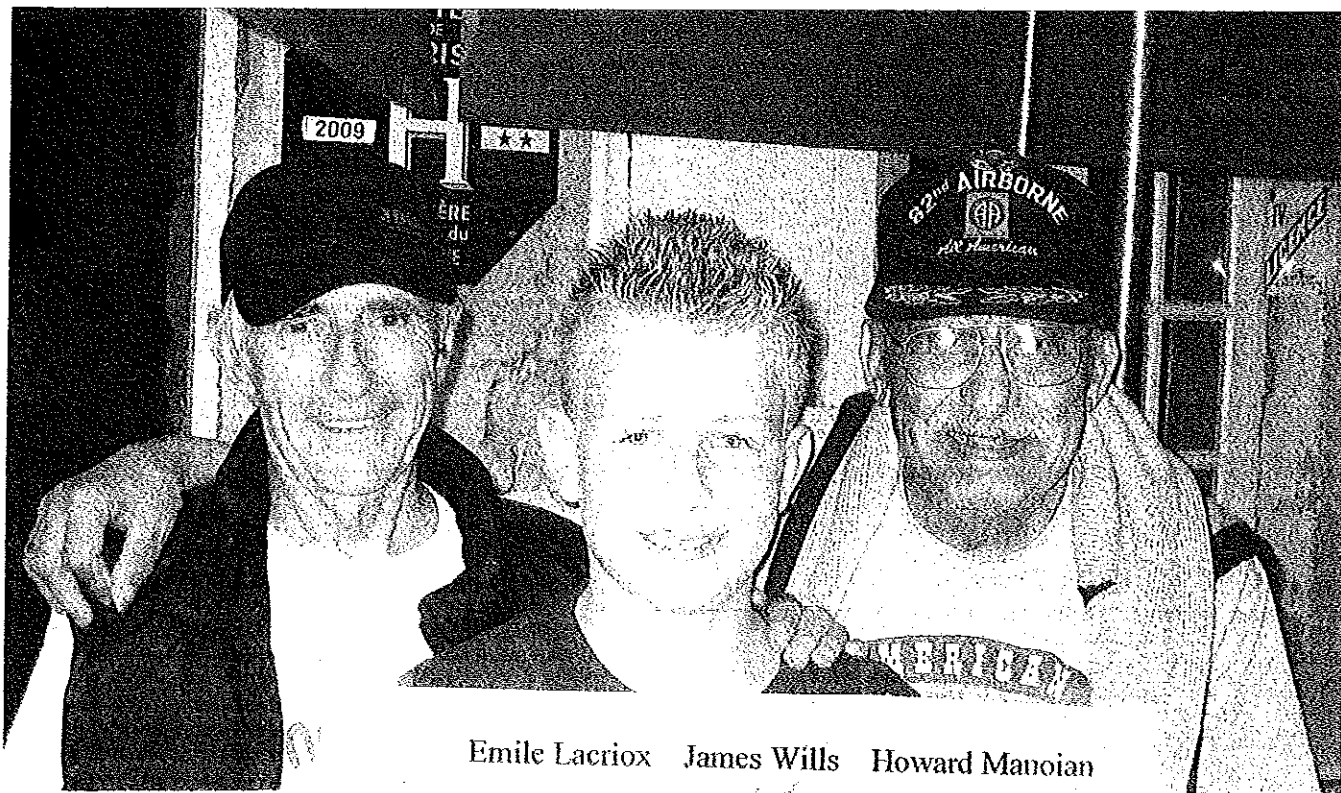
Dear friends and family,

This year's celebration holds many memories of newly made friends, friends that are family and comrades' that will always be family. On behalf of Howard we send a big hello. Unfortunately, we believe most of you present during the celebrations must have noticed the absence of Howard from many of the events. He wanted to attend but we were minimizing his activities due to health concerns.

On May 31, Howard suffered a stroke. He chose not to return to the US until after the celebration. He wanted to continue with the ceremonies and most importantly to him – visit with his dear friends. (A special thank you to all that stopped the Chateau Manoian, you lifted his spirits.)

On June 11, Howard returned to the states with us. This cut is normal stay in France three months. The morning after our return he visited the VA hospital in Washington DC which is where he is currently residing. He was admitted to the neurology unit and is undergoing much attention. Currently they are doing extensive tests to determine the cause of the TIA (stroke). The first series shows scar tissue in the brain. Additional, he has pneumonia, an infection, and an irregular heart beat that may be attributed to a valve issue. The VA is examining our dad and your friend with the utmost care. At this time we also know he will require rehab following the determinations of his more sever issues.

We welcome letters and emails which we will transport to him. We will keep all informed on his condition and stubbornness as he builds his strength and health.



Emile Lacroix James Wills Howard Manoian



David & James Wills With Army Troops

Subject: D-DAY HEROES

Dear Don: Back on June 5, I had a wonderful opportunity to speak to a Library audience near my hometown about the "D-Day Heroes Who Saved Utah Beach."

It took two hours, a bunch of WWII maps, some WWII photos and those taken by myself in Ste Mere Eglise and Lafiere to explain the pivotal role of the 505 Regimental Combat Team in the Normandy Invasion, June 6-7, 1944. It was especially interesting to me to have a veteran of the 53rd Troop Carrier Wing who made many flights on the C-47s and was responsible for the cargo on board. He mentioned that while many pilots were brave and did their level best, he noted two flights he was on where the pilot didn't give a damn about the paratroops or the cargo to be dropped and just wanted to hightail it out of the killing zones.

All too often, the public remembers only what it sees in the latest movies like "Saving Private Ryan" and "Band of Brothers." Those more advanced in age also remember Connie Ryan's "The Longest Day" where John Wayne played LTC Vandevort and Red Buttons played John Steele. The public learned a bit more about Gen Gavin and Pvt "Dutch" Schultz. But it saw precious little of the hard fought battles that followed the jumps and glider landings those fateful few hours that lasted until help arrived 36 hours later.

While many authors have chronicled, to one degree or another, the history that was made that day and the critical ones that followed, it is never redundant to recall the names and sacrifices they made every anniversary.

The tragedy which befell the F Company mortar squad that jumped directly over Ste Mere Eglise should always be memorialized, taking the young lives of LT Harold Cadish, SGT John Ray, PFC Charles Blankenship, PFC Alfred J. Van Holsbeck, PFC H.T. Bryant, Jr. and PVT Ladislaw Tlapa.

Americans owe a debt of gratitude to so many. Here are just some men and events that stand out above the rest:

THE MEN of A Company, 1st BN HQ, C Company and CO B 307 Engineers who made their way to the Lafiere Bridge and the German-defended Manoir under heavy fire and defended it against overwhelming odds, facing down armor-supported infantry, twice, with the bravery of individual riflemen, machine-gunners, bazooka teams and a single .57MM gun of the 80th AA BN which had been salvaged from a wrecked glider.

A SINGLE roadblock of G Company and one .57MM with a crew from BTRY A, 80th AA which put a halt to the first German counteroffensive in the south end of Ste Mere Eglise which had a half dozen tanks and self-propelled artillery with at least a company of infantry in the vanguard. The I Co counterattack, although not without problems, convinced the Germans to retreat.

THE GALLANT STAND in Neuville Au Plain of one platoon of D Company (led by LT Turbull), aided by yet another single .57MM gun, which stopped cold, a column of at least two companies of German infantry and two SP guns, buying precious time for LTC Vandevort and LTC Krause to set up their defense of Ste Mere Eglise. Not to forget the role of a depleted E Company, whose one platoon not misdropped, rescued the D Company men in Neuville, Otis Sampson's mortar fire helping to salvage the withdrawal.

The H CO and E CO roadblock on the NW corner of SME that, with the bravery of LT John Cliff, his A BTRY gun crew and PVT Atchley of H Co., knocked out a truck full of Germans, a halftrack and two SP guns, which got within 50 yards of LTC Vandevort's CP in SME, and thereby held off the German 7th Army STURM Battalion.

D and E CO platoons, led by men like LT Wray, LT Peterson and LT Coyle, ambushed two other battalions of German infantry, killing and wounding nearly 400 men and taking 350-400 prisoners in

6/20/2009

two pitched, side by side battles against the 91st Airlanding Division, aided by the likes of mortar magicians Sampson and Pickels.

All of the above actions, the parachute drops and glider landing before H-Hours of the Utah landing, all produced many casualties, and the 307 Airborne Medics, absorbing their own casualties upon landing, set up field hospitals under trying conditions, saving many lives and broken bodies. unarmed heroes to every soldier they aided at great risk to their personal safety.

It is little wonder why Gen Ridgway wrote that the 505RCT was the best such regiment during the war. Perhaps, it was too good for its own good. The relief which was to come from the green 90th Infantry Division provided no relief at all. The depleted 505 and its Airborne brothers in the 507, 508 and 325 Combat Teams of the 82nd ABN proved to be more aggressive and effective than regiments of regular tank and heavy artillery supported troops, and thus the promised return to England to re-fit and rest was delayed for almost a month.

When those 505RCT survivors get together again on August 28 in Tacoma, who can blame them if they feel they are the Best of the Best.

Bob Burns, President
FF 505RCT ASSN

Fiere. Sara also showed me a beautiful 400 year old house for sale on Hill 30, right across the street from Lucien Hasley's memorial wall. If only I could win the lottery!

When we arrived back at Howard's, his friend, Bruno Thirel from Rouen, was there with some members of his re-enactment group. Barry and Duke arrived to pick me up. The re-enactor group had 2 WWII jeeps that they had Howard and Duke sign. On one of them Duke wrote "Freedom is not Free" and on the other he wrote "All gave some; some gave all". Jean-Marie arrived at Howard's with Barry and Duke.

Jean-Marie, Barry, Duke and I went to SME to get some flowers to lay on Madame Renaud's grave in Valognes. We all drove there and Jean-Marie located the graves. Duke and Barry laid the flowers. We returned to SME for lunch and it was there that we said our goodbyes to our new and very dear friend, Jean-Marie. Duke, Barry, and I got in the car and headed for Paris.

Upon arrival in Paris, we drove straight to the hotel and checked in. Then we took the train into the city and got off near Notre Dame. We walked around for a while and then got in a cab and headed for the Eiffel Tower where we had dinner reservations. Jamie and Father Steve were already seated when we arrived. Duke treated us to a lovely meal. It was the perfect ending to a wonderful trip.

----- Original Message -----

From: David.Wills@skanska.co.uk

To: dwmderby@charter.net

Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2009 6:32 AM

Subject: RE: Dinner John Steel Hotel & Pictures for Panther

Don,

We had 26 members of the 505 F&F attend the dinner at the John Steele restaurant on Thursday 4th June 2009.

Attendees included: Ellen Peters, Katie Troccoli, Duke Boswell together with his son Jamie, Barry O'Shea and Steve Jeselnik, Howard Manoiian together with his son Chris and daughter in law Gina, Ray Fary, Bill Sullivan's daughters Carol and Jean, grandson Daniel and Jean's partner Jon Milano (Bill and Elizabeth were both in Paris to receive his Legion de Honour medal at the time), Jenny Cote, Emile Lacroix, Gene Garren, Leyland Burns, Jean-Marie and Catherine Lemoigne, Bob Murphy's daughter Christina Murphy Mazgelis and finally my son James.

We were joined for pre-dinner drinks as arranged at the Stop Bar by Tommy McArdle, Shaun and Bev Cunningham, Henri-Jean and Yvette Renaud and Bob Murphy's grandson Ryan Murphy. Henri-Jean had a prior engagement with Ryan in Bayeau for dinner with the American Legion President, so they couldn't stay for dinner.

On arrival at the John Steele, I was worried that I only had 26 dinners, 5 less than my reservation for 31, but luckily there were 5 visiting Americans in the reception attempting to secure a table for dinner. After hearing the receptionist say that they were fully booked, I offered them my 5 spare places which pleased everyone. It transpired that the party was led by Max Cleland the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, together with the Superintendent of the Colleville cemetery, the ABMC party were busy preparing for the visit of President Obama. Once we started the dinner, we asked everyone to introduce themselves and explain their connection to the 505, the menu and service was excellent with a fresh salmon starter, guinea fowl main course and chocolate tart desert. The ABMC delegation later remarked on how much they had enjoyed hearing our introductions.

At 10.00am on the morning of 6th June 2009 we assembled at La Fiere Bridge to lay a wreath in memory of Bob Murphy at the Iron Mike statute, the wreath was laid jointly by Bob Murphy's son Dion and daughter Christina. See attached photo no 0723 - Left to Right: Col Keith Nightingale, Dion Murphy, Yves Tariel, Christina Murphy Mazgelis, Emile Lacroix, David and James Wills.

Duke Boswell later presented a Stars and Stripes flag to the Airborne Museum which had flown over the Capitol Building on 6th June 1994, Duke had originally presented the flag to school he used to teach at. But when the school closed and the flag was returned to him, he decided to present the flag to the Airborne Museum along with a certificate of authenticity which explained its history. The flag was carried by a member of the Liberty Jump Team on a night drop from a C-47 aeroplane on the evening of 5th June 2009 at the DZ near Col Timmes Orchard. See attached photo no 0845.

Please confirm safe receipt.

Best Wishes, David

65th Anniversary of D-Day

Several years ago, Gene Garren told me that every trip to Normandy is special and unique in its own way and one trip can not be compared to another. Truer words were never spoken and this year's trip was no exception. This year I had the pleasure of experiencing the very kind hospitality of Howard Manoian and that of his son and daughter-in-law, Chris and Gina Riemer. It was truly the trip of a lifetime and I had a wonderful time. Some of my fondest memories of my trip are from the many morning conversations with Howard over coffee and breakfast. I can't thank Howard, Chris and Gina enough for making my trip a truly memorable experience. I also want to thank David Wills and Jean-Marie Lemoigne. David for the wonderful job he did putting together the F&F dinner at the John Steele Hotel restaurant on June 4 and Jean-Marie for the many kindnesses he and Catherine showed me during my visit.

I arrived Sunday morning May 31. Family and Friends member, David Ashe, picked me up at the train station in Carentan. We stopped by my friend Dick Cooper's place in St-Côme-du-Mont. He has B&B's and Gites that he rents to visitors. His place is beautiful and I highly recommend it to anyone who is going over. We had a lovely visit with Dick and his daughter. Dick showed me all around his place. Every year he has done more work to the place. It was really something. Later David dropped me at Howard's place in Chef-d-Pont. We had a nice visit with Howard, Chris and Gina. The four of us went to dinner at the Hotel La Normandie in Chef-du-Pont and had a wonderful meal.

One of the true highlights of my trip came the afternoon of June 3. Jean-Marie took Katie and me to the location on the north side of SME where my dear friends, Otis Sampson and John Perozzi along with the rest of the 1st Platoon of E Co. were dug in on D-Day night. The path leading to the position is known as the Valley of Misery. There is a woman who still lives there who was an 11 year old girl on D-Day. Jean-Marie also showed us the route they took to Neuville-au-Plain where they enabled Lt. Turnbull and his D Co. platoon to withdraw back to SME the afternoon of D-Day. It gave me chills to know I was in the same spot where my heroes fought so valiantly 65 years ago. How many times have I heard Otis and John talk about the shelling they took that night? It must have been terrifying. I could almost hear Otis telling his men to stay in their foxholes and not come out for any reason what so ever.

That night we had dinner at the home of Francine and Andre Tounaille, friends of Howard. Four soldiers joined us. It was a lovely evening. The dinner lasted from 6:00pm to 11:30pm. After dinner, Andre took us to the attic where he has a very impressive collection of WWII memorabilia. I took pictures of the soldiers with various items.

The morning of June 4, I met my friend, Bill Nation, at the Hotel La Normandie. Bill's uncle and namesake was the S-1 with the 508th PIR. Tragically, Captain Bill Nation was KIA on January 31, 1945 in Belgium. Bill took me all around Hill 30 where his uncle had fought with the 508th. Later we went to Dead Man's Corner Museum where 1st Infantry Division veteran, Harley Reynolds was scheduled to do a book signing. He very kindly sent me an autographed copy of his book several months ago, and I wanted to meet him in person. He is a lovely man and we had a nice albeit brief visit. While we were there, we ran into Pascal Hainaut. I

introduced Bill and Pascal. Pascal knew all about Captain Nation and said it was an honor to meet his nephew. Bill was quite surprised and told me later it was a very humbling experience for him.

That afternoon we went to a ceremony at Gourbesville where the 82nd Airborne fought alongside the 90th Infantry Division. The Static Line Tour was there and I was able to see many friends who were on that tour including 507th veteran, Howard Huebner. Howard told me his doctor forbade him to come on the trip because he needs valve replacement surgery, but his health is not good enough for him to have the surgery. He said he told his wife he may be coming home feet first! Returning to Normandy meant so much to him, he was will to risk his life to make the trip. Duke Boswell and Barry O'Shea arrived during the ceremony. They had just arrived in France that morning. It was wonderful to see them.

That night was the Family and Friends of the 505th RCT dinner arranged by David Wills. We all met at the Stop Bar and went around the corner to the John Steele Hotel for dinner. I believe there were 24 of us in all. It was a wonderful dinner and we all owe David a big "thank you" for doing such a wonderful job. It was at this dinner that I first met Christina Murphy, Bob's daughter, and Bill Sullivan's daughters, Jean and Carol as well as Duke Boswell's son, Jamie and his friend, Father Steve Jeselnick, an Air Force Col. It was wonderful meeting them all. Father Steve blessed the meal and everyone had a wonderful time. Members of the American Battlefield Monuments Commission were dining at the next table. With them was Senator Max Cleland

On June 5, we attended a luncheon at Chef du Pont and afterwards attended a ceremony in the 508th Park. It was a lovely ceremony that included a children's choir. The children marched in waving French, American, British, and European Union flags. Howard laid the wreath on the monument. In the evening, I was invited to a barbecue at Jean-Marie Lemoigne's house. I rode to his home with Duke Boswell and Barry O'Shea. On the way, we stopped on a street with a plaque to Sgt. Stanley Smith and others from a G Co. machine gun crew who had been killed there. Duke told us about the action there. Normandy was Duke's 3rd combat jump. I wondered later if he ever got used to losing friends or did he just come to accept it as a fact of war. Being at the exact spot where these events occurred always touches my heart. Hearing Duke talk of the action there really made Sgt. Smith and his men come alive for me and I couldn't help but think of their poor families whose lives would forever be changed by their loss.

We had a wonderful dinner at Jean-Marie's and later attended a night jump by the Liberty Jump Team at Amfreville. Duke brought the flag that flew over the capital in 1994 at the 50th Anniversary of D-Day. His congressman had given it to him and he had donated to the school where he taught for many years. When the school closed, the flag was returned to Duke. He brought it to Normandy to donate to the Airborne Museum. One of the jumpers asked to jump the flag at the Amfreville night jump.

Saturday, June 6 was a big day. We attended the medal presentation ceremony at the Airborne Museum. Howard Manoian, Duke Boswell, Chet Graham (508th), Bob Bearden (507th), Howard Huebner (507th), and Reed Pelfrey (502nd) all received the French Legion of Honor medal. Julius Eisner had previously received his medal in the United States, but he was there as well.

After the ceremony, we were all hustled into vans and driven to Colleville for the ceremony there. Many thanks to Father Steve and Gina for making this happen. I think they arranged the whole thing in two days. The N13 was shut down and we had a police escort to the American Cemetery at Colleville. We didn't even have to go through security! We were ushered right in. Chet Graham really touched my heart by something he said to me. While we were waiting to go in, we were just sort of standing around with all the graves behind us. I told Chet his medal sure does look good on him. His reply to me was, "I wear it for those guys" as he waved his hand towards the graves. His saying that brought a tear to my eye. The veterans were escorted away to sit on the stage while the rest of us sat in the family section. I sat with the Sullivan daughters, Jean and Carol, and had a lot of fun with them. Jean's son would stand his chair and take photos for me. What a great kid!! Afterwards, we were ushered into a tent where they had taken the veterans. I ran into a 90th I.D. veteran whom I had met last year when they had their reunion in Dallas.

That evening, I attended a lovely cocktail party at the home of Henri-Jean and Yvette Renaud. I met Ryan Murphy, Bob's grandson, and it was a real pleasure to meet him. It was truly a wonderful evening and we all had a lovely time. I left a bottle of Texas Red wine in the kitchen for Henri-Jean and Yvette. I love taking Texas wines to my French friends!!

The next day was the jump at La Fiere. The Liberty Jump Team jumped first. They jumped an MIA/POW flag, as well as, American, French, Canadian, and British flags. Next, the Americans, French, and Germans jumped. I think it poured with rain between each group of jumpers and then, as if by magic, the skies would clear up and the next group would jump. It was very windy that day and I was surprised they were able to jump. Earlier in the week, I met a trooper who wanted to jump at the 60th and was unable to get a spot. The weather report said it would be rainy on the 7th, but this trooper said they intended to jump no matter what the weather. And they did. One trooper looked like he was going to crash into the tents where we had been waiting out the rain. He went right over the tents and landed on the river bank just below the causeway. His parachute fell over the crowd and they helped him pull it in. It looked to me like several troopers landed in trees. One poor guy broke his leg and was taken out by ambulance and another injured trooper was taken out by helicopter. I read in the paper the next day that 9 paratroopers were injured. I hated to read that.

In the evening, I went to a dinner at Sharron Pike's house, my English friend who lives in SME. It was a wonderful dinner and several friends were there whom I had not seen during the week. Sharron is the widow of my good friend, Dave Pike, who passed away last year. I had a nice visit with Sharron and took pictures of their son, Sean, in front of the Memorial Tree in the park across the street from their home. Neighbors and friends, including myself, chipped in for the tree and to have a plaque engraved and placed under the tree. Sharron had around 20 people for dinner and I think she cooked enough food for 40! I had a wonderful time and it afforded me the opportunity to get in a visit with friends I had not seen earlier in the week.

Monday morning Sara Pritchard picked me up and took me to the Dave Pike Memorial on Hill 30. In the field just behind the memorial is where Dave's ashes were spread. It is a beautiful location with a perfect view of La

-----Original Message-----

From: rjburns19@aol.com

Date: 6/24/2009 2:11:22 PM

To: ff505rct@charter.net; dwmderby@charter.net; eeptx@sbcglobal.net; katiet1@sbcglobal.net; gavin505@optonline.net; genegarren@aol.com; RFARY@Mailstation.com

Subject: Fwd: Itinerary for Tacoma Visit

Don, Jim, All: Attached is the revised program for our Friday, Aug 28 visit to Fort Lewis and McChord AFB as well as our Memorial Luncheon. CSM Gaweda is working on a speaker. Our FF Board of Directors Meeting should be 5PM on Thurs and perhaps the 505 vets should have theirs at 4PM right before. Recommend the General Meeting be 2PM after lunch on Saturday. Have a Veteran Seminar following and then everyone gets ready for Dinner Banquet at 6PM.

PLease comment

-----Original Message-----

From: Hinkle, Roland M Mr CIV USA IMCOM <roland.hinkle@us.army.mil>

To: rjburns19@aol.com

Sent: Wed, Jun 24, 2009 12:36 pm

Subject: Itinerary for Visit

Sir,

Attached is the itinerary for your visit. Please let me know if this works so I can lock in the organizations supporting. Thanks.

<<...>>

r/

Roland (Matt) Hinkle
Community Relations

I Corps & Fort Lewis Public Affairs Office

Phone: 253-967-0146

Cell: 253-318-1269

FAX: 253-967-0612

Fort Lewis Official Website www.lewis.army.mil

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REGISTRATION FORM
2009 REUNION
505 RCT ASSOCIATION
(And Family & Friends of the 505 RCT Association)

August 27 - 30, 2009
Fort Lewis, WA

Registration Fee: \$85.00 per Person

Checks only, payable to F&F 505 RCT Association, mailed with
Registration Form, to Ellen Peters, 3630 Townsend Dr., Dallas TX 75229-
3805.

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Unit/Affiliation: _____

No. of Attendees: _____

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

Special Need (handicap accessibility, wheelchair, etc.): _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Hotel: Courtyard Marriott Seattle Federal Way, WA 253-529-0200. Be sure and tell them you are part of the "Family and Friends of the 505 RCT Reunion Group". To receive the discounted rate of \$108.00 a night, you must reserve your room by August 6, 2008. The hotel has an airport shuttle service. Once you have picked up your bags, call the hotel and let them know to send the shuttle.

REGISTRATION FEES WILL BE REUNDED IN FULL IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND.

505 R.C.T. WWII

Regimental Combat Team

973 Gladys St
Darby Lake
Stanton, Michigan 48868-0122



DATED MATERIAL

#2

July 2009

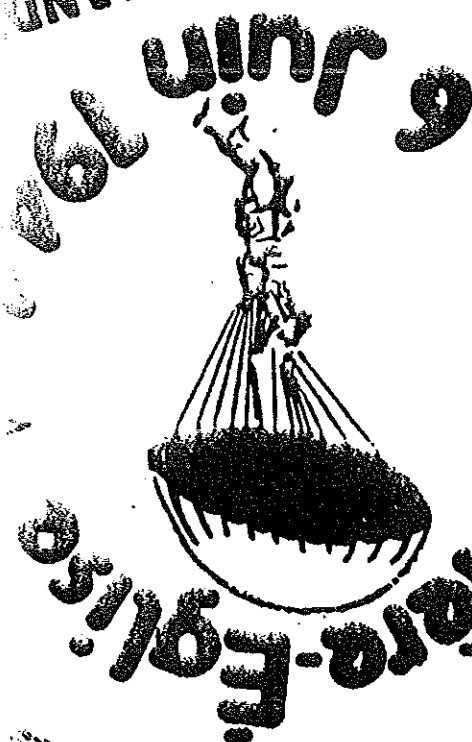
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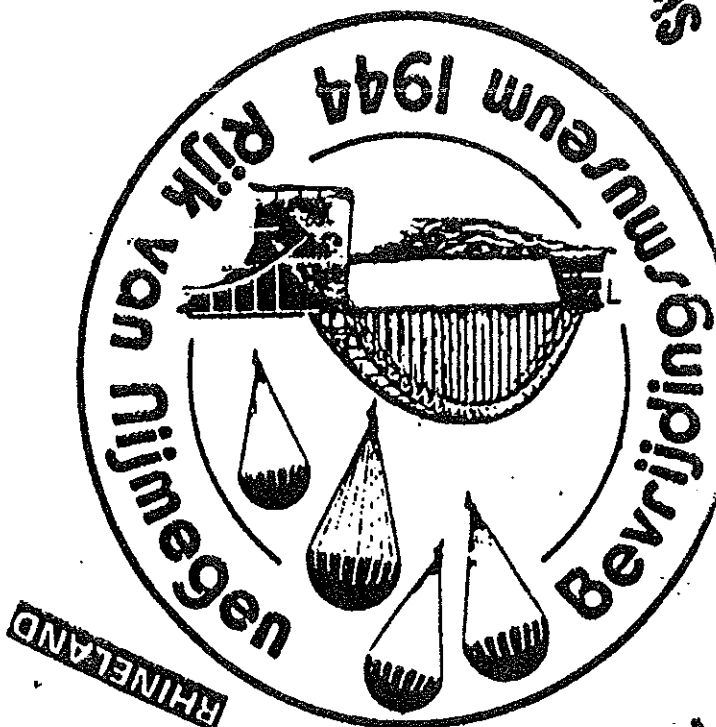
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